

## PART II

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# RESEARCH

So far, I have been offering you nothing but words. The next chapter will urge you to *do* something. Here I offer a brief review of some things I have said so far. The Requisites for action by a person are:

- 1 That the person be controlling some perceived variable(s).
- 2 That the person find a feature of the environment suitable for controlling the variable.
- 3 That the chosen act not disturb some other controlled variable.

Physical laws are not sufficient to describe a person's behavior. The behavior hinges on the person's purposes. Living creatures counteract disturbances to intended states; nonliving things do not. But we often act toward other people as if they were nonliving objects.

Living creatures act upon their environments with the purpose of controlling perceptual inputs; they do so by means of negative feedback loops in the neural net. Organisms amplify incoming energies; nonliving things typically do not. Living things act against entropy. Causation in the loop is circular and simultaneous. To make a psychological theory that can be tested with a working model, it is not enough to have a good idea such as purpose or acting against disturbances. It is necessary that the theory specify a negative feedback loop with circular and simultaneous causation having functions arranged so that perception can be controlled to match a reference signal (internal standard).

Chapter 6 will describe some demonstrations you can do with the help of a friend or two. Do them. You will see perceptual control at work.

In Chapter 7, I will turn to actual modeling and some further matters of theory.