



“we are continually cultivating our past.” - Lisa Feldman Barrett

our experience is, at least at some level, constructed. our brain is predictive and is constantly preparing us for what happens next by relying on what happened before.

the thing is, “what happened before” is not as simple as that. we remember our experience, not what actually happened. more than that, we actually remember *the last time we remembered* the event. we drift. we talk ourselves into a persona, create a set of expectations and prepare for the outcome we believe will happen. we experience the event the way we are prepared to. there is a chance that it will play out different enough to update our predictions, but for the most part the most efficient thing for our brain is to assume we are correct and move on.

this is not “the secret” or anything like that, this is acceptance of responsibility. this is exercise of agency. this is playing your part in whatever way you can. because that’s all we can do.

our brain is miraculous. it is 3 pounds of meat in a sealed box. it doesn’t see, it interprets electrical signals that have been triggered in response to the reflection of light. it doesn’t hear, it interprets signals that have resulted from changes in air pressure. it doesn’t feel, it interprets signals from the rest of our body in attempt to preserve its self and spread its genes.

our brain uses our past to create context, but that is not enough. it uses emotion to flavor that context., to shape it and drive it and prepare the body for what is about to happen. this. THIS is where we can start the change. it is called affective realism. our emotional state influences our brains interpretation of whatever situation we find ourselves in. to be clear: its not that we **think** that we see something differently, we don’t “see” anything - there is only our interpretation.

sit with that. then do something about it.

self awareness. granulation of emotions. being able to tell the difference between feeling disappointed and dejected. elated and excited. these emotions carry flavors, shades of nuance and color. being able to think about nuance permits us to feel nuance, and being able to feel it is a prerequisite to experiencing it - and the empathy required to meet the world as it is, and not just

how we are.

training takes many forms.

read a book.

write a poem.

paint. take a picture. feel what someone else feels.

and grow.

- the station

(one book suggestion - and the one that most inspired this post - is **how emotions are made** by lisa feldman barrett)