

“A bad habit never disappears miraculously; it’s an undo-it-yourself project.”

- Abigail Van Buren (author of the advice column “Dear Abby”)

APPENDIX II

HEART-SHIFTING TECHNIQUES

This appendix is a collection of techniques for reinforcing the heart-mind connection and for shifting the predominance of one’s internal dialogue from negative to positive.

This collection is not linear: one needn’t go through this collection methodically, practicing all the techniques in the order presented. Instead, read all the suggestions in this and the next appendix. If one or more of the techniques makes sense to you, try them.

Breathing techniques

Observing the breath for a few minutes and/or taking long slow breaths can be very helpful at shifting the mood from frantic to calm.

Hundreds, if not thousands, of breathing techniques have been written up over the past few millennia, especially in Asia.¹

Most of them involve sitting up straight. Most of them make the point that, during an inhalation, the abdomen should expand outward, the chest should expand outward, and the shoulders should rise up a bit, allowing the maximum amount of air into the lungs. During exhalation, the abdomen should, if possible, move gently in and up, the chest might move inwards and, if it is comfortable, the shoulders can drop down.

Other breathing techniques do not dwell particularly on the physiology of breathing, but rather ask the breather to simply “observe” (feel) the sensations or rhythms associated with the incoming and outgoing breath without trying to regulate or control the rate or volume of breathing.

Another technique is to imagine the feeling that the incoming breath is a stream, or waterfall, flowing down, down, down into a chasm of great depth and beauty. The outgoing breath is another stream of whatever seems appealing: mist or steam rising up out of an almost infinitely deep gorge.

Yet another breathing technique asks the breather to inhale while counting to a certain number, then hold the breath for the same number, and then exhale to the same count. It doesn’t matter what the count is except that it should be comfortable. While doing this, he should notice how he feels throughout his body when his breathing is measured.

Still another suggests that a person feel the breath while making no attempt whatsoever to control or regulate the breath. This focus is non-judgmental. The focus should not be on the previous breath or the upcoming breath, and never wondering “how much longer or shorter should this breath be?” The point with this technique is to practice being in the present, in “the now.”

¹ When confronted with the word “Asia” most Americans think primarily of China and the countries along the western Pacific rim, but most citizens of the British Isles think primarily of India and Pakistan. When I use the word Asia, I am referring to both groups of countries.

These various breathing exercises can be powerful assists in learning how to stop the internal monologue and allow awareness, rather than words, to be dominant in the mind. Don't try to do all of them; find one that appeals to you and practice until you begin to realize how difficult it actually is. After you've realized that, then work at it until you master it.

As for which of the above techniques are the most effective, I refuse to say. To the experienced eye, they all look the same. They can all turn the mind's focus onto the experience of feeling the breath. By focusing on feeling, one turns off the critical voice.

Going through the motions: misunderstanding the techniques

No matter how powerful and effective these breathing and other techniques can potentially be, they can always be sabotaged by a person who is determined to stay in defensive mode. Consider a person who perfunctorily does one of the above breathing exercises, methodically counting off the seconds of his "wasted time" while doing the exercise, and wondering all the while whether or not the technique is "working." He might as well not even do the exercise. He will do the deep breathing, and when he is finished, he will brush his hands as if to say, "Thank God *that's* over with...am I better yet?" When he realizes that the brief moment of slow-breathing-induced calm has already disappeared, he might even say to himself, "Hah! It didn't last. I knew it couldn't be that easy."

A wiser person, one who actually understands the point of this, and all the other techniques, will have a different approach to going through the motions. He will understand that this technique, like all attitude-altering techniques, merely provides a structure within which one can practice noticing how he feels: he can pretend, for a little while, to be gently cradled in the bosom of love. In this pretend state of being not only removed from all worldly cares, responsibilities, resentments and anxieties, but proactively loved and supported, the latent, usually beclouded or veiled peacefulness of feeling, of pure consciousness and intuition, is able to rise to the surface of awareness. The state thus attained is a state of awareness and pure feelings rather than a state in which streams of words are relentlessly evaluating anything and everything.

For people who meditate regularly and correctly, the joy of this wordless state is the motivator, the positive reinforcement, that encourages one to do the self-changing work that is necessary to – guess what – *increase* his ability to remain in this pleasant state during subsequent meditations and even during his busy day. If, on the other hand, these exercises are done with an eye on the clock and a relentless word-based consciousness of "How'm I doin'?" Sheesh. Am I done yet?" the entire point of the exercise will have been lost.

Seeing faces in the clouds

Again, as noted earlier, word-based thinking is nearly always a fear-based director of judgmental, adrenaline-dominated consciousness. Wordless awareness, in comparison, is not even, technically, thinking. Awareness simply perceives what is happening and, if appropriate, lets the heart decide whether or not the perception needs to be acted on. For the reader who is completely baffled at this point as to what I mean by awareness as opposed to mental dialogue, a quick example might be helpful. Most PDers recall that, at

some point in their childhood, they were able to look up at fluffy clouds in the sky and see them forming into sheep, ships, and shape-shifting faces.

This “seeing” was never a word-based process. This pleasant “seeing” of imaginary shapes is an emotionally joyful act of playing with awareness. Many PDerers are stunned to discover, as a part of their recovery process, that they are once again “seeing” faces in the leaves of trees and the clouds are once again forming fantastic shapes. There is no income-generating, efficient purpose in the mind while it is playfully forming these images, and, yet, even the most “practical and logical” PDerer finds, during recovery, that seeing these images is accompanied by simple joy.

Feeling safe and seeing faces

The reader who is reading between the lines of the breathing exercise will know that the exercise is a framework in which he can stop what he is doing for a few minutes and enjoy focusing on his sensory awareness in a wordless sort of way.

The experience of feeling peaceful or even feeling loved, even if induced, at first, by sheer pretending, will be similar to the experience of seeing faces in the clouds. It’s a simple, gentle recognition of the mind’s capacity for awareness of self and Self.¹

The fear-drenched reader who is determined to “do these techniques and exercises correctly” will want to know exactly how long to hold each breath, should he make a noise with his breathing, should he breathe through his mouth or his nose, etc., etc. The answer to these questions is “none of those things matter.” What might matter is one’s ability to pretend that, when he sits down to do a breathing technique, all the cares of the world have ceased. He can even pretend he has died to the world. (This is actually very helpful! It can be refreshing to realize anew, every day, that, the moment we die, all our worldly cares will cease and, no matter how important we think we are, everyone *will* find a way to go on without us. Why not practice for this relieving inevitability?)

In the pretend life-stoppage or sense-of-time-stoppage that can occur during the breath observation exercises, one can wordlessly observe the breath. Now, a person might choose to visualize some pretend image or sensation that accompanies one’s breathing – something fun and beautiful, something creative and loving. That’s fine too.

Or after while doing some breathing techniques, why not notice how the heart is feeling? Is it in your throat? Heavy? Broken in two? If your heart doesn’t feel quite “right,” why not spend a moment gently talking to it, asking it what it wants, and treating it the way that you wish you’d been treated as a child.

Then again, if I include something in the instructions to the effect that visualizations during the exercise are a good idea, a fear-based person who lives his life trying to “follow the rules” will most likely counter this with “But I don’t like to pretend or visualize,” or even “I can’t do that kind of stupid stuff.”² And then he might not even

¹ The capital “s” Self is a writer’s convention: “Self” signifies the greater self, the superego, superconsciousness, the individual soul, and sometimes, the larger manifestation of soul: the universe or even that which created the universe. When one gazes at the clouds and turns them into sheep and ships, he is playing games with creation: the self is playing games with the Self.

² Many PDerers have convinced themselves that pleasant activities are a waste of time. I am frequently told by really stubborn PDerers something to the effect that all of the things that contented people do are “stupid.” It is tempting to point out that at least these “stupid” people haven’t created so much fear avoidance that they can’t even walk. It does seem to me that wallowing in emotional rigidity to the point of

try to do the exercise. And since the very point of the exercise is exploring where your unique heart takes you when the worries are turned off, the very act of my suggesting what to do with your heart in your silence is bound to be incorrect and misleading. *I can't know where your heart will take you. Try the exercise with a childlike wonder, and see where you end up.*

The very essence of all of these techniques is turning off the fear of being judged and turning on the awareness of omnipresent love. However, the people who most need to do this may, quite likely, perform all these techniques as if the performance is being judged or measured – thereby inhibiting the joy. Therefore, as I have mentioned, writing up these exercises may very well be an exercise in futility. The very people who need to do these techniques are the ones who are most determined to do them correctly, but the whole point is that there is no such thing as doing them *correctly* – the essence of the exercises is doing them as if they were fun.¹

I think this quote from Sir James M. Barry, the author of *Peter Pan*, puts it very well: “You must have been warned against letting the golden hours slip by; but some of them are golden only because we let them slip by.”

Moving right along, now let's look at a technique that does the opposite of silencing the nagging mind: a technique that awakens the positive mental voice.

The technique of chanting

Chanting, the steady repetition of a word or phrase, silently or out loud, is a way to gently and deliberately retrain the consciousness. By chanting, one trains the unruly, undisciplined mind to move in the direction of your own choosing. The technique is extremely powerful.

For those PDer's who think they have strong mental faculties, I suggest that they try to chant one gentle or loving word for a solid minute, holding the mind on that one

becoming physically rigid is also a bit on the “stupid” side. When I was a child, this was called “cutting off one's nose to spite one's face.”

Recently, I was reading *The Ardent Birder*, by Todd Newberry, PhD in Biology and professor emeritus at University of California, Santa Cruz, and I was laughing so hard I nearly fell off the sofa. The text is *not* intending to be broadly comic, it is gentle and sincere; I was laughing because I was imagining how most of my PDer patients would respond to this book. I'll describe and paraphrase this book briefly. The book tries to describe the joy of sitting in an overgrown field for hours, hoping that a bird will come along. The writer points out, over a pleasant, meandering ten pages, that there is pleasure if a bird shows up. He even suggests that one go with a friend once in a while, thus doubling the pleasure, should it occur. The writer further bubbles that, at those moments when a bird stares at the birder who is staring at the bird, “it is life touching life.” I can just imagine the frustration and even anger of a PDer who has been assigned to read this pleasant and sincere discussion of why it is important to “unexpected the expected” while birding. “What's the point?!” screams the PDer to the absent author. “Where are you going with this?!” “Why am I wasting my time reading this?!” “I have better things to do than sit in a meadow and hope that a bird comes along!!!” “I have better things to do than read a book about the pleasures of a thermos of cocoa!”

¹ My colleague, Chris Ells, shared this story with me. A fellow Tai Ji student had been hired to teach a Tai Ji class. Due to polio, this student's right leg was considerably shorter and weaker than his left, so he always skipped over the one-legged portions of his Tai Ji form. When he got the teaching job, he asked his Tai Ji teacher if it was OK to skip the one-legged parts of the sequence, since, “If I do the one-legged parts, I will fall over.” The teacher said to him, “Then fall over.” The teacher's point was that the essence of the exercises (joy) had nothing to do with the skill of execution.

thought without being distracted into other thoughts. These “strong thinkers” are often amazed at the actual lack of control that they have. As long as their mind is looping over and over in some ego-prized memory of self-pity, anxiety, or obligation, their mind may be able to stay in a particular arena indefinitely. But they find that they cannot keep the mind steadily on a subject of their own conscious choosing for more than a few seconds. Even a few attempts at this mind-disciplining practice will show one why all great men, from Alexander the Great to the great saints and sages, have agreed that taming of the mind is the most important and most difficult undertaking that a man can pursue.¹

To practice chanting, choose a word or very short mantra, or phrase, and repeat it whenever you are not using your mind in a specifically productive manner. That’s the whole technique. How hard can it be? (Answer: very hard.)

Practically speaking, when you are driving the car, talking to someone, or adding up a long column of tricky numbers, you might not want to be silently, in a focused way, repeating your chant. But if you are eating alone, resting, working in the garden, bathing, dressing yourself, cleaning the house, or performing most of the activities of daily living, you can be trying to keep your mind focused on repeating your chosen word or phrase.

The more famous mantras usually have a strong spiritual emphasis. Some classics are, “For God” (meaning, “Whatever work I am doing, I am doing it for God”), “I love you” (the word “you” in this context is directed towards the chanter’s largest possible understanding of the cosmos), “Divine Mother,” “For Love” (meaning, “I am doing this work for the Universal Love”) or simply, “You.”

The psychological process is obvious; a person who is saying “You!” with all the focus of his mind cannot simultaneously be saying “Me!” Since “me” is the wily demon-lover, the ego and its partner, fear, the constant repetition of the word “You!” can slowly, eventually, effect a change of mental orientation towards peace of mind and away from fear. And please, don’t go saying “That’s so simple! It won’t be hard to do,” until you’ve tried silently chanting for ten straight minutes while keeping the thoughts ever turned towards the subject of your chant. This technique is simple, but there is nothing “easy” about it.

Other suggestions for chants include Om-Tat-Sat (Hinduism), Om Mani Padma Hum (Sanskrit form of a Buddhist prayer, also known as Om Mani Peme Hung in Tibetan), Father-Son-Holy Ghost (Catholic and some protestant Christian religions), Allah Akbar (Islam), any of the many Hebraic variations on the name of God or a few words from a favorite Psalm, or, mixing and matching, one can use God-Christ-Guru, or anything that makes a person focus on something other than self. All of these ideas draw the mind away from the little “me” and focus it on the greater Self.

Because I receive many complaints about this technique from people who do not believe in God or follow any particular spiritual path, I want to point out that belief in

¹ Thayumanavar, “The Silent Sage” of southern India (1706-1744), wrote this poem:

You may control a mad elephant;
You may shut the mouth of the bear and the tiger;
Ride the lion and play with the cobra;
By alchemy you may earn your livelihood;
You may wander through the universe incognito;
Make vassals of the god; be ever youthful;
You may walk on water and live in fire:
But control of the mind is better and more difficult.

God is *not* a requirement. Many people, due to the cruel images of God that they learned in their youth, have a strong aversion to the word “God” or any organized religion, per se. Such people need to know that the phrase “You!” can be directed to Love, Wisdom, or the Force that permeates the universe and which sets the universal ball rolling. For that matter, it can be directed towards a beloved deceased grandmother, or any person who you think of as a great soul. The Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Martin Luther King Jr. are all very good subjects for “You!”¹

One elderly monk said to me that, when he began his spiritual seeking, he wasn’t sure what was meant by “chanting with his heart.” He wanted to speak to God with his heart and not his mind, but he wasn’t sure how. So he imagined a little mouth with lips on his heart; that mouth said the words.

By creating this image, he was inadvertently accessing the playful part of his mind – the part that releases dopamine. This simple act of imagination was bringing him closer to using his intuition and simultaneously shutting the door on potential negativity.

He told us that, using this image, his chanting increasingly came more from the heart and less from his brain. His heart was successfully able to open up to the joy therein.²

It’s the thought of the thought that counts

Again, as with the breathing and all the other exercises, the way in which chanting is practiced does matter. If a person perfunctorily repeats “I love you World” for a predetermined number of counts and then says to himself, “Thank goodness *that’s* over with,” or if he is mindlessly chanting “You, You, You” while multi-tasking his brain to

¹ A study done in 1985 suggests that people who do not credit anything religious or spiritual can still be powerfully affected by exposure to a “spiritual” stimulant. A group of Harvard students, many of whom were deeply cynical, even adamantly anti-religious, watched a movie about Mother Teresa. After the movie, their saliva was tested. Even students with hard-core anti-Mother Teresa sentiments had a change in their saliva: a sharp increase in IgA (an immune system component that can *increase* when a person feels good and which can *decline* with stress). This study was included in an article about scientific experiments measuring whether spiritual and meditative practices elevate (improve) certain immune factors. (The answer was “yes.”)

The study with the Mother Teresa movie was done by psychologist David McLelland, Harvard University, and reported in *American Health* magazine, July/August 1985.

² Many PDers have convinced themselves that they cannot create mental images. Can you see how many layers of difficulty these PDers have created for themselves? They will not be able to imagine a mouth on their heart – something a child can do. That’s another problem with literal mindedness and overly “sophisticated” thinking: it detracts from, does not add to, our innate abilities.

My favorite experience dealing with innate ability occurred when I was doing acupuncture on a nineteen-year old. She had brought her nine-year old sister along to watch this “new” form of medicine. As part of the treatment, I put needles in both ankles of the patient. When the treatment was over, I asked the young girl if she had enjoyed herself. “Oh yes,” she replied. “I especially liked watching the blue-green sparks, like electricity, going back and forth between the two ankle needles.”

Now, I have learned in my fairly advanced and arcane researches that the color for the particular type of Qi that I was accessing is “blue-green” or “dragon’s green,” and that the paired currents arc back and forth while coming to a healthier equilibrium. However, I have never seen it. This young girl, not knowing any better, was able to see it easily. Not knowing what to say, I merely agreed, “Yeah, that’s great.” All too soon, no doubt, sophisticated, “rational” thinking will begin to cloud her innate ability.

simultaneously remind himself that his mother was not affectionate or his father should never have remarried, while alternately worrying pointlessly about the economy, next year's weather, or the ailing home sprinkler system, he will receive *no* benefit from this technique. Such a person may arrogantly think that he is demonstrating terrific mental faculty because he is thinking of so many things at once. However, it would be more honest and accurate to say that the owner of such a mind is a victim of his undisciplined, runaway thoughts.

The whole point of chanting is to take the mind away from chronic immersion in the "I, me, mine" mentality and break the pathological cycle of endless worrying. For example, it is fine to plan one's day – once or twice a day. If the process of day planning repeats itself pointlessly, that's pathological. Focused chanting can regain some healthy control.

It is important to have some sort of direction as one goes through life, but chronic worrying about taxes, traffic, or "what is the other guy thinking of me" is pointless. Such ego-based, fear-based thoughts diminish the quality of one's life. If one has Parkinson's, or even if one has recovered from PD, such habits can do more than diminish quality of mental peace: they can be physically debilitating.

To be sure, such looping, impractical immersion in worries conveys self-importance to the ego and is therefore gratifying, but if a person has enjoyed this type of thinking to the point that he can no longer walk easily or swing his arms, maybe it's time to try a little change of mental direction.

St. Francis and Brother Lawrence

A more advanced version of simple chanting is to direct all of one's silent thoughts and awareness towards the "You." To perform this technique, one steadily directs his mind to acknowledge the Love or divinity in everything he touches, smells, hears, and in all his actions and thoughts. St. Francis of Assisi felt an affinity with all creation; he loved Brother Sun and Sister Moon. He beheld divinity and affinity in all things and actions. He did not *think* about God so much as remain ever aware of Him.

This technique is sometimes called "practicing the presence of God." It has been practiced for millennia in the East, and has been practiced by mystics of various faiths even in the West.

Brother Lawrence was an uneducated, 17th century French monk who, having no academic skills, was assigned to his monastery's kitchen duty. As he performed his daily chores, he focused on seeing God in everything around him, in the very stones of the floors that he scrubbed and in the water that he carried in from the well. He was constantly aware of and talking silently to the ever-present God. Eventually, he was able to say "The time of business does not with me differ from the time of prayer; and in the noise and clatter of my kitchen, while several persons are at the same time calling for different things, I possess God in as great tranquility as if I were upon my knees."

As an aside, I want to make it clear yet again that no one needs to become transformed into a saint or hero in order to recover from Parkinson's. A recovering PDer need not become a sage-like master. However, he must learn to, at least once in a while, float along with the universe instead of trying to control it. To this end, even the simple act of staring at the stars once in a while is a very worthwhile activity. It is hard to

maintain the idea of self-importance while gazing out across the Milky Way. Of course, a truly determined fear-lover can use the darkness of the infinite abyss as a source of terror. Still, gazing at the night sky might be a helpful technique for a person who is ready and willing to put his anxieties into perspective.

To summarize the technique of Practicing the Presence of God (or the Presence of Love, if one prefers), one should try to be constantly aware of the love or mystery or magic going on around him and be ever talking to it in the language of one's heart. Although this technique seems ridiculously simple, it can provoke a ferocious tug of war between the mind's long-term habit of negative stream of subconsciousness and the novel experience of the mind being guided, directed, by positive, lovingly disciplined consciousness.

When, eventually, through formation of new habits, the mind becomes more focused and guided by the intuition instead of by fear or negative emotions, the results can be profoundly life-changing. Both chanting and practicing the presence can, when practiced diligently and lovingly, eventually bring about an orientation towards sweetness and gentleness even in a heart that has long been disconnected or enmeshed in a trap of worries and concerns.

Re-tuning the heart radio

I first read about this yogic technique in a write-up of a lecture given in the 1930s.¹ The modern information about electromagnetic fields emanating from the heart was not yet available. However, this yogic technique for tuning out the “fear channel” and re-tuning the heart to a channel that broadcasts love is clearly based on the electromagnetic characteristics of the heart.

The technique is as follows:

Place the right hand over the heart. Gently draw the hand towards the midline of the body (towards the sternum) and then let the hand rest for a moment between the two breasts. Then, lift the hand off the chest and replace it over the heart. Repeat. (Repeat as many times as you like.)

While doing the hand gesture, say out loud or silently, “Tune out the fear in my heart radio.” Repeat this statement every time you move the hand across from the heart to the midline.

About this technique: notice that this technique does not try to pretend that there is no fear. This technique is not a top dressing that merely masks the fear. The power of this technique is acknowledging that the heart is facing in a direction that tunes in with fear. The affirmation and the physical movement both assist to redirect the receptors, the antennae, of the heart radio.

(It is important to note that this technique does not seem to work in people who are pretending that their hearts are not connected to their minds (see chapters 22 through 27. One who has historically been disconnected from his emotions might want to first make sure that he has “reconnected before spending much time on this technique.”)

¹ I found the text of this lecture, originally given by Paramahansa Yogananda (1893-1952) in, I think, the 1930s, in a late 20th century issue of *Self-Realization* magazine. I do not recall which issue of the magazine had this technique. I have since heard a yogic monk refer to this exercise; he said, “I know it sounds ridiculously simple, but it really works.”

Why it works

In Asian medicine, the line of energy that runs up the center front of the body from the pubic bone to the lower lip is called the Ren channel. Ren is often translated as “Conception,” and is considered to be related to fertility and reproduction. A deeper understanding of this channel is that it resonates with the creative electromagnetic signal that underlies the creative properties of the universe. This channel is considered to be “Yin,” materially creative or “feminine.”

The Ren channel is associated with the *physical* manifestation of the universe, the quanta, if you will, as opposed to the causal, or *thought-based* forces that keep the universe in play. The more physically extant forces in the body and in the universe are considered more Yin, the thought-based forces that drive creation and that provide individual consciousness are considered more Yang. These Yang forces happen to resonate with the line of energy that runs up the back of the body, the Du (translated as “Governor”) channel. The Du channel is an energy source that plays a major role in shaping the spine and brain and providing consciousness.

Getting back to the point of this exercise, the Ren channel resonates with forces of created matter. We can call this force Divine Mother, Quan Yin, Maha Prakriti, Mother Earth, Mother Nature. On a more human level, this is the force that has found embodiment in Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other saints – male and female – whose love takes primarily a nurturing turn. The universal materially-creative force (physically creative and nurturing, as opposed to the forces that generate the *concepts* of creation, growth and change) manifests, among other things, as an electromagnetic field that, in humans, resonates with the Ren channel.

Heart orientation

In an emotionally healthy person, the electromagnetic receptors of the heart are oriented towards this channel. A well-tuned heart is thus always receiving signals from the nurturing love that permeates and guides the material, corporeal, physical aspect of creation. This is the love that can be transmitted via the sensations: the bliss of standing on the ocean cliffs in a pouring rain, the invigoration from the smell of fresh sage, and the sweetness in the touch of a baby’s tiny fingers.

When fear is present to the extent that one loses his connection with joy, the radio-like receptors in the heart can rotate outwards, towards the front chest wall, pointing towards the source of the danger, instead of pointing towards the midline. For example, in the newborn child, the shock and fear of breathing and being in the physical world often cause the heart receptors to be rotated outwards, facing out through the chest wall instead of towards the Ren channel. This is why a mother usually holds her frightened child to her left breast; the infant’s outward-facing heart, thus positioned towards the mother’s heart, can receive the relayed nurturing signals of the Ren channel via the outgoing broadcasts of the mother’s heart. The mother, hopefully, has her own heart receptors turned towards the Ren channel. In this manner, an infant that cannot as yet control his own fears can have them assuaged by the relayed signals of his mother’s heart “radio.”

As the child matures, he hopefully learns inwardly to attune himself with the radio signals of love that are always present in the universe. Outwardly, he affirms joy by learning to sing, play, and relate to himself and others in ways that build upon the already

present love and contentment. These inner and outward manifestations of joy help keep the heart radio tuned towards the Ren channel, towards the joy that resonates through the cosmos.

Sometimes, it is necessary for the electromagnetic field receptors of the adult's heart to reorient and face outwards temporarily. When danger is imminent but the brain is asleep at the wheel or preoccupied, the intuitive heart may still be able to sense that danger is lurking. In such times, the heart receptivity can be on guard, watching for signs of danger. However, after consciousness has been alerted to the danger, the heart should revert back to the position in which it faces the midline of the body.

Sometimes, a person who is overwhelmed by or chooses to live in anxiety or fear will find that he is incapable of mastering his own terrors. His fears, or his fear of fear, can dominate his mind. At such times, the heart has usually rotated outward and become lodged in that danger-anticipating position. This person can be said to have lost touch energetically with the underlying love in the cosmos. This person is, terrifyingly, on his own, in what seems to be an uncaring or even a hostile universe.

Also, a person who decides that he, and not the universe, is the source of his own strength may find it increasingly more difficult to feel joy. This is because the wariness associated with ego-directed self-reliance is fear-based. This fear can serve to reposition the receptors of the heart to face outward. The simple technique described above, which serves to reposition the heart reception into its correct alignment, can be very powerful.¹

Of course, one who practices conscious control of his thoughts is less likely to be a victim of habit. Then again, habit aside, many PDer's have a history of consciously or subconsciously choosing self-damaging attitudes.² To recover from Parkinson's, they may need to overcome – when dealing with new incoming sensory information – both their habits and their willful determination to choose negative thought patterns. Only so will they be able to tap into enough heart-joy that their brain-directed motor area will be able to, once again, move easily.³

¹ Although the signals emitted by the heart appear to be holographic (the same in all directions), it seems that the reception *into* the heart from outward signals is directional. I find it fascinating that the heart, historically considered to be mostly muscle with a self-contained electrical drumbeat, turns out, in the 21st century, to be an endocrine gland (releaser of hormones and neurotransmitters) as well. Not only that, but 60 to 65% of the heart's cells are neural cells, not muscle cells. Also, "the heart produces and releases a major hormone, ANF (atrial natriuretic factor), which profoundly effects every operation in the limbic structure (the emotional brain, also known as the primitive brain, or the "lizard brain"). The limbic area, in addition to regulating non-reason-based responses, also has an effect on memory, learning, and the hormone centers.

"Approximately half of the ANF released by the heart helps to integrate the rest of the body, allowing its parts to perform as a whole. The other half works with the brain; it can "carry on a twenty-four-hour-a-day dialogue between the heart and the brain." This information is from Chris Mercogliano, Kim Debus, "Does the Heart Have a Brain? An interview with Joseph Chilton Pearce," *Self-Realization*, Summer 2000, pp. 42-44.

² Many PDer's have said that fear of self-absorption or superficiality leads them to choose behaviors that are "correct" rather than "fun." And yet, by specifically shunning "fun," they usually inadvertently close off the door to joy. Hence my reference to "self-damaging" attitudes.

³ These attitudinal choices will be discussed more in chapter xxx. The attitudes that can be particularly damaging for a PDer include cynicism, resentment, self-pity and the fear of being judged.

A heart radio case study

I worked with a recovering PDer who was terrified of the dentist. Although this fairly well-recovered person could chase his nephew merrily down the beach or chase his wife around the dining room table when feeling frisky, he was now finding himself reduced to a heap of violent tremors when confronted with the thought of the dentist's chair. He had developed a dental situation that was going to require several visits over several weeks. The first time, he had to leave the dentist's office, procedure undone, because he was trembling too violently for the dentist to proceed.

I taught him the heart radio technique. He did it prior to his next dentist visit and even continued the silent mantra ("Tune out this fear from my heart radio!") throughout the procedure. The attending nurses, who had seen him shaking violently just a week earlier, were shocked at his new, relaxed mien.¹

When and how long to do this technique

The heart-radio technique can be beneficial when a person is anxious or fearful. It may not be of benefit, may not produce a noticeable shift, if a person is already feeling calm.

How many times should one drag the hand across the chest? How many minutes should be spent in this exercise? Sometimes, relief can be felt after five or ten movements. One time, I moved my own hand across a PD patient's T-shirted chest for longer than half an hour and neither of us said any mantra at all. I did it slowly and steadily until his body seemed to relax deeply. When he suddenly went uncharacteristically limpish, I asked him how he felt inside, in his heart, and he said with rare serenity, "Content."²

¹ This case study is interesting because this PDer clearly showed significant signs of recovery: his nearly-lifelong problem with constipation was healed. His facial expression returned. However, the return of suppleness and arm swing remained intermittent: he was able to move increasingly easily when he was unthreatened, but stressful situations were almost always able to induce trembling, weakness, and even foot sticking and difficulty in initiating movement. Even though he had success in the short term with the heart radio exercise, he soon stopped doing it. Though he insisted that he wanted to recover, he did not seem to be interested in doing the work required to make a consistent, lasting change in his make up; by his own admission, he practiced this technique steadily for several weeks, culminating with the triumphant success in the dentist's office – and then he lost interest in the technique, and stopped doing it.

Despite tangible, lasting changes in many of his body functions, he was certain that the benefits of treatment and mental techniques were placebos and that his behaviors in time of fear and stress revealed his "true" condition. He kept waiting for us to find the physiological kink that he felt was preventing him from being happy *all* the time. We could find no such physical problem and often reminded him that he could once again move normally, even athletically, when he was having fun or when he was relaxed. He dismissed these long-lasting periods of healthy movement as being "psychologically" induced. When we asked him, "Why not induce them all the time?" he answered that, in his heart, he knew he was still damaged by his stepfather's brutal assaults. He was determined that healing this underlying bitterness towards his stepfather was our job, and could and should be done via needles, massage, or some other physical or talk-type therapy. He was adamant that he himself could not change his attitudes. He felt he had no choice in the way in which he dwelt on the life-shaping traumas of his childhood or in the way that he collapsed into short-term episodes of PD-like symptoms when he was frightened or concerned about his condition. He finally stopped treatments and, two years later, applied for disability insurance.

² I want to mention that, when I saw this person a month later, he said he was doing very poorly: he was depressed and preoccupied with his conviction that his arm was never going to swing again. I asked

So, in answer to the question, “How long should I do this?” I will say, “As long as necessary.”

For long-term relief, a person needs to make a steady habit of attuning his or her consciousness in with the love that is radiating in the universe. To first feel the result, a calmness spreading over the chest, a healthy person may need to repeat the hand motion, with or without words, for less than a minute. PDers first starting out may need to do it for over an hour.

Concluding this section on the heart radio exercise, this exercise should be done as both a practical, physical technique, and also as an experiment in watching what happens in the body when the heart is rotated towards the midline. Do this sometime when anxious, depressed, or feeling fearful. Take some time to do this exercise when you have the time to really watch and observe the changes in yourself; do not wait until you are on the verge of a fear-collapse.

This heart radio technique is just a start. It can provide steadily increasing relief from fear if the exercise is done with a willingness to tap into the love that is vibrating behind every atom. If this exercise is done with a cynical conviction that there is no such thing as love, the exercise may only work for the short term. But even in the short term, it may provide a glimpse of heart attunement with joy.

Other techniques in this chapter and the next may prove helpful in solidifying this attunement.

Judge not, that ye be not judged

This next technique, like the others in this chapter, appears to be so simple that people refuse to believe it can work, until they try it. It consists of not caring about or not being afraid of the horror of being judged by others.

Many PDers, particularly the ones who remain stuck in fear even after their foot injury is gone, have a lifetime dread of being judged. Some are afraid of being “wimpy” or weak, others are afraid of being considered lazy. I have met PDers with a deep, compelling fear of, for example, being either a moron, a bad housekeeper, a bad dresser, not-manly, or bad-at-math. The list goes on and on.

Of course, it is perfectly normal for a person to doubt his abilities in some realm of life. But these PDers have taken their special fears and made them the cornerstones on which the edifices of their lives are built. The irony is that, in most cases, the PDer who

him if he'd done the heart radio exercise. He said, “Done the what?” I reminded him of how good he'd felt after I'd done the heart radio exercise. He remembered that he'd felt good but, although he was an extremely intelligent and quick-minded man, he had no recall of how to do this simple exercise. I showed him again, but after he did it for a short while, he told me, “You know, I'm not going to change. I'm just who I am. I'm never going to be able to be happy.”

So, as an experiment, I replied by telling him that I had read about a great saint who lived in the Himalayas. This saint was purportedly so elevated that merely saying his name with reverence would bring one a great spiritual blessing. I asked the PDer if he would like to know the name of this saint so that he could say the name. Without pausing to consider, the PDer said, “No, I'm not interested. Even if I experienced some miracle, I would need to rationalize it away because I am not interested in anything that I cannot rationalize.” I did not bother to remind him that he had been unable to rationalize the effectiveness of the previous session's heart radio-shifting exercise and, yet, it had worked.

I was not surprised at any of his responses; I have heard similar protests from so many PDers.

has a fear of, say, being bad at math, has usually made himself into a powerhouse of math and logic in the eyes of everyone around him. However, the PDer with the bad-at-math complex still finds himself trembling violently whenever a situation arises in which he needs to add a few numbers, such as balancing the checkbook. It seems as if the PDer latched onto the idea of some personal failing at an early age (possibly the age when the foot injury occurred) and cannot overcome the oppressive fear associated with this perceived failing.

The Stopping the Judge technique

This technique has to do with simply announcing to yourself and anyone who is interested that you *are* a failure in this particular area. (You may have to search far and wide for anyone who is truly interested; most people don't actually care about your self-conscious fears.) We have learned that doing the opposite of this technique (for example, the politically-correct treatment of combating weakness by stating "I *am* strong, I *am* strong," when you know darned well that you are not strong, is as useless as trying to force love and sweetness into a leg or arm that, according to the mind, needs to be dark and empty.

Merely stating something that you *know in your heart* not to be true is simply dribbling chocolate over a piece of coal. You are lying to yourself. It doesn't work.¹

Therefore, we suggest the opposite of some feel-good affirmation that will, inevitably, be subconsciously perceived by a PDer as deceitful: we suggest bringing the problem to the forefront of consciousness and then learning to play with it. For example, a person who is an overachiever because his mother always shamed him with statements about his laziness might say: "I *am* lazy and that's just the way it is!" or one who was bombarded with guilt about his inability to perfectly clean the house and therefore became an obsessively perfectionist housekeeper could say: "I am a bad housekeeper and maybe I always will be."

Several things might happen when you do this. First, the obviousness of the lie – after all, the PDer has doubtless taught himself to be a spectacular housekeeper, or a stupendous overachiever – might make the statement seem somewhat funny, if not ludicrous. Bringing the problem out into the open so that it can appear ridiculous is very powerful. The old adage "the devil hates to be mocked" is very true.

¹ Actually, affirmations *do* work for most people. But many PDers, even those who are "determined" to recover from Parkinson's, are so locked into the idea of the impossibility of true healing of their emotional and psychological wounds that an approach at variance with the classic "positive affirmation" format seems more helpful. What works best for these folks is to admit to the fear. Then, the fear needs to be brought to the forefront and vigorously addressed, even mocked. When the fear is out in the open, the PDer can work at abolishing it. Without first rooting out the fear, his attempts at positive thinking, as in this case, claiming fearlessness while actually sitting on masses of subconscious fears, are perceived by the PDer as lies, and not as true proclamations of positiveness.

As noted in an earlier footnote, the currently popular Emotional Freedom Technique, in which a person admits that he has a problem and then verbally states that he loves himself anyway, does not seem to work on PDers. I wonder if this is because they are so deeply attached to their noble idea of non-love of self or other variations on stoic suffering that their verbal statements to the contrary are not believed by the core being. By including the idea of self-love into the acceptance of the problem being addressed, it may be that the EFT technique raises barriers of its own for the PDers who have tried it. This may be an interesting avenue for further research.

Another option is, if the fear is something enormous, such as “I’m helpless to prevent people from dying,” then stating the obvious instead of being ashamed of it will at least bring it out in the open. Once the fear is out in the open, it becomes far easier to realize, “Of course I can’t stop people from dying! No one can!”

Basically, this technique consists of admitting that the fear of weakness or the fear of the problem is there – it does exist – and that all the vigorous anti-lazy work or all the good housekeeping in the world is not going to change the real issue: the fear of being judged and coming up short. The next step then is the admission that *no one* can be a perfect housekeeper or a perfect automaton of achievement. From there, one has to state to oneself, “I do a reasonable job. I refuse to be afraid or ashamed any longer that my work in this regard is imperfect. I do a fine job, a good enough job, and that’s the end of it. I can keep doing my best, but I no longer am willing to be afraid or ashamed if I don’t do a superlative job.”¹

The next case study is an example of how simple this process can be.

*Lady of Maine, I adore you*²

Roxy came out to Santa Cruz for a second round of treatments by the PD Team. During her first visit, six months earlier, she had said that she could not and did not want to change her personality in any way; she was the “responsible one” of her extended family: if it weren’t for her, no one would organize the Thanksgivings, no one would make the decisions about grandma, etc. Also, her friends had told her that they wanted her to recover so that she could resume her role as The Competent Organizer in their skiing circle. We discussed the necessity of “letting go” a little bit, of needing to at least let go of the tension that was holding her foot in that twisted position. If, in addition to letting go of the ankle tension, she could also let go of some of her onerous burden of social responsibilities, well, so much the better.

During her second visit, she seemed like a changed person. She laughed more easily and she didn’t seem concerned any more about whether or not she could change; she already had. She had been receiving FSR treatments once a week, and whether it was

¹ Speaking of confessing ourselves to be guilty of imperfections, it might be helpful to note that verbal confessions can be extremely healing. In a rare example of cultural awareness, the U.S. Veterans Administration is now paying Medicine Men to provide care for returning Native Americans (some of whom prefer now to be called Indians) who have been emotionally damaged while serving in wars.

As a VA-employed Medicine Man explained it, the sweat lodge can be a deeply healing experience for service members who have hurt their soul by killing or wounding other humans. In ceremonies and in the experience of the sweat lodge, in which hot rocks are doused with water, making steam, the wrongs can sometimes be verbally shared and “you give your troubles to the rock and burn them off. You no longer have to carry those burdens.” (From *NewsYahoo*, “Medicine Men Help Veterans,” Michelle Roberts (Associated Press writer), Nov. 29, 2005.)

The importance of ceremony and verbal sharing of past shames has been extremely healing for others, as well; recovering PDers who are lapsed Catholics may wish to avail themselves of the opportunity to go to confession simply to be able to ceremonially surrender to God any weight of woe that they have been carrying around. People of any other faith who have learned methods by which they can give to God or the Universe their burdens or anxieties are advised to do so.

² My editor pointed out that most young people today have never heard the Tin Pan Alley song “Lady of Spain, I Adore You” and that, therefore, this section-title gag is pointless. However, I like the song, I like the section title, and I’m leaving it in.

the treatments or her own musings on the subject, she couldn't know for sure, but she was different and she knew it. For the record, she had *not* undergone a majestic transcendent experience, nor had she gone through a "dark night of the soul." However, she had become far more easygoing. She shared with me a short story of a recent event that, it seemed to her, had been the turning point. I will paraphrase Roxy's accounting:

"My sophisticated sister from Manhattan made her annual visit to Maine to come visit me and the rest of the family. She hadn't been out of her car five minutes before she riveted her eyes on my khaki slacks and plaid shirt and, with an accusatory, mock-scandalized voice, said, 'My God, Sis, look at you! You look like you're dressed straight out of the LL Bean catalogue!'"

Roxy continued, "And you'll never guess what I did; I just smiled back at her and said, 'Yes.'"

"That's all I said, just a cheerful and sincerely contented 'Yes.'"

"In the past, I would always say something like "Oh, these old clothes...well, I was just going to change," and I would add something about how I was only dressed this way because I was feeding the dogs or some sort of excuse that would have served as an apology for not meeting her expectations. I've always been afraid of people having negative thoughts about me, of not fulfilling the expectations of others. But this time, I just gave her a big smile of loving indifference and said, 'Yes.'"

"My sister was nonplussed. She just stood there, gaping at me, incapable of speech. I stayed right where I was, grinning at her, enjoying the new sensation, and didn't say anything. After a long silence, she restarted the conversation by asking about the upcoming dinner.

"As I realized what I had done – how I had spoken with no fear of her criticism, but with simple acceptance of who I was, or at least of what I was wearing that day – I realized that my whole body felt so *light!* There was a distinct change in the *weight* of my body. I felt – I can hardly describe it – I just felt good, and happy, as if my body had become light and easy to move. It felt wonderful. And I realized that all I needed to do in order to feel this rush of joy was this: tell my truth and not fear what my sister – or anyone else – might think of me."

I have included the above vignette to drive home the point that a person does not need to have a complete sobbing meltdown, rant and rage at the moon or join a monastery in order to retrain the mind to release dopamine. In fact, these superficial actions won't help one bit. In the above case, in order to experience the wonderful sensation of dopamine release, Roxy just let go of her old worry about her sister's clothing judgments. It was that simple.

Roxy had her first flash of truly understanding the nature of her Parkinson's disease-related fear when her uncharacteristic, bold but simple "Yes" was followed by a distinct change in her perception of her own motor function and body awareness. She understood, finally, the power that her constant fear of being judged had had over her entire body and her motor function.

Roxy felt that possibly she might be able to shed a life-long fear of being judged by her sister via simply not caring what her sister thought, by admitting that she was, in fact, dressed from the LL Bean catalogue. Essentially, Roxy had said, "Yep, I'm not a

sophisticated dresser!” In the moment when she performed that confession of “failure,” her brain switched easily and naturally from fear to joy.

Roxy told me that she was going to try to walk a middle course between “terrified of what others might think” and “sappy and happy” (a position she had long scorned).

Sadly, the next time I saw her, six months later, she had created a new fear, possibly to take the place of the old one. She didn’t mention anything about fear of being judged, but she did say that her deepest fear, now that the Qi in her legs was running correctly and she was exhibiting symptoms of recovery, was that the Qi in her legs was going to spontaneously, against all odds and flying in the face of science, going to somehow revert and start going backwards again. The fear was always there.

So, Roxy may have managed to overcome her fear of being judged, but she had evidently replaced that fear with another one. For the person who is determined to have something to worry about, there are an infinite number of potential fears. For the person who is determined to train his mind toward the positive, there are an infinite number of reasons to rejoice.

Fearing the judgment of strangers

While on the subject of fearing judgment, I want to share more examples of similar types of fear. Many PDerers have admitted to me that, when out walking, they have, since childhood, been afraid to stop in midstride and turn around and go the other way when walking, even if they have suddenly realized that they left something behind or realize that they are going the wrong way. Why? Because they are afraid that “some stranger might see me turn around and they will think I must be an idiot.”

For the same reason, they are also afraid to do U-turns while driving. Some even melt into tremors of hot shame when they realize that they forgot to use a turn-signal while driving, even if the nearest car is a quarter mile away. “That driver behind me must think I’m a complete jerk!” is the ego-inflated response of the PDer.

I suggest, in addition to doing this Stop the Judge technique, that PDerers start reminding themselves that people are not judging them nearly as often as they like to think; most people are too busy dealing with their own lives to be wondering about why a pedestrian turns around in midstride or questioning the mental acuity of the driver of a car four hundred yards ahead that has already turned down a side street – whether or not he remembered to use his turn signal.

In case a PDer wonders why he is so dominated by fears of being judged and is always found wanting, he might do well to notice how critical he is of others. In my experience, many PDerers want to blame a hyper-critical parent for their immersion in a life-style of criticism. This attitude will be addressed in chapter xxx.

Instead of looking for someone to blame, let’s consider a more mature approach: sometimes, the very fastest way to turn off the fear of being not good enough is to stop evaluating everyone else according to your own impossible standards. When you stop judging others, you may find that some of your own self-criticism eases up. And when someone does criticize you unreasonably, respond with loving indifference.¹

¹ This may be the more accurate meaning of the scriptural admonition, “Judge not, that ye be not judged.” It is our own judgments on ourselves that cause us to burn in shame. No loving God could possibly judge his children as harshly as most PDerers judge themselves.

USING WORDS TO TEACH ABOUT/CONVEY FEELINGS

As I sat to write these chapters of techniques I was daunted by the inherent difficulty in trying to convey the positive feelings that can be generated by these techniques if the techniques are done correctly and repeatedly. The next chapter's exercises are even more abstruse and may seem even more unlikely to PDers who are looking for a way to shift their heart out of "uh oh" and into "ahh."

Here is the problem: those readers who really need to understand the *essence* and not just the routine of these exercises, probably, will *not* be able to glean that understanding via my words. Why? Because techniques by which joy is eventually accessed make use of our intuition, not the mental commands of our inner, fear-based monologue. Means for contacting the heart's potential joy or the intuition *cannot* easily be conveyed to the skeptical reader by mere words, and yet, the readers who are most keenly looking for help from these chapters tend to be people who interpret their entire existence literally, via words.

The problem is similar to that experienced by people who do not believe that love exists and, since their own heart is closed, would like to have love "proved" to them via some sort of well-worded logic. But, as most of us know, you can't prove the existence of love via words any more than you can describe the taste of an orange or the smell of sage.¹ And you can't get to joy via reading chapters about techniques for removing emotion blockages and habits, or by mechanically performing the techniques.

At some point, while using the techniques as a leaping-off point, there also has to be some listening to the intuition, some reading between the lines. One has to realize that joy can't be found in some external process; joy is already present, waiting shyly in the background – it simply needs to be allowed to step forward. And simply sugar coating a

And for these hyper-critical PDers, it's bad enough that they are making themselves miserable with self-criticism. Why must they add the weight of their critical judgment onto others? Though they think they uplift themselves by criticizing others, in fact, they actually perpetuate their own pain and negativity.

¹ Do not imagine that neural functions such as taste are free from the influence of the heart. Anyone who has received bad news during a meal might have had the "food turn to ashes" in his mouth. In order to truly savor food, one must be in the mood. A person in a hurry who bolts his food cannot enjoy the tastes, and may not even notice them. It is no coincidence that many food lovers prime their palate with alcohol: alcohol temporarily elevates dopamine levels and turns down the sympathetic system. Alcohol thus allows the heart to "open up" a bit. This alteration in the heart's feeling capability then increases the appreciation and even the anticipation of the food.

It can be no coincidence that PDers lose their sense of smell and taste at about the same time that they begin to lose their sense of joy. This concomitant loss can also be understood in terms of the PDer's loss of Qi flow over the face and sinuses and the paired decrease in Qi flow to the Heart channel. The Heart channel decrease necessarily follows from the decrease in Stomach channel Qi making its way into the Spleen channel and hence into the Heart channel. (The numbness on the side of the big toe where a healthy Stomach channel flows into the Spleen channel, SP-3, has been recognized as common in PDers, even by western doctors. In the flow chart of the channels, the decrease in channel Qi set in motion by the foot blockage cannot be compensated for until the flow line comes to the Small Intestine channel (which immediately follows the Heart channel). The Small Intestine channel, like all outer (Yang) arm channels, has a branch that goes to the Du channel. The Du channel is able to provide additional input, when necessary, to bring the system back up to speed.

negative personality with the actions or phrasings of positive behavior is not the same as replacing negative thoughts with positive *awareness*.¹

My message is that, for a deeply negative PDer, a sea change has to occur. He must become willing to shut down, for a moment (and after that, for longer and longer periods), the inner voice of negativity. He must simultaneously open his heart to the simple experience of pure feeling (also known as “awareness”), and then convey the peace of this experience to his relationship with his rigid sense of reason and, even more tricky, to his own feelings about motor function.² When he is able to do this one time, he must then do it again and again. The ego habits of negativity die hard. They must be countered with the building of new habits of awareness.

If there were *words* that could produce in the reader intuitional awareness, brochures would be snapped up at every good bookseller, and antidepressant-drug manufacturers would go out of business. If joy or spiritual perception were available through *words*, academics would be filled with bliss; if joy could be taught in words, every child’s mother would share these words with her lisping toddler and the world would be a heaven; all people would be full of joy. Since, evidently, this is not the case, we might concede that words alone are not adequate to convey awareness or intuitional perception.

Even the greatest teachers throughout history have struggled to convey, through their actions and examples, their parables and poems, the love and joy that is potentially available to every person. Their work is usually misunderstood, at best. At worst, their students imagine themselves helpless victims, and expect the teacher to fix their lives via miracles. They ignore the message that they themselves can become teacher-like by replacing their cleverness with awareness of the ever-present joy within.³

So, if great teachers through the ages have found this a challenge, you can just imagine how daunting this task feels to me, the reluctant researcher. Fortunately, I’ve no

¹ What does it mean to have awareness? It is not something that can be conveyed by words. When Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” Jesus remained silent. And as it says in the Hindu scriptures, “He who knows, knows; none else knows.”

² If the reader is uncertain what I mean by “feeling,” please go back and read the footnote in the previous chapter in which I describe the man whose chest expanded when he heard birds singing. Another common example of pure feeling is the expansion of the heart that one feels from hearing noble music or beholding a magnificent sunrise. The feeling thus engendered cannot be explained in or induced via words. And conversely, the fewer words one has rattling around in his mind, the easier it is for him to feel the heart-opening joy that lurks in all creation, the love that throbs invisibly throughout the universe.

Almost everyone can feel moved when the entire sky is taken over with evening’s purples and golds. It requires more inner serenity and more subtle powers of feeling and intuition to feel the same swelling of joy in the presence of a daisy even though the miracle occurring in the living daisy is even greater than in the miracle of the sunset. PDers, as their illness progresses, often find that they can no longer experience much heart feeling from anything. This ability must be reawakened if they hope to recover.

³ For that matter, most of the great ones never even wrote anything down. In most cases, these teachers taught through the examples of their lives. Their closest disciples were the ones that wrote up the “message,” as they understood it. For example, Socrates was a great soul, but we only know of his teachings through the writing of Plato. The reason for this reticence of writing may be due to the impossibility of actually communicating “the heart message” via words. Still, we all keep trying, don’t we?

shortage of emotion- and heart-touching case studies to help get the point across. Also, while the students of great teachers can indulge themselves in a *laissez-faire* attitude such as “If I don’t discover joy in this lifetime, I can do it in some other life,” I have this advantage: my readers are more motivated. Sadly, many of my readers are scared or in pain. But looking at the bright side, their willingness to “hear with their hearts” might therefore be better. At any rate, though I keenly feel the challenge of writing this set of chapters, I’m giving it a go.

Literalists

I do know that many PDers have subconsciously chosen, *despite changes in symptoms that imply recovery from PD*, to remain partially or intermittently immersed in the disease. They continue to experience paralyzing self-pity, resentment, guilt, and a crushing sense of self-importance or responsibility (adrenaline-dominated behaviors) and a conviction that they are still in the grip of some amount of Parkinson’s disease. These same PDers have also, in my limited experience, tended to be word-based literalists, holding onto an adrenaline-dominated, fear-dominated approach to words.

Now, here’s the problematic part: these people, though they truly do want to recover from their symptoms, may not be able to understand the spirit in which one must enter into the proffered techniques. Instead, they will probably read these chapters’ suggestions and then force themselves to perform the techniques literally, like automatons. The techniques, when performed in such a manner, are pointless.

I have seen repeatedly that those PDers who are most firmly locked into negative thinking are the ones who usually postpone indefinitely initiating practice of the exercises. Then, if they finally do perform them, they resent, if not hate, the process of the exercises and the “wasting” of so much time. They may grudgingly go through the motions, but they will completely miss the point of the techniques. They will have been trying to follow the literal performance of the exercises, but will have completely missed the “feeling” for why they were doing them.

And for those PDers who have dedicated years to counseling and soul-searching introspection and yet have come up empty handed, maybe it’s time to admit that relearning to connect with the emotions can *not* usually be done via words. Words, as noted earlier, are, for most of us, associated with the part of the brain that compares and contrasts. Logical streams of words are activated, for most people, with adrenaline.¹

¹ One might argue that I am accusing speech and even the power of reason itself to be “bad things,” fear-based things. This is not the case. Even though nearly all PDers seem to use words and apply reason from a fear-based stance, words and reason are, in some people, the result of joy-based attitude. The human attribute of *healthy* reason, as opposed to adrenaline-based reason, occurs when reason is conjoined with intuition: mind combined with wisdom and feeling. (Continued on next page.)

The “leap of faith” that most of the great inventors and scientists rely on for their breakthroughs occurs when, in calmness and fearless mental clarity, they allow their reason to resonate with their intuitive faculty: a faculty that is shut out when the ego-directed mental monologue is dominant. Hunches from “the heart” or “the gut” and productive, logical reasoning are positive things. But most PDers, even though they imagine themselves to be highly rational, tend to be predicating most thinking on fear, rather than gentle joy.

Of course, there are singers and poets whose use of words stems from their flow of joy and not their sense of fear. In fact, by adding music and joy to words, very often the mind can switch from fear-based behavior over to joy-based. This is why most people who stutter or stammer cease to stutter when

The ability to read between the lines and resonate with the essence of these chapters' techniques, an intuition-based ability, is often lacking in those people who choose fear as their *modus operandi*. Not only that, these fear-shields are often the habits of a lifetime. Even if the techniques in these chapters successfully modify the thought processes for a short while, a PDer who is locked into fear-based thinking can quickly return, from sheer force of habit, back into his old thought patterns after practicing these techniques for only a few minutes.

Therefore, the new attitudes may need to be practiced repeatedly. The old thought processes must be defied and the new attitudes must be instituted over and over again. How long, how often must the PDer wage this war? He will need to have as many struggles as the PDer *wants to think* that he needs to have.

The job of changing one's attitude can take lifetimes – or it can take minutes. Ironically, one thing that can determine how long it will take to change an attitude is: attitude. If a person is determined that it will take a long time to change, it will take a long time.

Another thing that determines how long it can take to change from ego-based fear to joy can be a person's ability and willingness to throw away his ego and humbly ask the universe for direction or insight. Attaining this humility can also take lifetimes – or it can be a matter of minutes.¹

they sing. When they switch to the music of the parasympathetic system, they use words via an entirely different neural system – one that doesn't stammer.

And it is possible for people who have learned to control their minds to use words from a joy basis rather than a fear basis. However, most people have many fears associated with speech. The internal dialogue of most people is more likely to be saying "What I should have retorted to that bully is..." rather than pondering which words rhyme with "moon," "June," and "spoon."

¹ How long does it take for a person to learn to accept joy? C.S. Lewis, author of the famous Narnia Chronicles (including *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*), was raised a Christian, studied philosophy, and became a staunch atheist for much of his adult life. However, a few days after talking with his good friend, J.R.R. Tolkien, a Catholic, Lewis experienced an instantaneous heart change. He describes the experience in *Surprised by Joy*. The gist of the experience is this: Lewis was in the car on the way to the zoo. When he got in the car, he did not feel a spiritual connection to Jesus, nor did he think that Jesus had a special relationship with God. By the time he arrived at the zoo, he was certain of both.

While many purport to want to feel joy and/or know the truth about the creation of the universe, about spirituality, immortality, and love, most people are reluctant to perform the simple steps of humbly, but with determination and single-minded focus, asking the universe, in the language of their own hearts, to be shown the peace, the joy, and the answers. And yet, if one asks with genuine humility and real desire – and then listens to the answers of the heart – the consciousness can be attuned to long-lost joy within a matter of moments.

Of course, the answers are usually the very things an egoist does not want to hear. Fortunately, the joy of Love and Wisdom is so sweet, so perfect, that the shallow and fleeting joys of the ego instantly dim in comparison. And then comes the battle between ego-based habit and the new desire to follow the dictates of the heart. That battle can go on for lifetimes if one so chooses. But the initial introduction to life-changing joy can sometimes come as quickly as it takes to ask for it.

I read recently an autobiographical sketch in which a man stated that, having been raised in atheist Russia, it was utterly impossible for him to consider any spiritual matters as worthwhile. He wrote that, despite his own atheism, he was good friends with many people who were deeply devout, in various religions; he envied these people because they seemed to have something that he knew he could never have. As I read this, I noted to myself that the only thing preventing him from having this same "something" might be his own certainty that he could never have what they had. It was purely his own attitude that was preventing him from having that "something."

Therefore, a person whose dominant attitude is a negative one may have a self-fulfilling prophesy in place – a prophecy that states “this is going to take a long time, and it probably will not work.” And then the mind and body, working together, will comply with this prediction: changing the attitude will be – as predicted – nearly impossible.

The deepest understanding of these chapters will come about by reading the material, practicing, re-practicing, and continuing to practice these possibly hateful exercises until, at some point, you realize that what you are becoming while doing the exercises was the point all along, and never “perfecting” the exercises themselves.

Noticing how your mind waffles and wanders while you do these inner-voice stilling techniques might help you to make the leap to understanding, or at least objectively recognizing, your own behavior. Only when you are able to dispassionately observe your unrestrained mind careening about while you try to stay focused on the exercises might you begin to understand the magnitude of what you are reining in. Then, by recognizing these unrestrained patterns and trying to shift them for a second or two, you will inadvertently begin to change.

Merely reading the exercises and trying to attain their goals by logically understanding the mechanism will not work. You will not change yourself by studying the techniques with a fine-tooth comb as if they are arcane cures: they are not.

In fact, many of the techniques in this group of chapters were invented or modified by PDers during their own battle against habits of negative thinking. I suspect that most readers who truly intend to succeed will also form their own methods – based on the lessons hidden between the lines of the case studies, and *not* strictly, formally, based on the suggested techniques.

Now, from the standpoint of content, this chapter is not finished. My gentle editor suggests, however, that I have too many “techniques for changing the mind” to fit them all gracefully into one chapter. So, for ease of reading, there is a “chapter break” here, even though the material in the next chapter will be simply a continuation of this chapter.

