

From “Time-binding” to “Times-binding” to “Conscious Times-binding”

About Time-binding

“Among ‘humans’ the abstractions of high orders produced by others, as well as those produced by oneself are stimuli to abstracting in still higher orders. Thus, in principle, we start where the former generation left off.” (Science And Sanity, page 394) Without instructions or training we build on (times-bind) and improve our **abstractions**—anything that ourselves and others (present and long gone) have imagined, thought, spoken, and written about, explained, believed, built, did, etc. We abstract (select-leave out-add to) from different frames of reference and create different fields of explorations (high order abstractions): chemistry, physics, biology, mathematics, history, anthropology, sociology, geology, geography, archaeology, philosophies, religions, works of art, music, linguistics, general semantics, etc. “Time-binding-abstracting is what we do—and cannot not do”. **General Semantics is about making ourselves conscious of our usually non-conscious behaviors and offers principles as tools we can use to help us do better.** “Abstractions of high orders” include labels, names, definitions, generalizations, inferences, expectations, beliefs, feelings, insights, habits, rules, policies, etc. –“Abstractions of high orders constitute times-binding abstractions from abstractions from abstractions...the earlier abstractions starting say at sensual experiences, objects, etc, are ranked “lower order” (lower, but not in terms of importance): Think of the seen, felt, smelled object; the label orange; a particular type of orange; the label fruit, a health product, a particular molecular configuration, and so on. Note that our higher order abstractions move us away from the seen, felt, smelled thing.

From “Time-binding” to “Times-binding”

We can modify (‘times-bind’) Korzybski’s definition of humans from “a natural time-binding class of life” to “a natural times-binding class of life” based on the following arguments: The time-binding process is not instantaneous...it goes on over a set of clock times (from clock-time “x” through clock times “x”+ to clock time “y”): The duration of a happening from which we abstract-time-bind, and our reviewings, revisings, refinings, and building on such happening, occur over different “intervals of duration” (set of clock-times--however small.) Two clock-times based on different “intervals of duration”, and involving different happenings, are not identical. We don’t call two different friends “friend”, or two books, “book”. From these considerations “Times-binding” seems to me more accurately descriptive than “time-binding”. With the notion “times” we might also avoid the usual controversies involving “What is time?” The beginning and end of time: Time flowing: Managing time: Slowing down of time: Time travel (which we do anyway whenever we move), etc. (For more on “times” See my article “Structuring and The Notion “Time” at <miltondawes.com>)

Our human world: A function of our times-bindings

We times-bind naturally--but we are not naturally conscious of our times-binding. Present world situations (political, economic, artistic, religious, scientific, international conflicts, terrorism, creative and technological accomplishments, destructive activities, etc.) result from our natural times-binding behaviors—unrestrained by “conscious times-binding

ethics”: An ethics where we “**value and appreciate how much we owe to earlier and present times-binders; and recognize and value our responsibility to ‘present’ and ‘future’ times-binders.**” An ethics based on ‘being’ “**conscious that we abstract**” as a way to re-train and restrain our often ‘unsane’ and destructive behaviors; and a way towards achieving higher levels of times-binding-intelligent behaviors. To help ourselves improve, progress in our relationships, and do better (no matter what), we need to **wake up ourselves, be more attentive, and become more conscious times-binders.** Becoming conscious of our natural times-binding behaviors, we can time-bindingly improve on those natural, spontaneous, sometimes harmful and destructive behaviors towards becoming more intelligent, wiser, and saner human beings.

Natural abstracting-times-binding

Natural times-binding like abstracting, being natural, needs no training: But in being “more “aware of what we are doing--and how, we can catch ourselves and develop “conscious-times-binding habits”. Language and symbol use accelerate and extend--but are not necessary for natural abstracting-times-binding. (Watch little toddlers playing and learning to do things by themselves: Observe yourself revising an idea, working at doing something better: Learning, observing, and revising are not words.) There could be times-binding lapse (as some claim) but in terms of “infinite valued maximum probability” this is hardly likely—not with billion of times-binding humans. Considering “times-binding” as “a special case of abstracting”: We are abstracting-times-binding whenever we sense, imagine, think-feel, believe, understand, know, ‘say’, do, etc. And more so when we realize that these abstracting-times-binding behaviors do not cover all, and are not the things they are about (principles of “non-allness, non-identity, and non-elementalism”). We are abstracting-times-binding when we are learning anything; reflecting on our beliefs; moving from ‘knowledge’ (awareness, acquaintance with ‘things’, objects, situations) to understanding (making sense of, give meanings to, recognizing structural connections, etc.): abstracting-times-binding when we discover we benefit in moving from seeing to looking, hearing to listening; seeing things, objects, situations, etc., to seeing things in relationships; when we spot and correct a mistake, ask a question or question an answer. We are abstracting-times-binding when we reflect on and seek to improve our assumptions, opinions, judgments, decisions, and actions. We are abstracting-times-binding when we realize that words by themselves do not have meanings—we give meanings. (Some dictionaries remind us of this.) If words had meanings: Where in the word do we look for its meanings? Could we look at any word in any language and know its meaning/s just by looking? We are abstracting-times-binding when we remember to remove our fingers before we close the door; remember not to hold hot coffee over our laps; when we recognize the green light as a “symbol”--not identify it as “a signal to go--without checking”; when we remember that we live in a world of relationships: that there is no one cause with one effect; that behavior has consequences; that actions will induce many reactions; that we are functions of each other, our environments, language, culture, and of ‘the ‘past’...which has not all passed; when we become aware that “It is sometimes easier to get into situations than get out.” We are abstracting-times-binding when we recognize through science and our commonsense that there are goings on beyond what we sense (event level--atoms, molecules, sub-atomic particles, attitudes, prejudices, biases, beliefs, values, etc.): And probably most

importantly: We are abstracting-times-binding when we think of ‘our’ ”conscious times-binding-abstracting behaviors” as abstractions from the neural processes—which we call “the unconscious”. Computers, smart phones, etc., by increasing the number and frequency of human interactions, also increase the number and frequency of natural times-bindings: We can expect more creative developments: But we need conscious times-binding ethics and consciousness of abstracting as guides, to help us minimize a predictable related increase in the number, frequency, and complexity of human problems resulting from natural times-binding. Many of the above abstractions are from some of my own abstracting-conscious times-binding experiences. Catch yourself and add some of your own.

Conscious abstracting-times-binding: Highest order of abstracting?

We are consciously abstracting-times-binding when we consciously use general semantics principles: date our opinions, theories, judgments, explanations, etc.; when we awaken ourselves to consciously distinguish between what we sense, and our imagining, words, labels, descriptions, definitions, assumptions, generalizations, theories, beliefs, opinions, etc.; about what we sensed. We can catch ourselves being conscious of abstracting, using a general semantics principle, engaged in “high order abstracting”, etc., and recognize these experiences as “instances of conscious times-binding awareness” before words or labels. The level of our ‘intelligences’ (however this is defined) in any field, is a function of our time-binding activities. We can extend our intelligences through increasing the frequency of our conscious times-binding activities. For myself, at this time, I think of this as also a possible measure of one’s appropriation and integration of general semantics as a system of interrelated principles: a system promoting conscious times-binding, and consciousness of abstracting as antidotes to our natural, often ‘unsane’, harmful times-binding thinking, ideals, ‘ideologies’, institutions, policies, and behaviors; and a system that can be considered an improvement and an advance beyond our usual ways of thinking and being human.

Consciously applying general semantics principles to modify our evaluations-attitudes-and-behaviors; non-elementalistically recognizing ourselves as part of a fractal Universe, and that we tend to behave like our ‘relatives’, could be among our “highest orders of abstracting”.

Conscious times-binding, consciousness of abstracting and ‘the calculus’

“We see what we see because we miss all the finer details.” Remembering this helps us not identify what we ‘see’ as all there is to be seen. (Science And Sanity, page 376) “It (the calculus) is structurally and semantically the ‘logic’ of sanity. (Science And Sanity, page 574) “The present work is also to a large extent inspired by it...” “...teachers...should be at least acquainted with the rudiments of the calculus.” (Science And Sanity, page 575) “The ‘calculus’” as “a study of a continuous function by following its development through indefinitely small steps”--generalized to finely tuned awareness; and consciousness of abstracting--also finely tuned awareness: remembering that our abstracting does not include all (including ourselves)), can be closely related. “Consciousness of abstracting” a general semantics master principle refers to “a conscious times-binding mode of consciousness” where we recognize that in our imagining, sensing, thinking, feeling, experiencing, deciding, explaining, understanding, knowing etc., we have selected, left out,

and added our own ‘stuff’. I see both ‘the calculus’ and “consciousness of abstracting” as conscious times-binding limits: We cannot evaluate or times-bind what we are not aware of--no matter how short lived. ‘The calculus’ involves variables, functions, differentiations and integrations—all aspects of our sensing, feelings, judgments, expectations, evaluations, generalizations, etc. What we ‘see’, our words, experiences, and even ourselves, can be seen and experienced from many points of viewing (frames of reference, perspectives, etc.); can be given different meanings, significance, ‘values’, etc.—and qualify as “semantic variables”. We cannot deal with everything (non-allness) —So we differentiate: recognize differences, make distinctions, break things down to “simpler more easy to understand and deal with” structures. What we ‘see’ or experience, is also a function of (depends on) our interests, how we look, our expectations, training, skills, cultural experiences, and so on. We make connections, classify, have beliefs, give meanings and values...We integrate, but usually not enough--and forgetting this, identify the little with the greater. We can avoid many conflicts and disagreements in remembering the notions of variables, functions, and integrations. A conscious-times-binding structuring of our times-binding activities helps us discover that ‘the past’ (previous happenings) have not all passed. Their effects are what we now call ‘the present’. What we now think of as ‘the future’ will be an uninterrupted continuation of ‘the present’, as ‘the present’ is an uninterrupted continuation of the past —no “elementalistic” (separating) gaps from ‘past’-to-‘present’-to-‘future’: ($f = f(\text{pres}) \dots \text{pres} = f(\text{past})$) (function...depends on, related to). A conscious times-binding recognition that with our present behaviors we are creating the foundations of our possible ‘futures’ could help us think more clearly; be more conscious of our abstracting; be more awake to our present actions; and take more responsibility for what we are doing ‘now’ that our children and grand children will have to start from, and will very likely build on! With finely tuned awareness we could discover for ourselves our natural times-binding behavior—allowing us to make a times-binding semantic quantum leap from natural times-binding to conscious times-binding: (As did an outstanding conscious times-binder Alfred Korzybski, the creator of general semantics. (Read Bruce Kodish, “Korzybski”: A Biography).

Becoming awake to our natural times-binding behaviors allows us to make a times-binding semantic quantum leap from natural times-binding and “gross mapping” to conscious times-binding and more finely tuned awareness. The more closely we ‘observe’, listen, etc., (small steps) the more distinctions we make; we see more in less times; we discover more relatedness, the more distinctions and relations we awake to, the more reasonable our expectations, the better our structuring, our judgments, and “map making”—the less stress we experience. Practicing conscious times-binding: We do what we do to discover what we are doing; to learn about and learn from what we are doing--so we can do better what we are doing. With a conscious times-binding approach we can consciously times-bind from the times-binding refrain in “Annie get your gun” and sing: Anything I can do I can do better—I can do anything better than me.

General Semantics, Science, mathematics, intelligence, and times-binding
The progress of science and mathematics has being achieved through very high levels of natural times-binding activities involving strict adherence to rigorous reasoning, explicit and accepted symbols, definitions, standards--and most importantly “times-binding revisions, and improvement on earlier abstractions”. Other non-mathematical and

non-scientific fields generally lack this level of transparency, rigor, and discipline. **Korzybski's great conscious times-binding contribution to improving our human welfare, was his conscious times-binding insight that we could learn from the methods and approach of science and mathematics, how we could improve our ways of being human. He developed general semantics (a system of interrelated principles) as generalizations of the methods and approach of science and mathematics. These principles are "semantic tools" that anyone can use to improve any area of their everyday and professional lives. We could think of our 'intelligences' as developments from abstracting, to times-binding, to conscious times-bindings, and consciousness of abstracting. More consciousness of abstracting leads to higher levels of intelligences: (Higher levels in the sense of intelligent use of our intelligences.)**

A Radically Different approach

Conscious times-binding on a times-binding insight from an earlier grand times-binder "Albert Einstein": 'We humans will be unable to cope with the increasing number, or manage the increasing complexity of the problems facing us, if we persist in **thinking along the natural times-binding lines that created these problems in the first place.**' 'We' have been struggling with our problems, economic and other inequalities, criminal activities, conflicts, uprisings, rebellions, wars, etc.: 'We' have been applying earlier natural times-binding analysis, ideas, attitudes, policies, and approach--maintained and promoted by our institutions (private, public, commercial, etc.) and supported by most of us. 'We' have not yet become awake to the actuality of the ineffectiveness of our approach and reasons for this. **Conscious times-binding, consciousness of abstracting, a calculus approach, advanced conscious-times-binding general semantics evaluation and attitudinal modifiers, offer a radically different approach, a radically other way of thinking, evaluating, relating, resolving problems, making decisions, and behaving. Presently, I think the human race is too highly differentiated--too many asymmetric relationships (different languages, different values, different locations and environments, different interests, different levels of times-binding, and conscious times-binding intelligence, etc.) to adopt, adapt to, or universally practice this unusual way of thinking. Many will resist this approach--not wanting to be "slaves to an idea" (I was once told this). A feature of a fractal Universe: Systems-structures (molecules, plants, animals, humans, social, national, etc), to maintain their structural integrity and survive are "self-protective and self-maintaining" to varying degrees: Resistance to change is to be expected: (One reason why a general semantics approach is unlikely to be accepted generally.) But for anyone curious, wondering, creative, seeking to make better sense of things, concerned with improvement, betterment, progress, and seeking higher levels of satisfaction in their/our ways of being in the world: **General Semantics as generalized science and mathematics offers principles--evaluation tools, attitudinal and behavioral modifiers that can be applied to make a very big difference in our living. (For more: (Read Korzybski's "Manhood of Humanity", and "Science And Sanity". Martin H. Levinson "More Sensible Thinking", "Practical Fairy Tales For Everyday Living". Bruce Kodish "Korzybski: A Biography" and "Dare to Inquire"...other books--abstractions available from the "Institute of General Semantics" collection, and visit <miltondawes.com> for more on "A Calculus Approach".)****

