

Deregulation:
Growth Through Orientation and Pleasure
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Introduction

You want to pursue, achieve, and enjoy your happiness: To determine what values will promote your happiness and pursue them, achieve them, enjoy them.

To do so, many people (not me) uphold doing what's uncomfortable.

"Growth requires getting out of your comfort zone." "I know you're scared of asking that girl out, but you gotta face your fears." "If you want the best life possible for you, you have to do what's uncomfortable." "No discomfort, no gain." "You have to challenge your comfortable habits." "You have to become 'comfortable being uncomfortable'." "You have to value 'productive discomfort'." Etc.

Advocating effort is another way people advocate discomfort. "Yeah, doing X is uncomfortable, so you have to effort at it." "Taking the steps you need to take in life may not be comfortable, easy, pleasurable, what you naturally want or are inclined to do, the path of least resistance, the path of inertia, etc.; you have to activate your effort."

Advocating control (and will power and focus and activation) is another way people advocate discomfort and effort. "You need to take control of your life, of your mind, of your organism, of your actions, to activate your effort, to take those uncomfortable steps. You need to activate your behavior. Activate your mind. Activate your focus. Activate your effort."

Advocating regulation, a popular term in the nervous system world, is another. "You need to regulate your nervous system."

Discomfort. Effort. Control. Will power. Focus. Activation. Regulation.

And if these lead to problems, not to worry: We can troubleshoot them with more discomfort, effort, control, will power, focus, activation, regulation.

The model of regulation is the model of control as the primary way to pursue happiness.

The problem with regulation is that it's exhausting—all that constant controlling and efforting—and comes at the opportunity cost of growing your capacity to process, do, and handle more in life, more effortlessly, with a more pleasant letting go of control quality.

This book presents a different model: The model of deregulation, of growing your capacity to do life more effortlessly and with a pleasant letting go of control quality.

Growth of capacity enables you more effortlessly to grow in the general, popular sense of the term. The general, popular sense is somewhat broad and vague, but meaningful enough in ordinary use. It refers to your life moving forward, in a positive direction, taking care of yourself, career moving forward, relationships getting better, deeper, emotional healing, more appreciation of life, more knowledge, wisdom, skill, etc. Growth of the organism. "Growth" in the title of this book refers to both senses of growth: The general, popular sense, and the more technical, specialized sense of

capacity growth, and integrated. Deregulation grows your capacity, which enables growth in the general, popular sense to be more effortless.

The book has two parts.

In Part 1, I present the core idea of deregulation, also called nervous system deregulation (NSD): Pleasantly letting go of control, i.e., deregulating, grows your capacity. Deregulation draws from and majorly credits Organic Intelligence®, a theory of capacity growth, developed by Steve Hoskinson.

Your organism has the ability to grow, uplevel, benefit you tremendously, and in unpredictable, unimaginable ways, and all without any effort on your part. Letting go of control of your organism unlocks tremendous and sustainable growth.

In part 2, I present an analogy between nervous system deregulation and market deregulation (a free market). Grasping fundamental similarities between the two promotes understanding and appreciation of both.

Just as letting go of control of your organism unlocks tremendous and sustainable growth, so letting go of control of the market unlocks tremendous and sustainable growth. Nervous system deregulation increases your quality of life without any effort or controlling needed on your part. Don't regulate your nervous system; advocate letting go of control. Market deregulation increases your quality of life without any effort or controlling needed on your part. Don't regulate the market; advocate letting go of controls.

Not only is there a profound analogy between nervous system deregulation and market deregulation, there's also a deep causal connection: They support each other.

Market deregulation supports nervous system deregulation. Market deregulation unlocks new, innovative, unpredictable pleasures, comforts, luxuries, conveniences, and reduction of pain points, all without any effort on your part. These pleasures offer you opportunities for pleasure and pleasant letting go of control, which grows your capacity.

Nervous system deregulation supports market deregulation. The more you experience and appreciate the value of letting go of control of your organism, the more open you'll be to learning about, appreciating, and advocating the value of letting go of control of the market. "You're proposing not regulating wages?! You're proposing allowing employers to set whatever wages they can get employees to agree to?! But deregulating will hurt the poor!" The greater that person's capacity, the more likely they'll be able to objectively examine arguments for example that minimum wage hurts the poor, as opposed to dismissing them without consideration, from a place of reactivity, due to not enough capacity.

"Deregulation" in the title of this book refers to deregulation of both your organism and of the market. Emphasis is primarily on your organism, on nervous system deregulation (NSD); that's what this book is primarily about. But market regulation is an important analogy and integration.

The model of nervous system regulation, of control, of using consciously directed effort to control things—e.g., your emotions, your stress, your work, your progress towards goals, your relationships—tends to override signals of freedom, of letting go of control, of orientation and pleasure. This tends to keep you stuck, not growing.

Likewise, market regulation—the government controlling how people live, as opposed to the government protecting your right to live as you choose so long as you don't initiate physical force against others or their property—locks up the mind, and prevents growth.

Part 1. Growth through orientation and pleasure

Suffering and discomfort, according to Organic Intelligence, indicate that intensity is too high, too much for your organism to process easily, comfortably.

Contrary to the view that discomfort and suffering is what grows you, makes you stronger, OI holds that discomfort indicates that you do not have the organismic capacity to handle the information and intensity coming at you, easily. Being able to handle that information and intensity easily, comfortably would be a sign of capacity growth.

The two conditions that enable capacity growth are orientation and pleasure.

Orientation is automatic, effortless connection to the environment through the senses; being able to see, hear, etc. what's around you in the immediate environment as opposed to having your attention be hostaged by your interior, e.g., thoughts, feelings, images, memories.

Pleasure is feeling good, which includes pleasantly neutral; doesn't refer only to pleasurable excitation, but also relaxation and feeling pleasantly neutral. (Later I'll go into orientation and pleasure in more detail; capacity growth, too.)

As you do more orientation and pleasure, orientation and pleasure will increasingly become automatic, effortless aspects of your experience and you'll be able to do life and handle more, more easily and pleurably.

To the extent you're in orientation and pleasure, according to Organic Intelligence, the ebb and flow of intensity of your biology will be such that intensity reaches certain setpoints, called in OI organic intensity thresholds, and then settles from those setpoints. This rising of intensity to reach these thresholds and then settling afterward results in capacity growth.

According to OI, you can't and shouldn't try to consciously aim at reaching and resting from thresholds, just as you can't and shouldn't try to consciously aim at digesting. You eat; digestion will happen automatically. You get into orientation and pleasure as much as you can; capacity growth will happen automatically. And you want orientation and pleasure also to be as automatic and effortless as possible; notice and lean into the automatic, effortless quality whenever possible.

This book does not get into what is often described as "the science of" something, e.g., "the science of" Organic Intelligence, biological intensity, thresholds, fight-flight-freeze, the nervous system, Yoga, sleep, digestion, etc. It focuses on explicating orientation, pleasure, capacity growth in the context of living one's life and being oriented towards living one's life.

By the way, nothing is more scientific than observing that when you get a good night's sleep, you experience more pleasure during the day. You have rationally validated that sleep boosts your mood. If someone says you need to support your claim

with research (beyond firsthand observation) and an explanation of what happens in your organism as you sleep, in terms of biochemistry, etc, they're being irrational.

And the displeasure they create for you is a signal to maybe limit your interaction with them, for the sake of your sanity, epistemology, rationality, pleasure, happiness, well-being.

This book is not a proof that orientation and pleasure will grow your capacity; it's an explanation of the claim that orientation and pleasure grow capacity. Your doing orientation and pleasure and seeing whether your capacity grows would be the proof or disproof.

OK: The essence of Organic Intelligence, in five words, is: Orientation and pleasure grow capacity. Deregulation emphasizes the pleasant letting go of control quality of orientation and pleasure.

Capacity growth enables you to do and handle more in life, more easily. It is a huge value that you want to promote as you live.

You want to live, to pursue your values—e.g., career, relationships—in a way that prioritizes orientation and pleasure as much as possible. That doesn't mean quit your job just because you hate it; you may need it for now to pay rent, etc. (to avoid the displeasure of losing shelter). Deregulation assumes a context of sane, rational living, oriented toward your long-term well-being and happiness, within which you prioritize orientation and pleasure as much as possible; incubating your pursuing values, your doing of life, within orientation and pleasure as much as possible.

In the ensuing sections, I get into orientation and pleasure in detail. Here I want to give a few examples of how orientation and pleasure can show up in life; and how mainstream approaches to living ignore and override them. To give you an immediate, clear, and stark sense of orientation and pleasure, before getting into their detailed explication. Here are some examples::

A guy is in therapy session. He sought therapy for various reasons, e.g., heal trauma, figure out how to meet and date women and get a girlfriend, figure out what he wants to do career-wise, improve relationships with family, etc.

The guy is silent, looking out the window, not making any effort to face his therapist or talk about anything.

The therapist assesses this as "avoidance."

"Where did you go?" the therapist says. "Come back and let's talk about what's wrong," she adds or is privately thinking.

The therapist reflects the mainstream approach. The guy needs to confront right now things that may be uncomfortable, not avoid doing that.

By contrast, on the deregulation approach, the guy's orienting is good and could be a crucially beneficial moment, leading to capacity growth. His orientation is to be cheered on, not pathologized as "avoidance."

A guy mentions that he's having problems with his girlfriend but also that they went on a date recently and had fun playing mini golf. He's talking about mini golf with his girlfriend, not the problems.

Therapist assesses him as "avoiding," reflecting mainstream approach. The guy needs to confront right now things that may be uncomfortable, not avoid doing that.

By contrast, on the deregulation approach, the guy's talking about the minigolf, if pleasurable, is good and could be a crucially beneficial moment, leading to capacity growth. His pleasure is to be cheered on, not pathologized as "avoidance."

(I'm stipulating above that it's pleasure. In another case, e.g., there's an upwelling of anguish that just has to intensify and he's making it worse by trying to focus on talking about mini golf instead of feeling his unpleasant feelings, then deregulation would say to feel the unpleasant feelings.)

A guy is talking about what's wrong with his life and how everything is falling apart and there's no hope.

Therapist tries to challenge his beliefs, his thinking, and get him to recognize some positives in his life. "That girl complimented your shirt. That was a nice thing."

The therapist's doing so increases unpleasant intensity in the guy, and he doubles down on negativity. "Yes, but, whatever, it's just a stupid shirt. My face is still ugly and no woman will ever want me."

Therapist assesses the client as "resistant" and "unwilling to do the work."

The therapist reflects the mainstream approach. The guy needs to confront right now things that may be uncomfortable—e.g., challenge his beliefs, acknowledge what's positive—not avoid doing that.

By contrast, on the deregulation approach, if talking about what's wrong and how everything is falling apart and there's no hope is what feels least displeasurable, that's to be joined and supported; to support any movement in the direction of orientation, pleasure, and capacity growth.

A guy is talking about what's wrong with his life and how everything is falling apart and there's no hope, but then suddenly says, "But a girl did compliment my shirt the other day, that was kind of nice," and then after a few moments goes back to talking

about how his life is falling apart. He was able to hang with something positive for, say, 3 seconds.

Therapist inferences, “Wait a minute, hold on there, a girl complimented your shirt and that was nice. Can we just hang there for a bit?”

The therapist increased the guy’s unpleasant intensity. “It was nothing; just a stupid shirt; my face is still ugly and no woman will want me.”

“It wasn’t nothing; it was something,” says the therapist.

The therapist’s comment increases the guy’s unpleasant intensity even further.

The therapist reflects the mainstream approach. The guy needs to confront right now things that may be uncomfortable—e.g., hang with something positive for more than 3 seconds—not avoid doing that.

By contrast, on the deregulation approach, talking about what’s wrong and then 3 seconds with something positive and then more talking about what’s wrong, all falls under pleasure (including minimizing displeasure); doubling down on trying to get the guy to hang with the positive for longer than 3 seconds increases displeasure, distancing him from capacity growth.

(I’m stipulating above that he couldn’t pleasurably hang out with the positive thing for more than 3 seconds. If he could, then poking at him to do so could be good; but being ready to back off if it increases displeasure.)

A guy is working towards becoming a doctor. This involves a lot of stress, hardship, and struggle along the way.

He has a zillion strategies to deal with stress, e.g., breathing exercises, physical exercise, cognitive reframing, orienting, seeking social support, eating lasagna, etc.

To the extent his doing so promotes orientation and pleasure, good. For example, in a moment of stress, he eats lasagna, enjoys it as much as he can, and orients as much as he can; nice.

To the extent his doing so does not promote orientation and pleasure, bad. For example, he does two hours of exercise everyday, to not fall apart; during which time he misses moments of orientation and pleasure that could have welled up and moved him toward capacity growth; missed them because his attentional focus is on the exercise routine.

A guy is working towards becoming a doctor. This involves a lot of stress, hardship, and struggle along the way. He hates it, hates the career, has no interest in becoming a doctor. He does it to obey his family and culture (the culture they claim is normative for him). He also hates every other career in his family and culture’s list of

approved careers; he wants to be a circus clown. (Becoming a doctor is unselfish; circus clown, selfish.)

Growing capacity increases the chances he'll be able to question how he was raised, defy his family and culture, and pursue the values that will make him happy. By contrast, using effort and will power to think and challenge all this without stability in orientation and pleasure might change his conscious beliefs, but not enable his organism actually to go through with defying how he was raised. Shame and guilt melt away as orientation and pleasure deepen.

The value of orientation, pleasure, and capacity growth is profound.
Let's get into each of these three in detail.

1.1 Orientation

Two partners are fighting, angry, and about to hit each other.

There's zillions of advice for preventing this, e.g., pause, take a deep breath, go for a walk, fight in public so you're less likely to hit each other, go to separate rooms, one partner checks into a hotel, etc.

But the zillions of advice often doesn't work; people keep hitting each other.

And even if in a particular case, one partner is able to successfully implement strategy X instead of hitting the other partner, the question is what's happening in the bigger picture; what keeps repeating. Are they hitting their partner in general, even if there are specific instances when they can apply strategy X and refrain? Are they getting into fights, physical or verbal, with others? Are they unable to reduce compulsive behavior no matter how many strategies they learn? Are they incessantly suffering, anxious, depressed, ashamed, lonely, angry, etc. even with massive efforting at employing a zillion strategies? Etc.

And whatever the success ratio of trying strategies, that's a lot of effort, which is exhausting and taxing to the organism (and which is reinforced by cultural support for effort, discomfort, and "suffering is good.")

For strategies to be possible and work, some amount of stability in orientation and pleasure is necessary. The more, the better; the more, the less effort, discomfort, and tax involved; the more the strategies are less strategies in the sense of the regulation model; the more they are aspects of orientation and pleasure.

Orientation and pleasure are not just two strategies among a zillion strategies. They are the two fundamentals that enable doing more effortlessly; doing a strategy as part of orientation and pleasure is not doing a strategy in the sense of the regulation model, but rather on the deregulation model.

Furthermore, it's not like orientation is a distinct process from other strategies, e.g., go for a walk, hang out with friends, eat something, pet your dog, etc. All that involves and can support sensory connection to the environment. (Same comment for pleasure.)

Of the two of orientation and pleasure, orientation is more fundamental than pleasure for settling intensity and enabling more pleasure, in a wider range of intensities and forms, and for greater duration.

Efforting at orientation is different from effortless orientation, and the latter is technically what orientation refers to, but at the same, includes efforted orientation; with the understanding that the goal is to get to effortless orientation whenever possible and notice and lean into that as much as possible.

Here are six features of orientation.

1.1.1 Six features of orientation (SUAVEN)

Orientation is connection to the environment through the five senses: seeing what's around you, hearing, touching, smelling, tasting.

I want to present six features of the connection, for which I have the acronym SUAVEN:

- S = significant
- U = unfixed
- A = automatic
- V = vacation (from interior intensity)
- E = effortless
- N = neutral

S. Significant

Significant means the environment is significant to your attention.

The people at the party, the objects in the room, tables, chairs, trashcan in the corner, and the sky that you can see through the window are real to you, not distant or unreal or insignificant.

If you're looking at tables and chairs, but they're not really real to you, because you're preoccupied with internal experience—thoughts, feelings, images, say about your problems—that's not orientation. It's orientation if the environment is significant to your attention

A sign of significance is that your internal experience is responsive to the environment. "Oh, a table. Actually, it's a pretty cool looking table. I like it."

The senses connect to the environment, the environment is significant to the attention, and a sign of this is that internal experience is responsive to the environment. As opposed to: "I'm stuck in my internal intensity and couldn't possibly be responsive to the environment."

U. Unfixed

Unfixed means your attention is not fixed on any aspect of the environment (or your interior), meaning it can easily roam. Your attention is not fixed on, say, the best looking person in the room. Your eyes may prefer to go to that person and may stay on them for a time, but they're not fixated; you could easily let your eyes roam and see other people, the sky, the trashcan in the corner.

A. Automatic

Automatic means the connection is happening automatically, like digestion and breathing happening automatically, as opposed to volitionally, though an act of choice. If you're preoccupied with your interior experience and then suddenly you hear the music in the room or suddenly see the room around you more vividly, that's automatic. Connection to the environment through the senses happening automatically. So right now, you have a bunch of automatic connection happening.

V. Vacation (from interior intensity)

Vacation refers to orientation feeling like a welcome vacation from internal intensity, as opposed to, say, boring, irritating, restless, or a pointless waste of time. You're preoccupied with thoughts, feelings, images. Then more orientation comes on; and it's a welcome vacation from internal intensity and inward attention. That's a sign of orientation, as opposed to: "This is a waste of time, I need to get back to inward attention." That's a sign that attention can't connect to the environment.

E. Effortless

Effortless means it's effortless to connect to the environment. Automatic connection is effortless. Volitional connection, choosing to connect to the environment, is effortless when and to the degree it's effortless. If you're preoccupied with internal intensity, and it would be hard to get your attention to the environment, that's not effortless. If it would be easy, that's effortless or at least much closer to effortless. The more effortless the connection, the more it's orientation.

N. Neutral

Neutral means the connection is not intense, doesn't trigger high intensity. For example, you're looking at the best looking person in the room and you feel ugly and ashamed, or you feel intense pleasurable lust, or both, where this intensity hostages your attention. Orientation is overall a neutral experience. There's still significance, the S in SUAVEN: Your internal experience is responsive to the environment; e.g., looking at the good-looking person gives you some pleasure, looking at the trashcan in the corner gives you some displeasure. But overall, orientation is a non-intense, neutral experience; neutral awareness of the environment, while still significant.

- S: Significant. How significant is the environment to me? How responsive is my internal experience to the environment?
- U: Unfixed. How unfixed is my connection? How easily can the attention roam around?
- A: Automatic. What automatic connection is already happening? What do I already see and hear without needing to use choice to try to establish or amplify sensory connection?
- V: Vacation. How much can I enjoy orientation as a vacation from internal intensity? If I stop what I'm doing and look at a tree for 5 seconds, will the world end?
- E: Effortless. In addition to whatever automatic connection to the environment is happening, if I choose to connect, how effortless is it?
- N. Neutral. Is my overall experience, even while being significant, also neutral, non-intense, low intensity?

Orientation is SUAVEN. The more SUAVEN it is, the more it's orientation.

1.1.2 Orientation is not “being in the present”

Here my views deviate from Organic Intelligence and popular opinion.

Orientation does not mean being in the present, the present moment, the here-and-now.

Everyone is always in the present, the here-and-now, and cannot be otherwise.

Yes, I understand the spirit of the idea of “being in the present.” “You’re reacting to the new woman you’re dating as if she’s your ex. You’re still in the past. Come to the present.”

But you are in the present, in the full context. In the present, you have the internal experience you have (thoughts, feelings, images), e.g., thoughts and feelings about your ex. That’s happening in the present.

And in the present, you may be pleurably thinking about your future and imagining yourself in it, and pleurably thinking about the past and imagining yourself in it, having a ball in both cases, and maybe the cases blend together, while having sensory connection to the environment that is SUAVEN.

1.1.3 Orientation is not “appropriate responsivity”

Here my views deviate from Organic Intelligence.

Being oriented does not refer to “understanding the situation you’re in and being appropriately responsive to it.” “Your suffering is totally oriented. You just got your heart broken. Not knowing that your heart is broken and not suffering would indicate disorientation.””

No.

Orientation is connection to the environment through the senses that is SUA VEN.

“You’re at a bonfire with friends and you’re thinking about work instead of being present with your friends. You’re not oriented. Being present with your friends would be oriented.”

No.

Orientation is connection to the environment through the senses that is SUA VEN. You can have this connection while thinking about work instead of being present with your friends. And this connection may be compromised in being present with your friends; maybe being present with them triggers you in a way that compromised the connection.

“You’re not paying attention to the work meeting. You’re looking at the butterflies outside the window. You’re not oriented. Paying attention to the work meeting would be orientation.”

Both paying attention to the work meeting and looking at butterflies (and not paying attention to the work meeting) can involve orientation. Orientation is connection to the environment through the senses that is SUA VEN. And even supposing paying attention to the work meeting is “appropriate responsivity” and even if you get fired and even if not paying attention was wrong to do, you still might have been oriented.

1.1.4 Orientation can count as pleasure but still keep it distinct

Orientation can count as pleasure. You’re looking at trees and it’s pleasant.

When I refer to “orientation and pleasure,” I’m not implying orientation is distinct from pleasure.

The reason for referring to orientation—to orientation and pleasure as opposed to just pleasure—is that orientation is fundamental to capacity growth.

Also, it’s useful to understand orientation as a neutral or more neutral experience, compared to pleasure, understood as a more intense pleasure. So you could distinguish orientation and pleasure in the sense of distinguishing a more neutral experience from a more intense experience.

At the same time, pleasure includes neutral experience, which can be pleasant.

1.1.5 Orientation is fundamental to rational pursuit of happiness

The greater your capacity, the greater your ability to be rational without having to be calm. (Also the greater your ability to be rational, period, but focusing here on the “without having to be calm”; which is relevant to being able to be rational, period.)

The greater your capacity, the greater your ability to be rational while excited, charged, electric, experiencing intense emotions and sensations, feeling intensity throughout your body. E.g., you’re excitedly thinking through a business idea; the excitement helps, not dogs, your thinking; makes it more creative, faster, and improves your happiness; more pleasure.

Being rational is often associated with being calm, cool, collected, unemotional, unfeeling.

One thing that contributes to this popular association is the fact that many people can't be rational when hopped up on intensity; or it's much harder for them to do so. Person A presents a criticism of person B's political views. B's intensity jacks up, making it hard or impossible for him to objectively think about A's criticism. B would have to be calmer to increase the chances of being able to do so.

Orientation increases access to calm.

Moreover, it increases access to intensity that is pleasurable and that is a fountainhead for thinking. Thoughts, feelings, and images arise that help thinking, e.g., about your business idea, about politics, anything, everything.

Thinking is more possible, sustainable, creative, generative, faster, and more pleasurable.

And more able to promote happiness, because you have more access to pleasure, which is crucial for pointing you towards values that promote your happiness.

1.1.6 Orientation is fundamental to useful insight

"I do compulsive behavior X because of my trauma." "I stay in abusive relationships because of my core belief that I'm worthless." "I keep suspecting and accusing my partner of cheating when really I'm the one who's cheating on him all the time." "My psychoanalyst helped me realize that I sabotage relationships because of my early life experiences."

When insights don't lead to any change, advocates of somatic approaches say you need to work with the body and sensations, not just the mind.

According to Organic Intelligence, the primary focus should not be on working with the mind and gaining insight or working with the body and sensations (or both), but on orientation and pleasure, which takes care of the rest, and more efficiently because more pleurably, and grows capacity (and all three are related).

In a given instant, this may involve work with the mind and insight; in a given instant it may involve work with the body and sensation. And Organic Intelligence stresses that you are an integrated organism, including mind and body.

Orientation leads to insight that is useful. The more that intensity is not too high, more pleasurable, and more generative, the more useful insights.

By insight I mean an impulse (or hunch or felt sense) for your next step. "Hmm, it might be fun to take guitar lessons." It could be an action step, as in the prior example. It could also be more internal. The thought, "I am loved," arises along with pleasant feelings, which you fully enjoy.

By useful, I mean the insight promotes orientation and pleasure, directly and immediately, and/or you are able pleurably to follow through on the insight (in the case of its being an action idea).

At the same time, its being an action idea doesn't necessarily mean the value of the insight is actually about action. "Hmm, it might be fun to take guitar lessons" might enable orientation and pleasure in the moment, for you to fully enjoy. And then the thought disappears and you no longer have an impulse to take guitar lessons. (Maybe you'll get that impulse again, maybe not.) Or maybe the insight potentiates an insight about another action, e.g., as you hang with the thought, "Hmm, it might be fun to take guitar lessons," you think of your dad who played guitar and you have an impulse later to ask him about his guitar playing. And maybe that insight is valuable for the orientation and pleasure, and then fades; or leads to an actual impulse to talk to your dad about his guitar playing, which ends up being a bonding moment.

Insight includes what some people call and pathologize as projection. "That surfer looks so free. He must feel so free in life," you think and share with your friend. "You're projecting," your friend says, and implying that's bad. "You're the one who feels imprisoned and seeks freedom." Your friend sabotaged your orientation and pleasure. The value of the insight "That surfer looks so free. He must feel so free in life" is to be fully extracted; extract all the orientation and pleasure you can as you have it and from whatever else happens later on, e.g., an impulse to learn surfing, to set a boundary with someone, to buy a kite, to limit your interaction with your friend, to have fish tacos, etc.

The object of orientation often potentiates insights, as in the prior example of orienting to the surfer. What in the environment attracts your attention often potentiates insight. A kid enters a toy store; his attention is attracted to a specific toy. Your attention is attracted to that surfer. Or to two trees in the distance and then suddenly the trees are talking to each other. "You're blocking the light," one tree says. "It is what it is," the other tree replies. And you notice that things that used to bother you a lot now bother you less.

1.2 Pleasure

1.2.1 Pleasure includes less displeasure

Pleasure, as it is understood in deregulation, includes feeling less suffering, pain (physical, mental, and emotional), discomfort, unpleasant stress, anxiety, depression, trauma symptoms, unpleasant symptoms generally, sadness, shame, loneliness, anger, unpleasant fight-flight-freeze, etc.

Many people distinguish between, on the one hand, relief of suffering (feeling less bad), and, on the other hand, promotion of pleasure, joy, happiness, well-being, etc (actually feeling good, not just less bad). Technically, maybe they're right. You're suffering, it starts decreasing, but you feel no pleasure, just less suffering. That's different from your suffering going to zero and then feeling pleasure.

Nevertheless, deregulation includes reduction of displeasure under pleasure because reduction of displeasure is in the direction of pleasure, and if your suffering abates and then you feel joy coming on, it's conceptualizable as one thing, feeling better and better (including less worse).

You want to get to the pot of gold but there's a wall in the way that you have to climb over. Yes, someone could say part 1 is getting over the wall and part 2 is walking to the pot of gold and getting it; part 1 is suffering, part 2 is pleasure. But at the same time, it's one thing. Moving towards the gold. Moving in the direction of happiness.

So pleasure includes what is commonly understood as pleasure, viz., actual presence of pleasure, as well as all feeling better, including less worse, less displeasure, even just for a moment and only slightly. Decreasing displeasure counts as increasing pleasure. Less anxiety counts as pleasure, as increasing pleasure. Anxiety going from 10 to 9.99 for 1 second counts as pleasure.

As you grow capacity, things that may typically be unpleasant for you may start being pleasant, e.g., anger, sadness, loneliness, shame, etc. You can feel these things more pleurably.

So contrasting pleasure against anger, sadness, shame, symptoms, fight-flight-freeze, etc. is not quite accurate. Contrasting pleasure against displeasure, its contradiction, is accurate. Contrasting displeasure against any concept that strictly and essentially refers to a form of displeasure is accurate, e.g., suffering, discomfort. But many things associated with displeasure can still be experienced pleurably, e.g., anger, shame, e.g., pleasant energy in anger, pleasant spaciousness in shame. If you define shame as inherently displeurable, OK, it's displeurable by definition; but someone may be experiencing shame in a way such that there's more pleasure in their experience. They can feel the pleasant spaciousness; or pleasant feeling of gravity; or find it pleasant to feel invisible, to hide from the world, to sink into the earth, etc.

If “I get more pleasure from my suffering” means “my suffering is less; my displeasure is less,” yes, good. But strictly speaking, pleasure and displeasure are contradictory.

Displeasure can decrease in the moment, e.g., your anxiety in the moment is settling (which is still true even if 5 seconds from now it will increase).

Displeasure can decrease over time. “I’m less anxious now than a year ago.” “I used to be anxious all day; now it’s only half the day.” “And less intense.”

1.2.2 Pleasure includes minimizing displeasure

Something bad happens to you and you’re going to suffer. Suffering is going to increase. And it could be chronic, e.g., flareups of a chronic issue, (emotional and/or physical)..

Pleasure includes minimizing displeasure, even when displeasure increases. Displeasure is lessened in the sense of choosing the least displeasurable path. The girl dumps you, you’re in for suffering. You do what you can to minimize the suffering as much as possible. That falls under pleasure.

It can be hard or impossible to know what exactly counts as minimizing your suffering. E.g., how long do you have to suffer from being dumped? One hour? One year? One decade? The rest of your life? And in a particular moment, would feeling your pain or would doing something to try to reduce your pain minimize displeasure? Maybe hard or impossible to know.

But still minimizing displeasure is a model to uphold even if it can be hard to implement.

In some cases, it will be clear or at least much clearer what minimizes pain. E.g., say you’re feeling your pain, crying in anguish over the breakup, and you sense the pain is starting to fade, and at the same time, you have a desire to look at a photo of your ex, which you suspect will trigger another round of anguished crying, and you feel you have a bona fide choice not to look at the photo. Minimizing displeasure consists in not looking at the photo.

1.2.3 Pleasure includes all intensity levels

Pleasure includes pleasure of all intensity levels, e.g., low, medium, high. Like when the doctor asks you to rate your pain level from 1-10, least intense to most. Here we’re focused on pleasure.

High intensity, e.g., you’re having a very intensely pleasurable time at the party.

Medium, e.g., you’re having a good time at the party, not as intensely pleasurable as in the prior case.

Low intensity, e.g., you’re feeling neutral, fine, comfortable, chill, relaxed, at ease, unperturbed.

All are good in life and important, e.g., “I’ve had enough excitement for now, time to chill out. Ah, it feels good to feel neutral, not in intense pleasure.” “OK, I feel I’ve had enough neutral for now; I’m feeling like some excitement.”

When you think of pleasure, don’t think only of high intensity. Low intensity counts as pleasure.

With orientation and pleasure practice, you gain access to pleasure in an increasing range of intensities.

For people who are unable to experience low intensity pleasure, orientation and pleasure will build their access to this; to feeling pleasantly neutral, fine, chill, at ease.

For people who are only able to experience lower intensity levels of pleasure, orientation and pleasure will build access to higher intensities.

1.2.4 Pleasure includes intensification and deintensification

Pleasure includes pleasant intensification and pleasant deintensification (or excitation and relaxation, arousal and dearousal, activation and rest or deactivation). Someone tells a joke you find funny and you laugh; pleasant intensification. At some point the laughter settles; you pleasantly or pleurably settle down. And there could be multiple cycles of pleasant intensification and deintensification after the joke, e.g., you laugh some, then settle, then laugh more, etc.

When you think of pleasure, don’t think only of pleasant intensification. Pleasant cooldown counts as pleasure.

For people who are unable to chill out (pleasurably), orientation and pleasure will build access to this. For people who are unable to intensify pleurably, orientation and pleasure will build access to this, too.

1.2.5 Pleasure includes the whole body

“I’m having a good time.”

Some people when saying this don’t feel much pleasure at all. Or maybe they feel it behind their forehead only, and nowhere else. Or maybe during sex, they feel pleasure in their genitals, but not really anywhere else. Or during socializing, they feel pleasure behind their forehead and maybe some in their torso area, but not really anywhere else.

With orientation and pleasure practice, you build access to pleasure throughout the body (your whole organism).

1.2.6 Pleasure includes sensations, emotions, thoughts, images, and orientation

Pleasure includes pleasant emotions, sensations, thoughts, images, and orientation.

Technically, maybe pleasure is only a sensation and the other four things cannot count as pleasure.

The thought, “this lasagna is delicious!”, maybe technically does not count as pleasure; the pleasure is the pleasurable feeling that is concomitant with the thought. By concomitant, I mean happening at the same time as and connected to.

The memory (image) of being in Italy as you eat the lasagna maybe technically does not count as pleasure; the pleasure is the pleasurable feeling that is concomitant with the image.

With a pleasant emotion—e.g., joy, happiness, cheer, good mood (distinguishing mood from emotion is too technical for my purposes)—maybe technically the pleasure is the pleasant sensation(s), not any thoughts or images that are part of the emotion.

With pleasant orientation—e.g., enjoyably taking in sights and sounds at the party—maybe technically orientation cannot be pleasurable per se. Pleasure is the pleasurable feeling, including pleasant neutral, that is concomitant with orientation.

Even if technically pleasure is only a sensation, it’s still rational, meaningful, and clear to call emotions, thoughts, images, and orientation pleasurable, where that may mean these things are concomitant with pleasurable sensation. Enjoying the party consists in an integrated experience of pleasant sensation, emotion, thought, image, and orientation.

Pleasant thoughts are not equivalent to “positive” thoughts. “I am loved.” If that thought makes you uncomfortable, is unpleasant, then it’s unpleasant;; regardless of whether people associate the thought with being “positive” and desire, expect, or pressure you to feel pleasure.

Unpleasant thoughts are not equivalent to “negative” thoughts. “I’m ugly.” If you feel more neutral than before, that counts as pleasure.

Pleasant vs. unpleasant is not “positive” vs. “negative.” “Positive” thoughts may bring you suffering; “negative” thoughts may bring you joy.

Same goes for images. A “positive” image of succeeding may trigger unpleasant thoughts and shame. A “negative” image of being at rock bottom may trigger pleasure, e.g., liberation, freedom, spaciousness.

For people who have limited access to feelings—sensation and emotions—building access to pleasurable feeling may involve pleasure in thoughts and images. A person is talking about some topic that interests them, that they’re curious about, and find pleasant, not so much in a feeling sense (since their access to feeling is limited), but still pleasant. These are important steps for building access to pleasurable feeling. The

person may find one day that as they talk about topic X, they feel a pleasant sensation in their face or belly or arms, etc.

1.2.7 Pleasure includes tolerance of discomfort, when tolerance is part of increasing capacity

As you grow capacity, things that used to bother or scare you bother and scare you less or not at all. If someone uses “tolerance of discomfort” to refer to this, then tolerance of discomfort counts as pleasure.

As you grow capacity, you’re able to do things that you weren’t able to do before and with less displeasure. If someone uses “tolerance of discomfort” to refer to this, then tolerance of discomfort counts as pleasure.

By contrast, someone is scared of asking a girl out, and the process of doing so distances them from orientation, pleasure, and capacity growth, but they do it anyway (on the pro-discomfort model). That’s not pleasure.

Exposing yourself to discomfort, increasing discomfort, and getting better and better at doing so, where this is not due to and part of increasing capacity for orientation and pleasure and increasing orientation and pleasure in life, does not count as pleasure.

Getting good at sacrificing your happiness does not count as pleasure.

Getting good at promoting your happiness and increasing your capacity, and tolerating discomfort as part of doing so—e.g., meeting new people even if scared, but where the impulse to meet them is directed by orientation and pleasure and where the fear is more pleasurable—counts as pleasure.

Meeting new people even if scared is not pleasure if done on a model of exposing yourself to discomfort, and not on a model of increasing capacity and paying attention to orientation and pleasure. It is pleasure if done on the model of increasing capacity, paying attention to orientation and pleasure, and noticing that meeting new people is more pleasurable.

Some people who follow the model of exposing themselves to discomfort eventually become desensitized. “I’m numb to rejections now. I asked 100 girls out, got rejected 100 times, worked my way through all that sting, and am now numb to rejection.” “Good for you!” says friend.

Desensitization is different from growing capacity for pleasure. Desensitization means less pleasure and may mean more displeasure, e.g., shame, a deep internal unhappiness, unease, vulnerability to something happening that suddenly triggers anguish.

Yes to: “I feel less displeasure when asking girls out and getting rejected because I have more capacity for orientation and pleasure.”

Imagine two digestive systems. One extracts pleasure and orientation from intake and feeds them into the organism. The second extracts discomfort and feeds it

into the organism. In the first case, the organism gets fueled by orientation and pleasure. In the second, the organism gets better at processing toxins, e.g., brain and liver changing in ways to better tolerate the heavy drinking habits of the organism, to mitigate damage.

You want to be the first organism.

1.2.8 Displeasure can be beneficial, but pleasure is preferred

You need access to displeasure, or else you might not know if you're wounded and bleeding to death, if you're touching a hot stove, etc.

Displeasure can be beneficial in being part of growth, strengthening, and wisening. "Displeasure X [e.g., cancer, getting heart broken, working the most unpleasant jobs in the most unpleasant working conditions, being held strictly accountable and punished by my military commander, learning how to survive torture conditions, etc.] was the best thing that ever happened to me. I wouldn't trade it for the world. It made me so much stronger and wiser as a person. I may not have grown in the ways I did had I not suffered X."

Granted, but you don't try to get cancer. You don't try to get your heart broken. You don't choose a more unpleasant job, other things equal. You don't try to skill up on surviving torture conditions if it's not relevant to your career or life generally. And the more orientation and pleasure you can feel and build while X-ing, the better. You try to minimize necessary displeasure.

Orientation, by the way, helps with avoiding touching hot stoves.

1.2.9 Pleasure is superior to equanimity

Equanimity is feeling OK with reality, not in grasping suffering in regard to reality, but also not hopped up on pleasure. "I accept that she doesn't have feelings for me."

Equanimity is consistent with taking action to change things. "Let's see if I can win her over."

Equanimity can be beneficial. Being equanimous in regard to being single and wanting a relationship is better than suffering. And equanimity may help you pursue a relationship; less energy drained from suffering, more rationality online, less likely to fall apart when rejected, less desperation vibes during dates.

Dating equanimously is better than dating while suffering or being unable to date due to suffering.

Dating pleasurably is better than dating equanimously.

1.2.10 Conceptualize everything under pleasure (and orientation)

Orientation and pleasure are not just two life hacks to add to a list of a zillion life hacks, e.g., CBT, DBT, breathing protocols, exercise, Feldenkrais bell hands, etc.

Conceptualize everything under the two fundamentals of orientation and pleasure. Say you're feeling bad and to address it you're doing cognitive reframing (randomly choosing this among a zillion strategies), e.g., "Maybe my friend is just busy, which is why he didn't message me back." If that helps you feel better, focus on the feeling better, the pleasure. If you have a hunch something else would help you feel better (more efficiently), e.g., time passing (so don't make any special effort), especially orientation, try that instead.

The more you deepen in orientation and pleasure, the more the optimal thing to do in the moment will occur to you organically. It could be "Maybe my friend is just busy," it could be eating lasagna, it could be a sudden career path idea. This is far better than having a repertoire of strategies you rigidly draw on. And often there's no way to predict what the optimal thing to do will be. Alternatively put, the optimal thing to do is orientation and pleasure, which will furnish in the moment the optimal thing to do more specifically, e.g., eat a tomato, keep doomscrolling, etc.

In the case of someone who's stable in orientation and pleasure, knows exactly what they want in life, and is pursuing it, they're rigid in a good sense of doing the things they want to do and not deviating, because they know what they want.

But even here, if orientation and pleasure furnish an impulse that deviates from your plan, it's worth considering the impulse. "I have a sudden impulse to see a movie in a theatre and get popcorn and a hotdog, but I never have such impulses (not to see a movie, let alone in a theater, not to eat popcorn, not to eat a hotdog), and it's 2-3 hours of my time and I have things X, Y, Z to do [which I'm supposing serve your bona fide happiness and are important things]." It's worth at least hanging with the impulse and getting as much pleasure as you can from it (even if you don't see the movie).

And worth considering more if the impulse keeps coming back across minutes, days, weeks, years, or decades.

1.3 Capacity growth

Orientation and pleasure grow your capacity to process information.

This processing is the activity of reason. It is reason. It is reasoning.

Reason involves automatic and volitional processes. When people refer to reasoning, they usually refer to the volitional processes. But automatic process is involved and is the primary emphasis in capacity growth.

1.3.1 “Reasoning” emphasizes volitional processing

Your reason is your faculty of identifying and integrating the information provided by your senses. And is your basic tool of survival. (Ayn Rand)

This information includes information about the world out there, the sights and sounds at the party, and information from internal sensing (introspection), your thoughts, feelings, images.

Technically, the sights and sounds, etc., are also in your conscious experience (your internal experience, your experience) and caused by how the world out there impinges on your senses. But there’s still a rationally justified, motivated, meaningful distinction. The taste of the food at the party, the music, the sights, information from your phone, watch, other people speaking, etc. is information from the world out there. “I’m so attracted to that girl. Should I approach her? I’m scared. My heart is pounding,” is information from within. “I’m feeling tired and ready to go home,” is information from within.

Both types of information, all information, integrates in living. The music and people’s talking are starting to grate on you. “I’m feeling tired and ready to go home. And my back pain is flaring up.” “I’m feeling excited and looking for connection.” You look around at people.

There’s a view in Dialectical Behavior Therapy that you have your reason mind, your emotion mind, and your wise mind—your reason, your feelings, your wisdom—and that wisdom is superior and is an integration of reason and emotion, each of which considered individually is insufficient. Your reason goes by “facts, logic, intellect,” and disregards feelings. Your emotion goes by feelings, and disregards reason. Your wisdom consults both reason and emotion and is the way to go.

This view is wrong.

Reason includes information from feelings (reason includes internal information). You’re feeling tired; your back pain is flaring up. These feelings are information for your faculty of identification and integration. “Can you give me just 5 more minutes? I want to ask this girl out,” your friend says (you’re the driver). That’s also information, along with the information from your feelings, that can be input into your identification and integration. “OK, five minutes.”

You're deciding whether to go on a second date with someone, or buy a home, or accept a job offer, or what to eat, or do the dishes now or later, etc. It's irrational, counter to reason, to ignore your feelings. It's rational to pay attention to your feelings, to input them into your reasoning.

Reason takes feelings as input (along with all other forms of information) and may go with what a feeling pushes for or not, "My gut wants to do the dishes later, not now. It's not urgent, so I'll do the dishes later." "My gut tells me the guy is guilty, but there's not enough evidence to support a verdict of guilt, so I will vote not guilty."

Being rational does not mean consciously processing everything, which is impossible and undesirable. Impossible: You automatically understand a lot of what people are saying, and a lot of ideas automatically come up when you ask yourself "Would he make a good father?" Undesirable: It benefits you tremendously to be able to automatically understand what people are saying and have ideas come up. The point of learning a foreign language, of consciously processing it at the beginning, is to get to automatic processing. And when you ask yourself, "Would he make a good father?", you want content to come up. If you're suffering from brain fog and nothing's coming up, it will be much harder to figure out if he would make a good father.

At the same time, volition is crucial. If the automatic content that comes up is all about how handsome he is and how good he is in bed, and has nothing to do with how he'd father, then volition is called for. "Hmm, that's not helpful. What's his character like?" Or: "Hmm, maybe I'll just enjoy these thoughts and not ponder right now how he'd father."

Reason includes and requires automatic processes, e.g., processes that keep you alive and information.

At the same time, when people refer to reasoning, they typically refer to volitional aspects of reasoning, e.g., volitionally asking yourself, "What is the solution to this engineering problem?" They typically do not refer to, e.g., an insight that popped up while you were taking a break and eating fish tacos while looking at the ocean. Volitionally asking yourself, "Do I want to go on a second date with him?" By contrast, people usually don't have in mind the experience of the first date, all the pleasure and displeasure intake (information intake), and automatic processing happening, including after the first date through to the present moment, as part of reasoning; even though it is.

There's value in understanding reason with primary emphasis on the volitional aspects; and value in understanding it in fuller context, as including automatic processes.

1.3.2 “Processing” emphasizes automatic processing

Orientation and pleasure grow your capacity to process information, your reason.

“Would he make a good father?” Orientation and pleasure grow your capacity to process information so you can well answer this.

An aspect of this growth is that you can take on more without feelings getting in the way, e.g., listening to your partner’s criticisms of you without feelings’ sabotaging this, being able to come out of the closet without traumatizing yourself.

Another aspect is that you’ll have more emotion that’s more pleasurable, not too intense, and more generative of useful insight, more information for your reason. E.g., as your partner criticizes you, you have reliable hunches about when to propose an idea (and you’ll have more and better ideas), when to stay silent and keep listening.

“Process” here is understood in a rational sense, and thus an achievement sense: Good processing as opposed to bad processing.

“The tarot cards say he’d be a great father; that’s all I need to know. Let’s make a baby!” This is processing in a technical sense; you’re processing information; but not in the rational-achievement sense. “I’ve observed him play with my nieces and nephews. He’s good with children.” Yes, your reason may come to false or unjustified beliefs, e.g., he ends up being a bad father. But reason is the right process, and so process in an achievement sense, as opposed to tarot cards. Just as aiming at the ball is the right process during tennis, even if you miss all the time; by contrast, throwing your racket at the audience, because your gut told you to, is not.

Processing is reasoning, emphasizing the automatic processes (but not excluding the volitional). You got back from the first date with the guy; you’re vegging out on your couch, by the fireplace, with your dog on your stomach, and letting go of attentional control and exertion. There’s still a lot of processing happening, e.g., hearing the fire, feeling the heat, feeling the pressure of your dog on your stomach, knowing he’s there, images, thoughts, and feelings passing by and associated with the first date and the guy, wondering whether to check your phone, wondering about your to-do list tomorrow, etc.

1.3.3 The whole organism processes

Consciousness, reasoning, processing is embodied. Your whole organism is involved in them. What you feel in various parts of your body, throughout your body, is information, available for your processing. You find yourself orienting to a bridge; you then feel a sensation in your torso; you pay attention to it; it potentiates a hunch about how to solve an engineering problem.

1.3.4 Capacity growth enables getting more done, more effortlessly, and pleurably: Triple win

Capacity growth enables you to do life, get more done, handle more, more easily, effortlessly, automatically, comfortably, and pleurably, e.g., work, relationships, chores, handling unpredictable crises, etc. As opposed to getting more done through effort and discomfort, increasing displeasure, tax on the organism, and increased risk of health problems and sooner, faster, and more intense deterioration.

Getting more done can include work that entails getting less done of other things, e.g., you quit your job to prioritize your mental health and give yourself time to figure out what you really want in life, emotionally heal, orient, be in pleasure. You're getting a lot less done, you're a lot less productive, in respect of your job, since you quit. But you're getting more important things done, the internal work. (Other people may not know, understand, or appreciate what you're doing and may not be supportive; the greater your capacity, the less this bothers you.)

Getting more done, and more effortlessly, and more pleurably is a triple win.

Some content on effortless processing and then on pleasurable processing:

There are three meanings of effort here. (1) Effort as volitional action, (2) Effort as volitional action that is unpleasant, (3) Tax on the organism.

Effort as volitional action; equivalently, nonautomatic action. Contrasted against automatic action. Eating requires effort. Digesting does not. Say you're learning French. As you improve, you understand more of what French speakers are saying, automatically. Less volition action is required.

Effort as a subset of volitional action: Volitional action that is unpleasant. Contrasted against automatic action and volitional action that is pleasant. "I hate eating and having to eat, but here I go because I need to." That's effort. Contrast: "I love eating lasagna." Effortless. "I hate exercise, but here I go." Effort. "I love exercising." Effortless. "I hate learning French." Effort. "I love learning French." Effortless.

Effort as tax on the organism. Technically, this means everything happening in the organism is effort, is taxing; uses resources that need to be replenished with fuel. Digesting, sweating, shivering, fighting a virus, recovering from workouts, etc. is effort. That said, effort here is intended to emphasize the generally greater tax on the organism from volitional action, especially unpleasant volition action, than from automatic action and pleasant volitional action. "I hate my job." More tax on the organism compared to loving your job. Stress, health problems.

Pleasure can greatly tax the organism. "I don't want to just chill on my couch. I want to do a beastly workout and then sing and dance and party and use intoxicants all night and into morning." At the same time, on the whole, pleasure—understood in

context of deregulation, which emphasizes healthy, wholesome, non-addictive, not too intense, non-intoxicant pleasure—reduces taxation.

You could also say greater tax from displeasure, including from automatic and volitional proximate causes; compared to pleasure, including from automatic and volitional proximate causes.

Orientation and pleasure grows your capacity to live more effortlessly. Other words for effortlessly are efficient, easy, less friction, more conveniently, smoothly. You process more, achieve more, get more benefit, automatically. E..g., you bounce back from discomfort faster and automatically. You find ways to reduce displeasure, and associated with this is tax on your organism. Doing something less unpleasantly means less stress on the organism. Less controlling, especially unpleasant controlling, less tax on the organism. More pleasant letting go of control.

Less taxation means less energy leaking and recovery. Less need to complain about things because you're less displeased.

Pleasurable processing refers to processing that is pleasurable and with an emphasis on feeling the pleasure. This is important for enjoying life and especially valuable for those who are trying to overcome a habit of focusing on achievement at the expense of pleasure.

For example, you're practicing piano, learning a piece for an upcoming recital.

You enjoy playing piano, the piece you're learning, making progress, looking forward to the recital, and imagining being appreciated. These are all pleasures.

At the same time, say you have a habit of focusing on achievement at the expense of pleasure. You practice in a way such that you miss opportunities for pleasure, and that you increase unpleasant stress, agitation, fear, frustration, efforting, will power, discomfort.

Some of that may be necessary, but as you grow capacity, you grow capacity for pleasurable processing, paying attention to pleasure, and as a result of this, achieving more, more quickly and efficiently.

You could also refer to effortless processing, as just discussed. A distinctive value of pleasurable processing is the focus on pleasurable excitation and on enjoying life; whereas "effortless" emphasizes more achievement and pleasurable relaxation as opposed to excitation.

Pleasurable processing also helps you stay aligned with the pursuit of happiness. You change, values change, goals change, and pleasurable processing promotes more efficient changing.

You could also say "pleasure" instead of "pleasurable processing," but here the context emphasizes the importance also of processing, the doing of life activity.

Part 2. Deregulation

Deregulation is orientation and pleasure, with an emphasis on the pleasant letting go of control quality of orientation and pleasure, and movement in its direction. Hence the word “deregulation”; dropping regulations, letting go of control. You could say “Deregulation is letting go of control,” where that refers to orientation and pleasure, with an emphasis on their pleasant letting go of control quality.

Deregulation also and secondarily refers to market deregulation, to a free market, to laissez-faire capitalism, and movement in its direction (deregulating). I analogize nervous system deregulation, NSD, (deregulation in the first and primary sense, viz., orientation and pleasure) with market regulation. Each helps understanding and appreciation of the other.

Deregulation, both of the market and your nervous system, has a spirit of laissez-faire. Let go of control, let things happen freely, hands off, stop controlling things, stop trying to control people and yourself.

2.1 What deregulation is

2.1.1 Of the market

Deregulation is freedom.

“Freedom” refers to the correct, political sense of the concept: Being free from the initiation of physical force by other people against your person or property.

Freedom is a condition in which the individual’s right to live by the judgment of his own mind is recognized and protected by the government, which protects every individual’s right to live as he chooses so long as he does not initiate the use of physical force against other people or their property. Initiation of force refers to starting the use of force and is different from retaliatory force, force used in retaliation against initiation. Rape is initiation of physical force; defending oneself against one’s rapist, including killing him, is retaliatory force.

Being raped violates your freedom. A government that allows people to rape you violates your freedom.

Someone stealing your organs or phone violates your freedom. A government that allows that violates your freedom.

Some claim a distinction between “economic” and “non-economic” actions. Producing, selling, and buying goods and services, they say, are economic actions. Practicing a religion, playing games with friends, going to a party, enjoying friendship, romantic relationships, and family, having (non-commercial) sex, they say, are non-economic actions.

Deregulation protects both “economic” and “non-economic” relationships with others. Forbidding the buying and selling of apples violates freedom. Forbidding gay sex violates freedom.

“Market deregulation” calls to mind “economic” actions, but includes protection of “non-economic” actions.

Deregulation refers both to your freedom being protected (to whatever degree a government protects it) and to movement in the direction of freedom. It includes freedom fighting, e.g., defending your country which protects freedom to a substantial degree against an aggressor who seeks to enslave you, protesting laws that violate freedom, abolition of a law that violates freedom.

Regulation includes any law that violates freedom. “You may not buy and sell apples.” “You may not have gay sex.”

2.1.2 Of your biology

Deregulation is letting go of control, where this refers to orientation and pleasure, emphasizing their pleasant letting go of control quality.

The quality of pleasant letting go of control

This quality refers to the control of attention feeling less taxing, efforted, will powered, unpleasant, uncomfortable, burdensome, draining, etc., thanks to more stability in orientation and pleasure. For example, less need for self-control. You’re having a fight with someone. It takes less self-control to keep your cool, not say or do something you’ll regret. Less self-control because you’re more stable in orientation and pleasure; much easier to do whatever you want to do, e.g., stay silent, excuse yourself, go for a walk, say something firmly but politely, etc.

Say you go for a walk. Orientation is happening automatically; doesn’t require self-control; and is neutral to pleasant. Pleasure from the warm breeze and from sights and sounds happens automatically; doesn’t require self-control

It refers to less need to control attention to pursue and enjoy happiness because more orientation and pleasure is already happening automatically; it doesn’t require control of attention to secure.

Another perspective on the prior point is that you can control your attention to promote pleasure, joy, and happiness, from a place already of feeling well; so that the controlling feels less taxing, as per the point above.

Moments of orientation and pleasure, of any duration, are moments of pleasant letting go of control. They’re tastes of feeling less need to do, to control attention, to secure feeling better or a value.

“Letting go of control” is figurative

Letting go of control is figurative; the result is more control.

You want to win someone’s affections, and to do so you’re initiating a lot of contact with her and inviting her to things and following up very shortly after a date to talk, bond, and plan the next date, etc. And she’s getting more distant; and the more distant she gets, the more you’re taking the prior sorts of actions, e.g., messaging her, inviting her to things.

“Dude, back off, give her some space, give her some breathing room. Stop trying to control her or the situation. That will increase your odds of winning her over.”

You back off and after some time she messages you, asking for a date.

Backing off was the better thing to do for your rational self-interest and falls under “taking control” in a literal sense. You’re choosing to back off and leave her alone rather than initiate more contact.

It’s letting go of control in a figurative sense. You’re backing away from actions that are associated with taking control, trying to control things, etc.

Deregulation involves controlling to promote orientation and pleasure

At the same time, deregulation includes controlling—referring to taking control, managing, effort, will power, exertion, executive control, activation of attention, focus, mind, behavior, action, commitment, discipline, stick-to-it-ness, etc.—for the sake of promoting orientation and pleasure.

Deregulation is not against control, as understood above. It is for control, in the context of promoting orientation and pleasure. Likewise, market deregulation is not against using force against others. It is for force, in retaliation and to protect freedom.

Deregulating doesn’t mean you’re in orientation and pleasure; you may be uncomfortable, suffering, and have to use a lot of effort, controlling, will power, just to survive. That still counts as deregulating if and because your goal is to move towards orientation and pleasure. E.g., You want to return to your abusive ex, you know it’s not in your self-interest, it will harm you. You use a ton of effort, control, will power to resist, and as best you can occupy your time with something as pleasant or least unpleasant as possible, and as orienting as possible. To promote laissez-faire, the individual acts, which can involve effort, control, will power, and the like.

Likewise, fighting for market deregulation doesn’t mean you’re free. You may be enslaved.

If there’s orientation and pleasure you could notice and lean into, but you choose to do something that distances you from it, e.g., problem solving, exercising, that’s regulation. (If the problem solving or exercising amplifies orientation and pleasure, that’s deregulation.) Regulation is action on the model of control, as opposed to the model of orientation and pleasure (with control as necessary to protect orientation and pleasure).

Doing X, e.g., problem solving, as regulation is different from doing it as deregulation. The action itself is not even the same. The deregulator will lean into any available orientation and pleasure, whereas the regulator won't.

Likewise, shooting and killing people as part of fighting for freedom is different from shooting and killing people as part of fighting for slavery. The action itself is not even the same. "Both sides are killing each other." Sure, but fundamentally, one side is fighting for freedom and the other for slavery.

2.2 The calculation problem for regulation

2.2.1 Of the market

To help people afford healthcare., a regulator proposes price controls on healthcare services. (Random selection from a zillion possible regulations And this example itself consists of a zillion regulations..)

A fundamental problem with regulation is that you can't rationally calculate what regulations to enact, because you don't have information from (true) prices. (You can look up the calculation problem, popularized by Ludwig von Mises.)

In a free market, you have prices, which are the result of voluntary interaction. Who (if anyone) is willing to offer what goods and services and at what price (range)? Who (if anyone) is willing to pay what price (range) for what goods and services? That determines whether the price of treatment X is generally in the Y range or Z range. Prices are crucial information for calculating action. E.g., prices for treatment X are rising. That's a signal: People will pay a lot for treatment X, e.g., 5K, incentivizing entrepreneurs to offer treatment X, which lowers the price.

Suppose regulator sets a price ceiling on treatment X of 2K (or whatever). This is completely arbitrary and not a price. You'll get fewer people offering treatment X and because you don't have a price, entrepreneurs won't have information that people will pay highly for treatment X, which incentivizes people to offer treatment X, making it more available and at a lower price.

Regulation harms.

2.2.2 Of your biology

To feel better, you do CBT. (Random selection from a zillion possible regulation strategies. And this example itself consists of a zillion strategies.)

A fundamental problem with regulation is that you can't rationally calculate what regulations to enact, because you don't have information from orientation and pleasure (because your attention operates on the regulation model).

On the deregulation model, you're paying attention to orientation and pleasure. If orientation and pleasure potentiate a sudden thought, e.g., "OK, my getting fired is a

growth opportunity,” cool, good; just as if prices potentiate more people offering treatment X.

But if you’re doing a “OK, my getting fired is a growth opportunity” mantra in a way such that you’re missing information from orientation and pleasure and suppressing it (through the effort and discomfort involved in doing the regulation), that’s arbitrary; just as price controls are arbitrary.

Regulation harms.

2.3 Regulation begets regulation

2.3.1 Of the market

A fundamental problem with regulation is that it begets more regulation. Regulations harm, and regulators address this with more regulation, which causes more harm, which they address with more regulation, which causes more harm, etc.

Regulator places a price ceiling on rent.

Now there’s a housing shortage, more homelessness, and the housing that is available is less maintained, e.g., roaches everywhere.

Regulator does more regulation, e.g., tax/print money for public housing, homeless shelters, regulate housing quality.

Rich people buy fewer yachts, putting yacht businesses out of business, resulting in job loss for many poor people; businesses and residents who don’t like living near public housing move away, resulting in fewer goods and services and less pleasant environment for people in the city; regulations on housing quality worsen the shortage.

Regulator does more regulation, e.g., taxes/prints money to give to the poor and as housing subsidies.

Inflation skyrockets; people can’t afford gas.

Regulator taxes/prints money to offer gas subsidies.

And so on. Regulation begets regulation; harm begets harm.

2.3.2 Of your biology

A fundamental problem with regulation is that it begets more regulation. Regulations harm, and regulators address this with more regulation, which causes more harm, which they address with more regulation, which causes more harm, etc.

Regulator, fired from his job and depressed, wants to play video games and eat ice cream, which will make him feel better. He uses effort to resist pleasure, and instead to do CBT (with a therapist, friend, or do-it-yourself, possibly with AI help; I’ll call the help the aide).

He doesn’t want to start regulation; it’s unpleasant.

“What are your fears? What’s behind the resistance?” asks aide. (Aide addresses regulator’s not wanting to do regulation, with regulation; adding demand on regulator to answer questions.)

“Uh...,” says regulator, feeling more unpleasant. (The demand to regulate caused harm.)

“Maybe we can support your ability to answer my questions if we first start with feeling your feet on the floor and your back against the chair and feeling what you feel in your body. Let’s start with those three things,” says aide. (Aide addresses the further harm with more regulation; adding demand on regulator to do those things.)

“I feel tightness in my stomach,” says regulator, feeling more unpleasant. (More harm.)

“Tightness in your stomach. Let’s feel that; the way through is through,” says aide. (More regulation; more harm.)

“It’s really unpleasant. Now I’m having the thought that I’m worthless.” (He’s feeling more unpleasant; more harm.)

“Ah, we’ve reached a core belief. Let’s examine that belief. Is it true?” asks aide. (More regulation.)

Regulator feels more unpleasant, uncomfortable, knowing aide secretly wants an answer of “No” but feeling the answer is “Yes,” which creates even more unpleasantness. Regulator looks elsewhere.

“Where did you go? Let’s do the work. Make eye contact with me,” says aide. (More demand for regulation; more harm.)

And so on. Regulation begets regulation; harm begets harm.

2.4 Regulation perpetuates boom and bust cycle

2.4.1 Of the market

A free market sustains economic expansion; sustains an economic boom.

A feature of sustained expansion is that prices of goods cannot suddenly skyrocket due to government money printing.

By contrast, sustained expansion is sabotaged, and replaced with cycling of boom and bust, of expansion and contraction, if government prints money. Government prints money -> banks get more money -> banks lower interest rates -> entrepreneurs incentivized to take out loans to engage in long-term, complex production, employment up -> economy feels prosperous (boom, expansion). But prices of goods that businesses need for production skyrocket (printing money does not magically create steel, etc.), businesses shut down, massive lay offs (bust, contraction).

Free market = eating protein. Money printing = sugar/caffeine/drug rush and then crash.

2.4.2 Of your biology

Deregulation sustains nervous system expansion, i.e., orientation and pleasure grow capacity.

By contrast, regulating yourself to produce action perpetuates a boom and bust cycle. E.g., using effort to think positive, cognitively reframe, activate behavior, ask the girl out, work harder, etc., face, feel, and tolerate discomfort, and then crashing into shame, negative thoughts, burnout, no energy, hope, will power; and then again effort to do all those things, and then crashing again. Rinse and repeat.

Deregulation = sustained boom. Regulation = boom and bust.

2.5 Auto-organization

2.5.1 Of the market

“Auto-organization,” a term drawn from Organic Intelligence, here refers to what’s variously called in economics “spontaneous organization,” “unplanned organization,” “spontaneous order,” “unplanned order.”

Auto-organization refers to growth happening through processes that are possible because of not regulating.

E.g., the government has been regulating an area of land, mandating it be left as the desert it is. It decides to deregulate. A few years later, you find a thriving metropolis. Person A came in and built a casino. B a museum. C an Italian restaurant. D a hotel. Etc. Each of these itself came about through auto-organization process. Z got an order for steel which he supplied; which would eventually be used to build the restaurant. Etc.

2.5.2 Of your biology

Auto-organization, in Organic Intelligence, refers to your capacity growing through orientation and pleasure.

Regulation prevents auto-organization. E.g., two hours of exercise a day, five cups of coffee, two glasses of wine, one hour of Yoga, one hour of meditation, one hour of cognitive reframing, box breathing all day to manage your states, distancing you from orientation and pleasure that could have emerged, distancing you from capacity growth, keeping your capacity the same. Like mandating the desert be left as it is.

Deregulating enables auto-organization. “I’m going to pay more attention to orientation and pleasure as I do my whatever.” A year later: “So this is what it’s like to feel good without having to effort, and to have capacity to do X (work, read a novel, socialize, etc.) more effortlessly, pleurably, and while able to process more.” Desert to metropolis.

2.6 Growth is roundabout

2.6.1 Of the market

A path that is roundabout is one that is indirect. E.g., instead of walking straight to the avocado, I (for some reason) am going to zig zag about, maybe circle around the avocado several times, even walk further away and then closer and then further away and then eventually get to the avocado.

In the context of economic growth, by a roundabout path, I mean (inspired from Böhm-Bawerk), a path that is insanely more productive because of its roundaboutness.

Direct path: I walk straight to the avocado, grab it, and sell it.

Roundabout path: I create technology that enables me to farm and sell zillions of avocados.

The roundabout path is insanely more beneficial.

2.6.2 Of your biology

In the context of growing in the more personal sense, roundabout refers to the path being one of orientation and pleasure, which can differ from a path of directly going after what you want.

Direct path: You message the girl you like, asking her on a date, even though it's scary.

Roundabout path: You build capacity through orientation and pleasure and then ask her out pleasurably.

The roundabout path is insanely more beneficial because of the capacity growth.