

Introduction to Interconnection of Life

One of the main roots of our unsustainable society is the idea that human beings are somehow separate or independent from Nature and the rest of life. Its not so difficult to see how we have modeled Western culture based on this foundation. The signs are everywhere: in the way we live, enclosing our homes from the outside world as we try to keep dirt out; in the way we speak and relate to one another, with an emphasis on “me”, “I”, “you”, “mine”; in the way we traditionally conduct science, believing in an independent experimenter. This view has enabled us to treat Nature as an inanimate object to do with whatever we please. We can blow up mountaintops, pollute entire oceans, destroy entire ecosystems, contaminate ground water, cause the extinction of millions of species of life all without consequence, or so we believe.

The truth is this idea that we are separate from the rest of life is at the core of both our broader, societal issues and our internal unease with trusting others. Because we believe ourselves to be separate, we feel alone and disconnected in the Universe. This feeling manifests in a feeling of anxiety and a desire to control as much of the world as possible to prevent an indifferent world from causing harm to us. Hence, you see countries spending trillions of dollars on military weaponry to exert force in an attempt to control the world. You see corporations spending trillions to extract timber, fossil fuels, fertile soil, and water to facilitate the conversion of the natural world into a fictitious commodity, money.

All of this would seem crazy to a culture that lived according to the knowledge that all life is interconnected. Not only is all life made up of the [guts of exploding stars](#) but we are [empathically connected through mirror neurons](#), hard-wired to feel the emotional distress (and joy) of another. Whatever we do to this world, we invariably do to ourselves. The problem is that Western culture and institutions are founded on a lie that we are separate from the Universe and the rest of life.

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