

8 External Control System (XCS)

Where the Internal Control System (ICS) promotes a state of overall balance and harmony within the body and mind, the External Control System (XCS) sacrifices this balance in order to maximize resources for “fight or flight” (a phrase coined by Walter Cannon). Managed through the Sympathetic Nervous System, this sacrifice includes (at least) digestion and parts of the immune system as blood is diverted from the core of the torso to the limbs. We sense this as a “sinking” feeling in our guts. Thus, the XCS is a defense mechanism.

To recognize “danger” versus “safety”, the XCS must break all perceptions into parts and then “mark” each part as being dangerous or safe. And the XCS marks each part with emotion — positive (nurturing), negative (threatening), or neutral (ignore). The neutral emotion is our default and is, effectively, “cruising speed”. We deem neutral emotion as “unemotional” or “feeling fine”. However, the ICS and XCS are both active but at a very low energy level, thus, conserving energy. Whenever the XCS “kicks in”, the neutral emotion is invoked. From this point, it can go equally positive or negative for marking other parts of our environment.

Since danger and risk are relative, the XCS and ICS “teeter” back and forth during our daily activities – like a rheostat switch. Rarely is either in full control. However, the XCS is “full on” during extreme “fight or flight” (terror) while the ICS is virtually turned off. The converse occurs during meditation and sleep when the ICS is maximized and the XCS is turned off. Achieving a “nondual” state, whereby “oneness” prevails, would be the point where the XCS is turned off. “Oneness” requires “no fear”. “No fear” requires “no XCS”.