



The Sense of Truth

A Cognitive Movement Simulation

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A revolution in thinking about the universe, truth, and thinking itself began in the early part of the twentieth century. The ideas of modern physics and the post-modern view of language have challenged, stretched, and confused us as to what is truth and how it can be known. The purpose of this paper is to offer a potential missing piece of the puzzle.

While reading a biography of Kurt Gödel, an important player in these discussions, I discovered what has been bothering me about the debate. This is not a new thought, yet in the context of the life of a mathematician and logician – a background that I share – it took on a whole new level of meaning.

Given my proclivities and that which I am trying to communicate, I will not cleave directly to the goal. Instead, to honor that which I have had the privilege of absorbing from China, I will take a more indirect route. The basic elements of this story have to be gathered and prepared. Hopefully, meaning will emerge like steam rising from the boiling rice.

I would like to start with an uncommon view of language. To begin this story, let's use a research finding from the field of communication. The essence of the discovery is that words alone contribute only a small percentage to the total impact. Some studies conclude that 7-10% of our communication impact is verbal. The main component of impact (90% plus) is how we speak non-verbally through our gestures, postures, movements, facial expressions, and tone of voice.

The aspect of language that particularly interests me is the linguistic act of making a distinction. But what do we mean by this act? Where does it take place? With what "part" of ourselves do we do it?

As an aid in loosening our thinking, let's examine the ancient Chinese view of "linguistic distinction." To express this idea, they started with the image of physically dividing an object and then combined it with the character for language.

Very basic to their whole approach to life was an unwillingness to divide the visceral from the abstract. "The principles are written in flesh and bone," said Fu Xi, the first Chinese emperor and inventor of the symbols used in the classic text, the I Ching.

When did we get caught in believing that distinctions were only verbal? What if they are non-verbal as well?

If the communications research is correct, the non-verbal dimension of language may be much larger than the universe of words. To risk taking this even further, what if the non-verbal dimension plays an equally powerful role in our moods, attitudes, responses, interpretations, presence, and actions?

It might surprise you to know that the non-verbal includes much more than just physical expression. Mathematical thinking reaches far beyond words. We also think visually, with colors and shapes. A wine expert analyzes the complex amalgam of tastes. The perfumer does the same with smell. The martial artist or dancer thinks with movement. Albert Einstein appears to have had the gift of being both cognitive and kinesthetic oriented.

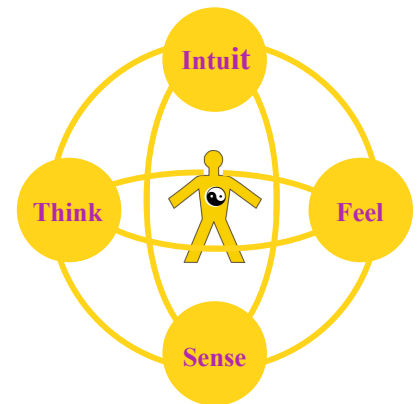
Before we go any further, I would like to offer a view of language that comes from China. It is expressed in the following poem by Wang Pi, a 3rd Century A.D. philosopher who opened the way for the constructive interchange of Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism.

*“Symbols serve to express ideas.
Words serve to explain symbols.
He who clings to words does not get the symbols.
He who clings to symbols does not get the ideas.”*

What if everything you do you do with all of you? You are an embodied (or somatic) self. You are a system. According to Carl Jung, you perceive and make sense of the world through four psychological functions: sensing, intuiting, feeling, and thinking.

Regardless of your natural or normal type, i.e., “I am a Sensor-Thinker” or “I am an Intuitive-Feeler,” all of these functions are present in each of us, in every moment. This is so even if they are rarely used or used poorly or unconsciously.

To emphasize the idea of the embodied self, the diagram on the right has the image of the human body at its center.



Instead of focusing on the very real issues of type and temperament, let's ask a different sort of question. How do I have to be to do what I have to do? Situations are not the same. People are not the same. Goals are not the same. Even I am not the same in all circumstances.

So even though it seems like too much effort, or conflicts with your sense of authenticity, I still must ask: What combination of these four mind/body functions is most fitting, given everything? Systems engineers call this, “satisfying the boundary requirements.”

Staying in a systems-thinking mode, these four sub-systems are parts of one whole. They do not exist separately. They each influence each other – in both profound and very ordinary ways. Thought without feeling may not be possible. Intuition without sensation may not be either.

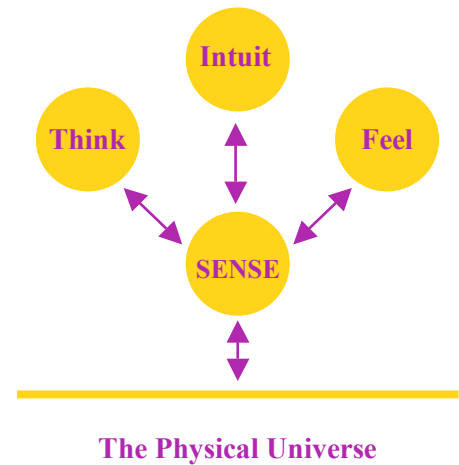
To take the next step, I would like to use a related four-fold model, often used by executives: vision, strategy, goal, and tactics. A leader needs to use all of him or her self, not just their favorite parts or ways of doing things. An excellent idea, but no one told us how to do this. Here are some more of my thoughts about becoming versatile.

On a very practical level, you want your visions, goals, and desires to manifest in the world and not remain as thoughts, feelings, or intuitions of possible new ways to be. You want them to become concrete and real.

Returning to Jung’s model and leaving aside the issue of types, the systems function of sensation is the “closest” to the physical universe. Said another way, sensation is to actuality as intuition is to possibility.

It is in the world of actuality that your results are tested. Through this feedback you can refine and retool yourself as an instrument.

This is why we believe that working with the senses is a crucial component of transforming words into actualities. The senses allow you to use yourself as a laboratory for building and testing your ideas and desires.



Anatomy textbooks categorize the senses as being either exteroceptive or interoceptive, that is, turned outward or inward. Studies show that the phenomena of the externally directed senses reach us, relatively speaking, more directly. The phenomena of our internally directed senses influence us more indirectly.

Before going any further, let’s find out what the anatomy texts say about these two complementary dimensions of sensation.

INTEREOCEPTIVE SENSES

1. Proprioception
 - a. Equilibrium
 - b. Tendons
 - c. Joints
 - d. Muscles
2. Visceroception



EXTEREOCEPTIVE SENSES

1. Smell
2. Sight
3. Hearing
4. Taste
5. Touch & Pressure
6. Pain & Temperature

As I play over my memories of what has “bothered” me in many of the post-modern and quantum-consciousness examples, it is that the standards that are offered for proof seem dominated by the visual and auditory senses ... the direct of the direct. There are no examples I can think of that are based on the external senses of taste and smell, which operate with an equally direct yet fuzzier mode of analysis.

At this point I would like to add another whole dimension of possibilities, from the world of the internal senses. These emerge from my studies of, what are now called, the somatic or “body” disciplines. My thinking is the product of decades of disciplined work in forms that span the globe. Because this realm is so unfamiliar, especially when linked with thinking, I will introduce some of my favorites.

Dance - modern, jazz, and ballet – each opens different paths of expression.

The martial arts – internal and external, animal and philosophic styles, from China, Japan, and the Philippines – each reveals different ways of responding to life’s events.

The modern mind/body methods – F.M. Alexander, Moshe Feldenkrais, and Wilhelm Reich – each offer different approaches toward self-mastery.

Far beyond the usual view of the “body,” these trainings can all bring right up to your face the clear fact that you are not in touch with yourself. From this view, it is a miracle that you actually end up where you are headed.

Of particular value in the exploration of truth is the idea, voiced by F.M. Alexander, of “faulty sensory appreciation.” It is from personal experience that I say that it is not pleasant at all to discover that you not only do not know where your body parts are, but when you give a simple command to move, something very different, unplanned, and unwanted often occurs.

John Dewey, the American philosopher, took lessons with Alexander for many years. In the preface to one of Alexander’s books, Dewey wrote that working with him was one of the most humiliating experiences of his life – intellectually speaking. He must have found it valuable because some of Alexander’s influence shows up in the title of one of Dewey’s books, *Ends and Means*.

A complementary finding comes from the research of Drs. Whatmore and Kohli published in, *The Physiopathology and Treatment of Functional Disorders*. They developed a sophisticated experiment using a multi-channel electro-myogram.

They discovered that effort is inherently connected to and affects all aspects of the nervous system and that specific patterns of effort made the difference between health and dysfunction. Besides the obvious dimensions of performance and bracing effort, they also found a link to two other fundamental human activities not often viewed so “physically” – the efforts of attention and representation.

A core component of the training I have undergone has been to discover my personal habits, a.k.a., biases, of internal sensing and to engage in the life long process of testing and recalibration. Every discipline has its own view of the ideal coordinate system and zero point. The search for truth takes place even with the muscles.

What I am trying to say is that there is a whole dimension of “objectivity” accessible by the internal senses. If one can imagine taking on the perspective of the “soul,” the external world includes the inner world of the body as much as the outer world perceived by the external senses.

This idea could open a few holes in the question of what is empirical and what is not. Just recently I heard a top NASA systems engineer talk about the history and future of his discipline. In the old days, he said, all you had to deal with were deterministic systems. The rules were clear, the decisions (relatively) easy. Then came along stochastic systems. These added randomness and statistical patterns to the equations and decisions.

Now they have to deal with autonomous systems. We have finally invented machines whose complexity makes them as difficult to grasp and control as human beings.

As we temporarily wander from the senses, here is an intriguing biological fact. It just so happens that there is a physiological connection between the external sense of touch and the internal sense of proprioception. As the nerves for each of these senses enters the spine, they come together – outer touch meeting inner touch.

This may be the physical mechanism corresponding to, what can be called, the Mind’s Hand, the ability to influence states and conditions via awareness. This configuration of senses is more tangible and concrete than the Mind’s Eye.

This may be a good time to introduce another ancient idea, *Xin* (“shin”). This is the Chinese term for the mind. Instead of being rooted in the head, as modern conventional view would have us believe, the mind is seen as being rooted in the heart. From this perspective, thinking, feeling, and moving are intimately connected. This same idea is found in Japan and India.

Here is a quote from the Czech poet, Rainer Maria Rilke that shows that this is not just an Asian idea. “All the soarings of my mind begin in my blood.”

Since I have given myself permission to wander, you might find it interesting to note that in Hindu Yoga physiology the sense of touch is related to the heart.

Circling back to language, it is through words that we tend to identify, process and express our experiences and desires for change. This phenomenon is especially intriguing in trying to understand the writings of Zen and Daoist masters. Using words to point to that which cannot be put into words is a well-respected skill in these traditions.

Words, symbols, ideas – in Western terms, it looks so mental. The ancient Chinese used visual, i.e., non-verbal, distinctions as symbols instead of a phonetic verbal alphabet. Our linguistic way of thinking is more substance-based. Theirs is more movement-oriented. We seek Truth. They seek Harmony.

Borrowing their view, we discover that: When someone is depressed, they feel “down.” When someone is excited, they feel “up.” Someone who always says yes “backs down” under pressure. We say we are frustrated when we feel “backed up.”

An important “secret” for successful non-verbal thinking comes from Miyamoto Musashi, 17th century Japanese master of the sword and strategy, author of *A Book of Five Rings*. He suggests that we, “*pay attention to the insignificant.*”

Western common sense tells us that the skills you develop in one area of life are not expected to transfer over into another area. We have grown up being told again and again that what we learn and can do in one area of life is only true or effective there. Many of us are so accomplished at this kind of personal partitioning that we do not allow what we know, in one area of life, to inform the rest of us.

However, the traditions that emphasize the internal senses have a different view. They tell us that you should expect a crossover effect. This is sometimes referred to as “generalizable learning.”

An excellent example is the Japanese Samurai Warrior. Expected to be as good with the brush stroke as with his sword, his ability to be one-pointed and focused on the moment of life and death was expected to go hand in hand with the openness to beauty he showed in his floral arrangements.

Chinese martial artists as well as physicians train for T’ing Qi or listening energy, the ability to use all of your senses to read your opponent’s movements, motivations, and intentions. They are not interested in what we may call, your story. When the matter at hand is a matter of life or death then the goal is concrete, bottom-line data and interpretation. Anticipating your questions, they answer, “*To do is to understand.*”

If F.M. Alexander was correct and our habits of sensory appreciation are “debauched,” then perhaps, before we go too far along in our judgments, we should invest the time and energy in recalibrating the sensory instrument used in our cogitation and emotional “management.” We have this capacity, as my own experiences and the words of Chinese sages like Mencius (Meng-Tzu) state. The task is to test, refine, strengthen, and draw out that which is natural for us to have.

After all this sensory conversation, let’s wander back to intuition and to two different ways to approach it. My interpretation of Carl Jung’s use of the term is that it emphasizes the realm of possibilities versus sensation’s orientation toward actuality.

When we bring to the table a nervous system trained in the detection and interpretation of internal sensory data an alternative understanding emerges. It is no surprise that people and cultures that include the internal senses in their minds are often at home in a world-view of change, complementarity, and chance.

I am going to borrow the idea, revealed by sub-atomic research, of the particle-wave nature of its phenomena. Using Jung's view, imagine that the Sensate in his or her relatively solid orientation waits for the event to encounter him or her – particle meeting particle.

Now, let's imagine that the Intuitive in his or her dynamic and expansive orientation extends him or her self to meet the wave front of the approaching event. These are two very different approaches, to everything.

Intuition has another meaning, one that is much more relevant to our quest for truth. It is defined as the state of being aware of or knowing something without having to discover or perceive it. It also refers to the immediate knowledge of something.

I'd like to throw a little monkey wrench into this definition. It is, most probably, based on a view of the senses that does not include either the internal senses or the fuzzier external ones. And, just because "most" people are not aware of this tangible dimension does not mean it does not exist or is subjective, in the sense of not being testable.

If you look back at the diagram on page two, you see Jung's four inter-dependent psychological functions encircling an image of the human body. At the center of the body image is a small diagram that the Chinese call, the T'ai Chi symbol.

This non-verbal mathematical concept emphasizes wholeness as complementarity. It is placed in the middle of the body image as a reminder of two of our most crucial organs: the heart and the lungs. As a thought experiment, ask yourself, is the tightening of the heart muscle more important than its relaxing? Which is more important, inhaling or exhaling. In real life, these are very silly questions.

I mention the lungs, because there is something about them that is very special and possibly relevant to our quest. The breathing function, of which the lungs hold a central place, is categorized as a semi-voluntary system.

On one hand, breathing is a matter of conscious control. On the other, it is entirely autonomic. In simple terms, you cannot purposefully hold your breath until you die. At a certain point, the "intelligence" of the flesh takes over control. This is probably why so many disciplines emphasize working with the breath.

The breathing rhythm provides an excellent laboratory for studying the interplay of intention, habit, feeling, and biology. You might find it will be time well spent, even though you might have to re-evaluate some old beliefs and recalibrate your attitude.

Now that this Chinese “mathematical” idea is on the table, let’s explore it a bit. Not only does it remind us that every whole has two inseparable aspects, but that they turn one into the other, like exhale into inhale. If you were to focus on your breathing right now and begin to exhale and then keep exhaling until your lungs were empty – and then relax – you will find that at the very extreme of emptiness, fullness begins. The same can be observed at the edge of fullness.



This leads me to something I have found interesting but is a bit of a heresy in the halls of formalism and post-modern thinking. Isn’t it interesting that some of the most abstract of the abstract findings of pure mathematics – the extreme of Yang (the white side of the diagram) often point toward the understructure or basic building blocks of our very concrete universe (the barest beginning of the black).

I have recently become aware that I might be a closet Platonist in addition to my Daoist and Confucian leanings. I am reminded that in the midst of large pendulum swings of belief the baby can be thrown out with the bath water. Here is a quote I found in the Chinese philosophic, strategic, and divinatory text named, *The I Ching* or *Book of Change*.

“In the words and deeds of the past there lies hidden a treasure that people may use to strengthen and elevate their own characters. The way to study the past is not to confine oneself to mere knowledge of history but, through application of this knowledge, to give actuality to the past.” *The I Ching*, Hexagram 26, Wilhelm/Baynes Edition

Carrying this ancient view back to human physiology, the T’ai Chi symbol is an excellent way of speaking about the relationship between two of the most fundamental components of our nervous system: the central nervous system and the autonomic nervous system. One of the distinguishing factors between them is “time.” At this moment, memory is offering up a few of the traditions that have influenced the view I am suggesting.

Alfred Korzybski made the point that humans are “time-binders” by nature. Moshe Feldenkrais viewed human consciousness as taking place in time. Hans Selye, in his work on stress, postulated two different pathways: 1) stimulus travels to brain and from brain to the organs of response (a time-based process); 2) the “instantaneous” gut response. In the Kashmiri philosophy, time (kala) transforms eternity into successive moments.

Or as the theoretical physicist John Archibald Wheeler said, “Time is what prevents everything from happening at once.” In anticipation of where I am headed, everything-all-at-once is a situation that most people call “chaos” and assiduously try to avoid.

Let’s return to the T’ai Chi symbol in the center of the human body at the center of the four psychological functions. The white part is called Yang and is sometimes compared with the I Ching hexagram Ch’ien or the Creative. This can be correlated with the “masculine” archetype.

The black part of the circle is called Yin and is sometimes compared with the hexagram Kun or Responsivity. I prefer this translation to the more usual “Receptive” with its undercurrent meaning of passive and being at effect versus cause. This can be correlated with the “feminine” archetype.

I want to bring the discussion back to the Chinese term for human consciousness, xin or heart-mind, since we are interested in truth from a human being’s point of view. Xin is a cognitive/affective organ. The Chinese say that one of its most crucial functions is Shi/Fei (This/Not This), the capacity to discern and decide.

Now with all these threads present, we might be able to say that the mathematical formalists and post-modern thinkers strongly emphasize the white: yang, mind-like, moving on purpose, time, choice. With this said, intuition in its “deeper” meaning probably emerges through the black: yin, heart-like, being moved, no-time, chance.

What if an important component of the controversy that surrounds “the Truth” is standing on an “impossible” desire – to have either inhaling or exhaling be the truth of breathing – to have the central nervous system or the autonomic be the “ruler” – to have the movement of life stop.

Clarity at the expense of movement seems to me to be too closely related to the particle/wave dilemma to be allowed to go unquestioned. Even though the results will seem less clear, they may well be more accurate.

“Nothing happens until something moves.” Albert Einstein

I am not trying to establish a Truth, just pointing out that “truth” might be more interesting than we imagine when we take into account more of what human beings have discovered and considered – around the world and throughout history.

With a background in the discipline of Operations Research, I find it reasonable to examine these fundamental issues by standing in the middle of the interplay between three very different and complimentary ways of thinking. As this scientific approach has demonstrated, sometimes, a problem or dilemma that resists solution can reveal a wholly other way to approach it when we bring together several different disciplines and foci.

A hybrid model and a new working method sometimes emerges. This is not a composite or amalgam or eclectic mix. It is as though, at a sub-molecular level, the DNA strands separated and then came together as a whole new kind of system. As is with any evolutionary change, the child cannot be understood by simply knowing the parents.

I was sixteen years of age when I realized the simultaneous importance of both science and soma. Allowing spirit to enter the conversation took a bit longer. Over the years I keep coming back to an unavoidable question. Does the order or priority I give to these three (undeniable) factors – science, soma, spirit - matter?

Just when you feel that you are close to finally grasping a “final” truth, the whole world begins to move again making the last act impossible. It’s that movement factor again.

From its perspective, everything is “made of” movement, you the observer as well as that which you are observing. Take heart from a teaching from the yin side of things. Movement must be danced with. Immersed in the movement, meaning is immediate and undeniable. Perhaps this is the “deeper” view of intuition.

Let’s return to purpose. Using the ancient Greek triadic view of Wholeness, here is a question. Do you seek the True, the Good, or the Beautiful? Wherever you anchor yourself becomes the foundation for your way of being in the world and making sense of things.

Most of us are familiar with the Christian Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. Here is another triad, the aspects of the Divine from the Hindu view: Brahma (the Creator) – Vishnu (the Maintainer) – Shiva (the Destroyer). As a note: this is their masculine view. There is a complementary feminine triad.

Although the beginning and end of processes are inherently more exciting, most of the time we are in the middle, the home of Vishnu. That which preserves, that which maintains, might alternatively be viewed as the realm of habit and the home of bureaucracy.

It is through rules, procedures, protocols that all results come to pass. This is so fundamental to the nature of things that the universe has included in its functional job description the task of defending the norm, a.k.a., the familiar, from all new ideas and new demands.

Having Habit hold the middle, we can alternatively rename the beginning as Choice and the end as Chance and the whole process as Change. Choice, Chance, and Habit, what if the interplay of all three is necessary to make sense of “the Truth”?

It’s common to misinterpret our confusion about the complexity of things and call them chaotic. The two basic ways one can respond to this are the leap of faith or grasping for simplistic ideas. At what point do you declare that you are at the edge of the Void, where the rational mind must stop?

An image that has helped me comes from all of the time I have spent at the seashore. Using the symbolic translation of the ocean as the spiritual or formless realm, do we exclaim we have encountered emptiness, at the shore or at the continental shelf? The difference may lie in our relationship to the “obvious” external senses as well as the “subtler” ones.

Now it’s time for the question. What is genuine? I want to take a brief tour of measurement – from a spiritual view. Let’s start with the 19th century view of Lord Kelvin whose name graces the temperature scale that begins at “absolute” zero, a temperature so low that movement is so slowed and power flows without limit.

*"When you can measure what you are speaking about
and express it in numbers, you know something about it." Kelvin*

The Hindu tradition of Vedanta has a concept named, Maya, that is viewed as the “force” that covers the Reality of the Divine and generates the world of illusion. In other words, enlightenment equals waking up from the dream that the world of Maya is real. In the context of our journey, it is very interesting to note that one of the key definitions of Maya is measurement.

In this context, calling that which can be measured, the Real, is according to Vedanta, a subtle and dangerous trap --- for those whose concern is enlightenment.

Rereading what I just wrote brought me to the question of the diverse nature of language itself. Through its act of distinction it creates, through its metaphors and assertions it describes, and through its logic it reveals as well as hides.

India’s Kashmir Saivism offers an intriguing alternate view. Maya is viewed more neutrally as representing one of Spirit’s primary powers. Maya is the power that displays difference in identity and gives rise to the finitising power of the Infinite.

The desire to make sense of the enormity of life by holding to what one can count is very human, and if the spiritual teachers are correct, unfortunately limiting, hence productive of suffering.

Buddhists express the relationship between everyday phenomena and the infinite with a simple sounding poem. “Form is formlessness (Void). Formlessness is form.” This is definitely something that has to cook for quite a while.

I brought up the idea of Void to draw in an important modern Western philosophic tradition, Existentialism. Like many, I read Sartre in college and had my own meeting with the abyss. Taking the last few paragraphs to heart, we might be able to reframe the dilemma that gave it its name and which serves as part of the ground for post-modern thinking.

What if instead of calling the encounter with the Void, an encounter with nothingness, we used the lessons of the Eastern traditions to call it recognizing the no-thingness of everything?

Not a personal, psychological, diminishment, rather the realization that beneath the obvious, there are no things, only energy and consciousness in motion. Unfortunately, our thing-oriented language makes it difficult to make this leap.

Standing at the edge of the Void.
Maintaining sanity as well as humanity.
Thank G-d for the social world of language.

“A person is a person because he recognizes others as persons.”

Desmond Tutu

A person can be genuine. An attitude can be genuine. An expression can be genuine. An intuition can be genuine. See why we've taken so long to get here. Real is real, just different in different domains.

That which is genuine is natural. That which is genuine is sincere. That which is genuine is honest.

Recently, I had the opportunity to observe someone debrief his team on his latest assignment. Given my background, it is not surprising that I noticed a tension pattern in his chest reminiscent of a touch of anxiety. I could also see that he was aware of the feeling as well as the sensation. As the presentation unfolded, he relaxed into the flow, the tension turning into expressiveness. At the end, the feedback spoke of his genuineness.

This got me thinking because this particular tension pattern – expansion of the chest followed by contraction yet still reaching outward - is also found in situations of ambiguity and uncertainty. Yes – No – Yes is like taking a trip around the T'ai Chi symbol.

The key is, he stayed in motion. He did not attempt to stop this inner movement. He did not act out in reaction. He stayed calm in the midst. Et voilà, no matter how he experienced it, everyone saw him as genuine.

I wondered, could being genuine be correlated with having a healthy dose of uncertainty? For our presenter, the uncertainty showed up in the muscular conflict as well as emotionally. Although it was not an issue in this situation, we still have the question of cognitive uncertainty and being genuine.

But before we start thinking about thinking, let's look at the reverse premise. Could an unhealthy dose of uncertainty be indicative of being not genuine? For now, let unhealthy refer to either too much or too little uncertainty.

Observing “too much” uncertainty, it is easy to question clarity, trustworthiness, or decisiveness. Observing “too little” uncertainty triggers assessments of arrogance, pretence, and hidden fears. Neither it appears, is conducive to being perceived as genuine.

What might be a healthy dose of cognitive uncertainty? It all depends. I am not uncertain that I am typing on my keyboard. I am not uncertain that the words I see on the screen match what I have typed. But if ask myself about what I really mean by the words you've been reading, then I find that a greater dose of uncertainty keeps me connected to you and more aware of my habits of writing.

Given my tendencies, I find it extraordinarily valuable to monitor my level of cognitive uncertainty, not just professionally. Its value in my personal life is priceless. As much as I would love to be right, I have found that in a great many situations it is not worth the price.

There is a point in the cycle of certainty/uncertainty when you feel so very close to “perfection.” You blink and it’s gone. Trying to pull back and return generates dogma as well as confusion. You just have to relax and ride the wave back. Next time, I will try to keep my eyes open at the peak of clarity. So I’ve told myself.

Standing at the edge of Truth is akin to skimming the event horizon of the black hole of meaning.

It is like reaching through the flames, not knowing if you can survive.

It is like stopping in the midst of almost complete relaxation before your consciousness awareness melts away.

Occasionally, standing at the edge of Truth, something happens, a quality emerges that alters everything. Whether or not you remember or can live it is another matter all together.

*“To realize the principle within your own heart,
do not just read, memorize, or imitate, instead,
study hard to absorb these things into your body.”*

Miyamoto Musashi

At the end of all this wandering, it seems to me that the real issue is not which one of these perspectives is the truth. Rather, it is how can I open my mind, heart, and body wide enough to hold all of these powerful and often seemingly conflicting views and let them cook.

This process honors the approach of the scientific discipline of Operations Research as well as the approach taken by the classical Chinese, which has been called “syncretic.” Coming from the Greek, “a union of communities,” I use it to refer to the process of holding different truths, each coming from a different point of view and even culture, and engaging in the task of reconciliation within one’s own heart, mind, and body.

Speaking only for myself, it is definitely worth the effort. Cultivating a broader view of the truth with its implications for the cultivation of character seems to me to be even more important than discovering the truth about Truth.