

Psychological Favor: Phenomenal Cliff (test #1: trust)

Hi Dr. O!

Okay, here is a quick introduction to our first (hopeful) field study.

As you know, one of my 3 key variables is: **Psychological Favor** (favoritism for our thoughts). This field study will be that.

Premise: We are more attached to our thoughts than we are to the life happening all around us. We place more trust in these self-managed (untrustworthy) thoughts, and somehow remain more suspicious of one another's genuine (trustworthy) feelings. (Needs rewording, please help!). I sometimes call this preference *transactional awareness* (solemn time), versus *playful awareness* (non-serious time), because it's more about making deals than being together*.

For some odd reason, we take as given that Life "begins" with human mental life. My research indicates to me, that "Life" ends there. Empathy ends there. Apathy and anxiety and antipathy begin there. Mental life begins when/because we cannot get to real life, not when we can (key point). It is more lasting than genuine awareness, but is never satisfied.

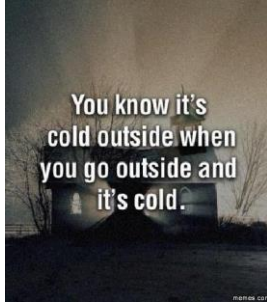
Our tiny children and other species do not *need* as much mental life - it isn't that they are *not as developed* as us. They trust what they feel to be true. They do not doubt everything until it repeats itself. We *prefer* mental phenomena to actual phenomena, because we can *control* it better (we don't have to share our mental life with our neighbors). We each possess private worlds (as both neurons and neuronal phenomena), and this, unfortunately, creates all sorts of conflicts. (There can only be One shared world after all, one of Everything).

But... we *can* carry these Preferred Worlds around... which makes them quite handy, but which also depreciates our one, shared, spontaneous moment completely. It makes the lasting Self's needs and the lasting Self's worth more urgent than our fleeting neighbor's unfulfilled needs. Or to simply be grateful to briefly have a neighbor, and perhaps find our worth when that neighbor's needs are met freely by us.

"For any of us, perhaps our greatest potential regret may be that of not seizing the moment and honoring it for what it is when it is here" – Jon Kabat-Zinn, from "Coming to our Senses: Healing Ourselves and the World through Mindfulness"

Basically, this study will seek to show that we would rather hug our *thoughts of things* than hug those things. We can demonstrate this in a gazillion ways (e.g. looking through a photo album of someone we neglected while she/he was here, or how we treat our beloved artists better after they are gone). But gotta get started somehow. Here is one way:

Field Study 1 – Trust (this seems the easiest thing to start with, sort of a “Phenomenal Cliff”)



The weather – we trust facts more than feelings

- We would rather listen to the news or look at a temperature gauge than go outside and see how we feel
- We get upset when others do not trust these weather facts (either our personal opinion about the temperature, or an abstract figure broadcast to all of us - same idea)
- We try to fit our feelings into that figure, which creates a normal curve of human urgency, struggling to make life a Fact



Example – test and see what the participant does at the front door just before going outside

- The young/non-human creature doesn't “reach” for the concept of cold/hot... until cold/hot reveal themselves as a way to realize how we feel
- So, they do not think to put on a jacket
- This “failure” to reference (reach for) thought first...trust thought, not affect... aggravates grown-ups
- We think badly about the child we love - just because he/she is being innocent. Then we “domesticate” that innocence away, replacing it with a social apprehension we feel is more mature

Why?

- The innocent do not try to live life before life arrives. Every moment is trusted and special
- The sincere do not manage what they utter about life while (or after) they live it. Every moment is honest, until the mind inhibits that honesty

Effect?

- When living things do not put mental phenomena first, “mental phenomena” get agitated. They form lasting agitations we call opinions and facts (demands)

Remedy?

- We may walk away from our invariant thoughts, and see what happens to our genuine well-being. We can trust our gifted moments and, maybe, end up trusting each other

These are some of the measurable phenomena I believe our study can bring to light – a terrible prejudice against living things, held by domineering mental phenomena (invariant thoughts) It seems to fit the Fiske model of social prejudice brilliantly (I think!). And what might be nice, is how “current” it might end up being (because we have done this to our world, and can finally see what we did...). As you love animals/children too, I wondered how you might feel about this sort of method?