

Becoming a Conscious Business

Expand Your Life and Work Through the Science of Energy Flow

To Emma Watson, who I hope leaves this book in the subway someday

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Foreword

When people ask me “So, how do you know Sam?”, I’m never sure what to say. Technically I know Sam because we’re family - our mothers are sisters, and we used to play together as children. But by the time I moved to New York City in 2016, we hadn’t spoken in over a decade.

On the basis of our – at this point – tenuous family connection, Sam invited me to crash with him for a week or two while I was getting settled and finding a place to live; and to the surprise of both of us, I basically never left.

It was in that apartment that the seeds for this book (and the business which inspired it) were planted; although on that first night, when I arrived jetlagged at my cousin’s place ready to crash after a long flight from London, I had no idea that this was where we’d end up less than two years later. This reflects the sort of serendipity and expansion which happens naturally as one becomes more aware of the energetic patterns of the universe, patterns which Sam explains so eloquently in this book.

I remember when Sam first completed the outline of the book draft. The first thing he said to me was, “I’ve figured out the meaning of life!”. Of course I teased him at the time for his exuberance, but when I finally read the manuscript, I began to understand what he had meant.

This is a book about business, yes. But it also is about nature, creation, evolution, the flow of energy, finding love and joy, overcoming fear and ultimately, understanding the purpose and behavior of all living things within the greater patterns of the universe. (No big deal!) It is a personal story...and also the story of everything.

This book is a scientific text told through the lens of individual experience. If you are looking for a business tactics guidebook or self improvement advice, you might do better to pick up the latest work by Seth Godin or Simon Sinek. And if you are looking for a book on spirituality, I’m sure that Sam himself would be the first to direct you to the work of Eckhart Tolle (and others like him).

What you will learn from this book, however, is a new way of viewing the world and building a business through tapping into the energetic flow of the universe – unlocking your own process vision, as Sam calls it. When we start to look at life from the perspective of that energy flow, everything becomes simple. And, in the process, we learn more about what it means to be part of nature, what it means to be human, and how businesses are the next stage of the universe's evolution towards ever-more complex form.

Sam's academic background as a biologist has informed his work as a process scientist and a student of human nature. The first part of this book is all about nature and the evolution of living forms, from the Big Bang right up to humanity and a higher form of consciousness. In this section, Sam describes how nature is designed to always optimize its own processes for creating the most value possible, and how this natural (organic) optimization eventually developed into human form, bringing in a new era of life on this planet.

In the second section, Sam focuses on the human experience and our own personal growth. Applying these evolutionary principles of value optimization to our personal lives, we begin to see how the same universal energy that flows through nature can inspire our growth as individuals (overcoming our innate fear of the unknown to embrace transparency, presence and love). But it doesn't stop there.

As humans, when we begin to bond with one another and come together in creating social structures and other organizations, we set the stage for the next phase of the evolutionary process – the rise of the business as a living organism with a will and consciousness of its own. This leads us into the third, and final, section of the book: an understanding of business as a living entity. This understanding is what enables us to most effectively remove the obstacles that prevent energy from flowing through and expanding the business organism to its full potential. This is how we “raise” our baby businesses to full maturity, finding a sense of personal fulfillment in the process.

You might be thinking, this all sounds well and good, but does it work?

The scientific method outlined in this book is not just theory. The principles and frameworks that Sam describes are the result of years of experimentation and real world application in a variety

of industries and organizations, culminating in the creation of our own business: Cavi Consulting.

Cavi Consulting, which grew out of a collaboration between Sam, myself, and our friend and co-founder Hassan Khan, is a model for this new way of approaching entrepreneurship and business growth. Through the experience of becoming a business ourselves, as well as in our work with clients, we have seen firsthand the many ways in which a business can start to become its fullest self by rebalancing and removing obstacles to its natural energy flow.

It is our hope that with this book, even more businesses and the people who comprise (and love) them, will be better able to thrive and achieve their highest potential.

Bridget Randolph
Manhattan, New York
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Introduction

...there are many worlds
but they share the same sky
one sky one destiny
— Kairi

Process science is the study of how energy flows through the universe. Everything I will share with you in this book ends with being able to describe the study of process science, but this isn't a book about defining or practicing a new academic discipline. This is a story about integrated discovery, learning to love, and finding purpose by understanding the universal energy pattern that governs everything in our lives.

Growing up watching TV and movies, I always thought the "meaning of life" was something to be searched for but never found. The concept was a romantic, unsolvable puzzle which the hero was meant to contemplate and answer as best he could; only to be validated by reflection at the end of his life.

I see things differently now.

The shared meaning and purpose of all our lives has been in plain sight the whole time. When I realized what it was, and how to best align with it, it brought me serenity and joy. Much of the fear I struggled with throughout my life has disappeared.

I'll admit that I ended up here by accident. It was never my intent to search for peace by understanding my place within the energy flow pattern of the universe. It was simply a consequence of my fixation with exploring the concept of *process*, and why the term is relevant to humans both personally and professionally.

I've always been a nag (in addition to being obsessive), and I was that proverbial kid who asked "why?" repeatedly until I was either punished or satisfied with the answer. In the context of process improvement work, which I fell into early in my career, I kept asking "why?" to many aspects of the job and kept getting back unsatisfactory answers, often creating more ambiguity than clarity. For example, if you google "process" right now, you will get back several definitions and not all are similar. In fact, the more you listen to people talk about process, the more you will notice that everyone is thinking of something different when they refer to it. Some people hate process, because to them it means bureaucracy, while others seek process because they think it will give them additional clarity or guidance within their work. If asked, most process professionals will give you a personal, as opposed to a standard, definition for the word "process".

As a young process professional, I was justifiably annoyed that I couldn't concisely define the word "process", which also meant I had no chance of clearly articulating what it meant to improve processes as a profession. To remedy this, I set out to create a standard, universal definition for *process* that everyone might adopt and understand. What I initially thought might be a simple exercise ended up not being solved within the week, or the next month, or even the next year. There were times when I gave up, or was distracted by other things in life, but I always had an itch associated with knowing that the clear definition of the most foundational element to process improvement was still outside of my reach. Eight years and many revelations later, I finally figured it out: *process is the mechanism that transforms energy into value.*

With this definition, it follows that *everything* is process. Anything with energy flowing through it is a process, and that includes almost everything that exists, including you. For an unknown reason, or perhaps randomly, the universe consistently seeks to create *value*, which is *the difference between benefits and costs* (value = benefit – cost); and it does so by transforming energy into value, using processes.

The way in which the universe allocates limited energy into processes is the highest order "pattern" that I will refer to in the narrative that follows. While I began to study process through the lens of business, I realized that my scope was too narrow. To come to the above definition of process, I had to integrate all my life experiences, as well as intentionally explore additional topics, including psychology, spirituality, natural science, history, and many more.

When all the knowledge I had gathered came to a critical mass, everything suddenly organized itself and I started seeing the pattern that governs processes, and the energy flowing through them. As a human process with this universal energy flowing through me, I could see myself in the pattern, and experienced such overwhelming comfort that it brought me to tears – the knowing was cathartic beyond words.

I'm going to attempt to share the knowledge I discovered, in a sequence that may help you to understand quickly what I had put together in a random way over the course of many years. I will recount events and learnings from my life that were milestones in the discovery process and

put them within the context of energy flowing through three subsets of our universe: the way energy flows through nature, the way it flows through humans, and finally the way it flows through business. I hope that by sharing my personal journey you will more easily find your own process vision and can experience the same joy and calmness in better understanding the process science that governs our universe.

Nature's Flow

Never does nature say one thing and wisdom another

— Juvenal

Video Games

Since childhood, I've been attracted to video games. My Dad had the first Nintendo Entertainment System, and playing it with him was the beginning of an obsession in me that has never dissipated. I didn't realize until many years later that I was developing a mind for process by spending countless hours completing the various games I had access to. Video games were my first teacher of process, and they intuitively taught me several critical pieces of the puzzle: scarcity, experimentation, and the power of simulation. The way that energy flows through nature is influenced by these same concepts, and I think many of us start to learn them through play – we just don't realize it.

If you don't know much about video games, or at least the type I enjoyed, they act as simulations of exciting, entertaining, and/or fantastical situations that we typically wouldn't be able to experience. For example, in first-person shooter (FPS) games, you play as a weapon-carrying individual who is usually forced to kill enemies in the context of a mission or dangerous situation. In role playing games (RPGs) you progress as the hero in some epic quest to save the princess, save the world, or some similar premise. No matter the context of the game, they all simulate common elements that appeal to our instincts. Simulations themselves act as a unique basis for learning, in contexts an average person normally wouldn't be able to experience. It is also a powerful learning mechanism to be able to experiment with the same simulation multiple times, each time with the ability to make different choices and observe the outcomes.

At an early age, I could see how my choices impacted situations, and if I didn't like the result, I could repeat the exercise with different variables and see how it changed my in-game fate. I later realized that simulation and iterative experimentation is the foundation of the scientific method – it's just that now, video games allow us to internalize this process from the minute we pick up and operate technology.

Access to technology and games aside, why would a child, or anyone for that matter, want to experiment with a simulation over and over again? It is because of the last element we haven't addressed yet: *scarcity*. Video games mirror the realistic energy flow through nature by setting up the construct of energy scarcity.

When you start a game, you are given a limited amount of energy to experiment with and achieve desired results. It could be currency, health points, skill points, ammunition, time, or anything else you can think of that would be useful, but it will only be provided in limited quantities. When you are in an environment with scarcity it creates urgency and pressure – this is what makes it exciting!

With limited energy, each choice during the simulation must somehow create benefits in excess of the energy it cost. That way, you can use that benefit at each subsequent stage to progressively gain more energy and move the game to completion. If you can't manage to consistently create value with your choices (energy expenditures) over time, the trials of the game will overwhelm you, resulting in starting over and trying again. Most people play games because the thrill of creating value from limited resources is viscerally satisfying, even if they don't articulate it that way. You could say that the pleasure of iteratively energizing processes that provide value is hardwired into our nature – which is exactly the case.

Scarcity of energy is the environmental condition required for *benefits* and *value* to exist as meaningful concepts. Without scarcity, there is infinity, which means that the relative energy cost of doing something (compared to the infinite amount you have of it) is always 0. If the cost in the value equation ($\text{value} = \text{benefits} - \text{cost}$) is always 0, it creates an interesting dynamic: value will always equal the perceived benefit, and it becomes impossible to prioritize achieving benefits that hold the same value. The inability to prioritize in this case results in random behavior when faced with a choice.

Let's take a video game example that covers scarce and infinite resource conditions:

Resources are scarce and I have 10 energy points to make my next decision. I only need to worry about health points for the next level, and I have two food options of equal benefit to me because they provide the same amount of health points – one is meat and the other fruit. ("Benefit" as a variable in the value equation is always determined subjectively from the perspective of the agent making the value determination, which means we can quantify it however we want, knowing both benefits in question already

give us the exact same thing). Let's assign the expected health point benefit an arbitrary value of 10 for this example.

The last piece of information outstanding is the cost: the meat costs 8 energy points and the fruit only 3. Now we can do some math using the value equation: The meat option yields 2 value units (value (2) = benefit (10) – cost (8)), whereas the fruit option yields 7 with the same math ((value (7) = benefit (10) – cost (3)).

Intuitively, you already know you would buy the fruit, but the point is to start letting your mind relate to the value-based language that you instinctively speak without knowing it. Even though the benefit of both options is the same, the value is different considering the cost. The reason this is important should become clear when we compare it to the infinite resource scenario.

If I have no costs in the same situation because I have infinite energy points, then the same two benefits from our food example would also have the same value (value (10) = benefit (10)). Between two benefits with the same value, I have no way to figure out which to pick, so I would simply pick the meat or fruit at random, if I only had space for one of them. Or maybe I would grab them both if there was no restriction (why not?).

Back when I was a kid, there were in fact “cheat codes” you could enter into video games to create such conditions. Once used, you would get infinite energy resources and do whatever you wanted within the simulation's broader limitations. Not surprisingly, when these conditions were created, the drive to create value to beat the original conditions of the game disappear entirely, and the players act and entertain themselves through random activity. For me, this was a huge aha moment: the fun wasn't simply in getting to the end or having all the resources you needed, it was in the value creation itself – by discovering and putting my energy into the right choices (or processes).

Between two equal benefits with different costs, given conditions of energy scarcity, you can see that a pattern, or a “pull” is created. People will invariably conform to putting their energy where value creation is highest; value being defined by the conditions of the environment around you. It follows that over time, people will stop spending energy on benefits that yield less value than similar options, and the inferior option will eventually cease to exist. It is in this way that games

also become directional, or in a way, guided. Players who buy the meat at the first stage will be punished by having less energy later, and when they replay the simulation, they will not make the same mistake considering the wasted energy on the meat. The conditions inherent to the environment force players to change the pattern in their play styles in specific ways, in order to create enough value to complete the game.

Relate this to your own experience – have you internalized some of the same dynamics of games you've played over the years (video games or otherwise)? Do you feel pulled to do certain things in your environment because it's the more efficient or effective way to do it – even if it may not be your preferred way of doing a particular thing?

Video games are simulations built in such a way that players can experiment within conditions of energy scarcity with the intent to create enough value to “win” the game. Described in this way, video games reflect the flow of energy through nature almost exactly – which in nature we call “natural selection”. Even though I was only a child, playing games was the start of me internalizing the pattern of how energy is prioritized and moves through natural processes. This background helped make it easier for me to understand real life concepts when I started studying them in college.

Science

I did my undergraduate degree at the University of Virginia, where I went with the intention to become a doctor. My degree ended up being in biology and psychology, but I also had to study the other natural sciences as part of the pre-med program.

I'll admit that I had no real reason to become a doctor. I made that decision without much thought, because in high school I was too preoccupied with video games to do any self-reflection or meaningful career planning. Despite that, the pre-med program ended up being extremely stimulating and it was there that I learned a lot of important truths that helped me to more clearly see the pattern of energy flowing through nature's processes.