

Systems Thinking Cognitive Dissonance

It's actually a super power
Use it as such



*“The **meat** became so **clever** that it convinced
itself it was **no longer meat...**”*

*~ **Buddha, or something***

Preface

How to approach this video

- Define Cognitive Dissonance
- Multiple Disciplines and POVs
- Unpack Implications
- Analyze Aspects
- New Understanding

Cognitive Dissonance

The mental discomfort experienced when conscious of conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes. A collision.

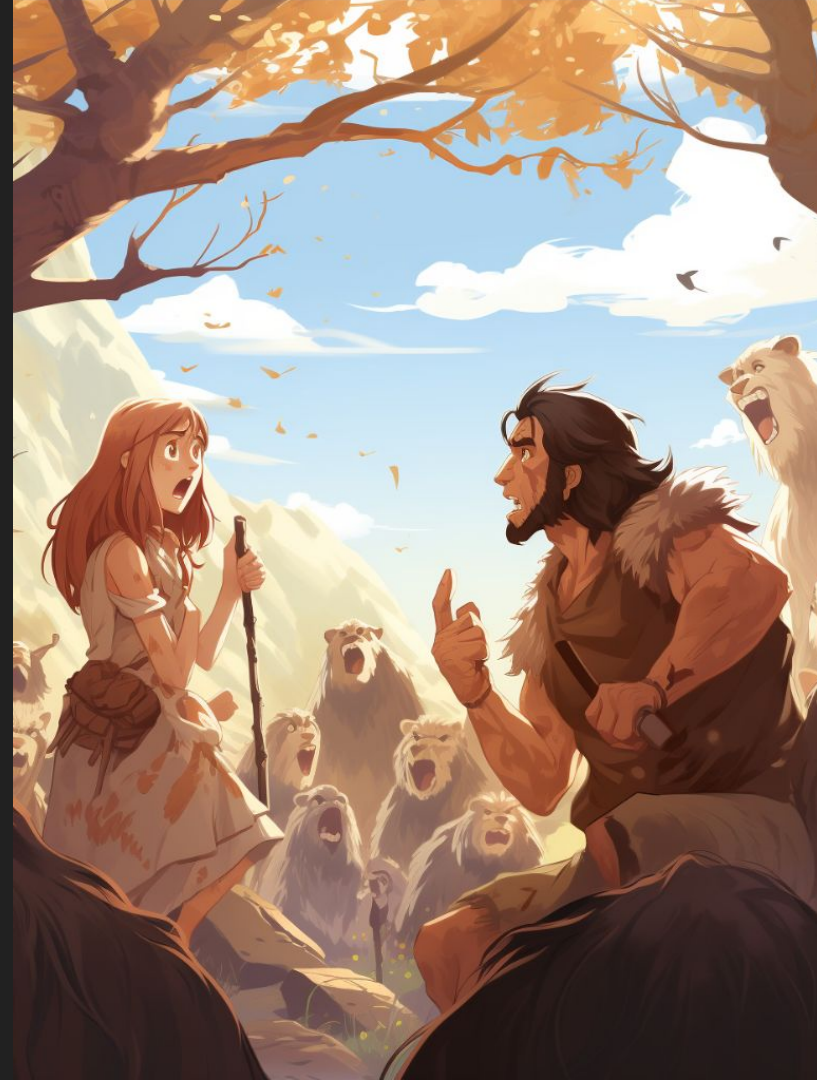
- **Mental Discomfort:** A sense of unease or tension that prompts attention. Affective result.
- **Conflicting Beliefs:** Collision between conflicting beliefs or ideas. Irreconcilable.
- **Motivational Drive:** Pushes individuals to resolve inconsistencies, or reject source of dissonance. Akin to curiosity and hunger. Natural impulse, instinctive.
- **Adaptive Function:** Evolved as a tool for improving mental models, getting at the truth.
- **Social Impact:** Plays a role in discourse, cultural norms, and societal progress.



Evolution

The adaptive mental trait that evolved to signal inconsistencies between beliefs, actions, and reality for survival advantages.

- **Ancestral Origins:** Not unique to humans; found in ancestral species. Magic tricks work on chimps.
- **Survival Advantage:** Aids in better decision-making and prediction. Where food? What poison?
- **Error Detection:** Drives individuals to adjust flawed perspectives. Identifying and resolving flaws.
- **Complex Knowledge:** Predicated by the capacity for abstraction and representation.
- **Social Function:** Enables collective dialogue in verbal species to work towards better understanding.



Neuroscience

The neural mechanisms that facilitate the detection of incongruent beliefs and prompt cognitive adjustments.

- **Multiple Beliefs:** Neural capacity to hold and manage different beliefs simultaneously.
- **Comparison Machinery:** Dedicated neural circuits for comparing and contrasting beliefs.
- **Reconciliation Limits:** Neural recognition of beliefs that can and cannot be harmonized.
- **Latent to Conscious:** Cognitive dissonance can transition from latent awareness to conscious focus.
- **Emotional Impetus:** Emotional centers in the brain fuel the drive to resolve dissonance.



Philosophy

The epistemological implications of cognitive dissonance for assessing the reliability and limitations of human cognition.

- **Towards Objectivity:** Capacity to hold abstract thoughts suggests some level of objectivity.
- **Biological Constraints:** Our beliefs are subject to the limitations of our neural architecture.
- **Situated Awareness:** Subjective experience is contextually embedded, limiting objectivity.
- **Metaphysical Mentalizing:** Ability to conceptualize beyond immediate reality for richer perspectives.
- **Self-Correction:** Cognitive dissonance acts as an internal mechanism for improving belief accuracy.



Computation

Exploring the possibility of formalizing cognitive dissonance through computational models, logic, and mathematics.

- **Symbolic Representation:** Informational encoding of beliefs for computational analysis.
- **Formal Logic:** Mechanistic tools for identifying and resolving cognitive dissonance.
- **Universal Computation:** Relating to von Neumann and Turing machine concepts in handling dissonance.
- **Mathematical Foundations:** Potential grounding of cognitive dissonance in mathematical principles.
- **Physics and Nature:** Suggesting that logic and math, tools for handling dissonance, may be rooted in the fabric of the universe.



Society

The cumulative impact of cognitive dissonance resolution at a societal level, accelerated by technological advances and cultural shifts.

- **Collective Resolution:** Society naturally resolves dissonance through shared conversations and experiences.
- **Historical Milestones:** The Printing Press as a disruptive force that democratized knowledge.
- **Power Structures:** Breakdown of traditional authority figures and systems, facilitating more egalitarian discourse.
- **Internet Culture:** Accelerated rate of dissonance resolution and information sharing.
- **Globalism:** Worldwide interconnectedness contributing to a quicker and broader reconciliation of societal dissonance.



Reactions

The various strategies people employ, either constructively or destructively, to alleviate cognitive dissonance.

- **Attack vs. Retreat:** Two basic emotional valences in response to dissonance.
- **Internal vs. External:** Dispositions indicating whether resolution strategies are inwardly or outwardly directed.
- **Reconciliation vs. Rejection:** Two strategies to alleviate cognitive dissonance.
- **Emotional Rejection:** External attack, such as unsubscribing from a channel that triggers dissonance.
- **Tribal Epistemics:** External retreat, labeling conflicting information as "fake news" to dismiss it.
- **Analysis and Exploration:** The healthiest approach, characterized as an internal retreat for deeper understanding.



Truth

Examining the notion that "truth" is not a universal constant but rather a state of cognitive equilibrium devoid of dissonance.

- **Sensation of Truth:** Defined as the absence or alleviation of cognitive dissonance rather than universal fact.
- **Evolutionary Basis:** Our belief in universal truth is shaped by common experiences throughout evolution.
- **Absence of Collision:** Truth as merely the lack of conflict between beliefs and experiences.
- **Cognitive Tools:** The mental mechanisms we possess for navigating toward truth and reconciliation.
- **Content and Knowledge:** Adequate informational and mental resources are required for this navigation.



Potentiality

Exploring the mechanisms by which a state of cognitive equilibrium can shift to one of dissonance, either internally or externally induced.

- **Internal Reflection:** Spontaneous dissonance through self-introspection and connecting dots.
- **External Vectors:** Conflict triggered by external information such as news or conversations.
- **State Shift:** Transitioning from a state of cognitive harmony to dissonance.
- **Dissonance Activation:** How cognitive dissonance can suddenly shift and become active. Rude awakening!
- **Ever Present:** It was always there, whether or not you were conscious of it. Bombs away!



Thank you