

You Are What You See by Preston Ely

“Man, this guy is going to mess my whole day up,” I muttered as I took another slurp of boiling hot espresso.

I was taking time out of my busy vacation to meet this dude, and here he was practically standing me up. What the heck! It was 10:31 a.m., and we had agreed to meet at 10:30. “He’s already breaking agreements. Not a good sign,” I mentally noted.

The gentleman I was meeting that morning was a bona fide billionaire. I’d never met a billionaire before, but I always figured whenever I did meet one he would probably be on time. (And yes, I figured he would be a “he” so sue me for chauvinism in a comment below.)

He showed up at 10:33 and apologized profusely for running late so I decided to let it slide.

“Can I buy you a cup of coffee?” I asked.

“Sure,” he replied.

Come to find out he owned not only the restaurant we were meeting at but also the entire island it was located on. He let me buy him a cup of coffee that he already owned. Classic.

“I can’t wait to be able to do that to someone,” I thought.

So after a little back and forth billionaire-banter I started to notice something really... odd.

I noticed that we kept sitting in the same positions as each other. If his arms were folded, so were mine. If his legs were crossed, mine were too. Normally I wouldn’t have thought anything of this except for I’ve never crossed my legs before.

Right about that same time I noticed that every time he would cough I would feel like coughing and sometimes actually coughed at the exact same time as him. That would be only a little weird except for the fact that I don’t cough. Ever. Even when I have a cough I don’t cough.

I “watched” as we drank our coffees at the same time, smiled at the same time, and changed positions simultaneously.

Now normally I’d think he was purposefully mirroring me for the sake of rapport except for, again, this was a billionaire. He certainly had nothing to gain from this meeting. This was all my pleasure, not his.

I now realize that we were in a full state of what’s called “empathic resonance.” It’s when two people meet and their minds and nervous systems synch. It’s almost like, for the length of our meeting that day, I was a billionaire. He “rubbed off on me” so to speak.

Now, I know what you’re thinking. You’re thinking, “Why the heck am I reading this article?”

There’s no logical answer to that question so I can’t help you with it, unfortunately, but I will say this: There is a scientific reason why you need to choose your friends, thoughts, entertainment, and blog articles very carefully. And that reason is...

Mirror neurons.

I want you to listen up and listen up good. Because what I am about to tell you is the most revolutionary thing you’re going to hear for at least the next five to seven business days, until my next blog post goes up.

You are nothing more than a combination of everything you've ever seen, heard and thought.

And without outside intervention? You're only free to think and act within the parameters of your "inputs" up to this point.

Your Delusion: You wake up every day thinking you are free to work hard and shape your life to be what you want it to be.

The Truth: You are not free to do anything besides change your mental inputs. Your life will change automatically based on those adjustments.

Would you really want it any other way?

Changing a life is hard.

Changing inputs is easy. You're doing it right now.

If you were to take a random person off the street (which I'm always tempted to do), erase their mind with a Men In Black memory-eraser, and download everything you've ever seen, heard and thought into their mind, they would become you. Or something creepily similar to you, anyway.

They would think like you, talk like you, act like you and very quickly have a life that looks just like yours.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall...

Located in the premotor cortex of your brain are these neurons that mimic every single thing they see, whether real or imagined.

They're called mirror neurons.

This mimicking has a very similar effect on your mind and nervous system as if you had actually done the thing in real life, to the degree that people with amputated limbs feel "phantom" pain when they see someone else get poked in the same limb that they're missing.

This is why you cry during sad movies, feel elated when your team scores on TV or wince when you see a guy get kicked in the nuts, if you're a guy.

You're not crying for the person on the screen; you're crying for you.

You're not celebrating for the guy that caught the winning touchdown pass; you're celebrating for you. Your mind thinks YOU did that.

You're not wincing for the actor's nuts; those are YOUR nuts for all your brain can tell.

Do you understand the ramifications of what I'm telling you right now?

Your mind does not just passively witness the words and actions of others or even the images you conjure up in your head through thought; it actively practices them as they occur. And this mental practice is just as powerful as if you did it in real life. Your real life body then begins to act accordingly and without your conscious permission.

There is absolutely positively nothing you can do to stop this.

The only thing you can do is control the inputs. That is it, and that is all.

It starts from the time you are a baby when someone playfully sticks their tongue out at you and you return the favor reflexively, and continues through your life as you yawn uncontrollably when other people yawn (are you yawning now? Go ahead... yawn. You're picturing it; might as well do it), laugh when other people laugh (why do you think TV sitcoms use a laugh track?), and tear up when others cry.

You've probably heard the story of the P.O.W. who spent years in solitary confinement visualizing himself playing golf every day. When he finally got out he went straight to a golf course and played a perfect round of golf.

Incredible, huh?

Two things about this story ...

1. It's not true. Sorry to burst your Zig Ziglar bubble.
2. It's still a good story and weird stuff like this happens all the time. So whoever made it up—kudos!

Look, the practical ramifications of mirror neurons are nothing new:

Be careful who you hang out with; you'll become like them

Practice visualizations because your mind can't tell the difference between them and reality

Be selective with your entertainment because it has an impact on you

Control your thoughts because they lead to action, habit and destiny

Garbage in, garbage out... etc.

But now you know why all this is true. And knowing why you should do something makes all the difference in the world when it comes to you actually doing it.

Let me bring all this home for you: You are like a human sponge rolling around planet Earth soaking up everything in its path and making it a part of you.

You are like a chameleon turning the color of whatever you happen to be around at any given time. Only the colors stain.

You are like an audio recorder with the red light on at all times. You may forget what you hear and read, but your subconscious remembers every single word and directs you accordingly. When you speak, it's usually a playback of the recording.

So no, you cannot hang out with your loser friends and not have them affect you negatively. You are stuck with mirror neurons that act how your friends act, and do what they do. You can't control it.

The only thing you can control is what you allow your inner copycat to see. I suggest you show it some cool stuff.

Show it some people who are succeeding and living productive lives. Go to seminars and church instead of shopping malls and bars.

Show it movies where people do heroic stuff as opposed to most of the trash coming out of Hollywood lately.

Show it some mental movies of people doing great things by reading biographies.

Show it images of you accomplishing your goals.

Show it pictures of stuff you want.

Take control of your personal environment and guard your eyes with your life. They truly are the windows to the soul.