

**Emotional Feedback: An Evolved Human Cognitive-Emotional
Re-Processing, Control, and Regulatory Mechanism
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Emotions are consciously perceived. That is, we feel anger, love, and joy, all of which have some corresponding cognitive and physiological state of being in the brain and body. Suppose I come across a ferocious tiger in the woods. In that case, emotional fear triggers a neurological, biochemical, and physiological fight, flight, or freeze response that includes dilated pupils, a racing heart, and the quickening breath as the body prepares to act. Or does it? Before this emotional response can be actuated, I must first perceive the tiger, understand that it is a tiger, and realize that this tiger is very aggressive, and because of her size, ferocity, and proximity, she can quickly put my life in danger. (Note: an illusionary perception of a tiger may also trigger this “fear response.”)

But can emotions be both causal to a physiological state and being and simultaneously be the perceived effect of that same physiology? Is that logical? If we diagram emotion as a result, a perceived effect of the body’s neurological and biochemical physiology of the brain and body, and cognition as the cause of these changes in physiology, then the irrational linguistics of emotions as both cause and effect of the same phenomena is remedied (see figure 1). Emotions are a function of cognition precipitating neurological and biochemical physiology. There exist a multitude of combinations of thought (cognition) and states of physiology in the brain and body that are emotionally perceived. An excellent source for identifying emotions and their cognitive counterpart is *“The Book of Human Emotions: From Ambigophobia to Umpty – 154 Words from Around the World for How We Feel”* by Tiffany Watt Smith (2015). An exact combination is not only genetic but socially and culturally determined as “cultivated”, “self-indulgent”, or “pathological” depending on an individual’s capacity to control the process. Today’s cognitive behavior therapies seek to cultivate cognitive behavior to obtain an appropriate, culturally defined emotional response.

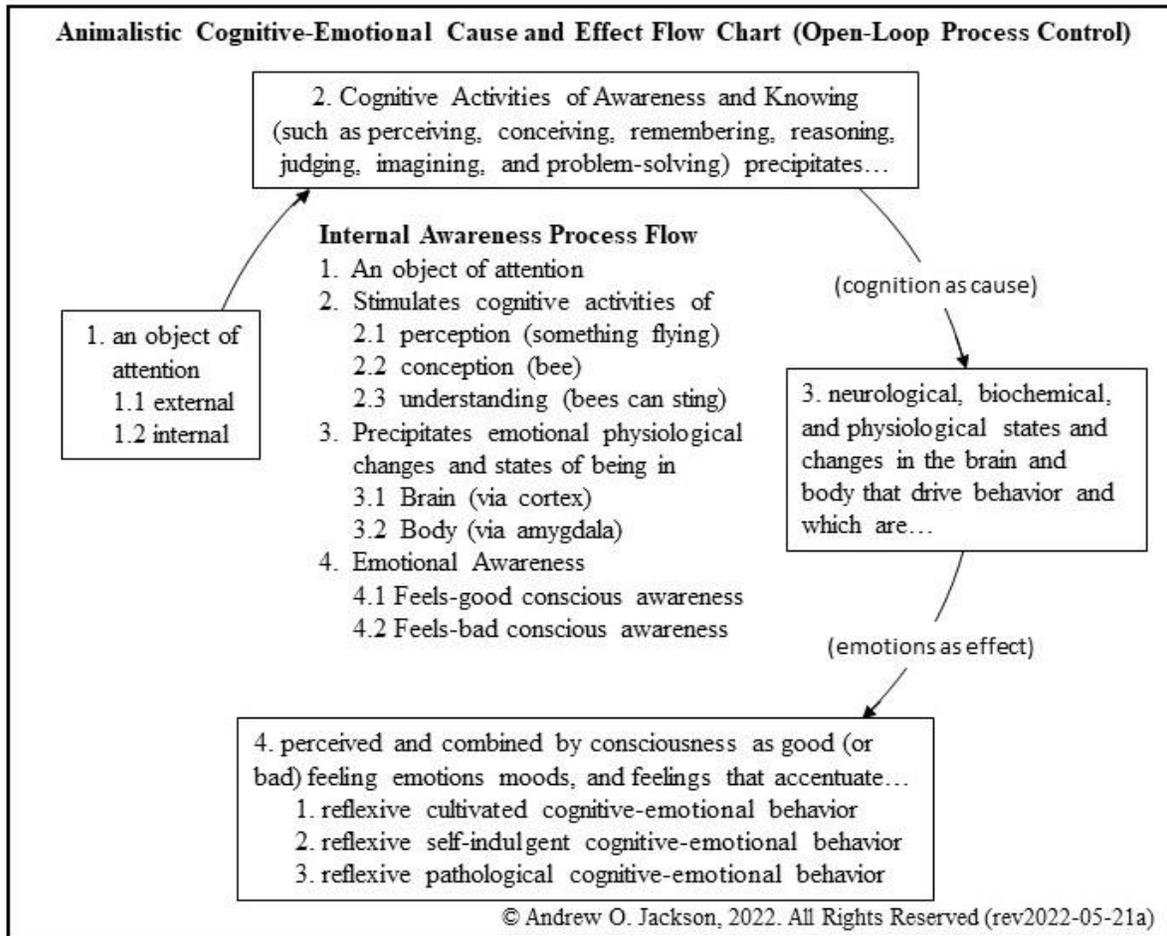


Figure 1: Animalistic Cause and Effect Emotional Event

The process to control the speed of a car with the car’s cruise control or the temperature within a room (or oven) with a thermostat is defined within engineering process control theory as “closed-loop” process control. When controlling the speed of a car, the desired speed is set, and components within the car’s engine are monitored and manipulated to increase or decrease the engine’s power output as needed to maintain the car’s speed over rolling hills (and other changing conditions that affect the vehicles speed). When controlling the temperature within a living room, the desired temperature is set, and components within the heating and air-conditioning units are manipulated to increase or decrease the temperature of the air flowing into a room as needed to

maintain the desired room temperature. This is in contrast to an “open-loop” control like that of a burner atop of a stove where the heat is set and there is no feedback loop to turn the heat down if the eggs begin to burn.

The significance of a cognitive-emotional “closed-loop” process control mechanism can only be realized by incorporating the most fundamental property of emotions; emotions, moods, and feelings... feel good or not. Joy feels good. Anger does not. Love feels good. Hate does not. “Feels-good” or “feels-bad” has important physiological significance. Good-feeling emotions (moods and feelings) have an evolved correlation with healthy physiology. Bad-feeling emotions (moods and feelings) have an evolved correlation with unhealthy physiology. The essence of evolution is that those behaviors that promote survival to the next generation will prevail.

If eating, breathing, or other necessary internal and external survival behaviors and instincts cease to exist or bring about extreme pain, sorrow, and anguish, wouldn't this favor extinction? If dwelling upon that which is wanted, desired, and needed is painful, would we work for its creation? If dwelling upon that which is unhealthy and injurious brings pleasure, would it no longer be undesirable? If feeling good correlates with lethargy and confusion, would confidently crossing a raging river remove this abstraction from the gene pool? Or, in the modern scenario, would a drunk confidently getting into his car to drive across town during rush hour traffic survive?

These are but a few scenarios that illustrate how good-feeling cognitive-emotional behavior has evolved to correlate with health, well-being, and success for the future survival of a species. An emotionally negative “fear response” is an evolved and necessary short-term survival mechanism. But, continual negative-feeling cognitive-emotional behavior will only lead to unhealthy physiology and contribute to a person's sickness, vulnerability, and demise.

Humanity has evolved to be joyous. It is a necessity of life. Continual ignorance of our cognitive-emotional evolutionary heritage to re-process, re-organize, and re-structure cognitive behavior based on emotional feedback sabotages individual, cultural, and societal prosperity and well-being. Human evolution has evolved a cognitive-emotional re-processing, control, and regulatory mechanism that uses emotions as feedback to control cognitive behavior. Every effective and evidenced-based psychological therapy uses good and bad-feeling emotions, moods, and feelings, that is, emotional feedback to re-process, re-organize, and re-establish new cognitive beliefs, logic, and behaviors that lessen bad-feeling emotional dissidence and increase good-feeling

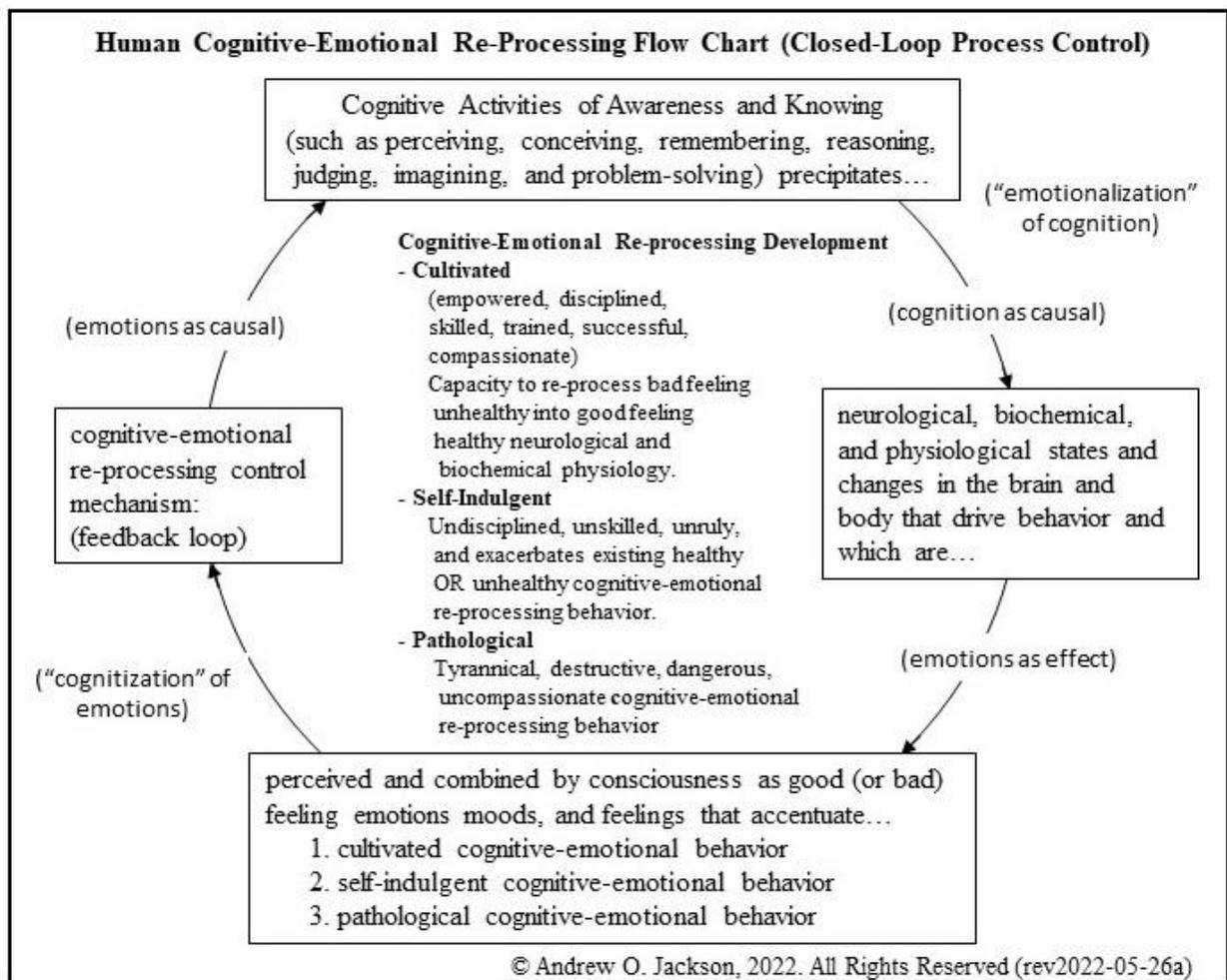


Figure 2: Human Cognitive-Emotional Re-Processing Flow Chart (Closed-Loop Process Control)

emotional harmony. Emotional control in an engineering sense means that cognition, as well as the neurology, biochemistry, and physiology of the brain and body, may be manipulated to gain a desired emotional outcome or response and associated physical behavior (reference Figure 2).

Historically, the mind has linguistically combined (1) cognition, (2) physiological states and changes, (3) any resulting behavior, and (4) emotions into one conscious cognitive construct. Our educational and academic institutions have only reinforced this construct throughout a student's career, beginning with their literary education. And this cognitive-emotional linguistic construct is further neurolinguistically supported within the academic cognitive-emotional structures of literature, religion, philosophy, law, and the psychological sciences. But this cognitive-emotional linguistics first inscribed in Homer's "*Iliad*" nearly 3000 years ago is but a shortcut that can easily fail to convey the whole cognitive-emotional dynamic process.

Yet, there is potentially great educational value within life's emotionally positive and negatively charged and, hopefully, entertaining roller coaster rides. Through the many vicarious lives and deaths within each ride, experiences, understandings, knowledge, and, potentially, the wisdom of others may be gleaned for the benefit of one's own life and reality. The efficacy of these dynamics will be significantly increased by *ignoring* the awareness that emotions have evolved to guide cognitive behavior for the individual's health, well-being, and success.

Academic education must include the traditional legacy and linguistic semantics of emotionally driven behavior for its experiential value and growth potential within the vicarious living of others through literature (and other mediums) and the linguistic semantics of emotional control behavior in the engineering sense where emotions are used as feedback to guide and re-process cognitive activities of the mind (that include thoughts, memories, perceptions, imaginations, and logic) for the individual's health, well-being, and success. This cognitive-emotional health

education entails training and the development of the necessary skills, abilities, and beliefs within an individual that they may develop and maintain a positive cognitive-emotional dynamic state of being and be able to get on and off the cognitive-emotional roller coaster as desired.

It is human evolution (apart from animal) that has created the cognitive-emotional mechanism that precipitates the neurology, biochemistry, and physiology consciously perceived as emotions and which is then used to re-process, re-construct, and re-organize cognitive activities into the better emotional feeling state of being that signifies health, well-being, and success... if the skills, abilities, and beliefs are nurtured to do so. There is no philosophical emotion vs. logic conflict and debate because our emotional biofeedback mechanism has evolved not to be controlled or negated by cognition but to work in sympathetic harmony with an individual's cognitive re-processing behaviors towards their health, well-being, and success.

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