

What is *Free Will*?

To understand free will we need to understand that we only exist within our minds—within our body—and only if we can sense it. Nothing exists outside of us unless we sense it. If we couldn't see, hear, smell, feel, taste, or somatosensorially or telepathically detect it, there would be no way to know that the outer-world exists and therefore have free will to react to it. And we only sense what *seems* important, ignoring all else. What is important becomes a connection (a memory) between our inner-world and that outer-world. Since the outer-world only exists for us by sensory interpretation, we can only *infer* how others interpret it. The fact that the outer-world does materially exist and that others can sense it too, allows us to share common thoughts (facts, not opinions) that exist for all of us.

Our conscious mind is our prefrontal cortex (PFC), which allows us to *choose* how to react, thereby affecting our free will. The rest of the *rational* brain (the frontal cortices) is *unconscious*, since it automatically reacts in the same manner (style-wise) to the same sensory stimuli with the same unconscious memories, never making a decision to do otherwise. Our emotional brain, containing our emotional memories, represents our *subconscious* brain and is the opposite of free will; it controls our reactions whether we like it or not.

The dictionary defines *FREE WILL* as: 1) The ability or discretion to choose, or 2) the power attributed to human beings of making free choices that are unconstrained by external circumstances or by an agency such as fate or divine will—as usual, the dictionary falls short of a satisfying definition of free will.

Since only conscious (PFC) *choices* based on our memories can involve free will, should we assume that *all* conscious reactions involve free will? No. Some people think that it is impossible to express free will since our choices are a product of what others have taught us, making it *their* will. Others think that it's impossible to express free will since our genetic styles and basic emotions dictate our reactions. Conversely, many others think that humans naturally express free will simply because they can make choices, whether influenced or not. The emotional brain evolved so that we can physically survive and the *rational* brain evolved so that we can *socially* survive, requiring our choices to be socially *appropriate* to survive. Thus, the question is not whether we possess an uninfluenced free will; the question is whether we can *choose* to react *appropriately*. The term “appropriate” is used because it negates the subjective morality and legality of right or wrong and good or bad reactions.

This leaves us with a possible definition of free will: “the ability to consciously, appropriately react.” On the surface, this definition seems no different than the rest, with the proviso that our conscious (PFC) choice be appropriate. But we must look deeper to see its true meaning, based on the only free choice we really have—to decide *contrary* to our genetic and learned personality.

With this in mind, we can now define “Free Will” as:

The ability to react appropriately, contrary to our genetic and learned personality