

A DIFFERENT POINT OF VIEW

by Serge Kahili King

As we know from the first principle of Huna, there are many different ways to think about anything. In this article we are going to explore a different way to think about how we experience life.

According to this point of view, we have direct experience of this world in two ways: through physical senses and emotional feelings.

We probably don't even think twice about the fact that we make contact with the world with our physical senses, because that seems so self-evident. With our eyes we see light in the form of color, shade, intensity, contrast; shape, size, and texture; vertical and horizontal distance; movement and patterns. With our ears we hear sound in the form of tone, intensity, harmonics, loudness, dissonance; and blends of frequencies that enable us to recognize individual people, objects, and sound sources. We experience touch in the form of pressure, texture, heat, cold, movement, and more. Taste and smell have their own ranges of physical perception as well.

What I am proposing here is that we make a parallel contact with the world through our emotional senses. When you experience anything you have both a physical perception and an emotional one.

Some philosophies have used the concept of an emotional body to get this idea across, and the idea that we sense emotionally through our aura or energy field is intriguing, but we can instead simply say that you have two sets of senses, or two main ways of perceiving the universe.

In addition to the physical perception of sight, there is an emotional perception of sight that occurs at the same time. It's important to understand that I am not talking about an emotional *reaction* to what you see, but to an emotional perception that is related to the act of seeing. I'll bring up the subject of reactions a little further on.

To help you understand what I mean, think of it this way: Physical seeing produces an image; emotional seeing produces a feeling. To use a metaphor, when light rays from the sun strike an object, they produce both reflected light and heat. So, looking at something produces both an image and a feeling. The same would be true for our other senses. Each one would produce a physical perception as well as an emotional perception. And perceptions relate to awareness, not to reactions.

Reactions are separate experiences that occur as a consequence of perception. Of course, when reactions become habitual it is very difficult to make that distinction. However, perception is a characteristic of our senses, and we can learn to improve our perceptions. Reactions are learned

also, consciously or unconsciously, and reaction is a characteristic of thoughts, senses and emotions.

It is possible to simplify our understanding of the physical and emotional reactions themselves by recognizing two categories of reaction for each set. All of the physical reactions can be described as varying degrees of pleasure or pain. All of the emotional reactions can be described as varying degrees of rejection or acceptance. Simply put, rejection feels bad and acceptance feels good, whether or not those reactions come from outside you or inside you.

Recognizing that all your emotional reactions fall into one of these categories can be helpful in dealing with them. Fear, anger, hate, jealousy, anxiety are all expressions of rejection with their own parallel to physical pain, and the body tension that accompanies them is a well-intentioned but poor attempt to regain acceptance. Happiness, joy, true pride, and the sense of accomplishment are all expressions of acceptance, which is akin to physical pleasure. The names that are given to emotions based on rejection or acceptance merely reflect the thoughts in our mind at the time.

The main thing to note, to contemplate, and perhaps even do something about, is that, just as we can train our senses, we can we train our emotions.

So how do we do that?

We train ourselves to do anything by practice, with or without the help of others. We can train ourselves to think differently, to speak differently, to feel differently, and to act or react differently.

However, this brings up the question of why we train ourselves in the first place. The answer is that we only do it when there is some degree or type of pleasure in doing so.

Here's a little story to demonstrate what I mean. My oldest son was almost two years old before he walked. Actually, he ran before he walked. Before the event I'm about to describe he only crawled where he wanted to go and showed no interest in walking. Of course my wife and I were concerned, but since he was otherwise very healthy and active, we hoped he would grow out of it. What happened left us stunned.

Gloria and I were both going to classes and jobs as well, so we left our son, Chris, at a day-care center. One day we picked him up and found him running back and forth and laughing in the main room of the center. We were told that that morning he was crawling as usual when some of the older kids had a running race in the hall and were laughing as they did. Chris stopped crawling and sat up with an amazed look on his face. Then he grinned and stood up and began running with the others, laughing as he did so. He enjoyed it so much he was still laughing and running when we got there. When we got home he watched us walking back and forth, and then began walking with us and to us, awkwardly at first, but with increasing skill and pleasure. It's

the pleasure part that's most important. First he saw a pleasure benefit in running, and then he felt the pleasure of both running and walking.

When our sensory or emotional reactions are painful, we tend to avoid the experience that bring them up. Likewise, when those reactions are pleasurable, we tend to willingly participate in the experiences that bring them up. The main point I'm making here is that we don't have to remain prisoners of painful reactions. We can, if we choose, find pleasurable reactions in in painful experiences and, by repetition of the pleasurable reactions--i.e. training--diminish or even eliminate the pain of those experiences.

Looking at pleasurable reactions in this way may seem unusual, but doing it is not. It is the pleasure part that motivates athletes, hikers, mountain climbers, explorers, mathematicians, writers, and many, many others to keep doing what they are doing in spite of pain, or even to the point where they don't even notice the pain any more.

Think about it, hunt for the pleasure, however small, and when you find it, practice, practice, practice.