

# Achieving Answerability

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- I want to say: “Deciders can and should be **answerable** to the consequences of their decisions.”
  - By *answerable to* I mean: *will listen for and accommodate*
  - By a *decider*, I mean: something “poised for symmetry breaking”
  - By *should*, I’m saying: those who poison their local milieu do not persist.
- The same phenomenon happens at many levels of abstraction
  - Abiogenesis  
Reaching life-like persistence requires a mechanism that keeps consequences local enough to gate future chemistry (compartment, surface, or cycle); otherwise history is washed out and no cumulative organization can stabilize. <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4500137/>
  - Metabolism  
Accumulation of specific metabolites regulates enzymes at pathway junctions by feedback inhibition and allosteric effects, shifting how flux is distributed at metabolic branch points.
  - Darwinian evolution  
Darwinian evolution is answerability via heredity: as variants differ in phenotype, differential reproduction transduces consequences into lineage frequencies, and selection makes past outcomes binding on future possibility through inheritable constraint.
  - Morality  
Morality is low-lag answerability: it binds choice to consequence immediately through “conscience,” e.g. anticipated relationship loss.
  - Science  
Science is answerability for explanatory claims: reproducibility requirements withdraw credibility when tests fail.
- W/o internal answer’y, the milieu will constrain: traces of action gate future feasibility; learn or die
  - Chemistry, regulation, selection, conscience, reproducibility
  - Poisoning the commons is self-defeating: answerable systems outcompete the tragic ones.
- Answerability is constructed anew, again and again!
  - There is a balance: being answerable to every possible consequence is too expensive.
  - The decider may try to elude feedback e.g. if it’s cheaper than learning.
  - But again and again, answerability is encoded into the decider. It’s lower-latency.

Poise for symmetry breaking:  
• a person standing upright vs. lying down.  
• a video game controller with four equal directions,  
• a lac operon  
• a ball at the top of a hill  
It’s hard to find distinction between this and “extended organism” (Dawkins, Turner)—can you find one without the other?

Question: How is answerability achieved? What are the principles and known mechanisms?