



New Life Course

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New Life Course

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INTRODUCTION

Life for most people has evolved to the point where we find ourselves stuck with few choices. Life is stressful because we find ourselves unsatisfied with the way we feel, doing things most of the time that we don't really want to do, and not achieving the things we actually want to achieve. As individuals we tend to get swallowed up. There has to be a better way.

You can have a new life. A life revised in small but crucial ways - OR - perhaps you will totally change the way things have been up to now. You choose. No one else can decide for you the right way to make a new life. But first you need to know just who you really are and to shed the conditioning imposed on you by decades of conforming to other peoples' expectations and other peoples' interpretations.

It is possible to find out what your true goals in life are and to attain those goals. It is possible to recognize what your problems really are and to fix those problems for good. Unlimited possibilities then open up for you. Most of us struggle on. We do everything but change our minds. Only a few realize that the path of improvement means changing ourselves. Those who have this realization - and act on it - gain what others can only dream about. All you have to lose is whatever stands in your way. Nothing will change unless you do.

The *New Life Course* is based on principles that have helped thousands of people, endorsed by experts over the centuries. A step by step approach is followed throughout to help you uncover the self-imposed barriers to self-knowledge and freedom of expression and action.

How the Course is Organized

The *New Life Course* will teach a series of concepts and techniques to form a complete program. The course is designed to smoothly and gradually develop your mental resources. The wide range of topics will be presented in progressive series of exercises which continue as threads throughout the course:

The lessons are organized into five threads: A, B, C, D and E. Each Lesson contains a set of new techniques, with explanatory theory and a series of practical exercises to master the techniques, and of course you can work through the lesson over whatever period you prefer.

A. Tools for Thought

Tools for Thought introduces a range of mental skills which open up new ways of understanding. To achieve anything you need skills and abilities. Tools for Thought teaches you the skills and abilities of the mind - thinking skills. It deals with problem solving. With Tools for Thought you get to be a master of problems. But there is more in life than we are fully aware of. Have you ever heard stories of people who paid attention to an internal voice - even if they had never heard it before - and its message saved their lives? In more mundane affairs, have you noticed how successful people seem to know - even if there is no reason for it - what to do? You can learn about intuition and gain these valuable secrets.

B. High Performance Living

High Performance Living teaches life skills - ways to help you organize your life better and be more successful (or even more successful). We need to know how we can reduce our stress and be more capable. Whereas Tools for Thought helps us to develop practical mental skills, High Performance Living helps us to use skills in the real world of actions and reactions: to develop our self-esteem, become more assertive and more able to communicate effectively.

C. Psycho-Linguistics

This thread helps you to undo patterns of behavior which are linked to the use and misuse of language. Psycho-Linguistics examines the ways that language impacts upon our psychology - upon the ways that we think, feel and act. We learn about language, and how it affects our feelings and perception. How we can clarify language and use it persuasively. Language is what makes us uniquely human. By mastering language, rather than being its slave, we can be in greater control of our thoughts, interpersonal relationships and our ability to understand written and spoken messages. When issues become muddled and upsets or disagreements occur, it is valuable to be able to analyze just what is going on.

D. Polarity Integration

The Polarity Integration thread offers a sequence of practical techniques to break down the barriers which block communication between different parts of our mind, and rebalance the mind to integrate left-brain beliefs with right-brain feelings. Whilst High Performance Living deals with how the self relates to the outside world, Polarity Integration deals with relationships within the mind and resolves conflicts within the self. Polarities are opposites, one thing against another. The conflicts between different

parts of the mind (such as fixed ideas, emotional upsets, beliefs or decisions) are forces which lead us to do what we'd rather not do, or not to do what we'd like to do.

E. Concentration & Meditation

We need to learn how to confront our minds and our lives with equanimity and understanding, and to resolve those parts of ourselves that we have kept secret for so long. The ability to focus the mind, easily and at will, in different directions and at the same time to be openly receptive to new information is the mental skill that Concentration & Meditation teaches. Learn to focus the mind sufficiently to deal with mental conflicts and to enhance the faculty of imagination as a tool for enlightenment. All the threads interrelate, but this thread deals with important skills which are essential for full development.

We hope that your study of these materials derived from many sources will enable you to live a new and better life. And that it will be a great preparation for your future development, both mentally, spiritually and in worldly achievement.

We know that you will achieve your goals because the information and techniques contained in this course are based on the best of what is workable. You do not need to spend a lifetime searching and experimenting. You do not have to buy books or to attend a myriad of seminars. You have it all here.

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Lesson 1A - Tools for Thought

Topics: Problem Solving; Handling Upsets

The mark of a successful individual is not whether or not they have problems. **It is whether or not they have the same problems they had last year!** In other words, do they understand problems? And are they solving them? Or are they just worrying and fretting and doing nothing? Everybody has problems. Whenever we have a goal, there are barriers to achieving that goal. The goal blocked by the barrier is a problem. Overcoming the barrier and attaining the goal is the game of life. This is also called problem solving. Without problems as challenges, life would be boring indeed! Problems are the essence of life. They are fun. Difficulties arise when you are at the effect of a problem - when a-problem-has-you, not when you-have-a-problem.

When a **problem has you**, you don't realize that you made it. You don't know that you, and only you, have to do something about the problem - that is, if you want to solve it. You are waiting for something to happen or someone else to solve the problem for you, or for it to fizzle out. You aren't solving the problem. And it isn't fun. This is also called not taking responsibility and being at effect.

When **you have a problem**, you know that you made it because you wanted something - you have a goal - and there are always barriers to attaining every goal. So you have a goal opposed by a barrier - a problem! So you know you have to do something about the problem - the goal opposed by the barriers. You have to overcome the barriers and get to the goal. And you have to do it (no one else can). And you are doing it! You are solving the problem. And it's fun! This is also called taking responsibility and being at cause.

There are always problems in life. The question is are you going **to-have-problems** or are problems going **to-have-you**? This lesson teaches you how to-have-problems, and stop problems-having-you. But first you need to identify the problems in your life. There are inevitably lots of them!

The technique on the next page will help you identify problems in your life that you may not even be aware of, perhaps because you have just got so accustomed to them..

Identifying Problems

| | | |
|------------------|----------------|----------------------|
| Doing | 1 | 3 |
| Not Doing | 2 | 4 |
| | Want to | Don't Want to |

First, sketch out on paper a set of boxes as above, to fill a page. Then do the following:

Step 1. Ask yourself the following questions:

- 1. "What are you doing in your life that you want to do?"** Write the answer in box number 1.
- 2. "What are you not-doing in your life that you want to do?"** In other words, what do you wish you were doing and are nevertheless not doing? Write the answer in box number 2.
- 3. "What are you doing in your life that you do-not want to?"** Write your answer in box number 3.
- 4. "What are you not-doing in your life that you do-not want to do?"** Write your answer in box number 4.

Question 4 identifies those things that a person really does not want to do and therefore is not making a part of his life. For example, he does not want to work for somebody else, and in this way he limits his options.

Step 2. Ask yourself these questions several times, one after the other, until you have run out of answers. Write each answer in the appropriate box.

Step 3. Underline the answers that you have written down in boxes 2 and 3. These are the problem areas of your life. Box 4 may also represent an unresolved problem. With this data you will be able to take action on the real underlying source of the problems.

Note: If lack of energy is a problem, realize that you can promote mental fitness by becoming physically fit, and exercise gives you more energy not less. Also, you can talk yourself into exhaustion; most people are about as tired as they make up their minds to be.

If you have practical problems, take action to resolve the problem, rather than worry and complain about things. If you need help in resolving a problem, the following procedure will assist you.

Practical Problem Solver

Introduction

Use the Practical Problem Solver to discover the root of problems so you can dig them out for good. You can solve problems by resolving their opposing intentions, because intention versus counter-intention is what makes a problem. And if this root is removed, there isn't a problem.

This procedure will deal with the conflicts making the problem, and take your attention off the problem. After completing the first 3 stages of the Practical Problem Solver, you will do stage 4. This is a step by step method of implementing the solutions discovered in the first 3 stages.

What are problems?

A problem consists of equal and opposite forces which are held in stasis. Two equal forces, wants, intentions, etc, meet head-on and both stop each other. For example:

"I must leave, but I cannot go",
 "I should do it, but I don't want to", or
 "I ought to stay, but I really should leave".

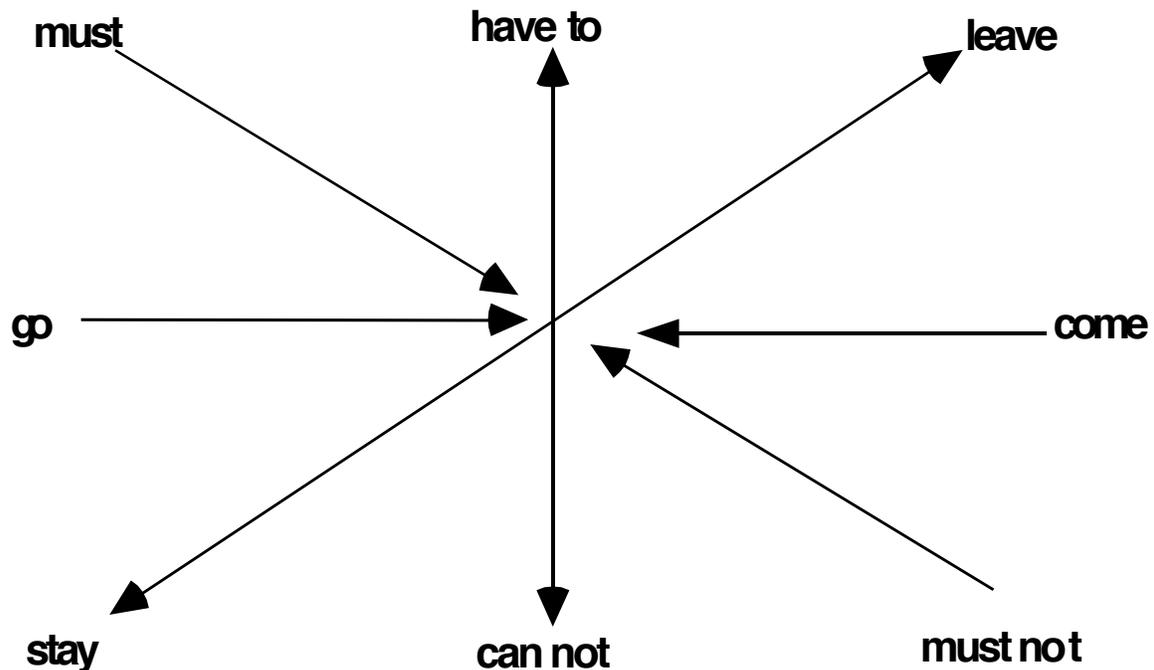
These dilemmas arise as the result of underlying conflicts that depth analysis reveals to have their roots in trauma. You may be blissfully unaware there are these conflicts.

Your conscious mind may hide these conflicts from awareness creating a form of mental blindness. Mental blindness results in us having belief systems with hidden contradictions.

For example, people can work in the armament industry, yet go to Church on Sunday, praying for "peace and good will to all men". They are unaware of the conflicts or they cover them with rationalizations and explanations which sound good. This type of behavior results from mental blindness. At their core are conflicting beliefs rooted in traumatic incidents. The contradictory elements of a belief are kept separate. Depending on the situation - at work or in church - the people may be aware of one or the other parts of the belief, but not both at the same time.

The following diagram illustrates the conflict structure described above:

The anatomy of problems:



When any two equal forces oppose each other, they are held in stasis. This is the basic mechanism of all problems. To resolve such problems, you have to examine the opposite forces, and unbalance one side or the other, so the hidden contradictions

emerge. At that point, you change your belief or viewpoint. No one can believe two contradictory things at the same time! The problem then vanishes, or you discover the optimum solution. Problems, unwanted conditions, exist only because they contain a hidden lie - contradictions. Therefore, when you discover the lie, the problem disappears.

How to solve problems

The Practical Problem Solver is a powerful method of unbalancing the vectors of a problem. When you unbalance the problem the opposing forces are unfrozen and the conflicting beliefs (the problem) are revealed. This brings them into awareness, so you can find practical solution. After completing this procedure a few times, your life will become more focused. You will make more sense of your experiences and begin to get your life together. You will realize that life is full of problems and solving life-problems is what makes life fun. If you have a problem or situation which is too tangled, or too misty and vague to solve in one go, you will need to repeat the Practical Problem Solver procedure for each of the major elements. Each time you will take a further step towards the complete resolution of the problem. You will be more responsible and have more fun playing the game of life!

The 4 stages of the Practical Problem Solver:

Stage 1- Clarifying the Problem

Step 1. Write down examples of problems, as they come into your mind. These problems could be behavioral problems. For example, overeating, shyness, procrastination, lack of confidence, etc. Relationship problems, such as with boyfriends, girlfriends or relatives, etc. Or situational problems. For example, unhappiness at work, lack of money, various forms of personal dilemmas, etc.

For example, list:

All the things you do that you wish you didn't.

All the things you do not do, that you wish you did.

List the problems you have with people. Things which make you worry.

List the problems you have in certain situations. For example:

At work; at home; with friends; in shops; etc.

The idea is to get a list of problems. (In truth these are a confused list of what you want in life). Now remember that life is full of problems, so don't worry if this is a big list.

Step 2. From the problems that you have written down in Step 1, select several which seem to have a common thread between them. You may notice that some problems seem to be related in some way. For example, something that always happens with relationships with the opposite sex, or with authority figures. You may notice a sequence of events, such as 'Whenever something seems to go well, then I always do something to spoil it.' On the other hand, you might notice a general principle. For example, 'I never get what I want.' Or 'I always fail to say what I think.' Don't worry too much about this. You may notice that there seems to be a thread going through several problems and you can group these together. When you do this you can dig out the root of all the problems, and save yourself dealing with them one by one. So it's a bonus!

Step 3. Describe what is the result that you consider to be a problem, or describe the situation. For example, getting fat is the result of eating - getting fat is the apparent problem. The boss interfering and making the staff nervous, and you getting angry is a description of the situation. These are not really the problem. They are the result of the problem. For example, being broke isn't the problem. It's how you got that way which leads to the real problem. And, at root, a problem is two conflicting opposites!

Step 4. Ask yourself the following questions:

1. What sort of problems are these? For example, problems with eating, problems with relatives, problems with study. Try to find the common thread in these problems.
2. What is the essence of them? Remember a problem is one thing opposing another. The essence is stating what is opposing what. For example wanting to be enthusiastic about my wife's interests, but finding them so boring!
3. How would you describe this group of problems in a nutshell (one sentence)? Write down these descriptions, as you may need them later.

Step 5. Imagine how things would be, if the extreme opposite of these problems were the case. For example, the opposite problem to overeating would be anorexia; opposite

to being shy would be being exhibitionistic; opposite to being rejected would be being completely and overwhelmingly sought after.

Examples of how to work out the opposites:

| Problem: | Opposite: |
|---|---|
| Want X but have to have Y | Don't want X but cannot have Y |
| Want to eat less, but have to eat more. | Don't want to eat less, but cannot eat more. (Wanting to eat more, but cannot eat more) |
| Want to be extroverted, but have to be shy. | Don't want to be extroverted but cannot help being extroverted. (Wanting to be shy, but cannot help being extroverted.) |
| Want to go forward, but unable to move. | Don't want to go forward, but cannot help moving. (Wanting to stop, but cannot stop.) |

Note: Do not write an alternative side of the same problem, because that would not be the opposite problem, but rather the complementary or the way you would like things to be. For example, a man drives along a very narrow road until he finds his way blocked, by a vehicle coming the other way. His problem is that he cannot go forwards. The complementary statement would be that the other car will not go backwards; the way you'd like it to be is that the car reverses to make way for him. The opposite problem to the road being blocked would be being unable to stop going forwards - because of no brakes, etc.

So, imagine what it would be like having the opposite problem. Really get into this. If you want to be more outgoing but instead tend to be very shy, imagine - using all senses - what it would be like 'wanting to be more shy, but can't stop being outgoing.'

Doing this step can help to release the problem. The idea is to discover some hidden beliefs that you might not have thought were there but which are in fact the real cause of the problem. In the last example, perhaps the belief that shyness is a virtue. So you're looking for beliefs which have previously been suppressed by you, since behind

every worrisome problem there is a lie - some false information, unrealistic assumption or conflicting belief or goal - below the surface of consciousness, which is the real cause of the internal conflict.

Stage 2 - Stretch Your Mind

There are two traps you may encounter in problem solving:

1. The trap of imagination.

You can think of the mind divided into the Thinker and the Prover. Whatever the Thinker thinks, the Prover proves. This is also called the self-fulfilling prophesy.

For example, if you think you are unpopular, then you will look around and find proof that you are unpopular. Whatever you believe, you will find some evidence for.

You may even find convincing evidence! Determine what the opposite of the problem is, and just as an experiment, look around for evidence for this. You will find it. For example, if you believe you are shy, look around and find evidence for being outgoing. You will find it.

The Prover will prove it to you! Do you see how this can lead you to believe things that just aren't so? Or are no more true than the opposite? Question 2 in the next step, helps to deal with this issue, as did step 5 in the last stage.

You might say, "It is not my imagination which confirms the problem exists. It is hard facts." Yes, the situation exists, but another might not perceive it as a problem, maybe more as a challenge. So what is being imagined or added to the picture which makes it a problem causing stress and worry?

2. The intelligence trap.

You get into a think, think, think! Off you go thinking of cats and kings and many odd things! You just don't get around to thinking about the issue at hand. One way to deal with this is to stop thinking and look around in the physical world and find something like the thing you are thinking about. Then find something different. Keep your awareness on the physical world and if these thoughts occur, then compare and contrast them with things in the physical world. Keep in present time. If an image occurs, compare it with something, say a table, and note how it is similar and how it is

different from the table. Where possible, find something which really is similar, or different, but if you can't, note the similarity in size, color, shape, or whatever. Peep at the physical object, then peep at the image in your mind. (Remember that technically an image can be any sense - sound, feeling, taste-smell, not just a picture.) Continue until you feel good about the image, and the images go away.

This is a good technique in its own right. The left brain often fabricates a picture of reality which is not objective, including rationalizations, justifications, assumptions and other distorted thinking. Actual perceptions are a right-brain faculty and the right brain by its nature cannot lie.

Step 1. Return to the presenting problem and ask yourself the following questions:

1. What do these problems make you feel like doing?
2. Suppose there were no controls, inhibitions or limitations on your abilities, what would you do? Give your imagination free rein here!

Note: You may ask, "What is the point of imagining I have unlimited power to solve my problem, if in reality I don't?" There may be a perceived limitation of ability which is not realistic and this is intended to uncover that inhibition and get the feeling of being able to do it.

Remember, all games have freedoms and barriers - without the barriers it would no longer be a game (or fun). What game are you playing?

Step 2. Ask yourself:

What would be an entirely different kind of problem?

Just go wild here and think of as many problems as you can which are completely different and unrelated to the ones you are considering.

Note: Quite often people have a shortage of problems and therefore don't want to lose the ones they have, so to find out that they can create new ones just at will remedies this. What things in your life - which are realistic - could you make into a problem, that you don't perceive that way now?

Stage 3 - Solving the Problem

Write the following down, as you think of possible answers. You can alternate asking yourself one question and then the other, or list answers to each:

1. Something which solving the problem definitely does-not-depend-on.
2. Something that the problem definitely does-depend-on.

Asking these questions will make you aware of your hidden problem-solving resources. What is preventing you being, doing and having the things which will resolve the problem? What needs to be changed?

For example, if the problem is overeating, then you might think:

- * It depends on eating less.
- * It doesn't depend on getting the car serviced.
- * It depends on the richness of the food.
- * It doesn't depend on the color knitting wool I buy.
- * It depends on the degree of self-control I have.
- * It doesn't depend on the weather.

But wait a minute! Might it depend on getting more exercise? And isn't the car related to this? And the color of the knitting wool for a jersey to fit a new slim body - might this be a solution? Be creative! Let me tell you something: none of your answers will be totally unrelated to solving your problem.

Repeat these questions for each problem that you have written down in Step 2 of Stage 1. Have fun finding these resources you never knew you had!

I once asked a very prim lady who had problems getting enough sex with her husband what she would definitely not do to solve the problem. She said: "Well, I definitely wouldn't ..." And she looked at me right in the eyes. And I looked back at her. She grinned. I grinned. She laughed. So did I. She went home and solved her problem. I didn't ask her what she did. She found the necessary resource within what she would definitely not do to solve the problem! Discover what resources you can find!

Stage 4 - Review

Step 1. Review all the forgoing with a sort of floating awareness. Let your eyes go out of focus and go a bit woozy as you let the ideas float through your mind, without especially thinking or planning. Let the ideas dance and twirl in a sort of dance. Be in a day-dreamy state as you let the images move. Jot down any ideas which come to you.

Step 2. Then, write down a list of some 10 or 15 things that you can actually go ahead and do towards solving the problems.

If you find it helpful, make models or sketches of the ideas you have had at Stage 4. This improves visualization, thus aiding insight into the nature of a problem.

Sometimes we can miss the underlying and unstated problem in a situation and try to apply solutions to obvious symptoms, rather than root causes. The following anecdote illustrates this:

A teacher walked into her classroom and found a big puddle on the floor. She called the caretaker and he mopped it up. The next day, there was another puddle in the same place. She called the caretaker and he mopped it up again. When she walked in the third morning and found another puddle, she called the maintenance man and asked him to take care of the puddle. When he appeared, he didn't have a mop. The teacher asked, "How are you going to mop up the puddle?" He just said, "I'm not. I'm going to mend the leak!"

The question you should ask yourself is how have you been mopping up the floor? That is, which symptom have you concentrated on, rather than the cause?

The second question you should ask yourself is how are you going to mend the leak? In other words, how are you going to start to solve the actual problem?

But don't forget, when you have dealt with the cause of the leak, you may still have to mop up the puddle! Take these questions seriously. They are a reminder to make sure you have kept on course with the Practical Problem Solver.

Write down: **I am going to ...** These are your solution steps. Try to put them in a logical sequence and check you have listed every step. When you have written them down, they can be modeled or demonstrated, or illustrated with a diagram or flow chart, if you wish to test them before they are implemented in reality.

How can I be sure that the solutions I list are the right ones? You can be fairly sure if the solutions apply an insight which opens a new view for you of the situation, one that you didn't have before, so that it seems for you now the problem can be solved.

How can I be sure that this problem is not a symptom of another problem? (i.e.. using the example of the school teacher, what if the school had no caretaker for her to call on?) The perceived problem at the start may well turn out to have an underlying problem, and when that appears it's best to continue to look at that instead.

What if I cannot recognize the real problem because it is something not accessible to my conscious mind? What if what I suspect is the problem is not really it? Well, that's just what this procedure is aiming to uncover. What new approach could you adopt that's more true to your goals and beliefs and anything else that you have discovered so far, that you weren't so conscious of before?

If during the above exercise you come across an experience or situation that you find upsetting - which makes you feel sad, depressed, afraid or angry - please do the following Dealing With Upsets procedure.

Dealing with upsets

This is a list of questions to identify upsets, or the cause of upsets. Read these questions to yourself (your conscious mind to your unconscious mind). Ask the questions firmly and become aware of the possible answers in terms of images, feelings, inner sounds, etc.

The purpose of this list is to turn off upsets. If a question does not seem relevant or if a response is not relevant move on to the next question. When you feel better stop doing the list. The purpose is not to do long analysis but to turn off upsets. Use the list for this purpose.

So you ask the question and if you think, 'No', then move on to the next question or step. Or if nothing relevant comes to mind, then move on. Be professional and efficient. The purpose of this list is to turn off upsets and not to do hours of analysis. When you have achieved your goal of turning off the upset, then stop doing the list and continue with your studies or activities.

Procedure

First, locate a time when you were having fun and enjoying yourself. Close your eyes and feel the positive energy from this time.

Now ask yourself the questions from the list of questions below (in the order as given, 1-39). Consider the question in relation to the particular upset you are feeling.

If the answer does not immediately appear and you are sure the question is relevant, then ask, 'What was it?' Write down a few words describing the incident. This is to focus on the incident and not to get into it and analyze it minutely. You want only the idea and NOT the details. It is just enough to define, or locate, what you are concerned with. A word or two in answer is fine.

Now indicate to yourself the truth of the question. For example, if the question is 'Has some affection been rejected?' then say firmly and confidently, 'I would like to indicate that some affection was rejected.' Assume this will resolve the issue.

If you feel that there is more to this matter, then find another similar example. For example, ask, 'Is there another time when some affection was rejected?' You could alternatively ask, 'Is there another example of some affection being rejected?'

Continue to work with this question until you feel the issues it brings up are resolved, with a sense of relief. Otherwise, step back and recall the pleasant time again, and enjoy the positive energy you get from it. And then move on to the next question on the list - but only if you feel that the upset has not yet been resolved. (If it has been resolved already, stop doing the list and continue your studies or other business in your life!)

You may notice that after handling a question you become more aware; you laugh, feel good and lose interest in the question. You will almost certainly have resolved the issue and can stop doing the list.

Upsets List

1. Has something been found out? What was it? Who might have found it out?
How do you know that?
2. Has some emotion been rejected?
3. Has some liking been rejected?
4. Has a truth been refused?
5. Has a communication been interrupted?
6. Has a communication been ignored?
7. Has a communication been rejected?
8. Has a communication been suppressed:?
9. Has an earlier rejection of emotion been aroused?
10. Has an earlier rejection of liking been aroused?
11. Has an earlier refusal of truth been aroused?
12. Has an earlier ignored communication been aroused?
13. Has an earlier suppression of emotion been aroused?
14. Has an earlier suppression of liking been aroused?
15. Has an earlier suppression of truth been aroused?
16. Has an earlier suppressed communication been aroused?
17. Has something been misunderstood? What was it? (If this is study material, then you may need to restudy the matter - check the definitions of the words and get the concepts.
18. Has someone been misunderstood? What was it? (If this is study material, then you may need to restudy the matter - check the definitions of the words and get the concepts.
19. Has a misunderstanding been suppressed?
20. Has an earlier misunderstanding been aroused?
21. Has some data been confusing?
22. Has there been some situation you have misunderstood?
23. Has there been a problem?
24. Has the wrong reason for an upset been given? What was it? Who gave the wrong reason?

25. Has a similar incident occurred before?
26. Has something been done other than what was said?
27. Has a goal been disappointed?
28. Has some help been rejected?
29. Has a decision been made?
30. Has an earlier incident been aroused?
31. Has there been a sudden shift of attention?
32. Has something startled you?
33. Has a perception been prevented?
34. Has a willingness not been acknowledged?
35. Has something been interrupted?
36. Has something gone on too long?
37. Has data been invalidated? What was it? Who was it?
38. Has someone told you what to think about something? What was it? Who was it?
39. Has something been unnecessary?

More Tips

Always start at question one and move through the list until the end if necessary. However, when the upset has been resolved, stop doing the list and do something else.

If you feel that the matter relating to a particular question has not resolved, find another answer. For example, 'Is there another time when some affection was rejected?' If an answer does not easily and quickly arise, move on to the next step or question.

Don't:

- * Don't make disparaging remarks about yourself
- * Don't force yourself to find an answer
- * Don't search endlessly for something
- * Don't strain at gnats, or swallow camels!

Do:

- * Be easy and casual (while being professional and alert).
- * Be gentle
- * Be confident and firm when asking questions and indicating. Presume the issue is, or will be, resolved
- * Accept any apparent answer that is relevant, even if it seems unreal or imaginary.

Remember: You can always go back to a question or a step, and do the list several times.

Although the basic question, 'What was it?' (normally referring to the incident) can be used throughout, sometimes other questions may be relevant too, such as 'Who was it?'

Sometimes misunderstanding and confusions with data may also require you to check the data and find the cause of the misunderstanding (study skills).

However, all these questions can be handled using the basic format explained above without any of the additional questions or actions.

Lesson 1B - High Performance Living

Topic: Stress Management I

Creating Order & Completing Unfinished Cycles

How to enjoy work

For some, this might seem like a joke. Enjoy going to work? You must be crazy! Work seems stressful and soul-destroying. Yet we can make the best of difficult situations. And some of us enjoy our work - even if our jobs are mundane, boring, and potentially stressful! Yet if we have to do something, at least for a short while, we can make the best of it. One of the major sources of stress, work and how to deal with it is a very important subject. This is what this lesson is about.

A reader wrote this message to gardening magazine: "I've tried everything you suggested, but I still can't get rid of the dandelions in my garden."

The gardening expert wrote back: "If you have tried everything I've suggested to get rid of dandelions, and you still have dandelions, I suggest you learn to love them!"

If work is grim, or even if it isn't, the following will help you to learn how - if not to love it - to lessen the worry and woe.

Introduction

One of the main stressors in our lives is the number of things we need to do. All too often we shelve tasks and forget them, or do trivial tasks and neglect more important ones. Sometimes we do this to avoid, for example, difficult communications. Other times we have not ordered our affairs sufficiently. We cannot remember what we need to do in what order. Disorder may become a habit and even hailed as a virtue.

Inevitably real problems result:

Crucial tasks left undone,
People not replied to,
Promises unfulfilled.

This may tax our relationships and threaten our jobs. On top of this we may worry about the undone work. We are supposed to do it, but somehow we couldn't gear ourselves up to do it. New tasks requiring attention piled on top of the old, hiding them.

We forgot the old tasks. And then we received a letter or a phone call, or the boss asked us about something, and we discovered that things we have put aside, and buried under new tasks came alive again and demanded instant action. Panic! Fortunately, there are some simple principles which can help you handle your work load more easily. And help you get more joy out of your job.

Do it Now!

Tasks naturally stack up if we do not deal with them. We might deceive ourselves that we'll get to it later. But "later" rarely comes. Either we will never do it or we leave it until it becomes a dire strait that we must handle now!

So do it now! This is the most efficient way of doing many things. You have it in your hand or within your sight - and you know what it is and what it's about. So there is no better time than right now. Organization is about handling the items which are thrown at you. We have tasks to do, and more will come. These tasks need organizing. Or they will just stack up. And rear up later, demanding instant and immediate attention. We need to organize them now.

There are basically four distinctly different types of action one can take:

1. Complete it
2. Delegate it
3. File it
4. Trash it

These actions apply to business situations, to one's personal affairs, and generally as a practical way of dealing with life.

Any task involves a cycle of action, the 3 C's: Commence--Continue--Complete.

Ideally you would do the task straight away:

1. Make the decision,
2. Resolve it,
3. Finish it,
4. Answer it.

Complete it, then it's done and out of the way. If it's a letter, then answer it now. If it's a bill, then pay it now. If you need to decide what present you'll buy, decide right now.

If you can, complete the task when you first put your attention on it. Make the decision what to do there and then, and then do it. Even if it is not perfect, you will have achieved something, rather than to have left it until it became an emergency.

You could also delegate the task and get somebody else to do it. Of course, you don't just hope somebody else will take care of it - you pass the item on to them and obtain their clear commitment to do it, by the due time. Also, you might file the item.

When you file something you allocate it a definite future-time slot. And you put it on your to-do list, or in your diary, so it doesn't get forgotten. Filing doesn't mean avoiding the task. It means that although no action is possible or necessary now, the job needs doing when you have completed other jobs of higher priority. Or when you have received the necessary information or resources to complete it. Or, you need to retain the information for use later. But before you can file something, you have to decide what to do with it now.

Examples of filing include putting letters into your in-tray and doing them in order of priority; your pending-tray if you need to get more information to complete them (but you need to add getting that information to your to-do-list); and to file appropriately, if they don't need answering.

Throw away what isn't genuinely useful to you. Make the decision now. If you really do need it - but not this second - file it! If you don't need it right now, then dump it. If you think it might be useful in the future, dump it. Everything might be useful at some

time. But if in doubt, throw it out! Junk clouds your freedom. Don't keep a hundred things because one might be useful!

So right now, handle the items on your desk until it is all clear. Experience that marvelous-feeling of having handled everything and being in the present. Be ready to face whatever comes along next. Go through your personal area and handle everything which needs handling.

1. Do it now,
2. Get someone else to do it,
3. File it, or
4. Trash it.

Do this until your physical and mental space is clear. And you feel good.

Use this idea at work, too. Get in the habit of doing things now, by handling, delegating, filing, or trashing.

Time Efficiency

To achieve worthwhile goals in life - for yourself, family and community - you'll probably need to be a busy person. Your time, however, is limited. Every day, the fund of time credits everyone - rich or poor - with the same 86,400 seconds.

It is up to each of us to invest this precious fund of hours, minutes and seconds in order to get from it the utmost in health, happiness and success. To achieve this it is important to spend time where it counts. The following exercise gets you to list the activities and tasks which consumed yesterday's 24 hours, then assess whether or not you spent your time wisely.

We will be analyzing your activities an A-B-C-D time-ranking system:

A's are those tasks and activities which are related to your major priorities and are connected to your life goals. (Perhaps this exercise will cause you to consider what your life goals are.)

B's are the tasks that you must do, but do not seem to be life-goal related. Every day we complete tasks that we must do in order to give us the opportunity to move towards life goals (for example, making a living - Rank B, in order to provide for your family - Rank A). We feel good when we complete tasks which support our life-goals. Production equals morale!

C's are the time spent relaxing, exercising or being entertained which energize us for our A and B tasks.

D's are the activities which add very little if anything to one's life, perhaps time spent in avoidance of what you really need to be doing. They may be disguised as category C's. Like junk mail, these time-wasters clutter up our existence and quickly eat up our days. Although you may feel at the time that you accomplished something, all you've really done is stay busy accomplishing nothing. Afterwards you feel frustrated.

Think through the details of your schedule yesterday - what you did, who you talked to, what about, etc. For example:

- a. lay in for half an hour,
- b. ate breakfast,
- c. cleaned up kitchen,
- d. read magazines,
- e. dictation,
- f. traveled to work,
- g. rang spouse,
- h. staff meeting,
- i. read the paper,
- j. sorted mail,
- k. daydreamed,
- l. wrote a proposal,
- m. shopping, etc.

Be as precise as possible in recalling the specifics of the day and list everything in a Time Log, which is a column on the left of a page or pages.

1. Then estimate the time you spent on each activity, noting it in the right of each item.
2. Now rate each activity you did yesterday as an A, B, C or D ranking.
3. Consider the following questions:
 - Was this a typical day? In what ways was it typical? In what ways was it not typical?
 - What time did you put to good use yesterday? What do you think was time you wasted?
 - What would you like to do differently?
 - How could you put more 'A' time into your day?
 - How will you start making that happen now?

Every day, no matter how 'busy' or tired, make sure you spend at least some time working directly on a life goal. Build in time for your 'A's' - every day!

Ten ways to master chaos!

Now let's look at some issues on time, in particular, giving away one's power by putting attention in the past or future in ways which are counterproductive.

Alternate between asking yourself the following 2 questions. Hopefully, in contrast, it will become more clear that the best time for action is in the present.

1. "What should I have done?"
2. "What do I need to do later?"

Deciding to do something 'later' or 'when I have time' is generally a way of not facing the actual decision. 'Later' often never comes. Find examples of some things that you decided to do later but never got around to. Note any that are still in the category of what-you-should-do-later.

To what extent has your future already been spoken for, because of what-you-must-do or have-promised-to-do? The most useful future to create is flexible and open and one you can change. You limit yourself greatly by believing that your future has to be fixed. Unfix your future!

Discover opportunities and resources which are available to you today. Be on the lookout for chances to do things better and for the wherewithal to do what you want to do. Be aware of them in the present, rather than in the past or the future. Make finding resources in the present a habit.

What incomplete cycles of action do you have your attention on? Discover why. Ask what is stopping you from completing them now?

Is there an aspect you are not taking responsibility for?

What are you avoiding doing now?

Make a list of everything you have put in the future because it isn't pleasant or fun or interesting to do now. Take up each one and decide what to do with it: Do it, Delegate it (as long as you take responsibility for its completion), File it (in the past), or Trash it (forget about it).

Go through your unfinished business and complete it, as if you were your last chance. Which is, put things in order! Complete communications!, etc. Don't just imagine doing it - actually complete the actions.

Make up your mind on anything you are undecided about. Take responsibility, commit to things, call people, etc. Or get rid of junk you don't need once and for all. There is no order in the world. You create order. If there is disorder in your world, you are not creating order!

For example, you are a telephonist is at the switchboard. Three calls occur at the same time. You answer the first call. What is the first call? It is the one handled first! There is no real first call. You just pick up one. Handle it and then pick up the next one. By picking just one call and then another, you bring order to the chaos of several calls at the same time - you can only answer one call at a time!

Use this idea in life. You need to be able to make decisions and manage things even under chaotic conditions. Play with the idea! Imagine yourself making decisions under imperfect, chaotic conditions. Create your order!

Consider the idea of a lot of things happening randomly. Instead of thinking this a problem, think it a great opportunity. The more that is happening, the more likely it is that something you want will happen. Opportunities will appear and new angles come into view. The more activity, the more that is going on, the more chance you have to make things happen the way you want. Intend what you want to happen, back it up with action, and almost by magic you get what you want!

Lesson 1C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Being Specific I - Deletions

Precision Language

How to stop thoughts thinking you - and start thinking thoughts!

Many difficulties in life are due not to other people or things, but to our thoughts about the people and things in our world. Thoughts we created in childhood with our childish minds, or during times of great stress. Thoughts we have not reviewed in a calm or relaxed way. These thoughts think us!

Whatever we think about a situation determines how we act, feel, etc, in response.

If we perceive a situation as dangerous, we feel afraid, even if the situation is not dangerous and we have made a mistake. If we perceive it as harmless, we do not feel afraid, even if the situation is really dangerous. We are controlled by our thoughts. And when we think irrationally about a situation, we respond to it irrationally. We act like robots or sleepwalkers. The Being Specific Model is one way to deal with these thoughts.

The Being Specific Model is divided into:

1. Deletions (this Lesson),
2. Generalization (in Lesson 2), and
3. Distortions (in Lesson 3).

Learn to recognize these patterns and the questions to ask very thoroughly, so you can do it automatically.

Deletions

When we express ourselves about something, we do not tell everything - this would be an enormous task! However, sometimes we delete important parts. You can use the following patterns to recognize and to retrieve the missing parts.

1. Vague References

These are words which have a vague reference. A reference is what they refer to. For example: “This is good.” We do not know what is good. The word ‘this’ refers to something, but we don't know what. We need to ask: “What, specifically, is good?”

Often in a piece of writing we have a lot of vague references, and sometimes we have to ask what they refer to. Confusion in reading can sometimes be due to vague references. Sometimes the author hasn't made clear what they are referring to - especially when this is the idea of the previous sentence or paragraph, so you have to figure out what this refers to! In conversation, or examining your own mental thoughts, you can ask the appropriate question.

| Example | Question |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| I, you, we, he, she, one, anyone, him, her, they, them. | Who? |
| It, they, these, something. | What? Which? |
| The person who (did this). | Who did this? |
| You should do that which we asked. | What, specifically, did you ask for? |

These words are pronouns. They refer to other words for their meaning. They include you, this, it, him and her. Sometimes we don't know from what is said who or what is being referred to. Almost any common noun, words like people, dogs, doors, etc., which do not refer to a particular individual can lack referential index. They are also generalizations. When the referent has been deleted, then we ask: Who? What? Which? When?

| Example | Deletion | Question to recover deletion |
|-------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| John went to town | He went to town. | Who went to town? |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| I like the book | I like it. | What, specifically, do you like? Who likes what? |
| The person who ate my cake should own up. | The person who did that should own up. | What, specifically, did the person do? |
| Bobby ignores the people at work. | He ignores everybody | Who ignores everybody? Who ignores whom? What, specifically, does he or she ignore? |
| This document is important to you. | This is important | What specifically is important? To whom is it important? |
| Watching 'How to wind your parents up' on television' gives my children Tom and Alice bad ideas, which wind me up. | Television is bad for kids | Which television programs? Bad for whom? Which kids, specifically? |

| Example | Deletion | Clarifying Question |
|---|---------------------------------|--|
| Bill and Alice don't like me singing. | "People don't like this" | Which people? What don't they like? |
| The guys who were in the pub last night didn't like the idea that the price of beer should go up. | "Nobody will support this idea" | Who, specifically, won't support the idea? What idea? |
| An article in the Sun was vague. | "Newspapers mislead" | Which newspapers, specifically? Mislead whom? |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| If I do that dance, you will laugh at me. | "Everyone will laugh at me" | Who, specifically, will laugh at you? Who or what, specifically, will they laugh at? |
| People who learn the Being Specific Model will increase their ability to study as well as their ability to communicate. | "That is another good reason to do it" | What, specifically, is a good reason to do it? Doing what? |
| I quarreled with Hidemi at work, and I felt tense all day afterwards. | "Modern life is too stressful" | What (aspects of) modern life, specifically? |
| The directors of the company turned down the idea that we should get paid for doing nothing. | "They turned it down" | Who, specifically, turned what down? |

Similarly, words like women, men, doctors, scientists are sometimes vague. For example:

"Doctors suggest this." Which doctors specifically? (Sorry about the pun!)

"Modern women believe (.....)." Which modern women, specifically?

| Example | Deletion | Clarifying Question |
|--|----------------------------|--|
| Perhaps the publisher won't like my new book. | "People won't like this" | Which people? What won't they like? |
| The worshippers of the great god BugBoo have to work as slaves and get no money. | "Religion is a great evil" | Which religion, specifically? |

2. Missing Complements

A complement is something which completes the meaning, usually of a verb. Linking verbs, which are words such as 'is', 'feel', 'appear', 'seem', etc., are common culprits because they tend to omit the person or thing which is doing or experiencing, or the object. For example, 'It is complicated' omits the person who thinks it is complicated. 'It is sad' leaves out the person who is sad (Who is sad?), and the object (Sad about what?). For example

"I feel bad".

About what?

"About what I said to you yesterday".

"It is difficult".

What, specifically, is difficult? For whom is it difficult?

"For my wife to do a job and all the housework"

| Example | Deletion | Clarifying Question |
|--|-------------------|---|
| I feel unhappy about buying that car from Sleazy Joe's. | "I feel unhappy" | About what? |
| I don't know what I do about the job. | "I don't know" | What don't you know? |
| I have received a demand to pay a debt. I do not have the money. | "This is bad" | What, specifically, is bad? |
| I have not succeeded in repairing this object. My neighbor says it's hopeless., | "It's hopeless" | What, specifically, is hopeless? According to whom is it hopeless? |
| I have tried to read this article, but each of the two times I have tried, my mind has wandered. | "It is difficult" | What specifically is difficult? To whom is it difficult? |

3. Incomplete Verbal Expressions

Verbs have subjects and objects. When we, or the speaker, omit one or the other, then we have a deletion. For example, 'I don't know', can be expressed more fully as 'I don't know (what to do about this problem)'. Therefore, 'I don't know' contains a deletion. We can clarify it by asking, 'What don't you know, specifically?'

"I don't understand".

What, specifically, don't you understand?

Examples - fill in the clarifying question in the last four

| Example | Deletion | Clarifying Question |
|---|---------------------------|---|
| I don't know what I should do about my son. | I don't know | What, specifically, don't you know? |
| I will agree to do the job for the company. | I will agree | What will you agree? With whom will you agree it? |
| I communicated with Mary about the new regulations. | I communicated with Mary. | ? |
| The letter I wrote and left on the desk is no longer on the desk. | It has gone | ? |
| I accept the money that Alice offered to me for my bicycle. | I accepted. | ? |
| Ali and I were talking about the game when you arrived. | We were talking. | ? |

4. Comparisons

When we compare one thing with one or more other things, we use words like: better, worse, stronger, the most, excellent, too. Often we omit to mention what we are comparing with. For example:

“You can't get a better deal than at Smiths.”

We would ask, “Better deal compared with what other deals?”

In language we have words which compare two things, such as better, and words which say that something is better than any other item in the group - we say it is the best. However, there are other words which refer to 'a degree' of something. These two are like comparisons. For example: excellent, awful. fantastic, awe-inspiring.

Also when we compare things, we use a criterion to make the comparison. For example: an excellent book might be excellent in that it is: informative, easy to read, well-illustrated, cheap, etc.

We would ask to find the criteria: In what respect is it better? According to what criteria is it better? In what way is it better?

Examples:

"This is the best".

Compared with which others is it the best? (Compared with what?)

"We stock the best computers in town".

According to what criteria are they the best? Compared with what?

Practice Examples - please fill in a clarifying question & possible answers

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|---|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| "This is bad" | Compared with what? | "With having everything I want" |
| "It's too difficult" | ? | ? |
| "That is the worst thing you could have said" | ? | ? |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| "It is awful" | ? | ? |
| "What a terrible thing to say!" | ? | ? |
| "This is the best course available" | ? | ? |
| "This is too much!" | ? | ? |
| "This is wonderful!" | ? | ? |
| "Modern life is too stressful" | ? | ? |
| "What a ghastly place!" | ? | ? |

5. Vague Verbs

These are verbs, that like the last group, do not clearly indicate what they are referring to. Examples:

"My husband hurt me"

How specifically did he hurt you?

"She insulted me"

How specifically did she insult you?

What did she do or say that you considered insulting?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|----------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| "He disapproves" | How, specifically does he disapprove? | "He frowns at me when I arrive late" |
| "She hurt me badly" | ? | ? |
| "She appreciated it" | ? | ? |
| "He enraged me" | ? | ? |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| "They entertained us sumptuously" | ? | ? |
| "I was humiliated" | ? | ? |
| "They welcomed me heartily" | ? | ? |

6. Nominalizations

These are words for things you cannot touch, but you may be able to feel them. Particularly common abstractions are 'Nominalizations', which are ex-verbs that by becoming nouns have had their subject, object, way of acting, etc., deleted. As such they are generalizations. They are processes but appear to be objects - unchangeable, real, and timeless. For example

Decision,
 Understanding,
 Knowledge,
 Forgiveness,
 Confusion,
 Panic,
 Depression,
 Misunderstanding,
 Acceptance,
 Education,
 Danger

Nominalizations are words which make people stuck. Respond to nominalizations by asking for the subject, object and manner (How?) of the verb.

Examples:

"I want to develop self-confidence"

Who wants to be self-confident about doing what and how do they want to do it?

"They made me so depressed"

Who is depressing whom, and how, specifically are they doing it?

(Suppose you weren't depressed by this, I wonder what you would be doing, saying, thinking, feeling, in that situation?)

Some nominalizations are not clearly associated with a verb. For example, danger or dangerous doesn't have a verb 'to danger'. The verb may be 'harm'. So the questions are: Who or what is harming whom or what and exactly how are they or is it doing it?

Practice Examples...

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|---|--|------------------------|
| "It is impossible" | Who or what is making it impossible and how are they doing it? | "Well, I suppose I am" |
| "I want to improve my understanding" | ? | ? |
| "It is too dangerous" | ? | ? |
| "I lack self confidence" | ? | ? |
| "It's a mystery" | ? | ? |
| "I have made my decision to do it" | ? | ? |
| "Learn how to improve your effectiveness" | ? | ? |

This is the first lesson on Being Specific. The next lesson deals with Generalizations, and the third with Distortions.

Prepare yourself well by learning to recognize and question appropriately these violations of being specific. Remember to communicate with your tutor. As a final exercise, collect some further examples from your own thoughts, or by watching TV, talking to others, etc. Write down possible responses and assess them.

Lesson 1D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Positive Moments

Recovering lost energy and enthusiasm for living

Remembering things by its very nature puts attention on the past. Which isn't really where the action is. Life is happening in the present. Putting too much emphasis on the past might give the wrong impression that the past is important and that it somehow governs the present.

The past may be pleasant, nostalgic or painful to recall but it doesn't govern the present - though one may think it does! Nevertheless, the action of remembering is a useful process. To the extent that we put a barrier up against the past, we cannot be integrated.

Suppressing the painful memories of the past - bad things which have happened or that we have done may help us avoid some unpleasantness. But it also suppresses our pleasurable resources that do so support our self-esteem. And the energy expended suppressing our past drains our present-life living. By recalling pleasant moments you can recover your lost energy and enthusiasm, and at the same time drain the energy from negative memories. Releasing wonderful new feelings and enjoyment into your present life. This lesson helps you do this.

Recall Something Exercise

Between you and your memories there is a barrier of suppressed emotional charge. This reduces your ability to enjoy your present life. It denies you that resource of youthful energy, enthusiasm, and wonder that somehow got lost during the years. When you remove this barrier (as you will begin to shortly), you will find it much easier to be in the here-and-now, and be (pleasantly, if not joyfully) aware in the present moment. There is a very simple and powerful way to break through this barrier of suppressed emotional charge between you and your memories. You can regain your enthusiasm and wonder of life. As you will discover they are still there. You just have to reclaim it.

You simply give yourself the command: "**Recall Something**" and as quickly as you can, obtain a memory, then repeat the command immediately. Any memory will do, whether it is from one minute ago or from years ago. But don't dwell on a period or experience; try to 'jump around', allowing whatever comes up before you quickly move on. Intend, each time, to recall something different.

After a while you will run out of 'stock memories'. You may dry up and find it hard to find a memory. You will then be aware of this barrier. You have billions if not trillions of memories. You should find memories with ease at first. When recalling becomes difficult you will know that something's going on! Your mind is being careful in case you recall something it doesn't want you to. Keep going! Ask the question, 'Recall something', and if no memory is found, simply repeat the question again. Know your unconscious mind is actually answering the question and finding a memory. You just aren't aware of it. Soon the memories will start to flow again - this is the breakthrough you're expecting. Keep asking the question and keep the answers coming as quickly as possible. Do not dwell on any of them. The purpose of this exercise is to be able to freely recall the past, not to relive the memories in depth. When you feel no barrier to that ability, well done! You can now move on.

Tips:

1. It is helpful to record "Recall Something" on a short endless-loop cassette, to start with at say 5 second intervals, and gradually increase the rate to 1 second intervals.
2. Or use a metronome.
3. Or just get a rhythm going.

This seemingly simple procedure will take you a long way in your development. Practice it often and have fun.

Positive Memories Exercise

In the previous exercise, 'Recall Something', you concentrated on the process of recalling, not on the memories you recalled. In this exercise, you concentrate on the pleasant memories you recall. When you re-experience positive memories you reclaim your vast resource of enthusiasm and joy. So you can enjoy it now. These experiences are left-behind golden nuggets of your life-energy that you can now reclaim. In the following exercise you recall some of the pleasant experiences of your life. By putting

your attention on the positive, you increase your energy and validate your good and honest qualities.

Recalling those pleasant experiences lets you re-experience that pleasure now, in your present living. Your increased life-energy then makes bad experiences less significant. It also releases those negative experiences. By concentrating on the positive emotions, you drain the negative ones, making their stuck energy available to you now as free life-energy.

Step 1. Ask yourself a question from the **Recall List** on the next page.

Step 2. Recall such an experience and briefly run through it from beginning to end, as if it were happening in the present. For example, "I'm running along the road and..."

Step 3. Ask yourself the next question.

If you cannot recall an incident, or you get an unpleasant memory, leave that question and go on to the next one.

Recall List

Recall a time when you enjoyed yourself.

Recall a time when you earned some money.

Recall a time when you heard some good music.

Recall a time when you mastered something.

Recall a time when you got something you wanted.

Recall a time when you enjoyed a cozy fire.

Recall a time when you rode a bicycle.

Recall a time when you played with an animal.

Recall a time when you rearranged furniture.

Recall a time when you really knew what you were talking about.

Recall a time when you gave a successful demonstration or talk.

Recall a time when you straightened out a messy environment.

Recall a time when you felt good about the way you looked.

Recall a time when you enjoyed talking with someone.

Recall a time when you were acknowledged for a job well done.
 Recall a time when you kept a promise.
 Recall a time when you held somebody close.
 Recall a time when you enjoyed exercising.
 Recall a time when you drew a picture.
 Recall a time when you helped somebody.
 Recall a time when you won.
 Recall a time when you met someone you got on well with.
 Recall a time when you had a good time dancing.
 Recall a time when you felt important.
 Recall a time when you were having a good holiday.
 Recall a time when you achieved something worthwhile.
 Recall a time when you were enjoying a long walk.
 Recall a time when you enjoyed working in the garden.
 Recall a time when you had a good idea.
 Recall a time when you kissed somebody you liked.
 Recall a time when you laughed at a joke.
 Recall a time when you painted something.
 Recall a time when you felt enthusiastic.
 Recall a time when you were with a friend.
 Recall a time when you stood your ground.

Step 4. When you can recall pleasurable experiences without much difficulty, repeat the above and look for earlier incidents of the same kind. That is, you ask:

1. Recall a time when ...
2. Recall an earlier time when ...
3. Recall the earliest time when ...

For each answer, choose a question from the Senses List below, about the experience. For example: Describe something you are seeing in the memory.

Recall that sense in the experience and describe it, again in the present tense (For example, "I'm seeing lamp posts and parked cars...").

Senses List

1. Describe something you are seeing in that memory.
2. Describe something you are touching in that memory.
3. Describe a color that you see in that memory.
4. What is the temperature in that memory.
5. Describe the position of your body in that memory.
6. Describe an emotion you are experiencing in that memory.
7. Describe something that you are hearing in that memory.
8. Describe something about the movement which is going on in that memory.
9. Describe something you are smelling in that memory.

Step 5. If you feel complete after several passes through the list, you may continue by imagining an 'experience' in response to the questions - let your imagination run wild! So instead of: Recall a time when... (e.g. you enjoyed yourself), ask:

Imagine... (e.g. enjoying yourself)

Imagine yourself experiencing this in the present. For each incident you imagine, also ask the Senses Questions: Describe something you are seeing, etc.

You can expand the above exercise by recalling other positive experiences in your life, and by visualizing positive things happening. To help you, on the next page is a long list of further examples:

This is a fun-exercise that really does make a difference to your outlook on life and improves your self-esteem.

Here's some more Positive Experiences - have fun!

Recall a time when you observed a birth.

Recall a time when you won something.

Recall a time when you completed a project.

Recall a time when you noticed you were growing up

Recall a time when you made an advancement in your career.

Recall a time when you got something published.

Recall a time when you reached a milestone.
Recall a time when you observed a child learning.
Recall a time when you observed something growing over time.
Recall a time when you felt a strong sense of identity.
Recall a time when you were anticipating a special event.
Recall a time when you were anticipating sexual pleasure.
Recall a time when you anticipated seeing someone after a long time apart.
Recall a time when you appreciated receiving an award.
Recall a time when you appreciated being accepted as leader.
Recall a time when you received unexpected respect.
Recall a time when you received encouragement from someone.
Recall a time when you received media attention.
Recall a time when you observed a wonderful view.
Recall a time when you admired some beautiful flowers.
Recall a time when you watched some wild animals.
Recall a time when you enjoyed looking at the sky.
Recall a time when you observed graceful movements.
Recall a time when you were carried away by a passage of music.
Recall a time when you admired a painting.
Recall a time when you had childish playfulness.
Recall a time when you had childish innocence.
Recall a time when you had childish wonder.
Recall a time when you discovered something as a child.
Recall a time when you made a friend as a child.
Recall a time when you shared something as a child.
Recall a time when you observed a child's cute behavior.
Recall a time when you received affection from a child.
Recall a time when you felt connected to a sense of tradition.
Recall a time when you felt a oneness with the world.
Recall a time when you felt connected to a community.
Recall a time when you felt a group accepted you.
Recall a time when you felt you were a good friend.
Recall a time when you felt a spiritual connection.
Recall a time when you felt part of a larger whole.
Recall a time when you were in a parade.
Recall a time when you were happy to be part of crowd.

Recall a time when you felt a sense of caring.
Recall a time when you liked your appearance.
Recall a time when you felt well organized.
Recall a time when you made things neat and tidy.
Recall a time when you ate healthily.
Recall a time when you enjoyed exercising.
Recall a time when you cleared your desk.
Recall a time when you felt totally in control.
Recall a time when you worked well as a team member.
Recall a time when you were singing along with others.
Recall a time when you created something with others.
Recall a time when you took part in something beneficial to others.
Recall a time when you liked your co-workers.
Recall a time when you decided to take a risk.
Recall a time when you decided to make a commitment.
Recall a time when you made love for the first time.
Recall a time when you decided to get married.
Recall a time when you decided to buy a house.
Recall a time when you decided to go into business.
Recall a time when you decided to quit a job.
Recall a time when you made up after a fight.
Recall a time when you won a concession.
Recall a time when you forgave someone.
Recall a time when someone forgave you.
Recall a time when you had a sudden inspiration.
Recall a time when you gained a new understanding.
Recall a time when you discovered a secret.
Recall a time when you discovered you had a shared experience with someone.
Recall a time when you had a new idea that others agreed with.
Recall a time when you made a new friend.
Recall a time when you discovered a new sensation.
Recall a time when you discovered a new interest.
Recall a time when you had a new experience.
Recall a time when you were really enjoying your holiday.
Recall a time when you enjoyed going out to eat.
Recall a time when you enjoyed a party.

Recall a time when you went someplace different.
Recall a time when you found an incident really funny.
Recall a time when you were thinking about your future.
Recall a time when you planned some decorating.
Recall a time when you saw light at the end of the tunnel.
Recall a time when you had a fantasy come true.
Recall a time when you righted a wrong.
Recall a time when you gained proper respect after ill treatment.
Recall a time when you received a due apology.
Recall a time when you enjoyed free time.
Recall a time when you were free from constraints.
Recall a time when you paid off a debt.
Recall a time when you enjoyed being alone.
Recall a time when you solved a problem.
Recall a time when you decided to leave and did so.
Recall a time when you cut out a bad habit.
Recall a time when you found something you thought was lost.
Recall a time when you got a bargain.
Recall a time when you received a special gift.
Recall a time when you found something for your collection.
Recall a time when you gave someone a surprise.
Recall a time when you received affection.
Recall a time when you got a pleasant hello from a stranger.
Recall a time when you gave without expecting anything back.
Recall a time when you shared an intimacy.
Recall a time when you received exciting news.
Recall a time when you cooked a favorite meal.
Recall a time when you received a thoughtfully chosen gift.
Recall a time when you enjoyed exercising.
Recall a time when you were enjoying playing a sport.
Recall a time when you had fun dancing.
Recall a time when you heard good news.
Recall a time when your past decision worked out to be a good one.
Recall a time when your past prediction was right.
Recall a time when your opinion proved to be correct.
Recall a time when you fixed something.

Recall a time when you volunteered to do something helpful.
Recall a time when you helped relieve another's suffering.
Recall a time when you listened with caring & empathy.
Recall a time when you made the right rather than the easy decision.
Recall a time when you received an unexpected kiss.
Recall a time when you hugged someone spontaneously.
Recall a time when you hugged and kissed after a long separation.
Recall a time when you enjoyed flirting.
Recall a time when you finished a challenging assignment.
Recall a time when you performed well at work.
Recall a time when you learnt a new skill.
Recall a time when things went well with your boss.
Recall a time when you found meaning and value in your work.
Recall a time when you acquired some interesting information.
Recall a time when you were prepared with a timely answer.
Recall a time when you helped your parents.
Recall a time when you had a bit of luck.
Recall a time when you bought some really nice new clothes.
Recall a time when you found a bargain.
Recall a time when you cut a good deal.
Recall a time when you had plenty of money.
Recall a time when you felt financially secure.
Recall a time when you had loving memories of a dead person.
Recall a time when you felt nostalgic.
Recall a time when love was in bloom.
Recall a time when you observed an act of bravery.
Recall a time when you heard about an inspiring action.
Recall a time when you warmed to a change.
Recall a time when you healed old wounds.
Recall a time when you felt it was time to forgive.
Recall a time when you felt 'on the ball'.
Recall a time when you reached a personal best.
Recall a time when you created something which expressed how you felt.
Recall a time when you felt intelligent.
Recall a time when you concentrated long and hard.
Recall a time when you felt energetic.

- Recall a time when you felt enthusiastic.
- Recall a time when you were ecstatic.
- Recall a time when you were greeted by a pet.
- Recall a time when you enjoyed a new possession.
- Recall a time when you felt proud of your family.
- Recall a time when you felt proud of your country.
- Recall a time when you were pleased by another's success.
- Recall a time when you reached safety.
- Recall a time when you felt safe, secure and well cared for.
- Recall a time when you felt attractive.
- Recall a time when you felt healthy.
- Recall a time when you felt popular and liked.
- Recall a time when you felt needed.
- Recall a time when you felt creative.
- Recall a time when you felt strong.
- Recall a time when you felt capable.
- Recall a time when you had an erotic experience.
- Recall a time when you shared pleasure with another.
- Recall a time when you got a good surprise in the mail.
- Recall a time when you gave helpful advice.
- Recall a time when you enjoyed a massage.
- Recall a time when you found out you'd reached a goal.

Recovering Memories

If there is an enjoyable incident from earlier years that you wish to recall and remember in depth, you can bring it into clearer focus by using literal description. Describe in the present tense. For example, "I am sitting looking across the room. I am feeling quite moved by the experience I have been reliving. On the wall I see a photograph and beside it is a lamp and I can hear the birds singing outside the window ..."

Continue, including everyone who is present, what they say, their expressions, how you react and how they react.

Re-create the movements, smells, sound, tastes, the temperature, any music which was playing, and any feelings you have.

Go through it several times from the beginning to the end. When you have taken the scene as far as you want to go, let it fade away.

Concentrate on pleasurable or meaningful times from the past that you would like to pleasantly relive again. The negative ones will just fade away!

Lesson 1E - Concentration & Meditation

Topic: Relaxation & Breathing Techniques

To turn tension off, first learn to turn it on

No doubt, you will have tried to relax before, and sometimes this is easy but other times, not so easy. When you try to relax, you become more tense. The very effort, and concentration on the relaxing, paradoxically, makes you tense. Some people succeed in relaxing by a process of mind-wandering. This is not what we are seeking here. We are looking for a state in which one is alert and concentrated, but without needless muscular tension. To achieve this outcome, we take a lesson from Zen and the Japanese Martial Arts. Here we will find a fundamental axiom:

'To turn something off, first turn it on.'

To turn off tension, we must first turn it on deliberately. That way you become conscious of tension and aware that you are creating it yourself. Then you can let it go.

Tension Exercise

1. Lie on the floor. Breathe regularly and keep on breathing throughout the exercise - don't hold your breath!!
2. Tense all the muscles of one leg.
3. Tense the muscles of the other leg.
4. Tense the muscles of both legs.
5. Tense the muscles of one arm.
6. Tense the muscles of the other arm.
7. Tense the muscles of both arms.
8. Tense the muscles of both arms and both legs.
9. Tense the muscles of the neck.
10. Tense the muscles of the stomach.
11. Tense the muscles of both neck and stomach.
12. Tense as many muscles as possible, all at the same time.

At each step, observe the tension, and after Step 12, just let go completely, breath slowly and deeply and feel every part of your body. We are not usually conscious of muscular tension.

We are used to it. After tensing and releasing muscles you may find you tense it back again into it's normal state - but now you've spotted this you can let go of it again.

Repeat steps 1 to 8, progressively getting more and more muscles into motion, such as the back muscles, buttocks, facial muscles, ankles, toes, wrists, fingers, tongue, and so on. Enjoy it and do this exercise regularly.

Basic Breathing Exercises

Introduction

When we do not breath properly, we do not supply our bodies with enough oxygen for optimum mental performance. By learning to breath properly, you can improve your ability to handle stress, your physical well-being, your memory and ability to plan for the future, and your ability to think abstractly and reflexively.

Poor respiratory patterns, that most people have to some degree, may be corrected though deep breathing practice. These exercises have two purposes - first to train the student to how to breathe correctly and secondly to force the body to make better use of oxygen in the lungs by partial deprivation. Once again, we see the Yin-Yang principle: To make a bad condition better, first make it worse!

Important Note: Read this carefully several times:

The breathing exercise that follows should be done easily and in a relaxed, manner. Do-not force or struggle with any part. You are becoming part of a flow which makes you more able.

Do not be oppressed by times. Take all the time you want. The guiding rule is to practice every day. Make it enjoyable and gradually perform your breathing slower and slower.

To make progress these exercises should be performed calmly and easily with no struggle or forcing whatsoever. Western exercise is quite different from this. So if you are used to thinking 'No pain, no gain' learn: 'Pain means no gain!'

This is being learned by Western sports trainers too. When discomfort is experienced then muscles have been hurt. To deal with this, after taking a few days to get better, they grow bigger. Practice is halted during these times and progress slowed. As a result, they do not get stronger or more enduring. Learn to treat your body with love and care. Allow it to improve at its own rate, and you will make very great progress!

This exercise is called pranic breathing or pranayama in yoga. There are three stages.

Stage One - Deep Breathing

Set aside 5 minutes every day to do this exercise. Breath in and out ten times like this:

1. Inhale gradually over a period of 5 seconds and
2. Exhale over a period of 5 seconds.

Breath in like this:

- i. Allow your stomach to expand as you take air into the lower lungs.
- ii. Then fill up the upper lungs. You will notice that your stomach contracts and your shoulders rise somewhat.

Breath out like this:

- iii. Let the air out of your upper lungs. Your shoulders will descend and your stomach will expand.
- iv. Finally draw in your stomach as you expel the last air from the lungs.

Do this exercise easily and comfortably. Do not struggle or strain in any way. When you can do ten cycles of this exercise without strain, increase the period for each breath to 7 seconds.

When you can do 7 second breaths without effort, increase the time to 10 seconds.
When you can do the exercise to a count of 10 comfortably, then do the next exercise.

Stage Two - Interrupted Breathing

Practice this exercise when you can do the previous one easily. Remember, real progress comes through an easy step by step approach. Do not use force, but gradually allow yourself to become skilful and give your body a chance to develop.

1. Breathe in gradually over a period of 5 seconds,
2. Hold your breath for 5 seconds, and
3. Exhale over a period of 5 seconds.

For the sake of clarity the instructions for the previous exercise are repeated here.

Breathe in like this:

- i. Allow your stomach to expand as you take air into the lower lungs.
- ii. Then fill up the upper lungs. You will notice that your stomach contracts and your shoulders rise somewhat.
- iii. Comfortably and easily hold your breath.

Then, breathe out like this:

- iv. Let the air out of your upper lungs. Your shoulders will descend and your stomach will expand.
- v. Finally draw in your stomach as you expel the last air from the lungs.

Do this exercise easily and comfortably. Do not struggle or strain in any way.

When you can do ten cycles of this exercise without strain, increase the period for each breath to 7 seconds.

When you can do 7 second breaths without effort, increase the time to 10 seconds.

When you can do the exercise to a count of 10 comfortably, then do the next exercise.

Stage Three - Extended Interrupted Breathing

The exercise continues from the previous one, using a count of 10 for breathing in and out. Do not increase this time. Gradually increase the time you hold the breath. To attain this, you should increase the count only when you can hold your breath for the previous count without strain.

The cycle is:

1. Inhale to a slow count of 10.
2. Hold the breath for a slow count of 11. Gradually increase this count, as it becomes easier, to 12, 13, etc., up to 30 seconds.
3. Exhale to a slow count of 10.

Continue 1-3 for 10 cycles.

Gradually increase the time spent doing this exercise for up to 30 minutes.

Note: If you take several-days break from practice, it may be best to restart again from holding your breath for 11 seconds. You will of course build up to the higher levels much faster than before. But remember to progress step by step - there should never be any effort or strain required.

Lesson 2A - Tools for Thought

Topic: Problem Solving II

Brainstorming - opening the mind to new ideas

Brainstorming is a process of answering a question, by rapidly noting any and all ideas which enter your awareness in response to that question, before any judgment or censorship takes place, in order to develop creative solutions to problems.

It works by focusing on a problem, and then noting down as many ideas and solutions as possible. You record every idea, however bizarre or seemingly irrational. Put simply, you put your mind on the question and write down everything which crosses your mind. Every thought, image, sound, feeling, etc. You reserve common sense and evaluation for later.

The key is to take off your blinkers and look beyond the tunnel vision of fixed ideas and assumptions. From a completely barmy idea, you may associate to a further idea. This new idea may at first also seem crazy and then ... on further inspection, it is not so crazy after all ... in fact it may well be a bit of genius!

Brain storming works like this... Normally when we answer a question we take the first answer which comes to mind. Or perhaps the first one or two answers. If they are not solutions, then we may even give up. We ignore answers which appear irrational or irrelevant, or just plain silly. We ignore images - which may be symbolic answers from the unconscious mind. With brainstorming, however, we allow a complete and full flow of ideas. Sometimes after a few 'silly' ideas, we start to think of more rational solutions. On other occasions, when we associate from the 'silly' ideas, or pretend they are solutions, and work from there, we discover workable solutions - that we would never have thought of if we were remaining simply rational.

Step 1. First define a problem clearly.

Use one of the problems which interests you and yet remains unresolved from the Lesson 1 Problem Solving thread. Or use any other question to which you are seeking a creative answer.

Step 2. Write down the flow of ideas, noting each one for later reference.

Relax and expect to enjoy yourself. Let your mind invent lots of ideas - possible solutions or parts of solutions - which relate however oddly to the problem. Quantity is the goal - remember, the greater the number of ideas, the greater the chance of getting a useful one. Anything which comes to mind when you focus on the problem is of some relevance:

- * Jokes, funny aspects or silly ideas could turn out to be particularly useful.
- * Everybody is already incredibly creative when they dream, so daydream when brainstorming.
- * Let the mind wander and picture strange events and situations which relate - however vaguely - to the problem situation.

Do not evaluate your ideas at this point; just write them down without any kind of censorship.

Step 3. Review what you have written down

When you run out of ideas, review your notes. If other ideas occur to you, write them down.

1. Do any of these ideas give you clues to a new way of looking at your problem?
2. Try different combinations of ideas, in different sequences.
3. Do they foster a new idea or an improved idea?
4. Check out words in a Thesaurus. Do synonyms and even antonyms suggest a new way of pursuing the subject at hand?
5. Visualize how some of the ideas could work or fail to work in the problem situation. If some ideas don't seem to work, ask yourself: what else might I need for the solution to work?

6. What assumptions are you making that you could break completely by applying one of the ideas from your brainstorm?

7. If you've got a good idea which isn't quite there, do some further brainstorming to develop it further.

The aim is to open up the problem so that you start to see crucial aspects that you simply hadn't spotted before. You may notice something that you can work on now to make the problem resolvable.

Lesson 2B - High Performance Living

Topic: Stress Management II

An Introduction to Stress Management

What is stress?

Stress is tension and heightened arousal caused by unmet needs. You need to take action to resolve it.

- * Something you want is not-coming closer or is going away.
- * Something you don't want is not-going away or is coming closer.

A stressful situation can be perceived negatively - as a problem, or positively - as a challenge. Stress becomes a problem when there is **a gap between the demands you perceive are being made on you and your perceived resources to meet those demands**

You can take measures to counteract stress at three levels:

1. Manage the demands. For example, you can apply the information on 'Do It Now' in Lesson 1 in order to manage your time better. Or use your Problem Solving skills to find out how you may be perceiving a challenge as a problem and therefore reducing your energy and enthusiasm to solve it.

2. Increase your mental and physical resources. For example:

- * Take regular breaks to build relaxation into your day.
- * Cut down on caffeine, alcohol, sugar and cigarettes, all of which cause stress on the body systems.
- * Eat optimally to provide the nutrients which are necessary to support normal functioning of body systems. The body demands nutrients particularly when situations are stressful.
- * Learn new skills to improve your capability on the job and develop your mental abilities and life skills, such as with this *New Life Course*.

3. Change your perceptions. Perceptions are important because you respond not to external reality but to how you interpret that reality. If you don't like the internal representation

"Changing the filters that your mind applies will change your perception of the world." Then you can change the reality. This course as a whole will help you to become aware of your perceptual filters and how you can change them, but the following technique is a simple and effective starting point:

How to instantly relax using your peripheral vision

Just find a point straight in front of you and focus on it. Now gradually become aware of what's around it... and let your vision spread out in front of you to the corners of the room. Your eyes continue to focus at that point and at the same time you become more and more aware of the periphery of your vision. If you stretch out a hand to one side of you, you might find the point on the edge of your vision where you only see that hand when you waggle the fingers. Let your awareness also spread behind you, so that your senses of hearing, touch, smell and spatial awareness spread out to the periphery as well.

Normally, in Western society, we mainly use and recognize what's known as foveal vision. We concentrate on one point in front of us and notice all the details about that one point. For example, watching TV, looking at a computer screen, reading, talking to someone. We ignore everything around it. This is very much a left-brain function of sequential focused concentration. There is another kind of vision - peripheral vision. It takes in the whole panorama of what's happening in front of us and around us. It is a right-brain function involving feeling and intuitive awareness.

As you experienced your peripheral vision, you might have noticed certain physical changes - perhaps a shift in your breathing from higher to lower in the chest, a relaxation of face and jaw muscles, or maybe later your hands became warm. If you normally hear an internal dialogue, you might have noticed it became quieter, or even stopped altogether.

Foveal vision, concentrating on one thing, is associated with the fight-flight reaction, with anger, fear and stress. Peripheral vision, being open and aware of many things in

your environment, is associated with relaxation, calmness and healing. To the extent that you are truly in the peripheral-vision state of awareness, you can block the anxiety or stress of left-brain thinking. The two states are incompatible.

Many older cultures know about peripheral vision and use it as a tool for reaching useful states. For example in hunter-gatherer cultures, peripheral vision allows the hunter to catch movements of prey without giving his position away by moving his head. It also dispels fear. In martial arts, peripheral vision allows the practitioner to be aware of any movement an opponent makes, for example, with his hands while keeping the rest of him in view. You can see how useful that would be if there was more than one person attacking you at once.

Left-brain thought processes are: analytical, verbal, logical, and sequential.

The left brain is good at intelligent thought, making hypotheses, but also at making things up and telling lies. It is therefore responsible for the mind's defense mechanisms of rationalization, justification, blame. This occurs when the individual can't confront feelings and real experiences. Because feelings and real experiences are right-brain functions, this defense causes a repression of the right-brain mode of experience too. It cuts off the valuable right-brain awareness such as intuitive thought and being in touch with feelings, that is, being grounded. At the extreme this leads to living in a world of fantasy and to being totally cut off from feelings.

Right-brain thought processes are: holistic and relational, non-verbal and based on perceptions and feelings.

If we cannot confront thinking *analytically* about painful experiences or wrong doings we may retreat to the right-brain mode of experience. Without left-brain input, we lack the logic and reason to control our feelings and emotions. They have no control so they run amok!

This is how we feel when overcome by fear, sadness or remorse, that in extreme cases can lead to extreme mood swings from laughter to tears, without any control. Clearly we need both modes of functioning. They complement each other. In fact, much of therapy and development is concerned with reintegrating thoughts and feelings - enabling us to take advantage of both. Below is a summary of left- and right-brain features:

| | Left-brain | Right-brain |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| Qualities and functions | Analytical | Holistic |
| | Logical | Relational |
| | Verbal | Non-verbal |
| | Sequential | Perceptions |
| | Hypotheses | Feelings |
| One-sided functions | Telling lies | Extreme emotions |
| | Rationalization | Roller-coasting emotions |
| | Justification | Intuitive feelings |
| | Blame | Picture memories |

Take regular breaks to increase your productivity

We all know that we work better and feel less stressed if we take regular breaks during the working day. However, the stressed individual may feel uncomfortable and guilty about taking breaks. Even when they admit that their usual driven work patterns are causing them stress, they feel they can't stop because "the work just won't get done." Research has established a theoretical basis for common-sense advice. Our bodies have a basic Rest-Activity Cycle, consisting of 90-120 minutes of activity followed by 20 minutes of rest. This cycle can easily be stretched or distorted, as when the individual works through the morning without taking a break, skips lunch, or works late. However, it has been found that people whose rest-activity cycle remains irregular for extended periods develop stress-related symptoms.

The rest-activity cycle involves alternate shifts in dominance from one side of the brain to another. When we move from activity to rest, the left side of the brain (associated with logic, sequence, details, analysis, calculation and language - "work mode") gives up dominance to the right side (associated with patterns, intuition, and emotion - "relaxation mode").

While we can force ourselves to remain in work mode for long periods, the right side of the brain protests and eventually reasserts itself, leading to a loss of concentration and enthusiasm, increasing tiredness and error rates.

It's no accident that workplaces and schools traditionally build midmorning and mid-afternoon breaks into their schedule; employers and school authorities found that people work better and think more clearly with regular breaks. By taking breaks in the middle of the morning and the middle of the afternoon, getting out of the workplace altogether at lunch time, and leaving work at a reasonable time in the evening, you can improve the quality of your work and get more done in less time.

Lesson 2C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Being Specific II

An Introduction to Stress Management

Organization is the way we make sense of our world. Usually by examining samples of a group and drawing conclusions about the whole group. When we take only a few examples and make rules, judgments, conclusions, etc., covering all examples, we are over-generalizing. Our way of organizing the world leads us to false conclusions. This lesson is about over-generalization, or going over the top!

Universals

Universals are statements that all members of a class have a certain quality. For example, 'Everything I do fails.' How to dispute such a generalization:

"All men are hard working."

All men? Every single man who has ever lived or will live? Can you think of a man who is not hardworking?

"Women are more intelligent than men."

Every woman? Any woman is more intelligent than any man - including Einstein and Socrates? Can you think of a woman who is not more intelligent than a man?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|---------------------------|---|--------------------|
| "Everyone thinks so" | <i>Everyone? Isn't there a single person in the whole world who doesn't think that?</i> | Well I guess so... |
| "Bosses are all the same" | ? | ? |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| "There aren't any answers" | ? | ? |
| "No one believes that nowadays" | ? | ? |
| "People are getting wiser" | ? | ? |

Ability

The form of this is 'I can't?', or 'It isn't possible'. Examples:

"I can't do that."

What stops you? (What prevents you?)

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------|
| "No one can help me with this" | <i>What prevents them?</i> | "It's too difficult" |
| "It's impossible" | ? | ? |
| "I could never do that" | ? | ? |
| "I can't get on with them" | ? | ? |
| "I can't put up with it any longer" | ? | ? |
| "This is more than I can endure" | ? | ? |

Obligations

We express obligation by using 'must,' 'should,' 'have to,' 'ought to,' etc. The opposite is 'must not,' 'ought not,' 'better not,' etc. Examples:

"I must do it."

What would happen if you didn't?

"You ought not to go"

What would happen if I did?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| "I have to make a good impression" | <i>What would happen if you didn't?</i> | "Well I wouldn't get the promotion I want" |
| "This must be perfect" | | |
| "You have to do it" | | |
| "I mustn't show myself up" | | |
| "You ought to try harder" | | |

Possibilities

We can create a very uncertain world by using words like might, could, etc., when we refer to unwanted possibilities. These words are very general because they cover all likelihood's from 0.1% to 99.9%. Examples:

"You could have an accident"

Yes, but how likely is it?

"You could have a heart attack"

Everything is possible, but how likely is it?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|--|--|---|
| "You could lose a lot of money doing that" | <i>Yes, I could, but how likely is it?</i> | "Well, not very likely, if you are careful" |
| "It is possible you could come unstuck" | ? | ? |
| "You might get ill" | ? | ? |
| "I could really get in trouble for that" | ? | ? |
| "Perhaps you will do a lot worse" | ? | ? |

Judgments and Evaluations

Statements such as, 'You are a fool!' omit the person who has made that judgment. They are deletions and generalizations. Underlying these statements is the assumption that something is true because someone said it (and for no other reason!). These assumptions are called 'performatives'. Examples:

"You are stupid"

According to whom?

According to what criterion?

What did I do that you judged stupid? When?

How does your saying I am stupid make it a fact that I am stupid? (This is the specific challenge for a performative.)

If anyone uses evaluations like this, you might as well ask all these questions one after the other without especially waiting for an answer!

Lost Performatives

Performatives are expressions which achieve an effect, or claim to do so, merely by uttering them. For example:

I agree.
 You're a failure.
 Permission has been given.
 He's intelligent.
 This is the best thing for you to do.
 This is crazy!
 I declare you husband and wife.
 I bet you won't.
 He's a nut case!
 You may now enter.
 You can't trust her.
 I sentence you to ten years hard labor.
 This is terrible!
 I declare war.

Who utters these statements and who is addressed makes a big difference. A person may not have the strength, power, authority, etc to make the statement the fact it appears to be. If I say, 'I sentence you to ten years', it doesn't matter a jot. But if a judge says it, it's a different matter! If a manager with appropriate authority says, 'You are fired!', then if I am an employee, then I am, in fact, fired. Performatives do exist; that is, when a king, judge, manager, minister of religion, etc utters certain words to certain people then the event, state, action, etc becomes a fact. In which case, who is making the statement and who is being addressed is crucial.

If someone says to me, 'You're a moron!', it doesn't have any impact, but if a psychiatrist says it!

The performatives we are concerned with here are actually expressions which masquerade as performatives. They are revealed as such by asking, 'According to whom?' If the answer isn't a person with appropriate authority (say a minister of religion), under the appropriate circumstances (in a church), and the person addressed is not within that authority (the bride or groom), then it isn't a performative.

During childhood, if Mom says you can go out then you can go out, otherwise, you are in deep trouble! You can go out because she says so, or you can't go out because she says you can't. Her uttering the words makes the fact. However, in adulthood, there are almost no true performatives. Yet some childish habits survive, so we may still react with conformity or rebellion in action, emotion or belief to what is said. In the majority of cases, the utterer of a performative is consciously or unconsciously expecting us to take what he or she says as a fact. Or in our own thinking, merely because we have a thought about something, we take it as a fact. Performatives are often judgments or evaluations. They are challenged by asking 'According to whom?', 'According to what criterion?', or by asking for information.

'This is good.' According to whom is it good? Performatives can be responded to directly by asking, 'How does your saying that make it a fact?'

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|---|--|----------------------|
| "I am a failure" | <i>According to whom?</i> | "Well, I think I am" |
| "Well, I think I am" | <i>How does your thinking you are a failure make it a fact that you are a failure? What's the evidence? According to what criterion?</i> | |
| "They don't know what they are talking about" | | |
| "I am allowed to do this" | | |
| "It is improbable that you would succeed" | | |
| "He won't get away with it" | | |
| "You're useless!" | | |

Take particular note of the above thought distortions when they are used by your friends and family or on TV and when they slip off your tongue. Each time consider an appropriate clarifying question. If appropriate, ask it - at least ask it of yourself! In Lesson 3, we will deal with the final parts of the Being Specific model.

Lesson 2D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Effect Conditions

Empowerment & retrieving lost power

The state of being empowered

Empowerment means being at cause, that is we cause whatever happens in our lives. We are responsible for our existence. We are in control. When we are responsible for something, it is we who have to explain why it is, as it is. After all we have been given the power to change.

So we are the responsible for what is good and what is bad. Here lies the crux. With responsibility comes blame. If all goes well, we are praised, if not, we are the only ones who can be blamed. It is our fault. As our failures and wrong-doings increase, so does our pain and guilt. Is it surprising that many have relinquished their power, given up control and responsibility and become an effect? As you will learn later, you cannot be other than at cause. Yet you can pretend to be at effect: to be disempowered.

The state of being 'disempowered'

If we yield our power of choice we stop being a cause. We become an effect! We no longer control our own life. Someone else controls it for us. We no longer have the power to choose or to change. But we no longer have to be blamed. We sometimes invest a lot in being at effect. We won't give it up easily. It can assuage our guilt and hide our true failures. It's a safe solution to our problems.

Unfortunately it's not the best solution. By being a victim, we try to escape the pain of responsibility only to accept the pain of being a victim. We refuse to choose, and have others choose for us. We refuse to control and allow others to control us. We do not accept our power, and give it to others. We do such a good job at this that we believe we are totally disempowered and that others are in control of us. Our pain is their responsibility. It is their fault. Yet by doing this we deprive ourselves of so much pleasure and fun in life.

We deprive ourselves of the opportunity to reverse the cycle of victim consciousness and to start making life much better for all of us.

Fortunately, the first step to retrieving our power is quite easy. We simply recognize **we are responsible for our choices** which bring about our present and future conditions. All we have to do is recognize how **we are already causing** our situation. Then we are empowered.

Why did we give our power away?

The fact is that we never did give it away. We are always making choices. Even choosing not to choose. We always choose the best option that we have available. We are always at cause.

When we choose to be effect, it is because the problems of responsibility appear greater than all the trouble which comes from being an effect. For example, being beaten by a drunken husband seems preferable to the alternatives of remedying his behavior or starting a new independent life.

There must be something of value that the person is finding in the current arrangement of being at effect. Maybe having somebody tell you what to do provides safety; being on drugs provides peace; having somebody scream at you every day helps you to feel something; being with an alcoholic ensures uncritical company.

We really wouldn't be in that sort of situation unless the apparent advantages outweighed the drawbacks. Also, the idea of being at cause may be unfrontable. Past negative experiences may maintain it is dangerous to recover our own ability to choose. Most likely we have tried things in the past which failed and led to us being blamed, so now we refuse to take responsibility. We may also imagine possible painful events in the future, if we regained our power of choice. We pick the safe position of being effect. Sadly, we have chosen misery rather than challenge and delight!

The disempowered person is fragmented

When you think another is right and you act according to their will, you have identified a part of you with them. You have let them into your mind, as your master. You have become fragmented. One of the main ways this comes about is through invalidation, or 'making wrong'. If somebody says your effort was 'not good enough'

or that you 'shouldn't have done that', then you start to question yourself. You begin to introspect and ask, 'Is there something wrong with me?' When another person wrongly evaluates or misunderstands your communications or your state of mind, this is, of course upsetting. It means the other has not understood you. Your enthusiasm wanes. You may accept this false evaluation. Perhaps because of the authority or dominance of the other person. If you think they are right, you begin to follow their will, not your own. A part of you has identified with the other person and split from the real you. The you which is responsible for your choices.

This very commonly occurs with children, where they take on the characteristics of their parents. It is also very frequent in relationships where one partner adjusts to match the other's expectations. And of course it happens at work too. When our goals are suppressed by another - however well meant - is eventually life destroying. Negative evaluations (personal criticisms, opinions) by another especially at times of stress can cause extreme upset.

Invalidations - making you wrong

The first step in handling disempowerment is to recognize that you are the cause of your life. That you have choices and you have the power to create the world you want. This step enables you to reclaim your power of choice and responsibility by examining one of the major causes of disempowerment.

The following is a list of the various ways you might have been put-down by others and as a result agreed to have less power. For each question which applies to you, look at the incident now and ask yourself:

- 1. What choices did I make?** Consider: What did I decide? (About myself? About the other person or other people?) How did I choose to feel? What emotion did I choose? What did I choose to do? What did I choose to think?
- 2. What other choices could I have made?**
- 3. What might the effect of that choice be?**
- 4. What positive learning can I get from this experience?**

You always have choices. If a mugger threatened you with a gun, you have the choice not to give her your wallet. She might have killed you. But you had the choice. You may have chosen to give her your wallet. This may have been wise. But you never have to do anything against your will. You can always choose.

1. Did anybody tell you, you didn't have a right to your opinion?
2. Did anybody criticize you unjustly?
3. Did anybody make an unfair generalization about you?
4. Did anybody tease you?
5. Did anybody harm you?
6. Did anybody suppress you?
7. Did anybody make your goal seem worthless?
8. Did anybody make you not exist?
9. Did anybody make you feel insignificant?
10. Did anybody tell you that you shouldn't be there?
11. Did anybody tell you that you didn't belong?
12. Did anybody tell you that you couldn't leave?
13. Did anybody try to control you?
14. Did anybody manipulate you?
15. Did anybody constrain your ability to move?
16. Did anybody force you to play a game?
17. Did anybody force you to follow their rules?
18. Did anybody trick you into an agreement?
19. Did anybody impose arbitrary limitations on you?
20. Did anybody judge you?
21. Did anybody make you do something you didn't like?
22. Did anybody decide things for you?
23. Did anybody take away your ability to choose?
24. Did anybody bypass you or take away your job?
25. Did anybody stop you from doing what you wanted?
26. Did anybody take away your pleasures?
27. Did any group condemn you?
28. Did anybody else set the norms?
29. Have you given away your space?
30. Have you given away your time?
31. Have you given away your life?

32. Have you given away your energy?
33. Have you given up your boundaries?
34. Have you given up your protection?
35. Have you given up your escape?
36. Have you given up your past?
37. Have you given up your future?
38. Have you given up your present?
39. Have you given up your free will?
40. Have you given up your pleasures?
41. Have you accepted false conclusions?
42. Have you let other people decide for you?
43. Have you allowed your efforts to be blocked?
44. Have you allowed your connections to be cut?
45. Have you allowed your communication to be blunted?
46. Have you allowed your choices to be changed?
47. Have you accepted superior authorities?
48. Have you accepted rules you didn't want? Have you accepted defeat?

Should I keep trying to remember every single experience? No, it's best to do an exercise until the point that you get a significant new understanding and 'release'. That should stay with you. But if you continue beyond such a point you can start to feel overrun and then it's hard to get further gains. You can, however, go back to earlier techniques at a later stage when you are looking at things from a new viewpoint, and so get further gains.

Co-dependence

Some people exist from the position of being effect. They are involved in relationships and work situations they know are harming them, but they feel helpless to change them. They have addictive relations to people and situations. They must have what is harming them, or they must do what harms them. They are Co-dependent.

Do any of the following apply to you? If so, spot the co-dependence and take responsibility in that area - reclaim your own choices. If you have any problems in sorting out the issue, discuss it with your tutor.

You can use these questions. Change them to the present tense if appropriate.

- 1. What choices did I make?** Consider: What did I decide? (About myself? About the other person or other people?) How did I choose to feel? What emotion did I choose? What did I choose to do? What did I choose to think?
- 2. What other choices could I have made?**
- 3. What might the effect of that choice be?**
- 4. What positive learning can I get from this experience?**
- 5. Is somebody out to get me?**
- 6. Have I been unlucky?**
- 7. Did somebody stop me from succeeding?**
- 8. Has anybody screwed up my life?**
- 9. Are there hidden influences in my life?**
- 10. Am I mysteriously failing?**
- 11. Does something seem to keep me down?**
- 12. How has my upbringing affected you?**
- 13. Did I get too few opportunities?**
- 14. Is somebody sabotaging me?**

Good & Bad People

Notice which people in your life make you feel good and which make you feel bad. When you find yourself feeling limited or put down or depressed in somebody's presence, write down who it is and exactly what happened. And when you feel uplifted and in a good mood in somebody's presence, note down who it was and exactly what happened.

Look for specific reasons for your feelings in those situations. What is the difference between the people or situations where you feel good and the ones where you feel bad? Isolate what is going on. Discover what is useful and what isn't. Work out how you can organize your life to minimize the negativity and reclaim your power.

Establish something that you can be at cause over - at least a little bit - in the area where you were at effect. If you can just succeed in changing a tiny element of the situation into the tiniest glimpse of a positive direction, that is enough. Don't expect to have the problem evaporate instantly. Reject the idea it is all or nothing. Create a small positive change by doing something a little differently in that area. Big changes

are accomplished a little at a time. For now it is the direction which counts. Changing in a positive direction is what will work. The positive direction is that of cause - responsibly taking charge and actually changing conditions, however small this may be at first.

You can also examine the current situation as a problem: compare it with other problems, find out what makes it a problem etc. Just recognizing the truth of one's current situation will help to free it up.

Remember that the effect conditions in your life are something **you are doing and creating** by yourself. It might *appear* to be other people's fault, however, we are the ultimate cause of our lives. To achieve this it is occasionally practical to move away from the people or places which appear to suppress you. With some distance you can reassess your involvement and if you wish, re-establish the relationship with you at cause.

"When I was a child, parents or teachers were always 'right,' and I had to conform to their rules. So the choices left would be extreme, like running away from home or jumping from a bridge. Even these extreme choices may have not been possible because of the strict control and surveillance. It is true that now I have the choice but, how these experiences can be resolved?"

The choices here are not so much practical - there was little choice in what you could do then - as in your interpretation now. From an adult point of view you can show your inner child that perhaps another choice is to understand that your parents or teachers may have been misguided but were acting in your best interest, so instead of feeling resentment you now have the choice to instead feel more understanding and empathy. Or maybe you now have the choice to forgive them that you did not feel you had then.

Lesson 2E - Concentration & Meditation

Topic: Breathing & Relaxation Techniques II

Tongue Relaxation

The tongue is one of the most common sites of chronic muscular tension, tied in with tension in the jaw, throat and neck. All the things not said get bottled up here! In this lesson we learn to become conscious of this tension and to let it go.

Some tension in the jaw and facial muscles is desirable. Ideally the jaw is sufficiently tensed for the upper teeth to almost make contact with the lower ones. Even as you think about this you will become aware of the effort, usually unconscious, that you normally use to keep the jaw from hanging too loosely. When relaxed, the tongue lies on the floor of the mouth, its tip making slight contact with the backs of the teeth.

To begin this exercise, sit in a comfortable position holding the head erect. Sense the position of your tongue in relation to the roof and floor of your mouth. Is it in the middle or closer to the left or right cheek? Sense the top of it, the tip of it, its roots, how long it is, how wide it is.

Now run your tongue over the inside of your teeth, top and bottom, as far to the left and right as you can. Then cover all the ins and outs of the cutting edges of your teeth. Then run your tongue between the teeth and the lower and upper lips, to all the extremities, several times.

Now press your tongue against the roof of your mouth. Press hard and hold it there for a while. Breathe normally as you do it, relax and let go. And then do it again. Similarly against the floor of the mouth, so that your mouth opens.

Then yawn deeply several times. Try to be aware of your tongue as you yawn. Now just open your mouth a few times to see how widely you can open it without any strain. See how far you can stick your tongue out without strain, a little farther each time. Then flick your tongue in and out between your lips, like a snake, several times,

then more slowly, using your lips to sense what the tongue feels like. Then take a little rest. Observe how the tongue feels. Does it feel longer and wider now? It probably will now that the tension has been reduced. If you've enjoyed doing this and feel it has made a difference, you'll benefit from doing it regularly.

Breathing Colors

Colors, when pictured mentally, have a subtle stimulating influence and help to strengthen the practice of Pranayama.

For example, bright red uplifts energy and stimulates wakefulness. Orange stimulates and purifies; yellow does the same but more subtly. Violet is purifying and uplifting and helps detach from worldly interests. Green helps relaxation, eases tensions in both feelings and thinking and creates subtle rhythms in the mind.

How to use colors with pranayama

This is a basic kind of meditation and should be practiced twice daily - the best times are sunrise and sunset, but at least, peaceful periods of morning and evening when you will not be disturbed should be chosen, in a quiet room or outdoor setting. Allow at least hour to elapse between eating and practicing. Also if you feel sleepy or are physically too tired, it is better to defer your work until another time. But it is important to practice at regular times, if possible. For example, if you do the exercise at 7 a.m. or 7 p.m., it is best to repeat it tomorrow at that time. This will make exercises easier and more pleasant. Alcoholic drinks and excessive smoking should definitely be avoided. Exercises on concentration should not be done in any state of intoxication.

Preparation

The deadliest enemy of successful concentration is belief you must think continuously! This is the false hope that something useful may come from any and all thoughts - that none can be ignored. As soon as you commence an exercise, you will note that after a few seconds spent thinking about one of the themes given in the following lessons, a swarm of thoughts start to attack you. You temporarily forget what you meant to do. All of these thoughts are of no value. But a voice whispers they are of great interest to you! It's a bit like the way many people believe they cannot miss today's episode of a favorite soap opera. If you accept this lie your efforts will be wasted. You will only lose time and the poison of doubt and disappointment begins to

undermine your decision to study the subject. In particular, thoughts relating to an expectation of results from the practice are the biggest obstacle to progress.

Try saying to yourself, preceding the exercise:

"Apart from these fifteen or thirty minutes I wish to devote to concentration, I have all of the rest of the day left for thinking. There is no reason to obey wandering thoughts, generated and harbored by my rebellious mind. In this small portion of my time I want to be myself, independent of all outer things, instead of being a rudderless boat tossed about by the waves of my mind. I am not interested in any thoughts or emotions during this period, and I am indifferent to whatever may happen. I have the inner power to ignore everything which tries to enter my mind, while I am here at this time."

You are not your thoughts, which compose your mind. The rider and his horse are two, not one. Until you are able to fully control your 'steed', you do not know and cannot clearly define that this rider is you. This knowledge comes as the ultimate result of your study, not before. But fully understand this concept and bear it in mind.

Persist in developing this clarity of your inner space, and you will experience a wonderful feeling of freedom in your everyday consciousness. This begins to give you a foretaste of the treasury which is true peace of mind. Then will come some advanced exercises, but you will perform them with the newly won ability to impose peace on your thoughts. The key to success in this study is giving up uncontrolled thinking. With that key you may open the golden gate, from which you expect so much.

Another result of mastering your mind is being able to see and feel emotions and thoughts in the surrounding astro-mental worlds - the 'psychic' space - no matter how close or distant they may be. By developing clairvoyance systematically, as shown here, it will not be uncontrolled and vague. It will be more like the normal physical senses of seeing and hearing, but infinitely more subtle and far-reaching.

The exercise

Sit on a chair or stool but do not lean back or assume a lazy posture. Sit upright with the spine, neck and head in a straight line. Place your shins perpendicular to the floor with hands palm downwards above your knees. Then completely relax the body. You should be quite comfortable so you could sit for hours without pain or tenseness; then

your attention will leave your body. Practice basic Pranayama breathing as in the last lesson. This should be natural and easy now so that you are no longer thinking about it.

Shut your eyes and imagine the whole of surrounding space to be filled with a bright (never dark) ocean of the color red. Like being in an immaterial, crystal-clear colored fluid. Imagine you are drawing it in through your nostrils when inhaling and allowing it to emerge again when you exhale. That is all that is needed for this exercise. Do not think of anything else but maintain the rhythm of your pranayama as usual.

The more relaxed you are, the easier it is to visualize. If you find it easier with your eyes open, then do so. Don't expect to be good at this at first time. In fact, don't expect anything. If you have difficulty imagining strong or vivid colors, try placing a sample of the color nearby for reference.

Lesson 3A - Tools for Thought

Topic: Problem Solving - Force Field Analysis

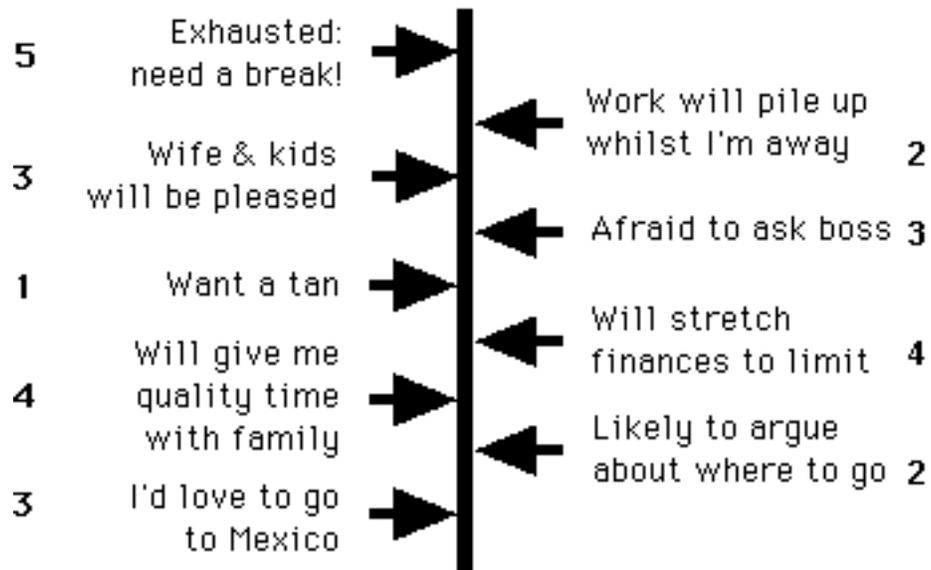
View the forces which act upon a situation

Force Field Analysis is a method used to get an overall view of all the forces, or factors, which act upon a situation. It enables you to make a decision which takes into account all the factors, all the pros and all the cons, and helps put them into perspective. You will find it easier to spot the intentions and counter-intentions which exist in the problem situation or which affect your planned solution to a problem. (The planned solution generally is the real problem!). You can use the clear view you obtained from Force Field Analysis help you reduce the impact of the opposing forces, and strengthen and reinforce the supporting forces. These forces may be your own intentions and counter-intentions or the conflicts between your intentions and others intentions (and other forces acting in the situation).

- 1. Draw a diagram** showing the forces supporting change in one column, and all forces hindering change in the opposite column.
- 2. Assign a score to each force**, from 1 (weak) to 5 (strong).

You have two options: To reduce the strength of the forces opposing the desired change, and to increase the forces promoting the change. An example of such an analysis is shown below.

Situation: Want to have two weeks holiday



Below is a table with an analysis. In the left-hand column, the opposing forces are listed. In the right-hand column, the ways of weakening them are explored. An alternative approach would be listing the supporting forces and then examining ways of strengthening them.

| Opposing Forces | Weakening the opposing forces |
|--|---|
| Work will pile up while I'm away. | In this case, I can arrange to have a colleague look after some of my duties whilst I'm away and arrange things so that there is nothing pressing on my return. |
| I'm afraid to ask the boss for leave. | I can look at the issues which cause me to be afraid to ask my boss - what's the worst that can happen? What am I hiding? Am I exaggerating the issue? |
| It will stretch finances to the limit. | I can see the bank manager and arrange for a temporary overdraft extension, and sit down with my wife and finally sort out our budgeting. |

| | |
|---|--|
| There are likely to be arguments about where to go. | OK, we argued about the location last time we went on holiday but I was being very rigid - this time we can discuss the matter more reasonably and find a place we all would like; and my wife has mentioned she would like to go to Mexico in the past. |
|---|--|

Yeah, I can handle these things! I'm sure that a good holiday would recharge my batteries, and when I get away some great new ideas tend to appear out of the blue. The kids will be very happy as we weren't expecting to get away this year and it would do us all so much good to have some real time together.

Analyzing Internal Conflicts

This an exercise in helping you resolve internal conflicts with Force Field Analysis. Think of something which is currently a conflict for you. It should be a situation where you have to make a difficult decision and where there is no clear choice.

Identify the problem and possible solutions - all conflicts have a central problem and possible solutions - you should make both very clear. With an internal conflict, you should be careful to **isolate** the problem to avoid making it bigger than it is.

We often complicate a problem by relating it to everything else in our lives. Because we have money problems, we cannot sleep, or be civil with other family members! The problem is with money, but we have related it to other things in our lives which are not relevant to the problem. Insomnia won't make you rich. Nor will being unpleasant! These are examples of spreading the problem to life areas where it does not apply. A traditional example is a company losing money. It buys cheap pens, to save a few pence. The saving on the cheap pens is too little to matter. It just makes the staff frustrated with pens which don't work.

Concentrate on the sort of thing which could solve the problem, and concentrate on what has sufficient significance to solve the problem. In the money problem, solving upsets will not solve the problem. It is the wrong sort of thing. In the company example, saving money by buying cheap pens, is the right sort of thing, but it is insignificant - and causes more problems than it solves. Avoid this by focusing on the

specific issue and what could solve the problem. (In conflicts with other people, we often confuse the problem with the person who presents the problem).

Furthermore, we might not even consider a possible solution presented by the "other" person, despite its merits. Look at each item and separate it from all outside relationships. **Identify the pros and cons for each possible solution** by making a Force Field Analysis for each.

Look carefully at the possible solutions and try to assess their outcomes. The Analyses should be evaluated in terms of how well they solve the problem. Sometimes people make choices because they have so many good side-effects, but the good side-effects may not address the real problem. Getting drunk because one has an upset, is a good example of this. Another is tidying the cupboard because there is so much work in the garden. We all do these illogical things, so be aware of them. Choosing a possible solution that has the best benefits but does not solve the problem will make the problem more involved and difficult to solve at a later time, when it will inevitably resurface. Also, be aware of how your own personal values affect how you weigh the pros and cons in each solution.

For example, in conflicts with people, you must listen fully and fairly to the other person's arguments, and you must have that person in turn listen to you. Furthermore, the merits of a proposal should continue to be the degree that it solves the problem, and not the degree to which it has positive side effects for people, or the degree to which it avoids your confronting particular people and issues.

Look for ways to integrate the solutions - is there any way for you to use the best of all your options? Often people get caught up in "either-or" ways of thinking, without Realizing that both options may be possible.

(In conflicts with other people, this is the extensive process of negotiation, in which people make offers and counteroffers as a means of finding an acceptable middle ground of agreement. Once again, it's important to evaluate any new arrangement which comes out of these negotiations with the old question: "Does it address the real problem?")

Make a tentative choice - *pretend* to decide on a solution. Immediately, ask yourself how you feel about it. If you feel that it's a wrong solution, pretend you made another choice. Now how do you feel? Test all the possible solutions in this way. What you're doing is testing these decisions. Sometimes people are so afraid of making a hard decision that they never even "pretend" and imagine the outcomes of decisions to see how they'd feel. This is the time of narrowing your possibilities, so don't be afraid to imagine the various different decisions and their possible effects on the problem situation. Think about past experiences with similar problems, consider where you went wrong in the past; learn any necessary lessons and use your accumulated knowledge to help you evaluate these options.

(In conflicts with other people, we need to narrow the negotiation down and refine the solution so it is acceptable to all parties. Each participant in the negotiation "tries the decision out" to see if it feels right.)

Make the choice. You have already done all the work needed. Now you make the decision.

Plan the implementation. Many people feel such great relief once they've gone through the difficult work of making a decision, that they think that the decision making is the last step. However, all the hard work may be for naught if there is not a concrete list of tasks and suggestions for giving the plan of action a fair chance. Determine a time for implementing the decision

Evaluate the results. Plan how you will know that the decision is working. You may make a list of criteria on which you will decide whether to continue with the decision or to find another. (In conflicts with other people, this planning is extremely important in order to maintain fairness, and evaluations should involve all of the participants).

Force Field Analysis is an effective method of getting a picture of all the forces for and against a planned solution. It helps you to weigh the importance of these factors and assess whether a plan is worth pursuing. Where you have decided to proceed with a plan, carrying out a Force Field Analysis helps you identify changes that might be made to improve the plan.

Lesson 3B - High Performance Living

Topic: Stress Management III

Overview of Stress Management

Types of Stress

Stress isn't bad. Too much stress is bad, but so is too little. Life without stress would be incredibly dull and boring. Life with too much stress is unpleasant and tiring, and may ultimately damage your health or well-being. It can also hinder your ability to attain results, because it makes you inefficient. The art of stress management is to keep yourself at a level of stimulation which is healthy and enjoyable. Not too high and not too low, but just right. To control stress you need to know when you are over-stressed or under-stressed. So we have provided this information to help you to monitor and control your stress so that you can manage your life at a comfortable level. We will discuss strategies to reduce or eliminate sources of unpleasant stress, and also explain the results of uncontrolled stress.

You know, of course, that aspects of your work and lifestyle can cause stress. Did you know, however, that it can be caused by your environment and by the food and drink you consume? And very significantly, it can be caused by the way you view and interpret situations.

Four sources of stress

1. **Survival Stress**
2. **Internally Generated Stress**
3. **Environmental and Job Stress, and**
4. **Fatigue and Overwork**

1. Survival Stress

Survival stress is an extreme reaction to danger that we might encounter when our lives are threatened. For example, a hunter comes face to face with a tiger. The injection of various chemical in the body increase the strength of the hunter and his

ability to run, fight, and variously do his best to survive. This is the 'flight or fight' response. In the real dangerous situation, this reaction has survival value, but in normal life it does not. However, even in normal life some people respond in this extreme way when there isn't a real threat to their lives or physical safety.

The fight or flight response is associated mainly with the release of adrenaline which results in a survival response. The main effects of adrenaline are:

- * Release of sugars which give your body access to more strength, energy and stamina. This helps you to fight harder or run faster.
- * Reduced the blood supply to your skin and non-vital organs. This minimizes bleeding if you are hurt, and ensures that energy is not wasted on processes which are not immediately useful.
- * Vomiting and elimination which eliminates excess weight which might otherwise slow you down.

You may think of these changes as something undesirable, such as fear or rage. Yet in a real survival situation, this adrenaline stimulus is beneficial. Fear and rage can help you to survive or perform better. This physiological response has been developed to meet physical dangers.

In modern times, we mainly face threats to our well-being rather than our safety - yet sometimes they too evoke the 'fight or flight' emotional response. In these cases, it is better to control and, ideally, to eliminate these adrenaline responses. We know, from lesson 2b, that when the left-hand side of the brain is suppressed, then the right-hand side can go out of control, showing extremes of rage and fear. This suggests one way of handling an overreaction to a non-dangerous situation. We can develop our rational thinking so it plays its part in correctly evaluating the situation. We can do this by using methods to reduce uncertainty, imagery, positive thinking, etc. This can be greatly magnified by acquiring a confident and realistic outlook in the stressful situation.

2. Internally generated stress

Internally generated stress results not so much from what is happening around us, but from our way of thinking, and, more generally, from our nature. This can come from:

- * Anxiously worrying about events beyond our control,
- * A tense, hurried approach to life,
- * Relationship problems caused by our own behavior. or
- * An 'addiction' to and enjoyment of stress.

Your personality can also affect the way that you experience stress. You may be familiar with the idea of 'type A' personalities who thrive on stress, and 'type B' personalities who are mellower and more relaxed in their approach.

Stress - when perceived as a threat - can give a feeling of confidence and elation that 'type A's like. They can therefore subconsciously defer work until the last minute to create a 'deadline high', or can create a stressful environment at work which feeds their enjoyment of a situation. The downside of this is that they may leave jobs so late that they fail when an unexpected crisis occurs. This may also cause unnecessary stress not only for them, but for their colleagues too.

Irrational thinking can cause stress. Examples are:

- * Perfectionism, where the perfectionist's extremely high or impossible standards can cause stress.
- * Excessive self-effacement, where constant attention to the needs of others can lead to dissatisfaction when no-one looks after your needs.
- * Lack of self-esteem, where one never thinks one is good enough.
- * Chronic negative emotions such as anxiety, jealousy, anger and upset, envy, grief, fear and depression.

Anxiety occurs when you are concerned that circumstances are out of control. In some cases being anxious and worrying over a problem may generate a solution. Normally it will just result in negative thinking.

Albert Ellis listed the five main unrealistic desires or beliefs which cause anxiety:

- * The desire always to have the love and admiration of all the people who are important to you. This is unrealistic because you have no control over other people's minds. As a result one tends to have bad days, see things in odd ways, make mistakes or can be plain disagreeable and awkward.

* The desire to be totally competent at all times. This is unrealistic because you only achieve competence at a new level by making mistakes. Everybody has bad days and makes mistakes.

* The belief that external factors are always the cause of one's misfortunes. Often negative events can be caused by your own negative attitudes. Similarly your own negative attitudes can cause you to view neutral events negatively. Another might find something positive in a situation that you view as a problem.

* The desire that events should always turn out the way that you want them to, and that people should always do what you want. Other people have their own agendas and do what they want to do.

* The belief that past bad experience will inevitably control what will happen in the future. You can very often improve or change things if you try hard enough or look at things in a different way.

3. Environmental and Job stress

Here your living or working environment causes the stress. It may come from noise, crowding, pollution, untidiness, dirt or other distractions. Alternatively, stress can come from events at work. These may include:

1. too much or too little work
2. having to perform beyond your experience or perceived abilities
3. having to overcome unnecessary obstacles
4. time pressures and deadlines
5. keeping up with new developments
6. changes in procedures and policies
7. lack of relevant information, support and advice
8. lack of clear objectives
9. unclear expectations of your role from your boss or colleagues
10. responsibility for people, budgets or equipment
11. career development stress:
12. under-promotion, frustration and boredom with current role
13. over-promotion beyond abilities
14. lack of a clear plan for career development

15. lack of opportunity
16. lack of job security
17. Stress from your organization or your clients:
18. pressures from your boss or from above in your organization
19. interference in your work
20. demands from clients
21. disruptions to work plans
22. the telephone!
23. Personal and family stresses:
24. financial problems
25. relationship problems
26. ill-health
27. family changes such as birth, death, marriage or divorce.

4. Fatigue and overwork

This can occur where you try to achieve too much in too little time, or where you are not using effective time management strategies.

You can get into a vicious circle of stress, which causes you to hurry jobs and do them badly. This under-performance causes feelings of frustration and failure, which causes more stress, which causes more hurry and less success, and so on. An inability to relax can compound this. If you do not manage long term stress effectively, it can lead to fatigue, failure and physical or mental ill-health.

What is our Optimum Stress Level?

The level of stress that we operate under is important. If we are not under enough stress, then we may find that our performance suffers because there is not enough stimulation, everything is too predictable and so we are bored and unmotivated.

If you are under too much stress, with too many difficulties and confusions, then you will find that you are achieving less than you might, because the stress interferes with your performance.

We are responsible for our own stress. That is, we create it. We create the level of stress we experience by the way we think about it. Of course, in a war zone, for example, the circumstances are extremely stressing. But different people experience

the stress differently according to how they interpret it, or mentally cope with it. In normal circumstances, the way we think about stress is most important in determining how we experience it. You can handle stress better when you monitor your stress levels - when you know when you are stressed and to what approximate degree.

Therefore, monitor your stress levels - adjust them up to be more alert, or down to be less tense. By managing your stress effectively you can significantly improve the quality of your life. The approach to optimizing stress depends on the sort of stress being experienced:

- * Short term stress such as difficult meetings, sporting or other performances, or confrontational situations. Here the emphasis is on short term management of one's nervousness in order to maximize performance.

- * Long term stress, where fatigue and high adrenaline levels over a long period can lead to degraded performance. Here optimizing stress concentrates on management of fatigue, health, energy and morale.

Short term stress

Where stress is low, you may find that your performance is low because you become bored, lack concentration and motivation. Where stress is too high, your performance can suffer from all the nervous symptoms of short-term stress.

In the middle, at a moderate level of stress, there is a zone of best performance. If you can keep yourself within this zone, then you will be sufficiently aroused to perform well while not being over-stressed and unhappy.

This zone of optimum performance is different for different people. Some people may operate most effectively at a level of stress which would leave other people either bored or in pieces! It is possible that someone who functions superbly at a low level might experience difficulties at a high level. Alternatively someone who performs only moderately at low level might perform exceptionally under extreme pressure.

Long term stress

The problems of long term, sustained stress are more associated with fatigue, morale and health than with short term adrenaline management. There are four major stages that you may go through in response to sustained levels of excessive stress:

1. During the first phase you face challenges with plenty of energy. Your response is probably be positive and effective.
2. After a period of time you may begin to feel seriously tired. You may start to feel anxious, frustrated and upset. The quality of your work may begin to suffer.
3. As high stress continues and your production suffers (production = morale), you may begin to feel a sense of failure and may be ill more frequently. You may also begin to feel exploited by your organization or manipulated by others, and start to distance yourself from them.
4. If high levels of stress continue without relief you may ultimately experience depression, burnout, nervous breakdown, or some other form of serious stress related illness.

Different people may move between these stages with different speeds under different stress conditions.

Naively, your 'toughness' is measured by how well you keep going under extreme stress. Certainly we can use stress as an excuse for not pushing ourselves hard enough. Yet it is all too easy to push yourself, or let yourself be pushed, to a level of stress where your work, and physical and mental health, start to suffer. The strongest and most flexible position is to actively manage your levels of stress and fatigue. You can then reliably produce high quality work over a long period.

What if my job is stressful by its very nature? If high performance in your job requires you to work hard in the face of high levels of stress then, you must learn to attend to your feelings to minimize the effects of stress. Attend to feelings of tiredness, upset or discontent.

This is the first step to avoid the effects of long term stress. It ensures that you know when to relax, take a break, get a good night's sleep, etc.

Look out for signs of stress in others. This is especially true if you are a manager seeking to improve productivity. Watch out for the stress in employees to avoid making them disheartened, burned-out or discontented. If you notice the signs of stress, give them time to recover. Then reconsider the pace you are setting. Also, look at improving work practices, time management, etc.

What can happen if stress gets out of control

Where you are under excessive levels of short-term stress, then you may find that your performance goes to pieces. Afterwards, however, you will be able to treat this as a learning experience and can adopt stress management strategies to avoid the problem in the future.

The effects of long term stress can be much more severe. In the early stages, the following sections can help. Go to see your doctor if the situation is affecting your health. The following sections should not be read to avoid obtaining professional help in severe cases.

Handling Fatigue and Exhaustion

You can often remedy this simply by going to bed earlier, or taking a good break. Re-examine your life and check whether you are meeting your personal goals. This may show you which tasks or commitments are important and that you can drop, giving you time to relax. Using time management strategies may also help you to work more effectively, giving you more time to put things into order and to relax.

Handling Depression

Depression may be related to high levels of long term stress - by failure associated with resulting under-performance, or by life crises. If you are depressed it is important that you take this seriously. Severe depressions which untreated can cause years of unhappiness and low performance can be neutralized quickly with the appropriate form of psychotherapy, or by other forms of personal action. You are wise to recognize quickly if you need to ask for help with a problem.

Depression may start when:

- * You miss important deadlines
- * Projects fail
- * You are passed over for promotion
- * You feel out of control
- * You are very tired
- * You are feeling inadequate while getting to grips with a new, difficult job
- * You are bored for a long period of time

Techniques for handling depression - before it gets too serious

Positive thinking really can help. As long as you can draw useful lessons from failure, then failure can be positive. After all, life is for learning - making mistakes presents a great learning opportunity. Those who achieve success are people with the courage to pick themselves up when they fall down and continue onwards to their goals. Many millionaires who have suffered insolvency's have learnt the lessons and tried again - then succeeded only because of what they learnt, only because they failed!

Talking about problems to a partner or to a respected colleague can help a lot. They may have been through a similar situation, seen the problem before, or may be able to gently point out alternative perspectives on a situation. We all need sometimes to be able to turn to a person who has their head screwed on, who is willing to listen and to offer objective advice; what you don't need are evaluation, invalidation or pity!

Where you are under stress caused by excessive demands, using effective time management can improve things. Similarly taking an enjoyable break may give you a chance to put things in perspective.

Where your life is just not interesting enough, you can set new personal challenges to increase stimulus.

How to improve your self-confidence:

- Start to set personal goals which are based on what you really want. This will help you to realize that you can achieve useful and important things.
- Write down a list of your negative points in the way that you normally express them to yourself. Challenge each item on the list objectively, with Being Specific clarifying questions. You will probably find that many of your negative beliefs are just not rational or are insignificant. Where you identify serious failings, set measurable personal goals to eliminate or neutralize them.
- Bring your anxiety and negative self-talk into awareness. When you experience it rationally, you may find worries are irrational or out of proportion. They usually are! If you have no control over a situation, then

worry does no good. File it! Forget it! If you can do something about it - such as to communicate or make a choice - then stop worrying and do it now.

- Write down a list of the things that you can do well and of the positive parts of your personality. Be proud of your good points - they can help you to contribute positively to the world. The more you give - one way or another - the more you get back!
- * If your mind wanders to a past failure - look at it differently! Find the positive element in it. Learn to identify these positives: this will help you to draw the best from every situation. Making mistakes or failing at something offers you an intensely valuable learning experience.

Improving your relationships with others

These are the areas to work on:

- **Assertiveness:** If you fail to assert yourself, you may find that other people are not attending to your wants and needs. This can be upsetting and even humiliating. Learn to express your wishes clearly, but only be confrontational if absolutely necessary (if your rights are being trampled) but remember that no-one wants to listen to a person speaking aggressively - persuasion requires shared agreements. Assertiveness training can be beneficial in learning to do this and will be included in a later Lesson.
- **Social Skills:** If your relationships are difficult, then take a look at the way in which you deal with other people. How would you like to be on the receiving end? If you can identify where things are going wrong, adopt new strategies to overcome the problem.
- **Other people:** It is easy to assume (especially when you are depressed) that the fault in relationship problems lies with you. This may or may not be the case. Examine your relationships rationally: you may find that people around

you are causing problems - there are some extremely rude, awkward, arrogant or confused people in the world. If a person is making your life worse, then you may be better off without them.

How to attain difficult goals

Difficult goals are important ones which require financial or time resources that you do not currently have. Handle them by reassessing what that you can reasonably achieve with what time and money you have, and aim at achieving that. Don't aim at the end goal: aim at the next step only. You attain difficult goals by achieving the next step, and the next, in the sequence. In the end you achieve the whole goal

Avoiding burn out

When highly committed people lose their interest and motivation, we sometimes say they are experiencing burnout. Typically it will occur in hard working, hard driven people, who become emotionally, psychologically or physically exhausted. You are at risk of burnout if:

- You find it difficult to say 'no' to additional commitments or responsibilities.
- You have been under intense and sustained pressure for some time and there is no seeming end to it.
- Your high standards make it difficult to delegate to assistants.
- You have been giving emotional support for so long that you feel drained.

Burnout will normally occur gradually and manifest itself in a reduction in motivation, a reduced volume and quality of performance, and possibly a desire to cease the activity altogether.

To avoid mental burnout, ensure that what you do remains fun. If you are good at your job, people may want increasing amounts of your time, and will rely on you more and more. This is not good for you or for them. You must learn to say 'No' to commitments that you do not want to take on - otherwise you will be in severe danger of becoming unhappy with your situation. Instead, delegate effectively.

If you feel that you are in danger of burning out, or are not enjoying what you do, the following points can help you correct the situation:

1. Re-evaluate your goals and priorities them.
2. Evaluate the demands placed on you and see how they fit in with your goals.
3. Identify your ability to comfortably meet these demands.
4. If you are over-involved, reduce the commitments which are excessive.
5. If people demand too much emotional energy, re-evaluate whether this is actually helping them.
6. Apply problem-solving techniques to reduce the stress in your life.
7. Get the support of your colleagues and family in reducing your work load.
8. Ensure that you are following a healthy lifestyle.
9. Perhaps develop alternative activities such as a relaxing hobby.
10. Acknowledge your own humanity: remember that you have a right to pleasure and a right to relaxation.

Further ways to handle stress

This section shows you some effective methods of reducing stress to a level where you can perform most effectively. In choosing methods to combat stress, first ask yourself where the stress comes from. If important events or relationship difficulties are causing stress, then use a positive thinking or imagery based technique. Where stress and fatigue are long term, then lifestyle and organizational changes may be appropriate. If the feeling of stress comes from nervous tension in your body, then it would be appropriate to learn to relax more effectively.

Reducing Uncertainty

Uncertainty is a common stress factor. Causes of uncertainty can be:

- * Not having a clear idea of what the future holds.
- * Not knowing where your organization will be going.
- * Not having any career development plans.
- * Not knowing what will be wanted from you in the future.
- * Not knowing what your boss or colleagues think of your abilities.
- * Receiving vague or inconsistent instructions.

In these cases lack of information or the actions of other people are stopping you achieving your goals. If the reason is lack of information then ask for the information you need. It may involve asking what your employer wants from you in the future, so that you can set the appropriate career development goals. If you are unsure of how you are doing, ask for a performance review.

If the problem is inconsistent and conflicting instructions, ask for clarification. If you ask in a positive way, then people are usually quite happy to help.

Imagery

Imagery is a potent method of stress reduction, especially when combined with physical relaxation methods such as deep breathing.

We are all aware of how particular environments can be very relaxing, while others can be intensely stressful. The principle behind the use of imagery in stress reduction is that you can use your imagination to recreate a place or scene which is very relaxing.

What is imagery? Your sense organs convert signals from your environment into nerve impulses. These feed into the areas of your brain which interpret that environment. Imagery seeks to create (by internal visualization) nerve impulses that can feed into those same areas of the brain which experience the outside world; amazingly, this creates the same effect as real sensory input.

This can be illustrated very effectively if you have access to equipment which measures body stress (e.g. a Biofeedback Monitor). By imagining a pleasant or reassuring scene, which reduces stress, you can cause a needle on the machine to move in one direction. By imagining an unpleasant and stressful situation, you can move it in the opposite direction. This can be quite alarming when you see it happen the first time! It seems amazing that thoughts can have physical effects, and this can be detected on a machine!

Using imagery to relax

Imagine a scene, place or event that you remember as peaceful, restful, beautiful and happy. Bring all your senses into the image: the sight the trees and grass; sounds of running water and birds; the smell of cut grass; the taste of cool white wine; the

feeling of warmth of sun, etc. Learn to use the imagined place as a mental resource in order to relax at times of stress and pressure.

Scenes can involve complex images such as lying on a beach in a deserted cove. You may see cliffs, sea and sand around you, hear the waves crashing against rocks, smell the salt in the air, feel the warmth of the sun and a gentle breeze on your body. Other images might include looking at a mountain view, swimming in a tropical pool, or whatever. Choose the most effective images for yourself.

Other uses of imagery in relaxation involve mental pictures of stress flowing out of the body; or of stress, distractions and everyday concerns being folded away and locked into a padlocked chest.

You can also use imagery in rehearsal before a big event, allowing you to run through it in your mind. You can practice the skills that you will need, as in sports. It allows you to prepare in advance for anything unusual that might occur, so that you are already practiced in handling it. Imagery also allows you to pre-experience achievement of your goals. This help to give you the motivation you need to do something well.

Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking

These three related tools are useful in combating reactive, irrational or negative thinking. Reactive thoughts are messages which automatically come up in your mind - sometimes fleetingly or slightly below your normal consciousness - in response to a stimulus or situation, based on past habitual patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving. They are frequently irrational or inappropriate to the present circumstances.

Negative thoughts occur when you put yourself down, criticize yourself for errors, doubt your abilities, expect failure, etc. Negative thinking damages confidence, harms performance and paralyses mental skills.

Listening to your thoughts

This the process by which you observe your thoughts for a time, perhaps when under stress, and become aware of what is going through your head. It is best not to suppress any thoughts - just let them run their course while you observe them.

Watch for negative thoughts while you observe your 'stream of consciousness'. Normally these appear and disappear being barely noticed. Normally you will not know that they exist. Examples of common negative thoughts are:

- * Worries about how you appear to other people
- * A preoccupation with the symptoms of stress
- * Dwelling on consequences of poor performance
- * Self criticism
- * Feelings of inadequacy

Make a note of the thought, and then let the stream of consciousness run on.

Thought awareness is the first step in the process of eliminating negative thoughts - you cannot counter thoughts you do not know you think.

Rational Thinking

Once you are aware of your negative thoughts, write them down and review them rationally. See whether the thoughts have any basis in reality. Often you find that when you properly challenge negative thoughts they are obviously wrong (see Being Specific). Often they persist only because they escape notice. We will be looking in depth at distorted thinking and rational thinking later in the Course.

Positive Thinking and Affirmation

You may find it useful to counter negative thoughts with positive affirmations. You can use affirmations to build confidence and change negative behavior patterns into positive ones. You base affirmations on clear, rational assessments of fact, and use them to undo the damage that negative thinking may have done to your self-confidence. Examples of affirmations are:

- * I can do this.
- * I can achieve my goals.
- * I am myself and people will like me for myself.
- * I am in control of my life.
- * I create my own feelings.

- * I can learn valuable lessons from my mistakes.
- * I am a good person.

Traditionally people have advocated positive thinking almost recklessly, as if it is a solution to everything. It should be used with common sense, and the affirmations should not be exaggerated or fanciful. An affirmation should be a realistic assessment of yourself which is not based on negative thinking - then you keep this up your sleeve as a resource. Decide what goals you can realistically attain with hard work, and then use positive thinking to reinforce these.

Health, Nutrition and Exercise

The food you eat may contribute to the stresses you experience. Examples of stressors you may not be aware of are:

- * Caffeine raises your levels of stress hormones, makes it more difficult to sleep, and can make you more irritable. Caffeine is a stimulant. One of the reasons you probably drink it is to raise your level of arousal (i.e., stress). If you are drinking many cups of coffee a day, then you may find that you can reduce a lot of stress by switching to good decaffeinated coffee for a portion of your daily intake.
- * Bursts of sugar from sweets, cakes or biscuits can make you feel more energetic in the short term. However your body reacts to stabilize abnormally high sugar levels by releasing too much insulin. This causes a serious energy dip shortly after the sugar high.
- * Alcohol: in small amounts may help you relax. In larger amounts it may increase stress as it disrupts sleep (and causes hangovers!). In large amounts over a long term alcohol will damage your body.
- * Nicotine in the very short term can cause relaxation, but its toxic effects raise the heart rate and stress the body. If you smoke, try taking your pulse before and after a cigarette, and notice the difference. After the initial period of giving up smoking, most ex-smokers report feeling much more relaxed on a general basis.
- * Too much salt raises your blood pressure and puts your body under chemical stress.

As well as these specific sources of stress, you may experience stress if you eat an unbalanced or unhealthy diet. Dietary deficiencies may cause discomfort and illness

which generates stress, and some deficiencies may directly cause mental problems. If you are obese then this causes physical stress on your internal organs and emotional stress if one's self-esteem declines.

A surprising amount of the stress we may experience on a daily basis can be caused by the chemicals we consume in our diet, including additives such as flavorings and preservatives, pesticides on vegetables and antibiotics in meat.

There is a lot of biased, dubious or incorrect dietary information around. A sound analysis of daily dietary requirements (and the effect of nutritional deficiencies) is contained on the Tools for Transformation Web site: Nutrition: The Medicine of the Future (www.trans4mind.com/nutrition).

Taking Exercise

Taking frequent effective exercise is probably one of the best physical stress-reduction techniques available. Exercise not only improves your health and reduces stress caused by unfitness, it also relaxes tense muscles and helps you to sleep.

Exercise has a number of other positive benefits you may not be aware of:

- * It improves blood flow to your brain, bringing additional energy and oxygen which may be needed when you are thinking intensely.
- * When you think hard, the neurons of your brain function more intensely. As they do this they build up toxic waste products which cause foggy thinking in the short term, and can damage the brain in the long term. By exercising you speed the flow of blood through your brain, moving these waste products faster. You also improve this blood flow so that even when you are not exercising, waste is eliminated more efficiently.
- * Exercise increases the release of chemicals called endorphins into your blood stream which give you a feeling of happiness and well-being.

An over-strenuous approach to exercise may actually damage your body. Certainly one should enter gradually into an exercise regime and not cause strain on inflexible muscles and joints; so this is best done under the supervision of your doctor or a fitness professional. The most important thing to remember is that exercise should be fun - if you don't enjoy it, then you will probably not keep doing it.

Lesson 3C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Being Specific III

Distortions - or twisting the fabric of reality!

We have dealt with Deletions and Generalization in the previous lessons. We can distort our perception by omitting something important (Deletions). Drawing conclusions from insufficient evidence (Generalization). Or we can add things which aren't there! In this lesson we deal with perhaps the most important part of the Being Specific model: **Distortions**. Distorted thought implies wrong causes or incorporates mind reading. It sneaks in assumptions or gives very questionable meanings. It deforms the truth so that reality appears as a ridiculous yet grotesque caricature. The fanciful and bizarre conclusions we all draw when we use this type of thinking make our lives difficult or more miserable. You can use the questioning techniques in this lesson to reveal and handle these distortions.

Cause & Effect

If a stone hits me, the pain is clearly caused by the stone impacting my nervous system. However, when someone says something which upsets me, clearly it is not the words which cause the upset. It is my thoughts and reactions to the message.

Examples:

"This makes me angry."

How specifically does this make you angry?

"What he said made me cry."

How specifically did his saying that make you cry?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|---|---|----------------------------------|
| "This book bores me" | <i>How specifically does this book cause you to be bored?</i> | "It isn't a book I want to read" |
| "This cold weather depresses me" | ? | ? |
| "You make me mad when you say that" | ? | ? |
| "This program makes me laugh" | ? | ? |
| "All that worry caused him to be withdrawn" | ? | ? |
| "He made me hit him" | ? | ? |
| "You put me off whenever I am trying to do something" | ? | ? |

Mind Reading

People who would not regularly claim to read the minds of others nevertheless make statements which would have required mind reading capability if they were even remotely true. This is not to say that mind reading is impossible; rather that no attempt is actually made to read a mind or to communicate. Instead, the other's thoughts are hypothesized, based on presumptions. When we 'mind read' we are often projecting what we think onto another person. We are thinking something, but we believe this is what the other person is thinking.

For example: "You are angry, aren't you?" When really we think the other person is angry. The other person might be angry. And then he or she might be upset, or even

thinking very deeply. What is certain is that the speaker thinks the other person is angry!

“You meant that in a dirty way.” The other person may or may not have meant it in a dirty way. What is certain is that the speaker had a 'dirty' thought.

Sometimes when we mind read we upset ourselves unnecessarily because the other person doesn't mean what we think they meant. The following questions ask for the evidence for the person's conclusion about what the other person is thinking. This evidence may or may not be good. Examples:

"They'll think we are troublemakers."

How do you know they'll think we are troublemakers.

"If people see me getting upset, they'll think I'm mental."

How do you know they'll think you are mental?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|--|---|----------------------------|
| "They'll think how strange I am" | How do you know that? | "Well, I would be strange" |
| "I would be strange" | (Performative) How does your thinking you would be strange make it a fact that you are strange? If you thought you were Superman, you wouldn't be able to see through walls, would you? | ? |
| "She's always thinking of ways to hurt me" | ? | ? |
| "They know what you want" | ? | ? |
| "I can see you aren't very pleased" | ? | ? |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| "He understands me better than anyone else" | ? | ? |
| "They think we're rich" | ? | ? |

Sneaky Assumptions

An assumption is something we take for granted and do not question. Assumptions are often slipped into our thinking and communication. The assumption may be wildly wrong, yet we do not think to challenge it. The way the assumption is dealt with depends on what the assumption is. You would respond to it first by identifying it, and then by using one of the Being Specific techniques. Examples:

Are you still beating your wife? [Assumption: you have beaten your wife.]

"Because you have had bad time keeping this month, you won't get a bonus." [Assumption: 'you had bad time-keeping this month.']
(Was my time-keeping bad?) "What is it about my time-keeping that you consider bad?"

"You are always upsetting people. You ought to shape up." [Assumption: 'you are always upsetting people.']
(Have I upset someone?) "Always upsetting everyone? All the time? Who specifically did I upset?"

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|--|-------------------------------|--|
| "Have you stopped telling silly jokes?" | When did I tell a silly joke? | "Well, I thought that one you told at the conference was silly." (Judgment and Evaluation) |
| "While you help me in the garden, is it all right for your wife to help in the house?" | ? | ? |
| "You failed last time. What are you going to do to prevent a repetition?" | ? | ? |
| "If I don't do something then I'm going to get anxious again" | ? | ? |
| "You need a tie to go with that suit. Now what do you think of this one?" | ? | ? |
| "If he had worked hard, he wouldn't have got fired" | ? | ? |

Personal Meanings

A consultant once said to me, "If you do that you'll be in deep shit." I asked, "What do you mean by 'deep shit'?" His answer changed what had seemed threatening to in fact be 'probably nothing much'. Words can have a vague meaning or a personal meaning, and we can only find out by asking. Examples:

"I can do you a good deal on this."

What, specifically do you mean by 'a good deal'?

"He wouldn't look us in the eyes, so I know he was bored."

How does his not looking us in the eyes mean he is bored?

"Something terrible might happen."

What, specifically do you mean by 'terrible'?

Practice Examples

| Example | Clarifying Question | Possible Answer |
|--|---|--|
| "He crossed his arms, so he disagrees" | How does his crossing his arms mean he disagrees? | "Well, that body language means he disagrees, doesn't it?" (Universal) |
| "He had that superior look on his face, so I know he was looking down on me" | ? | ? |
| "She looks sad so she is sad" | ? | ? |
| "He didn't phone, so he doesn't care what's happening" | ? | ? |
| "He laughed at me so he thinks I'm stupid" | ? | ? |
| "I want better things for my child" | ? | ? |
| "I want to develop myself" | ? | ? |

Take particular note of these kinds of thought distortions when they are used by your friends and family, or on TV, and when they slip off your tongue. Each time consider an appropriate clarifying question. If appropriate, ask it - at least ask it of yourself! In Lesson 4, we will review the Being Specific model.

Lesson 3D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Effect Conditions II

Positive Reframing

A positive way of looking

When you recall an unhappy experience, you may think of it as wholly negative -

- * Something that you wouldn't want to have happen again,
- * Something that you 'suffered'.

When you do this, it means that you have not learnt the lessons that your experience offers you. Because you haven't learned the lessons, you cannot apply them in your future. You can become wary of new experiences and you may shut off your willingness to experience new and better things.

In order to gain the valuable lessons of even 'bad' experiences, you need to learn to view them from a positive angle. You need to reframe it. The word reframe, when we are talking of a picture, is to take the picture out of its old frame and put it in a new frame. When you reframe an experience, you could put it in a context where it would be useful. For example, suddenly remembering you had left the saucepan on and panicking to turn it off might be a useful reframe of jumping at memories. Another type of reframe is giving something a different meaning. If the boss is critical, you might reframe it as 'he cares whether you do good work or not'.

Below you will find a sample list of positive reframe statements - ways of looking at things differently. Compare the statements with some of your experiences and present situations and notice how the right reframe (there are hundreds of right reframes) can make you feel different.

- * It could be worse.
- * It is a challenge, not a problem.
- * It is a growth experience.
- * this only happens to really special people.

- * I will have some great stories to tell about that.
- * It is just a small part of something much bigger and more important.
- * Some people would pay for experiencing that.
- * It is a magnificent thing just to be alive.
- * The glass is half full, not half empty.
- * I will be a lot more able after having resolved this.
- * It is an ability, not a limitation.
- * Imagine what I would be missing if it were any different.
- * It is all communication.
- * It is all learning.
- * Things always come out all right in the end.
- * Communication can resolve any problem.
- * It is useful in a different context.
- * Somebody else would respond differently.
- * That it comes up is a sign of positive change.
- * It goes quicker if you can enjoy it.
- * Everything happens for a reason.
- * Part of me knows what is going on.
- * The core of me/person is basically good.
- * Life is about having fun and learning.
- * My external situation shows me something about myself.
- * I don't need anything else, my intuition will guide me.
- * The universe will help you, if you will let it.
- * I have everything I need right here and now.
- * You always get what you ask for.
- * Wow, that is just great!
- * There probably is a really important lesson in this.
- * What is, IS. It could only be bad if we compare it to something else.
- * We are taking part in the planet's growth process.
- * It happened exactly as I caused it to.
- * It sure isn't boring.

The above are all general reframes. The general reframes here are more like attitudes which will apply to just about anything. If you reframe everything in life as 'a learning experience', then it doesn't really matter what happens. You consider it a learning experience. And learning makes you better. The negative effect of any event will be

lessened by reaffirming that indeed this is a learning experience. It means that you are going to learn something new, and that's great!

The bigger the problem, the greater the learning. Practice the reframes you like and invent others (these should be more suitable for you) until you can have a positive reframe ready for anything.

Putting oneself down

Guilt is usually a pattern of putting oneself down because of the "bad" things one has done. However, there is a rule which may seem untrue but actually it is the case: every person is basically good and basically has good intentions. (Even a child murderer is only doing what seems right to him, given that his basically clear, childlike view has been distorted and obscured by a tortured history of mental aberration). But then, if a person acts in ways that he or she labels as "not good," it violates this rule about being good. The typical response to that is to feel bad, to hide one's actions from oneself or from others. Most people will punish themselves severely if they feel that they have violated rules they should abide by.

A person who is certain of his or her own goodness will not do that. However, the typical person has no such certainty. They typically know that they ought to be good, but they aren't quite. Which opens the door to all sorts of religious manipulation and guilt trips. People will jump through all sorts of hoops in order to redeem their "badness" so they can feel good again.

When one does what one considers to be a harmful action, one will limit oneself a little bit. Which is a twisted way of maintaining the truth of every individual being good. If one does something which isn't good then one can't be quite as much of a being, so one makes oneself a little smaller. At least in relation to the group whose moral code one violated.

If one keeps doing misdeeds - whether deliberately or accidentally - one holds oneself back from acting, so that one doesn't get to do something bad again.

Another piece of twisted logic which often happens here is: if one committed a misdeed against a person or group, then since one inherently always does good things,

well, then that person or group obviously can't be good. In other words, one justifies what one has done by further putting down the target of one's harmful act. Again, that is likely to get worse and worse. Because one did one thing and put down the target to justify it, it is then more justified to do further actions against them, then to justify that, and then to do another, etc. One would most likely be critical of that establishment more and more. And if it was a group one was a member of, one would withdraw more and more from it.

If one's actions are almost found out by someone, this creates a very frantic phenomenon that can be quite explosive. The person is wavering between whether or not she has been found out or if her actions are still hidden. That would particularly make her badmouth anybody who is perceived as almost finding her out. Now, none of this is really the truth of the matter. Those are semantic reactions, done sub-consciously from an already limited and misunderstood perspective: that we are our actions. If the truth is re-established, all the negative phenomena will go away.

The basic handling of guilt is to recognize the basic goodness in oneself, just as the action of forgiveness is to recognize the basic goodness in another. If we dig into the "bad" actions we have done we will find basically good intentions, accompanied by elements of irrational and distorted thinking which are misguided solutions to the problems we face fulfilling our needs of survival, belonging, self-esteem and self-realization.

But wouldn't that be coming out with excuses for actions perceived as bad by others? Guilt is perceiving your own action as bad. Shame is concern over others considering your actions bad. So guilt is helped by realizing that your intentions were not so bad, but you had misconceptions that you understand better now - so you can forgive yourself; whether others understand that is another matter, but that gets less important when you have forgiven yourself. Life is for learning, we learn from our mistakes - but until we have admitted we were wrong then we cannot learn the necessary lesson, i.e. understand how and why we went wrong.

So many people protect themselves by maintaining their rightness, making others wrong in the process, and so do not learn and move forward. But wrong actions and misunderstandings do not mean you as a being are inherently wrong or bad. Even

child murderers have some crazy internal logic for their actions, but somewhere inside there is a genuine person.

One needs to have the ability to forgive oneself. Seeking forgiveness for one's sins from an outside agency doesn't solve anything. A person must be responsible for his or her own actions. We must act out of our basic goodness and must forgive ourselves for any perceived mistakes we might have made.

People say that I always have an excuse for everything (in which I really believe). Sometimes we do have genuine excuses - we know our intentions weren't bad - but other people don't want to hear them; they are playing their own games of making self right by making another wrong. What matters to you is your internal honesty, i.e. integrity. That is your real strength.

My lack of guilt feelings (i.e.. always justifying my behavior) sometimes creates problems with other people. Is this really a problem that I need to fix? It's their problem not yours. To deal with it is to obtain understanding of their viewpoint and so obtain empathy - which is not to say liking their view or agreeing with it - after all, only you know the truth.

But that honesty works both ways. One also needs to recognize when one is indeed justifying one's actions to protect one's rightness, e.g. making another wrong to justify misdeeds done against them. This is a common self-lie, and leads to sequences of misdeed-justification that get one further and further into the shit, away from truth. We see this all around us in society.

One way of addressing the matter is to free up the fixedness of rules: that there is only one right or wrong way of behaving. Those rules can be addressed like any other fixed ideas - testing their limits, finding what they are trying to accomplish, seeing them from different viewpoints, etc. Also finding what purpose the fixedness itself serves.

One may still have to conform to the rules and agreements of the family, group or culture one is part of. But that's better than being a robot, doing everything that it's programmed to do without questions. And sometimes we have to be brave; if courageous souls didn't question the rules there would be no reform or progress.

So really, there is no such thing as badness. People do what they do because it consciously or sub-consciously is the best thing they can think of at the time. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't work, but regardless, there is really not much need for making oneself or others totally wrong.

Take a look at some of the "bad" things you have done and see what were your motivations - the superficial ones and the genuine ones which underlie them. Then forgive yourself and feel whole.

Ways people use to manipulate others

It is very common that a person uses one main strategy for manipulating others. This **Control Mechanism** is usually quite an unconscious thing, something which is done habitually.

One learns early in life what it takes to control the attention and actions of others, to get them to give you what you want and avoid expending your own energy. The particular method used is often a reflection of how one's parents behaved.

For example, if you had a father who would always find fault in anything you said, you would probably instinctively discover that if you don't offer any information then there is nothing he could find fault with. You would gain power by withholding information and waiting for others to make the first move. That could easily become a permanent pattern.

A control mechanism doesn't have to appear very manipulative at first glance. Being meek or submissive or quiet might be a perfectly fine control mechanism. If you are submissive then people will keep you around and you might feel safer.

Often a control mechanism will be a way of increasing one's status with others. It could be that one plays on being more educated, more experienced, stronger than others, or that one simply shows an arrogance which implies that you are. On the other hand, a tramp on the street might control others by making them feel guilt or pity. A safe solution for you might be being unapproachable or being overwhelming, always staying collected or by always starting an argument.

Manipulation usually falls into the following four categories:

- 1. Intimidation:** Somebody who controls others by overwhelming them, commanding them, telling them what to do.
- 2. Interrogation:** Somebody who gets information from others in order to find something wrong with it. Gets others to do or say something and then finds weaknesses in it.
- 3. Aloofness:** Somebody who doesn't volunteer information, but controls others by having them reaching for the hidden information. Stays above others by not reacting, but waiting for them to make a mistake.
- 4. Playing Victim:** Somebody who makes others feel sorry for them. Talks about and demonstrates how they are particularly unlucky or persecuted. Controls others by getting them to feel pity or guilt.

Such control mechanisms are usually somewhat hidden, even though it is something done openly, because the person himself has always been that way, therefore he can't see it. You can't see what you are being - there is no distance from which to view.

Having a control mechanism at all is based on the subconscious belief that there isn't enough rightness to go around, that you somehow need to suck it out of others. It's a kind of self-esteem problem but deeply rooted in one's core identity. Basically it was a survival response to the lack of resources in a series of incidents. We all have certain safe solutions connected to the maintenance of our core identity and the full resolution of this matter is the subject of the first part of the Insight Project, Meta-Programming (see Web site: <http://www.trans4mind.com/spiritual/>), but we will be looking at the children and grandchildren of these later in the *New Life Course*.

It is something one can see quite plainly in others and it is useful to know how it works because then one can understand a great deal of behavior. Any given person might use a whole number of different mechanisms and fixed ideas to be right and to control and defend against others. People tend to be defensive about their control mechanisms, unless they are pinpointed very precisely, because to do so is really to expose the basic personality, to take down the face mask. Part of the makeup of a control mechanism is to evade being found out, even by oneself.

A control mechanism needs to be replaced with another way of feeling powerful, resourceful or safe. We need to find inner sources for these qualities. And we need to learn to think differently about the opposed factors that the control mechanisms are intended to keep at bay.

How can we handle manipulation when we recognize it in others? You can try and provoke consciousness by asking, "Why are you doing this to me?" Some won't listen, like some won't be helped, because they are compulsively protecting their rightnesses. But some will. And at least you can understand what's going on in their stupidity and so have some empathy. This is how it's possible to love idiots and bastards ("love your enemy"), because you know they're not really, just stuck in unconscious mechanisms and fixed ideas.

How can we handle manipulation when we recognize it in ourselves? Recognizing it is the key to its resolution. It's when it is done automatically and reactively, that's the problem, an aspect of our 'case'. If it was conscious act of manipulation you probably wouldn't carry on doing it, would you? If you would, then for your own best interests you need to start thinking differently, as described above. Because manipulation only takes you so far before it bites you right back in the neck.

Lesson 3E - Concentration & Meditation

Topic: Mind Control - Introduction

To Begin: A Favorite Melody!

We know that sounds in the form of melodies, songs, symphonies, etc. have a strong influence on the human psyche. Some melodies are stimulating, some induce soft, meditative moods, some make us melancholy, while others arouse sensual emotions in us.

Everyone has some favorite melodies, often connected with his or her earliest years, or bound up with happy or elated experiences and feeling. Select just a few of those that you really like and easily and gladly remember. Learn to reproduce them mentally. Next hum them softly. Then, when you feel some emotional depression, especially before the start of your daily exercises, quickly choose one of the favorite melodies, humming it for as long as needed in order to calm and uplift your feelings. With a little practice, you will soon experience the beneficial results derived from such a method. Note: only a few tunes should be used, not dozens of them.

In time you will come to appreciate fully this simple method of substitution of morbid and unwanted conditions by more desirable moods, and realize that you can effect such conditions; that you can if you so choose be responsible and in control. We do not receive any reward when we thoughtlessly harbor negative feelings, so why not replace it with something better and less harmful?

When we have negative thoughts we can cleanse them with the same method of substitution; but instead of a group of sounds, choose some sentences which inspire you and think about them or repeat them softly. They must be ones that you love, admire and fully appreciate. Exchange the mean, useless things for something superior. Instead of senselessly repeating themes which oppress you, introduce the luminous ray of wisdom.

Mental Travels

This is another preliminary exercise to help develop control of the mind. Get yourself seated and prepared for meditation. Now then...

Look attentively around you in order to memorize well as many objects in the room as you can in five minutes. It is not advisable to use a longer time for this purpose. Do it slowly, with full peace of mind. Do not name any of the objects you are mentally registering now, but operate only with the mute process of visualization. In other words, this exercise does not allow for any talks with oneself: only the images which appear before your mind's eye. It's a right brain exercise, not a left brain.

Then rise and go slowly into another room, or to another building. While walking, look around you with the utmost concentration you can manage, both to your right and left. On reaching your destination, immediately return the same way to your waiting chair. Sit quietly, and close your eyes.

Now, again perform the same activities, but this time only in your mind, exactly imagining yourself viewing the room and then rising and walking out, as in reality you did a few minutes ago. Visualize everything you saw. Try not to have any 'foggy spots' in the space around you, i.e.. gaps in your observation. Of course, in the beginning, when your mind may still be quite untrained and not accustomed to be directed exactly and purposefully, the work of your imagination may still be defective. So, repeat the exercise again, trying every time to perform it better. The key to success lies in your persistence. Only one 'travel' should be made in a session.

When you feel yourself to be capable and there are no omissions in your revisualization of these walks, gradually extend the distance you travel. While doing the exercise, any distraction should be ignored and no other thoughts allowed to enter your mind. Note that, contrary to Descartes, you are not your thoughts; thoughts are things that you create, either deliberately or via automatic mechanisms.

Developing Willpower

The success of concentration is proportional to the amount of willpower in a student. Quite naturally the question arises: "How do I begin to develop this essential force in myself?" Willpower is dependent upon the ability to dominate one's impulses, feelings

and speech in everyday life. Only when this power is developed will it become possible to be master of the thoughts in your mind.

Your willpower, then, grows in proportion to your capability to control strong impulses of speech, emotion and action which occur at any moment; i.e. your ability to BE in the present moment and not be carried along by habitual stimulus-response, reactive patterns of behavior. This is not a lack of spontaneity, of free expression in the moment, but rather a lack of 'driven' robotic behavior, which seems spontaneous but in fact has its roots in the imprints of past trauma and corresponding safe solutions.

There are three aspects that we will now practice: control of emotions, of speech and of behavior:

1. Control of emotions.

Suppose that under certain conditions you have the habit to respond with some particular emotions. For example, the sharp ring of a telephone makes you quiver; you know this. So, in future try to anticipate the ringing and prepare yourself to observe the response that your body-mind normally gives; with practice you will come to be unaffected by the sound Next, take another automatic emotion or reaction that you know to appear in certain circumstances. Eliminate these just like the one connected with the telephone, and so on.

2. Place speech under control.

Suppress every unnecessary and meaningless word that you are accustomed to utter every day. There are thousands of them and their flows of communication contain a lot of energy; choosing to retain this energy gives you an inexhaustible source of force. If you want to say a sentence to someone which has no special value or meaning, refrain from it. A trickle of force is immediately potentiated, and soon you will feel it as you practice this simple method more and more. An obvious warning: suppress only something which is really unnecessary. If your friend asks you a sensible question or the boss speaks to you on a matter of business, it would be nonsensical to remain silent. First and foremost cut the words that you pronounce thoughtlessly and that don't require your presence; they just spurt out. Instead, speak on your own initiative - with rationality and integrity.

3. Control of behavior.

Gradually, by practicing this degree of self-restraint you will begin to feel that your inner 'battery' is being charged. How will this feeling manifest itself? You feel yourself to be much more composed, self-assertive and less nervous and anxious. So, for some time, practice giving yourself these little injections of force, until you see that you are now able to undertake some larger renunciations. The greater the desire overcome and dominated, the greater the power which enters your battery. Therefore, miss out watching a TV soap and use your time more usefully; forego a portion of ice-cream or a cigarette and think what it is they are acting as substitutes for. When desiring to leave work early, overcome it by completing the tasks you need to do enthusiastically. In summary, don't just give in to desires like a controlled puppet; you take the strings and instead do what makes sense.

Put variety into your activities

Make plenty of variations and changes in your exercises for each day. Hopefully you will see that when your 'battery' is charged, you are more capable of performing something which needs greater strength of will. It will come to you more easily than before when your battery was continually run-down, having been exhausted by the immediate fulfilling of all of your desires as they appear: reacting emotionally, talking irrationally, or being self-indulgent. You will have more 'presence' when you speak with the support of your full energy, rather than being run down by dramatizing desires, words and feelings which are not truly your own.

An appropriate analogy is the activities of an athlete, who lifts weights and thereby exercises and strengthens his body's powers. Undoubtedly there is toil, just as with your self-restraint, which aims at the development of willpower. Therefore, these everyday exercises of limiting your speech, emotions, impulses and desires can be strongly recommended, in parallel with the exercises in the following Lessons.

Lesson 4A - Tools for Thought

Topic: Problem Solving IV

Developing your intuitive ability

Learning to recognize and to take account of your first thoughts, feelings and impressions is very helpful when confronting new situations. All of us have a natural intuitive sense that we can use, provided we recognize it as a source of information. If you meet someone and feel there might be something wrong but you just can't figure out what it is, you'd do best not to ignore that feeling. Likewise, if you feel a very strong positive feeling about someone, it's best to take account of it.

Intuition is like a muscle that you can develop with practice. Use it on a daily basis and you'll be surprised that such a great resource has been available to you all your life but probably ignored for much of the time.

Unfortunately, in the Western culture we are taught to think in a sequential, analytical (left-brain) way. Ideas have to be worked out, step by step, in logical fashion. But the right brain functions quite differently: it has simultaneous access to all of our knowledge base (including subconscious knowledge) and works out interrelationships and connections in that knowledge base analogically - the result just appears, perhaps as a feeling, hunch or symbol. Intuition, then, is an internal process which comes from all that we know and have experienced and very often it appears early and quickly. Sometimes intuition will contradict perceived reality.

For example, maybe you went out on a date with somebody and even though this person might have said and done all the right things, still you sensed that their motives were unsound. You may have picked up on body language that you weren't aware of consciously. There may have been telepathic communications that again you were not conscious of.

Your **first** thoughts, feelings, impressions about a person, thing or situation may be ignored or they may cause you to avoid or initiate action. These first thoughts are usually quite strong but they might not appear very logical. The second 'sensible'

thoughts, though - which are often fear-based rationalizations - may cause us to ignore the initial intuitive response.

Intuition - is there an answer under your nose?

intuition has always been a part of the creative process. It's been called insight, inspiration, brilliance, the spark, the muse, serendipity and many other things. Occurring in just about everyone and in every type of situation, intuition is our ability to directly know something without analytical thinking. Alas, our culture is deeply biased toward information which can be calculated, measured and verified, that often leaves intuitive data ignored or lost. Much wisdom is, therefore, left under the table, never spoken about or used.

While analytical thinking is important and valuable, intuitive thinking is equally so. Intuition is especially useful for sensing future trends, assessing multiple factors, embracing positive change, and seeing the big picture. There is little value in intuitive ideas in problem solving, if you cannot work out the applications logically. Equally, there's little value working out logical solutions to problems if they are out of touch with the context and your feelings of your desired outcome.

Yet although many of us have spent a tremendous amount of time and energy learning how to think analytically we have spent little or no time learning to think intuitively. In this course, you will have plenty of practice integrating both types of thinking.

Thinking intuitively

Have you ever done something, or had something happen, which was totally unrelated to an issue you are trying to solve, and, suddenly, you have the solution to your problem? For example, you spill the milk and, suddenly, you realize the solution to your problem. Or you go to town and meet someone you haven't met for years who makes a few comments, and you know the answer to something which has been bothering you. This is called synchronicity. It is the meaningful linking of two things which are apparently unrelated causally. It tells us that every fragment of time and every part of a problem space, contain the next steps and solutions to our problem. This knowledge includes the ability to sense from only one small aspect of a problem, its total solution. Such intuitions are available to those who know how to discern them.

Exercise: Keep a plate full of interesting and everyday objects collected from desks, toy stores, cleaned out closets, etc. Articulate a particular question that you have been struggling with and then pick an object randomly. Let the object be a message from the intuitive realm about how to proceed and what the solution might be.

The right brain also functions on the wavelength where we are all connected. Just about every parent knows this principle. Sensing how a loved one is feeling whether close or far away is a natural ability. We are all connected, not just to other people but to events and projects.

Exercise: To get on the wavelength where we are all connected requires quieting the analytical mind and giving room to the intuitive mind. Try meditating for 5 minutes, maintaining a silent mind, and then focus on a particular person or ongoing situation, and whatever feeling comes up instantaneously, without censure or judgment grab hold of it and let it expand, and let the left brain verbalize it as accurately as possible, just as it is without further interpretation.

Moving meditation is another option. Doing some kind of repetitive ongoing activity, such as a quiet walk in the evening, focus on a question or concern and just allow the answer(s) to come in.

Intuition connects us to the natural **cycles** to which every living process is subject. Everything is in a state of expansion or contraction, reaching or withdrawing. Knowing when to take action is as important as knowing what action to take. A good sense of timing requires a large dose of intuition.

Exercise: Think of a solution to a problem that you have previously arrived at. Now imagine instituting that solution when you would logically expect to, then much earlier than that and then at a much later time; finally at the time that 'feels right'. Compare outcomes.

We know much more than we think we do. Intuition does not require that we go outside of ourselves for an answer. Intuitive insight is available constantly. Einstein

knew intuitively there was a solution to the speed of light problem, he just didn't know what the solution was. It was his conviction and openness which enabled him to continue looking. Then the answer arrived when he was relaxing and daydreaming.

It cannot be predicted when an intuitive insight will occur. Be alert and open for intuition to occur at any time. Intuition is normally non-verbal and presents itself in feelings, pictures and symbols; understanding the language of intuition helps to keep the intuitive channel open.

Fight, flight or insight...

Conflict is neither good nor bad - it simply is. It's the inevitable result of living in a complex universe with other autonomous beings, all of us having minds focused on a partial, selective, interpreted experience of reality.

As part of the animal kingdom, we come equipped with the "fight or flight" responses to conflict. But as human beings we have another option: insight. That is, we can often find a creative new perspective which transcends our old understanding of the problem and simply dissolves the conflict. Let's look at each of these responses:

Fighting reduces the complexities of the situation to a simple question of power. In so doing, it moves attention and energy away from the substantive "primary" problem and toward the "secondary" problems of self-defense, maintaining self-image, and saving face. These secondary problems can often eat up as much creative energy as the combatants have to give. And that's energy that's not going toward solving the real problem.

Flight also leaves the problem intact. There are many ways of running away from the creative potential in a problem - that usually involves communication. We can try to deny the problem or gloss over it. We can let another make the decision or handle things. We can copy another's solution. We can go with the majority opinion or maintain the status quo. Running away may get us temporarily off the hook, but it never brings a breakthrough.

Insight - the third, uniquely human, option - was beautifully described by Carl Jung: "All the greatest and most important conflicts are fundamentally insoluble. They can never be solved, but only outgrown." This outgrowing requires a new

level of consciousness: some higher or wider interest appears on the horizon and through this broadening of outlook, the insolvable problem loses its urgency. It is not solved logically in its own terms, but fades when confronted with a new and stronger vision.

That "new and stronger vision" implies a radical clarification of purpose, an openness to new ways of seeing, and the ability to bring to the search for new understanding the courage, stamina, energy, and skill often dissipated in fighting or fleeing.

True creativity is a response of the whole person to the situations of life. It's a road always waiting to be taken. Where before you might have become frustrated or depressed, try asking: "What are my deepest purposes here? What's my highest vision for these purposes?" and see the situation from a new perspective.

Analyzing Intuitive Thoughts

What emerges intuitively - an image, feeling or idea - needs to be examined and developed further in order to be useful. The intuition may in itself be a valuable insight and reflect a truth, the product of the right brain working well. It may also be a window to the deeper knowing of one's spiritual dimension and the connectedness of all Spirit, which is accessed via this right-brain mode of thought.

The right brain, by its very nature, cannot lie. The contents of the right brain - real experience and perception - may be hard to face up to directly; experience is often painful. Therefore the intuition may be the tip of an iceberg and one needs to look further: "Is there more to this?"

Alternatively, it might actually be a left-brain thought which came up in response to the underlying intuition. The left brain is an expert at altering things, making things up and rationalizing. In this case one needs to look again, in an alternative direction, and be open to whatever then appears.

A further common content of what emerges from the well of the subconscious is material which is imprinted deeply into the mind, the result of conditioning from many sources. Such fixed ideas and beliefs may be your own conclusions as a result of traumatic experiences, your own solutions to previous problems, but also they may be other people's ideas which have been adopted by you - that you have identified and

made your own. To this one needs to ask: "Is this rational? Is this my own?" One especially needs to ask this of any idea which is negative, which puts you 'at effect' or which cuts down your choice and takes away your responsibility. Truth is (amazingly enough) always the opposite of that - it is your own; it is in the direction of communication, understanding and empathy; it increases choice and raises responsibility; and it accurately reflects what is (rather than what appears to be so).

With practice you can get to be able to quickly differentiate these kinds of mental content and be able to recognize and make the most of genuine intuitive insight.

How can I distinguish what comes from the right or left brain? For example when I ask if something is rational or my own, etc. The answer could be yes or no. How do I know which one it is. A lot of thoughts come to my mind and I don't know which ones are true.

If the thoughts are analytical, logical, sequential, judging and weighing, then they're left brain. If they come from an emptiness, a kind of non-verbal space, and they relate an overview of relationships, just seeing things as they are in an holistic way, then that's from the right brain. The left brain tends to alter things, to suppress the reality that the right brain naturally perceives. If something 'feels' true and 'right', including ethically and morally and not necessarily according to an authority or any other person says, rather than having been worked out, it is probably close to your true (right-brain sourced) reality. Validating inner knowing is what developing valuable intuition depends on.

Lesson 4B - High Performance Living

Topic: Stress Management IV

The main emphasis in management of long term stress is on adjusting your working methods and your lifestyle. Formal relaxation techniques do have a part in this, but equally important are time management skills, a positive attitude, a healthy diet with sufficient exercise and adequate rest, and a pleasant environment. Adjusting these things will improve the quality of your life as well as increasing your resistance to stress.

Time Management

Time Management means using your time in the most effective way possible. This helps you to reduce work stress by being more in control of your time and more productive. As a result you have time to relax outside work and do other interesting activities. The central shift of attitude is to concentrate on the specific outcomes you want to achieve, not to work away blindly, as discussed in Lesson 1 'Do It Now'.

- * Focus on your priorities so that you know which tasks should be done first, which ones can be delegated, and which ones can be dropped.
- * Plan projects so that all the necessary steps are done, in the right sequence, with adequate resources.
- * Avoid distractions.

This helps you put things in perspective when you feel 'drowned' in work. The more valuable work you get done, the better you feel. Remember, "Production = morale."

Time to Relax

If you spend all your working day competing or under pressure, then to prevent long-term stress building up it really is necessary to regularly give yourself a period of time for undirected activities such as reading a novel, watching television or listening to music, making love, meditating, having a long bath or massage, etc.

A Positive Attitude

Attitude is fundamental to long term stress management. Where your attitude is negative, opportunities seem like problems or even disasters. If you are hostile, you will create stress by alienating and irritating other people. On the other hand, with a positive attitude, you can maintain a sense of perspective and recognize the elements in any situation which align with your purposes or from which you can learn valuable lessons. You will find others to be more helpful and co-operative as they find you a pleasure to work with. Which attitude you adopt is really a matter of choice - your choice.

When you are under stress it is very easy to lose perspective. Problems which are relatively minor can take on an apparent size which makes them seem intimidating. Naturally this feeds your feeling of stress, which makes your problems feel worse, which feeds your feeling of stress....

If you take a positive approach, trying to find a good side to every situation, then you will find that you are much less prone to stress. You will worry less, sleep better and enjoy life more. Consider: What good has worrying ever done you?

Start to view mistakes as valuable learning experiences - if you have learned something you did wrong, then the whole experience has a positive value. When you face what seems to be a huge and overwhelming problem, ask yourself the following questions:

**** Is this really a problem at all?***

If you view it in a different way, is it actually an opportunity to do something well? If it really is a difficult problem, then most other people will probably fail at it or give up. If you can deal with the situation, then this will be a major triumph for you. If you take the problem on, then what will you learn from it, whatever the outcome?

**** Is this a problem that another person also has or has had?***

If so, find out how they deal with it or just talk to them to share the problem - they may be glad to talk. If you are facing a problem at work, talk to older or more experienced colleagues whom you trust. They will probably have seen the problem before and may be able to help to put it in perspective. Also you can learn from their mistakes.

**** Can you break it down?***

With a little thought you can usually reduce seemingly huge and impossible problems to a number of smaller, more manageable problems or tasks. Do a Force Field Analysis.

**** If you are facing a lot of problems, can you prioritize them?***

This helps you to work out the order in which you should approach tasks, and helps you to distinguish between important jobs and jobs which can be deferred.

**** Does it really matter anyway?***

If everything goes wrong, will it really matter anyway? If it does, will it matter in six months or a year? Bear in mind that you will probably have plenty of opportunities to correct any failure, or to shine in other ways if things go wrong. As long as you have done your best, and learn from any mistakes you make, then you cannot do any better.

Attitudes to Other People

Your attitude has a surprisingly large effect on the way that other people respond to you. The following are important factors in forming harmonious relationships with other people:

**** Take a positive approach:***

People enjoy working with and relating to happy, optimistic people. When things are getting difficult, a smile or positive approach to a problem can make the difference between success and failure of a project. Be assertive:

When you deal with other people, confidently project your right to have your views taken into consideration. This does not mean aggressively insisting on getting your own way, which irritates other people and tramples on their rights.

If you are not assertive then you will probably not be noticed, your achievements will not be given their due weight and your needs will not be given proper attention.

**** Pay compliments where they are due:***

If you notice something genuinely good about a person, or they have done a task very well, compliment them. This costs you nothing and helps to build rapport.

**** Try to leave people pleased to have spoken to you:***

When you are dealing with well-adjusted human-beings, the more you give, the more you get.

**** See things from the other person's point of view:***

When dealing with other people, try to understand the way they think. Try to put yourself inside their mind, feel what they feel, and understand their background, influences and motivations. This will greatly improve communication, understanding and empathy between you.

Sometimes things can go wrong. Some people are not intelligent in the way they conduct relationships. Where you face relationship problems, your attitude will often determine the amount of stress you experience:

**** If someone is sarcastic and rude to you:***

Remember that this is probably caused by a fault in their character. Don't take such things personally - the person is usually just dramatizing their own fixed solutions to previous problems. They are probably irritating and offending many other people as well. Examine any comment rationally: if it is unsound, then reject it. If rude comments are accurate, then learn from them. Sometimes a comment is inaccurate but presses your buttons because it is nearly correct - learn from that too.

**** If someone hurts you:***

Do not bear grudges. If you do, you will tend to churn them over in your mind. This will damage your vital positive attitude to life, may cause stress and may interfere with the quality of your sleep. Forgiveness is important in maintaining relationships which are important, providing that the forgiveness is genuine. You may decide, however, not to forget the fact of the hurt - it makes sense to confront, avoid or circumvent people who are unnecessarily hurtful.

**** If you are facing a frustrating situation:***

Where unnecessary obstacles are put in your way, or people you are dealing with are being indecisive or unhelpful, then using relaxation techniques can be useful. Give yourself some time and do Pranayamic Breathing and some

Palming (Lesson 4E). This helps you to remain calm and then to be able to sort things out rationally and effectively.

Eliminating Stress From Your Environment

If your living and working environments are badly organized then they can be a major source of stress. If your environment is well organized and pleasant, then it can help to reduce stress and increase productivity. Factors which need to be taken into consideration include:

- * Air quality
- * Lighting
- * Decoration and tidiness
- * Noise
- * Furniture and ergonomics
- * Adequate personal space

Lesson 4C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Being Specific - Review

The Being Specific Model is a psycholinguistic model. In fact, it takes the knowledge we have about language to make what we and others say and think more specific. After all, when we are speaking or thinking we are speaking or thinking about something! The model is divided into:

- 1. Deletions**
- 2. Generalizations**
- 3. Distortions**

Deletions occur quite simply when we have left something out. This does not mean we are wrong, or irrational in any way, but if we do not make clear what we have omitted then the other person, who could be ourselves when we are thinking, is left to imagine or hallucinate the parts which are omitted.

We imagine or hallucinate all the time what the other person means. If I say, 'He's a bit of a nuisance!' when it is not clear who I am referring to, you might think, or hallucinate, that I am talking about one person when I have a totally different person in mind! You might disagree, perhaps strongly, and it may turn out we are just thinking of different people.

Generalizations refer to more than one item, person, etc., and over-generalizations draw conclusions about the whole class when this isn't warranted by the evidence. Often, though, when we say, 'All men are selfish', we have no real intention to suggest this is true of all men, every single man who has ever lived, but we are really referring to men we have known, or even to one particular man. It is often safer to say, 'All men are selfish' than to say this of one particular person, perhaps our Father! When we are experiencing problems it sometimes helps to find out exactly what the person is talking about and get behind the smoke screen of 'All ...' and get talking about the individual the person really is talking about.

The third division is **Distortions**. Here the language is distorted so much that, on the basis of what is said, the statement twists and perverts reality. What is said, at first look, appears to make sense. But when we analyze it we find it completely irrational. When we say, 'She upset me', we are really talking inaccurately. People can hit us, manhandle us, and throw things at us and hurt us. But they cannot really do this from a distance, when they use words, or do or fail to do something. The upsetting comes from us. No one can upset you without your permission. And you have to do the upsetting yourself. The other person doesn't control your emotions!

Of course, in practice, we tend not to see things this clearly. We are conditioned by language, and when someone says, 'I love you', this causes one reaction and when someone says, 'I hate you', it causes another. Now, I have used the word 'causes' in the popular sense. The more accurate statement is 'I upset myself when I heard those words.' When we ask, using the Being Specific Model, 'How does her saying that 'cause' you to be upset?' we are trying to elicit the thoughts, images, sounds, feelings, etc., that the person uses to get upset. By identifying these and understanding that a distortion has been occurring, the person - or ourselves - will be less likely to get upset or be less upset. We are not saying, however, that we can do and say what we like without any responsibility for the reactions caused in other people, even if in reality the other person is upsetting themselves. Someone who induces others to upset themselves is not a very good person. And if we, in turn, did not upset ourselves or delight ourselves in appropriate circumstances, then would we be much different from robots?

So we again stress that the Being Specific Model is not a way to tell us what we should say or think, nor is it telling us that certain ways of thinking and speaking are wrong. It is a method of analysis. Of clarification. The model needs to be used wisely. Although it is probably one of the most effective ways to bring about better conditions, especially interpersonal and intrapersonal ones, it needs to be used kindly and with regard to the state of the other person or even ourselves. When this model is well-learned and practiced, mostly with ourselves and our own thinking, but also considering what others say, either in person or in films and television programmers - and, of course, when questioning others to elicit their meanings - then the model is useful and illuminating.

Another look at Deletions

In Lesson One we dealt with these Deletions:

1. Vague References
2. Missing Complements
3. Unspecified Verbs
4. Comparisons, and
5. Abstractions

Vague References often involve words like I, he, you, it, that clearly require the person or thing that they refer to. You might find it strange if I say, 'I feel unwell' and you use the Being Specific Question 'Who, specifically feels unwell?' Clearly it is I, the speaker, isn't it? However, the question sometimes produces an interesting answer. Where it is appropriate, and the speaker thinks about it, the answer could be that it is not 'I', the person speaking who feels unwell, but I am acting out my hypochondriac aunt's behavior and feelings!

Vague references can also involve general words like: scientists, people, cars, the law, good manners. These general words may refer to something specific, and we can retrieve this by asking, 'Which scientists, for example? Which people, in particular? (or who?) Which cars? Which law, specifically? What good manners, for example?' These questions can be used as an alternative approach to generalizations. 'Everyone thinks this.' Who, for example, thinks that?

With vague references, the misunderstandings which can arise are legion! Think of conversations where the 'he's and she's' abound and the people referred to are not at all clear!

Other words in this group include this, that, which, etc. These are more complicated because they can refer to any kind of thing. They often do not have a clear reference. For example, after thinking about an incident where we did something and others laughed at us, we might say, 'That is why I'd never do that again.' So now we ask, 'Why, specifically, would you never do that again?'

To some extent, we might think the answer is obvious, 'because others laughed at me', or 'because I felt so bad', etc. On the other hand, the answer might be surprising! That

is, the answer we have hallucinated as obvious to us is not the answer we get, and this occurs more often than we realize (we discover this only by asking the question and listening to the answer!).

Yet, whatever the answer we get to the question, our purpose is to follow the chain of thoughts, images, feelings, words, etc. When we or the other person answers (as expected), 'because others laughed at me', they are implying cause and effect, and they are drawing a general conclusion from one example.

'How does their laughing at you on this one occasion in the past, perhaps a time in childhood, when you and they did not possess the skills you have now, cause you to refuse to ever - now, in the distant future, in a future life, through all eternity - do that again?' What seemed like a reasonable thing to say, 'Because they laughed at me', now seems quite preposterous!

A common response is, 'I don't know.' That answer indicates that the individual refuses to think. He or she tries to avoid the issue. This is a cop out which could stymie the process, if we did not know the Being Specific Model. Of course, this is a deletion, so we ask, 'What, specifically, don't you know?'

The other person might answer, or we might think (if we are exploring our own thought processes), 'I don't know the answer to your question.' This is a logical reasonable answer, on the face of it, but it isn't the usual response. In this case, we would ask, 'Supposing you did know, what would you say? What images, sounds, feelings, are going through your mind now?' (Later, when we have studied eye movements, we would use this knowledge to make our questions more specific. Very briefly, if the eyes move up we'd ask, 'Is there a mental image you are looking at?', if they move to the left or right, 'Is there something you can hear in your mind?', or if they move down to the right, 'Is there a feeling?', and if they move down and to the left, 'What thoughts (words) are going through your mind?')

If in response to 'What, specifically, don't you know?', we get, 'I don't know why I have been so stupid all these years'. We would recognize this as a Judgment or Evaluation, and respond accordingly with, 'According to whom is it stupid?'. Or as a Deletion, 'Who is being stupid about what?' As Mind Reading, 'How do you know its stupid?' Or as Cause and Effect, 'How does doing that make it stupid?' Or as a

Distorted Meaning, 'How does doing that mean it is stupid? According to what criterion or rule?' Or as a Generalization, 'How does doing one or even many actions allow one to conclude a person is stupid?'

You see, even in one example, we have many of the Being Specific violations!

Missing Complements

When we use words like 'is', 'feel', 'seems', etc., we often miss pieces of information out, leaving ourselves or others to hallucinate a meaning. When someone says, 'I feel bad', we ask, 'About what? Specifically?' When I say, 'This seems difficult', we ask, 'For whom?' We can of course, respond to 'This' and ask, 'What, specifically, is difficult?'

Unspecified Verbs: What exactly are you doing?

This leads us on to Unspecified Verbs, because, when I say, 'I feel bad', we can ask, 'In what way, specifically, do you feel bad?' because feeling bad is an action or state (verb) and what is exactly happening, what I am feeling, is not clear at all. Sometimes, when we tell ourselves, or a voice in our head says, 'I feel bad' and we ask, 'How, specifically, do you feel bad?' (or, 'In what way?', etc) we search around our body and feelings and discover we do not 'feel bad' apart from thinking those words!

When listening to another, we might find ourselves hallucinating meanings. If someone says, 'She is just an annoying pig!', we do not know what she does which makes the speaker think she is a pig. 'How specifically is she a pig? In what way?' By asking these questions we can get some idea of what others mean. Here we have implied unspecified verbs. A real pig does not have to do anything to be a pig! It simply is a pig. If we ask, 'In what way is it a pig?', the listener would think we have flipped. However, when we say another is 'a pig', we are using a metaphor. They have to do something to earn this title, because really they are human beings, not pigs!

Comparisons

In reality there are few things which are better or worse than every other thing in all respects. When we say something is better or worse we are comparing it with others and we are comparing it in one or several ways. If I say 'This method is preferable', then, if I am comparing it to other methods according to some rule. For example, I might say this method is preferable, 'Because it is easier to learn.' Of course, I should

have the evidence also. But this is just my opinion. Another method might be harder to learn but give better results (another rule for comparing). When someone says, 'This is simply the best television you can buy', we ask, 'According to whom?', 'According to what rule of comparison?' (in what way?) and 'Compared with what others?' Depending on the rules used, we would get different answers.

Abstractions - I'll believe it when I see it!

Abstract words refer to concepts which cannot be touched. The important idea is to recognize words which do not refer to something tangible rather than to be too fussy about whether they are abstract according to definition. For example:

- I want to be more assertive
- I want self confidence
- I want to be well-educated
- I mustn't be selfish

None of these are very clear. We can make abstract ideas more understandable by changing them into verbs (or if we cannot, into adjectives.) That is, we make them into little incidents or stories, where someone is doing something, somewhere, in some way. For example:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| I want to be more assertive | What do you want to assert about what? To whom, in particular? When? |
| I want self confidence | Suppose you had self-confidence, what would you do now, with that self-confidence, that you do not presently do? |
| I want to be well-educated | Who or what would be educating you, in what way, to what end? What would you be doing and saying if you were well-educated that you do not currently do? |
| I mustn't be selfish | What, specifically, do you want to do, in which situations that you do not currently do? When? |

Of course, we will have to explore the answers using further applications of this or other Being Specific techniques.

Another look at Generalizations

In Lesson Two, we looked at the way we organize our thinking in non-resourceful ways, often by over-generalizing:

- 1. Universals**
- 2. Ability**
- 3. Obligations**
- 4. Possibilities**
- 5. Judgment and Evaluation**

If only we noticed this phenomenon more! Abstractions abound in our thinking and in our conversation. They are psychologically significant and have a great influence. Because we cannot touch them or otherwise sense them, they are to some extent distant. Love, War, Politics, Education, Anxiety, Loyalty, Self-Confidence, Patriotism, and thousands upon thousands of the concepts that we think with are abstract. They are the great blob words which lead us to assume all sorts of things and to act accordingly. They form part of the language of social control and influence.

Universals

Abstractions, referred to previously, are of course generalizations of a high degree. That they are put under the heading deletions is purely a matter of convenience. They could quite happily be placed in any category. Generalizing is drawing conclusions from a few specific examples. We can never view every example of an idea, so we generalize. However, this is largely an arbitrary process. Sometimes our generalizations originate from childhood or were made during a particularly traumatic time, and have never been re-examined. Sometimes we use generalizations to conceal a specific statement we want to make. For example, 'All men are selfish', to conceal my husband is selfish or my father was selfish, in my estimation. Sometimes, these universals are used to pretend to having more knowledge than we really have. 'No man would do this', we say, to give ourselves authority (after all we are claiming that half the human race has this view!), although we are expressing our own opinion, only. Usually, we have not thought things through, or the basis of our thinking is unconscious.

The statement, 'All self help systems are rubbish' presupposes a knowledge of all self-help systems. The way to explore universals is to ask for a counterexample. 'All self-help systems? Every single one? Isn't there even one which is even remotely helpful?' If we get an acknowledgement that there may be one which is useful, we can explore that. However, on the tail of this question is, 'How do you know, specifically?', which is sometimes a better way to reveal the specific data the individual has which leads them to the generalization.

In 'All men are selfish', we would take up the judgment and evaluation (selfish) and ask, 'According to whom? According to what criterion? Where's the evidence?' We could also respond to it as a vague reference, 'Which men, in particular?' Or even, 'Who, for example?'

Ability

On looking at the Being Specific Model, we might say or think, 'There is so much to learn. I couldn't possibly do that!' The individual denies their ability. Ability can be analyzed as follows:

1. Unconscious inability
2. Conscious inability
3. Conscious ability
4. Unconscious ability

When we know nothing about a subject, we might think there is nothing to it (unconscious inability.) But when we learn more, we realize that it is harder than we thought (conscious inability.) We need to apply ourselves so we can gain the ability and we can, when we concentrate and apply our minds to the task do it (conscious ability.) After yet more time we do it without thinking, it has become a habit (unconscious ability.)

When someone says, 'There is so much to learn. I couldn't possibly do that!', they have already made a lot of progress. They are in the second stage, Conscious Inability, at least and they are probably well on the way to mastery. 'If you don't know a certain amount about the subject already, how could you know how much there was to learn, or how difficult it might be?' If they genuinely knew nothing, they would be like the

young man who was asked if he could play the piano. 'I don't know,' he said, 'I've never tried.'

The usual Being Specific response to 'I can't' is: 'What is stopping you?' 'How do you stop yourself from doing it?' 'What pictures, words, feeling are occurring in your mind now, which prevent you?' We hope, by asking ourselves or others these questions, to find out what the person's thinking is which prevents them from doing the task.

Obligations

One meaning of the word 'must', when it is an obligation is, 'If this is not done, some undesirable thing will happen.' The undesirable part is omitted. To retrieve this, we ask, 'What would happen if you didn't?' And if the statement is 'I daren't do that', we would ask, 'What would happen if you did?' In asking ourselves or others these questions, we try to elicit the missing part and reconsider whether we truly 'must' or 'mustn't' do the thing in question. Of course, obligation is expressed in many ways using, must, should, ought to, and mustn't, shouldn't, ought not to, daren't, etc. Sometimes words used for obligations can really refer to ability, and those used for ability, refer to obligation. So we can respond to 'I daren't do that' with 'What prevents you?'

Possibilities

Apart from using ability and obligation to restrict what we can do, we also use possibility and impossibility.

'You might get in serious trouble if you do that'.

Philosophically, everything is possible. However, many things are not likely. Probability tends to confuse because there are things which are very likely or certain and others which are remote or nearly impossible. The simple challenge to a possibility is to ask, 'Yes, but how likely is it?'

Another look at non-resourceful additions - distortions

In Lesson 3 we studied Distortions:

1. Cause and Effect
2. Sneaky Assumptions
3. Mind Reading
4. Personal Meanings

In these cases we add something which isn't really there. All Being Specific violations are distortions, and those under the heading Distortions, distort especially!

Cause and Effect

'Because you upset her last time, she won't see you again.' My upsetting her last time is presumably the cause of why she won't see me again. We can make this specific by asking, 'How does my upsetting her last time, cause her to refuse to see me?' By asking the question, we might get, 'Blah, blah, blah. Anyway, she's seeing someone else now.' That may be the 'real' reason!

There is also a sneaky assumption here too. 'Did I upset her? What did I say or do, which upset her last time? When, specifically? Where?' And another causality: 'How did my doing or saying that, cause her to be upset?' Of course, in this imaginary example, we are not speaking to the person who was upset, so many of these questions are directed at the wrong person, if we want answers to why she won't see me! But we are able to challenge the speaker's distortions of what happened, not what happened. For this we would need to ask the person concerned. In all this, we should not forget the word upset: 'What did she do or say, which made you think she was upset?' We could also ask, 'Who was upsetting whom? When? Where? How were they doing it?' (Exploring an abstraction.)

Mind Reading

'She won't see you again...' also includes mind reading how does the speaker know all this? The normal mind reading exploration question, 'How do you know this?', can be used in any situation, where the source of knowledge is in doubt. 'Everyone thinks this' is a universal, but also has a mind reading component. 'How does the speaker know this?' Have they really asked everyone? Unlikely. Who is 'everyone' anyway? Probably one or two people. Perhaps only the speaker.

Personal Meaning

Although language has universal meaning within a language speaking group, or it is supposed to, there are many words which do not have a specific meaning, and the meaning is usually a personal one. If I say, 'I feel depressed', then I could have a range of meanings in mind. We could ask, 'What specifically do you mean when you say you feel depressed?' Of course, we could respond to it as an abstraction and ask, 'Who is depressing whom? How are they doing it, specifically?'

Outcomes

We assume that when we do something or think something then we do it for some reason or purpose. We are trying to achieve something. We sometimes forget what we want out of something so the following questions, which are not particularly linked to any psycholinguistic form, will help us get on or stay on track: 'What are we trying to achieve, by this?' 'What will doing this do for me?' 'Suppose you had achieved your goal of having more self-confidence, what, for example, would you be doing now, that you did not do previously?' 'What is the positive intention of that part of you which makes you feel unsure?'

These questions, like the other Being Specific patterns, tend to elicit specific answers. When we start to talk about things we can see, feel and hear, then we can begin to think clearly about them. Sometimes, when we become aware of our purpose, we realize that the problems we are wrestling with are not important at all. On the other hand, knowing our purpose might assure us we are on the right track.

The main learning objectives of the Being Specific Model are:

- * Much of what we and others say and think is incomplete (deletions), general, and distorted. We learn to understand more of what is said, both out-loud and silently, in our own minds, when we learn and use the questions.
- * We become less affected by difficult interpersonal situations, and
- * We learn to successfully deal with many communications which were previously difficult.
- * We learn the tools needed to explore and go beyond simple statements and thoughts, rather than to merely react, stimulus-response wise, to the events in our world.

The model is a good approach to attaining these and other goals. To attain these benefits, use the Being Specific Model whenever you can, e.g. when reading, writing, speaking, thinking, watching television or listening to the radio.

Lesson 4D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Toxic Relationships

How to make painful relationships come good

The enmeshment with past or current relationships, such as with a lover, spouse, close friend or work colleague, may be examined with respect to Beliefs, Feelings and Behaviors. There are inevitably conflicts between what seemed best to the other person in the relationship, and what is needed and wanted by you. You may be in touch with some of your feelings, but on other issues, you may feel the need to protect yourself from the intensity of your emotions by burying them or justifying them irrationally. This therapeutic exercise examines such 'toxic' relationships. The first action is to make a list of the people with whom you have had relations of one sort or another, and address the following procedure towards the person who brings up the strongest feelings.

Step 1: Feelings

Firstly we look at the feelings you may have towards the person.

The following checklist is divided into four groups: **guilt, fear, sadness and anger**. You are looking for automatic, reactive, negative feelings - the ones which usually cause self-defeating behaviors. The statements in the following list are read out, and statements which ring as true are noted.

In your relationship with (Person), which of the following statements is true for you, now or in the past?

1. I feel guilty when I don't live up to (Person's) expectations.
2. I feel guilty when I do something which upsets him/her.
3. I feel guilt when I go against his/her advice.
4. I feel guilty when I get angry with him/her.

5. I feel guilty when I disappoint (Person).
6. I feel guilty when I hurt his/her feelings.
7. I feel guilty when I don't do enough for him/her.
8. I feel guilty when I don't do everything he/she asks me to do.
9. I feel guilty when I say no to him/her.
10. I feel scared when (Person) yells at me.
11. I feel scared when he/she is angry at me.
12. I feel scared when I'm angry at him/her.
13. I feel scared when I have to tell (Person) something he/she may not want to hear.
14. I feel scared when (Person) threatens to withdraw his/her love.
15. I feel scared when I disagree with him/her.
16. I feel scared when I try to stand up to him/her.
17. I feel sad when (Person) is unhappy
18. I feel sad when I know I've let (Person) down.
19. I feel sad when I can't make (Person's) life better for him/her.
20. I feel sad when (Person) tells me I've ruined his/her life.
21. I feel sad when I do something which I want to do and it hurts (Person).

22. I feel sad when (Person) doesn't like my friends.
23. I feel angry when (Person) criticizes me.
24. I feel angry when (Person) tries to control me.
25. I feel angry when (Person) tells me how to live my life.
26. I feel angry when (Person) tells me how I should feel, think, or behave.
27. I feel angry when (Person) tells me what I should or shouldn't do.
28. I feel angry when (Person) makes demands on me.
29. I feel angry when (Person) tries to live his/her life through me.
30. I feel angry when (Person) expects me to take care of him/her.
31. I feel angry when (Person) rejects me.

Further instances may be elicited by completing the sentence:

“Regarding (Person), I feel guilty when”

And similarly for fear, sadness and anger.

Alternative feelings may also be elicited by completing the sentence:

“When I don't live up to (Person's) expectations I feel...” and similarly for the other situations above.

Step 2: Beliefs

The second checklist identifies beliefs which underlie one's feelings. The statement corresponding to the most moving or strongly felt emotion from Step 1 is read out, followed by 'because ...' and then each of the following Beliefs:

(Feeling statement from Step 1) because:

1. It is up to me to make (Person) happy.
2. It is up to me to make (Person) proud.
3. I am (Person's) whole life.
4. (Person) couldn't survive without me.
5. I couldn't survive without (Person).
6. If I told (Person) the truth, it would kill him/her.
7. If I stand up to (Person), I'll lose him/her forever.
8. If I say how much (Person) hurts me, he/she will cut me out of his/her life.
9. I shouldn't do or say anything which would hurt (Person's) feelings.
10. (Person's) feelings are more important than mine.
11. There's no point in talking to (Person) because it wouldn't do any good.
12. If (Person) would only change, I would feel better about myself.
13. I have to make it up to (Person) for the things I've done wrong.
14. If I could just get (Person) to see how much he/she is hurting me, I know he/she would be different.

15. (Person) must not have any control over my life.
16. I can't stand (Person's) behavior.
17. All men/women are like (Person).
18. Because??? (**Is there some other belief which underlies this feeling?**)

Step 3. Seeing the Connection

The feeling and underlying belief are then repeated as a whole statement, e.g. 'I feel guilty when I do something which upsets him/her because I shouldn't do or say anything which will hurt (Person's) feelings'.

Step 4: Behaviors

Having recognized relevant feelings and beliefs, behavior patterns can now be addressed:

Does (the connected statement from Step 3) lead to any of the following behaviors?

1. Tending to give in to (Person) no matter how you feel.
2. Not telling him/her what you really think.
3. Not telling him/her how you really feel.
4. Acting as if everything is fine between you even when it isn't.
5. Being phony and superficial when you're with (Person) .
6. Doing things out of guilt or fear, rather than out of free choice.

7. Trying very hard to get him/her to change.
8. Trying hard to get him/her to see your point of view.
9. Becoming the peacemaker between you and (Person).
10. Making painful sacrifices in your own life to please him/her.
11. Having to bear (Person's) secrets.
12. Trying to prove to (Person) that you're right.
13. Doing things you know (Person) won't like to show him/her that you're independent.
14. Screaming at (Person) to show that he/she can't control you.
15. Restraining yourself to keep from attacking (Person).
16. Cutting (Person) out of your life.
17. Any other persistent behavior relating to (Person)?

Step 5: Complete the Procedure

Go back to Step 1 and see if there are other strongly felt emotions regarding your relationship with this Person and handle these in the same manner, until - with this new understanding - you really feel released from any bad feelings, however much you might have previously been suppressing them.

Reactive or Response-able?

The opposite of being reactive is being response-able, i.e.. responsible. When you are being responsible, you're thinking as well as feeling: you're experiencing your feelings but also conscious of what is rational and therefore not driven by emotion to act impulsively. This is an integration of left and right brain functions. As you become free from reactive (stimulus-response) behavior then to that degree you know that you are also free to be spontaneous, because you know that will incorporate responsibility.

Responsibility also allows you to maintain your self-worth, despite anything another person might say about you. The thoughts and feelings of others no longer drag you into a pit of self-doubt. You will see all sorts of new options and choices in your dealings with other people because your perspective and your sense of reason are not being buried by emotions. Taking responsibility for your mind, puts back into your hands a good deal of control over your life.

By understanding how easily reactive responses can take over one's behavior you will find yourself not taking personal offence when others behave badly; you can see that they are just dramatizing the problems and conflicts in their own heads. Enlightenment always leads to understanding, empathy and improved communication, in short, love.

When another or others continue to attempt to manipulate and dominate, you can then stay calm and refuse to be stampeded: then you retain the power. For example by responding non-defensively, this breaks the cycle of attack-retreat-defense-escalation. The moment you argue, apologies, explain, or try to get them to change their minds, you give them the power to withhold the understanding that you are asking them for. One can instead say, "That's an interesting point of view", or "I shall consider that as one option". It is also necessary to assert one's position in a matter-of-fact manner, without worrying about upsetting them, but without any hostility or embarrassment: "I'm happy to let you stay for a specified, limited time."

One's response to this approach may be to say, "I just don't think I can stand up to (him or her)." But instead of saying "I can't," reframe your statement in the form: "I haven't yet stood up to my parents." 'Haven't yet' implies choice, whereas 'don't' and 'can't' imply the opposite: finality. Similarly, "I mustn't" or "I shouldn't" can be reframed as : "I could choose not to." "I should" or "I must" can be reframed: "I could

choose to." There is a big difference between choosing to capitulate to another because you've considered the alternatives and decided that you're not prepared to make a change at this moment, and automatically capitulating because you feel helpless. Making a choice means taking a step towards control; knee-jerk reacting means backsliding into being controlled.

Further Handlings for Toxic Relationships

These factors would apply to an intimate relationship:

1. Does what you are doing align?

Take a look at what is going on in a current relationship. Do it with the other person there if possible. Make an honest assessment of the current situation and then work together to align these different elements:

- * What is the Actual State of affairs?
- * What is the Basic Intention of each of you regards each other?
- * What is therefore the Ideal State of affairs?
- * Therefore what Desired Objectives do you share?
- * Work out an Overall Plan to achieve those objectives.
- * What are the Daily Actions which will be needed?

2. Responsible for what?

Examine the responsibility each is taking. Work towards a full responsibility for the overall relationship and one's own reactions, but do not attempt to be responsible for everything about the other person. What are you willing to be responsible for regarding (other person)? What are you not willing to be responsible for regarding (other person)?"

3. Is there a competition?

Sort out any issue of competition for territory. What kind of game are you and the other playing? If it is a game, then consider it as such and enjoy it. Is there something there isn't enough of which has to be fought for? If so, reassure that there is enough to go round (love, affection, money, communication, whatever).

4. Is there something one of you needs to know?

Upsets between people usually result from a failure of communication, very often one not knowing what is in the other person's mind, and therefore not acting accordingly. Work out what you don't know and get an answer; ask the other what they need to know and provide it.

5. Is something being kept back?

With the other person, work over the following questions as long as there is still anything to find on them. With somebody who has been a long relationship, that might be a LOT. What has (other) done which wasn't all right? What has (other) failed to say? What have you done which wasn't all right? What have you failed to say?"

6. Lost the original excitement?

Go back to when you first got together and examine what you saw in each other, what was fun and exciting. Get all the details and particularly the feelings. If the other person is available, do it at the same time with closed eyes and arrange it so you see each other first thing when you open your eyes. Transfer the feelings to the present.

7. What have you learnt?

Reframe the relationship as a learning experience. Find out what specifically each of you might have to learn from each other. Perhaps one person can do some things better, one can tolerate some things more easily, one can appreciate some things more readily. What do you have to learn from each other?

8. What do you agree about?

Find out what you both actually agree on, what you see the same way, interests you have common, stuff you have the same feelings or same reactions to. Come to realize how much common ground you have to build on.

9. Communication withheld?

What do you want to say to the person, but for some reason can't say or aren't saying? Why not? Imagine actually saying them to the other person, then do so out loud and imagine the reply.

10. Likes and dislikes?

What do you like about the other and what don't you like? Does the other person have to be perfect for you to like them? Are you perfect?

11. What's needed and wanted?

Ask each other what is needed and wanted from the other person. Honestly inquire what the other person actually wants. Not having any argument or discussion about it, but simply find out what it is the other side would like.

12. Talking honestly?

Get together and tell each other what you really want to say about each other. Try to keep it at what is personally felt, how things are perceived from either end. No "You ..." statements allowed. Continue until you each learn to respect what the other person says and begin to have more understanding of each other.

13. Secrets?

Examine what each of you keep secret from each other. Secrets tend to build and make the parties grow further from each other. Find out what the isn't being faced up to, what isn't being taken responsibility for. Is there anything you would never say to the other? Do you have secrets from each other? Why?

14. Is there some co-dependence?

Each person needs to look at the responsibilities they given up or areas they have withdrawn from by being in the relationship. Like, no longer maintaining friendships "because the other is taking care of that". What does your relationship allow you not to deal with? Is this resented?

15. Are you being right?

Look for fixed ideas about what is right. How do you think this relationship is supposed to be? What principle are you operating by? What piece of logic do you use? Is one of you making him or her self right by making the other wrong in some way?

16. Are you different?

What is similar between you and the other? What is different between you and the other? What qualities does one person have that the other is lacking? How can you make the most of these differences to complement each other rather than conflict?

17. Talking about yourself?

Turn the complaints you may have about the other person round as something you are really saying about yourself. Find the parts of yourself which match it. This is a very common phenomenon, that whatever one doesn't like or doesn't accept about somebody else is really what one does like or accept about oneself. One can't really change it in the other person, but one can change it in oneself, once one finds that part of oneself.

18. Are you allowing changes to occur?

Examine your willingness to let the other person change. Sometimes the different parties in a relationship try to keep the other person the same, or keep them in accord with their ideas and expectations. If the other person suddenly changes they don't like each other so much any more. That is not very useful, so increase the tolerance of change when you can. Find the underlying qualities you like about each other, but free up any fixedness about specific required behavior and circumstances. Consider: "What changes would you allow (other) to make?"

19. And in the future?

Visualize how you would like the relationship to be in the future. Check if that is really congruent, or if it is just an abstract dream. Backtrack it towards the present. How can you make that happen?

The Dilemma

**To laugh is to risk appearing a fool
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental
To reach out for another is to risk involvement
To expose feelings is to risk rejection
To place your dreams before a crowd is to risk ridicule
To love is to risk not being loved in return
To go forward in the face of overwhelming odds
is to risk failure**

**But risks must be taken
because the greatest hazard in life is to risk nothing.**

**The person who risks nothing
does nothing, has nothing, is nothing.**

**He may avoid suffering and sorrows,
but he cannot learn, feel, change, grow, or love.**

**Chained by his certitudes, he is a slave -
he has forfeited his freedom.**

Only a person who takes risks is FREE

Lesson 4E - Concentration & Meditation

Topic: Bates Eye exercises

Developing visual imagery with Bates techniques

The Bates techniques are included in this course because they are effective in improving visual imagery and reducing mental 'noise' or distractions. Although Bates, as an eye doctor, was concerned with improving eyesight, he was aware that these exercises also had the following effects:

- * Relaxation
- * Increased awareness
- * Made people less worried
- * Helped them to study
- * Improved memory

When doing eye-testing, Bates noted that when a person tells a lie, it causes a sudden change in eye focus which lasts for a few seconds and then returns to normal. Those who lie compulsively - whether to themselves or to others - will often be chronically short-sighted. The act of lying - a left-brain function - requires that mental images are formed that are at variance with reality. This conflict causes tension in the eye musculature and eyesight is affected.

Bates also noted that we can only recall and imagine black when the mind is relaxed. Many of the sight improvement exercises described by Bates increase this ability, because they reduce tension in the optical system and quieten the mind, allowing a black inner visual field. This is a valuable asset as visualization will then require less effort and concentration is facilitated.

People who find visualization difficult tend to make far fewer eye movements than normal, when they are looking at surrounding objects and faces. Usually they are left-brain dominant and have poor communication between left and right sides of the brain. Their visual memory likewise suffers.

Good visualizers, when they look at their surroundings and faces in particular, will tend to trace their outlines and features, shifting rapidly from one point to another. They can create more easily, by visualizing the things they want to achieve and comparing this with their current reality, so ideas flow more readily. Traumatic memories are also easier to confront and control.

The cause of the tension and anxiety which prevents this ability may have many psychological sources but this need not immediately concern us, since we have the means to help relax the eyes in the Bates exercises.

The following Exercises are done many times. Do the first Exercise to gain some familiarity with it and then move on to do the next, etc., Then return to Exercise One, with which one will then be able to obtain greater competence. This approach of rotating the exercises is called a 'cyclic' approach and all the exercises in the *New Life Course* are best practiced in this way.

Exercise 1: Palming

1. Cover the eyes with the hands, without bringing pressure to bear on the eyeballs. The eyelids should be open.
2. Relax the eyes by looking at an imaginary distant object. Then imagine pure black, over as wide a field as possible.

At first it's easier to do this in a darkened room. If you have difficulty imagining pure black, then do the steps A, B, and C below. People fail to visualize black either because they cannot see pure black when they look at black objects, or because they are straining the optical system when they try to visualize - the thing is, not to try but to let it happen.

A. Look at a black object for about 5 seconds, keeping the eyes fixed on it. The smaller the object, the blacker it will appear. Then palm the eyes and recall the object. At first you may only be able to recall the image for a few seconds. When the image is lost, uncover the eyes and look at the black object again. This is repeated, until you can recall black anytime you want to. When you can recall the object and hold an image

for as long as you like, then you can duplicate the image as many times as required, to cover the whole of the visual field.

B. Recall a color, in as intense a shade as possible. "Recall red," etc. If necessary, examine a physical example of the color before visualizing it. Then recall another color. Start off slowly, gradually increasing the rate that you call off the colors to about one per second. Do not expect instant results! Most mental exercises require considerable practice in order to break down the habits and set patterns of a lifetime.

C. Observe a piece of unused white chalk, for about 5 seconds. Cover the eyes and imagine the white chalk against a black background. The whiter you try and make the chalk, the blacker the background will become. When the image fades, open the eyes and observe again. This exercise is repeated until you can imagine white at will. When the white chalk can be visualized perfectly, the background will be so black that it would be impossible to remember a blacker black with the eyes closed, or observe anything more black with the eyes open. The black will be utterly black. When you can do step C, then step A will be easier to do and you can return to do the two steps of palming.

Unless the mind is totally relaxed, one cannot produce in the mind an exact image. On the other hand, if you can recall a realistic image of something seen, felt, or heard then your mind is at rest. In these cases, when you close your eyes, you will see pure black.

Listening and Visualizing are related skills. Indeed, Japanese Samurai warriors were taught that to visualize well, they must learn to listen. To listen or to visualize well the mind must be relaxed. Therefore, learning to visualize also helps listening and learning to listen helps you to visualize.

Exercise 2: The Black Object

At times during the day recall the memory of a black object. When the mind is under strain, this can be particularly helpful. Do not use effort to recall the small black area; let the black area come into mind. You will then be relaxed and calm. With continued practice, it will become easier to do this: the image will become blacker, and the mind more relaxed.

If it is not easy to recall, then your mind is not calm and a period of palming would be helpful. One could also call to mind an earlier successful attempt at recalling black, and this will, in turn, bring about the relaxed state which went with it.

Exercise 3: Look

A good visualize is constantly making many small, rapid, smooth eye movements, whereas a bad visualize makes slow and jerky eye movements. This exercise helps to improve visualization by training the eye movements.

In this exercise, you start off looking ahead and then glance at objects placed around all sides and corners of the room. Move the head a minimal amount; the emphasis should be on moving the eyes. But don't simply move your eye, you should also look. To check this, each time re-visualize the object you glanced at.

Select objects at random, near and far, left, right, up, down, etc. When you can do this well, the pace can gradually be speeded up and more objects can be selected, until all the room is covered. The same exercise can be repeated outdoors.

Exercise 4: Near - Far

This exercise consists of shifting attention from something near to something far. The emphasis is on focusing rather than eye movement.

Sit so you can see two objects at the same time: one placed nearby, about 1 foot away, and the other placed about 15 feet away (approximating infinity for practical purposes). The objects are aligned at the centre of your visual field, so that it is easy to focus on either of them without shifting the gaze.

Alternate between looking at the near object and the far object and do this as quickly as possible. When looking at the near object, the far object will be out of focus and vice versa. Start at one alternation per second and speed up gradually to three per second.

When you've practiced these exercises and achieved some competence, notice how this carries over to your everyday eye movements and the feeling of tension in your eyes. If they work well for you, then make the exercises a part of your new life.

Lesson 5A - Tools for Thought

Topic: Problem Solving V

Consequences: Upsides, Downsides, Offshoots

UDO - Deciding on the best course of action

If you need to judge whether your solution to a problem is likely to be effective, a simple but effective method is to examine the solution in terms of its likely consequences. This is basically the 'pros and cons' technique used since time began, but applied analytically.

- * What are the Upsides of your decision? What are the plus-points, the 'pros'?
- * What are the Downsides of your decision? What are the minus-points, the 'cons'?
- * What are the Offshoots of your decision? What are the implications, the 'interesting' factors which will likely result?

UDO is a basic decision making tool. It's similar to Force Field Analysis (FFA) but whereas FFA is about determining the balance of intentions and counter-intentions which go to make up a problem situation, UDO is centered on making a decision and has the additional element of considering supplementary consequences, the offshoots.

When you are facing a difficult decision, simply draw up a table headed 'Upside', 'Downside' and 'Offshoots'. In the column underneath the 'Upside' heading, write down all the positive points of taking the action. Underneath the 'Downside' heading write down all the negative effects. In the 'Offshoots' column write down the extended implications of taking the action, whether positive or negative.

For example, a class of 11 year-olds were asked what they thought of the idea of being paid 20 dollars a week for going to school. All were very much in favor and told of all the extra sweets, comics, etc. they would be able to afford. Then they were asked to look again at the idea in terms of the consequences, using UDO. The upsides were as before but now they also recognized some downsides:

- * the bigger boys might attack the smaller ones and take their money,

- * parents would be less inclined to give pocket money,
- * the school might have to charge more for lunch.
- * and where would the money come from?
- * there would be less money to pay the teachers, and so on.

There were also some offshoots: would payment be withheld if homework was not done? Would older students get more?

At the end of this exercise most pupils reversed their decision. As a result of thinking more analytically they obtained a broader perception.

You can also give each item a subjective scoring, say +/- 1 to 5. For example:

Should I move to the city where I work? I already decided that I want to (I would feel independent of my parents and I could make a new start after several failed relationships) but now let's look closer at the practical consequences:

| Upside | Downside | Offshoots |
|--|---|--|
| No wasted travel time and expense (+2) | More pollution (-1) | Easier to meet a new partner (+5) |
| Can do overtime with no hassle (+2) | Have to sell my flat (-2) | More likely to get promotion (+2) |
| Easier to see my best pal (+3) | Property more expensive there (-3) | May feel I'm stuck in the city (-1) |
| Easier to go to theatre, etc. (+3) | See the countryside less often (-2) | Would my parents feel upset? (-2) |
| Do a part-time degree at the university (+5) | Have to find a new home for my dog (-4) | May lose touch with my friends here (-1) |
| +15 | -12 | +3 |

Total = +6 ---> Yes, it's time to make the move!

Try analyzing a decision you need to make with UDO.

Lesson 5B - High Performance Living

Topic: Self-Esteem

Self-Esteem: the key factor in self development

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is a way of being, thinking, feeling and acting which implies that you accept, respect, trust and believe in yourself.

- * When you accept yourself, you can live comfortably with both your personal strengths and weaknesses, without undue self-criticism.
- * When you respect yourself, you acknowledge your own dignity and value as a unique human being. You treat yourself well, in much the same way that you would treat someone else who you respect.
- * Lack of self-trust means you're not sure if you can be trusted! You doubt your motives and hesitate to act effectively. It may stem from inner conflicts between your both your values and what you believe is the right thing to do, versus the needs, wants and desires you feel. Self-trust means that your desires, beliefs, behaviors and feelings are consistent enough to give you an inner sense of continuity and coherence, despite changes and challenges in your circumstances. You feel confident that you will do the right thing and don't feel the need to be an "inner critic" about your every action, so you can act with enthusiasm and determination.
- * To believe in yourself means that you feel you deserve to succeed and - on the basis of past demonstrated competence and current resources - you have confidence that you can fulfill your deepest personal needs, aspirations and goals.

A fundamental truth about self-esteem is that it needs to come from within. When self-esteem is low, the deficiency creates a feeling of emptiness that you may try to fill by latching on - often compulsively - to something or someone which provides a

temporary sense of satisfaction and fulfillment. When this becomes desperate, repetitive or automatic, you have an addiction. Frequently this attachment substitutes for healthy human relationships. It may also substitute a feeling of control or power for a more lasting sense of inner confidence and strength.

What difference does self-esteem make?

When we are high in self-esteem we feel good about ourselves. We feel in control of our life and are flexible and resourceful. We are able to make choices about how we run our life. We enjoy the challenges that life makes and are ready to take life head on. We feel powerful, creative and confident that we can 'make things happen' in our life.

We can realize our own potential by integrating all our abilities in a balanced and harmonious way. To each experience we bring our whole self and we integrate all our faculties. This 'holistic' approach describes us as existing simultaneously at the spiritual, mental, emotional and physical levels, and we bring all of these aspects to each of our experiences. For example, in meeting a new person, you bring the spiritual experience of your inner awareness, your connection with the life force which is you and your creative resources. Your mental energy brings understanding, empathy, perception and communication. Your emotional energy is expressed as feelings about what is going on and your physical energy enables you to actively participate.

As we all know, experiences can be subjectively good or bad. A good experience occurs when one has been creative - spiritual, mental, emotional and physical energies have been expressed in a balanced way - and this enhances self-esteem. You feel at ease and are able to 'make things happen'. You express choice and create the experience and so feel in control of your destiny. You feel good!

A bad experience, in which one has suffered in some way, tends to reduce self-esteem. If you feel you have no choice, if you feel 'trampled on' or a victim, you feel uncomfortable and out of control in your life. Things 'just happen' to you (or don't). So you feel bad.

| Creative Consciousness | Victim Consciousness |
|---|---|
| positive self-concept likes self high self-esteem | negative self-concept dislikes self low self-esteem |
| ability to separate self from behavior (does not confuse intrinsic self worth with skills or lack of them) | believes 'I am my behavior' |
| expansive world view | limited world view |
| action-based lifestyle (proactive) | fear-based lifestyle (reactive) |
| outgoing, objective clear, honest interaction creative and flexible can say 'no' can take criticism can give constructive feedback | inhibited or compulsive unclear, dishonest interaction inflexible can't say 'no' can't take criticism uses critical labeling |
| believes 'I make things happen' | believes 'things just happen to me' |
| acceptance, responsibility, strength feels interest, enthusiasm, exhilaration, aesthetic | denial, guilt, suffering feels boredom, embarrassment, anger, blame, shame, resentment, envy, fear, grief, apathy |

When we respond to particular circumstances we can do so from a state of creative consciousness or from a state of victim consciousness. If you operate from a state of creative consciousness you are valuing yourself for what you are, right now, and not just for what you do or have done. Your sense of worth does not depend on having a high-profile job or having expensive possessions or being clever. Self worth has nothing to do with job status or IQ or never getting things wrong. In other words you are not worth less if you can't do something or things go badly wrong. This idea of intrinsic self worth is the strength on which true self-esteem is based. Demonstrated competence and praise enhances self-esteem but this needs to be based on an

underlying foundation, where incompetence and criticism does not detract from intrinsic self worth.

This view of the world is one which allows for the creative experience of choice. We are free to initiate change and so can enjoy an action-based lifestyle in which we are able to communicate our needs clearly. Such behavior then reinforces our self-esteem.

Without a sense of intrinsic self worth you have a limited world view which provides you with little or no choice. This creates a reactive lifestyle in which you are always looking for the approval of others before you can act. Such a fear-based lifestyle results in unclear communication and consequent feelings of resentment, anger and blame. Hence the victim's lack of self-esteem is reinforced.

Improving Your Self-Esteem

Maybe you know how to 'look inside', feel relaxed and resourceful, but don't know how to bring this experience into material reality. In other words you can connect with your inner self but can't so easily act upon this connection - you can imagine and be inspired but can't put this into effect.

Perhaps you can act in a fairly spontaneous way but do not feel there is any more to your life than that which appears before your eyes. In this case you are finding it difficult to connect to your real goals and aspirations.

You may be very emotionally aware and sensitive to other people's feelings. If so, you are in touch with your feelings but does this gift work for you? Can you put your emotions into perspective so that you are able to think clearly and act appropriately?

Perhaps you are very good at understanding ideas and thinking rationally but your thoughts stay in your head and you aren't able to act upon on them. Or perhaps you find it difficult to express your feelings clearly about those issues.

Proper balance of self-connection, thought, feeling and action is the key to creativity and when we operate with creative consciousness we are high in self-esteem. In this lesson we will look at one of these main factors: connecting with the inner self. In the

next lesson we will add the other three factors: being responsible for one's thoughts, free expression of feelings and putting intentions into action.

Connecting with your Self

No doubt some times you have felt inspired to act - to make or say or do something. There is an extraordinary rush of energy and clarity which accompanies this. You feel excited, can't wait to begin and everything seems possible. But putting the vision into effect can be a sobering process. Spirit meets the resistance of materiality and the vision fades. We may fall back into habitual, limiting thought and behavior patterns and the new perspective becomes obscured. But if we can hold on to the spiritual connection and integrate it with the mental, emotional and behavioral aspects of our self, we can 'make things happen' and experience our creative potential.

As we get to know and trust our inner intuitive awareness, this produces a clarity of thought which illuminates the areas where we have created blocks - it throws light on patterns of thought and behavior which are now seen as inappropriate. It becomes easier to make decisions and act spontaneously.

On the other hand, if we lose touch with the creative source which is our inner being, we identify with negative thoughts, emotions and behavior patterns. We can't see them for what they are because we are being them. So at the other end of the spectrum we see self-conscious people with low self-esteem, hiding, either in frantic activity or in withdrawal. Imagine yourself in the following situations:

- * You are at a party and you don't know anyone except for the host.
- * You have returned an article of clothing which has split along the seam. The shop assistant tells you they have a 'no returns' policy.
- * Your doctor is evasive about answering your questions properly.

In each case, what would you do? How would you feel? What would you be thinking (underlying your emotions)? And what would be your true desire in that situation?

When our true desires inform our thinking and our feelings then we are being true to ourselves and this enhances self-esteem. When our true desires are submerged by distorted thinking and painful emotions then the resulting behavior is in conflict and

our self-esteem lowers. And if our true desires are not recognized at all then we can never feel fulfilled.

To Know Your Self

Try to set aside some time, each day, to fulfill solely your own needs and for your own personal enjoyment. This may include doing this course or it may be with other people but it is for you. The willingness to be self-nurturing plays a vital part in the development of your 'beingness'. As you start looking at your own needs and stop playing the victim of other people's demands you will be treated with more respect because you will gain more self respect.

Particularly when doing the meditation exercises, you are 'going inside yourself' and this requires that you break your identification with worldly links - you are going beyond your thoughts, feelings and desires. You will have found that the mind keeps on chattering and trying to stop it doesn't work, you have to become a detached observer of it, and then it starts to fade away. What you resist persists.

When we are truly being ourselves, without the barrier of mind chatter and negative emotions, it is easier to make direct connection between you, the spiritual being, and the world around you. This is an aesthetic experience, one of truth. Have you ever become totally absorbed by a project, a picture, a piece of music, a landscape? The mind becomes concentrated and still and you feel 'at one'.

A shift in awareness - an awakening - can be triggered by such things as a dream, a memory, an evocative smell, falling in love, being afraid. It is only necessary for our defenses to be down (which means we are holding no preconceived ideas) in order that we can experience something more intensely, as if for the first time, in a new moment. Can you recall such an experience of connecting, and the feeling of it?

To experience connection rather than separation, we need to break all attachments with our thoughts and desires and so learn to suspend our judgment. It is possible to connect and experience your spiritual self at any time, whatever you are doing. With Gurdjieff's technique of 'self remembering' we adopt the role of witness as we go about our everyday lives. The witness observes all your doings but is non-evaluative; it does not judge your actions (remember, you are not your actions). For example, you might eat a chocolate cake and then get annoyed with yourself for having eaten it. The

witness (if and when it arrives) would note: "He is eating a cake; he is annoyed at himself for doing so". The witness is dispassionate and does not care what you do, think and feel but simply notes it.

Of course, like stopping thoughts, this is easier said than done. You might be driving down the street and the witness notes that; you feel content and that is noted; then someone cuts right in front of you causing you to slam on the brakes. You forget about witnessing and immediately identify with your emotions of anger or frustration. Only much later do you remember that you were attempting to witness! But with practice you find it is possible to 'wake up' in the middle of a drama and observe a part of yourself hooked by an emotion; to that degree you have then learnt that you are not your emotions, you have differentiated your real self, the spiritual being which has intrinsic worth and cannot be judged in the same way that the inappropriate or self-defeating emotions and behaviors may be. And because you stop judging your self, you notice that the same applies to others, so you can cease judging them too.

You notice that as you dramatize various thoughts, emotions and behaviors it is as though you were different people at the time, other little personalities which come and go as appropriate, but usually reactively, according to patterns of behavior rather than consciously.

How many you's are there inside you? Very many. By lunch time today you may have been thoughtful, serious, annoyed, lustful, tired, forgetful, and have had many fleeting intentions and purposes towards others or ideas about what you want or don't want. You may have been acting like some person you admire or you may not like another person who don't want to be associated with. And many, many other ways of being. Each 'sub-personality' is all-consuming while it lasts, and some of these sub-personalities may play a major role in your make-up. Who you think you are may even actually be a sub-personality and not the real essence of you.

Gurdjieff points out that sometimes one 'you' does something for which every other 'you' must pay, maybe for the rest of your life. Our you's are numerous and ephemeral and all are evaluative and judgmental, and have plenty of irrational thoughts and beliefs, harmful intentions and painful emotions attached to them. Each is actually a solution to past problems which is retained and replayed in the present. To break this ceaseless train of identifications with the technique of self remembering is to give

ourselves some inner freedom. The full handling of this state of affairs is the business of Meta-Programming, but self-remembering certainly helps.

Can you remember doing something for which you cannot forgive yourself? Perhaps you said something out of place or made some other mistake and still feel guilty about it. These feelings perpetuate low self-esteem; they serve no effective purpose other than maintaining the rightness of the identities (the you's) which were involved. How harshly we judge ourselves! Do we need to take ourselves so seriously or can we give ourselves a break?

Practicing witnessing, forgetting to witness and then remembering again can be enjoyable and instructive - it adds spice to the most mundane tasks. The more you use this technique the more powerful it becomes. Each 'you' is a reflection of a link with a desire, feeling or thought - these are our links with the material world. By taking on the role of witness we can objectify these you's and so break our identification with them.

When we experience our spirituality we recognize our true place in the world and we know that we have our own vital role to play. This feeling of truly belonging creates a sense of worthiness which enhances our self-esteem.

Lesson 5C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Pacing & Leading

Pacing - the hidden way of influence!

Have you ever had the suspicion that certain very successful people seem to have a way to communicate and influence others which seems to defy explanation and sometimes even belief, yet it seems that in spite of all the hoo-ha, there is something, some intriguing quality that these people have. I remember how I encountered certain information and how I puzzled over it for years, as I found new evidence which added to the mystery and until an acceptable explanation was at last discovered.

I remember reading an intriguing story about the English magician, Alistair Crowley. He demonstrated a technique to an observer. A stranger was walking along the street and Crowley followed him, at first mimicking his movements, and then, quite suddenly, Crowley dropped to the ground, and the stranger in front, apparently unaware of what was going on behind him, also fell to the floor. The event was not Earth shattering, and the explanation was weird, but the facts seemed to be verified, and to be reported again and again.

I had heard stories of 'enlightened beings' who claimed to be able to move into the body of another and be that other person and do things using that other person's body. The words used in the claims were clearly nonsense, but the fact was that some sort of 'hidden' influence seemed to be occurring, even when the victim had no awareness of what was going on. Serious stuff this, and worthy of further research.

The next step in this jigsaw was reading about a scientific investigation conducted many years ago. At the time there was a horse called Clever Hans. The audience would ask Hans to work out a sum, and he would oblige by tapping out the answer with his hoof. Hans could give the correct answer, even to complex questions in mathematics. The simple explanation was that Hans could do sums, and quite hard sums at that. Perhaps he was the reincarnation of a famous mathematician? The investigating scientist thought there was a rational explanation and he resolved to find it by carrying out some experiments.

He established the following (and no doubt other) facts. Whether Hans' owner was present or not did not affect Hans' ability to do sums. Whether someone who knew the answer was present or not, did affect the result. For example if asked the surface area of a sphere with a radius of 6, Hans could only give the correct answer if someone present knew the correct answer. Perhaps he was using telepathy! The scientist investigated further.

He put a screen between the questioner and Hans, so Hans could not see the questioner. Hans could no longer do sums! Clearly, Hans was body reading.

We know that horses, and mammals in general, are very observant of the physical state of other creatures. Hans was most probably reading the body movements of the questioner. For example, when we are waiting for something and we are very tense we tend to hold our breath. When the event occurs we breath out. As Hans was tapping with his hoof, the questioner might nod as he counted along with Hans, and when the right number was reached, the questioner would stop nodding. Or the questioner might hold their breath until Hans reached the correct answer. We cannot read Hans' mind or ask him exactly how he did it, but the investigating scientist concluded that Hans was body reading the questioner. And what is really intriguing he could read the body state of almost any human being and almost always get the right answer. He could see what they were thinking! In some way Hans was modeling the bodily state and movements of his questioner. He was simply imitating!

Many years later, Dr Richard Bandler, one of the cofounders of NLP, told the much repeated story of his discussion with a social worker. She mirrored him exactly. As he slid down in his chair, so did she. Being aware of this, he played a joke on her. He slid down a bit more, and she slid down, until, in the end she fell off the chair. Rather reminiscent of the Crowley story!

However, by now the mechanism was quite well understood. The bookstores began to hold books on body language - although, as usual, these books presented the matter in a highly simplified and naive manner. Nevertheless, the phenomenon had been identified and the way to do it and understand it was known and could be taught.

When we are in the presence of others we are unconsciously aware of a vast amount of information. For example:

- * Facial expressions (which change at lightning speed)
- * Body position
- * Body movements
- * Breathing
- * Speech rate, volume, pitch, etc.

Most of this information is unconscious. When we have detected something wrong using these modes of information we sometimes say we 'felt' something was wrong (or right) but we cannot say why we know this. We sometimes say under these circumstances that we were instinctively aware of something, but we do not know what. We only know we felt uneasy or excited. In some of these circumstances the answer is that we picked up body language.

The rest of this lesson deals with the techniques which have been discovered to enable us to become more aware of this very powerful area of influence, and how these techniques are used to affect our behavior and the behavior of others. The techniques are called pacing and leading. They are, perhaps, one of the most powerful group of techniques in the psychology of influence. They get to the root of human (and animal) interaction.

Pacing and Leading

In pacing, we build rapport by copying the behavior of the other person or persons. For example, we note when the other breaths in and out and we breath in unison. We are pacing the other person's breathing. In running, when we follow another and let them take the lead, we let them set the pace. When we are pacing the other person, we are in good rapport with that other person, it is as if we are both one person (unification). As in the claim of 'evolved' beings mentioned earlier, we are becoming the other. When they breath, we breath. When they lean forward, we lean forward. When they scratch their nose, we do likewise. When they cough, we cough. Of course, we avoid actually imitating or mimicking the other to such a degree that we appear to be mocking them or 'taking the mick (mimicking).' We will explain how a little later.

Also, at this point, it is worth mentioning that this whole subject can create strong emotions and strong protests. This is because we are dealing with extremely useful and suppressed information. If your moral circuits start to play up, then tell them to shut up for a while because you are being manipulated in this way unconsciously, and you are manipulating others in the same way consciously. This is the major way human beings and others communicate. By becoming conscious of these techniques you can begin to use choice for the first time about how you are going to influence and be influenced by others.

When you are pacing the other person, consciously or unconsciously, the other is leading. That is, they do something and so do you. If you wish to lead the other person, after pacing them for a while, you might test whether you are in rapport. You might scratch your face and notice whether they follow and scratch theirs. If they don't then you would continue pacing and try again later. Having established that they will now follow you, you might try other techniques. If the other is sad, then you might start to be a bit happier, and check whether their mood begins to change. In this way, by pacing and leading one can use a very powerful technique of communication. The word matching is sometimes used to mean pacing and mismatching is the opposite. If the other leans forward and you lean back, then you are mismatching. If the other speaks in a boring tone, and you speak enthusiastically then you are mismatching. If you try to lead, and the other doesn't follow (or pace you) then you are mismatching.

In this section we have established the words we want to use to convey these fascinating and powerful techniques. In the next section we will resolve the questions we raised earlier.

Pacing versus Mimicking

When the internal activities of two or more people are similar, that is they are feeling similarly, producing similar brain chemicals, thinking in a similar way, and experiencing similar things, then their external body responses will likewise be very similar. On the other hand, when two or more people are producing similar body responses, then they will share similar internal behavior. They will be more or less in rapport. If you pace the external behavior of another, you will begin to think and feel as they are thinking and feeling. Similarly, if they follow your lead, then they will begin to think and feel in very similar ways to you. If you smile, you will begin to feel

happy to some degree. If you grimace and sigh, you will begin to feel less happy. And if the other person is following your lead, behaving in a similar way to you, then they will feel similarly.

The above might be considered obvious and self-evident, at least it is when it is verbalized, yet we stoically ignore this whole area of experience. People have reported that by using this techniques effectively they have achieved fascinating results, even when the other has not appeared to look at them or notice them, as when two people are talking and the third person is pacing one of the others.

Of course, if we mimic another so that they become aware of the fact we are mimicking them, then this will not create rapport - it will create the opposite. A simple way to avoid this is to pace in a different way. For example, if another is breathing asthmatically, we would not want to pace their breathing. We would move our hand, for example, in unison with their breathing to establish rapport. As the person breathes in, we might raise a finger, and as they breath out, we might lower the finger. We might raise and lower our heads (as in nodding) as the other breathes. We do not need to copy exactly what the other is doing in order to successfully pace that person. We can use another sense modality or a different form of the same sense modality the other is using. This is called parallel or cross-modality matching.

If the other is chain smoking, and we don't want to follow, we could use a pen. Hold it in exactly the same way the other is holding the cigarette, and pace in this way. If the other crosses her legs, we could cross our arms. If the other tugs at his hair, we could tug at our jacket. We do not suddenly do what the other does as soon as they do it, but we might follow a little later.

A bonus is that we are being aware of the other person and what they are doing. Merely doing this seems to increase rapport.

In this section we have examined a way to pace without actually copying everything that the other does. We do a parallel pace. Next we will look in more detail at what we need to know in order to pace.

Pacing and Leading Spoken Language

The spoken language, which is the sound of the voice when we are speaking, has the following components:

- Speed
- Quality
- Pitch
- Stress
- Pauses

Speech Rate

Different people and the same person at different times speak at different rates or speeds. At the extremes, some people speak hypnotically slowly, while others blurt out the information, so it seems they have told you their life story in a few milliseconds! When we are enthusiastic about something, we tend to speak quickly, and when we are sad, we speak slowly. This is of course, a generalization. We should always learn by actively looking and listening to what the other person is doing.

Quality

By quality we mean that which we are aware of when people speak, for example, in an excited way, or in a sad and depressed way. We also include the characteristic sound we make which identifies the voice as that of a certain person, just as a piano and a violin playing the same tune sound differently.

Pitch

Some people speak in a high squeaky voice, and others with a deep voice. This is the pitch of the sound they are making. Also, as with the other characteristics of the voice, we might say some words in a high pitch and others in a low pitch.

Stress

When we speak, we vocalize some words differently from others to give them emphasis. We can do this by speaking the words louder or softer than the neighboring words - that is, we can mark certain words so that they are separated from others. We often do this by volume, but we can do many other things to stress words. For now, think of stress as marking, and one way of doing this is to use volume.

Pause

The use of the pause in speechmaking is well known. When we pause before or after certain words, we give them emphasis, whether this is our intention or not. When listening to another person, you may notice that they emphasize certain words by using pauses.

What is the major influence in communication?

It is often claimed that the major influences on communication are:

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| Body: | 55% |
| Speech Rate/ Pitch/ etc: | 38% |
| Words: | 7% |

The influence and rapport we generate is mainly determined by our posture, body position, movements, etc. and the sound of our voice - the rate, pitch, stress, etc. The power of influence of rapport obtained from non-verbal sources is considerable.

In communicating messages and information, the words used are most important. But the seriousness of our message, the believability and the impact is mainly determined by non-verbal factors. For example, if I ask you to access the file Lesson 2 on my computer in directory 'lessons', then the words are most important. I cannot communicate this non-verbally. But if I say it in a questioning manner, you might think I am joking, or wonder what my real meaning was.

Posture Pacing

This is being aware of the position and movements of the body, arms, legs, and head and feeding back these to the person we are communicating with. In reading these signals consciously we might pay attention to:

- * Position and movement of arms and hands
- * Position and movement of legs and feet
- * Position and movement of body
- * Position and movement of head, including movements of the lower jaw
- * Facial expressions
- * Movements of the mouth
- * Movements of the eyes

- * Movements of the eyebrows
- * Movements of the nose (nostril dilation, twitching, etc.)
- * Movements of the tongue
- * Breathing Rate, Depth, Location

The above is part of the information we take in naturally, but our goal is to do it consciously, so we are more aware of the way in which we are influencing others and how they are influencing us.

The key to these techniques is observation and practice. You will be amazed how easy it is to acquire these remarkable techniques, and how effectively your ability to control rapport will become. By watching the television, you can observe the reactions of different people and note how their body language changes. Although there are certain signals which are common in a culture, we are really interested in what the signals of this particular individual mean. What does he or she do when agreeing, disagreeing?

Above all do not assume that a given posture or expression has a conventional meaning for that person. I recall being in rapport with another and then noticing we were both standing with our arms folded. Conventionally, this is interpreted as a closed posture, where people are not in rapport. Whatever the meaning (and it certainly wasn't disagreement), we were in rapport and we were mirroring unconsciously each other's body posture. Almost all experts in this field have noticed the same thing.

The Breath of Life

One of the most subtle and effective mirroring techniques you can learn, is to mirror the breath. Have you ever noticed how much we can tell about the other person from the way they are breathing? The way we breath when we are angry, annoyed, happy, etc. is somewhat distinctive. However, here, we are concerned with pacing the other person, and we need to observe how that person is breathing in order to consciously pace him or her. Try to observe the others breathing by looking at their shoulders rather than gazing obviously at their chest!

Is that person breathing high in the chest? In the middle? In the stomach?
Are they breathing fast? Slow?

Are they inhaling and exhaling at the same speed?
 At different speeds?
 Is their breathing uniform? Erratic?

Putting it into practice

Imagine you are speaking to someone who is upset. They are moving their head from side to side, and they are exhaling quickly and noisily, like a sigh. Their shoulders are raised and they are holding their fists tight.

You mirror some of this behavior. You hold your fists tight and move your eyes similarly to the way they move theirs. You move your finger subtly in accordance with their breathing (if you don't want to mirror the breathing).

When they express their feelings you feed back to them what they have said (not everything, but key phrases) and you move your body and arms, etc. in the same way they move theirs. If the expression is anger, you might look away from the person and express the non-verbal anger and words at an imaginary person. Notice how they may give you little side-looks, as if checking for your approval (that you give them by mirroring), and use these too when you respond to them. When you feel you have established rapport, then you might try relaxing your own muscles and watching to see if they relax a bit more. If they follow try smiling and checking whether they smile too. In this way, obtaining rapport by mirroring the other person and then leading them to a more pleasant state, you use the most powerful type of influence in existence.

How long does it take?

How long is that proverbial piece of string? You may be in rapport with the other to begin with. The other might mirror you straight away. On most occasions you will move into rapport very quickly, that you can then check by leading. On other occasions, it might take longer. If someone is upset, they might need the time to fully express how they feel, and you might decide it is inappropriate to lead until they have exhausted their emotion. You will discover the answer to this question by using your awareness of pacing and leading.

Becoming competent in the magic of hidden communication

Because this is a mode of communication we use, whether we are aware of it or not, it is essential that you learn it and become familiar with it. This is a case where you

either know about it and are skilled in it or you are controlled by it. There appears to be no middle road.

Whether you become competent by learning and becoming aware of the parts and practice them one by one or whether you apply the whole, jumping in at the deep end, you will realize how easy it is after you have attained mastery.

When you take the first approach, then you would read each section and observe and practice each part. When you take the second approach, you read the whole and try to put it into practice, reading the whole again to enhance your skills. Whichever approach you adopt, you will find the small amount of investment in acquiring the skills repaid many times by the results.

Lesson 5D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Releasing

The Release Technique

One technique we have found profoundly effective is a process of consciously and intentionally releasing emotions as they arise - a technique developed by Lester Levinson. In essence, Levinson found that people have three usual ways of handling a feeling:

* The first way is to **suppress the feeling**. But suppressed feelings don't go away - they build up and fester inside, causing anxiety, tension, depression, and a host of stress-related problems. The repressed energy (or 'charge') these suppressed feelings create eventually drives you to behave in ways you don't like or understand, and that you cannot control.

* The second way is to **express the feeling**. By 'blowing up' or losing our tempers we relieve the pressure of the accumulated emotions. This can feel good because it puts the feeling into action - but it doesn't get rid of the feeling, or the roots which create the feeling; it simply relieves the pressure of it momentarily. Negative emotions may also be unpleasant for the person on the receiving end, that in turn causes more distress and guilt.

* The third common way to cope with feelings is by attempting to **avoid the issue by attending instead to distractions** - by talking, watching TV, eating, smoking, drinking, taking drugs, having sex, etc. But despite our attempts to escape them, the feelings are still there - and still take their toll in the form of stress.

But there is another option for handling a feeling - you can focus on it, fully experience it, and then let go of it: release it, discharge it.

This is the healthiest way to handle a feeling which is consuming us. We've all had the experience of being in the midst of an emotional explosion and then suddenly began to

laugh at ourselves, realizing how silly or inappropriate or useless our behavior is. In other words we became conscious.

Typical feelings include the following:

* **Apathy** and related feelings such as cold, cut-off, dead, defeated, depressed, discouraged, disillusioned, drained, futile, hopeless, lost, numb, overwhelmed, resigned, shocked, stuck, worthless, neglected, unaccepted, insignificant, lifeless, abandoned, loveless, pessimistic, rigid, stagnant, stopped, insensitive, disconnected, depressed, defeated.

* **Grief** and related feelings such as abandoned, abused, accused, anguished, ashamed, betrayed, blaming, cheated, embarrassed, helpless, hurt, ignored, left out, longing, loss, melancholy, misunderstood, neglected, pity, poor me, regret, rejection, remorse, sad, unhappy, melancholic, betrayed, discouraged, self-punishing.

* **Fear** and related feelings such as trapped, anxious, apprehensive, cowardly, devious, doubt, dread, foreboding, inhibited, insecure, jealous, nervous, panicky, scared, secretive, shaky, shy, stage-fright, suspicious, tense, trapped, withdrawn, worried, threatened, fearful, undesirable.

* **Resentment** and related feelings such as exploited, harassed, frustrated, deprived, hurt, embarrassed, used, abused, confused, rejected, offended, unacknowledged, disappointed, ignored, hidden hostility.

* **Anger** and related feelings such as aggressive, annoyed, defiant, demanding, disgusted, fierce, frustrated, furious, hatred, impatience, lack of control, mad, mean, outraged, rebellious, resentment, rude, spiteful, stern, stubborn, vengeful, vicious, violent.

* **Antagonism** and related compulsive feelings such as aloof, argumentative, arrogant, boastful, clever, contemptuous, craving, critical, demanding, driven, envious, frustrated, greedy, impatient, judgmental, manipulative, lack of acceptance or approval, need to be right, lust, obsessed, pushy, resentment, righteous, rigid, ruthless, selfish, self-satisfied, snobbish, spoiled, superior, unforgiving, vain; wanting desperately to have or to hurt; wanting to make another wrong.

* **Indifference** and related feelings such as bored, careless, cautious, conservative, forgetful, indecisive, lazy, skeptical, tired.

* **Enthusiasm** and related feelings such as adventurous, alert, amused, anticipating, aware, competent, confident, courageous, creative, curious, daring, decisive, desire, eager, friendly, happy, independent, interested, joyful, motivated, open, positive, proud, resourceful, self-sufficient, strong, supportive, vigorous.

* **Love** and related feelings such as acceptance, balance, beauty, belonging, compassion, delight, ecstasy, empathic, open, receptive, secure, understanding, wonder.

* **Serenity** and related feelings such as calm, centered, complete, free, fulfilled, peaceful, perfect, pure, whole.

Note: the last three are positive feelings - it is important to release on even very good feelings such as serenity, love and enthusiasm, for driving these feelings are sometimes hidden and compulsive needs and desires. When you release these good feelings you feel a physical and emotional release, just as when you release negative feelings. What lies behind the emotion is something even better, an imperturbable serenity, the Higher Self.

The Release Procedure

Step One: Locate. First think of some problem area in life - something that is of great urgency and concern. It may be a relationship with a loved one, a parent or child; it might be your job, health or fears. Or it might simply be the feeling that you are experiencing now.

Step Two: Identify your feeling. Determine your feeling about the problem area, or the current feeling. What word comes to mind? If necessary examine the previous list of feelings as a reminder. Check on the list also to determine the primary nature of the feeling - for example, if you perform your releasing operation on fear, rather than hesitation or worry, you will find the results are much more dramatic and powerful.

Step Three: Focus. What do you really feel? Open yourself up, become aware of the physical sensations attached to the feeling and focus on them.

Step Four: Feel your feeling. Deliberately create it. Let your feeling inhabit your entire body and mind. If the feeling is a grief feeling, you may break into tears; if it is

anger, you may feel your blood begin to boil. That's good - now is the time to feel the feeling.

Step Five: Individuate. Become aware of the difference between your Self - YOU - and what that Self is FEELING. When the feeling is fully experienced and accepted, there will at some point be a clear sensation that your feeling is not you, so it would be possible to let go of the feeling.

If you do not feel that it is possible to let the feeling go, feel it some more. Sooner or later you will reach a point where you can truthfully answer: "Yes, I could let this feeling go".

Step Six: Learn the lesson. The most vital aspect of this process is the learning of life lessons. Unless you recognize what you are to learn from your negative emotions, they will not release permanently, because they will have to regenerate again until the lesson is learned once and for all. After all, the very nature of negative emotions is a message to you -- letting you know that something needs to be learned. Circumstances create themselves in order to bring an opportunity into your life for the specific purpose of teaching you a valuable positive learning. When you don't recognize the situation as an opportunity to learn, another situation will be created. And it will continue to be re-created until the lesson is learned.

Step Seven: Release. When will you let this feeling go? Sooner or later you will be able to answer: "I am willing to let this feeling go now". So let the feeling go, simply release it, if you haven't done so spontaneously. It feels good to let it go - all the built-up energy that has been held in the body is released. There is a sudden decrease in physical and nervous tension. You will feel more relaxed, calm, centered.

Step Eight: Check. Do you still have any of the feeling? If some of it is still there then go through the procedure again. Often releasing is like a well - you release some and then more arises. Some of our pent-up emotions are so deep that they require a number of releases.

Once you've learned to release you'll find that simply becoming aware of a feeling is often enough to trigger a natural, spontaneous release, and you will carry the ability over into your everyday life, resulting in a stress-free mind and body.

Fixed Emotional Responses

If certain feelings never seem to go away, or if they re-emerge in specific circumstances in a way which is unwanted and apparently outside your control, then these are Fixed Emotional Responses. Actually, YOU create your emotions, they are not caused by the circumstances around you or what happens to you. It is much easier to be both spontaneous and rational if such fixed responses are released. So now apply the above Release Procedure to each of the following emotions.

Apathy:

Use the following questions to help you detect if you have such a fixed emotional response:

"What are some things you don't really care about?"

"What doesn't really matter in your life?"

"What is never going to change anyway?"

"Is there anything you can't do anything about?"

"What don't you even bother trying to do?"

"Is there anything you just aren't made for?"

"Is there anything which is hopeless to change?"

"What do you find depressing?"

"Have you ever felt worthless?"

When you spot the emotion of Apathy, Release it.

Grief: (Handle similarly)

"What reminds you of something you've lost?"

"Think of something sad"

"What is missing in your life?"

"Anything which should be there, but isn't?"

"Do you feel abused in any way"?

"Have you felt abandoned or betrayed?"

"What makes you unhappy?" Shame: "What are you ashamed of about yourself?"

"What do you wish you hadn't done?"

"What are you embarrassed about?"

"What about yourself are you trying to hide?"

Blame:

- "Who is responsible for the condition you are in?"
- "Who or what do you blame for some situation?"
- "What parts of your life are others responsible for?"

Regret:

- "What should you never have done?"
- "What part of the past is haunting you?"
- "What do you wish you had done?"
- "Tell me some mistakes you have made"

Pity:

- "Who do you feel sorry for?"
- "Who should you help?"
- "Who can't manage by themselves?"

Fear:

- "What shouldn't happen?"
- "What are you trying to prevent happening?"
- "Is there anything threatening you?"
- "Is somebody after you?"
- "Is anything hidden in your life?"
- "What don't you want to look at?"
- "Is any part of your life scary?"

Anger:

- "Who do you hate?"
- "Who do you think deserves to suffer?"
- "What do you feel like destroying?"
- "Who really drives you mad?"
- "What do you think is outrageous?"

Antagonism:

- "Who are you envious of?"
- "Who do you think you are superior to?"

"Who or what do you have contempt for?"

"What deserves criticism?"

"What do you find really frustrating?"

"What do you argue about?"

"What are you obsessed about?"

(Unexpressed) Resentment:

"What do you not agree with, but haven't said openly?"

"What don't you like about somebody else?"

"What should somebody else not have done to you?"

"Is somebody else doing things differently than you want?"

Indifference:

"What do you have no interest in?"

"Who do you have nothing to do with?"

"What aren't you going to bother changing?"

"What do you find boring?"

"What are you skeptical about?"

Emotion Exercises

1. Consider how you 'get into' different emotions. Start with the ones you most frequently feel and find a particular recent occurrence. Go through the incident: What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel, externally and internally? Don't accept that it is something that "just happens". There will be something which either triggers the emotions (such as something that you say to yourself or think, even non verbally) or there will be conditions that you feel are the right ones to have that emotion, and there will be specific ways that emotion is activated. Then Release that emotion, with the Procedure above.

2. When you have worked through ones you frequently use, to the point where you can activate them at will, pick some that you don't often use but that other people do. Work out what would be a strategy for getting into such emotions. Then recall a time when you did have that emotion and Release it.

3. Then work through the following resourceful emotional states. Recall a time when you felt:

amused, excited, daring, fascinated, stimulated, playful, committed, creative, proud, caring, appreciative, serene, trusting, peaceful, courageous, determined, glad, passionate, alluring, zestful, loving, relaxed, interested, enthusiastic, provocative, ecstatic, centered, curious, energized, intimate, nurturing, compelling, sexy, sensual, clever, flirtatious, respectful, complete, tranquil, safe, in agreement, complete, satisfied, productive, involved, sincere, determined, fortunate, respected, protected, motivated, reckless, delighted, attractive, excited, fascinated, understanding, welcome, indispensable, refreshed, responsible, adequate, receptive, amenable, encouraged, invigorated, deserving, open, optimistic, adaptable, valuable, approachable, free, fulfilled, compassionate, secure, positive, independent, competent, strong, aware, decisive.

4. Then work through the following negative emotional states, Releasing each one after fully experiencing it. Recall a time when you felt:

Apathy:

cold, cut-off, dead, defeated, depressed, discouraged, disillusioned, drained, futile, hopeless, lost, numb, overwhelmed, resigned, shocked, stuck, worthless, neglected, unaccepted, insignificant, lifeless, abandoned, loveless, pessimistic, rigid, stagnant, stopped, insensitive, disconnected, defeated, depressed.

Grief & Culpability:

abandoned, abused, accused, anguished, ashamed, betrayed, blaming, cheated, embarrassed, helpless, hurt, ignored, left out, longing, loss, melancholy, misunderstood, neglected, pity, poor me, regret, rejection, remorse, sad, unhappy, melancholic, betrayed, discouraged, self-punishing.

Fear:

trapped, anxious, apprehensive, cowardly, devious, doubt, dread, foreboding, inhibited, insecure, jealous, nervous, panicky, scared, secretive, shaky, shy, stage-fright, suspicious, tense, withdrawn, worried, threatened, fearful, undesirable.

Resentfulness:

exploited, harassed, frustrated, deprived, hurt, embarrassed, used, abused, confused, rejected, offended, unacknowledged, disappointed, ignored, hidden hostility.

Anger:

bitter, exasperated, irate, boiling over, aggressive, furious, hysterical, annoyed, defiant, demanding, disgusted, fierce, frustrated, furious, hatred, impatience, out of control, mad, mean, outraged, rebellious, rude, spiteful, stern, stubborn, vengeful, vicious, violent.

Antagonism:

destructive, sarcastic, cynical, critical, aloof, argumentative, arrogant, boastful, clever, contemptuous, craving, critical, demanding, driven, envious, frustrated, greedy, impatient, judgmental, manipulative, lack of acceptance or approval, need to be right, lust, obsessed, pushy, resentment, righteous, rigid, ruthless, selfish, self-satisfied, snobbish, spoiled, superior, unforgiving, vain; wanting desperately to have or to hurt; wanting to make another wrong.

Indifference:

bored, careless, cautious, conservative, forgetful, indecisive, lazy, skeptical, tired.

5. Now practice expressing a whole range of different emotions. A simple way is to take spoken statements from any fictional book and say them with the designated emotional expression. Really act out the part as if you had been hired at great expense to play the part in a film.

6. If you look at the above list of emotions you'll notice that they are arranged in a naturally occurring sequence. Starting at Indifference, the emotions descend in emotional 'tone' through Antagonism, Anger, Fear, Grief and on down to Apathy. These are all types of 'victim consciousness', as described in Lesson 5b. Going down in tone, one is increasingly 'at the effect' of another force or determinism, with reduction of choice.

Moving up from Indifference, the emotions rise in tone through Enthusiasm, Love, Exhilaration, Aesthetics and on up to Serenity. These are all types of 'creative consciousness'. Going up in tone one is increasingly the creator of one's state of being, with increasing choice. Your knowledge, responsibility and control increase for your circumstances, with a corresponding rise in communication, understanding and empathy with the people around you.

Find an incident where you moved from a higher emotion down through the scale to a lower emotion, and Release the emotions as you do so.

Do this a few times, then find some incidents where you moved from a lower emotion up through the scale to a higher emotion, and Release these emotions.

Lesson 5E - Concentration & Meditation

Topic: Bates Eye Exercises II

Further eye exercises to help visualization and relaxation

Exercise 5: Nose Drawing

1. Palm your eyes and imagine a black visual field, the mental blackboard.
2. Imagine a length of very white chalk on the end of your nose.
3. By making slight head movements, imagine writing letters on your black board.
4. When you have got the idea of this, practice writing longhand.
5. With practice, speed up the writing and also visualize the words you have written, until you can see several sentences of white writing on the blackboard covering your visual field.

This exercise helps to link the two sides of the brain. Imagining the blackboard involves the right hemisphere of the brain (the context). Imagining the chalk increases activity in the left hemisphere (the focus). Moving the head, when 'nose-writing', causes pronounced synchronization of the rhythms of brain waves between the hemispheres, i.e.. improved whole-brain integration.

Exercise 6: Blinkers Away

People who are intuitive in their perception are simply more AWARE than the majority. They notice what is going on in their peripheral vision; whereas fearful or heavily conditioned people tend to have tunnel vision. They tend to see the world with blinkers on, only seeing what is directly in front of them and not looking aside, scared that the status quo might be taken away from them. This exercise will make you more aware of the incidental things and, therefore, more aware generally.

1. Set up a small object, a cup for example, about 8 feet away. Sit directly facing the object, which is at eye height. Focus on the centre of the cup and

don't move your eyes. The intention is to extend your visual range, to see more in your peripheral vision.

2. Without removing your focus on the object, mentally concentrate on the left and describe what you can see in your peripheral vision. Then move your awareness to the top of your visual field, and so on. Try to 'see' as far to the extremes as you can, but don't let your eyes move to follow your peripheral attention.

3. Go round the visual area in a spiral, and each time round, increase the area you can perceive in this manner. Shift your attention mentally, not with your eyes. Then revert to the centre and spiral out again.

Individuals with bad eyesight (not inherited or diseased) are generally fearful - this may be manifest, or just below the surface. Such a person has less tolerance of stress and therefore problems with visualization and memory. They will tend to be more left-brain dominant than average, because the logical mind has to work harder to keep thinking 'up to standard' when the intuitive mind is not providing ready answers (based on structure and context).

Good eyesight, good memory and the ability to think in pictures usually go together. The exercises described in these last two sections will go a long way towards solving perceptual problems, but some students may of course still need to wear glasses! When possible, though, the exercises should be done without them.

Lesson 6A - Tools for Thought

Topic: Problem Solving - SWOT Analysis

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats ...

SWOT Analysis

SWOT Analysis is an effective method of identifying your Strengths and Weaknesses, and to examine the Opportunities and Threats you face. Often carrying out an analysis using the SWOT framework will be enough to reveal changes which can be usefully made. To carry out a SWOT Analysis write down answers to the following questions:

Strengths:

What are my strengths?

What have I got going for myself?

What do I do well?

What do I control in this situation?

What do I have which will be valuable? (knowledge, skills, experience, equipment, etc.)

Who are my friends and allies?

What are my lines of communication?

Consider this from your own point of view and from the point of view of the people you deal with. Be honest and realistic - but not modest!

Weaknesses:

What are my weaknesses?

What could be improved?

What do I tend to do badly?

What am I vulnerable to?

What things are missing?

Again this should be considered from your own point of view and as others might see the situation - do other people perceive weaknesses that you don't see? Do your competitors do any better? It is best to be realistic now, and face any unpleasant truths as soon as possible.

Opportunities

Where opportunities could this situation offer?

What trends and current or forthcoming changes could I take advantage of?

What worthwhile goal does this situation make possible?

What do I stand to gain from this situation?

Also consider what opportunities others might have.

Threats

What obstacles do I face?

What are others doing which competes with me?

What are the possible dangers of this situation?

Are there any warning signs or things happening which could be disadvantageous?

Are there other things I want which conflict with this?

What do I stand to lose from this situation?

Are there liabilities?

Also consider what threats others might face.

Carrying out this analysis is often illuminating - both in terms of pointing out what needs to be done, and in putting problems into perspective.

Please let your tutor know what problems you've managed to see in a new perspective and what you've started to do about them.

Lesson 6B - High Performance Living

Topic: Self-Esteem II

Changing your mind about yourself

A poor self concept can be traced back to an early assimilation of negative ideas and attitudes about yourself. It is directly related to the extent to which you have been invalidated. If I 'invalidate' you, I take away your effectiveness, legitimacy and power by making you emotionally disabled. This is only possible, however, if you give credibility to my invalidations and assimilate them as part of your own self concept. Valid criticism is one thing, much can be learnt from it, but criticism which is only partly correct or an over-generalization, causes confusion and introspection, and resulting emotional upset. If this is assimilated and becomes unfounded self-criticism then a spanner is put into the working of the mind.

Creating self-esteem

How would you describe yourself? The following is a list of adjectives - virtues, vices, strengths and weaknesses - which may or may not apply to you. Very many other qualities could be added to the list.

| | | | |
|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| artistic | unique | embarrassed | confident |
| sarcastic | clever | withdrawn | supportive |
| incapable | demanding | lazy | flexible |
| kind | active | tolerant | thoughtful |
| shy | angry | afraid | passive |
| overbearing | light-hearted | happy | intelligent |
| boring | proud | loveable | inarticulate |
| sloppy | depressed | responsible | intolerant |
| modest | responsive | useless | tactful |
| interesting | self aware | extrovert | perceptive |
| unfair | aggressive | emotional | uncertain |
| worried | manipulative | enthusiastic | mistrusting |
| self righteous | sensitive | introverted | worthless |
| ugly | stupid | creative | unattractive |

There are plenty more attributes. You could look at yourself in terms of how others see you, appearance, personal manner, performance at work, home life, relationships, social position, mental functioning, self-awareness and sexuality.

We are all of these some of the time of course. However, now make a list of all the qualities - from the above list or other things which come to mind - that you think you are almost never:

"I am almost never..."

Now all those things that you believe you are almost always:

"I am almost always..."

Which of these statements do you consider the most important, i.e.. your underlying personal self beliefs? How do you see yourself? Are your core beliefs appreciative or critical; are you high or low in self-esteem?

Look at all the critical statements you listed and imagine you were saying these things about someone else. Would you be so hard and judgmental with someone else? How would you feel if someone else described you this way?

If you recognize and are happy to be the person you have described, then fine. But ask yourself if this means keeping some area of yourself quiet, out of sight and so out of mind. If you suspect this to be true, try to look into what area that might be.

Disarming the inner critic

Take each negative statement one at a time and check it for rationality against the following list:

- * Has a general rule been made from one isolated example?
- * Does it pay excessive attention to only small parts of your experience?
- * Is it an exaggerated description instead of an accurate one?
- * Is your critic thinking in terms of black and white? E.g. does it insist that everything you do has to be brilliant or else it regards it as rubbish?

- * Does your critic expect you to take responsibility for events which are actually outside your control?
- * Does your critic assume the whole world revolves around you and your interests?
- * Have you been mind-reading? Do you know for sure that other people don't like you, are unforgiving of you, or don't care about you?
- * Does your critic assume that you have no responsibility or are a helpless victim?
- * Is your inner critic being inappropriately emotional?

For each negative statement, see if you can contradict it with a more rational statement. E.g. "I may sometimes misunderstand, but that doesn't mean I'm stupid."

For each weakness or negative trait find an exception or a corresponding strength.

Think about people who are your friends or who you like in spite of their unfortunate habits or undesirable traits. Try adopting the same attitude to your own traits - make friends with yourself.

Changing Your Mind about Yourself

Should you or could you? The rationale which supports 'I should' (and 'I should not') allows us to hand over the responsibility for our lives to others. It is a childlike stance and gives the decision-making power to someone else. Believing the 'should' inhibits change, risk-taking and assertiveness. It is both comforting and severely limiting. Whenever we question our basic beliefs we are also questioning our status quo - our safe solutions - and this can feel threatening. Identifying the inner voices which tell you that you should do this and ought to be doing that, can greatly increase the range of choices you have in your life.

An inner voice which nags you in this way is likely to be an internalized parent or someone who is important to you, in the past or currently. Some should's and ought's make sense of course, such as legitimate rules to live by, and if violated then harm results, to yourself or others. Then it is appropriate to make up for the injury you have caused. Acknowledge the wrong to the person who was hurt and deal directly with him or her. Offer to recompense the harm damage done. And learn from your mistake! Remember, mistakes are an essential part of learning.

Many should's and ought's, however, act to undermine the strength and directness of what you think and do. Make a list of all the things you think that you

1. should or ought not to **do**
2. should or ought not to **have**
3. should or ought not to **be**

Take each listed item read it out loud and then ask yourself, “Why should I?” Here are some typical answers to the 'why should I' question:

"Because everybody has to",
 "My father said I should",
 "What will happen to me if I don't?",
 "Because people won't like me anymore",
 "Because I'm too fat/ stupid/lazy/careless etc."

The answers to “Why should I?” questions demonstrate how we can limit ourselves by holding certain beliefs. Try ending an 'I should...' statement with, "because I really want to." The sentence doesn't make sense because the word 'should' implies reluctance and feelings of guilt and fear. Do we really need to burden ourselves in this way? The word 'should', however, can be replaced by the word 'could' and this restores freedom of choice. So go through your list of should's and rephrase each item:

"If I really wanted to, I could ..."

Another approach is to ask the question, “Why should I?” repeatedly until you genuinely and sincerely answer it with "Because I really want to." Or you decide to give it up because you don't want to!

Looked at this way, somehow things seem much more possible and at the same time you no longer feel you have to. So give yourself permission to run your own life. You don't need taped instructions from the past - right now you can make your own decisions and create your own experiences.

Lesson 6C - Psycho-Linguistics

Topic: Sensory Language

Do you mainly hear, see or feel in your mind?

Modalities

Have you ever visited a country where the inhabitants speak a language other than English? Did you speak to them in their language? Clearly, if you did, you were more likely to be able to communicate with them.

Have you ever had a conversation with someone and although you both spoke the same language, you were left with the impression that you were both speaking a different language? I wonder if you have considered that even within our native language, different people have a preference for certain types of thinking. If we speak to them in the language which matches their thinking they will be better able to understand us.

Of course, there are many different language preferences. For example, scientists speak in 'science talk', and might get lost with artists who use 'artist talk'. There are, however, more basic preferences which are based on the five senses. What about now, when you are reading this? Are you conjuring up mental images? Are you perceiving certain specific feelings or are you hearing sounds, or internal dialogue?

If you customarily look at mental pictures, you would probably talk in terms of visual words like big, close, bright, etc. You might ask questions, like "How does this fit in with what I want to achieve, with the big picture?"

If you are having certain feelings, you may verbalize your thoughts in terms of 'feeling' words or kinesthetics. You might say it is heavy or light, smooth or rough, cold, hot or comfortable.

Again you might very often hear sounds or internal speech. You may think a concept is harmonious or the words might seem to be screaming out at you! The sensory experiences we have are:

| | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| Visual: | seeing |
| Auditory: | hearing |
| Kinesthetic: | touch and feeling |
| Gustatory: | taste and smell |

If you are talking to someone who is thinking hard about a subject, you get an indication of how they are thinking by paying attention to the words they use. Some people have sensory preferences; that is they quite often think about things in one particular modality. The main modalities are visual, auditory and kinesthetic. Those who have a sensory preference tend to prefer those words which match their preference. The following table gives some indication how people with a given sensory preference would express certain ideas:

| Visual | Kinesthetic | Auditory |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Blind to what others think | Doesn't care what others feel | Deaf to other points of view |
| I see what you mean! | I feel you are right | I hear what you are saying |
| I've got the picture | I've got a grasp of it | I am hearing the right sounds |
| Look | Get a handle on | Hear |
| Observe | Keep tabs on | Keep my ears open |
| Watch | Keep your finger on the pulse | An ear to the ground |
| See the meaning | Grasp the meaning | The bell rang |
| See the light | Be able to grasp it | Hear what I wanted |
| Spectacle | Wonderful Feeling | A brass band started to play |
| See how it works | Get the hang of it | Started to play music |
| Saw it | Grasped it | Heard it |
| Oh! I see | Touch the right spot | It struck a chord |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|---|
| Like a bolt out of the blue | Leapt out and bit me | Cymbals crashed |
| Burn the midnight oil | Get stuck in. | Play the violin till dawn |
| See the truth | I feel it's right | Harmonizes |
| Spot an opportunity | Seize an opportunity | Something tells me I should take this opportunity |
| Looking for something to do | Mooching about | Monotony |
| Got my eye on you | Breathing down your neck | Keep an ear open. |
| The colors were brilliant | I felt this feeling well up | The music was lovely |

Spotting modalities

Do not get into deep analysis about whether something is visual, auditory or kinesthetic. Look for patterns. We all use the whole pattern of words and what might seem initially like visual, might be kinesthetic, etc. One swallow doesn't make a summer! So be open to patterns. However, when someone is deeply thinking about something and they say, 'I feel,' then the person is most probably in the kinesthetic modality. When someone says, 'I can see what you mean,' it is most likely a visual modality, especially if the person appears to be looking at something. And when someone says, 'I hear what you are saying,' then it is most probably auditory. On other occasions you might not be sure on the basis of one example.

If someone is thinking about something and they say: "This problem is looming up and it is moving fast towards me and I can't see what is the best way to tackle it," then it seems likely that person is looking at a mental **picture**, rather than a feeling or sounds.

If the person had said: "This problem is screaming out for an answer," we would guess they are using an **auditory** mode of thinking. And if they had said: "I can feel this problem behind me; it's hot breath on my neck," then we might assume a **kinesthetic** modality.

To gain rapport with the speaker we would use sensory language which **matches** the one they are currently using. In building rapport and showing understanding, we would not have the following conversation:

"This problem is looming up (Visual mode)."

"What exactly does it sound (Auditory) like?"

To respond, the person would have to change from visual mode to auditory. If we match the language style used, we are more likely to develop rapport. However, we are not suggesting that you can precisely decide which modality is being used every time. Indeed, we all use words habitually, but when we are intensely thinking about something, and we are using visual, auditory or kinesthetic imagery, then our words often reflect the particular thinking style.

There are also styles of personal contact. Visual people like to look you in the eye. Kinesthetic people like touching. Auditory people may look away so they can listen better.

Mismatched conversations

Mismatched visual and kinesthetic:

"I **feel** I have to do something better."

"I **see** what you mean. What does it **appear** you have to do first?"

"I **feel** I should get to **grips** with my problems at **work**."

"That **looks** like the right thing to do. Let us **see** what we can do to help."

Mismatched visual and auditory:

"How does this **look** to you?"

"It **sounds** all right."

"Can you **see** how it will **look** when we are done?"

"I can **hear** an orchestra playing in **harmony**."

Matched conversations

Kinesthetic:

"I **feel** I have to **do** something better."

"I **get** what you mean. What do you **feel** you have to **do** first?"

"I should **get to grips** with my problems at **work**."

"That's **cool**. Let us **get in contact** with what we can **do** to help."

Visual:

"How does this **look** to you?"

"It **appears** to be **fine**."

"Can you **see** how it will **look** when we are done?"

"I've got a **big bright image** in my **mind's eye**!"

These versions seem to be better matched than those in the previous section. Although we have preferences for certain types of sensory language, we do not use our preferred modality all the time. In talking about some things it is difficult to use some modalities. For example, work is about doing things - the kinesthetic mode! Also, it is probably better to think of sensory language, not as personality types, but as related to specific situations and subjects.

Sequences

In addition to having a preferred sensory modality - seeing, hearing, feeling - in a given situation, we also have preferred sequences. For example, if I see a problem looming up large, I might hear a voice saying, 'You're in deep trouble now!', and feel anxious. This may be my normal pattern of response to stressful situations. We can write this pattern down as V-A-K (for Visual, Auditory and Kinesthetic sequence).

Similarly, an individual may have a mental image to which he or she responds with a feeling followed by some Auditory dialogue (V-K-A). The individual keeps returning to the image and this is his preferred modality at the time in that situation. It is the central image, (or the exact sequence of modalities) to which we should mirror and build rapport. For example:

"When I have a problem, I try to **see it clearly**, and I **ask** myself 'Is it really important?' If I think it is, I **look** for something to get a **hold** on, which is the **fulcrum** to **move** the situation." (VAVK)

(Matching response) "**Look** at this problem and try **see it clearly**, and then **ask** yourself some questions about it. If you think it is important, then **look** at it and try to find the **handle** which will solve the problem."

You can even go so far as to model a successful person to find how they think about things and communicate to others, and how that may help them to be successful.

Practice

Listen to conversations both in life and on the TV or radio. Write out dialogues using matching responses.

Lesson 6D - Polarity Integration

Topic: Releasing II

Repairing relations with your parents

We are taught from an early age that feelings are best kept to ourselves. There are messages like, "Put a smile on your face, stop being so miserable", "Don't be afraid, just go and do it like the others", "Boys don't cry", "No one will like you if you speak your mind", "When you get angry you make me unhappy," and so on. In short, deny your feelings and then everyone will be happy.

But feelings are related to needs. If our needs are fulfilled then we feel all right; if they are not fulfilled then we feel all the gamut of emotions. When you deny your feelings you are making yourself wrong for having those feelings, and that invalidation reduces your self-esteem.

When you deny your feelings you are pretending that you have no needs. If we become practiced in the art of hiding our feelings from others (unexpressed feelings) we eventually become able to hide our feelings from ourselves (unacknowledged feelings). However, hidden feelings do not go away because our needs do not go away. Inside ourselves they cause pain and misery. We are not being honest with ourselves and so we feel ill at ease (dis-eased).

Sometimes we feel the need to think positively with the need to deny our feelings. But in truth, we need to encompass our emotions in our positive outlook, to willingly accept them not bury them underground. When we suppress our thoughts and feelings we close down the lines of communication. We 'keep ourselves to ourselves' and become isolated, unhappy and confused, and often we become ill.

Shakti Gawain suggests: "It is our resistance to a feeling which causes us pain. If, because we are afraid of a certain feeling we suppress it, we will experience emotional pain. If we allow ourselves to feel it and accept it fully, it becomes an intense sensation, though not a painful one."

Anger occurs when you are not able to express yourself, to make yourself heard or understood, or to exert control over a situation. Usually we suppress this anger and go numb. As we start to get back in touch with our true power, to take responsibility, the first thing we experience is the stored-up anger. An important key for transforming anger into an acceptance of your power is learning to assert yourself. Learn to ask for what you want and do what you want to do without being unduly influenced by other people. When you stop giving your power away to other people you won't feel angry anymore. You are no longer a victim, you are balancing yourself at the emotional level, taking control of your destiny by learning how to respond creatively. When we are operating from a state of creative consciousness, we are high in self-esteem.

We find it hard to forgive when our resentment has not been released. Unexpressed anger ferments within us and so we can become ill. But if we hold on to angry feelings we become bound to the other in hatred, locked together with the chains of unforgiveness. The state of unforgiveness lowers self-esteem; how can I value myself when I am thinking poisonous thoughts? When we forgive we are free to be ourselves without being hindered by reactive responses.

How to make painful parental relationships come good

We all have strong emotional reactions to our parents. However 'good' they were as parents, there were inevitably conflicts between what seemed best to the mature adult, and what was needed and wanted (however irrationally) by the child. Some of us are in touch with those feelings, but others protect themselves from the intensity of their emotions by burying them.

The child in us may have come to the conclusion that it isn't safe to feel. Perhaps he was punished for expressing feelings, or perhaps his feelings were so painful that in order to make life tolerable, he pushed them deep into his subconscious. Perhaps he had to convince himself that he just didn't care, needed to prove to his parents that they couldn't get to him. The following checklist is used as a starting point to get to deeply buried feelings.

Step 1: Feelings

Firstly we look at the feelings you may have towards the either or both of your parents. The checklist is divided into four groups: guilt, fear, sadness and anger. You

are looking for automatic, reactive, negative feelings - the ones which usually cause self-defeating behaviors. Note which statements in the following list are true for you:

In your relationship with either or both of your parents, are any of the following statements true for you, now or in the past?

1. I feel guilty when I don't live up to my parents' expectations.
2. I feel guilty when I do something which upsets them.
3. I feel guilt when I go against their advice.
4. I feel guilty when I get angry with them.
5. I feel guilty when I disappoint my parents or hurt their feelings.
6. I feel guilty when I don't do enough for them.
7. I feel guilty when I don't do everything they ask me to do.
8. I feel guilty when I say no to them.
9. I feel scared when my parents yell at me.
10. I feel scared when they're angry at me.
11. I feel scared when I'm angry at them.
12. I feel scared when I have to tell them something they don't want to hear.
13. I feel scared when they threaten to withdraw their love.
14. I feel scared when I disagree with them.
15. I feel scared when I try to stand up to them
16. I feel sad when my parents are unhappy
17. I feel sad when I know I've let my parents down.
18. I feel sad when I can't make their lives better for them.
19. I feel sad when my parents tell me I've ruined their lives.
20. I feel sad when I do something which I want to do and it hurts my parents.
21. I feel sad when my parents don't like my (friends, lover, husband/wife).
22. I feel angry when my parents criticize me.
23. I feel angry when my parents try to control me.
24. I feel angry when they tell me how to live my life.
25. I feel angry when they tell me how I should feel, think, or behave.
26. I feel angry when they tell me what I should or shouldn't do.
27. I feel angry when they make demands on me.
28. I feel angry when they try to live their lives through me.
29. I feel angry when they expect me to take care of them.
30. I feel angry when they reject me.

Further instances may be elicited by completing the sentence:

'Regarding my parents, I feel guilty when'

And similarly for fear, sadness and anger.

Alternative feelings may also be elicited by completing the sentence:

'When I don't live up to my parents expectations I feel...'

And similarly for the other situations above.

Refer to the list of emotions and use the Release Technique to fully clear the emotion.

Step 2: Beliefs

The second checklist identifies beliefs which underlie one's feelings. The statement corresponding to the most moving or strongly felt emotion from Step 1 is read out, followed by 'because ...' and then each of the following Beliefs:

(Feeling statement from Step 1) because:

1. It is up to me to make my parents happy.
2. It is up to me to make my parents proud.
3. I am my parents whole life.
4. My parents couldn't survive without me.
5. I couldn't survive without my parents.
6. If I told my parents the truth about (my divorce, my abortion, my being gay, my fiancée being an atheist, etc.), it would kill them.
7. If I stand up to my parents, I'll lose them forever.
8. If I tell them how much they hurt me, they'll cut me out of their lives.
9. I shouldn't do or say anything which would hurt my parents' feelings.
10. My parents' feelings are more important than mine.
11. There's no point in talking to my parents because it wouldn't do any good.
12. If my parents would only change, I would feel better about myself.

13. I have to make it up to my parents for being such a bad person.
14. If I could just get them to see how much they're hurting me, I know they'd be different.
15. No matter what they did, they are my parents and I have to honor them.
16. My parents don't have any control over my life. I fight with them all the time.
17. **Because???** (Is there some other belief which underlies this feeling?)

Step 3. Seeing the Connection

The feeling and underlying belief are then repeated as a whole statement, e.g. 'I feel guilty when I do something which upsets them because I shouldn't do or say anything which will hurt my parents' feelings'.

This piggyback technique helps you to make a lot more sense out of your emotional reactions; you will probably be surprised at how many of your feelings have their roots in your beliefs. This exercise is tremendously important, because once you understand the source of your feelings - your own beliefs - you can take responsibility for them and control them.

Step 4: Behaviors

Beliefs lead to rules, feelings make you obey them, and that is what leads to behavior. Having recognized relevant feelings and beliefs, behavior patterns can now be addressed. The following behaviors fall into two categories: compliant (1-11) and aggressive (12-16). See if the actions in the following list correspond to your behavior resulting from the above feeling and connected belief.

Does (the connected statement from Step 3) lead to any of the following behaviors?

1. Tending to give in to your parents no matter how you feel.
2. Not telling them what you really think.
3. Not telling them how you really feel.

4. Acting as if everything is fine between you even when it isn't.
5. Being phony and superficial when you're with your parents.
6. Doing things out of guilt or fear, rather than out of free choice.
7. Trying very hard to get them to change.
8. Trying hard to get them to see your point of view.
9. Becoming the peacemaker between them.
10. Making painful sacrifices in your own life to please them.
11. Continuing to be the bearer of family secrets.
12. Trying to prove to your parents that you're right.
13. Doing things you know they won't like to show them your independence.
14. Screaming at your parents to show them they can't control you.
15. Having to restrain yourself to keep from attacking them.
16. Cutting your parents out of your life.
17. Some other self-defeating, painful or inappropriate behavior?

Step 5: Complete the Procedure

Go back to Step 1 and see if there are other strongly felt emotions regarding your relationship with your parents and handle these in the same manner, until - with this new understanding - you really feel released from any bad feelings, however much you might have previously been suppressing them.

You may not be able to change lifelong patterns of behavior overnight, no matter how self-defeating they may now seem to you. What you can do is start to challenge such behaviors if they emerge again with painful consequences, and to recognize the underlying misconceived or limiting belief on which they are based. Discard them to allow your true self to emerge. That way you come to know who you really are.

Allocating Responsibility

The opposite of being reactive is being response-able, i.e.. responsible. When you are being responsible, you're thinking as well as feeling: you're experiencing your feelings but also conscious of your Self and therefore not driven by emotion to act impulsively. As you become free from reactive (stimulus-response) behavior then to that degree you know that you are also free to be spontaneous, because you know that will incorporate responsibility.

Responsibility also allows you to maintain your self-worth, despite anything your parents, or anybody else for that matter, might say about you. The thoughts and feelings of others no longer drag you into a pit of self-doubt. You will see all sorts of new options and choices in your dealings with other people because your perspective and your sense of reason are not being buried by emotions. Taking responsibility for your mind, puts back into your hands a good deal of control over your life.

By understanding how easily reactive responses can take over one's behavior you will find yourself not taking personal offense when others behave badly; you can see that they are just dramatizing the problems and conflicts in their own heads. Enlightenment always leads to understanding, empathy and improved communication, in short, love.

When parents and others continue to attempt to manipulate and dominate, you can then stay calm and refuse to be stampeded: then you retain the power. For example by responding non-defensively, this breaks the cycle of attack-retreat-defense-escalation. The moment you argue, apologize, explain, or try to get them to change their minds, you give them the power to withhold the understanding that you are asking them for. One can say, 'That's an interesting point of view', or 'I shall consider that as one option'. It is also necessary to assert one's position in a matter-of-fact manner, without worrying about upsetting them, but without any hostility or embarrassment: 'I'm happy to let you stay for a specified, limited time'.

One's response to this approach may be to say 'I just don't think I can stand up to my parents'. Instead of saying 'I can't', reframe your statement in the form: 'I haven't yet stood up to my parents'. 'Haven't yet' implies choice, whereas 'don't' and 'can't' imply the opposite: finality. Similarly, 'I mustn't' or 'I shouldn't' can be reframed as : '**I could choose not to**'. 'I should' or 'I must' can be reframed: '**I could choose to**'. There is a big difference between choosing to capitulate to your parents because you've considered the alternatives and decided that you're not prepared to make a change at this moment, and automatically capitulating because you feel helpless. Making a choice means taking a step towards control; knee-jerk reacting means backsliding into being controlled.

These same principles of course apply to all relationships, not just child-parent ones.

It is necessary to let go of the responsibility for the painful events of your childhood and put it where it belongs. Visualize the little and helpless Child that you were (perhaps with the help of a childhood photograph) and say out loud to that child:

'You were not responsible for...'

1. The way they ignored or neglected you
2. The way they made you feel unloved or unlovable
3. Their cruel or thoughtless teasing
4. The bad names they called you
5. Their unhappiness
6. Their problems
7. Their choice not to do anything about their problems
8. What they did when they were drinking
9. Their hitting you
10. Their molesting you.

Add any other painful, repetitive experiences that you have always felt responsible for.

The second part of this exercise involves assigning the responsibility where it belongs to the parents. To do this, address the Child within, and repeat every applicable item on the above list and additions, but precede it now with the words:

'My parents were responsible for...'

Again, add anything which is relevant to your personal experience.

Taking personal responsibility

Putting responsibility where it realistically belongs squarely on your parents' shoulders does not give you license to excuse all your self-defeating behaviors by saying 'It was all their fault'. The following list will help you to focus on some of your Adult responsibilities, as they apply to your relationship to your parents. Say out loud:

'As an adult, in relationship to my parents, I am responsible for...'

1. Becoming a separate individual from my parents
2. Looking honestly at my relationship with them
3. Facing the truth about my childhood
4. Having the courage to acknowledge the connections between events of my childhood and my adult life
5. Gaining the courage to express my real feelings to them
6. Confronting and diminishing the power and control they have over my life, whether they are alive or dead
7. Changing my own behavior when it is imitative of my parents manipulative, critical or hurtful ways
8. Reclaiming my Adult power and confidence.

Some of these goals may be easier than others, but they are all attainable; you can free the Child within you from perpetual punishment.

Lesson 6E – Concentration & Meditation

Topic: A New Way of Seeing

Discovering the artist's way of being

Drawing well depends on acquiring the art of seeing. Ability to draw depends on being able to see the way an artist sees, and this kind of seeing can marvelously enrich your life. The artist is able to shift from the ordinary way of processing visual information (the sequential, analytic way of the left-brain) to the holistic, spatial mode of the right hemisphere. Contrary to popular opinion, manual skill is not a primary factor in drawing. Drawing is a skill which can be learned by every normal person with average eye-hand co-ordination - if your handwriting is readable you have ample dexterity to draw well. Far more important is learning how to process visual information in the special way used by artists.

Drawing, pleasurable and rewarding though it is, is but a key to open the door to other goals; hence its place in this course. In drawing you will delve deeply into a part of your mind too often obscured by endless details of everyday life. From this experience you will develop the ability to see things freshly in their totality, to see underlying patterns and possibilities for new combinations. Creative solutions to problems will be accessible through this new mode of thinking - using the power of your whole brain. The potential of the integrated brain is almost limitless, and through drawing (and the other techniques of the LIVING CONSCIOUSLY which achieve the same objective in different ways) you can come to know this powerful self and make it known to others. Through drawing and other forms of self-expression, you are made visible; and your powers as an individual are enhanced through increased awareness of your own mind and its workings.

Pre-instruction Drawings

Obtain a 4B pencil and a pad of inexpensive (not glossy) paper. Each drawing may take between 3 - 10 minutes. Be sure to date the drawings as they will provide a record of your present level of drawing skill, prior to the exercises that follow.

Draw a portrait (a person's head and shoulders), from memory, without looking at anyone.

Draw a portrait of a person nearby.

Draw a picture of your own hand in whatever position you choose - the hand which is not drawing, of course.

Draw a picture of a chair.

Get used to drawing playfully all over an intimidating sheet of empty white paper. Firstly start drawing - boldly, freely, confidently - using straight vertical and horizontal lines, at first following the edges of the paper, without taking the pencil from the paper. Invent the moves as you go along, knowing that you create the line and that the line, the paper and the shapes you make will lead you naturally into your next move. Then try another sheet, perhaps this time with diagonal lines as well as the lines which reinforce the edges. Try adding circles and shading in areas.

On a sheet of paper, right in the middle of the sheet, write your signature, but much larger than usual - say 10 times the normal size. You are looking at a drawing which is your original creation, shaped by the cultural influences of your life. You have expressed yourself through the use of line, the non-verbal language of art. When another regards your signature, they respond to the felt, individual qualities of the 'drawn' line: the speed of line, the size of spacing, the muscle tension or lack of tension of the artist, to the whole signature and all its parts at once. They respond to you and your individuality.

In the exercises to follow, we won't dwell on what you can do already. Instead the aim is to teach you how to see so that you can use your expressive, individual line to draw your perceptions. Drawing a perceived form is largely a right hemisphere function. We want the right hemisphere to 'lead' the left, to become the dominant hemisphere. The subjective characteristics of this state are: a sense of close 'connection' with the work, a sense of timelessness, detachment from using words, a sense of close attention to forms and spaces and shapes which remain nameless.

It's important that you experience the shift from one mode to the other - from the ordinary verbal, analytical state to the spatial, non-verbal state. By setting up the conditions for this mental shift and experiencing the slightly different feeling it produces, you will be able to recognize and initiate this state in yourself - a state in which you will be able to draw (and be more capable in many other ways).

Preliminary Breathing Exercise

This exercise is designed to reduce stress and tension and promote relaxation, in order to enhance the visual field and allow easier access to right-brain abilities.

Step 1. Breath in to a count of 6 seconds; breath out to a count of 6 seconds. As you breath in, raise your extended right arm, and lower it as you breath out.

Step 2. When you can do this easily and comfortably, in addition, as you breath in look up - as high as you can - with both eyes, but keep your head still. When you breath out, look down as far as you can, whilst keeping your head still.

Step 3. In conjunction with the slow breathing cycle, now learn to relax the tongue. As you breath in, tense all the muscles of your tongue, pushing it against the roof of the mouth. When you breath out, relax the tongue, letting it fall limp on the floor of the mouth. Once you have done this 3 or 4 times, the tongue will be fully relaxed; then you continue breathing in conjunction with the eye movements as described in Step 2, but do not tense the tongue on the in-breath. You will find it is very difficult to think in words, once the tongue is fully relaxed, since tension in the tongue is connected with inner speech and relaxing this tension helps to reduce the dominance of the left hemisphere.

Step 4. Once the above steps have been mastered, accompany the slow breathing with eye movements and in addition: as you breath in, imagine you are breathing in white light; as you breath out, imagine you are breathing out black. Do this with eyes closed.

Repeat this exercise periodically as you are learning to draw. As you become accomplished at this breathing technique, gradually increase the breathing count up to 10 seconds, corresponding to 3 in-and-out breaths per minute.

Vase-Faces Drawing

Step 1. Draw a profile of a person's head on the left side of the paper, facing towards the centre (if you are left-handed, draw the profile on the right side, facing towards the centre). Next draw horizontal lines at the top and bottom of the paper, equivalent to the top and bottom of a vase, of which your profile is one side.

Step 2. Go back over your drawing of the profile with the pencil; as the pencil moves over the features, name them to yourself: forehead, nose, upper lip, lower lip, chin, neck. Repeat this step a few times. This is a left-hemisphere task: drawing symbolic shapes from memory and naming them.

Step 3. Next, starting at the top, draw the profile in reverse, completing the vase. The second profile should be a reversal of the first for the vase to be symmetrical. You will find that you are doing the second profile differently and it will feel slightly different: this is right-hemisphere drawing. You probably lost the sense of drawing a profile and found yourself scanning back and forth in the space between the profiles, comparing and adjusting, not thinking in words at all.

Repeat the exercise several times, with different faces. If when doing the reversed profile, the left brain intrudes with verbal phrases about the separate features, say to it: 'Just stay out of this please, the other side can handle this job, then we'll get back to you'. The left hemisphere is not used to being shut out, and you may need to reassure it.

Upside-down Drawing

In upright orientation we can recognize familiar things, categories and name them. But viewed upside-down, the visual clues don't match our memories; we see shapes and areas of light and shadow. But this is the way of seeing which assists drawing, so in this exercise you will be copying an upside down image - your drawing, therefore, will also be upside down.

Copy the following drawing just as you see it. Before you start, look at the upside-down drawing for a while; look at the angles, shapes and lines and especially the spaces. Begin drawing at the top and work your way down, moving from line to line, part to adjacent part. Try not to think about what the forms are or to name them. Forget about time; take as long as you need.



When you've finished and turned your drawing right side up, you'll probably be impressed by your efforts. The know-it-all left brain, which admires a job well-done, must now consider the possibility that the disdained right brain is good at drawing! When you were drawing, did you notice how you felt after the cognitive shift to a right-brain mode of consciousness occurred? This knowing will help to bring the cognitive shift under control - the main goal of these exercises.

Do several more drawings upside down, using drawings from an art book, so that you become familiar with how it feels to be in the right-brain mode. It is indeed pleasurable and in that mode you can draw well. You feel excited, even exhilarated, but calm and in full control, released from the verbal domination of the ego-mind, the left hemisphere, at one with the process of drawing.

Contour Drawing

The most efficient way to accomplish a shift to the right-mode is to present the brain with a task that the dominant left-brain can't or won't handle, and to see in such a way that this naturally happens. This exercise is called 'contour drawing' and your left hemisphere is probably not going to like it, because it rejects the slow, meticulous, complex perceptions of spatial, relational information, and is happy to let the right-mode take over.

An 'edge' is the place where two things meet. In drawing your hand, for example, the places where the air (that in drawing is thought of as background or negative space) meets the surface of your hand (foreground or positive space), the place where a fingernail meets the surrounding skin, the place where two folds of skin meet to form a wrinkle, and so on, are shared edges or 'contours'. A contour is defined as an edge as you perceive it. The contour can be described (drawn) as a single line, which is called a contour line. (This concept of edges is fundamental to art, having to do with unity. Unity is achieved when everything in a composition fits together as a coherent whole, each part contributing to the wholeness of the total image: unified shapes and spaces that share edges.)

Contour drawing entails close, intense observation as you draw the edges of a form without looking at the drawing while it is in progress. As you draw, you imagine you are tracing the edges of the form with the tip of your pencil.

Step 1. Place a sheet of paper on the table and tape it down so that it cannot shift about while you are drawing. Arrange yourself so that your drawing hand, holding the pencil, is comfortable and ready to draw on the taped-down paper.

Step 2. Face all the way around to the opposite direction, gazing at your non-drawing hand, that should rest on some support, such as the table behind you. You are going to draw your hand without being able to see what you are drawing.

Step 3. Focus your entire attention on the visual information out there in front (the hand - but don't name it as such), and remove all attention from the drawing. Then start to draw only what you see, not what you 'know' should be there. Focus your eyes on some part of your hand and perceive an edge. At the same time, place the point of your pencil on the paper. Very slowly, creeping a millimeter at a time, move your eyes along the perceived edge, observing every minute variation and undulation of the edge. Simultaneously record this information with the pencil, as if the tip of the pencil is the focal point of your perception at all times, moving the pencil at exactly the same slow pace. Register everything you are seeing at the moment of seeing- not as a second action after you have seen. Do not turn around to look at the paper.

Step 4. Continue observing your hand and draw the edges you see, following the contours. Be aware of the relationship of each contour to the whole configuration of complex contours which is your hand, seen in your peripheral vision. You may switch from one contour to another and back again. Do not pause in the drawing but continue at a slow, even pace, matching the movement of the pencil exactly with your eye movement.

Do not be concerned about whether the drawing will look like your hand - it probably won't since you can't monitor proportions, but it will be an interesting impression of your hand - a beautiful record of your deep perception. The emphasis in this exercise is not to draw realistically but to see things exactly as they are, in the artist's mode of seeing.

Step 5. After you finish, think back on how you felt at the beginning of the exercise compared to how you felt when you were deeply involved in the drawing. Were you fascinated? Was your mind quiet? Was there a sense of timelessness? Will you recognize this state when you return to it?

Alternate the above Contour Drawing with the next Graph Paper Drawing exercise.

Graph Paper Drawing

This exercise is concerned with concentration. A high level of correlation exists between ability of concentration and ability of memory, because the higher the level of concentration, the deeper the memory trace. Improving the memory for line will assist drawing when attention is turned to the actual drawing in later exercises. Improved concentration also makes it easier to keep focused on lines in the subject, when doing the exercise above. Again, since the exercise is incremental and non-verbal (only small, unidentifiable sections of the subject being seen it once) it occupies the right-hemisphere mode of drawing skill.

Step 1. Using a section of a photograph about 8cm x 8cm, a transparent sheet of acetate ruled with 2mm graph-paper lines (obtainable from graphics shops), is placed over the drawing and taped in place. Another sheet of actual 2mm graph paper is placed by the drawing hand. Square by square, fill in 2mm squares on the graph paper in pencil, corresponding to squares on the original picture which include at least 50% of dark tones.

Step 2. As you improve at this exercise, you should try to increase the speed that you transfer the picture square-by-square, and then take-in more than one square at a time, up to a maximum of 25 squares (i.e.. one 1cm square). Try to remember a sequence of squares as a perceptual image rather than a verbal description.

Step 3. When the above steps are progressing well, change to a 1mm-ruled acetate and graph paper and continue as above. Also progress to a larger picture area.

Step 4. This exercise may be repeated with grays being duplicated by a lesser pressure on filling in the graph-paper squares.

Step 5. When the above Steps are proficient, move on to drawing the actual image within each 2mm square, at first in black and white, and then incorporating grays as well.

Step 6. Finally, a colored photo or copy of a painting may be used, with a set of colored crayons or felt-tip pens.

Object in a Bag

An alternative exercise, to complement your practice in Contour Drawing, is to draw an object that you are simultaneously feeling with your non-drawing hand. The object is obscured by being inside a bag. All the principles of Contour Drawing apply, but this time, you are of course, perceiving contours through the sense of touch rather than eyesight.

Post-instruction Drawings

Go back and try again the Pre-instruction Drawing exercises done earlier; see if you are a better artist now - and better at accessing the capabilities of your right brain!

Well, that completes your first run through the *New Life Course*. Remember that the 'cyclic' approach to study is a good one - if you go back to earlier exercises now, you'll see them in a new light and get much more out of them. It's a good idea to choose a particular lesson and concentrate on practicing its principles in your life for a few days, until it is completely mastered.

What's next? There's a huge range of freely available personal development resources on our sit Please check them out.....

<http://www.trans4mind.com/>