

What's Real About Subjective Reality?

by Stewart Blackburn

As we go about our daily lives with all the experiences of physical life, it is often difficult to see that the bulk of our lives is not in this physical realm at all. Most of our existence takes place elsewhere: in our imagination, in our feelings, in our thoughts, and especially in our dreams. While we seem to fill our lives with the sensations of sight, sound, smell, taste, and touch, what we overlook is the preponderance of time and energy *reacting* to those sense experiences. These reactions are experiences themselves which engender further reactions and so the cycle goes on.

If we look at our inner, subjective life from the perspective of “objective reality,” there’s very little that is substantial. We can talk about emotions and perceptions, desires, projections, and love. While these are accepted as subjectively real, that acceptance doesn’t seem to extend to their effect on the world outside of our minds. They aren’t as real as the roof over our head, the pants that don’t fit like they used to, and the car that lets us go most of the places we want to go.

Sadly, we have been convinced that subjectivity is “just making things up.” If it involves imagination, which by common definition is not real, then whatever we are considering lacks the fundamental solidity of basic reality. We lose a great deal of our humanity, not to mention daily effectiveness though, when we discount and dismiss all the millions of experiences going on in our subjective inner self.

From that “objective reality” perspective this inner drama can seem mentally dangerous and devoid of a basic groundedness. If we must always be able to fit our experience into our map of what’s real, then anything off that map challenges the foundation of the reality we have built for ourselves.

By doubting the validity of our inner world we undermine our relationship with the deeper parts of ourselves. We lose the ability to utilize the resources of our intuition, expanded empathy, subliminal knowing, and the processes of energy manipulation and manifestation.

The reality of “subjective reality” needs to be seen in its own terms. Our moods, our ambitions, our anticipations, and our disappointments are all very real. The fact that they can be altered by changing our thinking doesn’t detract from the real experience we have when we focus on them. Subjective reality is our personal reality. It is composed of all the experiences we have, both in the physical world and in our inner world. These experiences are all colored by our thoughts, our feelings, and our imagination. This is our own unique world within which we play

out our lives. And nothing that we perceive or experience bypasses our personal filters.

We can believe objective reality is the only “true” reality if we want to. We can believe in *anything* if we want to. But the belief in objective reality is based on outside reality seeming to follow clearly discernible rules that have nothing to do with an observer. Those rules say that whether or not we are paying attention to something, the subsequent moments are quite predictable. By only looking outward into the world it seems obvious that that’s how things are. But that’s not a valid argument for objective reality. We generally see what we expect to see because that is the nature of our brains. We find what we are looking for and ignore the rest.

It is easy to forget that besides the reality that we can intellectually be aware of, there are emotional realities that are just as valid and have as great or greater influence on our lives. For instance, the reality of a relationship breakup, particularly one that involves the sense of being abandoned and unloved, has a much stronger influence on our lives than simply an awareness of another person no longer participating in our daily lives. It is an experience that is wholly subjective and can’t be adequately conveyed except to people who have had a similar experience.

Once we accept that our inner world is at least as real as the outer one, just in a different way, then we can work within it to create an outer one the way we prefer. There is a kind of leap of faith required here. We are asking our minds to loosen their grip on what we have been saying to ourselves about what’s really real, in order to validate the other experiences we are having.

By valuing our inner world, our subjective experiences, we open the door to the magnificent riches of a full life. But in order to grow into our full, whole selves we need to develop trust in this inner self. That means embracing all the aspects of our subjectivity. It doesn’t mean that we have live forever with what is there now; we can change things within our inner world to things that are more to our liking. However, we have a vast resource there of skills, senses, and guidance that is just waiting for us to accept.

There is nothing in life so worthy of trust as our subjective inner self. It’s as real as anything we know and it is the most wonderful friend we could possibly imagine.

Wouldn’t it be nice to feel comfortable with who you are and to feel that you are okay all the time? My newest book, *It’s Time to Come Home*, is a pathway to get back to that feeling of being at home in ourselves. Available at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).