

# Principles to Understand Human Behavior

Our perception and decision-making are mediated by feelings. Therefore, **we don't seek survival but what feels like survival.**

Nature selected for those ancestors of ours who did more of what increased their survival. Therefore, **nature selected for the genes that produce neurotransmitters that reinforce the right behaviors – “right” being what increases survival.**

Our genes are largely our ancestors'. Therefore, **our brains reinforce the behaviors that help with survival in our ancestors' environment, not ours.** Hence, addictions.

We must survive many risks, which are often at a tradeoff with each other. Therefore, **we never minimize risks but control them instead.**

Because of the need to control many risks rather than minimizing any single one, **decision making is based on a single metric aggregating all risks (*what I call Expected Emotional Outcome, or EEO*).** If it seems we analytically weigh pros and cons, it's a post-hoc confabulation of the analytical part of our brain trying to justify the net result computed by the emotional part of our brain.

Because the Expected Emotional Outcome is the product of genes selected based on their ability to control risks, **emotions estimate distancing from risk.** If it seems they instead measure pleasure, pain, and so on – these are confabulations, labels applied to the same concept – the feeling of having distanced from risk (or its negative, having approached it).

**The analytical part of our brain doesn't have access to what happens in the emotional part, only to its outputs. Hence, it can only confabulate why we do what we do.**

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*by Luca Dellanna – more on [Luca-Dellanna.com](http://Luca-Dellanna.com)*