

Things That Must Be Included In All Discussions About Beliefs

Discussions about beliefs and belief systems today are completely different from what they were in 1980 when I began this journey. Science and computer technologies are the driving factors. Many of the things we now know about the functions of the brain, were not discovered until the 21st century.

In 1953, Crick and Watson discovered the structure of DNA. They proclaimed they had discovered the secret of life. However, today we know they only discovered one-half of it. The other half of the secret of life is not written in sequences of DNA base pairs, and you won't find it written in a textbook. Not now, not ever. Why? Dr. David Eagleman provides the answer in his book *Livewired: The Inside Story of the Ever-Changing Brian -- The other half is all around in every bit of experience you have with the world*. Eagleman uses this story to explain what he means.

“Imagine you were born thirty thousand years ago. You have exactly your same DNA, but you slide out of the womb and open your eyes onto a different time period. What would you be like? Would you relish dancing in pelts around the fire while marveling at stars? Would you bellow from a treetop to warn of approaching saber-toothed tigers? Would you be anxious about sleeping outdoors when rain clouds bloomed overhead? Whatever you think you'd be like, you're wrong. It's a trick question.

“Because you wouldn't be you. Not even vaguely. This caveman with identical DNA might look a bit like you, as a result of having the same genomic recipe book. **But the caveman wouldn't think like you. Nor would the caveman strategize, imagine, love, or simulate the past and future quite as you do.**

“Why? Because **the caveman's experiences are different from yours.** Although DNA is a part of the story of your life, it is only a small part. **The rest of the story involves the rich details of your experiences and your environment, all of which sculpt the vast, microscopic tapestry of your brain cells and their connections.**

What we think of as “you” is **a vessel of experience**
into which is poured **“a small sample of space and time.”**

“You imbibe your local culture and technology through your senses. **Who you are owes as much to your surroundings as it does to the DNA inside you.**”¹

Genetics, neuroscience, and molecular biology are major sources of those discoveries. Scientists now know more about the physical makeup of human bodies and how they function than ever before.

The control center of all the functions of the human body is the brain.

Things to Remember About the Brain

1. The brain has internal models for things humans recognize and are able to communicate with others about by using names and/or meanings.
2. The brain search for things outside the body that it has internal models for, and it does this at the **subconscious level** at speed of **40 million nerve impulses per second**. The conscious level functions at the rate of **40 nerve impulses per second**.
3. The brain compares sensory information flowing into it to its internal models – *confirming, updating, refining, and correcting them.*
4. If the brain doesn't have an internal model for something, it uses **a model that it views as similar** to what's outside the body in order to make its best guess. Using this process, the brain is usually right about 60% to 80% of the time, which means it is wrong 20% to 40% of the time.
5. If the brain doesn't have an internal model, it may **distort incoming information** or **mold it to fit internal models** it has.
6. If that doesn't work, the brain may literally **filter out incoming information** it doesn't recognize or it views as **threats to its internal models**. *Keep in mind that **the conscious level is completely unaware of what the brain is doing**.*
7. The more information a brain receives that matches its internal models, the stronger they become. Internal models cannot be quickly deleted, especially strong internal models (which include beliefs). New internal models must be created and strengthened by using steady streams of information that confirm them, while streams of information confirming old internal models must decrease.
8. The strongest internal models are those the brain combines to construct an individual's identity.

Accurate discussions about beliefs must include this information!

Be sure to remember that things that humans communicate to each other reveal the internal models in their brains. Unless a person is aware of how the brain functions, he or she is unaware of their presence or how they are influencing their lives. Remember that the things we learn about religious beliefs by Exploring Biblical Heritages, also apply to political and economic.

We are genetic memetic social creatures that depend on other humans from conception until death.