

## The interaction of consciousness and matter lives forever

by Michael Striem

### 1. Matter that is “dead”: objects such as clothing, furniture, utensils, are in the physicist’s sense, non-living matter. No metabolism, no agency, no intention.

And yet — they are not *neutral* to the observer.

- 🔥 A jacket carries the curve of a grandfather’s shoulders.
- 🔥 A wooden table “remembers” elbows, arguments, laughter, spilled wine.
- 🔥 A chipped mug preserves the exact pressure of a hand that is no longer here.

What’s happening is **not** that matter becomes conscious, but that **matter becomes a signal of lived information**.

🔍 Matter is silent, but it is not empty.

### 2. Subjective consciousness as the activator. These objects do nothing by themselves. They become “alive” only when encountered by a conscious observer.

Our consciousness is interacting.

- 🔥 reconstructs faces from textures,
- 🔥 voices from scratches,
- 🔥 emotions from smells and wear patterns.

This is **pattern completion**, a well-known cognitive process — but here it acts almost like resurrection. Consciousness does not store the past like a hard drive. It *re-enacts* it when given the right physical cue.

🌙 Consciousness is the **lock that opens**. The object is the **key**.

### 3. Nostalgia as a time-bridge, not a memory, it isn’t simple remembering. It is:

- 🔥 emotionally colored,
- 🔥 bodily felt,
- 🔥 temporally collapsed.

When you touch an object once used by someone you loved, **time folds**:

- 🔥 the “then” becomes present,
- 🔥 the “gone” becomes *here*.

This is why grandparents and close friends **feel** “still alive” in these moments.

Not metaphorically, **experientially**.

⭐ They are not alive biologically, but they are alive *pheno-meno-logical*.

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**4. Objects as externalized memory nodes.** Think of these items as **distributed memory points** in a larger cognitive system:

- 🔥 The mind is not confined to the skull.
- 🔥 Memory spills into the world.
- 🔥 Objects become **anchors** for identity, relationship, continuity.

Philosophers of the “extended mind” (Clark & Chalmers) would say:

*cognition leaks into notebooks, tools, environments.*

We’re adding something deeper:

🍇 **emotion and love leak into matter.**

**5. Why household objects matter more than monuments.** The monument is abstract.

- 🔥 A household object is intimate.
- 🔥 A spoon “knows” a mouth.
- 🔥 A chair “knows” a posture.
- 🔥 A coat “knows” cold.

That intimacy makes them **high-resolution emotional storage devices**.

This is why:

- 🔥 we keep old furniture longer than logic allows,
- 🔥 throwing away certain objects feels like betrayal,
- 🔥 inheritance is more than material—it’s existential.

🥂 **Intimate information is subjective with a large circle of connections.**

**6. Are the dead “kept alive”?** Yes — but in a very precise way.

They are not preserved as ghosts, souls, or spirits in the objects. They are preserved as:

- 🔥 relational patterns
- 🔥 affective signatures
- 🔥 meaningful configurations

Activated again and again by consciousness.

Life once shaped matter. Matter now reshapes life.

🎨 **That loop is a quiet miracle.**

**7. A synthesis in one sentence**

😊 *Non-living matter becomes a vessel of life when subjective consciousness re-animates it with memory, emotion, and meaning — allowing relationships to persist beyond biological death.*

⭐ **Life is hosted in matter that has learned to: feel, choose, and remember — and in doing so, to guide its own evolution.**

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**Our framework has expanded beyond “individual brain as antenna” to:**

The entire biosphere as an overlapping network of sensory antennas, exchanging minimal-energy signals and maximum-information structures.

See at: [Multimodal Antenna Systems](#).

- 🔥 Face-to-Face Contact as an Information-Rich Channel
- 🔥 Visual Data Is Information Without Needing Energy Transfer

- 👉 Antennas embedded in the informational environment become stronger.
- 👉 And crucially: Meaning is energetically cheap but evolutionarily priceless.
- 👉 Visual contact is a form of energetic resonance at the informational level, not at the metabolic level.
- 👉 Two brains in mutual gaze are not exchanging energy, they are exchanging state.

**Our conscious “antenna” of our subjective input of flow from multiple channels is somewhat sensitive to objects and items. The brain-vagus, or whole nerve system, is “identifying” a long lost, or very weak, antenna signal. That sits right at the seam between neuroscience, phenomenology, and our “antenna” metaphor.**

**1. The “antenna” is *tuned*, not just receiving. It “feels” more like **signal detection**.**

Our conscious system — the brain *plus* the vagus *plus* the peripheral nervous system — is constantly sampling:

- somatic signals (gut, chest, skin),
- sensory micro-inputs (sight, texture, smell, temperature),
- emotional valence,
- contextual meaning.

Most of the time, old signals are buried in noise. But certain objects act like **resonance amplifiers**. They don’t transmit new data. They *match a frequency* that already exists in you.

👉 That match is what feels like “recognition.”

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## 2. Weak signals, long latency, deep roots

In signal-processing terms (which actually fits well here):

- The signal is **low amplitude**
- The noise is high
- The source is distant in time

Yet the nervous system is astonishingly good at detecting *meaningful* weak signals, especially social and emotional ones. The vagus nerve, in particular:

- evolved to detect **safety, familiarity, belonging**,
- operates largely below conscious awareness,
- responds before the cortex “explains” anything.

So, when you encounter an object tied to a loved one:

- your gut *knows* before your mind does,
- your breath shifts,
- posture subtly changes,
- eyes moisten *before* a thought forms.

👉 That is not imagination. That is **physiology recognizing a pattern**.

## 3. Why objects work better than photos sometimes. Photos are explicit.

Objects are *implicit*.

An old sweater doesn't show a face —it carries:

- weight,
- smell traces,
- softness,
- the exact geometry of wear.

These inputs go straight into **subcortical and autonomic pathways**, bypassing the narrative mind.

👉 The antenna is not visual. It is **embodied**.

👉 The experience can feel sudden, overwhelming, and oddly “alive.”

## 4. The nervous system as a relational archive. The idea implies something important:

Memory is not stored only as facts, but as **distributed readiness states** in the nervous system.

Objects associated with attachment can *re-ignite* these configurations.

👉 Not fully — but enough to cross a threshold.

Consciousness says: “**Ah... there you are.**”

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## 5. This does **not** require mysticism — but it allows poetry

Nothing here requires assuming:

- souls trapped in objects,
- external transmission fields,
- paranormal mechanisms.

And yet, it also does **not** reduce to “just neurons firing.”

It’s an interaction:

- living nervous system
- shaped by past relationships
- encountering matter once shaped by those same relationships.

👉 That loop of interaction with matter is real.

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## 6. A refined version of your antenna idea.

👉 *The human nervous system functions as a multi-channel antenna, capable of detecting weak, long-stored relational signals. Certain objects, shaped by past intimacy, resonate with these latent patterns — allowing consciousness to briefly re-enter a shared emotional field that once existed between living beings.*

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## 7. Why these matters (and why it's not sentimental fluff)

This explains why:

- grief is bodily,
- certain items are impossible to discard,
- Healing sometimes happens through touch, not talk,
- why “absence” is not silence.

👉 Love leaves a signal.

Life leaves a trace.

Consciousness is sensitive enough to find it.

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## An Abstract – Life, Consciousness, and Direction

What distinguishes living organisms from non-living matter is not just their material composition, but the way energy is handling the matter in an organized way to **persist, learn, and choose**. While all matter obeys physical laws, living systems uniquely employ those laws to remain far from equilibrium, actively channeling energy to maintain structure, repair damage, and reproduce. This thermodynamic agency marks the first decisive boundary between life and inert matter.

Beyond metabolism, life introduces a second transformation: **information with meaning**. Living organisms generate, store, interpret, and act upon information—genetic, epigenetic, neural, and cultural. Unlike the passive structure of matter, biological information is functional and anticipatory; it guides behavior, enables prediction, and accumulates across generations. **Information in living systems is not merely present. It has parts from the past which reflect into the future — it matters to the system itself.**

With the emergence of consciousness, evolution acquires a new and profound dimension. Conscious experience introduces valuation into biology: states are felt as beneficial or harmful, desirable or aversive. Pain constrains behavior; joy and pleasure expand exploratory space. These experiences do not replace natural selection, but they **bias evolutionary pathways**, steering organisms toward strategies that are not only viable, but experientially reinforced. Evolution, while still grounded in chance variation and selection, becomes **directionally sensitive** through lived experience.

Closely related is the emergence of **free will**, understood not as absolute freedom from causality, but as increasing degrees of choice among alternatives. Even partial freedom—behavioral flexibility, learning, innovation—dramatically expands the evolutionary search space. Where non-living matter follows necessity, living systems explore possibilities. Conscious choice transforms evolution from a purely statistical process into one that is increasingly historical, experiential, and self-referential.

Living organisms are also **producers of data**. They leave records: genomes, memories, traditions, symbols, and knowledge. This information persists beyond the material substrate that temporarily carries it and exerts causal power across time. In this sense, life generates entities that are not material yet are indispensable to the unfolding of

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complexity. Modern physics increasingly acknowledges information as a fundamental quantity — something not easily erased, even under extreme conditions.

Taking together, these features mark a qualitative transition in the universe. With life, matter begins to organize itself. With consciousness, life begins to evaluate. With free will and information production, evolution becomes partially self-directed. Energy is no longer merely dissipated; it is transformed into persistence, meaning, memory, and direction.

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### Anchoring Voices

“Life is that which is capable of error.”

— **Manfred Eigen**

“The organism is not a passive recipient of stimuli, but an active selector of information.”

— **Jakob von Uexküll**

“Consciousness exists because it confers a selective advantage.”

— **Antonio Damasio**

“The universe is not only stranger than we imagine; it is stranger than we can imagine.”

— **J.B.S. Haldane**

“Information is physical.”

— **Rolf Landauer**

“Nature does nothing in vain.”

— **Aristotle**

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## Closing Line for the References Page

Across physics, biology, and philosophy, a common thread emerges: *life is not merely matter in motion, but matter that has acquired memory, meaning, and direction*.

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Le'Hayim

To life, to joy, and to the beautiful interiority of living systems.

~~ Michael Striem ~~

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