

**The Conservation
of
Suffering Principle**

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The Conservation of Suffering Principle

“What is it about life that there always seems to be something missing?” — Epictetus

The ten thousand forms of human suffering are but the transformations of a single dark force. Endlessly it displays itself, and yet it remains unknown! At times its existence may be suspected. Surmount any of life’s difficulties and another one takes its place. Overcome that problem, and a new problem arises. Human suffering is truly the most elusive of shape-shifters.

In its plasticity, suffering bears a curious resemblance to matter. Like matter, it can be neither created nor destroyed. Efforts to eradicate it succeed only in changing its form. We free ourselves from anxiety but now feel bored. We are no longer lonely but now suffer from conflicts with others. Within these transformations, the magnitude of suffering remains constant. Consequently, no matter what we do to find fulfillment, we still find that our world is “out of joint,” that something is lacking. The law guiding these changes is, “The Conservation of Suffering Principle.”

The good news is that a level of consciousness exists beyond the force-field of the conservation of suffering. Those who have been there have called it, “the still point of a turning world.” The Japanese philosopher Nishita described this state of awareness

when he wrote, “My joy and my sorrow do not touch my peace.” This book is a practical guide to help you get there.

Our journey will be along a path few know exist. It emerges out of the unique evolution and present crisis of Western thought and civilization. Here is a route from existentialism — which many cultural historians consider the final stop on the long train ride of Western thought — to a higher level of understanding about life. This book is essentially a roughly drawn map of the Western route to Eastern wisdom.

This path is a *via negativa*. It is not “negative” in the sense of bad or antagonistic. What makes it a negative route is that we do not proceed directly to that which we desire — freedom, immortality, bliss, peace of mind, higher consciousness, and so on. Ours is a journey in quite the opposite direction, into the dark side of everyday life. Dante learned from his guide, Virgil, that the exit from hell is to be found at its very center. Paradoxically, to be free, the two of them had to proceed deeper into hell. Likewise, our path to freedom involves a descent into our interior “heart of darkness.” We descend into these depths with penetrating questions. The result is illuminating insights that convert suffering into Self-knowledge.

Apart from the insights they generate, penetrating questions are invaluable for another reason. A question like Epictetus’, “Why is there always something missing?” — which is really an intimation of The Conservation of Suffering Principle — delivers us from a deadening complacency. It renews our spirit by propelling us on a detective adventure, an adventure more philosophical, and dangerous, than any other and far more uncanny.

Why uncanny? In a typical detective story the sleuth knows what is missing. But he lacks knowledge of its whereabouts, who has stolen it, and so on. Here, on the other hand, the something that is missing was first reported missing about 2,500 years ago in Greece, and we still do not even know what it is! Yet it is vital that we find it. To refuse

the assignment is to resign ourselves to what Thoreau called, “a life of quiet desperation.” We shall soon discover that all other mysteries pale before this most perplexing of life’s mysteries, the enigma of human suffering. Let us begin our investigation.

The Premise of Life’s Comedy

Man’s guiding star is his belief that changes can make him happier. He dreams, “My life will improve after I move into the new house, receive a promotion, retire from work. Or after I have something to eat, buy a car, win the contract. Or after my children are grown, the new president takes office, the snow melts, the heat wave ends, we win the war...”

Endless are the images of freedom and fulfillment that captivate us, feeding our hope that tomorrow can be better than today. We are easily mesmerized by the advertiser’s siren song, “It’s new and improved!” If our faith lies in the new and improved, we have not yet grasped The Conservation of Suffering Principle.

You may protest, “It’s obvious that changes do make a difference! If I win the lottery, I won’t have to work for my demanding boss. If I move, I’ll be free of my noisy neighbors. Progress is possible!” Yes, a change improves our lives in a relative sense, by ending a particular hardship. But here is the rub. We satisfy a desire, or overcome a difficulty, and almost immediately the familiar hunger for “we know not what” returns.

This hunger does not linger, for a mental image soon appears and declares: “I’m really what you’re looking for!” Hopeful, we search for what corresponds to the image. Our search might lead us to the distant corners of the globe, or perhaps no further than the inner recesses of our kitchen refrigerator. We obtain our desideratum, but immediately our lack returns. Our imagination then cooks up a new magical image.

The cycle of frustrated hunger begins in childhood. The joyous excitement of Christmas Eve is followed by “Okay. What’s next?” after we open the presents. In school, we long to be free of exams. But when summer arrives, we are pursued by the demon of boredom. We grow up, and drunk with love’s promise, we are soon sobered by family responsibilities. We look forward to retirement, but when it arrives...

Why Do the New Episodes Seem Like Reruns?!

Perhaps you have reached the point in life where you have no expectations. You no longer believe in those magical images that you formerly thought could satisfy you. You are disillusioned.

Disillusionment comes about because you increasingly grasp the identity, or sameness factor, amid a host of differences. You perceive that the changes that occur are merely variations on an all too familiar theme. Consequently, before embarking on the evening’s entertainment, you already have anticipated the ensuing “lack.” You know, before meeting him, that husband number four will not be essentially different from the first three. On an intuitive level, you apprehend the conservation of suffering.

Disillusionment is potentially a very good thing; it can be the route to spiritual awakening. But unless accompanied by a deeper understanding of life, it usually leads to a spiritual malaise. Your weakened psychic constitution then becomes susceptible to the contagion of world-weariness and cynicism.

We hear this cynicism in expressions like: “You just can’t win;” or “Six of one, half a dozen of another;” or “Same shit, different day.” We suspect that Baudelaire was correct when he wrote, “Life is a hospital, in which all of the patients are continually trying to change beds.” For “beds” we can substitute jobs, homes, husbands, etcetera. Mark Twain summed it up when he said, “Life is one damn thing after another.” But

while many wind up skeptics, if not cynics, they have not gone on to ask why “life is one damn thing after another.”

Rounding Up the Usual Suspect Answers

For many people it is not really a question. Bad things happen and there is no explanation. But they do have sort of an explanation. They presume that something external comes about to ruin one’s happiness. In the Biblical tale, Job asks why. But even that profound story begins with the sense that Job was doing quite nicely until tragedy struck. People today are less inclined to blame their gods for their present woes than they are to blame their childhood experiences, parents, past lives, political leaders, society, and so on. In all cases, the implication is that the negative came and eclipsed what is normally a sunny state of affairs.

Others assume that they suffer because of something that needs to happen that has not happened, and may never happen. “I haven’t met the right person yet,” or, “I haven’t hit it big.” Many people view being a wage earner as equivalent to being a slave on a galley ship. Every week it is decided, by means of the state lottery, who will become a multi-millionaire and leave the ship to live like a king or a queen. The rest of us must go back to our oars, until the next drawing.

Is unhappiness fundamentally due to something in particular — that has or has not happened? If someone were asked why he was unhappy and he answered, “Because I lost my farm,” or “Because my dog died,” such a response would be quite reasonable. If he then declared, “It didn’t have to happen!” he would still be right. But he would also be naive, because his focus would only be on his suffering’s immediate cause. He would have failed to consider its ultimate cause.

The immediate cause is always something in particular, and the fact that it happened may be purely accidental. But the fact that we suffer at all — apart from the

particular form that our suffering may take — is not accidental. If it is not a lost farm, or a dead dog, it must, out of necessity, be other things, equally negative, that plague us. What is this dark necessity? To discover the ultimate cause of human suffering, we need to see — behind the myriad shapes of suffering — the shape-shifter himself.

Good and Bad: Separated at Birth

There must be something intrinsic to life's pleasures, joys, and satisfactions that makes them evanescent, thus bringing us back to the state of dissatisfaction. Their evanescent quality is not due to the fact that things fade and then vanish, like flowers with the coming of the winter frost. Time is not the real culprit, because even when life is in full bloom, life disappoints us — especially then. What is it about happiness that makes it evanescent?

Examine the relation between the good things in your life and the bad things. You will discover, not that the bad destroys the good, but that, on the contrary, the good entirely depends upon the bad! The pleasure of eating depends upon the preceding hunger pangs. The pleasure of friendship depends upon the experience of loneliness. Those who most truly appreciate wealth are those who have known poverty. The father in the Biblical story showed greater love for his returning prodigal son than for his obedient son who never strayed. Those who have been to death's door can most appreciate life. As Arthur Schopenhauer noted, "good" is nothing more than a synonym for, "the removal of the bad."

As the bad departs, with the satisfied desire or the solved problem, so does the concomitant good! When the hunger vanishes, the pleasure of eating fades. The pleasure of a warm house vanishes as we forget what it was like to be shivering outside. Forgetting our loneliness, we begin to take our friend for granted. Our newfound joy in being alive diminishes as our near-death encounter begins to fade from memory.

Positive and negative are inextricably joined. For as the bad departs, the good must also take leave of us. And as the fleeting moment of satisfaction departs, our ever-present sense of lack returns.

What makes happiness evanescent, therefore, is that it is always dependent upon the awareness of a concomitant dissatisfaction. Consequently, the very achievement of happiness — which ends the particular dissatisfaction — paradoxically ends the moment of happiness.

We shall briefly explore some of the startling implications of the correlative nature of good and bad. Then we shall face the ultimate question, “What lies behind our unremitting sense of dissatisfaction; what do we really want?”

Critique of Pure Sunshine

“Bye-Bye Happiness, I Think I’m Gonna Die.”— The Everly Brothers

Insights can be unsettling, sobering, and wondrous — all three at once. That is what it feels like to perceive deeply that the good has no reality apart from the bad, that the two are joined at the hip. The perception is unsettling because it undermines our hope for a happy life, free of hardships and woes.

A person who concludes that a happy life is not possible, because the conditions are not right, will either feel anxious — if he still has hope — or depressed — if he has lost hope. But to realize that even under the best of circumstances, happiness is not attainable, because the problem is intrinsic to the nature of happiness itself, is deeply unsettling and disorienting. It is disorienting because one’s guiding star, the pursuit of happiness, no longer shines so brightly. A person might still seek to be happier, but “happier” pales before one’s original inner image of an everlasting and unalloyed state of perfect happiness, the happiness suggested in the 1930’s song, *Blue Skies*. When there

are “nothing but blue skies,” suffering soon returns in the form of a restless boredom. Shakespeare’s Prince Hal observes: “Nothing is more unendurable than a succession of sunny days.” But this is the very thing that most people earnestly, and naively, seek.

The Monster Returns!

One of the salient features of modern life is the effort to deny the inseparability of these polar opposites, the good and the bad. This is seen in the attempt to have sex without the responsibilities that result from procreation, to have money without work, to create without having to clean up the consequent mess that is intrinsic to creation; in other words, to divide the part of life that we want from the part that we do not want.

For example, since the negative dimension of acquiring things is paying for them, a person may seek to separate the good (buying) from the bad (paying) by means of a credit card, or in the case of the government, by means of deficit spending. When the bad returns, it usually returns with a wallop. It is as if the bad were lonely, and comes rushing back to join its missing half, the good.

Much of modern life involves efforts to keep the good while transferring the bad to someone else. It is as if we were involved with a giant game of “hot potato,” or “tag, you’re it.” The gods on Mount Olympus daily witness the comical spectacle of humans scurrying around, trying to reap life’s benefits, while sneaking the bill into the other fellow’s pocket.

The advance of technology is, to a large extent, driven by this effort to enjoy the goods of life without experiencing a concomitant bad. We can have heat and hot water, for example, without having to chop wood and fetch water. But not chopping wood means we become flabby, we do not appreciate the warmth of our house nearly as much, and of course there is the fuel bill.

Technology has caused the negative to transform in a more frightening way, creating problems of a global magnitude. These include: air and water pollution, the greenhouse effect, the threat of nuclear and chemical warfare — to say nothing of traffic jams, minds weakened from excessive television watching, an alienating loss of contact with life's fundamental realities, etcetera. This is not an argument against technology; our concern here is to explore how the effort to be free of the bad causes the bad to return in new and monstrous forms.

Another example of the effort to separate the good from the bad is “positive thinking.” Motivational speakers are the evangelists of positive thinking, but the gospel is also espoused by everyone from athletic coaches to business leaders. Here is a religion in which negative thoughts are anathematized. Negative thoughts are the product of self-doubt. And self doubt is the voice of the devil.

Authentic self-doubt springs from genuine insight about the nature of egocentricity, selfhood, and the meaning of life. What we see about ourselves at such moments is often difficult to face. But evolution to higher levels of consciousness is not possible without self-doubt. To flee from self-doubt by means of the self-lobotomy called positive thinking is a sure sign of desperation, both for a person and for a nation.

Good and bad, positive and negative, happiness and sadness, are all correlative. They are no more separable than up and down, or right and left, or heads and tails. The effort to have the good without the bad merely causes the bad to shift its shape and suffering to be conserved.

Giving Two Impostors the Bum's Rush

*"If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same" – Kipling*

It is quite sobering to realize that good and bad are interdependent, making it impossible to attain "nothing but blue skies." Paradoxically, this realization, rather than being heavy, is liberating. It makes you feel lighter and happier. That is because, at the moment when false expectations depart, so does the anxiety that you might miss your chance for happiness and the depression over having missed it. This is a great relief!

If you will daily contemplate the true relation of good and bad, you will begin to feel a rare peace of mind, owing to your unattachment from your ceaseless striving, contending, worry, and strife. It is our purpose, in this and coming chapters, to help you realize what is necessary for the attainment of this inner peace.

Now, you may think that we are recommending that you accept your status as a limited, finite, mortal creature enmeshed in a life of trade-offs, that you must realize that you can not have it all, accept the good with the bad, that you grow-up and give up. This is not what we are recommending! Shrinking or settling is a degeneration of spirit. The longing for being, fulfillment, happiness, the infinite, can never really be abandoned. But we can change the level on which we seek fulfillment. To get to a new level, requires that we clarify our desires.

It is vital, then, that we answer Epictetus' question, and discover what is really lacking. Only by answering this question can we finally attain that for which we have been longing. We must continue on our detective adventure, hot on the trail of the elusive shape-shifter of human suffering.

The Void Within

We have seen that when the bad departs, the good follows suit. What happens then? The lack returns, but in a new form. As the satisfaction of entering a warm house diminishes, we may search for something to eat, even if we are not really hungry. As the pleasure of eating palls, we are restless for distraction. This perception led Schopenhauer to propose that lack is what is most fundamental to human existence.

Schopenhauer suggests that each person has within him something akin to a void, a void which must be filled with suffering. We solve a major problem, and the void is immediately refilled, since nature abhors a vacuum. The void might be filled with a number of smaller problems, but filled it must be.

Schopenhauer's metaphor of an inner void is useful, since it calls our attention to a fundamental reality of human existence. But his metaphor still leaves unanswered the question: "What are we lacking?"

From Cosmic Hunger to Concrete Desires

We are involved here in an unusual enterprise: a self-conscious inquiry into "what is lacking." It is important that we distinguish this self-conscious search from the usual unreflective type of search continually undertaken by the mind. We are all involved in an unreflective search, whether or not we realize it. Nor do we have any choice but to carry on this search. Our unremitting hunger for something — we know not what — drives us on. Our search for what is lacking might be envisioned as a hamburger, the ideal mate, a new career, or perhaps a new world order. Then, enraptured by this image, off we go in pursuit of the hitherto obscure object of desire.

Consider an analogy. Freud stated that anxiety is formless or "free floating." Anxiety presents a threat to your existence, one you are unable to fend off in a practical fashion. If you are anxious over the inevitability of death, or the threat of

meaninglessness, what can you do? An unlisted telephone number or health insurance will not save you from meaninglessness. Freud said that we transform such anxieties into fear. Fear is a threat to our existence with a particular shape. Therefore, fear is manageable. If you fear snakes on your property, you can build a fence around it. If you fear flying in a plane, you can take the bus.

The negativity we are discussing is more fundamental than anxiety. Anxiety is a threat to our “being.” This original negativity has the character not of a threat, but of an ever-present hunger. Like anxiety, the primordial negativity or lack is formless, shapeless, inchoate. If this underlying negativity remains indeterminate, it is ungraspable. You are probably familiar with those moments when you find yourself restless, but have no idea what you wish to do. You are bored, but not bored with anything in particular. You are longing for something, but have no idea what it is. You long to be in desire, for desire is always directed towards an object.

How does the mind respond to this painful cosmic hunger? Just as the mind seeks to transform anxiety into fear, it seeks to transform the primordial and indeterminate sense of lack into concrete desires. It seeks to determine what is missing, in the hope that this painful hunger may be satisfied. Consequently, the primordial lack is transformed into any of a thousand and one images. Each is a picture, or representation, of what we perceive to be fundamentally lacking. Thus is born the great variety of human desires. We then have an object for our hunger.

Desire, in turn, is the parent of the legion of cravings, fears, quandaries, griefs, frustrations, and terrors — all the forms of misery — that plague us. Consider the human condition. We lust after what we do not have, fearful that we might not be able to acquire it, or disappointed that we failed to acquire it, or jealous of someone else who obtained it. We worry that we will lose what we already have, or are grieved that we actually did lose it, or are disappointed that what we wanted turned out to be empty.

The Buddha said that everything, the entire world, is on fire! It is burning from the heat of desire.

And what is the source of all our suffering? What we think is lacking is not what is truly lacking. Consequently, we are driven in dizzying circles by the whirlwind of endless desires, never finding and satisfying the source of all desire, our fundamental hunger. So we are back to our question: “What are we lacking?”

I’ve Been Expecting You, Mr. Bond

Our search for the ground of the negative requires the collection of clues and the identification of a culprit, as in any other detective or spy story. We, like James Bond, are on a mission to find “Mr. Big.” At first we only encounter Mr. Big’s soldiers or henchmen. These are the legion of particular negativities that we encounter in life. If we spend our time, as most people do, battling with life’s particular problems, we never win, for Mr. Big has endless numbers of soldiers at his command.

If we are unable to cut through appearances, to perceive the true nature of this protean monster, a hopeless war of attrition ensues, and we die of exhaustion. This is the usual pathetic scenario for human existence. The heroic alternative is to find the elusive Mr. Big, and discover his true identity. If we are to be free of suffering, we must look beyond suffering’s myriad expressions, and see the essential negativity.

But how can we know the ultimate lack if it is formless and characterless? It is possible for us to “read” our delusive images. By reading these images, we mean penetrating the depths of our various desires and difficulties to see what it is that we really want. This is comparable to finding and confronting Mr. Big’s higher-ups, our more fundamental formulations of life’s negativities.

What is a more fundamental formulation? It is to see, for example, that your romantic difficulties result, not from the flaws or faults of your partner, but from the

way you relate to the opposite sex, no matter who he or she may be. Deeper still is to see that the problem lies in the nature of erotic union in general. Each formulation or, to continue our analogy, each higher ranking officer, seems to be more dangerous than the last. You realize, in other words, that the problem runs more deeply than you expected.

It is one thing to perceive that your difficulties are due to the war between the sexes. It is quite another to perceive that your difficulties stem from the very requirements of selfhood being contradictory. In the first case, you might attempt to work out new arrangements of male and female union. But if you see that erotic problems are a species of a fundamental negativity — one cutting to the core of human existence — you realize that you are faced with a far more difficult question.

If you manage to survive each successively more powerful opponent, you enter into the most dangerous region, a place where no ordinary mortal dares set foot. You enter the inner sanctum of Mr. Big, or to use a more classical analogy, into the center of the maze, where you encounter the Minotaur. If you survive this encounter, you will finally come to know the answer to Epictetus' question. And, you will have overcome your suffering.

Mission: Impossible

How are we to begin our search for Mr. Big? If we become self-conscious of our desires, we see that the exchange of troubles at the core of our being — to use Schopenhauer's analogy — is not arbitrary. There is a logic to the sequence of shapes that the negative assumes. To read this logic would be comparable to deciphering the code that determines the shape of human suffering. Here, we offer an overview of what we mean by this deciphering effort; in later chapters, we will go into detail.

Examining our life, we perceive that our solutions to previous problems are often the very source of our present difficulties! How startling, indeed how downright

sublime, to catch the Proteus of human suffering in the midst of his transformations! Here are a few examples: Psychoanalysis, in freeing us from feelings of guilt, has saddled us with the problem of meaninglessness; having becoming a responsible person we now no longer feel carefree; having managed to escape the kinds of conflicts that our parents experience in their relationship, we have become saddled with problems endemic to a new kind of marriage. It takes some time to recognize the haunting connection between present problems and those we have solved.

We may suspect that solving one problem simply causes another one to appear, but this does not mean we give up on finding a solution. Economists know, for example, that raising the tax rate initially brings in more revenue, but, in fact, it may ultimately shrink revenue when marginal businesses become insolvent. Still they hope to finesse the delicate balances in the economy.

Puzzles and games can symbolically picture to the mind our effort to “get it together.” There are certain puzzles in which, if we get one piece in order, we may cause another piece to be out of place. Such puzzles dramatize this dilemma: if we are not careful in our solution, the negative will reappear somewhere else in our life. There is a sense that although a solution is difficult to effectuate, it is possible.

The Rubik’s Cube puzzle accords with our a priori sense that life starts out “whole,” and that somehow it all gets disarranged. The primordial unity is symbolized by each of the colors being in place. The blues are on one side, the reds on another, greens on a third and so on. The jumbling of the cubes has a mythic significance. It symbolizes life hopelessly mixed up in a multiplicity, a chaos, or just a mess.

It is akin to what happens in the philosopher Anaximander’s cosmogony. There is an original unity called, “The Boundless.” Out of the Boundless emerge the four elements: earth, air, fire and water. Then these elements fight with each other, creating strife and chaos. The nursery rhyme, Humpty Dumpty, tells the same story. The One,

the original cosmic egg, falls and splinters and splatters into a mess. Whether the truth is told cosmologically, mythically, in a puzzle, or in a children's nursery rhyme, it is the same story. We start out whole; life becomes a mess. Somehow it must come together again if we are to inhabit a universe, and not a chaos of conflicting opposites.

What is the driving force of your life? Is it not the assumption that you can “get it together?” If you run into difficulties, you think that you must work harder or that you need to be more clever. You are confident that you have a solution, but then you realize that your new solution has caused — continuing our Rubik's Cube analogy — one of the colors to be misplaced. You realize that you do not have it together. You succeeded in getting your mother-in-law to vacate your premises, but now you have no one to babysit. The result is that your suffering is conserved. But “hope springs eternal;” you remain confident, and try again.

Over time, the dark thought may come to you that pertinacious efforts to make life work are to no avail. This is because in life, unlike in Rubik's Cube, it is not simply a matter of difficulty in getting it together, in bringing the conflicting opposites into a unity. You suspect that it cannot be unified at all, that what you are attempting to accomplish in life is simply contradictory.

Human life is riddled with contradiction. For example, women are often required by men to be feminine, unreflective, and immediate. But they are then criticized if they are not also self-directed, reflective and responsible. And they are urged to be both ways, not alternately, but simultaneously. Likewise, men are often urged to be strong and directive, but they also are asked to show feelings — and to be both ways simultaneously. The task that men and women demand of each other is no more possible than, while driving, to make a left turn and a right turn at the same time. The contradictions that appear in relationships are but a species of an ultimate contradiction, which we have yet to explore.

Could it be that the game that we have been handed to play, at birth, is a contradiction? Will there always be Rubik's cubes out of order? Must all attempts at a solution merely alter the form that suffering takes? Is man's effort to find self-fulfillment really a "mission impossible?" For existentialists, such as Jean Paul-Sartre, the answer to these questions is a dreadful "yes." We shall explore Sartre's conclusions, in more detail, in subsequent chapters. But let us assume, for the moment, that Sartre was correct in his dark assessment of the human condition. Where, then, lies the road beyond existentialism?

The Road Paved with Paradoxes

The boon of self-knowledge turns out to be quite different than what you may initially hope it will be. It doesn't give you "an answer." On the contrary, it questions the answer that you are already living and which is not proving satisfactory. An "answer" is an inner image of what you hope would bring you fulfillment. It is an image that guides everything you do. It is the hidden blueprint of your life.

Examining this blueprint allows you to clearly know if your answer can succeed, or whether it is founded on a contradiction. Perceiving that your answer is contradictory allows you to let go of it. Nothing is more liberating than abandoning a "mission impossible." Here, then, is life's great paradox. The perception that what you are attempting to accomplish is impossible — because it is predicated on a contradiction — elevates your awareness to a level beyond the contradiction, and therefore beyond despair. The silver, that can be found lining every cloud, is liberating Self-knowledge. Here, then, lies the path beyond existentialism.

What was broadly outlined in this introductory chapter will be brought into sharper focus, beginning in Part II. There we shall explore how The Conservation of Suffering Principle operates in specific contexts, such as erotic love, economics and

psychotherapy. But, before doing so, we must unmask the shape-shifter of human suffering! In the next few chapters, we shall discover the basic contradiction that lies at the root of all suffering.

Note: Yes, there is more, and it is still being written. Various projects keep getting in my way. I do, though, explore the conservation of suffering in my book “Awakening with the Enemy,” particularly in the context of relationships. If you engage my philosophical counseling services, we shall explore it in the context of your own life. That could be rather exciting! — Mark Dillof