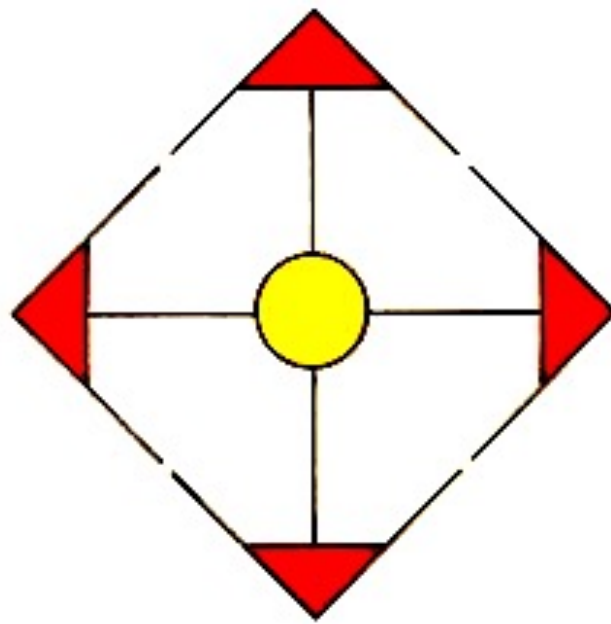
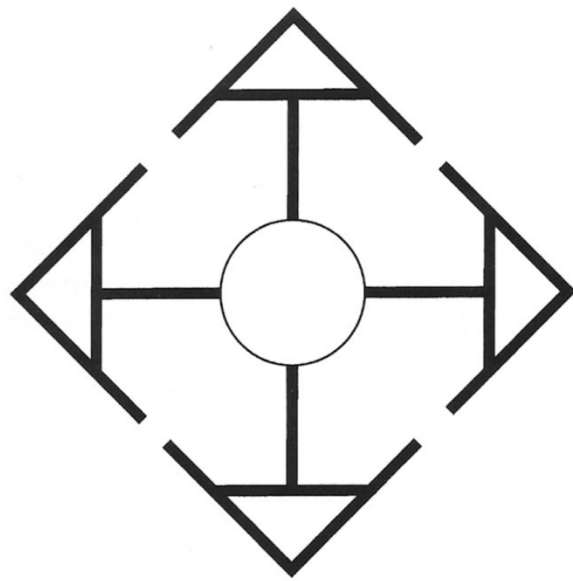


ROCK
‘N’
RUMINATIONS



DANIEL McGOWAN

Rock
‘N’
Ruminations



DANIEL McGOWAN

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*Everything in this book
may be wrong*

- but then again.....



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Deepest gratitude to my great friends, David Ellison and Jon Carter, for their considerable contributions to the production of this book.

Special thanks to my beautiful partner, Sarah Paice, without whose unstinting and loving support, the book would never have been written.

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INTRODUCTION

This book is a dip-in full of pop-ups. I call them pop-ups because the vast majority of the jottings contained in it simply popped up into my consciousness from that deeper layer of the mind, namely intuition. I know from more than fifty years experience of earnest intellectual study of deep metaphysical subjects, combined with meditation - where the aim is to stop the intellect's perpetual grinding internal dialogue - that eventually intuition cuts in and makes revelations that allow one to avoid the sometimes laborious process of ruminating or reasoning. This combination of intellectual ruminations and intuitive revelations is a very joyful and enlightening experience. This book, therefore, is not designed to be read like a novel from start to finish. Neither is it written as a treatise nor a thesis from premise to conclusion. Only the essays, which run for several pages, are written like a small book. The other jottings may be as short as one line. The reader is invited to "dip-in" and read the first words that "pop-up" and catch the eye.

I've been on this beautiful planet Earth for sixty-seven years now: so the jottings, which I started writing in the mid-eighties, have sprung from a fair amount of life experience. At first they were meant purely for my own use, but as I progressed in my studies of Paul Brunton's philosophy and those of constructive conscious control as expounded by F.M Alexander, as well as the human condition in general, I decided that it might be worth publishing my writings for people who know me and my work.

For those who don't know my work, I am a teacher of constructive awareness, which is based on the work of F.M Alexander, the work of Paul Brunton and my own work in the field of the spiritual quest. My jottings are the result of synthesizing these three elements. My work is not a blind acceptance of the teachings of these two remarkable men, but is - among other things - a collection of thoughts on how a combination of Paul Brunton's revelations of mentalism and F.M Alexander's of constructive conscious control in the use of the self can truly deepen one's understanding of the SELF and its interaction with the world around it. For example, Alexander expounded that the self is a psychophysical unity: that is, the mental mind and the physical body *somehow* merge and become one: whereas Paul Brunton's mentalism reveals that the body is a form of consciousness. The understanding of mentalism reveals that it transcends psychophysical unity. This understanding also eliminates the age-old question of how the mental and the material come together. The question falls away as one realises that there is no such thing as a material object, nor a material body. All objects, including the body, are mental constructs.

There is a fourth element that has had a profound influence and has been a source of inspiration in my life, and that is good old Rock'n'Roll! When the words,

“Well, since my baby left me, I found a new place to dwell
Down at the end of Lonely Street at Heartbreak Hotel”

exploded out of radios all over the world, then not only did they change the face of music, but also inspired the teenage revolution against those who thought that humanity should go back to the way it had been before the outbreak of the Second World War. Thank God for Elvis Presley! This man changed the world without spouting forth some fanciful philosophy. He was a shaker and a mover by simply blessing the world with his remarkable voice. He was - and still is - a source of great joy to billions of people.

At present, I am the Head of C.C.A.R.E - Centre for Constructive Awareness and Related Education - which I run with my great friend and partner, Sarah Paice, who is another wonderful source of inspiration in my life. We founded C.C.A.R.E in January, 2002, and, to date, have qualified 18 teachers :

Marcia Green, Tessa Holloway, Lisa Hooton, Maggie Taylor, Mel Appleford, Linda (The Queen) Falle, Martina Kaucka, Glenys Wheaton, David Ellison, Rosie Ferguson, Tonia Gooderham, Susan (Nushka) Kerr, Jim Woffenden, Sue Wright, Christopher Mockridge, Sarah Mugan, Dawn Robinson, Jodi Canti.

Our current students are :

Nina Walters, Diana Kay Cady, Sue Marsh, Janet West,
Jenny Quick, Uwe Paul, Rebecca Howard, Niclas Lundgvist, Michelle Hilliard.

My dear friend, Sarah Mugan, who qualified with us, is currently our Assistant Teacher.

Another dear friend of some twenty-seven years, Trisha Hemingway, is our Moderator.

Last, but not least, our school is blessed with regular visits from another great friend who is also my teacher, namely Jeanne Day. At 91 years young, she is an astonishing example of the efficacy of constructive conscious control, and is a great source of inspiration to all of us at C.C.A.R.E.

The excellent work of these three remarkable women is greatly appreciated.

In 1990, Sarah and I founded A.Z.A.T, the Ausbildungszentrum für F.M Alexander Technik in Berlin, Germany. Forty-six people qualified as teachers at this school up to 1999 :

1993 : Neidhart Bousset, Annette Lange, Veronika Liebau, Ulrike Oerter,

Dieter Preuss, Monika Scholz, Stefanie Sebastian, Renate Steininger,
Andre Theriault, Irmel Weber, Mitro (Cornelia) Vits, Uschi Wienholt.

Elisabeth Molle was our Assistant Teacher.

1996 : Irmela Bogatu, Annette Brockgreitens, Anke Dau, Saskia Draxler, Marlis
Fellinger-Michel, Gunda Fielden, Thomas Gwiasda, Barbl Kellner, Sabine Melzer,
Hannelore Milenkovic, Helmut Rennschuh, Heike Sheratte, Hannelore Starke, Gerda
Torrington, Angelika Unger.

Annette Lange. Elisabeth Molle, Andre Theriault and Irmel Weber were the Assistant
Teachers.

1999 : Elke Ballwieser, Michael Benter, Linda Gaylord, Christine Guillet, Hans-Juergen
Neumann, Vassilika (Vicki) Panagiotaki, Till Puhmann, Katharina Rolff, Dorte
Schmakowski, Jordana Schramm, Ute (Uli) Seyforth Silbermann, Sonia Wagemanns,
Antje Wurfel, Christa Borsch, Christine Fluger, Annette Forster, Mario Ohler, Klaus
Schuhmann, Nico Mastrokostopoulos.

Gunda Fielden, Elisabeth Molle, Andre Theriault, Gerda Torrington and Irmel Weber were
the assistant teachers.

When I left Berlin in December, 1999 to start a training course back in Devon, Irmel
Weber founded her own training course, using the original name of A.Z.A.T.

.....

NO MEAN CITY BLUES

A Small Autobiography Written in Song

He was born in no mean city
No mean city at night
The streets were lined with cold gas lamps
They didn't give too much light
They cast long sinister shadows
On rats of the two-legged kind
He learned how to walk, learned how to talk
But quicker he learned how to fight.

His daddy ran a book out of Tradeston
At the time it was against the law
Every now and then cops would raid the den
And bust everybody they saw
His daddy took a few bad beatings
At the hands of the devils in blue
And he told him, "Son, take off and run
Don't let this happen to you."

Football was a kind of religion
You followed the blue or the green
"Hey son, which foot do you kick with?
You'll get the job, you know what I mean?"
And the gangs fought their piddling battles
But he never did run with the crowd
"Shake their heads and their brains would rattle."
But he wouldn't say that out loud.

He was quiet and shy, but watchful
Survived by the speed of his feet
It was better to run than to face someone
Who would spill your blood on the street
And he found his best friend dyin'
Some kid stuck him with a knife
The doctors saved him from an early grave
But he'll never walk again in his life.

The years ran by like minutes
He married and moved far away

But they couldn't find that peace of mind
So they went their separate ways
Every day he misses his daughter
Don't get to see her often enough
But the big wheel turns, somehow he learns
You gotta take the smooth with the rough.

You gotta ride all the punches
If you wanna grow old
Get right back up when they knock you down
You gotta know how to rock'n'roll.

.....

*Peace and Love to all who peruse these pages
and to those who do not.*

Daniel McGowan

February, 2010

*When a man feels imperatively
the need of respecting himself,
he has heard a faint whisper
from his Overself.*

*Henceforth he begins to seek
out ways and means for
earning that respect.*

This begins his Quest.



Paul Brunton - PERSPECTIVES

Category 1, The Quest

Page 3, paragraph 2

ROCK ‘N’ RUMINATIONS

“I know,” whispers the intuition.

“I know BETTER!” trumpets the intellect.

Simplicity smiles compassionately, patiently waiting in her quiet grove for the day when people, tired of the frenetic turmoil of the modern world, will return to her.

To give opinions based on emotional prejudice, stored in your muscles, is to be out of touch with your reason.

Reason fails us when it becomes cold, indifferent, emotionless.

When you tell them about mentalism – about the body being a form of consciousness – they step back in disbelief. It is a step too far for them, a step into the unknown that they are afraid to take. They become anxious or aggressive and touch something to reassure themselves that the physical world really does exist. This is understandable, because it is so difficult to break down the self-erected walls constructed by the ego from preconceived ideas and ill-informed opinion. The appearance is preferred to the real.

They prefer the comfort of conventionality to the mystery of mentalism.

When you realise that you cannot step outside of your bubble of perception, that all these apparently physical objects are a co-creation of the World-Mind and your own smaller mind then – contrary to what you expect – the world becomes even more wondrous.

It is indeed interesting to watch their “undue self-determination” – to quote old Alexander – to hear their self-opinionated views about something that they know very little about, something they do not have enough experience of.

When you realise it is all mental, then a feeling of real freedom comes over you. You see that you have the power to change yourself. It takes only a thought.

This business of mentalism is a very private one between the individual and the World-Mind. In relation to other human beings, you are indescribably alone. In relation to the World-Mind, you are never alone.

As Paul Brunton says – “Things are no less felt and seen for being mental.”

Piousness is too often mistaken for spirituality.

They weave an intricate web of complicated theories and opinions around themselves and fail to recognise the simple truth of mentalism.

When you realise that in essence you are mind, that the body is a form of consciousness – the form the mind takes to function in the world - then you see the possibility of real change. Misuse of the self can be totally eliminated, but perhaps not in this lifetime.

They want a quick fix, an easy solution to their ills and problems; not the arduous repetition of inhibition and direction; not the relentless attention of constructive awareness.

There is nothing so intimate as the response of a muscle to the wish of the mind to do something.

The co-ordinated use of the self must be considered as part of any attempt at spiritual progress. This is not to say that people who practice constructive conscious control are well-rounded human beings. They must also work at improving their character, must also seek psycho-physical-emotional balance.

December 1999

A human BE-ing. This state is a long way off.

Too often we think we know what a human being is, when all we know is what a human being does.

Real enthusiasm is often regarded with suspicion.

The spine is your true friend. If treated with love it will uphold you, support you, never let you down.

They can easily accept that even our bones change shape for the worst as we grow older – witness the stoop of the aged person – but cannot grasp that, if we adopt constructive conscious control, the bones, being intelligent, can change their shape for the better. The body can be restored to the easily erect posture of the young child – if you WISH it!

If you knew how long it has taken you to come as far as you have, you would not want a quick fix. You would realise this is impossible. The habits of countless lifetimes have to be broken down. This realisation would bring patience in your wish to change.

Wake up! Wake up! Take control of your own life. Do not allow yourself to be dictated to. You can find freedom. Freedom is not to be found in some physical environment, no matter how pleasant, no matter how plush. Freedom is a state of mind, a way of being. Find it and stop giving your power away.

I – as mind – am.

I – as mind – have the fundamental ability to give attention.

I – as mind – think, feel and will.

It is unwittingly habitual to use such phrases as – “I changed my mind” – “In my mind I thought this or that.” The I of the Overself *is* mind. The Overself – as mind - is the I. You cannot talk about the mind in the possessive sense. You are simply mind.

I – as mind – create my own private perception from the master image supplied by the World-Mind.

The so-called “body” is the form that the individual mind – the I – takes to function in the “material” world.

The current talk nowadays about “everything is energy” is too glib. People use the phrase without understanding that energy comes from the active and creative imagination of the World-Mind, which is pure MIND-IN-ACTION. Having said that, one can use the word “energy” to describe the structure of the universe – as long as one uses it with the same sense of awe, wonder and reverence as one has for MIND.

The so-called “body” – like all other “things” – is an idea formed in the mind. It is not a lump of matter.

We only see the results of the working of the World-Mind (energy if you like), never the World-Mind itself.

Scientists are debating whether or not the sun has consciousness. How could anyone doubt this of the greatest spiritual being in the solar system?

How long can our beautiful planet go on taking all the abuse that human beings hand out?

Most of us on this planet are not human, but only half-human; some not even that far. We have yet to reach the human kingdom.

The Golden Rule remains the only answer, beautiful in its simplicity “Do to others as you would have them do to you.”

Of what importance could it be, to be told as a 10-year-old in school that the capital of Australia is Sydney?

If your immediate reaction to the last jotting was; - “Twit, he got it wrong again!” then you missed the point. And anyway, everybody knows that the capital of Australia is Adelaide.

Sometimes I get sad when I think of all the wonderful books that exist, that I will never read.

It’s simple really! You have to choose a path, one that will lead you to find a standpoint. Too often we have opinions about matters of which we know too little. Only when you have found a real standpoint will you be able to expound your knowledge with quiet

confidence and humble self-assurance. This does not mean that your standpoint is fixed and rigid; does not mean you defend it at all costs and turn it into a dogma. As you travel the path looking forwards, you must not forget to look right and left.

Mentalism and constructive awareness! The two pillars of my life! Both are not a question of belief. They are truisms, real knowledge. Both are simple, yet difficult, to understand.

The joy of freeing your neck and allowing your head to go forward and up, so that your back can lengthen and widen, your breath can deepen, is something that other people, who have not experienced it, cannot understand.

Repetition! The most difficult thing in life for us to deal with?
December 1999

Old Alexander is very clever. He called his book “THE USE OF THE SELF” not “THE USE OF MYSELF”.”

As a self, you have developed faculties or mechanisms such as thinking, feeling and doing. These mechanisms constitute the use of the self or the means for the self to experience the world.

It is not the use of the self in the same way as the use of a tool.

F.M. ALEXANDER TECHNIQUE AS THE BASIS OF LEARNING

A lecture given in Berlin, 1996

For those of you who are not familiar with the Alexander Technique, I will begin by giving a short account of how F.M.Alexander made his now famous discovery.

Alexander lived from 1869 to 1955. He was born in Tasmania and as a young man he became deeply interested in the theatre, especially Shakespeare. His particular love was to perform one-man recitations of Shakespeare's works and he was a successful and popular actor. Such were the demands made on his voice, however, in carrying out his profession that he developed problems with his throat, which resulted in hoarseness to the point where he could not speak.

He consulted his doctor, and after trying various treatments, he realised that the medical profession could not cure him. This meant that his beloved career as an actor was threatened and this realisation prompted him to reason that whatever was wrong with him must be caused by something he was doing to himself.

With the aid of a mirror, Alexander spent years of meticulous study of himself, not only of how he used his vocal mechanisms, but also his whole psycho-physical organism. He saw that any movement of a specific part of his body could not be done in isolation, but was a function of his whole being. He realised also that he was completely dominated by habitual, unreasoned use of himself: after many years of experimenting he gradually freed himself of its tyranny.

How did Alexander do this? From his observations in the mirror, he saw that he was not doing with his body what he felt or thought he was doing; e.g. he noticed that in everything he did he disturbed the integrity of his head-neck-back relationship, by stiffening unduly the muscles of his neck, which resulted in his head being pulled back and down into his shoulders causing his spine to distort harmfully, so that he became shorter in stature. This disturbance of the "primary control" as he called it, that is the balanced relationship of his head, neck and torso, caused severe pressure on his vocal mechanisms and restricted his breathing, thus causing the distressing hoarseness.

His harmful habit of stiffening his neck, pulling his head back and down and shortening and narrowing his back was even more apparent when he attempted to recite from the

works of Shakespeare, because of the added stress of dramatic expression, voice projection, etc.

Having made these discoveries, Alexander then thought that the way to cure himself of his voice trouble was simply to stop, by an act of will, the stiffening of his neck muscles, the pulling-back of his head and the shortening and narrowing of his back. In other words, he would stop disturbing his head-neck-back relationship, the primary, unifying mechanism in the body. When he tried to do this, however, he was greatly startled to find that despite his 'will-to-do' he could not prevent these unco-ordinated events from occurring and he realised that they were habits which he had developed over the years, habits which had become so ingrained, mentally and physically, that he could not change them *directly*. In other words, he discovered that if his neck muscles were harmfully stiffened, his head pulled back and down and his back shortened and narrowed he could not simply *free* his neck, *put* his head forward and up, and *pull* himself up in order to make his back longer.

This brought him to the knowledge that it is a common belief among the vast majority of us that if we are asked to perform an act in a new, unfamiliar way, we can simply do it. This belief is a fallacy. To perform an act in a familiar fashion is easy enough, but to do so in an unfamiliar manner involves experiences where we must take steps into the unknown.

What are these unfamiliar steps into the unknown? They involve the adoption of an *indirect* method of changing harmful, unco-ordinated use of the psycho-physical mechanisms of the self. As Alexander found, he could not *directly* change his habits and he had to find a way of doing so *indirectly*. He also had to find a way of *knowing*, without doubt, that he had done so.

The indirect method that he adopted happened as follows. Alexander realised that if he was ever to change his negative habits he must side-step them by refusing, at the crucial moment when he wanted to move, to do anything until he *thought* or *directed* his neck to be free, his head forward and up and his back to lengthen and widen. He would then do something, sit down for example, and maintain *as the priority* the conscious directions to his head-neck-back relationship *all the way through the movement of sitting down*. In other words, by stopping at the crucial moment and refusing to react habitually to the stimulus of sitting down (or whatever), he inhibited *at source* his habitual, unco-ordinated behaviour.

This process of inhibition was his most important discovery. It is not something hanging in the air like some doubtful, vague, metaphysical flight of fancy, but is a physical fact of the nervous system, a fact which has since been confirmed by the investigations of medical science. By 1949 the medical profession had discovered and accepted inhibition as a natural, vital function of the nervous system. In relation to the functioning of the nervous system, to refrain from performing a movement is just as active as performing

one. It is worth noting that Alexander discovered inhibition in the most practical way through *experience* as far back as the last decade of the 19th century and a growing number of people, who are interested in making radical, constructive, conscious changes in themselves, have been learning how to use it ever since. The word "radical" is used here to emphasise that, in order to change, we should first learn how to *inhibit or stop*, at source, all our old, harmful habits of misuse of our psycho-physical organisms.

A word of caution. The term 'inhibition' as used in the Alexander Technique should not be confused with 'suppression'. Suppression, in the conventional sense, is negative and dangerous to the welfare of the individual. Alexandrian inhibition is a vital, dynamic process, which is exactly the opposite of suppression. It is truly the gateway to positive change.

So, what did Alexander discover? He found that his reactions to the stimuli of everyday living were unsatisfactory because they were always too quick, too stressful and were carried out with too much strenuous effort. These habitual reactions caused him to develop harmful muscle-tension patterns throughout the body, which caused him subsequently to lose his voice. More importantly, however, he realised that throughout his life he had *thought* himself into these muscle-tension patterns and it was his wonderful power of *thinking* that enabled him to release them and thus free himself from his throat trouble. His throat trouble disappeared *in the process of re-educating* his whole psycho-physical-emotional organism. He had set out to cure a *specific* symptom and discovered something much more important i.e. that the human being is a psycho-physical-emotional unity which must be considered as a whole. *Specific* symptoms will vanish during the re-educative process of improving the *general* use of the self.

Before considering the educative benefits of the Alexander Technique for children, let us first look at a fundamental requirement for all of us no matter what we wish to learn. This fundamental is good health.

Alexander's initial motivation, when he tried to find out what it was that he was doing to himself, was to get rid of his throat trouble: in other words, to make himself healthy again by "curing" a specific symptom. During this attempt to "cure" himself, he found, as stated earlier, that his reactions to the stimuli of living were unsatisfactory because he, like most of us, was an inveterate 'end-gainer'.

What is 'end-gaining'? It is the desire to arrive at the finish of what one wishes to do without considering the co-ordinated means of gaining that end. 'End-gaining' results in inappropriate and, therefore, unsatisfactory psycho-physical-emotional reactions to stimuli. One example of an unsatisfactory *mental* reaction is 'mind-wandering' which manifests as not managing to keep your mind on the thing you are doing at that very moment, or on the abstract subject you are trying to study. Most children as well as adults suffer from this inability to pay sustained attention.

An example of an unsatisfactory *emotional* reaction would be sticking to one's belief, or opinion, when in your heart you know the other person is right. For example, the professor who would not look through Galileo's telescope because he knew that, in one glance, all his so-called 'scientific knowledge' of a lifetime would be swept away. Strictly speaking, thoughts cannot be separated from emotions. The basic 'I' thought, the ego, is a 'thought-emotion'. A person cannot have a purely mental, or a purely emotional reaction.

And then an example of an unsatisfactory *physical* reaction would be to sit down in a way which results in the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship being harmfully interfered with by stiffening and shortening the neck muscles, which in their turn affect every other muscle in the body. But again, physical reactions cannot be separated from mental reactions. One must start with the thought "I wish to sit down" and the physical act occurs. The phrase "I wish to sit down" also has an emotional content. If one 'wishes' or 'wants' or 'has the desire to' then that is an emotion. And, as we discovered earlier, mental acts cannot be separated from emotion, then the conclusion is that the human creature is a psycho-physical-emotional unity.

In relation to health, the understanding that the human being is a psycho-physical-emotional unity is of deep significance. Our three basic functions of *thinking, feeling and willing* manifest through psycho-physical-emotional reaction and action. So, for the purpose of illustration only, let us separate these three aspects of ourselves and consider them one at a time. We will begin with a habitual, mental reaction such as worry. We tend to worry about the same things all the time. Even if there is no cause to worry we usually find something to worry about. This is a mental habit based on fear, an emotion. But this mental habit results in a physical reaction, namely, too much muscle tension, which leads to habitual muscle shortening.

Let us now consider a habitual emotional reaction such as 'depression', another symptom of our reaction to the stress of modern life. When a person is depressed he or she is unhappy and this negative state leads to too much muscle tension, which leads to habitual muscle shortening.

Lastly, a physical reaction: We will stay with the example of sitting down in a chair. During the journey from standing to sitting, the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship is interfered with, as described earlier and this interference leads to too much muscle tension, which leads to habitual muscle shortening.

What these three illustrations mean is that *what we are manifests in the muscles*. They indicate our psycho-physical-emotional state. If you watch a baby in particular, you will see how s/he expresses joy by moving every muscle in the body, toes and fingers moving, arms waving around, legs kicking, lips smiling etc. When the baby is unhappy all the muscles tense up as s/he cries.

We can now see that our way of misusing our psycho-physical-emotional selves manifests as muscle-shortening, fixed muscle-tension patterns. The problem, however, is that muscle-shortening is not generally recognised as a symptom of ill-health. But if a muscle cannot function at its optimum, then it becomes inefficient and can, therefore, be shown to be unhealthy, just as the liver, if it did not function optimally, would be considered unhealthy and the doctor would prescribe some remedy to restore it to good health.

Unfortunately, shortened muscles cause many things in the body to become unhealthy. The spine, for example, distorts and this causes the torso to slump, which in turn causes all the vital organs such as the heart, lungs, liver, stomach, intestines, uterus etc. to drop. This results in tremendous pressure being put on them. Many ailments result from this such as heart disease, poor breathing, sluggish circulation, digestive problems etc. All these are usually diagnosed as separate symptoms and attempts are made to cure them on a specific basis. But no medical diagnosis could be complete without considering the person's use of themselves, which affects their functioning.

In our everyday acts we can learn to improve the use of the self by '*thinking in activity*', a MENTAL process which brings PHYSICAL change which will make us happier, an EMOTIONAL state. We should not separate these aspects of the self, *they function as a whole*. Alexander discovered that specific symptoms cannot be treated separately and that misuse of the psycho-physical-emotional organism as a whole causes these *specific* symptoms. If we wish to improve our health *we must first solve the problem of our negative reactions to the stimuli of everyday living*. This is why F.M. Alexander called his discovery "a technique for dealing with *human reaction*".

The schoolteacher's task is difficult because the majority of children have developed many harmful psycho-physical patterns of misuse before they even start school at the age of five or six. Why is this? Two major reasons stand out. The first is fear, usually the fear of doing something wrong, something that does not please the parents. Too often children are told, "Do it right, do it quickly, do it quietly and do it my way!" and this causes them anxiety and unhappiness. The second reason is love. Whichever parent the child loves best is the one s/he will copy. S/he will subconsciously adopt the parent's misuse right down to how the parent breathes. The child's ability to imitate is tremendous.

The children then start school and the pressure of 'getting it right' is perpetuated during their studies. Sometimes they are made to feel anxious when the teacher adopts a method such as the example which follows: - A friend of mine told me recently that her 8 year old daughter came home from school crying because the teacher attempted to check her knowledge of arithmetic by asking her, "What is 7 x 4?" The teacher told the child "I will ask you 7 x 4 and then I will count 1, 2, 3 and you must give me the correct answer immediately after 3". The child complained to her mother that the pressure of the situation stopped her from thinking clearly and she could make no reply. This of course really

irritated the teacher, but more importantly it caused the child psychological and emotional distress. How many of us have suffered such an experience numerous times?

Such pressure and distress increases in the child's later education because of the system of sitting examinations. Such a method breeds division among people as they approach adulthood because the 'clever' children are praised and rewarded for their 'success' and the 'stupid' ones are made to feel inferior because of their 'failure'. Who could estimate the untold damage done to all of us through this insensitive and segregatory system? With this type of education children are taught how to conform and become part of the system which we call society. It prepares them for **work** and does not teach them how to **live**. This way of 'education' is synonymous with indoctrination.

F.M. Alexander was greatly concerned about the plight of the children and called them 'his most important client'. Other people shared this concern, prominent among them being John Dewey (1859-1952) the American philosopher and educationalist. He was born in Vermont and received his PhD degree from John Hopkins University of Maryland before his appointment in 1894 as professor of philosophy and pedagogy at the University of Chicago. He resigned in 1904 and joined the faculty of Columbia University where he remained until retirement in 1930 and as professor emeritus until 1939.

With Charles S. Pierce, William James and George H. Mead, Dewey was founder of the philosophic movement known as pragmatism, which is the doctrine that the only test of the truth of human cognitions or philosophical principles is their practical results. This philosophy reflected American culture and insisted that the way to test ideas was to check whether or not, when applied in practice, the results were the ones expected. Crudely stated, this has been taken to mean the test of an idea is whether or not it worked in practice. At Chicago, Dewey started an elementary laboratory school in which he tested his ideas. His educational writings date from this time. 'THE SCHOOL AND SOCIETY', 1902, and 'THE CHILD AND THE CURRICULUM', 1902, followed by 'HOW WE THINK', 1916. Two of Dewey's later books, 'HUMAN NATURE AND CONDUCT', 1922, and 'EXPERIENCE AND NATURE', 1925, tell of his experiences with the Alexander Technique.

Dewey's influence on educational theory has been profound. Between the wars most American professors of education acknowledged his leadership. His influence on primary school practice was, perhaps, greater than at the secondary level. Progressive education had in Dewey one of its most articulate theorists.

Dewey had lessons in, and studied intermittently, the Alexander Technique from 1920 onwards. The greatest benefit he said he got from lessons was the ability to stop and think (inhibition) before acting. Another benefit was the improvement in his breathing and his doctor commented on how - even at the age of eighty-eight - mobile his ribs were.

Alexander wrote four books:

1. *MAN'S SUPREME INHERITANCE*
2. *CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL*
3. *THE USE OF THE SELF*
4. *THE UNIVERSAL CONSTANT IN LIVING*

John Dewey wrote introductions to three of them and a few quotes from these introductions are given below.

MAN'S SUPREME INHERITANCE:

"In the larger sense of education, this whole book is concerned with education. But Alexander touches on education in the narrower sense. He is aware of the perversions and distortions that spring from that unnatural suppression of childhood which too frequently passes for school training."

CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL:

"For although there is nothing esoteric in his teaching it is difficult for anyone to grasp its full force without having actual demonstration of the principle in operation."

"The perversion of our sensory consciousness of ourselves has gone so far that we lack criteria for judging the doctrines and methods that profess to deal with the individual human being."

"The most striking fact of Alexander's teaching is the sincerity and reserve with which he has never carried his formulation beyond the point of demonstrated facts."

"Alexander has demonstrated a new scientific principle with respect to the control of human behaviour, as important as any principle which has ever been discovered in the domain of external nature."

*Note: The "control of human behaviour" in the above quote is constructive conscious control of the individual, **by the individual**, not by some outside agency like a government or some other body.*

"It is a discovery which makes whole all scientific discoveries and renders them available, not for our undoing, but for human use in promoting our constructive growth and happiness."

"The one factor which is the primary tool in the use of all these other tools, namely ourselves as the basic condition of our employment of all agencies and energies, has not even been studied as the central instrumentality."

"But the method is not one of remedy; it is one of constructive education. Its proper field of application is with the young, the growing generation".

THE USE OF THE SELF:

"Education is the only method which humankind possesses for directing its own course. But we have been involved in a vicious circle. Without knowledge of what constitutes a truly normal and healthy psycho-physical life, our professed education is likely to be mis-education. Every serious student of the formation of disposition and character which takes place in the family and school knows - speaking without the slightest exaggeration - how often and how deplorably this possibility is realised. The technique of Alexander gives to the educator a standard of psycho-physical health. It supplies also the 'means-whereby' this standard may be progressively and endlessly achieved, becoming a conscious possession of the one educated. It provides the conditions for the central direction of all special educational processes. ***It bears the same relation to education that education itself bears to all other human activities. It contains in my judgement the promise and potentiality of the new direction that is needed in all education.***"

There can be no doubt that Dewey was deeply influenced by Alexander's work. Dewey, perhaps America's greatest philosopher and pedagogue, a co-founder of the practical philosophy of pragmatism was shocked to discover that he did not possess psycho-physical equilibrium. He was the intellectual type who thought that his body was simply useful for carrying his brain around. During early lessons when he attempted to perform the seemingly simple act of sitting down in a conscious, co-ordinated manner - as explained by Alexander - that ran contrary to his habitual behaviour, he found he could not do it and described his failure as ***"an experience not congenial to one's vanity, the most humiliating experience of my life, intellectually speaking."***

In Alexander's teachings, Dewey found the means of realising the pragmatic approach to life that he himself had advocated. Of this he said, ***"In the study I found the things which I had 'known' - in the sense of theoretical belief - in philosophy and psychology, changed into vital experiences which gave a new meaning to knowledge of them."***

We will now move on and consider what F.M. Alexander had to say about the child and education. Most of what follows is paraphrased from his books.

A child, once it has emerged from its first state of absolute helplessness, and before it is coerced into certain mental and physical habits, is the most plastic and adaptable of living beings. At this stage the child has the complete potential for learning constructive

conscious control of the self in every situation s/he is likely to face in life; the complete potential for learning the co-ordinated use of the psycho-physical self as s/he interacts with the environment and with other people. The usual procedure, unfortunately, is to thrust certain habits upon the child without enough consideration of cause and effect and to insist upon these habits until they become subconscious and pass from the region of intellectual guidance.

Too often, we thoughtlessly bind the pliable child to some method of working without considering whether that method is good in itself. We impose a rigid rule of physical and mental outlook on the children. Too often we know that, in ourselves, the rule has not worked very well, but it is the rule which was taught to us and we pass it on by precept. Too often, the adults are unaware that they are holding up their own imperfections for imitation.

If we are to avoid the development of negative, harmful, subconscious habits in the child, we must teach them conscious control. Give the child conscious control and you give him or her poise. Without poise s/he will soon be cramped and distorted by the environment. Give the child the reasoned control of her psycho-physical being and you fit her for any and every mode of life. She will come to possess wonderful powers of adapting to any and every environment and will be able to shape life to her own needs. Constructive conscious control, as a fundamental of education, can give the child of today as full a command of the use of the self as possible in all forms of human activity. It constitutes the co-ordinated means of adapting to, and freely expressing themselves in, the ever-changing vicissitudes of civilised life.

The children's reactions to their immediate environment, i.e. the desk, must also be considered. In adopting the habit of misusing themselves by crouching and slumping over the desk when reading and writing, the child and the teacher do not realise that their kinaesthetic sense, that is the sense of what they are actually doing with their bodies at the time, is being demoralised. At a time when natural activity should be encouraged, these kinaesthetic systems concerned with correct and healthy body movements are being grossly distorted. This causes faulty sensory awareness in every act that the child performs, not only in school, but in all the activities of life. In other words, this sensory awareness becomes so untrustworthy that the young person, like the adult, does not actually know the co-ordinated 'how' of performing everyday acts. They do not know that in everything they do they are habitually upsetting their psycho-physical-emotional unity. There is not, of course, an ideal desk to sit at and so, obviously, we must educate the children in the co-ordinated use of the self, not redesign the furniture.

Up to now, the educationalists have given the children what they thought the young ones needed, but in future we must give them the co-ordinated 'means' by which they themselves may satisfy their needs and command their own advancement.

Alexander attempted to give this very method to the children in the 'Little School', as it was known, which he founded in London in 1924, together with Irene Tasker, an Alexander Technique teacher and schoolteacher who had also undertaken the Montessori training. Tasker was in charge of the 'school' teaching of the children and Alexander gave them individual lessons in his technique.

With the Alexander Technique as the foundation for learning, the children were shown the value of working with the 'means', never with 'ends'; shown how to apply the principles in every kind of activity; shown how to, in the words of Professor John Dewey, 'think in activity'. As long as they applied the principles, the children could be left to carry on their reading, writing etc. with the minimum of help from the teacher.

Tasker planned the school work in a way which helped the children meet any special needs they may have had. She also found interesting subjects that they could share. In her book, 'CONNECTING LINKS', Irene Tasker describes some of the experiences at the 'Little School':

"The little ones contributed specimens of handwriting, older ones wrote stories and plays and poems, many describing the fate of 'end-gainers'. They all used the typewriter, which I found excellent for the practice of the inhibitory-means-whereby principle. They found that if they refused to strike the keys until they had arranged their fingers on the appropriate keys for at least three letters ahead, they prevented, instead of made, mistakes. Prevention of mistakes, by encouraging the children to wait long enough to have their means clearly and thoroughly prepared before going on to gain their end, proved to be a result of carrying out Alexander's principle in the schoolroom. Of course all attempts cannot be successful and we know how we learn by mistakes, but as Alexander says, 'Confidence is born of success, not of failure', and our processes in education and in the general art of living must be based upon principles which will enable us to make certain of the satisfactory means-whereby an end may be achieved. And thus to command a large percentage of those satisfactory experiences which develop confidence, as against a small percentage of those unsatisfactory experiences which tend to undermine our confidence and make us unhappy.

Our speaking work was also directed towards a common end, the performance the children gave at the end of term to their parents and friends. In the speaking work, I would give them, for instance, two or three lines from Shakespeare to repeat and I would say the words as many times as they needed to become sure of their meaning. Then, and only then, did they attempt to say the words themselves. It may have been slow but it was sure progress and by the time we wanted to act in the performance the children were sure of what they had to say."

After attending one of these performances Alexander said: "The performance afforded a pleasing and exhilarating experience, for instead of the bustle and excitement usually associated with children's performances at end of term, there was a calm and deliberate

attitude pervading all that was done". Irene Tasker was sitting in the audience obviously confident the children would not fail to be true to the principles of non-endgaining. Even the youngest pupil carried out his parts with the assurance of the trained and experienced performer. When one little girl forgot her lines she was not in the least disturbed. No shuffling of feet or twitching of mouth and fingers, just placid non-endgaining until she remembered and then on she went as if nothing had happened. It was noticeable that the attitude of calm and confidence was passed on from the young performers to the adults in the audience.

Tasker also said: "I think that the confidence which came to these children, manifesting, as they did, various shortcomings and difficulties, was largely due to their sharing the experience of learning to say 'No' (inhibition) before starting a job or an activity. Indeed they had great fun with it. They found it worked to have their 'means' clearly thought out before tackling a new piece of work. Professor Dewey, who visited the class for two mornings, sitting quietly in a corner while we carried on as usual, said to me on leaving 'It is quite evident what you are aiming at here - and I wish I were a pupil in this class!'"

It is surely the aim of every thinking, caring schoolteacher to make the children happy and of this Alexander said: "The characteristic note of true happiness is struck when the healthy child is busily engaged in something which interests him or her. To know 'how it works' is the natural desire of every child. Children are always interested in machinery and it is significant that in schools where experiments have been made in re-education of the use of the self on a general basis, the children show more interest in this work than in any other. They are not slow to recognise that they themselves are the most interesting machines and their natural interest in mechanics finds full scope in their own re-education. This interest in the working of their own psycho-physical mechanisms grows steadily and comprehensively. Any process of development of the child (or adult) in using the mechanics of the organism should precede all other experience and this would increase the value of knowledge gained through study of inanimate mechanical contraptions. One can recall the expression of interest, happiness and satisfaction shown by the child when one has enabled her to understand for the first time that her unduly stiffened neck is due to attempts to do with the neck muscles what should be done by some other part of the mechanism. Experience has proved to me that with re-education on a general basis, children find a new interest in all their activities and they are happy to find that they can improve at games by conscious *general* direction of themselves, instead of the usual *specific* directions they receive in coaching lessons. When they learn to inhibit, that is say 'No' to some stimulus to misdirected activity this prevents over-excitement of the fear reflexes and their happiness increases with their psycho-physical improvement."

In conclusion, if the teachers could learn that free-expression balanced with self-discipline would allow the children to consciously participate in, and to be in harmony with, the only constant in the universe, namely CHANGE, such conscious participation

and harmony would allow them to realise true happiness, which could be defined as psycho-physical-emotional balance. Surely, this should be the aim of all education.

Alexander once more: "I wish to say something to the many people who say 'I am quite content as I am'. To them I say, firstly, if you are content to be the slave of habits, instead of master of your own mind and body, you can never have realised the wonderful inheritance which is yours by right of the fact that you were born a reasoning, intelligent man or woman. Secondly, and more widely, I ask you, 'What about the children?' Are you content to rob them of their inheritance, as perhaps you were robbed of yours by your parents? Are you willing to send them out into the world ill-equipped, dependent on precepts and incipient habits, unable to control their own desires and already on the way to psycho-physical degeneration?"

A strange breed indeed, those people who believe the self to be the body, from whose brain thoughts arise like fire from burning wood, or the heat haze from a highway. Unfortunately, they are in the vast majority.

The chasm that yawns between materialism and mentalism is a huge one to jump.

Our senses tell us what they experience in themselves; what they hear, feel, taste, smell and see. They tell us nothing of what is really out there.

Do not assign the sweet taste to the maple syrup. It is a sensation on your tongue that you experience.

How startling to discover that the seemingly solid world of things around us is only inferred!

Let the children grow in freedom. Learn from them. Partake of their wisdom!

Old people who have come through a lifetime of seventy, eighty or ninety years and more, and who have done nobody any real harm should be admired. What a feat to have come through all those years of intermittent joy and despair, most of them having experienced lives of quiet desperation! I love to hear their stories.

December 1999

Old people should be respected, if only for the fact that they have managed to grow old!

Looking back, I can see a number of events that happened in a way which I later realised to be the intervention of the Overself. This is both humbling and inspiring.

Looking back, seeing events brought about by the Overself, gives me, in the here and now of my life, a feeling of being guided. Fears fall away.

Give yourself the freedom to fall!

Let your back smile!

The ability to stop and stand back, to take the role of the witness, is of tremendous value when another person verbally abuses you. The feeling of being hurt quickly disappears and your compassion for the other surfaces, because you know that the person is merely attacking him/herself.

Let the kundalini flow! It will uphold you.

The Use of the Self

Here “use” means how the self thinks, feels and does. Phrases like “We can learn how to change the use of ourselves”, have a materialistic ring to them. They imply an entity that possesses a self, and this self is used in a certain way. Actually you are a self and you have created mechanisms of thinking, feeling and doing. These mechanisms constitute the use of the self, i.e. what it does and how it does things to function in the world. Alexander discovered that the “how” of this use was “wrong”, unco-ordinated and imbalanced. Because we can see its form, we habitually refer to the so-called body as the self. And the body is undoubtedly a part of the self; but it is only a part. The other parts consist of that which we cannot see, i.e. the ego and the Overself. We have the “I” of the ego and the “I” of the Overself. The ego is the active phase of the Overself. It is the Overself made manifest. In other words, the ego is the projected, active part of the soul. The ego is the channel through which the Overself traffics with the world.

This can be represented as follows:

“I” (Overself) ➔ ”I” (Ego) ➔ THINKING, FEELING, DOING (Doing means Seeing, Hearing, Touching, Tasting, Smelling, Balancing.)

The projected “I” the ego, the active self, deals with form. It has created all its faculties to experience all the other forms around it in the world. It has needs, such as love, fun, art, sport etc. It is incredibly inquisitive. It needs to step into the unknown, to explore. Out of this need to know and to explore, has sprung its creativity; the creativity that led to the building of its FORM OF CONSCIOUSNESS known as the body. The Overself, the soul, on the other hand, has no needs. It dwells in eternity. It is out of time. It is out of space. It is the witness. It is still. It abides in ineffable peace.

December 1999

The peace of the Overself is what we intuitively feel within us. This feeling causes us great yearning, great longing to return to our true home, to give up the frantic everyday dealing with the world that the ego must go through. Hence, the boon and blessing of deep sleep.

Our creativity is indeed incredible. But then so is that of the animals, the insects, the plants and all the other forms of life on the planet. They are all selves that have created their myriad forms (of consciousness) to meet their particular needs.

Science has just discovered that water has a memory. This is not surprising, because if it didn't have a memory it would not know how to be water. Can anything exist without a memory?

Memory! Could a computer function without it?

Memory is used all the time, albeit subconsciously, by the individual to uphold and sustain its perception of the world. This process takes place millisecond by millisecond (not continuously). If all the colours in the environment suddenly changed, you would, at least, be totally disorientated or, at most, die of shock.

This co-creation of the world by the World-Mind and the individual needs hard and deep thinking. It is feasible that the World-Mind gave this gift of creativity to the individual before the latter had form: in other words, to the Overself. And, just as the World-Mind spun the universe out of itself, so the Overself did the same – via the ego – to create its own micro-universe, the body, a form of consciousness.

Is it not strange that we can never know how big or small we are (in the absolute sense)? We talk about the vastness of the universe, but this may be like crossing the street to a greater being. Relativity reigns!

December 1999

Only the individual mystical mind can venture where science fears to tread. Only the individual mystical mind can enter the Gate that science will never discover if it continues to search ever outwards. To find reality the scientist will have to turn mystic, will have to u-turn attention inwards and seek the reality of the Overself. Mystical revelations during meditation are exclusively private and beyond scientific scrutiny. Science is incapable of refuting mystical experiences, just as it is unable to verify them.

Reason tells us that the car we are driving is moving over the road. This is not, however, what we experience. We experience the road moving under the car. If only we could use our reason more when it comes to matters of deep emotional upset.

The adoption of constructive conscious control reveals how numerous are the pre-conceived ideas the individual has about himself. How many more do we have about other people?

If you really and truly ask yourself about the truth of what you believe in life, you are very likely to discover that most of it is pre-conceived and erroneous. Much of it is based on myth and precept. Can you face that?

Observe the two-year old standing easily erect, moving with natural poise and grace. Observe the twelve-year old slumping around, moving awkwardly, timidly. This is very sad.

The highest relationship – true friendship. Are your children your friends?

How inspiring it is to look into the eyes of the young babies and see that Inner Light of ancient wisdom shining brightly. How tragic that the light dims as they are indoctrinated into fitting into the system.

We are not educated to live, but are indoctrinated into serving the system controlled by the elite few, compelled to uphold all this social injustice.

How boring was so much of the trivia, that bore no relation to the immediacy of my life, with which they polluted my mind.

December 1999

They indoctrinated us with the fear, not the love, of God. “Be a good boy and you will go to heaven!” “If you are bad, God will punish you!” “The devil is watching you all the time. He’ll catch you and take you to the bad fire!”

I remember they showed me as a member of the Boys Brigade, how to polish the buckle on the belt of my uniform, by heating it with a candle and then rubbing it to make it shine. I made a mistake and burnt the leather. On the next inspection by the district captain, I was thoroughly humiliated and ashamed when he made me stand in front of the whole company, while he pointed out “This is NOT what you do when you polish your buckle!” The feeling of stupidity that came over me was overwhelming. I was twelve years old. I did not go back.

Most of the teachers ruled by fear. The threat of being assaulted, whacked on the hands by a leather tawse, so thick that it could stand up straight, was a sure deterrent to “bad” behaviour.

How can one convey the importance of the muscles? How can one show that they are the storehouse of our emotions? How can one explain their sensitivity?

At last, science has discovered that muscle cells have self-knowledge! We can take this further and realise that all our vital organs – heart, liver, stomach, lungs etc. – are living beings in their own right and also possess self-knowledge.

The apparent solidity of the things around us, including the body, blinds us to the fact of their mental nature.

The body is truly wondrous; a veritable micro-universe; consciousness made manifest.

December 1999

Too often we treat the children like children.

Because a person’s body has grown to adulthood does not mean s/he is an adult.

At seven years old, my son wanted to join the Boy Scouts. As it was his wish, I didn’t stop him. He could not, however, conform to the Scoutmaster’s version of how one should behave, so he quit. I received a letter from this Scoutmaster, saying that my son lacked loyalty and commitment. I wrote and told him he was yet another of the narrow-minded people who put children off.

Almost any kind of group mentality is dangerous. The individual is supreme.

men-made.

Be a river, go with the flow, trust your Higher Self!.

Atheism is inverted religion. It evades all the questions about the Mind behind the universe.

Decemeber 1999

Strange, that humans – intelligent creatures – can believe that there is nothing intelligent behind the universe.

I don't think intelligence grows. Knowledge grows. Intelligence IS. I have had the same intelligence since I was mind-without-form and learned somehow to change to a slower vibration and become a "physical" cell. Then I used the same intelligence to become 2 cells, then 4, then 8 and so on, until I became the complex creature that I am now. In this way, my knowledge increased.

Love of the mystery must replace fear of the unknown.

Gunda Fielden

The present-day social hierarchy exists, not because some people are more intelligent than others, but because some people have had more opportunity.

CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL IN RELATION TO HEALTH

For the purpose of the following exposition, I will attempt to give a definition of good ‘physical’ health. The word ‘physical’ is in parenthesis because it is not possible to isolate ‘physical’ health from the psycho-emotional aspects of health. A truly healthy person would enjoy a positive state of being, where the mental, the physical and the emotional would be in harmony and balance.

Good ‘physical’ health, then, I define as an organism in which all of its various systems are functioning with optimal efficiency in their distinctive, specific way to produce an interactive, holistic process that creates an effect of overall efficiency. F.M Alexander defines health thus, *‘Health in living may be defined as the best possible reaction of the organism to the stimuli of living’*.

These systems are those such as nervous, circulatory, respiratory, digestive, lymphatic – to name a few – and most importantly for this discourse, neuro-muscular, structural, mechanical and sensory: not forgetting in the sensory systems to include the vital role of the kinaesthetic or proprioceptive sense. When these systems are functioning in harmony with each other the organism will work as an integrated, co-ordinated and healthy whole.

It is generally believed in society that people are more healthy nowadays than in the past. This belief has developed because of the tremendous advances in medical science that have wiped out numerous serious diseases we have suffered from for thousands of years. But is this real progress? Is the prevailing idea now one where we expect the doctors to come up with a cure for everything and then we will be happy because we are healthy? This mind-set seems to be on the increase as evidenced by such disorders as obesity and addiction to drugs and alcohol. Many modern people seem to think that they don’t need to keep themselves in a good state of health, because if something goes wrong with the body, all they have to do is go to the doctor and get a pill that will cure the ailment. This attitude shows that most people do not want to – and/or don’t know how to – take responsibility for their own health and welfare.

Sportsmen and women and people who pursue a fitness regime are generally regarded as healthy. They perform prodigious deeds that many other less endowed people admire and wish to emulate. This way of being healthy involves following a program of exercises etc. that the person must regularly maintain to remain healthy. Such exercises are eventually dropped as the person becomes older and loses interest as the drive to stay up at the competitive level diminishes. Many such people then become overweight, over-

relaxed and paradoxically too tense. The lively tonus that the muscles enjoyed earlier has vanished. All this shows that, unless the person can keep their enthusiasm up, such an approach to health is not sustainable. There exists, however, a fundamental process of maintaining good health and fitness that the vast majority of people know nothing about. This process is that of constructive conscious control in the use of the self, as discovered and expounded by F.M Alexander.

His process of conscious control is based on knowledge of not only how the body functions as a mechanism, but also primarily how to *think* it into the naturally, dynamic and physically appropriate movement it is designed to perform. Such good use of the body is something that the vast majority of us have forgotten. For example, the common way to pick something up from the floor is done by bending the back too much – which is mechanically inappropriate and particularly harmful to the lumbar spine – instead of bending at the hip, knee and ankle joints and allowing the whole spine to keep its natural length and shape.

Alexander's procedures also demonstrate how to bring the self and the environment into a unified field of awareness in order to integrate and harmonise them. Too often in life our awareness is 'out there' in the world around us and the environment is given all our attention as we carry out our daily tasks. In this habitual way of being and doing the general use of the body is not considered. We simply do things without giving any thought to *how* the body should perform these everyday tasks. In all these activities we misuse ourselves so badly that – among other things – we habitually tighten our necks, pull our heads back harmfully, shorten and narrow the back, displace the pelvis and severely restrict the breathing mechanisms. All this misuse results, in particular, in shortening of the spine, which in turn imposes harmful pressure on the vital organs in the torso, thus preventing them from functioning at their maximum capacity. They become sluggish and this condition leads to all kinds of ailments. We usually consider that as long as someone has no physical pain and no apparent mental disorders, they are in good health. Remembering the definition of "good 'physical' health" given earlier, such a situation would mean – that no matter how fit an individual may appear to be – he or she cannot be truly healthy.

This problem of faulty use of the self is rarely recognised and, therefore, rarely addressed. We go around in life functioning well below our best potential. Even without any apparent health problems in our younger years, the body will gradually develop malfunctions such as damaged hip-joints, high blood-pressure, lassitude, fatigue, aches and pains, heart problems, sluggish circulation, inadequate breathing, nervous disorders etc. These ailments cause us to grow old far too quickly. A vital point to note is that ill-health does not suddenly occur at some late point along life's highway: it began way back around three or four years of age, which is the time that we started to misuse ourselves. When it comes, however, to making a diagnosis of the illness the person is suffering from, this condition of misuse usually goes unrecognised.

So, how does one come closer to really positive, dynamic and sustainable health? The answer is that not only must proper study be made of the body as a unified mechanism, but also a parallel study of the power of thinking and directing the body into co-ordinated ways of using it that will not harmfully violate its laws of functioning and moving. This is what Alexander did over a period of ten years, during which he made remarkable psycho-physical changes in himself.

He discovered that the do's and don'ts of movement must be learned. This may appear to be a trite statement, but the appalling use of the body by the modern-day person is tragic evidence of the gross lack of understanding that prevails about the good use of it. For example, the over-bending of the lumbar spine in almost everything we do in daily life, whether this entails sitting slumped at a computer or television, or in exercise where we are under the illusion that the abdominal muscles pull the torso up when performing sit-ups, are common misconceptions. A multitude of such illusions exist in most people.

Let's consider a few more of the ailments that can arise through misuse of the body as a mechanism, such as arthritis, scoliosis, lordosis, prolapsed discs, rheumatism, heart problems, digestive problems, damaged hip and knee-joints, foot disorders – such as fallen arches and deformed toes from wearing narrow shoes and high-heels – liver and kidney disorders, prolapsed uterus, high blood-pressure and breathing difficulties. These are ailments that are really *dis-eases* arising as a result of misusing the body as a mechanism. If we include our wrong beliefs about the use of the body, then most modern human beings are in a state of psycho-physical misuse. We compound misuse by imposing on ourselves such things as smoking, drinking, taking drugs and eating to excess.

The medical profession does not usually recognise – except in extreme cases such as the prominent stoop in the elderly person – that misuse of the organism exists in nearly everybody. People are given a clean bill of health when this harmful state of misuse still exists. Remembering again the definition of “good ‘physical’ health” given earlier, and remembering also the dire conditions caused by misuse, this would mean that no diagnosis could be complete if it does not take into account and address this condition of misuse.

Let's look now in more detail at what these forms of misuse are, and in what way they cause the malfunctions and ailments mentioned earlier. Leaving aside the psychological and emotional aspects, we can look purely at the physical effects and consequences.

The most important area where we go wrong is the neck. Very early in life – two or three years old – the child stiffens and shortens the muscles at the back of the neck. Consequently, the back of the head is harmfully pulled back and down and distorts the neck by increasing the curve in the cervical spine and shortening the neck. This situation becomes a seriously habitual one, which – if not attended to – will persist for a whole lifetime.

This disturbed and distorted head-neck relationship has a knock-on effect that adversely tightens and shortens the muscles and spine of the thoracic region. This situation, in turn, has a further knock-on effect that adversely tightens and shortens the muscles and spine in the lumbar region. So, now we have a drastic situation where the three curves in the spine have become more pronounced and the overall result of this is that the distance along the length of the spine from the top of the pelvis to the underside of the skull has decreased by 6 centimetres – and sometimes more – by the time the individual becomes a teenager.

How does the overall shortening of the spine affect our health? Let us make the bold statement that the vast majority of ailments suffered by the human race are caused by this simple, tragic fact that, because of our misuse of the body, the overall length of the spine has decreased.

The next logical question is, “In what way does the shortening of the spine cause these ailments?” The answer is that because the spine has sagged, the torso is no longer functioning as a suspension system. (A detailed description of this system is not possible here, and the reader is advised to consult my book, ‘GOING MENTAL’ to find out how it works). The result is that the vital organs in the torso, which are designed to hang from the head, neck, spine and rib-cage, slip down and cause harmful pressure and stagnation in the system. This means that many dangerous malfunctions occur, the most important being that the heart is displaced, making it less efficient as our habitual misuse becomes evermore firmly entrenched in the neuro-muscular system as we grow older.

If the heart becomes less efficient and the muscles more tense, the circulatory system will not flow as freely as it should. The thoracic region will collapse and restrict the breathing mechanisms. The liver will be under pressure and will struggle to produce a balanced amount of bile so vital to the successful digestion of food. The peristaltic movement of the alimentary canal will be retarded. Constipation will occur more frequently and, in turn, will make defecation difficult. In women the shortening of the spine frequently causes prolapse of the uterus. In men it can cause the testicles to drop too early in life. In both sexes the increased pressure on the bladder can cause incontinence.

It is well worth repeating here that general ill-health does not occur suddenly at a certain stage along life’s road. As I said earlier, it began way back around three or four years of age at the point when the individual began to misuse the body as a mechanism. Poor health is an accumulation of small, unnoticed disorders that, because of constant misuse, become large ones.

THE SHORTENED LONG-SUFFERING SPINE

Let's look more closely at what 'shortening of the spine' means: firstly the cervical spine in the neck. When the young child starts to misuse the body the cervical spine distorts as follows. The inner curve formed by the front faces of the vertebrae and the edges of the intervertebral discs becomes longer. The outer curve formed by the spinous processes of the vertebrae becomes shorter. This means that the erector-spinae muscles running up the back of the neck become shorter, and as we get older and continue to increasingly misuse the body, they will become evermore stiff and fixed in this deformed situation.

Moving on to the thoracic region, we find that – using the same reference points as the cervical – the curve lengthens on the outside and shortens on the inside. This means that the erector-spinae muscles in this region become longer, and fixed in this deformed situation. The lumbar spine is affected in the same way as described above for the cervical.

This is a simplified explanation of distortion of the whole spine, as it deals only with problems on the median plane. A combination, however, of median, lateral and torsional distortions are usually present at the same time, which causes further complications.

In addition, there is a curious and dangerous misuse of the lumbar spine that is adopted in life by the vast majority of human beings. This phenomenon is excessive bending of the lower back backwards and forwards. The belief that if you can bend the torso forwards keeping your legs straight to touch the toes indicates that you have a healthy lumbar spine is a total fallacy. There are also various other aspects of the prevalent misuse of the spine by the modern human being to consider.

If you have an occupation, hobby, sport, recreation or art where you bend your lumbar spine very often, then your erector spinae muscles in this region will initially become overstretched and flaccid. As a reaction to this some of these muscles – in an attempt to protect the lumbar spine - may tighten excessively and become shortened. The upshot of all this is that a combination of imbalanced flaccidity and rigidity exists. I have found this chronic situation in varying degrees in every single back of the many thousands I have – as a teacher of constructive awareness - ever had my hands on.

Another harmful consequence of over-bending is that the intervertebral discs will become deformed and weak, and this can lead to prolapse and even the complete flattening of them. When this occurs, the vertebrae will fuse together in an attempt to give the spine some stability.

A very important point to note here is that this over-worked lumbar spine – even though it has stretched to accommodate the wish of the naïve mind to bend it to a harmful degree – collapses down on itself when the body is standing, sitting or walking. ***This is caused***

by the fact that the majority of the lumbar erector-spinae muscles and ligaments have become too long. Indeed, most of the ligaments have become so overstretched that they have gone past their elastic limit and are suffering from plastic deformation, which means that they can no longer hold and stabilise the lumbar spine. I know of one expert in spinal engineering who – although he understands the dangers given above – advocates, that to cure disorders of the lumbar region, the erector-spinae ligaments should be cut and shortened to the proper length: a horrific solution indeed!

Considering the use of the body in walking, most people are unaware that the power for doing so comes from the lumbar back. If it is weak and distorted, the act of walking will be negatively affected. This is why we see so many curious and inefficient gaits in different individuals. Other people usually view each individual's manner of walking as 'his way' or 'it's unique' or 'it's how she is and moves' or 'it's a part of him'. It certainly is a part of him, but is nothing more than his peculiar way of misusing himself in movement.

THE PLIGHT OF THE VITAL ORGANS

If the spine is maintained at its optimal length, every organ in the torso will be hanging by connective tissue from something above it: for example, the hyoid bone, vocal organs, shoulder-girdle, rib-cage and diaphragm will be suspended from the head and the cervical spine in the neck. The vital organs in their turn will be suspended from these structures. Part of the liver is suspended from the diaphragm by a method similar to that where two pieces of glass are held together by a film of water in between them. Other organs in the abdomen, such as the kidneys, ovaries and uterus are suspended from the spine and rib cage.

The efficient functioning of these organs is greatly reduced by the shortening of the spine, because they are no longer suspended from above, but are now being squashed by whatever is situated above them. Obviously, the lower the location of the organ the more weight will be pressing down on it. This collapsed and detrimental situation is the first and foremost reason for the general ill-health of the vast majority of the human race. A specific example would be the prolific number of cases in women of a prolapsed uterus, which is usually only alleviated by cutting it out of the body – a hysterectomy. Other significant consequences are incontinence and constipation.

It is a tragic fact of human existence that shortening of the spine goes largely unnoticed, and even if it does come to our attention, we don't know how to lengthen it again. This pulled-down state is something we seem to accept as inevitable in life, a consequence of growing older and older. And yet, if I asked you – when you are still a young, vibrant and upright person – to wear a harness that ran from under the crotch up the back and front of the torso, up to and around the back of the neck, and then buckled at the front of the chest in such a way that your torso was harmfully hunched to the point where all your vital organs were being squashed and your breathing restricted, you would surely refuse

to do so! This harmful shortening, however, is what we cause in ourselves through misuse of the body. Such is the awful plight of the vital organs.

Another factor to consider about misuse is the widespread habit that exists of people standing with the weight of the body to one side, so that most of the weight is taken on one leg. If you do this often enough, you are in danger of wearing out your hip-joint to the extent that it will have to be replaced later in life. The replacing of the hip-joint is now so common that surgeons can perform the operation almost as quickly as a dentist can pull a tooth!

Here is a fairy-tale that underlines the inability of most people to take responsibility for their own health and fitness. Incidentally, to go to the gym and put your body through strenuous, mechanically-inappropriate exercises for a few hours per week does not mean you are fit and healthy, in the fullest sense of these terms. Imagine you were born with an ethereal body - rather like a ghost-body – and you grew up in it. Then one day you met someone who had a physical body and you were so taken by it that you wanted to have one. So you ask the person how she came by it. She tells you that you can buy one at the body shop. You see one that you love so much you are not put off by the huge price you have to pay for it. You purchase it gladly, slip it on and skip and run and dance and somersault and cartwheel and jump for joy and sing as you leave.

The person who makes these physical bodies is the Greatest Engineer in the universe, because there is no other organism that can equal the complexity of the human one. All goes well for some months – even years – then you notice that your hip-joint is paining you and is getting steadily worse as it wears out. Your lower back is also giving you trouble and you wonder why this is so. You become really upset because you paid an absolute fortune for this, the most magnificent, the most sophisticated mechanism of all creation and you decide to take it back and demand a new one. You confront this Great Engineer and tell her,

“I’m not satisfied with the goods and I demand a replacement!”

She looks you up and down and then asks,

“Have you been standing habitually with most of your weight on one leg, thus straining the hip-joint unduly and causing a very harmful twist in the spine?”

You reply heatedly,

“Well of course I have! It’s my favourite, habitual way of standing, of looking cool and really with it!”

To which she replies,

“Sorry mate, but it looks to me that you don’t know how to use this body properly. Your favourite way of standing has brought this on yourself and you have to take responsibility for the horrible consequences. You ain’t gettin’ your money back!”

As you stomp angrily out of the shop, you hear this Great Engineer call out,

“I have a helpful piece of advice for you! Go and find yourself a good teacher of constructive awareness and she’ll show you how to change your thinking in such a way that you can re-educate yourself and get rid of the trouble. Good luck!”

WE CAN DO IT

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

If I might suggest a vision of tomorrow
Of a world divest of hunger, fear and pain
When the best in men will once again bring peace upon the world
Where happiness is more than just a dream.

For the sands of time will change the minds of mortals
Yes, the joy of love will live in everyone
And you'll be free to walk with me in dignity and light
And we'll share a caring life beneath the sun.

We can do it, we can do it
We can all work hard together for the sake of everyone
We can do it, we can do it if we try
Hope and faith will surely take us on.

And the kids will ask their dads "What was a soldier?"
And words like "kill" and "hatred" won't be known
There'll be no exploitation of the many by the few
There's enough to go around for everyone.

Colour, creed and culture they won't matter
But we'll all be individuals just the same
Free to give opinions in an atmosphere of calm
I'll have learned to lend an ear to what you're sayin'.

Inhibit your habits, your negative ones.

Self-discipline leads to freedom.

I hear it said often in the Alexander world. “The A.T. is not the only way.” I don’t think any thinking A.T teacher believes that it is. But let us attempt to dispel the gross ignorance that exists about the role in life of the Alexander Technique. It is not an “ism”. It embraces everything you do, from the most trivial to the most great. No matter what your philosophy of life is, you will have to come to it. True spirituality must include a so-called body that is expressing love, harmony, beauty, balance and co-ordination.

MIND is the great secret behind all this manifested energy.

The expression – “I have changed my mind”, - is rooted in materialism. It implies a physical entity that possesses a mind. This is not so. It is better to say, “I – as mind – have changed my thinking”, or “I – as mind – have changed my opinion”.

December 1999

The so-called body is the form the mind takes to function in the world.

Psycho-physical unity, as stated by Alexander, does not go far enough, although it was a step in the right direction. MIND is supreme, MIND is all.

Old Alexander was an astute man. In his four books, he skilfully and deftly avoided getting into the speculative world of philosophy. He wrote only about tangible and touchable things. Any theory that he posited was quickly dismissed if it didn’t work. His great strength was his practicality. He was a genius.

To learn constructive awareness – the co-ordinated use of the self – will not solve all your problems in life, nor will it make you into a spiritual giant. It must, however, be included in any worthwhile philosophy of life.

“Alexander Technique? Oh yes, that’s that funny method where they teach you how to sit down and stand up properly!” Such are the misconceptions people have.

Constructive awareness is allied with constructive co-creation. The infinite World-Mind has given you the power to create a form that allows you to traffic in the world. This form we call the body.

This building-up of a so-called body has taken a length of time and a number of lives that staggers the imagination. The newly conceived entity, the baby, goes through this whole evolutionary process each time s/he reincarnates. This is done at an incredible speed. The baby – in conjunction with the World-Mind – has to THINK every part into existence.

The reason you can move a finger so easily when you want to, is because of this intimacy – this deepest intimacy – between the World-Mind and the individual, as well as the staggering repetition involved to bring about this ease of movement. There is not a *mental* mind that moves a *physical* finger; they are one and the same.

This co-creative process of building a so-called body is a tremendous feat of imagination and endeavour. Creativity is not confined to artists, musicians, sports people etc. It is a fundamental attribute of every human being.

You come to a point in life, where you sense deep down, that something is not right. This nagging feeling forces you to re-asses your life and look for something more fulfilling. This tense, uncomfortable, painful body is pulling you down more and more. You are mentally, physically and emotionally fed-up, as well as being spiritually starved. The creative process of constructive conscious control is discovered, and in adopting it, one becomes more open, more aware, more co-ordinated, happier. A new person emerges. Old habits fall away. Muscle-tension patterns disappear. A new body, functioning freely,

is formed. Even your very bones can think and change their shape for the better. Why? Because you **wish** it.

To become bent and stooped in old age, with the head pulled back, the neck poking forward and an unsightly curve in the upper back, is a belief system. It happens because you see it in old people, and then you believe it to be an inevitable consequence of life's struggle, and it must happen to you.

People come to me and say "I feel I have no support in life." This is an accurate feeling, because the spine is literally not supporting the torso. The trials and tribulations of life have shortened and distorted it. It must be lengthened and allowed its proper function. This is done by thinking.

We hugely underestimate the power of thinking.

Repetition of the "right" thoughts will eventually bring good results.

The strongest force in the universe – the **wish**.

The vital organs need room to function, or they become ill. The back must be lengthened and widened to allow them freedom to do the job that they know best to do. We forget that they are living beings in their own right. To ask them to function efficiently in unfavourable conditions is grossly unreasonable, grossly irresponsible.

December 1999

Misuse of the self is the biggest reason for humankind's maladies. In a shortened, narrowed and tense body, you cannot breathe properly; the heart is not only displaced but also deformed; the blood does not flow fluently; the vital organs suffer cramped conditions; joints become stiff because of shortened muscles. All this leads to illness, to dis-ease.

When a person becomes ill, the first thing we should look at is how they use themselves.

Constructive awareness should be the most fundamental part of a child's education.

Inhibition is not suppression. It is the foundation of a new, but paradoxically, ancient way to freedom.

BE THE CHANGE

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

Be the change, run like a river
Be the change, roll on forever
Be the change, live in the everlastin' here-and-now
Be the change, the only constant
Be the change and don't be daunted
Nuthin' stays the same, so be the change

Take a look at Mother Nature
And you'll see there's nuthin' fixed there
All things appear, but can't remain
From the greatest to the smallest
From the shortest to the tallest
It's ebb and flow and come and go again

We can learn the art of bein'
In a world we can be free in
Everything we see won't stay the same
The past is now dead history
The future a mystery
So be the here-and-now and be the change

Keep on doin' what you do know
And you won't know what you don't know
You gotta face the great unknown
Standin' still is just for dummies
All trussed up just like a mummy
Cut the ties and come into your own

The experience you want is in the moment
You are a process, not a thing
You are made for re-arrangin'
Every day to make a change in
Flowin' like a song you love to sing

Be the change, be the change, be the change
And it will set you free
Be the change, the only constant
Be the change and don't be daunted
Come into your own and be the change
Come into your own and be the change
Nuthin' stays the same, so be the change

Be a human BE-ing, not a human DO-ing. This means doing, as you know doing. This means your unco-ordinated habits of doing. This means habits that have led you to the point where you want to change.

Set out on the road to freedom – become conscious!

Change is the only constant in the so-called physical universe. You might as well get into harmony with it.

The belief that the body is a material object is an ancient fallacy.

The truth of the matter is that no one has ever heard, felt, tasted, smelled, or seen MATTER.

The crux of the matter is that all is MENTAL.

“Mind over matter” is a mistaken belief. Mind can know nothing but itself. There are no other forms that stand outside it.

We are imprisoned by the walls built from our own preconceived ideas.
December 1999

“What’s the use?” takes on a different meaning when one considers the self.

A person’s history and way of being is written in the muscles.

Whether we like it or not, we are trapped inside our bubble of perception. An objective, separate world of material objects that is out there exists only in our imagination.

People become uneasy, even scared when they get a hint of the fact that they never deal with anything other than what their six senses tell them.

Minds make genes. It is not the other way round.

The propensity of DNA to reproduce itself is a creative process of mind. Nothing in the universe happens automatically.

The fastest dwindling emotion or characteristic on this planet – Respect.
December 1999

Hatred – the father of violence.

It all springs from negative thinking that ends up in war and conflict.

So many sad faces to be seen in the city, all having lost their sense of wonder.

A glimpse of the glory that lies ahead – that's what sustains me.

This is the age of misinformation.

If the brain and the rest of the body are a cluster of ideas in the mind, then, as ideas are formed by the mind, the mind must have formed the body. This cluster of ideas simply disappears during sleep and so-called death.

The latest item of news from mainstream science at Feb. 2000 is that the universe is 12 billion years old! On whose time scale is this based? Is it based on the rate of travel of our insignificant little planet around the sun? There are a limitless number of time scales. Why do we, as puny human beings, insist on making ourselves the measure of things?

In 1999, I heard one scientist say very profoundly, “With this new telescope we now know that the universe is 10 per cent bigger than we thought. This means, of course, that it is 10 per cent older!” Then I thought, “Do I have enough money to buy food for tomorrow?”

“I don’t want to think big thoughts, they stop me from making small changes”
Saskia Draxler

Stephen Hawking’s search for a formula to explain the existence of the universe will be in vain. How can a finite formula, fashioned by an individual intellect, existing in space and time explain MIND-THE-ALL, which is out of space and time?

December 1999

Another statement from a scientist in Feb. 2000, “Before the Big Bang there was nothing.” And yet surely every scientist knows that something cannot be created out of nothing. To have a state of no-thingness is impossible. If the Big Bang is true, then it was born out of THAT which is behind everything – MIND!

The universe is expanding so fast that eventually it will disintegrate and there will be nothing but a vast, cold empty space. Such is the gloom and doom spouted out of the mouths of certain “rational” scientists.

Like all living beings that make up the so-called body, muscles are mind made manifest.

“The universe is expanding so fast and we don’t think there is enough matter in it to keep it together,” say the scientists. “Don’t trouble your heads, boys and girls,” says I, “about the matter; it doesn’t exist.”

It’s just as well that we can create the world around us so accurately from the master-image created by the World-Mind, otherwise we would walk into walls and not through door-openings, would miss the toilet seat and fall down holes in the road! We’re really quite clever!

I know that the only way to change the world is for me – as mind – to change myself.

If I did not have a vision of the beautiful life that lies up ahead for us all, then I would not wish to go on in this world where so much of what happens in it can be described in one word – HELL!

Hatred, greed, lust for power, envy, selfishness, coldness, indifference, lack of respect. These are the dominant emotions in our time.

Wilhelm Reich was right. We act like little men. We’ve been told so often that we are little men, we don’t know how to change and become big men. We don’t know how to express ourselves, our beauty, our equality, our uniqueness, our spirituality.

February 2000

The most misused four-letter word in the English language – LOVE!

The most active four-letter word in the English language – HATE!

We need the enthusiasm of a Stanley Matthews!

In terms of scientific and technological advancement, each new generation stands on the shoulders of the one before it. In terms of spiritual advancement, they stand on the same ground.

Just because you cannot witness the speed at which your mind functions does not mean you are not thinking.

March 2000

Small pebbles of pleasure can become large millstones of misery.

The more serious illnesses, which appear on the physical plane, are manifestations of illness in the deeper regions of the human mind.

The recurring struggles between reason and sensation can plague us for a lifetime and too often sensation runs out the easy winner.

John Eccles has made a noble attempt to explain how the self controls its brain, but he does not grasp the full meaning of what he calls mentalism. He talks of the mental self controlling the physical brain as though they were still two separate entities. Like the driver controls the car, but is not one with it, but separate.

No matter how you look at it – it's all mental!

All those billions of years of creative thinking to bring you to what you are now!
Having come from one cell to the multi-celled being I am now, it is plausible that I will
become – as Martinus, the Danish philosopher says – a globe.

I wish I could remember all those countless years of evolution. One day I will.

Thoughts are living beings, born only to die.

I am a thought in the World-Mind.

Science is forever coming up with universal “laws”, only to change them as they make
new discoveries.

We don’t invent anything - we discover.

March 2000

It is a liberating thought to realise that eternity is in the moment. It is not an adding of
second after second, minute after minute, hour after hour, day after day etc.

Paul Brunton's Philosophic Foundation, Wisdom's Golden Rod*Tuesday November 8th 1992*

It's time to go. I have a few minutes spare before going over for breakfast, so I decide to read a few notes of P.B.

My hand picks out Vol. 16, Enlightened Mind, Divine Mind. Part 4, The Sage's Service, Page 155, para. 40, and to my astonishment, I read the following.

"When he has found the truth, he has nothing to decide. He will realise that the ALL, this whole teeming universe *is* himself, that all creatures and all men are one. Therefore, their interests and their welfare become his automatically. Therefore he will come back to earth again and again to help all beings attain truth and happiness. The notion of choosing selfish bliss or unselfish service does not occur to those who have realised truth: it comes only to yogis and mystics who have experienced bliss in trance. But this is not the highest goal or plane; it is the highest *illusion*."

Paul Brunton

The perplexing problem I have had regarding that moment when we achieved self-consciousness – that is, whether it occurred at the "beginning" of things, or at some later point in evolution the World-Mind bestowed it on us – seems a bit clearer.

An individual cannot create life, only the World-Mind can. I could not, therefore, see the possibility of the individual creating all the bones, muscles, blood, etc., that constitute the body. But my mistake was to think separation. Nothing in the universe functions without World-Mind. The act of creating a body, a form, is a co-creative process of the World-Mind and the individual. Every individual is an expression of the World-Mind. There is, therefore, no reason why, when the World-Mind created the individual, either as a formless individual mind or as one "materialised" cell, it did not bestow self-consciousness on the individual at this point of "conception": did not bestow intelligence on the individual in this "primitive" state; the intelligence that would allow it to struggle for existence and evolve through that struggle by a process of recognising a need and creating any cell or organ required to meet that need. This is more plausible than the idea that we spent countless millions of years in "unconscious" or "subconscious" existence, until suddenly one day the "I" appeared and the individual knew the cognitive feeling "I AM". The problem is MEMORY! We do not remember!

The above is perhaps confirmed by Paul Brunton's statement, that the World-Mind sends the Overself "out" into the universe to gain experience and evolve.

From the book “**Meeting the Madwoman**” - Page 23 ,the last sentence:

“Finding the original, conscious ways of changing yourself and of living, is the uniquely human challenge that we face as a species.”

I was sitting reading the above book in the Atrium in Ithaca about an hour before Eleanor was due to pick me up to take me to the airport. It seems that anyone can make such a statement and not be thought of as cranky or weird or even crazy. But if one states that the restoration of the integrity, or balanced functioning of the head-neck-back relationship, as well as a wholesale re-education of those parts of the psyche we call the nervous system and the musculature, are an indispensable part of this process, then one is regarded with suspicion and disbelief. For the vast majority of the human race, *constructive awareness has never been experienced.*

Co-ordinated use of the mind’s form is an invaluable art. But more than this, it is an essential and indispensable part of the spiritual quest. Gross ignorance exists about its role in life. It is not an *‘ism*. It embraces everything you think, feel and do, from the most trivial to the most great. No matter what your philosophy of life is, you will have to come to it. True spirituality must include a so-called body that is expressing grace, poise, beauty, balance and co-ordination. This is not to say that everyone who practises constructive awareness is a well-rounded, well-balanced, spiritual person. They too are obliged to look at aspects of themselves that may need improving, such as their eating habits, or their treatment of themselves and other people and, above all, their character.

March 2000

If you are seeking enlightenment, then it should be balanced and full enlightenment. It should not occur only in the invisible intellect and emotion, but also in the easily distinguishable form of the mind - the so-called body.

The Life-Force, Spirit-Energy, Kundalini, call it what you will, vivifies every cell within us.

The kundalini runs spirally up the spine like a fiery serpent.

The Life-Force does not only travel up the spine. It lies dormant, latently present in the mind's form and if released can permeate and revivify every cell.

The so-called body is a co-creation of the World-mind and the Individual-mind. The World-Mind expresses itself through any kind of individual - animal, plant, rock or human.

We foolishly mistreat ourselves through ignorance, carelessness, neglect, self-indulgence and laziness. Then we go looking for a quick fix for our problems. Most people prefer quick fixes; hence the reason for the proliferation of the mind-set which seeks them through swallowing pills. Quick fixes don't work, they only treat symptoms. They scratch the surface of the problem that lies deep within. If you knew how long it has taken you to come as far as you have, you would not want a quick fix. You would realise this is impossible. The habits of countless lifetimes have to be broken down. This realisation would bring patience in your wish to change.

Many moods are born of the so-called body. If it is misused and suffering from poor circulation, inadequate breathing, digestive problems, muscle tension and self-indulgence of whatever kind, is it any wonder that so many of us suffer from bad moods?

March 2000

Such is the depth and power of our habits, that we mistakenly regard the body and mind as two completely separate and different entities.

That part of the psyche known as the muscles must be re-educated little by little. When learning constructive awareness, the pupil can make quick and dramatic changes in a few lessons, but sustaining and deepening the change requires hard work and patience. If suddenly, in an instant, you achieved balanced muscle tension throughout your so-called body, it would not collapse downwards as in over-relaxing: on the contrary, it would lengthen upwards and widen out, but the shock would probably make you faint. Our negative muscle tension patterns are what we cling to, *what we hold on to*, in order to deal with and survive in the world. They must be changed gradually.

Mind is a fact; matter is a fiction.

Co-ordination : the way you - as mind – consciously and creatively control your psycho-physical functioning.

Malco-ordination: the way you - as mind - neglect your psycho-physical functioning.

Spiritual progress and love of the Higher Self must show a parallel in the grace, poise, beauty, balance and co-ordination of the so-called body.

If you have experienced the flow of the kundalini up your spine, you will know that it is a breath-taking, irrepressible force. It is a fiery power that should not be meddled with; should not be sought after directly in the belief that its appearance is a mark of progress on the spiritual quest.

Lengthening of the spine by using constructive awareness can either release the kundalini gradually, or it can come in a sudden rush. It depends on the spiritual progress and past-life experience of the individual.

I dislike this word “tolerance”. I hear it said, “We must learn to tolerate each other”, but the word has a ring of reluctant respect for the other person, a splash of subtle superiority. This is not good enough. We must learn how to actively and truly love each other, to fully and humbly respect the other person’s way of being.

March 2000

If I might suggest a vision of tomorrow, of a world divest of hunger, fear and pain. Where the best in us will bring real peace upon the world, where happiness is more than just a dream. For the sands of time will change the minds of mortals, yes the joy of love will live in everyone. We’ll all be fit to sit with Dignity by and by; we’ll share a caring life beneath the sun. And the kids will ask their dads, “What was a soldier?” Words like “kill” and “hatred” won’t be known. There will be no exploitation of the many by the few, there’s enough to go around for everyone. Colour, creed and culture they won’t matter, but we’ll all be individuals just the same, free to give opinions in an atmosphere of calm. I will have learned to lend an ear to what you’re saying.

The USE of the self, the conscious co-ordinated USE of the self as expounded by F.M Alexander is an indispensable part of human progress and spirituality. Contrary to popular belief it is not a therapy, nor is it bodywork, nor is it any of the 1001 alternative therapies that now abound. It will be a large and vital part of human happiness and philosophy and will help to bring about the U.S.E.: THE UNITED STATES OF THE EARTH.

No, one fine day there will be no borders between the lands and the hearts of men. We will all be free to walk, to sing, to laugh, to talk, one fine day all the hatred will end. One fine day there will be no killing and the doves of peace will be flying high. We will learn to love all beings below and above, one fine day beneath a clear blue sky. Lets build a new world for the children. This is their home. Let them grow straight and true. One fine day there will be no darkness and the light of love will be shining bright. And we will be as one, all equal beneath the sun. One fine day, You and I.

We have thought ourselves into whatever we are at this very moment, and we can think ourselves out of it. Cruel as it may sound, this is true even of the person who has lived an underprivileged life, where the opportunity to do anything other than attend to the things necessary for eking out a living did not arise.

Balance is a function of intelligence. We have used our intelligence to achieve it and we must continue to use our intelligence to maintain it.

Inhibition is the key. You cannot make changes *directly*.

Considerate behaviour is spiritual behaviour. Is it considerate to treat your so-called body in a way that is harmful to it?

Trees are green, trees are fair
Trees are happy just standing there
No need for book or school or college
They're all descended from the tree of knowledge.

COME ON AND DANCE WITH ME

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

Well, come along
Sing this song
Old or young
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

Reach out your hands
Across every land
Give love a chance
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

This whole world's gettin' tired of blood and thunder
And if we don't stem the tide
You know, we'll all be goin' under.

So don't make war
We don't want no more
It's been done before
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

Come on, love the world
Every boy and girl
Give peace a whirl
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

Come on, love your father, mother, sister, brother
No matter who you are
You know, we all need one another.

Hey, everyone
Beneath the sun
Let's be as one
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

Left or right
Black or white
That's alright
Come on and dance with me
Come on and dance with me.

Well, each and every nation heed the warning
Or one day you're gonna waken
To a cold and lonely morning.

My song writing is a pleasing part of my creativity, but please don't ask me how I write one.

Mentalism and constructive conscious control are lonely pursuits, but their benefits and rewards easily outweigh this.

It has taken many years to figure out the suspension system of the body, but I have it very clear in my mind now. ***I know it as a great truth from within.***

June 2000

Silver Steed

This poem is a progression on the Long Path, leading to a transition to the Short Path.

Been up and down this highway now for oh so long
Seen all the signs that don't lead anywhere
And every road I travelled cut back to me
The soul sat in this saddle's still a mystery.

Learned a thing or two from what' or who' I found
Nothing, no one kept me satisfied
Been so busy searching, I failed to see
The Silver Steed whose faithful feet have carried me.

Someday I'll stop my wandering thoughts and get back home
To that sign upon the door that says "My Soul"
Knock and it will open, I'll know it's true
Yes, you knew all along that I'd return to you.

We seem to be greatly impressed by people who have psychic powers, but psychism is not spirituality.

Get ye behind me, thoughts!

More and more I see how constructive awareness is not a short-term remedy. It is a way of being. To undertake it is to start out walking on a 10,000 mile journey.

Intuitive flashes come of the intimate connection between the conscious and subconscious parts of me. I feel flashes of ancient memory.

Thirty seven years of study of the self, of self-discipline, of thinking the neck free, of thinking the head forward and up, of thinking the back to lengthen and widen, of meditating, of seeking humility, calmness, confidence, courage, compassion, kindness, clarity, love, understanding and wisdom, of eating virtually no animal produce, brings deep rewards.

Mentalism transcends psycho-physical unity.

Constructive awareness is *true mindfulness*.

The fallacy is that we try to deal with the fear, instead of dealing with the muscle tension.

There are two great truths that should be taught to children from an early age.

The first is “constructive conscious control” – how to use the self (not just the body) co-ordinatedly and efficiently, with grace, poise and balance.

The second is the doctrine of mentalism – that all objects including the body, are mental creations; that there are no such things as material objects; that nothing in experience is totally objective; but in the last analysis all experience is subjective; that nothing is separate from the self; that the self is all of it, is all of creation; that we live in a mental universe.

Constructive conscious control should be taught from the infant stage at school because children live in a world of vivid sensation. One sensation that is neglected is proprioception or kinesthesia. This in particular should be nurtured and refined in the children.

Mentalism should be taught as a subject in itself like maths or science at the beginning of secondary education when children are more able to handle abstract concepts.

The non-end gaining principle used in Constructive Awareness is vital to the satisfactory progress of the child. To show the child how to inhibit that wish to hurry to the end of what s/he is doing; how to stop before acting so that reason and judgement can enter in before proceeding further.

One of the biggest reasons why children don't know how to stop is because the adults have no idea how to do so. There are very few good examples of co-ordinated, reasoned use for the children to look up to and emulate.

There is nothing to be gained from end-gaining.

I'm sitting in La Guardia airport in New York and a girl of about ten years is standing near me. Her use is so bad she has the posture of an old woman. It seems to me that she has no special mental or physical problem, but she is "pulled down" to an incredible degree. It looks like she is copying her young father.

F.M.Alexander talks of psycho-physical unity, but mentalism does not allow the mental and the material to come together. Materialists habitually regard them as two separate things. But how can two entirely different substances unite and become one? They cannot. One of them must be primary and a study of mentalism shows that *mind* is primary, the hidden essence of everything and everyone. Matter is a mistaken *belief*. The apparent solidity of material objects is indeed mesmerising and gives rise to the fallacy of their separate existence.

Mentalism and constructive conscious control. These phrases themselves indicate that the essence of the individual is mind. It shows that it is constructive conscious control in the use of the self by the kinetic aspect of the Overself – namely the ego. The individual ego has spun this kinetic part out of itself to form the so-called body. It is not, therefore, constructive conscious control of a separate physical body made up of this fictitious stuff called matter. It is the individual mind giving attention to an aspect – a huge aspect – of itself that it has, through ignorance, neglected.

Be brave enough to let your light shine and speak the truth as you see it.

There are certain schools of thought in the field of bodywork, which advocate that the vital organs in the torso give support to the body. Some even take it to the extreme of saying that these organs contribute to the movement of the body. I think these ideas are erroneous. To take the second idea first, the body is moved around by muscles, nothing else. Organs do not have the capacity to move the body. They are there to perform certain functions to keep the body healthy; to contribute to the balancing of the metabolic rate; to produce substances such as adrenalin and bile when they are needed. The heart for example is a muscle, but it does not occupy a place of mechanical advantage that would allow it to move the body around.

Dealing now with the first idea, I think this springs from the fact that almost everyone slumps and instead of the spine doing its job of supporting the torso in general, the person can only slump so far before the organs have to react by resisting the pressure being put upon them by the weight of the upper body. They can only do this, however, because of the intrinsic ability they have – like any other structure – to resist pressure. An orange, for example, being a soft pliable structure, can resist a certain amount of pressure before collapsing. A steel ball of the same dimensions will obviously be able to resist much more pressure before disintegrating. An organ, therefore, has a built-in capacity as a structure to resist pressure, but it is not designed to carry anything in the body that may be above it.

I also read somewhere that provided the person allows each intervertebral disc in the spine to bend by the same amount, it is O.K. to slump. This prompts the question, “How would any individual know how to allow the discs to react to an equal degree?” The reason that spinal problems are the most common ailment in the whole world is because human beings constantly and habitually bend the lumbar spine, in particular, too much. Slumping occurs mainly in the lumbar region and to a lesser extent in the thoracic length of the spine. The thoracic spine tends to become rigid because of lateral restraint imposed

by the ribs. In the neck the cervical curve is habitually allowed to bend harmfully forwards as the person adopts a slumped attitude in sitting. It is worthwhile noting that in the person who has an exaggerated *forward* curve in the lumbar spine in standing and walking, and who adopts an exaggerated *backward* curve while sitting slumped, is constantly forcing the intervertebral discs in this area to function outside their safe range of movement. The person who does not have an exaggerated forward curve in the lumbar spine, but also slumps while sitting is hardly any better off. The misuse is simply on one side, instead of both. Damage to the two lowest discs in the spine is the most common ailment that humanity inflicts upon itself.

If it were possible to slump in a way that allowed all the discs to bend to the same degree, so that the vital organs in the torso took the weight of the upper body, we would place an unnecessary burden, not only on the organs themselves, but also on the breathing mechanism. The diaphragm – because it is being pushed down on to the abdominal contents – would not be able to move up and down, as it should during co-ordinated breathing. This means that during an inbreath the air pressure in the lungs would have to push the upper body upwards to allow enough breath to come in. On the outbreath, the body would collapse again on to the vital organs and the whole horrible process would be repeated over and over, much to the detriment of the body's health. The whole situation leads to stagnation in the viscera of the torso. We won't breathe well, the heart won't pump efficiently, the blood won't flow freely and our metabolic rate will be adversely affected.

General ill health will prevail unless we appreciate the importance of using the so-called body well, particularly in respect of the role of the spine. If it is allowed to function at its optimal length – not in the shortened state it usually spends a lifetime in – then all the vital organs will be suspended from it, as well as from other parts such as the head and the rib cage. A doctor told me that the liver is partly suspended from the diaphragm in a similar way to 2 pieces of glass that stick together when a layer of water lies between them.

The spine is a miracle of engineering, which is perfectly capable of carrying the torso entirely by itself. If it is allowed to function at its optimal length, the upper body functions as a suspension system. The importance of understanding this cannot be emphasised enough.

A huge boost to one's health can occur when the upper body functions as a suspension system. Why? Because the organs are stimulated and massaged by the improved flow of the blood and the breath. In this way, they become and remain more efficient.

GIMME SOME ROCK 'N' ROLL

My tribute to rock 'n' roll. A song I wrote just after Roy Orbison died.

It's gettin' late in the eighties
Decade number nine
It don't get any less crazy
With the passin' of time
Well, a whole lotta shakin' has been goin' on
Since the early days of '55
When the Big Beat was born and blasted through the radio
Gimme some rock'n'roll.

My heart's a little bit sadder
Now the Big O's gone
The world gets a little bit badder
But the beat goes on
Ten years and more since the Hound Dog Man
Caught a flight back to the Promised Land
But my Blue Suede Shoes are still dancin' to King Creole
Gimme some rock'n'roll.

Yeah I love them rock'n'roll girls, (Lucille)
Rockin' all over the world, (Maybelline)
And I'm still pinin' for Peggy Sue
Be-Boppa-Lula and Suzie Q.

I can't get no satisfaction
From what I'm hearin' today
But it's great to see the kids in action
They gotta do it their way
But I'm disco dizzy, need a travellin' band
Like the Rollin' Stones or Status Quo
A Creedence Clearwater Revival is what we could go
Gimme some rock'n'roll.

Explanatory notes about some of the lyrics :

"Whole Lotta Shakin" sung by Jerry Lee Lewis.

"The Big Beat" sung by Fats Domino.

The 'Big O' is Roy Orbison.

The "Hound Dog Man" is Elvis Presley.

"The Promised Land" sung by Chuck Berry.

"Blue Suede Shoes" sung by Carl Perkins.

"King Creole" sung by Elvis Presley.

"Lucille" sung by Little Richard.

"Maybelline" sung by Chuck Berry.

'Peggy Sue" sung by Buddy Holly.

"Be-Boppa-Lulla sung by Gene Vincent.

"Suzie Q" sung by Creedence Clearwater Revival.

"I Can't Get No Satisfaction" sung by the Rolling Stones.

"Rock'n'Roll Girls" sung by John Fogerty.

"Rockin' All Over The World" sung by John Fogerty and Status Quo.

A SAD COUNTRY SONG

Sing me a sad country song
One that just eases along
Sing of drowning your sorrows in wine
Like I do now she's no longer mine.

Sing of spending those long sleepless nights
Thinking of holding her tight
Sing of love everlasting that surely went wrong
Sing me a sad country song.

Sing me a sad country song
One that can help me along
Sing of hearts that have broken in two
As did mine when she said we were through.

Sing of losing your love in the end
To someone you thought was your friend
Sing of love everlasting that surely went wrong
Sing me a sad country song.

A song from the album, "CASH 'N' ME", which I recorded as a tribute to Johnny Cash. The album contains twenty-five of his songs performed by me and eighteen of my own compositions.

I thank him for the endless, profound pleasure I have derived from listening to more than sixty of his albums since I was twelve years old. He has been the greatest musical influence in my life, and inspired me to write, not only this song, but also about one hundred more. He was a legend in his time, a man who created his own musical genre that embraced rockabilly, country & western, pop, folk and rock'n'roll. Fifty-five years have gone by since I first heard him and I still love playing his chick-a-boom rhythm.

I met Elisabeth Walker in 1996. She was 81 years old at the time. I attended a workshop for two days in Basle, Switzerland, which she was running with her great friend Marjorie Barlow.

To say that this woman's use of herself is exceptional would be a gross understatement. She is truly one of the greats. Her poise, her grace of movement is astounding. She shines, generates love and enthusiasm; enthusiasm that many people half her age don't have. To see her squat to the floor with such ease was something beautiful to behold. To see her walk and do a little coquettish twirl was truly delightful. Her great strength is her great simplicity. No frills, just sticking to the principles. It was obvious she had been trained by someone special – namely F.M Alexander himself. I could see in her the possibility for all of us to keep our youth and vitality. I was very moved when she did a little activity with me and I said "I know a variation of this one". "Show me", she said with great anticipation, "Today I will learn something new!" To share it with her was a humbling and inspiring experience.

At the end of the two days, I said goodbye to her, but not before I told her that she is a shining example to all of us. She gave me a big hug and a kiss and then we stood quietly talking together and holding hands. It was one of the best moments of my life.

A few months later, I had a lesson with her at her home in Oxford. It simply increased my admiration for her.

"We must not think of consciousness as a property, the consciousness *of* a person. The person *is* consciousness."

*A.C. Mukerji - Self, Thought And Reality,
quoted from Lord Haldane, Page 301.*

As I figured out, "I – as mind – am." I have stated this in my book, "*Going Mental*".

When one gets a new experience – through inhibition and direction – the sensations don't match the intellectual idea.

The reason that animals do things – and human beings used to do things – so naturally and with maximum efficiency is, that if the creature did not learn to function optimally, it did not survive. In the past, our senses must have been tuned to an amazing degree.

I search in vain for some inspiration in the mediocre morass of pseudo-philosophical literature.

Mind is a fact, matter a fiction, the mental is real, the physical a fallacy.

The practical standpoint will serve you well enough in your daily life, but it deals with illusion nonetheless. The philosophic standpoint deals with reality. We must learn to lead a life that balances both standpoints.

Genes are not responsible for the birth of our minds. On the contrary, our minds are responsible for the birth of our genes, just as it was for the birth of our brains.

The baby goes through, from birth, the whole evolutionary process that the race has gone through. Then comes the thought “I am”. When did this happen for the human race? The question of evolution is mainly one of MEMORY! Further thought: If the baby goes through the whole evolutionary process, then that means that as one cell, she creates another and another until the whole complex body is built. This means that the “I”, during this construction, is totally bound up with “the body” in the womb. At birth it is then bound up with the environment and spends time puzzling over what it is, as it tries to interact with it. At some point the human then understands that it is an individual living in the world. The “I” thought then becomes clear as self-consciousness, and this marks the start of a meaningful relationship with the world.

“The muscular kind of sensation is ultimately as mental as the visual kind.”

Paul Brunton

We mistake miraculous manifestations of Mind for mundane material objects; objects that we then take for granted. The magic is lost, or never realised.

The paradox is that each individual is perfect, but must continue to seek perfection. The realisation that one is perfect is a step on the Short Path, but the disciplines of the Long Path, such as seeking perfection, should not be dropped. To imagine that you are perfect can be a serious egotistical misbelief that leads to illusions of grandeur, arrogance and self-deception. No human being, no matter how retarded or advanced, murderer or saint, can be at any other stage of development than the one they are at right now, at this very moment in time. This is why the universe, as it is now, is the perfect picture created by the World-Mind. But every life-form is paradoxically evolving to a perfect state. This sounds like a complete contradiction, but the perfect state we are all seeking is none other than the process of change itself.

Oneness

What good are my feet with no Earth beneath them?
 What good are my eyes with no Sun to light them?
 What good are my ears with no Sounds to soothe them?
 What good is my tongue with no Tastes to excite it?
 What good is my nose with no Smells to delight it?
 What good is my Heart with no Love to inspire it?
 What good is my Soul with no God to guide it?

September 2000

I am a Thought-Being, as light and subtle as the sunshine. I am the Overself.

Directions, thoughts, from the conscious mind to the so-called body should be given with a light and positive, even joyous attitude: with confidence that wherever you send them, they will reach their destination. The body reciprocates these thoughts, as it becomes lighter, livelier and stronger, by sending positive feedback via the subconscious mind to the conscious mind, thus improving one's feeling of well-being and self-esteem.

I stood on the cliff, praying to be
 like the wind, the sea,
 the sun shining on me.

At The Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation

Friday 28th May 1993

Just returned from Sam's class where we studied "The Unveiling of Reality", where P.B. talks about the two phases of World-Mind, one in repose and the other in manifestation or activity. It was mentioned that the sage also exists in this "double manner". That is, he is in the world but not of it, is active in the world but is continually aware of his inner undisturbed condition all the time, whether he is awake, asleep or a-dream. This state is what we are all aspiring to and the possibility of its realisation is what gives us hope. P.B. also talks here of how we have to view ourselves as mental beings from the philosophic standpoint, but as psycho-physical beings from the practical standpoint.

Someone in class mentioned that the World-Mind's ability to view the universe in this double manner was astounding, as well as ego-crushing. Arthur pointed out that the World-Mind does not suffer from the same restrictions as we do in viewing the universe, i.e. it is not restricted by the five senses. This made me think of F.M.'s discovery of what can be called the sixth sense, which does not have any mysterious connotations, but is simply our sensory awareness of ourselves in the body, i.e. kinesthesia and/or proprioception; our sense of the relation of one part of the body to another and of the body in relation to the environment. This sixth sense of ourselves, which he learned to refine by using conscious control, is analogous to the double aspect of the sage, but at a different level, which we could call the psycho-physical level, mentioned above.

Now the key word in Alexander's phrase "constructive conscious control" is "conscious". It simply means that we have to learn to become aware of not only *what* we are doing, but also *how* we are doing it. In other words, we can aspire to the heights of the state that the sage has reached, but we have to function in the body whether we like it or not. It is the medium through which we must obtain our experience of the world in this lifetime.

Staying in the realm of practicality, the body is that psycho-physical entity that we tend to misuse, because of our inability to consider its proper working, as a mechanism. Why is this? The reason is our deep habit of "end-gaining", always pushing to get things done without any attention to the co-ordinated "means" of doing so. This brings us back to the term "conscious". This conscious awareness of how to use ourselves co-ordinatedly is an indispensable part of our existence, which we must cultivate - no matter what our spiritual aspirations are - to progress in evolution and happiness.

Alexander's discovery of the primary control of the self through the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship, is of fundamental importance to the question of human progress. His realisation that the growth of civilisation has caused our formerly superb co-ordinated behaviour to fall into habitual misuse, and that misuse must be replaced by conscious, reasoned behaviour, is something that we lesser mortals cannot avoid if we are to, not only survive, but also evolve and grow. Mentalism reveals that the body is a thought and

this realisation teaches us that if the “body” is not functioning well, then there is something wrong with our thinking, our mind. If we continue to muddle through in the body, instead of consciously taking control of it, we will continue to be frustrated in our spiritual quest.

The word “nothing” is a contradiction in itself. We use it habitually, never realising that we cannot imagine “nothing”. Try as we may, we cannot think of such a condition. Even if we picture endless space with “nothing” in it, we are obliged to observe space itself, not to mention the observer, the witnessing mind.

“The Inner Reality” *Paul Brunton, The Seven Beatitudes*

Chapter 5, Page 60.

“You can’t have a feeling or an emotion about anything unless you think of it, so ultimately all these things are ideas in the mind.”

(Thoughts, ideas, memories, all mental pictures, opinions, fancies, images, feelings and passions.)

As mind, I’m free
 And I can see
 A mental world that’s really me
 A wondrous world of Ideation
 A universe of Self-creation.

To remember constantly to inhibit my habitual reaction to a stimulus, to then *think* of not stiffening my neck, to *allow* my head to go forward and up and my back to lengthen and widen brings truly remarkable changes. These directions bring about the free flow of the Spirit-Energy up the spine — if one has spiritual aspirations — and brings tremendous power to the back, an ability to be “up”; a condition where I can feel more and more that this is much closer to the natural co-ordinated way the organism should be functioning. A strong back brings a joyous feeling of optimism and indomitability. All of this underlines the incredible power of the mind – the incredible power of “I” as mind.

Formed, filled and sculptured by life's guiding Light
Shaped from the sadness and sorrow
Yet thrilled by the wonder of being alive
Born to be just what I can.

To remember to constantly inhibit and direct – although within the realm of the ego – is similar to the Remembrance Exercise of Overself. These dual aspects of remembering can be brought together so that, as one goes through the day using constructive awareness to attend to life's multifarious tasks, one can also develop the remembrance of the Overself at the back of it all. Repetition of these thoughts cannot be emphasised enough; with repetition and aspiration, new vistas are constantly opened up. This is a very pleasurable experience.

The power of the hands to help the other person to change is truly remarkable.

Over-indulgence in food and drink is one of the biggest reasons for spiritual indolence on planet Earth.

If you want to shed your load
Start walking up the freedom road
Give a thought to what you are
And follow your bright guiding star
It shines within you - could you but know it.

The Overself is providential
It lets you see your true potential.

The dark shadow of the ego blocks the effulgent light of the Overself.

This constant habit of the ego of standing facing its own shadow, turned away from the Overself's light becomes boring after a while. A great need for an about-turn is awakened.

A "Stern" Warning!

Entnommen der Zeitschrift STERN, vom Januar 1997, dieser Text spricht für sich selbst.

(Produced from STERN magazine, January 1997, this text speaks for itself.)

DIE NOTLAGE DER KINDER IST WIRKLICH TRAUERIG!

(The Plight Of The Children Is Indeed Sad!)

Evolution: WIE DER MENSCH AUF DIE BEINE KAM

Vor etwa vier Millionen Jahren begannen unsere Vorfahren das Experiment "Aufrechter Gang" die Affen machten nicht mit scheiben ist gross: 100 Kilogramm trägt beim Stehen jeder Quadratcentimeter des Lendenwirbels noch immer 50, denn Muskeln und Bänder pressen den halte-apparat zusammen. Mehr als hundert Gelenke halten unsere Wirbelsäule gleichzeitig stabil und beweglich, über zweihundert Muskeln bewegen 24 Wirbel plus Kreuz- und Steissbein.

Die Nachfahren des Ardipithecus kamen mit dem Problem noch halbwegs zu Ring Risse bekommt, rutscht die Scheibe aus ihrem Zwischenwirbelraum und kann die umliegenden Nerven blockieren: der klassische Bandscheiben vorfall.

Leider bleibt keine Hoffnung, dass der Konstruktionsfehler je behoben wird. Denn egal, ob durchtrainiert oder rückenkrank: Wir pflanzen uns fort und vererben auch unseren krummen Rücken an die Nachkommen. So bleibt der Schmerz das Schicksal einer unvollkommenen Art—des Homo sapiens sapiens.

(Magnus Heier)

This is part of an article on back trouble taken from STERN MAGAZINE, January 1997. It describes how we came out of the trees as monkeys and progressed from all fours to upright human beings. Drawings depicting this progress are shown ending with a man with very bad use sitting slumped at a bar drinking, and his state is described as a "failure in construction". The English translation of the bold italicised text above is as follows.

“Unfortunately, there is no hope of this failure in construction ever being eliminated, whether you are fit or have back problems. We fix ourselves ceaselessly and also transfer, or pass on, our crooked backs to our descendants. So it is the fate of an imperfect way or mode that the pain will stay.”

This quote is based upon various scientific *beliefs, not facts*, and displays gross ignorance of other possibilities for human beings to change these horrible conditions. Such statements breed depression and despair in people and are dangerous to our well-being. The belief in this “failure of construction” is also a fallacy of human existence. Our construction is not faulty, but our way of thinking is. Unfortunately, I do not have the space here to expand on this, but I can say that, as a race, we have ***thought*** ourselves into these negative states and we have the power and the means to ***think*** ourselves back out of them again. To do this is the responsibility of each individual. We need ***constructive conscious control of the individual, BY THE INDIVIDUAL.***

Incidentally, the statement that we are descended from apes is also based on scientific *belief, not fact*. This theory has *never* been proved.

One day in 1989, as I was in the act of sitting down to watch some T.V, a very clear voice said in my right ear. “You will go to Berlin, never fear.” It stopped me in my tracks and I sat for some considerable time thinking about it and asking myself if I really heard it. At this time I was considering whether or not to take a big step and go to Berlin to run a training course and had been asking for guidance and looking for signs. After pondering over this phenomenon for three days – wondering if this was a genuine intuition – I became convinced that it was when I suddenly thought. “Why those words and not others?” I spent ten very successful years in Berlin.

THOUGHTS ON THE MENTAL AND THE PHYSICAL

Psycho-physical unity is indeed a strange term. It posits the coming together of two different elements, the mental and the material. But deeper inquiry into the nature of the latter – and how a perception is supposed to arise from it – reveals some startling facts about the “solid” world around us.

How can we bring together two different elements, intangible mind, which cannot be heard, felt, tasted, smelt or seen, and hard matter which apparently can? Like oil and water, they don’t mix. How can we combine them?

The answer is we cannot. The hyphen in the phrase “psycho-physical” portrays rather neatly the hiatus that exists between the physical brain that can be touched and felt and the ethereal mind.

The outdated belief of the materialist – still held in some scientific circles today – is that a sensation such as that of touch is a physical event starting at the fingertips, travelling up through the nerves to the brain, where it *somehow* makes the leap over the brain-mind gap into consciousness. The word “*somehow*” is always used in this conventional physiological explanation of the birth of a perception. Science is still trying to find out what this “*somehow*” is. Its search will be in vain, because the fact is that the gap does not exist. It only appears to exist if we start at the wrong end of the process – the physical sensation at the fingertips – in our attempts to explain how we get from thing to thought.

The problem can only be solved if we start at the other end – with the mind. Here is this sentient being sending out “feelers” via the so-called body, feelers of hearing, touch, taste, smell sight and kinesthesia. These faculties, these inherent powers of the mind, are its means of experiencing the world around it. The process of perception does not begin at the extremities of the body where the senses are stimulated. It is a circular process that begins and ends with the mind.

At no point and at no time on the journey does the mind ever come across this fictitious substance called matter. All the apparently solid objects around us are not made of this matter which appears to be somehow crammed into them. This is truly mere assumption after all. All objects are, without exception, miraculous mental constructs. The mind must, of necessity, create its own ideas and project them outwards to form the space-time

continuum that we mistakenly believe to be a separate material world. Nothing, however, can stand outside of mind.

The theory of mentalism is difficult to explain because one has to start with this apparently solid matter that is all around us. One has to use phrases like “Matter emanates from mind” or “Matter is a product of mind.” But such statements are confusing because matter is a fiction. How can something which does not exist, unfold from something else? All those hard and heavy things around us are none other than manifestations of mind. To attempt to explain the nature of matter is to begin with a false premise, an assumption. You cannot explain the nature of something that is unreal, something that is mere appearance. To be constantly trapped in the belief in the physical is akin to perpetually living in the confinement of self-constructed dark prison walls. If we are ever to step into the light of mentalism, these walls will have to be demolished. These huge psychological barriers stand in the way of us achieving freedom.

F.M Alexander said that during his meticulous study of the use of the self, he discovered he was a psycho-physical unity. But he also said he realised that he did not know where the mind ended and the body began. He probably knew that the materialist’s interface that is supposed to lie between the brain and the mind does not exist. But he did not take the further step that was needed to realise that all is mental.

The universe is each individual’s idea of it. If we understand this, then we will realise that not only are the things around us ideas, but so also is the body. The act of building a perception of it is subject to the same laws of construction used in forming a perception of any other object in existence. In this way, each individual’s perception, each one’s *idea* of the universe, *is* the universe.

We are all of it! All of this wondrous creation of the Universal Mind, because the individual must arise to experience the universe. No individual mind, no universe.

What are the implications of mentalism for us as people who use the principles of Alexander’s constructive conscious control? Well, for the practical purposes of interacting with the world around us, it is fitting that we treat objects – as well as bodies – as physical, as long as we remember that they are not so in the usual, conventional way in which they are habitually regarded. The apparent solidity of a thing does not invalidate – but only disguises – its mental essence. We can remember always to take the double standpoint to ensure we do not lose our precious practicality.

Mentalism has deep implications for us in terms of our progress in using constructive awareness to improve our well-being, and enrich the quality of our existence. It shows that there are no *physical* obstructions to be overcome. The Alexander Technique is not about bodywork. It is about being *consciously* sentient. It is about *thinking in activity*. We have thought our way into what we are and we can think our way out of it. It is about being present, being in the moment. It is about knowing that if we want to change, we

have to be *consciously* involved in the *process* of change, which is the one constant in this ever-becoming “physical” universe. As F.M said, “*The experience you want is in the process of getting it.*”

The realisation that we are non-physical thought-beings makes a huge contribution in our efforts to live consciously in this wonderful process.

January 2001

I will remember today tomorrow
When it has faded to a yesterday
With no tears, no regrets, no sorrow
Let Life lead me on my way.

You’re not loving yourself if you’re stuffing yourself!

Nothing could be more practical than philosophy.

Your muscles make up a huge part of your memory.

Experience presupposes consciousness.

Mind - whether universal or individual - is both creator and observer.

The incredible swiftness of the act of perceiving, which we have built up through relentless repetition over countless lifetimes is the very celerity which mesmerises us, deludes us, into thinking that we merely explore the world with our senses, instead of realising that perception is a creative act of the mind.

The two greatest books I have ever come across:

“THE HIDDEN TEACHING BEYOND YOGA”

“THE WISDOM OF THE OVERSELF”

Both written by PAUL BRUNTON.

Inhibition And Direction

The relationship between inhibition and direction is a fascinating one. At first glance, the former appears to be passive, the latter active. But in fact they are both activities of thinking, activities of the nervous system.

In order to prevent – at the onset of a stimulus – the advent of the old neuro-muscular patterns that constitute habitual movement, as we know it, we must actively inhibit these impulses in the tiny tick of time between stimulus and reaction. In this time-gap we have the chance to prevent the old habitual reaction and create the possibility of reacting in a new co-ordinated way. Inhibition is active, not passive. It is the platform from which new directions spring; new directions to the primary control, that is, the head-neck-back relationship.

After we have inhibited our habitual reaction - STOP - we must energise and move forward - GO - into real change by thinking the neck free, the head to go forward and up and the back to lengthen and widen. Because the body is a thought-form, the repetition of this dynamic process of stopping (inhibition) and going (direction) will undoubtedly bring about the desired results of co-ordination, grace, poise and beauty in the use of the self. The *wish* is all-important. We can transform ourselves in the most fundamental way through this twin process of inhibition and direction.

Reality cannot be found in duality.

Look life in the eye
Don't let it pass you by
Reach up for the sky and claim your freedom.

Don't let 'em get you down
All the hustlers and the clowns
You can smile and stand your ground, 'cause you don't need 'em.

The ancient Piltdown human was a practical joke, but the modern Pulled-down one is a tragic fact.

I am, therefore, I think!

The ego is the underself.

Mind is THAT out of which consciousness is born.

I wish I could be like the sun and shine my light on everyone!

Where is the solidity then, of this mysterious substance called matter that is supposedly crammed into every object from a grain of sand to a colossal globe that we see around us?

We are habitually ego-based, ego-orientated. We talk continually from the standpoint of the underself. This is understandable, because we - as finite ego - do not normally possess any knowledge of, or feel the presence of, the innermost immortal essence of ourselves – namely the Overself. The “I” who says, “I think this”, or “I want that”, or “I do this”, is the “I” of the ego. The “I” who says “My soul” is the “I” of the ego. With this constant egocentric point of reference, we remain blind to the fact that the Overself possesses the ego – it is not the other way round. A proper understanding of the Overself–underself relationship would positively change our narrow, habitual way of referring to ourselves as human beings. I **am** the Overself!

Security and stability are the parents of indulgence. The search after them is one of the biggest reasons why misuse afflicts the vast majority of the human race today.

Intellect is the tool of the ego

The proper use of our most fundamental faculty – intelligence – will result in a well-rounded personality that can maintain a balance between reason and intuition.

The way in which you use your intelligence determines how knowledgeable you will become.

Real knowledge comes as the result of a balanced merger of reason and intuition.

I have seen a glimpse of life that shows
There is no such thing as death
I have glimpsed the shining glory
That would take away your breath.

ON BALANCING REASON AND EMOTION

The two deepest emotions in the human psyche, namely love and fear, are the main reasons why we need the Alexander Technique. The first one, love, causes us to go “wrong,” in the sense of developing maladjusted muscle-tension patterns. The reason for this is, that as pliable impressionable children, we copy, without realising it, the patterns of misuse of the person or persons we love the most. From a very early age, we display this amazing ability to mimic the person we love and admire, right down to the way the loved one breathes. This happens mainly on the subconscious level, but can also be very conscious. Young people model themselves on their heroes, usually those they see on television and the cinema screen.

The second emotion, fear, is usually caused by the demands made by the adults on the children to always try and be right. The dread of failure goes deep into the psyche of the child and causes much pain and suffering, resulting in habitual, maladjusted muscle-tension patterns. The muscles are the storehouses of the emotions. We do not, however, use them solely for physical movements. When we laugh, we use our muscles to do so and so too when we cry. Our emotions are expressed through the muscles.

I’ve heard it said in the Alexander world that the technique does not deal with, does not give enough attention to, the emotions, but this is not so. Alexander called upon us to express more emotion. It is also true that he placed great emphasis on learning to use reason, but he did not ask us to do so at the expense of the expression of emotion. Reason and emotion must be balanced.

How does the individual go about achieving this balance? Well, the first thing that went wrong with F.M was physical, that is, muscle-tension in his throat and neck that caused him to lose his voice. To remedy this, he reasoned that the constant recurrence of the problem – despite medical help – might mean it was some malfunction that he, through his faulty use of himself, was causing.

Using his acute powers of observation, he saw, with the aid of a number of mirrors, that he was badly misusing himself and his whole body was a mass of unbalanced muscle-tension patterns, which had caused him to actually shorten in stature. The first thing he noticed, therefore, was that something was *physically* wrong.

He then embarked – over many years – on a long series of investigations and experiments on the use of himself, which revealed that he could eradicate these powerful and harmful

muscle-tension patterns. By this mental process of attending to the physical, he made the most remarkable, positive changes in himself. This indeed was inspired reasoning.

What he had also brought about, however, was a great change in his emotional state. People who knew him personally say that he was always of a cheery disposition and had a great sense of humour. Those who undertake the learning of constructive conscious control, as F.M. called his technique, also experience such positive changes in their emotional state. Many say they have become more calm, confident and dynamic and are more able to face life's problems.

We can learn from this that through attending to the physical, we can improve our psycho-emotional state. Indeed, the alleviation of harmful muscle-tension patterns is essential to any form of psychotherapy. You can talk to someone all day about your problems, but if your negative, habitual muscle-tension patterns are still there – that is, if you have not improved the use of yourself – then it is doubtful that you have made any *real* change.

Use your reason to change your use and by this wonderful process, learn to express your emotions freely. Lose your fear and love yourself!

September 2001

There is nothing automatic about us, about our way of being as human beings. We are as free as the World-Mind that created us. The belief in automatic reflex reactions gives rise to the parallel belief that we perform certain movements robotically, that we function like automatons without the aid of consciousness; that we move and act instinctively - whatever that means. It is the incredible speed that the individual mind functions at to produce our finished perceptions that causes this illusion. This inner state of freedom is the reason why the human spirit, despite all the horrors it has endured through countless ages can never be defeated. We are free!

The word “automatic” should be struck from any description where it is used to describe the functioning of the human being. The human spirit can never be defeated because in our innermost being we are FREE!

Arrogance and ignorance are the twin fetters that shackle a narrow mind.

Our arrogance is matched most times only by our ignorance.

At the instant pure mind delimits itself, consciousness – the kinetic aspect of mind – appears as the individual. The root thought, the “I” of the ego is thus born and forms the basis of all our thoughts – the intellect. The latter is the tool of the ego.

Attention is the first function of the mind. It is above thought. It allows the individual to be aware of herself as the ego. This is why only pure attention can regard the ego–thought.

November 2001

The theory that we came down from the trees and stood up does not stand up.

Money is not the root of all “evil” - ignorance is; lack of knowledge of what we are.

Thought moves within the brain, but is not produced by it.

Mind is the principal principle: It encompasses all manifestations, all things, all thoughts, but is encompassed by none.

The separate existence of the object is completely beyond verification. It is inextricably bound up with your perception of it.

It is impossible to prove the independent existence of any object. To affirm its separateness is to display superstition - albeit perfectly pardonable superstition. No thing has an autonomous existence of its own separate from the observer. This is incontestable.

Take for example, the movement of the eyes and how quickly you can move them around. This “ego” that apparently resides in this body has this amazing ability to control all the activity in the neuro-muscular system, from the thought of moving the eye to the actual movement. All those cells, neurons in the nervous system have the ability to respond to this wish. How can the movement be an automatic physical one when the initiator of the movement is a thought? Science tells us all the information is contained in the genes passed on from the parents and that’s the reason we learn so quickly to use the eyes. But surely such a miraculous occurrence would take much longer than the few early years of a single lifetime to learn? And how does the “ego” control it? Surely it must have taken millions of years for the “ego” to know the cells so intimately. Surely the fact that the essence of the cells and the essence of the “ego” are the same - i.e. *mental* - shows why they are able to communicate with each other so easily. Not only that, but the cells have been created by the “ego”, have been spun out of its very self because it had the *wish* to grow and evolve. The eye is one of the tools the “ego” created to function in the world.

Those who can perform intellectual gymnastics are greatly admired by many people. Scientists, mathematicians etc. have spent lifetimes using the intellect, the tool of the ego, and that's why they can perform amazing feats such as discovering the theory of relativity. Sadly, however, the intellect has also discovered and developed nuclear weapons. It deals only with form however, with duality, with finite things and therefore cannot reach into the essence of so-called matter. The journey to the discovery of truth must be an inward one, where each individual can learn to stop the incessant activity of the intellect and find the real self, as well as real peace.

Interpretation of the objects in the world around us takes place on the subconscious level in the mind and is a function of one of our basic attributes – namely intelligence. This is why I think intelligence does not grow, but knowledge does. To be a human being indicates how incredibly intelligent you are.

Knowledge of an object cannot take place without the working of the nervous system and brain. But both nerve and brain are mind made manifest.

MIND AND TIME

Someone at sometime noticed that the earth's movement in relation to the sun was something that could be predicted. S/he noticed that the sun arrived at the same point in the sky at the same time every day and after deep deliberation, managed to measure how long the sun was visible and how long it stayed away during the darkness. Eventually this period of light and darkness was added together and split into the 24 hours of the day. It was also realised that it took the sun a certain length of time to move in the sky in such a way that its position at a certain point determined how the seasons of spring, summer, autumn and winter occurred. A complete cycle was also observed, a cycle that occurred 365 times before the sun started to repeat the larger cycle. This movement of the sun formed our idea of time that we now take for granted.

Science has since discovered that the earth travels round the sun and the 'fact' of the sun's movement as seen by the individual mind was an illusion. Despite our new knowledge, however, the modern individual still experiences the sun rising in the morning, passing right across the sky and disappearing over the horizon. Despite what we now know of the earth's travel around the sun, we do not experience that journey from our standpoint. Reason tells us that the earth rotates around its own axis and travels round the sun, but experience tells us the earth is static and the sun moves across the sky. Reason refutes and reveals, but does not remove the illusion.

This shows that the knowledge used by both the ancients and the moderns was an interpretation by a conscious mind of the movement of these heavenly bodies. These movements are sensations in the mind gained through the eyes. And, as we know, the brain deals only with the light from these suns and stars that strikes the eyes, then all we have become aware of is what occurs in our own brain and eyes. You have never at any time become *directly* aware of the multitude of suns, moons and stars that can be seen in the sky. This sense of time that we now have is nothing more than an interpretation by the mind of its own creations, because the mind has created the senses. Time is created by the number of sensations that pass through the mind. Time is the natural result and necessary concomitant of the process of producing thoughts.

The vast majority of the human race suffers from misuse of the self. Billions of people go through a whole lifetime never realising that co-ordinated use of the organism is so important to our psycho-physical-emotional-spiritual wellbeing. Our everyday movements become so familiar and habitual that we simply take them for granted. Most

of us are completely ignorant of the *how* of doing. This is clear proof that a person can spend a whole lifetime under a great illusion about the everyday acts that s/he performs.

Relating this to the fact of mentalism, this illusion regarding the *use* of the “body” should serve as a caution to humankind about the *essential nature* of the “body”. Its apparent materiality is also unquestioningly taken for granted, but is indeed an even greater delusion.

It is of great interest to note that so many people are turning to the spiritual quest. One of the main reasons for this is that we have forgotten not only what we are, but also how we came to be as we are now.

The process of learning constructive conscious control gives a clear indication that we have progressed and evolved by that very process, *conscious* control. Every act we can perform now has been learned consciously and been repeated consciously an unbelievable number of times until it has become so familiar that the conscious mind is able to execute it while thinking of something else at the same time. Thus the so-called subconscious mind was born and was educated by the conscious mind until it reached the high level of sophisticated and tremendously rapid functioning that it performs at present. This functioning is now so swift that it gives the mistaken impression that it occurs automatically.

Perception paints a private picture peculiar to each person.

The complex convolutions of the brain do not produce our experience, but have been produced by our experience.

Science and metaphysics hone the intellect, while mysticism pacifies it.

We must use our thinking powers to understand the complexities of metaphysics and arrive at an intellectual truth of what we are. When this truth is realised it is time to explore the mysteries of meditation and find out what lies behind and upholds the intellect.

Mind is the alpha unmanifested.

Mind is boundless BE-ness.

Mind is the covert creator.

Mind is the divinity that defies description.

Mind is the esoteric, eternal essence.

Mind is the final frontier.

Mind is the hidden healer.

Mind is the ineffable immanence.

Mind is limitless love.

Mind is the magical mystery.

Mind is the noumenon.

Mind is omniscient, omnipotent, - OM.

Mind is the principal principle.

Mind is beyond rhyme or reason.

Mind is the secret source.

Mind is not this or that.

Mind is the unutterable ultimate.

Mind is the wondrous witness.

Mind is the X-factor.

Mind is the reason why.

Mind is the zenith and the nadir.

Mind IS.

We are aware of doing things every day, but rarely cognisant of the *how* of doing, rarely aware of the *co-ordinated means*.

The quest is really the search carried out by the underself – the ego – to find the Overself – the essence. But this is only true from the egoistic standpoint and is the Long Path way. In reality the underself and the Overself are one. To know you are the Overself is to be on the Short Path.

One thought follows another and so time is created.

The ego's anxieties, fears and phobias, all its negative emotions are the cause of muscle-tension in the body in the wakeful state. One of the reasons that we experience real peace, free from tension, during deep dreamless sleep is because the ego is absent. It has been withdrawn into the Overself.

From the individual standpoint, all things have their source in the Self

Form is what mind assumes to become a so-called "thing".

Don't be fooled by the physical – it's a false belief.

Analogy is the tool of the esoteric and the inexplicable.

The ego becomes so impressed by the amplitude of its knowledge, that it forgets the Primordial Intelligence from which all this knowledge has sprung, and which lies at the heart of it.

One of the big problems in discussing the development, or evolution, call it what you will, either of the human being or the universe is the “pop-up”. In attempting to explain the *unfoldment* of life from Mind, the essence, the no-thing, to manifestation in all its myriad forms, things are always “popping up”. Science, in particular, uses strange terms such as “when life began”, or “when Man first appeared”. No matter how hard you try as soon as the word “Man” is mentioned, a picture of a human body is produced by the intellect. This picture “pops up”.

Science usually defines life as a combination of certain basic elements, such as amino acids, chemicals, etc., which need certain favourable conditions to develop into the complexities of a living being such as a human. But where did the basic elements come from? If I say “amino acids” then my habit is to form a mental picture of what I think an amino acid is. It “pops up” as a separate and complete entity in itself. But what is the producer of the amino acid? It must surely be Mind. An amino acid is a form that *unfolds* from Mind.

We'll walk together for a while
We'll learn together every mile
And from my heart I want to say
I'm glad that you are going my way

Sarah Paice

There's nothing better than a cup of tea
And sitting down with old P.B.!

ONE FINE DAY

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

One fine day there'll be no borders
Between the lands and the hearts of men
We'll all be free to walk
To sing, to laugh, to talk
One fine day all the hatred will end.

One fine day there'll be no killing
And the doves of peace will be flying high
And we'll have learned to love
All life below, above
One fine day 'neath a clear blue sky.

Let's build a New World for the children
It's their home
Let them live without fear, let them grow straight and true.

One fine day, there'll be no darkness
And the light of love will be shining bright
And we will be as one, all equal beneath the sun
One fine day, you and I.

You have survived from the Beginning
that never was and will endure
till the Ending that never will be.
Remember?

Consciousness is the Alpha made active

Consciousness is boundless becoming, the arc of the circle of Mind

Consciousness is the creative aspect of Mind

Consciousness is the great Doer behind all imagination, manifestation and creation

Consciousness is endless expression and energy and is never empty

Consciousness is behind all form, all manifestation

Consciousness is the ground-seed

Consciousness is the ignition key

Consciousness is the kinetic aspect of Mind, kinetic karma

Consciousness is the light of the body and of all manifested creation

Consciousness is mentalised movement

Consciousness is next to nothing

Consciousness is the Omnipresent Organiser, springing from the Ineffable Originator

Consciousness is the perceiver

Consciousness is quirkless: it is not a strange chance occurrence

Consciousness is the river on-flowing

Consciousness is the seed of sentience, the spring whose source is Mind

Consciousness is that which emanates from Mind

Consciousness is universal, unbounded

Consciousness is vivacious vitality

Consciousness is not confined to wakefulness,
but exists in the dream and deep-sleep states

Just as a thought is born in the mind of the individual, only to pass away, so is the individual human being born in World-Mind, only to pass away. But, just as a thought in the individual mind is stored in memory never to be forgotten, never to really die, so is the individual mind stored in the vast ocean of the World-Mind. Hence there is no death for us. We exist always, either latently or manifestly.

Perception is a function of the intellect.

Pure mind – the essence of the individual – is undifferentiated consciousness.

Duality is intellectually necessary and exists for the prosaic and practical affairs of life. The ego's activity as the underself means it has to distinguish itself from other things, which may be termed the not-self. But philosophically speaking, duality does not exist in the deepest part of our being. The principle of MIND as the unchanging essence of all creation is uncontradictable.

It would appear that in deep sleep when the ego has vacated the body, the cells in the body are sustained by the life-force of the Overself. The cells, therefore, must have their own kind of consciousness, which enables them to keep thinking and doing to keep the body functioning. This seems clear if we remember that as the ego in the waking state, we are not aware of the activity going on in even one cell of the entire body. The body is indeed constructed of cells that operate in differently graded phases of consciousness.

The origin of the intellect is found in the ego. All thoughts, perceptions and conceptions arise in the ego – the primal "I", the primal thought-emotion.

Attentive awareness is the primal power inherent in every human being. It is the power that is antecedent to thinking and perceiving. In the last analysis there is nothing but awareness. In the waking state this awareness is forever turned outwards to the world. It

is so strong that we cannot easily take control of it and turn it inwards to that Sacred Stillness, which dwells unnoticed behind all thoughts and perceptions.

The Overself exists as that ineffable Stillness that is beyond intellectual ideation, i.e as pure Mind; whereas the ego exists as the first result of Mind's active phase, i.e Consciousness. The ego, then, is the point where Mind becomes Consciousness. The Overself as pure Mind is Be-ness; the ego as Consciousness is ever-Becoming. This is easier to understand if we remember that to be conscious means to be conscious *of something*. Consciousness would be useless if it had nothing to be conscious of. This means that the individual – as ego – and the world arise at the same moment and must always exist together in inseparable union. The ego and the world are truly reborn when the individual wakes up every morning to start a new day. The Overself, then, projects the ego and its world at the same time.

Strange times are these in which we live when old and young are taught in falsehoods' school

And the one man that dares to tell the truth is called at once
A lunatic and fool.

Plato

The Overself is the impersonal, essential "I", pure, undifferentiated Mind. The ego is the personal, primal "I", the first thought-emotion heralding the birth of the individual Consciousness.

Consciousness, as mentalised movement, creates time and space, because it must view things in succession, to be aware of them at all. Equally, it must put things in space to be aware of them at all. Time and space are inseparable; they arise together in the making of concepts and percepts: time and space, therefore, are compulsory, concomitant creations of consciousness. Pure Mind, however, is THAT out of which consciousness emerges and is not touched by time or space. It is the mysterious Absolute that dwells in Eternal Duration.

The Overself is that pure Mind which is the source of the light of consciousness. The blissful unconsciousness of the deep-sleep state is the closest the human being – as ego –

can come to pure Mind, to the Overself. To stop the incessant flow of thoughts produced by the ego would bring one into the awareness of pure Thought, pure Mind.

The Overself, as pure Mind, delimits a part of itself to produce the ego, the primal “I”-thought of self-consciousness. The ego, then, is the means by which the Overself experiences the universe, the means by which the World-Mind views its own creations through the individual. The ego, in turn, must create the means by which it can experience the universe. This it does by spinning the so-called physical body out of itself. The “I”, the ego, does not don the body as the body dons a suit of clothes. The body is a manifestation of mind.

Becoming Be-ness

It's a wondrous cosmic journey
 Through the canyons of the mind
 Sometimes sad and sometimes funny
 Never knowing what you'll find
 A journey with no ending
 For it never had a start
 You weren't always what you are
 But you've always been a heart
 From a tiny single cell
 To whatever you can be
 Climbing ever upwards
 To see what you can see
 To realise it's all a dream
 As you learn to think and feel
 To see through the Great Illusion
 To THAT which is the REAL.

As a micro-universe the individual exists latently between births as the Overself. Then, when the karmic forces stir the Overself – the pure mind or essence of the individual – into action, the individual mind moves into its active phase and becomes the primal thought-emotion which forms the basis of all intellectual ideation. This primal thought-emotion is the ego and signals the birth of the personality. All thoughts, all emotions spring from this root – the “I” of the ego. When mind is moved by the karmic forces into this active phase it becomes consciousness. Consciousness is the realm of the ego, the

personalised self. By virtue of the creative power of consciousness – bestowed upon the individual by the World-Mind – the ego then sets out to spin the senses and the body out of itself. There are not, therefore two separate elements – the mental mind and the physical body – which come together to form a psycho-physical unity, there is only one – the mental. There is no need to ponder how these two elements come together, because the physical one is an illusion, it does not exist. The problem of how to unite the two disappears when you understand mentalism. The senses and the body are indeed the forms that the personal consciousness – the ego – adopts to experience the world around it. The senses are the means by which the individual mind becomes aware of its surroundings. They are the mind’s intermediaries. This way of saying this, however, underlines the inadequacy of language because the words “mind” and “sensation” suggest separation. All sense-function is formed *immediately* by the mind, and *mediately* by the senses, but we must remember that the senses are extensions of the mind. They are the minds antennae, so to speak, its “feelers” that inform us that a world of so-called “separate” objects is extended out there in space and experienced as an event in time. To know of an external world at all, the individual mind must *create* it, from the master-image imposed upon it by the World-Mind.

The thing is, you see, that the thing is not a thing at all, but something else entirely. That something is a mental construct, a perception. You have to be very perceptive to see through the thing and realise it is a thought. The thing is really the thought of the thing. The thing’s existence as a thing-in-itself, as a thing apart, as a thing possessing independent self-extension in space apart from an observer, is impossible to prove. The difficult thing to grasp is, that from the standpoint of the individual, the thing can only be known as a thought. It is impossible for the observer to burst the bubble of perception. The bubble is of infinite dimension. We live in a mental world constructed entirely from sensation.

In the wakeful state, perception is a perpetual, peremptory process, of paranormal proportions, painstakingly produced and practised, with relentless repetition, by the ego over a period of time that staggers the imagination. You cannot switch it off in a whimsical manner simply by deciding to do so. Its workings are neither palpable nor patent. Attention is its antecedent.

Intelligence is the root of the tree of knowledge

December 2002

Attention is the primal power, the hidden source of the process of perception. The ego's ability to think and creatively produce our world of perception is derived from this source. Awareness is truly wondrous!

A consideration of attention reveals that it is a force inherent in the Overself and not in the ego, because the latter loses its capacity for giving attention to its surroundings when the person falls asleep. In sleep we know absolutely nothing about the world and this indicates that the "I" of the Overself not only bestows, but also withdraws, the faculty of attention from the "I" of the ego. The ego is the root thought of reflected consciousness, the Moon, the underself, whose light is borrowed from its source – the Sun, the Overself.

RING OF SIN

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

Is it there to keep us in?
Or is it there to keep us out?
If you know where I've been
You know what I'm talkin' about
A scar that marks the people
Grey stone of evil, built by the Devil
A sinister ring of sin
In Berlin, in Berlin.

No it ain't no Great Wall of China
'Cause you can't see it from the moon
But it stands there a great divider
As cold as a Kaiser's tomb
Freedom it keeps denyin'
Still people dyin', all the time tryin'
To cross the ring of sin
In Berlin, in Berlin.

This hated creation is makin' two nations of one
It stands between mother and daughter, father and son
Weepin'.

Sound out the trumpets, this wall must come tumblin' down
There will dawn a new day when one day it's razed to the ground
Sighin'

Each and every individual *is* the manifested, but not the hidden, universe, because each of us must exist as an individual to be aware of the universe in the first place. No individual mind, no universe. Each creates the explicit but not the implicit. Because the ego has to experience the explicit via the six senses, the whole universe – from our own bodies to the most colossal star – is entirely each one's private perception. This means that we can come into an awareness of the World-Mind – God, if you like – but can never become It. The part cannot be as great as the whole. Each of us is the vehicle through which the World-Mind views its own creations, its own imaginings, its own thoughts.

From the egoistic standpoint, the Overself is implicit, and the world – including the body - explicit.

The underself, the ego, is the overt observer; the Overself is the covert Witness.

When intellect is illumined by insight, it becomes inspired. Intuition is the intermediary between the two.

Some of us spend a great deal of time trying to understand each other, trying to put ourselves in the other's place, to walk a while in the other's shoes, to apprehend the other's problems, to fathom the workings of the other's intellect, to plumb the depths of the other's emotions, to find out what makes them tick, to imagine what it would be like to be that other person. We try to offer love, compassion, sympathy and to empathise with the other. But too often, such efforts are in vain and do not effect real, positive and fundamental change that can truly uplift the other.

Why is this so? Probably the biggest reason is that – at the level at which most of us function, that is the egoistic – each individual human entity is a wondrous unfathomable mystery. It is simply not possible for the finite human intellect to know the essence of another's psyche. Why not? Because it does not know how to do this with regard to its own psyche. How can an individual understand another, when it does not understand itself? No matter how noble the attempts, no matter how good the intentions, efforts to truly help another person to change will yield only partial and palliative results unless the ego acquires the knowledge of what constitutes a human being. Here, surely, is where each of us must begin – with our own self? The task of finding out what you yourself really are is a monumental one! The task is so great that the vast majority of us require

lifetime after lifetime to achieve it. Only by coming into real knowledge of what you are can you hope to help others to change in a fundamental way. The individual is supreme!

Consciousness is active, full. Mind is still, empty.

A mystic told me recently that we are not the body, but something else, i.e consciousness. It was obvious that this mistaken belief – that we are not the body - was reflected in his own body, which was very overweight and badly misused. If we are not the body then how come we can't just get rid of it, simply think it away? How come it is the first thing we become aware of when waking from deep sleep or meditation? No, the body is the miraculous medium through which we experience the world. It should not only be respected, but also revered. It is a truly beautiful expression of the World-Mind's and the individual's creative powers. Deluded deliberations, muddled metaphysics and misguided meditation cannot spirit it away.

If we think it through thoroughly, we learn that things are thoughts.

We think thoughts and then think they are things.

Substantiality is a sensation, substance is a supposition.

The creative power of the mind has produced both the senses and the sensed world *for the individual*. Both arise simultaneously in inseparable union. The primal force that bestows this power on the individual is the World-Mind. The human being is a co-creation.

Questions:

Did we repeat our experiences countless times to the point where the process of perception became an unstoppable habit?

Why can't we switch it off when we want to?

Undifferentiated Consciousness = Mind = Overself. In order to realise self-consciousness, the Overself must delimit a part of itself and thereby create something that can experience all the different forms which exist in the universe around it. Thus it creates the ego. Consciousness, then, springs up with the ego as its root-thought and root-emotion. The ego is always conscious; the proof of this being that it disappears and loses all awareness of itself and the world at the onset of deep sleep. The ego and its awareness of the body and the world around it arise together at the same instant, because being conscious necessitates being conscious of something. Consciousness with nothing to fill it would be pointless. Mind is the esoteric “empty” essence and origin of consciousness and the latter is in turn the hidden active upholder of the body and the world. Mind is BE-ness, consciousness is ever-becoming.

Consciousness is the power that distinguishes the self from the not-self, the thinker from the thing thought of, the observer from the thing observed.

Consciousness – the intellect – is the producer of space and time.

Relativity exists in the realm of consciousness, in the realm of the intellect.

The Real – Mind – puts forth the relative -- Consciousness – from Itself. The Real transcends the relative: the Real radiates the relative.

Despite the assertions made by some mystics, the world is not a complete illusion. It is real, but relatively so. The experience of the world for each and every individual ego is unique. It is not possible for the experiencing individual ego to live in a timeless, spaceless, formless world. The formed world and the ego exist in inseparable union. The individual can only know itself by experiencing the not-self, the world of objects around it. This ability to contrast these elements against each other is a necessary function of being conscious. The ego, as the root-thought of consciousness, has to be there for the individual entity to experience the world at all. There is no need to scorn the body and

the world around it. If any philosophy is to be worthwhile, they must be reckoned with and understood.

TO BERLIN

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

The wall is over, we're over the wall
The wall is no more, no more at all
And now it's freedom, look at it fall
The wall is over, we're over the wall.

The wall is over, we're over the wall
Father and mother, sister, brother and all
Tell all the others, send out the call
The wall is over, we're over the wall.

And there'll be no more killing in the dark of the night
No more life-blood spilling in the cold morning light
When the people are willing they will win any fight
And the wall has come tumbling down.

The wall is over, we're over the wall
No need to take cover, let's go for a stroll
They're gaping in wonder in the government halls
The wall is over, we're over the wall.

The first fundamental faculty of Consciousness is the ability to give attention. Without this ability, we could not become aware of an external world of objects around us at all.

In our everyday dealings with, and thoughts about the world, we are vaguely aware – if we stop and think about it – of a sense of “I”. Reflection shows that we have a feeling that inside us there is something that sifts and weighs our ruminations, feels our emotions and is aware of our movements and sensations. Our attention is always turned outward to the body and the world. It is this incessant activity of the intellect that prevents us from becoming aware of the “I” of the ego that is the root-thought of consciousness. Were we to give as much time and effort to turning our attention inwards, as we do outwards to the environment, we would effect the means of reducing our multitudes of thoughts to that point of pure attention, to the ego, the innermost centre of individual life.

The present moment is an everlasting **NOW**. Past and future are derived from it, not by the movement of the planet around the sun, represented by the turning of the hands of a clock, but by the unifying power of the human memory. The relationship between past, present and future exists in the mind because the intellect is compelled to function in this way – one thought after another. The relationship does not exist in the planet turning on its own axis represented by our fabricated 24-hour day. We do not, therefore, experience the world as continuous, unbroken sensation, but as a succession of single perceptions that follow each other like the rapid dripping of separate droplets of water falling from a tap. The droplets have a common source, but their own independent existence. It is the incredibly fast occurrence of one perception after another, one droplet after another, which gives the illusion of unbroken experience similar to the continuous stream that occurs when the flow is increased. The mind is not only the source of each droplet of perception, but also the unbroken, unnoticed link in the space - in the infinitesimal moment - between each one. Each separate perception is based on, but not exactly identical to, its predecessor. In short, no two moments are exactly the same. This is true, however, only of the intellect, because in the wakeful state it is constantly in movement, this movement being the producer of time. If we were to consciously halt its activity, we would experience two moments that were identical. This would mean no transference of memory from one moment to the next and we would lapse into a timeless Absolute.

All intellectual knowledge is entirely relative and destined to run around forever in ever-decreasing circles until it disappears up its own ego!

Misuse of the mind-body complex colours and conditions perception.

When using reason in the realm of metaphysics, it must be honed to the sharpest degree if truth, at the intellectual level, is to be found. By this power of reasoning, you can realise that the chair you're sitting on is made up of a vast multitude of whirling electrical particles. Through habitual practical experience, however, the senses continue stubbornly to report it as something material, a wooden object of a certain size, shape, colour and weight upon which you can sit. Here indeed is an arresting thought - that your body-weight can be supported by a vibrant mass of electrical energy that looks like a chair! But because reason cannot step outside the boundaries of the intellect, it cannot verify what lies behind the latter, cannot circumvent THAT which produced it. If you managed to get behind the intellect, all reasoning would fall away and you would experience ultra-mystic INSIGHT into what is the real nature of TRUTH.

The space-time continuum is the rock, the basic structure that underpins all our experience of the world. From the individual standpoint, the human mind is the ground upon which this rock stands. Perception is not a passive, but a dynamic, creative process. Without this magical ability to construct the world around it, the mind would experience nothing.

Never mind, never anything!

The entire universe is a mental construct.

You don't have to keep it in mind; it's already in there!

It is true that we create our own thoughts. It is also true that the body is a thought-complex: we must, therefore, have created the body. Consciousness is the whole that produces the part, the body.

Sight and light are in indivisible union. During the act of seeing any and every object, we forget, or have never realised, that all we ever deal with is a wondrous world of light that bombards the eyes. This world of light is all that the brain can know, because its existence is reported via the optic nerve. The “material” world around us is only *inferred* from the world-image that appears on the retina. We see nothing directly.

Although we possess this wonderful faculty of sight, we cannot cite any object as standing alone in entirely *independent* existence. It is impossible to produce the *independent* thing as proof of its autonomous reality. It is inseparable from an observing mind. It must be a *known* object.

Mind you, the whole universe is immaterial, but this is not to say it is irrelevant or unimportant, or even illusive.

The selfish arrogant ego that constantly has ME! ME! ME! as its biggest concern is a pale and pathetic shadow of the unselfish altruistic one that humbly, but confidently, knows itself to be a ray of the divine light which shines behind it – the Overself. This knowledge would bring true poise and dignity to a human being.

Think of your neck to be free your head to go forward and up and your back to lengthen and widen. Here, indeed, are thoughts that help to give height to a human being, in more ways than one.

All this horrible hatred and war-mongering that goes on at present in the world is ultimately caused by one thing – the ego.

The ego is the hurdle to be jumped to get to the winning post – the Overself.

Philosophically, I am I - the Overself; practically, I am I, the underself – the ego.

Although the Overself is the real and ultimate experiencing innermost core of the human being, the ordinary thinking, feeling and willing that occurs during the wakeful state, in our day to day dealings with the world is performed by the ego.

WE WANT PEACE FOR THE WORLD

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

Take a good look around
So much beauty abounds
It's really a wonderful world
Yes this tiny blue ball
Can't be valued at all
It's worth more than diamond and pearls
But the future and fate
Of the whole human race
Is threatened by weapons that kill
So come on and sing it with me
We want peace for the world.

We've had two world wars
We don't want a third
That'll be the end of the world
A bomb that's nuclear
Knows no frontiers
The dust simply blows where it will
So let's lay down the arms
That would do so much harm
Let the flag of destruction be furled
Come on and sing it with me
We want peace for the world.

Let's all work together
Lift our heads from the sand
Make a change in the weather
Be the family of man.

Take a good look around
So much beauty abounds
It's worth more than diamonds and pearls
So come on and sing it with me
We want peace for the world.

The “I” of the Overself is not a thought at all; it is pure Be-ness, pure Mind, the Principal Principle. The “I” of the ego is a thought, and even more accurately, a thought-emotion that is the root of all our worldly experience.

We are not normally aware of our awareness, but could be – if we stop to think about it. Such process is what the Alexander Technique is about. Such process is ***constructive conscious control in the use of the self, the universal constant in living, which is humankind’s supreme inheritance.***

The ego is the “I” of the senses.

Mentalism and constructive conscious control are the fundamentals of re-education. They are vital to the spiritual transformation of the human individual. A further fundamental is the need for the vast majority of us to improve our character.

The ego and the body are an indivisible unity.

A human being can be selfless or egoless only in the moral sense, not in the psychological. Our sense of personal being and individuality begins and ends with the ego.

The ego not only instigates and directs the body’s activities, but also the intellect’s thinking processes.

The foremost thought in the human mind – the ego, the sense of “I”

The ego is a thought-complex.

The word “ego” means, “to be placed outside”

The ego is the most persistent thought that appears within Consciousness.

No thoughts can be separated from the ego, because it is itself a thought, albeit the fundamental one of the intellect.

The ego = personal consciousness.

January 2003

The illusoriness and transience of thoughts stand in contrast to the reality and immortality of Thought. Likewise, the ego, being a thought, is also illusory and ephemeral and stands in contrast to the reality and eternity of the Overself.

The term “consciousness of the Overself” means the power that emanates *from* the Overself. As pure Mind, the Overself does not need to be conscious, **IT IS**. When **IT** narrows a part of itself down to produce Consciousness, the ego is born as the first thought of Consciousness, from which all other thoughts spring. Consciousness cannot, like Mind, be “empty”. The former is always full. Full of what? Full of percepts, concepts, thoughts, emotions, sensations, the body and the world around it. It must always have an *object of* which to be aware.

Peace and Love to all!
We don't want war!
Let there be peace on Earth!

I am a child of God
In essence I am Thought
I am the Overself

When the meaning of mentalism becomes clear, it does not mean that everything takes on some kind of ghostly, spectral, non-substantial form, like mist or the heat-haze from a highway. The people around you do not become wraiths. It is simply that you realise that the substantiality you apparently feel in an object does not prove it has substance; that perception does not prove the thing-in-itself is real, in the sense of having its own separate existence apart from a knower. When you bump your head against the wall, it is, relatively speaking, solid and will cause you pain! Mentalism is not etherialism.

In the search for truth, the limits of relativity restrict reason. The latter is dismally doomed to deal with duality, with different views from different standpoints. No finite human intellect can have an overall view. It requires illumination by an instant flash of inspired intuition or, even better, insight.

If you are a quester, don't let your head get lost in the clouds, in metaphysical meandering. Your head can be in heaven while your feet remain - but lightly - on the ground. Don't lose your precious practicality.

The recognition of a need and the wish to fulfil that need could be termed "evolutionary compulsion." This compulsion stimulates our creativity.

Sometimes when you consider the vastness of the cosmos, an almost overwhelming sense fills your consciousness of how insignificant the individual human entity is. It is, therefore, understandable that so many people lose hope and faith, sometimes to the extent that they take their own lives. And yet, if you understand mentalism, the other side of the coin is revealed and a great paradox is realised. You see that the whole cosmic panorama is experienced through the medium of the six senses. This great universal drama is nothing more than that given to us by the sense organs. We can never step outside of the four imprisoning walls of our perceptions. But the trick is to realise how magical the individual mind is. It possesses this incredible ability, not only to explore and scrutinise the universe, but also to create it. "Is this not truly wondrous?", I ask myself. You are not so insignificant; you are – from the individual standpoint – this whole miraculous cosmos! Hope and faith can be turned into knowledge of this sublime truth.

Tuesday 25 Feb. 2003:

After waking at 2.30am, I listened to some music for a few hours and at 4.30 felt a strong urge to meditate. Powerful forces lengthened my spine and at one point I shook quite a bit until all tension left my body. The meditation was interspersed with clear thoughts and periods of non-thinking (almost). I smiled a lot.

And the Voice said,

“Many of the voices you have listened to in the past are those of the foolish, the insincere, the ignorant, the ingenuous, the crafty, the superstitious and the naive. They are the voices of the manipulators, the graspers, the ruthless, the selfish, the egoistic, the criminal and the cruel. But in the main, they are the voices of the insecure, the weak, the fearful and the unloved. And yet, you have learned a great deal from them.

Do not belittle your own thoughts. Respect them; love them, for they are as bright as the twinkling stars that light up a world in darkness. Trust yourself because you are, in essence, the ***Overself.***”

Because consciousness is never empty, but always full; because consciousness would be pointless without something to be conscious of; because the act of perceiving is a function of consciousness, it is impossible to experience this act without thinking of something to perceive. We cannot think of the faculty of hearing, for instance, without thinking of some sound. The faculty of hearing, stripped bare of any sound is impossible to experience. All we can say is that by hearing a sound we know that the faculty of hearing is functioning. All sensations, therefore, are inextricably bound up with the finished perception of any object that springs from the instant fusion of these sensations by the mind. The final completed perception is that which the mind presents to itself by an act of incredible creativity. The speed at which the mind can do this is what prevents us from “getting in” to the experience. It is important to remember that because the mind has to take all the sensations that tell it of the object’s existence and create the finished perception of it, ***the latter is the object.*** The thing’s independent existence is nothing more than an abstract concept, a figment of the imagination, useful only for the purpose of theoretical speculation. Despite appearances, we remain constantly confined within our own private bubble of perception. We never get at anything directly.

In your inner ruminations about yourself and your outer interaction with the world and other individuals, you habitually act from the ego-centre as your reference point, your

datum level. Hence your talk of “my soul” and “my body” and “my feelings.” This is the one of the reasons why the ego has no awareness of the Overself, but knows only its own thoughts, its own body, its own feelings and its outer world of people and things. By switching its attention from the outer world to the inner the ego can become aware of THAT which is behind it, THAT which makes awareness possible – the Overself. The ego is not an entity that possesses the Overself, it is the other way round, the reverse is true. *In essence you are the Overself.*

I – as ego - cannot comprehend what I – as Overself – am.

All statements made about the properties of things around you are purely relative ones. You cannot make a truthful statement about the real nature of any object because you experience only your perception, your thought of it. The six senses resonate within a limited range of vibration and can give only a limited experience of the object. It is impossible to jump over or circumvent the perception to get to the thing-in-itself. The latter is completely cut off from you and forever remains *inferred*. The perception is all that is really known; the thing-in-itself is an abstract concept, which is added in the mistaken belief that you are dealing directly with it. The thing does not produce our experience, *but is conversely produced by our experience.*

It is a hierarchy of: Insight > Intuition > Intellect.

Insight is inherent immanent knowledge that infuses intuition, which in its turn, illumines and inspires intellect.

Intuition is the informing instantaneous intermediary between inherent insight and inquisitive intellect. Rigorous reasoning is required to ratify its revelations.

Attention is antecedent to awareness of the finished mental perception that we create and call the physical world.

-
- 1 Arisal of " I " - thought.
 - .
 - 2 Arisal of body-thought.
 - .
 - 3 Arisal of world-thought .
 - .

The ego existed as the " I " - thought before it spun the body out of itself.

The ego does not move in and out of sleep and wakefulness by its own power, by its own volition. Such movement is involuntary, because it is done at the behest of a much grander and greater power – the Overself.

The ego, then, is a separate principle of awareness, part of which acts upon the body, principally via the heart and the brain. This fractional consciousness is the person; it is not the hidden mind from which it springs. This ego-consciousness is the seat of the body, the root-thought from which the body manifests. The ego is so intimately associated with the brain that the brain's reaction to the ego's thinking activity follows almost instantaneously. This "parallel" working of the ego and the brain is the reason why so many scientists believe the brain to be the originator or creator of consciousness and thoughts. No instrument has ever recorded the infinitesimal tick of time between ego activity and brain response.

Consciousness is a phase of Mind and thinking is a phase of consciousness.

During sleep, the vital functions of the body that are carried out by the living beings, the cells that constitute the heart, brain, liver, lungs, bones, muscles, sense-organs etc., are vivified by the Overself, because the ego – this fractional consciousness – has been withdrawn by the Overself – this mysterious mind - into itself. During the wakeful state, it is the ego that animates all the cells into greater activity. Not only does the ego do this,

but it also produces all thoughts, whose sum total is known as the thinking intellect. These are a few of the reasons why the ego must be there.

It is not the “separate” things around you that are the objects of your conscious attention, it is your *sensations* of them.

The ego’s return journey to the Overself at the onset of sleep is a compulsory one. In this state, the ego is completely withdrawn and the personal aperture is entirely closed.

There are countless layers, or levels, of consciousness. For the individual there is “I”-consciousness, which gives the feeling of existing as a distinct and separate, but nevertheless, whole being. The cells, however, which constitute the body, are also living beings that have their own sense of “I”-consciousness. The consciousness of the cells is more limited than the wider, overall “I”-consciousness that the human entity possesses. This means that each cell is a tiny part of the collective consciousness of all the cells and each knows exactly what to do as a specialised participant in the functioning and activity of the body. If this were not so, the body could not exist as the harmonious organism that it is. The ability of the cells to harmonise and co-ordinate the well-functioning healthy body is truly astounding and is beyond the comprehension of the intellect. Certain cells are, however, unaware of certain other cells. A brain-cell, for instance, does not need to know what a bone-cell is doing. Each has a particular task to perform and does so at its own level of consciousness. Each is part of the collective consciousness of all the cells of the organ to which they belong: organs like the heart, brain, liver, kidneys, lungs, muscles, etc. Each organ is a living being with its own sense of “I”-consciousness. Indeed, I have read that science has proved that muscle-cells have self-knowledge.

Although the function of various cells is specialised, their collective consciousness allows interaction between cells of different disciplines: a blood-cell, for example, which nourishes a muscle-cell. Here the two levels of consciousness meet in mutual understanding and glean satisfaction from a successful transfer of energy from one to the other. The blood-cell is happy to give nourishment, and the muscle-cell is happy to receive it. It should be noted that this successful transfer of energy between cells all over the body is a vital reason for the individual human having a sense of wellbeing and happiness. The opposite is also true when energy is not successfully transferred and you become ill. This gives a feeling of sickness and depression. It is a common error to believe that, as an individual, you can have emotional states and yet not acknowledge that cells also experience such states. All emotions have their setting in thoughts and you cannot have a thought-emotion without, for instance, a “physical” reaction in a muscle

somewhere in your body. The use of the term “energy” is another way of describing a process of thinking, a function of consciousness. Energy is an abstract concept, useful for the purposes of describing – not explaining – the universe around us. It is as fictitious as matter. When two cells in the body communicate at the apparently physical level, it is, on the contrary, a meeting of minds. Mind is the hidden basis of energy and matter.

The World-Mind sends the Overself forth to gain experience and knowledge. The Overself, however, although projected by the World-Mind, is not separate from it. To gain experience, the Overself, in turn, projects a fragment of itself into a series of separate beings, that is, egos, which move in and out of existence, out of “life” and “death,” as well as sleep and wakefulness.

The Overself is the real essence of the individual, the thread-soul that joins together all the countless reincarnations of the ego. It owns the ego. All the essential characteristics, memories and karmic tendencies of the ego are stored in the Overself. They cannot be stored in the ego, because it vanishes, not only at the point of dying, but also at the onset of sleep.

The Overself does not evolve as the personal ego does. Despite projecting these limited personalities during innumerable lifetimes, it does not change; nor is it diminished in any way through this act of producing a new personality at the point of each birth of the latter. The Overself remains forever the same, totally unaffected by the activity of the ego and indeed is not even interested in what the ego does. It is impartial towards this reflected shadow of itself. The Overself is aware of existence, but not of personal existence; its consciousness is undifferentiated.

From its centre, the individual mind creates the six senses to produce the means of externalising its perceptions of the world around it. In physiology, the belief in the opposite view is prevalent: that is, you receive a stimulus from the senses and this is passed to the brain, which then produces the conscious perception of the object. When written in this way, such a process seems absurd, because it offers no explanation of how the miraculous leap from the first physiological disturbance to the final mental perception takes place. The mind does not depend on the brain for its perceptions; it is the other way round. The mind possesses the miraculous ability to view its own creations.

MIND, whether cosmic or individual, does not grow and evolve, but Consciousness – being the active, kinetic phase of this hidden source - does.

The stillness of the Overself is broken by the karmic forces and the first conscious thought appears – the ego!

The stream of consciousness that flows incessantly from the heart is the light that illumines the brain, the home of the intellect. This stream fills the minute gap between successive thoughts.

Constructive conscious control, calmness, confidence, courage, compassion, creativity and clarity are all characteristics that you must conscientiously and consistently cultivate if you really want to “see”.

By means of metaphysical reasoning, the ego can arrive at an accurate *concept* of the Overself, but this can be nothing more than a pale shadow of the actual *experience* - through the unfoldment of insight – of the Overself.

Emotion is also a form of consciousness.

From the womb to the tomb, illusion rules our lives; we can spend a whole lifetime being mesmerised by materialism. Is this the biggest illusion of all?

You do not deal with your body; you deal with your *perception* of it. Like every other object, you can only talk about it in terms of sensation.

The body does not have to fight gravity. One reason for this is the fact that all joints in the body are rounded, circular. In the same way as the circumference of a circle is infinite, so also do the joints have an endless capacity for movement. The lower leg-bone, for example, does not have the tendency to fall forward because of the influence of gravity, but because its base is rounded. This circular base means it is totally unstable, If its

bottom end were flat, it would – like a flat-based pillar forming a part of a building – stand up straight forever. *As bipeds we stand up and walk around easily because we are far from equilibrium.*

I live in the wondrous world of me!

I stood on the Sacred Mountain
The whole world I could see
I saw that every wondrous sight
Was nothing more than me

I wish to see above the tree
I wish to see beyond the sea
I wish to see, to learn to BE
I wish to see as far as me!

I sit here in the stillness, feeling grand
Uplifted by the Sacred Divine Hand
Loving thoughts and feelings so sublime!
No pain, no world, no tick of time

The Overself is the point where the World-Mind delimits itself and creates a point of stillness from which the individual springs. In this way, the World-Mind views its own creations, its own imaginings, through the individual. This happens at countless levels, from the micro to the macro.

The experience you want is in the process of getting it. If you have something, give it up. Getting it – not having it - is what you want.

F.M Alexander

It is considered the height of wisdom to be able to see ourselves as others see us, but the practice of self-control goes far beyond this; he not only sees himself as others see him, ***he sees himself as he is.***

James Allen

The relationship between the ego and the Overself is difficult to understand and express. My understanding is that the Overself - the Sun – resides in the heart and shines its light upwards and vivifies the ego – the Moon – dwelling in the head. The life-current runs from heart to head. It sets attention in motion, which allows the individual to become aware of the sensations of external “things”. Attention is the first function of consciousness, of the thinking, perceiving intellect. Pure Awareness lies in the Overself. It is the power that produces the ego and confers on it the fundamental ability to give attention. In other words, Pure Mind - Overself – is unbroken awareness, from which springs consciousness – ego – blessed with the power of attention.

Putting it in yet another way, Awareness is the essence of the individual, a state of undisturbed Mind. ***It is***, full stop. Conscious attention is produced by this Mind and is, therefore, the primal power behind the ego. It manifests the ego as the first thought-emotion, from which all other thought-emotions spring. ***It does.***

This is confirmed by the state of deep sleep, during which we are unable to give attention to anything, because the limited ego has been withdrawn back into the Overself, pure Mind. If you think about it, the brain is the domain and the tool of the ego, because the brain perishes at death, that crucial crossover point where the ego is completely withdrawn back into the Overself – by the Overself – to lie latent until it is time for a new incarnation. The brain is not Mind, but is Mind-made-manifest.

Pure Awareness = Overself = Stillness, Repose.

Conscious Attention = ego = mental movement, thinking activity.

NUTHIN' MUCH HAS CHANGED

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

How many roads must a man walk down before you can call him a man?

His name is Bobby Dylan, he wields a mighty pen
A generation's shy reluctant hero
When he was young he sang his songs of how the times would change
Wanted nuthin' less than love minus zero

The words from his silver tongue roared like a hurricane
Stirred the hearts and minds of all good people
In the corridors of power they could not understand
"Hey, shut him up, don't you know this man is evil?"

And people all around him, inspired by his words
Sang songs of love and light and peace and freedom
They marched the streets in protest, called for an end to war
Cried aloud for power to the people

"Tune in, drop out," they sang out loud, with flowers in their hair
"Equal rights for all", the banners flouted
The politicians wavered and lent a listening ear
But the other one was deaf to what they shouted

Bobby Dylan, you sure were willin'
To help a generation find a new and better way
But I'm feelin' confusion, "Was it all delusion?"
They still take our human rights away

So take a look around you now, see nuthin' much has changed
That sixties generation's now in power
But the poor keep gettin' poorer, bound up in corp'rate chains
The rich are still reclinin' in their ivory towers

The dogs of war still barkin' for the taste of flesh and blood
Foamin' at the mouth, love to devour
The gentle hand of kindness bitten to the bone
Soldiers' boots still tramin' down the flowers

They still take our human rights away
And they're getting' fewer every day
Yes, they still take our human rights away

How many years must some people exist before they're allowed to be free?

Space and time are necessary and indivisible concomitants of the process of perceiving any object. The mind must create them simultaneously with the object if it is to know the object at all.

Consciousness is there as the primary fact, even before the whole sensory process begins to operate. This means that all sensations are creations of consciousness, forms of consciousness: and as sensations are inextricably bound up with and experienced in the body, then the body must also be a form of consciousness. In other words, consciousness is ever alert to the reports received from the senses. The world around us is, therefore, constructed by consciousness from the reports of the senses: the whole world – even the whole universe - is also a mental construct

We experience sensations because we think them.

After more than thirty five years of studying mentalism, I have become acutely aware of the difficulty that exists in having to choose certain words to explain it. When using a phrase such as, “the mind receives messages from the senses”, the reader could get the impression that the mind and the senses function as two separate entities. But this is not the case. The limitations of language are shown in all the different names we give to various things such as “mind” and “senses”, which cause us to habitually separate them out. The mind and the senses, however, are not two separate things that communicate with each other. They are one and the same mind; the so-called senses make up part of it. It helps me to understand better if I think of the senses as aspects of mind, as processes that have been woven out of itself by the mind. Processes that the mind was obliged to evolve as extensions of itself to enable it to contact and traffic with the "outside" world, as presented to it as the universe by the World-Mind. Thus, experience of the universe for the individual mind is a co-creation of it imagined by the World-Mind – imposed on each individual mind – and the individual mind's creation and private interpretation of that given universe. This means, therefore, that the reader must remain aware of the inadequacy of language to explain such subtle points, as well as bear in mind that the senses – and the body – are mental constructs, forms of consciousness.

You are not a physical person; you are a Mental Principle – the Principle of Mind, the Overself. When, at death, you shed your personality, which includes your body, you remain as this Principle.

Life – in all its wondrous, teeming variety is the dynamic aspect of Mind.

The discovery and understanding of the mental nature of all things contradicts the apparent stability of material objects and reveals them as mental constructs.

Duality is a necessity for the intellect, an essential construct it is obliged to create to experience the world around it at all. The task of the seeker is to get behind this appearance of duality to that sublime oneness that is Mind.

The ego – the root-thought of the intellect – is the witness of our thoughts and actions in the wakeful state. But even in this state it is in turn overseen by the inner Witness – the Overself. This Witness surveys all three states of wakefulness, dream and deep sleep.

January 2006

Finite human consciousness with nothing in it, nothing to fill it, nothing to be aware of, is meaningless. The individual human mind is compelled to create space and time to experience the universe around it, a universe presented to it by the infinite World-Mind, the Universal Intelligence. Thus for each individual mind the world it experiences is a co-creation of its own consciousness and the World-Mind's consciousness.

When there's nothing left to lose you'll have it all!

So many of them full of undue, unjustified self-determination, willing to wallow in the whinging waters of their own ignoble, ignorant arrogance, willing to wallow in the murky morass of mournful megalomania, trapped in trifling trivia and excessive egotism.

Two priceless qualities to attain – not only as old-age approaches and even in old-age, but also as a young man or woman – are the alertness and patience to attend consciously and co-ordinately to the relentless repetition of the "tedious" travail of the "trite" and "trivial" acts of everyday existence. As we grow older and the road gets harder, life

demands that we become more constructively aware; ***demands*** that we learn to improve the use of the self and adopt ***conscious control***.

There are two relationships that he needs to ***recover*** in his lifetime.

The first is his conscious relationship to the body and the thinking intellect. This is achieved by learning to get in touch with the kinesthetic sense – a sense unknown to the vast majority of humankind – which will enable him to change for the better his misuse of the body caused by misuse of his thinking. He needs to learn the value of co-ordinated use of the body by cultivating the knowledge of its proper function and movement as a mechanism – not just specific parts of it – but as a unified whole.

The second is his conscious relationship to the Overself, a much more difficult task. This can be achieved through fervent aspiration, meditation, heartfelt reverence for and prayer to the Overself. It should be noted that in both relationships, the first practical, the second mystical, the subconscious relationship has never been - and never can be - lost.

Note also that the word "recover" above is in bold italics, because he does not discover new knowledge, but re-awakens ancient knowledge that he has simply forgotten. The proof of this is easily demonstrated if he attempts to recapture in memory the easy, alert and beautifully co-ordinated physical movement he had as a very young child – up to around 3 years old. In striving to remember, he finds he cannot. The reasons are that his body has become badly misused, and his kinesthetic memory has completely disappeared, buried beneath the ever-growing pile of his subconscious, negative, habitual psychical and physical mechanisms. He also finds that he is now the slave of these habits. He or she who seeks to ***recover*** either one of these two relationships – but ideally both at the same time - is indeed on the quest of real wisdom.

You must take responsibility for your response-ability.

David Ellison, March 2006

Don't settle for less than up!

Mysticism – when checked and disciplined by robust reasoning – is subjective science.

In essence I am Mind, in action I am Consciousness.

His technique of constructive conscious control in the use of the self in everyday life can be summed up in the initials of Fredrick Matthias Alexander:

“Forever **Mindful in Action**”

The initials of Paul Brunton indicate a way of being that he exhorts us to aspire to and eventually attain :

“**Philosophic Balance**”

Balance and equilibrium are not the same. Take two people of exactly the same weight as each other and sit each one at exactly the same distance from the fulcrum at each end of a seesaw and you have equilibrium. This situation, however, generates no work or energy and would remain in this static situation forever, where nothing would happen. In contrast, the consciously controlled and co-ordinated body is incredibly efficient as a biped because it is in a state of disequilibrium – *very far, in fact, from equilibrium*. If one achieved appropriate, dynamic muscle tension throughout the whole body, then it would be in a state of ever-falling-over, because the ankle, knee, hip and head-neck joints are *rounded*. As far as the relationship of one bone to another is concerned, there is no stability whatsoever in these joints. The skeletal system is kept in *balance* by the instantaneous reaction and continuous work of the muscles to stop it from falling over. The tibial bone, for example, which forms part of the lower leg, stands on its foundation - the foot – and is always trying to fall forward. It must be restrained by a cable from the heel of the foot to the top of the tibia. This cable is, among others, the soleus muscle, which is kept toned up by this constant tendency of the tibia to fall forward. A truly co-ordinated body would never be still even when standing “motionless”. Such constant and co-ordinated adjustment by the muscles to keep the skeleton erect is what gives them tone and stops them from becoming weak and atrophied.

Mind is the Master power that moulds and makes
 And man is mind and evermore he takes
 The tool of Thought and, shaping what he wills
 Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills: -

He thinks in secret and it comes to pass;
Environment is but his looking glass

James Allen, "As a Man Thinketh"

You never hear anything further than your eardrum!

You never touch anything further than your skin!

You never taste anything further than your tongue!

You never smell anything further than your nose!

You never see anything further than the image on your retina!

I don't want to be somebody else - I just want to be another me.

Sarah Paice, June 2006

Where there's a way there's a wish!

You can use Constructive Conscious Control when doing Tai Chi
You can also use it in rock 'n' roll and brewing Chai tea!

The sparkling words of old P.B
Have truly helped to set me free
And F.M's way of C.C.C
Let's me live them practic'lly.

Evolution is the process of change undergone by each individual entity through the mineral, plant, animal and human stages. It is none other than the power, the inherent ability of each individual "I" to recognise the need for something – a hand for example – which stirs latent creativity that eventually fulfils each particular need. In this way, the conscious mind is the great driving force behind every human creation, whether it be a part of your body, or even your whole body, or something outside of the body, like a

painting, or a piece of music, or whatever. Such a process of evolutionary compulsion is never-ending.

December 2006

CO-CREATION

For want of a better way of expressing it, the Overself sits behind the brain and - because it is pure Mind - it uses the brain to deal with the world. This is the reason why the brain knows nothing of the Overself's existence. The brain is a form of Consciousness – the kinetic aspect of Mind - and as such the brain cannot turn around, so to speak, and view the very Consciousness that created it. The brain is not a lump of matter, but a collection of thoughts formed by Consciousness. As reflected consciousness, the brain can deal only with the sensations from the five senses, which send reports to it from the so-called “external” world. The ego resides in the brain and in the waking state it deals with the messages received from the senses. It would not be necessary for these sense-reports to go past the ego and the brain. The Overself has designated them to deal with the world via the five senses.

Mind is **mental** in essence and Consciousness – which springs from Mind – does not change into this fictitious substance called matter. In essence Consciousness remains untouched and unchanged as it moulds itself into the heart. In other words, the heart is a *form of Consciousness* and as the entire body springs from it, so too is the whole body a *form of Consciousness*.

It is simply not necessary for Consciousness to form a “physical” brain, which then – as is commonly supposed – produces “mental” thoughts. This is not only inefficient, but absurd.

It is important to realise that the brain – as reflected consciousness – is always busy, either with “internal thoughts”, or subconscious impressions from other parts of the body, or “external reports” via the five senses. It must remain constantly alert to any type of report - even in sleep – because Consciousness is always full, must always deal with something. You cannot think of Consciousness without presupposing something to be conscious of.

It is commonly believed that the senses deal directly with the “material” world and send reports from it to the “physical” brain, which converts them into “mental” ones. Sight,

hearing, taste, touch and smell, however, are all forms of reflected consciousness and deal only with what intrinsically exists *within themselves*. They –and the brain - do not deal with an “outside” material world. Matter is a myth, a chimera, a powerful illusion imposed upon the whole human race, because of the power of the feelings from the five senses. You do not – for example - deal directly with the cup you are holding, but with the sensations in your own self of weight, solidity, texture and temperature. The cup – the object – is merely *inferred*. Neither is the object separate from you: the observer and the thing observed always exist together. Every object must be a “*known*” one.

There is, therefore, no “inside” or “outside” in our interaction with our “internal” thoughts and dialogue on the one hand and the “external” world and everything in it on the other. We do not deal directly with the world, but with our *perception* of it. And our perception of it is not a mental copy of a “real” physical world existing separately outside of - and totally independent of - the mind. Every manifested thing is simply – but miraculously – Consciousness.

It is worthwhile noting here the inadequacy of language to convey “oneness”. As soon as we use words like, “brain”, “senses”, “world” etc., we immediately separate them from each other. For practical purpose this is understandable, but all of these “things” are forms of Consciousness, creations of Consciousness, ideas that Consciousness produces and then, by virtue of its miraculous, inherent ability, views and experiences its own creations.

To realise that all of it, from your tiny, immediate environment to the farthest stretch of the universe, is nothing more than your own private version of the master-image imposed on you by the wondrous World-Mind, is truly a liberating revelation. As James Allen says, “*Environment is but his looking-glass.*” If more people knew this, the world would be a much happier place, because each individual would know that she has the power to make or break her own life, to shape her own life. It would let everyone see that ultimately they must not rely on other people to help them; let them see, that in terms of their relations with other people, they are unutterably alone; let them see that they must not blame other people for whatever misfortune may befall them and let them see, that in terms of their relation to the Great Creator, the Universal Intelligence, the World-Mind, God – call it what you choose – they are never alone. The individual is but a wondrous, miraculous, beautiful thought in this unfathomable Universal Mind and everything in existence is a co-creation by the individual and the World-Mind.

January 2007

WALK WITH ME A WHILE

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

Back in the fifties I heard a man sing
When rock'n'roll made its big start
His golden voice had a sad ring
And it touched me deep in my heart
For a long time I carried it with me
And I would play it again and again
It seemed he had somethin' to give me
He was a friend.

He was also a man with a vision
So I camped nearby for a time
He aspired to the right way of livin'
I was hopin' to stay by his side
Yet somehow he lost his direction
Drinkin' and drugs took their toll
He still gets my love and affection
A beautiful soul.

Sing to me, walk with me a while
The road is long and I need a helping hand.

I guess it was a few years later
When this other guy I came across
A poet, a writer, a singer
He was more than a little debauched
He seemed torn between hell and heaven
Lived life, as they say, to the full
Had that fatal attraction for women
He was real cool.

I'm sure he shook hands with the devil
As the bottle he raised to his mouth
A fighter, a rock'n'roll rebel
Stayin' on his two feet somehow
And his songs they sparkled with beauty
As they fell from his silver tongue
When I listened they really got to me

Those words he sung.

Sing to me, walk with me a while
The road is long and I need a helping hand.

Then I met an old man from the South Land
He was tall and straight as a die
He really stood out from the crowd
And I couldn't help but wonderin' why
There was somethin' in the use of his body
Full of ease and there seemed nothin' to it
And I asked him to teach me to copy
So I could do it.

He said "It ain't so much the way that you do it
It's more the way that you don't
Too often we try to get to it
When it's better to leave it alone
You gotta learn how to stop and get started
To change in the way that you must."
He showed me how to beat those old habits
Him I could trust.

Sing to me, walk with me a while
The road is long and I need a helping hand.

Then one night in my dreams I was wanderin'
When a great man I happened to meet
And he talked of the things I keep ponderin'
Though not once did I hear him speak
He wasn't religious or mystic
I knew he'd gone deeper and higher
He was humble yet truly majestic
Shining like fire.

And I walked in his footsteps for ages
Through every country on earth
And I saw in the past all the sages
Who'd been sent to the lands of their birth
Your heart should embrace all their wisdom
For they've come through the fires of hell
Be like them and you may find the kingdom
Look to yourself.

Sing to me, walk with me a while
The road is long and I need a helping hand
Sing to me, walk with me a while
The road is long and I'm tryin' to understand.

Mind is pure Awareness and as the ultimate 'I', the Overself, it is pure Thought. Consciousness is attentive awareness and as the ordinary ego it is *a* thought.

Perspectives, The Peace Within You

Paul Brunton

Page 331,

Holding on to the future in anxiety and apprehension must be abandoned. It must be committed to the higher power completely and faithfully. Calmness comes easily to the man who really trusts the higher power. This is unarguable.

Page 333,

Do not be anxious about making provision for the future, if you are in a state of surrender to the Overself; but if you are not, then indeed you need to be anxious. The first relies on a superior power, the second an inferior. If you will trust the Overself today, it will provide for you tomorrow. If you repose trust in the Overself, it will never let you down and you may go forward in surety. It is indeed the "Father who gives us each day our daily bread".

Triple 'H'

When the idea is born in your **heart**,
Nurture it in your **head**,
And manifest it with your **hands**.

A Wee Prayer

May I be open enough to allow the love and wisdom of the Overself
to fill my heart, guide my head and make my hands creative.

And a soft, small voice keeps calling from the canyons of my mind
Like the autumn leaves a-falling, whisp'ring, "Not to fall behind"
But I need you right beside me, urging me, "Come on, come on"
Need your loving light to guide me on this road I'm walking on

Happiness is hard to find, even harder to define

And in a chasm of despair
All alone with no one there
To share the anguish burning deep inside me

Sometimes you stop and wonder why
You're born at all, only to die
Sometimes you think, "Well, what's the point?"
"This world is really out of joint"

Don't succumb to pessimism
Or any other downward 'ism'
Cast aside all dreary thoughts
And give living all you've got!

Acknowledge that change happens

Accept the changes with good grace

Adapt to the changes

When all is in place, **Advance** to a more positive way of life.

Pruw Boswell-Harper

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND EMOTIONAL QUALITIES NECESSARY FOR THE STUDY OF CONSTRUCTIVE AWARENESS

1. *POSITIVE CHANGE*

The student requires a strong yearning to change from being a subconsciously controlled individual, who is the slave of unco-ordinated, negative habits, to a positive, consciously controlled human being, skilled in the use of the self.

2. *KINESTHETIC ACCURACY*

The desire to re-educate oneself about the faulty use of the mind and body must be there. The intellect and the kinaesthetic sense must be brought into harmony. This entails going through a conscious thinking process that will re-educate the subconscious mind and lead to greater co-ordination and well-being. When learning to change, the intellectual idea does not usually match the kinesthetic feeling. The 'right' thing usually feels 'wrong'.

3. *THINK*

Thinking power must be cultivated and become rigorous enough to weigh correctly the relative importance of matters, and/or the validity of statements. Constructive awareness demands a truer perspective. It seeks to show her how to see herself and other things as they really are. The student should attempt to become free of the quagmire of the doubtful opinions and beliefs of others. Clarity of thought must be achieved to avoid being stupefied by habitual and unreasonable social conventions.

4. *DETACHMENT*

A steady attitude of inner detachment is required, because throughout the whole process of change the student is asked by the teacher to consider deeply and deliberately what are the impeding psycho-emotional habits that must be rooted out and discarded to ensure continuous progress. Rigorous reasoning and a light emotional attitude are needed, not only if the truth about one's misuse of the self is to be realised, but also to face the task of deeply changing and work with it with staggering repetition, no matter how palatable or unpalatable the revelations of such deep change may be.

5. DETERMINATION

A quiet and reasoned determination – not the face-grimacing, fist-clenching, muscle-tensing type – must be adopted. Despite occasional setbacks, never to accept 'failure' and resort back to habitual, negative behaviour patterns; but simply to realise that the past is behind you and the rest of your life starts now, now now, now, now..... You can make a fresh start by using the power of the eternal NOW, the ever-present MOMENT.

6. BALANCE REASON AND EMOTION

At every stage in the process of learning constructive awareness, where reason and emotion come into conflict, to stop and consider if one is habitually displaying unreasoned, emotional bias. The process of conscious change is very powerful and complex intellectual and emotional problems can arise. In examining these problems, it is very common for the individual to be influenced too much by deep-seated, negative emotions and ill-informed opinion, which cause resentment when evaluating the alternative ideas of other people. In such cases, the tendency is to cloud - and even block completely – clear thinking with a confused, emotional fog. Whether we like it or not, positive, unprejudiced emotions must be cultivated to disperse the fog and bring about clarity of thought.

GIVING ATTENTION TO THE CIRCLE OF AWARENESS

The connection between the two basic fundamentals of the individual mind – Awareness and attention - is a fascinating one. Awareness is primary and attention secondary. Awareness is the source from which attention springs and is something given: a compulsory, peremptory process that simply *is*. Attention, however, can be switched from one thing to another, from one thought to another and this indicates that attention is the first function of the conscious mind. Giving attention is a conscious process that the individual mind must perform to make it aware of any thing or any thought. This is a seeming contradiction, but I can understand it better if I put it as follows.

Awareness – with a capital A – is an inadequate name for that wondrous, unfathomable essence of a human being – namely Mind. It is the hidden core of the individual, given to her by the World-Mind. To be a human being means being aware, like it or not. We have no choice in the matter. So, from this still source of Mind springs the bubbling stream of Consciousness, with its ability to give attention. Attention to what? Attention to the task of producing perceptions of ourselves and the world around us; keeping in mind that our perception of the world is the world. This is now done on a subconscious level, but in the beginning it was a slow and conscious process - repeated a number of times that beggars the imagination – that produced a single cell and continued to produce all the billions of cells that make up the incredibly complex arrangement of them that now constitutes a human body.

At the present stage of human evolution attention is selective: that is we can turn our attention to whatever we choose. Relating this to constructive conscious control, we choose to turn our attention to the use of the self – both mentally and physically – and attend to the *how* of doing anything, attend to the *co-ordinated means* of doing any task in our everyday interaction with the people and things around us.

Relating it to meditation, we choose to turn our attention away from the world and seek to attend to stopping our incessant thinking, our internal dialogue, in an attempt to find that undifferentiated Awareness that is our essence.

Awareness - Attention - Perception - awareness.

This last awareness is, of course, that of the finished perception of the body and the environment produced by Consciousness and it is dependent on the ability of the individual mind to give attention to the reports from the six senses of sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell and proprioception. We all experience varying degrees of awareness of our thoughts, our body and our environment. It ranges from being very vague to being very clear. The quality of awareness is, therefore, determined by the amount of attention we give to any thought and any thing.

The principal thought 'I' existed before the body. It then shaped itself into a form of consciousness that was mistakenly assumed to be the first 'physical' cell. It then continued to shape itself into a vast collection of cells known as the body. The building of the body in all its wondrous complexity was, therefore, a thought process. Nothing that occurs within the miraculous human being is ever automatic. Anybody who asserts that reflexes etc. do happen automatically fails to appreciate, not only the power of the individual mind, but also insults the omniscience of the Universal Intelligence, World-Mind.

The fact that nothing in the complex interaction of the cells in the body ever happens automatically is one of the reasons why human beings have the passionate, unquenchable, indestructible wish for freedom. We do not take kindly to being treated like robots and automatons. There is a lack of knowledge of this in those who seek to obtain power over others. In the long run power seekers and greedy graspers will always be defeated by the human spirit.

February 2008

There is too much spit-at-you-ality in this troubled world, not enough spirituality.

I've given up living in the present for the moment.

Jan Mossbacher, March 2008

Seems to me that the academic world is forever fixed on making a pseudo-intellectual mountain out of a practical, common-sense molehill!

Only the individual mystical mind can venture where science fears to tread. Only the individual mystical mind can enter the Gate that science will never discover if it continues to search ever outwards. To find reality the scientist will have to turn mystic, will have to u-turn attention inwards and seek the reality of the Overself. Mystical revelations during meditation are exclusively private and beyond scientific scrutiny. Science is incapable of refuting mystical experiences, just as it is unable to verify them.

THE UNIVERSAL AND THE INDIVIDUAL, THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND THE PRACTICAL

MIND – in capital letters – is the hidden essence of the universe where no-thing exists. MIND exists by itself and for itself, having no needs, no desires and no awareness of the manifested universe. MIND dwells in stillness and is beyond the imagination of the finite human mind.

From this unfathomable MIND springs Consciousness, which is the Great Creator and the Great Doer. It is the kinetic, active phase of MIND. It is the dynamic Hidden Power, the Secret Source of every “thing” and/or being in the manifested universe. Consciousness is the noumenon behind the phenomenon.

As a micro-universe, the human being exists in a similar way. The mind from which the individual ego – the personality - springs is the Overself, which, like MIND, dwells in stillness. It is the producer of individual consciousness. The first thought produced by consciousness is the ‘I’-thought, the ego, which in its turn deals with the manifested universe around it. These parallels between the Universal and the individual are simply put as follows:

MIND	→	Consciousness	→	Manifestation
Stillness	→	Creator	→	That which is created
Mind (Overself)	→	individual consciousness (ego)	→	finished perception of the world (manifestation)
Stillness	→	creator	→	That which is created

SPIRITUAL PRACTICALITY

The aim in meditation, or the goal of mysticism, is to stop the ego's incessant internal dialogue to allow awareness of the great stillness behind the ego, i.e. the Overself. Such an awareness of the Overself would be the state of supreme joy and happiness and a realisation of reality.

All of the foregoing, however, may be of little or no interest to the individual who regards himself as a man of the world and who likes to deal with the practical things in life. For him spirituality and mysticism are for people who drift around in an unreal world with their heads in the clouds: people who deal with speculative philosophy and are full of fancy, pie-in-the-sky theories that have no bearing on the real world of practical affairs and the tangible things of everyday living.

There exists, however, a fundamental aspect of practical life that the worldly wayfarer may not have come across. This fundamental is **THE USE OF THE SELF**, as expounded by F.M Alexander. I will not give here a full explanation of his process of **CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL**, but suffice it to say that it deals with – through the power of thinking – the co-ordinated use of the body as a mechanism; deals with the *how* of doing any task in life. My aim is to show here that a similar state of stillness and activity as described above in spirituality and mysticism exists also at the practical level.

Alexander's greatest discovery in his quest to make positive change in himself was *inhibition*, a point of stillness between stimulus and response. He recognised that the vast majority of us suffer from misuse of the psycho-physical self. This misuse was caused by our end-gaining approach to problems, projects and practical affairs. He saw that – because of our too-quick reactions to the stimuli of everyday living - we had caused the balanced, co-ordinated use of the mind and body to go wrong and as a result of this the organism was deteriorating much more quickly than it should – in posture, movement and health. He could also see that all *direct* attempts at changing maladjusted habits in the individual were largely ineffective.

Inhibition is the point of stillness, the gap between stimulus and response and the gateway to fundamental change. It is a vital function of the nervous system, co-equal with excitation. We can get into this gap and give ourselves the opportunity to stop our habitual reactions to stimuli, and adopt a conscious, co-ordinated way of using the organism, chiefly by attending to the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship, which

has been misaligned by the universal habits of stiffening the neck, pulling the head back and down and shortening and narrowing the back.

After inhibiting a reaction to any stimulus, we can consider the next step, which is the *how*, the co-ordinated means, of doing any task. This is done in particular by giving conscious *direction* to the primary control of the body – the head-neck-back relationship - by consciously directing the neck to be free, the head to go forward and up and the back to lengthen and widen. Other directions can be given to other parts of the organism as necessary to bring about mechanically appropriate ways of moving it.

Conscious direction, then, is the dynamic, kinetic, energising power of thinking that is applied to the self after stopping in the point of stillness – inhibition – and with this combination of stillness and action the individual can re-educate the whole neuromuscular system. This leads in time to dynamic, constructive, conscious control in the use of the self. *Inhibition* followed by *direction* is the combination that is Alexander's *indirect* process of effecting real, fundamental change in the individual.

The parallels with mysticism and spirituality are summed up below:

Overself	→	ego	→	body
Stillness	→	action	→	manifestation
Inhibition	→	Direction	→	body movement
Stillness	→	thinking in activity	→	body movement

Thus, the spiritual quest and the practical affairs of life can be brought into harmony.

WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

Song from the album 'Dark Light'

All around the world it's still goin' on
Fightin' each other from dawn till dawn
Ventin' our hatred with guns and bombs
Yeah, we're really ace at killin'
Blind destruction in every land
Everywhere you look it's gettin' outta hand
Maybe you don't care and don't give a damn
But what about the children?

Hate your neighbour for the shade of his skin
For all that money that he's rollin' in
And you'll never see eye to eye with him
'Cause he's not the same religion
Red and yellow and black and white
Everyone pretendin' everything's alright
While we're still practisin' fratricide
What about the children?

Sit up straight pay attention to me!
'Cause I know what it's all about you see
I had to toil and sweat for my degree
So you sit there and listen!
I can tell you what to do and what clothes to wear
And if you don't like it then I don't care!
'Cause I know what's best for your welfare
Huh, what about the children?

She's taken everything that she could take
Gettin' into marriage was a big mistake
If she don't get out, her heart will break
She's tired of all the bickerin'
She don't want no more of his cheatin' lies
While he's runnin' round with his best friend's wife
She's gotta go and start a whole new life
But what about the children?

Some child, somewhere, lookin' up to you
Watchin' everything that you're gonna do
And if you keep actin' like bad is good
He ain't gonna know the difference
And so it goes on, there's no end in sight
We gotta make some changes, gotta get it right
Or they face a future that's as black as night
What about the children?
Consider them
What about the children?
The innocents
What about the children?

“Grandan, the world is an eyeball,” he declared solemnly and with a dramatic wave of his hand. He is my seven year old grandson, John McGowan. Little did he know how close to the truth he was.

February 2010

CONSTRUCTIVE AWARENESS IN RELATION TO MUSICAL PERFORMANCE

THE PROBLEM OF FOCAL LIMB DYSTONIA OR MUSICIAN'S CRAMPS

May 2000

Many musicians, both instrumentalists and vocalists, suffer from various kinds of neuro-muscular disorders, due to the unusually heavy demand that the learning of such an art makes on the psycho-physical-emotional beings that we are. To be the best, to reach the highest as many musicians aspire to be and do, requires hours and hours of dedicated daily practice. Striving for perfection can be an arduous task. This striving, this relentless repetition of the same movements, day in and day out, can lead to great discomfort and pain. These pains take many forms; neck pain, back pain, shoulder pain, arm pain, finger pain etc. All this can be very distressing, because pain prevents the musician from performing at his or her best. Sometimes it prevents one from playing at all. These problems are commonly known as “musician’s cramps” or, in medical terms, “focal limb dystonia”.

This essay will deal with the problem of musician’s cramps and, hopefully, will throw some light on what individuals who are experiencing such problems can do to help themselves improve their performance by learning constructive awareness or, in other words, constructive conscious control. Constructive awareness can also help those who are not experiencing such problems to improve their performance.

In twenty-seven years of teaching constructive awareness to musicians and singers, I have heard them complain of stiff necks, shoulders, arms, wrists, fingers, back pain, fatigue, lack of control etc.; complaints about having tried all kinds of specific remedies to cure these distressing conditions, but to no avail. I have witnessed in these musicians many strange ideas about how the mind-body complex functions, ideas that block their progress; that prevent them from realising their best potential and sometimes bringing their careers to a tragic halt.

All these stiff necks, shoulders etc., stem from excessive muscle-tension, which causes distressing and sometimes heartbreaking conditions such as a subtle loss of control in fast passages, “sticking fingers” on the piano keys, lack of precise control of “forks” in woodwinds, uneven or irregular trills, involuntary flexion of the bowing thumb in strings, “curling in” of fingers, shortage of breath in singing and playing wind instruments etc. Sometimes the condition can be so extreme, the fingers simply won’t do what the

mind wants. The threat that these alarming states pose, to the professional musician in particular, can produce a reaction that is psychologically devastating. In desperation, the musician seeks help, either from orthodox and /or unorthodox approaches to the problem.

SPECIFIC REMEDY OR GENERAL RE-EDUCATION

What has really caused the problem? I said above that the specific problem arises as a result of excessive muscle-tension, but this itself is a symptom of misuse of the mind-body complex as a whole, which will be explained later. To find the answer, we must probe deeper than specific causes. To meet the rigorous psycho-physical-emotional demands of playing to a very high standard, musicians are called upon to make probably the most complicated specific movements of any human beings. To deal with a painful bowing arm for example, specific remedies are usually suggested to alleviate the specific problem.

“Don’t bow this way, but that way.”

“Hold the instrument this way or that way.”

“If that doesn’t work, try beta blockers or cortisone injections,” and so on.

Various specific exercises may be adopted, but the problem stubbornly refuses to go away.

Musicians are also required to have tremendous specific awareness of what they are doing when they are not only learning how to play, but also when they become able to play at an increasingly high standard. This intense concentration can be very tiring and can exacerbate the situation.

Another factor to consider is emotion. Most players and singers are passionate about their music. It is greatly loved. It plays a huge emotional and spiritual part in one’s life. It is an inspiring source of happiness. For this reason, when something goes wrong and threatens to end a wonderful and prosperous career, one tends to intensify one’s efforts to improve, but as a result the problem gets worse, sometimes to the point where the musician develops an anxiety neurosis about the situation. This is very sad.

The musician may find help from orthodox and/or unorthodox sources, but remedies offered are usually specific ones that deal only with symptoms that are a sign of a much deeper disturbance. For this reason, I will attempt to outline an approach to alleviating these distressing symptoms in a general way that deals with the human being as a whole.

Despite their wonderful specific skills in playing, musicians suffer from the same general lack of co-ordination in performing their everyday tasks as most other people. In other words, general use of the self, the mind-body complex, is something that we are very rarely, or even never, aware of. The general use of the self, however, plays a vital role in determining the quality of our specific movements. Misuse of the self occurs in all areas

of human activities, such as walking, sitting, standing, eating, bending, lifting, thinking and so on. The list is endless. The vast majority of us have not noticed that the quality of our movement in these “unimportant” activities has a tremendous influence on the quality of our lives. The idea that the body can perform these “trivial” acts easily is a fallacy.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEAD-NECK-BACK RELATIONSHIP

In my book “CONSTRUCTIVE AWARENESS”, I wrote:

“We use the body in ways for which it was not designed. This includes ways which use excessive muscle-tension when doing something, using muscles that are not needed for a particular task, distorting the neck, back, shoulders, hips etc., and interfering harmfully with the breathing mechanism. From misuse, muscles become stiff and shortened and the body in general, decreases in stature. This compressed state also interferes adversely with the functioning of the vital organs in the torso, because they are forced to function in cramped conditions. This leads to all kinds of maladies such as poor breathing, sluggish circulation, inadequate assimilation and elimination of food and so on.”

There are certain key elements to be noted when considering the use of the self. The main one is the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship. The poise of the head, the freedom of the neck, the posture of the spine and the function of the breath determine every attitude of the whole self. The head-neck-back relationship is the central, unifying reflex mechanism in the body. The quality of this relationship determines the quality of every movement we make, from the simplest to the most complex. When it is out of kilter, its integrity must be restored. When its balance is interfered with through habitual harmful misuse, we go through life performing beneath our best.

Good use comes from a proper consideration of the body as a mechanism. This allows it to perform freely and easily, with a strong back and suitable effort for each task, with poise and balance and appropriate muscle tension. One result of balanced use of the body is economy of movement, a saving of energy which allows us to keep our vitality. Good use does not mean relaxation as it is generally understood, because the latter leads to flaccidity in the muscles, and in the modern person, usually means an undesirable state of collapse. Balanced muscle-tension throughout the body is the ideal condition.

How do we interfere with the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship? The cause is excessive muscle-tension, which manifests as rigidity or flaccidity. These tension patterns have become established in the individual’s neuro-muscular system as powerful habits. Shortened muscles pull the skeletal frame into harmful states of imbalance that can be seen in the 1001 varieties of shapes and sizes that we see around us.

We are all aware of musicians with various signs of misuse, depending on which instrument they play; heads pulled to one side, bowed and twisted spines, narrowed shoulders, fallen chests, tilted pelvises etc., all caused by the particular way each individual uses themselves when playing their particular instrument.

How do the muscles go wrong, so to speak? The answer lies in the fact that they are intimately linked with our thoughts and emotions. Every thought we think, every emotion we feel brings a muscular reaction somewhere in the body. Positive thoughts and emotions make for more balance in the muscles, negative thoughts and emotions make for more imbalance. Fearful, anxious thoughts and emotions make the muscles more shortened, rigid and fearful. The history of the individual, as well as their way of being, is written in the muscles.

This point could not be overstated, because muscle makes up the greatest bulk of the body. It forms over 70 per cent of the body's weight. It is incredibly strong, and equally incredibly sensitive. It also forms a huge part of the psyche. Its condition determines many of our moods. It also provides the "feel" we have for ourselves. It forms the largest part of our kinesthetic or proprioceptive sense – our feeling of one part of the body to the other and of the body to the environment. Musician's cramps are obviously in the muscles.

How does this focal dystonia come about? To answer this we must consider – as stated earlier – *specific* use in relation to *general* use of the self, not only in practising and performing, but also in everything we do. Like the rest of us, musicians are inveterate end-gainers. This means that in learning to play the instrument, one tries too hard to complete the task in hand in order to progress to the next one. This trying, however, shows that the musician is mainly concerned with the end product – the perfecting of the music – instead of the conscious co-ordinated means of achieving that end and has no idea of what s/he is doing with the organism as a whole in the process. Attention to the co-ordinated use of the whole mechanism at the same time as giving attention to the specific task in hand is not usually considered. Many kinds of extraneous neuro-muscular patterns occur during practice and performance. For example, tensing of the jaw muscles, rapid wagging of the tongue, tightening of the lips, stiffening the neck, pulling-up of the anal muscles, fixing shoulders, holding the instrument too tightly and last but certainly not least, holding the breath. All these unnecessary reactions indicate the use of muscles that are not required in the act of playing. They are negative patterns caused by the stress induced by the attempts to master the playing of music.

The point is here emphasised that these harmful muscle-tension patterns occur below the level of the conscious mind. We have no awareness of them during the act of playing, whether in practising or performing. We may become aware of them in hindsight when somebody points them out to us, but as soon as we start to play again, they will re-appear. We become so engrossed in the music that it draws us out of ourselves and we

are completely oblivious to the reports that the muscles are constantly sending to the brain.

An interesting phenomenon occurs here. In many cases, as one strives to master a particularly difficult passage, certain extraneous patterns of tension mentioned earlier, such as fixing the jaw muscles, are subconsciously adopted, and like the movements required to master the passage, are repeated over and over to the point where the smooth execution of it cannot be successfully carried out without the adoption of these unnecessary tensions. They become an unavoidable part of the neuro-muscular response to the wish to execute the passage as efficiently and with as much expression as possible. Like the appropriate patterns required just to play, they become entrenched in the neuro-muscular system. If the musician were prevented from adopting these patterns, s/he would be unable to play the passage successfully! Why? Because this would upset her “feel”. It would not feel “right”. But – as I will deal with later – our feeling of being “right” is usually “wrong”. To play in a certain way, with one’s own particular patterns of misuse, executed with unremitting repetition, means the same neurons firing in the brain, the same messages being sent down the same nerve pathways, resulting in the same muscular reactions, appropriate and inappropriate, that result in the same movements. This is the neuro-physiological fact of a habit.

This relentless repetition of unnecessary tension patterns causes the fatigue that many musicians complain about. One cannot afford extraneous movements; they use up precious energy. Economy of movement is highly desirable. The expending of too much energy occurs also in the everyday acts that we perform in life, but due to the demand made in striving for perfection in playing, the musician actually compounds them, pushes them deeper and deeper into the nervous system, with the result that one gets trapped in a bubble of habit that is very difficult to burst.

The musician’s ability to execute specific movements, to use his or herself in a specific way in order to produce beautiful music is certainly something to be admired and appreciated by other people, but too often it is achieved at the expense of general co-ordination.

So how do we deal effectively with those problems mentioned earlier, those of lack of control in fast passages, “sticking fingers” on the piano keys, lack of precise control of “forks” in woodwinds, uneven or irregular trills, involuntary flexion of the bowing thumb in strings, “curling in” of fingers, shortage of breath in singing and playing wind instruments etc? To answer, I could quote much from medical books, such as “the site of lesion is probably the basal ganglia”, or “the cause is Task-Specific Unco-ordination in musicians”, or “Segmental Dystonia” and so on. But these diagnoses very rarely deal with the problem of general misuse of the mind-body complex. Conscious co-ordinated use of the self as a whole is the missing link. It is also the blind spot of most medical professionals.

Constructive conscious control is not a therapy, but a re-education of the self. I will attempt to outline as simply as possible some of the complex activity that occurs in the neuro-muscular system and a few of the reasons why it can go wrong.

The brain and the muscles are intimately connected via the nervous system. The brain's preoccupation with muscle is well documented. Is there a nerve pathway from the brain that does not lead, directly or indirectly to muscle? A constant flow of commands from the brain goes to the muscles and a constant flow of feedback from the muscles goes to the brain. It is obviously important that this constant flow of information is accurate. But the relentless repetition involved in making specific movements, especially those executed with the intense concentration and strong resolve used in practising for perfection – and not forgetting the extraneous use of muscles not needed for the performance of these movements – causes malfunctioning in the system. One of these malfunctions occurs in the muscle spindles that send feedback to the brain. They become fatigued, become fed-up with the relentless repetition and they switch off, either partially or completely. This leads to a lack of control of certain parts such as the fingers, because the brain no longer knows where they are. Accurate communication is lost. A professional pianist told me that he eventually experienced a lack of control in some of his fingers. They simply would not do what he wanted. He could not feel them anymore.

Another reason why things go wrong is the blocking of nerves by over-tensed muscles. As a result of habitual misuse, muscles become bunched-up and shortened. The stiffness brought about in them causes them to impinge on the nerves. Tight muscles in the neck and shoulders for example, prevent the passing on of messages to the muscles that control the fingers, causing distressing tingling and chronic pain. The sciatic nerve, on its journey from the spine to the leg, is literally wrapped in the gluteal muscles of the buttocks, and when trapped can cause excruciating pain.

Another important factor to be considered is the influence of the legs on the rest of the body. The body is designed to stand on two legs. The almost universal habit of standing with most of the body's weight on one leg causes lateral twisting of the spine, all the way up to the head. The spine develops an S-curve that can cause severe back pain. This habit also causes great pressure on the hip joints and is one of the reasons why problems in them are so common. The power of unco-ordinated habits is here underlined. If you bought your body from a good engineer who had designed it with loving care and meticulous accuracy, and you then suffered discomfort and pain in it, you would take it back and complain; ask for your money back. The engineer, however, would inspect it, recognise the unbalanced stresses in it, and say, "Well, what do you expect? You've been doing things like standing habitually with most of your weight on one leg for 20 years, distorting the mechanism all over the place! It's your problem, you've been misusing it!"

OUR KINESTHETIC SENSE

Let's return to a consideration of sensory appreciation, particularly our kinesthetic sense. This sense gives us the "feel" of what we are and what we do. In playing music, we develop a "feel" for it. Usually, if the actual physical act of playing feels right, then we feel better emotionally. But too often this feeling of right is only right in the sense of feeling familiar. Without realising it, our familiar patterns of misuse are part of this feeling of being "right". We are usually unaware that we have, during playing, adopted extraneous and harmful muscle-tension. In the majority of cases, our feeling of being "right" is actually "wrong". Our kinesthetic sense can actually be extremely faulty and may become even more so as we strive to meet the demands made on us in practising for perfection. General misuse and consequent mal-functioning of the mind-body complex affects our ability to register sensations and experiences. For example, a particular stimulus brings a reaction that registers quite differently in one's senses from that which has actually taken place. Ask a person to sit down and in doing so she will, among other things, stiffen and shorten the neck muscles. When this and other things are pointed out to her, she expresses surprise – sometimes even to the point of denying that she did so.

A further example. I gave a lecture at a university of music in Berlin, and after explaining the principles of constructive conscious control, I asked for a volunteer to come up and I would demonstrate how one could change by applying it in practice. A young man came forward, and after a few minutes of gentle coaxing from my hands, as well as some thinking on his part, many of his harmful, habitual patterns of misuse had changed considerably for the better. In comparison to the slumped attitude that he usually adopted, he was standing easily erect and was much closer to being in a state of balance. I then asked him to sit down and he emphatically, but with good humour, said "No!" I asked him why not and he replied "I don't know where my body is anymore!"

How does the musician, whether having problems or not, go about changing the negative habits that constantly impede progress in the search for improvement? The answer lies in learning how to come to a full **STOP**, how to inhibit one's habitual reaction to the stimulus to do anything, whether in playing the instrument or lifting a cup.

INHIBITION

Before going into inhibition, let's consider what happens when we react to the stimulus of the wish to do something. The thought or the wish arises in the mind, the brain reacts to this thought, neurons fire and conduct the messages to the nerves, the nerves pass them to the muscles and the muscles react. An amazingly intricate series of electro-chemical events occur in response to the thought, a series of events of such anatomical and physiological complexity that they still defy scientific description. What we tend to forget here is that the movement was initiated by a thought, a wish to do something. We

become so used to the “mundane” everyday movements we make that we take them for granted. As a child said to me during a guitar lesson, “But I’m not thinking about it, I’m just doing it!” We do not, however, do anything without thinking of it first.

Inhibition is not used here in the sense of suppression; for example “inhibiting one’s feelings.” Inhibition is a vital function of the nervous system. It is co-equal with excitation. If one thinks of making a movement, the excitatory neurons are activated and the movement is carried out. If, however, one thinks of making a movement and then refuses to react, the inhibitory neurons are activated and the movement is not carried out. This means that the habitual messages sent to the muscles are stopped at source and one then has a chance to react in a new way to the stimulus of wishing to do.

To effect real, fundamental change in our harmful, habitual patterns of reacting to stimuli, one can adopt the following procedure. As I said earlier, the poise of the head, the freedom of the neck, the posture of the spine, and the function of the breath determine every attitude of the whole organism. The head-neck-back relationship is the central, unifying, reflex mechanism in the body. In our end-gaining efforts to do anything, we habitually upset the integrity of this central mechanism of control. We are not usually aware in our daily doing, as well as our daily practising with the instrument, that the neck is habitually stiffened, the head is pulled back and down into the shoulders and the back is shortened and narrowed. To prevent these harmful reactions, we must inhibit them, stop them at source. Why? Because we have thought ourselves into them – and we can think ourselves out of them. We can think of not stiffening the neck, the head to go forward and up, the back to lengthen and widen and the neuro-muscular system will respond. In this way, we will become conscious of what we are doing to ourselves as a whole, instead of falling into our subconscious, energy-sapping, habitual muscle-tension patterns.

DIFFERENT, BUT THE SAME

Inhibition in the sense meant here is fundamental to the process of change; it is the gateway to change. By using it, we can take a step into the unknown; we can learn to practise and perform in a new way. Inhibition is an indirect method of change. What does this mean?

We will firstly consider what happens when we attempt to change directly some aspect of ourselves, some habitual way of being and doing. Take, for example, the person who slumps badly while standing. If it is pointed out to him that he slumps, he will immediately pull himself up to an erect situation and attempt to improve his way of standing directly. Within a short time, however, he will be back to the old habit of slumping, because it is so powerful and its influence irresistible. The person who slumps all the time actually believes that the reason s/he does so is simply that s/he is omitting or

forgetting to stand upright in a strong, graceful manner. This belief is a delusion. Similarly, if you are having chronic problems in moving your bowing arm, then to change it directly results in the adoption of a different kind of badly. No fundamental change will have taken place. If the psycho-physical organism – beginning with the head-neck-back relationship – is not changed as a whole, you will still be trapped inside your bubble of habit. Inhibition is the process that allows us to change our subconscious negative habits into conscious positive ones.

To come to a full stop before doing anything affords us the opportunity – through our wonderful power of thinking – to integrate the psycho-physical-emotional self as a whole. Inhibition gives us that space, that tick of time to allow reason and judgement about what we wish to do to come in. We can then use it as a springboard to energise ourselves by thinking of not stiffening the neck, allowing the head to go forward and up, the back to lengthen and widen and in this way, change the whole self for the better.

A word of caution. I have witnessed in some musicians a fear of such fundamental change. The reason for being anxious about adopting constructive awareness is that initially one's playing may deteriorate a little. Why? The reason is that the feeling of being "right", which is so important to the musician, is upset. To give attention to the head-neck-back relationship, as well as other parts of the body, at the same time as playing the instrument is extremely difficult. It can make one feel totally "wrong". But if we keep in mind that our kinesthetic sense needs re-educating, we can move from the known to the unknown, and in this way our feeling of "right" will get closer to actually being "right". A consequent improvement in one's playing will occur.

The pressures on the professional musician are here appreciated. Very often in the music business, when problems arise, the musician requires a quick fix and feels unable to take on the task of learning constructive awareness. The quick fix is sought because it relieves anxieties in the short term. This is understandable when one has to earn a living as a professional. Quick fixes, however, do not deal with the problems in the long term.

DIFFERENT, BUT TRULY DIFFERENT

This hiccup where one's playing initially deteriorates, does not happen to every musician. Most of them experience an immediate improvement in the quality of their playing, as well as in everything else they do. For example, a young student of twenty came to see me in despair, because the pains in his arms were so severe that he could no longer play his cello and a promising career as a professional was in jeopardy. He was having cortisone injections in his forearms. He took on the discipline of becoming conscious of what he was doing to himself and learned how to change his harmful habitual way of being and playing. Within a few lessons he was delighted to report that he was

able to practise for four hours per day. He continued to improve to the point where he became conscious of himself as an integrated whole; where he could prevent any negative habits of misuse from creeping back in again; where he could take responsibility for himself – not rely on specific remedies – and use constructive conscious control, not only in his playing but also in his everyday life.

In my experience, many people are sceptical of the ability of thinking to alter the negative muscle-tension patterns that the self adopts in life. They are sceptical of the power of inhibition to effect real change in the neuro-muscular system. Why? Because we cannot feel all the complex activity that occurs in the nervous system brought about by inhibiting a response to a stimulus. Curiously though, if I give an explanation – like the one given earlier – about the activity that occurs in the nervous system as a result of wishing to do something, they will readily accept that it all occurs beneath our conscious awareness. They will accept that the only awareness one has is a feeling of effort in the parts that are doing the action. They see that to “simply” waggle a finger is a result of thinking. It takes a while, however, for some to accept, that in terms of the nervous system, inhibition is as much an act of volition as excitation. In other words, non-doing is as much an act of volition as doing.

SUMMARY

To conclude, I would say that the problem of musician’s cramps – focal limb dystonia – can be tackled successfully, not by seeking specific cures for specific problems, but by adopting a holistic approach of re-education in the use of the psycho-physical-emotional-spiritual self.

During all those hours, days and years of relentless repetition in your daily practice, what have you been doing? You were using your intelligence to learn a great art. You were laying down lines of communication in the nervous system that brought about the complex, skilful movements needed to produce beautiful music. Unfortunately, in other parts of the organism, you may have been laying down unnecessary lines of communication, which produced deep harmful patterns of tension that constantly interfere with your playing and the quality of your living.

Constructive conscious control in the use of the self can help to eliminate any problems you may have. If you adopt it, you will be using your intelligence to lay down new lines of communication in the nervous system, which will break up those harmful neuro-muscular habits that interfere with the quality of your playing. To learn to play the instrument that plays the instrument is also a great art. Constructive awareness can bring us closer to the freedom, grace, poise and joyful expression that we had as children and can bring such qualities back into the music that we so dearly love to play.

ADDENDUM

In the third paragraph of the section titled INHIBITION, I wrote “To effect real fundamental change in our harmful, habitual patterns of reacting to stimuli, one can adopt the following procedure.” I would point out, however, that the procedure is given purely for the purpose of illustration. It is almost impossible for the individual to learn constructive conscious control without the aid of a professional teacher, because the kinesthetic sense cannot be trusted. A few quotations regarding this point, from my book “CONSTRUCTIVE AWARENESS” are listed below.

“On paper this process seems simple. But if you try it by yourself you will find it impossible to perform without reverting to your old habit of stiffening your neck and pulling your head back and down into your shoulders. For the vast majority of people, this conscious process of inhibition and direction is impossible without the help of a competent teacher to guide them.

“It is first and foremost a mental process, which involves taking a step into the unknown.”

“Even the supposedly simple act of sitting down in an unfamiliar but co-ordinated way (as the pupil has been carefully guided into by the teacher with consent) causes fear and anxiety in many people – often to the extent that they cannot move at all – because the new situation feels entirely wrong. The pupil’s intellectual grasp of what is to be done in order to execute the new co-ordinated movement is of no avail. Only when the pupil is guided by the teacher, only when the act is repeated often enough does the pupil’s fear begin to subside and the intellectual ‘knowledge’ of the new movement become real knowledge gained through experience.”

“At this point, you may object that to pay attention at the same time to all the details mentioned above would be impossible. Indeed few, if any, individuals can learn the process of constructive awareness without the help of a competent teacher. The guiding thoughts or directions – for example, ‘the head to go forward and up’ – are particularly difficult to understand and can only be fully explained by the teacher through practical demonstration in the one-to-one situation of a lesson. The process can, however, be learned with time, just as one needs time to learn how to play a musical instrument, or tennis, or whatever.”

“The ‘means’ or the ‘how’ of doing must be found in order to develop and maintain reliable sensory awareness. We should recognise that until new and correct experiences have been established, through the indirect process of inhibition and direction of the mind-body-complex, it will be impossible to perform any new act satisfactorily. Recognising this vital connection marks the point of departure between methods of teaching on a conscious basis and those on a subconscious basis. We must learn to inhibit our habitual reaction to the wish to perform an act – to refuse to ‘do’ anything when a stimulus comes to us, until reason and judgement have entered in – and

then give attention to the new, guiding, conscious directions to the organism, through the integrity of the head-neck-back relationship. These new directions are absolutely necessary for the improvement of our psycho-physical use in performing the act.”

“Please note that constructive awareness cannot be imparted through the written or spoken word. It must be experienced.”

COMMENTS ON PAUL BRUNTON'S WRITINGS IN RELATION TO CONSTRUCTIVE CONSCIOUS CONTROL

January 2001

In this section P.B.'s writings are in *italics* and my comments are below them in ordinary type.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER 1: ENTERING THE SHORT PATH

Begin and end with the goal itself.

Page 9, para 42

"Is it not a psychological absurdity to say that what conscious effort cannot bring forth may be brought forth by unconscious effort? No – the deeper mind must not be deprived of its own kind of consciousness merely because we cannot bring its operation within the range of imagination."

In the inner sanctuary where the Overself dwells, we reach the deepest and most mysterious level of the human mind. Ordinarily, the individual is unaware of this essence of itself, because of the ego's habit of giving extroverted attention to the world around it and to its own thoughts and feelings. The working of the deeper layers of the subconscious mind will remain a mystery unless the ego turns its attention inwards in search of the answer to the question "What am I?"

If the ego makes progress in this search, it will become aware of various levels of thinking that go on within the self of which it was totally unaware. It will realise that there are various levels of consciousness, such as that experienced when, during meditation, one has the feeling of "coming up through the clouds" as thinking slows down and a beautiful feeling of peace coupled with exhilaration pervades the self. One moves to another level, which is paradoxically deeper and higher at the same time.

These experiences on the spiritual quest have their parallels on that other journey – the search for constructive conscious control in the use of the self. As I progress and become more adept at giving conscious directions to myself in the everyday acts of life, I am increasingly aware of the feedback that comes from the subconscious regions of that part of the mind we call the body.

Science is now learning what mentalism teaches us. All beings, all life-forms have the capacity to **think**. In thinking as often as possible of the neck to be free, the head to go forward and up and the back to lengthen and widen, the muscle cells respond by getting to work – at their own level of consciousness – on the wish that is being passed to them by the conscious mind to bring about the desired changes.

If I forget to direct the use of myself, the neuro-muscular system will remind me to do so by sending messages back to the conscious mind that say, “Hey, you’re pulling down, shortening and narrowing, reverting back to your old habitual behaviour.” In other words the **thoughts** from the muscle cells are passed to the conscious mind, the ego. This is the result of the conscious repetition of the wish of the self to change. This feedback from the “body” to the conscious mind is a strong indication of progressive change being made **within the whole organism**.

Another positive aspect of this wish to change is the feedback I get from the spine itself. During the last 2 years or so (this is January 2001), it lengthens strongly by itself and I can feel it – as well as the back muscles, particularly in the upper thorax and shoulders – striving for the improved situation of dynamic balance it knows it can reach. This striving is a delightful feeling. The impression I have is that my vertebrae are changing shape in their efforts to restore balance.

No – the various cells, of any kind, in the organism must not be “deprived” of their own kind of consciousness, their own way of thinking in their own space-time order. All cells are made of mind stuff, all are products of **consciousness**.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER 1: ENTERING THE SHORT PATH

The Practice.

Page 20, para 135

“When body and feeling are cleansed by disciplinary regimes, when the intellect is inspired by meditational exercises, one is ready for the Short Path.”

With regard to the cleansing of the body, let us assume the above mentioned disciplinary regimes involve proper hygiene, proper eating and drinking habits. If an individual indulges in excesses of poor quality food and drink – particularly meat and alcohol – a great deal of toxins will be stored in the body and will cause all kinds of illnesses to appear. As a result of this poisoning, the body will become arthritic, rheumatic etc and will function well below its full potential.

If the person decides to cleanse the body by eating sensibly – fresh fruit, nuts, vegetables etc – a tremendous change can be brought about in health and spirits. This is common knowledge accepted by many people.

There is, however, an aspect of our habitual way of living that many human beings have not considered. This aspect is the use of the self, which in most of us is very unco-ordinated. One has only to look around in the High Street to see that most people live and move in malco-ordinated bodies, which suffer from slumped spines, narrowed chests and shoulders, stiff necks, inadequate breathing and circulation etc. etc. It is not generally known that many of the toxic conditions that exist in the body are caused by these universal negative habits of misuse of the self. Shortened muscles cause stiff joints, clogged blood vessels, digestive and elimination problems etc.

This vital element of the use of the self cannot be ignored if one is to successfully tackle cleansing the body and feelings. It has a vital role to play in our efforts to become ready for the Short Path.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 2: PITFALLS AND LIMITATIONS

Page 35, para 52

“It is a matter of simple observation that these Vedantic teachings are unfortunately not adequate to meet all the demands of a worthwhile life. They have no more useful advice to give concerning the physical body than, as I was told by one guru, ‘Take it to the doctor when it falls sick. Give it no attention otherwise and forget it.’”

This advice is typical of the attitude to the body of many spiritual seekers. It is not enough, however, to attend to the welfare of the body by eating good healthy food, cleansing it properly and taking natural exercise. It is essential that we give consideration to **use** of the self, to the co-ordinated use of the body in the everyday acts of life; essential that we learn how to use inhibition and direction to burst our bubble of negative habit. We should take on the learning of constructive conscious control.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 4: THE CHANGEOVER TO THE SHORT PATH
The preparation on the Long Path

Page 70, para 35

“Another reason for the need of the Long Path’s preparatory work is that the mind, nerves, emotions and body of the man shall be gradually made capable of sustaining the influx of the Solar Force, or Spirit-Energy.”

The learning of constructive awareness in the use of the self is an indispensable part of the Long Path’s work. Through it the individual can set up the conditions for releasing the Spirit-Energy. A spine that is habitually shortened through misuse of the organism will undoubtedly block the passage of the Kundalini.

In practising the principles of constructive conscious control, one builds a back of tremendous strength and durability, which brings about feelings of spiritual uplift and indomitability. This strength will make mind, nerves, emotions and body capable *“of sustaining the influx of the Solar-Force or Spirit-Energy.”*

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 5: BALANCING THE PATHS.

Their contrasts and comparisons.

Page 89, para 2 (excerpt from)

“The moment that such negative ideas and feelings appear, then, instead of using the Long Path method of concentrating on the opposite kind of thought, such as calmness instead of anger, the Short Path way simply drops the negative idea into the void, the Nothingness, and forgets it.

In using constructive conscious control in the use of the self, the spine becomes longer and stronger and feelings of lightness, buoyancy and well-being are experienced. Negative thoughts and feelings do not arise so frequently, and when they do, the person can help to avoid them by thinking the neck free, the head to go forward and up and the back to lengthen and widen. These directions bring about the desired result of feeling freer and freer and more and more positive.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 5: BALANCING THE PATHS

Their contrasts and comparisons

Page 92, para 11

“Saint Teresa seems to deny the possibility of reconciling the two ways of life when she writes. ‘To bring the soul and body into agreement, walking according to justice and clinging to virtue, is the pace of a hen – it will never bring us freedom of the spirit.’”

The good lady's attitude to the body is typical of many people on the spiritual quest, especially those on the religious path with its unreasoned superstitions, blind precepts, restrictive rituals and traditions, not to mention its extremes in castigation, circumcision etc. Lesser mortals than this woman may be involved in the discipline of the Long Path, but the journey can be enjoyed in a healthy body that can be positively changed by means of guiding directions that will bring it to a high level of co-ordination and balance. Such is the power of constructive conscious control.

One may proceed at the pace of a hen. But hens lay eggs and every egg has the knowledge necessary to perform the miraculous feat of turning into a hen. Hens also have the added advantage of performing naturally their everyday tasks with maximum efficiency and co-ordination of movement. This they do because they have learned it during countless rebirths, learned it to the point where they do not have to think about it. Their bodies are geared to functioning optimally at all times – like all other animals in the wild – to survive. Co-ordinated use of the self comes easily to them.

Human beings do not have this natural ability anymore. They suffer from all kinds of neuroses, anxieties, phobias and fears, all of which result in unreasoned, inefficient and unco-ordinated use of the self. This sad state of affairs produces muscle-tension patterns that stay with us for a whole lifetime. They keep us imprisoned, not only in this habitual “physical” eggshell, but also in those negative states of mind and emotion already mentioned.

When the individual takes to the path of constructive awareness, wonderful positive changes take place, changes that bring feelings of ease, well-being and **joyous, spiritual uplift**. This has nothing to do with “*walking according to justice*”, but one can certainly learn how to walk consciously, in harmony with the way the body is designed to move. This brings feelings of deep satisfaction and happiness.

We learn from mentalism that there is no such thing as a physical body; the body is as mental as a thought. We all live and have our being in a mental world, a spiritual world. Considerate behaviour is spiritual behaviour. If we, therefore, give the so-called body due consideration and treat it as we would wish to treat other human beings – with love and compassion – and attend to its needs, particularly in the sphere of the use of it, then, contrary to what the good lady Teresa says, it will go a long way in contributing to the freedom of the spirit.

Let us aspire to having the head, as well as the heart, in heaven, but please, let us also keep our feet on terra firma as we move, breathe and have our being in a body which is exhibiting beauty, grace and dynamic balance.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION**CHAPTER 6: ADVANCED MEDITATION****Page 131, para 27.**

“In the advanced practice of meditation, it is not only required that the body shall be utterly relaxed, but also that it shall be without the slightest movement.”

The question that arises here is, “What is relaxation?” To most people it means lounging around in a slumped situation, a state of collapse, that is detrimental to the welfare of the body. When asked to relax, the modern person usually adopts this unnatural state. If the person is highly strung and has difficulty in relaxing, they are usually exhorted by someone to “Try to relax.” This phrase holds a glaring contradiction. If you are not relaxed, how can you try to relax? In trying to relax, the individual usually becomes tenser, or goes to the other extreme and adopts the state of collapse already mentioned.

So, what is relaxation? It is a state of balanced tension that should permeate the whole organism. We need tension, but it should be balanced. Real relaxation is a condition that would bring the mind-body complex into a state of **dynamic balance**. But such a condition is rarely seen in the modern day. Very few people know how to achieve a state of dynamic balance. What then is one to do?

In reply, if it is recognised that the condition of collapse that is usually adopted has brought about a shortening of the spine, resulting in an unbalanced state of muscle-tension throughout the organism, then it makes sense to restore the spine to its optimal length. But the shortened state of the spine has been caused by the wrong relationship of the head to the neck. In general, the head is pulled back excessively by the shortening of the muscles at the back of the neck. To relax these muscles in the sense that the term is habitually used – would mean that the head would drop back even further, making the spine in turn even shorter, causing a greater collapse.

The relationship of the head to the neck is determined by the state of the neck muscles. If those at the back, in particular, have become stiff and shortened, the head will be pulled back and down away from the desired co-ordinated situation of it being delicately poised in a state of dynamic imbalance on the atlas at the top of the spine. From this it can be seen, that if we wish to restore the muscles throughout the body to a state of balanced tension, each one functioning at its optimal length, then we must start at the neck.

This is why F.M Alexander in his method of constructive conscious control – came up with the following classic directions one can give to the organism to restore its balance.

1. Think of not stiffening your neck.
2. Think your head to go forward and up.
3. Think your back to lengthen and widen.

The key here is to **think**, not to try to do.

In a misused mechanism that is suffering from excessive tension in certain muscles, together with excessive flaccidity in others, it is almost impossible to relax it in the sense of achieving balanced tension throughout. “Trying to relax” does not achieve the desired result. We are obliged to study the use of the self to discover how the mechanism actually functions – and this does not mean studying anatomy to see what specific muscles do. It means discovering how the self functions **as a whole**.

It takes great discipline and dedicated hard work to achieve constructive conscious control in the use of the self, but if one adopts it one has the chance to achieve the true state of relaxation – dynamic balance – which will allow the body to sit still during meditation without the slightest movement from head to foot.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER 6: ADVANCED MEDITATION

Remembrance Exercise (of the Overself)

Page 166, para 244

“To keep up this remembrance all the time, in all circumstances, requires practice and perseverance to an extent that seems beyond the ordinary. But they are actually within everyone’s untapped resources and untouched reserves.”

The extraordinary practice and perseverance required to stay in remembrance of the Overself, have their parallels in constructive conscious control in the use of the self, where one is required to remember to be aware of the co-ordinated means of doing anything in everyday life, moment to moment.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER 5: BALANCING THE PATHS

Their contrast and comparison.

Page 94, para 29

“On the Short path he becomes aware of the fact of forgiveness. He leaves out the constant self-criticism and self-belittling, the painstaking self-improvement of the other path and begins to take full note of this saving fact.”

I have experienced this fact of forgiveness. During my life I have had no problem with forgiving someone else for something they thought they had done to me. I have always felt that to be the forgiver was to be in a superior position, as if one could pass judgement on the other and then say, “Yes, I forgive you.” In human interaction it is not always easy to determine who is right and who is wrong.

But until I was fifty, I did not apply this principle to myself. And then I suddenly became really fed-up with criticising myself and decided it was time to love myself in the same way as I have tried to love other people. I realised that self-respect and self-love must come first if one is to truly love others.

Having said that, I can say this realisation did not happen just at fifty, but it came to me very strongly at this time. These thoughts had occurred to me now and then throughout my life. I have always been able to respect myself apart from a few lapses where I have criticised myself needlessly. I now think at sixty-seven, “I have done what I have done and that’s that. Let it all go and have no regrets. The rest of your life starts now.” Again, having said that about regrets, I have always had no regrets since I was a young man. I can see that my life has been a mixture of Short Path and Long Path practice.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION

CHAPTER 6: BALANCING THE PATHS

LONG PATH/SHORT PATH

Page 98, para 56 (excerpt from)

“The heart is in the centre. Here is the consummation, the union with God. It is here that you feel it most in the beginning. We have to end up in the heart, which means we have to meet Truth, Reality in the heart with feeling. But it has to be understood in the head. There has to be discrimination between what appears and what is really there You can’t be a fool to understand the meaning of the world and of life. We must feel and think. The two together fuse in realisation.”

On January 11th, 2001, while I was sitting meditating in the early morning, I felt a strong indrawing of my thoughts, as if my consciousness was being pulled to a central point. I wrote the following about this meditation.

“Today I woke up at 5.50 feeling very clear and with a strong urge to meditate. I attempted to stop my thoughts as usual and at one point I thought, ‘But where am I withdrawing to? How do I stop the brain’s, the intellect’s incessant activity? Where is the centre in me?’ And then I realised that my consciousness was being withdrawn into my HEART! What a joyous feeling. I focused my attention there and felt very strongly that here indeed is my centre, the Overself atom in my heart. It was now much easier to still my thoughts because I had a new reference point. My consciousness had shifted to my beautiful heart. I could feel myself emanating from it. I wanted to bring every part of me to this divine centre. Every part of me, literally – hands, feet, shoulders, head etc. seemed to be drawn to my heart. I felt elated. Of course I know intellectually that the heart is my centre, but this is the first time I have experienced such a clear shift from head to heart, to the fountain that feeds the brain. My remembrance of the Overself shall

henceforth come from my heart, the seat of my being. Yet again, I was amazed to discover that this session had lasted one hour!”

Paul Brunton’s teachings are so helpful when such events take place. He helps me not to get carried away emotionally, so that I have a chance to keep a balance between thinking and feeling. It is true when he says, *“The two together fuse in realisation.”*

The lengthening of the spine is an important factor here. As I wrote recently: “If the spine functions at its optimal length, standing easily erect, there is clearer communication between the heart and the brain. One has a better chance to balance emotion with reason.”

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 6: BALANCING THE PATHS

Page 99, para 59

“The Short Path is content with exercises done for their own sake, not for the sake of the results they bring. In this it is the opposite of the Long Path, which does them for results, and is attached to those results.”

I did hatha yoga for five years, starting at the age of twenty-nine or thirty. I did it for results. The practices changed me dramatically, because I had been suffering from a chronic illness when I started. I have no doubt they helped me back to health, even though I was end-gaining all the time.

When I discovered the much more reasonable approach of the Alexander Technique – constructive conscious control – with its principle of non end-gaining, I gave up almost all hatha yoga practices. The principles of inhibition and direction used in the A.T are powerful means of staying in the moment throughout the day and one does not have to push and pull the body around for a set period each day. Transformation of the self using A.T principles is done by **thinking**.

I do, however, enjoy moving the body – particularly running and walking – so over the years I developed a little routine of “directed activities” that I practise, time allowing, every morning, first thing.

On reading this quote, I realised that I now go through these activities just for the sake of them, for the fun of it. No end-gaining, just being in the moment with each one. They are a source of joy; of delight in being able to move the body around in this conscious way. They are now more enjoyable than ever before.

The above also applies to meditation exercises. I'm tired of *striving*; I simply want to learn to *be*.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 6: BALANCING THE PATHS

Page 101, para 69

“Even the mere feeling of being alive brings content, satisfaction and reconciliation. How far this is from later stages of the Long Path, with their exaggerated idea of his worthlessness.”

These words are very inspiring! On many occasions throughout my life I can remember thinking, “Yes! It’s wonderful to be alive.” Even in my darkest hours during those long 3 years of illness, I recall – even as my body was shaking violently – how still, calm and peaceful I was inside. My heart felt as small as a pea, completely unruffled as all that tumult raged around it. I was not afraid. I knew nothing of P.B’s teaching at this time.

I think the reconciliation mentioned here is not the negative kind. One accepts the World-Idea and learns to accept it positively; realises that one can work in harmony with it. This is beautiful.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION
CHAPTER 6: BALANCING THE PATHS

Page 103, para 85

“Although it is quite correct to say that we grow through experience, that suffering has valuable lessons and so on, we must also remember that these are only half-truths. The other half is that by Short Path identifications we can so totally change our outlook, that adverse experience becomes unnecessary.”

I have had a glimpse of the possibility that adverse experience becomes unnecessary. It springs from the realisation that to avoid adversity, one must learn self-discipline. Hence the benefits of working with the Alexander Technique, constructive conscious control. I have suffered enough and will perhaps suffer again, but I will be much more able to deal with it. One can walk joyously on life’s highway.

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - ADVANCED CONTEMPLATION**CHAPTER 6: BALANCING THE PATHS****Page 106 para 115**

“If the Long Path followers tend to have little sense of humour in matters relating to the quest, the Short path ones tend to have much of it.”

Yes! Yes! What a boon it is to have a sense of humour in these matters. God must have a sense of humour. S/he made the human race, didn't s/he!? That, of course, was a joke.

If I can't get my pupils to let go, to release muscle-tension, then I tell them a joke. There is no more effective tool than laughter for freeing muscles. How do we laugh? We laugh with muscles. When you think something is funny, it's your muscles that do the laughing. They also do the crying when you're sad. Is this not proof that you cannot have a thought-emotion without a muscular reaction somewhere in the organism?

Thank God for laughter!

NOTEBOOKS, VOLUME 15 - PART 2: THE PEACE WITHIN YOU**CHAPTER 2: BE CALM*****In daily life***

“Nothing matters so much that we should throw ourselves into a state of panic about it. No happening is so important that we should let ourselves be exiled from inner peace and mental calm for its sake.”

As Aksel Haahr, my Alexander Technique teacher said, “Nothing is worth stiffening your neck for.”

THOUGHTS ON THE GREAT TRANSITION

The question of what happens to the “physical” body and the “mental” mind is a fascinating one. If the body is believed to be a physical entity in which the mind dwells during a life time, and then vacates the body at ‘the end’, then Descartes would be correct in his assertion that mind and body are two distinctly separate entities. This belief is similar to the Christian one of the soul or spirit vacating the body at the point of death.

Mentalism, however, reveals that, despite the reports of the senses, which give impressions of the varying degrees of ‘physical’ hardness and softness of different parts of the body, the latter is, in fact, a cluster of various mental-constructs that the mind has spun out of itself. In this way, the mind has ‘manufactured’ the entire body by itself. This does not, however, explain the fact that when the individual self, the ‘I’ vacates the body, this cluster of mental-constructs still remains. The ego - the personality - has been withdrawn from the body by the Overself and lies dormant in the latter until it is time for a new incarnation. The individual is no longer aware of the agglomeration of thought-forms known as the body. How then does this collection of thought-forms remain as a ‘dead body’? The answer is that - like all other ‘things’ in the universe - it cannot exist without a knowing mind to perceive it: and that knowing mind must be the Universal-Mind, the World-Mind that has spun the entire universe out of itself.

The human being is a thought contained within World-Mind through the medium of the Overself, and remains alive in the form of the mental-construct known as the body over the span of a whole lifetime. The body, therefore, is a co-creation of the individual mind and the Universal-Mind. Despite appearances, the mind and body are not separate entities. This is illustrated by the phenomenon of deep dreamless sleep. In this state the consciousness of the ego - the personality - has been withdrawn into the Overself, and knows nothing of the body and the world which still surrounds it. Incidentally, the ego’s total lack of awareness during sleep indicates that Consciousness is the secret source of our awareness of the world in the wakeful state. Individual-Consciousness and the world exist inextricably together. There would be no point in having Consciousness if there was nothing to be conscious of. No conscious individual ego, no world. During sleep, it is the Overself that sustains the body, keeps it working until it re-projects the ego at the point of waking, and the ego resumes its interaction with the body and the world.

All this indicates the limitless power of World-Mind, which can create anything it chooses. Its imagination and creativity are boundless and of infinite variety. The human being has been blessed with such powers - albeit in a limited capacity - and uses them to create that cluster of thought-forms known as the body.

*I am THAT of the Present
The Past in Perfection
There is no Tomorrow that I have not seen*

*One day you'll remember
With smiles warm and tender
There's no Yesterday that you haven't seen*

*Yes, if you would know Me
Then look inwards for Me
There is no heart not formed by Me*

World-Mind in INDIVIDUAL-MIND

Daniel McGowan



EPILOGUE

PAUL BRUNTON

Every now and then a true spiritual light shines in this world in the form of a veritable Sage. Paul Brunton is such a Sage, and is also a man who did a great work in bringing Eastern philosophy to the West. To say just this would be to do him a grave injustice, he not only brought these ancient teachings to the Occident, he also presented them in a way that the man or woman in the street could understand. He synthesized ancient Eastern and modern Western philosophy in a uniquely creative way. His teachings became a new modern philosophy, not any kind of revived corpse.

P.B., as he is affectionately known by readers of his many books, was born in England in 1898 and passed over in Switzerland in 1981.

Paul Brunton's profound humility and wisdom are apparent in his books. They are also emphasized by the fact that, throughout his life, he repeatedly refused to accept any attempts by people to make him into a guru. He refused anyone who wished to be a follower and said that each of us must become our own guru.

He was a prolific writer. Ten books published during his lifetime have been read throughout the world. A further sixteen-volume *Notebooks* series was published posthumously. The titles of all his books are listed below.

Early Works of Paul Brunton:

A Search in Secret India

The Secret Path

A Search in Secret Egypt

A Message from Arunachala

A Hermit in the Himalayas

The Quest of the Overself

Discover Yourself (originally The Inner Reality)

The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga

The Wisdom of the Overself

The Spiritual Crisis of Man

Essays on the Quest (early writings published posthumously).

All the above are published by Rider and Co., London, and Samuel Weiser, Inc., York Beach, Maine, Maine (USA).

The following *Notebooks of Paul Brunton* consist of more than 7,000 pages of notes withheld by him for posthumous publication. They are part of a large work, which he spoke of as his “Summing Up”. There are sixteen volumes covering twenty-eight categories such as “The Quest”, “From Birth to Rebirth”, “The Reign of Relativity”, “What is Philosophy?”, “Mentalism”, “World-Mind in Individual Mind”, etc., all of which are of deep significance to any spiritual seeker. The *Notebooks* are published by Larson Publications for the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation in Burdett (near Ithaca), New York.

Volume 1: Perspectives.
This Volume is a representative survey with sample chapters on each of the twenty-eight major topics (categories) in the Notebooks series. Subsequent volumes focus in depth on one to four categories.

Volume 2: The Quest

*Volume 3: Practices for the Quest
Relax and Retreat*

*Volume 4: Part 1: Meditation
Part 2: The Body*

*Volume 5: Emotions and Ethics
The Intellect*

*Volume 6: The Ego
From Birth to Rebirth*

*Volume 7: Healing of the Self
The Negatives*

Volume 8: Reflections

*Volume 9: Human Experience
The Arts in Culture*

Volume 10: The Orient

- Volume 11: The Sensitives*
- Volume 12: The Religious Urge
 Reverential Life*
- Volume 13: Relativity, Philosophy and Mind*
- Volume 14: Inspiration and the Overself*
- Volume 15: Advanced Contemplation
 The Peace Within You*
- Volume 16: Enlightened Mind, Divine Mind*

FREDERICK MATTHIAS ALEXANDER

Another genius I have had the great good fortune to come across along life's highway is F.M Alexander who discovered the process of constructive conscious control of the individual, *by the individual*. This process, this non-ism, this common-sense approach to the plight of humanity was named after him as the Alexander Technique. That may not have been such a bright idea. At any rate, people who do not understand it now throw it into the mix of numerous alternative therapies that abound in this new age. An alternative therapy it certainly is not. Nor is it "bodywork." It is a re-education in the use of the self, based on intelligent reasoning and inspired intellectual analysis. It is the most mental process I have ever experienced and in combining it with Paul Brunton's teachings on mentalism, I prefer to call my way of teaching it *Constructive Awareness*.

Frederick Matthias Alexander (1869-1955) was an actor, born in Tasmania, who developed throat trouble at an early age. After realizing that the medical profession could not help him, he decided that whatever was wrong with him must be something he was doing to himself. This led him to spend years of meticulous study of himself in the mirror. He studied not only how he used his vocal mechanisms, but also his whole organism.

He saw that no movement of a specific part of his body could be done in isolation. Each movement was a function of his whole being. He realised also that he was completely dominated by habitual unreasoned use of himself. After many years of experimenting, he gradually freed himself of that tyranny. This was a remarkable achievement, because his habits of being and doing were the very things he had to use in his investigations, but were also the things he had to change. Eventually he discovered that inhibition was the key to fundamental change. We cannot bring about real effective change in ourselves unless we learn to inhibit or stop our old unreasoned habits. Knowing how to stop is another of our great needs.

The remarkable thing about Alexander was that he discovered inhibition experientially - not with scientific machinery - but with acute reasoning, observation and analysis. He called the process "constructive conscious control." He made this discovery many years before medical science confirmed that inhibition is a vital part of the functioning of the nervous system.

Another remarkable point about Alexander: he realised from the outset what he had discovered was not merely an epidemic of misuse in the civilized world, but a psychological turning point in human evolution. He constantly asserted that the time is long overdue for us to change from habitual, unreasoned behaviour and become consciously controlled, balanced beings, guided by reason and accurate sensory appreciation. We must learn how to use constructively the wonderful potential of our conscious minds, how to think of functioning co-ordinatedly in the humdrum activity of

our hectic modern lives. To learn this is not to adopt some kind of mechanical physical culture, but to use what is truly a vital, creative mental process. Such conscious change would allow us to come into that most wanted of all states at the psycho-physical level, a sound body in a sound mind.

He saw the ability in us to develop ***constructive conscious control***, through inhibition and direction, as ***man's supreme inheritance*** in relation ***to the use of the self***, which is a ***universal constant in living***. The words in bold italics are the titles of the four books he wrote in his lifetime.

Alexander was a man of vision and his strongest plea was for the person that he called his most important client, the child. He founded a school where, as in any other school, the three R's were taught. But the first priority for the children in his school was to learn the co-ordinated "means" of doing anything, so that balanced mental and physical development took place. The children were guided without being made to fear being wrong. He also had the rare ability to take the long view and see that our liberation lies in teaching the children, so that subsequent generations can emulate them and become conscious reasoning beings.

Alexander's book titles :

Man's Supreme Inheritance

*Conscious Guidance and Control in Relation to Human Evolution in Civilization
With an introductory word by Professor John Dewey*

E.P Dutton & Company, New York, 1918

Constructive Conscious Control of the Individual

With an introduction by Professor John Dewey

Methuen & Co. Ltd, London, 1923

The Use of the Self

*Its Conscious Direction in Relation to Diagnosis, Functioning,
and the Control of Reaction
With an Introduction by Professor John Dewey*

Integral Press, Bexley, Kent, 1932

The Universal Constant in Living

With an Appreciation by Professor G.E. Coghill

Chaterson Ltd, London, 1942

OTHER BOOKS BY DANIEL MCGOWAN

Constructive Awareness - Alexander Technique and The Spiritual Quest

Published for the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation by Larson Publications,
1997

Alexander Technique

Original writings of F.M Alexander

Constructive Conscious Control

Abridged and Edited by Daniel McGowan

Published for the Paul Brunton Philosophic Foundation by Larson Publications,
1997

When my partner Sarah Paice and I decided in 1989 to move from Totnes, England to Germany to start a new Training Course for A.T teachers in Berlin, I realised that Alexander's books would be a little heavy for students whose first language was not English, so I decided to abridge all of his books to make the study of them in class easier for the students. Sincere gratitude to Larson Publications for publishing this one. (Hopefully, the others will come out in the not too distant future.)

Going Mental

Philosophical ruminations and practical approaches to the use of the self combined, in relation to the plight of the individual in the modern world.
(includes graphic anatomical effects)

Self-published in August, 2000

Copies of “*Constructive Awareness - Alexander Technique and The Spiritual Quest*” and “*Going Mental*” can be purchased from Larson Publications.

