

## **YOUR INNATE POWER**

**BY OLIVE LYLE BROWN**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Since scientists now realize that the more intelligent people use only a very small fraction of their mental and spiritual powers, they are seeking new ways to develop our faculties. Many of them, however, do not seem to understand that this growth and improvement must come from within the integrated self. Anything superimposed from without is apt to interfere with nature and cause imbalance. In spite of the enormous advances of modern medicine and psychotherapy, the number and intensity of nervous and psychosomatic disorders are multiplying alarmingly. The problem is world-wide. The new countries of Africa and Asia are seeking some new solution as the methods in use by the developed nations have failed. Unfortunately they are finding that neurosis results from trying to adapt too quickly to the cultural patterns of the West. And so the world grows sicker, with tension and violence everywhere. The condition is aggravated by the increasing number of people who turn to drugs to stimulate and calm them. In many cases these chemicals have harmful side effects and widen the schism in the mind-body relationship. Most alarming is the popular enthusiasm for the new 'miracle' drugs which are believed to increase the efficiency and creativeness of normal, intelligent people! These

chemical 'mind-changers' are part of a programme seeking new techniques for the control of the human brain and behavior. They are intended to stimulate sensory perception far beyond normal and to give heightened insight into the self, yet it is recognized that the emotions and opinions of the subject are coloured by his surroundings and by the personality and suggestions of the person who administers the drug. What terrifying violence to man's nature! Changes in brain quality and behavior can and should be brought about by developing man's potential powers through the use of free will and consciousness: for it is this way that we find true freedom. We can learn how to coordinate ourselves and find a centre of balance in that the sensory may play its full role in the evolution of the mind. What is needed is education in conscious control for an improved use of the self so that the whole mechanism functions as nature intended. The need was studied by three great men in different continents at the beginning of this century. They made remarkable discoveries in methods for training

in conscious control to improve psycho-physical functioning. Each studied intensely for many years before presenting his method to the public. Dr William H. Bates, an American, applied all his efforts to the development of better vision. Towards the end of his life he learned of and became interested in the discoveries of the other two. The three men never met. In Australia and later in London F. Matthias Alexander devoted his life to teaching an improved use of the self as it affects functioning, which he called 'constructive conscious control'. The third and perhaps most important of the three was Dr Roger Vittoz, a Swiss neurologist who made the tremendous discovery that every act, thought or emotion had its vibration which could be sensed when he placed his hand on the patient's brow. It is, of course, the quality that is sensed not what is actually thought. The vibration gave him tangible means to analyse the patient's mental state and guide him to stability and conscious control. Many of the principals [sic] of the Vittoz method are based on the discoveries of Pierre Janet, known as 'the father of all psychology'. Professor Janet defined neurasthenia as 'a disease of attention'. He and some of his predecessors recognized the necessity of reeducating the sensory faculties, especially kinaesthesia, but they never found a successful method for doing so. Dr Vittoz and F.M. Alexander developed techniques of reeducation through which we can transform our mental and physical health and our personality, if we have patience, sincerity and the will to change. In the pages that follow I shall explain what is meant by conscious control, its importance to a healthy, full life and insofar as it can be put into words, how to develop it. Special emphasis is given to Dr Vittoz's discoveries which are too little known in the English-speaking world. It is chiefly his method, synthesized with Bates's and Alexander's principles which I have employed in my last fifteen years of teaching. Results have been extremely rewarding. It is essential that we learn to experience, instead of intellectualizing about reality, to distinguish between fact and our idea of it. The Vittoz training shows us how to be consciously aware. The question is often asked, 'How long will it take?' It is impossible to generalize as it depends upon one's degree of passivity, one's sincerity in applying the principles and

how far one wants to go in self-fulfilment. For most of us it takes a long time to apply these principles to our daily activities and realize a fundamental change in health and behaviour. But one thing is certain, we can if we will. Reeducation is not a quick remedy. It needs perseverance and a sincere will to change and grow. Constant control is required so that the whole self takes part. Then what you do is really well done and accompanied by a feeling of calm confidence. It is very important, both to the individual and to society that what we do be done with the whole heart. There seems to be almost no limit to how far we can go in overcoming functional disorders and increasing general well-being and efficiency, mental and physical. Some need only to become aware of what they are doing in the present moment and, without understanding more, they find increased stability and a more integrated self. Through brain control we can overcome the duality or split state which is the cause of so much fatigue, nervous disorder and other psycho-somatic symptoms. I speak of functional disorders and not those of organic or structural origin. The trouble with most of us is that attention, hence energy, centre in instead of out, so the mechanism does not function properly.' Go out of the self to be in or at one with whatever is, here and now' is an important principle that has been preached for ages. What I am trying to explain is how to proceed without superimposing idea on an already over-intellectualized state. Complete understanding can only come with experience and guidance; for, as in any art, words alone cannot sufficiently explain the new use and sensory experience. One can, however, help oneself by starting in the right direction and letting deeper understanding grow with experience. For those who have lost their equilibrium and are out of harmony, this reeducation means changing a state of

suffering into one of health and well-being. Those with normal control acquire through heightened sensory perception deeper insight into what is and an increased power for good which the world certainly needs today. Our thinking pattern is of our own design. We shape the world we live in by our inner disposition, our tendencies. Reeducation is simply a matter of learning how to direct our thoughts and to reconstruct our world. It is a kind of de-conditioning process. A controlled mind results in happiness for ourselves and for those about us. It is the 'normal' individual who perhaps, has most to gain in learning the means to a more useful life. He is a better pupil too, because he exercises his will to be better, to overcome mental inertia and the slavery of the conditioned reflex or any dominating force. An unstable personality is more conditioned to mental laziness and often does not make any consistent effort to overcome it. So he sometimes but by no means always takes longer. Intelligent and sensitive, he recognizes even a flash of wholeness and release from tension. And since he finds it much more pleasant he may apply himself sincerely to installing new habits of use. He has the key to greater efficiency, self-fulfilment and an increased zest for life. Full details of the exercises will not be given as few should practice them at first without competent supervision. The reason is that when working alone there is apt to be a harmful surveillance which turns inwards or a tense effort to do. Either attitude will increase the split and tension. My purpose is to present something more than detailed exercises. The principles set forth here are an important answer for those educators, doctors and psychologists who are seeking to find some better answer to the growing need for stability and integration. Certain principles are frequently repeated but for the person who seriously wants to bring about a fundamental change, the essentials need repetition again and again at each phase of control. Only then can there be understanding, for even the most brilliant rely on unconscious direction and bring to the learning the very mental habits that need to be changed.

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## **CHAPTER I**

### **WHY WE ARE ILL**

Neurotic symptoms usually begin in childhood. They may be due to an inherited tendency or to an upbringing by someone with a very tense or otherwise unstable personality. When there is nervous instability in early childhood certain normal

coordination may not develop properly. Maladjustments may occur in the functioning of the muscles or in any organ. Too severe an atmosphere may stifle normal development but a too lenient one is equally bad. The problem today is not so much one of repression as indulgence. There is a great need for education in self-control and self-denial. But children and adolescents need patient, enlightened explanations to help them understand life and themselves and so find integrity instead of the anarchy

and torment which is increasingly evident today. Such confusion breeds doubts, fears and inferiority where there should be courage, confidence and an enthusiastic interest in learning and in becoming a better person. In the upbringing of children today there is too much distraction; too many impressions are presented too rapidly: everything is so speeded up that pressure and tension are built up while attention is split. Perhaps worst of all is the constant distraction of television with its demoralizing and stupid programmes brought into the intimacy of the home. Education in real awareness, in concentration and in development of will is tragically neglected. Therefore too often the child is not taught how to develop his powers of adaptation in this technological age. Mental inertia must be discouraged in order to create more integrated personalities. But in learning and learning to do, training in a proper use of the psycho-physical organism is needed to prevent malfunctioning. Mental and physical health depend upon that functioning and prevention is so much better, simply and more effective than re-education after the harm has been done. My chief concern here is to bring to light some of the relatively unknown facts of the importance of conscious awareness to healthy, efficient mind-body functioning. Any defect in mind control has its repercussions in the body. Sometimes the physical manifestation becomes the more evident as in functional disorders in the vascular, nervous and digestive systems. The genital system too, is often greatly disturbed as are the organs of sense, especially those of sight and hearing. All symptoms are real and the results of a malfunctioning of the brain. Auto-intoxication is another symptom often caused by the absence of conscious control and mind-body unity, and is just as unpleasant as when due to a virus or some other physical cause. Our mental state can torture and make us ill or can be a powerful agent in making us well and strong. If all the energy dissipated in uncontrolled thinking could be consciously controlled, many unnecessary illnesses would not exist. Dr Vittoz's discoveries explain why this is so. He did not agree with his contemporaries who thought that the seat of psycho-neurosis was in the unconscious. He found it was caused by a defect in equilibrium and in communication between the conscious and unconscious. That does not mean that the two centres must be of equal intensity. A perfectly balanced individual may have a preponderance of one or the other, while the unconscious of a neurotic is usually more developed. All the latter needs is to have sufficient control. He referred to the unconscious as being subjective and in a way the genesis of ideas and sensations, and to the conscious as the objective and focusing agent. Reason, judgement and will depend upon the conscious brain.

The important thing, he said, is that there is certainly both a conscious and an unconscious I. Hypnotism has proved this by suspending all conscious functions. The duality is not noticeable with normal functioning because all ideas or sensations are the result of the two centres working together. There is a wide need for education that stimulates the higher centres of consciousness so as to benefit all behaviour whether mental, emotional or physical, and to make a person balanced, integrated and whole. Good educational methods should develop an increased interest in life and thus contribute to self-fulfilment and self-confidence. Wrong methods of teaching, however, may result in the brain being blocked through boredom or frustration. Such is the beginning of many physical and mental disorders. If habitual interiorization and living in dreams is not corrected early, mental inertia results which can develop into extreme schizophrenia and complete loss of will. Then readaptation becomes difficult if not impossible. The dream state is not necessarily harmful provided one can dream or not at will. But for a full, efficient, happy life it is very necessary to avoid that half-awake state with its vague aspirations or apathetic indifference. There are many ways in which the misuse of the brain and the self expresses itself. Misdirected energy predominates as the cause. Most illnesses are due to self-

centredness, to clinging to the self mentally, emotionally and physically. Everyone should be taught to direct their attention outwards, to exteriorize. Energy follows thought whether conscious or unconscious. He who lives too much in his own thoughts and emotions is more and more cut off from the outer world. The other points which follow are only an extension of this primary cause. Much energy is wasted through doing things under pressure too fast and too hard, thus using more energy than is needed for a given task whether physical or intellectual. Act quickly if you will, but not too hurriedly with tension. If a person is too absorbed in ideas or emotions and neglects incoming sensations, his brain constantly gives out energy without a pause to take anything in. This prevents the organs of sense, including the very important muscular sense from performing properly. They become weakened and sometimes destroyed. (It is interesting to note how often the legs are affected when there is a state of emotional disturbance.) Inattention or merely superficial attention causes all the sensory equipment to become either over-excited, lowered or disturbed. It is this passivity, this lack of discipline and use of the will that makes one the slave of one's organism. This divided attention also causes a great leakage of energy which is not properly channeled. Moral or surgical shock, a long period of overwork, worry or grief are considered as secondary causes of nervous instability, while excessive use of intoxicants also contributes to the weakening of control. When there is a faulty use of the self the sensory equipment does not function properly. Then judgements, emotions and movements are affected. A perverted sensory distorts truth and so causes self-deception and misunderstanding. Depression, thoughts of suicide and other masochistic tendencies are symptoms of this malfunctioning. The brain is passive instead of being consciously controlled. This in turn perverts health instincts. The greatest instinct is to live.

## CHAPTER II

### THE MIND-BODY RELATIONSHIP

Mind and body cannot be separated. Science now recognizes that we are psycho-somatic organisms in which the mind has taken on increased importance throughout its evolution. The principles of the readaptive method presented in these pages are confirmed by exciting new discoveries made recently at the University of California and at Göteborg in Sweden. These prove that when rats have been trained in mental discipline by being presented with increasingly difficult problems, striking improvements are found in the quality and quantity of the material in the cortex of the brain. Brothers from the same litter who were fed regularly, but kept idle in their cubicle, seeing and doing nothing except to hear the movements of the other rats, showed no change in the cortex. The experiments proved the mind body relationship, and the physiological as well as the mental benefits of the active, aware state as contrasted with mental inertia and passivity. However, in the education of children use of the whole mechanism must be taken into consideration. The rats took their coordinated selves to the problem. They did not think, tightening with self-doubt and fear of not doing well. They adapted to each new set of circumstances and found the solution. In these pages we are concerned not only with the further development of potential faculties, but with the more serious problem of avoiding deterioration. Senescence too can be delayed when the body and mind are kept active. In middle and old age man needs stricter discipline than in childhood. The early deterioration of so many people is due to self-indulgence. Keeping mentally alert and interested in something besides themselves prevents senility and retards the deterioration of many men and women. Mental activity and spiritual

experience depend upon how the brain is functioning. In fact all experience is influenced by physiological changes in the brain. Experiments have proved that conductivity is lessened when the brain is fatigued or in a passive state. The liver, the heart, the lungs and glands are necessary to healthy thinking and the body is controlled by energy fabricated in the brain. The brain is constantly receiving and emitting vibrations from and to the body. If the body is tense that tension is communicated to the brain. In response the centrifugal force then emits false, tense energy to the body, causing disorders and also distorted acts, ideas and sensations. Many motor troubles are due to a lack of consciousness of certain parts of the body, so that movements and gestures are not properly controlled. The tie is one example of subconscious expression and loss of liaison with the conscious I. One of the effective ways of correcting this is to bring it into full consciousness and repeat it voluntarily several times. In this manner the victim usually becomes able to control it and it seems especially effective with children. Dr Bates made similar observations with certain types of eyestrain. When his patients were made to exaggerate the stare or squint etc., they learned to control it. It is not uncommon for a person seeking medical help to appear organically sound so that the doctor finds nothing wrong with the nervous system or the organ in question.

This is because the symptom of which the patient complains is due to a split in psycho-physical unity which cannot be corrected by drugs. What is needed is reeducation in conscious control which would correct the malfunctioning. Our behaviour is the result of motor reactions to our thoughts. Coordinated acts depend upon the precision of our thinking and the ability to turn it into action. In cases of cerebral malfunctioning a person often behaves in a manner that he does not will and then does not understand what made him do so. We all know how often mental attitudes are unconsciously revealed by physical disorders and vice versa. But having free will and higher powers of control, we can reverse the vicious cycle and sometimes eliminate the disorder altogether. For instance when we avoid the physical manifestations of an emotion, the unpleasant psychic state cannot exist. Anger, fear, anguish, depression and timidity are examples. Try it. Refuse to become taut and learn to open up detensing your muscles and joints. This is communicated to the nervous system and you will experience the well-being that accompanies freedom, tolerance and understanding. Integration, efficiency and well-being are the natural outcome of an active attitude so that the exchange of energies is free. It is important for us to learn how to develop this conscious control.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **THE PROBLEM AND AN ANSWER**

The need for better education in mental hygiene is revealed in the shocking percentage of people who have to enter mental institutions at some time in their life. Moreover according to Dr Karl Menninger one out of every two patients going to a doctor or general hospital is suffering from a condition that is at least partly mental. Crime, juvenile delinquency, drunkenness, attitudes of indifference, absenteeism, high divorce rates and even chronic traffic offenders are further evidence of a lack of conscious control. The list is endless. It is a serious problem which directly or indirectly concerns us all. The answer lies in education to readapt the individual and develop his nervous stability. So many methods for dealing with the problem seem to end in a blind alley. They are not fluid and flexible nor within the framework of high moral standards, as too often they confuse freedom with looseness and licence. Mental and physical health require moral consciousness and mental discipline. The fact that an over-scrupulous or

severe attitude causes neurosis through a lack of understanding of human emotions does not mean that the opposite extreme is right. Individual and social freedom, health and happiness require balance and moderation. Man's higher consciousness enables him to act above the level of animal nature. On this lower level of behaviour he is dominated by his organism, instead of using it to achieve his highest potentialities. When there is extreme lack of consciousness, especially moral consciousness, human beings sometimes live at levels below that of animals. Examples are all too commonly cited in the newspapers. Normality depends upon the way we direct our lives towards a harmonious, integrated whole. We have free will, but all too often we simply drift, acting mechanically, without precision of acts, ideas or sensations. This is both the cause and result of a split, a lack of unity between the conscious and unconscious. When this duality becomes marked and habitual, the individual is maladjusted to reality and becomes neurotic. The early stages of insufficient control are much easier to normalize and a lot of suffering and unhappiness can be prevented if they are recognized and adjusted at the beginning. Fatigue is one of the foremost symptoms of the uncontrolled or maladjusted individual. Many who can afford it love to 'take the cure', going from spa to spa, but this very preoccupation with self makes well-being impossible. It is usually not environment but the mental attitude that should be changed so as to reorient the individual. If the conscious I is habitually weak and unstable, the individual is subject to fears, compulsions and prejudices. These morbid fears exist when there is schism and the body acts alone without the lucidity of consciousness. The healthy minded refuse unhappiness as they do all ugliness. They are free, optimistic and enthusiastically interested in life. If the powers of consciousness have fallen into disuse or have not been fully developed, the brain becomes tense, vague, agitated or torpid. In a passive state it cannot react. Many nervous symptoms are caused by automatic, uncontrolled functioning. The neurasthenic or neurotic person, however, is capable of great accomplishments in all fields. His brain is organically normal—a condition necessary for the reeducation in conscious control. The trouble is simply a malfunctioning which produces a lack of equilibrium and affects behaviour on all planes, physical, mental and spiritual. To correct this malfunctioning Dr Vittoz sought a means of perfecting, or restoring as near to normal as possible the receptivity and emissivity of the brain. He devised a method for refocusing these faculties in the ill and developing them further in persons considered healthy and normal. Results have been astounding and out of all proportion to the simplicity of the means. In order for man to become as whole as possible he must be free from unhealthy emotionalism, pre-conceived ideas and prejudices. This is achieved by developing a conscious awareness in the present and by avoiding the passive states. The first step in this reeducation is to learn the art of pure, wordless receptivity through the organs of sense, reserving all opinion, analysis or emotion (even like or dislike) for the moment. Receptivity of sensation nourishes the nervous centres through incoming vibrations. If the sensory pathways which terminate in the higher centres are not stimulated through voluntary attention, the faculties become sluggish or atrophied. Emissivity is nervous influx from the brain which is ceaselessly transmitted throughout the body. It is also thinking, will and vital force. The physical functioning of the brain and mental state are inseparable. When we find which of the functions is not normal, we have to learn how to replace the uncontrolled state with one of control. But in reeducating conscious control the symptom is not directly attacked. The purpose is to get at the underlying cause, the misuse which brought about the malfunctioning. When that is corrected the symptoms, mental and physical, disappear by themselves.

Every cell of our being lives by an exchange of energies, a continuous receiving and giving out. To arrest these two necessary functions means its disease or death. Not only is this true of every smallest cell but also of every organ. This constant exchange is necessary to life. The same law holds for the nervous system, for mind-body relationship and for the psycho-physical whole which takes from and gives to the exterior world. Learn to adapt better to reality increases the power and efficiency of consciousness. We can learn how to direct our energies and improve their quality. Then events which once might have caused neuroses no longer disturb us for they are objectively received and considered. We are able to control our reactions to any stimuli, instead of repressing them, as many, many people do with such harmful results. Sometimes it is necessary to fix our attention long enough to get a new idea about a situation—to decide what to do about it, lest it become hidden and harmful. With increased conscious control we are able to free ourselves of past repressions and are no longer dominated by them consciously or unconsciously. Our own force exteriorizes, allowing a normal exchange of energies which bring us into harmony with ourselves and all about us. Not only the nervously ill but the so-called 'normal' persons is better able to meet the unusual, sometimes harmful, influences of environment and of the unforeseen pressures of the world today. Instead of being broken by these pressures, the reinforced conscious I uses the power of control and lessens the harmful effects by full awareness and increased facility in dissociation. Only then can one know mental freedom.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE IMPORTANCE OF FREEDOM

What do we mean by freedom of mind? How do we achieve it? What is its purpose? We are not concerned here with freedom to follow our desires but freedom from those desires so that they cannot dominate us. It is freedom from benumbing mental laziness, from tension and from all forms of passivity. There is no greater slavery than to be dominated by our emotions, our preconceived ideas and prejudices, for then we have no control over our reactions. It is only through detachment from the self, through getting rid of the ego and its interference that we can find freedom. It is found through conscious awareness which is the integrating factor of the psycho-physical mechanism and personality. Out of this unity comes the power of free will so that we are no longer dominated either by forces in the world without or within the self. Many of us do not know the real meaning, the experience of freedom, especially freedom from self. We are dominated by outside factors or are slaves to our own organism or to an idea, and are often plagued with paralyzing tensions and fears. Again and again we deceive ourselves, mistaking the idea for the facts; the idea of freedom, love, kindness, generosity and sincerity. But the idea is not the substance. Many people for example constantly speak of love or of God, but rarely truly sense either. There is no unity, no oneness without freedom. Mental, moral, and physical freedom demand a balanced self. Only through this personal harmony can we find understanding and bring ourselves into harmony with the world and with reality. True awareness and spiritual enlightenment require freedom on all planes, from the known, from preconceived ideas, from desires and impulses and from the self. People suffering from nervous disorders are for the most part very emotional and overspend or misdirect their nervous energy. They are egocentric and not in contact with the outer world but immersed in a constant whirl of distorted thoughts and emotions. Being undisciplined they do not know how to use their will to free themselves from that prison. They



do not know how to focus their attention. When like most people we see things egocentrically we are not free but closed in. Freedom of mind depends upon a proper use and functioning of the whole self and especially of the brain. It depends upon the direction and quality of our energy. Only when the mechanism functions normally can we experience freedom from self, from environment, propaganda and other outside influences. An ancient philosopher once said that it is not things which trouble man but his opinion about them. In order to know truth we must learn how to free ourselves from prejudices, from preconceived ideas and dominating emotions. This is done by allowing the whole field of consciousness to be aware of the facts before forming an opinion. In this way we get rid of duality so that the brain functions normally, freely reacting and positive and is not passive and negative. Consciousness has control of the leash. I have said that the way to freedom is through conscious awareness. Volumes have been written about awareness, yet we are rarely told how to achieve it. Dr Vittoz and Alexander have given us the key, the way to real experience and understanding which is not through philosophy, but through an improved use of the psycho-physical mechanism. Human beings are endowed with free will. They can choose to wallow in passivity and mental inertia or they can choose freedom, physical, mental and spiritual. Once you develop the art of conscious direction and control, you can be free of all wrong influences. When consciousness is in control, you will no longer stiffen and withdraw in fear, resistance or repression. You think and act from unity and calm confidence, dominated by nothing and by no one.

## CHAPTER V

### REEDUCATION VERSUS THERAPY

Therapeutical methods are needed in disorders that are primarily organic, but in these pages we are discussing functional disorders and the advantages of learning an improved use of the self to correct them. Experience has proved that there is a very definite relation between abnormal brain functioning and most nervous or psychic symptoms. With the brain as with every organ symptoms are the result of its functioning. Learning an improved use of the physical brain will correct malfunctioning and also readapt the individual far more simply than psycho-therapy which usually takes a very long time, tends to make people centre inwards instead of outwards and too often increases intellectualization and brain tension. After years of intensive study Vittoz found it of primary importance to improve the use and functioning of the mechanism before attempting psycho-therapy. He said that

long experience had shown how ninety per cent of those who had been reeducated in cerebral control never needed psycho-therapeutic treatment, as their symptoms simply disappeared of themselves. If, however, therapy is still needed it will take less time and the patient will become more balanced. There is a tremendous and growing need for this reeducation. Innumerable people today feel incapable of facing up to life or of knowing the joy of living. They try every possible kind of treatment. After hours of lecture and advice, they still feel inadequate. They are intelligent and often know it, but they have no idea of how to direct that intelligence. It is not simply a matter of correcting false ideas but of correcting the functioning of the brain itself. Ideas and sensations are the result of such functioning. Reason alone is not enough if the latter is not true. It might even be dangerous if the subject is carried away by ideas and the superficial effects of auto-suggestion that do not last and so end in further discouragement. 'The best musician in the world could not strike a true note on a piano out of tune', and for Vittoz the

reeducation of the human organism is like tuning a piano. This must take place first before any attempt is made to modify the subject's ideas. Like false notes, false ideas disappear when the instrument becomes normal. It is important to note here that functioning is not corrected by anything to do with the brain directly but by reeducating the self which uses it. Any effort to do with the brain itself is wrong. Normally the organ is simply there, receiving and reacting without interference. Here we have the principle of Dr Vittoz and also of F. M. Alexander and Dr Bates. Reeducation in the use of self brings about improved functioning and an accompanying improvement in mental and physical health. Vittoz found the essential causes for neurosis to be instability and insufficiency of brain control. One cannot, he said, expect medicine to recover a cerebral faculty which has been lost or to complete one that is underdeveloped. Some years later Dr Jung was to agree. In his *Modern Man in Search of a Soul*, he stated: 'We have been taught by all too many mistakes, that organic medicine fails completely in the treatment of neurosis. In his search for a method of psycho-therapy Vittoz tried hypnotism and recognized that it had certain merits which were 'sometimes astounding'; but after years of experience he dismissed it as being a palliative rather than a cure. A further disadvantage, he said, was that the patient depended more and more on the hypnotist, preferring the easier suggestion to any effort of will on his own part. Hypnosis acts only on the unconscious and therefore cannot modify any lack of control. It makes the subject more passive and increases his duality. The readaptive method corrects faults of attention so that we become oriented towards the outer world, and less preoccupied with the self, with our own opinions and emotions. In this way we open up and sense reality, instead of intellectualizing about it as so many do for most of the time. We must learn how to become more aware of what we see and touch and hear. But the first awareness is that of being, of sensing our body and movements in the present, here and now. When the whole self takes part in what we do and think, we have the key to healthy, happy and efficient living.

Most adults and all neurotics no longer sense their bodies, their aliveness or the world around them. They know that it is there; they may emotionalize about it, but they have lost real contact with it as the whole self is not involved. All incoming vibrations are superficially received, confused or coloured by some preconceived idea or emotion. We can all train ourselves to see, hear and touch remaining open and receptive and avoiding for the moment any criticism or analysis or thought. Let interested attention be restricted to sensing the object, to being objectively interested in the fact. Opinion should follow not precede receptivity. This is how to get out of self and overcome the barrier which we put up between ourselves and reality. For many people simply to become aware of their environment and daily acts is enough to regain equilibrium and eliminate their psycho-somatic symptoms. Others need (or want) more training in concentration and will and fuller experience through heightened sensory development. The controlled use of the self de-tenses and permits us to use the minimum of energy for any act, physical or intellectual. With consciousness in control, when we are consciously aware of what we do, we increase our vital force in activity. Consciousness rests us. Passivity allows leakage and therefore causes fatigue. When education at home or in the school has used wrong methods of training and discipline, the brain is apt to fall into lazy habits. The conscious I becomes inactive with no spontaneous control. The power is there but untrained and unused. Frequent brief exercises in awareness, concentration and will, restore and develop this power, as all the exercises have a direct influence on the neuro-cerebral system. They help to stabilize and reinforce conscious control and to reduce mental inertia and automatic behaviour. Each state has its own vibration, which gives the teacher tangible means to help the pupil regain control and balance and to build confidence through

successful experience. However, even without a teacher we can all help ourselves to some degree to escape the slavery of automation and negativity, and so strengthen the power of conscious control in reacting to any stimuli whether from within or without. Normal control, normal rhythm is a very positive, happy feeling of well-being, calm and balance. Doubts, fears and prejudices disappear of themselves. Instead of trying to use force against a symptom such as compulsive eating, drinking or smoking, and in sex problems, the cause is attacked indirectly through restoring normal brain functioning. In very simple acts you become aware of your faulty use and learn how to change it. You recognize the tensions, distractions and split attention. Only when you know what you are doing wrong can you correct it. In the beginning the exercises should be brief and few, then gradually increased as the power to attend without tension increases. Gradually you become able to apply this conscious control and become more objective to life and its problems. People who resist noise and so increase nervous tension can learn to hear it consciously, allowing the vibrations to penetrate. This permits no irritation, conscious or unconscious. You simply open up and let it come.

Invite it in! It is the same with touch. Be aware of the contact (whether hard, smooth, heavy or warm) with no mental comment, not even like or dislike. So with sight, let it come first, true and undistorted by idea as a child discovering the world, unprejudiced and without preconceptions.

Anything you do to improve the sense will be wrong. You simply give all your interested attention to what is brought in through the organs of sense. Thus you train these organs to constantly enrich your life and to break bad habits of automatism. The practice of such controlled acts leads to a normal and even the most highly elevated ideas through the unity of the conscious and unconscious and through psycho-physical coordination. There seems to be no limit to how far consciousness can be developed, but it tends to adapt itself to the special condition of the individual who instinctively applies it to his activities. The difficulty lies in the lack of sincerity with which most people put these principles into practice. They so much prefer something to do it for them – a treatment, a pill, ‘something to take’. Sometimes they play with the idea of making a fundamental change but their habits of mental inertia are too strong for them. It requires will and perseverance to conquer tenacious unconscious habits of thought and action and to install good ones. The reward is to sense self-mastery, confidence and the marvellous feeling of aliveness. Any person who gives it a fair chance cannot but recognize the truth and wonder of this developed power of consciousness. They realize as well that it answers an instinctive need for self-fulfilment. Another impediment to complete and sustained stability is the great temptation to discontinue the practice of conscious acts and exercises as soon as one feels better. It takes time to recreate or develop the habit of living in the present moment. Some people need many months to develop a habit of consciousness. When this is well installed it becomes normal use. We learn to recognize our control or lack of it and know what to do to maintain or recover it. When tense or depressed, worried or irritable, we know that we are out of tune and in a harmful, passive state. If this is prolonged old physical symptoms are apt to return. A brief second of awareness is sometimes enough to change the brain to a normal rhythm. If we are doing, thinking or feeling something contrary to our will, we know how to regain freedom and awareness in the present. We need no longer be dominated by morbidity, tension or pettiness. Seen from a calm perspective things take on proper proportion and the physical body behaves better. It is easy to see how brain functioning influences health, character and personality. When control is not normal, the true centre is not reached so that incoming and outgoing messages are distorted. Controlled, active functioning requires calm, harmony

and simplicity, it looks beyond personal desires and self-interest and so finds healthy joy and enthusiasm, love and understanding. The state of true consciousness is objective and impersonal. You are aware with the whole self. Whereas philosophy works from a standpoint of idea, this reeducation works from experiencing. It gives understanding through sensing what is. Ideas then come from this understanding. There is little good in reasoning with an unstable, overtense individual. His instrument is out of tune and distorts or does not receive incoming stimuli. With the mechanism out of alignment he cannot be expected to function normally. He loses the quality of reaction. There is no free flow of energy in or out. He must learn how to get rid of that passivity, how to become spiritually active and conscious of what is.

## CHAPTER VI

### USE

The body of civilized man should be an efficient instrument of the mind. With conscious control and an improved use of the self and the body, distortion and disease diminish or disappear. An outstanding example of the benefits to be gained by this improved use was told by Randolph Churchill in an interview with Ben Gurion for the London Evening Standard a few years ago. Churchill, surprised at the improved appearance and vitality of the Prime Minister, asked him why he looked so much more vigorous and fit in spite of the anxieties and difficulties he was going through. Ben Gurion enthusiastically gave full credit to what he had learned from a teacher of the F. M. Alexander principles of reeducation which, he said, not only cured him of lumbago but revolutionized his mental and bodily health. 'Mr Ben Gurion told me,' said Churchill, 'that not only is he entirely rid of the lumbago, but also of the troublesome habit of clearing his throat when speaking in parliament. In addition, he has found that his memory had greatly improved—a very rare thing in a man of seventy-three. To achieve this improved use, Alexander taught how to inhibit harmful, habitual reactions to any stimuli from within or without; how consciously to direct the self so as to create a new coordination of mind and muscle. He discovered that allowing the head to fall back instead of balancing on its atlas, and the spine and back muscles to curve in and collapse, causes pressures. It throws the body off balance and interferes with the functioning of all its organs and limbs. All tense effort whether physical or intellectual seems to be associated with rigidity of the thorax and a pulling down in the sub-occipital regions, causing pressures on the spine, especially in this region of the top three vertebrae. Refuse to permit that pressure and mental strain eases. The position of the head is of primary importance for all vertebrates. It is not held, but 'fallen into', the head being lightly balanced and free. FREE the head forward and up from the neck. Let it go up itself, do not deliberately put it there. It is not so much what you do as what you do not do that matters. In learning the new use you simply make a calm decision: 'No, I am not going to tighten. I am not going to pull that head back. I will not close in or sink into myself.' If you refuse deliberately to do any of these things the right thing does itself. 'Nature is there dying for the chance, if you'd only give it to her,' Alexander used to say. Refusing consent to come down or pull in choosing instead to go out, is as simple as to decide whether or not to eat a chocolate. You can choose to do one or the other. You may consciously give or withhold consent to do anything. It is a matter of will. When you open up all energies are free and radiate out into space. It is a kind of lengthening out of self in all directions, a freeing of self. Energy follows thought, conscious or unconscious. Focus your conscious attention with absolute trust and simply think of lengthening to turn your head or to extend

an arm—even to pull an object toward you. Watch any baby's movement and you will see what I mean. The slightest doubt defeats the end. It changes the direction and the quality of the energy. The great pitfall for most of us is wondering if we are right. Instead of staying with the principle we look for results. When we learn how to direct and use our bodies properly, awareness is increased and we are able to control nervous and muscular tension to the minimum required. Then we can exteriorize and achieve objectivity at will. We function more in obedience to nature's laws. With lowered awareness the pro-prioceptive (body) senses does not give accurate information. Gradually a maladjustment takes place which affects the functioning of all the organs. If the body is off balance movements cause all kinds of strain, irritation and harmful habits. The result is lowered breathing capacity and, according to Dr J. E. R. McDonough, is one reason why the blood cannot be pure. In consequence the whole system is effected. When you open up and let energies radiate out the body feels light; you have a feeling of buoyancy and being above things. Unconsciousness seems to be heavy. The weight on the scale is, of course, the same but a body in balance feels lighter to carry about. The importance of good posture is well known, but Alexander used to say that it was foolish to speak of it if the neuro-muscular functioning is imperfect. For then there can be no stability and the posture is likely to be a harmful 'held' position.

1(Citation 1

I realize that these few paragraphs greatly oversimplify some of Alexander's teachings, but his four books on the subject give full details of his discoveries. I simply cite these principles as a means of opening up in order that the sensory may function more reliably.) Unfortunately one cannot understand and correct faulty habits of movement and posture on verbal instruction alone. Words cannot express sensory experience. Most of us need the teacher's hands to check the direction of our energy and help us to recognize the change. As any osteopath can tell you, many symptoms of ill health are due to faulty use which causes undue pressure on the vertebrae, nerves and internal organs. Opening up, lengthening out (or refusing to tighten, refusing pressures) permits a heightened consciousness so that we are able to meet life and its problems objectively, and stay above the sordidness and confusion that is so prevalent a part of modern life. The unstable or neurotic person does not have conscious control. He puts up a wall, a defence against the problems and difficulties of life. His vital power weakens and he becomes a slave to his own organism without freedom or inner harmony. Instead of objectifying he sees everything egocentrically in terms of himself. He neither sees nor hears what is, but comes to everything with a preconceived idea or emotion that distorts fact. He rarely listens or tries to understand what is being said or done. Instead he withdraws further into self, uninterested in another point of view. All life's activity whether mental or physical is met with this faulty use. Without consciousness in control he is driven by impulses, moods and desires. Of course he is not happy.

We can learn how to modify these states, these mental habits and the state of the brain. We are working with a vital force which can perform miracles when we learn how to dominate and direct it instead of misusing it to torture ourselves. The new control (full consciousness) of thoughts, emotions and acts gives a very positive sensation of wholeness, of harmony with yourself and with reality. The increased self-awareness acquired through improved use enables controlled reaction instead of automatic, unconscious response. Nearly all the work of the brain is in thinking. Its rest and nourishment come through sensing. In learning to use our senses, we modify brain activity and achieve an economy of

nervous force. If the brain falls into lazy habits the nervous system is affected and causes malfunctioning of the brain and other organs. This is especially true of the vascular system which then makes the organs anaemic or congested and augments or diminishes their secretions at the slightest psychic influence. With improved use and conscious control, you eliminate distractions and mind-wandering and so increase vital force. The channel is clearer with fewer leaks and the consequent loss of energy. Moreover you learn not to overspend your energy by making more effort than is needed. The quality of energy is also improved becoming calm and free, not tense. You begin to sense your power and act with confidence. Many people are inclined to be skeptical until they have had the experience and so understand. It is rare, though, for anyone after the first hour of practice not to see what is meant, but to apply the principle to life takes him a long time. It is subtle and elusive. Repeated and repeated good experiences are necessary to install the new habit of use. Let sensation come to you! I shall repeat this again and again. If you try to seek it in the old habitual way, you tighten and pull into yourself. Let the head fall into place so that it balances high on its pivot, whether in movement, in thought, or in receiving sensations. In all vertebrates the head leans (or should), lengthening forward and up from the neck, no matter what the activity, physical or mental. It is to be, as it were, spiritually within the object or the act. In the early stages it is important for the teacher to check the vibrations and direction of energy in order to avoid as much self-deception as possible and the very harmful habit of looking for results. Reading the vibration tells the monitor when energy is channelled and directed out to the point of focus, in writing, seeing, hearing or any act. It tells if the pupil is centreing-in and doing something with the brain itself. The brain should not be used as a muscle. 'It's just wonderful how these principles work when you put them into practice,' said my friend. 'One sees their truth through personal experience'. Then she told me that though she had loved gardening she was always tired afterwards with a cramped neck and aching back. But that when she freed the head up and forward and lengthened up out of the hips as she bent over, giving full attention to the task without letting her mind wander, she returned refreshed after two hours intensive work. 'Now I am going to see whether it is imagination or true,' she said to herself two or three days later, 'so I will do it the old way with no attention to posture and less concentrated on what I am doing.' Sure enough she returned to the house with all the old familiar pains, but wiser and convinced.

Then is no end to the marvels produced by conscious direction and an improved use of the self. A particularly interesting case was that of a man in his early sixties who had an unusual number of symptoms of psycho-physical malfunctioning. He complained of constant and extreme headaches, pains in his neck, back and shoulder. He suffered considerable pain and disturbance in the viscera. The more he slept the more he felt that he needed to sleep. He had lost all contact with himself, his friends and his work. What seemed to him worst of all was that he thought he had become impotent. This fear causes many men and women a lot of unnecessary unhappiness and contributes to increased nervous instability. Evidence indicates that a truly impotent man or frigid woman is rare. The disorder is usually functional and a symptom of some form of passivity that is indirectly corrected when the person has achieved an improved use and conscious control. This man had consulted one doctor after another, none of whom could find anything organically wrong. Even his neurologist regretted that there was nothing to be done. Once a gay, fun loving person even greedy for life he became despondent, suffered extreme and constant nervous depression and talked increasingly of suicide. He came for the reeducation in desperation and without enthusiasm. In fact he was a little inclined to ridicule it. His thinking was so negative and despairing that I wondered if we would get anywhere. But each lesson

gave him such release that within ten days he began to give full, wholehearted cooperation at home. He was one of those rare pupils who faithfully carry out all the practice they are asked to do. As his mental attitude gradually changed his pains disappeared. He regained his enthusiasm and an interest in what was going on outside of himself. At first he would call for help when he could not recapture control by himself. Gradually he learned to work alone in the same way as we worked together and to conquer his disagreeable and painful experiences, instead of being obsessed by them. His confidence increased as he succeeded in controlling his thoughts and acts. A brilliant composer of high sensitivity that he now controlled, he began turning out fine creative work within ten weeks – after more than two years' incapacity. Here is but one example of what intelligence can do when well directed. He saved his career, his health, and his happiness, amazing his grateful family and friends. Many others have found understanding in their marriage and social relationships, and greater success in their profession, simply by being consciously aware and directed towards becoming a free, integrated and whole being.

## CHAPTER VII

### GETTING AWAY FROM THE EGO

Some time ago a man being interviewed was asked to what he owed his remarkable well-being at the age of eighty-two. 'To three things,' was the answer. 'First, choose your parents well; second, never loose height and third, walk forth in a world wider than yourself. 'Heredity certainly plays an important role in health and behaviour, but it is the exteriorization implied by the second and third points which concerns us in learning an improved use of ourselves for better functioning and greater awareness.

Most people, if they think about it at all, know that they get in their own way. They know they should forget the self and get rid of that interfering ego – but how? Due to his faulty, perverted sensory a person seeking to find what is wrong and why, usually tries a solution that merely increases his passivity and his symptoms. He becomes more withdrawn, more tense and so increases the disharmony within himself and between himself and his surroundings. Fixations, perversity and selfishness are signs of immaturity and a turning away from evolution. As long as one's chief concern is to get rather than to give, there can be no growth from within. Self-centredness is a result of misdirected energies, interiorizing instead of exteriorizing. It is myself, my problems, my emotions that have attention consciously or unconsciously. Psychic disorders and their physiological repercussions result. There is no fullness to life, no self-realization for the person who thinks or acts egocentrically, identifying things in terms of himself. Selfishness is never objective and in clinging to the self the whole sensory equipment is bound to be false or perverted so that opinions are distorted. It is only through going out of self that we allow the faculties of sense to function as a reliable register on which to base judgements. This exteriorizing frees energy by refusing an unconscious desire to tense, hold or watch for results. In learning conscious direction of the self, avoid wondering or checking to see if you are right. This is doubt and causes the worst kind of split, short-circuiting the current. This kind of doubt centres in upon the self, while confidence is outgoing. They cannot exist together. Headache is one of the first symptoms to disappear when one learns the new use. One learns to refuse it, to say 'no' to turning in, and to go up and forward out of the self and thus relieving the pressure that caused the pain. I cannot say how many people have found this secret very early in the training. As the new use takes over and one's attention and energies are habitually directed out, all inclination towards

headache disappears. Here as throughout these pages I speak of functional disorders, which according to medical authorities are the cause of most suffering. It has been said that ninety per cent of illnesses are of functional rather than organic origin. But frequently even in the latter case, the symptoms may be modified and the suffering lessened. For example one may unconsciously be centring in on a pain or discomfort. As soon as the full attention is directed out and so away from the affected part, the symptom diminishes or disappears. A striking case is that of my sister who suffered what was diagnosed as sclerosis of the spine, due to a bad fall downstairs when a very young woman. For years she favoured that back and suffered. She had been advised by her doctor not to bend over or do anything that would cause irritation. Some years later in an endeavour to free the vertebrae from pressure by directing energy up while having her move or bend, she herself remarked : 'It is perfectly true! I do come down and centre-in on that part of my spine. 'It was not long before she had entirely freed her back through frequent, conscious directions to lengthen up and refuse the tendency to collapse. A new stable but easy use was installed so that her back has been free and without pain for many years, though her complaint was of long standing.

My own case of rheumatic fever matches this history. Backs cause a great deal of suffering for many people until they learn the improved use. Then in most cases the trouble simply disappears. Loneliness is another symptom of centring in and the reason for much illness and unhappiness today. Since loneliness does not exist in the active state, one answer is to be in contact with all about you, to be interested in what is. It is the way to avoid all morbid states when long periods of solitude are imposed upon you. Of course there is a limit to the duration and intensity of solitude that a man can tolerate and remain happy. However there are those who do not know how to be alone at all. Others isolate themselves purposely and wonder why they are not well and suffer such fatigue. This is another form of unhealthy withdrawal. The hermit is seldom a happy man, for we are social beings and need contact and exchange with each other. When we have a sincere outgoing interest in others, doing things for and sharing with them, we avoid the suffering of loneliness. The defensive, withdrawn attitude is usually due to fear which breeds petty thoughts, jealousies and anxieties, shutting out the light of truth and harmony. It is only through detachment and getting rid of preoccupation with the self, that we can live useful, happy and healthy lives. The word detachment is sometimes misunderstood and confused with indifference. Detached, you may be vitally interested but without self-reference. You see all life including yourself and your problems as though from above, with everything below and in front of you in space. With detachment your interested attention is directed out and so you receive the true sensation of what is. To be detached is to be conscious and receptive, not tied up emotionally distorting facts. The first step towards living consciously is to go out of self. Lengthening out of the self, you become very aware of your body alive and vital. Body sense is of primary importance to living consciously. It is not something you do. It is a decision you make and let it happen of itself. Those who strain at the idea of going out, try to 'do' it: instead of freeing themselves they unconsciously tighten and pull in – the very opposite of what they want. Will, an outgoing force, does not come into play when the power to exteriorize is weak and unused. The power of concentration suffers also as does all control. A controlled person is able to give attention to sensation or to ideas at will, without distraction and without tension. He is also freer to adapt to life and overcome difficulties. Nervous symptoms indicate a weakness in the faculty of exteriorization. When you know how to open up you will never allow yourself to be dominated by depression, discouragement or fatigue. You rise above it all by directing your energy and your thought, refusing to indulge in regret for the past or fear of the future.



If you do not succeed you are not living in the present moment. You are clinging to some emotion, to some idea and only pretending to go out. To love, in the truest sense, is to exteriorize. To smile, to be gay also gives out and frees energy, so does interest in all that goes on. The critical state of mind is a harmful withdrawal from reality and interferes with free functioning and harmony. I often urge people when they are awake in the morning to smile with joy at finding the world again. 'Oh, yes,' said one pupil, 'Hello world, here I am.' 'No,' I said, 'Oh, world, there you are!' She then laughed at herself. 'But of course,' she said and she understood both herself and her problem of self-reference better. Real improvement began at that moment. The lessons are fun and when people learn to laugh at themselves they are on their way! All that depresses can be eliminated immediately by putting it out and out and farther out. You learn how to do this through exercises in distancing the figure '1' which exteriorizes your attention. It is a means of getting away from the ego, of leaving the self behind. Since it entails precision in concentration and use of the will, it is a fine, subtle discipline. You sense the detachment, the freedom from the self.

## CHAPTER VIII

### CONSCIOUS AWARENESS

Let us try to define what real consciousness is. To be conscious of something means to sense it. More than mere outward perception, it is as though you were inside the object or event, part of it. To be conscious is to be receptive to vibrations coming through the organs of sense or from within the mind itself. It means 'living in the present moment', a philosophy preached throughout the centuries but rarely understood. Many who try to understand merely strain at the idea and so increase their tension and duality. Instead of straining at the idea of reality, we must learn to let realization come through a gradually improved sensory. Sensation is the origin of all mental and spiritual activity; but with our faulty education, we begin early to deform these sensations through preconceived ideas or making too tense an effort, which is misuse of the brain and of the self. Rhythm is lost in a state of tension or inertia. As the misuse continues, it becomes aggravated and causes all kinds of mental and physical trouble. Thoughts, judgements, imagination and will are psychic emissivity. Intelligence and proper functioning require that we sense these thoughts then they come from the whole self. To sense them is to be at one with your thoughts as with body movements or acts of sight, hearing and touch. The nervous or neurotic individual intellectualizes and verbalizes constantly. He thinks his acts or performs them mechanically instead of experiencing or sensing them. He does not really feel but emotionalizes, becoming exaggeratedly sentimental in little things and incapable of response when real emotion is called for. He grows tense in making outward effort to see or hear instead of being receptive with the whole self. Constantly forcing his brain, analyzing or judging without first pausing to 'take in' he builds up such a tension that the sense organs cannot function properly. If their functioning is distorted or atrophied judgements suffer in consequence. There is a great difference between the state of freedom and oneness of truly sensing and the tense, split state. Conscious awareness allows a free harmonious exchange of the centrifugal and centripetal forces of nature. Consciously controlled, you live fully in the present, aware of your body and in contact with your surroundings, though free and independent of them. Consciousness objectifies everything, even your own body, your acts and emotions, your pains, problems and successes. It is through this consciousness that you can reach self-knowledge and self-direction on all planes whether physical, mental or emotional. You learn to use your innate power

instead of depending upon some outside influence. The uncontrolled person or rather one controlled by an unruly unconscious, lacks this flexibility and precision of will. He lives in a sort of dream state, subject to unconscious drives and reactions and in a constant whirl of rumination. Yet most of us live in a state of unawareness, even of our own thoughts and acts, so that memory and constructive imagination suffer. Conscious awareness is of special importance to creative writers, artists, musicians and others who enjoy a rich imagination. They must know how to put aside any interference and allow the unconscious to unfold and develop images which are undistorted. Even Ernest Hemingway said that his greatest trouble was to truly know what he felt, instead of what he was supposed to feel. He urged young writers to recognize what they really felt undistorted. This calls for the discipline of a highly developed consciousness. The conscious act as we shall see later trains the brain to attend and objectify. These exercises apply not only to what we see, hear, touch, taste and smell but also to awareness of our own bodies and movements, so that there is no split in the mind-body relationship. The movement of an arm, leg or finger becomes coordinated and integrated so that we sense control over our body and its movements. This awareness of body and movement is fundamental to the sensory. You must be aware of the self before you can be your own master. Receptivity is the underlying principle of the training in conscious control. Once we have learned to be 'conscious' of our body and incoming sensations, we apply this attitude of control to our ideas and emotions. In the same way we let come to consciousness thoughts, memories and emotions. It is always de-tensed attention in the right direction. When we sense things objectively we recognize their true quality. We know whether they are true or false, constructive or destructive. As awareness grows we learn to sense situations and people. Bringing a troublesome or negative thought or emotion into full consciousness automatically eliminates it. Depression, jealousy, worry or any dominating idea disappear when voluntarily brought to consciousness. In any situation you direct your attention to the facts not to your emotions. This changes the brain functioning. Passive states cannot exist at the same time as the active, consciously controlled state. Consciousness, therefore, is the secret to happiness and well-being. Even active awareness of passivity can cause the latter to disappear, at least for the moment. It is a flash of insight. Conscious acts in the present moment when repeated with sincerity create a new healthy attitude. Later if some accident should cause any collapse of control you will know how to deal with it. Morbid states never come from unity, from the integrated whole person. Jealousy, for example, emanates from the lower, uncontrolled nature. All fixed ideas are passive, not free. Remorse and guilt are harmful to the organism, but bring the fault into full consciousness without praise or blame and you bring about a more healthy, constructive reaction. Denying it or pushing it back destroys harmonious functioning. Learn to fix your attention on the fault long enough to develop a new idea out of it, instead of repressing it. This may well mean that instead of being a slave to egocentric resentment, compulsive acts and emotions you become objective and well balanced. For most of us it takes time to get the right perspective because we pretend to objectify while still holding on to the self. Unconscious conflicts cease to exist as soon as there is unity and equilibrium. This sense of freedom, calmness and self-possession is sometimes experienced in the first steps of conscious awareness. Confidence replaces fear and doubt as you realize the cause of your illness or fatigue. True consciousness is free of strain and is restful. It is mental inertia that causes most fatigue and discomfort. Training the consciousness develops a sense of wholeness and gives deeper meaning to life with greater understanding. Conscious awareness is the most simple and direct way to develop our powers and uncover many undreamed of hidden potentialities. Only when we are aware objectively, unemotionally and uncritically can we truly

understand any situation concerning ourselves or others. Thoughts which follow as a consequence will be true and based on undistorted receptivity of facts. There are, of course, many unconscious forces which work upon us but we can keep them at a minimum through conscious awareness of what is going on and so control our reactions. Start to be conscious of what you do and think and feel as much as possible. No one can be completely conscious of every act all day long nor is it desirable, but we want to avoid habitual mechanical or emotional attitudes which are unpleasant and harmful to the organism. The fact that integration of mind and body evolves out of an improved consciousness in the present, can be verified when reading the physical vibration. This vibration is an invaluable guide in the reeducation of conscious control, and we will now consider it.

## CHAPTER IX

### VIBRATIONS

In searching for an alternative method of treatment to psycho-analysis, Dr Vittoz placing his hand on the patient's forehead discovered a special kind of vibration. Very detailed study revealed that the type of vibration corresponded to the mental state of the patient. Then he found how to teach his subject to restore the vibration to normal and so experience improved well-being and control. The vibrations are modified by the mental state and so indicate brain function just as the pulse of a patient gives similar information about the heart. What can be read in this way is the state of the brain functioning and of control, not what is thought. In attempting to explain the vibrations which the hand perceives, I cannot do better than to quote Dr Vittoz' own very simple description of the various types. The following is roughly translated from his book *Traitement des Psychonévroses* : 'The pulsation of a normal brain varies, according to its state, from 5 to 100 beats a minute. The slowest represents a state of calm and, as the brain becomes animated, the vibrations increase. The volume and force of the vibrations vary also. As soon as will enters, there is an immediate response of great force and increasing rapidity; in spite of these variations, all normal vibrations have a certain rhythm and regularity to them, whereas abnormal vibrations are always irregular.

'The state of torpor is characterized by a diminution in sensation perceived by the hand. Reactions are slower and irregular. One senses the brain less active and without energy. A state of overexcitement, on the other hand, gives very strong, but disorganized reaction. Normal agitation has a certain regularity to the vibration. 'In a state of tension, vibrations are tight, as though made of wire. There is no fullness in the reactions, which are very rapid, or so tight that they seem not to exist at all. There is no regularity to these vibrations. 'A neurasthenic has never very regular vibrations, even when he feels quite normal. It may go along seemingly rhythmic for several moments, then becomes confused. Then back to normal to become disturbed again. Questioned, he will reply that an idea crossed his mind, or some distraction occurred. Sometimes he doesn't even realize that there was an interruption. 'Should he be obsessed with some idea, or be overexcited, the pulsation is very rapid, uncountable. Further, you observe a violent shock followed by shocks hardly perceptible, never a series of pulsations having anywhere near the same breadth or intensity. In anguish, the shocks are even more accentuated and more disorganized . . . a kind of panic. 'Admitting the existence of abnormal vibrations peculiar to the state of cerebral uncontrol, we are forced to conclude that any insufficiency modifies the functioning of the brain itself. The reeducation of control, then, cannot be complete until the subject succeeds in changing

the functioning of the brain, or replaces the abnormal vibrations with normal ones. 'How? First we must seek the cause which produces them. The cause is either instability or insufficiency of control. But this generalization is not enough indication for the training. There are other factors which must be carefully sought in order to find the key to the enigma. 'In examining the pupil's brain function, the abnormal vibration very often modifies and takes on regularity of controlled vibrations. Why? There are three chief principles that explain this sudden change of vibration:1. If it is a matter of a simple instability it suffices, generally, that the pupil becomes more conscious of what he does and of what he thinks.2. When there is a certain degree of insufficiency, consciousness alone is not sufficient. He must be able to concentrate on the act or idea.3. The third and most important factor which could replace the other two consists in his making his will intervene so that every act or idea be voluntary or that he senses them to be subject to his will. 'Proper functioning and cerebral control depend upon these three conditions. The patient must have sufficient consciousness, concentration and will. These three qualities will permit him to control and modify an abnormal vibration.' Vittoz has thus described and analyzed the more obvious vibrations which can for the most part be easily verified by any sensitive person who understands how to remain detached and receptive. Other subtleties in quality, tone and volume are indefinable. Sensitivity to and understanding of them develops with experience. These undulations signify the state of consciousness or instability. About 30 or 40 consecutively is average. Each series is separated by a slight rest of a few seconds.

Comments and discussions of the will-wave and those of concentration and receptivity will be made later under individual headings. Here we have limited comment to the normal and abnormal vibrations of controlled and uncontrolled states. If the teacher is well trained and intuitive, it seems that the hand can detect nuances unrecorded by a machine. Great patience is necessary. The monitor must be completely objective and receptive himself, avoiding all tension and muscular fatigue. Unlike with the pulse no one can take his own vibrations. Reading the vibrations with the hand detects any faulty use and when normal rhythm is reestablished. Vibrations also indicate the depth of thought, the waves varying with doubt, negation, affirmation, etc. The rhythm varies in quality, quantity and depth according to the mental, physical and moral state of the subject. Harmony and equilibrium or lack of them is reflected in vibration, so that the teacher can verify whether there is a unified whole, superficial control or none at all. He knows whether it is simply cerebral or if it comes from the integrated self. True confidence has a free, supple quality and the hand senses it as though from deep within the person. A defensive attitude of holding to the self can also be read very deep, sometimes under a superficial vibration of receptivity or concentration. Resentment, depression, anguish, doubt and inferiority all have their rather special vibration, and so has objectivity. It is a very different movement than when there is merely the idea of detachment or objectivity. The pupil learns to sense the difference between the state and the idea of it. In all such activities as reading, thinking and listening as well as resting, it is easy to check these vibrations. Many muscular acts including walking can be dealt with in the same way or with the hand on the pupil's back instead of on his head. These vibrations can be read on any part of the body but they are most easily discerned with the hand on the subject's head. Some with high sensitivity and intuition can read them at a considerable distance from the person. A true spiritual vibration is a beautiful experience for the teacher as well as the pupil. The hand senses a tremendous freedom and fluidity in the wave, with a great upswing on the right side as it oscillates in a deep curve. Every emotion and thought has its own type of wave and these vibrations have their repercussions in the physical body. There is no possibility of deception. The pupil very soon learns to

recognize the difference between the active state with its accompanying freedom and well being and the passive states with their discomfort. In concentration and all emissivity as well as in receptivity the functioning should be free and continuous, never tense or broken. In a semi-conscious state or in sleep the undulation is not the same as when the pupil is conscious of what he thinks. In receptivity exercises, the half conscious, superficial vibration betrays any lack of integration. When you correct him the pupil will sometimes say, 'Yes, I see the difference now but not until you called it to my attention.' This is how the monitor aids in correcting self-deception in the learning period. Insincerity and self-deception can be detected by reading these vibrations. The pupil may believe what he says but the brain contradicts him. This has been of great help in 'confessions' of the over scrupulous. If you ask, 'Do you really believe that you have sinned?' he affirms with conviction, but the brain contradicts him for there is no affirmative wave. If he is advanced, he knows himself better and recognizes the lack of freedom and unity, the self-deception. A pupil was asked if she would practise her exercises more consciously and more often. She said that she would but the vibration was very superficial showing vague intention but not sincere will. Her attention was called to it and she was asked if she could not be more positive, realizing how much good was to come of it. A strong affirmative wave registered before she had time to utter a sound. She sensed the difference herself and recognized the force of sincere decision. Wrong conceptions also can be detected in reading the brain vibration as in the case of a young post-graduate student at Harvard. When asked to think 'freedom,' he tightened and pulled into himself with great tension – a defensive attitude, anything but free! When the prevailing state is one of stability there is a healthy reaction after a normal agitation or emotional disturbance. Dr Vittoz compared the brain to a rubber ball that returns to its original form after being distorted. It remains limp only when the rubber has lost its flexibility. Thus a brain which is passive and lacks tone, holds the impression of the slightest shock instead of automatically returning to equilibrium and stability. We do not yet, completely understand these vibrations which may not originate in the brain. They are however, a physical phenomenon which coincides with the state of the brain and nervous system. As the whole muscular system reacts to the state of the nerves, some people think that the vibrations may be cellular. When this 'brain' vibration is restored to normal physical and mental life become more normal and balanced. This happens indirectly through reeducating the attention. Here, as in all the training, you do not go directly after the result. This is a rather subtle but very important principle. 'The end takes care of itself. Stay with the means,' Alexander used to say. Dr Vittoz expressed the same thought: 'Don't look for results. Stay with the principle.' This means that good vibrations come only when you are sincerely interested in something other than yourself, when you get rid of ego-centrism in all its many forms.

## CHAPTER X

### CONTROL

Control is another of those words which like love, freedom and will is often misunderstood. Usually it is confused with repression. It is by no means the same thing, anymore than having control of your car means driving with the brakes on. True control is supple, flexible and de-tensed. It is a confident force which comes from a harmonious, integrated whole person. Perfect control is rare. It is found in the detached serenity and comprehension of great saints and highly evolved individuals. The set, firm-jawed 'control' is only tense effort. Such individuals do not understand the use of free will power. They

are usually afraid of their emotions and so suppress them. They do not understand the rhythm of life, so stiffen and block the free flow of energies and increase their tension; then one day something somewhere pops!

Control is not complicated. It is simplicity and harmony. The controlled state is one of free, effortless functioning, a combination of calmness and energy. Lack of control means anarchy or the inability to do as we will. By control we mean a balance between the conscious and unconscious mind, so that every sensation, act or idea is controlled by the conscious, reasoning mind which judges, modifies or eliminates. Control is the faculty of focusing attention at will on any idea, sensation or act. It also regulates, regenerates and inhibits physiological brain activity – the way the brain receives, assimilates and gives out. This faculty is spontaneous and natural in the normal person and should develop progressively as he matures. Anyone, of course, may lose control for a while but one who is habitually uncontrolled is ill. According to Vittoz, the function of control is to unite the centres of comprehension and act or idea. It is true that sometimes time and nature correct a dissociation due to instability of control, but usually the disunity can only be corrected through reeducation. The split state of doing one thing and thinking of something else, if unrestrained, develops into serious malfunctioning. A nervous tension results which makes it impossible to adapt to life however hard the victim tries. He must learn objectivity and how to be aware through exteriorizing. To say 'relax' or 'stop thinking of yourself' only maddens him. He wants to, but how? How escape from the prison of himself? These readaptation methods give him the key. Vittoz defined conscious control as a regulator and inhibitor, in that it limits the number of associations or dissociations. Without this control of the conscious I there would be chaos and wild exaggeration such as are experienced in dreams. Normal reaction to stimuli allows only the images relevant to the development of an idea or act. Control requires that consciousness rule and regulate the vast powerful unconscious. When the conscious I is not in control unconscious pressures find their way out and develop nervous symptoms. The sufferer usually senses his lack of wholeness but does not know how to deal with it. When you feel out of control it is because your brain is not fully conscious, not concentrated. To reestablish control we must improve the faculties of receptivity, concentration and will. Only then can we know truth, freedom and integration. As regulator and coordinator, control permits us to give attention at will to thoughts or to incoming sensations. That is, we can at will be in contact with reality or follow an idea without the brain-wandering that troubles most people at times. Dispersed attention is the very opposite of consciousness. Control gives our thoughts and acts precision, and with it we can stop the incessant "thinking" which as a rule is merely unproductive rumination of which we are unaware. While a coordination of all three functions, receptivity, concentration and will is the ideal goal, this does not necessarily mean that each function should be developed equally in all of us. Differences in personality are due to differences in brain functioning. The artist, the scientist and the industrial leader are examples of three different types. Though balanced personalities a different function predominates in each. The active state which is conscious and objective is capable of reacting to stimuli whether from without or within. There is one active or normal state but passive, uncontrolled states are many. Brain-wandering and tension are most prevalent. Worry, depression, nervous agitation, hyper-excitability, fears, phobias and many other symptoms are due to uncontrolled functioning. A sense of inferiority is another symptom of a lack of control and balance giving rise to ideas which are morbid, or distorted so untrue. Of course there are exceptions. Sometimes remarkably clear reasoning in special fields comes from very tense individuals, but at great cost to the organism. These are the men whom doctors beg to slow down. What wonders

these people could do if they would use their energy properly! Some conditions, such as grief or disappointment, may be active as well as passive but if indulged in for too long they become morbid. It is necessary to know and keep active about the cause. Sometimes however it takes time to accept a fact or situation, depending on how profound the sentiment may be. Learning control begins in learning first to sense your body, then other conscious acts are attempted through the organs of sense. Once this control of acts is achieved, then that of ideas and internal sensations can be attempted. The art of concentration and the free use of will power follow and are relatively easy due to the prior training. Thus we achieve self-direction and control of our reactions. Physical equilibrium is the first step towards moral equilibrium. Ideas superimposed on an old and harmful use and functioning simply add to the burden and confusion. The change must come from within. The physical, mental and emotional states must be brought into balance so that all one's being takes part in every act, thought or emotion. The ideal is rarely reached but training in only one aspect leads to imbalance. Conscious control is the key to self-knowledge and self-realization so that we can adapt to the terrific pace of modern life. It opens up the personality so that one radiates out and above and so meets life. Then we understand acceptance and are able to eliminate harmful ideas and sentiments. Pettiness has no place when there is control, while fears and phobias disappear of themselves as soon as normal rhythm and balance are restored through improved use of the brain. The training in cerebral control leads to precision of consciousness. In the normal active state all messages come to and issue from a centre of physical, mental and spiritual balance. Most of us instinctively seek this harmony and self realization but not so many know how to achieve it. As the personality becomes more integrated, true confidence and simplicity become natural as does a sense of well being. It is like escaping from prison to fresh air and light. This simple confidence that accompanies control is a very pleasant experience. In a controlled act we have a clear idea of it and the sense that it is willed. It obliges us to live in the present moment and brings the brain into a state of unity and repose instead of one of disarray and fatigue. Once we begin to live with mind and heart in the present, we are no longer enslaved by past experience. We are free. Integration and balance which come from brain control are always accompanied by freedom of will. Until we find this equilibrium, we deceive ourselves constantly by a perverted or debauched sensory equipment so that our thoughts and emotions are not true. The brain vibrations register this. Instead of being supple, full and free they will be superficial, confused or tense. All behaviour whether mental or physical reflects this functioning. Now the conditioned reflex is important for the self protection and preservation of all creatures, but we must still learn how to control our reactions. Yet we cannot achieve conscious control until we realize that external influence need not have an absolute effect on us. We must consider ourselves capable of reacting to and controlling any incoming impression, be it slight or powerful. Inhibition is important to all true thinking and activity. As Descartes discovered and physiologists have confirmed any motor act requires an inhibitory process along with the excitatory. But one must know how to inhibit by conscious choice with free will coming from unity of the conscious with the unconscious. It is only by bringing an idea into consciousness that you can control it. Pushing away an idea or an emotion that you do not want to face is harmful inhibition which discolours or distorts ideas and behaviour. This duality between the conscious and the unconscious causes mental, physical and emotional trouble. Symptoms of it show when we have an idea but do not act on it, when we are unaware of the idea which causes an act or sometimes when we cannot inhibit the idea which gave it impetus. We may behave in a manner we do not like but seem unable to control it. The aim of the readaptive method is to increase control of the conscious I so that

events that might become traumatic will be consciously assimilated and dissociated thus being made harmless. Once normal rhythm is established repressions free themselves and are regarded objectively. They no longer have power to make trouble in the organism. We are then masters of our reactions. Not only does a neurotic need to learn control, but a normal person can learn the means for greater achievement and efficiency in whatever field he has chosen. However, no one is normal all the time and a brain in complete equilibrium is rare. A moral force accompanies consciousness and moral values differentiate according to its development. Vice does not exist where there is conscious control. The choice is spontaneous and free, it is not forced or exacted; but we cannot help obeying the truth when we recognize it. Vittoz tells us that control warns of a danger, a wrong that only moral conscience may define. It and conscience go together. Since perfect control implies perfection, few of us achieve it, but we can all work towards improvement. It means struggling to conquer our faults. For example, jealousy which is one of the most destructive emotions, can be conquered very easily. First, and very important, is to refuse the physical manifestations as explained before. Of equal importance is to brush aside all preconceived ideas and become honestly and calmly conscious of the thing or person which aroused the unpleasant reaction, sincerely directing the interest outwards and being receptive to what is. It makes all the difference between pettiness and maturity, between the false and the true. There are men and women in whom jealousy seems to be a deep rooted disease. Some will not admit it even to themselves; but those who do and who have the will to conquer it, can do so by these simple means. They change their vibration to a healthy one. As a result they have a healthier influence on all whom they meet. There is no limit to the repercussions of one's behaviour. Bad temper and a hypercritical state of mind are dealt with in the same way. However, when one has learned the art of control, these destructive emotions occur rarely if at all. When they do they are an unpleasant sign that one is off balance and the brain reacts with an almost automatic check and recovery.

Cases are far too numerous to list, but there was one interesting pupil who wanted so much to share her experience. 'Please write something about self-pity,' she said. 'I was possessed by it, and I should like everyone to know how unnecessary that misery is, the fatigue it causes and the general harm it does to the whole self. Now I am free and well and so very happy simply because I am no longer preoccupied with myself and my little problems. I no longer act from a sense of duty but have a sincere whole-hearted interest in what I do. 'She had been spoiled and self-centred from childhood. When the man she loved left her for another, she became bitter and closed in on herself more than ever. Brooding and lonely she blamed the world and especially the man for the increasing discordance in her life. She was quite ill when she came for help. But as she learned the art of receptivity, consciousness and the use of will, she 'grew up' and health returned – so did the man. They married and both now enjoy the peace and happiness which deepens with each year. She had learned the joy that comes from keeping active towards life, the freedom that comes from conscious control. This joy and control radiated from her to the amazement and delight of her family and friends. To say, 'I'm not going to be jealous any more,' is not enough. It is too vague or may be but harmful repression however well intentioned. You can, though, decide to get back in control, and if necessary through conscious direction and conscious acts. It may not be jealousy that is your problem but perhaps depression, impatience, irritability, self-consciousness or any form of nervousness or passivity. In this manner such problems are dealt with indirectly. When the vibration is restored to normal the cause as well as the symptom disappears. Dr Vittoz wrote; 'Instinctively, so to speak, man arrests the evolution of his control so as not to have to struggle against his faults and vices, and he is astonished not to experience the happiness that perfect



equilibrium gives. As long as he does not dominate his weaknesses and inclinations to misbehaviour, his stability cannot be complete. 'Not only is control the secret of perfection, it is also the means of perfectability. The more a man increases his control the more he notices his imperfections and the relativity. 'As a moral faculty control judges good or evil from a very special point of view, that of moral equilibrium. Any action or idea which causes disharmony in the organism is wrong in itself, regardless of the end or intention. Naturally, one must have arrived at a certain stage of the training for, unhappily, few know how to use this control. . . . Most marked is the disappearance of the absolute quiet which only perfect equilibrium gives.'

1(Citation

1From notes left by Dr Vittoz and collected with others by Dr d'Espiney and Henriette Le Febre in Un Sauveur Le Dr Vittoz . . . pp. 58-59.)

## CHAPTER XI

### TRAINING

The training for this mind-control leads to precision in consciousness which is a means towards growth and a more integrated self. Only the experience can bring full understanding for it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe sensation or to understand the unknown in terms of the known. As all nervous instability which is not organic at base is a 'disease of attention', it is the attention which must be trained and developed. The whole organism is affected by abnormalities in the power of attention. This can be verified in reading the vibration which tells how the brain receives, concentrates and gives out. Attention is defective if we are preoccupied with thoughts when we should be receiving with the senses, or if we are distracted by something when we wish to concentrate on an idea. Proper functioning requires that we can attend to an outer sensation or an inner image at will, but to try to attend to two different things at the same time causes a split and makes trouble if continued. To focus attention out towards the exterior, or to that which comes from within, requires stability of conscious control and free will. During the learning period this may come in flashes of only an instant or so but they will gradually build up in duration and quality. If we cannot keep our mind on what we are doing, integration is lost and there is a great waste of energy due to diffusion. Diffused attention also blurs and distorts incoming sensations. Exercises in conscious, controlled acts strengthen the power of attention and discourage distraction and mind-wandering. Through these exercises in attention we learn how to concentrate and eliminate and so achieve supple control over our ideas and emotions. The habit of mind-control is built up by the practice of controlled acts. The new state which develops is stable and trust-worthy, not merely an accidental change brought about by an emotion or mood and therefore temporary. In the reeducation of the muscles involved in speaking or in movement, the pupil learns how to give his full, de-tensed attention to the precision of the act. But the idea which gives rise to the act must be clear and precise not vague, confused or unconscious. Most people need guidance and help to have confidence in their own powers and in their ability to get well or to control their behaviour. It is very important that we learn to function from the centre of our being, and so achieve an economy of nervous force with improved efficiency. To do this we must learn how to calm our fears or emotions, then quietly and confidently to inhibit the old response to any stimulus, and give conscious direction for a new improved use of the whole self. There is always the danger of self-deception when

working alone. Exercises without a teacher are often not advisable. Therefore no sessions of exercises are outlined here lest the pupil try too hard or watch for results and thus increase the duality. However; easy, untense conscious control of attention in the present moment can and should be practised by everyone who wants to develop his powers. The teacher reading the vibrations indicates to the pupil when the exercises are done superficially and not from the whole self. The very vague or tense pupil may not recognize the difference until after many lessons and considerable ingenuity on the part of the teacher. Most people, however, are conscious of the freedom after only a few moments of sincere practice. They are usually those who are more sincerely willing to break with the old pattern of holding on to the self. Many who are over tense and cannot let go, can learn through rhythmic movements to release the tension and so sense their body, its life and freedom. Then other conscious acts of sight, sound and touch are easier. Whether working alone or with the teacher whole-hearted application is required. Half-hearted practice increases passivity and prevents progress. In the learning period attention often flags as a result of mental inertia. There is no real direction of energy. Instead of the free, true will force there may be tension or irritability because of forced effort or annoyance at its being 'too difficult' to break with familiar patterns of unconscious, mechanical response. This attitude delays progress but it is usually overcome if there is a sincere will to improve. The most prevalent reason for failure is that when the pupil begins to feel better he neglects to continue the practice of conscious awareness. As a result he gradually (or suddenly) slips back into the old faulty habits of attention. This is the chief reason for a relapse and the reappearance of symptoms – this and the lack of a real will to get well and break with the old habits of mental inertia or morbidity. Old habits are often tenacious. Practice should be continued for months and months until the habit of living in the present is firmly established. It is a process of evolution in which patience is essential. Trying too hard, too long and too quickly will delay progress. Like the mountain climber bit by bit one slowly works one's way to the top – always in the present moment. Each moment prepares for the next, and finally one arrives at the top. Perfection takes a long, long time. Setbacks and relapses are inevitable. Accept them as a challenge, refusing discouragement. The secret of progressing is to keep interested and enjoy these experiences in self-discipline. Any great artist, musician or dancer employs this precision focusing in his work, though he seldom makes it a principle of life or applies it to the rest of his activities. Not wanting to practise conscious acts is due to passivity, to a withdrawal and indicates that those acts are needed to restore a sense of wholeness. If the exercises are done sincerely at frequent, regular intervals confidence, control and freedom of will become normal behaviour. Sometimes progress is delayed because the pupil does the exercises looking for results, for what they will do for him. He does not see it as a change in his attitude to life. Objectivity and detachment from the self are difficult so he takes to learning the very thing that he is trying to unlearn. Understanding sometimes comes very slowly. Repetition is as necessary in teaching as in these pages. We may explain a point over and over again. If the pupil is not receptive, he does not really hear or register it. His preconceived idea interferes. Then one day he is apt to announce the same essential fact as though it were his own discovery. That may be a good sign for it comes from within and is not a superimposed idea coming only from the lips. Although the exercises give tone to and rest the brain and nerve cells, their chief importance is that through them one learns a new use of the brain and the self in one's reactions to life. Like practising before playing tennis or a concerto, it is learning an art, the art of living consciously and in the present. Receptivity, then concentration and willed acts are practised first under ideal conditions and applied little by little to life and to unfavourable conditions.

In listening, for example, it is sometimes difficult to learn to hear in the new way, by letting sounds penetrate. The monitor watches and when tightening starts stops his pupil so that the latter regains control and is once more calm and untense. At first the pupil hears only meaningless sounds even though the subject matter is very simple, whether it be music, a lecture, or conversation. Little by little the new use becomes familiar, then more complicated material and longer periods may be attempted. The same procedure is followed for reading, speaking, writing and other activities. When learning new habits of use and control of reaction, remember to wait for the conscious, active state. When you cannot get your own attention any other way sit down and quietly ask yourself what it is you want. Let your will be clear, precise and confident.

## CHAPTER XII

### RECEPTIVITY

Of the three functions we have mentioned as necessary to control receptivity is the most important and fundamental. It is also the faculty most frequently at fault and the most difficult to learn. Most people know how to think and many reason very well, but relatively few know how to be receptive. As we have seen, if the brain is constantly giving out a whirl of thoughts whether conscious or unconscious, the laws of proper brain functioning are violated. There is no pause for rest and normal rhythm is interfered with. The brain like the heart, lungs and every other organ needs rest. This is achieved through being receptive to sensation, through taking in. The importance of acquiring this faculty cannot be over estimated. It is the basis of all control. Receptivity prepares the mental attitude for concentration and will. It trains the power of attention, withholding judgement until we have the facts. It restores harmony within the organism and puts us en rapport with reality. It teaches us to accept facts and so is the first step towards adaptation. Conscious awareness and receptivity are interdependent. As Dr Vittoz explained, receptivity of vibrations from the outer world is complete and sufficient only when it is conscious. Unconscious receptivity is incomplete and sometimes harmful because it becomes distorted. For receptivity to be perfect the brain must be in a state of repose which is not passive. Dynamic repose, awake, alert, with interested, de-tensed attention is needed for receptivity to be pure and undeformed by other sensations or ideas. So many deformed ideas and sensations are due to false reception. Science has not yet appreciated this fact. We have not been taught how to see and hear properly. More research is needed for training in wordless experiencing. This does not mean that everyone should fit into the same pattern. Each normal individual has his own manner of receiving and reacting, but no one is normal all the time. When we are not, receptivity is untrue and the truth of ideas depends upon the quality of receptivity. The way to find truth is to be mentally silent. Ideas and emotions are put aside in order to allow us to be purely receptive, to sense what is in the present moment and not to think.

Mental health requires us to live in the present. It is the key to understanding which depends upon the truth of receptivity. Do not do anything to understand. Just open up and let meaning come. It is a subtle combination of non-doing and effort – not muscular effort, but a subtle focusing of attention with the body de-tensed. To the degree that you have the sensation of your body it is de-tensed. If there is tension, you sense that not the body. To demonstrate stiffen your arm . . . you sense the tension, but it is not the sense of arm. Now relax the arm and you will sense it. The attitude of receptivity takes tense effort out of what we do. We learn actively to let the right thing occur instead of tightening up to go

after it. That word *let* is so important! To *let* instead of *get* is the rule here. When we stop doing the wrong thing the mechanism will function as nature intended. Remain objective and consciously permit what is to come to you. This means that one must learn to live with all one's being, to live, feel and breathe through every pore. When receptivity is true you feel as though every cell were nourished and free. It is a feeling of wholeness, of calm, confident awareness. Accustomed agitation, tension and chronic fatigue disappear. When we have learned to live in this way, we enjoy a sense of well being and happiness undreamed of by most people. There is no place for worry and morbid ideas of the past or the future. They cannot exist in the active state. So do not fight a morbid thought, simply do something to change the functioning of the brain. It has been proved over and over again that anguish of whatever nature or intensity cannot resist five minutes of sincere receptivity. The interest must be in the sensation of the object not in the result, not in what it is doing for you. Stop a moment and think what this means. Fears and phobias, such as fear of storms or of being alone in the house, cannot be reasoned away but the practice of receptivity in the present moment will calm the agitation. This is done by letting the whole field of consciousness be filled with, for instance, the sense of touch and movement as one rearranges the cupboard or bookcase. With consciousness in control the brain vibration changes and the fear disappears. This is the way to eliminate all morbid ideas or other symptoms of passivity. To be conscious of the act as you wash your hands, dress, or walk, rests you. It restores vital force instead of wasting it in dispersion. In this way you can even find pleasure in washing dishes and doing other chores which once seemed arduous and fatiguing. 'OH, come now, let's not go too far', laughed one pupil. But she tried it and let herself be enriched by the sensation of touch and the play of muscles and joints as she moved. The experience was one of joy. She was delighted to find herself rested and feeling 'wonderful' instead of tired and bored. The practice of wordless receptivity is to see, hear and touch, like a baby discovering the world. It is to float, to bathe in the pure sensation of the object without praise or blame, without even like or dislike. In the act of receptivity there should be no thought, opinion or judgement; no feeling or emotion except the sensation of what is regarded, heard or touched, etc. At first it may be very difficult to stop the constant whirl of thinking even for an instant. But with patient persistence, one has more and more frequent flashes of pure sensation, be it the blue of the sky, the sound of traffic, or an object touched. Gradually anew mental attitude becomes established. The pathways are clear. We no longer inject our emotions, opinions, troubles and tensions into every act. To be interested in something outside the self de-tenses. It is a good thing before undertaking an intellectual work, to devote several minutes to quiet the brain and de-tense through the conscious act; also to make several such pauses during the course of the work, frequent at first then more and more spaced as your control improves. In these pauses do a few conscious acts of sight, touch or movement so as to prevent tension and fatigue. After the work a few more exercises in receptivity will repose the brain. Each act takes just a second or two to register; then easily, quietly go on to the next. We are all too accustomed to injecting our emotions into everything. Most of us do not know how to be objectively interested in the 'thatness' of an object or event. This can be demonstrated in very simple acts which are used to train the brain so that we can control our reactions in any situation. One day a pupil learning receptivity of touch was asked to slide her hand down and up the back of a velvet chair. Sliding down was pleasant, but coming back against the pile she shrieked, backed away and became quite wild in expressing her dislike. She was not interested in the object but in her emotion about it—even in such a simple, harmless 'conscious act' exercise. Had she directed her attention out into the act she would have registered incoming sensations of touch, one

less pleasant perhaps, but she would not have withdrawn so violently, tightened all her muscles and been shattered instead of calm and detached. Though considered a fairly normal person this was her habitual approach to life. 'Keep these senses in rein,' my teacher used to say over and over again. It is not a tight hold but a gentle, sensitive control which prevents nervous instabilities. The danger of working alone is to become self-hypnotized, instead of reaching higher level of consciousness. We deceive ourselves and try to pursue our idea of what is right instead of letting truth come to us. By checking the vibration the teacher can help the pupil to recognize the difference between an idea and it. It is the itness, the reality which is important. When one finds himself facing facts as they are undeformed by ideas, things are simpler. When the conscious act becomes part of you your receptivity will grow more and more profound. It is absolute when you are in contact with all about you. As receptivity grows the power of giving out is increased and you are prepared to meet any situation. Amoral force develops from this control. It is more than a personal satisfaction for we all have an influence in this world, radiating kindness, energy and joy, or trouble, discouragement and evil. We never know how far the repercussions of an act or a word may reach.

### CHAPTER XIII

#### THE CONSCIOUS ACT

Training in receptivity, in improving the will and in concentration begins with the conscious act. It is your will that directs your attention to concentrate on the act, even though it be for a brief second or two. Thus the conscious act breaks the bad habits of automatism and dispersion of energy. Through it we learn to stop the whirl of the motor, the constant rumination which wastes the whole organism. The conscious act teaches us how to avoid the dream state. It develops precision and control. It is the means for returning the absent-minded preoccupied person to the present moment of reality. It is an exercise in controlled attention, the first step in the reeducation of conscious control. We learn to change the functioning of the brain by an act of will. In the exercises we learn to sense the difference between an act performed passively and one performed in an active state of awareness. The uncontrolled individual instead of being completely integrated in what he is doing, is split by mind-wandering, undue tension or some other distraction and so the act lacks precision. Often he cannot remember whether or not he has performed it. This lack of certainty contributes to a loss of self-confidence. To have the true, sincere experience requires patient training and a strict, though gentle discipline; but the resultant happiness and well-being are worth all the struggle with bad habits. Through the conscious act we learn de-tension in activity. As we apply ourselves to the conscious act with exactness the brain begins to act with precision. Little by little the habit of control establishes itself and confidence in oneself develops. More than anything else it is confidence which causes the brain to react quickly and it is achieved through the well-done conscious act. Mechanically done, these acts cause a wider split and increase the passivity. It is fundamental that in order to learn an improved use of our sense organs and to receive the true sensation of any object, the body muscles and especially the joints should be free of tension or pressure. De-tension is both the means and the result of receptivity. It works in a happy cycle. As consciousness and the sensory become more acute another overall sense is developed, a kind of super-consciousness and increased intuition. You can learn to quiet your brain, eliminating thoughts through pure sensation, sensing your body, sight, sound or touch. Take your time, though. Do not force

it. There is no effort in receptivity. Sit down and confidently call for quiet. Let the sensation come to you, do not strive for it. Then simply choose what you give your attention to and let it come. See it, feel it, hear it as though for the first time. Never be mechanical but truly interested and therefore enriched by incoming vibrations. Faulty receptivity results from lack of or only superficial attention, or from tense effort. Good results are indirect. If these exercises are done for results, watching for their effect, for what they will do for you, then you are defeated before you start. If you do an exercise to see or feel better, attention hence energy turns in not out and this is harmful. Forget yourself. Get rid of the ego and let the right thing come on its own. To sense the movement of a finger, for example, do not seek for it in the brain. The sensation is in the finger. Do not DO anything with the brain. Open up your heart, goon out of the self and let the sensation register. Be patient and confident although it may take a second or two to report to consciousness. The attitude is one of sincere, impersonal interest. Receptivity of movement will release your tension or moving your attention from one point to another in seeing or touching will avoid the fixed state. Acts should be brief and supple though precise. With experience you learn to apply the conscious act to your daily activities. Take a simple exercise like opening and closing the hands or extending an arm or leg. You sense the play of muscles and joints and also sense that it is your own free will which directs the movements. Gradually you sense your mastery over your body and movements in whatever you are doing. In reestablishing contact with and control of parts of your body stay out of the way, detached and, for example, let the sensation that is the left foot come: remain detached and choose to let the right foot come and so on with different parts of the body. For most of us in the learning period this exercise needs to be controlled by the teacher to avoid tense effort and self deception with the 'idea' or visualizing, instead of receiving it. To be consciously aware of the sensation is not to say, 'I am touching the glass'; 'I am putting on my gloves'; 'I hear the roar of traffic' or to name what you hear, see or touch. Simply sense it. Receive the vibrations, the sensation without mental comment. To think is giving out and work for the brain. The conscious act should be pure wordless receptivity and a rest to the nerve cells. Let sensation enter as though by every pore, as though every cell were receiving. You must keep free and de-tensed for that. One day a pupil was having difficulty with the conscious act vacillating from one state to another, trying too hard to do well or being cerebral and occupied with her preconceived idea of it; or lapsing into passivity, not even interested for fear of over-doing it. We stopped and chatted a moment to get away from all this confusion and trying to be right. Then I casually picked up a very fragrant apple and handed it to her to smell. She let the perfume enter effortlessly, fully interested in only that, and achieved true receptivity. I asked her to invite in the same effortless, interested way, the sense of several objects touched, seen and heard all of which she did with a wonderful sense of de-tension and rest. 'Oh, let's stop right there,' she said. 'It is too wonderful an experience, I have learned so much!' In the successful conscious act the external sensation occupies the whole field of consciousness. It is not merely knowing that you are doing it but sensing the act. Then the conscious and unconscious work together in the present. There is no split, no undercurrent, no tension. The conscious act is reposeful and at the same time gives tone to the nerve cells. The sensation comes to the centre of your being. It lasts only a second or two but when repeated many hundred times a day miraculously creates a psychic transformation. It is essential that there should be no intervening thought of any kind. Your sincere interest must be in the object, in the act and not in your opinion or emotion about it. It is an exercise in objectivity to correct the harmful habit of introversion and self reference. The attitude is one of a child waking from sleep and wordlessly rediscovering the world about him and his own body. Let the sensation come to

consciousness easily, slowly, confidently; never hurried, never tense but profound. Do not look for it. Wait, let it penetrate. Do not judge or analyze it. Don't try too hard or too long. A spirit of play leads to mastery. Keep it fun. Enjoy your practice in consciousness. To be conscious of something is to sense, to feel, not by being emotional about it but by receiving – absorbing the vibrations. Learn to take in first; then when the new use is established, there is a spontaneous exchange. Take in, give out and what you give out will be based on what is received and, therefore, more true. Thinking should follow and not precede receptivity. If you are patient and sincere distractions and all forms of passivity disappear.

When you are holding and reading a book, let your sense of touch aid in directing your attention out there onto, into the printed page. This 'receptive' reading is also the secret of understanding. Read with the heart, then it is something more than an intellectual accumulation of facts. It is enlightenment. To read actively in this way is far less fatiguing. As we have seen, the habit of being distracted, of doing one thing while thinking of another causes a great loss of vital force. Start to be aware as often as possible during the day of what you are doing. Sense your movements as you dress, as you brush your teeth, or wash your hands. Let the psycho-physical whole be in whatever you are doing and notice the remarkable rest that comes from it with a release of tension. The well done conscious act trains a unity of feeling, idea and will. The attitude must be one of patience and without doubt. You simply wait confidently for the sensation to come to consciousness. It is a restful experience, not one of effort. Do not be tempted to go after it or to look for it. Wait, trusting. After some practice it comes spontaneously and immediately, although in the beginning it may take a few seconds before it registers. You remain receptive for about one second, then reconcentrate if you wish or go change the object. Be sure not to make any effort. A controlled act is one of quiet ease and freedom and, I must re-emphasize, completely conscious. There is a clear idea of the act and the sense that it is willed. It is never done with a sense of duty or of being compelled but freely. There is never reluctance or resentment in a consciously controlled act. There is the joy that goes with sincere interest. When you have gained ease and confidence in these conscious acts, then look, feel, hear and move separately in rapid succession, then altogether. This heightens consciousness of the present moment. Even though to start with a teacher should be present to control these conscious act exercises, most people get tremendous release from tension and fatigue by simply being consciously aware during their daily acts at home, at work and at play. Others are deceived by the idea of being consciously aware and need long training in the exercises. The rewards of increased consciousness are rich and may affect the whole family or group if even one member learns the art of living in the present. Consider a wife and mother who felt herself imposed upon and misunderstood. Her husband, a brilliant, highly sensitive man had a very difficult disposition made worse by her negativity, sulking and possessiveness. The situation grew worse and worse until she was on the verge of a nervous breakdown with suicidal tendencies. All medical and therapeutic treatment had failed. In desperation she turned towards training in the principles outlined here. As she learned to open up, to become more conscious of reality and live in the present, she experienced a new found freedom and harmony within herself. Her pettiness and self reference disappeared. She became happy and loved life; but most wonderful to her was how much he had changed. He had become more thoughtful and affectionate, there was harmony in the home that the children also reflected. By changing herself she had revolutionized her life and the lives of her loved ones. Such cases are almost endless. How often a wife has said, 'I now have back the man I married!' As one husband put it: 'I have a new wife, even better than the other'. Developed consciousness leads

to greater harmony with oneself and one's family and to more rewarding social and business relationships.

An interesting experience was that of a young actress, one of the most unstable of Hollywood's personalities. As she learned control through the conscious act, her calm confidence had a remarkable effect upon the entire company which changed the opening night from the usual agony of nerves to confident joy. Then knew that it was she who had brought stability to the group but they could not understand the source of her power. She was proud and happy as she told me of their gratitude. She added that she now blessed a director who made her wait for an interview. Instead of fretting and meeting him in a state of complete uncontrol, she now used the waiting time to practise conscious acts for several minutes, and walked into his office composed and confident, which, she said, never failed to surprise him. There is another interesting case of a man about seventy-eight years old. He was becoming senile and somewhat of a problem to himself and his family. He was, as are many of his age, easily fatigued so that even a ten minute walk exhausted him. He became interested in lessons in conscious awareness and learned to walk consciously sensing his movements, what he saw and heard and especially the feel of the ground beneath his feet. In only a few weeks he found the rest and relief that consciousness brings and would return refreshed and in excellent spirits after an hour's walk. He and his family marvelled at the change. 'Not only am I better,' he wrote me, 'but I am so much happier!' 'The conscious act is the key to a supple control of the whole person. Lucidity, happiness and physical well-being replace vagueness, repression and lack of energy. A seemingly miraculous change is brought about by such simple means.

## CHAPTER XIV

### SENSATION

In the foregoing chapters we have emphasized and re-emphasized the importance of sensation. Truth of thought depends upon it. Emotion and ideas are aroused by what is sensed. All knowledge comes through the sensory equipment. Therefore, it is extremely important that the organs of sense function properly and that reeducation is aimed towards that end. Intelligence feels, it senses things. The Latin word *sensatus* means intelligent. We cannot have too much sensation provided it is controlled and true and not an emotional hyper-excitability which wastes energy. The greater the number of these incoming sensations, the greater the enrichment. Everything has its sensation – a white cloud, a vase, a chair leg, the fold of a curtain, the texture of a fabric. Form has its sensation, colour, sound, touch, your elbow, foot and ear, so has each movement, act and idea. Even thought must be sensed to be true. If consciousness is faulty and receptivity incomplete, the sensory is not true and errors of judgement and opinion result. When you learn how to let consciousness be penetrated by vibration whether from within the mind or from without and learn not to confuse your idea with the fact, you will enrich your life, thought and understanding. Your heart is more open. The change does not come suddenly or overnight but evolves gradually.

Sensation may be heightened and improved in proportion to the mental attitude and preparation, for psychological attitude affects the sense organs. The chief reason for failure is that your interest is not directed out, is not in the object but ego-centric, preoccupied with your opinion, emotion or preconceived idea about it. A subtle discipline is necessary to stay consciously aware and receptive.



Practice in receptivity intensifies sensation and develops an increased acuteness. This is especially true of vision, the most subtle and variable of all the senses. Alexander used to say that if you are not consciously controlled the register is unreliable and you cannot trust old feeling tones. Then he told me of William James, who used wilfully to bring about an extreme tension in the region of his heart, for the release that he experienced afterwards. Unaware of the harm done by the tension he thought this was good for him. A dear friend of mine used purposely to stare as hard as she could so that her eyes would sting and then release. Like James she thought that she was inducing relaxation despite the fact that her brain registered greater tension. Although an intelligent person she was deceiving herself through dependence upon an untrustworthy sensory. We deceive ourselves constantly but less so when practising exercises in seeing. If your vision blurs it usually means that you are pulling in, tightening somewhere, or that your mind is wandering and so interfering with true receptivity. By not attending with full presence of mind you develop bad habits in using your eyes. Blurred vision oftens seems to be tied up with a narrowing across the back and with centreing in not out. It is another symptom of misdirected energy. The conscious and unconscious are not working in harmony. There is no freedom of conscious control. A lack of conscious control causes all kinds of aberrations in ideas and in the general functioning of the senses. Sight is one example. Dr Bates found that most refractive error was due to a 'wrong thought'. It is simply imagined wrong, he said. He found memory, imagination and sight to be inter-dependent and that if one was perfect, so were the other two. Provided that there is nothing organically wrong your ability to improve your vision is commensurate with your ability to remember or imagine any object, colour or point. The smaller the object or letter remembered the better. If you have a blurred or vague conception, the vision will not improve. Those who have fully corrected their vision were able to concentrate easily and effortlessly on the memory of an object imagined perfectly. A delicate coordination of nervous impulses is achieved through perfect memory or imagination and is carried over into seeing. This concentration brings rest to the eye, mind and all the nerves as energy is properly channelled instead of being dispersed in all directions. It is precision focusing without muscular effort, without tightening anywhere in the body. It is an easy, gentle discipline and an important step towards the improved use and control of the self. Keep all muscles and joints free simply by refusing consent to tighten them. To think, see and hear does not require muscular effort. If the print blurs when you read let the head go up and forward and the back widening – opening up in all directions. Go out of the self spiritually as it were to be one with the object. The whole self takes part in seeing and we must learn through sensing how to liberate and direct only the amount of energy that we need for any act.

Dr Bates frequently asked his pupils to practice five minutes a day reading fine print. You must relax to read it, he explained, and so learn a new habit of use. It is important, especially while learning, to rest frequently before effort and strain set in. Then old bad habits of undue effort gradually disappear. If you sense any object, a bouquet of flowers for example, you spontaneously shift from one point to another, resting in it with effortless looking. It is the same with any distant object or the printed page. To retain the memory of an object also requires you to shift mentally. Close your eyes, recall something simple like a chair and you will see what I mean. To hold a point fixedly without shifting is effort. It interferes with rhythm and therefore with sight and memory. By imagining the object or letter precisely we get rid of confusion and this improved mental attitude gradually becomes the new use for the act of seeing, replacing the lazy habit of vague thinking and diffused energy due to lack of control. The uncontrolled state causes wrong muscle pulls and so distorts vision as Bates discovered. Sometimes it

is simply a matter of focusing too far or too near which affects the muscles concerned. Perhaps, due to a lack of precision all extrinsic muscles are pulled so that seeing is blurred and astigmatic. Dr Bates and others have explained this in detail in various writings. In the New York Medical Journal, May 8, 1915, he wrote: 'The sole cause of all the uncomplicated functional errors of refraction is a conscious or unconscious effort to see. The only remedy for this strain is relaxation. Relaxation or rest of the eye is accomplished by central fixation. . . . When vision is normal, there is tremendous activity to eye movements and no evidence of effort; whereas, in the eye with imperfect sight, movements are slower, wider and jerky and made with apparent effort. 'All Dr Bates's training is directed towards getting normal movements in the eye ,to break the stare, to release the tension, the hold. Nothing is done with the physical eye itself but indirectly through attention and mental attitude. Faithful practice is sure to bring improvement. Sometimes at first the functioning changes for only a flash. It takes time and patience to install good habits. A fully cooperative pupil with an understanding teacher cannot fail to correct a long list of uncomplicated functional disorders. Dr Bates found that it is only when the twenty or so eye muscles coordinate properly that we have a clear precise impression of the object regarded. The play of muscles depends upon the quality and direction of nervous impulses. This coordination, however, is not something that you do in the ordinary sense of the word. It is really non-doing which must not be confused with passive, collapsed inertia. Just stop doing the wrong thing. Let the way be free by simply focusing the attention with body de-tensed. If while reading you think of something else this duality is bound in time to cause a lowering of vision. In a seeing exercise as in all drills many people, in order not to make an effort, slip into a harmful state of vagueness instead of just being easily, confidently, objectively interested. The mental attitude is extremely important to good vision. The psyche directs the body in all activity whether consciously or unconsciously. Perfect coordination requires conscious control. Literally countless people have been helped to normal sight through the Bates method, especially those who are in the beginning stages of refractive error and who do not wear glasses. Sometimes it takes only a matter of minutes or a very few days to correct the faulty use. Others need a long period of training. When there is a long history of glasses which have been frequently changed the problem is usually more difficult. People simply do not respond even when the trouble is functional and not organic. The trouble may be too deep seated. It may call for more time, patience and whole-hearted perseverance than one is willing to give. For most of us there is no quick and easy way to develop any art and the proper use of the self is a art. Patient, confident practice is necessary. Acts repeated over and over again with fresh enthusiastic interest are needed to install habits of psycho-physical coordination. Many books and articles have been written on Dr Bates's method for improving sight. Here I merely emphasize certain principles in terms of an improved general use of the self and the required mental attitude.

## CHAPTER XV

### MENTAL ATTITUDE

To acquire the necessary mental attitude for conscious control we need a lot of de-conditioning. First of all we must learn detachment from the self and must train the sensory to perform as nature intended. This means that we must learn pure receptivity through the senses and not emotionalize or infuse our prejudices into the things we see, hear and touch. A state of receptivity should be the attitude towards life, sensing your body, surroundings and being, in the present as children do. This is the way to use

the brain and the self for all learning and doing. Let all knowledge and understanding come to you. The principle of conscious control is the same whether we look at a page of print, hit a golf ball, play an instrument or whatever we do. The mental attitude is one of confidence, simplicity and sincere interest with all of one's self easily focused in the thought or act so that we are at one with it. If training to develop precision of thought and attention is neglected there results a great loss of intellectual power and physical energy. In pure receptivity there is no thinking but all thought should be sensed. This is the means to sincerity and truth of thought. In giving directions for the new use it is the idea that is sensed. All attention, all concentration is on the order and not divided in checking the result. Energy follows the thought. Trust it. It is impossible to give full attention to vibrations from the outer world,(receptivity) and at the same moment to vibrations from within the mind (your opinions, emotions, and ideas). Such a split is the cause of a feeling of pressure and discomfort which is chronic with many people. If there is duality the thought is not clear and coordination cannot be perfect. In reaction to the emissivity of thought however, there will be receptivity of sensation, it may be only a fraction of a second later. When the new use is installed and functioning improves the alteration may be so rapid as to seem simultaneous. If you do an exercise to see better or to feel better you are preoccupied with the result and not with the principles of control. Energy is misdirected and you will not achieve your aim. You may even end worse off. Stay with the principles, let the end take care of itself when you take away the interference of 'that meddling intellect', as Huxley called it. Searching for results means that there is a doubt, a fear of not doing well which is harmful. Keep it simple. Develop your own simplicity towards life. Confidence more than anything else is important to the mental attitude of control. Lack of it is one of the most predominant symptoms of an uncontrolled brain. It is not something that someone gives us, it comes from within, from unity. True confidence is objective and detached. It is a free, outflowing force that can be sensed and is quite unlike arrogance which always comes from tension. True confidence seems rather to be accompanied by a very real humility. We do not lose self-confidence when we are aware and receptive. Conscious and objective we sense our power and know how to use it to surmount obstacles, but without confidence failure is almost certain. The consequences of this failure are endless, and can completely destroy stability and lead to disorders which further destroy confidence. Consciousness excludes morbid doubts and uncertainties and any sense of inferiority. Experience teaches what this means. The idea of confidence must not be confused with the real fact; but, in the beginning, one must sometimes act as though one had no doubts, 'stamp it out with both feet,' Alexander used to say. Doubt is an unhealthy, paralyzing emotion and must be replaced with an attitude of courage. Of course I refer to the over-scrupulous doubt that comes from passivity and uncontrol. There is healthy, normal doubt, just as there is normal, active sorrow. Confidence is of tremendous importance to well being. Indeed mental health requires it for without it there is no control. The two go together one begetting the other. You can learn to sense the difference between detachment from the self and the centreing- in which destroys unity. Refuse the physical symptoms and the mental attitude changes. Begin now to sense your freedom, physical, mental and spiritual. The chief impediment to acquiring an improved use of the self is well explained by Eugen Herrigel in, *Zen and the Art of Archery*. His teacher says, 'Your difficulty is that you do not let go of yourself. You brace yourself for failure. You do not wait for fulfilment. It should happen independently of you, of your idea of doing right. You must learn to wait properly.' Q: 'How does one do that?' Master: 'By letting go of yourself, very decisively leaving yourself – and everything yours – behind. 'Mental processes should be spontaneous and easy. Sit quietly, open and confident and wait for what

you want whether it be an idea, sensation or memory. It is not a passive waiting but effortless alertness detached from the self. An old Brahmin teaching is that one should learn to live – to function – from ten inches above the head. Develop that sense of aboveness. Let everything take place as if below and out in front of you.

## CHAPTER XVI

### CONCENTRATION

True concentration is beautiful to see and to experience. It is precision in consciousness, a channelling of vital force which releases great power. In concentration the whole self is in harmony with the problem or act, sensing it, absorbed in it but calm, free and confident. There is no worry or strain with real concentration.

For most people it means strained effort. Whether in physical or intellectual activity they hold their breath, tense their bodies and lock the brain. Yet to focus an act or idea tense effort is not only unnecessary but prejudicial. This has been verified repeatedly. Almost invariably when I even say the word 'concentrate' to anyone who has not learned the new use, the vibration shows that he pulls in, stiffens and makes an effort with the brain. The brain as I have already explained must not be used as a muscle. Anything you do with it is wrong. Just let it receive and react without interference. True concentration requires that you use only the amount of energy needed. For intellectual concentration all muscles and joints should be free and de-tensed, and any idea not related to the subject must be eliminated. This is done, not by shutting out which would be a tension but simply by giving full, interested attention to the chosen act or idea. You focus on what you are doing as if it were the centre of a circle. Such mental discipline requires that we learn the art of rest, of stillness in body and mind. Dr Bates's principle of central fixation is the ultimate in true concentration, bringing all one's attention to the tiniest point, without tense effort. To focus on a point does not mean to hold it for that would cause strain and tension. There should be a rhythm, a slight oscillation: in other words freedom not rigidity. The point of focus should change constantly. Superficial attention to daily tasks while you cling to any of the passive states, causes a leakage of energy: whereas to be concentrated with attention focused on the actor idea is restful and restores vital force. We have all had accidental flashes of this integrated, balanced state of consciousness but most of us have not understood what brought it about. The uncoordinated individual instead of channelling his energy and enjoying its full power permits its leakage and waste. After a time his mind becomes conditioned to a state of inertia, the will does not work as it should attention and memory also suffer, sometimes to the extreme. Any or all of the passive states may result, such as tension, vagueness, depression, mind wandering, anguish, doubt, etc. In these uncontrolled states the brain is working all the time without pausing to take in. It is a kind of uncontrolled day dreaming rather than real thinking. Most people are astonished when they realize how much useless rumination goes on. Developing the faculty of concentration is the means of regulating cerebral emissivity. It is therefore an indirect means of conquering dominating ideas, phobias and other uncontrolled thoughts. Although concentration is restful because it channels energy and does not permit waste through dispersion, it is nevertheless work for the brain, a giving out so it has its limits. Normal rhythm should be maintained through frequent pauses to take in. Receptivity is the primary quality of control. The second essential quality is concentration, the art of being completely absorbed in what we are doing. The control is not complete until we are able to concentrate at will,

even under unfavourable conditions of environment or emotions. Good concentration requires the brain to be in equilibrium and the free will. Simple exercises in attention here and now train the brain to work in a concentrated and coordinated way in all we do. The exercises should be simple and brief at first and gradually lengthened as you are ready. It is training in living the present moment to the full with the mind, body and emotions coordinated. Then concentration is supple and free and from the centre of being, not merely cerebral.

One of the first exercises is to draw in the air the sign of infinity  $\infty$  or any curve, completely, easily, coordinated in the present moment, not thinking ahead or behind each point as you move. When this can be done easily give the same de-tensed attention to drawing a letter or numeral. Simple as it seems one is usually astounded at how difficult it is and how badly discipline is needed. It is the beginning of self knowledge. We see our weaknesses and lack of control. If we are unable to bring de-tensed concentration to such a simple act, there is surely a great loss of overspent energy in nearly all we do. Here is the evidence of duality for the whole self does not enter in, part holds back or wanders away. We begin to understand. Reserve your judgement until afterwards. I cannot overemphasize the importance of not judging during the act, for this splits the attention and is harmful. The exercise only takes a few seconds after which you should rest a moment. Stop if there is any discomfort, as it means that you are doing something wrong. Dr Bates wrote of the physical benefits of good concentration: 'Since central fixation is impossible without mental control, central fixation of the eye means central fixation of the mind. it means, therefore, health in all parts of the body... . Not merely the sight but other senses are benefitted by central fixation. All the vital processes, digestion, assimilation, elimination etc. are improved by it. The symptoms of functional and organic diseases are relieved. The efficiency of the mind is enormously increased. The benefits of central fixation already observed are, in short, so great that the subject merits further investigation.' (Better Eyesight without Glasses, p. 62) Dr Vittoz and others have helped to explain this. Noteworthy is Sir Charles Sherrington's report that the seat of rhythm is in the occipital centres of the brain. (Man On His Nature) This explains the general de-tension that results from Dr Bates's exercises to release tension in the visual centres. It explains also the visual benefits of his body swings. It is usually best not to attempt the concentration exercises until one has learned the mental attitude of detachment and objectivity through receptive acts. If they are well done without tension and without distraction, the vibration is supple and the monitor's hand senses the design free and unbroken. When this is done with tension the brain tightens and either there is no impression of the design, or it is very tight and stiff instead of a supple, brush-like movement. Moreover the hand can sense when the pupil is doing it in his head instead of out in front of him, and when he tightens to do instead of letting the psycho-physical forces work in harmony. If the person is distracted the line of the design is broken, or may be lost in whole or in part. It is very important to understand that the concentration is not true unless the exercises are done very simply. Too tense an effort indicates a schism instead of unity and concentration of energy. Later as your power of concentration and confidence is increased more complicated exercises are attempted, such as concentration on an idea, a lecture, reading or conversation. When well done the monitor's hand perceives a series of supple and regular undulations with no underlying tension or rumination. The fullness and rapidity of these waves depend upon the quality of thought whether calm or energetic.

When your concentration is good you sense the idea. In concentration on the idea of calmness, energy or control, a few seconds is all that should be attempted at first. Gradually the period can be

lengthened. When repeated frequently throughout the day an improved mental state develops, until we can call for calmness, control or energy at will and regardless of circumstances. We can do the same thing with other sensations such as confidence, courage and freedom. To intellectualize instead of sensing these ideas will give a false experience and be undependable. Arrogance may take the place of confidence for example and the idea of freedom may result in the very opposite. Thus do we deceive ourselves. The attitude of consciousness in concentration is similar to that of receptivity. But this time the vibrations come from within the mind instead of from the outer world. You simply call for what you want and let the unconscious offer it up. Permitting no distraction remain de-tensed with patient, confident, alert interest. This attitude is applied to all ideas and is the key to constructive thought and imagination. He who knows how to direct and use his energy can through concentration send healthy energy to a trouble spot in the body and bring about remarkable physiological changes. Reading the vibration is very important here for there must be no tension when sending currents to the body. Nor can right energy be directed when there is brain wandering or any other passive states. Currents require excellent brain control and unity. Two or three minutes of directing the mind in this way bring rest and increase vitality. Currents are used to stimulate circulation and are very effective in warming cold hands and feet. Properly used in certain types of pseudo-paralysis they are known to have restored muscular tone. Spasms and a whole list of symptoms have been overcome in this way. However, tension and forced effort change the quality of the energy and can be harmful. It is important too to sense the part and not be preoccupied with the pain or discomfort. For example, if one concentrates on a pain in his neck, one increases that pain. The vibration indicates when the subject is concentrating on the pain or fatigue in his leg, for instance, instead of giving full attention to the sensation that is leg. Sometimes the person is looking too eagerly for a result and not completely absorbed with the sensation of the part concerned. If he abandons the principle by going directly after the result then control and concentration are lost.

## CHAPTER XVII

### UNITY

No nervous or tense person is at one with himself or reality. As a rule he realizes this but does not know how to either achieve or sustain a feeling of wholeness. It is only when the organism functions as a whole that it works efficiently. The foregoing chapters have emphasized the importance of integration. All the training from the first simple exercises in receptivity is aimed at oneness. In reeducation for conscious control we reorient the whole personality around consciousness. Everything should come to and from that centre of being which is developed by improving the faculties of pure receptivity and concentration.

Unity is the working in harmony of the mind-body mechanism and of the conscious and unconscious. It is wholeness and wholeness means health and well-being. Unity is something you sense. You sense your freedom, your equilibrium, your oneness. Such harmony within the self is essential to harmony with other people, your surroundings, the universe and the Infinite. The whole person enters into whatever you do, think or feel. All of you registers what you see, all of you takes part when you read or write so that you are whole-heartedly at one with the act or object. If you are out of harmony with your surroundings or the work at hand, there is malfunctioning and the physical body suffers. We are

always less tired in work that we love and are interested in. But if we dislike or resent our work all sorts of psycho-somatic symptoms may occur. Functional at first they sometimes develop into serious organic disturbances. When we are at one with ourselves, permitting nothing to disturb that harmony, energy radiates out, we are in contact with reality and are receptive. Unity is the highest expression of control and includes confidence and self-possession. From this harmony comes truth of thought and feeling. The instant that morbid doubt slips in unity is lost. So it is with all the passive states. The person who habitually resists or remains selfishly withdrawn from his surroundings and from others cannot experience harmony, nor is he understanding. The answer is not to condone or embrace evil and pettiness; it is detached awareness not resistance that finds a solution. This going out of self to be at one with the audience is the secret of success of certain actors and public speakers. Those who try to imitate them fail because they lack the sincerity and general feeling of oneness with their subject or with those to whom they speak. They are not true to themselves. They intellectualize without feeling or they emotionalize. Neither state is one of truth and harmony. When one acts from unity the intelligence directs. Intelligence feels and understands. Unless things are registered by a unified conscious and unconscious there is little understanding. The unconscious is necessary to assimilate previous experience. While consciousness regulates and reasons. Unity is the means of perfecting behaviour in even the slightest act. You sense your centre and direct the self from there, channelling your attention and receptive to what is. This harmony of the physical, mental and spiritual is a very positive experience and not simply an idea. Great artists and writers experience this harmony with their work, though they do not often apply the principles to life in general. The artist who is apt to intellectualize or force his talents is marvellously helped when he learns to act from unity and to be at one with his subject at will instead of waiting for this state to arise accidentally. He senses when to give imagination a rest and knows the difference between this active rest and inertia or the fear of not doing well; for he understands control, coordination and concentration. From this unity of a balanced self comes the force of free will. When you sense that freedom, you become independent of all bad influences. If you feel your unity threatened it takes but one brief conscious act to recapture it. In that instant of sincerity nothing can dominate you. Such repeated acts even though each one lasts for only a brief second will gradually restore harmonious functioning. It is the way to simplify yourself and broaden your point of view. A highly unified personality has great simplicity, a broad point of view and great power. Unity is at once the result and the means of control. Self fulfillment comes from unity as do true spiritual experience and self knowledge. The neurotic person, indeed the vast majority of people, is far more interested in self-preservation than self-fulfilment. His aim is to protect and defend himself and his selfish interests. But those who develop their personalities become more united with the cosmic forces of nature and so contribute to their fulfilment and evolution. However infinitesimal it may be we all influence world forces towards evolution or degeneration. Not enough people realize their individual responsibility in what they do, say and think. We have free will. We can choose either unity, oneness, harmony and wholeness or discord, conflict and dispersion of energy. We contribute not only in what we do, but in what we omit doing.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### SELF KNOWLEDGE

It has often been remarked that man gives much more time and thought to improving his environment than himself. Many want to improve themselves and also to help humanity in general, but they understand too little about human nature to know how to achieve self-fulfilment and efficiency. Due to their own faulty use judgements are disturbed. They almost always try to superimpose something from without whereas the change must come from within. True spiritual values and understanding of Divine Will should be evolved from within not imposed from without. It makes all the difference between the true experience and mere reverberating. It is the spirit, the inner self that must be trained. Words and ideas are not enough. So much of modern writing on psychology is based on the power of the conditioned reflex to explain behaviour, using the Russians, especially Dr Pavlov, as authority. But, unlike Pavlov's dog human beings have free will and a higher consciousness which enables them to control and direct the influence of exterior forces and those from within the self. But wiser direction of the self and its powers requires self-knowledge. Philosophers and mystics have preached for centuries, 'know thyself', but have not been successful in telling us how to develop this awareness and knowledge. Dr Vittoz, F. M. Alexander and Dr Bates have answered this need. However, they were so far ahead of their time that their methods have not yet received their merited recognition. One begins to develop the power of the conscious I through a series of simple exercises such as have been explained throughout these pages, especially in the chapters on Use, Conscious Act, Concentration and Will. Self knowledge also begins in their simple acts. We learn what our weaknesses are and are often surprised at our self-deception and inertia, our ego-centrism and lack of kindness and love. We find that we have confused 'idea' with the fact, with truth. As we grow we become more aware of these weaknesses.

How often when I have lost my control and could not arouse my conscious attention, have I stopped a moment and asked myself, 'how sincere am I?' 'Do I really want to get out of this state or am I clinging to the old pattern, indulging in mental inertia?' Try it. If you ask sincerely you will probably receive a humiliating answer. As self knowledge increases you become more aware of your motives. You know, too, whether there is a true, free will force or if it is merely a passive impulse, desire or strained effort. 'A sense of wrong doing,' someone once said, 'is like a sense of physical pain, a warning of unity threatened.' The loss of unity is a warning that something is wrong and we learn to recognize the cause. One of my pupils, fairly well along in her training, was still a slave to her emotions and subject to frequent and prolonged periods of depression. One day when she was only working half-heartedly for control I asked her to exert a sincere will choosing to be free. There was no reaction. 'Don't you want to be free?' I asked. Under my hand I sensed a tightening and pulling in on the left side. We stopped. 'What did you think you chose?' I asked. She looked at me in astonishment for she had recognized the block, the underlying negativity. It was a surprising bit of self knowledge that jolted her out of her lethargy. When we become aware of withdrawing into the self it is the beginning of self knowledge. We recognize at times pettiness, jealousies and insincerity of which we thought ourselves incapable. Any unkind thought or a critical attitude hurts us for the physical body as well as the mind suffers repercussions. There are negative states that destroy unity and so have been the unrecognized cause of many illnesses and much unhappiness. Many, many people have never known real happiness



and wonder why. Some go through life seeking fun and excitement, unaware that they do not know what happiness, joy or harmony are. Really to sense the truth of what is, instead of being preoccupied with preconceived ideas and emotions about it, keeps us free and permits growth and evolution. As we grow our spiritual life is affected as well. When we understand unity prayer becomes something more than a whining, morbid begging for special favours. It grows into a oneness with God for it is outgoing and not ego-centric. When we are at one with Infinity we want what is right and good, not what is selfish and regardless of others' rights and wishes. Weaknesses of character cannot be eliminated all at once, but little by little, new outgoing mental attitudes replace the old harmful ones of self-reference. Our goal is to see everything in life including ourselves and our problems from above and objectively. It is a kind of exteriorizing to interiorize to be 'at one with'. Bring your weaknesses into full consciousness in order to eliminate them. As long as you push them away and refuse to recognize them you will not be free and whole and happy. 'Go to God with your faults, not your virtues,' Was Dr Pourtal's way of saying the same thing. But the spirit is not so much to condemn the fault as to create the opposite virtue.

## CHAPTER XIX

### WILL

All the foregoing leads to the high point of the training – the art of releasing and using the will. The will is the most essential element to healthy, efficient brain functioning. For a free and happy life it should always be in command of all we do. When we know how to exercise our will, we are more able to control the other faculties and all behaviour, mental and physical and emotional. Health as well as character depends upon the use of this force. Once the will is well-trained it becomes part of us and acts automatically. The normal controlled person turns it on when needed and according to the force required for whatever it is that he wishes to accomplish. The true will force is quite different from the right, tense determination that many mistake for it. It is often confused with forced effort, desire or compulsion, with stubbornness and especially with intention. These are passive states. It is only in the controlled, active state that the will force is free and we have self-mastery and self-reliance. None of us is without will-power. It is latent in everyone but may be unused or badly used and so weak or ineffective. In order to have the true will force, the brain must register no tension, no inertia, no dominating emotion or undercurrent of thought. It is supple and free, a vital intelligent force of tremendous power that comes only from psycho-physical unity and the unity of the conscious and unconscious. Tension locks the brain while will frees it. This freed energy is marvelously sensed by the pupil and by the teacher reading the vibration who verifies this great unleashing of energy. The intensity and volume of the undulations correspond to the quantity of will emitted: WILL WAVE (Diagram pg.96) The sketch can only partly describe what the hand feels. The sense of depth or undercurrent and lack of unity is less easily described. There are many nuances and sometimes it is difficult for the unskilled monitor to distinguish the difference between a superficial vibration (be it one of receptivity, concentration or will) and one which comes from the centre. The brain vibration is a valuable guide to the teacher in helping the pupil to find his own free choice from unity within himself and oneness with his problem. If there is confused or half-hearted choice he must stop and do something to restore normal rhythm and control, then reconsider the problem with detachment and equilibrium. If there is conflict instead of clear choice the force is one of tense effort and not of free will.

There is no clear message from the centre. Sometimes, of course, the choice must be to wait before making a decision, but this is active choice and not negative drifting. Decision is not necessarily will. How very often people choose the wrong kind of life for the wrong reasons! They go on hating every minute of it, yet do nothing to change either their attitude or the circumstances. The result is strain, tension and ill health. Most of us have to decide at sometime or other between two unpleasant choices. But even a difficult choice must be made with full acceptance of the circumstances. Such adaptation relieves the strain and indirectly improves the conditions.

This is especially true of living with a difficult person. A change in our own attitude will alter the atmosphere and indirectly the other's behaviour. It happens over and over again. 'I can't change him', said one woman, 'so I must change myself'. As a consequence, he lost his power to hurt her and no longer tried to do so. He became less irritable so that harmony and understanding developed between them. The unstable personality suffers from indecision or acts emotionally and impulsively without reflection. Many of us deceive ourselves and satisfy our conscience by superficial intention. It is so much less tiring to act upon a will than to keep 'intending' to do something. Wills on generalizations such as 'I am going to be more tolerant,' 'more patient', 'less selfish' etc. are rarely successful. They are too vague. But specific wills of time and place succeed and will gradually create a new attitude that becomes part of your personality. Stubbornness which is often mistaken for will is tense and centres in. It is a resistance. We should learn to give up this tension and to yield in little things and so become more flexible. Certain strong-willed persons can give up a bad habit like excessive smoking and drinking all at once. Yet for most people it is either impossible or leads to a repression that increases nervous tension. However, anyone can sincerely decide not to smoke, say between 10 and 12 a.m. and then gradually lengthen the time or increase the frequency of the periods. Here is precision. Usually the compulsion disappears of itself as control of the brain improves. The conscious act is an important method of dealing immediately with a bad habit which you know to be a wrong and a harmful misuse of the self. Freely choose to give full attention to the willed act. Continue these controlled acts until the vibration is changed and the compulsion disappears. Desire is another emotion that all too often takes the place of will. A vast majority of people think that they should only do what they want and so submit to whatever temptation comes along, even perversion. This is a mental inertia that may or may not bring amusing diversion, but rarely brings happiness. Of course, one may rightly will something one wants but to be controlled by desire weakens the will and freedom of choice is lost. Until understanding comes these people repeatedly ask how it is possible freely to will something they do not want to do. Desire follows a sincere will but it is a desire to do what is right. To scold the person of weak will or even try to persuade him does little good. He knows very well that he should use his will power, but does not know how to do so. The conditions for releasing the will are three: there must be a clear, precise idea of what it is that you will; it must be possible and the will must be sincere. If these three conditions are met then all one's forces are concentrated to bring it about. Fulfilment is certain though it may take longer than anticipated. Will like concentration depends upon the precision of consciousness. The idea of the act must be clear before the will comes into play and the body can carry it out. If you cannot find your will force it is perhaps because you are vague as to what you really want. When the idea is not precise the act cannot be coordinated or controlled. Vagueness of idea is accountable for so much misbehaviour. People so often think one way and act another. Of the three conditions necessary to will, it is lack of sincerity that causes most failures. The teacher reading the vibration knows whether it is sincere will or whether merely superficial intension or wishfulness. Often

it is a kind of 'willingness' but with no real will force. The vibration is very positive when all requirements are met. An example of how helpful the vibration is can be seen in the case of one pupil who loved her exercises in general control but rebelled at applying the principles to practice her vision drills. Her trouble was a very simple case of refractive error at reading distance. For the most part she did very well during a lesson and her vision became clear and sustained. But when she was on her own she slipped back into bad habits of use and her vision became less clear. Her chief trouble was that she was constantly watching for results so that the quality of her practice was less good than when we worked together. Discouraged, she would give up. One day in a will lesson, I asked her to will to do the exercises regularly everyday. A large, free will wave followed which was whole-hearted and sincere. Then I asked her to think with me: 'I will practise the seeing drills regularly until my vision is perfect.' The brain locked. She was deceiving herself pretending to will but it was simply words and not a force from an integrated self. There was no oneness with the idea. She recognized the resistance and withdrawal so we stopped briefly to regain unity and control. Then she made a sincere effort of will and freed the brain. She continued that sincerity in home practice. Some days later she called me to say that she could report honestly that her blurred vision had disappeared. That was several years ago. Today her sight continues to be quite normal. One of the greatest impediments to success is an underlying, though almost unconscious, doubt and an unwillingness to give full whole-hearted interest in practicing the new use. Mechanical or half-hearted attention does not help but increases passivity and even forms new bad habits. The will 'exercises' begin with very simple acts in the present moment such as bending an elbow, getting up, sitting down, opening a door, moving an object, etc. Whether for simple or great wills the conditions are the same: precision of idea, possibility of carrying it out and sincerity. If the force is not free, stop and get better control. Stick to principle in these drills as it is the force that is important, not the act. Keep it free and part of you. Here as in all the training we begin with physical acts. Later little by little, moral wills are developed. The difference between intellectualized patterns of behaviour and the behaviour of an integrated personality becomes very clear. As self-knowledge grows you know when you are practising self-deception and only pretending to will. In the beginning of the training the will force is less pure, more apt to be not will but the idea of it. Before exerting the will wait for calm and control. Then consider the steps: (1) What do I want? (2) Is it possible? (3) Am I sincere? When you are satisfied that these conditions have been met go ahead and make your decision. Sense the 'I will'. It is through this free force that we find self-mastery and serenity. Once the will-power is released a tremendous momentum carries the decision onto fulfilment. The action which follows is precise and achieved without wasted effort, provided it is freely willed and consciously performed throughout. A developed will is intuitive and senses what is. The energy may be applied to an act, an idea or a sentiment. On its highest level it is as though directed by a High Power, for then it comes spontaneously from deep understanding and unity with everything. If we will our every act whether agreeable or not, whether freely chosen or imposed upon us, we act more vitally and what we do has more value. In the normal, balanced person the force acts automatically. But those with weak will-power can develop it by exercising the will on even the smallest act, bringing it precisely into consciousness and sensing unity with it. As the force develops there is no need for words. We sense the force and use it. The will force enables us to adapt to reality. Adaptation depends upon the faculty of the brain to react and the ability consciously to direct our selves and control our reactions. The conditioned reflex however, is mechanical and unconscious, a fixed behaviour that lacks the freedom and flexibility necessary for adaptation. There can be no adaptation without suppleness.

Whatever the influence, whether without or within, the brain should be able to recover its equilibrium and control reaction to stimuli. This is especially important today when depressing demoralising events are continually bombarding our sensibilities. The healthy-minded individual will control his reactions almost automatically, eliminating harmful emotions and ideas; whereas, the hypersensitive individual with uncontrolled emotions gives to the slightest occurrence an importance well out of proportion to the facts. A coordinated use of the self requires conscious, not blind or half-awake direction. It is only through making the best use of the self that we can evolve, grow up and avoid immature attitudes and deterioration which account for so much of the unhappiness and discontent prevalent today. In order to adapt to life one must first accept what is. This does not mean 'resign yourself to fate'. If we would only accept hardship instead of submitting to it there would be much less unhappiness. Even suffering becomes more easily and more worthily faced as soon as it is fully accepted. Acceptance is an active, positive attitude, whereas, resignation or submission is passive, negative and harmful to the organism. There are a few rare, evolved individuals who are inspiring proof of this truth. Aldous Huxley was one. Like Vittoz he died an agonizing and lingering death which he accepted with full objectivity and remained to the end actively interested in everything including his own disease, but especially in humanity. When some years earlier he lost by fire all his most precious belongings and papers, he accepted that too with equanimity, not as a saint but as a human being, with all the gentleness and intelligence that proved what man is capable of. He lived by the principles of conscious control that we outline here: which were laid down by F. M. Alexander, Bates and Vittoz. As a humanist he wrote and lectured on all three men, but especially in later years, he spoke more and more on the importance of wordless receptivity. It is necessary to accept first then consider what can be done after full consciousness of all the facts. It is as harmful and morbid to submit to unpleasant circumstances which can be changed, as to refuse to accept those which cannot be altered. Neither attitude is healthy. We must accept ill health and misfortune for to resist causes tension which only makes the symptoms worse. Learn to see all problems and pain as something apart from yourself. Put them out in front and below you so as to consider them objectively. Then see what you can do to change them. A solution will come when consciousness is in control. Use your will to control and overcome passivity: 'I will be free! . . . I will be free! I will be free!'; or, 'I will get well! I will get well!' Say it, think it, feel it sincerely and confidently. The will to get well is very important. Many people hug their illness. They do not really want to get well. If you ask them they will answer 'yes' but the brain vibration shows the contrary. There is no sincerity behind the answer. The words come from the lips but not from the heart, not from the coordinated self. When a man becomes aware of this insincerity, a fundamental change takes place; the active state replaces one of inertia and he uses his will to get well. Anguish and anxiety are also conquered through will. As with all the training they are attacked indirectly through exercises in control such as those referred to throughout these pages. To dispel a worry or fear, for example, the approach should not be, 'I must and will conquer this idea' but 'I can and I will be in control.' Then do the exercises in unconscious acts, concentration and will however long or as frequently as is needed to regain equilibrium. Frequent ten minute periods of controlled acts are better than an hour's struggle before one knows how to practise for longer periods. True sorrow is normal and active, but if within a reasonable time we do not accept things which cannot be changed, we develop a passive, morbid attitude which is physically and mentally harmful. Many people keep themselves from being completely well and happy by an unconscious refusal to accept a certain situation or disappointment. Sometimes it continues for a lifetime as an unrecognized cause of

instability. The vibration of acceptance is that of the will. The brain locks or becomes confused when there is merely a superficial idea of acceptance and not sincere will. There is always confusion or tension when there is no integration. Acceptance and adaptation cannot be forced and sometimes cannot be achieved all at once. It may take many repeated wills to keep active and free and so avoid tense resistance or depressed resignation. Constant awareness may be necessary to make sure that energy is outgoing and not centreing-in defensively. Repeated again and again the free will wave becomes established as normal function with consciousness in control. As man is free he can choose either to let some thought or event destroy his unity, or to go out and above and refuse that harmful influence. This does not mean that we become hard and callous. On the contrary we feel more and also more truly because things are considered objectively and undistorted. It is a force of great momentum and must be used as soon as the will has been made up, otherwise the power weakens. After you have learned to will simple acts in the present moment apply the same principles to willing for the future. If you are sincere everything you do will be done towards that end simply and naturally; and provided it is possible, you cannot fail. Properly directed this extraordinary force will overcome obstacles and accomplish seeming miracles. However, circumstances sometimes change and thus it may become unwise or impossible to carry out the will. There must be flexibility, never rigidity in this control. Anew will is taken just as precise and sincere. It is a free spontaneous force and is never the outcome of any dominating emotion or idea.

As a free energy directed by intelligence will is accompanied by moral consciousness and allows us to choose between right and wrong. It is not will that makes one rob, kill or do an evil thing. It is unconscious drive. You cannot will a wrong. You can intend it and force it, but that is not will. Any vicious or evil thought changes the vibration. This can be detected in reading the vibration and is sensed as a rhythmic by the pupil himself. We cannot be free, open and in unity with ourselves when we think anything ugly or mean. It violates harmony and causes tension.

## CHAPTER XX

### MEMORY AND IMAGINATION

Our memory and hence our reasoning and imagination depend first of all upon the functioning of the sensory equipment. Good imagination depends upon good memory, which in turn depends upon the degree of consciousness in registering what is brought in through the organs of sense. If you only half see, half hear and only superficially attend to what you are doing, the brain does not function properly so traces are faint or non-existent. It is therefore through the conscious act, through letting the vibration penetrate to the centre of consciousness that we reeducate memory. Then with the same active detachment and effortlessness, you simply recall the image, letting the vibration, this time from within, come to consciousness. You cannot do anything to remember. Perfect memory is spontaneous. Once we have learned the art of receptivity we have the secret of good use for all mental activity. Let thoughts and the development of ideas unfold themselves enlivened by confident, detached interest in what the unconscious offers up. Make no tense effort to get. It is a secret known to many great thinkers. It is important not to look, touch or listen, etc. with the idea of remembering. That divides attention and causes a split. Let the whole field of consciousness register the impression purely; then let memory come, pure. The quality of memory and imagination depends upon the quality of receptivity. As I have explained, it must be undistorted by ideas, there must be no analysis or criticism, not even praise or

blame and no tense effort should be made to get or to hold the impression. To train the brain begin with simple acts of sight, touch, sound or movement, as explained in the chapter on The Conscious Act. Repeat them mentally by effortlessly letting the memory of sensation come to you. Gradually you can train yourself to recall the experience of as many acts as possible that have been performed during the day. Those done automatically or with tension leave little or no trace. With the sense of touch, for example, if you consciously slide your hand very lightly over an object, you can retain the memory of the sensation. If you do it very hard or with divided attention, the sensation and therefore the memory is less true or non-existent. There may be memory of tension but not of touch in the exact sense. You may know you did it but you cannot remember the full sensation of so doing. Dr Bates saw the important relationship between sight and memory. One improves the other. Vittoz also taught how to regard the object easily but consciously aware, without tightening any part of the body. Close the eyes and let memory come easily and effortlessly. The attitude is one of patient confidence letting the image improve itself. Anything you DO, any effort you make to remember or to see will be wrong. Improved memory, imagination or the development of ideas are the natural outcome of the improved use and functioning of the brain and the organs of sense. Faulty memory is simply a symptom of passivity, of mental inertia. When the rules of mental hygiene are observed and consciousness becomes the habitual state, memory and all thinking is clearer and more creative. If the brain is tense and strains in outward effort, the impression may not reach the centre and so cannot be recalled. This is the trouble with most memory courses. It also explains the fallacy of cramming for examinations. Facts crammed without being sensed are only superficially acquired and little remains long. The whole, integrated instrument has not been focused therefore precision is lacking. We can learn to recognize when our attention is split or dispersed and we become gradually aware of our self deceptions, of how we pretend to exteriorize while unconsciously holding to the self. Pulling into the self, withdrawing from or resisting a fact or situation instead of objectifying it, causes unconscious repressions that affect memory as well as behaviour. The unconscious assimilates, associates and dissociates in its own way all images and engrammes, all learning and so develops new ideas. With a brain habitually active and controlled you call confidently for whatever data you need from that vast storehouse. When thinking is good all your awareness is focused on what the mind unfolds. Conscious control regulates the ideas that come to light, freely and easily, inhibiting or eliminating any that are irrational, irrelevant or harmful. Precision of sensation(receptivity), or of thought (emissivity) depends upon the agility of brain control, so that you can at will direct attention in or out. It is part of a good memory to know how to get rid of nagging, troublesome, unwanted thoughts that do harm by destroying unity. Exercises in elimination and voluntary recall have proved an excellent means of training the flexibility of control. One learns ease in getting rid of dominating ideas or the tendency to be controlled by some disappointment, fear, shock or other emotional disturbance. Through voluntary recall and elimination the idea is no longer fixed and loses its power to disturb, either consciously or unconsciously and so discourages any tendency towards morbid states. This does not apply, of course, to real grief or sorrow which are normal and active. When we are normally controlled we spontaneously get rid of irrelevant or troublesome thoughts and give attention to something else. The less stable individual fixes on the pain or trouble and so aggravates it. I do not mean that pain should be denied for it is nature's warning that something is wrong. It must be recognized and dealt with objectively. To train the mind to recall, eliminate and rearrange images we again begin on the physical plane. Placing three or four objects before the pupil we asked him to eliminate them one by one, then to close his eyes and repeat it mentally. Try it. It's fun

and very restful when well done. For most people the first step of taking them away physically is unnecessary. When there is more stability the pupil is asked to write mentally two or three figures and erase them one by one. If well done, with full, de-tensed attention, the monitor's hand perceives the outline of the figures as the pupil writes them in his mind then the erasures one by one. There is a supple incoming vibration from the number or numbers he retains in imagination. When all are successfully eliminated the hand perceives an active rest vibration. Reading the vibration reveals that the uncontrolled person 'holds' the object or number that he was to have eliminated. (This explains the malfunctioning that exists with obsessions.) Gradually as control and flexibility increase, fixed ideas and phobias can be dealt with directly in this manner, calling them to full consciousness and then eliminating them. Repeat this several times. There is no end to the variety of these exercises. Mentally write a phrase or word that expresses a troublesome or depressing thought. Eliminate it word by word or letter by letter. Recall and eliminate it again and again. You will find that it no longer has power to trouble or depress you for you can control it. It is important, though, to emphasize that we are speaking of morbid ideas and obsessions and not of real grief or trouble. The exercise can be done with people or events that disturb. Call them voluntarily to mind and eliminate by brushing him or it away; or by sending the visualized image out and away until it disappears. Recall and repeat. This is done objectively not emotionally. The exercise increases your flexibility of control and changes the vibration from one of passivity to that of the healthy active state. Of special importance is the number '1', putting it out, again out, and further out, with a brief second's rest in between each distancing. Nothing will make you so aware of your ego-centrism, your holding on to the self, as attempting the distancing of '1'. This exercise however, is extremely difficult, and should not be done without the control of the monitor. It cannot be done with brain tension. The ultimate in exteriorization and detachment from the self it can only come from unity. There must be no tension in these exercises, no forced effort. Control must be light and sensitive to give free rein to creative imagination. Suppleness and freedom are vitally important.

## CHAPTER XXI

### TENSION, FATIGUE, REST

Of all forms of passivity brain tension is the most tenacious and most common. It accompanies all forms of nervous instability. The habitually tense person usually has a very difficult character. Due to the taut condition he is easily annoyed or irritated. He is usually angered if disagreed with and intolerant of any opposing point of view. This type believes that he must be busy every minute. He is under a compulsion to be occupied and seems incapable of sitting quietly doing nothing. He looks with disdain on those who can for he does not understand the difference between active rest and indolence. These people do everything under pressure either too hard or too fast and so overspend their energy that they suffer a great deal of fatigue. The more tense they are the more they force themselves. Not only the brain but all their muscles are more or less contracted and often painful. there is also contraction of the arteries and of certain organs especially the viscera, which causes a malfunctioning. Many complain of pressure or tightness in the brain, while neck pains are a common symptom. So many, many illnesses are due to or aggravated by brain tension.

The monitor reading the vibration easily recognizes this state. There is no rhythm, no suppleness and the vibrations are very taut and even disorganized. Uncontrolled emotions and doing things with split

attention cause much brain tension. Wrong effort to control oneself may also cause tightening in the brain. It is due to a misuse of the self. Everything is met with this tension, the slightest act even in play and the exercises themselves. For this reason these people are sometimes very difficult pupils. But once they have experienced the tremendous relief and freedom that develops with the practices, they are usually most cooperative and make rapid progress. The tense individual must get rid of his defensive attitude towards life for tension is often largely due to resistance, to an unconscious defence which lowers mental and physical efficiency and affects all behaviour. If it is people who fatigue you, you can avoid strain and tension by taking an interest in their point of view. Dr Bates introduced body and head swings and shifting as an outlet to tension. Rhythmic movement breaks the state, the physical and mental hold. He proved that when the eye is relaxed all the nerves of the body de-tense. Truest de-tension is found by consciously directing the self which stops useless agitation, anticipations, anxieties etc. and leads to living in the present. One way to get rid of tension and fatigue is by making directed movements of arms, legs, fingers or elbows, etc. The channelling of energy in the right direction tones and frees the nerves, and increases vital force. Receptivity of sensation is another remedy. If you feel unduly irritable and nervous it is a symptom of brain tension. A few conscious acts will quiet the brain and nerves. You can compose yourself and find great release and de-tension through sensing your body. Also movements made in a state of receptivity sensing the play of muscles and joints bring about a great release, a dynamic de-tension, as does any conscious act through whatever organ of sense. Ancient Chinese mystics knew this secret and used to finger marbles for the calm it brought when their attention was focused on the pleasant incoming sensations of touch. Mental attitude is so important. One should will sincerely everything that one does. Those who do things in the spirit of a martyr instead of whole-heartedly are always tired. They think that their efforts for others are responsible instead of their lack of integration and their duality, when part of the self holds back. Normally it is not work which causes fatigue so much as the mental attitude towards it, the spirit in which it is done. We do not tire so easily when we love or are interested in what we are doing. Our housekeeper at a large holiday ranch in the desert works very hard from early morning to late at night. She loves her work and she loves people. Though past the age of retirement she rarely tires. Many of her younger staff who work far less hard, less long and less well, complain constantly. They neither like nor have any real interest in what they do. They do it not from the heart but mechanically while thinking of something else. Naturally the tension and split causes extreme fatigue and no satisfaction or self fulfilment. Rest fitted into daily activity is far more important than periodic vacations. One can learn the art of relaxation in activity. Almost everyone needs to learn how not to overspend his energy. As a certain executive who had returned for more lessons after being away for two years, said: 'However hectic the days are, I never get that terrible sick fatigue any more. I no longer do the exercises regularly but I evidently apply the principles more than I realize.' It was true. The body had found the easier, more pleasant way of functioning. Chronic fatigue is more apt to be of psychological than organic origin and is often the most outstanding symptom of the uncontrolled individual. 'Oh, if only I had more energy,' they say; or, 'I'm exhausted.' Many fluctuate between inertia or a hyper-excitability which in turn depletes energy. In either case the ceaseless uncontrolled activity of the brain causes an unhealthy fatigue. It is constantly working, giving out with no pause for rest. There are many uncontrolled mental states that over-spend and exhaust nervous energy. In such cases resting the body is not enough and under some conditions may increase passivity. Many who suffer from nervous depression or other forms of passivity are obsessed with a wish to sleep, some do so for twelve hours a night and complain



that they cannot get enough. Others complain of insomnia. Insomnia, when it is not of organic origin, is due to tension or to whirling, uncontrolled thoughts which cause a great leakage of energy. Another great waster of nervous force are the emotions. Worry, fear and doubt are destructive emotions which solve nothing. The sufferer often thinks that if he could only sleep he would be well. The truth is usually the contrary. When the control is normal and the brain quiet he will sleep. A controlled person simply wills to go to sleep and puts aside all disturbing thoughts and interference. In some countries the 'Sleep-Cure' is a popular treatment for neurasthenia. But drugs and over-prolonged sleep often contribute to increased passivity and depression with disastrous results. Sleep is often not restful for the overtense. The tenseness of the day continues at night and results in either insomnia or a poor quality of sleep. Many strain and tense more in sleep than when awake and so wake up tired and unrefreshed. Sometimes it takes them hours before they are truly awake. A certain amount of sleep is necessary and varies with the individual. But the quality of sleep is far more important than the quantity. Even when one has slept little, if one knows how to rest one is far less tired in the morning rather than lie there half asleep and tense, it is better to wake up and do a few exercises to rest the brain and so obtain a freer vibration and a better quality of sleep. Make it a rule to go to bed with a quiet brain. The conscious act, gives instantaneous repose to the brain and nerve cells and restores normal rhythm. Nothing rests so much as being receptive to pure sensation, eliminating all thought and effort. If a noise disturbs you change your mental attitude. Remember that resistance is a tension so refuse to tighten let the sound enter. Noise if consciously accepted de-tenses and will put you to sleep if you allow it. It is interesting that not physical but mental drills are needed to take the tension and fatigue out of the body, whereas physical exercise is often an outlet for mental tension. To realize the tremendous release and rest that comes from full consciousness, one must experience it. Once experienced and understood it is more easily repeated. This mental attitude should become a principle of life, not merely something to do as an exercise and then forget until you are again ill or over-wrought.

If we do but one thing at a time and live in the present, we experience a great economy of nervous energy. Work while you are working and when you leave the office leave your problems as well. You will return more rested and with more perspective after the brain has had a normal rest. Be consciously aware of what is going on when you are driving or walking home and when you are dressing. Be present, sense it when you are washing your hands, shaving and brushing your teeth. Hear your bath water run, or hear and feel the shower as it hits your body. Learn to give full attention to whatever you are doing. It is the secret of calm, of efficiency, of health and happiness. One woman in her late middle age had developed a habit of anxiety and worry since childhood. After some weeks of these simple conscious acts in the present moment she exclaimed one day, 'Why I'm happy for the first time in my life and I never have a headache any more!'

## CHAPTER XXII

### VITAL FORCE

There is a power deep in the centre of our being which education has not taught us how to use. Indeed, education too often does just the opposite by focusing too much attention on ideas and by encouraging tense effort, thus violating the psycho-physical coordination that permits the mechanism to work in

harmony. We are not taught how to use the brain itself. As a result our tensions, distractions and emotions interfere with normal functioning. The bi-polar exchange of free-flowing energies is blocked. We are not at one with ourselves or with reality. Education should orient children outwards through all the organs of sense, discouraging all tendency to withdraw into the self in doubt, fear or anxiety which are paralyzing emotions. Love, kindness and sincere interest outside of self frees and exteriorizes energy, while the receptivity which follows renews it. This is a means towards a dynamic relaxation which avoids overspending our energy until we are nervously bankrupt. Children should be taught to concentrate and employ will with a mechanism that functions properly, so that the force is true and efficient. It is a self evolving energy which increases with the improved use and functioning of the self and is the result of a transformation of energies brought in through the organs of sense. We are transformers on all planes, physical, mental and moral and through them act on the exterior world. To receive and give out in this way is fundamental to all life, even to every cell and organ. It is an action and reaction which is constant in every healthy organism. Any interference with that pulsation, that give and take, causes malfunctioning. Each cell has its own rhythm and so has each organ. During the training in conscious control the first and most repeated instruction is not to hold, not to tense; but to be free, to open up and let the exchange of energies take place both within the self and between the self and the world. The quality of vital force depends upon the degree of physical, mental and emotional equilibrium. If one of these is out of balance the force is less true, less potent. Will is an important expression of vital force. To use your will is simply to free this innate power which flows out and applies itself to the act, idea or emotion. It increases as integration grows, overcoming obstacles and finding solutions, freedom and truth. It is the force of evolution. Bergson referred to will as consciousness externalizing and adapting and said that it explains the role of consciousness in evolution. 'Consciousness corresponds exactly to the living being's power of choice,' he said. 'However full, however overflowing the activity of an animal species may appear, torpor and unconsciousness are always lying in wait for it.' Well, here is our warning. Yet people are still reaching for tranquilizers or false stimulants which encourage mental inertia, weakened will and loss of precious vital power. All that we have been discussing in these pages has to do with energy and how to develop and use it. We have seen how, if unchannelled or misdirected, it can throw the mechanism out of balance, causing fatigue and all sorts of other symptoms. We have seen, too, how we can eliminate depression and most fatigue by releasing our energy up and out or by willed acts or conscious acts which change the vibration. So much energy is wasted in morbid regret, guilt and fear. A healthy man refuses a morbid thought as an evil influence. It is very important that this be understood by the multitude who complain continually of lack of energy and of being too easily exhausted. Any of the passive states can have a toxic effect. When conscious attention is merely superficial or non-existent the dispersion causes a leakage and waste of energy. Interested attention channels and so conserves it. Through real concentration that is free not strained and tense, we can find deeper and deeper levels of energy. Then vital force is increased in activity. This does not mean that normal rest is unnecessary for rhythm and alternance must be respected. Another way of restoring energy is to concentrate on the idea of it, just think about energy for a while. This is difficult for most people as they strain at the idea. Their thought is not coordinated and does not sense the idea. An idea that is not sensed has little value. It is helpful to remember moments, when you were full of vitality and energy. You cannot recall the sensation of free energy and remain tense or otherwise passive. I remember an early stage in my training when I simply could not recall a true memory of myself when gay and energetic. So instead of trying to force the idea

I would recall the memory of a happy, active child, a horse or a dog. In recalling their vitality I changed from my very passive state to an active one, my spirits lightened and I became more energetic. Concentration on energy, or calmness brings that sensation. If concentration on the word calm does not bring the sensation of quiet, then recall a place perhaps in the country where you have experienced calmness and beauty. As your conscious control increases you need only to call for energy and to sense the influx of vital force. When you can be calm or energetic at will you have achieved control and are master of yourself. Everything has its sensation so often sense the vital force within you. Sense your power to perceive, decide and act. It is a power for good, the power of evolution. It keeps you well and strong and confident. It is by controlling this force that you control your reactions to stimuli from within or without. Like will, its momentum varies according to the amount of energy that the task or sentiment calls for. You can learn how to exercise your faculties and the mental and spiritual forces within you, so that you become free, independent and confident, not depending on a pillor a treatment or someone's presence. Things and people help but it is YOU, your will towards good, towards well-being and self-fulfilment, which is of primary importance. We need love, understanding and companionship but our well-being requires us to be free and outgoing in all our relationships.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CONCLUSION

The training in readaptation, as we have seen, is aimed at correcting the tendency towards self-centredness which is the malady of our age and causes untold harm to mental and physical health on a world-wide scale. If the principles set forth here are sincerely put to work, a physical and psychological transformation takes place affecting all behaviour and reconstructing the personality. The new direction of the self insinuates into the mind a conscious awareness that becomes a principle of life. Health, happiness and self-fulfilment are the indirect result. However, those who continue the training only for the sake of being well and not for the ideal of control and self-fulfilment, will not achieve permanent success, for their goal is not growth but self-interest. We are reeducating the sensory, the experience of which cannot be expressed in words. But I hope I have helped to create a better understanding of what causes trouble in the organism. So much trouble could be prevented early in life if the psycho-physical mechanism were better understood. Prevention is so much more desirable and easier than the correction of tenacious harmful habits. However, when education has been faulty, as it has for most of us, training in conscious awareness is the way to restore or develop greater nervous stability and control. Conscious control is the integrating agent. It is the means to freedom, physical, mental and spiritual and so releases vital power and talents which are far too often left dormant. It makes possible healthy, happy living even under adverse circumstances. To live consciously in the present makes the difference between active acceptance and a resignation which depresses. These principles work when sincerely applied. The trouble with most of us is that we want to lose our symptoms but not their cause. We cling to the bad habits that bring about the malfunctioning. 'Change me, but keep me as I am' describes our approach. Too many of us wallow in our inertia, unwilling to make a real effort to get rid of that half-awake state and dependence on unconscious guidance. 'Don't let them break your heart', Alexander used to say in speaking of those who wanted everything done for them with no whole-hearted, sincere will towards helping themselves. To me, however it is disturbing to see all the unnecessary discord and suffering that could so simply be converted into self-fulfilment

and well-being. According to Jung the causes of neurosis and the dissociation of human personality are spiritual stagnation and psychic sterility. Over sixty years ago Dr Vittoz and F. M. Alexander discovered the simple means whereby we may achieve, maintain and develop the integrated active state. They gave us the tools of personal and social evolution, and the way to readapt the individual. The only disadvantage is that people think that the means are too simple to be true.

The readaptive method is not a philosophy but a principle for the efficient use of the self. Adherence to the laws of harmonious psycho-physical functioning brings greater understanding of religious teachings and ethical standards. In spiritual education as in all the training, simplicity is what is important. The simple act of buttoning your coat contains all the elements of a spiritual will. Simple acts are the foundation. With them you begin to understand unity within the self and with all problems. The underlying principle is common to all whether they be Christian, Jew, or Buddhist. The method is comprehensive and so appeals to people of whatever religion or philosophy and even to those who say that they have no religious beliefs. It helps them to find their own way and to understand better the meaning of life and the teachings of the great mystics of the east and west. These teachings then become something more than ideas, and bring the experience of peace and harmony – of oneness. When we learn how not to abuse this remarkable organism of ours and to respect and care for it, it will serve us efficiently. A healthy body is the necessary instrument for carrying out orders from the mind and soul. The first step towards conscious control is learning to go out of the self, to open up so as to be receptive to reality. You begin with your own reality, your sense of being. You learn to be receptive at will to what you see, hear or touch. Two or three seconds of pure, wordless receptivity each followed by a rest is all that is recommended in the first stages of training. Receptivity of movement in simple acts follow and is gradually applied to walking and other daily acts. You begin to understand what is meant by detachment from the self and ‘relaxation in activity’, so that you are ready to apply this new use to the second important faculty of the brain, concentration. The first steps for training the attention and the mental attitude for all thinking are simple designs. Gradually the new use is applied to more complicated acts and ideas. You learn to be at one with yourself and with what you are doing and thinking. Training in will, that most important faculty, is usually quite simple if training in the other two has been thorough. Receptivity is the faculty most difficult to acquire and the one most often at fault, but the little conscious acts are basic to an improved use of the brain in all we do. Take in the facts first, let them assimilate however briefly and then give out ideas that are your own. These ideas flow from your centre and not simply from the lips in repeating something that someone else has said. They are not coldly cerebral, nor do they spring from emotionalism, but from your integrated conscious self. It is a supple discipline which gives you conscious control of your reactions. The improved use of the self not only conserves but reinforces energy and does not permit you to overspend or waste it until physically and psychically bankrupt. It brings free functioning instead of conditioned reflex behaviour. When your contact with reality increases everything in life interests you and this awareness increases your vital force and brain power. A developed awareness of your body and movements is of primary importance to psycho-physical coordination and self-knowledge.

Julian Huxley has stated that man’s most sacred duty is to realise his own inherent possibilities as fully as possible. Consciousness in its broadest sense – experiencing – as outlined in these pages is the means of growth and evolution. The ‘normal’ person as well as the psychaesthetic or neurasthenic, may

improve his brain functioning and well-being to the degree that he adapts the principles of improved use to his daily life. To practise a few exercises and then forget them is not enough. We must make consciousness a principle of life and learn to avoid habit and automatic behaviour which are symptoms of mental inertia, that may make us insensible to opportunity and inhibit new impulses and ideas. Through developed consciousness we are able to get rid of the interfering ego and to cooperate with and trust a Greater Power, the Cosmic Forces of nature within us. When we tense or turn in on the self we lose that centre of radiation. There must be a sincere will to change from the old harmful attitudes of ego-centrism to a fuller life with a broader outlook. The will should always be in command. The more we exercise it the more clear our thinking will be. Confused, unclear thinking is the cause of so many wrong decisions. When your control has become normal you need not continue with regular exercises. If something disturbs your equilibrium you know how to regain your balance. It may take only a moment or perhaps an hour of repeated conscious acts, and will exercises. Many who misunderstand, fear that control will make life lukewarm and tame, but in fact the opposite occurs. Life becomes far more interesting and full of wonder and joy. One feels so much more. Love becomes greater, richer and more beautiful as it is intelligent and unselfish. Neurotic emotion is no longer mistaken for real feeling. I remember one woman in love with vacillated from a state of ecstasy to one of deep depression. She and the man she was to marry were either quarrelling or making it up. As she learned control she did not understand her new equilibrium and feared for a time that perhaps she did not really care about him. Real happiness and understanding however, developed with stability. People's conceptions and opinions depend upon how their brain function. A healthy, normal point of view is quite different from that of a worried, depressed or irritated individual. The more sensibility one has the better, but one must know how to control it. It can be compared to handling a very sensitive instrument. One has to learn how to control without suppressing the wonderful force of the unconscious. It takes a life-time to apply the principles of control in everything we do, but we can begin now with immediate and profound benefit. Each setback is a new challenge but with each victory we grow a little and gain in strength and confidence to meet life and its problems. This reeducation shows us how to be free. We learn to exercise free choice so that we are not affected by immoral influences, by propaganda or anything destructive to that freedom. When we develop inner freedom our spirit will not be crushed or broken by misfortune or illness. The stable person knows how to accept and adapt to the inevitable, although it may take him a little while. Some things cannot be accepted all at once. We have so much if we would only use it. Freedom through conscious control, free will, a great storehouse of knowledge and experience, the power to adapt, reason and imagination, aesthetic sense, love, spiritual insight – all these constructive forces are at our disposal to realize fulfilment and to help the human race. We all have social responsibility. Change is going on constantly so it is up to us to choose between integration and growth or deterioration. Evolution depends upon mental activity. We can achieve harmony gradually within ourselves and act from that unity and not from prejudice and preconceived ideas. The spiritual changes which occur when we do so are profound. They are not just emotional or intellectual ideas as they take place in the centre of our being where feeling, idea and will have united. For the teacher it is a wonderful experience to know people so intimately, to see their earnest striving to understand and to evolve now that they have found the way. It is a joy to see the pupil's vibration change from one of tension and malfunctioning to one of freedom, aliveness and balance. It is wonderful to see their happiness in finding mental, spiritual and physical integration – a very different experience from the artificial health achieved with the aid of drugs and tranquilizers. It is

vital that the world's statesmen and leaders should learn to consider events objectively and sincerely. If they would only seek the truth with open minds free from all personal emotions and prejudice, there would be some hope for humanity to find peace and happiness. Human energies would then be channelled and directed towards a higher evolution and a fulfilment which is infinite in scope.

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*This book contains many references, similarities to Ophthalmologists William H. Bates Method of relaxation, natural eyesight cures. This book was found free on-line. We cannot guarantee its authenticity or if it is complete. A spell correction was done as best that time allows. I will search for the original in paperback to compare and ask the Authors permission to re-publish in paperback and donate all profits. Most copies on Amazon, Google are a \$100.00 and up. Last I saw was \$200.000-\$300.00. Is a popular book. I have not read the entire contents so cannot endorse everything until I read, study myself. Many natural vision teachers advise reading this book.*

*Passed along from Cynthia Roselle to Thomas Quinn, others and now the world.*

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