

**Book II, Endnote 44. On Potential Fire and Entelecheia/Energieia  
(Line by Line Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima Eugene T.  
Gendlin, © 2012 PDF Page 272 (b))**

Aristotle says that “fuel doesn’t burn itself from itself.” In order to burn, the fuel needs “**actually existing** (entelecheia) fire.” Wood contains potential fire, but no actually existing fire.

Already in II-4 we saw that the elements in a living body are not quite themselves since they don’t move in opposite directions as they would if they were actually existing. The flesh is a mixture. In what Aristotle calls “mixture” the elements are not actually there; they are only potential. (See ENDNOTE 40. The hot and dry of fire do exist in wood, but not in the extremes of hot and dry which are fire. Therefore fire is present in it only potentially. To heat up the wood to the extreme heat which is fire, you need actually existing fire.

Fire does not have a first actuality, a kind of entelecheia that may be not in act, like knowledge or like the powers of the soul. When fire **actually** exists, it burns.

Aristotle says that actual (entelecheia) fire is needed to kindle the wood. He always uses entelecheia when he argues that something must **already actually exist** in order to cause something else. In the Metaphysics XII he refers to the nous of the universe as “energeia” many times, but the word “entelecheia” is used where Aristotle argues that a substance must **actually exist** in order to cause anything else (XII-5, 1071a36). That is also the relevance here of needing actually existing fire.

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**Focusing at Thinking in Movement Studio reference pages ~ comments welcome:**

\* Reading Group: Line-by-Line Commentary on Aristotle's De Anima Eugene T. Gendlin, Ph.D. ©2012 [https://thinkinginmovement.ca/focusing\\_principles/gendlin-on-aristotles-de-anima/](https://thinkinginmovement.ca/focusing_principles/gendlin-on-aristotles-de-anima/)

\* Reading Group: Mike McCullough "Self Organizing of Growing and Perceiving" Gendlin-Aristotle in relation to S. Kauffman and R.D. Ellis <https://thinkinginmovement.ca/mike-mccullough-self-organizing-of-growing-and-perceiving-2022/>

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