

# A macrobiotic approach to destiny

by Filipa Silva

## 1. Introduction

Destiny and free will are themes which have been discussed across generations and cultures throughout history.

According to the Oxford dictionary, destiny is “*The events that will necessarily happen to a particular person or thing in the future*” or “*The hidden power believed to control future events*”.<sup>1</sup>

In Taoism there is some sort of destiny, in which ‘*Man*’ is commanded by a natural force and that the less the person struggles, the more accomplishes: ‘*Man follows the earth. Earth follows heaven. Heaven follows the Tao. Tao follows what is natural*’<sup>2</sup> or ‘*Tao abides in non-action, Yet nothing is left undone*’.<sup>3</sup>

Greek philosophy, Stoicism, states that each person has their own destiny, decided by a universal force known as Natural Intelligence and that man can only decide whether or not to accept this destiny.

In the 1700s, philosopher Immanuel Kant discussed the existence of destiny in his most famous book, ‘*Critique of Pure Reason*’ and in the 1800s, philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche defined destiny as the “*Amor fati*” (Love of fate)<sup>4</sup>: “*My formula for human greatness is amor fati: that one wants nothing to be different, not in the future, not in the past, not for all eternity*”.

For Oshawa, responsibility and non-creed were two key words to live a macrobiotic life. However, his mention of the impact of Nature and her cycles in people’s life could be assumed as conditioning the way people make decisions.

Today, this is an ongoing discussion. Psychology and neuroscience are examining if free will exists or if are humans just following their unconscious mind, a biological program, which could be named destiny. As a result, a new discipline has emerged, named the ‘neuroscience of free will’, which studies the possible Illusion of free will.

This paper aims to present a macrobiotic perspective on destiny, considering that humans are restricted to Nature and its cycles, in a yin (earth) and yang (sky) perspective. It also presents philosophical and scientific approaches to the possibility of human destiny, which can be called the ‘Will of Nature’.

We explore the implications of accepting the existence of destiny and the possibility that our decisions may be overwhelmingly influenced by Nature and our own history.

What are the implications of this way of thinking, what kind of state of mind will result? And ultimately, how would this state of mind influence issues like freedom, acceptance, commitment, environmentalism and ecocentrism?

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/destiny>

<sup>2</sup> ‘*Tao Te Ching*’, chapter 25

<sup>3</sup> ‘*Tao Te Ching*’, chapter 37

<sup>4</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche (1967) ‘*Basic Writings of Nietzsche*’, trans. and ed. by Walter Kaufmann

## 2. Scientific approach to decision making, free will and conditioning

When it comes to decision making, some of the main questions are: (1) How do people make decisions? (2) Are our decisions in life decided by us consciously or are they a product of our conditioning? And; (3) Is everything that happens in our life predetermined or do we have (some or total) freedom to choose our own path?

### Decision making and science

In the 1970s, Benjamin Libet, conducted one of the first scientifically recognised experiments on decision making. The study showed that before we make a decision, there is a previous brain activity, suggesting that the decision is made before we are consciously aware of it: *"It is concluded that cerebral initiation of a spontaneous, freely voluntary act can begin unconsciously, that is, before there is any (at least recallable) subjective awareness that a 'decision' to act has already been initiated cerebrally. This introduces certain constraints on the potentiality for conscious initiation and control of voluntary acts."*<sup>5</sup>

Other investigators, that used brain scanners to predict people's decisions, went further and suggest that there is a delay between the actual decision made by the brain activity and the awareness of having made the decision: *"the outcome of a decision can be encoded in brain activity of prefrontal and parietal cortex up to 10 s before it enters awareness. This delay presumably reflects the operation of a network of high-level control areas that begin to prepare an upcoming decision long before it enters awareness."*<sup>6</sup>

Rationally, these results make sense, because in the act of deciding, the human brain only gives the individual a small number of alternatives to choose, meaning that when we think that we are deciding consciously, we are already conditioned to what the subconscious mind decided to give us as input for the final decision. Humans are not able to choose on possibilities that they do not remember at the time of a question or on possibilities that they didn't even know they existed.

This can be summarized by the quote of Donald Rumsfeld, that mentioned that we have *"known knowns, known unknowns, and unknown unknowns"*<sup>7</sup>, inspired by a Persian–Tajik poet from the 13th-century, Ibn Yami<sup>8</sup>.

Even if we consider that our decisions are based in previous experiences, such as related with the culture where we grew up in, the patterns of the family that we were raised in, the schools where we studied and the friends we made, among others, that may not explain the all act of decision making. According to Karim Nader, long-term memory is susceptible to disruption and restoration and, possibly, the very act of remembering can change each individual' memories, meaning that what we think it happened might not be what really happened.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, humans think and communicate in a language and because of that our memories and understanding are limited by our language. As the philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein

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<sup>5</sup> Benjamin Libet (1983). *'Time of conscious intention to act in relation to onset of cerebral activity (readiness-potential). The unconscious initiation of a freely voluntary act'*, available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/6640273>

Benjamin Libet (2006). *'Reflections on the interaction of the mind and brain'*, available at <https://web.archive.org/web/20110718052421/http://www.telefonica.net/web2/lupelandia/piramidescerebro/Libet.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Chun Siong Soon, Marcel Brass, Hans-Jochen Heinze, John-Dylan Haynes (2008), *'Unconscious determinants of free decisions in the human brain'*, Nature Neuroscience volume 11, pages 543–545

<sup>7</sup> Donald Rumsfeld sentence, in the DoD News Briefing - Secretary Rumsfeld and Gen. Myers, available at <https://archive.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=2636>

<sup>8</sup> Ibn Yamin poem, available at [https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137283368\\_5](https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137283368_5)

<sup>9</sup> Karim Nader (2015), *'Reconsolidation and the Dynamic Nature of Memory'*, available at Cold Spring Harb Perspect Biol., <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4588064/>

mentioned, “*The limits of my language are therefore the limits of my world*”.<sup>10</sup> Deep feelings and experiences are examples of how sometimes it is not possible to put in words human feelings.

Oshawa mentioned that “*Words or speech develop in parallel with human knowledge and inversely with our consciousness*.”<sup>11</sup> This approach will be discussed in chapter 3.

In summary, humans seem to make decisions based on limited set of predetermined subconscious possibilities that the brain gives at the time of the decision and based on past memories that are dynamic, i.e., memories are able to change with time. So far, there are no answers on how the unconscious mind is giving us those possibilities among a list of possibilities. Also, we do not fully understand how and why are our memories changing.

In this sense, are humans deciding consciously or being oriented by our unconscious mind? What are the main influences on our unconscious mind?

### **Decision making as a natural process**

According to Petter Wohlleben, trees seem to have structures resembling the brain at the ends of the roots, which suggests that they have memory capacity and emotions. Trees socialise, help each other and create cooperative relations with other species, like fungus.<sup>12</sup> Regarding insects, scientists found that honeybees can add and subtract, acquire long-term rules and use short-term working memory and this study<sup>13</sup> suggests that “*advanced numerical cognition may be more accessible to nonhuman animals than previously suspected*”.

But since other species (plants, insects and other non-human animals) seem to react differently in a human perspective, it is often mentioned that they act according to intuition or instinct, but not intelligently, this last one being mentioned as an attribute of human's superiority. In this type of thinking, Nature is controlling most of their actions, and therefore their destinies, such as the reproductive or hibernating seasons. But, Nature also rules specific changes in humans' body, such as puberty, menstruation or menopause/andropause. These events have a strong impact in humans' emotions and therefore in the way we react to the world. For instance, are humans able to choose partners in love or could one assume that it is a hormonal decision?

Being animals, aren't humans also deciding according to Natures' will, whilst believing that we are making personal decisions? A study by Michael Platt suggests that human decision making is based on mechanisms that evolved early in the species' development (prehistorical ancestors) and that we react to situations similarly to other animals, whether when making simple or complex decisions: “*finding food, finding a mate, making friends and allies*”.<sup>14</sup>

Should these studies prove accurate, these mechanisms may be representative of instinct/intuition as an instrument of 'Nature's' decisions or the way 'Nature' communicates with humans. If so, 'Nature' influences everything humans do, whether we realise it or not.

For Oshawa, “*intuition and instinct are but one*”<sup>11</sup>. He states that instinct does not grow or decrease with time and that it appears before reasoning when it comes to understanding something (“*practice precedes reasoning*”, “*knowledge does not exist without instinct*”).<sup>11</sup> What

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<sup>10</sup> Ludwig Wittgenstein (1921), ‘*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*’

<sup>11</sup> George Oshawa (1976), ‘*The Unique principle: the philosophy of macrobiotics*’, George Oshawa Macrobiotic Foundation

<sup>12</sup> Peter Wohlleben (2016), ‘*The Hidden Life of Trees: What They Feel, How They Communicate – Discoveries from a Secret World*’

<sup>13</sup> Scarlett R. Howard, Aurore Avargues-Weber, Jair E. Garcia, Andrew D. Greentree, Adrian G. Dyer (2019), ‘*Numerical cognition in honeybees enables addition and subtraction*.’ *Science Advances*, vol. 5, n. 2, 10.1126/sciadv.aav0961

<sup>14</sup> Michael Platt (2015), video ‘*This Is Your Brain on Decision-making*’, available at [https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/this-is-your-brain-on-decision-making/?\\_ga=2.182886318.963691757.1570343271-1567437609.1570343271](https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/this-is-your-brain-on-decision-making/?_ga=2.182886318.963691757.1570343271-1567437609.1570343271)

Oshawa calls intuition or instinct can be assumed as the primal mechanisms mentioned previously.

Caroline Myss, sees intuition as an ability based on self-esteem and health that has nothing to do with superstition or special powers.<sup>15</sup>

### **Decision making and sense of agency (sense of control)**

Sense of agency is the feeling of individuals having control on their own actions and is linked to the study of free will. If destiny exists, then free will and sense of control are but an illusion.

Although humans may accept that destiny is related to big events in our lives, like the person we married or the job we have, when it comes to small events, we do not like to give away personal control.

Maybe this happens because we are more overwhelmed and linked to personal feelings and emotions when big events happen than in smaller events. Falling in love can feel beyond human control and from beyond logic and reason and in that sense, the idea of a destiny is more bearable or reliable.

Also, humans tend to underestimate small events and the impact they can have in our future decisions. For instance, a conversation with a friend two months ago may generate information in our unconscious mind that leads to a different decision, even though at the moment of the decision we weren't consciously using that information.

### **Other remarks**

Science is evolving and studies on these subjects are still embryonic. The ultimate question about free will and decision making would be whether an individual would make the same decisions, or not, if that person went back a year in life and had no memory of that year, reliving the same events, or if he/she would do something differently: "*The basic questions concerning free will are (1) whether we are able to choose other than we actually do, (2) whether our choices are made intelligibly, and (3) whether we are really the originators of our choices.*" and "*Freedom of will is an illusion if we mean by it that under identical conditions we would be able to do or decide otherwise, while simultaneously acting only for reasons and being the true originators of our actions.*" Error! Bookmark not defined.

## **3. Oriental philosophy, Macrobiotics and Nature**

### **The trigrams as humans' influence**

The trigrams were mentioned by Oshawa has the 'philosophy of the three sticks of Logos'<sup>16</sup>, and are also known as "*The San Cai or the three powers approach*"<sup>17</sup>.

A trigram is composed by three forces that influence each other and, together, create a Whole called Nature. These forces are:

- I. "*Tian, the way of heaven, what is above*". It includes the influence of yin and yang in human's life, the astrological, meteorological and seasonal conditions and the spatial

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<sup>15</sup> Caroline Myss (1996), '*Anatomy of the spirit, the seven phases of power and healing*'

<sup>16</sup> George Oshawa (1976), '*The Unique principle: the philosophy of macrobiotics*', George Oshawa Macrobiotic Foundation

<sup>17</sup> Howard Choy (2006), '*The "San Cai" approach to feng shui analysis and design*', presented at the International Conference on Scientific Feng Shui and the Built Environment, held in City University of Hong Kong in 2009, available at <https://www.fengshui-college.org/www/images/pages/19/HK%20Conference%202009%20Paper.pdf>

orientation. The way that seasons influences human's characteristics is an example on how this line relates with humans. For instance, some studies suggest that there are more crimes during the full moon than in the other lunar phases.<sup>18</sup>

- II. *“Ren, the way of Human, what is in the middle”* (‘Humanity’, according to Oshawa). Human emotional needs, external appearance and prospects are represented by this line. For instance, someone borne in a catholic culture will have different characteristics and therefore might respond differently than an individual of a different religion or with no religion. User of San Cai consider benevolence and righteousness as the main attributes of humans, in the sense that humanity is seen as a whole and not as a group of separated individuals.
- III. *“Di, the way of Earth, what is below, soft and hard, the origin of the 10 000 things and the source of all that is living”*. This is related to the topography and the composition of the land (geography). The way that food influences human behaviour (thinking, feeling or acting) is an example.

Free will should be included in the second line of the San Cai, where humans perceive and decide how to interact with the world. However, as mentioned in the ‘I Ching’, although any point of reference is possible, when human consciousness awakes, it is already entwined in systems so powerful that these external influences tend to prevail<sup>19</sup>. Likewise, Oshawa claimed that human will is influenced by external forces<sup>20</sup>.

In other words, that means that each person is more attracted to specific people, places and foods according to their condition (yin-yang) and because of this natural limitation, humans are not really choosing freely and deciding conditioned by personal inner structure and characteristics, given by the laws of the Universe and Nature.

### **A macrobiotic approach: Nature as a releaser?**

Oshawa wrote that instinct/intuition are not limited whilst the ‘free-will’ of the ‘scientists’ is. He explained knowledge and instinct/intuition with the notions of small *self* and big *Self*. For him, the small *self* is the physical *self* (human being), driven by the forces of yin and yang and therefore limited, while the big *Self* is the spiritual *Self*, that meditates on the small *self* and therefore is free and absolute, sometimes called God or Soul. According to Oshawa, without knowing both, it is not possible to discuss ‘free will’:

*“Being unique and boundless in space and time, the infinite embraces everything infinitely – past and future as well as present. It can be likened to the mind of the author of a novel. He is aware of the whole story in every detail because he himself created the story. (...) Our centre, which thinks, remembers, understands, and rules, is the infinite itself and nothing else.”*<sup>21</sup>

Trough Oshawa’s sentence, we can assume that Nature is controlling everything and that truth creative comes from Her, not from a single individual, being humans Nature’s creation and Her instruments. If we assume that when we are deciding, we are using our limited experiences, compared with Nature as a whole and all of Her possibilities, then this make sense. Oshawa also had a sense of destiny, when he wrote that we cannot lose our way in the road of life:

*“Here is life’s great highway, Tao. You can even walk it carelessly. It is wide, infinitely wide. You cannot turn and lose your way on this road, even if you walk with closed eyes.*

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<sup>18</sup> Jodi Tasso and Elizabeth Miller (2010), ‘*The Effects of the Full Moon on Human Behavior*’, in *The Journal of Psychology Interdisciplinary and Applied* 93(1): 81-83

<sup>19</sup> Unknown author (1989), ‘*I Ching Or Book Of Changes*’, translated by Richard Wilhelm

<sup>20</sup> George Ohsawa (1960), ‘*Philosophy of oriental medicine, key to your personal judging ability*’, George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation

<sup>21</sup> George Oshawa (1976), ‘*The Unique principle: the philosophy of macrobiotics*’, George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation

*Here is the narrow door. It is quite small and narrow and unpretentious, like those twin words, yin and yang. But once you have passed beyond this small door you are in infinite freedom, eternal happiness, and absolute justice.”<sup>22</sup>*

Also, according to Oshawa’s writings, namely the previous quote, freedom only happens when we overcome our own limitations and embrace Nature’s road and guidance, where everything is possible. Maybe the expression “to give up” means to give oneself upward to something that is greater than each personal existence.

Finally, when we see ourselves above and separate from Nature, aren’t we more likely to misunderstand Nature’s guidance and end up feeling unbalanced with the world around? Could this disconnection be the arrogance that guides humans to illness, as Oshawa often mentioned, due to the missing link with the ultimate source: Nature?

## 4. Destiny in philosophy

Due to the extremely dependence of humans on Nature, some ancient philosophers believed Nature determined each person’s destiny, through her cycles and laws. The **Stoics** went deeply in this destiny approach dictated by Nature.

**Stoicism** is a school of philosophy created in 300 BC, in Greece, by Zenão de Cício, also followed by well-known romans, such as the emperor Marco Aurelio and Séneca. Today it still has followers.

The Stoics consider no distinction between Nature and God (‘Zeus’, king of the gods for the Greeks, ‘Jupiter’ for the Romans) and that the Universe has regular cycles of “formation” and “destruction”, which can be compared with the yang and yin approach. Also similarly to macrobiotics, they referred that “*Men should understand Nature and integrate in it*”.<sup>23</sup>

In their destiny approach, the stoics consider that from the moment humans are born, our lives are already determined by Nature and that free will exists only to decide whether to accept or not each personal destiny, included in the cosmic order. According to them, happiness and virtue (ethics) happens when we accept and love our destiny. One of Seneca’s most famous citation, is a follow: “*The willing, destiny guides them; the unwilling, destiny drags them*”<sup>24</sup> and Marcus Aurelius mentioned that “*By keeping in mind the whole I form a part of, I’ll accept whatever happens*”<sup>25</sup>.

They consider that destructive emotions are the result of humans trying to use their will against Nature’s influence.<sup>26</sup> Oshawa called this use of will against Nature as ‘arrogance’.

This approach helped people to overcome stress and difficulties in the past by adopting a contemplative attitude, personal virtues/ethics, positive thinking and trust in life. It helped developing personal peace of mind, even in hard times.

If we are conditioned to act and live according to our experiences, then the Stoics can give us an approach on how to live a better live with conditionings: by accepting them without judgment. The following Seneca’s citation is still recognized and used: “*If you really want to escape the things that harass you, what you’re needing is not to be in a different place but to be a different person.*”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> George Ohsawa (1960), ‘*Philosophy of oriental medicine, key to your personal judging ability*’, George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation

<sup>23</sup> Lúcio Aneu Séneca (2008, ed. translated). ‘*Cartas a Lucílio*’, translated by J.A. Segurado e Campos

<sup>24</sup> Lúcio Aneu Séneca (2008, ed. translated). ‘*Cartas a Lucílio*’, translated by J.A. Segurado e Campos

<sup>25</sup> Marcus Aurelius (2003, ed. translated). ‘*Meditations, a new translation*’, translated by Gregory Hays

<sup>26</sup> John Sellars (2006). ‘*Stoicism*’. University of California Press. p. 32. ISBN 978-0-520-24908-0

<sup>27</sup> Lúcio Aneu Séneca (2008, ed. translated). ‘*Cartas a Lucílio*’, translated by J.A. Segurado e Campos

About the Stoics, Jean Brun mentioned that “*destiny ceases to be an exclusively tragic expression, or an essentially extramundane force, to become a natural, ethical and theological reality that fits into the structure of the world, the life that animates the universe and beings.*”<sup>28</sup>

Recent philosophers also approached the theme of free will and destiny or the laws of Nature. In the book ‘Critique of Pure Reason’, Emmanuel Kant referred that reality is a construction of humans’ mind, while true reality is inaccessible to us, because we are not able to fully know an object since our knowledge of objects is only the result of what we are able to think about it. About freedom and Nature, he mentioned: “*if freedom were determined according to laws, it would be no longer freedom, but merely nature*”<sup>29</sup>.

## 5. Implications of believing in destiny

What can an approach of believing in destiny bring us, compared with the opposite situation, where we feel we have total control on our choices?

### More connection and commitment

It might seem that destiny takes away personal commitment with life, with ourselves and with the world around, that people might just lie on the sofa all day expecting for something to happen since destiny will always do his part.

However, in a macrobiotic perspective, every human receives a will from Nature (sun/earth), which will lead us to be active, creative, productive and adventurous as this is our journey.

And if is this will of Nature that leads us to our purpose, then accepting Nature’s guidance will lead us to be more committed with our purpose and more connected with what surround us, more accepting and less judgmental, which reduces the personal barriers, both with other people and with the Universe.

Instead of uncommitted, we become observers of our own experiences and more connected with what Nature wants us to feel or create. Isn’t this one of the scopes of life, to observe?

### More natural freedom, less individual conditioning

If ‘*the Divine is not limited by time, space or physical human concerns*’<sup>30</sup> and humans are the result of each own experiences, then only the Divine/Nature is entirely free. And if so, if humans are living through Nature and Nature has much greater abilities than humans, is it by letting Nature be the guide that humans experience most in life? Could we say that when we connect with the Divine, we become less limited or conditioned by our own constrains?

Also, isn’t conditioning a state of mind driven by the way people live life?

In economics, every decision has an implied ‘cost of opportunity’, meaning that if we spend time or money doing something, we won’t be able to do other things with that specific time and money – we are always conditioned. The same happens with the concepts we adopt - if we decide to become macrobiotics, we are most likely ‘conditioning’ ourselves from eating dairy and sugar daily.

However, humans only feel conditioned when it comes to ‘negative’ conditioning, when we don’t like the situation or the outcome of a situation, which is the result of a judgement driven

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<sup>28</sup> Brun (1986). ‘*Le Stoicisme*’, translated by João Amado

<sup>29</sup> Immanuel Kant (1781), ‘*Critique of Pure Reason*’

<sup>30</sup> Caroline Myss (1996), ‘*Anatomy of the spirit, the seven phases of power and healing*’

by an expectation – no one will complain feeling restricted when in a good moment, even that to live that moment it had to make choices.

In this sense, doesn't the type of conditioning depend on our perspective and on the acceptance we have of the moment? If there is only observation of life, doesn't 'positive' and 'negative' conditioning fade away?

If we accept each person experiences as something bigger and out of human's control, is there space left for judgements, negative thinking or complaints? Could it be that from surrendering to Nature comes total freedom, total possibilities, total detachment, making the best we can independently of the results?

### **More acceptance and simplicity, less judgement and criticism**

Believing in destiny brings people more acceptance of what life has to give, and help us appreciate every moment, with less concerns or assumptions about what happened (past) or what is going to happen (future). Life becomes simpler.

When acceptance comes, it is easier to live each moment as a blessing and harder moments become a Nature's season, that comes and goes.

We can relax about decisions and be more empathetic and understanding of ourselves and of other people's life journeys. No right or wrong, good or bad. Frees us of guilt, shame and resentment and takes us out of being emotionally trapped by our past into a potential to accept and move forward. It opens us up to greater acceptance and frees us to be loving of people as they are and our own life as it is.

When we become less judgmental with ourselves, don't we become less judgmental with people around us too and in general, with more understanding, empathy, kindness, joy and a positive attitude to the world?

Simon Brown's quote is an example of how can be more loving towards others: "*Sometimes I am amazed to be sitting with someone who is either the result of millions of years of evolution, or create by God in his image. Here I am with someone who has evolved from a fertilised egg to an incredible adult with a fascinating life history. In this moment I find it easier to connect with the person, soul to soul, rather than get caught up in assumptions, judgments or comparisons.*"<sup>31</sup>

### **More Ecocentric and Environmental, less Egocentric and Individual**

At a certain level, free-will and self-development can separate us from others and from Nature. For instance, when we assume ourselves has unique, can't we be running after the feeling that we are individually special and different of everything that Nature as ever made? And if we think like that, aren't we ultimately isolating ourselves? Is there a chance that this type of feeling might lead us to feeling alone, in our unicity and 'special' individuality?

If we want to be one with the Nature, conscientious and sustainable, then can we also be independent, making individual decisions and living totally as we wish?

When we assume ourselves as part of Nature, 'Me' becomes less and 'We' becomes more, we can start seeing ourselves as all part of each other's learning, not in a competitive way but cooperating and helping each other.

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<sup>31</sup> Simon Brown, available at <http://www.connectiontherapy.co.uk/awareness.html>



Notably, Ohsawa mentioned that “*One should not punish a criminal if one is not able to help him understand the constitution of the universe.*”<sup>32</sup> This might reflect the idea that ‘*understanding*’ is a concept that should be used in a universal way instead of individually.

When accepting that we are connected with Nature and that Nature influence our choices, then we more are aligned with her. And can’t we achieve more when we become Nature’s instrument, compared with when we try to do all by ourselves? Don’t we receive more when we respect Nature’s cycles and rhymes?

When we create the connection with trees, the sky, with food, with other people, we can seek to achieve some sparkles of what is our destiny and ultimately know the Universe, like ancient philosophers mentioned. We become more fulfilled because we stop living our lives separated from all that surrounds us.

## 6. How to connect with destiny

The following list gives some examples to help feeling connected with destiny:

- **Being with Nature:** it includes eating according to the seasons and place, going for a walk in the wild frequently, being with animals (animals seem to be more aware of their natural essence than humans), catch sun during the day and look at the stars during the night, among others.
- **Creative exercises and activities:** dancing, singing, painting or any other activity that can be considered creative and has a movement helps us being in the moment (even better if it is in the wild). Everything moves in Nature and so should we.
- **Relaxation techniques:** meditation activities, breathing, feeling our body consciously, helps connecting with what Nature as given us to live on Earth - our body.
- **Writing in a descriptive way:** writing using observation instead of judgment (positive/negative), helps to deconstruct individual/personal feelings and therefore reduces barriers with what surrounds us. For Seneca, writing was a spiritual exercise that helped him meditate on his life in order to have more stability in his thinking.<sup>33</sup>
- **Asking for other opinions:** when we are in our own conditioning, divination and letting other people sometimes decide for us might help, because they would potentially decide differently than what we would choose for us. This can help us have a different approach that we would not make through our normal conditioning and take new directions in life.
- **Being kind and generous** with yourself and with every being with whom we cross with. If everything is connected, these acts will lead to a stronger sense of community and purpose and ultimately to be within Nature.
- **Practice Love:** instead of differences, can you find and feel the complements that we all have with each other’s?

Finally, believing in destiny can be seen as an approach of how to be in the moment, to trust life and that each person is in the right place at the right hour. It is trusting that everyone is connected, that there is a higher meaning and that the biggest will happens, even if we cannot see it for ourselves.

It is the same as recommending us to be happy with what we receive each day, instead of looking for what we do not have. It is to be the best we can be in each moment of our lives and have the assurance that we are never alone, that Nature breathes and lives through us.

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<sup>32</sup> George Ohsawa (1960), ‘*Philosophy of oriental medicine, key to your personal judging ability*’, George Ohsawa Macrobiotic Foundation

<sup>33</sup> Lúcio Aneu Séneca (2008, ed. translated). ‘*Cartas a Lucílio*’, portuguese translation by J.A. Segurado e Campos

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## **The author**

Filipa Silva ([filipa.silva@saudemacro.pt](mailto:filipa.silva@saudemacro.pt))

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/filipa.silva.923171>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/filipa\\_silva\\_macrobio/](https://www.instagram.com/filipa_silva_macrobio/)

Teacher at the 'Museum of Orient' and 'Escola Macrobiótica' in Lisbon.

Annual Course of Macrobiotics, Health and Self-Transformation (3 years), in Instituto Macrobiótico de Portugal (IMP)

Degree in Mathematics applied to Economics and Management, in Instituto Superior de Economia e Gestão da Universidade de Lisboa (ISEG)

Master in Applied Econometrics and Forecasting, in ISEG

## **Other considerations**

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