

## What is Relational Being?

And why might you care?



Consider these propositions.

### **Relational Being:**

- Reframes how we define “reality” and our relationship with it
- Requires that we step away from the desire to be in control of the world and from the belief that we can be, or should be
- Calls for an acceptance of the connectedness of all life at many levels
- Shifts our thinking away from either-or choices and polarities
- Makes our position in reality into a matter of awareness and chosen viewpoints
- Places those choices in a frame of differentiated wholeness rather than oneness
- Changes the way that we see ourselves in time and offers a less fixed, more dynamic sense of what it is to “be”
- Redefines the question of who and what we are, and where the answers come from
- Unifies our relationship with spirituality, away from any previous need to be primarily spirit or body
- Allows us to be located in experiencing and in our role as experiencers
- Is based on an alternative and more complete presentation of science
- Recognises the information field as the driver and shaper of reality, including scientific theories and laws
- Validates human experience of spirituality including forms such as shamanism and mysticism, and makes sense of activities such as prayer

- Centres us in the information field as intuitive and creative co-participants in creation

## **A Comprehensive Reframe**

Human perception of reality and existence has never been a fixed thing. Throughout history it has changed as we learned more about our world. Each step, from telescopes to ocean-crossing ships to space travel, alters our perspective. As we experience an increasingly global connectivity alongside rapid changes of many kinds, it is time for another reframe. Who are we? What is reality?

It is natural for us to see ourselves at the centre of existence. For the big-picture version, think of the time before Galileo when humans believed that the Sun orbited the Earth. When we each consider what is real, it is inevitable that personal experience and “my view” are foremost. It takes effort to see the world through someone else’s eyes or to “walk a mile in their shoes”. Philosophy and science too, have struggled with the question of what is real, and even questioned whether there is such a thing as “reality”. There have been repeated debates about the significance of personal and subjective reality compared with something that is either collective or objective. What’s your perception?

Relational Being is about getting past all of that and setting ourselves free. What if we don’t have to choose between these apparent polarities? What if such debates ask the wrong question in order to pin down a permanent answer in a world where things change all the time? The Relational Being perspective is that fixed answers are incompatible with life itself.

## **Beyond Control**

We are a curious species. Do other species such as dolphins or whales, with apparently high intelligence, ask questions about their existence? As far as we can tell, they don’t, and even humans don’t typically do so until approaching adulthood, if they do so at all.

Descartes is famous for saying “I think, therefore I am”, but in fact, that statement began “I doubt, therefore I think ...” What kind of creature doubts its own existence? Equally, what kind of creature projects its existence outwards, places its origination in the realm of a separate being, and seeks to understand that mind? For several centuries, scientific enquiry was framed by the notion that if we could comprehend all of the rules by which the universe operates, we would know the mind of God. And if we could do that, everything would be ordered and predictable.

This, too, is a misconception of life. We know now that such certainty is not possible.<sup>i</sup> We know, too, that existence operates in ways which are chaotic and fractal; while my ability to comprehend the idea may be limited, I know that I must accept the truth that the flap of a butterfly’s wings in Hawaii may impact the weather in Tokyo.<sup>ii</sup>

The desire for certainty is understandable. Our lives are fragile and our wish to survive is strong. Humans use their minds to recognise patterns so that we will be more likely to find

food, to be sheltered from extremes of weather and to avoid being eaten. At that fundamental level, the better our predictions, the more able we are to control life's risks.

While that desire may be understandable, we also know that the most we can do is improve the odds and we are left with the reality that life is bigger than you and bigger than me. Even more important, it is bigger than humans. We have learned that our existence depends on webs of connection between us and all that is around us. Those webs are complex and similarly interconnected. Humans are just one element in the planetary ecosystem and we are slowly embracing the truths not only that we cannot control it but that our beliefs that we can and that it is the right way to live, have been getting us into big trouble. We have destroyed much of what we depend on and raised individual fragility to the level of our species.

### **Control as Abuse**

When it comes to individual relationships, we are aware of the shift from collaboration to control. A marriage in which one partner alone says what goes and restricts the freedom of the other, leads to restraining orders, refuges and, ideally, to a rehabilitation program for the abuser. We don't have to think about whether this is wrong.

It seems to be less obvious to us when scaling up to our species' relationship with the planet and with other life-forms. We have placed humans at the centre, assumed that we have priority and viewed the planet as in service to us. Resources are there for our benefit. When God is considered, there is a widespread assumption that such resources are God's gift specifically to us. This attitude is an affront to the God of all life. And with or without God, it is an abuse. It is an affront to life itself.

### **Fragmentation and Separation**

If I were to regard myself as the centre of the universe and behaved as such, you would regard me as selfish or even sociopathic. There is generally a limit to our tolerance of others who see their own opinions as the only ones that are true, and who are incapable of accepting that others might also have a valid view. We know, too, the consequences of believing that there is only one right way and that others must be forced into agreement or compliance. It leads to violence, bloodshed, fascism and wars.

The philosophical debates referred to earlier, while they are usually civilised, are no less destructive. Polarisation between personal and collective views of "truth" is fragmenting. Either it makes individual viewpoints irrelevant, or the individual becomes separate from the whole, living in their own world.

Fortunately, most people do not behave according to philosophical theory. Empathy and care for others comes naturally. Embedded in our mammalian evolution are the codes that balance competition with collaboration, and not only at the level of the family or even the species. These days, YouTube and Instagram abound with clips of individual creatures helping others across the species divide. But what comes naturally can nevertheless be subverted by our big brains when we are persuaded that there are reasons to destroy others. While that behaviour can be natural too, since there are fights for resources and

territory, humans have a choice. Our brains, and therefore our philosophies and beliefs, can bend our natures out of shape. This is how they become destructive.

### **It's Not an Either-Or**

We are not separate. We are embedded in the web of life.

We have our individual perspectival realities, but you don't define reality for the whole.

Philosophers can professionally doubt either their own existence or debate whether a larger reality exists. The rest of us are engaged in the more grounded concerns of staying alive. It is idiocy for me to question the existential reality of the 18-wheeler as I cross the road. Even philosophers seem to know enough of this to survive.

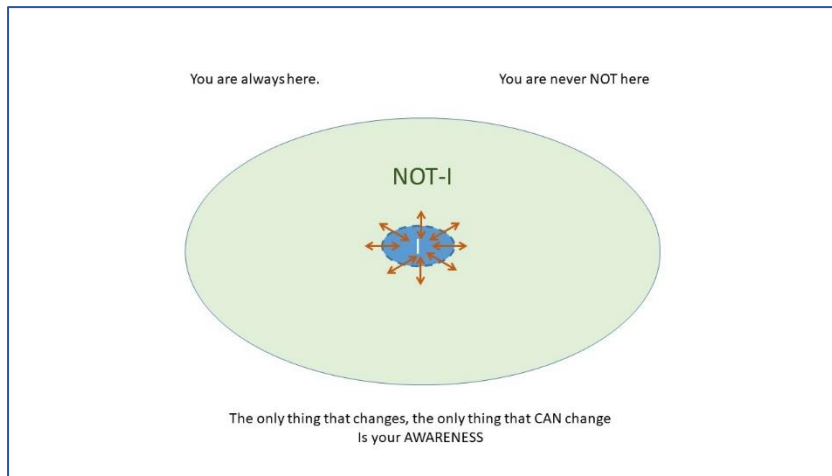
Scientists can professionally investigate the nature of the material reality that surrounds us and that shows up in our bodies. They can define that reality in its material terms and say that anything less material is not part of any reliable knowledge, and therefore not scientific. Even so, scientists are as capable as anyone else of believing in God, loving their partners or making choices of how to vote. Some even have direct spiritual experiences.

I used to think like a scientist. I was raised rationalist and atheistic, trained at Oxford to think scientifically, and I believed that framing of reality. Believed, that is, until I had a very direct experience of psychic/intuitive receiving of data, during a training program I was participating in. In it, I was able to connect to an individual about whom I knew only his name and approximate location and receive a direct sensation of the pain in his head, and to recognise instantly that this was due to a brain tumour. My world was turned inside out. That experience led to further engagement with that program, to becoming one of its trainers and to witnessing that other people were capable of similar detection. This demonstrated repeatedly that such connection to a field of information was both a feature of how the world functions and a natural ability for humans in general.

In the four decades since, I have seen so many demonstrations and proofs of that underlying connection that it is beyond question. Because of the recognition that these experiences were beyond conventional science, I needed to find how to cross a conceptual boundary and join that conventional reality to this new one. There is indeed a coherent scientific framing which covers the physics, biology, evolution, neurophysiology and metaphysics of that joined-up thinking. It also explains more of spiritual experience, alternative healing methodologies and other aspects of human behaviour over several millennia. I put that framework into a book.<sup>iii</sup>

I won't go into the details of that framework, even though in many ways it is at the centre of Relational Being. A great many scientists, writers and thinkers inspired and contributed to it and have since provided further examples and proofs. I want you to know that such material exists in case you are curious, or want to be convinced by more evidence, but you don't need it for Relational Being to make sense or to expand your thinking and being towards this larger reality. My purpose here is to say more about the outcomes in regard to that shift of thinking and living, and open the boundaries of what is possible if you choose to explore that expansion.

## Oneness and Differentiation



When you think about who you are, and the space that your consciousness occupies, the dualistic perspective is that you exist in a place that is separate. You experience yourself in that distinct way. This is our daily reality. When someone asks your name and where you live, you will know the answers.

There is also a perspective of oneness, which holds that this separation is an illusion, since you are part of a cosmic energetic whole, and that you cannot be separate.

I want to encourage you to step beyond this either-or framing into an acceptance that both separation and oneness are aspects of the cosmos and that there is a choice in any moment of which point of view you hold. Your awareness can change. It is possible, through mystical experience or “magic mushrooms”, to experience the loss of the boundary. It is possible to hold the conception that there is no boundary even if you are not in that experience. It’s a choice of where your focus is placed.

This choice does not apply only to you. It also affects your perception or experience of other entities, whether these are solid and material, or not. This creates a different frame, which accepts that all entities, from the 18-wheeler truck to the consciousness of another human, also exist in a distinct way.

The first implication of such a viewpoint is that being in oneness presents an operational limitation to what is possible, since you are either in oneness or you are not. The limitation is not merely conceptual. If you were to apply it, it would be impractical. As a biological entity you cannot live for long by oneness. You would not know where your food and water are. The Buddhist representation of this is “After enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.”

The second implication is that in order to live, it is necessary to accept that there is differentiation within the field of oneness. There is not only “I” and “not-I”, but also you and the 18-wheeler truck. It does not suit me to be physically one with either it or you.

Once you accept that differentiation, you, I and the truck have a relationship. I choose how I wish to be in relation to the truck. I can be distant from it, close to it or even inside and driving it. The relationship between me and you has an additional dimension. The closeness of our connection is determined by each of us.

### **Wholeness and Relational Existence**

Because of the above, the opposite of separation is not oneness, but **wholeness**. The change in perception and the shift in consciousness required for us to function effectively in today's complex and volatile world will arise from our capacity to see living systems in their entirety. This leads into many different directions and although I will unpack them one by one, they form a collective. They are facets of wholeness.

In presenting the personal aspect of two-sided choice about how you and I relate I have presented a small and hopefully easily grasped illustration of a much larger principle. I return now to the philosophical debate about what reality is, and the earlier statement that the polarised context is not compatible with life.

The larger principle I am describing is that reality itself involves a relationship between any given entity and that which is around it. Some of what describes the keyboard I am typing on is defined by what it is, its components, shape, colour, etc. It has an inherent existence, defined from within. It is also defined from outside. It has facets of its being that are determined by its use, by its connection to the desktop and by my use of it. If I decide that it is knackered and needs replacing, that changes what it is. If I take it to my local rubbish facility, its being is altered. First it is no longer a keyboard but instead an item of refuse and soon after it ceases to be an entity and becomes minerals for recycling.

This principle extends to everything in the universe. Even the smallest particle exists in a context. The principle becomes more important as we move to larger scales, because the number of relationships increase and it becomes hugely significant when we talk about living systems and most significant of all when we are dealing with human activity and the way that conscious choice becomes an additional feature.

### **The Quantum Distraction**

This is something of a tangent at this point, but needs to be put explicitly to the side because of how influential it has been, not only on professional science and philosophy, but on popular renditions and New Age culture.

For a century now it has been part of common parlance to speak of relativity theory and uncertainty. As before, I will avoid scientific detail and speak in the simplest possible terms. Since Einstein proposed relativity theory, we have heard of  $E=MC^2$ , possibly the only widely known equation above the level of  $2+2=4$ . And even if most of us don't know what that really means, we know of its implication – that matter is a form of energy. Because of that, we also know that there is a sense in which matter is not "real", just energy in motion, and with most of what we see as solid consisting, in fact, overwhelmingly of empty space. While this is true, I will echo the earlier position that I took about doubt and other questions of

what is real. None of it makes any difference. I am here at my still-defined-as-a-keyboard and you are reading ink on paper or pixels of different colours. It is what it is.

Of at least equal impact is the concept of Heisenberg uncertainty. Since matter is also energy in motion, when a particle is observed in apparatus it may behave as a wave of energy or as a solid piece of matter.

The traditional presentation of this derives from Heisenberg's view that until you observe what is happening, you are unable to be certain what you are dealing with. And because of that, it is possible to know how fast it is traveling, or exactly where it is, but not both.

Once again, we are in either-or territory. The scientific desire for certainty brings with it a desire to say which it is, but this is unachievable. At the same time that desire brings a reluctance to say that it is both.

Theoretical physicist Carlo Rovelli has an elegant response to this problem. What it is, he says, depends on what apparatus you select to measure with. If there is a definition, it rests on the choice of what it is to be defined by. This is the theory of Relational Quantum Mechanics.

It has been common in some circles, and it is certainly convenient, to avoid any requirement for explanation of how more esoteric phenomena in the world arise, such as energy-based medicine, with a glib "everything is energy" response. This has all the usability of a chocolate teapot. There are mysteries in the world, but energy medicine is not one of them. Not only can it be explained but the better our explanations become, the more skilled humanity can become in preventing illness and curing it without pharmaceuticals.

All that will be said here about Relational Being relies on the equivalent, outside of a quantum laboratory, of the idea that what a thing is, depends on who or what is making the observation or providing a definition. In the context of humans and living systems, this brings us back to centre of how life works and to what Relational Being means. Let's look more deeply into some of those meanings.

### **Relationship with Time**

Why did I say that the search for certainty is incompatible with life? Once again, I suggest that the answer is simple. Nothing in life is static or fixed. The very essence of life is ongoing change. You cannot put a pin in the butterfly without it being dead. Only then does it cease to contribute to the fractal unfolding of surrounding patterns of energy.

All of life is subject to this truth. So, uncertainty is essential. It is not just that the search for some kind of clockwork outworking of the mind of God cannot be achieved. It is that the capacity life has to take new directions, whether those are random or somehow selected intentionally by living entities, is foundational. All of creation has emerged in that way, the core of evolution has also followed that path and you and I have free will. Even if you believe in God, it is necessary to understand that it is the essence of Its creative process, the birth itself of a living world.

To achieve certainty, it would be necessary to stop time itself. One could then, at least in theory, define where every particle in the universe is and what relationships it had with all others. For that instant certainty would exist. Life unfolds in time. It is, as Buckminster Fuller observed, a scenario, and you cannot get out of scenario.

It has been said that time exists so that everything does not happen at once. Regardless of any statements by physicists that time does not exist, it is very much our biological reality that it does. You are probably quite attached to that condition and keen for it to continue. For consciousness there are some exceptions, because the information field is less subject to time. For example, Constellation work and pre-cognitive dreaming demonstrate that the boundaries of our awareness are porous. These do form part of the Relational Being model, since they, too, show contexts where we are not separate. Even so, the bulk of our waking existence functions in a time sequence from past to future where we relate to what is happening now. There is “now” and “not-now”. Our awareness can shift, but it is in the now that we make our choices.

## **Time 2**

A second, crucial aspect of time connects to my use of the word “Being”. It is easy to view this in a static way, where “I am” or “I be” are statements with a fixed quality. But we also know that who I am now is not in any sense who I was yesterday. My experience has changed. My cells have changed (you lost thousands of skin cells in the time it took to read this sentence). The grammatical significance of “-ing” words – playing, listening, swimming – expresses a continuum in time.

Because of this, Relational Being should be seen clearly in a dynamic way, ongoing and unfolding. Once again, it is a scenario and a journey. Its relationality is not only in your own experience of the passage of time. The world around us is also subject to change from moment to moment. The air moves, the weather changes and my tea has gone cold.

As I draw your attention to that aspect of reality, perhaps your awareness of it is altered. Maybe you can notice what is changing around you, the car passing your window or the bird landing on telegraph wires. Most of us, most of the time, are taking in limited amounts of that surrounding information, and for good reason. The alternative is potential overwhelm, plus failure to filter out what is less important. An animal that cannot do this is either an ineffective hunter or easy prey.

At the same time, I am referring above only to what we directly sense. This is a tiny fraction of the changes that we know are taking place, some of which will affect your life. A political decision is taken, a store worker stacks the shelf with the produce you will buy later and the seeds germinate that will create a future bowl of your breakfast granola. Is this a pointless recital of something obvious? I don't think so. It says something about the position we take in our own existence. It says something about our relationship to it all and about the nature of Being itself. All of those events affect YOU and you cannot be cognisant of all of them. I don't imagine that you would want to be.



## Your Two Brains

You probably know already that your brain has two halves and that they are functionally different. Iain McGilchrist, perhaps the world's expert on this area of science, has written a long, brilliant and evidence-filled book on the topic which I will now insult by summarising it in a few paragraphs.

For an animal or bird to survive, it must do two tasks. The first is to focus its attention, for example, on hunting its prey or gathering seeds. The second is at the same time to remain aware of its wider environment so that it is aware of a potential predator. Eat, or be eaten.

These tasks require different forms of information processing, so brains have evolved to focus on them with some degree of functional separation. The two halves must be connected so that we function as one coherent entity, but the connection is sort-of "filtered" and there is a choice at any instant regarding which of the perceptual modes takes priority.

In human neurological evolution, while both hemispheres have become much larger, the connective tissue (corpus callosum) has not grown in proportion. We have been evolving in the socio-cultural realm too. Very recently (in evolutionary timescales) we have been learning that our cognitive and analytical brains enable us to create tools. We have extended the physicality of opposable thumbs into all the technologies with which we manipulate the physical world. We have also extended the physicality of grunts and gestures into language such that we manipulate both knowledge and each other through language.

The title of McGilchrist's book is "The Master and his Emissary". The story he borrows from Nietzsche is of a great and wise ruler whose choices on behalf of those whom he rules are informed by data, information that his emissaries gather from all corners of the empire. He is able to see the whole picture. This is the image of the right hemisphere with its wide scanning and peripheral awareness.

In the story, a trusted emissary becomes aware of how much power is available, and that he could make his own independent decisions, taking control as if he were the Master. The result is that decisions are no longer made with awareness of the needs of the whole. This is the image of the left hemisphere with its narrow analytical focus.

Attributed to Einstein is the quote "The intuitive mind is a sacred gift and the rational mind is a faithful servant." McGilchrist is saying something similar – that "though the cerebral hemispheres should cooperate, they have for some time been in conflict ... At present the domain – our civilization – finds itself in the hands of the vizier who, however gifted, is effectively an ambitious regional bureaucrat with his own interests at heart."

The right hemisphere is responsible for many aspects that we might consider important to human understanding. Metaphor and context, our sense of self, our values and our systemic perspectives are held there. It is the realm of our experience and of the narrative itself, rather than the re-presentation of our experience, or the ordering of the flow in time. It is essentially concerned with the relations between things. Where the left hemisphere focuses

on *what* we do, the right is more concerned with *how*, and thus with the qualitative and values-driven question of *in what way*.

We cannot deal with our challenges without all of these. Ecosystem damage is in essence the failure to take into account the systemic whole, the context of our existence and our human relationship with other life-forms. For several centuries, our societal stance has prioritised the analytical, fragmenting mode of being and become anti-cooperative.

### **Your Mind**

Your brain is not your mind. If that statement surprises you at all, then think about a time when you were drunk, or in love, or sleep-deprived. Have you ever been so hungry that you could not think of anything but food?

What you know from such experiences is that your experience and your ability to make choices are greatly influenced by the way your body is operating. We even have a language for that. Anger relates to the bladder and kidneys, so we are “pissed off”. The British are famous for controlling emotions with a “stiff upper lip”. We call courage “having a backbone, and the opposite “spineless”. Beneath such surface perceptions is the scientific knowledge that we are shaped by “molecules of emotion”<sup>iv</sup>, the many hormonal messenger chemicals that mediate relationships between our organs, including the brain.

It is also a little-known fact that the brain is not in charge. More information is sent from the heart to the brain than vice versa. Our language, too, recognises some sort of fundamental truth about the seat of our emotions and being. All of this needs to be understood as telling us that the body is “mind all over”.

That much is in the domain of what our conventional science knows, however new and limited its understanding of the role of messenger molecules. Outside its domain is the intuitive connectivity that I described earlier with my story of psychic connection and that I have provided a scientific framework for in my book “The Science of Possibility”.

When we recognise that the information that the universe operates by is within us as well as in the field as a whole, the question of what mind is and what it is capable of, alters drastically. In effect, it is a reversal of our conventional viewpoint, according to which the mind, our awareness and whatever you choose to call “consciousness” are created by your brain or mind. The opposite is true. The information field, operating both internally and externally, is what shapes the way we function. Of course, many of those functions are hardwired, built into the rules of chemistry and cellular process, but that is not the case with our awareness. Since the mind can and does access that information at any time, even if we are not aware of it, the embodied mind does not exist in isolation. In this sense too, it is in relationship. The information field is an essential component of Relational Being. Indeed, you might say that it is the essence of Relational Being and the deepest source of Wholeness.

## Relational Being and Spirituality

What do we mean by spirituality? How can we make that potentially complex question simple?

To start with, let's distinguish it from religion. Religion puts belief systems, definitions and structures around how we relate to a non-material world and to concepts like the divine or higher powers such as gods. Some liken it to a finger pointing at the moon rather than the moon itself.

The very word spirituality indicates the challenge of definition, since spirit is evidently not material. The word itself is related to breath and to intangibles such as what inspires us. We can talk of human spirit – something which is internal to you and animates you beyond your physiological being – but spirituality is wider than that because it is about how we relate to something beyond ourselves, even though we can't define what that something is.

So, what does it mean to you? Your answer, whatever it is, will probably be less a definition and more of an idea, or a concept or maybe even a belief. I would like to suggest that how you see it will depend on your experience.

Not everyone has an experience of spirit, and it is not essential to Relational Being that you do. In that case, what follows here may be less relevant to you personally, but it is highly relevant to humanity. Throughout millennia and across cultures, in so very many forms, our species has expressed such experiences. From shamanistic connection to plant and animal spirits, to religious mysticism and direct connection to the Divine, to speaking with departed loved ones, to simple deep inner knowing, this is what people have done and have described.

Scientific materialism says that all of these represent, technically, a psychosis, which is to say something that is a dysfunctional artefact or side-effect of the way our brains imagine and perceive. If you hold that view, then this section is not relevant to you. There is no evidence that counts within that narrowly material-oriented science. Nothing that humans say counts for much, so my stories of psychic events, and all other such human experiences are merely part of the psychosis.

Relational Being is a valid description of our position in creation even if you do hold that orthodox scientific perspective<sup>iv</sup>, but it becomes vastly richer when we engage with something more and I suggest it is much more respectful of human intelligence and understanding when we give people credit for knowing what they are talking about. So, I move forward here on the basis that you, too, have some form of inner knowing that there is something more. The question then becomes, what is that, and what does it say about your existence?

So, holding the assumption that you have your own notion, however fuzzy it may be, that there is something going on here, I come to some crucial questions.

Are you a human being having a spiritual experience?

or

Are you a spiritual being having a human experience?

Take your time.

At the centre of this choice is a very basic existential question. What are you? Are you spirit or matter?

You may detect here, some resonance to the earlier questions about physics and the apparent energy/matter conundrum. Being spirit and being energy could seem to be synonymous. While there is a strong correspondence, I suggest that there is a significant difference. Energy is diffuse and formless, even in a conceptual sense. Spirit is more than that because there is the potential for something individuated, differentiated and somewhat distinct. I hope that you may be sensing another parallel here – that once again we are dealing with elements of awareness and choice, with the I and the Not-I. And once again, the dichotomy, the either-or sense of the key questions as posed just above, pushes us into something unhelpful, or even false.

And if that is correct, then what is left of the existential inquiry: who and what are you?

Here is my suggestion.

**You are the experience.**

Hold that thought for a moment and consider what it means to you, and how you feel about it. Perhaps it doesn't feel quite enough, so here is something more.

**You are (also) the experiencer.**

How does that land?

I encourage you to take your time and allow yourself to get beneath the words here. You may even find it helpful to take these notions into a contemplation or a meditation. For me the implications have unfolded into something significant, into a different way of seeing myself and how I am in the world. Rather, I might say, how I BE. The shift is simultaneously subtle and profound.

For many years my answer to the key question would have been that I am a spiritual being having a human experience. I was content with that because it supported my belief that there are aspects to my existence which have continuity beyond this particular body. Now it no longer feels sufficient. The existential question calls for me to be one thing or another. I am human. Or I am spirit. Each of them on their own feels like a trap; a constriction, a separation. In particular, prioritising spirit over being human placed my body in an inferior position which was contrary to everything I was learning about embodiment. My physical form as a human is not something to carry "me" around. It IS me. I AM it. I am my body just as much as I am my spirit.

I don't wish to tell you what you should think or feel. My purpose is to present you with the idea that there is a choice, and it is yours to make. It is to invite you into awareness of what choice you have previously made, consciously or unconsciously and to some consideration of how you now stand with that.

In keeping with the whole Relational theme of this exploration, spirituality and spiritual experiences do not exist in one place or another, in humanness or in spirit-ness. Who we are exists in the space in-between and in the relationship between them. In as much as it can be defined at all, it is from a mixture of both human and spirit, embodied and enspirited, material and energetic, according to your moment-by-moment choice and the focus of your awareness.

Let's return now to the earlier question – “what is spirituality?” – as there is another essential thread that we should follow.

We have been exploring the internal perspective of our experience and how we frame that experience. That is all most discussions of this subject do. There are two usual ways of seeing this territory. One, as mentioned, is from scientific materialism which holds that there is nothing to discuss. The other is from the viewpoint of the experiences themselves and the descriptions that the experiencers give to them. In so far as there is an exterior, its nature is determined by that subjective interpretation: I experienced God; I connected to the spirit of that tree; I spoke with my deceased grandmother. It is implicit in such interpretations that something or somethings are there, but we lack any frame of reference for them to be anything other than isolated phenomena.

There's a big and essential step for us to take here. While I have arrived at this point through the frame of spirituality, I want to shift to the underlying reality and ask what it is that people are having an experience of. It has been called “spirit” almost by default, and in the absence of a better terminology.

Some Eastern religious perspectives describe our experience of the material realm as “Maya”, meaning illusion, representing whatever is beneath as being the “true” reality. In effect they reject all particles in favour of the waves of energy and the empty space that everything moves in. In consequence, the true reality they offer as being the genuine nature of the Divine and label as “oneness” is filled with everything-at-once and nothing-at-all. This probably sounds more dismissive than I intend to be, because I don't deny that something is taking place. Mystical visions or magic mushroom experiences are connected to something and may be better represented by the art of Alex Gray than by any words that could be used here. Nevertheless, in keeping with earlier statements about the “I” and the “Not-I” being optional points of view and choices of where we place our awareness, I want us to explore the texture and content of the non-material space. What is the nature of the “something” that is there? What is its relationship to the day-to-day world of Maya? What (if anything) connects the otherwise isolated phenomena?

We have only one world. How do we end the debate, the conflict and any perceived need to choose? How do we become whole?

## A Universe of Information

The alternative scientific framework that I offer in “The Science of Possibility” is essentially simple. The evidence is complex and detailed, but where it leads is not. I even suggest it is easy, if you are willing to look at the world in a fresh way.

I was taught a definition of God, a being that is omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent. That is to say, something that knows everything, is everywhere and holds all of the power in the universe.

Welcome to the Information Field.

Consider the question, what shapes the forms that energy takes when it becomes matter? Past scientific answers have been a combination of mathematics, randomness and “that is how it is” laws of nature. Many of those answers have been accurate enough to land humans on the moon. However, they have not been as reliable when it comes to living systems. What then governs the subsequent unfolding of the universe as we know it, including us and our experiences? Neither mathematics nor random chance offers anything into our exploration of connectivity and spiritual experience.

What if the universe has a kind of memory that began by holding the information about which mathematical rules will repeatedly create stable particles and then records everything about where those particles are and what is happening with them? What if that record of information continues to expand as matter creates more complex combinations, forms molecules, amino acids, and cells?

It may seem mind-meltingly complex to conceive of such a field of information being a record of everything that has ever happened, and of it holding the conditions for whatever will happen next. In a way it is that complex, far beyond human minds to comprehend. At the same time, it is no more of stretch than knowing that there are 200 billion galaxies in the observable universe and that each of them may contain a thousand million stars. It is perhaps no less difficult for you to think of the 40 trillion cells in your body. And ultimately it is no more complex than what many humans have believed about God.

The bottom line for this conception is that the field of information knows everything and is everywhere. It is in you and me and the dandelions that grow in your garden. It has the distinct rules for the construction of dandelions rather than daisies. Since its information about what is (where the dandelion is) and its rules for what may happen (the shape and genetic content of a dandelion seed) guide the unfolding of everything that happens to every molecule and every living being, it is also all-powerful. It conforms to the definition of God that I began with, and you could, if you wish to, call it God, or a God-mind, or the presence of the Divine.<sup>v</sup>

The information field<sup>vi</sup> holds the relationships between everything and everything else. In asking what the connection would be between any of the descriptions that we give to our spiritual experiences, we have our answer. The field holds the knowing that we connect to when we have a direct experience of God. It holds the field of information that a shaman encounters as the spirit of a plant. It has whatever is known and knowable about your

deceased grandmother. What we have been calling spirit is the flow of information in the field. Spiritual experience is the experience of connection to that information flow.

The information field also provides the means, the mechanisms by which a psychic experience such as I described earlier, can happen. As miraculous as it is, it takes it out of the realm of mystery. The information about that person and his brain tumour was there in the field, and since both he and I are in the field and the field is in each of us, connection and knowledge are possible.

In principle, it *is* that simple and that easy. Of course, it gets more complicated as soon as you get into the details, but so does everything in life. If you are engaging with the reality that I am describing, it may rapidly take you into the implications and the follow-on questions. So, what happens when ...? How does ...? How did you ...? It might seem a bit daunting and bring so very many new unknowns. But it also brings new ways of knowing and new possibilities for how you shape your existence. What can you do when you learn how to engage with and live by this new reality? One of the reasons for my book title was the effectively limitless possibilities that emerge when you enter that relational space, become part of that experiencing and embrace the wholeness of being simultaneously embodied and enspirited.

### **Qualities Not Quantities**

Relational Being is qualitative. Here I refer back to the distinction made by Iain McGilchrist regarding the ways in which our brain hemispheres operate. When we deal with the world in terms of material objects, it leads to a focus on what, where, how many, how fast. Up to a point this is quite successful in our management of the material world, but it is not adequate to human issues of who we BE and how our awareness operates. There are many aspects of how we choose to behave for which such basic functional frames provide no relevant information.

When we engage with the relationship between things and events, the terms tend to be different. We are more likely to ask in what manner and in what context. We are concerned with different kinds of shapers. As described above, you cannot find a quantitative frame for spiritual experience; more significantly, more day-to-day considerations are excluded. If you want to choose what will make you happy today, that is influenced by who you are and your preferences as well as by what is available. At one level it is as basic as choosing from a dozen ice-cream flavours. At another level one is factoring in the behaviour of other people and maybe even asking what will make them happy.

A quantitative approach may provide what we need in order to survive. As soon as there is an aspiration beyond survival we are concerned with priorities. What do we value? Is your connection to your parents more important than your independence? Would you prioritise close adherence to rules over what would bring success to your business? How do you engage with the questions of balance between the needs of humanity and those of the planet's other species. At a personal level the choice may be as basic as how you treat the spider you discover in your bathtub.

Just as, going by Buckminster Fuller's observation, you are never out of scenario, Relational Being means that you are never free from context. Metaphorically it resembles being a surfer on a wave. The wave doesn't stop, and neither can you control it. Our quality of living has its existence in a continuum of relationality to the dynamic of flow. It is maintained by a stream of choices about balance and direction. Our priorities, our perceptions of what has value to us, are our direction-setting guidance and they are based to a high degree on qualitative choices about our relationship to the world.<sup>vii</sup>

### **The Icing on the Cake: Creative Participation**

The last feature I wish to place before you is optional, in the sense that you can live from the relational space whether or not you choose to engage with it. I will touch on this lightly as it is the subject of a full description elsewhere.<sup>viii</sup> This is not to minimise its considerable value, only to recognise that it is not our focus here.

*Since the information field is everywhere, including within us, and*

*since what happens next is shaped by the flows within the field, and*

*since you are an active component of the field and have the capacity to consciously influence the flow of information;*

*your relationship with the future is not necessarily an entirely passive one.*

It might legitimately be said that many humans have believed in such interactivity, whether in the form of prayer, or creative visualisation, or techniques such as "the Law of Attraction". In that sense Relational Being is not bringing something entirely new. It does, however, have a lot of implications for how such practices might work, what is possible, and what is realistically achievable.

### **Conclusion**

This document is only an introduction, and even so, is quite long. This gives an indication of how large a mindset shift is involved and how wide the implications might be. The website<sup>ix</sup> reveals more of the detail and of the various facets of the work and lenses we can apply. So, for now, I will once more summarise the elements that have been used here in presenting what Relational Being is.

Relational Being:

- Reframes how we define "reality" and our relationship with it
- Requires that we step away from the desire to be in control of the world and from the belief that we can be, or should be
- Calls for an acceptance of the connectedness of all life at many levels
- Shifts our thinking away from either-or choices and polarities
- Makes our position in reality into a matter of awareness and chosen viewpoints
- Places those choices in a frame of differentiated wholeness rather than oneness
- Changes the way that we see ourselves in time and offers a less fixed, more dynamic sense of what it is to "be"



- Redefines the question of who and what we are, and where the answers come from
- Unifies our relationship with spirituality, away from any previous need to be primarily spirit or body
- Allows us to be located in experiencing and in our role as experiencers
- Is based on an alternative and more complete presentation of science
- Recognises the information field as the driver and shaper of reality, including scientific theories and laws
- Validates human experience of spirituality including forms such as shamanism and mysticism, and makes sense of activities such as prayer
- Centres us in the information field as intuitive and creative co-participants in creation

All of these elements contribute to a sense of wholeness in which our choices of what to be aware of, what points of view we adopt, and what actions we initiate are simultaneously one and distinct, individual and collectively/contextually informed. There is a high degree of freedom to be who we choose and at the same time to embed those choices in sustainable connection to the living systems that we depend on and in the relationships with other individuals in our spheres of influence.

Who do you choose to be?

Jon Freeman

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<sup>i</sup> In 1931, the Austrian logician Kurt Gödel published his incompleteness theorem, a result widely considered one of the greatest intellectual achievements of modern times. The theorem states that **in any reasonable mathematical system there will always be true statements that cannot be proved.**

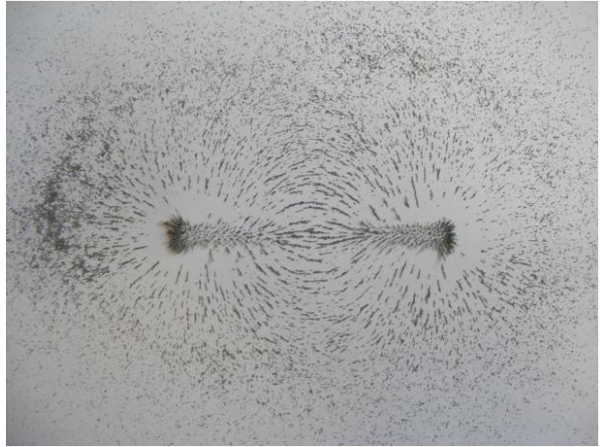
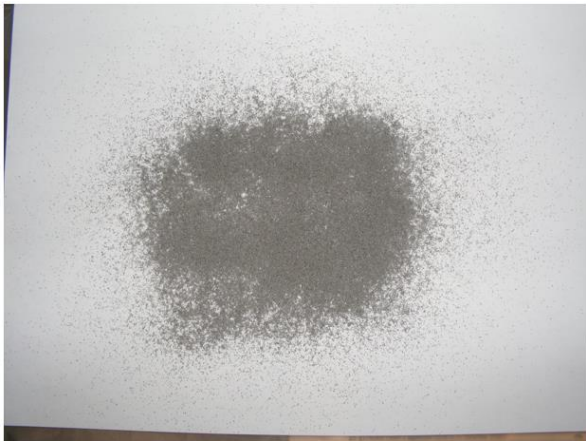
<sup>ii</sup> <https://www.organism.earth/library/document/order-out-of-chaos>

<sup>iii</sup> [The Science of Possibility: Patterns of connected consciousness](#)

<sup>iv</sup> If you can stomach it, Richard Dawkins book “The God Delusion” presents the “only matter matters” arguments very clearly.

<sup>v</sup> One way of describing this perspective is as panentheism – ‘theism’ indicating God, ‘pan’ meaning everywhere and ‘en’ indicating that it is within.

<sup>vi</sup> If you have difficulty understanding how a field can shape what happens, the two pictures here show what happens when you place a bar magnet under a piece of paper covered with iron powder. The magnet’s field is not visible, but it shapes how the powder is organised. Maybe you have done this experiment at school. Scientists sometimes complain when, for example, energy healers use the concept of a field of energy to describe how they work. But there is no scientific explanation for a field of magnetism, just as there is no explanation for why gravity exists, only descriptions of how it acts. They are features of the universe. Just as information is.



vii Spiral Dynamics is a comprehensive theory based on the research of Prof. Clare W. Graves that systematises the full conception of how humans adapt to changing life conditions by shifts in their priority codes (values systems). There is a 1-hour basic [introduction to the model here](#).

viii [Your Access to Possibility](#)



ix [Relational Being website](#)

