



EARLY ACCESS SNEAK PREVIEW

CHAPTER 5

© 2008, 2009 PJ EBY, ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

5

DARE: The Mechanics Of Passionate Purpose

“Remember, if you opt for a safe life, you will never know what it’s like to win.”

– Richard Branson, Screw It, Let’s Do It!

PASSION IS AN UNDIVIDED MIND

Have you ever really **lived in the moment**?

Maybe you were playing a video game, or an actual sport. Perhaps you were deeply involved in some artistic or intellectual activity. Or it could even have been a romantic moment, or a wonderful vacation.

Whatever it was, you probably felt as if time had stopped, or that it could “just go on forever”. Or maybe you were so caught up in it that there didn’t even seem to be a “you” experiencing time at all.

And if you were *truly* living in the moment, then you weren’t worried about the past or future. You weren’t even thinking of anything else at all.

And that’s what an **undivided mind** feels like.

It feels *good*!

Because, when you’re in that state, you’re using your mind and body the way they were *meant* to be used. And you can get so absorbed and engaged by what you’re doing or experiencing, that there’s hardly any mental “room” left over to think about yourself or worry about anything else.

Feels a lot better than a *divided* mind, doesn't it?

Take your current goal or problem, for example. You want something, but you're not going after it. In other words, your mind is **divided** about it.

You're torn between wanting to do something, but "on the other hand" there's some problem (or problems) that you're facing.

Perhaps you don't feel like you have enough time... skill... energy...

Or maybe there are people who might not *like* it if you do it... or you feel afraid, stuck, and blocked.

Or it could be that you're just torn between multiple choices, all attractive... but you just can't get yourself to *choose* one.

Heck, maybe you just feel like you don't have any choices to begin with!

But whichever of these is the case, the fundamental problem is that you don't have a **single best course of action** to follow. You want more than one thing (either to get or to avoid), or you just don't know what you want in the first place.

Now, if we were truly logical creatures, we could weigh all the pros and cons and come to a perfectly **rational** decision about which of our choices were best, or what we *should* want. And perhaps you've already **tried** doing just that!

But we are **biological** robots, not electronic ones. So we don't *run* on electrons and logic circuits.

We run on *chemistry*!

And I mean that *literally*, as well as figuratively.

You see, while our nerves and brain cells do communicate electrically, the vast majority of our body's inner and outer activities are orchestrated **chemically**. Even the brain is heavily influenced and directed by chemical messages originating in various glands throughout the body.

And we call these chemical messages, **emotions**.

At least, that's what we call the ones we can *sense*! Because usually, we only become aware that we even *have* emotions, as the result of their

effects on our body or mind. For example, we can sense fear by the sudden outward focusing of the senses, and by the changes in our breathing, heartbeat, and muscle tension.

Now, in an evolutionary sense, there's no such thing as a "bad" emotion. We have all the emotions we do, because all of them served some **survival** purpose at some point in our genetic history.

But clearly, some of them are more *pleasant* than others, and some are more **useful**, when it comes to achieving our goals.

In particular, *negative* emotions are not very useful for achieving goals. Because, as we've already seen, that's not really what they're *for*!

And so, the simple truth of the matter is this: apart from the laws of physics, the only real **limitations** we have in our lives...

Are those created by our **negative emotions**!

Because, if you didn't feel some kind of negative emotion each time you thought about what you want or what choices you have, you'd have *already* figured out what to do, and you'd already be *doing* it!

So you're only stuck in hesitation, indecision, and procrastination because every time you try to choose (and stick to!) a **single** course of action, your brain and body start squirting chemicals into you that say, "Danger! Caution! Something Bad Is About To Happen!"

In contrast, think of all the times you **quickly** and **easily** make decisions – the times when you're **confident** about making them.

At those times, your brain and body are using a *different* set of chemicals: the ones that keep your attention focused, and move you towards that timeless state of **flow**.

Passion.

Living in the *moment*.

So these emotions – these **chemicals** – are what *truly* make the difference between success and struggling in a given area of your life.

And if you want to get out of struggle and into success, you're going to need to know how to get your body to dole out *different chemicals*.

Which is why you're about to learn...

THE SEVEN LAWS OF EMOTIONAL MECHANICS

Everyone uses emotion to make decisions. People with brain damage to their emotional systems have a hard time making any decision at all, and when they do make a decision it's usually bad.

—Temple Grandin, Animals In Translation

Just like everything else about your mind and body, your emotions are ruled by the **iron law** of cause and effect. They occur for mechanical *reasons*, and therefore, they can be controlled by mechanical *methods*.

However, while emotions are lawful in this cause-and-effect sense, they do not follow the same patterns of thought that our **logical** brains do.

You see, your logical brain likes to view the world as a kind of **arithmetic**: adding up benefits, subtracting costs, and “weighing” the pros and cons. (In fact, this is where the word “rational” comes from: computing the “ratio” of good vs. bad!)

Your emotional brain, however, doesn't work this way at all! Being chemically based, it works more like **flavors and colors** do: if you mix the wrong ones together, you end up with something nasty or ugly!

In other words, chemistry is a matter of mixing the *right elements* in the *right proportions*. And certain things can't be mixed at all, if you want a pleasant result.

Fortunately, the rules of emotional chemistry are a **lot** easier to master than those of painting or cooking!

Really, the only thing that might **keep** you from grasping these rules is that they might seem too *simple*. (It is, after all, a common idea in our culture to regard emotions as complex, mysterious and uncontrollable things, that aren't to be tampered with.)

So, if you have any of those kinds of beliefs, then you may experience some difficulty accepting one or more of the laws I'm about to reveal to you.

If that happens, however, I encourage you to *suspend* your critical judgment, just long enough to *consider* what I'm actually saying. Because my own, previously-mistaken beliefs about emotion were a big part of

what kept me from making a big breakthrough in my life, a **lot** sooner!

And so, the sooner you “get” these laws yourself, the sooner you’ll be able to *really* change your life, by getting **real** control of your emotions.

And I don’t mean by pumping yourself up with so-called “motivation” and “positive thinking”, either!

Law #1: Motivation Is Not A *Choice*

You see, as with everything else, willpower simply **doesn’t work** for controlling your emotions.

Because, by the time you’re feeling a negative emotion, that existing emotion’s **chemicals** are already in your bloodstream. So anything you do with your mind or body to “fight” the emotion at that point is only fighting the *symptoms*, not the **cause**.

So, when you grit your teeth and tighten your face to try and force out a smile, all you’re doing is pitting one group of muscles against another... and that other set of muscles has the chemical advantage!

What’s more, despite what the self-help gurus imply, you cannot simply **choose** to want things, be motivated, or even *commit* to a course of action, any more than you can “choose” to grow an extra arm or a leg!

That’s because these emotions are your robot brain’s *outputs*, not its inputs. They’re just like little gauges on the dashboard of your brain, showing you whether you’ve got enough motivational “fuel”!

And so, when you try to deliberately “pump yourself up” with motivation or belief, it’s like trying to fill your car with gas by **moving the fuel gauge**, or chanting “I choose to have a full tank!”

In other words, it might make you feel a *little* better for a *short* while (through **denial**), but it won’t keep your “car” from grinding to a halt!

Because the only thing that really *controls* the chemistry of your emotions...

Is your robot brain’s *prediction* system.

Law #2: Feelings Are Always About The Future

*The single most important thing emotions do for an animal is allow him to predict the future. We didn't always know that, but thanks to research, we do now.... Emotions don't just give you motivation; they give you information – information about the future and what you need to **do** about it.*

– Temple Grandin, *Animals In Translation*

You see, most emotions are about preparing the body or brain for some kind of *action*. For example, it could be an *external* action, the way fear might prepare you to run away from a tiger.

Or it might be *internal*, like what happens in your brain after you make a bad chess move: that feeling of “D’oh!” or “I can’t believe I was so stupid!”

And that feeling is a chemical that influences the **learning** functions of your brain. Specifically, it helps your brain *mark* the action you took as leading to an undesirable result!

And if you think carefully about it, you will see there is **no other use** for an emotion *after the fact*.

After all, once you’ve *made* the bad chess move, what difference does it make to feel **bad** about it? You can’t go back and change it, so *why feel bad?*

But there are **two** reasons for that bad feeling.

First, feeling bad about the move is just a *side-effect* of the chemicals telling your brain to **cross that move off** the list of “good move ideas” in the future.

And second, the feeling isn’t really about what *already* happened, it’s about what you think is *going to happen next!*

After all, the only way your bad move can have **meaning**, is if it *affects the outcome of the game!* Otherwise, it wouldn’t **matter**.

So every feeling is about the **future**. Either what you think is going to happen *this* time, or what you need to remember for *next* time!

And why is this **so** important?

Because, when we think that emotions come from the past or the present, we're looking through the *wrong end of the telescope*, and think we have a **lot less control** than we actually do!

If we assume we're happy or sad because of the things that have *already* happened to us, then there is clearly **nothing** we can do, except try to improve our circumstances and maybe have "better luck next time".

But emotions are really about the *future*, not the past. Otherwise, lottery ticket buyers would be sad about having spent money, and lottery winners would be happy for longer than six months!

You see, studies show that most lottery winners are *less* happy, six months after winning, than they were when they were **poor**.

And that seems pretty counterintuitive, if you think of emotions being about the **past** or **present**. I mean, you might think, "shouldn't they be *happy* with all that money?"

But if you realize that emotions are about the *future*, then it actually makes **perfect sense**.

You see, when they bought the ticket, they were *anticipating* their big winnings: **looking forward** to them, in other words. And when they first won the big jackpot, they were again looking *forward* to an improved lifestyle.

But, six months later, having gotten used to the money and the lifestyle, there was nothing else to look **forward** to... and thus, *nothing to feel good about!*

In fact, as soon as they realize there's nothing to feel good about in the *future*, they begin anticipating that their life has nowhere to go but **down**... and they then feel *bad* about it.

Do you see? You feel good when you anticipate a *better future*. You feel bad when you anticipate a **worse** one.

And it's this *anticipation* that's the **key** to *mastering* your emotions.

*What is wrong with positive thinking? In a word – **truth**.*

– Robert Fritz, The Path of Least Resistance

Unfortunately, you don't directly control your *anticipation*, either!

Otherwise, "positive thinking" would work for everyone, and you could have a great life simply by imagining good things happening to you in the future. You could get out of bed every morning saying, "It's going to be a great day!" and have it actually **work**.

Yes, these things *do* work for some people. But when they work, they work because they're simply reinforcing that person's *already-existing* positive attitude.

So if thinking or speaking positively feels **fake** or **foolish** to you, it's because you and your robot brain are having a *disagreement...* over the *likelihood* of your positive predictions.

Because your robot brain is **constantly** predicting things. As I type, mine is predicting how far my fingers need to move to reach the keys, and what thoughts I should try to communicate next. And as you read, yours is trying to predict what words and ideas will come next, and then checking to see if it's what you expect, something you already know, and so on.

All day long it goes, predicting, predicting, predicting. It never stops, and *can't* be stopped, because every neural function you have – like sight, hearing, and the ability to move or speak – all depend on this constant stream of predictions **in order to work at all**.

And, whenever you think about taking some kind of **action** on your goals, this *same* prediction system tries to predict *what will happen* if you **take** that action.

Not by *reasoning* it out.

And certainly not by *thinking* it over.

But rather, by using your **memory**.

Law #3: Memory Is Never About The Past

Remember, your robot brain doesn't "think" in a logical or reflective sense. It just remembers stimulus-response, "when-then" patterns. Like, "WHEN a car is coming, THEN stay on the sidewalk".

And unfortunately, not all of the patterns it learns make any **sense**!

For example, if as a child, you get shamed by your parents or teachers whenever you talk about your ideas or express confidence, then your robot brain learns that "WHEN I feel confidence, THEN feel ashamed".

I know, it doesn't make any **sense**. But your robot brain doesn't *understand* things, remember? It just notices and remembers **patterns**... and automatically *acts* on them.

For example, if every time you see a tiger, you end up running away, then you might as well start getting *ready* to run, the moment you see the tiger. And if there's always a certain sound you always hear, just *before* you see the tiger... then getting ready **then** gives you an extra half second's head start.

So memory isn't really for remembering the *past*; its true purpose is predicting the **future**!

Indeed, scientists have systematically demonstrated just how **unreliable** human memory is, when it comes to the actual, factual past. We not only *don't* remember things that **did** happen, we can easily be tricked into "remembering" things that **didn't** happen at all!

And the reason for this, is that memory is not (and was never *supposed* to be!) a way of **remembering** things. After all, just being able to "remember things" doesn't help an animal survive or reproduce.

But being able to anticipate **likely** threats, or return to locations that **likely** contain resources... now *that's* a survival advantage.

Which is why your memory is really a *probability database*, used to anticipate how things are **likely** going to turn out in a certain kind of situation. So your brain doesn't really care what **actually** happened on one specific occasion or another, so much as how things *usually* go.

*When the animal found itself in the same or a similar situation, the memory would be recalled, leading to a prediction of what was likely to happen next. Thus, intelligence and understanding started as a **memory system** that fed **predictions** into the sensory stream. These predictions are the essence of understanding. To know something means that you can make predictions about it.*

– Jeff Hawkins, On Intelligence

That's why it can be so dang hard to remember for *certain* whether you turned out the lights or locked the door when you left the house: your memory only knows that it's **likely** you did it, not whether you *actually* did it!

This is also why, if you read an old journal or diary of yours, you wonder how the hell you could have ever written such **rubbish**: your brain only keeps track of what you think you're likely to write **now**, not what you *used to be* likely to write.

After all, what it needs to know is where predators and food are likely to be **now**, not where they *used to be*, ten years ago! Thus, more recent information tends to overwrite the old information, or at least supersede it by being more readily recalled.

But unfortunately, there's a **critical flaw** in this design:

Law #4: What You *Feel* Is What Seems *Real*

Because your robot brain is driven by a probability database, not real **understanding**, it has an unfortunate tendency to jump to unjustified conclusions. And, because we are not in the habit of *questioning* our own minds, these conclusions seem “real” to us.

Worse, our memory is actually *influenced* by our current emotional state. Which means that when you're feeling say, mad at your spouse, it's a lot easier to remember all the *other* things about your spouse that have made you mad in the past. And since these memories are easy to

recall at that moment, they seem to *justify* your righteous indignation in that moment.

In this way, your mind enters a vicious cycle of self-fulfilling prophecy, the very *moment* you begin thinking negatively. But **you** think it's all perfectly justified!

Consider the goal, dream, or problem you wrote down at the end of the previous chapter. Whatever's stopping you certainly *seems* real, doesn't it?

But whether it's a "real world" obstacle or just a thick wall of your own **doubts and fears**, the only thing that makes it seem *real* to you is the **emotion** that's attached to it.

Want proof? Think of the last time a friend of yours told you about one of their problems. Didn't it sound to you like **no big deal**? Like something they should easily be able to solve?

That's because **you** had no emotion wrapped up in it.

But when it's *your* life, *your* decision... there's *always* emotion involved.

Law #5: All Decisions Are *Emotional* Decisions

Logic is **great** at solving problems – especially the kind of problems that human beings make for themselves! But logic has no *direct* impact on our emotions, and it's our emotions that control what our body actually **does** in the long run.

Indeed, since our emotions influence what memories come to mind in a given moment, and our logical brain then *uses* those memories to reason with, it's rather difficult to consider the logical brain to really be the one "in control" here!

For that matter, emotions determine which memories get **stored** in the first place: the more emotion is involved, the more likely that something will be *remembered*... which is why we get brief moments of positive or negative emotion after doing something good or bad, to help fix the memory in mind.

But, you have to understand: the way to deal with all this isn't to *fight* it.

It's to **embrace** it.

Because instead of trying to **convince** or **argue** our emotional "horse" brain into agreeing with our logical "monkey" brain – which we already *know* doesn't work! – we can use "horse sense".

That is, we must frame our ideas in terms the "horse" can accept, **not** the arguments that *we* think are appealing!

For example, you may think it's very important to finish a project so "the boss doesn't yell at you".

But your emotional brain only perceives this thought as "WHEN work on project... THEN boss yelling!"

In other words, this thought pattern will actually *condition* you to **avoid** work on the project... just as quickly and thoroughly as if your boss were standing next to you all day, and yelling every time you even **think** of working on it!

So, we need to *replace* such negative when-then patterns with **positive** ones. Because you simply can't make a clear decision when you're including both positive **and** negative emotions in your thinking.

Instead, you just get pulled back and forth, because...

Law #6: Negative And Positive Emotions Don't Mix

Now, before I understood this, I used to have a lot more trouble making decisions.

For example, when my wife and I were thinking about going to a movie, we would say things like, "it'd be nice to get out... but it's opening night for that movie and it's probably crowded... but we haven't been to a movie in a while... but it's getting late..."

On and on, round and round... and before long, the movie would've gone to DVD already!

And what was happening, was simply that our brains couldn't resolve

the **mixed feelings** involved.

You see, your brain can compare **negatives to negatives**, as in, “would you rather fill out your tax forms, or gouge your own eyes out with a rusty spoon?”

And it can compare **positives to positives**, as in, “which would you like better, a movie or a walk on the beach?”

But it **cannot** compare *negatives against positives*, as in, “I’d like to go to the movies, **but...**”

That, is the very essence of stuckness, right there, in its simplest form: “I’d like to, **but.**”

Of course, in the more typical form, you might have **more than one** possible choice, as in, “I’d like X, but then I don’t get the benefits of Y. And I’d like Y, but then I don’t get Z... But then I don’t get X... Aaagh!”

But really, the fundamental pattern is still the same here: you’ve just created new “buts” for *each* possible choice, by noticing what it *lacks* that one or more of the other choices **has**!

And the basic problem here, is that you cannot *subtract* a negative emotion from a positive one, no matter how hard your logical brain tries. It’s like trying to subtract “yellow” from “42” – it just can’t be done, because they’re fundamentally not the same kind of thing!

Thus, you can only make a clear choice based on either what’s **most positive**, or *least negative*, while completely **ignoring** the other kind of emotion.

But out of these two ways of choosing, only **one** way can ever make your life *better*.

Because...

Law #7: There’s Nothing *Positive* About A Negative Emotion!

The problem with negative emotions is that they tend to put you in the “pain brain”... which always votes in favor of doing **nothing**! So you will *never* live your dreams that way, and in fact you’ll find yourself doing

less and less “living” at all!

In the case of my wife and I, for example, we eventually quit going out nearly altogether, until we learned not to do this kind of “negative reasoning”.

Now, you might wonder how you can make a truly **rational** decision if you don’t take the negatives into account. After all, won’t that make you do things that are too **risky** or **costly**?

No, actually, it won’t.

You see, you’ll still *intellectually* know about the risks and costs involved in your decision, and you’ll still be able to consider them... **logically**.

In fact, this is the best way to consider the risks of any activity: **logically**. Because your logical brain isn’t *paralyzed* by contemplating a negative, the way your **emotional** brain tends to be.

So we *want* your emotional brain to be **irrationally positive**.

Just like the emotional brain of an *optimist*.

Because optimists *live* longer...

Enjoy life more...

And get a heck of a lot more **done**!

THE THREE CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF CONFIDENCE AND COMMITMENT

Unless your emotions are somehow involved with your brain in any subject you are looking at, you will learn nothing about it.

– David Seabury

So what does it take to be a confident, positive, **passionate** person?

Well, all you really need, is to create and maintain three simple emotional states:

1. **Desire:** a positive, “pull” motivation towards some beneficial result.
2. **Belief** that you can and will *obtain* that result without unacceptable losses, and
3. **Commitment**, meaning you have eliminated all *other* possibilities from consideration.

When you have these three things, you can achieve almost any goal. But without them, you can achieve almost **nothing**.

With them, you can enjoy your life... even when things are going **badly**. But without them, it's *hard* to enjoy life... even when things are going **well**!

But if you don't *have* these three things, how do you *get* them?

After all, we've already established that hope, wishful thinking, and willpower are all **useless**, since your body's emotion-chemicals are under the exclusive control of your brain's automatic prediction system.

So that means the **only** way to change your emotions...

Is to change your brain's **predictions**.

Because each of the three emotional states we need, is driven by a specific *kind* of prediction:

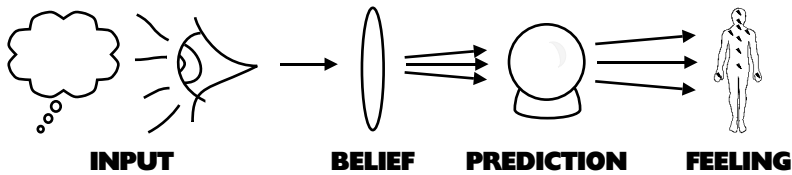
- Desire is a *prediction* that you will **benefit** from some result that is not currently present;
- Belief is a *prediction* that you will be **able to get** that result;
- And commitment is a *prediction* that you're **prepared to face the consequences** of pursuing that result.

And all *three* of these predictions **must** be present, for you to feel consistently motivated and take *action* on all your goals and dreams.

But you can't just *change* these predictions (or the feelings that go with them) by “deciding” to do so. Your brain simply doesn't work that way!

But it does work something like *this*:

HOW YOUR BRAIN'S "PREDICTION SYSTEM" WORKS



That is, your brain:

1. Takes some sensory **input** (either real, remembered, or imagined), and...
2. *Filters it through the lens* of your existing **beliefs** (the “when-then” rules in your **memory**), in order to...
3. Produce a **prediction** of the outcome, and...
4. Generate the corresponding **feeling** you’ll need if that prediction comes *true*. (That is, it sends out the chemical messages needed for your body to *respond* to the threat or opportunity that the predicted outcome represents.)

And there are only two “leverage points” in this four-step system that we can take advantage of: the **input**, and the **belief**.

Everything else is just an **output** of the system... which means that trying to override your predictions or feelings *directly*, is just a waste of time!

Now, the theory behind “positive thinking” is that if you pump tons of positive *input* into this system, then everything will turn out great.

But that’s **only** true, so long as the “when-then” rules of your belief system don’t say things like:

- “WHEN I think positively, THEN I end up disappointed”,
- “WHEN I try to do anything important, THEN I fail,” or
- “WHEN I’m happy THEN it never lasts.”

...or any of the many **dozens** of other possible rules that would

completely *negate* the effect of your positive inputs!

You see, your beliefs are the **lens** through which your prediction system sees the world. And as a result, they are the *final* arbiter of how you will *experience* the events in your life... not to mention what you will **do** about them!

Now, many self-help gurus claim that, if you just keep streaming positive inputs into the system *long enough*, you'll eventually **force** the brain to give in and change its rules.

But I've *never* seen that happen in practice!

In fact it's very likely a **myth**... generated by the simple fact that if you take a large group of people and have them all *try* to "think positively", some of them will get good results simply because they don't **have** any of these conflicting when-then rules in the first place, so the positive thinking goes right through their "belief lens" without being filtered out.

(And since the gurus don't usually *test* any of this beforehand, well, who really knows?)

But, since I'm a programmer and I like yes-or-no answers, I prefer to apply standard **testing and troubleshooting** procedures to identify and eliminate any faulty rules like these, *before* telling anyone to "think positively".

In fact, if you change your when-then belief rules just right, you won't have to *remember* to think positively. You'll just **be** positive!

But, before we can delve into the troubleshooting process for fixing your when-then rules, we first need to establish what **positive** really means.

Because, believe it or not, many of the things we think we "want"...

Aren't really *positive* at all!

For example, if you think you want money, do you really want *money*? Or do you want to *not be* **broke**?

Do you want to be healthy and fit, or to *not be* **fat and ugly**?

Do you want a romantic partner, or to *not be* **lonely**?

And although it might seem like I'm nitpicking semantics here, I'm

really not. The difference between “wanting” and “avoiding” is **crucially** important in how your brain’s rules, predictions, and emotions operate.

Because “wanting” produces passion, desire, and *effortless* motivation.

And “avoiding” just makes you feel worse and worse!

So you need to know how to *test* your goals and desires, to see if they’re really positively motivating you. And then, you need to know how to *change* your brain’s **mental model** of those desires, so that they’re “wants” instead of “avoids”.

And, in the process, you’ll learn a simple way to create positive **desire** for a goal...

And a powerful **motivation** to pursue it...

In just 30 seconds.

...or *less*!