

How Faith and Reason evolve, together

Faith and reason together enable the evolution of self-reflective consciousness; their mutuality produces certitude and truth, neither of which is absolute, but both of which are experientially and logically reliable. The process of self-reflective consciousness is a process of conciliation by way of reconciling communication, consciousness and conscience.

1. What TRUSTFUL Communication is

Trustful communication is what occurs when two or more people talk together with the common purpose of becoming better informed, and who are respectful of differing understandings. They are of one mind in their disposition of respecting the other as equal in standing and deserving consideration. Learning by way of communication is not trustful except the parties to it contribute authentically and accept the authenticity of the other.

When ideologies (fixed positions) underlie conversations, people tend to speak “at each other” and with purposes of affirming their ideology, while being closed to the reason of another. For example, ideologies fixed in convictions of the age-old Static Worldview will not change except there is openness to the rationality of the Evolutionary Worldview.

When one party is predisposed in ideological fixation, it is unlikely that (s)he will be open to what others have to say. In this case, communication is defeated before it starts. For example, the problem with dominion theology (religious absolutism, fundamentalism) is that it is unbending in its adherence to ideological fixations and insists on reaffirming them. The evolution of consciousness and the way of “intentional symbiosis” are about resolving ideological conflicts. Fixations promote non-accommodation, the stagnation of faith and reason, and violence, whereas, symbioses lead to reconciliation and peaceable accommodation.

Trustful communication is conditioned by how well the parties are informed in what they are discussing. A person less informed and/ or ideologically prejudiced should be honest and willing to admit his/ her deficit. No matter how well informed one is in any subject, there is always more to be learned, for knowledge about anything is seldom exhausted. Like reality, knowledge is expansive, evolving.

Expansion, growth in one’s personal knowledge-base is what advances trustful communication. The pursuit of knowledge, of informed consciousness, is the purpose of trustful communication — not domination, not intimidation, not the imposition of one’s fixations on others, but open mindedness to the expansion of understandings for the betterment of life, of everyone.

2. What INFORMED Consciousness is

Informed consciousness is about discovering and developing personal potentials, about self-improvement and personal/ social betterment. Consciousness is active and passive. One’s exposure to life in personal upbringing, in family, in community, in cultural and environmental experience is in many ways passive, especially in earliest years. As our faculties develop we engage our consciousness and interact more intentionally. And by conversation we develop learning and communication skills; and by communication we learn and confirm lessons of cultural/ environmental experience.

In learned experience we come to discover cause-and-effect relationships and how we personally prevail upon outcomes, good or bad. If we are passive in our attitude and do nothing to inform our consciousness personally, we limit our potentials and increase the likelihood of unwittingly doing injurious and destructive things; our levels of self-understanding and fulfillment will be diminished and we will suffer loss of self-esteem and competency in interacting positively with others.

Self-reflective consciousness is the stimulus of intelligence. It's what distinguishes us as humans from other animals. Communication and self-reflection open human potentials to the active expansion of horizons, evolutionary development, intentional symbiosis and the endeavor of personal/ social living that values other life and grows in enabling knowledge and common betterment.

3. What AFFIRMATIVE Conscience is

Affirmative conscience is another term for "intentional symbiosis". Symbioses are natural and evolving accommodations of life-forms and functions. The biological successes of life on Earth are outcomes of "intensional" evolution, what is evolution driven by natural forces, physical, chemical, environmental. Intensional evolution (symbiosis) is interactive in "problem-solving", even if not intentionally self-reflective. See:

<http://www.secondenlightenment.org/The%20Evolution%20of%20Symbiosis.pdf>

The evolution of humankind to the high complexity of self-reflective intelligence gives to humanity the choice of being intentionally symbiotic or, if it chooses, to be non-accommodating, non-symbiotic. The intelligence of choice comes with extraordinary potentials for good and for bad, and because of high-risk outcomes, all the more need to be responsible for one's own actions, to be informed and committed to avoid exploiting others and spoiling nature.

Affirmative action, based on self-reflective understandings of life and personal dependence on nature and other life, is what makes choices moral or immoral, and is what "affirmative conscience" is about. Conscience like consciousness is active and passive. "Passive" conscience is re-active, that is, it seeks the moral choice when it is required to make a choice, a decision. "Active" conscience is pro-active, that is, it is alert and aware of bad situations and takes action on its own to do something to make situations better.

**Affirmative conscience (intentional symbiosis) supposes informed consciousness
Informed consciousness supposes trustful communication
Trustful communication supposes affirmative conscience**

**And so continue the mutual iterations of faith and reason in perpetual dialogue,
and the evolving quest for common betterment and interpersonal authentication.**