

The **Self-Organizing Universe**

**Insights on the Nature of the
Universe and the Nature of Nature**



Christopher Van Buren

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and the Nature of Nature

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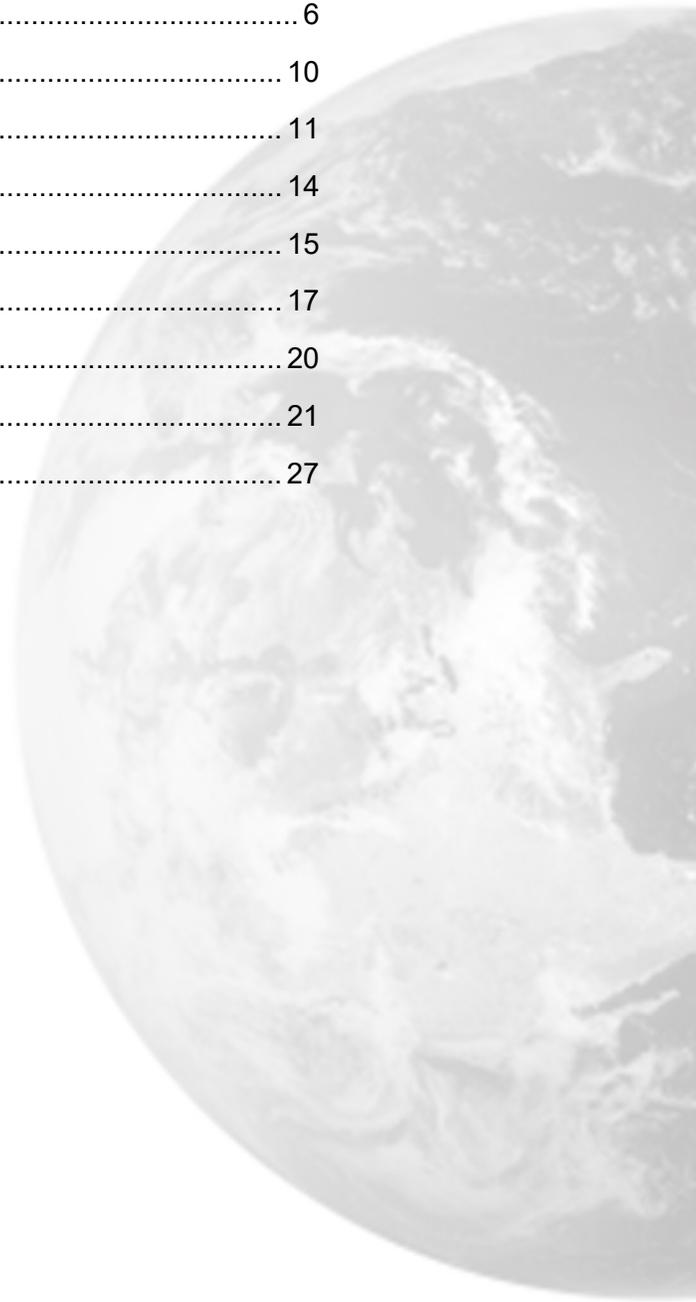
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Introduction:

It's no easy thing to explain how the universe is constructed. At the same time, the universe is the same everywhere you look – and its structures have similar characteristics in every instance.

One begins to notice that everything is a universe in itself. The human brain has roughly the same number of neurons as there are stars in our galaxy...and it has more neural connections than stars in the universe. It's a universe in itself.

But so is Earth's Ecosphere...which contains various eco-systems. Take the plant kingdom: it has countless plants, which have countless branches and countless leaves, which all contain networks of veins. Zoom into the molecules and the atoms and it seems that each one is a universe of connections.

The same can be said about the human body – an eco-system of ecosystems...a universe in itself, connected to other universes.

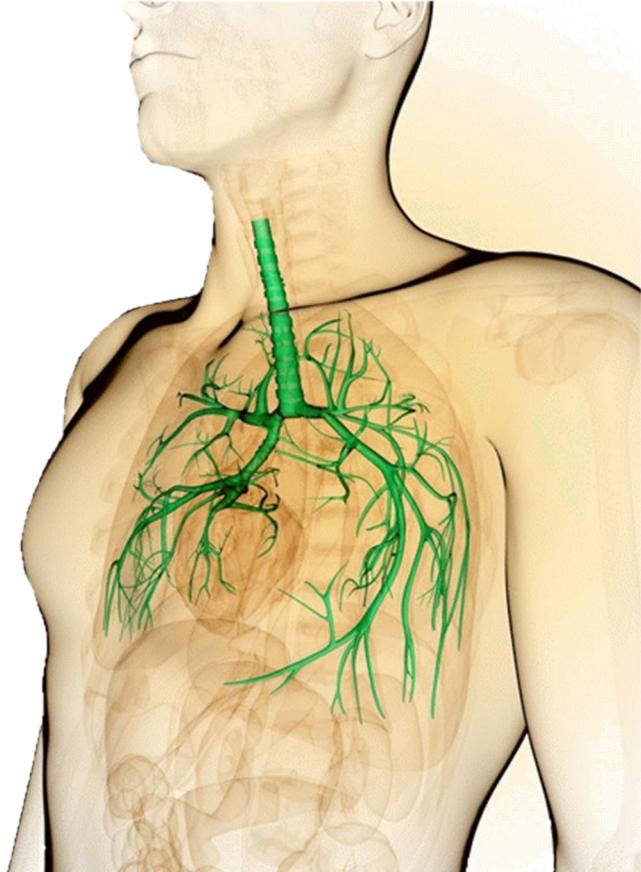
Here's the key: What's true about the universe is also true about us and vice-versa. Is the universe a big brain? Or is it a molecule in the leaf of a universal tree? Is everything connected, like the synapses in our brains?

Let's dive in and see what we can see...

The Nature of Nature (and the Internet)

Nature is self-organizing and interconnected, what we commonly refer to as an eco-system. Each system within the eco-system is self-organizing, and the eco-system as a whole is also self-organizing. It's an interconnected system of self-organizing systems.

We see this pattern of interconnected systems again and again – in nature, in the Internet. In fact, self-organizing systems are all around us. We encounter them every day. The way a tree grows and branches out into more branches; the leaves on those trees reveal a self-organized system of veins; the veins and arteries in our own bodies, the bronchi of our lungs, and the neural connections in our brains...these are all self-organized systems that follow a similar pattern.

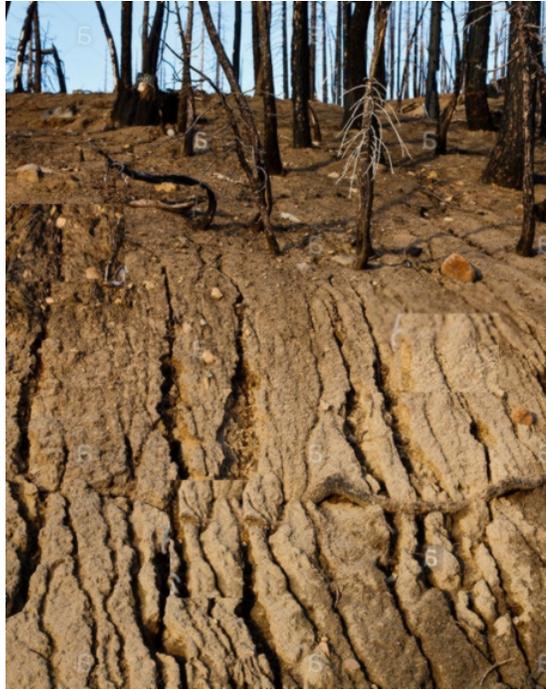


I'll be discussing the nature of self-organizing systems in this book because it provides insight into the nature of the human brain, as well as the nature of nature and the universe itself. If we understand how self-organizing systems work, then we can better understand how our brains organize, process, store and recall information. This might just give us more control and empowerment with those processes. If we understand what causes a self-organizing system to branch and branch again, we might discover that we can influence these branches and create a future that we choose. Yes, we might just be able to apply some of this to the universe and perhaps our own evolution.

As we'll see, self-organizing systems have defining characteristics. I'm going to take you deep into these characteristics and "zoom in" on the details and qualities of each and I'll suggest how each characteristic might influence our lives, our world and our future, starting with...

1 Bifurcation

Perhaps the most obvious thing about self-organizing systems is that they look like pathways that branch and branch and branch again. This is known as *bifurcation*. Trees do this. Lightning does this. Language does this. And as we'll see in this book, our brains do this, evolution does this...all of nature does this.



What causes pathways and connections to form in a self-organizing system? What makes a branch occur where and when it occurs? What makes bifurcation happen?

In a word...stress.

Stress may seem like an unlikely reason for branching to occur, but in all self-organizing systems, it's the most basic cause of branching. Stress can be observed as a number of different things:

Resistance -- Imagine a hillside and the rain falls onto the hill...eventually channels form where the rain passes. What causes a channel to form where it does? Receptivity in the ground, softer soil....while rocks and other points of resistance force the flow away. The stress of the water hitting the rock causes a bifurcation, a branching to occur. Most of this is unseen to us...we just see the resulting channels.

Noise – In electronics, noise is an unwanted disturbance in an electrical signal. In electrical terms, it's an unwanted form of energy which tends to interfere with the proper reception and reproduction of transmitted signals. Noise is type of stress in an otherwise “quiet” system.

Potential – in Physics, potential is the difference in mass and energy between two points, like the sky and the ground or the beginning and ending of a tree branch. Difference in potential is what causes lightening to strike and further branches of lightening to “shoot off” from the trunk. Gravitational potential describes a piece of fruit before it falls from the tree, or the water being held by a dam. Magnetic potential describes the force that one magnet emits on another – pushing or pulling. These can be looked at as forms of stress: energy potential that has not been restored to “quiet equilibrium.”

What do these all have in common? The stress acts to disrupt homeostasis within the system. It's this disruption that causes movement through time and space...branching.

And this bifurcation (branching) applies to all systems, including the human brain, the internet, and even *meta-phenomena*, such as thought and culture.

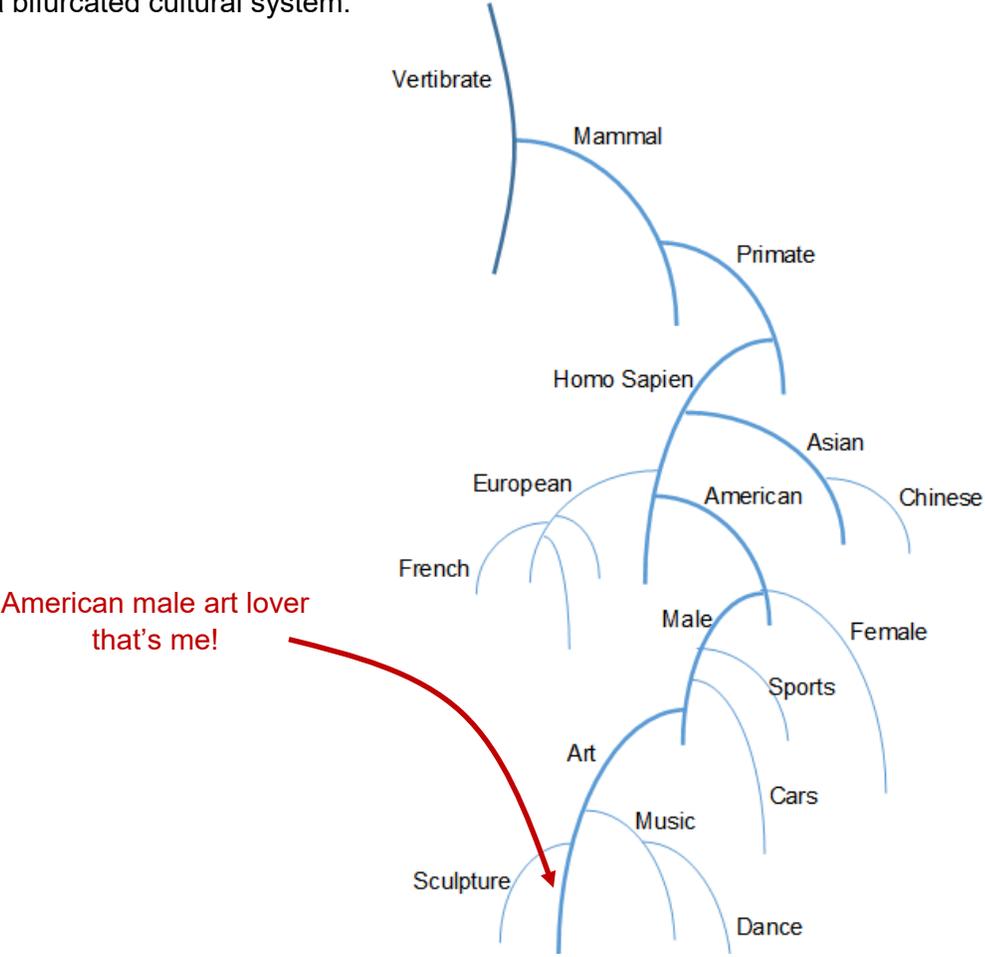
In the human brain, branching occurs with our neural connections. Receptivity and resistance are key here. When the human brain has finished forming neurons in our infancy, it begins to make connections among them. Dendrites reach out to other dendrites and “shake hands.” Adding to this, we also have *receptors* that stimulate the formation of certain connections. Receptors exist to facilitate needed functions, such as vision and sound recognition. In time, these connections begin to form *networks*, which are complex patterns of connections that can repeat their functions over and over again.

You could compare these brain networks to the network of roots in a forest or the network of connections among individuals and groups in a social media platform...even the branching that takes place in a conversation, as we move from topic to topic and back again.



In culture and human civilization, bifurcation describes the various groupings of people and the sub-groups that branch off of those groups. Here's a simple (and I mean over-simplified) example of a bifurcated cultural system.

This is me:



2 Self-Similar Replication

One of the things you'll notice about self-organizing systems is that the branches look like the branches before them, which look like the branches before them, and so on. There is a similarity in the structures of each branch. This is a phenomenon known as *self-similarity*. Self-organizing systems replicate themselves across time and space. The more you zoom-in or zoom-out, the more you find the same structural patterns over and over again.

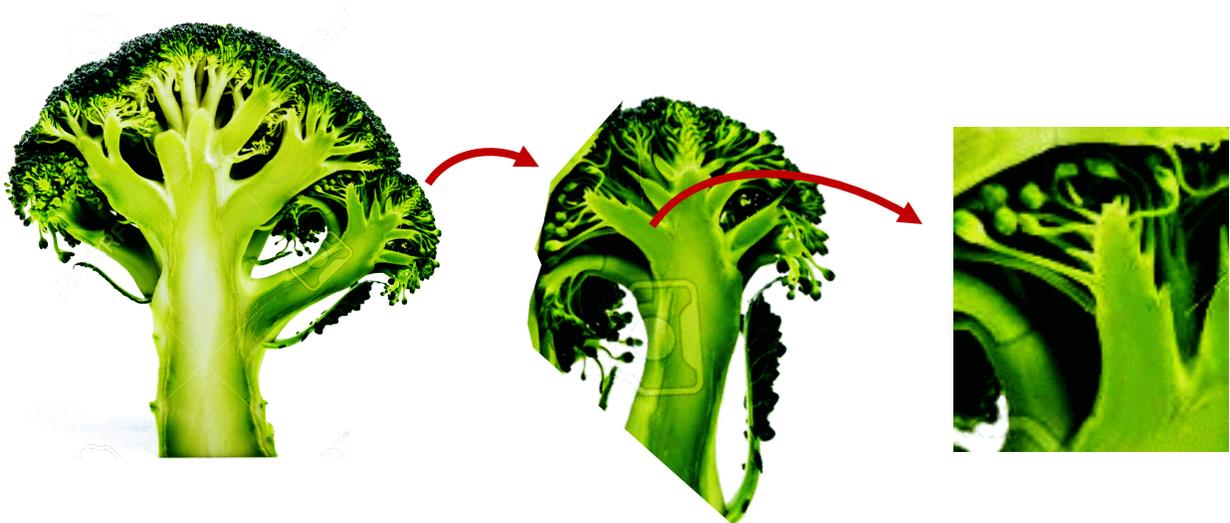
Why is this important?

Consider culture. As we saw in the previous illustration, culture can be mapped as a self-organizing system. In the example, we mapped a small portion of the system from vertebrate to Americans to art lovers. We could just as easily have followed Chinese or French branches leading to art lovers in those cultures.

As Richard Dawkins defined the term, a cultural *meme* is essentially a branch of the cultural tree. For example, "American males" is a cultural meme; "art lovers" is a cultural meme. There's the "male" meme and the "female" meme. There's the "sports" meme and the "art" meme.

These are all replicated throughout the system. And each meme has characteristics of the meme from which it branched. As we'll see later in this book, self-similar replication is a component of the evolutionary impulse that drives the universe through time.

Consider the universe. Is our little planet in our little solar system in our little galaxy a self-similar replication of other systems in the universe? Almost certainly, because that's how self-organizing systems are structured.



Indelibility & Resistance to Change

Some self-organizing systems appear to be “intelligent” or at least “dynamic and self-changing,” like the neurons in the brain, which can change their connections to other neurons or like the Internet, which can dynamically re-route information pathways between different networks (a technology known as the Internet Transfer Protocol).

Other self-organizing systems appear static and unchanging (or nearly so), such as the branches of a tree, which only change when growth or damage occurs; the veins on a leaf; and the channels that form when rain falls on a hillside. These don't generally change after they are formed.

What we find is that all self-organizing systems are resistant to change – some more than others. And while change can occur, it doesn't exactly occur quickly or easily...and definitely not without a reason or underlying impetus (stress or stimulation).

Interesting Aside: Stimulation is what lights up or excites our brain networks. It can also cause bifurcation to occur. It has been defined as *transient and moderate stress*...a type of stress that's good for us. It's like the stress of playing a game where you're trying to compete against others. Or it can be the type of stress associated with public speaking or skiing down a mountain. Children feel this type of stress constantly; it stimulates their growth and development. Play is a form of creating moderate and transient stress. What about curiosity? Is curiosity a way that we “direct” the stimulation of our brains?



The brain is a self-organizing system. So is the universe. But unlike the universe, we know how a human brain forms. We can track the creation of neurons and neural-connections. We know that babies, infants and toddlers form neurons and make neural connections at a rapid rate and

that they actually create “too many” neurons. Starting around age 2, a pruning process begins, where the brain actually kills off (and recycles) unwanted neurons as it begins to form neural connections among the neurons that remain. These neural-connections will continue to form through childhood, adolescence, and even into adulthood, with each major stage of development mirroring stages of neural development.

The information that enters a young, developing brain forms networks of interconnecting neurons that proceed to get filled with memories, thoughts and ideas that allow us to recognize and master the world around us. Networks continue to form throughout childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Because of our human interaction with nature, many networks are formed to simply deal with the natural world around us – thus, all humans have a great deal of similarities in brain network functions. We need to recognize faces, so we form a facial recognition network. We need to make decisions and organize our lives, so we form a central executive network. We have to process complex human interactions, so we form socio-cognitive networks.

We recognize the world around us and respond based on (or informed by) these recorded networks of neural activity. We couldn't survive without these "pattern recognition" abilities and the beliefs and cognitive processes that accompany them.

Once formed, these cognitive processes, memories, behaviors, and belief patterns are nearly indelible. They cannot be easily erased or changed...but over time, and with great effort, they can slowly change into new patterns of behavior and beliefs.

Anyone who tells you that you can "erase unwanted patterns" or "eliminate negative beliefs" is simply not up to speed on brain science (unless they are referring to brain damage). So if our belief and behavior patterns cannot be erased, how do we change our thoughts? How do we overcome unwanted patterns? How does anything change in our brains?

The answer is simple and it applies to all self-organizing systems: Change occurs through growth and damage. You can add something that influences or even overwhelms existing patterns with something new, such that it becomes a less prominent pattern...even to the point of becoming almost unused (almost forgotten). The new synaptic connections, with sufficient time and flow of information, become more prominent than the old ones. In short, growth can either deepen an existing channel or create new channels.

Maybe you cannot undo the structures or network connections once they are created -- but you can expand them and compete with them by creating new connections.

So within the brain and within all self-organizing systems, you begin to realize that balance between and among the network branches is key to survival. A tree won't thrive if it grows branches in one direction only. An ecosystem requires balance among the various systems that comprise the whole; imbalance can cause damage to the entire system in a type of chain

reaction. In the human brain, when patterns get severely unbalanced, we fall into deep cognitive bias. That is when all new information (input) is routed into existing belief patterns over and over, and it becomes difficult to have any new thought...any "other" thought. This is why conspiracy theories can be formed and believed so easily.

Thankfully, the brain has a large capacity...and there are plenty of new frontiers, new hillsides, we can explore and discover, allowing us to add new thought and behavior patterns. These new patterns will self-organize around the existing ones, but they will also form new networks of belief and behavior.

4 Asymmetry

Self-organizing systems are always asymmetrical, organic, and seemingly random and unstructured. The channels formed by the rain on a hillside or the veins in the leaf of a tree are examples of this. The patterns are asymmetrical. The scientific term for this is *asymmetric bifurcation*, the splitting of channels or pathways in an asymmetric manner.

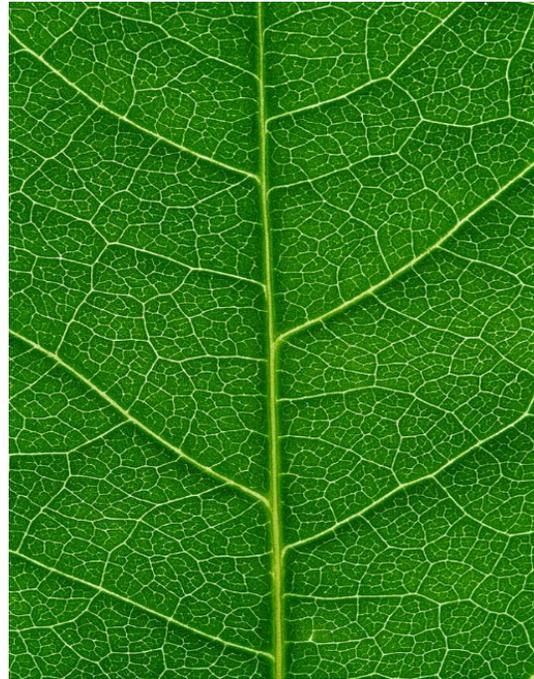
Why is this important to understanding our brains (and our potential)? There are two properties of asymmetric bifurcated (AB) systems that affect how we think and what we are capable of (and neither of these is random or unstructured)...

They are Non-Linear

In an AB system, the path from point A to point B is not the same as going from point B to point A. The route back may be more efficient by way of a different path, a different set of connections. This is how our thoughts, feelings and beliefs move back and forth through our brain networks. The cognitive center influences the emotion center but also takes into account the emotional data coming from that center...and then informs the emotion center back again. The opportunity here is to intentionally short-cut (or re-route) the usual patterns -- something I talk about more in my book *Belief Relief*, which is a companion to this book.

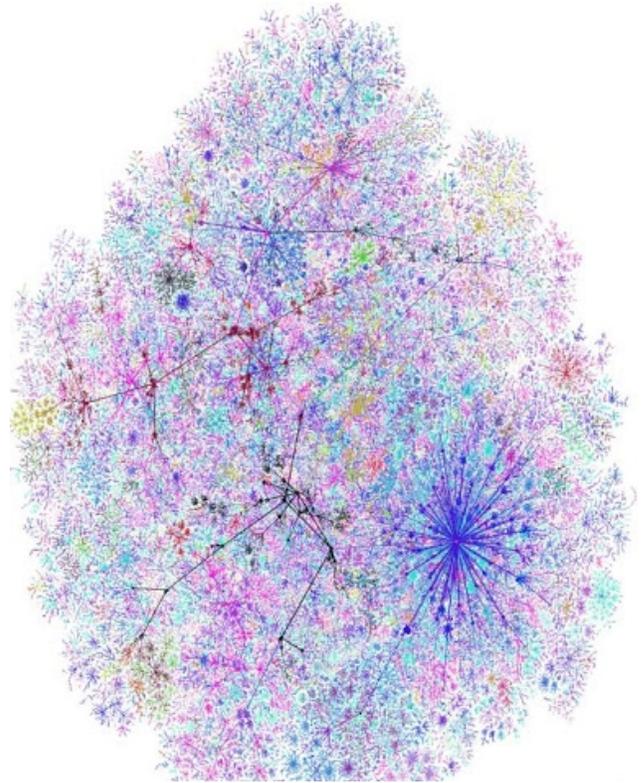
They are Energy Maximizing

The veins in a leaf do not grow in their particular way by chance. They are following an AB system pattern in order to maximize space and energy. We know that our lungs form bronchi following an AB pattern -- in order to maximize oxygen intake within the space that's available. AB patterns have been applied to solar panel technology to maximize the efficiency of the solar conversion process. What's the opportunity here? To keep building new AB systems in our brains through learning and growing. Also, to keep branching our culture and our universe to create more balance in our network structures.



Layered & Interconnected

Let's explore another aspect of how self-organizing systems are structured. Specifically, they are layered and interconnected. When we think of the veins on a leaf, we can see how they form a kind of "network" of pathways or connections. We know now that the brain processes information through brain networks -- and that certain networks are largely responsible for certain tasks. For example, we all have a network in the brain that helps us recognize human faces. It's called the *fusiform face area* of the brain.



Well, it turns out that this facial recognition network is actually a series of three distinct networks that encompass 25 key regions of the brain. It's a network of networks...all interconnected, overlapping and functioning in a specific chain of activity (an order). The most common term for this type of network structure is *layered networks*.

Why is it important to understand the layered network structure of the brain and the universe? Here's why they are special...

They Maximize Data

Layered networks, even though they have some overlap and redundancy, are able to process and store more information than simple networks. This means there's more data stored in our brains than we probably realize. It also means we are capable of sustaining high levels of input and stress.

They are Fast

Layered networks are faster at processing, storing and retrieving information than non-layered ones.

They are Interoperable

The individual networks in a layered system may be part of several different network chains. Each network performs its function for multiple tasks and purposes (multiple larger network chains). Moreover, almost all

cognitive functions require multiple networks in the brain to operate -- they are all networks of networks.

They are Resilient

Layered networks are able to operate more by function than by form. The human brain assembles networks into a chain of activity not because those networks are next door to each other, but because they perform the desired function well together. They are function-driven and this is key when the network suffers damage -- it can re-route the function through other network chains and accomplish the same result (or close to it). The take-away? There's not one way to process information in the brain. There's not one way to think about any given thing. There's not just one way of accomplishing anything. We are multi-layered beings living in a multi-layered universe.

If you're thinking that the image at the top of this section is a map of the human brain...I have a surprise for you: It's actually a map of the Internet.

Context Sensitivity

This is where things start getting really exciting. This is where the aspects of self-organizing systems (the brain and the universe, the Internet and all of nature) reveal their true powers...and their secrets.

It all comes down to context.

Context is what causes one network to “activate” instead of another. Context is what turns information and associations into “triggers” that then light up, or excite certain networks in the brain...causing us to think (and act) in certain ways. I discuss context, triggers and associations in the brain in more detail in my book *Belief Relief*.

Context is what causes a social interaction to trigger one cultural meme versus another. Consider this: A man touches a woman softly on the shoulder. In one case, this is a trigger for abuse and inappropriate sexual behavior. In another case, it's a sensual gesture from a desirable guy, which is welcome and exciting. The difference is context.

Interesting Aside #1: In dynamic networks, such as the brain, we find that the medium is the message when it comes to context. What does that mean? It means that there is no "data" running through the branches of the network structure. Rather, the network structure IS the message. Context is the message. You could say it this way: There is no data, there is only awareness of context. Thoughts are not running through the connections in our brains – the connections *are* our thoughts. Why this matters and how we can harness its *potential* (there's that word again) will be revisited later in this book, but for now, it's important to note that this allows us to instantly jump between brain networks, beliefs and thought patterns (when adequately triggered).



Everything in our brains is context sensitive. Words have contextual meaning and a single word can trigger a series of brain networks into action. Context is what tells genes to turn-on other genes, leading to permanent gene sequencing in your brain. Those genes then influence your brain networks in a myriad of ways. And this can change the outcome of your life.

Context comes from environment: both internal, which may be called biochemistry, and external, which can be called culture. Culture occurs in the womb, throughout childhood and the family environment, and from peer groups, neighborhoods, social systems (races, religions, political groups), and countries.

Each culture has a vocabulary. The vocabulary creates and then repeats associations with certain brain networks, like guards at the entrance of a neighborhood, allowing some to pass through and forcing others to seek a different neighborhood. This, in essence, is part of the belief formation processes in the brain: Our brain collects information, sorts through it to find out what is relevant (context), we then think about it, talk to others about, and then arbitrarily decide what we believe or disbelieve. Through repetition, cultural and social enforcement (rules), those beliefs become deeply embedded in networks that control behaviors and the way we habitually think. They become cognitive biases. At this point a person assumes that those biased beliefs are true and those who disagree are a potential threat.

Back in the outside world -- outside of the cognitive bias --- there is always more context to be discovered. You can never have all the context about anything...ever. This means there's always new associations that can be assigned to old pathways and even new (or updated) networks that can be formed from existing connections in the brain. You just need the right context to "excite" the pathways. This also means that all beliefs are limited and never "true," but to get beyond our personal biases we need to consciously build new association and new neural connections.

Interesting Aside #2: It's easy to think of the brain, and the universe, as a network of networks that are ever increasing in complexity – constantly growing and adding connections and branches. We then create networks that organize the other networks. The brain's *Central Executive Network* does this in part, but it can all start to seem rather chaotic and scattered. A garden that is left untended slips into increased complexity and what many would call *chaos*. A tree grows from a single trunk into thousands of leaves, representing exponential complexity of network structures.

But the tree may lose its leaves in the Fall or even lose branches from age and weather. Certain plants might overtake the garden and kill off many of the other species of plants, reducing complexity. Neuropathways can

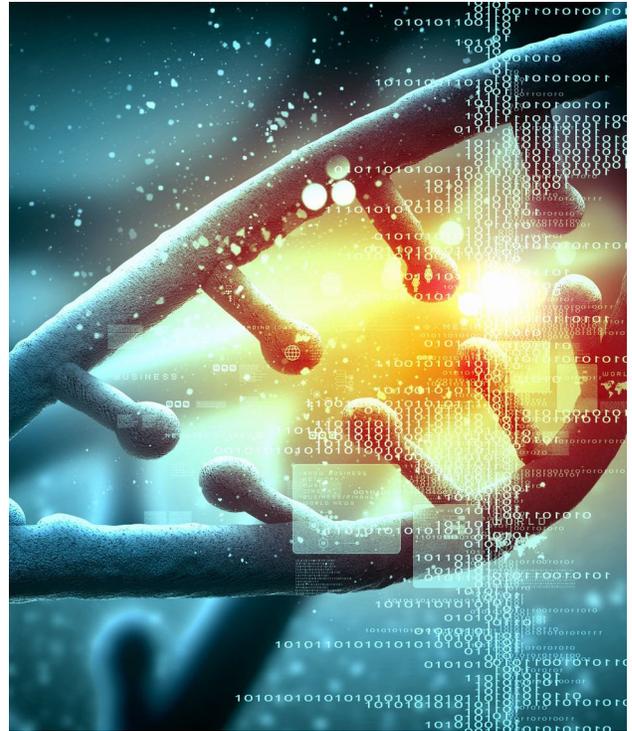
merge into a confluence of meaning and association, thus reducing the complexity. The purpose of context in an asymmetrically bifurcated, layered network structure (now that's a complex term for a self-organizing system!) is not to add complexity, but to organize the pathways and networks, setup signposts (contextual triggers), and allow for awareness to excite its way through the system, creating meaning.

7 Evolving

The final characteristic of self-organizing systems is that they change over time. They evolve. It may be a slow process, but there is no exception to this rule. Since noise or disruption exist, bifurcation or branching happens. When branching happens, a self-similar replication happens with a distinct difference from the original branch. This is what we used to call a random mutation. We now know that this phenomenon is neither random nor a mutation. It's part of the layered network structure of the system and its evolution over time.

Throughout this eBook, we've explored how self-organizing systems form network patterns that, once created, are difficult and slow to change. We've seen that the formation of the network's patterns and connections happen through a process of asymmetric bifurcation (branching) that maximizes space and energy -- and that branching occurs because of stress and energy potential. Stress can look like disruption, noise, curiosity, or damage. There are various forms of stress, ranging from "mild and transient" (stimulation) to "catastrophic and permanent" (trauma). The result of all these types of stress is a change in the energy *potential* within the system.

We concluded that the best way to change an existing network pattern is to add to it...to create more network patterns that take precedent over the one you want to change. We can do this by deliberately adding stress to the system -- preferably the mild and transient kind in the form of stimulation that creates the *potential* for change to happen.



The Universe is Self-Organizing (and So Are You)

Everything we've learned about the nature of self-organizing systems applies to the universe itself, to the development of time, space, matter, and life. We can find the characteristics of self-organizing systems in the evolutionary cycle and what Barbara Marx Hubbard calls the evolutionary impulse.

But let's start with a review of the various "states" of evolutionary development in which any self-organizing system might find itself. Note that these are not mutually exclusive; a system may be in multiple states at the same time...



Expansion

All self-organizing systems expand, add context, branch and branch again. They often form connections among the branches. Eventually the system becomes a layered network – a network of networks.

Individuation

Within the expanding system, each branch constitutes a unique individuation that plays a unique role and defines a unique context in the system as a whole...and sometimes a unique context in various systems within the whole. For example, an American male art-lover has a unique context in the meme "American Males" and may also have a unique context in the meme "American Entrepreneurs." Branches cross over other branches and networks overlap with other networks, while each given "point" is a unique individuation. In the Internet, that could be seen as a unique URL – a web page to which one could navigate through various possible pathways. In culture, this individuation describes each one of us and our unique connections to various memes and networks within the culture (e.g., you have a unique contextual significance within your family and a different one within your business).

Symbiosis

As individuation flourishes, connections are made and symbiosis occurs between and among the unique individuals and groups within the system. Symbiosis is a type of dependency that affects the balance of the system, creating an ecosystem of interrelated groupings within the larger system. With humans, these groupings are called *cultures*. In the brain, these groupings may be seen as beliefs and habits. In the Internet, they are called intranets and virtual private networks...or simply *networks*.

Now it's important to remember that there are different types of symbiotic relationships that might form:

- **Mutualism**-- is when both individuals benefit from the connection. This would be like bees that pollinate flowers. In the human brain, this describes the interaction between brain networks when we interpret data from the outside, such as when we watch a film, which engages various brain networks mutually, including our visual and our auditory networks.
- **Commensalism**-- is when one individual benefits and the other is unaffected. This is like birds that nest in trees or mushrooms that grow on fallen trees. In the Internet, this describes indexing bots (the programs that search the internet in order to index information about websites for the search engines).
- **Parasitism**-- is when one individual benefits and the other is harmed from the relationship. This is like a virus or how humans hunt a species to extinction. In the Internet it might be a computer virus or security hack. In culture, it's the caste system, where one group benefits from the work product of another group. Extreme parasitism kills the host for the benefit of the parasite.
- **Collectivism**—is when individuals depend on a group for survival and sometimes make sacrifices (self-harm) for the benefit of the group, rather than their own, individual benefit. Extreme collectivism minimizes (or kills) the individual for the benefit of the collective.

Equilibrium / Homeostasis / Balance

Self-organizing systems are constantly seeking equilibrium or homeostasis. That's why differences in potential will cause a branch to occur – because the system wants to equalize that difference. But because there is so much noise or imperfection in nature, natural eco-systems are constantly equalizing imbalance without end. **This flux between balance and**

imbalance is what drives the system to evolve. It's the evolutionary impulse itself.

In complex ecosystems (such as Earth's ecosystem or the human brain), imbalances within the system don't usually cause imbalance in the whole ecosystem. But that's not always the case. Sometimes the entire ecosystem can be imbalanced, causing the whole system to seek homeostasis. Global warming, for example, may be Earth's ecosystem balancing itself out from systemic imbalances.

Where Is All This Going?

It seems that our greatest task is always to restore balance and homeostasis after "growth and change" cause "disruption and imbalance." It's a constant system of imbalance and rebalance, disruption and homeostasis, expansion and symbiosis. Never a dull moment, to be sure!

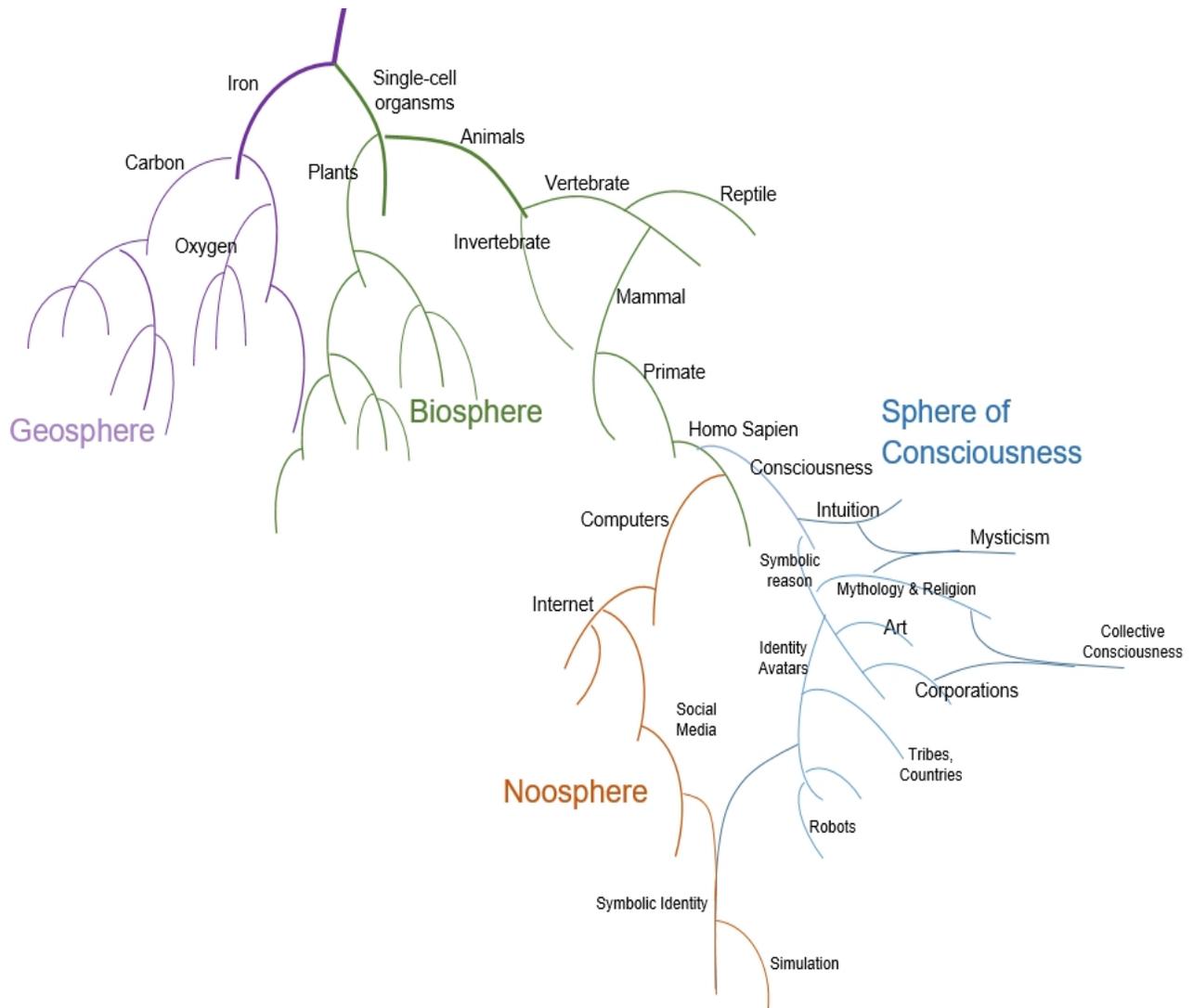
I've often likened this phenomenon to surfing...where the surfer riding a wave is in a constant state of imbalance -- adjusting and readjusting to the wave. While at any moment, there's imbalance, the overall ride is exhilarating -- from beginning to end.

It can be difficult to know where one system ends and another begins. Systems are made of other systems – networks of networks. It seems you can continue zooming IN indefinitely and you'll keep finding systems within the systems you started with. You can continue zooming OUT too, finding larger systems that incorporate the one you started with.

But there is a sequence to all of it. Systems beget other systems, branches shoot off of previous branches – all in a linear timeline. Sure, these systems overlap and therefore the timelines overlap too. But you can't ignore that time has something to do with the evolution of self-organizing systems.

The image below shows the evolutionary system of Earth, moving from the *geosphere* to the *biosphere* to the *noosphere* and the *sphere of consciousness* (the latter two are not as fully accepted in scientific circles as the first two). You can imagine zooming into any of these branches to find deeper and deeper levels of overlapping systems. And we can imagine zooming out to see all these systems as a single planetary solar system, which is itself part of a larger universal system that incorporates many planets and solar systems.

If we take a look at how the self-organizing universe has played out on Earth, we might get a glimpse into the direction of our evolution.



The Geosphere

It all started with matter. The elements. Earth's geosphere branched into more contextual spheres, including the atmosphere, the hydrosphere (our water systems), the cryosphere (polar ice caps), and so on. It also gave way for...

The Biosphere

Life begins. Single cells multiply and branch into kingdoms (plant and animal kingdoms) and form networks of genus and species. Further branching defines vertebrates and invertebrates...then mammals, primates, and humans. Humans then evolve toward...

The Sphere of Consciousness

Awareness. Sentience. Knowing that we exist. Knowing that we have a place within a larger ecosystem. This branches into various types of symbolic reasoning...superstition, religion, mythology, art, business, money. These begin to form symbiotic relationships, such as economies, tribes, cultures, and countries. We might call this the *coetosphere*, the sphere of collective consciousness where groups have symbiotic relationships with other groups. We could also call this *civilization*, and many studies have been conducted on the symbiotic relationships among groups within human civilization – including differences between Western Civilization (which emphasizes individuation) and Eastern Civilization (which emphasizes collectivism). I'll discuss this more in my next book.

The Noosphere

Humans also created the Noosphere, the sphere of artificial intelligence and artificial life posited by Vladimir Vernadsky. The network of networks and the web of data, devices and artificial identities (avatars). Like all systems this leads to symbiotic relationships among the elements and, eventually, the possibility of a science-fiction-like artificial collective (the Borg?).

Hacking Evolution

Do we have a choice in the matter of evolution? Can we influence the branches of our own future? The simple answer is yes, with great effort. The complex answer is yes, we can cause a branch to occur, but we can't predict its outcome. We can create the *potential* that causes lightening to strike, but we can't predict the lightening's path.

With that caveat, here are some possible ways to hack a self-organizing system ...

Creating Potential

How do you create potential? In the human brain, you can do this with curiosity and surprise – a.k.a. stimulation. In a tree, you do this with sunlight. Pathways and channels form when rain falls on a hillside because of the *slope* of the hill. Increase the slope and you increase the potential. And in cultures, potential can be stimulated by fear and desire among groups.

Grafting

Creating a new bifurcation is no small task...even in your own brain, much less in a culture or in evolution itself. But existing branches can be grafted onto other stems. This is common in horticulture when grafting branches from one plant onto another. In the layered networks of the Internet, we can clone and graft entire networks onto other networks (like moving data centers from East Coast to West Coast). In cultures, we can graft memes into other cultures (like grafting Japanese Anime into Western film production).



Pruning

We know what pruning means to a tree. We can literally cut off branches to affect the growth of other branches. In culture, this might look like war, genocide or cultural neglect. Usually not a happy thing. In the Internet, this might look like diverting traffic away from a network branch, such that it still exists, but hardly operates at all. This is also how we can reconsolidate memories and beliefs in the brain – causing them to be almost “forgotten” by making other memories more prominent.

Conscious Symbiosis

You might call this “intentional dependencies” because it’s about creating (or encouraging) a dependency between two or more systems. This might look like forcing two groups of people to work together, that might not otherwise. In certain applications, this is a type of artificial selection (like breeding dogs to produce certain traits).

The Future is Calling (the Present is Overrated)

We spend a lot of time connecting to the past, remembering and completing the energetic connections from previous cycles, patterns, actions, experiences. This is good, if we do this in an effort to build on our past in order to improve our future.

And if we are mindful and remember to stop, be still, and face our current reality, then we are also paying attention to the present and experiencing the NOW. And this is also good if it helps to ground us and keep us focused on what matters and what's in front of us.

But our greatest gift as humans is our ability to imagine the future. We can hear the future calling. We feel the anticipation of realizing it. It begs our presence and our imagination. It's part of our reality. It invites us to be who we want to be and to create a world we want to live in.

You might even say that the future is what prompts us to find meaning in our existence.

Our imagination of the future is both individual and collective...and the collective idea of the future, our hopeful expectation of what we are creating, is actually the most powerful force around us. We generate a collective mind and a collective spirit because of our hopeful anticipation. Perhaps this anticipation creates a type of energy *potential* that causes our future to unfold before us.

We are the energy that is creating the future. Make it a future that inspires you.

Who Do We Want to Be?

Nobody knows how the future will turn out. Nobody knows what happens after death. Nobody knows how consciousness exists or how our universe will evolve. Will we move toward the Noosphere of artificial intelligence or toward a collective consciousness of mutualism and balance?

The truth of the matter is that we're moving along life's path in these specific ways...making the choices that we make...without any absolute knowledge of the outcome, the purpose or even why we're here. We can *stimulate* change in ourselves and in the world around us, but we don't know what the outcome of that change will be. A branch in the evolutionary path of life. We make our choices based on who we are in each moment – or perhaps more accurately, who we have become up to that moment.

Is there a better approach? We are always going to run into fears, doubts, and uncertainties in life. Survival, love, relations, making peace, getting along ... these are rife with difficulty and confusion. We don't even really know exactly who we are in each moment. As we've seen, our cognitive processes may change over time. We act on our best beliefs and cognitive biases. It's like our past is pushing us forward whether we like it or not.

Our consciousness, however, gives us another option. We can imagine the future. We can *intend and encourage* an outcome for the future. The best guiding light, then, is not based on who we are or who we have become, but on **who we want to be**. In other words, our desired future is our guide. Only "*who do we want to be*" sets an adequate guidepost that we can always count on. It's the only trustworthy barometer that we have for creating a meaningful existence.

So ask yourself...in each moment, which choice is consistent with the person you want to be? Which choices bring you closer to that person? Which choices help you become that person? Which choices help create the world you want to live in...the future you want to see?

Some people decide who they want to be based on faith, or on role models. Others may decide based on an accumulation of experience and observation. Still others may use intuition, nature, the golden rule, or a combination of things.

The Noble Spirit bases his/her decisions on a code, a set of values that guide the Noble Soul into expression in our lives and as our lives.

This is the code of the Noble Spirit.

This is who we want to be.

The Evolution of the Noble Spirit

Become the
future human

[Details Here](#)

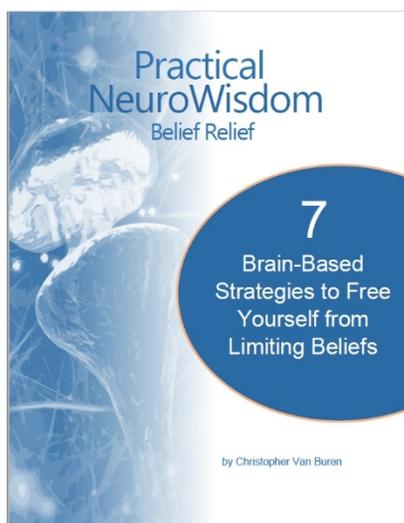


Christopher Van Buren has worked in publishing and information marketing since 1984 as a writer, publisher, and literary agent. Christopher has written numerous books on technology, business, travel and self-help. He has written for numerous magazines, including a Brazilian travel magazine (in Portuguese) and serving as the Brazilian correspondent for *U.S. Industry Today* and *Food & Drink Quarterly* magazines.



Christopher is a student of neuroscience and has studied a wide variety of spiritual teachings since the late 1980's and spent many years studying, comparing and mapping archetypes, emotions, chakras, and behavior patterns and exploring how these represent connections to the collective consciousness, what he calls our Noble Soul.

Download his mini-ebook *Belief Relief* using the link below.



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