

CHAPTER III

Self-study and improvement – States of consciousness and functions – Degrees of consciousness – Division of functions – Self-remembering – Mechanicalness – Study of functions of the four centres – Subdivision of centres – Attention – Formatory apparatus – Wrong work of centres – Four kinds of energy – Stopping leaks – Negative emotions – Stopping the expression of negative emotions – Change of attitudes.

IN THIS SYSTEM, WHICH STUDIES MAN AS AN INCOMPLETE BEING, particular stress is laid on self-study, and in this sense the idea of self-study is necessarily connected with the idea of improvement. As we are, we can use very little of our powers, but study develops them. Self-study begins with the study of states of consciousness. Man has the right to be self-conscious, even such as he is, without any change. Objective consciousness requires many changes in him, but self-consciousness he can have now. Yet he has not got it, although he thinks he has. How has this illusion started? Why does man ascribe self-consciousness to himself? He ascribes it to himself because it is his legitimate state. If he is not self-conscious, he lives below his legitimate level, uses only one-tenth of his powers. But as long as he ascribes to himself what is only a possibility, he will not work for the attainment of this state.

Next the question arises: why does man not possess self-consciousness if he has all the necessary arrangements and organs for it? The reason for this is his sleep. It is not easy to awake, for there are many causes of sleep. The question is often asked: do all people possess the possibility of awaking? No, not all: very few are capable of realizing they are asleep and of making the necessary efforts to awake. First, a man must be prepared, he must understand his situation; second, he must have enough energy and a sufficiently strong desire to be able to get out.

In all this strange combination that is man, the one thing that can be changed is consciousness. But first he must realize that he is a machine, so as to be able to tighten some screws, loosen others, and so on. He must study; that is where the possibility of change begins. When he realizes that he is a machine, and when he knows something about his machine, he will see that his machine can work in different conditions of consciousness and so will try to give it better conditions.

We are told in this system that man has the possibility of living in four states of consciousness but that as he is, he lives only in two. We also know that our functions are divided into four categories. So we study four categories of functions in two states of consciousness. At the same time we realize that glimpses of self-consciousness happen, and that what prevents us from having more of these glimpses is the fact that we do not remember ourselves – that we are asleep.

The first thing necessary in a serious study of oneself is to understand that consciousness has degrees. You must remember that you do not pass from one state of consciousness to another, but that they are added to one another. This means that if you are in the state of sleep, when you awake, the state of relative consciousness or ‘waking sleep’ is added to the state of sleep; if you become self-conscious, this is added to the state of ‘waking sleep’; and if you acquire the state of objective consciousness, this is added to the state of self-consciousness. There are no sharp transitions from one state to another state. Why not? Because each state consists of different layers. As in sleep, you can be more asleep or less asleep, so in the state in which we are now, you can be nearer to self-consciousness or further from it.

The second thing necessary in a serious study of oneself is the study of functions by observing them, learning to divide them in the right way, learning to recognize each one separately. Each function has its own profession, its own speciality. They must be studied separately and their differences clearly understood, remembering that they are controlled by

different centres or minds. It is very useful to think about our different functions or centres and realize that they are quite independent. We do not realize that there are four independent beings in us, four independent minds. We always try to reduce everything to one mind. Instinctive centre can exist quite apart from other centres, moving and emotional centres can exist without the intellectual. We can imagine four people living in us. The one we call instinctive is a physical man. The moving man is also a physical man, but with different inclinations. Then there is the sentimental or emotional man, and the theoretical or intellectual man. If we look at ourselves from this point of view, it is easier to see where we make the chief mistake about ourselves, because we take ourselves as one, as always the same.

We have no means of seeing centres, but we can observe functions: the more you observe, the more material you will have. This division of functions is very important. Control of any of our faculties can only be obtained with the help of knowledge. Each function can be controlled only if we know the peculiarities and the speed of each. Observation of functions must be connected with the study of states of consciousness and degrees of consciousness. It must be clearly understood that consciousness and functions are quite different things. To move, to think, to feel, to have sensations – these are functions; they can work quite independently of whether we are conscious or not; in other words, they can work mechanically. To be conscious is something quite different. But if we are more conscious it immediately increases the sharpness of our functions.

Functions can be compared to machines working in varying degrees of light. These machines are such that they are able to work better with light than in darkness; every moment there is more light the machines work better. Consciousness is light and machines are functions.

Observation of functions requires long work. It is necessary to find many examples of each. In studying them we shall unavoidably see that our machine does not work rightly; some functions are all right while others are undesirable from the point of view of our aim. For we must have an aim, otherwise no study will give any results. If we realize we are asleep, the aim is to awake; if we realize we are machines, the aim is to cease being machines. If we want to be more conscious, we must study what prevents us from remembering ourselves. So we have to introduce a certain valuation of functions from the point of view of whether they are useful or harmful for self-remembering.

So there are two lines of study: study of the functions of our centres, and study of unnecessary or harmful functions.

Q. Is the method of this study observation?

A. One can find many things in that way and it can prepare the ground for further study, but it is not sufficient by itself. By self-observation one cannot establish the most important divisions in oneself, divisions both horizontal and vertical, for there are many different divisions; one cannot know the different states of consciousness and separate one's functions. One must know the chief divisions, otherwise one will make mistakes and will not know what one observes.

Man is a very complicated machine; he is really not a machine, but a big factory consisting of many different machines all working at different speeds, with different fuels, in different conditions. So it is not only a question of observation but a question of knowledge, and man cannot get this knowledge from himself, for nature did not make this knowledge instinctive – it has to be acquired by the mind. Instinctively man can know what is sour or sweet and similar things, but instinctive knowledge ends there. So man must learn, and he must learn from somebody who has learned before him.

If you make a serious effort to observe functions for yourself, you will realize that ordinarily, whatever you do, whatever you think, whatever you feel, you do not remember yourself. You do not realize that you are present, that you are here. At the same time you will

find that, if you make sufficient efforts for a sufficiently long time, you can increase your capacity for self-remembering. You will begin to remember yourself more often, you will begin to remember yourself more deeply, you will begin to remember yourself in connection with more ideas – the idea of consciousness, the idea of work, the idea of centres, the idea of self-study.

But the question is *how* to remember oneself, how to make oneself more aware? The first step is to realize that we are not conscious. When we realize this and observe it for some time, we must try to catch ourselves at moments when we are not conscious and, little by little, this will make us more conscious. This effort will show how little conscious we are, because in ordinary conditions of life it is very difficult to be conscious. Here you put yourselves in artificial conditions, you think about yourselves ‘I am sitting here’ or ‘I am myself’ – and even then you cannot do it much. But in ordinary conditions when you are thinking about something, or talking, or working, everything distracts you, and you cannot remember yourselves. This expression ‘remembering oneself’ is taken intentionally, for in ordinary conversation we often say ‘he forgot himself’ or ‘he remembered himself in time’. We use this expression only in relation to extreme forms of negative emotions, but in actual fact we always forget ourselves, and with the exception of very rare moments we never remember ourselves in time.

Q. Is self-remembering the initial process of this system?

A. It is the centre of the initial process, and it has to go on, it must enter into everything. At first this sounds improbable, because you may try to remember yourself, and then you find that for long periods of time it does not come to your mind; then again you begin to remember about it. But efforts of this kind are never lost; something accumulates and at a certain moment when in the ordinary state you would have been completely identified and submerged in things, you find that you can stand aside and control yourself. You never know when it will be or how it comes. You must only do what you can – observe yourself, study, and chiefly try to remember yourself; then, at a certain moment, you will see results.

Q. How does one begin to use memory in the sense of self-remembering?

A. Self-remembering is not really connected with memory; it is simply an expression. It means self-awareness, or self-consciousness. One must be conscious of oneself. It begins with the mental process of trying to remember oneself. This capacity to remember oneself must be developed, because in self-observation we must try to study our functions separately from one another – intellectual function separately from the emotional, instinctive separately from moving. This is very important but not easy.

Q. Do you mean we should practise observing these different functions?

A. Yes, at certain moments of the day we must try to see in ourselves what we think, how we feel, how we move and so on. At one time you can concentrate on the intellectual function, at another time on the emotional, then on the instinctive or the moving. For instance, try to find out what you are thinking about, why you think and how you think about it. Try to observe physical sensations such as warmth, cold, what you see, what you hear. Then, every time you make a movement you can see how you move, how you sit, how you stand, how you walk and so on. It is not easy to separate instinctive functions, because in ordinary psychology they are mixed with the emotional; it takes some time to put them in their right place.

Q. Would there be any sense in breaking down certain habitual actions, such as going to bed at a certain time at night?

A. Mechanical changes of that kind may be useful in the very beginning of self-study, but they cannot produce any lasting effect. They may help you to see something that you would not have seen otherwise but, by themselves, they cannot produce any change. Change must begin from inside, from change of consciousness, from the moment when you begin to remember yourself or even earlier, when you begin to realize the possibility of self-

remembering and that it is really important. Only unfortunately it often happens that people start well and then lose the line of efforts.

Q. Does observing mechanicalness impair mechanicalness? I was thinking of physical work.

A. Without work on consciousness all the sides of us that can be conscious will become more and more mechanical. Only very uniform work without any variations is totally mechanical. If work is a little more complicated, then the more mechanical it is the worse it is. In no work is mechanicalness useful – one has to adapt, to change methods in order to produce good work, and for that one has to be aware of what one is doing. Being efficient in physical work does not mean mechanicalness. Training does not make us more mechanical. Being an expert means being intelligent about one's work.

Q. The moving and instinctive centres seem to work more evenly and normally than the intellectual and emotional. Why is this so?

A. Because otherwise people would go to the left instead of going to the right and never get where they want to go. And if the instinctive centre were like the intellectual and the emotional centres are now, a man would soon poison himself. A certain degree of normality is obligatory for the instinctive and moving centres. Other centres can go mad without immediate harm.

In order to understand man's mechanicalness it is very useful to learn to think about him as a machine, to study the functions of this machine and to understand the chief divisions of functions not only in general, not merely in theory, but to study them in their activity, to learn how they work. This division into four functions is only a preliminary division, because each of them is again subdivided. All this has to be studied and understood by observation, because theoretical study does not give the same result, does not lead to the same conclusions, does not show the same truth. For instance, very few systems recognize the existence of the instinctive centre or instinctive mind, and no system I have heard of recognizes the existence of an independent moving mind. Yet moving mind plays a very important part in our life, so the absence of this division spoils to a great extent the results of ordinary observation of man, particularly in modern psychology, for, since this fact is not recognized, many things are ascribed to a wrong origin. Moving centre is very important to study and observe, because it has other functions besides movement in space, such, for instance, as imitation, which is a very important function in man No. 1. Besides, moving centre also controls dreams, and not only dreams at night, but dreams in waking state – day-dreams. And since most of our life passes either in real dreams or in day-dreams, study of the moving function is most important. We think that the intellectual and emotional side is more important, but actually most of our life is controlled by instinctive and moving minds. So moving centre has many useful and many useless functions.

Q. Is there a connection between behaving mechanically and moving centre?

A. No, moving centre only means the mind whose legitimate function is to control movements. So 'moving' and 'mechanical' are not the same. Every centre may be mechanical; every function can be more mechanical or less mechanical, more conscious or less conscious. Certainly, there are some mechanical processes in us for which there is no need to become conscious, such as the physiological processes which are arranged and controlled by their own mind. But it is our actions as a whole, both in relation to ourselves and to other people, that can become harmful if they are left to themselves.

Q. Is talking always mechanical? I often talk before I have time to stop it.

A. In most cases. This is one of the first things one has to observe and struggle with. It is very difficult to observe and difficult to struggle with, but it must be done.

Q. I used to think that by talking about my observations I was formulating them. But now I feel there is a danger of observation evaporating in talking.

A. There may be very different talking; you can talk for the sake of talking, or you can *make*

yourself talk, with effort. Talking can be awakening, and it can be sleep.

Q. Could we be told of some way of making more efforts to observe?

A. If you put yourself in a more difficult position, for instance if you assume an unaccustomed posture, you won't be able to stop observing. We do not observe ourselves because life is too easy. If you are hungry, cold, tired, you will observe yourself. But with civilization there are no strong physical sensations. We smooth out all things before they reach a degree that will make us observe.

Q. Is this the kind of observation you want us to practise? I thought it was observation of our inner states.

A. Everything is useful. The study of the machine is also necessary, as well as the psychological side. You cannot study one side without the other. You must know how the machine works

Q. How do you know how many centres there are?

A. By observation. In the ordinary way you can observe four different functions which obviously come from different sources, controlled by different principles. Self-observation shows this quite clearly and after some time you cannot mix them.

Q. Why haven't modern psychologists come to that conclusion?

A. Because they do not know about it. This division of centres looks very simple, yet the fact that it is not known shows that ordinary mind cannot discover it. Ordinary mind, if you take existing psychology, just feels something different but cannot definitely say that this is one thing and that is another thing. This idea comes from schools, just as does the complete idea of the division of four states of consciousness. You can find this last idea in literature, but the description is quite different, so again it comes from schools and must be explained orally. There are things which can be described in books and there are other things which can never be rightly described.

Q. So the idea of centres is an old idea?

A. It is very old, but we cannot discover it until we are told about it. If we are told, we can observe ourselves and find that it is true, but by ourselves we cannot discover it. Facts prove this, for it has not been discovered.

Q. Where are the centres situated?

A. It does not matter because each centre occupies the whole body. There is not a single cell in our body that is not controlled by all centres. This must not be taken too literally; for instance, you cannot say that intellect controls every cell, so there are limitations, but speaking generally, each centre controls the whole body in a different way. But we cannot know the physical side by ordinary observation; we can study functions, however, and that gives all the material that is necessary.

Q. Then one can observe with the intellect?

A. You can do nothing else; that is the only part of us which is to a certain extent under our control, so we can use the mind for observation. Later perhaps you can train other centres to make observations, but that cannot come for a long time. Naturally, other centres must not be in the way. For instance, if you identify emotionally with something, it will prevent your observing; you want to think about one thing, but it will constantly bring you other thoughts, other associations. For a long time we have to work from the intellectual centre, but at the same time we must understand that we cannot go far with it because it has definite limits; it will bring you to a certain point after which you cannot go further unless you can use the emotional centre. But the emotional centre has to be trained first. You must learn not to express negative emotions, and only if you do that for a sufficiently long time can other things be explained.

Q. You cannot let your emotions guide you without your intellect, can you?

A. Normally you could, but then we are not quite normal, so they may guide us in a right way

or a wrong way. There is no guarantee that they will guide us in the way we want – we may want to go to one place and our emotions may lead us somewhere else.

Q. Emotions would have to develop an intelligence of their own?

A. I quite agree with you, but what does it mean? It means first of all that you must learn to control the expression of all unpleasant emotions; only then can you know emotionally what to do next.

Q. You say that the thinking and the emotional functions are completely separate, but isn't it very difficult to tell the difference?

A. No, it is not difficult at all, only a little patience and observation are necessary; after a short time you will see quite clearly what is thinking and what is feeling.

Q. Are the three centres often working simultaneously?

A. Yes, but 'simultaneously' may have different meanings. It is very rarely that they work simultaneously on the same subject. All the four functions can and do happen simultaneously, but they can work on different things. An example of all the four functions working simultaneously on the same subject would be artistic creation.

Owing to their working simultaneously centres often get very mixed, yet it is possible to distinguish them. This is the beginning of self-observation and self-understanding; we have to understand the different functions and then begin to divide them.

Q. Why is it that moving centre can stop imagination? For instance I find gardening or any physical work a help to stop it.

A. It means that the same centre was occupied with imagination that is occupied with gardening. It only proves that imagination is a function of moving centre.

Q. I cannot see the importance of the stress laid on centres.

A. It is very important to see that our mind is divided into four minds, that there is no unity in us, that the four minds or functions are quite different. This alone gives one a different picture of oneself.

Q. How can one distinguish between emotion and instinct?

A. It is a very important question and must be solved by one's own observation and study. Instinctive emotions are always connected with something physical. Since modern psychology does not separate instinctive emotions from other emotions there is bound to be some difficulty in understanding the difference. But when you know that they are different, it is possible to distinguish between them.

Q. Is there anything that can control unruly organs or cells?

A. Yes, instinctive centre. Do you think we would be alive for half an hour if instinctive centre did not work? It knows the right and the wrong work of each organ. It always tries to make them work rightly. We think organs work by themselves – this is imagination. They are controlled by instinctive centre. This is 'instinct' in the real sense in relation to man.

Q. Has the quality of intellect any bearing on the acquisition of consciousness?

A. Yes, because we must begin with intellect. Our intellectual centre is better developed, or more under its own control. The emotional centre is more irresponsible. So, since we have more command of our intellectual centre we have to use it until either we become more conscious or learn to use other functions more efficiently and control them better than we do now. At present we have no control over instinctive and emotional functions, and only a little over the moving function. External influences move them. We cannot be glad or angry without cause, and a cause means something external. Later work must be in the emotional centre because the chief energy is in it. Intellectual centre is only auxiliary, but at present it is all we have.

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I want to tell you a little more about centres which will help you to understand the situation. Some centres are divided into two halves – positive and negative. This division is very clear

in the intellectual and the instinctive centres. In the intellectual centre it is 'yes' and 'no', affirmation and negation. All the work of the intellectual centre consists of comparing. The division in the instinctive centre is quite plain: pleasure – pain. All instinctive life is governed by this. At a superficial glance it seems that the emotional centre also consists of two halves – pleasant and unpleasant emotions. But it is not really so. All our violent and depressing emotions and, generally, most of our mental suffering has the same character – it is unnatural, and our organism has no real centre for these negative emotions; they work with the help of an artificial centre. This artificial centre – a kind of swelling – is gradually created in us from early childhood, for a child grows surrounded by people with negative emotions and imitates them.

Q. Are instinctive emotions not negative?

A. They may be negative, but they are rightfully so. They are all useful. The negative half of the instinctive centre is a watchman warning us of danger. In the emotional centre negative emotions are very harmful.

Then each half of a centre is divided into three parts: intellectual part, emotional part and moving or mechanical part. The moving part of each centre is the most mechanical and the most often used. Generally we use only the mechanical parts of centres. Even the emotional parts are used only occasionally; as to the intellectual parts, they are very seldom used in ordinary conditions. This shows how we limit ourselves, how we use only a little part, the weakest part, of our organism.

It is very easy to distinguish these three parts when we begin to observe ourselves. Mechanical parts do not need attention. Emotional parts need strong interest or identification, attention without effort or intention, for attention is drawn and kept by the attraction of the object itself. And in the intellectual parts you have to control your attention.

When you get accustomed to control attention, you will see at once what I mean. First the character of the action will show you which centre you are in, and then observation of attention will show you the part of centre.

It is particularly important to observe the emotional parts and to study the things that attract and keep the attention, because they produce imagination. Study of attention is a very important part of self-study, and if you begin to observe this division of centres into parts, in addition to the division of centres themselves, it will give you the possibility of coming to smaller details and will help you to study attention.

Q. Is it possible for us as we are to give attention to something without being identified?

A. Certainly. Only you must distinguish attention from identification. Attention can be controlled; identification is mechanical.

Q. Did you say we have three kinds of attention?

A. No. Attention is one, there is no other attention. But sometimes you can act without attention – you can do many things, even normal, logical things without any attention. In other cases attention is drawn and kept by the attraction of the thing itself, and in the third case attention is controlled.

Q. I find that if I control my attention for even a short time I cannot imagine.

A. Quite right, because imagination goes on in mechanical parts of centres, without attention. If attention is fixed on something, imagination stops.

Q. Is it only when one is self-remembering that one can give controlled attention?

A. It is more or less on the same line, but at the same time controlled attention is possible in ordinary life. Sometimes people can control their attention and do interesting work without knowing anything about self-remembering. Although controlled attention is very close to self-remembering, there is a difference. Attention can be in only one centre, whereas self-remembering needs the work of three or even four centres.

Q. Isn't it very easy for controlled attention to become identification?

A. No, they are quite different. One is the maximum of control, the other is the minimum of control. There is no possibility of control in identification.

Q. Can one encourage the intellectual centre to work?

A. Cultivate attention. You will see that then it gives different results. Think with attention. Do not let yourself think mechanically. Mechanical thinking transforms itself into imagination.

Q. What is the difference between doing things consciously and intentionally?

A. We cannot speak about doing things consciously, because we are not conscious. As to doing things intentionally – if you do some work and have to give your attention to it, then, even without your noticing it, part of your effort will be connected with keeping attention on what you are doing. But if it becomes quite mechanical, you may be thinking of something else, yet your hands will be still doing it. That will be the mechanical part of the centre. If your work needs constant thinking, invention, adaptation, you have to work with intellectual parts.

The mechanical part of the intellectual centre has a special name. Sometimes it is spoken of as a separate centre, and in that case it is called the formatory centre or formatory apparatus. Most people use only this part; they never use the better parts of the intellectual centre. But ideas of this system or similar ideas cannot be understood by formatory apparatus at all. Formatory apparatus has very definite limitations. One of its peculiarities is that it compares only two things, as though in any particular line only two things existed. Then formatory centre likes thinking in extremes; for instance it either knows everything or it knows nothing. Another of its peculiarities is immediately to look for the opposite. You can find many examples of formatory thinking. For instance, if I say, you must do this or you must do that, people say, ‘But you said we cannot do!’ If I say this needs will-power, they say, ‘How, if we have no will?’ If I speak of being more conscious or less conscious, people say, ‘But we have no consciousness!’ These are all examples of formatory thinking.

Q. Can you give an example of formatory apparatus rightly used?

A. If the intellectual centre works normally, that is, if other parts do their work, formatory centre does its work quite all right. It is a registering apparatus. We are concerned only about its wrong work. This refers not only to the formatory apparatus but to all the mechanical parts of centres. Only when they begin to work wrongly do they become dangerous. So there is no need to worry about their right work; what you must try to do is eliminate their wrong work. The mechanical part of the emotional centre wants to do the work of the higher part, and it is the same with the formatory centre – it wants to do the work of the intellectual centre, and as a result the moving part of the centre includes all the intellectual life of an ordinary person.

Q. How do you account then for people occasionally living in the higher parts of the centre? One can occasionally have an idea.

A. Certain combinations of ideas may ‘happen’, but we want control, not an explanation of things that happen by themselves. Anything may happen once or twice, but it has no practical value or meaning, just as once or twice one can find money in the street but one cannot live on it.

Q. I do not understand what acting mechanically means, because one seems to spend half of one’s life doing things mechanically, like writing. Has all this got to be undone?

A. That is moving centre – I do not mean that. Many things are mechanical and should remain mechanical. But mechanical thoughts, mechanical feelings – that is what has to be studied and can and should be changed. Mechanical thinking is not worth a penny. You can think about many things mechanically, but you will get nothing from it. In a mechanical way you can use only a small part of your intellectual centre, the formatory apparatus, and it is not worth spending your time on.

There is one thing you must understand about parts of centres, and that is that the

intellectual parts differ much less from one another than the other parts. This division into intellectual, emotional and moving is very clear and sharply defined in the lower parts of centres, but it becomes much less apparent in the higher parts.

Q. Do only different centres interfere with each other or can one part of the same centre interfere with another part?

A. It may be anything. Supposing you work with moving centre – then instinctive centre may interfere, or emotional centre, or another part of moving centre. Or if you feel in one centre and then start speaking, you pass into another centre and may even forget what you wanted to say.

Q. Does the sum of the intellectual parts of different centres make up the intellectual centre or are they separate?

A. No, they can all work separately, but certainly if one could control the intellectual parts of all centres and make them work together, that would be the way to higher centres. Intellectual parts will not make up a centre by themselves, but their combined work will produce better work than they can do separately.

Q. Does work on oneself diminish the functions of the mechanical parts of centres?

A. It will diminish the work of the mechanical parts in the sense that it will diminish mechanicalness where attention and consciousness are useful. The mechanical parts will then do their own work for which they are intended, and perhaps do it better than at present, because now they are too occupied with things that do not concern them. This will enable the better parts of centres to work.

Q. Is mechanicalness to be looked upon as a fact to be observed or as an evil to be fought against?

A. You see, you will never understand mechanicalness if you speak in this way – in relation to small things. But when you see, or find in your memory, how quite mechanically you can do the most abominable things, which later you cannot understand how you could have done, then you will know what mechanicalness is. All our life we do mechanically what we would never do consciously. That is what we must understand. If we look through our life, year by year, month by month, we see things we would never have done consciously, or things we did not do which we would have done if we were conscious. This is the way to think about mechanicalness.

Q. Is formulation a proper function of the intellectual centre?

A. Quite right. There may be different degrees, but at present we can only speak about formulation and formation. In this connection it is important to understand the right meaning of the word ‘formatory’. There are two methods of mental conclusions: ‘formation’ and ‘formulation’. ‘Formation’ is a conclusion arrived at by the way of least resistance, avoiding difficulties. It is easier because it makes itself – ready-made phrases, ready-made opinions, like a stamp. It is generally defective with the exception of the simplest cases. ‘Formulation’ is a conclusion arrived at on the basis of all the available material; it needs effort and is sometimes difficult, but it means the best we can do.

Q. How is it possible for us to formulate? Will not certain ‘I’s distort the evidence?

A. If they distort, they will distort the formulation. But certainly it is necessary to learn to distinguish formulation from formation. Formation is, so to speak, just one glance, sometimes quite wrong, and formulation, as I said, is when you collect all you know about a given subject and try to make some deduction from it.

Q. Why is it that sometimes I find lectures interesting and sometimes not?

A. Because you are in different centres. In one centre you can be interested in another centre you are not interested. Suppose you are in instinctive centre; it cannot be interested in esoteric ideas – it is interested in food and things like that. But if you are in the intellectual or partly in the emotional centre, you can be interested. You know that we have four rooms in our house,

and it depends on which room we are in whether we are interested or not.

Q. I find in typing routine work one types more quickly. In typing intelligent work one types more slowly.

A. Because two centres work. Complicated work needs two centres. But even in copying, intellectual centre enters. Moving centre cannot be trusted much; it controls imagination and dreams. So when it works, intellectual centre watches. If one works wholly with moving centre, one is half asleep. All co-operation of centres is a certain degree of awakeness. What does falling asleep mean? Disconnection of centres.

Q. Speech comes under two centres, doesn't it?

A. More, even. Generally it is partly instinctive, partly moving, partly intellectual, and it may be emotional, so it may include all four functions.

Q. Is the intellectual part of each separate centre the better part, and the one to try and maintain, as against the emotional and mechanical parts of each centre?

A. All parts are equally necessary, but each part must do its own work. Parts are not wrong in themselves, each of them has its own function, but if they replace one another, their work becomes wrong.

You see, the idea that we do not use the whole of our brain but only part of it is not a new one, but psychological systems do not explain what we don't use, because parts of centres are not on the same level – they are really different machines. This system gives a real anatomy of our brain and generally of our whole mentality. So this is a very important point, and if one begins to observe oneself from the point of view of attention, one can study the different values of one's mental processes. This is the key to these machines.

Q. What is the difference between the moving part of the intellectual centre and the intellectual part of the moving centre?

A. They are completely different. Intellectual part of moving centre can control all our most complicated movements, when we have to invent new movements. Suppose one invents a very complicated machine, or works with a very difficult machine, or does very intricate handwork which needs constant attention and constant self-remembering even, in order not to break the whole thing; that would be the work of the intellectual part of moving centre.

And the moving part of the intellectual centre is the registering or formatory apparatus – a card-index system in the brain. It is quite useful in its place, but it is used for wrong purposes. Suppose, for instance, that one throws those cards in the air and tries to make deductions from the way they come down; that would be wrong work of the formatory apparatus – and that is what we usually do.

Q. When you spoke about adjusting things, did you mean trying to make centres work better? What will guide them to this better working?

A. All work on yourself – self-study, self-knowledge, self-remembering. First we have to know the machine and then we have to learn to control it. We have to readjust functions so that each does its own rightful work. Most of our activity consists of one centre doing the work of another centre. Our incapacity to reach our normal level lies in our inability to make our centres work rightly. Many inexplicable things we observe are due to wrong work of centres.

Q. Does wrong work of centres mean interference with one another?

A. There are two forms of wrong work of centres. Either they interfere, that is, one works instead of another, or one takes energy from another. Sometimes centres have to work for each other. If, for some reason, one centre stops working, the machine is so arranged that another centre can continue its work for a time to avoid an interruption. The original idea of such an arrangement is quite right, but in actual life it has become the cause of mental and physical disturbances, because one centre cannot work properly for another. And in the state of identification they like to do wrong work instead of their own work. It has become a kind

of bad habit, and by mixing functions the centres begin to mix energies, trying to get more potent energies for which they are not adapted.

Q. I find it difficult to see instances of wrong work of centres. My only observation is that I often experience a sensation of unnecessary excitement.

A. You can see examples when people become unnecessarily emotional in relation to things which would be better done without any emotion.

Q. How can one stop this interference?

A. Our functions are at present conditioned by our state of consciousness. There is a slight variation: we can be a little more conscious than we are – a *little* more or much less. That affects functions, for if you are more awake functions produce better results, if you are more asleep they produce worse results. This we can observe, but as a principle you must understand that functions and states of consciousness are independent of each other and exist by themselves. The state of consciousness affects functions, and increased consciousness will create new functions. Complete, real awakening will produce new functions which we do not have now.

Q. The thing to aim at is a perfect adjustment of the four centres?

A. Yes, this is the starting-point. After that a man can think about creating higher states of consciousness – about being conscious of himself and then about being conscious of things outside himself. This will correspond to the working of higher centres.

One centre cannot be improved by itself. All must be improved, must come to normal working. You see, the human machine is very cleverly made and everything in it can be used for the same purpose. But on the ordinary level the work of centres is not fully co-ordinated, they live too independently, and at the same time they hinder one another and use one another's energy.

Every centre is adapted to work with a certain kind of energy, and it receives exactly what it needs; but all the centres steal from one another, and so a centre that needs a higher kind of energy is reduced to working with a lower kind, or a centre suited for working with a less potent energy uses a more potent, more explosive energy. This is how the machine works at present. Imagine several furnaces – one has to work on crude oil, another on wood, a third on petrol. Suppose the one designed for wood is given petrol: we can expect nothing but explosions. And then imagine a furnace designed for petrol and you will see that it cannot work properly on wood or coal.

We must distinguish four energies working through us: physical or mechanical energy – for instance, moving this table; life energy which makes the body absorb food, reconstruct tissues, and so on; psychic or mental energy, with which the centres work, and most important of all, energy of consciousness.

Energy of consciousness is not recognized by psychology and by scientific schools. Consciousness is regarded as part of psychic functions. Other schools deny consciousness altogether and regard everything as mechanical. Some schools deny the existence of life energy. But life energy is different from mechanical energy, and living matter can be created only from living matter. All growth proceeds with life energy. Psychic energy is the energy with which centres work. They can work with consciousness or without consciousness, but the results are different, although not so different that the difference can be easily distinguished in others. One can know consciousness only in oneself.

For every thought, feeling or action, or for being conscious, we must have corresponding energy. If we have not got it, we go down and work with lower energy – lead merely an animal or vegetable life. Then again we accumulate energy, again have thoughts, can again be conscious for a short time.

Even an enormous amount of physical energy cannot produce a thought. For thought a different, a stronger solution is necessary. And consciousness requires a still quicker, more

explosive energy.

Q. If no amount of psychic energy can produce conscious energy, what difference does it make how much psychic energy I use?

A. You want psychic energy for quite different purposes. For instance, you have to think with psychic energy.

Q. I have found that trying to keep attention fixed uses a great deal of energy. Does it mean I do it in a wrong way?

A. No, you have to use energy to keep attention. This is work, and work needs energy, although on the other hand it saves energy – it saves waste of energy in another direction. If you are doing things without attention, it will mean a much greater loss.

Q. Why is it so difficult to control attention?

A. Lack of habit. We are too accustomed to letting things happen. When we want to control attention or something else, we find it difficult, just as physical work is difficult if we are not accustomed to it.

Q. Why should moments of consciousness be so rare? Is it a question of energy?

A. No fuel. If you have no electricity, or if you have a pocket torch with a bad battery, you may have a flash and then nothing. Consciousness is light, light is the result of a certain energy; if there is no energy there is no light.

Q. Does the secret of all development of consciousness lie in the conservation and control of energy?

A. No, not all the secret, though conservation and increase of energy is very important. But in itself it is not enough; one has to know how to control it. Energy is the mechanical side of consciousness. We cannot begin with the idea of control. In order to control one small thing we must know the whole machine. First, we have to stop waste of energy; second, collect it by self-remembering; then, adjust things. We cannot begin in any other way.

Q. Can energy be stored?

A. Yes, energy can be stored when you are able to store it. But at first the question is not about storing but about not wasting. We would have enough energy for everything we want to do if we did not waste it on unnecessary things. For instance, the reason why we are so formatory is that we are too dull, we do not feel enough. We think we feel, but this is an illusion. And the reason why we feel so little is because we have no energy available for the emotional centre.

Leaks of energy were already spoken about, but the worst of all is expressing negative emotions. If you can stop the expression of negative emotions, you will save energy and never feel the lack of it.

We can only hope to become conscious beings if we use in the right way the energy that is now used in the wrong way. The machine can produce enough energy, but you can waste it on being angry or irritated or something like that, and then very little remains. The normal organism produces quite enough energy not only for all centres but also for storing. Production is all right, but expenditure is wrong. These leaks have to be studied, because with some kinds of leaks it is not worth going on until they are stopped, for the more one accumulates energy, the more will leak out. It would be like pouring water into a sieve. Certain negative emotions produce precisely such leaks. In certain situations some people go through a whole range of negative emotions so habitual that they do not even notice them. It may occupy only five minutes or five seconds, but it may be sufficient to spend all the energy their organism produced for twenty-four hours.

I want particularly to draw your attention to this idea of negative emotion and the state of negative emotion. This is really the second important point; the first referred to consciousness – that we are not conscious and that we can become conscious. It is necessary to realize that there is not a single useful negative emotion, useful in any sense. Negative emotions are all a

sign of weakness. Next, we must realize that we can struggle with them; they can be conquered and destroyed, because there is no real centre for them. If they had a real centre, like instinctive emotions, there would be no chance; we would remain for ever in the power of negative emotions. So it is lucky for us that they have no real centre; it is an artificial centre that works, and this artificial centre can be abolished. When this is done, we will feel much better for it. Even the realization that it is possible is very much, but we have many convictions, prejudices and even 'principles' about negative emotions, so it is very difficult to get rid of the idea that they are necessary. Try to think about it, and if you have any questions I will answer them.

Q. You said we had no positive emotions?

A. We have no positive emotions; we call positive emotion an emotion that cannot become negative, and all our emotions, even the best we can have in our present state, can become negative at any moment. Also, by their scope, our emotions are too small for positive emotions. Positive emotions include very much, whereas our emotions are very narrow. So at present we have no positive emotions, but negative emotions are there.

Q. And if we become free of negative emotions?

A. Then we can have positive emotions. Some negative emotions can be simply destroyed, but some others we can dispose of only by transforming them into positive. Only, that is very far from us now; we cannot do it at present; now we can only prepare the ground for that, chiefly by creating right attitudes, for mental work comes first. We create right mental attitudes by understanding that negative emotions serve no useful purpose and by realizing how much we lose by allowing ourselves the pleasure of having them. Then perhaps we will have enough energy to do something about them.

Q. To do something about them is to stop them?

A. We have to begin with right understanding, right attitude. As long as we think negative emotions are unavoidable, or even useful for self-expression, or something like that, we can do nothing. A certain mental struggle is necessary to realize that they have no useful function in our life and that at the same time all life is based on them.

There are many strange things in us. First, there are things that could be conscious and are not; and second, we spoil our life by negative emotions for which nature has not even provided a centre, so that we must make one artificially. What is mechanical? What is not normal, what is unnatural, is most mechanical.

Q. Can you always tell a negative emotion from a genuine one?

A. You can tell it by identification, because two things are always present in negative emotions – identification and negative imagination. Without negative imagination and identification negative emotions cannot exist.

Q. When you are in the middle of having a negative emotion such as bad temper, you cannot stop it just by thinking?

A. No, but you can prepare the ground beforehand. If you can create a right attitude, then after some time it will help you to stop the negative emotion in the beginning. When you are in the middle of it you cannot stop it; then it is too late. You must not let yourself get into a bad temper; you must not justify it.

Q. From what you say it seems to me you are presupposing an 'I' higher than others who can do this?

A. Not higher, but some intellectual 'I's are free from the emotional centre and can see things impartially. They can say 'I had this negative emotion all my life. Did I get a penny? No. I only paid, and paid and paid. That means it is useless.'

Q. Have we emotions that are not negative?

A. Certainly, but not positive. They are not negative yet, but can turn negative the next moment.

Q. But it seems to me there are circumstances that simply induce one to have negative emotions!

A. This is one of the worst illusions we have. We think that negative emotions are produced by circumstances, whereas all negative emotions are *in us, inside us*. This is a very important point. We always think our negative emotions are produced by the fault of other people or by the fault of circumstances. We *always* think that. Our negative emotions are in ourselves and are produced by ourselves. There is absolutely not a single unavoidable reason why somebody else's action or some circumstance should produce a negative emotion *in me*. It is only *my* weakness. No negative emotion can be produced by external causes if we do not want it. We have negative emotions because we permit them, justify them, explain them by external causes, and in this way we do not struggle with them.

Q. Is there any reason why we are so anxious to keep them?

A. Habit. We are too accustomed to them; and we cannot sleep without them. What would many people do without negative emotions? This habit is so strong that special work is necessary to get rid of them. But in the beginning work on negative emotions is two-fold: studying and trying not to express them. Real work on negative emotions comes later. You cannot study them if you express them. If you try to stop expressing them, then you can see and study them.

Q. Is not changing one's points of view a method of struggling with them?

A. Quite right, only it is not sufficient by itself. Real struggle begins with struggling with identification. If you destroy identification, negative emotions will become weaker by themselves. But of course change of points of view is also very necessary.

Q. I understood you to say that struggling with negative emotions is useless, but we must study and observe them. Is this correct?

A. Struggle with negative emotions needs very many efforts; the habit is too strong. At first you must simply study and attempt to struggle with the expression of negative emotions. Now, if you struggle with one emotion you may create two instead. In time, indirectly, one can gain mastery over emotions. But the first step is study.

Q. Can one have negative emotions and be in good health?

A. The word 'health' must be taken in a broader sense, from the point of view of the system. We cannot take it in the ordinary sense of physical manifestations – actual absence of physical illness – because one of the first necessities of health is right work of centres. People whose centres work wrongly are not healthy. The idea of health must be enlarged, it cannot be taken narrowly.

Q. About right work of centres – I do not see how you can prevent emotional centre interfering with the work you are trying to do with the intellectual.

A. It interferes all the time. You can do nothing about it until you have conquered negative emotions and have learned not to identify. When you cease to identify, negative emotions cease to have power, because they work only on the basis of identification.

Q. When you feel an unpleasant emotion, why is it necessary not to express it?

A. It is the same as in relation to unnecessary talk. Ask yourself: is it useful, is it necessary to express them? The idea is to create resistance, otherwise we cannot observe. And this creation of resistance is the introduction to the study of emotions.

We cannot see them without it.

Q. Why is it that if you try to resist them it brings about a complete stop of thought?

A. Lack of practice. In the beginning everything stops.

Q. If you do not express unpleasant emotions, is it good bottling them up?

A. Try. You must not believe anything. If you find that it is good to express them, we will argue. I will then say that you cannot control this expression and that, if you observe, you will find it better not to express them. The question is, can you refrain from expressing them?

Much time and many other things besides are necessary in order really not to express unpleasant emotions.

Q. Why is it that it gives a feeling of relief to express anger or irritation?

A. There is a worm in you that wants to express itself. Then, when it expresses itself you feel relief, but in this way it becomes stronger and has more and more control over you. When you realize that nobody else is responsible for your irritation, little by little you will begin to feel differently. We have much more power over expression of negative emotions than we think, and we can learn not to express them. Even in ordinary life we do not always express negative emotions; in certain conditions we know that it would be dangerous. And if we can control the expression of them in certain conditions, we can control it in all conditions, if we try.

Q. May not restraint from expressing negative emotions, commonly described as 'letting off steam', have a harmful effect?

A. There is no danger. We cannot produce a restraint sufficiently strong to harm ourselves. 'Letting off steam' as a relief is an illusion. It makes us lose energy. Expression of negative emotions is always mechanical, so it can never be useful. But resistance to it is conscious.

Q. If we must not have negative emotions, this will abolish all emotional life!

A. Quite the opposite. *Now* we have no emotional life, but only an imitation. The idea is to have an emotional life. Real possibilities of knowing are in the emotional centre.

Q. The same amount of exhaustion is incurred by controlling as by releasing. What then can I gain by trying to control the expression of anger?

A. It is quite a wrong assumption that it is the same amount of energy, because control increases energy. It may be that you have to expend a certain amount of energy to control some emotion, but next moment, since you do not spend energy on this useless emotion, control will increase your energy. This is the chemical action of control.

Q. My experience is that suppressing the expression of a negative emotion makes one tired.

A. You can become tired if you only suppress the expression. But I never said suppress, I said, 'Do not express, find reasons for not expressing'. Suppression can never help, because sooner or later the negative emotion will jump out. If you merely suppress, you keep the identification and only shut off the external expression. It is a question of finding reasons, of thinking rightly, because expression of negative emotion is always based on some kind of wrong thinking.

Q. I should like to get more help about tackling negative emotions.

A. It must be your own effort, and first of all you must study your negative emotions and classify them. You must find which negative emotions you chiefly have, why they come, what brings them, and so on. You must understand that your only control over emotions is by mind – but this is not immediate. If you think rightly for six months, then it will affect negative emotions. If you begin to think rightly to-day, it will not change your negative emotions to-morrow.

Q. When I think about negative emotions, I do understand very clearly that they are in ourselves, and yet, soon after, I continue to express them. Is it simply because I am not one?

A. First, because you are not one, and second, because you do not try in the right way. It is a question of long work, as I said, and this cannot be changed at once. If one has constant negative emotions, recurring negative emotions of the same kind, one always falls in at the same point. If one observed oneself better, one would know that this was coming, or had come, and if one had thought rightly beforehand, one would have some resistance. But if one has no right attitude, if one does not think rightly, then one is helpless, and the negative emotion happens again at the same time, in the same way. This is one of the methods of controlling emotions through the intellectual centre. But attitudes must be created not at the moment of emotional explosion but long beforehand. Then, little by little, emotional explosions will come under the control of the intellect. Thoughts can be more permanent than

feelings, and in that way thoughts can influence feelings. You can create permanent thoughts, permanent attitudes which will affect feelings in time. But before this can become possible a certain discipline must be introduced into our emotions, and a certain knowledge must be acquired in order to work on the emotional mind.

Q. I have noticed that nearly all the time I hardly feel any emotion or have any vividness of experience. Is this sleep?

A. Partly sleep, partly living in moving and instinctive centres. Then, exactly as you describe, we hardly feel any vividness of experience.

Q. In some cases the negative emotion of fear seems useful, otherwise people would cross the road at any time without looking.

A. You speak about instinctive fear; emotional fear is different, it is based on imagination.

Q. Do negative emotions have a harmful effect on other functions?

A. You must find that out for yourself. For instance, if you are agitated or irritated, or something like that, notice other things. Can you remember well? Can you think well, work well? You will see that all your faculties are diminished. This observation will by itself show you many other things to observe.

Q. Why is it that negative emotion appears to affect the functioning of the instinctive centre to such a degree?

A. Negative emotion affects all centres. Centres are so connected that you cannot have a strong or violent negative emotion – and with the help of identification they all become strong – without affecting all centres. You cannot have a negative emotion and at the same time do something else right or even think rightly. You eat wrongly, breathe wrongly, walk wrongly, work wrongly – everything.

Q. Are negative emotions a wrong use of the instinctive centre?

A. No, but all emotions have their origin in the instinctive centre. In a small child centres are not divided. Negative emotions are created from material taken from the instinctive centre. This material legitimately belongs to the instinctive centre and is wrongly borrowed from it. We are in a very strange state, because positive emotions do not belong to our ordinary emotional centre but to the higher emotional centre, and negative emotions do not belong to the ordinary emotional centre but exist in an artificial centre. The emotional centre borrows material from the instinctive, and with the negative half of the instinctive centre and the help of imagination and identification, it creates negative emotions. Destroying them is a very difficult work; but you must realize that as long as negative emotions exist no development is possible, because development means development of all there is in man. Negative emotions cannot develop; it would be very disastrous if they could. So if one is trying to create consciousness, one must at the same time struggle with negative emotions, for either you keep them or you develop – you cannot have both together.

Q. Would a way to controlling negative emotions be trying to understand why a thing happened, to understand cause and effect?

A. It may be in some particular case, but at present there is no question of destroying or controlling, the question is of studying. The strongest method for controlling negative emotions is learning not to express them. So we must first struggle with the expression of negative emotions and, second, with such emotions as we can struggle with. When we learn not to express them, we will speak of the next step. You cannot control negative emotions as long as they have free expression. I want you to understand that stopping the expression of negative emotions and struggle with negative emotions themselves are two quite different practices. Trying to stop the expression comes first. If you express a negative emotion you are in its power, you can do nothing at that moment. When you have learnt not to express it, you can try not to identify, to create a right attitude, and to remember yourself.

Q. I can sometimes manage not to express a negative emotion to begin with, but it goes on

trying to come out.

A. That means you only stopped the external manifestation, and you must try to stop the cause of it. I do not mean the emotion itself, but the cause of the expression. There is a difference. Emotion is one thing, expression is another. Try to find the difference.

Q. Does trying to control unpleasant emotions gradually eliminate them?

A. Certainly, because many of them can exist only when there is no control; the moment control begins, many of them become easy to eliminate.

Q. If one's early training has been such that it is natural not to express unpleasant emotions, is it not equally mechanical?

A. This is an academic question; it is necessary to verify whether you can do it in all circumstances. One may be trained not to express negative emotions in certain circumstances, but in other circumstances one will express them.

Q. Is not the point not to feel unpleasant emotions?

A. That comes later, it is quite a separate question. You come to that by not identifying.

Q. By what means can one check where one's unpleasant emotions come from, what causes them and how we are to get over our tendency to deceive ourselves? Is this only possible through a school?

A. At present it is not important to learn where they come from, but important to stop their expression. Many things about negative emotions can be learned afterwards. As to what causes them – identification is the general cause of all negative emotions. You cannot struggle with them without help – many people tried. If you realized how small our possibility is, you would understand that one must have every possible help in order to achieve something.

Q. Must negative emotions always be mechanical?

A. What is opposite to mechanical? Conscious. Who will have negative emotions consciously? When one knows that one can give them up, nobody would have them. So certainly they are mechanical.

Q. Could we hear more about right attitude as a weapon against negative emotions? It must mean more than just not identifying?

A. Certainly, it means more; it means right thinking on a definite subject. For instance, almost all our personal negative emotions are based on accusation; somebody else is guilty. If, by persistent thinking, we realize that nobody can be guilty against us, that *we* are the cause of all that happens to us, that changes things, not at once certainly, because many times this realization will come too late. But after some time this right thinking, this creating of right attitude or point of view can become a permanent process; then negative emotions will only appear occasionally. Exactly by being permanent this process of right thinking has power over negative emotions – it catches them in the beginning.

Q. I find that much of my time is passed in a negative state, not very definite, and I don't seem to be able to do anything about it.

A. Yes, but you must have realized that it is generally connected with some kind of identification or imagination. When you find different manifestations of this negative state, you can struggle with it, because this struggle is in the mind. You can refuse some points of view and accept other points of view, and very soon you will see a difference.

This is connected with a very big question, because from one point of view we are so mechanical that we can do nothing; but from another point of view there are several things which we can begin to do. We have certain possibilities in us, only we do not use them. It is true that we cannot 'do' anything in the sense that we cannot change what we, *feel* at any given moment, but we can make ourselves *think* about a subject at a given moment. This is the beginning. We must know what is possible and begin from that, because then the possibility to do something, instead of letting things happen, will gradually increase.

We do not realize what enormous power lies in thinking. I do not mean that as a

philosophical explanation of power. The power lies in the fact that, if we always think rightly about certain things, we can make it permanent – it grows into a permanent attitude. You may find some inclination to wrong emotional manifestations of some kind. Just at that moment you can do nothing, you have educated in yourself the capacity for this kind of reaction by wrong thinking. But if you start from right thinking, then after some time you will educate in yourself the capacity for a different reaction. Only this method has to be understood, and this understanding must be quite deep.

You can apply this method to many different things. This is really the one thing you can do. You can ‘do’ nothing else. There is no direct way to struggle with negative manifestations because you cannot catch them; and there is no way to prevent them except by being prepared for them beforehand. But a passing realization that they are wrong will not help; it must be very deep, otherwise you will have an equally difficult process to prepare the ground for another manifestation. You do not realize how much you lose by these spontaneous manifestations of a negative character. They make so many things impossible.

Q. Even if I begin to think rightly I find imitation starts when I hear somebody grumbling, and I begin to do the same.

A. The fact that you begin to think rightly will not change anything straight away. It is necessary to think rightly for a long time; then results will come – but not at once. It is a question of months or years to create right attitudes. By creating right attitudes you consolidate the fact that you have really and seriously decided not to give way to negative manifestations. We do not realize how much we lose in this way. We lose exactly what we want to get.

But first of all you must stop the habit of expressing negative emotions. This is why, in the very first lectures, when you hear about self-observation, it is explained that you must learn not to express negative emotions. Everybody knows how not to show what they feel – I do not mean in exceptional cases, but in ordinary cases. All negativeness is based on identification, imagination and on one particular feature, namely, allowing oneself to express it. You always believe you cannot stop it and therefore feel it is quite right to show what you feel. So first you must get rid of this illusion. You *can* stop the manifestations of negative emotions. If you say ‘I don’t want to’, I will believe you, but not if you say ‘I cannot’.

I have given you many suggestions about work on emotions, such as study, struggle with identification, struggle with the expression of negative emotions, right thinking about negative emotions. Four practices. If you really use all that is given, very soon you will see quite perceptible results. Real control of emotional centre needs self-remembering, a new state of consciousness, so it is a long way off; now we must use auxiliary methods. The most important of them in the beginning is a right attitude.

The above text constitutes Chapter III of *The Fourth Way* by P. D. Ouspensky.