



**Theology of Neurology: Summary & Conclusions: Facilitation & Paths of Least Resistance;
The Concept of Free Will in Neurology; The Neurology of Rom 7**

10. **Facilitation: Changing the Path of Least Resistance:**

Summary:

Facilitation means to make a task easier to perform. In neurology it refers to the principle that a behavior pattern becomes more and more habitual with every repetition of the act. We noted the technical process by which a positive charge fired from the cell nucleus causes that of a neighboring neuron to fire. This process is repeated over and over throughout the neural pathway until a memory trace is created. We then noted how the repetition of this sequence causes the memory trace to become habitual and thus facilitated into a path of least resistance.

Likewise, an action is halted or even prevented from starting by the firing of a negative charge which fails to influence the neighboring neuron resulting in no action occurring. Positive volition initiates a positive charge called an action potential and synaptic excitation. When this results in the message crossing the synaptic cleft it sets up an excitatory potential. If the signal is strong enough, the potential becomes a reality and the neighboring neuron fires.

Negative volition, on the other hand, initiates a negative charge and results in synaptic inhibition. This causes the individual to either stop an action or prevent it from ever starting.

Conclusion:

- 1- A facilitated memory trace presents the volition with a path of least resistance.
- 2- If that path is a wheel-track of wickedness, the likelihood of the believer doing the wrong thing is very high.
- 3- If that path is a wheel-track of righteousness, the likelihood of the Spirit-filled believer doing the right thing is extremely high.
- 4- Under the filling of the Holy Spirit inside the Divine Power System, the believer is enabled to recall the right wheel-track and is delegated the power to choose it and execute it.

12. **Addendum:**

A. Turning up the Volume:

- 1) In closing there are a couple of things that need to be emphasized. The first has to do with a particular aspect of facilitating a memory trace which may be compared to an electrical rheostat.
- 2) Before noting this, let's review the several changes which occur in the brain that we learned are common whenever something is learned:

Rose, Stephen. *The Making of Memory: From Molecules to Mind.* (New York: Bantam Books, 1992. Reprint. New York: Anchor Books, 1993), 259-60:



Learning causes changes in synaptic connectivity between one neuron and another. Dendrites increase in length, change branching patterns, and the number of spines alter. Connectivity is altered not only by increasing the actual number of synapses but also by altering the size or position of any particular synapse.

- 3) Added to this list is the concept that following each facilitation of a memory trace, adjustments are made regarding current flow at each synaptic connection:

Johnson, George. *In the Palaces of Memory: How We Build the Worlds inside Our Heads.* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1991. Reprint. New York: Vintage Books, 1992), 24-25:

In the 1960s, Eric Kandel of Columbia University found that the synapse seemed to function like a volume control. If a synapse is turned up, the neurons on either side become more strongly connected: If the first one fires, the next is likely to follow. On the other hand, two neurons whose synapse is turned down are, in effect, disconnected. The synapses, then, seem to allow for the malleability needed for learning.

B. Volition: Firing Pin for that First Neuron:

- 1) Throughout my research I was amused to see among the writers a consistently blind devotion to the theology of evolution.
- 2) Neurologists recognize that there is something which controls human thought but they insist in isolating it in the cerebral cortex.
- 3) The answer is of course found in the soul and in particular human volition. Whereas in the 19th century, science was quick to recognize theology as a part of the creation, it's no longer does so in the 21st.
- 4) Today, the scientific community is subservient to a secular government for its financial survival.
- 5) Both are inflexibly committed to the view that evolution is scientific law rather than unproved theory.
- 6) The mention of "spooky stuff" in a grant request would make it illegal for the government to issue the funds and politically incorrect of the applicant who broached the subject.
- 7) However, there is a neuroscientist who at least has the courage to address the subject of free will. I think you will find some of his thoughts at least encouraging if not theological:

Restak, Richard M. *The Modular Brain: How New Discoveries in Neuroscience Are Answering Age-Old Questions about Memory, Free Will, Consciousness, and Personal Identity.* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1994), 155-56; 158; 120-21:

Despite the limitations in our knowledge about the brain and its relationship to violence, courts are increasingly willing to accept "brain disease" as a mitigating factor in determining guilt or innocence.

Slowly, the emphasis is shifting away from the principle that a person is responsible for his or her behavior and toward various "explanations" why certain people engage in criminal or other self-destructive actions. On the face of it, this redefinition of free will and individual responsibility seems to make sense. After all, if a person can suddenly become violent as the result of an epileptic seizure or other brain abnormality, why can he not commit crimes that appear to involve premeditation, such as with serial killers or stalkers, for the same reason. With this question, brain scientists come to grips with the issues of good and evil. (p. 155)



What becomes of our traditional belief in personal responsibility if the killing of another person is viewed not as a matter of choice but, rather, as due to some irresistible impulse emanating from a damaged brain? With some people, acts of consideration and kindness towards others seem natural, indeed even inevitable. It is as if they couldn't imagine themselves acting any other way. If this is true, what happens to free will? Are such people acting kindly only as a result of some patterning within their brain? Are those who love and those who hate others merely acting out different brain activity patterns? I recognize that in raising such questions, I am proceeding quite a bit beyond my own training and education. I am neither a theologian nor a moral philosopher. But that aside, it does seem to me that a belief in goodness and the existence of good people who have loving and caring feelings toward others must imply a belief in the existence of evil or whatever word you might wish to substitute for people who not only commit, but seem to enjoy committing, gratuitous and inexplicable acts of cruelty and destructiveness toward others. (pp. 155-56)

Neurology is not going to solve the mystery of why some people kill others. Neither can it help us discover why killers are often not just unwilling participants in something beyond their control, but rather, judging from their own words and actions, often engaged in something that gives them great pleasure.

Ronald Markham, who has examined more murderers than perhaps any psychiatrist in the United States, says: "Our society is leaning awfully close to the idea that you have to be mentally ill in some way to commit a crime. This is not so. Most crimes—even grisly murders—are not committed by mentally ill people, but by people just like you and me."

It's likely that the tendency towards violence, like most human behaviors, follows a bell curve. At one end are those who, even in the face of extreme or life-threatening provocation, cannot arouse themselves to violent action. Further along the continuum are the rest of us, who are capable of violence if the stakes are high enough. At the other extreme are the habitually and chronically violent, whose actions do not represent insanity and certainly not brain damage, but only the outer limits of our human potential for violence. (p. 158)

But even a casual effort at introspection reveals that even the most balanced of us are often of two or more "minds." One part of us wants desperately to do something, while another part resists with a ferocity that leaves us feeling disjointed and conflicted. At such times we wonder if more than one person occupies our bodies. (pp. 120-21)

- 8) This last paragraph by Dr. Restak is a perfect segue into the next component of our study. We have examined the theology of neurology. Now it's time to apply the neurology to the theology of Romans 7.

2. Application of Neurology to Romans 7

1. Outline of Romans 7: (1) The two marriages of the believer, vv. 1-6, (2) the Mosaic Law as marriage counselor of the first marriage, vv. 7-14, (3) the attacks of the first husband, vv. 15-21, and (4) the battle of wheel-tracks, vv. 22-25.
2. The two marriages of the believer, Romans 7:1-6:

Romans 7:1 - Do you not know fellow believers—for I communicate to those who know the Law—that the Mosaic Law has dominion over a person as long as he lives?

v. 2 - For the wife under the authority of her husband has been bound to her husband by law while he is living but if the husband has died she has been released by the law from her first husband.



v. 3 - Consequently, therefore, if while her husband is living she has become intimately united with another man, she shall be classified as an adulteress. But if her husband has died she is free from that Law so that she is not an adulteress though she is married to another man.

Romans 7:4- Therefore, fellow believers, you also were made to die with reference to the Law by the human body of Christ with the result that you might belong to another, to the One who has been raised up from deaths in order that we might bear fruit to God.

v. 5 - For while we were in the flesh [**under the authority of the sinful nature as first husband**], the sinful trends, which through the Law were operative in our members [**the brain's neurons which contain DNA which itself is made up of over 100,000 genes, many of which are encoded with trends of the sinful nature**], resulted in the production of fruit [**sin, human good, and evil**] from the source of our spiritual death.

v. 6 - But now we have been released from the Law [**as marriage counselor**] by having died to that to which we were bound [**the first husband**], in order that we might serve in a new marriage by the Holy Spirit [**as marriage Counselor**] and not in the old marriage by the letter of the Law.