

Lesson 19: Part One - Understanding the Nature of Free Will

We are often told that we have the right to exercise our free will; however, we are usually left in the dark when it comes to having a conscious awareness of the implications involved in understanding what free will really is as it relates to what is called determinism and the role of cause and effect. You might be of the belief that by exercising your free will you are in control of your life and to some degree you are but there are underlying affects you must know about in order to know how to properly manage your free will. In this lesson I will reveal for you the many implications involved so that you have a much clearer conscious awareness when it comes to knowing how your free will operates. This lesson will be presented on a cognitive level that everyone should be able to grasp but if you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me. Please understand that if you have a question(s) others may be in need of the same information so when you ask questions everyone gets the benefit of the answers.

Understanding the nature of free will may seem ambiguous at first because there are many definitions that describe free will which is complex to say the least but I will break them down for you in a way that you should be able to assimilate the information easily. I would like to begin with a simple definition of what free will is. Free will is defined as having the ability to make choices as a free agent without the imposition of certain kinds of constraints. However, this is only part of the story because there really are constraints that will affect your circumstances as well the circumstances of many others who you have a direct and indirect relationship with. As you make choices and decisions on your own behalf or even on the behalf of others another dimension is added to this first layer which most people are not consciously aware of.

All through the history of time there have been at least two distinct schools of thought held by philosophers and metaphysicians as well as those in religion and science. There have been those whose beliefs have sided with the principle that free will does not carry any form of determinism (a word I will define later) just as there have been those who hold the belief that with free will comes an automatic causal determinism. Metaphysicians understand that nothing is free but that everything carries with it a related series of cause and effect. Religion for example teaches that free will can co-exist with the will of a divine plan. I won't delve into the technical terms for these two beliefs because they are not at all pertinent to this discussion.

When we think in terms of religion we hold an understanding that while we believe we are free to exercise our free will we also look for our free will to be consistent with an omnipotent divinity most people know as God. Another principle of free will is the implication of whether or not we can be held accountable for our actions in terms of ethics and morality. The answer to that question is an absolute yes but not so much in the way we are all programmed to understand that accountability. Socially speaking we

are held to accepting rules and regulations that we are governed by on an ethical and moral level in a collective agreement but there is much more to the principle of accountability.

To help you better understand what I am talking about let's take a look at two different scenarios to see how free will really works. Let's start with the notion that as you exercise your free will you elect to make choices and decisions either on your behalf or on behalf of someone else. If we consider the philosophical belief that there are no constraints involved then that would have to mean that determinism does not play a role. You just make your choices and decisions and they are what they are; that they stand alone with no effects or consequences. Of course we are not implying that there are no physical, social or psychological constraints because there are and there is no getting around the issue. What we are talking about here is the notion that free will is just that 'free.'

Now to proceed further we have to understand what determinism is. Well, that is where it begins to get complicated because there are at least six different technical definitions. Basically determinism can be broadly defined as all future events existing on past and present events in compliance with the laws of nature. So now with a very broad definition of determinism we can begin to explore free will in a more realistic way which is to understand that free will is not as free as we have been led to believe. When we look below the surface we find that the act of exercising our free will carries with it many implications that we are not necessarily consciously aware of anymore than we are aware of the karma or the karmic relationships we are creating at the same time and the implications that go along with karma and karmic relationships.

If you have been following the weekly lessons you will recall that I wrote four lessons on the subject of relationships, one of which focused entirely on karmic relationships (see Lessons 16 & 17). I had intended to write the next lesson on what is karma but since I write under the influence of a higher source the lesson on karma has not been brought forth yet. However, this will not hinder us in the discussion of what free will really is. So for the record karma is nothing more than the actions we take that results in some kind of cause and effect or what is otherwise known as causality or determinism. As we create karma from our actions we also exchange karmic energy with those we enter into a relationship with even if it is as simple as saying hello to someone in the parking lot at the grocery store. Any form of energy exchange between two people ignites a karmic relationship regardless of whether or not you think you will ever see that person again. Another good reason to always be mindful of your attitude toward one another because we are all connected to each other on an unseen and unrealized karmic level.

Okay so now that we have defined determinism and karma rather broadly let us begin to see how the action of exercising our free will really plays out. The first example I would

like to use comes from the Emerald Tablets. Again, if you have been following the lessons you will know that I often refer to the tablets to support a discussion. From tablet 12, The Law of Cause and Effect speaks to the flow of free will in this manner:

*Know ye, O man, that all of the future is an open book to him who can read. All effect shall bring forth its causes as all effects grew from the first cause. Know ye the future is not fixed or stable but varies as cause brings forth an effect. Look in the cause thou shalt bring into being, and surely thou shalt see that all is effect. So, O man, be sure the effects that ye bring forth are ever causes of more perfect effects. Know ye the future is never in fixation **but follows man's free will** as it moves through the movements of time-space toward the goal where a new time begins.*

As you can see from this message the action of exercising free will is really not as free as it appears to be on the surface but that it does, in fact, carry a cause and effect or what philosophers and others call determinism as well as accountability. This is precisely why I do not want to expend needless energy on breaking down all the definitions of determinism because it truly is a mute point. Call it whatever you choose to refer to the results of free will but really it all comes down to the implication of cause and effect and accountability being very real.

So much needless energy has been poured into the principle of free will vs determinism and even to the role chance may or may not play depending on whose philosophy we are talking about. Metaphysically speaking we know that there is no such thing as chance but that everything happens for a reason and that it is a by-product of free will through the unfolding of synchronistic events. You simply cannot isolate cause and effect from free will because the proof is always to be found in the pudding. If you look back on the events of your own life honestly speaking you can see how every choice and decision you made brought forth a cause and an effect. Some may have been good and some not so good. We often think of karma as something bad, something we become indebted too but that is not always the case. Karma is brought about by positive and negative actions. You can be the beneficiary of really good karma just as you can be the beneficiary of not so good karma in which case you sometimes do have a debt to resolve. All the particulars will be discussed in the upcoming lesson on karma.

A question was raised in determining just how free is free will and what is the predictability factor that brings the principles of free will onto a whole new playing field which literally stands outside of what has always been known by the sages, masters and teachers all down through the ages including Jesus Christ. The question is from a statistical standpoint which is this: "to what extent do the choices of a conscious being have the ability to influence the future?" The truth is that there is nothing statistical about the affects choices have when it comes to exercising free will and the effect on future events. First of all we have to consider that while the question bears in mind that we are referring to a 'conscious being' we also have to take into consideration that the

conscious being is consciously aware of what and to what extent. In other words is the conscious being really consciously aware of the actions and accountability of his free will and its effects on future events. If that was the case we would all be living in a state of perfect peace and abundance but a quick glance at the daily headlines reminds us that this is definitely not the case. The reason why is that so few people are actually consciously aware of the cause and effects their actions are having on mankind as a whole not just as individuals.

I addressed this matter in a prior lesson in which I talked about possibilities and probabilities. The bottom line is simply this: as you make certain choices and decisions you put into effect a host of what I like to call 'likely to occur' probabilities. There are infinite possibilities of what you can experience in a life time but they are not as random as you might think they are and the reasons fall in sync with what you hold as your own personal belief structures and how you perceive your own circumstances. Those two factors immediately narrow down the field of possibilities that are more in keeping with how you tick. It's not that those infinite possibilities are not out there because they are but you consciously and unconsciously narrow them down through your own habitual manner of thinking, believing and perceiving.

Now how does this affect your 'likely to occur' probabilities? Well, without having to repeat myself as I have already addressed this in Lesson 5 I will simply say the probabilities that are more likely to manifest in your reality will be in close alignment with how you exercise your free will which is generally a habitual action on your part until you become consciously aware of what you are bringing into your reality. I would like to take a look at the principle of free will from another perspective. From the words of the Indian Yogi Paramahansa Yogananda: *"I am the captain of my ship of good judgment, will, and activity. I will guide my ship of life, ever beholding the polestar (a visible star, especially a prominent one, that is approximately aligned with the Earth's axis of rotation, i.e. the North Star) of His peace shining in the firmament of my deep meditation."*

So you see that how you choose to guide your own ship will indeed have a direct influence on your present and future experiences. The word polestar also means a thing or principle that guides or attracts so as you activate a polestar you will want to be especially aware that you are attracting what you really desire to experience through the actions of your free will. Another perspective on the effects of free will comes from the Bhagavad Gita. In chapter eight Arjuna is asking Krishna what is absolute freedom and what is the true nature of action to which Krishna replies, *"Freedom is union with the deathless; the Self is the essence of all things; its creative power, called action, causes the whole world to be."* From this statement you can see how Krishna's reply is in keeping with Yogananda and the great ancient master Thoth, author of the Emerald Tablets as was quoted above. There are no diverse classifications of cause and effect or

determinism; there are no conflicts or contradictory beliefs. To exercise your free will is to take some kind of action and that action opens the door wide to positive or negative karma that is either desirable or undesirable and furthermore that the action you take through your free will affects the world at large. I had addressed all these principles in prior lessons so if you are not familiar with the contents of those lessons I recommend you afford yourself an opportunity to read through them.

But let's not stop here; let us see what others have had to say about free will. The Buddha gave us what he called the Eightfold Path which I have written about in detail in prior lessons too but will nonetheless refresh our memories of what this path contains. I would like to first quote some phrases from The Dhammapada, chapter 20, The Path in which the Buddha says this: *"Of paths the Eightfold is the best; of truths the Noble Four (the fourth truth is the Eightfold Path) are best; of mental states, detachment is the best; of human beings the illumined one is best."* It is this illumination that I and Z strive to bring to your conscious awareness to help you better understand the nature of your own reality and how to avoid the many pitfalls that you stumble upon when you do not have the proper knowledge which of course leads you straight into those 'ditches of error.' These pitfalls and ditches of error can be avoided when you have the right knowledge which is a knowing that speaks for itself and never becomes outdated. This is a knowledge that is not subject to any dogma, doctrine or creed. You are always free to test it out and when you test it out properly the results will always be in a perfect alignment with the effort you put into the application of this knowledge.

Another phrase I would like to quote from the same chapter is this, *"Guard your thoughts, words, and deeds. These three disciplines will speed you along the path to pure wisdom."* So you see again there is no leniency toward exercising free will without considering cause and effect. The proof continues to stack up against the notion that free will could ever possibly stand on its own with no consequences or determinism whether it is events that occurred in the past, present or yet to occur in the future. So now let us revisit the Eightfold Path which takes on the following characteristics: right understanding, right purpose, right speech, right conduct, right occupation, right effort, right attention, and right meditation. Without these characteristics in place on a daily basis there can be no way to avoid negative consequences. A little common sense goes a very long way here when you take into consideration that if your free will leans toward having positive experiences you can only achieve those experiences through your own effort of knowing what right thinking is and applying it as well as all the remaining characteristics. Incidentally this is what marks the distinction between achieving success and not achieving success. There just is no other way. You cannot expect to climb the ladder of success no matter how you measure success with wrong thinking that is negative in nature and so on as it applies to all the rest of the characteristics the Buddha implemented in the Eightfold Path. These are fundamentals that have stood the test of time and can never change in their applications or effects.

From the Bible we learn a little something about the will of man as stated in John 1:13 *“Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”* Now I realize the term God is wide open to interpretation especially in light of what our quantum physicists know today. The only thing of importance here is that there is no right or wrong way to interpret how we relate, understand or define what Aristotle referred to as the First Cause and what our physicists know to be a field of energy having a beginning, a Consciousness from which everything else came into existence. A Divine Plan if you will because it exceeds our conscious awareness and can only be touched upon from an intuitive level or in meditation; a discussion for a future lesson.

With the matter of free will in place along with its counterpart cause and effect I would also like to shed some additional light on another aspect of the operation of free will in accordance with what we often think of as the Divine Will. For this part of the discussion I also have literary support but I will be speaking more from pure experience. Again, everything I teach in these lessons is always open to subjectivity, for you to test these principles and see the results for yourself. What I want to bring to your conscious awareness is that there is a very distinct difference in what you desire as your free will and what the universe returns to you along those vibrational frequencies. Sometimes when we declare the desires of our heart we do not always ask for something that is in our best interest or is in the best interest of those who will be affected by our desires and our free will to manifest those desires. However, there are desires we hold fast to that may take a very long time to manifest whereas other desires manifest quickly in regard to our free will and what we choose to believe. The reason for this is because everything and everyone involving that desire has to be perfectly lined up which could take a long time not to mention your own beliefs have an effect on what you do or do not manifest. Above all you must be in a position to receive what you have asked for which often times means you've had to do some internal housekeeping along the way.

In the movie *The Secret* (or the book too) we learn from the teachers that the way to achieve what we desire is a three-fold process. First we ask for what we desire, then we wait for the answer and then we receive it. Now this makes it sound quite simple and while it is simple in theory there are many other concepts that must be taken into consideration. Because this aspect of exercising our free will through our desires opens up the discussion to an entirely different level of understanding I will be addressing this in detail in what will be Part Two of this lesson. At this point I have given you a glimpse into what the remainder of this lesson will be about. I just wanted to bring to your attention that there is much more to this business of exercising our free will than what lies on the surface.

One of the issues I am acutely aware of is that most people do not understand how to act in accordance with their free will; the implications involved when it comes to what they

desire and the timing of how and when those desires will manifest. Consequently in Part Two, I will in essence be taking you through the process of The Secret in a way that will enhance how this process works on a deeper level of understanding what so many people believe does not work in principle when in fact the principle is always in operation producing like results.

In the meantime I sincerely hope that I have enlightened you thus far about the importance of how you choose to exercise your free will and the consequences that go hand in hand whether you call them cause and effect or determinism. The most important fundamental you need to remember is that every time you make a choice or a decision you take some kind of action and that action sets in motion a related cause and effect. How you choose to experience that cause and effect is entirely up to you but when you have the right information you are in a far better position to make good choices and decisions that will ultimately affect your experiences in a positive manner.

All the material quoted will be at your disposal for further study under the Resources. I thank you all for the opportunity to shed light on a matter that is designed to heighten your conscious awareness which should begin to bear its fruit depending on how well you assimilate and integrate the information from each of the lessons.

Thank you,

Linda and Z

lindaj@dragonofdrama.com

Resources:

For your convenience the following resources are listed in the order in which they were addressed in the lesson above.

Free Will – Wikipedia. http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_will

The Emerald Tablets of Thoth. <http://www.crystalinks.com/emerald.html>

Metaphysical Meditations. Paramahansa Yogananda. 1964. Self Realization Fellowship: Los Angeles, CA.

Bhagavad Gita. Stephen Mitchell. 1968. Three Rivers Press: New York, New York.

The Dhammapada. Eknath Easwaran. 1985. The Blue Mountain Center of Meditation: Canada.

The Secret. Rhonda Byrne. 2006. Beyond Words Publishing: Hillsboro, Oregon.

All quoted scripture is from the Holy Bible, The Peoples Parallel Edition. King James Version and The Living Bible.