

AN OBJECT · A QUESTION



Every
person is
a *crystal*.



One being. Infinite facets. None of them complete.

*Touch the crystal —
and observe how its
'personality' changes.*

Depending on proximity, touch, or the state of the world around it, it lights up differently.

Just like us.

The If–Then pattern

Walter Mischel spent decades searching for the stable core of human personality. He could not find one. What he found instead were **conditional response patterns** — behaviours that activate depending on context.

“If I’m at a stadium, then I’m loud and physical.”

“If I’m with my child, then I’m patient and soft.”

“If I’m in a negotiation, then I’m precise and cold.”

None of these is performance. Each is entirely, authentically that person — in that context. The same accountant who weeps at films rages at matches and is ruthless at a fishing lake. He is not inconsistent. He is a crystal, and the light keeps changing.

The radical shift

Mischel's patterns shift smoothly with context. But **L.A. Paul** describes something more violent: a **transformative experience** — an event that changes us so fundamentally that the person who emerges is not continuous with the person who entered.

Parenthood. Grief. War. Conversion. These cannot be understood from the outside, because the very self that would evaluate them is the self that gets replaced.

You cannot decide whether to have a transformative experience by imagining what it will be like. The imagining self and the transformed self are not the same person.

Peter Watts imagines, in *Blindsight*, a character called Susan James — a parliament of subsystems, each aware of the others, capable of debate, sometimes in conflict. What we experience as a single decision is the outcome of an internal negotiation we never witness directly.

What we call “I” may be a post-hoc narrative — a story the mind assembles after the subsystems have already decided.

*“The self is not a thing,
but a bundle of perceptions —
a theatre where different
characters successively
make their appearance.”*

— David Hume, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, 1739

Dennett calls it a “centre of narrative gravity” — not a thing, but a story that holds together long enough to act.

FOUR MOVEMENT MODES

The crystal moves between four personalities — not characters, but **modes of being**. Each one a different relationship to time, to others, to the world. Named not by who they are, but by how they move. The character of these pieces of music has been transposed into light — not as interpretation, but as inspiration. It is absolutely silent.

A. PÄRT / ARINUSHKA

Very slow · contemplative · warm gold and soft violet

J.S. BACH / INVENTION

Voices interweaving · question and answer · green, yellow, pink

J.G. PIEFKE / PREUSSENS GLORIA

Ordered · uncompromising · blue, white, gold

N. ATLAS / KIFAYA

Asymmetric · warm shimmer · cyan, pink, orange

And beneath all of them: Susan — the ground state. The home everything returns to.

Very slow. Listening.

In 1977, Arvo Pärt composed a set of variations for his daughter Ariina, who was recovering from surgery. He called it *Arinushka*. It is an early example of his tintinnabuli method: two voices, each with a single role — one moves stepwise through a scale, the other arpeggiates the tonic triad. Neither leads. They are, as Pärt said, *“one and one — not two. This is the secret.”*

This mode is the person who is entirely present, entirely unhurried. Who listens before speaking. Whose warmth does not perform itself. Gold, amber, a soft violet — colours that do not ask for attention.



Very slow breath · warm gold and soft violet · brightness 0.46

Voices. Counterpoint.

The Two-Part Inventions are exercises in independence: two voices that each pursue their own logic and yet, precisely by not yielding, produce something neither could alone. They agree by holding their ground. The harmony emerges from the tension, not despite it.

This is the person who holds multiple positions simultaneously — who can argue both sides with equal conviction, whose intelligence is relational, whose energy comes from productive friction. Green, yellow, pink: colours that do not settle, and do not need to.



Counterpoint order · green, yellow, pink · brightness 0.72

Ordered. Uncompromising.

Johann Gottfried Piefke composed Preußens Gloria in 1871, fresh from the Franco-Prussian War. It does not ask permission. The rhythm is not a suggestion. There is a kind of person who operates this way — not from aggression, but from a deep conviction that the world functions better when things are done properly, on time, and without hedging.

This mode does not soften its edges. It is **clarity without apology** — the person who arrives, states their position, and holds it. Blue, white, gold: cold precision with a hard centre.



March order · blue, white, gold · brightness 0.78

Enough. Shimmering.

Kifaya — كفاية — means “enough” in Arabic. It became a movement in Egypt in the early 2000s: people who refused to perform contentment any longer.

Natacha Atlas carried something of this spirit in her music — North African, Balkan, electronic, never quite from one place, always from everywhere at once.

This mode contains contradictions without resolving them — both tender and fierce, both spent and alive. Cyan, pink, orange: colours that shift as you move around them, that refuse to be seen from just one angle.



Organic order · cyan, pink, orange · brightness 0.82

The ground state.

Susan is not a fifth personality. She is the **home** that the others return to. White, pale blue — present but undemanding. The breath between phrases. The subsystems, here, know each other. They are not separate; they are in conversation.

A Long Touch transforms the crystal into one of the four modes. But it does not stay there. Over five minutes — slowly, without announcement — it finds its way back to Susan. The other modes are states. Susan is the ground.

Named after Susan James in Watts' Blindsight — a self held together by a quiet centre that all the others know, and return to.



Slow breath · white and pale blue · 5 min return from any mode

Not only the facets.

The crystal is not only defined by its facets. It is equally defined by **the relationships between them.**

A facet is a state. What decides the character of a crystal is not the list of states it can hold, but how light travels between them — what it takes to get there, how long it stays, and what it sets off on the way.

Two crystals can carry the same facets and still be nothing alike.

The same facet, different paths.

Two people may illuminate the same facet and yet arrive there by entirely different paths. They may remain there for different lengths of time. The same experience may echo through one crystal while leaving another almost unchanged.

Four measures describe this inner dynamic. They are not four more types. They are always running, in all of them, at once.

Arriving.

CONVERGENCE

How many different relationships can lead to the same state?

Many doors, one room. The state does not remember which one was used.

ACTIVATION THRESHOLD

How much is required before that state appears?

Some open at a touch. Others need the whole weight of an evening.

Remaining.

REMANENCE

How much of that state remains after its cause has gone?

What the material keeps once the field is switched off.

PROPAGATION

How far does the activation spread through the crystal?

One facet lights, and the neighbours answer — or they do not.

None of these is a type. All of them are always running.

You are not *autonomous.*

The center LED — the heart of the crystal — does not follow the personality. It follows **CheerLights**: a global network of synchronised lights, where anyone, anywhere, can send a colour into a shared channel.

Each new colour that arrives joins the centre and slowly fades the previous ones out — until it breathes alone. Then the next comes. You did not choose any of this. You may not have noticed. But the centre has already changed.

We are all CheerLights receivers. Culture, the mood in a room, what floods our attention from elsewhere — it colours us at the centre, and we call it “I.”

Someone is in the *centre.*

When a remote event arrives, all five LEDs briefly leave their personality — they become unicolor, a single shared hue radiating outward from the center. Then they fade back.

But the center does not settle back. It holds the remote colour — quietly, persistently — while the outer four resume their own movement. The crystal carries someone.

A second crystal, somewhere else, can send its state here. Two objects, two rooms, one connection. What changes there shows here — not loudly, but durably — at the heart.

Advanced configuration · requires MQTT broker · see pulsewave.ee

TO BEGIN

- 1 Place the crystal and **connect power** via USB-C. It needs a WiFi network.
 - 2 On first use, the crystal opens its own network. Connect to it from any device — the configuration page opens automatically. Enter your WiFi credentials. Save. The crystal connects and begins.
 - 3 **Approach** to activate. **Hold for five seconds** to transform.
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Offline: If connection is lost, all five LEDs breathe very slowly in deep warm white — present, but withdrawn. To return to configuration, press and hold the config button for 3 seconds.



TO CARRY WITH YOU

*Which facet is shining
brightest in you
right now?*

*Is there someone you have
only ever seen
in one light?*

*What would it take
to shift your entire
configuration?*



FURTHER

Philosophy

David Hume · A Treatise of Human Nature

Daniel Dennett · Consciousness Explained

L.A. Paul · Transformative Experience

Walter Mischel · The Marshmallow Test

Literature

Peter Watts · Blindsight

Robert Musil · The Man Without Qualities

Jerry Fodor · The Modularity of Mind

Music

Arvo Pärt · Arinushka (1977)

J.S. Bach · Two-Part Inventions

Natacha Atlas · Kifaya (2005)

Art

Anselm Kiefer