The Battle Within US

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To the extent of my knowledge, I am not schizophrenic.

That being said...I am all too aware of the continuous battle in my head between good and evil.

In fact, it’s not just me, this is a battle going on in all of our heads, the battle between instinct and righteousness.

There are two parts of our brains: There’s Kyle, who is a major douchebag, and there’s RY (Righteous You), who seeks truth and purpose.

Life is a constant battle between Kyle and RY.

Let's Take a Look at Kyle

Kyle is Human OS 1.0. The original software program humans have been running off of since the dawn of The Hominid. An incredible program initially, but as outdated as a Command Line Interface.

To get a better grasp of what exactly Kyle is, we have to take a bit of a dive into human evolution. Let’s start with a gene.

A Very Brief History Of Man Because I Am Not A Scientist

A gene is a small section of DNA that contains instructions for a specific molecule, usually a protein. The purpose of genes is to carry out their instructions and continue existing. You can think of a gene as a data particle encoded with one task: survive.

The first single-cell organism appeared on Earth about 3.5 billion years ago, about a billion years after Earth formed. The first gene-delivery-vehicle (GDV).

Not until about 600 million years ago did genes find that teaming up and working together gave them a better shot of carrying on their existence, and each cell had to do less work to keep on keepin’ on. This was the birth of the first multi celled organism.

Each time they formed together though, they forfeited a bit of individuality in return for a greater overall being. If a cell in a multicellular organism decided that it was sick of the team, it could just up and leave, which would cause some problems for the greater organism.

Think of it like a colony of ants. A colony of ants is the meta being, and each individual ant is a cell in the colony. This works so well because the only cell in the colony able to reproduce is the queen ant, so the other ant-cells will do whatever they can to protect the queen and keep the colony existing. If one of the ant-cells developed the ability to reproduce, it would have no need to stick around with the greater organism that is the colony because it would become independent and could start its own colony.

So each time cells decide it's time to team up and make a bigger organism able to last longer and thrive, they sacrifice their individuality for the greater good of the purpose of the genes, to keep existing. But each time they teamed up, they made a stronger, more durable vehicle to carry the genes.

About 4.4 million years ago, while genes kept making better vehicles, they had branched into a multitude of GDV, or species. Namely, Ardipithecus Ramidus,an early species of Homina with the ability to walk on two legs and thrive in the trees.

Sorry about this drawing...

While genes were creating A. Ramidus, they were also creating Kyle. Kyle is all primitive instinct to keep the vehicle alive and winning as much as possible. Kyle is mainly responsible for the 4 F’s: Fighting/Fleeing, Feeding, and Fucking. Kyle posted up in the early human brain with his switchboard. He could toggle up or down a number of feelings to ensure that his vehicle stayed safe, fed, and would reproduce.

Whenever there was danger in the air, Kyle would toggle up some adrenaline so his vehicle could either fight or flee.

When his vehicle was running low on fuel, Kyle would turn up the hunger so regardless of how low energy the vehicle was, it would get up and go grab food.

But above all else, whenever love was in the air, Kyle put the Horniness switch to 11 so his vehicle could get it on and hopefully produce a new, fresh vehicle to keep carrying the DNA.

Now Kyle's job in the parent vehicle was to protect that new vehicle at all costs, even at the expense of the old vehicle.

Kyle was the man for a while. Without Kyle, we wouldn’t be here today.

During this time humans were one track minded. Their only focus was survival. Fighting, feeding, and fucking to keep their genes moving on.

But Kyle is the command line. There was a time when there was a command line interface, but times change. Kyle was still necessary for the program to run, but there was an apple user interface in town.

Somewhere between 400,000 and 800,000 years ago, our common ancestor with neanderthals diverged into the first sapien. While neanderthals were fit enough to take on their predators and prey hand-to-hand, they never had a reason to develop range weapons. With a spark of innovation and larger social circles, RY implanted itself in the sapien and wrote the “Hello, World!” of Human OS 2.0.

Sapiens outlasted their Neanderthal cousins with a smaller build and critical skills such as archery, agriculture, and sailing.

With the capacity to innovate, it was a relatively short time from the first tool until we were able to verbally communicate our thoughts and document our knowledge, called the theory of mind.

Between 150,000 and 50,000 years ago something critical happened. Humans developed the ability to verbally communicate. This is where RY, the higher consciousness of the human, began to thrive. Humans took a bounding leap above their animal co-players when they were able to express thoughts, document knowledge, and begin innovating at an exponential rate.

Another critical attribute was the ability to imagine. No other living being on earth can comprehend that other living beings also have their own consciousness. No other living being can think of something that does not yet exist.

The ability to imagine paired with the power of communication and documentation of knowledge already learned allowed humans to skyrocket into the stratosphere, making exponential leaps and bounds over their once competition on earth.

With this drastic shift in intelligence came a drastic shift in technology. Humans mastered agriculture, archery, and sailing which meant food was readily available, partners were abundant, and predators were not as big of a problem.

Primitive instincts like fighting, feeding and fucking were still essential for survival but the intensity at which they controlled life didn’t need to be as much since all they sought to achieve became more readily available.

As times got less hard to survive, humans had more time to think, communicate, and create. During this time of uprising, a consciousness higher than the primitive one began to develop. This is RY.

RY was everything that Kyle wasn’t, and even though Kyle’s job remained essential for life, the intensity of it scaled down the more RY was able to butt in. With food becoming more readily available, partners around more often, and less predators to fend off, Kyle’s job got increasingly easier.

RY is the part of your mind that asks questions, that loves, that does things for other people because they are conscious beings too.

If RY was able to run the mind full time, humans would be enlightened, loving, and brilliant creatures.

This is not the case though, Kyle is still in there with little-to-no regulation on its needs.

We became prisoners to our unconscious instinct to survive, reproduce, and sustain existence. Slaves to our genes, that have been building vehicles as means of survival since the first unicellular organisms. We are no different.

We exist to serve our genes. As long as the belief that the purpose of life is happiness or anything other than survival, reproduction, and existence, there will be existential anguish when happiness can’t be found.

All living beings are vehicles for genes with the same person but when our genes invest in intelligence instead of adding on physical attributes, the evolution of consciousness took us to a place unknown for the 13.7 billion years before humans existed.

Life becomes a constant battle between the higher and lower consciousness.

When you can see past the now, think about a bigger picture, work for a bigger cause, seek truth, and do the right thing, that is your higher mind doing the thinking.

An insatiable desire to eat unhealthy foods is caused because your primitive mind is used to foods that taste really good being high in energy, therefore stocking up is the primitively smart thing to do.

A short temper to argue, fight, or cower away from a situation you should instead face is your primitive mind feeling threatened and turning up adrenaline for fight or flight.

Adultery is only a modern problem, it’s humans' primitive mind trying to reproduce as much as possible.

The fight for power in politics and religion is the primitive mind trying to keep its tribe alive and thriving.

The “seven deadly sins” are all duties of the primitive mind. It’s just doing its job, you can’t blame it. And from an evolutionary standpoint, these instincts are going to be around for a while. It took millions of years to develop these instincts that kept us alive and got us here, it’s going to take a long time of not needing them to go away.

The best way to combat it is being aware. Trying to use your higher mind to push through the blurry, noisy static that is your mind when Kyle has the reigns.

RY and Kyle don’t take binary shifts at the wheel though, they work hand and hand on a spectrum. When one is in charge and making more decisions, the other one is more restrained.

The Consciousness Spectrum

At the lowest level of the spectrum we have Kyle making all of the decisions with RY on a short leash. Kyle is fulfilling primal desires with no boundaries set. Food? Eat it. Attraction? Pursue it. Angry? Do something about it. When Kyle is in charge there is no patience, no time to think further than right now. Kyle loves instant gratification. A hit of dopamine is all he is after and with the privileged world we live in, it's not hard to find. He is a fiend for instant gratification, this is why sometimes you can’t stop yourself from scrolling through your phone on twitter or instagram. Each scroll is a chance for a little dopamine hit, and every time it hits it keeps you there. When dopamine is this easy to come by, it becomes not worth it to do anything that takes less effort and provides any less dopamine, even tasks that may add up to a huge dopamine payoff i.e. finishing writing an article trying to explain why we love instant gratification.

As we rise up The Consciousness Spectrum, RY is able to take charge and put Kyle on a leash, controlling primal desires above the base level necessities. Have you ever had a runners high or been so focused on a project that you don’t even want to do anything else? You are able to see past the now and realize what you are doing will have a bigger payoff and improve you in the long run.

This is kind of along the lines of Plato’s Tripartite Soul. He believed that there were three parts of the human soul: The Rational (Logical), Spirited (Emotional), and Appetitive (Physical Desires).

From my research I have understood the Tripartite as: The Rational part of the soul was the conscious awareness, the truth-seeking, objective third. It analyzes, weighs options, thinks for the greater good and bases decisions on truth. The Spirited part is best represented by ego, it angers over injustice, steps up to challenges and is courageous in the face of danger, it loves winning. The Appetitive part is the black sheep of the three. It desires instant gratification, material possessions, comfort, and carnal satisfaction and will conflict amongst its pursuits.

This makes a lot of sense at first glance, you should be making rational decisions as much as possible, and at this rate you would probably be looking a lot like Bradley Cooper in Limitless. Without emotion, though, you would never take risks with a chance of great success, there would be no competitive nature in life. And without the Appetitive soul, you wouldn’t have sex other than to reproduce, wouldn’t enjoy food, and probably wouldn’t have many crazy stories to tell about adventures you went on because it didn’t fit along the lines of your rational mind.

That being said, being able to live completely through your Rational Lens would probably get you very successful, very fast… but without the Emotional Lens you’d have no one to enjoy it with and without the Appetitive Lens you probably wouldn’t find any enjoyment in it.

The difference between the Tripartite Soul and the Consciousness Spectrum is that in the Consciousness Spectrum the both the Rational Soul and the Spirited Soul lay in the Righteous You. They keep each other in balance, the logical decisions of the Rational Soul are made with empathy and love, the courageous and valorous decisions of the Spirited Soul are made rationally. The Appetitive Soul lies in Kyle.

Both RY and Kyle are necessary. Without Kyle there would be no urge to eat, no desire to reproduce, and no hormonal trigger to react to danger. Without RY, we would still be living as animals whose only purpose is to eat, reproduce, and dodge danger.

The problem we see now with Kyle, though, is that he knows no boundaries when left in charge. In the wild with no structured society, given the chance, Kyle will take full advantage of any resource that he can get. As much food as he can take in to store as energy in case he is not able to feed again for a while. The highest calorie foods because they have the most energy. Since it has been an evolutionary very short amount of time since humans have developed a higher consciousness and mastered agriculture so food is readily available, the mind hasn’t had enough time to adapt to the surplus we know now, and is still in a scarcity mindset.

Since we have developed a consciousness able to imagine, empathize, and communicate, though, logic is able to tell us that we don’t need to stock up on food because it’s going to be there when we need to.

This is where the Spectrum comes in, at the bottom when Kyle is in control, he will do whatever necessary to fulfill primal needs. As we climb up the spectrum and RY gets more of a grip, he’s able to keep Kyle on a short leash and only give him what’s necessary. At the highest level of the spectrum Kyle only gets what is necessary and RY is able to control the mind, making sensible decisions that will benefit you and whatever causes you support.

Obviously, the human mind and the way we live life is a lot more physiologically complex than two fictional characters pulling strings in your head but I do believe looking at yourself through an introspective lens can be telling and productive.

In this article we have taken a look into our minds and tried to figure out what the hell is going on inside there and why we make the decisions we do.

I always like to remember that the goal of the philosopher is not to win, but to find truth. I welcome all comments, critiques, and questions!

In the next article we'll take a dive into how we can best control Kyle and make sure that RY is in charge as much as possible.

Thanks for reading, and remember… Question Everything!