

# A Course in Real Psychology

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## CHAPTER I: Introduction

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You are driving your car on a long stretch of highway in a remote area of the desert. There are no towns; there is no place to stop for food or fuel. It is winter, a very cold night. It is getting late, and you have been driving all day.

You are alone.

You look ahead and see in the moonlight a pile of something with a strange shape. It appears to be a wall about six feet high made of unpainted adobe, with a dark area at its foot that might be a tunnel. Inside the tunnel is a faint light – perhaps a candle. The wall seems to be blocking the roadway. You slow down.

As you approach it, your perception changes. Now you are not faced with a wall in the road. It is obviously a huge mesa in the distance. The dark area that seemed to be a tunnel is now seen to be much closer. The sight startles you. It appears to be a large, round furry animal up on its hind legs, with a shiny metal tag of some sort on its collar. It looks like a fat bear. “But that is impossible,” you say out loud to yourself, “There are no bears in this desert.”

So you try to see it as something else, as you continue driving..

It is not moving. You strain your eyes to see it. It is still too far away for your headlights, and on a slight incline in the road. You realize that you are afraid; you feel your heart pounding. You rub your eyes and shake yourself – maybe you dozed off and were dreaming, or hallucinating. You look up again and the bear is gone. You breathe a sigh of relief.

But then you remember rounding a slight curve in the road and dipping into a low area, a dry arroyo.

You peer around in the darkness to get oriented and try to locate the object, and your car wanders onto the shoulder of the road just as you come to the crest of the hill. Now your headlights catch a glimpse of the figure, but it is too late. As your right front fender hits the figure and it bounces past the passenger side window, barely visible inside the hood of a tightly zipped up parka you see a human face. The “person” appears to be holding a can of beer.

You are paralyzed at the wheel, trying to stay on the road and your foot does not move from the accelerator to the brake pedal. The fear in you makes you want to keep going; you are momentarily unable to connect with the reality of what just happened.

Then your mind starts working again: “This is impossible. I am in the middle of the desert on a freezing cold night. Nobody would be out here standing like a statue right beside the road drinking a beer. It could not have been human”. You keep driving. Now you are wide awake.

It is at least two more hours to the nearest truck stop.

You have a cell phone, but do not use it. Your mind is uncontrollable, frantically reviewing all that you saw, battling with itself to arrive at some kind of conclusion as to which reality is real: “It was human” vs. “It was not human.” When the thought “Yes it was a human being” feels real, it brings terror. When the thought “No it was not a human

being” feels real, it brings relief. Perhaps it was a mannequin propped up by some crazy person or some teenagers, as a sick joke. Perhaps it was an advertisement. In this “reality,” you can relax and concentrate on making it to your destination tonight.

But as soon as you are settled in this “reality,” the other “reality” intrudes: “It had to be a human being, a tall heavy set man, perhaps drunk, perhaps stranded.” You try to remember other clues. “I think I saw a small truck off on one of the side roads back there. He was stranded, needing help. Maybe he is still alive, lying there bleeding. My God. I have to go back.” You stop your car and turn around.

But then you sit there with the motor running. Your brain says: “Why go back? If he is a human he is dead. If he is not a human, I’ll waste a half hour out here for nothing.” You turn back around to resume your journey. But your mind won’t let you put the car in gear. Finally you shout out loud “Dammit. I have to know.” When you hear your own shout, it arouses in you the fear that you have lost all reason and judgment.

You try to be logical: “A stranded or even a drunk person would at least move around, raise his arms or something to attract attention, and when he was hit he would make some kind of sounds, screaming or something. And besides, knowing won’t change anything.”

You have seen no other traffic from either direction for at least an hour. Suddenly you feel vulnerable, sitting here in the road, in the middle of nowhere, doing nothing. You shiver. Where you are is beginning to feel unearthly, ungodly. You begin to imagine a variety of scenarios of what might happen if you go back, of what you might find -- and the consequences of finding it. Your mind says “It was not human, it was too big to be human, there was no blood...BLOOD. Maybe there is blood on the car.” You grab a flashlight and jump out and examine the areas where there might be blood. There is a dent where the impact occurred, and a cracked turn signal lens, but no blood. And no beer. You are relieved.

“It was not human. Some kids put it there just to terrorize some poor traveler, like me”.  
It is cold -- sub-zero. You are shaking. You get back in your car and put it in gear and speed toward your destination.

At first, your mind is calm and your conscience clear, but during the course of the two hours en route, you remember a few other details that raise doubts. You are subjecting your memory to every kind of test, theory, analysis, hypothesis. When you finally arrive at your hotel, you are still haunted by the sick feeling that the figure you hit might well have been a human being.

Every day, for the rest of your life, the thought “I killed someone” occurs. You never tell anyone, not even your spouse. You do not even report the incident to the police anonymously, or check the newspapers from that local area. You develop a sleep disorder – insomnia and nightmares. You go to a psychiatrist and begin taking medication, but still do not disclose the incident. Your ability to concentrate at work is affected, and you begin to experience episodes of loss of temper. For the first time in twenty years of marriage you slap your spouse. Socially, you are on edge, always a little distracted, self-conscious. Gradually, you deteriorate mentally. You die, alone, in a nursing home.

Your last thought was: “I might have killed someone”.

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A businessman, owner of a small company, is on a trip to China with three of his employees to make some contacts and check out the feasibility of manufacturing his product there. His two children are college students and well able to take care of their own lives, and his wife has a good income selling handcrafted jewelry, so there are no worries. He phones the U.S. every day and talks to her for a few minutes. If the line is busy or there is no answer he does not try a second time; he realizes that, like himself, his wife has responsibilities.

The trip ends and he returns home. Now he must decide whether to invest in the opportunity in China or not. He talks it over with his wife, whose viewpoint is usually helpful. She also has things to talk about – concerns about the children and their futures, a problem with her car -- so the couple spends an unusual amount of time in conversation during spare moments, especially in bed. This seems to bring them closer together, and there is more affection and sexual intimacy than before the trip. Life is good, and everything seems to be moving in a positive direction.

When he was young, he suffered a long period of confusion about relationships. But now, for the first time, he feels settled, content, stable. He revises his longstanding cynical attitude about marriage, and begins to think that a marriage can be a great thing. She too seems relaxed and happy in the relationship. He looks forward to his time alone with her, and occasionally finds himself surprising her with flowers – something he has never done before. He is even beginning to reveal to her some of his more painful experiences growing up, and she is reciprocating. He sees her as more sincere, maturing, though she still has the sparkle and figure of a much younger woman. When he is down, she usually can say something to cheer him up; she has that kind of personality. He is beginning to feel a deeper kind of love for her.

One weekend while washing and cleaning the two cars, he comes across a single ticket stub to a jazz performance at a raucous venue across town. It is tucked down into the passenger's side seat of his wife's old Volkswagen. The date of the performance was during his recent trip to China. This is curious. In all of their many hours of conversation, she never mentioned this event. Many times, the rest of that day, he asked himself "I wonder why she didn't tell me?" No answer came.

That night in bed he can't bring himself to ask her. She is warm and affectionate, and he doesn't want to spoil the mood. But for the next few days, his mind is preoccupied with the question "Is it possible that she is hiding something big from me?" But he still does not bring it up with her.

He is watching her closely, for any sign of the one thing that he most dreads: infidelity. He knows that for about a year she has been attracted to one of her customers, but the man is much younger. Before the trip to China, he happened to see her car parked in front of the man's shop, and saw the two of them engaged in a lively conversation. He didn't interrupt it, and drove by unnoticed, but he felt a definite jealousy.

One week after finding the ticket stub, he decides to confront her. He waits until she is not preoccupied with other things, so he can watch her eyes. He has planned this. He asks one simple question: "Did you cheat on me while I was in China?" She stiffens, and then reacts with outrage. "Did *you* cheat on *me* while you were in China?"

He is surprised by her hostility. "No." he replies. She says "I am in love with you. How can someone who is in love with one person have sex with another person, and then lie about it?" She turns and storms out of the room. He feels embarrassed and ashamed for suspecting her.

But he did not tell her about the ticket stub.

That night they do not touch or even talk. He is waiting for her to explain the ticket stub, calculating that if she is being honest with him she would want him to know.

For several days he is thinking about all this. He realizes that problems like this arise in many relationships, including his previous one. He didn't like those feelings then, and he doesn't like them now. But he would not want to remain married to someone who needs sex from others, or to someone who deceives him on such an important matter. For the next several days he continues to observe her closely. He sees her relaxing again, and fulfilling everything he could ask in her role as a wife and a mother.

He slowly regains his trust and affection for her. Neither one of them mentions their heated conversation, or the issue of infidelity. He resolves his question about the ticket stub by thinking of many different plausible explanations besides "She cheated on me." His feelings for her are restored, and their intimacies are very natural and pleasurable. He even starts bringing home flowers again. For the next six months, their relationship is perfect. She is very accommodating, easy to be with. He sees her as a person of integrity, a good partner and wife.

One day, by chance, he runs across the young man, her customer, in a coffee shop. After a brief, friendly chat with him, he is even more convinced that nothing happened. So, this husband continues working the long hours required to keep his company moving ahead, to provide a comfortable life for his family. He has no time to himself, no personal time, with the weekend demands of house and car maintenance. But he is glad to be relieved of his troubling doubts.

For his wife's 40<sup>th</sup> birthday, he plans to surprise her and take her out to her favorite restaurant. He makes the reservation for 5 pm, and comes home early, at 3. With a bottle of her favorite wine in hand, he quietly enters the house. He does not find her in her workshop, the kitchen, or the living room, but he knows that she must be home because her car is in the driveway.

He accidentally makes a loud noise while setting the bottle on a glass tabletop in the kitchen. Still she doesn't appear. He finds a corkscrew, opens the bottle, gets two glasses, and pours the wine, and in that time she has gotten dressed and her lover has left through the patio door. She pretends to not hear him, she needs another minute or two, knowing that he will bring the wine to the bedroom. She listens for him, and times her exit from the bedroom so that she will meet him in a rather dark hallway. She distracts him by a hug, and kiddingly telling him "Happy Birthday", taking her glass of wine and standing away from him for a toast and chattering about how wonderful the wine is.

He doesn't notice anything unusual. She makes sure that they go into the living room and not the bedroom. He never suspects. Not consciously, anyway.

This man "loves" his wife because he believes that she is faithful, that she "loves" him in a special way, and that she would not cheat on him or lie to him. Without this belief, he would not "love" her. His future is work, for her and the children – and for his illusion. He never realizes that he is also supporting her passionate affair. His life would be totally different if he knew.

As it is, he will never have an opportunity to experiment, to find out if there is such a thing as real love, if he is capable of it, if it feels different than a relationship that is based on a lie. He will never know what a life based on something real is.

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These two admittedly rather trite vignettes are presented to dramatize an everyday problem: what we see through our eyes, hear through our ears, feel on our skin, and interpret with our brains can easily be false. Some of the most important things in our lives, things that hold our lives together, things that hold our “reality” together, are based on very fragile perceptions, misperceptions, beliefs, and needs.

In fact, it is often the most crucial things in our world that we scrutinize and question the least. We do not scrutinize and question them because we fear that the answer may destroy our reality. We are easily fooled because we *want* to be fooled! As long as we can BELIEVE what we need to believe, we don’t care to KNOW. Since we never seriously test, we never find out if there is such a thing as “Truth” – something more real than the “real” we have always known.

People commonly complain that there is no truth, no objective truth, and they adopt this point of view to justify negotiating their interactions with other people by lying – when necessary. Because we are living in a world dominated by science and objectivity, technology and efficiency, if a lie gets the job done we use it. *Perhaps lies “work” in our world only because our man-made world itself is fundamentally false;* we need lies to function within it; we need lies to survive in it, we need lies to keep it running. A person who maintains his own internal standard of truth, who lives faithfully whatever he feels is truth, and won’t even lie about trivial objective things, loses out.

A lie, of course, functions like a key, and it opens a floodgate to a false reality, stimulating other people to respond by lying too. Soon, *everything* is a lie, a trick. A lie sets a mood, and after a time the mood seems real, similar to the way that mob psychology, groupthink, or singing hymns in a church affect participants. The matrix of lies grows, requiring all of our attention just to maintain it; and, immersed in the false atmosphere, we lose the ability to sense truth.

Thus, for almost all people, what they call “living my life” consists in stringing together certain deceptions to “make it” in the objective world that they perceive with their senses, and allowing to atrophy the intuition that tells us what is true and what is not true. We live our lives to sustain illusions – ours and those of the people on whom we depend. This sustaining of common illusions is what creates the “consensus reality”. It should be called instead “the consensus illusion.” Everybody trains his body’s senses and his brain to interpret sense data as if it is information about a real world. THE real world. THE ONLY REAL WORLD. But our vignettes illustrate that when we put together the available sense data to form a perception of that world, we can be dead wrong. But since the available sense data is what they taught us in school to use to determine what is “real,” we may be thrown way off track, and if there *is* a “real,” we never know it. We may end up living in an entirely false world. – a world which can never fulfill a real human being.

This is the ridiculous condition of man in a world based on Newtonian thinking, in which sense data is god, and the objective, physical, material world is the only possible world, the only possible source of “truth.”

And when this thinking is applied to psychology, and the only acceptable method of inquiry in psychology is the observation with the senses of observable phenomena, we end up with a view of human nature, of the so-called “normal” human being, which is vulnerable to all the misperceptions and false impressions inherent in sense data.

Textbooks of psychology today are almost totally limited to statements based on Newtonian-style scientific method: i.e. sense data -- with or without the modern extensions and filters for the sense data, such as EEG machines and computers. The scientist trains his senses, or designs and programs his man-made instruments, to see those things that he believes are real and important. Exactly like the businessman in our vignette. And you can never see the big picture through an electron microscope! What appears to be superior sensitivity and precision makes one blind to the true nature of the thing.

And no matter how many publications, how many textbooks that confirm the theory, no matter how thick the textbooks are or how many degrees and diplomas the authors have, the conclusion is still subject to all the same errors as the conclusion drawn by the businessman in the vignette, because the phenomenon being observed itself may be a misperception. By reading and believing what he reads in these books, or what he finds in experiments he conducts himself using the methods he is taught, the student gets even more tangled up in the false, and promotes the false as true to everyone around him, confirming its “truth” in their minds too. The so-called “experts” blind the whole world.

The thought is frightening, but *the entire modern science of psychology may well be nothing more than a huge, complex, reliable and repeatable, pack of lies. Everything that therapists advise their patients and clients to do may be wrong. And nobody would know!*

Nobody, that is, except someone who had found an alternative to sense data and had tested and tested this alternative, and found that this alternative “worked,” in the sense of creating a world in which truth worked.

A world in which a person doesn’t need to lie. A world in which he doesn’t have to be told what to say or do because his own natural spontaneous heartfelt impulses would “work,” would naturally be in harmony with all the rest of nature. A world in which one person’s truth functioned like a seed which grew and resonated with other people’s truths which then all accorded with a universal truth.

We all, even if we “believe” in “God,” scoff at the mention of such a thing. We live in a false world where there is no possibility of a universal truth, an absolute truth, or even an objective truth. We have been told that the most we can expect is “a probability” and “a hypothesis,” Aristotelian-Newtonian physics, and Aristotelian-Newtonian-Skinnerian psychology are still the standards we swear by. And this in spite of the half century now that physicists themselves have supplanted Newton and redefined him as merely a tiny subset of Heisenberg and Einstein.

It is time to catch up. It is now possible to put behind us the entire science of psychology as we have known it, and develop an alternative. Here we offer a proposal for an alternative: *A Course in Real Psychology*.

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### **Recommendations For The Student**

This *Course* is a companion to our more comprehensive volume *Why The Mind Works*. Probably it is better to study this *Course* first and then the bigger project. If you are in the habit of speedreading, you will just frustrate yourself with both of these writings.

You cannot skim off the essentials here. The words are chosen and connected in such a way as to evoke in the reader a specific state of consciousness. A “knower” within him who has atrophied has to rejuvenate. This will de-hypnotize you, deautomatize you, from the ordinary thought patterns that have been programmed into you during your years in schools and in cities, and during the thousands of hours sucked up by the internet and your TV. It will give you the freedom to choose an alternative. Here, you learn to think with your whole being, and not just with your rational intellect.

So, *first and foremost, DO NOT SPEEDREAD!!* Read a few words, or a few sentences, and then stop and let the meaning be assimilated. When the words themselves disappear from your mind, and an impression of the meaning remains, it has been assimilated.

Read only until your mind starts to rebel. It will! Then, stop and write about what you have read – first what you *feel* about it, then what you know about it, whatever comes into your mind. Open your heart and mind and spirit to it. When you are satisfied that you have written all that you have to say about this first “quantum” of the material, go do something else to get your mind off it. Then, when you want to, resume reading. Be advised: your writing about one quantum of the material may take hours, days – even years. But until you feel that you have gotten out everything you want to say, you are not ready for the next quantum because you are still stuck on the last one.

Unlike the way in which a good student of a typical textbook of psychology reads, piling ideas on top of one another in his mind and trying to memorize the melange as rapidly as possible so that you can put it back into words and regurgitate it, here you are free to do as much radial thinking and feeling as you want from one piece of material that forms a meaningful quantum for you. So, TAKE YOUR TIME! The slower the better. Reality is sort of like a hologram: study one part of it long enough, deeply enough, and you know the whole.

You may realize that you may want to write things that you do not want anybody else to read. You may become very emotional and irrational, and some very personal and sensitive things may come up. This is good. So we suggest that when you write you adopt the attitude of “For my eyes only”. On the other hand, you may want to discuss some things with other people. Beware: this might interfere with arriving at how *you* feel, what *you* see. It is up to you.

In order to get the most out of this *Course*, you will need to minimize all stimulants on days when you will be doing experiments on yourself. The slower your brain is working, the deeper your experience will be.

Stimulants include:

1. Strong colors and fragrances
2. Loud, harsh noises
3. Radiation from electronic equipment, X-rays, and cell phones
4. TV, the internet, and most recorded music
5. Driving a car, motorcycle, or bicycle in traffic
6. Participation in a crowd
7. Hard physical exercise, except job-related
8. Sex
9. Reading narrative accounts of events, such as in newspapers and periodicals
10. Concentrated effort at logical tasks, such as doing math problems, studying scientific information, repairing technological equipment
11. These foods and drinks:
  - a.) salt and soy sauce (use kelp)
  - b.) all sweeteners and sweetened foods, including artificial ones (even stevia contains fructose and is a stimulant due to its processing, though it raises blood sugar levels very little)
  - c.) alcohol
  - d.) processed foods (one main concern is MSG)
  - e.) caffeine (to be safe avoid even decaffeinated herbal teas)
  - f.) vitamin/mineral supplements and herbal formulas (almost all are stimulants)
  - g.) yeast
  - h.) meat (except organic) and fish (except freshly caught)
  - i.) overcooked carrot, potato, beet, corn
  - j.) anything canned
  - k.) sweet fruit
  - l.) ginger and garlic ( great foods but very stimulating)
  - m.) spices and peppers in general

There are 55 experiments in the *Course*, and at the end of each chapter we suggest that you design and perform an original one of your own. If you do this, you will have completed 64 experiments in all. This number, 64, is a special number. The number 8 has significance as the number of Immortals in Chinese lore, the number of directions, the number of basic movements in T'ai Chi Ch'uan, and the gradations from T'ai Yin to T'ai Yang in the energy meridians of the human body. And 64 is the number of hexagrams in the *I Ching*, "The Book of Changes."

If at any point you have questions or comments for us, feel free to send an email to: [info@nectarproject.org](mailto:info@nectarproject.org).

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## CHAPTER II: Philosophical and Mystical Roots

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First, read carefully Chapter I. It is not necessary to read Chapter II or the first part of Chapter III before completing this *Course*. You can skip directly to the experiments, page 35, Chapter III, if you wish.

You, and all of us, are in the same predicament as the driver in the desert and the husband. Everyone gets the energy to live his life in the physical world from his illusions. Thus, illusions being their source, the “energy,” the “life,” and the “physical world” are also illusions.

All illusions, perceived due to other illusions. Nevertheless, they do function as *symbols* of the Reality. They point you *away from* themselves. They contain a message *about* the Real, they represent something *of* the Real, but they are not themselves real. They are useless to the aware being, who has already learned the lessons, received the message, of these symbols. But they are of immense value to the being still stuck in an ego. He needs to experience the error phase of trial-and error.

Such a being must pass through many stages of learning, of gradually having his Inner Eye opened. He can only learn from what he can relate to. If the only thing that he can relate to is a particular layer of illusions, those illusions are the very best thing for him at that moment. As he looks more closely at this layer of illusions, he will see something that he has never seen before. By living fully, with intensity, in the illusions that he believes to be real, he will come to see that they are not real. If he lives only half-assed, lukewarm, he will never see.

Once he sees that there is nothing at this layer of illusions, he graduates to the next layer, and believes to be real all the concepts, ideas, artifacts, and limitations at that level -- until he tests. Then he sees that they are not, feels the bitter disappointment, and looks elsewhere. That is, unless he is afraid to test. Then his future is the life of an ostrich, bent over and vulnerable to whatever anyone wants to inject.

This slow, step-wise process is necessary because, over many years, having made many choices to play in illusions of one kind or another, he has limited his possibilities and his vision. As one chooses something from the physical array before him, his energy gets stuck in that thing, in acquiring it and maintaining it. Illusions are high maintenance; the false is unnatural, and so nature is no help. Many lies, woven into a solid fabric of self-deceptions and distortions and clever antics are needed to keep them seeming real, to extract some satisfaction from them. This takes an immense amount of energy. There is no energy left to explore other possibilities.

In the Real world, you have your cake and can eat it too – but not in the physical world. Never. And the longer that one invests energy in maintaining an illusion, the farther from the Real world he strays. Hence the burial of his Memory of the Real, under the solid matrix of layers of lies.

In the illusion world, it does not matter if the figure in the parka is a real human or not. In the illusion world, it does not matter if the wife is really a faithful person or not. All that matters is that there is the belief; all that matters is that the illusion remain intact. The only “happiness” possible in an illusory world is an illusory happiness that is based on pretending.

But it is not real happiness, it is an illusion of happiness. Being an illusion, it has the flimsy status of a dream. The connectedness, the source, the root, the essence, the context, the enduring quality, the nectar of the Real are all missing.

In the physical world, then, the experience of truth is impossible. There IS no truth out there in the objective. The objective is always, always, only an illusion constructed from sense data combined with memories, and in service of ego's needs and beliefs. And, in a person's illusory objective world, *being* true, *being* sincere, *being* honest makes no sense. Living truth has no utility in a false world.

The husband is "in love" with a woman who does not exist -- except as an illusion fabricated by his own mind. If he knew the real woman – that is, if he could recognize the real spirit behind this woman he calls his wife –he would not be able to love her. He is "in love" with his own idea.

With our minds, our imaginations, our thoughts, our beliefs, our hopes and our fears, each of us constructs our own unique "reality." We train our physical sensory systems to operate in such a way as to provide us with experiences that are consistent with our need to keep our made-up "reality." We reject any source of experience that would show us that our "reality" is false. This rejection is done by a mechanism in the mind that can block from consciousness these threatening sources.

Then, we huddle together with people who have the same fears as ourselves, and are guarding "realities" similar to our own, and we all reinforce our illusions together. We strengthen our belief that our "reality" is real by seeking out certain other people and forming a consensus – everyone nodding their heads and saying "Yes, of course this is real and important. There is nothing more real and important."

If you ride a Harley Davidson motorcycle you are likely to gravitate toward a club or group of people who also ride Harleys. Soon you are believing that a Harley is the only motorcycle worth owning, and that the experience of riding a Harley, especially in a group, is the greatest..You may have not had much interest before you found these people. You rode a Honda, but it mostly just sat in the garage. But one day you met these people, bought a Harley, and then thought a Harley was the only motorcycle worth owning. But now that you hear them talking so excitedly about their Harley and their adventures out on the road and in the taverns, your own enthusiasm level is boosted. Energy and time that you might have invested in other things you now dedicate to your rides every weekend, and to motorcycle maintenance throughout the week. Maybe you subscribe to a magazine and buy a whole new wardrobe. The idea created in your mind by all the fun everybody else *says* they are having makes you want "more" of it. Because you need this illusion, you are stuck in its symbols. You believe them to be real and important. Until that day when someone in the club insulted your daughter. Now your Harley just sits in the garage. You do not *see* it as you once did.

Intellectuals are notorious for creating these false consensus realities, or, more accurately, "consensus illusions." The particular words that a philosopher or a novelist or a cleric in a religion or a lawyer or a physician or a psychologist uses become crucial to him. The particular calculations and formulas that a mathematician or engineer employs become sacred. An intellectual builds his reality around mere words, mere numbers! And around his circle of colleagues and clients who make these words and numbers seem important. Then, these people buy and sell them. The words and the numbers take on an inflated aura, beyond their meaning, offering something that they can't deliver. And when they also take on inflated dollar signs, everybody flocks, because if it has a high price tag that means everybody wants one, so it must be really real and important.

All these people cling to and defend their words and calculations, their "consensus reality," because it seems to contain something more solid than their own personal "reality." At least, everybody else "respects" them for it. But it seems more solid only because they can't back away and see that all the people forming the consensus are stuck in the same lie and confusion that they are! And, for the same reason – because they don't trust their own personal, inner "realities."

We perceive whatever we perceive because of our desperate need to hold our "reality" together. *Desperation is*

*the glue!* Without all that we do to run from the desperation, from the doubt, from the fear that our illusion may not be real, it would fall apart.

But it is only when we let it fall apart that we can see a different echelon. We are so fearful of this echelon that if someone comes into our lives and effectively demonstrates to us that what we are living by is a lie, we fight them. We have to defeat their argument or their evidence. We may go to war against them, we may murder them. But it is better to crucify them before they gain too many followers. Nip it in the bud, before it hits the papers and the nightly news.

What do we really know? What *can* we know? Truth, pure experience of the Real, is possible for any human consciousness. But it is so far from any physical energy filtered through the senses and the perceptual system and the memory and the beliefs that we can not make any claim such as “That object is real” or “There is an objective reality.” So what we can know is simply this: “There is experiencing.”

*The experiencing itself* is all that we can ever know.

When we draw conclusions about what the experiencing is *of*, we step out of the realm of knowing and into the realm of guesswork. Maybe the *thing* we want to conclude we see doesn't exist, as in a hallucination, a delusion, or a perceptual illusion. We can never know, no matter how many tests we apply, whether or not the experiencing is *of* a certain real thing or not. It can always be an elaborate trick, and there is always the possibility that one more test of the thing that we perceive as real would reveal the nature of the trick, that the thing is a mere illusion, misleading, confounding.

The physical senses cannot prove the independent existence of anything. We know only that there is experiencing, that there is a consciencing, and that the **Quality** of this experiencing changes sometimes. For this, we do not need belief, we do not need any tests or analyses, we do not have to think or reason, we do not have to ask anybody else. WE KNOW.

To an ego who adheres to the *belief* that he knows something beyond this, there is no point in such a distinction. His *whole* reality is illusions. The special, unique “Quality” of true knowingness he does not recognize.

Early in the history of philosophy in all advanced civilizations, there have been those who want to know “more” than what it is possible to know. So they redefine perception, or logic, or reasoning, or mathematics as tools by which we can take pure experiencing and make something “more” out of it. This makes a fearful and ignorant ego feel confident and intelligent. It makes him seem learned and wise to other fearful and ignorant egos. Soon, there is a whole gaggle of fearful and ignorant egos pretending to be confident and intelligent, and fighting amongst themselves as to which one of them has the most powerful tool. Factions form. Much is written and much is said on the subject of which tool is best and which expert is the smartest.

But this is all just smoke, and it is distracting the whole of humanity from the essential thing.

While they are all busy honing and polishing and wielding their favorite tool, they are missing all the moments of pure experiencing – that which is the only reality.

In their struggle to prove that they KNOW, they are ignoring the only thing that it is possible to know.

**Reader:** Please stop now and look at this:

No matter who you are, even if you are an intellectual, you have the capacity within yourself to see this.

Knowing is our nature. Pure knowing. Pure experiencing of *all* that is real. Moment to moment to moment.

That is our nature. We are real and the real is real. We are all part of the same reality.

Nothing can take this from us. Nothing ever interrupts it, not even sleep. Not even death. Just *allow yourself to see this*. That is all. Forget the object of experiencing. Forget even the subject of experiencing – the “I.” You don’t need either one of these ideas. All that you need is the experiencing.

Be still, and KNOW.

Not think, but KNOW. Experiencing is not an idea or a thought. It doesn’t matter *what* you know. It is the experiencing itself that is important. It is the experiencing itself that is Real. It is the experiencing itself that is the only “reward,” if you will, of conscious Awareness. Of existence.

If you practice this exercise, a “Quality” will creep into your Awareness. Then, you will notice that whenever an idea or an object appears on the screen of pure experiencing, this “Quality” changes. There is a contamination. Soon the contaminated mind is insane; it follows the contaminants instead of the “Quality” of the experiencing, and there is an explosion of uncontrollable images, thoughts, beliefs, prejudices, hopes, and fears to cope with and to try to organize in some way. An organizer is then needed, or it just keeps degenerating into a chaos of sex and rage. Ego is born.

As we will see in this *Course*, ego is the root of the false world. To have an ego is to whitewash the Real. The clear, empty consciousness which is capable of pure experiencing, of Absolute Truth, is lost. And Absolute Truth -- *not objective truth* -- is the only experience that is Real.

*Everything* that is not *Absolutely* True is absolutely false. If only one single element in it is false, the essence is false.

Nothing that we are presenting in this *Course* is new or exotic. The histories of philosophical and mystical inquiry, in all civilizations, contain everything that is here. We are not offering the names of the philosophers or of their systems of thought, or their specialized terminology because these distract you from the pure experiencing yourself. The best single reference, if you prefer to pursue an intellectual treatment which is an overview of the essentials in the history of Western philosophy, is Robert Pirsig’s *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*. He reduces it all, all the intellectualizing, to a few simple mystic-clear insights. In this *Course*, we purport to bypass even this, and to keep the reader’s faculties trained on the pure experiencing itself. We repeat the essentials many times, using different words, in order to evoke a specific open-minded and open-hearted and free-spirited state of consciousness in the reader.

So be patient, read slowly, feel what is between the lines, and follow the **Recommendations for Students** set forth in Chapter I.

Contaminated mind, then, produces a contaminated objective world seeming to be real. But it gets this appearance from its chaotic, complicated, confused nature. We are always having to put out fires, so we can never appreciate the beautiful experience we could be having *right this moment* of the forest. We are so busy that we don’t even know that this beautiful experience is possible. We are drowning every moment, we are sinking, unless we keep swimming. We are weighted down by the rocks of our thoughts and fears and desires, but we won’t cut them loose and be buoyed up by the flow of the pure moments of life, because we don’t trust life anymore.

In our egos, we feel safer in the struggle against the blooming, buzzing, blurring confusion that incessantly contaminates our pure minds with sensory stuff. As long as we are fighting, our egos can maintain the illusion that we are winning! If we believe that our senses are our only ally in this battle against what is bombarding our

senses, we open the floodgates and the bombardment gets worse. We are in the impossible situation of stimulating the very process that we want to end, of making the meaningless seem more meaningful in our struggle against meaninglessness. We continue to do this until we are finally exhausted and die, still believing that our dying body and the ego-bound person who is dying with it are real.

The alternative is to recognize our insanity as soon as possible. And as soon as possible is RIGHT NOW. As soon as possible is not summer vacation or this weekend, or tomorrow morning after breakfast, or after I finish reading. As soon as possible is RIGHT NOW. There is nothing stopping you, in this very moment, from pure experiencing. The only real obstacle is your belief that it is not possible.

A little child, before an ego develops, can be playing some simple game alone, and suddenly stop, and stare. The objective world ceases to exist. The mind relaxes back into its natural clear and empty state. The child's heart rate and breathing slow way down. He might even drool, and slouch, as the nervous system and the muscles also relax. The child's projection of his own body stops; he no longer feels his body. To an ego watching this, the child is lost in some unknown zone. This ignorant person might even call to the child or shake him out of the experience.

But it is the most beautiful experience. It is pure experiencing. If you watch the child when he comes out of it, you will notice a different "Quality" around him. He sighs, he is a little sad that the experience left him, and he slowly resumes playing his game. He will never tell anyone about this experience. He never forgets that state, but he will never tell anyone. The child, without an ego, assumes that everybody else also has that experience. And, what is more, his experience is sure, so he doesn't feel a need to ask his parent about it, to look to someone else for verification, to establish "a reality by consensus." It is not something that his ego would boast about. So there is no need to talk about it.

In contrast, when a conscious being starts looking for meaning in the meaningless, in contaminants, he forgets this real experience, and can't recover it. Real Memory is lost. The forgetting creates a huge vacuum, and he frantically attempts to find substitutes. It does not occur to him that what he wants is already right there *inside* him, because he has even lost the awareness of the depths of his own being. He is focused on externalities.

He is training his senses on a substitute for the experience that he wants. Whatever is useful in giving him a taste of this experience, even if it is only a symbol or reminder and not the real thing, is called "good." Anything that is not useful, or that he sees as a hindrance to experiencing one of these substitutes he calls "evil". But both the "good" and the "bad" substitutes are false. They merely *represent* the Real, and nothing he can do can make them real. He is clinging to them because they evoke some *sense* of the real experiencing. They are not real Memory, but they have a little of its "Quality."

Thus, they are self-deceptions – lies. They lead him into a dark world. When something threatens one of these "good" things that he has fought so hard to keep, he calls that thing "bad" or "evil." In this way, good and evil are born into a false 'reality.' In reality, what he labels "good" is not good – it is actually obscuring the experiencing of the reality that it represents. And what he labels "evil" is not bad – it is offering him a chance to see the lie for what it is and to escape it.

To take a simple example, if you are good at sex and you get many compliments and have an enjoyable time at it, you call sex "good" and you seek it out. If you are clumsy at sex or have been raped or have had your lover taken away from you by someone who is good at it or for some other reason you find the act odious, you call sex "evil," you pass judgment on those who enjoy it, and you try to eradicate it from your world. These are equally egoistic.

Then things get really complicated, because invariably the person who loves sex has an experience in which sex some way or other disgusts or humbles his or her ego, and the person who hates sex finds himself or herself sexually excited around someone. In a false world, the opposite of a thing is in the nature of it.

Everything in the false world *produces* its opposite. The true function of the opposite is to expose the “good” thing as false, as a mere substitute. Thus, it threatens the ego, and poses a big challenge to the it. The opposite leads you to the truth about the thing. Deny the opposite, such as the inevitable depression after the caffeine wears off, and you continue on, stupidly, tricked by the half-truth, caught in a whirlpool.

When we forget how to return to pure experiencing RIGHT NOW, we lose the capacity to distinguish its “Quality” from the quality of a substitute. Then, we can’t see any reason to return to pure experiencing. It is easier on the ego to wave the flag of its substitute.

Easier for the time being, that is. Until the inevitable opposite rears its “evil,” horny head.

When we forfeit that capacity to feel real “Quality”, and distinguish it from the quality of the false, we than must justify the false, for it is all that we have left. We must create in our minds the idea that other things are of lesser “quality” than our chosen substitute. Hence, good and evil, better and worse, kind and unkind, moral and immoral, legal and illegal, intelligent and stupid. All kinds of artificial distinctions and warring opposites and jealous guarding of “mine” and repulsion of “yours” self-replicate like a cancer and soon there is no “Quality” experiencing left.

Our substitute world is pallid. Its sweetness is never enough. It is not the Nectar. And without the love of the Real, there is no reason not to live like an animal, predatory, for survival and reproduction. Without pure experiencing, a human descends to the level of an animal. But in this unnatural condition, the human becomes more vicious than any animal. He doesn’t even make a respectable animal! He is more like a robot -- and a prostitute.

His only hope is for a negative sort of “happiness”: relative, temporary freedom from disasters, and animal pleasures which are doomed by the nature of things to produce nothing but their opposites: pain and fear and loss. Our vast consciousness, capable of pure experiencing at ALL moments, is trapped in a tiny dying body amidst billions of other dying animal bodies, in the tiny sector of spacetime available to the body’s senses, forced to function like a mechanical device in a mechanical society. A vast consciousness, capable of the highest “Quality” experience at *all* moments, has become enslaved to the impossible and insane project of sustaining the “life” of a dying thing, and building an ego which has imaginary mastery over some little bit of self-contradictory spacetime. Both of which are illusions, meaningless, and produce nothing lasting.

As long as we are making our consciousness work to sustain our illusory world, we cannot make it work in the opposite direction, i.e. to clarify and empty the senses so that we can once again, like the little child, experience truly, purely, directly. And the more layers of experience of illusions we pile on top of pure experiencing, the more laborious is the uniling. The possibility becomes more and more remote.

*Each gesture that we have made throughout our lives in order to relate to the false world has to be reversed, undone.* Gradually, we see through our illusions, and the sense of a separate I, the ego, as an agent, is also seen to be just a figment of our frightened imagination. This painstaking removal of layers over a time period is not in the nature of the Reality. Pure experiencing is instantaneous, we might say it is *between* two moments of time..

But to shift from an egoistic pale reality to vivid, dynamic, free-flowing Reality with no sense of I or of objects

to inhibit it is a tremendous shock. It is like a snake who is told that he can fly like an eagle. He won't even test. The consciousness may try to shut down and go back to the seeming safety and comfort of its illusions. But once you *see*, once your Inner Eye is opened, it can't be shut again.

That is why we have this *Course*. Those who have already passed this dangerous place between two worlds and are living in the Pure Experiencing don't need methods. But those who are still unsure need steps, stages, procedures, to do their testing, to practice small reversals, in order to know real psychology and to gradually become re-acquainted with who they really are.

*Is this possible?* Do I have within my nature something more real, more alive, of a higher "Quality" than what I experience now? Is there, for me, something more meaningful than mere relief (negative happiness), something more intense than mere termination of animal cravings? These are empirical questions. One can test.

The only way to know the answers to such questions for yourself is to do the experimenting yourself. Only a person who has tried all the methods, performed all the experiments, looked under all the rocks in his path, is in a position to deny the reality of the pure experiencing, and dedicate himself exclusively to his concerns as a human body in a physical world. No one else is in a position to deny that there is a more beautiful and fulfilling way to live, a better usage of time, than the way he is living. One who denies the "metaphysical" and the "mystical" who has not practiced the methods by which these may be encountered is a fool. He may be a scientist, he may be a religious person, he may be a drug addict, he may be a genius, or he may live a normal, conventional respectable life. But if he denies that a branch higher on the tree of life will support him, without going out on it and testing it, he is just a fool. Avoid this person.

So now we come to the crux of the problem of the modern, Western "science of psychology." Ironically, modern scientific, laboratory-oriented, normal distribution-oriented psychology originated from the same questions that we posed above. Psychology was, and is, as it should be, "the science of the psyche". Some central questions are "What is the psyche?" "Why is there a psyche?" and "What possibilities are inherent in the psyche?" or, as Maslow put it "What are the farthest reaches of human nature?" "Who is the possible human?"

*But the psyche is not an object, as the brain is an object.* It therefore does not have the characteristics of physical things, as brains have parts. It does not exist in a cause-and-effect chain of which physical objects are parts. It cannot be observed. It can, however, and must, be experienced.

For a century, philosophers and scientists puzzled over the question "What is the relationship of the brain to the mind?" This got ridiculous, with some Nobel prize winning scientists claiming that some brain event caused some event in the mind, and other Nobel laureates arguing that some event in the mind, or the psyche, caused some event in the brain. Many people still to this day think in such terms. It is crazy. There is no possibility of "brain stuff" and "mind stuff" interacting, except in the imaginations and word games of people who have no sense.

The psyche, or the mind, is not and never can be a physically observable object, and does not obey the "laws" of physics. You may say, on the basis of this "OK, then it does not exist." But shouldn't you test first? If there is a psyche, if there is a mind, you have one. You can perform *the* most direct tests -- on yourself.

If you introspect thoroughly and find that no mind exists in you, then the mind doesn't exist -- in you. That is all that you can say. If you introspect and find a mind, then you have to admit that the non-physical is real. Even if you are an atheist. We can't approach the questions that pertain to real psychology by defining the mind or the psyche and describing it as we do physical objects. We must return to pure experiencing, intuition, the deepest kind of knowing.

The word “psyche” is a Greek word that pertains to the life energy in the breath. And the myth of Psyche and Cupid is useful in getting a sense, an understanding, of what the word psyche meant to the ancient Greeks. To the early Greeks, psyche was the very source of life. It was the source of everything, the very breath of life itself. The entire world is just a figment of the mind!

The entire physical world, and even the world of romantic love between humans, was recognized by the early Greek mythmakers as just a product of psyche! Their intuition was still intact. To the early Greeks, the psyche was a consciousness which was the substrate of all individual human consciousnesses. It *was* the pure experiencing, which made all other experiencing, including the experiencing of an objective world, possible. The true, original science of psychology was an introspective and extraspective investigation into how pure experiencing does what it does.

But modern psychology has wandered far astray from the admission of the depth and power of this “psyche.” And in its dazed state it has forgotten its questions, such as: “How does the psyche produce the phenomenon we call ‘man’?” “How does it determine the specific events that a man encounters when he turns his consciousness outside himself?”

Since ancient times, sincere people have tried to devise a science of knowing, and methods for stabilizing the consciousness in the pure experiencing of the real. And, to this day, most societies have preserved and handed down the methods which were successful. These methods formed the written teachings of the original psychology, and the more secretive teachings of the mystical traditions. The two were in accord. Today, there is a great resurgence of interest in the cosmovisions (not *cosmologies*) of ancient cultures such as the Mayans, the Andeans, the Hindu, and the Tao of ancient China. There is an amazing correspondence among these. When intuition is used, everybody seems to discover the same things. Could this be truth then?

But, in the West, the codified, public, common psychology began to muscle in on the mystical epistemologies – on the basis of tests that were pre-biased in favor of belief in the primacy of the objective, “consensus reality.” Words and concepts and sense impressions were substitutes for the gods within. The direct experiencing of “Quality” as the criterion of what is more real was disowned in favor of Aristotelian logic and agreement among observers. This of course became the philosophical basis of all modern Western sciences. The decision to make this kind of teaching the direction taken in all the schools came from – guess who -- the money source: the imperialistic Greek monarchs!

And why did the Greek monarchs decree this direction?

It was all for developing a technology for waging war and expanding the empire.

Mystical awareness, subjective knowingness, pure experiencing, does not tell you how to construct a stronger fortress, to design a more effective weapon, or to feed an army at minimal cost. But logic and mathematics can conquer the world. The objective world, that is. The meaningless world.

And so, at this juncture in Greek history, all the intelligent youth were recruited and taught not to waste time on the primitive, obsolete, soft-minded, Sophist philosophy, or on a useless quest for personal mystical experience, but were sent to schools where logic, mathematics, engineering, architecture, astronomy, and physics were taught. All based on sense data about the *objective* world. The goal of knowing, of enriching one’s inner life, of deepening one’s experience, of discovering the source, i.e. the psyche, were forced out of the domain of legitimate philosophical and scientific inquiry. There was an empire to build, their were frontiers to defend.

By contrast, in the Orient, the true definition and purpose of both philosophy and psychology remained relatively

authentic, for many centuries after the fall of Greece. So, perhaps, after all was said and done, objectivism was not even superior for the welfare of the empire. In the East, even to this day, meditation is respected as a science. There is a science of breathing, a science of yoga, the Ayurvedic science of medicine. In China, the science of the wheelwright or the butcher or the master carver was not taught as a *method*. Even fathers could not teach their sons, because it was the silence, the state of mind of following the Tao, which made the wheel or cut up the ox or saw the bell stand in the tree. It was not the blade.

There are many imposters among those who call themselves mystics and teachers and gurus, but still one can find the authentic transmitters of these true sciences. One though has to be in the proper state of consciousness, purified and clarified, or the master turns away in horror. These more subjective sciences have survived for thousands of years because their methods work. They have been put to every test. They are “empirical” in the truest sense of the word.

Newtonian physics appropriated the time-honored terms “empirical” and “scientific” and distorted them. So today, in the West, when we hear these words we think they mean the opposite of subjective experience; we think they mean observation of the objective by using the senses, usually under strictly controlled conditions, and reported in statistical terms.

The value of these subjective, intuitive sciences is not in the conquest of new territories in the outer (meaningless) world, but for befriending new territory in the inner, for expanding consciousness into the deepest, purest realms of the psyche. This is true healing, and true improvement of “the Quality of life”.

After Greece, all of Europe and the Middle East accelerated technological development, and the term “science” gradually lost its original meaning and became more and more restricted to objective observation of physical events under controlled conditions. The doctrines and encyclicals and prohibitions of the Church, and the crazy antics and claims of some of the false prophets and mystics provoked this backlash by technocrats, who just wanted a body of knowledge that *worked*, that was practical, for building and maintaining their societies – which translates into controlling the populace and the flow of money.

The inner search for the pure experiencing of the True Self was not trusted, was discredited by the authorities, and the ancient methodologies for conducting this search were suppressed, and unavailable to the vast majority of people. Books were burned, mystics were burned. Humanity entered a dark age in which the vitality of the inner was stifled, and human inquiry limited to the dry, pedantic, logical, rigid, formal, statistical methodology of physical science. The pinnacle of this trend was reached in the wide acceptance of Newton’s “laws.” as the last word.

The minds of all men, and especially the minds of hard-working students, became fixed upon this way of thinking; all other ways of thinking, and of being, atrophied in Western civilization. This was the beginning of modern man’s loss of conscience. As men failed to exercise their inner guidance, they lost trust in themselves and in their own consciences. They turned against one another, forming factions and political parties, building walls at their borders, losing the spirit of cooperation – and necessitating stricter external controls: more police, more armies, more SWAT teams, more lawyers and doctors, and even more psychologists to tell them who and what they were and how to act and think and feel. Just living day to day became complicated.

And became a struggle. The kind of struggle that hadn’t existed in the simple, natural, immediate lives of ancient peoples. This kind of happiness became history. Even in religion – a proliferation of denominations and factions, many of which were based solely on criticism of another, with no real vision of their own, offering no useful method for probing deeper into the inner life, futilely trying to recover what was lost.

The irony in this is that the shift toward Newtonian objectivity originated in the effort to stabilize society and expand its territories. First of all, what kind of person wants to expand his outer territory? Only an overgrown ego who has lost the capacity to expand his inner territory and peacefully co-exist with his neighbors. A little help from your friends, after the little help you gave to your friends, can work wonders. And secondly, all the limitations placed on man, as soon as you convince him that only the objective is real, turn him into a more difficult citizen to manage, not a more docile one. Everything about human nature got turned upside down and inside out by the sword of the Newtonian version of reality.

This is not to argue that it should not have happened. It was a necessary moment in man's development. It cured physical diseases, increased food production, led to inventions – the automobile, the airplane the dialysis machine, the television. But now we are in the aftermath. We are seeing how much was lost. The only mistake is in not learning from it.

Because it was so unnatural, the age of pure objectivity was doomed to die an early death. A mere three centuries after Newton came relativity physics. The system of mathematics and logic that had predominated since Aristotle, Newton's "laws", and the reality of the material world all fell at once. Though many objectivists among scientists and philosophers have tried, no one has ever been able to mount a convincing argument that relativity physics can be construed as merely an *extension* of Newtonian physics. Relativity physics did not just "shake the foundations" of Newtonian physics, it showed that Newtonian physics *has* no foundation. All mere ideas that work only in the most mechanical sectors of a false world.

We can now see what mystics of all ages and all traditions have been proclaiming: Everything in human experience that has any value, any real life, any heart, any wonder, any spontaneity, any growth, any individuality, is inner; everything outer is contingent on this inner – is relative. And relatively insignificant. Pale substitutes. Dead ends.

The idea that we arrive at knowledge or truth by setting up a contrived situation in a laboratory in which all of the events that naturally play a part along with the event under observation are either controlled or excluded is simply ludicrous. It led to a ludicrous way of thinking and living that impacted every single human being in the Western hemisphere. Believing that we are no better than monkeys, we happily file into their factories and their skyscrapers and live "our day" the way a monkey could be trained to live, and we pay into our insurance policies and social security because we have to, and because, as Bob Dylan said, we have a heart attack machine strapped across our shoulders and need to stay one step ahead of it.

We are perplexed and mystified trying to solve riddles such as "If a tree falls in the forest and no one hears or sees it, does a tree fall in the forest?" If you are trained to think only in Aristotelian logic, and brainwashed until you believe that only objectively observable events can be real, you may scratch your head and mumble "Hmmm...that's a good question." But a human still in possession of all of his faculties just says "Mum's is the word", walks away from whoever poses such a question, and never comes back.

Another "challenging" question posed by Newtonians is something like "How can a rock not be real?" But a Newtonian limits his tests to the five senses, and also insists that the observer behave only in prescribed ways. And, a Newtonian first has to pin you down and make you agree that the word "rock" refers to a specific object that he can point to. To convince the logical mind that something is real, having a word for it is half the battle.

An Einsteinian, or a Heisenbergian, is much more fluid, and can experience what Newton is pointing to in a multitude of other ways. First, you say that a rock is hard only if you bash up against it in some way. Why bash up against something? Just to prove that it is hard? And it does not have the same hardness to a karate expert! And its 'hardness' has a completely different meaning to the geologist who loves rocks and to the little girl who

just got one hurled at her by a little boy. And a rock is just a thing of beauty, is a friend, to the one sitting by the river and watching the water swirl and flow around and over it; its hardness is not a part of his world. A hermit can meditate every day and never register specific features of his surroundings. A Newtonian can come along and ask him about the rock that he was sitting by and he might say “What rock?” The ‘physical object’ that he was sitting by may be too insignificant, compared to the experience he is having, to waste even a moment thinking about it. A Newtonian might argue that if a rock is in your path and you stumble over it and break your arm, you will never again deny that a rock is real. But a person who walks a lot and knows what he is doing automatically changes course to follow the easiest path. He doesn’t even consciously notice the rock. And he doesn’t trip over it and break his arm. Only someone who sits all the time in his laboratory or at his computer doing calculations or something, and doesn’t walk much, would be stupid enough, absent of mind enough, to break his arm tripping over a rock.

This could go on and on. Hopefully you the reader are beginning to transform the way you see, are beginning to return to pure seeing.

The science of psychology in the West followed the paradigm of the physical sciences. And in psychology, where this led was even more ridiculous. The human in search of knowledge is bound and gagged, and it is pounded into him that none of his experiences are valid except those that can be physically observed under ego-controlled conditions.

Newtonian thinking reached its pinnacle in psychology in about 1960 with B. F. Skinner. The trend, culminating in Skinner, was to re-define psychology completely. It was no longer the science of the psyche, or even the science of experience, or even the science of the mind.

It was “the science of behavior.” And why was psychology thus shrunk? Because behavior is all that can be objectively observed under controlled conditions! The stubborn and fearful clinging to one single method was now determining what was real!

And, it was no longer human. Most of the data used to support this definition of psychology were collected on animals. In reality, it was a science of laboratory rat behavior.

The purpose of psychology was also redefined. It was no longer anything like to know the nature of the phenomenon of man. Its purpose was stated as “to observe, describe, predict, and control behavior.”

The early psychologists, the Freudians and the introspectionists, had been excluded from the fraternity of the sciences by the Newtonians and accused of being weak-minded mystics engaging in fairy tales. The profession of psychology responded by cutting off its left hand and blinding one eye in order to prove its loyalty to objectivity. By the time that Skinner came along and codified it all, the leaders of the profession – the ones who edited the textbooks and selected the journal articles – were by and large rejecting everything except the directly observable. Instead of taking the direction of deepening themselves as true scientists and whole human beings, really putting their whole being into their work, going deep within to distinguish the true from the false, they hung on to their egos and became even more one-sidedly intellectual and Newtonian. They threw out the psyche, the mind, thought, intuition, feelings, and all private experiences. They backed themselves into a corner where they had to recant even the assertion “I have a mind.”

It is no coincidence that this development in psychology occurred when the American war machine was policing the world! Most of the grant money that supported all this psychological research in those days came from the department of defense of the federal government. It was Greek imperialism all over again.

It is very likely that B. F. Skinner, who vehemently opposed anything mystical, himself had some salutary mystical experiences. One was the insight that we are not free, that we are being used by a power beyond ourselves. A behaviorist can say, "Of course, we are victims of the environment," but if you read Skinner's *Beyond Freedom and Dignity*, you will come away with the feeling that Skinner is talking about something more encompassing. A second mystical insight that really pushed Skinner was that we have no dignity: that is, our egos and their 'conceit of agency' are delusions, our thoughts basically worthless, our motives animalistic. The mystic sees this clearly. As individuals, we are nothing. Skinner was standing up and telling us this, and trying to provide some scientifically acceptable way of putting it. And a third mystical insight evident in Skinner's psychology is that the mind does not exist. This is one of Ramana Maharshi's main teachings. When a person meditates and experiences the disappearance of his mind, and yet exists in a beautiful space, he cannot explain this. One who has not experienced it insists that a mind must exist in order to experience even this. But one whose mind has disappeared knows differently. Skinner must have had at least one incident of this mindless state.

But his followers could not rise to this. They could not see the message within the method. And so, without Reality as a foundation, the glory days of behaviorism hung on for only about 20 years. It was a necessary step, upon the shoulders of which came cognitive psychology, and interest in altered states of consciousness and studies in parapsychology. An entirely new methodology for a science of psychology had to be developed when these more subjective aspects began to be admitted as necessary.

As a final note, we should mention the path followed by the field of psychotherapy. The original intent of those sincere and mature people who were seeking a way to impart their own wisdom of their own psyches to others, was to help others to encounter the depths of their being and develop their own potential. By the time of Freud, however, man-made, high-tech, restrictive Western societies had so distorted men, women, and children that many of the symptoms exhibited by caged animals were showing up everywhere. *Everybody* was some kind of "neurotic". And more and more institutions had to be built to incarcerate the "psychotic". It was a shock to many people when Pinel in France showed that a physician with insight and the right attitude can free "the insane" from their chains without being eaten alive. And Charcot, using his method of trance induction, was able to help some neurotics overcome their symptoms; but this turned out to be only a temporary solution, as the root of the problem was even deeper.

Freud went deeper. Following the medical model and the germ theory of mainstream medical diagnosis and treatment, he probed the psyche for the "underlying cause" of manifest symptoms. He invented a stratum which he called "the unconscious mind," and, once it was invented, it now could be nominated as the cause of the symptoms. This was a tremendous advance, and it came from Freud's flair for the intuitive. The problem, however, which became apparent, was that this ghost in the machine was seen by Freud as within the patient's own individual psyche, just as streptococcus bacteria can be found in a throat culture of a person with certain symptoms. Bringing the unconscious urges to light, however, did not kill the hysteria in the same way that penicillin kills the strep germs. Freud found no way to kill the urges. And the contribution of behaviorism was to show us why: the urges do not exactly originate from within the individual psyche, but from somewhere else. Behaviorism called this 'somewhere else' the physical environment, but this turned out to be not exactly true either.

However, something happened to Freud too in his intense search. Like Skinner after him, he must have had a few mystical experiences. Something made him "add" in his later theorizing the concept of thanatos -- the death instinct. After all his work developing eros as the basis of everything, something made him assert: "Life is merely a roundabout way to death." This is a profound insight. Everyone reads Freud's early book *The Future of an Illusion* and relegates him to the ranks of the atheistic scientists. But with thanatos, Freud's theory becomes balanced Taoistically, and more than that, into agreement with all karmic and atonement principles. He

would not have done this purely from intellectual inquiry; he had to experience it as truth in a more personal way.

Perhaps it came after pressure from the honest Jung. The deeper search for the 'somewhere else' that governs things was undertaken by Freud's intuitively gifted student Carl Jung. Jung's probing led all the way back -- to "*Modern Man in Search of his Soul.*" This is territory that neither Freud and cohorts nor Skinner and cohorts were willing to enter. Jung pinpointed the real "germ" behind the manifest psychological disturbance: the individual soul's yearning for its loss of communion with the "collective unconscious" -- the realm of the Real. No man is really just a separate physical object, an island, but life in highly structured societies forces him to act like one, think like one, and feel like one. Man was so far from his True Self, stuck in the complexifications of his own individual programmed brain, that finding that Self was now a lifelong struggle, requiring many years of "treatment." *The Self is not a thing in the brain.*

In reality, of course, a human's own True Self, or soul, or psyche -- the collective unconscious -- is closer, more immediate, than anything else. It is more real and continuously available than anything in his outer world, more real than his own personality, more real than his body, more real even than the private thoughts and heartfelt feelings that this Self has. In reality, there is no distance.

But humans in technology-based societies, because of all the developments we have here described, were caught in the programming of THE CONCEPT of who they are. But the concept is just who they *think* they are, and this is so far from the Real Self that the Real is now too much to face. Hence, the Holy Terror of *one's own Self* that manifests as neuroses and psychoses. Jung's search took him to India, and Hinduism, and A. U. Vasavada. The relationship between these two men is detailed in *Why The Mind Works* and will not be repeated here. But Vasavada was a Brahmin priest and mystic, who went to Zurich and greatly influenced Jung, and then, at the insistence of his own guru, went to the U.S. to practice 'Jungian psychology' -- ostensibly. In truth, what Vasavada was doing with 'clients' was transmitting darshan. Vasavada told Jung to his face that he was a mystic and a guru, two things that would destroy his credibility as a scientist. But the mystical Awareness was a powerful link between Freud and Jung, and then later Jung and Vasavada. And Vasavada to Sunyata and Ramana Maharshi. This all remained underground, in the realm where only those with eyes can see.

Meanwhile, during the behavioristic phase, psychotherapy was reduced to "behavior modification." The client's "reinforcement contingencies," or rewards and punishments, were manipulated in imitation of what worked in controlling laboratory animals. This was, like hypnosis, effective only on the short term. And it did not produce happier campers. Next, therapies based on changing the thinking of the client, following the cognitive theories, similarly died on the vine; once again the source of the problem was deeper.

After that, manipulating states of consciousness became popular. LSD and other drugs were used, and meditation, relaxation, biofeedback --and Perls' confrontive "Gestalt Therapy." Here, places in the person were touched that had not been touched in a long, long time. When these places were opened up, the experience was one of being in a familiar but at the same time extremely foreign place. Much fear and confusion was aroused in clients who all their lives had been programmed to believe that only the physical world existed. Here, they were seeing that many other worlds felt equally real, and intense. This was too much. For the most part, this kind of therapy had to be discontinued. People were becoming even more crazy -- in terms of what psychologists and psychiatrists were comfortable with.

Now, in 2013, we recognize the absolute necessity of becoming familiar with all other worlds. But we also recognize the absolute necessity of adequate preparation for these encounters, and of an expert guide. A spiritual guide, or guru. There are many imposters; there are not many authentic ones -- that is the problem.

The value of exploring these alternate worlds is not in the discovery that there are alternate realities. In exploring them, one finds that in Reality they do not exist. But as one finds that they do not exist, it transpires that he finds that his old world does not exist either. He comes to realize that all are generated by some mechanism within himself – by something that has lost its root and is now a mutant. But people are too lazy to do the preparation, which involves stabilizing in the pure experiencing of the True Self. They would rather sit down with their textbook of abnormal psychology, or their Bible or Koran or blogspot, and read the stories of other people. Most can't imagine being a mystic themselves. Most can't imagine being the mystic that, in Reality, they are.

It is time now for the psychotherapists and counselors and psychiatrists and social workers, everybody who has been trained in the standard academic university, to step aside. What they know cannot help. Not even themselves. But if they get out of the way, mankind can mature, in word-silence, in deep solitude. Here, alone, we can heal ourselves.

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### CHAPTER III: A Methodology for your Experiment in Real Psychology

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Since you first learned to imitate your mother's smile and vocalizations, and you learned that your smile and your vocalizations had an effect on her, you have been programmed. Every day, since that day, you have been programmed to think and feel in a way that makes you a productive member of society. To thrive, a society must very carefully and consistently control the minds of its members, throughout their lives. The state of consciousness in which you go about your business in the world – which has been called in the literature of psychology “the ordinary state of consciousness” -- is not your natural state of consciousness. You are hypnotized. What we are presenting in this *Course* cannot be understood if you cannot let go of your ordinary state of consciousness, if you cannot de-hypnotize yourself. De-automatize yourself. The value and meaning -- the “Quality” of the *Course* can be sensed only if you can settle into a more natural, integral state of consciousness, open-minded, open-hearted, and free-spirited. You must re-incorporate what you lost in your socialization. You must embrace what the Greek monarchs and the U. S. Government denied as useful for waging war.

It may be impossible for you to do this. If you can't get into this writing, even when following the **Recommendations** in Chapter I, put it aside until later in your life. To read this the way you have been programmed to read for information will not work. As information, most of this is just tedious and boring. This is *not* to *inform* you. It is to show you how to *transform* yourself.

If the history of how real psychology became a false psychology has deepened your awareness, if you feel a spark, you are ready to begin your own experiments in real psychology. The purpose is not to arm you to write journal articles or publish books or land a high paying position in a university or to become a Facebook celebrity. The purpose of the real psychological experiment is to become whole again, to regain your natural integrity. You have been split, cracked, crazed, sick; now you can become whole, sane, and healed. But you need a methodology. And the statistical methods and experimental design courses in your local department of psychology do not offer much that can help you. So here we offer some procedures that have been tried and tested, and that worked for other people. Perhaps they will work for you.

The foundation of the design of the real psychological experiment is the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. In controlled laboratory studies using a particle accelerator, Heisenberg demonstrated that the process of conducting an experiment itself alters the phenomenon being observed. His results were recognized world-wide by the Nobel Prize. Way back in 1933! One part of this phenomenon is acknowledged in standard psychology research design and called “The Experimenter Effect.” Another part is recognized in social psychology experiments and is referred to here as “The Observer Effect.” The magnitude of the error caused by observation itself varies with the design of the experiment and the nature of the phenomenon under study. In general terms, it is probably safe to say that the error is vastly greater in studies in human psychology than in quantum mechanics, because the human is aware that he is a subject in an experiment. The experiment is an intercourse between experimenter and subject. Part of the effect is explainable in objective terms because the apparatus and the measuring instruments used must perform some operation on the phenomenon in order to take a measurement, which is separate from the manipulation of independent variables. For instance, when your blood pressure is taken, think of all the ways that this simple procedure itself can alter your blood pressure.

Over and above this apparatus and measuring device effect is the effect of the specific person who is designing and/or conducting the study. The contribution to the error in experiments on objective events due to this human factor is impossible to calculate. It probably varies tremendously. The implications for science are far-reaching: *There is no way to legitimately employ standard statistical tests and generate probability statements or*

*calculations of statistical significance that have any validity. Thus, all conclusions are in error.*

As soon as we admit the Uncertainty Principle into physics, we are admitting that Newtonian physics is not real science. This is one of the reasons that physicists have been dragging their feet; even today their textbooks are mainly Newtonian, with no thorough treatment of the implications of the Uncertainty Principle and relativity, and no mainstream physics which is based upon them.

They are understandably slow to admit that their field of expertise is obsolete. There are no physical objects which can be measured and identified with any accuracy; there are only interdependencies. The interdependencies are the source of the idea of interdependent 'things'. Not the other way around.

A second reason why physicists have been dragging their feet is that they *can't* incorporate the Uncertainty Principle and relativity even when they try. It is not apples and Fuji apples. It is apples and oranges. It has to be one or the other. Some have tried, by increased sophistication of their mathematics, to combine the two, but it can't be done. It is not just that Newtonian physics is valid in a narrow range, while the "new physics" is valid across the wider spectrum. The two pertain to separate realities. To accept the "new physics" is to deny that the world based upon Newton's laws is real.

Put more accurately, to accept the "new physics" is to admit that the world based upon Newton's laws is nothing more than a concept which is wrong.

Physics itself – the science of the physical -- is no longer tenable. It is now more like a historical curiosity, now that we know that there is so much error inherent in its methods, so much misleading about its basic concepts. The days when building a faster machine or a stronger bridge were the most important thing in life are almost over. The "new physics" is not a science of the physical. It is a science of relations. Relations are more alive and elusive than things.

The logical mind can't fathom it, but there *are* no physical objects which can be identified and quantified with any meaningful degree of accuracy; there are only relationships. The relationships are the important "objects" of study. But to study a relationship, one must enter into relationship with it. Then, the dynamics, the energetic aspect, the flow – the uncertainty – can lead us toward *knowing*. We are getting somewhere, we are deepening our own relationship with other relationships. Our intellect can't grasp it but our being can experience it.

But if we get scared and keep running back to the old physics we slip into quicksand.

How do we develop a methodology in psychology which can move us ahead in that field, which is based upon, and does not just honorably mention, Heisenberg and Einstein? The very first step should be a simple and easy one.

But the opposite is true: the very first step is the biggest challenge.

None of what we do afterwards is authentic, true, and real unless we start out on the right foot: we have to develop an intuitive vision that is on a par with that of these two men. We don't have to be mathematicians or physicists or patent office clerks to develop this vision. This ability to *see* is a faculty that all humans possess. The problem is that we prefer to carry all the baggage that cloaks in glitter and gold our old way of seeing with our old blinders. We are emotionally attached to all this pretty baggage, which was at one time useful. There was an era when mankind needed blinders. That era is almost over.

Let's briefly look at Heisenberg. He pointed out the crack in the edifice of science, and through that crack

Einstein could see light, and he made that crack into the escape hatch. Heisenberg's demonstration of the Uncertainty Principle reached every corner of the world, every segment of the scientific community, with the Nobel Prize in 1933. Good scientists are always skeptics, but in the case of the Uncertainty Principle, which they prefer to call "The Principle of Indeterminacy" – that sounds a little more objective -- they were paralyzed. They didn't know what to do with this finding. They saw immediately its implications for the fate of their profession. So it was basically ignored. *For over fifty years!* It was not taught to students of physics until much later. But it did not go away, and it was not disproven, but rather confirmed in future experiments. Later, it was taught as a sort of curiosity, apart from mainstream physics; it could not be incorporated. It took a patent clerk, not a physicist – it took someone *outside the profession*, with little investment in preserving the old guard -- to take the next step and compel physics to deal with this, the arch-enemy of the physicist, this slippery, deadly viper called "uncertainty."

But the same foot dragging attended the calculations and theories of Einstein the patent office clerk. They would probably be still not believed had the U.S. and Germany not been at war, and competing to employ these "new physicists" to develop the ultimate weapon. After Hiroshima, there was no doubt. Newtonian physics was relegated to the status of a child's game. Matter, the material world, was now secondary and contingent. Just sort of an accident, in a way, existing only as a perception, and only if the observer stood in a certain place and tuned out a lot of other experiences. And matter in huge quantities could now even be exploded and transformed instantaneously! A miracle! If you are a Newtonian. All former statements by scientists about what is real, solid, enduring were out the window. The behavior and attitude of the one training his senses – the subjective so despised by scientists -- now was the important thing. There is no way to look at something, to hear something, to touch something, without altering it in such a way that we can never be certain exactly what it is – or even *if* it is. There is no way to control any scientific experiment so well that we can be certain that what we observe is "real." There is no mathematic or statistic that can tell us what is real. We must back off to a probability statement, but, to be honest, this tells us nothing. It is a smokescreen, it is a face-saving device, useful only in the limited application of designing physical structures.

Psychology has still not figured out how to incorporate relativity and uncertainty. All those people were used to following the physicists. Their professions too, their reputations, their usefulness, depended on Newtonian thinking. They had acceded to this, and found a comfortable niche. They did not want to accept relativity or uncertainty. They preferred to pretend, and so that is what they have done.

Psychology continued to employ its parametric statistics and probability statements to 'demonstrate the validity' of the results of its tightly controlled experiments, and had people believing that what they said could be trusted. But each data point is in error to some indeterminate degree, and 'statistical significance' has little significance. All of the information about human beings, human behavior, the human mind that was published by the best publishing houses, all the meticulously edited textbooks and refereed journal articles that even to this day follow the Aristotelian/Newtonian model for good science, are in error to some indeterminable degree. And replication, cross-validation, duplication of studies using tighter controls, is no assurance. In fact, according to the Uncertainty Principle, the more intensely you observe a phenomenon, the more your act of observation affects your results. Your level of confidence does not improve, it gets even worse! Parapsychology has in addition introduced the complication that the intention, the psychological and emotional state, and even the moral character of the experimenter have powerful effects on what is observed. *The state of consciousness of the one who does the research may be the most important variable of all!*

These considerations compel us to find a new vehicle and a new road. In psychology, objectivism as a method will not work. Perhaps it is time for us, as a profession, to replace the objective, logical, mathematical controller and manipulator of variables. If he or she is not able to face the reality of the situation, cannot relinquish his thinking and his training, and develop in its place a sensitive intuitive faculty, maybe it would be best for

everyone if he or she hangs up the lab coat and lets some fresh minds take over. Perhaps, we can't yet see how big a reversal, how dramatic, how total, the necessary paradigm shift is. And how imminent. History will have to show us.

So now we have been thrown all the way back. We must deal with the same old problem that has haunted epistemology and the human being's search for the real from the beginning: to find a method of knowing what is true and real. This new crack in the method of objective observation takes us all the way back. It is the crack in our cosmic egg, says Pearce. Where did science come from? Intuition. First, intuition. Afterwards, on the basis of this intuition, people began to think and scheme and plan an intelligent strategy for attacking this monster "The Truth." One might well argue that the most enduring developments in science were the ones which had the most contribution from intuition and the least involvement of "scientific method." Perhaps, what scientific method has added has been very little of any value in psychology. Except a false sense of security!

Intuition is **the** human faculty which is at the core of everything. Intuition is akin to feeling, not so much to sensing and thinking. In fact, the more that one develops his thinking capacity, the more his intuition and sensitive feeling capacity atrophy. Each is a habit, and they compete. Exercise one and you drain energy from the other. There are four "qualities" that characterize intuition. The first is its immediacy. It is an experience that the present moment alone contains more than enough. It need not have a preamble or a postscript; it is not part of a sequence of mental activity that extends from past to future – or from future to past. As soon as you try to determine its validity by applying the test of logic, it is no longer intuition. Second is its spontaneity. No effort is needed. It comes and it goes. A true intuition is a feeling of truth, it carries with it "the ring of truth." Third, it happens only to a person who is passive. If the mind is already occupied, actively processing information, intuitions are missed. In science we call this empty mind period 'the incubation stage of the creative process'. Fourth, it does not come to egos. No one can take credit for it. It comes from somewhere else. It comes only to the humble person. If a person thinks that he already *knows*, the new can't enter.

The more desperate he is, the more hopeless the situation, the more he *accepts* the ignorance and confusion, the deeper will be the intuition. The ego often uses the word intuition incorrectly. A person may say that he had an intuition that some other person would cause him harm. Such as "a woman's intuition." This is really in service of ego, self-preservation. As ego's needs change, it becomes irrelevant. Real intuition, on the other hand, pertains to a truth about the nature of things,. Precisely, it is seeing *through* the particular to the universal. It lasts, it is self-deepening, and it continues to be veridical, in many situations. It is an insight that becomes a building block of wisdom.

The brain is a physical object/concept. That is all it is. When a brain conceptualizes a brain, when a brain studies a brain, what we end up with is a tangled mess of confusions. We find what we want to find, and if all that we want to find is structures and functions, that is our approximation to reality. If we use our brains *less*, intuitive experiences will come through in the gaps in sense data, or besides sense data.

This is a whole different picture of the brain. There are many alternatives. The hologram is one. The brain can be seen as a hologram which mediates other holograms. If we are going to come close to the real, if we don't want to continue the old game of living in illusion, we *must* begin to look at the functional organization of the brain as merely a useful metaphor. It is a metaphor of how intuition and other experiences come about. **THE BRAIN IS NOT THE ORIGIN OF EXPERIENCES!** But when we are trying to use our brains to understand how experiences come about, what we come up with is a model of "the brain" and how it works in mechanical, cause-effect, past-future terms. Here, we wish to do no more than to point out that even the majority of brain scientists, when they conceptualize brain function, and report their "findings," do not rule out a theory in which "knowing" is fundamentally intuitive. The Newtonian brain science had claimed that the cerebral cortex is the seat of man's "highest" functions. The student is given the picture that the cortex is a sort of Wizard of Oz up

there on top pulling all the strings. A big powerful ego! A later look at some old and new research contradicts this picture. The cortex may be nothing more than the handmaiden of “lower” structures such as the amygdala, which is associated with pain and pleasure. (See Wilke, *A Neuropsychological Model of Knowing*, 1979). This view agrees with Freud, and with the ancient Andean cosmivision. It is as if the experience of something primal directs the cortex in its processing of information from the senses and the memory. The cortex, the ego, is merely a slave to the nature-immersed animal. So perhaps, intuition and other primal sources of knowing are converted by the cortex into separate thoughts and sensations and emotions, if they are not allowed to pass through the system undistorted. If they are allowed to pass undistorted, the cortex is not even involved.

Thus, true, immediate knowingness is possible. It is a consciousness, it merely lacks an object. So, how a moment feels, its value, its “Quality,” is possible to experience directly. The time it takes for it to be circulated through millions of cortical neurons and put into linear thoughts by the left hemisphere relegates experience to the past only. Thus, what we experience through thinking, and even through perception, is already over, and is already dissected and distorted by the time we think about it or perceive it. But intuition is in the now moment, unfiltered. The less the brain is invoked, the closer is our experience to Reality.

The brain is *not* the mind, experience does not happen *in* the brain. The brain is merely a useful metaphor. As a metaphor, it can offer to the person who can think only in mechanical terms a rough idea of how the mind works. When the attempts of a mind trying to understand the mind by studying the brain spill over into thinking, and especially into thinking that the mind *is* the brain, we are off in fairy tale land. The attitude of Newtonian neuropsychology is absurd. But an intuitive sense for what is going on in human experience can be more useful. When we intuit, what we feel is more closely tied to our own subjectivity, which can be pure, uncontaminated by objects. Our science of the mind, the psyche, is not a pile of data sheets, or even understanding, because no mind can comprehend the mind. But a science of mind can be based on “innerstanding.” This is immediate tact, a relationship of unity. With mind, we are not dealing with a system with parts that works like a computer. We are dealing with a living experience in which the knower and the knowing and the known dissolve into a unity. *We can experience the principle behind it directly!* And then, specifying parts or sequences is not important -- in fact, misleading. A direct encounter with the *principle* behind the concept of the psyche is possible, if we refine and sensitize our primal intuitive faculty. And it is even more real and alive than a principle; it is really an entering into a pure “Quality.” This answers all of our questions. No more study is needed. The mechanism itself is of no interest.

Even more challenging than refining and sensitizing intuition to this degree is overcoming the fear of doing this! To overcome this fear, to become open and vulnerable to any and all intuitions, to know the psyche -- to do “real psychology” -- is to know oneself. Not merely in the objective sense of an uncomfortable self-consciousness, or even in a Freudian or Jungian sense of recognizing our primitive urges and complexes, but to directly experience what is at the root of these, to encounter the Totality. All ego, all sense of individual self, must drop, at least temporarily, or the encounter is only with the *sense* of self – a huge step removed. When purified self meets purified self it forms a critical mass. The past explodes. This explosion is enlightenment. As long as there is still a trace of a separate “I”, as long as you refuse to let this go completely, there can be no enlightenment. A person can pray and fast and give away all his possessions and meditate and follow a guru all his life, but if he will not do this one thing and let his ego be removed from him enlightenment is impossible. But if he can allow this, for even a single moment, he will experience a true intuition which will give him courage to allow the experience again. But these moments too must reach a critical mass, so that they begin to supercede the moments spent in his ego and ego’s world.

It is always an explosion, because the old in its entirety has to go. So the person must prepare to be exploded, and then allow it whenever it comes. You cannot predict when it will come, you cannot control it once it begins. It is almost impossible for it to come while you are adapted to a civilized society. Societies are designed by egos

for the sustenance of egos, and that means the truth must be excluded. One must somehow reject the society without any residue of resentment or fear of it. As societies become more Einsteinian – more like pre-language societies – the possibility of enlightened members will increase. But now, the earth is in a very dark period. Enlightened people have no home here. They must remain in hiding.

Acceptance of all this is a necessary step as you pursue this endeavor that we are calling “real psychology.” And if you do not experience all of these things, it is not real psychology. It remains off the mark, and you remain in the circle of the imposters. In Western civilization after Socrates, it may be fair to say, almost all those who have studied the psyche have been imposters. If their methodology involved treating the psyche like an object, they were not studying the real thing. Since Socrates, all the brightest men and women who aspired to an understanding of the psyche were sent to schools and given carefully prepared things to read and handed a set of concepts and methodologies designed to shield them from the real encounter. It is unlikely that a single one, for these 2500 years, became enlightened, until his death. They think too much. And they think too much of their thinking. And they think too much of themselves as thinkers.

If we are to develop a tradition of real psychology, we must select and guide people who have the capacity to become real psychologists. *We must weed out the thinkers!* And, we must continue to direct the candidates inward, toward their own experience, and away from analyzing it. Mystical traditions of the past have done this. However, their downfall, rightly criticized by scientists, is their ethnocentrism, their partisanship, their clubby elitist, exclusive attitude. The problem with this is that egos are shaped around their particular icons and symbols. A real psychology has to avoid this. It must be neutral, colorless, tasteless. It must not offer anything that an ego can grab ahold of. It must be available to anyone who dedicates himself or herself to it. Osho’s experiment with his Multiversity comes to mind. This is an important precursor of real psychology. Two problems with it are the necessity for a charismatic figure, and the immature state of humanity at that time. The student must become his own guru or he gets lost, in a dead zone, emotionally attached to the charismatic figure. And when Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh/Osho was mesmerizing thousands of followers worldwide with his amazing brilliance, humanity was just at the end of the hippie era and asserting freedom from Victorian and Puritanical restraints; the sexual energy released when ego imploded was tremendous. Rajneesh/Osho became labeled in the media as “the sex guru” even though he stated time and time again that sex needed to be transcended and replaced by meditation. But the inner circle who were running the Rajneesh show wanted the show to go on, and sex sells. Osho ended up going with the flow of his followers, most of whom were still stuck at the level where the highest state of consciousness they could stabilize in was reached through intense tantric sexual experiences.

As the school in real psychology is forming, there is much to learn from mystical traditions of the past. Number one is that there has never been a true mystical tradition which selected its candidates on the basis of test scores, or grades in academic courses. There has never been a true mystical tradition which selected its candidates on the basis of money and power. Some mystical traditions put candidates through a series of tests of physical courage, and/or set up situations designed to tempt the candidate to indulge in some sense pleasure. These tests can be faked, however. The best way to select candidates is to not select candidates. The priests and shamans recognized by the bulk of the citizens in a collective are often just big egos because that is what the bulk of the citizens admire. So let’s not turn to them to choose the real scientists of the future. The few people who genuinely soul-search, the few real psychologists, are basically invisible. They do not cause any problems, and they are not do-gooders either. They have little interest in the outer, and see the wisdom of leaving things alone, letting illusions take care of their illusions, letting the dead bury their own dead.....

In the 1890s in Germany there began a movement known as ‘introspectionism.’ Wundt, who was intensely interested in how the mind works, recognizing the importance of the overall character of the person. He carefully selected students, and trained them to observe selected events in their own minds, evaluating them on the

dimensions of quality, duration, and intensity. Introspectionism could have been the seed of a worthwhile method, but it was discredited by the American psychologists -- notably Titchner -- who were staunch Newtonians, and their influence essentially killed the movement.

Freud required all of his direct students to undergo and successfully complete a rigorous psychoanalysis by Freud himself. In turn, he instructed them to select their successors in the same way -- each had to complete his own psychoanalysis before he could receive patients. The student had to learn to listen to his dreams and other messages from the unconscious, and to face things in himself that the average ego would not face. This was Freud's attempt to select people who were at least honest enough to open up to a little more of the psyche than their future patients. It was a test of intuition as well as of their understanding of Freud's scheme of how the mind works and what causes problems. Freud's own analyst was his top student Carl Jung, whose early life had been a struggle to reconcile his powerful intuition of the Real with adaptation to the outer Victorian society.

At one point during Freud's analysis by his student Jung, Freud refused to reveal to Jung, his own analyst, a particular dream, stating only: "It would compromise my authority." This was one of the causes of the eventual split between them. Jung was pursuing authenticity, and his work would take him into realms which were taboo to Freud. In Jung's mind, Freud's ego was in the way. Jung had intuitions that insisted that there is a True Self that is completely separate from the ego -- in fact that they are reciprocals; his own Analytical Psychology took what he had learned from Freud and probed even more sensitive areas, challenging the very reality of his patients.

Perhaps Jung was one of the few Western psychologists who was truly enlightened. He had a rare integrity. Among his own students were a few sincere people. But each generation of analysts after Jung -- and here we include all psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers and counselors -- became progressively less personally and carefully selected. As the profession of psychotherapy grew in popularity it attracted a very diverse group of students with many different motives for becoming analysts, not the least of which were money, reputation, and a way to disguise their own problems. The academic criterion became important. The thinkers were not being weeded out! Psychoanalysis fell into disrepute as much because of the less than honest and less than deep among the therapists as any other factor.

For the past fifty years or so, the training of therapists has become more and more academic and technical. It treats the psyche as if it is merely a brain, it treats the brain as if it is merely a computer. It so much neglects the other aspects of the person, such as moral maturity, that the training may be weeding out the more intuitive and sincere, and granting diplomas to the charlatans. Most seminaries and theological schools awarding Doctor of Divinity degrees, which authorize the person to do counseling work, are also heavily academic. Some require only that the seminarian memorize the bible, and be able to give a sermon, maintain a pious but authoritative demeanor, and hire a clever accountant. And so, none of the training systems based on scientific psychology, supposedly for those who would help troubled souls and minds and psyches, has been adequately preparing its aspirants for the truly intimidating task of direct encounter with the Self. So, when a client starts to open up to this level, the therapist throws his arm up to shield his eyes, and distracts the patient with some empathetic words or strong medication. Undoubtedly, the character, intuitive sense, and mystical awareness of some percentage of these individuals carried through in spite of all the academic programming. But there is another big hurdle in the therapy session that nearly precludes truth. It is called professional ethics.

This is the quagmire that the profession of psychology is still in today. One symptom is the high number of professionals who have not at all resolved their own problems, and turn to alcohol, pharmaceuticals, recreational drugs, sex with clients, and even suicide. We have now seen one hundred years of people receiving therapy based on "scientific psychology." The problems of mankind have not by any means diminished.

By contrast, let us describe the selection, preparation, and training given to one student of an ancient Native American mystical tradition, the Tamanawas dance of certain tribes of the Pacific northwest. The term “dance” does not refer to a pattern of movements, as we ordinarily use the word, but to the entire set of rituals and oral teachings. The Tamanawas dance, by the way, like many others, was banned by the U.S. government in the Potlatch Act. Anyone practicing it was jailed and/or flogged and/or relocated. Most of the information included here was related to me orally by a Native American woman who survived these rites, which she passed through as a teenager in the 1970s. Most of it was done in remote areas and in total secrecy. It is rarely described to outsiders.

This woman was probably autistic as an infant. Her grandmother was the medicine person of the tribe; not always a kindly and gentle soul, but rather a tyrant who supervised even the drug dealing on the reservation. The grandmother recognized the silence in this baby, and the stillness. As a baby, the woman appeared to possess a wisdom already, with large alert eyes. According to the tradition, the grandmother had to select only one candidate to pass all her secret knowledge to. She recognized something in the demeanor of this young girl, and took her from her mother and raised her. So this grandmother took her own daughter’s child away from her! And re-named the baby! There were “positive” traits in the girl such as honesty, generosity, and helpfulness, but also the qualities of fearlessness, tolerance of pain, and ability to fight, shoot a bow, use a knife, and hunt with a rifle. As the girl grew, she always sought solitude whenever possible, preferring the company of the animals and the trees and the river to that of people. Early on she learned how to survive in the wild, eating berries, mushrooms, and the many other nutritious wild plants in the area. She learned to make a bed of cedar boughs and sleep under a log. And she learned many ways to catch the salmon that ran in the river.

There was compulsory education for all Native children in the regular public school on the reservation, but this girl was so resistant to this that tensions grew and one day she pulled a knife on the teacher. That was the end of her formal education. She could not read English or write her own name until well into her adult years. This was not an inability, she just wasn’t interested in “filling her head with worms.” The grandmother influenced her in this regard, warning her never to let the white man make her forget the ancient ways. This grandmother herself had been taken from her family and sent to another place, Tacoma, where there was a white people’s “Indian school.” She repeatedly refused to learn and to speak English, and was repeatedly tied to a post in the courtyard and flogged in view of the other children. So the grandmother also passed on her disgust and hatred of the white man, and ways to get around his rules and his laws.

When the young woman was entering puberty, the grandmother subjected her and several other children to some harsh tests. One was whippings. As it was related to me, all the children stood in a row, and the grandmother repeatedly walked up the row striking each one with a branch. After several passings down the line, the kids began to drop out. The last one to whimper or flinch was the chosen one. This young woman had the ability to get out of her body and put her mind in a treetop, an ability she was to use many times during her adult life at times when she was the victim of a violent attack. So she was the child who outlasted the others in the whipping test. Another test was standing in the river. I believe that the water must have been about knee deep. Even in summer, the river there is cold. The woman told me that she endured this for 24 hours.

The original purpose of the Tamanawas dance was to rid the person of attachment to the body, and develop a state of consciousness that was entirely inner. “I had to make a place inside myself” were her words. Originally, this was intended to assist him or her in remembering the True Self, the source, which interestingly is represented at the base of their totem pole as a large empty hole! Achieving this empty place of egolessness, he or she would be worthy to serve as a spiritual guide for the people. However, not many shamans were this deep. The rituals they conducted were contaminated; often used egoistically: to prove the ability to dissociate from pain and thus become feared by the people. It seems that before the white man came, the ancient purpose of the Tamanawas dance was generally honored, but the encroachment of the white social structure – rigid and

impersonal to these peoples – fostered the more warrior-like motives for the ritual.

As she related her experiences to me, the term “remember” was often used. Many of the oral teachings were stories and other devices to help the student remember the ancient values, rituals, one’s connection to the natural world, and the associated state of consciousness. The teachings did not include the personification of an external God who passes judgment, and rewards or punishes, nor did they include the concepts of good and evil. There were no written teachings that survived the encroachment of the white society.

The main rituals in the Tamanawas dance as she described her experiences to me, were close to information I found in the local library. They had to do primarily with the experience of dying – to give a taste of it, to overcome the fear of it. In one ceremony, four pieces of skin were clipped from the girl’s arms and legs with scissors. A second ceremony involved capturing her during the night, blindfolding her, driving to a remote area, and actually burying her alive, I believe in a sack made of thick blankets, for a short time. She told me that it was very realistic, that she could not breathe, and feared that she was going to be left there to die. It probably triggered what we would call a psychotic break. It greatly exacerbated her fear and mistrust of people. After this experience, she saw humans as unpredictable, as capable of anything. She sometimes reacted violently to the slightest sign of threat. One thing that it certainly did was make her incredibly sensitive, even psychic. She was known on the reservation for this ability, and it was said that her eyes glowed red at night. Because she was feared, she was the envy of several men on the reservation, and reputations were established by physically fighting with her. Perhaps due to her silence and stillness, she also had an alluring, mysterious aura around her. She could be purely feminine, or purely masculine. She was raped more than once, men were fighting over her, but she also won enough fights with men that she earned their respect. I believe that her grandmother had told her never to have sex. So she fought. She made her living by cutting firewood and selling it and by fishing and clamming, and was very strong. There was a Golden Gloves boxer on the reservation who was known to have raped another girl, and this woman, named Tamanawas by her grandmother, didn’t like him. One night in a store parking lot he approached her from behind and grabbed her by the hair, but she managed to whirl around and take him down. Two men were required to keep her from killing him. When she described this incident to me she said she lost consciousness of everything while she was sitting on top of him and beating on him, except that she noticed the colors of the oil on the asphalt. She humbly appended her account by saying “But it was not a fair fight; he was drunk.” He later committed suicide.

A final ceremony in the Tamanawas dance was an actual dance in which those performing the ritual put on grotesque animal masks. The girl was required to participate in the wild, jerky, convulsive movements that were supposed to simulate dying. It was an endurance test, intended to induce a frenzy state of consciousness, similar to the Ghost Dance of the Sioux.

I have presented the Tamanawas dance here not to propose it as a model of how to prepare someone to do a real psychological experiment, or to imply that this kind of experience is necessary. But we can use it to put things in perspective, and to consider several issues. The most important, I believe, is that few people are dedicated enough to truth to undergo anything like what this young woman suffered, and willingly, in order to have the knowledge to be fit to spiritually guide her people. She did not question the methods. She accepted them, feeling in her heart that preserving her culture’s Way was sacred. Her own prior mystical awareness allowed her to see what most people never see, and her experiences during the Tamanawas dance made it even more clear that physical existence in a body is not the real thing. She had, at some point, a direct encounter with the core of the psyche. From my contact with her this was my conclusion. Though her English was poor, her mystical insights were not only profound, but spontaneously came out of her, expressed as clearly as what you might read in some sacred text. Not always, but usually she was not an ego, a personality, or even in her body; she saw them as tools and knew how to direct them from someplace else. Although very sensitive to other people’s needs, she never catered to egos, not even those of her three children. She was often amazed at people’s

selfishness and ignorance, and usually this came out as amusement – she wasn't afraid to laugh right in your face.

So this was a rare human being. Unfortunately. Mankind hasn't arrived there yet, at the place deeper within us than our fear of loss of our animal existence. Only one who has accepted all pain, and death, is deeper than this fear. Ordinary courage and bravery does not take you there. It is not a matter of will power. It is a matter of *seeing* -- of seeing something much more wonderful and enduring. And that seeing is possible only for the one who has eyes.

A second issue which comes into focus as we look at the Tamanawas dance is the ever-present danger of contamination. That is, if the initiate is being misguided by either ignorant or malevolent people, the result can be terrible. Something that poses as a truth can be 180 degrees wrong. This is exactly the fear of the mystical that spurred the radical shift toward objectivism. It could be a long detour, into a dead end. People can be harmed. People can die. People can become insane. An authentic shaman, a pure shaman, would know how to select and prepare the initiate for the experiences, so as to almost guarantee that he or she would emerge transformed rather than crippled. In fact, this preparation phase forms the main corpus of the dance; the rituals then are rather anticlimactic. But if the shaman is not himself pure, and the preparation is inadequate, or the rituals are done in the wrong spirit, oftentimes the initiate's psyche is laid wide open and the false shaman does not have the knowingness of how to bring the person to a resolution. The recent popularity of tantric sex and 'awakening the kundalini' is showing us what can happen. To do these properly, and emerge spiritually advanced, a pure guru is essential. And there are only a few in the world. Also, most people who are attracted to these practices have an entirely wrong idea of what they are getting into. In a sense, the people who are attracted to them are exactly the wrong people to attempt them. Years of dedication, purification, preparation are needed. Some individuals and couples try to do it by reading a book. This is hazardous. A person can get stuck in sexual obsessions and compulsions for the rest of his life. The energy is stronger than anyone's will power.

Considerations such as these should not deter us from seeking ways to go deep into our own psyches, and there is much that we can learn from the ancient tried and tested mystical ceremonies. For we are now at the opposite extreme. In our present era, our idea of the one who is exploring the psyche for us, the psychological researcher, is the one conducting laboratory experiments and publishing articles on something like alpha waves! He may well have spent five years of his life doing a literature search, designing the study, applying for grants, equipping a laboratory, conducting the experiment, writing it up in APA format, and finding a journal that will publish it. If he can't find a journal editor that likes it, probably no one will even ever know about it. This is how science becomes so narrowed that it is no longer honest. How much is this person really contributing to anyone's quest to go deeper? How much is he gaining in his own quest? Most of his activities relate to the illusion world of numbers and concepts, and artificially contrived circumstances. Five years – and for what? Is there one single moment of pure experiencing in any of it? Is there any personal transformation? A couple of hours drunk in a bar and he would probably learn more about the human psyche than this five years spent in sterile, Quality-less trivia and diversions.

It is the *quality* of one's experience moment to moment to moment that matters in life. Not the intensity of sensory stimulation, but the "Quality" of the moments. This is what real psychology is about. This *Course* is designed to help you to not compromise on the quality of your experience of life in ways that our researcher has to, once he sets his foot on that path. The overdeveloped intellect can do nothing except to continue overdeveloping the intellect. "Thinking is a disease" said Sunyata. And it can be terminal. It can prevent the *seeing* that is needed in order to deepen. Data, information, concepts, theories, and understanding are the booby prize! But there is a perfection as the substrate of it all, and if a booby prize is all that a person can handle, that is what he gets. If he is totally confused about who he is and totally afraid to even ask the question, he may dive into a commitment to a university education, or medical school, or law school, and he will then have to *force* his

mind to think, at times when it is capable of something of much better “quality.”

This is a tragedy. The person becomes trapped in a mind that has forfeited its essential tool that makes him a human being, just because the society rewards his ego for it. He might as well be made of tiny gears and circuit boards, plasma and silicone. Back at the other extreme for a moment, the teenage girl who survived the Tamanawas dance has not hidden herself from the vicissitudes of life in an ivory tower. She was once involuntarily committed to a mental hospital, and she is well known to the local sheriff and circuit court judge, as she tries to help her children cope with the false reality and find the real one. At times refusing the help of government commodities, she raised her children by hard labor, living in a dangerous place under deprived conditions. She has had many injuries and surgeries, and cured herself of rheumatoid arthritis – by refusing prednasone. She did not drink or use drugs, did not go to parties or flirt, and dealt with men as men only when she absolutely had to. She was feared because she was so strange, and bizarre “coincidences” happen to her and around her. But people went to her for advice, or herbs, or knowledge -- or her presence.

She was known as a person of wisdom, willing to help any sincere person, but also as a person who did not tolerate any chattering and gossiping, or any drugs or drinking or carousing on her property. But this was all around her on the reservation, and she made some enemies. She attracted violent people as well as gentle people; she saw all people who came to her with insistent questions as the same; all seeking an answer to their misery. Her intuition was incredible, and she carefully avoided people who live unconsciously, in externalities, with no knowledge of their deeper potential. Once I saw someone trying to flatter her. She said: “I’d rather get my arm broke than be talked to like that.” A door-to-door evangelical became fascinated by her perspective on the bible, her knowledge of the deeper meaning of all religions, and her demeanor, and he was a regular visitor. But she turned the tables: she became the minister and he the convert! Through some incredible coincidences this obscure, reclusive, uneducated, poverty-stricken woman has met and influenced some famous musicians, including a troupe from the Andean altiplano playing traditional music on ancient instruments! Two well known top 40 songs were written about her.

A whole person. A real person, who would not compromise her moments of Quality. A rare person in modern times in the U.S. She knew the psyche inside and out because, as she says, “I been through hell and back” in order to know her own. She was supposed to pass on her knowledge – which she prefers to call “knowingness” – to one young person in the tribe. She told me that she had not found one single person of the right character.

Persons who live moment to moment, true to their Quality experiences, their awareness consistently at a deep level, do not need to be rare in the future. But we have to shed many fears and many pretenses to lift ourselves up by our bootstraps. One cannot wait for the society to do it for us, one cannot demand it of his mate or his children or his neighbor, or even of the local pastor. *He* has to do it. Each person has to become his own laboratory, his own experimental subject, and a living breathing document of the results of his research. So, with all this preamble, let us now begin to outline the essentials of a methodology for doing real psychology. Let us put aside our pretty baggage of theories and methods and data from the obsolete archives and annals of what was called “the science of behavior.” This cargo is heavy and it is dense and it is dragging us down. We are now beyond that – we are lighter, we are of a more subtle realm. We deserve something more fluid, something more radiant, something less confining. We deserve something that is less cold and hard and mechanical, and more alive, warm, and harmonious -- more truly human.

We deserve something that is more like we are – in Reality.

So let us dispense with hard, cold logic, linear thinking with blinders, and pretending to be computing machines capable only of processing sterile bits of entertaining information, and robots capable only of certain routines and rituals.

Let us remember when we were sensitive and intuitive, aware of our feelings, aware of our longings, and pick up now where we left off, many years ago, before the schoolmarm got us in the clutches of her cold sharp claws.

You may still be asking: “Is it possible to do this? Is it possible to go back?  
Or have we gone so far down the road of logical thinking that our capacity for intuition and feeling have atrophied?”

Once again, *these are empirical questions!*

Each of us is a separate case. To answer such a question, one must conduct his or her own experiments. It will be an uphill climb. You are crawling out of a black hole. So let’s not waste any time. Let’s get started.

The most important variable in your experiment is you. The outcome of your experiments is dependent mainly on one thing: you. Everything else is relative; it all revolves around you. There is no moment when this is not true. Your state of mind, the quality of your consciousness *in this moment*, determines the world you will see the next moment. The fire TO KNOW which burns inside you, which dedicates you with your whole being to escape the false, and which lifts you above your ego’s fears will carry you through.

You do not know how this is possible – yet.  
You do not know how you are going to do this – yet.

You will be tempted to manipulate variables in these experiments, to artificially control or direct circumstances. As a beginner, you will not be able to remain passive. So we present **Tactics for Beginners** here. These are ways to subtly manipulate and still be able to flow with events and remain alert and aware. The basic overriding principle here is Gurdjieff’s “Self-remembering” exercises. This is captured in the Zen saying: “If you are carrying something, put it down. If you are not carrying something, pick it up.”

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### Tactics for Beginners:

- 1. Don’t read much. Let your encounters be with a fresh eye, direct, innocent, not bound to a theory.**
- 2. Talk less than usual. Listen more attentively, but do not look for meaning in the words themselves. Listen to the silences between the words. Listen to the feeling or intent behind the words.**
- 3. Never be the expert in any interaction. Avoid putting yourself above others.**
- 4. Never be an imitator. Be an original.**
- 5. Slow down and speed up from your usual speed of doing things. Not for efficiency’s sake, but to break your hypnotized state and see what happens within yourself.**
- 6. “First things first.” Keep an eye constantly on what is most important to you.**
- 7. Be “sick of sickness.” If something in your life feels sickening, feel sick of it. And don’t participate!**
- 8. Accept things, but do not tolerate things. Tolerating is hypocrisy, pretending.**

**Accepting is a profound and dramatic shift in which you suddenly see the value of such things as pain and embarrassment.**

- 9. If you are against something, try it.**
- 10. See *through* things. Don't look at them with only your senses. There is a deep meaning and message in *all* things.**
- 11. Everything and everyone is hazardous in some way. Learn to feel and recognize the danger.**
- 12. "Enough is enough." Know when to stop. Observe a change in the Quality of your consciousness when you trespass.**
- 13. Try not to get into situations in which you will have to do or say things you don't feel are right. You don't need a reason or rule.**
- 14. Be spontaneous but not impulsive. In an impulsive act you feel inspired, brilliant, clever, sneaky, and there is usually a specific target. In spontaneity you have none of this mental stuff. You just feel drawn into a black hole. Follow this feeling.**
- 15. If 12, 13, & 14 don't work, just try some new activities at random. Not for the stimulation, but to break your hypnosis by ordinary reality and observe your unexplored tendencies and leanings, and to develop your intuition.**
- 16. Change around your eating, drinking, sleeping and exercise habits. Not for health or comfort, but to conduct an experiment on how this affects the "inner" life.**
- 17. Avoid being *pressured* into multitasking. But do multitask when you feel like it, just to confuse yourself and break up habits of linear thinking.**
- 18. If you have a serious compulsion, something you have to do very day to calm or "center" yourself, actively resist doing it and pay attention to what comes up inside you. Write about it. Then, go full bore into it and see what this produces. Write about it.**

Remember, the goal is to know yourself, not to develop a "better" or "healthier" personality or body, not to make your external life run more smoothly, not to be smarter. These **Tactics** are not necessary for the person who can already passively observe without manipulating. Once you learn from them, drop them. In the words of Timothy Leary: "When you get the message, hang up the phone."

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Now: How to record the findings of your experiments? As you can see, everything all day and all night can be an experiment. However, you will not be able to pay attention to everything. So you must choose only as much as you can concentrate on, and only as much as you can keep records for. In your records, minimize commenting on other people's behavior, except where you are susceptible to imitating it. Your experimental subject is you, not someone else. Remember, what you see in another person is only your own projection. Focus on what you see and feel in yourself.

Sometimes it is useful to ask another person what they saw in you during one of your experiments. Note this, unedited, in your records for the day. It is helpful to be familiar with basic psychological and mystical terms, but don't get too technical, analytical, clinical, or wordy. Simple and straightforward is best. The ego will want you to shun writing in detail about painful and embarrassing experiences or thoughts. But do it anyway. Research in real psychology is not painless, like conducting an alpha wave study. The closer you get to the truth, the more intense it gets. The validity and reliability of your experiments requires daily records, because you will be comparing the past with the present. It is best to carry a notebook and record all important findings when they

occur, even if there is no time to write complete thoughts. Be cautioned that editing often misses the flavor of the original experience. Do minimal editing. (If you are so inclined, you can email us with your questions: info@nectarproject.org)

Our first experiments are to open your eyes to the possibility of this kind of knowingness. You will be both the subject and the object of your own study. Later, you won't need an experimenter or an experimental object. You will need, and want, only the process: pure experiencing.

The fastest and most direct way to develop the intuitive flair of men like Einstein and Heisenberg, and others, is to not fill your mind with any old or new thoughts, concepts, ideas, plans. Intuition requires space. The mind must be empty. It must be silent. Into such a mind, new intuitions spontaneously grow from within. A mind which thinks it already knows, which will not let go of its old favorite programs, is hopeless. It might as well be sitting under an apple tree in 1650.

So here we use words, but try not to present any new ideas or concepts. What we are presenting is simplistic as ideas. They are old ideas, ancient ideas, ideas that you have already had, a long time ago, before you learned to think like Aristotle. They are not complicated or scholarly. They are childlike. They are to help you to *unlearn*. But they are deep and they are subtle. They will require a level of sensitivity to which you are not accustomed. And, remember, it is moment to moment to moment.

Each moment is a crisis. Each moment, you either deepen your knowingness or you murder it. There is no in-between. Each moment is indeed a life crisis. This has always been true, your entire life, but you probably never realized it. You probably never realized that *everything* is contained in the single moment, everything hinges on the single moment..

You have murdered so many of your moments, you have traded your knowingness for dust so many times, that you are accustomed to living in the dark – and living in the fear of the dark. A murderer has guilt, and whether it is conscious or unconscious does not matter because his murder has had an effect which will murder the murderer, probably when he or she least expects it. If this does not make you uncomfortable, you are reading the wrong book. You are not ready for this *Course*. Does this make you uncomfortable?

You have just completed **Experiment III.1**, your first experiment in this *Course*. It was an experiment on your sensitivity and your honesty. Please record the results in your notebook, following the **Recommendations** in Chapter I. Write whatever comes into your mind. Do not go on to the next experiment today. But pay close attention to your moments for the next 24 hours. Try to recognize when you are using a moment to deepen your knowingness, and when you are using it to sink your feet deeper into the physical world. This is an important distinction. Make sure that you can clearly see this difference. Write in your notebook whatever comes to mind during this 24 hours. If you need more than one day, take as much time as you need.

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### Experiment III.2

You already have the data for this experiment in your memory. Recall your observations of your moments since yesterday. How many moments did you dedicate to knowingness?

Write a number in your notebook. Now, how many moments did you dedicate to your ego and its world? Write a number.

Now, what did you do with all the other moments during this 24 hour period? This may require a lengthy explanation.

How many moments would you say that you wasted, or killed, during this 24 hours?

Now answer this question, in your notebook: What is a moment?

When you finish writing, read over all your notes, from yesterday and today at least. If there is something you want to add or change, do it now. Then close this document and do not go on to experiment 3 until tomorrow. You are free to go back over any notes you have written up to this point, or to re-read any part of the *Course* up to this point. But do not go ahead. It is important that you solidify as much as possible what you have already learned before you take on anything more. Devote some time to this.

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### **Experiment III.3**

Spend a day casually watching your mind as moments pass. Early in the day, fix in your memory these four questions, and at the end of the day, record your answers. It is also helpful to write the questions on a small slip of paper and consult it during the day whenever you need to.

1. Is it possible for there to be a moment separate from its contents?
2. Is it possible to notice the transitions between moments?
3. Do I actively choose what occurs to me in a moment, or am I a passive victim of this choice?
4. What can I say about differences in the “quality” of my moments today?

The first day that you try this experiment may not be of much value. Our goal is to be able to answer the questions, not with a simple yes or no, but with a good ability to recognize these processes in the mind, and with the words to write about them. So, you might need several days. We suggest that you try all four questions on the first day to get you oriented, and then take a separate day for each question. You may not feel that you have completed the experiment, and you may not be satisfied with your notes. But do not attempt to draw cut-and-dried conclusions. You will just become more confused. We remind you that the logical mind is not adequate for these experiments. Spend no more than five days on this experiment. Then, if you need a rest, take a rest before going on. Rest as long as you like.

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### **Experiment III.4**

Now that you are a little familiar with the experience of the moment, apply this idea to your experience for one day: *“The present moment is a gap between future and past. The only real moment is the present moment. If my mind is in the future or the past, it is in a false world. So the only real, living moment is the experience of the gap between past and future, which are both illusions.”*

Be careful to not try to reason this out! Just let it sink in. By the end of the day, you may be totally confused. That is good. It means that something deep is sinking in. Record anything that comes to mind in your notebook. If all that you can say in your notes is “I am totally confused,” that is not a problem.

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Now we will take a break from the experiments. You have an idea of the methodology, but let us present a few more considerations before going on. First, let us remember that we are doing science. This implies that we are careful, honest, rigorous, disciplined, able to recognize and admit whatever we may find, and have developed our capacity to discover and uncover the hidden. You probably think of science the way it is defined in textbooks of Western sciences, where its essential features are manipulation of some “variables” while controlling other “variables,” and quantification with statistical analysis of the results. Here, we define science as closer to its first dictionary definition, but even less biased and agenda-based than this. The state of mind of the true scientist must be that of “blind justice.” The experimenter, you, must pile up all the evidence on one side and honestly weigh it against all the evidence piled up on the other side, and then accept the outcome. The evidence is your experience. Nothing more. No theories, no hypotheses, no assumptions, no list of the publications of other scientists, no conferences to guide you. You are a pure empiricist.

In this *Course* we are working toward a state of mind which is “positively passive.” This means a passivity which allows the evidence to pile up on whichever side, which does not fearfully falter and lapse back into ego’s fearful use of tactics such as manipulation. Positive passivity is not a deadness, a dissociation, or a denial. On the contrary. It is a state of heightened alertness and awareness. It is an ability to feel your participation in life without the sense of “I am doing.” It sounds easier than it is. We are manipulating and controlling in an active mode all day. We can’t help it, as long as we believe that what we are manipulating – our external world – is real and important. The passivity required to study the moment with “blind justice” is a tremendous challenge to the psyche. These first four experiments alone teach big, difficult lessons about the nature of the psyche. As the *Course* progresses, when your need to manipulate and control flares up, and it will, remember to use the subtler manipulations found in the 18 **Tactics** in this chapter. (pg. 36), instead of the more aggressive ones you have used in the past. For example, one tactic we suggest is that you read much less. Nothing, if possible. Perhaps you are accustomed to researching things through reading. This is how you have “clarified” your confusions, found “answers” to your questions. We suggest that you moderate this. It is not advised that you cross-reference this *Course* with other relevant writings, or include in your notes references to other works. Such intellectual, analytical activities are contrary to the passive mode of being. You will end up fighting yourself. You will not develop the capacity to observe with your whole being if you are confining your mind to the narrow spectrum of active thought. There are many many good writings that can help you, that are entirely consistent with the goals of this *Course*. If you feel that you need to do extensive reading, it is better to put the *Course* aside completely and concentrate instead on a reading program. After you have read everything you want, allow some time for the mind to process it, then return to the *Course*. The danger is that you may try to stimulate your thinking at the same time that you are trying to get past it. Here again, you will only end up fighting yourself, and no progress is possible.

It is important also to not get too ambitious, anxious, or aggressive about your progress in the *Course*. Slower is better in inner things. The more something new has a chance to sink in, the richer is the experience. You may experience some actual physical sensations associated with this sinking in process. As a person becomes more passive, and allows to pass opportunities to act and react, muscular tension is released, and the body image changes. You will probably want this to happen gradually, because it can be unsettling. But don’t let it deter you from your “positively passive” attitude. In a later chapter we will offer experiments in silence and passivity which are more explicit, more advanced. For now, the attitude is all you need.

### **Experiment III.5**

Don’t forget to design and perform your own original experiment based on the material presented thus far. If you wish.

## CHAPTER IV: The Ego: The False Sense of Who You Are

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The word “ego” goes way back to the Roman Empire; the concept -- who knows? Though people have used this Latin word ego in everyday language up to the present time, and often take for granted that a listener understands the meaning intended, the term is problematic – slippery. Volumes and volumes have been written on the ego, in the East and in the West. Freud assigned it a specific function in his scheme of the psyche, and Jung altered this significantly, and then the so-called “ego psychologists” each had their own slant. In Hindu teachings, in Buddhism, and other Eastern philosophies and religions, the Latin/English word “ego” has been defined in still other ways. In this *Course*, our working definition is close to the Eastern. We define ego experientially, as “the false sense of who you are.”

The experiment in real psychology is not possible if you are observing from the point of view of this false sense. Certainly, you are – at first. But at this point in the *Course*, we are going to examine the experience of the false self. When a person believes that he is dust, it is useless to point to the sun and try to convince him that he is sun. Instead, we study the nature of the dust. So that is what we are going to do at length now – study the dust. We are not going to tiptoe around the parts that are grimy or nasty or difficult, we are going to make a thorough study. This is not for the faint-hearted who prefers to cling to the comfort zone of his or her false identity. From the vantage point of positive passivity we can be still and let the dust settle and see it for what it is. This slowly gives the realization that we are not the dust.

The next series of experiments is offered to help you to disidentify with your false self. Disidentification is the central process in many esoteric practices, and in Roberto Assagioli’s *Psychosynthesis*. When prayer to a God is asking for something, it is from the ego; but when prayer to a God is in the spirit of “Thy Will be done” it is perfectly in line with our purpose here. We are neutral on the subject of prayer. But, if you pray, try to begin limiting your prayers to the expression of surrender. It is better to not ask for anything. This will help you to move through the *Course* with the fewest illusions. Whenever your ego, your fear, flares up, it will change your thoughts, your feelings, and your bodily sensations. Here, we briefly explain this, and offer ideas to manage this on your own. Soon we will be doing experiments so that you can directly experience.

You already have in your memory what it feels like to be ego-free, to not be identified with the false self, the ego, the personality. There have been times in your life when there was no false self. The false self was overlaid upon you in early childhood as you developed your sensory capacities and saw a false world. It is more accurate to say that you laid it upon yourself, in the same way that you would put on a cloak – or a mask. At one time, you were a pure *pre*-ego consciousness. In the *Course* we are working to recover this state, your true state, but now it will have the added feature of the wisdom of having lived through the ego phase. It will be a *post*-ego consciousness. You will never again be as naive as you were as a young child; you will never again be fooled by the intricate tricks of the false self.

This is one of the fears that becomes an obstacle for many people. As they begin to feel the cloak and mask of the ego dissolving, they feel as a vulnerable child again. So they are tempted to grab up the cloak and the mask again. This has happened to you many times. You have grabbed them up. Now, we will learn that we need not grab them up. There is a deep wisdom in post-ego consciousness that you did not have in pre-ego consciousness; it serves as a protection. This cannot be explained. But as you put yourself out onto higher branches of the tree in this *Course*, you will experience it. Be assured that this protection is not false. It is real. But also be aware that it will not sustain the false, only the true.

When fear, the ego, flares up, the thoughts are stimulated. With no ego, there are no thoughts. Thinking is much

like a cancer. First there are a few innocent, scattered musings, but then as ego grabs onto them they suddenly self-reproduce forming a bizarre and complicated latticework of configurations, feeding on the life force itself. Forcing the mind to think is the energy that feeds the disease. You will do some experiments here to see for yourself. Maybe you do not have this disease. It is an empirical question.

Sentiments are also of the ego, the false self. In fact, many egos are built around emotional attachments and their expression. Such egos criticize others who are less “compassionate,” less “loving,” less “empathetic.” This is how they manipulate! There is such a thing as true compassion and such a thing as true love which are universal rather than personal and selective. In a few of the experiments you will perhaps be able to recognize the difference for yourself. The True Self is a place of a very fluid kind of balance in which no special attachments or ecstasies or terrors or rages occur. You will see.

The bodily sensations associated with the false self are a huge subject. To make a long story short, the two are indistinguishable. If there are bodily sensations, there is a false self. The stronger the bodily sensations, the more entangled the “soul” is in the ego. Your searching for pleasure and comfort and for relief from pain and discomfort – adjusting the bodily sensations -- is all from the ego. Your use of the body to accomplish something in the external world, and even your efforts to keep the body healthy, are from the ego. There are rare exceptions. Hopefully, the experiments will help you to sort this out for yourself.

The false self has habits. Some of these are very strong, and resistant to even the slightest modification. Ego flares up defiantly, ready to kill, when some of them are threatened. This cannot be overcome until you have found a Self that is better than the ego and you can stabilize in it. There will be experiments to aid progress in this direction, to offer you an alternative to your ego. But the life of a human body is short. Perhaps you will not complete this *Course*, or something similar, while in a specific physical body. One can experience only what one can experience, and one must accept that some experiences may not be available to him or her.

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### Experiment IV.1

Before continuing, it is essential that you clearly and surely see: *one must know when to stop*. So this experiment is presented here, early in the *Course*, to remind you that introspection is a depth-consciousness process. It takes a huge shift in the way you use your mind. Unless you become acutely sensitive to what is inside you at any given moment, you miss its value. If you merely skip, skim, sip and speedread only the surface of your Being, you will just waste a lifetime. So we are calling this set of cautions an experiment, because you have to answer for yourself the empirical question: "Is it time to stop?"

If you tend to be speedy, ambitious, to take on big projects, to manage complicated plans, to manifest your dreams, you will be unable to bear the honest results of some of the experiments in this *Course*. If you have enjoyed the exquisite exhilaration of kundalini practices, if you have delighted in shakti power-arousing experiences, do not expect to be immune to breakdowns and deep depressions as you try to let go of these

and face your deeper Self.

If you have completed the first four experiments on ‘the moment,’ and are anxious to continue, you are not ready to continue. We suggest that you go back and repeat these experiments until a shift occurs in you and the ambition to continue disappears into an awareness of fear. This will happen when you realize what you are getting into!

In this *Course* you will find yourself in situations in which you will have to rely on your ability to be at home in the present moment. At times, in the thick of it, there will be nothing else to stand on. At such times, you must be able to allow your mind to rest in the present moment, whatsoever it may be. So these first four experiments from the previous chapter are not merely introductory. They are the foundation. If you continue on, adding more ideas, without this foundation, your mind will leave you and will rush ahead of your Being, disconnecting from you. You will *think* that you are making great progress, that you are understanding many things, as you watch the mind take off for the heavens. But you will be wrong.

In this *Course*, there is no guru right there with you. The main function of a guru is to slow your mind down, to keep you integral, in the Unitive Consciousness. Here, you must self-monitor. And there is no experiment that we can offer you which will be able to undo the mess you make by egoistically pressing onward. If you can't see quicksand until you are deep into it, you are doomed. We do however offer many cautions and warnings so that you will be able to sense when you are stepping into quicksand, and we offer you all the tools you need to step around it.

Therefore, stay with the first four experiments on the moment, and now this one too, until you feel sure that they will always offer you a place of refuge -- that you will not forget them. Then, continue with the *Course*. Whenever your thoughts and feelings start going ballistic, don't fight it, but relax, and be fully in *that* moment, until peace comes, though all that you have is that one moment. With this skill always at hand, you will be able to complete this *Course*. Never forget: one must know when enough is enough.

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### **Experiment IV.2**

All psychological problems are caused by living a false life. The more false your life, the more serious your problems. *Why does a person live a false life? Why does he deceive others? Why does he deceive himself?* Ask yourself these questions today, as you go about your typical routines. Carry a piece of paper and note down any examples of deception or self-deception which you see in others. Then at the end of the day, compile your notes with a commentary.

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### **Experiment IV.3**

Today, repeat experiment IV.2, but use only yourself as a subject. Any instances of deception or self-deception. *How does it feel when you see this in yourself? What was your feeling while you were doing it?*

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Perhaps you recognized in these last two experiments that the substrate of deception is fear. However, if the psychological problem is serious, that is, if the false self has taken over the entire psyche, the person is no longer aware of even his own fear. He fears his fear so much that he has to deny it, and also has to deny that he fears it! But even though outwardly he shows and feels no fear, his actions and his words are entirely based on it. His every moment is a lie.

What is the origin of this deep fear that is too immense to admit? This is very difficult to put into words. And, obviously, a person who is not facing the truth will see any discussion of this as absurd. First we say a few words on this, then we will do some experiments.

When you were very young, the True Self was your whole experience. In many respects, it is the exact opposite of the ego you now call "me." It is an extremely vivid and salutary experience, but it is very delicate. Just a brief flicker of ego and True Self recedes. If we even slightly will to play in ego-awareness, we have ego-awareness. True Self does not resist, does not insist that we remain true. All it takes is a tiny thought of my importance, or a single moment of fear of loss of something in the sensory world or of death of the physical body, and the awareness of True Self is entirely forgotten. When you were young and your pre-ego consciousness began to be usurped in this way by the ego, you felt a helpless panic as if you were being drowned. You were aware of the magnitude of what was lost, and your struggle to get back to where you belonged did not work. There was nothing you could do. You were not strong enough in the True Self. You looked to other people for your definition of yourself. You encapsulated, sort of neutralized, this unbearable fear of the loss of who you are in a false sense of who you are. It is impossible, in Reality, to lose the True Self; it is always who you really are. But the True Self can be obscured, buried, forgotten, inaccessible for a very long time. Since early childhood, we have put on a mask every day, played a game, and added another brick in the wall which separates us from the True Self. For twenty or thirty or forty or fifty years we as egos have been trying to believe that this solid wall is the boundary of our being, that there is nothing on the other side. To keep an ego, we have to convince ourselves and everyone else that our mask is who we are. Ever since you made this choice, you have lived in confusion. The world in which your false self exists is a pandemonium. It is truly a bad dream. We know, in a part of ourselves deeper than the ego, that there is 'something more' than this bad dream. But, as egos, we *have* to deny that we know this. But this world gets its energy from your ego, and you will not relinquish your ego long enough to see beyond the bad dream! That is the dilemma of man.

We get out of bed every day hoping to find this 'something more' in something that we anticipate that day, but we always just end up with more chaos, more contradiction, more excitement that turns into disappointment, which then turns into another excitement, which then turns into another disappointment, and on and on, until the body finally wears itself out and dies. The 'something more' is never found in the sensory world; the True Self that we only faintly and fleetingly remember, that we lost, we cannot become again. We see ourselves being false, but we can't remember how to be authentic. We actually fear being authentic. We can never just BE, we have to snake our way around all the threats that the false world presents to our false self, out of fear of loss of this false self! Thus, we can never be satisfied, never at peace; any moment of satisfaction is interrupted by some anxiety about what disaster might happen next.

As our life progresses, more and more evidence piles up that our choice to develop a self-image, an ego, and a personality was a wrong choice. Our masks don't seem to work so well anymore. Still, we keep trying. We become more and more stubborn, more and more split from the truth of who we are. And anyone who refuses to participate in our psychosis we carefully avoid, rather than admit that we have wasted a lifetime chasing a ghost.

This is the fate of every person who chooses to have a self-*image* or a self-*concept* instead of a Real Self. The only way out is to stop completely. Be still enough to allow the self-image to disappear. Into this stillness, the

True Self comes. Be honest enough to admit that the world is just a play of the senses and not a real world. If you are still and if you are honest, all the bubbles will burst – ego’s greatest fear! And so, your ego will not allow you to be still, and will not allow you to be honest, even when you try. In fact, the best measure of the size of one’s ego is how difficult it is to remain still with a silent mind.

Just as a child is not ready to be an adult, and cannot learn the things that an adult can learn, a person entrenched in an ego, a person who wants to dream, is not ready to wake up. He prefers to remain eyes closed, unable to see the essential thing that he is sacrificing just to keep the dream seeming real. He is unable to see that when the dream ends, the dreamer ends too.

No one in his right mind would ever trade a real self for a false self. However, let us say, a person can play with his powers of imagination too long. He may become fascinated with his ability to generate his own “reality” – his own perceptions, his own ideas, his own world, his own body/image. At first when he is lost in this dream he is enjoying. But when the dream turns ugly and gruesome, he wants to wake up. But he has set something in motion, and it can’t end until the cycle is completed. He has to suffer through the ugly and gruesome part. And, since he forfeited his consciousness of the True Self, he has no anchor. He wanted to believe that his made-up world and made-up self were real, and so now this illusion is all that he has. He has to suffer and die with it, and with no confidence that there is anything else. And even worse are the moments when he glimpses the reality of the True Self, which is now inaccessible to him. A starving man’s misery is most acute when food is right there but he cannot eat it. The deep psychic fear that he is not his real self and may never be real again is worse than the fear of death. There is no fear on earth so immense. It overwhelms his entire consciousness. It has been termed the Holy Terror. He is suspended between two worlds – a Real world which he can’t have, and a false world which is decaying and exhausting all of his life force. He is paralyzed. His playing with the power of his mind has turned his own mind against him. His own ‘right mind’ is alien to him.

Let us repeat: All psychological problems are caused by living a false life -- that is, living from the point of view of the ego, the false self. When our faculties are locked up in trying to hold a false self together for another day, the entire psyche becomes twisted. Psychological problems are resolved *only* when we live a true life, a real life, a sincere life -- that is, from the point of view of the True Self. Perhaps, if you were honest in doing the last few experiments, you felt the “Quality” of the True Self. Perhaps not. Let us go on, and offer you some other things to consider, and some other experiments to perform on yourself.

The point of view of the false self, the ego, is the point of view of one who is committing suicide and is fearful that some part of him will rise up and prevent him from finishing the act, and he will be forced to live in that condition! To live a false life is to try to kill the True Self. Each egoistic action, each breath drawn in service of the ego, the “me,” has split you more and more from your source of sanity and your source of life itself. The actor, the hypocrite, the one who manipulates others, tricks others, harms others, is not living a sincere life, and so is splitting from the true and the real. The psychological term for this split is psychosis. Such an ego cannot in Reality “kill” the True Self; a thing which is false has power only in a false world. Nevertheless, to live a false life is to bring disaster upon yourself, because everything remains connected, a unity, in spite of all efforts to take the part of a thing you like and to not suffer the part you don’t like. Because everything is connected, you get into deep trouble when you are false, pretending, so that your ego feels better; the part that you are rejecting becomes like a monster that pursues you until you finally complete the cycle. So whatever one has done to others for the benefit of his own ego he must suffer before his death. The circle has to be completed, the equilibrium has to be restored. When one causes disorder around him, he brings disorder into his own home. When one drags another person down to the animal level, he will in turn later be treated like an animal. When one breaks a law, even a man-made law, and evades the penalty, he loses the protection of the law for himself and his family. When one fights, his life fights back. It becomes even more of a fight, even more difficult and demanding. *All of a person’s problems are his own creation, due to his egoism.* Young children can see this by

contrast because they still experience at times the “Quality” of the True Self; the ego has not yet usurped. Anyone who really looks at life can also see this truth. But the psychotic is blinded by his strong ego.

It requires a great courage to live a sincere life, to be authentic moment to moment, to end the lies and the pretending. No ego has this kind of courage. To change from living a false life to living a true life one must completely let go of his egoistic image of who he is. This is intense. It is like walking into a fire. Nevertheless, at some time in his life, *everyone* is going to have to change, to reverse his course of splitting and judging, face himself and his past, and never again return to ego’s blindness and stupidity. His only real choice is when. He must find a way to gather together the courage to walk into the fire and end the pretending.

This next experiment is a beginning in assisting you to muster up this courage. As we pointed out, it is a courage not of the ego. It is not mere bravado, mere denial of fear. One must be able to see from the point of view of the True Self in order to begin the relinquishment of his ego. So our experimental question is this: “Who am I?” “Who *am* the True Self? We must do some deep soul-searching to begin our approach to this most significant of all questions. To an ego, the question seems completely stupid. To a psychotic, there is no question who he is – he is an ego. Descartes’ “I think, therefore I am” is an example of not knowing what the word “I” signifies. To a person partially split, one who exhibits mental confusion and disorganization, one we call “schizophrenic”, the question “*Who am I?*” constantly haunts him, but he can get nowhere with it because he refuses to let go of his fragmentary ego. To a person with less attachment to his ego, and a little more of a sense of how serious a problem the ego is, a person we call “neurotic,” only a little help may be needed. He already has two of the most salutary qualities: humility, and consciousness of his fears. The person whom most people would call “normal” is one who conceals well his fears and confusions, even from himself. He looks good. He looks “together”. He radiates confidence -- deliberately. He seems to have a clear direction, a sense of purpose. But don’t be fooled by this exterior. This is an ambulatory psychotic. His whole life is an effort to kill the True Self, to fortify the ego. If you help him in this effort, if you support his ego, he will “love” you, and reward your ego. But if you frustrate his ego, if you threaten it in any way, he will turn against you.

Beware of the “normal” person. And, beware of the striving to be “normal” yourself.

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Is an “I” which does not change from birth to death, which is closer to us than anything, closer even than the body and the secret thoughts and feelings which it “has” a mere illusion? How can we know it? How can we NOT know it? The thought and the feeling “I am just an illusion!” is an enormous thing to accept. We don’t want to accept it. How *can* we accept it? Is our non-acceptance just due to fear? Or is there something in us deeper than the fear that sees the impossibility of an illusion having experiences? As we said at the beginning of this course: Experiencing *is*. That, we can’t doubt. But this “I” issue is problematic. Certainly, we have many illusions *about* who I am. Ego is *dis*-illusioned, crushed every day. But can the one who has the illusions about who he or she is also BE an illusion? A terrifying thought. Perhaps, there is an “I” that is not an illusion, but it is so deeply buried that we have forgotten what it feels like to BE this I. But this too is a terrifying thought!

So here we reach the dead end where reason, logic, and thinking fail us. This *Course* is not about these limited tools. This *Course* is empirical. Scientific. You will continue probing beyond these. You will do your own experiment and live with your own results.

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### Experiment IV.4

Today, we begin to explore the question: "Who am I *not*?" In other words, perhaps there is a simple way to get a sense for those things that we are in the habit of associating with the "me," which are not "I". This experiment may help you to actually *feel* the difference. Hopefully this feeling of disidentification will stick with you for the rest of your life.

The experiment is simply this: Answer "Which of the two statements feels more true?"

- "I *am* a body" or "I *have* a body"
- "I *am* a personality" or "I *have* a personality"
- "I *am* a mind" or "I *have* a mind"
- "I *am* an ego" or "I *have* an ego"
- "I *am* a point of view" or "I *have* a point of view"
- "I *am* my beliefs" or "I *have* my beliefs"
- "I *am* my thoughts" or "I *have* my thoughts"
- "I *am* a heart" or "I *have* a heart"
- "I *am* my past" or "I *have* a past"
- "I *am* my experiences" or "I *have* experiences"
- "I *am* my feelings" or "I *have* feelings"
- "I *am* my actions" or "I *do* actions"
- "I *am* the words I say" or "I *have* words to say"
- "I *am* my house" or "I have a house"
- "I *am* the clothes I wear" or "I *have* and I *wear* certain clothes"
- "I *am* my family" or "I *have* a family"
- "I *am* my intelligence" or "I *have* my intelligence"
- "I *am* a talent" or "I have a talent"
- "I *am* my successes" or "I *have had* successes"
- "I *am* my money" or "I *have* money"
- "I *am* my name" or "I *have* a name"
- "I *am* my identity" or "I have my identity"
- "I *am* a price" or "I *have* a price"

Now, as a second part of the experiment, write in your notebook five additional things that you, as an ego, usually identify with. Take a few moments with each one to *feel*

the difference between “am” and “have.”

Now say to yourself, for each of these five: *“My false self has made itself feel real by falsely appropriating this. It is what I have. It is not who I am.”* Close your eyes and take some time to feel the implications of what you have just felt. If none of these externals that you have come to identify with are not the “I” who identifies with them, WHO IS THIS I? This “I” is separate from all these things. Take away all these things, and you find the I, buried under them! Maybe your ego wants to argue, and claim that the real I is just the totality of all these things. But still, no matter how many things you bury your I under, each one of them was still just added, or developed around something else. So what is this something else, that is not an object, but a subject?

For instance, it makes more sense to many people to say of themselves “I am an animal” than to say “I have an animal.” And, to other people, it makes more sense to say “I am a soul” rather than “I have a soul.” This must mean that some people see themselves as more of an animal than a soul, while others see themselves as more a soul than an animal. And, typically we say “I am John” or “I am Johna,” but to say “I am my name” doesn’t feel right. Your name can change! And most people would say “I am a person” rather than “I have a person,” but you can also say “I am not the same person I was two years ago.” Does this mean that the I itself changed? Or is there an I that does not ever change? How do such anomalies fit into this confusion?

Again, don’t strain to make logical sense out of all of it! Just note the self-deception. Writing, immediately, is important here. So take up your notebook, sit in a comfortable place, and use your intuitive eye to begin to unravel all this.

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### Experiment IV.5

Today we extend the insight gained in the previous experiment. Throughout the day, keep the list from Experiment IV.4 with you. Whenever you have a spare minute, choose an item from the list, for example "I have a house," and remind yourself "No, I am *not* my house."

Make sure that by the end of the day you have done all items on the list.

Before going to sleep, make a list of any items which your mind would not allow you to disidentify with.

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### Experiment IV.6

*Today we begin to ask the more positive, deeper question "Who am I?"* Ramana Maharshi and A. U. Vasavada both encouraged their students to constantly pursue the answer to this question until they were satisfied. (For more background, see *The Nectar of Ramana Maharshi* on our website [www.nectarproject.org](http://www.nectarproject.org).) This is the most fundamental question in life. One who finds -- and can recognize -- the real answer to this question holds everything in the palm of his hand. So first we need to do at least one experiment to be able to recognize "the real answer," and distinguish it from all imposters. We cannot tell you what is "the real answer." You will decide this for yourself on the basis of your own inquiry. We hope that your inquiry is not limited to only this *Course*. Every moment of your life you are being shown the false and the real, the false and the real, the false and the real, over and over again, so that you can see the difference. Here, we can only help you to get oriented.

So how does one distinguish the real from the false? Well, one thing that we know, thanks to Heisenberg, Einstein, and countless mystics throughout the ages, is that you cannot just rap on it, and if it seems to rap back, it must be real. Its physical properties, its tangibility, the intensity of its effect on the senses, is not a valid test of whether a thing is real or an illusion, meaningful or not. And, reason and logic tell us that time and space are real, but they are not. So our thinking power is also not a valid test. As Solomon says in Ecclesiasticus: "All is ego's vanity, all is in vain." How to get deeper than, or beyond, the vain, the worthless? We can only go today as deep as we can go today. Maybe deeper tomorrow, if we continue to probe and to experiment and to open ourselves.

The procedure for today is so simple that it seems useless. You will be tempted to skip this experiment and go on to something more interesting. But this is one of the most important experiments you can perform. And, if you do it every day, every day you are peeling off a layer of dead skin over the wound that has closed around your loss of True Self. At the end of your life, you will be thankful for every moment you devoted to today's experiment. All you need to do today, and every day from now on, is say to yourself, whenever you remember: "I do not know who I am. Who am I?" This, you will find, is too deep for note-taking. It paralyzes the thought process. The thought process is totally inadequate for this. At first, you won't notice anything. But eventually, a new feeling will descend upon you. Don't ignore this seed feeling.

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This is one of the points in this *Course* at which you might decide “I don’t like where my mind is going with this.” There are dark passages in the labyrinth, for everyone. John of the Cross called this “the dark night of the soul”. C. G. Jung cites the metaphor of “the night sea journey.” If you are doing this *Course* according to instructions, you will encounter this too. It is impossible to circumvent. But, *do not forge ahead with something that does not feel right!* It is completely up to you to decide if something “feels right” or “feels wrong.” No one can tell you what “feeling right” and “feeling wrong” are -- for you. The wonderful thing about being human is that you, at every moment, have two roads before you. You, alone, ultimately decide your destiny. Avoid anyone who tries to make this decision for you. If you rely only on yourself now, you will have much more confidence later, when you face deeper challenges. So, if you decide to abandon this *Course* now, and find something to read, or join a religion, or do a lot of meditation, or just forget the whole thing, it is all good – *as long as you take full responsibility for your own decision.*

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If you are continuing, we would like to introduce you to a Danish mystic, Albert Sorensen (1886-1984). There are two books: *Life and Sayings of a Rare Born Mystic*, which is an edited version of his own original autobiography, and *Dancing With The Void*, which includes photographs and describes his meetings with other mystics in India. In our website ([www.nectarproject.org](http://www.nectarproject.org)) we have reprinted his own autobiographical writings under the title *The Nectar of Sunyata*. This uneducated son of Danish peasants lived somewhat of a charmed life, working as a simple underpaid gardener some twenty years, never married, experienced sex only one time in his 98 years, and while still a young man was invited by the Indian poet/mystic Tagore to his home in India. Albert lived forty two years in solitude in the Himalayas, twenty of those years in total silence. While there, he visited the ashram of Ramana Maharshi; he enjoyed sitting in silence with Ramana. He states in his autobiography that Ramana singled him out of a large group and communicated to him five words: “We are always aware, Sunyata.” Albert took this word, which is Sanskrit for “nobody,” as his name. When in his 90s, he was discovered in his humble dwelling in the Himalayas by some people from San Francisco, California. They took him there to replace the deceased Alan Watts as spiritual guide of the Alan Watts Society. But Sunyata was so quiet and unassuming that his entertainment value was well below their needs, and his message was so simple that it required no speeches, sermons, or discourses. Nevertheless, a brief encounter with him changed the lives of many people. At the age of 98, while crossing a street, he was hit by a hit-and-run driver and taken to the emergency room. By some incredible coincidence, the driver was one of his students. When this driver realized whom he had hit, he found the hospital and went to Sunyata begging for forgiveness. Reportedly, Sunyata said only two words: “No problem.”

In his autobiography, which he titled simply *Memory*, he relates that he remembers when he first began to lose awareness of the True Self, and his ego began to “usurp,” as he says. He was twelve years old, and these were the thoughts that he said to himself at that time: “You stupid and giddy boy. How can you forget your Self like that? Remember! Remember! And you will not laugh at such silly tricks and these merely clever antics. You’ll not wallow in desires, nor fall for mean temptations. Remember! Recollect yourself!”

### **Experiment IV.7**

Don’t forget your own original experiment, if you wish.

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## CHAPTER V: Silence and Pure Experiencing: Testing the Waters

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There is a Silence that nothing in the world can touch. It is an inner silence, a positive silence, more pure than the total absence of the sounds of the outer world, the negative silence. It is transmitted with no loss of fidelity through all things and events, but ego's body's ears and brain are deaf to It. This Silence is not a subdued silence, like the cool calmness of a confident ego. This is a 'jacked-up' state. It is such a high that It almost physically lifts you up. When it descends upon a person who rarely experiences It, he may have difficulty resisting running and jumping and shouting. But the mature soul who is familiar with It just wants to be still and vibrate with It and as It... It can be compared to the most subtle vibration, the sweetest, most constant musical note. Peotically, It is expressed as angels singing. It signals that one is on the threshold of the True Self.

This experience is there as the substrate of each moment of your life. This Silence is the material out of which each moment is manufactured, as it were. And yet, the conscious experience of it is very rare. Possible, in any one of the millions and billions of moments that make up a lifetime, and yet it is very rare. Its value? The length in time of a lifetime does not matter – all that matters are the moments in which the Quality of this experience is awared.

When does it come? Since it is a fullness, since it is all-encompassing, it can come only to a totally empty mind, a perfectly still and receptive mind. Whenever you relinquish your mind, whenever you do not use your mind, whenever you permit your mind to be pure and clear and empty, it comes. Can you be completely thought-free? Can you be completely fear-free? Can you be completely desire-free and even hope-free? Then it will come. Thus, it is your own decision that permits this Silence to come to you, and it is your decision alone that is preventing it this very moment.

When a human being begins to believe that he and his world and his position in that world and what happens in that world are real, all of these beliefs clutter his mind. The all-encompassing Silence has no place to dwell. True Self has been excluded in favor of ego. After a person so chooses, placing his own ideas and images and bodily experiences above the Silence, life blesses him with suffering to remind him that he has chosen wrongly. He needs something to paralyze his stupid ego long enough so that his vision is clear again. If his ego is strong, if he is *really* stupid, the misery must be intense to break through ego's shield. If his ego is weak, only a brief paralysis is necessary. Eventually, we all see again what the outer "reality" really is: a complicated, confused nothing. Surely, it is a blessing to be corrected, to be reminded that our bodies are going to fail us no matter what, that the world and the people around us cannot be a source of a happiness that we can trust, and that the very thing we cling to the most is what will kill us. Surely, it is a blessing to be returned to the Silence which is sometimes called the Peace of God, but which ego calls death. The Silence, where no threat can enter, where all that we value endures as one, indivisible experience.

The blessing, our suffering, continues until we stop feeding our life energy to our egos and competing with other egos for the scraps here. Our daily lives are a constant battle against time and circumstances, as long as we continue to fight for time and circumstances! When we transform our fight into acceptance, the suffering ends. When we accept that there is nothing we can do, and we put the mind and body to rest, there is space for the Silence to enter, and so it enters. We arrive Home, thanks to suffering, our teacher. We enjoy a fulfillment of the true purpose of our lives.

In this chapter, we begin a reversal. We have been testing the waters of the noises of the world, those things that

stimulate our senses and flood our consciousness; we now turn to testing the waters of silences. Before and after all noises, all perceptions, there is a silence. Ego ignores it. Ego considers it unimportant. It makes ego feel creepy. Ego wants to drum up some new noise to obscure it. Ego equates noise to life. But life is not noise, and the end of noise is not the end of life. Silence is not dead. It is the beginning of life.

Silence works the way a river destroys a dam, so that the stagnant water can flow with a new freedom. To flow is the nature of water. To be free, to seek freedom to flow, to find a way through all obstacles – that is water. How much more is it the nature of man! But if a man has been dammed up his entire life, and has stagnated with an accumulation of debris, and is polluted with the droppings of animals, to suddenly be released into the freedom of the Absolute is a shock. He learned to feel safe hidden in the turbidity beneath all the flotsam. Light and vastness are too foreign.

It is natural for a drop of water to find the fault in the dam of rocks, and flow through, and it opens a way for another drop and then another, and then only time stands between stagnancy and freedom. This is the natural way for man also. As ego recedes and the psyche softens, the crack is found, and begins to be penetrated. As psyche sees this possibility, it allows further softening, and a tiny stream of this soft element begins to flow through the crack, and as it flows it opens up the crack, and it sees that softening and flowing is the way out of the stagnancy, and it loves the freedom to flow downstream. In this way, self-liberation, salvation, is accomplished.

If we were to explode the dam all at once, to destroy what little peace and stillness there was in the stagnancy, and to erupt the psyche like a geyser, and to drop it headlong into the roaring flood, it might be too much. The Fall into the Silence, the Joy of the perfect freedom, would perhaps not even be produced. One has not started to flow as even a drop yet. Ego is still rigidifying, solidifying, taking a position, fortifying itself. Explode this, and ego's first thought is suicide, or murder. In itself, suicide is not a tragedy. In itself, murder is not a tragedy. All that happens is that an ego dies. What is real, True Self, is not touched. Nevertheless, these dramas are not necessary. They have an ugliness. They are out of synch, somehow. They are not harmonious. They evidence the disharmony of the psyche in which they occur. There are two ways to end disharmony: kill it, or wait for it to die a natural death. If one waits long enough, beyond even expecting some change, all disharmony dies a natural death.

Life always knows best. If a particular ego refuses to begin the softening, to fall silent and *look at what is*, and continues with its own pointless project, and blinding others as well, life will kill it. No one else needs to threaten it or punish it or kill it, this is the job of life. Life is the official executioner. One who tries to take its place will only bring an intolerable shock upon himself. Life knows what is the best moment for everything. It has immense patience. It keeps waiting until a psyche is ready, and then it offers some silences, a few tastes of the Quality of Silence, and waits. Can this psyche taste? Can it digest and incorporate the new and the beyond? If so, it is spared. If not, if it rejects all opportunities, it is sacrificed, as an example to people who can learn from seeing this, and to make room for others who bring a better capacity to taste and to digest.

So at this point in the *Course*, no one is expected to fall headlong into love with the Silence, to disappear into it. That is for the last chapter! But now, we offer you a way to begin probing. Withdraw attention from the noises in your outer and inner worlds and invest it in the silences between. Right now, this is important, because right now you need to see how life works. When a person allows the silence a space in his consciousness, when he allows even a tiny crack, a tiny gap between the noises, he will see a miracle. Something in the noisy world will change, and make it easier for him to explore silence. There is no need to fight the noise. It has power *only* if you fight it. Just relax. Let your awareness notice the tiny moments of silence. Let thoughts subside. In the very moment in which one thus chooses, in that moment the world changes. Something new is set in motion. Inner silence breeds outer silence. The bigger the gap that you allow in the inner, the more silence the world will

return to you. You need do nothing more to create this miracle.

But it is an empirical question! Do not put together an argument against it, and do not blindly believe in it. The only way to KNOW if it is TRUE is to do the experiment yourself.

### **Experiment V.1**

This first experiment in silence, testing the waters, is so simple that it need not be explained; you do not need instructions, a procedure, or a sacred scripture, or a teacher, guru, or therapist. *Just start noticing the silent moments in the gaps between perceptions and let them linger.* Right now, you might not enjoy them. They will probably make you nervous, anxious to get back into the noisy world and *do something!* You are stagnant water as yet. You are crawling with contaminants – they seem so much more real, more friendly, than clear, empty silence. They seem so much more solid, and they seem to have the power to keep the pure Light out. But you don't know what power is yet, *because you have never tested!*

So today, right now, begin testing. Just start noticing the gaps and let them linger.

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When you do begin to notice the Gaps, when the silent Light returns to you once, your Eye begins to open. Now you are motivated. Instead of filling all silences, you can let them linger. As you see that this multiplies your opportunities for more and bigger silences, you are less frantic about trying to *do something*. You are beginning to see that silence has more power than movement, or planning. Then it is just a matter of repeating what you know. Each time a pain comes, do not fight it, do not try to act to end it, but see it as telling you that you are doing too much, filling your mind with too much. Choose to relax, and allow the mind to empty completely. Fall silent, body and mind. You will recognize the feeling. It is the feeling of falling in love. The difference is that your beloved will never walk away, and will never die.

This is the advanced methodology for the real psychology experiment. It is the *perfectly* passive method. The methodless method. The path without a path. All the methods and plans and strategies and efforts which we have used all our lives to gain or achieve things in the outer world are useless here. All the methods and suggestions and experiments which require a doing are only preliminaries, and must also finally be laid aside. We are now learning to leave space in our day for a new fragrance, a new Quality. We are beginning to be subtle enough to harmonize with this most subtle Thing. We are preparing. We are preparing ourselves for the moment when we, in total trust, fall into the light of this Silence. Without this, all of life is mere foreplay, child's play. Use all that has happened to you to see this, and then drop all of it. Prepare yourself now, and this will not depress you, it will not frighten you, it will not arouse thoughts of suicide or attack. Make yourself ready. As many times as you can each day, open up the little silences. Soon, you will realize that past and future can be ignored, that this one tiny present silent moment is in control -- it is opening up the gate to everything. Soon, you will not move, you will not speak, but the Quality of the Silence will, with you in it. Eventually, you will know that you are ready to let The Silence totally replace everything you have known as "I."

### **Experiment V.2**

As we have said, pure Silence is not new to you. You came here with this purity. At any moment in your life when for any reason ego was dormant, it was replaced by the Silence. At any such moment in your life, you were seeing from the point of view of the Real Self. Today's experiment is another one on differentiating qualities. Probably, you will not experience any moments of the pure Silence today, unless this is a very unusual day, either very joyful or very sad. Both of these emotional extremes can briefly inactivate the ego. To get the most out of today's study, you will be doing a type of meditating which is the essence of Raja Yoga: pure silent witnessing. It is the same as the goal of Zen: mindful mindlessness! You probably have your own meditation practices. However, this is not like any other kind of meditation. Meditation practices are "doings." You focus your mind, you use your mind. Pure silent witnessing is "non-doing." *You let go of all control of the mind.* The state which eventually comes over you, after all thoughts and emotions and images and urges have run their course, is the Emptiness which is vast enough to admit the all-encompassing: the pure Silence. The real Silence encompasses even the mind. If there is still mind, you are still too small.

So today is an easy day, an effortless day. All you need to do is periodically introspect and see if the mind is empty, and then notice the Quality associated with this. Just casually observe. Perhaps the mind is never empty. That is OK. Just notice the Quality associated with this too. Both observations are extremely valuable. If you happen to notice differences in the Quality of the perfectly silent mind and the mind with contents, that is a bonus.

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### Experiment V.3

Sit or lie down in a comfortable quiet place where you won't be disturbed.

Recall a time in your life when you felt the deepest love. Probably, this will be when you were young, and open, and ego was vulnerable, not yet hardened. It doesn't matter upon whom or what you projected this love. Do not occupy your mind with the cherished object or person. Here we are interested only in your memory of the Quality of the experience itself.

Once you have stabilized the memory, now try to stabilize in the feeling of the Quality of the experience. This will feel raw. You will notice that whenever the object or person intrudes, many other contaminating qualities also appear, such as regret, resentment, sadness, jealousy, abandonment, sexual arousal, perhaps even rage. But these were secondary. See if you can recall and stabilize in the original, pure feeling of being in love.

Next, see if you can allow this Quality to grow into something more than a memory. Feel this Quality as real and alive right now, without projecting it onto anyone or anything. Don't force or pretend. Just relax your body, relax your mind, and be passive. Allow the Quality of love to fill you.

Perhaps you will want to repeat this procedure later today, perhaps not. Follow your inclination. Avoid your usual note taking at the end of this day. Your memory will suffice.

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Just as you cannot for more than a second or two “not think of an elephant,” you cannot “think of the void, the emptiness, the Silence,” especially that which is all-encompassing. That which is the Pure Subject of the "I" cannot be made an object or a concept. We fall into it, we slip into it, just in the same way that we fall in love – it catches us unawares. If you can be unaware, of anything and everything, the mystical experience is inevitable and automatic. But if there remains one shred of an object of consciousness to which you are clinging, the space is not big enough for the mystical experience, the identification with the Real Self. If a single idea, even the idea of God, is in the mind, the true mystical moment of Self-remembering is impossible.

Therefore, we have to go all the way back to where we were before we had even God for comfort to the “me.” This is referred to in the *Tao Te Ching* as “returning to the Source.” So the advanced method of positive passivity, allowing all noise to pass through you until it all resolves into Silence, requires consistent practice. This next experiment is one that can be practiced every day. It is more of a reminder to yourself of the conducive attitude than it is an actual experiment...

#### **Experiment V.4**

We employ an image here to describe the attitude of pure passivity. An image is helpful because as the Silence begins to descend you will want to try to grasp it and hold it as an object. This is a mistake. It will defeat your purpose. So the proper attitude is one of opening your hand and releasing your grip on everything. Even the Silence. If you practice daily, letting go a little more each time, soon you will arrive, unawares, at the gate to all mystery, the resolution of all doubt – liberation, salvation. This is how the process works. Nothing else is required, nothing else can work. Release your own will, release everything to which you cling for security, to the Process. No matter what.

So, from this day forward, take some time to sit down and relax, rest your hands palms up on your legs, and look at your hands. Let whatever comes to mind come to mind. Perhaps past uses of your hands, perhaps plans you have for them, perhaps something about you personally -- the ‘Quality’ of your hands. Perhaps your perception of them, how they look and feel, will change. Allow any of these to occur. Don’t be in a hurry. This part may take some time, and it is time well spent.

After this, recall today’s image: "I will open my hand and release my grip a little more today." Sit quietly for a while with this experience of releasing. Be aware of how this feels.

Then, move slowly and consciously into the activities of the day.

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Perhaps by now you are beginning to feel a little of the anxiety that ego has about silence. Have you noticed that as soon as there is a gap into which the experience of the Emptiness might come, the mind pipes up and finds a way to fill it? If there is no stimulation, the mind self-stimulates. Why does the mind do this? Why does the mind invent struggle, invent a mountain to climb, rather than just enjoy rest in the Silence? Correlative questions are: Is there life after perception? Then how does one live? What does such a 'life' consist of?

Ego is squirming. It does not like these questions. There is a knowingness in a place deeper than the ego that remembers a state of suspension between two worlds. This memory arouses a terror in the psyche that is incomparably more profound than either the fear of death or the fear of insanity. We call it the Holy Terror. This Holy Terror has the power to take over the entire consciousness, so that nothing besides it can be experienced. And no way out can be found. The way out of the fear of death is to die; the way out of the fear of insanity is to become insane. In both cases, the fear ends. But this Holy Terror allows no way out. The suspension consists of knowing that there is a Real world but being unable to enter it because of refusing to let go of a false world. The psyche can't enjoy the Real world, as it must dwell in the world that it knows is false. The psyche doesn't want to move, or to remain. But it has to do one or the other.

The problem cannot be solved, precisely because ego refuses to acknowledge that ego itself is the only problem. In Reality, the Holy Terror is not a problem. Ego makes it a problem by refusing to feel the full force of it, to expose it to the Light of awareness. As soon as there is a little anxiety, a tiny hint of the Holy Terror, ego shuts it down and tries to return to business as usual -- business as usual in its false world. Thus, the suspension between the worlds. This is hell. And as long as ego reigns over the psyche, this is an eternal hell. One never experiences the end of it; even in death ego is still struggling to assert the reality of its existence. Ego cannot tolerate the truth that it is not real. Thus, though there is no way that an individual psyche can find out of hell, an individual psyche can disappear. The Holy Terror then ends.

The passionate and poignant writings of mystics such as St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila describe their experiences of trying to let go of the false, outer world. Their descriptions are of demons which exist in the depths of the mind and which we must somehow overpower. We must heroically pass through this 'dark night of the soul' to arrive at 'the interior castle'. St. Teresa prays to God, not for an end of the pain, but for death. She intuitively knows that dying into God, not fighting the demons, is the only way, and her hunger for the end of her awareness of herself as a separate being is total. Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemani begged his Father "Let this vessel pass from me." He was not asking to be spared the crucifixion, he was asking to be relieved of the *awareness* of his body, his physical vessel, his encumbrance.

Through this *Course*, one can attain to this. All the tools are here. Whether you in particular can relinquish your awareness of yourself as separate is an empirical question. If you allow the cloud to lift, a little at a time, if you approach the Holy Terror, a little at a time, steadily, day by day, you will disappear, a drop into the ocean. Never again will the Silence, the Plenum-Void, be interrupted. Let go of the false world, and there is no suspension, no psychotic split. What seemed to be 'the problem of hell' and the 'demons within' is just a forgotten illusion. You are once again True Self, who knows not the false. But you can't skip over any steps.

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### Experiment V.5

This experiment may be the most important in the entire *Course* for you. It may be a turning point in your life, because it may show you how fragile and flimsy your mind is. Perhaps you have previously experienced a shift in which your "ordinary state of consciousness" was overpowered by some dramatic or traumatic event, or by a radical change in brain chemistry. Your "mind", as you knew it, ceased to function. For some moments, you seemed to be left without a mind. It is worthy of note that this can be brought about by "bad" events as well as "good" events. You can be deeply humiliated or embarrassed and be temporarily ego-paralyzed, or you can experience a great benefit, such as having a baby or being promoted to a new position. It can be alcohol intoxication, stimulants or depressants, the empty-mind moments before falling asleep or after waking up, or the exhilaration of an erotic experience or a serious physical trauma. They are all the same in that, for a short time, they stop the mind. We are *moved*. We encounter the beyond within; our false self is temporarily exposed as powerless. We are shown without a doubt that there is a "Higher Power."

But these experiences end, and usually the mind just returns to its former "ordinary" state. The Glimpse into the other world -- the worldless world -- cannot be remembered by the ordinary mind. You may have never realized that you need not wait for the next trauma or exhilarating erotic experience to open up new Glimpses. And, that you can connect up these Glimpses until they weave for you a new level of Being: mindless Reality. This cannot be done through intoxicants, because it is the process of learning how to "do it yourself" that promotes the connections. Drugs are like artificial flowers: you can buy as many as you want, and still not a single one will sprout a new one.

Today, you can find the key to it all. Our previous experiments in this chapter all work to prepare you for this one. It is like a knack. It is not really a talent, either bestowed or developed. It is pure effortlessness. We do not have to earn any grace or merit to do it -- we have all already been graced with this 'knack.' In fact, when we were children we were doing it every day, without even knowing it. And the obstacles to it -- the ego and the mind -- are not real. So there is nothing to fight or to overcome. What we do need, however, is the ability to allow. We are allowing a moment to pass without grasping it and making its direction "known." And then, we are allowing another moment to pass in like manner. And then another, and then another. Forget

the effect on your ego. Forget the effect on your body. Just let time pass however it may, and watch all that happens without grasping at it -- or pushing it away. Suspend all effort, and your mind will eventually cease, and you will see that it is not real. It is just made up of thoughts -- poor, low quality experiences. When they cease, the consciousness spontaneously shifts to richer, higher quality experiences. The time you have spent *just Being* gets you to a better place than if you had spent it *doing*. Each time that this happens to you shifts your Being from the false world to the Real. The more that you practice this, the richer your experience becomes, and it is easier to shed the tendency to enslave yourself to your ego and body and thinking mind. Enslavement is not the natural condition of the human psyche. It is a poor quality way to live. Life grows in freedom from mind; life stagnates in bondage to mind.

It is all that simple and mystic-clear. Your task today is to allow it, throughout the day. This will be the beginning of the Reversal for you.

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And now we must interject a caution to those who would teach. What is there to teach? And who is there to teach? You are wasting timeless moments in these fictions. To attempt to teach is to descend into hell to save a being who is not what you think he or she is, and to teach what cannot be taught. If you see someone who needs to learn, you are gazing lovingly into a mirror. The image in the mirror does not exist. How can one teach silence? By talking, by breaking the silence? By being silent? The very effort to be silent in order to teach it is a grandiose delusion. It produces nothing. The very idea of teaching so contaminates the mind that it will never be clear. You put yourself in suspension between two worlds; you are running from the Holy Terror by dragging someone else into your confusion, and you will never escape.

Only an ego would claim that he was taught by a great master. Only an ego would claim special knowledge. And the desire to teach is like any other desire in that it comes from ego; the less in touch with True Self the stronger the desire. Ego is always seeking a challenge to prove its reality. Thus, the egoistic teacher seeks out the most difficult cases -- the white sheep right in the middle of the flock. The teacher's plan is to thus divide them, to disrupt the entire flock. This sheep which is firmly embedded in his society is like the rock on which seed falls. No new life can sprout. But this ego hoping to convert someone, this false prophet, persists in haranguing the rock, chastising it for being barren. It is not fertilizing his seed. Perhaps he is more interested in hearing himself expound and generating a fear and trembling than he is in the liberation of the rock.

But there is nothing wrong with the rock! It is doing exactly what nature asks of it. We need lots of rocks of all shapes and sizes. One of the jobs of a rock is to teach false prophets a lesson. What *is* a rock but earth under pressure? Tremendous pressure, over a period of eons, has been imposed upon earth and has hardened it. So do you think that you can soften it by adding *more* pressure? Doesn't pressure just make it even harder, more resistant? Perhaps if you hammer at it long enough you can succeed in cracking it, but this still won't sprout your seed. These souls, these egos in teachers' clothing, are all still just toying with the idea of enlightenment; it still remains for them to face the Holy Terror and be dissolved so that Light can pass. The truly enlightened have no answers, and they entertain no followers. The now moment is too pure for them to contaminate with such spacetime world illusions. Their silence is steady enough to be communicated even without conscious awareness. Their passivity has attained to absence. Then, someone might sense their absence and be transformed!

Water knows how to relate to a rock. Bathe it, cool it, caress it, dance around and over it, show it the joy and the life that it brings to you. Then, by and by, the dance itself transforms the rock, from jagged and rough to round and smooth, and then into sand. The sand then settles, and purifies the water, and as it purifies it takes on soil, and the soil brings forth new life. It is a beautiful process, it is a dance that seems to never end, to remind humans how infinitesimal we are. No human has ever danced as long as the ugliest rock and the most neglected stream of water can dance. Water enters the rock, and water emerges from the rock. In Mayan: Sartaneja.

The false prophet may harbor no ill-will; but even if he is not a wicked person still he is hopelessly frustrated. Every ignorant soul that he saves leaves a hundred more to save. The false prophet is just in too much of a hurry -- he is trying to outdo nature. Instead of molesting the rock, he would better serve by reflecting in silence upon his ambitions for his seed, and upon his misguided martyrdom -- to a rock.

From Chuang Tzu:

"Who is the one who has forgotten words? He is the one I want to talk to!"

"And the greatest man is nobody!"

### Experiment V.6

We end this chapter with an experiment for those who want to know how to enlighten the whole humanity.

It is easy to predict misfortunes and disasters, once you understand their cause and their purpose. The only Certainty is that any assertion of "I" will produce an ego-humiliation. Do you feel big right now? Do you feel important, special in some way? Is your project, whatever it is, working out? Do you enjoy thrills of good health and strength in your body? Are your human relationships satisfying you? Then the hammer is about to fall. Your head is in the wrong place!

If, however, you live near trembling, tentative and sensitive, watchful of this Certainty, yet allowing It to control everything, a deepening and a clarification pervades your moments. Allow the Certainty to guide you and It becomes your constant companion. You begin to recollect an ancient Memory of your intimacy with such powerlessness.

This Memory is full. It feels like who you were *before*. Before everything. Before you had a mind. You begin to feel this Memory all around you -- like air, like sunshine, like darkness, like pure music, like silence. You also feel this Memory within you -- like your breath, like your warm heart, like an all-knowingness, like a vast Emptiness that is always full, like silence.

This experiment is to learn to watch the outer and the inner connecting into One Silence. The power to make this connection happen you do not possess. The power is your breathing. When a natural effortless inhale happens, all the Memory around you is digested and assimilated. When the exhale naturally and effortlessly happens, the Memory within is released and provides the outer with its Source of Life.

The very best way for a man to live, the very best thing he can do for humanity, is to step aside and let breathing keep Memory alive. There is nothing better that he can do. There are no words that he can say that can improve upon the perfection of his passivity, his silence. Everything has already been attended to and put in its proper place. Spirit breathes.

This experiment is a meditative practice on the message of A. U. Vasavada:

"There is nothing to do but to be constantly alert and aware,  
And to continue on in the unknown, and to nowhere."

Today, go alone to a place that is as untouched by human "doings" as is available to you. Take your lunch, a blanket, maybe a pillow. Get comfortable somewhere that no one is likely to discover you. Privacy is important, because then what is moving from within you on exhales is purely and innocently your non-doing. And, what is moving into you on inhales is pure Memory of your true ambience. Be alert to your non-doing, aware of going nowhere. When distractions arise, give them time to run their course.

Here, you can discover the best way to live, and begin to live it. Just be nobody before your breathing. Let it accomplish everything there is to accomplish. Devote as much time as possible to this breathing experiment, but don't force.

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### Experiment V.7

Don't forget your own original experiment for this chapter.

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## CHAPTER VI. Judgment: The Origin of the Duality Play

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This chapter treats the judgments that we as egos pronounce upon people and things. These are major obstacles to peace and sanity, and further fragment our world and worsen our split from it. We must ask ourselves: Why is there a thought in my mind that another person is defective in some way? And why am I worried about this thing in another person? It is another person! There is an aphorism: “What Paul says about Peter tells us more about Paul than about Peter.” This phenomenon is well-known to professionals in psychology, and it is called “projection.” It is a defense mechanism used by the ego so that it doesn’t have to admit some quality in itself. So, if you go to a psychologist and express a judgment about another person, a psychologist would suppose that since this “defect” is active in your mind, you must be feeling “defective” in that way. Some part of you recognizes that you have this quality and judges it as a problem, but you are fighting it instead of admitting it. Perhaps the other person reminds you of yourself, of this thing in you that you hate. For the ego, it is easier to hate or criticize someone else than to admit that this is your own “defect.” Then you can pretend that all is well with you, that there is nothing that you need to change. You can demand that the other person change, or you can justify eliminating him or her from your life.

So, *anytime* you judge another, find fault, this means that you have not faced this problem in yourself. You fear that it will erupt in you again, and you don’t want to be reminded of it, you don’t want to deal with it. A very common contemporary example is judging others because of their sexual behavior. But if you have “pervert” in your mind, then what are you? Are you hiding from the pervert in yourself? Do you fear its power?

If you persist in pronouncing judgment on others, you carry your own problem with you wherever you go. Hiding it, not thinking about it, does not cure it! You are bringing a darkness, a twistedness, a bitterness, a fearfulness into your own world and that of others. You cannot make your world, your self, a more joyful place as long as this lurks beneath the surface. Your judgment will be pronounced upon you. You will pay the penalty. Therefore: “Judge not.” Remove the obstacle to your vision so that you can see the fault in yourself. Yes, it is a blow to your ego. But this is a good thing. The other person is there *so that* you can become familiar with his quality, which is also your own. As you come to understand why he is as he is, you will also come to know yourself better. As you see his pain and his fear, you will discover your own.

These things do not pertain to the True Self. “Defects,” “faults,” “sins” exist only as ideas which arise due to ego’s attempt to carve out an identity which is an arrogant sham. They are threats to ego’s project. They are necessary by-products of ego’s project of splitting from them. Since they are stuffed into a dark and forsaken corner, they are prevented from completing the circle, restoring the equilibrium point at which stillness, Silence, the True Self can be awared. Eventually these moldy regions of the mind mushroom, and when they burst through, they have destructive power. The Peace of God, the Silence, is impossible until the circle is completed. This may not happen until the person is on point of death. His entire life has been spent in fear, fighting this “evil” within himself while pretending that it is outside himself, never able to accept it, and so never able to transcend it and discover the love that he really is.

So, the idea that some things are good and others bad, some things are normal and others sick, some things are right and others wrong is just a figment of ego’s imagination. If there is a consensus among many egos in a group or a society, everything is thrown so far off center that no one can even glimpse True Self. And every ego’s needs keep multiplying as fears and suspicions escalate. People lose their sense of oneness, their awareness of the level at which they are fundamentally connected, and there is no room in their beings for love or Silence to enter. Ego, in its effort to be big, consigns itself to a life of littleness, in an animal body.

In these experiments, we explore our potential for living beyond judgment. We look at the earth and its creatures from above, through the eye of the eagle. Only when we are beyond, can we truly transcend judgment. Judgments which are merely suppressed or repressed are still festering problems – worse than judgments which are projected. Psychologists, psychiatrists, and counselors do not solve this problem, but only substitute new judgments for the old ones. This is not an improvement, it is not a way to liberation, but rather merely a transfer to a new cage. The human animal is still a dangerous animal.

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### **Experiment VI.1**

For this experiment, you will not be taking any notes, so don't carry your notebook.

You will not need to disturb your normal daily routine at all to conduct this experiment in non-judgment. Your procedure is simply this: *For everything that attracts your attention today, just take a moment to say to yourself: "Everything is equal. This is part of the unbroken perfection"*. Do this for an entire day. As with most other experiments in this *Course*, repeat it a second, and even a third day if it seems beneficial to do so.

\*       \*

After the previous experiment, you might want to take a few days off before continuing. Our purpose is not to torture your ego, but to enable you to see through other eyes. To let go of something does not mean to discard it. It means to relinquish control of it, to allow attachment to it and judgments about it to loosen and ultimately to dissolve.

\* \*

### **Experiment VI.2**

This experiment is simple to perform. It is related to the previous one. You are free to choose the procedure of either of the two previous experiments, or both. Your task is again to study the effect on you of looking at objects and saying something to yourself about it. Here you say, with each thing: *“My ego needs this, but my True Self does not”*.

\* \*

### **Experiment VI.3**

Today, we focus specifically on the function of contents of the mind. *Why do things appear in the mind? What is the mind working toward?* In spite of all the diversity of our experiences -- some we call memories, some we call thoughts, some we call images, some we call feelings, some we call things, some we call other people, some we call our own body - they all have something in common. They all basically have the same function, the same value, the same purpose. Your challenge today is to reduce everything to this common denominator, and to identify it.

We are not going to define this for you. It is better if you find your own way of talking about it. Likewise, we do not specify a particular procedure today. Do whatever helps you to answer the above questions. Sometimes just free associating as you are writing helps. You will want to write today, and save what you write and add to it later. This question of why the mind works, why we are not at peace, in Silence, all the time, is worthy of some serious attention.

So at the end of this day, summarize your insights from this group of three experiments, and lay out your answer to the questions from today's. If you have not yet read our book *Why The Mind Works*, this might be a good time to get acquainted with it. You might need to put aside the *Course* temporarily if you find the book more useful. This is all up to you.

\* \*

### Experiment VI.4

In chapter III. we offered some very important experiments on ‘the moment.’ Now we are ready to take the next step in deepening your experience of the moment. We shift from examining the moment itself to examining its contents. This will be a beginning of becoming re-acquainted with your Right Mind. This experiment is to step back and look at your thoughts directly. We have all done this, or rather, our mind has done this for us. We have found ourselves not only thinking, but aware that we are thinking. And, usually when this happens, immediately we begin to make judgments about our thoughts: should I be thinking this, should I stop thinking this, this is a good thought or a brilliant thought, this is a bad thought or a stupid or perverted thought, I like this thought, I don’t like this thought. *In this experiment, you are asked to deliberately watch all your thoughts as they flow through the moments.* It is recommended that you wait for the right day to do this. Today’s experiment is intense. Spend a few days preparing, and wait for a day when you are not too busy, and when your mind is relatively free of anxieties and crises to deal with. During the preparing days, practice watching your thoughts, for only brief intervals, in a sort of casual way. Don’t bother to write any notes. But on the chosen day, have your notepad right next to your bed and begin watching immediately upon awakening. Scribble a few words regularly, but don’t stop your thoughts in order to write. It is the flow, the sequence, that we are interested in this day. At the end of the day, allow perhaps one half hour to elaborate your scribbles into a sort of narrative.

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### Experiment VI.5

Repeat Experiment VI.4 exactly, for one more day. Again, wait for the right day.

\* \*

### Experiment VI.6

If you feel inclined, repeat Experiment VI.4 again. If not, try this next step. *This experiment asks you to not only watch your thoughts, but in addition to recognize all your evaluations and judgments about them. Answer the question: "Why am I judging this?"* Once again, wait for a day when your mind is relatively free of preoccupations. *Choose a day when you can isolate yourself from all input for at least an hour. During this hour intensify your watching and your note taking.* It may be a frenzy. Begin, as before, immediately upon waking, with your notepad by your bed. Watch, and scribble, as much as you can all day. But, make sure that you do the intense hour at some time during the day, separately from the half hour at night when you elaborate all your notes.

Repeat this experiment a second day if you feel so inclined.

\* \*

### **Experiment VI.7**

This experiment is a double-edged sword. We are working toward a state of mind in which you can see that all thoughts are equal. In the previous six experiments, you have heightened your awareness of both your typical thoughts and your judgments about them. *Now, you are asked to suspend all judgment. Try to achieve a state of pure watching.* When you start to like a thought, and you want to play with it, let your enjoyment go. Give it up. Not forcefully, but lightly. Let your feelings, and the sensations in your body, dissipate. Relax. And, when you start to dislike a thought, and you want to bypass it, let it linger. Do not let your negative judgment kill the thought. If there are feelings or sensations in your body that you do not like, do not try to end them. Let the thoughts that aroused them go on freely, just as the thoughts that arouse feelings you like.

*Hopefully, by the end of the day, you will be able to say “yes” or “no” to the question “Did I see my thoughts as equal today?”* Perhaps you will recognize that thoughts are neither good nor bad in themselves, but we impute this meaning to them by a separate process.

\* \*

### Experiment VI.8

The purpose of this experiment is to help you more clearly distinguish the mechanism in your mind that produces your thoughts from the one which makes the judgments once the thought is produced. The thoughts themselves come from an unconscious place, a place that you don't much identify with. Hence, the common experience of "Where did that come from?" or the conscious battle with unwanted thoughts. We cannot directly stop our thoughts, because we don't know what, or who, or where they came from. But once the thought flashes upon the screen of the mind, we feel that we can prolong it and elaborate it if we like it, or that we can kill it if we don't like it. This process *is* conscious, to a great extent. We feel like we know who is the one who does this – it is "me." This "me" is the ego. Notice that the ego is an *objective* thing! It is *not* a *subjective* thing! It feels like *me*. If you can glimpse this, by direct experience and not merely intellectually, you are close to a very important experience. It is a mystical experience – the experience that your ego is not the True Self, the Real I, the pure subjectivity.

Then, if judgment comes from the ego, but thoughts themselves do not come from the ego, but from somewhere else, is that 'somewhere else' the True Self? Like all other questions in this *Course*, this is an empirical question. To answer it, you must *note the "Quality" of the experience of a pure thought without any judgments whatsoever attached to it*. We are presenting this experiment early in the *Course* so that you can begin to use your mind in a way that will make it possible for you to answer this question. It is very unlikely that you will succeed in this now. So don't become frustrated and try to force something. We suggest that you repeat this experiment later, when you are better prepared.

The method is just as before, with the notebook by your bed. Now, you are not watching judgments, you are not watching thoughts, but you are sensing and defining a Quality. Your notes should consist of simple one word adjectives. Avoid straining. Take what comes easily

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### **Experiment VI.9**

For this experiment, as with much of this *Course in Real Psychology*, we are indebted to Helen Schucman's *A Course in Miracles*. The very first lesson in her inspiring *Course* is awesome:

*"NOTHING I SEE IN THIS ROOM (ON THIS STREET, FROM THIS WINDOW, IN THIS PLACE) MEANS ANYTHING."*

We certainly have no objection to you practicing this lesson at this point in our program; we will present it again later. But as an experiment, we suggest the following procedure:

First, do not take any notes or bring your notebook. Sit in a place that is your own, surrounded by things that you own or cherish. We suggest that you choose a time when people who are close to you will be there, such as at mealtime, but be forewarned that this can be intense.

Look around the room. Pick out one thing that is important to you. Look closely at it. Notice the feelings that it arouses in you, then say to yourself: "This \_\_\_\_\_ is meaningless. I am going to let go of it." Then relax for a minute or two. Then look at the thing, or person, again, feel any feelings that are aroused, and repeat: "\_\_\_\_\_ is meaningless. I am going to let it (him, her) go." Now relax for a few minutes. Then, a third time. After this, rest. See how you feel. The part of you that balks at this practice is your ego.

This may be all you can do today. But if you feel that it would be beneficial, and you are not forcing, you may pick a second thing or person and repeat the three times.

At the end, after a rest, look around the room and identify anything that you cannot honestly let go of. Just admitting this is a big step.

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**Experiment VI.10**

Do you have an idea for your own original experiment on judgment?  
Take one day for this, if you wish.

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## CHAPTER VII. Human Relationships: Duality Personified

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First, we repeat what we have said many times: the only problem in life, the root problem, is the ego, the false self. The false self survives on illusions, and its Holy Terror is that the consciousness will see through these illusions to a deeper Light. No ego can survive the Light of truth.

The root purpose of a relationship – that which drives and directs the attractions between the people and all the events pertaining to the relationship – is freedom from ego. That is, a relationship is a big step toward truth, toward belittlement of the ego. The more intense, the more emotional, the more intimate, the more passionate the relationship, the bigger the step which is possible, because the bigger will be the threat to the egos of the people involved.

Each of us is ready to take a specific step at a specific time; we require a specific situation and a specific person in order to learn the exact lesson that we are ready to learn. The feeling of ‘falling in love’ occurs when these conditions are met. Therefore, we *always* ‘fall in love’ with the right person! No matter how miserable we may become with that person, the one we fall in love with is the perfect person to teach us the specific lesson, the specific kind of ego loss, that we deeply yearn to put behind us right at that time. Love comes from the True Self. No ego can be a source of love; on the contrary, ego is always looking for it – ego has none to give. If you love, it means you are ready to give up something of ego. If you love with a passion that consumes you, the relationship will undoubtedly consume your ego. You will be forever changed.

Thus, we do not choose our relationships, even if we go through a careful rational or emotional process of picking one person over another. All of this is arranged at a much deeper level, a level that supercedes all conditions, coincidences, and human “will power.” The belief that you possess the power to love, and to choose whom you will love, is one of your ego’s most grandiose delusions. Usually, what you deeply want from a relationship is going to entail pain. One who enters a relationship to improve his life circumstances as an ego is just blind. This improvement appears to happen at the beginning, but eventually its illusory nature shines through. By the time of the resolution of the relationship, ego has been dismantled, piece by piece. Relationships are entanglements with another ego, which doubles your problem, as an ego. At some point in your relationship, your ego will see your partner as evil. Then you will have a choice: fight, to preserve your ego by taking something from your partner, or accept your loss and let your partner have the satisfaction of conquest over you. If you let go of your ego, and keep letting go, and keep letting go, you gradually acquire a different kind of vision, beyond that of your ego. The Memory of the True Self is beginning to return. Only then does the pain end. (See our book *Why The Mind Works* for an extensive explanation).

Many times it happens that a married person who is faithful discovers that his or her spouse has not been faithful. He or she may have worked hard in the relationship, sacrificing many things, perhaps many other opportunities, and finding temporal happiness and security in the belief in the spouse’s fidelity. (Perhaps you will want to re-read our vignette on page 4.) This faithful person may have the idea that whatever sacrifices have been made have earned for him or her the right to demand the partner’s fidelity. Egos, deep down, like to believe that a spouse loves him or her too much to have sex with another, lie, sneak, fall in love with another -- though egos often pretend to not care.

And, even though these things happen very frequently, still ego believes that it cannot happen to him, or to her.

So, the first question is: is there any value in the naive *belief*, the *half-belief*, that one's spouse has been and is faithful even though it is not true? Is there any value in the sacrifices, the loyalty, the trust – the “love” – when the partner is unfaithful? The half-belief, first of all, though it seems benign, is still egoistic. The person has an image of the life his or her ego wants, and works to maintain this image. Ego is sustained – as long as nothing happens to shatter the image and force the person to accept the loss of the self-image. And, the naive belief also is sustaining the ego of the unfaithful partner, and actually supporting the ego of the partner in the other relationship!

Belief is indeed powerful -- as long as you live in the false world. But like attracts like. If a relationship is based on a lie, it attracts bigger and bigger lies, uglinesses, stupidities. All of one's time is taken up trying to patch together a life by careful attention to all the trivia and details that are needed to cover up the growing matrix of lies. The relationship becomes like a stage play.

If there is sex as part of the relationship, it directs everything that the two people do. One way or another, the urge to use the partner as a sex object finds a way to satisfy itself. The glorification of romance in civilized cultures comes from the need to disguise the animal urge, sanitize it, make it seem more noble, and even heroic -- in order to pacify it. The need to repress and suppress urges intensifies them and perverts them, rather than rising above them. The result is that when a person finally is able to experience release, whoever is the partner becomes powerfully associated with the pleasure. This makes for strong urges to possess and control, homicidal or suicidal jealousy, and a willingness to devote a major portion of one's life energy to keeping this other person – at least until someone else comes along who provides an even more intense erotic release.

But at some point, the lie, the trick, the deceptions and self-deceptions "out" and have to be admitted. And then, the person has to learn to live without erotic release. The longer one has built his life around it, the more impossible this becomes. There is a great danger that the person will become trapped by the animal within himself, if he cannot negotiate this critical transition. This intense moving from the lie to the truth is well illustrated in the history of music from the 40s to the present time. Imagine Guy Lombardo or Lawrence Welk on stage with Nirvana or Eminem. From 'Moonlight Serenade' to 'I wanna rock your body' -- and 'in a parking lot', no less. Different realities entirely. The generations have different challenges facing them. It is a different type of human being, because of the progress man has made in telling the truth about relationships. The 'game of love' is just about history. The young men can see through the girl's ego tricks, and the young girls are not turned on by the macho charade anymore. But they pretend, in order to manipulate.

So, in the end, ego has to be relinquished one way or the other. The sooner the better. Our lies catch up with us. Admitting sexual passion for what it is is a step forward. Looking back over a life which you know was just a deception, a trick, perpetrated on the one person whom you supposedly love the most, is not a good place to be. A human always wonders if something better might have been possible if he or she had just opened up and told the truth.

Only when the dream, the fantasy, ego's lie ends can the person wake up. Once he or she feels what it is like to be authentic, genuine, and to feel the same radiating from another person, he could never go back to an egotistical false life. There is no comparison between the two in terms of "Quality." To an awake, ego-free person, a lie is so far from what he or she wants that it is almost impossible. And, in a Real world, with real people, no lies are necessary! Truth, beauty, and wisdom form a triangle, mutually sustaining one another. They continue re-creating deeper, more real experiences. The awake person, looking back on his former false world, cannot even see how he could have possibly lived in that manner.

But ego can make any lie seem true -- to one who has lost the True Self. The lie is such a person's only reality. Constant embellishment of the ego is necessary; the person must feel "special." Either s(he) must believe that

the partner could not possibly love someone else, or have his or her own relationship outside the marriage, with a “lover” who makes him or her feel “special.” Only an ego needs to feel special. True Self makes no comparisons. And, the arrogance, the conceit, makes its opposite -- humiliation -- inevitable. The biggest egos are the ones which are the most easily fooled. And the bigger the bubble gets, the bigger the mess when it bursts. And this is the whole reason why you fell in love with this particular person: he or she is the best one for bursting your bubble.

If a relationship continues on and on, for many years, sustaining your ego, making you feel special, never forcing you to relinquish your ego and its illusions, it must end in a manner which devastates you. Perhaps, the spouse who adored you dies, leaving you with nothing, and you begin to attract various kinds of vultures. Problems come into your life again and again, until you open your fist and let ego fall away.

We, egos, do not want to believe such things. But there is no need for belief. Just look at life. Admit what you see all around you. When you have the courage to *look*, and to admit what you see, and to feel the falseness of pretending, the eye of the True Self is beginning to open. Your ego can no longer control you. The inner Silence, and the awareness of Quality, flourish. Free of the sediment of ego, we grow wings. We remember who we really are, always were, and always will be – beyond time, beyond the body. This “relationship” or reunion, with True Self is the only real relationship.

*So, in today’s experiment what we are looking for is the “Quality” experience.* The best we can do is to recognize that certain experiences carry with them a better quality than others. Today we are not concerned about anything else. Be clear on this: the quality that you experience is something that comes from within yourself. It does not come into you somehow *from* anything outside yourself. Or, we can say that the highest quality is within all things equally. Or, we can say that the highest quality is *in spite of* whatever is outside yourself! Your intuition will confirm this insight. So first, take a little time today to see this. It is why no one can tell you what is real and what is false. There is no book, there is no path to follow, there is no guru to hear or to imitate, that can enlighten you on this critical point. Only you can make this determination. To make this determination, you must be perfectly still and let your mind rest and feel into the “Quality” of your moments. Most qualities change moment to moment, and they don’t stun you. They don’t present to you something that feels bigger and deeper and truer than other qualities. They don’t attract you, they don’t pull you, they don’t leave the impression of something beyond your greatest fantasies. But That which is Real does carry with it this Quality. When one’s conscience is fine tuned, he or she is stunned when it pipes up. It leaves no room for doubt..

Now, have patience, as we explain one more thing before sending you forth to conduct your experiment. You may say: “Wait just a minute. I have felt this “quality stuff” before, when I fell in love. And it turned out to be a disaster. I thought it was real and it turned out to be just another case of mistaken hormones.” You are confusing two different things here. One is the Quality of falling in love. **This is the real part.** The other is the object or person that your ego *projected* this Quality onto. **This was the mistake!** Do you see the distinction? The pure experience, the Quality, that we recognize as falling in love, is the only Reality. If we can stay in that experience, dwell in that Quality, we are enlightened. But if we believe that some thing or person is the *source* of this experience, or has some special “Quality” and somehow chose us to bestow it upon, we are just an ego with a grandiose delusion. This pumped up ego then tries to make a special relationship, beyond the ken of other people, with another ego. He or she gets lost in the self-congratulations and forgets the pure Quality experiencing! Ego drinks the bathwater and forgets the baby!

So. The trick is: how do I fall in love, over and over again, *without* another person?

\* \* \*

### Experiment VII.1

*For now, we are going to do one simple thing: we are going to sense the difference in quality between two experiences. One is the experience of “me” – the ego. The other is the experience of “I”, the one who has the capacity to sense the “me” as an object.*

Do not take any notes today while you are practicing, but do make some notes on the results of your investigations at the end of the day. Your task is simply, whenever you remember and have time, to feel your “me.” Feel the quality associated with "me", and then step back and feel the “I” that feels the "me", and see if this has a different quality. That is all. Don´ t analyze it. Just feel it. And, when with other people, recognize that they do not see my "I". They are talking to my "me".

Remember, this is just a beginning. Don´ t expect anything earth-shattering today.

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Have you ever loved somebody so deeply that you could not get enough of that person, that you wanted to be with that somebody always, but then you were disappointed and became confused, and the feeling of love was difficult to find, but nevertheless you clung to the person just to experience those few moments in which it did come? And then, perhaps, you did not much want to be with the person, but alone or with someone else, and this caused further confusion, as you began to search for defects in the person? Or, did you pretend to have feelings that were no longer there?

"Nobody knows, honey, where love goes,  
But when it goes it's gone, gone.  
And when you're alone, you're alone...you ain't nothin' but alone."

*Springsteen*

Yes, we can feel such a deep love for a person. This feeling unlocks a passageway within us, a way back to the Source of Love. The person, though, is but a key. The person is not the source, or even the territory. The person is but a symbol, providing an experience of what love feels like. The person is a finger pointing to the moon; the person is not the moon. Our egos intersect for a moment in "a co-hesitation in the flux," because one 'I' is needy and incomplete, at a position at one pole, and attracts another needy and incomplete 'I' at the opposite pole and a surge of current flows and is discharged. He or she is not a light that you can take with you on your journey through the Darkness. Your father, your mother, your husband, your wife, your son, your daughter, your best friend, your teacher, your guru -- all become impediments if you try to take them with you. They will keep you believing that the symbol world that your relationship exists in is the only reality. And, you also become an impediment to them, keeping them believing the same.

You attracted this symbol/person in order to discharge your stuckness at one pole and taste the free flow of the Silence, the true Source of Real Love, which necessitates *both* poles. Once a relationship has accomplished this, what it has been will end. Once you can dwell in the Plenum-Void, the attraction to this special symbol/somebody is no more. You are no longer stuck at one pole so you don't need the other. The Void is all-encompassing, and once known, Love is felt equally everywhere. Separate things and people are not loved, but the totality in which they appear is loved as oneself. The persons and the bodies are just temporary apparitions in the eternal Reality.

So the fulfillment of the relationship has nothing to do with soul-mates or partners, likes or dislikes, except for those who can't decipher the message in the symbol. They are not paying attention to all the evidence: they do see the limitedness of the other, and of their own love for that particular other, but they disregard these believing that what they have is the most real love possible. They believe that the way they spend time with the other is the best possible use of time. Any evidence to the contrary, anything that disturbs their image of the value of their relationship, is quickly dismissed, for it begins to arouse the Holy Terror -- the hell of suspension between two worlds. And then, there is guilt, because in some deep place they know that they are impeding the other person. This guilt arouses pity and sympathy: the human, momentary substitutes for enduring love. So, ironically, the more that one does for the other in the names of empathy, sympathy and the like, the more the other person's journey toward real love is impeded. The more the guilt, then the more the pity and sympathy, and the more one dotes, and these imposters of love can go on and on recycling. This *is* the 'relationship'. It is fearful ego attached to fearful ego, and thus can produce nothing more than ego. Hence, the unending misunderstandings, hurt feelings, jealousies and suspicions, and battle of the sexes. All unnecessary.

\* \* \*

## **Experiment VII.2**

This experiment is an effort to begin to end this fearful deception and self-deception, and to awaken the both of you to the possibility of love beyond separate persons, beyond ego attachment, beyond guilt and pity and sympathy. Your egos will feel that this experiment is suicide, insane. But deeper in your psyches you will recognize it as a major step that you have wanted to take -- a step toward real intimacy, toward healing.

First, arrange a time to meet with the other person for an hour. It can be any person with whom you have a close relationship and would like to go deeper. You might agree to a longer session, two or more hours. This is difficult to determine ahead of time. But the amount of time set aside should be agreed upon before beginning. Make sure that you will have total privacy -- without interruptions such as meals or appointments or phone calls -- the total and undivided attention of one another.

Begin the session with a short monologue, something like: "I do not want to end our relationship. I want it to continue in a new direction. I believe that it is possible for us to help one another to find a deeper meaning in life than we have found. It is a potential in both of us, and we can discover it together. But for this to work we both must be dedicated to the search. And we will be opening ourselves to one another more than ever before. Are you willing to consider doing this with me?"

If the answer is "no", or if this proposal just arouses strong defensiveness, end the experiment. Perhaps the person just needs time to deal with the idea. If he or she comes to you later expressing a willingness, you can proceed with the experiment at that time.

If the answer is "yes", ask the person to read these few pages beginning above with "Have you ever loved..." and ending with the two asterisks at the end of the experiment. If, after reading, the answer is still "yes," ask the person to take some time explaining to you how he or she sees this. Encourage an extended description of his or her thoughts and feelings. Do not interrupt.

When the other person states that it is your turn to talk, begin an open dialog, allowing

extended silences between speakers, so that each person can complete whatever there is to say. There will be some soul-searching. *Avoid superficial conversation designed to control the mood of the other person.*

One thing to focus on is self-disclosure, becoming more transparent, revealing hidden feelings. This is ego-humbling, but purifying. If tensions mount to the point of anger, accusation, or blaming, remember that one person's problem is never the fault of another. Every human being in your life is playing his or her part perfectly. He is doing what any person in exactly his circumstances would do. None of it is wrong; it is all to point us to something. But if an impasse occurs in your dialog, end the session and deal with the hang-up individually. Perhaps you can resume at a later date, perhaps not.

As the truth is approached, there is fear, embarrassment, sadness, possibly regret. This is a very sensitive and emotional experiment. It goes deep. It clears away much debris.

If possible, end the session with a period of silence in which you both relax and allow the other to look steadily into your eyes and to see you for who you are. *No words!*

Later, write in your notebook what happened. Do not repeat this experiment unless the other person approaches you with this proposal. The closer one gets to the Source of Love, the more intense relationships become.

\* \*

Most people's egos are built around what psychologists refer to as their 'gender identity.' That is, "I am a man," "I am a woman," "I am masculine," "I am feminine," "I am bisexual." In other words, a strong ego always has to define itself sexually. Sex is important to strong egos: it is the way they reinforce themselves, re-assert and firm up their gender identity. Thus, an essential part of the inner journey back to the True Self is to re-equilibrate, to eliminate the definition, to dissolve the position which defines your ego into its opposite. This is the experience one has in uninhibited sex, when "getting into" the partner, though this experience may be only a momentary flash. But that moment gives a taste of the miracle of dissolving, and arriving at sexless equilibrium -- our original pre-ego condition. One experiences again the resolution of the dynamic interplay of the two primal forces: Yang and Yin.

So, once again, ego misunderstands. It thinks its irresistible attraction to a 'playmate' is the pleasure, and that becoming involved with that 'playmate' will further ego's plan. In reality, the attraction is the attraction to ego death. In reality, this soul wants to learn about Yang and Yin, and about its sexlessness, and is ready to take a big step toward a direct encounter with primal forces and its own littleness. Once again, the deeper one immerses himself or herself in the raw aspect of a relationship, the more ego is risked. One who shies away from this aspect, and tries to choose a partner reasonably, and to maintain a relationship which is merely polite and considerate and practical, is a coward. Such a relationship, though perhaps socially or monetarily successful, stagnates spiritually.

So we now turn to a brief treatment of 'man,' 'woman,' 'the masculine,' 'the feminine,' and 'Yang' and 'Yin.' We caution the reader not to jump to facile conclusions here; this subject is vast and profound. Your entire soul will be consumed in trying to comprehend the real psychology of these things. The following are excerpts from our treatise *The Nectar of the Global Feminine* (Available at [www.nectarproject.org](http://www.nectarproject.org)).

"Balance refers to the ability of the person to not be stuck in one or the other perspective. He or she would have the ability to sense when an active, masculine response to a situation is best, and to respond in a way in which this feeling or word or action is tempered by and informed by the passive, feminine side within. Similarly, he or she would have the ability to sense when a feminine response is best, and to naturally engage this side in a way in which the masculine voice within is consulted. As you can see, in a truly balanced person, feelings and words and actions would not be extreme and rigid "shoulds", but would be moderate and temperate – spontaneous rather than restrained or phony. The free inner dialectic between the two opposite tendencies would serve as a private "devil's advocate" or feedback loop that would insure that nothing was blurted out until it had been first "felt through" at a deeper level.

So the opposite within a person is very valuable. It prevents the urge to "fly off the handle" or to deny and repress. It allows conflicts to be resolved without violence or passive aggressiveness. And it provides the person with a much larger perspective: one who can see a situation from both the masculine and feminine perspective can truly see "the big picture". And one who can appreciate within himself or herself the *equal* value of both, "re-members" the Place where the two meet deep in the psyche. This produces true understanding, or "inner-standing", and compassion. And, we may speculate, this wisdom would reduce the need to rely in fear and ignorance upon dogmatic belief systems in determining how to live and how to treat other humans, and how to expect others to treat us. When you *know* deep down whether a thing is right or wrong, you no longer need to *believe* anyone else or any teachings. And this intuitive

wisdom reduces fear of the unknown or the foreign. When the feminine is balanced with the masculine, we feel our common bond with all peoples, whereas the masculine alone tends to sort us into separate categories and emphasize our differences. Paranoia results." (pg. 3)

"So what is femininity? How do we contrast it with masculinity? "Masculinity" and "femininity" are not realities. Each exists only in relation to the other. The masculine depends upon the contrast with the feminine for its existence; the feminine has no existence without something less feminine as a backdrop. To even call something "masculine", you have to be having femininity in your mind! For instance, the concept "soft". How hard would a thing have to be before you no longer call it "soft", and begin calling it "hard"? And, more importantly, of what value is "soft" unless there is something that you consider too hard? Life is alive, organic. The Chinese speak of the incessant change, exchange, and interchange between Yin and Yang. Everything is flowing into everything else all the time. In nature, the Yin and Yang must be allowed to dance freely; it is ridiculous to keep pushing for one or the other. If a person claims that masculinity is of value in itself, or that femininity is of value in itself, that person is claiming the impossible. And that person is out of balance, trying to stop the dance! The masculine is always just half of a natural life; the feminine is always just half of a natural life." (pg. 5)

Yang ("masculine")

Yin ("feminine")

Hard	Soft
Fast	Slow
Loud	Quiet
Push	Pull
Repel	Attract
Active	Passive
Compete	Cooperate
Plan	Spontaneous
Expressive	Receptive
Intellectual	Sensuous
Time-conscious	Pattern-conscious
Explicit knowledge	Secret (tacit) knowledge
Analytic	Gestalt
Propositional	Appositional
Linear	Nonlinear
Sequential	Simultaneous
Focal	Diffuse
Yang	Yin
Fire	Earth
Verbal	Spatial
Thinking	Intuition
Cause and effect	Manas
Buddhi	Synchronicity

Evidence	Experience
Extraverted	Introverted
Willful	Compliant
Moving	Still
Light	Dark

Remember, these descriptors refer to the primal poles which are contained within everything in existence. And remember also that every one of these produces its opposite, as the natural movement toward neutralization of all distinctions unfolds.

"Just opening up a dialogue, and freely discussing the meaning of the terms "masculine" and "feminine", is a growing, healing experience in itself. Many people immediately become defensive and judgmental. Our conditioning by our parents, schools, employers, the media, and other agents of socialization instill a judgmental process. As a result, there is tremendous confusion. We forget what is simply natural. The culture and the counterculture give us opposing messages. And when our male and female egos get involved in any kind of conflict, we lose touch with all sense of what is fair and balanced and equitable. It becomes extremely difficult to perceive clearly without evaluation and judgment. Consider the following examples. If you are in a male body, you think of yourself as more masculine than feminine if you have been conditioned to. The conditioning itself involves rewarding you for developing this out-of-balance self-image, and projecting it. So, unconsciously, you come to value it as a good thing. In contrast, you see the feminine person as simply one who has failed to develop the "good" qualities for which you were reinforced. Conversely, if you are in a female body, you think of yourself as more feminine than masculine if you have been conditioned to. Just as in the male, the culture rewards you for the qualities it wants in its women, and you come to think of these as "good". And so, a person who has not developed these good qualities is bad, or deficient. We are immersed from an early age in our respective biases. How can we ever see the two as equally valuable? How can we allow the opposite of what we have been told is "good" to become as strong in us as our ego?" (pg. 10)

The first step is to recognize that we are out of balance. The second step is to accept it. The third step is to live it. Through accepting our situation and living it, we work through the karma, and move toward balance. At the Stillpoint in the exact center, when our masculine or feminine instincts have been exercised with the temperance by their opposite, ego disappears. Awareness is filled with the True Self, the Absolute. The purpose of life is fulfilled.

"The lives of two women mystics in India might be introduced as exemplary. They are two of the many perfected, ego-free women in human history. Most of the stories of such women are never told, because the balanced person hardly attracts much publicity. These two women, Kasturabai Gandhi and Anandamayi Ma, can teach us many lessons about how to call upon the strength of femininity in dealing with the challenges facing a woman on her journey to wholeness.

Kasturabai was Mahatma Gandhi's wife. As a young man, Gandhi had had a very successful

law practice. The couple lived and gave birth to their sons in luxury. But his compassion for the masses of starving and destitute untouchables in India was to change everything for her. He walked away from his lucrative career and began to live at a bare subsistence level, wearing only a loincloth that he could make with his own hands at a spinning wheel, and excreting at a latrine that he himself could dig in the ground with a shovel. He took vows of non-violence, truth, non-stealing, celibacy, non-possessions, bodily labor, minimal and bland diet, fearlessness, equal respect for all religions, use of what can be manufactured at home, and equal treatment for untouchables. So he moved his family out of their plush affluence and into a simple hut full of flies and mosquitoes. And he stopped having sex. He insisted that his wife Kasturabai also take the eleven vows. At first she resisted, argued, refused. But in time she began to see the wisdom of what he was doing. She recognized him as not just her husband but as her guru. A devout Hindu woman, she could not disobey her guru.

The mahatma was a very demanding man. She had to suffer tremendously. Her ego as a woman had no place to find refuge. Here's an example. She was the treasurer of Gandhi's ashram. One day he discovered a small discrepancy of four rupees on the books. He publicly announced her mistake, causing her great embarrassment and humiliation among the followers. But she called upon a feminine strength to learn to accept such treatment. Toward the end of her life, she paid her husband the following tribute:

"I thank you for having had the privilege of being your lifelong companion and helpmate. I thank you for the most perfect marriage in the world, based on *brahmacharya* [self-control] and not on sex...How thankful I am that you put God and country before bribes, that you had the courage of your convictions and that you had a complete and implicit faith in God. How thankful I am for a husband that put God and his country before me. I am grateful to you for your tolerance of me and my shortcomings of youth, when I grumbled and rebelled against the change you made in our mode of living, from so much to so little." (Yogananda, 1946)

Kasturabai died in imprisonment for Gandhi's cause of non-violence, more than a year before he was assassinated. She transformed herself from a materialistic and rather fearful, dependent woman into an outpouring of unselfish love. In the end, she was every bit as courageous as her husband who was called "The Mahatma" – "great soul."

Anandamayi Ma, the "Joy-permeated Mother," was one of the most beloved woman gurus of the twentieth century. She was known to have the ability to heal by a touch of her hand, and even by her mere presence. She was utterly unaware of her outward appearance as a woman, but knew herself only as the changeless soul. She often fell into trances that could last for days. Her followers had to feed her with their own hands as if she were a helpless child; if they did not she would not eat, or even ask for food. At times when the trance was really deep, she did not eat even when food was placed in her mouth. Here are some of her words:

"A saint is like a tree. He does not call anyone, neither does he send anyone away. He gives shelter to whoever cares to come, be it a man, woman, child, or an animal. If you sit under a tree it will protect you from the inclemencies of the weather, from the scorching sun as well as from pouring rain. And it will give you flowers and fruit. Whether a human being enjoys them or a bird tastes of them matters little to the tree. Its produce is there for anyone who comes to

take it. And last but not least, it gives itself. How its self? The fruit contains the seeds for new trees of a similar kind. So by sitting under a tree you will get shelter, shade, flowers, fruit, and in due course you will come to know yourself.” (Matri Darshan, 1994)

She was married by an arranged marriage while still a young girl. Swami Yogananda relates that she told this story when he asked her about herself:

“Father, there is little to tell.” She spread her graceful hands in a deprecatory gesture. “My consciousness has never associated itself with this temporary body. Before I came on this earth, Father ‘I was the same.’ As a little girl, ‘I was the same.’ I grew into womanhood, but still ‘I was the same.’ When the family in which I had been born made arrangements to have this body married, ‘I was the same.’ And when, passion-drunk, my husband came to me and murmured endearing words, lightly touching my body, he received a violent shock, as if struck by lightning, for even then ‘I was the same,’ My husband knelt before me, folded his hands, and implored my pardon. “Mother”, he said, “because I have desecrated your bodily temple by touching it with the thought of lust – not knowing that within it dwelt not my wife but the Divine Mother – I take this solemn vow: I shall be your disciple, a celibate follower, ever caring for you in silence as a servant, never speaking to anyone again as long as I live. May I thus atone for the sin I have today committed against you, my guru.”” (Yogananda, 1946)

She also said:

“This body has lived with father, mother, husband, and all. This body has served the husband, so you may call it a wife. It has prepared dishes for all, so you may call it a cook. It has done all sorts of scrubbing and menial work, so you may call it a servant. But if you look at the thing from another standpoint you will realize that this body has served no one but God.” (Matri Darshan, 1994)

And:

“I never say ‘I will do this, I will not do that’. It is you who makes me carry out whatever work lies in your power to induce me to perform”. (ibid)

This woman Anandamayi Ma was a great teacher to thousands in India throughout her lifetime. She was illiterate; she never went to school. And yet, her wisdom was crisp and brilliant in answering questions before a crowd. Once when a man challenged her with a question to the effect that how could a woman be a teacher of men, her instantaneous reply was “We are all feminine before the Father”.” (pgs. 21-24)

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### Experiment VII.3

Here you are invited to open up a dialogue with someone of the opposite sex, to discuss what we have just presented. If you feel that you are not ready to do this with someone of the opposite sex, you may feel safer, less on the defensive, with someone of your own sex.

The purpose of the experiment is not to gain information, hear another point of view, or present one of your own. Your point of view is the problem; our goal is to eliminate it. So this is another experiment that ego will not like. Your task is to observe your reactions to everything that the other person says. Do not waste time judging the other person, or analytically uncovering all of his or her ego defenses. You will have your hands full dealing with your own.

So it is really an introspective test:

1. How well can you persevere in looking at yourself in terms of the gender identity aspect of ego treated in this section of the *Course*?
2. How candidly can you reveal your own feelings to the other person?

These are your two experimental questions.

We suggest that you take notes on these two issues during your conversation(s), and then, as soon as possible, organize and elaborate these notes. Do not sugar-coat or downplay your feelings in your notes. Be honest. If ego has something to say, say it. For your eyes only, but save these notes as a permanent part of your records for the *Course*. They will be valuable later.

The setting for the conversations can be anywhere where the two of you can have privacy. The mood can be anything. If you want to get drunk, get drunk. If you want to do it naked in bed, do it naked in bed. Whatever works for you. The important thing is that it be uninhibited. If you feel that it would impede communication to tell the other person that you are conducting an experiment, there is no need to mention it. You are not doing the experiment on the other person anyway. Perhaps, though, it would be best if the other person reads this section, and agrees beforehand to your

experiment. Decide this for yourself.

You may want to have a series of conversations on this topic with the same person, or you may want to conduct this experiment with a series of people. Follow your own inclination. Just be aware of your motive, and stick to the purpose we have described above.

\* \*

The stronger the ego, the more relationships of all types it attracts, because it needs more lessons. The soul that remains true to itself does not need many relationships, and so does not attract them. In the psychology based on Newton, everything is about filling the senses with objects in one's world; thus, in this psychology, it is desirable to have many relationships – to have 'stable, healthy relationships' of many types. This is what is called 'normal.' In this *Course*, we are not interested in being 'normal,' in conforming to the norm, the average, the typical. One who puts energy into this guarantees that his sickness will not end.

In *Why The Mind Works* we present in some depth the insight that the only real relationship is within. The only real intimacy is in those moments when the divided parts within the conscious being fuse together and form that critical mass that is the epitome of human experience. Relationships with other beings are mere substitutes for this moment. However, for the one who does not know how to go about healing the splits within, he or she can use a person-to-person relationship to learn some fundamentals, and get a taste of the experience, and learn that he must at some point let go of the other person and search only within.

Relationships to spiritual teachers, gurus, and groups such as religious congregations are particularly dangerous because they can provide a false sense of spirituality and security. It is perhaps easier to fool yourself here than in friendships, social groups, taverns, clubs, work groups, or political parties. Attractions to *all* forms of social contact must be fully explored; whether or not there is real Quality there for you is always a case-by-case empirical question.

One particular 'special' relationship that attracts most humans at some point in their journey is that of being a parent. Here, we briefly sketch 'parenting,' 'developmental psychology,' and 'child clinical psychology.'

Ego which has had sex and now has a child invents an elaborate system of beliefs and behaviors to disguise its guilt and fear. Psychologists and other 'experts' on children play along because there is money in it. The result is two lucrative, formal professions: developmental psychology and child clinical psychology. These offer many ideas about how to parent so that your child is 'normal' and 'emotionally stable.' We are led to believe that if we follow all the advice of all the best experts as we interact with our children, we will be successful as parents and in turn our children will be successful and happy.

There are two glaring errors here. The first is: your child is not yours. On the surface there is a resemblance. But the nature of the child that has your genes and chromosomes can be anything. You are given what you need according to the lesson you are ready to learn. The child you have is the perfect child to prod you into facing that lesson. *You and the child have no special affection.* Any special affection that you feel is your own illusion, which is exactly why you have this particular child: to learn to see beyond this illusion. Your feeling of a special relationship, your feeling that you are an especially important person in the life of the child, is your own egoistic wish, your own hope, and it arises out of the hopelessness that you feel when you look inside yourself. You hope to buoy up your ego by riding along with the characteristics and accomplishments of your child which you wish to have. But as soon as you fail to go deeper than this, all of the problems and traumas that the child undergoes throughout life show you your guilt, and show you your fear of the karma, the opposite, of your erotic pleasures and your maternal or paternal pride. No matter how you prefer to see it, your karma will be to become a servant to the child until you have become an example to him or her of how to accept the next step toward the True Self. You do not need anyone to tell you how to do this; life will demand the proper response.

The second error is the belief that there is something for the child to 'become.'  
Consider these verses:

“When something comes to you unbidden  
It is the best possible thing that could happen to you in this moment.  
It will open a door to a world more intense, interesting, and authentic  
If you can accept it in a spirit of humility.

When you force something to happen  
which comes from your own imagination or desire or fear,  
It will cause you troubles and confusion without a doubt.  
Always abandon such effort.

When someone tells you that there is something that you must do or become,  
He is a fool, and is your enemy.  
Always shun such an advisor.

Everything that you need already lives inside of you.  
Relax and it will manifest itself.

Ambition is the seed of insanity.”

In every moment, the child is already complete. He already has everything he needs. You cannot improve him, you cannot make him any worse. In reality, you have no influence. And, in reality your own agendas won't work. He or she is going to face every situation according to the spirit which is natural to him. Any unsolicited advice from you is just confusing. If a child – or any person of any age – asks for your ideas, give the deepest, most real answer that you can, but not with an effort to convince. Just offer your truest insights, remaining aware that it is easy to trespass with a person who is vulnerable. Temerity and humility will serve you well in such situations. If your own ego ambitions for the child get in the way, you will kill the relationship. Leave him or her alone and unmolested as much as possible and he will find his right mind.

'Life span development' is similarly just an erroneous concept. Only an ego 'develops.' For the True Self, there is no development; there is no time. There are no distinctions between who the real I was, who the real I am, and who the real I will be. There is only the moment. And in that moment, with no imagination of a past or a future, you are at one with the other. True Self is not separate from True Self. If you are unable to be in the moment, silent, you have no relationship whatsoever with this child that you imagine to be 'mine.' You miss this possibility, because you are not at one, integral, within yourself. Thus, you can only experience the child as separate from you.

To be 'at one' is 'atonement.' To be at one with your child in this moment is automatic when you complete the atonement for your ego's guilt at having sexual pleasure, and at having the erotic power of conception and ownership of a child. There is going to be a price for living in your body's hormones, and conceiving a child for ego's purposes.. There is bound to be guilt, and there is bound to be fear, as you watch your child's fate unfold. Since your ego has taken pride in the success of its project, the child, it will also hold itself responsible for all failings. Each pain felt by the child you must feel; you will be sharing in his or her fear of death and fear of insanity, and in all efforts to avoid the worst horrors of existence in a body. In this sense, your ego is bound to feel that this is 'my child.' You have no influence; you are helpless. But you have to share the pain, to whatever extent you have enjoyed the satisfactions. The child is your karma.

How to atone? How to be at one with the child? Ego tries to do this through a person-to-person relationship.

The ego/parent tries to use masks, clever tricks, sentiments, gifts, threats to prevent this other being from causing pain to the ego/parent. By trying to harness, to restrict, to shape the ego of the child, the parent ego hopes to preserve, and even to strengthen his or her self-image. This comes from the animal urges for survival and the pleasant flow of hormones that enlivens the body.

*It has nothing to do with real love.*

Real love is to leave the child alone to enrich his experience in his own way. Real love is to be whole yourself, moment to moment; at one with yourself, atoning, foregoing a need to stimulate a 'parent-child relationship' with your child. Parents who cannot find the timeless awareness themselves fabricate a vicarious, imaginary happiness by trying to participate in the life experiences of the child which swell the child's ego. But this does not benefit the child. You are just blowing bubbles in his or her face. The best way to help others is to face your own pain, your own guilt, your own fear – alone. Then you can live each moment in your own timeless awareness. Only this kind of love has the power to heal and to transform your child. Its egolessness, its silence, its invisibility, its tastelessness is its connection to the Source of all power. It doesn't need time and space to produce its effects. It is all inner – True Self in one arouses True Self in the other.

Thus, the absent parent can be the best parent.

\* \*

#### **Experiment VII.4**

If you are a parent of a living child, if you are a parent of a deceased child, if you are a parent of an aborted child, if you are unsure if you have fathered a child, and even if you are sure that you have never conceived a child at all, you can perform this experiment.

We are all absent parents, because the world in which your child lives is not your world. There is no bridge, there are no windows. The truth is that one person cannot make another person's illusions his own.

This experiment is to give you a sense of this truth. Recall a time when you were in the physical presence of your child, or some other young person, and felt love. Perhaps you were enjoying something together. Relax, and re-experience that feeling. Once you can stabilize in that feeling, try to recall what you did or said to the person, and how the person responded to you. Spend a few moments recalling as much as you can.

Now try to keep that feeling alive, in whatever way you can. Check your watch and time yourself. Record in your notebook how much time elapsed before the feeling

began to fade. Next, record how you feel, now that the feeling has faded.

Now, relax again, and repeat the same procedure, recalling the exact same situation. The effort is to enjoy the feeling as long as possible. Again, record its duration.

Now, recall a later, similar situation with the same person. Follow the procedure as above, then repeat, as above.

Finally, record in your notebook what happened after these situations ended. Add any comments you wish.

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### **Experiment VII.5**

Don't forget your own original experiment for this material, if you wish.

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### **CHAPTER VIII. Acceptance and Passivity**

“He who acts defeats his own purpose;  
He who grasps loses.  
The sage does not act, and so is not defeated.  
He does not grasp, and therefore does not lose.”  
(*Tao Te Ching*, Chapter 64)

In a moment of time, one may reflect, and notice a feeling that something is slipping away. We may feel this when alone and idle, and we may feel this when we are with others and occupied. We may sense that even though everything seems to be going well, some unnameable thing is felt to be slipping from our grasp. Our relationship with another person is not quite as vivid as it was, is somehow less exciting, less interesting. We may worry that the other person feels this toward us as well. We, almost consciously – if not consciously – say to ourselves: “I have to do something quick or this is just going to fade away.” But a very natural process is taking place; you are seeing, in a glimpse at least, that you have been propping up something that is no longer worth the effort it takes to prop it up. Perhaps it was never worth propping up. If you refuse to allow and to accept this natural fading away, and you move to grasp for control, you engage in a battle with forces much greater than yourself. Today, you may feel a victory. Your aggressive action, your clever words seem to restore something, maybe your position in the eyes of others, maybe your position in your own eyes; but, in fact, you have already lost. Something is dying, and there is nothing you can do to stop it. You can, however, succeed in prolonging your own agony.

What we could instead be saying to ourselves is: “I can feel that this thing is fading away. I have fear, but I have to open my hand and let it go.” This acceptance, this ‘positive passivity,’ this receding and allowing, is not of ego. Ego cannot face itself if it does not revive itself in this crisis. It must assert, it must ‘seize the opportunity,’ speak up, take control. But this is a life situation that is challenging us to learn to trust something deeper than the ego. If we trust it, if we remain passive, a door opens. A path is made clear that was not clear before. Ego is too big, too dense, to fit through the door; it always has to drag with it its things, its ideas, its ambitions, and other egos, clutching them the way a little child clutches a teddy bear.

If from a few isolated choices to be accepting and passive a habit grows, a new positive way of being is found. My leaning forward into the future ends. When the ‘I’ disappears, there is an uprightness, a verticality which sends a root deep into the present moment; eternity replaces time. Using time for activity always disturbs constancy, even though we often act with the intention of maintaining something. Activity agitates; it creates friction. But passivity is a settling, a quieting in our inner world, which reflects itself in our outer experience. At first, to be passive feels stupid and lazy, for we as ego see many ‘wrongs’ that we want to correct, using our ‘abilities.’ We have urges. But if we remain passive, if we trust, if we accept whatever may come about, everything falls into its proper place. And there is a revelation: time really has no power to press us into action, there is no hurry, we have no unique ability or responsibility *right now*, everything that was ‘wrong’ disappears into the oblivion of the whole, the constant, the eternal.

In his entire life, there is but one thing that a human has the ability to accomplish: the forgetting of what is Real. Everything else that happens in his life is done for him -- or done to him. His sense of accomplishment is a laughable delusion of ego. The person who is proud of himself is in a stupor. He can’t sense what is real cause and real effect. He knows not where he is, or who he is. His opinion of himself is such a dense cloud around his

head that he lives in darkness, unable to see his Home. His self-image, his accomplishments, his trophies have made him into a cruder, lower form of life, enslaved to other cruder, lower forms of life. An ego is hard and brittle. The more it is fortified, the harder and more brittle it becomes. Thus, the most powerful person is the one who is the most easily shattered. He is fragile; his defeat is inevitable, and it will be a bitter defeat.

The intuition of how real strength functions in life is a treasure. It is comparable to the way that the tongue outlasts the teeth. There is no way that the hard, aggressive ego can outlast the silent, invisible Self. So the secret is simply: relax, and allow all of your hardness, all of your fight, to be drained from you. You need do nothing more. The process is automatic.

“Acceptance is all” says Sunyata. “There is nothing to do but to be constantly alert and aware, and continue on into the unknown and to nowhere” says Vasavada. Whether one is alone with nothing but his own mind, or whether he is in the midst of rapidly changing events perceived as outer, he can take a position in which to remain accepting, in positive passivity and negative capability. This has a powerful harmonizing effect. His emptying from himself his ego radiates a peace which affects everything and everyone around him. If one does not grasp, one does not lose. Eternally we have everything that we can release into the Unknown.

Logical ego, bound by the laws that limit the sensory world of a fearful soul, cannot grasp this and so denies its possibility. Without something solid to grasp, ego would be lost. So it will not even try acceptance, scoffs at positive passivity, and will never admit negative capability. Thus it turns its back on the experiment that would be definitive, and it will never know whether these have any real power or not.

In this next experiment we offer a procedure, in a simple situation, that you can replicate in almost any other situation, and little by little test the effects of positive passivity. You can see for yourself, as this becomes a habit. Everything depends, though, upon your ability to overcome your fear of remaining passive. If you cannot admit your fear and then let go of your urge to act while you are feeling afraid, you cannot perform this experiment. You want to continue fighting life. You will never allow it to get close enough so that you can see it for what it is. This first experiment in accepting will pose a modest risk, not a big loss of ego. Later, if you replicate this experiment regularly on bigger things, you will be working toward bigger ego losses.

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### **Experiment VIII.1**

True positive passivity has the prerequisite that you are relaxed and can remain relaxed. It is easy to fake positive passivity: all you have to do is employ any ego defense so that you don't feel your fear, and then just resist the urge to move or talk. This is a tense kind of stillness, like a rock. This is not passive. What we want to cultivate is a stillness like a clear pool of water. Water just accepts wherever it is put. It flows downward to the lowest place, it takes whatever shape you put it in. Our goal today is not to succeed at true positive passivity, negative capability, and acceptance. Today is step one, and there is nowhere else to start except step one. It probably will not go smoothly this first time, because you will be becoming conscious of contrary tendencies within yourself – old habits that will not let new ones replace them. But

with practice, a clear direction will reveal itself.

After you are able to relax, and you are sure that you are willing to feel any fear, anxiety, embarrassment, confusion, and helplessness that may arise in this experiment, choose a day when you will have no job-related duties to perform. This one will take twenty-four hours. You can choose any environment in which there will be people whom you know. Your own home may be best, unless you live alone.

The experiment begins upon awakening in the morning. Do not say anything to anyone, except to say to one person: "I will be doing an experiment all day today." Don't offer any explanation, and don't answer any questions. For the entire day, until waking tomorrow morning, you will not be speaking, or using body language, or using sign language to communicate.

For this entire day, do as little as possible. Relax your mind and your body. Let them taste the opposite of activity. Spend the day alone in bed or in a chair looking out the window with no particular interest in anything. Watch any thoughts, feelings, or urges as they come up, but do not concentrate on anything. Do not write anything. Do not read anything, watch TV, use a computer, listen to music, play a musical instrument, or occupy yourself in any way. Remember: positive passivity, negative capability, and acceptance of whatever happens. If someone asks a question, just relax and allow it to go unanswered. If someone asks for your help, just look away, relax, and let it pass. If someone wants the space you are occupying, move. However, whenever you move or walk, do it slowly and consciously. Do not do any exercises, or make any unnecessary movements. Do not wear any unusual clothing or do anything that attracts attention. You want to remain as invisible to others as possible. If you sleep with someone, do not touch the person.

Next morning, end the experiment by explaining to at least one person what the experiment was about, and answer any questions. However, if someone criticizes you, do not defend yourself. Accept the criticism, with no apologies. Take up your notebook and write:

1. How this conversation feels.
2. More generally, about your feelings and experiences yesterday.
3. How successful were you at remaining passive, accepting, and relaxed?

4. Note times when fear and tension arose.
5. Note when the urge to not remain passive arose, and how you dealt with it.
6. Did you have to turn cold and insensitive -- a rock -- to do this experiment?

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Now that you have experienced first-hand the challenge of positive passivity and acceptance, it might be easier for you to understand the differences between true acceptance and some of its imposters. Ego has many tricks. It knows many ways of appearing to be accepting something when it is not accepting it at all. There are many games in which egos compete with one another to appear to be the most humble, or the most tolerant, or the most cooperative, or the most virtuous, or the most stoical. None of these is true acceptance. Some common imposters of true acceptance that are used by egos are presented in this chart:

Putting up with/Delaying reaction  
Passive-aggressive/Gandhi, King  
Resignation/Submission/Powerlessness  
Suppression/Hypocrisy  
Toleration/Identification  
Denial/Active numbing  
Repression/Psychosis

These are listed in order of how strongly ego is actively fighting against accepting the thing. Repression leading to psychotic splitting is the least 'accepting,' the most retarding in a spiritual sense. And so, the chart also indicates how conscious of, or honest about, one's refusal to accept is. One who is merely putting up with something until he gets a chance to escape or react is fairly conscious of this strategy, fairly conscious that he is not accepting, though he appears to be. But repression is done automatically and unconsciously. For example, a person can be petrified with fear internally but experience no fear consciously. In this split condition, nothing can be worked out, no progress is possible.

So ego has many maneuvers to squirm out of true acceptance. In true acceptance, there is an impeccably sincere willingness to allow *whatever* is about to occur, even if this includes ego-annihilation. True acceptance is therefore total: it does not pick and choose certain things to accept and other things to not accept. True acceptance is to have no position or point of view, and to trust the uncertainty of the Unknown within all things. It is not a 'doing' -- it is a pure passivity. It is rare. In the lives of most people, it may occur a few times; usually not willingly, but by default, when ego is overwhelmed by something too sudden or too big to prepare a defense for. So it is beyond ego. In contrast, the imposters in the chart above inflate, or at least preserve ego, rather than letting it go, which is our goal here.

So now, in your notebook, write which of the imposters in the chart you used yesterday in order to remain 'passive'. Did you experience at all the 'Quality' of true acceptance, of pure passivity uncontaminated by an imposter? How does this feel? Since we sort of induced you to 'be passive and accepting', the whole experiment was a little artificial. True passivity would not be planned. It is well-expressed in this statement by Anandamayi Ma when she was asked about how she lives: "My body does whatever it is in the power of someone else to make it do." Though her husband was her disciple, she continued to clean and serve him as is proscribed for a Hindu wife.

Few human beings have achieved this total forfeiture of will. Few can live in the space of 'the delightful uncertainty' as did Sunyata. Without constant awareness of True Self, we are in a panic unless ego feels secure, active, alive, assertive, effective. But in this there is no true acceptance.

Only true acceptance produces one's own acceptance by the world. Ego's tricks seem to gain acceptance by others, but soon we find out that *we* were the ones tricked; the 'acceptance' was only an act. But the one who lives in positive passivity and pure acceptance of all is accorded acceptance wherever he needs it. He does not attract enemies except the ones that he specifically seeks out. He can move about the world freely with no

worries. Because he does not judge, he is not judged by life.

Lao Tzu states in the *Tao Te Ching*:

“Because he does not compete, he does not meet competition.” (66)

Jesus said:

“Whatsoever you sow that you shall also reap.”

And again, from the *Tao Te Ching*:

“The world is ruled by letting things take their course; it cannot be ruled by interfering.” (48)

And:

“What others teach I also teach, that is: ‘A violent man will die a violent death’.  
This will be the essence of my teaching.” (42)

And:

“When nothing is done, nothing is left undone.” (48)

\* \*

Here we offer a second experiment which may help you to see your own obstacles to true acceptance and pure positive passivity. As with the one above, this one may not go smoothly the first time. But don't neglect these. Practice them regularly, and you will feel a new trust opening up in you, and, perhaps, a whole new way of life.

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### **Experiment VIII.2**

This experiment is unusual in this *Course* because it calls upon the analytical mind. We are not looking to analysis for answers, but are merely using it as a device to stimulate intuition. This can put us directly in contact with some deeper tools, which we can use to penetrate our resistances.

Our thoughts are the foam and froth spewed up in the waves of the troubled sea we call the mind. Here, we begin by examining the foam and the froth, to pinpoint the trouble. So, today, we are beginning by asking ourselves the question: “Why are positive passivity, negative capability, and pure acceptance so difficult?” When an answer comes, then we, in turn, ask the “Why?” question about it. And we continue in this way, asking “Why?” questions, probing deeper and deeper.

So when you are in the mood for such an inquiry, bring your notebook, to write down in order all of your “Why?” questions and answers. You will find this necessary to avoid losing track.

This experiment is one that you can do while you are active in other things, if you don't want to sit still. Certain things within a person move better if the body is in motion. You may want to pace back and forth across a room, or go out for a walk, or even a run, you can cook or clean, do the laundry, work on the car, paint the house. What is important is that you are not distracted by other people. Conversation will kill this experiment.

For future reference, when you repeat this experiment later, you can expect that if you are active a different set of insights come than if you are inactive. And the type of activity also makes a difference.

So the method is simple. Allow one hour. Write in your notebook the first "Why?" question:

*"Why are positive passivity, negative capability, and pure acceptance so difficult?"*

Then, whatever answer spontaneously comes, don't evaluate it as right or wrong, but immediately write it as the next "Why?" question. The whole thing depends on writing the spontaneous answer that occurs to you, no matter how ridiculous or irrational it may be. There is a reason why this particular answer came. Your mind is telling you something. Eventually, if you are passive, answers will start flowing faster than you can write. Some sensitive places in you might get touched. But persevere. Don't let fear stop you. Your notes are "For your eyes only." Your ego will say to you: "That's enough. Let's stop this stupid game." But that is exactly when you need to ask just one more "Why?" question! That is when you are getting to the good part, the healing part, the turning of the corner, the illuminating part. You can always handle just one more "Why?" question, can't you? Just one more is all you need.

So probe today. Be a little irritated. Only an ego is irritated. Jot down in your notebook anything that is meeting with resistance. After about an hour, end the experiment. Notice later, or the next day, if other good answers, fresh "Why?" questions, come unsolicited.

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“He who bends to himself a joy  
His winged life doth destroy.  
But he who kissed the joy as it flies  
Lives in Eternity’s Sunrise.”

*Ibsen*

Acceptance of where life has put us is more important than where we are; acceptance of what we have to do is more important than what it is. The non-doing of such acceptance is what will determine where you are and what you have to do tomorrow. It is ego to restrain the body from moving and doing, just as it is ego to push the body. The expressions “I will do” and “I will not do,” and “I will change” and “I will not change” are not in True Self’s vocabulary. Similarly, “I feel forced to do” and “I feel blocked from doing,” and “I am anxious to do” and “I am afraid to do.”

Only an ego is in conflict about what to do; only an ego moves with tension or keeps tensely still. Most of ego’s bodily tension comes from its efforts to keep the body safe; this comes from a confusion about Who I am, and about what happens to the "I" when the body changes, or is no more.

What happens to the "I" when the body is no more? One thing that we know is that the fearful “I” who is asking the question is no more! This “I” never existed, except as a dream of myself. When it is no more, consciousness reverts back to the Dreamer, and the struggle to make happy dreams and to end ugly nightmares ends. The freedom that confused ego sought but could never grasp replaces him. At what moment does the struggle end? At whatever moment you choose positive passivity, negative capability, and pure acceptance over your ego’s idea of ‘something better’; at whatever moment you simply let go, let be, let flow.

Let the muscles of the body entirely soften and liquify as the senses fully feel and allow to pass whatever comes. Do not in this moment brace this body, protect this body – this idea that stands between you and yourself.

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### **Experiment VIII. 3**

This is another exercise in observing the breathing. First, choose a time when you won’t be interrupted for at least half an hour, and a place that has no noises that would distract you. Take some time arranging a comfortable place, either for sitting or for reclining. But be aware that if you are lying down you will probably fall asleep. Choose what is best, knowing yourself. Make sure no clothing is restrictive or distracting. No note taking, no need to analyze your experience. Let the mind be as clear of concerns as possible. Dim or extinguish lights, draw blinds, or do this experiment after dark. A candle is okay, as long as it will not need maintenance during the experiment. Read these instructions several times now, so that you don’t have to consult them during

your experiment.

Assume the most comfortable position possible. If you choose to keep your eyes open, let them be only half open and relaxed. We call this 'soft eyes.' The task itself is simple, and passive. You are already breathing. Your body knows how to breathe to get the air it needs and eliminate the air it doesn't need. So you don't need to do anything with it. All you are asked to do now is watch it. Keep your mind with it. Feel the air enter and exit your nose and fill your body. Notice when inhales and exhales begin and end, and note any gaps or pauses between. Notice regularities and irregularities. There is nothing wrong with them; just take note of them. That is the whole experiment. As far as how long to do it, best is to do it until you notice that you are enjoying it and don't want to stop! The other option is to set an alarm for fifteen minutes, and then after the alarm sounds go for another five minutes or so. After you end the observing, just rest quietly for a short time before moving on to activities.

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### **Experiment VIII.4**

The procedure here is identical to that of the previous experiment. The only difference is that here you are observing not breathing but muscle tension. Note all the places in your body that hold tension, and when you find it let it go. But usually, the very places that are the most tense are the ones that you have the least awareness of. So, during the time of this experiment, your main task is to keep searching out the places you *can't* feel. When you begin to be aware of a place that you couldn't feel before, note the sensations there, in this place that is waking up. The mind, of course, will always be wandering back to the usual places that make up your body image. Don't fight this, feel these places too, but always be working your way back to the 'dead' places.

If you feel anxious or jittery, or feel thrills of energy moving, allow it. Don't try to oppose it, because that will just increase the tension and defeat the purpose. The mind is what creates muscle tension, not the body. Memories are the source of tension. When we let go of a memory, the muscles relax automatically. It is the attitude of 'holding on' that makes tension. In this experiment, however, we are concerned only with the effect, not the cause. So your task is simply to observe.

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In this *Course*, and in daily life, we want the passive observation of your breathing and your tensions to become a habit. This is a good kind of self-consciousness to develop. Always know the status of these two functions.

To relax is difficult, impossible, when the body is pumped full of the fear of death. You have pumped your body full of the fear of death if you have just taken in stimulating foods, drinks, or medications, or overslept, or over-exercised, have just used other people to make yourself feel alive, or have just revived your body by filling the senses with canned music, media entertainment, or other strong stimuli. These are things that ego does when it is starting to weaken. They are motivated by the fear of death.

So, before you try this experiment, there is a self-screening questionnaire which you can self-administer, which may save you years of futile effort 'trying to relax.' To determine if you are ready right now to perform this experiment, ask yourself this one simple question:

*“Am I ready to put everything else aside and devote one hour to healing myself?”*

If the answer is yes, now is the right time for this experiment.

### **Experiment VIII.5**

This is an exploration of body movement, not for the purpose of esthetics, or physical fitness, or even physical health, but for the purpose of letting go. It is done alone in total privacy, and without music, although if some rhythm or melody spontaneously comes to you, you can go with that. You even might unintentionally develop your own original chant to accompany your movements.

What kind of movements? Anything. But it must feel like jelly. The muscles must not become hard. There can be no strain, and ideally you won't even get out of breath. Move every part of your body in every way that it can be moved without strain. The movements can be slow or fast, big or small – just so they are totally relaxed. You can shake, bounce, hop, twist, writhe, stretch, bend, jump, walk, jog. You can sit, lie down, and stand on your head, but mostly be standing with weight on one foot at a time. Keep everything moving at once, as much as possible. Move joints in ways that you never moved them before. But again never with tension or strain. The movements can be like dancing, or like fighting. They can be erotic, or graceful, though never precise – always sloppy relaxed. Move all muscles: fingers, toes, eyes, forehead, nose, lips, tongue, jaw. But no strain! And no hurry!

How long? How many moments are there in a day? That is probably about how many

different ways that the body can move. But we suggest about one hour.

Don't impose any system or sequence, as you might do when you are taking a shower. Let your body tell you what to do next, in fact don't plan it at all, just release the body to do what it wants. Your task is to keep liquifying it. Don't hold your breath, don't judge the movements. There is no best or worst way to do it. If a place seems stiff or resistant, don't force it to relax but keep coming back to it. Do try to move both sides of the body equally.

You will notice that your ego will get into it, and you will start liking certain movements, and tension will creep in. Avoid too many repetitions of the same movement. Let it be sloppy, and change into something else. Be passive. Be carried away by the joy of the gentle release of all tension, and the total freedom. Allow your image of your body and of your face change. In T'ai Chi, it is taught: "Find Stillness in movement; seek the Formless through form."

When you feel like you want to stop, don't. Instead, get creative. Try something new. Try releasing something you have been holding. For example, try letting one hip drop entirely, supporting no weight. To do this you will have to relax the lower back and abdomen on that side while the other side supports the weight.

Immediately after you stop moving, close your eyes, be perfectly still, relax, and feel the energy circulating in your body. Don't feel the muscles, the substance of your body, but feel the non-material, the buzzing, the vibrating, the flowing energy. This is called ch'i, ki, or prana. Remain still until the sensations dissipate. Then sit quietly for a few minutes and do nothing. Enjoy your self.

It is recommended that you do this three times each week, from now on. A little every day is also good.

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What we call 'the physical body' is an idea. It is powerful, it is compelling, but nevertheless, it is just an idea. It is an extremely complex sensory experience. This idea is actually a composite of billions of past and present micro-experiences, billions of separate and distinct momentary experiences. The body is an illusion in the same way that a movie is an illusion made up of a series of snapshots that are rapidly fed through a movie camera. These snapshots have been stored in your brain's memory and organized into a pattern that fits ego's idea of what its body should be. In both the past and the present, each moment in which your ego feels itself to be slipping away, the self-image weakening, it fears death. In this fearful state, it then takes moments, which could have been passively accepted as pure, silent experiencing, and makes up an image of a part of 'me,' an image which relieves the fear of death and assures ego that it still thrives. For example, perhaps the ego is beginning to sense that something that is pursuing him is catching up. His fear then makes up an image of legs and feet. The image of having these as a part of himself makes him feel safe. Note: it is the *image* or the *idea* that makes him feel safe. In reality, nothing has changed except his idea. Or, perhaps ego is feeling embarrassed, stupid. It fears that its self-image is falling apart, and so it generates an image of a confident face and a clever retort. These and a billion other 'snapshots' -- all mere images and ideas -- are what make up the experience that we call 'my body'. These moments of separate and distinct reactions to fear are stored in memory, and fear calls upon them to consolidate into a consistent picture. At times when there is no fear, there is no body. We are aware of something else.

Thus, the body is not an entity. It can be called 'an object' in the same sense in which anything else can be called an object, that is, if we train our memory and our senses in a specific way, if we calibrate our instruments at a certain frequency, we roll the film and create the illusion of life out of dead images. This is the only sense in which it exists. When we think we are experiencing the body *in toto*, we are mistaken. It is a trick of the senses, in service of ego, which doesn't care about truth, it cares only about its own *belief* that it is real, and its own *need* for it to seem real.

The immensely complex data bank that stores our billions of moments of images of toes and fingers and warmth in the chest and tensions in the face is always changing. And what we call 'my body' changes accordingly. When our reality is an image world, we are bound to whatever images prevail. Life experiences are constantly challenging ego's illusions about its body and its parts and its capabilities. When we are young and have not been tested, we can believe that we have the body of a superman or superwoman. When ego fearful of Emptiness generates a belief in this, it appears healthy and strong. It projects strong images of body parts. To conceal its fear of death, ego projects images with the qualities of an alive, active, working body; to conceal its fear of insanity, ego projects the qualities of hardness, stability, and confidence. The greater its fear of death, the more it must project the alive quality; the greater its fear of insanity, the more it must project the quality of stability. But in the course of living Reality sets in. Ego is forced to admit that the body is very fragile, and even tiny things like viruses can kill it completely, and to admit that its mind is also very fragile, that the tiniest unexpected frustration can upset it. Ego can no longer pretend, can no longer project such a powerful body image. Thus, as our fear of our fragility and of death are admitted, our images take on more of the quality of weakness, debility, lifelessness. This is what we call 'aging'.

If, through facing truth, one consciously allows ego to weaken, and allows more of his moments to be dedicated to pure experiencing and fewer to the body image, fear is less of a factor. One need not project such an invincible body image, because threats to the body are not threatening the real Being that the spiritually mature person realizes that he is. In this case, the body is less exaggerated in its demonstrations and protestations of power and confidence and grace and beauty. Less 'heart' is put into movements; if they succeed okay, if they don't succeed, okay. If they appear less coordinated, less quick, less aggressive, okay. Mature soul doesn't need a 'great body'. As we see the meaninglessness of everything that our image/body can do, we do not care to invest many moments in it. The collage fragments, the movie camera slows down, and we become aware that

the body was never a solid object at all, just a collection of sensations and ideas.

A body with which an ego is strongly identified is the fertile soil in which a dis-ease will be planted. Ego -- the refusal to lapse into positive passivity, and the use of moments to fearfully construct a sense of "I" around the body -- is the cause of dis-ease. Without a body/image -- i.e. the composite brought together and held together by fear -- there can be no dis-ease, no experience of loss of ease. Ease is the quality of passive acceptance and negative capability. There is nothing to agonize about, just let everything fall into its natural place. But to hold together an ego, one has to make many many things happen at certain times. One must cultivate and defend a specific image of 'my body' and 'myself.' One must rob pure experiencing of billions of moments and redirect them toward the ego project. This is artificial, unnatural, out of balance. An opposite must come into play to correct this condition, and to make the person aware of his mistake. In any moment that you forsake Pure Self and concern yourself with your ego project, you add to the severity of the dis-ease that you must suffer. In any moment that you make ego's life easy, comfortable, better than others, glorified, you make your future dis-ease worse.

We commonly attribute many serious illnesses to the diet, lifestyle, and stress of modern high-tech societies. Not true. It is the ego who is *enjoying* the fruits of that society, who is *using* the high-tech gadgets for its own ego's inflation, who is overeating on those flavor-enhanced, sugary, salty, oily, spicy, preservative-laced foods, which is causing his own disease. However arrogantly comfortable he makes himself by robbing moments of pure experiencing and using them to excite and fortify his body/image -- that is exactly how miserable his physical dis-ease will be. Ego is the essential cause of all diseases, and of premature aging. It is a classic case of an eye for an eye. That is all. Medical researchers on aging -- those of them who are honest -- will flatly admit that in spite of the billions and billions of dollars that have been spent on research on ways to slow the aging process and stave off death, science still does not know what causes the aging process! This is because medical science *is* the cause of aging! The choice to invest moments which could have been passed in the experience of pure consciousness in the "wonderful amazing human body" by fearful, guilty, arrogant egos is the cause of its own opposite: dis-ease and frightful death. The main cause of diseases is refusal to let go of something, due to fear of death. So, ironically, it is the fear of death that kills you. Whatever you are refusing to let go of, to keep your ego intact, is responsible for the specific disease that develops, or the specific manner in which the body is destroyed.

Note that we have been using a hyphen in the word 'dis-ease.' Cancer, for example, can be a 'disease' and/or a 'dis-ease.' The word disease refers to a medical condition, a deviation from the medically defined 'ideal.' The word dis-ease refers to a bad, uneasy, experience. To an ego who thinks that he *is* his body, any terminal disease is the worst possible misfortune, a terrible dis-ease. But to the sage, whose life and Self are elsewhere than the body, the disease of terminal cancer is not a dis-ease. In fact, it is welcome, as a reminder that he was wise to not invest love moments in the body, and as a reward, that soon his pure experiencing will not be contaminated by the busy-ness of keeping the nuisance of a body going. Even pain is welcome, and hardly felt by the one like Ramana Maharshi, who saw his terminal bone cancer as happening outside himself. He told his doctors: "I feel no pain. The tumor has come like you have come here."

The Totality always rewards the sincere, who bring open eyes to their present moments, and always guides them into a beneficent new moment. Maybe they are given a weak constitution so that they do not develop an ego around their body, so that they can immediately see the futility of the 'beautiful body' project. So the sincere do not waste moments fighting for optimal health, they just use the moments to enjoy the Real. A life that lasts only one day, but in that day there are many moments of pure experiencing, is worth more than a life that lasts a hundred years in the day in day out struggle to keep the body alive. The one who fearfully and narcissistically devotes his capacity for timeless awareness to the trivialities of service to his own body/image may need some dis-ease, some disfigurement, some accident, some medical problem, or a relationship or career failure, to

release consciousness energy and disarm ego. And sooner is more merciful than later.

The one who refuses to relent, who continues to assert ego and to develop the body as the envy of others, is being lured by the Totality into a trap. He is being tested, tempted, given more and more rope; how long will he continue to take the bait? The deeper he goes into his ego 'reality,' the more excruciating will be the extraction from that world. Perhaps, it is only the one who lives his moments for his own body who can experience true dis-ease, true depression, true suicidal desolation. When his body begins to decline, he feels that *he* is beginning to decline. Who cannot see that the body *has* to decline, *has* to be terminated? Who cannot see that the cost of buying more moments is too high? Who cannot see that the joys of life in a body always fall short of what the ego hopes? Perhaps we might say that such a one is not treated justly, was not given eyes with which to see, as others were given. He doesn't even notice the loss of his True Self, or that pure experiencing is even possible, so how can he be expected to choose this over ego and the body? But, who can say what lies unseen within the psyche of another? Who can say whether or not this one was given opportunities to turn sincere, and ignored them? The only approach to such questions is the purely empirical one: Devise an experiment that *you* can do on *yourself* to see how your own psyche works. Beyond that, there is nothing that anyone can really know about Justice.

Here, we hope to offer some light to those who are able to see. Any moment devoted to the body as a special thing is a wasted moment, a shovelful of dirt thrown upon the soul's grave. If the body is being used for its true purpose, health will come to the body as long as it is serving that purpose. No effort, no particular diet and regimen are needed. What is the purpose of the body? To bring truth by BEING true, to bring the 'Quality' of Silence by BEING silent. If the egotistical are so obsessed that they cannot be silent, perhaps they cannot benefit from truth, but perhaps their lives can teach others a great truth, for as their bodies decline, their misery increases. Others can recognize: the body is nothing.

The egotistical ones are perhaps just being sacrificed. In all times and in all places, the ones who refuse to learn are sacrificed for the benefit of the ones who passively accept the lesson.

Enjoyment through the body, through the senses, is not real joy. It is no more than a momentary release from fear. We have caged ourselves up in bodies, hopeful that this will keep us safe, but soon we are taught that the body is a dangerous place to be. We try to make it stronger, but that doesn't protect us either; it is a lot of effort, and all the while we are aging and weakening. We try to forget our dilemma, we try to overwhelm our seeing, through intense and continuous pleasure. But that just attracts more misery, brings us closer to dis-ease, death, insanity. We try everything, but we never gain any ground. We can't even make it back to square one; the joy that trailed behind us when we came here, before and beyond tension and fear and body awaring, is nowhere to be found. Not even as a memory.

So, the path of ego is not a natural path. It is not the path of healing. The egotistical needs a disease, or some other kind of dis-ease, to shake him out of his sleep. One way that this happens is that he craves the very foods and situations that will cause a disease!. When we are living our moments for ego, our body is not naturally attracted to the foods and the way of living that keep it functioning in a natural way. When we are living for pure experiencing, we automatically eat what is best for the purpose of our particular body/brain complex.

To the one who believes that his body is all that he is, the definition of a miracle is the reversal of a disease. But Who you really are is calling you through your pain. Your pain is telling you that your body is nothing. You are being offered an opportunity to make a reversal. The miracle cannot reverse anything until you reverse first. Let go of using the body for your own pleasure, and instead devote your moments to the Silence. No pleasure is necessary for ultimate happiness, for perfect joy. Only the turn to the Silence can cure; it eliminates the purpose of disease.

So, whenever you have a few moments available, do not reach for a coca cola or a cup of coffee or a glass of wine, or eat a beefsteak or a piece of cake or some salted peanuts to revive ego. Do not reach for another person's body, or go out dancing, or lift some weights to excite the body's hormones. Forget the fear of the Emptiness that has been driving you to be a slave to your body's cravings. Relax. Be passive. Accept your incapacity to create your own life. Admit the nothingness of all that you have done. Let the Emptiness descend. You have been given a few moments in which you can be restored to true health, true sanity, real Life. The Life which never began and can never end.

Why are you thrashing about and trying to swim in a puddle? You are being offered the ocean!

Just these few moments are all you need to reverse everything. With the positive passivity of pure acceptance, you need no capability. You can be passed through the dark Emptiness into the bright Emptiness and the Light of the purest moment that it is possible to experience. You cannot take your ego through this passage. Only your sincerity.

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### **Experiment VIII.6**

You are standing knee deep in a pool of muddy water. You know that there are nuggets of gold lying somewhere on the bottom, but you can't see them. And, if you move, you muddy up the water even more. Your very movement itself makes it impossible to find the precious thing you seek. But you are not comfortable there, standing frozen in this pool.

This is the situation with meditation. Each time you move the mind, you muddy up the water. But you are anxious, you are impatient. You have come so far to arrive at this place of gold; you thirst for the prize. But who can make muddy water clear? Only the one who can be still... and wait.

This is an experiment in the power of stillness. Perhaps you have never tested stillness before. Perhaps you believe that it has no power. How can doing nothing produce anything?

How you arrange this practice today is up to you. Figure out the easiest way to do nothing! And for quite a while, uninterrupted. This is the ultimate meditation.

Afterwards, just notice what was produced. And later, as well.

This is the best usage of time.

\* \*

**Experiment VIII.7**

Have an idea for your own?  
(Just a reminder)

\* \* \* \*

## CHAPTER IX. The Lesson of *A Course in Miracles*: "There is no world."

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There is no world. This is the central lesson of *A Course in Miracles*, and the central lesson of life itself. Apprehend this, and you have found the only cure for all your emotional, mental, relationship, and even financial and physical problems. When there is no world, there is nothing for the ego to fight for or against, and so ego disappears. When there is no world, and no sense of a separate "I," we return to the Source; where the mind cannot go, but where no-thingness *can be*. To the mind, this nonexistent, non-mental 'something' is an impossibility.

If "There is no world" is not compatible with your perspective in any way, it would be worth your time to embark upon a study of *A Course in Miracles* and how it came about. Be open-minded and open-hearted. Consider it one of your major experiments in our *Course*. Here is a brief sketch.

Helen Schucman (1909-1981) was born to Jewish parents and then was taught Christianity by a woman who worked in the family home. At the age of twelve, young Helen had a mystical experience during a visit to Lourdes in France. She entered a career in psychology, working with and writing about retarded infants, and was a faculty member at Columbia University in New York. At the age of 56, one day her silence was interrupted by a voice which identified itself as Jesus, and said: "This is a course in miracles. Please take notes." Over the next seven years, at times when her mind was unoccupied, the voice would return. She took notes in shorthand, trying to copy everything literally, but much of it was so outrageous that she called upon William Thetford to help her to organize, and even to re-write, her notes. Thetford and Kenneth Wapnick became the editors of the notes, and Helen receded from the publication and marketing process. The Foundation for Inner Peace was established, and published a textbook, a workbook with 365 lessons to comprise a one-year program, and a manual for teachers, in 1975. This edited version of Helen's original notes became *A Course in Miracles*. It has been translated into many other languages, and is known worldwide. It is not consistent with most Christian religions in certain respects. Helen requested that her name not be attached to the work until her death. Her original notes still exist, and a copy can be obtained from the Foundation for Inner Peace, but they are nonsense to the logical mind. Some of the publicity surrounding *A Course in Miracles* has been bizarre. There was a great enthusiasm on the part of its editors to alert the world to this work. Wapnick even appeared on The Tonight Show and was interviewed by Johnny Carson. This event demonstrated that the general public was not ready for *A Course in Miracles!* In trying to convey a sense of it in words that the audience, and Carson himself, could understand, Wapnick found himself embarrassed, in a hopeless position. The segment came off like a sort of a puzzling, boring piece wedged in between the guffaws and pretenses of the celebrities interviewed before and after. "There is no world" was not entertaining, not 'diversion.' Whether it was true or not did not matter to the audience. And today, forty years after the work was published, this still seems to be the case, for the great majority of people.

Release the world from all you thought it was. It does not follow any laws that you can understand. It appears here, and then it disappears; it appears there, and then it disappears; first it changes one way, then it changes into its opposite – like any other phantasm. It is not real. Its substance is just a few moments of sense impression. That which is Real does not ask anything of you; It does not need anything you have. That which is Real cannot be displaced by anything else. And the anything else, the unreal, does not exist. When you believe that something in the world can threaten something Real in you, you are in delusion. What does not possess real

existence cannot threaten anything that is Real. And, as Helen Schucman puts it in *A Course in Miracles*: “Herein lies the Peace of God.”

Here, you can rest. Your own will is useless, all of your choices have already been made for you, and moreover all choices produce the same result. All paths lead to the same pathless path. We merely play in curiosities, in our illusions. We have no power to do any harm to the Real, but we do have power to turn our dreams into nightmares, and to kill our own dreams, ending the play, waking up.

When we stop thinking long enough, when we allow the Silence to deepen long enough, the Reality begins to shine through. We die before we die, and realize that there is more life in death than there is in life. Pretending to be a body is a heavy load to carry. Pretending to be a person requires never-ending maintenance. Pretending to make efficient use of time is a blind man’s vision.

But from the Place outside of space, the World not contained by any world, is a Void too perfect to disturb. In the Light of awareness of this Void, the miracle comes.

Our experiments in this brief chapter are, as Lao Tzu said of his words, the *Tao Te Ching*, “easy to understand and easy to perform, yet no man under heaven knows them or practices them.” Then why even present them? Because even the openness to them brings the Indescribable a little closer. One minute of practice of the purest exercise can save hundreds of lifetimes; in the timeless awareness, giant steps require no time.

\* \* \*

### **Experiment IX.1**

This first experiment does not require that you set aside time from other things. It is an effort to see the ridiculousness of *all* your doings. But this seeing is not a sudden insight, or anything tangible that you could capture. It is a very slight shift in something *behind* your seeing; it is something that is like the sky in which the sun shines, the moon reflects, and the stars and planets appear. Every moment, for the rest of your life, you can be continuously engaged in this experiment.

All you need to do is this: Do not do anything wholeheartedly, ever again. Instead, reserve a part of your consciousness for this reminder: “The best usage of this moment is to be in timelessness.” If you truly have glimpsed that there is no world, this is automatic. You need not devote many moments of your consciousness to it. You will not be in time, you will be in timelessness. Many people feel that they have grasped the *idea* that there is no world, and they go on with their lives just as before. But, if one really *sees* this, he could never go back to his life just as before. For as soon as you see it, your usage of time does a reversal. Without a world of space and time, the timeless awareness is all that matters.

So, use the reminder, as often as you can remember to remind yourself: “The best usage of this moment is to be in timelessness.” Slowly, slowly, as you use fewer moments to be in time, your world will change accordingly. The things that formerly demanded a concentrated effort, putting everything you have into periods of time, will not get done. The nonessential will disappear from your life. The time demands on you are reduced. Your whole world is slowing down, grinding to a halt, as you practice this experiment in devoting energy to timelessness. Slowly, slowly, you will realize the truth taught in *A Course in Miracles*: “There is no world.”

\* \*

It may help you to perform two experiments around the lesson from *A Course in Miracles*: “There is no world apart from your eyes.” This places the emphasis on perceptual experience. If we can get behind our own eyes, and scrutinize our own perceptual processes, “there is no world” becomes apparent.

### **Experiment IX.2**

If you have already experienced the breakdown of your ordinary reality by exposure to the many textbook examples of perceptual illusions, you can skip this one. If not, you have an interesting research project to complete. Do an Internet search of the topic of “perceptual illusions.” Or a textbook on *The Psychology of Perception* might be a good start. It is up to you how you find the material. First, make a list of all the illusions you can identify. Find a media source which actually presents them so that you can experience them directly. Play with each one, making sure that the shift from ordinary perception does happen to you. Then choose your ten favorites, or the ones that are the most startling. You will need a way to be alone, and to repeatedly expose yourself to the stimuli. Perhaps you can download them to a DVD, and do the experiment on your computer.

The purpose of the experiment itself is to try to figure out what it is in you that makes the illusion work or not work. We will deal with only one at a time. So choose an illusion, such as an Escher drawing, and just watch it. Note exactly when you see it change. See if you can tell what happened in you right before the change occurred. Something *must have* happened in you, because the drawing is the same. Can you sense what changed in you? Repeat this several times.

Now that you know what to expect, try to *make* the change happen at will. How did you do it?

Next, try to *prevent* the illusion from working; that is, try to overpower it. You are trying to overpower your own habit of seeing! If you succeed, how did you do it? How did it feel?

Repeat this protocol for all ten of your selected illusions. You may want to do only one or two per day. As always, there is no hurry. Remember, the purpose is to try to figure out what it is in you that makes the illusion work, because that is exactly what makes your world.

\* \* \*

There is no world apart from your eyes. The fearful psyche has rejected the Silence and imagines itself safe in a container which can run or fight or negotiate. This contained soul imagines a dangerous world which intends to destroy the container, and imagines that the container has eyes with which to detect the dangers. Whatever dangers it needs to believe threaten it, it sees with these eyes. And then its "life" has a purpose: to perceive, avert, and/or destroy these dangers. Apart from this fear that mobilizes this looking out, there is no world. And no container.

In the freedom of pure consciousness, without a world and without a container, there is nothing to fear. There is only the vast perfection, the consummate consummation, the same in all moments. But at the moment when something in you rejects this, and there is a descent into the play of limitation, there arises a great fear of the At-one-ment -- the end of the container and the ego. It is a supernatural guilt; a Holy Terror. This paralyzes the consciousness and directs it to function in one mode only, because now it must vigilantly aware, every moment, this world of imagined threats, in order to feel safe in it.

But where all this comes from is within psyche itself. There is no place outside oneself from which any of it could originate. One moment, one rejects the Silence. Next moment, the fear of retaliation. Next moment, he hallucinates separation: objects foreign to him. Next moment he hallucinates a container. Next moment he imagines some of these objects as threats. Next moment he imagines that eyes see these threats. His hallucination runs wild, and he imagines seeing all kinds of separate things. This is his 'world.' But all that it is is an image of all the processes that have already taken place inside himself. The eyes can never see *anything now*. He is watching the dead leaves as they fall to the ground; he is unable to lift his vision higher and see the living tree from which they have fallen. He is seeing only the warm glow of the coals left by the fire, and thinks them the only heat source. He can't remember the real fire.

In the brain/symbol, the light that is reflected by the star enters the eye, is interpreted according to past experience and what others have taught you, and only afterwards is the light perceived. We know that by the time the observer experiences the light from the star, the star may no longer 'exist.' The person can believe that what he perceives exists, because he does perceive it. But he cannot know whether it exists or not when he perceives it. He is unaware of what in him made the perception. When you look across a room and perceive the smile of another person, and feel a reaction to that smile, and feel that you are having a real experience of a real person in real time, you are mistaken. Your mind is generating a perception of an event that happened in the past, *and* is imputing its own meaning to it. We can never perceive the fire. We perceive only the aftereffects, the warm embers. In fact, at the moment when you are perceiving this residual, your mind has already generated new events and is interpreting them according to your memories. These exist in the invisible world of the psyche, and some form of them will be shown to you at some future moment.

Thus, the present, the experience of things and events in the *now*, is an illusion just as are past and future. What you experience in the present does not exist, and is a form of something from a past which does not exist either! And your response to it is always late! There can never be any real connection.

A Heisenberg is a man with a sincere desire to KNOW. He brings this sincerity to every careful movement he makes in the process of planning his experiment and calibrating his apparatus. Each of these moments of sincerity invests the laboratory with more and more of the "Quality" of sincerity. And his dedication, his conscientiousness, focused on this experiment, may extend over days, weeks, even years. Years of sincerity permeate his particle accelerator. All of these moments accumulate in the past, before the moment of his observations. They change everything that happens afterwards, during the observations. So, in his sincerity, he observes something real. He observes uncertainty, and he observes truth. He observes the residual of all that he

has put into the observations. He is observing the past, and its effects. There is no world to observe in the present. He is observing his insight, his intuition, that the certainty of physics, and the reality of a particle, are illusory. He has put this in already. And so the particle follows the sincerity in its trajectory. But he can observe only the residual, not the sincerity over the past years. But in reality there is no particle, there is no trajectory, there is no observed – and there is no observer, and he can KNOW this. There is only the invisible sincere quality of uncertainty. Everything else is the dream that psyche's fear has produced. At some moment, Heisenberg was swept away by the mystical experience, and this was the most important moment in his life. The culmination of his life and work.

We see a world only because we never really *look deeper*. We *could see through* the world. We *do* possess a vision capable of sensing the invisible within the visible, the meaning within the form. It is all within us, and within our capacity to experience. But we have trained our faculties elsewhere. They are tuned to the surface duality play of opposites. We are lazy. This seems easy. Everybody does it. And safe. Everybody understands it. Anything 'deeper' seems dangerous. Crazy. And we are afraid to be the only one. If someone shows us the evidence, we deafen ourselves and squeeze our eyes tightly shut. Only after all of our games fail, all of our momentary pleasures trap us in some misery, all of our time and energy are gone, are we willing to listen and to look. The rare born mystics, and those who left behind their ego-consciousness in childhood, live in the Light of awareness. All of the rest of us are, or think we are, content; we are in the calm before the storm.

But if you are ready to go one step further, this next experiment may be appreciated. It will demand two things of you: intense concentration, and a sincere willingness to overcome the fear that prevents a new way of seeing. So, first decide if you can meet these two conditions. If you realize that you are not sufficiently motivated, the experiment will be a waste of time. It is somewhat involved, and you will need to photocopy the instructions and follow them step-by-step as you make your observations.

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### **Experiment IX.3**

This experiment necessitates two sessions, one one day and one the next day. Each session will require about an hour. The first day is preparation only; the second day is the one that will tax you. The ideal location for such experiments in perception is an anechoic chamber in a laboratory, where all extraneous sensory stimulation is eliminated. John Lilly and others have devised other ways to achieve "sensory deprivation," and had good success at breaking through the perceptual programs of themselves and other subjects. Some people have spontaneous experiences of this sort if isolated long enough in a natural environment, especially after the body becomes depleted. How much it takes, though, to produce a good result depends entirely on the subject. Some need nothing out of the ordinary at all to achieve a new way of seeing. But this is rare.

Your ability to concentrate and your decision to not let fear stop you will determine

whether this experiment works for you or not.

Day 1:

On this planning day, you are asked to choose a location, arrange an object there for visual observation, and eliminate distractions as much as possible. First inform others nearby that you are conducting an experiment, and request not to be disturbed for an hour. Take your photocopy of these instructions to the location. Do the following:

1. Arrange a comfortable seat, with a side table for your instructions, so you can glance down without moving and read the page. Attend to details, so that once you begin tomorrow, you will not have to move.

2. Look around the room and decide upon a single object that you will be observing. These are the criteria:

- Something you never noticed before, or something so ordinary that it doesn't attract attention.
- Something that casts a shadow. You may need to change the lighting.
- Something that has some small details which are easy to focus on.
- Something that has little value to you.
- Something that stands out from its background.
- Something living, like a plant, if possible.

It may take some time to select a suitable object. Play with this, until it feels right to you. Your state of mind toward the object is important. Once you have selected the object, you may need to move it directly in front of your chair, or move the chair. The distance is up to you.

1. Now look around for distractions. The worst are noisemakers and anything with words or strong colors. Just for these two days, remove from view all such visual distractions, and disarm all noisemakers. Be sure that there are no small objects to fiddle with near your seat, and nothing to read, except this sheet of instructions.

2. Sit in the chair. Make it as comfortable as possible, maybe with your legs elevated. Arrange pillows, and even a blanket if necessary. Look at your object. Just sit for a few minutes and relax, and see how this is going to work. You may need to change something. It has to feel right. Study the object, and really get to know it. Notice things about it that you never noticed before. Imagine *being* the object and performing the function that it performs.

3. Read this aloud to yourself:

“THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS \_\_\_\_\_ THAT I  
HAVE NOT YET NOTICED, BUT WHICH I WANT TO NOTICE.”

Close your eyes and ask yourself: “Is this true?” If it feels true, you are ready for tomorrow. If it does not feel true, you are advised to skip this experiment for the time being.

Before you leave the room, look around again and eliminate any distractions which you might have overlooked. Sometime before tomorrow, read and review the instructions for Day 2.

\*

Day 2:

It is recommended that you schedule this session when you are not hungry, but not after taking in stimulants such as salt, caffeine, and sugar. Choose whatever time of day your mind is relatively relaxed, perhaps evening. If you have something preoccupying you, take care of this first. Again, inform people around that you will be conducting an experiment and request not to be interrupted for one hour. It should take only about a half hour. Arrange the room as necessary. Remove any electronics or unplug them, and turn off any cell phones. If necessary, go to the bathroom, and change into comfortable clothes. If you wear glasses, don't forget these. You will not be taking any notes, so just bring the sheet of instructions. Take your time preparing. The state of mind you are in now is the “Quality” you are putting into this experiment, and will determine what you get out of it.

Now take your seat and settle into a relaxed position. Don't be in a hurry. We have allowed plenty of time. Recall the earlier experiments on watching the breathing, the muscle tension, and your mood. Take your time, and play with each of these, eyes closed. Relax. Open your eyes and read:

“THERE IS SOMETHING ABOUT THIS \_\_\_\_\_ THAT I  
HAVE NOT YET NOTICED, BUT WHICH I WILL NOTICE TODAY.”

Re-read this as necessary, throughout the following procedure:

1. Locate the object and look at it, minimizing thoughts about it, just seeing it. Now relax your eyes so that the object goes slightly out of focus. Notice if the object *feels* different. Repeat this procedure several times. Take your time, and let something happen. Which way of seeing feels more real? Rest.

2. Now look at the object and try to see it as part of its background, as a two-dimensional surface. There is something you can do with your eyes to achieve this. First, try repeatedly with both eyes, and if that doesn't produce results, close one eye. You must concentrate, and you must stare. Which way of seeing feels more real – the 2-D or the 3-D? Repeat a few times. Feel that something has happened before going further. Rest.

3. Now focus on the shadow cast by the object. Again, let the shadow go out of focus. Repeat this procedure a few times, resting between attempts. Is the shadow interesting? Do you like the focused or the unfocused shadow better? Rest.

4. Now pick one edge of the object, beyond which you can see a background. Concentrate on this sharp edge, this boundary, of the object. Continue to look at it until something changes. Allow any change. Rest.

5. Now concentrate on the background where it meets this same edge. Does the background feel more or less real than the object? Rest.

6. Finally, just relax and gaze at the object. Does it have a different quality? Did it show you anything new? Relax your eyes and take a few minutes to glance around the room. Does the room feel different? Do *you* feel any different? Take your time getting up from your chair.

This is the end of the procedure, but the experiment will continue on its own, any time you remember that there is always a new way to see anything.

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After you are sure that sensory experiences are showing you only what *you bring* your senses to see, you are close to the next insight: the world you experience through the senses is only a mirage, shimmering above the desert of your angst, your loss of the True Self. Accept this, and the whole world steps back as the Real pervades the moment. In this experience, your attachment to the world is no more.

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#### **Experiment IX.4**

Here, we turn to a specific element in your life, to give you an opportunity to test your level of knowingness of this truth. If one sees that there is no world, he should be able to eliminate one familiar thing from that nonexistent world with no ill effects. For if there is no world, there are no things within it. There is nothing to be attached to. This experiment will ask you to make a commitment, to yourself. It is a lifetime commitment. It is not for any mundane purpose, like to stop smoking for some reason. It is just to let you see if you can let go of something familiar, permanently. If you can't do this with even one single small thing, you must be terrified of the thought that "There is no world." If you can't do it, and do not *feel* terrified, you must be split, severely, from what you really feel.

So, you can use this commitment, for the rest of your life, to gauge the severity of your split condition. If the commitment keeps getting easier to keep, you are probably healing. But if, with passage of time, it gets more and more difficult to keep the commitment, you are not progressing. For you, there IS a world, and you are failing to learn the lesson of *A Course in Miracles*, a lesson which is required in order to be fulfilled as a human being.

The commitment is this: Take some time choosing one thing that you have been doing or saying or making use of every day for some years. Something that has taken a little of your time and attention. It can be something you like or something you don't like. What is important is that it is a part of your world. A world is a whole. It is a mechanical device with parts. If you remove one part, the whole is affected. By removing one part, you accomplish three things that are significant for this *Course*: you make your world less demanding of your time, you weaken your attachment to it, and you see its vulnerability and transitoriness.

It is suggested that you spend several days choosing this one small thing, because if

your commitment is not sincere, it is no commitment at all. Of course, many things fall away or are irrecoverably lost, just in the course of living. All of your deciduous teeth are gone, your favorite dog has died, you may no longer be able to digest ice cream, etc, etc. But this experiment is slightly different; here you are asked to give up just one thing that there is no reason in the world to give up! There are no circumstances requiring this. It is just for purposes of an experiment on yourself – to get to know yourself a little better. It is a lie detector test! And, finally, do not replace this thing. Let it create a tiny vacuum.

Once you have chosen the one thing, identify it in your notebook with the date. Then test: give yourself a one week ‘probation’ without this thing. At the end of the week, you may realize that this thing will not work, for whatever reason. If so, forget your commitment. Choose something else. Again, give yourself the one week to check it out. Keep doing this until you find a thing that seems to work. Record all this in your notebook. Once you find a thing that easily passes the one week probationary period, and that satisfies the other criteria mentioned above, make your lifetime commitment to never devote time to this thing again. You cannot promise to never think about it – that would be impossible. Just give it away, to someone who might value it. If you know noone who might value it, just discard it. That’s the end of it, and the end of your world as you knew it.

\* \*

All men possess the knowingness that there is no world but for their eyes, and yet they will argue vehemently against this which they deeply know to be true. All men possess the knowingness that they have to work constantly to build and maintain some semblance of a world, and yet they claim to be 'living.' All men have experienced shocks which have clearly shown them that the world they are trying to build does not exist, and yet they claim to have "recovered". They had an opportunity to relax and to accept that their imagined world is merely that, and yet they chose to direct their perception to building a new image.

Most men, when frightened, turn to fighting. Ego feeds on the animal urges; ego delights in the sensation of the flow of hormones, uncontrolled, and unimpeded by something so insignificant as another human. And so ego is attracted to the challenge of fighting to build a world and fighting to keep it seeming real. This kind of struggle ego can always convince itself that it wins, because ego also enjoys exercising its capacity to deny – its 'power' to overpower any evidence that its world is not real and is of no value. Ego thrives in such conditions. There is nothing real that can oppose it! True Self, Silence, do not intrude where they are unbidden. And these lovers do not enter dreams anyway. So ego cannot be forced to relinquish its struggle to continue perceiving the unreal.

However, egos, as individuals, when there is no opponent to fight, are vulnerable to moments of truth. They can't *always* escape solitude! They must rest between struggles. When the arms are too weary to hold up the weapons, and the sentinel in the tower sees no riders approaching, the gap between the illusions is enough to admit entry to the four invisible horsemen. When perception weakens, truth shines. Light shines through the tiniest crack, no matter how strong is the rest of the wall. The Light is the mortal enemy of ego. But the Light shines right through even the strongest ego, because there is nothing there. When ego sees the tiny beam that has found the crack in the wall, ego shrieks a battle cry. It would prefer a valiant death, fighting, to submission to this tiny beam of Light.

But one ego is not enough to defeat this beam. It must run and recruit other egos, knowing that they have the same Holy Terror, and it takes with it its plan to convince them that its world is worth defending from this tiny beam of Light. It is no easy task to convince other egos that his world is the real one. So this is another constant battle, this rallying of supporters. Much must be sacrificed, there will be casualties, as ego tries with smiles, with words, with grimaces and with guns, to rally the mercenaries. Though they share his terror, they do not share his version.

All egos' versions of 'the real world' differ. Even the specific features that are essential to one ego's belief that his world is real may not exist at all in another ego's 'real world'. To one ego what is the most trivial thing may mean everything to another ego. For instance, one ego might cite as evidence that his world is real and worthwhile the exhilaration, the freedom, that he feels driving his sports car late at night when the highways are empty. For him, this is what makes life worthwhile when he is down; this is what seems to revive him. But another ego may yawn and say that for him maintaining such a car is too costly, other cars are always in the way, and there are always cops, and there is always the chance of killing some child crossing the road, etc. So if an ego wants to gain some verification for the reality of his world, which feels real because of driving his car, he has to appeal to sympathy and empathy. All egos, he knows, are terrified of no sympathy or empathy. He also knows that if he gives sympathy and empathy, other egos will give it back, because they also know that sympathy and empathy do not self-create, as does living love, so only if they give it will they get it back.

And so, a self-sustaining illusion is born. The belief in the reality of one's perceived world is nothing more than millions of such tricks, such strands of deceptions and self-deceptions woven together in memory into a solid fabric which allows no Light to pass. The other end of the strands, the opposite, the contrary evidence, is ignored; it is woven into the other side of the fabric -- the side that is hung facing the wall. If ego would quietly sneak around behind the fabric and see these other ends of the strands, twisted and gnarled and unpretty, he would have to start dealing with the truth.

If a 'love relationship' with another human is the foundation of an ego's motivation to work to keep its world intact, its failure presents another challenge to ego, another opportunity to fight, or to not fight. The businessman in the vignette fights his own perceptions: he literally turns his head away. In this way he seems to win. Another way of fighting, making the ego seem to win, is to convince itself that what was a failure was not a failure but a success: "It is all good." Another way is to blame the failure on some other ego: "His perception of reality is faulty. He screwed up." Usually, this ego then has to go out and start up a new relationship to prove that there was nothing wrong with him. This is however an ignorant strategy, because as soon as this new relationship gets too close to truth, it will 'fail' too. All that ego can hope for is that the new partner is now old and tired, and will just support any lie that he wants to tell. So he has to keep up the pretending, keep up the sympathy and the empathy, for a long time – until the partner is old and tired. Too old to jump ship and align with another partner.

Thus, it is possible for an ego to live its entire life and never allow a single beam of the Light of truth to show him that his 'real world' is nothing more than his own struggle to see something which is not there. The Light *is* getting through, but it is the most subtle thing, and we can always choose to pretend that it does not exist.

No such struggle is necessary for the one who relaxes and allow the Light in. He finds that all of his needs in a body are met. He has turned his power of vision onto the gaps between the dreamings, and he has caught on to the Quality of Silence. He has faced the truth, and he has accepted it. There is nothing needing his support or maintenance; what is real is not dependent. So he need not exert himself. He need not even notice how and when his needs are being met; they are met before they become needs! The outer world made up by the body's senses does not compel him to do anything. It is just something which bows and recedes before the silences.

To dwell in the Quality of Silence is to stick to the path of no attack. Without a machete, one simply stays put and enjoys. Then, a path which offers no obstruction, which needs no machete, appears. A world that does not exist can offer no obstruction. But in any moment, one is free to step out of the Quality of Silence. When he then tries to carve out his own path, he meets with nothing but obstructions. He will learn that if he raises his machete against the obstructions, he trespasses from the Real into the world of the false. His feverish flexing of muscles and hacking away will get him nowhere but lost in the thickening jungle, among the lions and tigers and bears.

So if he is wise, he stops. Even though he may have the most wonderful machete, he lays it down. He takes not one more step into the obstruction. He allows the Quality of the Silence to catch up with him. By and by, it will. It returns his experiencing to the Placeless Place in which there are no obstructions.

To an ego who sees this, it is 'a miracle'! It defies all the limitations he encounters in his known world. But to one who dwells in the pure experiencing, it is natural. It is practically unnoticed. To take note even of the miracle is a slight lapse of the all-encompassing Silence.

Many people claim to be followers of Jesus, to love Jesus, to be loved by Jesus in a special way, to live according to his teachings. But which of them does not ignore the very essence of his teaching? "Seek, find, and experience the kingdom of heaven, the Quality of the Silence within, first and foremost, and you will feel no needs." And: "Whoever lives the path of this truth, and trusts in the truth of my path, even though his body die, he shall live."

But egos do not believe Jesus. Apparently, they believe that he was not very intelligent! They do not live his way and truth and life. They prefer to sit in the churches and temples and mosques and in front of their TVs and computer screens, listening to stories of struggle, and of sympathy and empathy. For maybe a few hours, lost in

some fantasy. And then they get up and they return to their own daily struggle, maintaining the same illusions they have always maintained, just in the same way as the characters they see on TV. Then they must go back to their pastors and their gurus and their sacred scriptures because they can't find the kingdom of heaven in themselves – their holy egos are a jungle of obstructions.

None of this is an argument. None of it calls for rebuttal, rebuke, castigation. Here, we are raising empirical questions. Fall silent, and do your own experiment. Open your mind, open your heart, put aside your fears of what you might find in yourself, and *test it!* Live this moment in the kingdom of heaven, the Quality of the all-encompassing Silence. Forsake all else. And see for yourself what happens.

\* \* \*

### Experiment IX.5

In this experiment we draw upon what you have learned about the power of silence, the power of stillness, the power of passivity, and test your trust of your Self. This is a very advanced experiment. After you read over the procedure, recall prior experiments you have performed that are useful, and even necessary, skills for attempting this one. Perhaps make a list of these experiments, and take a few days to repeat them before you tackle this one. Though the duration of this test is only a single moment, everything is concentrated into this moment. A moment is an interruption of time. It is an eternity set in time, but itself is not an interval of time. Thus, it can easily be wedged between any two events in time. It is capable of stopping the world, because it is more Real than the world.

Today, we will first refresh our ability to turn to passivity, stillness and silence, and experience this state. All that is necessary, for today's experiment, is to be able to experience this pure state for a moment -- a 'Holy Instant.' But the challenge is to be able to assign this tiny moment the highest priority -- to seek and find It above all else.

Next, we will practice wedging It into the flow of events, *before* the next event. Being the tiniest of experiences, It is sharp and pointed. It can cut through anything, It can wedge itself anywhere, It can enter where there is no space. So our task will be to make use of It when the flow of events -- or thoughts -- is not to our liking. Instead of fighting these contents of the mind we will wedge in a Holy Instant, *before* the next experience or perception takes place. Again, we will be working with only one moment at a time.

For example, someone is shouting or some loud recorded music played through deep bass speakers or some car alarm gone haywire is annoying you. You cannot stop your brain from attending to it. But you can insert a *single moment* of pure Awareness, immediately, *right now*, before the next perception of sound. Then, once this is done, you can prepare to do it again, and then again. Your attitude should be one of accepting the thing you don't like, and seeing it in its God-given sense: as offering you an opportunity to purify your Awareness. After all, that is why it is happening to you!!! So that you can remind yourself to put the Real first; so you can perform this experiment.

Do step one at quiet times. You are not meditating exactly; you are figuring out how to open yourself totally for only a single moment of the pure depth-consciousness to touch you. That is all. Relaxed, absolute stillness is a pre-requisite. Then, when you have the knack of it, practice in easy situations. Wedge that moment in, *right now*, before any other perception or movement can occur. Then let whatever occurs occur. Repeat, until you can trust yourself to be able to allow this Holy Instant instantaneously in a stressful situation.

The real test comes when the "evil" situation of tension or threat arises. Can you insert this tiny moment of pure Experiencing where It belongs: first? Remember, your concern is only for one single moment, but It must be of the purest Quality. Do not attempt to string together several such moments in an effort to block your perceptions in time. Concentrate on the single Holy Instant. Then, relax. Afterwards, you can repeat the procedure.

Do not get ambitious with this one! You are close to something big, but you can't force it. The transition from the false world to the Real is a two-step process. You can do only the first step: Replace the false moment with the No-thing-ness, and linger in this... The second step, the replacement of the No-thing-ness with the Real, is not your part. It will happen when It will happen.

\* \*

You may be realizing that when one lives in the awareness that there is no world, nothing is fixed. You are accustomed to grasping for something fixed in order to feel solid and secure. This habit served you well at one time; now, it is a major obstacle to your progress. The following experiment will help you to overcome this habit.

\* \*

### **Experiment IX.6**

*What is a Miracle?*

*It is not a magic trick like bending a spoon or chanting and then rain comes. A miracle is a shift in your mind and in the heart of your Being, from clouded and troubled to filled with the deepest possible peace, the purest possible love. It is the coming of the Dawn Which Never Ends; the opening of the Flower Which Never Ceases to Blossom. The shift may be for only a moment, but its effects are lasting*

*Who can perform miracles?*

*Anyone, and at any moment. A miracle happens whenever you make an empty space in your mind for it. The bigger the empty space, the bigger the miracle; the longer you keep making the empty space, the more miracles keep happening. Just stop filling your mind with what you have been filling it with. The feeling of emptying is the feeling of withering away, like you are dying. But persevere! Rest quietly, wait prayerfully. This feeling is the sign that a miracle is about to occur. You have to be willing to let storms and thunder and lightning pass. You may become terrified to the bone. The thunder may shake you, the lightning may jolt you. But do not run from them and do not curse them. They are God, giving you your Moment to make your Choice. For the Choice to perform a miracle is yours; He will not impose it upon you.*

*Trust your intuition. The storm will pass. A miracle happens whenever a human can summon this kind of trust, this kind of courage, this kind of love. Move this mountain, and you will see the effects of your miracle materialize right before your eyes. The world you live in will be a different place. And you will never go back to a life of fear, of effort to enjoy, or a lesser kind of love.*

Adapted from *Why The Mind Works* (2006)

We might title this experiment "Remaining in the path of the next miracle," because that is the attitude we are exploring this day. The experimental question we are investigating is: "How long can I remain in the emptiness, the withering away?" But, like most experiments in this latter part of the *Course*, this is not for beginners, for egos. If a proud flicker of "I am performing a miracle" passes through your mind, you are doomed. Not only will the shift fail to occur, but you will also be assaulted by an event or gripped by a state of mind that is an improbable, unaccountable misery. We can't tell you whether you are prepared for this experiment or not. But if you are in doubt, if you still feel that ego can flare up at any time, it may be best to skip this one for now.

All the most humble and simple people around the world are 'performing miracles' every day without knowing it. They live in an uncanny zone of grace after grace. They do nothing but to remain in the path of the miracle, allowing whatever Life may bring, not even imagining 'a better life.' So, each day, they enjoy a few moments of pure Love -- prayerfully, but unasked for. The person who is conscious of the miracle as the power to shift from the 'normal,' on the other hand, is the Adam or the Eve after the fall from Grace. He, she, we have a hole to climb out of: the pit of knowledge. We thinkers have bound ourselves to a world of fixed illusions and strict laws, and are working our way back to Freedom. It *can* be done -- or rather, we *can* unlearn what we think we 'know.'

So, today, print a copy of the quotation above, read it over, and let the meaning sink in, until it becomes a wordless awareness. Keep allowing the aura of this awareness to replace thought. Carry the page with the quotation with you wherever you go. Re-

read it frequently throughout the day, renewing the wordless awareness of the meaning. Be passive, and receptive, and let yourself be shifted, be moved. And let the meaning of the quotation be the last thing on your mind as you drift off to sleep.

\* \*

### **Experiment IX.7**

If you have an idea for your own original experiment based on this chapter, design and conduct it before continuing.

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## CHAPTER X. The Sanity of Lifeless Living; the Insanity of Everything Else

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*“You don’t need a weatherman to know which way the wind blows.”*

Bob Dylan

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### Experiment X.1

“There is a simple test you can perform on yourself to find out if you are sane or insane. Go to a place where you can be alone without interruptions or distractions. Get comfortable. Relax. Then just watch the mind work. The content doesn’t matter. If the mind eventually settles down, and empties, and leaves you with nothing but Pure Awareness, moment-to-moment, you are still sane. But, if the mind clicks rapidly from one thought to another, from one image to another, from one impulse to another, running like a machine with the switch stuck “on” and no ability to turn itself off, you have become insane.”

From *Why The Mind Works*, 2006

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Fundamentally, for all spiritual intents and purposes, there are no differences among all the labeled and defined ‘syndromes’ and ‘disorders’ of the human psyche, even though such an impressive tome as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, commonly known as the DSM, would have you believe they are legion. There are no mild, moderate, and severe degrees of ‘emotional disturbance,’ ‘neurosis,’ ‘psychosis,’ ‘schizophrenia,’ ‘personality disorder,’ or even ‘organic brain syndrome.’ There is no ‘normal personality’ or person, there is no one who is more or less ‘borderline’ or ‘bipolar’ than anyone else. This scheme of categories and judgments about who is more sane and who is less sane is a plot, perpetrated by the coalition of socialist and capitalist ‘helping professionals’ who want to control you and take your money. It would be a saving grace if the spirit behind ‘diagnosis’ and ‘treatment’ were grounded in the wisdom of the ages, and faithful to the deepest understandings and innerstandings of the human psyche, but that is not the case. It would also be a saving grace if treatment based upon the DSM categories and the principles of psychotherapy in fact alleviated human suffering and rejuvenated the spirit of patients, but that is not the case either...

What we have is this: the only sanity is total sanity. And this can change at any moment. One moment may be a sane moment: perfect attunement and deep joy in the Silence. But the next moment, one may step out of the Silence. This one step delivers him into the realm of total insanity. A woman is either pregnant or she is not pregnant; she is either feeding another life or she is not. When in the Quality of the Silence, you are bearing Life itself. This is what you bring to all that comes in contact with you. When you step outside the zone of the Silence, everything reverses. You are not now a giver of Life. You are barren, sterile. You are just another competitor for the limited resources in the limited illusion world. You reinforce the illusion; you lead to death all who come in contact with you.

How serious is your problem? It is always severe. You have denied Life itself and so your 'living' is itself a lie. It may pretend to be a giving but it is a taking. Now, many steps will have to be retraced in order to undo the effects of your lie. Your choice seemed so small. There seemed to be only the subtlest difference between remaining in the Silence for one more moment, or a casual foray just outside It. But you forgot the Inertia Factor. When you have sunk your feet into the earth it does not let go as forgivingly as heaven lets you step freely out. Insanity takes hold of the psyche instantaneously. Total insanity, to the point that you totally forget Sanity. Then, it doesn't matter what anyone labels your problem – you personally have a very serious problem. In fact, those 'disorders' that are considered by the professionals to be the least severe are the ones in which a strong ego is still intact. As we have been showing you by means of experiments throughout this *Course*, this is the main problem. It is no easier to return to Silence if you exhibit "only a mild phobia" than if your diagnosis is 'severe mental retardation'. Different paths back home must be taken. Only the individual himself is in a position to tread his path, and to know how easy was the journey.

How can we judge and rank people who are 'disturbed,' who are not alive in the Peace of God? How can we condemn the ego who is 'antisocial' any more than we condemn the ego who is 'prosocial'? How can we pick out a few features of a person, ignore all the other features, and then hurl an insult at him or her by means of a 'diagnosis' or a signature? And how can we look at ourselves and call what we see 'normal,' 'healthy,' and 'sane,' making ourselves the standard by which to judge others? Basically, this is what psychologists and psychiatrists do. It is the reverse of what Freud attempted to do by requiring all his students to undergo psychoanalysis before accepting patients, the reverse of what the mystical traditions do in choosing spiritual leaders. The courage to face oneself, to admit one's defects, and to dedicate one's life to letting go of oneself is missing in our modern-day profession of psychotherapy. These are not important, in the eyes of these professionals. What is important, what works for the professional, is the ability to memorize and to categorize, and the willingness to condemn others.

"They ain't no sins, they ain't no heroes,  
Ain't no mistakes, don't need no police.  
Ain't no no bad people, ain't no no good people.  
We all just scratch where we itch.

We just scratch when we itch,  
Just scratch where we itch,  
Keep a-scratchin`and a-scratchin,  
Lord it feel so good, I just can't quit a-scratchin,  
Don't ya love that itch that don't never stop?."

\* \* \*

The itch is the longing for the Silence. We try everything under the sun, but only the Silence can take away the itch. No human can do it, either for himself or for someone else. And no human can project onto anyone else the blame for his own noise.

\* \*

*“Maybe there is no silence in your head.  
Maybe there is no silence in your head.  
Maybe you’d rather kill your own voice instead.  
Instead of the innocent,  
Instead of the innocent,  
Instead of the innocent.”*

Jill Cohn

\* \*

Nothing has gone wrong. The misery of the itch is perfectly in proportion to the moments of choices to step out of the Silence. It is the misery of the itch which restores everything to its Source. If God did not want us to step out of the Silence ever, we suppose that He would not give us that option. It is usual for the parent to allow the child to play with toys; he does not grab the toys away and punish the child for being a child. There is a time and a place for everything, and it always happens perfectly. It is the greatest joy to return Home after a long journey. One can deeply appreciate his Home; one can deeply rest. Sunyata said: “Each down may lift us up higher, depending on how we tackle it.” Only God himself never ventures beyond his nature, into the false. There are no perfect humans. Sometimes, each of us is insane.

Only in the Absolute, the all-encompassing Silence, the Real, are there no distinctions. In truth, then, there are no distinctions. We step out of Silence because we think it might be different; thus we aware difference, distinction. A distinction is only a thought, but in order to think it you must also think a second thought – its background, its contrasting part, its opposite. If you go only this far, you have put only one foot on the earth. You still can feel the Silent Reality with the other foot. But as soon as you call one of this pair of opposites ‘good’ and the other ‘bad,’ you have toppled over -- you are diving in head first. The train back Home leaves without you. Now you must wait. Who knows when the next train will stop where you are standing? Who knows when you will be ready? With contrast, judgment, there can be perception, with perception there can be a world, with a world there can be an ego, with an ego there can be insanity, with insanity there can be a fight, with a fight there will be a loss. After you complete this cycle you may be ready for the next train.

We perceive only insanities. The senses mediate only insanities. The mind mediates only ideas. And all ideas are insane. A mind cluttered with a single idea is a mind that is not accepting Silence – wholeness, sanity. The idea is a stagnation at one pole of a pair of opposites and a fear or repugnance of the other, the opposite idea. The more you cling to one pole the more you strengthen the other. An almost universal elaboration of this takes place when one misunderstands the cause of the tiny moments of pure Silence between events in the world. This leads to tremendous confusion that may take decades to see through. We refer here to any person who concentrates on a task, humbles himself before it, and then accomplishes it. There are a few moments of pure Silence when his mind relaxes after completion of the task. The task itself can be anything; it can be performing a surgery, painting the ceiling, playing a sport or game, performing before an audience, robbing a bank. The Silence has no morals! As long as the person has given himself over to the demands of the task, forfeited his

ego, and exhausted his mental energy, afterwards there is a short period when he totally relaxes, body and mind, and all thinking, feeling, and action stops. There is nothing to do but be aware of awareness itself. He experiences the beautiful Stillness, the lack of all need, the clarity and emptiness of the mind uncontaminated. The problem is: he attributes this experience to the completion of this specific task. In his ego's memory, he forms an association between the task and the Silence, and believes that the task is a wonderful task, leading to a wonderful resolution. If he is a football player, for example, he develops a love for football. In reality, the Silence comes at any time that the mind is relinquished. But this person has never learned how to relinquish it, let go, directly. He needs the specific task and the exhaustion.

So what is the problem with this? It is at least twofold. One is that the person does not go in the direction of practicing letting go of the world, but does just the opposite: he tries to set up the same conditions again in his outer world. His belief in the reality of the outer world is strengthened. This may hold him back in his maturing toward truth, and his freedom from the mundane. Secondly, he is now deeper in illusion. Each time that he sets up this task and exhausts himself on it, and feels the Silence, and then attributes the wonderful experience to the completion of the work, he is increasing the severity of the shock to his ego when this work peaks and then progresses to its inevitable failure. His ego has been strengthened by the accomplishments, and he can't foresee the crash. The Light will penetrate, but not in a gentle way. This is the kind of problem which can be avoided if a person is guided by an authentic guru. A little guidance, on how to switch from perception to intuition, or even just a few moments in the guru's silent presence, might avert the catastrophic impact of this outcome.

However, there is no better way to live! Your psychologist and your psychiatrist who would change you are crazy! All 'ways of living,' all 'lifestyles,' are equally insane!

*Only the one who has stopped living truly lives. The one who has a life, the one who thinks that he is alive, the one who is living his life is delusional. Only the one who has lost his mind can find it.*

\* \* \*

Let us address one specific 'psychological problem.' In psychology in modern times, much attention has been devoted to the issue of abusive relationships. We have reached a point of coming full circle, examining all the cause-and-effect chains the logical mind can generate, and still therapy continues running around in the same circle. The problem is that two straw men have been invented. The whole concept of 'abuse' is a lie. An ego has been threatened, that is all. But ego is false. And ego – the false self – is exactly what we *want* to be threatened! Nevertheless, psychologists have invented the two concepts 'the abusive personality' and 'the victim of abuse' and made everything immensely complicated and impossible to sort out. If one follows their opinion, no real healing can occur.

*When you reach the point where you look all around in your world and see that there is no one you can trust, nowhere to turn for security and happiness, no meaning anywhere, and you give up, and you look inside yourself at the Nothingness, and you accept it, you become enlightened. This is total healing, the only healing possible. In the future, whenever you forget this lesson and begin asserting ego, you will attract 'abuse' again, to remind yourself.*

To be 'abused' is an opportunity to accomplish many of the most difficult tasks on the inner journey quickly and certainly. *That is why a person is abused! This particular soul wants the fast lane!* But if he or she clings to anger, resentment, judgment, revenge – or pretending -- the golden opportunity is wasted. If the 'abuse' was sexual, its lesson is that sex is gross, mean, selfish, and stupid, and that any relationship that involves sex is just a hall of mirrors: a big pack of deceptions and illusions. A 'victim of sexual abuse' who never forgets this lesson saves many years on his life journey. He or she is not attracted to sex and possessive relationships. He can see

through them, and so is not controlled by hormones as are other people. In any situation with another person in which 'intimacies' begin, the choice is always: "Do I open myself up and spill my guts or do I pretend?" But neither of these seems right. Backing out of the situation seems like the only real course, to the aware person. And, if he or she is sensitive, and has clearly seen what sex is, there may be no need to ever participate again. Though, by the standards of the old psychology, this is considered 'abnormal,' and the person is rushed into therapy, no therapy is needed. The person is greatly advanced on the spiritual journey – way beyond the psychologists who crave to treat him because they are still hung up on sex. Sex is no longer a distraction.

If the 'abuse' has been experienced by a child under the violent hand of a parent, the child can save many years, and move directly to the final stages of the most wonderful state of a human being. He or she has been shown what so-called 'parental love' consists of. He can see that attachment to parents with the idea that there is necessarily a special relationship, just because this woman is your earthly mother or this man is your earthly father, is foolish. As a result, he or she can't get caught in the false family games that most other people get lost in, playing their assigned roles because they believe that the roles are real and important. The 'abused' one, if he or she remembers the lesson of the 'abuse,' is not interested and does not feel obligated to participate. All the time that he would have wasted sitting in living rooms and dining rooms and restaurants trying to keep a sentiment going is freed up. He has an opportunity to be alone, to explore, to detect something that feels more real – to find the True Self. If he wastes this opportunity, if he carries the 'abuse' like a cross or a badge, his egoism traps him, and he ends up right back in the same living rooms, dining rooms, and restaurants, with his 'normal' relatives – the ones who opted for the slow lane.

It takes a rare courage to let go of the cross and the badge. Ego can't do it, because ego uses will power. The 'abused' person must passively feel the pain, and keep feeling it, until it runs its course. As soon as he or she is vulnerable to the pain, has totally surrendered to it, it will end. At that instant, all at once, something in his Being shifts. A great opening up into a vastness is experienced. The person realizes beyond a doubt that something that has been dormant now lives again. He recognizes the meaning of existence. His consciousness feels more refined, more subtle, more sensitive. He sees the value of his future in a body. And, he suddenly realizes that he need not worry anymore, that there is nothing he needs to do, that everything is falling into place, in a perfection that he could not have brought about by his own efforts.

So, if you think of your 'abuse' as a misfortune, you will never recover from it. You wallow in egoism. Especially if you delight in fascinating therapists with the details of your story! But if you opt to feel the pain to its end, you are freed of the past, and blessed with a future beyond the reach of most humans. It is your choice.

You have endured your Tamanawas dance. You have had the lesson taught by all the sages and saints, throughout the ages, to their most deserving students. The experiences of your 'abuse' should never be forgotten. The truth is, these experiences are now a part of you. The truth is, they have been a mortal blow to your ego. You have seen clearly how flimsy ego is, that it is just a trick. The blessing in this is that ego is now easier to lay aside, and you are drawn to letting yourself sink into re-membering Who you really are. You will rapidly mature into your full potential.

For this reason, it is highly recommended that, every day for the rest of your life, you take some time to remember your biggest ego humiliations. This will remind you that there is no point in asserting the lie of your ego that day; there is no point in hiding behind the mask. This and the experiments in this *Course* are the only therapy, the only medicine, you need. You are the only therapist you need. You will cure yourself of the sickness which was your ego.

You may never need to tell anyone about the incidents themselves. In the first place, you may have difficulty finding someone who sees 'abuse' in its true light. Most everyone believes a blow to the ego to be a bad thing, a

shameful thing, a trauma and a tragedy. You save yourself much confusion if you never tell such people. They can only get you stuck where they are stuck. Secondly, if you learn the lesson, you will live on in the truth of Who you are, ego-free. This is 'telling the truth' livingly -- without words. Trying to describe in accurate detail events that happened in the past is not 'telling the truth.' As we explained in Chapter I, there *is* no objective truth. When you describe events, you try to make some kind of impression or other. Also, what a person hears is whatever he wants to hear.

And don't worry about 'forgiving' -- or thanking -- those who 'abused' you. They did not know what they were doing. You cannot help them.

The only problem in life is your own ego. Let your 'abuse' be your ego's executioner. You will live on at a new echelon, free, enjoying the Nectar of each moment. You are no longer the name that your parent or your partner calls you. You are no longer who the world has groomed you to be. You are Ananda, you are Amadeus.

\* \*

At first, this series of five introspective experiments will be intense, and the anxiety will build to a crescendo, but then it will begin to taper off. If you follow the instructions, every minute of practice will lighten your load. The first three are preparation. The last two are the intense part.

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### **Experiment X.2**

This and the following experiment are repeats of two experiments from Chapter VIII. This one is an exercise in observing the breathing. Please refer to Experiment VIII.3 on pgs. 104-105.

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### **Experiment X.3**

Please repeat Experiment VIII.4 on pg. 106.

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After you complete these two experiments, take stock of your situation. It is important that you have a good measure of success at both. So repeat either or both as many times as you need to, until by your standards you have achieved the purpose. If you cannot, you are probably not ready for the next three experiments, because we will be working with the memories themselves. Use your knowledge of yourself to decide when you are ready to look at the memories of your abuse. You may not be ready until later in life.

#### **Experiment X.4**

In this experiment, we are allowing a mood, an ambience, to settle over us, that is all. Several experiments in an earlier chapter have prepared you for this. We are not going to attempt to put words in your head about the quality of this mood. It will be yours. So begin in the same way that you began the two experiments above. Re-read these instructions until you are sure that you won't have to interrupt the experiment to consult them. No note taking. Once you are comfortable, watch your breathing for a few minutes, and then observe your muscle tension for a few minutes. Let your body image soften. Relax. Now say to yourself: "I am about to open the door to one of the worst memories of my life. This is the right time to do this." Feel how you feel. Is this statement true or false? If it is false, admit this, and just spend a few minutes allowing the mind to wander, and then end the experiment and resume your daily activities. In the ensuing days, go back and do whatever experiments you believe might help you to prepare for this one.

If the statement is true, if this honestly feels like the right time, do the following step: Allow whatever mood is building to build, and feel it without judging it as good or bad. Just feel it. Watch it as an observer. Ego probably doesn't like it. But continue watching it come. Allow it to come. As you feel your body reacting to it, note the reaction. If your breathing is affected, note that. If your muscles tense, note that. Now, just watch all this happening to your body. Note that you are watching. It is happening in your body, but you are separate; you are one who is watching your body. Now, fully feel all this in your body, plus the mood that is descending. Allow all these experiences to pass through your awareness. Keep allowing them to pass in and out of your awareness, as you gently relax your breathing and your muscles. Sense when you are approaching a point where you can no longer relax. Note this, then end the experiment. Open your eyes and look around. Note the contrast between where you just were and your immediate surroundings. Whenever you are ready, resume your daily activities.

\*            \*

Here again, it is time to take stock. You are advised to repeat the last experiment until you have a good measure of success before going on to the next one. In any case, you are also advised to give yourself several days before going on. Probably, during these days, the memories themselves will begin to torment you. They may be powerful enough to disturb your concentration on your everyday tasks. Again, note the contrast between the mood of your present life and the mood of the day of the 'abuse.' Do you see how your mind is attracted to the 'abuse'? Do you see how it is more important, more real, than your present life?

It is strongly recommended that you record all of these insights and feelings in your notebook. Do not restrain yourself – write it just as it occurs to you. For your eyes only. Also in your notebook, answer this question: "Many people suffer horrible experiences. Does my ego think it is better than somebody else? How could this be?"

Perhaps you have seen an execution, in physical life, in news clips, acted out in movies. The person being executed may appear to be very calm and accepting of his, or her, fate.

It is possible that he has truly accepted, let go of ego, and is in the pure experiencing.

But probably he has simply dissociated from the magnitude, the meaning, of the event of the ending of his life in this violent way. In life, everyday, ego employs this strategy to conceal feelings from himself and others. In a sense, every day is a mini execution. As we have seen in a previous chapter, this is not acceptance. This is hardening yourself. Acceptance is softening and dissolving.

Before you were abused, you had already developed the habit of hardening yourself. In other words, you were not feeling your own pain, nor were you capable of feeling the pain of others. A hardened part always attracts the hardened part of another person. This hardened part is the ego. The part that thinks it needs to be hard, and is hard, wants to fight, thinking it can in this way solve a problem. That is what it has always done. Such a person has never discovered that this just attracts bigger enemies. Such a person has never discovered the power of softening, and fully feeling all pain, both his and that of others.

\* \* \*

### **Experiment X.5**

The criterion for deciding if you are ready for this experiment is if you can accept that you are no better than anybody else. If you pass this test, repeat the preparation procedure used in the previous three experiments. Remember to re-read these instructions several times so that you won't have to consult them during the experiment. This study is about distinguishing the difference between numbness and acceptance of death of the body. At first, you may not see any relevance of this to the issue of your 'abuse' -- this will become clear later.

Find your comfortable position. Begin by watching your breathing for a few minutes, then your muscle tension, then the mood which is descending. We expect that soon images of the memories will begin to appear. Note if there is a tendency in your body to react to these images by bracing, tensing, perhaps even closing your stronger hand into a fist. Perhaps your face is hard, preparing to be hit, or your hips are hard, ready

to resist. Relax again, especially your hands and face. Note if the tendency is instead to run, evidenced by tension in your legs and a strong urge to jump up. Just note these things, and relax again into your safe place. The threat is in your mind. But now, let the mind open to this threat. See and feel whatever you see and feel. Note if there is a tendency to shut down, to numb yourself, to not see, to not feel, even though your own mind is insisting.

Allow a little more of the pain to be felt than you have previously allowed. Just a little more. Stop the experiment if you reach the point where the ego screams “No, I refuse to accept this!”

Sit up and look around, and note the contrast between the two worlds. Write whatever is in your mind in your notebook. If emotions are strong, let them flow. But remain aware that fighting will not solve them. They are there so that you can learn acceptance, which is descending from your ego and taking your place among humble men and women. Slowly move into your daily routine.

\* \*

Decide for yourself how many days to allow before going on to the final experiment. Maybe the urge to write will be strong. If so, write. Express yourself.

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### **Experiment X.6**

Here, we do not approach the memories in the same way that you might in therapy. We are not much interested in the details of the events themselves. These are, now, fictions, creations of the imagination, made up of the original perceptions, then afterwards the memory of these, dreams and daydreams about these memories, and things that you have read or heard about similar situations. The conviction, even if strong, that a particular memory is accurate is often dead wrong. It is not the events but the *experience that you are having right now as you recall those events* that we are interested in. We are going to examine what your ego is doing with your memories of the events, and of the other person who was involved. We are not going to attempt to change or manipulate this. But, just as in the previous two experiments, we are going to concentrate on passive observation, on looking directly at every part of this memory, and on fully experiencing whatever comes up.

Begin in the same way as before. Arrange everything, find your comfortable position, watch your breathing for a few minutes, then your muscle tension, then your mood. Remind yourself that your habit is to say “No” and go numb. Today you are saying “Yes” and accepting whatever comes.

Now, begin to recall the events leading up to the situation in which you were abused, and continue to relax and just watch it unfold before you. Feel the memory coming, allow it to come, dwell on it, watch your mind dramatize it, feel whatsoever you feel, and then watch it go as it changes into something else. So you have to be prepared to stick it out, to endure it, no matter how long it takes.

No one wants to recall an ugly, demeaning experience from the past. That is, it is hard on the ego. Ego wants to pretend that its life is good now, with decency and beauty, and on the right track, getting somewhere in a positive sense. This memory seems to threaten ego’s entire project. And, to ego, this memory leaves nothing of value to replace what is threatened. So ego wants to fight it. Ego cannot accept it. Just like any other cornered animal, when this experience of being cornered and trapped and having the body violated by a more powerful person is recalled, the human animal

attacks. But its attack is not rational. It will attack whatever or whomever is there, even an innocent person. He or she may ´abuse´ a spouse, a friend, a child, himself, his therapist. It is irrational. An animal has been uncaged.

The keeping of this animal in a cage is what has made it so vicious. Precisely because the memory is painful to ego and threatens its reality, the person has not faced it. But, before opening the cage and cornering your ego with your own memory, we must show you a way to let ego recede a little, and let your deeper consciousness come into play. The two experiments above are crucial parts of this opening up. Your life itself, since the incidents, has been teaching you what works and what does not work. Time and maturity always give you more ability to distinguish what is real and important from what is false and unimportant. And, this entire *Course*, if you have sincerely carried through with it, has brought you to a point where your ego is smaller than it was when your body was violated. If you are even reading this you probably have the wisdom to realize the necessity of backing off as an ego and beginning to live by something more real.

So before you begin, assess yourself. Is your ego small enough so that your spirit can pass through whatever the memory aggravates? How have you handled similar situations lately – that is, situations that might have caused your emotions to explode? We do not want you to have to avoid the worst part! However, be prepared to abort the experiment if you realize in mid-stream that it is too much. Remember, there is no hurry in this *Course*. *Take as many years as you need*. You might get hung up right here. That is not a problem. Just plan to do it later. Don´t give up.

After the memories stop coming, you may feel drained. So remain still. Sensitively tune into your state of mind. What is its “Quality?” If you like it, linger in it. Enjoy it. This moment may be an important moment in your life.

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Now we open up the application of Real Psychology to the perpetrator of 'abuse.'

The soul who is ready to re-connect an anger which is hidden in himself with his present moment of experience attracts a specific situation into his life, and at just the perfect time. In its bizarre, self-serving thought system, ego calls this situation a 'temptation.' It is true, the one who perpetrates 'abuse,' the one who acts, is in reality *re-acting*. But the 'temptation' is not really the other person, it is from within himself. He or she is *reenacting*. Ego is caught off guard. It is momentarily vulnerable to this memory of being victimized. His ego defenses have long been working hard to block awareness of all that underlies his urge to reenact, and now are tired. Even though ego does not want to admit the full extent of his desperation, his neediness, for erotic and/or violent physical contact, the urge breaks through into a compulsive action.

He is helpless before this neediness. He has not been able to consciously admit the extent of this neediness, to explore it, to fully feel it -- perhaps for decades. To do this would take him back to a time, perhaps in his early life, when he experienced the Holy Terror of loss of True Self while someone else violated him. To solve this, to disarm his urge, he would have to deal with the realization that the world is not his home, and that the person he has become is not really who he is. That is, he would have to face what almost no one can face -- that he is not a person at all. He would have to face that any ugliness he sees in the world is merely a reflection of his own ugliness. He is disconnected from the beauty of Pure Being.

There are many perpetrators of 'abuse' who are not even honest enough to perpetrate. They are more careful, than is the one who acts out, to keep their ego defenses honed. They maintain a completely clean exterior, good conduct, so that no one detects anything amiss. A tremendous amount of energy is invested in defenses, which usually take the form of displacement -- compulsive acting out and dissipation of energy in socially approved activities, such as marriage and child rearing. Sometimes it takes the form of sublimation into intense, frantic creative activity -- artwork, painting, writing, music, dance, theatre. Such perpetrators of abuse -- those who never abuse others as such in physical form -- nevertheless do abuse others, through these socially approved channels. A Picasso, a Van Gogh, a Mozart, a Frank Sinatra, a Bob Dylan -- all representative of this group of covert perpetrators of abuse who release the energy in an ego-friendly, socially acceptable, form. Since their urges are expressed in such an indirect, disguised way, they are very difficult to ever resolve. Their egos have found a way so that the person never can recognize the connection to the Holy Terror within.

The one who allows his ego defenses to lapse, and commits an act of stark abuse is more honest. The ugliness in himself he allows to come out in a frankly ugly act. He can't pretend anymore. However, when what he has been hiding from himself expresses itself in an act of sexual or violent abuse of another, his ego can still muster a defense from what the act is reflecting to him about himself, by claiming responsibility for it. His ego *wants* him to say "I did it" -- at least to himself. This makes him feel that he is the one in control, and not his deeper psyche. Ego can believe that it is still stronger than the self within, that even in this obvious act, he is not crushable. The act is interpreted by ego as the evidence, visible to himself and to his victim, which 'proves' his power.

It is essential to ego that this particular victim feel his power. This is not anything personal, and not even something directed at the group of people to which the victim belongs. Perhaps the victim is a young woman. Ego is not interested in power over women per se, or in power over children per se. Ego is interested in power over his own psyche, because if he allows the feminine part of himself, or the childlike innocent part to get even one foot in the door, ego has a terror that who he has made himself out to be will be destroyed. It is all about blocking the remembrance of the overwhelming of the True Self that occurred in very early childhood. If the psyche completes itself, if the feminine and the masculine halves start to merge and to return to the sexless True Self, ego is dead. So a typical male ego will never allow the female part of himself to be free and equal, and a

typical female ego will never allow the male part of herself to be free and equal. Never. And, in physical form, a male ego will never allow a female ego in his life to be considered an equal, nor will a female ego ever allow a male ego in her life to be considered an equal. *Never! The world is not big enough!* Only when ego has once and for all forsaken its project can any such condition be permitted. All egos pretend to permit it, but it is just pretense, probably to get sex, or money, or security, or to maintain a façade socially.

If, instead of claiming responsibility, ego 'blames' the victim, this signifies that he can admit, albeit in a highly disguised way, that he has no power. *This* is what the therapist should capitalize on and explore – guide him to becoming fully conscious of his helplessness, his weakness. The therapist would do well to *encourage* him to blame the victim. This furthers his disidentification with his ego. It is the key to overcoming his ego defenses, and transforms his act into an honest search for the True Self. But instead, most therapists become judge, jury, and executioner, pushing the person to admit "responsibility." This is the worst possible course! It plays right into his client's ego's agenda! The immense value of resolving his act of abuse, the opening into himself which it offers, is thrown away. And branding him or her, publicly humiliating him or her, punishing him or her, similarly freezes the whole thing at a superficial level, keeping the focus on the physical act itself and his ego and the 'damaged' ego of the person he 'abused'. And there is a third ego which emerges triumphant from this affair: that of the therapist. And let's not overlook the ripple effect: police investigator egos, empathetic social worker egos, prosecutor egos, defense attorney egos – kind public defenders especially – and newspaper reporter egos, probation officer egos, the vengeful self-righteous egos of the victim's family and friends, etc. etc.

Somewhere in all this, though, there is always *at least one person* who is getting the point. Someone is looking within, deeper than ever before, and finding the perpetrator in himself, and possibly all the way back to when his ego first reared up and refused to dissolve back into the Nothingness in which the True Self lives. Someone, at least a little bit, is facing the reality that the world and all that happens in it is meaningless. This is certain. Truth wastes no opportunity. The one who has ears to hear, hears, and to one who hath shall be given.

But there is nothing that anyone can do to either lure or intimidate the perpetrator, or the victim, into hearing and seeing and feeling. It is up to them to orient their hearing, clarify their seeing, open their hearts. The one in a position to 'help' the perpetrator must focus instead upon himself. It would be very fruitful for him or her to soul-search, and to feel his own pain, that he is somehow hiding from all the same truths that the two people in this incident are hiding from. The real psychologist would see the situation as *his or her own experiment in introspection*. He would want to do a thorough self-study. The energy, the emotions, are there right now to drive his search within deeper than ever before, into the unknown, into the more sensitive parts of his or her own psyche. This is the place where he identifies with the perpetrator, suffers along with him, and thereby begins to heal himself. If you are a therapist, don't miss this golden opportunity.

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### **Experiment X.7**

This one will take three sessions on three separate days. First, read the newspapers, watch news reports on TV, and/or ask people about a case of violent or sexual abuse which is currently in the media. It will be active in the minds of many people. A great deal of energy and emotion is now stirred up. From the point of view of what has been presented here, study what the media are saying. Summarize in your notebook the relevant "facts" of the case. In particular, write a full description of the act itself:

exactly what led up to it, and exactly what the perpetrator did to the victim. On a new page in your notebook, make two columns. In the left column, write a biography of the perpetrator; in the right column, write one of the victim. *Wait one day.*

Find a quiet place where you can be alone. Turn off your cellphone. Then, re-read all that you have written. On a page facing the two biographies, describe those features of your own life that coincide with anything in either of them. Include in your self-analysis all the feelings that are aroused in you while you are writing. Note especially if you feel your ego flaring up and resisting something that feels true. Does it feel like a battle between two parts of your psyche? Does it feel like an uneasy truce? Or does it feel like a real reconciliation? Now, put your notebook aside and *wait one day.*

Again, find a quiet place where you can be alone. Turn off your cellphone. On this third day of the experiment, once again read over everything you have written. Let it all become alive in your consciousness. Then stop, close your eyes, relax your thoughts, and just *feel*. If the urge to write something comes, write. If not, just continue to relax and feel. Watch the feelings develop and evolve. Do this as long as you are so inclined.

This is the experiment. Do not continue reading in this *Course*, but spend the rest of this day just feeling, and letting your mind get lost in your experience.

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Since the perpetrator is carrying all that a victim carries, and also is carrying a habit of acting out, and also is carrying the karma of his or her acting out, there are three layers of ego, three walls, keeping True Self a prisoner. This person can get stuck at any of these places and build there a fortress to define and to defend an ego. To attempt to logically and rationally figure out how to reverse this and relieve the client of his burden, as psychologists do when they follow a theory, is no help. To focus on the end result – the physical acts – and to attempt to solve the problem by stopping the behavior, is no help. The only way is to look upon each individual's situation as a unique situation, and to amplify his or her sensitivity to whatever is moving within, in *this* moment. Each mind has it put together differently, so we have to take it apart differently, for each person.

First of all, is it a problem at all? In this moment? If the person, even though he may have perpetrated an act of 'abuse' at some time in the past, is not troubled *right now*, what can be done, right now? And the answer is, of course, nothing. Nothing is moving. And so will it do any good to aggravate him or her? Maybe some other person is aggravated right now, and wants this 'abuser' to be aggravated right now too. Well, then in *this* moment the one to do the experiments is not the perpetrator. The one who is projecting blame onto the perpetrator is ripe for some progress. The perpetrator is not. Perhaps, in five minutes, if everyone leaves the perpetrator in peace, something will begin to stir *from within him*. This is something he can do experiments about. The soul is ready for something.

Growth always begins in silence, in peace. It is never stimulated by torture. Torture will certainly call up stronger ego defenses. This is a set-back, never progress, never deepening. Back a human being into a corner and threaten him in an effort to get him to tell the truth, and he will never tell the truth – unless he knows that you already know it. And then his confession is a deeper kind of lie – he is not being himself, he is being someone you have forced him to be. He is not facing himself, he is not feeling any of the genuine shifts in his being which he would feel if he freely volunteered this 'confession.'

Therefore, you, the one who is studying yourself, if you call yourself a 'perpetrator,' or an 'abusive personality,' back off a bit and look at who you are *in this moment only*. No other moment is real. No other moment contains your total, living being. We cannot do any real psychology on a person who *was*, or a person who *will be*. Only on a person who *is*.

Perhaps, when you did experiment X.7, you realized that your autobiography was close to one of the people in the news report. How do you feel right now? Is there something you want to explore? What would you like to explore?

Take a little time to read over your notes, beginning with Experiment X.2.

Now, would it be worth your while to repeat any, or all, of these experiments? Would it be a good time to write? Would it be worthwhile to read something, maybe earlier in the *Course*? Would it be worthwhile to talk to someone about any of this? Would it be worthwhile to take a retreat, a few days off work, to a quiet place where you can be alone? Would it be worthwhile to find another victim?

This is the decision you are up against right now. So, we suggest that you take some time to look at yourself and discern what is best for you.

If none of these seems to be drawing you, and you feel that what is best for you is to go on now to the next experiments, there is an important one coming up. It is an experiment on facing the fear of death. But we want you to be sure you are ready for it, and that you will seriously consider the ideas that we present here. You may have to stop after each sentence to figure out what it is saying to you. So be prepared to read and reflect. Speedreading is your enemy here. You will end up empty-handed.

Recall that there are many disguises for 'abuse.' There are many disguises for 'violence.' There are many disguises for a 'sexual act.' The person who manifests these in their raw, undisguised form is already being half-truthful. The person who finds clever and devious ways to get release and end up smelling like a rose is committing a double lie.

Everyone is an 'abuser,' a 'perpetrator,' a 'pervert,' 'violent.' Everyone with an ego, that is. Whenever ego is functioning, it is busy figuring out how to release the energy of one or more of these four things without getting caught.

Ego is always under tremendous pressure. True Self never experiences any pressure. But ego does, because at any moment, it could be found out. The tiniest thing can completely expose and destroy it. The ego of the businessman in the vignette: what would have happened to his ego and his entire life if he had walked into the bedroom? Are these the kinds of circumstances when a person can kill his 'beloved'?

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### **Experiment X.8**

Your ego is always under tremendous pressure to *do* something. Your ego is every moment afraid of what might happen if you are *not doing* something. In this experiment we explore your fears. Record in your notebook your answers to the questions below. Give detailed, thoughtful answers. Probe deeply into yourself.

1. Do you feel any pressure right now? Do you feel pressed to *do* something? Or are you perfectly content to do nothing? Take a few minutes to bring any pressures to consciousness. Write about this process of bringing pressures to consciousness.
2. Now, sit quietly and *do nothing*. Absolutely nothing. Don't even relax! Just do nothing. Don't *stop* anything, like your fidgeting – that would be a *doing!* Just do nothing as long as you can. Eventually, you will do something. What we are interested in here is what makes you do it, when your intention was to *not* do. What is pressing you? Can you pinpoint the feeling of the pressure? Describe this in your notebook.
3. Also in your notebook, describe what you think you are afraid will happen if you don't do something. What are the specific fears? Now probe deeper into your fears. Can you feel the deeper fear, the bigger fear, the one that underlies all the obvious ones?
4. Is death the worst thing that could happen? What would be worse than death? Be paranoid, for about ten minutes. Think of the twenty worst things that could happen to you in your personal life if you right now stopped doing. Make a list in your notebook – for your eyes only.

5. A person acts out an urge in the instant in which he is beginning to be aware of one of these deepest fears. He fears the awareness of this fear, and his acts relieve the pressure so that the thought does not come. If he is a compulsive thief, for instance, it is not just that he gets a kick out of stealing. He is a person who lives constantly on the brink of hell. The pressure from a memory or state of mind that is starting to break through into consciousness makes him temporarily insane. A cornered animal. Cornered by his own mind. If you have always thought of violent people as simply 'lacking in impulse control,' and that all they need is a little will power, reflect on this. Is it possible that they feel tremendous pressure, such that one of the twenty worst things that could happen to them *is happening*, and only their act will stop it? Write your answer in your notebook, with an explanation.

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As a therapy or self-therapy strategy, controlling your impulses is impossible. You may gain a delay, but this concentrates the energy even more. The more you resolve to not do something, the more irresistible becomes the urge. You just increase the pressure until it explodes something -- or someone. To cure the impulse, we must deal directly with the *cause of the pressure itself*. As soon as you feel an urge arising within you, take this as a serious warning of an imminent disaster. Be alone and begin to deal with the urge. Do not deny it. If you think that your ability to suppress it is quite a talent, and you go on acting as if the urge is conquered, your cockiness will destroy you. Wisdom is also truth. One must admit what is moving inside of him. We have shown you many ways to be honest here, but perhaps even after conscientiously completing this *Course*, you still have impulses which you fear. But wherever you turn for help, remember that rising to the surface will not root out anything. The problem is always that one is not deep enough. The truth will set you free; pretending will enslave you in fear of your own mind.

When ego is cornered and has nowhere to run, it fights. If fighting doesn't open up an escape route, it will kill. There is nothing moral or immoral about this, and there is no way that a cornered ego can choose not to do this. It is in the nature of the ego. *All* egos.

Perhaps you have never killed. Perhaps you have never become violent. Does this mean that you are a superior human? A more moral human? A more compassionate human? Does it mean that you have more 'self-control' than others? Or does it mean that you have a more clever ego?

A clever ego is, first of all, a person who has been sheltered and groomed by other clever egos. He has had opportunities in the past to observe and learn from other clever egos, to sit unmolested and reason out how to predict pressures, and how to not be there when they come. And, a clever ego, if it gets caught under a pressure, has been programmed in how to release the energy in ways that do not threaten it. A clever ego will never let itself get cornered -- at least not where anyone can see.

This is why so few people ever find the True Self. They are clever egos. They keep their lives predictable enough, mechanical enough, that they can avoid situations in which they break down. No matter what happens, they already have a way to leave somebody else holding the bag. Somebody always has to be left holding the bag when the truth is exposed.

Therefore, you *have* killed. You *have* raped. You *have* used violence to avoid threats to your ego, and allowed others to suffer, and to a degree that you probably will never know. But you have cleverly escaped detection. The more cleverly you have lived, the more you have done the equivalent of raping and killing. And just because your release, your satisfaction, did not require the raw undisguised physical acts, and you did not get caught, does not mean that you have escaped the karma, the at-one-ment. You have not.

And you know this. Clever ego lives in terror of death and in terror of insanity because it is carrying a huge load of karma. The person is not free to explore foreign, deeper inner territory, as a person with a clear conscience can. The clever ego lives in a carefully sealed box. He calls this 'living.' He is well-respected. But he is twice a fugitive: first, from the truth, and second, from the 'hounds of heaven.' He must remain armed at all times, prepared to kill any hound who faintly resembles anything that might be sent from heaven -- anything that might show him or someone else who he really is, and what he has really done.

People in all walks of life rape and murder in the course of doing their job. Many a psychologist and psychiatrist has affixed his signature to a psychological evaluation which caused another person great suffering; and he has affixed his signature for money. Often, the evidence used to complete an evaluation -- personality inventories, interviews, neuropsychological assessments, intelligence tests, records of achievement, information on past behavior -- are inconclusive. But the psychologist or psychiatrist rarely admits this. He is paid to draw a

conclusion. Drawing a strong conclusion is how he maintains his professional reputation. So he or she uses his own personal impression of the one he or she is evaluating, and interprets all the other sources in that light. People in many other professions do the same thing. Once, while drinking wine with a district court judge of many years experience, attending a party with him, his wife and her friend, we were discussing this problem. His wife's friend asked him: "Bob, what do you do if there is just not enough evidence? How do you decide?" It didn't seem to bother Bob at all to reply: "If I like him he's innocent. If I don't like him, he's guilty." Everybody laughed. But then his wife said: "Bob, you shouldn't tell people that." It was not a joke. Sometimes a person is beaten or raped or murdered in a jail. Sometimes a dangerous person is released and goes on to beat or rape or murder someone, either overtly or covertly. There are a thousand ways that this judge's judgment can reverberate into horrors in the lives of various people. And he has never laid a hand on anyone.

The point we are making here is that everything ends up exactly the way it is supposed to. Justice is ultimately served. Perhaps the psychologist or the judge committed a violent act in passing judgment when he had to go beyond the evidence to do it. He was a clever ego making sure that the pressure did not end up on him. The pressure, the threat to his ego as a professional, would have been great had he admitted that he did not know, and refused to pass judgment. And so, to avoid that pressure, he ignores this truth. He might as well be throwing the switch for the electric chair, for all he knows, or contributing to the violent rape of a retarded girl. His signature is a powerful weapon – a scattergun.

Ironically, though, his signature, his act which he thinks will keep him safe, hurts him worse than it hurts anyone else. It drives him farther from the True Self, and it shrinks even more the little box his ego hides in. His fear of death and fear of insanity increase as his load of karma increases. In spite of his appearance of success, he lives a bitter life. Certain things in his life do not go well; the path gets more treacherous. And all just for money. Meanwhile, the one who was unfairly judged gets an opportunity to accept, to atone and free himself from past karma. In this way the perfect justice of everything manifests.

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### Experiment X.9

This is an experiment on impulse control which directly reveals the root cause of such things as thoughtlessly signing your name, or premeditating an act of violence. Both are the same. This experiment will require you to do what is called "withdrawing the projection." This means taking something which you have attributed to something outside yourself and 're-owning' it -- admitting that in reality it is in you and it comes from you. We have seen how a simple act such as a signature can go beyond the truth, can trespass and appear perfectly correct, can violate with no evidence of violence, can kill with no corpse. Today you will admit some of these projections, and withdraw them.

This is another paper-and-pencil experiment. Locate in your notebook your list of the twenty worst things that could happen to you personally. Choose one at random and write it at the top of a separate page. Now, elaborate this scenario into a short story.

Develop characters, with yourself as one of them. Use your own name for this character. Set the story in present time, using places and things that are part of your life right now. The story must contain the event that you fear, and the aftermath.

Keep a separate piece of paper alongside the page you are writing. Record your feelings about what you are writing. Try to build these feelings into the character in your story who is you. So the story will include both a narration of events and the private thoughts of the character who is you.

Your ego will invent twenty excuses for not doing this experiment. This is not an easy one. But it is a critical one; it is probing the boundaries of your integrity. So take as much time as you need. Make sure that your finished story remains a part of your notebook.

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Perhaps the title of this chapter about insanity seems insane to you. “The Sanity of Lifeless Living”: what is this? We all try to live the best life that we can, and we teach our children how to make the most of their time here. Many people, with Zorba the Greek, think in terms of ‘living life to the fullest.’ Who but an insane person, or a retarded person, would not? Our time in a body is very short; who would shrink from life, waste life, take no interest in living, but a psychotically depressed and paranoid person?

The confusion arises because we have the idea that what we *do* matters. Most of us believe that you get out of life as much as you put in. We like to feel that we have some control over our destiny; that we must go out and ‘make a life for ourselves’ or we will end up nowhere, our life a complete failure. In the same vein, most people believe that if you don’t combat depression, failure, and poverty they will swallow you up. So, living an active life seems necessary.

A very different philosophy is presented by Chuang Tzu in his poem entitled “Perfect Joy”:

“I will hold to the saying that ‘Perfect joy is to be without joy. Perfect praise is to be without praise.. If you ask ‘what ought to be done’ and ‘what ought not to be done’ on earth in order to produce happiness, I answer that these questions do not have an answer. There is no way of determining such things.

Yet at the same time, if I cease striving for happiness, the ‘right’ and the ‘wrong’ at once become apparent all by themselves.

Contentment and well-being at once become possible the moment you cease to act with them in view, and if you practice non-doing (*wu wei*), you will have both happiness and well-being.

Here is how I sum it up: Heaven does nothing; its non-doing is its serenity. Earth does nothing; its non-doing is its rest. From the union of these two non-doings all actions proceed, all things are made. How vast, how invisible, this coming-to-be! All things come from nowhere! How vast, how invisible – no way to explain it! All beings in their perfection are born of non-doing!

Hence it is said:

“Heaven and earth do nothing  
Yet there is nothing they do not do.”

Where is the man who can attain to this non-doing?”

From Merton, T. *The Way of Chuang Tzu*

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And now we come to the crossroads where *real* cause and effect meets individual responsibility. We present this carefully, to avoid misunderstandings as much as possible. We implore you to do your part and read it carefully.

If there is no world but my eyes, as is taught in *A Course in Miracles*, then it is my vision that makes the world I see what it is. This is the deeper process that is manifested as the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle. By beginning with science, one can recognize the reality of the mystical by meditating on this principle. And the reality of the mystical, the primacy of the mystical, is the primacy of human vision. Human vision is responsible for everything. But this is not the vision of mere use of the eyes. It is not the vision of understanding. It is not even the vision we have during glimpses of mystical insight. It is a vision which is worlds within worlds deeper. There is a steady Awareness in you which is deeper even than the one in you who can ask the question “Who am I?” The one who asks this question is the one who has not yet answered it. He is the one in you who makes

your world what it is. If he succeeds in answering the question, so that he need never ask it again, he realizes the Place which determines his capacity, endows him with Infinity. He can look back and see how he had been blinded with limitations or blocks to remembering that Infinity, his true nature. Blinded by his own refusal to use his real Vision.

So we must distinguish capacity from responsibility. The world I see, with its limitations, with its 'evils' and pain and struggle and brutality, is nothing but my eyes. It reflects exactly what my 'seeing' wants to see. All these qualities come from me. They are part of what I am, but I cannot face the truth that this is what I am. I do not want these qualities. So I project them and call this projection 'seeing.' Thus, my world is full of 'wrong' and 'bad' things. But the deeper part of me, the one in me who is asking the question "Who am I?", wants my world to be all these things because he wants to know the truth. Thus, one part of me, ego, holds the world responsible for these, and steadily focuses them upon the world and its people, to avoid feeling the responsibility for them. It is not merely that I bring these things to the world, as an aura, but my ego tries to make others feel all the things that I do not want to feel. And there is no world other than the one I make with my own eyes because of my fear of knowing who I really am. This very moment, I, an ego, am throwing out my refuse for others to clean up. This very moment, I am sheltering myself from pain and making other beings to suffer it.

And, simultaneously, the deeper part of me who wants to know the truth, is also participating in 'making the world.' However, this part has different eyes; it can see its own ego's projections. So it uses what it sees differently -- not for ego-support, but for ego-annihilation. It *feels* deeper than the ego part. It notices more than the ego part. And, it is more honest than the ego part in facing what ego is trying to do.

So which is the real "I"? Am I the one who does not yet *want* to know the answer to the question "Who am I?", or am I the one who is looking for it? Now we are cut to the quick. There is a big reason why we are avoiding this question of "Who am I?" For if I did know the answer, I would have to admit responsibility for all the suffering in the world. And not only that, but I would know the way to undo it, uncreate it, relieve it. And not only that, but I would know that the world will change only if I change. Who would want the responsibility of such knowledge, and such power? Then, is the one who makes the world, and has this knowledge and this power the True Self? No, it is not. It is subsidiary. The True Self is the One who knows the answer, has already undone everything, has forsaken all knowledge and all power, and now is living In Truth as Truth. True Self does not waste its power of vision on illusion; It does not look through two divided eyes of a body/illusion out into a 'world' separate from Itself, a place where beings come to suffer and want and die.

We have been using the term 'the ego' for the one who makes the world, the one 'responsible' for all of it. Ego has the power to inflict pain. It has the power to re-distribute its own misery among millions of other beings. What sort of thing must be the ego! Who would make a world where his brothers are kept apart from Truth, apart from the One Thing that can fulfill them? Who would have them believe that they are not this True Self, but instead a tiny person in a tiny dying body? Who would have them lured into traps daily, believing that the trap is a way to freedom, to salvation, when the truth is that it is only a deeper descent into delusion and death?

You, your ego, is the one responsible for all this. Perhaps you underestimate your ego. Perhaps you think that since it is just a false self, a mask, that it is powerless, that you can shed it at any time. But the deep part of the ego, its root, has power -- in the false world. And you can never shed your ego, disarm it, until you accept full responsibility for what it is doing, and you stop doing it. You have the *responsibility* for doing it, but you do not yet have the *capacity* to undo it. That capacity comes from a place deeper in you than the root of the ego. You do not have this capacity because you have, in a panic, cast it aside. Now, you cannot just change your mind and pick it up and dust it off, and save the world. No doubt, you have had glimmers of your responsibility, of your sick use of the capacity that you were given; no doubt you have felt intense flashes of insight with pangs of guilt as you look around you and see the suffering that you could have faced but instead displaced onto someone else.

But still, ego says: “No, it couldn’t be possible; I, responsible for *all this?* Ridiculous. *Insane!*” And then you ignore the glimmers, the insight, the intuition of your guilt. You ignore them. And you forget them..

And this is the source of your Holy Terror. This is why the mind works so hard to maintain the lie of your world. If the world is real I cannot have made it with my own eyes. I am absolved. If I am just another separate being, if there is no real connection, if every event has its own separate cause, every pain of a person its own origin in his ‘genes’ or his ‘environment’ or his ‘karma,’ how can I be held responsible for changing it all? Isn’t this the reasoning your brain uses to justify continuing the pretence, the game of survival? With this justification, I can go on as a separate self. I can justify anything I do. I can continue making a special place of comfort and safety for my ego and body, using the materials needed by a brother – or needed by two brothers, or ten. I can go on demanding that some other brother solve the problems of the world. I can hope and believe and pray that some other brother will descend and rescue all of us, will save all of us.

But, in truth, who can be the savior of a world that I made? Where is this Christ? Where is this Buddha? Can it not be only the one who is responsible, the one who admits responsibility, accepts responsibility? The one who no longer hides behind the mask of his humanness?

Perhaps, if this one re-accepts his One-ness, and refuses to compete, refuses to lie, refuses to do harm, refuses to take pleasure, refuses to hide his Beyondness, and just gets out of the way, the One with the capacity to reverse the world, to undo the world, save the world, will shine through his Pure Emptiness.

The world you see will continue exactly as it is until you change, until you disappear into the Pure Consciencing. Your failure to get out of the way is responsible for all illusions. Once you discover how to get out of the way, the world will change instantly. Stop acting and talking like a human, and everything will change. You cannot do it with an army, you cannot do it with money, you cannot do it with any sacred scripture, you cannot do it with will power. Using all these, you will look up afterwards and see the same world. You cannot save the world because it is not real, and there is nothing to save. So you cannot *do* anything, you do not have the responsibility to do anything. But you can stop pretending that a world is there and that you are there. So now you can see how misguided prophets are made. Their egos think they have the power and the responsibility to help or to teach. Be careful: *No ego can do this. No ego has this capacity.* It is the most serious of delusions to believe that you have the power of a Christ, of a savior – even of a teacher. You cannot solve the problem because you *are* the problem! By disappearing, you solve the problem. There is no other way.

Minimize yourself. Then others are freed.  
Minimize yourself. Then others wake from their nightmare.  
Minimize yourself. Then others dissolve into the Vastness.  
Minimize yourself. Then others are no longer afraid.  
Minimize yourself. Then you eliminate all obstructions.

Die before you die, die into the truth, and the lie dies, and the truth shall set you free.

### **Experiment X.10**

We suggest that you take the time to design and perform one original experiment on the highly sensitive material in this chapter before continuing. You are now in the thick of it. What is moving in you needs to be brought to consciousness, and you alone can sense what direction to follow. At least, stop long enough to decide whether it is wise to continue or not. Remember, slower is better.

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## CHAPTER XI. The Nature of Truth: The Worldless Reality

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“Knowing your own ignorance is strength.  
Ignoring your own knowingness is sickness.  
The sage is not sick because he is sick of sickness.  
Therefore he is not sick.”

Lao Tzu, *Tao Te Ching*

We can imagine experience, consciousness, with no objects, with no world. We have felt love, at times, and so we know that it is possible to be immersed, absorbed, at least for a short time, in such a strong experience that nothing else exists. Perhaps we have felt this for only a moment or two in our entire lives. But that is enough to show us that it is possible. There *is* an all-encompassing.

In worldless Reality, this experience has no beginning point and no ending point. These moments of transition do not occur. It is worthwhile to reflect, silently, on the meaning of this. How can we, who know that this all-encompassing experience is possible, ignore it? Some moments of a rare and precious kind of knowingness have been given to us. How can we fail to explore, to test, to open ourselves to more of this? How can we not see our ignorance in living and moving and speaking even one moment with something less?

The sage is not sick, because he is sick of living in a false world. He is forlorn when surrounded by deceptions and pretense; he is super-sensitive to the sickness of these. He will not settle for a false world, he will not work with it, he will not try to make something real out of something that is fundamentally false. He knows that each moment is too valuable, and too full of the nectar of the experience of the Worldless Reality, to waste. A single moment in which mind is clear and empty and pure is enough to permanently transform a human being. Everything of value condenses into this one moment, and the single glimpse is enough. Impure, still clinging to a shred of the false, renders the glimpse impossible. Purified, living in truth, what appeared as insurmountable problems are no longer obstacles obscuring Infinity.

True intelligence is the ability to enjoy such glimpses over and over, and to find the proper state in which to WAIT, until they all blend into one -- the Full Emptiness, the Silence, the Peace of God. There is no place in this unity for fear or loss or threat to enter. True wisdom is the acceptance that you have no power over what is real, and the vision that you need no power over either the real or the false. It is trusting in positive passivity, trusting in truth, trusting in Life. True sanity is dropping personality, dropping ego antics, letting pass opportunities for pleasure and comfort and security, and leaving people alone. Perhaps a useful definition of a sage is: “One with the foresight to not put himself in situations in which he might deceive, and the courage to not deceive if caught off guard, regardless of the consequences.” We all have the potential for this, but we have to learn to let it happen.

You have your knowingness, your pure experiencing, your true nature. That is *all* that you have. You have nothing else. You *can* have nothing else. There *is* nothing else. This *is* the True Self. Everything else is false. Any moment spent with this consciousness contaminated by anything else is a lie. Tiny moments of tiny lies, and they start to accumulate again, and crystallize into a world, and the pure experiencing is lost. Any world -- ideas, dreams, objects, emotions -- is false. Forget that your body, your person, is just something you are dreaming, forget your knowingness of your nothingness, turn to an I in a world, and you become a negative force. You are a contaminant, and you desecrate all you see. To live in a world is sickness. TO NOT BE SICK

OF THE WORLD YOU SEE IS A SICKNESS! It is a psychosis, a split from Reality. Then, only the ugliness of the Holy Terror can save you. You reap exactly what you sow. Your fear of The Reaper is your fear of your own ego.

These strong statements seem to point to death, to suicide, for how can we *not* live in a world? The question arises only in the mind of a person who is clinging to his or her lies. The problem exists only for the person who does not yet know his ignorance, is ignoring his knowingness all day long, and is not yet sick of his sickness. That is, this person has a formidable challenge in the road ahead, a barrier that he now refuses to face. But which he will have to face. If he tries to avoid it, death will not come soon enough.

The situation of the sage cannot be explained to the one who is not yet sick of sickness, the one who is still perplexed by the question posed above. He does not have his vision fixed on truth, or he would see as the sage sees. Instead, he has his vision fixed on trying to make his lie work. This trying is what he calls “my life” and “the world.” Since he has his vision fixed on it, he cannot escape it. But he is the one who chooses to direct his vision! At any moment at all, he can drop the lie and disappear into Silence... There is no moment when this is not possible. Every moment, there is some small lie to tell – or not tell. There is some part of a mask that can be put on – or taken off. Each time that one chooses to not knowingly deceive, in even the smallest matter, he moves one giant step closer to the Silence, to the vision of the sage. He is more able to admit the seriousness of his sickness. He is more able to see that there is nothing to gain by any lie. And, no justification.

Truth works in mysterious ways. It does not follow the rules of the logic of the mechanical world, as do lies. Truth is part of a Reality which creates itself as it goes. There is a saying that “Whatever a Buddha says becomes true.” If a Buddha says that a particular event occurred in history, even if all the history books say otherwise, the moment that the Buddha makes his pronouncement changes everything. The event did occur, just as the Buddha stated. That is how fluid, how responsive to perfect truth, the Worldless Reality that makes the worlds of all people is. Space and time do not limit It.

The sage understands this, having lived in perfect truth, having taught it silently, by his example. The one who still clings to a world of objects, who believes and promotes the lie that objective events are real, considers this to be impossible, and considers anyone who asserts such a thing insane.

Jesus said: “The truth shall set you free.” These few words contain everything that anyone needs to know about how to live. Truth works in mysterious ways, bypassing all limitations. In many situations, the logical mind cannot see any way that the truth can possibly lead to anything he thinks he wants. But in the Real World, everything is more fluid than logic. In some situations, *anyone* would lie – except the one who has seen that the world and his own body are illusory. Such a person will never lie; not for any moral reason, but first of all because the lie obscures his Vision of the Real, secondly because an untruth sullies and bogs down the energy of the moment for everyone, and third because he wouldn't want the burden of a future that is born through a lie.

The lie divides. It pertains to a small realm and excludes, hides, everything else. It *must* exclude the truth, or it will not work. It follows the way that rational people think, because it must be credible, it must say something believable. It must seem to get you what you think you want, and it must seem to offer to someone else what they think they want. It must stop certain wheels from turning in one direction and start others turning in some other direction. Thus it is limited. However, this thing that you get in the short run turns out to be a trap in the long run. Life, time, expose lies and uncover truth. The lie ends up in a dead end. And then you have to scramble to try to undo it and recover some respect and self-respect, some integrity, some connection to True Self. If this seems like an impossible task, you are even worse off. You have no choice but to scramble to try to cover up your lie. And that *is* an impossible task.

The lie comes from sickness and it promotes sickness. It can lead nowhere but death.

There is no psychopath who is so far gone that he is not capable of sensing when he is lying, deceiving, perpetrating some trick upon others or upon himself. If he claims that he cannot, he is grinning interiorly when any fool believes him. How does one know if he is telling a lie? If any moment does not feel like being in love, being swaddled in the purity of the all-encompassing, you are lying. It is that simple. Because this is the only Reality. You do not need to analyze the circumstances, carefully choose your words, or ferret out the facts in the articles in your local newspaper to separate the true and the false. This moment, are you in ananda, karuna-love? If love is your experience, in this moment, this is a moment of truth. All other moments are lies feeding your sickness. If you are in love and not in fear of another, your listening to the Silences between their words has a power to attract truth. If you lapse, if the fear overpowers the love, you will attract a deception.

According to those who live in lies and for lies, the society, the government, the nation need to lie in order to survive. How can a one who is responsible for the lives of millions of people be truthful with the enemy? How can a father or a mother protect the children without occasional lies? Each lie necessitates a bigger lie. Perhaps there is a way to start afresh and try the truth? Perhaps there is a way. The truth works in mysterious ways. The truth shall set you free.

But not if you don't try it.

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### **Experiment XI.1**

This one is in two parts. For the first part, for your eyes only, make a list of the ten worst lies you have told in your life. Here, the word "lie" is used in the most general sense, to include any mask you regularly put on, any symbol you put before people which in some way gives a false impression, and any participation in someone else's false life.

Give yourself at least three days to review this list, and do the best you can of being honest about your list – that it is in fact your ten worst.

When you are satisfied with the list, for each of the ten items write the worst harm that your lie did to someone else. If you are not sure, make an educated guess. This completes part one of the experiment.

The second part is to select one lie that you currently tell and stop telling it. We have done a similar experiment earlier. This is slightly different, because we are not going to ask you to make a commitment to never tell it again. Instead, your commitment is to stop and tell yourself "Now I have to decide whether to lie or not" whenever the

situation of that lie arises. In other words, just be honest with yourself that you are making the decision. You may decide to tell the truth, or you may decide to lie. Of course, we would prefer if you would decide to be truthful.

After you say or do whatever you say or do, take up your notebook and answer this question: "Why did (or didn't) I be totally truthful?"

Now wait, it may take years, and look for some consequence of this incident. Record this in your notebook. Add any comments or insights you may have.

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What is the best way to 'tell the truth'? If the world does not exist, then to say *anything* about it is also false, in a sense. But in another sense, words also can be used to transmit silence. That is, words can draw the attention of a listener to the silences *between* the words, to the Silent Spirit that utters these words and these silences. To tell the truth is to faithfully transmit truth. If one is not in the awareness of the True Self, whether he speaks or is silent, he is not telling the truth no matter how honest a person he thinks he is. If he is in the awareness of the True Self, it makes no difference whether he is uttering words, or chanting, or laughing, or crying, or remaining noiseless; he is transmitting Silence, speaking the truth. And one who deliberately suppresses words because he read that "He who speaks does not know" is just a hypocrite. The ego is behind it!

But truth telling is mostly in the manner in which one goes about living. The one who is naturally humble and gentle and moves with a natural rhythm is the only one who is faithfully representing the true status of a human being in the universe. As beings, we are specks of dust. The one who asserts anything more than this is lying. The one who covets more than other humans is living a great lie every moment. When you look around in your world and your society, do you see *anyone*, do you see one single person, who is not a liar, a pretender? Your world and your society are just reflections of you.

Now you can see the problem, and its solution.

### **Experiment XI.2**

A man must learn to honestly sense the many significances of each move he makes, of each word-symbol that he records or utters. Whenever he is effortfully, willfully *doing*, he is making a mistake. That is, he is defeating his purpose; the action is a kind of suicide. But when he is not behind the doing, when he is not behind the speaking, and action or words come through him anyway, they reveal the thing that he deeply needs and hasten his approach to it.

Have you heard of information processing theory and signal detection theory? The vast quantity of "information" contained in a single letter of the alphabet? Utter one single letter, such as "s", and already you have eliminated all the possibilities for words which do not contain an "s". Just think of it. The power of this one squiggle written on a page -- more powerful than any machete. When you add a second letter after it, such as an "e", you tremendously limit the possibilities for your meaning. Out of the thousands of words containing an "s" in a language, only perhaps a hundred contain the sequence "se". Now add one more letter, say "w". Only a handful contain this sequence. And this is only three letters! Imagine the limitation you create, all the aspects of experience that you eliminate, by uttering a single sentence! How many sentences would you need to utter to reconstruct the entire reality?

To you, the speaker, the single meaning that you see in your sentence is *your* meaning, *your* truth. You believe that in uttering it you have eliminated all other meanings. But every other person has his own very precise and limited meaning for what he hears you utter. Each of you can see only one meaning, and has the illusion that the other can see only this same meaning.

And now, look at the power of the emptinesses, the spaces, the blanks, the silences before and after the letters. If we leave a silence before and after the string of characters "sew" we feel very definitely that there can be no mistake -- the two silences plus three letters cannot possibly say anything other than what we think it says. Without the spaces, "sew" could be part of another word with another meaning, or even a string of letters without meaning. But a person who believes that there is truth in words has no doubt that when he pronounces "sew" he generates one single and unambiguous meaning in the mind of his listener. Both the speaker's and the listener's brains operate according to the principles of information processing and signal detection theories, which of course are based on experiments on human speakers and listeners. We rest, confident that something clear has been communicated, and if the listener assents to what the speaker says, we tend to claim that 'truth' has been shared. But all that has happened is that the speaker's 'truth' is solidified in his mind, and the listener's 'truth' has been solidified in his mind. Both walk away more confident in their respective objective "realities" than ever, due to this "confirmation." Much confidence has been gained through this "communication" in word-symbols, but true communication has not occurred.

But what happens if there are only silences, with no limiting word-symbols in between? The space in which the two persons came together remains open-ended. One person is not pinning the other down -- not flooding the other's consciousness with limitation. There is no clutter, clatter, or stutter. There is wordless, undivided freedom. Each additional moment of silence adds one more degree of freedom! Perhaps, in this there is space for real Truth, in this there is room for real Beauty to grow, in this there is a deepening of Wisdom. With no illusions and images generated by specific words, each of which chops off a piece of the whole, Reality remains.

This experiment is offered to clarify your perspective on this, to increase your consciousness of every single step you take, of every single word-symbol you utter or record. *Do you really improve the quality of the time you spend with another by*

*speaking or acting?* What is the quality of your consciousness during extended silence? What is gained by pinning another person down with your words? How do you feel about yourself after being still and silent, and how do you feel about yourself after speaking and acting? Do you realize what you are doing? Do you sense all the possibilities you are eliminating? Do you really want to arouse in someone else the spirit in which you have spoken or acted in their presence? Because this is what you are making your world into.

So first, record in your notebook your answers and considerations relevant to the above questions.

Second, recall when you were an adolescent and struggled to "do the right thing" or to "say the right thing" to someone. Perhaps you really preferred to remain silent (?) So what prompted you to speak or act? Recall a specific situation. Describe the scenario in some detail, to help you to reconstruct it accurately. Now, focus specifically on your feelings -- the 'quality' of your consciousness -- in this awkward situation. What was the effect of your silence and stillness? Then what was the effect of your speaking or moving? Do a little soul-searching, to see something about this situation that you have not heretofore seen.

And now, in your notebook, discuss what felt closer to truth: silence and stillness or speaking and moving? Which was "The Real Me?"

Now, discuss how this may have changed you, may have shaped a direction for your "personality," may have influenced another person. Do you still to this day conform to this strategy of self-presentation, or has it changed? Which is "The Real Me?"

Finally, in your next social situation, try relaxing into silence and stillness. Linger in this, and just observe what happens within yourself. The thoughts, the feelings, the impulses. Look into the eyes of the other person, and allow the other person to look into your eyes. More than you have ever done before. Without speaking or acting to define things, the lack of definition breathes fresh air into your world. Remain in the silence for a while and feel that aura all around you. Avoid note taking now. If you like, you can explain it to the other person later.

\* \*

You will find that when you live at joyous ease in the awareness of your no-thing-ness, your mouth becomes like a flute and produces sounds without your uttering them. You are not there, except to watch the sounds the flute makes. You have no desire to tell the truth, it is just automatic. You have no desire to produce an effect in any listener, but you do not prevent the flute from producing whatever effect it might. Your authentic purity, the result of all of your purifications, is what determines the “Quality” of what comes out of the flute. Your knowingness of the Real determines its wisdom. You cannot control any of it. And if silence reigns over any urge to use words, you enjoy this just the same. At-one, atoned, you cannot do anything other than allow truth to be brought forth.

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### **Experiment XI.3**

By this time, you may have many ideas for experiments.  
Choose just one for now, but save your other ideas for a later time.

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## CHAPTER XII. The Ultimate Experiment: Disappearance into The Great Void

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“Soul, be faithful unto the last.  
The victory of victories is to lose all.  
The sum total of your loss constitutes your winning.  
Eternally we possess only that which we have lost.”

*Ibsen*

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If we employ the terms ‘Great Void,’ ‘Nothingness,’ ‘Emptiness,’ ‘Peace of God,’ ‘Stillness,’ ‘Pure Silence,’ ‘Pure Experiencing,’ ‘Absolute Perfection,’ ‘Eternal Rest,’ ‘Heaven,’ or the Buddhist expression ‘Supreme Undifferentiated Bliss and Emptiness’ to characterize the One Reality, you the reader will employ your mind to try to conceive what we mean. But your concept, that which you can generate in your mind, is not what we mean.

It is easy to misunderstand. Indeed, *any* understanding is a misunderstanding. One’s mind can conceive the word ‘Nothingness’ nihilistically, but cannot comprehend the *Real living* Nothingness. The reader may draw the conclusion that our ‘Nothingness’ is mere ‘nothingness’: “OK then, I get it, nothing is real, nothing exists, nothing matters, everything ends, our lives and our experiences have no meaning, life is short, all we have is this one moment, so let’s just fuck and take what we can get, and stay drunk, and give me lots of morphine at the end so I can’t think about it and I go out smiling.”

But this is not what our writing is about. If you still think this way, the *Course* has failed you. Do not recommend it to your friends.

Of course, words can’t convey truth. However, they can lead the mind out of its erroneous conclusions. They are signposts to a Nowhere which is nevertheless more full than any somewhere. We cannot generate the experience of this Nowhere. On the contrary: it is only when we become totally passive, and our minds are as clear as pools of still water, that the ‘Nothingness’ experience descends. Ego believes that there is nothing that can be experienced without a brain. We have, in stutter steps, tried to address this belief at the very beginning of this *Course*. Perhaps, the only thing that is worth experiencing is That which is experienced in pure Silence with minimal, or even no, brain involved. This experience does not come from within us, nor does it come from outside of us. But it comes.

As we have pointed out many times, such questions cannot even be approached by argument, discussion, conversation, logical analysis, or appeal to any authority.

*It is a purely empirical question! You can test!*

Minimize your brain, and do your own experiments. Use ours, invent new ones, or find a meditation practice that suits you. Do not try to understand, or you misunderstand. Practice, and by and by your mind will let go. Then you will *innerstand*.

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### Experiment XII.1

This first experiment harkens back to the chapter on lifeless living. We introduce it with an excerpt from Nietzsche:

*There is a story about King Midas wandering in the forest, contemplating his life and the meaning of all that he had accumulated. In the darkness of the forest he came upon a demon, the wise Silenus, and he asked Silenus this question: "What is the best and the most preferable thing for man?" The demon laughed, and said: "The best and most preferable thing for man is exactly that which he does not want to hear. It is to never have been born. And the next best thing is -- to die soon."*

The purpose of this experiment is to find out if it is possible for you to experience lifelessness while still in a body. Not merely to imagine lifelessness, but to actually experience being lifeless. If you can experience lifelessness, you will experience that which cannot die. Osho calls it `deathlessness;` it is death-free-ness -- Infinity. If you cannot experience lifelessness, you cannot experience deathlessness; you cannot know that eternity is possible. You are limited to hope and faith.

One man who practiced this as a teenager, Ramana Maharshi, became one of the 20th century`s most beautiful and loved gurus. (See *The Nectar of Ramana Maharshi*, a reading at the website [www.nectarproject.org](http://www.nectarproject.org))

Many people report having had `near-death experiences` in which they accepted that their death was imminent, and/or in which the body was medically declared dead. Their reports afterwards do not reflect a terror, but a tremendous peace, consciously experienced. Here, one experiment is unlikely to be so definitive. Probably you will not succeed the first time. Most people panic and cut short the process. But consider this experiment a first step in a new direction in your `life.` You have been devoting your moments and your days to experience being alive. Now, you can begin devoting them to experience being dead. You can find out if Silenus was speaking truth.

First, some mental work, then beyond it. Ordinarily, we as egos recognize and define `being alive` through the body. We think that as long as the body is working, "we` are alive. When we see a corpse, we assume that that person does not feel life, and we

call the person 'dead.' But if we are looking at a corpse, perhaps in a hospital or funeral home, and suddenly it begins to move and breathe again, we say that that person "came back to life." Ordinarily, we as egos think of being in a body which moves and breathes as superior to being in a body which is not moving and not breathing. But is one of these really more 'alive' than the other? The body, in both cases, is a dream. Whether it is moving and breathing or not, the body is a dream. Is one dream more real than another? Is one dream more 'alive' than another? The answer has to be no. A dream is just a dream. The dreamer prefers some dreams over others, but he cannot make some dreams live on and become real. The dreamer lives on; no dream lives on. Thus, to dream of being dead does not kill the dreamer!

You are the one dreaming. You can dream of being in a body which moves and breathes, you can dream of being in a body which does not move and breathe, you can dream of being nothing -- or you can not dream at all. If you, the dreamer, cease to dream, you wake up; you do not die! When one is awake he is *more* than when he was asleep, not less.

Maybe you will object to the possibility of our experiment: how can one experience lifelessness while still in a 'living' body? But now you have relapsed, back into Newtonian thinking! Remind yourself that what we call the body and all the other objects in the physical world are, according to physics itself, mere secondary epiphenomena, secondary to perception. There is no reason why a perceiver cannot perceive, realize, make 'real,' a moving and breathing body one moment, then unperceive it, then re-perceive it. In fact, we do this all the time. In reality you are not experiencing a breathing and moving body that you call 'me' most of the time. Your awareness is elsewhere -- dreaming other dreams.

So, in this experiment, we are doing nothing new. All that is different is that we are *noticing* what we are doing. Are you afraid that if you focus your mind on the practice of lifelessness that you will somehow interfere with the future ability of your body to move and breathe? Are you afraid that in doing such an experiment you can accidentally 'kill' your body? This fear has been faced by many many mystics and meditators throughout the ages, and not one has ever accidentally committed suicide by practicing a meditation on lifelessness. But the fear is intense. It comes from the ego's grandiose delusion that it has power over something real -- life -- and that it is alive in the first place! You, in your present ego state, are not alive in reality. But you,

the dreamer of your ego, are Life itself.

So this is a powerful and a challenging experiment. You will have to be willing to let your ego 'die.' That is, you will have to stop fooling yourself into believing that it and its body possess Life in the first place. You can experience this lifelessness only from the position of deathlessness: immortality.

Now, stop and meditate upon all this. Re-read, re-think. Intuit. Feel into it with your depth-consciousness. Free associate, and write in your notebook whatever comes to mind. Relieve yourself of any anxiety of proceeding to the next part of the experiment. Linger in this 'dementing' mode, undoing old ideas, liberating yourself from old beliefs. Arrive at an awareness of your mind becoming empty and clear, just as the clouds disperse and the sun shines after a rainstorm. We can't tell you how many hours or days or years this will take for you. But don't shortchange this process. It is important.

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When you feel ready for part two, the un-mentalized part, arrange a time and place where you will not be interrupted, and can be comfortable for at least two hours. You will not have to be still the entire time, but will need intervals of perfect physical stillness. This is not to be a rigid stillness in a posture, like a rock, but a soft stillness, allowing the body and spirit to settle like a pool of clear water.

The procedure begins by sitting quietly and repeating the watching your breathing, your muscle tension, and your moods, all practices you have done before. Don't hurry. Then, get up from your chair and begin moving around slowly, easily, casually relaxed, watching your mind, allowing thoughts to disperse, breathing normally. When you notice your mind shifting into a silence, relatively free of contents, lie down and get comfortable and be perfectly still. No particular posture. Close your eyes. Totally relax. Become limp, a corpse. Let your body feel like a corpse (Shivasana practice). Attend to your mind, and hear the silence. Now, allow your next exhale to be naturally long and slow and comfortable. This is the first of your last three breaths. Allow all the air to escape, one molecule at a time, without forcing it. At the end of this exhale, feel the stillness, the emptiness, the lifelessness of your body. Repeat this two more times. Allow your last breath to taper into total deadness, and resist inhaling for as long as possible.

When the next inhale must begin, recover normal breathing but do not move. Lie there and breathe until you can hear the silence again. Now, when you feel ready, repeat the three long slow exhales, as passively as possible. Again, stay in the gap, neither exhaling nor inhaling, as long as possible. Experience the emptiness, then the pressure to breathe becoming too much to resist. Resume breathing and see how your body feels. Note your emotional state. Note your mental contents. After your breathing returns to normal, linger in this space, as long as you like.

Rest for at least fifteen minutes, experiencing fully whatever there is to experience. Then stand up and begin moving around.

Whenever you feel ready, repeat this two-step procedure. It may be today, or tomorrow, or a year from now. Be advised that the first time is usually not pleasant, but with practice, one can make the necessary shift. So plan to repeat this experiment many times throughout your life. You can increase the length of a session to make it more intense, repeating the three breath procedure several times, but do not make it so long that it makes you anxious or becomes artificial. Remember the very first experiments in this *Course* on staying in the moment. This skill will serve you well now.

The mystic lives in the state of lifelessness, of deathlessness. Continue to practice such an experiment until this state comes naturally.

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## Experiment XII.2

We paraphrase from Sunyata to introduce this experiment:

You experience that you alone ARE when mature, sincere, sustained effort reaches its limit, and carries you to the brink of despair, where you realize that the mind is inadequate to the purpose. If one allows this 'Cloud of Unknowing,' or 'Dark Night of the Soul' to descend, and can accept the succession of ups and downs, Grace takes over. When you make a serious quest for Self-awareness, the "I" thought, as a thought, disappears. Something else from the depth-consciousness takes hold of you. You realize that it was never the ego "I" which has been driving your quest. It is the import of the Real, the universal Self. You begin to see that your efforts and your thoughts were all along -- your entire life -- hiding the integral, invisible and ineffable Real. And so, now, it is time to be still and remain intuitively alert in a state as free from thought as possible (Be free in them when they arise; let them pass). One's ego must be ripe, ready and mature to say "Yes" to its own annihilation. At this point, each down begins to lift us up higher, and through the contrast, the darkness of ego reveals the intuitive Light that Ever IS. We begin to 'unknow' our own bodily 'self' and all that was its 'reality.' We must remain still and thought-free, positively passive in intuitive alertness, and relaxed as if under water, letting the sea of thought-waves and ripples and foam and froth pass over without disturbance. If one can with very little effort sustain this, any thought will pass out of the mind. All becomes quiet, serene, and Self-illuminated. You have arrived Home.

Ripeness is everything here. If you must force any part of the above practice, you are not quite ready. Your love for the Silence is not quite deep enough. Be prepared to back off. Remember, steady, unwavering passivity is the key. One must be utterly feminine before the power of this Reality! We suggest that you devote an entire day, or many days, to it, returning to the practice whenever there is time.

Actually, you will not be able to determine when this experiment can take place. All that you can do is don't interfere when it starts to happen. Probably, there will be many false starts. Perhaps for many years. Patience is important, but combined with dedicated preparation. One big obstacle is that the ego wants to watch! That is, you will say to yourself "It's happening!" and make it into an ego-trip. This will kill the process. Ego can't watch itself be annihilated! So we have inserted this experiment

here, but perhaps just skip it for now, and start preparing. Use your own intuition.

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### **Experiment XII.3**

Initially, this experiment will be repeated each day over a ten day period. Many things have been activated in you by this *Course*, and right now must be some kind of turning point in your life. So we will now take ten successive days without any other experiments, without any reading, as a time for reflection.

The procedure of this ten-day experiment incorporates most of the essential elements of the *Course*: silence, solitude, passivity, acceptance, emptying the mind, taking off the mask of ego, facing the dream which is your past, letting go of your body and your world. It is an experiment in learning how to 'die before you die.' It requires of you a shift in your consciousness, an identification with the primal element of fire.

You will need ten candles that each burn for half an hour. You can buy tapers and time them, then cut them off and use only the portion that will extinguish itself in a half hour. You don't want to use a watch or clock to determine when a session ends.

Each day, place one candle directly in front of the comfortable chair in which you will be sitting. Like most others, this experiment will be done in total privacy and with no interruptions. You will not need your notebook, but read over several times the instructions below. Do this experiment after dark.

Prepare your seat so that you will be comfortable for the duration of the life of the candle. Just before lighting the candle, re-read the following instructions so that you will not need to consult them during the experiment.

*This candle represents your body. The flame represents time. When you light it, you are conceived. As it burns, you are growing, changing, experiencing physical existence, dealing with the problems of surviving in the world, then running out of energy, suffering losses and disappointments, and eventually*

*flickering out.*

*Your task today is to watch time, the flame, consume your body.*

*Relax while you watch the flame, and allow your mind to wander back to some of the experiences of your life. Reminisce. You will notice your memory to begin to open to things, then slam shut. See if you can let it open, to admit to consciousness what is hidden. Re-live old feelings. Let it all dance in the flame, and then watch it die into total darkness.*

*After the flame dies out, sit with your eyes closed, and feel that your life in a body is no more. Allow this feeling to fill you.*

*Remain still, until your mind has drifted to other things. Then end the experiment.*

Now, light the candle, extinguish all other lights, and begin.

Repeat the procedure for ten days, even if not much comes to mind.

At a future time, when you are nearing death, this experiment may have a beneficial effect.

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The ultimate experiment, the only real science, is every moment. Test, and discover whether or not it is possible to fall into The Silence – in *this* moment. It is exactly the opposite of any experiment in the science of psychology as we knew it before this *Course*. Here, no variables are manipulated. Nothing is held constant. There is no control group. No instruments or aids to perception are needed. There is nothing to quantify, nothing to measure. There is no left-brain educated intellect to limit what happens to his subject. There is only I, and only a relaxing, a letting happen whatever will happen. If I fall I will fall. How far? To where? It is not a concern. How will the experiment end? I do not know. Perhaps it will never end.

We have done the pilot studies, to prepare for this, the only real experiment. And now there are just a few final reminders before we totally let go, and allow whatever varies to vary with absolute freedom.

The first reminder is forgiveness. Whatever our expectations have been, the world has given us only half. In regard to the other half, we forgive the world for disappointing us. How is this forgiveness accomplished? By judgment? Shall we judge that even what we didn't want must have been 'good' for us, or 'good' for someone else? No, that is not real forgiveness. Then shall we feel sympathy and understanding for the things and people who hurt or disappointed us? No, that is not real forgiveness. Then should we rationalize what happened, and find a logical reason for it? No, that is not real forgiveness. Then should we turn it all over to God, and simply believe that He knows best? No, that is a self-deceptive trick. It is not real forgiveness. Then should we see how each thing was a lesson unto us, and brought us one step closer to this moment, better prepared for the ultimate experiment? No, this is still an idea of the mind. It is not real forgiveness.

*A Course in Miracles* defines forgiveness as: "Realizing that what you thought your brother did to you has not occurred."

Then, real forgiveness is simple denial? No, on the contrary. We must fully feel everything that we thought, or remember, that our brother did to us. And as we live in the reality of it, as we suffer it again, slowly a moment comes when ego dissolves, the mud settles, and we see all the way to the bottom of the pool. In our total passivity all is clarified. What we thought our brother did to us is seen in the Light of Awareness, in the Miracle, as our dream. Our brother was merely a part of the dream, the offense against us was merely a part of the dream – and, the "me" who suffered the offense was also, merely a part of the dream.

And now, that dream has ended. We are awake, most of the time, now. Awake enough, at least, so that the dream is almost impossible to live in. There is no desire to live in it. The pure experiencing comes, in this moment, and then it comes in the next moment; why would we want to conjure up a weak substitute?

So real forgiveness is not something we do, it is something that befalls us. It is like the first gentle nudge, that we just in pure positive passivity allow, and it is enough to push us over the edge, the edge of our world as we knew it. That experience, which was yours, which was your sanity, which *was* you, is slowly returning now. All the years of numbness, of hiding from the Memory of the loss of this Only Thing of value, have ended. Now, you have found the courage to feel the pain again, and this pain throws open the floodgates to the Experience itself. We are now falling, through Nothingness, and into Nothingness. Now, the experimenter, the I, the experiencer, also disappears. If he reappears, he has more work to do, more pain to accept. But if he allows the disappearance so that he never reappears, and so that even the moment disappears, That which remains is Pure Experiencing. God.

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