

Creative Imagination In Autotherapy

By Eugene Halliday

1. When we seek to communicate with each other, more levels of being are involved in the process than the particular one on which we choose to focus. There is a physical level, an emotional/feeling level, a serial mental level, a comprehensive (logos) level, a volitional level, an episcopal level (overseer), a para-episcopal level; also the same for each ancestor from which our being is derived. There are impulsive action-tendencies from bio-grams, our own, our ancestors, and 'side-line' pickup elements. The Irish have their Protestant/Catholic reaction records to deal with. Other peoples and nations have their equivalents. Heritage of action-patterns, of language and of basic concepts of diverse peoples do not make for easy agreement. Internally, different peoples do not look at the same facts, feelings, emotions and impulses to action.
2. We must come to terms with our own structure and with that of our ancestors recorded in us, and the climate of opinion in which we have to live, and which complicates the pattern of our experience. Here Jung's analytical psychology may be called 'synthetic' psychology, for the individual has to put together his many percepts, and those of his race from whom he derives. We are set the problem of synthesizing what we see in our world with what our ancestors saw in their world. What our ancestors experienced in the primordial forests is still with us, and may appear in dreams and childhood fantasies. 'Bio-geny recapitulates phylogeny'. The individual echoes the evolution of his race, and in a very definite order. The child's mind is like that of a primitive man, living hundreds of thousands of years ago. The child does not see the grown-up's world, but lives in the world of his ancestors. We can demonstrate this to ourselves in a simple way
3. Unless we have something or some idea to manipulate, we cannot manipulate it. If we look at a piece of blackboard chalk, move it across the blackboard and so make a mark, we are repeating an act of some early ancestor. More delight is

found in a piece of naturally found chalk than in the commercially prepared substance given to us by our parents when we are children. There is in the naturally found chalk a resonance of the original ancestral moment of discovery that chalk could make a mark. Such moments of discovery are the lights that brighten our mental processes.

4. By a deliberate allowing of a regression, a mental and emotional going back to such ancestral moments, we can re-experience them as our ancestors did, and re-live the pleasures of such discoveries; and to do this is to re-vitalize ourselves in a very valuable way.
5. A modification of this is used in the manipulation of ideas and feelings that we call the 'Creative Imagination' exercise.
6. If you will close your eyes and prepare your mind to watch what happens when I give you a certain stimulus, you will discover something about your inner mental and emotional constitution. With your minds prepared to watch what happens within, I snap the chalk.
7. One of you hears a noise 'like bones breaking'. Our ancestors have cracked bones many, many times. We find that the stimulus of the breaking sound of the chalk has power to send us back to some early experience, perhaps of our own, perhaps of our ancestors.
8. With this in mind we can begin to look for **emotive shock**, and especially for **negative shock**, i.e. unpleasant shock.
9. Discovering moments of pleasant shock and re-playing them can give rise to pleasant feelings and emotions, increase our circulation and feelings of general well-being. But re-running pleasant records of experience does not release us from the inhibiting effects of negative records.

10. Every negative shock encapsulates or locks up in us a certain amount of energy and makes it unavailable for positive use. It also constitutes a point or area of reactivity, which, when re-stimulated, results in a replay of the record of the original unpleasant or painful experience. In replaying such negative experience-records, we may be led to believe that our feelings of negativity are our own present feelings. In fact, very little of our unhappiness and unpleasant feelings relate merely to our present situation.
11. We may make a rule out of this: Only if our present situation is one in which we are **actually** undergoing some physically unpleasant, painful or damaging stimulus are we right to view our unhappy feelings and condition as belonging solely to the present moment. The rest of the time, any unpleasant feelings or emotions we experience are the results of record re-play from the past.
12. It is very important that we recognize that the substance of our body, the protoplasm of which it is made, is an extremely sensitive substance, able to record not only the **form** of our experiences, but also their emotional content. It is as if we possessed within our organism a very special kind of tape-recorder which recorded not only all the things we see and hear and taste and touch, and all that we might think of such experiences, but also our likes and dislikes, pleasures and pains, joys and sorrows. Until we clearly understand this, we are at the mercy of the records of our total past experience and the stimulus situations that may trigger them into reactivity. We can say that until we can release ourselves from such record re-play, we are the playthings of our past protoplasmic history.
13. When we replay records of negative experiences and face them courageously, with sharpened consciousness, we assimilate into our consciousness the energy that was previously hidden in the encapsulated record. To do this is to 'collect power' from the previously unconscious zones of our being, and to add it to our consciously usable energy store.

14. Energy locked up in us, encapsulated by fear, is not available for our free, conscious use. In principle, once freed from negative record materials, we have an infinite potential upon which we may draw whenever we may decide. This potential may be made actually available for our use if we will work to release ourselves from negative, inhibiting record material. This work can be done in various ways, psychoanalysis, meditation, etc., but behind all these operates the Creative Imagination, or power of consciousness to re-arrange its experience record contents.

15. In the exercise of the Creative Imagination we locate a negative experience record, replay it to disclose its contents, then replay it again, but this time in order to alter the order of events, and to change the contents into a more positive form.

16. When we first locate a negative record, we find that its unpleasant or painful character tends to make us wish not to continue to look at it. It seems, as if from itself, to slip out of our grasp, to evade the searchlight of our sharpened consciousness. Actually, it is just that we find it painful to look at, and to assimilate, so that we tend to turn away our consciousness from it, and this turning away, this negative tropism, appears to us to be a behavior of the experience-record itself. We can prove this by making ourselves realize that it is for our own benefit and profit to force ourselves to look with very sharpened consciousness at the painful parts of the experience-record. For we then find that the record **begins to change** its character, that it becomes progressively less frightening, and demonstrates to us thereby the great law that '**Consciousness is a catalyst**'. *By this we mean that the **sharply focused consciousness changes the form and content of that on which it is focused.***

17. If we locate in us a negative experience-record and then re-enter it and run through its contents, we find that each unpleasant or painful part of the record has a certain effect on our body. Unpleasant or painful record parts produce hypertension in our body.
18. This excessive tension is the primary source of psychosomatic disorders and disease. If we enter deliberately such zones of unpleasant excessive tension, note the particular events that provoke them, then deliberately mentally replay the events in a different way; we alter, by the catalytic action of our consciousness, the contents of the record. On again replaying the record, we find that our response to it has also changed.
19. By this act of Creative Imagination we have changed our attitude towards the record's contents. Whereas on first replaying the contents we were in a passive state towards them, now, after deliberate, creative, conscious interference with the contents, we are in an **active** state.
20. It is most important for us to realize that when we are in **passive** relation to the contents of a negative record, we are at their mercy, and so are made unhappy or miserable by them. But when we place ourselves in **active** relation to the record's contents, we realize that we have power over them to change them, and to bring them under our will. Realizing this makes us happy and full of positive feelings of well-being.
21. Suppose one has slipped and broken a bone. In the record is a feeling of pain, and an idea that the break has reduced one's survival capacity. The pain and the negative idea tend to make one feel unhappy, for one's efficiency in the process of living has been impaired. One may tend to feel sorry for oneself, and to seek sympathy, perhaps even to hang onto one's symptoms in order to justify expecting sympathy. Such tendencies can prolong the symptoms and lead to a belief that one is now a victim of an irreversible misfortune.

22. But suppose that we have understood the function of Creative Imagination, and that we deliberately re-enter the record of the accident. Suppose that instead of **passively falling down**, we mentally visualize ourself as deliberately and **actively throwing ourself down**. What happens to the record? After a few replays in this deliberately active manner, the record content is changed. We have realized our potential of activity, our **power of self-actualization**. From the moment we do this we begin to feel happier. We feel that we are no longer the slave of external accidents. We have begun to realize our capacity for self-creation, the capacity that is the ground of all real happiness.
23. Suppose that a person tries in the presence of other persons to perform some physical act, perhaps requiring some skill. Suppose that in the moment of performing the act the performer makes a mistake, performs the act badly; and suppose that the other persons jeer at the error. It is probable that the performer will feel badly, feel rejected by the group, become fearful of trying to repeat the act. Now he has the precondition of probable failure - fear - the great inhibitor.
24. But let us suppose that the performer knows something of the way Creative Imagination works. He runs mentally through the record of his failure, but now deliberately, mentally performing it in all conceivably wrong ways. He turns the act into the performance of a clown. He visualizes that the group realizes that his actions are deliberate, that he is clowning. He sees them no longer jeering, but delighted at his antics. His fear vanishes, the inhibitor of perfect action has gone. Now he is fully confident. He does not care whether he succeeds or falls. He can do either - deliberately. Now he has the mental pre-condition of success. He is the positive master of himself. He knows that the professional clown failed many times before he managed to perform his tricks; and he knows that the clown several times deliberately fails in order to let the crowd enjoy an imagined superiority to him as representative of themselves when *they* make mistakes in life. But finally he performs his tricks perfectly, so that they, too, the people, will

identify with his success, will feel relieved, will believe that they, too, will be able finally deliberately to perform a perfect act. All this the professional clown knows as part of the game of life. And by this knowledge he makes his living and enables others to live also.

25. By this act of Creative Imagination we have changed our attitude towards the record's contents. Whereas on first replaying the contents we were in a passive state towards them, now, after deliberate, creative, conscious interference with the contents, we are in an **active** state. And by the catalytic action of our consciousness, we change the contents of the record. On again replaying the record, we find that our response to it has also changed.
26. It is most important for us to realize that when we are in **passive** relation to the contents of a negative record, we are at their mercy, and so are made unhappy or miserable by them. But when we place ourselves in **active** relation to the record's contents, we realize that we have power over them to change them, and to bring them under our will. Realizing this makes us happy and full of positive feelings of well-being.
27. In the depths of our 'unconscious' mind, which is really a super-conscious mind, we know all these things. And we know that all of us basically wish to be loved, and that we fear to be rejected and hated. That we wish to be loved shows an erotic factor at work. That we fear rejection and hatred makes us wish to have sufficient power to be able to defend ourselves against possible attack.
28. The Freudian sexual motivation, and the Adlerian 'will to power', both run together in even the simplest acts. And both re-stimulate and are re-stimulated by the Jungian collective unconscious. Thus we find a triplicity of functions in our every act. As a memory aid we might print on our lower abdomen the name Freud; on our chest, Jung, and on our head, Adler; and then remember that we use all our three parts, though in different proportions, in everything we do. In our

lower abdomen is centered the desire for pleasure, especially sexual pleasure; in our chest dwell our emotionally charged memories of our collective unconscious experiences; in our head is centered the will to dominate our world and everything in it. Our task is to become conscious of this triple nature, and to learn to coordinate the separable functions, and give them a unity of cooperative action, which will generate efficiency and happiness in everything we do.

29. In all the great religions and philosophies this triplicity is found, for we must think and feel and will in all our actions. Thinking was developed in order to clarify our formal relation with the things of the world. Feeling sensitivity was increased in order that we could become aware of coming events before they actually happened. Will power was generated out of the necessity for survival in very difficult situations.
30. We are to make ourselves aware of these three functions so as to give them their due proportions in the situations of life in which we find ourselves. In some situation we need to think very clearly in order to understand the forms of reality with which we have to deal. In other situations we need to be able to feel the directions of forces, which have not yet clearly shown themselves. In still other situations we need to be able to gather together all our power and to make it converge on one point in a supreme act of will. And for all of these our best ally is Creative Imagination, which enables us to re-arrange our thought, re-orientate our feelings and emotions, and empower whatever we imagine with the supreme energy of our directed will.
31. The same power that can lead us into disintegration, disorder and disease when allowed to hold us in passive subjection to its presentations, can also, when actively controlled, be the means of our being able to enter fully into active life. This power is the power of the imagination, the power to make and energize mental images and to push them into physical expression.

32. Conscious, active Creative Imagination is the key to all life's values; as unconscious, passive, uncurbed imagination is the key to disintegration, disorder, disease and misery.

33. Starting from little exercises in active Creative Imagination, we can begin to take our life in our own hands and rescue it from the chaotic impulses of our unexamined, unconscious, biological inheritance. And having started on the active path we can say, "Blessed is he who perseveres to the end."