

Freedom as Physics

Nobody asked but ...

I must share this quote with you:

Freedom is the capacity to pause in the face of stimuli from many directions at once and, in this pause, to throw one's weight toward this response rather than that one.

— Rollo May

This has a physical truth to it. Even if only one task can be done at a time, the collision of possible tasks can be overwhelming. To the extent that one is overwhelmed, the more it may seem that events are conspiring to remove one's choices. Dr. May's observation, however, gives one hope that the crush can be separated into pieces to which one can respond. Stimuli are opportunities for response. Every stimulus is different — of each itself and of the combination of stimuli with which it impinges. Freedom is the optimization of prioritizing the stimuli to which one will respond. In a perfect world, the stimuli would space themselves so that one could respond rationally and interactively to each in isolation in the best way. But the world as we get it is clamorous and random. Our freedom depends on optimum response. "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance." — Leonard H. Courtney

— Kilgore Forelle