



The first time I was suggested that free will may be an illusion, I got scared to death. My reply was: "Oh, well, that's just too easy: it justifies (not) doing anything or putting the blame for your own mistakes on God, Fate or the Universe." Throughout history, the **objection to the existence of free will has been met with fierce resistance**. Like anything else, the existence of free will is no postulate. So, why has Western culture ruled out this possibility for most of its history? And why do we all react with anger and anguish at the very suggestion that free will may not exist?

The answer I have given to myself is that the illusion of free will is a basic **psychological defense mechanism** we use to protect ourselves from the painful awareness that not only are we **mortal**, but so are our dear ones – and **mortality is the ultimate proof we have no control over Nature, the World, the Universe and ourselves the way we fool ourselves to have**.

This is why the lack of free will scares us – literally – to *death*, thus having us cling to the soothing illusion that we are able to make free decisions. **We do make decisions, but they are not free – they are limited by our intrinsic limitedness**. The illusion of free will also supports the illusion that making free choices makes us into good or bad people; accordingly, dispelling the illusion of free will would entail dismantling the **ethics of responsibility** at the base of our social system. But this argument, too, is flawed: it doesn't. Even if you are not really free to make **choices** because they are **influenced by physiological and psychological mechanisms you are not in control of**, you still are socially responsible for impinging on someone else's rights. If you understand that **the lack of free will doesn't entail the lack of personal responsibility**, then you will be able to reap its most wonderful fruit: the ability to **forgive** yourself and your fellow human beings for being limited and fallible.

Click on the picture for a **VIDEO** on the Illusion of Free Will