

# PACKET NO. 3

DEC/JAN 2017

PCKT 3— PG 91

12.16–01.17  
SUMMARY

This morning, on rare occasion, my husband and I sat down together for breakfast. We were chatting about how in years past, when we used to live in South Carolina, we used to talk about future long- and short-term goals, all the time. We each had our list of aspirations, a mutual one which was of course to move back to Colorado. We've been in Steamboat Springs now for a year, and continue to feel extremely lucky to be able to be here to raise our family. We noted, however, that since we moved we really haven't talked about our goals. We've been too busy acclimating and absorbing into our new community, living in the present. Now that a year has passed however, it feels right to begin thinking about our new goals. For me specifically, I feel it's important to focus on them as they relate to my practice of Graphic Design. I'd like to continue teaching and sharing with students the conceptual magic of design. I'd like to continue art-making, and maybe even dive into the world of fine art. I'd like to continue doing research and writing,

and gosh, maybe in a dream world also get paid for my thoughts and effort. Regardless, as I continue to pave my path within grad school, I wish I had more clarity, of thought and action. I feel utterly lost in my making. It's like maybe I'm inching closer to something, or maybe not. I'm definitely reading books that I find fascinating. I am also, albeit very slowly, learning new ways to image-make. I feel like resources are scattered, far beyond my reach. I also feel a looming lack of uncertainty. Maybe the root of this mass confusion lies within my own expectations. I want to be making really cool stuff that means something, that makes a difference. But I'm not doing it yet.

—  
So this month was good. There's always less time to focus during the holidays with parties and dinners and family in town, all of which makes for a great time of the year. I did a little less thinking and a little more making, which feels right within the flow of the semester. I also thought of something I'd like to discuss further:

Aside from me continuing to explore and play with paper, and in an effort to redirect myself towards what I've always known to be Graphic Design, I'd like to create a visual branding system for something that I cannot yet articulate. This something is kind of like 'identity'. Very abstract and definitely hard to grasp, but that within which we all operate, but are maybe not aware. So like a corporate identity for identity. Does that make sense? Yeah, in a way it'd be trivializing the process of corporate branding, and it would also systematize the abstract, but I think it'd be a neat way to bring everything I've been reading together into one thing. So this 'brand' would have 'sub-brands' and it would have products and maybe even campaigns, but of course non which would actually be tangible. I would draw from Ornstein's premise of the flawed mind, Schneiders quantified levels of energy, Cain's introvert-extrovert personality quandaries, Watts' cohesive theory, and whatever else I can muster up. What do you think?

RESEARCH  
**BOOKS & ARTICLES**

**MINDREAL: HOW THE MIND CREATES ITS OWN VIRTUAL REALITY<sup>24</sup>**

by Robert Ornstein, Illustrated by Ted Dewan

THERE ARE A FEW BOOKS THAT HAVE THE POWER TO change the way we think forever. For me, *MindReal* has been one of those books. Its theories and ideas have fallen in line with my exploration in many unexpected ways. It's amazing how these seemingly different and disconnected sources somehow fit together. Starting first semester with the casual reading of a book written in the 60's retelling of Hindu beliefs, to a popular & contemporary self-help book hinging on possibility, to a self-initiated curiosity about peace & conflict, to sacred Taoist poetry, a pragmatic exploration of design pedagogy & semiotics, to the dissection of 'creativity', and now the revelation that Reality, as we think we 'know' it, does not exist... what in the world do these have in common? For now, the only viable answer I have is 'me'. Thanks Natalia, for pointing that out. I suppose my 'reality' is as ludicrous as everyone else's, albeit disjointed, as it should be. Thanks to VCFA for creating this space in which I can leap from lily pad to lily pad, weaving an elusive commonality of interests, to safely pave *my way*.

*I'm pretty sure this quote is not meant to be comical, but I think it's hilarious. How is it that we take everything so seriously when it's truly All Invented? Could the dissemination of this idea help disperse more love and tolerance in the world?*

“YOU ARE COMPLETELY IMMERSSED IN A TINY CHAMBER OF TOTAL SELF-DELUSION.”

The way which I speak of, I suppose, is my 'reality', which is how I will loop back to talk about this incredible book. Let me start, however, by pointing out the fact that although I understood its ideas and premises, for the most part, there were three key terms which I wish had been explicitly defined off the bat. One: *mind*, two: *consciousness*, three: *Reality*. I've attempted to get in contact with Ornstein to clarify, but whether he gets back to me or not, I will ensue my book summary with the caveat that I may be using potentially misunderstood terms.

I believe when he writes 'mind', he is speaking specifically of the physical brain and its natural processes. This is what he calls Mind LTD which, according to Ornstein, is much like “a big company... with outdated policies, lies, deceit, massive ignorance, and plenty of screwing up” all the time. Love it. Our minds are really messed up. And for good reason. *What comprises our mind is truly an amalgamation of adaptations that have come together through time to ensure our survival. Adaptations which are today, in large part, obsolete.* Next, I believe when he writes 'consciousness' he is referring to the 'knowing' or 'awareness' that results from *Mind LTD's selecting, ignoring, categorizing, comparing, and systematically dealing with the massive amounts of signals and information it receives,* via the physical senses, from the outside world. Apparently only one trillionth of actual Reality makes it into our consciousness—resulting in a highly illusory interpretation. *Our 'reality' is filtered to such an extent, it's borderline delusional, completely made-up,* and as Ornstein points out, virtual. Last, when it comes to Reality, I believe his is in fact speaking about two different things. There is the Reality that really exists out there, one which we are completely and utterly unable to grasp and understand fully, and then there's the 'reality' we make up or we think that exists, which informs our consciousness and ultimately our entire view of the world and ourselves. *It is out of this made-up, or virtual, 'reality' that we create the narratives and personal life stories that serve as the foundation of our identity;* ever changing and completely subject to the antics of Mind LTD. This virtual reality is what Ornstein calls MindReal. Because MindReal is all we will ever really 'know', we mistake it for Reality and take it to be **true**.

“THAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING “REALITY” IN ITS FULLNESS IS, TOO,  
A BELIEF (ALTHOUGH WE DON’T USUALLY DISCUSS IT THIS WAY) —  
ONE THAT IS STRONGER, MORE IMMEDIATE AND PERVASIVE THAN  
ANY RELIGIOUS OR CULTURAL IDEOLOGY. **AND IT IS WRONG.** {THIS  
ERRONEOUS BELIEF} IS THE CAUSE OF MUCH MISUNDERSTANDING  
ABOUT US, ABOUT OTHER PEOPLE, AND BETWEEN SOCIETIES,  
COMPANIES, AND COUNTRIES.” » THE ROOT OF CONFLICT.

*This idea echoes Alan Watts' premise, as well as countless others I've read this semester. It has also undoubtedly become a part of my personal belief system and foundation to my core personal values.*

It's understandable that our mind, having grown and evolved through thousands of years, developed coping mechanisms to ensure we make it through each day, (its primary job.) And it is because we make it through each day that we buy into the 'reality' it presents. **The mind “produces a seriously reduced, edited version of Reality; in short, a well crafted illusion.”** The mind creates this illusion “backstage” to our consciousness, leaving us little room for control. This is why we sometimes say things when we wish we hadn't, lose our keys, or forget all about the nose on our own face. It's important to note that **the mind operates under a set pattern of rules and procedures** which, I believe, are the beliefs and assumptions I've read so much about in other books. And if I'm correct, these are mostly framed during our childhood to ensure our survival and the creation of our sense of identity.

*Short interlude: So I'm about half-way through reading this book, and of course I'm basking in this really cool state of marvel and total confusion. As I'm going to sleep one night I decide “yeah, I make up my own 'reality'. I'm the master of my own illusion.” So I decide that when I wake up the next morning I will be 5 inches taller. I will have always been that 5 inches taller so I won't even know the difference. Neither will anyone around me. I suppose I should have measured myself before trying that experiment, but I'm pretty certain I did not grow overnight. Not really bummed or disappointed, I realized the true difference between Reality and MindReal lies in what consciousness makes of what MindReal presents. I can choose to love my short distance to the ground, for numerous reasons including being called 'cute' all the time and fitting comfortably into limited spaces. I hardly ever bump my head! Or, I can be upset to need a stool every time I want something from the top shelf in the kitchen or the fact that I can never really see the artists while at a live show. It's all perspective and it's in that mindful choosing that we begin to gain control over the automated functions of our mind. That momentary and voluntary distance from mind-set rules & patterns brings light to a feeling, knowing, and seeing that exists beyond us, whether we call it God, Source, Universe, Faith, Miracle, or nothing at all.*

Throughout the book Ornstein goes on to describe the nature of and the many flawed qualities of both Mind LTD and its subsequent MindReal illusion. Here are a few quotes that really stood out for me:

- Like the rest of biological evolution, the human mind is a collage of adaptations.
- **The mind did not evolve for self knowledge.**
- The mind is not organized to tell you what's actually going on, but rather to tell you what you need to act on next.
- Unexpected or extraordinary events have fast access to consciousness.
- **You are not your mind. (Are we our consciousness then?)**
- **We never "see" things whole.**
- Some people think that Reality is an illusion, but that's not the case. MindReal is the illusion; it's just that we confuse MindReal with Reality.
- **The mind is wired to cast instant judgement and pigeon-hole people—racism.**
- Evolution favors the simple comparison process over the far more difficult process of measuring things absolutely. Efficiency means survival.
- **You measure the propriety of your own behavior compared to the behavior of those around you.**

^  
*This is a particularly scary fact given all that is happening with groups like ISIS around the world. Beautiful people are being moved to do incredibly horrible things, justified and applauded by those around them.*

“WE DON'T FACE REALITY SO MUCH AS WE **DEFACE IT,**  
 TAKING ONLY SMALL PARTS AND CREATING OR FILLING  
 IN THE GAPS TO HELP US THROUGH THE DAY.”

- There is no color in nature, no sound, no touch, no smell. All these wonders exist inside the shell that the mind creates for us to live in.
- We most often have to make decisions based on incomplete information.
- **The senses are both sensors and censors.**
- A great deal of behavior is directed by the environment—by what happens around you.
- **We judge based on our assumed level of adaptation.**
- Our minds only notice new threats and ignore constant threats, even when the constant threats are far greater.
- Our mind has no idea just how unstable it is—it labors under the illusion that it is thinking in a “straight line,” when the truth is that it is far more unstable.

Now that I've gone through the process of reviewing the text a little more carefully and digesting its ideas at length, I don't quite feel as confused. I also now see the source of my initial confusion. Reality is a noun, whereas MindReal sounds more like an adjective. Noticing that one little grammatical nuance would have brought more clarity. Evidence of Ornstein's point, in fact. My 'comparometer' was trying to not dump the two terms in the same bucket, my grammatical experience seemed to resist the grouping.

*« I think this is a really cool realization, especially as it relates to Graphic Design. Designers are especially guided and influenced by sight and by the interpretations we create through what we think we see.*

*« And cause for much conflict.*

*« This is exactly why global warming is such an enormous problem. Its effects are just constant enough that we choose to ignore them, until of course the day we no longer have the option to make them feel 'invisible'.*

“EVERYTHING YOU THINK, SAY,  
AND DO IS GENERATED BY SOME  
PRECONCEIVED SENSE OF I”

— BRUCE D. SCHNEIDER

ENERGY LEADERSHIP<sup>25</sup>

by Bruce D. Schneider

A FEW YEARS AFTER HAVING OUR TWO BOYS, years of staying home and dedicating myself wholeheartedly to them, I had a bit of an existential crisis. It wasn't too dramatic, but it did require a little attention and some definite action. The crisis revolved specifically around my professional journey and future aspirations. I had quit my job the week before having our first baby and had 'freelanced' on occasion, but had pretty much lost all sense of my creative drive and passion. My husband suggested I see a professional coach, which I did. I saw two actually. The first was a kind and insightful lady, leaning more towards full-blown therapist, who helped me clear some key personal ground. She didn't help me professionally however, so I decided to see an ex-client of mine who had recently become a personal coach.

Kyle followed a method developed by renowned coach Bruce Schneider whose underlying philosophy is based on seven levels of energy within which, according to Mr. Schneider, all of us operate both personally and professionally every day. During the time I worked with Kyle I underwent evaluations and we discussed my own personal levels of energy in relation to the way I was navigating through life. The sessions were helpful and productive, and of most value was his guidance in pinpointing my aspirations, creating goals of action and holding me accountable to those goals and to myself. Through my work with Kyle I realized how much I missed teaching and loved the conceptual aspect of design. Soon after, I landed a dream teaching job and eventually went back to school.

*« I'd like to think I was able, through introspection, to manifest my own professional destiny.*

25. SCHNEIDER, BRUCE D. *ENERGY LEADERSHIP: TRANSFORMING YOUR WORKPLACE AND YOUR LIFE FROM THE CORE*. HOBOKEN, NJ: J. WILEY & SONS, 2008.

During that time, Kyle also suggested I read Schneider's *Energy Leadership* to compliment our work, but I never did. I wasn't in the mood for reading, nor did I want extra input in my life. During our boys' early years, which extended to like five, I felt constant overload, overwhelm and utter exhaustion, evidence of my introverted nature which I now better understand.

Luckily, life has opened up with more room for input, and given the book was on my 'someday' list, this month I decided to read it. Of course, it was awesome. It has easily melded into my explorations and curiosities and will be interesting to analyze side by side all I've read this year. This is how it goes:

In life, there are no real problems, nor real challenges. When we label anything as either or those two things, we are seeing the situation from a fear-based perspective. Everything we ever do, we do either out of love or out of fear. When we are able to transcend a fear-based perspective we open up space for opportunity, or as the Zanders may have said, possibility.

*« This philosophy was life-changing for me. I believe it's a beautiful and empowering way to see the world.»*

“WE DO NOT SEE THINGS AS THEY ARE.  
WE SEE THEM AS WE ARE”

— THE TALMUD

**Consciousness**, according to Mr. Schneider, is “the level of your self-awareness, how fully you realize your true self, as opposed to the self you have been 'trained' to see and accept. True Self is unlimited and perfect. Your level of consciousness is determined by how you see yourself, the world around you, the people in your life, and life in general.”

*« I'm not entirely sure how this is assessed and/or measured. Are we capable of true consciousness, especially as it relates to Ornstein's philosophy of the flawed mind? At this point in time I'd argue, no.*

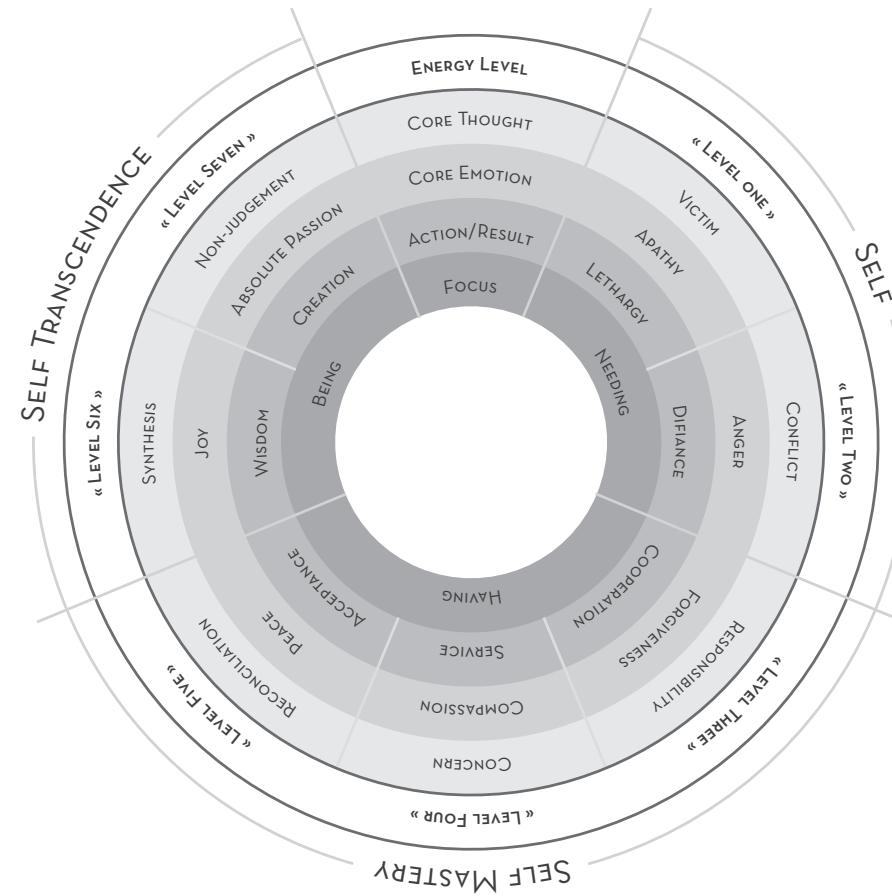


“ALTHOUGH YOUR WORLD IS TOTALLY REAL TO YOU,  
THERE’S NO ‘REALITY’ TO IT, EXCEPT HOW YOU  
PERSONALLY DEFINE WHAT YOU SEE.”

**Energy**, aside from being the pivotal force behind our *output potential*, is directly related to, and affected by, our level of self awareness. It can be either anabolic or catabolic. *Anabolic energy* is positive and constructive, while *catabolic energy* is mostly negative and destructive. This idea is really interesting. According to Schneider, “when the mind perceives a threat, anabolic hormones, such as dopamine, decrease, while catabolic hormones, such as cortisol and adrenalin, increase.” This hormonal shift, on a short-term basis, can give us an edge on potentially dangerous situations. Sustained long term however, as with stress, it can be dangerous and detrimental to our whole system. In essence, and in line with my other reading resources, *when our mind is in survival mode it is susceptible to automatic and default responses which we can neither control nor easily steer in a positive direction*. What’s interesting is that both types of hormonal releases are triggered by thoughts or, as Ornstein would have noted, by Mind LTD. Thus, thoughts are also either catabolic or anabolic. Throughout our lives, and because of the automated nature of our mental processes, we learn to react to life situations anabolically or catabolically (nature or nurture?). These ‘default tendencies’ generate and make up our energy.

**Energy Leadership** focuses on “addressing the energy behind the core thoughts that either drive people forward or hold them back.” It proposes methods to positively influence and shift one’s energy and therefore also one’s self-perception and experience of the world.

Schneider’s process, parting from the key terms defined above, consists of understanding and utilizing what he calls the **Energetic Self-Perception Chart**. This chart describes seven levels of energy within which we exist and which ultimately make up our consciousness. *While all of us shift up and down the scale of levels each day, we have what Schneider calls an Average Resonating Level of Energy. This is literally the average at which we operate, our default energy, and a strong indicator of our potential for success.* (Quick note: I was a bit bummed this book was so “corporate”. But I guess after all it is the theoretical foundation for this guy’s professional coaching methods. Regardless, I think it’s smart and broadly applicable.)



*I decided to redesign this chart, and it took me forever, but I don't feel it is any better than theirs. I will have to readdress another time.*

CORE THOUGHT:  
**VICTIM**

CORE FEELING/EMOTION:  
**APATHY**

ACTION/RESULT:  
**LETHARGY**

**LEVEL ONE**

Level One hinges on *apathy*. People living within this level of energy live their lives just going through the motions, feeling as victims within others’ power, believing they do not deserve better. They are generally lethargic, with little self-awareness, self-esteem, or faith. Within this energy level, which is entirely catabolic, one cannot see past the ‘self’.

*Dissecting this system of quantifying energy has left me with a greater sense of awareness regarding my own state of being. It's incredible how difficult it is to attain self mastery, let alone self transcendence no matter what method you decide to subscribe to.*

## LEVEL TWO

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| CORE THOUGHT:         | Level Two stems from <i>anger</i> and is thus <b>the conflict energy</b> . “It is based on thoughts of conflict, as well as emotions and feelings of fear, anger, and anxiety. This results in resentment, retribution, and defiance. Level 2 is all about control or, more specifically, attempting to control others.” Together with level one, this energy is completely need- and fear-based. According to Schneider, <b>about 85% of all human beings spend most of their life focusing on problems, rather than solutions, and shifting back and forth between victim-passivity and anger-conflict</b> . Those operating within level two energy have negative feelings about the world and believe that in order for them to win, someone else must lose. It is important to note that <b>true conflict can only occur only when those involved are acting catabolically and are at the same level of energy</b> . If just one person responds anabolically, conflict is defused. |
| <b>CONFLICT</b>       |  |
| CORE FEELING/EMOTION: |  |
| <b>ANGER</b>          |  |
| ACTION/RESULT:        |  |
| <b>DEFIANCE</b>       |  |

I have to take a second to be introspective here given ‘conflict’ has been a main drive in my studies this semester. I am an avid conflict-avoider. I abhor conflict, specifically, one-on-one vocal conflict. It is an energy level at which I do not like to exist, whether it’s in relation to me or others. **When I experience anger, it remains within** until I am able to shift into a different energy level to work it out.

**The Four Energy Blocks.** A block is anything that holds us back. It can be externally influenced or internally perceived. “Usually though, the external reflects the internal, so we could say that 95% of the time, it’s internal factors that hold us back.

The four blocks are:

1. The *limiting beliefs* that you hold
2. The false *assumptions* from the past that you bring to today
3. The false *interpretations* that you make
4. The fear that you are not good or deserving enough, the inner critic, or what is sometimes called a *gremlin*”

For Schneider, there is a marked difference among these blocks, which I find really interesting. While *limiting beliefs* are usually created from what we’ve been told by others, *assumptions* come from personal experience. For this reason, assumptions

## LEVEL THREE

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| CORE THOUGHT:         | Level Three, rising beyond unconscious fear, is all about cooperation, forgiveness, and responsibility. It is the first anabolic energy level and is positive and productive.  |
| <b>RESPONSIBILITY</b> |  |
| CORE FEELING/EMOTION: | Within this level of energy the focus steers away from needing into a more aware realm of having. It is the realm within which we stop focusing on problems & begin seeing opportunity and solutions. Increased consciousness is displayed not only towards the self, but also towards others. This shift breeds empathy and the desire to contribute, make a difference, and be part of something bigger. |
| <b>FORGIVENESS</b>    |  |
| ACTION/RESULT:        |  |
| <b>COOPERATION</b>    |  |

## LEVEL FOUR

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| CORE THOUGHT:         | Level Four brings about a heart connection and is focused on true and deep compassion for others. “It involves caring about another person so much that you consider their welfare before your own.” Level Four hinges on emotional intelligence which, according to Schneider, is an important factor in raising our consciousness. The more aware we are of our emotions, the better we can express them. |
| <b>CONCERN</b>        |   |
| CORE FEELING/EMOTION: |   |
| <b>COMPASSION</b>     |   |
| ACTION/RESULT:        |   |
| <b>SERVICE</b>        |   |

“WE CREATE OUR EMOTIONS AND CAN RECREATE THEM ANY TIME WE CHOOSE.”

*Easier said than done. ^*

are more internalized and carry more emotional weight. This correlates to my brief study of semiotics, specifically to Charles Peirce’s definition of an index as a symbol: From sensory, physical experiences, we create meaning which is difficult to part from in later, similar circumstances. *Interpretations* are created as we make meaning of others’ behavior. Problems arise when we neglect to consider alternate motives or perspectives, and when our interpretations are based on **fear**. All of us, at some point, are victims to our own self-doubt, which is usually fueled by the relentless inner critic. Much of what fuels these *gremlins* is very personal and unique to our own life experience and thus carries the most emotional charge. Deep-rooted within our being, this block is the most difficult to overcome.

## LEVEL FIVE

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**CORE THOUGHT:** **RECONCILIATION** Level Five thrives on opportunity. It is a highly positive and invigorating energy level within which judgements are released as mere subjective products of the mind. People at Level Five are optimistic and believe there is a purpose for anything that happens. This gives them a greater sense of control over their experiences and an ensuing feeling of inner peace. I find it interesting that both ‘conflict’ and ‘peace’ are central ideas within Schneider’s system and I wonder, are these two especially important energy levels for me to understand? I am generally a very optimistic person and a strong believer that everything does happen for a reason. Perhaps I should make a mental note to tally when/where/how I experience these energy levels each day. *Level five sounds very much like the Zanders’ “Being the Board” practice in *The Art of Possibility*. Actually, it’s like the premise of the entire book. It also sounds like the result of understanding the flawed nature of our mind.*

**CORE FEELING/EMOTION:** **PEACE**

**ACTION/RESULT:** **ACCEPTANCE**

## LEVEL SIX

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**CORE THOUGHT:** **SYNTHESIS** Level Six is the start of the third ring of awareness within which one is able to transcend the nuances of the ‘smaller self’ to give way to the ‘greater self’. It is characterized by synthesis “which is *the blending together of people and everything else as one*”.

**CORE FEELING/EMOTION:** **JOY**

**ACTION/RESULT:** **WISDOM** This is kind of a funny statement because it was my conceptual kicking off point during my first semester at VCFA and is apparently still relevant. How do I keep coming back to this? Back then, a year and a half ago, I wanted to say that I think we’re all ONE because I loved Alan Watts’ theories in *The Book*. Here, Schneider says that recognizing that we’re all one is a high and anabolic energy level, one filled with wisdom and joy, one I’d like to sustain within myself.

## LEVEL SEVEN

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**CORE THOUGHT:** **NON-JUDGEMENT** The last level, Level Seven, is intangible. Within it things don’t, and will never exist. There is no grad school or thesis, there are no students or professors, no words are spoken, no concepts conceived. At this level the three-dimensional world as we think we know it is undefinable. Pure vibration of energy is the only thing that truly exists. “Level Seven is an energy that cannot be sustained; it can only be tapped into from time to time.” I believe this is beautiful and completely attainable, with mindful intent, practice, and lots of hard work.

**CORE FEELING/EMOTION:** **ABSOLUTE PASSION**

**ACTION/RESULT:** **CREATION**

“CONSCIOUSNESS IS THE  
PROCESS OF AWARENESS,  
AND THE AWARENESS OF  
THE PROCESS.”

*Which is in a sense saying that consciousness is knowing that we know. Descartes would agree. But in accord with Ornstein, if we are not our minds, but our minds produce our consciousness, does consciousness then hold any validity? Or is our consciousness in part influenced or created by something else beside our mind? Is that where we create room for the beautiful/sacred unknown?  
Or is this void the very reason we want something beyond us to exist so badly?*

ART & DESIGN

# PLAY WITH MATERIAL

ART & DESIGN

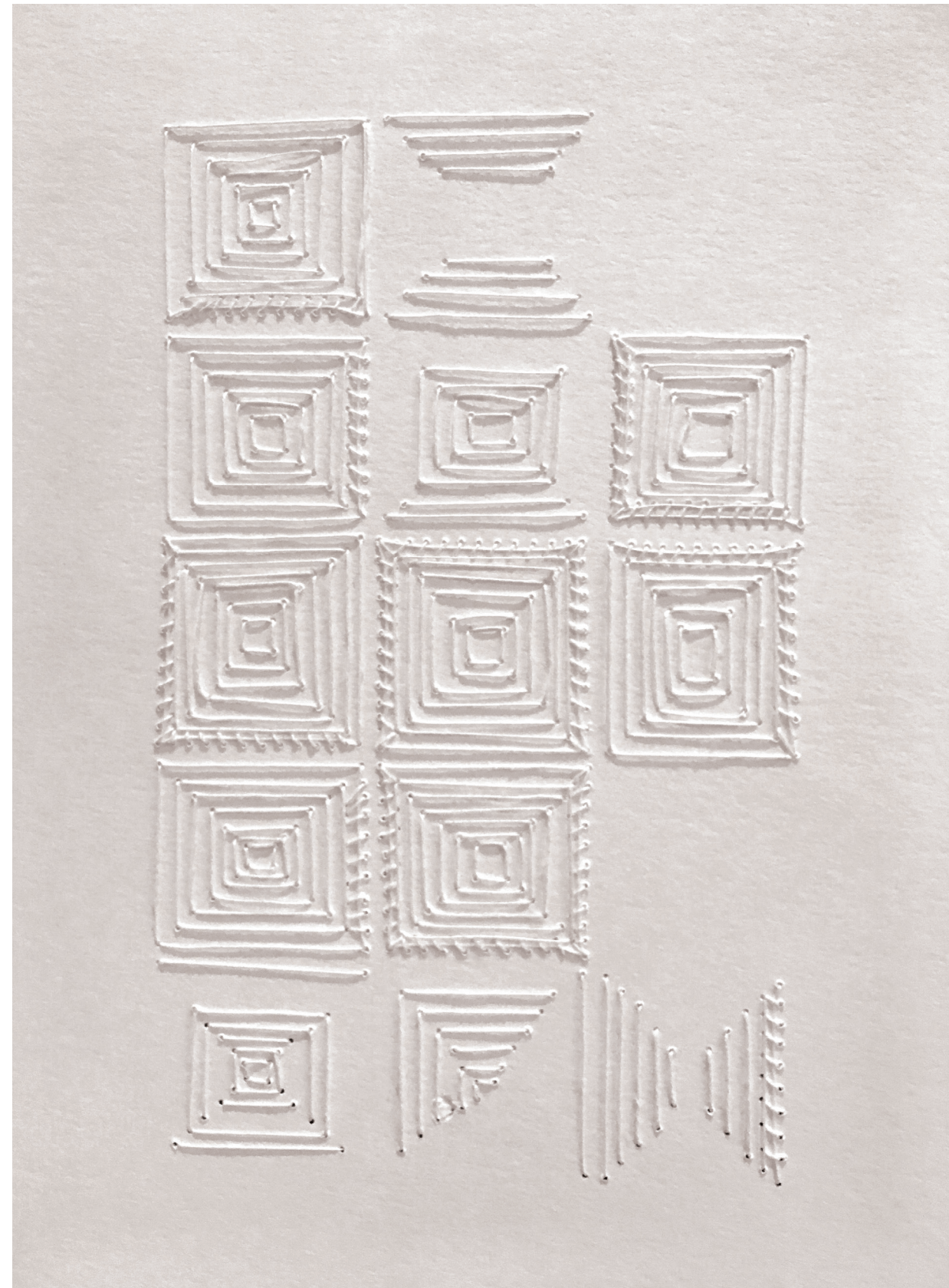
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*My first project entailed hand sewing book-binding thread into watercolor paper to create an abstract pattern. As the pattern grows out from the center of the page, the squares begin to shed their sides. This, in my head, eludes to the idea "Let go of the edges of yourself." It's not finished, I envision each square housing a tiny pin in its center, until the pin no longer has surrounding sides.*

This month I focused a little bit more on my physical making. I continued working with paper, extending my exploration to the use and manipulation of paper thread.

Within this making, I remain like a deer in headlights though, waiting for something to happen, anxious, uncertain. I struggle with the joy I find in detailed and repetitive craft work versus this hovering and seemingly crucial need to convey a groundbreaking and impactful story. When I sit and play with paper, I do not feel like I am practicing graphic design. Nor do I want to. When I sit at the computer and tweak type, I feel like I am a practicing graphic design, which I enjoy. Should they converge? Do I have to bring greater meaning to what I feel is beautiful movement and pattern? Do I have to say something?

Well, this month I did not. I followed your advice Natalia, and viewed my making as a creative outlet, unrelated to my studies. I can't say the making is in fact completely unrelated. There's definite influence of thought, but it's not obvious nor overt. It's me digesting ideas in abstract form and playing with material.





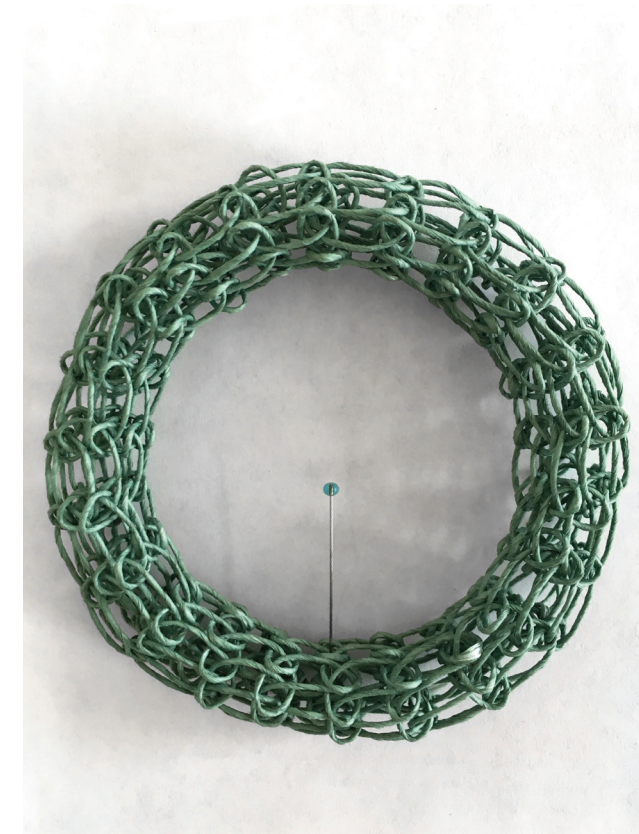
*Exploration of 'edges' and 'threads'.*

*Book-binding thread hand-sewn into  
cold-pressed watercolor paper.*

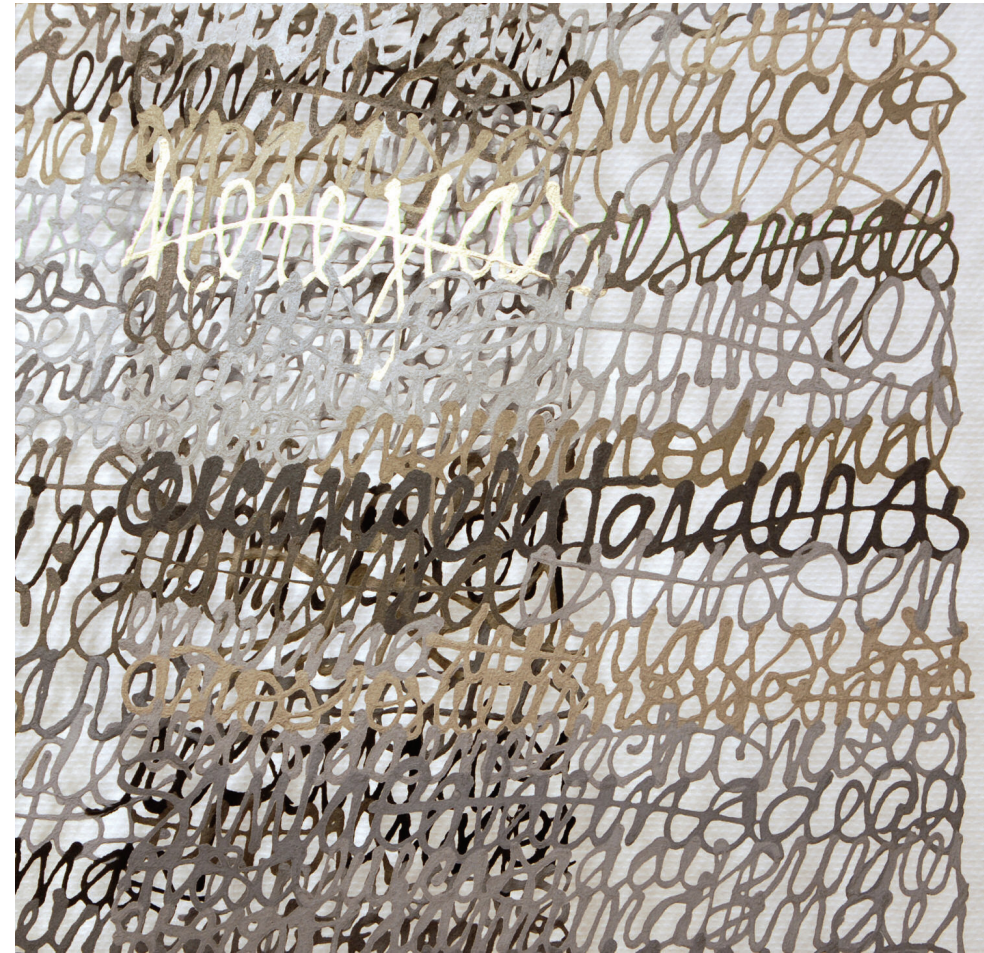
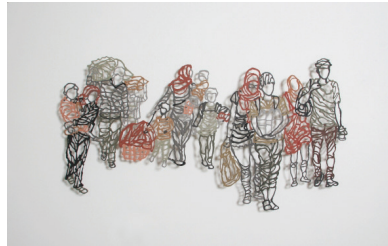
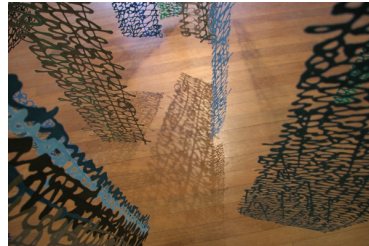


*Still thinking about threads, both physically and metaphorically, I found a neat DIY kit with which one can make paper twine cuffs. These are easy and pretty simple to make.*

*As these sat on my desk one day, and I made an accidentally flawed test print of a page in this packet, I placed a cuff on the page and realized it may be interesting to experiment with its meaning. I will try this next month.*



*I was hugely inspired by Colombian artist Miriam Londoño this month. I find her paper work unbelievable beautiful. She draws with paper pulp making the end result both medium and message. Her work is calligraphic and sculptural.*







*I decided to see if I could also draw with pulp. Using recycled holiday envelopes and everything I learned about papermaking last semester. I went ahead and failed in an epic way while making a mess of my kitchen. I have contacted Miriam in hopes of getting some tips and learning her techniques. I also reached out to a local paper artist. Hopefully I can make this happen next month.*





*My last unfinished project, inspired by artist duo Stallman, entails cutting a large sheet of canvas paper into half-inch strips which are then molded into fluid organic shapes. These shapes seem to be my comfort zone. I love how they feel to me, despite their abstract nature.*

*So, while I love how this looks, it's not an original nor an authentic idea. I struggle with this. When I find art that I love, I want and need to imitate it to understand the process, but of course the outcome is never truly mine. When does that transition happen?*