

Free Will is a Mirage

by [Armando Simón](#) (June 2025)



Second Version of Triptych (Francis Bacon, 1944)

We have to believe in free will. We have no choice. –Isaac Bashevis Singer

There have been several arguments which have been debated *ad nauseam* over the centuries among scholars: nature vs nurture, is there a god, what is the ethical life, etc. One of the eternal arguments among scholars is whether people have free will. Regardless of which side one takes on the last question, deep down both sides of the question believe that free will is indeed a fact. I would like to take the opposite side, namely, that we do not have free will and, furthermore, I truly believe it. Unlike other philosophical questions, I have facts and logic to prove my point.

A differentiation must be clarified from the start: probability and certainty. In the former, I can state there is

a high probability that any person, or specifically person X, when presented with a certain stimulus, will behaviorally react a certain way. Or, conversely, a low probability.

That is, if A, then B.

70% probability, 90% probability, 10% probability, depending on the variables (i.e., details) involved.

For example, in the waiting room of a doctor, if I give a deep yawn, or several yawns, there is a 90% probability that someone else will yawn (yawn contagion, incidentally, can also be found in the great apes). Depending on circumstances involved in a specific individual, even if he/she does not want to yawn, he will yawn. Even twice. Or thrice, while laughing about his/her inability to prevent it.

If I thoroughly know the personality of person X, and I know him/her to have a short temper or cannot stand criticism, saying certain things will almost certainly trigger a temperamental outburst.

University students in Western Europe, who have gone through the gauntlet of leftist indoctrination, when asked what is capitalism will respond that it is the exploitation of people. And the more ignorant they are of the subject, the more certain they will speak.

They will even believe they came to that conclusion on their own.

In America, ask a brainwashed college student to analyze his/her thoughts, and you see how much they are lacking in free will. They think those beliefs they hold were developed on their own by them, and not installed. For instance, an intensely liberal student will proclaim that Donald Trump is a racist against blacks, with a certainty as deep as saying the sun is in the sky. Yet, ask that person for *one* single time that Trump made a racist statement and you can almost see his

brain short circuit and smoke come out of his ears. *Nevertheless*, afterwards he will still insist that Trump is a racist, though he cannot “remember,” actually cite, one single instance. You may also encounter another student, a female, who will proclaim with indignation that men have more rights in society than women. When asked, what *specific* rights they have that she does not have, you will either see her mouth soundlessly opening or closing like a gasping fish, or she will drown you in a torrent of general verbiage about “the patriarchy” benefitting men without giving a *specific* response.

An example of low probability is when you ask a person for directions to a certain place or street, and he/she does not know. Many will say they do not know. But there are always some who give tentative directions, even though the person asked is ignorant of the location.

Go to Las Vegas to the gambling casinos and you will see people who are deficient in “free will.” They will lose all their money.

The above illustrations involve probability that B will follow A. There are also illustrations of B response definitely following stimulus A.

Psychologists have run hundreds of experiments that prove determinism. They have even developed personality tests and IQ tests that are valid and reliable. One has only to consider the conditioning experiments of Ivan Pavlov that began with dogs, but are equally applicable to humans. Or the instrumental conditioning experiments of B. F. Skinner (whose applications can be seen in Las Vegas slot machines).

If I sneak up behind someone and fire off a gun into the air, the unsuspecting person in front of me will invariably flinch.

Addicts are an example of persons who have no free will. The same with alcoholics.

Still not convinced? Have you gone on a diet? If you actually lost weight, did you continue on the diet? So much for free will.

A person who has a phobia of spiders or lizards will physically and behaviorally respond in a predicted manner. Always.

All this makes perfect sense and is something that everyone knows. A person knows how his son or wife behaves and can easily anticipate their behavior. The reason you married a particular person is because you knew that person, that is, you could predict what his/her behavior was, what they liked, etc. (unless they were deceptive during courtship). Confronted with A, you knew what B (his/her response) would be. Likewise, we all have close friends whom we know and can anticipate how they will act.

Perhaps the best evidence of determinism and lack of free will are the studies of twins. To choose one pair of twins: separated at birth and raised by different families, upon being discovered in adulthood, they were found to have identical traits at an unnerving level. They both married women named Linda; upon divorce, they remarried to women named Betty. They gave the same name to their sons. They had dogs with the same name. Both had similar jobs. Both vacationed in the same place. Both drove the same type of car. Both were good at math and woodworking. Their medical histories were the same. When asked to draw a picture, they drew the same thing. They had similar hobbies. They had a habit of biting their fingernails. After they met, one would start a sentence and the other would finish it.

The same is true for triplets (watch the film [*Three Identical Strangers*](#)).

Recently, I read a [book](#) by a cosmologist. He wrote that, as a adult, once he reconnected with his father who had been out of

his life since early childhood, he was flabbergasted that his father had done work in the very same scientific specialty as himself. Elsewhere, there was a TV program on a storm chaser who was killed in a tornado; he had been fascinated by the weather all his life. In the show, his wife mentioned that their son would become mesmerized by clouds, staring at them for long periods.

Along similar lines, my son has inherited his mother's personality whereas my daughter has inherited mine (I feel sorry for her).

This is also commonplace in animals. Different dog breeds are known to have different inherent behaviors. A [Russian](#) scientist who was exiled to Siberia to work with foxes bred together those that had relatively less avoidance behavior until he succeeded to breed foxes that were tame. I have seen videos of cats being amazingly intelligent, one showing a feline trying to open a locked door by repeatedly turning the handle from a nearby platform. Failing that, he turned the lock and twisted open the door. But the door was blocked by a box at the floor. The cat jumped to the floor, pushed the box out of the way and walked out. By contrast, my cats are retards.

The same is true with people. Something that sends liberals into hysterics is the scientific fact that intelligence is inherited.

Variables

Earlier, I mentioned variables and how they will influence a person's behavior. The reason it appears that there is free will is because daily there are a myriad of influences on a person and those determinants jockey for eminence: You are hungry. You would like to eat a thick steak at restaurant Z. But, variables come into play: do you have enough money to pay

for the meal, do you have enough money to pay for the meal and have enough left over for other expenses that week, how far is the restaurant, do you need to dress up, do you want to wait long during lunchtime waiting for a table to become available, are you really that hungry, other restaurants are available, is eating closer to home more convenient, are you hungry a bit hungry or starving, will you be comfortable eating alone, would it be simpler to eat at home?

Nevertheless, Mr. Free Will insists that he has freedom of choice. He will tell you that every morning he stops at a local bakery to order the same pastry and coffee, but to prove he has free will today he will choose a different pastry or skip breakfast altogether. The new variable intruding into the scenario is a desire to prove he has choice. But, when he resumes his life and forgets the challenge, he will resume his usual predictive pattern.

I used to go to Starbucks at least once a week, but once the company started to push homosexuality in customers' faces at the local level, my purchases fell over 95%.

But there is a limit to a particular variable's power. Here is a true story. Old people are known for persisting in their habits. There are times where I live a heavy rainfall will produce flash floods in parts of the city. An old couple went to their favorite Mexican restaurant for dinner every Saturday, but one day it rained heavily and despite a lot of official warning signs, plus their own eyes, they set out to the restaurant and drowned before they got to it. So, one variable (age) superseded another variable (dangerous flood). There was an interplay of variables.

Not having free will translates into one having constraints. Some are obvious, others are subtle. Some are conscious, others subconscious, even self-imposed. If one truly had free will, one would be at the mercy of impulses, thusly: I am at work and get bored, so I leave work for a walk. I pass a fruit

stand and grab some grapes as I pass by. I reach a woman with an ample bottom and I smack her bottom. When I pass a store that has magazines on display, one of which has a picture on the cover of a Florida beach, I go back to my car and head for Tampa.

And this brings me to the variables of neuropsychological and physical effects on "free will." The above is a crude example of someone who has bipolar disorder and is in the manic phase; family members will watch helplessly as their loved ones joyfully act on impulse without any self-control or self-awareness. As for physiological effects, everyone knows that how he feels will affect how he reacts to other people or surroundings. In my case, I am normally emotionally stable and have a lot of patience, but if I'm suffering sustained pain, I will become irritable and snap at others.

But you still disagree with the premise of this essay.

You have free will?

OK, prove it, really prove it.

Don't go to work for a week. and don't give any reason for taking off.

Better yet, marriage is an excellent laboratory for proving the lack of free will ("Are you going out wearing *that?*").

In young couples, there are certain wives who become very anxious if the husbands want to "hang out with the boys." No matter how much the husbands want to be with their male friends, there is a very good probability that he will forego that pleasure in order to keep peace at home and placate the harpy.

I would make the following challenge to Mr. Free Will: If you have a wife who truly loves you and you love her, ignore your anniversary the next time. Don't take her anywhere, buy her a

present, or even mention the anniversary or acknowledge it. *And do so without telling her, or others, the why of your actions (or lack of). Ever.*

I predict you will not do so, Mr. Free Will. 100% probability. And I also predict that, depending on the type of woman she is, in the hypothetical (not realistic) scenario that you do so, Mrs. Free Will will: (a) angrily yell at you, or (b) cry, or (c) give you the Silent Treatment, or (d) withhold sex, or (e) all of the above at varying times and varying intensity.

You know you will not do it, and you know that she will react in that manner.

And if you try to cop out by saying you choose not to take up the challenge, you can lie to yourself all you want to, but no one else will believe this transparent dodge.

Face facts. Free will is a mirage.

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