

CHAPTER FORTY-THREE

SEMANTICS: PART III

Defining surrender

Recovered PDers often use the word surrender to explain the mental shift that occurred during recovery. For example, “I finally realized that I’d been fighting something my whole life. It felt so good to just surrender to the universe.”

And yet, many people who are stuck in partial recovery usually have a powerful emotional dread of the word surrender.

To start with, surrender does *not* mean die.

Surrender means stop fighting: send up the white flag; stop being so tough and alone; ask for help; stop pretending that you are the only thing keeping your family fed and sheltered; stop thinking that, if you let down your guard, you and your loved ones will be necessarily be hurt.

The next sentence may seem a bit harsh, but I assure you, I am speaking to many PDers when I say: stop thinking that your stone-hard sense of responsibility is what has made you successful in life and that people who are different from you are losers. In the big picture, if you are so afraid that you constantly tremor in fear and you are so out of touch with your own body that you can’t relax and restore yourself at will to an awareness of the vibrations of joy within yourself, how successful are you, really?¹

As I mentioned earlier, the first time I attended the local Parkinson’s support group I was stunned to my core when a sweet, eighty-plus year old woman shared this experience (I paraphrase): “Last week I was at the grocery and I couldn’t reach something on the top shelf. I hated to do it, but I asked a young man to help me. He was so pleasant, he seemed to take pleasure in helping me!”

The other the PDers in the group looked at her aghast, as if wondering how she could have so far forgotten herself as to ask for help.

Surrender. It means admitting that you don’t run the universe.

Many PDers, in response to the above sentence, have said, “Maybe I don’t run the universe, but I’m responsible for running my part of it to the best of my abilities. I should not make errors or let people down if I can help it.”

¹ Many PDers are captains of industry and highly honored powerhouses. But if they are not contented, how successful are they, really? All the honors and money that they have accumulated will stay behind when they die: the consciousness of imperfection and fear will accompany them. If a PDer does not overcome his inability to be relaxed and content in this lifetime, he will have to continue working on these problems after death and in his next life. I often ask PDers how many lifetimes they intend to have Parkinson’s before they decide to surrender their stoicism and end their dissociation from their own hearts. Of course, they always say that they never want to have Parkinson’s again. I ask them what they have been changing in their approach to life so that they won’t end up with the exact same problems next time. Anyone who does the same thing over and over and expects to get different results if he does it yet again is *not* behaving rationally. If one’s attitude has contributed to Parkinson’s, one will have to change his attitude if he hopes in future to not have the mindset that causes Parkinson’s.

This sounds somewhat reasonable on the surface, but the way that some PDers apply it is in the extreme, dissociated from their ability to know what sort of errors are reasonable or inevitable. Because they cannot feel their own heart, they cannot know their true conscience. Therefore, many of them try to be strangely perfect. At some point it becomes sheer vanity – and doomed to failure.

This tendency is so marked that doctors have, for more than a century, tried to define the Parkinson's personality. I will make an attempt at describing that "something" that makes PDers seem so different from other people.

The Parkinson's Personality

For many PDers, their personality is defined by an attempt to use a combination of adrenaline and a numb heart in order to make the world as safe as possible for themselves and for as many people as possible according to the guidelines of their imperfect intellect, while having no idea what their hearts are trying to telling them with regard to their own feelings.

Humility: a hallmark of surrender

Can anyone of us prevent an earthquake? Prevent the death of a loved one? Reverse the tides? Prevent an economic recession? We can do our best, but we can't create a world that will be free from pain to the ego or body: a "safe" world.

Our responsibility is to use our faculties to do our best. We are not supposed to be super-humans who can "make everything all right" or keep ourselves or anyone else "safe" from pain.

We are supposed to love ourselves, and others, and do what's right to the best of our abilities. But we aren't supposed to be unreasonably perfect or knock ourselves out when we turn out to be no better, in the big picture, than anyone else. In fact, if the goal is to be virtuous, one of the greatest virtues is humility.

A humble man is perpetually surrendering to the will of the universe. Humility does its little job to the best of its ability and then leaves the rest to play itself out.

A humble man doesn't hurt himself by lying awake at night thinking of retorts, or hurt himself by running a constant critique of himself or of the rest of humanity in its head. Humility is always grateful.

I am not talking about being grateful or humble to *others*, although that is admirable. Many PDers come across as *very* humble and appreciative towards *others*.

I am talking about the way a PDer has to learn how to treat himself – the person he's become dissociated from. The PDer needs to be grateful and humble towards himself.

Humility can mean being grateful for having a body and prove it by taking the time to feel the body and feel oneself being inside his body. Humility can mean surrendering in the sense of *admitting* that various forces have wreaked havoc on the body and emotions, *feeling* those pains, and humbly *helping* the body by holding the pain-filled areas with internal vibrations of love and support when it asks for solace.

PDer, take a load off; give up the fight. You may discover that you have been spending most of your energy fighting enemies that you are creating in your own mind. Surrender. Stop the fighting. You may well find that most of your enemies were imaginary.

Surrender. It doesn't mean die. It means stop the fighting. Be at peace. Enjoy the physical sensation of calm that your heart feels when you remember that you are safe.

Defining calm

The discussion of feeling safe can be related back to the heart-nerve that were discussed in chapter xxx: the feeling of safety is associated with a relative calmness in heart rate variation.

“Calm heart” means “*regular* heart rate variations.” Calm means orderly: not chaotic. A rapid heart rate can still be calm. For example, a person who is having a glorious time leaping to catch Frisbee or gaily galloping down the beach at full tilt might have an *elevated* heart rate that is nevertheless calm and orderly.

Some people want to misunderstand the phrase “calm heart” to mean *slow* heart rate. This is incorrect.

If a person feels safe, his heart rate variations will not be chaotic. Even if the heart beat is going fast to accommodate increased oxygen needs, the “feeling safe” heart wave variations can be patterned in such a way that they are regular and somewhat steady: steady enough that the brain and heart are entrained and working together. “Calm heart” does not mean minimally active heart – it means heart without chaos, without fear.¹

A minimally active heart occurs during the pre-death state of automatic dissociation. In this condition, heart rate is minimized. However, this is not the same thing as a *calm* heart, one that is joyfully integrated with the mind and sensory awareness. A dissociated heart is one that is detaching from its ability to perceive sensations: preparing to die.

The minimal activity in the heart of a person who is dissociating is *not* the same as the minimal activity in the heart of a person whose sense of feeling has become vast through meditation and practicing compassion. The former has a slow heart rate because he is nearly dead or pretending to be nearly dead. The latter has a slow heart rate because he is living via the neutralized vibrations of energy that he *feels*, instead of sustaining himself with oxygen. There's a substantial difference between the two. Many PDers have deluded themselves on this point.

Defining “neutralize”

Most PDers, and many modern English speakers, have come to think that the word neutralize means “destroy,” as in, neutralize (kill) the enemy. Actually, that usage is a euphemism. Neutral means, more exactly, not taking sides: impartial.

For example, during World War II, the Swiss remained neutral. This does not mean that the Swiss were dead. It means that they tried to not get caught up in the madness.²

¹ A frequent admonition of Paramahansa Yogananda is “Be calmly active and actively calm.” In other words, even when active, the heart should be calm, not chaotic. And if, during the rush of activity, you temporarily lose your sense of calm, then actively work at feeling calm and safe again.

² I know, I know. Historians are making the case that the Swiss were not in fact neutral. I merely use this familiar political stance as an example. For that matter, historians' jobs are to *not* be neutral. Their job is to *interpret* the past so that we can learn from it. But to be most effective, they must integrate some illusion of neutrality into their work. This is what makes the job of the historian an art and not just a listing of dates and places. Historians must present their cases as if they are based on truths when, in fact, all perceptions *not* rooted in absolute Truth are delusory. And by bringing up the subject of history, I get to segue into a tangent that gets to the very root of our ability to be neutral: perspective.

As we say in physics, all observations vary depending on the location and velocity of the observer. Only when one perceives all things from the perspective of infinity can he perceive the Truth. Or as they say in Chaos

Perceiving a sensation with a neutral attitude allows it to be perceived as neither good nor bad, but simply as what it is. When, in the previous chapter, I said that pain becomes neutralized into mere sensation when one simultaneously feels the pain *and* the indwelling vibrant feeling, I did not mean that the pain is eliminated. I meant that the pain becomes mere sensation, without being tinted by fear, by notions of good or bad or a desire that it increase or decrease.

Sensory neutrality

When a person beholds a beautiful sunrise unfold, as he feels the sensations of color vibrating in his eyes and resonating in his chest, he will perceive it most fully if his perceptions are neutral.

Oppositely, if he analyses the sunrise to decide whether it is as good or bad as yesterday's sunrise, he's actually missed the whole experience. If he mentally says, "Nice work God, but I think last Tuesday's sunrise, featuring mauve and less canary yellow, was more effective," then he hasn't really *experienced* the sunrise – he has only judged it.

A person gazing at the sunrise should be able to feel neutral towards the sunrise. He can accept the sunrise for what it is: a sunrise. He *feels* the sunrise by noticing how his heart's vibrations are influenced by the colors and shapes. He does not taint the experience by deeming it "good" or "bad."

When one stops applying the murk of personal opinion and preference to an event, he can perceive the event as it truly is: he is a neutral observer. This is also known by another term: relaxation.

Oppositely, the evening news is designed to make a person feel strong opinions: *not* feel neutral. The TV viewer may feel aghast at the images of violence that are shown. He may feel angry or opinionated. Unless he is deeply wise, he cannot maintain his neutrality and relaxation as he is subjected to the over-dramatized events of the day.

One PDer told me that, in her teen years, after attending several music concerts with her friend, her friend said, "Why don't you ever just sit back and enjoy the music? You're always looking around at everyone, trying to see everything that's going on." The PDer continued, "When she said that, I had no idea what she was talking about."

What the friend was trying to say was, "Why don't you just sit back and enjoy the sensations of the music? Let the neutral – neither good nor bad, utterly unanalyzed – waves of music wash over you."

theory, in order to be able to know exactly what is happening, what has happened, and what will happen, you need to know everything, and you need to start your measurements at the moment all actions were initiated.

For example, to *truly* predict or understand the weather, we need to measure vibrations starting at the moment the universe began. If we have that Cosmic perspective, we can know what the weather will be and – getting back to the point – we can be emotionally neutral about what happens. When we know all the past, we can see all current events as repercussions of cause and effect. If we step back one step further, perceiving the love that *initiated* the universe, we can even perceive love amidst the fluctuations of seeming light and dark, pain or pleasure. We can see all events as neutral demonstrations of the law of cause and effect, originated and sustained by Love and moderated by Forgiveness.

We are never victims of randomness: we live in a universe that is ultimately fair. We are safe. We can rest assured that the exquisite perfection and balance in the universe is in force even when winds of change tear at the ever-shifting, delusory flesh. We can stand, emotionally unmoved, amidst the crash of breaking worlds: vibrating in time with the universe; feeling the song of every glorious atom. We can feel everything, feel the Love behind everything, and be joyously, truthfully *neutral* (without prejudice, without personal preferences, likes and dislikes).

Move to the music, housefly

Music is particularly glorious if one doesn't try to analyze or judge it. The other evening, while proof-reading the previous chapter in my living room, some friends were across the room playing a Hayden piece for violin, viola, and cello. The music was written in waltz time (oom pah pah, oom pah pah).

A housefly was walking around on the table next to me. For the duration of the musical piece, the fly paused at every downbeat. Pause skitter skitter, pause skitter skitter, pause skitter skitter, pause skitter skitter – in perfect time to the music. The music was vibrating through the housefly, and the fly was *feeling* the music. He was experiencing the music. His movements were being influenced by his vibratory awareness, his *feeling*, of the music. He was *not thinking* about the music; he was feeling it. His feeling of the music was emotion-neutral and vibrantly alive.

This fly brought to mind a particular problem. When I've told partially-recovered PDers that they need to learn to *feel* the Something Within, as it is called in gospel music, or the vibrations in the chest, or the expansion of the chest, they have often complained that I expect them to attain to sainthood. They bitterly point out that they shouldn't have to be a saint in order to recover from Parkinson's; *lots* of people aren't saints, but they don't all develop Parkinson's disease.

Some partially-recovered PDers have gone on to make the point that they know lots of people who are real jerks, who are far less spiritual than they are, who don't have Parkinson's, so how dare I make a connection between PD and the inability to feel "something within."

When I assure my patients that they don't need to be the least bit perfect or saintly in order to feel, or to feel safe, they shoot me a look that says it all: they remain convinced that I am asking them to aspire to something rare and nearly unattainable: a Gandhi-esque level of fearlessness and God attunement.

I thought of this common complaint as I watched the fly moving in time with the music, feeling the music. The fly could be another example for them: a PDer doesn't need to turn into a bodhisattva or prophet in order to recover; he just needs to experience neutral feelings – like a housefly.

Neutralizing consciousness

The great sage Patanjali (circa 200 BC) wrote in his Yoga Sutras (spiritual insights) that, in meditation, the waves of consciousness should be neutralized. He didn't mean that people should pass out and become unconscious – a common western misunderstanding. He meant that the waves of consciousness must be fully perceived, but with impartiality rather than opinions and analysis.

In other words, turn off The Internal Judgment Machine and feel what you can feel. Be human; come back to life. Be as safe as a mouse can be; be as perceptive of vibration as a housefly.

The neutrality of babies

When a tiny baby sucks his mother's milk, the baby's experience is neutral. The baby is not thinking about whether or not the milk is richer or tangy-er than last time. The baby is not

worried about whether or not the supply will run out. His isn't wondering as to his mother's motives.

The baby experiences the feeling of the milk flowing into his mouth, and the taste of the milk running across his tongue, and the smell of the mother's skin, and the feeling of his own tummy filling with milk, and the feeling of pure being that he senses inside the casing of his body. What joy!

A tiny baby doesn't take sides while nursing. He experiences his life without judging it: he is neutral; he is content; he is safe. When he isn't safe or when he is in pain, he cries or screams. When his pain ceases and his needs have been met, he is safe again. Safe is the fallback condition. Neutrality (sometimes known as gratitude) is the stance that lets one feel safe.

Defining gratitude

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, many PDers have told us that the "breakthrough" occurred when they realized how much they had to be grateful for.

Because of this insight, we often advised PDers to do a gratitude exercise that consists of feeling grateful for five things every night before going to bed.

We finally came to realize that it wasn't the gratitude, *per se*, that ended the dissociation. When we asked carefully about what the person had been grateful for in that moment when the brain suddenly sprang back into normal function and the Parkinson's permanently ceased, as if turned off by a switch (if the foot injury had already started to heal), we found that it wasn't due to the act of mentally *listing* things for which they were grateful.

It was when people stuck in partial recovery suddenly were able to *feel* grateful (a sensation, a heart feeling) – and they felt grateful for *everything* – that they suddenly felt profoundly safe. When they managed to change the drift of being grateful for the things they *liked* into an overarching gratitude for everything, even things that had seemed terrible or unpleasant at the time, they simultaneously felt safe.

Any immature person can be grateful for getting what he wants. Emotional maturity is being grateful for whatever happens.

How does this relate to feeling safe? Logically speaking, if *everything* that happens is OK, then there's nothing to be afraid of. If there's nothing to be afraid of, we're safe. Period.

As soon as PDers remembered that everything they'd hated or feared, even pain, had been helpful, had been a learning experience, had been fair and reasonable, maybe even *deserved* (in some impossible to understand, karmic sort of way), or had turned out OK in the end, they suddenly had to admit that everything, even the Parkinson's, was obviously going to turn out to have been OK, no matter how it turned out. And the tremor and the rigidity and the other mood-based symptoms all stopped.

In other words, when the gratitude became neutral, it became *real* gratitude. Real gratitude is gratitude for *everything* instead of gratitude for things that were favorable or desired. As soon as the PDer was neutral in his gratitude, his gratitude became directed at the universe in general instead of things that he particularly wanted or liked.

Which is the same thing as saying he became glad to be alive and a part of the great play of cause and effect and love that runs the universe. And a person who is truly glad to be alive and feels safe no matter what no longer needs to dissociate from his ability to feel.

When he ceases to dissociate, his brain flips off the switch that activates dissociation. He climbs back into his body, to stay. He no longer needs to play dead. The long-standing risk of potential emergency is over.

No exceptions

If a person is trying to experience the fullest expression of the neutrality type of gratitude for everything in his life, there can be no exceptions. As long as a person is nursing a grudge, he's not really grateful.

So long as a person is blaming anyone or anything other than himself for the events of his life, he cannot know peace in his heart.

The PDer will benefit from practicing gratitude for experiences that seemed painful at the time. Then he can remember and feel the pain of those experiences (re-associate). Then, he can neutralize the pain and be done with it.

If he simply can't find a way to be grateful for some bit of bad fortune, he can use the approach I learned from a dear friend: "When you can't understand why something has happened, assume the kindest possible explanation and you might be closest to the truth."¹

For example, suppose you come down with a dread disease. Try and come up with the kindest possible explanation. Is it possible that in a previous lifetime or in this one, you prayed for a friend or child who was sick? Maybe you even asked that the illness be transferred to yourself. Is it possible? If the sick person recovered against all odds and now you are sick – maybe it's because your prayer was answered. In this case, this might be a very kind explanation, reflecting well on the your magnanimity. And it suggests so much to be grateful for.

If a PDer is nursing a grudge against some perceived unfairness, he might try to be more original and creative in understanding how he himself might have set the mess in motion. Or he might want to consider how he has learned and benefited from his "troubles" in the long run. He can turn the problem into a blessing or an answer to prayer. And voila! Gratitude.

Or, he may need to learn that something that he perceives as unfair to others is actually, in some incomprehensible, "big picture" sort of way, actually fair. One PDer, trying to explain why people should keep their hearts blocked from all emotions told me, "If you don't, you'll go crazy; you'll see inequality in the world and you'll fret over it. You might even kill someone." I asked her if possibly the seeming unfairness in the world might actually be manifestations of cause and effect. She said that it didn't matter what the cause was. She assured me that the best way to deal with it, for a big-hearted person like herself, was to keep the heart blocked off from any emotions.

Some tips on learning gratitude are included in the chapters on Treatment Techniques.

Defining vibrant

In an upcoming section, am going to use the term "vibrancy" to mean the sensation in the chest that I've been struggling to find a word for.

¹ Thanks to Lendie Bliss

The words “vibrancy “ and “vibrant” are related to the word vibration. In addition to referring to vibration, vibrancy can also mean resonant, throbbing, radiant, sparkling, or vivacious (full of life).

Possibly because many PDers tend to *look* at things, including themselves, instead of *feeling* things, including the insides of themselves, they often assume that the word vibrant is primarily associated with colors. They think that vibrant means bright or fluorescent. This is a very limited meaning of the word vibrant.

And, although we *can* use the word vibrant to describe colors, it refers not to brightness, but to the way that colors sometimes seem to vibrate when you rest your eyes on them.

For example, a relaxed person, gazing across a mountain lake at the trees in the far distance, may notice that the colors of the trees and the sky and the lake are not a fixed, specific color. The colors seem to shimmer, as if they are rapidly vibrating between one color and another, or the colors alternate between sparkles of color and sparkles of pure light. These colors are vibrant – they are vibrating.

The PDer may not know what I am talking about, so I will explain. When a person sees the vibrations of light and sparkle when he gazes at colors in nature, he is perceiving some of the vibratory energy that is being generated and/or reflected that is not in the normal visual range of red to ultraviolet. This occurs when he registers visual perceptions using his heart’s resonance instead of his brain’s analytical processes. His heart’s electromagnetic field can resonate with lightwaves that are outside of the usual retinal perceptions. He “sees” vibrating color tones.

On the other hand, if a person is deeply depressed, colors may utterly cease to vibrate. If a person is depressed, the colors in a landscape may appear flat and matte: without any inherent vibration.

When colors are perceived as vibrating, they can be referred to as “vibrant colors.” Fluorescent colors have a greater likelihood of being perceived as vibrant. Still, no matter what the actual color, the emotional state of the observer plays a large part in the degree to which colors are perceived as vibrant or not. That’s enough about color.

Because I am going to use the word vibrant quite a bit, I just needed to make it clear that vibrant refers to *more* than colors. When I use the word vibrant, I am talking about a vibratory feeling, a small, gentle, physically felt sensation that resonates, flows, and swirls in response to stimuli that arrive via sight, hearing, taste, touch, smell, or the intuition.

In closing: reviewing the superscript quotes

Since we’re defining terms that might have been misunderstood due to lack of experience, I want to make clear the meanings of some of the quotes that I’ve inserted above some of the chapter titles.

St. Teresa of Avila said, “Pay no more attention to the mind than you would to the ravings of an idiot.” Mother Teresa of Calcutta said, “No one ever got into heaven (found happiness) by being clever. And the Mahatma Gandhi reminded us that “The mind is the attorney for the devil.”

In every case, these great souls were reminding people to turn off the relentless jabbering of the undisciplined mind and instead, feel the heart. Make the mind subordinate to the resonances of the heart. Feel, don’t think. Let the mind be the perfect servant of the heart feeling.

Years ago, I learned the following affirmation and prayer: “I shall reason, I shall will, and I shall act. Guide Thou my reason, will, and activity to the right thing I should do.”¹

This simple quote shows the correct relationship between heart and mind. The heart feels the vibrations of the land, sea, and air, and of the hearts of others. It also feels the voice of inner guidance. The mind’s job is to reason, will, and act in response to those vibrations. A person who has chosen to not feel will not be able to live. He will become increasingly mechanical, and then, like the denizens of Dante’s lowest circle of Hell, he will become frozen. His only movement may be the unending tremor of fear – the wordless call for comfort that even infants make when their hearts and brains are not working in tandem.

So feel.

I hope these word definitions have been helpful.

Redundancy

Some of my proof-readers have pointed out, correctly, that my writing suffers from redundancy. Many PDers, on the other hand, have told me that, in the beginning, they *think* they understand what I’m writing about, and it helps that I present the same information over and over again, in different ways, so that they eventually realize that they do *not* understand what I am talking about.

Some recovered PDers have told me that they honestly didn’t understand all that “heart stuff” in my book until *after* they recovered. Many have admitted that they skipped over the chapter about the feeling role of the heart in their hurry to get to the “important part.” But they did begin to suspect that there was something about the heart that they didn’t understand when, due to my redundancies, they realized that the bits that they tended to just skip over were the ideas that they truly did not comprehend. So, I apologize for the redundancies. Then again, if after reading this chapter even one reader is able to smack his forehead and say, “Oh! She means an actual physical sensation!” it will have been worth it.

There have been many instances of patients who have been told repeatedly, verbally, all the bits in this chapter. And when, after a spurt of gratitude that results in feeling safe, they suddenly notice a physical feeling of expansion in the chest, they usually say to me or email to me something to the effect of, “Why didn’t you tell me it was a *physical* sensation?!”

¹ From a talk by Paramahansa Yogananda (1883-1952), who has been described as “The father of yoga in the west.”

