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There was a time when I thought that there was but one reality. It exists as it "is", and we exist within that world and experience it in but one way. Blue is blue, right? Vertical is vertical? Well, maybe I hadn't simplified it quite that much, but I certainly didn't think there was that much difference from person to person. Man oh man, was I wrong on that one! You mean to tell me that there isn't just "one" reality?

Our reality is based on our perceptions. Our perceptual mechanisms are driven by our experiences. We collect the data from our surroundings that we want to collect, and we act on it accordingly. Humans are driven by their past experiences and their perceived competence and self-image (or lack thereof). Two people could be standing in exactly the same place, witnessing the same scenario unfold before them - yet their perceptions could conjure up completely different emotional and physical responses. Even something totally benign could create something utterly diabolical in one person's mind ... and something ecstatic in someone else's mind ... all in the same moment of perception.

Of course, there's a huge bonus to this sort of epiphany. We all bring our perceptions and self-imposed limitations into our interactions with those around us .... and our "reality" is merely something that we've unwittingly and perhaps unknowingly created deep in the corridors of our mind. The beauty ... is the challenge contained within. Two people interact ... and exchange, via verbal and non-verbal communication, the maps of their realities. Within this interaction - is another experience which feeds back into our current understanding of our world and ourselves ... to generate another response. Stimulus - response. Another feedback loop - another simply elegant mechanism of the human species.

But if you have two actively self-responsible humans ... with a desire to understand each others' "maps of reality" ... understanding the perceptual basis and history of the other ... then you have a very powerful synergy. If we can only be so fortunate. It's a wonderful goal ... but requires constant attention to detail while maintaining flow in the big picture. Balance. Isn't that the age-old problem with just about everything?

Self-image. It all starts ... and ends ... there. We come into this world solo ... and leave solo .... and our growth as humans remains a solo task of which we are all the masters of our own destiny. In the end, we have nobody to blame (or cherish) but ourselves. Even in the most synergistic relationships, the growth of the individuals allows the growth of the bigger entity. By looking inward, I look outward. By reflecting and learning, I refine the process of "being". And in "being", I am one with the universe.