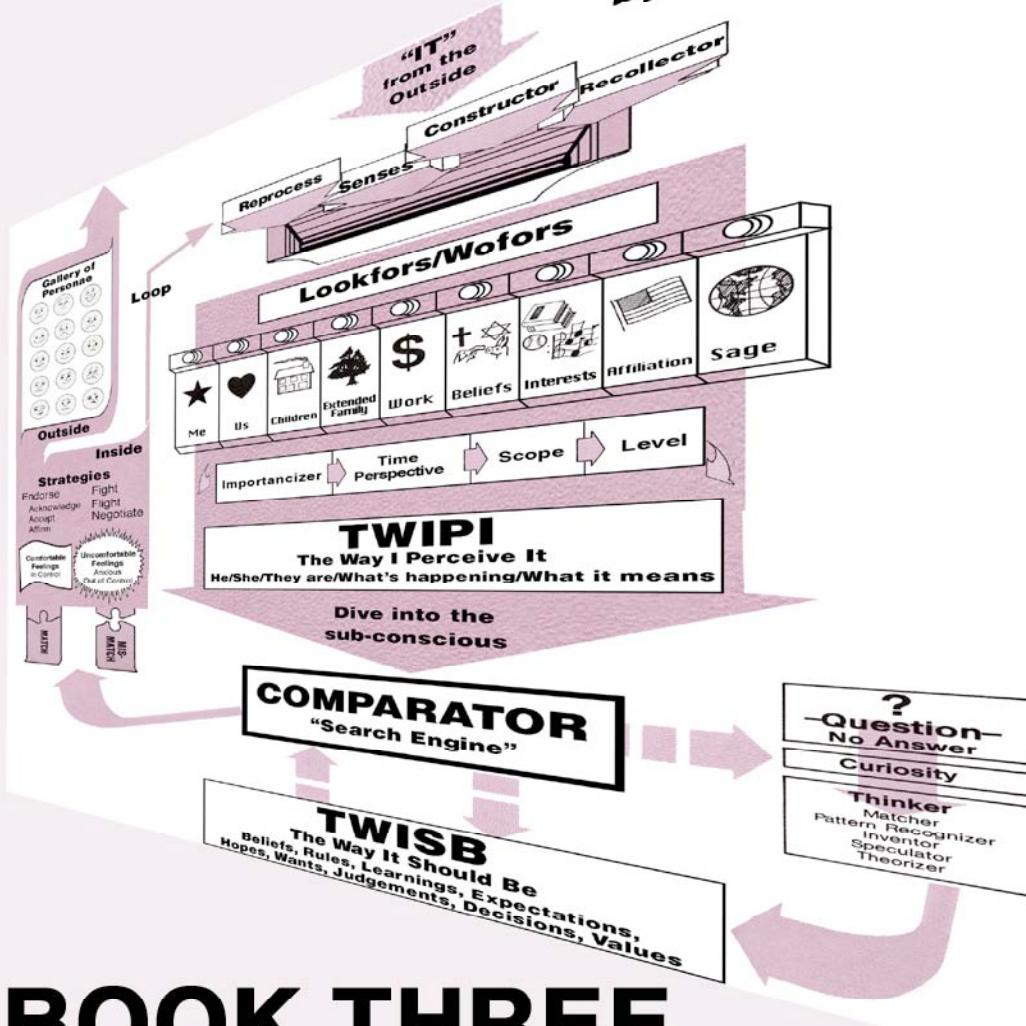


SAGERY

a user manual for the mind

by: ken johnston



BOOK THREE

21 Steps to a Lifetime of Happiness

Sagery Book Three — 21 Steps to a Lifetime of Happiness

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(Nobody likes to read this kind of stuff. We wish we didn't have to do it.)

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Memorable Quotes and Comments

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Chapter 25 — How to use Section Three

Note: Section Three contains more detail on each of the pieces of the Sage Model.

It is useful to think of Section Three as a “portable Sagecoach.” What you will learn in Section Three is what a Sagecoach might advise you, if you were working with a professional person trained in the Sage model.

Most people will be able to use the information in this section to resolve their own problems. Some people will require the assistance of a trained Sagecoach.

It is best not to read Section Three as you would a text. Unless you are studying to become a Sagecoach, you will not need all of the information in this section. It is easy to become bogged down and get a sense of futility if you attempt to gain mastery over all of the components of your mind at once.

Section Three is best used to help you deal with any problem you identify in your life. Begin by identifying the problem. You could select one from the list you created in Chapter 25: “Taking Out the Garbage.”

Or, simply start fresh with any single problem. For example, you may have been experiencing what you call depression. You will find no mention of depression here. Depression can be the result of several smaller problems. For example, a person could create a feeling of depression by grouping a set of individual small problems into one massive problem that appears insoluble because it is so large. Or, a person could create a feeling of depression by looping on negative constructions. Or, depression could be the result of a negative and hurtful belief that discounts possibilities, such as “There is no way out of the box I am in.”

Whatever you have been calling your problem, start fresh. Take one bad feeling at a time, call in your Sage, ask the four questions, and choose one of the Sage choices. Progress is made in small steps. Each step builds confidence, and an increasing sense of mastery over your mental processes.

One Problem at a Time

Every problem can be solved if you approach it in small enough steps. Pick one problem to work on at a time. Do not attempt to work on several at once. If you take too big a bite, you can create your own defeat. If you tackle a single problem, and you find it too difficult, then break that problem into its pieces. Every problem can be resolved if you deal with it in small pieces.

Expect a Pattern or Two

Expect a pattern. Look for patterns in your problems. Often you will find that most or all of your problems originate in one section of the mind. For example, you may find your TWISB creates most of your problems for you. Or, you may find your parts are in constant conflict, or you choose strategies that produce bad outcomes. As you find a pattern, create a resolution to the difficulty. Then apply the resolution each time you find yourself with a bad feeling. Quickly, you will gain mastery over the single part that gives you the most difficulties. Then, after you feel comfortable that you have that pattern under control, you can move on to work on new problems as they arise.

Identifying the Problem

After you have selected the single, small problem to work on, chart the problem through the Sage Model. Follow a single thought through the model and find out where it starts, find out what part or parts are involved in processing it. Find out if your TWIPI has a valid perception, or a distorted one. Find out what TWISB message you are using to mismatch the thought. Identify the feeling you get. Specify the strategy and persona that you have been using. Identify where the problem has its roots. Then select the chapter(s) that describes that piece and read how to gain control over that piece. If you change that piece and the problem stays with you, then start again and re-identify the problem.

Chapter 26 — The Recollector: Learning to “Watch”

There are several strategies used by professionals to help people get relief from painful recollections. Of these, the simplest to use by yourself is the strategy of “watching,” rather than reliving past experiences. John Grinder and Richard Bandler teach this process as part of what they called “dissociation,” because it allows you to dissociate the visual memory of a past experience from the strong negative feelings it causes. You will find that it is very simple to learn and use.

“Watching,” Not Reliving

Someone (I’m not sure who), noticed that there are two different ways to review past experiences. One way is to “relive” the experience and the other is to “watch” the experience. For example, suppose you had the experience of skiing down the slope of a high mountain. You can review that experience anytime you want by recalling it in your mind. You can either “watch” it, or “relive” it, depending on the perspective you choose. To “watch” it, you mentally stand outside of yourself and see yourself going down the hill. To “relive” it, you see everything you saw when you skied down the hill, but you don’t see yourself. It is as though you are seeing out of your own eyes and you see what you saw as though you were doing it again, right now.

Whoever noticed these two different ways of review past experiences made a powerful discovery. They noticed that when you “relive” the experience, you have the same feelings you had when you had the experience. They also noticed that when you “watch” the experience, as though from a position outside of yourself, you *do not* feel the experience.

How to “Watch”

You can practice “watching” right now. Right this moment you are reading this book. When you finish this paragraph, close your eyes and “see” yourself as you would look to someone else as you are reading this book. Mentally take a position outside of yourself. You can face yourself, or look at you from the side, or behind, or above, or whatever perspective you choose. Do this now.

Here is another way to “watch” yourself. First, recall some mildly unpleasant experience from the past. Imagine that you have a movie screen in front of you. Imagine that you are watching that past experience on the movie screen. Actually play back the experience on the movie screen, while you watch yourself go through the experience again. See yourself as you looked then. Do this now.

Notice how detached you become from the experience. Take that same experience and the movie screen, and this time, watch yourself “watching” yourself on the movie screen. This time you will see you sitting in front of a movie screen, watching the past experience being replayed. Do this now.

Notice how dissociated you are from the experience. You can be very detached from the feelings that the experience originally held for you. To help you understand the process, let’s label the various versions of “you.” On the screen is “you-a.” Watching the screen is “you-b.” Watching “you-b” and the screen is “you-c.”

Now, you are ready to “watch” some truly painful memory from your past.

Get Relief from Your Painful Memory

If you have a very painful memory that recurs and brings you pain, “watch” it, rather than relive it. Start by seeing yourself as you-c, watching you-b watching the movie screen. Now, play back the experience on the movie screen. Hold your position as you-c “watching” yourself watch the screen. Do this now.

For many people, this technique has made it possible to “accept” a very painful experience from their past.

If you experience difficulty “watching” yourself, you simply need a little practice. Some people do it easily. Others require a little practice. If you need practice, just work quietly inside your head and practice getting outside of yourself and creating an imaginary image that includes you in it. You can use any past experience that you can remember, or you can practice watching yourself in the present. If you are troubled by a painful memory, you will find the practice worth doing to gain relief from the pain of the experience.

Some people have found themselves deeply affected by a painful past experience. They find the memory of the past experience so painful, they block it out, or repress it. By repressing, or blocking it out, the healing process is also blocked, and the experience can remain as an active sore spot that doesn’t heal. For those people especially, the “watching” process is invaluable.

Other Uses for “Watching”

People have reported other good uses for the “watching” process. One person noticed that she could give a speech or presentation to a large group without fear, when she used the “watching” process. She found that she could “watch” herself give the speech. (She took up a mental position off to her side, not in the audience.) She reported that when she used this technique, she was free from stage fright and able to be at her best.

An actor reported the same thing. A tennis player described it as “being in the zone.” He said that when he was playing “in the zone” and being at his best, he could “see” himself playing the point.

So it seems that “watching” is a possible strategy for any situation where your performance might be affected by fears or negative thoughts that create emotions that stand in the way of doing your best.

Now, let’s also discuss situations in which “watching” is not recommended. “Watching” is not recommended for any situation, which would otherwise bring about *good* feelings. For example, one lady, in treatment for being unable to reach orgasm, reported that she always “watched” herself making love to her husband. Naturally, she was dissociated from her feelings, and was unable to experience her feelings. She quickly cured her difficulty by “living” the experience directly by seeing what she was seeing, and feeling what she was feeling.

Chapter 27 — The Constructor

Your Constructor is a powerful ally. The human ability to construct images of things that have not happened is one of the major powers that humans have. It is also a potential liability. The Constructor can help you solve problems before they occur. The Constructor can create images that can terrorize and defeat you. You will be wise to learn to harness your Constructor so that it can serve you and not defeat you.

Good Uses for the Constructor

The Constructor is very powerful when you use it to rehearse the future. For example, you might be considering a decision. Before you decide, you can use your Constructor to imagine a wide range of possible outcomes. By examining each possible outcome, and deciding how you will handle each one, you can be well prepared to live with your decision.

Notice that there are two parts to the process. First, you construct a possible scenario, then, you find a positive way of resolving that scenario.

Athletes, like baseball players, golfers, tennis players, and others, report that they are at their best when they construct a visual image of the shot they are about to make. They visualize the shot exactly the way they want it to go. When they do this, they find it easy to make the shot the way they want it.

The Constructor can create positive anticipation. Some people actively use their Constructors to imagine the pleasure they will get from some future activity. As long as the anticipation doesn't create expectations that will later be used to create a bad feeling from the actual experience, anticipation can be very enjoyable.

Any use of the Constructor that better prepares you for a successful actuality is a positive use of the Constructor. Any use of the Constructor that creates good feelings, and doesn't set up later bad feelings, is a good use of the Constructor.

Bad Use of the Constructor

The Constructor becomes a liability when it produces scenarios of the future that scare, defeat, or debilitate you. Remember that the positive use of the Constructor requires that you find ways to resolve the negative scenarios so that you can be comfortably prepared for any actuality. If you just create negative scenarios, and then don't find positive resolutions, you can end up afraid, worried, or defeated.

Athletes report that when they construct negative visual images of what they are about to do, they quite often experience negative results. As a golfer, if you construct a mental image of your spot slicing into the water hazard, you are much more likely to get that result. This is an example of a bad use of your Constructor.

Another way to make bad use of your Constructor is to use it to create wonderful images of some future event, create anticipation, and then be disappointed with the actuality. For example, one lady, in treatment for her marriage difficulties (seven marriages), reported that none of her men ever lived up to her expectations. She created marvelous mental images of her men, and of course, they ended up being simply human.

Another way to misuse your Constructor is to spend more time using it than is necessary. Some people live their whole lives constructing images about what is coming next in their lives. By doing this, they don't ever live in the "here-and-now." They live most of their lives inside their heads rehearsing the future.

By far, the most destructive use of the Constructor is to create horrible scenarios from which there is no satisfactory resolution. People misuse their Constructors to create scenarios where people die, or leave them, or love another, or are out to get them, or worse. They construct scenarios where they will lose, or become penniless, or go bankrupt. They construct scenarios with atomic bombs, germs in the water, disasters in the environment, and other irresolvable problems. If you are experiencing any of these bad uses of your Constructor, then it will be very beneficial for you to learn to gain control over this powerful human capacity.

How To Gain Control Over Your Constructor

The Constructor is a powerful tool that you can control. Your Sage is especially good at using the Constructor to help you achieve the outcomes that you want. Think of your Constructor as a tool for your use, and you will use it well. If you think of your Constructor as something that controls you, you are at its mercy.

The first step in controlling your Constructor is learning that you can control it. You control your Constructor by telling it what you want, and then acting or reacting in some way when it does what you want. If your Constructor doesn't do what you want — take no action — just accept it, and let it pass.

For example, think of something that you want to do in the near future. Then ask your Constructor to imagine a very good outcome. If you then get an image of a very good outcome, smile, and mark the feeling. If you get an image of a bad outcome, let it pass with no response, and ask it again for what you want. You can think of this as a form of behavior modification. You will gradually train your Constructor to give you what you ask it for.

Now, practice asking your Constructor for what you want. Here are three stimuli that you can use to provoke constructions:

1. Imagine someone you care about saying something you want to hear.
2. Imagine getting something you want to have.
3. Imagine yourself doing something that you want to do, and doing it well.

Now, are you convinced? You can ask your Constructor to give you what you ask it to give you. If you didn't get the results you asked for, go back and practice on these until you do. It won't take long. Now that you know that you can control your Constructor, and it doesn't control you, you are ready to learn a strategy for making your Constructor work for you.

Invoke Your Sage On Bad Feelings

If you have installed your Sage to work as an autopilot, your Sage will eventually come on any time you have a bad feeling. If you haven't done that yet, you may want to go back to Chapter 14. If you have chosen to keep your conscious mind in control, then you will need to consciously invoke your Sage any time you want to handle a bad feeling created by some negative scenario your Constructor has imagined.

Your Sage will handle the construction in one of two ways. If the construction is something that you can resolve, your Sage will resolve it. If your construction is some disaster that your Sage can't resolve, your Sage will pass and ask for a construction that is more useful.

Construct A Positive Resolution

Suppose your Constructor creates a scene where you fail at something important to you. Your Sage can resolve that. Your Sage will choose either to take some action that will prevent that failure, or will choose to accept it if it occurs. In either case, the construction is resolved. Most people benefit by going forward knowing that whatever happens they can handle it. This builds confidence and allows you to handle whatever really comes up for you.

Now, let's suppose that your Constructor creates some horrible scenario that can't be resolved. For example, you find yourself fearful because your Constructor imagines a tornado that wipes out your whole area. For this kind of useless construction, your Sage has some options. It can simply "pass," make no response, and ask for a more useful construction. Or, if your Sage finds it easier, your Sage can modify the construction to assure that none of your parts takes it seriously and becomes upset. Here are two simple ways to modify a construction to mark it as simply a construction with no reality.

Exaggerate Or Minimize Until It's Laughable

It is sometimes possible to exaggerate or minimize a horrible scenario to the point where it becomes humorous. This has several benefits. First, it reaffirms that you have control over your Constructor. Secondly, it gives you a laugh (a good feeling). And thirdly, it marks the construction as imaginary and assures that none of your parts will confuse it with reality. How, you ask, can you exaggerate the devastation of a tornado so that it becomes humorous? I'll give you two possibilities, and you come up with another one.

1. Make it bigger and bigger until it covers the entire city, county or state.
2. Make it smaller and smaller until it simply destroys one garbage can.
3. You imagine one.

Here is another example. Suppose your Constructor has been creating jealousy by imagining your significant other in the arms of another person. Your Sage might exaggerate that by adding in a dozen more people, and creating an entire orgy. Make it extreme enough that you have to laugh at it.

Color It Pink

Some people find it easy to use color to change constructions. If you find it easy, you can take an irresolvable construction and color it pink, or yellow, or whatever color you choose. If you think in color, you can reserve a color especially for ridiculous constructions. This assures that none of your parts takes it seriously and creates a bad feeling from it.

The color strategy can be very useful if some parts of you have difficulty distinguishing between reality and your own constructions. Your Sage will know, and one of the jobs your Sage must do is to instruct the parts that get confused how to tell reality from constructions.

Chapter 28 — Wofors

Wofors are energized to scan the world around you for signs of danger. When a Wofer spots something that it has been created to watch out for, it instantly sends control to the part that set it up. That part then takes over and reacts to the stimulus that the Wofer observed.

The Purpose and Use of Wofors

To fully understand the purpose and use of Wofors, it is useful to go back in time to our cave dwelling heritage. Regardless of your beliefs about creation or evolution, it is well established that early humans dwelt in small tribal units and had no written language. Let us examine how the human mind prepared a person to survive.

Imagine young Harold venturing out into the forest for food. Because he has never seen one, or read about one, Harold knows nothing about leopards. As he walks through the forest, the sun is shining, the wind is blowing, and as he walks under a tall elm tree, a leopard leaps at him and claws him across the back. Harold is lucky; he fights off the leopard, climbs a tree, and keeps the leopard at bay until the leopard goes away.

Now, Harold has had an experience that frightened him. He now has to learn from that experience. He has learned that leopards exist, that they are dangerous, and that he had better “watch out” for them in the future. The way the mind is programmed to work is to create a “Wofer” for leopards. The critical question from our standpoint is this. What will be included in the Wofer? The learning could be so specific that it includes only the single idea: “watch out for spotted, cat-like animals that jump at me from trees.” Or, the Wofer could be so general that it might include many factors: “Watch out for sunny days, or when the wind is blowing, or when you are in the forest, or when you see a tree, because there could be a leopard there.”

A Wofer is most useful when it includes enough specifics so that it keeps a person safe, and yet not so many variables that one spends energy being concerned when there is no danger.

If Harold’s Wofer includes sunny days, or seeing a tree, then that Wofer will be activated too often and make Harold so fearful that he will be unable to enjoy normal life, and he may be too afraid to do what he needs to do to find food. Every sunny day, or tree would alert the Wofer and Harold would go into “panic” mode.

If, on the other hand, Harold’s Wofer is so focused that it doesn’t alert him to danger until a leopard is flying through the air, then Harold may not live long in the forest.

A good functioning Wofer would allow Harold to be alert for combinations of path and tree that might be dangerous, and that’s all. Then, Harold can go about his business without producing the excess stress that would come from being afraid all the time.

What about you? You have inherited the human mind, which is programmed to create Wofers from every fear or pain-producing experience. Probably, no one ever formally taught you how to make the most effective learnings from your experiences. So, it is likely that you have had one or more experiences where you made a learning at the wrong level.

When a dog bit me, I made a learning at the wrong level. I learned that all dogs are dangerous (an obvious over generalization). So, from that time forward, every dog that

came into my scan cause me to stop whatever I was doing and focus my attention on the dog.

I knew a young man who made a wrong learning at the other extreme. He had been speeding his car down a winding residential street. He skidded off the road and hit a tree. Luckily he was not severely injured, but the car was wrecked. When I asked him what he had learned from that, he said, “I’ll never speed down Pine Street again.” Surely this could be described as a learning at too narrow a level. One could assume that his Wofer would only alert him to danger when he was speeding down Pine Street.

Here are some examples of people who have made learnings at too broad a level.

Phyllis T. was deeply hurt when her lover abandoned her for another woman. The learning that Phyllis made was that all men will abandon her. From that time forward Phyllis had a Wofer active that was always scanning for signs that her man was about to abandon her. This Wofer kept Phyllis from ever trusting those that she loved.

Fred W. was traumatized when his best friend revealed his deepest darkest secret to all of his other friends. Instead of learning that some people can’t be trusted to keep secrets, Fred learned that no one can be trusted to keep secrets.

Mrs. R was in a terrible automobile accident. When she recovered, she found that she was terrorized anytime she had to get into a car. She had made a learning at the wrong level and her Wofer severely limited her activities.

At their most extreme, errant Wofers produce phobias or phobic responses.

Errant Wofers — Phobic Responses

A phobia is an extreme example of an errant Wofer. When a person sets up a Wofer that causes him or her to become panicked in non-dangerous situations, then it is called a phobia. When a Wofer causes reactions that over alarm, then it is doing more harm than good. If you have any Wofers that cause you discomfort or dysfunction then it will be valuable to learn to modify them.

Modifying Errant Wofers

There are two steps to modifying errant Wofer. The first is to reduce the panic and alarm that is produced by stimuli. The second is the use your Sage to modify your Wofer so that it protects you where possible, and yet doesn’t alarm you excessively or unnecessarily.

Dissociation

Dissociation, or “watching” rather than reliving is the key to taking the excess panic and alarm out of the Wofer. Read the section on the Recollector (Chapter 26) for complete instructions.

After you learn to “watch” rather than relive your original painful experience, you will be better able to rationally modify your Wofer by relearning at the best possible level.

Relearning at the Best Level

Your Sage will have access to all of your accumulated wisdom as it chooses to relearn at the best level. As an aid to your Sage, I will give you some examples of experiences and both good and bad levels of learning.

A Car Accident

Too narrow: "I'll never speed down Pine Street again."

Too broad: "I'll never drive again."

About right: "Driving has an element of risk. I'll manage that risk by driving moderately and by paying attention."

Being Fired From Work

Too narrow: "It was Fred's fault. I'll be safe as long as I don't work for Fred again."

Too broad: "Bosses are always looking for reasons to fire people. I'll stay out of the way and never give my boss any reason to notice me."

About right: "There is no guaranteed security in any job. I'll manage the risk by doing my work as well as I can, and be as valuable as I can be. If I lose this job, I'll do my best to get another one."

Reading about an airplane crash

Too narrow: "It can't happen to me."

Too broad: "That's it, flying is too dangerous. I'll never fly again."

About right: "There is some element of risk in flying. I have no control over the risk so I will simply accept it and fly as I want to and need to."

Discovering That Your Child Has Lied To You

Too narrow: "I told him to never do that again, so he won't."

Too broad: "He is a liar. I can't trust him anymore."

About right: "He lied to me. Children sometimes do that. I'll continue to trust him because I choose to be trusting. I expect that he will learn from this and I will do what I can to help him learn the value of being truthful."

Examine these examples, and write one for yourself using the experience you have had that has caused you to have an errant Wofer. Write an example of a learning that is too narrow. Write an example of a learning that is too broad, and then a learning that your Sage decides is about right.

In the future, as you find yourself reacting to the errant Wofer, your Sage will respond by restating the learning you have decided is about right. You will find that each time this happens the excessive response is reduced, and eventually will disappear all together.

Chapter 29 — Parts: Team Building

Virtually everyone who has learned Sagery has discovered that they have been having parts problems of one kind or another. You may have a situation where one part dominates all of the others. Or, you may have two or more parts at war with each other. To resolve these difficulties your Sage will find it useful to know how to recognize distortions and resolve conflicts using win-win resolutions. Your Sage will also be interested in how to build a team of your parts by calling “parts parties.”

One Part Dominates — the Others are Passive

For some people, one part dominates and all the others are passive. These people tend to focus their entire lives around getting one part what it needs, and all other needs are largely discounted or ignored. Examples of this are the happy workaholic, the happy foodaholic, the happy gambler, the happy cult member, and the happy super mom. They are described as happy because they seem very satisfied to develop only one part of themselves and are not seeking to change. Contrast this kind of person with the unhappy workaholic and the unhappy alcoholic. They, too, allow one part to dominate, but the other parts are not passive. The other parts are fighting, attacking, and criticizing the dominant part and combine to make the person quite uncomfortable.

If you have the situation where one part dominates and the others are not giving you any difficulties, then you probably don't think that you have a problem. An outsider may look at you and say, “Oh, too bad, that person is missing so much.” And the outsider may be right. After all, there are a great number of satisfactions that you do not experience. On the other hand, you don't have any inner conflicts, either.

You may not achieve what others would call a full and complete life, but if you are happy and satisfied, you don't care. Philosophers may argue that you would benefit by becoming a more complete person, but what value is that if it introduces conflicts into your life?

There may be a time in the future when you begin experiencing conflicts as the other parts become more active and begin to express their needs. If that happens, you can choose to deal with it then.

In the meantime, if you are fully satisfied, you need not further consider that you have a parts problem.

Parts are in Conflict

The most common situation is to have conflicts between parts. One part may dominate, or you may have a reasonable balance, but in either case, the parts are in conflict with each other.

A common example is the conflict between work and play. This occurs in school children, teenagers, young and older adults. The Me-part and Interests-part may combine together and want to do something that is interesting and fun. The Work-part and Beliefs-part may combine together and want to work. The lines are drawn and the battle begins. Each side wants to win the battle. Each side is willing to fight and will do whatever it can to win. Each side believes that “everything is fair in war,” so each side is willing to distort or exaggerate.

Let's listen in on a typical battle going on inside Sam's head:

1&7: "Let's take the afternoon off and go bowling."

5&6: "Don't bother me, I'm working."

1&7 "Maybe we'll meet a girl." (enlisting the Relationship-part)

5&6: "I have important work to do."

1,2&7: "They won't miss you. Nobody will even notice."

5&6: "You are lazy and irresponsible and I won't listen to you."

1,2&7: "You think you are important; well 'they' don't think so; you haven't gotten a raise in nine months."

5&6: "Hey, \$7.00 an hour isn't bad."

1,2&7: "Face it, you're a peon. If you had any guts you'd quit this stupid job and we could go bowling."

5&6: "Typical, you lazy jerk. If it wasn't for this job, we'd starve."

1,2&7: "Any job would be as good as this one. You work for an idiot, and the company is run by people who don't give a damn about you."

5&6: etc. etc.

Now, let's examine this kind of inner dialogue. Notice that each side is willing to attack, criticize and distort to get what it wants. When the battle is over, Sam is left with the residue of these distortions. Here is a short list of the thoughts that have been running through Sam's head:

1. "You are lazy and irresponsible."
2. "You haven't gotten a raise in nine months."
3. "You are a peon."
4. "You do unimportant work, nobody notices you."
5. "You don't have any guts."
6. "You have a stupid job."
7. "You are a lazy jerk."
8. "Any job is as good as this one."
9. "Your boss is an idiot."
10. "Management doesn't care about you."

How would you feel about yourself or your job if these thoughts were running through your head?

The primary damage done by parts conflicts isn't the conflict itself, it is the damage done through the distortions, attacks and criticisms that the parts use when they fight to get their own way.

In this example, neither side won. Sam isn't going bowling, and he isn't enjoying his work. And, Sam feels bad about himself and his work.

Sagery offers the potential for resolving parts conflicts so that both sides win and you don't suffer the residual damage of hurtful attacks and criticisms.

"Parts" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 30 — Parts: Recognizing Distortions

If you have been experiencing parts conflicts, you have probably collected a great number of distortions, attacks and criticisms by your parts.

Recognizing Distortions

Here is an enlightening exercise for you. Take a piece of paper and put at the top, “*I am:*” and fill the paper with whatever comes to your mind. (If you are going to do this exercise, do it now, before you read further.)

Reviewing The “I Am” Exercise

Notice any negative statements on your list. Ask yourself, “Am I really that?” You will probably answer, “Maybe sometimes, but not always.”

The “*you are*” distortion is one major distortion to notice. It is almost always an exaggeration or distortion to characterize your entire self with a single “*you are*” statement. Perhaps it is true to say, “You *sometimes* are,” or “You *have the capacity to be* (something negative).” But, it is a distortion to say, “You *are* (something negative).”

Your Sage can help you take notice in the future of any “*you are*” distortions.

The “Never,” “Always,” “Can’t,” and “Every” Distortions

It is useful to be suspicious of the words “never,” “always”, “can’t,” “every,” and “any.” These are words that often are gross distortions. If you ask your Sage to be alert for them, you will gradually find that your parts begin communicating more honestly.

Notice any other distortions that you find that your parts use. The idea is to refine the communication between your parts so that they can express their needs without harmful attacks on other parts or on your entire person.

Team Building Strategies

One goal of Sagery is to help you bring your parts together into a team. When your parts work together as a team, they support each other, and you become free of inner conflict. As a team, they can work together to get each of their needs met fully. You stop feeling torn, or guilty, or uncomfortable.

What do your parts get? When they become a team then each part gets the full support of the other parts, without resistance or bad feelings.

Here are the elements you need to build your team:

1. The commitment to work as a team. (Chapter 18)
2. A trusted judge or referee to resolve conflicts. (Your Sage)
3. Confidence that each part will be accepted and have its needs respected. (Your Sage)
4. A strategy for creating win-win conflict resolutions. (Chapters 31 and 32)
5. A forum in which ideas, needs and wants can be communicated. (Chapter 29)

The “parts party” is simply a meeting of the parts, called by the Sage, wherein each part gets to express its needs, ideas, and wants. The Sage will begin by calling the parts to a meeting and raising the issue or choice or decision to be made. While you are learning the skills, write the dilemma on a piece of paper, and then write what each part says about it.

A parts party can be called anytime a major decision is to be reached, or a conflict is to be resolved.

If your Sage is invoked each time you have a bad feeling, your Sage will be in a position to decide when a parts party would be useful.

The key tool for resolving conflicts between your parts is the win-win conflict resolution.

"Parts" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 31 — Parts: Creating Win-win

Win-win conflict resolutions are almost always possible. Sometimes they are simple, and sometimes they take a little creativity.

Steps for Creating Win-win

Here, in outline form, are the steps required:

1. What does each part want?
2. Can I create a way for each part to get what it wants?
 - a. If “yes,” then you have resolved the conflict.
 - b. If “no,” then you need to go further.
3. Can I create a way for each part to get what it wants, sometimes?
 - a. Can they alternate, and take turns getting what they want?
 - b. Can I change the time frame — one gets what it wants now, the other gets what it wants afterwards, or next week, or next year?
4. Can I go beyond what the part wants — to determine what it needs?
 - a. What need is being satisfied by what the part wants?
 - b. Can I find a different way to satisfy that need?
 - c. Can I arrange a way for one part to get what it wants, and the other part to get a substitute that still satisfies the need?
 - d. Do I need to convert both wants into the needs that they satisfy?

Some Examples:

Sally is having an internal conflict. Her Work-part wants her to do some technical reading that she wants to do for her work. Her Relationship-part wants to spend time with her husband while he is available. Unless she resolves the conflict, she will feel guilty about whichever she chooses. Her Sage is brought in to resolve the conflict. Her Sage might suggest these options:

- a. Spend time with her husband now (because he is available and inviting her attention), and wake an hour early to do her technical reading.
- b. Spend time with her husband now, and when he gets interested in something else, do the technical reading then. If he doesn’t get involved in anything else, then wake early to do her reading.

Once Sally chooses which she prefers, the conflict is resolved, and she can proceed with what she has chosen in a state of inner harmony.

Another Example:

Fred is having an argument with his wife. He finds himself in a state of inner conflict. His Me-part wants to “be right,” and want to “win” the argument. His Relationship-part wants to stop arguing and have some good quality time with his wife. Fred invokes his Sage to resolve the conflict.

1. The Sage determines that what the Relationship-part wants is in harmony with what Fred wants for his life — a warm, loving relationship.

2. The Sage determines that what the Me-part wants — to be right — is in harmony with what Fred wants for his life, but the specific want — that of proving his wife wrong — is not what Fred wants for his life.
3. The Sage simply changes the level. Instead of “being right” by proving his wife wrong, the Me-part can “be right” by doing what is best for the relationship.
4. The Sage suggests that Fred shift the level of the discussion by saying something like, “I think we are both right, and rather than spend this time arguing, I want to spend it by telling you I love you.”
5. The Relationship-part gets what it wants and needs, and the Me-part gets to “be right” by doing the right and wise thing.

The final step in a win-win resolution is to check out whether both parts are satisfied with the resolution. This is done by the Sage proposing the resolution, and the test is whether it “feels good.” If the solution feels good, then all parts will support it. If there is still a bad feeling, then the Sage simply needs to ask, “What will it take for you to be satisfied?” This will normally lead to some change or addition that will make the resolution work. Sometimes a “sweetener” can be added that will make a difficult resolution possible.

“Parts” continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 32 — Parts: Practice Win-win

Think of a situation that happens in your life where two or more parts are in conflict. It is sometimes helpful if you go back in your mind to one time when you felt this conflict strongly. Feel what you were feeling, think what you were thinking, hear what you were hearing, and see what you were seeing.

When Parts Conflict

As you re-experience the situation, ask yourself the following questions:

1. “What feeling did you have?”
2. “What did one part want?”
3. “What did the other part want?”
4. “Did any other part want anything?”
5. “How would it be possible for both parts to get what they want?”
6. If you can't find a way for both parts to get what they need, then ask these questions:
 - a. “What need is the part trying to satisfy by what it wants? “ (e.g. security, social acceptance, status, power, self-acceptance, self-actualization, etc.)
 - b. “What need is the other part trying to satisfy?”
 - c. “How would it be possible to get both parts what they need, even if it isn't exactly what each part seems to want?”

Every time you resolve an inner conflict with a win-win resolution, you are gaining experience that will enrich your life.

It seems to be part of human nature that we are conditioned to think of conflicts in terms of “or” rather than “and.” We tend to box ourselves in by thinking we can do one thing “or” another. The reality is that “or” is only a limitation of our thoughts. When we begin to see that we can think in terms of “and,” then life gets richer and free of conflict. We can almost always do one thing “and” another.

It appears to me that we can use “and” thinking more easily when emotions are not escalated. It seems that as adrenaline flows and our emotions rise, we become more likely to think in terms of “or.” One thing that the Sage Model helps us to see is that two people in an argument are most usually both “right.” If it is a matter of fact that is in dispute, then perhaps one may be wrong. But, usually people argue over perceptions rather than realities. As you recall, perceptions are modified by importance, time, scope and level. It has been my observation that people typically disagree because their perceptions are different. Each is “right” in terms of the importance, time, scope and level they have chosen.

As a disagreement arises and emotions escalate, both people tend to become more rigid in their thinking that one *or* the other is “right.”

As you invoke your Sage, you will find that emotions shift toward calmness, and you become better able to see that one is “right” *and* the other is also “right.”

The same effect is true of internal conflicts between parts. You might find that you become irritated, frustrated, or angry as a result of the internal arguments going on in your head between parts in conflict. As you switch to your Sage, your emotions calm and it

becomes easier to be aware that it doesn't have to be one choice "or" the other, but that it can be one choice "and" the other.

Remember the operative word is "and." Be aware of the word "or" when it comes to your mind. Do your best to find ways to convert "or" to "and" whenever there is a conflict.

Use a "Sweetener" to Aid in Conflict Resolutions

Many internal conflicts involve the Me-part. For example, Sandra has decided to lose weight. Her Relationship-part want to be more attractive, and she believes that she will be more attractive if she is thinner. Right away, this sets up a conflict between the Me-part that has the need for food.

Before Sandra learned about her Sage, she found that each meal or snack involved a battle between the urge to eat, and the desire to be thin. She didn't think of it in Sage terms, but her Me-part and her Relationship-part were in conflict.

When Sandra installed her Sage, she decided that she would use her Sage to take charge of her health and her weight. Sandra called a meeting of her parts and got the whole team to agree that they would support each other in her desire to eat wisely.

Sandra's Sage found that her Me-part would fully support her choices of foods to eat and amounts to eat, *if* she could pick out one small treat a day of up to 100 calories.

At first Sandra was concerned about this daily violation. She thought of it as a form of "bribery." She had a belief that "bribery" was a bad thing and that she ought not to have to offer bribes to get her Me-part to support her weight loss.

I asked Sandra how the diet was working. She said, "It is going wonderfully. I have no inner conflict at all regarding food. I find it easy to eat correctly and in small amounts. I even have no problem eating 100 fewer calories of my diet foods to make room for the 100 calories of treats."

What Sandra was concerned about was the idea of "bribing" her Me-part to get the Me-part's support.

In any situation which involves the Me-part, you may find that a little bribery works wonders. I call it a "sweetener" and recommend it heartily. I have been able to get my Me-part to cooperate fully on many issues by offering a little "sweetener" to help with the resolution.

I find it helps me to visualize my Me-part as about five years old. I know it doesn't like to do any one thing very long, so it comes up to distract me when I am writing for a long period of time. So, when my Me-part comes on, and my Work-part is unwilling to take a break right then, my Sage offers a little treat at a certain time, and my Me-part will wait patiently.

When I was losing weight, I promised my Me-part a special treat for each six pounds I lost. I got its full support. Weight loss was never easier.

Here are some examples of people using "sweeteners:"

1. Hank was having difficulty studying for an exam. His Me-part wanted to watch television; his Work-part and Interests-part wanted to study. His Sage sweetened the deal with the Me-part by offering to watch the midnight movie if the Me-part

would allow him to study until midnight. He was able to study without interruption.

2. Mary Jane quit smoking easily after she made a deal with her Me-part. She offered her Me-part a set of satin sheets and a sexy negligee that she had been unwilling to buy before. Her Me-part supported her totally, and after one month of not smoking, she gave her Me-part the promised treat. She thinks it was the best deal she ever made.
3. Phil had problems concentrating on his piano practice. His Me-part wanted to rest or read. Phil's Sage discovered that his Me-part would agree to support the piano practice if he could get one hour of pleasure reading for each hour of practice. The sweetener worked and Phil had no further difficulties concentrating on his piano.

If you offer your Me-part a sweetener to get its support, you will discover something that happened in each of the examples above. Not only will you keep your Me-part from being in conflict with other parts, you will get your Me-part to support what your other parts want. Notice that supporting is different from "not fighting it."

When I lost weight, I had fun choosing wise foods and wise portions. When Hank wanted to study and offered a sweetener, his Me-part helped him to study, and studying was more rewarding. When Mary Jane quit smoking, her Me-part helped her quit, and didn't even want to smoke. When Phil made his deal with his Me-part he found his Me-part helping with his piano practice, and it actually became more satisfying than ever before.

When you get your Me-part to support you, everything seems to go better. Perhaps in a perfect world one wouldn't need to offer sweeteners to get a part to cooperate. But, it isn't a perfect world and sweeteners work great, so I recommend them highly.

Chapter 33 — Importance: Reducing or Increasing

There are many factors that influence the amount of importance that you attach to any individual item. Among these factors are: the *level* of need, the *urgency* of need, the *relevance* to need satisfaction, and assorted *physiological variables*.

Level of Need

The great sage Abraham Mazlow proposed a hierarchy of needs. Mazlow's hierarchy had a number of concepts that I will digest briefly here.

Mazlow suggested that needs are ranked in a certain order:

1. Physical: the most fundamental level of need
2. Security: the next highest level
3. Social: the next highest level
4. Self satisfaction: the next highest level
5. Self-actualization: the highest level of need

Mazlow suggested that any single level of need would operate as a motivator until it was satisfied. After being satisfied, that level would no longer act as a motivator. Once a given level was satisfied, the next higher level would begin to act as a motivator. Mazlow also noted that until any given level was satisfied, higher levels would provide little or no motivation.

To illustrate: Fred has his physical needs met, and is presently being motivated by his need for security. Until Fred feels secure, he will not be much motivated by his need for acceptance by others or any of the higher needs. Next, assume that Fred satisfies his need for security, he will no longer be motivated further by appeals to his security. Fred will thereafter be motivated by his need for social acceptance.

In Mazlow's writings, he presented the concept as it applies to a single human being. The concept also applies to an individual's separate parts. For example, Fred might have a secure job where he is popular and much admired, and is motivated in his work by his need to achieve satisfaction with himself (level 4). At the same time, Fred may be falling in love and very much motivated by his need to feel secure in his relationship (level 2). In this example, we could say Fred's Work-part would be motivated by his need for self-satisfaction, and his Relationship-part would be motivated by his need for security in his couple relationship. So, you can see that several of your parts may be at a different level.

Urgency Of Need

Now, to relate this concept to the Importancizer, let's examine how Fred might assign importance to inputs.

1. Fred gets an input from a co-worker that affirms the co-worker's appreciation for Fred's work. Mazlow's theory would suggest that Fred wouldn't give very much importance to this input because his social need in his work has already been satisfied.
2. Fred gets an input from his SIGO that affirms that she loves him. Fred might give this input a high level of importance because it satisfies a need that Fred feels strongly, and it is highly relevant to his need.

3. Fred does a piece of work that he is very happy with. We could expect Fred to give a high level of importance to that input because it satisfies a need that Fred feels strongly, and it is highly relevant to his needs.
4. Fred loses his job. Now, his work security is no longer satisfied. Now, Fred will be highly motivated by any inputs that are possible satisfiers to his need for work security. He will not give as much importance to higher level needs such as his own satisfaction or social approval regarding his work.

Relevance as A Need Satisfier

Mazlow's theories help us understand one basis for assigning importance to various inputs. The next variable to consider is the relevance of any input to being a potential need satisfier. For example, Fred needs security in a relationship. He will give much importance to inputs that give him a feeling of security. So, he will give a lot of importance to what his SIGO says when she tells him she loves him. If, on the other hand, his SIGO is talking about hamburgers, and Fred is not hungry, he may give it little importance because it has no relevance to a need satisfier.

Physiological Factors

Notice that Mazlow's most fundamental need level is the physical level. Mazlow noted that physiological factors were indeed very important in the question of motivation (importance).

If Fred hasn't eaten for two days, the thing we can expect Fred to give the most importance to is food. Given a choice between hearing that his SIGO loves him, and eating a hamburger, Fred might be expected to choose the hamburger. But, as soon as the physical need is met, Fred will be unlikely to be motivated by more hamburgers.

Some other physiological variables and motivators are:

- Sleep when you are tired.
- Water when you are thirsty.
- Health when you are sick.
- Relief when you need to evacuate.
- Quiet when you are over stimulated.
- Activity when you are under stimulated.
- Movement when you have been inactive.

This brief overview of motivational theory gives us a starting point in understanding some of the ways that we can modify the amount of importance we give something.

"Importance" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 34 — Importance: Increasing

It is sometimes useful to be able to modify the Importancizer and add importance to something.

Example

For example, let's take Fred. Fred needs a job, and he needs a feeling of security in his relationship. Let's also say that Fred feels he is overweight and wants to lose weight. His problem at the moment is that he isn't doing anything about getting a job. Instead he is spending his time with his SIGO and eating too much because he is feeling bad about losing his job, and worried about his relationship.

Let's imagine that Fred invokes his Sage and the Sage decides the following:

1. Number one priority is to spend time finding a job.
2. Number two priority is to eat wisely to lose weight.
3. Number three priority is to enhance his relationship.

These priorities lead to the following decisions:

1. Increase the importance of the job search.
2. Increase the importance of eating wisely.
3. Reduce the importance of spending his days with his SIGO.
4. Reduce the importance of food as a stress reducer.

Using these choices, we will examine a strategy for increasing importance for the job search and eating wisely. We will then examine some strategies for reducing the importance of spending days with his SIGO, and eating.

Link it to a Need Satisfier

One strategy for increasing the importance of something is to link what you want to make important to the needs you have that need satisfaction.

Fred has several needs that we know about. He needs the security of a job, and he needs security in his relationship. He also feels the need to lose weight.

To increase the importance of his job search, he can link the job search to his need for security with his SIGO. Fred can construct scenarios in which his SIGO is excited about the new job he will get. He can imagine her telling him she loves him even more now that he has found a job. He can imagine her deciding to marry him because he is such a “go getter.”

To increase the importance of eating wisely, he can link eating wisely to his need for security in his job and security in his relationship. Fred can construct images of himself as a more attractive job candidate as he sees himself slimmer. He can imagine a lunch on a job interview where the interviewer is impressed with Fred's wise choice of food. He can construct images of his SIGO telling him she loves him even more now that he is thinner.

Increase its Relevance to Satisfying Your Specific Need

Fred wants a job, but he doesn't like writing a resume or going on job interviews. Fred wants to eat wisely, but has not cultivated a taste for fish and fowl.

As Fred considers the task of writing a résumé he can increase its importance to him by linking it with the specific job he wants. He can view the task not as résumé writing, but

rather specifying the job he wants. Fred can change the scope of the task in his mind to equate with the level of the final outcome. Fred will focus on his desire for the job, not on his distaste for writing resumes.

As Fred considers the meal he will eat, rather than think of it as fish that he doesn't like, he can think of it as something to help him reach his goal weight. Along with seeing himself at his goal weight, he can see himself moving toward a satisfying job, and a satisfying relationship.

Resolve Physiological Needs

Fred recognizes that he feels sluggish from his excess weight. He also realizes that he feels a lot of stress from his job loss and his new relationship. Physiological needs must be resolved to free him to put his full energies into his job search and developing wise eating habits.

Fred might begin a regimen of early to bed, a full night's sleep, and an exercise program to resolve his stress and sluggishness. All of these actions can be linked to his goal of being at his best for his job search. Also, they can give him the feeling of well being and achievement that comes from deciding to do something and accomplishing it.

By taking action to resolve his physiological needs, his physiological needs will not act as barriers to his desire to invest more importance in what he wants to emphasize.

Resolve Barriers to its Attainment

Often you will find that to get what you want, you have to give up its opposite. For example, Fred wants to get a job. He has to give up staying home with his SIGO. Fred wants to lose weight. He has to give up eating unwisely. These opposite satisfiers are barriers to the attainment of what Fred wants. Shortly, we will discuss strategies that Fred can use to reduce the importance of the satisfiers that he wants to give up.

There may be other barriers that Fred has to the attainment of his goals. We already noted that he doesn't like writing resumes and going to job interviews. If there are any other barriers that Fred discovers, it is prudent to give them to his Sage to resolve. For example, Fred may discover that he has a thought that he wants to get out of his old line of work and get into something new. This idea needs to be considered and a decision reached. Until he decides, the unconsidered idea may act as a barrier to becoming active in his job search.

Reducing the Importance You Attach to Something

To *reduce* the importance you give something, there are several strategies you can use.

You can distance it from being a satisfier.

You can become increasingly critical of each example and decrease its relevance as a satisfier.

You can add barriers to its attainment.

Let's see examples of each of these possibilities in Fred's example.

- **Distance it From Being a Need Satisfier**

Fred wants to decrease the importance of spending his days with his SIGO, and decrease the importance he gives food as a stress reducer.

Fred has already linked his job search with his goal of job security and relationship security. To reduce the importance of spending days with his SIGO, he simply focuses his awareness on the thought that spending the day with his SIGO would get in the way of what he really wants — the job. He can conclude specifically, that spending the day with his SIGO, right now, could cost him a job he might miss.

In the same manner, on the issue of food choices, as Fred is taking steps to increase his desire for fish and fowl, he can begin to think of beef, sweet wines and desserts as being hurtful to his desire to eat wisely and lose weight.

- **Decrease its Relevance as a Satisfier by Being Critical**

Fred can take each particular stimulus and become increasingly critical of it, so as to find it less and less satisfying. For example, Fred is about to start his day and could choose to spend it with his SIGO, or on his job search. He can look for reasons why this wouldn't be a good day to spend with his SIGO, e.g. "It looks like rain, so it wouldn't be any fun with her, but it's a great day to write my résumé." As Fred examines a menu, his eyes stray to the three-layer hamburger, Fred might think, "These hamburgers are fried, and I would probably get indigestion," Or, "They never cook them the way I like them here, it would probably be overdone."

- **Add Barriers to its Attainment**

Fred can decrease the importance he attaches to being with his SIGO during the day, and eating unwisely, by installing barriers to each possibility. For example, he might decide, "Until I get my new job, I won't use my car during the day for anything but tasks involved in job hunting." By this decision, he makes it more difficult to visit his SIGO during the day. He can add barriers to eating unwisely by such things as throwing out any high calorie food items that he has at home. Fred could decide that, "On any day when I eat unwisely, I will penalize myself by not being with my SIGO that evening." Or, "For each meal in which I eat unwisely, I will then skip the next meal entirely."

Managing the Importancizer

This brief outline of strategies for managing the Importancizer give you some idea of how you can increase or decrease the importance you give to things. Notice that the Importancizer is only one of at least four factors that influence perception. The other factors — time perspective, scope, and level also have an impact on the overall importance you attach to anything.

In short, you also impact the importance you attach to something by changing the time perspective you choose, or shifting the scope and level.

In Fred's case, if he focuses on "today," he might be torn between seeing his SIGO *or* making appointments for a job interview. But, if Fred focuses on "the next year" as his time frame, he can see that over that time span, he will have *both* his SIGO *and* his job. An expanded time reference will reduce the importance he attaches to seeing his SIGO "today."

"Importance" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 35 —Importance: Three Major Drivers

A Sage of our time by the name of Taibi Kahler discovered and named the five major “drivers.” Kahler called them drivers because they are driving forces in our lives. The drivers are TWISB elements or strategies that have gone sour.

Example

Take the “Be-Perfect” driver. Naturally, everyone has a built in desire to do well. People who distort this natural need to “do well” change it into a goal to “Be-Perfect.” The idea sounds good. After all, if it is good to “do well,” then it seems as though it would be even better to “Be-Perfect.” As you will see, all of these drivers are distortions of normal and natural goals. As they become distortions, they become excessive and they are misapplied.

Kahler noticed that any one person usually only has one of the three major drivers: the “Be-Perfect,” or “Please-0thers,” or “Try-Hard.” In addition to a major driver, you might also have one of the two minor drivers, the continuing urge to “Hurry-Up,” or the urge to “Be-Strong.”

The drivers are important sources of pain and misery. Indeed, they not only create strong bad feelings, they are self-defeating as well. By that, I mean that a person attempting to “Be-Perfect” will typically be less effective than a person who is only striving to “do well.” A person who strives to “Please-0thers” typically pleases others less than a person who is not *driven* to please others.

If you are “driven” by one of the drivers, you will find that your Sage can be of great help to you, if you decide to change. Your Sage will simply substitute a wiser strategy for each of the driver strategies, and you will find that you experience fewer bad feelings, and do a better job of whatever you are striving to achieve.

Be-Perfect vs. Do Reasonably Well

If you are a person who has a “Be-Perfect” driver, you experience a great deal of unnecessary and unproductive pain. You attempt to do everything perfectly, and of course, you fail more than you succeed. Not only do you provide a lot of misery for yourself, but you quite probably produce a lot of misery in others as well. Striving to Be-Perfect causes a person to be more explicit than is required, be more thorough than is valuable, be more complete than is useful, and feel dissatisfied most of the time.

If you take a test and get a 98 out of 100, you suffer because of the two points you missed. You miss out on the satisfaction that you could have experienced from the 98 you got correct. If you play a golf shot that is 15 feet from the pin, you suffer because you weren’t closer. You miss out on the satisfaction of the good shot you hit.

Confidence is the memory of past successes. A person afflicted with the “Be-Perfect” driver actually has less confidence than a person who is satisfied simply to do reasonably well. A person who strives to do reasonably well has many successes. The person striving to Be-Perfect has fewer successes.

If you suffer from the pain of attempting perfection, your Sage can help you a great deal. First, comes the step of deciding to give up your drive for perfection. Next, comes

the step of deciding what you do want. I recommend that you choose for yourself, “I want to do reasonably well.”

Once you choose to simply do reasonably well, your Sage will begin helping you implement your new decision. Anytime you get a bad feeling about something you or someone else has said or done, your Sage will examine the TWISB message to see what test you were using. If you were using perfection as your test, then your Sage will simply resolve the bad feeling by testing for whether it was something that was reasonably well done.

Gradually, as your Sage resolves each bad feeling produced by the old test, and substitutes your new test, you will find the perfection test disappears. As you achieve this shift, you will experience less dissatisfaction with yourself and others, and more satisfaction with yourself and others.

Please-Others vs. Satisfy Yourself

The drive to please others is a painful and insatiable drive. If you are afflicted by this drive, you know the truth of the statement, “*It is impossible to please anyone all the time, and some people, ever.*”

The problem with this driver is that it gives other people the control over your satisfaction. You are delegating to others something that is your own responsibility. You are imposing on them a burden they don’t want, and can’t reasonably be expected to accept. Your good feelings depend on whether someone else feels good.

On its face, it seems reasonable. It seems unselfish. It seems generous and giving. In reality, it is a heavy burden that isn’t fair to place on others. Other people are having enough trouble being responsible for their own satisfaction and good feelings without being burdened with the responsibility for the satisfaction and good feelings that you might get in pleasing them.

The reality is that it is less selfish, more generous, and more caring and giving if you take responsibility for your own satisfaction.

Now, it seems backwards. If you truly want to please others, then you will do it best by pleasing yourself. Notice that this is not an argument for being selfish. I am not suggesting that you only meet your own needs and not be concerned with the needs of others. Rather, I am suggesting that you satisfy yourself that you are doing reasonably well at meeting other peoples’ needs as well as your own.

Do as much for others as *you are satisfied* to do. Then, you are pleasing yourself and they don’t owe you anything. If you give up your own satisfaction for someone else’s pleasure, then it places an unstated obligation on the other person to do the same for you. That is asking too much. That is placing an unfair burden on the other person. Satisfy yourself by doing what you choose to do for another. Then, it is a gift. There are no strings attached. There is no obligation placed on the other person. You are doing what you choose to do for them, to satisfy *yourself*.

If you truly want to please others, then choose to satisfy yourself by what you do.

Anytime you experience a bad feeling because another person is not pleased, your Sage will ask, “Am I satisfied that I did what I was willing to do to meet that person’s needs?” If the answer is “yes,” then you can be satisfied with yourself that you have done all you

were willing and able to do. The other person's satisfaction is, after all, that person's responsibility. If the other person wants to be pleased, he or she can do what is needed to feel pleased and satisfied.

If you are afflicted with the "Please-Others" driver, you will experience a new freedom and sense of self-reliance as you take over the responsibility for satisfying yourself. And, odds are very good that you will do a better overall job of truly pleasing other people.

Try-Hard vs. Do It

The "Try-Hard" strategy is built on the belief that anything is possible if you "Try-Hard" enough. A person afflicted with the Try-Hard driver will respond to frustration by trying harder. Sometimes the strategy works. There are, indeed, some things that can be accomplished by trying harder. The problem comes when the person attempts to meet all situations with the same strategy, even when it isn't appropriate. For example, if I am attempting to move a heavy piano, I may push it. If the piano doesn't move, I may get it to move by pushing harder. But, if I am attempting to solve a math problem, trying harder doesn't work. The math problem is a situation where trying hard doesn't help. As a matter of fact, trying hard actually hurts. If you attempted to solve a math problem by trying hard, your pulse would rise, your blood pressure would increase, you would breathe faster, and you would actually have less access to your thinking capacity.

So, the Try-Hard driver causes people to take the wrong action in many situations. Sometimes it makes the problem worse. But, the main difficulty is that it keeps them from finding a strategy that might work.

The classic example of Try-Hard in action is the tourist in a foreign country. He is speaking English to someone who doesn't understand English. When the person doesn't comprehend, the tourist raises his voice and says the same thing louder, or slower. This illustrates the futility of the Try-Hard strategy.

The person afflicted with Try-Hard driver uses more effort as the solution to any difficulty. More effort frequently isn't an appropriate strategy. The result is that the problem doesn't get resolved. Some people with a strong Try-Hard driver will appear to be very busy, moving from one task to another, but getting little accomplished.

If you decide to give up the "Try-Hard" driver, the wise substitute is "Do It." Instead of "trying" to do something, do it.

Notice that trying is the same as failing. When I am trying to move the piano, I am not moving the piano. When I am moving the piano, I am moving the piano; I am not "trying" to move the piano.

So, trying is synonymous with failing, or *not* doing something. When I make an error in tennis, someone yells, "nice try." When someone fails to do something, people say, "he tried."

The typical outcome for the person with the "Try-Hard" driver is failure.

As you choose to substitute "do it" for trying, your Sage will apply the new test for the old one. You will find you actually accomplish things, rather than simply "trying" to accomplish things. Notice that the new test isn't for trying, it is for doing. You use less effort and you get better results. Seems odd doesn't it?

"Importance" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 36 —Importance: Minor Drivers

Taibi Kahler points out that you can have a secondary driver in addition to one of the primary drivers. In other words, you could have a Be-Perfect driver *and* a Hurry-Up (or Be-Strong) driver. Each is resolved in a different way.

Hurry-Up vs. Go at Your Own Pace

The Hurry-Up driver causes you to have an excess of urgency about time. Instead of doing things at the pace at which they are done best, you find yourself always hurrying. It's as though there is a little voice always saying, "Hurry-Up." The problem with hurrying is that you don't do things well. Few things are best done hurriedly. Also, you may find that you arrange things so that you have to hurry. If you have plenty of time to meet a deadline, you may wait until you are almost late, and then Hurry-Up to meet the deadline.

If you have the Hurry-Up driver, you will typically wait until the last minute to wake up in the morning, so that you have to hurry to get the day started. If you have to be somewhere, you will arrange to start late so you have to hurry. Hurrying becomes a way of life.

People with the Hurry-Up driver frequently are not thinking of what they are doing, they are thinking of what they will do next. This is a way of living inside your head, in the future. By doing this, you don't live in the here-and-now, and life goes by without being lived.

If you decide to give up the Hurry-Up driver, you do it by deciding to "Go at the right pace." The right pace is the pace at which it is best to do what you are doing. Some things are best done slowly. Some things are best done quickly. When you go at the right pace, you go at the pace best suited to the outcomes you want.

Your Sage will always know the best pace for any task. When you give up hurrying, your Sage will lead you wisely to choose the pace that is right for you. As you make this switch, you will find that you have more time than you ever imagined. You will find that you have the time that you need to do what you choose to do. You will no longer say to yourself things like, "There is never enough time." You will discover that there is plenty of time, when you go at the pace that is right for you.

Be-Strong vs. Experience Life Fully

The Be-Strong driver is frequently found in men who've been taught, or decided, that they don't want to show their feelings. Women can have it also, but it is more commonly found in men. In cultures where it is considered "macho" to show no feelings, the Be-Strong driver is very common.

Under the influence of the Be-Strong driver, a person will attempt to mask feelings and not show them. In terms of the Sage Model, when a Be-Strong person has a bad feeling, or a good feeling, the strategy for handling the feeling is to adopt an unresponsive persona. The Be-Strong persona is one where the face and body are somewhat fixed and rigid, and whatever is being felt is not being expressed.

Notice that the Be-Strong driver is a strategy that is used for handling any feeling. Perhaps there are situations where it would be wise to use that strategy and persona. But, the person with the Be-Strong driver uses the same strategy in every situation. It must be

obvious that no single strategy is always the best strategy for all cases. So, the Be-Strong driver robs a person of the flexibility to select wise strategies based on the needs of the situation. The person with the Be-Strong driver has no choices. The response is always the same.

A person under the influence of the Be-Strong driver lives life as though he or she were in a straight jacket. They can only live life to the extent that they don't feel anything, or don't communicate feelings to others.

People who are under the influence of the Be-Strong driver might even fear feelings. This is a massive dilemma because everyone has feelings. You can pretend they don't exist, you can discount them and not feel them, but they are there. Feelings serve an important and useful purpose. They serve to let you know that life is going well or badly. Feelings are the basis of choice. Feelings are the basis of strategies that you can use to handle whatever happens in your life. To discount feelings and repress or mask them, is to shut yourself off from what may be the single most important element of the mind.

The Be-Strong driver can block your access to your Sage. How can you learn to invoke your Sage to resolve conflicts or handle difficulties if you shut off feelings? You will never be aware of a good feeling to maximize, or a bad feeling to resolve, unless you allow yourself to experience your feelings.

People afflicted with the Be-Strong driver may fear that they wouldn't be able to handle their feelings if they felt them. This fear typically stems from childhood when the person wasn't capable of handling strong feelings in a socially acceptable way. For example, boys are taught, "big boys don't cry." Girls are told, "Don't be a baby." Now, in adulthood, with access to your Sage, there is no longer a need to have such fears.

The antidote is the choice to live life fully. That choice offers a person the freedom and flexibility to respond appropriately to every situation with the strategy best for that situation. To live life fully means to feel the bad feelings, and to feel the good feelings. It means to fully experience the life that you create for yourself.

You can choose the strategies that are best for handling feelings. You can choose to express them, act them out or resolve them. The important thing is that you have a choice. The person with the Be-Strong driver has no choice. There is only one response for every situation.

Have you noticed that each of the drivers defeat what they seem aimed at achieving? The Be-Perfect driver causes people to accomplish less and perform less effectively. The Please-Others driver causes others to be less pleased. The Try-Hard driver causes people to accomplish less. The Hurry-Up driver causes people to do poorer work and never have enough time. And, the Be-Strong driver causes people to be more afraid at the same time they are seeking to appear unafraid. To fear your feelings is to carry fear with you always.

Chapter 37 — Time Perspective: Present, or Future

Time is somewhat of a hidden dimension for most of us. Yet, every thought that you have has a time component. Our choice of time perspective is usually quite outside of our awareness, yet that hidden choice has a powerful influence on our perceptions, feelings and actions.

It is sufficient for the purposes of this book to focus on two different aspects of time.

1. The Choice of Time Frame: Past, Present, or Future

There are three time frames:

A recollection from some past experience causes you to focus on the *past*.

Awareness of something that is happening here-and-now is a focus on the *present*.

Constructing something that might happen in the future is a focus on the *future*.

For each of these time frames, you can choose a time span that is narrow or broad.

2. The Time Span: from Narrow to Broad

For example, you can think about a *specific* birthday you celebrated in the past, or you could scan *all* of the birthdays that you have celebrated in the past.

The present is less flexible, because you are in real time when you are in the present. What is now is now; what will happen in two minutes is still in the future. Even so, there is some flexibility. You can react to a given stimulus either instantly, or rather slowly. You may have noticed that sometimes things seem to be going too fast for you to follow, and yet, other times, things may seem to be going in slow motion.

The future time frame is very flexible in terms of span. You can think of the future as the next minute, or the rest of your life.

Wise Choices

So, what do you do about time? How do you make wise choices about time frames or time spans?

Here are several useful generalizations:

- A. The past is finished. Nothing can be done to change it, and your wisest choice regarding the past is to accept it.
- B. The present is where you *live* your life. You will be more alive and truly experience your life by living as fully as you can in the here-and-now.
- C. The future is something that you have the power to affect and change. The future is where you will live the rest of your life. It is in the future that you will realize your wants, goals, hopes, and dreams. Yet, anything you do to affect the future must be done in the present — the here-and-now. (It may be *tomorrow's* here-and-now, or *next year's* here-and-now, but anything that is to be accomplished must be accomplished in some “here-and-now.”)
- D. In general, the narrower the time span, the higher the emotional impact. The broader the time span, the less the emotional impact.

From these generalizations you can derive some helpful strategies:

1. Live as much as you can in the present — the here-and-now.

2. Use your past wisely. Use your recollections of mistakes, losses and failures only as sources of learning about what to do here-and-now. Use your recollections of your successes and your wins as a source of confidence that you carry into the here-and-now.
3. Use your constructions of the future to give you the vision that will guide you to live in the here-and-now, doing what you need to do in order to realize your vision of the future.
4. Heighten any positive experience by focusing on a narrow time span, whether past, present, or future.
5. Reduce the emotional impact of any negative experience by focusing on a broad time span, whether past, present, or future.

"Time perspective," continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 38 — Time Perspective: Strategies

At this point, we've used generalizations about how to use time wisely. The next two chapters will elaborate and give examples.

Wise Strategies

There are several strategies for using the past, the here-and-now, and future in wise ways.

Live As Much As Possible In The Here-and-now

Some gurus will advise you to live your entire life in the present. They will advise you to live always in the here-and-now. They will say that any time spent reviewing the past, or contemplating the future is time spent living inside your head and they will say that during those times you are not really living.

I hold a more moderate view. I think there is considerable value to be gained from reviewing the past, if it is done wisely. I think there is considerable value to be gained by constructing a positive vision of the future. And, I think there are times and situations when it is no great loss to leave the present and go inside your head to review the past or construct a vision of the future.

When is it Important to be in the Here-and-now?

When you are with someone else, it is important to be in the here-and-now. To truly “be with” someone else, you must activate your senses, go outside your head, and focus on that other person. You open yourself fully to that person. You absorb that person fully. You are not thinking, evaluating, judging, remembering, or imagining. You are focusing all of your senses on that person. As you learn to do this fully and openly, you will experience that person fully, and you will experience the magic that occurs as you live fully in the here-and-now.

It's important to be in the here-and-now when you are doing something. Whether it is work, hobby, or play, you are truly “alive” when you are doing it completely in the here-and-now. You are not thinking, evaluating, judging, remembering, or imagining. You are totally concentrated on what you are doing. Your senses are alive, time has narrowed to this instant, and you are totally absorbed in what you are doing. As you learn to do this, you will begin experiencing the magic that comes from getting outside of your mind and wholly focused in the here-and-now.

If this concept of living in the here-and-now is new to you, you are on the threshold of a magnificent transformation in your life. You will discover that the time you spend fully absorbed in your conscious experience of the here-and-now will become your most highly valued time. (For a fuller examination of this concept, read “Flow” by a great Sage of our time, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)

The Sage, the Tigers and the Blossom

There is a story about a Sage being chased by tigers. He reaches a cliff, jumps over and grabs a tree root. He looks below and sees tigers waiting for him. He looks above and sees tigers snarling at him. He looks at the face of the cliff and sees a small flower and a lovely blossom. As he dangles on the cliff, his face lights up in a smile and he says, “What a beautiful blossom.”

Use Your Past Wisely

It is simple to use your mind to recall the past. You can do it by asking a question, or by simply scanning for anything you decide to review. Sometimes, past events will come up in response to outside stimuli, or sometimes they seem to come to mind by themselves.

How can you use your past wisely? You use your past wisely when you use the *bad* experiences from your past as the basis for learnings about how to handle the here-and-now. You use the *good* experiences from your past wisely when you re-experience them fully as a source of confidence that you will bring with you when you live in the here-and-now.

To simplify, good experiences are those that give you good feelings when you review them now. Bad experiences are those that give you bad feelings when you bring them up to review in the present.

To use these past experiences wisely requires that you treat them differently when they come into your awareness. Those that bring good feelings, you handle by re-experiencing the good feelings. Those that bring you bad feelings, you handle by “thinking” or reprocessing.

As a past experience comes to mind that brings bad feelings, you immediately shift to an objective view, that is, “watching” it, and ask the question “What would I do differently if that situation were happening now?” Or, “What can I do to assure that *that* doesn’t happen again?” In other words, you process that bad experience with questions instead of simply feeling the bad feelings again.

As an experience comes to mind that brings good feelings, you fully experience the good feelings — again — in the here-and-now. You can heighten its benefit to you further by attaching it to other good feelings that you have had that are similar. To do that, you scan other similar experiences you have had that have produced similar feelings. At this point you are maximizing the good feelings available regarding that recollection. After you have fully experienced all of the good feelings available, you can then “think” or reprocess the feeling by forming a general statement. For example, you might say to yourself, “Yes, I *do* do good work,” or “Yes, other people do love me,” or whatever the positive experience confirms for you.

Notice that I am not suggesting you get so wrapped up in the past that you stop living in the here-and-now. I am suggesting that you allow the recollections from your past to be part of your ongoing life and to use them wisely to serve you in the present and the future.

Construct Positive Visions of The Future

You use your Constructor most wisely when you allow it to construct visions of the future that you want to create. Your Sage learns from these visions and will use them to make decisions in the here-and-now that will move you closer to your vision of the future.

You can create positive constructions with a narrow time frame, or a broad time frame. You can construct a positive vision of your next golf shot, or the sentence you want to write. Or, you can construct a vision of how you want your life to be ten years from now.

Sometimes you will create negative constructions, and they can be useful as ways of preparing you for all possible alternatives. For example, you might be involved in making a decision that could turn out good or bad. You can use your Constructor to create a full

range of possibilities. Your challenge is to use these negative constructions positively. If you construct a negative scenario, use it to create a plan for how you will handle that eventuality, in order to produce a satisfactory outcome. When you have prepared contingency plans for any eventuality, you are prepared to make the decision because you know you can handle anything that happens. Once that is done, then it is wise to focus only on the positive constructions. Focus on what you want the outcome to be, and it will serve as a vision that will help you achieve what you want. If one of the negative outcomes comes to mind, move rapidly through the plan you will use to make a satisfactory resolution, and then retrieve the positive vision that you want.

It is useful to have an “all-purpose” resolution available for whenever you construct a future possibility for which you have no strategy (for example, if your Constructor creates the vision of a nuclear holocaust, or the bankruptcy of the government). A useful generalized resolution might be “I am flexible and I will accept whatever happens. As long as I am alive, I will make the best out of the life I have available.” Then, it is wise to refocus on the vision of the life you want to create.

Heighten Good Experiences by Choosing Narrow Time Spans

As you live in the here-and-now you will encounter good and bad experiences. As you encounter good experiences, you can heighten your enjoyment of those experiences by choosing a highly-focused time span. Now! Right this instant! Narrow your focus of time; exclude all thoughts of past or future. Feel the feelings you are having right now.

This is not a great time to become philosophical and dilute the experience by expanding the time frame to your whole life.

Moderate Bad Experiences by Choosing Broad Time Spans

You can moderate present moment bad experiences by expanding the time frame. If your dog dies, feel the grief and loss. Do not go inside your head and rob yourself of the expression of your feelings. After you have fully experienced your feeling of loss and grief, you need not dwell on it excessively. You can moderate your feelings of your dog’s death by thinking back on the good times you shared. You can moderate your feelings by thinking of another dog in the future. But, shifting time frames is not the idea here.

The idea of time span is to shift your span of perspective about this experience in the here-and-now. Here are several ways that you could express in words the idea of broadening the time span.

“Seeing my life as a whole — spanning 90 years — where does this experience fit?”
“Overall it’s been a good (year, decade, lifetime).”

Unwise Strategies

Here is a recipe for creating a miserable life:

- Spend part of your time reviewing the past in your mind, focusing intensely on the mistakes, failures, or losses you have experienced.
- Spend the rest of your time creating scenarios of the future that focus intensely on the worst outcomes you can imagine. Be certain that you create scenarios that you don’t know how to handle, or won’t be able to handle.
- Spend little time in the here-and-now, outside of your head, where other people are, and where your life would be, if you were around to live it.

Then, if you want to make other people miserable, too:

- Share all of your painful memories with those around you. Don't come outside to listen to them, simply report your pain.
- Share all of your disaster scenarios with others. Make sure that they know that they are helpless to handle the disasters that will occur.

If you have someone in your life that you love that uses these strategies for creating a miserable life, give them this book. If they decide to choose wiser strategies, support them. If they don't or won't choose wiser strategies, accept them. Use their misery as a source of motivation for you to reinforce your decision to use wise strategies for time perspectives.

What About Living Your Life Totally In The Past?

Perhaps you know someone who lives their life inside their head recalling the good things that have happened. Often this is the strategy adopted by someone who has retired. Retired from work? Retired from child raising? Retired from life? The question has been asked, "If you are at the end of your road, and death is eminent, wouldn't that be a wise time to focus on the glories of the past?"

What About Living Your Life In The Future?

Another way to avoid living is to stay inside your head and live in the future. Everything wonderful will happen in the future. In the future you will be healthy, happy, loved, loving, rich, successful, admired, fully utilizing your entire potential. It will be wonderful.

Perhaps you know someone that lives in the future. If they live fully in the future, you may notice that they don't do the things now, in the present, that it will take to achieve their dreams for the future. Ah, well, even though the dreams never get realized, it doesn't matter, because when the future becomes the present, they won't notice because they will be focusing on the new future.

Living in the Future: The Twins — and the Jail

Tom and Tim, identical twins, lived identical lives. Until one day, by a quirk of fate, Tom was put in jail for life, while Tim continued to live on his family estate. Both lived in the future. Each of them spent their entire time focusing on the future and savoring their dreams. Tom and Tim, by a quirk of fate, died on the identical day. Tom and Tim had identical lives.

Moral: If you are going to live here-and-now with your mind in the future, it doesn't matter where you are today.

Chapter 39 — Scope

Scope is a way of describing the size or scope of what you are processing.

Example

For example, you are watching the weatherman on television. He says, “Tomorrow we will have a cold front passing through. There is a 50% chance of showers, winds shifting from southwest to northerly from 10 to 15 miles per hour with gusts of 20 to 25. Temperatures will reach a high of 65 with lows in the lower 50’s. Humidity readings can be expected around 60%.”

Now, how will you process that? Will you take it all? Or, will you choose a piece of it to process? The choice of what you choose to process can be described as the *scope* that you choose for the input. Here are some of the possible scopes that you could choose:

- Rain tomorrow
- 50% chance of rain tomorrow
- It’s going to be cooler
- It will be windy
- It will be rainy and windy tomorrow
- It may rain, but it will be windy and relatively dry air
- Cold front is passing, possible showers, windy, dry

So, from this single input, you can carve out any *scope* of input that you choose.

In every input that is processed, there are two scopes that are chosen. The first is the scope of the input that you process, and the second is the scope that you choose to process it against.

As you listen to this forecast, you could choose any number of different scopes to use:

- What it means to me
- What it means to me, and my SIGO
- What it means to me, my SIGO, and my kids
- What it means to my work
- What it means to my church
- What it means to the neighborhood
- What it means for the town
- What it means to the state
- What it means to drivers and the roads
- What it means to farmers
- What it means to boaters
- What it means to tourists
- What it means in terms of world weather patterns
- Etc. etc. etc.

So, in this simple example, you must choose a scope for the input. And, you must choose a scope against which to process the input.

Since there are so many possible scopes from which to choose, and so many possible scopes against which to process the input, it is unlikely that any two people will get the

same message from this forecast, and use the same scope to interpret it. As a consequence, virtually everyone hearing the message will process it differently.

So, what does scope mean to us as we are examining the process of the mind? How can we use an understanding of scope?

Here are some conclusions about scope.

1. When two people are disagreeing or misunderstanding each other, it is often because they are choosing different scopes to process the same inputs. If you are in a disagreement with someone else, you can move toward agreement with that person by shifting your scope to the scope that the other person is using. If you want the other person to move toward agreement with you, then you can define the scope that you are using and invite the other person to come to the same conclusion that you have reached.
2. When two of your parts are in disagreement, it is because each of them is using a different scope. Your Sage can help the parts reach agreement by expanding the scope to a scope that includes both of the scopes that the individual parts are using.
3. Expanding the scope on any issue will tend to resolve disagreements, and will tend to reduce the emotional component of the issue. Expanding the scope that you use to process any input will reduce internal conflict and the emotional response you have toward an issue.
4. Narrowing the scope on any issue will increase its tendency to polarize and create disagreement. Narrowing the scope that you use to process an input will create increased internal conflict and increase the emotional response you have to an input.
5. An understanding of scope, and flexibility in choosing scopes is very useful for people who must deal with conflict, e.g. politicians, judges, diplomats, therapists, and organizational leaders.

For the limited purposes of this book, it is sufficient to suggest that you learn how to expand or narrow a scope to get the result you are seeking.

Exercise on Expanding and Narrowing Scope

I'll give you an issue. You practice expanding the scope and narrowing the scope. Then after you have done that practice expanding and narrowing the scope you could choose to process it. Here is an example of an issue:

A Space Launch Of A New Satellite

Making the issue broader:

Another successful launch — that makes (xx) of them. We are approaching mastery of space.

We now have a larger network of satellite communications.

We are approaching a global communications capability.

We can see the time when all people in the world can see the same television program.

Another step toward a single world of man.

Making the issue narrower:

More of our tax dollars gone up in smoke.

Harold Farbush is an astronaut on that flight.

Another traffic jam around Cape Kennedy
It went off at 10:14 a.m.

The Scope You Use to Process the Input:

Make the scope broad:

What does this mean to my family?
What does this mean to our community?
What does this mean to our economy?
What does this mean to our nation?
What does this mean to the world?

Making the scope narrow:

What does this mean to me?
What does this mean to my health?
Will this delay my dinner?
I'm missing my favorite soap opera.

Okay, do you have the idea? Now, you do it. Here are some issues to work with:

1. A lady was mugged on Main Street.
2. A truck turned over on the expressway.
3. My friend had a baby boy.
4. SAT scores are rising across the nation.

Take each issue; find ways to make it broader and narrower. Then choose some broad and narrow scopes that you could use to process the input.

There are no right and wrong answers. The exercise is intended to give you a sense of scope, and to make you aware enough that you begin to notice scopes that people use.

As you begin to notice scopes and notice the difference they make in reaching agreement or creating disagreement, your Sage will have a new tool to use to create more agreement in your life.

Chapter 40 — Levels: Learning to “Go Meta”

An input being processed can be dealt with at a variety of *levels*. By understanding levels, you can begin to make wise choices for the levels that you choose.

Examples Of Levels

One way to describe level is to say that any input is a part of a *class*. To talk *about* the input is one level. To talk about the *class* of inputs is the next higher level. To talk about *some part* of the input is to drop a level.

Let's begin by an example:

Harold makes the statement to Maude. “I like this pie.”

The Initial level: If we deal with the content “pie” or “likes,” we could call that the initial level. A response at the same level might be, “I like it, too.” From this level we could go up or down in level when we respond.

Up a level: To go up, we could talk *about* the statement Harold makes. An example of a higher-level response might be, “I like it when you say nice things about my cooking.” Maude is dealing with it at the level of a class of statements.

Up another level: Statements that Harold makes are part of his overall communications. Maude can deal with it at the next higher level, the level of overall communications that Harold makes, by saying, “I’m always happy when you tell me what you think.”

Still higher level: Harold’s communications are a part of his relationship with Maude. Maude can deal with it at the level of the relationship she has with Harold by saying “I’m so glad I married you.”

Down a level: Maude could drop a level by talking about something smaller than the “pie.” She could say, “I thought the crust was a little soggy.”

This example illustrates the idea of level. Every input is assigned some level as it is being processed. Notice that the further that Maude got away from the level of the input, the greater the distance the response was from the input.

For the purposes of this book, it is enough to notice that everything has a level, and that you can easily change levels as you process an input.

How Do You Use Levels?

Levels are used in the same way that scope is used. As you raise the level, you move toward resolving conflict, and you reduce the emotional impact of an input.

So, to move toward resolution of conflict you can raise the level, or expand the scope, or both. To *increase* the emotional response in an input, you can narrow the scope, or drop a level, or both.

Let’s talk about the “meta” level. The “meta” level is simply one level higher than the level of the input. At the meta level, you move away from content and toward dealing with the input as part of a class of those inputs.

Harold: “I like this pie.”

Maude: “I like it when you say nice things.” (a meta level)

Maude is not dealing with the content of the input; she is dealing with the statement as one of a class of statements, (nice statements Harold makes).

As you begin to observe “meta” responses, you will begin to recognize them in many familiar places. In Alan Alda’s reruns of M*A*S*H, many of Hawkeye’s comments are meta comments.

If you’ve read or seen the comedy humor of the great and popular playwright Neil Simon, you’ll notice that many of the clever things the people say are meta statements.

Listen to skilled and gifted politicians. When they are facing a difficult question or issue, they often make a meta statement, rather than dealing specifically with the question or issue.

If you build your awareness of meta comments, you will discover a whole new capability that you have to be clever, introduce humor, and to resolve conflict.

Notice also, that responses at a higher level reduce the emotional impact of an issue or communication. , If you want to maintain the emotional value of an input, stay at the same level. If you want to reduce the emotional value, go to a higher level.

Example: Maude: “I love you.”

Harold: “I love you.” (same level, maintain emotion)

Example: Maude: “I love you.”

Harold: “We have a loving relationship.” (higher level, reduced emotional value)

Example: Maude: “You are an idiot.”

Harold: “No, I am not.” (same level, no change in emotion)

Example: Maude: “You are an idiot.”

Harold: “I don’t want to trade insults. I want to talk.”

This last statement is a meta comment — Harold didn’t respond to the content, he responded to the class of the statement, and the odds are good that this will reduce the emotional quotient of the exchange)

An exercise

Below is a list of inputs to practice on. Take each one and create a response that is one level higher.

Example: “It’s a nice day.”

Response one level higher: “The weather has been good lately.”

Now create a meta comment for each of the following inputs:

1. “Here’s a letter for you.”
2. “My dog’s name is Fido.”
3. “Have an apple.”

When you have thought of a meta comment for each input, read on.

A Recap (Review the Map)

To this point, we have followed an input into the mind. We have seen how a part is assigned to handle it, and it is given some amount of importance. The input is assigned a time perspective, given a scope and a level. Then, and only then, is it ready to take the big

dive. The input disappears and goes on what is called a Trans Derivational Search, (TDS). I call it a dive.

What is happening is that the Comparator takes the input that you have focused, leveled, scoped, and importancized. The Comparator searches through your Storehouse of experiences looking for some way to understand this input. When the input reappears, it becomes available to the TWIPI. Whatever was found on the dive that was used to interpret the input goes into the TWISB. So, that is where we are. The next subject is the TWIPI.

Chapter 41 — TWIPI: Giving up Distortions

The input has been processed, and now you know what IT is. What IT is, is now available to you in your TWIPI. IT started out as an input of some sort, you assigned it to a part, you gave it some amount of importance, a time perspective, a scope and a level, and then it became, the way you perceive “IT.”

The TWIPI

How can you find out the contents of your TWIPI? Ask yourself, “What’s happening?” You will have access to two things, your TWIPI and your TWISB.

What’s happening with you right now? Go ahead: ask yourself that question. “What’s happening?”

As you get the answer to that question, you may also get an uncomfortable feeling. If so, then you can ask, “What is the mismatch?” (Or, “What’s wrong?”) Then you will get the contents of your TWISB. Do that now.

If you got an answer to what’s happening and got a good feeling, then you can find out the contents of your TWISB by asking, “What is the match?”

Okay, now you know how to find out what is in your TWIPI, what do you do with it?

The Way You Perceive IT — Is Not (Necessarily) the Way IT is

Notice the difference between reality and your perception of reality. First of all, everything starts with some reality. You take a piece of that reality, you assign it to a part that has beliefs, expectations, and wants, you importancize it, you choose a time frame, you scope it, and you level it, and by the time you are done, you have something quite different from the reality you started out with.

The idea to get is that you can’t put too much faith in the answer you get when you ask yourself, “What’s happening?”

Of all of the possible combinations that you could have used to create your perception of “IT,” you have only chosen one. Surely, there are many other equally valid perceptions possible. Yes, there are almost an infinite number of equally valid perceptions possible from the same input. So, don’t get too attached to any one of them.

When you have a perception that brings you good feelings or leads to good outcomes, use it. When you have a perception that brings you bad feelings or poor outcomes, abandon it. Go for another perception of what is happening.

Some people get stubborn. Some people think that their perception of they way it is, is *really* the way it is. This can lead to bad feelings and poor outcomes.

If you are wise enough to understand the difference between your perception and the reality, you will be flexible enough to make any shifts you need to make that will lead to good feelings and good outcomes.

There isn’t much more to be said about the TWIPI. It is not something you can do much with. It is the result of a series of processes we have already discussed.

There is one more thing to be aware of regarding the TWIPI. It will change through re-processing. After all the work you did to create the TWIPI, if you get a feeling — and

choose to stay inside and reprocess the same input — IT will change. Often, if the TWIPI and the TWISB are mismatched, some distortions can be added through the reprocessing.

For example, Harold says: "Maude, you are an idiot."

Maude's TWIPI, initially: "Harold insulted me."

Maude's TWISB initially: "It's wrong to insult your wife."

Maude doesn't react to that input. Instead she stays inside and reprocess the input. But, by now, she is aware of other times he has insulted her, and that she doesn't like it.

Maude's TWIPI, after reprocessing: "Harold always insults me."

Maude's TWISB: "You shouldn't ever insult your wife."

So, if you asked Maude initially, "What's Happening?" she would have said, "Harold Insulted Me." But, after Reprocessing (thinking), she might say, "Harold always insults me."

Notice the distortion that has occurred.

Distortions That Get Added

When you stay inside and re-perceive an input, distortions often get added. In this case, "thinking" just gets you further and further from the reality you are "thinking" about.

The most damaging distortions are words that are absolute: for example, words like *always, never, can't, every, and any*.

Never allow yourself to use *any* of these words. They *always* distort, *every* one of them, and you *can't* help but err in using them. (A little gratuitous humor to invoke your Sage.)

Sensitize yourself to these absolute words, so that you can reduce the distortions that you create. Begin to notice them as a source for bad feelings. As you invoke your Sage and ask the first question, "What's happening?" you will get the contents of your TWIPI. If you notice one of these absolute words in your TWIPI, you can guess that it will be the source of some or all of your bad feeling.

As you notice an absolute word, moderate it and see the difference it makes. Change *always* to "sometimes," or "often." Change *never* to "seldom," or "infrequently." Change *can't* to "haven't yet," or "don't want to." Change *every* to "most," or "many." Change *any* to "some."

Faulty Cause and Effect

Another distortion that crops up, as you re-perceive, is the faulty cause and effect. You will notice this when you notice the word "because."

You create a faulty cause and effect when you tie two thoughts together with "because." For example: I am writing this book *because* you want to read it. The reality is I am writing this book. Another reality is that you are reading it (one might assume you want to). So, I have two separate realities, and the word "because" distorts the entire statement.

You can clean up the distortions by using "and" instead of because.

Here is a list of statements distorted by faulty cause and effect.

1. I went out drinking because you were watching television.
2. I smashed up the car because you were talking to me.
3. I hate that television show because you always want to watch it.
4. I lost my job because my boss was a real jerk.
5. I didn't get to work on time because the traffic was heavy.
6. I think she doesn't like me because she says my shoes are strange.
7. I don't like to read because my parents made me read when I was young.
8. I have a sharp temper because I am Irish.
9. I am really shy because all the kids teased me when I was a child.
10. You don't understand me because you don't seem to listen to me.

Now, read over these statements and replace the “because” with “and.” I think you will see how the realities become clearer and the distortions disappear. When you replace “because” with “and” you discover that you are not controlled by outside forces. You discover that you have more choices than you might have thought you had.

Strategies for Your TWIPI

There are only four strategies that I can suggest for your TWIPI.

- *Notice distortions and moderate them.*
- *Eliminate faulty cause and effect and,*
- *Don't get stubborn about what you perceive.* Be open to awareness that what you're perceiving isn't reality.
- *Change the importance, or the time frame, or the scope, or the level.*

Work with your perception until it serves you as a basis for good feelings, or leads to good outcomes.

Chapter 42 —TWISB: Changing Destructive Beliefs, Learnings, Rules, etc.

You have spent your life collecting experiences that you will use to shape your future. Everything that you experience in the present is compared against all of your past experiences. There are many the elements in your Storehouse of experiences that can be used to interpret your present experiences.

You *don't* have much control over what comes up for you in your TWISB. Your Comparator takes the current input, and brings up something from your Storehouse to use to interpret it. Your Comparator may bring up a belief, a rule, a goal, a judgment, and some other element from your Storehouse.

You *do* have a lot of control over how you *respond* to whatever comes up for you in your TWISB. If your TWISB provides a match, you will have a good feeling. If your TWISB provides a mismatch, you will have a bad feeling. If you elect to use your Sage to handle bad feelings, then you have the opportunity to examine the TWISB item and make a decision about whether it is a productive item, or a destructive item.

Purpose of Your TWISB

The purpose of your TWISB is to guide you as you go through life. Your TWISB can affirm that things are going as you want, or alert you when things are not going well. Your TWISB will give you good feelings when you are acting, thinking, and feeling in a manner consistent with your values, and are choosing strategies that will help achieve the outcomes you desire. Your TWISB will give you bad feelings when you are acting, thinking, or feeling in a manner that is not consistent with your values, or are using a strategy that will not give you the outcome you desire.

Your TWISB is failing to serve you well when it

- produces bad feelings unnecessarily, or when it
- induces you to choose strategies that do not produce the outcomes you desire.

Your TWISB is Yours Alone

Be aware that your TWISB is yours alone. You have a unique body of experiences. You have chosen your specific beliefs, values, and desires. You have made your own decisions and your own learnings from your experiences. The things that come up for you in your TWISB are unique to you.

Many people make a grievous error in assuming that other people should have the same beliefs, learnings, values, judgments and rules that they have. The reality of life is that each person creates his or her own Storehouse. If you attempt to force your choices of “the way it should be” on others, you are opening yourself up to a life full of bad feelings.

The first step in creating a life that works for you is to accept that your choices are for you, and that other people have the right and freedom to make their own choices.

You will create many unnecessary bad feelings if you believe that your TWISB is “right,” and attempt to make other people believe, decide, learn, and value as you do.

Make it Work for You

For many people, the TWISB is the major source of bad feelings, and poor outcomes. When you are living at the conflict level, you are at the mercy of whatever comes up for you in your TWISB. When you use your Sage to resolve bad feelings, you can make your TWISB work for you. The Sage will help you affirm the elements of your TWISB that work for you, and will help you to purge the elements of your TWISB that don't bring you what you want.

Affirm What Works

To make your TWISB work for you, it is helpful to affirm the elements that work. In a later chapter you can learn how to maximize good feelings by affirming them. As you learn to affirm and strengthen the good feelings you get, you will at the same time be affirming the TWISB messages that produced the good feelings or good outcomes.

Purge What Doesn't Work

The task for your Sage is to purge the TWISB messages that do not work for you. As you produce a bad feeling your Sage will come on to resolve it. If your bad feeling is produced by an unproductive TWISB message, your Sage will help you purge the hurtful message, and find a positive TWISB message that will lead to good feelings, and productive outcomes.

TWISB: The Elements

The major elements of the TWISB are discussed in the following paragraphs. The focus will be on the unproductive aspects of each element. Strategies will be offered to help the Sage learn to purge the unproductive messages.

Values

Your unique set of values is one of the most important components of the TWISB. When an input is processed that conflicts with one of your basic values, you may find that that basic value comes up in your TWISB. Of all of the TWISB elements, your values are the most fundamental and least changeable. If your Sage determines that one of your basic values is causing you repeated difficulties — and gets in the way of you achieving what you want for your life — then your Sage will bring that value up for review. This is an infrequent event for most people. In most cases, the other elements of your TWISB will be in conflict with your basic values, and in those cases, you will purge or change the other TWISB element.

Goals

The next most fundamental TWISB element is your unique set of goals. Your goals are what you have decided to become or achieve in the future. Your goals serve as the basis for choices and decisions. Sometimes you might select a goal that is inconsistent with your values. When this happens your Sage will help you reshape your goals so that they become compatible. For example, a person might decide to get revenge for some perceived wrong. The goal of getting revenge might come into conflict with a basic value such as the desire to be a forgiving person and a person who does not hurt others. In such a

case, the Sage will resolve the conflict by adjusting the goal so that it fits within the basic values. Goals that are compatible with the basic values are seldom a source of TWISB problems.

Wants

Wants can either be goals, or steps toward reaching a goal. For example, you might “want” to win an election. The “want” is to win the election, and the election is a step toward a goal of achieving power, prestige, or influence. When a want is compatible with the basic values, and is compatible with an important goal, then it is seldom the source of TWISB problems. Wants become problems when they are incompatible with values or when they conflict with achieving a goal. Wants become problems when they are held by individual parts that are not acting in concert with the team of parts. The Sage can resolve problems created by incompatible “wants” by calling a team meeting and adjusting the wants so that they will be supported by all parts.

Dreams

You might sometime find a dream coming up for you in your TWISB. Dreams are the fantasies that you create that are not turned into goals. A dream is something that you may want, but have not been taking the necessary actions to achieve. When your Sage discovers a dream creating a mismatch in your TWISB, your Sage can resolve the bad feelings by making a decision about the dream. The Sage will help you decide to either turn the dream into a goal, or to simply let the dream fade away.

Dreams have value to you when you use them to stimulate the action necessary to realize them. Dreams can have a pleasure value when you use them to create pleasurable fantasies of the future. Dreams become unproductive when they cause you to have bad feelings in the present, and are not powerful enough to stimulate action to achieve them. For example, as a youth I dreamed of someday becoming a great sports hero. Today, that dream is past the possibility of realization. If I recall that dream, and have a “Walter Mitty” type of pleasurable fantasy, then the dream is not being hurtful. If, however, every time I see a sporting event, I feel a pang of pain because I never realized my dream, then the dream has become unproductive. When a dream has become unproductive, the Sage can resolve the bad feelings by deciding to let go of the dream.

Hopes

Hopes are constructions of the future that have satisfying outcomes. They serve a positive purpose when they mobilize your energies to achieve the desired outcomes. They can be unproductive sources of pain if they serve to create bad feelings when they are not realized. For example, Edna is hoping her SIGO will telephone. As she experiences the pleasurable construction of the satisfying telephone call, she gets good feelings. If the hope leads Edna to place the call, then it is useful in that it gets her to take action to realize her hope. If, on the other hand, Edna produces a series of bad feelings as time passes and the telephone call doesn’t come, Edna’s hope has become unproductive.

If Edna invokes her Sage to handle the bad feelings, the Sage will be able to resolve them by accepting that there has been no telephone call. As her Sage becomes wiser, she will discover that she spends less time with her Constructor creating hopeful fantasies and more time in the here-and-now experiencing life more fully, moment by moment.

Expectations

Expectations are sometimes based on past experiences. For example, Billy once went to the circus and he had a very enjoyable experience. Now, as Billy goes to the circus again, he has some expectations about the experience he will have.

Expectations are enjoyable when they are positive, because they produce the pleasurable feeling of positive anticipation.

Expectations are unproductive when they are negative. Negative expectations provide bad feelings well in advance of the experience. For example, Billy has an appointment with the dentist. He expects a painful experience. Each time that Billy thinks about the dentist, he rehearses the bad experience he will have. The expectation brings Billy bad feelings.

Even positive expectations become unproductive when they are used to create disappointment in the reality experience. Susan and Fred go to see a film together. Susan has high expectations for the film. Fred has negative expectations for the film. Fred creates bad feelings for himself in advance of the film. Susan creates good feelings of positive anticipation before the film. When they are finished with the film, Fred gets a good feeling because the film is “better” than he expected. Susan gets a bad feeling from the film because the film didn’t live up to her expectations.

In both cases, the expectations caused some bad feelings about the film, either before or after. It can be argued that it is wiser to have no expectations, either positive or negative. If you have no expectations, then you can experience the reality freshly, as it really is, rather than having it screened through your expectations.

If it is easy for you to decide to have no expectations, then you may make that decision. If it is difficult, I propose an alternative for you.

You may find it wise to decide: “I choose to get the most that I can from each experience, and I am not willing to experience bad feelings because of expectations.”

If you decide to do this, then your Sage will resolve each bad feeling that you get from an expectation, by re-perceiving the experience to find the positive things that can be gained from the experience.

After you make this decision, expectations will no longer have the power to create bad feelings for you, and you will find yourself able to get the most possible benefit from each experience.

“TWISB” continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 43 — TWISB: Beliefs

Beliefs are both a source of pleasure and a source of pain. By understanding beliefs, you can increase the pleasure they bring you, and you can reduce the pain beliefs have the potential to create.

Beliefs are a source of pleasure when they resolve the discomfort that is produced by “not knowing.” Beliefs are a source of pain when they hurt the person who holds the belief, or when they cause a person to hurt others.

Your Sage can help you choose beliefs that provide pleasure and comfort, and your Sage can help you modify beliefs that bring you pain or cause you to hurt others.

How Beliefs are Formed

One of the wonderful aspects of human beings is curiosity. Curiosity has been the source of many of the great discoveries that make our lives so rich. Curiosity has stimulated humans to explore, to create, to build, to experiment, to learn, and to reach out in every dimension of human life.

Curiosity is produced by questions. When a question is formed in the mind (whether from outside or from inside), a search is made of the Storehouse for an answer. If no answer is found, curiosity is produced. The amount of curiosity that is produced is a function of the importance assigned to the question, and the perceived payoff of finding the answer.

When you form a question for which there *is* an answer, curiosity motivates you to find that answer. This leads to learning and knowledge.

When you form a question for which there is no answer, or to which the answer is not yet known, curiosity is produced, and you have no way to resolve the curiosity. The curiosity is felt like a tension, and it begs to be resolved. Indeed, if you assign the question enough importance, you can become very curious, and if you don’t resolve the curiosity, you can find yourself deeply troubled by your inability to resolve the tension.

Beliefs are the answer to resolving the tension produced by questions that have no answer, or to which the answers are not yet known. Beliefs provide the relief for the tension of curiosity.

For example, science knows a great deal about the common cold, yet they still don’t have enough answers. Doctors and scientists don’t yet know how to cure the cold, and there are conflicting ideas about how colds are caught or transmitted. They have a number of theories, or possible explanations, but they simply don’t know.

If you form the question in your mind, “How did I catch this cold?” you will create curiosity. To resolve that curiosity, you might create a belief about how you caught the cold. So, you scan your Storehouse for possible answers, and you invoke your thinking processes and you select from all of the choices, the answer you like the best. “Aha,” you say, “I got it from Harold.” Then you have an answer, and you feel the relief of “knowing” how you caught your cold.

Your Sage part has the wisdom to know that you really don’t “know” how you caught your cold. If you ask your Sage, your Sage might say, “I don’t know how I caught the cold.” Or, the Sage might say, “I don’t know, but it seems reasonable that I might have

become infected in some way through contact with Harold, who has a cold.” Notice that there are parts of you that “know” how you caught the cold, and there is at least one part (the Sage), that is wise enough to say, “I think I know,” or “I have a theory about it.”

Your Sage is not troubled by uncertainty. Your Sage knows that uncertainty is the price you pay for wisdom regarding anything which is not knowable or not yet known.

Yet, uncertainty still produces tension in some parts of the mind. For those parts, “knowing” feels much better than being uncertain. Uncertainty doesn’t provide as much comfort and relief from the tension of curiosity as “knowing” does.

So, every human being collects beliefs. The beliefs are created or borrowed from others to resolve the tension produced by curiosity. Curiosity is produced by forming questions to which you don’t have an answer. Or, questions for which there are no answers.

The Purpose of Beliefs

Beliefs have several purposes. The first and primary purpose is to resolve the tension that comes from asking questions to which there is no known answer, or to which you don’t know the answer.

The second purpose of beliefs is to guide you in making decisions and choices about how to proceed in areas that are not yet known. There is still a great deal that us humans don’t yet know. Discoveries are being made all the time and our reservoir of knowledge grows. But, there are many discoveries still to be made. Until those discoveries are made, we simply don’t yet “know” the answers. Yet, we still have to go forward and live our lives. So, we need beliefs to help guide us until the discoveries are made.

So, beliefs are to give us comfort from the tension of “not knowing,” and beliefs help guide us as we move through those facets of life about which not everything is yet known.

Without beliefs, life is full of tension and fear. Without beliefs, you would suffer continuous stress from the tension produced by curiosity, and you would be very fearful about making decisions and choices that might be “wrong.”

You Choose Your Beliefs

It is important to notice that you choose your own beliefs. Some people find it comfortable to think that their beliefs are imposed by others. Some people fear the responsibility that they feel when they think that they choose their own beliefs. But, in reality, however you think that you got your beliefs, you *chose* them.

You might have created some of them for yourself. You might have borrowed some or all of them from others. As a child you most often got them from parents and teachers. However the beliefs were created, you decided to believe them. You *chose* to believe them.

If you fail to acknowledge that you chose your beliefs, then you give up the freedom to examine them and modify them to make them serve you. If you won’t take responsibility for your beliefs you can end up serving your beliefs rather than having your beliefs serve you.

You Have a Strategy for Becoming Convinced

There are a number of different strategies that people use to become convinced about a belief. Some have to see something before they believe it. Some have to hear about it. Some need only hear a belief once; some need to hear it repeatedly. Some need to hear it from an authority figure; some do not.

Some people create their own beliefs. Some only borrow them from others. Some people do some of each.

For some people, their beliefs start out as hunches, speculations, or theories, and become beliefs over time. Here is the way that works. You form a question, discover that you don't have an answer, become curious, and begin creating possible answers. Your thinking part might create several alternatives. From these, you will pick one as the most likely. When you first do this, you know it is only a speculation, or theory.

The next time you form the same question, you process it looking for an answer, and lo and behold, this time you have one. What comes up for you is the same speculation or theory that you created the last time, only this time it comes up for you as an answer. Gradually, as you use the answer again and again, you lose track of the source and you discover that you now believe it.

You may find it enlightening to explore some of your beliefs and discover what strategy you use to become convinced.

Allow Your Sage to Hold “Meta” Beliefs

As you are reading this discussion about beliefs, it may occur to you that I am suggesting that you loosen your hold on your beliefs. That is not the case. Beliefs are powerful and important tools that serve you in many ways. I do not suggest you believe them less or suggest that you purposely introduce less certainty.

Here is a wise and prudent strategy regarding beliefs. I suggest that you maintain the same level of certainty about them that you presently have. I suggest that all of your parts remain as convinced as they are. What I suggest is that you add some “meta” beliefs for your Sage. Allow your Sage to observe your beliefs as you use them, and help you to strengthen those beliefs that serve you well, and modify those beliefs that hurt you or hurt others.

Here is the Sage strategy for beliefs. As a belief brings you good feelings, your Sage will help strengthen that belief by affirming the good feeling and the belief that produced the good feeling. As a belief brings you a bad feeling, either about yourself or someone else, I suggest you allow your Sage to resolve the bad feeling.

Your Sage will come on to resolve the bad feeling, and will examine the belief. The test that your Sage will use will be to determine whether the belief is serving you or hurting you. If your Sage discovers a belief that is not serving you, but instead is hurting you or someone else, then your Sage will propose a modification of the belief.

For example, suppose Sally holds a belief that she is unattractive. Suppose that she collected a number of inputs when she was young and convinced herself that she was unattractive. Now, further suppose that Sally gets a little bad feeling every time she looks at herself in the mirror. If Sally invokes her Sage to handle the bad feeling, the Sage will come on and examine the belief. Her Sage might modify the belief to be, “some people

will find you attractive, some will not.” In other words, the Sage simply changes the *level* in the belief. The new belief is much more accurate and contains more truth than the original belief, and will serve Sally better. Now, when Sally looks in the mirror, she need no longer get that bad feeling. (At least she won’t get the bad feeling after the old habit disappears.)

The “meta” beliefs that your Sage will hold are simply these:

1. The first purpose of beliefs is to bring comfort and peace of mind whenever you are contemplating issues that have no answers, or are unknowable.
2. The second purpose of beliefs is to provide guidance for aspects of life where the answers may not be known.
3. A belief is good when it serves you.
4. A belief needs to be modified when it hurts you or hurts others.

Examine Your Beliefs

You can examine each belief that produces a bad feeling, whenever it comes up for you. Or, you can do a scan of your beliefs to examine them without waiting until they come up for you.

To do a scan of your beliefs, simply ask yourself this question: “What beliefs do I have that bring me pain and discomfort?” After you review those, you might ask this question: “What beliefs do I have that prompt me to act in a way that brings pain to others?”

Modify Those That Hurt You

Clearly any belief that brings you pain is a belief that isn’t serving you. Your Sage will attempt to modify the belief so that it can serve the important purposes that beliefs serve, without hurting you. If the entire belief is hurtful, and can’t be modified to make it work for you, then your Sage will consider other beliefs you might choose to replace it.

Modify Those That Hurt Others

If you have beliefs that cause you to say or do things that hurt others, your Sage will examine the belief and modify it so that it can serve you without hurting others. If the belief is so totally hurtful that it can’t be modified, then your Sage will consider what other beliefs you might choose in its place.

Sage Strategies for Handling Belief Issues

As you start using your Sage to handle hurtful beliefs, you may discover that you begin to adopt a different set of strategies regarding belief issues. You may find yourself becoming more accepting of others who have different beliefs. You may find yourself willing to offer your beliefs to others, but being accepting toward them if they don’t choose to adopt your beliefs.

Your Sage knows that beliefs are tools that serve you. Your Sage has the wisdom to understand that beliefs are not “right” and absolute. Your Sage might think of a belief in the same way as you might consider a warm coat. If you have a nice warm coat, and another person has a different coat, you don’t feel compelled to tell them why they should have a coat like yours. You don’t find it difficult to accept the other person just because he or she prefers a different kind of coat. Your Sage takes the same approach with beliefs. Your Sage knows that the other person’s beliefs offer them comfort and satisfaction. Your

Sage can accept the other person totally, even though the other person chooses different beliefs. Your Sage knows it isn't wise or kind to push your beliefs on another in an effort to get them to change to your beliefs.

Accept People with Different Beliefs

It is common for a set of beliefs to be packaged together. Sometimes in addition to the valuable beliefs, you will find some hurtful beliefs that come along with the package. Sometimes, for example, the package might include a belief that it is wrong to modify or change any of the beliefs in the package. Or, the package might contain a belief that says that people who hold different beliefs are lost, wrong, or ignorant. Some packages even come with a belief that compels you to force the belief onto others who may not want it.

You may have parts of you that believe the hurtful beliefs, along with the valuable beliefs. Some of your parts may believe that it is wrong to modify *any* of the beliefs in the package. Some of your parts may believe that you would be wrong to accept people who have chosen different beliefs.

Your Sage is wise enough to know that just because a bunch of beliefs come together in a package, you don't have to choose the hurtful beliefs in order to keep the valuable ones. Your Sage knows that the beliefs exist to serve you and that is why you chose them. Your Sage is wise enough to know that you can believe all of the valuable beliefs in the package, and modify or eliminate those that would hurt you or cause you to hurt others.

You can observe the incredible injustices that occur in the world when people are unwilling to accept other people's choice of beliefs. As this is written, there are several wars throughout the world that are being fed by one hurtful belief wrapped in a package of good and valuable beliefs. In each case, the hurtful belief is that it is wrong to accept different beliefs in other people, and that it is "right" to kill them if they won't accept the "right" beliefs.

It is horrible when people go to war to punish others for choosing different beliefs. It is just as sad when neighbor fights neighbor because of a hurtful belief wrapped up with valuable ones.

As your Sage modifies any hurtful beliefs you may have had, you will find yourself becoming more accepting of people who choose different beliefs, and that is wise.

"TWISB" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 44 —TWISB: Decisions, Rules, Learnings

Every time you make a decision about yourself or your life, you change your life thereafter. Every decision you ever made about yourself or your life is stored in your Storehouse. Each of those decisions is available to be compared with the inputs you process. As you are reading this book, you are being invited to make some new decisions. As you make these new decisions, they will be in your Storehouse to shape your life in the future.

Decisions

Whole therapies have been built on the power of the decision. Bob and Mary Goulding have created a comprehensive system of self-change based on “the power of re-decision.”

Throughout your life you have been making decisions about yourself and your life. Some of them have been wise. Some have been unwise. The unwise decisions may still be affecting your life today.

If you are operating under the influence of old decisions that you made in the past that are causing you difficulties today, you can use your Sage to help you change them.

As you invoke your Sage to resolve bad feelings, your Sage may discover an old decision in your TWISB that is causing you pain today. For example, Ted once had a painful experience with a girl and he decided, “I’ll never trust a woman again.” As long as Ted lives at the conflict level, that old decision will keep on operating and as a result, Ted would find himself unable to have a loving and trusting relationship.

If Ted decides to invoke his Sage to handle bad feelings, his Sage will discover this old decision and bring it up for review. The old decision needs to be re-examined to see if it still is appropriate. If Ted’s Relationship-part is unable to get its needs met, the Relationship-part will be a source for much pain for Ted. As the Sage discovers the old decision, the Sage will test the current set of wants to see if the old decision reflects what Ted wants now. When it becomes clear that Ted wants a warm loving relationship, he will be invited to make a new decision. Ted can make a new decision — one that will allow him to trust women that he loves — and the new decision (or re-decision) will change his life from that time forward.

If you discover an old decision that no longer works for you, you can make a new decision. If you are changing an old but important decision, you might find it best to call a parts meeting to review the new decision. When you involve all of your parts in a new decision — and they all agree to support it — you will find the new decision starts working for you immediately.

For a while, the old decision might still operate out of force of habit and long practice. Do not be concerned. Since you have made a new decision, anytime you use the old one you will feel the inner conflict that comes from having a conflict between decisions. As soon as you feel that feeling of conflict, your Sage will come on to resolve the conflict. When your Sage reaffirms the new decision, the new one will get stronger, and the old one will fade further away. It won’t take long before the conflict no longer exists.

You can handle old decisions as they come up, or you can go looking for them. If you want to conduct a search for old, obsolete decisions, here is a strategy for doing it. Go inside and review your list of wants. Ask yourself this question, “What decisions have I

made in the past that will be barriers to getting what I want in life?” You will find yourself scanning all of your old decisions and checking them out in terms of your present goals. Any that are in conflict will be brought up for you, your parts, and your Sage to review. Remember, any decision that you made in the past about yourself or how to live your life, can be changed through re-decision today.

Some old decisions hide from view and have to be discovered through patterns or repetitive searching questions. For example, take Ted and his decision, “I’ll never trust a woman again.” Ted may not be aware that he made that decision. He has met a woman and become infatuated. Then he gets a bad feeling about her. His Sage checks out the TWIPI and gets the answer, “I don’t trust her.” The Sage can examine that for patterns. The Sage can ask a question like, “Is this a common problem for the women in Ted’s life?” If the Sage detects a pattern, the Sage can ask for the underlying belief or decision that is hiding behind the perception.

The Sage can use another strategy to discover hidden decisions or beliefs. The Sage can make use of the thinking capacity by framing a question. For example, the Sage might frame this question. “What decisions or beliefs underlie that perception?” The question creates curiosity, stimulates the thinking process, and various possibilities are considered.

Learnings

With each experience you have had in your life, you had the opportunity to learn from that experience. After a *bad* experience, you might have filed away a learning in your Storehouse — a learning that was designed to keep you from having a repeat of that bad experience. After a *good* experience, you might have filed away a learning. A learning that was designed to enable you to have more good experiences like that one.

Unfortunately, we seldom are taught how to make good learnings from our experiences. It is all too easy to make learnings at the wrong level.

Learnings are like decisions in that after you make a learning, it stays with you and shapes your future experiences. If you made a good learning, then it helps you for the rest of your life. If you made a wrong learning, then it can hurt you for the rest of your life.

Wrong learnings are often learnings that are made at the wrong level or scope. For example, Ted had a bad experience with a girl when he was young, and what he really learned was that individual girl could not be trusted. However, he made the learning at the wrong scope, and learned that “no girl can be trusted.” In addition, he made a decision, as was described above.

Learnings are similar to decisions in that they can be changed. A wrong learning can be changed, by creating a new learning. Sometimes you will find an obsolete decision was based on a wrong learning. If you change the decision, you can also go further and change the learning.

You can scan for past wrong learnings by examining your list of wants. As you examine what you want for your life, ask yourself this question. “Is there anything I have learned that will stand in the way of my getting what I want for my life?” This will cause a scan of your past learnings, and if there is one that will act as a barrier to achieving what you want in your life, it will pop up for review. As you review a wrong learning, allow

your Sage to help you create a valid learning. A valid learning is one that is specific to the learning situation and isn't too broad or narrow in scope.

From time to time in the future, the old learning may come back to you out of habit or practice. Do not be concerned about that. Your Sage will notice the conflict between the two learnings, and resolve it by reaffirming the new learning. Gradually, the old learning will disappear.

Rules

Rules are a common source of TWISB mismatches. "Rules" is the name I use for the general class of things that includes formal rules, informal rules, laws, cultural standards, community standards, mores, and manners. Rules come up in your TWISB most commonly for two different situations. One is where someone else acts or speaks in a way that violates one of your rules. The other way a rule comes up is when you say or do something that violates one of your rules. Let's examine each of these separately.

Someone Else Violates A Rule

You may find yourself with a bad feeling that comes from noticing someone else breaching or violating a rule that you hold as valid for you. If you are dealing at the conflict level, the bad feeling may cause you to speak or act in such a way as to create an undesirable outcome. If you invoke your Sage, your Sage will choose whether to act, ask, accept or forgive. Your Sage will choose the strategy that will be in line with your basic values, and will produce the best possible outcome compatible with what you want for yourself and your life. In any case, your bad feeling will be resolved.

If you have chosen to use your Sage to help you achieve what you want in life, you have probably chosen to accept other people and to allow them to make their own choices in how to live their lives. In most cases, where a person violates one of your rules, your Sage will choose to simply accept or forgive the other person.

You Violate A Rule

At the conflict level, it is possible to create very bad feelings about any act or communication that you create that violates your rules. At the Sage level, the violation of a rule is a different matter. Your Sage will choose whether an action is required to resolve the breach, or whether you will choose to ask for what you want (for example, acceptance or forgiveness). In some cases, acting or asking won't achieve satisfactory outcomes, and you are left with accepting or forgiving yourself.

Let's take an example. Harvey is out of town on business. His Me-part drinks too much, knocks out the Sage and the other parts, and has sex with a lady that he meets. Harvey is married and has committed himself to be faithful to his wife. Now, Harvey has broken his own rule, and has to deal with the consequences of his action.

At the conflict level, Harvey would have to deal with the guilt that would be produced by his other parts (e.g. the Relationship-part and Beliefs-part).

At the Sage level, Harvey will invoke his Sage to resolve his bad feelings. There are a number of issues. The first is the action to take to responsibly handle his actions. The Sage might suggest such things as a medical check to assure he has not become infected. The Sage will consider Harvey's agreement with his wife to determine whether or not she

has asked to be informed in this situation. So, the first issue is any actions that are required to handle the situation responsibly.

The next issues Harvey and his Sage must deal with are consequences and a possible repetition. Harvey has selected his basic values and rules that he will use to guide his life, and one of his parts has violated one of his rules. Harvey's Sage will be invested in deciding what must be done to assure that no future violation occurs. A wise strategy would include a parts meeting to consider what consequences, if any, might be needed to protect against a possible repetition. At Harvey's parts meeting, the Sage might seek the following outcomes:

1. Reaffirmation of commitment to the rule that was broken.
2. Acceptance of responsibility by the offending parts.
3. Request for acceptance or forgiveness from the other parts.
4. A statement of how the responsible part will protect against a repetition in the future.
5. Agreement on whether there are to be consequences, and if so, what consequences to the responsible part.
6. Acceptance or forgiveness by the other parts, and restoration of the parts as a mutually-supportive and mutually-accepting team.

With the Sage guiding the dialogue, the outcome will be acceptance or forgiveness, a plan to avoid repetition, and a plan for implementing consequences, if there are to be consequences.

Now, let's contrast the approach at the conflict level with the approach at the Sage level. At the conflict level, Harvey's act would have produced guilt. The guilt would not be easily resolvable, and Harvey would end up with a lasting ache. Harvey might attempt to resolve the guilt by a new decision or commitment, but there would be a continuing loss of trust and acceptance by the innocent parts. Attempting to solve this kind of a problem at the conflict level might cause Harvey to confess his violation to his wife to expiate his guilt. It is possible that Harvey's attempt to free himself from his guilt would create even greater pain as his wife suffers needless pain, and Harvey has to deal with the initial guilt as well as the guilt of causing his wife to suffer. (If you think that Harvey is wise to confess to his wife, read Ann Landers' previous advice on this subject.)

At the Sage level, Harvey would be able to resolve the guilt through responsible actions and a plan that would prevent future repetition. Harvey's other parts may ask for consequences against the Me-part as a form of behavior modification through punishment.

Or, the other parts may simply accept the Me-part's confession and acceptance of responsibility without requiring consequences. In either case, Harvey has resolved his guilt, there is an action plan to avoid repetition, and Harvey is free to get on with creating the kind of life he is capable of creating.

There is no evidence that collecting guilt is an effective way to stop yourself from violating your rules. There is evidence that bringing your parts into a team strengthens your ability to carry out your decisions and resolve. There is evidence that using your Sage to examine possible strategies in terms of your values and goals is effective in choosing wise and acceptable behaviors.

"TWISB" continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 45 — TWISB: Judgments and Injunctions

Judgments sometimes appear in the TWISB. Judgments are just one way of attempting to interpret the input in the TWIPI. Judgments have the form of a conclusion or a comparative. Judgments generally are either negative or positive. Judgments are valuable when they help you achieve the outcomes you desire. Judgments are destructive when they interfere with the outcomes that you desire. Judgments are a common source of difficulty in people who are unaware of the role and use of judgments.

What are Judgments?

Judgments take the form of conclusions or comparatives. For example, if I see a sunset, I can form a judgment as a conclusion by saying, “That sunset is beautiful.” I have observed the sunset, and drawn a conclusion that the sunset is beautiful. I could form a judgment in terms of a comparative by saying, “That is the most beautiful sunset I’ve seen this week,” or, “That sunset isn’t as beautiful as last night’s sunset.”

You can create judgments about any input you process. You can judge people, things, ideas, concepts, smells, tastes, recollections, constructions, etc.

Some people make frequent use of judgments. Some people seldom use judgments. It is useful to notice that after you’ve made a judgment about something (a person, a thing, an input, etc.), you are no longer processing that thing. You now are processing the judgment you’ve made about that thing. So, judgments create a layer of distance between you and the input you are processing. A person who makes frequent use of judgments can be said to be experiencing life indirectly, through judgments, rather than experiencing life in the here-and-now.

If you want to experience life directly and fully, you would be wise to limit the use of judgments. If you want to distance yourself from your experience of life, then you can experience your life inside your head through the judgments you make. Distancing is useful when your experience of life is painful. When your experience of life is positive, and you want to intensify the experience, then judgments are not useful.

Positive And Negative Judgments

Your first choice is whether to use judgments at all. If you choose to experience the world through judgments, you get a second choice. Assuming you will use judgments, what kind of judgments will you choose — positive or negative?

For example, you meet a person. If you choose to experience that person through a judgment, you can choose a positive judgment or a negative judgment. There is no person so wonderful that you can’t find some negative judgment to make about the person. There is no person so horrible that you can’t find some positive judgment to make about the person.

Anything that can be judged can be judged positively. Anything that can be judged can be judged negatively. You have a choice. Your choice depends on the outcome that you want.

What Outcome Do You Desire?

What outcome to you desire? Do you desire to experience the best that is available in the world? Or, do you desire to experience the worst that is available in the world. You have a choice.

If you chose to do so, you could harness your TWISB and your Comparator so that they always found the positive and the good in whatever you judge. Or, you could harness your TWISB and your Comparator to always find the bad and the negative in whatever you judge.

First, let's remember that the world doesn't need to be judged. It simply is as it is. Judging doesn't change it. All judging can do is to change your *experience* of the world. So, judging may not be the best way to experience the world.

Judging, however, is one way to experience the world. And, if you choose it, or if it occurs without your making a conscious choice, then you still have a choice about whether you will experience the positive or the negative aspects of the world.

The Paradox of the Connoisseur

Once upon a time there were two wine lovers, Charles and Oscar. Both enjoyed wine. Both made judgments about wine. Oscar judged every wine for the good it had in it. Oscar found good in even the most humble wine. Charles judged every wine for its limitations or weaknesses.

Charles set out to find the perfect wine, the wine without flaws. Charles became a renowned connoisseur, with a taste so sensitive that he could sense the subtlest weakness in a wine. Finally, one day Charles found a truly flawless wine. He proclaimed it, the perfect wine. As Charles drank the perfect wine he experienced the joy that comes from finally finding satisfaction.

Oscar set out to taste as many wines as he could find. Oscar loved them all. Oscar found some aspect of pleasure and satisfaction in every wine he tasted.

To Charles, Oscar was an oaf. Oscar was an oaf because he couldn't tell a good wine from a bad wine. To Oscar, all wines were enjoyable. To Oscar, Charles was a connoisseur. Charles was a connoisseur because he couldn't enjoy just any wine. Charles could only enjoy one wine, the perfect wine.

Now, let's stand back and observe Charles and Oscar. Charles has created a world in which virtually all wines are flawed. Charles has found only one wine that he can truly enjoy. Oscar has created a world in which all wines are wonderful. Even the most flawed wine has the power to bring joy and satisfaction to Oscar.

For Oscar, all wines are sources of pleasure. For Charles, almost all wines are sources of dissatisfaction.

The wines didn't change. Both tasted the same wines. Yet Oscar the oaf found them satisfying. The connoisseur did not. Who is the oaf?

Before you think that I have come down hard on people who refine their tastes, allow me to distinguish between Charles and my idea of a true connoisseur.

I have a friend named Nicholas. Nicholas is my idea of a true connoisseur of wines. Nicholas has developed his knowledge and tastes through experience. Nicholas uses his expertise to create the maximum possible enjoyment in wines, not to find the flaws in them. Nicholas makes wise and informed choices about what wine to drink. He knows

when the wine will be at its best, what temperature will make the wine taste the best, how long to let it breathe so that it will taste as good as it can taste, and how to pour it so as to get the least amount of sediment. Notice that Nicholas uses his developed knowledge and taste to maximize his enjoyment of the experience of the wine. Oscar used judgments to prevent his enjoyment of less than perfect wines. Nicholas uses his wisdom to enjoy all that is enjoyable in any wine.

Using The Sage To Create Positive Judgments

You can use your Sage to help you create positive judgments, if you decide to prefer positive judgments instead of negative ones.

Every negative judgment creates a bad feeling. You can invoke your Sage to resolve the bad feeling. Your Sage will ask the Sage questions and discover that indeed, the life you want to create for yourself is one with positive judgments. Your Sage will take action to re-perceive and create a positive judgment regarding the input. Each time you re-perceive in search of positive judgments you increase the probability that the next judgment you make will be positive. Eventually, even the strongest habit of negative judgments can be broken.

Injunctions

Injunctions are commands that govern actions. Injunctions frequently have imperatives as part of the statement, such as “never,” or “always.” Examples of injunctions are: “Never take candy from strangers!” and “Always wipe your feet when you come in the house.”

Injunctions are designed to control or govern behavior. They are normally phrased in such a way as to preclude thinking or choice.

Where You Got Your Injunctions

Typically you get your injunctions from authority figures in your life. You may have gotten injunctions from your parents, grandparents, older siblings, teachers, or religious leaders.

Normally injunctions are given to you when you are too young or too dependent to make your own decisions. The injunctions are given to you people who mean well. The people seek to guide you toward safe and productive behaviors.

How To Identify Them

As a thinking adult, you may find that injunctions no longer serve you well. In some cases, outdated injunctions can become barriers to achieving the outcomes that you desire in life. For example, suppose you got the injunction when you were young, “Never trust a stranger.” This may have been a useful protective injunction when you were too young to make wise choices about people who might be dangerous. But, if you are stuck with that injunction as an adult, it might operate to keep you from making friends you might like and value.

The best strategy for injunctions is to identify them, ask your Sage to evaluate them, and replace them with wise decisions.

You will find it easiest to identify injunctions if you become alert for absolutes, and imperatives. Look for statements that include these components:

- Words such as “never,” “all,” “always,” “can’t,” and “don’t.”

- Unconditional assertions that preclude thinking.

Here are some examples of injunctions:

“Do what I say!”
 “Don’t question it, just do it!”
 “Always wash your hands before you eat.”
 “Never use swear words!”
 “Always say please when you ask for something!”
 “Never kiss a man until the third date!”
 “You can’t always do what you want!”
 “Don’t believe anything a woman says!”
 “Don’t go out in the winter without a hat on!”

How To Replace Injunctions With Decisions

When you act under the influence of injunctions, you are allowing external forces to govern your actions. You aren’t free to make your own choices and decisions. If you have chosen to be a free and autonomous person as one of your basic values, be aware that injunctions can be barriers to that autonomy.

Notice that I am not suggesting that the injunctions are wrong, or are not useful. They may be. I am suggesting that you identify the injunction, and then examine the injunction in terms of what you want for yourself and your life. Then, make a decision about the injunction. If you choose it for yourself, then decide to keep it. You may want to modify it to give yourself a little room for flexibility. By allowing room for flexibility, you are maintaining freedom of choice. If you decide to choose an injunction that has no flexibility, then you are choosing to compel yourself to act regardless of circumstance.

Behavior that has no room for judgment is the source of compulsive behavior. For example, Jane got the injunction to “Always clean the bathtub after a bath.” Jane hasn’t examined that injunction as an adult. Or, Jane might have examined it, but decided to keep it without modification. If Jane feels compelled to clean the bathtub, then she could find herself cleaning the bathtub in a hotel after she bathes. At that point, the behavior might be described as compulsive.

Compulsive behaviors may not be harmful. On the other hand, they are actions about which one has little or no choice. They are actions that are incompatible with the goal of having freedom and autonomy. To preclude the development of compulsive behaviors, it is wise to allow your Sage to examine your injunctions and replace them with decisions that have room for choice.

Chapter 46 —Good Feelings and Discounts

Throughout this book, you have been learning how to resolve bad feelings. Resolving bad feelings is one of the strategies that your Sage will use to help you create the kind of life you want for yourself. There is another piece to the puzzle. You most likely want a life with a minimal number of bad feelings, and you probably also want a life full of many good feelings. Your Sage can help you to achieve a life full of good feelings.

How to Maximize Good Feelings

The strategy for maximizing good feelings is very simple.

1. First, learn to recognize a good feeling when you get one.
2. Second, learn to increase your enjoyment of your good feelings by marking them.
3. Third, learn to loop on *good* feelings.

The first step is simple. Go inside your head and recall something that gave you a good feeling. When you recall the situation, step into the situation and see what you saw then, hear what you heard then, and feel what you felt then. Do that now.

Now, do the same thing again, and this time notice what the feeling feels like. Where do you feel the feeling physically? What happens to your body? Go back to the situation and notice what you can about the feeling.

This demonstration will illustrate to you the ease with which you can create a good feeling for yourself any time you choose. You simply recall a time when you felt a good feeling and re-experience it.

The second step is marking a feeling. Anytime you get a good feeling, you can simply experience it and let it pass, or you can experience it and mark it. You mark a feeling by acknowledging or affirming the feelings.

For example, you are talking to someone and they say something that provokes a smile. The smile is a way of marking a feeling. You have acknowledged it. You mark it more if you say something positive in response, perhaps, “I agree,” or “I like that.”

If you see a sunset and you think it is beautiful, you can mark it by saying out loud, “Wow, what a beautiful sunset,” or, “I like that sunset.” You mark the feeling specifically by describing the feeling. For example, “I love the feeling I get when I see a sunset.”

So, the second step is maximizing your good feelings by affirming them or acknowledging them. There doesn’t have to be anyone else around. You can speak out loud and mark a feeling when you are all alone.

The third step is to learn to loop on a feeling. As you have a particularly good feeling, you can stay inside and reprocess it again and again. You can focus all of your attention on it and feel it again and again. Make it last.

Watch a winning team in the locker room after the big victory. Everyone is talking about the game (marking it). Those who aren’t talking are replaying it in their heads to feel the good feelings again and again. Life can be viewed as a game. The goal is to win, and you win by creating happiness and achieving the outcomes you want. You lose when you create pain and misery and don’t get what you want out of life. Every time you create happiness you have a win. Enjoy it. Mark it. Loop on it.

How to Spot Discounts

There are really three things you can do with a good feeling.

You can simply have the feeling and experience it.

You can actively maximize it by marking or looping.

The third possibility is to make the good feeling go away by discounting.

It may seem odd to you that a person would want to discount good feelings. Yet, some people discount most or all of the good feelings they get. Discounting may have its roots in superstition, religious beliefs, or in parental modeling. In Sagery we are not very concerned with how problems originated, we are more interested in how to resolve them.

There are a variety of strategies that people use to discount good feelings. Read through them, and identify any of those that you may use. If you discover that you sometimes discount good feelings, then you will find it very valuable to modify the strategy you are using. Good feelings are the basis of happiness, confidence, and peace of mind. They are worth having and enjoying.

“I Don’t Deserve It”

One way to discount good feelings is to stay inside, re-perceive or reprocess the good feeling and replace it with a bad feeling. You might say to yourself, “I don’t deserve this.” Or, you might say, “This doesn’t feel right, I’m basically an unhappy person.”

If your Sage recognizes that you are using one of these discounting strategies, your Sage has two strategies available. Your Sage can examine the underlying belief and modify it, or your Sage can operate on the strategies that you use to discount the good feeling.

To modify the underlying belief, your Sage could pursue an inner dialogue to find out how you came to believe that you don’t deserve good feelings, or that you are basically an unhappy person. Your Sage can choose a more appropriate belief based on the “meta” belief that *the purpose of beliefs is to produce good feelings and good outcomes*.

If the underlying belief is rooted in a belief package that is difficult to change, then your Sage can operate on the discounting strategy by taking over and countering the strategy. For example, if you were to bring up the thought, “I don’t deserve this,” your Sage might handle the bad feeling by saying, “Perhaps, and perhaps not, but regardless, it is wise to fully experience good feelings.”

Notice that the strategy of responding with a counter strategy deals with the problems at the conflict level. This is a less desirable strategy, but it may be the only one available if the underlying belief is invulnerable to change.

“It Was an Accident” (or Luck)

Another strategy for turning a good feeling into a bad feeling is to discount your role in creating the good feeling. For example, you might attribute something good to be the result of luck, or just an accident. The underlying belief that supports this strategy may be that you aren’t able to create good feelings or good outcomes. If this is your situation, it is best to have your Sage examine this underlying belief and to modify it. This book is all about how to take responsibility for your feelings and your experience of your life. As soon as your Sage comes on to handle the bad feeling, your Sage can replace the negative belief with a new belief that you *can* create good outcomes and good feelings, and use the

good feelings that triggered the discount is an example. After several such switches, you will probably find that the original negative belief begins to have less influence.

“It Won’t Last”

Another way to convert a good feeling into a bad one is to immediately think that this good feeling won’t last. The thought that it won’t last will take the focus off of the good feeling, and move it on to a vision of the future filled with bad feelings. Perhaps there is a wrong learning that you made that created this thought. Whatever underlies this response can be examined by your Sage and replaced with the new learning or belief that you now possess the ability to make good feelings come often and last a long time.

“There Must Be a Flaw”

Another way to discount a good feeling is to immediately search for something wrong. Again, your Sage can replace this strategy with a different strategy that seeks to maximize the good feeling, rather than make it disappear.

“It Didn’t Happen”

Another strategy for discounting good feelings is to simply discount the existence of the good feeling. People who can totally discount the existence of a good feeling are creating a form of internal blindness or amnesia. Somehow, a mechanism is utilized that blocks any awareness of a good feeling. Where this is done, the Sage will find it useful to begin a training process that will allow you to feel and experience good feelings.

If you are discounting the existence of good feelings, you may experience no good feeling at all. For you, good feelings may not exist. To resolve this block, your Sage will need to go back in your life and scan for a time before you created the block. You may use a Sagecoach for this, or you may be successful just using your Sage.

The idea is to go back to an early time when you can remember having a good feeling. Then, relive that experience and feel it fully. See what you saw then, hear what you heard then, and feel what you felt then. As you do this, notice where you feel the feeling, and what it feels like. Then, think of a recent experience in which your Sage thinks it would be appropriate to feel that good feeling, and merge your recollections of the two experiences. Switch back and forth between the two experiences until you feel the original good feeling with the more recent experience. You can then find out if you can feel that good feeling in the present situation. If you succeed in feeling the good feeling in the present situation, then you now possess the ability to feel the good feeling once again. Now, your Sage can use that ability to help you feel the good feeling anytime you create a thought or situation where the good feeling is appropriate.

If you find yourself unable to feel good feelings in appropriate situations, then a Sagecoach may be useful to help you resolve the block.

“Feelings” continues in the next chapter.

Chapter 47 — Bad Feelings: Owning and Resolving

This entire book has been aimed at feelings. The goal is to maximize good feelings and resolve bad feelings. The pivotal point for resolving bad feelings is the point at which you recognize the bad feeling. If you can learn to recognize a bad feeling immediately, you can move to resolve it before it provokes you into a strategy that creates problems for you.

You don't have to be a student of human behavior to recognize that most of the problems that we create for ourselves comes from acting out or behaving in ways that produce bad outcomes. These ineffective strategies can be eliminated by learning to recognize the bad feelings that precede the acting out strategy, and shifting control to the Sage. It is clear that if you shift control to your Sage — and choose a wise strategy for handling the bad feeling — you will *not* choose a strategy that produces bad outcomes.

So, the pivotal point comes in learning to recognize bad feelings.

Learn to Recognize Your Bad Feelings

At first, as you are learning to identify bad feelings in order to shift to your Sage, you will usually find that you recognize the feeling after the feeling has passed. That is okay, and it is very natural. For a while, you will find yourself invoking your Sage only after you have chosen an unproductive strategy. You may have acted out in anger, or pain. Or, you may have stayed inside and looped on the bad feeling until you became depressed or furious. As soon as your bad feelings subside, you will again have access to your Sage.

When your Sage finally comes on, use your Sage to bring back the experience as it happened, and feel the first bad feeling again. When you have the initial bad feeling back, feel the feeling fully. Feel what it feels like. Feel *where* you feel it. *See* the visual images that might accompany the bad feeling. *Hear* what you might be saying to yourself that creates the bad feeling. By examining the bad feeling in the feeling mode, the visual mode, and the auditory mode, you are creating three links to the feeling. These three links will give your Sage three different ways to identify the feeling when it comes up again. As you are re-experiencing the feeling, your Sage will practice coming on and asking the Sage questions (“What’s happening?” “How am I creating this bad feeling” “Is this what I want?” “How can I move toward what I want?”). By doing this, you will be rehearsing how you want to respond to the feeling the next time you get it. You will be practicing turning control over to your Sage.

After you have done this a few times, you will begin to notice that there are only one or two bad feelings that seem to provoke the unproductive strategies that produce bad outcomes. This will help you understand how easy it will be for you eventually to shift to your Sage each time these one or two feelings recur.

Good Strategies for Handling Bad Feelings

Most of the problems that people create for themselves come from choosing unproductive strategies to handle bad feelings. They may choose to fight and make the situation worse. Or, they may run away or withdraw and find that that makes the situation worse. The best answer to handling bad feelings is to invoke your Sage and have your Sage ask the Sage questions. This will lead to choosing the most productive strategy

possible — a strategy that will be concerned with the outcomes that you want to produce to have the full and rich life that you want for yourself.

Your Sage will deal with two kinds of bad feeling situations. One kind of bad feeling situation is where you have created the bad feeling yourself and the bad feeling is not appropriate. The other kind of situation is where things have really gone wrong and a bad feeling is very appropriate.

Resolve Those That You Have Chosen or Created

In those situations where you have created or chosen bad feelings where they are not appropriate, your Sage will chose to resolve the bad feelings. The strategy for resolving the bad feeling will be to resolve the bad feeling internally without responding to the outside world. For example, you might be planning an outdoor activity, and you see that it is raining. You get a bad feeling. Immediately, your Sage will come on and ask the four Sage questions. Using your goals and wants, your Sage will choose the best of the four Sage choices. Probably your Sage will decide to accept that it is raining and begin considering other ways that you could have a good time.

There is another category of events in which bad feelings are perfectly appropriate and necessary to deal with the situation.

Let Your Sage Handle the Appropriate Bad Feelings

Many times the situation is such that bad feelings are normal, natural and a part of the resolving process. For example, the death of a loved one, or the illness or injury of a loved one. Or, the failure of a valued project, or the loss of a valued job, or divorce from one you love. There are many situations in which experiencing bad feelings are part of the healing or curative process. Just as it is foolish to feel bad feelings in inappropriate situations, it would be just as unwise to fail to feel bad feelings when they are appropriate.

Who is to judge when bad feelings are appropriate? Sometimes it is difficult to know when bad feelings are appropriate. Sagery is built on the idea that your Sage part is the part of you best able to decide when bad feelings are appropriate or not.

When the bad feeling is loss or grief, it generally is most productive to fully feel the feelings. Indeed, if you block or discount feelings of loss or grief, you may never resolve the situation, and may keep it with you forever. The way to get past a situation involving loss or grief is to experience the feelings fully. Your Sage will counsel acceptance, or forgiveness, and when healing is complete, you can get on with your life.

When the feeling is anger, the best strategy may be more difficult to assess. Sometimes anger is a useless and hurtful strategy. In other situations, it is appropriate to the events and may fuel indignation and the actions necessary to preserve your rights and freedoms. If any part of you knows when anger is appropriate, your Sage will know.

Some feelings are almost never appropriate or productive. For example, envy, hatred, greed, or jealousy. For each of these feelings, there are more productive strategies available that are not aided by feeling these feelings.

One important key to deciding on whether a feeling is appropriate and necessary to feel is your choices on your basic values and what you want from your life. As your Sage seeks to find the best strategy for any situation, your Sage will choose based on the values and outcomes you seek for your life.

Chapter 48 — Strategies: Testing for Outcomes

Throughout the book we have been concentrating on feelings, and using the rational power of the Sage to create positive life experiences. In choosing wise strategies, the Sage manages to change behavior.

Behaviors, e.g. Strategies

In the Sage Model, behaviors are called strategies. The word “behavior” focuses on one aspect of a strategy. Every behavior is part of a strategy. The word “strategy” implies a behavior with some desired outcome. It is difficult to think of a behavior without considering the outcome the behavior intends to produce.

Strategies are behaviors with an intended outcome. Many people do not think of their behavior as having an intended goal. When Mary gets angry, she chooses a strategy of attacking the person or object that made her angry. The outcome she really wants is for the person or object to change in some way to better meets her needs. If her strategy succeeds, the person or object she attacks becomes accommodating to Mary and she gets her needs met. If her strategy fails, the person or object either doesn’t change or becomes *less* accommodating to her needs.

If you ask Mary what her strategy is, she may not even know. She doesn’t think of a behavior in terms of the outcome she wants. When a person is reacting from an emotional base, they can select any behavior that suits that emotion. The goal in Sagery is to help Mary see that each behavior she chooses has certain predictable outcomes. The goal in Sagery is to help Mary connect her choice of behaviors with the outcomes she has chosen to pursue in her life.

Let’s look at how behaviors are selected when you deal at the conflict level.

When You Act at The Conflict Level

When you act at the conflict level, each part is in control of the entire system, and acts in its own interests. The interests of one part may not be in the best interests of other parts or the entire person.

You Can Use Good Strategies in the Wrong Situations

Harry is a supervisor in his job. His Work-part has developed strategies that work for him on the job. He becomes stern, dominates his subordinate, and issues firm, demanding instructions. Now, Harry comes home and uses the same strategies on his wife. The strategy that works for him at work may not achieve the outcomes he wants with his wife. When each part is choosing its own strategies, without regard for the outcomes desired by other parts, bad outcomes can be produced.

You Can Use Poor Strategies and Get Bad Outcomes

When each part is choosing its own strategies and no consideration is given to desired outcomes, poor strategies can be chosen and bad outcomes produced. For example, Edna’s Me-part learned as a child that she could get what she wanted from her father by whining and crying. Now, Edna has grown up and is married. When her Me-part wants its own way, she chooses to whine and cry. Edna’s Relationship-part wants a good relationship

with her husband. Edna's Me-part is damaging that relationship by using a poor strategy to get a short-term outcome that is damaging to the relationship in the long term.

You Can Fail to Test for Desired Outcomes

At the conflict level, each part is seeking its own, short-term outcome. There is no team effort, and there is no consideration for long-term outcomes desired. There is no coherence to the strategies used. Each strategy is chosen by the part that controls, and the outcomes produced are highly variable. Or, if there is a long-term outcome desired, it is usually chosen by one part — without teamwork — and all effort is made to reach that single desired outcome, without regard for the needs of the other parts. This single-mindedness can cause the other parts to work to sabotage the outcomes desired by the dominant part.

When You Act From The Sage/Goal Level

The entire picture of strategies changes when you act from the Sage/Goals level. The strategies are selected by the Sage in any situation where it is likely that bad outcomes will be produced. You Fully Consider the Outcome You Want

When you are getting your desired outcomes, you get good feelings, and no action is required by the Sage. When, however, some outcome is not as desired, or when bad feelings are created, the Sage will step in and choose the best possible strategy. Now, the main difference when the Sage is choosing the strategy is that the Sage will fully consider the outcome you want.

Whether the strategy is effective in producing the outcome is obviously not under your total control. The outside world and other people are required to cooperate in many cases. But, you will know that you are selecting the best possible strategy that you can employ to do your best to get the outcome you desire. Also, with your Sage resolving bad feelings, you will have your Sage to help you when you are using a strategy that isn't working for you. When one strategy doesn't work, your Sage will be there to help you choose another strategy that might work better.

In every case your Sage will be choosing strategies that fully consider the outcome you are seeking.

You Will Get the Best Possible Results

There are no guarantees that the outside world and the people in it will cooperate with you so that you can produce the outcomes you desire. You can be certain, however, that with your wisest part choosing your strategies you will be doing the best that you can do.

You can expect to achieve the best possible results in life if your Sage is choosing your strategies, and chooses them based on the outcomes you desire. You can also expect that your individual parts will no longer attempt to choose poor strategies if they are part of a mutually-supportive team and aware of the overall goals of the team.

Chapter 49 — Persona: Effective Use

You may discover that your Sage proposes new strategies for you to use. You may find that you need to modify some of your persona to match the new strategies. You may find that you need a persona that you have never developed.

After you install your Sage and decide on the overall outcomes you want to achieve, you may need to modify old persona or add new ones. The place to start is to identify the personas that give poor outcomes.

Identifying the Personae and Their Outcomes

Bring on your Sage to scan all of your personae and identify those that give poor outcomes. A place to start is to find out which parts are having difficulty getting their needs met. For example, suppose you don't have a SIGO and want to attract one. If you are having difficulty, ask your Sage to examine the persona you are using now, and suggest a change.

Each time you find a persona that isn't producing the outcomes you desire, decide whether you want to eliminate it, modify it, or replace it with a new one.

Eliminating Personae That Produce Poor Outcomes

If you have a persona that you want to eliminate, the first step is to gain control over that persona. The easiest way that I can suggest is to exaggerate the persona. For example, suppose you have a persona in which you look sad and whine. To begin to eliminate that persona, practice it when you are alone. Put on the face and posture and use the gestures that are part of the persona and exaggerate every part of the persona. If your face is sad, make it sadder. If you whine, whine extravagantly. If you wring your hands, wring them vigorously. You will discover that as you exaggerate, the persona becomes funny. Do this a couple of times — each time exaggerating — until you laugh. You will discover that the next time this persona comes on, you will find yourself laughing, and you will be able to switch immediately to the persona you have decided to use as a replacement.

Identifying Personae That Produce Good Outcomes

Think about the parts of you that are getting what they want and are fully satisfied. As you do this, think about the persona you use for those parts. Feel good about those personas that you want to keep. These persona are the real you and express your unique personality. Enjoy them, take pride in them, and above all, feel good about them.

Adding Personae That You Want

You may find that when you eliminate a persona that you have been using, you will need to add another to take its place. There are two strategies that you can use to add new personae, through modeling and imaging.

“Imaging” a new persona uses your Constructor. If you have a creative Constructor, you can use it to produce an image of you having the persona that you want to achieve. As you picture the mental image of you doing, being, or saying what you want, simply step into the picture and allow yourself to practice the facial expressions, the posture, the voice tones, the gestures that you will use when this new persona is called for. Acting students

learn to do this readily and easily. You will find that with a little practice you can do, be, and say exactly the way you imagine yourself in your construction.

Some people find it easier to use their Recollector to model the persona of another person. If you choose this approach, find a mental picture of another person — as similar to you as you can find — who has the persona that you want to adopt. Take the mental picture of the person using the persona that you want, and step into the picture. Use the same facial expression, the same posture, the same gestures and voice tones as the persona that you recall. This is another technique used by actors and by impersonators. You will find that it is easy to do with a small amount of practice. Then, get a mental picture of yourself using this persona in some future situation where you have decided to use a new strategy. See yourself as you will be, hear yourself saying what you will say, feel the feeling you will have as you employ your new persona.

One lady who used this technique to create several new personae reported that she felt like an entirely new person. She expressed surprise at how easy it was to do. The key is tying the persona to the new strategy that your Sage has chosen for you to use.

As long as you make the persona fit the strategy that you want to use, and make it fit you, the unique person you are, you will find adding a new persona to be fairly simple

Chapter 50 — Breaking Hurt Loops

A hurt loop is a repetitive internal processing of the same idea, thought, recollection, or event. Often the feelings get worse and worse, the longer you are in the loop.

Eventually, your Sage autopilot will keep you out of hurt loops. Until that occurs, however, it is useful to know how to break them.

How do You Know When You are in One?

You can tell you are in a hurt loop when you get a bad feeling and it stays with you for some time. The following situations are examples of hurt loops.

Example: Phil worries about his work. Sometimes when he goes to bed at night, he finds it difficult to sleep. His Constructor creates terrible scenarios about things that might go wrong at work. He gets a bad feeling. He replays the same scenes, each time making it worse and worse. His bad feeling grows. His body reacts with adrenalin and his pulse rises. He stays awake for hours. Phil is in a hurt loop.

Example: Agnes gets angry with her boyfriend. He does or says something that she doesn't like. She thinks about it over and over. Each time she thinks about it, she gets angrier or more upset. Her TWIPI distorts the event by making what he did seem worse and worse. Her TWISB gets more and more self righteous and indignant. She may see her boyfriend, but she won't get out of her loop. She pouts or sulks, and it may take her days to get over her bad feelings. Agnes is in a hurt loop.

Example: Any time Harold is in a social situation he reviews the events in his mind after it is over. His Recollector recalls the interactions he had with people. His Constructor creates imaginary things that people might have thought about him, or said to others about him. He feels foolish and inadequate. He reviews the events over and over, each time feeling worse about himself, and feeling more embarrassed about what he did or said. Harold has a pattern of hurt loops. The bad feelings he gets from them keep him stiff and uncomfortable in any social situation.

There are an endless number of examples of hurt loops. Most people have one or more that they fall into regularly.

Use it as a Turning Point — What Will You Do?

Your Sage can get you out of hurt loops, and eventually will be able to keep you out of them altogether.

The Sage asks the Sage questions:

1. “What’s happening?” (“I’m feeling I’m in a hurt loop.”)
2. “How am I creating this feeling” (Your Sage will know.)
3. “Is this what I want?” (“No.”)
4. “What can I do to move toward what I want?”

The final question is the key question for breaking a hurt loop. “What will I do?” The key to breaking a hurt loop is to interrupt it with questions.

“Is there is something I can do, and want to do about this?” If the answer is “Yes,” then the Sage will decide on a plan of action. If there is nothing that you can do, or want to do about this, then your Sage will either decide to accept it, or forgive it.

Once you have chosen either to act, or ask for what you want, or have chosen to accept it or forgive it, then the situation will be resolved.

Sometimes you may find yourself going back into the loop, even after it is resolved. If so, have your Sage reaffirm your earlier choice.

If the loop still returns, then your Sage can break it simply by changing any one of the elements in the loop. For example:

- If you are using your Constructor, switch to your Recollector and think about a pleasurable past event, and vice versa.
- If you are using your Me-part to feel wronged, switch to another part. Think about your hobby, or your work, or your significant other, etc.
- If you are distorting in your TWIPI, then choose to change the importance, or the time perspective, or the scope, or the level.
- If you are using hurtful tests in your TWISB, then switch to more productive tests. Give up being perfect, or pleasing others, or trying harder, or hurrying, or being strong. Be yourself, and accept yourself.
- If your TWISB is pressing you with “shoulds,” “oughts,” and “have to’s,” then ask your Sage to examine the belief, expectation, or whatever to see if it is in harmony with what you want in life.

Any change you make to the steps in the loop will break the loop. Certainly the best and easiest step is simply to switch to your Sage part, and examine the loop again to see what part has needs that aren’t being met. That will give your Sage something to do, and the loop will be broken.

Chapter 51 — Questions: Productive and Unproductive

I have become convinced that the questions we ask ourselves are one of the most vital forces in our lives. We get questions from the outside world, but the questions that stir us and move us and upset us are the questions we ask ourselves.

Questions

A question can be formed from any input. As you process the input, you compare it to your prior experiences and your expectations. If it doesn't match, you may ask yourself a question. "What is this?" "How is this different?" "Why did she do that?"

It is beyond the scope of this book to study questions in detail. It is enough for now to simply direct your attention to the kinds of questions you ask yourself.

Questions can be organized into three general classes:

1. Questions that are *productive* (they provoke answers that solve problems or take you closer to your goals.)
2. Questions that are *neutral* (they don't provoke answers that solve problems or bring you closer to your goal, but they also don't hurt you.)
3. Questions that are *unproductive* (they provoke answers that take you away from your goals or they provoke answers that hurt you.)

Notice the word "provoke." It suggests that the question you ask actually forces the answer you get. That is true. The answer you get is a function of, and limited by the question you ask. If you are having trouble getting answers that help you solve problems and achieve your goals, it is likely that you are not asking the best possible questions.

Here is an illustration:

Mother comes home and finds young son and a broken lamp. There are any number of questions she could ask either her son or herself. Here are a few:

1. "Why did you break the lamp?" (an unproductive question).
2. "When did you break the lamp?" (a neutral question).
3. "What can you and I do to assure that you don't break any more lamps?" (a productive question).

"Why did you break the lamp?" is unproductive because it forces some sort of an answer to a question that has no known answer. Certainly the boy has no earthly idea of "why" he broke the lamp. He knows "how" he broke it, and "when" he broke it, but there is no known answer to the question, "Why did you break the lamp?"

"When did you break the lamp?" is simply neutral. It doesn't help, and doesn't hurt.

"What can you and I do to assure that you don't break any more lamps?" is the question that begins to move toward solving a problem or achieving a goal of having no more lamps broken.

Another illustration:

Fred notices his friend Alice. Fred waves at Alice. Alice glances toward him, then glances away and goes on her way.

Fred is surprised. Alice's behavior is not what he expected. So, he forms a question in his mind. Here are three possible questions that could form in Fred's mind:

1. “Why didn’t she stop and say hello?” (an unproductive question).
2. “I wonder if she saw it was me?” (a neutral question).
3. “When can I call Alice to ask her about our meeting today?” (a productive question).

Notice the questions you ask yourself. Begin to examine them. The next two chapters give you some clues you can use to recognize unproductive questions and productive questions. Any question that isn’t productive or unproductive is neutral. Neutral questions won’t hurt you, but they don’t help you either.

Unproductive Questions

If you like rules, here is one for you. “Why” questions are almost always unproductive, and quite often are hurtful. So, the simplest rule for you is this. *When it matters, don’t ask “why”!*

Let’s examine the “why” question.

Before we start, let’s get rid of the good “why” questions, by saying this, *even when a “why” question isn’t unproductive or hurtful, there is always another way to form the question without using “why.”*

Now, let’s examine other “why” questions. For some examples:

- “Why did you say that?”
- “Why did you do that?”
- “Why do you think that?”
- “Why me, God?”
- “Why can’t I ever do anything right?”
- “Why did she/he leave me?”
- “Why can’t I get a date?”
- “Why didn’t I say _____?”
- “Why didn’t you call me?”
- “Why didn’t she/he call me?”
- “Why isn’t she/he home yet?”
- “Why is she/he that way?” etc. etc. etc.

The only correct answer to any of the above questions is, “I don’t know.” It has been said that the best answer to a “why” question is, “I don’t know.” Youngsters frequently say, “I don’t know” when they are asked “why” questions. Children are often wiser in this regard than adults.

Each of the questions can provoke other answers — *wrong* answers.

Let’s take the simple question, “Why did you say that?”

- “Because I felt like it.”
- “Because that’s the way I am.”
- “Because that’s what my mother used to say.”
- “Because I didn’t get enough education.”
- “Because you deserved it.”
- “Because you made me say it.”
- “Because that’s what everyone say about you.”
- “Because I’m part Irish.”

“Because my TWIPI distorted my perception.”
“Because I hate it when you do what you did.”
“Because I had too early toilet training.”
“Because I’m bigger than you.”
“Because I really love you.”
“Because I want you to understand me.” etc. etc. etc.

Now, I suggest to you that any question that has a zillion equally true answers really doesn’t have any answer at all. Even if, somewhere among the thousands of possible answers, there is one with more truth than others, the question is still a lousy question.

So, as a simple rule of thumb: do your best to avoid “why” questions.

If your five year old asks “why” questions, rephrase the question and answer the productive question. This will teach the youngster to create productive questions. For example:

Child: “Why is there a moon?”

You: “I don’t know why. I can tell you when it comes and the shapes it has, would you like to know about that?”

Another rule of thumb: *any question is unproductive if it produces bad feelings.* Any statement that produces bad feelings is really an assertion. Some assertions masquerade as questions.

Examples of assertions under the guise of being questions:

1. “How did you ever get to be so stupid?” (you are stupid)
2. “When will you ever grow up?” (you are not grown up).
3. “Where did you put my keys this time?” (you often misplace my keys).
4. “Who are you going to get drunk with tonight?” (you’re going to get drunk).
5. “What did I do to deserve this?” (I deserve bad things).

When an assertion is phrased as a question, it does much more damage than a simple assertion.

For example, if you say to me, ”Why are you so stupid?” I will probably process that as a question. I will search my Storehouse looking for possible explanations of how I could have become stupid. Perhaps I will see through the masquerade and respond to the assertion. But, quite possibly I will scan through my whole Storehouse of experiences looking for possible explanations for how I came to be so stupid, *without questioning the assertion that I am stupid.*

You can create the same kind of hurtful questions for yourself. If you say to yourself, ”What did I do to deserve this?” You may find yourself scanning your whole Storehouse of experiences looking for everything you have ever done that was bad or wrong, *without questioning the basic assertion that you somehow deserve bad things.*

Unproductive questions like “What did I do to deserve this?” cause people great pain. The question itself forces the person to scan all of their mistakes and failures, and has built in the unchallenged assertion that they somehow deserve bad things.

If you find yourself wallowing in bad feelings, or getting depressed, examine the questions you are asking yourself. If you find an unproductive question — rephrase it, and make it productive.

For example, if you ask yourself “What did I do to deserve this?” change it to “What is the best thing I can do to solve this difficulty?” Get on with making your life work and get off of wallowing in painful thoughts.

Productive Questions

Productive questions are productive because they focus your thinking power on ways to create solutions to problems.

The simplest way to characterize a productive question is to say that a productive question provokes productive answers. If you aren’t getting productive answers, you need a better question.

Here are some examples of productive questions:

- “What’s the best thing for me to do now?”
- “What are my alternatives?”
- “If I want (X), what’s the best way to get it?”
- “If I do this, will it get me what I want?”
- “What will happen if I do (X)?”
- “How can I turn this situation around and make it work for me?”
- “How can we get from where we are to where we want to be?”

Productive questions provoke thought in two areas: *choices and goals*. To be productive, a question must provoke answers that offer choices of ways to reach some goal. Built into the idea of productive questions is that they lead to some goal.

Notice the four Sage questions.

“*What’s happening?*” focuses attention on the present situation.

“*How am I creating this?*” has the built in assertion that you do indeed create your own experience of anything that happens in your life. That assertion reminds you that you are responsible for creating your own experiences (not the events, but your *experience* of the events). Then, after reminding you that you created it, the question asks you to determine how you are creating your present experience.

“*Is this what I want?*” asks you to compare what you are creating with what you want to create for your life. In other words, the third question asks you to review the outcomes you are seeking.

Given that you have just reviewed what you want for yourself in life,

“*How can I move toward what I want?*” — the fourth question is the action question.

“Okay, this is what I have, now *how can I get what I want?*”

Every time you invoke your Sage and ask the four questions, you are practicing asking productive questions.

Notice how the Sage gets invoked. Every time you have a bad feeling, you invoke your Sage by asking the four questions. If you have been asking yourself unproductive questions, you have been getting bad feelings. Now every time you ask an unproductive question and get a bad feeling, you will get on the right track again by invoking your Sage. Your Sage will ask productive questions.

Chapter 52 — Summary

You've reached the end of the book. You are at the start of the rest of your life. You can create your life exactly the way you want it to be. If you do nothing with what you have learned here, you are still creating your life the way you want it to be. You cannot always control what happens to you. You can always control how you create your experience of the life you get. Here are some parting thoughts for you.

Identify any Self-Defeating Strategies from Your Reaction to Sagery

You can identify any self-defeating strategies that you may have been using — strategies that could keep you from using what you've learned about how to use your Sage — by examining your reaction to "Sagery" itself. Ask yourself this question: "What is my reaction to Sagery?" Then notice both your TWIPI and your TWISB response. You may discover the process you have been using to defeat yourself. It may be a TWISB message that discounts the possibility of change. It may be a distortion of the TWIPI. It may be the choice of a strategy that will keep you from succeeding with changes you want to make.

If you are positive and enthusiastic about your ability to use Sagery to take control of your life and create the kind of life you want, then you do not have a major self-defeating process. If you feel defeated, unable, incapable, etc. then, you have found your major blocking process. Fix it, and move on to make your life what it can be. Remember, as complicated as it may seem to your conscious mind, it is incredibly simple.

Sagery is Incredibly Simple — There is Only One Thing to Do

There is only one single, simple strategy to use in any situation where you get a bad feeling. Ask the four Sage questions. Choose one of the four Sage choices. That's it. That's all there is to Sagery. If you have a bad feeling about Sagery, simply ask the four questions. If you have a bad feeling about anything, ask the four questions.

This whole book could be summarized this way. Anytime you get a bad feeling, ask the four Sage questions, and choose a Sage resolution. All of the rest of the book is simply aimed at training your Sage part to be able to do this one simple thing.

Your Sage Will be as Wise as You Allow

Your Sage already knows more than you think. Your conscious mind may have difficulty remembering what you learned in this book. No problem. You didn't need to learn it. Your Sage will not be expert or even capable of applying all of the suggested strategies. Not even Sagecoaches need to know everything in this book. Your Sage will be as wise as you allow your Sage to be. If this doesn't make any sense to your conscious mind, simply accept it.

Do now, what your Sage can do now. Apply what you have learned, anytime you choose to deal with a problem. There is no need to invoke your Sage every time. Just do what you can do. In a year, come back and read this summary again. You will understand it fully then.

In the meantime, create a magnificent life for yourself. Live it fully, and enjoy all you can. Love as fully as you will, and be easy on yourself.

Memorable Quotes And Comments From “Sagery”

The mind is like a drunken monkey. If you seek peace of mind and inner harmony, you must gain mastery over it and train it to do your bidding.

If you don't know where you are going, any road will get you there.

Confidence is the memory of past successes.

Trying is synonymous with failing, or not doing something

About Beliefs

The purpose of a belief is to make us comfortable, give us peace of mind, and enable us to get what we want in life.

Beliefs are chosen.

The purpose of beliefs is to produce good feelings and good outcomes

Beliefs are the answer to resolving the tension produced by questions that have no answer, or to which the answers are not yet known.

On Questions

When it matters, don't ask “why”

Even when a “why” question isn't unproductive or hurtful, there is always another way to form the question without using “why.”

Any question is unproductive if it produces bad feelings

Productive questions provoke thought in two areas: choices and goals.

About the Sage

When to use your Sage: anytime you get a bad feeling!

Use the four questions to invoke the Sage:

What's happening?

How am I creating this bad feeling?

Is this (what I'm creating) what I want?

How can I move toward what I want?

Then take one of the four Sage actions: Act, Ask, Accept, Forgive

On Acceptance, Forgiveness, and Expectations

Accept what is and what can't be changed.

Meta belief about acceptance: I believe that I am wise to accept what is and what can't be changed.

Meta belief about forgiveness: I believe that I am wise when I forgive.

Failure to forgive is a form of self-punishment.

Forgiveness is not a high price to pay to achieve peace of mind.

The payoff for forgiveness is that I am free to create my experience of my life with more loving thoughts, and fewer pained and angry thoughts.

Meta expectation: I expect that sometimes I won't get what I want, or want what I get.

On Conflicts

Do your best to find ways to convert “or” to “and” whenever there is a conflict.

It is impossible to please anyone all the time, and some people, ever.

On Time

Your wisest choice regarding the past is to accept it.

You will be more alive and truly experience your life by living as fully as you can in the here and now.

The future is where you will live the rest of your life.

If you are currently living your life in the future, it doesn't matter where you are today.

On Feelings

I choose to get the most that I can from each experience, and I am not willing to experience bad feelings from expectations.

There is no evidence that collecting guilt is an effective way to stop yourself from violating your rules.

On Feelings, thinking, and behavior

If you change the thinking, you change the feelings and thus the behavior.

If you change the feelings, you change the behavior, and thus the thinking.

If you change the behavior, you change the thinking and thus the feelings.