THE FOURTH WAY is a system of ideas and practices designed to increase consciousness and develop understanding in the individual. It teaches a psychological methodology which is instruction on the process of 'metanoia'—meaning transformation of mind. This path to enlightenment was introduced to the twentieth century western world by G.I. Gurdjieff who called it Esoteric Christianity.

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The Fourth Way & Esoteric Christianity

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Part One

Early in the Twentieth Century, a Greek-Armenian esoteric teacher walked out of Russia and revolution with a small group of students. His name was George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff. Eventually, he made his way to France and established a teaching center he called the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man. There, Gurdjieff taught a developmental system on personal transformation that he called The Fourth Way.

In this, what he managed to do was to make metaphysical, spiritual instruction accessible to the rational scientific mind, uniting spiritual teaching from the East with the science of the West. The value of this particular accomplishment is immeasurable. Without Gurdjieff, the practical path of enlightenment called "the Work" may not have reached into the twentieth-century western world. His formulation of this esoteric teaching made it available to the general
population where previously it was only found in small exclusive
groups few ever heard of.

There is endless gossip about the very enigmatic Mr. Gurdjieff.
About his outrageous behavior, about his intentions and moral
character, and about his sources. However, there is still much more
debate about the system he called The Fourth Way. There seems no
end to the constant need to argue or prove the validity of the Fourth
Way by way of linking it to esteemed or mysterious sources. More
importantly, there seems to be no clear understanding of the subtle,
transformational psychological practices of the "Work"—which is
the heart and substance of the Teaching. Therefore there are
constant questions about how to practice it or why do it at all or
what the aim and result is. Gossip and debate will lead you nowhere
in your search for meaning and Truth in the Fourth Way. Slander is
as easy as idolatry. Only experiential understanding and verification
of this Teaching through the practice of it can impart its
significance.

Once you have the kind of verification that comes from practice,
you cannot misunderstand the aim of it. And once you understand
the aim and the Objective Truth found there, you will know how
valuable Gurdjieff's contribution was. In the light of it, gossip,
personality characteristics and debating the original sources are all
irrelevant.
What we have been given in the Fourth Way psychological teaching called the "Work" is a practical, verifiable instruction on the self-development possible for a human being; a process for the real transformation of human consciousness. It teaches self-generated self-transcendence: evolution. It is direction on how to grow in consciousness. By giving you a new perspective and awakened conscience, the Work gives you a chance to choose to become real.
Introduction

These lectures are intended to give you an understanding of the Fourth Way System which is an esoteric teaching about the inner development possible for human beings. You will learn about the relationship between Christian esotericism and the Fourth Way. You will hear instruction about the ideas, the practices and exercises, the terminology, the process and aim, the requirements and result of becoming a student of the Fourth Way. At the end of these lectures, you should clearly know what the Fourth Way is and whether it is the path you wish to follow.

Esoteric teaching is a psychological system but it differs from today's version of psychology. Modern scientific psychology studies Man as it finds him or as it supposes him to be. The psychology of esotericism studies Man from the point of view of his possible evolution. This perspective on psychology is the one being used in these talks—the point of view of Man's possible
evolution.
## 1. Sleep:

The Work teaches that every human being walking around in their daily life does so in such a subjective state of mind, at such a low level of consciousness, that it can be likened to a state of unawareness as intensely unreal as the state of actual sleep. This condition of Sleep applies to the whole of humanity and to each
person. The Work teaches a system for Awakening from Sleep.

This state of Sleep, which applies to the psychological condition of every person, is also called Second State or Waking State. In this automatically functioning mode, you interact in the world, in your life, by reacting to everything according to the formation of your psychology. You believe that you are in your personality and that your subjective opinions and attitudes and beliefs are right and true. You therefore invest yourself, give your identity to every response you have, remaining unaware that you are responding mechanically to the stimuli from life.

2. Levels of Consciousness:

The Work teaches that there are different levels of Consciousness, beginning with the state of literal physical sleep, which is called First State, to the waking state of living your daily life in the world, which is called in the Work, Sleep, or Second State, all the way to a fully evolved consciousness characterized by permanent unity.

It teaches that everyone lives their life in First and Second States, but that other levels are available as well. Eventually it comes down to choosing what level you want to live at and express—to which influences you choose to put yourself under.

Fully developed consciousness in a person, which means
Work Terminology

psychologically evolved, is characterized by Unity and Purity in their Being. It expresses their uniqueness purified, living in a permanent state of spiritual development, which is humble and self-transcendent and receptive to Divine influence.

The Work is a methodology for raising your level of consciousness, intentionally. That is why it is called self-evolution.

3. Possible Psychological Evolution:

The Work maintains that a person can intentionally raise their level of Consciousness upwards through the ideas and practices and exercises present in the psycho-transformational teaching of the Fourth Way.

Since there are different levels of Consciousness, change from one level to another is possible. Development is possible. Development means evolution.

This development does not happen automatically or mechanically in life. It requires intentional and specific efforts from the individual. It manifests as a permanent change in a person to a new level of Being, a new quality of character, a new depth of understanding, a new emotional perspective.

It is called self-evolution because the development is built upon
your own sincere efforts. You need to know what you are doing in the Work, and what you are aiming at. Then you can do the Work willingly, which is essential, aware and committed to your aim. Therefore, your Work efforts will build something new in you. Real change is possible. Remember that the direction of Evolution is upwards.

This system teaches that every human being comes into the world with a particular kind of essence nature which is unique to the individual. This essential nature interacts with its environment and a personality is produced that is subject to many variables. The outcome—Acquired Personality—is the result of what the Work calls the first education. It is a necessary development intended to create a means with which to interact in life responsibly. It is the second level of Consciousness. It is not the end of potential development, however it is as far as most will go.

The Work is sometimes called the second education. It can only take hold in a person who has a mature Acquired Personality. This is called being a Good Householder, which simply put means being a responsible person in your life, to yourself and to the world as well. A person in this position can use the Work, this second education, to reconstruct an authentic Being, true to their essence nature. You can build a structure psychologically that can lift you above the mechanical stimulus-response level of Consciousness. Building this structure through personal efforts of practicing the
Work will lead you into a new level of Consciousness and growth in Being which is the Psychological Evolution possible for humankind.

4. Awakening:

Awakening means raising your level of consciousness from an automatic stimulus-response mechanical level to that higher level of awareness possible within you. It means changing from a self-interest motivated person to a self-transcendent conscious person with an evolved level of Being. It means real change in the nature of a human being. It does not just "happen". Each person has to create this change through specific Work practices and diligent efforts over a long time period.

5. Real I:

It is Real I that is awakened by Self-Awareness. It is the who you remember in the act of Self-Remembering. Everyone has Real I within them. It is the truth of your Being, but it remains inactive and powerless behind Acquired Personality. During the course of the Work, as you eliminate the Wrong Work in your Acquired Personality, Real I grows in presence. Self-Observation stands in front of Real I and informs it during its development. The growth of
Real I is directly connected to the emergence of Buried Conscience as well. Self-Observation informs Real I, Conscience shapes it. True Personality expresses it.

6. True Personality:

Real I expresses True Personality, which is your purified Real Self. True Personality is authentic and comfortable and flexible and is Externally Considerate. True Personality manifests humility. Your own personal sacrifice of mechanical self-interest creates the space where Consciousness and Being can be transformed and True Personality is revealed.

7. Conscience:

The Work teaches that there are two kinds of Conscience: Acquired Conscience and Real Conscience. Acquired Conscience is different in different cultures and places and times and in individuals. The fact that it changes means that it is not objective or an expression of Unified Conscience. What may be seen as cause for pride in one era or culture may be cause for shame in another. Nicoll: "Acquired conscience is based on self-love, and self-love is based on fear."

Everyone also possesses Real Conscience, but it is buried and weak and nearly inaudible. Real Conscience is the same in everyone and
those who have developed it understand each other because they understand the same thing through the enlightenment of Conscience. Nicoll: "The growth of consciousness and the growth of conscience must necessarily go hand in hand."

The Work teaches that Real Conscience doesn't have enough force for action. The process of purifying the Emotional Center, which is the foundational labor in the Work, reveals a greater degree of Conscience. Your Conscience grows in the Work through Understanding and the consequences of purification. It develops correspondingly with Consciousness and level of Being. Conscience is connected to spiritual direction, it recognizes Truth and Goodness and it helps to formulate Real I. It is active in discernment and in choosing self-transcendence.

8. Being:

Roughly speaking, your Being is the quality of your character. Your level of Being is an expression of the nature of your psychology. Being is mechanical and present in everyone to different degrees. Being can be developed and indeed must develop in the Work along with Consciousness or there will be no right result from this process. You cannot possess a higher level of Consciousness which has been purified of negativity and selfishness and at the same time maintain a level of action in the world that express no change in...
Being. The nature of your character—Being—must be correspondingly transformed to a higher level, or Consciousness remains theoretical and has no power, no force. In the Work, Being is Goodness.

9. Divided Attention:

In order to practice the most important exercise in the Work, that of Self-Observation, you must first learn how to divide your attention, or rather that you can divide your attention. The idea of seeing a tree, and seeing yourself seeing a tree, is only part of the equation. You must realize that your attention is constantly engaged, moving from one event to another. Whether you are active in the world or not, your attention is engaged in a constant string of reactions to your life. Your thoughts, your feelings, your words, your actions, your attitudes, your opinions, your likes and dislikes, your moods or states are always taking all of your attention in one direction—projecting these things into the world. This projecting has energy and it all flows outward like a twenty-four hour radio station emitting a constant noise.

When you use your divided attention to practice Self-Observation, you are creating an interior vantage point that can view all of the "noise". It can observe both your actions in life and your underlying feelings and motives. Dividing your Attention in this manner takes
Conscious effort. You have to make a Conscious choice and use intentionality in Dividing your attention to create the vantage point of Observing I. Simply learning the exercise of Divided Attention goes nowhere until you use that division to practice Self-Observation by dividing yourself into an observed side and an observing side.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Divided Attention

10. Self-Observation:

The practice of Self-Observation is the most fundamental exercise in the Work. You can't know yourself unless you observe yourself. Self-knowledge in the Work sense is essential for change and development.

Once you can divide your attention so that you have a new vantage point in addition to your normal awareness; and when what you can see from this new psychological position is your self acting in the world and your own psychological condition as well, then you have begun. This is somewhat like learning to pat your head and rub your tummy at the same time, psychologically speaking. It takes attention, practice, and adjustments.

You do this observing from a new vantage point that you must make within yourself, from which you can see all of your behavior
and the psychology which creates it. Nicoll: "...First you must try to see everything in yourself in a given moment. The emotional state, thoughts, sensations, intentions, posture, movements, tone of voice, facial expressions, and so on." This vantage point or new perspective is called Observing I. It is directed at your psychology and it shines the light of Awareness into the psychological mechanics which have been functioning in the dark.

Practicing Self-Observation must be refined as you proceed. Most importantly, you must learn to do it without becoming negative because of what you observe in yourself. This does not mean do not recognize what is right from what is wrong. It means do not get caught up in an emotional response to what you observe. If you do, you have lost your perspective and are stuck in an emotional state that will obstruct your progress and your ability to see with clarity.

Sincerity, being able to be honest with yourself, and focus are part of the nature of practicing Self-Observation correctly. You must accept beforehand that you have to be able to see what is wrong in order to change it. If you remain unenlightened concerning something within you that is preventing your development, then again you are stuck and cannot change. So you must be willing to observe all that is in you. You must practice Self-Observation frequently, diligently, tenaciously, sincerely, and uncritically.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Self-Observation
11. Verification:

One of the first tenets of the Work is "verify everything for yourself". You may need to have an open mind to grasp a Work idea, but you are not asked to accept anything that you cannot verify. This of course means that you have to DO the Work. The result will give you verification. Verification is experiential understanding and it lives in your Work memory and gives it substance.

12. Self-Remembering:

Of all of the Work practices, Self-Remembering is the least understood and the most incorrectly practiced. One of the reasons is because Self-Remembering has many degrees and forms. Giving yourself the First Conscious Shock is a form of Self-Remembering as is remembering the Work ideas, and remembering your Aim. The practice of Self-Observation and of becoming present are also lesser forms of practicing Self-Remembering because they bring the Work to the point of incoming impressions and carry a taste of Real I.

Self-Remembering is making an effort to recollect what your essential Being is, your Real I, within the context of Scale and Relativity. It is a paradoxical experience in that you feel your
uniqueness and you also feel connected to all of Creation, an integral part of all that is. In a full state of Self-Remembering, Real I is "who" is present.

You can reach up to this higher state in your consciousness of Self-Remembering and sometimes touch what you are reaching for briefly. This is so that you can know and verify that this higher state exists within you. It is through your personal Work that you can develop the ability to Remember yourself in the full sense and become your Real I.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Self-Remembering

13. Negative Emotions:

One of the largest areas of study in the Work is the nature and activity of Negative Emotions. There are many good reasons to begin practicing Self-Observation by observing Negative Emotions. They have a strong recognizable energy and quality, they are preponderant, they lead you around and waste your energy, they obstruct conscious development because they anchor you to the lowest level of consciousness. They also lie.

The other good reason to begin with observing Negative Emotions is because the Work asks you to stop giving expression to all of your Negative Emotions from the beginning of your Work. In doing
so, you will learn many profound truths about yourself. First you will have to notice your Negative Emotions after you have learned what to observe. This, you will find far too easy. You will be shocked to observe in yourself how many Negative Emotions you have and how they dominate and taint your life. Then you will discover to your horror, that you can only barely, sometimes, keep from giving expression to them. It is a great inner struggle and it will take time and development before you can transcend your negative emotions instead of just trying to repress them. You will see how Negative Emotions arise against your will and intention; how quickly you are swept away by them, and how you justify having them.

The following are some of the Negative Emotions that you are asked by the Work to observe in yourself: annoyance, criticizing, self-pity, impatience, malice, vengeance, frustration, complaining, feeling offended, irritability, envy, sadness, restlessness, boredom, depression, anger, smugness, indignation, hopelessness, shame, nervousness, melancholy, insecurity, embarrassment, dissatisfaction, and more.

Each of these is examined as you observe them. They are studied and worked against and eliminated. For example, if you observe that you are feeling annoyed, examine why. If the answer is "because—whatever—is annoying you", then you are observing in the wrong direction. The source of the negativity is not outside you.
Your Negative Emotions are ALWAYS your own responsibility. Virtually no external circumstance can MAKE you negative. There is always another way. With growth in the Work you become able to choose not to become negative. You will see upon observation that you are Negative because your circumstances don't meet the requirements you have. In the Work, you will learn how to release your requirements, not how to make your circumstances satisfy them. You will learn to accept not being satisfied by way of working against Negative Emotions. This state of acceptance detaches you from the dissatisfaction of not having your requirements met. Most of your Negative Emotions come from dissatisfaction. In studying them, you will find that the dissatisfaction is the product of having requirements that are not fulfilled. You will see that behind your requirements lie a bevy of self-interested motives and false presuppositions.

The Work will tell you to look at your Negative Emotions and identify them. Then you must look behind them to the place in your psychology where they originate. You can only do these two things by the means of practicing Self-Observation. Through Self-Observation you will see that the emotions of suspicion, jealousy, and insecurity, for example, are generated by fear. While the emotions are very real and the needs feel very strong, all of them are produced by self-interest...you want, you need, you feel, you don't want, etc.
The Work teaches you to transcend self-interest, consequently Negative Emotions have no source and cease to exist. Getting rid of Negative Emotions is the process of purification necessary for development to Higher Consciousness through the Work. Negativity uses and wastes your limited energy and attention and obstructs your path. While you are in a negative state you are effectively cut off from higher emotions, the psychological place you are aiming at. Negative Emotions are the lowest levels of Consciousness in action, the most mechanical level. In order to gain in Consciousness or raise your level of Being, you must become purified of Negative Emotions.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Negative Emotions

14. Mechanicalness:

According to the Work, everything that happens on earth happens mechanically, dictated by cosmic laws that cannot be verified. Mechanicalness, however, can easily be verified and Worked with. Negative Emotions are the most mechanical level of functioning in a human being, and this can be verified by observing them. Negativity is very easy to observe. All it takes is seeing how a particular event makes you feel a Negative Emotion in response, repeatedly (for example, driving on the highway always makes you
feel anxious) to verify that Negative Emotions and states are mechanical responses. You will notice that you become angry if you feel you are not being treated well enough and that you join in gossip, or you hear yourself lying or pretending or complaining, exaggerating, criticizing, slandering, etc. You notice how a negative topic introduced into conversation about bad weather, health, kids, bosses, doctors, etc—will generate energy and everyone will join in telling their experience, creating a momentary wild fire of negative energy. This observation verifies that Negative Emotions are contagious.

Everyone is functioning according to their own personal agenda. Everyone seeks satisfaction, attention, appreciation, and acceptance. Everyone becomes negative when they suffer, when they don't get what they want. And it is all mechanical, that is, belonging to the lowest level of consciousness which is response to stimulus without awareness. All of the emotions in Acquired Personality are mechanical responses. That applies to each person and the whole of Humanity as well.

15. Acquired Personality:

Conventionally, the term used in the Fourth Way is False Personality. There is no disagreement with the accuracy of the term "false" if there is no condemnation in it. However, the term
ACQUIRED Personality is far more specific and informative with no condemnation implied. Nonetheless, Acquired Personality is unquestionably false.

The Work teaches that every person is born into the world with an innate nature and unique being, and also with a purpose. This is called Essence. It is basically the "who" of your being. But, since as an infant you are also a blank slate, so to speak, your experience shapes your Personality to a great degree. As your Essence interacts with the experience of your existence, the nature of your personality is gradually formed and acquired. This is necessary for normal development. But it is a limited level of development. There is a potential level of a higher Self available. The Work develops this potential higher Self.

In the formation of Acquired Personality, attitudes and habitual patterns of feeling and thinking and acting are created by imitation and environmental influences. This kind of personality formation is automatic and common to everyone while remaining idiosyncratic. It is not created purposefully or even with your consent. Your Acquired Personality is rather like the result of everything that was done to you during its formation. It is up to each individual adult to choose a path of self-development, to have Consciousness and authenticity, integrity and self-transcendence, and express their Real I in True Personality.
You have to observe your Acquired Personality in order to discern what is false and what is true to your Real I, your highest Self. In this Work process, your Conscience becomes more active and is able to discern between good and bad, right and wrong, true and false with increasing clarity.

The transformation of Acquired Personality is basically reconstructing your psychology to express your Real I, your highest Consciousness and Being. It means changing from a self-interested psychology to a self-transcendent psychology. The process is difficult because it involves deconstructing the ego, which is painful to the ego. It is destabilizing and therefore requires great strength of character and a strong need to change and have understanding in order to grow in the Work.

Acquired Personality is who you think you are. It is sometimes called your Imaginary I. It is defined by your attitudes, opinions, feelings, likes and dislikes, imitations, habitual responses and habitual ways of thinking and feeling and acting. It is the Acquired Personality that acts most mechanically automatically without consciousness or intentionality, churning out responses (energy) to stimuli according to the formation of your psychology. In the Work, all of what is false or wrong or negative in the Acquired Personality is observed and studied, worked against and separated from. This means long-term efforts.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Personality
16. Imaginary I:

Imaginary I is your identity according to the pictures you have of yourself as your personality. If someone were to ask you what kind of person you are, your answer would be a description of Imaginary I. You perhaps think you are a good old boy or a loyal patriot or an avant-garde artist or an intellectual or a fair and honest man or a rabble-rouser, etc. These characteristics belong to Acquired Personality. They are not you.

Imaginary I has the illusion of unity but in reality it is the constantly changing mass of all of the 'I's. There is no one permanent 'I' in control. But a man has one body and one name and a personality made of imaginary pictures, which leads him to believe that he is always the same—this Imaginary I.

17. Buffers:

Buffers are like a psychological appliance created by Man in the formation of his personality to absorb the shock of contradictions in himself; in his views and in his words, his thoughts and emotions. They take the place of the Real Conscience we have as small children, which gets buried as personality forms around essence, in
order to reconcile us with acquired conscience. Ouspensky: "Buffers make things easy for us. They prevent us from seeing what we are really doing and saying." If Man could see all of the dire contradictions in himself all at once he would feel that he is mad. Gurdjieff: "He must either destroy the contradictions or cease to feel and see them" . . . "Buffers help a man not to feel conscience."

18. Self-Love:

Everything in the Personality is based on self-love, that is self-interest, and this is the only way that it can be. Self-love is based on fear. Basic urges motivate actions that express a need for power or control over your environment and circumstances. These urges arise from the instinct for self-preservation and are necessary in the first education.

But if you think of self-love as the source of self-interested motives and you know that you have a mechanical Acquired Personality, then regardless of its nature it is all based on self-love since it is created to serve the self. Self-love will pollute your good actions with pride and merit-seeking. It will lead most seekers down a path that teaches them that "development" means the ability to get everything they want, that the manifestation of your desires means fulfillment. Self-love seeks attention by any means. It talks about itself and needs to be in the right, insists that it is right. Self-love
Work Terminology

exaggerates to flatter and inflate its good appearance to others and it takes offense very easily. All of these forms of Wrong Work arising from self-love are dealt with through Work practices and ideas and they lose power, and eventually they cease to be the motives that generate the actions of your Personality.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Vanity

19. Imagination and Pictures:

Imagination, which can seem to be a benign, insubstantial force actually has great power in your psychology. Your imagination is assisted by your Acquired Personality in forming Pictures that you have of yourself in your mind, things that you believe about yourself, and imaginary perceptions about what others think of you.

The truth is that imagination is actually completely insubstantial. It is imaginary. But the power and reign your psychology allows it fills it with force.

It is primarily the Imaginary Pictures that you have of yourself about what kind of person you are, that the Work deals with. This is no trifling matter. Your Imaginary Pictures are the expression of what you are identified with in your Acquired Personality and they are entrenched in "who" you think you are.
Directed, creative imagination is not what is being referred to here. The Work speaks about mechanical Imagination which is involved in most Wrong Work and perpetuates the consequential psychological malfunctions.

20. Justification:

Self-Justification is one of the most powerful forces which keeps us asleep. It is the activity of buffers. Always putting yourself in the right means staying in Sleep, not changing. Justification subtly alters things in the memory, emphasizing some and leaving others out. In other words, it lies. It is very important to the Acquired Personality which is based on self-love and needs to receive visible approval in order to maintain the Picture that Acquired Personality wants to present.

When you begin to observe negative emotions, your immediate response will be justifying them. You will feel quite right about being negative, placing the blame outside of yourself and you will feel relieved of the responsibility you have regarding negative emotions. This particular Wrong Work is easily recognizable and while it is hard to deal with in Work terms, it is something definite that you can observe and use in practicing the Work.
21. Lying:

There are so many forms of lying that they constitute an almost continuous condition of lying in our psychology. Lying is a great support in Justification and is always present in Negative Emotions. But every form of dishonesty is also lying. If you exaggerate your attributes to make a good impression, you are lying. When you pretend to have interest in or sympathy with or understanding of or knowledge about something, when in reality you do not, then you are lying. You lie about your thoughts, your feelings, your motives, your intentions, your whereabouts, your activities, your income, your position, your merit, your success, your character, your nature, your interests, your aims. Most of all, you lie to yourself about who you are and in believing you have consciousness and unity.

It is hard to discern lying since it can be so subtle and insidious, but it has a particular quality or "taste" in the psychology that also becomes recognizable. When you are seeking Truth, it becomes very easy to discard lying once you start to recognize it. It plays a large part in all Wrong Work because Wrong Work involves Negative Emotions which always lie.

22. Keeping Accounts:

Keeping accounts is specific Work language for what is basically holding a grudge against a person or even against life. When you
keep an account against someone, you have a memory about them filled with all of the actions for which you resent them. If you have a long-term relationship in such a case, you will remember only what validates your ill will and all of the times they offended you in some way. Careful reflection will show you that lying is active and that the underlying feeling behind keeping an account is one of feeling that you haven't been treated properly so you didn't get your due. Therefore, the other person "owes" you. Or you may feel that life owes you, that you have never received the right opportunities or the good breaks, the worthy circumstances you deserve. These are some of the actions of Internal Considering.

23. Complaining:

Complaining is like the background noise of your psychology. Once you start observing it, you will be shocked to find how much time you spend complaining, sometimes out loud, most often in your thoughts. Keeping accounts is a kind of complaining. Complaining is also full of lies. It is a one angled, tunnel vision, ungratified self-interested point of view.

Throughout your day, you will complain associatively about a number of things. Perhaps you start off each morning with the internal complaint of being tired. You can observe throughout the day complaining about your physical condition, traffic, your job,
your boss, your spouse, your kids, the weather, fatigue, overwork, lack of appreciation. You can observe dissatisfaction (which is complaining) with your circumstances, your finances, your appearance, your position, your possessions, your relationships, what you have, what you don't have, how you feel, whether you are satisfied, gratified and comfortable. All of these are also forms of complaining.

Complaining is easy to observe, it arises from self-interested psychology that is constantly obsessed with being satisfied. It includes always only looking at the negative side of things and the background noise it forms is a constant stream of Inner Talking about your dissatisfaction with your life. Once you posses Scale and Relativity and some degree of developed Consciousness, you will see the pathetic nature of constantly complaining about not getting your way or having what you want, and how something so seemingly innocuous and justifiable can effectively obstruct transformation and Growth through the Work.

24. Song Singing:

Song singing is a specific Work term referring to an habitual set of complaining 'I's that repeat themselves in your psychology, the nature of which is something like "woe is me". It may begin with an experience in the present, but that experience can trigger a set of 'I's
that say the same thing to you over and over again throughout your lifetime. They are very familiar emotional states that have a descending quality. An example would be: your alarm doesn't go off, you wake up late and are immediately hurried, irritated, and you begin thinking "Why does my alarm go on the fritz today when I need to be at work early? Why do things like that always happen to me? It seems like every time I have an important occasion, I'm plagued with problems that day. You would think I could get a break just once and not have to deal with any extra hassles on an important day. But no, the harder I try, the more difficulty I have. It seems like bad luck is just chasing me down, running me over and I can't get away from it. If this keeps up, I'll never be a success. What am I talking about, I'll never be a success anyway. It's useless. This is ridiculous. I'm tired of trying. I'm tired of failing. I don't know how to get what I want and I'm never going to be happy."

Very often, these kinds of "songs" will be about your difficult childhood or your painful relationships or your unsatisfied vocation. But they always say the same thing and it is always a sad song about your sad circumstances and your unhappy life. You will recognize them easily due to familiarity. After paying attention long enough to know what these emotional habits express, the only way to deal with them is to practice Inner Silence in relation to them.

25. Inner Talking:
Inner talking is the vehicle for complaining and song singing and keeping accounts and justifying, among other things. It is the normal functioning of your psychology to be constantly engaged in either external or internal talking, or both at the same time. The subject matter varies, but the monologue is your constant commentary on your experiences and feelings and thoughts. Generally speaking, there is a negative quality as in the above examples, but there are many kinds of inner talking. It can be imagination, fantasy, day dreaming, or even positive subject matter and emotions as well. Through Self-Observation, you will find that Inner talking is going on inside you at all times.

In the Work, you will need to know what to make silent and see whatever real perception may be present. In any case, Inner Talking is primarily an obstruction to receptivity. If you are full of comments, opinions, attitudes, and responses, how can hear from Higher Consciousness?

26. Internal Considering:

Internal Considering refers to an enormously prevalent dysfunction of your psychology. It has mostly to do with feeling that you are owed or that you have been slighted or offended in some way or you fear that you might be. This term ties together many different kinds of emotional dysfunctions like keeping accounts and
complaining and justifying, and many others. Vanity plays a powerful role in Inner Considering as does Fear. The psychological expression of it goes something like this: you arrive late at a party with a great story about your delay. Everyone is already engaged in conversations and activities. No one seems especially interested in inviting you to join them or in your "great story". You feel slighted. You feel that these people aren't treating you very well. They are not showing you the amount of interest, regard and appreciation you deserve. You feel insulted and offended and you begin to worry about what everyone of them thinks about you. Do they like you? Do they notice that you are nervous? Can they tell that you exaggerate? Do they agree with what you are saying, approve of it, of you? Of how you look? What if they don't agree with you? Are they criticizing you, scoffing, dismissing, mocking, belittling you? These feelings are based on the unarticulated question in your mind that feels like am I satisfied? Are you getting your expectations and requirements of this event fulfilled?

Inner Considering is always saying things like "I hope they like me"; "What if I make a mistake?"; "What do they think of me?"; "Was that an insult?"; "What did he mean by that?"; "I hope I don't embarrass myself"; "What if I do something humiliating?"; "What will they think?"; "Are they in agreement with me?"; "Is someone trying to make me look bad?"; "Why is that person not paying attention?". It moves very quickly into even more general Negative Emotions. Most often they are about how dissatisfied you are with
your life and your circumstances and how unfairly treated you feel by them. You feel that you never got a break or that you have had exceptionally bad circumstances. You feel that you should have a better job and higher position and more ease in your life. You feel that life has cheated you out of the opportunity to have what you want. You think you haven't received the proper share of consideration, appreciation, or compensation that you deserve from life and people.

This very complex, wide-ranging psychological Wrong Work is a huge area of study that you undertake in order to be free of it. Every form of Inner Considering is an obstruction to the development of Consciousness. Inner Considering keeps you focused on yourself and filled with your own requirements. This effectively eliminates the possibility of real personal development of transcended consciousness.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Inner Considering

27. Identification:

In the Work, being Identified with something means giving the force of your belief to it and ascribing it to yourself. Primarily you are identified with yourself, with who you think you are. Therefore you are identified most with everything that defines you, i.e. your
attitudes, your opinions, your politics, religion, national affiliation, cultural designation, as well as individual events and circumstances. This is the mechanical functioning of an un-awakened consciousness. In Identification, the psychology goes from one associative thought to another, Identifying with each one in its turn, giving force to the Identification by believing what it says and asserting it.

You may define yourself as a good citizen, politically liberal, socially acceptable, patriotic, sound minded, honorable person. However you define yourself, it will be expressed in what you believe to be consciously formed attitudes and opinions and dispositions. However, these Identifications are not you and they were not formed Consciously yet they feel like yourself. They are at present who you know yourself to be. But they have been formulated in you without your conscious participation and therefore belong to the level of Sleep. If you can imagine for a moment that you have been struck with total amnesia, thereby you have no attitudes or opinions or preferences or any of the conventional ways to describe yourself, yet you still exist. You are not the things you have lost with your memory.

Identification is one of the most difficult areas to work with. It is subtle and insidious and powerfully tenacious because it brings you right up to the point of having to forsake your ego for the transcendent higher.
28. Multiplicity:

One of the hallmark transitional points in the Work occurs when you have observed all of the previously described Wrong Work within yourself and you see the enormity of contradictions and insincerity therein. The Work teaches that your sleeping psychology is an unorganized mass of individual thoughts and feelings called 'I's. This is the doctrine of 'I's. To every circumstance in life, an 'I' within you steps forward and says 'I' in response—without the presence of Real I or Consciousness or intentionality or unity. After a long period of Self-Observation, you notice that many 'I's are habitual and congregate in groups. You will observe how one 'I' can contradict another 'I' with no seeming discomfort, that you can go to bed full of 'I's of conviction to wake early in the morning and find only 'I's of complaint and resistance, justifying and rationalizing away the previous night's 'I's. You will see that your 'I's speak automatically for you in ways that you would not choose, were you able to choose. You will see how 'I's are constantly changing, expressing your mechanical responses to the stimuli in your life. You will understand that in saying "I" to something you are giving consent and energy to Identification.

One of the reasons this is a critical stage is because in seeing your
multiplicity you have the first glimpse of the magnitude of the Work and the magnitude of its requirements of you. It is a decisive point where you have to commit to the path of unity or decide to live with being a multiplicity. Thereafter, you will have to make choices about every 'I' you observe within yourself. You will have to work against inconsistency, and you will have to restructure your psychology with no Wrong Work left in it.

More importantly, the mere fact that you know through verification that you are a multiplicity means you can choose which 'I's are real and honest and which express your Real I. Knowing your multiplicity eventually gives you the power to choose, thereby change.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - Multiplicity

29. Self-Awareness:

All of the efforts you make to practice Self-Observation, Self-Remembering, not expressing Negative Emotions, and to be Externally Considerate are aimed at bringing you into a higher state of consciousness called Self-Awareness. Practicing Self-Observation over a long period of time and verifying the existence in your own psychology of the Wrong Work of Inner Considering, lying, justifying, etc., will teach you to "know thyself" in the only
way that matters. Self-Awareness is the beginning point of your potential. Before you reach Self-Awareness, you are too mechanical to be accessible to the influence of higher Understanding, with only rare, brief exceptions throughout your life.

With honest Self-Awareness, you can begin to choose to be real in every moment. It is the point at which real and permanent change in your level of Being can become tangible.

In this System, Self-Awareness, Self-Remembering and Self-Observation all belong to the same level of Consciousness which is directly above your normal consciousness. Each is a different kind of activity. They are not the same thing.

30. Intentionality:

Intentionality means acting with Conscious awareness. You must reach conscious awareness, even momentarily, in order to act with intentionality. Consciousness and Being manifested in Real I and True Personality act with intentionality.

31. Non-Identification:

Non-Identification is the movement of energy out of Wrong Work. It is the force between mechanicalness and intentionality. In order
to be free to choose intentionality, you must be free of your own Identifications, free of your requirements. If you are motivated by selfishness or personal agenda, you are Identified and you are not free to make a pure choice.

Non-Identification is an effort that you make which releases force for transformation. It is that state of selflessness or emptiness or detachment that is referred to in this Work. It happens when you choose not to express or consent to your normal mechanical responses. During the Work process you can experience times of Non-Identification. This state is available to you in every moment when you sacrifice your own requirements in order to act from Conscience, intentionally. It is the state you are seeking in doing the Work.

32. Sacrifice:

In order to get into a state of Non-Identification, you must sacrifice something. In the Work, you sacrifice everything false or wrong and selfish or negative that belongs to Acquired Personality for self-transcendent consciousness. When you sacrifice your personal requirements and desires, you will find you can reach Non-Identification with the force you have withdrawn from Identification with your own agenda.

Understanding the idea of sacrifice correctly is critical to a straight
The Work teaches that you must pay for what you receive, and this is correct. What you have to sacrifice in order to Work on yourself is your self-interest, your Acquired Personality with all of its screaming opinions, likes and dislikes, attitudes and hatreds. In doing so you can reach a higher state of consciousness called Non-Identification. It is only from that point that you can formulate right action. So the sacrifice that you must make in order to develop in the Work is a psychological sacrifice of ego to make room for the growth of consciousness and the receptivity to higher influences. Every effort you make to let go of an identification is a sacrifice. Every effort you make to practice Self-Observation is a sacrifice. Every effort you make to not express Negative Emotions is a sacrifice. These are the sacrifices that are required by any authentic developmental path, in this case the Work. Nothing else can produce any gain in consciousness. You can't buy your way into it and you can't do external work that will get you there. Sacrifice is an essential, emotional/psychological effort. It has force and it leaves space for growth.

33. Suffering:

The Work teaches that there are two kinds of suffering—Necessary Suffering and Unnecessary Suffering. They both feel quite the same and we generally don't differentiate between them. Your suffering over a public humiliation, for instance, may be as severe as your
suffering over the loss of a close friend. So it is critical to start observing the difference.

Everyone suffers nearly continuously throughout their lifetime, regardless of their circumstances. And there are valid reasons for Real Suffering in everyone's lifetime. However, the Work teaches us that the vast majority of our suffering is unnecessary. Unnecessary Suffering arises from unsatisfied requirements and desires on our part. Real Suffering is bearing the loss of love, the death of someone close, meaninglessness, real heart deprivation, illness, etc.

Unnecessary Suffering is what you study most in the Work because it is what you have to sacrifice. Your Unnecessary Suffering arises from your Acquired Personality and its Wrong Work. All forms of Inner Considering are Unnecessary Suffering. All forms of Negative Emotions are Unnecessary Suffering. All forms of justifying, fear, worry, and insecurity are Unnecessary Suffering. The sources of all Wrong Work are addressed in doing the Work, and are gradually eliminated.

There is one more element that needs to be mentioned here. Doing the Work is taking on intentionally additional Necessary Suffering with the aim of development. Doing the Work practices and exercises causes Necessary Suffering and it needs to be done willingly. Accepting the process is Necessary Suffering and
sacrificing your egocentric psychology for self-transcendent psychology is Necessary Suffering. You do this for a purpose when you are in the Work.

34. Inner Separation:

Among the practices and exercises in the Work, we are given tools as well to use against any Wrong Work that we observe. These are psychological tools applicable to your psychological development.

First the Work asks you to practice Self-Observation. You are instructed to observe the multiplicity of I's, the degree of Wrong Work in your psychological condition, and watch passively as you begin to know yourself in a new way. But what then? Once you have seen your Acquired Personality and have sensed your Real I, how do you reconcile them? What can you do about the Wrong Work that you observe within yourself?

The Work gives us a practice called Inner Separation that is a psychological effort you make to step back from your mechanical functioning and view it as only mechanical functioning. In doing so, you strengthen the observer of the mechanics—Observing I. The effort to distance yourself from mechanical behavior weakens its force. This is a subtle psychological exercise. You see repeated mechanical behavior and you do not say 'I' to it. You do not assent. Your rob it of force. It moves away from you. It amounts to
reaching for detachment or taking one step in the direction of Non-Identification. Every effort of this nature helps to separate you from your False Personality.

35. Inner Stop:

Another valuable tool that the Work gives us is called Inner Stop. It can be considered the first movement of effort toward Inner Separation and Non-Identification. When you observe Wrong Work in yourself and you know through verification that this is Wrong Work that you wish to change and that the first effort of change is to stop the Wrong Work, you can practice Inner Stop. If you observe yourself justifying, simply stop saying the words. If you can successfully stop some Wrong Work in process, then you have the choice in that moment to move toward separation from that Wrong Work. Elimination of it happens by not consenting to giving it your attention. First you stop, then you can move toward Inner Separation. You can use methods of remembrance of the Work and your aim or some other intentional activity to assist you in changing direction at that point.

36. Inner Silence:

In the Work, Inner Silence is a very specific psychological exercise.
It is not the inner silence commonly referred to when speaking of a transcendent state above the noise of the multiplicity. It is not the general inner silence of a still, inactive mind. It means to remain silent in your mind toward one specific thing.

As you practice Self-Observation, you will begin to see definite, repetitive groups of 'I's that are harmful or dishonest or even dangerous. You will observe yourself "singing your song". You will observe an account you are keeping against someone. When you have a definite set of 'I's that you have recognized repeatedly over a period of time through Self-Observation, you can practice the Work's version of Inner Silence in relation to these familiar sets of 'I's in order to dis-empower them. The practice of Inner Silence goes something like this. You are aware that there is an account raging in your head against another person. Fueled by Negative Emotions, it has its own momentum. Its energy is actively present as are the consequent Negative Emotions. To practice Inner Silence, stop giving voice to that particular set of 'I's. Every time an 'I' arises that belongs to keeping an account against that person, you give it no words either literally or more specifically psychologically. You do not let your thoughts touch that place in your psychology and you do not let your tongue touch that place because if it does the words will pour forth. So in practicing Inner Silence, first, you give no words to the specific Wrong Work. You give it no attention, even if you still sense its presence. You refuse to acknowledge or have your attention drawn into it. But most importantly, you do not
allow yourself to speak the words even in your mind.

**Related:** Teachings of Inner Transformation - Inner Silence

#### 37. External Considering:

If you persevere in the Work and develop on its path, and when you have reached some degree of self-transcendence, you will begin to be able to practice External Considering intentionally. The Work asks you to practice External Considering from the very beginning of your efforts. At first, this seems mostly an issue of exaggerated good manners, but as you go through the process of the Work, your Understanding of what it means and what it takes to be externally considerate in the full sense is beyond your capacity for a very long time.

To be externally considerate, very well includes sensitive manners. But it asks you not only to be polite, it asks you to understand the other person's position. It asks that you view the circumstances from the other's point of view and that you treat the other person with intentionality that expresses good will—Conscious Love. It may require being active or it may require being passive, or even withdrawing. Every day, every bit of time you spend in the company of others becomes an opportunity to practice self-transcendence through External Considering. As you do this
exercise and develop in the Work, you begin to have an organic Understanding of what it means to be asleep. And as you begin to awaken yourself, you will find it becomes very easy to forgive other people for their condition because you know what being asleep is like. It is full of suffering.

External Considering requires a good deal of practice and study that will be useful to you when you gain enough consciousness to choose self-transcendence. But the essential nature and foundation of External Considering is based in forgiveness. It is forgiving people for being asleep. In doing this, you release them from your requirements and you both become free. It means giving others ease and whatever consideration needed. Acting intentionally from Conscience with Understanding and right actions—to do what is Good.

Related: Teachings of Inner Transformation - External Considering

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Introduction

Before you begin practicing the psychological Work of the Fourth Way, you must first have a strong desire to change the kind of human being you are; a reaching out metaphysically, seeking meaning and authenticity and growth into what you were born to become. This kind of dissatisfaction with yourself as you are is a prerequisite because the Work can then use the energy of that desire to fuel the real change it is aimed at. Since the Work is a path devoted to concrete change, so must the student be seeking actual change. Each student must be willing to undertake the efforts necessary due to a sincere longing for personal development.

The Work must be done willingly and this is a most critical point. First, you must understand what you are doing and why you are doing it before you can do it willingly. If you try to engage in the Work practices in an uninformed or casual way, or out of curiosity, or if you are simply following the directions given you by your Teacher, in a legalistic manner, you will find that you have bitten
off more than you can chew and the Work will become hazardous to you. Again, if you are generally satisfied with yourself the Work will only offend you. Or if you imagine that you can gain the kind of self-mastery which will give you the power to fulfill your dreams and desires and thus be satisfied, you will be in for a rude shock. None of these approaches will get you anywhere in the Work. From the outset, you must willingly be seeking sincere self-change in order for the Work to work in you. If you understand this clearly and you have the right attitude, which is Conscience toward the Work, then you begin with acquiring knowledge.

Gaining knowledge is the first effort in the Work because you cannot get the right results until you understand how and why and what you must do. Since the Work is esoteric knowledge, it is of a special quality which requires thinking. You cannot learn about the ideas and exercises intellectually, by rote using your ordinary memory, and get any results. The ideas of this system need to be assimilated into your consciousness by way of understanding which is not the same thing as knowing. This requires personal Work, thought and reflection, and a flexible mind which doesn't presume it understands everything already.

You can spend your lifetime studying the knowledge of the Fourth Way, becoming a technical expert, and never actually be in the path of the Work. Knowledge comes first but it goes nowhere until you apply it to yourself, to your Being. No amount of knowledge alone
Esoteric Christianity creates change, but when you begin to practice what you have learned you receive light and gradually the ideas become organic understanding by way of the personal experience you have in practicing them.

Studying this esoteric teaching will give you small shocks of awakening if you reflect on the ideas. The idea that humanity is asleep is a shock only slightly less alarming than the idea that you are asleep. The idea of self-evolution and different levels of consciousness is a shock. And the idea of Multiplicity and mechanicalness can leave you reeling. You can find momentary mind expansion but not permanent personal transformation in the knowledge of this teaching. Transformation, which clearly indicates change, happens in and through your individual effort to apply this knowledge to yourself by way of practicing its teaching. Too many students confuse knowing about the ideas of the System with understanding that only comes with the enlightenment gained in practical efforts. You may know that you do not remember yourself, but that knowing doesn't mean you are remembering yourself. You have to make the efforts to actually remember yourself in order to understand what it means that you don't remember yourself. You may know quite well that you must observe yourself but never get beyond merely noticing this or that randomly, or you may have a very clear grasp of the idea of mechanicalness without ever having observed your own. You cannot have the perspective of the Third State of Consciousness unless you reach up into it in a practical way.

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through your effort.

Getting into the Third State of Consciousness—awakening—is made possible mostly by way of making your personality passive; by going against the mechanical momentum of sleep which is always asserting your personality. Remember that the Third State is available to you at all times, above your ordinary state, accessible by the means of practicing Self-Remembering and Self-Observation and Non-Identification which are conditions of consciousness in the Third State. You can create these conditions yourself by doing the Work yourself. That is what self-evolution means.

This is an incredible idea—that you can raise yourself up into higher levels of Being and Consciousness within yourself by doing the Work, and in doing so, you can receive enlightenment. The magnitude of this gift of opportunity exceeds words, yet it is verifiable and true. Your valuation of the Work will deepen and grow as you learn to appreciate the significance of this gift. If you find this esoteric path, you may consider yourself blessed.
Related Material
Articles, book reviews, and web links

Articles

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by Theodore J. Nottingham

The Wisdom of the Fourth Way
Reflections on the Process of Spiritual Evolution
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Teachings of Inner Transformation
Commentary on Key Fourth Way Concepts
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**Gurdjieff: Reflections on the Man and his Teachings**
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**A Different Christianity: Early Christian Esotericism and Modern Thought**
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**Gnosis: Study and Commentaries on the Esoteric Tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy**
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Links of Interest

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[Praxis Research Institute](#)
The Praxis Research Institute investigates certain teachings of the early church that have been unknown or ignored in the Western world. We have been particularly concerned with teachings that appear to offer a resolution to the 'human dilemma', first working pragmatically to find a 'way through the maze,' then to support what has been found in this way with in-depth research.

NEW!
Theodore J. Nottingham is an author and translator who works in a variety of genres, including Historical and Metaphysical Fiction, Screenplays, Teleplays, Children's Books, and Non-Fiction. He is also a television and video producer. He is the author and producer of numerous documentaries and has regularly published articles in national and regional magazines.
Part Two

Each of us is born with a nature that springs from the strongest drive in a human being. That drive is self-preservation—the primary survival imperative. The psychological nature produced by this necessary element is based on self-interest and power-seeking is its expression. Human beings naturally strive for power over their environment to help ensure survival and satisfaction. You will find that nearly all that you do can be traced back to one of these elements as motivation. The development possible beyond this automatic self-interested motivation for life is psychological evolution.

Each person's unique essential nature in interaction with its individual environment creates all of the infinite variety of individuals who nevertheless all have the same basic drives creating the same conflicts in lives and events, even in history. This condition would most properly be called humanity's animal level of being. Nearly everyone will live their whole life at that level and die there too, unaware that there is any other way to live. Yet there
is much about this level of being that is beneath even animal level behavior, such as killing for pleasure, cruelty, vengeance, sexual perversion, making war, and malice. These things define most people's nature as something below animal nature in character.

A person like this can be said to be in a state similar to being asleep. Governed by self-interest and being automatic in behavior, the person is a stimulus-response organism acting without free will, and is unaware of it. This person spends their life and energy responding mechanically to every changing circumstance, both in external life and in internal states. Each event engenders a response that is subjective and is motivated by gratification-seeking. Constantly changing outside events and internal states create a seamless life of responses one after another. This condition is called Sleep. Everything happens automatically and mechanically.

This is the state of humanity: ASLEEP. From this condition arises every sort of conflict, from resentment to thermo-nuclear annihilation; and every cruelty, every bit of malice, every act of violence. But this is not all what a human being is. In each of us there is also something authentic, with purpose. The Fourth Way calls it "Real I" and teaches that it exists as a possible, that is, reachable state existing within you above the level of the sleeping state of consciousness.

This level is open to the inspiration of Objective Truth which
always expresses Goodness because Goodness is above Truth. The direction or inspiration you can receive in this awakened state is from a level above you, from the dimension of Spirit. Therefore, you must raise your own level of consciousness to a place where you can hear higher consciousness—spiritual direction. That means you have to choose, in the moment, to be self-transcendent over all other possibilities.

The possibility of living this way—in the Work—gives meaning to everything in your life. But living it means doing it. It means practicing the exercises and studying the ideas and it means constantly choosing self-transcendent Goodness. One of the most important points to be made concerning "choosing" is that it is an intentional conscious act: you have to make the effort yourself. That effort provides the energy and material for transformation. This is something you can only do by choice, willingly. Choosing Goodness above self-interest creates psychological evolution which happens one person at a time making self-transcendent choices one at a time.

The development or evolution that is possible for a person on this earth in their lifetime is psychological. The result of that self-generated psychological evolution is spiritual growth. Spiritual growth, psychological evolution, higher consciousness, and developed being all mean essentially the same thing: they are describing a higher level within you. All legitimate paths lead in
that direction.

From our ordinary state of consciousness we can have very little understanding about how to actually go about becoming a transformed person. Learning to become self-transcendent requires enlightened instruction from someone who possesses an understanding of esoteric teaching. Ouspensky stated, "You must learn from someone who knows". With that instruction, plus knowledge and practical Work, you can create an understanding which raises your level of consciousness. It is your existence in that higher level that manifests your Real I. This can only be a momentary experience at first but it can be built up by conscious intentionality through doing the Work. So there exists real knowledge of how to go about transforming your level of consciousness but it is a painful arithmetical truth that, although the knowledge and the means are available to everyone at all times, few are interested in esotericism and fewer by far find real permanent evolution in the nature of their character—their Being.

Nevertheless, the unconditional love which extends this opportunity to awaken remains faithfully near us, continuously accessible, unchangingly good. Christ's life was lived out in every way necessary to bring all people, under all circumstances, personal communion with God. No other need to, or can, follow Him to the literal cross: it is accomplished. Howsoever anyone finds God, He is the means regardless of what the path is called.
There are legitimate traditional paths to a personal relationship with God; the major religions primarily. They all have esotericism in their essence or in their mystical aspect. However, this teaching about inner development is not expressed very well in external forms, rituals, or dogma. The exoteric forms of all religions very rarely produce real transformation; that is, evolution in the individual. But many ways have always existed in order to accommodate all people.

In Christianity, it is possible to have an authentic transformation by the very simple and completely pure inspiration arising from empathetic experience with Christ and self-transcendent Love for Him. It is possible to be completely changed permanently by sudden radical illumination in the heart and mind which creates objective understanding. It is possible to find transformation through suffering, and although this is God's least desired way, it is a common human path because so many never turn toward God until they are suffering. There is a path to transformation through the selflessly motivated imitation of Christ's nature. There is the salvific way of God-centered life. And because He provided THE WAY, every way eternally, for all, there is also a pathway that is accessible to the intellectual, rational, scientific mind—no particular religious designation required; only conscience. This is esotericism.

The Work is a developmental path for very serious people who
cannot find this authentic, permanent change in themselves through academic or inspirational or empathetic or traditional religious means. It is a path of practical psychological instruction intended to purify your heart and mind, resulting in increased consciousness. It is based on Objective Truth and is the essential esoteric teaching given to the world by Christ—the inner meaning of His teaching.

Esoteric doesn't mean 'hidden' or 'secret'. It means 'inner': the inner meaning of a thing. It is uncompromisingly pure; therefore, the steep and narrow path where only the most dedicated will persevere. Since self-transcendence is the elemental force for change at the heart of all real transformation, it is ultimately the only way. Because it is a steep and narrow path, it requires attention and effort. These two supply the energy for change, literally.

The Teaching can be employed by anyone at any time in ordinary daily life. It is an internal, psychological activity and depends entirely on your personal efforts, your motives and a clear understanding of what you are doing and what the aim is. You can supply the first two. Unfortunately, there are few sources that can teach this path correctly or have the right aim. If you are fortunate enough to find such a source, you will be able to verify for yourself the Objective Truth at the heart of the Teaching.

One of the intractable points in the Work is that it is not a passive activity. To listen or read and acquire knowledge is only the initial
Esoteric Christianity

After that, each person must make personal efforts applying specific practices and exercises that are aimed at enlightenment. These efforts are almost entirely internal and psychological. The result of these efforts is your authentic selfhood in a state of detachment and purity of heart which is the essential nature of Humility. Doing the Work leads to Humility which requires the greatest courage.

You must understand from the beginning that the Work is a definite process with a specific aim. The Aim of the Work is to develop, that is, raise your level of Consciousness. Your level of Consciousness is correspondingly expressed in your level of Being. Therefore, Being evolves with Consciousness; they are not separable. The ultimate Aim of the process of the Work is to create authentic Goodness in a person; a unified Conscious human being who can act from self-transcendent Goodness instead of self-love.

The process of doing the Work begins with the sincere desire to acquire the Knowledge of ideas and practices. It can only begin to create a transformation within you when you begin to apply the practices and ideas to yourself. Knowing about it, thinking about it, talking about it will not lead to change. Change requires individual internal effort and only the student can supply the force of effort that creates change. In the case of this Work, change means transformation from Sleep to awakened Consciousness, from ego-centric psychology to self-transcendent psychology. The process
can be described in general as the purifying of the psychology, which is studied in detail and from a particular angle. This angle is the perspective of uncritical Self-Observation.

Self-Observation is the foundational practice in the Work and it can evolve into a permanent perspective of awareness. Self-Observation is directed at your psychology. It provides illumination for your Work. What you see within yourself in the light of Self-Observation will give you information that you must have for transformation. You cannot reach self-transcendence if you have no self-knowledge. It takes tenacious and repeated efforts to practice Self-Observation correctly; that is, with enough objectivity to be uncritical about what you observe, and enough Conscience to motivate you to change your particular Wrong Work. The illumination from Self-Observation will begin a change within your psychology as you see yourself in the light of Objective Truth.

It is only when you get to this point, after having learned and practiced repeatedly, that you will know what the Work requires of you and you will then have to decide if you want to continue. Every bit of progress depends on your sincere effort, so the continuing is always up to you. If you proceed in the Work you will feel worse before you feel better. You will observe, like a bound-and-gagged prisoner, while your Personality goes around acting in ways and saying things that in no way reflect what is most real in yourself: Real I. You will sound insincere to yourself and you will feel dis-
empowered. You will experience a feeling of 'psychological vertigo' as you lose Acquired Personality before True Personality has had time to grow. But you will come to a point, intermittently at first, when the strength of Real I can direct Personality. Your Work Memory, which is the memory of everything that you have verified for yourself through your practice, will grow and gain clarity and have force.

You will find that this process of gaining something—Consciousness—requires mostly losing things, like the ordinary thoughts and emotions that make up the noise in your mind, so that there is a place inside that can hear. You will find that you have to Work your way up, through intentional effort, to a place where you can begin to receive illumination from Higher Consciousness. And what you will find is that the psychological position from which you can be receptive is characterized by Humility. Humility has no requirements and thereby enough inner silence to hear.

Be sure that this is what you are seeking—To be humble and pure in heart and at the service of Goodness. If you are seeking personal power in worldly terms you will not find it in the Work. Don't come to the Work expecting to be gifted with great transforming experiences. You will receive tools. You will have to use them yourself to create transformation out of effort—WORK. You will experience resistance internally and externally. You will no longer
be going with the flow. You will have turned around and so the flow will be going against you.
Part Three

There are many books by and about Gurdjieff and his students and the Fourth Way. For this reason, I would prefer not to dwell on material that can easily be found elsewhere. Also, what can be assumed about the Work of the Fourth Way from a position outside of it, has little to do with the incandescent reality of it, making historical and anecdotal material irrelevant.

What I want to address here are some specific problems present in the current generation of teaching the Work. The Work is the psychological methodology of the Fourth Way. There are numerous ways in which it has been distorted, making the real essence of it inaccessible. That loss has caused many to lose their souls to the corruption of this spiritual path into the business of buying and selling self-empowerment.

Regarding the current generation of Fourth Way groups, some forms represent the perversions or distortions or level of Being of their various leaders unintentionally. Some forms remain rigidly
Esoteric Christianity crystallized in formatory dogma and structure to assure absolute adherence to Gurdjieff's literal words and idolization of his person. Some forms have been created that deliberately misuse the ideas and misrepresent the Teaching for the purpose of personal gain for the teacher.

While the distortion of the idea of "esoteric" into a secret society mentality held some validity in the world at the beginning of the twentieth century, it remains a distortion, nonetheless, in the Work of the Fourth Way. It is still employed as a selling tactic because people love secrets. They love being told secrets. They love keeping secrets and they love telling secrets. They love the superiority and power they feel when they know something that another does not. When something is secret, it appears to be special and those who have access to it feel special themselves. Selling secrets always works because the buyer feels empowered.

But in the Work, esoteric means 'inner'—the inner meaning of a thing. It does not mean 'hidden' or 'secret'. In the case of the Work, it literally is the inner meaning of Christ's Teaching on personal transformation—spiritual development. Gurdjieff called it "Esoteric Christianity" as did his primary students Ouspensky and Nicoll. Esoteric teaching is not hidden.

It would be nearly impossible to conceptualize the Fourth Way teaching from Gurdjieff's writings alone. Ouspensky expressed it in
the intellectual terms of a cosmological system, a new model of the universe based on esoteric teaching. Nicoll's contribution is of no less consequence as he aligns it with the Objective Truth expressed most clearly in esoteric Christianity. Not one of these men was a perfected human being. They each had their respective subjectivity to deal with, yet they each accomplished something extraordinary. Together they left enlightened instruction about self-generated evolution: the Work. It is a sacred Path.

Today's age of global mass media and computer technology has put an end to esoteric secretness. Virtually all available knowledge is accessible to anyone interested. Unfortunately, what seekers will find in the representative Fourth Way Schools or groups is a degenerated version taught without the intended context or aim. The "secret society" ideology of elitism is perpetuated, as well as teacher worship and legalism, in lieu of substantive instruction and directed process. Meaning has become about gaining personal power and gratification rather than self-transcendence and increasing consciousness.

The Work is a path to a level where your consciousness shares communion with God through the conduit of Spirit. In misrepresenting this Aim, the Fourth Way System can be and has been manipulated to entrap students and bilk them and cause harm to their psychology. It is meant to heal and purify your psychology and enlighten your Consciousness. It is being used against
vulnerable students to rape their souls and their bank accounts. As in conventional exoteric religion, people hear the resonance of Truth and they are attracted to it. However, they do not find Truth in the Gurdjieff schools or groups. What can be found are cults of varying success. Potential students are misled and used and prevented from developing in the Work by the very teachers and organizations supposedly teaching them the Fourth Way.

It has been made easy to employ this kind of corruption not only because of the omission of context and aim, but also because Gurdjieff taught a specific cosmology, including manners of expression, that can captivate and fascinate endlessly. Or these same expressions can lead a student into the psychological, transformational ideas of the Work. The Work is not the Cosmology and it is not 'the Movements', though they have a place in the system. The Work is the psychological Teaching at the heart of the Fourth Way. It is the inner meaning of the Fourth Way. It is the esoteric meaning behind the Cosmology and the Movements. All aspects of the cosmology cannot be verified literally and 'the Movements' are clearly not possible for every student seeking transcendence. The Work, which is accessible and verifiable to all, is the only aspect of the Fourth Way that can create psychological transformation in the student. It is ONLY the psychological part of the Teaching, the Work, that contains the means for transformation.
Part Four

The Work is fundamentally different from other paths to conscious development in a few very important ways. To begin with, although it is a psychological system, the Work differs from standard psychology's presupposition that a human being has consciousness. Modern psychology presumes that a person who is awake and walking around has consciousness. The Work asserts that every person in this waking state is in reality in a state of Waking Sleep, and that there is very little consciousness present. But it also teaches that consciousness can be developed through specific intentional efforts. The Work teaches how to develop your consciousness through ideas and psychological practices that build a new kind of understanding. It requires a great inner struggle against the assertions of Personality and against the momentum of being Asleep in life.

The next idea is one that is essential in the direction of the Work. It differs from every religious tradition and humanity's general presupposition that God's will is done on earth. God's will is not
done on earth and this is verifiable. All of the evil and suffering that you see in the world are not the results of God's will, for God's nature is ONE. That one characteristic is Perfect Goodness. It is the will of individuals acting and living out of self-interested motivations that creates the chaos of violence and suffering. The will of God is not done on earth. The will of man is done on earth. If you believe that God's nature is something other than perfect Goodness, what are you worshipping? Only Goodness is worthy of worship.

Nicoll:

"... Religious people usually imagine that what happens on earth is always God's will, and they seek to comfort and strengthen one another with this thought, even in the face of the most senseless and fortuitous accidents, disaster and death. People who are not religious take it as evidence that there is no God. ... People judge of the existence or non-existence of God from what happens on earth. Every decade books are written proving that the existence of God is impossible in view of the fact that there is so much evil in life, and so much cruelty and waste in nature, while most people in the privacy of their own thoughts come to a similar conclusion. In the face of this, and arguing from the standpoint of the visible world, is it possible to believe that God—as the supreme principle of highest Good—exists? ... If we always look to visible life for evidence of the existence or non-existence of God nothing will
come of it. Therefore, to draw conclusions about God from what happens on earth is to start from an entirely wrong point of view. People continually start from this wrong level. . . . They regard the visible external world as the first theater of divine vengeance and see in its events the hand of God punishing or rewarding human beings according to their behavior. They see God as right or justice on earth. They see the hand of God in war and believe that God is on their side and that victory will mean that the will of God is fulfilled. It is this external, sense-based idea of religion that is rebuked by Christ. He says that all people suffer the same fate unless they repent, but what is to *repent*?

The word translated throughout the New Testament as repentance is in the Greek meta-noia which means change of mind. The Greek particle meta is found in several words of comparatively ordinary usage, such as metaphor, metaphysics, metamorphosis. Let us take metaphor; it means transference of meaning. To speak metaphorically is to speak beyond the literal words, to carry over or beyond and so transfer the meaning of what is said beyond the words used. Metaphysics, again, refers to the study of what is beyond purely observable physical science, such as the study of the nature of Being or the theory of knowledge or the fact of consciousness. Metamorphosis is used to describe the transformation of form in insect life, the transformation of a grub into a butterfly—a transference or transformation of structure into an entirely new structure, into something beyond. The particle meta
therefore indicates transference, or transformation, or beyondness. The other part of this word translated as repentance—noia—is from the Greek words nous which means mind. The word metanoia has to do with the transformation of the mind in its essential meaning.

Nicoll:

"Here lies one of the deepest ideas in the psychological teachings of the Gospels. A radical, permanent transformation is taught as being possible and Metanoia is the technical description of it. But a man cannot reach a permanent higher level of himself unless there is built up in him a connection of ideas that can gradually lift him beyond his present level. The idea of the self-evolution of Man, the idea of Metanoia or transformation of mind, and the idea of the Kingdom of Heaven are all connected and related ideas. . . . Christs teaching is about a possible individual evolution in a man. . . . Everyone on this planet is capable of a certain inner growth and individual development, and this is his true significance and his deepest meaning, and begins with Metanoia."

The Work is a Teaching about the process called Metanoia which is a psychological transfiguration.
Part Five

There is an important common element in most religious teachings, ancient ones as well as New Age metaphysical ideologies and many popular belief or developmental systems, that is inconsistent with Objective Truth. It is also another way that the Work is very different from other paths. Almost all popular developmental systems teach that spiritual growth—developed Consciousness—results in material world gains, especially wealth and health. The ideology maintains that higher consciousness or psychological/spiritual growth heals the physical body and provides wealth in the physical world. This is not correct. The material world cannot determine development in the spiritual or metaphysical realm. Nor can metaphysical gain be counted or seen in earthly materiality. What is possible, and has been distorted, is that by raising your level of Being you will attract different influences and different circumstances because your Being attracts your life.

Anything can happen to your body and eventually everyone's body suffers and everyone's body dies. You need not allow your
psychological state to depend upon your material world circumstances. You can develop Consciousness and Being regardless of your physical condition or any circumstances. Since the developmental path is essentially always above you, available to you in each moment, your condition in life is not a limitation to your possible level of Consciousness. This is a spiritual Truth and it is easily verifiable. One clear objective observation will verify for you that health and wealth have nothing to do with a person's spiritual nature or level of Consciousness. The most successful and active people in the world are hardly correspondingly deeply spiritual or developed in Consciousness or Being. Nor are the most authentically developed and spiritual people necessarily among the wealthy, jogging elite.

These ideas are misinterpreted even within legitimate traditional systems. They are a lower level of understanding, expressing a spiritual truth, and deliberately or not, they sell well. It is mixing different levels of Understanding. It is attributing to spiritual growth a corresponding material growth. It is saying that your worldly life will become perfect if your spiritual life becomes perfect. This is wishful thinking at best. Witness the lives of the saints. Anything can happen to anyone in life, including poverty and illness. But nothing can happen in life to anyone that can inhibit the development of Consciousness. Developed Being, which is the expression of Consciousness, can accept life as it is, and continue to express and create and live in Goodness.
That is not to say that your psychology or spiritual disposition has no effect on your physical body, but it is a serious mistake to believe that any particular path will result in perfect life in the physical world because: if physical world gain is any part of your motivation for being on a spiritual path, you will develop nothing. The angle of approach is wrong and not accessible to the level of spirit. It makes your efforts conditional and self-interested, which is antithetical to transcendence.

This great lie—that followers of any particular teaching will have earthly superiority and powers including health and wealth—seduces people away from the possibility of real spiritual transformation since real spiritual transformation is dependent upon the purity of your motives and means moving from egocentric psychology to self-transcendent psychology: evolution.

From the self-transcendent stage you will see the partial truth which creates these mis-formulations. You will understand that a higher level of Consciousness and spiritual growth are the same thing. And that from a higher level of Consciousness—spiritual understanding—the concerns and interests you have in life change and your detachment from the circumstances of your life leave you content with what is. You are not as interested in what you can get or do, as in what you can give and become.

Real developed Being has patience and peace. It is content to wait
or to act without requirements because living in Being is rich with meaning. Whether external life is difficult or easy remains irrelevant because your heart and mind are walking in the right path. That gives meaning to every day and the opportunity in every moment to be on the path; in this case, to be in the Work.
Part Six

There is another very important practice that is constantly misused especially in Fourth Way schools. It is the practice of bringing your awareness into the present moment. If this psychological exercise is used correctly, it is a tool. Practicing correctly means precisely "bring your awareness into the present moment". This exercise will remove you from the mechanical momentum of life and your Identification with it. Instead of being totally Asleep and caught up in automatic responses, you raise your awareness from that hypnotic state into cognizance of the present moment you are living. First, by sensing your body in the here and now and then by expanding your awareness to include your body in its surroundings, and from your immediate environment to a broader scale. You notice that you feel tense, that your brow is furrowed or you are tapping your foot or your stomach is clenched and you intentionally release the energy and relax. You deny any thoughts or emotions access to your attention which is focused in the moment. You look, you register, you release tension and you are not part of the
mechanical stream of life for a few moments. You may feel a stronger sense of Real I as a result.

This is a very minor form of practicing Self-Remembering by stepping out of your mechanical awareness for a moment. It is a valuable exercise that can take you out of the momentum of Sleep, give you an experience of scale and some awareness of Self outside of that mechanical momentum. It also gives the practitioner an experience of relief from identification and negative emotions "in the moment". It is this last part that has been perverted in Fourth Way instruction where this exercise is called Self-Remembering, which it is not, and where the student is taught to meet every difficulty with Self-Remembering. If the student could practice full Self-Remembering, then they would be working rightly. But Self-Remembering has many forms and degrees. The beginning student cannot jump up into the presence of Real I, because Real I is yet unknown and unformed so there is no place in which to jump.

If you observe carefully you will see that the expansion of consciousness is horizontal, on the level of life in the world. It starts with becoming aware of yourself physically and expands to being aware of yourself contextually, physically. While this exercise can provide valuable knowledge, it is a tool, not an end. It is not the road to Conscious Evolution. It is one of many tools used to create a certain kind of awareness and in that, it is helpful. It does not create Real I, it clears the way for sensing it momentarily, and most
importantly it is not Self-Remembering.

The misuse of this practice in the Fourth Way happens when a student gets addicted to the feeling of relief from Identification or painful emotions, even for a few moments, then it is a tool used for emotional disassociation. Or, when the student is taught to use this practice to become Non-Identified whenever they experience Negative Emotions. Used in this way, it becomes an escape mechanism and does not allow the student the chance to Observe and recognize and separate from the Wrong Work that keeps creating the Negative Emotions.

The student stays trapped in a blind alley when the experience of Negative Emotions is treated with this exercise; i.e. Negative Emotions = bring awareness into the physical world experience of now = temporary emotional relief = no clear Observation of what the Negative Emotion is and what it is connected to in the psychology = no means to deal with it or understand it or Work against it to create transformation. So the student practicing wrongly cannot build a structure of Understanding that would eventually raise them to a permanent level of Non-Identification. They can only try to jump up and touch that state over and over again. Touching that state is possible. Living in it requires building it. Building it requires long term attention and effort.

The Work gives us many tools and ideas with which to create
transformation. The primary most essential exercise given is Self-Observation. It is through Self-Observation that you learn to see your own psychology functioning. You learn to "Know Thyself" through Self-Observation. It is the fundamental practice from which all development grows. In comparison, the exercise of "being present" provides little knowledge with which to Work.

So this distorted practice stops the developmental process and prevents the student from gaining the understanding received through Self-Observation. It also keeps the student enslaved to the "school" since development can't come from this wrong way of practicing.
Part Seven

Another distortion which is taught in Fourth Way schools appeals to the desire to avoid suffering each person experiences. The claim is made that the Work teaches you how to stop suffering. The truth of the Teaching is that you learn to stop unnecessary suffering which is not the same thing. Sacrificing your suffering, learning how to become objective to it, detached from it, is not anything like emotional disassociation which is the result of wrong practicing. Emotional disassociation is the wrong work of the Emotional Center and completely limits your ability to receive the Work. Through the active process of the Work you will learn what Unnecessary Suffering is and become free of it. But the idea is sold that higher consciousness is free of human suffering. This is not true. In some ways it suffers less, in some ways it suffers more. The idea of Non-Identification is clarity and purity in the Emotional Center, not separation from it.

There is another very heavy-handed misrepresentation of an esoteric idea taught in most successful Fourth Way schools. The
idea is that of "payment" and the distortion is again assigning literal meaning to a psychological truth. The Gurdjieff "schools" teach that you have to pay for what you receive, specifically in money and services, to the school. The principle is supposed to be that if you pay money for it, you will value it more and the idea is used to convince students that they have to give enormous amounts of money to the "school": dues, special donations, fines, etc., in order to receive the Teaching. It goes without saying that schools have financial needs and it is appropriate that the students who are able to share that burden do so. But this is not the esoteric idea of payment.

The idea that you have to pay for what you receive is accurate when understood psychologically. The Truth of this spiritual principle is that in order to gain in Consciousness or Being, i.e. evolve, you must sacrifice something. The reason behind it is that you must give up something internally in order to make room for the developing Consciousness. If you cling to the mechanical conditions that keep consciousness asleep and you give up nothing, then change is impossible. Without sacrifice there is no space internally for growth and change. Change is essential. You cannot change and remain the same. In the Work, change means sacrificing self-interest. That sacrifice is your payment, spiritually/psychologically speaking.

Consequently, there is Objective Truth in the idea that each person must make a "payment" in order to receive from the Teaching. The
psychological Truth in the Work is that your "payment" is the effort you make, each effort you make, to awaken. When, for instance, you have sacrificed your need to be right, what you receive is the freedom from the psychological tyranny and suffering of always having to be right. This is the correct Work understanding of payment and receipt. The whole concept of sacrifice in the Work must be understood correctly or no development is possible.

In almost every teaching, this idea is used to squeeze volunteerism and cash out of the student. You are taught that you must sacrifice your time and energy to contribute to the community through manual labor or services and of course you must contribute money, whether or not you can afford it. Without saying that these kinds of sacrifices have no potential value, it is critical to understand that what the Work asks you to sacrifice is your suffering; that is, your Unnecessary Suffering. Self-Observation will illuminate for you everything that you have to sacrifice, and differentiate between Unnecessary Suffering and Necessary Suffering. Self-Observation with Work knowledge and Conscience will reveal to you everything that you must sacrifice in order to develop Consciousness.

The whole idea of sacrifice has been so polluted with perversions that it is a vital concern that you understand that in the Work you make sacrifices by making the effort to apply the ideas to yourself. That effort may include gaining knowledge, opening your mind, directed thinking, intentional use of your attention and energy,
sincerity, honesty, dedication, and actually practicing the psychological exercises of Self-Observation, Inner Separation, Non-identification, External Considering, and much more. These ideas are so dense that it is only through the experiential Verification of the practices that you can understand what they mean. Then you will begin to understand what you need to sacrifice and how you can sacrifice. The first thing that you will understand is that this sacrificing is a psychological/spiritual exercise, not a material-world directive.

If you take this idea of sacrifice externally, that is exoterically, it is simple math to see how the axiom becomes: "the bigger the sacrifice, the bigger the gain". This level of understanding renders every perversion from poor people sending their life savings to televangelists, to intentionally creating suffering in order to generate a bigger sacrifice, and even to the literal sacrifice of human life. The sacrifice of every external thing is always easier (the path of least resistance) than the sacrifice of ego, of Acquired Personality, of Pictures you have of yourself, of Inner Considering and all sorts of Identification. It is easier and it is dangerous. Beware of religions, schools, developmental paths or systems that ask you to sacrifice your money and your time in payment to them. They have either misunderstood something fundamental about real Conscious development or they are knowingly misusing this idea for their own gain. If you Work right and sacrifice right and have actual psychological transformation, then you will want to give
back to what has given this miracle to you. At this point inspiration will let you know how to give back and the means will be different for everyone. Volunteerism and even money then become gifts of gratitude and appreciation, not payment. Gifts are pure.

Another of the central ideas of the Gurdjieff teaching that has been mis-taught is the idea of building a soul. This is a very foundational idea and is a misunderstanding of the spiritual concept intended or perhaps simply a miscommunication of the process. In the Fourth Way cosmology it is taught that you can build a soul that exists in Eternity (in the electronic world, so to speak) through conscious efforts. The spiritual reality is that everything that does not come from higher consciousness passes into nothing because it issues from sleep. Sleep cannot produce something eternal. Therefore, you cannot build your own soul since you do not possess higher consciousness. You can build your consciousness which can result in the actualization of your soul. However, what you find in higher consciousness is that you receive your soul rather than build it. Developing higher consciousness is soul-saving; salvific life. And it is sacrifice that creates the internal space which receives it.

The esoteric teaching is that you must organize your three given bodies in order to have access to your divine body. This is "building" only in the sense of creating the conditions necessary to possess the fourth divine body. What the possession of divine body means regarding the life of the soul is unknowable. It certainly does
not mean that you as you are now can have immortality in divine light. It means whatever good you do becomes a conduit of light and is continued in the realm of divine light and therefore immortal. The idea of possessing your own personality eternally, through immortality, ought to frighten you into getting very serious.

Since this Teaching is esoteric Christianity, the real understanding of this idea is not that you have to build your soul because if you could create it yourself the result would be a sort of Frankenstein made from the distortions of your own limitations. What you can do, through the Work, is to create a purified place within yourself where what is called the Holy Spirit in traditional Christian terms can exist within you. This place is in Higher Consciousness. Higher Consciousness, being on a completely different level, has a different psychological orientation than Sleep. If there is no place within you that is clean enough of self-interest, then you are not accessible to higher influences and the Spirit cannot penetrate and baptize you because there is no receptive place where it can enter.

The Work is about purifying your psychology and emotions, cleaning a place within in order to be open, to be able to be receptive and hear from what the Work calls higher influences—or from Higher Consciousness, or from what is above, spiritually speaking.

So the process of baptism in the Esoteric Christian tradition is the
Esoteric Christianity

opposite of the exoteric ritual of submerging an individual in water. To symbolically immerse the individual in the Holy Spirit is a reversal of the real process. It is not you who enters the Holy Spirit and comes out imbued with it. The Holy Spirit enters you, and only to the extent that you have a place that is receptive within. The Work makes this place. The experience is universal, therefore the process and transformational experience is the same for all people in all times. Since it is recognizable in different forms, it is verifiable.
Part Eight

If you are interested in the powers you will gain through doing the Work you should know exactly what they are. You will be able to transcend your personal desires on behalf of the greater good. You will no longer feel competitive. You will not feel the need to assert yourself, but you will be able to, if appropriate. You will feel comfortable within yourself. Your actions will be motivated by Goodness only, because Goodness is the nature of developed Being. Your Real I will not be tossed around by the circumstances of life. Real I will simply respond appropriately, always creating Goodness. You will suffer less, subjectively, and you will suffer more, objectively. Your Conscience will grow and assert influence that can create real permanent change—evolution. You will experience peace, acceptance, serenity, appreciation, gratitude, joy, humility, forgiveness, freedom, conscious inspiration, intentionality in action.

You may well have heard some of these ideas from other sources in devolved forms. The potential powers offered to the student in
existing Fourth Way schools are from the psychological level of sense-based thinking. They appeal to Personality. They say you will gain self-mastery and the power to "do". You will awaken to the illusion of life. You will become a higher self, an improved version of yourself. You will discover your Real I. You will become free of the ordinary laws that govern other people's lives and be able to act intentionally and get the results you desire. You will receive hidden knowledge not available outside of the "school". You will learn how to experience higher conscious states. You will come under the direct power of C Influence. You will have understanding that sleeping humanity does not possess. You will learn esoteric secrets about how to create your soul. You will be able to create your own soul and that will give you immortality.

It is important to note that none of these expressions of powers are a complete lie. They are a lower level expression of the Objective Truth behind them, consequently, a distortion. They do not express the context or the aim of the Work. They are aimed at attracting Personality. Whether that distortion is intentional or a manifestation of a lack of Being isn't really the point. The point is that a person cannot grow in the Work if their motives are self-interested. Self-interested motives cannot be served by the Work because Higher Consciousness depends on self-transcendence.

Therefore everyone coming into the Work needs to understand from the outset that it is far more about giving up self-interest and giving
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up gratification-seeking, than gaining personal worldly power and self-mastery in the ordinary sense. Also that this giving up of self requires immeasurable efforts—WORK.
Part Nine

All of the Work is to raise your level of Consciousness and evolve your level of Being. It is personal, interior, psychological Work because that is where development can happen. Your Being, which is a manifestation of your Consciousness, is also an expression of your psychology. The aim of the process is to deconstruct the Acquired Personality by way of efforts that illuminate and disempower it. The objective here is to purify the psychology of what is false and inauthentic and self-interested and negative because these psychological conditions obstruct the development of Consciousness. These elements are studied, addressed, and transcended leaving a more purified heart and mind, feelings and thoughts; i.e. psychology.

This Work, which begins with self-knowledge, is called self-evolution because it is only through sincere efforts intentionally made by yourself, that the possibility of evolution exists. It is in and through the energy of the effort that evolution happens. Each person must make their own efforts—Work—in order to evolve. No one
can evolve by intellectual understanding, by vicinity, by osmosis, or by knowledge. Only personal Work effort produces the force for evolution.

In the Fourth Way, the Work ideas belonging to this esoteric teaching are about personal, psychological evolution and they require real personal efforts to create experiential Understanding. You may take the Gurdjieffian cosmology or leave it, but no one can advance in the Work, gain in evolution of Consciousness and Being, without practicing and applying the psycho-transformational ideas to themselves with sincerity and tenacity. If the ideas are understood rightly and practiced in earnest, the results are the development of Consciousness and Being.

By selling the Work as a system to develop personal power and even immortality, many are attracted; especially those who have already dangerously formed egos. Most are easily satisfied by paying money to receive supposedly secret knowledge that will transform them automatically and bestow the aforementioned powers. Ironically, the kind and degree of vanity which falls for this angle of approach to the Work hasn't a chance to grow past its self-interest, which is the Aim of the Work. Their motives defeat them from the outset. It is not an easy process, it is life-long, and it is for people who are very serious about becoming authentic and good and who long for change enough to be able to accomplish it.
Not many people will even discover and fewer will choose a serious path of permanent transformation. Perhaps the reason is no more complicated than the fact that the path of least resistance holds the most power of attraction for mechanical humanity.
Part Ten

Christ's suffering in life and death were not the will of God. In part it was a sacrifice demanded by the character of human nature in order to impart an exemplary experience that can be grasped by anyone, anytime. His suffering and death were a necessary dimension of his earthly life intentionally undertaken so that communion with the whole of humanity through divine love was made possible. This was an, unfortunately, necessary sacrifice, willingly given by God in Christ. Given in love to teach us to know God and how to love one another.

Contextualizing a path of conscious development based in sound Christology is an advantage since there exists a valid, verifiable teaching and a Divine Teacher. But the psychological Work of self-transformation belongs to a methodology that is unilaterally accessible to all, regardless of religious or secular designation. Having a religious longing is definitely an advantage, but this indescribable yearning is called by many names in the world and most find themselves confused about what they are seeking. Then
they are easily satisfied to find any emotional experience of a
religious nature sufficient to their needs. But for those few who are
diligent in their search for authentic meaning, some fortunate ones
will find the path of esoteric Christianity called the Work.

Objective Truth is the highest level of Truth. It is unchanging
throughout time and under every circumstance. Like water, it
moves to accommodate life while staying the same substance:
Objective Truth. It is verifiable through experiential Understanding.
The process and result of verification is an individual, internal event
yet also the same for everyone in every time period.

Christ's life was a sacrificial model to meet the needs of the level of
development of humanity. Its multi-dimensional nature makes it
accessible to all, always. But he gave a teaching as well—an
authentic methodology which is instruction on spiritual
development. In the Work this instruction is formulated into
psychological practices with the aim of developing a higher level of
Consciousness. It is instruction on how to become a person Holy in
Being and in life; this life now; your life while you are here and can
be of service. What happens after this life is unverifiable. You have
to do the Work for the love of it, from the Valuation you have for
the gift it is to your life, from the gratitude you feel for being given
meaning and a way to walk in Goodness toward your highest Self.
Esotericism

Esotericism is all teaching regarding the inner development of Man. Esoteric teaching is a special kind of knowledge that has to be learned and gradually understood through emotional development. It is intended to produce a profound and authentic permanent change in the individual.

Esoteric teaching has existed throughout human history in different forms and schools. At different periods, it has been "sown" into the world to give us direction. Nicoll: "In every age, there is sown into the world esoteric teaching which gives the direction in which individual evolution should take place. . . . In our epoch, we have been given the esoteric teaching in the gospels indicating the direction in which individual evolution should take place at this stage."

The word "esoteric" is commonly misunderstood to mean 'secret' or
'hidden'. Esoteric schools have existed for many thousands of years, but in the pre-industrial-technological world they consisted of relatively small isolated groups. The vast majority of humanity has never heard of esotericism and extremely few people came into contact with a real school. The "secret society" mentality connected with esotericism arose partly from this ignorance due to circumstances and it is used in current Fourth Way schools as a selling tactic. People love secrets, they love elitism, 'hats', and agreed-upon delineated hierarchical groups. But esoteric does not mean secret or hidden, it refers to the inner meaning of a thing. Gurdjieff: "In the first place, this knowledge is not concealed; and in the second place it cannot, from its very nature, become common property." Esoteric knowledge is not hidden, it is available, however, the enormous majority of people cannot hear it or if they do, they find it fantastic, or at least unnecessary.

Esoteric teaching is for those who are not satisfied with themselves or with life as it is; those who feel there must be some greater meaning to life and yearn to find their own meaning in it. If you are mostly satisfied with yourself, with the kind of person you are, esotericism is not the path for you. You must have a question in yourself and feel a longing for understanding, for completeness and personal meaning and direction. Then, if you seek, when you find you will be able to "hear".
General Description and Aim

The Fourth Way is an esoteric teaching about the personal development of consciousness possible for a human being. Man is created as a self-evolving being. Nicoll: "Man is sown on earth. . . . with the possibility of inner development, and the existence of this Work, the existence of Christ's teaching and the existence of many other teachings, is due solely to this fact—that Man is created as an organism capable of undergoing an inner evolution."

This system uses ideas, practices, and exercises designed to bring about a gradual change in the level of your understanding, in the perspective of your mind and in the nature of your character. It can be practiced in life—your life, as it is now. There is no need to remove yourself from your circumstances and go into a separate community in order to be in the Fourth Way. Its psychological methodology is meant to be practiced in your daily life with all of
the circumstances and people belonging to it.

It requires two kinds of effort—work on your knowledge and work on your being, because these two combine to create understanding. All development depends entirely on your own efforts and motives. Sincerity is critical as is honesty. It is a lifetime process aimed at creating a psychology that is rightly ordered to be able to receive divine inspiration or what the Fourth Way calls higher influences.

It is called the Fourth Way with regard to the three other approaches to the inner development of Will. The first way is the way of the fakir; the way of the physical body developing "body will". The second way is the way of the monk which forms an axis of religious devotion, love of God, creating "emotional will". The third way is the way of the yogi, which develops "mind will".

This system teaches that everyone is regarded as having three given bodies—physical, emotional, intellectual—and a potential fourth body which must be created by Will. A path which develops only one body is unbalanced. A fakir may develop enormous physical will and perhaps be able to hold his arms outstretched for years. Of what use is this? He has not developed his emotional body or his intellectual body and so with his "will" he can do nothing of value. It is nearly the same with the other two paths. The monk is undeveloped physically and intellectually. The yogi is undeveloped physically and emotionally. The developmental teaching of the
Fourth Way works with all three given bodies simultaneously to produce "Balanced Man" who can develop "Conscious Will".

The four bodies are called in Christian terminology the carnal, natural, spiritual and divine natures. In the Fourth Way, these are the first body, second body, third body, and fourth body.

The first body is the most external part: the physical body which experiences sensations. It is given to us already organized, but it functions mechanically by responding to external impressions.

The second body is the emotional body and is an unorganized mass of feelings and desires, constantly changing, subject to no direction, responding automatically. It is more internal than the first body.

The third body is the intellectual body which is the seat of thoughts and thinking functions. It is also an unorganized mass of changing thoughts stimulated randomly.

The fourth body is the divine body. It is accessible only by "Will" created in the ordering of the second and third bodies. Developing Conscious Will by organizing your three given bodies gives you access to your divine body or nature, which is inexpressible. If this is achieved, the fourth body then has existence and it possesses consciousness, individuality, and will. The fourth Will-Body is Master. It is the most internal part of you.
The functioning of an undeveloped man is initiated by external life. His first body, physical body, experiences sensations which give rise to emotions in the second body which find expression in thoughts in the third body. In this case, there is no fourth body, no will-body, just a jumble of small, conflicting momentary wills stimulated by the unorganized emotions and thoughts. His functions are governed by changing sensations in external life.

In this system, developed Man is directed by consciousness in his divine body and obeys divine will. In this case, the most internal part (fourth body) is directing the functions of the other three bodies. The fourth body's conscious awareness understands what any circumstance needs and the divine will directs thoughts in the third body regarding these needs which produces corresponding selfless emotions in the second body which creates appropriate actions in the first body. In this way, what is highest is generating actions with intentionality and the three given bodies are subject to it.

The acquisition of a Divine body is the same process as that of baptism. The Fourth Way is practical instruction on the process of this acquisition.
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| General Structure of the System | Levels of Consciousness | Sleep | Awakening |

| Essence, Real I, and Being | Acquired Personality | The Psychology of Possible Evolution |
Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Nicoll

Gurdjieff (1872-1949)

So much has been written about the very enigmatic George Ivanovitch Gurdjieff that anyone would be hard pressed to sort out fact from fiction or, in this case, slander from idolatry. Gossip is easy and second-hand information is subjective. What is commonly accepted is that he was Greek-Armenian, trained from his childhood in the Sufi tradition and he was possibly an Orthodox monk at some point. Also, he traveled extensively through Egypt, Greece, India, and the Caucasus seeking out schools of esotericism. In 1917, he left Russia with a small group of students and eventually settled in France in 1922. There he purchased a residence at Fontainebleau and opened what he called the Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man where he taught the Fourth Way.
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His methods were controversial and his personal behavior sometimes outrageous. There has always been debate about his motives, his actions, and his legitimacy. Mr. Gurdjieff can only be encountered in the Fourth Way Work, in the System he taught. In the light of understanding the Work, its magnitude and significance, you encounter Gurdjieff and thereafter gossip or arguing about his sources becomes irrelevant. The beauty and importance of the Fourth Way which he introduced to western civilization validates his authenticity, but in spite of his reputation and accomplishment and flamboyant personality, he remained humble. He gave this very stern warning to potential students: "Never confuse the vessel with the cargo".

Ouspensky (1878-1947)

Peter Demianovich Ouspensky was born in Moscow. He was an intellectual and a journalist for some years and traveled in the east and Europe and Russia. In 1907, he discovered the idea of esotericism and pursued the study of it in many different countries and methods. His search took him to Egypt, Greece, India, Ceylon and many other countries. He also studied occult literature, yogis, Tarot, and magical methods. He gave public lectures on his search for the miraculous.

He met Gurdjieff in 1915 in Moscow and was so impressed that he arranged groups to whom Gurdjieff presented his teaching.
Ouspensky and Gurdjieff had a rocky personal relationship and, in 1918, Ouspensky began to feel: "I had ceased to understand him and found it necessary to separate Gurdjieff and the system, of which I had no doubts". In 1922 he helped Gurdjieff move to Fontainebleau in France and subsequently visited there several times. Ouspensky finally broke acrimoniously with Gurdjieff in 1924 but continued his own work in London. After Ouspensky's death in 1947, the manuscript of his book "Fragments of an Unknown Teaching" was sent to Gurdjieff who said: "Before I hate that man, now I love that man." The book was published in 1949 and re-titled "In Search of the Miraculous".

**Nicoll (1884-1953)**

Maurice Nicoll was born in Kelso, Scotland into a titled family. He attended college and qualified as a physician and eventually became a practicing psychologist in London. He spent several years studying in Paris, Berlin and Vienna, and worked with Carl Jung for some time. In 1914, he served with the Royal Army Medical Corp in Gallipoli and in Mesopotamia during World War I. Upon returning to England, he was a medical officer in charge of the Empire Hospital which treated men with head and spinal injuries.

He met Ouspensky in 1921 and became interested in the Teaching. Some time later he closed his practice in London and went to live at
the Institute at Fontainebleau where he worked with Gurdjieff directly. When he returned to England, he received Ouspensky's permission to pass on the ideas he had received from both teachers. He began teaching in 1931 in England and continued until his death in 1953.
The General Structure of the System

There are three aspects of the general structure of the Fourth Way system as it was taught at Fontainebleau—the cosmology, the movements, and the Work.

The Cosmology

There is much to be gained by studying the cosmology of the Fourth Way. However, I would say to you at the beginning that one of the cornerstone ideas of this system is the caveat: "verify everything for yourself". The cosmology is a mind-expanding model of the universe. The study of it can impart a perspective of scale and relativity and stretch the mind dimensionally. Some of the ideas act as a shock of sorts, designed to awaken you a little or cause you to think differently about creation in general and your place and meaning in it. If you reflect
on the ideas, you may begin to have a change in your understanding.

The **Ray of Creation** is the primary cosmological model about the ordering of the universe. All created things are ordered according to laws otherwise there would be only chaos—disorder. This system teaches that the universe is living and evolving, seeking unity and consciousness. Its structure is represented in the Ray of Creation.

The Ray shows us seven levels of Creation, beginning with the Absolute, which is subject to only one law—the law of its own will. The second level is the level of all possible starry systems or galaxies and it is under three laws. Each subsequent level is subject to the number of laws of the preceding level and, in addition, that same number of laws at its own level. So the third level, which is the level of our Milky Way, is under three laws from the second level and three laws of its own, therefore six laws belong to that level. The fourth level is the level of our sun which is under twelve laws. The fifth is the level of the planets as one mass, under twenty-four laws. The sixth is the level of our earth, under forty-eight laws. The seventh is the level of our moon, under ninety-six laws.

The Ray of Creation teaches that all matter is energy condensing as it moves farther away from its source in the Absolute, becoming coarser and denser material. It teaches that our earth and the human beings on it appear far down in the Ray and are consequently
subject to many laws: the laws of nature, the laws of physics, the law of accident, etc. It teaches that Man is a self-developing being created for a special purpose in the function of the Ray of Creation. For that reason, we have been given the free will to choose evolution. Gurdjieff: "There is only evolution and non-evolution." Actually, there is also degeneration which is certainly non-evolution, but it is not a static condition. It is possible also to lose the ability to become conscious through degeneration.

That special purpose in the Ray of Creation for which we are created, individually and collectively, is expressed in its simplest terms in the cosmology by the table of hydrogens. Our purpose can most elementally be put as "transforming energies" from coarser vibrations to finer vibrations.

The law of Seven, or the Law of Octaves, in the cosmology is a teaching about the ordering of creation on different levels—in the macrocosm of the universe and in the microcosm of Man.

One of the most important points to understand in studying the Ray of Creation is that the nature of the Absolute is one thing—perfect Goodness.

The Law of Three, sometimes called the Law of the Trinity, teaches that in every manifestation of anything in the universe, three forces must be present. They are 1) Active Force, 2) Passive Force, and 3) Neutralizing Force. Active and Passive forces
essentially cancel each other out and produce nothing. A third neutralizing force is necessary to bring the opposites into relationship in order to produce "something".

The cosmology of the Fourth Way is mind-expanding and enlightening. It can give you a valuation for the magnitude of this teaching and a perspective on its aim, including ideological shocks that help to create moments of higher consciousness. In the Fourth Way schools, and in this system, it is taught that you must begin in the Work with the study of the cosmology and this can have validity for the above reasons. However, in doing so, you will find eventually that all of the cosmology cannot be verified and you are instructed not to take anything on faith. More importantly, whatever knowledge you can receive does not result in personal transformation. Even the most astute knowledge of the cosmology cannot produce a permanent transformation of consciousness, which is the whole aim of esoteric teaching.

**The Movements**

At the Institute in France, students participated in learning "Sufi dances" or "movements". This physical exercise was practice in attention, discipline, cooperation, precision, perseverance, and more; including occupation for the students. The dances were performed in public to earn money for
the Institute, as well. They are quite extraordinary. It is said that these movements, or dances, carry esoteric meaning. This may or may not be so, or may or may not be verifiable. In any case, the unavoidable fact is that just as intellectual knowledge of the Fourth Way cosmology doesn't produced transformation, neither do the movements.

In spite of this, many Fourth Way schools insist that the Movements must be practiced as part of the system, and in order to be balanced. This is a serious misinterpretation of the idea of "balanced centers" or "balanced Man" in this teaching. The only physical requirement for transformation of consciousness is brain function, so regardless of their relative value, the Movements are not necessary for transformation of mind. Nicoll: "No amount of attention to the body will create transformation."

The Work

The psychological exercises and practices of the Fourth Way are the "Work" of the system. They are specifically designed to be used in your daily life experiences. They are aimed at self-knowledge, growing authenticity and becoming conscious. This is the transformation that esotericism refers to and the psychological Work is the means for attaining it.
The ideas and exercises and practices of the Work are meant to build something up inside you that lifts you into a higher level of consciousness. Nicoll: "The knowledge of this Work is of a kind that can act on Being and as a result give rise to understanding." This action can only take place using the force of your personal efforts in practicing the Work. Applying the ideas to yourself with sincerity and diligence is effort—Work. This is doing the Work—being in the Work. Many students think and say that they are "in the Work" simply because they are studying the Fourth Way system. This is not so. You have to do the Work in order to be in the Work.
Levels of Consciousness

The premise for assuming that there can be a developmental system lies in understanding the idea of different levels in an individual. All of the ideas of the Work are based on understanding that different levels of consciousness exist. Therefore, movement from one level to another level is possible. Nicoll: "As he is, Man serves the purposes of nature and nothing else is necessary in regards to his life. But he can put himself under different influences if he chooses. He can change his level of consciousness and consequently attract different circumstances according to his level."

In this system there are said to be seven levels of consciousness consisting of four states which belong to three different kinds of Man existing at different levels.

Man # 1, 2, and 3 all share the first two states equally. First State is resting sleep, literal sleep with dreams. Second State is called
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Waking State in which you walk and talk and act in life mechanically. The Work calls Second State Sleep as well, because it functions automatically without consciousness.

At this level of consciousness, there is only the darkness of being asleep. No help is possible because higher influences can only reach down as far as the Third State of Consciousness. This is what the system teaches, but it would be more accurate to say that Man asleep—mechanical Man (numbers 1, 2, and 3) cannot perceive the finer vibrations coming from higher consciousness because of the coarse nature of his Being.

Man # 4 is at the Third State of Consciousness. He is beginning to awaken through the practice of Self-Observation and Self-Remembering. He has some degree self-awareness and Real I.

Man # 4 is called Balanced Man which in general terms means a man functioning properly. Balanced Man has organized his centers (or bodies)—the functions of his psychology. He is able to remain upright in the center of the swinging pendulum of life events and circumstances. Achieving this state requires long-term, sincere, hard psychological Work; real inner Work. But the right efforts made for the right motives will produce real inner change. From the level of Man # 4, influences, inspiration and understanding can reach him—light is present and help is possible.

Man numbers 5, 6, and 7 live in Fourth State—Objective
Consciousness. These three are called "Conscious Man", Man Awake. Light is present and help is available. At this level, a man can see things as they really are.

Conscious Man has understanding and perspective, intentionally developed consciousness and Being, active real conscience and the Will to do. Conscious Man is authentic and living out his meaning and purpose in God's will. He is guided by divine inspiration, spiritual direction, objective Truth, real conscience, objective consciousness, and goodness above all things. Conscious Man is incapable of violence.
Sleep

Let's look at an example of mechanical Man, that is, Man asleep: Man #1, 2 and 3, which means all of us.

Let's take the ordinary circumstances in the daily life of an ordinary man. Let's say he is married and has a dog and a job. He wakes in the morning to the sound of the alarm clock and immediately wishes he could sleep longer. Resignation accompanies bringing his feet to the floor. His shower revives him and he remembers that today is Friday. Relieved and happy about the weekend, he begins to imagine the activities he plans. While he is thinking about a pleasant event, he gets soap in his eye and immediately anger flairs. Perhaps he swears or growls or some such. When he steps out of the shower with his stinging eye, he finds the dog scratching and whining at the bathroom door. He irritably wonders why his wife hasn't let the dog out yet. He can't do it right now. The dog will have to wait, he says to himself with impatience. He hurries to
finish his preparations, dropping his toothbrush and nicking his chin while his frustration builds. His mind returns repeatedly to the special occasion on the weekend and he imagines conversations and scenarios where he is the center of attention or where he is appreciated, flattered, and of course always right. Or he worries about who will be there, how they will treat him, whether he will make a good impression, if they will like him or embarrass him. Dressed, he comes out to find that the dog has gone and he is irritable again, thinking how he hurried and cut himself shaving only to find that it was unnecessary. The smell of coffee attracts him and his first sip brings him a wave of pleasure. His wife comes in and they share a warm greeting. He is noticing how nice the weather is when she lets the dog back in. The dog jumps up and his hot coffee sloshes over the edge of his cup, burning his hand and staining his shirt. He yells at the dog and explodes with anger over his shirt. He stalks from the room. Changing his shirt means changing ties and now he can barely manage it, what with his burned fingers, nicked chin, and stinging eye. He swears he is going to take that dog to obedience school. He never wanted it in the first place, it was her idea. She can take the dog to school. Now he is running late, so he skips breakfast, says a hurried goodbye to his wife, and heads out for work. Traffic is light and his favorite music is on, and it reminds him of sentimental times passed. Out of the blue, he remembers that he left his paperwork by the bedside instead of in his briefcase. He smacks the wheel with his hand and
curses aloud. He has to return home and he will be late for sure now. He worries, he blames the dog, his wife, the shampoo, his life.

This man believes, as does every individual, that he is fully conscious, that he acts from his own volition and is perfectly aware of himself and of what he is doing. The Work says that a man functioning at this level is a stimulus-response organism reacting to life enslaved to his mechanical responses. He functions with no awareness or intentionality and he is asleep to this fact, unconscious of his state.

This is Sleep (Waking State, Second State). Everyone functions in this manner automatically, creating the chaos and violence in the world.

The idea that everyone is asleep is a shock that can help to change your thinking. However, the awareness that you yourself are Asleep is a shock of awakening. This awareness you can only gain through personal verification.
Awakening

The idea of awakening from this Sleep is to grow in consciousness and be able to act with intentionality instead of only reacting mechanically. The chief obstacle to awakening from this condition is that each person imagines that he already possesses full consciousness and self-awareness so he doesn't need it, doesn't seek it, isn't interested. Each person believes that they act with cognizance and that they possess the will to do whatever they choose to do.

The Work tells us that this is an illusion and that the illusion that you are already properly conscious is part of the condition of being asleep. Note please that the Work does not tell you that life is an illusion (which can make you insane). It tells you that your subjective view of it is an illusion.

People don't act. They react. From the beginning of their life, each
person is reacting to the circumstances that come to them and this is the only way it can be. But the mechanical, automatic stimulus-response organism, which means each of us, is also created as a self-developing organism. We can evolve in consciousness by way of specific intentional efforts.
Essence, Real I, and Being

You were born with a unique self that has a few innate qualities which are observable. As an infant, you were either primarily active or passive and you had either a positive disposition or a negative disposition predominantly. There are other idiosyncratic attributes present at birth that are more subtle, but the point is that you are born with a totally unique self already present. In the Work, this is called your Essence. It contains your reason for being.

As an infant, your essence is somewhat like a clean slate. It has unique characteristics and disposition, but as your essence is influenced by its experience in your environment, your personality is formed around it. Personality is acquired to enable you to interact with life and survive because self-preservation is the primary directive. In human development, that directive translates into gaining power over your environment in order to get your needs met so that you can survive which is, after all, the first precondition...
necessary for any other possibility.

So Essence is the more internal part of you and the more authentic part, but it is overlaid with a personality which may not express your essence at all. Remember that personality was formed around essence via your subjective experience of your life and its events over which you had no control. Essence can only develop in life up to a certain point when personality must take over. It remains undeveloped and powerless unless it is intentionally developed through the Work. The intention in the Work is to develop Essence until it has the power to direct your personality. This process revolves around making your acquired personality passive so that essence can become active. If this process is successful and essence develops, Real I emerges.

Real I is master. Everyone has Real I which will manifest developed Essence in True Personality, but it also must be gradually reached through the Work. It exists within you at the level of Self-Remembering, the Third State of consciousness. The Work teaches exercises and practices which help to bring Real I into presence. The practice of Self-Observation informs and illuminates Real I and carries a taste of it because they are connected at the same level of consciousness.

Personality is the most external part of you. Behind acquired personality is Essence, and behind Essence lies Real I.
Psychologically speaking, Essence is internal to personality and Real I is internal to Essence. Real I is your highest self. It is the truth of your Being.

What the Work calls your Being is roughly the nature of your character. Everyone possesses Being to one degree or another. For example, the Being of an honorable man is greater or above the Being of a criminal man. Being exists in scale that is on different levels and it can be developed. In the very beginning of the Work, you are asked to work in two areas of yourself—work on Knowledge and work on Being. That is because it is this special esoteric knowledge applied to your Being which produces understanding and it is said in this Work that understanding is the most powerful force you can develop. The development of consciousness is inseparable from the development of Being. They go hand in hand.

One of the elements in the scale of Being is that different levels are discontinuous with each other, like parallel telephone lines between two poles. The events you encounter on one level of Being may not exist on another level which has its own different events. Nicoll: "The level of Being awaiting you just above your present line, which is your evolution, your inner development, your inner growth, is discontinuous with your present level, just as one rung of a ladder is not continuous with the next. You have to jump."
The most important idea in the Work about Being is that "your Being attracts your life".
Acquired Personality — False Personality

As was said, Essence interacts with life and personality is formed from these infinite idiosyncratic factors. Personality forms around Essence as a means of interacting with life and this is absolutely necessary. It forms according to laws that apply to everyone. In other words, its formulation is ordered which accounts for common psychological traits among all people in all times.

The Work calls this formation of personality the first education. It is referred to in this system as False Personality and is indeed false. I find the term Acquired Personality somewhat clearer and more specific, less condemning.

Personality in general can be described as a collection of habits. Habits of thinking—thinking about the same things in the same ways; habits of feeling—recurring emotions, repetitive emotional states; habits of talking—repeating the same stories, the same
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phrases, the same words. You have habits of attitudes and of opinions. You have habits of the physical body—posture, facial expressions, tensions, movements, body language; habits of Being and habitual ways of responding to life events. You acquired all of these habits by imitation, by opposition, by family and cultural and community influences. That is, life influences in which you had no choice, therefore these habits are not You. You are not your personality.

Your personality renders life to you according to its unique shape or formulation automatically. You have an attitude about something, an opinion about another thing, you have feelings and thoughts and these things compose your experience. Yet all of these habits that make up your personality do not express your Essence or your Real I. You may experience this sometimes as a feeling of being a phony or being unknown to yourself.

Essence has to be intentionally developed as well as Real I. These two aspects do not evolve mechanically. They evolve only with the personal efforts of attention and intentionality taught in esotericism, in the Work.

One of the primary teachings about personality is that it has an illusion of unity. Ouspensky: "The illusion of unity or oneness is created in Man first, by the sensation of one physical body, by his name. . . . and third, by a number of mechanical habits which are
implanted in him by education or acquired by imitation. Having always the same physical sensations, hearing always the same name, and noticing in himself the same habits and inclinations he had before, he believes himself to be always the same."

The Work teaches that, in reality, Man is a disorganized mass of I's with no permanence. Each thought, feeling, sensation, like or dislike is an 'I'. Unconnected, contradictory and even opposite 'I's in you say "I" as if each speaks for the whole of you. This is called the Doctrine of 'I's and although it may sound incomprehensible at first, it is easily verified and critical to your development. You can observe within yourself the turning wheel of 'I's, each a thought or an emotion, a desire or a sensation. Man is a multiplicity, not a unity. There is no single controlling 'I' or will. Each 'I' has its own small temporary will which vanishes when the next 'I' is dominant.

The recognition of your multiplicity marks a critical stage in the Work process. It feels very unstable to see your lack of identity and can induce a kind of psychological vertigo that is frightening. Ironically, it is by way of this multiplicity that you find the opportunity for intentional change and real stability.

The Work teaches you how to recognize and choose and nurture the 'I's in you that belong to higher consciousness or Real I and how to become detached from 'I's that are harmful or do not express your Real I. In this way, the Work works in your psychology on your
personality.

But Man commonly takes himself as one 'I' and has a picture of himself as his personality. This is his imaginary I. It is a cloak put on by each 'I' in turn.

There is another very significant teaching about personality in the Work which I would like to make particularly clear. There is a level of development in personality called Good Householder. This means a person who does his duty in life, lives responsibly to himself and in the world, without criminality or perversion. Only a person who has reached this stage called Good Householder is fit for the Work. If you cannot live a decent ordinary life, then you have no chance of success in the extraordinary Work. Nicoll: "Let us again recapitulate the teaching about Being. First, a man must be in life and have dealt with life and reached some adequate position in life and knowledge of life and so be a Good Householder, capable of dealing with the ordinary difficulties and problems of human existence—that is, the Work is not for people who seek to escape from the normal burdens of life. It is for normal decent people and starts from that level of Being. It is very important that everyone should understand this."
The Psychology of Possible Evolution

The development or evolution that is possible for a person on this earth, in their lifetime, is psychological. Remember that Man is created on the earth as a self-evolving being capable of self-generated psychological change—development. This Work, which begins with self-knowledge, is called self-evolution because it is only through sincere efforts intentionally made by yourself that the possibility of evolution exists. It is in and through the energy of the effort to Work that evolution happens. Each person must make their own efforts in order to evolve. No one can evolve automatically or by intellectual understanding, by vicinity, by osmosis, or by knowledge. Only personal inner Work effort produces the force for evolution. This process in the Work will take you from self-interested psychology to self-transcendent psychology. Awakening from a sleeping mechanical psychology to an intentional conscious psychology is your destiny. It is what each of us is here to do. The fact that this Teaching exists is hard proof of God's unconditional
Love reaching down to us even in our insignificance; His very personal Love for each of us individually and equally.
The Practice of Self-Remembering

Every student beginning to practice the psychological exercises of the Work is taught first of all to practice Self-Remembering in a particular form. You are instructed to call to attention your remembrance of your most authentic Self; recollecting the essential sense of your Being, outside of time and events. Several times a day, or whenever you remember to, practice Self-Remembering by standing upright within yourself outside of the moment and its influences. It makes no difference whether you follow an alarm clock method of practicing Self-Remembering or if you simply try to remember to remember yourself. What you will discover first is that indeed you do not remember yourself. You will start remembering that you forget yourself and this is the beginning of light.

Since this exercise relies on something more pure in motivation than rules, legalism rarely works well. Keeping a notebook of your experiences may be helpful if it is your style, or it may disrupt the
experience or your perception of it if this is not your style. What is important is that you actually practice Self-Remembering and that you taste that state and remember it.

All of the other psychological Work practices are different forms and degrees of Self-Remembering. Self-Observation is not Self-Remembering although it allows you to observe that you do not remember yourself. This is where the confusion lies between Self-Observation and Self-Remembering. Self-Remembering and Self-Observation are very different kinds of psychological activity that touch the same state of consciousness, the Third State. Self-Awareness and Real I belong to this level as well, each resonating to some degree in the others, or sharing the same taste of state.

The Work teaches that bringing the Work ideas to the moment of experience (incoming impressions) is also a form of Self-Remembering. Practicing any Work exercise, i.e. Self-Observation, Inner Separation, etc., is a form of Self-Remembering. Remembering your Aim is another form. In full Self-Remembering, it is your Real I that is experienced in relation to all things; your individuality, your nothingness, your interwoven place in the universe. In this state you feel profound peace and inexpressible enlightenment. It cannot be reduced to adequate words. Although everyone has had moments of this experience during their lifetime, the practicing of Self-Remembering can intentionally evoke this state and help to develop it into a permanent condition of
Consciousness. This kind of permanence must be built upon practice. You must Remember Yourself—no one else can do this for you.
Self-Observation

"Watch, do not sleep."

Self-Observation is the most fundamental practice in this Teaching. Even more so than Self-Remembering because it provides the light of Consciousness and the means for developing your Real I—the one meant to be remembered in the act of full Self-Remembering. Everything begins with and depends upon Self-Observation in the Work. The subsequent practices and exercises all depend upon it and Real I is illuminated by it. It is consequently critical that your practice of Self-Observation is refined and accurate. For this you will need a Teacher.

When you begin to practice Self-Observation, you must divide yourself into two sides: an observed side and an observing side. To do so, you must take part of your attention and create a vantage point within your psychology from which you can see yourself objectively. When you try to see yourself from this new position,
you should be able to see all at once—your outer circumstances, your actions and words, your attitudes, emotional states, posture, tone of voice and inflection, intentions, motives, facial expressions, and body movements. This kind of awareness takes some practice and only comes in small glimpses at first. Each glimpse is a photograph of yourself that you will remember because of the special quality it has. And each effort to practice Self-Observation will create more light because Self-Observation lets a ray of light from Higher Consciousness into your psychology.

The analogy for practicing Self-Observation goes like this:

You have many I's, one of which is Observing I, and you are attending a play. The play represents life. The audience (your many different I's) are each giving their attention to the play and each responding differently to it. Some I's are excited, some are bored, some are angry, some are pleased. Observing I turns around from the stage and watches the audience, noticing each I's reaction to the play which is life.

Remembering to practice Self-Observation and refining that practice are the first two challenges.

Reminding yourself can be a simple matter of taping up notes that say Observe yourself all over your environment, or deciding to practice at a particular time every day, or using small tricks which remind you to observe yourself.
Once you begin to practice Self-Observation, you will be horrified at times regarding what you observe. This is the biggest obstacle to overcome in the refining of your practice of Self-Observation. When you observe yourself and you begin to see the insincerity, the lies and selfishness, and the legion of Negative Emotions that characterize your inner experience and shape your life, the shock can stop you in your tracks, in a literal way, developmentally speaking. As soon as you feel Negative Emotions about what you are observing, like guilt, fear, humiliation, frustration or shame, you are immediately stuck. Since nothing conscious can grow from a negative state, you are effectively stopped. As soon as you begin justifying what you have observed, you are equally stopped. If your are justifying, you may be sure that you are identified and in Negative Emotions.

It is vital to practice Self-Observation uncritically. You must be able to see everything clearly with a dispassionate eye. This does not mean that you become oblivious to Conscience, but you must learn not to ascribe everything to yourself. Doing so is Identification which is the condition you are seeking to change. The process of the Work will enlighten you about what to ascribe to yourself—your Real I.

The first thing to do in the case of becoming negative in response to what you observe in yourself is to withdraw the feeling of I from it.
Say to this observation: "This is not I". Then turn your Observing I on your negative responses and notice what they say to you. When you say "This is not I", you are differentiating between your mechanics and your Real I, which is clarifying, and you are making a small withdrawal of force from the energy of mechanicalness. If you find yourself justifying, simply stop saying the words. Practice **Inner Silence**.

It will take a long time of actual practice before Observing I functions accurately or has any permanence, or before you have experienced enough internal light to verify what the Work teaches regarding your own psychology.

The light of Self-Observation shines a ray into the darkness that is the unconscious side of you. This darkness is not evil. You are not instructed to look for whatever evil might be unacknowledged in you. That idea of confronting inner darkness is evil. Your dark side very well contains multitudes of Negative Emotions, but that is not all. Your dark side is all that remains unobserved and unacknowledged by you, unconscious to you. You cannot change something if you have no awareness of its existence. So real personal change, which is the aim of esotericism, depends upon the light of Self-Observation first of all.

Some of the many reasons the Work asks you to observe your Negative Emotions and states from the beginning are because they
are not part of your Essence, they are acquired and, what is most important, they stand squarely in the way of your development. Also, each student in the Work is asked to not give expression to negativity from the beginning, as work on Being. In doing so, you will begin to see the stranglehold Negative Emotions have on you and you will feel their force when you try not to express them. But first, you must be able to observe them.

Your practice will show you how you go from complaining to feeling irritable to speaking and acting with anger followed by self-justification, feeling dejected and guilty. You will observe inner and outer talking in slanderous terms and find yourself grumbling about something you must endure, worrying about it. You will see how you are constantly being critical about everyone and everything you encounter. And this is what you call discernment. You will notice that you are plagued with dissatisfaction no matter what you have and you feel anxious and fearfully vulnerable. When things are going well, you will be afraid that they will change and you will suffer. When things are not going well, you will be afraid that they wont change and you will suffer. In any case, you are afraid and already suffering. You will catch yourself reciting grudges against people and events and circumstances and you will observe frustration. You will catch yourself gossiping, and be shocked by how often you lie, feel insecure, embarrassed or rejected, or how often you flatter yourself, judge others, and relate to everything in terms of like and dislike.
It is very clear that all of this Wrong Work in your psychology must be eliminated before you can function at a higher level of consciousness. Self-Observation is the first step in beginning to purify your inner life; in getting rid of all of the mess and uncleanliness of Negative Emotions. When you observe a negative I, you are already less under its power. Observing I is not identified and so cannot be captivated. It uses the force of intentionality which would otherwise be engaged in the mechanical negative emotion. Repeatedly observing the same Negative Emotions weakens them and makes separation from them progressively easier.

Students are also asked to observe their False Personality in action. This includes: attitudes, opinions, preferences, mannerisms, repetitive phrases, postures, body language, facial expressions and the whole multitude of changing I's. This stimulus-response multitude is called Imaginary I and it has the illusion of unity. The formation of it comes from ideas you have about who you are. These illusory ideas form pictures of yourself based on imagination, vanity, and self-love. Imaginary I believes that it is the pictures and imagination you have about yourself, but honest Self-Observation will show you that you are not as you suppose yourself to be. All of the multitude of I's spring from automatic responses which are dictated by your individual Acquired Personality. Self-Observation will show you that you are not your False Personality.
After you have practiced Self-Observation for a time, when you have a Work memory full of photographs of yourself and verifications, the idea of Multiplicity will begin to have more meaning to you. Seeing that you have no stable center or controlling I means that you are not living life—you are only responding to stimuli. That is a very grave bit of understanding which, if you get hold of it, will increase your desire for change.

This point in the Work can be frighteningly disorienting. Becoming aware of your Multiplicity happens in the Work process long before your Real I or True Personality have the strength of presence to save you from the psychological vertigo of feeling your nothingness in the acute manner that Self-Observation creates. It is here that the first really dangerous place in the Work is reached. When you get a first harsh look at all of the hordes of I's in your psychology over which you have no control, and you see them reacting mechanically to life without your assent and when you hear them say things that you don't mean, you suddenly feel like a stranger to yourself. You don't recognize the mass of changing I's as a reflection of how you have always pictured yourself and so the illusion of unity and Imaginary I is dissolved.

What follows is the question: Who am I? And this is the necessary condition that must be reached—in the moment of reality when you are experiencing your true nothingness, to feel the question: Who am I? If your motives are sincere, the response you receive is an
assertion of your Real I.

You begin to perceive your Observing I as separate from the other I's in quality and position. It stands apart, above the other I's so to speak, and can see them in action. Remember that Observing I informs and defines Real I and Real I stands above Observing I. This perception becomes a tangible inner experience as you proceed in the process through Self-Observation. You begin to feel your sense of self as different from the I's of False Personality. The difference becomes space between False Personality and Real I, defining both. But this process takes time and Observing I has the ability to see before it gains the strength to act. You will feel the falsehood of the I's of Personality and know that this is not I, yet be unable to change anything. What is worse, you wont know what is I having no developed sense of your Real yet.

It takes a level of stable, mature Being and accurate instruction to traverse this part of the path. It can be valuable at this point to ask yourself this question: What is it within me that is doing the observing? The answer gives Observing I clarity and definition. The more often you practice Self-Observation the more quickly you can pass through this stage in the Work as Observing I becomes more defined.

In practicing Self-Observation, Observing I will see the Multiplicity of I's, habitual Personality traits, Negative Emotions, associative
thinking, self-justifying, Inner Considering, fear and vanity each vying for your attention and using your energy. At such a moment of seeing a discerning choice has to be made, one that negates all I's that are false or negative and also attracts and affirms all I's that belong to Higher Consciousness within you. The faculty that can make this kind of discernment is Real Conscience which becomes active in the light of Self-Observation.

Right here, at this point in the process of the Work, is where the purity of your motives comes into play. If your Work is serious, and your Aim is God's Will and not your own, then Real Conscience will discern and choose and inspire you. Otherwise the opportunity is lost when an I of Personality imagines that it chooses, selecting what pleases it most. In this case, False Personality is strengthened and nothing is gained in terms of the Work.

It is only in the purity and humility of your nothingness that Objective Real Conscience can illuminate the Real I of your Being. So, if you have been Working from a false basis, such as a desire for gaining personal power, this is the point at which you will fail due to your motives. It is a tragedy perpetuated by corrupt schools and corrupt teachers teaching corrupt motives and professing corrupt aims.

The Work takes the place of Real Conscience while your own emerges. Conscience is a function of spirit that needs a degree of
purity in order to become active. Self-serving, self-aggrandizing motives haven't the purity to accommodate the activity of Conscience. And if you find yourself at this 'point of choosing' in the Work process without the assistance of Real Conscience in discernment and choice, you have no connection with higher Mind to guide you. This is a very dangerous psychological position in which to find yourself. Having no direction, you cannot move out of the stage of seeing your Multiplicity toward unity and authenticity, and you cannot "un-know" what you have seen and verified. Such misguided motivation is cosmically criminal because it leads students directly to the point of soul-shattering loss of identity and it leaves them there, when the real aim of the Work is creating unity and authentic I.

However, let us suppose that your motives are right and you do come to the point in the Work when you have to choose which I's to nurture and which to eliminate. To speak in very practical terms, suppose you observe yourself justifying being critical of someone:

Well, he is very bad you know. He is rude and stupid and he's caused you great difficulty, even pain. He talks too much and finds sarcasm amusing, not caring if he causes offense. He even deliberately insulted you and tried to undermine you with callous disregard for your feelings. You've heard him lie and gossip and slander everyone he talks about. And his clothes and that hair!
You'd think that someone so intent on making a spectacle of themselves would care more about their appearance. You suspect he has a problem with drugs or alcohol and are almost sure that he steals and cheats others. You really can't stand him and with good reason.

Now if you observe some thoughts and feelings like this going on in yourself and you remember the Work ideas and your aim, you will have to think about them in relation to this event. First, you STOP criticizing because it is a negative emotion and the Work teaches you that to stop expressing Negative Emotions is central to the process. Then you have to practice STOP again and again as the thoughts and feelings return repeatedly, resisting your aim. Then you recognize that your personal mechanics are at work since someone else finds this fellow quite charming and witty, even loveable—maybe his mother—and others take no note of him at all. So it is your subjective mechanical responses to him which are at fault. Your Negative Emotions are always your own fault. But how can you possibly not object to him and his behavior?

Then you remember that he is also subject to his mechanicalness and dead to the world Asleep in it. It dawns on you that he is not his behavior anymore than you are your behavior. Having observed your own inability to behave always intentionally, you understand what being mechanical means and that he has very little choice in the matter. You realize that his mean-spirited personality had to
have been formed by pain and imitation and that his constant snide remarks are an attempt to make others seem less than himself so that he can feel superior. You know then that he actually feels very inferior and insecure and that his personality is driven by these conditions. A moment of compassion enters you through understanding. You think, "am I so different?" You see that your criticism and slanderous thoughts of him aren't very different from his gossiping, slandering, insulting behavior. You verify that suspicion accommodates the facts to suit your negative attitude while you are sitting in your own superior little niche looking down on him, judging and condemning him for looking down on others. Is your feeling of superiority any more correct than his? Have you ever acted badly in order to get attention or power? Can you remember the last time you lied or gossiped or said an unkind word about someone—today? It doesn't matter if your expression of these things is not like his. You see that they are the same Negative Emotions in action in him and in yourself. You understand insecurity and the pain of feeling inferior very well from personal experience and long-term Self-Observation. You experience an affinity with him. You realize that you do not know the real person, you see only the False Personality which is actually more painful to him than to you. You feel remorse for being so critical and mean-spirited toward him. You are humbled and you feel the pain that you inflicted within yourself. You desire forgiveness and you need purity. You recognize that you have been given the immeasurable
gift of the Work and its ability to free you from Negative Emotions and the suffering they create. Then you remember that this person has not received that opportunity and you feel sympathy and compassion for him. A prayer arises in your heart that he be also blessed. You feel forgiven and your are freed. This more purified and enlightened state is an experience of your Real I. Its consistent presence is built upon repeated experience.

It is not necessary that you learn to like everything you consider bad or negative. And here is another point in esoteric teaching which gets misinterpreted regularly. The idea of learning to like what you dislike is an exercise meant to be practiced with discernment and an appropriate spiritual disposition of releasing your subjective requirements. If a man spits in the street in front of you, you do not have to like it. However, you must forgive him knowing that he is unconscious in his imitated mechanics. You don't have to like what you dislike, it is only necessary that you forgive him so that you don't become negative. He does not know what he is doing: he is asleep. And so you can forgive him since he is already suffering the pangs of Sleep—a condition you are now very familiar with.

Often this part of transformation teaching gets distorted into the practice of accepting everything passively, without Conscience active, which will lead only to confusion. Sometimes, as in monasticism and misguided Fourth Way groups, this idea becomes the practice of creating more suffering or friction in order to
generate more transformation. This approach does not work because creating suffering means "missing the mark" in this system. You can be assured that your everyday life is full of all the suffering and artifice you can handle to fuel your Work for your lifetime.

This is an example of one of the infinite possible experiences of transformation created in doing the Work. It leaves you feeling purified, clearer, lighter, with a new perspective and tolerance and a broader view with connected understanding. If you undertake these practices correctly and you persevere in them, you will find that you must struggle with many issues, and the same ones repeatedly. You will also find liberated authenticity.

Notice how much choosing has to do with this process. To begin with, you choose to practice Self-Observation intentionally, you choose to give it your attention and effort. This is what is meant by doing the Work willingly. You choose to stop your mechanics and consider your internal responses objectively in the light of the Work ideas. You choose to accept what you see and take responsibility for it. You choose to remember your aim. You choose to allow yourself to be humbled and transformed. You choose with integrity the thoughts you think, the words you use, the emotions you consent to. You choose your actions and motives, you choose to forgive and externally consider, you choose which influences to which you submit yourself.
It is just incredibly intelligent that something in you higher than your vacillating personality makes these choices. Real Conscience needs to be that which chooses. Real Conscience becomes active when you choose to make Personality passive and follow the Work. All of these profound things depend upon Self-Observation. In the Work, transformation depends upon Self-Observation above all.

This process, which amounts to intentionally pulling yourself up into a higher state of consciousness, must be put into practice an incalculable number of times in order to build a new psychological structure from which you have the perspective of developed understanding.

A simple overview of the process, if you were practicing all of the Work correctly, would work something like this:

You observe something about yourself, your Acquired Personality, or some negative emotion which you feel and know must be changed. From the vantage point of solid Self-Observation you have a foothold from which to say "This is not I" and feel the separation between Observing I and personality I. Observing I is directly connected to Real I and it therefore feels more authentic than personality. The defining of this distance between Observing I and Acquired Personality helps to accomplish Inner Separation.

After you have observed a specific thing and identified it and you
are intentionally working against it, you will have to practice Inner Separation and Inner Silence, Directed Attention, inner and outer Stop, Non-Identification, and bring all of the ideas of the Work to bear on the problem. As you observe the issue repeatedly and refuse to identify with it repeatedly, it moves farther and farther away from you over time until it becomes faint. It loses strength and sounds hollow and false. You will see what Wrong Work it is connected to in your psyche and consequently be increasingly able to say "This is not I" to it. Eventually the issue you are working on will be dissolved in the light of Understanding and transcended. Usually it takes a long time for Self-Observation to produce these results. But sometimes an issue you have to deal with will simply vanish as soon as you see it objectively. The results are the same in each case. You are free and more conscious: Non-Identified.
Non-Identification

The psychological state called Non-Identified in the Work is a condition of detachment, not from life, but from the power and influences life has over you. There is a very subtle difference. It does not mean not caring about life in an unemotional dismissal of its significance. It means transcending your subjective responses to and requirements of life in favor of higher, more conscious emotions. It takes effort to achieve the self-transcendence of Non-Identification but if you reach that state, the state itself feels effortless. It is lighter because it is not attached to the heavy coarser energy of Negative Emotions. It feels clearer because from a higher perspective of consciousness you can see more, you can see connections, scale and relativity, and this gives you understanding which brings freedom and peace.

The true form of this state must be reached through developed Understanding. Understanding has force, it can build Consciousness and create Non-Identification. You can sometimes jump into
detachment temporarily without the understanding that accompanies developing a more permanent condition of Non-Identification. But be careful not to use this practice for emotionally disassociate escapism. That distortion of practice cannot build anything. It means missing the mark of the aim of the practice.

Real Non-Identification is a conscious activity even though a good deal of the effort is in making personality passive. Personality is always concerned first with what it thinks it wants. You have to get to the point of not forever wanting what you think you want so that you can will the Work and want what it teaches instead. Making your own will passive in this way is a very intentional conscious activity. It requires energy and attention and it is not a matter of passively abdicating responsibility or Conscience. The ultimate and achievable result is wanting only God's Will, which is the nature of the state of Non-Identification.
Teachers and Schools

The Work is a very clean, pure path where sincerity, honesty, and integrity are essential and the right aim is pursued from the beginning. The intellectual ideas of the Work become emotional understanding through your personal practice. It is surely very clear that you must learn from someone who understands this path. You cannot get the right instruction in the Work from someone who merely knows about it. Many people know the Fourth Way ideas thoroughly but do not possess the developed understanding necessary to teach them from the right angle. Having a bad teacher in the Work, whether an unscrupulous fraud or simply one who has no understanding, is a seriously dangerous situation that can damage, even cripple, your psychology simply because it isn't taught with Conscience or Understanding and the true Aim.

Although the System contains vast intellectual ideas that you can study and ponder for yourself, the transformational personal inner Work absolutely requires one to one, face to face, work with a
Teacher. An advanced student can teach the cosmology and basic practices under the direction of a teacher. But addressing your individual experiences, adjusting your practices, guiding you through the process—these things have to come from someone who has gained a degree of developed Understanding by way of personal experience.

An authentic Teacher in the Fourth Way Work teaches from love to preserve the Teaching and to give it to others and to continue their own personal growth. A real Teacher need not be a divine being or even a perfect one, but there are a few recognizable, verifiable requirements for the position. A Teacher in the Work needs to have personal integrity and a high standard of Conscience. You should be able to see exemplary behavior and Being. What your Teacher says to you should lead you into Understanding. The instructions you receive should also lead you deeper into Understanding. You should be able to verify the results of employing your Teacher's instructions and feel a new quality of Being growing.

This is perhaps where the greatest difficulty lies. No qualified teachers have been produced from the major groups descending from Gurdjieff, Ouspensky, and Nicoll because this Teaching has been so distorted and removed from its aim and context by today's generation of teachers and schools. Numerous groups exist, from small conversational or study groups to international schools and organizations claiming thousands of members. But no real teachers.
That means no real schools.

Without question, the best possible circumstance in which to meet and practice the Work is, or would be, an authentic school. If you are taking this path seriously, it is very beneficial to have relationship with other serious students. You can learn from each others experiences and compound your knowledge and understanding through discussion, and you can verify for each other the quality of your teacher. There are no currently known schools or teachers in this sense. In fact, there are many unscrupulous pseudo-teachers and fraudulent groups using the Fourth Way, or rather misusing it, for their own gain without concern for any harm they cause.

Anyone interested in pursuing the Fourth Way needs to be very careful today when searching out a school. Be well read in the Gurdjieff, Ouspensky and Nicoll writings on the Fourth Way, particularly the Psychological Commentaries by Nicoll. Ask lots of questions. Be willing to submit yourself to the Work and to respect and value your Teacher without letting go of the bit of Real Conscience you have alive in Magnetic Center—the bit that knows that Goodness is above Truth. Remember that the nature of the Absolute is Perfect Goodness and so do not submit yourself to anything that is not goodness. Do not let yourself be convinced that you will lose the Work if you leave any particular group. The Work does not belong to the school. Your real personal Work belongs to
you and you can practice it—be in the Work—anytime, anywhere. The Work is designed so that you can develop a permanent faculty of perception which is your own Inner Teacher. This is called the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.
Introduction

This primer is written for persons who have some sense that there is more depth and potential to life and to our own nature than what we see around us. This material is for those who refuse to drown in the shallow values of our culture and society. The ideas presented herein have great power and have been around for centuries in many forms.

The reader will notice early on the relationship between this teaching and some of the great knowledge and wisdom of humanity handed down from the likes of Plato, Lao-Tzu, Mevlevin, Eckhart, and through the sayings of Christ and the teachings that are called esoteric. In this work, the term esoteric means inner rather than hidden or secret and concerns the spiritual life, the life of transformation.

Through long years of study and effort, I have received these ideas in the form of a Teaching. Like all systems of thought and
methodologies, it has a special vocabulary so that practitioners can understand each other. I will be sharing words with you that have an immense density of meaning. This form of the Teaching comes from the genius of George Gurdjieff who at the turn of the century, in his great search for meaning, was able to gather practical and transforming insights from various spiritual traditions and synthesize them for the contemporary rational mind and way of life that we are required to follow in our day. He brought to the west a distillation of the esoteric teachings of humanity dealing with spiritual awakening that are applicable to the experience of every individual.

Gurdjieff called his teaching "Esoteric Christianity." He wanted to present a psychological methodology that could be applied in daily life without going to an ashram, without leaving your family or your job. He called it "The Fourth Way." He categorized esoteric teachings as the way of the monk, the way of the yogi, the way of the fakir—which deals with transcending the physical—and the fourth way which has to do with applying all of these techniques and insights internally and psychologically without removing yourself from the external life that you are living.

Though invisible and personalized, these methods have the same intensity and power as the other ways to enlightenment. These teachings come down through the ages, all of them having to do with spiritual awakening, all of them having in common the
ultimate aims that we find in the teachings of Christ, of the Sufis, of Lao-Tzu, and in all the great hearts and minds of humanity. This particular teaching, the Fourth Way, uses daily life as the field of opportunity for the process of awakening.

Like every other Teaching, these ideas can become dogma and turn into their opposite very quickly. The ideas of the Teaching at the end of the twentieth century have a different quality than when they were presented in the early and middle part of our era. The holistic consciousness of this age brings a new context to these ideas: the appreciation of other cultures and teachings, the recognition of the unity inherent in physics and mystical insights are all part of the flowering of a new consciousness. Gurdjieff left statements that foresaw this development.

Everything in this inner Work is taught from the perspective of personal verification. Each individual must verify these ideas for himself or herself. However, the cosmological aspect of this teaching is not verifiable. It is useful for providing perspective or a sense of relativity. It can lead one into a moment of higher consciousness. But the essential part of this Work is the practical application of the ideas to one's own psychology since this Teaching is about self-transformation.

In its essence, this Work is the same as the wisdom of every authentic religion: how to become your true self and living out your
purpose in life.

This Work leads only toward developing our inborn capacity for goodness. I will therefore not deal with other cosmological aspects of the teaching that may be familiar to students of the Fourth Way, such as the table of hydrogens or the Ray of Creation or the Law of Seven. It is important to note that this stream of Teaching that has come down through Gurdjieff has gotten stuck in the mud along the way. A coldness—even a lack of humanity—has developed among some of the exponents of the dogmatic version of the teaching. You will find this opinion confirmed in a number of fine books that have been published by former students who have moved into other teachings in order to make connections between different systems of thought. In my case, it was through the Christian mystics that I found another dimension to the ideas made available through Gurdjieff.

The Teaching known as the Fourth Way is for those of us who cannot go to live in an ashram or a monastery, and who seek meaning and higher states of consciousness while living in the world. It is specifically for penetrating into the simple aspects of our daily life. Gurdjieff called this work the way of the "sly man" (a misleading translation of le ruse in French which is less pejorative). This term does not refer to questionable ethical behavior or to a belief that the ends justify the means, but rather to the lucid awareness of an individual who perceives how to transform difficult
circumstances into valuable opportunities for personal growth. Such a person knows how to use everything that happens to him/her in life as fuel for inner growth.

Imagine turning situations that are otherwise unpleasant and dead ends into material for inner joy and liberation. Carlos Castaneda spoke of the Indian priests who were made abject slaves by the conquistadors but retained their dignity and learned how to use the horror of that experience to strengthen themselves internally and as a result were not destroyed by their conquerors. The "sly man" is not caught in the madness of it all and can bring stressful situations to fruition for his higher aims by living them at a new level of consciousness.

The whole point of this Teaching is about one's own practical psychological (and ultimately spiritual) transformation. It isn't about anything external. It has nothing to do with changing our outer circumstances in life, but rather with changing our inner selves and therefore our relation to life's events. When an external method is turned into law—which happens in many Fourth Way schools—it loses all its purpose and meaning. The Church is an example of a Teaching becoming external and disconnected with the real purpose of its existence. All the dogma of the Church is only a reflection of the real experience of those who were transformed by the teaching. With the inquisition, the distortion of these ideas became a reason to torture people, thereby turning the
teaching into its very opposite.

In some contemporary esoteric groups, one will often find the idea of personal effort transformed into a matter of heavy financial donations rather than of inner sacrifice. This phenomenon is also a sign of degeneration.

In my journey, I have found that the mystics' experience of the sacred was reflected in this Teaching's more psychological and scientific way of describing human transformation. Through such connections, I understood that Truth is found in the inherent unity of seemingly different spiritual teachings.

This primer will be confined to focusing on the practical, experiential inner work that can be done anytime and anyplace. I will be presenting ideas that are similar to those of purification and detachment, and yet you will find that they are not abstract, not counter to the ways and needs of your life. Rather, they may lead to the development of a new consciousness, a new perspective of yourself and of the meaning of life.

This is a powerful teaching. My purpose here is not to give you new intellectual concepts to place next to others, but to assist those who desire to embark on an inner path of psychological evolution that has practical, daily ramifications. It may begin with the mind, but it will move quickly into the heart, into your psychology and your whole way of life.
The Work

It is called the Work because it requires real effort that each of us can make invisibly and internally. We are talking here about an inner psychological work, a work that requires you to not merely know the ideas, but to apply and practice them as well. And to apply them not in general, but to yourselves. This practical application leads to personal change that opens onto a new level of knowledge that some have called "knowledge through being".

So this Work is a process of self-knowledge which is razor sharp. The ideas presented here have power, the power of genuine psychological and spiritual transformation in the midst of daily life. It is a work tailor-made for those who cannot escape their ordinary obligations and yet need it as desperately as oxygen in order to have meaning and purpose in their lives.

This Work is about self-change. The subject of the Work is you yourself and you will note that this is one of many connection with
the great teachings of humanity: "Know Thyself" is at the core of the wisdom of Socrates. The Work offers its own unique, magnificent insights in taking an idea like "know thyself" and connecting it to our personal issues so that we understand what that idea really implies.

These ideas address the frustrations that people have in trying to better themselves, trying to get in touch with God, trying to break through to something sacred—a higher state of joy or of transcendent goodness—and getting beyond their limitations. Hopefully most of you have had some taste of a higher state of consciousness in your lives and that is why religion and spirituality are of interest to you. This work seeks to help us not only understand these experiences, but become more receptive to them, make them more long-lasting and ultimately learn to live them out in each moment, rather than in occasional, accidental encounters.

The Work begins with this fundamental insight: We are told that before change can happen, we must become more conscious of who we are now. A good portion of this work begins with tearing down the plaster of who we think we are in order to discover who we truly are. All the spiritual teachings tell us that there is extraordinary potential in each human being. But it is often untapped and tragically wasted by the hardships of life, or through confusion and unhappiness.
The Work provides psychological tools that can lift us to that inner place beyond confusion and despair. One of the sayings in the Work is that "if we wish to have a different life, we must first realize what kind of life we have now." We are told that human beings are self-evolving beings who, through effort and knowledge, have a struggle to undertake in order to reach a higher level of themselves. One of the great mysteries behind all of the teachings of the world religions is that we are seeds—only seeds—and that we can die as seeds and fail to discover the real potential of our existence.

With the right kind of knowledge and the right kind of effort, we have the possibility of becoming something quite different and yet more truly who we are. A person can undergo a definite transformation, a real evolution if they know and understand what they have to do. Some of you may have heard the term "becoming co-creators". Matthew Fox and other such thinkers of our day recognize that we are meant to participate consciously in the development of the universe as well as in the development of ourselves. The Work tells us that people often get stuck at a level of being that is equivalent to the maturity of a seven year old. That explains why a seventy year old person can have such an immature emotional reaction to things. They may have become important leaders in the world but something has remained stunted. Knowledge and level of being must increase together to create the metamorphosis, the discovery of a new consciousness that leads us to who we are truly meant to be.
We all know people who are encyclopedias of information and then have this blind side to them—adolescent impatience or irritability. Something has not been translated into their being. Again, this teaching is based on seeing what we are and what we can become. Our aim, then, is to change the state of our current psychology which is made up of attitudes and imitations that we have picked up over the years of our development, and the result of our unconscious behavior. For inner change to take place—and you can think of inner change as encounter with the sacred—we must break out of the little self that limits us to the awareness of the senses and of our own psychological dispositions.

The Work helps us to clear an inner path through all of our unconscious behavior, all of our attitudes, all of the things that we do not recognize and which consequently do so much harm to us in our daily life. Here the Work connects with the idea of purification: "The pure in heart will see God." There has to be a purification process. This can only be accomplished by people who are either yearning greatly for something that they cannot grasp or those who recognize the limits that they have come to in themselves.

In order to begin to do this Work, there are certain fundamentals that have to take place. One is being sincere with oneself. And that is very hard. We all know that to some degree, but in this work it becomes really difficult because we start seeing things that are not
comfortable for us and our idea of who we think we are. We must climb out of the darkness of not-knowing who we really are and how we behave and why we behave in the ways that we do. The uses of attention and energy will be critical to this process.

Everything that we will offer you is based on practical, verifiable ideas. This is not a matter of faith or of belief. Imagination and opinion are set aside for rolling up your sleeves and getting into the hard effort of real psychological transforming work. It is critical to get to the nuts and bolts of why we are the way we are before we can get beyond that to someplace else. But we cannot understand any of these ideas without applying them to ourselves. This Work requires psychological effort. You are the subject of the work. These ideas cannot change your external life. But they can change your internal life, raise your level of consciousness, and therefore give you a new relationship to your present life which will ultimately change everything.

One of the problems with the Gurdjieff teaching taken alone is that there is an element that is almost brutal. G. himself taught people how to see themselves by sticking their noses in it. That was his method: "You are nothing, you're just a vain, pathetic puppet, and I'll step on your corns every chance I get. Whatever is left of you after that might learn something. If you leave whining, don't come back." That was Gurdjieff. He had a field day doing this with all the arrogant intellectuals in Paris, London, and New York. But he was
also an old man who had a pocket full of candy for the children. He was so much more than what anyone had witnessed before. A classic example: He was intentionally shouting at one of his key students. Yet he taught about not being negative and identified. So while shouting at this man wilting before him, a twelve year old boy who worked at the school came to the door. In a split second, Gurdjieff turned and winked at him in the midst of his rage in order to let the boy know that he wasn't caught up in this rage at all. He then returned to shouting at his student for an intentional purpose.

All of Gurdjieff's writings are extremely complicated and difficult. They are not meant to be taken at surface value. At the front of his twelve hundred page book, "Beelzebub's Tales to his Grandson", he says that it must be read three times. Then there is P. D. Ouspensky who started out with Gurdjieff in Russia and moved east into Europe with him during the Revolution. He was with him for nine years, but had to make a decisive break with him. Yet it is thanks to Ouspensky that we have the more understandable, clear expression of the teachings. We could not have received the legacy of Gurdjieff's lifework just through his writings.

Then there is Maurice Nicoll after Ouspensky who contributed an even more lucid expression of the teaching through his own genius. But the first generation of Gurdjieff students, after his death, attempted to continue the same methods used by him. They did not have the subtleties that he brought to his method, such as his
profound love and devotion hidden behind his raw character. His primary students were often hard and inhumane with nothing behind that to balance their approach. In their books, G. and O. do state that one must find an esoteric school in order to learn this teaching. People with knowledge unlike anything that is available in mainstream culture are needed for the process of evolution.

Special knowledge provides the opportunity of participating in the possibility of awakening, of authentic transformation, of joining in the true destiny of the human spirit. Let's say you join a school and begin the hard and painful efforts of working on yourself, struggling with the ego, and all the things that nobody can stand to deal with. Some Fourth Way writings state that if you leave this school, you are back on your own and virtually doomed. You no longer have a teacher or a school to provide the incentive to work on yourself, and you have very little chance of spiritual development. These teachers say that you are lost. Many of them, including revered individuals such as Yogananda are quoted as saying that it is better to have never started at all, than to begin and quit. People then become terrified because of this dogma stating that if you leave the school, you're dead. Emotionally, you do lose a great deal: the community, individuals who share something in common that is very hard to find in ordinary life. Being part of such a community can have some very positive elements in the experience. You are cleansed of all the things that make up our life, such as the six o'clock news, the illusions that generate our ideas of
reality.

But Gurdjieff did say that, every so often, an individual manages to keep swimming by himself and makes his way to somewhere. He also said that we must verify everything. We are not to accept a belief system on faith. We have to experience and make organic these ideas. He pressed people to find out for themselves what was real and what wasn't. It is also true that G. himself left a school. There are teachers in the East among the Sufis and in Tibetan monasteries who thought of him as a maverick escapee, a rogue teacher. What I discovered is that we do not step out of the reality of Being, whether we leave a teacher or a community, Being (God), life remains fully there. Clearly, it requires additional inner strength to pursue this difficult work of going against the grain of one's own selfishness and everyone else's way of life. But as I came across Christian teachings, I was able to recognize that elements of self-remembering, vigilant awareness and ceaseless prayer, connect us with the Source that cannot be separated out from one's life and that belong only to one group or one teacher. Now more than ever that kind of fragmentation is criminal. This doesn't mean that we don't need some community to continue the process of going against one's own grain toward one's higher self.

This presentation of these ideas is informed by long experience and breadth of study that moves the teachings in their evolutionary process from Gurdjieff out of France into the Europe of the
twenties; then Ouspensky in England into the nineteen forties. Now comes the more holistic, unitive approach that is critical for the twenty-first century. Whether it is spirituality or science or politics or electronic media—everything is converging. We are becoming a global community and spirituality as well must be informed by all the great teachings or humanity will destroy itself.
States of Consciousness

This Work begins by saying that we are not conscious. Right now you are looking at these words, and you are aware of yourself doing so. Yet this Work says that you are not conscious. It says that everyone in the world lives in a state that is referred to as "sleep." We are told that there are four levels of consciousness:

- The dream state experienced in bed.
- The state we are in now which the Work calls sleep.
- The third state is self-consciousness or consciousness of self which is what we try to reach through these efforts. Gurdjieff called it "le rappel de soi" or self-remembering.
- Then there is a level beyond that, objective consciousness, which very few know but which we can recognize in the great teachers who have come through this world.

So how can we be asleep when we are here aware of ourselves? The Work tells us that we are a stimulus-response
mechanism—something happens in the external world and we respond to it. In our ordinary state, we are nothing but responses to outside stimuli. We imagine that we control our lives, that we make our own decisions, but with a little attention to the reality of life around us, we can gain a new perspective: everyone is just reacting to everything.

You can see it clearly in the work place. It is thematical. Something goes wrong and everyone gets mad and nobody is in control. That is one little facet of sleep. Another way to understand this idea as a state of consciousness is the fact that what we call thinking is nothing but a random flow of associations. I say the word "apple." One person tastes it, another remembers childhood memories, another sees it. One visual after another sends us along a certain path of thinking. What we assume is our own intentional reflection is most often an out of control process stimulated by the outside world. Another facet of sleep is seen in our ingrained attitudes. Surely we have enough honesty to know about that issue.

A common experience might be that of parenting. You find yourself talking like your parents did. You start pulling on that string and you find that most of your ways of being angry are the exact copy of your father or mother, right down to the way your jaw tightens. And you begin to see that so much of who you are is pure imitation, going way back into the unconscious days of childhood, and yet having total control of you. Even when you have completely
rejected the source that you are imitating.

The irony is that as we begin to discover these realities, people close to us know a whole lot more about us than we do. They could have told us that years ago: "You're just like your dad!" But we can't handle that because we need our individuality, our sense of self and independence, and we are not prepared to see that the emperor has on no clothes.

Another example of this condition of sleep: a man wakes in the morning. He feels fine, the day is nice. He gets out of bed, goes into the bathroom and drops his toothbrush and this makes him mad. As he combs his hair, his comb breaks. This makes him mad again and he associates into thoughts like "you can't depend on products these days." He goes downstairs and the smell of coffee makes him feel better. But he spills his coffee on his lap and he is angry again. His newspaper is late and he feels impatient. When it finally appears, he reads it and responds. This is how we respond to the stimulus of life upon us.

Life is constant stimulus. There is something coming at us at every moment that we are awake. But our responses are all automatic, or as the Work says mechanical. They have been programmed in us since infancy. While we think we have consciousness, we really have very little choice in how we respond to any particular kind of stimulus. You may think you are in control, but if someone comes
up and insults you, you are probably going to have a predictable response. This is another description of sleep. Being in that state where we respond to incoming life through our personality without having any control or any objective view of ourselves acting in our life. This is one of the sources of our massive unnecessary suffering. When we begin to examine the things that cause us unhappiness—with colleagues, with loved ones, with family—we discover how long the list is and why there is no inner peace.

It is our birthright to find that special inner sanctuary of peace, stability and harmony that makes us real contributors to the universe. This is the evolution that we are meant to reach. Imagine if every day of your life was lived in peace and contentment. People who have achieved this way of living often exhibit such a state of self-transcendent goodness that they can even face their mortality without despair, without fear, without bitterness. It is possible to reach a place in this life where the beauty and poetry and goodness of it all—which is spirituality and love—is at the center of our experience.

Other teachings try to help us along on that path, such as meditation and mindfulness. They may have tremendous value but most of them don't really teach us how to focus in on those details about ourselves that keep throwing us back into the turmoil. We all know people who have certain strong characteristics, quickness of temper for instance, and we accept that. We assume that's okay. But such
persons are like a gerbil in a cage, never getting off the treadmill. Such people are unlikely to contribute to the beauty of the universe. From the perspective of spirituality, these persons are dead before physical death. They have missed the opportunity of their true potential.

That is the whole point of the ideas presented here: to evolve into our true selves, our higher selves, our real selves. It is an ongoing process. We don't get to the end. No matter how long we live, we must work at it every day. That is why it is known as "the Work." The Work says that we are not just asleep, but that we are also machines. A machine can be clicked on and off. The human ego doesn't like that idea at all. Most people are not interested in finding out how truly unimportant and insubstantial their egos are, how made-up they are, how trivial and selfish.

Finding one's true nature requires a leveling of the ground of all this distortion. That is the radical teaching of spirituality. "Seek not the honor of men" does not merely refer to awards, but points to what is truly valuable beyond humanity's ordinary set of priorities. These are utterly revolutionary ideas. No one lives by them except in the underground of spiritually-aware individuals. Why so few? Because each of us has plenty of pride, self-satisfaction and imagination about ourselves that we do not want to let go of in order to let something else come through.
The Work tells us that we live according to an imaginary picture of ourselves, built by literature, movies, parents, siblings. We can see these pictures manifested in how people walk and talk. If these pictures were taken away from most people, there would be nothing left. So this is a dangerous work. Gurdjieff said that if people saw themselves as they truly are, they would go insane. But there are safeguards in this work. It is a methodical system that provides knowledge to assist us in receiving new insights about ourselves. Without such information, we can get pretty serious vertigo when we experience new perspectives about ourselves. "Sell all you have and follow me" refers to the inner obstacles that keep us from authentic transformation. That transformation is also known as "awakening."

This Work is a method of awakening. "Seek first the kingdom of God" means seek first that state of being where the reality of God is palpable. That experiential dimension is the heart of all religion and spirituality. It deals with the experience of inner liberation from one's own agonies and weaknesses and entrance into that state of consciousness which is in touch with the powers of the cosmos. Quantum theories in physics are opening up the doors to the spiritual reality of which we are a part. Awakening takes continuous psychological effort, but at the same time, being in an awakened state is not ahead of us in chronological time. It is "above" us. So it is accessible now, but it takes a long time of doing this inner work to reach it.
The reason we can do this Work is because we have each had glimpses of these higher states in our lives. The trouble is that we may not have valued or recognized them for what they were because of our state of sleep. A moment on a beach, a sunset, where we are separate from the usual rush of life, offer us an expansion of inner peace and serenity which are the hallmark of higher consciousness. We see this in the great teachers of humanity, in their tranquility and acceptance. They accept all the unfortunate circumstances that come our way, including death, and live in that wisdom of acceptance and harmony which leads to self-evolution.

Human beings are an experiment in the universe: Can these little fragments, born out of supernovas and stardust, evolve into a higher quality of consciousness that can connect with the grand designs of the universe? People who have experienced these awakening moments offer us the following insights: "What you took as yourself begins to look like a little prison-house far away in the valley beneath you." (Maurice Nicoll)

Imagine a state of presence in the moment where you are so separated from your usual state of self that the part of yourself that is so full of confusion and ignorance no longer constitutes the parameters of your consciousness. Another quote from the teachers who have encountered higher consciousness: "It is no longer the old I but a wider, more comprehensive one. We do not lose ourselves in
it, but on the contrary we truly find ourselves. A new breathing space, scope and sphere of action opens up and we realize only then how confined we had been before, how imprisoned and isolated." (Karlfried Graf Durckheim)

In this awakened state of consciousness we experience connection, and ultimately conscious love. All the great ideas that we admire about spiritual teachings are not abstract thoughts but expressions of human experience that are available to each one of us. But we must work on ourselves for them to bear fruit.
Multiple Selves

We are not one person. There is no "I am," but many "I's" coming from numerous places within us. There is the "I" who is in command when it is hungry. There is the "I" who is in a bad mood, there is the "I" that loves to read poetry, and on and on. This work enables us to look at this phenomenon while it is happening. In the state of sleep, we just assume that we always act as the same person. Inner knowledge tells us that we are made up of many disconnected, fragmentary facets without unity. When such information is verified, then a presence besides those many "I's" is also present. You can no longer fall entirely for the illusion of unity.

A person beats his child in a moment of rage. In that instant, he is only adrenaline and anger. Hopefully, sometime later another part of him is going to be horrified. But it could also happen that in the moment of explosion, something in him could have seen it coming and chosen not to let it take over: "I will not go with that. That is not me. I do not need to do that." This effort leads to a dis-
entanglement from a life of mechanism that leads us nowhere. One of the other great ideas of this Work is that who we are attracts our life to us. If we are always unpleasant to be around, we will end up being by ourselves. We will gather to us a certain kind of life and people.

It is no small thing to begin to see who we are. It will impact our whole life. We are not one, but many. The aim is to become one, the true one behind the many "I's". The mysterious metaphor "man is legion" refers to the multi-faceted being that we are in our separation from the unifying Source. Part of our inner work, then, is to develop an awareness of the feeling of "I" in the moment. Such an effort will allow us not to be that fragmentary self claiming to be our whole identity. Any change in the sense of "I" will also transform the world around us. If the person who is about to strike his child catches himself and recovers some patience or forgiveness, he or she is going to change their world. The child will grow up without carrying the violence into another generation.

We generally encounter the world as an egotistical bundle of personal reactions and that is the cause of so much of our unnecessary unhappiness. We must develop a feeling of "I" that is different from the one we have now. We all have the experience of constant chatter in our heads. We are always thinking something, responding to something, imagining something. We say "I" to each activity in our mind: "I hate this...I am this...I want this." But this
flood of constant response and talk in our brain is nothing more than life acting on our personality and our personality responding to it. We can form in ourselves, in our own psychology, a little bit of awareness that can stand back from that torrent of thought and activity and simply see—without response to it, without judgment or justification.

This seeing allows us to recognize that in one moment we are this "I", yesterday we were another "I". Life impacts us and our personality responds. That little bit of "observing I" within us will grow and become more powerful. Eventually it will lead to our "true I" where we will have the power to be more than merely reactions. No single I in our personality will include the whole of itself in our consciousness. The "I" that we are now cannot possibly contain all of who we are. It is a fragment. The Work tells us that what we are not conscious of will control us. When we are completely caught up in our ordinary sense of self, there is no chance of change. We are convinced that we are right, we take for granted that this is who we are. We don't create that inner space which allows a new evolution to take place. So long as we take ourselves as one person, we cannot move from where we are.

There are sets of I's that are contradictory to the ones that make you feel bad. You can say "yes" to them and "no" to the ones that make you feel bad.
As you begin to distance yourself from this inner ocean, you will be able to observe parts of yourself that we are calling I's which are not only contradictory but entirely foreign to what you really care about. For instance, you can be a religious person as well as the very opposite. In order to strengthen the part of yourself that wants to be a spiritual person over against the part that couldn't care less, one has to intentionally give power to those I's that will do the work of spiritual evolution and remove power from those that will not. This requires serious personal separation. As things are now, all of these I's claim to be yourself whenever they appear.

When you make that space—which is the detachment of the mystic—and you see these armies of light and darkness inside, then you know where the battle must take place. You will also see that the army of darkness is much bigger than the one of light, those I's that wish to love God and the universe and transcend their selfishness. Over against them is this horde of barbarians that are only interested in being comfortable and satisfying their desires.

We say I to everything. Everything that comes along makes us feel something. We say I to it. A lot of our I's are extremely contradictory to one another. Those I's don't know each other. We are changing I's at every moment, every event, every thought, every feeling is a different I in us. They all belong to personality which is acquired over our lifetime.
If we can see these I's as separate from our true self, if we do not give them our force for just a moment, that energy goes into true I and gives it more strength. Everyone has I's that they don't like in themselves—cruel I's, lascivious I's—we don't want to think of ourselves as that kind of person. So when we have that I, we don't acknowledge it. If we see it at all, we justify it: "well, they deserved it." Most often we don't see it at all. It comes and goes and another I takes its place.

An "I happens to you because a set of circumstances in the external or internal world provokes that I. If we can see that it just happens, if we can separate and not say I to them and just refer to them as "passing I's", we begin to detach from all of the emotional bondage that these I's inflict upon our lives. The Work tells us that nothing can change in us if we identify with all our I's. The whole point is to discover that we are not all that inner traffic. This insight gives us independence from the external world. This is a fundamental aspect of spiritual maturity and freedom. If we look at the teachers of humanity, they were independent of the forces around them. They were truly themselves and able to act in the world regardless of surrounding influences. That is one characteristic of higher consciousness.

We do not have to create any grief for ourselves as part of our spiritual awakening. Life will give us all the grief we can handle, and a whole lot more. Going into a monastery or developing an
intense discipline will not necessarily lead to authentic transformation. With this teaching, we are offered the mechanism of self-change. It is very specific, very scientific. This is spirituality brought to the West so that all of us who are bred through the use of the mind are able to access these higher states through knowledge. If we cannot see we are many and insist on regarding ourselves as one, then we can do nothing with regard to our inner life.

Buffers are a psychological phenomenon that keeps one set of I's from knowing another. They allow you to live with all the contradictions because they are not seen. This is a fundamental characteristic of the state of waking sleep in which we live wherein we cannot see the whole picture.

Lower I's cannot see higher I's. How can we separate if we take everything as ourselves? Some I's can make us depressed and have power over us. We do not even challenge them. We can detect their presence by a sudden loss of force. If we are not quick enough, they will take over. It is no use arguing with unpleasant I's. All our work lies in separating from wrong I's.

Where do they come from? At birth, we have a certain nature, called essence. Everything that happens to us from that point on lays down patterns of behavior, attitudes and associations in thought. These I's are not expressive of real I, but come from what has been built up in us through experience. This is determined by
where we were born, when we were born. In a different culture, our I's would be completely different. In the desert, you might have wonderful associations concerning rain, whereas in Seattle it might depress you. They are all just I's, arising from personality which is a conglomeration of acquired thoughts, attitudes, moods, opinions. We don't have to take all this as oneself. If we invest our energy by identifying with an I, we give it power. By observation, we can see that they change constantly. Eventually, we will be able to separate. What is separate from that stream of I's? Real I. This is important because the state of consciousness that we live in, characterized by multiplicity, is the reason why there is so much violence in our world. Everyone is identified, everyone is asleep, everyone has false ideas about themselves. All of the I's that arise out of personality come from self-interest. And self-interest is always in conflict with the world.

If we have an I that says, "I am an American and therefore, as a good patriot, I must have an enemy who is not an American." Here is an example of why that state of consciousness is so dangerous. Everything is turned into conflict because we cannot find the place within that does not need to fight for its vanity or for those attitudes that keep us locked in. If all of that were unplugged, and we were at peace, not easily offended, not aggressively competitive, and could go through life being goodness, this would be the result of struggling against the I's.
All of us, even "nice people", have abhorrent thoughts. If we ascribe them to ourselves, we are in the power of that thought whether we act it out or not. We must not give it our energy and say I to it, and it will pass. Those kinds of negative I's will come in cycles. If we keep refusing to allow our emotions to get attached to them (identification), we will recognize that it isn't I, but that it comes and goes. We don't have to be that thought.

In order to protect our inner being from negative events, we must become hermetically sealed. They cannot penetrate to the core of ourselves and pollute us. It is possible to keep a part of ourselves protected. The idea of selection allows us to choose which thoughts to go with. "Get thee behind me, Satan." This is inner spiritual warfare. Satan is the conglomeration of all those results of the sleeping human psychology that creates the distorted human beings—the selfishness, the violence, the chaos within.
Initial Methods

Self-observation

Self-observation is the first tool in the process of awakening.

The application of any of these ideas begins with self-observation. This is an act of attention directed inwards toward what is going on in us. Instead of living on the exterior, there is a little attention and energy kept within that can remain neutral and observe our behavior. Most of the time we are so unaware of ourselves that we don't even realize how we are sitting or what our posture is like. We are completely asleep to ourselves.

This self-observation begins to let a ray of light into our inner darkness. But it cannot be done automatically like everything else we do. It requires a conscious effort. We must develop some control over our energy. If it is all used up for other things, we will not have it available for this effort. The Work requires the valuation of attention and energy.
The idea of higher states of consciousness is a more intensive way of being alive. In such states, there is a presence that resonates in the now. But we leak out our energy every day so completely and in so many ways that we do not have the fuel to live in those higher states which would so thoroughly change our lives. Self-observation means that we see something recurring in ourselves.

The more we see it, the less we are under its power. If we see something in ourselves, such as lying, the natural inclination is to feel horrified. As long as we stay in that condition of response to what we have observed, we have no power to separate ourselves from it. However, the non-judgmental "Observing I" will naturally begin to change our way of acting in the world. It will also lead us to forgiveness, humility, and compassion not only for yourself but for everyone else.

When we come into the world, we are like a blank tape. Everything that we experience after our birth builds our personality. All of the external situations in our life interact with our essence and that creates who we are on the surface. This self is not the true I, but the I of personality which stands on shifting sand. The Work leads us to our real self from which we can act rightly in the world. The consequences of this Work are joyful and liberating. Self-observation leads to inner separation which is the beginning of the possibility of awakening. But it must be done in a neutral fashion.
Usually, when we see something in ourselves, we either deny it or feel horrible about ourselves. Or we justify it: "it only happened this one time, I'm not like that." This scientific, psychological method allows you to see within yourself in a way that you have never seen before. The object of self-observation is to impartially, uncritically and without justifying, take an inner glance at yourself, your attitudes and behavior. Try not to have an emotional response to what you see. This creates separation within yourself between the changing I's that you are observing and something within you that is stable and real. In the beginning it is weak. This is your true I, your higher self and self-observation will strengthen a sense of real I. It will make a space between the turning wheel of "I"'s that go through you all day and the part of you that is your innermost, truest self which is most closely linked to the source of our being which is unfathomable.

We say "I" to everything. Everything that comes along makes us feel something. We say I to it. A lot of our "I"'s are extremely contradictory to one another. Those "I"'s don't know each other. We are changing "I"'s at every moment; every event, every thought, every feeling is a different I in us. They all belong to personality which is acquired over our lifetime. If we can see these I's as separate from our true self, if we do not give them our force for just a moment, that energy goes into true I and gives it more strength. Everyone has I's that they don't like in themselves—cruel I's, lascivious I's—we don't want to think of ourselves as that kind of
person. So when we have that I, we don't acknowledge it. If we see it at all, we justify it: "well, they deserved it." Most often we don't see it at all. It comes and goes and another I takes its place. An I happens to you because a set of circumstances in the external or internal world provokes that I.

If we can see that it just happens, if we can separate and not say I to them and just refer to them as "passing I's", we begin to detach from all of the emotional bondage that these I's inflict upon our lives. We are told in the Work that nothing can change in us if we identify with all our I's. The whole point is to discover that we are not all that traffic, wherever it comes from. That gives us independence from the external world. That is spiritual maturity and freedom. If you look at the sages of humanity, they were independent of the things that came at them and were therefore truly themselves and able to act in the world regardless of circumstances. One of the tricks in self-observation is to not call I's I. When you observe yourself in a negative state and say to yourself: "I'm in a negative state. I'm really angry. Someone did something that upset me..."—this is seeing, not observing. Observing means saying: "It is in a negative state. It feels angry, it feels resentment."

What we are dealing with is a phenomenon that is separate from us. If we can observe our mechanical behavior and not call it "I", we will be able to separate from it and not have to respond automatically to it. Calling these inner disturbances "It" can help. If
we find difficult and confusing this concept of many I's, and the idea that our moods and feelings and attitudes are not us, but simply our acquired behavior, then calling our mechanical self "It" instead of "I" can help us learn to separate. In meditation, it is possible to reach a peaceful place within and feel refreshed and vitally alive. But then we step into the street and suddenly we are back in the whirlwind again. Here is the practical way, the secret to learning how not to fall right back into it. And therefore to maintain that high state of serenity in the midst of the chaos that we know so well.

This Work allows us to notice who are the friends and who the enemies within us. As it is now, they are all the same since they can each claim power anytime they want. There is no control, no direction, no center of gravity where one is anchored in certain fundamental decisions about the direction of one's life and commitments. When we begin to make an inner separation within ourselves and create "observing I," we are separating a part of our psychology from the mechanical part of our personality that is continually interacting with the world. That makes the personality that is functioning in the world self-conscious because it is being observed. This takes some of the force out of the strength of feeling ourselves as that personality because now there is something else in us that feels more like us than the personality. It is no longer so self-assured. Something within is seeing our life from a perspective that is not identified and therefore it isn't caught up in the power of the
daily emotional roller-coaster.

The personality loses strength when it begins to be observed. If practiced with sincerity, the real I that would choose to live in accordance with our fate, our destiny, our vocation, our purpose for being here, would act in the world rightly. As that real I gains in strength, you begin to change. Gradually the personality becomes a servant to that real I. Instead of acting out of control with no unity, it will act with real will and express your unique individuality in the way that it is meant to be expressed.

The Work says that personality is all that is built up within us from a young age. This needs to happen so that we know how to function in the world. So we move from essence—what we are born with—into personality, which is artificially absorbed through the culture and education but is necessary in order to deal with the world. Inner work makes this personality more passive so that arrogance, pride and all the other attributes of personality lose power. When Dorothy pulls the curtain back on the wizard of Oz and catches the little man working the equipment, the power of the mighty Oz is forfeited. That is very much the idea of catching personality for what it is. We become very vulnerable because we no longer have all that puffed up behavior made out of "sound and fury signifying nothing." When you finally begin to activate that group of I's that wants to live at a higher level, you will soon find yourself confronted by opposite I's; that powerful group that wants
to stay in control and doesn't want anything to do with this self-transcendence business. Your greatest enemy is the false part of you that will not relinquish its power and will seek to destroy the other part of you that seeks the spiritual life.

The early fathers of Christianity saw the demonic as psychological phenomena. They talked about this teaching on I's as demons. A demon enters and suggests such and such an act to you and you have a choice: assent to the suggestion or reject it. In some ways, the ancient metaphors make it easier to fight internal contradictions than the terminology of the Work. If you know you're dealing with evil, you can face off with it. When it is confused with yourself, or what you thought was yourself, it is more subtle and complex.

These ideas must be employed in your everyday dealings. To be in the world and yet to be removed from it is real work. In order to accomplish this, you must find time for yourself and seek quiet space. Take twenty minutes a day for the centering that will give you the inner force to build up your true self. Again, this is why the Work has been referred to as that of the "cunning man" because we are to take the events of life—the nasty boss, the frantic pace—and turn them into inner gold by using them as opportunities to reach that objective space that can deal with both one's inner and outer world. When the Work is applied to challenges in the outer world, it defines and gives character and strength to your real I. From this perspective, we can be sharpened every day.
John of the Cross refers to the rock being sculpted. It doesn't know that it is being turned into a piece of art. It only knows that it is being hammered on. As we enter deeper into this teaching, we begin to feel sustained by the power behind these ideas. The point is to come under influences that are from a higher realm. There are the influences of life—making a living and so forth—and there are higher spiritual influences that come down through real I, through essence, through level of being, that have to do with the presence of God. These influences can sustain us through everything, including death. This Work cleanses, aligns, and puts us in connection with something that is far beyond our own means so that we are not left out there by ourselves flaying against our enemies. Ultimately there is the hope of being in touch with something that can give us the kind of support that we cannot give ourselves.

"All our work lies in separating from wrong I's." In the beginning we cannot even tell the difference between right and wrong I's since we have no guidelines. Behind all our many desires is the one desire for God. These finite desires are merely reflections of the ultimate desire for the infinite. We must therefore center our lives around making a choice, coming to a decision. We must unify ourselves around a focal point—a decision—which the Work defines as separating from wrong I's. We need to sort out the wheat from the tares.

"What drags us down is our choice." We have the power of choice
to think in one way or in another. The I that decides to wake up early is not the same I that has to roll out of bed at 5:30 when the alarm goes off. You can notice in your contradictions that one I is in charge and that it doesn't remember the previous one. When you sit down to dinner, you often don't remember your diet I's. They don't appear until you're finished. The fact that one can recognize that "this is what I wanted to do and this is what I did" can be the beginning of seeing clues to a complete transformation of consciousness. Ideally, we should go through life in that higher place that is detached, free, self-controlled, and able to do right action in the world. This place does not get dragged down by boredom, depression, envy. This is the place that can be reached briefly in meditation and can become the place inside you which is the observer. After a beautiful meditation or worship service or having listened to a piece of music, you will notice that fifteen minutes later you are under attack and your higher state is lost. You are back in the usual momentum. You must begin to build slowly, carrying that meditative inner space into the madness of daily life.

In this Work you need to remember that you don't remember yourself. In other words, an hour into your day, after having started out quietly and built that inner space, you suddenly realize that you have completely forgotten about it. That is an important moment. Merely noticing how you completely lost track of what you are trying to be and do is the beginning of change. All of these steps and ideas lead somewhere. They lead to a definite change, a definite
transformation of your being. If your aim is to be in touch with God or to have enough knowledge of God to know what your place is in the world—what you are suppose to do while you are here, the meaning of your existence—there must first be an emptiness created within. This Work is all about clearing out the mess that is inside everyone as a consequence of being born on this planet, in order to get behind that noise and become able to hear guidance from another source. So all the things that we are talking about—many I's, self-observation, inner separation—are tools. They are meant to clear a path in you that will be without self-interest and consequently will be at the service of what is divine in the world. This Work can lead you to a very great place in yourself which is your highest fulfillment.

Gurdjieff said not to take any of these ideas on faith. The only value is to verify it for yourself. The only way you can find out what it might do for you is to begin with inner separation. The key to get to the inner separation that can remove us from the hypnosis of the external world is self-observation. This is the secret of this Work. This teaching uses our daily life as the food for our transformation. The methodology begins with self-observation. Self-observation leads to inner separation which is the beginning of the possibility of awakening. But it must be done in a neutral fashion.

We are told in the Work that nothing can change in us if we identify with all our I's. The whole point is to discover that we are not all
that traffic, wherever it comes from. That gives us independence from the external world. That is spiritual maturity and freedom.

In this teaching, morality is subjective to a great extent. What is moral for this time was not moral one hundred years ago. What is moral in this country is not moral someplace else. The vast majority of the things to which we assign morality are subjective. That morality can change according to the person, the place, the era, the culture. This condition of self-observation cannot assign judgment, because as soon as we do so we are no longer observing but we are being it. If we are being it, we have no chance of separating from it. So if we observe something in ourselves—such as a hateful I—and we feel that we don't want to be that, we are investing it with our emotional energy and we are not going to be able to separate ourselves from it. Eventually, through a long process of self-observation with non-judgment, we can see which I's serve higher consciousness (goodness) and which do not serve it.

When we can be separate from it, we can pull ourselves out of the I's that don't serve higher consciousness and consequently they become weak. That is how we can have an influence on them. This idea of selecting parts of oneself is very important. Being able to be objective within oneself enough to see that there is a large crowd within us allows us to see those parts of us that have no interest in spirituality.
Now we are capable of recognizing the "enemy." These few I's that are interested in self-transcendence are the ones we want to cultivate. As they get stronger, they will help us evolve to that higher quality of being. But until we get to this point—seeing the contradictions within—everything remains confused and chaotic. These ideas will step on your toes. But if we apply the humility of observation, we will develop marvelous insights into how this mechanism operates. "We touch life according to implanted attitudes" wrote Maurice Nicoll. "It is an extraordinary experience to become even a little free from this acquired way of taking life and taking others...With insight into oneself, it is possible to take things in a new way."

Change involves a change in oneself. We are all convinced that the way we take things is appropriate. The Work is meant to dissolve self-complacency, this "pseudo-creation we call ourselves." We are slaves to this acquired machinery that we take as ourselves. The practice of the Work allows us to capture overviews of what we are really like and what we have been like for years. This can certainly be shattering. But it is dangerous unless we know how not to become negative as a result of these perceptions. We cannot take all our I's as ourselves, and the Work calls this conglomeration as "imaginary I." Nicoll asks the question: "Is not all development through a process of rejection and selection?" It follows that we must wonder how we can reject or select if all is one for us, if all is I. The object of this Work is to make us conscious of what is going
on in us. "Here in this inner world, and in what we select and reject in it, lies the key to the Work and so to evolution."

Just remembering that we forgot to remember is an important observation. To say "I'm going to observe my impatience." Suddenly, it's Friday and I've been impatient all week but never thought about noticing it, reveals to us very clearly what the idea of sleep is about. There is a dimension of observing I that needs to break through to a larger perspective that has healing powers. One of the problems with the way the Work is being taught as we experienced it—and as Gurdjieff saw it being done in New York to his great disgust—is the fact that it is often reduced to a sterile psychological exercise. Even though one has to make simple efforts in the beginning, baby steps even, the whole point is that we are embarking on the greatest adventure human beings can undertake, which is to connect with that holy dimension of life, that unnamable dimension that we come from, and which transcends even our passage through this plane.

Observing I, seeing tensions in the body, has the potential of doing more than merely alert us to it. Observing I can also link you with a spiritual quality of self-forgetfulness (you remember yourself in order to forget yourself). This quality of transcendence of self is such that there is a meltdown of tension. Observing I needs to eventually remove us from the sphere of self-concern to the point where all our wrong tensions and attitudes disappear, just like in
deep meditation. Such relaxation of misguided tension can come to us through a moment of higher emotional experience that becomes available through the moment of separation. We must be beware of turning this kind of observation into microscopic self-absorption, all turned in upon ourselves. Remember that ultimately the aim is to be so surrendered to the something higher that we are that we both vanish and find self-realization.

Tension comes from something emotional. If we can take the emotion out of an anxiety, then the physiology can relax. The power of observation is that it teaches us that we are not fully captives of our behavior. Becoming aware of tension begins the process of relaxing it. The process of relaxing tense muscles is directly related to our spiritual state in the moment. Awareness becomes healing and frees us to simply be in the moment. We can only have that inner liberation by a separation. Detachment or inner separation is the key. The Work does not give us platitudes but practical how-to insights. To remember some of these ideas during the current of the daily activities is to notice something about yourself. That noticing is the first step toward awakening which is a way of being in the world that is closer to our true potential.

Negativity

Most daily negativity is based on self-indulgent, small minded,
petty behavior that goes uncontrolled and is the result of years of habit and imitation of others. We have all had experiences where we recognized that our negative behavior was unnecessary. Any poisonous contribution to the psychic atmosphere of the world is not going to bring about harmony or good. We must get to that point where we have observed clearly our own negativity and what it generates in the world. We need to see that we are not in control, that we may want to act differently but continue to act in the way we do not want. Then we may begin to see that humanity feeds off this negativity which produces the consequences that we see all around us. Observing negativity can teach us reams about ourselves and show us why the world is in such a mess. It will also reveal to us that negativity is contagious and perpetuates itself.

Maurice Nicoll speaks of "becoming aware of a drop in level or sudden loss of force". The awareness of letting yourself go with a sudden moment of irritation is not a moral issue, but a loss of energy. We are to learn to value this life force that can be used for getting in touch with God or higher meaning. Negative states squander such energy completely. This beginning process of self-observation and separation eventually leads to being able to have a choice over the use of our energies which most people don't have. "If you're not quick enough, I's of this kind will get in and take possession of you and it may take days to get rid of them."(Nicoll, Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky).
Instead of being morose for three days and finally, some way or other, getting on with your life, become aware that on a particular day you didn't have the inner strength to not let this old habit come back in and take over. At this phase of the Work, all you can do is say: "it's taking over." You cannot keep it from doing so. Just being able to know that you have been taken over takes away some of the power of that phenomenon. When it happens unconsciously, there is nothing you can do about it. You will just be it. "We have to learn to walk in ourselves very carefully."(Nicoll) To take for granted our psychological landscape with its peaks and valleys, its dark and light areas, is to miss a universe peopled with all sorts of angels and demons. Our condition is to wander around in this vast and varied country without paying any attention to the dangers that exist there.

Just by the power of observation you will put a flashlight to this unknown world. You will begin to see the bad neighborhoods through which you do not want to travel. The esoteric metaphor of Christ born in a manger has to do with the birth in your manger, full of darkness and smells and animals, of the higher Self. The mystics say that it doesn't matter if Christ was born a thousand times in Bethlehem if he is not born within you, because then his incarnation was pointless. There is something precious within us to create. To do that, we must see our surroundings and make our way through them. Out of all of that which is petty and selfish and cruel within us, we must get to the point where we can say "not I, but Christ lives in me." That is the expression of being in touch with the
spiritual self and that birth within is the Work. It is the birth of the unified self in touch with divine influences and cleansed of the madness and darkness which is the usual state of our being.

"It is no use arguing with unpleasant I's." When there are I's in you that seek to make you negative, struggling with them puts us on their level and we become emotionally identified with one side or the other. We either argue or resist them and stay engaged on that level. If instead we say "these are only I's, and I will not give them my strength; I will not identify with them and they will pass," then we can begin to have an effect on our inner state instead of just being subject to whatever turmoil is happening within. Eventually that real I in you will have more power. Behind real I lies God and that is why we struggle to get there, so that we can be in touch with God and know what that Will is for us, and have it come through our real I and guide our personality in the ways in which it is needed in the world.

As we are now we can do virtually nothing against the emotional forces within us. But if we start with the mental I's that are not as charged as the emotional ones, we can potentially control them and deal with them. Their speed is different. The speed of sudden anger is on a different scale than the speed of intellectual thought. Eventually, we can develop a mastery over all of the emotional activity within us. The Work lays down guidelines between what is right and wrong. Ultimately, this differentiation has to do with the
aim of the Work, which is higher consciousness. Whatever takes away from that development is wrong, and whatever leads to it is right. What is it that interferes with the aim?—automatic behavior, negativity, false personality. It isn't a moral judgment, but a practical and common sense approach to what is going to help or hinder our inner development. Life encourages wrong I's, namely the lower side of humanity—aggressive, negative, greedy behavior. Those characteristics are clearly poisonous to inner development and yet are rewarded in this world.

Life and the Work have completely different agenda. Try to observe your negativity. Notice when you are negative, whenever it happens, in any of its forms. They include much more than anger, it includes frustration, vengeance, any feelings of irritation. The next step after observing your negative I's is to try not to express them. Simply refrain from expressing this negative I. An alchemical phenomenon will happen inside of you when you do not express it. The energy that would have gone into expressing this I is free energy and it will feed your real I and give you a sense of yourself. Try not to express negativity when it occurs to you and don't feel bad when it doesn't work because it takes a long time before you can get to that point. Sometimes we discover an I in ourselves that is "out to get us" because it wants our energy like a carnivorous creature. It will do anything it can to get us into a negative state so that it can nourish itself. This teaching is an alchemical method to take force out of such I's.
The idea is to turn the energy that would have gone into negativity into food for higher consciousness. This is not a process that seeks to uncover the reasons why that negativity was formed within you in the first place. What needs to be seen is not where it came from or how it happened, but to recognize that it is there and that it keeps happening. We then deal with that phenomenon in a transcendent way rather than in an analytical way.

Many people define themselves by their negativity. We are emotionally attached to our negative feelings. We enjoy them. They give us a sense of ourselves and who we think we are. They give us a sense of power because of their strong effect on us.

A first step is to try to separate the emotion from the activity. If you observe negative emotion in relation to your personality, let all of that go; don't listen to those I's; let them pass right through you, stay focused on the mechanics of the activity that you have to get through. If you focus attention on your writing hand, it will relax the muscle. Using that experience to be conscious of it produces a domino effect. You free your muscles to do the activity correctly, you free your psychology from some other connection and create a space of simply being. Intentional use of this ordinary experience of writing can then align you with a higher state. Attention to your hand writing can become a spiritual experience. There is also value in observing how the human machine works. This knowledge can
make us more compassionate toward persons who have been formed and imprisoned by habits of fear and emotional attachment. Sometimes you can only observe something in retrospect. You're too caught up in it in the moment. The releasing of tensions can bring cleansing to these toxic emotions.
Toward the Real Self

What you have taken all your life to be one being with a name is shattered into a million pieces. There is no center in which you can consider yourself to be at home, to be dependable to yourself. Nobody wants to know this. In fact, we spend our lives building up a false identity of who we are. A self-importance, a role based on what our jobs are, that give us the illusion of unity and oneness. The Work tells us that this is a fantasy, an illusion. One of the things that keeps us in such a hypnotic state is identification. The reason we are asleep, the reason we do not naturally recognize the reality of our being is because we get caught by everything. We identify ourselves, our life, our emotions, with each phenomenon that occurs.

An example: Getting angry at your child for spilling the milk. At that moment you are emotionally and intellectually enslaved by that event. You are lost in that event. Instead of being all that you are—the rational, intelligent, loving human being—you are lost in
the spilt milk. This insight has an extraordinary range of subtlety. Life, which cares not for esotericism, mysticism, spirituality, thinks that is just fine. In fact, the more you are identified, the better an employee you are. You will work very hard for that status or all the things that society rewards you with for selling yourself into the illusion of what is important.

This Work calls life "incoming impressions," events that have an impact on you. Everything that you say I to, you identify with. Everything that you identify with, you give your force to and consequently it has power over you --a person going through their daily routine, identifying with one thing after another that comes through either the stimulation of outer or inner events such as psychological patterns, habits of reaction, ways of behaving. The reason this is extremely significant for those who are seeking something more in being alive is that this is what blocks out higher consciousness, the reality of the sacred, God or whatever you want to call it. If it's raining and that puts you in a bad mood, you have just cut yourself off from the deeper source of your being. In that moment you are dead to the essence of being alive. For those who are yearning for spiritual reality, who are magnetized toward something more than the dreary ordinariness that is not the end-all of being in the cosmos; these are the things that cut us off completely and with these are all of our attitudes that we are asleep to.
Gurdjieff would say that the third state of consciousness is the place where we become capable of loving our enemies, and that we can be like the sun that rains on the good and the bad alike. The great teachers—especially those of the Christian Tradition—say that our rebirth, our transformation describes the process of becoming that sun that can shine on all things in the same way. That is a level of love that we must admit we are not capable of in our present condition. The reason we are not capable of implementing the teachings of Christ or of the Buddha is because we live in a consciousness of multiplicity where the good and the not so good commingle. Our I's are not merely an interesting phenomenon to observe, but reflect a level of being that keeps us from what we are truly meant to become.

All the great teachers of all the religions tells us that we are meant to express true love, objective love—agape—the kind of love that can transform other people because its radiance has power. This is our birthright. This is what we are called to by religion and spirituality. Christianity in its manifestation in the world today has been polluted. It is difficult to talk about this religion without someone having all kinds of associations that are distortions and the result of unfortunate experiences. As long as we take this teaching—which is the essence of the Christian teaching—and apply it to ourselves, there is no problem. It is the external manifestations of religious faiths that have completely corrupted its presence in the world to the point that most wars are now religious.
ones. Gurdjieff used the link with Christianity as a shock. Most of the people around him were secular intellectuals completely outside of the religious institutions. B. D. Griffith, a Benedictine monk who lived in India, said shortly before his death that if Christianity does not recover its mystical tradition, it might as well close up shop. Otherwise it is a total failure.

There is virtually no place in society to find real spiritual nourishment. Imagine a place where everyone is so focused on the common aim of spiritual awakening that an authentic liberation from the harshness of the world "out there" occurs because you are among people who are genuinely working on themselves in the name of the Creator. That is what a Church is meant to be. The early eastern teachers of Christianity had as a magic key parallel to self-observation: the state of gratitude. In gratefulness, there is a transcendence of self-interest, a recognition of life as gift rather than as something to manipulate for one's desires. Gratitude does focus us on the possibility of another state of consciousness. All of us have had access to these higher moments. That is why we seek them because we have some yearning for it. This system is a systematic way of achieving such experiences. In a moment of gratefulness, we may indeed transcend a situation or some psychological state and experience some moment of bliss.

The issue is: what will happen tomorrow and why can it not be sustained? When you begin to understand these ideas, you can see
why it happens. Another fragment of self that is not grateful for anything is going to take over and call itself "you". Meanwhile, the you that had this grateful awareness will not provide the unity and center where you might live that out. Real gratitude is a state of prayer, which is a state of higher consciousness. But then, we have the gratefulness of the Pharisee, who was glad that he wasn't like the other fellow. True Christianity is very holistic. The idea of the incarnation proves that through the physical body there can be higher consciousness, or unity with the source of existence. One is able to use the body as a vehicle to manifest higher consciousness.

The Buddhist masters are tremendous examples of this. In practicing martial arts, their presence to reality and separation from lower levels of consciousness is so intense that their very gestures have a purity that reflects a higher state. The goal is that real I will manifest in the world. If it were present at all times, we would be acting in the world in a right way under every set of circumstances. The outcome of our actions would be goodness. If all the people around the world were in that condition at the same time, that would be called the "kingdom of heaven." Barbara Marx Hubbard and other contemporary thinkers hope for this critical mass where numerous people would reach that state. It is hard not to be pessimistic because it takes a great deal of work to get there. It does not happen automatically. That is where religion can be very superficial because of the assumption that some external ritual will do the trick. The symbols have no meaning unless an internal
phenomenon takes place and continually takes place. The early teachers of Christianity were very clear about the idea that thoughts come to you.

Their method of the watch of the heart was to be aware enough of their thoughts to keep them from entering the emotions and manifesting in actions. They developed a process to observe the I's and keep the negative ones from stealing their force. This was in conformity with the idea of "cleansing the inside of the cup." We cannot do that if we think these thoughts are ourselves.

For hundreds of years, every teacher of Christianity read the Bible allegorically. St. Augustine, the father of the western Church, went so far as to try to figure out why the gospel writers mentioned two straps on John the Baptist's sandals. But stories could also be turned into profound psychological meanings that could affect your life. The idea of the literal interpretation of the Bible is a new idea from the days of the American frontier and cut off from centuries of teachings. All of the ideas in scripture are multi-dimensional, that is why they are called sacred. They are relevant and valuable because they relate directly to human evolution, to what one can become, to spiritual awakening. The number one sin according to the early fathers was pride. And that is the description of the Satan figure. The personality that pictures itself as a wonderful human being while being a stimulus-response machine is where the perversion comes in.
The stimulus-response phenomenon of our nature is "evil" by the fact that it is unconscious behavior without will or control. The false personality distorts the mechanical responses. If the conditions on this planet were different, with conscious human beings living here, the mechanicalness would develop a different kind of personality without necessarily having those negative traits. Mechanicalness could exist and not be a conveyer of evil. But the false personality that we develop around ourselves is what perverts it.

When some of these ideas begin to resonate at a deeper level, then intimate and personal insights that cannot be expressed in words come to the surface. They have to do with qualities of awareness and degrees of consciousness beyond the realm of the senses.

As you observe yourself over a long period of time and you come to see the pictures that you have of yourself, of the kind of person that you think you are and the contradictions in your behavior, as you separate from the I's that you observe, real I—which belongs to the third state of consciousness—becomes more powerful. This real I is you in your pristine, uncluttered existence. As it becomes stronger, it manifests and what is contradictory to it begins to weaken and not manifest. It is not a matter of something breaking through, but of growing and evolving. That higher part of us gains control and power and manifests in our behavior. The I's that we express change according to that evolution.
Moments of higher consciousness do break through and occur spontaneously. Sometimes we don't realize what is happening to us. We often do not know how to value what has happened in a moment of gratitude or deep peace. We are so asleep that we don't recognize the different qualities of consciousness that we experience. The purpose of this Work is to make such moments more frequent and more consistent. We don't have to go to a mountaintop or to a beach in order to find that peace, that state that the soul longs for. We are meant to know this state even in the middle of a traffic jam. If we are able to separate and remember to observe rather than to become irritated, then we can save ourselves from that loss of life-force and gain force by turning that energy into something higher.

Ultimately, this process leads to becoming a better human being. Knowledge and Truth are meant to lead to Goodness. We must be willing to recognize the contradictions and the need for help to lead us toward the self that we are meant to be.

When you visit your parents on holidays, you will notice that you are behaving in a way that belongs to a personality that you had when you were very young. We have entire groups of I's with certain personality traits. They take over under different circumstances, according to particular stimuli. You play one role at work and another at home. From business person to husband or
wife. The idea is to achieve a level of unity and consistency that should be the characteristic of the Self. We attribute this characteristic to ourselves even though we are not like that. We can discover a quality of being that we recognize in the great saints and teachers of humanity are trustworthy in relationship to the higher Truth in every moment of life. Their actions do not contradict their level of being.

Consciousness in the moment can put us in touch with a timeless reality. Eternity in the moment. This straightforward set of ideas is meant to deal with the extraordinary things of life. There is no question that a great deal of empowerment can take place through these ideas. Imagine you are at the office and someone becomes very angry. But you stay calm and in control. You watch this person objectively and you don't react. The adrenals don't kick in as they might otherwise do. You are in control and the other person is not. This is an example of the power available through this Work. Yet it is not about personal power, because then it becomes distorted and that element of goodness which is at the heart of it is lost. Empowerment is a goal, but not for self-interest. There are situations, such as embarrassment, that rob us of our force and our ability to be present. If we were free of all of those considerations, we would have the power not to be crippled by our own thoughts of ourselves and the emotional mess it creates in us. That is a kind of liberation that is empowering.
If you were suddenly stripped of all your possessions and you found yourself in the wilderness alone, everything that matters now regarding prestige, attachments, would disappear. But you would still be there. The part that is unconditioned is what our soul yearns for, because that is the source of peace and fulfillment.

The aim is to be able to walk through life with a unity of self and remembrance of the significance of being alive unhampered by circumstances, people, and one's own past development. This is the goal that great sages, saints and teachers reached. To radiate with a higher goodness is the result of work on oneself. So from small efforts, we reach out for that state of consciousness which makes the difference between a life well lived and one not well lived.
The Power Of Self-Observation

The power of self-observation lies in the fact that it teaches us that we need not be fully captive of our behavior. Just becoming aware of muscle tension begins a process of relaxing them. Many of the great teachers state that this simple process of relaxing tense muscles is directly related to your spiritual state in the moment. Applying the simple act of awareness frees you to just BE in the moment. One can only begin that kind of inner liberation by a separation. If you are that tension, you cannot NOT be that. This is part of the magic of this idea of detachment which is found in all spiritual teachings and which is called in the Fourth Way "Inner Separation". The Work gives us those practical tools. It does not provide abstract platitudes but a how-to approach which begins with remembering some of these ideas in the midst of the daily rush in order to notice something about oneself. That noticing is the first step toward awakening.

The Work talks about our Many 'I's, the many parts of our being
that we do not control. There are certain aspects of our being that have no interest in spirituality and evolution and will actually fight against it. One of them is our instinctive nature, which is interested in eating and staying warm. It handles our digestion and is a mind that has its own way of doing things. We cannot claim ownership of it or control it. Quite often it is in control of us and most often gets what it wants. As we apply this Work and try to make choices against forces within that have always had their way, we will experience resistance. We are a universe within. As above so below. Maurice Nicoll says that we eventually learn—as we become more aware of all of the elements of our inner being—to walk carefully in the landscape of our being. There are certain places we should not let ourselves go into.

The crack in the wall of our state of sleep is precisely found in noticing. Something else becomes active and the more you develop that inner space the more you begin to enter a new dimension of presence. To notice that you are automatically repetitive means that something else is becoming active and beginning to see. The more you develop that inner space that is not entirely ripped out of you by automatic reaction, the more you begin to enter a new dimension of presence, of awareness. Try to notice how thoughts that enter your mind are not your thoughts. Try to catch a moment when something in your mind has been "dumped in", such as a reaction to the radio or to what someone said. And yet we immediately assume that it is we who are thinking this because it is in our mind, and
therefore it is us and we are one with it, when in fact it is a thought merely floating through the various frequencies that we are tuned into. If you saw a horror movie last night, and today you are suffering from a strange paranoia, try to notice the connection.

The early teachers of Christianity were extraordinarily aware of this phenomenon and developed a complex methodology for dealing with the inner life. They called it "the watch of the heart". They recognized that when thoughts entered and these feelings bubbled up, they had a choice to catch them at the point of recognition. If they were aware in the moment enough to say "here is a thought that I am not going to go with because if I let it enter me further and let it become an emotional feeling, it will eventually become an action manifested in the world." To cut that thought off at the source requires that it must be caught before it has such an impact on you.

This reality of the "state of waking sleep" as Gurdjieff called it, suggests that we are hardly any more conscious or in control as when we are asleep and that we in fact live mostly in a dream state. The aim is to become grounded in a deeper reality. We are so filled with this imaginary world, mainly through this imaginary sense of unity that we have about ourselves which blinds us to the inner panorama of our psychology, that we can only hope to chip away at it a little at a time. Though it is long-term Work, we are blessed by moments when we experience this freedom from our usual sense of
self, our usual reactions to the world, and are able to have a moment of higher consciousness—or awareness of the presence of God—where peace, release, joy, and gratitude for living can exist.
On Non-Identification

The idea of non-identifying carries with it a depth of meaning that needs to be explored thoroughly in order to avoid misunderstanding. Its parallel can be found in other ideas related to spiritual evolution, such as detachment, freedom from desire, inner peace. The results of this effort are seen in the presence of sages and saints in all times and places.

Non-identification is ultimately self-transcendence. It requires us to overcome a fundamental self-interest that guides everyone's lives in order to accept passing circumstances, in order to remember the greater context in which our lives are taking place. We must become liberated from all that is connected with the selfishness with which we are born. This condition is part of our natural make-up, as basic to us as the instinct to survive. The paradox is that spiritual and psychological survival requires the opposite. The maturing of the human character means turning one's attention to something greater than oneself.
We all know people who have completely crystallized in the state of identification. It is a tragic dead-end that brings despair and solitude in its wake. Such persons equate the state of identification with their identity. Their negativity, their reactions from false personality are how they know themselves. They are not aware of other options. This Work reveals that in fact we do have other options of behavior.

To be identified means that we literally lose ourselves, lose our identity, in that with which we are identified. A new car gets a dent in it and we have an angry reaction—we become the dent in the car, this is our reality. There is no sense of Self unaffected by this external event. To remember that Self—which is the opposite of identification—suggests that we are present to this moment of our lives and its link to the rest of our existence. We are the child that we once were, the youth, all of our life experience that we have acquired on this journey through time and space. This remembrance creates a density that is not dragged down or fragmented by the passing event with which we would otherwise be identified.

To be in a state of identification is a condition in which we find in everyone around us and in which we live and breathe and have our being. It is a total waste of life-force, it is imagination, self-indulgence, pettiness, unreality.

The serenity that is witnessed in the sages and saints of the past is
not meant to be some rare or unique nobility of character. It is right alignment with reality. It is an achievable state for all of us. This Work takes us there step by step if we make persistent, right efforts.

Non-identification has nothing to do with a disconnection of the emotional center, lack of compassion or interest in what is going on around us. In fact, to be non-identified gives one the widest scope of vision and makes possible a new awareness. Non-identification pulls us out our black hole of distorted self-interest which gives us tunnel vision and keeps our psychology in the basement of its potential.

It is very difficult work, as anyone will quickly discover upon making efforts to overcome identification. It demands moment by moment remembrance of Work ideas, of one's higher aims, and a constant return to inner separation from our automatic reactions and the tyranny of false personality and its infinite variety of self-gratifying desires.

Finally, non-identification requires the capacity to accept necessary suffering, a fact that everyone must deal with in one way or another. To experience inner pain without falling victim to negativity (including self-pity) or becoming completely unbalanced by the surfacing of the emotional center as the only perspective on reality and is a sign of a new maturity of will and understanding. At the apex of this level of being is the ability to find joy and gratitude for
the gift of life even in the face of great turmoil, injustice, or tragedy. Living in that paradox creates a new quality of Self which transcends the ever-shifting scenery of temporal life. It is the groundwork of unity, constancy, and independence.
On Mysticism And The Intellect

Meister Eckhart's understanding of the use of the intellect on the path of transformation had an extraordinarily modern understanding of the nature of being and of human psychology. He saw us as fragmented and separated from our source of origin with an "irrepressible orientation" toward our spiritual unity. But he provided no dogma as signposts on the way. He considered it better to say what God is not rather than what God is. He believed that each had to find his or her own path to the Godhead within and that this search could take place anywhere. In simplest terms, he believed that God is immediately present to us and that through the abandonment of our lower selves and their world of multiplicity, we can be filled with the eternal illumination of the unmediated, inexpressible Godhead. He hints at this view of reality when he states that God "expects the soul to progress to that point where it may receive much."

Progress is therefore equated with knowing, a knowing which is not
based on empirical observation or rational comprehension, but rather on an inner, higher level of consciousness which transcends the material world. Meister Eckhart considers the intellect as the element in us which opens onto higher spiritual spheres. This perception makes of it far more than the workings of the reasoning mind. The intellect is the "agent" within the soul which is "perfectly sensitive to God" because it is of God's order and not made from nature. Awareness of reality comes through the development or transformation of this agent "into God".

The consciousness of the nearness of God reveals for Eckhart that all reality depends on the invisible and immanent reality of the Divine: "my being depends on God's intimate presence." The soul's knowledge of God is hindered by time and space because their multiplicity veils the unity from which everything comes. "If I am to know true being, I must know it where it is being itself, and that is in God and not where it is divided among creatures." Knowing God outside of time and space means knowing God in His fullness, in His purity. For Eckhart, this is the Kingdom of God, the state of being in which all creation is known in its essence, the origin and home of the soul. The ascent of the soul to the Kingdom of God is an inward journey: "God is within; we are without."

The outer physical realm can only distract the soul in a way that is best expressed by Augustine's two loves, i.e. the mistaken preference of love of the creation over love of the Creator. Eckhart
asserts that if sticks and stones knew God in His immanent presence, they would be "as blessed as the angels." He suggests that the only true difference between a stick and a human being is precisely in this matter of knowing God's nearness. This consciousness is not a matter of instruction but of inner experience or "recognition." "When the Kingdom appears to the soul and it is recognized, there is no further need for preaching or instruction."

The consciousness of God excludes the consciousness of oneself until one finds oneself again in God. Here Eckhart is suggesting a merger with the divine where no medium separates the soul from the Godhead. The intellect must have no existence of its own in order to be filled with the only true existence. This insight assumes an absorption of the lower into the higher in which the lower is utterly consumed. The lower actually becomes the higher. This is how Eckhart understands the fullness of our joy. As with wood and fire, we too can enter into a higher form and "glow" with the very glow of holiness itself. This is the birth of the Son in the soul, the unmediated first emanation of the Godhead in an individual.

Eckhart takes the Neo-platonic return theme and carries it beyond rest in God or vision of God into an actual oneness in which there is no distinction whatsoever.

He presupposes that everything is divine in its ground, that the soul has a spark of uncreated light at its core, and that the total emptying or abandonment of the self results in the soul's penetration into the
naked Godhead Itself, the source of all being. Multiplicity, restlessness, changeability cease only when there is no more becoming. As with the pain of physical birth, there is initially a "painful unlikeness that resists change."
Some Answers To Questions

STUDENT:
Gurdjieff said in "In Search of the Miraculous" that connection with the large accumulator can only come through the emotional center. The other three centers feed only on the small accumulators. Therefore, "the aim must be on the development of the emotional center" (p.235). Naturally, no further instructions are given. My question: Other that to refuse indulgence of negative emotion, what may one do in a positive manner to connect with the large accumulator? Is it effort? And if so, of what kind? I find the text somewhat nebulous on this point (as I do others).

TN:
The above quote from G. is a critical clue for those who seek to evolve. He is telling us that a key breakthrough toward transformation comes through the emotional center.

In our stimulus-response behavior, the emotional center is primarily
made of negative energy, like and dislike, crowd emotion (instinctive/moving story of the emotional center) and so forth. Yet its potential is to be an instrument of cognition. Through intelligent emotion comes intuitive knowing, conscience, remorse, awareness of our responsibility to the Universe, and other qualities of awareness that cannot be easily put into words.

The reference to the large accumulator is merely a technical term for tapping into more high voltage, refined energy than that with which we normally operate. But we do not work on the emotional center in order to tap into the larger accumulator. It is the result of the right use of the emotions. In those moments, we can detect another quality of energy circulating within us. This is not the aim, but the by-product.

For instance, you can verify that an act of self-transcendent kindness toward another person or an effort of real forgiveness will generate another kind of energy within you. That is the least of the issues involved here. The Work is not about energy but about becoming.

The other question is the more important one—the positive uses of emotion. Work on negative emotions must occur because we are so soil and rendered opaque by this constant misuse of emotional energy. If we seek any significant change, we must perform these efforts of undoing wrong work, which is almost a permanent
condition for many people. Work on positive emotion is also important because it introduces us to the potential of higher states. For example, making the effort to not identify will produce a subtle emotional quality which can be defined as positive. Or seeing beauty—such as the Autumn leaves—without interference by the ups and downs of our circumstances, but being present to that grander reality brings forth positive emotion. External considering, giving no thought to oneself but caring for the needs of another, is another key way of working on positive emotion.

Making the effort to not expose oneself to the toxic stimuli that are all around us (media and so forth which often generates negative emotion) leaves energy available for work on positive emotion.

Learning to accept what IS and finding a certain contentment in being present in the moment generates positive emotion.

Being freed from self-absorption enough to sense the state of others and perceive what is needed for right action in specific circumstances is another form of positive emotion.

Intentionally feeding one's higher emotions (quiet reading versus watching a football game) helps to develop positive emotions. After awhile one will want to live there as much as possible and leave behind the chaos, self-indulgence and unpleasantness of the misuse of the emotional center.
The sense of one's connection with a vaster life and gratitude for being alive and a witness to the phenomenon of conscious existence in the Universe generates positive emotion.

Perhaps you can see that all of these approaches tie in to the state of self-remembering for which positive emotion is fundamental. You will also note that divided attention, knowing what is going on within oneself, getting to know one's nature, must be done in a way that paradoxically frees us from self-absorption. This liberation from pettiness and sleep opens onto a greater reality that is the primary path toward positive emotion. This path can lead to profound spiritual experience which each must find for themselves.

STUDENT:
Court proceedings resulted in the most unjust, draconian solution imaginable for a client. During the proceeding, I sought to observe myself, remember myself. Things have changed inside. It does not seem like the end of the world. The clients are apoplectic. Life is school.

TN:
You can also observe (in the case to which you refer that "your being attracts your life"), that the energy of life driving everything is negativity, the "law of accident," mechanics producing predictable responses, everyone's total identification with every event, and therefore complete lack of relativity (sleep). Injustice
exists because of sleep.

There is another level of being that includes an increased perspective and understanding born of effort and experience in the Work. It includes relativity, compassion, and acceptance. Its nature is not that of self-interest and consequently it is liberated and can be objective, clear and unidentified seeing. Such seeing is not emotionally dead or repressed, but serene and wise.

This is what is created through doing this inner Work. The psychological practices and ideas gradually clear away all the wrong work of mechanical psychology (the lies and dirt of negativity in all its forms, self-interest, vanity, inner considering, pictures of oneself, lying, pride and everything else the Work tells us to observe). This process strips the personality (ego) and leaves one feeling vulnerable and rather without a "real personality" to replace the dying false personality. One does become withdrawn.

This is a critical stage in the Work. What this emptiness should create in you is humility. Not self-condemnation, but self-transcendence and real self-remembering. Humility expands understanding which begets meaning.

A new Self is born with observing "I". It is the Real Self and will grow stronger and become more present with the continued practice of self-observation. With practical work and verifying experience, one's awareness expands. Continuing sincere efforts can expand
one's consciousness permanently, but what you sacrifice to reach this point is all that you believe yourself to be and all interest in seeking personal gratification. Not everyone is willing to pay such a high price.

Those who are courageous enough to continue will find valuation of the Work to be the only third force needed. Therefore, the new faculty in one's psychology (that of developing consciousness) is fed by the power of right valuation.

The path of evolution is upward toward illumination, through the sight of understanding, toward finer and finer energies that cannot support the weight of violence. This path leads away from the automatic animal level of being toward enlightened intentionality.

STUDENT:
What does the taste of REALIZATION feel like?

TN:
Assuming that by the "taste of realization" you are referring to the presence of awakened consciousness (also known as self-remembering), the taste is familiar.

This state feels as though one is seeing everything from a higher perspective which includes a broader vista. Connections are seen that cannot be recognized from a lower level. It feels like unified, undifferentiated, utterly unique, serene selfhood.
One does experience something of that "peace which passes all understanding." The reason it is beyond understanding is that such a state of serenity occurs despite paradoxical circumstances. It "makes no sense" in the reality of the second state of consciousness. This state includes acceptance, serenity, humility, resolution of paradoxes, sometimes deep joy and gratitude. It comes to us as both a gift and as a result of our efforts.

One feels as valuable as any other creation in the Universe and as transient. One feels intuitively connected with all of life. One's sense of identity shifts and a truer, purer quality of self replaces the narrow, identified, second state.

A sense of harmony arises from this new perspective and understanding. This experience can form a permanent faculty in one's psychology where that consciousness is present. The Work calls it "an organ of perception" formed by understanding, growth in being, illumination. That level of consciousness is available not only ahead of us in time but above us in time now.

The self-evolution of the figures in Fourth Way literature undoubtedly possessed that faculty which nevertheless does not eliminate the reality of continued effort. This is why their comments are most often focused on the difficulties of achieving change. But at some point, for those who persist, there are
breakthroughs and one begins to "be able to do", which also means being "able to be". Results are not only possible but verifiably achievable. However, the great mass of humanity (and of seekers) does not wish to awaken.

TN:
An important development along this path is to notice that we live in different states of consciousness. This is not as obvious as it sounds. I am not referring here to moments of happiness in contrast to times of depression but to a state of being that puts us in touch with a deeper reality. Perhaps you have had moments of experiencing such a liberation that comes from these higher states of being. Moments of great joy, or gratitude for being alive, or while standing before a scene of great beauty. Moments when our awareness is lifted beyond the knots and tensions of our worries and concerns and we are free to enjoy the experience of being here now and happy to be alive. These are higher states of being.

You may have had such experiences as children when we were less weighed down by the things that now preoccupy us. And maybe you think that those times of bliss and wonder are gone forever along with the other delights of childhood. But that is not the case. We are meant to dwell permanently in this habitat of the soul where higher consciousness dwells. It is possible to taste and live this joy and freedom, this inner awakening, even during rush hour, even at the office, even when circumstances around you are difficult. Let's
take a look at our everyday state of consciousness. Teachings on this subject describe our usual condition of consciousness as a state of sleep. Though we all believe that we are fully conscious in every moment of our lives, the fact is that most of our existence is spent "on automatic." We are stimulus-response organisms: something happens to us and we react.

We think we choose how we behave, but most often we are simply one giant knee-jerk reaction to whatever comes our way:—your child disobeys you and you get angry—you spill a drink on yourself and you're embarrassed—the red light lasts too long and you're impatient the list is endless, from morning till night. It's the world of stress, of ups and downs, of good days and bad days, of insecurity, inconsistency, unreliability. It's the world we know so well. If you think the word "sleep" is a strange way to describe our condition, just think back on the last time you observed someone watching television. The vacant stare, the loose jaw...we are virtually hypnotized by life around us, drawn out of ourselves and no more able to make choices than when we are in the middle of a dream. Things happen and we respond according to our programming. It's all consuming. Our first obstacle is therefore our wrong perspective on our lives. We take ourselves for granted.

We think we know who we are. We believe that we are one and the same person all the time. But take a closer look and dare to be honest with yourself. When you're really hungry, the you that is
hungry is in charge in charge. When you're irritable, the you that's irritated is the boss. When you're tired, when you're excited, when you're mad, each mood and desire is in control. Where is the unity of one self in all that? Again, we function in a stimulus-response manner that takes away our capacity to be unified as individuals. We can't count on ourselves to be the same person from one moment to the next. The person who decides the night before to get up early in the morning is not the one who has to turn off the alarm and roll out of bed. That person has a very different idea of what he or she wants to do. To make matters worse, each of these impulses that claims to be the whole person is separated by blinders. They do not know each other. When we are our happy-go-lucky selves, we don't remember the mean-tempered one. Our condition of multiplicity is further complicated by the fact that we live so much of our life in imagination. Consider how much time is spent worrying about the future, or fretting over the past.

Think of all the day dreaming that goes on in your head. And look at how we bounce from one thought to the next without any intentionality or purpose: someone mentions a word (like blue) and our mink takes us off on a tangent that gets more and more tangled until we no longer have any idea how we got to a certain mood or idea. So in our ordinary state of consciousness we are made of many disconnected selves, we are pulled to and fro by imagination and unintentional thoughts and yet we think we are in full control of ourselves. Now we come to an even more fundamental problem:
our essential nature, that which we truly are—the sensitivities, the gifts, the inclinations we were born with—is generally repressed at an early stage of our life. As we encounter the world around us, the essence of who we are becomes covered over by the development of our personality. Here again, we take for granted that our personality is who we genuinely are. But our personality is rarely related to our essence and our natural inclinations. Throughout our pre-teen, adolescent, and early adulthood years we have, both consciously and unconsciously, built up defense mechanisms to survive the pain of dealing with life. We have developed masks to protect ourselves or to manipulate others. Furthermore, we have absorbed into our idea of ourselves the images that our culture tells us are the acceptable way of being a man or a woman. We have accumulated the imitations or our parents, our peers and our environment.

In a word, we have covered over our essential nature to such an extent that we have to virtually undertake an archeological exploration in order to rediscover ourselves. In order to find the habitat of our soul, in order to live right, we have to be aligned with our real self. But there are powerful forces in the way. The greatest among them is negativity in all its forms: irritation, anger, impatience, depression, hatred, vengeance, jealousy, envy, and resentment. These are all poisons within us that cause us so much unnecessary suffering and use up so much of our energy, our life-force. We can't have to live like that! Even though it seems that
everyone around us indulges in these negative forms of behavior, they are not the only way to live. Imagine how different your life would be without the constant stress of these wretched feelings. But that entails dealing with our greatest foe: our vanity. Vanity is not merely primping in the mirror.

It causes us to spend much of our life in self-interested activity, in thinking about ourselves, in having to be right, in asserting ourselves over others, in stubbing our pride over this or that. Vanity causes us to have a false idea of ourselves a false sense of self-importance, along with a perverse distortion of our attention. Everything becomes me, me, me. So much grief and misery comes from this petty self-centeredness that disfigures our humanity. We are our own greatest source of suffering as lone as we live in this state of sleep that is ruled by automatic behavior, a self-centered focus, negative emotions, multiple selves trying for control, and misperceptions of who we truly are. So what is the true Self found in higher states? It is the life-force beyond our mistaken notion of ourselves that is seeking to come through us and accomplish its work of goodness in the world. It is that mysterious "presence" that can overcome solitude, meaninglessness, and despair. Moreover, not only is it always there—deep within—but it is seeking us more than we are seeking it.

STUDENT:
I have tried to keep watch, and take note of, the shifting 'I's and that shape-shifting 'person' behind them. This, I think, is valuable from an observing point of view, but then may be no more than a sleepy little cataloging activity and ends up giving the phantom selves a credence they do not deserve.

TN:
Observing multiplicity is valuable information. Whether any Work practice becomes formatory or authentic depends entirely on the sincerity and effort of the student. It can become formatory cataloging, but it needn't. It can over time recognize recurring 'I's and groups of 'I's. In seeing their repetitiveness, one can feel less identified, knowing that it is mechanical behavior, knowing that a particular group of 'I's always leads to a particular psychological state that needs to be avoided for the sake of this Work. There is a wealth of knowledge to be gained by observing one's own multiplicity, including a sense of what is behind all of that shifting sand of personalities. Seeing the continuous activity of changing 'I's, you begin have a sense of WHAT is seeing this activity and consequently develop a stronger sense of separation from the multiplicity. At some point you will be able to decide which I's to give your attention to and which 'I's to dis-empower. In truth, we must see that level of changing 'I's as a veneer that must be removed so that something more permanent and stable can be present.
To verify, see, feel, that there are many 'I's, I must be able to hold together to very different 'I's. It does not need to be so complicated or strained. Opposite 'I's and contradictory 'I's are self-evident. There is a [ME] who wants to study a subject intensely and a [ME] who wants to lay on the couch and watch television. One who sets the aim of getting up early in the morning, and one who wakes up to the alarm and hates the idea of getting up. It will help for you to perceive the appearance of different centers—intellectual, emotional, instinctive, moving—as they vie for temporary control and satisfaction of their desires. The non-involvement and careful watch of Observing I will lift you out of the chaos of multiplicity and eventually anchor your sense of self outside of the hypnotizing power and attraction of the many I's stimulated in us in countless ways. To me, this is a very big thing. When it happens, if at all, it burns akin to a feeling of deep shame and I feel a disorientation.

TN:
Remorse of conscience is an important ingredient in our development. But as Rodney Collin astutely points out—once we have tasted it, we must move on. There is no value in wallowing in remorse. It is bitter, no doubt, but can be a major third force for growing in this Work.

STUDENT:
But then when I actually try to apply the words, apparently nothing occurs and I am discouraged. It is necessary to burn up the intruders
who have taken up residence in this 'house'. To hold them firmly in the light of consciousness so that, through the light and contradictions, they are burned and destroyed.

TN:
The ancient ones of early eastern Christianity taught that, in relation to intruding thoughts, we should be so vigilant that as soon as they "show their heads, like a serpent appearing through a hole, we must cut it off"! This is a potent use of the "stop exercise" which is also meant to halt the entry and influence of 'I's that seek to claim our identity. The more you live in a more quiet inner place (an inner sanctuary) where features cannot take over, the more you will see the difference between passing thoughts and feelings and your deeper self. It is subtle business, but most certainly can be achieved. Among other things, don't take yourself so seriously. Relax and try to live at a different pace. Find some silence between the notes.

TN:
You are exhibiting several different kinds of wrong work. To begin with, multiplicity can be verified in the un-unified nature of your many I's.
A New Rhythm Of Life

In slowing down, you will find healing. None of us can get anywhere in terms of breaking out of the vicious cycle of being what we are or finding something sacred and wonderful about life if we don't create some opportunity internally to slow down, to go deeper into our own center where we will find the great mysteries of life. Here is where this teaching becomes extremely useful because it helps you get into that center while you are in the hurricane. Not just in quiet meditation at dawn, but in the traffic or at the office. When you carry inner observation with you, you are laying the groundwork for building an inner sanctuary within all circumstances. This ultimately means consciousness of the Divine in the midst of the chaos that all of our lives have. To one degree or another we are all in the same boat, and we all have the same possibility of finding an oasis. We are not meant to be these frazzled, confused, unhappy people. This is what the religions try to give us, but they often give it to us as "just believe this and that will do it."
This Work sidesteps all of the theological knots and confusion and gets down to who you are and how you operate and tells you what you can do about it. So what does this lead to and make this strange Work worthwhile.

We have no control over these brief higher states, how long they last or when they come. The saints will state the same from their contemplative experiences. They cannot make the sacred, the numinous be present. They can only wait for it. This waiting is a special psychological state which may be easier to do in a monastic cell at a different rhythm. But how do we wait on God, how do we become receptive in our lives to something more? Again, this is what this Work is about. If you can't control the higher state—either when it comes or how long it lasts—what can you do? How can you make it happen? All of this Work leads to maximizing the higher states that occur to us more regularly and lasting longer. To do this, we have to set our psychological house in order. We have to stop the massive hemorrhaging of our energy and of our mindset which takes place from the moment we get up to the minute we go to sleep. If within fifteen minutes after you get out of bed, you are wired or all caught up in something, you are done for. It is going to be a momentum lasting, most likely, all day long.

All of the religious, philosophical, esoteric people of the world say that you must get to a point where many times during the say, you
Esoteric Christianity can have a moment of stopping and re-centering so that you are not just carried along by what is happening. Muslims do this, at least theoretically. If your day has a lot of frustration in it and a lot of busy work, where are you going to find room for the peace that passes understanding, for the state of mind that is receptive to the more mysterious aspects of life, to the higher Self which is not just an office worker and has a right to just be.
Introduction

Very few people find enough inspiration for the kind of transformation possible for human beings. Somewhat more find a true path to their development, yet still only a few. A very small number actually travel that path and achieve the transformation of consciousness possible for each person.

From our ordinary state of consciousness we can have very little understanding about how to actually go about becoming a better person. Learning to become self-transcendent requires enlightened instruction. Knowledge and experience can create an understanding which lifts your level of consciousness. It is your existence in that higher level that produces Goodness. So there must be the knowledge of how to go about transforming yourself into a good person by raising your level of consciousness.

No one seems to know how to accomplish this thing called
"becoming good" or variously becoming real, becoming conscious, becoming self-transcendent, or just becoming. It is a painful but arithmetical truth that, although the knowledge and the means are available to everyone at all times, very few find real permanent evolution in the nature of their character -- their being.

It is conscience which evokes this yearning for goodness in the heart. Conscience longs for purity and meaning. And it is conscience that determines the outcome of this development in each person's life. How sad that, though the means have been given to humanity, so many choose to remain unchanged. It is simply the path of least resistance that automatically attracts human nature.

Nevertheless, the unconditional love which extends this opportunity remains faithfully near us, continuously accessible, unchangingly good. Christ life was lived out in every way necessary to bring all people under all circumstances, personal communion with God. No other need to or can follow Him to the literal cross. It is accomplished. Howsoever anyone finds God, He is the means regardless of what it is called.

It is possible to have an authentic transformation by the very simple and completely pure inspiration arising from empathetic experience with Him and self-transcendent Love for Him. It is possible to be completely changed permanently by illumination in the heart and mind which creates objective understanding. It is possible to find
transformation through suffering and although this is God's least desired way, it is a common human path because so many never turn toward God until they are suffering. There is a path to transformation through the selflessly motivated imitation of Christ's nature. There is the salvific way of God-centered life. And because He provided THE WAY eternally, for all, there is also a pathway for the psychological development that is accessible to the intellectual, rational scientific mind -- no religious designation required. Only conscience. How perfect His Love is for each of us.

The Work is a developmental path for very serious people who cannot find this authentic, permanent change in themselves through academic or inspirational or empathetic or traditional religious means. It is a path of practical psychological instruction intended to purify you, resulting in increased consciousness. It is based on Objective Truth and is the essential esoteric teaching given to the world by Christ -- the inner meaning of His teaching. It is uncompromisingly pure, therefore the steep and narrow path where only the most dedicated will persevere. At the heart of all real transformation, it is the only way. Because it is steep and narrow, it requires attention and effort. These two supply the energy for change, literally.

This Teaching can be employed by anyone at any time in ordinary daily life. It is an internal, psychological activity and depends entirely on your personal efforts, your motives and a clear
understanding of what you are doing and what the aim is. You can supply the first two. Unfortunately, there are few sources that can teach this path correctly or have the right aim. If you are fortunate enough to find such a source, you will be able to verify for yourself the Objective Truth at the heart of the Teaching. That verification will give you the valuation needed to supply the force for your efforts. In essence, your love of Goodness will generate goodness and love. One of the intractable points in the Work is that it is not a passive activity. To listen or read and absorb knowledge is only the initial intentional effort. After that, each person must make personal efforts applying specific practices and exercises that are aimed at enlightenment. These efforts are almost entirely internal and psychological for a very long time. The result of these efforts is authentic selfhood in a state of detachment, which is called Non-Identification in the Work, and purity of heart which is the essential nature of Humility. Doing the Work leads to Humility which requires the greatest courage
Self-Observation

Self-observation is the primary psycho-transformational exercise given to us in the Work. All progress in the Work depends on diligent, uncritical, long-term self-observation. It is only through the experiential practice of this idea that one can gain the knowledge and understanding necessary for growth and change.

Self-observation is the foundational effort in this process, its value cannot be overestimated. All development proceeds from that point. You must intentionally turn a portion of your attention inward in order to observe yourself. It is essential not to judge or criticize what you observe in oneself. These emotions will distort what you observe and inhibit your progress.

Try to detach from your justifying and observe the feeling
objectively. Keep tracking back, in your psychology not your history, to find the source of this unpleasant experience. Continued self-observation will give you knowledge, understanding, and the possibility of detachment and liberation from this recurring state in you.

All wrong work loses force when it is seen through self-observation. Use the recognition of this unpleasant experience as your "reminding factor" and third force to not identify. You are then using the problem to solve the problem.

Self-observation needs to be free-wheeling and spontaneous. Your observations will lead to a catalog of insights about yourself which will then give you a truer picture of what you have to work with.

Keep the Work efforts more internal.

Practice self-observation uncritically. Do not become identified with what you observe. Try to separate psychologically from all negative thoughts, states, and feelings. Release anxiety, let personality be passive, and observe, observe, observe.

It is true that we need to be "merciless" with ourselves in seeing
things for what they are (namely, internal reactions, attitudes, states). But this mysterious practice of self-observation is about creating a new quality of awareness within yourself, and clearing the ground for a new sense of identity. Ultimately, it leads to a development of being that is characterized by great compassion, even for the mechanical and chaotic aspects of yourself.

So this is imperative: do not judge what you see, just see it. The more you see it, the more you will want to change it and the more opportunities will arise to do so. Remember that this is not the way of self-denial, but of understanding. As you know, understanding is defined in the Work as the result of knowledge and being. Self-observation gives you knowledge on how to create being.

Your repeated efforts at self-observation will build a Work memory that will in turn remind you to do the Work.

It is possible through self-observation to eventually gain control over your mechanics, to be liberated from unnecessary suffering, to find authentic personality, to be able to be intentional in your actions and form a body of Work I's that have a permanent Work perspective in you. This Work is about personal internal purification. All the transforming knowledge in the Teaching is aimed at this goal of purifying the emotional center. Self-
observation is necessary to shine the light of consciousness into the
dark unconscious of our own psychology.

Regarding your statement on "surrendering my will": Practicing the
exercise of self-observation is not the same as surrendering your
will. Self-observation is the only source of information that will
inform you about what you need to surrender and what you need to
keep. So leave the surrendering of your will out of self-observation.
Simply observe yourself non-critically and especially observe
negativity.

The aim here is to see the psychological origins and motivations for
our actions in the world.

In doing the Work, beginning with self-observation, little by little
we disempower those tyrannical I's. We create in ourselves a place
of knowledge, perspective, and empowerment from which we can
act intentionally. As self-centered I's lose power under the effect of
the Work we cease to have so many requirements of the world.

We become free of constantly needing what we don't have, or
constantly being unhappy with what we do have. We recognize that
our attitudes and opinions are relative and our likes and dislikes are
self-observation
irrelevant to reality. So it is essential to see yourself objectively or you will not recognize what it is you must work on.

Remember that this Work is psychological and internal, requiring real and continued effort.

The reason that self-observation needs to be spontaneous is because you can only do it when it occurs to you, whenever and whatever the circumstances. The observing I will give you better information if it is unencumbered by schedule or contrivance.

What you need to be observing is what state you are in—Are you confused? Are you anxious? Are you in negative imagination? Are you inner considering? Are you being critical of what you observe?

- Do you notice when you are insincere?
- Do you see yourself lying, pretending to know, care, understand, be sympathetic, etc.?
- Can you feel identification when you are in it?
- Do you see changing I's? Contradictions between I's? Buffers?
- Do you see vanity? The need to be right? Insisting on having your own way? Being disappointed that you don't have what you want?
- Do you notice how much of your behavior is based on what
you like or don't like?

The point of all this OBSERVATION is to build Real I which is not polluted by any of the wrong work mentioned above. It takes intentional efforts, real desire for change, willingness to see yourself honestly, and time. This Work is a process that begins with the first I of self-observation and can grow to the point where there is a permanent presence in your psychology, a source of understanding formed by Work, knowledge and experience.

You say you forget constantly and ask if it is just a matter of will. It is a matter of building will. If you have an aim to observe yourself, your aim has force—use it. Fill your life and your schedule with reminding factors, for example: put your wristwatch on the opposite wrist to remind yourself to observe every time you look at the wrong wrist. Put notes on mirrors and refrigerators, change patterns of activities to knock you out of your habitual routines as reminders to observe yourself.

Purifying the emotional center, "cleansing the cup", is the purpose of the Work and its results. This is achieved by diligent, humble efforts to see and detach from what is false, negative, and selfish in ourselves. Negative and judgmental attitudes will distort the seeing and keep you from the objective reality available only in non-identification.
In practicing self-observation, self-loathing is difficult to avoid. Being a negative emotion, it is necessary to avoid this in order to grow in the Work properly. To observe uncritically is so important in this process because it is through detachment (non-identification) that we are liberated. It is a waste of energy and wrong work of the emotional center to loathe what is only the manifestations of acquired personality.

Everyone comes into the Work with their personality, in full force. It is the condition sleeping humanity lives in. The work of self-observation, which is foundational in the process, requires intentional effort. Included in this intentionality is the practice of being uncritical about what you observe. If your observing I responds with hating what it sees, then that is where you will be stuck, in a constant war between the observer and the observed.

The whole point of self-observation is to give an objective view of what you are really like. Without objectivity, you are not going to see anything. Keep Observing I passive. That effort is part of making the effort to observe.

A new Self is born with observing "I". It is the Real Self and will grow stronger and become more present with the continued practice...
of self-observation. With practical work and verifying experience, your awareness expands. Continuing sincere efforts can expand your consciousness permanently, but what you sacrifice to reach this point is all that you believe yourself to be and all interest in seeking personal gratification. Not everyone is willing to pay such a high price.

QUESTION:

I seem to experience self-remembering more than I do self-observation. There are very frequent moments when I am painfully aware of myself, but do not know what to make of any of it.

RESPONSE:

Being painfully aware of yourself is neither self-remembering nor self-observation. It is the natural condition of every human being's psychology. It is inner considering. It is due to the wrong work of the emotional center that is concerned with "appearances" and other people's feelings toward you.

You are at the point where you are AWARE of being "painfully aware". This is a step above merely BEING "painfully aware". The next step is to simply be aware.

Just being "aware" is the first crack in the false personality. The
Work starts here. Self-observation comes first. It is an intentional effort. It is done uncritically. Eventually, Observing I gains enough power to direct behavior. But for a long time you cannot do anything but observe.

What can you observe objectively about being irritable? Is it an unpleasant feeling or do you picture yourself as a "lovable groucher"? (There is no such thing, by the way). Are there any I's that secretly enjoy the zing of negative energy? What I's are irritable? The ones that want something that they don't have, the ones that have to do something that they don't want to do, the ones that are feeling inadequate, unsatisfied, unsure? We could go on and on, but the point is that all of the above and more belong to inner considering, to acquired attitudes, likes and dislikes, etc. That is ALL that the Work tells us that we must separate from.

Knowing this can give you the force to become detached and in that state of non-identification see clearly what intentional right action is. Then you lose all motivations and justifications for being irritable.

So, how do you know if you are observing yourself through a filter of false personality? If Observing I is objective, non-identified, then false personality CANNOT be present. One must work at this also,
making Observing I not react with identification. This is difficult work as well, but it leads to liberation, to that escape from the prison of sleep that we seek.

Ouspensky was right about needing help. We need the help of knowing a way out and the help of someone who knows also that "way" from experience and can assist you through the difficulties and help you avoid the traps. Someone who really knows the way can help you to verify for yourself the ideas of the Work and their transformative power. To be absolutely sure that your work is progressing in the proper direction is easy. Follow goodness. Seek to act with unself-interested intentionality. Every normally formed human being has the innate knowledge (faculty of recognition) of what GOODNESS is. The Truth in it resounds in your soul with recognition.

The process of self-observation requires intentional, repeated efforts over a long period of time, and it is often genuinely painful work. We learn that we spend most of our time in some kind of negative state and from an objective point of view we see the unnecessary suffering of it, the wrong work of it, the interference of it and the loss of energy that it costs us. These ideas are strong motivations for change. We see our own automatic behavior which may shock and humiliate us and we are helpless to do anything about it at first. We recognize that every action is motivated by self-interest. We see
in ourselves lying, justifying, manipulating, attention-seeking, competitiveness, vanity, the falsehood of pictures we have about ourselves, the Multiplicity of acquired personality, even the corruption of merit seeking in our good works.

When the light of self-observation begins to reveal our inner states and psychological condition, the Observing I is still too weak to change anything it observes. However, repeated observations steal power from identifying with our mechanics, help us to separate from them and form a stronger Observing I which eventually does have the power to affect change.

This is a process of purification which removes the obstacles that cut us off from the state of self-remembering. The goal is the formation of a permanent Real I which is the manifestation of the state of self-remembering. Self-observation, founded on divided attention, creates the link between self-remembering and the development of Real I.

It is only natural in the developmental process of the Work that in the beginning the power of your personality is much stronger than your will or ability to remain conscious or internally aware. At first, when you try to practice self-observation, you can only get glimpses of the external reality and the internal reality at the same time. You may find it helpful to reflect upon any effort of self-
observation after the fact, picturing it from an objective, external point of view where you can see the event, where you are cognizant of your own inner state are not identified with either. These glimpses and reflections form photographs for you. They give you information that you can verify through further observations. The attention that is directed toward your psychology becomes Observing I. Observing I grows with every photograph and every verification of Work knowledge. Eventually, Observing I has the Will to remain conscious.

I must point out that Self-Observation is a specific psychological exercise that is unique to the Work. It is not practice of the present moment or paying attention to anything other than your own psychological processes and states.

What you are seeing when you experience yourself as "simply a bundle of tape recordings and reactions responding from these" is False Personality. It is relevant because it makes up your present reality. You do have a True Self which doing the Work will lead you to discover. The process of discovery begins with relentless practice of self-observation. It is imperative that one is uncritical of what is observed.

You are not only programs and mechanics. There is something in you that is authentic, unique behind all of these things. That Real I,
True Self begins to gain strength or surface with the first observation of False Personality. You know already that there is something in you that isn't only mechanical, the I that knows this is the I of self-observation. That I is the beginning of who you are (Real I).

Once you have observed in yourself (verified) that Sleep and Mechanicalness and False Personality exist not only in you but also in everyone else, it becomes easier to forgive BECAUSE you understand the nature and the power of Sleep. This helps to reinforce Real I which will then give you more power to forgive and understand.

When you first begin to practice Self-Observation, you will probably begin with seeing yourself as if from a distance. In other words, you will see yourself constantly touching your hair or shoving your fists deep into your pockets, or flirting, or not looking someone in the eye, or posturing in any of the different ways we all do. Or you may first notice that a particular state is always created by the same and repeated circumstances; as soon as you get in the car you become tense, anticipating the drive ahead, or having a particular activity interrupted you notice that you always become irritated. Or receiving mail gives you a little thrill, a compliment makes you feel validated, happy. But all of this is only half the picture, the external half.
The other part of this practice is to begin to see your internal states and psychology as well, and in conjunction with your external observances. It may begin as only an awareness, for instance you "see" yourself acting very self-confidently while you are actually feeling insecure. Or you observe yourself in conversation nodding apparently in agreement or understanding, when you actually have no idea what the other person is talking about.

Self-Observation does take effort and it requires long-term, often repeated efforts. Sometimes you will see something very clearly, sometimes your efforts produce nothing or something vague, or only later will you become cognizant of what was observed earlier.

But when you begin to make sincere and repeated efforts to observe yourself, you will probably experience what your fellow student did. You will have a spontaneous experience of Self-Observation that will feel clearer to you because there is only seeing, without trying. This happens because what practices Self-Observation in you is Observing I and it is growing in presence with every experience of Self-Observation. Eventually, after long-term authentic Work, Self-Observation becomes a sort of faculty in your psychology that functions on its own. It creates Observing I which becomes Real I which has access to Objective Consciousness.

What effort is too great to make for this?
When I speak of Self-Observation, I am not referring to Self-Remembering. These are two distinct and very different experiences and practices. Self-Observation is psychological exercise of seeing objectively both our inner state and our outer reality at the same time. It is an exercise that over a long period of time and a large accumulation of observations leads to a degree of self knowledge and objectivity (non-identification). Under these conditions, full Self-Remembering can take place.

Knowledge in the Fourth Way means understanding the Work ideas. That requires "pondering" and practical Work. Increase your efforts to gain all the intellectual information you want or need, and reflect upon it. Then begin the initial practices of Self-Observation and not expressing Negativity. That is the process for Awakening. And that's a long one. If you are just beginning in the Work, presume nothing. Verify everything. Read, read, read and practice Self-Observation.

When you are practicing Self-Observation and that which you are trying to observe disappears, there are a couple of possible explanations. In the beginning, although it may seem hard to grasp, the ego will oppose Work efforts. It does not want to change and it
certainly doesn't want to be seen. So perhaps some particular I's are hiding from observation. Sometimes when you practice Self-Observation that which is observed simply ceases to exist under the light of observation. For instance, if you are angry and you observe your anger in the context of Work knowledge and you see the self-interest, the lie, the machinations, the childishness in the anger, it can die on the spot. It isn't a should or shouldn't situation. This is just one of the things that occurs during Self-Observation.

You have a very important opportunity in what you have been experiencing. You say "the emotional feeling is separated from the thoughts that have aroused these feelings". The thoughts are only I's and separating them from the emotional feeling that they evoke is what we work very hard to be able to do. To have experienced this spontaneously is an insight and maybe an organic understanding of that condition of inner separation that can help you to know what you are aiming at. It is freedom from Identification.

To remain objective during Observation takes practice. It may help you to separate the Observing I from your personality's manifestations by referring to them in your observations as "it" rather than taking them as yourself. For instance, "it" (meaning the mechanical, automatic personality that you call "self") is irritable. It feels successful. It is tired. It doesn't like . . . It thinks that people should . . . Some people find this exercise helpful.
You could try, while being externally aware, to have Observing I passively registering what it sees, maybe only subconsciously sensing the inner state. In other words, you see yourself talking to someone and your Observing I just notes that you are uncomfortable. Let it go. Reflect on it later. Remember that what you are observing, the manifestations of your False Personality, is not you. It is the acquired attitudes, opinions, likes, dislikes, pictures and imaginations, habitual behaviors, habitual thought processes that were laid down in you without your conscious participation. All of these things are not what is real in you. When you know this, it becomes easy for Observing I to be objective. It is not the real you that is being observed. What is behind the Observer is the Real you. It is through Self-Observation that Real I comes into existence and gains Consciousness and Will.

So you begin by observing passively, externally and internally, and you begin to see the contradictions between external behavior and internal states and not ices that the internal state is always some variation of self-interest; the need to be noticed, appreciated, treated well, the desire to be understood, to possess abilities that others value, the need to be right, the feeling of embarrassment and insecurity when these needs and desires aren't met; the bragging and preening of Vanity; the insincere salaciousness of flirting; lying overtly and lying covertly by pretending to be interested, pretending to know when you don't, pretending to care when you don't,
pretending to listen when in reality your mind is on something else entirely; manipulations and the inauthentic actions of all varieties. Inner Considering is always concerned with how it appears. This is only sometimes Vanity. External appearances, position, appropriate deference, merit, status, valuation are all core emotions in Inner Considering.

It is only by observing, verifying and working against Inner Considering that you can begin to get to the point where your every thought and action is not motivated by self-interest. This is where real External Considering can begin to happen. It doesn't happen by focusing exclusively on the thoughts and opinions of others. It happens because being divested of self-interest leaves room in your psychology for seeing clearly and being able to act consciously in the moment.

QUESTION:

How can I instill in myself a preference for Work I's that have the all the appearance of being the interlopers in my being?

RESPONSE:

These feelings are natural in the beginning of the Work. Observing I has no power except to observe and one begins to lose the familiar sense of self before anything else has been created to replace it. The
"ways that are familiar and comfortable" to you are mechanical and asleep. Is this the self you wish to be? It feels wrong to "shun" this familiar self because you are identified with yourself. You only know yourself as you always have been.

To feel a resistance to doing the Work is a common experience. The sense of loss that you feel is real. There is real loss, loss of ego and personality and your familiar sense of self. But this is necessary in order to build True Self on a new, authentic basis. Through the long process of Self-Observation, Work I's accumulate. You will gain a sense of authentic Self (versus imitation and pretense) gradually.

You can fully understand how to divide your attention, how to observe yourself, or any other Work exercise and not know what you will learn or how that knowledge will affect you. You may practice Self-Observation and observe Vanity of a particular kind, which leaves you feeling small and shallow, embarrassed, paranoid about being revealed, humiliated; then justification jumps in and if you retain a degree of observing you will see that as only more wrong work and suddenly you recognize that none of these changing I's are real . . . So who Are You? What is real and what is not real? You cannot see this ahead of time and it will be a somewhat different experience for each person.

I do fully believe that in order to do the Work rightly, you need to
know what you are aiming at and understand what it will require of you. I do also believe that a student must understand the purpose of the practice he is given to do. This does not contradict the reality of multi-faceted experience whose depth cannot be perceived from afar.

Do not underestimate the admonition to "know thyself", the whole aim there being to discern the real from the false. All progress in the Work is based on this self-knowledge. Observing I gains clarity of vision with repeated practice and verifies the Work ideas. These verifications create a psychological faculty, an organ of perception that is a permanent vantage point from which you see everything through Work-verified Understanding.

Certainly, no student is expected to be working at the same level as any other student. This is very personal, idiosyncratic experience. However, if I give the exercise of, say, noticing lying, then all students will respond to that exercise with the degree of Understanding and Being they currently have. It may be with a range of responses from "I never lie" to "I have observed that I lie constantly, exaggerating and manipulating words to flatter myself, to feed the pictures I have of myself; I constantly am outwardly friendly even though almost everything makes me mad; I pretend to like people I don't like; I pretend to understand things so that no one will know that I actually don't; and this knowledge has shattered the
self-observation

illusions of False Personality and liberated me."

Sometimes the Work is a gradual development. Sometimes it's a
mind-altering immediate experience. If it proceeds, there is not
usually any consistency in the way it proceeds, up until a certain
point.. However, the Fourth Way consists of very specific
knowledge, exercises, and precise information, not hints and clues.

There is a beginning point in the Work and it is Self-Observation
which is the bedrock of all further development. It is a practice t hat
will continue indefinitely and doing it right is essential. It requires
practice and repetition, and it must be ongoing during the whole
process of t he Work. With development in the Work, you begin to
see differently, your vantage point changes and new perspectives,
new levels of Understanding become available. This cannot be
antecedent. It must be worked for.

QUESTION:

Can you explain a little more in detail about the idea of changing
what you observe. I don't quite understand this.

RESPONSE:

The aim of Self-Observation is to enlighten you about how your
own psychology works. If you are practicing Self-Observation and you begin to "see" wrong work in yourself, you will want to change this; however, for a very long time, all you can do is observe. You will see Sleep, Mechanics, Features, Inner Considering in all its facets, Multiplicity, Lying, Justifying, Vanity, Imagination, Pictures, etc.

It is frustrating to see all of this, or any of it, and not be able to do anything to change what wrong work you observe. But Observing I's accumulate. They gain clarity and strength, and eventually give you the force to change your own wrong work. Sometimes just seeing repeatedly the same manifestations of the wrong work of False Personality diminishes their strength. After all, the I's of Self-Observation are not identified with what is observed. As they accumulate, they draw force from Identification, weakening its hold on you, eventually giving you enough Will to disengage from wrong work.

Sometimes you may observe some wrong work in yourself that so shocks you the power and depth of your enlightenment annihilates its existence. It vanishes, falls away, crumbles to dust, ceases to exist only because you have seen it clearly and know it IS NOT YOU.

Under Self-Observation notice:
- That you have many I's, many are contradictory
- Notice habitual behavior, posture, tics, attitudes, sayings
- Verify Sleep
- Verify mechanicalness
- Notice negative I's especially. Note their frequency: anger, irritation, criticizing, depression, frustration, boredom, impatience, exasperation, grumpiness, competitiveness, negative inner talk, slander, self-deprecation, despair, hopelessness, violence
- Note their frequency
- Trace them to their roots in your psychology
- Notice habitual I's that say the same things over and over
- Recognize your own Multiplicity.
- Recognize that what can see that in you is a separate you
- Try to realize from the beginning that this separate "you" is NOT one of the Multiplicity
- Observing I must keep observing all that the Work teaches
- Try to keep Personality passive
- Practice Inner Separation
- Speak less
- Remember your Aim
- Remember the Work every day

The Work tells you also to notice:

- Lying
● Outright dishonesty, giving people a wrong impression of yourself that is usually flattering, pretending to listen when you are not, pretending to understand when you do not; pretending interest or care because it serves you, lying about your status, your knowledge, your merit, manipulating the truth to put yourself in a better light, exaggerating.

Identification, False Personality, Pictures and Imagination, Vanity

● Physical vanity, intellectual vanity, vanity about money, position, power, experience, sexual attractiveness, accomplishment, merit, importance, having some special privilege or secret knowledge, feeling superior to others in some way. Self-deprecation is the flip side of the coin of vanity. It is made up of the same thing.

● Self-centeredness.

When you have seen all of these things in yourself, for yourself, you will begin to wake up. When these moments happen, you will see the state of Sleep and mechanicalness that rules everyone, including you. During this period of observation, there is not much you can do to change what you observe. This is a frustrating stage and it passes slowly. The more you observe, the more presence and strength Observing I will have. As you see and verify more often and more clearly, you will not want to continue to manifest from Sleep and mechanicalness. Your will to be conscious and intentional and act with integrity will be the primary force to help
you get rid of the wrong work in your psychology. When the Emotional Center is purified of its wrong work, growth in Consciousness is possible.

QUESTION:

Sometimes when practicing self-observation, I feel that I am thinking about myself too much. Is there any danger of self-observation becoming self-absorption?

RESPONSE:

Yes, there is a danger if Self-Observation is not done objectively. You can become endlessly fascinated by what you observe without ever moving beyond that point. To quote Nicoll, in response to the question "don't you think this Work makes one very self-centered?" Nicoll: "Exactly the opposite. It shifts you from this self-satisfied, self-centered view of yourself. It makes you really think you are nothing like what you thought."

Being critical is negative emotion in action. Don't believe it, just observe it. It's too soon for you to know where these I's come from. The only way to find out and be free of them is through Self-Observation. Uncritical, objective Self-Observation.
Work on Emotional Center first by refusing to identify with every Negative Emotion that appears in you.

Along with the "normal" wrong work of every machine, if you are dealing with Fear that could account for more emotional dysfunction and the feelings of being alone since Fear will not take emotional risks and therefore is cut off from authentic emotional relationship. It may also fuel your need for reassurance in order to feel comfortably your self.

If you feel that you are starving emotionally, you must consider that you are cut off from a functional Emotional Center. Even ordinary people not in the Work have some sort of emotional life that is nurturing to them.

What nurtures you? Not your Vanity Feature. Your heart. What do you find to be sweet in life: animals, plants, children, music, nature, close personal relationships? If you feel this Emotional Center starvation, FEED YOURSELF POSITIVE EMOTIONAL IMPRESSIONS. Please do not chastise yourself. It is only further identification with yourself. OBSERVE. Practice Inner Separation. If you are feeling the "terror" of the conditions you are observing, you are stuck fast in Identification and have no way out. If you can observe the condition of your psychology at present and say to it
"this is just my mechanics at work", "my Vanity Feature is asserting itself", "my Tramp Feature is avoiding having to work", "my Fear Feature needs reassurance", then you can begin to separate from the Negative Emotions the observations are attached to.

When you observe objectively an aspect of your psychology such as Vanity, when you observe it repeatedly in all its manifestations you will begin to know that these actions are not YOU. They do not express the truth of your Real I. You will see the futility and indignity of seeking your self-worth outside of yourself through the fickle flattery and appreciation of others. You will grow to dislike this immature dependence upon others' opinions of you. The Real I that is taking form through Self-Observation will begin to assert itself in place of Vanity or Trampishness. That which "knows that it knows" in you will not need external verifications.

I suggest that you attempt to make your internal I's passive and quiet as much as possible so that you can see. If I's and glimpses of states are still moving too quickly for accurate observation, try to grab onto one particular observed I and hold it, letting everything else pass while you examine it to the extent that you can.

Remember that Vanity in Latin is "vanitas" and it means "empty". You are not empty. You are at least seeing some things of value, therefore you can apply the Work to the material you have.

The I's of Vanity and Inner Considering are only part of the wrong
work which you observed in relationship to "pretty women". This is also a distortion of sex energy called Infrasex. In the case of a newlywed, I find this activity a little more surprising, however it is very common as you well know. It will ruin the possibility of a good marriage and corrupt your work efforts.

QUESTION:

In practicing self-observation, I still see the object of my observation as entirely "myself", that is, the person I consider to be the real me. I can approach some dispassion or uncriticality in my observation, but no strong sense of "inner separation". There is really no sense of a new observing self. Do I err?

RESPONSE:

You perceive the object of your observation as yourself because your Observing I has not developed a strong enough presence. This happens incrementally. It has to be worked at . If there is no sense of a new Observing Self, what is observing? Is it the same self that is being observed?

QUESTION:

Nicoll in the assigned reading spoke of the absence of struggle in
the process of self-observation. This is something with which I struggle myself. I have a feeling this is important. Please elaborate.

RESPONSE:

I think this means more about being passive in your observations rather than in tension trying to make the observation happen. As Nicoll said, I think that in the very beginning, it is wise to be inconspicuous in your observing, beginning with the just the sensing and then noticing of states.

QUESTION:

Should one not be able to manifest externally in any way that is appropriate while internally remaining separate (G. calls it playing a 'role'). But I find that, for example, I must slow down when walking in order to observe myself for any period of time. There seems to be no reason that I ought not be able to sustain observation while hurrying, going about my daily business.

RESPONSE:

You can certainly observe yourself while hurrying going about your daily business, but what you should be observing in this is the wrong work of the Emotional Center which creates hurry in the Moving Center. If you continue to observe eventually you will get
to a point where Understanding will take the place of mechanical responses. I don't particularly like the idea of "playing a role" unless it is necessary. I believe that through impartial observation the wrong work begins to diminish.

Which would you most like to be free of? Identification, Imagination, or Inner Considering? They are all equally Wrong Work. Sometimes observations descend into any one of these aspects. If you recognize it to be Inner Considering, are you more able to separate from it than if it has fallen into Identification? Would knowing this help you to raise that I back to the level of Observation? These kinds of discriminations are not significant work practices. You need to focus on re-establishing Observing I, then let it see where it has been. You are the only person who can determine which weakness most affects you. If it helps you to understand this then again, raise your Observing I and see where the wrong work came from.

If you observe in yourself, for instance, an I that wants to speak, to have its say, to be heard, understood, recognized, appreciated, and you know from Work Knowledge that this emotional disposition is Inner Considering and wrong work of the Emotional Center you then have reason to become detached from that I.
Observing that your Instinctive Center is hungry carries no weight. When you note that the Instinctive Center creates negative emotions when it isn't satisfied would be stronger observation. Note the strength of the Instinctive Center. How it tyrannizes all the other centers until it gets its way. Most often, it is best to humor the Instinctive Center so that it doesn't impede your Work.

QUESTION:

Tearing down what is false without taking care to build what is genuine seems to court disaster.

RESPONSE:

It is not courting, it is creating disaster. The process of tearing down what is false should happen gradually along with the growth of Understanding which should take the place of what was false and is no longer a part of you. I reiterate and ask you all to continue the fundamental practice of Self-Observation with PATIENCE. You have each had some experiences of raised consciousness or deep insight. Let these inspire you to work without requirements knowing that you will receive what you particularly need in order to proceed.
QUESTION:

I understand that one purpose for Self-Observation is information gathering. We are uncritically observing attitudes, reactions, and motivations. But we are also observing "wrong work". The very words "wrong work of centers" suggest a need to correct or "make right" this wrong work. For example: I often experience wrong work of centers when I become wrapped up in some intellectual activity, like research or writing or discussion. I then sometimes experience some unaccountable hyper-activity or nervousness in the moving center, as if I've had too much coffee; I may have a shortness of breath and I may even begin to sweat for no physical reason. This is an observation of wrong work. Should I require a cessation of this wrong work or simply observe with the attitude that this material will be useful later?

RESPONSE:

This particular wrong work is the Emotional Center affecting the Intellectual Center creating intellectual Identification. The wrong work that is happening is anxiety and nervousness, both are Inner Considering. You can try to require that this wrong work stop. That probably won't have much effect. Observe, let go of your need to force this behavior to stop.

Observing it is the quickest route to eliminating wrong work. You have to eventually be able to trace the path of wrong work back to
its origin, its motivation. Seeing where it comes from, knowing that it functions in contradiction to your aim and your will and understanding that it is wasted self-interest becomes great inspiration for change.

Negative I's are easier to observe and create more damage, which is partly why we concentrate on observing them in the beginning.

I didn't intend to suggest that only negativity be observed. Everything is to be observed. You will find much more negativity present than you expect. Another reason for observing negativity is that it is always the wrong work of the Emotional Center which is particularly what must be Worked on. The more you see it, the better you will be able to work with it.

Death is always impending and for most of us, we can never know when our time here will end. Imagine what a waste it would be if you spent the next twenty-four hours trying to cram all of the Work ideas into your mind to form a whole that you can understand. Only to be hit by a bus the next day. Part of doing the Work in the beginning, starting with Self-Observation, is about being intentional. This implies doing the right thing at the right time. The future is imagination. What you have is Now and what you can do, Now, to make a path to where you want to be. Paradoxically,
Higher States of Consciousness exist in you now, above your current level of existence but there are accessible in the moment.

It is my opinion that, in the beginning movements towards Self-Observation, Self-Remembering can confuse the issue. Later, once you have established a functioning Observing I, Self-Remembering simultaneously will give you another dimension of insight and a taste of Real I.

It is not necessarily better to observe yourself here or there. Observe yourself when you remember to. Both life situations and Work environment give you every opportunity you need to apply the practices. For an extended exercise, try to observe groups of I's. Associative I's. I's that create particular states with what they say to you.

Observing I will be able to see everything clearly in time. It may be years before you can have a satisfactory effect on observed behavior. But what you are seeing is not only Vanity. It is also imitation, Inner Considering, and False Personality. These things diminish under the light of Self-Observation and a more conscious action takes their place.

What is to be observed here is how a set group of I's are put into
motion and through paths of association lead in a particular psychological direction and wind up in a familiar place. For instance: excitement over a new something creates the I "this will be great", "I'm going to like this", "I can't wait to get started", "why can't I start now". Groups of I's have set patterns that result in definite changes of state. Most of these are Negative I's that lead to negative states. If you observe a repeated pattern of negative behavior associated to particular circumstances, you will find a group of I's back stage, directing.

Habit is such a powerful force to be expressed in such benign terms. Look behind habitual I's to find out what created them, what their source is, and what psychological phenomena are produced by them.

What you are observing is False Personality and you are probably seeing more falsehood in it than ever before. Keep trying to see yourself objectively. Practice at observation creates a better quality of Observation. Falsehood is impossible to deal with psychologically. There is no ground beneath it. It is uncomfortable and frustrating.

This is everyone's condition with the exception of those in the Work who occasionally WAKE UP and realize that they are
ASLEEP.

Seeing this is to be celebrated and reflected upon. This experience shows you the condition of Sleep and the power of Imagination and the chaos of responding randomly to external influences, that is mechanically. Keep looking deeper into this experience, behind your observations to the source of the wrong work.

When I hear you say that you cannot find your "wish" and cannot see beyond the petty "wants and needs" and cannot tell the difference between suffering and joy, the only conclusion that can be made is that your Emotional Center is not functioning right or it would give you this information. Or you are completely cut off from it. You say you want to "need" the Work more. I believe this is also an indication of disconnection with Emotional Center. You can't feel your need. The only way I can tell you to increase your valuation of the Work and your need for it is to continue in it, practicing Self-Observation in earnest without expectation of results.

Observe all of your emotions, positive and negative. Just watch them as they change and march through your day. Notice that your opinions and attitudes are full of emotions.
Beginning with Observation, progressing to Inner Separation and Non-Identification will disconnect you from the wrong work of the Emotional Center which essentially purifies it. This is a long process in the Work, and I do mean years, and it begins, and for a very long time remains, mostly Self-Observation. All of the Understanding that you will gain in the process of doing the Work will come initially from Self-Observation.

First you would have to know that it was an imaginary or false I. This you can only know through long-term Self-Observation in the light of Work ideas. During the process of doing this Work, you will develop a taste for what is authentic and what is false and you will develop a perspective that can see what reality is and what Sleep is.

The importance of being uncritical about what you observe is so that you are not in a Negative State, Identified with your emotional reaction to what you have observed. This condition will leave you blind and unable to Work successfully. However, there is the danger of becoming too impartial where you don't see the right work or wrong work differentiated and all the information you receive is taken in without discernment.
The purpose in this particular observation is that you are many I's, currently asleep and indiscriminate. Through the process of Self-Observation you will determine what I's are false and harmful and you will "feel" what I's are true and right.

Discernment between the quality and nature of I's being observed is another step in advancing the process. All I's should be observed. It will not be possible if you are working correctly to separate from I's that originate in Objective Conscience. Real I, which will give you glimpses of this, has the innate discernment of knowing true and right from false and wrong. There is a difference and you will begin to notice it as Conscience awakens.

In the Fourth Way you must accept up front that this is a long term process and you should work without the expectation of results. It will literally take years of observations to inform you adequately about what you need to change in yourself.

QUESTION:

I have many selfish I's. I observe them in various roles. They stem from my instinctive center and perhaps from the way my personality was formed. That is a common observation that I make,
that I am thinking about myself, worrying only about myself, etc. False personality is strong in this area and it seems hard to step ahead of it - so to speak. Can you suggest how to work on this.

RESPONSE:

G. called the Instinctive Center "the Boss". It will tyrannize all other centers until it is satisfied. For instance, if your Instinctive Center is exhausted your Intellectual Center will not work. Your Emotional Center won't care about anything except satisfying the Instinctive Center's need. You have to work with it intentionally, making compromises and rewarding it for cooperating. As for selfishness, it is the normal state of a sleeping machine. Self-interest is behind almost every word and deed. It requires a great deal of long-term observation and dedication to change to become unselfish. And it is worth it. Keep working for it.

Well, to be existential, this moment is all we have. I'm glad you're willing to do the Work now. I hope you will develop a commitment to doing the Work because of the results you get and the valuation of those results. Nicoll: "Through Self-Observation light enters and it is this light that begins to separate us. Esoteric teaching is light, but only when it is understood, valued and applied. You will get no light without this valuation. We cannot understand the Work ideas unless we work on ourselves. Your being will not change if you are
completely identified with yourself. If there is no change of being then there can be no change in your understanding of the Work. Self-Observation lets in a ray of light. This light is called in the Work Consciousness. The object of this Work is to increase Consciousness."

The awareness that is intentionally separated out in order to practice Self-Observation is not thought. It is not intellectual, though it is "intelligent seeing". If you are thinking about the exercise, then be aware that there are such I's circulating within you.

**QUESTION:**

I notice that the ascendancy of certain of the many "I's" can correspond to Moving Center habits and attitudes. When I slump in my chair, my attitude changes. When I keep a toothpick in my mouth, my attitude changes. Can Moving Center be employed to elicit Work "I's"?

**RESPONSE:**

Absolutely. Habitual postures generate habitual emotional states. For instance, if your reflective stance or body language is a bowed head, perhaps stroking your face or crossing your arms, pacing—all of these things, if they are habits associated to particular states, in
this case let's say brooding, then you can have an impact on that negative state by changing the habitual posture that unconsciously associates to it. You'll find in a general sense that when you still yourself and your mind, take a deep breath and relax your muscles that other influences can enter.

External factors can create certain I's. If you are asleep, this is all that will happen. What happens in the Work that has an impact is the transformative power of the psychological practices. The physical phenomenon that you've referred to "happens" all the time—sensations create emotion. There should be enough Self-Observation going on to do more than "sense" through the body. Much greater effort is called for than sensing or being aware of your body. This focus is too narrow and a side issue.

When you begin to make real progress in Self-Observation, it is common to feel like you are getting worse BECAUSE you are seeing more. Don't let this confuse you.

QUESTION:

As I practice Self-Observation and see better my own weaknesses and falsity, I become more aware of these things in others as well.
How can I work to avoid using these insights about others in a wrong way?

RESPONSE:

Try dealing with these insights without Identification. Awakening from Sleep will give you compassion. Observe others and their sleeping mechanics and you will find empathy with that position. This will allow you to forgive them for their wrong work (for they know not what they do).

The following is my list of the important points in observing Inner Talk. The most important of all is that when you are talking, you are not listening to what may be available: Associative thinking; psychological attitudes and dispositions that recur; patterns of connected I's, the taste of your inner state, where your attention is, the power of Imagination; almost all Inner Talk is imagination; the constant reinforcement of attitudes and opinions through indiscriminate thought processes; identifications and justifications. The most important point once again is that there is no silence, you cannot hear.

QUESTION:

Sometimes I think that if I have observed a thing once in myself
that I can then move on to something else. Should I not strive to make continued and repeated observations of the same things?

RESPONSE:

If you make continued and repeated observations you will begin to see the same things. There is a point to this. The point being that at this stage the "same things" keep happening whether you want them to or not or whether you observe them or not.

QUESTION:

In that Commentary, Nicoll speaks of preparing a Work aim that will "save you from going to Soho in yourself." What does this mean?

RESPONSE:

It means that you have recognized a group of habitual I's that take you to the slums of your psychology and you make a Work Aim to refuse to go with them. It's partly a matter of cultivating the better I's in yourself and turning your attention in another direction. The practice of Inner Silence can also be of great help, regarding habitual groups of I's.

In our ordinary state of consciousness, thoughts come from all
around us—inside and out, without discretion or reason. Noticing what thoughts we have, especially repeated sets of I's that have their own Personality and agenda, is a critical first step in choosing what we give our attention to. If we let our flow of thoughts go unobserved, unchecked, then we remain under their power and completely asleep. You need to recognize what thoughts are helpful to the Work and the right functioning of your psychology, and what thoughts are harmful to the Work and to your Self. Then you try to select what the Work teaches you to select.

Not all I's are from False Personality. That is why we have to observe and identify them in order to separate from what is false and nurture what is genuine.

**QUESTION:**

First, I practically tried to examine what is "observing I" in me. As recently as a few minutes ago. The question is crucial and unavoidable in my opinion for anyone involved in the Work. I take it seriously. Having said that, I must tell you that I do not know what Observing I is. I must study, reflect, struggle with this for a long time. It is the classic question asked of the Seeker: "Who am I"? I can tell you that I am not the functions of the machine. I can tell you that I am accessible only when I am separated from the functions. Second, more theoretically, I think that Observing I is
related to Conscience.

RESPONSE:

The object of defining what it is that is Observing in you is to increase its presence. To sense the taste of it helps define it. This part of you that is Observing is not one of the many I's. It has a different quality that is detached, it has a different perspective, and it feels more like something authentic in you that is you, not Imaginary I.

Observing I is connected to Buried Conscience. Buried Conscience emerges during the process the Work.

QUESTION:

I kept asking myself the question, "what is it that is Observing?". As I tried to ponder this question seriously, I noticed that 'what was observing' gained force. At first I concluded that the answer was "Consciousness". Then I concluded that it is Gurdjieff's "embryo". "Woe to him who has it in embryo."

RESPONSE:

Observing I gaining force and definition is the point of the exercise of examining it. I would not call it "Consciousness". It is something more like a place in you where Real I begins to grow. Actually, it is
more spiritual than psychological in nature. Something akin to your soul.

QUESTION:

Through Observation I believe I can see various aspects of my psychology. How then can I more aggressively confront my psychology?—that is, how can I bring more pressure to bear to expose difficulties and overcome them? Should I Work more aggressively?—or just take opportunities as they arise?

RESPONSE:

Take the opportunities as they arise. You will recall Nicoll saying that you cannot Work in an Identified way, anxious and trying to force results. I don't want you to aggressively confront your psychology. I want you to passively Observe it and try to define what is Real I in it and what is acquired Personality and inauthentic to your Being. The most aggressive you should be with yourself is in repressing False Personality and making it passive. This is the beginning of Inner Separation which is the long, hard Work of cleansing the Emotional Center.

Your present psychology which is mostly made up of False Personality is full of the attitudes and opinions, likes and dislikes, and multiple I's that you have acquired. These I's that you have
observed verify for you that your Personality is full of them. They need to be made passive so that the Work can be active.

The idea that Self-Observation is active, intentional, directed attention, whereas knowing and thinking are passive, is a way to discern whether your practice is rightly aligned.

Wrong Work atrophies under the influence of the light of Self-Observation and through the denial of Identification with it. Other elements come into play like thought selection and Inner Separation but a good deal of power exists in the light of Observing I.

The idea of Nothingness is closely connected to Humility. Being critical or severe with yourself will not bring you realization of this fact. Only Objective Self-Observation over a long period of time will reveal to you through Scale and Relativity and the artifice of False Personality, your condition of Nothingness. You can't force yourself to feel this. It is more in the nature of an epiphany (enlightened Understanding).

Through Self-Observation, which is meant to have 360-degree vision. Observing Negativity is easy and extremely important
self-observation throughout the Work life. But it is only one aspect of your condition that you must Observe. There are plenty of neutral aspects in everyone's Personality, even pleasant aspects. These are I's of mechanical goodness. They are definitely easier to live with but they are nonetheless mechanical. So Observe them. You will learn from them as well. There are also authentic I's of real goodness and these are to be valued and protected.

That you are able to Observe and even prevent the expression of old Negative I's is an accomplishment even if you are inconsistent at it. But you have said it yourself: These very strong Identifications are convinced they are right and are firmly entrenched. That is the definition of Identification. It is consequently understandable that when you usurp an entrenched characteristic it leaves a vacuum and something that you felt very attached to disappears, leaving you with that feeling of "no bearings".

QUESTION: Upon observing something negative, for example fear or anger, there is a sort of "pain" which often results and as a result of the "pain", observation ceases and 'I's come like: "Oh no!" or "I am having a bad day" . . . etc., as if they are buffering the pain. How can this be overcome?

RESPONSE:
When you are practicing Self-Observation, you must try to keep all emotional reactions to what you Observe silent. If you are experiencing pain as the result of Observation, no development can result. You must Observe impartially, uncritically without Identification. When I's in response to what is being Observed begin to appear, you must not let them speak.

**QUESTION:**

It seems like self-judgment is attached to many of my 'I's.

**RESPONSE:**

This is a paradox. While you remain uncritical in your observation of yourself, you must at the same time have some sense or taste of discernment about what is Right Work and what is Wrong Work. The nature of the 'I's that you observe must be recognized before you can proceed to separate from those that are Wrong Work.

If your question is how do you remember to Observe yourself, the motivation comes from sincere desire to change. If everything is fine, that desire for change is less. My advice would be to put aside trying to practice Self-Remembering for now. Focus on practicing Self-Observation which can function when things are fine or not. Just register with your Observations what you see. This
This particular exercise is about Observing how you allow yourself to mistreat others in your psychology. As well as singing sad secret songs. A quote from Nicoll: "You must cultivate quite a new idea of your responsibility to yourself in this respect." That is, having inner integrity in relation to the Work, not allowing yourself to fall into Sleep when you are by yourself. Nicoll: "We must handle a person we are working with as carefully and consciously in our inner thoughts and feelings as we do externally from polite manners."

It is a good thing when Self-Observation works in this manner. In some instances, it takes long-term hard Work to eliminate the illusions of Sleep. Sometimes, the illumination you receive when you Observe yourself Objectively and the force of the Work ideas dissolve Wrong Work on the spot. Just be sure that it has been vanquished and it isn't hiding.

It isn't possible to Work on everything at the same time. Then again, each idea is attached to another idea and so on. The Work will lead you if you let it; if you don't try too hard to force results. So begin where you first Observe yourself and what you Observe.
Applying the Work Knowledge and practices to these Observations will lead you.

QUESTION:

Would you please expand upon the statement made by Nicoll, "You can observe thoughts but not attitudes: also a thought does not necessarily make you act, but an attitude does, without your knowing anything about it."

RESPONSE:

You can Observe an I—a thought—that is critical of someone, for instance. The underlying attitude that created the I is firmly planted in False Personality and is not differentiated from it. A thought can come into your mind and pass through it without having an impact that would result in action. An attitude is presupposed, invisible in the Personality you would ascribe to yourself. Personality is full of attitudes which create action. For example, feeling inferior is an attitude that creates all kinds of behavior and I's that can be easily Observed.

QUESTION:

I have observed that the exercise of refusing to go with the first
reaction makes it possible to see these 'I's and allows one the possibility of raising them. This has been valuable for me.

RESPONSE:

It is getting to the point of being able to refuse to go with your first reaction that is the hard labor of doing the Work. It is an accomplishment every time you can do this.

It is exactly through the process of the Work that you can learn to function at the highest level of your Being. That begins with Self-Observation.

Do you understand that Self-Observation is an ongoing process?

Do you know that the quality and character of Self-Observation changes and evolves as you do?

Do you understand the nature of Self-Observation?

Do you understand the purpose of Self-Observation?

What are you watching when you observe?

Do you recognize changing consecutive "states" in response to external events?
Have you observed Negativity in yourself without Justifying or Identifying?

Have you observed many I's in yourself, any contradictions?

Do you understand what it means to be identified with yourself?

What is your biggest obstacle in your practice of the Work?
Remembering to? Finding time? Resistance from False Personality?
Skepticism? Impatience for results???.

QUESTION:

I used the word entangled intentionally because in my self observations I seem to be noticing this more. For example I often question my motives before acting now and ask . . . is it pride? . . . are you looking to recognized? . . . do you really want to know? . . . is your intention to be helpful? Often I think I see a combination of "I's" at work at the same time. Sometimes I get the feeling that a sincere "I" initiates the thought or insight and the "Achiever/Doer" muscles in wanting to take credit or be recognized. I hope this makes some kind of sense to you because I find it very confusing.

RESPONSE:

This is a definite Work experience. In the beginning, all of the I's
are clamoring at the same volume. But you have perceived and experienced a phenomenon in the Work. Some intuition (Buried Conscience) knows that a sincere I initiated the thought. Then, mechanical, habitual, accusing, challenging, undermining, distorting I's all speak up in turn. Challenge them back. And DO question your motives, it is one of the most essential elements in the Work. Stay in touch with the small part of you that has Verified that your motive was pure. The false I's will fade away because they will be robbed of their power as they become known to you and you recognize their falsehood.

Remember that this is not the way of self-denial, but of understanding. As you know, understanding is defined in the Work as the result of knowledge and being. Self-observation gives you knowledge on how to create being.

You have a very important opportunity in what you have been experiencing. You say "the emotional feeling is separated from the thoughts that have aroused these feelings". The thoughts are only I's and separating them from the emotional feeling that they evoke is what we work very hard to be able to do. To have experienced this spontaneously is an insight and maybe an organic understanding of that condition of inner separation that can help to know what you are aiming at. It is freedom from Identification.
To remain objective during Observation takes practice. It may help you to separate the Observing I from your personality's manifestations by referring to them in your observations as "it" rather than taking them as yourself. For instance, "it" (meaning the mechanical, automatic personality that you call "self") is irritable. It feels successful. It is tired. It doesn't like... It thinks that people should. Some people find this exercise helpful.

Contempt for self is Identified, critical Self-Observation, which is the wrong way to practice this most essential Exercise in the Work. Self-Observation MUST be done uncritically in order for the results to be in keeping with Work Aims. This accomplishment must be worked at as well. The ability grows with practice. Reach higher, past your responses to seeing, to unobstructed seeing. Reach deeper, beneath Vanity, False Personality, and Inner Considering to see what motivates them. The difference between "I and myself" that you are questioning is the difference between the emergence of Observing I and the "myself" of acquired Personality.
Divided Attention

QUESTION:

We have given ourselves a task where we sense our body (our right hand) while we listen or talk with another. Or even just while we do our job. We find we can have an overall "awakened" sense with this divided attention but, it quickly turns into a time when attention begins to switch back and forth between hand and subject. Are these mini identifications? Would this be time to stop the task and come back or try to work through it?

RESPONSE:

The purpose of these exercises in divided attention is to prove that divided attention exists. It is possible. It is actually a big accomplishment to verify divided attention, even if it happens only in small doses. And it will come in small doses for a very long time. The ability to divide your attention for longer periods of time comes
with practice.

However, you have already proved that you CAN divide your attention. You no longer need to waste this effort on any pointless activity. Now you need to direct one part of your attention not toward your body or any other external thing, but inward toward observing your own psychology while the other part stays engaged in the world.

When you first direct your attention inward, try only to observe what is going on, to register negative states, incongruities, inner considering, vanity, inner talking, insincerity, etc. Try not to react, criticize or judge what you observe.

This is the beginning of psychological transformation, to see your own psychology in action, to "know thyself". Read and study what the Work teaches about sleep, multiplicity, mechanicalness and all else one must observe and verify internally. Each observation is a step in the growth of Real I, so don't waste the effort of dividing your attention on externals. Observe YOURSELF with your divided attention.

Before a person learns that there is a practice called Divided Attention, and before they can Understand how to use this practice to see within themselves Objectively, no such idea exists in them that there is something other than what they call "I". When I teach
someone to separate their thought processes into two different streams of direction, if I do not keep them on the right path in the right direction, this dichotomy in their mind can seem just like a schizophrenic state, that is, they lose their sense of themselves. Those here can attest to the difficulty of this stage. That makes me responsible for seeing to it that each student passes through this stage undamaged and can progress to fulfillment in the Work.

Working with Divided Attention not specifically related to Self-Observation is a waste of time. It can be a subject of fascination for the psychology and many people will prefer to remain at this kindergarten stage of practice rather than apply what has been learned to themselves.

Continuing to practice exercises of divided attention without using that divided attention to observe yourself is a wasted effort. Once you can divide your attention, then turn that part of it to psychological Work practices that can get you somewhere beyond dividing your attention. No matter what other Work efforts you make, if you are not practicing the psychological exercises regularly of true Self-Observation, Inner Separation, Non-Identification, the Stop exercise, External Considering, then no growth can happen.

Divided Attention precedes and is necessary for Self-Observation,
but it is not Self-Observation. You cannot observe yourself without dividing your attention but Self-Observation is a specific practice in and of itself.

The beginning of divided attention is realizing that your attention goes in one direction only -- outward -- and that you live only in response to external stimuli. The "I" that can recognize this is the first "I" of divided attention. The point of the effort is that through realization and practice you can now have more than one perspective.

For instance, the practice of seeing a tree and seeing yourself seeing a tree is useful only in so far as it confirms that one CAN have divided attention. The aim is to take part of the attention that is normally directed outward, engaging in life, and turn that attention inward to see your behavior and the psychology that generates it from an objective perspective.

If you can do this, then you are using divided attention in order to practice self-observation. The aim of self-observation is to uncritically observe your psychology and your behavior in relation to Work knowledge. The Work tells us our behavior is governed by mechanics, that we are all asleep and furthermore that we do not know that we are asleep. The overall purpose of self-observation is awakening. In awakening we see what motivates our behavior, we learn how to become intentional, self-transcendent, and authentic.
The Work begins with dividing one's attention. If you have had no experience in this practice, try the following: While being aware of your external experience become concurrently aware of your inner state. This internal awareness is the beginning of self-observation.

QUESTION:

I recall Ouspensky saying that in the practice of Divided Attention, the attention is shared between the 'observer and the observed'...

RESPONSE:

Divided Attention keeps us aware of our external circumstances while noticing our internal states. The central issue is seeing what is going on within you so that --

a) you are not completely controlled by it b) you begin to understand why you function the way you do c) you begin the process of changing your ways of being and reacting.

QUESTION:

How is Divided Attention different from remembering oneself while looking at an external object, where two lines are created, one towards the object and one towards the viewer?
RESPONSE:

Part of your attention is not caught up in the external flow of events. It sees your internal psychological condition.

The aim here is to see the psychological origins and motivations for your actions in the world. You have to start by seeing in yourselves what the Work tells you to observe.

You must make many observations over a long period of time before you can even begin to get a picture of what you have to work on. Remember that the aim of the Work is psycho-transformation.

Self-Remembering is not an exercise. It is a state. Sometimes you'll unexpectedly find the state of Self-Remembering as a result of self-observation and inner separation. Sometimes this happens when you are observing yourself and you see that your outward manifestations are all driven by false personality and you have a moment of not knowing what you are besides that artificial personality. A sense of serenity and self undefined may be experienced in that moment. You may encounter something more authentic than what you are observing.

Real Divided Attention requires intentional effort for the specific purpose of self-observation. Trying to practice self-remembering while looking at an external object is a meaningless mind game. In order to remember oneself, it is first necessary to have observed
oneself and created enough real Self to know what to remember. Therefore, in order to self-remember, you must first observe.

The beginning of Divided Attention is realizing that your attention goes in one direction only -- outward -- and that you live only in response to external stimuli. The "I" that can recognize this is the first "I" of Divided Attention. The point of the effort is that through realization and practice you can now have more than one perspective.

For instance, the practice of seeing a tree and seeing yourself seeing a tree is useful only in so far as it confirms that one CAN have Divided Attention. The aim is to take part of the attention that is normally directed outward, engaging in life, and turn that attention inward to see your behavior and the psychology that generates it from an objective perspective.

If you can do this, then you are using Divided Attention in order to practice self-observation. The aim of self-observation is to uncritically observe your psychology and your behavior in relation to Work knowledge.

The goal is the formation of a permanent Real I which is the manifestation of the state of self-remembering. Self-observation,
founded on Divided Attention, creates the link between self-remembering and the development of Real I.

The purpose of these exercises in Divided Attention is to prove that Divided Attention exists. It is possible. It is actually a big accomplishment to verify Divided Attention, even if it happens only in small doses. And it will come in small doses for a very long time. The ability to divide your attention for longer periods of time comes with practice.

However, you have already proved that you CAN divide your attention. You no longer need to waste this effort on any pointless activity. Now you need to direct one part of your attention not toward your body or any other external thing, but inward toward observing your own psychology while the other part stays engaged in the world.

When you first direct your attention inward, try only to observe what is going on, to register negative states, incongruities, inner considering, vanity, inner talking, insincerity, etc. Try not to react, criticize or judge what you observe.

This is the beginning of psychological transformation, to see your own psychology in action, to "know thyself". Read and study what the Work teaches about sleep, multiplicity, mechanicalness and all else one must observe and verify internally. Each observation is a
step in the growth of Real I, so don't waste the effort of dividing your attention on externals. Observe YOURSELF with your Divided Attention.

QUESTION:

Why should one begin with practicing Divided Attention? It has been my experience that one must first be able to direct their attention rather than having it taken away from them (day dreaming, identification, etc.). So, how can you practice Divided Attention if you don't have real attention?

RESPONSE:

Of course everyone has some degree of attention. It's just that it's scattered and constantly changing directions. But people do focus on work, on reading, entertainment, hobbies, etc. all the time. It may not be intentional, but it is directed. What the Work asks you to do is to focus part of it on one single thing: your inner reality. If you want to do pale exercises like seeing how long you can focus your attention on the second hand of your watch, you will indeed verify that it is nearly impossible to keep your thoughts from wandering for even a minute or two. It shouldn't take more than once or twice to learn that lesson.

But what if, for the sake of experimentation, you intentionally and
repeatedly turn some bit of your attention that you can control toward the same thing, starting as an awareness of your inner state in the context of your outer circumstances at the moment. Maybe you're meeting someone new when you remember to observe your inner state; for a moment or two, you see yourself smiling, shaking hands, talking, etc. AND at the same time you are aware that inside you are feeling nervous or insecure, superior, inconvenienced, delighted, interested, afraid, sexually attracted, totally bored, or any other possibility.

The Work asks you to note your state. This indeed requires great effort. That's why it is called Work. But it is possible to do it (practice self-observation in this manner) and you don't have to take my word for it. You can verify it for yourself through your own experience. Of course, you have to make the effort of self-observation repeatedly in order to build something strong enough inside you to observe yourself as a regular activity. This will take much work and a long time. So evaluate your aim in undertaking the Work.

If you decide to do this Work, your efforts will create a response that enlightens you.

QUESTION:
I think the idea is that, as I pay attention to my surroundings, I am less absorbed in my internal mental world. Not wasting energy in imagination. Because it's hard to do both at once.

RESPONSE:

You seem to be stuck in the first movement of Self-Observation which is Divided Attention. This has no value except in application to the observation of your internal state. This Work is about your internal mental world. It requires that you place your attention there. In doing this, you are not in imagination, you are just beginning to observe (which is not absorption).

In the beginning of the Work there is a dangerous stage, when you instruct a person on how to practice Divided Attention and Self-Observation. This condition of Divided Attention and Self-Observation, if not done with very exacting parameters, can be schizophrenic inducing. So I would ask you please to take a very long time in practicing and understanding the Work before deciding what to share and how to share it with others.

Before a person learns that there is a practice called Divided Attention, and before they can Understand how to use this practice to see within themselves Objectively, no such idea exists in them
that there is something other than what they call "I". When I teach someone to separate their thought processes into two different streams of direction, if they do not stay on the right path, aimed in the right direction, this dichotomy in their mind can seem just like a schizophrenic state, that is, they lose their sense of themselves. Those here can attest to the difficulty of this stage. That makes me responsible for seeing to it that each student passes through this stage undamaged and can progress to fulfillment in the Work.
Identification

Being able to see it- Identification is one of the most difficult psychological aspects to Observe. When you are Identified, Observing I isn't present. It takes more effort to Observe Identification than to Observe the results of Identification...Negative I's, complaints, Inner Considering, etc.

Identification is not an attention issue. It is the wrong work of the emotional center.

A person attempting to awaken by way of the Work will be able to have some small part of their mind SEE identification happening in themselves. These I's that can see identification are not themselves identified. Consequently, the force of identification is lessened by the I's that can see it and refuse to give their energy to it. This is a
powerful incentive to practice self-observation and inner separation.

The accumulated I's of observation and verification and understanding eventually have enough force to stop automatic emotions and reactions. The aim here being to consciously chose right action.

Identification is especially hard to work on because we get our sense of who we are by way of identifying, i.e. what you care about, what you love, hate, need, want, etc. It fills you with energy and a sense of meaning when it is really only stealing your life and your force. Since we "feel" like we are defined by what moves us the most ("I'm a Republican, a victim, a freedom fighter, a feminist, a devout person), it is very difficult to see a level of relativity that denies one's sense of self and purpose. This is the stripping of the ego. It is painful and hard to let go of long-held convictions (identifications), to see with relativity that your attitudes, opinions, presumptions, and passions all have been acquired throughout your life. Therefore, they are subjective. They are changeable. They contain not the whole truth of a thing, only that which satisfies the false personality. They are not you.

Only inner separation, another difficult practice, can work at first against identification. Eventually, when the emotional center has been cleansed of the self-interest that builds identifications, action from a higher, more objective level is possible. You will be able to
choose consciously what to give your energy to and how. But this is very far down the road. Be patient while Working. Results are usually a long time in coming, but growth is every step of the way.

Observe identification. See the strength of the grip that it has on you. See the same grip it has on others. See how it fills you with energy, how you get a little thrill from the jolt of it. See how it is full of justification. See that the agenda that fires your identification is self-serving and so is the next person's, and the next.

This is where to make personality passive. The "why" is so that you can see through the false personality and all its obstructions to a higher level of scale and relativity which can free you from identification.

Exercises to work on identification:

--self-observation --register identification --try to observe where it originates in you --try to see its motivation --practice inner separation --practice the stop exercise --make personality passive --give no attention to justifying I's --remember scale and relativity --remember objective truth --remember yourself

The burst of energy that you experienced ought to be a positive experience, sometimes accompanied by a flash of higher consciousness. This energy is liberated from the identification that
If identification would have consumed it. If there is not identification, that energy is available for something else.

The idea of "doing exercises to help build an observer and like what it didn't like" is only half right. One builds an observer through self-observation. Trying to like what it doesn't like is wrong work of the emotional center. The idea of trying to like what the machine doesn't like is more about separation and non-identification than it is about forcing yourself to endure something that is distasteful. It is also unnecessary and will inhibit real self-observation which must stay objective in order to work properly.

Wrong work of the emotional center results in wasted energy (can you afford it?) and is an obstruction to Higher Emotion and will foul up the workings of the other centers with hurry and identification, etc.

QUESTION:

Is identification the result of the dominant function of the emotional parts of the centers, particularly the emotional and intellectual centers? Is this why we are to make personality passive? Does it all boil down to fact that we have utterly no control over emotions?
Are there exercises for bringing emotions under control?

RESPONSE:

Identification is the WRONG WORK of the emotional center. It can be active in any center. For example, the instinctive center is identified when it is denied the satisfaction it constantly seeks, i.e. meals on time, ample sleep, familiar surroundings, feeling safe...

The moving center gets identified with having to hold still, not having its hands busy, slow people, traffic.

The emotional center gets identified with everything because it responds to every event in life from the emotions. It empathizes without discretion, it loves or hates according to the dictates of false personality.

The intellectual center is identified when its ideas, understanding or presumptions are discredited or when it is challenged with problem-solving, when it seeks knowledge for power, or when it gets excited about learning something new.

The emotional center's real dominant function is emotional cognition. Your emotional center will tell you more about the nature of reality in any circumstance than any other center. The speed with which it works makes Working with the emotional center very difficult. But NOT impossible.
In a person asleep, the emotional center's wrong work is constantly moving from identification to inner considering and back (a person who is inner considering is identified with himself).

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This is where to make personality passive. The "why" is so that you can see through the false personality and all its obstructions to a higher level of scale and relativity which can free you from identification.

You say "the emotional feeling is separated from the thoughts that
have aroused these feelings". The thoughts are only I's, and separating them from the emotional feeling that they evoke is what we work very hard to be able to do. To have experienced this spontaneously is an insight and maybe an organic understanding of that condition of inner separation that can help to know what you are aiming at. It is freedom from Identification.

Identification is always the wrong work of the Emotional Center. It feels real because it is. You have given it reality by consenting to it. It also has a more intense energy than Non-Identification, which helps to make it feel more real. Identification helps create opinions, attitudes and convictions, likes and dislikes, which consequently make you think that it IS who you are. It is NOT. These attributes are acquired. They belong to False Personality. You are the Real I of your Higher Conscious Self; the authentic Self you are seeking to manifest.

Sometimes just seeing repeatedly the same manifestations of the wrong work of False Personality diminishes their strength. After all, the I's of Self-Observation are not identified with what is observed. As they accumulate, they draw force from Identification, weakening its hold on you, eventually giving you enough Will to disengage from wrong work.
I cannot think of any wrong work from the other centers, Intellectual, Moving, Instinctive, that isn't the product of the Emotional Center's wrong work acting through the other centers. For instance, an avid reader who lives her life with her face in a book is definitely misusing the Intellectual Center. The Emotional Center is investing the Intellectual Center with energy that is out of place in that center. It creates fervor, it creates Identification, it creates an imbalance in the activity of the centers.

The wrong work of the Moving Center is almost always hurry - People who can't stop rushing and can't stop doing things, who can't sit still. This is caused by the Emotional Center acting inappropriately in the Moving Center, creating Identification and agitation.

Instinctive Center Wrong Work involves obsessive behavior of an instinctive nature, i.e. eating, sex, sleeping, etc.

Indeed Vanity can attach itself to anything, but the issue here has to do with the Work idea that thoughts come into you from all different sources -- some you can recognize, some you can't -- but any thought ("aren't I something!!") is just a passing I. You can credit it or not, you can identify with it or not, or you can ignore it. Ask yourself if this is a Real feeling that you have? Probably not,
but if it is and you persevere in the Work, you'll lose that one fast.

Take the issues as they come up. When you notice that you are identifying again, STOP. If for instance you hate the drive to work, the traffic, waiting at lights, other drivers' behavior and negativity, the loss of productive time...you are driving (a moving centered activity) with your Emotional Center. Disengage your emotions from moving centered activity.

If you notice that what you are identifying with is a future event, then you are almost certainly in Imagination. Of course, directed, creative, intentional Imagination (how to work out a problem or create a particular outcome) is valuable, Intellectual Centered work. But you will probably find that your negative imagining is full of speculation and the negative discourse that accompanies it. This is Emotional Center's wrong work again, distorting the Intellectual Center's proper activity. If you have Work concerns, you can deal with them without identifying. Let your Emotional Center inform you, not steamroll you.

QUESTION:

I observed a moment that would usually lead to identification and imagination about the future. I noticed that a "want" internally
identification arrived as a response to an internal 'emptiness'. This "want", should I have gone with it, would have fed me or filled me up in some way and conversely, should I be able to stay with the state of 'hunger' or 'emptiness' and not immediately react, I might avoid identification. Can you comment on this?

RESPONSE:

This experience of not going with an automatic I is crucial. What it might have fed you would have been waste. If you can avoid identification, that would be the kind of emptiness that is serene and receptive. If the emptiness and hunger you experience are negative emotions, identify them as such and do not touch them psychologically.

QUESTION:

Ouspensky said that identification was the other side of the coin of self-remembering. Is this a useful characterization? Is identification wrong work of only the emotional center or all emotional parts?

RESPONSE:

Identification is the wrong work of the Emotional Center in any part.

Identification has more feeling in it than ordinary emotions.
People live by going from identification to identification. They define themselves by what they identify with.

Identification is emotional wrong work occurring in any center.

Being identified is automatic behavior. There is no consciousness in it. It is subjective and what is important to you at this time in your life can change in a New York minute.

Try to see Identification as an obstruction to clear observations.

Do you notice that what you identify with has strong emotions attached to the Identification? Question those emotions. What are they? What is their statement? Where do they come from? Name the source. Make them account for their identification. What do they say? Examine the Emotional Center for awareness that may be present and can inform you. Don't trust negative emotions.

*** If you write down over a period your I's that complain you will notice that you have the same complaint, let's say in regards to one person and you notice later that you have the same complaint about an entirely different person. This is an indication that the complaint is about something in you that you have not observed yet. You have only observed the result of it. It feels like you are in it because you are identified with it. This is what identification feels like.
QUESTION:

I often feel myself shifting out of Work I's and in to the other more common, automatic I's. I identify with them and feel that "this is me". This leads me to have an indifferent feeling toward the fewer work I's. I know that every moment, every reaction, every attitude, is an opportunity for self-observation. I feel that there are many opportunities to observe myself and that they are missed due to identification. I feel that if I "am" the I's then I cannot observe them.

RESPONSE:

This identification with yourself is false. What is habitual and mechanical feels natural. It is natural to the psychological functioning of man asleep. This man asleep is kept asleep through identifying with himself and therefore remains at a level that is actually sub-animal and unreachable by anything above it.

The momentum of talking will reinforce Identifications. It will also keep you from accurate Self-Observation.

In the beginning Observing I identifies with everything. If you find
it in identification with the Work, this is a good thing. It is when you begin to see and feel that you are not one I that you will discover that you can choose which I is real.

QUESTION:

Is not identification and imagination also wrong work of emotional center and would one student be more likely to fall into imagination rather than identification so in this way a student could be typed as to a chief fault?

RESPONSE:

Inner Considering is a form of Identification and Imagination always overlaps Identification. One student may be more vulnerable to one kind of wrong work over another, but the bottom line is that it is Wrong Work and must be eliminated.

Revenge is an extreme form of account making which belongs to Inner Considering which belongs to Identification. This long stream of wrong work that begins with Negativity created by Inner Considering can lead all the way to violence.

QUESTION:
Would it be right work of centers to proceed to "do what is necessary", in a practical sense, without investing the situation with emotion?

RESPONSE:

It would be the right work to do what is necessary without Identification. Identification is hyper-emotion.

Wrong Work atrophies under the influence of the light of Self-Observation and through the denial of Identification with it. Other elements come into play like thought selection and Inner Separation but a good deal of power exists in the light of Observing I.

QUESTION:

I think our experience in life comes from what we identify with.

RESPONSE:

It's more like what we identify with creates our experience of life.

That you are able to Observe and even prevent the expression of old Negative I's is an accomplishment even if you are inconsistent at it. But you have said it yourself: These very strong Identifications are
convinced they are right and are firmly entrenched. That is the definition of Identification. It is consequently understandable that when you usurp an entrenched characteristic it leaves a vacuum and something that you felt very attached to disappears, leaving you with that feeling of no bearings. If you continue to practice as you have been, you will get to a point where you are so free from old Identifications and Pictures and Imagination about yourself that there will be no False Personality to quibble with. You can be and if you continue earnestly as you have been, you will be free of all of the Wrong Work that stands between where you are now and your full potential.

Your experience is random. It comes to you from outside of you and inside of you without purpose or direction. All kinds of experiences pass through your life. And one places the blame on external circumstances for these experiences? It is what you Identify with that creates what you feel is your experience. Your Identification with accidental associations is what attracts and holds your attention and makes you feel that your life is the result of Identification. When in fact it is what you Identify with among the many experiences that come to you which forms the content of your life.

Identification is not a barrier to Observing I.
QUESTION:

It is the same old reoccurrence going 'round and 'round and going nowhere.

RESPONSE:

All of these songs are Identification with yourself. And, as you know, Identification stops you dead in your tracks in the Work. They do go nowhere, but they use most of your energy getting there.

QUESTION:

What is it that does not Identify?

RESPONSE:

Real I. This is above the level of Identification.

Non-Identification should not hurt. Just the opposite. It should heal. When you can't Separate from an Negative Emotion, it needs further scrutiny. Try to discern what the I's of Identification are saying and determine whether they are true. If this escapes you at the time, practice Inner Silence in relation to your Identification. Do
not listen to its I's. Do not speak to them. Do not acknowledge them. Reflection will inform you later about what the Identification was.

False Personality's strongest weapon is Identification. Fight it with detachment.

If you want to diffuse old accounts, begin with trying to see within yourself what Identifications initiated the account. In a general sense, the way to do this is to put yourself in the other person's place. See from their point of view (Sleep), how you seem to them and what their life experience has created in them. Remember that everyone has Many I's, and try and Separate the offensive I's from other things you know about this person. Remember that you are offended where you are most Identified and that the source of the inner account is within you (your requirements).

QUESTION:
What would other forms of identification be called?

RESPONSE:
Negativity, feelings of superiority, having Pictures and Imagination
about yourself, holding accounts against others, Fear, greed and all the other Wrong Work of Features. Vanity is especially Identified.

QUESTION:

Imagination is separate from identification, yes?

RESPONSE:

Yes, these are two different functions, BUT Imagination is present in Identification and vice versa.
Personality

A person developed in the Work -- to the degree that they are relatively free from the power of False personality -- can interact with life and people with a clearer perspective on reality. The obstructions of inner considering, mechanical momentum, features and identification lose power as True Personality evolves.

Not reacting from personality, negativity, identification is key to moving forward. You must be willing to be patient and to make humble efforts. Results will come. Moments of sudden illumination will occur.

QUESTION:

Would attitude be associated with consciousness?
RESPONSE:

No. Attitudes are acquired Personality traits. They are never Conscious.

QUESTION:

As one's consciousness expands, would there be a change in one's attitude?

RESPONSE:

Of course. As your consciousness expands, your perspective expands, your Understanding deepens, your Knowledge grows, your Being develops, and almost every attitude you now have ceases to exist in the light of Consciousness. The Work creates this kind of change. Sometimes in a moment. More often with long intentional Work. Be sure that any change in attitude remains consistent with the Work and the change will become permanent.

If you are working from False Personality, you will feel satisfaction. If you are really doing the Work, you will feel humility. False Personality is tenacious and will resist, kicking and screaming all the way to oblivion. It is very cunning and it will protect its interests. You can challenge, if you are unsure, any I in order to discover its authenticity. Does the I you Observe represent
what is Real in you? If you ask yourself this question when you have this doubt, the answer will be clear to you.

QUESTION:

I was at an oppressive seminar today and took Collin to read. There was a passage on the "extinction of personality" which jumped out at me. I realized the enormity of what was being said. this is not a grafting of some interesting ideas onto a false personality, but a complete "extinction". Now this is a very frightening thing and I think it may reflect where I am right now. an enormous struggle that is profound in its implications. and it does make me afraid.

RESPONSE:

Recognize that not everything that belongs to Personality is trash to be discarded. Surely you have experienced sincere compassion or real forgiveness. The reason Self-Observation needs to be uncritical, which means not Identified with what it Observes, is so you can see everything objectively. It is only from that perspective that you can discern true and valuable from false and worthless. Last week, I gave you an illustration of how you can eventually turn a negative activity into something positive and creative without dismissing the activity. This kind of adjusting to the right attitude is as much a part of reconstruction as discarding is. The Work asks you to "Know thyself", then you can choose to Become. But first
comes Knowing everything that is in you from a point of view that can make value judgments and has the force of the Work to carry them out. Does your fear relate to not knowing what happens after the "extinction" of Personality? Or is it being in that space where False Personality has perished before True Personality has been formed?

Acting may be necessary at times for some. In which case, it should be Intentional and as true to authentic Being and Objective Conscience as you can get. Other than these should be rare occasions, the Work asks you to make that False Personality passive whenever you can. If you give yourself permission to be asleep in it, so that it can function effectively, you are not on the right track. The Work requires of you that you eliminate bit by bit the False Personality that you Observe. If you find yourself in awkward stages, reflect upon the value this Work has for you, and continue in silence. It is essential that you Work to be rid of Wrong Work, not just Observe it.

As we have all verified, it is impossible at first to not feel revulsion with one's False Personality. This is where the Work becomes very subtle. It is also a paradox. One must Observe, discern, and Separate from all forms of Wrong Work, which consists of Negativity. The feeling of revulsion in relation to what is false and impure in you has relative validity and can contribute to the force
you seek for change. This revulsion, however, once again is the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center. Revulsion is also a Negative Emotion. The Work will proceed with more alacrity if Inner Separation and Non-Identification take the place of revulsion. This approach to dealing with seeing False Personality will contribute to a permanent change.

Ouspensky said to Nicoll "Why are you sad?" Nicoll said "I didn't realize that I was." O. said: "It is a habit with you". Recognize that disgruntled-ness has unmet requirements. Recognize habitual emotional states. It is correct that you cannot not be False Personality when you are in it. You can however still Observe it. When you do, make it be quiet.

The silence is the space where Observing can happen. The power to stop False Personality grows there. A slight amendment -- Making False Personality quiet involves the effort of stopping its manifestations. Whether this is successful or not, a degree of inner quiet is a choice I believe you can make now.

QUESTION:

I can sometimes curtail outer manifestations of False Personality but I can still feel it inwardly. Is there a difference, from a Work
point of view, between inner manifestations of False Personality and external expressions? What is the specific quality of 'making Personality passive'?

RESPONSE:

Yes, there is a difference between inner and outer expressions of False Personality. But the Work teaches you to Observe and Separate from both. It is the quality of "detachment" that defines making Personality passive. It is the exercise of not responding to any I that comes from False Personality, having no emotional response to it.

QUESTION:

I have observed many times over that observing makes me more quiet. But I have also noticed of late an ability to ease up on my self a bit. And actually enjoy myself.

RESPONSE:

This is good to hear. Talking is often just the automatic expression of False Personality. Observing it makes you want to be more quiet, less noise from False Personality. This gives you the opportunity to be more real.
True personality requires me to talk a bit, yes?

RESPONSE:

Yes, True Personality talks quite easily without Inner Considering. But it doesn't require you to talk, life does.

QUESTION:

This is connected with the distinction between the "active" me whose I's are in operation with the psychological absorption attending them, and the Observing I that must passively and helplessly watch on. I have made some efforts along these lines and have found that it is useful in some cases to allow the I's to continue expressing themselves and elicit Observing I in a passive mode, even having a helpless feeling with it. Notice, express the "I", and watch. The immediate urge to somehow change the "I" seems to me to be False Personalities attempt to clean up what you are observing. This way False Personality thinks it has improved matters and one can now stop observing because everything is better now. This can muddy real observation.

RESPONSE:

This is a subtle and important perception. It is very common to find
False Personality trying to imitate what it believes is a Work personality for anyone's benefit, including your own.

Real I seeks to exert control over Personality in order to be authentic, in order to replace Wrong Work with Right Work. As False Personality is observed and studied and worked against, it loses power, refuses to function, and eventually dissolves, vanishes to be replaced by your True Self, awakened, intentional, internally free, authentic, unique, purified of the labyrinth of Wrong Work, self-interest, and the Negative Emotions connected to them.

Real I is connected to Higher Consciousness, Objective Conscience. It has perfect integrity and contains the meaning and fulfillment of your existence.

Observe how Personality doesn't want to change, doesn't want to make any efforts, especially ones that eliminate its existence.

So this is part of Necessary Suffering, that is, sacrificing False Personality, which is always painful in some way in order to gain a real Self that is more truly you and in which there is no pretense.

Work I's oppose what you have always known as "yourself" but
they come from you, they are in you, and even dormant they are more You than any imitation or pretense. The aim in the Work is to change. Is this your aim? Then you must change your "cherished sense of yourself". If you want to DO the Work, then you must continue to practice. Be passive to the resistance of False Personality. Expect it and just observe.

Once false personality has been observed, it ceases to function smoothly or at all. Sometimes we are left with out the faculties to interact with the world. This state is part of the evolution in the Work and it can feel like "psychological vertigo" but it is temporary.

You are describing the experience of feeling the loss of your personality. It feels like "psychological vertigo". That sense of panic comes from not knowing who you are without your personality.

You will notice that the "frightening feeling" vanished once you were again firmly entrenched in personality through your exchange with the colleague.

These experiences reveal that there is nothing behind false personality, nothing to stand on. Your house is "built on sand." And
nothing authentic as been created to replace it yet (true personality). This is a common experience in the early stages of Work practice. It comes from shining the light of consciousness on personality.

Ouspensky himself had the following experience early in his practice of the Fourth Way: in a letter to a friend, he stated that he did not know who would be writing the next letter (which I) and this frightened him. Seeing our multiplicity and disconnecting with our former sense of self is very unsettling. But we need to realize that "I am not that" and that this is a temporary transition.

We are hearing from some of you about the "psychological vertigo" accompanying this process which begins with the deconstruction of our false personality. This vertigo is being expressed in a sense of panic, a feeling of emptiness, a feeling of fear or anxiety, or sometimes the sense of being a fraud. The best way to deal with it is to try to practice inner separation in relation to those feelings and realize that this is a natural, temporary response in the process of the Work. The way to eliminate that negative experience is by building something real internally which will act consciously in the world. The way to build that in yourself begins with and relies upon self-observation.

When the mind is filled with the constant babble of inner considering and the heart is motivated by the self-interest of inner
considering, the potential of receptivity to a higher state is lost. That is why all practical Work is focused on self-change or self-transcendence. The possibility of intentional, psychological self-generated evolution lies in this process of purification. The means is self-observation.

Remember that the aim of the Work is psycho-transformation.

There are many positive elements that can exist in False Personality. They are, however, still mechanical, still asleep, and though they may be more pleasant to deal with, they are no less false than any other aspect of acquired personality. They can work against you and your aims to develop in very insidious ways. Someone who is mechanically positive with a pleasant personality will have a harder time finding a reason to change or see anything wrong with their behavior in the first place. They will lack motivation to change.

When false personality I's try to observe themselves, they are enamored with what they see.

This confused state, although powerful, is temporary and a common
experience in the beginning of the Work. The uncertainty, the loss of identity, and the terror that these feelings create is the "psychological vertigo" that accompanies the state of recognizing False Personality with an undeveloped observing I.

There are so many opportunities to see False Personality, Vanity or Pride and everything else the Work tells us to observe in everyone's every day experience that it is nearly impossible to not notice them functioning...if you are observing.

To use an example: perhaps you are a rather witty fellow, intelligent, perceptive, with a keen sense of humor (perhaps a Jovial body type). In almost every social situation you have the wittiest remarks, you can top anyone's story, you can level your friends with one witty word and you enjoy this about yourself. Your friends enjoy it too. You perceive yourself to be a good-natured, humorous person.

This nice, funny guy is the false personality, but you cannot see it when you are only being it. Everything about the false personality emanates from self-serving motives. Inner considering, which makes up most of the false personality, is obsessed with "what do others think of me", "do they see me?", "can they tell that I'm special?", "am I being treated properly?", "have I been insulted?", "have I received the merit and recognition I deserve", "am I
attractive enough?", "are my clothes 'right', "am I making the impression I wish to project?", "do I have what I want?", "do I have approval, acceptance?", "am I being foolish?"

All of these thoughts and emotions belong to false personality. One can see vanity in them, one can see pride, one can see insincerity and dishonesty, and eventually one can see the complete mechanicalness of it all.

When one verifies what one knows to be the truth of the Work regarding oneself, the recognition creates a separation (some space for non-identification). Observing and verifying mechanics creates a powerful force that doesn't want to be mechanical. If that force is strong enough, it can create permanent change. More often, force will be accumulated over a long period of observing the same I's behaving the same way regardless of observation.

Any self-justification in this process should be considered a red light that inner considering is at work and that you must not listen to it. So back to our witty fellow. Suppose he is trying to work on himself and so he has an aim to make his personality passive. What does that mean? It means that he chooses not to go with his mechanical reactions in life. Perhaps the next time he is with a group of people, talking, laughing, with personality flowing abundantly, he will recognize his desire to make a funny remark as arising from the need to have attention, to be appreciated and
recognized as the wonderful fellow that he is.

His Work effort then would be to remain silent. And in doing so, for the first time, much that he has missed can become clear. Because he is not projecting his personality, he can be perceiving reality in a different way. He may see some poor other mechanical person caught in the momentum that he was able to resist.

He may see fear or pain where he never would have noticed before because his attention was consumed with himself. He may recognize that his contribution, had he made it, was basically irrelevant and had no other purpose than to gratify his vanity. And if he can see this one little piece, then perhaps he can begin to realize that it is the same with all the other little pieces. Consequently, his real importance in the world has nothing to do with whatever his personality has to offer it, but what he has to offer the world without his personality in the way.

QUESTION:

I have made a profession out of personality, the raconteur, the improvisational conversationalist, ..and the transparency of One "I" to the Watcher means I can't fool myself. It may be Fun but it ain't Work. And there are heaps of these guys.... so the question is to do with attitude to the racket being exposed.
RESPONSE:

Everyone comes into the Work with their personality, whatever type it is, in full force. It is a condition sleeping humanity lives in. The work of self-observation, which is foundation in the process, requires intentional effort. Included in this intentionality is the practice of being uncritical about what one observes. If your observing I responds with hating what it sees, then that is where you will be stuck, in a constant war between the observer and the observed.

The whole point of self-observation is to give one an objective view of what one is really like. Without objectivity, you are not going to see anything.

Keep observing I passive. That effort is part of making the effort to observe.

When you have the psychological space that objectivity requires, you have a toe-hold on inner separation. Then you can observe personality in all of its manifestations. This type of self-observation after a long period of time will show you much about yourself.

The aim of the Work is to transform the acquired, automatic behavior into enlightened, intentional action. In this process, the ego (false personality) made up of only self-interest, must be displaced gradually with a more evolved self. Purifying the
emotional center, purifying the psychology of self-interest, is the substance of the Work.

I suggest that everyone "in the Work" reflect upon their motives for making these efforts. If one's motives have something to do with gaining personal power, that self-interest will effectively block any kind of real development.

You have made an interesting observation in seeing that you "sacrifice yourself in order to appear natural to others". This is indeed the case and can be easily verified by all who observe themselves honestly. False personality betrays essence when it seeks approval, pretends to be interested in things it is not in order to "fit in", or the thousand and one ways it lies out of inner considering.

The tragedy of false personality is that it does sacrifice our deeper selves, smothers our essence, and defeats our Work aims for the sake of being accepted by others. This is a high price to pay and almost everyone around us pays it for a lifetime.

QUESTION:

Although false personality is still a speeding freight train which can not be stopped at times, this is a most surreal experience, to observe
false personality and watch in horror as it continues on. Could it be possible that I sense an almost mocking attitude.

RESPONSE:

Absolutely. It is necessary to know organically (from experience) the strength of false personality and therefore see the condition of sleep. That of humanity and that of oneself. But what is "It" in you that "sees"? Contemplate this question. It will help define and strengthen that part of you.

QUESTION:

I observe that lately I have withdrawn from friends and family to some degree. I find that it is with those that I am most familiar that I lapse into the deepest mechanical behavior. How does one develop a proper outlet for social behavior if one falls asleep when so doing? I have no impulse to "talk" to them about the Work.

RESPONSE:

When you find that your existing personality cannot handle a social situation, make the effort to make your personality passive. Just observe.
QUESTION:

Nicoll observes in his Commentaries that "You cannot change if you stay the way you are". He describes self-observation as the cornerstone for these efforts. My question, which may appear a bit pedantic, is this: how can you know when you are "uncritically" observing yourself, whether or not you are still peering through a filter of false personality? How does one verify that one travels in a sure and proper direction, and not further into the abyss of sleep and self delusion. Somewhere I read either in Plato or Aristotle a similar conundrum: how can one learn anything new when one has not yet developed the faculty for recognizing it? Sometimes I wonder whether we live in little Alcatrazes of our own, dreaming of escape and fantasizing that we are observing ourselves. Is this why O. says escape is impossible if attempted alone?

RESPONSE:

False personality judges, criticizes, justifies, feels offended, gets angry, has likes and dislikes, attitudes, opinions, feels ashamed and insecure.

When you practice self-observation, if you find any of these elements in the Observing I then you are identified with what you are observing. That is a trap that leads to insanity.

Observing I MUST be made objective, uncritical of what is being
personality observed, yet seeing it clearly for what it is.

Think of observing as taking photos, registering, passively seeing.

What can you observe objectively about being irritable? Is it an unpleasant feeling or do you picture yourself as a "lovable grouch"? (There is no such thing, by the way). Are there any I's that secretly enjoy the zing of negative energy? What I's are irritable? The ones that want something that they don't have, the ones that have to do something that they don't want to do, the ones that are feeling inadequate, unsatisfied, unsure? We could go on and on, but the point is that all of the above and more belong to inner considering, to acquired attitudes, likes and dislikes, etc. That is ALL that the Work tells us that we must separate from.

Knowing this can give you the force to become detached and in that state of non-identification see clearly what intentional right action is. Then you lose all motivations and justifications for being irritable.

So, how do you know if you are observing yourself through a filter of false personality? If Observing I is objective, non-identified, then false personality CANNOT be present. One must work at this also, making Observing I not react with identification. This is difficult work as well, but it leads to liberation, to that escape from the prison of sleep that we seek.
Ouspensky was right about needing help. We need the help of knowing a way out and the help of someone who knows also that "way" from experience and can assist you through the difficulties and help you avoid the traps. Someone who really knows the way can help you to verify for yourself the ideas of the Work and their transformative power.

To be absolutely sure that your work is progressing in the proper direction is easy. Follow goodness. Seek to act with un-self-interested intentionality. Every normally formed human being has the innate knowledge (faculty of recognition) of what GOODNESS is. The Truth in it resounds in your soul with recognition.

Earnest efforts will gradually create a stronger Real I in you.

If you can recognize that your negative states are caused by the requirements you have (of the world, of people, of your life) in order to feel satisfied, then you will know that these requirements are based in false personality and inner considering.

We Work against these by making personality passive, by inner separation, by non-identification, by recognizing that inner considering is only self-interest, by sacrificing your need to be gratified.
Be patient while Working. Results are usually a long time in coming, but growth is every step of the way.

Observe identification. See the strength of the grip that it has on you. See the same grip it has on others. See how it fills you with energy, how you get a little thrill from the jolt of it. See how it is full of justification. See that the agenda that fires your identification is self-serving and so is the next person's, and the next, though the identifications may oppose one another.

This is where to make personality passive. The "why" is so that you can see through the false personality and all its obstructions to a higher level of scale and relativity which can free you from identification.

Essence is the innate nature you are born with. Whether you are active or passive, positive or negative type, or whether you are predisposed to being centered in the intellectual center, the emotional center, or the moving-instinctive center all belong to Essence with which you are born. You can verify this by observing the striking differences in types among very young infants and children.

This essence, which is your nature, then interacts with the external circumstances and events of your life's experience to form a
"personality". Example: an active/negative type born in a large family may easily develop a loud, hyperactive personality in order to compete for the attention it desires. Then the influences of culture, family attitudes, opinions and behavior are all imitated or rejected automatically.

Clearly there are an infinite number of combinations of essence and experience which produce the unique individuals who are nevertheless all stimulus-response organisms.

This is a natural and necessary developmental process of acquiring a personality that can interact with the world and events. However, from the Work point of view, this acquired personality is created on the basis of self-interested need that originates in brain stem urges for self-preservation. So the acquired personality is called False Personality in the Work because it has been created through environmental influences and self-interest as opposed to enlightened or objective knowledge. It is mechanical, functions on automatic, and is asleep.

The process of awakening in the Work leads to True Personality. Through the process of self-observation, inner separation, non-identification, we learn to see that our automatic behavior does not reflect our true Self. The efforts undertaken reveal to us the malformation of our psychology. The accumulated I's of observation gain strength enough eventually so that one may act
intentionally rather than mechanically. This intentionality issues from True Personality. It is not based on self-interest, but rather on objective consciousness. Long-term self-observation will strip away or melt away or burn away the wrong work of False Personality bit by bit.

Although the process is painful, to be rid of unnecessary suffering and have the clarity of mind and strength of will to act intentionally is liberation from the chains of mechanicalness that bind us in sleep. Psychological freedom brings new life expressed in True Personality.

True Personality still contains essence, types and different centers of gravity. But they are all at the service of higher consciousness. This means that you are more honestly yourself than you can ever achieve through any avenue of False personality.

A person developed in the Work -- to the degree that they are relatively free from the power of False personality -- can interact with life and people with a clearer perspective on reality. The obstructions of inner considering, mechanical momentum, feature and identification lose power as True Personality evolves.

What you are seeing when you experience yourself as "simply a bundle of tape recordings and reactions responding from these" is False Personality. It is relevant because it makes up your present
reality. You do have a True Self which doing the Work will lead you to discover. The process of discovery begins with relentless practice of self-observation. It is imperative that one is uncritical of what is observed.

You are not only programs and mechanics. There is something in you that is authentic, unique behind all of these things. That Real I, True Self begins to gain strength or surface with the first observation of False Personality. Since you know already that there is something in you that isn't only mechanical, the I that knows this is the I of self-observation. That I is the beginning of who you are (Real I). And although at some level we are all one, we are also each completely unique.

Once you have observed in yourself (verified) that Sleep and Mechanicalness and False Personality exist not only in you but also in everyone else, it becomes easier to forgive BECAUSE you understand the nature and the power of Sleep. This helps to reinforce Real I which will then give you more power to forgive and understand.

Understand that the desire to be seen, noticed, have importance, be accepted, feel appreciated, are all natural strivings that arise from the brain stem urges that seek the security and connectedness of social relationships. So these emotions are not only a natural
QUESTION:

Then there is the issue of compensation- in order to compensate for what may be a fear of being invisible or a belief I refuse to see that I am invisible- I exaggerate. I must excel at everything. In the past, as a much younger man, I dressed lavishly. At a younger age, I weight lifted. As a student in University, I wrote essays that stood out by covering a subject as completely as possible, often three or four times the required length. Today, I have my own office in the most prime location possible. Of course, it is never enough and deep down there is often a sense that I am 'faking it' that I am an 'impostor'. All this is from a deep need to be 'seen', to 'matter'. To be invisible is a painful, humiliating experience.

RESPONSE:

Of course it is never enough, partly because gratification-seeking has no end, and partly because this sense you have of "faking it" or "being an impostor" comes from a deeper level than the world can satisfy. This deep need you have to be "seen", to "matter" is only painful or humiliating if you believe it is. In reality, it is unnecessary suffering and you can simply let it go with the
recognition that you do not want Vanity governing your life and actions.

There is a paradox here. This deep need to "matter" can be strictly vanitas (emptiness) or it can be, even at the same time, the force behind the effort to find meaning. Finding real meaning in your life makes all the small I's of self-interest fade into nothingness.

The next time you find yourself feeling these emotions make an exercise to turn your psychology around 180 degrees and concern yourself with everyone else's welfare, anyone else's needs. If you are not tangled up in Inner Considering, you may notice that someone else is in need or that everyone else is full of Inner Considering as well. They are adjusting their clothes, worrying about their breath, smoothing down their hair, flirting and showing off, bragging, telling jokes, being vulgar, or anything else to get attention. The difference is that they cannot see this. You have seen and so you have made the first step in the possibility of self-transformation. Seeing is the first step to change if you are willing to.

If you are with a group of people and you are all operating fully in False Personality, then each of you has self-interest as motivation for your personal agenda which forms requirements of this event. You each want to be appreciated, behind your empathic interest
with the others may even be the intent of being seen as amiable and as a good person or a compassionate friend. You're worried if you still have garlic on your breath from lunch. You're resenting someone's inattentiveness or perceived insult. You want to make your point. You want your point to be heard, understood, and validated by everyone so that you know that you're right and so that they know that you are right. You're flirting with someone who is married and you are insulted when they don't flirt back. You wonder what's wrong with them. Then you wonder what is wrong with you. Then you wonder if you are talking too much, or if you really like these people after all. And on and on. There is no useful exchange of energy in this kind of situation. It is all automatic, mechanical, predictable, and pointless.

However, let's say you are with your group of people and you are not in False Personality, which is made up mostly of Inner Considering, what might be going on with you in these circumstances? Might you not be able to see the condition of sleep, the flow of mechanicalness, the predictable stimulus-response behavior, how negativity is contagious, how it most often runs the show, how one association leads to another, how people use buffers, what pictures they have of themselves, what issues they are dealing with, what level their being is, what their features are, what their suffering is about?

If you are in External Considering, seeing from this point of view
will evoke compassion for everyone's wrong work, and forgiveness. You could soothe the insecurity of one, absorb passively the negativity of another, include the excluded ones, and generally respond with conscious intentional words and actions appropriate to the circumstances. I hope you agree that this would be a better place to be in. If you do, then imagine your meeting with these people if they were also all Externally Considering. You can freely give to them your attention and care, and they give you back the attention and care that you need which will be an entirely different kind of need than that which comes from False Personality. That is an appropriate exchange of energies between people, each Externally Considering the other. Now imagine the whole world like that, everyone Externally Considering everyone else all through their lives. No fear, no hate, no taking only giving and receiving -- that would be purpose enough, don't you think, to do your own part in it, to be one more person on that side of Consciousness.

QUESTION:

How can I instill in myself a preference for Work I's that have all the appearance of being the interlopers in my being?

RESPONSE:

First know that they are not "interlopers". Work I's oppose what you have always known as "yourself" but they come from you, they are
in you, and even dormant they are more You than any imitation or pretence. The aim in the Work is to change. Is this your aim? Then you must change your "cherished sense of yourself". If you want to DO the Work, then you must continue to practice. Be passive to the resistance of False Personality. Expect it and just observe. Observe how Personality doesn't want to change, doesn't want to make any efforts, especially ones that eliminate its existence.

Through the long process of Self-Observation, Work I's accumulate. You will gain a sense of authentic Self (versus imitation and pretense) gradually.

So this is part of Necessary Suffering, that is, sacrificing False Personality, which is always painful in some way in order to gain a real Self that is more truly you and in which there is no pretense.

QUESTION:

It seems insulting to ego to submit to this observing and separation.

RESPONSE:

Observing I exists although dormantly throughout the adult life of every person. Each person has momentary glimpses of that higher perspective. In the Work, we make the effort to observe and separate for the purpose of growing. It is more than insulting to the
ego, it is the end of its tyranny.

QUESTION:

How do we effect the shift in attention from the False Personality to the Observing "I"?

RESPONSE:

Begin by trying to notice or even just sense your state. Note also that Observing I is elusive in the beginning and in effectual however, with practice and patience Observing I gains presence and grows in relation to real efforts.

QUESTION:

It (this state) is utterly useless and of no real value!

RESPONSE:

That's why you're in the Work. Being mechanical has no meaning and it always leaves you feeling empty.

QUESTION:

Sorry...not really a question there. Just a realization of the futility of
filling oneself with momentary and transitory 'excitements'.

RESPONSE:

False Personality and the I's of Inner Considering can never be satisfied. These aspects always need more attention, more gratification. Notice that when you have requirements, let's say of another person, and that person gives you what you want at the moment, the next moment you want more or something else. These transient I's associate without discretion and keep your attention and momentum on automatic. We must always return to the work of Self-Observation. It's the hard labor of brick laying. But it builds something.

QUESTION:

On a couple of occasions I have been able to interact normally while observing myself. At other times, I cannot do this and fall silent.

RESPONSE:

That silence, though awkward, contains the possibility of not acting mechanically. If you are confused in this silence, let go of the requirements you have that are creating confusion. Practice Inner Stop and accept the silence.
QUESTION:

But the silence makes others uncomfortable. I do not wish to appear self-absorbed. Is this wish not external consideration in some degree?

RESPONSE:

Possibly, it may be External Considering. But I would say that this is an unavoidable experience in the early stages of the Work. Other people will find that you are behaving differently. They may or may not be comfortable with that. That is their problem. Yours is to be able to interact in a sincere way without experiencing the absence of Personality. I'm sorry but this takes practice like any other achievement. It is something you have to work at and in the beginning it is awkward and confusing and out of pace with the flow of False Personality around you.

QUESTION:

Tearing down what is false without taking care to build what is genuine seems to court disaster.

RESPONSE:

It is not courting, it is creating disaster. The process of tearing down
what is false should happen gradually along with the growth of Understanding which should take the place of what was false and is no longer a part of you. But it's like reining in a wild team of horses. Everyone wants results and particular results and right away. All seem to need external, tangible evidence that this Work is actually working. It is important to study different aspects of these transformational ideas. At the same time, trying to apply them to a psychology in the chaos of wrong work won't have healthy results. I reiterate and ask you all to continue the fundamental practice of Self-Observation with PATIENCE. You have each had some experiences of raised consciousness or deep insight. Let these inspire you to work without requirements knowing that you will receive what you particularly need in order to proceed.

The bucking of False Personality is to be expected, probably with bursts of negative energy. Here in itself is a set of I's. These I's don't want to make the effort to do the Work. These I's don't want to see, don't want to change, and aren't sure where they're going. You have another set of I's. I have a stack of papers from you writing about the Work in extensive detail. This belongs to another set of I's. You have I's that get negative, then discouraged, then desperate and wind up confused and lost. And you have I's that have a great deal of Understanding and intuition for Truth.
Observing I will be able to see everything clearly in time. It may be years before you can have a satisfactory effect on observed behavior. But what you are seeing is not only Vanity. It is also imitation, Inner Considering, and False Personality. These things diminish under the light of Self-Observation and a more conscious action takes their place.

QUESTION:

I can see imitation in others far more clearly than in myself. I see them make silly faces or grimaces which they probably think demonstrates to others some wonderful quality (though I wonder what I do that I cannot see as well). It all appears to be 'affectation' and completely unnecessary. I would like to see it more in myself and less in others.

RESPONSE:

What you are observing is False Personality and you are probably seeing more falsehood in it than ever before. Keep trying to see yourself objectively. Practice at observation creates a better quality of Observation.

QUESTION:

Why is there the automatic reaction of irritation when seeing
falsehood in myself or others?

RESPONSE:

Falsehood is impossible to deal with psychologically. There is no ground beneath it. It is uncomfortable and frustrating.

QUESTION:

So you say that false personality is the result of wrong work of the emotional center?

RESPONSE:

Not exactly. False Personality is what you have acquired since birth and it is based on the wrong work of the Emotional Center.

QUESTION:

This is connected with the distinction between the "active" ME whose I's are in operation with the psychological absorption attending them, and the Observing I that must passively and helplessly watch on. I have made some efforts along these lines and have found that it is useful in some cases to allow the I's to continue expressing themselves and elicit Observing I in a passive mode, even having a helpless feeling with it. Notice, express the "I", and
watch. The immediate urge to somehow change the "I" seems to me to be False Personalities attempt to clean up what you are observing. This way False Personality thinks it has improved matters and one can now stop observing because everything is better now. This can muddy real observation.

RESPONSE:

This is a subtle and important perception. It is very common to find False Personality trying to imitate what it believes is a Work personality for anyone's benefit, including your own. I am so glad that you continued reading about Internal and External Considering. This area of study in the Work is profoundly enlightening and gives you a good sense of where you are going.

QUESTION:

I saw myself today. And I saw a buffer quickly interceding to protect an apparent inner contradiction. While on the telephone, I made a comment that was out of alignment with my Work demeanor; in fact, it was a clear mis-statement. I had said that "I had complained" about something the other day when this was not really the case -- I had actually only brought attention to the subject out of concern. My statement was called into question by my friend and I had to admit that I did not mean to say that I had
"complained" about it at all. I was only being flippant and unnecessarily severe in my comment. At this moment, I saw myself. I could see that I was operating from a set of I's associated with my friend on the telephone and not the I's that I often operate from when alone or with someone else. These were clearly a separate set of I's and the sudden observation of them was jarring. Also, at this moment, I felt the imposition of a buffer whose intent was to protect me from this observation. I was able to refuse the buffer and alter the set of I's. I felt the need to physically change my posture, sit down, and operate from more sober and less flippant Work-related I's. My tone of voice changed and I began to express myself in a more sincere and genuine way through the rest of the phone call. After the phone call, I found myself struggling to keep this impression before my mind, wishing to keep this observation vivid. By doing this, I could see better what artificiality in myself means and I could then see new I's coming in to follow up behind the earlier ones and quietly take me on to the next state.

RESPONSE:

You caught a glimpse also of False Personality which is what generated the exaggeration. That you were able to pull yourself up out of the momentum of False Personality and the I's particularly related to this person required intentional effort. I'm sure you consider it worth it. To be functioning rightly according to Work knowledge at any time is a real foundational movement of your
QUESTION:

I don't understand. I seem to have a problem accepting feelings in terms of my "psychology." They are from a different part than "thinking," aren't they?

RESPONSE:

Yes. But your psychology is not your thinking process. It's the makeup of your whole psyche. When I ask you to define your feelings then, try speaking in terms that describe the Emotional Center's experience.

QUESTION:

You mean you want me to tell you what the feeling was? to name it?

RESPONSE:

Yes. Is this insecurity, is it Vanity, is it Identification, is it Fear, etc? This is what I mean, what feeling generates the Inner Considering.
QUESTION:

It's insecurity, and fear - vanity is a way to cover it up, I think.

RESPONSE:

Now try to define where the insecurity comes from, and is it a valid state or an habitual attitude?

QUESTION:

Is it correct to say that essence has the potential to surface among friends?

RESPONSE:

Essence is more easily accessed or activated in a comfortable, non-threatening, informal situation "among friends". But it can surface anywhere.

QUESTION:

Should I look for this "quality" or "taste" of Essence or set this aside for now and focus on pacifying Personality?

RESPONSE:

It wouldn't be particularly productive to focus on Essence right
now. Essence evolves as False Personality falls away. It makes its own expression known without you having to dig for it. Making Personality passive is one of the most helpful things you can do at this point.

QUESTION:

Will this render me cheerless?

RESPONSE:

I hope not. There is a stage in the Work that can last a long time when silence and retreat and reflection are most important. This has a definite effect on your Personality and it may seem flat, especially to others who know you. It is not that you are "rendered cheerless", it's just that you are changing and becoming more serious during this stage. What emerges gradually is authentic joy, from Essence, expressed in True Personality.

QUESTION:

My personality, as I look back over time has a pronounced acerbic wit, a sarcasm intended by me, and seen by me, as being funny. In attempting to make personality passive I note a pronounced decrease in the clever rejoinder, etc. It is such a pronounced difference that people see it quite clearly and my kids think I am
nicer (because I have quit talking and listen). I also note when with a group of people, they are always interrupting and jockeying for position to talk, impress, etc. It almost is getting a bit strange and I lose my easy bearings in the midst of it. I am a bit confused, part of the vertigo thing.

RESPONSE:

Even if you are confused, don't imagine that you are lost. This condition is a natural side effect of the Work. You have witnessed others' sleeping Personalities butting against each other and have seen it for the impostor that it is. You are beginning to verify that you are not like that and do not want to be like that. To deal with "losing your bearings" strive for Inner Silence, Stillness. Be passive and don't Inner Consider behaving differently. This "vertigo thing" can be difficult to deal with but it is temporary. It only needs more time to develop Real I that can function naturally and independently in any situation. One more thing -- There is a place for humor and wit in Real I, True Personality, Essence. But not sarcasm if it hurts anyone.

If you look carefully, the "attitude" you refer to is not an honest I. Do you truly believe that you are more intelligent than everyone else in the world? You couldn't be intelligent and hold that thought to have any value. This "attitude" is perhaps just another aspect of
False Personality that is acting in you to interfere with your Work efforts. We all have some of this kind of resistance in us. If you could suspend this "attitude" for a time, perhaps we can work through it to a different stage of development.

QUESTION:

Not all I's are from False Personality.

RESPONSE:

That is correct. Not all I's are from False Personality. That is why we have to Observe and identify them in order to Separate from what is false and nurture what is genuine.

QUESTION:

For a time now I have been unusually quiet, working in my yard, changing some patterns. My question. I seem on occasions as we have discussed to have suffered some confusion. Where am I?

RESPONSE:

I don't understand your reference to suffering some confusion. About what?
QUESTION:

Sometimes I sort of lose my bearing, get a bit morose.

RESPONSE:

What is "suffering some confusion"?

QUESTION:

A recurrent pattern of 'I's don't have clear vision of where I am headed and how I am changing. that is as well as I can describe it. It has been tough.

RESPONSE:

This "quiet" that you refer to has revealed the truth of many Work ideas to you. Has it not? In this quiet, you cease to be the artificial created Personality that you had no choice in creating. It's like stepping back away from yourself and your life and seeing it all with new eyes. Then you can hear and you can see and you can verify the Work. Eventually, you will choose from the position of Real I how your Personality manifests and it will suit you. This process may be taking place in the quiet space that may seem like emptiness now. There are real difficulties at this stage that have to be dealt with, however. Not knowing where you are headed or how you are changing is an experience you share with Ouspensky who wrote to a friend that he didn't know "who" would be writing the
next letter. And this is one of the primary difficulties in the Work. You have to do the Work in order to receive its force and consequently verification. Unfortunately, most often you have to do the Work for extended periods without receiving any results. Therefore, you get stuck at a point where your normal False Personality cannot function and you have no solid Real I or True Personality to replace it. Becoming quiet at this point is a natural response to this dilemma.

QUESTION:

I have noticed that my automatic Householder side has been impacted. I can see that this passage is not easy and fraught with danger. I could very easily see how someone could lose his mind, though I have no severe concerns in this regard. I can just see it.

RESPONSE:

First, what do you mean by "my automatic Householder side..."? How? I mean how has it been impacted?

QUESTION:


RESPONSE:
You are having an experience, like others here. You can assume this is a byproduct of doing the Work. This is a good thing in one sense. But you are right this passage is not easy and it is fraught with danger. Insanity is for the person who sees clearly what he is externally and has nothing internally that is more authentic and therefore more solid. The Work is meant to progress gradually, replacing the dying False Personality with Understanding and more intentional choices in action.

QUESTION:

I see gradual as to be preferred.

RESPONSE:

Be very sure that you understand what you are doing in the Work. The intention is to eliminate the False Personality and create a New Man based on Higher Consciousness. That means that you will necessarily have to undergo a complete change in your Personality.

QUESTION:

I am beginning to understand.

RESPONSE:

If you remain at a point of confusion, let's sort out the questions. The unsure footing, the psychological vertigo, the non-functioning
Personality, the retreat into silence, are predictable results of progressions in the Work. This silence has been very helpful as well as disconcerting because in it you have verified many ideas and observed in yourself and in others these verifications. You have begun to change. Try again to release anxiety and other Negative Emotions. Try to be patient, you have already noticed a cumulative effect. This will increase. The definition you seek will take shape with your continued efforts. Please talk to me specifically about any dangerous areas you encounter. If you find no relief for this distress, call on me. Don't let it continue indefinitely without positive change.

QUESTION:

Through Observation I believe I can see various aspects of my psychology. How then can I more aggressively confront my psychology? --that is, how can I bring more pressure to bear to expose difficulties and overcome them? Should I Work more aggressively? -- or just take opportunities as they arise?

RESPONSE:

Take the opportunities as they arise. You will recall Nicoll saying that you cannot Work in an Identified way, anxious and trying to force results. I don't want you to aggressively confront your psychology. I want you to passively Observe it and try to define
what is Real I in it and what is acquired Personality and inauthentic to your Being. The most aggressive you should be with yourself is in repressing False Personality and making it passive. This is the beginning of Inner Separation which is the long, hard Work of cleansing the Emotional Center. Are you having any problems with a particular idea, such as knowing that your psychology is a separate entity from your physical body. Your present psychology which is mostly made up of False Personality is full of the attitudes and opinions, likes and dislikes, and multiple I's that you have acquired. These I's that you have observed verify for you that your Personality is full of them. They need to be made passive so that the Work can be active.

Nicoll: "The second education that the Work consists in is about observing the psychology that everyone so easily takes for granted, a definite makeup, from which they can gradually become free if they practice self-observation in the light of this teaching. Has everyone verified that the Many I's of False Personality can eventually lose power and you can become free of the False Personality and its tyranny?"

QUESTIONS:

One aspect that is difficult to deal with is that False Personality
arises when it chooses to. It fills me up with attitudes and opinions and talk. It is like the "See 'n Say" pull-string toy. What's more, when this happens, I feel that I am 'that', that is, I take 'that' to be me. I cannot decide to not be False Personality. At times I can operate from Work I's but this is weak and momentary. I also observe an attitude of disgruntled-ness that I bring to many situations. This is somewhat like the comment that Gurdjieff gave to Nicoll when he said, "Nicoll, you go around with a pocketful of stones, ready to throw at people." (Nicoll, "Informal Work Talks and Teachings", 51)

RESPONSE:

Ouspensky said to Nicoll "Why are you sad?" Nicoll said "I didn't realize that I was." O. said: "It is a habit with you". Recognize that disgruntled-ness has unmet requirements. Recognize habitual emotional states. It is correct that you cannot, not be False Personality when you are in it. You can however still Observe it. When you do, make it be quiet.

QUESTION:

Quiet, not stopped.

RESPONSE:

This is correct. The silence is the space where Observing can
happen. The power to stop False Personality grows there. A slight amendment -- Making False Personality quiet involves the effort of stopping its manifestations. There comes a time when your distaste for False Personality is so strong that you will begin to want to make choices that weaken it.

QUESTION:

I can sometimes curtail outer manifestations of False Personality but I can still feel it inwardly. Is there a difference, from a Work point of view, between inner manifestations of False Personality and external expressions? What is the specific quality of 'making Personality passive'?

RESPONSE:

Yes, there is a difference between inner and outer expressions of False Personality. But the Work teaches you to Observe and Separate from both. It is the quality of "detachment" that defines making Personality passive. It is the exercise of not responding to any I that comes from False Personality, having no emotional response to it.

QUESTION:
I have observed many times over that observing makes me more quiet. But I have also noticed of late an ability to ease up on my self a bit. And actually enjoy myself.

RESPONSE:

This is good to hear. Talking is often just the automatic expression of False Personality. Observing it makes you want to be more quiet, less noise from False Personality. This gives you the opportunity to be more real.

QUESTION:

True personality requires me to talk a bit, yes?

RESPONSE:

Yes, True Personality talks quite easily without Inner Considering. But it doesn't require you to talk, life does.

QUESTION:

This is connected with the distinction between the "active" me whose I's are in operation with the psychological absorption attending them, and the Observing I that must passively and helplessly watch on. I have made some efforts along these lines and have found that it is useful in some cases to allow the I's to continue
expressing themselves and elicit Observing I in a passive mode, even having a helpless feeling with it. Notice, express the "I", and watch. The immediate urge to somehow change the "I" seems to me to be False Personalities attempt to clean up what you are observing. This way False Personality thinks it has improved matters and one can now stop observing because everything is better now. This can muddy real observation.

RESPONSE:

This is a subtle and important perception. It is very common to find False Personality trying to imitate what it believes is a Work personality for anyone's benefit, including your own.

Real I seeks to exert control over Personality in order to be authentic, in order to replace Wrong Work with Right Work. As False Personality is observed and studied and worked against, it loses power, refuses to function, and eventually dissolves, vanishes to be replaced by your True Self, awakened, intentional, internally free, authentic, unique, purified of the labyrinth of Wrong Work, self-interest, and the Negative Emotions connected to them.

Real I is connected to Higher Consciousness, Objective Conscience. It has perfect integrity and contains the meaning and fulfillment of your existence.
Observe how Personality doesn't want to change, doesn't want to make any efforts, especially ones that eliminate its existence.

So this is part of Necessary Suffering, that is, sacrificing False Personality, which is always painful in some way in order to gain a real Self that is more truly you and in which there is no pretense.

Work I's oppose what you have always known as "yourself" but they come from you, they are in you, and even dormant they are more You than any imitation or pretense. The aim in the Work is to change. Is this your aim? Then you must change your "cherished sense of yourself". If you want to DO the Work, then you must continue to practice. Be passive to the resistance of False Personality. Expect it and just observe.

Once false personality has been observed, it ceases to function smoothly or at all. Sometimes we are left with out the faculties to interact with the world. This state is part of the evolution in the Work and it can feel like "psychological vertigo" but it is temporary.

You are describing the experience of feeling the loss of your
personality. It feels like "psychological vertigo". That sense of panic comes from not knowing who you are without your personality.

You will notice that the "frightening feeling" vanished once you were again firmly entrenched in personality through your exchange with the colleague.

These experiences reveal that there is nothing behind false personality, nothing to stand on. Your house is "built on sand." And nothing authentic as been created to replace it yet (true personality). This is a common experience in the early stages of Work practice. It comes from shining the light of consciousness on personality.

Ouspensky himself had the following experience early in his practice of the Fourth Way: in a letter to a friend, he stated that he did not know who would be writing the next letter (which I) and this frightened him. Seeing our multiplicity and disconnecting with our former sense of self is very unsettling. But we need to realize that "I am not that" and that this is a temporary transition.

We are hearing from some of you about the "psychological vertigo" accompanying this process which begins with the deconstruction of our false personality. This vertigo is being expressed in a sense of panic, a feeling of emptiness, a feeling of fear or anxiety, or sometimes the sense of being a fraud. The best way to deal with it is
to try to practice inner separation in relation to those feelings and realize that this is a natural, temporary response in the process of the Work. The way to eliminate that negative experience is by building something real internally which will act consciously in the world. The way to build that in yourself begins with and relies upon self-observation.

When the mind is filled with the constant babble of inner considering and the heart is motivated by the self-interest of inner considering, the potential of receptivity to a higher state is lost. That is why all practical Work is focused on self-change or self-transcendence. The possibility of intentional, psychological self-generated evolution lies in this process of purification. The means is self-observation.

Remember that the aim of the Work is psycho-transformation.

There are many positive elements that can exist in False Personality. They are, however, still mechanical, still asleep, and though they may be more pleasant to deal with, they are no less false than any other aspect of acquired personality. They can work against you and your aims to develop in very insidious ways. Someone who is mechanically positive with a pleasant personality will have a harder time finding a reason to change or see anything
wrong with their behavior in the first place. They will lack motivation to change.

When false personality I's try to observe themselves, they are enamored with what they see.

This confused state, although powerful, is temporary and a common experience in the beginning of the Work. The uncertainty, the loss of identity, and the terror that these feelings create is the "psychological vertigo" that accompanies the state of recognizing False Personality with an undeveloped observing I.

There are so many opportunities to see False Personality, Vanity or Pride and everything else the Work tells us to observe in everyone's every day experience that it is nearly impossible to not notice them functioning...if you are observing.

To use an example: perhaps you are a rather witty fellow, intelligent, perceptive, with a keen sense of humor (perhaps a Jovial body type). In almost every social situation you have the wittiest remarks, you can top anyone's story, you can level your friends with one witty word and you enjoy this about yourself. Your friends enjoy it too. You perceive yourself to be a good-natured, humorous
This nice, funny guy is the false personality, but you cannot see it when you are only being it. Everything about the false personality emanates from self-serving motives. Inner considering, which makes up most of the false personality, is obsessed with "what do others think of me", "do they see me?", "can they tell that I'm special?", "am I being treated properly?", "have I been insulted?", "have I received the merit and recognition I deserve", "am I attractive enough?", "are my clothes 'right'", "am I making the impression I wish to project?", "do I have what I want?", "do I have approval, acceptance?", "am I being foolish?"...

All of these thoughts and emotions belong to false personality. One can see vanity in them, one can see pride, one can see insincerity and dishonesty, and eventually one can see the complete mechanicalness of it all.

When one verifies what one knows to be the truth of the Work regarding oneself, the recognition creates a separation (some space for non-identification). Observing and verifying mechanics creates a powerful force that doesn't want to be mechanical. If that force is strong enough, it can create permanent change. More often, force will be accumulated over a long period of observing the same I's behaving the same way regardless of observation.

Any self-justification in this process should be considered a red
light that inner considering is at work and that you must not listen to it. So back to our witty fellow. Suppose he is trying to work on himself and so he has an aim to make his personality passive. What does that mean? It means that he chooses not to go with his mechanical reactions in life. Perhaps the next time he is with a group of people, talking, laughing, with personality flowing abundantly, he will recognize his desire to make a funny remark as arising from the need to have attention, to be appreciated and recognized as the wonderful fellow that he is.

His Work effort then would be to remain silent. And in doing so, for the first time, much that he has missed can become clear. Because he is not projecting his personality, he can be perceiving reality in a different way. He may see some poor other mechanical person caught in the momentum that he was able to resist.

He may see fear or pain where he never would have noticed before because his attention was consumed with himself. He may recognize that his contribution, had he made it, was basically irrelevant and had no other purpose than to gratify his vanity. And if he can see this one little piece, then perhaps he can begin to realize that it is the same with all the other little pieces. Consequently, his real importance in the world has nothing to do with whatever his personality has to offer it, but what he has to offer the world without his personality in the way.
QUESTION:

I have made a profession out of personality, the raconteur, the improvisational conversationalist, ..and the transparency of One "I" to the Watcher means I can't fool myself. It may be Fun but it ain't Work. And there are heaps of these guys.... so the question is to do with attitude to the racket being exposed.

RESPONSE:

Everyone comes into the Work with their personality, whatever type it is, in full force. It is a condition sleeping humanity lives in. The work of self-observation, which is foundation in the process, requires intentional effort. Included in this intentionality is the practice of being uncritical about what one observes. If your observing I responds with hating what it sees, then that is where you will be stuck, in a constant war between the observer and the observed.

The whole point of self-observation is to give one an objective view of what one is really like. Without objectivity, you are not going to see anything.

Keep observing I passive. That effort is part of making the effort to observe.

When you have the psychological space that objectivity requires,
you have a toe-hold on inner separation. Then you can observe personality in all of its manifestations. This type of self-observation after a long period of time will show you much about yourself.

The aim of the Work is to transform the acquired, automatic behavior into enlightened, intentional action. In this process, the ego (false personality) made up of only self-interest, must be displaced gradually with a more evolved self. Purifying the emotional center, purifying the psychology of self-interest, is the substance of the Work.

I suggest that everyone "in the Work" reflect upon their motives for making these efforts. If one's motives have something to do with gaining personal power, that self-interest will effectively block any kind of real development.

You have made an interesting observation in seeing that you "sacrifice yourself in order to appear natural to others". This is indeed the case and can be easily verified by all who observe themselves honestly. False personality betrays essence when it seeks approval, pretends to be interested in things it is not in order to "fit in", or the thousand and one ways it lies out of inner considering.

The tragedy of false personality is that it does sacrifice our deeper selves, smothers our essence, and defeats our Work aims for the
sake of being accepted by others. This is a high price to pay and almost everyone around us pays it for a lifetime.

QUESTION:

Although false personality is still a speeding freight train which can not be stopped at times, this is a most surreal experience, to observe false personality and watch in horror as it continues on. Could it be possible that I sense an almost mocking attitude.

RESPONSE:

Absolutely. It is necessary to know organically (from experience) the strength of false personality and therefore see the condition of sleep. That of humanity and that of oneself. But what is "It" in you that "sees"? Contemplate this question. It will help define and strengthen that part of you.

QUESTION:

I observe that lately I have withdrawn from friends and family to some degree. I find that it is with those that I am most familiar that I lapse into the deepest mechanical behavior. How does one develop a proper outlet for social behavior if one falls asleep when so doing? I have no impulse to "talk" to them about the Work.
RESPONSE:

When you find that your existing personality cannot handle a social situation, make the effort to make your personality passive. Just observe.

QUESTION:

Nicoll observes in his Commentaries that "You cannot change if you stay the way you are". He describes self-observation as the cornerstone for these efforts. My question, which may appear a bit pedantic, is this: how can you know when you are "uncritically" observing yourself, whether or not you are still peering through a filter of false personality? How does one verify that one travels in a sure and proper direction, and not further into the abyss of sleep and self delusion. Somewhere I read either in Plato or Aristotle a similar conundrum: how can one learn anything new when one has not yet developed the faculty for recognizing it? Sometimes I wonder whether we live in little Alcatrazes of our own, dreaming of escape and fantasizing that we are observing ourselves. Is this why O. says escape is impossible if attempted alone?

RESPONSE:

False personality judges, criticizes, justifies, feels offended, gets
personality

angry, has likes and dislikes, attitudes, opinions, feels ashamed and insecure.

When you practice self-observation, if you find any of these elements in the Observing I then you are identified with what you are observing. That is a trap that leads to insanity.

Observing I MUST be made objective, uncritical of what is being observed, yet seeing it clearly for what it is.

Think of observing as taking photos, registering, passively seeing.

What can you observe objectively about being irritable? Is it an unpleasant feeling or do you picture yourself as a "lovable grouch"? (There is no such thing, by the way). Are there any I's that secretly enjoy the zing of negative energy? What I's are irritable? The ones that want something that they don't have, the ones that have to do something that they don't want to do, the ones that are feeling inadequate, unsatisfied, unsure? We could go on and on, but the point is that all of the above and more belong to inner considering, to acquired attitudes, likes and dislikes, etc. That is ALL that the Work tells us that we must separate from.

Knowing this can give you the force to become detached and in that state of non-identification see clearly what intentional right action is. Then you lose all motivations and justifications for being irritable.
So, how do you know if you are observing yourself through a filter of false personality? If Observing I is objective, non-identified, then false personality CANNOT be present. One must work at this also, making Observing I not react with identification. This is difficult work as well, but it leads to liberation, to that escape from the prison of sleep that we seek.

Ouspensky was right about needing help. We need the help of knowing a way out and the help of someone who knows also that "way" from experience and can assist you through the difficulties and help you avoid the traps. Someone who really knows the way can help you to verify for yourself the ideas of the Work and their transformative power.

To be absolutely sure that your work is progressing in the proper direction is easy. Follow goodness. Seek to act with un-self-interested intentionality. Every normally formed human being has the innate knowledge (faculty of recognition) of what GOODNESS is. The Truth in it resounds in your soul with recognition.

Earnest efforts will gradually create a stronger Real I in you.

If you can recognize that your negative states are caused by the requirements you have (of the world, of people, of your life) in order to feel satisfied, then you will know that these requirements
are based in false personality and inner considering.

We Work against these by making personality passive, by inner separation, by non-identification, by recognizing that inner considering is only self-interest, by sacrificing your need to be gratified.

Be patient while Working. Results are usually a long time in coming, but growth is every step of the way.

Observe identification. See the strength of the grip that it has on you. See the same grip it has on others. See how it fills you with energy, how you get a little thrill from the jolt of it. See how it is full of justification. See that the agenda that fires your identification is self-serving and so is the next person's, and the next, though the identifications may oppose one another.

This is where to make personality passive. The "why" is so that you can see through the false personality and all its obstructions to a higher level of scale and relativity which can free you from identification.

Essence is the innate nature you are born with. Whether you are active or passive, positive or negative type, or whether you are predisposed to being centered in the intellectual center, the
emotional center, or the moving-instinctive center all belong to Essence with which you are born. You can verify this by observing the striking differences in types among very young infants and children.

This essence, which is your nature, then interacts with the external circumstances and events of your life's experience to form a "personality". Example: an active/negative type born in a large family may easily develop a loud, hyperactive personality in order to compete for the attention it desires. Then the influences of culture, family attitudes, opinions and behavior are all imitated or rejected automatically.

Clearly there are an infinite number of combinations of essence and experience which produce the unique individuals who are nevertheless all stimulus-response organisms.

This is a natural and necessary developmental process of acquiring a personality that can interact with the world and events. However, from the Work point of view, this acquired personality is created on the basis of self-interested need that originates in brain stem urges for self-preservation. So the acquired personality is called False Personality in the Work because it has been created through environmental influences and self-interest as opposed to enlightened or objective knowledge. It is mechanical, functions on automatic, and is asleep.
The process of awakening in the Work leads to True Personality. Through the process of self-observation, inner separation, non-identification, we learn to see that our automatic behavior does not reflect our true Self. The efforts undertaken reveal to us the malformation of our psychology. The accumulated I's of observation gain strength enough eventually so that one may act intentionally rather than mechanically. This intentionality issues from True Personality. It is not based on self-interest, but rather on objective consciousness. Long-term self-observation will strip away or melt away or burn away the wrong work of False Personality bit by bit.

Although the process is painful, to be rid of unnecessary suffering and have the clarity of mind and strength of will to act intentionally is liberation from the chains of mechanicalness that bind us in sleep. Psychological freedom brings new life expressed in True Personality.

True Personality still contains essence, types and different centers of gravity. But they are all at the service of higher consciousness. This means that you are more honestly yourself than you can ever achieve through any avenue of False personality.

A person developed in the Work -- to the degree that they are relatively free from the power of False personality -- can interact with life and people with a clearer perspective on reality. The
obstructions of inner considering, mechanical momentum, feature and identification lose power as True Personality evolves.

What you are seeing when you experience yourself as "simply a bundle of tape recordings and reactions responding from these" is False Personality. It is relevant because it makes up your present reality. You do have a True Self which doing the Work will lead you to discover. The process of discovery begins with relentless practice of self-observation. It is imperative that one is uncritical of what is observed.

You are not only programs and mechanics. There is something in you that is authentic, unique behind all of these things. That Real I, True Self begins to gain strength or surface with the first observation of False Personality. Since you know already that there is something in you that isn't only mechanical, the I that knows this is the I of self-observation. That I is the beginning of who you are (Real I). And although at some level we are all one, we are also each completely unique.

Once you have observed in yourself (verified) that Sleep and Mechanicalness and False Personality exist not only in you but also in everyone else, it becomes easier to forgive BECAUSE you understand the nature and the power of Sleep. This helps to reinforce Real I which will then give you more power to forgive.
Understand that the desire to be seen, noticed, have importance, be accepted, feel appreciated, are all natural strivings that arise from the brain stem urges that seek the security and connectedness of social relationships. So these emotions are not only a natural function of the human personality, but they are the same in everyone, regardless of whether the person has developed a personality that manifests those urges differently.

QUESTION:

Then there is the issue of compensation- in order to compensate for what may be a fear of being invisible or a belief I refuse to see that I am invisible- I exaggerate. I must excel at everything. In the past, as a much younger man, I dressed lavishly. At a younger age, I weight lifted. As a student in University, I wrote essays that stood out by covering a subject as completely as possible, often three or four times the required length. Today, I have my own office in the most prime location possible. Of course, it is never enough and deep down there is often a sense that I am 'faking it' that I am an 'impostor'. All this is from a deep need to be 'seen', to 'matter'. To be invisible is a painful, humiliating experience.
RESPONSE:

Of course it is never enough, partly because gratification-seeking has no end, and partly because this sense you have of "faking it" or "being an impostor" comes from a deeper level than the world can satisfy. This deep need you have to be "seen", to "matter" is only painful or humiliating if you believe it is. In reality, it is unnecessary suffering and you can simply let it go with the recognition that you do not want Vanity governing your life and actions.

There is a paradox here. This deep need to "matter" can be strictly vanitas (emptiness) or it can be, even at the same time, the force behind the effort to find meaning. Finding real meaning in your life makes all the small I's of self-interest fade into nothingness.

The next time you find yourself feeling these emotions make an exercise to turn your psychology around 180 degrees and concern yourself with everyone else's welfare, anyone else's needs. If you are not tangled up in Inner Considering, you may notice that someone else is in need or that everyone else is full of Inner Considering as well. They are adjusting their clothes, worrying about their breath, smoothing down their hair, flirting and showing off, bragging, telling jokes, being vulgar, or anything else to get attention. The difference is that they cannot see this. You have seen and so you have made the first step in the possibility of self-
transformation. Seeing is the first step to change if you are willing to.

If you are with a group of people and you are all operating fully in False Personality, then each of you has self-interest as motivation for your personal agenda which forms requirements of this event. You each want to be appreciated, behind your empathic interest with the others may even be the intent of being seen as amiable and as a good person or a compassionate friend. You're worried if you still have garlic on your breath from lunch. You're resenting someone's inattentiveness or perceived insult. You want to make your point. You want your point to be heard, understood, and validated by everyone so that you know that you're right and so that they know that you are right. You're flirting with someone who is married and you are insulted when they don't flirt back. You wonder what's wrong with them. Then you wonder what is wrong with you. Then you wonder if you are talking too much, or if you really like these people after all. And on and on. There is no useful exchange of energy in this kind of situation. It is all automatic, mechanical, predictable, and pointless.

However, let's say you are with your group of people and you are not in False Personality, which is made up mostly of Inner Considering, what might be going on with you in these circumstances? Might you not be able to see the condition of sleep,
the flow of mechanicalness, the predictable stimulus-response behavior, how negativity is contagious, how it most often runs the show, how one association leads to another, how people use buffers, what pictures they have of themselves, what issues they are dealing with, what level their being is, what their features are, what their suffering is about?

If you are in External Considering, seeing from this point of view will evoke compassion for everyone's wrong work, and forgiveness. You could soothe the insecurity of one, absorb passively the negativity of another, include the excluded ones, and generally respond with conscious intentional words and actions appropriate to the circumstances. I hope you agree that this would be a better place to be in. If you do, then imagine your meeting with these people if they were also all Externally Considering. You can freely give to them your attention and care, and they give you back the attention and care that you need which will be an entirely different kind of need than that which comes from False Personality. That is an appropriate exchange of energies between people, each Externally Considering the other. Now imagine the whole world like that, everyone Externally Considering everyone else all through their lives. No fear, no hate, no taking only giving and receiving -- that would be purpose enough, don't you think, to do your own part in it, to be one more person on that side of Consciousness.
QUESTION:

How can I instill in myself a preference for Work I's that have all the appearance of being the interlopers in my being?

RESPONSE:

First know that they are not "interlopers". Work I's oppose what you have always known as "yourself" but they come from you, they are in you, and even dormant they are more You than any imitation or pretence. The aim in the Work is to change. Is this your aim? Then you must change your "cherished sense of yourself". If you want to DO the Work, then you must continue to practice. Be passive to the resistance of False Personality. Expect it and just observe. Observe how Personality doesn't want to change, doesn't want to make any efforts, especially ones that eliminate its existence.

Through the long process of Self- Observation, Work I's accumulate. You will gain a sense of authentic Self (versus imitation and pretense) gradually.

So this is part of Necessary Suffering, that is, sacrificing False Personality, which is always painful in some way in order to gain a real Self that is more truly you and in which there is no pretense.

QUESTION:
It seems insulting to ego to submit to this observing and separation.

RESPONSE:

Observing I exists although dormantly throughout the adult life of every person. Each person has momentary glimpses of that higher perspective. In the Work, we make the effort to observe and separate for the purpose of growing. It is more than insulting to the ego, it is the end of its tyranny.

QUESTION:

How do we effect the shift in attention from the False Personality to the Observing "I"?

RESPONSE:

Begin by trying to notice or even just sense your state. Note also that Observing I is elusive in the beginning and in effectual however, with practice and patience Observing I gains presence and grows in relation to real efforts.

QUESTION:
On a couple of occasions I have been able to interact normally while observing myself. At other times, I cannot do this and fall silent.

RESPONSE:

That silence, though awkward, contains the possibility of not acting mechanically. If you are confused in this silence, let go of the requirements you have that are creating confusion. Practice Inner Stop and accept the silence.

QUESTION:

But the silence makes others uncomfortable. I do not wish to appear self-absorbed. Is this wish not external consideration in some degree?

RESPONSE:

Possibly, it may be External Considering. But I would say that this is an unavoidable experience in the early stages of the Work. Other people will find that you are behaving differently. They may or may not be comfortable with that. That is their problem. Yours is to be able to interact in a sincere way without experiencing the absence of Personality. I'm sorry but this takes practice like any other achievement. It is something you have to work at and in the beginning it is awkward and confusing and out of pace with the
QUESTION:

Tearing down what is false without taking care to build what is genuine seems to court disaster.

RESPONSE:

It is not courting, it is creating disaster. The process of tearing down what is false should happen gradually along with the growth of Understanding which should take the place of what was false and is no longer a part of you. But it's like reining in a wild team of horses. Everyone wants results and particular results and right away. All seem to need external, tangible evidence that this Work is actually working. It is important to study different aspects of these transformational ideas. At the same time, trying to apply them to a psychology in the chaos of wrong work won't have healthy results. I reiterate and ask you all to continue the fundamental practice of Self-Observation with PATIENCE. You have each had some experiences of raised consciousness or deep insight. Let these inspire you to work without requirements knowing that you will receive what you particularly need in order to proceed.

The bucking of False Personality is to be expected, probably with
bursts of negative energy. Here in itself is a set of I's. These I's don't want to make the effort to do the Work. These I's don't want to see, don't want to change, and aren't sure where they're going. You have another set of I's. I have a stack of papers from you writing about the Work in extensive detail. This belongs to another set of I's. You have I's that get negative, then discouraged, then desperate and wind up confused and lost. And you have I's that have a great deal of Understanding and intuition for Truth.

Observing I will be able to see everything clearly in time. It may be years before you can have a satisfactory effect on observed behavior. But what you are seeing is not only Vanity. It is also imitation, Inner Considering, and False Personality. These things diminish under the light of Self-Observation and a more conscious action takes their place.

QUESTION:

I can see imitation in others far more clearly than in myself. I see them make silly faces or grimaces which they probably think demonstrates to others some wonderful quality (though I wonder what I do that I cannot see as well). It all appears to be 'affectation' and completely unnecessary. I would like to see it more in myself and less in others.
RESPONSE:

What you are observing is False Personality and you are probably seeing more falsehood in it than ever before. Keep trying to see yourself objectively. Practice at observation creates a better quality of Observation.

QUESTION:

Why is there the automatic reaction of irritation when seeing falsehood in myself or others?

RESPONSE:

Falsehood is impossible to deal with psychologically. There is no ground beneath it. It is uncomfortable and frustrating.

QUESTION:

So you say that false personality is the result of wrong work of the emotional center?

RESPONSE:

Not exactly. False Personality is what you have acquired since birth and it is based on the wrong work of the Emotional Center.
QUESTION:

I don't understand. I seem to have a problem accepting feelings in terms of my "psychology." They are from a different part than "thinking," aren't they?

RESPONSE:

Yes. But your psychology is not your thinking process. It's the makeup of your whole psyche. When I ask you to define your feelings then, try speaking in terms that describe the Emotional Center's experience.

QUESTION:

Is it correct to say that essence has the potential to surface among friends?

RESPONSE:

Essence is more easily accessed or activated in a comfortable, non-threatening, informal situation "among friends". But it can surface anywhere.

QUESTION:
Should I look for this "quality" or "taste" of Essence or set this aside for now and focus on pacifying Personality?

RESPONSE:

It wouldn't be particularly productive to focus on Essence right now. Essence evolves as False Personality falls away. It makes its own expression known without you having to dig for it. Making Personality passive is one of the most helpful things you can do at this point.

QUESTION:

Will this render me cheerless?

RESPONSE:

I hope not. There is a stage in the Work that can last a long time when silence and retreat and reflection are most important. This has a definite effect on your Personality and it may seem flat, especially to others who know you. It is not that you are "rendered cheerless", it's just that you are changing and becoming more serious during this stage. What emerges gradually is authentic joy, from Essence, expressed in True Personality.
My personality, as I look back over time has a pronounced acerbic wit, a sarcasm intended by me, and seen by me, as being funny. In attempting to make personality passive I note a pronounced decrease in the clever rejoinder, etc. It is such a pronounced difference that people see it quite clearly and my kids think I am nicer (because I have quit talking and listen). I also note when with a group of people, they are always interrupting and jockeying for position to talk, impress, etc. It almost is getting a bit strange and I lose my easy bearings in the midst of it. I am a bit confused, part of the vertigo thing.

RESPONSE:

Even if you are confused, don't imagine that you are lost. This condition is a natural side effect of the Work. You have witnessed others' sleeping Personalities butting against each other and have seen it for the impostor that it is. You are beginning to verify that you are not like that and do not want to be like that. To deal with "losing your bearings" strive for Inner Silence, Stillness. Be passive and don't Inner Consider behaving differently. This "vertigo thing" can be difficult to deal with but it is temporary. It only needs more time to develop Real I that can function naturally and independently in any situation. One more thing -- There is a place for humor and wit in Real I, True Personality, Essence. But not sarcasm if it hurts anyone.
If you look carefully, the "attitude" you refer to is not an honest I. Do you truly believe that you are more intelligent than everyone else in the world? You couldn't be intelligent and hold that thought to have any value. This "attitude" is perhaps just another aspect of False Personality that is acting in you to interfere with your Work efforts. We all have some of this kind of resistance in us. If you could suspend this "attitude" for a time, perhaps we can work through it to a different stage of development.

QUESTION:

Not all I's are from False Personality.

RESPONSE:

That is correct. Not all I's are from False Personality. That is why we have to Observe and identify them in order to Separate from what is false and nurture what is genuine.

QUESTION:

For a time now I have been unusually quiet, working in my yard, changing some patterns. My question. I seem on occasions as we have discussed to have suffered some confusion. Where am I?
RESPONSE:

I don't understand your reference to suffering some confusion. About what?

QUESTION:

Sometimes I sort of lose my bearing, get a bit morose.

RESPONSE:

What is "suffering some confusion"?

QUESTION:

A recurrent pattern of 'I's don't have clear vision of where I am headed and how I am changing. that is as well as I can describe it. It has been tough.

RESPONSE:

This "quiet" that you refer to has revealed the truth of many Work ideas to you. Has it not? In this quiet, you cease to be the artificial created Personality that you had no choice in creating. It's like stepping back away from yourself and your life and seeing it all with new eyes. Then you can hear and you can see and you can verify the Work. Eventually, you will choose from the position of Real I how your Personality manifests and it will suit you. This
process may be taking place in the quiet space that may seem like emptiness now. There are real difficulties at this stage that have to be dealt with, however. Not knowing where you are headed or how you are changing is an experience you share with Ouspensky who wrote to a friend that he didn't know "who" would be writing the next letter. And this is one of the primary difficulties in the Work. You have to do the Work in order to receive its force and consequently verification. Unfortunately, most often you have to do the Work for extended periods without receiving any results. Therefore, you get stuck at a point where your normal False Personality cannot function and you have no solid Real I or True Personality to replace it. Becoming quiet at this point is a natural response to this dilemma.

QUESTION:

I have noticed that my automatic Householder side has been impacted. I can see that this passage is not easy and fraught with danger. I could very easily see how someone could lose his mind, though I have no severe concerns in this regard. I can just see it.

RESPONSE:

First, what do you mean by "my automatic Householder side..."? How? I mean how has it been impacted?

QUESTION:

RESPONSE:

You are having an experience, like others here. You can assume this is a byproduct of doing the Work. This is a good thing in one sense. But you are right this passage is not easy and it is fraught with danger. Insanity is for the person who sees clearly what he is externally and has nothing internally that is more authentic and therefore more solid. The Work is meant to progress gradually, replacing the dying False Personality with Understanding and more intentional choices in action.

QUESTION:

I see gradual as to be preferred.

RESPONSE:

Be very sure that you understand what you are doing in the Work. The intention is to eliminate the False Personality and create a New Man based on Higher Consciousness. That means that you will necessarily have to undergo a complete change in your Personality.

QUESTION:

I am beginning to understand.
RESPONSE:

If you remain at a point of confusion, let's sort out the questions. The unsure footing, the psychological vertigo, the non-functioning Personality, the retreat into silence, are predictable results of progressions in the Work. This silence has been very helpful as well as disconcerting because in it you have verified many ideas and observed in yourself and in others these verifications. You have begun to change. Try again to release anxiety and other Negative Emotions. Try to be patient, you have already noticed a cumulative effect. This will increase. The definition you seek will take shape with your continued efforts. Please talk to me specifically about any dangerous areas you encounter. If you find no relief for this distress, call on me. Don't let it continue indefinitely without positive change.

QUESTION:

Through Observation I believe I can see various aspects of my psychology. How then can I more aggressively confront my psychology? --that is, how can I bring more pressure to bear to expose difficulties and overcome them? Should I Work more aggressively? -- or just take opportunities as they arise?

RESPONSE:
Take the opportunities as they arise. You will recall Nicoll saying that you cannot Work in an Identified way, anxious and trying to force results. I don't want you to aggressively confront your psychology. I want you to passively Observe it and try to define what is Real I in it and what is acquired Personality and inauthentic to your Being. The most aggressive you should be with yourself is in repressing False Personality and making it passive. This is the beginning of Inner Separation which is the long, hard Work of cleansing the Emotional Center. Are you having any problems with a particular idea, such as knowing that your psychology is a separate entity from your physical body. Your present psychology which is mostly made up of False Personality is full of the attitudes and opinions, likes and dislikes, and multiple I's that you have acquired. These I's that you have observed verify for you that your Personality is full of them. They need to be made passive so that the Work can be active.

Nicoll: "The second education that the Work consists in is about observing the psychology that everyone so easily takes for granted, a definite makeup, from which they can gradually become free if they practice self-observation in the light of this teaching. Has everyone verified that the Many I's of False Personality can eventually lose power and you can become free of the False Personality and its tyranny?"
QUESTION:

I can sometimes curtail outer manifestations of False Personality but I can still feel it inwardly. Is there a difference, from a Work point of view, between inner manifestations of False Personality and external expressions? What is the specific quality of 'making Personality passive'?

RESPONSE:

Yes, there is a difference between inner and outer expressions of False Personality. But the Work teaches you to Observe and Separate from both. It is the quality of "detachment" that defines making Personality passive. It is the exercise of not responding to any I that comes from False Personality, having no emotional attachment to it.

QUESTION:

Detachment -- meaning "this that I am observing is not me"?

RESPONSE:

It is more than this. It is knowing what this Being is, not just what it isn't.
QUESTION:

I seem to be noticing an alarm going if I slip into a poor state. I note that I am slipping into some low grade angst type state, for instance, and almost always as I try to justify the feeling there is something that says "there you go again" and so I give it the inner silence/stop exercise. immediately the FALSE PERSONALITY starts to quibble with the new view of things. but I stick with it, observe, and the grip is loosened a little. I also note some sensations that go with this process in the area of the solar plexus.

RESPONSE:

What does False Personality have to say when it quibbles? Can you describe the sensations in your solar plexus?

QUESTION:

OK, let me try to describe. I am so used to going with a depressive feeling as being totally warranted under the circumstances. I know I learned this, principally from parents and these I's are convinced they are right to give in to the feeling, very entrenched. The new feeling in the solar plexus is difficult to describe. it is almost like butterflies in the stomach but a little higher. like almost a feeling of fear at the approach of this new ability to quell the negativity, something totally new and almost frightening. But it is happening consistently, that is, the refusal to go with the low grade I's and the
funny feeling of newness and almost a lack of bearings. It is hard to describe.

RESPONSE:

Well, you did a good job anyway. This is a perfectly natural experience in the Work. That you are able to Observe and even prevent the expression of old Negative I's is an accomplishment even if you are inconsistent at it. But you have said it yourself: These very strong Identifications are convinced they are right and are firmly entrenched. That is the definition of Identification. It is consequently understandable that when you usurp an entrenched characteristic it leaves a vacuum and something that you felt very attached to disappears, leaving you with that feeling of no bearings. If you continue to practice as you have been, you will get to a point where you are so free from old Identifications and Pictures and Imagination about yourself that there will be no False Personality to quibble with. You can be and if you continue earnestly as you have been, you will be free of all of the Wrong Work that stands between where you are now and your full potential.

QUESTION:

Does the artifice of False Personality ever become to seem like a ridiculous burden? Like baggage and "drag" released? As if what we have tried to protect all these years was what made us feel so
bad and sick at heart? This is what I imagine it to be.

RESPONSE:

False Personality is both ridiculous and seriously suffocating. I don't believe we try to protect it. It protects itself. I think that at least people with Magnetic Center want to be free of artifice. And it does turn out to be the False Personality that is "sick at heart" and makes us feel bad. Does this make sense to you?

QUESTION:

Yes, the idea that we are not the False personality that connives against us.

QUESTION:

In other Commentaries Nicoll also speaks of "hating the enemy" (False Personality)

RESPONSE:

As we have all verified, it is impossible at first to not feel revulsion with one's False Personality. This is where the Work becomes very subtle. It is also a paradox. One must Observe, discern, and Separate from all forms of Wrong Work, which consists of Negativity. The feeling of revulsion in relation to what is false and
impure in you has relative validity and can contribute to the force you seek for change. This revulsion, however, once again is the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center. Revulsion is also a Negative Emotion. The Work will proceed with more alacrity if Inner Separation and Non-Identification take the place of revulsion. This approach to dealing with seeing False Personality will contribute to a permanent change.

QUESTION:

Can I see too much of myself? -- or is this not possible?

RESPONSE:

It is possible to see too much of yourself, that is your False Personality, if you have not enough Real I present to give you centeredness or stability. Other than that, holistically speaking in terms of the Work, it will be necessary for you to see everything that you call "myself".

QUESTION:

Today, I recalled an experience I had with my grandfather as a child. It brought up the same feeling I had at that time, which was sadness.
RESPONSE:

This is not exceptional since Personality traits are imitated in families. Your mother's sadness may be an imitation of her father's sadness. Overall, sadness is self-absorption and lacks Scale and Relativity. It is also Negativity which is the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center. The next time you Observe yourself feeling sad, first, say to yourself "this is automatic behavior". It is Negativity which the Work asks us to not express. Remember that it is imitation and try to Separate from the habitual and familiar taste of it.

QUESTION:

I am trying to interpret Gospel stories in the light of the Work.

RESPONSE:

You will be fascinated and enlightened by Maurice Nicoll's "The New Man" and "The Mark" if you are trying to make connections with the Work.

QUESTION:

The Work brings life to the Gospels for me.
RESPONSE:

That is what it is meant to do.

QUESTION:

When the Christ said, "It is not I that doeth the work, but the Father within me, He doeth the work. Was he not referring to the Real I?

RESPONSE:

He was referring to that individual part of your true Self (Real I) that is in touch with "the Father".

QUESTION:

When he said, I of myself (false personality) can do nothing, wasn't he recognizing his nothingness that the Work proclaims we should do?

RESPONSE:

This is correct. Recognizing not only his nothingness, but the inability of False Personality to DO.

You experienced a group of I's that make up a Picture you have of yourself in False Personality. This is acquired Personality and it is Real I that had the experience "who on earth was I talking about?".
Real I knows that the "who" you were talking about is not Real I. Therefore, it feels "odd".

QUESTION:

The closest I can describe it was I was almost embarrassed to talk about these I's that belong to False Personality and was a bit sheepish about it. Anything but authoritative.

RESPONSE:

So, Buried Conscience awakens and challenges False Personality.

QUESTION:

We are in false personality, having no Real I to guide. My question relates to the vantage we take to assure that we are not lying and making it just grow.

RESPONSE:

This is one of the biggest pitfalls in the Work. Many people use the Work ideas to reinforce their False Personality instead of disassembling it. One of the ways to discern whether or not you are "lying" is to ask yourself whether you are experiencing any ego gratification from your Work activity. If what you are seeing and saying in your Observations pacifies you, then you are in False
 QUESTION:
What is the False Personality's greatest weapon or group of weapons?

RESPONSE:
False Personality's strongest weapon is Identification. Fight it with detachment.

 QUESTION:
How does one assure that one is being completely Sincere about these efforts, and not a pawn of False Personality?

RESPONSE:
Can you not tell the difference between the taste of truth and the taste of lies? I think you can. Are you trying to?

QUESTION:
Yes, I am trying to and I think I can tell most of the time but the interests of False Personality are very powerful and cunning, I think. I have had a few small tastes of the freedom non-
identification affords, and I can see false Personality shifting, or attempting to shift the valuable lessons in its interests.

RESPONSE:

If you are working from False Personality, you will feel satisfaction. If you are really doing the Work, you will feel humility. False Personality is tenacious and will resist, kicking and screaming all the way to oblivion. False Personality may even be responsible for the kind of "plagues" that others have experienced recently. It is very cunning and it will protect its interests. You can challenge, if you are unsure, any I in order to discover its authenticity. Does the I you Observe represent what is Real in you? If you ask yourself this question when you have this doubt, the answer will be clear to you.

QUESTION:

It is just that sometimes it is like a house of mirrors.

RESPONSE:

That is exactly what seeing Multiplicity is like. And the False Personality consists only of Multiplicity. Remember that Nicoll says that recognizing one's Multiplicity is a definite stage in the Work. It shows real progress. You can find the image that is Real I by destroying the false images in you.
Nicoll writes- "For a very long time we mix the Work with our associations, with the machine of personality, which is driven by life and reacts to it mechanically. And this is inevitable because only a gradual separation is possible. A person cannot be torn suddenly away from personality. It would destroy him. So even though we try to work, we identify with the reactions of personality which seems more distinct and real, or more 'natural'."

What you will find is that even when your real motive is unselfish (posting a question to help another student), the Negative I's that belong to False Personality's pictures, pride, fear, vanity will raise their heads and each make its own remark. Remember that these are only the I's of False Personality. They aren't truly YOU. Though they may be familiar thoughts, that doesn't mean that they are valid. The old habitual I's that taunt you and challenge your Work are just old I's. They are the things you always say, without actually meaning them. For instance, when Timothy Mcvey was convicted, I remember saying something like "Well, I'm glad I won't have to go there and kill him myself". This I came from self-righteousness and old False Personality behavior. Would I kill him really? I would forgive him. I didn't mean one word that those I's said. Nevertheless, they were spoken. Challenge any I that challenges your Work. If it is not true, dismiss it.
QUESTION:

I believe that Nicoll says in the Commentaries that there is no psychology in the false personality. Am I correct there?

RESPONSE:

Yes. In the Work, psychology is something that you develop. Before you develop it, you are only a stimulus-response organism according to the Work.

QUESTION:

Yes. I can see that more and more. I saw my father, a very methodical man, with every thing in place, taking his bath just on Saturday night, etc...but I see certain things in myself that are like that. When I do see it, I change quickly because I don't want to be like my father.

RESPONSE:

Much of our Negativity is based on the unconscious imitation of our parents. This is why Personality is called "acquired". It is not our true Self.
QUESTION:

When contemplating conquering Personality, I think of the phrase, "Are you prepared to die?" Is there any validity to this viewpoint?

RESPONSE:

It is precisely apropos. However, ONLY when taken metaphorically. This is not a simplistic matter of semantics which is why I make a point of it. Religious language is dangerous to people who do not understand the esoteric meaning. Of course you know that this "death" has to do only with the False Personality.

QUESTION:

As I have tried to observe myself, I seem to find fear as the root cause. It seems to generate identification, formatory thinking, false personality, and on and on. I don't know if this is true or if it's my own current dark state of mind. I would appreciate your comments.

RESPONSE:

You have seen clearly into the source of many aspects of the Wrong Work in a person's psychology. But Fear is at the source of Identification, etc. We fear rejection, being alone, being in need, being vulnerable. We are afraid of failure, commitment, appearing
to not fit in, looking foolish, and deep inside more than anything we fear meaninglessness.

QUESTION:

Meaninglessness. Yes, this fear seems to be the basis of my personality. Without my image of myself there is nothing.

RESPONSE:

All of these fears are Negative Emotions meaning Wrong Work of the Emotional Center and they result in Wrong Work in Personality. You are mistaken, however, behind the image of yourself is your true Self. A related quote from Thomas Merton. "Even when I try to please God, I tend to please my own ambition, His enemy. There can be imperfection even in the ardent love of great perfection, even in the desire of virtue, of sanctity. Even the desire of contemplation can be impure, when we forget that true contemplation means the complete destruction of all selfishness -- the most pure poverty and cleanliness of heart." The result of doing the Work correctly is Humility. Make sure that this is what you want. Your Fear of meaninglessness can be force for Work.

We are dealing now with strictly internal matters. I was referring to being passive in yourself to yourself. If you are in this state, you are not in False Personality and you will not respond to others from that
place. When I said that you don't need to be passive to others in this exercise, that is because this exercise is not about others. Being passive to other people's Personalities is a different exercise for a different purpose. One more note on making the Personality passive. If you are a passive type Personality, then becoming passive to your Personality may require you to become active.

RESPONSE:

If over achieving is a repeated scenario in your life experience, it may be necessary that you STOP trying....

QUESTION:

I see what you mean. Yes surrender has not been easy for me.

RESPONSE:

Surrender can be understood as another word for Non-Identification or acceptance. Non-Identification can pull the rug out from under Personality's momentum.

QUESTION:

Could you say something about resistance please.
RESPONSE:

Your Personality will resist the Work. It doesn't want to make the effort, but more importantly, it is protecting its existence. I know this seems strange, but it is rather like something in you desperately trying to hold together the Multiplicity to avoid the loss of ego. Sometimes, you may experience only a slight struggle. Sometimes you have to beat the bear.

In reference to Humility, there is an aspect of fearing the unknown, but I believe the resistance against it has more to do with being afraid of being vulnerable. Humility feels very much like vulnerability. The truth is that they are opposites. Humility frees you from all the insecurities of False Personality.

QUESTION:

It seems that unnecessary suffering and negative emotion overlap a great deal, if not totally coextensively. All of it boils into a bad state, which is most unpleasant, useless and wasteful. It has helped me to realize I am more like a baboon than Mozart when I indulge all of it.

RESPONSE:
Unnecessary Suffering is always Negative Emotions and Negative Emotions are always Unnecessary Suffering. And all of it belongs to False Personality Every kind of suffering that comes from unsatisfied Personality is what has to be sacrificed in order to make room for purified emotions. When you can trace some bit of Unnecessary Suffering to something that happened in seventh grade and has stayed in your Personality ever since, there is powerful liberation.

The object of the Work is to make Personality weak which is a disadvantage at first. Every time you go against Personality consciously, you gain and are stronger. Personality is acquired. You contact and experience life through your Personality. You do not see your Personality directly. It is not conscious to you. Your Personality renders life to you according to ITS shape. Personality is: HABITS of mind, emotions, behavior. It is necessary to study the Personality; what your apparatus is like. If you do not Work on Personality, we remain mechanical. Even seeing Personality you will not be able to alter anything, at least for a long time (that doesn't mean don't try). Personality is a machine that controls you. Personality grips you and you fall asleep in its grip and so behave in the same ways. Once you are in Personality everything happens mechanically, automatically. You do not see it. When you awaken a little, you see the machine to which you are attached. You feel imprisoned, even afraid of the manifestations of Personality and
afraid of your inability to control it. This Personality was created (acquired) without your knowledge or consent (mechanically). Work on yourself means Work on Personality. The Fourth Way is "in life". You cannot go into a monastery or sit in a cave to free yourself from Personality. Making Personality passive is continual Work on yourself. The means (tools) are Self-Observation, Inner Separation, and Non-Identification. You must take mental photos of yourself over a long period of time. This will reveal that your usual conception of yourself is very far from Reality. In this Work, you must learn to know the real from the invented. Later, to separate them. A person must realize that they indeed consist of two sides, observing and observed. As long as you take yourself as one person, you will never move from where you are. Observing I is passive and Personality is active. When you understand your powerlessness over Personality, your attitude changes -- to caring about becoming Real. You understand that you are not your Personality. It is a mask, a part you play. Sincerity will show you that you are under the power of Personality and at the same time you feel that you are not only Personality. You begin to fear Personality and question everything because whatever you would do or say is done for you by Personality. The Aim at this level of Self-Observation is to be free of Personality.

The idea of Humility is abhorrent to the ego, False Personality. And
in the English language cultures it sounds far too much like humiliation, which is completely unacceptable to the vain False Personality.

You have perceived deep levels of motivation and functioning in your acquired Personality. What you have Identified as "fear of survival" is present in everyone in varying degrees. It belongs to the primary instinctive drive (brain stem urge) in every human, which is self-preservation. If your Instinctive Center was threatened with starvation in infancy, this experience would most likely create Fear, frustration, panic about being powerless, distrust of the world, insecurities about your ability to get what you need. In infants powerful feelings about self are laid down in acquired Personality closely connected to Essence feelings which are active at the time. This further empowers these "concepts" you have about yourself because they are buried so deep and feel so much like you to yourself. This will give you some idea of the very real power that acquired Personality has. It would be from these fears and insecurities that the idea (Picture of yourself) of being "inept" arose. This idea is actually a feeling you have about yourself and is where you are Identified with yourself. Your particular Identifications would probably seek to be in control either of situations or yourself and possess power which feels far more secure than being vulnerable. Any perceived threat to these features of acquired Personality would be felt as a threat to your very existence. This
dynamic is the same in everyone's psychology. Each person's experience forms their idea of themselves around Essence which is present at birth. This happens to everyone and is necessary. In the Work it is called the First Education. It is unavoidably based on instinctive self-interest and necessarily so. This idea of who you are is not a reality. The thoughts and feelings ("I's") that belong to it were acquired through individual experience. If your experience had been different, your feeling of I would be different. However, it would have some other acquired feeling of I, also based on experience interacting with Essence.

The Personality that is formed in this way cannot afford to have its sense of self jeopardized or shaken because what is behind it is weakness, i.e. fear, insecurity, shame. It wouldn't do to have others see you as weak. That would undermine the False Personality and reinforce fear and insecurity. The feeling you have of being "inept" is one of the many emotions that belong to Internal Considering. Internal Considering is a branch of Identification. It is full of I's that care most of all about how others see you and treat you. It (Inner Considering) worries about the impression you make, the notice, understanding, interest, appreciation, etc. that you receive. Inner Considering cares about position, merit, power, status, wealth, beauty, health, possessions, and more. All Inner Considering is the Wrong Work of your psychology. Long Work on understanding these specific ideas plus Observing and Separating from acquired Personality are some of the intentional efforts that will result in
freedom from this Wrong Work and its consequences. If you know that your feeling of being "inept" was laid down in your psychology without your consent when you had no options, and was intensified by being connected directly to Instinctive-Centered Fear, then exaggerated later on by Vanity, Pride, etc., you have an Objective view that can loosen the grip of acquired Personality enough for you to realize that it is NOT YOU.

Real I, true Self, is buried under the mountain of acquired Personality. Gradually getting rid of your Wrong Work will reveal Real I and empower it. Your Essence experience of humiliation only underscored the relationship between Inner Considering and Instinctive deprivation and Fear. Vanity has also played a big role in forming Inner Considering in you. The simple point in all of this is realizing that no matter where your own personal Wrong Work began, you can be free of it since it does not express your most authentic Being. All of your psychology is based on self-interest unless and until you develop enough Consciousness and Being to become selfless in your motives. This Work develops Consciousness and Being and you can see how Humility (the absence of self-interest, no Inner Considering, no Wrong Work of any kind) is a necessary factor in the process. I regret having to Verify for you that sleeping humanity does function primarily from the Moving-Instinctive level of Being.

There are different levels in all centers and the Moving-Instinctive
level is the lowest in each, the path of least resistance. The most automatic and mechanical, stimulus-response functioning belongs to this level. There are also higher levels in each center and in each person. The Work tries to get us to live in these higher parts of centers where we can receive higher influences that lead us toward increasing development of Consciousness and Being. It is indeed a paralyzing thought to realize that sleeping human beings, whose nature is beneath that of animals, are the blind leading the blind into constant chaos. It takes very little observation to Verify this. To say that the human species is different from other organic life-forms and valuable only in terms of potential is a deep Work idea, actually Objective Truth. And while, without development, there is little difference between an animal and a human being, the difference is extremely significant. After all, animals don't make wars, they don't kill for pleasure or gain, and they are never malicious, greedy, or deliberately cruel. While human beings are destroying the planet and all of their own species through these exact activities which are beneath the animal level of existence. We each ought to at least raise our level of Being above that of Fido.

Recognizing the "taste" of Negativity is a critical development in the Work. This cognizance will inform you, long before your mental processes can, of the nature of an "I" or state. Developing further a distinct Dislike for that taste will assist you in Separating. The slums of your psychology refers to the lowest level of being
within you. Not everything (I's) that resides there is strictly False Personality. Recognize higher levels of Being in yourself as well and direct your attention there. This will aid in discernment. Fear is a very difficult Feature to deal with. The Instinctive element has legitimate Fear I's that are very hard to be Objective to. Fear also hides and expresses even more fear when it is Observed. It will paralyze you and keep you stuck where you are. It tends to infect every thought and greatly exaggerates Internal Considering. To Work against it whenever you recognize it working in you, Separate from it and examine it to the extent that you can. Real legitimate feelings of Fear exist to inform us that there is danger.

However, you can have this exact same "feeling" based solely on Identification. You can learn to discern which is which by taste (Instinctive Centered knowledge) and by questioning the I's that express Fear. Ask: What is this Fear about? What exactly am "I" afraid of? Does this Fear come from False Personality (Inner Considering)? What are the I's from Fear saying? Are they honest? Do they express a Truth or only one narrow angle? If you can do nothing else, try to practice Inner Silence toward Fear I's that you have Observed before and know are not of real danger.

To practice Inner Silence, allow for the awareness of Fear I's in your consciousness WITHOUT giving them your attention. Do not talk to them or listen to them internally. Reach for that still, silent point in the center of the tumult. Remember that Features act
automatically so question your first response when you recognize Fear, without closing your eyes to any information it might provide. IN GENERAL, don't trust this feeling of Fear. It is usually made only of Imagination, but it will ruin your entire life. Another exercise you can use is: Every time you feel fear, let it become like a bell, a Reminding Factor to Stop and Separate. In addition, since this (Fear) is an emotion, you can purposefully direct your inner attention to Intellectual Work to keep your mind occupied and unavailable to Fear I's; read, write, plan, problem-solve, use Creative Imagination, etc.

It is absolutely correct to say that that choice is to be made by an individual's awakened Conscience. While awakened Conscience may produce the same level of Objective Morality in separate individuals, its inner direction (instruction) will be different in each person and each instance. Do not go against what you recognize as awakened Conscience in yourself. To Work towards the growth of Essence is not a matter of being able to lay your hands on it, metaphorically, and rouse it into activity. It is approached in a more indirect way through practicing External Considering and eliminating the False Personality, especially the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center.

Try to suspend Fear so that Conscious Mind can function. Essence will EMERGE as the Work progresses in you. The dichotomy of experiencing the Work as miraculous and wonderful/disconcerting
and frightening is a definite and common experience in the developmental process. Be patient here. You are definitely on the right track. The "inner connection" within you and that "still, silent point" are the same thing. It SEES and is NOT what it sees. Its knowledge is Understanding and it is Real I in you. You have experienced it as connectedness and through Non-Identification in that silent place. Ask yourself: What is it in you that has been Observing and Seeing so much? Then try to discern the answer by inner touch and taste. This will increase the presence of that which Observes.
**Inner Considering**

**QUESTION:**

You have said that we should look for the I's that are creating states. I have made notes showing two columns. On one side I wrote down a state or mood I observe in myself. On the other side I wrote down what I consider to be the "I" behind this state... example: Resentment --> "I don't like being criticized". ...example: Joy --> "I like music" "I like singing"...example: Frustration --> "I don't like not getting answers"...? -- and what should I be looking for in this? It seems to come down to likes and dislikes.

**RESPONSE:**

It does come down to likes and dislikes which are part of acquired Personality and part attached to Essence. This all belongs to Inner Considering. Inner Considering is full of opinions and attitudes, likes and dislikes, needs and desires, and essentially everything you
think of as yourself. This is why it is so difficult to separate from Inner Considering. These elements "seem" to be real because they are all you have ever known yourself to be. However, everything that belongs to Inner Considering is acquired, is self-interested, and will obstruct the process of the Work. The Work places a great deal of emphasis on studying all of the aspects of Inner Considering, which is the current state of your psychology, in order to eliminate the obstructions they create. Since all the aspects of Inner Considering are acquired, they are subjective and can change. That which belongs to Real I does not change. It is connected to Objective Conscience which is universal and unchanging.

Along with the "normal" wrong work of every machine, if you are dealing with Fear that could account for more emotional dysfunction and the feelings of being alone since Fear will not take emotional risks and therefore is cut off from authentic emotional relationship. It may also fuel your need for reassurance in order to feel comfortably yourself.

You are seeing a lot already. You have identified Vanity I's and laziness. The more you photograph them, the less you will want to suffer the pain and the wrong work they create.

You are very perceptive to notice the element of self-interest (seeking appreciation) in your complimenting of the guard. On
inner considering, though, I think you will find that the I of self-interest was not the real I of motivation. I imagine you really were grateful and it was externally considerate to express that. The other I that felt self-important was probably only the automatic I of your own False Personality, an acquired habit of thinking of yourself in particular terms.

Work on Emotional Center first by refusing to identify with every Negative Emotion that appears in you.

All Inner Considering is the Wrong Work of your psychology. It is like always being in your own way. Long Work on understanding these specific ideas plus Observing and Separating from acquired Personality are some of the intentional efforts that will result in freedom from this Wrong Work and its consequences. You have an Objective view that can loosen the grip of acquired Personality enough to realize that it is NOT YOU. Real I, true Self, is buried under the mountain of acquired Personality. Gradually getting rid of your Wrong Work will reveal Real I and empower it.

The simple point in all of this is realizing that no matter where your own personal Wrong Work began, you can be free of it since it does not express your most authentic Being.

All of your psychology is based on self-interest unless and until you develop enough Consciousness and Being to become selfless in
your motives. This Work develops Consciousness and Being and you can see how Humility (the absence of self-interest, no Inner Considering, no Wrong Work of any kind) is a necessary factor in the process.

If you are looking for causes ("what is it that causes us to begin to internally consider") the following quote provides some. Nicoll: "The answer is that what is at the bottom of it all is where you identify with yourself. All forms of internal considering, of which making accounts against another person is one form, belong to identifying. The Work says that we must study identifying down to its very roots. A man is only offended where he is identified with himself. And the Work also says that the study of identifying must begin with a study of where you are identified with yourself. It is here that you can be upset, hurt, offended, insulted, and so on. The being identified with oneself comes first, being upset and offended comes second, making inner accounts comes third."

Being concerned with other peoples' opinions is the essence of inner considering. Always worrying about how you are being "seen", "perceived", "treated", "understood", "appreciated", and "noticed" by others is a prison of self-interest. This is where everyone lives in their psychology. This is the natural state of
waking sleep. Understand that the need to have attention, the fear of "invisibility" arise from the natural human instinct for self-preservation which includes social acceptance.

Those of us in the Work strive to be more than just the animal nature.

So...

1. You cannot be exploited or used if your actions are intentional.

2. Trying to imagine what other people think is a complete waste of time and energy.

The need for attention and the fear of invisibility are probably more specifically connected to vanity which is part of inner considering. Vanity will go to absurd lengths to make sure that it is not invisible.

You need to practice inner separation in relation to all of the above. You cannot see clearly what you are only feeling.

QUESTION:

Nicoll says, "the study of identifying must begin with a study of where you are identified with yourself". When this "WHERE" is discovered, what is to be done with it?
RESPONSE:

When you discover "where", ask yourself why it exists there. In the light of the Work's answers to this question, practice Inner Separation. For example, if you are identified with being an intellectual, that is how you perceive yourself. If that sense of yourself is not validated by others' responses to you, its accuracy is undermined, the Picture is challenged. This creates Inner Considering, insecurity, resentment, etc. The creation of this Wrong Work that belongs to Identification should be enough motivation for you to begin to let go of this particular set of chains.

An exercise to apply regarding accounts. Try to Observe what accounts you have with one particular person. Reflect on why. Have they hurt you? How have they hurt you? Do you resent them? Why? Is their behavior annoying, insulting, aggravating, infuriating? What does their behavior have to do with you? They are asleep, mechanical, full of False Personality with NO options about how they manifest. So WHY do you have accounts?. Because you have requirements. You need other people to satisfy your requirements or you become upset because you remain UN- gratified. You need others to support the Pictures you have of yourself, otherwise you feel invalid. You need others to Verify that you are indeed valuable because there is nothing in you yet that knows its own value and doesn't rely on others' opinions to Verify it. WHAT DO THE
The Work should give you enough valuation to not be completely under the power of Inner Considering. Don't let it ruin your efforts. And don't let it rob you of what you have already verified.

Take one aspect of Inner Considering and focus your attention on it. Observe it, try to be passive to it, try to separate from it, and keep trying. One thing at a time. It leads incrementally to Real I.

You have to find the place in yourself that is free of all of the aspects of Inner Considering in order to get to the stage where you no longer seek or need external validation. I can't give that to you and neither can anyone else. It is a matter of your evolution in the Work which depends on continued Observation.

QUESTION:

I had noticed that revenge I's are often coupled with negative future imagination so that one undoes a wrong in ones imagination. What I found astonishing was that I could remember slights from decades ago which today mean nothing to me and get so worked up and identified that I begin to imagine revenge. This is incomprehensible to me. I could say much more about this topic as well since I have
recently observed revenge I's in me. (ironically 'revenge' comes from the Latin 'vindicare' which means 'set free'!)

RESPONSE:

Revenge is an extreme form of account making which belongs to Inner Considering which belongs to Identification. This long stream of wrong work that begins with Negativity created by Inner Considering can lead all the way to violence. If revenge I's are abundant in you, this suggests a serious state of insecurity and no attention being given to making Negativity inactive in you.

QUESTION:

May I give an example of a strong revenge I in me because I do not see the inner considering? I would like your analysis of the example.

A store owner refused to give my property back and was very rude, condescending and concluding the telephone call with "deal with my lawyer" and promptly hung up on me. I did everything in my power to try to recover it. I became more and more agitated and could not rest until I "got back at him". I thought of nothing but how to hurt him back, and get revenge. Eventually I did by pulling strings and having him charged with criminal offences. This rectified the wrong and 'set me free" (root of revenge) and I could rest again. Although when I saw him in court, saw a real person
attending court, I felt bad for him as well and had the charges withdrawn. Question-where is the wrong work and specifically where is the inner considering?

RESPONSE:

You did stumble upon a phenomenon. As long as the wrong work of your Emotional Center is in place you can return to any painful memory and become totally identified all over again even if it is now irrelevant. This is one of the reasons why we in the Work try not to give Negative Emotions our energy or identification. You can live in painful Negativity permanently if you choose to let your mind wander among the various difficulties in your past. Or you can start new NOW.

First of all, Ghandi said "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind". I would not call this a situation caused by Inner Considering. Undoubtedly you were dealt with badly. This does not excuse nor permit your own bad behavior (wrong work). In this particular case, it was appropriate to do what was necessary to regain your possession if possible. The phrase "do what was necessary" does not include trumped up charges, pulling strings, and essentially scaring the man half to death. Did this really make you feel better? Even if the Latin root of revenge means "to be set free", that's just etymology and has nothing to do the Work, In the Work, we set someone free as well as ourselves by forgiving them. Forgiving
can't happen in the presence of wrong work. They are antithetical. Negativity is always wrong work. Revenge is only self-perpetuated Negative Emotions. Should he retaliate, will you then not need to have revenge again?

There is no real freedom in revenge regardless of what your emotions feel. If Emotional Center was awake it would not be possible to act in a violent or negative way toward another person. This is our Aim. This is true freedom. If you felt freed by this response, from humiliation or self-torment, you have it backwards. You should feel genuine remorse at your own wrong work and at understanding that you caused another harm. If he caused you harm first, it doesn't matter. You are only concerned with your own wrong work and inner state, not his.

On Inner Considering, observe:

-- Justifying, always putting your self in the right -- the need for attention -- the desire for appreciation -- worry about what others think of you -- feeling excited when you're a social success -- feeling disappointment if you are not -- thinking always how hard you have it -- feeling superior, feeling inferior -- being nervous -- resenting not getting the notice or valuation you want -- being insincere -- feeling rejected -- feeling insecure -- worry
Ironically, what is required in Work against Inner Considering is that you lose yourself. So through the efforts that you've made so far, you have verified the existence of Multiplicity, Sleep, an absence of Real I, and how difficult it is to keep your attention focused for any length of time on any pursuit. All this without the discipline of School or preparatory Work. I should think that would be enough motivation to send you seeking after Work knowledge voraciously.

External rules, external disciplines will not help you. This Work is purely inner, psychological, transformational Work. Even if you were in a School full of rules and disciplines, you would find the energy of Observation dissipates rapidly and that is a natural occurrence.

Recognizing Inner Considering becomes one of the easiest aspects to observe after you have studied and understood what constitutes Inner Considering. These states become glaringly obvious and are very easy to see, not rare, with the effort of Self-Observation. If you observe Inner Considering, probably the most you can do and the best thing you can do is to make your personality passive. External Considering is a long way down the road of knowledge in this Work. But making your personality passive by not identifying with your Inner Considering has to be accomplished before you can get to true External Considering. Luck plays no part in this process. Knowledge comes first, effort and practice comes after knowledge,
and the result can be the creation of Real I. What you need to serve as Third Force or "reminding force" is a strong desire for change and a good deal more knowledge of the Fourth Way Work.

Understand that the desire to be noticed, have importance, be accepted, feel appreciated, are all natural strivings that arise from the brain stem urges that seek the security and connectedness of social relationships. So these emotions are not only a natural function of the human personality, but they are the same in everyone, regardless of whether the person has developed a personality that manifests those urges differently.

In this Work, we try to evolve beyond the brain stem urges governing our actions in the world and forming our psychology.

When in the presence of other people, let your effort be only to register what feelings you have (alienation, fear, insecurity, superiority, etc.). Try to make an effort to make your personality passive. This can help you see more clearly. Later reflection will reveal that the obstruction you are experiencing in social situations probably has a lot to do with all of the issues of inner considering. Knowing this, observing this, verifying this will free you from it.

When the mind is filled with the constant babble of inner
considering and the heart is motivated by the self-interest of inner considering, the potential of receptivity to a higher state is lost. That is why all practical Work is focused on self-change or self-transcendence. The possibility of intentional, psychological self-generated evolution lies in this process of purification. The means is self-observation.

Remember that in the Work we are trying to move from internal considering to external considering where the good of others is placed ahead of our own.

In the natural progression of the Work, having created an effective Observing I, one begins to see all of the wrong work of Inner Considering. With long term observation, you begin to see that all of your actions in the world are motivated by self-interest, even the outwardly charitable ones are subconsciously, mechanically seeking merit, appreciation, rewards. When you begin to feel the insubstantiality and immaturity that comprise all of the aspects of Internal Considering and if your aim is development of Being, these manifestations begin to fall away. At that point, you can no longer walk into a room of people feeling insecure about yourself without being aware that such behavior is mechanical and based solely on Inner Considering. It will feel beneath you to be functioning psychologically at the level of Sleep, like everyone else in the room.
seeking self-gratification. The dissolution of those I's of Inner Considering raises you to another level of consciousness. It takes you out of the stream of social momentum and mechanicalness.

If you are with a group of people and you are all operating fully in False Personality, then each of you has self-interest as motivation for your personal agenda which forms requirements of this event. You each want to be appreciated, behind your empathic interest with the others may even be the intent of being seen as amiable and as a good person or a compassionate friend. You're worried if you still have garlic on your breath from lunch. You're resenting someone's inattentiveness or perceived insult. You want to make your point. You want your point to be heard, understood, and validated by everyone so that you know that you're right and so that they know that you are right. You're flirting with someone who is married and you are insulted when they don't flirt back. You wonder what's wrong with them. Then you wonder what is wrong with you. Then you wonder if you are talking too much, or if you really like these people after all. And on and on. There is no useful exchange of energy in this kind of situation. It is all automatic, mechanical, predictable, and pointless.

However, let's say you are with your group of people and you are not in False Personality, which is made up mostly of Inner Considering, what might be going on with you in these circumstances? Might you not be able to see the condition of sleep,
the flow of mechanicalness, the predictable stimulus-response behavior, how negativity is contagious, how it most often runs the show, how one association leads to another, how people use buffers, what pictures they have of themselves, what issues they are dealing with, what level their being is, what their features are, what their suffering is about?

The constant state of irritation that you experience comes strictly from inner considering, i.e. expecting the world to accommodate you, having the presupposition from vanity that you should have your way in all things. The wrong work of inner considering is filled with self-interested I's ("am I getting what I want? do others appreciate me enough? do they notice I'm special?")

Being concerned with other peoples' opinions is the essence of inner considering. Always worrying about how you are being "seen", "perceived", "treated", "understood", "appreciated", and "noticed" by others is a prison of self-interest. This is where everyone lives in their psychology. This is the natural state of waking sleep. Understand that the need to have attention, the fear of "invisibility" arise from the natural human instinct for self-preservation which includes social acceptance. Those of us in the Work strive to be more than just the animal nature. So... 1. You cannot be exploited or ued if your actions are intentional. 2. Trying to imagine what other people think is a complete waste of time and
The need for attention and the fear of invisibility are probably more specifically connected to vanity which is part of inner considering. Vanity will go to absurd lengths to make sure that it is not invisible.

Inner considering, which makes up most of the false personality, is obsessed with "what do others think of me", "do they see me?", "can they tell that I'm special?", "am I being treated properly?", "have I been insulted?", "have I received the merit and recognition I deserve", "am I attractive enough?", "are my clothes 'right'?", "am I making the impression I wish to project?", "do I have what I want?", "do I have approval, acceptance?", "am I being foolish?"...

All of these thoughts and emotions belong to false personality. One can see vanity in them, one can see pride, one can see insincerity and dishonesty, and eventually one can see the complete mechanicalness of it all.

You have made an interesting observation in seeing that you "sacrifice yourself in order to appear natural to others". This is indeed the case and can be easily verified by all who observe themselves honestly. False personality betrays essence when it
seeks approval, pretends to be interested in things it is not in order to "fit in", or the thousand and one ways it lies out of inner considering.

The sense of loss and disappointment that you experience has a cause. That cause comes from having requirements that the external world needs to fulfill in order for you to have the positive experience you wish for. These requirements belong to inner considering. They are about whether or not you get what you want, things go as you plan, people treat you as you wish, and overall whether you are satisfied with the "event".

Inner considering is the nature of a normally developed psychology. But in the Work we are asked to transcend all of the complicated emotional issues of self-interest for the transcendent clarity of being without requirements.

The first step in that process is to notice when inner considering occurs. Then look behind the emotion to find the motivation. Are you disappointed, angry, irritated, insulted, neglected, sad, self-pitying? Are you "singing your songs of woe"? Are you justifying all of the above negative states?

Getting the world to meet all your requirements is an impossibility, of course. And although most people never stop trying to force that to happen, simply being detached from inner considering alleviates
all of that unnecessary suffering. In that state that has transcended inner considering, you will find yourself without requirements. Your state will not depend on what others do or say, what you have or don't have, get or don't get. Since gratification is no longer your goal, you will find yourself at peace, filled with acceptance.

This begins a long term study, but have you discovered any ways of dealing with "accounts"? Can you see how they are related to Imagination? Nicoll: "All accounts of this kind, all feelings that you are owed by other people and that you owe nothing your self, are of very great psychological consequence to the inner development of a man. A man in the Work can only grow through the forgiveness of others. That is, unless you cancel your debts, nothing in you can grow."

Can you see how forgiving others and not having requirements of them could completely change this condition in you?

If you forgive others to gain something for yourself, this is not real forgiveness. I don't think this is about semantics, but forgiveness isn't a tool.

QUESTION:

It seems that inner accounts represent ugly pathological qualities in us and that canceling debts and removing these accounts is a kind of
purring of these dirty things in us rather than a pseudo-forgiveness that we magnanimously bestow on others for their benefit and for our own artificial relief. Are you saying that 'account-making' is not just about people, but about generating an inner 'ledger' with credits and debits regarding life in general?

RESPONSE:

Making accounts definitely has two aspects to it in this regard. On one hand, we make accounts against people who offend us. But the more subtle accounts and potentially more damaging are the ones we have about what we "deserve" in life. We can more easily write off someone who insults us than we can be released from the feeling that we ought to receive more from life. It is true that the only real way of overcoming Inner Considering is by canceling debts and removing accounts of these kinds, and this happens before real forgiveness is possible.

QUESTION:

I was wondering if the need for self-approval is inadequately replaced through seeking approval from others or even through imagination. if this could create lots of inner considering, account-making, etc. . Also, is the need to come to direct self- approval innate in the mind?
RESPONSE: Getting approval from other people or through your Imagination would be inadequate to satisfy the Personality's need for approval. The Personality belonging to an un-awakened person cannot be satisfied by any amount of external validation or even reward. It is bottomless. Needing self-approval is a backwards approach to the Work. The Work will not make you feel this. Indeed, you will feel the opposite. If the Work is Working in you, you will start to feel your Nothingness. This opposes "self-approval". This gauntlet must be undergone. What emerges, if the Work has been applied rightly, will be a self that needs NO approval because it is purified.

Let's return for a moment to the subject of Inner Considering. Nicoll: "What is it that causes us to begin to internally consider? Let us ask the question: "At what point or where do you start making accounts?" You start when you feel you are not estimated aright, when you feel you are undervalued. The waiter does not come when called. The shop-assistant serves another person first. Perhaps people do not look at you enough in the street, or, let us say, pay sufficient attention in general. Or one person seems persistently to ignore you. Or perhaps you hear what someone said of you: that is nearly always unpleasant. There are a thousand and one possible examples, less, and more, serious. Small incidents upset us easily -- the waiter, the shop-assistant. These form short
accounts and may eventually become a habit. But we have all sorts of long-standing accounts against others, some of them stored up in the past, unfortunately for ourselves. They all begin with this mysterious question of one's own valuation of oneself."

It is another paradox that our insecurities form outward presumptions of superiority. This paradox exists in "one's own valuation of oneself". Does anyone find this familiar?

______________________________________________________________

QUESTION:

I see it now as a self-centered focus that is excited at the thought of being passed over. This is aggravated due to being a passive type. Being ignored or interrupted is a common experience and I rebel against this with an inner attitude that demands to be heard and respected.

RESPONSE:

Ask yourself if the reason you have for feeling offended is valid, honest, true? Is it realistic to expect attention from sleeping people? What does the Work have to say about the reasons for your Negative Emotions? And have you Verified that an "inner attitude that demands to be heard and respected" doesn't work? It doesn't get you heard or respected, only aggravated. This is only the activity of Vanity.
If you are looking for causes ("what is it that causes us to begin to internally consider") the following quote provides some. Nicoll: "The answer is that what is at the bottom of it all is where you identify with yourself. All forms of internal considering, of which making accounts against another person is one form, belong to identifying. The Work says that we must study identifying down to its very roots. A man is only offended where he is identified with himself. And the Work also says that the study of identifying must begin with a study of where you are identified with yourself. It is here that you can be upset, hurt, offended, insulted, and so on. The being identified with oneself comes first, being upset and offended comes second, making inner accounts comes third."

Nicoll: "Our object is to try to awaken, not to be so identified with everything, not to be slaves to useless negative states and blank minds and so on. If we continually make accounts against one another by privately despising, by wrong talking, by psychological murdering others and so on, all work on oneself is spoiled. "In the process of awakening from sleep, one thing hangs on another thing. One leg cannot get out of the bed. The whole of you must get out of the bed if you want to stand upright."

If you want to diffuse old accounts, begin with trying to see within
yourself what Identifications initiated the account. In a general sense, the way to do this is to put yourself in the other person's place. See from their point of view (Sleep), how you seem to them and what their life experience has created in them. Remember that everyone has Many I's, and try and Separate the offensive I's from other things you know about this person. Remember that you are offended where you are most Identified and that the source of the inner account is within you (your requirements).

Forgiveness is the ultimate remedy for holding accounts. The path to it is directly through the Work.

So you see that you can have accounts against people who "apparently" deserve it. Their behavior has caused harm. Remember that releasing accounts frees YOU. And remember the other person IS ASLEEP.

QUESTION:

I was finding it hard to see accounts I had made. About a week or so ago I observed myself becoming angry because someone had ignored me and I was starting to imagine what I would do if the situation were reversed. This kind of opened the door for me and I
began to see the many, many accounts I was keeping. One of the deep rooted accounts was with my mother who has been dead over nine years. Tonight, while preparing myself for the meeting by reading over the commentaries I began to think of this account I have not been able to deal with and as I read I began to try to put myself in my mother's place. She was a demanding and stubborn woman. We were at odds for as long as I can remember. On her deathbed I took her hand, when my father was out of the room, and told her that I loved her and forgave her for everything and that all that mattered was our love for each other. That night she died. The love I felt was genuine, but the forgiveness was not real. Tonight for the first time I began to see myself as she must have saw me. I hated her stubbornness, but I was just as stubborn. I was demanding and unbending. I never once in the thirty years we had together ever gave a thought to what she might have been feeling. I was so arrogant that until today I thought that my forgiveness may have released her from her six month coma like state. It was so much easier to hate the things in her that I couldn't see in myself. Instead of trying to forgive her, I should have been begging for her forgiveness.

RESPONSE:

This is a real experience of Understanding. And this is where the Work can lead you. Realize that true Forgiveness is inherent in genuine Love. What you did for her and yourself on her deathbed
was appropriate if incomplete. You can probably count on the fact that she would feel just as you have and would have begged your forgiveness if it was possible. You gave it to her unasked and your motive was pure. If the Forgiveness was not accomplished at that time, it does not matter except for what it has cost you since. Now forgive yourself.

QUESTION:

We each have our own little avenues of expressing Negative Emotions and Keeping Accounts which may simply be on a smaller scale. As long as we are in our present state of psychological captivity, we are at risk of the vilest violence. I find that Account-Making is linked to Negative Emotions. Negative Emotions can have us extending our mechanical, unthinking reactions into the future by resorting to Account-Making -- that is, by holding others accountable for our bad reactions, or our inability to understand. Expressing Negative Emotions is a form of self-indulgence and a surrender to immediate impulses and a constricted sense of injustice. Not expressing Negative Emotions can redirect one's attention inward and can have us focusing on what is what at the heart of getting in to this state of affairs. Without Self-Observation in these moments, we simply roll out the familiar and predictable course which leave us with no insights and others with the stale effects of our inner filth.
RESPONSE:

This is accurate. A sleeping psychology can begin at a point where one Negative I starts a train of associative Negative I's that has its own momentum and can lead all the way down to the lowest level in a person. Violence. Example: "I hate getting up in the morning. My job drives me crazy. It takes all my energy. I'm so exhausted. I just need some rest. I can't get any rest. I always have something to do! I wish I could get away from all this pressure. But I never get a chance like that. I have to work and then work some more while some people can take off whenever they feel like it. Why can't I get a break? I've always been so overwhelmed with responsibilities. My life is so unfair. It makes me furious that my sister can travel when she wants to and I have to always be the one to be responsible. Well, I've had enough. I can't take it anymore. I have to have a break or I'll die. If I don't get a break, I'll lose my mind." This descent into Negativity CAN really lead a person to insanity, suicide, or murder. So the first I of Negativity is always the first moment of possible violence.

This is an example of keeping accounts. When we give more than we receive, we feel that we are owed. Unconditional Love desires reciprocation but does not depend on it. There is no 50 % - 50 % in relationships that work. The equation is each gives 100 % plus. You
did the right thing in Externally Considering your wife. All that you gave to her, material and otherwise, was a sincere act of Love. It is in expecting equal reciprocation that you were disappointed. Being disappointed because someone does not have the same feelings that you do about anything is a lack of perspective. It presupposes that the other person ought to be in complete sync with you whenever you desire that. I would like you to consider the fact that your wife is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the most important and frightening event of her life. To have requirements of her at this time is an extra burden she probably can't bear. Fearing the loss of attention and being cared for is as normal as the sunrise but try to not have expectations, requirements, and even suspend your needs temporarily. This is an exceptional time in both of your lives. The closer you are, the better you can work everything out.
Inner Silence

To begin with, and maybe most important, you cannot hear anything when you are speaking. Also, you may be investing your emotional life in your Intellectual Center. This will not work. Try practicing short periods of inner silence repeatedly. As you learn Inner Separation and direct your attention more intentionally, you will find more spaces for inner silence. The momentum of talking will reinforce Identifications. It will also keep you from accurate Self-Observation.

QUESTION:

My personality, as I look back over time has a pronounced acerbic wit, a sarcasm intended by me, and seen by me, as being funny. In attempting to make personality passive I note a pronounced decrease in the clever rejoinder, etc. It is such a pronounced
difference that people see it quite clearly and my kids think I am nicer (because I have quit talking and listen). I also note when with a group of people, they are always interrupting and jockeying for position to talk, impress, etc. It almost is getting a bit strange and I lose my easy bearings in the midst of it. I am a bit confused, part of the vertigo thing.

RESPONSE:

Even if you are confused, don't imagine that you are lost. This condition is a natural side effect of the Work. You have witnessed others' sleeping Personalities butting against each other and have seen it for the impostor that it is. You are beginning to verify that you are not like that and do not want to be like that. To deal with "losing your bearings" strive for Inner Silence, Stillness. Be passive and don't Inner Consider behaving differently. This "vertigo thing" can be difficult to deal with but it is temporary. It only needs more time to develop Real I that can function naturally and independently in any situation. One more thing -- There is a place for humor and wit in Real I, True Personality, Essence. But not sarcasm if it hurts anyone.

The important thing for you to do then is to seek some Inner Silence so that you can Hear. Try stepping back and just Observing or even just Sensing your Inner states. Don't strain trying to separate. Transforming happens as the result of practicing long-term Work.
You can't force it. One more thing: It is okay to be adrift sometimes. If you remain receptive, your bearings will come to you.

I found a good description of Inner Silence that I'd like to share. It's from Volume 1, page 213 of the Commentaries. The title is "Self-Observation". There are new connections made. This is a small quote: "The practice and meaning of Inner Silence in the Work is like this; First, it must be about something quite distinct and definite; and second, it is like not touching it. That is, you cannot practice Inner Silence in a vague, general way, save perhaps as an experiment for a time. But you can practice it rigidly in regard to some distinct and definite thing, some thing you know and see quite clearly. What you are practicing Inner Silence about is already in the mind and you must be aware of it, but you must not "touch" it with your inner speech. Practice this in relation to selecting thoughts, Negative I's, complaining I's, sets of I's that create Negative states, not going with I's from False Personality and Wrong Work, Identifications. Try Working with only one definite thing at a time.

QUESTION"

I find Nicoll's comment a bit vague and hard to understand. Does he
mean "Don't wrestle with the state?" Don't talk to it?

RESPONSE:

Yes, that's the intent. Sometimes you have to wrestle. But it should be rarely. The point being made about Inner Silence is that in the Work it is practiced in reference to a specific thing. In other words, if you have a repeated Negative response to a particular person or recurring state or I's, you can use the practice of Inner Silence directed at those specific issues. Is that clearer? "don't talk to it" is correct.

QUESTION:

Yes. But I must ask follow up if I may? Say I have a time of day. In the morning when I worry. What he is saying is to observe this in silence and note the predominance of this pattern of Is at this time, right?

RESPONSE:

Yes, and...he is saying not to let your inner speech touch those I's. You are aware that they are there, but you refuse to have anything to do with them. In the case of worry I's, you must always remember that worry is Negative Imagination and it would be something specific like this that you would practice Inner Silence in relation to so that every time you noticed "worry", you turn away
from it. Don't give it speech.

QUESTION:

How is inner silence "about something distinct"?

RESPONSE:

Say you have a particular attitude that is Wrong Work. For example, public speaking makes you nervous. The practice of Inner Silence in relation to this distinct Wrong Work is to not touch it with your inner speech even while you are aware of its presence. If you give it no voice, it is silent and loses force. Is that a clear example?

QUESTION:

I see, it means you must be 'silent', inwardly, about something specific, something that is too often present in the mind.

RESPONSE:

Yes, this is correct. The silence is always about something specific. It is not a general silence like emptiness of mind.

QUESTION:

I see. And are you saying that this and other Wrong Work atrophies
out of disuse?

RESPONSE:

Wrong Work atrophies under the influence of the light of Self-Observation and through the denial of Identification with it. Other elements come into play like thought selection and Inner Separation but a good deal of power exists in the light of Observing I.

QUESTION:

Is inner silence an accompaniment to self-observation? They seem [like] the same thing almost.

RESPONSE:

Very often Self-Observation leads to a kind of Inner Silence but it is an entirely different kind than the intentional exercise of creating Inner Silence in relation to a specific issue. The kind you are referring to is more about False Personality evaporating in the light of Observation, leaving a lot of silence in place of its normal noise.

QUESTION:

Is inner silence a refusal to give voice to a particular set of recurring Is, such as sad ones, or is it silence in relation to it?
RESPONSE:

The refusal to give voice to recurring I's has to be an internal one as well as an external one.

QUESTION:

Please give another example of Inner Silence. My problem, i.e., whether you refuse to empower the issue or just watch in silence. Internally, are you inside or outside of the issue. I know this sounds abstruse in the extreme.

RESPONSE:

This Work practice of Inner Silence is about refusing to empower the issue by giving it speech. You are not watching in silence because you are not giving "it" that much attention. Let's say you Observe a habit you have of always having to have the last word. Assuming your Work Aim is to eliminate this Wrong Work of False Personality, you are instructed to be aware of this characteristic and refuse to "think" about it. You refuse to talk about it in your mind, you are aware of its presence and you make a deliberate effort to not act in this way by not allowing yourself to formulate the words that express this aspect of your False Personality. Internally, you are outside of the issue. You know the issue is there and you do not touch it with your inner speech. Therefore, Silence exists.
QUESTION:

I see, so these are not the I's of Self-Observation but the actual Wrong Work I's manifesting that we are trying to be silent to.

RESPONSE:

Yes, this is correct. The I's that are Wrong Work are what we suppose to practice Inner Silence in relation to, not the I's of Self-Observation.

QUESTION:

How do we determine what wrong "I's" are appropriate targets of our inner silence technique?

RESPONSE:

Choose one that you recognize easily, that has verified consequences of Wrong Work and make it one that you want to change. Start with patterns of Wrong Work that give you distress. For instance, if you are afraid of flying and you must take a trip, you do not allow any inner talking in relation to your fears. That may be large or small -- it is subjective. It would be best to start with single issues, and smaller issues when you first begin this practice. You will have more success and you will learn more consequently. A better example might be a recognized negative
attitude toward a particular person. This attitude is full of Negative I's against this person. The attitude says "I can't stand him, he makes me sick, furious, exasperated; he is so stupid ...etc.". These are the words your inner speech gives this attitude which is Wrong Work that you want to eliminate. If you refuse to give your words to this attitude, it has no expression. You are aware that you have these feelings inside but you do not acknowledge them, giving them no voice.

Even more simply, take one single Negative I that you experience frequently and practice Inner Silence. Choose one that is easily recognizable, i.e. I hate traffic, I am impatient with my children, cooking dinner makes me sick, my mother makes me angry, laundry work is the worst drudgery, I worry about money, etc. Choose your own personal I to practice with and as soon as you hear that I turn your thoughts away from it AND replace it with intentionally directed thinking. It can be helpful here if you have a prechosen subject so that your attention can have a definite place to go without confusion. For example, planning your dream-house, vacation, job -- anything. Whenever you choose to direct your attention, the Aim is to give NO WORDS to that one I. Even if you remain aware of its presence, you don't talk to it, you don't listen to it, you do not allow it expression.

QUESTION:
Is the idea of "Suggestion, Assent, and Captivity" relevant to introducing moments of Inner Silence? -- that is, breaking off gathering I's in the earliest "Suggestion" stages.

RESPONSE:

Absolutely. It is between Suggestion and Assent that you can practice Inner Silence and effectively deflect Captivity.

QUESTION:

Is Inner Silence different from thought selection?

RESPONSE:

Yes. Inner Stop is different. You practice Inner Stop in relation to any Wrong Work that you Observe. You simply STOP all manifestations and become quiet and passive. Thought Selection is about choosing which I's to go with. You don't stop, you switch tracks.

QUESTION:

Identification is something I can see better at the end of the day when I look back over things. But I noticed myself in a
conversation recently where I so wanted not to be identified and I just out of habit went there. I felt hurt, etc..

RESPONSE:

Non-Identification should not hurt. Just the opposite. It should heal. When you can't Separate from a Negative Emotion, it needs further scrutiny. Try to discern what the I's of Identification are saying and determine whether they are true. If this escapes you at the time, practice Inner Silence in relation to your Identification. Do not listen to its I's. Do not speak to them. Do not acknowledge them. Reflection will inform you later about what the Identification was.

Treat it with the practice of Inner Silence. When you notice where your I's are taking you, stop and refuse to go. Try to recognize the bad state you are left in after a trip through the slums of your psychology. Loss of energy is the least of it. Negativity is contagious. If you hang around it long enough, you will become infected with its poison. This is even more significant than loss of energy because you will then spread it further.

Whenever you notice you are feeling Negative, FIRST, stop. Next, practice Inner Silence toward the thoughts and words expressing Negativity. Later, when the state has passed, reflect on what the Negative Emotions were that you felt. Name them. What were they saying to you? Are these I's familiar to you? (Habitual) Are they truthful? Try to perceive the source of your Negative Emotions. It is
inside you, not outside you. DON'T JUSTIFY YOURSELF. Observe what is behind your Negative responses. Try to get a sense of the "taste" of it. Is it pain, fear, frustration? About what?

Recognizing the "taste" of Negativity is a critical development in the Work. This cognizance will inform you, long before your mental processes can, of the nature of an "I" or state. Developing further a distinct Dislike for that taste will assist you in Separating. The slums of your psychology refers to the lowest level of being within you. Not everything (I's) that resides there is strictly False Personality. Recognize higher levels of Being in yourself as well, and direct your attention there. This will aid in discernment.
Vanity

QUESTION:

When another is attentively listened to or 'seen' in situations where I am not, I immediately feel negativity towards them. I resent that they are heard and I am not. I feel either my 'ideas' are just as important as theirs are so 'it is not fair'.

RESPONSE:

Resentment toward another because they have what you do not, i.e. attention, appreciation, is nothing more than envy and offended Vanity. Your ideas may indeed be just as important or valuable as theirs are, but to whom does it matter? To you? Or can your concern be for the betterment of the whole group, the other individual, or the situation? So what if someone is getting more attention than you are? Maybe they need it. Maybe they need it even more than you need it, and maybe you could give up your own
desire for it as an exercise in External Considering. Don't expect "fairness", it isn't reasonable.

**QUESTION:**

When another person is walking ahead of me, blocking my path, not seeing me, I become irritated. Likewise, when I am speaking and am not heard or when in a group with several others in conversation and I am being ignored, I become irritated or feel isolated, ostracized, self-pity.

**RESPONSE:**

When someone is blocking your path, your irritation is impatience. If you feel you are being ignored, ostracized, or isolated, Vanity is at work. All of these negative emotions exist in you because you have requirements of the world, of other people, of your life, and your requirements keep you stuck in all of the aspects of Inner Considering. Vanity fills you with talk and Inner Considering (Do they like me? Does she find me attractive? Do I seem boring? Why didn't that person answer my question? Am I laughing too loud? Does anyone see the real me? Am I appreciated for my talent, wit, gifts, looks, etc.? Have I received enough respect, recognition, reward? Am I getting what I want? Am I satisfied? Am I gratified?)

If your own view of yourself is dependent upon other peoples' responses to you, then your personality is governed by Vanity.
QUESTION:

Nicoll in one of his commentaries speaks of an important realization one can make that one does not know oneself at all including what a "thought" or "emotion" is, or where such "thoughts" or "emotions" come from. Keeping this in mind then as my question will relate to this. We were given the task sometime ago to observe inner-talking. I have continued to do so when I remember to. Nicoll suggests that inner-talking is usually related to 'grievances', singing one's song, inner considering. For a while I did not see the deeper levels of motivation in my observations of inner-talking. The last few days I have finally seen them though. They are NOT as Nicoll suggests but more frequently are the following- My inner-talk is future imagination. I imagine conversations with others where I am "recognized", told how wonderful I am, told I am brilliant etc., and of course because it is "imagination" I begin to believe. and I am tempted or there is a seduction to continue these pretend conversations to feed vanity. Well, now, with apologies for the length, my question is. Although seeing this motivation effectively stops the inner conversations and sometimes I can even stop without criticizing myself. I wish to know and am at an absolute loss to comprehend, "Where do these thoughts come from?" It is not like I am feeling dejected or something, so out of vanity I must create an inner conversation to feed vanity. What is
the source of such thoughts?

RESPONSE:

To begin with, to want recognition for being "wonderful" and "brilliant" is nothing more than Vanity and Inner Considering. It is caring about what others think of you and how they see you and whether they value you enough and getting what you presume you deserve. Vanity can never be fed enough to be satisfied. It is in constant need of reinforcement for the Pictures it must uphold. That is the motivation behind that particular kind of inner talking. As for the source of your thoughts, the possibilities are endless. Some begin in infancy, branded into your Personality through suffering or simple imitation or any number of other experiences. Some thoughts come from external stimuli that go unrecognized yet remain in the unconscious and arise through association. Some thoughts are only associative. Some are forcefully impressed upon you. Some come from unconscious connections between I's, etc. It can be helpful to understand the source of your thoughts. But it is not always possible and the more important issue is what thoughts you choose to give your attention to. Are you able to practice "Thought Selection" in relation to this issue? If not, can you practice Inner Silence in reference to particular thoughts?

Nicoll: "'A terrific fight is necessary before this power of Imagination can be loosened, and a great deal of thought and trial
and experiment and failure and quietness and patience."

Vanity is obsessed with keeping score. It has very little humility and needs constant verification that it is superior in some way or another. So you have identified a Chief Feature, now Observe it and how it functions and what it is related to.

Almost all of the difficulties you are dealing with belong to Inner Considering and most especially to Vanity. You have observed this for yourself, the issue of Vanity. Needing to be "seen", needing to be "appreciated", "valued", "verified" by others' approval, and the invisibility that pains you as well as your need to be understood are all aspects of Vanity. Vanity derives its self-worth from external life. It needs to be fed by constant attention, appropriate valuation, and confirmation that one is important. I encourage you to read everything you can in the Commentaries about Vanity and Inner Considering. These two tyrants only hold you in their grip for as long as you let them.

Inner Considering and Vanity are the natural condition of the psychology acquired according to brain stem urges. Each of us has the need to be accepted by the "group" as a form of self-preservation. This gets translated into needing external validation in order to feel real and safe. However, what is real in you exists
already although undiscovered. It does not require any external
circumstance to be secure, authentic, and able to function in
solitude without feeling lonely. Feeling lonely in your current
circumstances indicates to me that you have cut yourself off from
that which could free you. Examine the intensity of your need for
validation and socializing. Socializing is generally the wrong use of
sex energy or simple distraction.

This Work is all about developing the Emotional Center. However
it is not a matter of reconnecting to Essence. The issue is riding the
Emotional Center of the wrong work of Inner Considering in all its
aspects. To try and work on the Emotional Center from the angle of
External Considering is jumping ahead of yourself. First, you must
work diligently on cleansing the Emotional Center of its wrong
work. Then you can practice External Considering rightly.

Self-deprecation is just the flip side of Vanity. Also it can be an
excuse to not make real efforts. There is no real observing in self-
deprecation.

What nurtures you? Not your Vanity Feature. Your heart. What do
you find to be sweet in life: animals, plants, children, music, nature,
close personal relationships? If you feel this Emotional Center
starvation, FEED YOURSELF POSITIVE EMOTIONAL
IMPRESSIONS. Please do not chastise yourself. It is only further
identification with yourself. OBSERVE. Practice Inner Separation. If you are feeling the "terror" of the conditions you are observing, you are stuck fast in Identification and have no way out. If you can observe the condition of your psychology at present and say to it "this is just my mechanics at work", "my Vanity Feature is asserting itself", "my Tramp Feature is avoiding having to work", "my Fear Feature needs reassurance", then you can begin to separate from the Negative Emotions the observations are attached to.

When you observe objectively an aspect of your psychology such as Vanity, when you observe it repeatedly in all its manifestations you will begin to know that these actions are not YOU. They do not express the truth of your Real I. You will see the futility and indignity of seeking your self-worth outside of yourself through the fickle flattery and appreciation of others. You will grow to dislike this immature dependence upon others' opinions of you. The Real I that is taking form through Self-Observation will begin to assert itself in place of Vanity or Trampishness. That which "knows that it knows" in you will not need external verifications.

I suggest that you attempt to make your internal I's passive and quiet as much as possible so that you can see. If I's and glimpses of states are still moving too quickly for accurate observation, try to grab onto one particular observed I and hold it, letting everything else pass while you examine it to the extent that you can.
Remember that Vanity in Latin is "vanitas" and it means "empty". You are not empty. You are at least seeing some things of value, therefore you can apply the Work to the material you have. "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it." (Goethe)

The I's of Vanity and Inner Considering (needing to feel attractive) are only part of the wrong work which you observed in relationship to "pretty women". This is also a distortion of sex energy called Infrasex. In the case of a newlywed, I find this activity a little more surprising, however it is very common as you well know. It will ruin the possibility of a good marriage and corrupt your work efforts.

QUESTION:

If you are stuck in vanity, you are incapable of performing at top notch-- even children can see through it. On the other hand, a humble approach will appeal to the King of Hearts even in the unconscious.

RESPONSE:

Even though we are all victims of constant internal talking someone with a Vanity Feature talks more internally and externally.
Externally to keep the attention on themselves, internally because they remain fascinated by themselves.

I have observed in myself being carried along in the momentum of negative associations in conversation with friends. My observation put a stop to my mechanical reactions and I became quiet. I noticed that no one missed my biting wit as much as I did. I noticed that perhaps I had even offended someone unintentionally. I have observed myself trying to impress someone of importance, seeking their exalted approval or appreciation, even notice. Seeing this as immature, petty gratification- seeking produced by Inner Considering and Vanity was in such contradiction to the dignity of Real I that all Inner Considering stopped and my center shifted away from needing external validation.

**QUESTION:**

We have been asked to look for groups of "I's". I have observed a set of "I's" that seem to have the same or similar psychological root. I don't like being insulted. I don't like affronts to my dignity. I don't like being "shown up". I don't like being ignored. I don't like being interrupted. I don't like being outsmarted. I don't like being laughed at. I don't like being criticized. I don't like being talked down to. I don't like being snubbed. I don't like being overlooked. These seem to fall together and may have their root in Vanity.
RESPONSE:

That is exactly right. You can trace them right back to their source in Vanity. This is a good thing to know what you have to deal with and gives you a bit of distance for Inner Separation in realizing that these emotions are mechanical manifestations of Feature. Now look behind the Vanity. Do you see insecurity? Fear? Or what?

QUESTION:

With respect to 'Imitation": I am so ridiculous that at times I even imitate a twitch that a well-established Judge has (for medical reasons I think) because Vanity thinks this shows how concentrated and powerful my thoughts are. Sometimes I unnecessarily limp a bit to show others how "tired" and "hard working" I am.

RESPONSE:

Types certainly do have mechanical responses of attraction or repulsion. That doesn't mean that the phenomenon you experience in relation to Martial body types is because of being an opposite type. It could be as easily a Fear Feature responding to a Power Feature or a Vanity Feature responding to a Dominance Feature, or some other particulars.

This phenomenon is simple Inner Considering, punctuated by
Vanity. It speaks to me of deep insecurity and Fear. Most likely, not a single person noticed or cared where you were going. You were in Negative Imagination generated by Inner Considering. You were worried what other people would think of you when it's a near certainty that other people aren't thinking of you at all. They are thinking of themselves as well - wondering, worrying, whether or not you are noticing their Inner Considering. The Work will gradually diminish your need for external validation, approval and will have no response to others' reactions.

It is quite special, an accomplishment to have had all of those I's, recognize them for what they were, and be able to separate from them. This is the type of practice I was referring to earlier and it is an excellent example and effort. You say that you rarely observe. That is where you have to focus your attention. You can see the results in this event. By not going with Negative I's, Inner Considering, Vanity and Justification, you achieve the results both internal and external that the Work aims at.

I don't believe your accumulated Work I's and efforts and your Understanding can revert to being weak. This "mocking of the world" is a common game that two Vanity Features play with each other. But as you know the Work is not of the world. Trust that what you have already verified cannot be lost to you.
These two characteristics are both very common childhood experiences, being afraid and wanting attention. You may have heard the idea that each of us has a Chief Feature and two subordinate Features that form a kind of triad that can be deceptive. The point here is that you have to Work against Fear and against Vanity, regardless of their position of superiority at the time. Although Fear is crippling, Vanity may be harder to overcome and I suggest you Work on that issue first (Vanity).

If you can eliminate this characteristic of wanting attention (Vanity), you will effectively decrease the amount of Fear you experience.

The first big example I can think of is the Fear of commitment that I see you have. This is so prevalent that it is hardly considered emotionally dysfunctional. It partly comes from brain stem urges for self-preservation. In Nature, the animal that is vulnerable is the one that doesn't survive. But we are aiming here for a level above that of animal and brain stem urges. Also, you have expressed your Fear of being invisible, of being insignificant or unnoticed among other things. These come from Vanity. You are right that it will take Observing from many angles over a period of time to verify this idea if it is true. Whenever you experience the uncomfortable feeling associated with Fear, try to discern its origin.
QUESTION:

It seems that Vanity cannot be got rid of abruptly...How can we take steps everyday to continually reduce Vanity?

RESPONSE:

Reflect on its source. A person seeking dignity of Being cannot be at the mercy of the emptiness of Vanity. Feeling superior is an inaccurate view of oneself. Acting superior manifests foolishness. Remember especially that it is through Humility that one receives the force of the Work and can receive enlightenment.

I believe your Chief Feature is Vanity and your satellite Features are probably Fear and Non-Existence. This is a complicated configuration. Vanity can't be afraid or non-existent. I believe you have stated in the past that one of your greatest fears is that of being invisible (non-existent) which is a horror to Vanity. You also have a strong dose of Solar to deal with. This makes everything more complicated because the quality of Solar is so ethereal that it has a hard time seeing gritty reality and has to be intentional to be able to deal with it. It is extremely difficult for a Solar to be intentional or even notice that he is not being so.

Being concerned about what people think of you, in this instance,
whether you know something, etc, is Inner Considering. The fear of being vulnerable can have more sources than Inner Considering, for instance -- Fear Feature or Vanity.

QUESTION:

Where does the pleasure in "extracting every farthing" come from, in reminding people how you were "right" and they were "wrong"?

RESPONSE:

That's nothing more than Vanity. Silly, empty, childish "I'm better than you are".

Identifying one's Chief Difficulty in the beginning of the Work means Self-Observation. Working on it (Chief Feature) should be in the form of Self-Observation only in the early stages. You have seen Pride and Vanity within yourself and your description of the "Achiever/Doer" is a Picture of Vanity. Vanity is obsessed with keeping score. It has very little humility and needs constant verification that it is superior in some way or another. So you have identified a Chief Feature, now Observe it and how it functions and what it is related to.
Multiplicity

Anyone attempting to do the Work in reality will need the guidance or assistance of someone who has evolved in the Work and knows what the pitfalls, digressions, misunderstandings, difficulties and processes are, and can help you find your way through them. From the beginning, you must understand that the process of the Work is difficult, requires hard efforts, and can be very painful. It can give you frightening feelings of psychological vertigo or a loss of identity. The loss of one's false Personality, the exposure of the ego, these are all difficult, painful, and liberating. This is what you must undergo as the result of your Work efforts and you should know ahead of time that it is lifelong, sometimes nearly impossible, but of immeasurable value.

QUESTION:
I begin to sometimes see "sub-personalities", where I have a distinct attitude or outlook that arises and operates for a brief time and then changes subtly into another set of attitudes -- these may be "groups of I's" or "habitual sets of I's". It is as if I could give them their own names. These sub-personalities seem to arise unannounced and leave the same way. Observing them seems to help me see them as not "me", but some sub-personalities seem more artificial and some not so artificial and I would like to operate less from the artificial sub-personalities. If I am not able to control their coming and going, what Work approach should I use in this connection?

RESPONSE:

These sub-personalities are groups of I's. Probably all habitual. Observing them, as you have verified, helps you to separate to a degree. This dilemma is addressed in the Commentary on "The Selection of Thoughts". Nicoll: "Eventually, then, I realized that although we cannot stop our thoughts, we can select our thoughts. I mean we can select which thoughts we go with and dislike thoughts that we know quite well by observation always lead to the worst slums in our psychology....We always have some power of selection in our interior world."

Be aware that recognizing that you are not one I but many, Multiplicity, is the first taste of real Self-Remembering. When you
see the hordes of mechanical I's taking charge and acting without your authority, you get a better sense of what Real I might be.

If you have not observed this string of successive I's, it is only because you have not observed rightly and long enough. This is a fact of the Work which can be verified through observation.

You are a Multiplicity. You have within you I's that are good, bad, noble, vainglorious, selfish, perverse, honest, insightful, violent, lying, imagining, etc. These different aspects of yourself have relative value and relative expression of what is most true to your deepest Self. Your task in the Work is to learn to discern between what is good and valuable and what is untrue and harmful. Then the next steps will function to eliminate what is undesirable in the Work sense, and you certainly should keep what is real and valuable. Then put these things into the service of your Work. False Personality, Negative Emotions and mechanical behavior will all be lost in the process to be replaced by True Personality, Positive Emotions, and Conscious action.

You cannot do this Work as long as you take yourself as one I. You have to observe multiplicity in order to be able to separate from detrimental I's.
"If you take yourself as one I then that I cannot have power over another I."

As you Observe the Multiplicity and discern what belongs to Real I and what is acquired Personality. Over time, what is false will fall away and what is authentic and pure will emerge in the space that is made by the absence of Wrong Work.

In the Commentary reading for tonight, the most important point made is that of beginning to sense two men in you. There must be an Observing side that is Observing the active Personality. These two are very different in taste and function. It is when Observing I begins to become defined through practice that you can perceive the difference. This Understanding or rather realization that you are a Multiplicity is a very significant stage in the Work.

You can only come to this realization if you have a functioning Observing I that can Verify it for you.

**QUESTION:**

I have been thinking about humility. Monday when you said "make sure humility is what you want" At that moment I saw the different
"I's". Part said yes. The others said no way. I observed pride etc. and found fear beneath it. Survival fear...All kinds of memories returned from childhood. The fear seems to be connected to an idea formed early of being too inept to survive. I don't know if this is an overactive mind or real insight yet.

RESPONSE:

One thing to note is that you have Observed Multiplicity. This is an event that doesn't usually take place this early in personal Work. When you KNOW that you are a Multiplicity, this is a definite stage, an important turning point in the Work. Fear will exaggerate and agitate your self-interest. And Humility will do the opposite. Humility is a difficult concept to Work with in Western civilization and especially for men who are enculturated to consider it weakness.

To extend the practices we have been doing, try to observe Multiplicity, that is, the Many I's in you all claiming to be you in their turn. Just observe how one I takes the place of another instigated by an event, external or internal. Eventually, Unity is possible and Intentionality takes the place of Multiplicity. The important point to notice is that you are not one I. When you know this, you will begin to be able to choose which I's honestly speak for you.
QUESTION:

In the current instance the struggle I earlier referred to between wanting to speak here ("Yes") and not speaking unless I was certain it came from a right place in me and not from desire to belong ("No"). The I's of wanting to speak and not wanting to speak went back and forth more and more quickly. I experienced something like this in Foundation meetings years ago. I would not speak unless I was sure it came from a place of humility. Every time I reacted internally I 'questioned' where this reaction came from.

RESPONSE:

The most important thing to know about where this phenomenon comes from is that it is coming from multiplicity. There is no discretion or unity and too much Inner Considering happening. This experience should not be that difficult. Don't add Unnecessary Suffering. I don't expect all questions to come from the "right understanding". Ask any questions you want. Don't try to screen them. Just talk.

Quoting Nicoll again: "You know it is said that the first form of self-remembering is the realization of one's mechanicalness. Man must struggle with identifying with himself and with these illusions and
pictures he is identified. He thinks himself one person who has will and full consciousness". You cannot do this Work as long as you take yourself as one I. You have to observe multiplicity in order to be able to separate from detrimental I's. "If you take yourself as one I then that I cannot have power over another I."

Nicoll quote: You will only get into a state of complete confusion if you think that you are one I and think in some way that this I can observe this one I. "If we suppose that there is only one thing that acts in a man, then it will be impossible for one thing to command another to obey."

To extend the practices we have been doing, try to observe Multiplicity, that is, the Many I's in you all claiming to be you in their turn. Just observe how one I takes the place of another instigated by an event, external or internal. Eventually, Unity is possible and Intentionality takes the place of Multiplicity. The important point to notice is that you are not one I. When you know this, you will begin to be able to choose which I's honestly speak for you.

Try to understand what this condition means to the validity of your psychological condition. And be aware that recognizing that one is
not one I but many, Multiplicity, is the first taste of real Self-Remembering. When you see the hordes of mechanical I's taking charge and acting without your authority, you get a better sense of what Real I might be.

Verifying that one has Many I's is a definite step-in the Work process. The reason the doctrine of I's is so important is not only so that we can Verify our Multiplicity, but more importantly, so that we can begin to assign value to certain I's and give them authority over other I's. If you assume that you are only one I, that one I cannot assert any influence over any other I.

QUESTION:

The doctrine of I's is the most important part of the psychological teaching of this Work because it is here that the avenue of escape lies. The fact of Multiplicity provides the very tools needed to acquire something new. Within the fragmentation of Many I's, Work I's have the potential of coalescing and replacing Multiplicity which can open the way for Real I.

RESPONSE:

This avenue of escape is inherent in the doctrine of I's because it gives you a chance to CHOOSE. If you take yourself as only one I, you have no choices.
Verifying Multiplicity is definitely part of the Work on Buffers. You have to see and know that you are a multiplicity. In doing so, you can begin to perceive the blind spots of Buffers. Don't accept being blind.

QUESTION:

It is just that sometimes it is like a house of mirrors.

RESPONSE:

That is exactly what seeing Multiplicity is like. And the False Personality consists only of Multiplicity. Remember that Nicoll says that recognizing one's Multiplicity is a definite stage in the Work. It shows real progress.

The Fellowship of Friends wanted you to think External Considering meant your being servile to them. The next time you have bad thoughts about someone, look at them more carefully. They are a Multiplicity and they are in complete Identification, and they are sound Asleep in Second State. Their life and circumstances, that you may know nothing about, may be a living hell for them. Recognize that they also have within them different
levels and I's belonging to all of them, including some noble and good I's. Try to raise the level of Negative I's against a person to a level of Understanding. This perspective will free you.

Your Personality will resist the Work. It doesn't want to make the effort, but more importantly, it is protecting its existence. I know this seems strange, but it is rather like something in you desperately trying to hold together the Multiplicity to avoid the loss of ego. Sometimes, you may experience only a slight struggle. Sometimes you have to beat the bear.

QUESTION:

I have been thinking about humility. Monday when you said "make sure humility is what you want" At that moment I saw the different "I's". Part said yes. The others said no way. I observed pride etc. and found fear beneath it. Survival fear. All kinds of memories returned from childhood. The fear seems to be connected to an idea formed early of being too inept to survive. I don't know if this is an overactive mind or real insight yet.

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stage, an important turning point in the Work. Fear will exaggerate and agitate your self-interest. And Humility will do the opposite. Humility is a difficult concept to Work with in Western civilization and especially for men who are enculturated to consider it weakness.

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Psychological Vertigo

QUESTION:

Working quietly in my yard and observing a type of impatience always with me accompanied by a tension in the body. I tried to dissolve the hurry and tension by observation and that and the hard work helped a good bit. At the same time. I knew I was in an interval of sorts and at times seemed like a stranger to myself. I did not fight it and can see the Work Is re establish. Interesting experience.

RESPONSE:

Did this feel like "psychological vertigo" to you?. Because you felt like a stranger to yourself?

QUESTION:
I knew it was an incredibly powerful attempt of false Personality to take over. Like a false Personality Battle of the Bulge. Yes stranger.

RESPONSE:

This is a common phenomenon when false Personality begins to come apart, leaving gaps where you have no functional or recognizable Personality. I've noticed that almost everyone is experiencing impatience with this process. If you could work for the sake of making good efforts and eliminate elements like impatience and frustration and confusion through Inner Separation you would all get better results. Impatience and frustration are Negative Emotions that will prevent any growth or possibility of Objective Observation.

We are hearing from some of you about the "psychological vertigo" accompanying this process which begins with the deconstruction of our false personality. This vertigo is being expressed in a sense of panic, a feeling of emptiness, a feeling of fear or anxiety, or sometime the sense of being a fraud. The best way to deal with it is to try to practice inner separation in relation to those feelings and realize that this is a natural, temporary response in the process of the Work. The way to eliminate that negative experience is by building something real internally which will act consciously in the world. The way to build that in yourself begins with and relies upon
When you begin to actually catch glimpses of yourself through Self-Observation, something changes inside. You no longer quite believe in yourself or feel comfortable behaving as usual. You can see all of these automatic and repeated responses you have to life around you and you begin to recognize that something is not genuine in them. Somehow, your Personality no longer reflects what or who you really feel yourself to be. And yet, you are unable to change anything. That practiced Personality goes right ahead acting in the same ways, saying the same expressions over and over, expressing the same attitudes and opinions in the same ways, using habitual gestures, postures, and facial expressions.

Once you begin to become Conscious a little bit of the existence of False Personality, through Self-Observation, you recognize that the truer part of you, the Real I that you have, contradicts the manifestations of False Personality and is poorly represented in the Personality you have at present. You feel like a phony sometimes. You feel like an alien to yourself. You don't know WHAT your self IS anymore. Your False Personality begins to cease functioning at times when you are Observing. You are left with no Personality and barely know how to react to life at all.

Everything you Observe in yourself seems artificial. You observe multiple and contradictory I's and you feel only confused because
you are unable to discern which I's are real and which are artificial.

It takes time sorting all of this out. It takes practice that enlightens you with experiential Understanding to begin to discern the difference in quality between the lower I's of False Personality and the higher I's of Real I. And it is along the way that you can begin to make choices about what you give your attention to, eliminating aspects of False Personality as you Observe, Verify, and Separate from acquired wrong work.

You can see that it takes "process" for all of this to happen in you and there is a time when it is uncomfortable or even terrifying to some people. After all, you are sacrificing your sense of self before you know what "self" will take its place, what that self will require of you and whether or not you are willing to give it.

This psychological vertigo that a student experiences when they no longer know who they are is real and dangerous. Many will retreat immediately into Sleep because they cannot bear it. Others can get stuck at a point where they can see themselves to some degree but cannot feel any emotional discernment and therefore cannot respond with Objective valuation of what they see. So they cannot move forward to Inner Separation. Some will go down other paths, self-made and inherently dangerous. Some simply turn their attention to other aspects of the Work and determinedly avoid feeling the loss of ego, therefore they lose the force of this Work
and cannot proceed to develop in Consciousness or Being.

The solution to this problem is to proceed in the Work. As you develop Knowledge and Understanding, Real I grows in presence and strength. Self-Observation is the function that will provide all of the information for this development. So you have to have the courage to proceed in the Work through Self-Observation in spite of the vertigo.

Remember:-- This is a stage and it will pass.-- Everyone has Real I and it is accessible through the Work.-- You have to see the reality of yourself before you can begin to change. Change is your objective. It is natural to be shaken when you begin to see False Personality in action. Think of it as being shaken awake. Remember that you can "fall back on" your False Personality and let it function on automatic if circumstances require.-- Notice the taste of the state of "nothingness" that exists in this limbo.

Perhaps the best help you can find for this condition of psychological vertigo is to ask yourself "what is it that is doing this Observing in me?" As you seek internally to define what Observing I is, it becomes discernible and gains strength. It is connected to Real I, the deepest part of you, the highest state in you, and you will be reassured.

There is one other effort to make to help you with this condition: Remember Yourself.
You will notice that the "frightening feeling" vanished once you were again firmly entrenched in personality through your exchange with the colleague.

**QUESTION:**

False personality perhaps in a "death panic"?

**RESPONSE:**

Exactly. These experiences reveal that there is nothing behind false personality, nothing to stand on. Your house is "built on sand." And nothing authentic has been created to replace it yet (true personality). This is a common experience in the early stages of Work practice. It comes from shining the light of consciousness on personality.

Ouspensky himself had the following experience early in his practice of the Fourth Way: in a letter to a friend, he stated that he did not know who would be writing the next letter (which I) and this frightened him. Seeing our multiplicity and disconnecting with our former sense of self is very unsettling. But we need to realize that "I am not that" and that this is a temporary transition.
This confused state, although powerful, is temporary and a common experience in the beginning of the Work. The uncertainty, the loss of identity, and the terror that these feelings create is the "psychological vertigo" that accompanies the state of recognizing False Personality with an undeveloped observing I.

From the beginning, you must understand that the process of the Work is difficult, requires hard efforts, and can be very painful. It can give you frightening feelings of psychological vertigo or a loss of identity. The loss of one's false personality, the exposure of the ego, these are all difficult, painful, and liberating. This is what you must undergo as the result of your Work efforts and you should know ahead of time that it is lifelong, sometimes nearly impossible, but of immeasurable value.

We are available to any authentically seeking person.

QUESTION:

My personality, as I look back over time has a pronounced acerbic wit, a sarcasm intended by me, and seen by me, as being funny. In attempting to make personality passive I note a pronounced decrease in the clever rejoinder, etc. It is such a pronounced difference that people see it quite clearly and my kids think I am
nicer (because I have quit talking and listen). I also note when with a group of people, they are always interrupting and jockeying for position to talk, impress, etc. It almost is getting a bit strange and I lose my easy bearings in the midst of it. I am a bit confused, part of the vertigo thing.

RESPONSE:

Even if you are confused, don't imagine that you are lost. This condition is a natural side effect of the Work. You have witnessed others' sleeping Personalities butting against each other and have seen it for the impostor that it is. You are beginning to verify that you are not like that and do not want to be like that. To deal with "losing your bearings" strive for Inner Silence, Stillness. Be passive and don't Inner Consider behaving differently. This "vertigo thing" can be difficult to deal with but it is temporary. It only needs more time to develop Real I that can function naturally and independently in any situation. One more thing -- There is a place for humor and wit in Real I, True Personality, Essence. But not sarcasm if it hurts anyone.

QUESTION:

I was in an interval and knew it and I am much, much better. I, or something, sealed myself up like a bathyscaph till I got better. "Battened down the hatches" to extend the nautical metaphor. Is
psychological vertigo

this an instance, albeit a weak attempt, at hermetically sealing oneself, there was something "there".

RESPONSE:

I don't believe so, unless you intentionally hermetically sealed yourself for specific reasons. Being hermetically sealed is an intentional activity of the mind. I think perhaps you reached a stage where you were feeling that psychological vertigo and going into an interval at that point partially saved you from a total crisis of identity.
Teachings of Inner Transformation
Rebecca Nottingham

| Introduction | Self-Observation | Divided Attention | Identification | Personality | Inner Considering |
| Inner Silence | Vanity | Multiplicity | Psychological Vertigo | Self-Remembering |
| External Considering | Negative Emotions |

Self-Remembering

True Self-Remembering belongs to a higher state of consciousness. Flashes of it, glimpses and brief experiences are possible and can feed Real I. But more often before a person has developed in the Work, their attempts at Self-Remembering will be distorted by a lack of cognizance of True Self, Real I. I don't discourage the practice of Self-Remembering or attempts at it. I would suggest you store your impressions from these experiences for future reflection. In Self-Remembering, the Self you experience is nothing like the False Personality you have. Authentic Being in the context of Scale and Relativity is the true experience of Self-Remembering. Remember that the personality you have is not the Being that you are.

In the experience of self-remembering, you will recognize that despite whatever efforts you have made toward achieving it, this
experience is a Gift. In the experience, false personality ceases to exist. One knows oneself in one's essential nature, as an eternal being.

The best efforts one can make in order to seek that experience are more about letting go than straining for something.

Removing the obstacles to self-remembering is a more effective way of getting to that experience than trying to do some step by step process mentally. Self-remembering is not a mental state. It is not something you can intellectualize your way into.

If your efforts at self-remembering involve "sensing" the body and making an effort to force your consciousness to expand, then you haven't a prayer of getting there. You cannot "make" this experience happen. You can only make yourself ready to receive it.

Removing the obstacles is done by practicing the psychological exercises taught in the psycho-transformism ideas of the Work. One must do the Work. Change comes from practicing, not from thinking about it. Also, one is only able to receive it by being cleansed of self-interest. That purification is the result of the Work.

The paradox is that, even though it is a gift, one must also make regular efforts to try and remember oneself.
Self-Remembering is not an exercise. It is a state. Sometimes one unexpectedly finds the state of Self-Remembering as a result of self-observation and inner separation. Sometimes this happens when you are observing yourself and you see that your outward manifestations are all driven by false personality and you have a moment of not knowing what you are besides that artificial personality. A sense of serenity and self undefined may be experienced in that moment. You may encounter something more authentic than what you are observing.

Real divided attention requires intentional effort for the specific purpose of self-observation. Trying to practice self-remembering while looking at an external object is a meaningless mind game. In order to remember oneself, it is first necessary to have observed oneself and created enough real Self to know what to remember. Therefore, in order to self-remember, you must first observe.

An experience of Self-Remembering is an authentic awareness of your True Self in higher consciousness with scale and relativity.

Self-remembering is a level of higher consciousness. In self-remembering, we know our authentic worth, relative value and our connectedness to all things. Although this state is achievable, or rather is given to us in rare experiences, it is not something we can evoke or control with a level of consciousness that is beneath it.
Because Observing I is connected to higher consciousness, creating a stronger Observing I brings us closer to that state and makes us more available for moments of self-remembering.

Self-remembering is a rare state of higher consciousness in which one is both undifferentiated from Creation and entirely unique. It happens only in rare moments and seldom when we are actively seeking it. It comes to us with a sense of selfhood, serenity, acceptance, and compassion.

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Self-remembering is a state of higher mind uncontaminated with anything negative. What you have been able to "observe" in your efforts to self-remember is the artifice of false personality. Once false personality has been observed, it ceases to function smoothly or at all. Sometimes we are left without the faculties to interact with the world. This state is part of the evolution in the Work and it can feel like "psychological vertigo" but it is temporary.

You cannot get to self-remembering without going through the path of self-observation except for rare circumstances that you cannot control. You have to create something in yourself through the practice of the Work (namely, self-observation) that is capable of experiencing self-remembering, that can generate the psychological conditions for that experience.

QUESTION:

Please relate the interconnection and difference among divided attention, self-observation, and self-remembering.

RESPONSE:

The beginning of divided attention is realizing that your attention goes in one direction only -- outward -- and that you live only in response to external stimuli. The "I" that can recognize this is the first "I" of divided attention. The point of the effort is that through realization and practice you can now have more than one
For instance, the practice of seeing a tree and seeing yourself seeing a tree is useful only in so far as it confirms that one CAN have divided attention. The aim is to take part of the attention that is normally directed outward, engaging in life, and turn that attention inward to see your behavior and the psychology that generates it from an objective perspective.

If you can do this, then you are using divided attention in order to practice self-observation. The aim of self-observation is to uncritically observe your psychology and your behavior in relation to Work knowledge.

The Work tells us our behavior is governed by mechanics, that we are all asleep and furthermore that we do not know that we are asleep. The overall purpose of self-observation is awakening. In awakening we see what motivates our behavior, we learn how to become intentional, self-transcendent, and authentic.

The process of self-observation requires intentional, repeated efforts over a long period of time, and it is often genuinely painful work. We learn that we spend most of our time in some kind of negative state and from an objective point of view we see the unnecessary suffering of it, the wrong work of it, the interference of it and the loss of energy that it costs us. These ideas are strong motivations for change. We see our own automatic behavior which may shock
and humiliate us and we are helpless to do anything about it at first. We recognize that every action is motivated by self-interest. We see in ourselves lying, justifying, manipulating, attention-seeking, competitiveness, vanity, the falsehood of pictures we have about ourselves, the multiplicity of acquired personality, even the corruption of merit seeking in our good works.

When the light of self-observation begins to reveal our inner states and psychological condition, the Observing I is still too weak to change anything it observes. However, repeated observations steal power from identifying with our mechanics, help us to separate from them and form a stronger Observing I which eventually does have the power to affect change.

This is a process of purification which removes the obstacles that cut us off from the state of self-remembering. Self-remembering is a level of higher consciousness. In self-remembering, we know our authentic worth, relative value and our connectedness to all things. Although this state is achievable, or rather is given to us in rare experiences, it is not something we can evoke or control with a level of consciousness that is beneath it. Because Observing I is connected to higher consciousness, creating a stronger Observing I brings us closer to that state and makes us more available for moments of self-remembering.

The goal is the formation of a permanent Real I which is the
manifestation of the state of self-remembering. Self-observation, founded on divided attention, creates the link between self-remembering and the development of Real I.

The mystical experience, objective consciousness, what is called in the Work self-remembering, are all essentially interchangeable terms for the same human experience.

We must always return to the work of Self-Observation. It's the hard labor of bricklaying. But it builds something.

QUESTION:

Do you intend to de-emphasize Self-Remembering?

RESPONSE:

Only in the beginning.

True Self-Remembering belongs to a higher state of consciousness. Flashes of it, glimpses and brief experiences are possible and can feed Real I. But more often before a person has developed in the Work, their attempts at Self-Remembering will be distorted by a lack of cognizance of True Self, Real I. I don't discourage the practice of Self-Remembering or attempts at it. I would suggest you
store your impressions from these experiences for future reflection.

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Quoting Nicoll again: "You know it is said that the first form of self-remembering is the realization of one's mechanicalness. Man must struggle with identifying with himself and with these illusions and pictures he is identified. He thinks himself one person who has will and full consciousness". You cannot do this Work as long as you take yourself as one I. You have to observe multiplicity in order to be able to separate from detrimental I's. "If you take yourself as one I then that I cannot have power over another I."

It is my opinion that in the beginning movements towards Self-Observation, Self-Remembering can confuse the issue. Later, once you have established a functioning Observing I, Self-Remembering simultaneously will give you another dimension of insight and a taste of Real I.
Discovering that "Real I does not need to be respected" can be a shock for Self-Remembering.

Try to understand what this condition means to the validity of your psychological condition. And be aware that recognizing that one is not one I but many, Multiplicity, is the first taste of real Self-Remembering. When you see the hordes of mechanical I's taking charge and acting without your authority, you get a better sense of what Real I might be.

Self-Remembering is invaluable. At this point it is also premature. Do not expect any full experience of Self-Remembering until you have observed and worked on yourself sufficiently.

I would consider religious devotion and reverence to be the best allies to the Work. This is one of the reasons we use Nicoll's Commentaries for the basis of this aspect of the Teaching. They are particularly religious in nature and make connections with original sources.

Nicoll says that Self-Remembering belongs to Third State, but there is a paradox here. Even though real Self-Remembering is basically
out of our grasp, we are instructed to reach for it anyway. This reaching creates the receptivity that can experience Self-Remembering.

QUESTION:

Nicoll also wrote at 450 "Self observation without Self-Remembering is simply not a good practice. The two things are quite distinct by inner taste and I would be glad if none of you asks questions now as to what is the difference" (On Deeper Self-Observation).

RESPONSE:

This quote is accurate, but Nicoll was not addressing new students. One cannot begin in the Work trying to practice both at the same time. Self-Observation definitely comes first and Nicoll states this fact over and over again throughout the Commentaries. At the same time, when you have an authentic experience of Self-Observation, if you examine it carefully, you will discern a taste of Self-Remembering.

Self-Remembering "is raising oneself -- not contending. Contending is another kind of effort. Self-Remembering is a non-identifying with oneself -- for an instant -- as if one were merely
acting and had forgotten. One is no longer in a Picture."

A moment of Self-Remembering is authentic and free of Pictures.

I have compared this experience of Self-Remembering to be something like a being momentarily on a higher floor in a building. As you go up in levels, you can see farther. When you can see farther, you can see a bigger, clearer picture. Eventually, you live at the top of that building (Higher Consciousness).

I realize there is some confusing information, even in the Commentaries, about the difference between Self-Remembering and Self-Observation. My own experience is that what you have described is seeing from the perspective of Non-Identification and that Self-Remembering is not an experience, simple or otherwise. It is a state that belongs to a higher level of Consciousness.

If your question is how do you remember to Observe yourself, the motivation comes from sincere desire to change. If everything is fine, that desire for change is less. My advice would be to put aside trying to practice Self-Remembering for now. Focus on practicing Self-Observation which can function when things are fine or not. Just register with your Observations what you see. This
accumulation of insight and information is essential in forming the next step in your path on this Way. There are simple practices that can function as "reminders" if you find this necessary. If so, we can discuss it.

QUESTION:

I was deeply moved by your translation of "Dialogue On The Path of Initiation" by Karlfried Graf Durckheim and Father Alphonse Goettmann. I would like to pose a question in respect the following quote from that: "To love one's neighbor is to help them to discover the three fundamental impulses of life: its vital source, its meaning and its unity. This is exactly what we seek in meditation, face to face with God." My question is, what is 4th Way's stance on meditation. How does it fit into the Work, if it does?

It is true that Ouspensky used the term Self-Remembering to describe several different kinds of psychological activity. I take my Understanding of the term Self-Remembering partly from Nicoll and greatly from experience. My Understanding is that Self-Remembering belongs to a higher state of Consciousness, the state of Self-Awareness. It is a metaphysical experience and can only last for a short time when we first try to practice it.
This varies. But it isn't dependent on the quality of Real I. The experience is available in full to all. It is simply rarely achieved because of all that stands in the way. It can be a very full, profoundly meaningful, even life-changing occurrence, or it can be a pale reflection of one of these.

Accompanying an authentic experience of Self-Remembering is a sense of profound peace and the serenity of acceptance.

Can you see how Reconciling Force needs to be Understanding? This lifts you above the opposites through resolution born of Understanding.

Nicoll: "I have a right not to be negative" is actually a form of Self-Remembering, of feeling a trace of Real I, that lifts you above the level of your Negative I's which are all the time telling you without a pause that you have every right to be negative."

In the Work, the first shock is called the "first Conscious Shock" because it is intentional and it is Self-Remembering. These ideas have Objective Truth at their source. Therefore you will find them reflected in all Objective Truth, wherever it may be.
Another quote..."Now the Work says that we must lift ourselves out of this dark state by acts of Self-Remembering and this, as was said above, requires force. It requires some power of concentration of attention and you will never have this power if you let your force run into this inner chaos, this continual procession of mechanical associations, this stream of images, this formless vagueness that is really our inner state."

You will recognize what happens when you don't let your force run into inner chaos. You experienced it at the gym. Were you able to read this Commentary?

QUESTION:

Yes I did and yes I get your point.

RESPONSE:

One more LITTLE quote..."...He must remember, for example, that by the act of stopping all these mechanical streams in himself he may lift himself up to other influences far higher than he is."

QUESTION:

Last night something quite strange occurred, it was very late and I
felt energized and connected to something beyond me, to the Work. I went outside, raised myself quite above my thoughts, gazed up at the sky and felt a real connection to both the Work and the energy of what occurs here.

RESPONSE:

This doesn't sound like Imagination to me. Can you say more about the quality of that state?

QUESTION:

I had the energy to stop thoughts and raise myself up. I felt the presence of you and whatever connects those of us who sincerely engage in this strange, unique pursuit. I felt a gap between myself and Higher Forces that just might be surmounted one day. I contemplated humanity as a whole both in the city I live in and then moving out to encompass the Earth and time as a whole both in my life and then moving out to encompass generations past and generations to come. I thought of those who are not yet born who will think the same thoughts I now do and those who have long been forgotten and are dust, who have thought the same thoughts I am now thinking.

RESPONSE:

This sounds very much like an experience of Self-Remembering.
Did it seem that way to you? The qualities of Scale and Relativity, connectedness, and your unique Being and its relation to Higher Forces, are all part of that experience.

QUESTION:

It is like a doorway just out of reach.

RESPONSE:

How did it leave you feeling? Can you describe what emotions were present in the experience?

QUESTION:

It left me feeling Energized. Doubting my sanity. I felt in awe of the vastness all around me.

RESPONSE:

This is the apex of sanity. And I would describe it as an experience of a higher state of Consciousness.

QUESTION:

Yesterday, I had a wonderful experience. I was at the gym and, as I was entering, I decided to try an experiment. I told myself that working out didn't really require the use of my intellectual or
emotional centers, that I should just leave it to the movement and instinctive centers. As I began my cardiovascular work out, I noticed that it seemed much easier requiring much less effort. It actually felt very pleasant. The next thing I noticed is that I was seeing people in a whole new light. I wasn't in my usual judgmental mind, you know...he's too fat, bet he's been working out for years, she's got a nice figure, etc.. I was seeing people and appreciating them. I can't really explain it. It's just that I began to feel delight in just seeing people. The next thing I noticed was that I began to feel an overwhelming joy come over me and began to cry. A bit embarrassing (internal considering- what will they think?) I felt loved and started to feel compassion for others. Again it's hard to explain. Then a song came on the radio, "A Whole New World" from the movie Aladdin. I heard the words for the first time. If you know the song it speaks of a beautiful new world. It was as if I was being told that awakening is possible and this is a taste of what it will be like. This lasted about 15 minutes. Does this sound like it might have been and experience of self remembering? Did I perhaps free up my emotional center a little because I left the workout to my moving and instinctual centers. Any guidance you could provide would be appreciated.

RESPONSE:

In your gym experience, suspending the Emotional and Intellectual Centers allowed you to see in a whole new light because they were
available to see. They weren't occupied with Negative I's (thoughts and feelings) generated by the Instinctive Center. This was an authentic experience of Higher Consciousness. And yes, you were given a taste of it. REMEMBER THAT TASTE. Prepare to experience resistance.
QUESTION:

As I walked through a grocery store, I decided to try to act from External Considering. As soon as I turned into an aisle and saw someone coming my way down the middle of the aisle, internally I switched to Inner Considering, by requiring, internally, that they move aside or take me into account somehow. The striking thing about this observation is not noticing Inner Considering, but having observed the immediate switch from External to Internal Considering. It seems to me that the foundation for External Considering should not be based on "other people". It should be based in the negation of self-will and self-love.

RESPONSE:

One of the things you verified is that the power of your Features and Personality is stronger than your ability to practice External Considering.
Considering. This is because Self- Observation, Inner Separation, Non-Identification have to be functioning long enough for Personality to be made passive and intentionality therefore able to be present. The foundation for External Considering is based first on the elimination of wrong work in the Emotional Center, second on other people's needs. It's a good exercise to practice but what you'll find is that Internal Considering and your own Features and Personality are dominant until you've eliminated and disempowered them to some extent.

What the Work desires to accomplish in you is a transformation from Mechanicality to an authentic Self of Intentionality which consists of External Considering. External Considering is the un-self-interested state of being in which everyone else's welfare becomes more important to you than your own. That is self-transcendent Work. This involves the death of False Personality (ego). It is a process that requires efforts, sometimes painful, sometimes frightening, but always enlightening and if you do the Work correctly they lead you to your True Self.

Whatever actions constitute External Considering, none require being appreciated or even recognized. Those needs belong to Inner Considering. External Considering has nothing to do with getting anything, even acknowledgment, understanding, appreciation, merit
or reward for oneself. That is why real External Considering is the opposite of weakness. There is nothing weak in being able to act consciously, unselfishly in the world. Indeed it takes great strength to not be constantly obsessed with yourself. It takes courage and the acceptance of Necessary Suffering, and freeing oneself from Unnecessary Suffering to fight your way through the psychological obstacles of Inner Considering. If you are successful, you have raised your level of Being.

If you are practicing real External Considering, no one can take advantage of you, nor mock you to any effect. Vanity, Fear, Power features do not exist in External Considering and therefore cannot be assailed. You will have gained a measure of independence from the external world and from the tyranny of the wrong work of your psychology.

The motive behind doing a favor for a friend in External Considering is the friend's need. If that friend doesn't appreciate your favor or outwardly rejects it, it is no reflection on your authentic motive and will not be an insult. To use your own example, cooking your wife her favorite dinner may seem like an exercise in External Considering. But if her need is not for dinner but for your attention instead of the hours you spent shopping and cooking, this is not real External Considering. You gave her what you wanted to give her instead of what she needed. Instead of making you angry, it should have motivated you to find out what
she needs and to give her that with no expectation of any particular results. External Considering has no consideration for one's own needs. As a matter of fact, one has no needs in External Considering. The needs of others are the only consideration, which is a manifestation of Higher Consciousness.

Contrary to your idea of examining External Considering from a "selfish point of view from the point of view of first line work", it must be said that the first line of Work is ALL ABOUT divesting oneself of selfishness. It is not "an attempt when in the domain of false personality...to focus exclusively on the thoughts and opinions of others." To begin with, False Personality and External Considering cannot co-exist. And the focus of External Considering is not on the thoughts and opinions of others, but on their needs. If the others show no appreciation or even acknowledgment, you cannot deduce that you have failed, because you have no requirements of them. To deduce that you are not Externally Considering them because you have not given them what they need may be partially correct. External Considering would know what they need before acting and even if its actions are ineffective, there is no failure because the motivation is genuine.

So in the Work we are taught to practice External Considering even when we don't know how, just like we are asked to practice Self-Observation which also has to be learned. But to get from Self-Observation to real External Considering is a long, difficult process
of cleansing yourself of the wrong work of the mechanics of Sleep. In the meantime, any exercise of External Considering will enlighten you and you will begin to see how very far away that level of Being is.

Real External Considering is advanced Work but it is something a student can DO, at least outwardly. Most other Work practices are about not doing, i.e. not expressing negativity, not being mechanical, or are about inner Work.

External Considering is essential to the development of Being. It is both a by-product of progress in the Work and an essential element in a developed person in the Work.

It isn't a practice of being "nice" to others and affecting a pleasant persona, beatific smile etc., but it and all Work practices are firmly planted in Objective Morality. In the natural progression of the Work, having created an effective Observing I, one begins to see all of the wrong work of Inner Considering. With long term observation, you begin to see that all of your actions in the world are motivated by self-interest, even the outwardly charitable ones are subconsciously, mechanically seeking merit, appreciation, rewards. When you begin to feel the insubstantiality and immaturity that comprise all of the aspects of Internal Considering and if your aim is development of Being, these manifestations begin to fall
external considering away. At that point, you can no longer walk into a room of people feeling insecure about yourself without being aware that such behavior is mechanical and infested with features based solely on Inner Considering. It will feel beneath you to be functioning psychologically at the level of Sleep, like everyone else in the room seeking self-gratification. The dissolution of those I's of Inner Considering raises you to another level of consciousness. It takes you out of the stream of social momentum and mechanicalness.

What the Work desires to accomplish in you is a transformation from Mechanicality to an authentic Self of Intentionality which consists of External Considering. External Considering is the unself-interested state of being in which everyone else's welfare becomes more important to you than your own. That is self-transcendent Work. This involves the death of False Personality (ego). It is a process that requires efforts, sometimes painful, sometimes frightening, but always enlightening and if you do the Work correctly they lead you to your True Self.

If you are acting intentionally by making your personality passive, then you cannot be exploited or used by others. You are in control. Placing limits on our preferences when called upon to do so can create force for external considering due to the intentionality of the effort.
External considering is a huge area of effort in the Work but is basically about unselfish care for others. If you treat the holidays as an opportunity to practice external considering then you will find yourself gladly giving instead of sadly tolerating your disappointed I's.

The world is full of people in need. Some of them you know and some you don't. Who you give to and how you choose to give can be directed by inspiration, circumstances, opportunity, etc. If you decide to be externally considerate with someone you know, then you can give THEM what THEY need, whether that is your presence, your absence, your listening, your help, your lack of requirements from them. Whatever circumstances come to you, if you greet them with external considering, you will find your happiness and satisfaction in being able to give.

Looking at the holiday season from the perspective that this is the time of year when it is acceptable to be unselfish, you will find even more opportunities for self-transcendence and external considering. You can be grateful, even joyous, for the opportunity to do so much giving, whether in your family or in a soup kitchen or even in solitude. This is real Work.

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from Mechanicality to an authentic Self of Intentionality which consists of External Considering. External Considering is the unself-interested state of being in which everyone else's welfare becomes more important to you than your own. That is self-transcendent Work. This involves the death of False Personality (ego). It is a process that requires efforts, sometimes painful, sometimes frightening, but always enlightening and if you do the Work correctly they lead you to your True Self.

Recognizing Inner Considering becomes one of the easiest aspects to observe after you have studied and understood what constitutes Inner Considering (refer to archives or Nicoll). These states become glaringly obvious and are very easy to see, not rare, with the effort of Self-Observation. If you observe Inner Considering, probably the most you can do and the best thing you can do is to make your personality passive. External Considering is a long way down the road of knowledge in this Work. But making your personality passive (not identifying with your Inner Considering) has to be accomplished before one can get to true External Considering. Luck plays no part in this process. Knowledge comes first, effort and practice comes after knowledge, and the result can be the creation of Real I. What you need to serve as Third Force or "reminding force" is a strong desire for change and a good deal more knowledge of the Fourth Way Work.
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seeking self-gratification. The dissolution of those I's of Inner Considering raises you to another level of consciousness. It takes you out of the stream of social momentum and mechanicalness.

So one begins by observing passively, externally and internally, and one begins to see the contradictions between external behavior and internal states and notices that the internal state is always some variation of self-interest; the need to be noticed, appreciated, treated well, the desire to be understood, to possess abilities that others value, the need to be right, the feeling of embarrassment and insecurity when these needs and desires aren't met; the bragging and preening of Vanity; the insincere salaciousness of flirting; lying overtly and lying covertly by pretending to be interested, pretending to know when you don't, pretending to care when you don't, pretending to listen when in reality your mind is on something else entirely; manipulations and the inauthentic actions of all varieties. Inner Considering is always concerned with how it appears. This is only sometimes Vanity. External appearances, position, appropriate deference, merit, status, valuation are all core emotions in Inner Considering.

It is only by observing, verifying and working against Inner Considering that one can begin to get to the point where one's every thought and action is not motivated by self-interest. This is where real External Considering can begin to happen. It doesn't happen by focusing "EXCLUSIVELY" on the thoughts and opinions of others.
It happens because being divested of self-interest leaves room in one's psychology for seeing clearly and being able to act consciously in the moment.

Whatever actions constitute External Considering, none require being appreciated or even recognized. Those needs belong to Inner Considering. External Considering has nothing to do with getting anything, even acknowledgment, understanding, appreciation, merit or reward for oneself. That is why real External Considering is the opposite of weakness. There is nothing weak in being able to act consciously, unselfishly in the world. Indeed it takes great strength to not be constantly obsessed with yourself. It takes courage and the acceptance of Necessary Suffering, and freeing oneself from Unnecessary Suffering to fight your way through the psychological obstacles of Inner Considering. If you are successful, you have raised your level of Being.

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Contrary to your idea of examining External Considering from a "selfish point of view from the point of view of first line work", it must be said that the first line of Work is ALL ABOUT divesting oneself of selfishness. It is not "an attempt when in the domain of false personality...to focus exclusively on the thoughts and opinions of others." To begin with, False Personality and External Considering cannot co-exist. And the focus of External Considering is not on the thoughts and opinions of others, but on their needs. If the others show no appreciation or even acknowledgement, you cannot deduce that you have failed, because you have no
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So in the Work we are taught to practice External Considering even when we don't know how, just like we are asked to practice Self-Observation which also has to be learned. But to get from Self-Observation to real External Considering is a long, difficult process of cleansing yourself of the wrong work of the mechanics of Sleep. In the meantime, any exercise of External Considering will enlighten you and you will begin to see how very far away that level of Being is.

QUESTION:

How can I know what others truly need, and what if anything do external considering and internal considering have to do with energy exchanges between people? If one has no needs in external considering, then what is the purpose of trying to do it?

RESPONSE:

The way you can know what others need is first by understanding what it means to be asleep and mechanical. You can know by being
able to observe in others (because you have observed it in yourself) insecurity, nervousness, fear, withdrawal, vanity, and all forms of Inner Considering and wrong work of human psychology.

"...and what if anything do external considering and internal considering have to do with energy exchanges between people?"

Let's take an example: If you are with a group of people and you are all operating fully in False Personality, then each of you has self-interest as motivation for your personal agenda which forms requirements of this event. You each want to be appreciated, behind your empathic interest with the others may even be the intent of being seen as amiable and as a good person or a compassionate friend. You're worried if you still have garlic on your breath from lunch. You're resenting someone's inattentiveness or perceived insult. You want to make your point. You want your point to be heard, understood, and validated by everyone so that you know that you're right and so that they know that you are right. You're flirting with someone who is married and you are insulted when they don't flirt back. You wonder what's wrong with them. Then you wonder what is wrong with you. Then you wonder if you are talking too much, or if you really like these people after all. And on and on.

There is no useful exchange of energy in this kind of situation. It is all automatic, mechanical, predictable, and pointless.

However, let's say you are with your group of people and you are
not in False Personality, which is made up mostly of Inner Considering, what might be going on with you in these circumstances? Might you not be able to see the condition of sleep, the flow of mechanicalness, the predictable stimulus-response behavior, how negativity is contagious, how it most often runs the show, how one association leads to another, how people use buffers, what pictures they have of themselves, what issues they are dealing with, what level their being is, what their features are, what their suffering is about?

If you are in External Considering, seeing from this point of view will evoke compassion for everyone's wrong work, and forgiveness. You could soothe the insecurity of one, absorb passively the negativity of another, include the excluded ones, and generally respond with conscious intentional words and actions appropriate to the circumstances. I hope you agree that this would be a better place to be in. If you do, then imagine your meeting with these people if they were also all Externally Considering. You can freely give to them your attention and care, and they give you back the attention and care that you need which will be an entirely different kind of need than that which comes from False Personality. That is an appropriate exchange of energies between people, each Externally Considering the other. Now imagine the whole world like that, everyone Externally Considering everyone else all through their lives. No fear, no hate, no taking only giving and receiving -- that would be purpose enough, don't you think, to do your own part in it,
to be one more person on that side of Consciousness.

To try and work on the Emotional Center from the angle of External Considering is jumping ahead of yourself. First, you must work diligently on cleansing the Emotional Center of its wrong work. Then you can practice External Considering rightly.

QUESTION:

I was reading today some Nicoll on Metanoia. Attitudes and associative habits of mind. I can so clearly see how they imprison. Isn't external consideration a way to see differently?

RESPONSE:

Yes, External Considering is another perspective. We can put ourselves there sometimes. In the Work we aim to grow into being externally considerate in nature. In disposition, in constitution, in character.

The attitudes and habits of mind that you could see are exactly where you are most identified and least your real Self. Yes, it is about thinking from a new place in yourself that must be created. "Being nice" is often the result, but the point is more about objective goodness.
QUESTION:

As I walked through a grocery store, I decided to try to act from External Considering. As soon as I turned into an aisle and saw someone coming my way down the middle of the aisle, internally I switched to Inner Considering, by requiring, internally, that they move aside or take me into account somehow. The striking thing about this observation is not noticing Inner Considering, but having observed the immediate switch from External to Internal Considering. It seems to me that the foundation for External Considering should not be based on "other people". It should be based in the negation of self-will and self-love.

RESPONSE:

One of the things you verified is that the power of your Features and Personality is stronger than your ability to practice External Considering. This is because Self-Observation, Inner Separation, Non-Identification have to be functioning long enough for Personality to be made passive and intentionality therefore able to be present.

The foundation for External Considering is based first on the elimination of wrong work in the Emotional Center, second on other people's needs. It's a good exercise to practice but what you'll
find is that Internal Considering and your own Features and Personality are dominant until you've eliminated and disempowered them to some extent.

Conscious Love is External Considering.

QUESTION:

To what extent is External Considering a matter of feeding Self-Love or weaknesses in others?

RESPONSE:

To no extent at all. That would not be in their best interest. The point of view of correct External Considering is doing what is right and giving what is needed. Reinforcing what is false and weak in another is not doing them a favor. For a more conscious person, there are more choices. In what to do.

QUESTION:

Let's put this in the context of one's business, internal and external considering. I can see the point on internal considering always, but the external considering eludes me. I am at a point where I can be
passive and stuff with kids, friends, but I feel lost in the business context and this is where my vertigo hits.

RESPONSE:

What is it about External Considering eludes you? The point of it or what it is or how to do it?

QUESTION:

How in a shark tank, to put it bluntly.

RESPONSE:

A difficult task, to be sure. Do you mean that you don't know how to be Externally Considerate in your work environment?

QUESTION:

I do not see how to do it in business. Maybe what I am getting at is function of true personality.

RESPONSE:

Let's say you have an opponent in a court case. Instead of thinking of how you can discredit him, you would psychologically put yourself in his place. This would give you a perspective that you would lack otherwise. It would also give you Understanding, alternative resolutions, and the potential ability to see how to
achieve your aim without using violence against your opponent. External Considering in this case would allow you to empathize with the Real Suffering that may be present and be successful in finding a fair resolution. This is the most difficult circumstances under which to practice External Considering and it will a lot of time. Most of that time should be devoted to eliminating Internal Considering which leads in the right direction. I believe this is a different issue than the vertigo of no Personality.

QUESTION:

One- Where does this involuntary laughter at the absurdity of negativity (in another or oneself) come from- it caused my wife to become only more negative because I am "not taking her seriously"? and. Two- The "turning away from my wife" and "continuing to pretend to be negativity"- it is clearly pride and "saving face", being unwilling to show another that I have seen my foolishness...can you further instruct me on this?

RESPONSE:

The involuntary laughter is a release of the energy detached from Negative Emotions and Identification. Being unwilling to expose your foolishness (something we all have), is another manifestation of the fear of being vulnerable. Having a Non-Identified relationship to yourself gives you great freedom of movement and
flexibility so that making mistakes, being wrong or appearing foolish create no negative response in your psychology. In relation to your wife, External Considering would be to be totally honest with her. It is important to her that you take her seriously, just as it would be important to you. Your Aim is to reassure her, be authentic and compassionate.

If you haven't already, read page 253 in Volume 1 "Internal Considering and External Considering". A person of low Being has no Magnetic Center and has self-interest as his every motivation and gratification-seeking behind his every activity. What he/she is capable of in a moral sense defines the level of Being of that person. A man of low Being would be the person who passed by the wounded man in the story of the Good Samaritan or perhaps a person with an even lower level of Being would stop and steal from the helpless man. The Good Samaritan is a man of higher Being who does Good from seeing the good of doing it.

QUESTION:

It seems to me that the ability to Love all of mankind requires transformation. Is External Considering a near aim or a far aim?

RESPONSE"
External Considering is a far aim and requires considerable foundational Work on Internal Considering. I think that the ability to Love all of humankind requires a degree of compassion that is as deep as your own pain. Do you love a child who misbehaves out of ignorance? Of course. Transformation can create Conscious Love in a permanent state. Conscious Love also exists now, in time, above you. If it were in your power, would you not forgive everyone everything, knowing now what Sleep is?

QUESTION:

I would.

RESPONSE:

That is Conscious Love. Do it one person at a time.

QUESTION:

This includes, I suppose, the ability to forgive oneself as well?

RESPONSE:

Absolutely. And probably first.

First of all, the direction toward External Considering is the path directly through Internal Considering. I have paradoxical
perspectives about the issue of the "oneness" of everything. There are verifiable levels where all of life on Earth, all of humanity, all of the Universe are "of one thing". There is also the reality of individual uniqueness. While we share more similarities with each other than we recognize, our uniqueness is like the package that incarnates the different contributions each can make.

QUESTION:

So finding commonness is not the way toward External Considering.

RESPONSE:

When I see another person, I think "there is another person like me". Not part of me, under the same laws, sharing the common experience of life on planet Earth.

Finding commonness is not the way toward External Considering although you will find that common experience will help you empathize, which is necessary in External Considering. As a matter of fact, the opposite is more true. When you are outside of the "common" experience of life due to the Work, it is the growing separation from that part of you which is like the other person which gives you even greater compassion because of greater Understanding and realization that Awakening gives you opportunities that are not available otherwise.
QUESTION:

So External Considering is more like the ability to 'step inside someone else's skin' regardless of your own uniqueness or Level of Being.

RESPONSE:

This is definitely the right attitude. But it is only the beginning movement of External Considering.

"Standing in someone else's shoes" i.e. seeing from their perspective, is part of External Considering. Your uniqueness has nothing to do with it but your level of Being certainly does. A development of Being is necessary before you can Externally Consider each person according to their need.

This is meant to be an Objective perspective. Done right it does not involve Identifying. If it leads to sympathy, just Verify whether it is the right Work of the Emotional Center.

Only the small I's can become Identified. Objective I, Real I does not Identify and is the I that is present in the act of External Considering.

"In regards to sleeping machines" that is like asking what use is it trying to be good when my purpose is being good.
Do not think that you can use Work exercises to benefit yourself apart from awakening. This is what you owe: External Considering for the purpose of contributing goodness to the world.

QUESTION:

Am I headed in the right direction. if I try to fulfill a need I see in someone. even if I sense that this is an ego need?

RESPONSE:

This isn't directional, but it can sometimes be appropriate to Externally Consider another by pacifying them as long as it causes no harm.

Nicoll: "In the Work, external considering must go more deeply than in life. It really belongs to the purification of the Emotional Center. One of the great objects of this Work is to awaken the Emotional Center which is drugged with negative emotions and all the small emotions of self, of vanity, of self-conceit, etc. "...We have to be fair "in ourselves" to others and this really is Work on oneself that takes the form of external considering. A cluster of unpleasant thoughts and feelings about another person, that you have allowed to enter consciousness willingly can begin to grow. It
is both for the sake of yourself and the other person that something must be done -- that is, that you must Work on yourself to neutralize, as it were, this powerful material in you. "All your intelligence and sincerity and Work Memory will be required probably to neutralize this poison, so that you can once more treat the other person fairly inside yourself. You will have to drop all self-justifying, and above all you will have to remember what you have observed in yourself and what you are like, before you criticize so easily this other person."

The best way to "exercise" your Being is in External Considering. External Considering, done rightly, will increase your Being.

External Considering is a powerful exercise as you have now Verified. Eventually, in the Work, it can become a permanent state of Being.

Last meeting you asked "what is the best way to diffuse old accounts?" First, you need to decide if you really want to. If you do, begin by realizing that part of the basis of account-making is thinking that others should be different. Putting yourself in the place of a parent, for instance, means understanding what it is like to be him and live his life. It is really the only way to get to
Forgiveness. If that parent was a victim of abuse or is limited by any factor, you must experience what that was like for him. You must also experience what you are like to him, from his point of view.

QUESTION:

In conjunction with the External Considering exercise, I notice that in ordinary inner-considering, there are a lot of negative "I"s surrounding my relationship and when I make the effort to External-Consider, those negative "I"s are raised to a better place.

RESPONSE:

Does this mean that you were able to Verify not only the result of External Considering, but the existence of different levels within yourself?

QUESTION:

Yes...This does indeed prove the different levels and that the levels can be worked with.

RESPONSE:

You seem to have successfully combined two Exercises. That of External Considering and raising Negative I's to a higher level. That
these levels can be worked with is an extremely important point to know organically.

I believe the state you are seeking is one of Non-Identification. It has to begin with self-knowledge and proceed through the Work process all the way to External Considering. During this process, you would become Objective in relation to your emotions regarding the divorce. Part of what you would want to aim at would be canceling old accounts which would require real forgiving. This is a tall order for anyone.

While it is infinitely better to have a relationship with someone who shares the same Understanding and interest and values, such as would be the case with another in the Work I find it to be true that the common knowledge and aims of people in the Work allows them to have a greater degree of Understanding in their relationship, this is not a critical element (sharing the Work) in any relationship. Certainly, children cannot be involved in Work. And since the Work eventually produces an authentic Being capable of External Considering, you can have real relationships, deep relationships, love relationships with anyone.

QUESTION:
In my efforts to externally consider my mate we hit a point where she was sure about a course of action and I was just as sure about a different way to handle the situation. Does external considering mean to give in when I am sure I have the best way to handle the event?

RESPONSE:

External Considering doesn't mean that you have to "give in". But think of it this way. If you are Externally Considering another, GIVE is all that is present. Whether your solution is superior or not is irrelevant. I don't mean that you should always forgo your judgment in being conciliatory, and each situation would have to be dealt with individually. If for instance "your way" is better for all and the other way leaves open the possibility for harm, then you have to find a way to do what you know the right thing to be.

QUESTION:

Is there a connection between caring and external considering?

RESPONSE:

In the Work, there is no way to Externally Consider another person without caring. External Considering is all about caring for another person's well-being.
You can stop the thoughts, the internal words that express worry. But worry is Emotionally-Centered and therefore it is the Emotions that must be changed.

A quote, "To formulate clearly...helps to prevent this state of disorder. External Considering is always conscious and since this requires directed attention, it takes you out of worrying."
Negative Emotions

QUESTION:

I noted an extremely persistent negative state this a.m. and observed it persistently. I also noted that I regarded it as the most appropriate, or "honest" response.

RESPONSE:

This phenomenon is nothing more serious than falling back into habitual emotional states. If you can do nothing more than observe the power of habit and the psychology's way of justifying mechanical activity, you have some material to work with. Are you willing to let external influences dictate your reality, your states, with nothing in you unaffected and detached from the stimulus-response level of being? Sometimes observing negative states gives you a lot more information to work with than turning away from it. Try to perceive what is behind an habitual emotional state. Do you
feel more "yourself" when you go with your mechanics? Do you
feel justified in feeling morose, in brooding, in letting your negative
half have free rein? This is self-justification, a powerful aspect of
False Personality. Instead of allowing yourself to feel justified in
your negativity, just look at it. What is it? Where does it come
from? Where did it start? What does it give you? When you notice a
typical negative state claiming your life, try to stop the negativity
before the momentum has a firm hold on you. Look at this
phenomenon from a distance as if you were above the I's that are
creating the state.

In the Work, the proper way of dealing with Negative Emotions is
first of all, not giving expression to them. This you know and can
manage. It is critical that Negative Emotions are not repressed as
opposed to expressed. They require another approach. Repression
will not work in the long run. Observing your Negative Emotions
comes next, or at the same time. Recognizing what your Negative
Emotions are in the context of the Work and where they come from
is the next step. Separating from your Negative Emotions is the next
(super) effort and this is repeated until you are no longer Identified
with your Negative Emotions. Use the "rising fire of negative
emotions" as an alarm. You are in Wrong Work. Stop. Consider.
And adjust your attitude to alignment with the Work.

Ways to Work against habitual Negative Emotions:
-- Even before you understand what it is you are trying to do or why, you are asked by the Work not to express Negativity.

-- Recognize that regardless of any justification or secret liking of them, being in the Work, doing the Work, means getting rid of them.

-- Be aware that they are hyper-Identified.

-- Be aware that they are subjective, apply Scale and Relativity.

-- Be aware that Negative Emotions are behavior patterns and associated sets of I's laid down in you when you had no choice.

-- Know that you want to choose.

-- Want to choose change.

-- See what destruction and pain they create.

-- Learn the taste of them.

-- Learn to dislike the taste of them.

-- Choose a specific, verified habitual Negative state to apply these practices to: practice Inner Stop to behavior and thoughts that support them.
-- Practice Inner Silence in relation to them specifically.

-- Do not give them your words externally or internally.

-- Make your Personality passive. Don't allow it to act mechanically.

-- Sacrifice requirements.

-- Understand that Negative Emotions lie, they NEVER tell the whole truth of a thing and cannot be Objective.

-- They hold a sort of attraction because of their intensity, which is an illusion that wastes energy.

-- Desire to be free of that burden.

-- Nourish and nurture your Emotional Center in positive ways.

-- Remember yourself.

QUESTION:

Your comments on the Doom mentality were quite accurate. I have had friends observe this in me and today I got quite sick and negative to the whole cyclical detail of it became so obvious to me. I am anxious to deal with the problem with the increased energy I have lately. I am just sick of it, quite frankly. It is boring.
RESPONSE:

Only you can tell whether or not this Doom mentality is a manifestation of Fear Feature or whether it comes from another source. Parents very often instill this attitude in their children. Either by BEING the doom around the corner or expressing their own fear. So this can also be a part of imitated Personality. The same goes for worry. You will have to discern within yourself whether or not Fear is an underlying motivation in more than just these two expressions. The most direct route to eliminating all of the Wrong Work of Fear is by recognizing the pointless waste of energy in Negative Imagination. Step away from all of those emotions toward Humility, and acceptance. Practice Inner Stop. Do Work in another Center. And Observe.

I had a very long struggle with Fear, especially doom scenarios. When I understood through the Work that it was Negative Imagination at work and I did not have to consent to view those scenarios. Since those scenarios were such frequent visitors, I was able to turn the situation around. Every time one came to mind, I used it as a reminding factor to not pay attention to the I's. Using your Feature as a reminding factor to separate from your Feature is especially powerful. Consider this Feature the enemy (i.e. a key source of Identification which will keep you from freedom and from awakening). Search and destroy this aspect of your Personality.
by seeking out its source. First, you have to admit it to yourself, then you begin to see it more frequently, then you can no longer tolerate it, then you separate and study. Eventually, you uproot it, even if some mild forms of it remain. For instance, even if the blood rushes to your face in reaction to confrontation, if you are removed from the Fear itself you can keep your inner state from being as affected as your physical state.

QUESTION:

It seems that I place myself in situations which feed fear and I seem unable to place myself in situations which are devoid of fear. I always paint myself into a corner.

RESPONSE:

You may have to make more intentional efforts at becoming passive to your Features. Remember that the Fear is IN YOU and that it is a Negative Emotion that you must not feed. Here is where you can make a choice about what you give your attention to. Insist that you avoid fearful impressions. When fearful Emotions arise, Separate from them and Observe where they came from.

QUESTION:
This issue of "violence" seems fundamental. Irritation...impatience, Everything that fouls us up emotionally largely can be traced to this, at least in my psychology. Even the fear can turn into it in a moment. Is this staving off of violence not fundamental?

RESPONSE:

Staving off violence is absolutely fundamental from the very beginning of the Work. You will notice that irritation, impatience, and other Negative Emotions that lead to violence are all the results of having requirements that are unmet. One of the important reasons we begin in the Work by not expressing Negative Emotions is that any one of them can lead in a descending octave all the way down to the most violent states and actions. It doesn't seem possible that irritation could lead to murder. But this is so. It can, it does when it goes unchecked.

Photograph Negativity as the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center and recognize from your Work knowledge that negative states lie.

Don't try to differentiate between Negative I's. Try to separate from them. Differentiating makes no difference. Separating does. If the I is negative, it is Wrong Work and must stop.

All negativity is the enemy of your true Self. It almost invariably
negative emotions

comes from self-interest. Negativity and self-interest are fundamental aspects of Acquired Personality, and inhibit the development of Real I.

Negative I's waste energy, and create momentums that can ruin a whole day. If you can't make them be quiet, refuse to listen to them.

You must be mercilessly honest about what you sees within. It is critical not to justify the behavior that is witnessed.

Separation and non-identification with these I's are the only path to liberation from them and their vicious cycles.

You must have noticed by now that Negativity drains your energy. If you have a Time Body glimpse of what the expressions of Negativity have cost you in terms of wasted energy and lost opportunities, you may find yourself another Conscious Shock to assist you in separating from Negativity and Identifying.

QUESTION:

I observe that the non-expression of negative emotions is sometimes followed by a greater feeling of Essence arising. Is it true that the non-expression of negative emotions can prompt Essence to surface?
RESPONSE:

I would describe the experience like this: the energy of Identification that is in negative emotions is released or detached from the Identification. As a result you may experience a feeling of freedom, liberation, and a lightness of being that is the result of this energy being available to give you a moment of experience of a higher state. This higher state is closer to Essence but is not Essence.

People seem to enjoy being made to feel sad or afraid and any other number of negative emotions. This is because Negativity has more energy in it than an ordinary state. The vehicle for this phenomenon is Identification. People in the Work are taught to develop a distaste for Negative Emotions and Negative States and Negative Impressions.

In every case of negativity, separating from the force of it will release the energy that would have been otherwise consumed by the identification. If you do not practice some degree of inner separation when it comes to your negativity, you waste the vast majority of the force that could be available to you for use in attaining higher states.
QUESTION:

Without Self-Observation in these moments, we simply roll out the familiar and predictable course which leave us with no insights and others with the stale effects of our inner filth.

RESPONSE:

This is accurate. A sleeping psychology can begin at a point where one Negative I starts a train of associative Negative I's that has its own momentum and can lead all the way down to the lowest level in a person. Violence.

Example: I hate getting up in the morning. My job drives me crazy. It takes all my energy. I'm so exhausted. I just need some rest. I can't get any rest. I always have something to do! I wish I could get away from all this pressure, but I never get a chance like that. I have to work and then work some more while some people can take off whenever they feel like it. Why can't I get a break? I've always been so overwhelmed with responsibilities. My life is so unfair. It makes me furious that my sister can travel when she wants to and I have to always be the one to be responsible. Well, I've had enough. I can't take it anymore. I have to have a break or I'll die. If I don't get a break, I'll lose my mind.

This descent into Negativity CAN really lead a person to insanity,
suicide, or murder.

So the first I of Negativity is always the first moment of possible violence.

If you trace most Negative I's all the way to their origin, the origin will tell you something about yourself and will Verify the lack of validity that these I's possess. For instance, if you Observe a repeated negative habit and you recognize that it is imitation because your parent does the same thing. It is immediately robbed of its substance, of your ownership. It can dissolve in the presence of this knowledge.

QUESTION:

I highlighted as a significant idea contained in the Commentary. "In the Work, the enjoyment of negative states must be observed sincerely, especially the secret enjoyment of them. You cannot separate yourself from what you have a secret affection for." This seems connected to the idea of "deeper Self-Observation" and moving it to the level of seeing motivations.

RESPONSE:

This is exactly right. Observing that you secretly enjoy a negative
state is one step deeper than Observing that you are in a negative state. This process continues to deepen until you can see motivations.

QUESTION:

It has been quite unmistakable. I was in a world of identification with several matters and still caught up in it. It was a very new experience and I just sat there and let the negativity flow through like a current. I am unsure if I could have stemmed it with effort. Was the process correct in just letting it happen and observe?

RESPONSE:

When you were letting the negativity flow through you, were you experiencing Negative Emotions yourself?

QUESTION:

Not entirely. It was a completely new thing to feel negative but not to be negative, if you can see what I mean. I was emotionally on an even keel, but I felt the onslaught.

RESPONSE:

This is a new stage. The difference between your feeling negative and not being negative is Inner Separation, the beginning of Non-
Identification, and the growth of Observing I.

QUESTION:

It is a definite new state for me. Very new.

RESPONSE:

Try to remember the taste of Identification so that you can recall it when you experience it again. The letting things go by or through you without snagging your Emotional Center while you are observing, is a new level of clarity.

The Fourth Way is in life and requires that we deal with our circumstances, whatever they are, from the angle of doing the Work. If you feel lost, confused, empty, in darkness -- 1) recognize these as negative states that exist in you. 2) remember that negative states lie because they aren't the whole truth of the matter with scale and relativity. 3) don't try to do anything about your negative feelings other than observe them uncritically and don't express them.

If you are not successful, keep trying, keep doing the Work. Earnest efforts will gradually create a stronger Real I in you.

If you can recognize that your negative states are caused by the requirements you have (of the world, of people, of your life) in
order to feel satisfied, then you will know that these requirements are based in Acquired Personality and inner considering.

We Work against these by making Personality passive, by inner separation, by non-identification, by recognizing that inner considering is only self-interest, by sacrificing your need to be gratified.

All anyone can do for a very long time is practice self-observation. Observing negativity is one of the most informative ways to gain understanding about yourself and about the nature of Sleep. You can use the feeling of negativity to remind yourself to observe: How are you negative? What is the source of your negativity? Anger, pain, fear? Make a practice of observing your negativity.

The Work exists to give you the chance to find meaning. I could tell you to observe how your bad state is directly related to your requirements not being met and the negative emotions of disappointment and frustration. But what I want to say to you is to find love and fill your life with it. Love IS meaning. Now the real secret...giving love is what fills the emptiness, not receiving love. Things you can do: --Get a puppy or a kitten and give your heart to it --Help someone in need because you can --Be kind always --Be patient. Gurdjieff said "Patience is the mother of Will. If you have no mother, how can you be born?" --Do not indulge the wrong work
of the emotional center by feeding it impressions that will "inflame" wrong work. --Direct your attention intentionally to something that soothes you and is a positive impression. Distract your mind with directed creative imagination, work, hobbies. Meditation, contemplation, prayer.

Suffering does not run the world. Negative energy runs the world. People use unnecessary suffering as justification for these negative emotions that run the world.

QUESTION:

I also feel that the time is approaching when I will need to make contact with others in the work, and feel frustrated at my extreme isolation. I'm sure there is no simple solution to this quandary, and don't mean to impose on you unnecessarily, but if you have any suggestions of how my preclusion from the second and third lines of work might be mitigated, I would appreciate your advice.

RESPONSE:

It would be wonderful to be able to find individuals or groups interested in this Work with whom you could share ideas and understanding. You should search for this. In my experience, I have found that nothing of the sort exists. Indeed, virtually every group
or individual connected with the Work manifests some type of distortion usually related to interest in gaining personal power or the need to feel superior. Nevertheless, I would suggest that you not be discouraged by this and continue to seek people with whom you can share the Work. Feeling frustrated at being isolated may be understandable, but then you must look at it also as a state of negativity. This negativity can cut you off from the possibilities that may exist in your isolation. Let your higher emotions inform you and act accordingly. Don't let negative emotions confuse you and steal your life. When the time is right for you to do whatever you decide to do next, you will know. Then follow your Aim.

QUESTION:

The system proposes that in our work on ourselves we should employ a key technique that promises to provide material for observation while at the same time presents opportunities for change of being: the non-expression of negative emotions. The non-expression of negative emotions is said to be useful in and of itself due to their entirely self-generated and imaginary quality and that negative emotions simply represent the wrong work of a tainted machine. Secondly, negative emotions are said to be the greatest source of leaks of energy for the machine; a rarefied energy that is best preserved for work efforts. Third, it is said that the energy produced by this volatile emergence of negative emotions can be
converted and placed in service of the effort of self-remembering. It is this third aspect that interests me here. It seems that many things are necessary to effect this conversion. One must first recall that this is a useful thing to do; then one must intervene prior to the expression or all is lost; one must relinquish identification with the surrounding causes; one must intentionally apply the energy to the act of self-remembering; and lastly, the machine must continue behaving in the world. For me, this conversion of energy is more rare than the opportunities given to do so; and yet I feel that this is an important idea in the system. This should not sound like an over-emphasis on this particular aspect but simply one that occupies my thoughts at this time. Is this an appropriate aspect for observation and work?

RESPONSE:

There are many reasons in the Work for not expressing negative emotions. When you begin to practice this exercise, you will first be surprised at how often you experience negative emotions. Next you will be incredulous at your own powerlessness when trying to resist the pull of need to express them. The next things you will probably see are justification I's popping up all over the place. Before we go further, let's clarify what the Work term "negative emotions" encompasses.

It means not only anger, but also irritability, sadness, boredom,
dislike, complaining, melancholy, malice, criticizing, impatience, resentment, envy, "woe is me", rage, annoyance, bitterness, grudges, dissatisfaction, violence, etc. All of this, which you will observe in yourself as well as in others, is the wrong work of a sleeping machine who presumes everything should suit its agenda and requirements. "Tainted" would be an inaccurate word to describe this condition. As a matter of fact, this is the normal psychological condition of every sleeping person and it's just the wrong work of the emotional center. If you manage to do the Work exercise of not expressing negative emotions, if you observe them uncritically in order to see them clearly, if you can do this for even a moment or two, you will suddenly find yourself outside of the flow of human stimulus-response momentum. From this more objective point of view, whether in the moment or later on reflection, you can carefully look at what was behind your own negative feelings.

Almost all the motivations come from inner considering, self-interest, and having requirements. You only have to observe how exhausted you are after a heated argument or at the end of a difficult day to verify that negative emotions leach energy from you. This energy that is made available from resisting the expression of negative emotions can indeed be used by higher consciousness. But for you to presume that YOU can convert and direct it is absurd and dangerous.
This ability belongs to a very advanced person in the Work whose level of being and consciousness are inaccessible to your own level. The only thing you can do is make this energy available by not becoming identified with your own negativity. You very well may experience a momentary state of higher consciousness, a more objective vision of reality, or a degree of understanding as a sort of spontaneous result of the released energy that would otherwise have been wasted in negativity. But if you try to use it for your own purposes (regardless how well intentioned) you will lose all the opportunity it presents. You are very confused about this process. First: to think of it as useful is self-interest motivated, which will get you nowhere. It is what we do because it is what the Work asks of us.

The results are not to be projected by you, only experienced. You will learn in many different ways from your experiences. Second: if you are not able to "intervene" and prevent the expression of negativity, "all is NOT lost". You may learn as much, or even more from that experience, for instance how difficult it is to resist mechanics, even for those in the Work; how strong the pull of sleep is. Or you may be able to see what aspect of your own psychology is at work overriding your efforts. If you can see THAT clearly, then perhaps you can sacrifice its requirements in order to be successful the next time.

Essentially, you cannot lose anything except your objectivity
because you can learn from your failures as well. Third: Self-observation is non-identified and the surrounding causes of your negativity are all in you. Fourth: Again, and it deserves reiteration, you must not attempt to direct the energy generated by the process of not expressing negativity. It is not graspable and cannot be converted by your will. What is higher in you will direct its use, probably in an entirely different way than you would, for example toward humility. It is dangerous to be in Imagination about the Work. Don't presume that you know how it functions or where it leads. Just keep doing it. Over a long term your accumulated experiences will teach you what you have to work on and your Work knowledge will teach you how. The ultimate result of the psychological practices in the Work is a state of humility that allows authentic being to exist and right action to proceed from it. If you are looking for self-empowerment, you are on the wrong path.

QUESTION:

A great source of negativity for me might be expressed as arising from the feeling that others are not noticing me, that I am not seen, that I do not matter, that I am invisible. This in itself is difficult to see. Once seen, it must be remembered, which again, is difficult. Hence I am writing to you about it upon seeing it moments ago. I also posit that this source of negativity may be based on either a fear of being invisible or a belief that I am 'invisible' (that is,
'insignificant') Some examples of 'negativity' or other manifestations that arise might hopefully explain better what I mean-
1. When another is attentively listened to or 'seen' in situations where I am not, I immediately feel negativity towards them. I resent that they are heard and I am not. I feel either my 'ideas' are just as important as theirs are so 'it is not fair'. 2. When another person is walking ahead of me, blocking my path, not seeing me, I become irritated. Likewise, when I am speaking and am not heard or when in a group with several others in conversation and I am being ignored, I become irritated or feel isolated, ostracized, self-pity. 3. Then there is the issue of compensation- in order to compensate for what may be a fear of being invisible or a belief I refuse to see that I am invisible- I exaggerate. I must excel at everything. In the past, as a much younger man, I dressed lavishly. At a younger age, I weight lifted. As a student in University, I wrote essays that stood out by covering a subject as completely as possible, often three or four times the required length. Today, I have my own office in the most prime location possible. Of course, it is never enough and deep down there is often a sense that I am 'faking it' that I am an 'impostor'. All this is from a deep need to be 'seen', to 'matter'. To be invisible is a painful, humiliating experience.

RESPONSE:

In this Work, we practice Self-Observation in order to get objective views of our reality. These glimpses form pictures that can inform
negative emotions

us. Part of working with a group in the Fourth Way is accepting photographs, pictures, that others give to you about yourself from their perspective. Please understand that photographs given to you from a real Teacher are not aimed at hurting you. The Teacher's objective is to enlighten you so that you may be able to see even more clearly. Keeping this in mind, photograph Negativity as the Wrong Work of the Emotional Center and recognize from your Work knowledge that negative states lie. Understand that the desire to be seen, noticed, have importance, be accepted, feel appreciated, are all natural strivings that arise from the brain stem urges that seek the security and connectedness of social relationships.

So these emotions are not only a natural function of the human personality, but they are the same in everyone, regardless of whether the person has developed a personality that manifests those urges differently. Now for the photograph: All of the emotions that you describe belong to Inner Considering and most specifically to Vanity. In this Work, we try to evolve beyond brain stem urges governing our actions in the world and forming our psychology. With that in mind --

You state:

"1. When another is attentively listened to or 'seen' in situations where I am not, I immediately feel negativity towards them. I resent that they are heard and I am not. I feel either my 'ideas' are just as
Resentment toward another because they have what you do not, i.e. attention, appreciation, is nothing more than envy. Your ideas may indeed be just as important or valuable as theirs are, but to whom does it matter? To you? Or can your concern be for the betterment of the whole group, the other individual, or the situation? So what if someone is getting more attention than you are? Maybe they need it. Maybe they need it even more than you need it, and maybe you could give up your own desire for it as an exercise in External Considering. Don't expect "fairness", it isn't reasonable."

2. "When another person is walking ahead of me, blocking my path, not seeing me, I become irritated. Likewise, when I am speaking and am not heard or when in a group with several others in conversation and I am being ignored, I become irritated or feel isolated, ostracized, self-pity."

When someone is blocking your path, your irritation is impatience. If you feel you are being ignored, ostracized, or isolated, Vanity is at work. All of these negative emotions exist in you because you have requirements of the world, of other people, of your life, and your requirements keep you stuck in all of the aspects of Inner Considering. Vanity fills you with Inner Considering (Do they like me? Does she find me attractive? Do I seem boring? Why didn't that person answer my question? Am I laughing too loud? Am I
negative emotions

Have I received enough respect, recognition, reward? Am I getting what I want? Am I satisfied? Am I gratified?) If your own view of yourself is dependent upon other peoples' responses to you, then your personality is governed by Vanity and Inner Considering.

3. "Then there is the issue of compensation- in order to compensate for what may be a fear of being invisible or a belief I refuse to see that I am invisible- I exaggerate. I must excel at everything. In the past, as a much younger man, I dressed lavishly. At a younger age, I weight lifted. As a student in University, I wrote essays that stood out by covering a subject as completely as possible, often three or four times the required length. Today, I have my own office in the most prime location possible. Of course, it is never enough and deep down there is often a sense that I am 'faking it' that I am an 'impostor'. All this is from a deep need to be 'seen', to 'matter'. To be invisible is a painful, humiliating experience."

Of course it is never enough, partly because gratification-seeking has no end, and partly because this sense you have of "faking it" or "being an impostor" comes from a deeper level than the world can satisfy. This deep need you have to be "seen", to "matter" is only painful or humiliating if you believe it is. In reality, it is unnecessary suffering and you can simply let it go with the recognition that you do not want Vanity governing your life and actions. There is a paradox here. This deep need to "matter" can be
negative emotions

strictly vanitas (emptiness) or it can be, even at the same time, the force behind the effort to find meaning. Finding real meaning in your life makes all the small I's of self-interest fade into nothingness. The next time you find yourself feeling these emotions make an exercise to turn your psychology around 180 degrees and concern yourself with everyone else's welfare, anyone else's needs. If you are not tangled up in Inner Considering, you may notice that someone else is in need or that everyone else is full of Inner Considering as well. They are adjusting their clothes, worrying about their breath, smoothing down their hair, flirting and showing off, bragging, telling jokes, being vulgar, or anything else to get attention. The difference is that they cannot see this. You have seen and so you have made the first step in the possibility of self-transformation. Seeing is the first step to change if you are willing to.

In the Work Violence is at the bottom of a degenerating spiral of Negative Emotions. It is the most base and coarse energy. This is partly why one of the first exercises in the Work is to not express Negativity. Negative I's associate to other Negative I's which lead down habitual paths of negative thoughts and emotions. If this descent is not stopped by Non-Identifying, it can lead all the way to murder or suicide. The Work also has an expanded definition of Violence that includes insisting, coercing, extorting, causing harm to someone through manipulation, forcing your will or opinions on
negative emotions

others, intolerance, slander, and hatred.

QUESTION:

At those rare times when I am able to refrain from expressing negative emotions, I can see myself feeling deprived of something I want to do.

RESPONSE:

You are deprived of something you want to do when you don't express negativity. It feels natural to you to express yourself according to your Essence inclinations. That doesn't mean it is appropriate. This particular exercise reveals other Work ideas that will help in the process of Inner Separation from negative emotions. Try not to just repress them. Try bringing in the Third Force of Understanding to transcend them.

Guilt is a negative emotion, drop it. Sometimes it's necessary, once again, to retreat and contemplate. Nothing else.

Sometimes observing negative states gives you a lot more information to work with than turning away from it. Try to perceive what is behind an habitual emotional state. Do you feel more
"yourself" when you go with your mechanics? Do you feel justified in feeling morose, in brooding, in letting your negative half have free rein?

QUESTION:

I am afraid this is true.

RESPONSE:

This is self-justification. A powerful aspect of False Personality. Instead of allowing yourself to feel justified in your negativity, just look at it. What is it? Where does it come from? Where did it start? What does it give you?

QUESTION:

It gives me nothing. It ruins the morning.

RESPONSE:

You don't have to let it. When you notice a typical negative state claiming your life, try to stop the negativity before the momentum has a firm hold on you. Look at whether or not this negativity is caused by certain circumstances or is only your habitual way of being. Look at this phenomenon from a distance as if you were above the I's that are creating the state.
Worry is a completely useless negative emotion. If you have an issue that needs dealing with, worry will not impact it in any way. It will only obscure your ability to address the issue with conscious intentionality. For every worry I, say to yourself: what can I do to change this? If the answer is nothing, then stop worrying. If the answer is something, then do it.

QUESTION:

Why are people, including myself, attracted to movies which can cause emotional states of terror, anxiety or grief whereas, normally in 'real life', such emotions are painful and avoided? What is it that is of value or positive in such experiences?

RESPONSE:

There is nothing positive or of value in negative emotions stimulated intentionally through negative impressions. There is an element in man's psychological nature that can essentially be referred to as awe. It has a quality called "numinous". This quality is rightly connected to states of higher consciousness. People can get a cheap substitute version by creating the feeling of the numinous through experiencing fear inducing negative impressions. It has a faint flavor of something like awe, but it is perverted and creates psychological poison.
QUESTION:

I have seen that observing a negative "I" can remove its power momentarily; and only to have the I return seconds later and once again I am in its grip as though nothing happened. Is this successful observation?

RESPONSE:

Yes, this is successful observation. One possibility for this phenomenon is that when you have something specific that you need to understand in relation to the Work, and you try to avoid dealing with it, it will only return in another form to present the same issues or it may also be that you have a roaming band of negative I's that is a kind of detached anger which will jump on any opportunity to express itself.

QUESTION:

Yes, there is a returning to the former negativity, oblivious to the dis-empowerment of moments ago.

RESPONSE:

Don't get discouraged. Part of the reason we observe negativity is to experience the power it has in our psychology. This you have to
negative emotions
glean for yourself through applied practice.

The process of cleansing the Emotional Center and the development of Real I are permanent solutions to the problem of insecurity. A transformed Emotional Center has no requirements from the world. It finds its being and meaning in giving to the world. Real I knows its authenticity and doesn't need external validation.

The easiest aspect of the Emotional Center to observe is Negative Emotions. However, since we were just speaking about it, hurry, irritation, worry and anger are very simple to observe in yourself as well as in other people.

The first thing to be done is to practice Self-Observation. You must have an honest, clear picture of yourself and your Negative Emotions and their causes in order to deal with them. The object is to be rid of them. The Work teaches the way to do this. Observing Negative Emotions at once gives you some distance. Observing them repeatedly in the light of the Work will gradually diminish their power and influence and you will have other options and be able to make other choices.

Not expressing negativity holds a wealth of information about yourself. It is also one of the Work ideas we are asked to practice.
from the beginning because Negative Emotions essentially cut you off from the possibility of raised Consciousness and change of Being.

QUESTION:

Is there a habitual aspect to negative emotions speaking with regard to breaking the bad habits, as one might give up smoking, for instance?

RESPONSE:

Certainly there are all kinds of habitual Negative Emotions. Sometimes they can be triggered by things as small as a song, a fragrance, an associative I. You think you'll get up early to exercise in the morning, but when morning arrives your first I is "no". You say to yourself "come on, make yourself do this" and still you don't. You think" this always happens. Every time I try to do something I never follow through. I am so lazy, how am I ever going to get what I want?" Habitual sets of I's like these and endless others begin with one Negative Emotion that associates to and attracts other Negative I's. Everyone has their own peculiar sets. Try to recognize yours.

QUESTION:

Are these "I's" empowered by memory patterns? Or rather, do they
negative emotions originate in memory patterns?

RESPONSE:

These I's are laid down in memory patterns. If you recognize a particular attitude that is negative and recurring, you are looking at habitual Negative Emotions. They do not respond well to the kind of approach you might take to breaking an external bad habit. To observe them and refrain from expressing them and to make an attempt at separation from them is the right approach.

This is a common phenomenon when False Personality begins to come apart, leaving gaps where you have no functional or recognizable Personality. I've noticed that almost everyone is experiencing impatience with this process. If you could work for the sake of making good efforts and eliminate elements like impatience and frustration and confusion through Inner Separation you would all get better results. Impatience and frustration are Negative Emotions that will prevent any growth or possibility of Objective Observation.

Suspicion, which is Negative Imagination, may involve trust issues. "Self-fulfilling" is an idea that is not valid, it is only guilt-tripping yourself and you can let go of it. The way in the Work to deal with
Negative Emotions and attitudes is through Objective Observation, gradual Inner Separation, and eventual Non-Identification with the elements in you that are responsible for this Negative condition. Feeling justified because of what you have observed is a paradox because you have observed accurately, but having a negative response to what you have observed is wrong work and it won't lead you where you want to go.

Every time you experience this negative attitude ask yourself what requirement you had that was not satisfied. Then ask yourself if it is appropriate for you to have such requirements. If it is appropriate for you to retreat from the world, then consider seriously following that need. Sometimes this is desirable in the Work. It depends on the individual. G. called this Work a "process of individuation" so listen carefully to your deepest cognition of direction.

QUESTION:

I often-times find myself unable to resist the expression of Negative Emotions. What is the proper course when observing Negative Emotions after the fact?

RESPONSE:

That depends on the consequences of your expression of Negativity. Perhaps it only requires reflection. Perhaps you may need to
apologize to someone or make amends in other ways. The most important factor here is that you do not justify your Negativity or refuse responsibility for the consequences.

Anger and revenge on the other hand are only Negative Emotions and you can be free of them with the right Work attitude.

Anger, being such a strong Negative Emotion, is a fast ride down into violence. The speed you refer to is a problem, but it can be overcome by using another emotion to combat it. The higher emotions of acceptance, Understanding, being without requirements (Humility) are some.

QUESTION:

This issue of "violence" seems fundamental. Irritation...impatience, Everything that fouls us up emotionally largely can be traced to this, at least in my psychology. Even the fear can turn into it in a moment. Is this staving off of violence not fundamental?

RESPONSE:

Staving off violence is absolutely fundamental from the very beginning of the Work. You will notice that irritation, impatience, and other Negative Emotions that lead to violence are all the results
of having requirements that are unmet. One of the important reasons we begin in the Work by not expressing Negative Emotions is that any one of them can lead in a descending octave all the way down to the most violent states and actions. It doesn't seem possible that irritation could lead to murder. But this is so. It can, it does when it goes unchecked. Do you recognize that other Negative Emotions lead also to violence? And can you separate from them? Can you find a place in yourself that has no external requirements in order to be at peace?

QUESTION:

There is definitely a process in that regard that has emerged. You must realize that I have an extremely difficult pattern in this regard. It was that I could go off at the slightest imagining, and this was not lost on others. Nor has the change very meagerly effected been lost.

RESPONSE:

This is good to hear. If you have a Work process in place that is effective, then just continue.

The exercise that I would like you to all practice this week is as follows: Every time you Observe a habitual Negative Emotion, say to it "this is not I". When you say this, understand that you are asserting the differentiation between Real I and the actions of False
Negative Emotions

Personality. Remember that habitual Negative Emotions are imitations and responses and do not speak for what is most genuine in you.

QUESTION:

Say "this is not I" to habitual negative emotions. When I remembered to do this exercise, as I did on two occasions, it had the effect of releasing an ugly psychological weight from me. Joy rushed in to fill the place where the negativity was.

RESPONSE:

This is a wonderful experience and is the intended outcome of this practice. Have you also noticed a distaste for Negative Emotions developing in you?

QUESTION:

Yes. But mainly for the more extreme cases. I still seem to relish a general negative attitude. I think my chief difficulty is Negative Emotions.

RESPONSE:

Do you honestly relish them? Don't they cause you harm? Don't they make you feel bad inside? Don't they make you feel less
negative emotions authentic?

QUESTION:

They feel like an old suit that I just keep wearing.

RESPONSE:

Then the only way out is by getting rid of the old suit piece at a time. One Negative Emotion at a time, Observed, understood, Separated from, will gradually strip away the Wrong Work that hurts you and stands in your way. Every time you experience a Negative emotional state, practice Stop and examine it. Is it habit? How can you disable it? Can you Separate from it? Can you see it as an I that belongs to False Personality and has gratification requirements? Most of all, does it express Real I?

QUESTION:

At a former meeting, when speaking of the exercise to say "That is not I" in connection with Negative Emotions, you stated that there is a "vital element in this practice that needs to be emphasized". Can you elaborate tonight?

RESPONSE:

Yes. By saying "this is not I" to Negative Emotions, first you give
yourself the opportunity to discern that indeed what is most real in you is not connected to these emotions. You may be able to recognize something familiar like imitation or habit and taste the Understanding that what Real I is in you has no connection to these energies. Inherent in this experience, which amounts to Not-Identifying, is a taste of Real I. It is revealed by the exercise of saying "this is not I".

Internal Considering is a big issue for you, Imagination is monumental. And this you may or may not know, you like your Negative Emotions.

QUESTION:

Yes...they are my heroes...I see that...and it hurts.

RESPONSE:

What they hurt most is you, but I'm sure that also pollutes your environment. You must learn to dislike the taste of Negativity.

QUESTION:

I received a really big shock when Rebecca said I like my negative emotions!!! WOW....big way to go, anyway...I am observing along
these lines and seeing a lot of how true her photograph is. Is there anything else that could be said about this matter?

RESPONSE:

Negative Emotions have more active energy than other feelings. It is easy to Identify with the intensity of the energy attracts and fascinates. There are multiple reasons why people enjoy their Negative Emotions.

Remember that Gurdjieff said that it is Negative Emotions that run the world, not sex energy or power, but Negativity. In the Work, you should avoid any Negativity that you can. This is true of the external world, but the meaning of this practice is to remove Negative Emotion from yourself. From your Emotional Center. That means Working on the causes in yourself, not the causes in your life. When you Observe this in yourself, ask what likes it. Why does it like it? What feeling does it leave you with? This is a real and valuable step for you in the Work.

This gives me a perfect opportunity to quote from the Commentary tonight. "And one of the greatest forms of dirt is Negative Emotions and habitual indulgence in them. The greatest filth in a man is Negative Emotion. An habitually negative person is a filthy person,
in the Work sense. A person who is always thinking unpleasant things about others, saying unpleasant things, disliking everyone, being jealous, always having some grievance or some form of self-pity, always feeling that he or she is not rightly treated and so on -- such a person has a filthy mind in the most real and practical sense, because all these things are forms of Negative Emotions and all Negative Emotions are dirt."

QUESTION:

I was impressed by the thought that I have a right not to be negative. Usually, in the past I might say, "I have a right to be negative, if I want to. But, now I realize that I don't really have a right to be negative, but to not be negative. It frees me up from my negativity. Another quote: "To say this phrase in the right way to yourself, to feel the meaning of the words: "I have a right not to be negative," is actually a form of Self-Remembering, of feeling a trace of Real I, that lifts you above the level of your Negative I's which are all the time telling you without a pause that "you have every right to be negative"." I also realized from this lesson that I don't have enough excess energy to waste it in negativity.

RESPONSE:

I don't think anyone should waste any energy. There is so much Work to be done. I'm glad you experienced freedom from some
Negativity as a result of this idea.

In the Commentary on Negative Emotions, page 162, part 2, Nicoll talks about levels in a person and about how you can choose to live in better states that belong to higher levels or lower states which belong to lower levels in your psychology. Recognizing that within yourself there are different levels of Being and functioning is an open door to a place where you can see what your choices are internally and you can go to a higher level inside yourself.

QUESTION:

I found the inner "slum" idea interesting to contemplate. That there is such a thing.

RESPONSE:

We all have them and we all have to make efforts to stay away from them if we want to live on a higher level.

QUESTION:

Today I had an experience that normally would have caused a lot of negative emotions. I had to deal with a person who I normally have difficulty with. In our meeting today I felt a calmness, and a
detachment to any anticipated outcome. I was able, to a certain extent to see how I was relating to this person. I was aware of my tone of voice, and my posture. It was a very good feeling. Could this be the beginning of the growth of Real I?

RESPONSE:

When you have eliminated some of the Wrong Work that stands between where you are now and the development of Real I, you can have a taste or a sense of what this "Real I" is.

It sounds like this was close to your experience. Non-Identification clears the path. Observing I had to be present in order for you to see or to notice calmness, detachment, tone of voice, posture, etc. But you probably had some cognition of Real I in your experience.

A higher place makes Real I more accessible.

It is certainly true that everyone justifies their own grievances. And it is patently true that Negative Emotions that are justified cannot be affected by the Work. This is the huge impact that Justification can have. It will immediately put a stop to any possibilities for change. That's what makes it so insidious.

QUESTION:
Occasionally, Negative I's will rise in me and find expression when I am confronted with situations that typically trigger those I's. However, I have recently been seeing the Negative I's begin to rise and feel like an inner fire that seems to get "caught in my throat," so to speak, and not necessarily find expression. I can observe this and recognize how my usual reaction would have allowed some form of expression but in this case does not. I am then able to continue on afterwards without any feelings of negativity and at those moments I can see the option of External Considering as an alternative Is this an appropriate way of confronting the Work on Negative Emotions?

RESPONSE:

In the Work, the proper way of dealing with Negative Emotions is first of all, not giving expression to them. This you know and can manage. It is critical that Negative Emotions are not repressed as opposed to expressed. They require another approach. Repression will not work in the long run. Observing your Negative Emotions comes next, or at the same time. Recognizing what your Negative Emotions are in the context of the Work and where they come from is the next step. Separating from your Negative Emotions is the next effort and this is repeated until you are no longer Identified with your Negative Emotions. Use the "rising fire of negative emotions" as an alarm. You are in Wrong Work. Stop. Consider. And adjust your attitude to alignment with the Work.
Being passive allows for all kinds of possibilities other than automatic Negative Emotions. While it is valuable and true to understand that becoming Negative is causing yourself harm, your motivation should eventually include the fact that you don't wish to cause anyone else harm either.

QUESTION:

As I have tried to observe myself, I seem to find fear as the root cause. It seems to generate identification, formatory thinking, false personality, and on and on. I don't know if this is true or if it's my own current dark state of mind. I would appreciate your comments.

RESPONSE:

You have seen clearly into the source of many aspects of the Wrong Work in a person's psychology. You may have seen and experienced your own Chief Feature, Fear. But Fear, whether it is your Chief Feature or not, is at the source of Identification, etc. We fear rejection, being alone, being in need, being vulnerable. We are afraid of failure, commitment, appearing to not fit in, looking foolish, and deep inside more than anything we fear meaninglessness.

QUESTION:
Thank you...Meaninglessness (nothingness). Yes, this fear seems to be the basis of my personality. Without my image of myself there is nothing.

RESPONSE:

All of these fears are Negative Emotions meaning Wrong Work of the Emotional Center and they result in Wrong Work in Personality. You are mistaken, however. Without the image of yourself or behind it, is your Real I[A student] posted this related quote from Thomas Merton.

"Even when I try to please God, I tend to please my own ambition, His enemy. There can be imperfection even in the ardent love of great perfection, even in the desire of virtue, of sanctity. Even the desire of contemplation can be impure, when we forget that true contemplation means the complete destruction of all selfishness -- the most pure poverty and cleanliness of heart."

The result of doing the Work correctly is Humility. Make sure that this is what you want. Behind your Fear of meaninglessness you might find your only opportunity to have real meaning. Don't let Fear steal it.

QUESTION:
Late last night I was exhausted after a very long day and arrived home to find my basement is being demolished/repaired, very expensively (!). My wife was yelling at me off and on for some of the evening. Finally, as I was more tired and had an alcoholic beverage, I felt the anger begin to bubble up inside me. I remembered to make myself quite passive, to in effect become empty and non-reactive. I stood up and left the room to remove myself from this situation, in itself something quite new for me, went outside to calm myself and have a cigarette and experienced a state where I WELCOMED and was glad for the following material for self-observation. While alone outside-I began to actually hear a song, to see it and the underlying self-pity- "I am not appreciated by my wife. I work so hard during the day and here is the thanks I get. It is not fair". But for the first time ever I could stop the song and as I said welcomed it as material, it is a very old song that I normally sing quite loudly to anyone who would like to hear it. Then I saw another old "I"- I would remove myself from my wife, become withdrawn, NOT go back inside for a while as "punishment". Again I was able to put a stop to this Inner Account.

RESPONSE:

What an incredible transformation of circumstances! So many difficult elements and in the midst of them you were able to apply the Work and stop the momentum and direction of Negative Emotions. This is what this Work is all about. It is much more vast
QUESTION:

I received a collector's threat on a bill that I had already responded to appropriately several times (insurance issues, etc). The frustration was difficult to control, especially with the elements of incompetence and threat. I was eager for the next morning when I would call these people and "straighten things out". Once on the phone, the matter was easily resolved, and yet I had lost a good deal of energy in Negative Imagination about what I would have to do.

RESPONSE:

A related quote. Nicoll: "We think of the Imagination as a light airy nothingness. But the imagination is very powerful -- very real -- like concrete. Pictures are formed out of imagination, controlled by vanity. They are fixed forms of imagination, woven by vanity. Vanity is a terrific force in us and imagination is the powerful builder and bricklayer of vanity. It builds pictures of ourselves."

QUESTION:

These aspects of my condition seem more repugnant and
negative emotions unacceptable than before. And less justifiable and less hidden.

RESPONSE:

That is because your relationship to them has changed drastically. That they are less justifiable and less hidden is a very good movement in development. I know that it is hard not to find the Wrong Work we see in ourselves to be repugnant, but as you know, this approach to dealing with such Wrong Work is not effective. Seeing what is repugnant and unacceptable needs to happen in a space that doesn't respond with Negative Emotions. Otherwise, the Negative Emotions will obstruct your view.

Changing that repugnance into Third Force is the genius of the Work. It is indeed the rise of Buried Conscience which you feel.

I would like to quote from a Commentary that we read months ago. Re-reading is always an exercise in discovering the progression of your Understanding. The Commentary is on page 1039, Volume 3, "On Violence and Understanding" "Violence is the antithesis to Understanding. All violence has its roots in not understanding another. It is said in the Work that understanding is the most powerful force we can create. So we have to create understanding. All violence has its root in negative emotion. I said above that all violence has its root in not understanding. There is no contradiction in this. It means simply that negative emotions do not lead to
understanding but to violence. The Work says a man is his understanding. He is not his size, his money, position, birth, strength or his prestige or distinctions or religion. A man is his understanding. Violence destroys everything in us. To react with violence is the easiest of all things. To understand is the most difficult. Now it might be said that when you get violent you come to the limit or end of your Being. Capacity for endurance is a sign of Being. Small being which only loves itself, soon reaches its limit and becomes violent. In violence, one is totally asleep and has no understanding."

Can you understand better now why it is so important to not express Negative Emotions? They effectively put a complete stop to any potential Understanding. That means no development. And they have the open-ended possibility of descending into the most base violence.

Violence includes thinking Negative Emotions, murdering someone in your psychology, slandering them with your inner speech. It includes all forms of force, coercion, insistence, dominance, and manipulation. One more quote from this Commentary. "I will say, by way of commentary, that to understand one must learn, and learning is to perceive in oneself the truth of a thing that one is taught -- that the thing is so. This leads to understanding. The Work teaches that knowing and understanding are quite different. I may know many things, but may never have perceived in myself the
negative emotions

truth of any of them. In that case, I do not understand what I know though I may retain it in my memory."

QUESTION:

First, for some types is violence less of an issue? I am thinking of passive types, non-existent featured types who generally "go with the flow"?

RESPONSE:

Yes, definitely. Violence is more of an issue for particular types,. Active and Negative for instance.

QUESTION:

Second, you speak of manipulation being a particular form of violence. Some (such as myself) depend on being able to manipulate for their livelihood. I am successful as a trial lawyer to the extent that I can manipulate others at times. But this does not feel like "violence" to me.

RESPONSE:

Although everyone, even the nicest of people, have violence in them. The path to it is through their Negative Emotions. Manipulation in the intentional use of it without underlying selfish
ends is different than the emotional manipulation that people abuse each other with.

Later, when the state has passed, reflect on what the Negative Emotions were that you felt. Name them. What were they saying to you?. Are these I's familiar to you? (Habitual) Are they truthful?. Try to perceive the source of your Negative Emotions. It is inside you, not outside you. Don't Justify yourself. Observe what is behind your Negative responses. Try to get a sense of the "taste" of it. Is it pain, fear, frustration? About what?

QUESTION:

Once the habitual negative emotion is identified, then what? For example, frustration because others are using up resources that I work for without my being able to give an opinion on without getting in trouble.

RESPONSE:

Consider that behind this frustration is not just the sense of injustice and powerlessness over the situation, but Fear which creates those unconscious attitudes. Perhaps your sense of power over what your produce feels compromised. The fear of being in need and the fear of having to do without what you need is probably involved. All of
these emotions that you are labeling frustration are self-interested emotions. That is why they produce the Wrong Work of being frustrated. The Objective point of view in this specific case is that you should feel grateful that you CAN give, work, and support your family, and joyful that you have one to give to.

QUESTION:

It seems that unnecessary suffering and negative emotion overlap a great deal, if not totally coextensively. All of it boils into a bad state, which is most unpleasant, useless and wasteful. It has helped me to realize I am more like a baboon than Mozart when I indulge all of it.

RESPONSE:

Unnecessary Suffering is always Negative Emotions and Negative Emotions are usually Unnecessary Suffering and all of it belongs to False Personality. Every kind of suffering that comes from unsatisfied Personality is what has to be sacrificed in order to make room for purified emotions.

Ways to Work against habitual Negative Emotions:

First, recognize that regardless of any justification or secret liking
of them, being in the Work, doing the Work, means getting rid of them. Even before you understand what it is you are trying to do or why, you are asked by the Work not to express Negativity. Be aware that they are hyper-Identified. Be aware that they are subjective, apply Scale and Relativity. Be aware that they are behavior patterns and associated sets of I's laid down in you when you had no choice. Know that you want to choose. Want to choose change. See what destruction and pain they create. Learn the taste of them. Learn to dislike the taste of them. Choose a specific, verified habitual Negative state to apply these practices to: practice Inner Stop to behavior and thoughts that support them. Practice Inner Silence in relation to them specifically. Do not give them your words externally or internally. Make False Personality passive. Don't allow it to act mechanically. Sacrifice requirements.

Understand that Negative Emotions lie, they NEVER tell the whole truth of a thing and cannot be objective. They hold a sort of attraction because of their intensity, which is an illusion that wastes energy. Desire to be free of that burden. Nourish and nurture your Emotional Center in positive ways.-- Remember yourself.

Exercise on Negative I's :

Find a particular group of habitual Negative I's (they exist in the lower level of your psychological states). Try to raise this one group of I's which constitute a Negative attitude through Self-Observation
and Work Knowledge, to the level where you can see them Objectively. Now if you can see these Negative I's Objectively, you can discern by Knowledge and taste what is true and real from what is false. You will see that this set of I's do not represent the whole truth of the matter. They lie by omission and misrepresentation. They will say things to you that, in a higher state, you would recognize are not true.

Everything they say to you, they say to support the feelings of Negative Emotions within you. What is BEHIND those feelings? From the state of Self-Awareness, you will be able to answer this question for yourself. If you answer it from a Work point of view, you will begin to separate from these Negative Emotions. With repeated Observation, Understanding grows, Separation continues and you CAN make efforts to eliminate this feeling (Negative Emotion) which is responsible for the original set of habitual Negative I's. The Work says that a person can DO the Work. It is through Understanding, from practical experience and the effort to not Identify, that you can become free of this one particular bit of Wrong Work. Understanding is illumination, and lies so Negative Emotions cannot exist in its light. Understanding resolves paradoxes and raises you above the level of opposite I's. However, Understanding must be formed in the right way through the honest action of the Work. This is necessary, of course, because everyone thinks they understand all the time, while they still hold onto Negative Emotions through Justification.
Understanding can happen in a moment or it may be a process that lasts for many years, but it is a process regardless of its time frame. And the process begins with Self-Observation which should lead to inner Separation, which should lead to Non-Identification, which should lead to higher states, higher levels of Consciousness, and development of Being. Try to manage this kind of change in levels, that is, raising one set of Negative I's into the light of Self-Observation to create Understanding, thereby rendering them powerless.
Deep within our buried conscience is some awareness of what is right in the presence of God and as part of our true destiny. We cannot do this extraordinary Work—which is the heart of all esoteric and spiritual teaching given to humanity—without a sense that there is something higher than oneself. This is where our magnetic center, the small part of us that has led us on some kind of spiritual search for meaning and purpose, is especially valuable. There are 'I's within us that know there is more to life than self-gratification, self-love, self-interest. These 'I's yearn for a mysterious inner liberation where a new quality of consciousness and of daily living can take place. This is no fantasy. It is the very reason why we were created as self-evolving beings. We have a job to do and it is called "metanoia" or transformation of mind.

There is no doubt that we cannot do this on our own. Perhaps you've heard the sayings "when the student is ready, the teacher appears", or "seek and you will find". All persons who enter a real search for something greater discover that help becomes available. In this Teaching, we are told that there is help available to us but we cannot receive it in our current condition or state. We must enter the Third State of Consciousness in order to "catch the rope" that is
handed down to us. This Third State is Self-Remembering and it is characterized by non-identification, inner separation, external considering. It is the state of detachment found in Zen or in Christian mysticism. One has managed to step out of personality and its many petty requirements and found a place where a certain transcendent peace exists. This is a place that is familiar to us. We were all born with some knowledge of this in our essence, but life and its hardships blinded us as we developed personality and its defense mechanisms.

One of the fundamental aims of the Work is the purification of the emotional center. Our emotions are meant to be instruments of cognition, not endless generators of self-emotions that toss us from one state to another. One can intuit the state of another and the sense of what right action is needed in a moment through the proper use of the emotional center. But to do this one must break with the wrong work that has been unconsciously instilled in us. This is not impossible and in fact is a requirement of being a real adult. We must break from the "sins of the fathers". Regardless of what was done to you, your responsibility is to not pass it on to another generation. You must gather the strength of character and presence of mind to say before all that is holy—"This wrong behavior stops here."

The Work and all the great religions require self-sacrifice, the crucifixion of the self-interested person (the "old man"). You have
an opportunity to become a new person, to be good to your wife in spite of everything, to forgive her, to forgive yourself for the sake of your children. You have access to special tools that can help you have compassion for her and assist you in understanding yourself (the two go together).

If you make the effort to not go with 'I's that you know are from old ways that do not serve your aim of evolving and awakening, you will reap the reward both for yourself and for your family. You will experience an increase of marvelous energy, an empowering of your will to go with the higher in yourself, and a new peace of mind.

There is no future in staying on the road of old habits and wrong behavior. There is only unspeakable misery. You have been given the chance to save yourself and your family from such dark despair. Your past does not need to haunt you or control you. You have a chance to acquire wisdom, to incarnate goodness, to find fulfillment by doing right.

But it is spiritual warfare and you have to make definite choices. So it is with everything in life, from the ordinary business of dieting to accomplishing things in education and business. It is all the more necessary in the spiritual realm.

Seek out Third Force to strengthen your aims. Find kindred spirits where you live—other students, a wise counselor in a church.
Somewhere there awaits another person who will help you if you truly wish to stay on the path of spiritual transformation.

Do not be discouraged. Do not allow yourself to fall into unnecessary negative emotions. We have all suffered and made mistakes. Above all, never give up. It is time for a new thing to happen. Enter the path of becoming and there will be light in your future.

Regarding Aims

For a long time, simply the aim of seeing what is occurring is a major one indeed. Eventually, you move from recognizing negativity (for instance) and its toxic impact on your life to making the effort of not expressing it, and then to making the choice in the moment to transform it into neutral energy which is used for generating a more serene state of consciousness. This is a prototype for the stages, whether dealing with inner considering, negative imagination, false personality, features, etc.

Clearly, the early stages require the painful labor of seeing oneself honestly in the light of objective observation. That seeing alone will reveal extraordinary new data, such as how much of one's psychology is imitated from parents and cultural influences. Also, to witness the amount of negativity in one's reactions creates a desire for developing the will to change.
I would recommend the more personal approach of discovering your own specific "wrong work" based on the teaching and dealing with particular details one at a time. One classic element would be the indulgence in daydreaming which often creates worries about the future based on imagination. This is a giant leakage of energy and can be seen for what it is very quickly.

Simply witnessing your inner reactions with people and circumstances will give you mountains of information about yourself. Gathering that material will lead to being able to make different choices in the moment of reaction.

So the simple aim of seeing without identification is one that needs to be primary for a good while. Second, focus on the issue of negativity. Try to not express it and see what happens.

By the way, at some point in the future, I will share your specific questions with my wife who is a master at assisting individuals in these processes.

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**Answers to Questions**

**QUESTION:**

What I do see is that my mind is not sufficient to solve its own
problems, and if that is a correct observation, I wonder what I can do about it all?

RESPONSE:

Knowing this is already an important step. This is where Nicoll would say that one needs the "Neutralizing Force of the Work" without which we cannot change. Our life is generally lived under the impact of the neutralizing force of life—outer circumstances, inward attitudes and illusions continually shape our behavior.

Making the Work and its ideas the neutralizing force means that we seek to no longer be determined by the same things. Our personality is made passive so that the Work ideas can influence our actions and understanding.

QUESTION:

Somehow I feel very blocked in my mind, and I don't know what to do or what to say, or what to ask next.

RESPONSE:

I would suggest a slow but regular reading of the Commentaries. Take an idea and seek to apply it to yourself. Learn from the observations and obstacles. Verify its truth for yourself. Let it help you discover something about yourself. Let it help you seek the inner space of Self-Remembering which lifts you beyond the
questions and answers and becomes an answer itself—a state of peace, even bliss, where one is no longer devoured by the 'I's (thoughts and emotions) that flood us constantly.

**QUESTION:**

In spite of the many thousand things it can think and know, I feel there is something important that it cannot know, and does not know.

**RESPONSE:**

This is important and opens you to the possible experience of something higher than yourself. The Work tells us that our higher centers are continually active and available to help us but we live only in the lower centers and cannot hear them. To not identify, to practice inner separation with whatever is going on inside and outside of you, opens the door to receiving help.

Help is available. It is we who are not.

You are on the right track by knowing that you do not know.

**QUESTION:**

How can I learn to know which are the good 'I's, as I practice self-observation? ...but I would like to know a little more about how I can identify and support the good 'I's.
RESPONSE:

This is the very important work of discernment (the famous "diakrisis" of early eastern Christian teaching) where one learns to discern by inner taste the good from the bad within.

In relation to the Work, you should have some assistance in telling the difference between I's that wish to work and those that clearly don't.

This can be a simple matter of honestly observing what is trying to take center stage.

QUESTION:

For instance, is external consideration a way to do this?

RESPONSE:

This effort would certainly call forth the I's that wish to evolve in this Work. A certain self-sacrifice is required and this is always against the current of False Personality.

This is a good insight.

Seek to establish inner silence at times (for a definition, see the terminology on the website). This will help to control the parts of you that do not wish to work.
QUESTION:

Should contradictions be viewed as blocking or promoting self-remembering?

RESPONSE:

The awareness of contradictions within oneself is critical to the beginning of real self-knowledge. This is where one verifies that one is not unified but a multiplicity and therefore has no real will. This perception is itself a moment of higher consciousness that can create authentic self-observation and enough liberation from the many I's to generate self-remembering.

Learning about buffers means entering the painful waters of seeing oneself with harsh honesty. This is the beginning of the weakening of False Personality.

QUESTION:

Does not contradiction also work to promote, rather than block, these two processes?

RESPONSE:

Contradictions do not promote, but interfere with the development of the Work. They are one of the greatest blocks to self-change. Awareness of contradictions is necessary to even know why there is
a need for this Work. But that is the only way they "contribute" to the process of the Work. Contradiction is the opposite of the aim of the Work, which is internal unification around conscious understanding. That allows the reception of new influences and the capacity to do right action in the world.

QUESTION:

Now, this is the question I feel that I must ask you now: is it correct to practice self-remembering in the way that Ouspensky suggests here, or is there something that I have missed, concerning the way I shall practice it?

RESPONSE:

Your intuition that something has been missed is correct. This stems, in part, from Ouspensky himself. I am assuming here that you do not look upon Ouspensky as an infallible super human (as many followers inevitably do, especially in the case of Gurdjieff who was a much more impressive person). The quote you shared from Ouspensky strikes me now, some twenty-three years after taking it as objective truth, in the following manner:

Ouspensky was supremely intellectual, a man of mind first and foremost. He was that rare type who was centered in the intellectual part of the intellectual center. This explains his extremely dry and meticulously analyzed approach to something utterly spiritual. In
my view, the statement you quoted on self-remembering fails miserably to grasp the essence of the concept, because it is approached in such a rational, scientific manner. Self-remembering is not divided attention, just like a house is not its cement foundation. Ouspensky has reduced it here in this comment to the point of being unrecognizable.

Other important students like Nicoll and Rodney Collin were better able to express the meaning of this term. Collin especially made it clear on an intuitive level. To paraphrase him, he said that self-remembering means to forget oneself, and moreover, that self-remembering means to remember God.

To qualify my criticism of Ouspensky, I would simply point to the end of his life where he told his students to "abandon the system", where he began to speak of the "Jesus Prayer" as a means of self-remembering, and where he was known to spend long nights drinking vodka alone.

Remember the idea of bringing the mind into the heart? I would suggest that this brilliant man may not have (at least publicly) managed to do that.

I would suggest that self-remembering is closer to Buddhist mindfulness than to divided attention. It is similar to the later only because one is free from what is going on around or going on inside one. Self-remembering is a leap upwards out of identification and
Teachings

into a realm that brings "peace that passes understanding", new insight, compassion, and ultimately unconditional love.

I spent many years struggling with this idea as well. Perhaps it is best not to complicate it too much or one will forever be twisting and bending one's mind over it. Self-remembering is the English translation of what Gurdjieff named in French "le rappelle de soi". That verb ('rappeller') has more to do with bringing back into awareness a quality of being which was ours before we became lost in the madness that is called adult life.

Remember also the perennial wisdom of making "effortless efforts". It requires a certain relaxation and peace to bring forth a different state of consciousness.

QUESTION:

I have a feeling that there is something that blocks me from bringing the mind into the heart, although I can't exactly put the finger at it.

RESPONSE:

This is a specific technical phrase from the Early Fathers. It could be translated in Work language to "intelligent emotion" or emotional cognizance coming from a higher use of the Emotional Center (particular the intellectual part of the Emotional Center, also
known as the King of Hearts in the coded symbol of the cards).

QUESTION:

Could it be that False Personality feels frightened to bring the mind to the heart, and instead does everything in its power to bring the heart into the mud?

RESPONSE:

This may be a case of the nature of your machine being a man number three, centered in the intellect. Such persons do have trouble balancing their proper functioning so that emotion is more active as an instrument of perception (and compassion). Intellectually-centered persons respond to other people's pain with rational analysis rather than empathy.

Self-Remembering requires the activation of the Emotional Center (see Nicoll's writings in Volume 2 on this matter).

QUESTION:

There is a central dilemma here that I don't know exactly how to solve: Shall I separate from the feeling of fright in this case? An alternative would be to go into the feeling, facing it, and go through it, but being aware that it is False Personality that makes it all up.

RESPONSE:
Fear is a topic and form of wrong work on which much is written. Most of all, you might want to engage your Intellectual Center when that feeling arises and think of it as negative imagination. This can free you from its power.

Also, think of that phrase "mind into heart" more simply as a type of conscious awareness that integrates intelligence and emotion in a manner that unifies, uplifts, and intensifies perception. You may also want to put this idea on the "back burner" for awhile so that it is not confusing to the more fundamental ideas expressed in the Work.

QUESTION:

First of all, could it be that the heart should be taken almost literal, to refer to the rhythms of the heart beat, i.e. a deep connection with bodily states, in case it would be something very concrete to "listen to the heart"?

RESPONSE:

The answer is no, the heart has understood in the teachings of the Early Fathers is the inner eye of the soul, the center of our being. The solar plexus is the location of the emotional center, so one could say that the heart can be equated with the source of emotions. A further definition, although more complex, is that the "heart" is known in ancient philosophy as the "nous". Here is a definition of
that word by Robin Amis in his book "A Different Christianity":

"What then is the nous? This is experienced as that single organ of consciousness which contains all our knowledge in itself, not verbal or diagrammatic knowledge, but direct knowledge, entirely different from the descriptions and definitions that with most people pass for knowledge. This distinction is essentially of the unwritten tradition, as it is one of those things that really cannot be adequately conveyed in writing without the aid of inspiration or spiritual intuition."

This barely touches on the importance of this term as it relates to "metanoia" and I would recommend that sometime you obtain a copy of Robin Amis' book. He is a longtime teacher of the Fourth Way, now informed by the work of Mouravieff, and is also a dear friend.

More specifically, it is critical to not interfere with the functioning of your physical body (such as breathing, etc) without more knowledge. The best thing to do in that area is focus of attention, relaxation, separation. Also, in regards to emotions, know that the true purpose of the emotional center is to be an "instrument of cognition". In other words, if we can overcome the wrong work of our emotions, they become a sensitive form of intuitive sight and wisdom. This is one reason it is so important to cleanse them of negative emotion, imagination, and all the chaos that they bring.
Inner purification is indeed a goal of the Work. "The pure in heart will see God" remains a cosmic and practical Truth. This inner cleansing does require special work on the emotions, but the Fourth Way starts us with the intellect which is easier to control than the speed of emotional response. To remember certain ideas and apply them leads to understanding the wrong use of emotion and eventually to making choices and using will power when they arise. Saying "This is not I" when a silly feeling arises can help to find a separate space that is not flooded by the wild swings of our emotions.

Helping to quiet the heart might be a better way to look at the matter. The Fathers have a mysterious saying: "Bring the mind into the heart", which on one level means bringing intelligence to the emotions and emotional quality to the intelligence.

For now, you might continue the exercise of not expressing negative emotion so that you can at least develop some will over them and observe how useless and damaging they are. That will lead to the first steps of purification and freedom.

**QUESTION:**

How can I maintain an adequate inner attitude (Work attitude) in the midst of so many external demands?

**RESPONSE:**
It is correct to understand that the Fourth Way is a spiritual path that is specifically aimed at taking place in the midst of life, as opposed to other ways, such as the way of the monk. This is why Gurdjieff called it the way of the "sly man" (le ruse in French, which translates better as the "smart" one) because someone in the Work learns to benefit from all that life throws at him, whether good or bad.

This is also why it is called the way of "Understanding" because it requires the wisdom to deal with external events and one's own psychology in order to produce something fruitful for one's spiritual awakening.

Self-Observation is the key. Even if you react wrongly (according to the Work) to a situation, the ability and knowledge to recognize this actually feeds your development in the Work. All information is useful. It is not about "behaving in the right way". You can learn a great deal in a moment of negativity about the misuses and wastes of energy, the value of not identifying, the opportunity to make other choices, the reason to put things in a larger perspectives, the limitations of your old habits and imitations, etc.

So whether False Personality rules the day or not, you can still be harvesting a great deal each and every moment that you make the effort to apply Work ideas. This is also true in observing others and seeing their sad state of affairs due to functioning in a state of
Sleep.

Don't expect results from yourself. It is important to recognize the reality of your situation. We are prisoners of our dysfunctional psychology and we must realize over and over again how damaging is the state of Sleep and the tyranny of Personality.

Eventually we begin to develop "True Personality" which allows us to function appropriately in life, but with intention, purpose, and will.

Each moment is the best of opportunities to learn about your condition, the human condition from the viewpoint of the Work, and to verify the authenticity and potential of the Work ideas.

QUESTION:

Is it a good idea to write down observations on a more or less regular basis? Could that be a way to make the "recording" more effective? Or are there other elements in the process of self-observation that could be missing, which should be included?(What about self-remembering?)

RESPONSE:

I recommend that you look up material from Maurice Nicoll on "Work Memory". This is essentially a new faculty that retains insights from Observing I and begins to build a new perspective on
one's mechanical nature. This requires time, of course, and continued efforts as recurrent observations begin to form an "image" of one's particular wrong work, and ultimately of one's Chief Feature—the axis around which Personality operates.

Writing things down may be helpful, certainly. But more important is the objective honesty that takes place in the moment of perception. It will not take long to recognize the familiar taste of certain recurring states.

As for Self-Remembering, this is a different activity than Self-Observation. It is important to attempt it several times a day, when you intentionally leave behind all thought and separate yourself from the ordinary involvement with life. This is the "first conscious shock" that the Work speaks of. In the long run, it enables us to deal entirely differently with incoming impressions. But first we must know how it is that we deal with them to begin with.

QUESTION:

...as if personality have wanted to drag me down in the mud.

RESPONSE:

You will note as time goes by that False Personality will in fact defend itself. So will the Instinctive Center. After a few victories, you will find harder resistance manifesting. Sometimes, it will be as
simple (and obvious) as falling asleep every time you try to read material on the Work.

This is why the great Teachers of eastern Christianity (for instance, Theophan the Recluse from 19th century Russia) always emphasize that one must continue on with zealous perseverance. You might find his work "Inner Warfare" especially helpful.

QUESTION:

Somehow it is always easier to destroy than build up something.

RESPONSE:

Insightful wisdom.

QUESTION:

How could I grow stronger in inner separation?

RESPONSE:

Find a "third force", that is, ways to reinforce your desire to sustain effort in this Work. Don't let much time go by without feeding that part of yourself that wants to make these efforts. If one does not increase, one will decrease. Christ says: "He who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not worthy of the Kingdom."

Know that you must compromise with your Instinctive Center. Give
It a "cookie" when you have required effort from it (advice from Gurdjieff himself). Make an aim and keep it small and achievable. Return to it each day without remorse for forgetting. Don't let negativity creep into your Work I's. Self-observation does not work if it makes you negative.

Remember that ultimately this is spiritual work and that there is help.

As Winston Churchill said: "Never, never give up." (Because the unexamined life is not worth living.)

You will have breakthroughs or this Work would not have found you.

**QUESTION:**

There are two questions that I would like to make:

1. Is it correct to describe all these different aspects of my behavior as 'I's, in the sense of the Work?

**RESPONSE:**

Yes, all of these thoughts come from the makeup of personality, which is known as "false" or "acquired". This means that our ways of responding to things are learned unconsciously and are therefore subjective perspectives on Reality. The more they are separated...
from, the more their source can be seen. The key here is learning the art of inner separation.

QUESTION:

2. What shall I do with all these sub-personalities once I have begun to observe them?

RESPONSE:

Leave them be. Just don't "touch them" as Nicoll says. Don't let them take center stage and claim themselves as your Real Self or fundamental identity.

QUESTION:

But still I have this nagging feeling that I am not doing enough in the Work, or that I am not doing it in the "right" way, and I think that is the feeling that troubles me right now.

RESPONSE:

Self-observation takes a long time. It both creates new information about yourself and a new inner space which becomes independent of outer circumstances and of inner psychological conditioning. These I's cannot be removed, certainly not instantly. Some are useful for general activity. One must learn to make "effortless efforts" as Zen Buddhism speaks about. The Work is about using
"attention" with more consciousness.

QUESTION:

And because I must study a lot in order to finish these studies, it is a great "enemy" to the Work, and I don't know how to do with it.

RESPONSE:

Keep it simple. When it is time to read, read. Focus the use of self-observation on times that bring wrong work, not on times when you are doing what needs to be done.

Moments of self-remembering at the right time will make the fruits of the Work evident. You can also verify the truth of these ideas in observing both yourself and others. Also remember what Gurdjieff said: "Patience is the mother of will. If you have no mother, how can you be born?"

QUESTION:

Is the transformation of impressions also a way to transform energy (as your letter perhaps suggests), i.e. to gradually take energy from personality in order to build up new being, as you expressed it? That would mean that if I keep silent, if I stay passive, if I realize that I cannot do and in this way transform impressions -, then personality would gradually be loosing strength, because it would be operating with less energy?
RESPONSE:

The transformation of impressions is a particular dimension of the Work, one especially studied in the "school" known as "The Fellowship of Friends". I wonder if you are familiar with them. I was a student of that school for an intense four year period. Be sure to stay away if you find a link with them—they are without question a dangerous cult, led by a criminal sociopath. However, some of the Work ideas came through, and one was this idea of transforming impressions. Impressions is here understood as what is perceived in the outside world, i.e. visual perception. As one becomes more sensitive to energies and more discerning of higher or denser "vibrations" through liberation from wrong work within, it becomes possible to "feed" oneself finer food through intentionally receiving finer impressions. For instance, a particular inner state is created when watching a horror movie. It is evident even to sleeping machines that there is something toxic taken in to us. In the Work, this is most significant because it is very literally poisoning ourselves and damaging our efforts to evolve. Negativity is contagious.

On the other hand, if you visit a museum, your inner state will be impacted by finer energies that will in fact lighten your state and place you in a higher emotional state that bring you closer to a different state of consciousness. This is advanced Work as it
requires a good deal of sensitivity to one's inner psychological country, and the differences there so well described by Nicoll. If you work in a barren or grim environment, one pleasant image can influence the quality of your inner state. This is the use of impressions.

As for the transformation of impressions, you are correct in deducing that passivity to personality is a first step. Neutralizing the negative energy of someone's nasty comments to you, or keeping your own negative reaction to this event from taking over your emotions, is indeed the beginning of transformation. In the long run, this transformation becomes potent when you can actually make the choice to not be negative in a difficult moment, to not be victimized by vanity and habit. Then the energy created by the event generates a moment of presence (and self-remembering) that will give you an entirely different experience. This is virtually an alchemical phenomenon effected by a new form of will, a new relationship to one's sense of identity, and a new understanding of the purpose of one's existence.

Once again, you are correct in your intuition that being passive to personality does in fact weaken it.

You might find it useful to read material from a different stream as you seek to apply the teachings of Nicoll. St. Augustine's Confessions come to mind. The mystics were certainly focused on
inner transformation. This may add a strong emotional element to the entire process.

**QUESTION:**

Should the transformation be seen primarily as a means of "neutralizing" negative reactions to impressions, or could it also be a way to self-remembering, little by little? In other words: Is there a connection between transformation and self-remembering?

**RESPONSE:**

To answer your second question first: Certainly, there is a connection between transformation and self-remembering. The latter is called "the third state of consciousness". It is already a form of transformation. Those rare moments in which we experience a transcendent state of joy, gratitude, peace, intense presence are moments of self-remembering that we carry for a lifetime and which cry out to us of another quality of living. The Work is meant to make these moments more frequent and longer lasting through intentional effort, rather than by accident.

The purpose of dealing with negative emotions is to a) clean up our inner life so that b) we can use the energies precisely for experiences of higher consciousness. We thereby stop the wasting away of energy and redirect it for our aim of awakening, experience higher consciousness—in other words, self-remembering. Nothing
Teachings can happen as long as we remain in the same darkened condition. One of my favorite quotes from Nicoll is: "How can you change if you remain the same?"

Overcoming our wrong work leads to the possibility of re-channeling that energy with the help of knowledge and understanding in order to create new "being".

QUESTION:

1. Could self-observation be practiced all the hours of the day, or is it better to confine it to certain hours, and leave the mind to "rest" the remaining time?

RESPONSE:

It is not possible to practice self-observation all the time. In fact, one of the critical discoveries in this effort lies precisely in seeing how often we forget to do this. This forgetting is of course falling into the natural state of Sleep in which we all live as stimulus-response machines, to use Gurdjieff's language. Remember that this primary effort of the Work is a first step that evolves with personal experience. What you are creating by this effort is: a) a point of awareness beyond your mechanical behavior, and, b) a gathering of more objective information about yourself. This kind of self-knowledge is a cornerstone to spiritual evolution, as was stated by Socrates and all the great sages of humanity. Since we live
primarily in illusions and self delusions, it is necessary to face the reality of how much of our "pictures" of ourselves are imaginary. As the Hindus say, we live in "Maya" (illusion) and it is this ignorance that keeps us asleep to our true potential and birthright.

Regarding this new point of awareness which is the birth of Observing I, this is the baby step of a new state of being, one that will lead to the ability to live in the presence with detachment, peace, independence of outer circumstances, freedom from distorted and imitated habits.

QUESTION:

... and have found it rewarding in many ways (for instance a more relaxed state of the body, less of mechanical reactions like irritation, anger and worry. A problem is of course that mechanical reactions now and then takes over at the cost of Observing I, but sooner or later the latter "wakes up", and starts to work again, noticing what happened in the "absence". In short: Is this an adequate way to work?

RESPONSE:

Certainly, there must be balance. And we must learn to "bargain" with the powerful aspects of our nature (Gurdjieff said that we were three-brained beings—composed of the Intellectual Center, the Emotional Center and the Instinctive Center). The latter he named
in French "le patron" (the boss) and we often must appease it so that it does not come back at us with a vengeance.

However, it is important to recognize that when we are not attempting to "be present" (which means aware of ourselves to some extent), then our life is either wasting away or running out of control. In the long run, self-observation leads us to living in a state of relaxation because we are less identified (a very key concept) and therefore released from the constant flow of thoughts, feelings, and imagination that poison our existence. Therefore, the aim is to find in this initial exercise a new joy of being in the moment that was very rare before this effort of becoming more conscious and only came to us by accident.

QUESTION:

2. When (Observing) I is separating and detaching from reactions to impressions, by saying for instance "This is not me - I", is it correct to apply that to all impressions, and reactions to impressions, independently if they are "negative" or "positive"? In other words: Should Observing I in that way exclude everything that belongs to the many I's and Me's of personal self?

RESPONSE:

The important factor here is to become free from the wrong work of your mechanics. If the body is hungry, self-observation will
Teachings recognize that fact and deal with it without "becoming the hunger". What this effort leads to in the long run is "purity of heart", sensitive of conscience, and discernment. This last word means that you will be able to disentangle your sense of self from passing thoughts that randomly enter your mind and emotions. This is a very significant development on the spiritual journey. But in order to achieve these skills of perception, you have to have a different relationship with what is occurring in your inner world. Therefore self-observation simply sees. By that seeing, you are already disengaged to some extent from what you are witnessing. It does not mean that everything is alien to who you are, but that you are not victimized by all that occurs in your psychology.

**QUESTION:**

What is really the place of meditation in the Work? How did Gurdjieff and Ouspensky view it? Could the techniques of self-observation in the Work - inner separation, non-identification, and passivity to personality, etc., be practiced in meditation?

**RESPONSE:**

Gurdjieff had his students start the day at the Prieure where he taught for some years with 45 minutes of silence. This was not a time to practice self-observation—that is for use in the "heat of the battle" when there are mechanics at work to be discovered.
Meditation helps to quiet the mind, body, soul. This is valuable for anyone. Have you seen the material we translated about the practice of meditation?

This would be a way to clear the ground a bit and give you additional force to avoid immediate identification first thing in the morning.

By the way, you should expect strong resistance because our False Personality knows that the Work is out to destroy it. This is why you must use the intellect and as much understanding as possible in dealing with yourself. Faith in something higher than oneself is crucial.
This age of humanity is undeniably unique in that knowledge has exceeded by far the developmental growth in level of Being, individually and collectively. For example, our knowledge of war and weapons and poisons and all sorts of corruptions overwhelms our ability to resist using them. Our world view has changed drastically in only the last century via the technology of communications and the elemental consequence is that human beings have lost the ability to discern right from wrong.

How simplistic this idea sounds. That human beings cannot tell good from bad or right from wrong is not news at the beginning of the twenty-first century. There is loud bemoaning of the declining moral character of humanity and it is a legitimate complaint. But as I am sitting here this day writing on this subject, I am graphically, tragically reminded of the magnitude of this reality. I watch in disbelieving horror as a handful of men who zealously refuse to acknowledge right from wrong or good from evil perpetrate a nightmare of suffering and death in the hideous crimes of terrorism this day September 11, 2001.

There couldn't be a more perfect example of the consciencelessness that has spread like an epidemic through the human race. How is it
that the subjective conscience can be convinced to act against real conscience, objective, universal conscience which everyone has and which is the same in every individual? It is this real conscience whose functions recognize good and right from evil and wrong. It is that part of all of us who are moved to compassion for the victims and cannot comprehend how the criminal could act so cruelly; the part that cries out in anguish at what is so very evil and unquestionably wrong. How does it get to be so silent and overwhelmed?

It happens much too easily because the acquired conscience belongs to personality which means that the acquired conscience serves the best interest of the personality, justifying everything, anything.

The men responsible for the evil of this day believed that they loved God and served Him in their murder/suicide mission. They also believed that they would receive carnal rewards in the afterlife -- meaning after bodily life when carnal rewards are inaccessible. And probably most significantly, they believed that they would become heroes to their people; that they would be honored and revered and become legendary religious figures. The particular condition of consciousness which desires to believe these things is insane, and the individuals possessing it are the weakest and most pathetic human beings. Bereft of Being, the nature of their character has no identity and becomes subject to fanatical Identification because it feels like something, like an identity. You then have a man whose
self-affirming duty it is to go to any length to glorify that which has
given him his identity and which assures him that he is superior to
other human beings. Once again, a condition of insanity.

The Work teaches that a man is his understanding. He is not his
body, his appearance or reputation, his beliefs or his stature or
position; nor is he his wealth, fame, power, or name. A man is his
understanding. There can be no understanding in violence which is
extreme discord. In violence a man has no understanding and
consequently he is nothing according to this Work.

It isn't the religious fanaticism that is the common denominator in
the distortion of their beliefs. An absence of Being and an insane
level of vanity are the common denominators among these zealots
who deem themselves superior to others and who seek to be martyrs
to elevate their meritorious stature. They are not martyrs, they are
murderers. Until just a few hundred years ago, they would be
confined to killing only those they wished to fight face to face, one
to one. How cowardly and easy to use the innocent instead.

What must be understood in terms of this Work is that this kind of
religious belief belongs to Man number two, that is emotional Man.
Religious experience for the emotionally centered man is one of
exuberant faith and love that can easily become one of persecution
and martyrdom. Man number two is mechanical and being so
means that he cannot be truly religious, which is conscious. He has
religious feelings but no understanding.

Those terrorists who martyred themselves and killed others in the name of their religion misunderstood the basic direction of their religious teaching. The Holy War that they are meant to undertake is the internal war against materialism and corruption, egoism and perversion. The infidel is within the holy warrior and it is there, within the man, that the war is meant to be waged. It is those who are too weak for the real task who turn their Jihad outward against others. Then the only restraint they face is whatever relative conscience they may possess.

Everything in the universe, including the whole of it, every galaxy, every man, every atom is either evolving or degenerating, rising or descending, developing or decaying. Evolution does not happen mechanically. It is the result of individual choice and effort. Now when there is so much darkness in the world, every bit of light becomes more important than ever. However those who wish to evolve will have to be radically different than the dark times we live in. These times call for everyone in the Work to become exceedingly serious in their dedication to the self-transcendent goodness this path affords. Our world needs the light.

Finding the Lost
By Theodore Nottingham
An audio message on the events of September 11, 2001
Introduction

The teachings of George Gurdjieff are at the core of all that is most profound in religions, philosophies, and esoteric knowledge. He presents us with practical, uncompromising self-discovery, self-realization and self-transcendence. Gurdjieff said the following about his ideas:

"This teaching is for those who are not satisfied with what they have found in life and who feel that there must be something else beside success and failure in life and beyond what they have been taught in school and by their upbringing."

The ideas that he brought to the West and the system of work on oneself which came to be known simply as "The Work," have the power to transform human consciousness and its understanding of reality. Anyone who begins to practice for a time the efforts of self-observation, divided attention, and self-remembering under the guidance of someone who has understood and lives the teachings
will discover their radical impact on the human psyche.

Gurdjieff essentially synthesized ancient esoteric teachings and made them approachable and applicable to the lives of rational Western individuals. A seeker will find in his teachings an immeasurable treasure, the essence of so many other teachings, both spiritual and psychological, on the inner life. This extraordinary system of thought, which ranges from the most intimate, psychological insights to a grandiose cosmology linking the individual with the universe, is a synthesis of practices and teachings known as The Fourth Way. It is named the Fourth Way to differentiate it from the other ways of conscious evolution: the Way of the Monk, the Way of the Fakir, the Way of the Yogi. Each of these classic methods of human transformation focus on different aspects of the individual: emotional, instinctive, intellectual.

The Fourth Way deals with all of these dimensions at once, seeking to create a balanced individual whose inner work of transformation occurs in the midst of his or her daily activities. There is no need for monasteries, ashrams, or physical asceticism. Yet the efforts made are as intense and demanding as any of the practices which take place in those settings. The "Work" is entirely inner, invisible, and individual.

Then there is the man himself. Gurdjieff was the archetypal Master, beaming with extraordinary psychic powers developed in secret.
schools and monasteries somewhere between the Caucasus and the Himalayas; brutal soul-shattering insights; marvelous humor which was both ribald in the extreme and breathtakingly penetrating. He also had a capacity for love that was matched only by his ability to express rage. He was a master hypnotist, a master actor, a master healer. Those who encountered him often had opposite ideas of who he was, usually as a result of his own intentional behavior. He sometimes gave the impression of being a simple charlatan to arrogant individuals who would come to question him, while to others he was the most enlightened man they would ever encounter.

This powerful Master with eyes that pierced to the depths of the soul was also an old man whose pockets were full of candy for the children. This mysterious outsider who revealed new horizons that tore down society's social conventions and cherished beliefs, was also closely, though secretly, associated to the Russian Orthodox community in Paris. Several important teachers in their own right were born from his tutelage. P.D. Ouspensky is the most famous one. He presented the Work from a more intellectual perspective, though it still remained very practical. His book, In Search of the Miraculous, is one of the best expressions of the work ideas available to us.

Other leading students included Rodney Collin and Maurice Nicoll. Both have written remarkable books that shed light on what is now called the Gurdjieff-Ouspensky work. Nicoll's Psychological
Commentaries on the Teaching of Gurdjieff and Ouspensky consist of a five volume set of essays that cover the minute details of working on oneself. Gurdjieff called this path the way of the "Sly Man." This term is a poor translation of the French "le ruse" which has less negative implications and might better be translated as "clever" in transforming the difficulties of the moment into opportunities for spiritual awakening. Similar to the Zen Buddhist masters and their saying that "each moment is the best opportunity," Gurdjieff wanted his students to learn how to use the circumstances of each moment—both the internal and external—as food for the development of a new state of consciousness.
The Work

P. D. Ouspensky opens his lectures recorded in The Psychology of Man's Possible Evolution by stating that psychology has lost touch with its origins and its true meaning. He argues that, in its essence, psychology is the oldest science known to humankind and a largely forgotten one in spite of the fact that never before in history have there been so many psychological theories. He suggests that psychological systems can be divided into two categories:

1. Systems which study the person as they find him/her or as they imagine him/her to be (these are our modern systems).
2. Systems which study the person not from the point of view of what he/she is or what he/she seems to be, but from the point of view of what he/she may become.

These last systems alone explain the forgotten origin and meaning of psychology. According to Ouspensky, psychology is "the study of the principles, laws, and facts of man's possible evolution."
fundamental assumption is that human beings are not completed persons. Nature develops us only to a point, and it is only by individual efforts that further development proceeds. He writes: "Evolution of man in this case will mean the development of certain inner qualities and features which usually remain undeveloped, and cannot develop by themselves."

The evolution of human consciousness is a question of personal efforts and is therefore a rare exception among the majority of human beings. To those who would wonder at the seeming unfairness of this assertion, Ouspensky responds that most people simply do not want to awaken. To become a different being, we must want it greatly and over many years. Without the necessary efforts we will not evolve. Moreover, we must acquire qualities which we believe we already possess but in fact do not. In the Fourth Way, this insight is the first step in the direction of inner evolution: we do not know ourselves.

The teaching tells us: "Man has invented many machines, and he knows that a complicated machine needs sometimes years of careful study before one can use it or control it. But he does not apply this knowledge to himself, although he himself is a much more complicated machine than any machine he has invented." This "machine" is brought into motion by external influences. All actions, ideas, and emotions are responses to the stimulus of external events.
For Gurdjieff and Ouspensky, such mechanical persons are asleep to their true condition and virtually incapable of change. "By himself, he is just an automaton with a certain store of memories of previous experiences, and a certain amount of reserve energy." Everything happens to us as to puppets pulled by invisible strings. Ouspensky believes that if we could perceive this phenomenon, then things would begin to change for us. We human beings are not merely stimulus-response machines, but machines which can know that we are machines! Realizing this, we may find ways to cease being simply reactive organisms.
The Illusion of Unity

Another central idea in the Fourth Way is that the individual is not one. We have no permanent "I" or Ego. Every thought, feeling, sensation, desire is an "I" which believes that it is the whole person. Yet none of these "I's" are connected and each depends on the change of external circumstances. To make things worse, there are often impenetrable defenses between each "I" which the Work calls "buffers" separating these subpersonalities from one another.

Gurdjieff states that one of our most important mistakes we make is our illusion about our unity. He writes: "His "I" changes as quickly as his thoughts, feelings, and moods, and he makes the profound mistake in considering himself always one and the same person; in reality he is always a different person, not the one he was a moment ago." Our every thought and desire lives separately and independently from the whole. According to Gurdjieff, we are made of thousands of separate I's, often unknown to one another, and
sometime mutually exclusive and hostile to each other.

The alternation of I's is controlled by accidental external influences. There is nothing in us able to control the change of I's, mainly because we do not notice it. Each separate I calls itself "I" and acts in the name of the whole person. This explains why people so often make decisions and so seldom carry them out. A little self-observation will prove that we usually think, feel, move and respond to the stimulations acting on us, without our being aware of what is happening within us. This self-observation is in fact the first practical effort required in the Fourth Way. The student is to create an "observing I" which observes with objectivity his or her inner activity. To develop an objective space within which can see without judging is extremely difficult but is also the first breakthrough out of our mechanical behavior and the virtual hypnotic trance in which it keeps us.
States of Consciousness

Dr. Kathleen Speeth, from the California Institute of Transpersonal Psychology, has suggested that what Ouspensky and his teacher Gurdjieff have proposed are psychotherapeutic techniques which bring the various fragments of the ego into awareness, gradually acquainting the "I's" with one another. But there is another element in the Fourth Way view of human beings which creates a backdrop to the ideas just mentioned. This has to do with the very concept of consciousness.

Ouspensky dismisses the notion that consciousness is equivalent to mind activity. Consciousness is a particular kind of awareness concerning who we are, where we are in the moment, and what we know in the deepest dimension of our being. It never remains the same but can be made continuous and controllable through special efforts and study. The Fourth Way points to four states of consciousness: sleep, waking state, self-awareness, and objective...
consciousness. Most everyone lives only in the first two states.

The third state, self-consciousness or self-awareness, is one that we believe we possess even though we are conscious of ourselves only in rare flashes. Such flashes come in exceptional moments, in highly emotional states, in times of danger, or in new and unexpected circumstances. We have no control over their coming and going. This state of consciousness is similar to the Buddhist concept of "mindfulness" which Thich Nat Than describes as "keeping one's consciousness alive to present reality." However, the Gurdjieff teachings provide more details about our ordinary state which is described as "sleep"—the same state referred to by Christ when he said "Watch! Do not sleep."

Ouspensky writes concerning this condition: "If we knew the quantity of wrong observations, wrong theories, wrong deductions and conclusions made in this state (our ordinary consciousness), we should cease to believe ourselves altogether." Dr. Speeth, in her book The Gurdjieff Work, observes that anyone who has a difficult time accepting the notion that as we are we have but few moments of true self-awareness, ought to make a study of the loose jaws and vacant stares of people in public places and in situations where they do not think that they are being observed.

According to the Fourth Way, the central obstacle to higher levels of consciousness is a phenomenon known as "identification."
Ouspensky describes it in this manner: "In this state man has no separate awareness. He is lost in whatever he happens to be doing, feeling, thinking. Because he is lost, immersed, not present to himself, this condition is known as a state of waking sleep." When we are identified, our attention is directed outward and we are lost to ourselves. Self-awareness is then a state in which we become aware of ourselves and are no longer hypnotized by the external event before us.

There is a higher level still to be reached which the Work calls "objective consciousness." In this state, we come into contact with the real world from which we are cut off by the senses. Some psychologists deny the existence of higher states of consciousness, dismissing them as dream-states. It is strange that Sigmund Freud, who discovered so much about subconscious states, should not have postulated the existence of levels of consciousness above as well as below the level on which we usually live. But in order to reach the more silent areas of consciousness, what the Work calls our "higher centers," we must get beyond the noisy regions of our minds in which we spend so much of our time.

The attainment of higher levels of consciousness is closely related to certain religious practices which are found in all cultures, such as meditation and contemplation. These are difficult paths to tread because our attention is always being caught by the ceaseless chattering in our heads. Yet it is possible to become receptive to a
state of pure consciousness without thought, a state in which truth is revealed to us directly, without the use of words.
Essence and Personality

In order to see clearly the roots of our psychological distortions, the Fourth Way defines two aspects of the individual: essence and personality. Essence is what a person is born with, personality is that which is acquired. All that is learned, both unconsciously through imitation and through acquired likes and dislikes, constitutes the outer part of the person, that which is changed by outer circumstances. Though personality is necessary, it must not be left to dominate essence or it will produce artificial persons cut off from their true natures. "This means that with a quick and early growth of personality, growth of essence can practically stop at a very early age, and as a result we see men and women externally quite grown up, but whose essence remains at the age of ten or twelve."

Through the practice of self-remembering, we can separate ourselves from the pretenses and imitations which have enslaved us
since childhood and return to who we actually are. Such a return to our essential nature is accompanied by a sense of liberation unlike any other. "To thyself be true" is the first commandment on the way of self-development and the attaining of a higher consciousness.

According to Rodney Collin, one of Ouspensky's primary students who started his own Fourth Way School in Mexico, the fundamental abnormality in human beings lies precisely in the divergence between personality and essence. The more nearly we know ourselves for what we are, the more we approach wisdom. The more our imagination about ourselves diverges from what we actually are, the more insane we become. He writes: "Unless a man first finds himself, finds his own essential nature and destiny, and begins from them, all his efforts and achievements will be built only on the sand of personality, and at the first serious shock the whole structure will crumble, perhaps destroying him in its fall."

For Rodney Collin, the soul is the totality of the moments of self-awareness during one's life. Yet moments of higher consciousness are very rare and gone as soon as they come. Once again, the reason such self-consciousness is so difficult to attain is that it is dependent on the conscious use of attention.
Self-Remembering

One of the most practical and meticulous study of the ideas of this inner work on oneself is found in Maurice Nicoll's masterful Psychological Commentaries. Here the reader will come upon the "nuts and bolts" of transformation. Nicoll states somewhere in these five volumes of lectures given to his students that, as you make progress in the Work, "what you took as yourself begins to look like a little prison-house far away in the valley beneath you." This is a vivid expression of the "third state of consciousness" or "self-remembering" as it is called. These flashes of greater consciousness are the unexpected results of the strenuous efforts made in order not to lose oneself in the rush of outer circumstances, to be cleansed from the acids of negativity, and to maintain a heightened awareness grounded in the present.

The student is to reach a point where he or she can make the choice not to react automatically to external stimuli. This requires going
against the grain, against long established habits and self-indulgences. The question is as basic as: can you find the willpower to choose not to react angrily to something that makes you angry? Rather than being wasted in such an outburst, the energy accumulated through this effort can be available for a moment of intensified consciousness. Such a moment will flood you with peace or quiet joy or a sense of profound liberation.

Oddly enough, such rare and precious moments often come in very paradoxical events. When night is darkest, a shaft of light can suddenly breaks through. Self-remembering, combined with the insights of objective self-observation assists in the creation of a balanced individual who is not completely under the sway of his or her inborn nature and acquired habits. It is not possible to experience a vaster sense of reality if we are entirely under the dominance of the intellect to the exclusion of the emotional or the instinctive part of our nature and vice-versa. In attempting to make the "machine" work right, it is necessary to change attitudes and behavior developed over years of wrong functioning.

Ouspensky told his students that it is only when we realize that life is taking us nowhere that it begins to have meaning. This observation is not a philosophy, but a pragmatic realization which can fundamentally alter our perception of ourselves and of the world around us. Maurice Nicoll gives a hint of these first stages of real change in his Commentaries: "This gradual withdrawal of
energy from the customary, easily resentful and brittle feeling of 'I' is accompanied by a gradual new and broader feeling of I, as if one were living in a larger place...It is like being introduced to a new civilization, to another form of life." He points out that by using the inner camera of self-observation, we begin to open a mind above the level of the sensual mind.

Here is where the psychological experiences of the Fourth Way begin to reveal their numinous and "religious" character. The same idea is found in the teachings of Karlfried Graf Durckheim which is informed by Zen Buddhism, Christian mysticism and psychotherapy. He writes of the experience of higher awareness in this way: "It is no longer the old I but a wider, more comprehensive one. We do not lose ourselves in it but, on the contrary, truly find ourselves. A new breathing space, scope and sphere of action opens up and we realize only then how confined we had been before, how imprisoned and isolated."

Durckheim also gives us a clear description of the first steps of inner development which are fundamental to all such instructions: "Practice on ourselves, in the physical and spiritual sense, is always of two kinds. It involves both the pulling-down of everything that stands in the way of our contact with Divine Being, and the building-up of a 'form' which, by remaining accessible to its inner life, preserves this contact and affirms it in every activity in the world."
Self-remembering, then, is a process of being lifted out of our ordinary sense of self into a purified, detached space well known to those long practiced in meditation. But in the Fourth Way this birth of new awareness can be accomplished while one crosses a city street or takes out the trash. Nevertheless, despite the practical approach of the Work, self-remembering remains as intangible and paradoxical as any spiritual exercise. Reminiscent of the Zen koan, Rodney Collin told his students that we cannot remember ourselves until we forget ourselves. And at the height of his powers of understanding, he united the Fourth Way with the wisdom of all times and places: "To feel beauty, to feel truth, that is self-remembering. Self-remembering is the awareness of the presence of God."
The idea that we are not awake but live in a partial dream state from which we can awaken opens onto radically new horizons. The illusions we foster concerning ourselves melt under the light of increased consciousness and we awaken to new dimensions of reality which set us free. We are then able to relate to the world around us without the usual defenses, masks, and confusion which constitute much of human interaction. We become capable of a new kind of compassion.

Ultimately, this third state of consciousness, which is our birthright, frees us from the unnecessary agonies of a little ego always struggling for self-importance and awakens us to immeasurable vistas of new insight and understanding. The world becomes a different place, we become far more than our imaginary selves ever dreamt of, and the potential for happiness, fulfillment, and genuine usefulness to humanity are now tangible realities. This use of
attention is similar to the "watch of the heart" of early eastern Christian spirituality and the "remembrance of God" of the Sufi mystics.

To be aware of higher reality while dealing with ordinary reality requires an effort of awareness, detachment, concentration and insight which are the result of long practice. These experiences of vaster consciousness have been tasted by everyone in rare moments of our lives and our reminiscent of the wonder years of childhood. But despite the deep emotion or astonishing joy that accompanies them, they are always fleeting, ephemeral, and uncontrollable. The disciplines of the Work eventually make the practitioner receptive to longer, more frequent encounters with these regenerating and illuminating events.

These are the transformative moments that people have sought in drugs and voyages to exotic lands, in love and intense emotion. On the foundations of objective self-observation and liberation from constant entanglement (or identification) with circumstances of the outer world, these experiences become the oxygen of our souls. The mysterious and obscure passages of sacred scripture from all religions then begin to take on deeper meaning and each individual discovers for himself or herself those life-giving encounters with transcendent reality. Expressions such as "the kingdom of God" or "Nirvana" are then no longer lovely ideas but concrete, accessible experiences.
In proportion as we learn to remember ourselves, our actions acquire a meaning and consistency which is not possible as long as our attention moves only from one fascination to another. If we take seriously this state of awareness called self-remembering, many new possibilities open to us. But it does not take long to realize that there is an enormous resistance in ourselves against mastering this new state. We find that we have to give up all the more psychopathic ways of burning up our attention and energy which now seem such a necessary part of life--irritation, indignation, self-pity, all sorts of fears, and all the ways we hypnotize ourselves into satisfaction with things as they are.

The premise that we are not awake but live in a partial dream state opens entirely new horizons in dealing with our problems and the difficulties of other people. The release of the illusions we foster concerning ourselves frees us to relate to others without the usual defenses and masks which constitute much of human interaction.

At their core, the originators of the Fourth Way as we know it today were religious men in the true sense of the term. Work on oneself leads to a liberation which can be compared to the enlightenment and divinization of more religious methods. But writings on the Fourth Way have generally remained entirely secular with the notable exceptions of the works of Maurice Nicoll and Rodney Collin. Left with the exoteric dimension of the Work, the Fourth Way can be reduced to the development of personal powers and
dehumanizing attitudes. To be somewhat liberated from mechanicalness and the illusion of unity can allow a person to manipulate those who are still caught in the tyranny of waking sleep.

The Fourth Way is meant ultimately to transcend even the Work's own magnificent thought structures so that every student can find for himself or herself the new life of a higher consciousness which constantly seeks to reach us if only we would make the effort to awaken and ready ourselves to receive its treasures of wisdom and regeneration.

Gurdjieff required that each person verify the teachings for themselves based on their personal observations and experiences. That is why he rarely mentioned the idea of "God" even though he called his teaching "esoteric Christianity." His task was to help people free themselves from all that is false and imaginary in order that they might become receptive to their higher self and enter unchartered dimensions of consciousness on their own through liberation from the tyranny of their ego.

Gurdjieff broke through the dogma of institutional religion and revealed the dynamic truth within the teachings. He made clear the psychological insights beneath the rust of rote repetition and blasphemous misuse of the words of enlightened teachers. His insistence on verification forced the student to come upon the
stunning fact that life is indeed more than that which the senses perceive and to re-interpret spiritual insights in the context of their own lives. Belief was to give way to experience and experience to transformation so that the "new man" could emerge out of the ashes of rejected illusions.

It is for this reason that Gurdjieff was so merciless on his students. He crushed vanity and artifice, mocking those who thought they understood something. He differentiated between two forms of knowing: knowledge and understanding. The first is of the head, the second is that which takes root in our being and transforms us. He did indeed humiliate many egos stuffed with pride and broke people's confidence in their own importance.

A great library is now arising around this unique and extraordinary man. Some condemn him, some worship him, most praise his influence on seekers of the twentieth century. He remains an enigma, even a danger to those who would approach his transformative teachings without a compass. But there are some who have found their lives forever enlightened by exposure to this strange and complex man. His colossal personal efforts, carried on in spite of a revolution and two world wars, and his desire to share the awakening he had found with seekers here in the West, will someday be recognized as one of the central events of our century.

Gurdjieff tore through our most cherished beliefs with astonishing
force and irreverence, stung our vanities with brutal honesty, and called us to that ultimate journey toward the consciousness of who we are and who we are meant to be.

Behind the exotic masks of this oriental magician-rogue-teacher was great compassion. Children and animals sensed it, while seekers of all classes and types found healing and new life from his sometimes bizarre requirements. Gurdjieff came to wake us with uncompromising affection and assist us accessing our deeper selves. No one walks away unchanged from the teachings of this intense Master who has taught us to discover someone even more elusive than himself: the true nature of our being.
Few western people know that the idea of "inner silence" is at the heart of the earliest expressions of Christian practice and faith. This way of being has a name that has yet to be uncovered in our part of the world. The Greek word "hesychia" has been a fundamental spiritual practice in the traditions of Eastern Orthodox Christianity going back to the first centuries after the appearance of the Anointed One in the hill country of Judea. This mysterious word can be translated as "inner tranquility" or "inner silence" and a complex psychological teaching and set of practices has grown up around it, involving some of the great figures of eastern Christianity such as Saint Gregory Palamas, John Cassian, and many others.

Hesychasm is a quality of conscious presence that combines constant inner awareness and prayer with deep stillness. It requires a profound self-knowledge, attentiveness to each breath of the body, and commitment to the reality of the sacred at the heart of life. A synthesis of this teaching can be found in a revered book known as "The Philokalia" (translated as "Love of Beauty" or "Love of the Good") which is central to Orthodox spirituality.

The teaching on "hesychia" is modeled in many ways by the actions
of Jesus as recorded in the Gospels, but especially in the strange scene presented in Luke 4:28-33, after Jesus had revealed his mission to the people of his hometown: "All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way."

In the midst of violent attack, he maintained an attitude of extraordinary inner peace—as he would later on the way to the cross—and responded to the hatred and fury with silence and a detachment that mystically saved him from harm.

Though particularly evident in the humility and inner grounding of the Christ, "hesychasm" is a universal concept. Its parallel can be found in other ideas related to spiritual evolution, such as detachment, freedom from desire, inner peace. The results of this effort are seen in the presence of sages and saints in all times and places.

Inner silence ultimately means self-transcendence. It requires us to overcome a fundamental self-interest that guides everyone's life in order to accept the difficulties of passing circumstances, and to remember the greater context in which our lives are taking place. Accomplishing such inner freedom which leads to inner silence is no passive effort. It in fact demands "inner warfare" as we seek to
become liberated from all that is connected with the inherent selfishness in which we are born which includes the self-absorption of relentless thoughts, most of them based on self-interest. This condition is part of our natural make-up, as basic to us as the instinct to survive. The paradox we all must face is that spiritual and psychological survival requires the opposite of this natural instinct. The maturing of the human character means turning one's attention to something greater than oneself, which then offers a basis for inner stability, independence from externals, and a peace that "passes all understanding."

To be without this inner silence founded on the spiritual consciousness of a greater reality is to literally lose ourselves in the stimuli of the outside world and in the hallucinations of our imaginations, fears, daydreams, and vacuous illusions.

The serenity that is witnessed in the sages and saints of the past is not meant to be some rare or unique nobility of character. It is right alignment with reality, an achievable state for all of us and no less than our birthright, if we are willing to struggle for it.

This inner freedom has nothing to do with emotional disconnection, lack of compassion or disinterest in what is going on around us. In fact, to be rooted in an active state of inner silence gives one the widest scope of vision and makes possible a new awareness and a capacity for unconditional love.
This is very difficult work, as anyone will quickly discover upon making efforts to overcome the noise of our relentless and random thoughts and feelings. It demands moment by moment remembrance of our true purpose in this world, and a constant check on our automatic reactions based on acquired habits and imitations of those around us. The "hesychastic" way calls us to take the state of calm found in deep meditation and carry it with us into the noise and tumult of daily life.

To follow this way of inner silence requires the capacity to accept necessary suffering, a fact that everyone must deal with in one way or another. To experience inner pain without falling victim to self-pity or despair is a sign of a new maturity of will and understanding. At the apex of this way of being is the ability to find joy and gratitude for the gift of life even in the face of great turmoil, injustice, or tragedy. Living in that paradox creates a new quality of Self which transcends the ever-shifting scenery of temporal life. This inner silence is the groundwork of unity, constancy, and true freedom.
The next century is nearly upon us, bringing the human family together as never before. One of the things that could make or break humanity's opportunities for evolution and even survival is the gatekeeper of spirituality—religion. Will it unify us or split us further apart? There are plenty of spiritual groups in the world, but most of them reveal their exclusivity inasmuch as their members identify themselves by the motto: "I'm in the group and you're not."

Religion in the new millenium must either link us together or become obsolete. The answer to this problem is not another round of interfaith dialogue among representatives sitting in an ivory tower. What is needed is a widespread recognition of the common ground that unites all true experiences of the sacred. At the heart of nearly every spiritual teaching—from Christian centering prayer and hesychia (inner tranquility) to the Sufi zikr (remembrance of God) to Buddhist mindfulness and Hindu advaita (non-duality)—there are the same elements of self-knowledge, inner struggle, inner silence, inner transformation.
These experiences cannot be captured in words with our fragmented and limited intellects. Therefore no word can be final. We can, however, use words to express our feelings of liberation from the anxieties of the ego, for the peace that transcends external circumstances, and for our devotion to something greater than ourselves. Call it Brahma, Allah, Nirvana, the God of Abraham, or the Christ, there is a Divine Presence that, when encountered, may alter the fabric of our lives. Evidence of this fact can be clearly witnessed in every age.

In this day and age, we are discarding the rationalism of an arrogant, male-driven nineteenth century and are breaking into a new appreciation of intuitive sensitivities. Sensing the invisible in the visible, recognizing the sacred in the ordinary, and discovering the oneness of humanity is possible for us on an unprecedented scale. Now that every corner of the globe can be seen at the switch of a channel or the tap of a keyboard, we face a horizon without the boundaries of the past. We know in our bones that, with a little responsibility, starving children can be fed in all parts of the world. We know now that we are so connected that if the ship goes down, we all go down.

In such a world, there is no more room for the antiquated prejudice and dogmas that were shaped in the narrow confines of another age. Certainly, there are good things to inherit from the past. But
everything must be measured against the most holistic and universal spiritual criteria we can perceive in our day. Such a viable spirituality for the new millenium might be described in the following way:

- Enlightenment must lead to unification.
- Intolerance of any kind is unacceptable.
- Cultural diversity must be fully embraced.
- True spiritual leaders must radiate compassion and self-transcendence.
- Scripture can be considered divinely inspired only if it genuinely reflects unconditional love.
- Ritual is valuable insofar as it enables authentic inner experience, not merely because it has always been done that way.
- The truth of different paths converge at the deepest levels of our being.
- All of life is seen as a sacrament of the Mystery that generates existence.

These fundamentals provide us with a compass for a viable spirituality. Anything less cannot be considered unifying, sacred, or even humane. The world has suffered long enough from restrictive religions. It is time to strip them all of their forms that separate us. If there is no compassionate light beneath them, then let them become dust in the wind.
In this new age, we can approach this formidable and all-encompassing inner work with the help of transpersonal psychology, intellectual study, emotional liberation and purification. This is the wholistic development available to all of us who know that there is a special work to be done at the dawn of the new millenium.

It begins in the intimacy of our own psyche, as we undertake to find the "undiscovered country" of our deeper selves. In this highly individual search, we will encounter the universal aspect of our being that will enable us to bring to the world the kind of commitment and compassion that it so desperately needs.

Our experience of goodness, forgiveness, healing and transformation into the radiant persons we are meant to be is the heart and soul of a true spirituality. When individuals who are undergoing these inner experiences and yearning for more come together, a new community will be born—one that will be open, loving and real.
You and I are not simply men and women who pay our bills, bring up families, experience joys and sorrows and finally pass away like a dream that suddenly ends. We are much more than this. In our bodies that grow old, our spirits are made in the image of the Creator. We are not simply our picture on our driver's license or our social security number. We are the spiritual children of the eternal Creator. But we limit ourselves to our nationality, our gender, our age. Nationality, for instance, can be a very narrow and dangerous thing. The French national anthem has a verse in its chorus that says: "May an impure blood soak into our fields." And of course this impure blood is anyone who is not French. This is not the mindset of a child of God. Evelyn Underhill stated: "For practical purposes, we have agreed that sanity consists in sharing the hallucinations of our neighbors."

When we are quiet and alone, without distractions, we can taste another quality of life. We can discover a vision of spiritual reality. The poet William Blake put it this way: "To see a world in a grain of sand, heaven in a wild flower, hold infinity in the palm of your hand, and eternity in an hour." We have all known such brief
moments, but usually we limit our awareness to the physical reality. We find in the Christian tradition a very strange saying: "let the dead bury the dead." Surely these words do not refer to the dead in body, for a dead body cannot bury another one. Christ was speaking of the dead in soul. A perfectly healthy body can have a dead soul within it. And what is a dead soul? One that has closed itself off to the source of its being, with no spiritual sensitivity or understanding. How does this happen to us?

First, we take ourselves entirely for granted. Consider our emotions. When we feel depressed or angry, we simply believe that to be who we are. And yet we all have this recurring wheel of emotions that varies from the greatest excitement to the most morbid depressed feeling. According to whatever stimulus comes before us, to whatever happens in our outer life, the wheel turns and we have no choice but to manifest that emotion, however destructive and unpleasant it may be. It happens so quickly that we seem to have no other option than to turn into that emotion. And yet, we do have a choice. It is possible to separate ourselves from negative experiences, to not be tyrannized by them. For if we take these emotions for granted, we come under their rule. We then live in a petty world of reactions, founded on a consciousness focused only on ourselves.

One of the key insights in spiritual awakening is that it is we who attract our lives and bring so much misery upon ourselves. While it
Transformation Through Self-Awareness

is true that we have no choice but to be subject to such emotions, we do have a choice as to how we respond to them. We can release them through violence and ugliness, or channel that energy into something positive and not let them have their way with us. The poet e. e. cummings put it this way: "To be nobody but yourself in a world that is doing its best night and day to make you everybody else means to fight the hardest battle which any human being can fight and never stop fighting." This struggle begins with our own uncontrolled reactions. For when someone speaks or behaves in a way that we resent, we usually respond with great bitterness and carry terrible memories of the person.

But there is another way: we can notice that we are violent and bitter and that is different. The observation of our state lets in light, a consciousness of what is inside of us so that we do not simply behave unconsciously and automatically. We can then recognize that no matter who is to blame for the circumstances, we are to blame for being negative. The cause is in ourselves and not in the other person, because we have a choice and a responsibility to the universe not to release the poisonous energies of negativity. We also need to realize that self-love does not admit the more unpleasant part of ourselves into our consciousness. Worse still, we projects it upon others. The faults that we dislike in others are most often found in ourselves as well. Cleansing, then, requires that we honestly confront what we are like.
Such observation does not place value judgments on what it witnesses. Otherwise we run the danger of falling into repression rather than discipline. Repression is ashamed of reality while discipline confronts and masters it. Repression says of such things as hate, anger and envy: "I could never have such feelings." Discipline says: "Yes, I do have those feelings at times, but I'm not going to let them run and ruin my life." The repressed person never accepts himself as he is but is always trying to hide everything that does not agree with the false image that he has built up and is so desperately defended and cherished. The disciplined person has accepted himself, because he or she knows that they are accepted by virtue of being alive.

Just as we must be aware of the great outer world, so must we develop an awareness of our inner world. There is a vast psychological country within us, with many dangerous neighborhoods as well as entryways into regenerating peace. We have traveled through them all. Each of us has been mean and hateful, which are dark places in our being. If we pay attention to where we are in ourselves, perhaps we won't fall so easily into those quicksands within us. Why is it that we cannot seem to control our states? The philosophical and religious traditions have a name for these states and for the reason why we have no control: they call it sleep.

In the New Testament alone, we read: "Awake, O Sleeper, and arise
from the dead and Christ shall give you light." In the letter to the Thessalonians, we find these words: "So then let us not sleep as others do, but let us keep awake." The apostle Paul says: "It is high time for you to wake out of sleep." And Christ is recorded as saying: "Watch! Do not sleep." Certainly what is meant here is not literal sleep, but the self-centered consciousness that keeps us from experiencing that liberation called by so many names: "the Kingdom of Heaven," "satori," "cosmic consciousness," or even "peak experiences." As different as we are now from when we were sleeping in our beds, so is that state of self-centeredness different from the possible state that we can all attain.
What is Christianity?

Charles B. Ashanin, PH.D.
Professor of Early Church History, Emeritus
Christian Theological Seminary

From his foreword to the book
The Spiritual Wisdom and Practices of Early Christianity

WHAT IS CHRISTIANITY? This is a perennial question about which there are many divergent views among Christians themselves, which also explains the variety of ecclesial bodies within the Christian fold. Broadly speaking, they fall in three major groups: Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant. Although these three divisions came into being during the second millennium of Christian history, their origins can be traced to the very beginnings of Christianity and to the New Testament itself. For instance, the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) are understood to interpret the major event of the Christian Faith, Jesus the Christ, within the context of history.

The claim is made that these Gospels teach that He provides history with the true knowledge of how human beings should live in order to find fulfillment as social beings. In this view, Jesus is an enlightened teacher and a better philosopher in comparison to other great luminaries in history. He provides humankind with better
information about God and human nature. The key word here is information, for by following His teaching, humankind would finally realize the real homonoia, universal concord and social harmony. This is what humanity has been seeking through what the Greeks called Padeia, the education of humanity as beings endowed with reason. But this effort seemed to many to be an illusive dream and by the time of the rise of Christianity, philosophy which was thought to bring about homonoia, the universal accord, was not capable of being able to realize this ideal.

However, in the minds of many people who dreamed of homonoia, the appearance of Christianity seemed to be capable of achieving what ancient philosophy had failed to do and they pursued its realization by espousing the new religion. This "philosophical" view of the Faith became dominant in the Western Latin tradition of Christianity (i.e., Roman Catholic and Protestant). The aim of this new Christian Society was to change history by realizing the dream of ancient homonoia. This was to be achieved through bringing humanity in conformity to the will of God so that His reign might supplant that of Caesar. But this was not the only tradition of the Christian Faith. Along with the Synoptic tradition of Christianity and the interpretation of Christianity as our Divine information, there also stands the tradition of the Gospel of Saint John, as well as the writings of Saint Paul, which explicitly state that the Messiah Jesus is not just a bearer of Divine information, but of Divine Revelation. Jesus, the Christ, does not only inform us about God.
He reveals God.

This is not a matter of quibbling with words. Divine information and Divine Revelation are not the same. The latter does not so much aim at changing history but seeks to transform human beings. In other words, human beings are not educated to create a better social order, but are instead incorporated into the Divine life. According to the Johannine and Pauline traditions, Jesus the Messiah came into history and not out of history. He came from the bosom of the Father in order to help human beings return to their Father from whom they have alienated themselves. In this vision of Christianity, God acts directly upon each human person, and not through intermediaries. According to Christianity as Divine information, intermediaries are necessary to the process of educating humankind for the Christian social order.

According to John and Paul, God is directly raising sons and daughters to inherit the Kingdom prepared "before the foundation of the world" (Jn 17:24). There is no question here of a new enlightened society as a center of Divine concern but rather an issue of the hagios, the saint. The saint is born "not of blood nor of the will of the flesh, but of God" (Jn 1:13). God reveals Himself to the saints directly through the Holy Spirit who is God's own unveiling of Himself to His children as their Creator and Savior.

As a consequence of God's disclosure, there comes into being the
communion of the Redeemed, i.e., the saints who are the Church, not as an organization but as the Divine-human organ, the mystical Body of Christ. Therefore, the Church is not so much an "observed" reality but is a spiritually discerned reality. This is important to remember because the Church thus understood is not dependent on the ambiguities and predicaments of the world but on the mercy of God, This is also the meaning of the words of Jesus: "Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33). In other words, the Church is the Divine Creation in which God indwells in His saints. The saints are God's own "household" with whom, in the words of the Medieval Byzantine writer Nicolas Cabasilas (14th century), "God shares His Kingdom, not as His servants but as His own family" (Life in Christ). In this vision of Christianity, the Church is essentially a communion rather than a community of like-minded people, for it is this communion (i.e., the bond of love between God in Christ and His saints) that makes the Church as a visible social organ possible. In this view of the Church, primacy belongs to the saints as God's anointed friends and not to the cleros, who are only servants of God's people.

This point is clearly underlined by the authors in the sixth chapter of this book. Structures and "principalities" in the Church exist for the sake of the saints and not the other way around as the proponents of the militant Church affirm. God's Kingdom, though not as yet universally acknowledged, is universally revealed. There is a beautiful passage in the last chapter of this book which bears
Christianity witness to this: "Through Christ, God has entered into history, that is, into time and space. Henceforth, there is not a single place or moment which is not filled with His Presence." The two interpretations of Christianity continue to coexist in the Church. The Church of Christ the Teacher may be called the Church militant. It believes itself in duty bound to bring Christ's Kingdom upon earth. Its monuments are great ecclesiastical establishments, such as bureaucracies, educational enterprises, missionary and social agencies. Its leaders are Christ's vicars and deputies, as if Christ were absent from His Church. Here the Church is the visible presence meant to counteract the power of this world with its own power. A good Christian in this understanding of the Church, therefore, is one who loyally supports the ecclesiastical system.

The militant Church competes with the powers of the world for influence in the world. Its philosophers are theologians and canon lawyers, the guardians of its discipline. Its founding father is Saint Cyprian (died 258) who argued that the unity of the Church is based on the Episcopate holding the common profession of Faith. As a former Roman magistrate, he simply transposed the Roman law which undergirded the Empire into the idea of Christian Faith where bishops did the same for the Church. With Cyprian, the clergy became the new magistrates of the Church as the New Society. The Gospel simply became the New Law which was renamed the Divine Law. The fathers of the Church are its great legislators, Leo the First (fifth century), Gregory the Great (died
604) and Innocent III (died 1216), all were bishops of Rome. The objective, visible elements of this Church's life are the true marks of its Christianity. The subjective and inner elements are to be avoided or condemned as being suspect of heresy! Alongside this Church of law and order there stands the Church of the Divine Revelation. Its center is not institutional but sacramental. Its patron Saint is Saint Ignatius of Antioch (martyred in 115). According to this vision of Christianity, the Kingdom of God and the union with God is its true aspiration, but this Kingdom does not come by "observation" (Lk 20:18). It is not an outward show but an inner invitation known through experience which is the intimation of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the believers.

The agenda of the followers of this path is a journey through askesis (total surrender) in order to enter more fully into the life of Christ according to Saint Paul's saying: "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Ga 2:20). The pathfinders of the Way are the patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, confessors, and ascetics. This vision of Christianity centers on the person of Christ as the Axis around which their whole life revolves. They profess the Faith as taught by the Orthodox Catholic Church through the ages, but they understand that Faith not as information or doctrine to be learned, but as a way of life to be lived. They believe Christianity to be the Revelation of God, i.e. the unveiling of the divine which unites the believer in Christ with God so that the believers may live in God and God in them. This revelation must be appropriated in
order to become an inner illumination. Among Western Christians, this path has been followed by the great saints and mystics, but its true home has been chiefly the Orthodox Church for which this understanding of Christianity has been normative. This is witnessed to by the fact that to the Orthodox the only fully recognized theologians have been Saint John, the Fourth Evangelist, Gregory Nanziansus, one of the great Fathers of the Church (d. 390) and Saint Symeon the New Theologian, the great Medieval mystic (d. 1022). All three have made such an indelible impact on Orthodox Christianity that their vision is its authentic form, so much so that if ever the Orthodox Church should depart from it, it would lose its soul and become the salt that has lost its flavor, as Jesus said, and therefore become worthless for human use.

It is not surprising that Western Christians are discovering this Orthodox Christianity of the Holy Spirit and becoming her children. Among these are the authors of this book, Father Alphonse Goettmann of the Orthodox Church of France and his wife Rachel. Inspired by gratitude to God for vouchsafing to them the understanding of this inner vision of Christianity, they present in the following pages an eloquent interpretation of this way of transformation which I venture to say will be an eye opener to every reader who is seeking to enter into communion with God through Christ, the Revealer. The authors make available in this book their own discovery of Christianity as the tradition which bears witness to the New Covenant which God has written on the hearts of
believers. Human beings will no longer need to teach each other about God, for He will reveal Himself in their hearts (Jeremiah 31).