

We Do Not Think, We Process: A Radical Shift in Self-Understanding

By Ted Ernest Norton

I am introducing a new-to-you way of Self-understanding. It is simple and radical.

Before explaining, how did this awareness come to me?

In a world where traditional thoughts often complicate the mind, I embarked on a journey of Self-discovery that was radical in its simplicity.

My path was different in that I lived as five Believers.

Raised in theology, I sought answers through various belief systems. I lived as a Christian, a Buddha, a Philosopher, a New-Ager, and a Shaman. Each experience added a layer to my self-understanding, yet none provided the complete answer to the question, **“Who am I?”**

With a degree in psychology and a fascination with philosophy, I sought my Self. *I became my homo sapient stimulated animal, running a process, and responding.* Versus a ‘BEing’, creating or willing my thoughts.

Tragedies and trophies marked my journey. Each has explained the diversity of experiences to me.

I learned that Self-discovery is a continuous process, driven by the stimuli that surround us and the engagements we have with them.

This way of thinking can be learned, taught, and applied.

Now, the Radical yet Simple way to *Think about Thoughts*.

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I am challenging the fundamental assumption we hold about ourselves: the idea that we, as individuals, ‘think’. This is a misconception. You will see why.

We do not think, we process stimuli that get conjured into thoughts. Let us break down this radical yet simple structure.

It begins with Unaware to Aware of the stimulus.

The first step in this ‘thought processing’ is **not** the generation of a *grand idea*. It is basic. We simply become aware of a stimulus.

An example, *we do not create the sound of a car horn; we simply become aware of it*. This might seem obvious, yet *it is crucial*.

We do not have a precognitive awareness of experience. *We do live in the moment of stimulation.*

The next step is Naming and Defining.

Once aware, we engage in the Process of **naming and defining**. This involves drawing connections to past experiences and the present. *They are a mental filing system of sensations, not memories*. Related sensations are conjured into stories, *sometimes hallucinations, sometimes brilliance*, the same as AI.

The Process conjures stories based on similar stimulus timestamps, creating a framework for understanding. This framework, this ‘naming and defining,’ is what we often **mistake for our independent thinking**.

After it arrives, we **‘think’** the name and definition. Using an example, *that was a car horn, not my child practicing the trumpet*.

Completing the Process: One Stimulus with Three Engagements.

Finally, we **engage the ‘thought.’** This engagement happens on three levels:

- **First - self:** We hear our ‘thoughts’ internally.

“Is this car horn a warning for me?”

(I’m going to add the time element, let’s say this takes one-half second.)

- **Second – My Circle:** We discuss it with close friends and family *refining our understanding* through these interactions.

“Hey, why is that car honking?” “Yes, they seem mad!”

(Let’s say this interaction was two seconds.)

- **Third - Social Context:** The final level of engagement involves broader social conversations. Our *belief systems, social media viewings*, and *cultural norms* **all influence how we refine our ‘thoughts.’**

“I have seen videos about road rage honking.”

(Let’s say this was one second.)

My summarized Process: *“This road rage honking is directed at another car. I need to avoid them.”*

This was three and a half seconds of conjuring, resulting in a single ‘thought’.

The Illusion of Individual Thinking is that this *thought was created*.

It is Processed!

The key takeaway is that a single stimulus triggers a process of multiple dimensions. Stimuli beget the Process of conjuring the Thought of “I AM”.

The misconception lies in attributing this three-step process and three engagements into a single disassociated independent ‘thinking self.’

We do not create thinking; we are DNA and the Process in a dynamic interplay of stimuli and engagements, in time, evolving.

The fundamental shift in understanding ourselves is to frame it this way.

“We are not isolated minds that ‘think’, rather, we are complex interconnected organisms processing a vibrant world of stimuli into thoughts. Each thought is labeled as our own.”

It is a humbling realization. It is a liberating one. I am an animal, reacting.

This opens doors to a deeper understanding of ourselves and the interconnectedness of our experiences. We stimulate each other!

Radical and Simple produce understanding. It is hard work, daily work, and never-ending work.

When I ‘*get it*’, **Peace of Mind** is experienced.

Additional Information

1. **Definitions:** 'Everything' differs from 'Every Thing.'
Everything is collective. Every Thing is individual.
2. **Building Block Elements** are Sound, energy, and gravity. They exist in infinitely varying units and combinations.
Sound is waves. Energy is power. Gravity is a binding force.
3. **Now is** Every Thing; not separated, not named, and not defined.
4. **Not-Now is** building blocks separated from Now and forming 'things.'
5. **Time is** a state of 'not-now', without a beginning or end except for the 'things' in space.
6. **Light** is emitted when building blocks form a Thing.
7. **'Outside',** *of our senses*, is a statistical probability.
8. **Self and self are** conjured, exist in a process, then believed.
9. **Creation** is 'new' to the individual. An object is formed through a process of stimulus and response, adding or subtracting building blocks in time. For example, writing begins with a stimulus, and writer's block is without a stimulus. 'Ideas' are stimulated, arriving as a 'thought' in 0.333 seconds, named, and then refined in processing.
10. **Will Power** is a conjured thought, believed.
To 'will' would be pre-stimulus, pre-cognitive, and illogical.
11. **The Big Bang** is a Thing. It describes a phenomenon where the fundamental building block elements of 'now' formed a Thing in 'not-now. We 'Named and Defined' this event. Not-now preceded the bang.
12. **Now does not empty. Not-Now does not fill.**

13. **What Are Black Holes and Dark Energy?** They are units of gravity and energy that have separated from 'now' and are not yet combined with sound to form a 'thing'.
14. **Objects** are 'things' known by their form. They are defined and related versus sentient. Objects are 'Things.' People are 'Things.' All Things respond to stimuli. No Thing is sentient nor independent.
15. **Every Thing** is formed from building blocks of sound and energy bound by gravity. 'Thing' is defined as an Object.
16. **Our 'Thing' called a Human** processed a stimulus, named and defined it as 'consciousness', and then 'believed' it. We are not sentient. We are 0.333 seconds behind the stimulus in receiving the 'thought.'
17. **"I" is generational**, from and to. Minimally from the egg inside grandma, through to your grandkids, we are stimulus-response affected and evolved DNA.
18. **Explaining Artificial Intelligence:** AI operates through a large database and processes related then relational data to assemble answers based on statistical probabilities. Same as a 'thought.'
19. **Explaining a Thought:** Thoughts are formed through a large database of stimuli and then processing of related then relational stimuli (not memories). They are conjured into a story. This process is perceived as 'thinking' as if it were independent. Same as AI 'thinking.'
20. **AI and Thinking:** Both AI and Thinking are based on statistical probabilities of related then relational data. They have the potential for hallucinations and brilliance yet most are predictably common.