

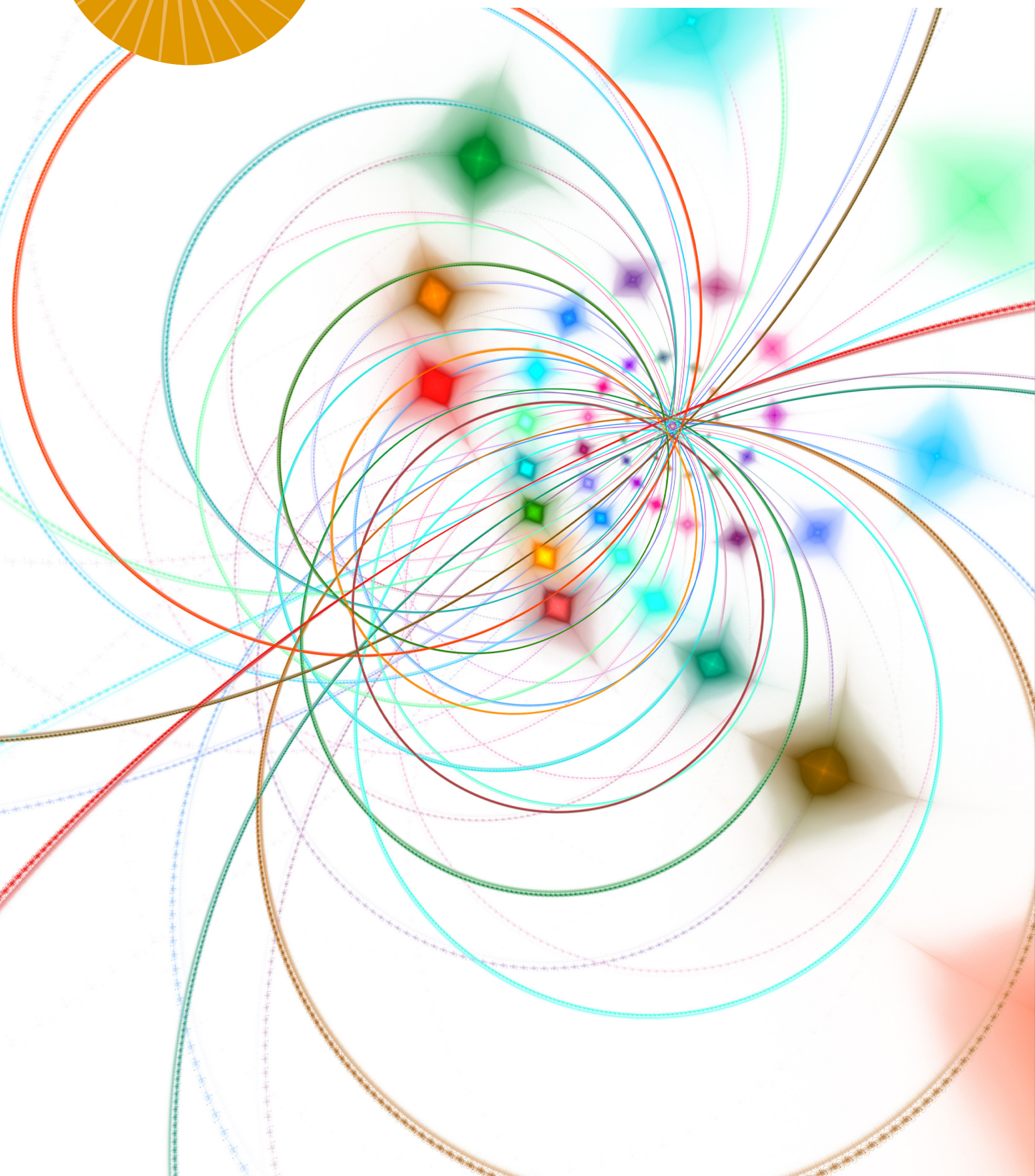


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# Healing as a Secret Motive of Synchronicity

Sky Nelson-Isaacs

Recently my nine-year-old daughter got mad at me. I asked her for the third time to stop watching the iPad and she had the nerve to get mad and say “I am putting it away! Maybe you should watch what I am doing before you criticize me!” Normally, I may have defended my point and justified myself to her, insisting that she was in the wrong. After all, I was not criticizing her; I was just repeating my request that she ignored.

But in this moment, I noticed an opportunity. Within her inaccurate statement of what had happened was an accurate reflection of what she was feeling. She felt criticized and she was offering the key to helping me understand what she needed.

I think that this is how life works. When meaningful circumstances arrive they often carry with them the path to our own healing. I call these circumstances “synchronicity,” following the lead of psychologist Carl Jung. We do not need to limit the definition of synchronicity to just the amazingly improbable events that occasionally show up. I see synchronicity in all the little clues life gives me — in the family member that interrupts my work to tell me about their hard day, in the surprise when a waiter brings me the wrong dish by accident or in my daughter’s comment about being criticized. These events hold clues to something important, something deeply fulfilling and

maybe even life-changing. These synchronicities help me find greater wholeness within myself and aid me in becoming a witness to the healing of others.

I followed my sulking daughter into her room, laid on her bed and said softly “You do not feel good when I criticize you; is that right?” She did not say anything, but as she lay with teary eyes on the bed she moved closer to me. As I rubbed her back I could sense the feelings coming through her — feelings that needed a place to go. My willingness to acknowledge and open to her struggle allowed her to let her feelings flow instead of blocking them inside herself. A few minutes later, the feelings had passed and we were joking and laughing on the bed. It may have started with one step backward, but we ended up many steps ahead.

## Meaningful Histories Are More Likely

Our wounds show us how they can be healed. Many of us already feel this to be the case. Yet as a physicist I have wondered whether a specific process can be found that supports this idea. It seems to me that we need to understand why specific events happen in the world. Are some events meaningful? Why does this job opportunity arrive when it does? Why does that friend show up at a specific moment? What potential gift does my daughter’s defensive words contain? There appears to be a mysterious connection



between the needs we have and the circumstances we experience. Many spiritual traditions aim to find underlying meaning for life's events, yet we do not have a coherent understanding of their causes within the physical sciences. I have tried to uncover such a process and I call it "meaningful history selection."

In the way that I view nature, the most fundamental things we know are our experiences. "Experience" even comes before the laws of physics. I experience the flight of a baseball through the air and then I can use the laws of physics to describe that experience. Without the experience, there is no physics.

feeling-emotion system also models experiences we are not actually having. These "anticipated experiences" influence the possibilities for actual experiences. Whether we want more of an experience or less of it, we are always anticipating some kind of experience. Anticipating an experience is like holding your breath. Whenever you find yourself metaphorically "holding your breath" in anticipation of something in your life, I think you are activating your *thought-feeling-emotion resonant cavity*.

So how does this turn into physics? How does synchronicity arise? In every moment of your life choices

### More important than "things" are the "experiences" that we have of those things.

At least at the microscopic level, quantum mechanics seems to reflect this. Every "real" event — at least for the basic building blocks called fundamental particles — is a result of two essential things: a thing out there in the world and something that acknowledges its existence. In other words, the "observed" is in a relationship with the "observer."

More important than "things" are the "experiences" that we have of those things. I think of myself not as just another object in the world, but as an "experiencer." We are each built to experience the world and we do so through our thoughts (ideas in our heads), feelings (interpretations like embarrassment or shame) and emotions (anger, sadness, etc.). These three elements all influence each other. Our bodies are like "resonant cavities" within which experiences come to life and build upon themselves. When I mention the word "chocolate," you are not a robot that simply looks up the definition of chocolate in your brain. Rather, you *experience* chocolate in the resonant cavity of your body. You remember its taste on your tongue and you feel a hint of the euphoria that real chocolate brings.

In my view, not only do real experiences affect our thought-feeling-emotion system, but our thought-

are being made. Imagine each of these choices as a branch in a tree of possibilities. Each branch is just one possible way things could work out and together all the branches represent all the possibilities. In this model, when you anticipate an experience like eating chocolate, this grows "apples" on the tree of possibilities. These apples weigh down some branches more than others. Branches in which you have a "chocolate-like experience" (whether it is hot chocolate, Hershey's chocolate or even carob) get heavy apples and other branches get nothing. From this, a process of "meaningful history selection" emerges: the branches with more apple weight — more significance — become more likely.

#### Synchronicity Leads to Wholeness

If we are born as whole, complete expressions of Divine Nature, then we might envision that through dis-ease or trauma we cover up aspects of ourselves. From this perspective, painful experiences in the past might result in the suppression of certain feelings, such as anger, resentment or loneliness, so that we avoid discomfort or pain. These feelings still exist as part of our core being but are proactively ignored by our subconscious mind because they feel threatening.





Hidden feelings cause us to anticipate certain experiences just like any other feeling. They hang apples on branches of the tree that align with the anger, resentment or loneliness. These branches become more likely. When I saw my daughter walking to her bedroom with the iPad, a hidden fear arose in me that she would be spoiled when she grew up. I was embarrassed by that possibility and I acted preemptively to avoid it. But it turned out my choice of words made her feel criticized, which grew apples on tree branches, resulting in our conflict escalating. The escalation reflected my own hidden feelings of insecurity and created a feeling in her that she is not good enough just as she is.

Yet this type of confrontation is not my core desire for our relationship. What I really want is for us to have a close, trusting relationship. My embarrassment is based upon a hidden program or belief that I carry and I reacted from this conditioning. The good news is that, since my core desire is for a close, trusting relationship, any action I take will place apples on branches in which the opportunity for closeness is ultimately present. In some cases, this involves experiencing branches where the conflict deepens, because without being shown the pattern over and over I may not ever “get it.” Through repetition, I may be able catch a glimpse of the underlying pattern, allowing me to peel it away and make a different choice. Thus, the yearning to heal pulls me toward experiences that elicit from me the same reactions. If I eventually notice the pattern and choose differently, then I will end up picking one of the apples that I actually want — sharing experiences with my daughter that build trust — and meaningful history selection will have served me positively. Let’s examine this step by step process in more detail.

### The Healing Cycle of Synchronicity

Healing is often about making different choices. This may mean, for instance, having more self-respect, being less defensive, trusting intuition more or relying on others more readily.

Synchronicity can show up in our lives to help us.

Consider this chain of effects. To change a behavior that does not serve us, we talk about peeling away a layer of false belief or inaccurate “programming.” To do this requires seeing ourselves clearly, so it is helpful to be exposed to experiences that cause us to respond from our inaccurate programming. In other words, we need to run up against situations that activate our hidden feelings in hopes we might recognize them for what they are.

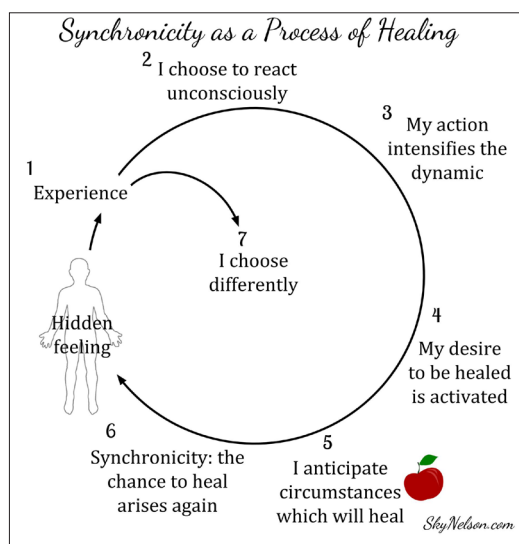
If our core intention is for healing and growth, whether conscious or not, then the apples on the tree will represent situations that ultimately bring healing and growth. These apples weigh down the branches from which they hang and increase the likelihood of any branches we experience healing from. These may be the very branches that trigger our hidden feelings. So in pulling ourselves in a synchronous way toward healing, we may find ourselves on a path that triggers our wounds.

The important thing to recognize is that we ourselves may be anticipating these triggering experiences. When we have a thought about how we were hurt in the past it triggers feelings, which lead to similar thoughts, which lead to more feelings. Our cognitive and emotional bodies light up like a firework! We grow many such apples on the tree, all in the name of “working it through.” In *The Seat of the Soul*, Gary Zukav says “When you choose to challenge and to release a negative aspect of yourself, that aspect comes to the foreground.”<sup>1</sup> Synchronicity gives us chance after chance to heal; when something is up, it shows up. The process of meaningful history selection is likely to bring us repeated experiences to keep this issue in the forefront of our consciousness.

In the diagram on the next page, we see a cycle whereby we continually draw similar experiences to ourselves. When we re-enact old patterns, we exacerbate the hidden feelings, not just for ourselves but also for others. Yet this intensification makes our own inner radar stronger and we get clearer that we want things to change. Then we anticipate a more wholesome experience more intensely. Through the apple tree metaphor, this makes us more likely to



experience another circumstance that triggers the same feelings. This time, having seen the pattern more clearly, we may be able to choose differently. We may be able to recognize what it is we are really needing from the situation and find a way to obtain that without having the same unconscious reactions. In doing so, we step out of the cycle and an old layer of belief is peeled away.



## Allowing Flow Through Pain

Trauma and disease can sometimes be visible in our lives through the choices we make. When we are wounded, we may make choices to avoid reexperiencing our trauma. But meaningful history selection points a way to healing — through the natural flow of circumstances. If we try to avoid painful experiences, we may be resisting that which is leading us towards healing — the flow and all its synchronicities. Whether life sends us a difficult conversation or a scary opportunity, allowing it to unfold naturally may help us heal the underlying hurt.

Even in little moments, synchronicity can be present in the things another person says or does. We should come to expect these sorts of clues, because the very desire to heal brings with it the repetition of circumstances which trigger the places we are wounded. This is a beautiful gift from the Divine. Instead of turning

away from experiences that remind us of our hurt places, we can practice seeing them as manifestations of our own desire to heal through those experiences.

You do not have to do this alone, either; this is where you can work with a licensed or trained practitioner to help you. You can become highly aware of both the external circumstance and your internal landscape of emotions, trusting that by living in flow you will experience meaningful guideposts to point out a path through your discomfort. Just as the bank of a stream redirects the flow of water along the most natural way to the ocean, synchronicity helps us flow into our authentic Self. €



Author Sky Nelson-Isaacs can be found at [www.LivinginFlowBook.com](http://www.LivinginFlowBook.com).

## Reference:

1. Zukav, Gary. (1989). *The Seat of the Soul*. New York: Simon & Schuster, pp. 145-146.