

'Everything Is Natural' When We Orient By Definition

by Michael A Green, 2016, www.TheAllowableThoughtCage.com

When I first encountered the all-inclusive claim that 'everything is natural' I felt it reflected a very widespread pattern of orientation. I had also assumed it represented the views of one very unique man. I have since learned that he had actually read a book on the subject. Then, when I searched the Internet, Google handed me 635,000,000 matches. That's misleading, though, because after I put quotes around the words to limit the search to this exact, specific phrase, the results dropped way down to 320,000.

Still, that indicates a lot of people wrestling with, and even writing about, whether or not the assertion 'everything is natural' is true. These results included numerous philosophy forums, political forums, technology forums, science forums, nature forums, religious forums, history forums, linguistic forums, various Wikis, youtube videos, natural products, and discussions of natural law, among many others. The discussions I found were generally in places where 'serious people' gathered to rant and rave and compare notes.

Those who make this 'everything is natural' claim with great fist-pounding conviction, seem to believe that anyone who disagrees with them is... well, not very bright, to put it politely. Because to them, the truth of this statement is so obvious that only someone 'not very bright' could possibly fail to see it. Most of the results I found, from what I gleaned in about 20 minutes scanning the results, stated that it is true—that everything truly is, indeed, 'natural'.

I consider this disturbing. I'm about to show you why, and there are some very good reasons to take the following explanation to heart. Of course, I wrote it, so 'naturally' I would say something like this. Anyway, here's my story...



I had heard so many conflicting stories about him that I had grown curious to meet this guy, so I could form some opinions about him for myself. So when at last I did meet him, in a setting that gave me an opportunity to talk with him, I attempted to engage him with genuine interest...

“Everything is natural”, he explained. Since ‘everything’ is ultimately traceable back to nature, since we humans are part of nature and embedded in nature, then everything we

can possibly do or create has to be natural. Some brief follow-up questions made it quite clear to me that he was saying this to me in all earnestness and was fully and emphatically serious.

This is an example of 'orienting by definition'. Orienting by definition means putting our descriptions of certain facts ahead of the facts our descriptions are intended to describe. It means the definitions we create for certain terms become more important to us than the objects our terms were supposedly devised to represent or point to.

The facts can now be safely dismissed because they are no longer relevant. By definition, anyone who accepts this assertion, this definition of the term 'natural', cannot possibly come up with or identify anything in the world that is not natural. And if you don't accept this, then obviously you're not very bright, because the logic of this definition is so clear and obvious as to be self-evident.

Any exploration of what may or may not be considered 'unnatural' is rendered moot, null and void, and any insights that may have been gathered while evaluating or defining so-called 'unnatural' behavior or events, are also null and void. They're based on a fundamental misconception as there is no such thing as 'unnatural'. For proof, refer to the definition above. Now we're effectively 'orienting by definition'.

We have just banished the term 'unnatural' from our vocabularies because we've accepted that, by definition, there is no such thing. So, many familiar sentiments and expressions are all rendered meaningless, mindless errors carrying no significance at all—again, by definition...

We need to ban the following statements and any others like them, for example, as unallowable (meaning we're not allowed to think them) or nonsensical thoughts:

- ✓ It's not natural for us to talk to each other like this.
- ✓ It's unnatural for me to think before I speak.
- ✓ There is something unnatural about this eerie silence.
- ✓ His attitude was stiff and awkward. His mannerisms seemed like he was constantly wrestling with himself about which direction he wanted to move. His personality felt strained and unnatural, as if he didn't feel at home in his own skin—more like he was trapped in it.

- ✓ There was something unnatural in the way he talked to inanimate objects as if they were actually having conversations with him.
- ✓ It would be unnatural if he didn't miss her.
- ✓ His natural sequence of growth into adulthood had been arrested.
- ✓ His lack of maturity seemed unnatural for his age.
- ✓ Being thrown together suddenly in the trunk of a car was an unnatural beginning to their relationship.
- ✓ To go along with such an outrageous suggestion would be unnatural.
- ✓ His words over the phone sounded unnatural, as if he were using some electronic device to distort his voice.
- ✓ Highly preprocessed and refined foods are very unnatural things to eat.
- ✓ The color and tone of his skin looked so unnatural that I became concerned for his health.

Nope. Now that we have a perfect definition for the term 'natural', we'll no longer consider any of these objects, situations or events unnatural ever again. The very possibility is unthinkable, because now we know better. All we need to do now is to discipline ourselves to consistently place our definition of 'natural' ahead of our actual experiences of anything that strikes us as unnatural, and remind ourselves that it has to be natural or it couldn't exist. Get it?

Some dictionary definitions of 'unnatural' from From WordNet® (3.0, 2006) serve to further emphasize the point:

1: not in accordance with or determined by nature; contrary to nature; "an unnatural death"; "the child's unnatural interest in death" [ant: natural]

2: not normal; not typical or usual or regular or conforming to a norm; "abnormal powers of concentration"; "abnormal amounts of rain"; "abnormal circumstances"; "an abnormal interest in food" [syn: abnormal, unnatural] [ant: normal]

3: speaking or behaving in an artificial way to make an impression [syn: affected, unnatural] [ant: unaffected]

These definitions are obviously no good because our definition is 'the correct one', and it overrides these other definitions, rendering them not only wrong and illusory, but downright delusional as they're based on the obvious misconception that some things are not 'natural'. These assertions cannot possibly be true, by simple and obvious definition. Well, our definition. The definition we accept as true. The one really true definition. The one that simplifies our lives by making it unnecessary for us to consider anything that might be unnatural, ever again. What a relief!

A thesaurus (Moby Thesaurus II by Grady Ward, 1.0), presents some synonyms for 'unnatural' including: aberrant, abnormal, affected, anomalous, artificial, bastard, bizarre, contrived, counterfeit, deviant, distorted, divergent, exceptional, extraordinary, fake, falsified, feigned, grotesque, labored, monstrous, odd, out of character, outlandish, overdone, peculiar, perverse, phony, strange, supernatural, uncanny, unexpected, unreal, wacky, warped... and these are just a few I selected from a much longer list.

If we accept the definition that there is no such thing as 'unnatural', then to be consistent we have to jettison all these synonymous terms as well... don't we? We just have to accept that anything we encounter is natural because we encountered it. Because if it exists, then it's natural, by definition. Therefore, the adjectives in this list are inaccurate and unnecessary because they only serve to disguise naturally-occurring events.

Another time-saving feature of this approach is that specific empirical observations are powerless to affect an orientation by definition. Once the definition has become accepted as true, evidence to confirm or deny the definition becomes irrelevant.

I once heard Bill Russell, arguably the best defensive basketball player in history, interviewed on television where he talked about his first professional game. He had blocked 5 shots very early on. With great timing and anticipation he would jump up and swat the ball away as it was being released.

His first coach told him this is not the way basketball is played. A good defensive player never leaves his feet. He instructed Mr. Russell on the proper way to play defensive basketball, positioning his body, staying on the ground and putting his hands up.

Bill tried this and several players scored on him when he used this technique. He instinctively went back to his natural, far more successful approach and immediately became a much more effective defensive presence on the floor.

He explained that he couldn't play for this coach as a result of their incompatible styles, their differing definitions of what a good defensive basketball player looks like.

He was very grateful that he later met Red Auerbach, who told Bill that he didn't understand what Russell was doing, but he believed he was the best basketball player he had ever seen. He encouraged Bill to play his best, apologized for not knowing how to make sense of what he was doing, but promised that as he came to understand it he would work it into the team strategy as best he could. Well, that uncanny relationship led to an unprecedented basketball history of success.

Mr. Auerbach was able to observe the facts and let them override his existing definition of a good defensive basketball player, when he saw one better than his old definition could account for. Russell's first coach was obviously stuck in his personally true and correct definition of 'a good defensive basketball player', and placed it ahead of the facts he was observing, or that he was unable to observe, because he was orienting by his definition.

Probably the greatest advantage of orienting by definition is that further learning, investigation, or inspection of the facts of experience can stop, cease and desist. The matter is settled and closed, reflecting the structure of a 'mind' in the grip of deeply embedded prejudices. Captured and preserved in some absolutely final definitions that serve to freeze existing evaluations into fixed constraints, this type of orientation circumscribes a specific sphere of 'allowable thoughts' as well as a set of thoughts outside that sphere, that you are 'not allowed to think'.

In this manner, we find people forming self-made cages, effectively imprisoning their imaginations within self-proclaimed boundaries. They will then typically preserve and protect these pervasive constraints with their most devoted and unwavering conviction, proud of what they have achieved. Welcome to the weird, yet highly populated world, of 'allowable-thought cages'.

For more writing like this about 'orienting by definition', 'allowable-thought cages' and related topics, check out the articles and posts on theallowablethoughtcage.com and read the book [*Unlocking The Allowable-Thought Cage*](#) [*Imprisoning Our Imaginations*](#).