

NeuroSimplicity

What to Do with Our Flooded Minds in a Culture of PTSD, Narcissism and Gaslighting

By Charles D. Miller V

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The Long Nightmare

Acknowledgements

Words alone cannot express the feeling of usefulness I find in my community of knowledge. Floundering in my uncertainty and unawareness, reflective mediums have helped me find my own answers to the deepest questions I didn't know I was asking.

In the beginning of waking up from my long nightmare, there was Pete Walker and his consistently useful books: *Complex PTSD* and *The Tao of Fully Feeling*.

In the middle, when I saw no way up – and life was to be a descent into perpetual suffering – *The Courage to be Disliked* and *The Courage to be Happy*, both by Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga, helped me see a path forward.

And as I'm reaching the end of my long nightmare, Devon Price and his book on *Unmasking Autism* and *Unmasking for Life*, simultaneously brought me clarity and forged prior philosophicals into tangibles.

And through it all were the people who heard my voice and saw my self – in my search for answers – diving deeper and deeper...

“A prayer cannot be born out of those who know nothing but joy. Oh, child of suffering, cursing life itself... Certainly there is something only you can do.” —Akihito Tsukushi, Made in Abyss¹

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to all children; small and large, young and old. To the ones who are fibrous, fleshy, furry, scaley, or chitinous. To the valued and devalued. To those loved and those discarded. To the ones that move and the ones that are still. To the visible and invisible, may you all be heard and seen.

Induction

Etiology or Teleology?

I want you to understand that this book serves as a metaphor to simplify the complex... until we reach our destination. Until then, please keep that in mind going forward. I will let you know when we've left metaphor-land, so no worries there. Paraphrases and quotes from people and sources in this book are grounded, but to get where we're going, we gotta hop in the metaphorical brain-plane and fly somewhere that seems a bit far away. That being said...

The sharp contradiction between etiology and teleology, as explained in *The Courage to Be Disliked*,² is something I continue to think about a lot. So much so that I needed to put my thoughts in a book. Metaphorically speaking, the contradiction between etiology and teleology poured over my senses like an unexpected ice-bath in the middle of a deep sleep – more of a deep nightmare really – especially after having read *Complex PTSD*³ and *The Tao of Fully Feeling*⁴ at the time. I freaked out when I discovered these two words. You might too. Since a baseline understanding of causes and goals is foundational for this book, here's a neat table to explain what etiology and teleology are. Tell me if you feel anything weird after seeing these:

Etiology

- Stuff in etiology refers to things having a “cause” or “responsibility.”
- The study of causes or origins.⁵

Teleology

- Stuff in teleology refers to things having a “goal” for a “result.”
- The study of goals or ends.⁶

Do you see that it's quite tricky to decide which of these to use as a lens to see the world? Are there only causes? Are there only goals? Disorienting, really. So, I had to take a step back and think. To literally think about thinking. Funny right? But seriously, where does sensing, thinking, feeling, and doing happen? Forget the confusion of being caught between causes and goals for a moment. The answer is simple: the brain. My brain. Your brain. Their brain. Our Brains. That's

where all of the stuff™ happens. But where does outside stuff enter our brain to be processed? The body! The body is the place where inputs happen!

Etymology and teleology are sort of the beginning and end points of all internal experiences we have. In a metaphorically similar way, the body receives the input (origin) and the brain pushes the output (end). They're sort of like *opposing poles* on a magnet. One pushes something to the other, which is pushed back, so on and so forth. To really be free in life, an awareness of how we're being *pushed* around is needed, so we can *push back* if we feel the need or desire to do so. To elaborate, beginning and end sort of converge into a single point: BETWEEN brain and body. Zooming in, where does this convergence happen? At *neurons*. Beginning and end always converge on the present moment, just as body and brain converge on the neuron. Just as there is no present without beginning and end, there is no self without body and brain. Simplistically speaking, no one can really *feel* or *be* present if they aren't first aware of their beginnings and their ends – their causes and goals.

Luckily, there's this guy named Peter Putnam who made this *Outline of a Functional Model of the Nervous System* in 1963. There's also Andrew Huberman, but we'll get to him later. What a dashing lad... Anyway, this paper from 1963 was a very dense academic experience for sure. Putnam basically says that the brain is sort of a bunch of correlated neurons, collectively seeking a kind of stability. I think what Putnam was saying is that there's something that causes, or starts, this correlational stability seeking. This stability seeking is something that happens in the brain circuits as responses to a choice of inputs, or causes.⁷

To simplify, I interpret this to mean that our capacity to form goals is reliant on our awareness of causes. This doesn't really seem fair though. If someone has a larger lens of awareness of causes, doesn't that mean they have the liberty to have *more goals*? This creates a problem for us: how can we be aware of causes we're not aware of? The answer lies in re-correlating our brains to see more options, so that we can *do* more options.

The phenomena where the brain correlates... just... correlates... to seek stability⁷ – and thus adapting – is called neuroplasticity.⁸ Andrew Huberman is an absolute legend at explaining this in [Essentials: How Your Brain Works & Changes - Huberman Lab](#). It's a great video, please check it out if you'd like to hear it from the mythic man himself. Bro told me that neuroplasticity is actually gated by temporary agitation⁸ – literal annoyance. Additionally, neuroplasticity is also gated by these cool little things called neuromodulators.⁸ Neuromodulators – and annoyance apparently – help send input signals to circuits correlated to sensing, thinking, feeling, and doing things all inside the brain.⁸ Handsome Huberman also says the brain has two spotlights, or lenses, it uses to absorb inputs, probably for correlation.⁸ Finally, he says that sleep and non-

sleep deep rest is actually when neuroplasticity cements in your brain. NOT when it's agitated. You just have to do the agitating thing first, then sleep... lol.⁸

However, what even is *input*? That word's pretty vague, so I'll explain. There must be something that causes sensing, thinking, feeling, and doing to actually begin the correlational stability seeking⁷ process in the first place. To answer this, I offer you Dr. Nicole LePera's resonating words:

*"Stress is an inevitable part of life."*⁹

If you felt an "Oh no..." emerge from within you, don't worry! It's really not bad! Boredom is inevitably part of life as well, as we see in The Yerkes-Dodson Law – also known as the stress spectrum – which I interpret to be a simple spectrum in which ALL inputs – causes or goals – can be placed:

Boring Input \leftrightarrow Optimal Input \leftrightarrow Distressing Input¹⁰

Leaning on the notion that none of us can escape our own subjectivity,² what is boring, fun, or traumatic is entirely filtered by our own brains through correlation^{7, 8} – yours AND mine. So, to see the big end goal of the brain – the teleological end – we kinda have to see where the brain begins – the etiological origin from the metaphorical perspective of the small neuron.

If the brain is made of a bunch of neurons seeking stability when given inputs⁷ (goals or causes), then HOW does a neuron seek this stability? Why does that matter? Teleology: does this mean neurons have goals??? Etiology: Are they reacting to causes??? Neurons don't have brains themselves, so why even ask these outlandish questions? My answer might surprise you: it kinda looks like both etiology AND teleology apply! Not only that, but I believe their combination IS neuroplasticity! Their combination IS the HOW!

It seems as if something causes the goal, then the goal causes a goal, and so on and so forth, cascading in a kind of rhythm, from input to output to input again, looping back in on itself, with the only limiting factor being these "spotlights" Huberman mentioned.⁸ But what causes lead to goals? From there, what goals lead to causes? Even when writing this book, I'm still confused myself, so I made up a word: *goal-cause*.

A hybrid lens of sorts that believes both teleology and etiology to be occurring at the same time in the present moment. The closest metaphor I could make up that encapsulates a neuron would be: Neurons HAVE a goal-cause and Neurons ARE a goal-cause. Neurons are a kind of convergence point of goals and causes, and of beginnings and ends. To bridge neuron to brain, I extend this metaphor to say – like neurons – brains HAVE a goal-cause and brains ARE a goal-cause. Brains have a beginning and an end. That is to say, you and I have beginning-points and end-points

that encompass our individuality. Just as groups of people have individuals, so too do brains have neurons.

The brain also happens to have a convergence point of sorts too... of goals and causes, and of beginnings and ends. Let's see if we can breach through the dissonance, contradiction, and confusion, together. Let's see if there's a bottom to all of this, and how we can leverage that bottom for our own gains. We'll try to breach through this confusion and hopefully resolve it – together – once and for all. Get some sleep. We have quite the journey ahead of us. See you again soon. Goodnight <3

Breach 01

Y(our) Goal-cause

There's a goal-cause at the bottom of everything. Even when you weren't aware you had it, it was there. I was there. You were there. It's THE goal-cause. It's the goal motivating all causes, and the cause of all goals:

Goal-Cause: Exist.

The goal which causes. The cause of goals. It's so simple, yet so profound and expansive at the same time. Every sense, every thought, every feeling, and every action you and I have done has been both FOR this goal and CAUSED by this goal. Every adaptation we've made to life and its stressors. Every moment and memory – boring to distressing – we experience(input) or deliver(output) has been because of and for the Goal-Cause: Exist.

All existence, experiences inputs and delivers outputs because of this goal-cause and for this goal-cause. Let's dive deeper to pick apart the neurons behind this magic, and later... the stuff outside us too.

Glossary

Goal-Cause

Type: Metaphor / Neologism / Technical / Narrative Symbol

Definition: A playful reframing of causality.

Origin: Coined by author to represent recursion between teleology and etiology.

Purpose: This is not a scientific term. It's metaphorical and used to facilitate conceptual understanding.

First Appears In: Induction

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