



Hayward, April 2, 2011

Dear ...,

I am pleased to enclose for your information, evaluation, and sharing with others...

***Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief Approaches to a Science of Life***  
*Word Pictures and Correlations versus Working Models*

When Galileo published *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems*, astronomy was based on the intuitively obvious but entirely imaginary explanation that the earth is at rest at the center of the universe. But once the evidence was examined people realized that the new astronomy was superior, and today, the Copernican explanation of the solar system that Galileo championed is unquestioned.

Under house arrest, Galileo went on to write *Dialogues Concerning Two New Sciences*, dealing with math, physics and scientific method. Because of the experimental approach that Galileo introduced, the world has seen spectacular progress in the physical sciences in the 400 years since.

No equivalent progress has been made in the social and life sciences. The world has been lacking a valid explanation for behavior: what it is, how it works, and what it accomplishes. Today we live with a rich assortment of plausible-sounding stories and intuitively obvious but imaginary explanations about human behavior and interactions. Some stories are from religious teachings, some from secular traditions and some from a fuzzy and often mistaken "science" that misattributes statistical generalizations to individual behavior. Once you examine the evidence, you realize that the explanation offered by Perceptual Control Theory (PCT), created by William T. (Bill) Powers, is superior. In time, because of the experimental methodology introduced by Bill Powers, it will be PCT that will be obvious and unquestioned.

This volume contains reproductions of correspondence between Bill Powers and a brilliant social psychologist, Phil Runkel, as he progressed through the stages of learning about, then learning, then really grasping PCT. The correspondence is supported by an introductory overview and several papers. *Dialogue* introduces PCT, which lays a foundation for psychology to become a science based on clear principles no less reliable than principles employed in the physical and engineering sciences. Already, professionals and researchers in diverse fields have seen phenomena in their areas of expertise in a new way, a way that has led to new understandings. See page 2.

There is no claim that PCT is fully developed or correct in all details. Just like the emerging science of astronomy in the 1600s, PCT is a work in progress. But you will find compelling evidence for the essential principles of PCT when you look closely and study the sophisticated, varied computer simulations Powers has developed. Most likely it will seem like common sense to you, but improved. This is an explanation of behavior based on a correct understanding of control—at its core a physical process with a rather simple, technical explanation. Once you have studied PCT enough to grasp the basics, you can begin to review your daily experiences in terms of this explanation. You begin to realize that this explanation sheds new and different light on your existence and begin to see others from the same perspective. This affects your understanding of yourself as well as your interactions with others.

Continued...

## Putting Perceptual Control Theory to work

### Management

By laying out the nature of a hierarchical structure of perception in our minds and making clear that we all control for perceptual input, not action output, PCT lays a foundation for the development of effective management skills. With respectful, purposeful and insightful questioning a manager can determine what an associate is controlling for and work to support and modify the associate's understanding and goals. This leads to mutual insight, cooperation, teamwork, satisfaction and high productivity. Careful listening and personal involvement are required, but the results can be remarkable. Jim Soldani applied insights he derived from PCT when he had a free hand at a division of Intel. See page iii and his reports on results referenced in the Editor's preface.

### Psychotherapy

In his book *The Method Of Levels (MOL)*, Tim Carey reports on how he practices psychotherapy informed by the hierarchical structure of PCT. While working for Scotland's National Health Service he used this approach exclusively with primary care patients. Tim and his close associates achieved a level of service efficiency such that a 15 month waiting list was reduced to a few weeks.

### Infant/Toddler development

*The Wonder Weeks* outlines the development of the entire perceptual hierarchy postulated by Powers: When and how it develops in human infants and toddlers on mother nature's schedule. See [www.thewonderweeks.com](http://www.thewonderweeks.com) and be sure to watch [www.youtube.com/thewonderweeks](http://www.youtube.com/thewonderweeks).

### Evolution

Gary Cziko has outlined PCT and shown how it helps explain evolution in his two books, listed on page xxxi. See also Powers' essay *The Origins of Purpose: The First Metasystem Transitions*.

### Economics

With PCT, economists gain a new understanding of interactions among individuals. For example, incentives may not yield the behavior economists (and others) expect due to their ignoring the role of an individual's higher level goals. Bart Madden includes PCT among his considerations in his work *Wealth Creation: A Systems Mindset for Building and Investing in Businesses for the Long Term*.

### Jurisprudence

The review of *House of Cards; Psychology and Psychotherapy Built on Myth* (page xxi) offers a disturbing comment. Contrast this with Hugh Gibbons' comment on page v. In his work *The Death of Jeffrey Stapleton: Exploring the Way Lawyers Think*, Gibbons analyzes legal concepts in light of PCT.

### Education

PCT shows that all learning: (1) is goal directed, (2) involves the development of new perceptions and ways to control them, and (3) requires some degree of trial and error, either mental or behavioral. These lessons have far-reaching implications for education at all levels.

### Higher Education

Several professors of psychology have taught PCT at the university level over the years, currently Warren Mansell and Sara Tai at the University of Manchester in the U.K. Student evaluations are posted at [www.pctweb.org/whatis/students.html](http://www.pctweb.org/whatis/students.html).

I hope that you find this volume of interest to yourself and people you care about.

Happy reading ☺

Sincerely,

Dag Forssell

Editor and publisher

More information is available here:

[www.livingcontrolsystems.com](http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com)

*Dialogue* can be previewed online in its entirety.

See [www.livingcontrolsystems.com/google\\_books.html](http://www.livingcontrolsystems.com/google_books.html)