

POSTULATES AND EMOTION

A lecture given on
5 November 1951

Unfortunately the beginning of the recording for this lecture is missing. We have been unable to locate any actual recording, transcript or notes for this section of the lecture. This lecture begins with the start of the available recordings.

Fixed Emotional Responses

There is an interesting point for you to remember: An individual who has run up against danger which he has to overcome monitors his own behavior with his endocrine system. How are you going to run a big machine unless you have some method of burning its fuel in certain ways and of burning types of fuel in order to cause it to react in the desired way in any situation? How do you go about doing that? It would be done in just that way—fuel alteration, fuel consumption, and so on.

An individual has a use for every emotion. For every emotion there is a good, survival use. Let's take fear, for instance. If you go out and run into a hungry grizzly bear who, besides, does not look pleasant and who has decided that you are something in his road, and if you go on standing there, perhaps something may happen to you; you may get your head knocked off with a paw scrape or something of the sort. It wouldn't be good sense to say "Well, grizzly bear"—bop—and hit him, because they object to being hit. (If you do hit one, make sure that you get in a double one-two uppercut. That doesn't do you much good either, but it may give you a better chance.) The point is that a grizzly bear is something that you don't want to stay around.

So what do you do with the body? You say to the body, "You'd better turn around and run." But I am afraid that if you didn't have some method of really laying on the whip, you wouldn't get much action out of yourself. You don't want to run in a case like that—you merely want to vanish and appear a mile away! And this is almost exactly what the fear reaction system sets up.

It does several things: To start with, it makes you taste bad. That is good survival—don't be flavorful when you are about to be eaten. The second thing it does is cause moisture in the palms and on the soles of the feet so that you can hold on to things a bit better. The next thing it does is burn up the fuel in the system at a high rate of speed. It is a terrific catalyst. It says immediately to every cell in the body, "Better be going, bud!" so you get out of there.

The only time fear starts to act up is when you have said "Be afraid," and then you said, "Well, I'll stay here."

And don't think you don't monitor your own endocrine system. I could patch somebody up to a point where I could have him standing around shaking with fear, sweating with terror, crying and so forth. A fellow can just turn over the emotions like that if he wants to.

Did you ever see a little child who wanted somebody to feel sorry for him? He stands right there and he says to himself, "You poor little boy, you poor little boy," or something like that, and the tears come down his cheeks. He doesn't feel bad at all. He has convinced himself for a moment that he ought to feel bad, the tears come down his cheeks and Mama says, "All right, Reginald, here's the dime. Sorry I treated you so badly," and he goes away.

Now, if he is sort of loused up and has been knocked around by life and he has had to make several postulates (if he is living in a standard American family, in other words), he gets to a point where, when he says "Cry" he cries and then he goes off and forgets that he told himself to cry. So he goes off feeling sad.

Of course, the second he hits the street he ought to be as happy as a lark! He got the dime, didn't he? And there wasn't any reason to cry in the first place, and he told himself to cry in the second place. But he gets out there and he hits the street and he goes down the street feeling sad.

A few days later he decides he will pull the same gag. He cries, gets the dime, goes out on the street—but he is sadder! A few days later he does it again, and then he is really sad. Then one day he comes in and cries but his mother says, “You know, I think you're just faking. I don't think you're crying at all.”

So he says, “Oh, yes, I am!”

Now he has to invalidate her and make a liar out of her and validate himself, so this means that he is sad and is crying. So he goes out on the street and he is then crying in earnest. He has told himself to cry and he is crying, but now he has forgotten that he told himself to cry and he keeps holding this up against Mama!

He is stuck with it. He has used these tears which he himself turned on as a service facsimile. In other words, he is not being himself at all. He has turned himself into something other than what he is.

It is this way with every engram, with every facsimile. A person uses them in this fashion.

A person uses his endocrine system in this fashion. You can trace back, with every preclear you have, the times when he has turned on, willy-nilly, any emotion. First he starts by talking himself into it. All you have to do is find the points in life where he started talking himself into being afraid, the points in life where he talked himself into being angry, where he made himself be antagonistic, where he made himself be bored.

There is a period, for instance, in high school, where the youngsters think it is a very fine thing to be blasé and sophisticated. They translate this as boredom. So in order to be pals and be like their fellows, naturally they have to go around being bored—“Life is such a bore.”

When they get to be twenty-five, twenty-six or something like that, they have forgotten about what did it and they are bored with life; they say, “I wonder why I'm bored with life? Well, there's no reason at all why I should be bored with life.” The actual truth of the matter is they turned it on themselves.

Probably you will find it much earlier than that. In childhood they were sitting around feeling perfectly happy and then somebody told them, “Sit there.” They were happy until this moment; somebody said “Sit there,” and then they had to have a reason why they were not supposed to sit there.

So they said, “Well, I'm bored sitting here.”

“Oh, no, you're not!”

“Oh, yes, I am!”

And here we go; they have to invalidate somebody right away, quick, and so they get bored.

This boredom is a syndrome sort of a thing. An awful lot of people suffer from it. They turn on this emotion and then they have to explain to everyone why they are bored; they have to rationalize. So every time they go to a motion-picture show they have to tell everybody what a boring picture it was. Every time they read a magazine they have to tell everybody how boring the stories in it are. In short, they have no choice now but to be bored about everything and rationalize on it (and this is the way we get literary critics).

Let's take grief: Grief is a pretty low point on the tone scale and when a fellow has turned on this emotion just as emotion a lot of times in his life, he can forget very easily that he turned it on. Then some good reason for him to be full of sorrow comes along and he turns himself into a 0.5 on the tone scale. It is as easy as snapping your fingers. And it is just as easy to undo.

Now, you would be surprised how many people counterfeit apathy, how many children counterfeit apathy. They find out they can't get something they want, that they cannot do what they think they ought to do, that they cannot move freely around in the area, and they get mad; then they find out that doesn't do any good, and so on. But actually, nothing really bad is happening to the child. A child learns this trick with ease. I bet you can easily remember suddenly pretending that you weren't interested in anything, that you could not be pushed out of the mood you were in. Children do this because as long as they retain that mood somebody pleads with them to be happy, to be cheerful, to go on and be good and so forth. They will lie there in apathy.

Very often a little child who is put to bed in the daytime or something like that will feign apathy, and he doesn't really realize what he is feigning. He will sometimes play jokes on the people around him, like pretending he is dead or some such thing, and they will come in and worry. So a fine mechanism to get people worried and upset is just to go into apathy—"Well, I'm not interested in anything anymore." Everybody stands around and tries to coax and encourage him to be interested.

Once a fellow has started along this line, he has turned on what is actually an endocrine reaction. Apathy is almost a cessation of glandular action. That is the way you achieve apathy: by telling the glands to quit, just like you achieve sadness and listlessness and so forth by telling all the glands to quit except the tear glands, and so on up the line.

This is what is called the alarm reaction system in the higher band. It is very well understood. It is less well understood that if an individual suddenly turns on a big, solid jolt of endocrine fluids, he can kill himself with it. That is less well understood, but that is how human beings kick themselves off when life becomes unbearable. When they are badly hurt or something like that, they just turn on a terrific glandular flood of everything in sight, go into convulsions, and within about three hours they are deader than doornails.

The alarm reaction system, the endocrine system, is very easy to trace in a human being. And it is very easy for a human being to get his hands on it, even though he has gotten down and clear out and beyond into the hopeless state of being a normal human being. Even if he has gone that far, you can still fish around with this individual and let him find one of his endocrine buttons. As soon as you do that you are off to the races.

You just start running emotion on the case as emotion. Just let him locate it. What is emotion? Get a time when he was angry. You aren't asking for the effort or anything like that when he was angry; just get him to recall a time when he was really angry—get him to recall this time—and then get him to sort of feel around till he can reexperience some of that anger. This is very convincing. The fellow can feel his system change. All of a sudden he recognizes something he has forgotten—that in his early youth he consciously monitored his own endocrine system.

Up to the age of eight, nine or ten, an individual actually can monitor his heartbeat and so on, quite often. So it is not only the endocrine system; he can also monitor something that is supposed to be an automatic type of reaction. A young child will quite often forget to breathe for a short space of time, and then gasp a little bit, remember to breathe for a minute and then get it back in the groove again. This is quite common. It has just come up to a conscious level. So can almost any operation in the body.

Therefore, as an auditor, you can do your preclear a great deal of good by showing him that he does monitor his own endocrine system. But that isn't all the good you will do. You start locating this emotion and that for him, and this one and another one, and let him approximate

this one and that, and you can get him on the whole range. You can get him to approximate how it feels to be apathetic, how it feels to be afraid, how it feels to be very sad, how it feels to be angry, how it feels to be antagonistic—all of this bracket. You can get him to feel these things, and the next thing you know, he is loosened up on the subject of emotion.

Actually, the only reason the world might not look as good to you as it is, is wholly along the line of emotion. You have many times in the past, during moments of stress, turned on emotion in order to catalyze motion, and then you didn't turn it off again. So eventually your whole endocrine system, you might say, is running on past postulates, not present postulates. You made decisions in the past to be afraid, to be angry, to be this, to be that, and you made so many of these—and you haven't picked any of them up—that all of a sudden here you are in present time and you say you wonder why you can't feel anything emotionally.

You probably remember well when you were a little child and you used to sit in the theater and watch Tom Mix or Hopalong Cassidy, and how you used to be thrilled. You used to feel this thrill, and now you say, "Gee, if I could only feel youth again."

Or you remember how you used to read the comic strips and get all excited over them, and how this used to really be the stuff to you, and how the colors used to be very bright and so on.

It is just that one thing: You postulate a flock of emotions, you don't pick them up, and then all of a sudden you can't monitor your emotional system because it is simply fixed at probably the mean of all postulates you have made or something of the sort, and it is inflexible, it is unchangeable. So there it is.

Evidently one of the very fast ways to change the nature of man—and that is what we can do in this subject—is to loosen up his emotional system and get him jarred up. You may have heard a young girl say, "Well, I was out with that fellow, but he's really a stuffed shirt. He really needs to be jarred up a little bit and squared around, and so on. He wants, you know, some pep!"

The point is that your experience of freedom with yourself and your appreciation of the world around you, the brightness of color and the thrill you might get out of a pair of pretty legs or something of the sort, are dependent upon your ability to use your own emotions.

It is a favorite postulate to some individuals that emotions are somehow automatic. This is actually taught in an old subject they called psychology.

They said that the environment monitors the individual. But I can show you, and you know, that every time you get an individual who is being monitored by the environment, you have got a loop. (That is a technical term in Dianetics: loop; it means people who are ready for the spinbin—real technical!)

What is wrong with an individual, and the only thing that gets wrong with an individual, is that the environment starts monitoring him instead of him monitoring himself.

"I" is resident in the mind; it is the control center of the mind. It says "Jump" and you jump. It says "Don't jump" and you don't jump. That is "I" in good working condition.

There is a switchboard whereby the theta impulse of command is translated into muscular action. "I" says "Jump," and this wave goes out and through some sort of a translator which puts it into material-universe energy. The impulse then goes through the nervous system and executes. So, "I" says "Jump" and the arms, legs, endocrine system and so forth jump. That is with a mind in good working condition.

Now let's take a fellow who has been lying on park benches, and every morning a cop comes by and wakes him up with a good, solid whack on the soles of his feet. This fellow finally

decides that there is something wrong with his feet; he gets this back-impulse into the motor-switchboard system, and he gets some of these things hooked up a bit.

He gets to a point where he has finally agreed with the cop that he ought to move. This was a fatal error; it aberrated him. It would practically have killed him if he hadn't agreed, but that is beside the point. Now this fellow says "Jump!" but nothing happens. Then a cop shows up way down at the other end of the street and the fellow jumps.

You can see what has happened there. This fellow has agreed to answer to the pain of being hit on the soles of his feet to get off the park bench, and what is in control now is the cop, not "I." So this switchboard has been short-circuited to the environment. The environment shows a cop: he jumps. That is aberrated. That is the environment in control of the individual.

When this individual gets really loopy, any time he sees blue he jumps, because the cop wears a blue uniform. (We are getting down closer to "normal"—we're not there yet.) Every time he hears the sound that approximates the club striking the soles of a man's feet, he jumps. Worse than that, every time he hears any sound, he jumps. In other words, it is getting more and more general; this motor-switchboard unit is more and more capable of being occupied by crossed and short circuits and so forth to the environment.

Actually, this is a crude analogy—that is, not a very exact one—but you get the idea. The individual who is controlled by his environment is an aberree. And an individual who is in control of himself is not; he is sane. That is the difference between sanity and insanity. It is as simple as that.

There is an old experiment in hypnosis. They hypnotize a fellow and tell him to put on a coat. He puts on this coat and they say, "Now, when you wake up, any time the hypnotist touches his tie, you will take off this coat. And every time the hypnotist lets go of his tie, you will put the coat back on again." So they wake the fellow up, the hypnotist touches his tie and the fellow takes off the coat.

Somebody says, "Why did you take off the coat?"

He says, "Why, it's hot. It's hot." The hypnotist takes his hand off the tie and this fellow reaches down and puts this coat on again.

"Well, why did you put your coat back on again?"

"Well, somebody must have opened a window; it got drafty in here."

He does not connect this touching of the tie with his action with the coat. In other words, he is being handled by his environment because of a planted suggestion. That is only one mechanism, but it is demonstrative of what can happen to an individual.

Of course, theoretically, you just make him remember that he was told that and he no longer has this compulsion. Only don't try to tell that to any auditors who have been around trying to audit people who have been many times hypnotized, because these suggestions don't blow like that. They have to be audited out.

This system of "I" controlling the body or the environment controlling the body is exactly applicable, whether you talk about muscles, whether you talk about the dreams the person has or anything else, and it is particularly applicable to emotions.

If you walk down the street and you expect to see a pretty girl and have your emotions jump automatically, think again. If your emotions just jump every time a pretty girl shows up, you are aberrated! It is not a stimulus response mechanism. In other words, you don't get something showing up in the environment and an automatic emotional response to it. And yet individuals were taught in this old field of psychology to think of all thought in terms of

stimulus-response. They experimented on so many dogs and rats in that field that they got everything confused, and the environments of dogs and rats became confused with the environment of human beings (probably because they had been associated with too many politicians or something), and the next thing you knew, they expected everybody to run on a stimulus-response mechanism.

Now, this is very nice for a teacher: A teacher stands up in class and does something and the students all give a certain response. He does something else and they all give another response. He says, "The square root of the second part of the third body of axiom two is normally epistemology."

All the students say, "Uh-huh." He gives them an examination paper at the end of the course and the students pick up the paper and they write, "The second part of the square root of epistemology is square root of two over summation x, and that is close enough, so he passes them.

But what has happened there? There has been a bypass of the individual's understanding, his ARC, his self-determinism and so forth. What they did was pour in some phrases and expect the students to pour them out again when the same stimulus occurred.

There was a lady who had been slapping her dog once in a while for stealing things and so on. Then she said to the dog the same word she used when she slapped it; she said, "You stop that; stop doing that," and so on, and the dog jerked its head.

Her husband saw the dog moving its head and said, "Stop hitting that dog so hard!" But she wasn't hitting the dog. The dog had been hit this way several times and so had gotten this motion of being hit mixed up with "Stop it." So when she said "Stop it," or whatever the signal was, the dog would jerk his head like he was being hit. This is a perfect example of stimulus response training.

This is very easy to test out. This works with human beings. When they get thoroughly educated and all of their responses are stimulus-response, then they are fully qualified as psychiatrists! These boys then go out and if they see a person going into a bit of a spin, immediately they go into a stimulus-response mechanism, reach over, grab the electric-shock machine, put it on the fellow's head and pull the switch. Then they take the machine off, they see the fellow is not well anymore, they see he is in worse shape than he was in before, and they say, "Well, he's been treated. Release him from the hospital." The fellow goes home and stabs his wife, shoots a couple of cops, and they send him back to the institution again. This is sort of the way life goes. That is a stimulus-response mechanism!

Now, if you expect beautiful scenery to thrill you simply because you have looked at beautiful scenery, you are mistaken. What you really do (this sounds awfully calculated but it is not, actually) is take a look at this beautiful scene and say, "My, isn't that beautiful!" repeating "It's very beautiful." It is pretty, you appreciate it and so forth. You look at a garbage can and say, "My, isn't that ugly." It is ugly.

You keep on going this way from the time you are a little child, and eventually you get to a point where the environment is in control, and you look at a garbage can and say, "My, isn't that beautiful," and you look at the scenery and say, "My, that's ugly." The lines get all crossed. You have to be in free control of your own emotions.

Oddly enough, it only takes about a millisecond for a fellow to make up his mind whether something is pretty or thrilling or otherwise. He makes up his mind and then he feels that way. But if he ever gets caught in a trap of his own devising, he can get messed up in the most horrible fashion.

Take college spirit, for instance: This gets turned on automatically, so that every time a cheerleader says “Rah-rah-rah for dear old Scalp U.” he says “Thrilled!” He can’t help himself somehow; every time he hears that old college song he is off to the races. There is an example.

The way you condition a human being’s emotions is simply by making him agree that something is exciting or thrilling, and then hanging him with it. He has agreed that this is exciting or thrilling, and the next thing you do is tell him “Oh, you’re not excited about it.”

He says, “Oh, yes, I am!” You have invalidated him, so he has to invalidate you by being excited—he thinks. You turn it on, and if you keep this up, pretty soon you can get him to the point where every time he hears “Dear Old Maine” or something of the sort, he is all set. That is the way it is done.

If you want to whip up some esprit in a bunch of troops or something like that, you give them a regimental song and a few other things, and you show them the colors, and you keep telling them and getting them to agree on the fact that it is very impressive, and when they have agreed enough that it is very impressive, then any new recruit that comes in who says “I don’t see anything very impressive about this!” is liable to get wiped out—they have to invalidate him.

That is the way emotional responses get fixed.