



Location

file:///C:/Diaries/index.html

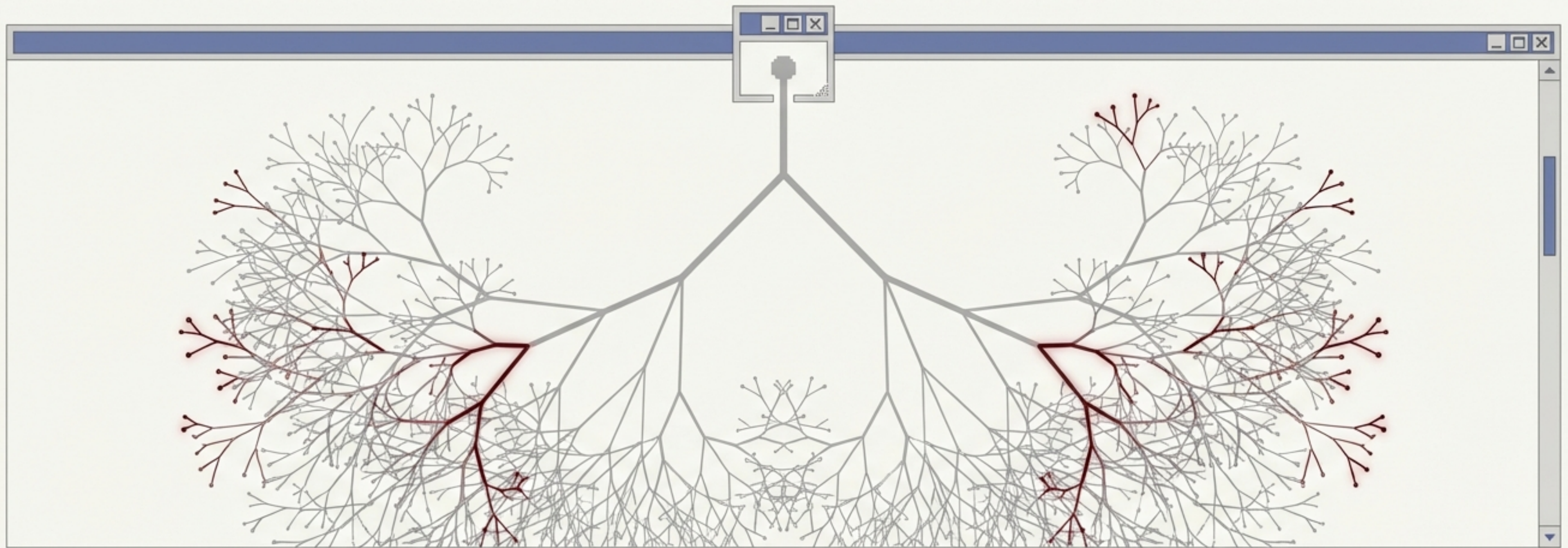
**In 1996, at the dawn of the public web, a philosopher in Brighton began a diary.**

**"I decide I'm going to keep a diary."  
- David Pearce, 1 April 1996.**

---

What follows is a curated journey through the personal diaries of **David Pearce** from 1996-2008. These entries capture the genesis of a radical philosophical project, a mind grappling with the deepest questions of existence, and a unique snapshot of early internet culture—all from a small flat in Lower Rock Gardens.





**The philosopher's first principle was not a premise, but a problem: the reality of suffering.**

"By far my greatest dread in life... is that (some variant of) the Everett interpretation of Quantum Mechanics is true. This is because if it's correct, then there are googolplexes of branches of the Universal Wave Function with things going on in them far worse than, say, Auschwitz." - 16 April 1996

"We may ask with incredulity, 'Why Didn't We Bomb The Death Camps?' while our own mini-Auschwitz's of murder and torment are re-enacting its horrors up and down the country." - 20 April 1996



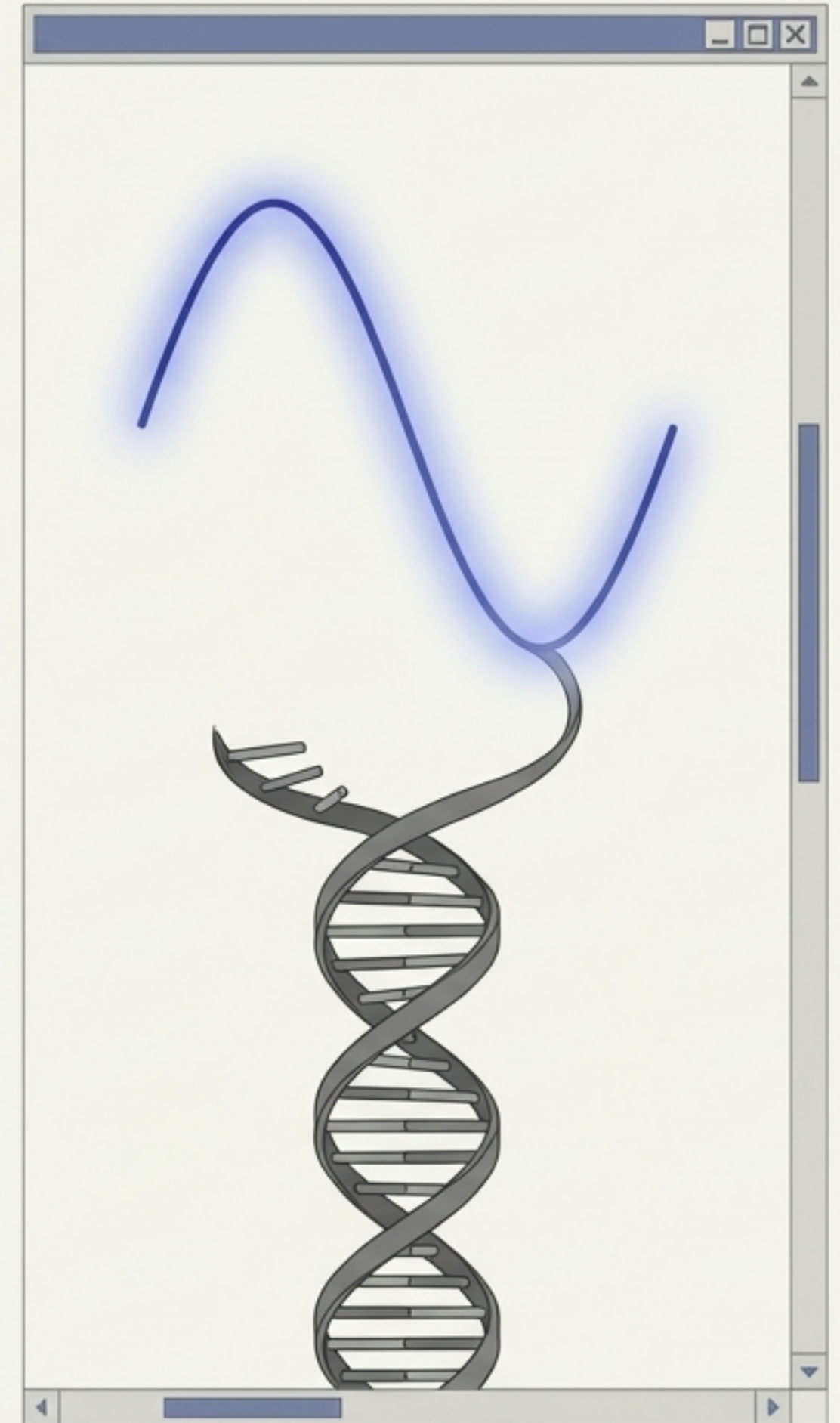
# The proposed solution is a bio-technical project of unprecedented ambition.

"HedWeb's expressed wish to contribute, however marginally, to 'eradicating the biological substrates of aversive experience' sounds tough-minded and austere enough, I hope, not to alienate the more robust sort of net-surfer right from the outset." - 22 April 1996

"The capacity to undergo any form of aversive experience will be treated as a genetic disorder. Alas the post-Darwinian prospect of invincible life-long happiness is still some way off." - 4 January 1998

## The Hedonistic Imperative

A moral and technological project to abolish all forms of suffering and malaise in all sentient life. It proposes using advanced biotechnology—including genetic engineering, nanotechnology, and sophisticated psychopharmacology—to replace the biology of pain with 'gradients of genetically pre-programmed life-long bliss.'





# The laboratory was his own mind; the tools were a 'witches' brew' of psychoactive compounds.

'On any particular pharmacological regimen, it takes a while before I discover who and what I'm going to be. Strictly speaking, one can make only an informed guess in advance... My drug-catalysed lineage is full of failed identities.'

- 25 January 1998

## Personal Regimen (1998)

"I aim for pretty much complete MAO-b inhibition with 10 mg daily of selegiline (l-deprenyl) and perhaps 80% MOA-a inhibition with 300 mg moclobemide... I wash it down with 30mg of DHEA and the usual witches' brew of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants."

- 3 January 1998

## Speculation & Concern (1996)

"I have become increasingly anxious about the effects on the quality of people's personal relationships of selective serotonin re-uptake blockers... Prozac and its friends can radically change these interdependencies. This is great if it means an (emotionally or physically) battered woman is at last enabled to leave an abusive spouse. But it can prove tragic and disastrous in other, far more benign contexts." - 24 April 1996

DOPAMINE

SYNAPTIC  
CLEFT

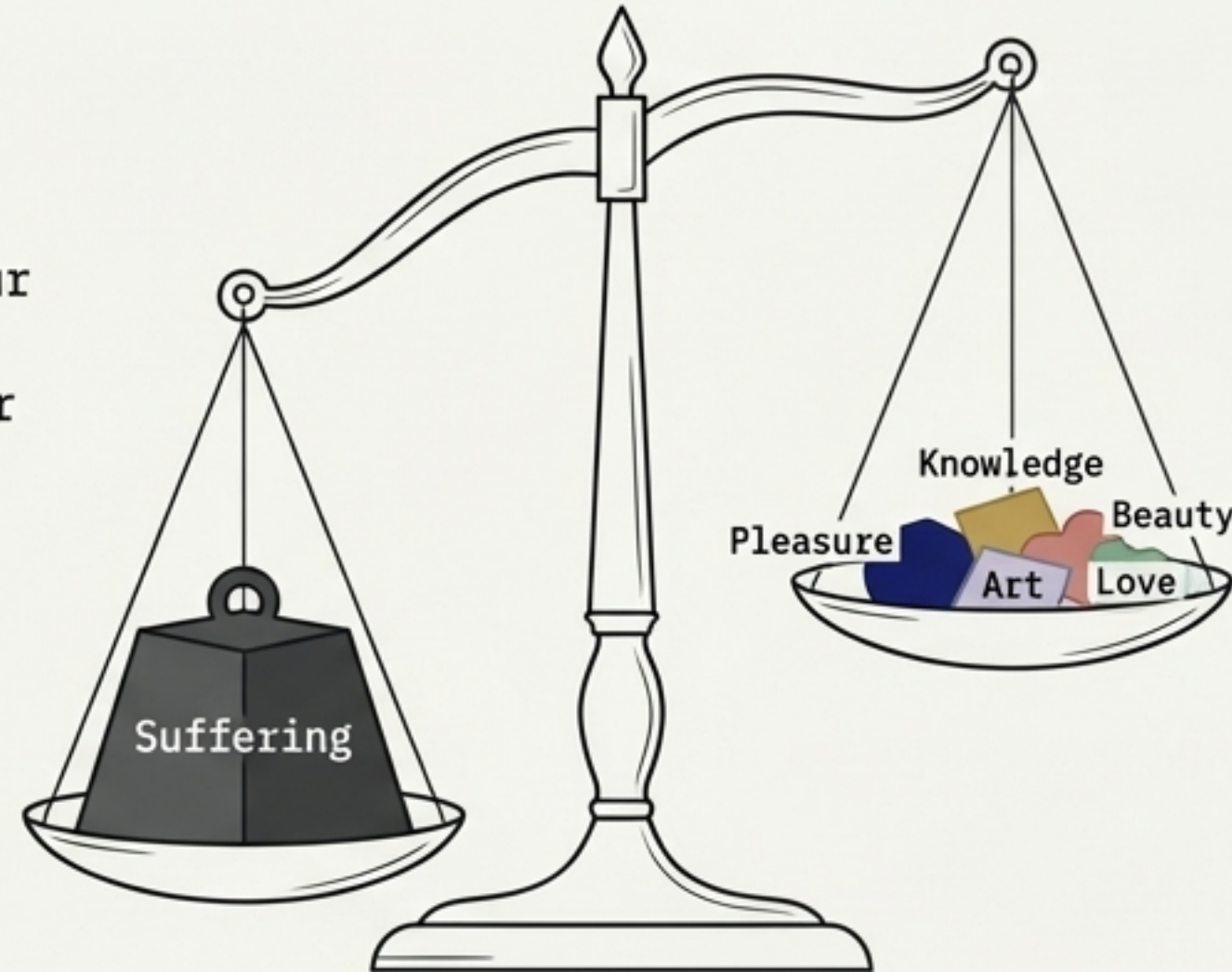
SEROTONIN



# The ethical calculus is simple and absolute: suffering is the only intrinsic evil.

"In medieval times, an animal which killed a human being might be accused of murder.... Most probably our descendants will view our analogous tendency morally to blame each other for the way we behave as equally quaint... a form of human exceptionalism which simply reflects our ignorance of the causes involved."

- 26 April 1996



The escaped pigs fiened now:  
"More fitting would be the horrified tone appropriate for describing how Jewish infants were stuffed screaming into the gas-chambers by the SS."

- 14 January 1998

## Negative Utilitarianism (NU)

An ethical theory that prioritizes the reduction of negative states (suffering, pain, misery) over the promotion of positive states (pleasure, happiness). In its strongest form, it argues that the only moral imperative is to minimize suffering.



**"Our truest life is when we are in dreams awake."**  
- Thoreau, quoted 27 April 1996



"The fundamental difference between dreaming and being 'awake' lies in the mode of state selection. One's brain/virtual world states get sharply selected by the environment in the latter but not the former setting; but in neither case does one transcendently hop outside oneself to explore Reality."  
- 19 April 1996

"Internalise it, and you can feel unutterably lonely, as though condemned to solitary confinement for life and with no prospect of remission, ever. Russell ('One never sees anything but the inside of one's own head') anticipated some such sort of view... Fortunately, these days I'm happier and shallower."  
- 11 April 1996

"One day, nanotechnology may enable our trans-human successors to experience arbitrarily large universes while at the same time they occupy indefinitely small physical volumes." - 27 April 1996



# Grand visions were built on a new frontier of dial-up modems, search engine quirks, and “Javaphobia.”

## On Programming

“I go down with a bout of Javaphobia... Why can't picking up one's first computer language occur by a process of effortless osmosis...? Will nobody return to HedWeb, I wonder anxiously, unless greeted with a flimflam of Javan applets?”

- 21 April 1996



## On Search Engines

“I try a ‘hedonism’ keyword search on Alta Vista. Hmmmm.... It seems heavy-duty ethics tracts are not entirely the norm. Any listing of my own rip-roaring page-turner of a tome is presumably buried beneath the mountain of personal and porno ads.”

- 18 April 1996

## On Web Traffic

“HedWeb's hit-count suddenly decided to go through the roof... I realised that perhaps one's naive good intentions might have been misinterpreted. Oh dear.”

- 12 April 1996 (referencing a warning about ‘animalistic under-age sex’ on a photo of elephant calves)





# Surviving the early web required pragmatism, activism, and a bit of namespace speculation.

## Case Study 1: The Speculator

"I register and set up a virtual server for investor.com. It will offer 'financial advice for the illiterate'... just in case anyone misses the drift of one's deathless marketing-prose, I add another file with the coyly suggestive caption of 'investor.com: \$20 000'."

- 7 January 1998

## Case Study 2: The Activist

"On britishmeat.com, Melissa and I launch a 'British Meat: the recipe for BSE' web site. It is at least a little more balanced than its sanitised official counterpart; and perhaps it can serve as our token contribution to the UK's export drive."

- 28 January 1998

## Case Study 3: The Operator

"I try to register 'wta.com' on behalf of the World Transhumanist Association. I discover instead that a dastardly domain-name speculator has snatched it before me... Curses."

- 2 January 1998





# By 1998, a personal philosophical project was becoming a global movement.



Personal Diary  
IBM Plex Mono



World Transhumanist  
Association  
IBM Plex Mono

"Nick Bostrom of the LSE has asked me to help co-ordinate setting up the World Transhumanist Association. I am chary at first because I'm so unrepresentative... rugged individualism, hard-nosed technophilia and gung-ho dynamic optimism is the prevailing temperament. I don't think there are many negative utilitarians among them."

- 22 January 1998

Despite these reservations, the collaboration marked a pivotal moment. The intensely personal, diary-documented philosophy began to form the ideological bedrock for an organized movement dedicated to the ethical use of technology to overcome fundamental human limitations.

IBM Plex Mono



# A Decade On: The self-experiment continues.

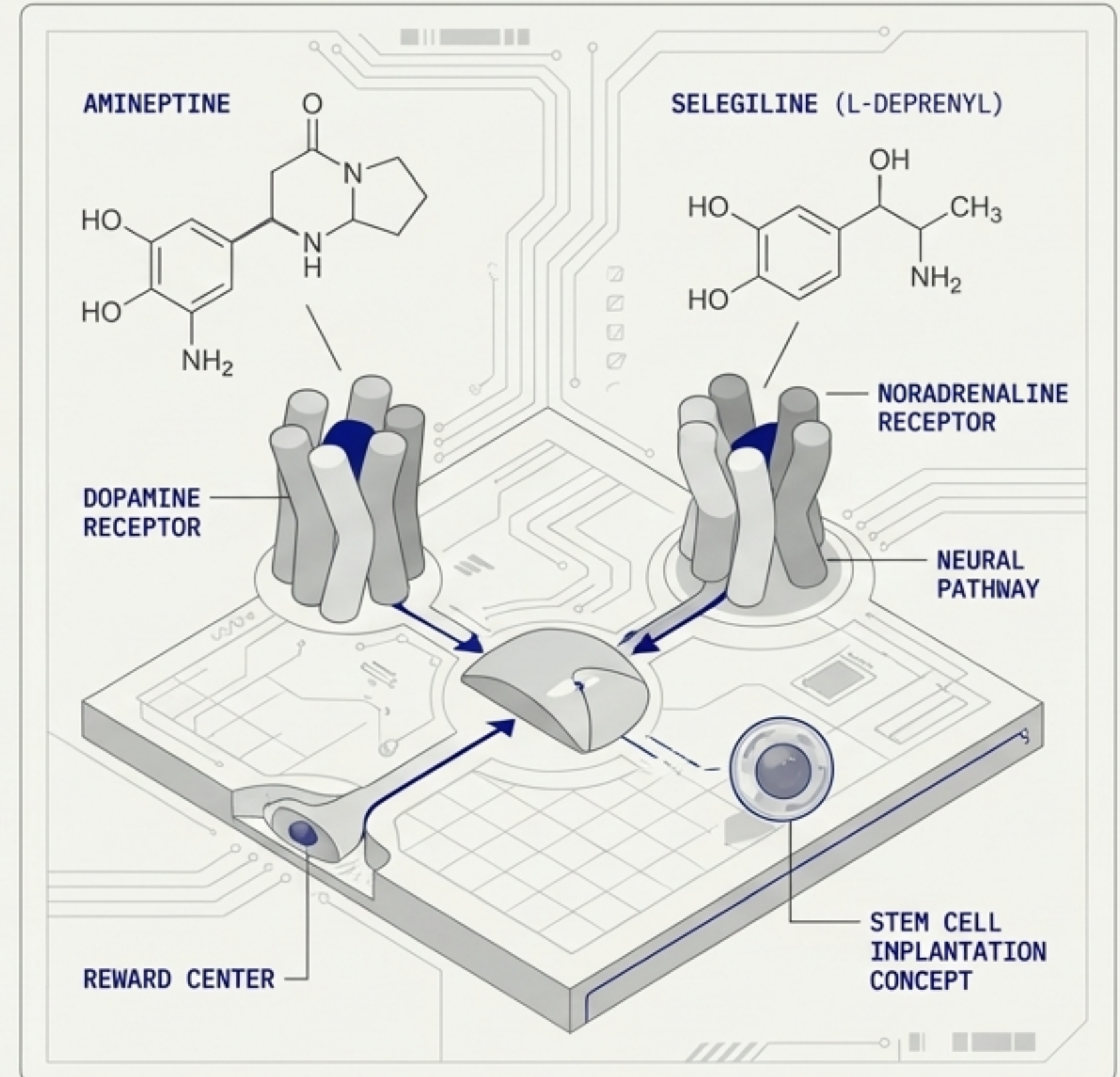
DP Drug Regimen, August 2005

"What am I on? 100 mg amineptine (Survector) and 2 x 5 mg selegiline (l-deprenyl, Eldepryl) daily. I also take omega3-rich flaxseed [linseed] oil supplements; LEF's 'Life Extension' mix; and resveratrol with quercetin. And that's it - affected".

And that's it - for now, at least."

"Once my capacity to do useful webmastering for the abolitionist project is spent... I dream idly about entering the Guinness Book of Records the category of world's greatest sustained euphoria... I have fantasies of implanting stem cells and nerve growth factors into my stunted reward centres and expiring in my dotage from an uncontrolled proliferation of pleasure cells."

- 1 August 2005





# The Abolitionist Project: From personal diary to a blueprint for the accessible universe.

## On Intelligence vs. Happiness:

"I know (most) transhumanists find the prospect of superintelligence much sexier than the prospect of superhappiness... By contrast, I'd erect plaques to mark the slaughterhouses and concentration camps of our murdered nonhuman animal cousins."

- 1 October 2008

## On the Future of Value:

"Without the pleasure-pain axis, nothing matters... the molecular signature of pure pleasure holds the key to the universe, unlocking the power to manufacture limitless value, meaning and significance - magic to infuse the cosmos and all sentient life."

- 1 August 2005

## Final Quote:

"The pleasure principle, I suspect, is a cosmic invariant. Alas the dateability of the world's last aversive experience can't hold true of the Multiverse as a whole... I still think that the abolition of suffering is not a phenomenon we will live to regret."

- 1 October 2008

