



second a10

Focus on
Burnout

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Focus on **Burnout**

Guidelines for working through modules

We recommend that you work through one section of this module per day. Read through the section and allow yourself to re-experience feelings that need to find an updated expression and decide on an attitude that could be considered more constructive to holistic practice than the one you have had up until now.

As you work through each section of this module, it can be helpful to write down your impressions in a journal or tape or illustrate your experiences as you progress through your journey of inner transformation.

Complete any exercises and answer any questions. A suggestion is to read a question and to write your immediate reactions to it. Go for a walk, then have a cup of tea/coffee or do something else. Then come back at a later time and write more as you surrender and decide if you are ready to forgive yourself, others, circumstances, environments, personal habits and so on. Then spend a few moments in contemplation prior to proceeding. At this time just to decide to begin to let go of resentment and to forgive begins a process of healing.

At the end of each day, note in your journal what your attitudes were, how you were feeling and how your body responded over the day as well as anything else of importance.

Working with the text and the diagrams

The text in this module will give you guidelines for how you might wish to proceed in deciding your next step in life towards fulfilling your potential. For this to happen, your mind will need to gradually incorporate these guidelines as you work with allowing old attitudes to release from your body memory. This will take time. Your intuition is the most important factor in facilitating this process. The diagrams in the module are to help you free up your intuition by triggering a helpful energetic response in your mind to support your study of the text. You do not need to 'understand' them. Just look at them and let them speak to you intuitively. Over time, your study of the text and contemplation of the diagrams will form an association with each other.



Section I

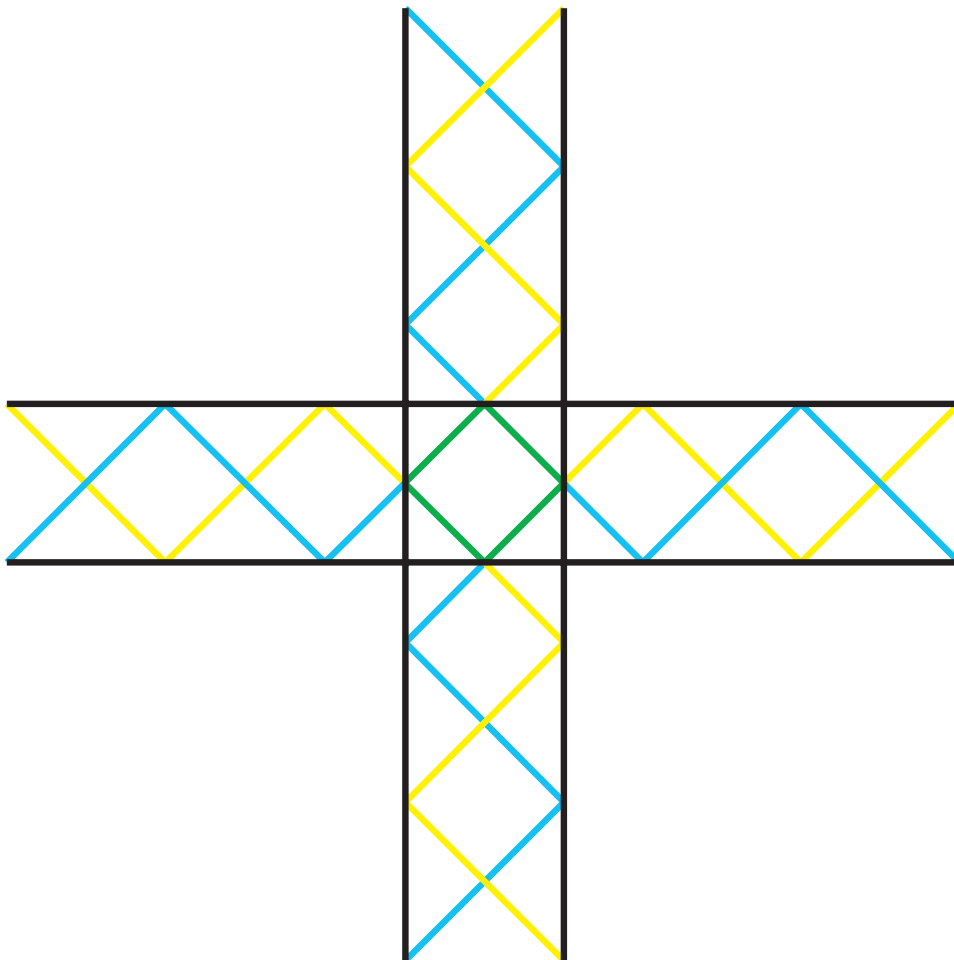
Anger and Frustration

Personal reformation

Build up – Break through – Sabotage

Obey Soul instruction
versus
Be selfish; arrogant; scornful

Steward wisely
versus
Be insolent; pain filled; self-indulgent



Dismiss; neglect; ignore
versus
Serve willingly

Include all comers
versus
Harm; mock; condescend

Co-operate with Mother Nature



I Anger and Frustration

Anger and frustration are inextricably mixed. Without both of these signals letting us know that there is some imbalance that needs adjusting, there would be no release – rather, there would be a suppression of negative emotions. We would remain unaware of our feelings and that would be self-destructive.

Let us examine anger as one of our reactions to other people's viewpoints – especially in the case where we unwillingly or unwittingly play a negative part in their scenario. We are all familiar with the syndrome of the human volcano where we try to pretend our annoyance doesn't exist or isn't really important and do everything to keep that wooden smile doggedly on our faces. Our anger (whether justifiable or not) nonetheless builds and builds and one day, when the build-up is too great, the human volcano erupts.

Instead of being upset or feeling guilty about this, we should feel grateful. It is, as we know nowadays, healthier to release our inner anger rather than suppress it. If we keep suppressing and finally the volcano erupts, we stand to lose more, in terms of loss of time due to extreme upset and in the disturbance caused to those around us. Far easier to deal with, accept and work with our emotions and perhaps eliminate the need to explode altogether.

Frustration is similar if less intense. If we are interested in learning about our reactions and growth patterns, we will see that frustration often prompts us to seek further, to question ourselves and others, and to examine our behaviour more closely. This sort of activity in itself may not necessarily be positive or even helpful (in some people it becomes obsessive). But through this attitude we learn to channel our frustration creatively and to look at events, feelings and our interactions with people in a way that we may not have been able to before. In this way, we can actively make our growth a more pleasurable, more rewarding and less threatening experience. Intuition and insight, which means taking the time to assess our feelings, circumstances and the situations that we 'find ourselves in', provide the key. As we become more familiar with our own inner signals, we do not have to wait until it becomes necessary to scream, shout and upset ourselves and others. Instead we can affably ask ourselves. 'What is this situation trying to show me? How can I

work with it?'

If we can't creatively summon our own self-awareness in times of stress, anger and frustration, we allow ourselves to sink in situations we ourselves have created, to become like a rock, crystallised. We cannot, and therefore should not, try to prevent motion, the very energy of life that moves through us. We are like the sea – and we must learn to work with the ebb and flow of our own tides. Harnessing our anger, as we would a team of wild horses (a daunting task) and putting the energy to work for us, can be one of the ways we most help ourselves. By allowing others good-naturedly and peaceably to hold their own beliefs, we complete our inner balance. Contrary to what many people may think, there is plenty of room on this planet for differences of opinions. We do not necessarily create unity and harmony with others simply by agreeing with them. All the different kinds of flowers, with their many colours, shapes and sizes, live in the garden without quarrelling or shoving each other out of the way. Why can't (we) humans? By adopting a co-operative attitude and practising it as often as we can, we create a new level of self-discipline, which is infinitely, valuable – and much needed in today's world.

Suppression of anger and frustration merely causes static and creates a time delay factor, sometimes of many years. In the end, it all comes out in the wash; it must all be dealt with and resolved. We are often, in sudden, unexplained outbursts of anger, reacting to 'unfinished business'.

continued overleaf . . .



Self-reflection exercises to channel anger creatively and letting off steam.

- i). Pursue some sport or physical activity such as swimming, football, walking or dancing.
- ii). Reading can provide a helpful, creative release and therapy.
- iii). It is better to kick a pile of cushions instead of someone's shins; shout at the wind instead of at your boss; punch your mattress rather than the side of your car.
- iv). Whatever the trouble, don't just sit around and stew in it! Move about. Talk to people. Help others by joining a group with a good cause.
- v). Above all, remember to accept yourself – and so carry on.

In learning to take responsibility for our actions and reactions, we are making the commitment to improve ourselves and our relationships. Learning to cope with our emotions, especially anger, is a major step in the process of self-awareness.

Self-reflection questions on your relationship to life.

- i). Why do you think you are here on the Earth living life as you know it?
- ii). Are you willing to explore new experiences?
- iii). What is your attitude towards adventure?
- iv). Do you explore experiences internally or are you content with superficial external phenomena?
- v). Do you put your learning to work to potentially benefit others or do you keep it to yourself?
- vi). Are you honest about the difficulties encountered on your journey or do you pretend you are perfect and find all encounters easy?

We may feel that there is a chance that our peers could condemn us. If so, are we then apprehensive of others' reactions or challenges? Do we feel as if we are crucifying ourselves? Do we fear that we will be harmed, hurt, mocked or scorned because of our beliefs? If we obey our inner ethic and set a standard that includes all comers, are we fear-filled that others could react with arrogance and selfishly challenge us in a manner that we fear could destroy us? In spite of this, do we trust the soul guidance well enough to obey our inner instruction to the letter as best we can? This will require us to lead and we may be willing to serve but fearful of being dismissed, neglected, or ignored by those we care for here and now within our life. Supposing we are not stewarding wisely and those who follow us are so pain-filled, insolent and self-indulgent that they hold themselves aloof and encounter compounded problems as a result. Are we risking all and gaining nothing by taking this seemingly divine gamble of following our inner instruction?

To reform ourselves because we have no choice is one thing but to hurt and harm those even more vulnerable in the process is another. How can we assess the wisdom of forward movement in line with the needs of the Earth Mother if we are to claim naturalness as well as spiritual focus? To pretend to be perfect when we do not feel so, is dangerous, and can too easily lead to a power trip where we challenge authority in a manner that hurts and harms. To be challenged by administrations can seem harsh, torturous and cruel. To be fixed on a cross and to have no alternative but to grow can feel as if we have no choices and anger can result. We then walk around at the point of saturation, as if we were a volcano that is about to erupt. Alternatively we can feel victimised at the hands of others and bullied by circumstances as we try to find ways to release the frustration, resentment and impotence that have built up. At this turning point we must choose to release the need to love to hate and let go of the idea of hating to love.

Self-reflection.

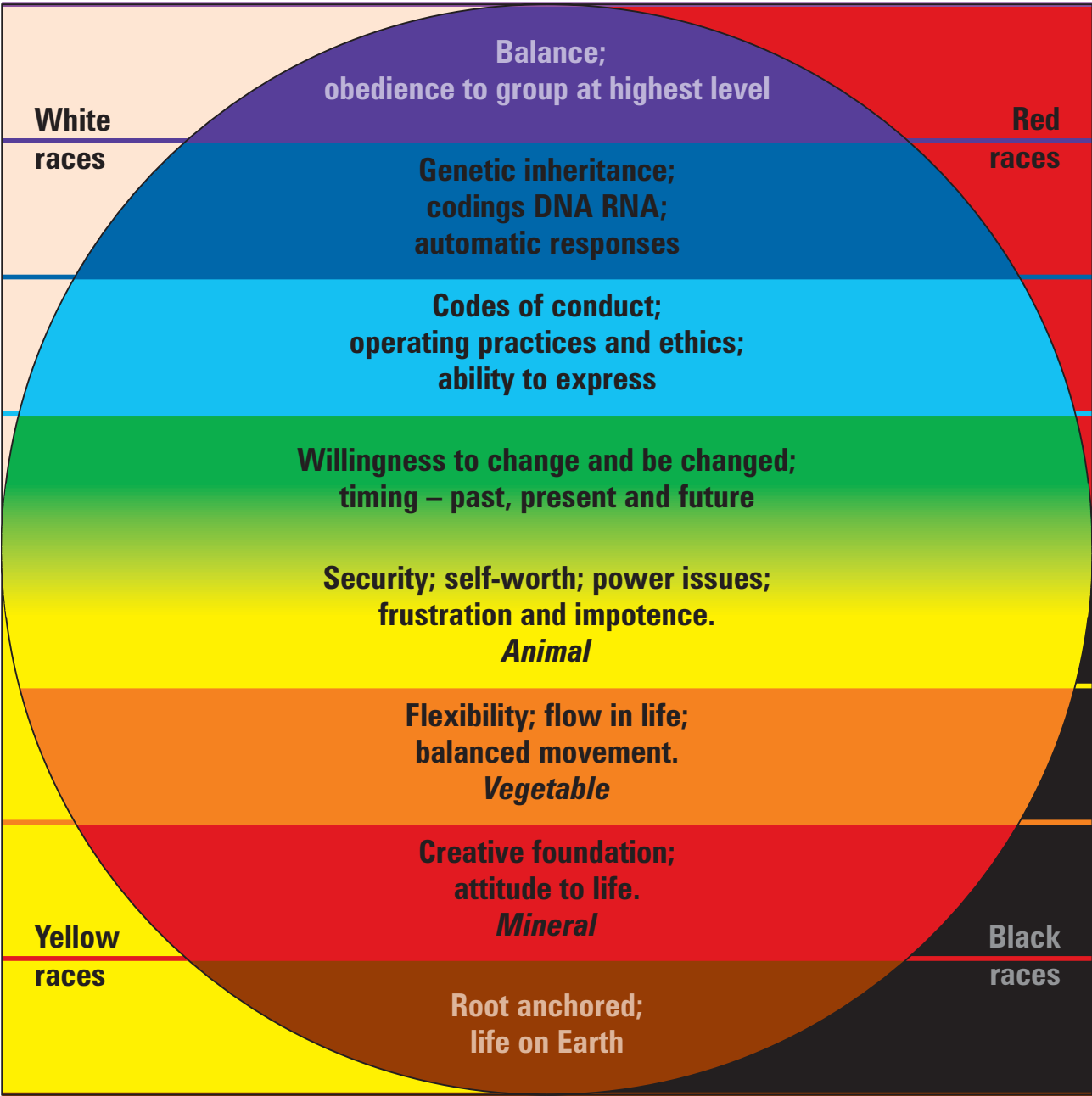
To release the frustration, resentment and impotence that have built up over time, we must choose to release the need to love to hate and let go of the habit of hating to love.



Section 2

Discernment: fine tuning

We are one another





2 Discernment: fine tuning

As we begin to accept the need for new information and a new system of rules, we are still in a state of doubt. 'How do we navigate ourselves through the perils and the unknown? How do we know that this new approach will make us happier? Perhaps things will get worse!' We need to bolster our courage at this point and have a little faith in our own good judgement.

It helps if we share the company of a friend or counsellor who can be objective, who can, like a mirror, act as a reflection of ourselves. An objective well wisher can be very constructive in aiding us to select that which we should retain and that which it would be best to discard or modify. In clearing away some of the clutter, our minds become sharper and more able to work with and further refine the ideas which we choose to retain or newly adopt. We discover that our powers of discrimination and discernment are more astute, and we waste less time and energy over things and thoughts which are unproductive or not positive for growth.

Our goal is to refine, appraise and monitor our progress.

Visualisation exercise on good management.

- i). Imagine that you are your own management team and that you have granted yourself the time and resources to study a proposed plan.
- ii). Proceed with caution, monitor the stages and review your progress.
- iii). In reporting back, to yourself, you hold a board meeting with yourself, as it were, and fix as your goal a 'win-win compromise', whereby all members of the team, which means all with whom you come into contact, can feel as if they've benefited by being in your presence.

When we organise our strength, we see just how much we have not only to gain, but also to offer. Within this cycle of growth, we notice a new chain reaction occurring. Us, the pupil, can in an instant become someone else's teacher. Although we are in the process of learning, we can simultaneously help someone else. And we

recognise that everyone is also our teacher! We begin to see that we are all linked, obliged to help one another, that we are inter-dependent, each of us a unique part of the whole.

We will need to be exposed to any prejudice, bigotry, bias and intellectual concepts that divide, separate and expose inequality. This includes vulnerable, instinctive reactions that reject and dismiss out of hand. We need to learn adopt attitudes that others find acceptable. So we will need to mix with all races with a cultural inheritance that differs from our own – black, red, yellow or white races, different behaviours and environments until we can keep our balance without upsetting theirs. Life on Earth is bigger than our experience to date and all are rooted into the Earth and are a part of a foundational structure. We must learn to be creative within attitudes to what healing represents so that we release grief rather than compounding it. This requires a skill of honouring differences rather than forcing sameness to preserve the familiar.

To keep our balance and to ensure we honour others, we have to learn flexibility and flow. If we move too fast we create fear, too slow and we get bored and boring. So by learning time management, we assure all of good humour and good health. This prevents us from running away or from fighting breaking out and allows us to maintain self worth. We then have the time to rest and recover rather than to compound frustration. Impotence gives way to correct use of power, as and when it is entrusted to us. Feedback from others requires space in which to express our needs and recognise others' needs that we might otherwise overlook.

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The willingness to change and be changed requires we clear up old issues that are past, we concentrate on what can be done right now, and we trust that the future will be as it should be. So many of us give so much energy to reliving the past, again and again, that there is nothing left to live now. Others, concentrate on the future to such an extent that they get lonely as no one is there yet but them. They may become hermits forgetting that others may find this difficult to stomach.

So codes of conduct must be set up and field tested to make sure the standards are ethical to all and each has an equal right to express their needs. Operating practices must be tried out to make sure that all have what they need, whether that is comfort and care, food, clothing, shelter or skilled specialist workers. Redistribution takes time and money. We instinctively and automatically respond according to our genetic inheritance and the codes carried within our bodies in the DNA and the RNA. We have a choice whether to obey the inner calling and respond to the highest level possible or whether to respond to the lowest level we can get away with.

Self-reflection exercise on creating a plan for your immediate future.

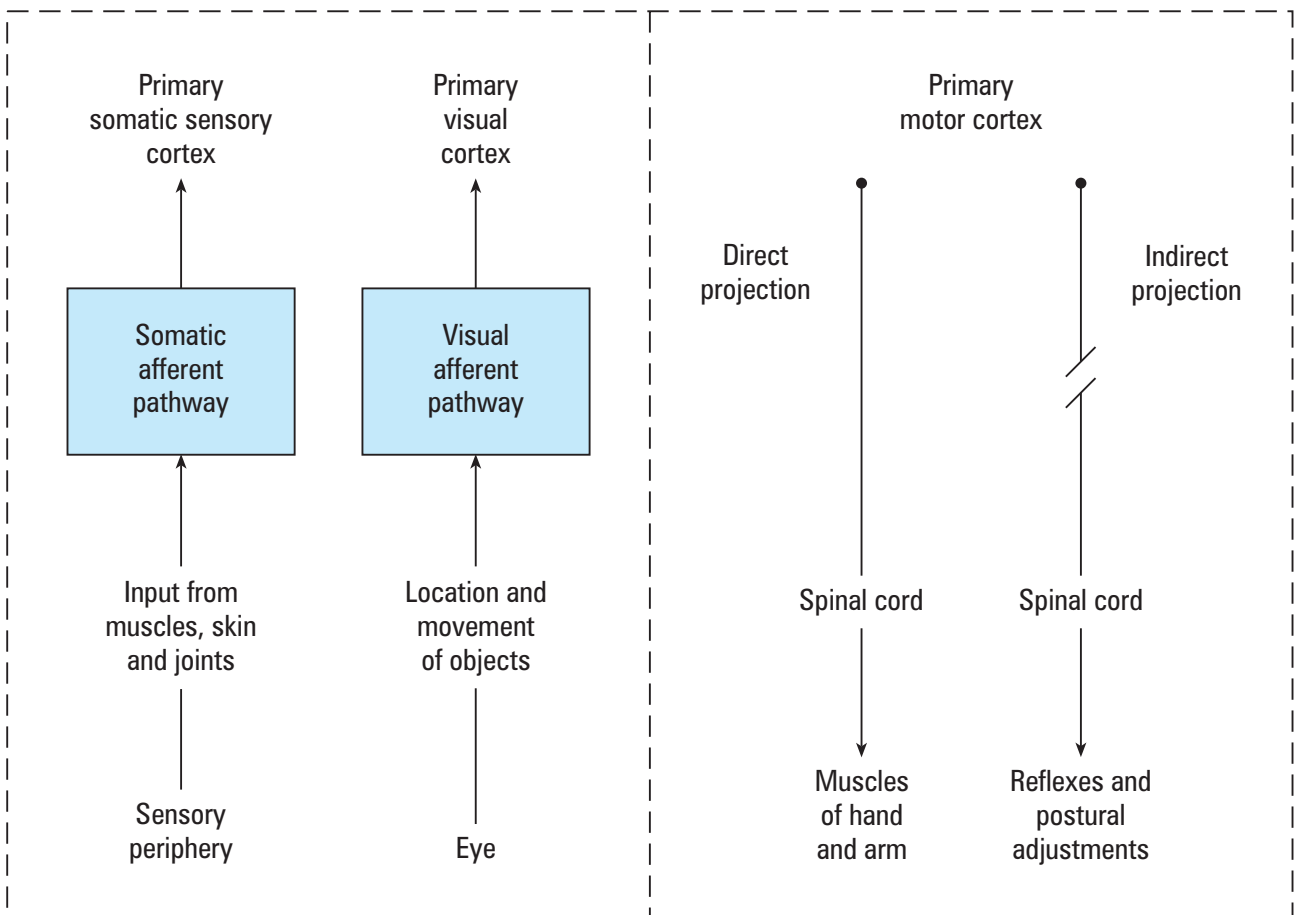
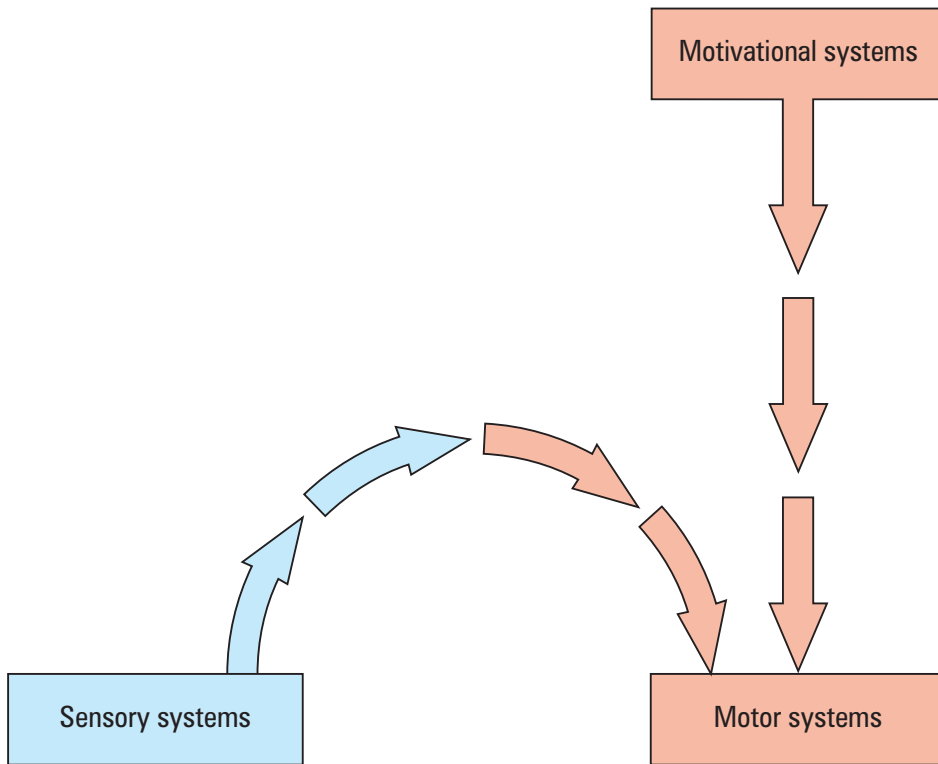
- i). Create a plan for your immediate future.
- ii). Set realistic objectives for a nine month period.
- iii). Plan to review this in one year.
- iv). Decide on the next step for work, recreation, family, community and for yourself.
- v). Give yourself permission to modify this plan after discussing it with others.
- vi). Tell a counsellor, or a close friend your plans and find out how well they respond to these.
- vii). Modify any aspects of your plan if required.
- viii). Take the first step.



Section 3

Senses and emotions

Body union





3 Senses and emotions

Our senses also work through our emotions. Sensory input gives us the messages and our mental faculties interpret them. One manifestation of this interpretation is emotional response. For instance, certain atmospheres or buildings, which have a particular smell, such as hospitals, will arouse memories and emotions related to hospital experiences, death or illness. Before we know it a particular smell has evoked in us an emotional reaction which actually may have nothing to do with the present. Vibrations held in buildings and in other surroundings, especially if these are not regularly cleaned or painted, can amplify and arouse emotional responses we had long forgotten.

These reactions may seem beyond our control and may even become quite troublesome. However, we can train ourselves to regard our emotions as barometers of inner states, as hazard signals or warnings that some part of us needs work, something in our past history needs resolving. Perhaps we have been unconsciously held back in past shadows. If we haven't acknowledged and worked with the situation, we may remain daunted or stunted rather than free to go forward. If we make the effort to readjust ourselves, we will find we are healthier and happier for having undergone the experience.

Nature in her benevolence has given us many gifts. When we release through sadness, for example, we are creating space for something more uplifting to take its place. Laughing and crying are totally healthy and integral. Laughter is the music of the soul. We wash away our disappointments with tears. Releasing anger and frustration in a creative way realigns the body's metabolism and allows built-up pressure to settle and become more stable. Thus we must give ourselves and others permission to release emotions. We can discipline our emotional reactions, certainly, so as not to create chaos or misery, but we should never restrict them.

Admitting that we need help and guidance in certain areas is a very important step towards emotional honesty. And it is equally important to offer our honesty to others. This does not mean that we indiscriminately blurt out every thought. It simply means that as we become more honest with ourselves and imbued with courage and confidence as a result, we can elicit

honesty from others, thereby filling them with our love and understanding.

Self-reflection exercise on looking after yourself.

i). What do you sense from your body? Do muscles and joints ache deep inside, and does your skin look tired and dull. Old grief is often felt in this way. It can be helped to release through a massage, through gentle exercise, through care in the diet, through rest and sleep.

ii). Do your arms, hands, fingers, hips, knees or feet ache? Move them, stretch, take some deep breaths. The nervous systems may have been so full of adrenalin, from dealing with crises that you are in a state of negative expectancy. Each time the phone rings or the door bell sounds, you may jump in expectation of the next trauma. Take time out to go to a movie, to have a drink with friends, to laugh at the antics of others and to enjoy.

iii). Are you bent double, covering your body, slouching, or moving sideways unable to face life? You need help – talk to a counsellor or friend. Go out for a day, go swimming or better still go for a massage, reflexology, aromatherapy, acupuncture or whatever you feel would enable release.

iv). Are you able to see wonder, beauty and colour, or is the world grey, or just black or white? Practise seeing beauty in people, places, situations and environments until you create a standard of seeing that is the norm. We get so used to mediocrity that we forget the simplicity of innocence and awe. Move objects around in your living accommodation until things look as nice as they can.

v). Use it or lose it – your rubbish is somebody else's treasure. Recycle. Turn out your wardrobe, your cupboards, your attic, your cellar, your garage.

vi). Say no to others until you feel your nerves settle and you are ready to move onwards once more. There is no hurry. Do as little as you can, not as much as you can, for three days.

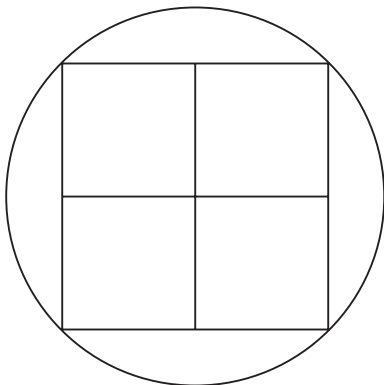


Section 4

The cycle of birth and rebirth

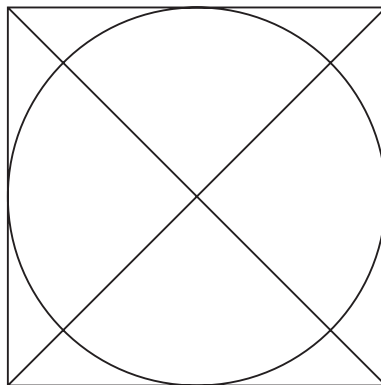
Work to release old hostility

Fixed pathway



of past

Reaction to



past

Brain



Body

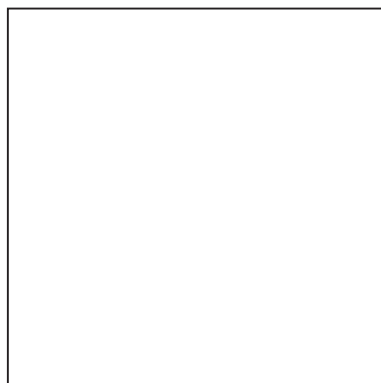
Bully or
be bullied

Victimise or
be victimised

Defend or be defensive;
criticise or be criticised;
sacrifice or be sacrificed

Attack or be attacked;
condemn or be condemned;
persecute or be persecuted

No sword
No shield



Empty canvas ready
for Soul connection



4 The cycle of birth and rebirth

Why bring up the subject of birth again? Surely by now we've got over the trauma of finding ourselves in a body, with a mind, emotions and all the rest and we know how to deal with life. We don't want to look back; we want to go forward! Even in confusing and discordant circumstances, we have learned to work with and through alternatives and now we are at the stage where we are ready and willing to enter into the process of active and constructive living. Life has become an acceptable rhythm or has it, fully?

Mythology, religion, art and even the biological sciences talk of a cycle of birth and rebirth. These days we hear a lot about 'rebirthing' and other types of holistic therapies. But in this module we are talking about a much simpler understanding of the recurring process of rebirth, a form of second aid for which you don't need any kind of therapist.

Generally the term 'rebirthing' refers to the attainment of a higher level of awareness. Most of us know something of that ecstatic experience, where we have glimpsed, if only for a brief moment, the sense of our own wholeness or perfection, meaning or purpose, a sense of something greater than ourselves yet the same as ourselves, something unifying, guiding, loving. It is a moment of total fulfilment, of pure self-acceptance.

We can make this a living, total state of being rather than a momentary experience, a state wherein we become radiant and sensitive, where our awareness is not for ourselves alone, but extends to and includes caring about others. The basis for this state of being is actually quite simple. As human, living, changing beings, we continually process information which is tempered by the many and varied experiences we encounter in life. The balance and integration of incoming information and personal experience transforms us from negative, passive receptors to dynamic, positive transmitters. In fact, both aspects are necessary to complete the process of integration and self-acceptance. One without the other creates an imbalance.

To reach and maintain this level of being requires great courage and fortitude. Sometimes we lose sight of the goal, and our attempts at self-improvement and expansion seem fruitless, often eliciting feelings of despair and failure. But what a sense of celebration and joy our efforts can also bring, as we become more

aware of the visible and invisible aspects of our being. The division between our inner and outer self seems to blur and dissolve and we find we can co-operate with ourselves, not to mention with others. Neither the real, nor the imagined, can harm us and we see that cause and effect are inter-dependent. Cause becomes effect and effect becomes cause and we are the mediator, the creating entity in between, the link between thought and action. And positive thought does create positive action.

This is the state of being in which the laws that govern the universe no longer remain mysterious, elusive and incomprehensible. We can know and understand life in and through our experience – as we keep expanding our awareness. This understanding is the sister of unconditional love – love without demand, love without fear, love without selfish motive. And there is no greater reward than to offer our love unconditionally in service to the universal consciousness and to accept with gratitude the same gift of love in return. Soon we colour all that we see, do, hear, taste, touch, smell, think and speak with that purity of heart.

A little like St George, we must kill our old dragons until we no longer have need of a sword and we feel safe enough to put it down. We no longer need a shield for what are we protecting ourselves from? We no longer have enemies for we are in a clear space and on the same side as all other living creatures. The canvas of our life, which was so full, is now cleansed and clear of the need to attack or be attacked, defend or be defensive. We do not criticise or fragment, condemn or assassinate, sacrifice or withhold, persecute or subject. We know we do not bully or invade space – we are invited in or we do not enter. We do not victimise or impose choice – we inform and wait patiently as each and all decide for themselves and then we co-operate as best we can.

Now the brain and the body as well as the mind and the soul are in harmony, and the fixed pathways of the past are giving way to the new pathway. Our reactions towards the past have been reassessed and all is well.

continued overleaf . . .



Visualisation exercise on contentment.

i). Visualise an empty and peace-filled place in which you can rest and recover in complete safety. It is a large and empty canvas that nature provides, allowing you to experience peace, beauty, and tranquillity.

ii). You rest in the epicentre where stillness is experienced knowing that even if you still sense peripheral squalls, you need not involve yourself at this time. Sit with this empty canvas, knowing that a revised picture will appear soon enough. When it does you will be ready. Until that time you will live as simply as you can enjoying the chopping of wood, the fetching of water, the sun, the moon, the stars.

iii). Know deep in your being that all is well and that you are at peace and being led towards the promised land.



Section 5

Burnout and balance

Time management

Past

Future

'Wait nicely' as reorganisation and redistribution are re-administered as you reach for new understanding

Radical distilling of essence.
Live don't exist. What still works?
Check for – parasites; predators; freeloaders; pimps; leeches – in all aspects of life

Romantic ideal supplanted by contentment with real possibility.
Check for – virus and bacteria.
Release judgement of success/failure; pleasure/pain. Do not threaten others, prostitute, compromise or settle for less than the best

Take baby steps towards revising intention as you are changed and being changed



5 Burnout and balance

How can we know light without darkness? How can we experience balance without having experienced imbalance? Often it seems that experiencing the negative side or polar opposite of our goal helps us measure our progress. We can't cop out of life and so must accept that we will experience the extremes in many situations until we come to a point of integration and reconciliation.

Balance is not an outside thing; it comes from inside and means that we can face all of life with a sense of inner balance. We become a sort of mental juggler or acrobat; we see how well we can do without falling. And if we fall or lose our balance, we pick ourselves up and try again . . . after all, we've only fallen onto the trampoline, and so we can bounce back. The ironic thing about inner growth is that it seems to create imbalance. When we're out there living life, making ourselves vulnerable, perhaps, by taking chances, expressing, communicating, trying out new ideas and activities, we are more likely to be subject to radical swings. It is another one of those 'snake-eating-its-tail' symbols – by seeking growth and not hiding in the superficial comfort of our routine or habits, we open ourselves up to situations where swings, shifts and sometimes catastrophes will occur. At least we're giving life a chance and living it fully.

In our enthusiasm we must also beware of becoming slaves to our ideals. There is no need to exhaust ourselves while trying to glimpse both ends of a given spectrum. We needn't run to both ends to get an informed overview. But we do require the overview to make aware choices. A broader understanding allows us to perceive the invisible behind the visible, the sound behind the words, the shape and shadow behind touch, the thought behind the description.

We must also be aware of burnout, a modern-day syndrome where, with so much to do and learn in this age of specialisation, it is easy to be open to everything until we suffer from overload. We may recognise the merit of many activities or ways of living, but that does not necessarily mean that we have to try them all. We must achieve a sense of balance in all respects, achieving what we set out to do day by day, week by week, month by month. We must also seek to create the balance in helping others as well as taking care of our-

selves, learning to fulfil our obligations as well as taking on new tasks and interests. Both are necessary, and both are rewarding. It is simply a question of refinement and becoming more attuned, until we get the blend right. And we know when that is so, because we are rewarded with additional energy and inspiration when we thought we had exhausted it.

Finally, we see we are now at a point in our growth where we can make use of experience rather than be the hapless victim of it . . . and we can begin to think of using our experience to help others.

Time cycles throughout life are there to guide us and they do so even without us realising; we know when to finish breathing in and thus reverse the flow and breathe out. We know when to stop looking outwards within our growth and so start to look in. Between the two we have a period of seven minutes, hours, days, weeks, months or years that facilitates us going into reverse so to speak. So we get periods of time, which are reflected and duplicated by nature in the sun, moon, tides, and so on. Once both the cycles of the 'tide in' and the 'tide out' are worked with, we release the need for fight and flight and achieve an embracing of both – what was once the ceiling then becomes the floor of the next phase.

continued overleaf . . .



Self-reflection questions on the nature of your relationships with others.

ii). To live rather than to survive we need to radically extract essence and release effluent as we find out what works for us now. Who in your life appears to be a parasite and do you wish to seek them out anymore?

ii). Who appears to be a predator and do you want to allow them to seek you out anymore?

iii). Who freeloards on you and demands your good nature be extended toward them? Do you want them around or should you free them to have experiences with others now?

iv). Who lives off you – your good nature, your work experience, your kudos, your home, your finances? Do you enjoy the experience and still want it, or is it time to reschedule?

v). Who clings to you like a leech – is it a healthy and happy relationship or is it time to re-create and update boundaries?

vi). Are you trying to live out an ideal that just will not work? What is it and why is it not working? Are you too far ahead of yourself and do you need to be content within the realistic possibilities presenting?

vii). Are you burning ground around yourself as if you had a virus and thereby causing mayhem and harming others in the process of judging what success and/or failure is? What can be modified to suit today's needs?

viii). Are you bitter, sceptical or cynical within your dealings with others, denying pleasure and causing pain albeit unwittingly? How can you convince others you are off their case and onto your own unless requested to input?

ix). Do you feel threatened by others or prostituted, used and abused by them? Can you make a clear statement of where you are on a take it or leave it basis? Can you give others the opportunity to do the same with you, basing your next move on the result without selling them out or backing out yourself.

The answers to the above give indications of the small and gentle steps that are required to enable a revision to take place with good intention towards all. This enables all to change and be changed without being hurt, harmed, bruised or battered in the process. We need to be infinitely patient within our negotiations as we wait as nicely and as kindly as we can for a redistribution to occur. Following this, we need to wait in the same way for that redistribution to create an updated administration and to gain wisdom, tolerance, compassion, care and understanding so that all feel a part of the greater scheme of things and find their revised role within it.

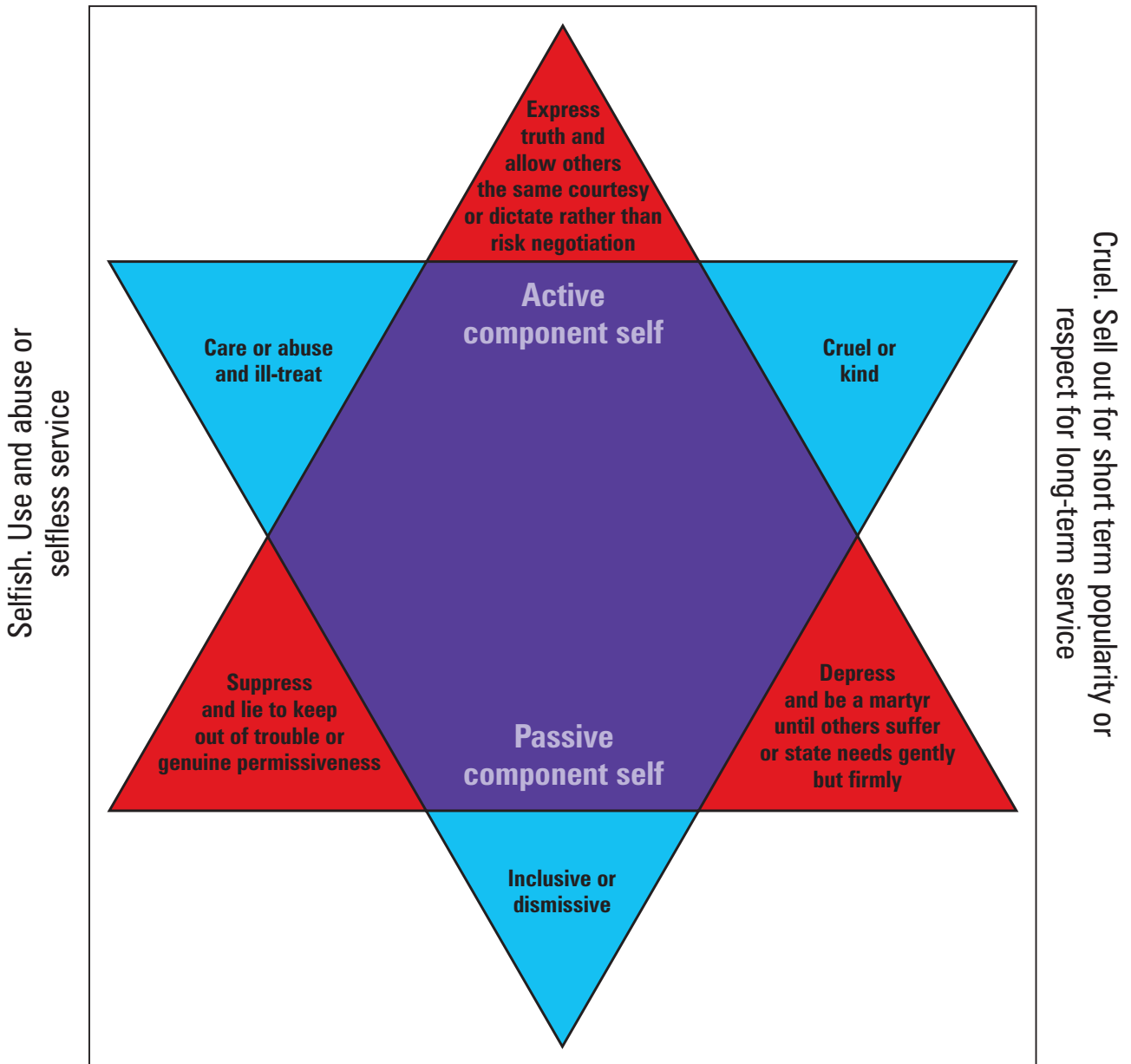


Section 6

Responsibility and harmony

Have we learned?

Mutual love and sharing or
dismiss others and insure self



Attitude to authority; a destructive 'stitch up' or
regard and joy in service



6 Responsibility and harmony

We have mentioned the 'win-win compromise' in which the parties in question work out a solution in a given situation whereby each is recognised as winning or gaining, rather than losing. This method of reconciliation is now gaining recognition in economic and political arenas as well as in inter-personal relationships. It is an attitude that wins respect and transforms negative energies.

When we think in a manner that embraces all possibilities we become positive, life-supporting people. That is, we are not exclusive; we do not exclude or alienate others or their way of thinking. We are expansive enough to welcome others (in spite of the temporary inconvenience that may be caused) and entertain their points of view. This is another case where short-term discomfort achieves a long-term gain. Once again it is a question of balance and working creatively with circumstances and situations to create ease and well being, thereby extending the parameters of personal growth.

An exercise to help create this state of mind is to imagine ourselves as part of an orchestra. Each player is a master of his/her instrument and each must also adjust their volume and style to accommodate the others. The level of commitment is such that each musician puts aside his/her own personal desire to be the soloist and works towards a balance, which will create harmony. Each accepts that his/her individual part creates a shared whole which, because it is the culmination of the individual effort and skill of all the members of the team, it is more enjoyable and satisfying to listen to.

Carrying this analogy a little further, one could say that playing a solo would be more satisfying and less restrictive than playing an indistinct part. That may well be so. The point to be recognised, however, is that we are free to choose. If we want to strike out on our own, fine. If we would like to be part of a collective endeavour then we have to abide by certain rules, otherwise chaos results. There is certainly a time for each and much satisfaction can be derived from both kinds of activity and focus. But remember that life is a collective endeavour, that it helps to help each other and work together to achieve common goals.

We have now reached a crucial stage in our lives

where we must acknowledge and identify with greater rhythms. In so doing we give credit to the skill of the conductor of the orchestra, who manages to keep the music flowing from all of us. We are as gracious in our acceptance of his/her skill and wisdom as we can be, recognising that there is always room for our own improvement!

Developing harmony is a kind of discipline, a self-imposed limitation, which we are committed to work through. To create harmony we should adopt the attitude of 'How can I make a positive contribution to this endeavour?' rather than think only about what we are going to get out of it. To achieve harmony within one's own being and with others is, perhaps, one of the most pleasurable experiences a human being can know. It means that we make the commitment to take responsibility for ourselves rather than expect others to carry us along through life. We can acknowledge the unique opportunity that so-called limitations afford us to further our understanding, and in so doing, we celebrate a new aspect of communication with others.

Clearly we would not put a brain surgeon into a professional orchestra but he/she is a welcome member of the audience. So like must attract like, and as we learn at differing rates there will be a time when groups change shape, personnel or whatever. At these times we can conform, rebel, revolt, challenge, acquiesce, grovel, appease and so on. The implication of this is that change is wrong, that someone has made a decision that affects us and that they have no right to make demands and so on. Has our attitude changed towards authority such that we regard service as a joy or do we feel ourselves to be a part of a destructive stitch-up which we resent? Do we truly believe that there is a system of mutual love and sharing or are we secretly pleased that another is dismissed and we are insured of a place and assured of attention?

Do we give selfless service or are we selfish and use and abuse or negate others in the process? Do we sell out and lose morality for short-term popularity or do we remain ethical and await respect through consistent demonstration as a long-term policy? The choices are ours.

continued overleaf . . .



Self-reflection questions on revision.

i). Would you consider that you have included all comers to date?

ii). Are you ready to revise your closest circle according to the nature of the current environment?

iii). Would you consider letting go of that which is no longer working, by removing yourself from the circumstances involved?

iv). Do you feel you have cared for all as best you could? Did you tell them you cared?

v). Do you consider yourself to have been abused or ill treated by any? Are you ready to forgive and release the experience?

vi). Have you experienced kindness and did you thank those you needed to?

vii). Have you been cruel and do you need to apologise to any and to explain your behaviour?

viii). Do you think you have been as permissive as you are able to be within the confines of current commitments?

ix). Do you tell little white lies to keep yourself out of trouble and in so doing suppress your truth because you lack trust in your ability to be understood?

x). Are you able to state your needs gently but firmly?

xi). Do you feel depressed and act the martyr so that others suffer wondering what they have done to upset you?

xii). Do you explain your truth as it is now to others as courteously as you are able to?

xiii). Do you bark orders to avoid having to negotiate and take the time required to explain what is troubling you?



Summary

In conclusion, we need to recognise and realise how gently we have been taught by life and how inclusive the working regime has been. Although we may have understood and recognised a need a long time ago, the consistent pace has allowed us and all who surround us to reach a certain point at a certain time which supported the evolvement of all. To do more sooner would have caused burnout. To do less, would not have taught us the mechanics. As it is, all have been served and all are free to move onwards. We trust those whose support has been consistent and considerate through time, we accept those who have not trampled on or invaded our space but have respected all as equal consenting adult souls whatever the external age or stage, colour or creed.

Be well and know you deserve peace and are rewarded with good health at every level of being even within a disablement. Even when you are not feeling too well in body or are experiencing disquiet in mind, you are working towards greater freedom in greater light.



Relaxation technique

This basic relaxation technique can be useful. Imagine yourself to be safe, healthy and protected. Imagine a white cloak around you and imagine that it gives you gentle comfort, safety, warmth and love.

- Sit in a comfortable chair or on the floor if you prefer, but make sure that you are in a relaxed position. If you are on a chair, place your feet flat on the floor, straighten your spine, neck and head, and close your eyes. If you are on the floor, you may cross your legs (Indian style) or stretch them out before you, providing your knees are bent and your feet are flat on the floor. Try not to slouch, but don't become stiff either.

- If you are feeling tense, worried or distracted, you can use this simple process to help you relax. Take in three deep breaths – pushing your tummy out as you inhale slowly – pulling your tummy in as you exhale slowly – saying to yourself the word 'relax'. Consciously concentrate on the muscles in your body, starting from your feet, calves and thighs, moving up to your stomach, chest, arms, neck, head and face. Tense each set of muscles first, and then release the tension consciously and slowly, feeling the gentle warmth, comfort and relaxation each time you release. Become aware of your body as a pleasant part of the natural surroundings.

- Create a clear picture in your mind of the situation about which you feel worried, angry or resentful. Be aware that you are feeling uncomfortable. Then again say the word 'relax' to yourself three times and become conscious of your breathing. Try to breathe in deeply and slowly, pushing your tummy out, and breathe out, pulling your tummy in. Do this several times.

- Picture good things happening within the situation, a happy ending, a reconciliation, a change for the better, a rest. See the situation – yourself and all those involved – surrounded by love or whatever you think would be a good antidote to the problem. Picture a beautiful setting where you are truly contented.

- Be aware of your reactions. It is natural to have difficulty seeing a loving picture. The feelings of tension, anger, frustration and all the other emotions are also natural. Dissolving them into relaxation will become easier with practice.

- Think about the role you may have played in creating the stressful scene, and try to re-interpret the event, your own and other people's behaviour. Imagine how the situation might look from another person's point of view.

- Be gentle with yourself and your thoughts. Try simply to watch rather than judge them, no matter how negative they seem. Become aware of how much less frustration, anger and resentment you feel. Tell yourself that you carry this new understanding with you.

- Move your head, hands and feet slowly. Open your eyes, look around; know that all is well with you and that you are in harmony with all that is.

There are many different sorts of impressions that we carry with us, consciously or unconsciously, which at some point we must look at, review and revise. Without doing so, it is difficult to allow our own subsequent levels of growth to emerge fully and freely. And, since personal growth and expansion is the goal of Second Aid, it is never too early or too late to reflect on our beginnings, on the past that has led us to this point, and thereby to rewrite history.



Consolidating your study experiences

Having completed each section of this module, try to write and/or illustrate and/or tape a holistic, understandable story about yourself. You will find clues to do this from within yourself contained in the sections you completed during this module, as well as external clues, in anything that you may have gleaned from other people or circumstances. Put each clue together as they can mirror a symbolic message for you about an aspect of your life that you may have been confused about. We have many mysterious aspects within our lives. By

going through this process, areas of our life can be transformed, clarified, solved or resolved as the internal and external aspects unite to enable transformation.

Once you have written your report or your journal, if you wish, you can send it to us and we will read it and give you some feedback to encourage you in your process of changing and being changed, as you discover and deepen your inner journey. If you are interested in this service, or in receiving e-mail support, (for which a charge is made), please see details of this in the SUPPORT section on the Second Aid web site – www.secondaid.net.

Focus on
Burnout

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