

**THE TROIKA TECHNIQUE:
HOW TO QUIET THE MIND
RELAX THE BODY
AND TALK SENSE**

John Locke

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE TROIKA TECHNIQUE

Quiet the Mind

All of us have found our actions impeded occasionally by our own mental chatter. Whether it's a speech or a sport, a business meeting or an act of love—sometimes our internal dialogue interferes with our ability to perceive, to recall, and to act. Often, what we remember concerning events is not our sense perceptions but our chatter. If you practice techniques for quieting the mind, you will see a remarkable increase in perception as well as memory. You may also discover that your listening has a positive effect upon those who speak to you.

Relax the Body

Our media and our personal circumstances provide us with a daily list of apparent reasons to twist our bodies up inside. When we are in pain because of stress, injury, or illness, we are often tempted to anesthetize parts of our bodies, instead of allowing our perception system to function normally. Through the use of scanning techniques, we can peer inside our bodies and reduce pain by increasing perception, not blocking it. We can observe our bodies into relaxation.

Talk Sense: Linguistic Fallacies

Our thoughts and actions are shaped by a language which is logically flawed in dangerous ways. Our language teachers, myself included, failed to sound the alarm. As a structure of meaning, English creates a word world which overgeneralizes and oversimplifies habituality and causality. In referring to people, especially ourselves, we are too quick to transform past events into personality characteristics. While considering objects, we often fail to take into account how they came into being and how they are falling apart. And when we use abstract terms, we sometimes evade making clear who is expected to do what and who will profit from these actions. We make assumptions that we do not know we are making. The deep structures of our language do some of our thinking for us, and we seldom notice. We act like the absent-minded physics student who kept forgetting his wave formula, thereby seeming to create a universe of particles.

Talk Sense: Attribution Fallacy

In addition to projecting a map of blocky types of things and people, our language also invites us to overgeneralize about causal relationships: attribution fallacy. For instance, we blame others for choices that are ours to make when we say: “Look at what you made me do” or “You’re making me mad.” In effect, we disempower ourselves by refusing to see how we have contributed to events around us. Furthermore, all events involve complex causal relationships, and our easy answers often create more problems than they solve. This book offers a basic system for, first, checking your language for clearly unjustifiable assertions concerning habituality and causality, and, second, translating events into terms which more closely express what you perceive.

Talk Sense: Sourcing the Force of Modals

Just as the deep structures of our language sometimes program our thinking without our realizing it—unless, of course, we choose to examine our language critically—there is also a group of words which we avoid checking for meaning. They are commonly called modals: will/would, shall/should, may/might, can/could, must, and ought. These mental remnants of tribal and feudal times hide a complex structure of blessings, curses, promises, threats, and disempowering commands. Fortunately, we need not intellectually comprehend the totality of this structure in order to free ourselves from it. It is normally enough to check the meaning of these words when they appear in our speech and in the speech of others, especially at critical times, moments of decision. A careful look at what we say and think can free us from the ancients and moderns who have used language to lead us to act against ourselves and our neighbors.

The Troika Technique: A New Start

I share this information as one student to another. We can all practice looking past the veil of words that we have created. If there are dangerous errors, they can be reprogrammed. If there are hard truths, they can be faced. If actions are needed, they can be undertaken. And behind those old words are new worlds to be discovered.

PART I

HOW TO QUIET THE MIND

Choosing

We have chosen
to look at ourselves
and the rest of the universe
in ways that are demonstrably false
to any examining eye.

We have systematically
prevented our brains
from recording
what is.

CHAPTER I

THE VOICES

Have you ever been kept awake by a little voice inside your head? Has it ever happened that what you remembered about a book was not what was on the page but what you said to yourself while you thought you were reading?

Or in going over your notes from a lecture, have you discovered that what you wrote down was not what the lecturer said but what your little voice said during the lecture?

Did you ever find that when you wanted to count the blessings of an exquisite moment in your life, you could not retrieve the memories of your sense perceptions? Have you felt there was something wrong with your brain function because your memories were fragmented and erroneous?

At a time when you knew that you needed all your powers of perception and analysis, have you found yourself beset by a chorus of disturbing and derogatory voices?

Have you sometimes felt as though someone had implanted a television receiver in your head—a TV set for which you cannot find the channel selector or the off switch—and the station coming through seems almost more than you can bear?

Have you ever been plagued by emotions that you knew were not appropriate, but you could find no way to decondition them? The voices and feelings kept welling up inside you, and all you knew to do was suffer, or turn to drugs. Little answers to your problems seemed to come from cigarettes, coffee, and liquor. The big answers came from the A.M.A. and the Mafia.

On the other hand, have you known moments of clarity when you could recall what seemed to be microscopic details of sense perceptions, almost miraculous specificities of an event?

Have you ever observed something so completely that you lost yourself in your perceptions so deeply that you ceased to be yourself and became at one with the totality of your experience?

Volitional stillness is the term that I would like to use in order to point to our ability to reduce and (if we wish) to dismiss the chorus of voices.

Although I am going to show you a cluster of techniques that you can use to reduce and turn off mental chatter, I want to emphasize that such actions are not to be taken lightly. What the voices tell us may be information that we would be wise to examine, acknowledge, and act upon, in part or even totally.

Whatever comes up on the screen of the mind is worth looking at before we turn it off or reprogram it. If we find a fallacy, it is usually best to transform it and to put the transformation back into the mind, rather than just turning the fallacy off. If we do not translate (or transform) it, then the same errors are likely to come up again later on, perhaps at a critical moment when we do not have the leisure for re-evaluation.

However, if we have examined the expression or transformed it or if we need to focus on something else for the moment, then we may have a time when we can appropriately practice a technique which leads to volitional stillness.

Maybe You Don't Need a Technique

I have found that many people have no need of any special technique in order to practice a high level of volitional stillness. After hearing about the voices, they discover on their own how to turn them off. They just do it. A common remark is, "Gee, I didn't know that I could do that."

Sometimes a suggestion about religion will key a person in the right direction: "The peace of God which passeth all understanding." Also I have found that the "Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi" can be effective. (I will discuss this prayer in more detail shortly.)

By the way, you will not normally be aware of being still when you are being still; you will only become aware of having been still after the stillness is over.

We Are Not Our Thoughts

We may sometimes be unaware of mental chatter as a distinguishable piece of behavior. We may even assume that these voices are us. However, if we listen, we can often hear the actual voice of whoever contributed the tone and content of a particular vocalization. Thus, we can come to see that the voices are very much like the output of a computer.

What goes in is what comes out. And since we all live in an environment of verbal garbage, it should come as no surprise that we have a chorus of voices in our heads spitting out a lot of garbage: garbage in; garbage out.

Thus, it is a great error to assume we are identical with these voices. Our thoughts are just our thoughts. They are not us. We are not our thoughts.

By the way, you don't have to go along with this analysis in order to use the techniques.

CANDIDA (without the least fear or coldness, and with perfect respect for his passion, but with a touch of her wise-hearted maternal humor) No. But you may say anything you really and truly feel. Anything at all, no matter what it is. I am not afraid, so long as it is your real self that speaks, and not a mere attitude: a gallant attitude, or a wicked attitude, or even a poetic attitude. I put you on your honor and truth. Now say whatever you want to.

MARCHBANKS (the eager expression vanishing utterly from his lips and nostrils as his eyes light up with pathetic spirituality) Oh, now I can't say anything: all the words I know belong to some attitude or other—except one....Candida.

From act III of Candida

COMPLETE PLAYS WITH PREFACES, Bernard Shaw

(New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1962), pp. 250-1.

CHAPTER II

VOLITIONAL STILLNESS

There is nothing unusual about volitional stillness. We have all experienced stillness at one time or another. Perhaps you were so involved in a book or a movie or a play that all the voices stopped. You just experienced directly what was going on. Or perhaps you were captured by the antics of some little creature, and you didn't make a running commentary of the event.

If you review any of these experiences years later, you may be surprised by the exactitude of your memories. We have fooled ourselves into thinking that we must make words about an event if we wish to preserve it accurately in our minds.

Musicians and canoeists and painters know better. They have seen for themselves that to translate their experience into words would take volumes, and even then much would be lost.

In assisting people to find the off switches to their chatter, I have noticed that some folks don't require much assistance. They seem to say to themselves, "Oh, I can choose to be still." And they go ahead and just do it. Others of us—I count myself among them—prefer to work for a while before allowing ourselves to discover how easy it is just to relax and observe what is taking place. There is beauty and pleasure to be found in the long and the short paths to volitional stillness.

I want to describe four ways that you can practice being mentally still. If you have other methods which are easy and pleasant, I support you in your practice. My four techniques range from the very simple to the somewhat complex. (I urge you to come back again and again to these four, if you have difficulty quieting down. You need not master them on the first reading, even if you are a serious student.) Even if you don't use any technique, even if you just start thinking about being still, you may come to glimpse the peace and strength which comes from quiet observation.

How to Quiet the Mind: PEACE

A simple and effective way to practice volitional stillness is to say the word PEACE—aloud, softly, or below the level of a whisper—drawing out the final “s” sound and then listening to the silence that comes at the end of the word.

Take what you get, be it two seconds or two minutes of quiet. As we accumulate moments of stillness in our experience and in our memory, we may come to understand for ourselves that there is nothing to fear about quieting down. On the contrary, being still allows us to see and do almost anything more effectively.

We can say PEACE and listen to the stillness that follows. If chatter comes, we can observe the chatter. When we are through looking at the chatter, we can once again say PEACE and listen to the stillness. I recommend practicing PEACE at a variety of levels of vocalization, in a variety of places, at a variety of times.

If we do not take charge of the mental off switch in our brain, we are more likely to fall victim of the propagandists. They love to see us dancing to the jingles they have put into our heads. It is not necessary to be still all the time. At first, being still may seem like a delicate balancing act—something you can only accomplish under ideal circumstances. But then one day the problem may turn itself upside down. We can come to see how much energy we put into making chatter. Then stillness is as easy as looking quietly at the stars on a bright clear night.

How to Quiet the Mind: ONE

Another effective, though slightly more complicated, way to practice mental stillness is by using the sounds of ONE or “won,” pronounced in a special way: /wən'/. We begin by puckering our lips to start the /w/ sound, and opening them as we move to the /ə/ sound. (The /ə/ is what we say when we are not sure what to say: uhhh. It is also known as a schwa sound.) Then we hum an /n/. Lastly, we cut off the end with what is known as a glottal stop: /'/. This is the sound we make twice as part of an expression to indicate that we think we are in trouble: ‘uh ‘oh. Thus, the form of this technique is /wən'/' or one' or won'.

As we practice this group of sounds, we will find that there is a transition from /ə/ to /n/. In linguistics, we call this a nasalization of the vowel. The /ə/ becomes /ə̃/. Thus, the whole group of sounds becomes /wə̃n'/'.

Now we can equalize the amount of time on each step /w/ /ə̃/ /n/, and then give the glottal stop a vigorous cut-off while leaving the tongue touching the uneven part of the roof of the mouth behind the teeth. With a bit of practice, we will find that we can pronounce a smooth and strong version of /wə̃n'/'.

While you practice your /wəñn'/, let me tell you something about World War II in England. Toward the end of the war, the Nazis sent un-manned V-1 missiles over the English Channel. If you happened to be around when a V-1 appeared, what you heard was a very loud rocket engine. And if you heard it stop, then you knew it was coming down near you. People became very sensitive to the stopping of the V-1 engine.

I invite you to become sensitive to the stopping of /wəñn'/, especially the / ' / Allow yourself to listen to the silence that comes after the / ' /. Let it last as long as it lasts. Then give yourself another /wəñn'/. All we are doing is experiencing brief moments of volitional stillness and seeing that it is harmless.

The Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi

Another way to start working on volitional stillness is by memorizing “The Prayer of St. Francis”:

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.

Where there is hatred, let me sow love;

Where there is injury, pardon;

Where there is doubt, faith;

Where there is despair, hope;

Where there is darkness, light;

Where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek

To be consoled as to console,

To be understood as to understand,

To be loved as to love;

For it is in giving that we receive;

It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;

It is in dying that we are born to eternal life. ¹

After you know the prayer well and have practiced it for a couple of days, just repeat the first part: “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.” Linger on the /s/ of “peace” and dive into volitional stillness.

¹Ekhnath Easwaren, Meditation: Commonsense Directions for an Uncommon Life (Petaluma, Calif.: Nilgiri Press, 1978), pp. 29-30.

CHAPTER III

HOW TO SURPRISE YOURSELF

A Defense Mantra from Arica

Some ten years ago, I spent a summer taking an Arica forty-day training. One of the techniques presented was a defense mantra called Shutati-Shumawi. We learned the mantra by heart and then sat in pairs facing one another while we said rude things about the partner who was saying the mantra. The mantrists could recite slowly or quickly; if they got lost, they just started all over again.

Whenever someone was saying something that we didn't want to encode, we could deflect it by putting our attention on the mantra.

Then some of us realized that if we could turn off someone else's voice with the mantra, we could also, in effect, turn off that intrusive internal dialogue that so often interfered with sleep and concentration. If we found ourselves going over and over something, just loop-taping, then we could do Shutati-Shumawi.

The fact was that we were not gnawing on the bone when we were not gnawing on the bone. As they say in est: you're only doing what you're doing when you're doing it.

One day I surprised myself in the middle of Shutati-Shumawi. I just screeched to a halt. And though I didn't realize it at the time, I experienced an extended period of stillness. Only afterward did I perceive the gap, the way you did that time on the highway, when you awakened from what has been called highway hypnosis.

In the following months, I reduced the surprise from somewhere in the middle to just the beginning "sh" sound at the onset. Then it was a "sh" only barely audible to me. Then it was just the feeling of the passage of air over my tongue in the "sh" position.

And I found that I could pretty well be still whenever I wanted to be.

As with “The Prayer of St. Francis,” we begin Shutati-Shumawi by memorizing a pattern of words, but with Shutati-Shumawi, the words have no recognizable meaning, at least to me. It is a pattern of reciting two clusters of sounds: Shutati and Shumawi.

The following is a chart of my recollection of the pattern:

Shutati	1	2	3	1	3	2	3
Shutati- Shumawi		2					
Shumawi	1	2	3	3	1	3	2
	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x

The chart tells us how many times we are to say Shutati, Shumawi, and Shutati-Shumawi. At the left we see these three clusters of sounds. The emphasis is on the second syllable, Shutati and Shumawi. These syllables are pronounced like “tot” and “ma.” The last syllables are pronounced “tee” and “wee.” The first syllables are pronounced /**shə**/. (There’s that schwa again.)

We go from the top of the chart to the bottom, down each column three times. Thus, if we start in the first column, we say Shutati once and Shumawi once, and do that three times. So to do the first column, we would say: Shutati, Shumawi; Shutati, Shumawi; Shutati, Shumawi.

Shutati	1	2	3	1	3	2	3
Shutati- Shumawi		2					
Shumawi	1	2	3	3	1	3	2
	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x

The second column is the only one that has instructions about the combined form Shutati-Shumawi; and this is in the middle of the second column, where we have a 2 next to Shutati-Shumawi. If we do the second column once, then we have: Shutati, Shutati; Shutati-Shumawi, Shutati-Shumawi; Shumawi, Shumawi.

The remaining two repetitions of the second column would go as follows:
 Shutati, Shutati; Shutati-Shumawi, Shutati-Shumawi; Shumawi, Shumawi.
 Shutati, Shutati; Shutati-Shumawi, Shutati-Shumawi; Shumawi, Shumawi.

Now we are ready for the third column. Our instructions are to say Shutati three times and Shumawi three times, so the third column is:

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.
 Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.
 Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.

In the fourth column, we are to say Shutati once and Shumawi three times:

Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.
 Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.
 Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.

Shutati	1	2	3	1	3	2	3
Shutati- Shumawi		2					
Shumawi	1	2	3	3	1	3	2
	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x	3x

The fifth column is the reverse of the fourth: three Shutatis and one Shumawis:

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi.

The sixth column has two Shutatis and three Shumawis:

Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi, Shumawi.

The seventh and last column is the reverse of the sixth: three Shutatis and two Shumawis:

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi.

Shutati, Shutati, Shutati; Shumawi, Shumawi.

And that completes one repetition of Shutati-Shumawi. Let's observe the chart once more. Notice that across the top, it goes 1-2-3, 1-3-2-3. The columns go 1-1, 2-2-2, 3-3, 1-3, 3-1, 2-3, 3-2. The bottom row goes 1-2-3, 3-1, 3-2.

When you begin to practice S-S (Shutati-Shumawi), there is nothing wrong with looking at the chart, but it is important to wean yourself gently away so that you have the whole thing in your mind.

It is not unusual to lose your place occasionally while doing Shutati-Shumawi. If the mantra is new to you, you may need to check and see if you really have learned the correct form. But even after years of practice, you may still lose your place every now and then, especially if you are dealing with some highly charged input.

I want to emphasize that it is in no sense an error or a mistake to lose your place and go back to the beginning. When you are doing S-S, you are just doing S-S.

The Arica folks characterized Shutati-Shumawi to me as a beginner's technique. It has seemed to me that after a while there was less and less need to defend myself against chatter, my own or other people's.

I have also encountered beginners who used S-S so much that their knowledge of the technique reduced its effectiveness. (They knew the pattern so well that they could keep the mantra and the chatter going at the same time.)

In these cases, I have recommended that they reverse the words into Shumawi-Shutati.

The Arica trainers presented Shutati-Shumawi as a “defense mantra,” a verbalization intended to reduce the negative effects of people’s jabbering. I found that when rituals of manipulation were staged for me, I didn’t have to sit and squirm. All I needed to do was observe them and chant to myself. I discovered that I could chant myself to sleep, chant my way through repetitious meetings, as well as chant during malicious manipulations.

Then I started using S-S to reduce my own negative chatter—an advanced form of counting to ten, I thought at the time.

When I noticed that I was running a destructive number on myself (“God, John, you idiot, you did it again!”), all I had to do was say a couple of reps of S-S. After all, when I was not speaking destructively about myself, I was not speaking destructively about myself. Anytime I did not like my chatter, I could choose S-S. The mantra became a kind of innocuous chosen chatter that I could produce instead of the negative behavior.

I noticed other changes. Since I knew that I could stop my negative statements about myself, they did not seem so threatening, and I was better able to look at their truth value. (After all, the behavior I had been condemning myself for had been inappropriate.)

I found I was able to listen to people in meetings with a softer attitude. I began to see why people (not only at meetings) kept saying the same things over and over. Sometimes it was because they felt no one was listening, and they were usually right about that. Almost everyone was preparing another script to be inserted later at the opportune moment, without paying attention to what was going on at the present time.

As I paid more attention, I found more and more speakers directing their remarks to me. I felt a curious energy within as I just sat still and quietly gave my attention to others.

Shutati-Shumawi and Volitional Stillness

The Shutati-Shumawi Technique (S-S) gives us many of the powers of volitional stillness: for instance, the ability to be relaxed and centered in the midst of circumstances that other people find disturbing—something that John Keats, the English Romantic poet, called negative capability.

If you learn S-S by heart and practice it for a few hours over a period of a week or so, then you will have completed step one on another path to volitional stillness, the ability to quiet down the mental chatter which sometimes interferes with other desired activities. (These steps are not, so far as I know, a part of the Arica training.)

Step two involves surprising yourself in the midst of S-S. It may seem intellectually as though you cannot surprise yourself, but it turns out that you can. You just go along doing S-S, and then at some point you stop short and surprise yourself. The effect is similar to the ending of /wəɪ̃ n'/ and “Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace.” For a brief period, you experience stillness.

After you have practiced surprising yourself in S-S for about a week, you are ready for step three.

Step three involves saying just the first “sh” of the first Shutati-Shumawi. Then dive into the silence that follows. (Note that in step two, all you did was stop short anywhere in the mantra.) Step three is also appropriately practiced for a week or so, until it is comfortable.

Step four is a reduced “sh.” We produce a barely audible sound after placing our tongues in the “sh” position.

The fifth and final step is to form our mouths for the “sh” and just feel the gentle passage of air over our tongues.

With practice, we will be able to be still with relative ease in most situations, something to slip into in order to increase observation or relaxation, or part of a heightened sense of knowing we can turn to in times of trouble or danger.

Science and Mysticism

To observe closely
without comment
allowing all the instruments
to measure and register
without interference
is scientific mysticism.

Tell me who I am
and then explain
what it means
to explore our being.

I cannot tell you my secret.
Communication is quite impossible.
Speech is a clay window.
Sight alone is crystal clear.
A hearer is no seer.

Taken from The New Rose Garden of Mystery
(Gulisham-i-Raz-i-Jadid)
by Mohammed Iqbal (1877-1938)

CHAPTER IV

STUDENT COMMENTS

Driving

I have had students tell me that they used Shutati-Shumawi while driving. My recommendation is against this practice. People have contended that doing S-S was better than their regular chatter or less dangerous than highway hypnosis. They are probably correct in these comparisons. In this life, behavior X may be far less dangerous than behavior Y, and yet not be appropriate when seen in the context of other choices.

My driving ritual is to look through the windshield, with a lot of peripheral vision for the sides; then check the overhead mirror to see the flow of traffic behind me; next it's back to the windshield; then a check of the side mirror. And repeat, as long as driving. What I want is to have in my mind a continuous flow of the traffic and the land with myself and my car in that flow. If anything unexpected occurs, I already know where everything else is—the cars, the people, the incoming streets, the escape routes, etc.—and I am ready to use this knowledge without having to gather it under emergency conditions. I am sure that you can learn a lot more from your driving instructor, but since students have brought this question up so often, I thought I would give it some attention here.

One counter-assertion: if you have used the five-step S-S to gain volitional stillness, you may use this to center yourself upon the driving process. I am only speaking against practicing S-S while driving. (It's okay to use "sh" to cut off chatter; it's not okay to go down the road chanting Shutati-Shumawi.)

The Mirror Effect

S-S can make us stronger in our dealings with relatives, friends, salespersons, administrators, etc. I found that when someone wanted to manipulate me, it was quite powerful to observe them minutely and do my chant; and from this experience, I discovered that close examination was effective, whether or not I was doing the chant.

A friend of mine who is a university administrator went to another administrator and asked him to perform one of his designated functions. He gave her a list of reasons why he would not comply. She accepted these excuses the first time.

The next time, she was armed with S-S. When he went into his little number, she did S-S and quietly observed him in detail. He ended his number. She continued to observe him, saying nothing aloud. Then he got up and said: "Okay, I'll do it."

When people see us observing them, they are led to consider what it is that we are seeing. This mirror effect can be a powerful force in changing their actions, when it is.

If you have some success with this form of observation, you may be tempted to use it automatically as an answer to your problems. This is not wise. S-S observation is just one more tool in a range of behavior which we can bring to a situation. It is handy in that we do not have to figure out what to do; we don't have to justify ourselves or disprove other people's arguments.

Sometimes, it is enough to appear to be still and observe in order to change things. Nothing is a substitute for actually being still and observing and being open to appropriate action—whatever that action might be.

It'll Just Come Back

Upon being told about S-S as a way of reducing negative thinking, students have often said to me: "That's no good. It'll just come back later." However, there may be a defect in thinking about time and our problems in this way. Perhaps the real problem is not what we have done or the fact that we think someone doesn't love us anymore. Perhaps the problem is that we keep feeding ourselves negative commentaries.

If you start dumping on yourself and use S-S to stop it, at a later point in time you may or may not choose to dump; but at that time, you will be someone who has been saying S-S. You will not be someone who has been programming yourself for negative reactions for the last few minutes.

In a sense, you are not the person you would have been had you been putting yourself down. If you catch yourself later, you can choose to S-S it, or you can choose to look at the truth value of the dump, or.... In any case, you have a variety of options among which you can choose. We feel freer when we have a variety of options to choose among.

I Like Hearing My Chatter: I Don't Want To Be Still

I am not recommending that you be still when you don't want to be still. I am recommending that you practice volitional stillness so that when you do want to be still, you will be able to do so. We all have times when we want to observe accurately. We may also want relief occasionally from the racket going on upstairs in our head.

If you don't practice stillness every now and then when you don't need it, then you may not be able to make it happen when you do need it.

The Bridging Technique

Another use of S-S that I have made over the years is so specific that I have come to call it the Bridging Technique. This is a way of getting to tasks that we know we need to begin but which we have been resisting. They might be student responsibilities, business duties, household chores, etc.

STEP ONE: Prepare everything you need for the job. As a student, this might mean clearing off the desk and getting those books and papers lined up for action. You could say that Step One is **CLEARING THE DECKS FOR ACTION**.

STEP TWO: Begin Shutati-Shumawi in the spirit of whatever mood you are in. If you are tired, you might yawn and sound sleepy. If you are angry, go ahead and growl. If you are sad, let the tears flow. Step Two: **BE WHERE YOU'RE AT**.

STEP THREE: As you go through Shutati-Shumawi, slowly shift your emotional set from where you were to where you want to be. Get stronger. Get clearer. Step Three: **SHIFT YOUR GEARS**.

STEP FOUR: As you get toward the end of Shutati-Shumawi move yourself into the space you have prepared; and as you finish the end of the chant, allow your fingers and eyes to do the things you've chosen to do. Step Four: **DO IT!**

Choosing Now

Finding stillness or even just staying in S-S can vary greatly from time to time. We just take what we get. If we get a few seconds of stillness, that's what we got. If we only get half way through the second column of S-S, then that's what we got. We can choose what we're going to do next. We do not get to choose now what we got a second ago. That's over and done with, the result in part of earlier choices.

We do get to choose how we are thinking now about what we got. We do get to examine what has occurred and to learn from our experience. Choosing is always right now. Not yesterday, and not tomorrow. Just now.

Stop

Look

and you're quiet.

Listen

and you're not talking.

Observe

and you're in stillness.

The Little Hills

The four seasons have marched in succession
without mistake from the earliest times.

Grass greets the spring with flowered rugs.

The trees dress the summer with their leaves.

Sad the breath of autumn on the falling fruit.

Bare branches bend before the shrieking winter wind.

When I see the seasonality of things,

I know that we too will grow and die.

I have heard of heaven, but I have never seen it.

I look toward the home of the gods,

but I do not know the way.

I do know that in order to make a mountain,

I must pile the pieces up one by one.

How then can I become a noble human being?

There is nothing low in what delights my heart.

I roof the narrow grotto at the end of the garden.

I lead the water to flow past my house.

The hills beneath the heavens, the trees upon the earth—
 these the mean spurn and the wise nourish.
 Though I be in the narrows of distress,
 should I discard the defenses of wisdom?
 I draw my drink at will from the western lakes.
 My eyes control the waters of the north.

These jagged hills that shut not the racing sun out,
 this clear pond ruffled by the wind,
 the pines nodding from their crags,
 the rocks shining from the river bottom below the drifting mirrors,
 the half risen moon lighting the valleys
 where the songbirds fly from tree to tree:
 to these have I abandoned and devoted my life.

The Great Creator, in the variety of creations,
 blesses the low and the high.
 In this one act have I resolved all philosophy.
 I walk oceans and they do not hold me back.
 I ride into the dark heart of all being
 and dwell in the vast halls of the ant.
 No need to look outside the door for wisdom.
 Must we see all the mountains and the seas to love them?
 I have written what my heart has learned.

Isonokami no Yakatsugu (729—781)

PART II

HOW TO RELAX THE BODY

CHAPTER V

THE BODY SCANNER

Ritual Emotions and Heisenberg' s Uncertainty Principle

Most of us have spent a lot of time practicing self-destructive rituals. A positive ritual or no ritual at all is a better use of our time. Ritual emotions are responses that we bring up again and again, to the point of thinking that they are part of a personality. We can detect negative versions of these ritual emotions by our unwillingness to decondition them—our attachment to cultivating them in our repertoire of behaviors.

These negative rituals are what we and others call our bad habits, actions which we tell people that they are going to have to accept as part of US—even though emotions are chatter and physical sensations.

Whenever we begin to decondition a ritual emotion, we are likely to discover that we are suddenly very tired or that something else very interesting needs to be done right now. Amusingly enough, to make a positive use out of this potentially negative phenomenon, you may want to use these techniques occasionally as a way of getting to sleep or discovering other wonderful things for you to be doing with your time!

The observer effect—known in physics as the Heisenberg uncertainty principle—reminds us that the act of observation intrinsically and immediately becomes part of the interactions taking place within the locus of that observation. To look at something is to change it. And we have all murdered needlessly in order to dissect. We can also be on the side of selectively healing and nurturing what we observe. We can look and assist.

And for us as individual humans being, the observer effect can mean that it is more difficult to stay stuck in a negative ritual once we really start examining it in detail.

Stop Abusing Your Horse

Our culture teaches us to torture our bodies when things don't go the way we want. It's like whipping our horse because we don't like the weather. Or throwing sand at the robot that feeds us. Or poisoning our water in the name of defense. We have learned to make ourselves sick over things we don't like. One version of the Don't Like Ritual is similar to what we do with our insides when we happen to ingest some bad food or water. If our car breaks down, we join in the event by twisting up our guts, thereby making it clear to ourselves and others that we don't like what happened.

If these emotional rituals are infrequent, then little harm is likely. But if they occupy a large portion of our daily behavior, then we would be wise to seek out other methods of handling events we don't like. Constant aggravation of the body can only lead to serious disease. I don't think I've ever met a relaxation technique that I didn't like, especially in times of illness, injury, or stress. My favorite relaxation technique involves a deep scanning of the body, searching out for tensions and then observing them away. If you have ever wanted not to be feeling what you were feeling, then the body scanner may be a technique you would like to add to your repertoire. We can alleviate the physical and mental aches and pains that we have brought upon ourselves.

Shape Volume Substance

There are many ways of observing our physical discomforts: Adam Smith refers to “The Great Central Philippine Headache Cure” in his *Powers of Mind*; the est training offers another method of observing our insides. The body scanning technique that I am giving you here is based upon my experiences of following the directions of Smith and est.

First, we observe the entire body looking for any sign of discomfort, and if we find some, we examine the overall SHAPE of it.

Second, we consider the total VOLUME of the discomfort by measuring how much of a vessel we could fill if we poured the entire discomfort into it: a pinhead, test tube, flask, teaspoon, tablespoon, cup, glass, pint, quart, gallon, or bucket. Third, we look for an impression of the SUBSTANCE of the discomfort. It might be light against dark, dark against light, a piece of leather, a stone, a lump of lead, mist, sparkles, colors, gems, an organism, a piece of rubber, etc. Anything.

No Anesthetizing!

We move through the three steps several times, slowly enough to experience each step, but not so slowly that we start looking at our memories of the discomfort instead of the discomfort itself.

If we have more than one discomfort, we may choose to take them one at a time. We may choose to observe for a short or a long time.

After some practice, we will find that we are able to relax these areas more quickly. However, it is NOT our intent to mask or anesthetize the discomfort; we only want to give our brains the best data we can as to what is taking place.

Occasionally, we may find that if a discomfort remains unchanged for a while, it is advantageous to imagine ourselves diving into the middle of the discomfort and looking around, then going back to the three steps of Shape, Volume, and Substance.

Watch It Go Away

When we first start using this technique—especially if it's an old pain that we have been anesthetizing—the discomfort may become larger and more severe. (“What have you done to me, Locke?”) Keep observing, and let the pain get as large as it gets, even if it feels like it's spreading outside your body. Usually, it will move around somewhat. Let it move.

The primary instruction is just to observe, not to try to make anything go away. We can observe and LET it go away, but we do not try to make it go away.

It is normal to experience some fear when you read that it is appropriate to let your pain get as large as it gets. The problem with old pains is that we have been preventing our brains from perceiving what has been going on.

We have been very effective anesthetists, and in so doing, we have prevented our bodily systems from receiving the data that they require, the data that the systems would ordinarily receive if we were not interfering with the perception process.

While we have been cutting off the pain, we have inadvertently been cutting off the lines of communication needed for us to heal ourselves. One way or another, we can all benefit from scanning our bodies two or three times a day, just to keep the sensors flowing.

My suggestion is that we see pain as a kind of telephone call, a message from a part of our body telling us some attention is necessary. And the nature of that attention, that observation, might well be the Shape-Volume-Substance Technique—a means whereby we allow our brains greater sensory access to what is going on.

So if the pain phone rings, pick up the receiver. You are on the line.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRACTICE OF SHAPE-VOLUME-SUBSTANCE

Practicing Shape-Volume-Substance with a partner can be an extremely wise choice. I have done it successfully with people on the phone, across great distances. Each person takes a turn leading the other through a few minutes of the scanner ritual. By sharing the experience of the ritual and by having someone else keep us in the ritual with questions, we increase the ease with which we stay focussed. Then as we have more and more experiences of maintaining concentration on our bodies for, say, five or ten minutes, we will find it easier to stay focussed when we are on our own, and would like to give our bodies a close five or ten minute scan. Of course, if we find that we have wandered off to do something else, that is not a cause for displeasure. It is a time for choosing. Would we prefer to go back to the scanner ritual, or would we prefer to do that something else? Whenever we awaken from unconscious behavior, that is a good time for practicing consciously beneficial behavior, not a good time for going into an unconscious ritual of self-torture.

If we are sharing a scanner ritual with someone, we want to assist the other person to see each step clearly, but we do not want to dwell on an observation longer than it takes to get a clear photograph. We want to move on to the next step and get another perspective on what is taking place. At the same time, we do not want to deprive our partner of the pleasure of enjoying the internal movie that is taking place. Sometimes we may wish to assist our partner to bring his or her experience into a finer focus. All of these are directions we can give ourselves, of course, at any time.

A Scanner Ritual

Do you feel any discomfort right now?

Yes, I have a headache.

What is the shape of your headache?

It's kind of a small set of barbells on the side of my head.

If you were to melt down your barbells and put the whole thing in a container, how much volume do you think your barbells would come to?

Oh, about half a cup, I guess.

Look at your discomfort right now. Do you see any colors? Is it hard or soft? What does it look like to you?

It's black and hard, like barbells. But now one of the bells is gone.

Just take what you get. If it starts to move around, just let it move.

What's the shape of it right now?

It's a little ball.

What's the volume of the little ball?

Oh, a heaping tablespoon.

What does it look like?

It's a little, black marble.

Does it feel very hard to you?

Yes.

Let's dive into the middle of the marble and see what's inside.

It's all gray in there.

What's the shape of your discomfort now?

It's a little gray disc. It's moving around the side of my head. Now it's gone.

Let's scan your head again. Do you see any discomfort in there at all?

No, it's all clean in there now. That's amazing.

See Your Physician

The Body Scanner—or Shape-Volume-Substance—is NOT a substitute for medical diagnosis and care. Nor is it a substitute for common sense. (Once I further injured my back when I did S-V-S instead of putting my spine into a comfortable position.) Close observation of physical discomfort is a useful adjunct to virtually any treatment, in consultation with your physician. Headaches, burns, bumps, cuts, and bruises might be a good place to start.

This way of dealing with pain can change our attitudes toward it. No longer is pain something to be evaded. It can be seen as a useful indication of something that needs to be attended to at that moment. We may come to process this pain in such a way that it no longer “hurts.” We may also wish to use other sensors when observing our discomforts, for instance, our eyes, our fingers, or our tongue.

It Gets Easier With Practice

After we have practiced observing and reducing some of our emotional rituals, the process can become easier and faster. I recall explaining “The Intestines Outside of Body Technique” to a class of students who were studying Monkey, a Chinese novel that describes a contest among magicians. (You can find this technique in the chapter called “Miscellaneous Techniques.”) When I finished my explanation, someone who had taken a class from me before raised his hand and said, “John Locke, that’s the dumbest thing I’ve ever heard of.”

I immediately experienced fear along the entire front of my body, from my forehead all the way down to the tops of my toes. There was a big ball of tension in my stomach, and as I looked down, the tension—all of it from the forehead to the toes—cracked into crumbling grains and disappeared.

In the same instant, I saw that if what I said was dumb, now was a good time to find it out before I misled more people. It felt easy and natural to ask, “Where did I go wrong?”

I saw my student’s face change. The other students were noticeably relieved. The student and I had missed our communication, and we were able to clear up the problem quickly. He explained what he thought, and I restated the description of the technique, with a few changes inspired by his explanation.

Only afterwards did I notice how the fear had come and gone so fast.

Pure Feelings and Ritual Emotions

Many of our emotional responses can be shaped and changed by the techniques in this book. Sometimes, we resist the notion that we can shape our emotions, preferring to think that our emotions just happen to us. Dr. William Glasser makes a useful distinction in his book Control Theory: A New Explanation of How We Control Our Lives (New York: Perennial Library, 1985). He points out that we do not choose the "immediate, usually intense, short-term feeling, which occurs at the moment of frustration or satisfaction. This brief burst of pain or pleasure is best described as pure feeling." (71) "Because of this we tend to jump to the seemingly logical but wrong conclusion that all our feelings happen to us, when in fact these immediate feelings are only a very brief part of all we feel" (71). Then in order to deal with the frustration or prolong the satisfaction, we almost always choose a long-term feeling behavior such as depressing or loving. These behaviors may last for years and even increase in intensity with time...."(72).

Although our pure emotions are, for the most part, beyond our ability to control, most of us are surprised when we see no immediate reduction in them, despite our efforts. Indeed, our efforts sometimes make things worse, especially if we forget that we can, at first, only change what we do after our pure emotion is over.

Here is a four-part negativity ritual that I have seen played out more than once, by me and others:

1. Decision: I am going to do something about my anger.
2. Charged event occurs.
3. Pure emotion: anger, etc.
4. Ritual emotion: regularized sentences (“Look at what that so and so did to me”) and physical sensations (an ache that fits like a cap on the head).

Amusingly enough, having decided to work on anger, we found that we were getting angry about getting angry. At least before we decided to reduce anger, we could just get angry. Now when we get angry, we add ritual anger to it, in the name of reducing angry emotions!

As we observe our emotional rituals, it becomes easy to see the scenarios: the charged event, the pure emotion, and the ritual story with its sentences and bodily contortions. By subjecting these events to observation, we raise them from unconscious to conscious action on our part. Those close to us have known these rituals better than we, for they have seen them played out before their eyes again and again. We the players have hidden the texts from our own eyes only.

At another level, after we have done a lot about reducing our anger—when the frequencies of pure and ritual anger responses have gone down—then we may find ourselves getting ritually angry about other people’s destructive behaviors and lack of advanced understanding. We can develop powerful new anger rituals when people ritually do exactly what we ritually used to do.

Sometimes, it may be appropriate to follow a pure anger with some ritual anger if someone does some of the things that we used to do. And sometimes it will be appropriate to do something else. We need to practice using the wonderful energy of our pure emotions in beneficial ways that we choose for ourselves, not in ways that others taught us out of their greed, ways that are dangerous to us and our neighbors.

Be ready. Not only may we see little or no reduction in the frequency and intensity of our pure feelings when we decide to take responsibility for our emotions, they may even increase—they very frequently do—when others perceive our efforts. It is a fact of life that our pure emotions—short though they be—are somewhat beyond our control. Our kids or our spouse may harass us more as they find us less willing to act out our old ritual emotions when they push our button. We may have to wait out the siege until they recognize some of the benefits to them under the new regime. Hang in there!

Perhaps we cannot directly choose our pure feelings, but we can develop a repertoire of ritualized behaviors which we can follow as we come out of our pure feelings. If we observe the script and tension patterns of our ritual emotions, the act of observation reduces their severity. We need not contort our insides for hours everyday in order to demonstrate our disapproval of certain events. We need not follow a pure emotion with its culturally dictated ritual counterpart. A repertoire of positive behaviors might include choosing to be still and to observe what is taking place without and within. If we are in imminent danger of attack, we might focus upon without. In times of disease or stress, internal observation would seem wise.

As we choose again and again to follow pure feelings with observation, we will find ourselves moving more and more quickly to observation when charged events occur. And in time, the frequency and intensity of even our pure feelings will reduce. And we will still have permission to get angry anytime it seems appropriate.

Our ritual emotions play themselves out in words and physical sensations. In quieting the mind, we turn off the manipulative talk that has been programmed into our brains by amateurs and professionals. When we relax the body, we cease to damage it. In the next section of this book, we look at how we let our language manipulate ourselves against ourselves. But if we just stay quiet and observe in a relaxed way what is taking place, we are, effectively, if only for the moment, free of these manipulations.

And for you intermediate practitioners who have aggravated your bodies over the destructive behavior of others, put your time into being centered and observant. You may be in immediate danger. Quiet the mind, and relax the body. And then give a thought as to how you might safely lead those who love poison away from their poison and toward service to themselves and their neighbors.

Student Comments

No one told me about quieting down my mind.

Sometimes we make ourselves sick over nothing.

Why make ourselves sick, even if we have a big problem?

We jabbered away when we needed to be paying attention.

Observation of the body relaxes and heals it.

Our constant comments interfere with observation, storage, and recollection.

We let ourselves be run by the local culture's emotional rituals.

I think some of those rituals were designed to do us harm.

Keeping my mouth shut and my mind quietly observant has saved my life.

I can influence those pure emotions a little bit; I can change my rituals.

You're just saying there's no point in indulging in destructive rituals.

I really thought my rituals were my real self, that that was me.

Quieting the mind and relaxing the body are a cleansing of the instrument.

I can remember more of what I read when I relax and let the words in.

There's nothing wrong with any emotion as long as it is not indulged in.

Now I look at my pain and stress, instead of trying to run away from them.

Now I use emotional rituals to help, not hurt, myself and my neighbors.

I used to handicap my brain with my chatter.

I used to fill my mental computer with garbage and short-circuit my robot.

I have to laugh sometimes when I forget that I can quiet my mind or just relax.

I find that I can use the energy of pure emotions any way I want to.

I call it destruction reduction.

I used to practice voluntary ignorance.

I Can't Stand the Idea of Letting Myself Feel How Painful My Pain Really Is

Your continued interference with the proper and ordinary functioning of your pain perceptors has very likely prevented your body from using its best resources to heal itself. If you choose now to allow your senses to operate normally, you probably will pay a cost of increased pain of some duration, so choose a time when you are willing to pay that price. You might set a timer for fifteen minutes, and then do Shape-Volume-Substance until the bell rings.

Even if the pain seems to extend beyond your body, allow it to go just as far as it wants to go. Just keep looking at it. Take turns observing the shape, the volume, and the substance as they present themselves through your senses. And consult a physician.

PART III

HOW TO TALK SENSE

I Can't Learn History

The graying professor in his brown tweed suit looked out across the class and fastened his eyes on me as he said: "And central to it all is a sense of history."

My mind spat out: "I'm no good at history." Then: "I can't learn history." I examined the concept "can't" in this context. A current inability? Apparently yes. A physical incapacity? Yes, it seemed like it. A lack of practice? Well, there was a lack of practice.

Where had my "can't" come from? In a way, it didn't matter. If it came up again, I could re-examine it and look for another translation, if necessary. Still, with a big bug like a "can't," a little memory scan might bring up at least one time when this description was made by someone and accepted by me as a continuing truth.

Suddenly, I was in a little movie. I was a little kid holding up to my mother a piece of notebook paper (from a packet we had proudly bought in the dime store) on which I had written the answers to my first grade history test and on which the teacher had written in red ink: 50%. And about which I had convinced myself to make a lot of tears on my face and a lot of tension in my stomach because I thought that if I made myself miserable enough, then my parents would be less likely to do something nasty like take away some of my so-called privileges. And I felt bad about the test itself, too. I didn't know where I had gone wrong, and I wanted my Danish immigrant mother to explain my errors in American history.

My mother looked at the test for a long time. She and my grandmother had read to me since the age of three if not earlier, and I had never seen her read anything more seriously, not Nicholas Nickleby nor even the Red Cross First Aid Book.

First she tried what she thought was a joke, but I took seriously: "Well, at least you got half of it right." I gave her some more tears.

Then she put the piece of paper in a pocket in her dress (I never saw that piece of paper again, but I can see it today forty years later), knelt down, and put her arms around me and said: "Maybe you're just not good at history."

Suddenly, all the pain was released from my body. I felt that I had done nothing wrong. There was nothing to worry about. No reason to contort my self in distress. Not this time. I just was, by nature, not good at history.

My mother felt good because she had been able to find some magic words that made her kid feel better. Even the teacher, who did find time in her life to give me some extra help, was pleased as I went ahead and did as she instructed. But in my heart I felt that there was nothing that I could ever do to overcome my weakness at history.

As the years went by, I consistently impeded the flow of historical information into my brain by replaying old CAN'T commands, instead of just allowing my self to read the material.

In the years since I sourced my history CAN'T (I was twenty- six years old and in college), I haven't become a great historian, but I have been able to learn about history just as I can learn about anything else.

Is there evidence that your capacity for science or math or languages or anything is impaired in some way? Whatever the answer, you can do what you can do. For me and for you, interference with our perceptions will only reduce our effectiveness.

I think that what I missed in my linguistic training was the significance of what I was learning. I did not understand that it made some difference as to which of many sentence types I might trot out in order to encode my experience. I did not understand that a careless word-world encoded in my brain could entice me to act in ways that are dangerous to me & my neighbors.

CHAPTER VII

LINGUISTIC FALLACIES: THE NOUNING FALLACY

The analysis of linguistic fallacies is designed to assist us in clarifying and correcting some of the erroneous ways that we have been talking about ourselves and our neighbors. We will look at four linguistic fallacies (the nouning fallacy, the adjectival fallacy, the present tense fallacy, and the attribution fallacy), examine their pleasures and pains as well as their benefits and harms, and find ways of translating these fallacies into saner English.

Nouning and Evasion

When we pick out part of a cluster of events and use a noun to designate that presumed entity, this act of nouning in itself invites us to ignore certain aspects of the original events.

Language lies.

For instance, if we call ourselves or someone else a fool for having done something we deem foolish, we have done more and less than record an instance of inattention. We have created mirages and blindnesses for ourselves and those who hear us. Indeed, we may have shifted our minds away from lessons about inattention and led ourselves into an illusion of a self which is, in some sense, stupid, a fool. (Have you ever done something foolish that was not a result of inattention?)

Instead of leaning from our error in judgment, we make another error in programming our brains concerning the nature of ourselves. We don't record the error in choice about attention, and we carve into our brains an image of ourselves as a fool.

A past event is an experience which we can examine on the basis of our recorded perceptions of that event. We can learn how to make these recordings more accurate and less fragmented so that we can expand our understanding of them. The language and emotional stress that we have associated with the events are additions which we created. However, we do not normally see the differences between what we say is going on and what is going on.

Language lies. We have been using language. We are liars.

We are liars, in the sense that we are going to be continuing sources of misinformation to ourselves and others as long as we create flawed maps of our experience. Indeed, we may find that much of what we call culture is ritualized lying.

Nouning and Illusory Personalities

When we turn someone's actions into a noun, many things can happen to us and that person. If our child steals something or tells a lie, this culture teaches the child that he or she is a thief or a liar.

The past event becomes a feature of a personality, or the present action is projected into a future likelihood. It is this kind of twisting of the self that many Buddhists and Existentialists have seen as contributing to the illusion of personality. (Are you a homo, hetero, or bi?)

What we did is what we did. That action need not turn us into anything. We can let ourselves be tied to a circle of repeated counter-productivity, or we can choose to learn from our mistakes.

Nouning may also lead us to over-emphasize a cluster of behaviors. When I was a second year man at the University of Virginia, my lovely dance partner asked me, "What are you?" That question didn't mean what it might today. (It could range anywhere from a request for your birth sign to an assertion of insanity.) She wanted to know what fraternity I belonged to.

Sometimes we think that we have said a lot about someone when we say, "She's a college girl" or "He's a truck driver" or "They're doctors." Often we will find that we have said both more and less about people than we realized.

We may also over-categorize people by making them just another member of a group. It is similar to over-emphasizing behavior in that both errors can result in a noun statement: you are a student, teacher, liar, soldier, politician, etc. What is different is how we come to these statements.

In the case of over-emphasis, we are taking part of a person's behavior and making it more significant than is justified; whereas in the case of over-categorization, we are considering people as just another member of a class of persons who have performed a class of behaviors.

With over-emphasis, we notice that a person has been studying a lot, and so we call her a student. With over-categorization, we have an idea of a group of people who are students, and we have chosen to make this person an indistinguishable member of that group.

A Few Translations

1. I am a liar. T> I lied.
2. I am a fool. T> I did something foolish.
3. She is a winner. T> She has won frequently.
4. They are losers. T> They lost several times, by my measurement.
5. He is a psychologist. T> He studied psychology at the university.
 - T> He did an internship at a hospital.
 - T> He taught psych courses at a university.
 - T> He has counseled people in his office.
 - T> He has placed himself in harm's way to be of help.
 - T> He has asked to be paid for his advice.
6. She is a cop. T> She studied at the university.
 - T> She trained at the police academy.
 - T> She has answered emergency calls to accidents.
 - T> She has come to the rescue of people in distress.
 - T> She has placed herself in harm's way to be of service.
 - T> She has asked to be paid for her work.
7. I am a paranoid schizophrenic. T> I have been paranoid schizophrenicking.
8. I am an addict. T> I have ingested so much poison for so long that my body has felt bad whenever I wasn't poisoning it.
9. So and so is a #%\$*! T> X didn't do what I wanted.
 - T> X did needless harm and took pleasure in it.
 - T> X has frequently done careless harm.
 - T> X has avoided gaining skills and demanded services.
 - T> X has paid little and demanded much.

Nouning and Interconnectedness

Nouning can also lead us to ignore the interrelatedness of the universe. What we are is maintained by a physical and social atmosphere of chemicals, temperature, vegetative and animal processes, astronomical events, cosmic forces, and customs—to name a few.

For instance, a hill is not an object that we can neatly move around at will. Unfortunately, we have sometimes thought that we could merely move a hill, or mine it, or remove it for an airport—all without taking into account the effects upon the surface and subsurface water supplies. When we break up the structures of the earth, undesired chemicals seep into the lakes and streams and down into the aquifer.

In the course of a day, we have a profound and often irreversible effect via our muscular action, excrement, plutonium, fumes, and words—again, to name a few.

When we buy a shirt, we move the world.

In short, indiscriminate nouning can lead us to personality disorders, avoidance of learning from our mistakes, overemphasis, excessive categorization, and an attitude of separation—any of which can, in turn, make it seem reasonable to do harm to ourselves and our neighbors.

Just as we can play physics and choose to consider light as waves or particles, so we may as speakers of Indo-European choose to describe the universe in terms of nouns or verbs—people/things or ings—as seems appropriate.

Words and Ings

What we put into making words about events
reduces the amount of concentration
for compiling accurate sense data.

The more we talk
the less we see.
Or hear or remember
as a continuous textured whole
unique in its complexity.

Ings become things.
Or so they seem.

No Things

No things.

Just ings.

I am writing.

You are reading.

We are ing.

Formulas, Pain Blocks, and Conspiracies

Part of the anti-education bias that some of us are carrying around is an automatic pain in the stomach when we encounter anything to do with formulas. Putting a block of pain between ourselves and formulas is statistically dangerous, since formulas are among the clearest and most explicit statements we are likely to see. Such counter-productive acts are consistent with our occasional habits of cultivating similar blocks of pain between ourselves and benefits like healthy food and drink, keeping agreements, and communicating accurately.

On the other hand, many of us have cultivated pleasure bonds with tobacco, alcohol, gasoline, laziness, ignorance, honors, sexual excesses which reduce sexual delight, and wasting the fruits of the earth in the name of pleasure, freedom, and security.

One formulaic way of expressing a typical nouning fallacy along with a translation is:

Subject + BE + a(n) + NOUN T> Subject + VERB + PAST

Bob is a fool. T> Bob fooled around.

Mary is a helper. T> Mary has helped.

Jim is a doctor. T> Jim has doctored.

I am a teacher. T> I have taught.

I am a student. T> I have studied.

I am a minister. T> I have ministered.

We are not really students or teachers just because we manage to convince the cashier's office to take or give us money. As Confucius reminds us, we are not teachers unless we are performing the acts appropriate to our title: reaching into a life of travel and observation, and out of this experience, sharing valuable ways for people to comport themselves. Further, we are not more than the acts which we have performed, in this sense: the fact that someone has taught or doctored does not mean that we need to believe what they tell us, nor does it mean that we must pay them better or worse than other workers for their services.

Some of us are fond of calling ourselves nominal members of some religion, meaning by that, I suppose, that we have gone through some of the rituals of that religion without allowing them to have a major effect upon our behavior. Similarly, the normal state of affairs is a society where lawyers use the law to deprive outsiders of just treatment, priests and ministers are unfamiliar with religious history and philosophy, parents are not parenting, children conspire against the survival of their families, educators haven't read the great works of world literature, managers interpose themselves between the servers and the served, and doctors practice medicine upon diseases for money instead of treating people. Our professional titles are a significant part of the well-rehearsed smoke screen hiding our conspiracies against the general population.

And our professional titles also provide us with a means whereby we may give our best service for a reasonable return. We can dedicate ourselves to any worthy enterprise. I know lawyers who have taken the law upon themselves as holy orders. I know priests and ministers who have studied the major religious works of the world. I know parents and children who support one another without reservation. Even in my little town, there are a few educators at all levels who have read among the classics of world literature. I have glimpsed the invisible manager. I know doctors who have learned to observe much and do little. I have found these people everywhere. They are not difficult to recognize. You see them by what they have done.

If you look, you may find that as the prestige of the title diminishes, the possibilities of finding dedication increases. I recall a retired Iowa farmer who met with friends once a week in the attic where he lived with his library, a French resistance fighter who lived her life out as a maid in Paris, a brightly orange clad garbage man in Switzerland who held a cultivated conversation with me in a Lausanne park, an old grandma going out with three grandkids (their parents killed in that war torn land) to gather dandelion blossoms which they separated that night and sold the next day for pennies, an immigrant who built a temple around his family house and taught meditation there until he died, and a janitor in a library who knew more about a course I was teaching than I did. Who they were was clear from the conscious dedication of their acts.

From William Glasser's Control Theory

Doing and thinking are always expressed as verbs, like running or meditating, but feelings are usually expressed as adjectives, like depressed, or nouns, like depression. For example, we are used to hearing a man who has just lost a good job complain that he is depressed, or hearing his friends describe him as suffering from depression.

To say the man is depressed would be to infer that the depression happened to him. . . . To describe accurately what this man is feeling as a behavior and also be grammatically correct, I would have to say that he is depressing or choosing to depress.

Therefore, throughout this book, verbs rather than nouns and adjectives will be used when they refer to feelings. For example, headache will become headaching, phobia will become phobicking and anxiety will become anxieting" (xi).

Dating, Indexing, and Etc

When we use a grammatical form which implies habituality— a noun, adjective, or present tense—we can increase the scope of our understanding by checking for three specifications which are well known to students of general semantics: dating, indexing, and etc. (I was introduced to them when I was a teenager taking a junior level logic class at Wooster School.) If we are speaking of a “professor,” we might want to note when and for how long she did her professing (dating), how she differed from other professors (indexing), and what else she did in her life that is relevant to our purposes (etc).

Dating reminds us that the meaning we are attaching to this person or event is a temporary condition, coming in and going out of factuality. (This rock has been rocking very briefly in geological time.)

Indexing points out that every member of every group is different from every other member of that group in more ways than we have life to count. (All snowflakes, roses, and fathers are unique.)

Etc prompts us to notice that everyone and everything has done other things besides what we happen to be mentioning just now. (That old linguist sold newspapers and delivered dry cleaning in the village when he was a boy.)

Dating, indexing, and etc give us three powerful dimensions through which we can glimpse the flexing universe which moves beneath our language. If we do not note the changes, they can crush us.

A Mid Term Question and Answer

Discuss the following term, indicating its meaning, showing its significance, and giving an example: ing.

A common fallacy is that of seeing everything as objects that have some sort of permanence and fixity (people as well as places and items like chairs). But, in fact, nothing is permanent; everything is always going through changes, cyclical and not. A person is not a complainer but is complaining (or not) now. A sea is not a sea, but is engaged in seaing activities, until non-it stops doing so.

So things are not objects but events which we can call ings.

Rhonda Williams, Graduate Student
Fulbright College, 1983

Choices

I

The hardest choice
is the harmful choice
we made while unaware.

Without our cooperation
fewer horrors would occur.

We have evaded miracles
we had the power to permit.

We are a danger
to ourselves
and our neighbors.

We cannot love.

Our touch is death.

Choices

II

Almost effortlessly
we have wielded vast powers
forging chains around our minds
and gnawing self-inflicted wounds.

To see the damage
we have done
and how we did it
is to see our power.

Guilt is one of the dances
in the ritual of repetition.

Looking Past the Words

I'm not blaming you.

I'm not hating you.

I'm not getting mad at you.

I am saying that I think

if you took a look at what you're doing

you wouldn't be doing it.

While you look, or while you don't,

I'm planning to back out of danger.

And Then the Criminal Spoke

I have
lied
cheated
stolen
killed.

I am not
a liar
cheat
thief
killer.

Logos

This is not the place I would like to start
but this is where I am.

Here are hats and horns and the names of states on sticks. The speaker is
spreading out the syllables
of blessings, curses, lies and incantations. Only the lies are what they
pretend to be.

Some words, put to such a use, fare badly.
They change colors. They take on mutant shapes.
They come like a pestilence flapping around the room.
Silently, one by one, they fall to the floor.
One with a tentacle, vermilion and mottled with yellow,
tries to attract my attention. I ignore it to death.

Words when they fall are like the falling of angels.
Words when they die are like the burning of feathers.
They peep like bats.

In the beginning that unbroken breath in endless exhalation
was broken by the terrible mercy of God's own tongue, God's teeth,
into one round verb.

Its offspring number so many nobody could count them.

Words are shadows, words are only shadows.
We take them for more than shadows. They seem to be more.
They enlist in the armies of our poems.
They quiet unhappy lovers and name our children.
They join all things together and put them asunder.
They never hear themselves. They have no ears.

Miller Williams, The Boys on Their Bony Mules

(Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), p. 31.

Gemstone

The insider who sold it
put half its price in his pocket.
The miners will die of lung disease.
The neighbors will breathe the dust.
The conglomerate will prosper.

It is easier
for a worthless object
to be beautiful.

And you,
what have you purchased?

CHAPTER VIII

THE ADJING FALLACY

When we transform our experience of events into an adjective, we leave ourselves open to the same problems as nouns (personality, fixedness, overemphasis, categorization, and separation), plus we may overlook the relativity of our statements and imagine our emotional responses to something as part of that something, and not what we have added to the situation.

When we say that something is large or small, hot or cold, heavy or light, fast or slow, bright or dark, smooth or rough, easy or difficult, high or low, strong or weak, the truth value of these adjectives is based upon a range of relationships which can change as the context changes. Thus, what we call a cold day today would be a hot day elsewhere or at another time of the year. Fortunately, we normally take this context into consideration, with a few exceptions. For instance, are you tall or short, fat or skinny, smart or dumb?

I Say That's Disgusting

We often describe the world with adjectival statements in which the speaker is not referred to, and yet what is being expressed is almost entirely the speaker's attitude toward what is being discussed. When we say that a work of art is beautiful, we are saying at least as much about ourselves as we are about the object; perhaps even more is being said about ourselves if we are discussing the relative beauty of a human being.

If we say that something or someone is horrible, disgusting, painful, joyful, interesting, charming, tempting, or believable, we are making statements about our own reactions, even though we may not be mentioned at all. To say "That's disgusting" is to report our own reaction, but it is disguised as a statement about the external event at hand.

Even apparently objective statements about color from a person who is not color blind is a report about how reflected light is being received by the eyes and sent to the brain. The object which is reflecting the light is only one of many participants in a great cosmic dance.

I Feel Disgusted With This

Frequently, we can alleviate the hidden judgment of an adjecting fallacy by taking an “I-Statement”: I am feeling horrible about what happened; I feel disgusted with this; I got a painful headache after seeing it; I am happy with what happened; I was interested by what was said; I found her charming; it was tempting to me; I gave his story credence.

If for any reason we wish to change some of the behaviors of either the speaker or the one spoken to, we might do well to be more explicit as to what is occurring. As long as we think that the pain is in the event and not in the speaker, we are not likely to be able to reduce the discomfort. Once we are clear about whose discomfort it is, we can be more effective in applying the deconditioning methods in this book.

Over a Sunday Brunch Out

The lawyer asked, "Now, look here, the coffee in my cup, is it liquid or not?"

"The coffee is liquidating," she said. And then added: "That's only right now, of course. Under other circumstances, your coffee—which never was an 'it,' by the way—might be solidating or vaporizing."

"Solidating? Well, I never heard of anything like that. Now, this cap on the ketchup, what's it?"

"That non-it may seem to be solidating—and in the conventional sense of the term, that's so—and I'm sure you know enough about physics to tell me that most of that solidating event is actually vacuum, and that most of the non-vacuum particle/wave ings are in great cyclical motion as they come in and out of being."

"Well, whatever."

Same Brunch

"All right, what about the salt in this shaker? Is there something wrong with that? Or do you want to call it salting?" The lawyer looked into her eyes with a gaze of firm self-confidence.

"If you mean do I have any major objection to you giving the name 'salt' to that conglomeration of crystallizations that's mixed up in there with what we call 'rice' hereabouts, then, no.

"On the other hand, there is a moisture exchange taking place between the salt and the rice—perhaps they are intermoisturizing—and the salt is not, as a matter of fact, at this present time, actually salting. At least not in the conventional sense of the term, although we may have some pretty salty rice in there, but I doubt it. Shall we cook the rice up and see if it's salty?

"Of course, salty in the sense that if you or I or any standard human being puts some of that stuff in our mouths, our 'tastebuds' and brain and what is in between register a sensation which we in our culture call salty.

"I wonder, does salt lose its saltiness as long as it maintains its crystal form. There's another experiment for us, but I'll bet that someone over at the university could tell us right off."

For Your Consideration

- I. Compare the left with the right:
 - a. She is happy. She seemed to have a good time at the party.
 - b. He is quick. He completed his work before Jim did.
 - c. Germany is cold. It was below freezing in Zweibrucken during the early part of winter.

- II. Stereotypes

She's French, so naturally she's cultured.

He's Latin American, so naturally he has a quick temper.

They're Americans, so naturally they're crass.

She's oriental, so naturally she's inscrutable.

They're Arabs, so naturally they're rich.

He's Jewish, so naturally he's smart.

They're German, so naturally they're militaristic (pacifistic?).

- III. Separation

Just throw your batteries away then they wear out.

She's different. She's white.

He's too short (tall?) to be effective in our office.

She's not beautiful enough to represent our network.

- IV. Interconnectedness

White people are just like us.

We are all brothers and sisters.

We are always doing more than we know.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRESENT TENSE FALLACY

The present tense asserts a wide variety of meanings that we are not normally aware of. English (and most Indo-European) present tense forms sometimes refer to present events. We can say, “I smell smoke” and “You look good.” These records of current sense perceptions are easily understood as taking place at the moment.

More often, however, the present tense will refer to habitual actions (“He smokes”), probable future events (“He’ll explain when he gets here” and “I go to Paris tomorrow”), capacity (“She speaks French”), and conditional statements (“She’ll help if she sees you”). We also have the historical present tense: “Yesterday, he comes up to me and gives me ten dollars.”

Of these six kinds of meaning tucked away in “the present tense,” (nowness, habituality, futurity, capacity, conditionality, and pastness), the two most open to fallaciousness are habituality and futurity.

In the case of futurity, we may be tempted to think that we can do more than make plans for the future. In practical terms, we might do well to compare notes with our companions in order to estimate how much effort is likely to be expended in order to make our plans come true.

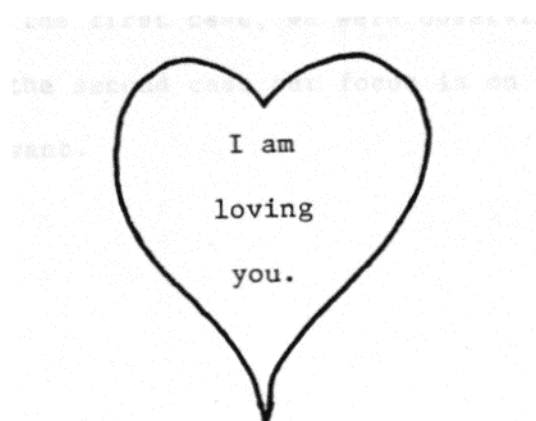
If we make a plan for dinner tomorrow, we may mean different things when we both say, "I'll see you tomorrow for dinner." One person could mean that they are going to make special preparations, and the other might see the dinner as something they will attend if nothing better comes along. A clarification concerning intent is likely to reduce expectations, which will in turn reduce disappointment.

If we unjustifiably impute habitual behavior to someone, not only do we create an inaccurate verbal picture of that person, we may also inadvertently reinforce actions we would like to reduce.

Quite often, the habitual present tense appears as a question: “Do you X?” or “Does she X?” or “Does it X?” These can turn out to be variations on “When did you stop beating your wife?” Any yes-or-no answer may be misleading. Consider: Do you drink? Do you smoke? Do you play chess? Do you work? Do you lie? Do you love me?

When faced with questions which unjustifiably assume habituality, we have a choice of answers which deal with the past, present, and future: I have (not) X-ed; I am (not) X-ing; I am (not) planning to X. Or we may use a statement which sounds like it came from Zen or est: “I X when I X, and I don’t X when I don’t X.”

The resulting answers may sound just a bit strange at times. They may also have a special impact. I can remember a Saint Valentine’s Day when I found a heart-shaped cake on which was iced:



Thus, “I am the kind of person who X-es” (hates vegetables, loves ice cream, makes foolish mistakes, loses her temper, drives too fast, drinks too much, etc.) can become “I (have) X-ed” (have hated vegetables, loved ice cream, made foolish mistakes, lost my temper, driven too fast, drunk too much, etc.).

Even in those cases where the behavior is currently taking place, we are better off adding a present progressive statement (“I am losing my temper”) than going back to a habituality (“I lose my temper”). In this way, we are not constructing another defense of a “personality” characteristic; we are reporting what is taking place.

Another meaning of “I’m losing my temper” is as a manipulative threat: “Unless you do what I want, I am going to lose my temper and hurt you, and it will be your fault because I gave you a warning.” (The fact that we clear up one problem doesn’t mean that we won’t find other ones.) Let’s notice, however, that the meanings are different: in the first case, we were observing ourselves getting angry, and in the second case our focus is on getting other people to do what we want.

As long as we describe undesired behavior in habitual forms of the present tense, we are programming ourselves for more of what we want less of. Stating a behavior in the habitual form may make it a part of a make-believe “personality”—a self which we may feel that we have to justify, defend, or perpetuate. Stating an event in a past tense accounts for what we did and sets us free to make a different choice in the future.

Certainly, there are occasions when we may be justified in using a habitual present tense to describe a person’s behavior. It is possibly true that your father gets up every weekday morning at six o’clock, with very rare exceptions. Furthermore, if a politician has been stealing from the public trough for years and you overheard him making plans last night, you are justified in saying of him: “He steals.”

Basically, I am making two objections to the present tense (as well as nouning and adjing). The first is that we open ourselves to an erroneous assumption of habituality. The second objection is a bit more subtle: if there is habitual behavior which you would like to see reduced or extinguished, you will normally increase the likelihood of your success by describing it in a past tense: “You lied.” The use of a past tense acknowledges what has happened, without implying that the people involved are likely to repeat their performance.

Be Mine

Does your
I love you mean
you've made me
the object
of your greed?

Werner Erhard and the *Hsinhsinming*

Take a look at the following poem and see if you can find a way to make all the statements true without making them contradictory.

What is

is.

What is not

is not.

What is

is not.

What is not

is.

The first two sentences of the poem sound like something that even Werner Erhard might say. The last two sentences are a version of two lines from the Chinese classic *Hsinhsinming* by Seng-ts'an, the Third Patriarch of Zen, who died in 606.

What is
is.

What has taken place thus far has taken place exactly in the way that it took place, in spite of any opinions about it that you may have to the contrary.

All the events occurred, including all the accurate and faulty observations thereof, took place exactly in the way that they did, even though you may not like it very much.

It all happened just the way that it happened. There's no point in your twisting yourself out of shape about it all.

Cool it.

What is not
is not.

You guessed it. Didn't you? What didn't happen didn't happen, even though you thought it did, or hated to accept that it didn't.

Hang on. Things aren't as bad as they seem.

What is
is not.

The universe as we have encoded it is unlike what we would find it to be, if we examined it. Any particular point of view that we have about anything will undergo conspicuous change, if we look deeply into the nature of what is available to us through our senses and the reports of the experiences of other people.

Ordinary ways of speaking are so misleading that any teacher of any skill is likely to bring you a special language which the teacher alleges is more accurate, more able to assist you in causing the changes you desire.

What is not
is.

There are horrors and powers in this universe beyond anything that we have imagined. Much of what we have denied will turn out to be true. The dimensions of our ignorance will reveal themselves for as long as we choose to seek them out.

Things are not as bad as we thought. They are worse. And they are better. For there are new joys to be experienced as we see ourselves in the growing profundity of our being and in the continuing complexity of our relationship with the universe.

Unjustifiable Transformations: A Summary

Nouning, adjing, and presenting are fallacious when we unjustifiably transform past events into present characteristics, or when we transform events into things, thereby ignoring a significant activity.

We may find ourselves labelling behaviors in ourselves and others in such a way that we get more of what we want less of and less of what we want more of. When we transform events into nounish objects—the proverbial fluxes into fixities—we hide from ourselves the transient as powerful nature of "things." Things are ings.

According to English, if you have lied, cheated, stolen, and killed, then you are a liar, a cheat, a thief, and a killer. Certainly, if we encounter someone who has been getting wealthy by feeding us a careful diet of fallacies, propaganda techniques, and half-truths, then we are justified in applying the term liar to them, perhaps even into retirement. On the other hand, if a child or a new acquaintance does something we find inappropriate, in some cases we might choose to ignore the action; in other cases, we might point to the behavior and enter into negotiations about it; or we might create some novel solution.

Seldom will it be productive to turn the undesired behavior into a label which we attach to ourselves and others in the form of a noun or an adjective.

Nevertheless, while we are being careful not to label ourselves and those about us, we must take into consideration that our society does, in general, believe in these labels. We have the power to trap ourselves into repeating the dangerous and counter-productive patterns of past actions.

In general, our society will support us with sympathy and understanding and gratification as we act out our roles as smokers, drinkers, complainers, overeaters, underachievers, paranoid schizophrenics, manic depressives, gays, straights, bis, dopers, and chocolate lovers.

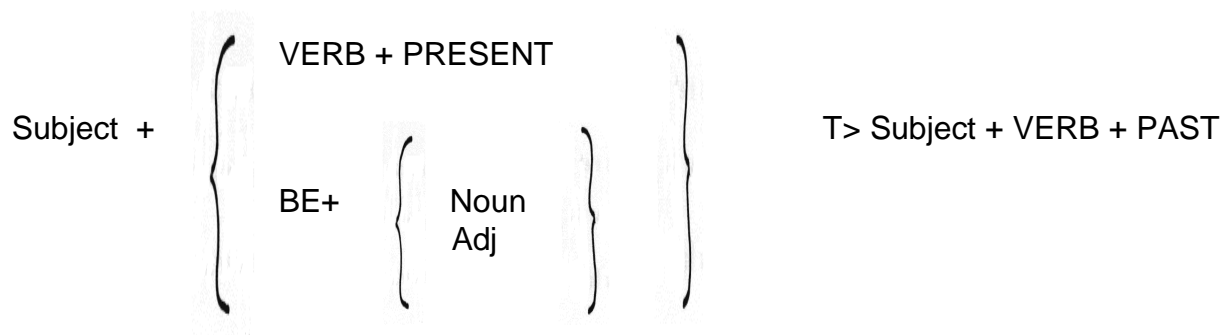
We receive similar approval for ourselves as stupid, dumb, aggressive, cowardly, passive, temperamental, accident prone, and sick. We can easily find validation as the kind of person who gets scared, hates work, gets mad, drinks coffee, and likes candy and cigarettes.

Most of the pictures of ourselves that we are most comfortable with are made up of unjustifiable transformations.

We are not stupid because we have done stupid things. AND it is appropriate to look into these events and see how we came to make an erroneous choice. We have eaten and drunk and smoked what we have eaten and drunk and smoked; and we are existentially condemned to make new choices, even when we repeat our old harmful ways.

Although we are born with certain freedoms, we have the power to mime an intricate cage.

In dealing with persons, all three of these fallacies can be transformed into past tense statements. Thus, we can conveniently combine the three formulas into one:



He lies.

He is a liar.

He is untruthful.

T> He lied.

She helps.

She is a helper.

She is helpful.

T> She helped.

Remember that each potential fallacy must be demonstrated as a fallacy. If we are dealing with someone who has a long history of lying, who is under contract to misrepresent facts to the public in return for money, and who is attending a conference in order to prepare more lies, then I think we are justified in designating that person as a liar—especially in warning others of this dangerous behavior. However, if we wish to change this person's acts of misrepresentation, we would do well to point out what he did and what we would prefer he do in the future. This distinction between what a person is and what he has done is important to some Christians, for it shows how we can come to love the sinner and reject the sin.

CHAPTER X

ATTRIBUTION FALLACY

An attribution fallacy is a causality error: we attribute to others those powers which are within our ability to activate. We turn ourselves into victims, and we create power objects, power persons, power places, and power events—all outside of ourselves. There are times when it is appropriate to seek and find power beyond our own. But it is seldom wise to diminish ourselves in so doing. Attribution fallacies may take the form of “POWER made me ADJECTIVE” or “X made me Y,” such as “You made me mad” or “You make me sick.” (Notice the present tense fallacy in the second example.) Other variations include “Look at what you made me do,” “You’re killing your father,” and “You piss me off.”

To transform an attribution fallacy into more sane English, we can change the object of the verb into the subject: I got mad at you; I made myself sick over what you did; your father is killing himself over what you did; I did what I did after you did what you did; I was really pissed off after you did that.

Seen in terms of a formula, we can summarize two kinds of sane translations of an attribution fallacy:

SOME-BODY/THING made me X (when they Y-ed) T> $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{I X-ed after S-B/T Y-ed} \\ \text{S-B/T Y-ed, and I X-ed.} \end{array} \right\}$

You made me mad when you refused. T> $\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{I got mad after you} \\ \text{refused.} \\ \text{You refused, and I} \\ \text{got mad.} \end{array} \right\}$

Extreme Provocation

Even though we are responsible for our actions, there are people and situations which can constitute extreme provocation. Our children normally become professional provocateurs by the age of two years. Bosses, subordinates, fellow-workers, and distant relatives take a little longer.

To stay centered and to function rationally under extreme conditions may seem to require the serenity of a saint or the clear mind of a Zen master. It does. And these actions are open to those who choose to practice them.

Dr. Frankenstein and the Provocateur

When we give the threatener and the torturer what they ask for, we are reinforcing them in their behaviors. If they are friends or relatives, we may be building a family of monsters with whom we will be obliged to deal, unless we leave the county. Every Frankenstein monster has a kindly Dr. Frankenstein lurking in the lab.

Certainly, there are situations in which we may decide to acquiesce, perhaps because we would like to come home from our grand tour of the world with all the body parts that we had when we left. On the other hand, if we do not submit torture and threat to a decision-making process, we will definitely find more of some things that we would like less of.

Look at What You Did to Me

If we have been blaming our troubles on someone or something for a long time, we may find a certain amount of unwillingness to cease this behavior because we have so much invested in the idea that they, not we, are responsible.

We may feel that part of the proof that someone has been a bad person is the evidence of our continuing physical deterioration. Thus, to give up our suffering may seem equivalent to saying that the other person was right and we were wrong.

Suffering is among the most difficult of behaviors to give up.

Benefits and Reinforcements from Fallacies

Attribution fallacies can contribute to significant physical harm, such as headaches, heart disease, and gastrointestinal disorders. These fallacies may also provide us with short-term gains as we manipulate people into doing what we want: “You know how sick that would make me” (so don’t do it); or “I’ll just die if you don’t” (do what I want).

We may also find continuing health benefits from placebos, physical prowess from a rabbit’s foot, additional available energy from encouragement by a person we trust, and power of any kind from rituals such as the glass-of-water technique. (More about this later on.)

In my experience of analyzing linguistic fallacies, it will be no surprise to B. F. Skinner that I have consistently found that the purveyors of fallacies—whether aware or unaware—have derived reinforcement from their erroneous behavior.

It's All Your Fault

We say attribute powers that are ours (or could be ours with a bit of practice) to God, goddesses, cosmic currents, visible objects, invisible entities, friends, enemies, relatives (current and former, living and dead), healers, cursers, coaches, our hometowns, our war experiences, etc. And we may come to see that we have been in error when we blamed others for what was our responsibility.

Nevertheless, this intellectual comprehension say seem, at first, to make things even worse than they were before! After all, before we knew any better, things were bad, but at least we had the satisfaction of knowing that it wasn't our fault. Now things are bad, and we are to blame for it all.

The source of this new level of discomfort is that we see, in part, what was wrong, but we do not know how to stop doing what we have been doing to ourselves.

Emotion Is a Combination of Chatter and Physical Sensation

The harm of an attribution fallacy often takes the form of undesired emotional stress. EMOTION IS A COMBINATION OF CHATTER AND PHYSICAL SENSATION. The chatter may be rational or not. The physical sensation is often tightness, flow, or throbbing.

In many cultures, we are encouraged to ignore physical discomforts with the idea that they will go away. Often they seem to go away. Sometimes they go away only in the sense of leaving our field of perception. And sometimes they actually go away.

We now have three tactics that we can practice in dealing with our ritual emotions: first, we have seen that we can turn off the linguistic chatter (quiet the mind); second, we can observe the physical stress (relax the body); lastly, we can transform the irrational chatter into more accurate language (talk sense).

Conjugation

I have been very powerful
in making trouble
for my self and my neighbors.

You yourself have been very powerful
in making trouble
for your self and your neighbors.

She has been very powerful
in making trouble for her self
in her creations.

He has been very powerful
in making trouble
for his self in his relationships.

We have been very powerful
in making things fall apart.

You all have been very powerful
in biting the hands that fed you.

They have been very powerful
with their lies in our minds.

CHAPTER XI

FALLACY ANALYSIS

For a fuller understanding of a linguistic fallacy, I recommend a formal analysis. One method I have used extensively involves seven steps:

First, name the fallacy. (Nouning fallacy, adjing fallacy, present tense fallacy, attribution fallacy, etc.)

Second, quote the fallacy. (State the fallacious sentence, and indicate the erroneous words.)

Third, explain the fallacy. (Demonstrate that there is an error.)

Fourth, indicate the physical benefits and detriments which are likely to result for the speaker. (We can expand the discussion to the other participants if we wish.)

Fifth, indicate the pleasurable and negative emotional associations (likes and dislikes) which the speaker has toward the fallacious statement.

Sixth, show how this fallacy assists or hinders the speaker in attaining a goal or set of goals (productivity and counter-productivity)—or is without effect (non-productive).

Seventh, translate (or transform) the fallacious statement into more accurate language.

In step one, naming the fallacy, we announce that we have found the features of a special type of error in thinking. Some criteria are simple: a nouning fallacy requires at least one noun; an adjing fallacy requires an adjective; a present tense fallacy requires that there be a verb in the present tense; an attribution fallacy will normally have a person as the object of a verb.

More difficult and open to discussion will be whether or not there is some kind of unjustifiable assertion. For instance, has a certain behavior occurred with a frequency sufficient to justify a designation of habitual, or not? Or, one of us may conclude that a person on television is a professional liar, whereas someone else may decide that he is merely temporarily misguided in his thinking.

The analysis process may also be complicated by the fact that there is more than one fallacy involved in a sentence, either stacked or combined. Among the more frequent combinations are present tense and attribution (“He makes me sick”), the nouning-attribution fallacy (“My anger drove me to it”), and the adjing-attribution fallacy (“He’s too dumb to know”). In such cases, we may look at each one separately or do them both at the same time as we go through the steps.

In the second step, we merely direct attention toward the part of the sentence where the fallacy can be found. In short sentences, this step is not always significant, but it can be quite helpful in discussing longer utterances.

In the third step, we are to explain the fallacy in ordinary language showing where the error is in thinking. For instance, we might point out that the speaker has taken a past event and turned it into a current characteristic without demonstrating any reasonable justification, as in nouning, adjing, or present tense fallacy.

If we inadvertently knock over a lamp around the house, we may see this fact as further evidence of us being “accident-prone.” However, the fact that we have not been paying attention to where we have been going does not mean that we are forced to continue this behavior. We can learn to be more observant: we can train ourselves to be more watchful in key situations; we can reduce extraneous and irrelevant activities; we can lessen and stop the chatter inside our heads. We can learn how to allow our sense organs to operate normally and naturally. (DON'T INTERFERE WITH YOURSELF.)

We can unlearn non-adaptive behaviors more easily when they are not hidden under erroneous and complicated cultural assertions concerning personality.

The fourth step brings us to a discussion of the physical benefits and detriments of the fallacy. Physical benefits might be an increased rate of healing, reduced feelings of depression, a lessening of tension, a new supply of water and food, etc. Physical detriments include heart trouble, gastrointestinal disorders, headaches, etc.

We have seen how a person can break a lamp and be misled by a self-description of "accident prone." Such language leads away from the actual situation and toward circles of self-fulfilling prophecies, thus avoiding a regimen leading to increased perception and increasing the statistical likelihood of additional dangerous incidents (potential detriments), plus the associated stress.

The fifth step examines feelings of pleasure and dislike associated with the fallacy under discussion. Such pleasure may be attached to a sense of power, a getting of what is desired, a feeling of being right, a discovery of identity, a finding of acceptance, etc. Negative feelings may be associated with a loss of self worth, increased stress, not getting what is desired, a feeling of helplessness, etc.

People who describe themselves as accident-prone may attach pleasure to finally finding a label for themselves, and that label may decrease some of the guilt and responsibility they have been associating with their behavior. We sometimes enjoy being identified, even if we're called The Village Idiot.

We may also associate negative feelings with our label. We may feel that we are limited in our life choices because we are "accident-prone." We may think that life has given us a "raw deal." We may feel that we are not as valuable as other people. We may come to believe that we have to lie about ourselves if we are to appear worthy of acceptance.

The sixth step sometimes overlaps with steps four and five, but here the thrust is in terms of the goals of the speaker. Is this fallacy productive, counter-productive, or non-productive—as measured against the speaker's goals?

For instance, if the intent of the speaker is to confuse the public so that people will choose behaviors which are dangerous to themselves and profitable to the speaker, then a particular fallacy might be extremely productive: we may be led to smoke more tobacco, drink more coffee and soft (!) drinks, and eat more chocolate and sugar—thus enriching the people associated with these industries.

On the other hand, if we want a peaceful home life, fallacious manipulation may lead to extended periods of tension as nasty networks of intimidation and torture become the accepted family pattern. Thus, it is counter-productive.

Lastly, I suspect that all of us have pulled out all the stops—tried every manipulative technique we could imagine—and succeeded only in bringing about no apparent change. (IMPORTANT: the next time you see things not changing, you might take a look at how you are inadvertently keeping a part of the world in an undesired holding pattern.) Non-productive fallacies get us no nearer and no further from our goals.

The last step, number seven, allows us to reprogram the flawed sentences that we have been putting into our brains. Thus, “I am a fool” becomes “I did something foolish.” “I am accident-prone” becomes “I wasn’t paying attention when the car hit the garage.” “He lies” becomes “He lied.” “You make me sick” becomes “I made myself sick over what you did.”

This step is somewhat similar to debugging a computer. However, unlike a computer, you may need to reprogram your brain more than once, even if you re-encoded it properly. Old mental habits require disciplined reorganization. And sometimes an old bug will creep back into your brain years after you thought that it was permanently zapped.

Through analysis, we can become clearer about the dangers and advantages of a particular fallacy in a given situation for a specific person, and we can reprogram our brains so that they more closely reflect our best thinking—not merely the garbage and propaganda of our local culture.

We can perform analyses from the point of view of any person within range of the fallacy—speaker, hearer, or reader.

The fallacy may take place in life, in literature, in discussion, or in our solitary imagination.

The tracking of fallacies in literature can be both aesthetically pleasurable and materially beneficial. When we analyze a fallacy a character has committed, we usually analyze a fallacy which we and our acquaintances have committed too. As we see the roots of the manipulations, we may find ourselves able to divest ourselves of these erroneous modes of thinking, perhaps without passing ourselves through the conventional ritual of self-blame.

When we choose not to cultivate ourselves, when we avoid looking at the universe which is miraculously passing through our senses, then we can easily be tricked into hidden agreements, ways of experiencing the universe that can lead us into unwittingly harming ourselves and our neighbors.

A Fallacy Analysis of a Sentence from THE GLASS MENAGERIE

In scene 1 of THE GLASS MENAGERIE, Tom speaks to his mother Amanda: “It’s you that make me rush through meals with your hawklike attention to every bite I take.”

Step One: Naming the Fallacy

We have the possibility here of at least two fallacies, a present tense fallacy (“you...make”) and an attribution fallacy (“you...make me rush”). For a present tense fallacy to apply, we would have to assert that Tom is unjustifiably referring to Amanda’s behavior as habitual. This “hawklike attention” has probably been going on for quite some time and is to continue until Tom leaves home. Therefore, although the verb form is in the present tense, I do not find a present tense fallacy. (Other people are welcome to disagree.)

Step Two: Underline the Fallacy

“It’s you that make me rush through meals with your hawklike attention to every bite I take.”

Step Three: Demonstrating the Error

Tom is asserting that Amanda is the cause for his rushing “through meals.” Clearly, Tom has the power to eat more slowly or even more quickly than he has up until now. It may be true that Tom chooses to eat quickly so as to escape the provocative actions of Amanda, but at all times the choice is his.

Step Four: Benefits and Detriments for the Speaker

It might be argued that Tom reduces some of his physical tension by telling off his mother. In that sense, some physical benefit could be cited. I do not see much evidence to support this assertion, however.

The detriments, actual and potential, are somewhat easier to document: eating quickly is dangerous to the body in that we skip essential steps in the digestive process; activating stress reactions during eating also interferes with normal digestion; and there is a strong potential for future harm to Tom, if he continues to justify acting self-destructively when people do not perform as he wishes.

Step Five: Pleasures and Dislikes of the Speaker

Tom, like almost anyone who perceives himself or herself as a victim, probably does take some pleasure in telling off his mother. He may feel a sense of power: even though he is making himself sick, at least he is not cringing in silence. He is “standing up for himself.” Oddly enough, by falsely blaming his mother for his own actions, he may not feel so guilty about what he has done. (After all, he’s not responsible.)

On the other hand, Tom is unlikely to be pleased by this self-constructed universe in which he feels obliged to act out destructive rituals in response to the actions of others. He probably strongly dislikes the role of victim which he has created for himself. And as long as he sees himself as a victim of his mother, he is likely to cultivate negative feelings toward her, thereby reducing the probability of the two developing a mutual pleasure bond.

Step Six: Productivity in Terms of the Speaker's Goals

Any fallacy can be measured for productivity in terms of any goal which the speaker seeks. Thus, a given fallacy could be productive, counter-productive, or non-productive, depending upon the goal by which it is measured.

In terms of the possible goal of getting his mother to stop harassing him during meals, Tom's fallacy is non-productive or even counter-productive. She responds with sarcasm: "Just like a Metropolitan star!"

On the other hand, if he wishes to broaden the breach between himself and his mother, he is modestly successful; thus, the fallacy would be productive, from this different perspective.

Therefore, a fallacy is not properly called merely productive or counter-productive or non-productive. The productivity of the fallacy can only be measured in terms of whether it furthers, retards, or has no noticeable effect upon a specific goal.

Step Seven: A Sane Translation

Typically, in dealing with translations of attribution fallacies, two suggestions are helpful: first, take the speaker out as object of the verb, and put him or her in as the subject; second, change the causal word into a temporal expression (“then”) or a form of coordination (“and”).

Thus, “It’s you that make me rush through meals with your hawklike attention to every bite I take” might become: “You have been observing my every bite with hawklike attention, and I have been rushing through my meals.” Each of us has done exactly what we have done. We can choose to continue in this way, or one or the other of us can choose to do something else.

I Hate Doing Fallacy Analyses

You have the power to put what I have expressed into a part of your brain where you will almost never use it again. No one can debug your brain computer without some cooperation on your part.

Unless you choose to perform fallacy analyses upon the erroneous sentences which are generated by your brain, your computer is going to present you with dangerously defective pictures of the universe.

It is normal to attach emotions such as anger and fear and sadness and boredom and aversion to mental maintenance and defallacization.

We have cherished our superstitions. We have resisted giving up our suffering. Without a major reduction in our negative cultural stereotypes, the survival of human civilization will continue to be precarious.

The Pathetic Fallacy

In literary study, the term “pathetic fallacy” (coined by Ruskin in Modern Painters, Volume 3, Part IV, Chapter xii) has come to refer to writings in which the emotions of a human being are attributed to inanimate nature.

On the one hand, it could be argued that the pathetic fallacy is a charming ornament to a poem; and if the usage is peripheral or clearly playful, perhaps this is true. On the other hand, it may be another needless encouragement toward insanity.

To call the sea cruel or the day sad is a misrepresentation of the facts, and they lead us away from what is taking place. According to Ruskin, such actions can lead to “a falseness in all our impressions of external things:...”

In a world filled with the propaganda of the greedy, I do not find it wise for a writer to implant erroneous personifications of malice or sadness in our environment. If we are to associate negative emotions with the air, earth, sky, and water, then they would be more appropriately directed at the human depredation which is poisoning the nests of all living creatures.

A Fallacy Analysis Is Never Complete

Confucius spoke of the necessity of using the right terms in describing our experience. Many translations have been offered to designate this need: right name, the rectification of names, the right phrase, and appropriate nomenclature. Confucius taught that a king who is no longer kinging is no longer king. We might say that what is going on is only going on for as long as it is going on.

In *How to Talk Sense*, it is my intention to point out what I think are clear cut errors of thinking which are built into the very grammar of our language. I think this information is the proper domain of all language teachers everywhere, for all people at all times. We have looked at specific ways we can translate or transform erroneous sentences into more accurate statements, always with an eye open to additional errors which may have crept in with the correction or been missed in the first examination.

A fallacy analysis is never complete. It is always tentative. It is only offered as one's best performance at that time to describe the salient features of our experience in a particular situation. And although no defallacization process is ever complete, this fact does not mean that we need to dwell endlessly upon it. Defallacization is merely a technique to be used whenever we find it appropriate.

CHAPTER XII

PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHY

I

The Philosopher, Confucius, and the Pope

It may seem a small slip when we call a person a philosopher, a writer, a killer, a lover, or. We may think it irrelevant or insignificant that anyone is only doing what they're doing when they're doing it, and not doing it when they're not doing it.

I may misinterpret Confucius' meaning concerning appropriate nomenclature—what is often called the “rectification of names” or more literally “right name”—but it seems to that part of what he is getting at is this: when the king is no longer kinging, the king is no longer king. Similarly, the Pope is only popping when he's popping; and there are strict agreements about how the Pope can pope and how he is not to pope.

I recall a troubled student of clinical psychology for whom this aspect of nouncing became a central part of an experience of clarification.

II**Confessions of a Troubled Psychology Student**

I guess I have only been psychologizing when I was psychologizing and not when I've not. I have psychologized: I have assisted folks to cope more effectively in their lives. And I have been not psychologizing, too. A lot of the trouble that I'm in now is on account of me choosing not to do what I knew was appropriate. I even gave my not-doing a name: laziness. That was my personal curse word, the word I used like a prayer or a mantra to drag myself down. I fought to maintain my position of laziness against anyone and anything in the universe. When active and honest people came into my orbit, I criticized them and asked them for favors and discounted their feelings.

One trouble with this culture is that it is too rewarding at all levels of human interaction to those who are willing to hurt and exploit people. In a way, the deepest lore of human culture and civilized education (I call it seduction) is the lore of lies and deception, known in the west as logic, propaganda and sales techniques, feminine wiles, ways of handling women, advertising, press agent tactics, election tricks, and knowing the law so you can steal without committing a crime.

We have all worked to make deception a popular and rewarding activity.

III

Philosophy and Religion

When we take another noun jump from philosopher to philosophy, we may find that we forget that we are still referring to folks doing stuff. The same is true for “religion” and any -ism.

Your list of human acts that you want to include under philosophying and religioning may not be the same as mine, but at least this grounding in actions will provide us with the means to make an interlocking list which will represent our views: what we both include; what each of us includes that the other does not; what behaviors we both exclude; and what each of us excludes that the other does not.

When we do not keep in mind that we are talking about people’s actions, abstract nouns can easily become forces—parts of what I have been calling noun-attribution combinations.

The purpose of Newspeak was not only to provide a medium of expression for the world-view and mental habits proper to the devotees of Ingsoc, but to make all other modes of thought impossible. It was intended that when Newspeak had been adopted once and for all and Oldspeak forgotten, a heretical thought—that is, a thought diverging from the principles of Ingsoc—should be literally unthinkable, at least as far as thought is dependent on words.

From George Orwell' s 1984

(New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1949),
p. 303.

Neo-Prescriptivism

I think that some prescriptivists in the past called for conformity to rules of proper grammar which largely ignored common sense. Grammatical correctness superseded questions of evidence and logic.

The neo-prescriptivist takes the position that we are unlikely to survive unless we choose to revise our ways of putting our lives into words. It is everyone's business that we challenge and improve the accuracy of our understanding and our description of the universe and our place in it. The neo-prescriptivist works against malicious and careless lies.

CHAPTER XIII

COMBINATIONS OF FALLACIES

Some fallacies combine easily. For instance, the present tense fallacy and the attribution fallacy join easily in sentences such as “You make me sick” and “You make me feel so good.” (Such statements are very powerful commands to the body. Be careful what you tell yourself to do.)

Another frequent combination is the nouning fallacy and the attribution fallacy: “My anger made me do it”; “My timidity held me back.” (Statements like these are likely to lead us into automatically repeating certain behaviors.)

This nouning-attribution combination—or the noun-att combo—unjustifiably divides an event into a cause and an effect. Suddenly, there is a “me” and an “anger,” and it is this thing called “anger” that is causing me to act irresponsibly. I am not responsible. It is my anger that is the cause. And my anger is asserted as “something” beyond my control.

In effect, the noun-att combo is often a false dichotomy followed by a false cause: Senioritis is getting me down.

The Noun-Attribution Combination

Let's consider the two following sentences: Depression strikes more women than men. Women are more vulnerable to depression than men.

Both sentences are examples of the noun-attribution combination. We separate a piece of the behavior, call it a noun, and then turn the noun into a causal agent. Seen within this kind of context, depression becomes almost a Platonic ideal beyond our capacity to perceive directly. Or it implies an almost viral condition: there are depressions running around, and one might grab you at any time. And they attack women more frequently than men, as is evident from the statistics on depression.

A saner translation might go something like: women feel depressed more frequently than men. As we look behind this new statement, other realms of possibilities arise: women may have more provocation for depression; women may feel freer to express their feelings of depression than men; women may get rewarded more frequently for showing feelings of depression.

When we see depression as a behavior which we are emitting—and not a virus which attacks us—then it is easier to change the behavior, assuming for the moment that we wish to change the behavior. Depression is an emotion. Emotions are made up of chatter and physical sensations. The sentences which we produce during depression can be analyzed and reprogrammed, or they can be stilled. The physical sensations can be experienced out by the use of Shape-Volume-Substance (S-V-S). (Body Scanner chapter.)

Further, if we are living in a situation which is difficult, we may wish to exercise our animal rights and move. (Most plants have to stay there and take whatever happens.)

In effect, the noun-att combo is a curse, a verbalization which brings about and maintains a behavior which is difficult to change so long as we see it as a causal noun, and not a chosen behavior. As long as the depression is “out there” waiting to get us, we are the innocent victims. When we see that acting depressed is something that WE DO, then we can choose to do something else.

Even further, acting depressed doesn't have to be such a big deal. We can act depressed for a while, and then we can act another way for a while. We don't have to get depressed about acting depressed.

The Adj-Att Combo

The adj-ing-attribution combination—the adj-att combo—comes in many shapes and sizes. Sometimes, it is very close to the noun-att combo: “His churlish personality made him rude.” The adverbial use of “too” and “so” is frequent: “I’m too shy to speak up”; “He’s so drunk he can’t walk.”

Clearly, the noun-att combo and the adj-att combo also combine easily with the present tense fallacy: “Her virtue keeps her from lying”; “Her cheerful disposition makes her happy.”

On the beneficial side, sometimes the use of these fallacies may have led us to do positive things which we might otherwise have avoided. They are, in effect, commands to our bodies. However, as you examine your own behavior, I suspect you will find that we have more often used these commands to negative ends. Seeing our behavior as derived from traits leads us away from appropriately exercising the powers we have over ourselves.

Let me close with a look at the attraction that the noun-att and adj-att combos have as apparently logical arguments:

Very sad people cannot reach out to others.

I am a very sad person.

Therefore, I cannot reach out to others.

The statements are not true. The conclusion is valid. The conclusion is not true.

CHAPTER XIV

DEALING WITH FALLACIES

As we begin to put this material into practice, some problems arise again and again. For instance, if we present the Attribution Fallacy without Shape-Volume-Substance (or a similar technique), we are actually giving people something they may use as an additional excuse for self-destructive or counter-productive behaviors. After all, before all this marvelous information about fallacies, people had the satisfaction of blaming others for their discomforts. Now they have no outsider to blame; and they have the added problem that they are doing it to themselves and have no recognizable way to stop.

It is important that we not leave people unaware of how to decondition undesired emotional responses. Otherwise, we are going to place them in the position of many Christians who would be very glad to love their neighbors, if they could only figure out how to do it. (Does this sound like the patient whose doctor tells her that she must relax? Not to worry, Doctor has a new relaxercizing drug with very few side effects.) No one wants to be walking around pretending not to be disturbed and flashing grotesque smiles in a strained expression of love—a serious problem for ministers, teachers, psychologists, and perfect parents.

As we familiarize ourselves with the fallacies, it becomes easier to recognize them. People everywhere seem committed to speaking about themselves and the universe in ways that are erroneous, counter-productive, and dangerous. Two reactions are common among the cognoscenti: one is to feel that we are better than everyone else (“Yes, my dear, I used to discuss myself in destructive terms, too.”); another is to attach a lot of chatter and tension to the ubiquitous fallacies, our own or other people’s (“How can they be so stupid after all the time I spent explaining this stuff to them” or “I must be terminally crazy if I’m still making up all these same fallacies about myself”).

As far as feelings of superiority are concerned, whether or not we come into contact with linguistic fallacies is, even for the assiduous student, a matter of accident; and anyone can learn them—anyone who takes the time to learn them. Oddly enough, the investment in a formal discipline may be a barrier to learning and applying the fallacies, because so often a special set of fallacies may seemingly be an integral part of the discipline: for instance, a philosophy student may have trouble with paradoxes because they seem to break the principle of contradiction.

To use the errors of others and ourselves as a reason for our own chatter and tension is obviously dangerous. Instead, what we have is another opportunity to practice fallacy analysis Shape-Volume-Substance, and volitional stillness. It is GOOD NEWS when we catch ourselves in a fallacy. We can rejoice in the ritual cleansing of our brains in a fallacy analysis topped off with a sane transformation of our old garbage. (This may seem obvious from a theoretical point of view, but my best students have at least occasionally attached discomfort to catching themselves in a fallacy.)

On the other hand, it is normal in our culture to notice that what we are doing is dangerous to ourselves and then keep right on doing it, sometimes because we are comfortable in our routines and sometimes because we don't know how to change. (Have another cup of coffee, puff on a cigarette, piece of chocolate, shot of liquor, or a glass filled with a drink that we call soft.)

We may wonder how we can best share our experience of the fallacies. Often, it is tempting to use them as a way of winning arguments and making people wrong. Needless to say, they are not likely to be as pleased as we would like by our great wisdom. A gentle approach is sometimes the answer. If someone utters a major fallacy at a key moment, it can be very effective to say softly, almost to oneself, a sane translation of the fallacy. They say: "God, I'm stupid." And we say quietly: "Yes, you did something that got you into difficulties."

They say: "You're making me mad." We say: "You've been attaching a lot of anger to what I've been doing."

Every situation must be observed in its uniqueness. Nothing is automatically the appropriate response to a given event. Sometimes, perhaps quite often, an appropriate response might be wordless observation. At other times, a confrontation might be proper. And at all times, we can choose to be open to a totally new, spontaneous, appropriate response.

I Made a Mistake

The discovery of an error
is not an appropriate time
for a ritual self hate ceremony.

It is a good time
for a microscopic telescopic view
of the many details that contributed
to what and how a particular event unfolded,
is unfolding,
and possible paths of future unfolding.

CHAPTER XV

SOURCING THE FORCE OF MODALS

In linguistics, modals are verbs like will/would, shall/should, may/might, can/could, must, and ought. The meanings of modals are often quite complicated. (Two of the most difficult books in our bibliography are about modals.) Furthermore, often the meaning of a modal is deliberately or accidentally masked from us. One modal may even be used to “explain” another: we may be told that we must do something because we should because we are supposed to because we have to because we are to because we have got to because we ought to.

A modal often masks a “because I want X.” For instance, if you hear, “You should brush your teeth,” that “should” might mean “because I want to”:

- a. sell more toothpaste and brushes;
- b. kiss a clean-smelling mouth;
- c. avoid future dental bills;
- d. save you future pain and trouble.

You Shouldn't Smoke

A modal might express the value of improved relations (“I think you should go ahead and help your friend out”), increased sales (“You should advertise with us”), improved goods and/or services (“You should do it this way”), reduced danger (“You should drive more to the right”), reduced harm (“You shouldn't smoke”), self-cultivation (“You should keep up with current events”), cost-effectiveness (“You should do it more quickly”).

Thus, the modal may mean that the speaker wants us to do something, and that something may be to our benefit or not. Does the toothpaste salesperson really have just our best interests at heart? In other cases, we may ultimately be faced with threats of death, pain, damnation, imprisonment, or loss of affection, money, reputation, health, shelter, security, livelihood, or property.

A modal might be associated with an obligation based upon expressed or implied agreements, formal or informal. If two people agree to divide up financial responsibilities and one of the partners fails to perform, we are likely to hear a succession of modals from the injured party.

I Can't

The ultimate source of a modal's force may be legal, moral, scriptural, personal preference, physical danger, material or spiritual benefit, local customs, etc. When we source the force of a modal, all we are doing is examining the possible meanings expressed or implied by the speaker. When a child asks a parent "Why should I?" the child is seeking the source of the modal. Another version of that question could be: "What will you do if I don't?"

Formal studies of modals have sought to list all of the possible meanings in particular societies. Here, however, in sourcing the force of a modal, we limit ourselves to the particular situation at a particular time. Nevertheless, complexities occur at this level as well. For instance, the word "can't" may imply a current inability (I can't swim (but I can learn)), a constitutional inability (I can't run a hundred miles an hour (even if I practice)), and a current lack of desire (I can't come over tonight).

I Would've

Some people feel rewarded whenever they can define themselves as the modal or command giver, say, in the role of boss, foreman, or officer in charge. Even if the content of the command comes from above, they may still feel powerful in passing on the word. Sometimes, the command may come in the form of a question (“John, would you close the door?”) which is designed to require the listener to validate himself or herself as cooperative, as willing to do little things that the commander could do for himself or herself.

We often use expressions like “would have,” “could have,” and “should have” as ways of leading the listener away from the fact that we did not perform the action under discussion: “I would have completed my work, but you....” Whenever you are sourcing the force of modals of this kind, remember that part of their meaning is “didn't.”

Why Should I?

Commands and requests are similar to some modals. To source the force of a modal, we may make guesses, ask questions of the speaker, or seek other information. “Drink your milk” or “You ought to drink your milk” could mean: I don’t want to waste this milk that is about to go bad; I want to strengthen your teeth so that I will not have to pay big dental bills later; I love you as myself, and I want you to have plenty of calcium in your body for optimal growth of all parts of your body; I want to sell more milk and make more money.

Quite often, the statement YOU + MODAL translates clearly into I WANT YOU TO.

As in the case of modals, a lot of the important information about commands is often not to be found in the words of the sentence, but rather in the situation in which the sentence occurs: the nature of the promise or threat or hope implied by the speaker. Telling someone to do something is roughly equivalent to saying that they should do it. Consequently, it is wise to source the force of commands and requests, just as we would a modal.

Do it!

Why should I?

Will I See You Tomorrow?

“Will” and “shall,” along with the future form of the present tense, are usually an over-extension of the data base of the speaker: we cannot know that we will see someone tomorrow; however, we can make a plan to do so. Thus, a future tense may or may not be a future tense fallacy, depending upon the situation under discussion and the meaning intended by the speaker. Each case must be subjected to a decision-making process, and of course, no case is ever closed, because new data may come to light which will change our earlier judgment. Furthermore, modal fallacies, like any fallacies, may usefully be subjected to fallacy analysis, as described earlier.

The significance of sourcing the force of a modal is that it allows us to bring more of the facts of the situation into our conscious consideration. Too often we have unconsciously entered into agreements which we might not have accepted, had we seen the particulars as understood by our partner.

There is no place that isn't looking at you.

You must change your life.

From "Archaic Torso of Apollo"

Rainer Maria Rilke (1875-1926)

Transformational Grammars and Deep Structures

The defallacization process and the sourcing of the force of modals are, in a double sense, transformational: they make modest use of some conventions of Chomskian transformational grammar, and they provide a practical path for personal transformation, for as we change our use of language, we change our modes of thinking—our very self.

Deep structures, in Chomskian transformational parlance, refer to underlying sentences which are presupposed by any given utterance, according to ordered rules and sets of rules. Deep structures are the simple sentences out of which we build more complex sentences. In addition, these simple sentences—these deep structures—are themselves the product of rules. Thus, deep structures are generated by rules, and then the deep structures are transformed by rules into surface structures. Surface structures are what ordinary people would call sentences.

If we choose to construct our surface structures out of deep structures built of carelessly chosen nouns, adjectives, tenses, and modals—unjustifiable assertions of cause and habituality—then we create a universe of superstitious words, our own little hell.

The transformation rules and the philosophy of this book direct our attention toward Subject + VERB + PAST and Subject + VERB + NOW—toward what was and is taking place. Too often our ordinary ways of speaking lead us away from what was and is happening. Cut off from what is, we become easy prey to error and to those who would have us make errors.

Modals

I am going to end this chapter with a short list of sentences with modals for your consideration:

You must stay on guard duty, soldier.

You'd better do what your father said.

Thou shalt not murder.

You have to stay here tonight.

You'd better not take that.

You should check out what your brother said.

You ought to button your shirt.

You ought to take your vitamins.

You must use smoke detectors.

You need to lock your doors.

You've got to go to work now.

You should insure your belongings.

I would have done it.

I should have done it.

I used to could swim.

You might should say you' re sorry.

You may leave the table now.

I'll see you tomorrow.

I can't come over now.

I can't remember names.

CHAPTER XVI

THE TROIKA TECHNIQUE

What is the Troika Anyway?

The troika, of course, is not a what. You might call the troika three interlocking things. You could also think of the troika as a toolbox of three major techniques—processes or actions which anyone can choose to perform.

Rudely put, the troika encourages three activities. Shut up! Pay attention! Talk sense!

In a friendlier fashion, one might say that the troika points a way to peace of mind, physical relaxation, enhanced perception, and intellectual clarity.

The first two legs of the troika are volitional stillness and observational unstressing. The third leg is a combination of defallacization and modal sourcing.

Whatever code words we use to point to these practices, first, we quiet down the intrusive mental chatter, which some of us have identified with ourselves and which often interferes with whatever we would rather be doing at any given moment.

Second, we observe the physical pains and stresses which we have inadvertently been cultivating, thus allowing the body to communicate internally—instead of breaking the normal perceptual linkages, as we are normally taught to do by our culture.

Third, we look for fallacies, such as the nouning fallacy, the adjing fallacy, the present tense fallacy, and the attribution fallacy; and we source the force of modals. In effect, we examine our language for significant errors in logic and hidden meanings.

Some Synergistic Aspects of the Troika Technique

As in the situation of the three trained horses that traditionally draw the Russian carriage called a troika, each of the three activities of the Troika Technique can assist the others to function more effectively. Fallacy analysis invites us to observe more carefully what is expressed and to compare that verbal map with our own sense experience. These evaluations often lead us to see that we are experiencing a mixture of chatter and physical stress, which can be alleviated or extinguished by volitional stillness and Shape-Volume-Substance, among other techniques.

The reduction of chatter allows us to examine more coolly the alternatives of fallacy analysis, without the constant intervention of extraneous attitudes. Chatter reduction also greatly increases the speed and depth of Shape-Volume-Substance, as well as any act of observation.

Shape-Volume-Substance helps us to perform fallacy analysis in that we are less distracted by pain and physical stress. Shape-Volume-Substance is an excellent preparatory step toward volitional stillness; it makes the stillness stiller.

A pre-dental student reported to me that he first gained volitional stillness through Shape-Volume-Substance. He perceived a place in his brain that appeared as a row of pulsings. He observed the pulsings into motionlessness—they seemed to him the source of his chatter—and then he was still.

As you begin to play with the Troika, you are likely to discover dimensions beyond those suggested here. For instance, reading in stillness allows the words of our chosen author to move more directly into the brain.

Expectations Lead Statistically to Disappointments

We all know what expectations lead to, at least some of the time—
DISAPPOINTMENT. Does that mean that we should not expect anything? A martial arts teacher might say: Expect nothing. Be prepared for everything. Others might say that they have tried to not expect, but they found themselves expecting anyway.

Our problems with expectation are similar to our problems with other activities that we think are not appropriate: in spite of our good intentions, the behavior occurs. We could start walking around with a mental list of what we are not supposed to do, and then we discover that the list has not helped us to stop and that the list gets in the way of being here now.

One thing that we can do with inappropriate behavior is keep our eyes open for it as part of our general observation of our selves and our neighbors. Then when we see our selves doing something dangerous, we can choose to do something else instead.

Expectation is an emotion. Emotion is composed of chatter and physical sensation. Chatter can be defallacized or stilled. Physical sensations can be reduced or dissolved by practicing the Shape-Volume-Substance Technique (the Body Scanner).

Blaming our selves for our self-destructive behaviors just gets us deeper in the hole. If we don't like what we have just discovered we're doing, we can do something else. And with practice, you will find that you can make these discoveries sooner and sooner. In time, these undesired behaviors will disappear, because of the choices you made.

The Horrible Truth

Most of us have a changing set of truisms that we replay for our selves over and over again, secret verities about our selves and the universe which we seldom share or test against the experiences of others. Many of these sentences focus on what we think is the horrible truth about our life situation. Virtually all of them will be found erroneous in some way, if they are checked for factuality and fallaciousness, or if the modals are sourced for their power.

Typically, these horrible truths will make it seem that we are less powerful than we actually are. Examples would be sentences like the following: I'm not good enough for that; that's too complicated for me; no one I love would ever love me.

Part of what has kept these sentences as a map of our situation is our unwillingness to examine them in detail and our acquiescence in making informal confirmations without careful observation. Thus, every time that we block our selves, we may choose to attribute our own blocking to the effect of events which we think are beyond our control.

Through checking out each situation in its uniqueness, we will find that we often have turned away from choices which were and are available to us, new worlds beyond the horrible truth.

CHAPTER XVII

A FEW COMMON OBJECTIONS TO THE TROIKA TECHNIQUE

The Fallacy Revelations Are Irrelevant and Insignificant

Yes, what the fallacy analyses reveal is often irrelevant and insignificant. Three kinds of results are most common:

1. No fallacy or danger is found. (Note that there are dangerous truths, too.)
2. A fallacy is found, but it is not significant in this particular context.
3. We find a fallacy with actual or statistical or potential harmfulness.

In effect, I am suggesting that you change those characterizations which you yourself upon inspection find to be erroneous and dangerous. I advise that you transform these fallacies into linguistic forms which you in your circumstances at a particular time find by your own examination to be more accurate for your own purposes.

It Doesn't Matter To Me That I Tell Lies As Long As I Know They' re Lies

If you mean this in a non-malicious way—that is, you have been going along with apparently harmless lies and you think you know what you're doing—then your actions may be appropriate. Indeed, even if you were to give up the practice of habitually and unconsciously constructing dangerous and erroneous sentences, you would still have them available to you as options. Actually, all of us do a fair amount of multiple mental bookkeeping as we move from group to group, from individual to individual. It would not be wise to correct the language of an arresting officer doing her duty, for example.

On the other hand, if you are revealing yourself as one of the consciously manipulative people who are willing to endanger themselves and their neighbors in return for short term financial or other benefits, I can tell you that you are bringing trouble to yourself and you are quite easily recognizable despite the apparent effectiveness of your disguises.

Guilty

You've oversimplified everything. Tenses, modals, and fallacies are far more complex than you suggest. Learning to quiet chatter and observe in-externally requires hours of practice for most people, something that few westerners have been willing to do, except for serious athletes and musicians.

What's more, there's nothing new here. It's all been said before and better by the American Indians, Richard Bach, Buddha, Fritjof Capra, Castaneda and Don Juan, Chuang Tzu, Kenneth Cohen, Confucius, Eknath Easwaren, Werner Erhard and est, the Essence, Buckminster Fuller, Tim Gallwey, the Gnostics, Goethe, Gurdjieff, Guru Nanak and the Sikhs, the Hanifs, S. I. Hayakawa, Heraclitus, Hillel, the Hindus, Jean Houston, Oscar Ichazo and Arica, Isherwood, Jesus, Wendell Johnson, Ben Kimpel, Korzybski and General Semantics, Lao Tzu and the Taoists, George Leonard, John Lilly, Maharishi and TM, the gentler martial artists, *Mind Magic*, Orwell, Ouspensky, Raymond Van Over, Joseph Chilton Pearce, Neil Postman, Rilke, Edward Sapir, shamans everywhere, sports psychologists, Gary Snyder, Walter Stace, Lucien Stryk, the Sufis, D.T. Suzuki, the Tantricists, Thoreau, Alan Watts, Charles Weingartner, Whorf, Whitman, Franklin Williams, the yogis, and Zoroaster—just to name some of my favorites.

All the Bad News

Neither you nor the earth nor the sun
is the center of what is.

The earth is not flat, nor is it round.

Newton was right

and then wrong

and then right again.

The universe is not composed

of people and things,

of nouns and adjectives.

All that is

is deep structures, interlocking ings.

PART IV

DEEP STRUCTURES

CHAPTER XVIII

MORE TECHNIQUES!

The Timer Technique

If we are dealing with an activity that we have been actively avoiding or associating a lot of discomfort with, our attention span may seem rather limited. The slogan of the timer technique is: **I CAN DO ANYTHING FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.**

The timer technique can be used with the bridging technique we introduced in part I, or you can do it by itself. With the bridging technique, as we come out of Shutati-Shumawi, what we do is twist a kitchen timer to a fifteen minute setting and then go on to our work. (Be sure to have everything set up first.)

Fifteen minutes later, when the bell rings, we have some choices: we can keep on with what we have been doing; we can take a break and go back to our task; we can set up another task; we can go back to our normal, unconscious behavior; we can make some other choice.

I think you will be surprised by the power of your kitchen timer. You will find that you can do more in fifteen minutes than would seem possible. You may find that your associations of discomfort can be put away for the few minutes you are working under the timer. You may even come to agree that **WE CAN DO ANYTHING FOR FIFTEEN MINUTES.**

Tick, tick.

The Double Timer Technique

Just as we can set the timer to run for fifteen minutes while we do the task we are avoiding, we can also set the timer for when we want to start the work period. For example, in order to get this sheet written, I went out in the sun with my timer. I set it for around fifteen minutes. After I had been stretching for a while, the timer dinged. Then I came in here where the typewriter is and set the timer for exactly fifteen minutes. This is the first time that I have ever completed what I thought might be a difficult task, all before the last ding. Usually, I have used the double timer technique on things like state and federal income tax returns. There's the ding.

The Glass of Water Technique

The Glass of Water Technique seems to me an effective way of bringing a version of the placebo effect within the reach of everyone.

First, we fill a glass with water. Then as we look at the water and the little bubbles in the glass, we visualize what we would like the glass of water to accomplish within our bodies, i.e., increased curative power, greater concentration, reduced stress, etc.

Next, looking at the glass of water, we empower the water to do what we want to do. We “see” in the water the little molecules of power moving around.

As soon as we see the power in the water, we are ready to drink half of the water and to feel the pieces of power in our stomach branching out through our bodies.

Five or ten minutes later, review the sensations in the stomach as they reach out through us.

Then five or ten minutes after that, drink the rest of the water. Lastly, review the physical sensations a few minutes later, and be doing what you want to do.

The Old Drunkard's Trick

The wine was almost gone.
We called for another Li Po,
but he did not return this time.

An old man
who had been sitting among us without a word
stood up.
I might even say that he arose,
for he raised himself from the ground in a single motion.
I realized that I had not acknowledged his existence.

He spoke in a strong but not loud voice,
and after he began to speak,
he did not stop until the end.
He drew a water bottle from beneath his cloak
and held it out away from his body.

If the young people would allow an old man their attention.
Cleanse your mouths with this pure water,
and I will show you an old drunkard's trick.

We passed the bottle.

I've drunk more wine than any two of you
but not these last few years.

The skins have dried up for me and mine.

He took all the wine and poured it into one bottle.

Put your finger on the spot
where you would like your mind to go.
You may choose enlightenment
paradise
visions of power
where to go and what to do
to achieve your secret desire.

When the bottle comes to you,
take a tiny sip
and slush it all around inside,
in front of the teeth
and down to the root of the tongue.
Let the mouth and nose breathe the wine.
Let the self taste the wine for the first time.
Then lay you down and suck the wine of your mouth.
Let it take you to your chosen place.

He took the first turn,
and I the last.

As I drifted off to paradise,
did I see the old man
chugging down the dregs?

I You

Last Order First

When I was in the army, my instructions were to follow the last order given. Thus, if I was following one order and an officer gave me another, I was to follow the new order.

The first thing to do in playing “Last Order First” is to set aside fifteen minutes to an hour of time. What we are to do is follow whatever the brain tells us to do, within reason. (Slightly strange actions are fine, but don’t do anything dangerous to you or the neighbors.)

Typically, when we start this technique, we may feel ourselves moved in several directions at once or jerking from one beginning action to another. We may get an instruction to get a glass of water, but on the way to the sink, we get an order to wash the bathroom floor. The instruction is just to follow the last order.

Ordinarily, we receive many mental directions in the course of a day—wise, dangerous, and foolish. Perhaps not so surprising, we pay little attention to the wise reminders, and we often act upon foolish and dangerous suggestions. When we tell ourselves and others that we have forgotten something, usually it is that we have repeatedly refused to act upon a series of reminders. We did not forget. We refused to follow clear instructions.

What we learn from a given instance of “Last Order First” is unique to each experience. We may find a change in the quality of instructions once we start paying serious attention to them. We may find that some suggestions are examples of mental chatter, whereas others are extraordinarily wise.

While practicing the technique, we follow all orders, just as they come, as long as they are not harmful. After the game, we may wish to be more selective.

Two results are common: we learn to follow more of the good ideas; and we start receiving more of those good ones. Have you found your VALID INNER VOICE?

A Pond in a Forest with No Ripples

A traditional visualization that I have seen in dojos and on TV invites us to create a clear picture of a pond in a forest with no ripples. Certain benefits seem likely: an increase in visual perception and visual memory; a quieter mind/body.

In my own practice, I have usually started by just roughing in the shape of the pond. Then I put in two of the main trees of the forest. Above the trees, I visualize the blue sky and a couple of clouds. Then as I move back to the pond, I fill in some more trees and add bushes and grasses around the pond, ending by allowing the ripples of the pond to relax and smooth themselves out.

After years of practice, occasionally I can put the entire picture before me in one action. At other times, I still go through the steps.

You, of course, need not follow these steps in this way. The important thing is just to DO IT: see the pond in the forest with no ripples.

The Intestines Outside of Body Technique

I first encountered a version of this technique when John B. Marr, Professor of Psychology at the University of Arkansas, presented it to me as a way of reducing the discomfort of a spastic colon. A couple of years later I was surprised to find something quite close to it in Arthur Waley's translation of Monkey (New York: Grove Press, 1943), p. 242.

When they had tied him to a stake and ripped open his belly, Monkey calmly took out his guts and after manipulating them for some time put them back inside him, coil for coil exactly in the right place. Then he blew on his belly with magic breath and the hole closed up.

In my own use of this technique, I have begun by imagining the right thumb as a scalpel cutting an imaginary line from the top of the pubic bone to the sternum (the place where the ribs meet above the diaphragm), passing through the belly button.

Step Two. Place both hands on the stomach area and imagine pulling apart the two sides of the cut so that you are looking at your stomach and your intestines.

Step Three. Cup your stomach in your left hand, and pat it with your right hand.

Step Four. Human adults have some fifteen to thirty feet of small intestines. What we are going to do now is imagine ourselves holding and petting the intestine right from where it is attached to the stomach. Initially, we can place the first four feet or so in our lap. Then as we have more intestine to deal with, we can lift it over our head and drape it around our neck and back, like a snake charmer. When we have fifteen feet of Imaginary intestine draped and petted, then we are ready for the next step.

Step Five. The large intestine forms a large upside down U, linking the small intestine to the anus. Imagine grabbing the sides of the U and lifting the whole thing down on your lap. Then pet and rub it from beginning to end. (Don' t pull too hard on the end! It's attached.)

Step Six. Imagine grasping the large intestine and returning it to its place. Then replace the small intestine. All of this is to be done very gently.

Step Seven. Now imagine using both hands to bring the sides of the opening together.

Step Eight. The left thumb is your instrument for sealing the sides of the opening. Run it up from the top of the pubic bone to the sternum.

Step Nine. We end by patting and smoothing and jiggling everything back in place.

I want to add that I attached a lot of chatter and discomfort to this technique when it was presented to me by Dr. Marr. I thought that it was silly and messy. And deep inside, I didn't like the hidden implication that I was the one who was giving myself a spastic colon, and that I was the one who needed to stop doing this destructive act to myself. I preferred to think that my spastic colon was the result of actions by my family, friends, and colleagues.

Thus, I became angry—although I tried to hide it from Dr. Marr—when I came to step four and the sensation of a stitch in my colon began to fade away.

In the years since, I have occasionally used the entire technique. At other times, I have just given myself some judicious pats. It seems to me that I have learned not to twist up my guts every time something in the world was not quite to my liking.

Telling Someone to Tell You What to Do

The report from me and my students is that sometimes telling someone else to tell you what to do is a good way to convince yourself to get on with the job.

You can call up a friend and ask that he or she call you back in fifteen minutes and say: "Go start writing your paper NOW."

I won't pretend to understand the process, but you may feel an increase of power and willingness to work when you hear the voice of a friend telling you to do what you think would be best for you to do.

A wise friend might also call you back in an hour or two in order to see how you're coming along.

Groaners' Ward, Please

Although we have used our sigh, cry, and moan rituals (most of us) in attempts to modify other people's behaviors, some of us have not permitted our pure emotions of sighing, crying, and moaning to come through hardly at all. We have practiced holding down our pure emotions instead of experiencing them out through observation of what has happened and what is going on now. We are programmed to feel fear when confronted with the strange. We know our old destructive rituals, and we have survived using them.

I think it is extremely healthy to sigh, cry, and moan OCCASIONALLY, as long as we see no immediate counter-indications. I think that the best time for a deep sigh, a few sobs, or a long moan might be just as we come off a strong pure emotion. If we have been practicing holding back lots of pure emotions for many years, then we would do well to give deep expression to our sighs, cries, or moans. It may be that we are relaxing our hold-back muscles for the first time in years, at least during our waking hours.

And for the price that we pay for hospital rooms, I think that there should be a Groaners' Ward, or at least a Groaning Room. If we are ill, we could do a lot worse than groan and do shape-volume-substance on the pain, along with the rest of our physician's instructions. Vibrate that groan right down in there with the rest of your perception system.

Did I say, "Groan and bear it"?

The Avoidance Alarm and the False Alarm

It is important that we be ready to flee quickly from any area when an internal or external alarm sounds. We may at any time, for example, find ourselves in a place where the atmosphere will not support our life. At other times, it might be wise to move away casually or almost imperceptibly from a present danger.

This valid reaction to avoid danger can, however, in other circumstances get us into trouble, instead of out. If our alarm goes off when a topic comes up in conversation, we would do well to take a closer look, and not turn our attention elsewhere.

A verbal false alarm is often expressed as “I don’ t like this” or “I don’t want to hear this.” A frequent result is a diminution in perception. People who are concerned with cultivating themselves can use this alarm to alert themselves to the need for increased observation. (Even if we decide to run away from some place, we will run more efficiently if we stay aware of what is taking place.)

What we hate to see or hear is often exactly what we most need to observe closely.

Our culture teaches us to respond to our alarm of a physical-emotional emergency by interfering with our feedback-repair system and disturbing other ordinary organic functions. This is comparable to a fire fighter responding to a fire alarm by smashing the department' s communication network and going around town setting fires. We are the fire bugs of our body.

We can learn to use our power gently and with observation so that when things go wrong, we won't be quite so dangerous. We don't have to live our lives with one foot pushed down on the accelerator and the other foot firmly pressing the brake. We can learn to be ready to act with all our power in vast virtuosity.

A Place Where You're Not Allowed to Be a Complete Idiot

Select a spot which you don't frequent for long periods of time. My first place was an upstairs hall which I could pass through quickly without encountering any complexities, or so I thought. You might choose a spot at home and also one at work.

Don't choose to take dangerous actions against yourself and your neighbors while you're in your spot. Refrain from grinding out erroneous and judgmental commentaries about the universe.

As you pass through your spot, allow your self to feel its strength. Walk erectly. Flow smoothly. Act in ways which you think are appropriate. Observe.

The Rule of Three

The Rule of Three is to remind us that when we make a serious mistake in our behavior, we will discover at least three errors which preceded and contributed to our mistake, if we take the time to look.

Every situation is unique. Yet certain kinds of errors do reoccur for most people: we choose not to pay attention to our bodies and our surroundings, and so on the basis of incomplete or erroneous data, we make a mistake; we decide not to perform a decision making process, and thus we avoid seeing the significance of what we have observed; we ignore clear warnings (from the universe, our friends, or our own brains) and brazenly do something we know to be dangerous.

Without the Rule of Three, we are easily tempted into thinking that we have gained significant insight into our difficulties after finding one or two things which we did to contribute to our problems. The likelihood is that if we run up hard against something which hurts us, it is the result of many unwise decisions—at least three.

Founding a Growth Group

It may be that your growth group already exists. Take any training that is easily available, preferably within walking distance, so that you can get some good exercise going and coming. Look into the local “New Age” communication network (newspapers and bulletin boards). Priests of most every religion pass nearby you more frequently than you think. Reach out and let them touch you. And stay centered, defending your self at all times.

Many kinds of semi-commercial trainings are available widely: est, TM, Silva, Arica, yoga, aikido, t'ai chi, etc. Ask around for local people who offer short courses, formal and informal fora in which people share what they have learned of value in their lives. We can experience profound feelings of aliveness during the face-to-face transmission of knowledge.

You may find a place like the Tao Academy in Eureka Springs which brings cultivated people in to teach long and short programs. There are conventional churches and schools where valuable sharing is taking place. Look for informal study groups that meet in the evening at the library, or down in the church or school basement. Occasionally, you may have the pleasure of being the only student who shows up for an announced meeting with a great teacher.

As you talk to people, find those who share your path of “working on the self”—people with whom to walk and talk and eat and touch, people with whom you can delightfully share your existence. And let it be just fine with you when you enjoy yourself with your self.

You can start your own group. For instance, you could announce a meeting of people who would like to study a certain book one evening a week for X weeks. Or you might choose to open a forum for people to share valuable techniques. A democratic group might vote each time on what they would like to do the next time. You might or might not have:

- a. an opening meditation
- b. a presenter or group of presenters
- c. a back-up program, just in case
- d. a period for questions, announcements, requests, offerings
- e. meetings in public places and homes
- f. a closing meditation
- g. times when you invite new people and times when you don't.

Most important: keep working on your self. Don't let unnecessary actions impede your cultivation.

Advice

Breathe through your nose.

Swallow saliva, and spit out phlegm discreetly.

Chew your food.

Brush and floss your teeth after eating.

Grow some of your own food. Trade with your neighbors.

Wash and vigorously rub your body all over everyday.

Eat lots of fresh fruits and veggies.

Pray or meditate twice a day.

Stretch and exercise everyday.

Listen more than you talk.

Give up being right.

Study a language that's very different from your own.

Study a gentle martial art.

Sing and dance.

Play.

Share a massage now and then.

Find clean water to drink and clean air to breathe.

Swim.

Don't take yourself seriously.

Get a laugh out of what's going on.

Methods of Dealing with Other People' s Negative Feelings

1. We can accept the energy as just energy and experience it as a beneficial shower to cleanse and strengthen ourselves.
2. We can make a list of valid and semi-valid points that are a part of the negativity—things that we perhaps do not want to hear about our own behavior.
3. We can relax and ask to be told more.
4. We can “flip it”—turn the negative energy into positive energy.
5. We can be still and not do anything in particular.
6. We can recite a defense mantra or the Prayer of St. Francis.
7. We can create a bubble of invulnerability which deflects negativity away from us. Start the bubble as a tiny sud in the middle of your tum tum and let it expand until all of you is inside the bubble.
8. We can interpose a mirror between us and the source of negativity, and send it back where it's coming from.
9. We can tug a person further into negativity than they had originally intended, thus leading them to pull back from their current feelings.
10. Imagine yourself in their position dealing effectively with their problems.

CHAPTER XIX

WISDOM LITERATURE AND EVIL ART

Wisdom Literature and Evil Art

Wisdom literature:

the beauty
the pleasure
the value
of nurturing
our neighbors
and ourselves.

Evil art
smiles poison
into our nests.

Old devils:
best angels.

I You

Wisdom and Power

I packed my brain with words.
I obliged my intestines
to digest poison into my system.
I vomited the bowels of the earth
into the air I breathe.
I deftly tuned my powers away
from gently cultivating
myself and my neighbors.
Wise in my greed.
Blind in eye and ear and heart
to the path.

I You

A Motive of Profit

Will you tomorrow give and take
more money and perks and pensions,
teaching us to pair the pleasures of love
with the execution of violence,
convincing us to seek poison and destruction
as paths to beauty and happiness,
leading us away from self sufficiency
by the illusion of revolutionary acts,
twisting us to kill our selves in self defense,
training us to love waste?

Temptations

They will tell you how much you deserve
the pleasure, wealth, and power you can get
by harming yourself or your neighbors.

They will tell you how it's wise
to hurt yourself and your neighbors.
They'll say you're stupid not to.

They will tell you they won't help you anymore
unless you harm yourself or your neighbors.

They will tell you they will hate you
if you don't help them hurt themselves.

They will tell you they won't love you anymore.

People of Substances

My parents taught me how to talk
but didn't show me how to turn it off.
My teachers taught me how to write
but didn't tell me what the words could do.
My buddies taught me what to want and hate
but not the way to ease my pain.
Then people came to school with substances
and showed us how to numb our minds.

The Mean Little Kid

If you don't do what I say,
I'm going to make your life miserable.
And I have a lot to say,
a lot of things I want.

It hurts me
when you don't do what I say.
And if you hurt me,
then I have the right to hurt you.

Would You Rather Be Rich Or Beautiful?

Dangerous
to be born
rich or beautiful

enticed to negotiate
doing the least
to get the most

encouraged
to twist organs
when people don't obey.

The path to joy:
gentle service
to ourselves and our neighbors.

Chances Are

You've sabotaged
almost all your relationships.
You've taken pleasure
in harming yourself and your neighbors.
You have virtually never
applied yourself to anything.
You have thrown away
ideas as good as
the ones in this book.

Good-bye For Now

Look, I know that you know
that what you just did
was an act of underhanded manipulation.
I haven't put up with
my self doing that sort of thing
for quite some time.
I'm not going to put up with it from you.
I plan to remove my self from your presence
so that I won't inadvertently reward you in some way
for your sneaky tactics.

Someone Said Hillel Said

If you do not love your self,
who will love you?

If you do not love others,
what does that make you?

And if not now,
when?

Save the Last Dance for Me

Finding in you no other,
I took a turn with you.
Our selves as one,
we saw and spoke our truths.
We danced the dance of life.

I am holding those times gaily
during the last moments of our light.

Not Chaos

but deep structures are our being,
so deep no life can plumb the depth,
yet oh, that sight, that sight!

I You

The Path with a Heart

The path with a heart
leads to the places of the heart.

The path without a heart
leads to the community of the heartless.

A Vocation

Did you find something
better to do with your life
than bring peace to yourself
and your neighbors?

CHAPTER XX

THE END IS A BEGINNING

How to Quiet the Mind

We all need to work on an off switch to our mental chatter. We will not be able to see, remember, or react appropriately at key moments unless we practice quieting down the squawking chorus which has been implanted in our heads from the earliest times to the present by those who would use us unfairly instead of entering into a free exchange where all can benefit out of mutual service.

How to Quiet the Body

Contorting our bodies in rituals of emotional stress for extended periods of time is painful and destructive to our health. Stress, injury, and disease can be alleviated by periodically observing the internal functioning of the body.

How to Talk Sense

Our language leads us to see a particulated universe of oversimplified causalities. We have been taught to think more in terms of types of people and things than in clusters of interlocking systems.

We maintained a universe of words—a word world—of limitations: the habituality and particulation of nouns and adjectives and present tense verbs, the victim statements (X made me T), the disempowering commands (the curse of can't), and unexamined obligations (I am the king, and so you must serve me; I am a professional, and so I should get more than other people). We limit ourselves and our neighbors dangerously when we fail to challenge the hidden assertions of our language. I think I have only begun to see the ramifications of these problems, only begun to develop the tools. But what I had is now yours, if you wish to have it.

We are brothers and sisters in a universe which takes better care of us when we take better care of it and them and us. For we are us. There is no other.

What the Old Woman Said

I have no authority.

I seek no believers.

I speak only
of what I have seen
and heard.

I You

Livelihood

Study what you love
and make your living
sharing it.

I You

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- . Epistemics: The Science of Innovating. San Francisco: International Society of General Semantics, 1972. "Thus was I led on the primrose path of verbal knowledge. Thus was I brainwashed to the point of believing that the world around me and inside me is made of permanent natures that I perceive when I focus my attention on them" (140).
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- Castaneda, Carlos. Tales of Power. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974. "I've told you that the internal dialogue is what grounds us,' Don Juan said. 'The world is such and such or so and so, only because we talk to ourselves about its being such and such or so and so."

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- Easwaran, Eknath. The Mantram Handbook: Formulas for Transformation. Petaluma, CA: Nilgiri Press, 1977. “We are being truly spontaneous when we can change the habits of a lifetime overnight and not be oppressed by it” (145).
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ETC: A Review of General Semantics, 33, No. 2 (June 1976), 119—35. "If you take one of these nouns—measles—and make it into a verb, then it becomes, 'Mrs. Jones, your little boy appears to be measling,' which opens both your mind and her mind to the concept of disease as a process"(129).

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"My point is that, even in the case of public languages, coherence doesn't require a stable relation between the way the terms are used and the way the world is: What it requires is a stable relation between the way the terms are used and the way speaker believes the world to be" (71).

Fuller, R. Buckminster. I Seem to Be a Verb. New York: Bantam Books, 1970. "I live

on earth at present and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing—a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process—an integral function of the universe" (1).

Fung, Tu-Lan. A Short History of Chinese Philosophy. New York: The Free Press,

1966. "Wu-wei can be translated as 'having-no-activity' or 'non-action.' But...remember that the term does not actually mean complete absence of activity, or doing nothing. What it does mean is lesser activity or doing less. It also means acting without artificiality and arbitrariness" (100).

Gallwey, W. Timothy. The Inner Game of Tennis. New York: Random House, 1974.

"The first skill to learn is the art of letting go the human inclination to judge ourselves and our performance as good or bad. . . . When we unlearn how to be judgmental, it is possible to achieve spontaneous, concentrated play" (33).

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New York: Perennial Library, 1984. "Never let anyone control you with the pain and misery he or she chooses. This does not mean you should reject them, fight with them, abandon them, or beg them. . . . But what it does mean is that . . . you should deal with long-term sufferers as if they were not miserable at all" (202-3).

"The general rule that I am suggesting . . . is that when you want to correct someone, do it by saying, 'Let's take a look and see what is and is not working for me, for you, and for both of us. This means take a good look at my album wish book of events , your album, and the situation.' You may not be able to agree on exactly what the situation really is, but you do know whether it is working for you, and the other party knows the same. Then go ahead and try to work out a plan that will work better for both of you than what you have now" (166-7).

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- Hayakawa, S. I. Language in Thought and Action. 3rd edition. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Inc., 1972. "The meaning of 'yours' and 'mine' lies not in the external world, but in how we intend to act" (96).
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- James, William. The Varieties of Religious Experience. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1919. "The first thing the intellect does with an object is to class it along with something else....The next thing the intellect does is to lay bare the causes in which the thing originates" (9).

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“There are in a sense no crazy people; there are only crazy ways of behaving” (315).

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Korda, Michael. Power: How to Get It, How to Use It. New York: Random House, 1975. “For most, the idea that we are personally responsible for our own lives comes late, if at all” (254).

Korzybski, Alfred. Science and Sanity. 4th edition. Clinton, MA: The International Non-Aristotelian Library Publishing Co., 1973. “A map is not the territory it represents, but, if correct, it has a similar structure to the territory, which accounts for its usefulness”(58). “I reject the ‘is’ of identity entirely, because

identity is never found in this world. . . .”(93).

Leonard, George. The Ultimate Athlete. New York: Avon Books, 1974. “Our social machine turns its energy toward making all of life more standardized, reliable, predictable. Predictably, the effort often backfires” (244).

Ogden, C.K., and I.A. Richards. The Meaning of Meaning. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1923. “An inaccurate or irrelevant image is worse than no image at all” (61).

Ouspensky, P.D. The Psychology of Man’s Possible Evolution. New York: Vintage Books, 1974. “I found that the chief difficulty for most people was to realize that they had really heard new things. They always tried to contradict this in their minds and translate what they heard into their habitual language” (xii).

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- Rhinehart, Luke. The Book of est. New York: Molt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1976. "The only real thing in your life is your experience. Beyond that is either blackness or the illusory realm of belief and reasonableness" (137).

- Simeons, A.T.W. Man's Presumptuous Brain. New York: Dutton, 1961. "This diencephalic relaxation does not take place in modern urban man as he no longer escapes from danger by running away, and this is so because adrenaline can take over fully from the diencephalon only if actual flight is resorted to. . . . Reverting once more to the simile of the car, modern man's behavior is like that of an inexperienced driver who does not realize that the engine is running by itself. He keeps his finger pressed down on the self-starter and then wonders what is producing all the unpleasant noise" (150).
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- . Science and Human Behavior. New York: The Free Press, 1965. "Verbal behavior, however, can occur at the covert level because it does not require the presence of a particular physical environment for its execution. Moreover, it may remain effective at the covert level because the speaker himself is also a listener and his verbal behavior may have private consequences" (264).
- Smith, Adam. Powers of Mind. New York: Ballantine, 1976. "And why is Whorf so intriguing here at the margins of psychology? It may be because of his suggestion that you have been tricked by your language into a certain way of perceiving reality, and that possibly an awareness of the trickery gives you an insight" (285).
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absurdity, to quake before it, is to make of it something which does not exist, a cosmic agent the purpose of which is to act on man" (xxxv).

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Van Over, Raymond. Eastern Mysticism: The Near East and India. New York: Mentor, 1977. "For Zoroaster, righteousness—that is, good thought, good word, and good deed, the three commandments of Ormuzd—leads to bliss" (290).

Waley, Arthur, editor and translator. The Way and Its Power: A Study of the Tao Te China and Its Place in Chinese Thought. New York: Grove Press, 1958. "In all languages it is the smallest and most innocent-looking words which have given rise to the most trouble. A large number of the tangles in which European thinkers have involved themselves have been due to the fact that the verb 'to be' means a great many different things" (62-63).

Watts, Alan. Tao: The Watercourse Way. Some of the translations of Lao Tzu are by Kenneth Cohen. New York: Pantheon Books, 1975. "Standard average European (SAE) languages, for example, have sentences so structured that the verb (event) must be set in motion by the noun (thing)—thereby posing a metaphysical problem as tricky, and probably as meaningless, as that of the relation of mind to body" (11).

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- Wheelwright, Philip, ed. The Presocratics. New York: Odyssey Press, 1960. Heraclitus' "philosophy, ever dynamically serene, asserts that good and evil are two sides of the same coin, interpenetrating aspects of the one manifold and ever-changing reality, and that the wise man looks at the ambivalence unflinchingly, seeing the bright and the dark, the ugly and the fair, with calm freedom of mind" (65).
- White, Alan R. Modal Thinking. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1975. "The confusion of needs with wants is a root cause of fallacies in psychology, politics and education" (2).
- Whorf, Benjamin Lee. Language, Thought, and Reality. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press, 1969. My conclusions are "not so apparent if we compare only our. . . European languages. . . . Among these tongues there is a unanimity of major pattern which seems at first to bear out natural logic. But this unanimity exists only because these tongues are all Indo-European dialects cut from the same basic plan" (214). "Hopi, with its preference for verbs, as contrasted

to our own liking for nouns, perpetually turns our propositions about things into propositions about events” (63). “One of the important coming steps for Western knowledge is a re-examination of the linguistic backgrounds of its thinking, and for that matter of all thinking” (247).

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“From what we have just delineated as problems and approaches, you can see that all five health factors must be dealt with: exercise, nutrition, rest and relaxation, stress management, and improved mental attitudes” (10).

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus. Trans. B.F. McGuinness and D.F. Pears. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1974. “The limits of my language mean the limits of my world” (56).

APPENDIX

Text Variations

The Troika Technique has come to us in two editions: the first was given to Dr. Barbara Taylor in 1984 subtitled "How to See for Yourself," and the second was presented to Geoff Oelsner in 1988 with the subtitle "How to Quiet the Mind, Relax the Body, and Talk Sense." This electronic version follows the contents of the 1988 edition in the pages between the table of contents and this page. Additional material that was in the 1984 edition but not in the 1988 edition appears in the pages of the Appendix following this page. We have closely followed the formatting and page layout of the 1988 edition, with the exception of bold type added to some of the headings in this version to make the text more readable. We wish to give special thanks to Dr. Barbara Taylor, Geoff Oelsner, and Dr. Virginia Krauft for allowing us to compile this electronic edition of this collection of some of Dr. Locke's teachings.

Sheila Czech
Chad Kieffer
January 2001

The flow of the river is endless, and its waters never the same. The bubbles floating in the pools— vanishing and forming—do not last long: thus in the world is humanity and its dwellings.

My Ten Foot Hut

Kamo no Chomei (1153-1216)

They Trapped Me Into English as a Child

Whenever we choose to speak English or any other similar language, we are obliged to translate our experiences into nouns and adjectives, the nuts and bolts of western thinking. One of the central ideas of this book is that our universe, upon inspection, is not composed of who's and what's. We do not live among people and things, in the ordinary senses of these terms.

In saying that there really are no people and no things, I am not denying the existence of your uncle Charley, your car, or your pet rock. I am denying the adequacy of the conventional taxonomies that go with the concepts of "people" and "things" in our culture. What you and I are capable of accomplishing becomes divided into categories of people, our unique powers for joy and fullness of being are lost in the cracks. Everybody becomes somebody's nobody.

And things become blocks that we think we can move around without taking into account the havoc we create in forcing apart what is intrinsically attached in more ways than we can know. Charley, the car, and your pet rock are more than their conventionally available nouns and adjectives. They are configurations of mysteriously interlocking events, which are peeking out at us, visible at least in part to those among us who choose to take the time to look.

We can learn to see past this veil of words that we have created. If there are dangerous errors, they can be reprogrammed. If there are hard truths, they can be faced. If actions are needed, they can be undertaken. And behind those old words are new opportunities ready to be discovered.

To Our Neighbors and Our Selves

we have given
poison and lies
torture and death
and love.