with the naked truth about ourselves. As has already been mentioned, there is a way and it’s not difficult, in fact it’s an extremely effective, exciting and satisfying way of coping.

10. Recognition of the conflict between instinct and intellect as being the cause of the human condition

The underlying protagonists involved in producing the upset state of our human condition of instinct and intellect have been recognised throughout human history in many mythologies, such as in the Garden of Eden story, and also by profound thinkers, as the following six references illustrate.

It should be pointed out that while these quotes recognise the conflict between instinct and intellect as being the cause of the human condition, what science has made possible is the ability to explain WHY this conflict occurred. Description of the elements involved in creating the human condition was not enough, we needed clarifying first-principle explanation, and it is this all-important breakthrough that science has now made possible.

In The Soul of the Ape Eugene Marais, who in the early 1900s was the first person to study primates in their natural habitat, described the emergence of this conflict between humans’ inherited instincts and conscious intellect that is able to understand cause and effect: ‘The great frontier between the two types of mentality is the line which separates non-primate mammals from apes and monkeys. On one side of that line behaviour is dominated by hereditary memory, and on the other by individual causal memory...The phyletic history of the primate soul can clearly be traced in the mental evolution of the human child. The highest primate, man, is born an instinctive animal. All its behaviour for a long period after birth is dominated by the instinctive mentality...As the...individual memory slowly emerges, the instinctive soul becomes just as slowly submerged...For a time it is almost as though there were a struggle between the two’ (written between 1916 and 1936, first pub. 1969, pp.77–79 of 170).

Erich Neumann, an analytical psychologist who has been described as Carl Jung’s most gifted student, recognised the battle and rift between humans’ already established non-understanding, ‘unconscious’, instinctual self and our newly emerging ‘conscious’, intellectual self that led to the denial of and alienation from our original instinctive self or soul in his 1949 book The Origins and History of Consciousness: ‘Whereas, originally, the opposites could function side by side without undue strain and without excluding one another, now, with the development and elaboration of the opposition between conscious and unconscious, they fly apart. That is to say, it is no longer possible for an object to be loved and hated at the same time. Ego and consciousness identify themselves in principle with one side of the opposition and leave the other in the unconscious, either preventing it from coming up at all, i.e., consciously suppressing it, or else repressing it, i.e., eliminating it from consciousness without being aware of doing so. Only deep psychological analysis can then discover the unconscious counterposition’ (p.117 of 493).

Author and explorer Bruce Chatwin made reference to scientist-philosopher Arthur Koestler’s recognition of this extremely upset state arising from the conflict between our instinct and intellect in his 1987 book The Songlines: ‘London, 1970: At a public lecture I listened to Arthur Koestler airing his opinion that the human species was mad. He claimed that, as a result of an inadequate co-ordination between two areas of the brain—the “rational” neocortex and the “instinctual” hypothalamus—Man had somehow acquired the “unique, murderous, delusional streak” that propelled him, inevitably, to murder, to torture and to war.’ Koestler explains his ‘inadequate co-ordination’ theory more fully in the prologue to his 1978 book Janus: A Summing Up, where he states, ‘Thus the brain explosion gave rise to a mentally unbalanced species in which old brain and new brain, emotion and intellect, faith and reason, were
at loggerheads’. It wasn’t, as Koestler suggests, an ‘inadequate co-ordination’ between two areas of our brain that caused the human condition, but the difference in the way genes and nerves process information. Koestler does however recognise the basic elements involved in the conflict of our instinctive self and our rational self and just how upset humans have become.

In the 1950s the American neurologist Paul MacLean developed his theory of ‘the triune brain’ which basically presents the same argument as Koestler that we are a mentally unbalanced species because of an inadequate coordination between our emotional old and cognitive new brain. In his 1973 book *A triune concept of the brain and behaviour* and his 1990 book *The Triune Brain in Evolution: Role in Paleocerebral Functions*, MacLean proposed that our head contains not one but three brains, each originating from a different stage of our evolutionary history. He said there is the inner original reptilian brain comprising the brainstem and cerebellum, which he said tends to be rigid, compulsive and ritualistic, intent on repeating the same behaviours over and over. This brain controls muscles, balance and autonomic functions such as breathing and heartbeat. Then there is the middle ‘limbic’ brain that is prominent in lower mammals, comprising the amygdala, hypothalamus and hippocampus. Derived as he says from survival being dependent on the avoidance of pain and on the repetition of pleasure, MacLean describes the limbic brain as being concerned with emotions and instincts, in particular feeding, fighting, fleeing and sexual behaviour. Then MacLean says there is the outer neo or cerebral cortex brain of higher mammals that is concerned with reason, invention and abstract thought. Although all animals have a neocortex it is relatively small, the exception being primates: in the case of the human primate it is massive, constituting five-sixths of our large brain. Scientists had assumed that the neocortex effectively dominated the brain’s lower levels however MacLean showed that that is not the case, arguing that having originated from separate stages of evolutionary history the three brains remain relatively independent systems. He said that ‘the three evolutionary formations might be imagined as three interconnected biological computers, with each having its own special intelligence, its own subjectivity, its own sense of time and space, and its own memory, motor, and other functions’ (*The Triune Brain in Evolution*, p.9 of 672). As a result of this independence he saw the three brains as frequently being dissociated and in conflict, with the lower limbic system that rules emotions even capable of hijacking the higher mental functions when it so chooses. MacLean saw great danger in the limbic system’s power. He saw the limbic brain as being the seat of our value judgements instead of the more advanced neocortex — it decides whether our higher brain has a ‘good’ idea or not, whether it feels true and right. MacLean explained this concern in *The Triune Brain in Evolution*. Here he documented how during seizures certain epilepsy patients experience what they variously describe as ‘feelings of eternal harmony’, ‘immense joy’, ‘paradisiacal happiness’, ‘feelings completely out of this world’, ‘what it was like to be in heaven’, ‘feelings of familiarity or déjà vu’, ‘feeling of enhanced awareness or the feeling of clairvoyance’, of having ‘clear, bright thoughts’, that ‘seem as if “this is what the world is all about—this is the absolute truth”’ and that their thoughts during these episodes or auras ‘seem so much more important and vital than they do in ordinary living’ (pp.446–449). Referring to such studies of epilepsy where ‘a patient may experience during the aura free-floating, affective feelings of conviction of what is real, true, and important’ MacLean then asks, ‘Does this mean that this primitive [limbic] part of the brain with an incapacity for verbal communication generates the feelings of conviction that we attach to our beliefs, regardless of whether they are true or false? It is one thing to have the anciently derived limbic system to assure us of the authenticity of such things as food or a mate, but where do we stand if we must depend on the mental emanations of this same system for belief in our ideas, concepts, and theories? In the intellectual sphere, it would be as though we are continually tried by a jury that
cannot read or write’ (p.453). In the following extract from an interview recorded in the 1986 book, The Three-Pound Universe, by J. Hooper and D. Teresi, MacLean elaborated, saying ‘While the neo-cortex, with its sensory equipment, surveys the outer world, the limbic system takes its cues from within. It has a loose grip on reality’. The interview went on to describe how ‘In the 1940’s MacLean became fascinated with the “limbic storms” suffered by patients with temporal-lobe epilepsy. “During seizures,” he recalls, “they’d have this Eureka feeling all out of context—feelings of revelation, that this is the truth, the absolute truth, and nothing but the truth.” All on its own, without the reality check of the neo-cortex, the limbic system seems to produce sensations of deja-vu or jamais-vu, sudden memories, waking dreams, messages from God, even religious conversions…“You know what bugs me most about the brain?” MacLean says suddenly. “It’s that the limbic system, this primitive brain that can neither read nor write, provides us with the feeling of what is real, true and important. And this disturbs me, because this inarticulate brain sits like a jury and tells this glorified computer up there, the neo-cortex, ‘Yes, you can believe this’”

...This is fine if it happens to be a bit of food or if it happens to be someone I’m courting - “Yes, its a female, or yes, its a male.” But if its saying, “Yes, its a good idea. Go out and peddle this one,” how can we believe anything?” (pp.48–49). In the electronic book, Laws of Wisdom, the author, who is known only as ‘Ralph’, says the following about the above quote: ‘MacLean warns us not to fall for the soul trap of the middle brain. The limbic system is likely to think anything is true, anything is sacred, and to build thought around desires. His insights underscore the need for thinking to not be the slave of feeling; it should stand in its own right. You shouldn’t leave your higher brain out of the value judgment process anymore than you should leave your emotions out of choosing a mate.’

There are some very important points to make about MacLean’s triune brain interpretation. Firstly, as with Koestler’s interpretation, citing an inadequate coordination between our old and new brain is on the right track but it doesn’t explain our divisive human nature and human condition. It doesn’t reach to the bottom of the problem. The limbic brain and the neocortex do have their ‘own special intelligence’, their ‘own subjectivity’, their ‘own sense of time and space’, and their ‘own memory, motor, and other functions’, and these differences do produce dissociation and conflict between the two brains but what is it about the different intelligences and resulting subjectivities and senses of time and space and memories that actually causes the conflict between these two particular brains? The 3,500 year old story of the Garden of Eden recognises that taking the fruit from the tree of knowledge—becoming conscious—led to our divisive, corrupted, ‘evil’ state. In his 360BC dialogue Phaedrus Plato recognised that we humans struggle with two parts of ourselves, describing our situation thus, ‘let the figure be composite—a pair of winged horses and a charioteer. Now the winged horses and the charioteers of the gods are all of them noble and of noble descent, but those of other races are mixed; the human charioteer drives his in a pair; and one of them is ‘noble and of noble breed, and the other is ignoble and of ignoble breed; and the driving of them of necessity gives a great deal of trouble to him’. In the 1930s the philosopher George Gurdjieff wrote Beelzebub’s Tales to His Grandson, a novel in which he recognised that man is a ‘three-brained being’, that there are distinct factions in our brain, one brain for the spirit (intellect), one for the soul (the emotional instinctive self) and one for the body (the primitive, foundation part of our mind). The outstanding question in all these accounts is what particularly is it about the differences between our old brain and new brain that causes them to be in conflict? Why are they uncoordinated? Humans have known since time immemorial that they have conflicting parts of themselves, in particular a conscience that condemns any divisive behaviour that our conscious mind might decide to practice. People have questioned whether the explanation of the human condition that is being put forward is original, citing others such as Arthur Koestler or Paul MacLean or Plato or
Gurdjieff as having already recognised the instinct versus intellect account that is being put forward here. What is significant is that none of the other accounts have recognised that the cause of the conflict between our instinct and intellect is that instincts are only orientations and that when the insightful nerve-based learning system became sufficiently able to understand cause and effect to wrest management of self from the instincts the instinctive orientations would challenge that take over, leaving the intellect no choice other than to defy that resistance, with that necessary defiance being the explanation for our angry, egocentric and alienated human-condition-afflicted state. Once seen it is an extremely obvious explanation for our human condition, but as biologist Allan Savory said in his 1988 book *Holistic Resource Management*, ‘whenever there has been a major insoluble problem for mankind, the answer, when finally found, has always been very simple’. Before Darwin, the origin of the variety of life on Earth seemed inexplicable—even Darwin, in his book *The Origin of Species*, referred to the question as ‘that mystery of mysteries’. Yet his idea of natural selection was so simple that the scientist Thomas Henry Huxley responded, ‘How extremely stupid of me not to have thought of that!’ (The Life and Letters of Thomas Henry Huxley, Leonard Huxley, Vol.1, 1900, p.170). Again it has to be emphasised that it is actually the development of science that has made clarification of the human condition possible because it is only with the very recent knowledge found about the different ways the gene-based and nerve-based learning systems process information that it becomes possible to explain why a fully conscious mind emerging in the presence of an already established instinctive self would have had to challenge and defy the instinctive self.

The other very important point to make about MacLean’s account of the triune brain is that he fails to recognise the significance of the emotional instinctive self that ‘sits like a jury and tells the neo-cortex, “Yes, you can believe this”’. As has been emphasised, and as will be further illustrated and emphasised throughout this book, humans have lived in denial of the issue of the human condition and any concepts that bring that issue into focus. Later it will be explained that humans obviously aren’t birds and don’t have an instinctive orientation to some migratory flight path and that in our case our instinctive orientation was to behaving in an utterly cooperative, integrative, harmonious way. It will also shortly be explained that integration is the theme or meaning of existence and that once humans did live compliant with this integrative, cooperative purpose, they did live in an ideal, ‘Godly’, ‘heavenly’ state, free of corruption and the agony of the human condition—hence the ‘feelings of eternal harmony’, ‘immense joy’, ‘paradisiacal happiness’, ‘feelings completely out of this world’, ‘what it was like to be in heaven’, ‘feelings of familiarity or déjà vu’, ‘feeling of enhanced awareness or the feeling of clairvoyance’, of having ‘clear, bright thoughts’, that ‘seem as if “this is what the world is all about—this is the absolute truth”’ that epileptic seizures can suddenly give access to through the ‘fifty feet of solid concrete’ alienation (that R.D. Laing acknowledged) which blocks ‘normal’, human-condition-denying humans’ access to this ecstatic state. (The ‘Resignation’ chapter in *A Species In Denial* explains at length how such alienation-busting ecstatic experiences, such as those which people have in so-called ‘near-death experiences’ and in these epileptic episodes, occurs.) Far from our limbic brain being a ‘soul trap’ that has no ‘grip on reality’ and which we have to avoid being a ‘slave’ to, our instinctive self or soul’s conscience is the only thing that has saved humans from living out their upset anger, egocentricity and alienation to the full! As for our instinctive self or soul not being able to read or write or understand language, it can still feel if a behaviour is selfish or aggressive—after all we weren’t initially adapted to understanding how to behave cooperatively, only to the effects of behaving cooperatively. MacLean’s inability to properly interpret what he is observing and above all to reach the deeper understanding of why there has been conflict between our instinct and intellect is
due to the human condition, to humans’ deep denial of any truths that bring the issue of the human condition into focus. Humans are now so alienated that it is almost as though they have to experience an epileptic fit, or other equivalent alienation-busting experience, to access the truth. Indeed, it will be described throughout this book how the alienated mind is absolutely dedicated to not getting to the truth.

To return to other examples of people who have recognised the conflict between instinct and intellect. In a bid to explain humans’ corrupted state and associated loss of sensitivity to the world around us Rob Schultheis, in his 1985 book Bone Games, summarised American psychologist Julian Jaynes’ concept of the bicameral mind: ‘One semi-plausible theory is Julian Jaynes’s idea of the bicameral mind [see Julian Jaynes, The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind, 1976]. According to Jaynes, humankind was once possessed of a mystical, intuitive kind of consciousness, the kind we today would call “possessed”; modern consciousness as we know it simply did not exist. This prelogical mind was ruled by, and dwelled in, the right side of the brain, the side of the brain that is now subordinate. The two sides of the brain switched roles, the left becoming dominant, about three thousand years ago, according to Jaynes; he refers to the biblical passage (Genesis 3:5) in which the serpent promises Eve that “ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil”. Knowing good and evil killed the old radiantly innocent self; this old self reappears from time to time in the form of oracles, divine visitations, visions, etc.—see Muir, Lindbergh, etc.—but for the most part it is buried deep beneath the problem-solving, prosaic self of the brain’s left hemisphere. Jaynes believes that if we could integrate the two, the “god-run” self of the right hemisphere and the linear self of the left, we would be truly superior beings.’

It wasn’t a switching of dominance from the more lateral and imaginative right side of our brain to the more sequential, logical left side of our brain that caused the human condition, but rather the difference in the way genes and nerves process information. Nevertheless Jaynes, like Koestler and MacLean, does bravely recognise the basic elements in the conflict of our intuitive instinctive self or soul and our more recent cognitive, conscious self.

In his 1974 book He: Understanding Masculine Psychology, Robert A. Johnson described the agony of adolescents having to resign themselves to a life of denial of the unconfrontable issue of the human condition. In doing so Johnson recognised the ‘unconscious perfection’ of the pre-conscious ‘Eden’ state that humans had to suffer the ‘pain’ of leaving in order to eventually achieve ‘a conscious reconciliation of the inner and outer’ worlds. He wrote: ‘It is painful to watch a young man become aware that the world is not just joy and happiness, to watch the disintegration of his childlike beauty, faith, and optimism. This is regrettable but necessary. If we are not cast out of the Garden of Eden, there can be no heavenly Jerusalem...According to tradition, there are potentially three stages of psychological development for a man. The archetypal pattern is that one goes from the unconscious perfection of childhood, to the conscious imperfection of middle life, to conscious perfection of old age. One moves from an innocent wholeness, in which the inner world and the outer world are united, to a separation and differentiation between the inner and outer worlds with an accompanying sense of life’s duality, and then, hopefully, at last to satori or enlightenment, a conscious reconciliation of the inner and outer once again in harmonious wholeness...we have to get out of the Garden of Eden before we can even start for the heavenly Jerusalem, even though they are the same place. The man’s first step out of Eden into the pain of duality gives him his Fisher King wound...Alienation is the current term for it’ (pp.10-11 of 97). (The ‘Fisher King’ is a character in the great European legend of King Arthur and his knights of the round table.)

Other references to the battle between our instinct and intellect having caused our upset state of the human condition will be included throughout the rest of this book however here is one more for this main collection. It is an extract from a play by the
16th century English parliamentarian and author Fulke Greville: ‘Oh wearisome Condition of Humanity! Borne under one Law, to another bound: Vainely begot, and yet forbidden vanity, Created sicke, commanded to be sound: What meaneth Nature by these diverse Lawes? Passion and Reason, selfe-division cause’; (Mustapha, c. 1594–96). As emphasised, while a conflict between our instincts/ ‘passion’ and our intellect/ ‘reason’ has long been recognised in mythologies and in the writings of some exceptionally honest thinkers, it is only science’s discoveries in the last century about the different ways genes and nerves process information that at last allows us to answer Greville’s all-important question, ‘What meaneth Nature by these diverse Lawes?’—what caused the conflicting situation?

Greville is right when he said there were ‘Lawes’ involved in the conflict and while these laws don’t explain the conflict they are relevant in understanding how extremely upset by the conflict between our instinct and intellect we humans became. To explain the involvement of ‘Lawes’ raises the next issue to be looked at of what was humans’ original instinctive orientation because, as mentioned, it obviously wasn’t to a flight path such as birds have. The answer to this question is that our instinctive self was perfectly orientated to the law of integrative, cooperative meaning, which means that when we became conscious and defied our instinctive orientation and became upset, namely angry, egocentric and alienated, that divisive response then attracted extra criticism from our particular instinctive orientation making us doubly upset. There is much physics and biology to be explained before the compounding effect our particular instinctive orientation had on our upset behaviour is described however what will be revealed when that description is given in Section 26 is that our situation was much, much more frustrating than Adam Stork’s, and we can see that his was frustrating enough.

11. But what was humans’ original instinctive orientation?

Of course humans aren’t birds with an instinctive orientation to a flight path, nevertheless we must have had our particular instinctive orientation to the world we were living in prior to becoming fully conscious which must, to a significant degree, still exist within us. All animals have an instinctive self and so do we. Carl Jung termed humans’ common, shared-by-all instincts ‘the collective unconscious’, as the following quote makes clear: ‘Jung regards the unconscious mind as not only the repository of forgotten or repressed memories, but also of racial memories. This is reasonable enough when we remember the definition of instinct as racial memory’ (International University Society’s Reading Course and Biographical Studies, Vol.6, c, 1940). The question then is what was our species’ original instinctive orientation?

While we humans have an undeniable capacity for brutality, hatred and aggression—which we can now understand is our upset state—it is also true that we have an enormous capacity for love, kindness and compassion. It is further clear that we have an inbuilt awareness that such kind, considerate and caring behaviour is good and to be aspired to—after all, how could we have a sense of guilt, shame and recrimination about unkind thoughts and actions unless some deeper intrinsic part of ourselves felt at odds with such behaviour? The fact that we have called our born-with, instinctive awareness of what we have termed ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behaviour our ‘moral’ sense, and its ‘voice’, or expression from within us, our ‘conscience’, is indicative of this.

This moral sense, this inclination to be caring and considerate of others, amounts to a social conscience. It is a capacity, in situations where the need arises, to behave altruistically, to put the welfare of others, ultimately of our community, above concern for our own welfare—such as when we are prepared to volunteer to fight and, if necessary, die for our country in war.