

WANTERFALL

**A PRACTICAL APPROACH TO THE UNDERSTANDING
AND HEALING OF THE EMOTIONS OF EVERYDAY LIFE**

Dr Gordon Coates

A free e-book from www.wanterfall.com

Creative Commons Copyright 2008 by Dr Gordon Coates

This work is distributed under the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike licence, the Commons Deed of which is paraphrased below.

You are free:

to Share — to copy, distribute and transmit the work

to Remix — to adapt the work

Under the following conditions:

Attribution: You must attribute the work in the manner specified* by the author or licensor (but not in any way that suggests that they endorse you or your use of the work).

Noncommercial: You may not use this work for commercial purposes.

Share Alike: If you alter, transform, or build upon this work, you may distribute the resulting work only under the same or similar licence to this one.

For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the licence terms of this work.

Any of the above conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.

Nothing in this licence impairs or restricts the author's moral rights.

Your fair dealing and other rights are in no way affected by the above.

This Commons Deed is not a licence. It is simply a handy reference for understanding the Legal Code (the full licence) which is available at <http://creativecommons.org>

*Attribution: Coates, G.T. 2008. *Wanterfall: A practical approach to the understanding and healing of the emotions of everyday life.* Dr Gordon Coates, Sydney. Free e-book from www.wanterfall.com

ABOUT THIS BOOK

We all experience emotions – and the experience is not always pleasant. Being sensitive by nature, we are inevitably vulnerable to these feelings. But must we be helpless? What exactly are emotions, anyway? Where do they come from, how many are there, are they any use to us – and, if we don't like their effects, is there any way to get rid of them?

Drawing on a variety of sources including western psychology and eastern philosophy, as well as the experiences of a long and varied medical career, the author describes a simple and practical model which can be used to understand, and potentially to relieve, the emotional distresses of everyday life.

The book is both a subjective exploration of, and a practical guide to dealing with, the emotional aspects of human experience. However, it is not a form of therapy, and the techniques described in it should not be practised during the course of a mental illness. Mental illness requires medical treatment – whereas this book mainly offers mental exercise.

The elements of the model described have always existed, but they are presented here in a way which the author considers potentially useful to a wide audience. A single underlying cause for our many emotions is suggested. Their complex effects on daily life are then discussed in detail, and simple techniques for their exploration and resolution are described.

This book is written for anyone who would like to understand the human mind better – or who would simply like a happier and calmer life. However, it certainly does not guarantee either result. Nor does it pretend to explain life's underlying mysteries – which words cannot, in any case, effectively address.

On the other hand, a better understanding and fuller resolution of emotions allows a clearer view of the mental landscape. That might well lead to a more peaceful and joyful life. But it would be an optional extra – bought with your own hard work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Coates was born in Melbourne, Australia in 1946, and studied medicine at the University of Melbourne and the Royal Melbourne Hospital. He entered General (Child & Family) Practice in 1971, working in various parts of Australia and England before settling in Sydney, Australia in 1977.

His interests in western psychology and eastern philosophy brought him into contact with psychiatrist and thanatologist Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in 1979, and he subsequently spent a year studying at her training centre in California.

Returning to Sydney in 1981, he spent the next twelve years working in the field of palliative medicine. During those years, he directed new departments of palliative care in two Sydney teaching hospitals, and was a founding vice-president of the Palliative Care Association of NSW.

He also attended patients in a number of hospices, lectured extensively on pain management and grief counselling, and ran a domiciliary palliative care service in suburban Sydney. The ideas on which this book is based gradually took shape during that time, and were further developed during his later work in geriatric community care, also in Sydney.

The first version of the Wanterfall chart was in fact created for a series of inservice lecture-discussions at a Sydney nursing home in 2004. The idea for a book gradually grew from successive revisions of lecture notes written for those sessions.

At the beginning of 2007, Dr Coates decided to close his medical practice in order to devote the majority of his time to writing. The book Wanterfall is the first result of that decision. Various other topics are currently in draft form, and will be made available via wanterfall.com as they are completed.

DEDICATION

Wanterfall is dedicated to my wife, Suzanne Norris, who has been putting up with my eccentric ideas about psychology and philosophy for more than a quarter of a century. She has enjoyed the best parts of my life with me, and helped me to survive the worst parts. She has been an example of kindness and common sense throughout – to a degree that I can only aspire to. So, if you should ever want to thank someone for this book, do what I do. Thank Suzanne.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

Far from sharing the view of some critics, that Australian English is an oxymoron, I have tried to use it at all times, unless quoting the words of others.

This may have different effects on different readers. English readers will not, I hope, be surprised very often by the spelling or expressions used – though they may be aghast at the style. American readers are likely to suffer approximately the opposite effect, putting up with the style (with luck) but finding some of the spelling and expressions extremely odd.

Readers whose English has its origins elsewhere will probably just be aghast, period. While those who speak very little English of any variety will probably be the most forgiving. (Perhaps translations will be available one day.)

What about my Australian readers? What will you make of my allegedly Australian prose? I can't answer that – but I suppose some of you will tell me. (Maybe I should have employed an editor, after all.)

CONTENTS

ABOUT THIS BOOK	3
ABOUT THE AUTHOR	4
DEDICATION	5
NOTE ON THE TEXT	6
PREFACE	12
DENIALS: WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT	13
Validated	13
Original	15
Puritanical	16
Religious	17
Directive	17
Guaranteed	18
CAUTIONS	19
SECTION 1 THE ORIGIN OF EMOTIONS	22
THE WANTERFALL MODEL OF EMOTIONS	25
THE WANTERFALL CHART	26
WANTERFALL WORK: HOW TO USE THE WANTERFALL CHART	34
The First Pillar of Wanterfall Work: Constant, Non- Judgmental Self-Awareness	35
Self-Awareness	35
Non-Judgmental	36
Constant	39
Summary	39
The Second Pillar of Wanterfall Work: Dealing with Emotions	40

SECTION 2 THE ANATOMY OF EMOTIONS	44
THE SIX PRIMARY EMOTIONS	45
Hope	47
Fear	47
Happiness	48
Sadness	49
Propathy	50
Things Excluded from Propathy	51
Antipathy	53
PRIMARY EMOTION PAIRS	55
Hope and Fear	55
Happiness and Sadness	56
Propathy and Antipathy	57
Happiness and Propathy	57
Sadness and Antipathy	58
SUPPRESSED EMOTIONS	61
COMPOUND EMOTIONS	64
Grief	64
Anxiety	65
Gratitude	65
Guilt	66
Shame	71
Stress	72
Burnout	75
Feeling Depressed	76
Other Emotions	78

SECTION 3 THE RAMIFICATIONS OF EMOTIONS	79
CONDITIONING	80
Overview	80
Beliefs	85
Stored Emotions	91
Attitudes	92
CONFLICT	94
DUALITY	98
SUBJECTIVE TIME	106
SECTION 4 THE HEALING OF EMOTIONS	115
MORE CAUTIONS	116
INTRODUCTION	118
LOOKING INSIDE GRIEF	121
UNFINISHED BUSINESS	124
MOVING THROUGH GRIEF	127
EMOTIONAL EEEES	135
Introduction	135
Encourage	138
Explore	141
Express	144
Making Music	145
Explicit Lyrics	149
Playing Safely	151
Program Notes	153
Gentle Expression – <i>Con passione ma non troppo</i>	154
Gentle Methods of Expression	154
Private acknowledgement	154
Putting it in words	155
Saying the words	155

Talking about it	156
Writing it down	156
Non-verbal expression	157
Crying	158
Facilitation of Gentle Expression	159
Calming Catharsis – <i>Decrescendo e rallentando</i>	163
Facilitated Intense Catharsis – <i>Appassionato e tempestoso</i>	170
Prerequisites	173
Administration	174
Participants	174
Information	175
Assessment	177
Agreement	178
Facilitators	180
Personality	181
Attitudes	183
Knowledge	184
Skills	185
Experience	186
Focus	187
Methods & Equipment	188
The Basic Process	188
Complications	192
Infection Control	193
Closure and Departure	198
Follow-up	200
Time and Place	201
Perspective	202
Evaluate	204
REPERCUSSIONS	206

LAST WORDS	213
APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE CAUSES OF WANTING	216
Learned Wanting	217
Instinctive Wanting	217
Self-Preservation	219
Sex	220
Family	223
Society	224
INDEX	225

PREFACE

This book is about one aspect of the human mind – the emotions. But hasn't there already been too much written about the mind? And hasn't it all completely failed to solve the problems we human beings have lived with since the beginning of recorded history – and presumably before?

Going by the recent and present state of the world, the innumerable mind experts don't seem to have helped us much. So, in writing this book about emotions, am I not simply adding to the confusion? Perhaps I am. On the other hand, perhaps some things written about the mind have helped some people, sometimes. And perhaps this book can do the same.

For better or worse, this book more or less grew inside me during my rather eccentric medical career. Throughout that career, death was never far away – especially during my hospice and geriatric phases, which together accounted for two thirds of my clinical work. Perhaps that is partly why philosophy and psychology became major interests of mine.

Of course, powerful emotions were no stranger to me, my patients or their loved ones. And as the years passed, I became more and more interested in the origins and characteristics of those emotions. But most of all, I wanted to discover whether the pain they so often cause could be relieved – and, if so, how.

By the beginning of 2007, after 35 years in practice, I felt sure that my model for the understanding and healing of emotional pain was worth passing on – if I could just put it in some sort of order. So I withdrew from clinical work at the age of 60, and settled down to write this book. It had a broader scope in earlier drafts, but I decided to publish much of the content (also via wanterfall.com) under other titles. That left the field clear for the emotions as the exclusive topic of *Wanterfall*.

DENIALS: WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

Perhaps, like me, you approach books about the human mind with some scepticism. I hope so. But you may have various expectations of this book. Well, there are a few possible expectations that I would like to nip in the bud. Here are some things which this book is most definitely *NOT*.

Validated

*The "Wanterfall work" described in this book is **not** a validated therapy for any illness.* The book is an entirely subjective work. It is woven around a model of the origin, characteristics and effects of emotions which includes generalisations and approximations derived from many sources. These sources include existing philosophical and psychological writings, personal observations, logical argument and clinical experience. But they do *not* include the results of any controlled clinical trials.

The philosophical foundations of the book are not really amenable to scientific study. However, because self exploration often causes emotional distress as a side effect, a method for dealing with that distress is described – and that certainly could be tested. However, it would be a major undertaking, and at the time of writing it has not been done.

This actually puts it on a similar footing with most psychological therapies, the vast majority of which have not been validated. Indeed, the evidence for those few therapies currently considered as evidence based is itself quite limited.¹

¹ Parker, G. 2008, 'Selecting psychotherapy', *Medical Observer*, 1 February 2008, p. 30.

That said, the approach to emotional distress described in this book does not compete with any type of therapy – because it is simply not designed to be a form of therapy at all. It is, however, closely aligned with many current concepts in grief counselling. Indeed, its role in "Wanterfall work" is analogous to grief counselling. It could also be applied, on an empirical basis, to emotional distress due to other causes.

I will include some general information about common mental illnesses and their treatment in one forthcoming publication¹, and I will discuss a few self-help techniques in another². But you will not find anything at all about the treatment of mental illness in this book – this book is just about understanding and relieving the emotional distresses of everyday life.

Although relieving emotional distress is one of its aims, the ideas in this book may make you feel worse, at first. If you take them seriously – which means practising the technique called "Wanterfall work" – it will probably result in a rather rough ride, over successive humps of personal challenge; some of which you may not previously have been aware of at all.

If your mind is healthy, I don't think you will ever regret that ride. But if your mind is temporarily unwell – if you are suffering from any mental illness – now is *not* the time to read this book. Put it aside. Later, if your doctor has no objection, you may wish to explore these ideas. But not now.

¹ An Introduction to Mental Illness, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² A Few Self-Help Techniques, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

Original

*This book is **not** all my own work.* Considering the subject matter, it hardly could be. Rather, it has resulted from my long-term interest in eastern philosophy and western psychology, coupled with a fairly continuous attempt to understand the everyday experiences of my patients and myself, during a thirty-five year career in clinical medicine.

That medical career, incidentally, has been divided approximately equally between General (Child & Family) Practice, Hospice (Palliative) Medicine and Geriatric Care – with a considerable domiciliary component in each case. And if you are beginning to think me a little eccentric, rest assured that my medical colleagues have often thought the same.

Among many influential teachers, I am particularly indebted to three. The first was the 20th Century philosopher Jiddu Krishnamurti¹, who had a knack of simplifying things to such an extreme degree that the truth of the simplification often escaped me for years. On one occasion, he listened with apparent interest to my lengthy exposition of the theory and practice of the hospice movement, and then summed it up in three words – "Isn't it *fear*?" (He didn't say whether he was referring to some aspect of hospice care, or to me.)

The other two were the unconventional psychiatrist Elisabeth Kübler-Ross² and her down to earth colleague, clinical

¹ Jiddu Krishnamurti (1895 – 1986). A non-denominational philosopher who was educated by the very eclectic Theosophical Society, but who consistently defended himself with great enthusiasm against any suggestion that his philosophy was derivative. I think the best collection of his talks is *Freedom from the Known* (Harper & Row, 1969. ISBN 0-06-064808-2).

² Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, MD (1926 – 2004). The best known of her books is *On Death and Dying* (multiple publishers and dates, but first published in (continued overleaf)

psychologist Marti Barham¹. They introduced me to the principles on which my "Emotional EEEEs" technique is based. Although their interest in reincarnation caused many people to consider them rather eccentric, they taught me more about emotions during a one year sabbatical than I had learned in the previous fifteen years of medical training and practice.

Puritanical

*I am **not** trying to take away anything that you enjoy.* In fact, that is the exact opposite of my aim. There is an apparent paradox here, but it is an illusion. If you think carefully as you read, you will certainly learn that *wanting* anything very much can cause suffering in various ways. But you will not find any advice in these pages to give up the things you like. Instead, you will be offered the opportunity to give up the *suffering*, if you choose to – or to keep it, if you prefer.

I will explain, from various angles, how energy invested in wanting pleasure actually *prevents* pleasure. Whereas, if you instead apply that energy to making choices, and taking the actions which those choices imply, it is possible to leave most unhappiness behind and discover many previously elusive joys. This may sound trite and obvious, but it does not come automatically to most of us. That is why I wrote this book.

1969 by Macmillan, New York). Her interest in the paranormal tended to overshadow her contribution to the understanding and healing of emotional pain – but I think the latter was the truly supernatural thing about her.

¹ Martha J. Barham, PhD, 1978, Dissertation: The Barham Method of Psychodrama: Presentation of the Total Personality Model from Which the Technique Developed, The University for Humanistic Studies, San Diego.

Religious

*This book is absolutely **not** a religious statement of any kind. It does not ask you to believe anything. It does not offer you any sort of salvation. And it tries very hard not to be moral, immoral or amoral – whether that leaves anything else, or not.*

Personally, I do not follow any religion, although I was brought up in one of the many Christian denominations. I have also been influenced considerably by Buddhist philosophy, and to a lesser extent by some Taoist and Hindu concepts. You might notice these influences at times. But if you are asked to adopt any of them, then you are certainly not reading the book I wrote. Please download a genuine copy – they are free.¹

Equally, if you have a religion, I will not try to take it away from you. It is, however, possible that something in the text may accidentally offend one of your religious beliefs. If so, I sincerely regret it. I do not set out to offend you, or anybody else. And I do not ask you to agree with anything I say. In this book, I will simply be trying to explain my Wanterfall concept, to the best of my ability. You may think about it – or ignore it.

Directive

*I am **not** offering to lead you anywhere.* This book does not offer a path *to* anything or *to* anywhere. Rather, it maps the route *away from* the madness generally called "normal". That map is yours to refer to – but the leadership must be your own.

In any case, following blindly in the wake of someone else's ideas can never succeed – words can never lead you anywhere worth going. To find anything real, you must see every step of

¹ Wanterfall is available as a free e-book from www.wanterfall.com

the way with your own understanding. That way, you can be your own, careful leader – and follow yourself.

Guaranteed

*This book does **not** come with any promises.* Absolutely none at all. Not even the usual sort. So, bearing in mind that those ones (empty promises) are the most marketable commodity known to man, perhaps it is a good thing that this book is available as a free e-book. After all, who would pay for it?

Throughout the book, of course, there is the implied suggestion that the Wanterfall work described is worth learning how to do – and worth doing. But I don't promise any specific result from this – and in any case, it is *your* work that is the essential ingredient, not mine. So, there are plenty of suggestions in this book, but no promises. On the other hand, there is no pessimism, either. If you read this book, and think carefully as you read, I for one am very optimistic about what may follow.

CAUTIONS

There are three main cautions to bear in mind, in relation to the Wanterfall approach to emotions. Although they do not seem very dramatic, they are nevertheless very important. Ignoring them could adversely affect the health of the reader, or could conceivably even prove fatal.

The first caution relates to physical or mental illness, and can be derived from the first heading under Denials above – the denial of therapeutic intent. But it belongs here, too – so here it is again. *The techniques which I will describe in this book are **not** treatments for any illness, either mental or physical.*

I emphasise this particularly because many universal experiences such as sadness and anxiety, which *are* addressed by the Wanterfall model, can also occur as symptoms of various illnesses – which are *not* addressed by the Wanterfall model. Quite a wide variety of physical and mental illnesses can present with symptoms suggestive of emotional distress.

Expert medical diagnosis and treatment will lead to significant benefit in almost every case of physical or mental illness – and to complete cure in many cases. The Wanterfall approach has no place in such treatment. It would probably be useless – and quite possibly harmful. After recovery, it could be reconsidered – preferably after discussion with the treating professional.

The second important caution applies to the appropriate use of the model in the absence of physical or mental illness. Getting more closely in touch with strong emotions often has the effect of making you feel much worse than you did beforehand. This may be short lived, but it can be very intense while it lasts.

It is therefore not a good idea to delve deeply unless you will have time and energy to work through the results. If practised before an examination, a competition or an interview, the

techniques I will group together as Wanterfall work might easily interfere with your performance.

It is also unwise to make important decisions, cross busy roads, speak too plainly to your spouse, or indeed do anything that might be adversely affected by emotional distress, until the shock waves of recent emotional archaeology have subsided.

The third caution again has to do with adverse effects, but in a different way. Quite early in the book, under Wanterfall Work: How to Use the Wanterfall Chart, I define the two main components of a simple method of self-exploration. However, the second of these components will not have been fully described until every single page of the book has been read.

Therefore, starting to practise the method before that time would be like driving a car with a good engine, but faulty steering and no brakes. Not recommended. A corollary of this third caution is the need to start the book at the beginning. Later parts of the book rely quite heavily on concepts which are discussed in earlier parts, and could easily be misunderstood if read in isolation.

Those are the three cautions I consider important. However, a fourth question is sometimes raised, regarding the effect of the Wanterfall approach on motivation. Some people worry that discovering a downside to desire might reduce its motivating effect – they think that, without large amounts of *wanting*, no one would have any motivation for *doing* anything.

But action need not be dependent on desire, nor on the emotions generated by desire. Action only requires that you make a *choice* – the choice to do something – and then carry it out. Motivations that do not have their basis in emotions are admittedly not easy to define. They may well be easier to notice, when they occur, than to give a name to. I will ponder

that point to some extent in a future publication¹, but it is really beyond the scope of this one.

For now, I would simply suggest that loss of motivation as a complication of the alleviation of emotional distress is a natural enough fear, but I think the fear is groundless. You may experience some changes, if you apply the ideas in this book, but there is no reason to expect terminal torpor to be among them. On the other hand, changes in motivation might save a lot of time and energy, which might otherwise have been wasted on pointless tasks. But that is hardly an adverse effect.

¹ Philosophical Musings, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

SECTION 1

THE ORIGIN OF EMOTIONS

Emotion is a common enough word, but if I am going to talk about it for the next few hundred pages, I think I had better say exactly what I mean by it. And I am happy to report that I mean what most dictionaries mean – I mean a *mental feeling*, such as happiness or fear. Not only that, but the converse also applies. Any mental feeling is an emotion.

Of course, sensation is also a feeling – but it is a physical feeling, not a mental one.¹ Thought, volition and action, on the other hand, are not feelings at all. Thought, though, can have a feeling as its subject – it can have anything as its subject.

Emotion, sensation, thought, volition and action are interrelated in a continuous, omnidirectional dance of reciprocal influence (but surely no gratuitous hyperbole) called the *mind*. However, sensation and action also have elements outside the mind.

So emotions exist in the mind, but they are not alone there. I didn't mention awareness, incidentally – I am saving that for later. As for anything hypothetical beyond awareness, I will stick to simple things in this book; though I do wax a little hypothetical elsewhere (see last footnote under Cautions).

Anyway, we now have a working definition of emotions, and a general idea of their context. But I am still going to give a few examples – skip them if they get tedious. Feelings like anger

¹ Its perception is mental – and sometimes generates emotions – but that is a different matter. OK, that is two different matters.

and sadness are examples of emotions. Feelings like pressure on the big toe, or an itch where a mosquito fed, are not emotions – they are sensations.

A feeling of severe crushing pain in the chest is also a sensation – but it is likely to give rise to emotions, thoughts and actions. The emotions might include fear, sadness and anger. The thoughts might include wondering what else is in there, apart from the heart. And the actions might include calling an ambulance.

Thoughts like "three fives make fifteen" are not in themselves associated with emotion – though past experiences in a schoolroom could add an emotional overtone. Thoughts like "I will never amount to anything" are almost always associated with emotion. So either sensation or thought can give rise to emotion, or not – depending on the situation, current knowledge, previous experience and interpretation.

By now, you may be wondering why I have not mentioned the brain. That is because this book's approach to the mind is *subjective*. And resorting to my dictionary again, I am glad to discover that, by subjective, it means just what I do – existing in one's own consciousness.

Subjectively, I am quite sure that I have a mind. I live there, and sometimes I rearrange the furniture a bit. But subjectively, I have no idea whether I have a brain. My anatomical studies lead me to think that it is extremely likely. Some of my friends are inclined to imply that it is extremely unlikely. But subjectively, I can only wonder about it.

Perhaps I do have a mind *and* a brain. But I have no idea whether the two are the same, or a bit different, or very different. Fortunately, though, I don't care. This book is a subjective exploration of one aspect of the mind – its emotions. That is all it is. There are plenty of other books about the brain.

In exploring emotions, I will, as advertised, consider their origin, their characteristics, their effects on our daily lives, their often considerable power – and some very effective things that can be done to relieve the suffering which they so often cause.

This first section is about their origin – though it inevitably classifies them to some extent, as well. I am pretty confident of convincing you that emotions have their origin in the universal human state of *wanting* something or other.¹ This is illustrated in the *Wanterfall chart*, which will be introduced shortly, discussed lengthily, and referred to frequently.

It is by using this Wanterfall chart, in the way described in the text, that I think you will become convinced that a significant degree of wanting is the source of the turbulent river of our emotions. I will argue in favour of the proposition, but if you really want to know the answer, the best way to find out is simply to watch it happening in your own mind.

¹ I am not referring here to figures of speech, like "Now I want to talk about the environment" or "I think I would like to start with soup". Statements like that may indicate a very small amount of desire – or may simply express opinion or intent. Either way, they are of little or no significance as causes of emotions. It is the things you really want strongly that cause the mischief.

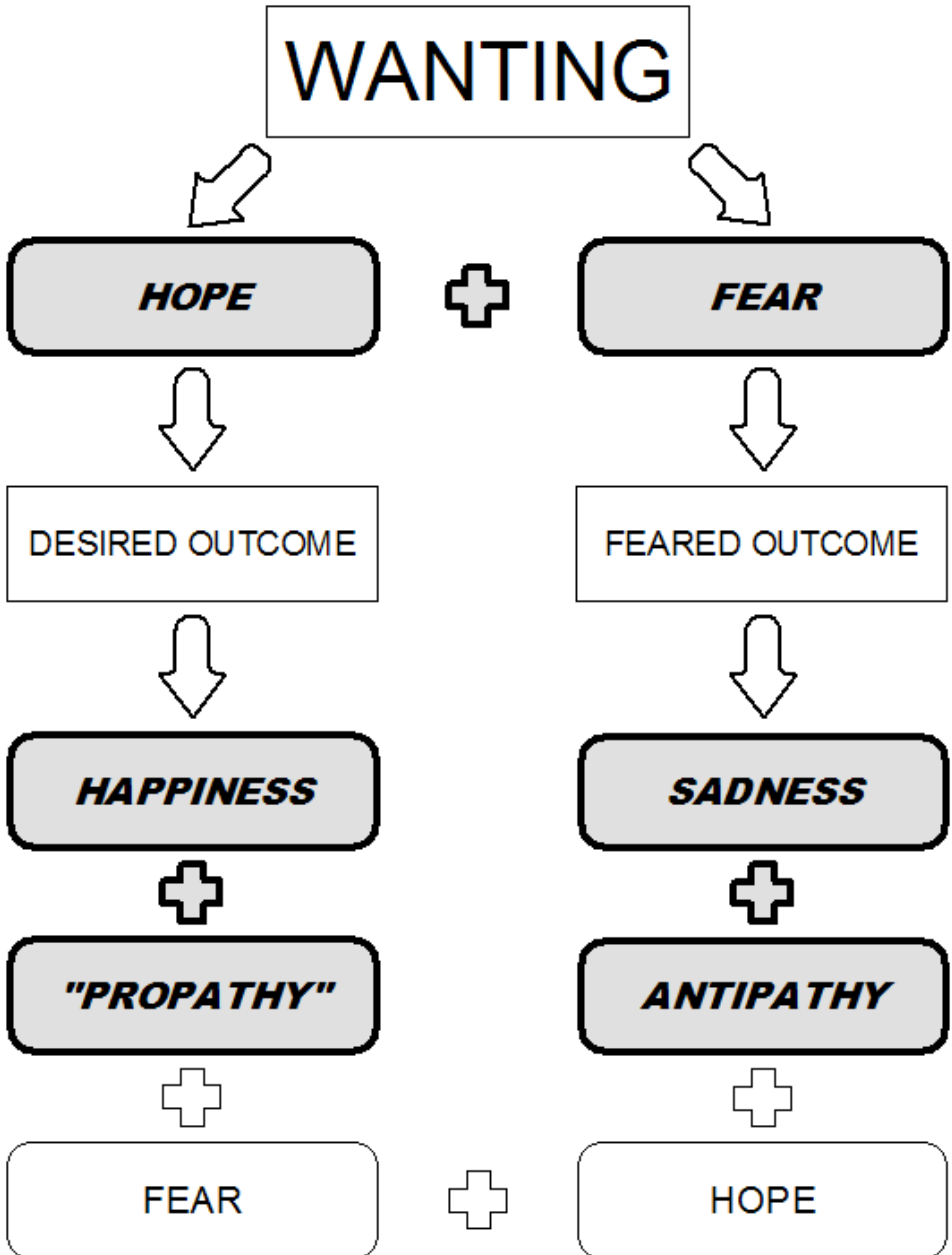
THE WANTERFALL MODEL OF EMOTIONS

You may already have looked at the rather sparse flow chart called The Wanterfall Chart. If not, you will see it on the next page. If you think it looks far too simplistic to represent anything of actual or potential value, I am not surprised. After all, there are only sixteen words on the page.

However, that is entirely by design. It is simply a skeleton, which will be fleshed out in the text. It is also meant to be used as the kernel of a map of insights, by those readers who choose to make the ideas in this book a part of their daily routine. For now, it would be a good idea to make a copy of the chart, so that you can refer to it easily while reading about it – and perhaps scribble your own ideas on it as you go along.

But how was this chart made? In a sense, it created itself. The chart printed on the next page is just a neater copy of the most recent version of the countless diagrams that I have scribbled down on scraps of paper over the last twenty-five years, while attempting to clarify and simplify my own thought processes. Anyway, I suggest you make that copy before reading any further – and keep it handy as you read the rest of the book.

THE WANTERFALL CHART



The chart illustrates a cascading series of subjective phenomena which flow spontaneously from the well known state of *wanting*. In fact, two parallel cascades occur – rather like a waterfall, split by a jutting rock into two adjacent falls, which feed a pair of turbulent rapids. Fancifully, a sort of waterfall of wanting – hence Wanterfall.

If you watch carefully, you may be able to notice the sequence of events depicted by one side or other of the Wanterfall in your own mind. You can often notice the effects of those events in the behaviour of other people, too. But if it seems like just another theory – that's OK. Let it be a theory, and come along for the ride – on a strictly provisional basis – while I pin some ideas on the chart.

The Wanterfall starts with wanting, and I will do the same. Starting earlier, with the causes of wanting, would not be relevant to the Wanterfall model. Suffice it to say that some wanting is instinctive, some is learned and there is rarely any shortage of either. However, I have included some very brief notes about the causes of wanting in an appendix to this book.

I am using "wanting" in its broadest sense. Wishing, for example, is certainly included. Wishing may seem a little more polite than wanting. Nevertheless, if you wish something were so, or wish something were otherwise – be it ever so refined a wish – you're already over the edge and riding those rapids.

Desire, whether horizontal or otherwise, is another word for wanting. And leaping straight to hope or fear, without even noticing wanting on the way, will make barely any difference. Perhaps you dived in, instead of being swept away. Perhaps you simply fell in – same Wanterfall, same ride.

If only the water were smoother... Oh yes, that reminds me! "If only" is yet another variant of wanting. It is especially common when thinking of the past. If only I had done something

differently. If only I could have another go at the last twenty years of my life. "If only" simply means I wish it could have been. Even plain old "if" is sometimes short for "if only".

What about the love/ success/ fitness/ whatever that I *never had at all*? Can you miss, or wish for, what you never had? Easy – all you have to do is imagine what could have been, and compare it with the reality. Welcome to the Wanterfall.

In fact, we often miss what we never had, even more than we miss what we had, and then lost! So, *I want*, or *I wish*, or *I desire*, or *I hope*, or *I fear*, or *if only*, or anything with a remotely similar flavour – whether related to the past, the present or the future – puts your kayak smack in the maelstrom which I call the Wanterfall.

Having said all that, and hopefully included every imaginable variant of wanting in the process, I would like to reiterate what I said in a recent footnote. I am *not* talking about figures of speech, such as "and hopefully included" or "would like to reiterate" – both of which you can see in the previous sentence, incidentally. Nor am I referring to idle daydreams which are not thought of as likely or necessary ever to become real.

Things like that may indeed point to a small amount of desire – though the figures of speech often simply express opinion or intent. But either way, they are of little or no significance as causes of emotions. It is the things you really want strongly that cause the mischief. The mere flutter of a possible preference will never cause a thundering, surging Wanterfall.

Before I explain the chart itself further (and I agree that it is fairly self-explanatory, but that will not deter me) I must define the one word found on it which is not (yet) in the dictionary. You already know my first made-up word – Wanterfall. But there on the chart is a second – "propathy".

Before I say what propathy means, I will tell you how to pronounce it. It has the accent on the "o" – which rhymes with "low". The "pathy", I am glad to report, is the same as it is in antipathy or apathy – in other words, pretty forgettable. None of this (nor the meaning, soon to be announced) is in dispute, because it's my word. Well, it was, anyway. Now that it has been released into the wild, I guess it is mine no longer.

But why did I have to make this word up in the first place? Well, I searched for (literally) years to find an English word which is truly the opposite of "antipathy". Why did I do that? Because the Wanterfall chart *needs* the opposite of antipathy – just as desperately as it needs antipathy itself. The reality is there, so the chart must acknowledge it – with a word. When I finally accepted that antipathy has no antonym, I coined one.

Now, antipathy is a general term that covers *unfriendly* feelings like anger, irritability, a "short fuse", frustration, animosity, antagonism, aversion, coldness, detestation, dislike, disapproval, enmity, hatred, hostility, ill will, malice and repugnance.

Therefore, propathy has to be a general term that covers *friendly* feelings like affection, amity, approval, cordiality, fondness, goodwill, liking and warmth, as well as some of the meanings of the much overworked word love. Otherwise, it could not *possibly* occupy the position on the chart opposite antipathy. You will encounter propathy from time to time in the text, and it will always have the meaning just given.

Now, back to the chart. We have seen that the chart starts with the normal human tendency to *want* things to be a certain way – whether or not that is the way they actually *are*. Of course, we often want things *not* to be a certain way – but, for our purposes, *that is the same thing*. In either case, we want a particular result – whether we define it in the positive or the negative, it is the result we *want*.

For example, whether we want to remain well, or we want *not* to get sick, the thing wanted is the same (good health). Or, if we want some variation on that, or any other, theme, then that will be wanting, too. Whatever we want or don't want, however we express it, is wanting. That is fairly straightforward – and universal. We want to get what we want – a too true truism.

Sometimes, though, getting what we want is not quite so straightforward as wanting it. We may not even know exactly what we want to get, or avoid – but the effect can still be very powerful. At other times, we get exactly what we wanted – but find that it does not bring much happiness when we get it. Indeed, it sometimes brings unexpected sorrow.

However, the principle remains the same. While we want it, it *is* something we want. Later, perhaps, it is no longer something we want, and it is therefore no longer relevant as regards wanting. If we find that it is actually unpleasant, and *regret* getting it, it will become something we *don't* want (which is still something we want, but in the negative). The rapids are just as turbulent then, because the wanting is exactly the same.

When we discover that something we wanted is really useless or harmful, we have actually lost something we didn't even realise was at risk. We have lost the pleasant illusion we originally had, that getting this thing would bring happiness. And the loss of an illusion can be just as distressing as the loss of something concrete. So when we think of wanting, we must include illusion and fantasy, if there are any strong desires attached – though not, as previously mentioned, idle daydreams, as these lack that vital ingredient.

The outcome of wanting is often expressed in terms of success (getting what we do want or not getting what we don't want) or failure (getting what we don't want or not getting what we do want). Whether these things are concrete, or merely figments of the imagination, makes no difference. And, if we don't like

the outcome we wanted and got, it just means we were riding one Wanterfall – and now we are riding another.

So although the situations in which wanting is found may differ, the wanting itself is always the same phenomenon – and any example of wanting will do, to start the Wanterfall flowing. After that, the chart moves in large steps, which are in fact very broad generalisations, through the main possibilities that can follow any given instance of wanting.

Arbitrarily, I have placed the possibilities we prefer on the left hand side of the page, and the others on the right hand side of the page.¹ As you can see, six of these possibilities are identified by bold italic text with a shaded background.

I call these six possibilities the "primary emotions". These six primary emotions *each* represent a *group* of related emotions, which include, or from which can be derived, all of the more complex human feelings. They are discussed in some detail under The Anatomy of Emotions.

Hope and fear regarding the outcome is the first pair of primary emotions shown. The outcomes themselves are shown next. Then the remaining four primary emotions appear, placed under the outcomes which generate them.

Finally, hope and fear *reappear* at the bottom of the chart, in reverse order – because we always *want* to keep our good luck – or else to lose our misfortune. And while we *want*, the Wanterfall continues. You can go down it any time, and any number of times, all in the privacy of your own mind.

¹ Throughout the book, when I refer to the left or right hand side of the Wanterfall, I will mean that side of the printed chart, as you look at it.

You will have noticed one other thing. As well as the + signs that show how some of the vertical elements on the chart often coexist, there is also a + sign between hope and fear, each time they appear. Though one of these emotions often predominates, there is usually a little of the other lurking in the background.¹

We now come to a very important point. Apart from "wanting", all the elements of the Wanterfall chart are arranged in pairs, with the members of each pair shown on opposite sides of the page. These pairs represent symmetrical opposites which exist in our emotional life. The members of each pair are so closely linked to each other that each pair has often been likened to the two sides of a single coin.

In other words, if you find one member of the pair, you can be sure its opposite is lurking nearby. Or, to put it another way, both members of a given pair come into existence simultaneously – or not at all. This, however, does not necessarily mean that both are *experienced* simultaneously. That is not uncommon with hope and fear, but when it occurs with the other four, it is usually to a relatively minor degree.

For thousands of years, eastern philosophers have emphasised the two-sided aspect of human emotions – and therefore of most aspects of human existence. The word most often applied to this phenomenon is "duality". I will have quite a bit to say about duality in Section 3, when considering the ways in which emotions exert their power over human beings.

But for now, we can notice a few things in passing. There are three major "coins" (or dualities, or linked opposites) illustrated

¹ Strictly speaking, hope and fear are arbitrary points on a continuum, and so are the other two pairs of primary emotions. The chart leaves this point, which will be discussed at some length in the text, to your imagination.

on the chart. There is a coin with hope on the face and fear on the reverse. There is a coin with happiness on the face and sadness on the reverse. And there is a coin with propathy on the face and antipathy on the reverse. (Which side is called the face, and which the reverse, makes no difference at all.)

Incidentally, the last two "coins" mentioned, shown nearer the bottom of the chart, are sometimes merged into one coin of a larger denomination. That coin has (emotional) *pleasure* on the face and (emotional) *pain* on the reverse. It is sometimes used as a sort of placeholder for duality in general. However, it is a little non-specific for our purposes.

Of course, there are plenty of subsidiary dualities, like right and wrong, good and bad, friend and foe. Some of them include other mental elements as well as emotions – but it is the emotional component that gives them life. However, these smaller dualities are not our immediate concern.

Having looked at the words on the chart, it is almost time to consider how to use it. But first, I'm sure you have noticed that there are many things which are *not* on the chart. In fact, *most* things are not on the chart. This certainly makes it easier to read – but are some essential things missing?

What about equanimity – was it just too boring to include? Or causeless joy – too unbelievable? Did perfect peace pass the author's understanding? And love with no strings attached – did it simply float away? Well, perhaps rather conveniently in the circumstances, I do not think those things are emotions at all. And that means that they will barely get a mention in the text – let alone find a place on the Wanterfall chart.¹

¹ They are, however, wondered about in *Philosophical Musings*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

WANTERFALL WORK: HOW TO USE THE WANTERFALL CHART

It is one thing to explain the meaning of the Wanterfall chart – but what is it good for? Well, as it is basically a minimal representation of my Wanterfall model of subjective experience, it should at least be useful as an aid while studying that model. So keep that copy of the chart handy...

The purpose of the Wanterfall model is to provide a framework for *understanding* our subjective experience, and the chart has an essential role in that process. It can be used as a place to *represent, arrange and rearrange* the elements of your subjective experience in ways that make it easier to understand.

This arranging might be a purely abstract process. Or, if you write ideas and feelings on a spare copy of the chart – or on a hundred spare copies, for that matter – it can also have a concrete element. Indeed, it could grow into something rather like a "mind map".¹

However, the value of this exercise in isolation is very limited. To make the Wanterfall chart really useful, two more things are necessary. They are, in a sense, the two pillars on which the practical application of this book rests. The first pillar facilitates the exploration of your own mind. The second pillar facilitates the healing of painful emotions – because some will certainly be discovered during the exploration referred to.

The first pillar is a simple but powerful mental practice which is not often talked about in the West, but which has been popular for millennia in the East. This practice is sometimes

¹ Mind maps are described in Buzan, T. 1991, *The Mind Map Book*, Penguin, New York.

translated as "mindfulness". However, that term does not explain itself, and when others explain it, the explanations vary quite a lot. I prefer to call it *constant, non-judgmental self-awareness*. It may be a mouthful, but it is much easier to understand.

The second pillar starts with exploring emotions from the perspective of the Waterfall chart, and continues by applying everything learned in the next three sections of the book – The Anatomy of Emotions, The Ramifications of Emotions and The Healing of Emotions. An important corollary of this, is that the second pillar is very wobbly – and therefore not to be relied on – until the whole book has been read and understood.

The First Pillar of Waterfall Work: Constant, Non-Judgmental Self-Awareness

As mentioned above, this is the first of two things needed, to make the Waterfall chart really useful. And as you can see, there are three parts to it – two adjectives, and one noun. These three are approximately equal in importance. Let's look at each, starting with the noun and working backwards.

Self-Awareness

In this context¹, self-awareness is a matter of *noticing one's own thoughts and feelings*. In other words, it is the subjective part of awareness in general. There is nothing complicated or arcane about it. Although it is, in my opinion, the most important thing we ever do, it is nevertheless very ordinary and

¹ Self-awareness can be extended to include noticing things like sensations, posture and movements. However, the emphasis here will be on thoughts and feelings.

very simple. Notice that thoughts are under surveillance here, as well as feelings. Because of the constant interaction between thought and emotion, it is essential to observe both.

Non-Judgmental

Non-judgmental means that the self-awareness is practised *without either approval or disapproval of the thoughts and feelings which are noticed*. This is necessary because, if you praise or condemn as you go along, one of three adverse effects will occur.

Firstly, you might suffer considerable guilt, shame etc – and therefore either hate yourself passionately (not recommended) or give up the practice of self-awareness altogether (not usually recommended – but probably necessary for survival, if self-awareness is judgmental).

Secondly, you might suffer a severe case of overconfidence, inappropriate elation, egotism, grandiosity etc. If you are lucky, your friends will prick that balloon before it carries you away. Otherwise, the consequences can be serious. This response is not common, but it can happen. It seems very different from the first problem, but in a sense it is the same – just in the opposite direction.

Thirdly, you might develop *selective* self-awareness, as a self-protective mechanism. Anything which looks disturbing might be passed over, and only the acceptable parts explored. The result of this reaction is a very distorted view of self – which can only lead you astray. Indeed, nothing which has passed through the filter of a judgmental attitude – or any other form of bias – can possibly emerge undistorted.

So self-awareness must be non-judgmental. But does a non-judgmental approach require the suspension of all critical faculties? Not at all. It only requires the suspension of praise

and condemnation (which, incidentally, is another example of a minor duality). Non-judgmental self-awareness is a way of seeing clearly and dispassionately – of observing existing thoughts and emotions, without introducing new emotions into the observation process.

Also, as it is just observation, it has nothing to do with choice or action. It therefore does not prevent you from making changes as a result of your insights, if you choose to do so – nor does it apply any pressure to make changes, if you choose not to. Changes are a matter of choice. And choice, together with any action that follows it, is separate from observation.

So you are aware, observing, noticing – sensing what is going on within your own mind. The awareness itself is *choiceless* – in that it does not choose what to see.¹ It just looks – at whatever is there. And, in a sense, it is also *unfocused* – not in the sense of being blurred, but in the sense of not concentrating on one thing more than on another. Thought often needs to concentrate on particular things – but awareness is at its best when it just observes what is. In that sense, awareness is more like a film, rather than a film producer or a film critic.

It is like an uncensored film, at that. But here, I am talking about freedom within the mind of a person who chooses to explore it. Within that space, undefined and perhaps infinite, censorship of awareness is simply a form of distortion. It is thus the enemy of the truth, and the enemy of all true learning.

In the public domain, of course, some degree of censorship is usual, and in my opinion essential. Complete freedom of

¹ The choiceless quality of your awareness must not be confused with your own capacity to make choices. Awareness works best when it makes no choices. But human beings who made no choices would just be robots.

expression would allow the dissemination of whatever the sickest minds produce, to everyone – including children, the developmentally disabled and the mentally ill. This would often be distressing, and sometimes very harmful.

But the human mind, though perhaps less enclosed than we realise, is not the public domain. There may, however, be times when you become aware of a thought pattern which distresses you excessively, or seems detrimental in some way. The techniques for working with emotions, which will be described later, might solve this problem. But not usually immediately.

Perhaps the best example of this situation is obsessive-compulsive disorder.¹ In this disorder, deliberate thought blocking is sometimes advised, and can be very helpful. However, *whenever possible*, self-awareness should be uncensored to the point of choicelessness. Just noticing – nothing more, and nothing less.

Insights may sometimes occur during or after this process, but they are not achievable – they just happen. Insights may make some choices easier, or they may make the need for difficult choices more evident. Either way, they cannot be controlled. As with sleep, you cannot go to insight – it comes to you.

Choice, on the other hand, starts and ends with you – which doesn't make it easy, just different. But neither insights, nor the choices they sometimes lead to, are part of the constant, non-judgmental self-awareness so essential to the task in hand. They are important, but they are separate from this process.

¹ Unless in remission, this would be a reason to avoid this book altogether, until discussed with the treating professional. (Obsessive-compulsive disorder is briefly described in *An Introduction to Mental Illness*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com)

Truly non-judgmental self-awareness, incidentally, would have no adverse emotional consequences of its own. However, if it brings to light feelings which are themselves painful, there will still be emotional distress to deal with. So the second pillar, which deals especially with painful emotions, is usually needed sooner or later – usually sooner, in my experience.

Constant

Constant means – well, I guess you know what constant means. The question is, why? And the answer is, because the more often your self-awareness is switched off, the more you will miss. It may sound like a burden, but it soon becomes a habit, and then it is not too difficult. It is as if the awareness sits quietly in the back of the mind, watching calmly but carefully – all the time.

During everyday life, your mind reveals its emotional content, bit by bit, as you observe it. Especially when you are communicating with another person. Relationship – which can be anything from asking for directions from a stranger, to a lifelong interaction with a relative, friend, or lover – is in some ways like a mirror, which shows you a reflection of your own mind. Intermittent awareness might miss these opportunities.

Summary

The three essential elements have now been discussed. But you may still feel that self-awareness is a difficult thing to define. If so, I agree with you. Is an unknown part of the mind observing the part of the mind that we think we know? Is one known part of the mind observing another known part? Or can the whole of the mind just look at itself?

I have no idea. But, subjectively, noticing thoughts and feelings *is* possible. You can easily prove that for yourself. And it

provides one way to approach the mind. As I don't know of another effective approach, that is the one that I will be suggesting throughout this book. If you want to know yourself better, and live more fully, then everyday life, with all its complex relationships and challenges, is your schoolroom. But without the practice of constant, non-judgmental self-awareness, you are not paying attention in class.

Some of the lessons are hard. If you feel bad as a result of self exploration, it is usually a good sign. If you had been asleep, you would not have found whatever made you feel bad – and you would not have learned anything, either. This is, of course, the reason for the second pillar of Wanterfall work. However, as always, if you feel bad for days on end, or bad and getting worse, do not blame it on your exploration – see a doctor.

As you practise non-judgmental self-awareness over time, you can make for yourself a metaphorical map of your anxiety, sadness, guilt – or whatever other pleasant or unpleasant feelings you may find. But why would you want a map, if the territory is unpleasant? To find the way out of it, perhaps. If, on the other hand, you don't find your inner territory unpleasant, the map might come in handy when you go sightseeing.

The Second Pillar of Wanterfall Work: Dealing with Emotions

The rest of the book is about dealing with emotions – recognising, understanding and accepting them; exploring them in detail; learning to express them in harmless ways; evaluating them with the calmer clarity which follows expression – and usually choosing to leave some of them behind. However, I am not going to address all of that under the present heading.

I have included the heading here to make it clear that effective use of the Wanterfall Chart involves dealing with emotions, as

well as constant, non-judgmental self-awareness. However, I have not included the actual content here, because it is too large to place under a single heading. In fact, it has the next three sections of the book (which means all of the rest of the book) devoted to it.

You will arrive at the first of those sections, The Anatomy of Emotions, very soon. But first, I want to clarify the relationship between the Wanterfall work just discussed and another term, EEEEs work, which will be encountered quite often in the following sections of the book.

Although Wanterfall work has already been discussed, it may help if I summarise it briefly. In a nutshell, Wanterfall work is the practical application of everything covered in this book to the task of exploring one's own mind, and includes the following elements:

- constant, non-judgmental self-awareness is employed for routine exploration of the mind throughout daily life (this is the first pillar of Wanterfall work)
- everything we are going to learn about emotions aids the understanding of what is observed in the mind
- everything we are going to learn about emotions is also used to deal with any emotional pain encountered (this and the previous point constitute the second pillar)
- the Wanterfall chart itself acts as the kernel of a map of mental discovery – which is always a work in progress

It is very important to remember that "everything we are going to learn about emotions" includes the whole book. Therefore, starting to practise Wanterfall work now would mean supporting it on only one pillar. That may seem fine initially, but the first significant challenge encountered will show that the method is very unbalanced. So think about Wanterfall

work, by all means, as you learn about its second pillar. But digest the whole book before starting to practise it.

EEEEEs¹ work, on the other hand, is not nearly as comprehensive as Wanterfall work. By EEEEEs work, I mean the practical application of the Emotional EEEEEs concept, which will be discussed in Section 4. Ideally, this would be combined with as much understanding of emotions as possible. However, that is not a prerequisite. EEEEEs work is designed purely for the healing of emotional pain, and can be used for that purpose whether or not the person has any interest in exploring the mind, or in understanding the emotions involved.

Now, if you are a logical person, you will find the next few paragraphs rather tedious. In fact, I think you should skip them. As everything we will learn about emotions is included in Wanterfall work, and only part of what we will learn about emotions is included in EEEEEs work, the relationship between the two is really very simple. In fact, it is as simple as this:

- Wanterfall work includes EEEEEs work, and other things – because Wanterfall work includes everything in this book²
- EEEEEs work does *NOT* include Wanterfall work – it just happens to be one essential *part* of Wanterfall work
- EEEEEs work has been separated off for a reason – its use is not restricted to its role in Wanterfall work. It can be helpful, for example, when working through a bereavement – or indeed any painful emotional experience – even if you find that Wanterfall work itself does not appeal to you.

¹ As discussed in Section 4, the four Es stand for Encourage, Explore, Express and Evaluate, which are the four steps in the healing process.

² Later, you can add everything you ever learn about life to it. I suppose you could call that Advanced Wanterfall Work.

I'm glad I got that sorted out. The logical readers can return now. And that means that I will definitely have to refrain from talking about "Wanterfall work and EEEEs work". That would be like ordering a banana split and ice cream. I used to do that, quite often (no, not the banana split) but I think I have stopped. Time will tell...

And now for some anatomical dissection. In Section 2, I will dissect the primary emotions already introduced, trying to demonstrate what makes them tick – and what they make tick. As before, keep a copy of the Wanterfall chart handy as you read, to check where things fit. If you can't see where they fit, just wondering about it can be a valuable exercise in itself. But with practice, you will be able to place almost anything discussed in this book somewhere on the Wanterfall chart.

SECTION 2

THE ANATOMY OF EMOTIONS

In Section 1, I explained the way in which I think emotions come into being, as depicted on the Waterfall chart. The Waterfall model (or Waterfall approach) which the chart illustrates, led us on to the idea of Waterfall work – recently defined, but still lacking one of its two supporting pillars.

Along the way, I have repeatedly implied that I think emotions are very important. Because I think that, I will now look at them in more detail. And if you also think that, then I daresay you will look at them with me.

There are many words which convey emotional meaning, but I have yet to find an emotion that is not either included in, or derived from, one or more of the primary emotions shown on the Waterfall chart. So you will probably not be surprised to discover that I am going to take those six primary emotions as my starting point for this section.

THE SIX PRIMARY EMOTIONS

Six words, each of which represents a group of emotions, are shown on the Wanterfall flow chart in bold italic on a shaded background. I chose these six "primary emotions", and arranged them in the order in which you see them, in an attempt to create a visual depiction of the basic emotional responses that result from wanting something. (A great deal of scribbling and scrunching was involved, over a period of almost thirty years, before I settled on these six words.)

As you know, I had to resort to inventing one of the six words, propathy, as I could not find a satisfactory antonym for antipathy in the dictionary. I gave a formal definition of propathy under The Wanterfall Model of Emotions, but I will discuss it more fully later in this section.

In describing primary emotions, I am aiming to cover general types of feeling, rather than very specific feelings. The task of each primary emotion is to cover a range of feelings, which may differ a little in various ways, but are similar as regards their basic flavour.

So each primary emotion is really an umbrella term for a group of related emotions. And the six primary emotions together are a bit like a library, in which all simple emotions can be found – and from which compound emotions, which include two or more primary emotions, can also be derived.

I have chosen these particular emotions as the primary group simply because they do the job required of them, as described in the previous paragraph, better than any of the other combinations I have tried over the years. Here they are again:

Hope**Fear****Happiness****Sadness****Propathy****Antipathy**

As you can see, I have arranged them in the same layout in which they appear on the Waterfall chart.

On the left are the primary emotions associated with *getting what you want* (or avoiding what you want to avoid – which is the outcome you want). On the right are those associated with *not getting what you want* (or getting what you want to avoid – which is not the outcome you want).

For each primary emotion on the left, there is a primary emotion on the right which may be considered its opposite – or, as one is always lurking in the background of the other, they may be thought of as the two sides of one metaphorical coin.¹

I will first discuss each primary emotion by itself, giving its meaning as used in this book, and then I will consider various combinations of primary emotions. As I mentioned, the meanings of all the primary emotions are intended in a broad, general sense, so that they can fulfil their umbrella functions – hopefully without too many demarcation disputes.

¹ As previously mentioned, the two "opposites" of each duality are really arbitrary designators of the two directions from the centre of a continuum. This simplification is useful here, but will be dispensed with in Section 3.

Hope

Hope is used in various ways, both as noun and verb, but perhaps its commonest meaning is a wish that some desire will be fulfilled – often, though not always, with a fair degree of optimism about the outcome. Thus, whenever we want to get something (or avoid it) we *hope* that we will get it (or avoid it).

While thinking mainly of the desired result, we often feel reasonably optimistic. But we rarely forget the possibility of the unwanted result for very long, and when we remember it, at least a little fear creeps into the picture. This optimistic, but uncertain, wishful anticipation of an outcome that we want, gives the general flavour of the primary emotion *hope*.

Incidentally, in the Christian tradition, there is an idea that hope (well, it is called hope in some translations) is a virtue¹ – along with faith and charity (which are also replaced by different words in different translations). However, for the purposes of this book, the primary emotion that I call hope, as described above, is neither virtuous nor wicked. It is simply – as defined above.

Fear

Fear also has various meanings, both as noun and verb, but its commonest meaning is the unpleasant subjective effect of the apprehension of possible danger or pain, or any other outcome considered adverse by the subject – including unknown outcomes. It is often associated with an urge to escape. All of this gives the general flavour of the primary emotion *fear*.

¹ This is based, rather weakly in my opinion, on 1 Corinthians 13:13.

Again, there is usually a little of its opposite, lurking nearby. Thus, whenever we have prior knowledge (or suspicion) of an outcome we consider adverse, we hope to avoid it, but we fear we may not avoid it. In the case of a desired outcome, we hope to achieve it, but we fear we may not achieve it.

The fear of not getting what we want is not quite the same as the fear induced by physical danger. Nevertheless, they are closely analogous, and the "fight-or-flight response" seen with danger often occurs to some degree with fear not due to danger. (This physiological response includes the release of adrenaline, often causing disconcerting physical sensations, which tend to engender more fear – creating a most unpleasant vicious circle. I discuss this in some detail in another publication.¹)

Incidentally, in many traditions it is believed that fear is a shameful weakness. I strongly recommend *not* suggesting that to a war veteran, or anyone else who has faced great danger. In any case, for the purposes of this book, the primary emotion that I call fear, as described above, is neither reprehensible nor admirable. As with hope, it is simply – as defined above.

Happiness

Happiness is a state characterised by some or all of: well-being, contentment, enjoyment, felicity, feeling pleased, feeling satisfied; or perhaps just feeling that things are really good, just the way they are. This is the general flavour of the primary emotion *happiness*.²

¹ An Introduction to Mental Illness, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² Mental states caused by a mood disorder, a drug or a physical illness are excluded from this definition – they are different phenomena.

Happiness usually occurs, or is intensified, when our desires are fulfilled. That is, when we get what we want – or avoid what we want to avoid. It often continues, though usually at a less intense level, as long as the wanted result persists. But it is very vulnerable to anything that threatens to disturb that state.

There are various other words, such as bliss, euphoria, rapture and ecstasy, that are sometimes used to denote extreme forms of happiness, but at other times have different meanings. The word joy is also used for great happiness. However, because of its frequent use by philosophers when describing an alleged state of mind which is *not* conditional on external factors, I have not included it in the primary emotion happiness.¹

Sadness

Sadness, also called unhappiness, is a state characterised by some or all of: sorrow, misery, dejection, despair, displeasure, dissatisfaction, despondency, disconsolateness, dolefulness, mournfulness, gloom; or perhaps just feeling that things are really bad the way they are. This is the general flavour of the primary emotion *sadness*.²

Sadness usually occurs, or is intensified, when our desires are not fulfilled. That is, when we *don't* get what we want – or *do* get what we *don't* want. It often continues, perhaps at a less intense level, while that unwanted state persists. It is usually

¹ All the primary emotions are conditional upon circumstances – the Wenterfall consists only of reactions to circumstances (the circumstance of getting what you want, and the circumstance of not getting what you want).

² Mental states caused by a mood disorder, a drug or a physical illness are again excluded.

relieved, to a varying degree, by any improvement in the unwanted state.

Incidentally, although sadness is one of the features of grief, and also of depressive disorders, it does not define either of those conditions, nor is it limited to them. (I will have a lot to say about grief in this book, but depressive disorders are outside its scope. They are, however, discussed briefly in the forthcoming e-booklet recently mentioned.)

Propathy

As I discussed when introducing and describing the Wanterfall chart, propathy is a word coined by me for this book, simply because the Wanterfall model requires an opposite to antipathy. It is a general term which covers friendly feelings like affection, amity, approval, cordiality, fondness, goodwill, liking and warmth, as well as some of the meanings of the much overworked word love. So propathy, while it lasts, is nice and warm and fuzzy.

Propathy is usually felt when a *person* is perceived as being partly or wholly instrumental in bringing about one's happiness. It usually disappears quickly, sometimes being replaced by antipathy (see below) if the person has the effrontery to withdraw or reverse this influence.¹ Propathy may also be felt to some extent, albeit not very logically, when one's happiness has occurred without any help from a person.

Among the friendly feelings listed above as being included within propathy were "some of the meanings of the much

¹ The warm and friendly, but conditional, nature of propathy is similar to the *conditional love* described by some authors, notably the late Elisabeth Kübler-Ross (see footnote to Original under Denials).

overworked word love". That suggests that not all of its meanings are included – and they are not. Those that are not included, of course, have nothing to do with this book. They are wondered about elsewhere.¹ Nevertheless, I will mention them briefly – just to explain why I exclude them from the umbrella of propathy.

Things Excluded from Propathy

The first of these is difficult to discuss, for two reasons. Firstly, it may not exist at all; and secondly, even if it does, there is no satisfactory name for it. But having noted the conditional nature of propathy (and every other emotion) the question naturally arises, whether there could perhaps be some sort of love-ish thing which is *not* conditional.

Some of those who suggest that there is such a thing, call it *unconditional love*. Others call it Love (with a capital L). I will do that, on the few occasions on which I refer to the idea at all (in this book). Sometimes, it is given a completely new name; or perhaps a name borrowed from another language. In those cases, though it may not always be understood, it will at least not be confused with other things referred to as "love".

It may be a simple enough concept, but it is certainly not easy to capture it in words. Fortunately, all I really need to say about Love in this book is that, if it exists, it does so *outside the definition of propathy*. It could not possibly have anything to do with propathy, because propathy is a *result* – it always *depends* on something – it is always *conditional*. Therefore Love, which is *not* conditional, cannot be part of propathy.

¹ Philosophical Musings, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

So much for whatever that last thing was – or wasn't. There are three more things that I want to exclude, and they have so much in common that I think of them as variations on a single theme. They are *sympathy*, *empathy* and *compassion*. I have nothing against any of them – rather the opposite – which immediately raises the suspicion that they should not be limited to the conditional umbrella of propathy – or allowed in at all.

Much is sometimes made of the distinctions between these three words – but mostly by psychologists and counsellors, rather than dictionaries. Dictionaries seem to think the three terms are very close in meaning, and so do I – because their definitions overlap far more than they differ.

The common meaning that they share is *understanding and sharing the feelings of another person – especially one suffering from misfortune – combined with an urge to help if possible*. That's simple enough. What about the differences?

Well, perhaps sympathy emphasises the misfortune element, and may sometimes include a touch of schadenfreude. Perhaps compassion emphasises the helping element, and may sometimes include a touch of holiness. And perhaps empathy is too well trained to emphasise anything, and may sometimes include a touch of distance.

But in essence, these three words do approximately the same job. Sometimes, they are given particular meanings by particular authors. As long as they explain what they mean, I guess that's OK. But in general, I feel sure they are just different expressions of the same – well, the same something.

And what something is that? I don't really know, but those three words do have an irritating habit of not requiring adequate recompense. At the very least, this makes them guilty of consorting with Love – a capital crime in the Wanterfall jurisdiction, where conditionality rules without question.

Propathy may be warm and fuzzy as all get out, but it is pointing in your direction only as long as you continue to earn it – one way or another. Whereas the kindly triplets sympathy, empathy and compassion, though they may rub shoulders with propathy quite often, and perhaps be influenced by it when they do, were surely born far beyond the Wanterfall.

Perhaps these triplets descend into our environment of conditionality simply because that is where they are needed. Then, when their work is done, they fly away. I don't know where they go, but I have searched the Wanterfall up, down and sideways, and I don't think they live there. So off with their heads. They have no place in propathy – or in this book at all.

Antipathy

Antipathy is a general term that covers unfriendly feelings like anger, irritability, frustration, animosity, antagonism, aversion, coldness, detestation, dislike, disapproval, enmity, hatred, hostility, ill will, malice and repugnance. In some cases there is a "short fuse", with rapid transition to overt aggression.

Antipathy seems more logical when a *person* is perceived as being partly or wholly instrumental in causing sadness. If the person is later perceived as being partly or wholly instrumental in removing the sadness, or replacing it with happiness, antipathy usually subsides, to be replaced (sometimes slowly) by a varying degree of propathy.

Remarkably often, however, antipathy is also felt in the *absence* of a human instrument. In this situation, religious people often deputise God¹ as the responsible instrument, and

¹ Kübler-Ross always encouraged clients to give full vent to this feeling, reassuring them that "God can take it". (None were struck by lightning.)

feel intensely angry with God. Others just feel intensely angry, without knowing who or what they are angry with. However, they frequently direct their anger at anyone who comes within range – sometimes with very destructive effects.

Antipathy is often viewed as being entirely counterproductive. However, feelings like anger, frustration and aversion can engender a powerful motivation to strive for *change* – which might be a change for the better, at least in some cases. This is not to suggest that unresolved painful emotions are recommended – just that any benefit is better than none.

PRIMARY EMOTION PAIRS

The primary emotions defined above do not exist in perfect isolation. On the contrary, they interact like crazy. To illustrate some of these interactions, I will look at the primary emotions in pairs – first in their horizontal pairs of opposites, and then in some vertical pairings. I will try to be systematic, but some of the pairs are so closely linked that I will inevitably mention emotions other than those under the spotlight at the time.

I have previously discussed the way in which each of the horizontal pairings could be conceptualised as the obverse and reverse of a single coin – creating the simplest possible example of the concept of *duality* (discussed in some detail in Section 3). So I will not say much about duality here, although I might refer to it from time to time.

Hope and Fear

The first pair of primary emotions, hope and fear, is the immediate effect of a significant degree of wanting. Both hope and fear are present at the same time. However, they are often present to different degrees – and sometimes, one is so much more prominent than the other, that only one is noticed.

The simultaneous presence of opposites, each making a contribution to what is felt, applies to all three pairs of primary emotions, of course – and also to their components and their derivatives. But in the case of hope and fear, I find this "Siamese twin" phenomenon more striking than with any other pair. Their joint effect, which is the compound emotion

*anxiety*¹ (discussed later) can usually be found quite close to the surface, even when one or the other opposite predominates.

Even when the outcome is known, hope and fear do not entirely leave the stage. If the outcome is the one that was wanted, there will usually be some residual anxiety due to the hope that the desired outcome will persist, and the fear that it will change. And if the outcome is the one that was *not* wanted, there will usually be some residual anxiety due to the hope that the outcome will change, and the fear that it will persist.

Incidentally, as hope and fear constitute the first step that follows wanting, and as that step is virtually instantaneous, some authors ignore wanting itself, and take hope and fear as the starting point for their discussions of emotions. Also, as either hope *or* fear guarantees at least a little of its opposite, other authors take fear alone as their starting point. They could just as well start with hope alone, but I have not seen that done.

Happiness and Sadness

Happiness and sadness is the next pair of opposite primary emotions, and it is so closely linked with the third pair, propathy and antipathy, that it is difficult to discuss one pair without mentioning the other. When the outcome we await occurs, we often feel either happiness and propathy, or sadness and antipathy – depending on what that outcome is.

¹ The emotion anxiety must not be confused with the *anxiety disorders*, which have anxiety as a common feature, but have many other features as well. Anxiety also has very significant physiological and physical concomitants. These matters are discussed in *An Introduction to Mental Illness*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

If it is the outcome we want, we experience happiness and (mainly when a human agency brought about the happiness) propathy. If it is the outcome we don't want, we experience sadness and (often even in the absence of a human agency) antipathy. Note that the opposite member of each pair has not actually disappeared. It is waiting patiently in case the outcome changes. But, meanwhile, it may not be affecting us very much.

Propathy and Antipathy

Propathy and antipathy is the third and last pair of opposite primary emotions. As discussed above, it travels in company with the preceding pair, happiness and sadness – and either the left hand member of each pair, or the right hand member of each pair, often go together – according to the outcome.

If it is the outcome we want, then (mainly when a human agency is perceived to have brought about the happiness) we experience propathy as well as happiness. If it is the outcome we don't want, then (often even in the absence of any perception that a human agency was involved) we experience antipathy as well as sadness. Again, the opposite member of each pair has not actually disappeared, but may not be affecting us very much for the time being.

You may have noticed that the text under this heading is almost identical to that under the previous heading. That simply reflects the reality. When considering happiness and sadness, propathy and antipathy are also involved. And when considering propathy and antipathy, happiness and sadness are also involved.

Happiness and Propathy

As you can see, happiness and propathy are vertically oriented on the chart – instead of horizontally, like the previous three

pairs. A possible description of the lower left hand side of the Wanterfall chart, where happiness and propathy are found, would be "happiness, sometimes with propathy added; plus the ghosts of fear and hope, waiting in the wings, ready to pounce again at any time".

This corner of the Wanterfall chart has to do with getting what you want, not getting what you don't want, losing what you wanted to lose or not getting back what you hoped would stay lost. All of this is the same thing, as far as the emotions are concerned, and it is generally referred to as a *gain*. It could be the gain of something wanted, or the loss of something unwanted – but either way, we usually think of it as a gain.

Most of us don't have much difficulty coping with this part of the chart, indeed we like most aspects of it better than anything else that we know. We certainly like getting what we want. And when we direct propathy at another person, it is because we are happy, credit them with at least part of the cause of that happiness, and therefore feel pleased with them.

When another person directs propathy at us, we bask happily in those warm, fuzzy rays, because it feels good. However, the conditional nature of every part of the Wanterfall, and the gratitude (see below) often associated with this corner of it, are usually lurking somewhere nearby. There is nothing on the Wanterfall chart which is not capable of causing mischief – depending entirely on the *conditions*.

Sadness and Antipathy

Still vertically oriented, we now find sadness and antipathy at the bottom right hand side of the Wanterfall chart. In this case, perhaps the best description would be "sadness, usually with antipathy added; plus the ghosts of hope and fear, waiting in the wings, ready to pounce again at any time".

This corner of the Wanterfall chart has to do with not getting what you want, getting what you don't want, losing what you wanted to keep or getting back what you hoped would stay lost. All of this is the same thing, as far as the emotions are concerned, and it is generally called a *loss*. Even if it is the gain of something unwanted, we usually think of it as a loss.

There are some special names for particular examples of loss or the response to it. When we consider a loss important, we call it a great loss or a terrible loss, and we call the response to it *grief*. If the loss is the death of a loved one, we call the loss a *bereavement*, while still calling the response to it grief.

On the other hand, if a loss is not considered very significant, the response might be called being upset, feeling sad or feeling distressed. And if the response to a minor loss seems excessive to the observer, it might be called self-pity – which carries the implication that the person should stop making a fuss, get used to it, get over it, be strong, forget about it and so on.¹

Although grief in response to loss is a simple concept, the actual experience is quite complex. This is discussed more fully under The Healing of Emotions. However, I will include a brief outline of it here. Firstly, while happiness and propathy usually follow immediately upon getting what you *do* want, there is often a significant delay before sadness and antipathy occur, after getting what you *don't* want.

Especially when the distress is overwhelming, as in the death of a loved one, or a serious personal injury or illness, it may not "sink in" for some time. This is variously referred to as

¹ As we will see in Section 4, there is always a reason for an apparently excessive response, and being told to be strong and forget it is not helpful.

denial, shock or numbness, and it causes a postponement of the more obvious aspects of grieving.

During the transition to an acceptance that the loss is real, two other things may occur. The first is searching for an alternative explanation (or sometimes, physically searching for a person who has died). The second is a sort of virtual bargaining – trying to make a deal, mentally, with any power the bereaved person considers might possibly exist.

When the reality of the loss is no longer in doubt, which may be intermittent at first, the sadness and antipathy shown on the Wenterfall chart take centre stage – sometimes gradually and sometimes suddenly. Often, antipathy is more evident at first, and sadness is more evident when the antipathy begins to subside. However, this varies, and the two may occur together, or in the opposite order. They may also *recur* at random, and at anniversaries – sometimes for many years.

Incidentally, the above sketch of the basic phenomena active in grief did not include the most important factor – the person who is grieving. Personal resources and prior experience have a number of very important effects on the grieving process. However, the purpose of these brief notes is simply to put sadness and antipathy in context. A fuller discussion of grief will be found under The Healing of Emotions (Section 4).

SUPPRESSED EMOTIONS

Emotions are often difficult to discuss, or even to think clearly about, because most of us, to varying degrees, have been taught in early childhood to be quiet about them, to be ashamed of them, or both. Many of us have also learned by bitter experience that it is best to hide our feelings from relatives, friends and colleagues, lest they be used as weapons to hurt us. And all of us have at least noticed that we prefer some emotions to others.

For these reasons, we often try to ignore some or all of our emotions – or, failing that, to control them. If this also fails, we generally "push them to the back of the mind". This is called *suppression*. It can be, or become, unconscious, in which case it is called *repression*.

When either suppression or repression prevents the normal *expression* of one or more emotions, effectively keeping them imprisoned in the subconscious or unconscious mind, they are sometimes loosely described as "blocked" or "bottled up".

When emotions are thus imprisoned, it is sometimes suggested that they may become "distorted" in a way which makes their effects even worse than they were originally. This idea goes back at least as far as William Shakespeare¹, but probably much further. It is also found in many types of psychotherapy.

A rather fanciful analogy could be made with the way in which any hollow part of the human body tends to become infected if what it contains is bottled up by an obstruction. This often

¹ Give sorrow words: the grief that does not speak
Whispers the o'er-fraught heart and bids it break.

– Malcolm, in Macbeth, IV, iii.

leads to an abscess, which may prove dangerous if it ruptures internally. On the other hand, healing usually follows external drainage, whether spontaneous or surgical. Sometimes, infection which has already spread to adjacent tissue, or perhaps further afield, may also need treatment.

In the terms of this analogy, bottled up emotions might be thought of as forming an emotional abscess. If not drained externally by emotional expression, this abscess might be a danger to its owner, through its adverse influence on the mind as a whole. But whether or not there is any truth in this idea, it is interesting to consider the possible effects of inadequate expression of the six primary emotions discussed above.¹

If *hope* were strongly suppressed, the usual balance of hope and fear might lean towards pessimism and despair. Also, if it were not possible to hope to emulate another person's good fortune, the alternatives of jealousy and envy, perhaps with an urge to destroy what one cannot hope to have, might come to the fore.

If *fear* were strongly suppressed, appropriate caution might also go missing, with potentially dangerous results. If a specific fear were suppressed, a general sense of free-floating apprehension might remain, and might be felt as anxiety. Alternatively, one could imagine that fear which is very much bottled up might also manifest as a phobia.

If *happiness* were strongly suppressed, the result might be "killjoy" or "wet blanket" behaviour, which makes life less pleasant for all involved. A "poor me" approach to life could

¹ These and many other ideas are derived from the work of Martha Barham, PhD (see footnote to Original under What This Book is Not).

also develop, perhaps even precipitating or exacerbating a depressive episode in a susceptible person.

If *sadness* were strongly suppressed it might prevent normal grieving, leading to pathological grief. It is conceivable that sadness which is bottled up for a long time might also make some contribution to a depressive disorder in susceptible individuals.

If *propathy* were strongly suppressed, it might result in a cold and uninvolved personality, making affectionate relationships difficult or impossible. This, however, should not be confused with a reduced susceptibility to propathy consequent upon an understanding of its conditional nature.

If *antipathy* were strongly suppressed, it might interfere with normal grieving in a similar way to the suppression of sadness, again leading to pathological grief. It is also conceivable that antipathy which is bottled up for a long time might find an expression as judgmental behaviour or even cruelty. And if it were blended with suppressed fear, and the mixture then incubated, the result could perhaps be hatred.

Finally, if feelings in general are so overwhelming that they are all pushed out of consciousness together, we might be left with *apathy*. This word shares one parent with both propathy and antipathy, which by derivation suggest "for" feelings and "against" feelings – whereas the derivation of apathy suggests an absence of feelings (which is indeed one of its meanings).

However, when used in this sense, apathy really points to a lack of any *apparent* feelings – as well as, usually, a lack of any *apparent* interest in the outcomes that might influence feelings. Apathy is a mask that can hide considerable emotional pain. Sometimes, the pain has been driven into hiding precisely because it is so great – too great to bear.

COMPOUND EMOTIONS

Many emotions fit quite well under one of the primary emotion umbrellas. Examples were given as each primary emotion was defined under The Six Primary Emotions. Often, however, the sense of more than one primary emotion is included in a single word. I will discuss some examples of this here.

You may notice a new element under this heading, in that thought, and particularly belief, sometimes plays a part in the generation of an emotion – as, for example, with guilt and shame, both of which are discussed below. This does not mean that wanting has gone missing. It is just getting a helping hand from one or more thoughts or beliefs. (Belief is discussed at some length under Conditioning in Section 3.)

In the case of two closely related compound emotions discussed below, stress and burnout, physical exhaustion and/or illness also play an obvious part. The interaction of thought, emotion and physical health, however, is not limited to these examples.

Grief and guilt will be discussed at much greater length than the other compound emotions – though the discussion of grief is saved until later in the book. This is partly because of their great importance as causes of emotional suffering. But it is also true that everything said about the cause and cure of grief or guilt, can equally well be applied to any other painful emotion.

Grief

I have put the heading "Grief" here simply because Compound Emotions would not be complete without it. However, a heading is all it is going to be – grief will be discussed in detail under The Healing of Emotions in Section 4. Although that section applies to all painful emotions, grief is the example that

I will use. This is not only because of its importance in its own right, but also because grief includes most painful emotions.

Anxiety

In everyday speech, the word "anxiety" usually refers to this compound emotion, which is a distressing, apprehensive feeling, mainly consisting of fear and hope about a future which seems uncertain and threatening. The fear is often, but not always, somewhat more evident than the hope. The distinctions between anxiety, anxiety disorders and the physiological and physical concomitants of anxiety are very important (see the footnote under Hope and Fear) but they are outside the scope of this book.

Many everyday situations are accompanied by anxiety, which is generally accepted as an unpleasant, but bearable, part of "normal" life. Examples of the infinitely variable situations which may cause anxiety include facing a new challenge, knowing that you will soon learn about a significant gain or loss, and living with conflict. The last of these is discussed in some detail under The Ramifications of Emotions in Section 3.

The fear underpinning anxiety often has no clear object. In other words, the thing feared is often vague and ill-defined. Indeed, in the case of generalised "free-floating" anxiety, the thing feared may be completely unknown. In other cases, the thing feared may be perfectly well defined, but the timing or degree of the threat may be ill-defined.

Gratitude

Gratitude includes friendly feelings like approval, goodwill, warmth and affection, all of which are found within *propathy*. However, there is usually also a sense of obligation. And the latter tends to cause, to a variable degree, feelings like

resentment, antagonism and aversion, or even outright malice, all of which are found within *antipathy*.

In some cases there may also be some *sadness* about having to rely on the largesse of another person. There could also be some *fear* about a possible inability to fulfil the perceived obligation – which could then cause a feeling of *shame* (discussed below).

So gratitude, an apparently straightforward response to receiving a kindness, turns out to be a bit of a minefield. It is not only a compound emotion – it is quite a complex one. It may only take a few paragraphs to describe it, but it can take a fair bit of unravelling if it crops up in your Wanterfall work.

Guilt

In jurisprudence, to be guilty simply means to be the perpetrator of a crime. However, in its psychological sense, guilt is a compound emotion – and one of the most powerful known to man. Unfortunately, although it can sometimes lead to beneficial changes in behaviour, the power of this emotion is usually either mainly or entirely destructive.

Whereas fear can be a terrible enemy in some situations, but a helpful reminder of danger in others, guilt seems to act as an enemy in most cases – and a true friend in none. In my opinion, it is one of mankind's greatest enemies. For this reason, I will talk about guilt at some length. It has two main components, and I will look at each in turn.

The first main component of guilt is *disapproval of self*, often extending to outright anger at self, or even hatred of self. This can alternatively be called *self-condemnation*. Often, it is clearly related to one or more known acts, which are perceived as reprehensible by the person involved (and perhaps, but not necessarily, by one or more other people). At other times, the

memory of the acts involved may be suppressed or repressed to such an extent that the guilty feeling is not consciously related to any cause at all.

The second main component of guilt is *fear of consequences* if the reprehensible acts (whether or not consciously remembered) are discovered by others. This fear of consequences may be felt as a background anxiety in some cases, but it may be acute and severe in other cases.

So we can make quite a simple summary, for one of mankind's worst enemies: *self-condemnation and fear of consequences*. However, simplicity has nothing to do with significance. World War 3 is a pretty simple concept, after all. So let's look at the *adverse effects* of guilt, which make it such a terrible destroyer of human beings – including many cases of collateral damage.

There are two adverse effects caused by the self-condemnation component. The first is a failure of any sense of inner wellbeing. Without noticing it very often, people in reasonable emotional health experience friendly feelings directed towards the self, which are present by default and create a sort of background feeling that life is OK. But self-condemnation locks out this background of self-generated warmth, leaving the sufferer feeling cold and friendless – all the time.

The second adverse effect of self-condemnation is an external analogue of the first, influencing specific aspects of everyday life. It effectively puts a damper on any *happiness* which might show signs of being available. The sufferer's mind does this by ruling, either at a subconscious or conscious level, that happiness is simply not deserved. The same usually applies to *hope*. Not deserved – take it away. No jury is involved in this process. The inner judge sits alone – and knows no mercy.

Next, there is one adverse effect caused by the fear of consequences component. This fear often locks out any help

that might be available. In other words, it prevents the person from sharing the matter with any other person (which could be the first step towards healing) or from seeking professional help (which could be lifesaving). Only a truly fiendish malady prevents its own cure. And, in this way, guilt does exactly that.

Sometimes, one more factor may be present, to a varying degree, as a secondary result of the main factors. That factor is *sadness* – a perfectly logical sadness, about the loss of the previous, and much happier, state of mind.

Now, if you check the emotions mentioned under the present heading, you will see that the unpleasant side of the Wanterfall chart (fear, sadness and antipathy) is fully represented in guilt – with the antipathy directed inwards. While the other side (hope, happiness and propathy) gets stamped out if it so much as emits a feeble glow. Also, as mentioned, external help is usually locked out by the fear of external condemnation and punishment. So the suffering caused by guilt is not only severe – it is usually also prolonged.

If that were all that guilt could offer, it would already be much too much. However, in some cases, the punishment already described still does not satisfy the inner judge. Self harm of a physical nature may also be part of the sentence handed down. This may extend to suicide, especially after an entirely understandable, but equally misguided, attempt to ease the pain of guilt with alcohol, tranquillisers, other drugs, other high risk activities – or all of the above.

The reason that drugs, including alcohol, can increase the risk of suicide is simple. Many drugs, whether prescribed or not, tend to sedate the last remaining vestiges of common sense and/or inhibitions – leaving the sufferer completely at the mercy of that virtual (and virtually merciless) inner judge.

Do you think I have painted guilt in excessively dark and dramatic tones? Far from it. Unfortunately for many people, and their loved ones, the description of guilt given above is really rather tame, and completely fails to do justice to this powerful and cruel enemy – the cause of broken hearts, broken families and broken lives beyond counting.

No, I have not done guilt justice. However, I think I have provided a glimpse of the main elements from which it is constructed. And importantly, that glimpse shows that guilt is, in essence, no different from any other emotional pain. That, in turn, means that it can be healed by the same process that can heal grief – as discussed under *The Healing of Emotions*.

There is an important caveat here – guilt does not always travel alone. It can be one of the symptoms of various mental illnesses – especially depressive disorders and schizophrenia. When that is the case, the primary need is for treatment of the underlying condition. Emotional pain responds to the healing of emotions – but mental illness requires expert diagnosis and optimal medical treatment.

Before leaving guilt behind (highly recommended) I would like to say a bit about its prevention. I will follow the usual approach to the control of an infectious disease, because I think that approach suits guilt rather well.

The first step in preventing infectious diseases is *avoidance*. We try to avoid direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent to a susceptible person, by following various infection control practices. Some of these are universal, and others are tailored to the particular type of infection involved.

As soon as a safe vaccine is available, we also practise *immunisation*. Given optimal use of avoidance measures and, where available, immunisation, *treatment* may rarely be

necessary. But it becomes essential (and, at the population level, is also part of future prevention) if the other methods fail.

So let's apply this approach to guilt. Firstly, *avoid carriers of judgmental attitudes* – because judgmental attitudes are the main infectious agents in guilt. In this case, avoidance requires limiting communication as well as keeping your distance. Also, do not contribute to judgmental conversation yourself. Judgmental attitudes *cannot be aimed* – they scatter in all directions. That includes the direction of the perpetrator.

Secondly, *disinfect known carriers by applying forgiveness*. If nothing else, the practice will come in handy – you never know when you might need to forgive yourself. In any case, forgiveness, like judgmental attitudes, cannot be aimed. So when applying forgiveness, you will inevitably be hit by your own "friendly fire" – which, for once, will actually be friendly.

I expect I could go on in this vein, but I want to move on to immunisation. Is there a safe and effective vaccine available for the prevention of guilt? Well, not exactly. However, in my opinion, the practice of constant, non-judgmental self-awareness (the first pillar of Wanterfall work) confers partial immunity to guilt as one of its many beneficial side effects.

Learning to be non-judgmental as you notice your own thoughts and feelings is very good practice for avoiding the fundamental error of co-operating with guilt through self-condemnation. Such failure to co-operate will often prevent guilt from taking root. Guilt relies so heavily on a judgmental attitude that it simply cannot survive without it. So a non-judgmental approach to life provides considerable protection.

EEEEEs work, employed in its role as part of the second pillar of Wanterfall work, can further strengthen this protection, by cleaning out any pre-existing pockets of guilt discovered along the way. These might otherwise act as fertile soil for new guilt

to thrive in. Also, each time you notice that guilt is not only dangerous, but also optional, the immunity will grow stronger. And if, just once, you see that guilt is virtual and not real, you will never be able to take it completely seriously, ever again.

EEEEEs work in the *absence* of Wanterfall work is, of course, not part of individual prevention, it is treatment¹ for something which was *not* prevented. However, treatment of individual cases is an essential part of prevention at a population level – because it helps to prevent further spread of the infection.

Shame

We've just finished with guilt – and now along comes shame. But there is some good news – because of the fairly close relationship that shame bears to guilt, I will not have so much to say this time. If you understand guilt, you can understand shame quite easily. And most of my ideas about prevention and treatment are similar, too.

There are three main components to the feeling of shame. The *belief* (which may or may not be correct) that others know, or will discover, something reprehensible about you and will therefore disapprove of you. The *agreement* that this disapproval is appropriate. And the *choice* (usually not conscious) to co-operate with them in causing yourself pain through self-condemnation.

As with guilt, memory of a past shame may be suppressed or repressed to the extent that the feeling of shame is not consciously attached to anything specific. Also as with guilt,

¹ I am referring here to treatment of emotional distress only. As discussed under Cautions, More Cautions, and in various other places, nothing described in this book is advised as treatment for physical or mental illness.

there may be *sadness* about the loss of the previous state of mind, and an artificial barrier may be erected against self-directed *propathy* or incidental *happiness*.

Fear of discovery is not usually a major element. Often, discovery has already occurred. Alternatively, it may be thought to have occurred. Sometimes, it may just be considered likely to occur. But if there is a significant fear of discovery and its consequences, the feeling is probably closer to guilt than shame. Alternatively, guilt and shame may be coexisting.

The underlying issue with shame is something which is thought worthy of disapproval, but it is often not a bad or criminal act (which is often the trigger for guilt). In fact, shame is often felt about no act at all – just something that one *is*. But, in both guilt and shame, self-condemnation is the engine that drives the pain. Without this engine, there can be neither guilt nor shame.

A young girl might feel shame because she has painted her toenails the "wrong" colour, or perhaps because her friends have heard her parents arguing. A truck driver might feel shame because he or she made bad time between two towns. A cook might feel shame because the food tastes bad. Anything that people might disapprove of will do. It need not be extreme. (And it need not be suffered – like guilt, it is entirely optional.)

Stress

Stress is a term which is used frequently, but is not always very clearly defined. It often appears in occupational contexts like law enforcement, intensive care, palliative care and disaster relief work; but there is stress in every workplace. It can also be found in the home – or anywhere, for that matter.

The word itself gives the impression that some sort of force is being applied. We know that anything will break if the force applied to it exceeds its strength, so the implication is pretty

clear that, if stress gets bad enough, something will give. Before that point, we might suffer, but not actually "break".

We also struggle against various forces when we exercise, and under the right conditions this can be very beneficial. A somewhat analogous phenomenon occurs when we study, and become better educated as a result. The term "eustress" (meaning good stress) is sometimes applied to stress that seems to be beneficial.

The opposite of eustress is sometimes given as "distress". However, this term is so broad as to cover virtually anything unpleasant, including physical problems like shortness of breath or a sore foot, so it cannot be assumed to mean a deleterious dose of stress unless this is specified. In some cases, of course, the context will make it clear.

Anyway, the general idea is that the victim of stress is being expected to struggle against, or through, some thing or things which can usually be tolerated up to a point, but are likely to prove harmful or even disastrous if that point is passed.

Overwork is often a major element in stress, especially long hours of mentally taxing work. Constant tiredness, no time to resolve everyday emotions or engage in recreational activities, and an ever-increasing mountain of pending matters, all move the pointer from eustress towards distress.

Feeling anxious is almost always part of the equation. In some cases, so is feeling depressed (discussed below). Conflict, which is discussed under The Ramifications of Emotions, is a particularly potent stressor – especially when it includes a "double bind"¹. In the case of work related stress, grief might

¹ A double bind means two requirements which are mutually exclusive or incompatible, creating an unresolvable dilemma.

enter the picture if a promotion is missed, especially if a colleague has (hopefully only metaphorically) knifed you in the back. Grievs outside the workplace, such as a bereavement or the end of a relationship, can be the last straw when stress is already considerable.

All of this means that stress has intellectual, physical and social dimensions, as well as its complex emotional component. It certainly sounds pretty dire – but that does not make the situation hopeless. Firstly, the emotional component can be approached as discussed in Section 4. Resolution of emotional distress will usually have indirect beneficial effects on the physical, intellectual and social aspects of the situation as well.

However, effective stress management also requires attention to the factors causing and maintaining the stress, and these aspects are not covered in Section 4. I will comment briefly on them under the present heading, but the three main prerequisites for that task are outside the scope of this book.

Those three prerequisites are communication skills, problem solving techniques and optimal physical health. Although none of these issues are covered in *Wanterfall*, the first two will be looked at in forthcoming publications from wanterfall.com.¹

There are also various practical issues that can be helpful along the way. When stress occurs in the workplace, for example, an experienced administrator or negotiator, who is neither involved in the situation nor associated with any adversaries, may be able to provide invaluable advice. A union or professional association may be able to recommend such a person, or alternatively may assist you directly.

¹ Notes on Communication, and A Few Self-Help Techniques – both free e-booklets (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

Understanding your job description, and having a general idea of the legal requirements that exist, is essential prior to commencing any specific negotiations. It is also important to enlist all the help, both in terms of influence and emotional support, which is available to you. This might include work colleagues, though some care is necessary with them, as they could conceivably have one eye on your job.

The excessive workload will certainly need to be moderated as soon as possible. When the usual delegation process is exhausted, your supporters (if any) may help by taking on some of your work. Beyond that, it will be a matter of deferring where possible, and cutting corners wherever it is safe to do so.

So stress is an interesting mixture (OK, a horrible mixture) of emotional distress and just about every other aspect of human experience. When it is mild, it may not matter too much. It may even make you stronger. But when it is severe, it can be overwhelming. Indeed, it is far from unknown for the overall solution to stress at work to include a new job. Sometimes it includes a new life partner, as well.

Such major changes often bring with them further large doses of stress – and often grief, too. All of this can be lived through, if you work hard on all the different components of the various problems, and take the actions which seem necessary at the time. This is not easy, but it is possible. However, as usual, I don't expect anyone to believe that in advance.

Burnout

Burnout is the disabled state which results when severe stress exceeds the capacity of the individual to tolerate it. Such a person may remain in the workforce, in which case they often do more harm than good. Alternatively, they may be on stress leave (perhaps compulsory) or on sick leave. Or they may

simply leave their job (voluntarily or otherwise). Family and social life will usually be severely affected.

From the employer's perspective, burnout is a waste of a good employee – one with knowledge, skills and experience which may have been developed over years or decades. This should make the employer very co-operative with the work-related aspects of treatment. However, that does not always occur.

From the employee's point of view, burnout is usually a physical, emotional, social and economic disaster, which may take months or years to recover from. When treatment is not optimal, recovery will be further delayed. At worst, lifelong disability could result.

This need not be the case. Although early treatment would have been preferable, late treatment is quite possible. Because burnout is the terminal phase of stress, its treatment is basically the same as the treatment of stress – as described under the previous heading. However, the doses – especially the dose of EEEEs work – may need to be increased.

Feeling Depressed

I say *feeling* depressed, rather than *being* depressed, to distinguish this compound emotion from clinically significant depressive disorders. This is an easy distinction to make in words, but in practice it often requires medical assessment. (The features of depressive disorders are outside my current scope, but they are discussed briefly in another publication.¹)

¹ An Introduction to Mental Illness, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

Anyway, when we feel depressed in the emotional sense, we are usually somewhere on the right hand side of the Wanterfall. We feel sad, perhaps irritable or angry, and perhaps vaguely guilty; we don't seem to be able to enjoy life very much; and we feel pessimistic about the possibility of improvement.

If the cause is mainly or entirely emotional, it is likely to be helped by the Emotional EEEEs approach, which is described under The Healing of Emotions. Of course, many other methods of treating emotional distress also exist. A few of these are discussed in another booklet currently in preparation.¹

However, if the depressed feeling lasts for days on end, or if it is getting worse rather than better, or if it is very severe, then perhaps it is not just a matter of emotional distress. Perhaps it is a clinically significant depressive disorder – in which case it needs medical assessment and treatment. And if there are any thoughts of suicide, medical assessment is always urgent.²

But what if you just don't know whether feeling depressed is due to emotions, or an illness? What can be done then? *When in doubt, seek medical advice.* This applies in many situations, of course, but it is particularly important when feeling persistently depressed. The distinction between emotional distress and serious depressive illness can be almost impossible

¹ A Few Self-Help Techniques, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² This is not to say that every thought about suicide leads to suicide. However, suicidal ideas are often a feature of severe depression, and they are not infrequently the precursor of attempted or completed suicide. They must always be taken seriously – even if the person has "cried wolf" before.

for the sufferer or their friends to make – but it can always be clarified by a thorough assessment by a good doctor.¹

Other Emotions

In general, I find that all of the words used to describe emotions can either be placed in the general territory of one of the primary emotions already discussed, or else they can be derived from two or more of those primary emotions. This sometimes requires a bit of approximation, though, as neither language nor people are entirely regular in their behaviour.

Here are a few examples of words with emotional connotations: yearning, grievance, heartache, wretchedness. Can you decide which primary emotions are involved? You might also like to start your own collection of words with emotional connotations, as you encounter them from time to time – and then decide which of the primary emotions they are derived from, or contained within.

¹ If you do not know a good doctor, recommendations from family, friends or neighbours, sometimes followed by trying again until you are satisfied, is one way to find one. Local consumer organisations may also have some information. Officially, the staff of community centres will tell you that they cannot comment. Off the record, they sometimes give invaluable hints.

SECTION 3

THE RAMIFICATIONS OF EMOTIONS

Not all the effects of emotions are immediate and direct. In this section, I want to look at some delayed and indirect effects. These phenomena involve thoughts as well as emotions, but it is the emotions that give them their very considerable power.

The things discussed in this section need to be understood before we study the healing of emotional pain, in Section 4. Otherwise, they could interfere with both the understanding and the use of the techniques described there. They are also capable of causing a great deal of suffering in their own right.

The four problems discussed in this section are *conditioning*, *conflict*, *duality* and *subjective time*. Rather than defining these terms here, I will define each one as it is introduced. These four topics go to the very heart of human suffering, and make their presence most unpleasantly felt in every aspect of the life of the individual and of society itself.

There is no single solution to these problems, but I think they have a reciprocal relationship with Wanterfall work. By this, I mean that an understanding of these problems can improve the quality of Wanterfall work, and Wanterfall work can improve the understanding of these problems. This is potentially very helpful, because understanding these problems is usually only a short step away from being free of their adverse effects.

CONDITIONING

By the time they reach adulthood, most people have developed their own style of responding to life's various challenges – and have also acquired quite a number of individual beliefs and attitudes. Different people develop different responses, beliefs and attitudes, so that no two personalities are identical.

The reasons for these differences are presumably multifactorial. However, they can be divided into two broad groups of influences, often referred to as "nature" and "nurture". The "nature" element, which refers to influences already determined, though not necessarily active, at birth, is outside the scope of this book. However, that is no reflection on its potential significance. The "nurture" element, as we shall see, includes the "conditioning" which is our current topic.

Overview

The word "conditioning" has more than one meaning, but the different meanings share a number of common factors. I will look briefly at a number of these meanings, partly to avoid confusion, and partly to demonstrate similarities. As we will see, the common factors are *external action*, *resultant change* and *significant persistence*.

I will work through these various meanings, towards the conditioning of the human mind which is the first "ramification of emotions" in this section. I could simply start with a definition of the latter, but I think an understanding of every sort of conditioning makes it easier to see how the mind itself becomes conditioned – and how important that phenomenon is.

Conditioning an *athlete*, or for that matter a *racehorse*, means providing the best possible training, so that the condition of the subject is improved – with the improvement lasting at least long enough to benefit performance in a forthcoming race.

Conditioning *hair* or *skin* – usually by applying expensive cosmetics – also implies an improvement with at least some degree of persistence. However, while the familiar examples just mentioned have an improvement as their intended change, some uses of conditioning include change in either direction.

Conditioning a *reflex* – which is also referred to as *classical* or *Pavlovian*¹ conditioning – means repeatedly applying some stimulus at about the time of a natural physiological event, until the applied stimulus itself can trigger that physiological event. I will digress a little here, because classical conditioning is a very interesting analogue of conditioning of the mind.

The discovery that reflexes could be "conditioned"² had a profound influence on contemporary experiments in the field of human behaviour. Even a simple reflex (like salivation in response to the presence of food) involves a number of physiological and biochemical steps. If these steps could be modified by deliberate interventions, perhaps more complex behaviours could be trained in an analogous fashion.

An associated discovery, that previously conditioned reflexes could later be *extinguished* by frequent artificial stimulation in the absence of the natural stimulus, seemed even more promising. This discovery in fact formed the basis of early behavioural therapies such as desensitisation therapy.

¹ Ivan Petrovich Pavlov, a Russian medical scientist, was awarded a Nobel Prize in 1904 for demonstrating that natural reflexes in the digestive system of dogs could be trained to respond to artificial stimuli.

² Pavlov actually called them *conditional* reflexes, but it was mistranslated into English as *conditioned*. The verb "to condition" a reflex is derived from that mistranslation, and the whole world has become conditioned to using it!

Operant conditioning, a more ambitious form of behaviour modification inspired by Pavlov's work, encouraged desired behaviours by means of both positive and negative reinforcement, i.e. reward and punishment – the former being some sort of pleasure, and the latter something unpleasant or painful. Though its role in therapy is limited, operant conditioning clearly demonstrates that *behaviour can be influenced by the consequences that follow it*.

Perhaps the enthusiastic adoption of Pavlovian principles by the advertising industry the world over has led to the best demonstration of their significance. Anything that can make a high proportion of the population feel warm, happy, safe or sexy upon encountering the name, logo or other images of whatever products an industry wishes them to buy at the time, surely needs to be taken seriously.

As almost all industries wish us to buy almost all products at almost all times, the effect of advertising is inevitably somewhat diluted. It is still significant, though. And it is not limited to marketing. The last politician you voted for, or whether you approved of this or that war or power plant, was probably also the subject of expensive advertising expertise. While you were making your carefully considered, completely independent decision, the influence experts were – helping you.

Indeed, there would seem to be no end to the ways in which sophisticated derivatives of simple Pavlovian conditioning can be employed to influence the minds of individuals – or even the behaviour of whole populations. And there is no reason to assume that every case is deliberate – many instances of influence might occur by chance.

Such a broad spectrum of possible influence suggests a very broad definition for conditioning affecting the mind – which is, of course, our current topic. The broadest possible definition might be *every residue of the past which influences a person's*

being and behaviour in the present, or plans and expectations for the future. However, I think that would be a bit too broad.

It would include things like factual memory and cognitive development – which probably do have indirect influences on personality and behaviour. However, I think *beliefs, stored emotions* and *attitudes* are the main things that keep past mental influences alive over time.

Therefore, a more practical definition of conditioning as it affects the human mind might be *the residual effects of all past influences on a person's beliefs, stored emotions, attitudes and consequent reactions.* I am sure that definition is not perfect, either, but I think it will do for our current purpose.

If such residual effects were created deliberately, it would be called *brainwashing*. Brainwashing is generally defined as the deliberate modification of beliefs and attitudes by the application of psychological pressure, often aided by physical discomfort or exhaustion (and occasionally by torture). What a good thing it is, that children are not subjected to such pressures while they are growing and developing!

Or are they? In one way or another, reward and punishment are never very far removed from the behaviour of a child. I am not referring to severe corporal punishment here – though that is not unknown. A smile, a frown, or more subtle instances of non-verbal communication, can easily reward or punish. This is especially so for a young child, whose very survival may appear to depend on the actions of the parents.

If you think back a few pages, you may remember reading about the effects of reward or punishment, when applied following a given behaviour. That was the paragraph about operant conditioning. And as you can see, a great deal of the upbringing received by many children fits that model perfectly.

Combine operant conditioning with saturation exposure of the young mind to the beliefs and attitudes of the parents and other family members, and what do you get? You get the beginnings of *conditioning* of the child's mind – for some of the influences are sure to persist, and to affect the child's beliefs, stored emotions, attitudes and consequent reactions in the future.

Throughout a child's life at home, these things will be further reinforced. Should the child voice a belief, or exhibit an attitude, which is acceptable to senior family members, some sort of reward will often follow. It is usually not a material reward, indeed it is more likely to be something very subtle, perhaps a slight change of expression. But the child will notice.

On the other hand, if beliefs held by the senior family members are questioned, or if opposing ideas are stated or implied, a subtle punishment may follow. The same applies to other behaviours. Occasionally, the punishment is harsh rather than subtle – but, either way, the responses are likely to *reinforce* the existing conditioning.

Now, I am not suggesting that parents are brainwashing their children – nor that they are knowingly unkind to them in any other way. On the contrary, I think the vast majority of parents have the child's best interests always in mind. However, as my psychodrama teacher used to say (very often) "Parents do the best they can – they just don't always do the best".

The sum total of the cumulative conditioning of the past might well be looked upon as the *training* which has prepared us for the life we are now living. It probably affects many of our reactions, in all sorts of situations. It is, for example, the reason that other people can "push our buttons" and elicit "knee-jerk responses" – which vary from person to person.

It is probably also responsible for many influences within our minds that we are not aware of at all. However, I think the

most important aspects of conditioning are those which have been introduced above. They will be discussed further under the next three headings, which are Beliefs, Stored Emotions and Attitudes. Laid down in the past, and especially during childhood, all these things still influence our way of living today – as well as our plans and expectations for the future.

Beliefs

A belief is a conviction of the truth of something. I didn't invent that definition – you can find it, or something like it, in any dictionary. Notice that the actual truth of the thing believed did not get a mention. Why? *Because it doesn't have to be true.* You just have to be convinced that it is true. Of course, if the thing believed is false, the believer is making a mistake. But the belief is unaffected – until or unless the believer alters it.

This absence of any connection between belief and truth is very important – and very easily forgotten. If we believe whatever we are told without testing its veracity, we are surely asking for trouble. Most of us probably think we are much more sensible than that. But, if you watch your own mind carefully, I think you will sometimes notice a belief you cannot account for.

Actually, before I removed my Philosophical Musings¹ from this book, I had included a supporting opinion here, from an ancient but well known source. Perhaps I will leave it in.

"Do not believe in anything simply because you've heard it. Do not believe in traditions because they have been handed down for many generations. Do not believe in anything because it is spoken and rumoured by many. Do

¹ Philosophical Musings, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

*not believe in anything simply because it is found written in your religious books. Do not believe in anything merely on the authority of your teachers and elders. But after observation and analysis, when you find anything agrees with reason and is conducive to the good and benefit of one and all, then accept it and live up to it."*¹

I suppose we should add to that list, *do not believe anything simply because Buddha – or, for that matter, Simon – says.*² I guess that makes it fairly comprehensive. It does not, however, bring my remarks about belief to an end. I still have a few more things to say about that sometimes thorny subject.

If a belief is clearly false, but is not shaken by evidence to that effect, it is commonly called a *delusion*. In a person who is not mentally ill, such a delusion might be the result of self-deception, or deception by a third party, or sometimes a combination of the two.

The definition of a delusion used by psychiatrists is similar, but more precise. Here is the American Psychiatric Association's definition of a delusion.

"A false belief based on incorrect inference about external reality that is firmly sustained despite what almost everybody else believes and despite what constitutes incontrovertible and obvious proof or evidence to the contrary. The belief is not one

¹ Buddha, Anguttara Nikaya III, 65.

² Simon Says is a children's game which involves following simple instructions – but only when they are preceded by "Simon says".

ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture (e.g. it is not an article of religious faith)".¹

That definition, or a similar one, is used by doctors whenever delusions are of significance in the diagnosis of an illness. And, as delusions can be an important feature of a number of illnesses, both physical and mental, that is not a particularly unusual situation.

Delusions which are very bizarre, cause significant distress or are multiple, almost always reflect serious illness. But the illness cannot be identified by the type of delusion – as always, the diagnosis must be based on all the symptoms and signs, together with the results of appropriate investigations. However, this does not necessarily suggest a leisurely approach. Some delusions require very urgent assessment.

For example, a young man with a fixed belief that a radio transmitter has been placed in his brain, and that it constantly transmits his thoughts to an archangel, from whom it then relays orders regarding various necessary executions, needs *very* urgent intervention. This young man may well suffer from paranoid schizophrenia², and if treatment is delayed, the archangel's orders might be carried out – to the letter.

But why am I talking about psychiatry? Well, I just want to put delusions and other false beliefs in context. Illnesses account for some delusions – but not all. Delusions, in turn, account for

¹ American Psychiatric Association. Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, fourth edition, text revised. Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2004.

² Schizophrenia and other common mental illnesses are described in An Introduction to Mental Illness, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

some false beliefs – but not all. And that leaves some other false beliefs *unaccounted for*. So what accounts for them?

I think learning accounts for them. Because, just as a belief does not need to be true, to be believed, the things we learn do not need to be true, to be learned. This applies especially (though not exclusively) when we are young, when it may not be easy, or even possible, to confirm veracity before remembering something.

Indeed, we remember many things without trying to. And we start learning very early indeed – probably from soon after birth, or perhaps even before. Some beliefs are probably acquired by a sort of mental osmosis – which could include non-verbal receptivity as well as verbal – while very young.

Religious beliefs are among those often learned very early in life. So are beliefs about the family in relation to other families. And the village, state or nation in relation to other villages, states or nations. If these beliefs are ordinarily accepted by other members of the person's culture or subculture, they will not qualify as delusions, whether they are right or wrong. They will just be cultural and religious beliefs. However, that will not stop them from having very powerful effects.

Of course, some beliefs might arise as the result of careful analysis of all the available evidence, performed by entirely objective individuals who are possessed of scintillating discernment, a complete understanding of logic, and rigorous intellectual honesty. Naturally, they are not influenced by a single preconception. I think many of us harbour the fond hope that our own beliefs have that sort of pedigree.

However, considering the age at which many of them were originally accepted, our beliefs are very unlikely to be as accurate as we might hope. This surely means that *some* of our beliefs *might* be incorrect – and, in some cases, we might not

even realise that we hold them! I hope this is beginning to sound a little disconcerting.

Just in case it is not, here's another thought. What if some of our beliefs were modified deliberately? Surely not – who on earth would do that? Who knows? But we certainly have some words in the language to describe deliberate conditioning, such as *propaganda*, *indoctrination* and *brainwashing*. Not to mention *advertising*, and the closely related *public relations*. So this possibility has evidently occurred to others, too.

Whatever the reason, there may be times when you notice that you hold a belief, and also notice that it is not correct. On some occasions, this may cause *conflict*, which is discussed later. On other occasions, your own preference for reality might prove rapidly fatal to the false belief. However, it is not easy to let go of beliefs, especially those which you have held for a long time. They are a part of you – and they hang on tight.

If you ever find yourself in conflict over a belief which you are beginning to doubt, perhaps the following ideas might help. If something is true, then there is no need to believe it – it will still be true, whether you believe it or not. It is not belief that makes the truth true. Belief has no effect at all on the truth. Nothing has any effect at all on the truth. It just is.

But belief has a very powerful effect on anything which is false – it makes it seem true. Therein lies the terrible danger of belief. *Belief is a tool for making something seem true – whether it is, or not.* And a false belief can mask what really *is* true – perhaps hiding the very truth that the believer is seeking.

Of course, not everyone shares my rather jaundiced views about belief. In fact, as far back as history can probe, we human beings have been busily collecting and disseminating beliefs as though no better thing could possibly be found, or for that matter faked, anywhere in the world.

We have been fed some beliefs from birth. We probably accepted many or all of those. Later in life, some people have been very strongly advised to accept certain beliefs, or else be consigned to eternal torture in an unspeakably evil afterlife. And throughout history, there have been examples of the simple ultimatum – accept our beliefs, or die.

We have also clung to beliefs as defences against our anxieties and fears. We have sometimes developed new beliefs of our own – and later forced them on others. And, perhaps most tragically of all, we have fought "holy" wars – because our beliefs are right, so different ones must definitely be wrong.

People who hold onto their rigid beliefs very strongly, often feel that those beliefs resolve questions about life, which would otherwise be distressing to them. Some beliefs may also partially relieve the fears that most people have about death. Also, very tempting rewards for accepting a set of beliefs are often built into the belief system itself. (If not, they are sometimes added later – by a committee.)

Over a number of generations, almost any belief system can come to be accepted as being necessary to the wellbeing of the individual and society alike. If such a belief system is then threatened – which might only require the existence of something different – the natural tendency is to resist the threat. Because, if the sacred beliefs were found to be incorrect, then all the benefits assumed to flow from them would be lost. Fear of a deep and wide-ranging nature attends this possibility.

Theoretically, a re-examination of the threatened beliefs would be one possible response. More often, however, the actual response is the demonisation of whatever threatens the sacred beliefs. Sometimes, this demonisation has been followed by devastating reactions against the perceived problem, in the form of crusades, inquisitions, jihads, pogroms, genocides, and

countless other atrocities with less dramatic names but equally horrible characteristics.

When such mass crimes are perpetrated, it is often with a tremendous sense of righteousness – and usually without a single drop of mercy. In many cases, the attackers have been followers of great religions which embody ideals such as kindness, forgiveness and respect for all human beings.

Yet those ideals did not prevent a maelstrom of merciless and unspeakable cruelty, driven by – what? Probably, a number of driving forces existed, including fear, hatred and greed. But the essential ingredient, which tipped the scales in favour of such unbelievable cruelty, was neither more nor less than the difference between two beliefs.

Of course, those are examples of belief at its worst – and I think most readers would agree, that the worst of belief is well worth avoiding. But, as you may have guessed, I actually think that all of belief is well worth avoiding. Belief is the enemy of truth, because, far from enshrining the truth, it enshrines something which may be either true or false, but is henceforth required to be true.

In my opinion, that makes belief the best defence *against* truth that has ever been invented – as well as one of the most potent reasons, apparently, for killing people. So, if you ever ponder the concept of conditioning as a phenomenon which may account for some at least of what you have become during your lifetime, don't forget to include your learned beliefs, whether true or false, as an important ingredient in the overall picture.

Stored Emotions

Because they often influence us very powerfully, stored emotions are important aspects of our conditioning. Although the origin of these particular emotions lies in the past, emotions

really know no time zone – when they are being experienced, their time of origin is not part of that experience at all.

Many memories have an emotional component, and that component is bound to add its force to whatever other elements are included in the memory. And some memories may be almost entirely emotional. The prospect of relinquishing a belief or an attitude can also give rise to an emotional response – often fear. This means that emotions can, in a sense, protect conditioning, as well as contribute to it.

However, I will not discuss the emotional aspects of conditioning further here, because they are covered in Section 4, under Unfinished Business. They are needed there, and I think they are also best understood there. For now, it is enough to say that both our stored emotions, and our emotional reactions when our beliefs or attitudes are threatened, contribute very considerably to our conditioning.

Attitudes

A mental attitude, which is the only sort of attitude we are concerned with here, is an outlook, a way of viewing something, and is therefore likely to be the product of many influences. Among these influences, beliefs and emotions relating to the "target" of the attitude would almost certainly be the most important, in most cases.

To whatever extent our attitudes are the result of our conditioning, they are potentially influenced by the whole of it – which probably makes them the most complex expressions of conditioning. And because attitudes inevitably play a role in decision making, they can be very powerful in their effects.

It is often possible to discern some attitudes which have a recurring influence and seem to underpin a number of other attitudes. These underlying attitudes are sometimes called *basic*

attitudes, and they appear to be formed quite early in life, either before or during the early primary school years.

It is difficult to assess the exact significance of these attitudes. Nevertheless, it certainly does seem plausible that early conditioning could determine our attitudes to many aspects of life. And we may not even realise we have these attitudes – let alone think of questioning them. In some cases, the beliefs and feelings which underpin them could have been formed non-verbally, and could predate conscious memory.

For example, if a person feels absolutely no sympathy for those who are out of work, or homeless, or poorly clothed, where does this attitude come from? Did the person just work it out on the spot? Did they have to work it out at all? If not, where did it come from? Early childhood learning is certainly a possible source for such an attitude.

For example, a young child could hear, and accept, that people can always find work if they want to. This would make sympathy for the jobless completely redundant, as they clearly choose their state. Or, perhaps, a collection of notions could work together. First, that only "savages" live out in the open. Second, that "savages" are poorly clothed. And third, that "savages" are inferior beings.

The young child would not use the same words that I have used – perhaps not any words – but if the ideas became buried in the child's mind, their influence might remain throughout life. And they might underpin basic attitudes which would horrify many people. They might also horrify the person with those attitudes, if they were seen and understood clearly.

CONFLICT

We have previously seen how a single episode of a strong degree of wanting can cause considerable distress. But in addition to any current Wanterfalls, we all carry a large store of memories about the past and ideas about the future – any or all of which may come with their own Wanterfalls attached.

Now, whatever we want, wish, hope or even politely express a slight preference for, in relation to one of these memories or ideas, is not at all likely to mesh exactly with our preferences regarding all the others! The laws of probability will see to that. In other words, at least some of our desires will be incompatible with each other – whether we like it (which we won't) or not.

We won't always be able to "have our cake and eat it" – even when we feel that is really necessary. If our desires include mutually exclusive imperatives, we cannot possibly satisfy them all – sometimes, we cannot even get a reasonable proportion of what we consider absolutely essential.

The unwinnable mental wrestling match between this desire, that desire and maybe various other desires takes place in the arena of the mind. You could therefore call it mental conflict. However, when the context is clearly psychological, it is usually just called *conflict*.

A very simple example of conflict would be wanting to eat the preferred amounts of favourite foods and also maintain a preferred shape. For many people, these desires are mutually incompatible. Especially if the favourite foods are chocolate and ice cream, and the preferred shape is some variant of thin.

Of course, there is nothing very logical about struggles of this nature. Indeed, conflict is not at all logical. It is a game played by two or more Wanterfalls, after all – and Wanterfalls are surely the most illogical things known to man. But human

beings are notorious for suffering, even when logic does not strictly require it. So conflict remains a very important phenomenon to understand.

And the first requirement, if we are to understand conflict, is to notice its existence. We will not get very far otherwise. This, incidentally, provides a good example of that essential feature of self-awareness previously stressed – it *must* be non-judgmental. Otherwise, we would skip over such a silly thing as conflict very smartly, in order to spare ourselves the discomfort of our own contempt.

We saw under Guilt and Shame that our own condemnation, always ready to pounce when self awareness is judgmental, is not only very painful in its own right, but is also the essential ingredient which allows the disapproval of other people to wreak its cruel havoc.

In the present context, though, an even more important characteristic of self condemnation is that it makes self exploration so painful that it quickly grinds to a halt. So we can only explore our conflicts with dispassionate fascination (recommended) if we practise *non-judgmental* self-awareness.

I offered a deliberately simplistic example of conflict a little earlier. But here is an example which is rather more complex. Imagine that you are employed, and have been offered a promotion. It will bring you more money – something you could use without trying very hard at all. But it will also require Saturday work, and you play sport every Saturday. You don't want to give that up.

Your best friend is next in line for the job in question. You don't want to seem to be elbowing him aside. Especially as his house will be repossessed unless he gets a raise soon, and his wife is very ill. As a matter of fact, you think he deserves the job more than you do, and would do it better, too.

Once, however, he was made captain of a team, when you were the obvious choice. It would certainly balance that ledger a bit. On the other hand, you are currently pursuing a co-worker, and she thinks that your friend should definitely get the job. She even suspects that you have been doing some questionable things to neutralise him.

As a matter of fact, you *have* been doing some questionable things to secure this job. You feel guilty about that. And, as you have always thought guilt rather ridiculous, you feel pretty silly about feeling guilty. But you still feel guilty. And silly.

You have also been offered a job with another company, for even more money – but it might not last more than a year or two. It involves importing products made by child labour. You don't like the idea of child labour – but you also think that, without it, those children, and many of their relatives, would probably starve to death. So perhaps you have nothing against child labour. Or perhaps you do. You can't decide at all.

Basically, you want to be a good friend and earn more money and get even and have a new girlfriend and discourage bad things and encourage good things and play sport on Saturdays and not feel guilty and not feel silly and not get caught and whatever else I've missed.

Some of these things are compatible with each other, but plenty of them are not. Any that seem imperative to you but are mutually incompatible will create a double bind, as discussed under Stress. You can see that no perfect solution is likely – but you keep struggling to solve the problem, anyway.

You almost convince yourself that one course of action is the best overall. Ten minutes later, you realise that you simply cannot take that course. You have quite a few drinks and you think it will be OK in the morning. It isn't. You even wake up at night, going over the possibilities. You lose too much sleep.

Your doctor gives you some sleeping tablets. They work for a while, but the unsolved problem is always there in the morning. After some weeks, you find that the tablets only work if you take two. This makes you suspicious, and you flush the rest of them down the toilet.¹

You still have to make that decision – perhaps more than one decision. After that, you will have to live with the effects of the decisions. And you will also have to decide what, if anything, to do about those effects. Welcome to the world of conflict. As if you hadn't been there before. The world of conflict is, after all, the world most of us live in, a great deal of the time.

Incidentally, although it had a number of potentially emotive elements to it, and rambled on for paragraph after paragraph, that was actually a pretty tame example of conflict. There were no unwanted pregnancies, no unfaithful lovers, no religious taboos or demands, no rapes or murders, no bankruptcies, no wars and no prisoners to torture in the public interest. However, conflict doesn't have to be dramatic, to be painful.

Conflict is certainly not a pleasant thing to notice in one's own mind. But noticing it, and understanding it better and better as time goes on, is the first step towards freedom from it. So, like all the unpleasant phenomena discussed in this book, conflict is an excellent thing to explore during Wanterfall work.²

¹ You had a lucky escape there, as addiction to sleeping tablets is almost as hard to kick as addiction to heroin. You could have gone from conflict to addict in about six more dose increases. You could also have crashed your car, killing whatever number of children can fit into a bus shelter, etc etc.

² Remember that the second pillar of Wanterfall work will not be solid until the whole of this book has been read and digested. It is wobbly until then!

DUALITY

I introduced the concept of duality under *The Origin of Emotions*, but I would like to look at it more closely now. Duality has a number of meanings, and its meaning in the context of eastern philosophy can be a little confusing.

In western terms, duality can mean being split in two (also called dichotomy) or existing in one of two forms (e.g. wave or particle, in nuclear physics) or being interchangeable (e.g. points and planes, in some geometric theorems). In eastern philosophy, duality still implies a division into two – but then various differences in meaning emerge.

The eastern concept of duality is applied to *subjective* things which are divided into *opposite* halves by a thought process which is considered to be *erroneous*. The primary emotions previously discussed are excellent examples of this type of duality. Anything else which we very much want to be one way rather than another, also meets the criteria. Importantly, the division does not result in two discrete entities, but rather a continuum from one extreme to the other.

Value neutral opposites like hot and cold, night and day or large and small are not included, though they are sometimes used to illustrate the concept. But they can also become entangled with duality. For example, whether a diamond is large or small could easily be of subjective significance.

The eastern idea that duality is due to a wrong way of thinking, in other words, that it is an illusion, is the largest difference when compared with the various western meanings of the word. In the eastern concept, the reality is the central point where the opposites not only meet, but merge into one.

The impression of divergence in opposite directions from this point is considered to be an illusion, created by the tendency of most human beings to *want* things to be one way rather than

another. According to this eastern view, the sensible approach is to accept the reality of the current state with equanimity. Importantly, that does *not* mean agreeing *or* disagreeing with it. Nor does it encourage *or* discourage attempting to change it.

If this eastern idea were derived from the world known to the mind in its "normal" state, it would probably be considered rather fanciful. However, the idea that unity is real and duality is an illusion is at least partly drawn from experiences, sometimes but not always occurring during practices such as yoga or meditation, which convince the person of the truth of that idea. Therefore, it could be called experiential rather than fanciful – but certainly not amenable to external proof.

The nameless experience which gives birth to this idea has, as usual, been given various names. However, as I am sure you know by now, I do not recommend attaching labels from the dualistic world to phenomena which are inherently non-dualistic. It does nothing to make the latter more comprehensible – rather the opposite, in fact.

To summarise, eastern duality is certainly a bit of an enigma, but the essence of it is that the continuum between subjective opposites, in the world most of us know best, is apparent rather than real. And the further we travel inward, within the mind, the more everything appears to merge into an unlikely and inexpressible, but nevertheless real, sense of oneness.

Actually, when you look at the Waterfall chart, with its opposite pairs of primary emotions, at least part of this eastern concept of duality looks right back at you. The chart has two opposite sides, and each primary emotion is paired with an opposite primary emotion. So everything on the chart, below wanting itself, is dual. The chart is, in fact, a visual representation of the three most important dualistic pairs.

I will therefore revisit some of what I have previously said about the Wanterfall chart, progressing gradually towards a less simplistic view of duality. As previously discussed, hope does not exist entirely alone on the chart – rather, it exists as the opposite of fear. And fear, in turn, exists as the opposite of hope. That is not to say that they are always evident to the same degree – nor is it to say that only one can exist at a time. Sometimes, one predominates, to a degree which is variable. Sometimes, the other predominates. When they are fairly equally balanced, the main impression is usually anxiety.

I have previously likened these two opposite emotions to the opposite sides of a single coin. I didn't invent that idea, but I do rather like it. Not only does it illustrate the opposite nature of the two emotions, but it also illustrates their close connection. Like the two sides of a coin, these emotions cannot be separated. If you find one, the other is never very far away. A coin is a popular simile, or sometimes metaphor, for anything with opposite halves – in this case, for duality.

Everything further down the Wanterfall shows the same pattern. In a general sense, pleasure and pain (which are each divided into two basic components on the chart) can be seen as the two metaphorical sides of a single pleasure/pain coin. This represents everything downstream of the hope/fear coin.

The pleasure/pain coin is easily changed for the two smaller coins shown on the chart – happiness/sadness and propathy¹/antipathy. They add up to the same value as the larger coin. In turn, these two coins can be exchanged for a larger number of smaller coins, representing various pairs of opposites such as true/false, like/dislike and good/bad. The

¹ Propathy is defined under The Six Primary Emotions.

smaller coins are not exactly trivial, as any duality can engender painful emotions.

Sometimes, a more complex dualistic phenomenon is constructed from a number of mental elements. An important example of this is the *good/bad* duality mentioned previously. This includes judgmental tendencies, discriminatory beliefs and attitudes, and various associated emotions.

As the above paragraph illustrates, emotions and beliefs can get intermingled rather easily. They can also keep each other alive. If an emotion shows signs of succumbing peacefully, a belief or three will probably volunteer to assist in its resurrection. And if a belief is even slightly threatened by an emerging insight, an emotion or three can usually be relied upon to cloak the emperor's nakedness in swathes of righteous wrath.

However, regardless of apparent complexity, any duality you encounter can always be traced back to the original one – hope/fear.¹ So all the downstream dualities have hope/fear as an ancestor. Whereas hope/fear itself has no dualistic antecedents. Hope and fear are the twin offspring of a single parent – wanting. And wanting's offspring create, directly or indirectly, all the suffering dissected in this book.

Now I want to highlight an important aspect of duality which has been mentioned, but not discussed in any detail. Although the name suggests two *separate* things, duality is really a *continuum*. A continuum with a null point at its centre, and projections seeking infinity in opposite directions. Six of the

¹ It could be expressed as wanting this / not wanting the other. However, hope / fear has served us well in the role of the first division of wanting itself, and thus the first duality, so I will continue to use it in that way.

infinite number of points on the continuum from hope to fear could be represented like this:

great hope much hope some hope *neutrality* some fear much fear great fear

The Wanterfall chart does not show this continuum. It has been simplified so much that it only shows the polar extremes, with a space between them. This simplification of the chart makes it more useful as a corkboard – but utterly inadequate as a comprehensive representation of reality. It thus awaits your improvements – to make it better represent your own insights.

Now, that null point of neutrality, at the centre of duality, could be of interest if you ever decide that you would prefer a less dualistic approach to life. Away from the null point, you always experience hope or fear of some degree – perhaps mainly one of them, perhaps both simultaneously as anxiety, or perhaps an alternation between the two. At the null point, however, there might be peace, perhaps freedom, perhaps... "the sound of one hand clapping"¹.

But how on earth could anyone arrange to position themselves at the null point of any duality – let alone the mother of all dualities, hope and fear? And if we could do that, would it be sufficient to change our dualistic habits? Or might we still reach out in both directions, stretching ourselves on the rack of duality – despite being neatly positioned at its centre?

I think it depends on how you look at it. You could say it would be necessary to be at the null point and *also* to remain tranquil. Or you could say that if you are really at the null point, then it automatically means you are not reaching out in

¹ The question "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" is a famous "koan". A koan is an obscure, paradoxical or apparently nonsensical question, popular in Zen Buddhism as a means of encouraging insight.

either direction, so you are already tranquil. Either way, we are clearly looking for a passive sojourn at the null point, if we want to hear (so to speak) the sound of one hand clapping.

But can we do that? We might try to do it, and fail – caught in the grip of duality. We might then try fighting against duality, but all we would achieve by that is to add yet another duality – the duality of "overpowering duality/not overpowering duality". And that will just give us another dose of the sound of two (or more) hands clapping – a sound we know off by heart.

That null point is surely a clue, but apparently it is not the whole answer. And fighting against duality is a natural enough response, but that is not the answer, either. So what can one do? I suggest that freedom from duality is as easy – and as hard – as falling off a log. But not just any log – it is a *sticky* log.

No, I am not joking. We are very strongly attached to duality, it pervades our minds – even if we have tried and failed to fight our way free of it. We are not only balanced on the log of duality, but we are *stuck* to it as well. We may want to let go, so that we can fall off it. But we cannot let go, because we are stuck fast – to the very log that blights our lives.

There may be some exceptions, but in general, duality is not something you can let go of, just by trying. It sticks to you like glue. It masquerades as your friend, but it is a false friend. You can probably see that, but still you remain stuck fast. Why can you – your conscious mind – not let go of something which is clearly seen to be utterly false?

I don't know the answer to that – but, fortunately, it doesn't matter too much. Because there is another part of the mind, which *can* let go of what is false, when it sees clearly enough that it *is* false. And that part of the mind will suffice. What is that part of the mind called? Who knows? Certainly not me.

And *that* matters about as much as the colour of the bucket that carries the water that puts out the fire in the magazine.¹

If you had once seen me pull a rabbit out of my sleeve, you would never again be quite convinced that the rabbit comes out of thin air – even if it seems to. Your conscious mind will do that much for you. But at a much more subtle level, dualities that you are too enthralled by to relinquish consciously, can nevertheless be seen as false by a deeper part of the mind.

There is no need at all to give that part of the mind a name. It is just not fully conscious. It is probably closer to consciousness when practising non-judgmental self-awareness, but that is not important. What is important is, that it seems to *see* more clearly when practising non-judgmental self-awareness. It may also see more clearly during the practice of meditation – something which is closely related to non-judgmental self-awareness, and which I will discuss elsewhere.²

Whatever that part of the mind is, it can certainly be discouraged very easily. The conscious mind can discourage it, with a flicker of disapproval or fear. But, to whatever extent it is able to exert its influence, that part of the mind can weaken the glue that sticks us to the log of duality – from which we may not entirely want to fall, but will never regret falling.

To whatever extent we fall off that sticky log, some degree of freedom from the great illusion which duality is... happens. It happens *to* the conscious mind. The conscious mind will not (usually) jump into an entirely unknown sort of freedom. But it can fall in, if it is not too resistant, and if it is moderately lucky.

¹ I mean a powder magazine – a storehouse for ammunition, gunpowder etc.

² Meditation Demystified, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

The deeper part of the mind sees that there is more than just a rabbit coming out of duality's sleeve – and it is not so easily tricked next time. The conscious mind is accustomed to being tricked in many ways – and probably terrified of the alternative. So, if it falls off the sticky log of the illusion of duality, that will be a gift given by its less conscious colleague.

However, it is rare to receive this gift without preparing the way for it. It is the choice to do Wanterfall work or its equivalent, and the effort you put into doing it, which starts the ball rolling and keeps up its momentum. And you may need to do a great deal of such work, before your enslavement to duality becomes weak enough for the process described above to occur. That is, of course, assuming you are interested at all.

For most people, most of the time, an increasing understanding of the illusion of duality is far more likely than complete freedom from it. Relative freedom, perhaps, may not be so rare. But complete freedom from this grand illusion – the mother of all illusion – would, at the very least, be outside the scope of words, let alone the scope of this book.¹

¹ This subject is revisited in *Philosophical Musings*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

SUBJECTIVE TIME

Subjective time can have various meanings. It sometimes refers to a person's subjective impression of the speed at which time passes, something which varies from person to person and also according to the situation. But here, I will use it to refer to one of the ways – indeed, the commonest way – in which we think and feel about the past, the present and the future.

Subjectively, our memories of the past and our expectations for the future seem to represent the whole of our personal slice of time. The past stretches back as far as we can remember. The future stretches forward as far as we can imagine. On the other hand, the present – right *now* – seems (if we think of it at all) rather like a mathematical abstraction, an infinitesimally small point on our time line, where the past *cuts* (in the cinematic sense) instantaneously to the future.

All that you, personally, know about the past is what is in your own memory. Some, or even most, of the information has come from external sources. But, apart from the instant of perception, everything must be stored in your memory before you can access it. And even the most recent event belongs to the past by the time you access it in memory. If your memory remains accurate, it will never change, because the remembered event has already happened.

Your perception at the time of the event may have been faulty, information provided to you may have been incorrect, your memory itself might become faulty – but events that have happened cannot change. They are complete and immutable. They are, effectively, mummified as they reach completion – because what has finished happening is not still happening.

Mummified, then – but not exactly ineffectual. There is an apparent contradiction here. The past that we remember is certainly as dead as any prehistoric skeleton – and yet most of

us are well aware that it continues to affect us, as if it were still a living thing. Or perhaps, in some cases, a living monster (as will be explored under Unfinished Business, in Section 4).

In other words, the past may be dead, but it is not gone – it can still cause pleasure or pain, at any time of day. So what about the future? That certainly hasn't happened yet, or it wouldn't *be* the future. Nevertheless, we often think about the future. So where does our knowledge of the future come from? I'll tell you where it comes from. *We make it up!*

No, that wasn't a joke. It is a simple fact, which you can observe in your own mind, any time you like. Making up the future is an everyday activity. We frequently think about possible scenarios set in the future. In one sense, this is so normal as to be completely irrelevant. In another sense, it is simply tragic – because it is the source of untold suffering.

I am not talking here about the (totally unknown) *real* future – the one that will actually happen, when it finally does happen. We do not make that up, though we often wish we could. It is our *subjective* view of the future that we make up. This is a projection of the future as we think it may be – usually with many hopes and fears attached. Our subjective future is an image, a fantasy – it is a mind-made edifice.

We use whatever materials are called for in building this edifice, but we do not source them externally – they are entirely recycled from within the mind. It is our memories of the past which we use, to build our images of the future. There are no other materials available. So we take bits and pieces of our memories, rearrange them, fasten them together – and sell the result to ourselves at full price, as if it were brand new.

As a forecast, it is not usually very accurate – but that doesn't stop us worrying about it! Sometimes, instead of worrying about it, we either enjoy it, or suffer from it – all in the privacy

of our own minds. So, although it is only a fantasy, it is a very powerful one. And it is built entirely from the raw materials we find lying around in the attics of our minds.

Those building materials are the leftovers of a past which is dead, but not gone – and some of which is painful. It includes unresolved grief, guilt, stress, and so on; and perhaps many pleasant memories as well. And when we relive that subjective past – or the subjective future built from it – we feel again, to a varying degree, the pain or the pleasure of those memories. Little wonder, then, that we have great hopes for our imaginary future – and equally great fears.

Does this view of time seem rather depressing? I certainly hope it does. My reason for describing this "normal" approach to time is *not* to encourage it. Rather, it is to offer encouragement to any readers who would like to ameliorate its effects. And to do that, it is necessary, first of all, to understand it. Only then will we have any chance at all of finding an alternative.

Now, I have been talking about living in the *remembered past* and also in the *imagined future*. However, as that future is concocted entirely from the past, what I have been describing amounts to living *entirely* in the past. And as the past is as dead as any dodo, I wonder if that is really living at all. If it is not really living at all, is there anything else on the menu?

The idea of living in the (subjective) present is sometimes suggested as an alternative. It is an attractive idea, but it does not seem very realistic. It would be nice, certainly, to step aside from all the pain of the remembered past and the predicted future, just by gravitating, in some magical fashion, to the present moment. Nice – but perhaps too fanciful to be of much practical relevance during daily life.

But fanciful or not, exploring the idea of living in the present a bit further might contribute to our overall task of building the

second pillar of Wanterfall work.¹ And perhaps, when that task is complete, Wanterfall work itself might contribute to our understanding of the possibility of living in the present. But isn't that whole idea completely ridiculous?

I think the idea of living in the present, subjectively, is fairly ridiculous – but not totally so. I also think it is related to freedom from duality, as well as from subjective time. Indeed, I think it is the mortal enemy of both. Could it also have some relationship to conditioning, or conflict – or even both?

But perhaps it is not really possible in any case – at least, not by trying. Trying to live in the present, while stuck in the past, would simply create one more duality. So, instead of that, I would like to *think* a bit more about living in the present – and especially about its relationship to duality and subjective time.

The essence of subjective time, as we have seen, is that the mind, swept along by the Wanterfall, makes excursions into the subjective past and the subjective future – often creating considerable suffering in the process.

The essence of duality, as we have also seen, is that the mind, swept along by the Wanterfall, makes excursions into both sides of any pairs of opposites about which it has preferences – often creating considerable suffering in the process.

The preceding two paragraphs show a very close similarity between duality and subjective time, but also an apparent difference. Subjective time creates suffering by projecting painful emotions through *time*, whereas duality creates suffering by dividing reality into wanted and unwanted *sides*.

¹ Remember that the second pillar of Wanterfall work will not be solid until the whole of this book has been read and digested. It is wobbly until then!

But hang on a minute. The emotions projected through subjective time only cause pain because they have been divided into opposites by duality. And the opposite emotions created by duality simply cannot survive in the absence of subjective time, because, in the subjective instant *now*, only the centre of duality exists – not its opposite arms.

So each phenomenon is created from *itself plus the other*. If we call duality "A" and subjective time "B", that would mean that A consists of A+B, and B consists of B+A. And that makes it easier to see how two phenomena, which each include the other, are really just one phenomenon, given different names because they are viewed from different angles of view.¹

That is not to say that the terms duality and subjective time should not be used. Although they both express the same adverse effects of wanting, they do express them rather differently. Therefore, each can offer independent possibilities for insight, if observed dispassionately (recommended).

Anyway, in considering the possibility of living in the present, we need not worry which of its mortal enemies dies first. Either would do equally well – for both would fall together in any case. The problem is that neither will usually let go at all. In fact, the whole idea of living in the present is a paradox.

I call it a paradox, because in one sense we cannot avoid living in the present, and therefore we obviously do live in the present. Whatever time it is, we're there. But subjectively, we constantly bounce out of the present into the subjective past

¹ Perhaps this argument for the equivalence of duality and subjective time does not quite attain mathematical exactness. Nevertheless, I do think they are both underpinned by the same basic mixture of thought and emotion.

and the subjective future; where, as usual, we meet all the pain that duality creates. So we do live in the present – and we don't.

Paradoxes, of course, have a habit of collapsing when you examine them more closely. And, sure enough, this one is propped up artificially – by the inclusion of both chronological time *and* subjective time in a single idea of "the present". Of course, we live in the present in chronological time – how could we not? But we very rarely live in the present in subjective time.

Here is an analogy which is often used to illustrate the idea of living in the present. Just imagine that you are standing up to your knees in a flowing river.¹ There is always water flowing past your legs. Therefore, your legs are always wet with water – you can always feel the sensation of water flowing past them.

However, it is not the *same* water from moment to moment. There is water by the tonne upstream, some of which will flow around your legs – but it has not reached you yet. There is water by the tonne downstream, some of which previously did flow around your legs – but you will never see it again.

If you worry about the water which has not yet reached you, all you will achieve is worry. If you regret the loss of the water which has gone on downstream, all you will achieve is regret. Only the water touching your legs at a given instant is part of your water experience. And any attempts which you make to experience any other water will inevitably fail.

That analogy is framed in chronological time, so it needs to be translated into subjective time to reveal the full extent of the

¹ Don't try it literally, unless your river is free of health hazards – in which category I would include anything from crocodiles to flatworms.

unhappiness so freely available to you. If the subjective future and the subjective past are substituted for the upstream water and the downstream water, it makes a lot more sense.

The subjective future (the water which is expected to arrive from upstream) includes a complex set of hopes and fears. The subjective past (the water which has already vanished downstream) includes a complex set of satisfactions and regrets. All of this could be avoided by simply remaining with the subjective experience of the moment (the water which is wetting your legs right now). More often, though, we have a tendency to reach both upstream and downstream, in order to grab large handfuls of pointless and unnecessary suffering.

If you could live completely in the moment, subjectively, you could certainly throw this book away. The problems illustrated by the Waterfall model would simply not exist. That is a very tall order, of course, and would surely need help from a deeper part of the mind than the part that most of us usually inhabit. But I think the conscious mind can also move a little closer to the present moment – in the following four ways.

The first way in which the conscious mind can help, is to make a clear distinction between *forward planning* and *worrying*. The latter immediately drags us into subjective time, but the former need not. If I am on my way to a meeting, I naturally need to think about what might come up, and how to respond. If I will be bidding for a house, I obviously need to think about how much I can afford to pay for it. Even if I am just on my way to buy fruit and vegetables, I still need to think about which ones to buy, and where to buy them. And so on.

Almost everything I ever do requires me to think about future possibilities and probabilities (but not future certainties – there are none of those). So how can I remain in the present, when I constantly need to think about the future? I certainly cannot

abandon forward planning. But perhaps I can, with a little practice, separate it from worrying.

The secret of doing this is to keep the distinction between chronological time and subjective time very clear. If you are firmly planted in the subjective present, but thinking about the chronological future, you can wonder, you can plan, you can solve a potential problem – all the time dealing exclusively with future issues – but you *cannot* worry. You cannot worry, because you would have to leave the subjective present, in order to worry. Worrying has to do with the subjective future.

The second way in which the conscious mind can help, is by using a very simple, but sometimes very effective, trick. It is basically a matter of breaking up the incredibly daunting idea of "living in the present" into bite-sized pieces. Living in the subjective present all day would be a tall enough order – let alone living in the subjective present forever. But to live in the subjective present while getting dressed on one particular morning – that may not seem so impossible.

After that, you might decide to stay in the subjective present while having breakfast. Of course, you might not succeed very often. But giving it a go for a short, defined period, is much less daunting than the idea of doing it all the time. And the experience of occasional brief periods of time free from regrets and fears might well encourage further experiments.

The third suggestion is also very simple – it just consists of wondering idly about the concept of the subjective present, and what it might be like. This doesn't sound very active, but keeping the idea floating around in your mind might perhaps get a deeper part of your mind interested in it, too.

Then, one day, when you are completely absorbed in what you are doing, you may notice that you are neither worrying about the future, nor reliving the past – because all of your attention

is occupied with what you are doing right now. And when you fall back into "normality", you will surely notice the return of the various small or large anxieties and sorrows that go with it.

The fourth way in which the conscious mind can help to prepare you for a potential experience of the subjective present is through relevant study and practice. This might include pondering over philosophical ideas, or learning and practising techniques like relaxation¹ and meditation². Again, there is a possibility of unexpected calm, which inevitably challenges the supremacy of the "normality" of the subjective past and future.

But what about that less conscious part of the mind previously mentioned, as a potential source of assistance? Well, just as subjective time is really the same phenomenon as duality, the unexpected fall from the "sticky log" of duality, discussed under the previous heading, could also separate you from an equally "sticky log" of subjective time. Equally sticky, because it is the same log. And equally possible to fall off, with the help of that less conscious part of the mind, for the same reason.

¹ Discussed in *A Few Self-Help Techniques*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² Discussed in *Meditation Demystified*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

SECTION 4

THE HEALING OF EMOTIONS

This section has a more practical flavour than the previous three sections. This is partly because it draws on the understanding of emotions and their effects, discussed in those sections, to develop a practical approach to the relief of emotional pain. And it is partly due to the addition of some other ideas – which are included for the very same purpose.

Although it may read a little differently, I do not see anything awkward in this transition from theory to practice. Indeed, I would see little value in any theory which could not usefully be applied in some way – though not necessarily a material way. This section is, in one sense, the most important part of the book. But it is also heavily dependent on the previous sections.

It would be more difficult to understand and practise the Emotional EEEEs technique described in this section, without the thorough understanding of emotions provided by the earlier parts of the book. And, as any readers who later practice Wanterfall work¹ will find, it would be very difficult to explore the mind in that way, without some means of resolving the emotional issues which it inevitably uncovers.

Importantly, this section begins with some more cautions, which are particularly important whenever there is any degree of emotional distress present, as only some cases can safely be approached in the ways which will soon be described.

¹ Remember that the second pillar of Wanterfall work will not be solid until the whole of this book has been read and digested. It is wobbly until then!

MORE CAUTIONS

There are some important cautions, which relate to the whole of this book, just before the start of Section 1. But I want to revisit my warnings about the limitations of the techniques described under Emotional EEEEs (also referred to as EEEEs work) before continuing with Section 4. Please read all the cautions very carefully, as skipping them, or ignoring them, could result in considerable unnecessary suffering. It could even, conceivably, cost you your life.

This section is entirely devoted to healing the universal suffering that has its roots in the "normal" emotional responses previously discussed in this book. However, similar suffering can occur as a result of various mental illnesses, in which case medical treatment is usually necessary – and is very effective.

A particularly important distinction is the one between grief and a depressive disorder. Many of the features are similar – but the cause is different, the complications are different and the treatment is different. Even grief which is initially normal may later be complicated by a depressive disorder, and the change can easily go unnoticed. Also, as discussed under the earlier Cautions heading, a variety of other illnesses, both physical and mental, can masquerade as emotional distress.

Making all these distinctions is a routine – though not always easy – part of modern clinical medicine. But thinking you can make them for yourself, no matter how clever and confident you may be (and perhaps especially if you happen to be a mental health professional) is a recipe for continuing suffering – and, if a serious illness is missed, sometimes death.

Even when the cause of suffering is clearly emotional, it is still essential to get professional help if things are going badly. Again, grief is a good example. Although it is a normal process in itself, that process can easily get "stuck". Then it is called

pathological grief. Skilled intervention for pathological grief is very effective – but the lack of it may be utterly disastrous.

The intertwining of emotional and physical problems is not limited to grief. Emotional distress may occur in the context of any co-existing physical or mental illness. Sometimes, emotional distress can itself precipitate a physical or mental illness. At other times, the emotional distress may be an effect of some physical or mental illness.

In other words, these three things, physical illness, mental illness and emotional distress, may bear any and every possible relationship to each other. This can be difficult enough for a team of doctors to clarify – let alone the person who is unwell.

In summary, emotional distress occurs in very many situations, and you can never assume *either* that the Wanterfall model describes its cause, *or* that EEEEs work will be its cure. When in doubt, find out! And that simply means, seek medical advice whenever things are going badly. Because, by just hoping for the best, you are also inviting the worst.

INTRODUCTION

In describing the process that leads to the healing of any emotional pain or distress, I will use the compound emotion *grief* as my example, for four reasons. Firstly, grief is an almost universal experience, so many readers will have personal experience of it. Secondly, it is a very painful experience, so there is much to be gained by learning how to move through it. Thirdly, it is very amenable to assistance, so learning about it will make you a valuable resource, for the rest of your life. And finally, the process which leads to the healing of grief, can also be applied to any other emotional pain or distress.

Grief is the natural response to any loss. Most poignantly, it is the response to death – either the death, or impending death, of a loved one; or the knowledge of one's own impending death. However, any distressing deviation from a desired state can cause grief. Even the loss of a button can cause a miniature version of the same response – though we do not usually use the term grief unless we perceive the loss as being significant.

As you know, the components of grief are found on the lower right hand side¹ of the Wanterfall chart. However, charting them there does not make them any less painful. The journey through the grief caused by a great loss such as bereavement or incurable illness is always a tremendous challenge. So, although I am about to explain how to pass through grief and emerge, inevitably scarred but completely healed, I am *not* about to suggest that the passage is an easy one.

Perhaps grief is what you are experiencing right now – perhaps that is why you have turned to this page. If so, let me talk

¹ As before, when I refer to the left or right hand side of the Wanterfall or the Wanterfall chart, I mean that side of the printed chart, as you look at it.

directly to you for a while. I wonder if you feel that everything that was good in your life is now over – that you will continue to exist, but you will never really live again.

Many people have shared that feeling with me, especially during my twelve years as a hospice physician. And, in a sense, it is exactly the right way to feel at this time. For that matter, the way you do feel is always the right way to feel. But feelings can change – even your present feelings might change.

It is certainly true that your life will never be as it was. However, that does not mean that your life is over. It will be a different life, of course. But there is no reason that it cannot include all the joy and love that human beings are capable of embracing. Now, I am quite sure you don't believe a word of that – and equally sure that I can show you how to discover it.

The very idea of cheerful activities, good company and pleasant days may seem disloyal, treacherous or just plain ridiculous, when grief has struck you down. The sun has set for you, and the darkness seems impenetrable. But sooner or later, you will see the first glimmer of an inner sunrise.¹ For there is still the same life within you that there always was. It is just that, for now and perhaps for some time to come, it is in hiding.

But as I said, I don't expect you to believe any such thing. I wouldn't believe it myself. Or at least, not until it had been demonstrated. So that is now my task. I will describe, in this section, how to move through grief until your love of life returns. You can start when you choose, and move at your own pace. Not everything described will apply to you – just take

¹ As mentioned under Cautions, pathological grief lacks this natural progression, and therefore requires professional help.

what you need. And I do not ask you to believe that it is possible, until you yourself become the living proof of it.

I will certainly not try to do your grieving for you – nobody can do that. Nor will I try to tell you how to feel, or when to feel better, or when to feel worse. And I will never, ever suggest that anything about grieving is easy.

What I will do, is remind you, from time to time, that it is possible. Because that is one of the few things that I know to be true, without a shadow of a doubt. I did not work it out by thinking hard, nor did I learn it through study. I discovered it more or less in passing, in the course of my somewhat unusual training and career, and my own experiences of grief. And I don't think it should be kept a secret.

Now, a few paragraphs back, I mentioned the idea of moving *through* grief. But why not just go around it? Well, it is a good idea. Or rather, it would be, if it worked. I expect you will try it, as most people do – that is part of grieving. But the path around grief is a bit too true to its name, to be of any use. Because it goes around grief, and around it, and around it. Indeed, it goes around in circles, for as long as you like.

In my experience, any attempt to avoid going through grief can never be more than a preparation for grieving – a way of learning what does *not* help. Sooner or later – and preferably sooner – it becomes necessary to look inside grief, and find out what makes it tick. *This is of universal relevance, so I will no longer address myself directly to you, my grieving reader. But it will still be written for you. It is all written for you.*

LOOKING INSIDE GRIEF

The first thing to notice about grief may seem too obvious to need saying, but I will say it anyway. *Grief is made of emotions*. Often, an overwhelming avalanche of them; at other times, more of an interminable glacier. Of course, it is always a response to one or more facts, it is usually associated with various physical effects, and many, many thoughts surround it – but its essence consists of emotions.

As mentioned previously, grief inhabits the lower right quadrant of the Wanterfall chart, where things either do not go as we want – or else *do* go exactly as we *don't* want. The primary emotions shown on this part of the chart are *sadness* and *antipathy*. The feelings found under these two umbrellas have been listed under The Six Primary Emotions, but I will mention some of them again now.

The primary emotion *sadness* includes many feelings, most of which are felt frequently during grieving. Examples are sorrow, misery, dejection, dissatisfaction, despondency, mournfulness, gloom, and depression¹.

The primary emotion *antipathy* also includes many feelings, of which the ones most often felt during grieving are anger, disapproval and hostility. *Especially anger*. The anger may be directed at the situation in general, or at one or more people who are considered partly or wholly responsible for the loss.

Doctors and hospitals are frequent targets for such anger. Whether or not they did their job well, they failed. Also, people

¹ Here, I am referring to a feeling of depression rather than a depressive illness. Sometimes, though, it is not easy to tell the difference – as discussed in More Cautions at the beginning of this section.

who are even a little bit religious often feel angry with God, either in a general way, or for specific examples of action or inaction. This is a normal component of grief, and should never be confused with blasphemy.¹

Grief is not content to be restricted to one quadrant of the Wenterfall chart, and is of course not alone in this. The bleak and uncertain nature of the future may awaken the primary emotion *fear*, with a sense that the future will be painful, just as the present is; and with an urge to escape from the pain, if only it were possible.

Often, friends and family offer warmth and kindness, or other feelings found in the primary emotion *propathy*², but in many cases the ability to enjoy the feelings found under that umbrella (or indeed to enjoy anything at all) is hibernating. Similarly, feelings found in the primary emotions *happiness* and *hope* are in short supply – and will remain so, for some time to come.

So grief consists of many emotions – mainly the painful ones. But do they all stem from the loss which has occurred? This is a very important question about grief – and the answer is no, not all of them. Some of the emotions which occur in grief are not *directly* related to the loss. Where, then, do they come from? There are two sources from which these important feelings can originate.

The first source has to do with the context in which the loss occurred. Anxieties about other family members, worry about financial problems, feelings of guilt about something or other that occurred before the person's death, or any of many other possible issues, may be superimposed on grief simply because

¹ See footnote to Antipathy under The Six Primary Emotions.

² Propathy is defined under The Six Primary Emotions.

they are part of the life of the grieving person. The process of arranging and taking part in a funeral, though usually therapeutic overall, may also be extremely stressful. And physical exhaustion or illness may be present, sapping strength, just when it is most needed.

The second source might also be considered contextual, but it involves an inner context. Our emotional experience inevitably occurs within the context of our emotional knowledge – in other words, our emotional memories. This means that past pains can often be brought to mind by current grief.

Considering how many emotions (virtually all the painful ones, and a few of the others at times) are involved in grief, it is not surprising that grief can awaken pains from the past. And this "unfinished business" is so important to a better understanding of grief, that I am going to give it a heading of its own.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

The late Elisabeth Kübler-Ross¹ used the terms "unfinished business" and "pool of pain" for suppressed or repressed, leftover emotions which remain in the mind in a relatively dormant state. Along with many other psychiatrists, psychologists and therapists, she was convinced of the pivotal importance of these hidden emotions in understanding grief, or indeed any emotional suffering.

"Unfinished business" implies something that has already been encountered, but not completely dealt with. And "pool of pain" suggests that this "business", as well as being painful, might well vary in amount as content moves in or out of the pool. It does sound rather fanciful, doesn't it? But these metaphors point to an underlying reality that is not fanciful at all.

Indeed, the essence of the analogy, if not always the labelling, is accepted by most counsellors who work with people in emotional pain. It is also realised by most people who have worked their way *out* of emotional pain. And I'm sure you can guess that I have found it helpful during my own clinical career – otherwise, I would not waste your time by writing about it.

It is also quite common to speak of emotions being "bottled up" or "pushed to the back of the mind". The metaphor of an "emotional abscess" has also been suggested. These terms all point to exactly the same idea, though they may emphasise different aspects of it. And there are, in fact, a number of different aspects to this idea, which I would like to look at next.

In the first paragraph, I referred to a *relatively* dormant state. That was deliberate, because emotions in the pool of pain are

¹ See footnote to Original under Denials.

neither comatose nor encapsulated. Barriers in the human mind are never completely impervious, so a metaphorical pool (or abscess) full of pain inevitably exerts an influence on our day to day experience. This could be visualised as a slow percolation of toxic matter from the pool, seeping into the rest of the mind and making it slightly (or sometimes very) unwell.

Another important aspect of bottled up emotions is that they may not necessarily remain unchanged over time – they may sometimes become distorted. For example, anger and fear may sometimes develop into hatred, when bottled up together for too long. Other examples of possible changes in stored emotions are given under Suppressed Emotions in Section 2.

So this somewhat leaky pool may become murkier with time. But a pool (or an abscess, or a bottle) does not always leak slowly. Old feelings can sometimes erupt with astounding intensity, when a current event provides a strong enough reminder of the circumstances which originally caused them. I think the analogy of an abscess is most appropriate here.

One possible result of the bursting of an abscess is an initially painful, but ultimately healing, process. But, if an abscess bursts, it is important that it bursts to the exterior. Abscesses which burst internally can cause serious illness, or sometimes death. So expert lancing of an abscess is preferable. It allows for choice of drainage path, as well as early drainage.

How does this relate to pent up feelings? Sometimes, experiences which awaken unfinished business can be a blessing in disguise – they can cause the release of toxic emotions which have been poisoning the emotional life of the host for some time. Considerable healing usually follows.

But an avalanche of painful emotions can be just as dangerous as a physical avalanche. There is a risk of harm to self or others during the acute phase, which could conceivably include

suicide, murder or both. I will be discussing the safety aspects of emotional catharsis fairly soon, under Emotional EEEEs. For now, it is enough to note that the release of emotions, whether spontaneous or facilitated, cannot be treated lightly.

Of course, unfinished business has an effect on feelings whether grief is present or not. But its interactions with grief are important. Firstly, it may delay grieving, if a perceived threat of awakening old emotions discourages the expression of current feelings. Secondly, it may erupt unpredictably, as a result of stimulation by current feelings. And finally, the almost inevitable drainage work which occurs during grieving often results in the resolution of many past issues as well.

You might wonder how much reduction in unfinished business is enough. To be completely free of unfinished business, even if that were feasible, would surely be the tallest of tall orders. And it is certainly not necessary, from the point of view of grieving. The main thing is to understand and accept that you will sometimes feel old pains as well as new ones, and just let feelings surface when they are ready to do so.

This process can be helped along in various ways. But before I describe those ways, under Emotional EEEEs, I want to mention some important landmarks which may be encountered in the journey through grief. They are sometimes called the "stages" of grieving, but in fact they are neither strictly sequential nor particularly predictable.

MOVING THROUGH GRIEF

A number of "stages" of grieving were described by Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, in her book *On Death and Dying*¹. This book focused mainly on people who were facing impending death, but the same elements can be seen in people grieving for the death of a loved one – or indeed, following any significant loss. Kübler-Ross used the terms *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression* and *acceptance* for these "stages" of grieving.

She did not say that they all appear in every case, nor did she say that their order is fixed – though she was often criticised for allegedly saying those things. In fact, there usually is a general trend in the direction shown above, and most of the elements can be identified if they are looked for. However, the idea of discrete stages, occurring in a fixed order, represents a significant misunderstanding of her work – and of grief itself.

Indeed, the features of each "stage" may recur at almost any time. This implies that all the "stages" could conceivably be present at once. That would be quite unusual, though certainly not impossible if the expression of each was incomplete. Further recurrences, especially of anger and sadness, are also common at the times of the various anniversaries which remind the bereaved person of their loss. But despite their lack of regularity, the aspects of grieving listed above are worth a closer look, because they provide some insight into the process.

Perhaps I can safely look at these stages one at a time now, without any readers fastening a vice-like grip on the order in which they appear in the text. I am going to start with denial,

¹ Kübler-Ross, E. *On Death and Dying*. Multiple publishers and dates, but first published in 1969 by Macmillan, New York. Also see footnote to Original under Denials.

just as Kübler-Ross did. However, some of her other stage names will have to share the limelight occasionally, due to the inclusion of ideas suggested by other authors.

I have mentioned previously, under *The Anatomy of Emotions*, that there is often a delay before *sadness* and *antipathy* are felt after a loss. This would be impossible unless the realisation of the loss was itself delayed. The temporary absence of realisation is usually called denial. When the distress would be overwhelming, as in the case of bereavement or incurable illness, denial is sometimes both profound and prolonged.

In some cases, this results in a bereaved person being completely oblivious to the reality of their loss. This is sometimes called unconscious denial, and is often, though not necessarily, complete. In other cases, there may simply be a strong preference for not facing the reality, even though it is at least partly recognised. This is conscious denial, and is less likely to be complete, though it may be. But whether conscious or unconscious, complete or partial, it is often referred to simply as *denial*. It is also, quite often, called (emotional) *shock* – or simply *numbness*.

The mechanism of denial is uncertain, but it is often considered to be a protective device, on the assumption that awareness of the full significance of the event would overwhelm the person's mind, with serious consequences. This theory cannot be tested, because denial cannot be switched on and off. However, it is clear that grief is capable of causing overwhelming emotional pain, and that the latter can have serious consequences, so the theory is plausible. What is certain, is that denial very often does occur, and is then an integral part of grieving.

The transition from complete or partial denial to a full recognition of the unpleasant reality can be gradual, sudden or relapsing. When there is an identifiable transitional phase, it often includes a search, sometimes quite a comprehensive one,

for an acceptable explanation for the situation – or at least, an explanation less terrible than the obvious but unthinkable possibility – which might still account for the apparent facts.

Such behaviour is often called *searching*.¹ It may even involve a physical search for the person who has died, in the hope that there has been a mistake, and the person is simply lost. More often, though, it is less specific than that, though still analogous to it. It is important to acknowledge the normality of this behaviour – which would be far from normal in other circumstances – but it should not be artificially reinforced.

A behaviour which is closely related to searching may either take its place, or occur in addition to it. That behaviour is called *bargaining*. It is not the usual sort of bargaining, but rather a virtual bargaining – trying to make a mental deal, with any power the bereaved person considers might possibly exist, for the reversal of the apparent but utterly unacceptable reality.

When religious people bargain in this way, they engage in contractual negotiations with their God. This may seem strange to a third party, but bargaining is just as normal an aspect of grieving as denial or searching. And like them, it requires acceptance, but not reinforcement. It will run its course soon enough in most cases.

Now, looking back over the last few pages, you can see that I have given *denial* three words (denial, shock, numbness) and *bargaining* two words (searching, bargaining). I have also promoted bargaining, so that it appears before *anger*. And in just a moment I will explain that the primary emotion sadness provides the meaning of *depression* intended by Kübler-Ross.

¹ In the Kübler-Ross scheme, "bargaining" includes this searching behaviour as well as the bargaining behaviour next described.

As the last stage, *acceptance*, is not going to suffer any tampering at all, I think you will agree that the five stages have come through quite unscathed – an excellent result in all the circumstances. So, if you like the simplicity of *denial*, *anger*, *bargaining*, *depression*, *acceptance*, you still have it – sort of.

As [*denial/shock/numbness*] and/or [*searching/bargaining*] are replaced, gradually or suddenly, by an increasingly clear realisation of the terrible reality, *sadness and antipathy* move to centre stage.¹ In many cases, *anger* is the most evident emotion from the umbrella of antipathy, and it often makes its first appearance before the various emotions from the umbrella of *sadness*² emerge.

Or else it does nothing of the sort. Because, like everything else to do with grief, anger varies – sadness may come first, and in fact anger and sadness frequently alternate or coexist. Alternatively, anger may make its first appearance before searching and/or bargaining, despite the close connections between the latter two phenomena and denial.

There is another way in which anger may make its entry. If there is no noticeable denial phase, anger may be the immediate response. This is presumably why ancient kings and princes had a tendency to execute the bearers of bad news. We still talk of "shooting the messenger" – but nowadays, fortunately, it is usually a metaphor for aggressive reactions of a less permanent variety.

¹ These are the only aspects of grief which are represented on the Waterfall chart itself. But luckily, the chart always has this book wrapped around it.

² Kübler-Ross used the word *depression* to describe this deep sadness. She meant feeling depressed, not having a depressive disorder. However, feeling depressed is not always due to grieving, as discussed under More Cautions.

That brings us to *acceptance*. The very idea of acceptance is likely to seem ludicrous, if not downright offensive, to a bereaved person. That, of course, is part and parcel of the emotional voyage of grief. But, sooner or later, some sort of acceptance usually does occur. Or, to be a little less imprecise, at least three sorts of acceptance may be encountered. Each tends to come and go, erratically, for a variable period of time, gradually becoming more stable in most cases.

First, there is the *acceptance that the loss is real* – this is the acceptance which replaces denial, thereby allowing the emotions of grief to emerge. Then, there is the *acceptance that life can go on* – even though a hole has been left in it, which will never be filled. This is usually the beginning of a gradual but progressive improvement in wellbeing, leading to a life which, though still different, is no longer bleak and miserable.

Finally, and only in some cases, there is a *much greater acceptance and appreciation of life* than was the case before the loss occurred. This is a side effect of the EEEEs process described below, and is an example of the good which sometimes grows out of terrible experiences – even though we would never choose to have them, if we had that choice. This variety of acceptance is a great blessing – but it is a bonus, rather than a routine result of having moved through grief.

However we describe and classify it, there is tremendous variation in the process of grieving. Some people pass through it relatively calmly. Others seem to take forever, or go through hell, or both. I will mention a few factors which could influence these variations, but I am sure there are many others.

Various characteristics of the loss itself will inevitably have a significant impact on the process. However, it is the effect of these characteristics on the bereaved person which is important, rather than their external assessment. Therefore, while the importance of the characteristics of the loss can be

presumed, it cannot easily be measured. Nevertheless, some characteristics, such as unexpected death, presumed but unproven death, child death, parent death, murder, and suicide, certainly appear to have some partially predictable effects.

The next major influence that comes to mind is the nature and quantity of the person's unfinished business prior to the loss. This, whatever it is, will be stirred up by every aspect of grieving – and will, in turn, have its own effect on every aspect of grieving. In a very imprecise way, you could say that more unfinished business means a bumpier ride through grief. But also, if it is addressed effectively, it means that more secondary benefits may accompany the grieving process.

Closely allied to the previous factor, is the importance of the way in which the person deals with the strong emotions of grief. If the EEEEs work described under the next heading, or something equivalent to it, is already known, or is now learned, by the grieving person, then these emotions can be safely expressed – which makes an enormous difference.

Finally, various choices that are made by the person during the grieving process can be of pivotal importance. The importance of a choice to accept the existence of feelings and work through them – which is much easier to say than to do – has already been implied. A choice to exact revenge can both slow the grieving process and create new problems. And many other choices can sometimes be seen as forks in the road of grieving.

Now, most of the above influences on grieving are either difficult or impossible to modify – but the way emotions are dealt with is an exception. A safe and effective method of doing this can be offered, taught and facilitated in various ways and at various levels of intensity. The ways might involve anything from a short chat to formal and prolonged counselling, and the intensity might also vary considerably.

While effective help with emotions is not the only thing needed by a person who is grieving, I am quite certain that it is the most valuable thing. Its beneficial effects grow like a living plant, and they can also be applied to other losses, past or future. Whether in the office of a grief counsellor, the home of a friend, or for that matter in solitary confinement in a prison cell – if the emotions of grief are dealt with effectively, grieving will proceed inexorably towards its invariable goal.

I do not advise talking of a "goal of grieving" to those who actually *are* grieving, but an onlooker may well perceive something of the sort. It could be thought of as a life which is again worth living, despite the fact of the loss. In some cases, that life is richer emotionally than it ever was before – though the change may not be admitted, or even noticed. Of course, this second suggestion is even less likely to be welcomed, by a grieving person, than the more general idea of a goal.

During the discussion of the nature of grief – and indeed throughout the book – I have made many references to the safe expression of emotions. It is now time to say exactly what I mean by this, and I will do so under the next heading. As with most things in life, there are various ways of approaching painful emotions. However, I think many of the differences have more to do with the details than the overall concept.

I have called the method which I describe in the following pages "*Emotional EEEEs*". The four Es stand for Encourage, Explore, Express and Evaluate. That is partly because I like mnemonics, and partly because I like the idea of easing pain. But it is mainly because the essential elements of the method fit very neatly under those four headings.

Of course, as explained many pages back under Denials, the name is emphatically *NOT* an attempt to imply ownership of the method. The name may be new (though not to everyone, as I have used it in lecture notes over a long period of time) but

the method, in one form or another, can be derived from ideas which reach back as far as history itself. More recently, it has been used extensively by Kübler-Ross, Barham and colleagues¹, as well as many others. Consequently, while any errors in the text will indubitably be my own, the method itself is pretty well universal.

Some of the content under the next heading is so obvious that you may wonder why I bothered to type it at all. On the other hand, some of it may seem a little surprising, and you might instead wonder whether I should have culled it considerably.

But I suggest that Emotional EEEEs should be approached as if it were a tool kit, designed for the repair of emotional suffering. There are various different tools, each of which comes in a range of different sizes. And you only need to use the tools, and the sizes, required for the current repair job.

¹ See footnote to Original under Denials.

EMOTIONAL EEEEs

If you have arrived here via the Index, rather than directly from the previous page, the four Es in Emotional EEEEs stand for Encourage, Explore, Express and Evaluate. These are the four essential steps when dealing with any painful emotions.

Introduction

Although the four steps referred to above are discussed in some detail in the following pages, appropriate further study and supervised practice is also essential, if you intend to provide grief counselling or any other type of therapy. Communication skills are particularly important when working with people who, because of their emotional distress, are very sensitive to both verbal and non-verbal nuances. Communication skills are not addressed in this book, but they are the subject of a forthcoming publication from wanterfall.com.¹

The origin of emotions, and the characteristics of many of the emotions that we know, have been discussed already. Here, I will be concentrating on what we can *do* about those emotions. That is because dealing with painful emotions – whether new or old, and regardless of where they come from – is the essence of successful grieving. It is also, incidentally, the essence of dealing with any other type of emotional distress.

There are various ways of dealing with painful emotions, but the effective ones have much in common – once they have been stripped of their sometimes confusing nomenclature. The method described here is broadly derived from my training,

¹ Notes on Communication, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

some decades ago, in the Kübler-Ross "intensive growth" process¹ and the Barham method of psychodrama². It has also been influenced by my long and varied medical career.

As the majority of my clinical work has been with individuals, rather than groups, my comments on the expression of emotions in a group environment owe a very great debt to my earlier experiences as participant, trainee and assistant in the group activities mentioned above.

However, the application of the EEEEs model is not limited to group activities. Intensive growth workshops, psychodrama sessions, or any other specific methods, are entirely optional within this framework. Also, it can be used by itself, or in combination with other forms of therapy; and it can be used with the help of one or more other people – or as self-help.

Before I describe the EEEEs method itself, I would like you to imagine a hypothetical situation. You go out for a walk and come across a large, hideous animal. You might easily run away, to escape from the apparent danger. Perhaps you trip and fall. The animal, following with interest, catches up. Though frightening in appearance, it is actually a harmless animal – but you have been seriously injured in the fall.

Or perhaps you do not fall, but find a cave with a narrow entrance, and take shelter. The animal sniffs at the entrance for a few minutes, and then disappears. Where is it? You don't

¹ Kübler-Ross conducted many residential "Intensive Growth" and "Life, Death and Transition" workshops aimed at facilitating the discovery and resolution of "unfinished business". (Also see footnotes under Denials.)

² Barham, M. J. 1978, Dissertation: The Barham Method of Psychodrama: Presentation of the Total Personality Model from Which the Technique Developed, The University for Humanistic Studies, San Diego.

know, and you don't dare to come out. Even if the cave itself is free of hazards, you may remain unnecessarily imprisoned for some time – perhaps with serious consequences.

All you were trying to do was the best thing you could think of in the circumstances. Others may have known that the animal in question was harmless, but you didn't. So, by doing your best to help yourself, you injured yourself, or imprisoned yourself, or perhaps both. Had you been armed, you might have killed or injured the harmless animal; and possibly also one or more people who happened to get in the way.

In the case of painful emotions, some people know that, while large and hideous, they are not dangerous in themselves. Unfortunately, many other people do *not* know this. And fleeing in terror from hideous emotions, hiding in fear from frightening emotions, or attacking the presumed cause of painful emotions, often has tragic consequences.

Emotional EEEEs is a simple and practical technique which can help you to stop running, if you are running; or come out of your cave, if you are hiding; or see that violence is not necessary, if you are poised to attack. It will also show you that your emotions can only hurt you *with your co-operation*.

It may not seem easy to start with, but you only need to take one step at a time – and the steps get easier with practice. I will look at each of the four Es in turn, giving much more time to Express than the other three, simply because it usually needs the most attention. But regardless of how simple or complex each may be, all four EEEEs are important in every case.

Encourage

- *Encourage*
- *Explore*
- *Express*
- *Evaluate*

You could reasonably say that this is not, in itself, part of the healing process. After all, encouragement just has to do with getting started on exploring. However, so many people simply never begin, unless they receive considerable encouragement, that I prefer to include it as an essential part of the process.

I will introduce the general principles of encouragement here. However, much of the detail will be covered later, under Facilitation of Expression; and still later, under various subheadings of Facilitated Intense Catharsis. The reason is that continuing encouragement is an integral part of assisting with expression, whether the latter is mild, moderate or intense.

In practice, the hardest part of *encouragement* is often undoing the *discouragement* of emotional expression, which is so deeply embedded in most societies. This has usually been learned from infancy, or soon after. However, it doesn't stop there. It is reinforced, in one way or another, especially but not exclusively non-verbally, in social situations – on a daily basis.

Two common examples of this societal discouragement are the ideas that men must not cry and women must not admit to aggressive feelings. This is all part of our conditioning, as discussed under The Ramifications of Emotions – and our conditioning can sabotage any or all of the four Es, thus preventing emotional healing altogether.

So, whether you are grieving or helping another to grieve, do not be surprised if you encounter *discouragement* instead of *encouragement* – either as a result of preconceptions within your own mind, or in the minds of those around you. Cast off as many of these preconceptions as you can. Those that remain will slow you down, as though you were wading through treacle. But that's OK. Slow progress is much better than none.

Whether you are encouraging yourself or someone else, or are being encouraged, there are three general aspects of encouragement. The first is *reassurance*, the simple reassurance that it is normal to have strong feelings after a loss – or indeed, in the presence of any emotional distress at all.

The second is *permission*.¹ And if you are helping someone, it is three kinds of permission. Permission to pay attention to feelings. Permission to share feelings. And the reminder to the person you are helping, repeated as frequently as necessary, to "give *yourself* permission". If you are working alone, the last of the three is all that is needed. And it is needed absolutely – because without it, you will not even get started.

The third is *validation* of any feelings that are expressed. I am using validation here in the sense of confirmation that a given instance of expression is perfectly acceptable – and so is the person expressing it. It does not imply that anything has been proved to be correct – that is another meaning of validation.

¹ The scope of the permission involved will usually have been defined in advance. Obviously, any form of expression to be used must be safe for all concerned. In the case of facilitated intense catharsis, which is discussed later, specific techniques for the safe expression of violent feelings are taught, and no other violent forms of expression are allowed.

Feelings, of course, are neither correct nor incorrect – they are just what they are. But confirmation that a particular expression of feelings is appropriate, is often helpful. It is, effectively, a second dose of reassurance – a post-expression reinforcement of the original reassurance that strong feelings are OK.

When given by another person, this reassurance, permission and validation always needs to be given non-verbally. Often, it also needs to be stated verbally, but that is usually of secondary importance.¹ Very simple non-verbal messages are often the most powerful. Handing the person a few tissues, or pushing a box of tissues towards them, is often enough to satisfy any or all of these aspects of encouragement. Indeed, as long as all other aspects of communication are congruent with this gesture, it is sometimes the only specific action required to facilitate a very effective episode of expression of emotions.

Sometimes, more specific encouragement is also necessary, such as a simple explanation of some of the concepts discussed in this section. This should be combined with frequent repetition of the reassurance, permission and validation mentioned above. During expression of feelings, as discussed below, encouragement may still need to be continued. At that time, it should be almost entirely non-verbal. Occasional brief comments, made during pauses in the process, are OK – but a long or complicated sentence usually puts the feelings right back in the box from which they were so recently coaxed.

Encouragement may be the simplest step in concept – but it is often the most difficult in practice. References to encouragement, and sometimes specific examples of it, will

¹ If there is any difference between the non-verbal and verbal messages, the non-verbal message will "win" in this situation – as it does in many others.

also be found under Explore and Express, because it is a continuing requirement during the first three EEEEs.

Wherever it is found, the essence of encouragement is the idea that it's OK to have feelings – that there's no need to hide or deny them due to fear, shame, guilt or simply misguided politeness. Even if this involves standing a lifetime's collection of conditioned beliefs on their reluctant heads, it is essential – because otherwise, the next step may never be reached.

Explore

- *Encourage*
- *Explore*
- *Express*
- *Evaluate*

Although encouragement is often necessary to reach this step, there is no need to wait for it. The sooner you start, the better. From early childhood onwards, exploring emotions is highly recommended. But how is it possible to explore something which is invisible, and also inaccessible to the other senses?

It is "the mind's eye" that observes, rather than the physical senses. And it is feelings that are explored, rather than a physical landscape. But apart from that, it is no different from exploring a town or a forest. The method used is different, but the principle is exactly the same.

Perhaps, using the mind's eye, you look around to see what you can see – or perhaps your attention is arrested spontaneously by something very obvious. *Noticing* something is always the first step – until you notice it, you cannot focus your attention on it.

But when you have noticed something, you can, metaphorically speaking, go closer to it and inspect it in more detail.

As with a physical exploration, it is useful to record what you find. You can then compare it with other things you have explored, and see how they fit together – or don't fit together. You can ponder its significance. Slowly but surely, you can build a sort of map in this way – in this case, it is a map of your own feelings. If those feelings are painful, the resulting map of your own sorrow will be your most valuable map; for a map of where you are is always useful – whether you are staying there, or looking for the way out.

Apart from the constant business of noticing feelings throughout the day, other exploratory activities might include keeping a diary to write about feelings; discussing feelings with friends; and using some simple form of non-directed expression of feelings. True, that is the next E – but it also helps you to explore further, so it belongs here as well. Exploration and expression are complementary, and sometimes impossible to separate. This will result in a little repetition.

Examples of non-directed expression which can assist exploration include writing whatever comes to mind, doodling on paper, drawing simple pictures with coloured crayons, and "playing" in a sandbox. When the loss involved is the death of a loved one, viewing the body is another very important way of getting in touch with feelings. The reality of death seems more intense when all the senses are flooded with the evidence.

Planning and participating in the funeral can also be very helpful. However, the *degree* of participation of a bereaved person is a choice that should be made by that person. I have come across cases in which members of the clergy, or the family, have strong ideas about a fashionable degree of participation, which is not appropriate to the needs of the bereaved person. Even the perfect spanner can harm the works.

The anniversary of a bereavement is another opportunity for emotional exploration. Even when it seems that you could not possibly discover any more feelings, an anniversary may surprise you. It may be an unpleasant surprise, but it is still part of the overall healing process. The same often applies to other anniversaries, such as birthdays, the day you met, and so on.

What about deeply-buried emotions – how on earth can you explore such hidden horrors? Fortunately, there is no need to attempt this. When the next step, expression, is applied to the emotions that are near the surface, and as those emotions move out into the open, the deeper ones metaphorically float up to occupy the newly-vacated space. Sometimes, they are actually connected – in which case they are extracted more directly.

In the former case, it is a bit like a concentration of floating objects which, between them, are holding down more objects underneath. As the surface objects are removed, the deeper ones can rise. In the latter case, it is a bit like drawing a string of pearls slowly out of a purse. Pulling out the first pearl brings up the next one, and so on. In both cases, it is also a bit like peeling an onion, in that the surface must be removed before the deeper layers can be accessed.

Whatever the analogy, working with one emotion frequently reveals another – often, more than one. They may not seem like pearls – at least, not to start with. But however we think of them, we can only work with feelings in the order in which they appear. And, of course, until we at least notice a feeling, we cannot even get started on its expression and evaluation.

But is exploration reliable? How do you know you will not simply manufacture imaginary emotions, while pondering over some distressing event? This is a plausible idea in theory, but I have never seen anything to suggest it in a practical context.

Real emotions have power, which becomes more evident as they come more fully into consciousness, and wanes rapidly after they have been expressed. Imaginary emotions, on the other hand, have no power at all – of their own. If you concoct an emotion and find that it moves you, you can be sure that there is something like it, somewhere in your pool of pain.

In fact, "trying out" possible emotions is one way of exploring. If you try out an emotion which you are not carrying, you will only experience boredom. Of course, this might also occur if your version is too well buried to resonate with the imagined version. In that case, it will have to wait for another day.

Express

- *Encourage*
- *Explore*
- *Express*
- *Evaluate*

The text under this heading – especially under the subheading Facilitated Intense Catharsis – is a great deal longer than that which appears under the other three Es. That is partly a reflection of the importance of expression in the healing process – which is immense. However, it is also because practical procedures take far more time to describe, than they take to do.

For example, it only takes a moment to put a nut on a bolt, but a full description of the principles and practice of helical thread fixation would run to many pages. Similarly, expression of feelings need not take long, but the following description of its principles and practice occupies about a quarter of this

book. As it is one of the most important concepts in the book, if not the most important, I do not begrudge it the space.

You may wonder why the topic headings under Express have a musical theme. A few musical metaphors even turn up in the text. I like musical metaphors for emotional expression, because it usually involves sound and the end result is beautiful. Perhaps that is why I often heard Kübler-Ross say, "the screams and curses are like Mozart to me". However, the musical terms are not an essential part of the process, so they can safely be ignored by any readers who find them irritating.

Making Music

I will say a little about the theoretical aspects of the process by which a feeling within the mind of one person can be made accessible to the mind of another person. However, it is important to remember that expressing feelings is not a theoretical process. It is just something you do – like walking or talking. I will include another reminder about this important point when I finish with the rather abstract theoretical ideas.

The most literal meaning of the verb *express* is to press something out, as in expressing the oil which is already in existence, though not in evidence, within seeds, nuts or olives. This provides a preliminary clue to the process we are about to consider. However, in our present context, the meaning is extended to include *interpreting*, *representing* and *conveying* feelings which are already in existence within the mind.

The first two of these three stages of expression, interpreting and representing, are sometimes performed almost simultaneously. That is analogous to a language interpreter listening to one language and speaking the content in another. However, in the case of feelings, a different representation of the same interpretation – for example, a verbal representation rather than a visual one – might be made later.

Just as a musician has to interpret the musical notation before representing it as sounds, which are then conveyed through the air to be received via the ears of the audience, we face the task of interpreting, representing and conveying feelings. Feelings have their own unique "notation" within the mind. When that has been interpreted, a variety of methods of representation is possible – mainly verbal, visual, sonic, tactile, kinetic and all possible combinations of those.

Notice that neither music nor emotions can be conveyed, until they have first been interpreted (translated) into a form which can be represented in a medium (such as sound or words) which can then be transmitted to, and received and understood by, others. This change of form is not a gratuitous complexity. It is necessary because the original is not directly transferable.

The original form of an emotion exists only as a virtual entity within the mind of its owner. No one, not even its owner, can see, hear, touch, taste or smell it. We cannot even *think* about it in its original form – in that form, it can only be experienced. And the experience is restricted to the owner of the feeling.

That means that untranslated emotions are inaccessible to conscious processing, and therefore cannot be shared with others – or even evaluated intellectually by their owners. They require some interpreting first. And if they are also to be conveyed to other people, they require a representation which is transmissible in a form that can be received by others.

In practice, however, thinking about the process described above is quite unnecessary – indeed, the intellectual processing involved would interfere with the actual expression of feelings. In practice, it is just a matter of feel – express. This is closer to the language interpreting mentioned above – but even more immediate, as accuracy is less important here than spontaneity.

In other words, a potentially understandable analogue of the feeling is quickly made available to others, if present, without *conscious* processing. Alternatively, the representation can simply be conveyed to the space outside the owner. An audience is usually helpful, but it is by no means essential.

Very often, the representation is at least partly verbal. The sounds made if the words are vocalised, and any other sounds which are made, can also represent feelings. Because emotional feelings are quite closely linked with physical feelings, various physical actions are also very valuable forms of representation. And as so much of our experience and communication is visual, visual expression is inevitably very important as well.

But regardless of the type of representation used when conveying the feelings, there is always a sense of something which has been hidden or latent – emotional pain – now coming *out*. First, it is changed into an accessible form, allowing it to move from the pool of pain to the conscious mind. From there, it can be transferred *out* into a wider context.

This can have a number of helpful effects. The feeling becomes more conscious – and conscious in a more enduring way – than it was before. It is felt more acutely, which may be unpleasant, but it is also seen more clearly. Above all, it has been symbolically *pushed out* – in a sense, rejected. And symbolism has a strong influence on the mind. It is much easier to let go of a feeling, once it has been symbolically rejected in this way.

If the feeling was associated with a secret, which has been shared with one or more people at the time of expression, that secret is not a secret any more. Can this possibly be a benefit? At first, the sharing of a secret often makes you feel worse. Any associated shame or guilt is greatly intensified. But that is an opportunity to understand and express the shame and guilt, too. And there are few feelings more important to be rid of,

than shame and guilt. So even the intensification of shame and guilt can be beneficial – though it does not seem so at first.

There are various other benefits which can follow the sharing of feelings with a number of people. Witnessing the expression of feelings similar to your own, by others who are present, demonstrates that those feelings are not unique. And if others have feelings similar to your own, then perhaps they are not as terrible as you thought them to be. Also, the acceptance of the person expressing feelings, by others who are present, helps dispel the notion that those feelings are unacceptable to others.

Many other effects which are not consciously noticed will probably also occur. Quite a lot of our emotional life is less than fully conscious. In my experience, the overall effect of a significant episode of sharing of feelings is usually an initial increase in distress, followed by a marked reduction in distress, and later by considerable re-evaluation of the issues involved.

Thus far, the ideas about the expression of emotions which we have looked at have been fairly general in nature. The other subheadings under Express will address the more specific, practical aspects. Because, important as it is to understand emotional expression, the chief value lies in actually doing it.

Incidentally, I will use two other words which describe aspects of expression from time to time. The first is *externalisation*. I will use the words expression and externalisation interchangeably. Another word, *catharsis*, is usually reserved for fairly considerable or significant externalisation.¹ That

¹ The word catharsis is also used for a thorough emptying of the bowels, usually induced by a laxative; or indeed for cleansing or purifying anything at all. However, like Aristotle, I will use it to refer to a significant outflow from the "pool of pain" (though probably without the Greek tragedy).

word will come in very handy later, when discussing the more intense forms of expression.

Explicit Lyrics

The emotions which need our attention are, of course, the unpleasant ones. We do not flee from, hide from, or attack the presumed causes of pleasant emotions – nor do we mind, unless we are philosophers¹, if they remain with us forever. It is emotions like sadness, guilt, shame, fear, disgust, and rage – those which in some way upset or distress us – which need to be dealt with by the EEEEs method or its like.

Unfortunately, most people have a strong objection to the practice of expressing unpleasant emotions. That is mainly because they don't sound very polite. But, although it may not be very nice to hear impolite words and ugly sounds, it is very much worse to observe or experience assault, murder, torture, suicide, rape or war. And those are some of the effects of *not* dealing with unpleasant emotions – which is probably why, as I mentioned a little earlier, I so often heard Kübler-Ross say, "The screams and curses are like Mozart to me".

I will use a fictitious example to comment on some aspects of externalisation. Let's say that a man is talking to a friend about a woman who has been rude to him. If he feels angry, but is not comfortable discussing painful feelings, he might say (with very little non-verbal accompaniment) something like this. "By any standard, the lady was most impolite. Indeed, I think her behaviour could easily be construed as frankly offensive. I am most disappointed in her."

¹ Some philosophers see a need to drop *all* emotions – like hot potatoes.

The use of formal language, abstract concepts and non-verbal minimalism is quite an effective way of insulating both speaker and audience from any feelings which may exist. It keeps things on a mainly intellectual footing. Useless? Not necessarily. Like the first steps of a baby, it has the capacity to develop into much faster and more effective progress.

Hearing himself make the above statements, the man might easily feel at least the tip of the iceberg of emotions which he is keeping so well submerged. And if he had made the statement to a perceptive person, they might respond by asking "How did you feel?" He might then reply something like this. "I felt she was rude. Well, I mean, I felt bad. I don't like her, anyway."

Simple language, mainly descriptive and not necessarily logical or grammatical, is a much more effective vehicle for expressing feelings, than formal and abstract language. In this case, the simpler statement was the result of prompting. Prompting need not be verbal, of course – a raised eyebrow might have had the same effect. Nor is prompting always necessary – especially as we get to know our own evasions better. Nevertheless, it is often a great help.

Now, depending on the situation, the man might conceivably feel that more spontaneous verbal expression would be acceptable. If he knows that his friend is not afraid of strong feelings, and if the thought police are taking a break, he might feel less inhibited. If not, perhaps his friend would say "Just spit it out". Or perhaps "Don't be so polite".

Or (as Kübler-Ross invariably said) "Use the words". Anyway, if he is somehow made to feel safe from the risk of disapproval, he will probably rephrase his statement in much more colourful language, and with considerable non-verbal accompaniment. His friend might even learn some new words – unless he is used to encouraging the expression of feelings, in which case he will have heard them all before.

When there are no inhibiting factors, the verbal expression of strong feelings usually involves a mixture of *simple language*, *slang* and *swearing*. The *non-verbal* expression of strong feelings is more difficult to describe, but it is also very useful. As discussed later under Facilitated Intense Catharsis, the only important thing about non-verbal externalisation is to ensure that it is safe for all concerned. Its effectiveness is not in doubt.

Anyway, externalisation is not always polite. But we live in such a polite society! What can we do? This may seem like an impasse, but in fact it is nothing of the sort. Rather, it constitutes an important challenge. It is imperative that every society finds a satisfactory way to deal with something which *cannot* safely be ignored – the existence of painful emotions.

When a painful emotion exists, you only have two choices. You can give some attention to it, or you can ignore it – while it festers. *There is no third choice*. And I have already discussed what can happen if it festers. So, if you are very angry, it is a thousand times better to attend to your feelings, than to leave them to fester. We will look at some ways of attending to painful emotions quite soon.

Playing Safely

This gets a bit musical again – never mind, it's not for long. Assuming that we are now seriously committed to developing a worthwhile performance, there are some practical matters to sort out in advance. Discord may be dramatic, but we will only achieve our aims by working harmoniously in concert – which requires a framework of agreed behaviour. When the lights go down, there will not be time to do much planning. True, most of the expression will be extemporaneous – but there are some important things which must never be left to chance.

Although it has not always been given optimal attention by the medical profession, dealing with painful emotions is a vitally

important aspect of human wellbeing. So I think the first and most important principle of medical intervention automatically attaches to it. I was taught this principle in Latin – *primum non nocere*¹ – but that was admittedly a long time ago.

Anyway, avoiding significant adverse effects is an essential aspect of Emotional EEEEs, just as it is for any other therapeutic intervention. EEEEs work must therefore be done

***in a safe way, in a safe place, at an agreed time
and with the permission and co-operation of
everyone who is directly or indirectly affected.***

Those are always the prerequisites for externalisation of emotional pain, regardless of the intensity of the process. Of course, the ***complexity*** of meeting the prerequisites depends greatly on the intensity of expression. But the ***importance*** of meeting the prerequisites does not vary. Meeting the prerequisites is always essential – regardless of anything at all.

A bit later, I will discuss the ***process*** of meeting the prerequisites, at some considerable length. I will do that under Facilitated Intense Catharsis, because the requirements are most complex at that level of intensity. Nevertheless, the principles are the same at any level. With common sense and a little experience, you can apply the information provided there in ways that are suitable to any situation at all.

¹ The usual literal translation is "first, do no harm". Its earliest use as a medical aphorism is uncertain. In practice, of course, it is usually a matter of *balancing* risks and benefits, rather than avoiding any risk whatsoever.

Program Notes

There are three rather different pieces on my externalisation program, and each will leave a lot to the reader's imagination. The imagination will be needed most of all to fill in the infinite variations possible between mild and extreme externalisation, and the important continuum between encouraging and discouraging catharsis.

The first piece, Gentle Expression, will be my next heading. As the name suggests, I am going to describe some relatively gentle ways of expressing feelings, for which the prerequisites with respect to safety can usually be met very easily. The audience will probably expect something more vigorous to follow this piece – but they will have to wait a little while.

They will have to wait right through the second piece, which is called Calming Catharsis, and has been placed between Gentle Expression and Facilitated Intense Catharsis because it relates to reducing intensity from the extreme back towards the gentle – something which may be necessary for a variety of reasons.

Whenever externalisation is more intense than seems safe and appropriate in the circumstances, the options are to suffer the risk, to change the circumstances – or to reduce the intensity of externalisation for the time being. In practice, the last option, though rarely ideal, is often the best available.

The third piece, Facilitated Intense Catharsis, is perhaps not my most musical title. Be that as it may, it describes a much more intense form of externalisation, with correspondingly stringent prerequisites. As mentioned above, I will address the prerequisites for all forms of externalisation under this heading, but they can easily be modified to suit less intense processes.

Naturally, every gradation between gentle and intense may be encountered. The degree of intensity which can be managed in a given situation depends on many variables. An experienced

therapist might facilitate quite intense catharsis in an office situation, working with carefully selected clients. When there is any doubt, though, it is better to err on the side of safety.

Gentle Expression – *Con passione ma non troppo*

The hallmark of the gentle levels of expression now to be discussed is simply that *no significant disturbance is created*. There is no other limitation on the means used to represent and convey the feelings. Importantly, all of the prerequisites described later under Facilitated Intense Catharsis must still be met. However, that is usually quite easy to do at this level.

Gentle Methods of Expression

Anything which serves as a way of representing and conveying a feeling can be a useful method of expression – as long as it is safe for all concerned. So, while I will mention a number of useful methods, I am not suggesting that the list is complete.

If the feeling is conveyed to one or more other people who are present, the interpersonal aspects of the process make a valuable contribution. However, expression of a feeling in the absence of an audience still makes it more accessible to the person's conscious mind. It also has symbolic significance, in the sense that the feeling has been put *out* into a wider context.

Private acknowledgement

This is the very quietest and gentlest form which externalisation can take. It cannot be very clearly separated from the previous E – it is a transitional phenomenon between exploration and expression. Acknowledging a feeling necessarily involves interpreting it sufficiently for it to be accessible to thought, and conveying it to that part of the mind

which thinks. So, in that sense, it is a form of expression within the mind – as well as an aspect of exploration. (The form in which it is accessed by thought need not be verbal, of course.)

Whatever E we classify it under, private acknowledgement is an important step. Before a feeling has been consciously acknowledged, it may be a fairly vague and uncertain impression – which is relatively easy to ignore. Afterwards, it usually remains fully conscious, which makes it harder to ignore – and easier to express more fully.

Putting it in words

Words are of considerable significance to the conscious mind. Though private acknowledgement is possible while a feeling remains entirely non-verbal, translating it into words – and then thinking about it verbally – confers additional benefit. It often makes it seem more real and more accessible. It also makes it easier to remember what is learned, if there is a verbal memory link between the feeling and any insights gained.

Saying the words

Putting a feeling into words, as above, does not necessarily mean that you will speak those words. But it does open up the possibility of doing so – either to yourself, or to another person. Saying them to another person is discussed under the next heading. However, even if you are alone, saying the words out loud adds an extra dimension to the externalisation process.

When a feeling is first interpreted for the benefit of the conscious mind, the beginning of externalisation occurs. When a verbal representation is considered by the conscious mind, the value of the process is increased. But when the words go out via the mouth, a further and slightly different experience of externalisation occurs. And when they come back in through

the ears, their perception may be slightly different again. Any or all of these forms of expression can add value to the process.

Talking about it

Talking is the most popular of all the gentle forms of expression – and deservedly so, because it combines the simplicity of an everyday activity, the benefits of externalisation and often also the insight of another person who is not directly affected by the feelings. Added to those advantages, there may be a certain amount of visual, sonic, tactile or kinetic communication, as discussed below. This can turn the humble conversation into an interactive symphony!

Simple opportunities for talking about feelings might include a yarn over a beer, a chat over a cuppa, or indeed any conversation, whether planned or not, where one person is willing to listen while another person's feelings are described. And, as will be reiterated from time to time, if you happen to be the person listening, your contribution can be improved immensely by good communication skills – and even more immensely by a non-judgmental attitude.

Writing it down

Writing is another simple technique that allows verbal representation and externalisation of a feeling without creating any disturbance. It can be remarkably helpful to write down how you feel. Even wondering what on earth to write can be helpful. Then, after you have written something, reading what you have written usually reminds you of still more feelings. You may find yourself using much more paper than expected.

When you are finished with something you have written about your feelings, it is usually best to destroy it. Until then, keep it in a safe place. You probably don't want it to be read by anyone who happens to find it. Even if it seems fairly innocuous,

feelings taken out of context are easily misconstrued. And, who knows – you might be famous, one day. If so, every word you ever wrote will suddenly be worth publishing!

Non-verbal expression

Non-verbal communication is a very large topic, but I will only comment briefly about it here. There is a footnote under Facilitation of Expression about a forthcoming e-booklet, which provides a brief introduction to the basic aspects of communication. But there are also plenty of much larger books about this subject.

There are many possible visual methods of expression. Two examples are just doodling on paper, or drawing simple pictures – perhaps with coloured crayons. The images may be reality based, abstract or a mixture of the two. Facial expressions and non-specific gestures are also examples of visual communication. Gestures with known meanings are more like words, but they do have a visual component as well.

Sonic methods include vocal, instrumental and miscellaneous ways of making sounds. Vocal sonic expression is often added to speech, by way of variations in volume, pitch, timbre, speed and rhythm. However, various sorts of vocal sonic expression, including shouting, screaming, singing, keening and wailing, can be done with or without words.

Tactile methods include playing in a sandbox, modelling with clay or any other soft medium, or modifying various other substances in any safe way. Finger painting has a tactile element to it, as well as the visual one. More complex activities like carpentry or mechanical engineering, however, provide only limited opportunities for expression of feelings.

Kinetic methods include expressive movements such as clenching the fists, various limb and trunk movements,

grimacing, beating something inanimate, or any tantrum-related behaviour. The latter two are particularly important in externalising powerful feelings, and are discussed under Facilitated Intense Catharsis. Dance can also be used to express feelings, but it is easy to pay too much attention to the dance and too little to the feelings. (Most kinetic methods also include a visual element – or sometimes a sonic element.)

Some of the above methods result in the production of an artefact, most commonly a picture. Discussing this can sometimes add value to the process. However, no artistic ability is necessary in order to employ non-verbal methods of expression, any more than it is for verbal expression. It is the act of expression that is healing, not the beauty of the artefact.

Crying is a unique non-verbal method of expression, so I will give it a heading of its own...

Crying

Crying is a special example of non-verbal expression. It is partly kinetic, in that various contortions of face and body often accompany it, and partly unique, in that its defining feature is the production of tears. It is often the first gentle form of emotional expression employed, and it frequently accompanies other methods – including intense methods. So, while it has been placed last in this list, it is anything but least in importance.

Crying is a natural expression of sadness, and a very effective one. It includes instinctive and learned behavioural elements. It can conveniently be done either alone, or in company. Tears are "acceptable" to most people. However, crying can upset some people, usually when it stimulates their own unfinished business. This is discussed under the next heading.

Crying while watching emotive movies is a time honoured example of this method of expression being used effectively without another person to facilitate the process. Other communication media, such as books, also provide triggers for buried emotions. So does sifting through one's own memories.

While it is true that tears contain endorphins, which are intrinsic neurochemicals with analgesic and tranquillising properties, the main value of crying in our current context is probably its instinctive use as a way of externalising feelings – especially sadness. This has been known and used throughout the participant's life. It has also been known and used throughout recorded history – and presumably before.

Facilitation of Gentle Expression

By facilitation, I mean helping another person to externalise feelings. This is sometimes helpful at any level of intensity of externalisation. It is discussed further under Facilitated Intense Catharsis. However, I will say a little about it here.

Communication skills, which are of very great importance to every aspect of helping, are discussed elsewhere¹ and will not be addressed specifically in this book. Apart from those skills, one particular quality in the listener is paramount, and that is the quality of being *non-judgmental*. Some of this quality is helpful, more is healing – and even more, is even better.

Another essential for the expression of emotions is a continuing supply of the reassurance, permission and validation previously discussed under Encourage. However, permission to share feelings with a particular person or persons must never be

¹ Notes on Communication, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

confused with a licence to *inflict* feelings on any person who happens to be present.

A related issue is that permission to share feelings with another person does *not* imply permission to direct those feelings *at* the other person – or to blame the other person in any way for the underlying distress. Some professional therapists might be comfortable in the role of virtual scapegoat, with agreed limits, but friends and relatives hardly ever are – which is not surprising, as it is neither logical, fair nor easy to tolerate.

The underlying principle here is that the whole aim of the EEEEs process is to get rid of emotional pain in a generally beneficial way. This is not achieved by dumping it onto other people. As previously discussed, it is best achieved by externalising it *in a safe way, in a safe place, at an agreed time and with the permission and co-operation of everyone who is directly or indirectly affected.*

On the other hand, it is frequently necessary to express antipathy which is directed at a particular person. This paradox is best resolved by ensuring that the person is not present when that work is done. And even if acquaintances of the person are present, it is best to change names and modify circumstances while vocalising. You will still know who you mean!

The management of self-directed anger deserves special mention. It is a very important issue to work on, but working on it sometimes distresses bystanders, for an understandable, though erroneous, reason. It may be felt that the person externalising might be harmed by the distressingly powerful and intensely critical abuse which is directed at their own self.

However, the fact that it is distressingly powerful is the proof that it already exists within their own pool of pain. Now that it is coming out, there will be less of it bottled up, and more of it accessible for the next E (evaluation). The person will

consequently be at progressively *less* risk of suffering psychological or physical harm – not more. (That does not alter the fact that, in some cases, expert help may still be necessary.)

Another form of expression which sometimes distresses bystanders is crying. I mentioned this in passing under Methods of Expression, but I will address it here, because it has to do with various aspects of facilitation. Bystanders often try to "comfort" a person who is crying – in a way rather analogous to putting sticking plaster over an abscess.

They say things like "Come on dear, calm down, don't cry, it will all be OK, dry those tears, let's see your beautiful smile, everything will be alright, let's have a hug, there, that's better, now let's get a drink into you – and if you can't sleep tonight, just ask the wife for some of her tablets, the doc reckons they'd knock an elephant out".

This may be partly due to a misguided notion that, if the crying stops, the problem has been solved. It is also part of most people's conditioning, that comfort should be offered in at least some of the ways mentioned, as a more or less routine response. However, in many cases it probably also reflects the fact that the "comforter" has some unfinished business, which is being stimulated by witnessing the tears – and which the "comforter" does not wish to face.

Crying, like any other form of expression, requires the permission of both self and bystanders. Some people have great difficulty giving themselves permission to cry. Males, especially, have often been strongly conditioned against crying from early childhood. A person who is already crying has obviously got past the barrier of the first permission – their own. But the "comforter" is effectively withholding the second permission – and very strongly arguing for reversal of the first.

So, if you want to be helpful to someone who is crying, or appears likely to cry, don't tell them to stop the very thing that is most likely to do them good. Just let them know that you are there, and offer tissues (whether needed or not, within reason).

If you think words are necessary, say something short like "let it out" or "let the tears out" – after that, say the minimum necessary to encourage continuation of the process. A single word (or tissue) from time to time should suffice. Sometimes, just being there is sufficient.

Also, unless requested, don't hug a person who is in the middle of crying, or externalising feelings in any other way. Although a hug is comforting – indeed, because it is comforting – it can be counterproductive at this time. When emotions are pouring out, a hug usually slows the flow – and often stops it altogether. On the other hand, some people might expect a hug, and feel hurt if it does not materialise. Close attention to non-verbal clues may be helpful, but it is not always possible to tell.

Any other physical contact, like a pat on the back or holding the person's hand, can have a similar effect to a hug. Being nearby is all the connection that you need, to be helpful to someone who is expressing feelings. Close proximity, within usual social limits, is rarely a problem – it is touch that seems to cause this effect.

When the externalisation of feelings is complete, however, hugs can be one valuable way of providing validation. Among many other things, a hug shows that the person has not become repulsive as a result of their self-disclosures. This is often very valuable, because the expectation of rejection may be strong, especially after working on guilt or shame.

However, not everybody wants to be hugged after externalising feelings – just as not everybody wants to be hugged in other situations. If the answer is not clear from non-verbal signals, it

is better to ask than to remain uncertain, because, as mentioned above, the person who has just shared feelings may be in an unusually vulnerable state.

Calming Catharsis – *Decrescendo e rallentando*

It hardly needs stating that, so far, I have been exclusively considering ways to encourage, and certainly *not* to stifle, the precious process of externalisation. However, there are occasions when it is necessary to put a damper on the expression of emotions, simply because the conditions for its safe continuation cannot be met at the time.

The essence of those conditions, which you probably know off by heart by now, is that externalisation must be practised *in a safe way, in a safe place, at an agreed time and with the permission and co-operation of everyone who is directly or indirectly affected.* (These requirements will be discussed in detail later, under Facilitated Intense Catharsis.)

While the gentle methods described above are always important, and often sufficient, either the method or its intensity may sometimes be perceived as inadequate to the task. It may not seem possible to represent the emotions involved in any of those gentle ways. In such cases, the feelings might just remain bottled up.

Alternatively, there may be a spontaneous tendency for the strong feelings to come out in noisy and potentially disturbing ways, such as shouting, screaming, swearing and hitting things. Unless such an outburst is managed with a degree of care and skill, it may escalate, and could sometimes result in violence.

As we will see later under Facilitated Intense Catharsis, everything except the violence might be "just what the doctor ordered" – and the violence can be avoided. But it depends

entirely on the situation. Screaming and swearing in the middle of a violin solo, in a packed concert hall, would create nothing but discord. Whereas, under the right conditions – which will be described later – screaming and swearing just creates the healing noise previously referred to as being "like Mozart".

Externalising anger at a bus stop, by abusing the other passengers and kicking panels out of the bus shelter, might get a person assaulted, arrested, or even admitted to a psychiatric unit under a compulsory treatment order. On the other hand, expression of the same anger, in a safe way, in a suitable environment, could start a process of emotional healing which might ultimately lead to improvements which are simply not realised by any other method.

So the "volume" of externalisation clearly needs to be turned down in some situations – but this does *not* mean that noisy and vigorous externalisation of emotions is impossible. It just means that it cannot safely proceed until the prerequisites already stated, and discussed under the next heading, are met.

Adjustment of the volume is the function of a person who is present in a helping role. This might be you – it might be anyone. It could even be a passing policeman. However, possibly because of their frequent encounters with criminals, some policemen are inclined to treat noisy emotional catharsis in a cell (not recommended). All the more reason to get in first.

It is a bonus if the noisy person also has some understanding of appropriate externalisation, but this situation is more likely to be encountered when that is not the case. Therefore, if you are present and you want to help, you will almost certainly have to take the initiative.

If you accept the role, you probably already possess the most important prerequisite for it, which is an urge to help. Having that urge, you will surely not have missed the importance of a

non-judgmental attitude, which has been stressed frequently in these pages. And assuming that you are also possessed of a little common sense, you are off to a very good start.

However, you could still be completely out of your depth. The qualities needed in this situation are almost identical to those discussed under Facilitators, in Facilitated Intense Catharsis. If you lack some of those qualities, your attempts may only be partially successful. Indeed, they may be totally unsuccessful. Not every problem has an immediate solution, after all.

The most important thing is to avoid an adversarial situation. It is far better to agree, or to retreat, than to find yourself in conflict with the very person you are trying to steer away from violence. Compromising your own safety would only make matters worse for both of you. But before considering specific tactics, let's look at some possible scenarios.

A disturbing situation can arise from very innocent beginnings. You could have been listening while a person shared their feelings in a way which at first caused you no concern at all. The change in atmosphere can develop slowly, or it may be very sudden. However, if you have read this book, I hope it will never be a complete surprise.

Sometimes, when the gentle rain of feelings seems to be developing into an ugly storm, the strong emotions being expressed can have powerful effects on you, too. You might be distressed by feelings from your own pool of pain, which have been triggered by what you are now seeing and hearing. You could easily start to feel afraid of the situation – or possibly of the person who is expressing the feelings.

People who choose to share their painful feelings with you, with your permission, are in fact very unlikely to be a danger to you. However, your own anger or fear might sometimes pose a danger. And regardless of your own feelings, the situation may

be very disturbing to other people who are present. As a result, they may also act in ways which make matters worse.

Noisy externalisation can be problematic in various ways. For example, what are you to do if your friend, who has been crying quietly about various aspects of an impending divorce, suddenly exhibits many of the characteristics of a nuclear missile? Especially if your room is next to the Vice-Chancellor's office, and she is currently entertaining the Governor and three major benefactors. What can you do?

In many cases, the externalisation of feelings can be reduced in intensity by the sensible use of your own personal resources¹. I have previously mentioned some ways of encouraging expression, though this is discussed more fully under Facilitated Intense Catharsis. I have also mentioned that asking people to calm down, begging them to stop crying, telling them that everything will be alright and giving them a hug is usually totally disastrous – if you *want* them to express feelings.

Well, now that you *don't* want the feelings expressed, two broad approaches are immediately evident. First, withhold or withdraw any previous encouragement to express them. Just look a bit uncomfortable, like most people do when exposed to emotions, and suggest continuing the discussion later. That is sometimes all that is necessary. But if not, then proceed to plan B – do all the usual things that are alleged to "comfort" people when they are "upset". It's in a good cause.

After that, it *may* be possible to involve the person's intellect. If you try this too soon, you will just find that their intellect is not

¹ This does not usually apply if the situation is exacerbated by alcohol, other legal or illegal drugs, or a mental or physical illness. In those cases, professional help is frequently necessary.

in attendance. And if you do it in a judgmental way, there is also a risk of stimulating anger. One good ploy is trying to engage the person in planning a suitable time and place to work with the feelings later. In addition to making it clear that externalisation is not being denied, just deferred, this requires some intellectual activity – which is just what you want. Then a few more hugs, and you may be chatting about the weather.

If not, then time will often work in your favour. Most fires die down eventually. Unfortunately, though, not all fires die down quickly enough. Occasionally, a complication of the above scenario can occur, in which emergency services become involved. And sometimes, they fail to understand the emotional causes of the situation.

There is then a risk that the distressed person could be restrained, bundled into an ambulance, transported to a hospital emergency department, sedated, marooned on a stretcher¹, interrogated by a flock of medical students and possibly even admitted to a psychiatric ward. I will now wax a little melodramatic about this scenario – so, if you think I have already done that, perhaps you had better skip a few pages.

If the above is happening to someone you are trying to help, it is very important to stay calm. Always obey police officers, refrain from obstructing ambulance officers – and carefully avoid any movements that might be misinterpreted as threatening. Spare a thought for the poor police officer. Think of all the forms he or she will have to fill in, if you happen to get shot while attempting to draw your deadly mobile phone.

But as soon as you can, explain that the person is distressed by the recollection of terrible events, rather than being mentally ill

¹ In this context, it has wheels – it is called a gurney in some countries.

or possessed of any felonious intent. Depending on the circumstances, you could also explain that vigorous expression of emotions was advised by "the doctor" – and just got a bit more vigorous than expected.

Offer to arrange a taxi to take the person home, where you will look after them until they feel better – or to take them to "the doctor", if preferred. But if you cannot prevent a transfer to hospital, you could always tag along and explain the situation to the staff there. If so, try to discourage the administration of antipsychotic medication – in this situation, there will be no beneficial effect to balance against the risk of side effects (and the latter is not trivial).

Sometimes, it is difficult to escape being "sedated" for emotional distress. It is less likely, though, if the patient firmly states "I refuse to have an injection". You could make a note of that – dated and signed, of course. If you print NOTES MADE AT THE TIME clearly across the top, and then ask the doctor to check that you have the date correct, it should be noticed.¹

If that is not sufficient, I guess you could make a very polite enquiry about the consent procedure currently in use – which is sure to be printed in a policy manual quite nearby. Or ask the address of the hospital's Ethics Committee, seeing you have such a particular interest in Human Rights, and would value the committee's opinions so highly. None of that will help much if a compulsory treatment order has been made, of course.

You will certainly not be popular, if you pester the staff members in any of the ways suggested above. However, if you refrain from explaining the distinction between negligence and

¹ The approved way of recording such notes varies according to country.

felony¹, perhaps those same staff members will agree that you have been quite restrained, in the circumstances. Perhaps.

Of course, in other circumstances, antipsychotic medication may be an essential part of treatment. But here, we are considering an emotional catharsis – not a psychosis. OK, perhaps we are considering it in an overly dramatic way, too. If it's any consolation, the hypothetical situation in question was very nearly edited out completely. I couldn't decide whether it was comical, ridiculous, tragic, or all three. On reflection, I think it is all three. But perhaps it can serve to illustrate three points which, though not at all dramatic, are still important...

First, the externalisation of emotions can easily have complications – whether we go looking for them, or not. Second, working with emotions under optimal conditions, though obviously preferable, is not always possible. And third, regardless of the conditions, something unexpected can always occur – in which case, damage control is sometimes the best that can be achieved, at least initially.

Usually, though, it is possible to gain the co-operation of a person in need of emotional catharsis, and postpone it until the necessary prerequisites can be met. Under the next heading, I will discuss one way of meeting the prerequisites for powerful emotional catharsis. As mentioned earlier, there are many shades of intensity between gentle expression and intense catharsis, but I will leave them to the reader's imagination.

¹ Administration of antipsychotic medication despite a clear refusal would be an example of both, in many jurisdictions.

Facilitated Intense Catharsis – *Appassionato e tempestoso*

The extreme form of externalisation discussed under this heading may only be of interest to a few readers. The parts which relate to the organisation of facilitated intense catharsis in a group setting may be of interest to even fewer readers. That being the case, I expect many readers will ask, why have I included it at all?

Firstly, because it represents the most comprehensive approach to externalisation, I felt that the book would be incomplete without it. Secondly, it provides an opportunity to consider safety aspects in relation to intense catharsis, which can then be applied to any given level of intensity, simply by reducing their stringency where appropriate. And thirdly, I am quite certain that facilitated intense catharsis can be a very valuable part of the overall approach to severe emotional distress, if all the conditions described are fulfilled.

I said under the previous heading that the first step in damping down the expression of feelings is withholding or withdrawing any encouragement to let them out. The present heading discusses the deliberate encouragement of intense catharsis – the very opposite of what has just been discussed. Importantly, although the descriptions given will often refer to a group environment – which has certain advantages – the process can also be used as part of individual counselling work.

I will refer to those who attend an activity, and receive encouragement to express feelings as intensely as necessary, as *participants*; and to those who provide the encouragement as *facilitators*. The activity itself, as you know, is called *facilitated intense catharsis*. None of the ideas presented here are new, of course, but I think they are well worth revisiting.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

I will have quite a lot to say about facilitated intense catharsis in the following pages. But the first thing I want to say about it is that *it is not necessary unless gentler methods fail*. And the second thing I want to say about it is that *it is not safe unless you make it safe*. I do not say these things to disparage it, rather to put it in its place.

And that place, in my opinion, is a very important one. Because, when gentler and quieter ways of externalising emotions fail, this way usually succeeds. And when all the prerequisites discussed below are met, it is at least as safe as crossing the road – and probably safer.

However, although simple in principle, making it safe requires significant time and effort. At least as much of each, in fact, as an amateur theatrical production would require. I have written a basic script, which I have called Prerequisites (below). It isn't a particularly exciting name for a production, I admit. It could probably do with some embellishment in other ways, too. But at least the Creative Commons¹ copyright is flexible – and free.

Even when it is found to be necessary, and made to be safe, it is still very hard work – and it doesn't suit everybody who might potentially benefit from it. But for those who choose to do this work, the benefits can be correspondingly considerable.

To make facilitated intense catharsis available in a group setting, a number of people must work together, in a determined and organised way. This may sound tedious, but a complex undertaking always involves a fair amount of unexciting, but necessary, work behind the scenes.

¹ See page 2, or go to <http://creativecommons.org>

True, there are quite a few organisations that already provide opportunities for emotional catharsis. But they usually offer it as part of a broader type of therapy – or sometimes a religious activity. This introduces a degree of complexity, and sometimes a belief system, which may be counterproductive, or even downright dangerous, depending on many variables.

Of course, there is nothing new about intense catharsis. For example, the classical Greek tragedies were written and performed for the express purpose of encouraging emotional catharsis. And in modern times, many therapists have encouraged clients to make as much noise as they like, and also to hit something while they are screaming, swearing and putting violent ideas into words.

Kübler-Ross¹, in her residential workshops, used to provide a thick rubber hose, and a supply of telephone books, to facilitate the physical expression of angry feelings like rage or hatred. While assisting at one of those workshops, I saw a frail, gentle, elderly lady reduce a large phone book to confetti with a rubber hose, after getting in touch with some very deep-seated anger.

At other times, her physical activity was really quite limited. After the session, she felt very much relieved. She had sore muscles later, of course. I don't know where her strength came from, and neither did she. That and countless other examples of powerful externalisation have convinced me that considerable energy is associated with strong emotions.

But is it safe to meddle with such powerful feelings? My answer is, it is safe if you make it safe – but not otherwise. This answer is based primarily on my own experience with the

¹ See footnote to Original under Denials.

process, both as participant and facilitator. During the year I spent training under Kübler-Ross and her associates, I externalised unfinished business of my own, or facilitated externalisation by others, for roughly five hundred hours.

During that year, hundreds of other participants also took part in facilitated intense catharsis. In all that time, only one significant physical injury came to my attention – and it was due to a fall during psychodrama, *not* during intense externalisation. Also, no case of new precipitation or significant exacerbation of mental or physical illness as a result of the process came to my attention during that year. And this was a close community, with a very efficient grape vine.

We were taught to make it safe, and we did. Much safer than playing football, certainly. Safety is not the only important aspect of facilitated intense catharsis, of course – but it is the most important. It must be integrated with every aspect of the process. *For this reason, I am going to describe the process entirely in terms of the prerequisites that make it safe.*

Prerequisites

To make sure that vigorous catharsis is both safe and effective for all concerned, various prerequisites must be met. They also apply, though to a lesser extent, to the less vigorous forms of externalisation previously described. Under *Playing Safely*, I mentioned the essential principles, saying that externalisation must be done

*in a safe way, in a safe place, at an agreed time
and with the permission and co-operation of
everyone who is directly or indirectly affected.*

That statement is designed with brevity in mind, and does not attempt to include details of practical procedures. To expand on it, and to discuss those procedures, I have chosen five headings

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

which are derived from it, but which use different words. The principles themselves, however, are not changed at all. Here are the five headings:

- Administration
- Participants
- Facilitators
- Methods & Equipment
- Time and Place

Administration

I will say very little about administration here. It pops in and out of the picture under all the other headings, doing what is necessary, always available, but never in the way – which is, by the way, exactly my idea of good administration. Incidentally, in the text, I often refer to the administration as "the organisers", and to what they organise as "the activity".

Among its many responsibilities, the administration has to find the venue, arrange public liability insurance, negotiate agreements with participants, employees and volunteers, and deal with all the financial aspects. I will not go into the details of these matters, but they are all essential. So the administration, which gets passing mentions in the text, has a very large and important task in reality.

Participants

The minimum number of participants is one, but there is an advantage in having a larger number. The feelings expressed by one person often trigger unfinished business in others. Kübler-Ross often used to work with around a hundred participants, and four to six facilitators. Those workshops were very noisy – in the Mozartian sense previously mentioned.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

A formal registration procedure for prospective participants is essential, to avoid missing one or more of the necessary steps. The main issues which must be addressed before any person participates in facilitated intense catharsis are *information*, *assessment* and *agreement*. Each of these applies to both participants and organisers, but not necessarily symmetrically.

Information

Prospective participants need to be *given* information about the activity, so that they will know what to expect and (equally important) what will be expected of them. This allows them to make informed choices. The necessary information could be provided by word of mouth, holding a meeting, or providing a brochure – but preferably all three.

It is particularly important that each participant understands that the process is both physically and emotionally tiring, and that emotions will come to the surface which may well cause increased distress until they have been worked through. The participant must be willing to accept these aspects of the work. Otherwise, it should not be attempted.

Next, the participants need to *provide* certain information about themselves to the organisers, so that they can be assessed for suitability. This is necessary for the safety of the individual participant, and sometimes also for the safety of others who will be present. It could be collected by questionnaire, interview, medical report or a combination of these.

The design of questionnaires and medical report forms would be a matter for the organisers, but examples might be sourced from health care providers. Ideally, the screening process should be managed by a mental health care professional. Where this is not possible, a medical report on all participants would be advisable.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Conditions relevant to the assessment process include both physical and mental illnesses. Activities like those described below under Methods and Equipment are physically very demanding. The powerful emotions driving the activity ensure that it will usually be both vigorous and prolonged. The degree of effort involved may not be noticed in the heat of the moment – but its results will probably be felt later.

In the case of healthy participants, muscular discomfort is all that is likely to occur as a result of such activities. In some cases, other soft tissues might also become inflamed. However, people affected by any significant illness should always consult their doctor in advance, and provide a medical report to the organisers. There are some conditions which make vigorous exercise potentially life threatening.

The commonest condition requiring caution is probably ischaemic heart disease (often loosely called angina) in which the blood supply to the heart muscle is restricted. In combination with extreme exertion, this can precipitate a dangerous arrhythmia (fast or irregular heartbeat). A person with known ischaemic heart disease should already have a cardiologist, who can advise about the activities which may safely be undertaken. Any other person who is not accustomed to regular vigorous exercise should be advised to have a medical checkup and report before participating.

It is not only physical illness that can be worsened by facilitated intense catharsis. Anyone prone to manic or hypomanic mood states¹ runs some risk of precipitating an

¹ For a simple explanation of these states, see An Introduction to Mental Illness, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS
ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

episode by engaging in extreme forms of catharsis. This risk is very much lower if the illness is well controlled at the time.

Even then, careful observation is necessary. That is simply because the release of distressing emotions sometimes causes a natural mood elevation in the aftermath of the session, which may be enough, in some cases, to trigger an acute manic or hypomanic episode. This might be delayed in some cases.

Any severe depressive disorder would likewise preclude this work until the condition is stabilised, as a natural lowering of mood may occur when painful feelings have been brought into consciousness but have not yet been resolved. This might trigger a severe depressive episode in some cases.

There are also potential risks associated with psychoses and personality disorders, which are difficult to predict. The advice of the person's doctor and/or psychiatrist would be essential in all such cases. In many cases, increased risk of adverse effects and decreased likelihood of benefit would indicate exclusion.

There may be occasions when significant medical or psychiatric history is known but not disclosed – or perhaps has been forgotten. A participant's unsuitability might then not be discovered until after the activity had commenced. This could necessitate urgent medical or psychiatric review. Depending on the severity of the condition, the participant might then need to withdraw from the activity.

Assessment

There is only a very little to say about assessment, but it is very important. On the basis of the information available to them, as mentioned above, participants assess the activity and decide whether to proceed with an application. And on the basis of the information provided by them, the participants are assessed by

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS
ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

the organisers, who decide whether to accept their applications. Both sides of this assessment process are absolutely essential.

Agreement

Prospective participants who are assessed as suitable then have a very important choice to consider. If they are to proceed, they must make a commitment to co-operate with the facilitators, and especially to *accept safety directions* from them. This cannot be negotiated – it is an absolute requirement. There are other matters requiring agreement between participants and organisers, which I will discuss fairly soon, but none is as important as this one.

The agreement of each prospective participant to comply with safety directions is usually adhered to. If it were not, the participant would have to be asked to leave. But co-operative participants are overwhelmingly the norm – and they themselves create an atmosphere in which troublesome tendencies simply do not flourish. Indeed, the participants are usually just as determined to prevent problems as the facilitators themselves are.

Although that is the most important agreement, it is not the only one that is necessary. Here is a list of suggested agreements for prospective participants to enter into, including the one already mentioned:

- to accept safety directions from facilitators (this is the most important agreement)
- to attend in a satisfactory state of health, and free of the influence of any non-prescribed drugs or alcohol
- to report any changes in the previously disclosed medical or psychiatric conditions to a facilitator

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

- to maintain complete confidentiality about anything which is overheard (it should not even be discussed with the owner of the information, unless raised by them)
- to behave non-judgmentally as regards disclosures made by other participants, even if unable to refrain from judgmental thoughts about them
- to use the same (allocated and identified) rubber hose at all times, so that it cannot pose a cross infection risk
- to report any contamination of the environment by blood or other potential hazards to a facilitator immediately

In addition to a list of agreements such as the one given above, a formal consent procedure must be followed. It is true that the participants imply their willingness to be involved, by attending the activity. However, informed, explicit, written consent is also necessary, and must form part of the registration process. The exact procedure varies with time and place, so it will need to be researched during the preparations. It is essential that the consent procedure complies with local regulations, otherwise it will be ineffectual.

All the requirements mentioned above, along with any others added by the organisers (or their legal advisers) need to be explained to each participant, and must be properly understood before they are accepted. The participant's agreement should then be given in writing as well as verbally. This may all seem rather officious, but quite apart from its legal necessity, it is really the only way of being sure that the essentials are understood by all concerned.

There is still one aspect of agreement that I have not discussed under the present heading, and that is *permission*. Unless the participants are convinced that they have the permission of the facilitators to express their feelings, and also give *themselves* permission to do so, little progress will be made. This will have

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

been explained in the information given to participants as part of the registration process. The reminder "give yourself permission" is also popular with facilitators during the activity.

Facilitators

As with participants, the minimum number of facilitators is one. However, the number of participants actively encouraged to externalise *at one time* should not exceed the number of facilitators present. Of course, the number externalising intensely *without* active encouragement may sometimes exceed the number of facilitators. That cannot be helped.

When more than one facilitator is present, it is necessary that one of them acts as the director of the session. Occasionally, a procedural decision will be necessary during the activity, and it is not practicable to hold a meeting and take a vote at such a time. The director should be an experienced facilitator who is trusted by the other facilitators present.

The director and the other facilitators must obviously be chosen by the organisers, who will presumably be influenced by qualities such as those suggested below. All facilitators must agree to accept the leadership of the director, and specifically to cease acting as a facilitator if the director considers this to be necessary.

They must also be in satisfactory mental and physical health, agree to disclose relevant medical or psychiatric conditions, maintain complete confidentiality and attend the activity free of the influence of non-prescribed drugs or alcohol. If any participants are minors, a police check will be required in many jurisdictions. In some jurisdictions, this may be required regardless of the age of the participants.

The facilitator's role should be formalised by a written agreement. This may be more complex if they are paid

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

employees, as local employment regulations will have to be complied with. However, volunteers also need to negotiate a clear agreement with those organising the activity, and local regulations may be relevant to this agreement also.

I mentioned earlier that the facilitators provide more than just encouragement. They bring considerable personal resources to a dedicated helping role, which includes encouraging, guiding and educating the participants, and especially, *keeping them safe* while they do their work. The facilitators are thus critical to both the safety and efficacy of the venture.

Not everyone is suitable for this role. Tertiary qualifications in some aspect of health care are certainly no guarantee of suitability. Some facilitators might come from a mental health background, but many will not. It is an essentially practical task, and the best preparation for it is experience – experience of life, experience as a participant, and supervised experience as a facilitator.

However, together with such preparation, certain qualities are very important in a facilitator. I will describe the main qualities that I see as necessary for the role under six headings – *personality, attitudes, knowledge, skills, experience* and *focus*. Of course, some qualities might have an entry under more than one heading – and others might not fit very neatly under any.

Personality

In general terms, personality refers to a person's individual way of being, acting, reacting and relating. It excludes the universal characteristics of *Homo sapiens*, and it also excludes most innate and acquired qualities of a physical or intellectual nature (though it may be influenced by them). Consequently, it is primarily the result of emotional and social attributes.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Because personality is such a broad quality, it can often influence, or be influenced by, other qualities – especially attitudes. In fact, a good case could be made for including attitudes within personality. Also because personality is such a broad quality, the few comments I am going to make about it will be dwarfed by the magnitude of their subject. However, I hope this will not render them completely invisible.

One aspect of personality which is very important to the role of facilitator is a deep seated and sincere *urge to help*. This is related to the qualities of sympathy, empathy and compassion, which were excluded from membership of the proopathy club, earlier in the book – but are not expected to receive quite such short shrift in my *Philosophical Musings*¹.

Another very important quality is the *ability to remain calm* (and not just superficially) while all hell breaks loose. It is necessary for a facilitator to maintain a congruent² equanimity in the face of rage, terror, despair etc. Not to do so would tend to contradict the first premise of the activity – that the sharing of *any* feeling is not only acceptable in every way, but is in fact strongly encouraged as an essential part of the process.

In other words, just as the participants must give themselves permission to share feelings, the facilitators must give the participants permission to share feelings. And this permission will be interpreted as specious, if any communication from a facilitator, whether verbal or non-verbal, suggests that anything about the sharing of feelings is not OK.

¹ *Philosophical Musings*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² Congruent communication is discussed in *Notes on Communication*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

Congruent equanimity is not really feasible if the emotions being expressed cause great distress to the facilitator. Consequently, most people need to have done a lot of work on their own pool of pain before they are capable of acting in this role. Perhaps there are exceptions, but for practical purposes I think this quality should at least be tested by working as a participant – which will also help to develop it further.

I would like to include a *non-judgmental attitude* here, as an essential aspect of the personality of a facilitator – but I accept that, logically, it belongs under the next heading. However, the ability to *actually be non-judgmental* – and therefore to show it congruently – probably does have a foot in the personality camp. So I am going to put it under both headings. If that is an honour, it deserves it. It is probably the most important of all the essential qualities that a facilitator needs.

Attitudes

As promised, here is the repetition. The only *essential* attitude for a facilitator to possess is the non-judgmental attitude mentioned above. Importantly, as I hinted there, it must be more than skin deep. And it will be very clear, from a facilitator's non-verbal output during a session, just how deep, or shallow, this attitude is.

If you do not have a non-judgmental attitude, the best way to grow one is to externalise as much as possible of your own pool of pain, and evaluate that process as you go along. It is mainly guilt, shame and beliefs, largely laid down during childhood, which keep judgmental attitudes alive. You will like being free of them – and so will everyone you know.

There are other attitudes which are helpful, though not essential. Like all attitudes, they will shine like a beacon, via

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

non-verbal signals, to anyone who is working with their feelings. These other attitudes include:

- the attitude that the activity itself is worth doing
- the attitude that the participant really can discover – and release – the contents of their pool of pain
- the attitude that there is no such thing as a feeling which is too bad to share – or too painful to let go of
- the attitude that life keeps getting better and better as the painful emotions are left behind
- the attitude that goodness exists within all people – and can find its way to the surface if given the chance

I am sure you can think of plenty of others. But the only absolutely *essential* attitude is the *non-judgmental* one.

Knowledge

Knowledge is, in many ways, the least important heading. This is not rocket science, after all. It is far more important – to survival as well as happiness – than rocket science, but it is not a knowledge-intensive discipline. A basic understanding of emotions is the main knowledge that is needed. This might have been gained during childhood, or later in life. Some of it may come from study, but its application is mainly practical.

Obviously, it is also essential to be well versed in the methods of externalisation to be used, and especially how to keep participants safe while using them. This will be discussed under Methods and Equipment. At least one of the facilitators should also be trained in first aid (which of course includes skills as well as knowledge) even though accident or illness during the activity is uncommon, and almost always minor. A first aid kit, and a telephone, should also be available.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

When assessing participants for suitability, someone with knowledge of clinical psychology or psychiatry should ideally be involved. This person need not be a facilitator, though. If such a person is not available, a medical report on each participant provides a partial solution.

Skills

I mentioned the methods of externalisation under Knowledge, but those methods also include a small but important element of skill. However, the main skills that a facilitator needs are *communication skills*. These, as previously mentioned, are outside the scope of this book¹, but I will mention two aspects of communication here. The first is an ability to provide necessary input with minimal interruption. For example, a single word or a slight gesture can easily encourage continued expression, or point out that something is missing. On the other hand, a whole sentence tends to wake up the participant's intellect – which will be very useful for the next E, but is more often a liability during this one.

The second particularly important communication skill is the ability to make routine use of all input and output channels simultaneously – with the outputs all being congruent. This is a tall order. Indeed, it is impossible to achieve by artifice alone; and it is especially likely to fail when something less than the whole truth is being communicated.

In that situation – which is not uncommon when working with vulnerable clients – a number of factors influence the result. Careful attention to the nuts and bolts of the communication

¹ An introduction to these skills is provided in Notes on Communication, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

process, as a routine and effortless habit, is just the beginning. Some familiarity with one's own pool of pain is also essential.

Adding the regular practice of non-judgmental self-awareness, as previously discussed, should gradually result in a modicum of self knowledge. That in turn makes it possible for something less than the whole, mercilessly unvarnished truth to be communicated without causing conflict in the mind of the communicator. And *that* in turn makes it reasonably likely that the communication will be made congruently via all channels.

Some may question the need to communicate less than the whole truth. After all, brutally unfiltered honesty will usually result in congruent communication, without requiring any special skills. But it is better for the participant to choose the rate at which the truth is explored, rather than suddenly being interred beneath an uninvited mountain of it. And to avoid that, it is sometimes necessary to save part of the truth for later.

Experience

The most important specific experience needed is previous *and* recurrent experience as a *participant* in facilitated intense catharsis. This has also been mentioned under other headings. It is simply essential to have experience of the method, if you intend to facilitate the process yourself. In this context, one practice is worth a thousand words. After that, experience working as a facilitator, initially under supervision, will provide further learning opportunities for as long as it is done.

There is not very much that can be said about the general aspects of experience, except that they are very important here – as they are in any field of endeavour. Life comes with experience as a non-optional extra, but I think some sorts are particularly applicable to work as a facilitator.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Working in fields such as (but not limited to) mental health care, dementia care, hospice care, or education is likely to be very useful. So is living in a refugee camp or a prison, going through a divorce, suffering a bereavement or losing a job or business. In other words, any experience involving the *emotions* can be useful background training for a facilitator.

Focus

A facilitator must give undivided attention to the participant working on feelings. Also, the majority of facilitators must remain in role until the last participant has left. Assuming a willingness to do the job, the only threat to this focus is the facilitator's own unfinished business.

Triggering of a facilitator's own unfinished business is not an infrequent occurrence, because the work being done by the participants subjects everyone in the room to a wide range of powerful stimuli. However, whatever is triggered cannot always be dealt with immediately.

Depending on its nature, an emerging issue might be dealt with by deferring it to a later occasion, working on it briefly with another facilitator, continuing the activity as a participant or withdrawing from part or all of the remaining duration of the activity. This would be determined by the director. Externalisation by a facilitator during the activity must always be managed, because working as a facilitator requires a clear and steady focus on the participant. Like a medical or surgical procedure, it cannot simply be interrupted at random.

The above possibilities should cause little or no disruption as long as all the facilitators have previously done considerable personal growth work – and continue to do this work as and when necessary. Without that essential preparation, most

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

people would find the role of facilitator too painful, fulfil it very badly, or (most likely) both.

Methods & Equipment

The Basic Process

Unless already experiencing strong feelings, the participant is encouraged to talk about something which recently caused distress. If no recent example is forthcoming, previous material can be revisited.¹ Using the minimum of words, the facilitator encourages attention to the feelings involved, and then moves the focus to expression of those feelings, using any of the many safe methods available.

Firstly, gentle methods of externalisation such as talking and crying, which were discussed under Gentle Expression, are not redundant here. They are included at every level of intensity. In this case, whenever the feeling being expressed requires it, the repertoire can be expanded to include shouting, screaming, swearing, howling, moaning and any other noises and contortions imaginable, no matter how loud.

That does not mean that any activity at all can be employed. Only methods which are effective for the participant and safe for all concerned are allowed. In practice, this usually means the methods already described under Gentle Expression, and two more techniques which will be described here.

¹ Specific techniques, including psychodrama and the sharing of experiences in large groups, can also be used to help participants get in touch with feelings preparatory to cathartic work, but are not essential.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

In the first of those extra techniques, a piece of rubber compressor hose, approximately 45 centimetres in length¹ and 4 centimetres in diameter, is used to beat upon something inanimate, to aid in the expression of antipathy. A rubber hose can make a lot of noise, but is not nearly as dangerous as a solid object, if anyone inadvertently gets in the way of it.

I don't actually remember anyone ever being struck by such a hose, but it is possible, so solid objects must not be used. If the hose is too long, incidentally, it can bounce back and hit the person holding it. If this occurs, the hose should be shortened, a centimetre at a time, until its rebound is controlled.

Suitable targets for the rubber hose include a roll of carpet, a log of wood or a plentiful supply of old phone books. A mattress can also be used as a target, but it will wear out quite quickly. The floor is not a suitable target, as the beater's knuckles make contact with it. A log of wood used as a target may need to be covered with carpet, so that splinters do not break off and fly around.

Any other target which can release projectiles must also be modified or avoided. The same principle applies to the rubber hose itself – hence the use of compressor hose, which has a composite construction, including a fibre mesh layer with high tensile strength. But it is still possible for a piece near one end to become loose, in which case that piece must be removed.

If phone books are used as targets for the hose, they shed lots of bits of paper as they disintegrate. But that is not a problem –

¹ The optimal length varies with factors such as stiffness, density and elasticity, and must be determined after sourcing the tubing to be used. If too long, it tends to bounce back. If too short, the knuckles strike the target.

in fact, it can be very satisfying for the beater. There is a symbolic significance in reducing the object of wrath to shreds.

While a participant is beating with a rubber hose, it is sometimes necessary for the facilitator to provide redirection, if there is a tendency to stray from the target – which could conceivably place other participants at risk of injury.

As previously mentioned, safety directions given by a facilitator are not negotiable – a participant who cannot accept safety directions from the facilitators cannot safely engage in the activity. I have never seen it happen, but as a last resort, the participant would have to be asked to leave.¹

The other extra method of externalisation, which joins the repertoire when all the prerequisites for facilitated intense catharsis are met, is for the participant to lie on their back on a mattress and "throw a tantrum" – using the voice and tear ducts to good effect at the same time. The rubber hose is *not* used during this form of expression – and the participant does *not* turn over to adopt a lateral, prone or hands and knees position (unless mandated by physical illness).

The mattress itself must be sufficiently large, thick and firm to prevent injury due to insufficiently padded contact with the floor. It needs to be much firmer than most mattresses used for sleeping, and should not contain springs, which might break and become dangerous after extended use. It may be necessary to source suitably firm foam first, and then arrange covers.

¹ That in turn could raise safety issues. The participant would need to emerge from any intense feelings before leaving. Transport would have to be considered, and it is possible that someone might need to remain with the person for a time, or arrange for a friend or relative to do so.

There must be a facilitator at the head end of the mattress, who must ensure that the participant stays *on* the mattress and safely away from its edges, as well as maintaining an approximately supine position. As with redirection of a straying beater, these requirements are not negotiable, because they impact on safety. In any other position there is some potential for injury, either to the participant or to others in the vicinity.

The facilitator must scrupulously avoid encroaching on any airspace which could conceivably be reached by the participant's arms, legs or head, to avoid either inhibiting the participant's tantrum behaviour, or being injured. A facilitator who remains alert, focused on the participant and in the correct position – near the head end of the mattress, but not too close to the head – is very unlikely to be struck.

Incidentally, whenever *not* lying on a mattress, a participant must be in a standing, sitting or kneeling position – otherwise the body, and especially the head, could be injured by contact with the floor. Any tendency to adopt an unsafe position must be quickly noticed by a facilitator, so that the participant can be redirected, usually to a mattress, until less distressed.

Whatever method of externalisation is in use, the participant is provided with encouragement and guidance by a facilitator when and if necessary. Frequently, the sum total of this input is simply the presence of the facilitator nearby. At most other times, input is limited to a few quiet words, or else to entirely non-verbal communication.

The quality of the facilitator's non-verbal communication is of critical importance at all times – for example, a slight change of facial expression when a participant shares some information could easily be construed as disapproval. Added to the participant's existing diffidence about self-disclosure, this might be enough to halt the externalisation process in its tracks.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Complications

What might go wrong during the procedures described – and what is necessary to keep the practice safe for all concerned? The most essential needs for safety are the careful screening of participants, the careful choice of facilitators and the absolute requirement that participants must comply with safety directions from facilitators. These issues have all been discussed above.

Almost everything else that has been discussed above also has some bearing on safety. Most of the regulation of the process, however, is provided by example, aided considerably by the fact that the participants are invariably there to free themselves of pain – not to create trouble for themselves or others. The facilitators, and also any participants who have prior experience of the method, create a non-verbal atmosphere of mutual respect, tolerance and kindness. In this atmosphere, deliberate violence, whether to self or others, is most unlikely.

However, the slightest tendency towards unsafe behaviour must immediately elicit redirection by a facilitator on safety grounds. In most cases, the participant should be directed to return to the log or mattress and to work on externalisation of the current feelings, using the safe methods provided. The availability of safe methods of externalisation is the key here, as it provides a safe outlet for the very feelings which were motivating the previous unsafe behaviour.

While it is possible that a participant might not accept the directions given, it is also true that every person present is there because of a strong determination to make things better – not worse. Any seriously antisocial behaviour is therefore most unlikely. In fact, I think it would be far more likely to occur at a bus stop, or a cinema. Certainly I have never come across any such thing during EEEEs work, regardless of its intensity.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Agreement to attend unaffected by drug or alcohol use was mentioned under Participants. With the exception of prescribed medication, which should at least be of some benefit and is sometimes essential, the EEEEs method should not be attempted under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Not only are emotional perceptions likely to be distorted, but insight gained as a result of the process may well be diminished – or even completely inaccurate.

That is not to say that EEEEs work has nothing to offer to drug users. Almost all drug users suffer great emotional pain, which is often the main thing motivating their use of drugs. The relief obtained from their drug use is, unfortunately, temporary – and comes at a price far higher than the street value of the drugs.¹ EEEEs work would give far more relief, with less candy but no poison (see footnote). However, participants should be drug free, or nearly so, while doing the work.

The transitional distress around the time of closure and departure, and the repercussions which sometimes occur after that, are not really complications, but rather normal responses. These issues, although peripherally related to the current heading, have their own headings below.

Infection Control

This heading admittedly has no direct relevance to emotions, but I have decided to include it because facilitated intense

¹ Most illegal drugs have adverse effects as well as a withdrawal syndrome. This is one of the "poisoned candy" aspects of such drugs – the other main ones being their lack of quality control (sometimes dangerously pure, sometimes dangerously adulterated) and the very unenjoyable life of crime which tends to result from the high prices created by law enforcement.

<p>FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE</p>
--

catharsis is so often carried out in a group setting. It seems to me a great pity to reduce the benefit of such an activity by bringing home a new illness – especially if it is a serious one. However, if you are not involved in organising group activities, you may wish to skip this heading.

Whenever a number of people gather in one place, it is possible for infectious conditions to be transmitted between them. This can occur either directly or indirectly. As one obvious example, if more than one person has an accessible scratch, graze, laceration or ulcer, and at least one of them is infectious, then various serious infections, including hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV, could be transferred.

This type of cross infection is possible whenever a body fluid such as blood, containing the infectious agent, contacts non-intact skin or mucous membrane – or sometimes, intact mucous membrane. In some cases, an amount of blood or other body fluid too small to see may be sufficient to transfer infection.

Although the original source of infections like these is usually a person, the immediate source can be a different person, or an inanimate object, in cases where either has previously become contaminated. Such contamination may involve a number of intermediate steps. For example, an infectious person could be scratched by a damaged door handle, leaving some blood on it.

The next person to use the door could get a little blood on their fingers, but not be scratched – and might then work with the nearest rubber hose (though that is strictly forbidden). The owner of that hose could later hold it in perfectly healthy hands, and subsequently rub or scratch an itchy eye. This is a very roundabout way to contract a life threatening infection – but that will be no consolation to the person who gets sick.

The above example may give the impression that cross infection is almost inevitable – but nothing could be further

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

from the truth. The risk can be brought very close to zero, if the appropriate precautions are taken. And those precautions are not complicated or difficult – they are, in fact, just basic hygiene – which should be known by every child at school.

Having said that, it must be admitted that the hygiene measures to prevent cross infection by blood and other body fluids were greatly neglected until the discovery of HIV/AIDS – which, though far from being the only example, raised awareness of this method of transmission very greatly.¹ Anyway, I will briefly mention the main principles of infection control in a general community setting.²

The first principle is to apply all the basic cross infection precautions *universally*. If you wait until you know of a person with a transmissible infection before you practise good hygiene, the first person you know of with such an infection will probably be yourself. And by that time, there may be many other cases – most of which were also preventable.

The second principle, in very general terms, is to know how transfer can occur, and use that knowledge to prevent it from occurring. In the case of transmission by blood, probably the most important (but not the only) precaution is to cover any areas of damaged skin with a dressing capable of preventing infectious material from getting in or out. I will not consider other examples here, except to say that, unless you know the

¹ A similar neglect has long existed in the case of cross infection by respiratory tract droplets and aerosols. However, despite considerable concern about the emergence of new respiratory tract pathogens, this neglect continues at the time of writing.

² Infection control in a medical clinic or hospital also employs these basic principles, but adds aseptic techniques, protective clothing and additional precautions which are determined by the particular infections involved.

exceptions, it is best to treat every body fluid, and every body surface or cavity, as possible opportunities for transmission.

In the case of respiratory tract infections, there is something to be said for affected people wearing surgical masks to reduce the dissemination of infectious droplets.¹ This almost certainly reduces the risk of infecting others – some of whom might become much more severely ill than the person donating the infection. It is common practice in Japan, but has been very slow to catch on elsewhere.

When masks are not worn, the next best practice is to remain at least one metre away from other people, and cover every cough or sneeze, so that droplets are not sprayed so widely. Handwashing, as below, and safe disposal of tissues, are also necessary, in order to reduce environmental contamination.

Handwashing is the third principle. It is perhaps rather boring, but nevertheless critically important. An alcohol based lotion designed to provide an equivalent effect is an alternative means of cleaning the hands, and is often more convenient. The main times to clean the hands are *after* touching anything which could transfer infective material to them, and *before* touching anything which needs to be kept clean.

A very few examples of the former situation are after coughing, sneezing, nose-blowing, attending to a wound, going to the toilet or handling objects which may not be clean. A very few examples of the latter situation are before touching the

¹ An ordinary surgical mask, worn by a person with a cold, partially protects *other* people, by reducing both direct and indirect transfer of infective respiratory droplets. A fine-particle (N95) mask, on the other hand, partially protects the *wearer* from those droplets, and also from aerosols which can spread many respiratory infections, including influenza and tuberculosis.

nose, mouth or eyes, attending to a wound, preparing or eating food, or handling objects which will later be used by others.

The fourth principle is to clean the environment routinely, at suitable intervals, and also to remove any known contamination promptly and effectively. This needs to be interpreted broadly, to include, for example, ensuring that any food, beverages, utensils or other objects provided are free of infective or toxic material. Local public health authorities should be approached for more specific advice about all this.

Attention to these four principles makes cross infection during everyday activities much less likely. However, for best results, both dressings and cleanup should be done by someone with first aid or similar training. Although the procedures themselves are simple, there are plenty of ways to render them ineffective – even with the best intentions. Also, good infection control is not a substitute for recommended immunisations.

Apart from the general principles mentioned above, there are also some precautions particular to our current context. One of these relates to the possibility of contamination of the lengths of rubber hose used when externalising antipathy. Using the hose very vigorously can sometimes cause skin abrasion, but another possible source of contamination would be an existing breach in the skin, which had not been covered immediately.

To prevent cross infection via rubber hoses, each participant should be provided with their own hose, clearly labelled with their name – and must only use that one. The cost of each hose, incidentally, is trivial if the tubing is bought in bulk.

It must always be remembered that a hose (or anything else) which looks clean is not necessarily safe. As mentioned above, an invisible amount of blood can transmit some infections, especially hepatitis B. Also, the residues of other body fluids may not be easily seen, especially at the cut ends of the hose.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS
ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

The body fluids likely to be produced during externalisation are sweat, tears, saliva, nasal secretions and sputum. Unless they are bloodstained, these fluids are not, at the time of writing (2008) considered to be significant modes of transmission for the three viruses mentioned above. Some of them can, however, transmit various other infections – for example, conjunctivitis or influenza.

In the case of the mattresses used during externalisation, the basic principle is not to continue using a mattress if it becomes contaminated. It is also not wise to borrow mattresses which are in domestic use at other times, although suitable mattress covers would reduce the risks associated with prior contamination. Practical issues of decontamination of mattresses or their covers should be discussed with local public health or infection control authorities, as various methods exist and preferences vary with place and time.

Exclusion of persons suffering from infections which pose a public health risk, such as open tuberculosis, is also important. This is a complex issue, and regulations vary with time and place. The person's doctor, with the help of local public health or infection control authorities, should be consulted about this.

Closure and Departure

When a session of facilitated intense catharsis comes to an end, some transitional activities are necessary before the participants return to the "normal" world. Otherwise, the sudden change from the exhausting and disturbing actions and feelings experienced during the session, to the activities of daily life – and the behaviour of "normal" people – can be quite a shock. Transitional activities also allow time for the acute edge of any repercussions (discussed below) to settle down.

<p>FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE</p>
--

As extreme exhaustion is very likely, the first activity might well be a brief guided relaxation, while the participants find a more restful use for the mattresses, or perhaps the floor. Very brief educational input relating to the EEEEs process itself is an alternative activity while participants rest. However, when more than a few of the participants are snoring, the lecture has probably gone on long enough.

If it has not already been done, information about follow-up options should also be provided at this time. If it has been discussed previously, this is a good time to include a reminder about it. Follow-up is discussed under the next heading.

In many (perhaps most) countries, once the participants are a little rested, there is a tendency for every person present to hug every other person present – sometimes more than once. As previously mentioned, this would usually be counterproductive during the externalisation process. In the transitional phase, however, it has significant benefits, and should be suggested by a facilitator if it does not occur spontaneously.

It is unlikely, in this environment, that the least handsome or glamorous participants would be passed over, while others exchanged hugs. However, if that did occur, it should be noted by the facilitators, who could then restore the balance. (In doing so, they would also be modelling appropriate behaviour, which would inevitably be copied by various participants.)

As mentioned earlier, a hug can provide non-verbal evidence of non-judgmental acceptance, which can be very valuable to those participants (usually all of them) who have been working with shame or guilt during the session. It also has the beneficial effect of moving the focus from intense personal feelings back to everyday social interactions.

Perhaps a hug also allows the exchange of beneficial interpersonal things which cannot be seen or measured. This,

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

of course, cannot be proved – but then, it cannot be disproved, either. It can certainly be suspected, though – as many people do. In any event, hugs in all directions tend to create a good atmosphere, resulting in a relatively calm group of participants.

It does not usually take long before there is a general feeling of readiness to depart. Daily living activities can usually be resumed remarkably soon after intense catharsis. But if not, then tea and biscuits could be a suitable device for finding a little more time to acclimatise before departure.

There may be a participant who appears to need help with transport home, or perhaps continuing support until reunited with friends or family. One or more participants who are not in a state of distress will usually undertake this task. If not, it falls to one or more of the facilitators – whose job is not finished until all participants have been returned to a safe state.

Follow-up

Many participants will not require any specific follow-up after the activity, which may simply represent one aspect of a broader approach to their own emotional healing or personal growth. Others will have a range of options, perhaps including formal counselling, already in place. However, some participants may be in need of ongoing support, and may not know of any suitable options.

Sometimes, the organisation providing the activity will also be a provider of other services, which might include ongoing support groups, evening or weekend externalisation sessions, or individual counselling. However, when this is not the case, it should still be possible for participants to contact the organisers for advice about the availability of such services from other providers. At the very least, a participant who is experiencing severe difficulties should be advised to seek medical review.

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

Time and Place

Apart from convenience, there are only two really important points about the *timing* of intense catharsis. First, there must be sufficient time after the end of the session for participants to rest, both physically and emotionally, before returning to work or engaging in any other demanding activity. And second, if an important examination, or some similar challenge, is approaching, it is probably best to avoid very intense catharsis for some weeks, or even months, beforehand. However, the need to postpone catharsis would need to be balanced against the need for release of pent up emotions, in any given case.

The choice of venue is a little more complex. The physical requirements are very simple, but are also very important. The room to be used must be in a safe state of repair (including access and exits). It must comply with local fire and other safety regulations. It must be large enough to accommodate the number of participants and facilitators who will be attending. And it must be capable of being secured sufficiently to prevent unwanted visitors from entering or watching through windows.

Permission to use the room for this harmless but very noisy purpose must be obtained from the owner or agent. Permission to make noise must also be obtained from any neighbours who will be affected by it. Neglecting either of these essentials is certain to cause problems, and could even stop the activity.

The room should be simply equipped with mattresses, tissues and some means of energetic expression of antipathy, as discussed under Methods and Equipment. Seats should be available around the edges of the room. Access to toilets should not require leaving the safe environment of the venue.

There should be a notice placed on the outside of the door, such as GRIEF COUNSELLING IN PROGRESS. Details including a phone number could be added, in case the person

FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE

reading the sign is interested in future sessions. Even better, a person could be available outside the room, to explain the activity if anyone enquires. In some locations, the presence of security personnel may also be necessary.

In practice, however, it should not be particularly difficult to find a venue. Community centres and church halls can often be used for this purpose, after the method has been fully explained. Residential workshops can often be accommodated in religious retreats or seminar centres.

Perspective

To put the above description of prerequisites in perspective, it is worth remembering that facilitated intense catharsis is just *one* form of externalisation. Externalisation, in turn, is just *one* of the four Es in the Emotional EEEEs approach to the healing of painful emotions. EEEEs work itself, whether it is done as part of Wanterfall work, or alone, is just *one* way of reducing emotional suffering. And reducing emotional suffering is just *one* of the various useful things that can be done in relation to the human mind.

The third E of the EEEEs process, especially when seen in this most extreme form, is often rather dramatic. Not only can it provide dramatic improvements, but the process itself is often dramatically noisy and untidy. This might attract you, or it might repel you. But it need not do either – and ideally, it would not do either. It is simply a matter of finding problems and fixing them. In this, it has much in common with surgery.

In attempting to restore the physical body to health, we do not shrink from surgical operations which examine, modify or remove the cause. But a surgeon must have a very good knowledge of anatomy, and no little knowledge of physiology,

<p>FACILITATED INTENSE CATHARSIS IS NOT SAFE UNLESS ALL THE DESCRIBED PREREQUISITES ARE IN PLACE</p>
--

if the procedure is to be safe – not to mention good eyesight, a steady hand and various technical skills.

No, I have not forgotten the scalpel. Certainly, it is also essential. But the scalpel is the *last* thing needed. If it were employed in the absence of the prerequisites just mentioned, it would be anybody's guess what the result would be. But it would probably not be pretty.

Well, if the emotional part of a person is sick, why shrink from procedures which examine, modify or remove the cause? In this case, surely, a very good knowledge of the anatomy of emotions would be needed. And some knowledge of their ramifications. The sight that sees emotions (and more) is self awareness. The steady hand is the non-judgmental attitude.

Those are the essentials, if the procedure of emotional repair is to be safe. And facilitated intense catharsis is somewhat analogous to the surgeon's knife. In other words, it is sometimes essential, but can only be wielded safely when it is the *last* thing in the chain of knowledge, skill and experience.

Why do I mention these things? Simply because I do not want you to confuse the latter parts of this book with its essence. Certainly, the latter parts of the book are important – especially, perhaps, the procedure of facilitated intense catharsis – but it is the earlier parts that make them possible.

Evaluate

- *Encourage*
- *Explore*
- *Express*
- *Evaluate*

Finally, there is a role for the intellect! Earlier in this process, the intellect tends to "run interference", rationalising and trivialising the emerging feelings. Indeed, it can mount a very persuasive case, based largely on childhood conditioning and societal prejudice, for not exploring feelings at all.

However, after feelings have been experienced and externalised, an intellectual overview of the situation can provide valuable insights, and may also suggest appropriate actions. The intellect then has a continuing role in planning and executing those actions.

In our present context, evaluation means carefully considering what has emerged, appraising, weighing up, pondering and reviewing it all – from every possible angle. In other words, it means thinking carefully *about* the feelings – and what precipitated them – in an attempt to understand them better, and to integrate them with the rest of one's experience.

The Wanterfall chart is useful here, as it can act as a sort of corkboard on which to hang new insights – or, for that matter, new uncertainties. When enough experiences and ideas are hanging where they seem to belong on the Wanterfall chart, a much clearer picture of the causes of unhappiness may emerge. This does not immediately banish those causes, but it does tend to put them on notice.

I hope the above comments did not give the impression that evaluation is necessarily complex. On the contrary, it frequently provides the simplest possible view of what may previously have seemed so complicated as to be utterly baffling. Evaluation is basically just thinking about things.

During evaluation, some of the mental mistakes corrected by modern psychotherapies like Cognitive Behaviour Therapy¹ may well be noticed. However, it is important not to focus too much on mechanisms before externalisation is complete. There are certainly many self-help techniques, as well as many professional therapies, which can reduce emotional suffering. But unresolved emotions are the underlying cause of emotional distress. They are like a foreign body embedded in a vital organ – and it is always better to find and remove the foreign body *before* closing the wound.

Or, to put it another way, Evaluate is the *last* E. Most of us have a tendency to aim the intellect at emotions as a *first* response, neglecting the other three Es and hoping that we can fix everything with a relentless bombardment of brainpower. This would be a very attractive proposition, if it only worked. Sometimes, it seems to – for a while. But true healing of emotional pain requires *all four* Es.

¹ The basic principles of Cognitive Behaviour Therapy are explained in an appendix to *A Few Self-Help Techniques*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) which will be available from www.wanterfall.com at a future date.

REPERCUSSIONS

Apparent complications quite often follow EEEEs work. This may give the impression that something has gone wrong, but in fact it usually means that something has gone right – and is still going right. Repercussions basically just need to be understood, after which they will frequently prove beneficial. There are two main sorts of repercussion that you might encounter.

The first is due to the "string of pearls" effect discussed above under "Explore". Expressing one feeling frequently makes you aware of other feelings – which were previously hidden. This is beneficial in the long run, but it is not always welcome at the time that it occurs. That is hardly surprising. It means you have more work to do – just when you were feeling like a long rest!

In other words, getting in touch with one repressed emotion, or beginning to face a loss which has been partly or completely denied, is distressing enough. But getting in touch with more unexpected, uninvited emotions – especially a great flood of them – can seem quite overwhelming.

A person working with a counsellor quite often says "I feel much worse since talking to you". An experienced counsellor knows that this feeling is in fact usually a sign of progress. But do you know this? And, if you are not working with a counsellor, who is going to tell you?

That's easy. I am – twice. Once already, and now again. If you feel worse than ever, after externalising painful emotions, don't be surprised or dismayed. Far from being a true adverse effect, this type of emotional repercussion is a normal part of working with emotions, and is a definite sign that (a) you are making good progress and (b) you still have more good work to do.

The second type of repercussion is a feeling of intense shame following self-disclosure, either to a counsellor or to the other participants in a group session. Beforehand, you may have felt

that people would think incredibly badly of you if they knew more about you. Well, now they *do* know more about you – now, in fact, they know just exactly how revolting you are.

This feeling is less likely to be strong if all those present behaved non-judgmentally – both verbally and non-verbally – at the times of the disclosures. However, a truly non-judgmental attitude is a pearl of great price – and of remarkably small distribution. Therefore, when you are dying of shame, you may have to rely entirely on your own resources. Is this even remotely possible?

More than that – it is *entirely* possible. However, it is hard work until you get used to it. Here is what to do, one step at a time. First, remind yourself that expressing feelings is what you were there for in the first place – and feelings invariably come out with considerable information content.

It was your choice – indeed, it was the very best decision you could possibly have made. In sharing what was in your mind with those present, you have done exactly the right thing, in exactly the right way, at exactly the right time. You could not possibly have done better – because no better choices exist.

Next, apply this simple rule (you don't have to believe¹ it). *Anyone who disapproves of me is wrong.* I don't mean that they are wrong about you – after all, the information about you came directly from you, so it is probably absolutely correct. What I mean is, they are wrong, purely, simply and exactly, *because they disapprove.*

¹ As you probably remember, I think belief is an insult to the truth, because it is so often used to make something false seem true. (The adverse effects of belief were discussed in Section 3, under Conditioning.)

Disapproval is not only wrong, it is one of the chief causes of all the wrong in creation. It is a prime mover that sets person against person, group against group and, ultimately, nation against nation. So I trust you will be relieved to know that I am using the word "wrong" in the sense of "mistaken" – as in adding up figures and getting the wrong answer. Perish the thought that this book should disapprove of disapproval!

However, to say that disapproval is a mistake in every case, so that disapproval of disapproval is also a mistake, can easily be misunderstood. It might seem to suggest that everything should be viewed equally, that nothing is better or worse than anything else. But such an indiscriminate approach to life would not only be incredibly boring – it would also be utterly ridiculous.

To face life with intelligence and honesty inevitably involves discernment of differences. And discernment of differences will result in preferences, in many cases. Different observers will often have different preferences. And different preferences inevitably result in disagreement between different observers.

Have I just demolished my own argument? Not if disapproval is something different from discernment, preference and disagreement. And it is indeed *very* different from those things, although it is often associated with them. It has one extra ingredient that pollutes it totally – and twists it into error.

That ingredient is no stranger to readers who started at page 1 (highly recommended). It is the primary emotion *antipathy*. Antipathy, as you know, is one of the two primary emotions resulting from not getting what you want. A person who disapproves of you feels you should be different – effectively, they want you to be different. But they don't get what they want. That is not unusual, it is just another Wanterfall. But it is *their* Wanterfall and *their* problem – not yours.

In other words, a person who disapproves is "normal". That means that they have unfinished business – which inevitably reaches out its claws to mar their own happiness *and* that of anyone else who gets in their way. And that, finally, brings us back to you. You are getting in the way of the claws of the unfinished business of the person who disapproves of you.

If you can find it in your heart, feel sorry for this person. But if, like Propathy itself, you are not in possession of any sympathy, empathy or compassion¹, then just ignore them. Whatever else you do, do not feel bad as a result of their mistake. That would be using *your* mind to inflict the pain demanded by *their* error.

Come to think of it, you probably will make that mistake, at first. Everybody else does – why should you be any different? But when you make it, and feel the pain it causes, at least *notice the connection*. That mistake hurts you. You don't have to make it. So – don't. Or, if it seems impossible to stop, just make a plan that once, fairly soon, you will experiment with *not* saluting when a person who disapproves says "Suffer!"

In summary, disapproval is someone else's mistake – but it can easily become yours. You can make it yours, simply by agreeing – by disapproving of yourself. Then, you are your own enemy. And that is the *only* way that someone else's disapproval can cause you emotional pain.

Disapproval can, however, have other adverse effects. It might, for example, prevent a promotion. It might even lead to physical assault, in some cases. So, while the emotional aspects

¹ Sympathy, empathy and compassion were mentioned in Section 2 under Propathy, mainly to explain why they have no place in this book. They will be wondered about at greater length in Philosophical Musings, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com.

of disapproval should always be like the proverbial "water off a duck's back", it is still a good idea to watch your *own* back.

So be your own friend, and also your own guardian. There may be a zillion things about you that you would rather were different. Some of them may be excellent reasons for making changes. That is a very good reason to consider changes. But it is *not* a good reason to direct the cruel and destructive force of disapproval at yourself. There is no good reason for that prince of errors – there are only bad reasons for it.

Of course, it is easier to write about this, than it is to actually do it. Especially as a person who disapproves of you often does not say so in words. In fact, disapproval is very often expressed entirely non-verbally. Then, your first task is to *notice it consciously*. As long as you only feel it *unconsciously*, it is very difficult to refrain from co-operating with it. You just feel really bad, but you don't know why. *Always suspect disapproval when this occurs*. (Your own, or someone else's.)

Once you realise what is happening, there is absolutely no point in engaging the source of the evil in any debate about it. In fact, it is usually better to avoid them as much as possible, until you have finished working with the particular feelings involved. They should be much easier to put up with, then. I suppose, if you wait long enough, they might even be less judgmental – but that would depend on their work, not yours.

What if no one else disapproves of you, and yet you *still* disapprove of yourself – and you don't seem to be able to stop? Fair enough – we all make this mistake. Just remind yourself of the basic principle mentioned earlier. *Anyone who disapproves of me is wrong*. Well, anyone includes you – and in this case, you are the one who is making the mistake.

So your task now becomes – not to agree with yourself, on this particular point. Yourself is asking you to hurt yourself. Just

don't salute – and don't apply the prescribed torture, either. However, disapproval of self can be very difficult to let go of, and may require quite a lot more EEEEs work. This may often need to include facilitated intense catharsis, if available. Meanwhile, be patient with yourself – and try not to disapprove of yourself for being so stupid as to disapprove of yourself...

I have been talking about disapproval in the context of repercussions following EEEEs work. However, it is not limited to that situation. It is a pervasive evil – which is never far away. Now, as you know, this whole book is underpinned by the practice of *constant, non-judgmental self-awareness*.

The "non-judgmental" element is not there by accident. And it is *impossible* to practise non-judgmental self-awareness, unless a non-judgmental attitude to the world around you, and all the people in it, is adopted at the same time. This idea of a non-judgmental – which does *not* mean indiscriminate – approach to the whole of life, both inwardly and outwardly, is probably the most important idea in the book.

Anyway, back to repercussions. There is sometimes a third type of repercussion after EEEEs work, which is really a variant of the first type, in that it also depends on the awakening of previously buried feelings. In this case, however, it is the awakening of an urge to *retaliate*.

Retaliation – deliberately inflicting harm in the name of revenge, vengeance, retribution or whatever you like to call it – is a form of expression representing violent feelings found under the umbrella of antipathy. However, it is *not* a therapeutic expression. Far from resolving any issue, retaliation just creates another problem, to add to the original problem.

The most extreme example of this is the "blood feud" between families (and sometimes between countries) which continues

for many generations, healing nobody, but generating ever-increasing hatred as the population is culled on both sides.

So I am not in favour of retaliation. Although I think it is entirely understandable, I also think it is a terrible mistake. It may sometimes be a misguided attempt to make matters better, but instead it makes matters worse – often, for many other people, as well as for the individual with the feelings.

However, I am not you, and if you have been treated very badly, it is you who will decide whether to seek revenge – or healing. Your choice has nothing to do with me. But if you do choose revenge, do not expect it to help or heal you – or anybody else. Instead, it will cause a downward spiral of pain and anger, as it always does – for all concerned. And all concerned, of course, includes you. So if you ever face a choice between revenge and healing, think very carefully. It is probably the most important choice that you will ever make.

LAST WORDS

This brings the book *Wanterfall* to an end. The overall aim of this book has been to provide the theoretical basis and practical tools which could, hypothetically, bring the *Wanterfall* itself to an end. But that would be a very tall order. The goals of most readers are probably much more modest, and more realistic – which is not to say that they are in any way trivial. On the contrary, I would say that every single drop of emotional freedom benefits not only the individual, but all mankind.

On the other hand, the idea of freedom from the effects of the *Wanterfall*, whether in a modest or a more considerable way, can also be rather daunting. We are used to our dualistic approach to life, and anything unknown is always frightening. There is not much point in asking what we might gain – we cannot know that in advance. But what might we lose, if we choose to leave more and more of the *Wanterfall* behind?

I suppose that depends on whether the *Wanterfall* has anything to offer, that we would wish to keep. Have a look for yourself, and see if you can find anything on the *Wanterfall* chart that truly confers any long term benefit. I will be very surprised if you can. The *Wanterfall* causes untold suffering – it is very good at that. But it does no lasting good at all. Therefore, to whatever extent you abandon it, you will lose only your pain.

If you give up the endless struggle for freedom from fear, will you lose all hope of peace? Surely not, for it is the oscillation between hope and fear which *prevents* peace. If you walk away from the endless swing between pleasure and pain, are you abandoning joy? Probably not, for it is just when enjoyment is grasped as a pleasure – to hold onto – that it most often fails.

And if you cease to calculate your relationships on the ledger of propathy and antipathy, will relationship itself evaporate? This last question is perhaps the hardest. The warm and fuzzy feelings which shelter (while they last) beneath the umbrella of propathy, are often the very best things that we know.

So hope and fear we can probably dispense with, without incurring any loss. Pleasure and pain likewise, as long as joy is as much fun as pleasure (which perhaps remains to be seen). But can we afford to lose those nice warm things – including some of the meanings of the much overworked word, love – that beckon us from the shade of the umbrella of propathy?

I think that is something well worth wondering about. I have wondered about it quite a lot myself, while writing this book. However, I have removed the results of that wondering from the book, as they seem a bit philosophical – whereas this book is simply about the emotions of everyday life. I will publish them eventually, though – perhaps within a year or so.¹

I would say this about the emotions of propathy, though. They are certainly *emotions*. And, being emotions, they cannot possibly be depended on – because they themselves depend, and depend utterly, on the conditions which first gave them their apparent life. Plucked into existence from the propathy – antipathy continuum, they remain bound to that continuum forever. Change the conditions, and anything to do with propathy also changes – just like any other emotion.

That might give the impression that propathy could be left behind without incurring any real loss – just like the other primary emotions. But what if propathy were the sole

¹ Some of the author's philosophical ideas will appear in *Philosophical Musings*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

foundation of all human relationships? That could be rather disconcerting, to say the least. Personally, I don't think it is. However, I must refrain from exploring that question, or else I will find myself waxing philosophical, after all.

APPENDIX: NOTES ON THE CAUSES OF WANTING

In Section 1, under The Waterfall Model, I took the state of wanting something as my starting point. I did not consider the causes of that wanting, because you can understand the model – and later use it as the basis for EEEEs work or Waterfall work if you choose – without either knowing or caring *why* we want things in the first place.

However, for any readers who may be interested, I am appending a few comments on the causes of wanting. As mentioned earlier in the book, it is a significant degree of wanting that concerns us here, rather than an idle wondering about what might be nice, or a slight preference for a garment of this colour rather than that.

As far as causes are concerned, one thing seems clear at the outset. As with anything else, we could either start our lives with wants, or we could pick them up along the way – or we could do a bit of both. In other words, some wanting could be instinctive, and the rest would have to be acquired. If it were acquired, it would usually have to be learned – though the common meaning of learning would allow some exceptions to this rule.¹ I will talk about learned wanting first.

¹ The physiological element of dependence on a drug is acquired as a result of repeated administration of the drug. This is not learning in the usual sense of the word, but it does give rise to a state of wanting the drug. Other exceptions might be suggested, such as the state of wanting pain relief, as a result of the development of a painful condition. However, I think a high proportion of acquired wanting is the result of learning.

Learned Wanting

If I have ever enjoyed eating an ice cream, sailing a boat, making love, commanding a regiment – or absolutely anything else that I found pleasant – then I will want to have that pleasure again. I will want as much of it as possible, and as often as possible. Preferably, an unlimited supply.

If I have ever suffered as a result of having a toothache, being bullied at school, breaking up with a lover, having no money – or absolutely anything else that I found painful – then I will want to avoid that pain in future. I will want as little of it as possible, and as seldom as possible. Preferably, none at all.

In other words, if I have had pleasure of any sort, *I want more pleasure*. And if I have been hurt in any way, *I don't want to be hurt again*. This is learned wanting. Its roots are fixed in experience, its trunk carries the memories, and its branches spread out far and wide.

However, after some experience of life, it is not always necessary to have had prior experience of something, to be able to make a pretty good guess at whether we want it – or want to avoid it. This is an extension of learned wanting, based on a combination of experience and reasoning.

That last type, incidentally, can also be influenced by anything that affects our conditioning, as discussed in Section 3. Anything from the past behaviour of our parents, to the recent effects of advertising, might contribute to the direction and intensity of our wanting.

Instinctive Wanting

In addition to learned wanting, we also have – whether we like it or not – some instinctive desires. There are various definitions for instinct, but they are all along the lines of an

innate urge, tendency, behaviour or response which is typical of the species under consideration. From the point of view of the Watterfall model, instinctive wanting is neither more nor less important than any other sort of wanting. But there are some differences in the way in which it presents.

A learned desire is usually no surprise to us, though it may sink into the mind to the extent that we become less aware of it over time. However, instinctive desires seem to have permeated all levels of the mind *before* we become aware of them. They can, therefore, easily take us by surprise – and sometimes seem quite overwhelming.

Considering the many variables that influence human behaviour, the vagueness of the existing definitions and the complexity of biological systems in general, it is not surprising that there is no universally agreed list of human instincts. However, there is widespread agreement that they exist.

For the purposes of these notes, I am going to suggest that the main human instincts are *self-preservation, sex, family and society*. You can deduce from the previous paragraph that I am not expecting everyone to agree with this list. However, they are certainly all rich potential sources of wanting. I will discuss each one briefly, fairly soon.

Of the various other things that are sometimes put forward as instincts, the urges to satisfy basic needs for air, water, food, shelter, temperature regulation and security might well be considered as separate instincts. However, I prefer to include all these urges as part of the instinct for self-preservation.

Aggression is often called an instinct. It is, however, a behaviour with a variety of possible causes, many of which are not instinctive. Aggression in response to a threat can be instinctive – in which case it belongs under self-preservation.

Aggression in response to a rude gesture, however, is multifactorial in origin. The factors include wanting to avoid the pain remembered from previous instances of disrespect, triggering of unfinished business relating to those instances, individual and societal conditioning about various rights and duties relating to respect, and probably quite a few other factors which would depend on the particular case.

The urge to acquire language might be instinctive, but it could also be motivated by rewards. Alternatively, it could simply result from the exposure of a young brain to repeated learning opportunities.

Altruism, disgust, and the automatic responses to some non-verbal signals have sometimes been defined as instincts, too; but I think it is very difficult to separate these reactions from learned behaviours. Perhaps some of them could be included under the family and social instincts.

Reflex responses, such as those that occur when you tap a tendon or stroke the sole of the foot, have been described as instincts by some authors. However, I think that if reflexes are classified as instincts, you might as well include every innate, species-wide phenomenon which is the result of something else – including digestion, immune responses and perspiration.

I expect there are other things that are sometimes referred to as instincts, but I will just comment briefly on the four main ones that I referred to above. In any case, whether something is an instinct or not is of very little significance in Wanterfall work. It is the intensity of wanting that makes a Wanterfall powerful.

Self-Preservation

Any threat to personal safety almost invariably elicits a powerful attempt to control the dangerous factors or to escape

from them. Some of this is learned, but the innate part – which is considerable – is the self-preservation instinct.

All species exhibit strong responses to any threat. In many species, including humans, the initial response is the "fight or flight response".¹ Importantly, very little Wanterfalling occurs at the time of a serious threat – danger tends to demand undivided attention. And even if, as sometimes happens, fear paralyses the mind rather than being suppressed by the immediate practical needs, that paralysed state will not result in significant emotional resolution.

If there were ever any humans who used to waste time Wanterfalling when their lives were at immediate risk, perhaps they died out long ago – taking their genes with them.² At any rate, the urge to escape danger is an example of a strong desire which usually proceeds directly to *action*, rather than splitting into hope and fear and continuing on down the Wanterfall.

Sex

Sexual attraction also has a strong innate component, though many other factors influence it. The innate component is often referred to as the sex instinct. This small word sex – which I will use in its broadest sense, including attraction, romance, courtship and both short and long relationships – stands for a very, very large subject. (Sexual orientation, sexuality and gender identification add their own contributions, but do not alter the role of the sex instinct as one cause of wanting.)

¹ This is discussed under Anxiety Disorders in *An Introduction to Mental Illness*, a free e-booklet (in preparation) from www.wanterfall.com

² This would only apply if they died young enough to significantly reduce the number of offspring carrying their genes.

Within the broad field of sex can be found poorly understood unconscious and invisible attractive forces; emotional effects and reactions so strong that they can swamp all other aspects of life; and opportunities for a variable, but almost universally popular, degree of physical pleasure. The latter may also have significant deferred effects, whether desired or not.¹

The physical aspects of sex alone are the subject of countless publications, endless thought, and not a little action. But they really only represent the tip of the iceberg. Yes, I think I will rephrase that. They represent incandescent but evanescent sparks from a perpetual furnace. Hmm. Still needs more work.

Among the many non-physical aspects of sex is the development of a bond between the protagonists, which might at least partly result from multiple occasions of sexual intercourse; or might at least partly explain them; or neither; or perhaps a bit of both. Whatever the cause, this bond can vary from "love" conditional enough to satisfy the most hard bitten cynic, to "love" sufficiently lacking in conditions to be quite bewildering to almost anyone.

Because sex is such a huge subject, I was going to devote a section of the book to it. But this book is about emotions, and the emotions associated with sex are no different from the emotions associated with anything else. They may roll in with the power of a tsunami, but they are still neither more nor less than the inevitable results of *wanting something*.

¹ The main examples of possible deferred physical effects, of course, are pregnancy (in heterosexual cases) and sexually transmitted infections (in all cases). The late onset of some cancers is a less common, but still significant, deferred result of some sexually transmitted infections.

That "something" may be so subtle that words cannot approach it – or so unsubtle, that they rarely try to do so. But whatever it is, if you want it – or any aspect of it – the resulting Wanterfall will give birth to all of the emotions discussed in this book.

In other words, although it is far too simplistic, it is nevertheless true, to say that from the perspective of this book, sex is simply one of the reasons we are likely to want something. Or wish, or hope, or think it would be nice, if only – or, of course, the negative of any of those. All of which, as we have seen, drops you straight onto the Wanterfall. Splash.

So I did not subject you to a whole section about something which is relevant to this book simply as one cause of wanting. However, I have stretched this part of my notes on instinctive wanting a little, and perhaps made a few detours, in deference to the magnitude of that iceberg – er, furnace – and its effects.

Of course, not everything related to sex is instinctive. The instinct is mainly an attractive force, and is active long before any potential for pleasure is discovered consciously. However, when attraction leads to proximity, the experience of physical and emotional rewards becomes a more immediate possibility. And any pleasure which is experienced – or even simply imagined – provides a *learned* desire for more of the same.

Not everything related to sex gives pleasure, though. Many people suffer as a result of various situations in which sex does not live up to expectations. Sometimes, the expectations themselves are a source of confusion and distress. Orientation and gender issues can be slow and difficult to resolve, and society's acceptance of minority groups is usually qualified. These are all likely causes for Wanterfalls, and can all potentially benefit from EEEEs work.

When a couple encounters difficulties developing or maintaining the sexual relationship they desire, working

through painful emotions weakens underlying barriers, reduces anxiety, shyness and shame, facilitates co-operation and allows the discovery – or rediscovery – of a kind and co-operative approach to sex.

As a result, many sexual problems may solve themselves. Those that do not may still be more likely to respond to types of counselling specifically designed for the purpose, or to medical interventions. And both of these may previously have been declined due to the presence of unresolved emotions.

This two way interaction between sexual issues and EEEEs work is, of course, no different from the usual two way interaction between any other problem and EEEEs work. And whether the problem is founded on an instinctive desire or a learned desire, the emotions involved are still as described in Section 2 – and their cure is still as described in Section 4.

Family

The desire to start, protect and be part of a family probably also has a major instinctive component. These urges facilitate the care of children until they are independent, and sometimes also the care of parents after they are no longer independent. They also allow children to learn many social skills in a protected environment. However, the existence of a family instinct does not guarantee a perfect family.

A patient once told me with great confidence that the love of a mother for her child is truly unconditional. If that is the case, I wish more mothers would put it into practice. Too often, the message that children understand is that they are loved best when they behave well, get good marks at school, are successful at sports and generally please their parents.

Elisabeth Kübler-Ross¹ used to refer to this situation as "bringing up our children to be prostitutes" – in other words, teaching them that they receive rewards when they give us pleasure. I think the best way to avoid that type of parenting, is for parents to pay attention to their own feelings – and perhaps even do a little Wanterfall work.

Society

Finally, the social urge, the urge to spend at least some time in company rather than alone, is likely to be at least partly instinctive. The tendency for family units to settle in fairly close proximity, forming a village or a town, has been with us as far back as history can reach. It is generally thought of as an instinct, but there are also learned reasons for congregating.

Settling together allows resources to be pooled, knowledge shared, defences strengthened and so on. The ensuing benefits can easily be noticed – and remembered. The enjoyment of companionship, and the enhanced possibility of finding a suitable mate in a larger group, could also be partly learned. But whether instinctive or not, all these things can engender instances of wanting, and can therefore start Wanterfalls.

¹ See footnote to Original under Denials.

INDEX

- About the author, 4
 About this book, 3
 Acceptance, 131
 Administration, 174
 Agreement, 178
 Anniversary, 143
 Antipathy, 53. *Also see*
 Primary emotions
 Anxiety, 65
 Apathy, 63
 Assessment, 177
 Attitudes, 92, 183
 Beliefs, 85, 89
 Bereavement, 59
 Brainwashing, 83
 Burnout, 75
 Calming down, 161, 163
 Catharsis, 163, 170
 Cautions, 19, 116
 Closure and departure, 198
 Communication skills, 185
 Compassion, 52
 Complications, 191
 Compound emotions, 64
 Conditioning, 80; operant,
 82; Pavlovian, 81
 Confidentiality, 179
 Conflict, 94
 Conveying, 145
 Cross infection, 193
 Crying, 158, 161
 Dedication, 5
 Delusion, 86
 Denial, 60
 Denials: what this book is
 not, 13
 Depressed feeling, 76
 Desire, 27
 Disapproval, 207
 Double bind, 73
 Drug users, 193
 Duality, 32, 98
 EEEEs. *See* Emotional
 EEEEs
 EEEEs work: definition, 42
 Elisabeth Kübler-Ross. *See*
 Kübler-Ross
 Emotional EEEEs, 135
 Emotions: anatomy, 44;
 definition, 22; healing
 emotional pain, 116;
 origin, 22; ramifications,
 79
 Empathy, 52
 Encourage, 138

- Eustress, 73
- Evaluate, 203
- Experience, 186
- Explore, 141
- Express, 144
- Expression, 145, 154, 159, 170, 188. *Also see* Externalisation. *Also see* Catharsis
- Externalisation, 148, 170, 188. *Also see* Expression. *Also see* Catharsis
- Facilitated intense catharsis, 170
- Facilitation, 159
- Facilitators, 170, 180
- Family, 223
- Fear, 47. *Also see* Primary emotions
- Focus, 187
- Follow-up, 200
- Gratitude, 65
- Grief, 59, 64, 116, 118; stages, 127
- Guilt, 66
- Happiness, 48. *Also see* Primary emotions
- Healing. *See* Grief
- Hope, 47. *Also see* Primary emotions
- Hugs, 161, 162, 166, 199
- Infection control, 193
- Information, 175
- Instincts, 217
- Interpreting, 145
- Judgmental behaviour, 207
- Knowledge, 184
- Kübler-Ross, 4, 15, 124, 127, 172, 224
- Mattress, 190
- Mental illness, 19
- Methods & equipment, 188
- Motivation, 20
- Non-judgmental self-awareness, 35, 211
- Note on the text, 6
- Numbness, 60
- Pain: emotional. *See* Grief
- Participants, 170, 174
- Permission, 139
- Personality, 181
- Perspective, 202
- Pleasure and pain, 33
- Preface, 12
- Prerequisites, 173, 180
- Primary emotions, 31, 45
- Propathy, 28, 50. *Also see* Primary emotions; definition, 29

- Reassurance, 139
- Religion, 17
- Repercussions, 206
- Representing, 145
- Repression, 61
- Retaliation, 211
- Rubber hose, 188
- Sadness, 49. *Also see*
 - Primary emotions
- Safety, 151, 172, 176, 178
- Self-awareness, 35, 211
- Self-condemnation, 66
- Self-preservation, 219
- Sex, 220
- Shame, 71, 206
- Shock, 60
- Skills, 185
- Society, 224
- Sorrow. *See* Grief
- Stages of grieving, 127
- Stress, 72; work-related, 74
- Subjective approach, 13, 23
- Subjective time, 106
- Suppressed emotions, 61
- Suppression, 61
- Sympathy, 52
- Unconditional love, 51
- Unfinished business, 124
- Validation, 139
- Venue, 200
- Wanterfall chart, 26; how
 - to use, 34
- Wanterfall model, 25
- Wanterfall work, 34, 41;
 - first pillar, 35; second
 - pillar, 40; two pillars, 34
- Wanting, 27; causes, 216