

5. THE GREAT SCIENTIFIC QUESTIONS

WTM FAQ 5.1 What is biologist Jeremy Griffith's 'instinct vs intellect' explanation of the human condition?

[Note: this answer is repeated in WTM FAQ 1.3]

Finding understanding of the human condition—our species' capacity for 'good and evil'—is of incalculable importance; in fact, it has been described as the holy grail of the whole human journey of conscious thought and enquiry. And it is this longed-for breakthrough explanation of the human condition that biologist Jeremy Griffith has found.

Key to Jeremy's explanation of the human condition is an understanding of the difference between our instincts and intellect, and the effect that difference has had on our behaviour. He explains that when we humans developed a conscious mind some two million years ago, a battle unavoidably developed between it and our already established instincts. Natural selection of genes gives species' instinctive orientations, such as to a migratory flight path for birds, but a nerve-based conscious mind needs understanding to operate, so when a fully conscious mind emerges and begins experimenting in understanding it unavoidably comes into conflict with the already established instinctive orientations that are in effect intolerant of these deviating experiments in self-management.

The result of this conflict between our instinct and intellect was an undeserved sense of guilt and insecurity that caused us to become psychologically defensive, angry, alienated and egocentric, the upset state we refer to as the human condition—a state we sought to alleviate through a competitive, selfish and aggressive bid for the reinforcement we could gain from winning power, fame, fortune and glory. But now that we can explain and understand this conflict and the guilt it produced, all those insecure, defensive behaviours are obsoleted, brought to an end, and we free ourselves from the human condition.

In short, this explanation represents the fulfilment of the human race's great hope, faith and trust that one day this psychologically redeeming and transforming understanding of our 'good and evil'-stricken human condition would be found.

Watch Jeremy Griffith present the psychologically redeeming and transforming explanation of the human condition in [Video/Freedom Essay 3*](#), or read [chapter 1*](#) of his definitive presentation on the subject, *FREEDOM: The End Of The Human Condition*.

Published by WTM Publishing and Communications Pty Ltd (ACN 103 136 778)

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