

AI-04465 Faber Two Realms of Will

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Leslie Farber's Two Realms of the Will: A Psychological Analysis

Leslie H. Farber's contribution to mid-20th-century existential psychoanalysis remains one of the most clinically acute explorations of human agency ever written. At a time when psychology was split between drive-reduction behaviorism and orthodox Freudian determinism, Farber identified a critical blind spot: **the pathology of the will**.

His work exposes what happens when human beings attempt to force through conscious effort things that can only be given as gifts—such as sleep, love, wisdom, and courage.

Part I – Leslie Farber and His Philosophy

Who Was Leslie H. Farber?

Leslie H. Farber (1912–1981) was an American psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who served as chair of the faculty at the Washington School of Psychiatry and head of the psychology department at the Austen Riggs Center. Unlike many of his contemporaries who sought to turn psychoanalysis into a natural science, Farber viewed psychotherapy as a deeply humanistic, moral, and dialogic enterprise.

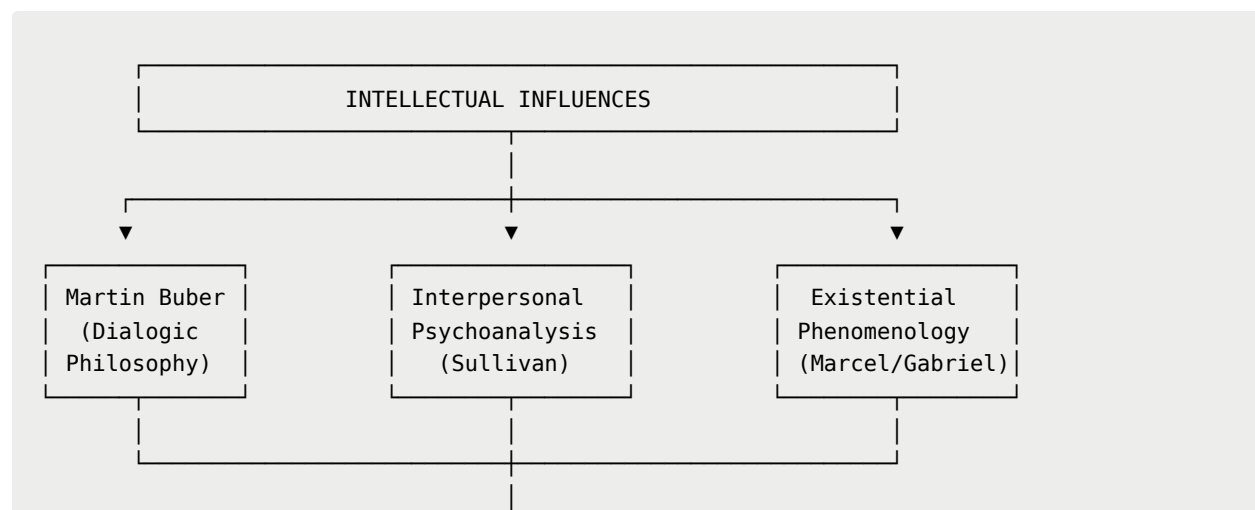
He was a prominent member of the existential psychoanalytic movement in the United States, writing with a literary precision and dry humor that set him apart from mainstream clinical theorists. His most influential writings were collected in

two major volumes: *The Ways of the Will* (1966) and the expanded posthumous collection *Lying, Despair, Jealousy, Envy, Sex, Suicide, Drugs, and the Good Life* (1976).

Intellectual Traditions & Influences

Farber's philosophy represents a convergence of several distinct intellectual streams:

- **Martin Buber's Dialogic Philosophy:** Farber was a close friend and student of Martin Buber. Buber's distinction between the *I-It* relation (treating the world as an object to be manipulated) and the *I-Thou* relation (entering into genuine presence with another) forms the bedrock of Farber's critique of modern relational manipulation.
- **Existential Phenomenology:** Influenced by Martin Heidegger and Gabriel Marcel, Farber maintained that human beings are fundamentally free, self-interpreting agents who cannot be reduced to simple biological drives or mechanical cause-and-effect relationships.
- **Psychoanalysis (Harry Stack Sullivan & Clara Thompson):** Grounded in interpersonal psychoanalysis, Farber understood that the self is formed in relation to others. However, he rejected psychoanalytic determinism that reduced conscious choice to mere unconscious rationalization.
- **Theological Humanism:** Farber drew heavily on Judeo-Christian understandings of human limitation, pride, grace, and moral agency, frequently engaging with theologians like Reinhold Niebuhr.



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LESLIE H. FARBER
"Pathology of the Will"

Central Problems Addressed

Farber sought to address a specific modern sickness: **the willful pursuit of the unwillable**. He observed that modern individuals, armed with technological power and psychological techniques, increasingly treat their inner lives as engineering problems. We try to *will* ourselves into falling in love, *will* ourselves into spontaneous joy, or *will* ourselves into peace of mind.

Farber showed that this misuse of willpower leads directly to anxiety, depression, obsession, and sexual dysfunction (such as impotency or frigidity), as well as a pervasive feeling of inauthenticity.

Modern Relevance

Farber's insights are more urgent today than when he wrote them:

- **The Optimization Trap:** Modern self-help, life-hacking, and performance culture are built on the assumption that every aspect of human experience can be optimized through conscious effort—the exact illusion Farber sought to dispel.
- **Relational Instrumentalization:** In an era of algorithmic dating and transactional relationships, Farber's warning against turning love into an act of calculated strategy explains why so many people feel alienated despite endless options.
- **Therapeutic Over-Engineering:** Modern psychology often promises quick techniques for emotional mastery. Farber reminds us that true healing requires patience, surrender, and respect for life's natural timing.

Part II – The Two Realms of the Will

In his landmark essay, *"The Two Realms of the Will,"* Farber outlines a fundamental distinction between two modes of human agency.

FARBER'S TWO REALMS	
REALM ONE (Primary)	REALM TWO (Secondary)
• Subterranean / Unconscious Direction • Experienced indirectly (moves us) • Moves toward ultimate meaning • Cannot be directly commanded • Yields: Love, Wisdom, Faith	• Conscious / Utilitarian Effort • Experienced directly ("I want") • Focuses on immediate, specific targets • Yields: Strategies, Information, Techniques

Depth Explanation of the Two Realms

Realm One (Primary Will)

Realm One represents the deep, subterranean movement of the whole person toward an objective. It operates below conscious awareness and cannot be directly commanded by the ego. We do not experience Realm One as a conscious "I want"; rather, we infer its presence after the fact through our actions, posture, and orientation.

Realm One is responsible for life's most profound states: loving, trusting, creating, believing, and forgiving. You cannot *decide* to love someone in Realm One; you simply find that your whole being has moved toward them over time.

Realm Two (Secondary Will)

Realm Two is the conscious, pragmatic, utilitarian instrument of choice. It is the realm of conscious deliberation, planning, strategy, and execution. It is directly experienced as "I will do X" or "I choose Y."

Realm Two is essential for navigating daily life—setting an alarm, driving a car, balancing a budget, or writing a checklist.

First-Order vs. Second-Order Willing

- **First-Order Willing (Realm One):** The fundamental orientation of the self toward good, meaning, or connection.

- **Second-Order Willing (Realm Two):** The conscious implementation of techniques to achieve specific, isolated ends.

Conscious vs. Subterranean Willing

Realm Two operates in full view of consciousness; it is articulate, strategic, and explicit. Realm One is subterranean; it works quietly beneath our conscious stories, gradually aligning our character, intuition, and desires without explicit verbal directives.

Voluntary vs. Involuntary Acts

Realm Two governs voluntary acts (e.g., picking up a pen, choosing a shirt). Realm One governs acts that contain an involuntary, spontaneous element (e.g., falling asleep, getting an erection, having an epiphany, feeling genuine empathy).

The Paradoxes of Trying vs. Allowing

The central crisis of modern life occurs when Realm Two attempts to manufacture the contents of Realm One.

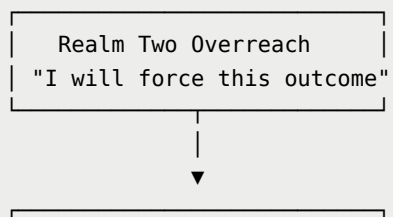
You can will knowledge, but you cannot will wisdom.

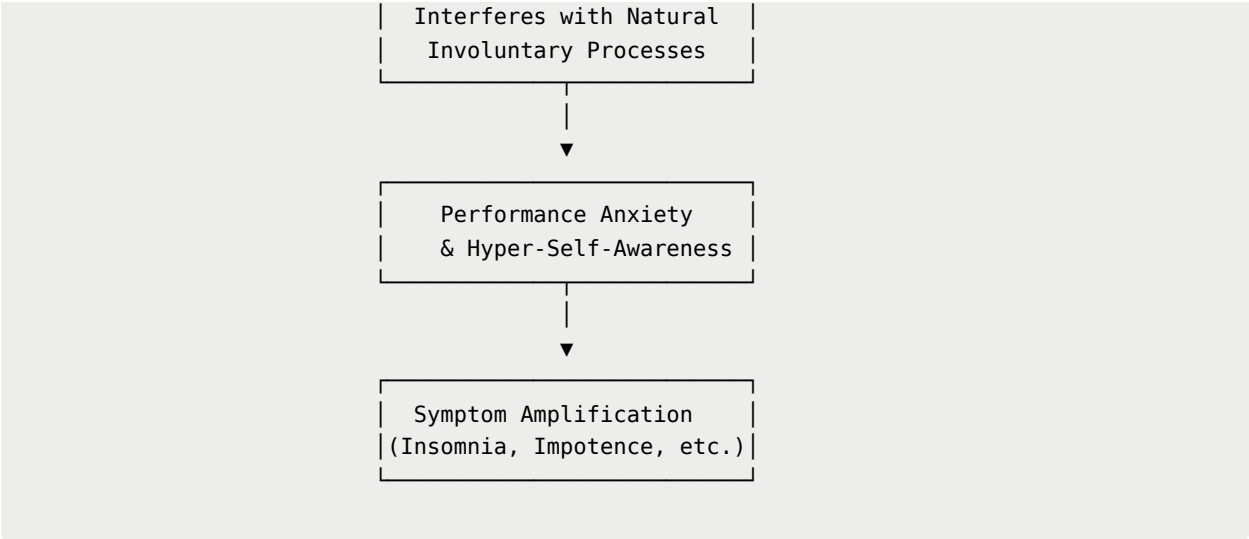
You can will sex, but you cannot will eros.

You can will praise, but you cannot will admiration.

You can will sleep-hygiene techniques, but you cannot directly will sleep.

When Realm Two tries to force what can only be allowed, it creates a self-defeating feedback loop. Trying harder to fall asleep guarantees insomnia; trying harder to be spontaneous guarantees awkwardness; trying harder to feel love produces emotional numbness.

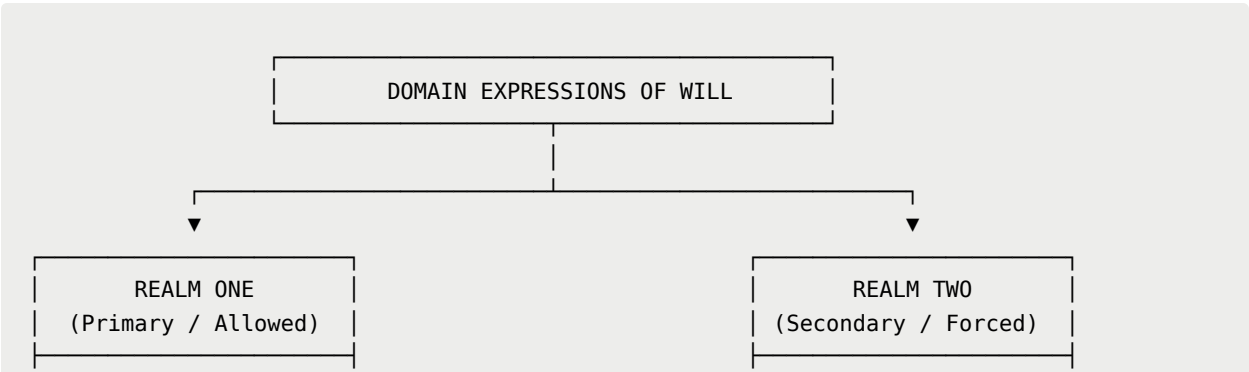




Advantages & Limitations of Each Realm

Attribute	Realm One (Primary Will)	Realm Two (Secondary Will)
Primary Advantage	Generates authentic meaning, deep connection, wisdom, true commitment, and creative inspiration.	Executes tasks, solves practical problems, creates structure, and manages daily logistics.
Primary Limitation	Cannot be directly summoned or controlled on demand by the conscious ego.	Incapable of producing authentic emotion, deep love, faith, or genuine creativity on its own.
Pathology when Distorted	Passive fatalism or drift when unassisted by Realm Two structure.	Obsessive control, anxiety, hyper-rationalization, and emotional numbness when overextended.

Concrete Real-Life Examples Across Domains



• Falling in Love
• Mutual Vows
• Natural Resonance
• Career Calling
• Artistic Inspiration
• Athletic "Flow"
• Insight / Aha Moment
• Earned Authority
• Quiet Surrender
• Character Maturity

• Planning Dates
• Legal Marriage
• Scheduling Calls
• Resume & Job Search
• Editing & Drudgery
• Drilling & Technique
• Rote Memorization
• Directives & Rules
• Rituals & Liturgy
• Habits & Discipline

- **Falling in Love:**

- *Realm One:* The sudden, organic realization that another person has become central to your life world.
- *Realm Two:* Swiping on dating apps, planning itineraries, and consciously trying to act charming.

- **Marriage:**

- *Realm One:* The deep, abiding interior covenant to stand by a person through suffering.
- *Realm Two:* Signing legal documents, managing household finances, and scheduling chore rotations.

- **Friendship:**

- *Realm One:* The effortless mutual understanding and warmth between old friends.
- *Realm Two:* Putting a friend's birthday in your calendar and texting to coordinate dinner.

- **Career Decisions:**

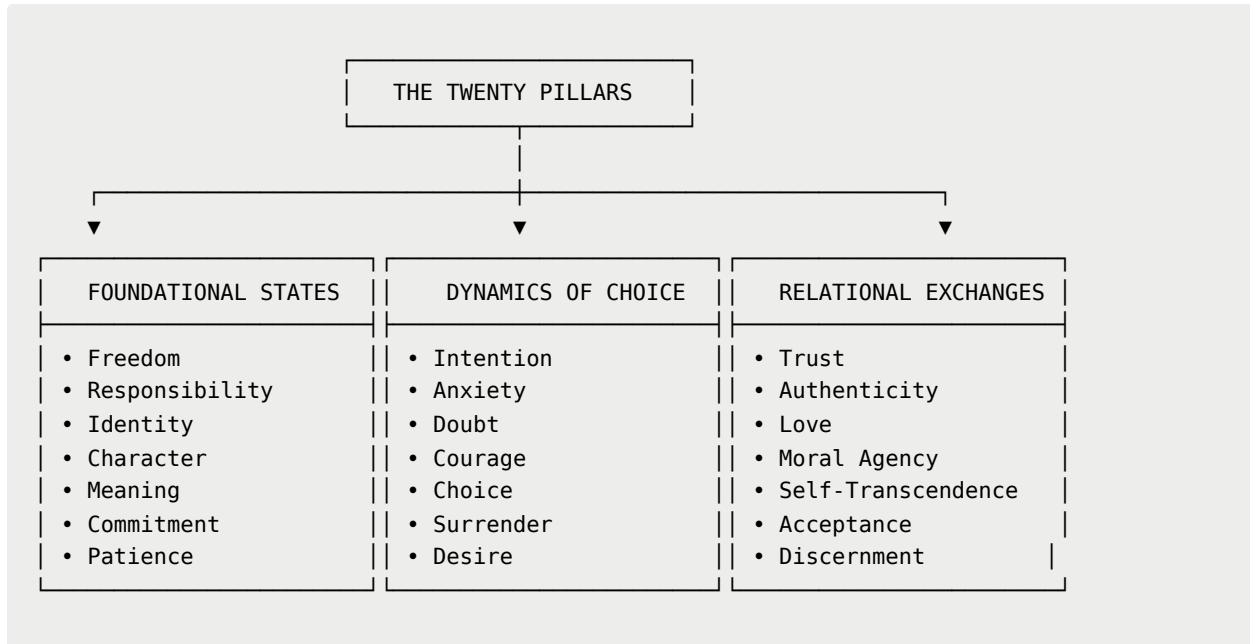
- *Realm One:* A growing inner clarity that a certain vocation aligns with your core values and talents.
- *Realm Two:* Polishing a resume, applying for jobs, negotiating salary, and learning Excel.

- **Creativity:**

- *Realm One*: The arrival of a novel artistic insight or literary theme out of quiet reflection.
- *Realm Two*: Sitting at the desk for three hours, editing sentences, and correcting grammar.
- **Athletic Performance:**
 - *Realm One*: Entering the "zone" or "flow state" during a race where the body acts fluidly without conscious thought.
 - *Realm Two*: Running laps, counting macros, lifting weights, and tracking heart-rate zones.
- **Learning:**
 - *Realm One*: The lightbulb moment when a complex concept suddenly makes intuitive sense.
 - *Realm Two*: Flashcards, highlight pads, repetitive practice, and reading textbooks.
- **Leadership:**
 - *Realm One*: Natural authority earned through integrity that inspires organic trust in a team.
 - *Realm Two*: Creating organizational charts, setting KPIs, and running meetings.
- **Faith:**
 - *Realm One*: A quiet, existential trust in the goodness of existence or a divine presence.
 - *Realm Two*: Attending services, reciting specific prayers, and studying theological texts.
- **Personal Growth:**
 - *Realm One*: The gradual, subterranean softening of an old resentment into genuine forgiveness.
 - *Realm Two*: Journaling, reading self-help books, and practicing cognitive restructuring techniques.

Part III – The Psychological Pillars

Farber's existential model rests on twenty interconnected pillars that define human moral agency.



Explanation of the Pillars

1. **Freedom:** Not the absolute absence of constraints, but the capacity to respond intentionally within one's given limitations.
2. **Responsibility:** The willingness to own the consequences of both our Realm One movements and Realm Two choices.
3. **Commitment:** The bridge between the two realms—taking a subterranean movement (Realm One) and locking it in place with conscious structure (Realm Two).
4. **Trust:** The willingness to rely on what cannot be fully controlled or guaranteed by Realm Two logic.
5. **Authenticity:** Congruence between the subterranean realities of Realm One and the outward statements of Realm Two.
6. **Courage:** Actively moving forward in Realm Two despite the existential anxiety generated by Realm One uncertainty.

7. **Anxiety:** The inevitable dizziness that accompanies genuine freedom and the encounter with the unknown.
8. **Doubt:** The necessary counterpart to faith and commitment; it keeps choice from hardening into dogmatism.
9. **Desire:** The raw emotional and biological energy that must be refined by character into genuine love.
10. **Surrender:** The essential Realm One act of relinquishing Realm Two control so that grace, sleep, or love can enter.
11. **Intention:** The conscious directional vector set by Realm Two to prepare the ground for Realm One outcomes.
12. **Acceptance:** Yielding to reality as it is, rather than demanding that it conform to our willed preferences.
13. **Patience:** The capacity to endure the delay between Realm Two preparation and Realm One fruition.
14. **Character:** The enduring internal architecture built from a lifetime of aligned choices between both realms.
15. **Identity:** Not a static label, but an unfolding narrative shaped by what we choose to commit to over time.
16. **Love:** A Realm One gift of whole-person presence that can be cultivated, but never commanded, by Realm Two efforts.
17. **Choice:** The moment of existential decision where possibilities are collapsed into concrete reality.
18. **Meaning:** The byproduct of self-transcendent commitment; it cannot be willed directly, only discovered.
19. **Self-Transcendence:** The capacity to reach beyond self-absorption toward another person, a calling, or a higher purpose.
20. **Moral Agency:** The dignity of being an active, accountable subject rather than a passive object of circumstance.

Interaction During Major Life Choices

During major choices, these pillars interact in a specific sequence: **Anxiety** and **Doubt** signal that a choice matters. **Intention** uses **Patience** to gather data without rushing to artificial certainty. **Courage** allows the individual to step into vulnerability, executing **Surrender** of total control. This allows **Realm One** clarity to surface, which is then sealed by **Realm Two Commitment**, producing enduring **Character** and **Meaning**.

Part IV – Relationship Initiation and Spouse Choice

Applying Farber's ideas to romantic life reveals why modern dating often feels confusing.

THE DYNAMICS OF ATTRACTION	
INFATUATION (Realm Two)	GENUINE COMMITMENT (Realm One)
• High intensity, fast-paced • Driven by idealization & fantasy • Demands immediate validation • Tries to force outcomes	• Quiet, steady, enduring depth • Grounded in real-world sight • Tolerates ambiguity & pace • Allows organic maturation

Key Relational Phenomena

- **Why People Hesitate Despite Attraction:** Hesitation often arises when Realm Two (the desire for safety, milestones, or immediate answers) moves faster than Realm One (the deep, organic process of whole-person trust). The self feels pulled apart by this speed gap.
- **Psychology of Emotional Uncertainty:** Uncertainty is not automatically a warning sign; it is often the mind's honest acknowledgement that it lacks enough shared history to confirm a Realm One alignment.
- **Fear vs. Intuition:**
 - *Fear:* Anxious, protective, and driven by past traumas. It speaks in frantic, high-intensity Realm Two terms ("I must get out now" or "I must lock this down immediately").

- *Intuition:* A quiet, subterranean Realm One sense of misalignment. It does not panic; it observes a persistent lack of real-world resonance.
- **Healthy Caution vs. Avoidant Attachment:** Healthy caution respects real-world pacing while remaining open to discovery. Avoidant attachment uses Realm Two rationalizations to manufacture reasons to run whenever authentic intimacy threatens the ego.
- **Commitment vs. Infatuation:** Infatuation lives in the fantasy projections of Realm Two. Genuine commitment is born when Realm One subterranean resonance is backed by Realm Two operational loyalty through difficult times.
- **Attraction vs. Long-Term Compatibility:** Attraction is an initial spark. Compatibility is the alignment of daily values, character, communication, and mutual moral agency across time.
- **Timing & Emotional Readiness:** Readiness cannot be willed overnight. It depends on whether an individual's Realm One has finished processing past wounds enough to allow a new person in.
- **The Role of Vulnerability & Trust:** Trust is an act of Realm One surrender. It requires laying down Realm Two manipulative defenses and allowing oneself to be seen as flawed.

Comparative Framework

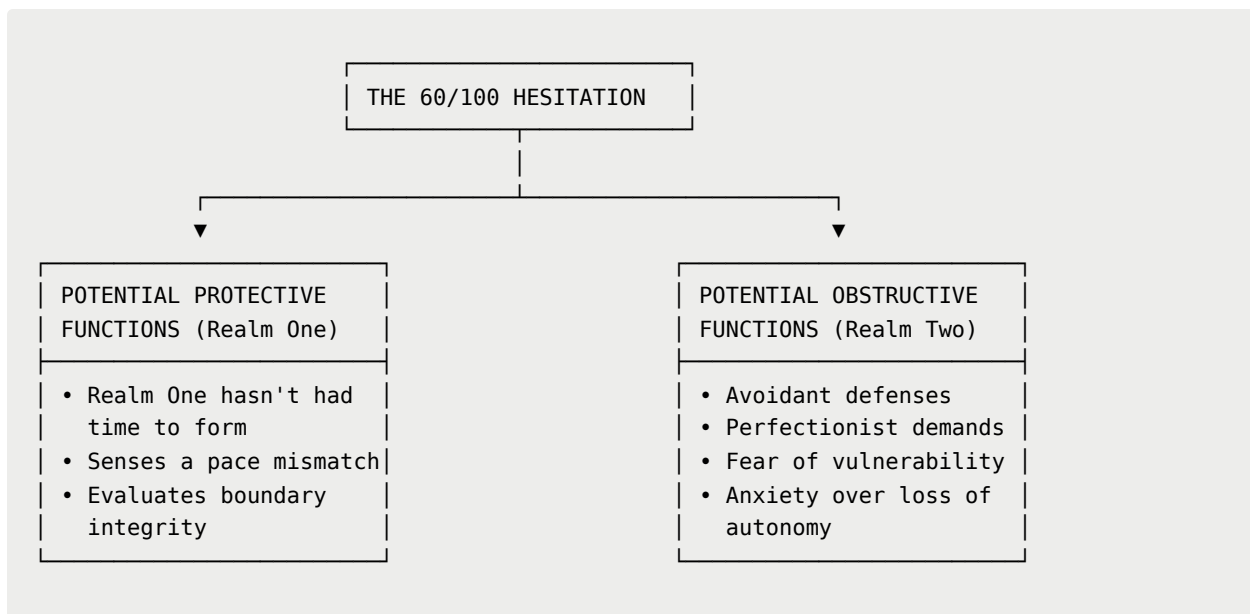
Psychological Model	Perspective on Relational Hesitation	View on Commitment	Key Focus
Farber's Existential Will	A misalignment between Realm Two hurry and Realm One readiness; or healthy resistance to forcing the unwillable.	An integration where Realm Two honors and protects the subterranean bond of Realm One.	Will, agency, authenticity, and avoiding manipulative control.
Attachment Theory	An activation of anxious or avoidant internal working models formed in early childhood.	Moving from insecure attachment to earned secure attachment through coregulation.	Safety, proximity seeking, and emotional regulation strategies.

Modern Relationship Psychology	Evaluates cognitive compatibility, shared values, and conflict-resolution skills.	A conscious choice based on mutual interest, social exchange, and shared goals.	Communication patterns, emotional intelligence, and compatibility.
Decision-Making Research	Analysis of cognitive biases, risk aversion, loss aversion, and information gathering.	Optimizing trade-offs under conditions of real-world uncertainty.	Heuristics, probabilities, and satisfaction thresholds.

Part V – The "60/100 Commitment" Question

Scenario Analysis

A woman dating someone for a few months feels approximately 60/100 committed emotionally. Her partner is expressing strong affection, suggesting moving in together, and offering to help her purchase a car to solve her transportation difficulties.



Multi-Dimensional Breakdown Through Farber's Lens

1. Subterranean Wisdom or Realm One Reality?

The 60/100 score could mean her subterranean primary will (Realm One) has not yet moved fully toward this person. Because Realm One cannot be forced, her hesitation is an honest signal: *her whole being is not yet convinced*. Trying to force a 100/100 response through conscious exertion would be a classic Farberian error.

2. Alternative Interpretations

- **Differing Relationship Pace:** Her partner may operate at a rapid Realm Two pace, confusing early intensity with deep commitment. Her 60/100 may simply reflect a normal, healthy timeline for building authentic trust.
- **Prudent Deliberation:** A few months is a very short time. Her hesitation may be sound judgment, recognizing that key areas of character take time to reveal themselves.
- **Practical Concerns & Dependency:** The offer of a car and moving in creates an asymmetric dependency trap. Her inner warning system may realize that accepting major financial or structural favors will compromise her independent judgment.

3. Protective vs. Excessive Hesitation

- **When Protective:** When it shields her from jumping into financial and residential dependency before establishing deep, mutual character evaluation.
- **When Excessive:** If her hesitation is driven by a perfectionist demand for absolute certainty (which doesn't exist), or an avoidant defense mechanism designed to prevent intimacy whenever a partner gets close.

4. Distinguishing the Drivers

- **Fear:** Feels anxious, frantic, and obsessive. It fixates on catastrophic scenarios.
- **Intuition:** Feels quiet, settled, and calm. It persists even when anxiety subsides.

- **Prudence:** Evaluates observable real-world facts, behaviors, and timeline constraints logically.
- **Avoidance:** Moves the goalposts; invents small flaws in the partner whenever things go well to justify pulling back.

5. Additional Information Needed

Before drawing firm conclusions, one would need to observe:

1. How the partner reacts when she sets a boundary and slows down the pace. (Does he respect her autonomy, or double down on pressure?)
2. Her historical pattern in past relationships. (Does she routinely flee at the 3-month mark?)
3. Whether her hesitation stems from specific red flags in his character, or merely an abstract fear of losing independence.

Part VI – Major Life Decisions

Major life choices require a partnership between both realms of the will.

REALM INTERACTION IN LIFE CHOICES		
DECISION DOMAIN	REALM ONE ROLE	REALM TWO ROLE
Marriage	Subterranean love & deep character trust	Vows, logistics, shared household rules
Divorce	Quiet realization that the core bond is gone	Legal separation, asset division
Career Selection	Inner sense of calling and creative interest	Resumes, networking, skill acquisition
Retirement	Readiness to step back from career identity	Financial planning, asset allocation
Entrepreneurship	Unshakable conviction in a mission or value	Business plans, capital raising, operations
Immigration	Existential drive for growth or freedom	Visas, paperwork, logistics, language

Housing & Location	Intuitive feeling of "home" and belonging	Budgets, leases, home inspections
Friendships & Mentors	Natural resonance and mutual moral respect	Reaching out, keeping in touch, scheduling
Financial & Health	Acceptance of bodily & material limitations	Budgets, investments, exercise routines

- **Marriage:** Realm One provides the enduring bond of mutual care; Realm Two manages the operational partnership (budgets, schedules, family obligations).
- **Divorce:** Realm One senses when the fundamental dialogic covenant has been broken beyond repair; Realm Two handles the legal, financial, and co-parenting realities.
- **Career Selection:** Realm One identifies authentic interests and vocational fit; Realm Two builds credentials, submits applications, and masters daily skills.
- **Retirement:** Realm One navigates the psychological transition away from professional title as an identity; Realm Two manages asset decumulation and daily scheduling.
- **Entrepreneurship:** Realm One fuels the vision and tolerance for uncertainty; Realm Two writes the business plan, manages cash flow, and handles operational details.
- **Immigration:** Realm One supplies the resilience to endure cultural dislocation; Realm Two manages visa applications, language study, and employment logistics.
- **Choosing Where to Live:** Realm One registers the subtle sense of peace and belonging in an environment; Realm Two analyzes property markets, commute times, and rental agreements.
- **Selecting Friends & Mentors:** Realm One picks up on genuine character, integrity, and warmth; Realm Two initiates plans, maintains contact, and respects boundaries.
- **Financial & Health Decisions:** Realm One fosters an acceptance of life's uncertainties and aging; Realm Two implements disciplined savings, asset

allocation, diet, and exercise.

Part VII – Twenty-Two Practical Guidelines

22 GUIDELINES FOR LIFE CHOICES	
1. Respect the Two Realms	12. Distinguish Fear from Intuition
2. Never Force Love	13. Beware Premature Gratitude
3. Use Realm Two as a Servant	14. Practice Mindful Patience
4. Honor the Speed of Trust	15. Value Character Over Charm
5. Recognize Willful Overreach	16. Don't Mistake Drama for Depth
6. Cultivate Prepared Openness	17. Respect Emotional Timelines
7. Embrace Necessary Anxiety	18. Keep Financial Autonomy Clear
8. Do Not Will Certainty	19. Build Habitual Structure
9. Assess Moral Agency Early	20. Surrender the Illusion of Total Control
10. Beware Fast Rescue Offers	21. Look for Shared Meaning
11. Test Character via Bounds	22. Act with Integrated Will

1. **Respect the Boundaries of Both Realms:** Never use Realm Two willpower to force what can only be granted in Realm One (love, grace, sleep, peace).
2. **Never Force Romantic Commitment:** Allow feelings to mature naturally; do not try to manufacture emotional intensity to match a partner's expectations.
3. **Keep Realm Two in its Proper Role:** Use strategy and effort to build order in your life, but never let them manipulate your emotional truth.
4. **Honor the Natural Speed of Trust:** Real trust develops through consistent, shared experience over time—it cannot be accelerated by shortcuts.
5. **Watch for Willful Overreach:** When you feel chronic frustration, check if you are trying to force an outcome that requires quiet allowing.
6. **Prepare the Ground and Step Back:** Set up the practical preconditions for success (Realm Two), then yield control to let results unfold (Realm One).
7. **Accept Existential Anxiety as Normal:** Feeling anxious during major life decisions does not mean you are making a mistake—it simply means you are free.

8. **Avoid Demanding Absolute Certainty:** Demanding 100% intellectual proof before acting leads to paralysis. Learn to act on reasonable clarity.
9. **Look for Moral Agency in Others:** Pay attention to whether a prospective partner or colleague takes responsibility for their actions or blames circumstances.
10. **Be Cautious with Rapid Financial Help:** Generosity that creates quick dependency can cloud your independent judgment before trust is established.
11. **Test Relationships with Healthy Boundaries:** A partner who respects your need to take things slow demonstrates character; one who pressures you shows self-interest.
12. **Learn to Tell Fear from Intuition:** Fear is loud, anxious, and urgent; intuition is quiet, persistent, and grounded.
13. **Don't Let Gratitude Blind Your Judgment:** Being thankful for someone's kindness or help should not obligate you to jump into a deep commitment.
14. **Practice Active Patience:** Waiting is not passive wasting of time; it is active observation that gives truth the space to emerge.
15. **Prioritize Character Over Charisma:** Charisma is an impressive Realm Two performance; character is a steady Realm One reality that reveals itself over time.
16. **Don't Mistake Relational Drama for Depth:** High-intensity emotional swings are often signs of anxiety and projection, not deep primary love.
17. **Respect Your Personal Emotional Timeline:** Cultural or relational expectations should not override your internal clock of readiness.
18. **Protect Your Financial Autonomy:** Keep your practical affairs clear and independent while evaluating new personal commitments.
19. **Build Consistent Daily Habits:** Use Realm Two to establish solid routines in exercise, work, and rest, freeing up mental space for Realm One clarity.
20. **Surrender the Fantasy of Perfect Control:** Accept that all important commitments carry inherent risk that cannot be engineered away.

21. **Focus on Shared Values and Meaning:** Long-term bonds thrive on shared commitment to meaningful goals beyond simple mutual attraction.
22. **Align Strategic Action with Inner Truth:** Make sure your outward daily choices (Realm Two) serve and protect your authentic inner realities (Realm One).

Part VIII – A Compassionate Letter

Dear Friend,

I am writing to you today not to give you advice on what decision to make, but to offer a quiet, supportive framework as you navigate this season of your life in New Jersey. Moving to a new country, establishing your nursing career in a new healthcare system, and opening your heart to a new relationship all at once is a monumental task. It is completely natural to feel a mix of hope, gratitude, and hesitation.

In the work of the psychiatrist Leslie Farber, human decision-making is understood through two distinct modes of the will. The first mode—what he calls the *Primary Will*—is subterranean, deep, and slow. It is the part of us that falls in love, builds authentic trust, and forms deep lifelong commitments. It cannot be rushed, forced, or commanded by conscious effort. The second mode—the *Secondary Will*—is our strategic, practical mind. It is wonderful at solving logistical problems, managing schedules, getting things done, and organizing life.

Right now, you are describing a feeling of being about 60% committed emotionally, while your boyfriend is moving at a much faster pace—offering strong affection, suggesting you move in together, and offering to assist you financially with purchasing a car.

It is so important for you to know that your hesitation is not a failure on your part, nor is it automatically a sign that something is wrong with him or the relationship.

Your 60% feeling may simply be your Primary Will operating on its natural, healthy timeline. Deep trust and whole-person commitment take time to develop—especially when you are also adjusting to a brand-new country and life environment. Your hesitation may be a protective, wise part of yourself that wants to ensure you maintain your personal independence and clear judgment as you build your new life.

When someone offers to solve immediate practical problems for us—like transportation or living arrangements—it is natural to feel immense gratitude. But it is essential to keep gratitude and emotional commitment in their proper places. Accepting major financial support or moving in together creates structural dependencies that make it much harder to evaluate a relationship clearly and freely.

Moving slowly is not a sign of fear or lack of appreciation; it can be an act of genuine respect for both yourself and your partner. It gives your Primary Will the time it needs to see if a deep, natural alignment grows over shared experience.

A partner who truly respects your character will be willing to honor your pace. Observing how he responds when you gently say, *"I care about you and want to get to know you better, but I need us to take things one step at a time"* will give you invaluable insight into his character, patience, and emotional maturity.

You do not need to force yourself to be at 100% commitment today. Give yourself permission to observe, to build your new life step by step, and to let trust grow organically over time. Healthy commitment is never forced—it is discovered.

With warmth and respect for your journey,

A Fellow Traveler

Part IX – The Ways of the Will

THE WAYS OF THE WILL (CHAPTERS)	
Chapter Title	Core Theme
1. The Two Realms of the Will	Establishes Primary vs. Secondary Will distinction.
2. Will and Willfulness	Pathology when Secondary Will tries to force Primary ends.
3. Perfecting of Desire	Distorts sex into a strategic performance metric.
4. Anxiety and the Will	Anxiety as the result of forcing the unwillable.
5. Despair and the Willing of Meaning	Depression from using Secondary Will to create purpose.
6. Hypnotism and Will	Relinquishing agency to external manipulation.
7. The Therapeutic Encounter	Psychotherapy as genuine I-Thou

Detailed Breakdown of The Ways of the Will

Main Themes & Arguments

The central thesis of *The Ways of the Will* is that modern psychological suffering is largely a pathology of the will. Farber argues that modern society has elevated technique, control, and strategy (Secondary Will) to such an extent that people have lost touch with the subterranean, organic foundations of human life (Primary Will). This imbalance results in willful self-manipulation and the alienation of human relationships.

Psychological Concepts & Clinical Observations

- **Willfulness:** The aggressive, forced operation of the Secondary Will attempting to manufacture primary realities (e.g., trying to *force* oneself to feel empathy or passion).
- **The Reduction of Sex to Performance:** Farber's famous critique of Masters and Johnson shows how reducing sex to technique and physiological response strips it of its personal, erotic, and dialogic depth, resulting in widespread performance anxiety.
- **Despair as Misguided Willing:** Despair occurs when an individual realizes that no amount of conscious effort can manufacture life's meaning, yet refuses to surrender control to let genuine meaning emerge.

Integration of "The Two Realms" Essay

"The Two Realms of the Will" serves as the foundational theoretical framework for the entire book. Every subsequent chapter—whether addressing anxiety, sex, depression, or therapy—applies this core distinction to specific human problems.

Comparative Existential Analysis

EXISTENTIAL THEORY COMPARISON	
Theorist	Core Distinction vs. Leslie Farber
Viktor Frankl	Frankl focuses on "Will to Meaning"; Farber warns that meaning cannot be directly willed, only discovered.
Rollo May	May views Will as passion merged with intentionality; Farber splits Will into two distinct functional realms.
Erich Fromm	Fromm emphasizes socio-economic structures; Farber focuses on internal moral agency and interpersonal dialogue.
Carl Rogers	Rogers trusts innate self-actualization; Farber adds a focus on tragic human limits and moral choices.
Attachment Theory	Attachment theory focuses on early evolutionary safety; Farber focuses on existential agency and freedom.

- **Viktor Frankl:** While Frankl emphasized the *Will to Meaning*, Farber cautioned that directly willing meaning turns it into a self-conscious project. For Farber, meaning is an indirect byproduct of genuine self-transcendent commitment.
- **Rollo May:** May treated will and wish as interrelated aspects of human intentionality. Farber offered a more precise structural distinction between the subterranean Primary Will and the strategic Secondary Will.
- **Erich Fromm:** Fromm analyzed how socio-economic systems produce psychological alienation. Farber focused on the internal mechanisms of moral choice and dialogic presence between individuals.
- **Carl Rogers:** Rogers believed that unconditional positive regard automatically unlocks human growth. Farber insisted that growth also requires facing moral limits, personal responsibility, and the tragic consequences of willful choices.
- **Attachment Theory:** Attachment theory views relationship behaviors through the lens of early safety seeking and biological survival strategies. Farber views them through the lens of existential freedom, moral choices, and personal responsibility.

Strengths and Criticisms of Farber's Work

Strengths

- **Unmatched Clinical Precision:** Offers brilliant descriptions of internal psychological states that standard diagnostic manuals miss.
- **Literary Brilliance:** Written with clarity, wit, and deep human insight.
- **Prescient Cultural Critique:** Foretold the modern anxieties caused by self-optimization, sexual performance pressures, and technological overreach.

Criticisms

- **Difficult Terminology:** His subtle distinctions between Primary and Secondary Will can feel abstract or hard to measure empirically.
- **Anti-Technique Bias:** He sometimes underestimates the value of structured behavioral techniques (like CBT) in treating acute psychiatric distress.
- **Elitist Tone:** His high expectations for existential authenticity can sometimes sound demanding or ungenerous toward everyday human coping strategies.

Part X – Reading Recommendations

Because Leslie Farber's original works can be hard to find in standard bookstores, the following curated reading list provides access to his writings and related perspectives.

Works by Leslie Farber

- **"Lying, Despair, Jealousy, Envy, Sex, Suicide, Drugs, and the Good Life"** (*Basic Books, 1976*) – The most complete collection of Farber's essays, including *"The Two Realms of the Will"* and his famous critique of sex research.
- **"The Ways of the Will: Essays for a Psychology of So-Called Free Will"** (*Basic Books, 1966 / Expanded edition by Yale University Press, 2000*) – Farber's foundational text, containing his full theoretical model.

Primary Essays & Discussant Works

- *Farber, L. H. (1956). "The Two Realms of the Will." *Psychiatry*, 19(1), 3-20. (The original journal publication).*
- *Farber, L. H. (1964). "Will and Willfulness in Hysteria." *Psychoanalytic Review*, 51, 117-128.*
- *Friedman, Maurice (1982). "Leslie H. Farber: The Phenomenology of the Will." *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*.*

Authors & Works with Similar Perspectives

- **Martin Buber – "I and Thou" (*Touchstone*)** – The primary source of dialogic philosophy that shaped Farber's relational views.
- **Gabriel Marcel – "Being and Having" (*Fontana*)** – Explores the difference between life as a mystery to be lived (Realm One) versus a problem to be solved (Realm Two).
- **Erwin Straus – "The Primary World of Senses"** – A major phenomenological influence on Farber's understanding of lived experience.

Modern Psychology Books Covering Related Themes

- **Irv Yalom – "Existential Psychotherapy" (*Basic Books*)** – The definitive modern textbook on existential psychology, covering freedom, isolation, meaning, and death.
- **Oliver Burkeman – "Four Thousand Weeks: Time Management for Mortals" (*Farrar, Straus and Giroux*)** – A popular modern application of Farberian ideas, critiquing the illusion of total time control.
- **Iain McGilchrist – "The Master and His Emissary" (*Yale University Press*)** – Provides a neuroscience equivalent to Farber's two realms, exploring the differences between the left brain's manipulative control and the right brain's holistic presence.

Philosophical Works on Freedom, Commitment, & Love

- **Søren Kierkegaard – "Works of Love"** – A foundational existential text exploring the deeper spiritual dimensions of commitment beyond mere

emotion.

- **C.S. Lewis – "The Four Loves"** – Explores the differences between biological affection, romantic passion, friendship, and sacrificial love.
- **Erich Fromm – "The Art of Loving"** – Examines love as an active practice requiring maturity, discipline, and respect rather than passive emotion.

Conclusion: The Enduring Value of Leslie Farber

Leslie Farber's philosophy remains a powerful antidote to modern life's frantic pace. He reminds us that the best parts of human life—love, wisdom, genuine faith, deep creativity, and lasting commitment—cannot be manufactured through calculated effort or clever self-help techniques.

By distinguishing between the **Primary Will** (the deep, subterranean alignment of the self) and the **Secondary Will** (our practical capacity for action and structure), Farber offers a clear blueprint for making life choices.

When we learn to use our Secondary Will not as a tyrant that tries to force our feelings, but as a faithful servant that prepares the ground and protects our boundaries, we open the door to a life of quiet authenticity, deep relationships, and real peace of mind.

Claude

THE WILL AND THE SELF

Leslie Farber's Two Realms of the Will

A Framework for Choice, Commitment, and the Limits of Effort

Nine Life Domains Reference Series

Domain: Relationships & Personal Growth

Contents

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Part I — Leslie Farber and His Philosophy

Who Was Leslie H. Farber?

Leslie H. Farber (1912–1981) was an American existential psychoanalyst, essayist, and, for many years, a leading figure at the Washington School of Psychiatry, where he trained under and worked alongside members of the interpersonal and existential wing of American psychoanalysis associated with Harry Stack Sullivan's tradition. He was also close to theologian and philosopher Martin Buber's circle of influence in American intellectual life, and his essays were published in outlets read well beyond clinical psychiatry, including literary and religious journals. Farber wrote less as a systematic theorist than as a clinical essayist — his best-known work, the essay collection *The Ways of the Will* (1966), reads more like moral philosophy grounded in the consulting room than like a conventional psychology textbook.

Intellectual Traditions

- Existential psychiatry and psychoanalysis — indebted to Sullivan's interpersonal psychiatry and in dialogue with Rollo May, Ludwig Binswanger, and the broader existential-phenomenological movement in mid-century psychiatry.

- Religious and theological thought — shaped by dialogical philosophy (notably Martin Buber's I-Thou relation) and by a Jewish ethical sensibility concerned with responsibility to the other.
- Literary and moral essay tradition — Farber wrote in the tradition of the reflective essayist as much as the clinician, closer in style to Montaigne or to his contemporaries in mid-century American letters than to a research psychologist.
- Clinical psychoanalysis — trained analytically, but increasingly skeptical of technique-driven approaches that treated the will as something to be manipulated directly rather than understood in its proper limits.

Central Problems He Was Trying to Solve

Farber was preoccupied with a paradox he saw at the heart of modern life: contemporary culture increasingly treats will as omnipotent — as though enough effort, technique, or self-discipline can produce any desired inner state, from love to faith to happiness to sleep. Farber argued this was a category error. Some things genuinely respond to direct willing; others — the very things we often care about most, such as loving someone, believing something, or falling asleep — are structurally unwillable, and the harder we will them directly, the further they recede. His essays repeatedly ask: what can a person actually be held responsible for choosing, and what must instead be allowed, waited for, or received?

Why His Writing Still Matters

Farber's distinction anticipates much of what contemporary psychology has since documented empirically — for instance, the way effortful self-monitoring degrades performance in flow states, or the way trying to suppress or force an emotion tends to intensify it (ironic process theory). In an age of productivity culture, dating apps, and self-optimization, his warning that not all valuable human experience is subject to willpower or engineering remains a useful corrective. His work offers a vocabulary for a very common contemporary frustration: the sense of having done everything right and still not feeling what one is 'supposed' to feel.

Part II — The Two Realms of the Will

Farber's central essay divides the will into two realms. The first realm consists of ordinary, direct acts of will — deciding, choosing, doing — where a clear intention translates fairly directly into an action and a corresponding felt sense of agency. The second realm consists of states and experiences that cannot be produced by direct intention at all — love, faith, sleep, spontaneity, genuine humility, or a natural conversation — where trying too hard is not just unhelpful but actively self-defeating.

First-Order vs. Second-Order Willing

First-order willing is straightforward: I decide to stand up, and I stand up. Second-order willing describes the more troubled situation in which a person tries to will something that is not, by its nature, subject to direct willing — trying to will oneself to fall asleep, to feel joy on command, or to believe a doctrine one does not actually believe. Farber's point is not that these states are beyond human influence altogether, but that they can only be approached indirectly, through the conditions that make them possible, never demanded directly.

Conscious vs. Subterranean Willing

Alongside the two realms, Farber distinguishes conscious willing — the deliberate, articulate intentions a person can report — from subterranean willing, the barely acknowledged undercurrents of desire, resistance, or self-protection that shape behavior without being fully owned. A person can consciously will to commit to a relationship while a subterranean current of doubt or self-protection quietly slows the pace of their actual engagement. Neither current is more 'true' than the other by default — the work is bringing the subterranean current into conscious view so it can be examined rather than simply obeyed or dismissed.

Voluntary vs. Involuntary Acts

A related distinction runs through the essay: voluntary acts are those we execute directly, while involuntary ones — a blush, a genuine laugh, falling asleep, a moment of grace — happen to us. Modern life, Farber argued, increasingly mistakes the second category for the first, treating involuntary states as engineering problems to be solved by enough technique, medication, or self-help.

The Paradox of Trying vs. Allowing

The essay's central paradox is that direct effort in the second realm is typically self-defeating: the harder one tries to fall asleep, the more awake one becomes; the harder one tries to force belief, the more the effort itself produces doubt about its own sincerity. What actually works in the second realm is closer to allowing — creating favorable conditions and then releasing the demand for a guaranteed outcome.

Why Life's Greatest Achievements Resist Direct Effort

Farber's account explains a familiar frustration: the most meaningful human experiences — being truly loved, feeling at home somewhere, having faith, achieving creative breakthrough — are precisely the experiences that cannot be manufactured by sheer determination. They arrive as by-products of engagement, patience, and honest living, not as direct targets of ambition.

How Unconscious Motives Shape Conscious Decisions

Because subterranean willing operates below full awareness, a person's stated (conscious) intentions can be quietly undermined or redirected by unacknowledged fears, resentments, or desires. Farber's framework suggests that psychological work often consists of narrowing the gap between what a person consciously wills and what they subterraneously will, so the two can act in concert rather than at cross-purposes.

Mechanisms, Advantages, and Limitations of Each Realm

Realm One (First Realm)	Realm Two (Second Realm)
Direct, effortful, produces a clear sense of agency and responsibility.	Indirect, emerges through conditions and time, cannot be commanded.
Advantage: reliable for tasks with a clear causal path from intention to outcome.	Advantage: yields the deepest, most valued human experiences precisely because they cannot be faked or forced.

Limitation: applied to unwillable states, produces anxiety, self-consciousness, and paradoxically worse outcomes.

Limitation: offers no guarantees, requires tolerating uncertainty and the possibility the desired state never arrives.

The Two Realms Across Ten Life Domains

Falling in Love

- **Realm One** Deliberately arranging encounters, self-presentation, or 'making' oneself fall for a suitable partner rarely produces the felt experience of love; it produces performance.
- **Realm Two** Love arrives as something one finds oneself already inside of — noticed only after the fact, in the willingness to keep showing up honestly.

Marriage

- **Realm One** Choosing to marry, showing up for the ceremony, signing documents, keeping vows on difficult days — these are direct acts of will.
- **Realm Two** Feeling married in the fuller sense — trust, ease, the sense of a shared life — accrues slowly through lived time and cannot be commanded on the wedding day itself.

Friendship

- **Realm One** Initiating contact, scheduling time together, and choosing to be loyal in a crisis are willed acts.
- **Realm Two** The warmth, ease, and mutual recognition that make a friendship feel real emerge indirectly, through repeated unguarded contact, not through effort to feel close.

Career Decisions

- **Realm One** Applying, negotiating, showing up, doing the work — all directly willed.
- **Realm Two** A sense of vocation or fit — the feeling that the work is 'right' — tends to surface only in retrospect, after sustained engagement, and resists being manufactured by ambition alone.

Creativity

- **Realm One** Sitting down to write, practicing scales, opening the sketchbook — discipline and craft are realm-one acts.
- **Realm Two** Inspiration, the felt sense of a piece 'coming together,' or a genuine original idea cannot be commanded; forcing it usually produces something stiff and derivative instead.

Athletic Performance

- **Realm One** Training plans, repetitions, diet, and race-day preparation are realm-one.
- **Realm Two** 'Flow,' the sensation of the body moving without conscious interference, arrives only when the athlete stops trying to force it — over-willing in the moment of performance is precisely what produces choking.

Learning

- **Realm One** Attending class, doing problem sets, rehearsing vocabulary — willed effort.
- **Realm Two** Genuine understanding — the moment a concept 'clicks' — tends to arrive unbidden, often after the conscious effort has been set aside, in the shower or on a walk.

Leadership

- **Realm One** Setting agendas, making decisions, giving directives — direct exercises of will.
- **Realm Two** Being trusted, respected, or followed willingly by others cannot be commanded into existence; it is granted, over time, in response to demonstrated character.

Faith

- **Realm One** Attending services, practicing rituals, studying texts are willed disciplines.
- **Realm Two** Belief itself, the felt sense of conviction or grace, is famously resistant to being willed directly — a person who tries to force belief by sheer effort often produces only doubt about the effort.

Personal Growth

- **Realm One** Committing to therapy, setting goals, changing habits are realm-one acts of will.
- **Realm Two** Insight, self-acceptance, or genuine change in character tend to arrive as by-products of honest engagement with life, not as the direct target of willed self-improvement.

Part III — Twenty Psychological Pillars

The following pillars recur across Farber's essays. Each interacts with both realms of the will — some belong primarily to willed action, others to what can only be received, and several sit at the hinge between the two.

- **Freedom** The felt capacity to choose; Farber distinguishes freedom to act from the illusion of freedom to feel or believe on command.
- **Responsibility** Owning the consequences of realm-one choices while accepting that realm-two outcomes cannot be fully controlled or guaranteed.
- **Commitment** A sustained realm-one stance (continuing to show up) that gradually invites realm-two experience (a felt sense of belonging) to develop.
- **Trust** A disposition that cannot be forced into existence by decision alone; it is extended in small realm-one increments and either confirmed or betrayed over time.
- **Authenticity** Acting from one's actual state rather than a willed performance of the state one believes is expected.
- **Courage** The willingness to act (realm one) despite uncertainty about outcomes that cannot be willed (realm two).
- **Anxiety** Often produced by the confusion of realms — the panic that arises from trying to will something (sleep, love, calm) that only worsens under direct pressure.
- **Doubt** A realm-two state; it can be examined and acted around, but cannot simply be argued away by an act of will.
- **Desire** The undercurrent that motivates realm-one action, yet desire itself often changes shape only through indirect, lived experience.

- **Surrender** Not passivity, but the disciplined relinquishing of control over what cannot be willed — a precondition for realm-two experience to emerge.
- **Intention** The realm-one scaffolding — a stated aim — that sets the conditions under which realm-two outcomes become possible, without guaranteeing them.
- **Acceptance** Acknowledging the limits of will; distinguishing what can be changed by direct effort from what must simply be lived through.
- **Patience** The capacity to sustain realm-one effort without demanding an immediate realm-two payoff.
- **Character** The accumulated pattern of one's realm-one choices, which over time shapes what becomes available in realm two.
- **Identity** Partly chosen (realm one — roles, commitments) and partly discovered (realm two — the felt sense of who one has become).
- **Love** Farber's central case study of realm two: it can be enacted through willed fidelity, but the feeling itself cannot be summoned by decree.
- **Choice** The visible mechanism of realm one; its long-run meaning is only revealed through realm-two experience over time.
- **Meaning** Rarely found by searching for it directly; it tends to accrue as a by-product of committed engagement with people and work.
- **Self-Transcendence** Moments in which the self stops monitoring itself — the hallmark of successful realm-two experience, whether in prayer, love, or performance.
- **Moral Agency** The ongoing negotiation between what a person can be held responsible for choosing and what can only be hoped for, not commanded.

How the Pillars Interact in Major Decisions

In any major life decision, realm-one pillars (freedom, responsibility, commitment, courage, intention) determine what a person actually does — the visible, accountable choices. Realm-two pillars (trust, love, meaning, self-transcendence) determine how the decision is eventually experienced, often only becoming clear well after the choice is made. Pillars such as patience, acceptance, and character

operate at the hinge: they are cultivated through willed discipline (realm one) but their fruit — ease, wisdom, a settled sense of self — belongs to realm two. Confusing the two registers is, in Farber's account, the single most common source of unnecessary anguish in decision-making: demanding of oneself, by will, an outcome that only time and honest living can produce.

Part IV — Relationship Initiation and Spouse Choice

Applying Farber's Framework

- Hesitation despite genuine attraction often reflects the subterranean realm doing its own slower assessment — of safety, compatibility, or readiness — that has not yet been articulated consciously; it is not automatically a verdict against the relationship.
- Emotional uncertainty is frequently a second-realm phenomenon: the felt sense of 'rightness' cannot be willed into being on demand, no matter how logical the case for the relationship appears on paper.
- Fear tends to be diffuse and anticipatory — a general dread untethered to specific facts — while intuition tends to be specific, referencing particular behaviors, inconsistencies, or patterns actually observed in the other person.
- Healthy caution gathers information over time and remains open to revision as more is learned; avoidant attachment forecloses closeness reflexively, regardless of the partner's actual behavior or new evidence.
- Commitment is a realm-one, sustained stance across time; infatuation is a realm-two surge of feeling that can occur with or without the deeper compatibility that commitment requires.
- Attraction is often immediate and involuntary (realm two); long-term compatibility is assessed through accumulated, willed observation across varied circumstances (realm one).
- Timing and emotional readiness cannot be forced to match a partner's timeline; two people's realm-two processes frequently move at different

speeds, and this difference is not inherently a sign of incompatibility.

- Vulnerability is a realm-one choice (deciding to disclose, to depend) that creates the conditions under which realm-two trust can — but is not guaranteed to — develop.
- Trust cannot be demanded from oneself or extracted from a partner by argument; it accrues through repeated, verified small acts of reliability over time.
- Genuine commitment tends to develop gradually as realm-one fidelity (continuing to show up honestly) creates the conditions for realm-two conviction to emerge — rather than commitment being manufactured first through decision and feeling expected to instantly follow.

Comparison with Modern Relationship Psychology

Farber's second realm maps closely onto what contemporary attachment theory calls the felt sense of security — something attachment researchers agree cannot be willed directly but develops through consistent, responsive interaction over time (the same logic behind 'earned secure attachment'). His distinction between fear and intuition parallels current research on interoception and pattern recognition in relationship decision-making, which finds that specific, situationally anchored gut reactions are more diagnostic than diffuse anxiety. Where Farber differs from some strands of modern relationship advice is in his refusal to treat feelings of readiness as something to be hacked or accelerated — a caution against the more mechanistic strands of dating advice that treat commitment as a matter of applying the right technique.

Part V — The 60/100 Commitment Question

A woman a few months into a relationship feels approximately 60/100 committed while her boyfriend is already expressing strong affection, proposing cohabitation, and offering to help her buy a car. Farber's framework is useful here precisely because it resists a single verdict.

Could This Be the Subterranean or First-Order Realm at Work?

It is plausible that her measured 60/100 reflects an honest subterranean assessment still in progress — genuine affection paired with parts of her that have not yet gathered enough evidence to go further. It is equally plausible that 60/100 is simply an accurate, conscious report of where she actually is after a few months, requiring no unconscious explanation at all.

Alternative, Equally Plausible Explanations

- Healthy deliberation — a few months is a short baseline for major decisions like cohabitation, and moving deliberately is not evidence of a psychological problem.
- Differing relationship pace — partners frequently arrive at trust and readiness on different timelines without either pace being wrong.
- Attachment style — a more cautious or a more anxious style will each color the number differently without either one determining the relationship's actual prospects.
- Practical concerns — recent immigration, financial dependency, or logistical vulnerability (needing help with a car) can reasonably slow emotional commitment even when the relationship itself is going well.
- Insufficient information — 60/100 may simply reflect that she has not yet seen him across enough varied situations (conflict, stress, extended family, money) to know more.

When Hesitation Is Protective

Hesitation is protective when it corresponds to genuinely unresolved unknowns — untested reliability, mismatched values not yet discussed, or financial entanglement (like a car purchase) that could complicate an exit if the relationship does not work out. Protective hesitation typically comes with a willingness to keep gathering information rather than a flat refusal to engage further.

When Hesitation Becomes Excessive

Hesitation becomes counterproductive when it persists indefinitely regardless of new positive evidence, when it is driven by a general fear of closeness rather than anything specific to this partner, or when it prevents any forward movement even in low-stakes, reversible steps.

Distinguishing Fear, Intuition, Prudence, and Avoidance

Fear	Intuition
Diffuse, physical, present regardless of the partner's specific behavior.	Specific, tied to a particular observed inconsistency or pattern.
Tends to soften somewhat as trust-building evidence accumulates.	Tends to sharpen and become more articulate as more is observed.
Prudence keeps gathering information and remains genuinely open to a positive outcome.	Avoidance forecloses closeness regardless of the evidence presented.

What Additional Information Would Help

- How he responds to disagreement, stress, or her setting a boundary — not just how he behaves during pleasant moments.
- Whether the pace of his offers (cohabitation, a car) matches her expressed pace, or is pressuring her to move faster than she has said she is ready for.
- Her own reasons for the 60, articulated as specifically as possible — what would need to be true for it to become 70 or 80.
- Whether accepting financial help (the car) would create dependency that complicates her ability to freely choose later, independent of how the relationship develops.
- Input from her own support network and enough time living in her new circumstances (recent immigration, new job, new country) to know which feelings belong to the relationship and which belong to the broader transition.

Farber's framework cautions against two equally tempting errors: assuming her hesitation is automatically unconscious wisdom that should be obeyed without examination, and assuming that moving quickly to match his enthusiasm is

automatically healthier. Neither speed is inherently correct; what matters is whether her pace is genuinely her own, examined and chosen, rather than either paralysis or capitulation to someone else's timeline.

Part VI — Major Life Decisions

For each domain below, the willed (realm one) and the received (realm two) dimensions of the decision are named side by side.

- **Choosing a Spouse** Realm one: vetting, deciding, proposing. Realm two: the growth of an unforced sense of rightness that cannot be rushed by will and is often only legible in hindsight.
- **Marriage** Realm one: the daily choice to remain loyal and attentive. Realm two: intimacy and ease, which develop as a consequence of sustained realm-one fidelity rather than as its precondition.
- **Divorce** Realm one: the decision and legal process. Realm two: the felt sense of closure or grief resolution, which follows its own timeline regardless of how decisively the decision was made.
- **Career Selection** Realm one: applying, training, choosing an offer. Realm two: the sense of vocation, which frequently arrives only after years inside a field, not before.
- **Retirement** Realm one: the decision to stop working and structure new time. Realm two: a renewed sense of identity and purpose, which cannot be scheduled and often requires patiently living through disorientation first.
- **Entrepreneurship** Realm one: launching, iterating, persisting. Realm two: product-market fit and genuine customer trust, which cannot be forced by conviction alone.
- **Immigration** Realm one: the decision to relocate and the logistics of the move. Realm two: the felt sense of belonging in a new country, which arrives slowly and unevenly, often well after the paperwork is settled.
- **Choosing Where to Live** Realm one: comparing cities, costs, and practicalities. Realm two: the sense of a place feeling like home, discovered only through lived time there.

- **Selecting Close Friends** Realm one: initiating and maintaining contact. Realm two: depth of trust, which cannot be willed into being on a first meeting no matter how much one wants it.
- **Choosing Mentors** Realm one: seeking out and approaching potential mentors. Realm two: the resonance and rapport that make a mentorship generative, which either develops or does not.
- **Building a Professional Network** Realm one: outreach, follow-up, showing up to events. Realm two: genuine goodwill and reciprocity, which accumulate slowly and cannot be manufactured by networking effort alone.
- **Financial Decisions** Realm one: budgeting, saving rates, asset allocation. Realm two: peace of mind about money, which often lags behind the numbers and must be lived into rather than calculated into.
- **Health Decisions** Realm one: adherence to treatment, exercise, diet. Realm two: the body's actual response and recovery timeline, which does not obey willpower and requires patience alongside discipline.

Part VII — Twenty-Two Practical Guidelines

For wisely integrating both realms of the will across love, career, money, and character.

1. **Name which realm you are in** — Before acting, ask whether the outcome you want is something you can directly produce (realm one) or something that can only be allowed to develop (realm two).
2. **Do not will the unwillable** — Trying to force love, sleep, faith, or calm by sheer effort tends to produce anxiety and its opposite; redirect effort toward the conditions that make the state possible.
3. **Act decisively where will is effective** — In realm one — showing up, committing time, keeping agreements — indecision itself becomes a source of unnecessary suffering.
4. **Separate the decision from the feeling** — You can commit to a course of action before you feel fully resolved about it; the feeling often follows the commitment, not the reverse.

5. **Distrust manufactured certainty** — A feeling of total conviction produced under pressure (from a partner, a deadline, a sales pitch) deserves more scrutiny, not less.
6. **Give realm-two outcomes time** — Trust, vocation, and belonging typically need months or years of lived experience before they can be honestly assessed.
7. **Use small, reversible commitments to gather data** — Where possible, structure major decisions (moving in together, changing careers) with intermediate steps that yield real information before the point of no return.
8. **Watch for the difference between fear and intuition** — Fear tends to be diffuse, physical, and present regardless of specifics; intuition tends to track specific, nameable details in the situation.
9. **Treat hesitation as data, not a verdict** — Slow emotional pacing is information to be investigated, not automatically proof of unconscious wisdom or automatically a flaw to be overridden.
10. **Beware of urgency imposed by another person** — A partner's timeline, a recruiter's deadline, or a market's hype cycle is not evidence about what is actually true for you.
11. **Practice patience without passivity** — Waiting for realm-two clarity does not mean doing nothing; continue realm-one engagement (spending time together, doing the work) while withholding premature conclusions.
12. **Keep integrity between word and action** — Let your realm-one commitments (what you say and promise) match what you are actually willing to do, or trust erodes on both sides.
13. **Cultivate self-awareness as ongoing practice** — Regularly check whether a stated desire is your own or borrowed from a partner, family, or social expectation.
14. **Distinguish discernment from avoidance** — Genuine discernment gathers new information and narrows uncertainty over time; avoidance stalls indefinitely without ever gathering the information needed to decide.
15. **Allow courage to precede confidence** — In most major decisions, acting bravely comes before feeling certain, not after; waiting for total certainty is

itself a decision — usually to stay put.

16. **Honor long-term thinking over immediate relief** — A decision that resolves short-term anxiety (accepting help, moving quickly) is not automatically the same as one that serves long-term flourishing.
17. **Do not confuse generosity with obligation** — A partner's financial or practical help is worth appreciating on its own terms, without treating it as proof of readiness for a bigger commitment.
18. **Invest in learning through direct experience** — Skills, relationships, and vocations are best evaluated by doing them, not by reasoning about them in the abstract.
19. **Lead by example rather than assertion** — In leadership and mentorship, trust is earned through consistent realm-one behavior, not commanded through realm-two claims about one's own trustworthiness.
20. **Build friendships through repetition, not intensity** — Frequent, low-stakes contact over time builds deeper trust than a few emotionally intense encounters.
21. **Protect emotional regulation under pressure** — In moments of high stakes (a proposal, a job offer, a big financial ask), slow the pace of the decision deliberately rather than letting adrenaline set the timeline.
22. **Revisit major decisions periodically, not obsessively** — Set specific checkpoints to reassess a major commitment rather than either ignoring doubt indefinitely or re-litigating the decision daily.

Part VIII — A Compassionate Letter

Dear friend,

I wanted to write you something steady, not advice about what to decide, but a way of thinking about where you already are.

You've described your feeling for him as about 60 out of 100. I don't think that number needs fixing or explaining away. There's a useful way of thinking about the will — the part of us that decides and acts — that says it works in two very different registers. In one register, will works directly: you can decide to call him,

to spend the weekend together, to be honest about how you feel. That part is fully within your power, today, right now.

In the other register, will doesn't work directly at all. Feeling fully ready, feeling certain, feeling that unmistakable sense of 'this is right' — none of that can be produced by deciding to feel it, any more than you can decide to fall asleep faster by trying harder. That part of you is still gathering information, quietly, in its own time, and it will not be rushed by his timeline, or by how kind and generous he is being, or even by your own wish to be further along than you are.

So it's worth separating two questions that can easily get tangled together. The first is: what do you want to do right now — keep spending time together, keep talking honestly, keep noticing how he behaves not just when things are easy but when they're hard? That part is yours to choose today. The second is: when will you feel fully sure? That part isn't answerable on demand, and trying to force an answer to it usually just produces anxiety rather than clarity.

His offers — moving in together, help with a car — come from real affection, and it's fair to appreciate that without feeling obligated by it. Practical help and emotional readiness are two different things; one doesn't have to prove the other. If accepting help would tie you to a decision you haven't actually made yet, it's entirely reasonable to say so plainly, and to let your own pace determine what you accept and when.

Moving faster is not braver, and moving slower is not wiser — only your own honest observation over time can tell you which one fits what's actually true between you. Trust, when it's real, tends to arrive the way most things worth having arrive: gradually, through ordinary days, not through any single conversation or gesture, however generous.

Take the time you need. It isn't indecision — it's the only way anything real gets to become real.

With warmth,

Part IX — The Ways of the Will: Thematic Overview

The Ways of the Will (1966; revised and expanded 1976) collects Farber's essays into a sustained argument about the limits and proper domain of human willing. Rather than a conventional linear argument built chapter by chapter toward a single conclusion, the book is better understood as a set of interlocking essays that return to the same core distinction — willed versus received experience — from different clinical and cultural angles. A note on precision: because editions of the book vary in essay ordering and Farber's original journal publications sometimes predate their inclusion in the collection, readers should treat any numbered 'chapter list' with caution and consult the specific edition's own table of contents for exact sequencing.

Major Themes

- The titular essay, 'The Two Realms of the Will,' functions as the book's conceptual anchor — the other essays largely apply or extend its distinction to specific clinical and cultural phenomena.
- A sustained critique of what Farber saw as an American cultural overreach — the belief that any inner state (happiness, sexual desire, sleep, self-esteem) can and should be engineered through enough willpower, technique, or expertise.
- Clinical essays on despair, on the psychology of lying, and on states such as obsession and addiction, read as case studies in what happens when a person tries to will a second-realm outcome directly and instead produces its opposite.
- An abiding concern with dialogue and relationship, echoing Buber, in which authentic contact with another person is treated as a second-realm event that willed technique (charm, persuasion, manipulation) can only ever simulate, not produce.

Key Arguments and Clinical Observations

Farber repeatedly draws on his clinical experience to show that patients who arrive determined to will themselves into a cure often make their symptoms worse by over-monitoring themselves — the insomniac who cannot stop trying to fall asleep, the anxious patient who cannot stop trying to will away anxiety. His clinical

stance was to help patients recognize which parts of their suffering they were, in fact, responsible for and could change directly, and which parts required the harder discipline of patient, unforced living.

Relationship to Existential Psychology and Psychotherapy

Farber's work sits alongside the broader mid-century existential-psychiatric project of writers like Ludwig Binswanger and Rollo May, sharing their concern with authentic being-in-the-world rather than symptom reduction alone. Where he diverges from some existentialists is in his sustained, almost legalistic attention to the will specifically as the hinge concept — asking not simply 'how should one live authentically' but 'what, precisely, can be willed, and what cannot.'

Comparative Notes

Comparison Figure / Framework	Point of Contact with Farber
Meaning is found through freely choosing one's response to suffering — an act of will exercised even under constraint.	Meaning is largely a second-realm by-product of engaged living, rarely found by directly searching for it.
Love is an act of will and commitment sustained over time, deliberately chosen daily.	Love as felt experience is second-realm; the willed fidelity Rollo May emphasizes is what Farber would call its realm-one scaffolding.
Genuine relatedness (productive love, in Fromm's terms) is a discipline and an art that can be practiced and improved.	Farber would agree with the discipline but insist the felt union itself remains beyond direct command.
Unconditional positive regard creates conditions for a client's own growth, which the therapist cannot force.	Closely parallel to Farber's second realm — growth cannot be willed by the therapist, only made possible.
Secure attachment is built through consistent, responsive caregiving over time, not decided in a single moment.	A close empirical cousin of Farber's second realm applied to relational security.

Strengths and Criticisms

- Strength: the two-realms distinction is clinically intuitive and maps cleanly onto later empirical findings about ironic process and ego-depletion, giving it lasting explanatory power.
- Strength: the essayistic, humane prose makes psychological insight accessible without reducing it to technique or checklist.
- Criticism: the essays are less systematic than later cognitive or attachment-based frameworks, and Farber offers relatively little in the way of concrete, replicable clinical method.
- Criticism: as a product of mid-century psychoanalytic culture, some of his illustrative material and assumptions about gender and relationships reflect the era in which he wrote and benefit from a contemporary reader's critical eye.

How 'The Two Realms of the Will' Fits the Larger Book

The titular essay functions as the interpretive key for the entire collection: once a reader grasps the distinction between what can be willed directly and what can only be allowed, the book's other essays on despair, lying, addiction, and dialogue all read as extended case studies applying that single distinction to different corners of human suffering and flourishing.

Part X — Reading Recommendations

By Leslie Farber

- *The Ways of the Will: Essays Toward a Psychology and Psychopathology of Will* (1966; expanded edition 1976) — his central collection, including the title essay.
- *Lying, Despair, Jealousy, Envy, Sex, Suicide, Drugs, and the Good Life* (1976) — a later collection extending the same concerns to specific moral-psychological states.

Essays and Secondary Discussion

- Retrospective essays and reviews of Farber's work have appeared periodically in psychoanalytic and literary journals; searching library databases (JSTOR, PEP-Web) for 'Leslie Farber' and 'will' surfaces the most reliable secondary commentary.

Authors with a Similar Perspective

- Rollo May — *Love and Will and The Courage to Create*, on will, love, and creativity from an existential-psychological standpoint.
- Viktor Frankl — *Man's Search for Meaning*, on meaning as discovered through engagement rather than willed directly.
- Erich Fromm — *The Art of Loving*, treating love as a discipline that can be practiced even though the deeper union remains beyond direct command.
- Martin Buber — *I and Thou*, the dialogical philosophy underlying Farber's view of authentic relatedness.
- William James — *The Will to Believe*, an earlier philosophical treatment of the limits of belief as a willed act.
- Ernest Becker — *The Denial of Death*, on the limits of willed control over anxiety and mortality.

Modern Psychology on Related Themes

- Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi — *Flow*, on the self-defeating effect of over-monitoring during peak performance, an empirical cousin of Farber's second realm.
- Attachment-theory literature (e.g., work building on Bowlby and Ainsworth) on how felt security develops through consistent interaction rather than decision.
- Daniel Wegner's research on ironic process theory, offering empirical support for Farber's claim that direct effort to suppress or force a mental state often backfires.

Closing Summary

Farber's enduring contribution is a simple but rarely honored distinction: some things respond to effort, and some things only respond to time, honesty, and the willingness to stop demanding a guaranteed outcome. In long-term relationships, career decisions, and other life-defining commitments, the recurring source of unnecessary suffering is not usually a lack of willpower — it is misapplying willpower to something that was never going to yield to it. Knowing which realm a given struggle belongs to is, in itself, most of the work.