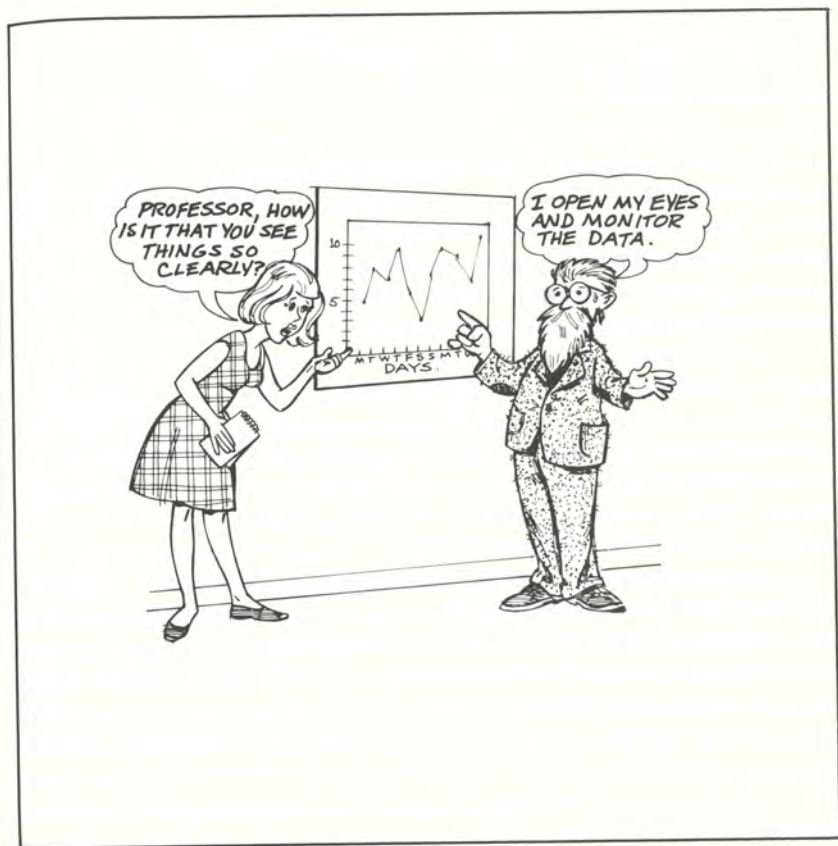


2

Behavioral Self-management & the West: The Grand Conditioner



The world is filled with two types of people: those who think there are two types of people, and those who don't.

— Anonymous

If meditation, with the accompanying altered state, has so many advantages, as we have shown in Chapter 1, why do we bother with ordinary awareness? Certainly ordinary awareness seems to be considered inferior by many, who refer to it as a waking sleep, a drunken awareness; they speak of the altered state as cosmic consciousness, the higher state.

The debate over which state of awareness is *really* the higher one goes back at least to fourth-century China. Lao-tse was the principal advocate of what may be referred to as *Taoism*, or a holistic view of the world. Lao-tse proclaimed that "names imply differentiation and loss of the original state of Tao."¹ His disciple Chuang Tzu noted: "Banish wisdom, discard knowledge, and people shall profit a hundredfold."²

Lao-tse suggested that we are not free as long as we are bound by labels and words, as long as we seek to understand cause and effect. The seasons come and go, whether or not we understand them. The free person is one who has learned to let go of analysis, yield, and follow the way of water. As we saw in Chapter 1, this holistic view of Lao-tse is evidenced and experienced in the fifth step of meditation.

Confucius, on the other hand, believed that our problems stem from the fact that we don't have *accurate* enough names and

labels. In order to restore order and harmony to living, he felt we needed more and better rules of conduct. In a sense, the contemporary content of Confucius' viewpoint may be seen in the behavioral literature, which emphasizes *precise labeling of experience* and a *sequential analysis of causality*.

Let us now look more closely at some of the components of ordinary awareness to better understand its advantages.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ORDINARY AWARENESS

Its Components and Advantages

One important component of ordinary awareness involves *naming and labeling objects* in our environment: tree, house, plant. This aspect of ordinary awareness also involves differentiating between objects (red, yellow, large, small) and between people (I/you; mine/yours). There are several advantages to this type of awareness. First and foremost, there is a *survival value* involved in assigning labels. Without the ability to sort items by means of conceptual labels (information processing), it would be impossible for the individual to deal with the variety and complexity of stimuli that surround him.³ Second, categories, by allowing events to be placed into fewer and simpler units, make for *better memory storage*—they allow us to place events within the limited scope of memory.⁴

Further, putting a label on experiences—particularly those that are frightening or confusing—gives a type of *reassurance* by helping remove the ambiguity and allowing us to feel more in control:

*In an uncertain hour,
a wise man acknowledges uncertainty.*

In this regard, Dollard and Miller have noted the importance of sorting and labeling for the patient: "To contain the panicking spread of anxiety, one must be able to identify and put a comprehensive label upon one's feelings—the better to treat them again; the better to learn from experiences."⁵

Labeling others also allows us to *feel in control* and to feel we can *predict other people's behavior*. Mischel has noted that

categorization and habituation give a perceived consistency which increases our feelings that we can predict other people and ourselves, thus making our world seem less chaotic. For this reason, he suggests that the construction of stereotypes about other people by assigning their diverse behaviors into a few broader categories may be highly adaptive.⁶ In medical diagnosis, it is felt that if we can label a disease, we can then know better how to cure it. Labeling helps us to *discriminate between objects*—to know which foods are edible, and which are poisonous, for example. As noted in Chapter 1, research suggests that verbal analytic style may be the mode of the left brain hemisphere. It is efficient for *dealing with technological society* and for *making scientific achievements*—these depend heavily on linear analytic methods and logical approaches proceeding piecemeal and step by step.

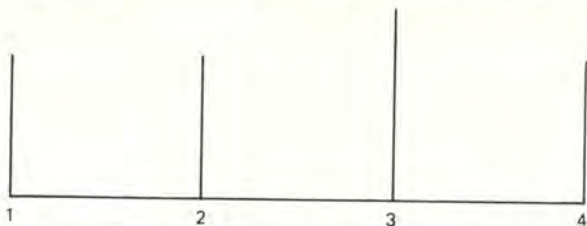
Finally, there is another important aspect of ordinary awareness, with its labeling and sequential analysis of events. Social learning theorists believe that *a crucial first step in developing personal freedom involves gaining an intimate and precise awareness of the internal and external environments and realizing the strong influence these environments have on our behavior.** These environments include the social (i.e., interpersonal relationships), the physical, and the internal (i.e., what we say to ourselves, physiological cues). Let us look at each of them to understand better how they might influence our behavior.

The Power of the Environment

Social Environment

One of the most dramatic research studies illustrating the effect of the social environment (e.g., peer pressure) on our behavior was done by S. E. Asch.⁷ Asch had an unsuspecting subject sit in a room with seven confederates whom he had previously instructed. The task given to the eight people was to answer a simple perceptual problem (e.g., to determine which among four lines was longest), as illustrated.

*Bandura says that personal freedom involves learning skills and competencies that can offer options for alternative actions (*Social Learning Theory*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977). Our world view is deterministic only in that there is a "production of effects by events, rather than in the doctrinal sense that the future is determined by the past" ("The Self-system in Reciprocal Determinism," *American Psychologist*, in press).



Each of the seven confederates was instructed to respond at certain times with wrong and unanimous judgments (e.g., to choose line number 2 as the longest line). Contrary to what we might predict, this situation caused a great deal of difficulty for nearly all the unsuspecting subjects. Many of them (33 percent) literally were not able to believe their own eyes and "went along with the crowd," agreeing that line number 2 was the longest. This occurred even though line 3 was longer than the other lines.

To illustrate this influence of others on our behavior, let me ask you to imagine that you have just entered a restaurant and are seated alone eating a meal. You are feeling comfortable and relaxed, ready to enjoy a nice meal alone. Someone you don't know comes in and sits down at the table directly across from you. The person is seated facing you. How do you feel? Where do you put your gaze? Do you look at a newspaper? Do you look straight at the person? Do you avoid looking at the person? All of a sudden, you are faced with a variety of decisions you didn't have before. Most of us would feel somewhat uncomfortable initially. This "self-conscious stumbling effect" suggests in a small way the influence other people can have on our behavior.

Many of us can probably think of several other examples illustrating situations in which we were influenced by those around us: e.g., we tried to exaggerate our accomplishments so as to win more approval; or we went along with social convention so as not to appear different; or maybe we used social pressure or joined a group to achieve a desirable but difficult goal. (For examples of self-observation of external cues in the social environment, see the two cartoons at the top of the next page.)

Social learning theorists believe that regardless of whether we realize it or not, the social environment influences our behavior. Therefore, one aspect of developing personal freedom is to learn when the social environment is influencing us for our benefit and when it is influencing us to our detriment.

HERMAN



"I WAS HAVING A NICE QUIET EVENING
AT HOME AND I COULDN'T UNDERSTAND
IT.....THEN I REALIZED
I WAS IN THE WRONG HOME."

4-25

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"That's just his way of saying he wants you to stay!"

The Now Society



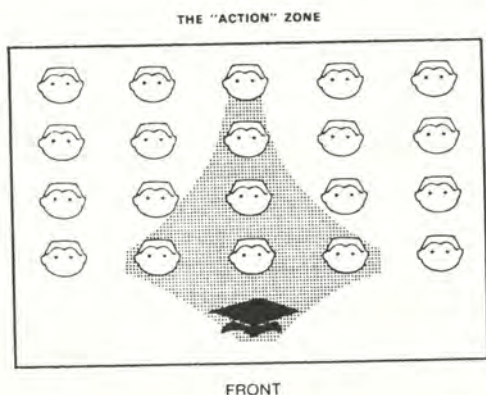
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6-1

No goddam building ever dehumanized me!

Physical Environment

Similarly, regardless of whether or not we are aware of it, our behavior may be influenced by the physical environment (see the cartoon at the bottom of page 60 for an example of self-observation of external cues in the physical environment). The research of Robert Sommer and that of Adams and Biddle has shown that the physical environment has a significant effect on our behavior⁸; for example, the arrangement of seats in a classroom plays a role in determining which students participate in discussions and which do not, regardless of their actual ability. The grey shaded area accounted for virtually all responses from the students.



Think about ways in which *your* physical environment has affected you. What about that quart of ice cream in the freezer? Did that influence your after-dinner snacking? When you walk into a room, how does the furniture arrangement affect where you sit, and, in turn, to whom you talk? There are many ways in which the external environment affects what we do and how we think. In the space below, jot down a few examples of the ways your environment influences you:

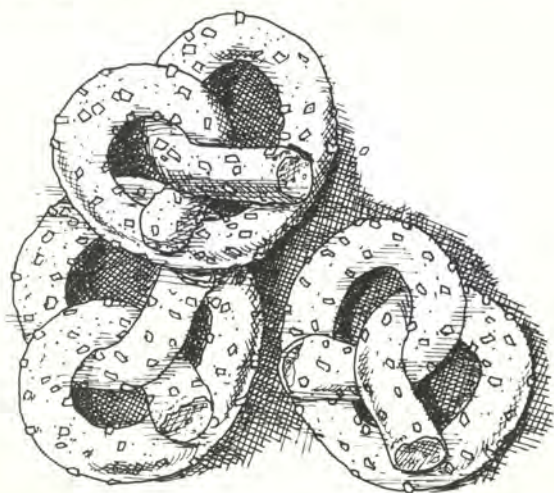
Internal Environment

Our internal environment consists of two things: (1) physiological cues from our bodies and (2) internal thoughts and images in our minds.

Research on self-perception suggests that it is often difficult to interpret the physiological cues that our body gives,⁹ and that how we interpret the cues will have a strong influence on our behavior.¹⁰ The obese person, for example, often interprets cues of anxiety and tension as signs of hunger. There is evidence that we may interpret our internal cues based on environmental stimuli. For example, when we are surrounded by angry people, and are unsure of the cause of our physiological arousal, we tend to describe what we are feeling as anger; when we are around happy people we tend to call our internal sensations joy.¹¹

In addition to this labeling function (attribution of causality), our mental or cognitive environment (the kinds of things we say to ourselves—our hopes, our expectations, our hurts, our concerns) also influences our actions and feelings in other ways. This may be manifested in such ways as the intensity of our depression, our effectiveness in approaching other people, or the amount of creativity and risk-taking behavior we engage in.

To show one way the internal environment affects us, I'd like you to engage in a brief experiment. Look at the picture below and imagine the following story.



I just obtained these pretzels from a delightful health food store in town. It's a clean, fresh place with a beautiful flower garden and a brick patio overhung by hanging baskets. There's a big black old stove in the store and the woman who serves you is a motherly type, clean and smiling. She has just baked the pretzels and they have come piping hot out of the oven. Think about how very warm and salty and crisp they are. Imagine how they would taste. Note what you are feeling. Note what you would like to do.

Now stop that imaginary scene. Look again at the picture. This time let me tell you what actually happened.

I was at the beach recently and I found some twigs on the ground. There were bugs on them and some birds had left their droppings on them. I washed them off in salt water and saw that they were decayed, with bugs and ants crawling through them. Note again your feelings toward the picture and what you feel like doing.

Most people observe that when they have made positive statements to themselves about the picture ("How good those pretzels look!") they want to approach the pretzels and maybe eat one. Similarly, if they don't think they look very appetizing, they want to avoid them. Thus the kinds of things that we say to ourselves, our "internal environments," affect our behavior. This is one reason why it is important to get in touch with these internal self-statements.

Another example of this influence is illustrated in the following anecdote. A patient I was seeing became terrified every time he went to a party or social gathering. When we began to explore this problem, we discovered that every time he attended a party, he was having thoughts such as, "No one knows me here," "No one really cares that I'm here," "I can't really make good conversation." He would then retreat to a corner of the room, thus fulfilling his own fears about himself. I had him observe his thoughts by teaching him to first discriminate and label the negative statements and then note on a sheet when and where the thought occurred (that is, who was present, where he was), and how he responded to it.

After we had gathered this information, I pointed out that he didn't have to say those negative things to himself. They were merely statements that he had learned to make in the past, but

that he didn't need to continue to make. We worked on substituting other kinds of positive self-statements, such as, "Although I don't know anybody, I have something to offer these people," and "It would be fun to meet and talk to some new people." When he began to say these things, it was like approaching the pretzels. He mingled at parties, made small talk, and felt much more comfortable and sure of himself. This clinical case illustrates the importance of tuning in to our thoughts. The labeling that occurs, often non-consciously, is important and affects the way we live our day-to-day lives. Social learning theorists believe that it is important when we are self-observing to tune in in a precise way to our internal environment: our thoughts, feelings, body reactions, and how they affect our behavior.

Take a moment, stop, and notice what internal cues you are experiencing right at this very moment:

BEHAVIORAL SELF-OBSERVATION

The Role of Precise Awareness

Now we can see that research bears out the idea that we are strongly influenced — our behavior is determined — by our social, physical, and internal environments. This realization is the first step in learning to *develop personal freedom*. When B. F. Skinner in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* talks of going "beyond freedom," he means that as long as we live with the illusion that we have freedom, we may fail to develop an awareness of the things that in fact are influencing our lives, and thus we may never learn to attain true freedom. As Nasudrin, the wise fool in many Sufi stories,

knew, our perception of reality, though it may appear natural, is merely a perception. Until we realize how we are conditioned, we will believe in an *illusion* of freedom. *Behavioral self-management strategies involve a precise method for attaining awareness about our conditioning.* This method is called *behavioral self-observation*, and it involves performing a very careful *analysis of the relationship between our actions and the environment*—how we affect those around us, and how the environment influences us.

Developing Precise Awareness

The concept of awareness in behavioral self-management strategies refers to a very analytical way of perceiving the world. It requires that an individual choose a specific problem area to work on changing. This may be anything, such as the number of negative things I say to my spouse, my quick temper, my weight, my smoking habits, etc. Once a choice is made, there are guidelines detailing the procedures for self-observation; these involve looking for the *antecedents*, the *behavior*, and the *consequences* of any particular action (the ABC's). Let's look at each of these separately, starting with a discussion of behavior.

The Behavior

Determining When the Behavior Occurs. Before we can learn about a behavior, we have to define for ourselves *when* that behavior is occurring. How do we determine the onset and the termination of a particular behavior? This is not too difficult with a concrete behavior, such as smoking. For example, you can record the specific number of cigarettes you smoke: the onset occurs when you light the cigarette, the termination when you put the cigarette out. But with some behaviors, especially *internal* behaviors (feelings, emotions, body sensations), it can become quite difficult to determine the onset and termination, as the following anecdote on anxiety illustrates.

A person came to me complaining of "free-flowing anxiety." When I asked him to describe what this anxiety felt like, he said that he experienced a sense of loss of control, and a tension described as an "overpowering feeling of being bounced around



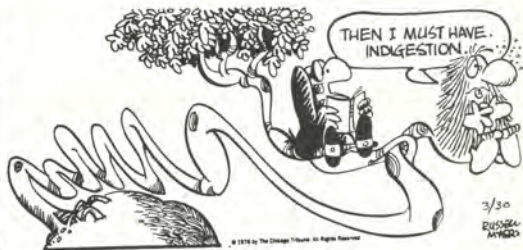
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*"Exactly what do you mean, dear, when you
say our lifestyle sucks?"*

by some sort of all-powerful forces, themselves neurotic." When I asked him to tell me when these feelings occurred, he said they happened throughout the day, at no particular time, in no particular situation. At this point, therefore, our task was to tune in precisely to what this individual meant by anxiety. What were the physiological cues, such as butterflies in the stomach, or tightness in the neck? What were the self-verbalizations: that is, what were the things he said to himself when he felt anxiety? Then we tried to find out about the frequency, intensity, and duration of these

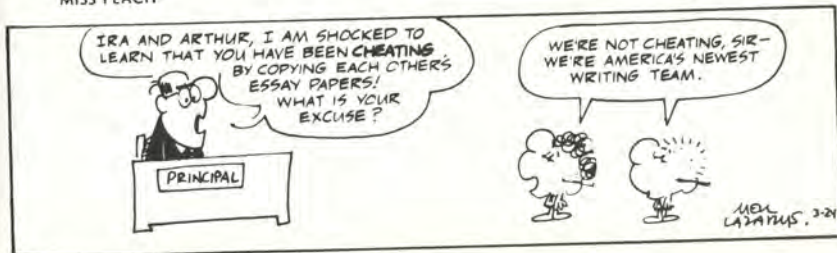
feelings of anxiety. How did he know when anxiety was occurring? How intense did the butterflies have to be: was a small tingle enough to signal anxiety? Did it always have to be a knot in his stomach? These are entirely subjective questions which only the individual can determine.

Labeling the Behavior. Another closely interwoven element in observing one's own behavior is labeling and defining it—there appear to be the same internal physiological reactions to the strongest love as well as the deepest hate and anger. The difference lies in how these physiological responses are labeled. This is not always an easy task, especially with internal cues. Further, there may not always be consensus about how a certain set of behaviors should be labeled. Is this cheating, or cooperation? Who decides? This is especially important for families and couples. What a mother may feel is a positive statement may be interpreted by a child as sarcastic (“Another glass of water?”). Even though we may agree that a certain behavior has occurred, we may not agree on how to label that behavior.



MISS PEACH

By Mell Lazarus



Antecedents

In developing behavioral self-observation skills, once the behavior is defined, an individual must learn to become aware of the *antecedents* to the behavior. Returning to the case of the person with the "free-floating anxiety," it was important for him to determine under what conditions this anxiety occurred. Was it in a certain type of situation? In a certain location? Was it at a certain time of the day? What else was going on? This is done in order to pinpoint the kinds of things that may be controlling or triggering the behavior. In other words, what situations or events increase the likelihood that a particular behavior will occur?

Consequences

Finally, the individual must look at the *consequences* of the behavior he or she is observing. The consequences refer to what happens as a result of the behavior. How does the person act differently? How do others act toward that person when the behavior occurs? Does the individual stay in the same situation, or leave the situation? What does the person say to himself after the behavior has occurred?

In the above case of anxiety the person found, after two weeks of self-observation, that his "generalized anxiety" was occurring at specific times in the day (upon awakening) and before an English class. Here are some of his notes:

Anecdotal Data: Daily Self-observation of Anxious Feelings

First week: I have overpowering feelings of being bounced around by some sort of all-powerful forces.

Second week: I find the anxious periods can be timed — upon awakening and before English class in the evening. As if I'm conditioned to be anxious at those times.

It is important to note that in this case of anxiety, it was the "precise awareness" of self-observation that allowed this individual to learn the antecedents of his disturbing anxiety. This probably would not have occurred as quickly, if at all, if he had used the global, non-analytical awareness of meditation discussed in Chapter 1.

Instructions for Self-observation

Research has shown that awareness is not always automatic; sometimes it does not occur unless an individual makes the decision to develop it. Behavioral self-observation is a technique concerned with making us more aware of our own lives. The emphasis of self-observation is not on changing anything—either behavior or attitudes—but rather on trying to get to know yourself better, to see exactly what it is you might want to change or what kinds of directions you might want to grow in.

It is best to practice self-observation for about a week to ten days *without trying to make any changes* in the behavior you are observing.

On the next few pages, a brief checklist is provided for the techniques of self-observation, self-evaluation, and goal setting. Also included are a data chart on which to record any selected target behavior for one to two weeks, and the beginnings of a self-observation journal. Throughout the text, suggestions are made for areas that might be interesting for you to self-observe. In addition, you may wish to observe aspects of the vision of yourself which you form in the following goal-setting section.

Checklist for Behavioral Self-observation

1. Self-observation

- Choose an area of concern (*the behavior*).
- Decide what you mean by that area in some precise way, so that you will be able to observe and count, when it occurs—in other words, how will you recognize this behavior? Think about the intensity of the behavior; the onset and termination of the behavior.
- Label the behavior.
- Note what happens right before the behavior (*antecedents*).

*There is usually no one single antecedent or consequence, because our lives are quite complex. However, insofar as it is possible, it provides valuable information to note as accurately as possible what you believe to be the antecedents and consequences.

Who was present? What was (were) the location(s); What time did it occur?

- Note what happens right after the behavior (the *consequences*).*

2. Self-evaluation

- After the initial week to ten days of self-observation, evaluate the results of the information.

3. Goal Setting

- Set a realistic goal for yourself (both a short-term goal and a long-term goal). Do you want to increase the behavior? Decrease the behavior? Learn a new behavior? Your goal should include a *description* of the behavior; a decision as to what *extent* you want it increased or decreased; and a decision about the *conditions*.

Self-observation Journal

In this journal, you may want to record some of the specific things you observe about the behavior you are monitoring. How did you choose this particular behavior? How did you recognize it? How did you go about determining the criteria for when it occurred? You may also want to note, especially for the first week or two, additional information you learned about the relationship between your behavior and the way it is affected by, and affects, the world around you.

The following chart may be helpful to you in recording information about the behavior, what happens right before, and what happens right after.

THE ELEMENT OF CHOICE

Choosing a Vision

After precise information has been obtained through behavioral self-observation, the individual is in a position to (1) evaluate the information and (2) choose a goal. *Once we have realized what kinds of things influence our behavior, we can begin to choose how we want to live.* This choice gives us the potential to free ourselves from maladaptive habit patterns, unproductive reflex emotional responses, and injurious environmental situations.

We learn to set goals for ourselves, to choose a vision of what directions we would like to grow in and what kind of person we would like to become. These goals are set through a very careful process of decision making and self-evaluation — evaluating where we are currently and where we would like to be as we look to the future.

Self-evaluation

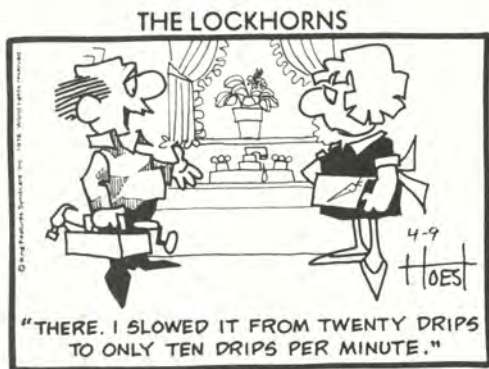
In order to set standards, monitor progress, and compare ourselves to the vision we are seeking to attain, self-evaluation is necessary. This self-evaluation can serve several different functions. First, it can enable us to determine the discrepancy between where we are now and where we would like to be. This can help us decide how much intervention, and of what sort, may be needed to attain our goals. Second, self-evaluation can help us monitor our progress to ensure that our present course will lead to our goal. It is through evaluation or feedback that we learn when we are making mistakes and how to improve ourselves. We may find through self-evaluation that if we continue on our present path, we are likely to miss our goals, whether the goal be an interpersonal relationship, a specific task we have set for ourselves, or larger life goals and plans. Finally, self-evaluation can help us decide whether the goal itself is still worth pursuing. Perhaps we no longer wish to pursue a goal for ethical, personal, or many other reasons.

Goal Setting

Self-evaluation, as we have seen, is intimately connected with setting specific goals. In order to make your goals clear enough so that you can ultimately determine whether or not you have achieved them, it is necessary to do three things:

1. *Describe the behavior.* What is the behavior, its antecedents and consequences.?
2. *Decide on the extent of the behavior.* How much do you want the behavior to increase or decrease? Is there a deficit, an excess, or an absence (i.e., a behavior that still needs to be learned)?
3. *Decide on the conditions of the behavior.* When and where do you want the behavior to take place?

An example will illustrate a model of goal setting. Suppose your long-term goal is to improve your relationship with your spouse. You decide that in order to do this you have to increase the number of positive remarks you make to that person. You define what you mean by "positive" (*description*) and after the first week you find that you made three positive statements to your spouse. You evaluate this baseline (taking into account feedback from your spouse!) and decide you want to increase it (*extent*) during the following week when both of you will be



together (*conditions*). Your goal is stated as follows: I want to increase my positive statements to my spouse from three a week to once per day.

At the end of the second week you can evaluate this goal. Was it reached? If it was reached, did it have a positive effect on the relationship? Do you need to further increase the goal? The precision of goal setting is crucial, for it gives us a means of evaluating our progress, and, when necessary, of changing either our strategies toward that goal or the goal itself.

Realistic Goals

It is important that our goals be realistic and attainable. For example, let's say you are a woman who is monitoring weight, and your baseline shows you weigh 139 pounds, eat 2,500 calories a day, and fourteen between-meal snacks a week (in the afternoon and before going to bed). You evaluate your weight as too high and decide you want to weigh 122 pounds. So far, so good. However, you decide you want to weigh 122 pounds within one week. Not so good. Your goals have to be realistic. You may set a *long-term* goal for yourself of 122 pounds, but your *short-term* goals should be different. For example, your short-term goals may be related to caloric intake: e.g., to cut down to 1,500 calories a day; to cut down the number of between-meal snacks from fourteen to seven per week; to change the nature of the snacks from cake to celery and carrots. A realistic goal will result in satisfaction and a sense of competence. An unrealistic goal will result in continued frustration, failure, and eventual abandonment of the hope of change.

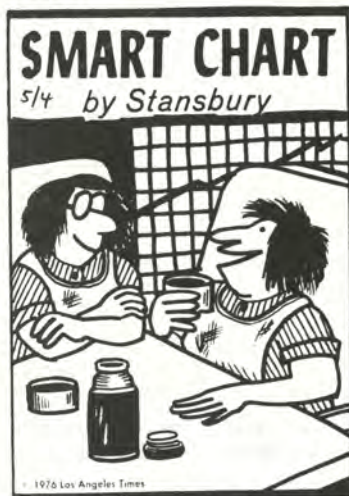
We have talked thus far about a precise goal setting for specific kinds of changes. Obviously some goals are more important than others. Setting a goal to get a philosophy paper done by next week may be valued as less important to you than the goal of developing a close interpersonal relationship. I'd like to suggest,



however, that the process of goal setting described here seems to apply to all types of goals, from the seemingly trivial to the most high-flown dreams.

*To understand the heart and mind
Of a person, what matter what he has already
Achieved, but at what he aspires to do.¹²*

Each of us has within the title of an unwritten book about our wisdom and our vision. Each of us has a vision of what kind of person we would like to become. For some, the vision may involve professional advancement:



"I wonder if directors ever pretend to be cleaning ladies."

For some, the vision may involve coping more effectively with daily problems:

MISS PEACH

By Mel Lazarus



TEACHINGS OF THE ZEN MASTER & THE GRAND CONDITIONER
or finding a basic purpose and meaning in life:



For others, there may be a fear of reaching the vision and thereby having no vision left:

Laughs From Europe



DENMARK
Emile Bencke
"My constant worry is that I might not always be so happy and content as I am at present."

This ability to set goals for ourselves helps determine, in a fundamental sense, *who we become* as individuals. Thus, goal setting is a necessary technique not only for choosing what we want to be in a larger sense but also for pursuing a productive and meaningful life on a daily basis.

POT-SHOTS NO. 571

*Ashtang
Brilliant*

ONE POSSIBLE REASON WHY THINGS AREN'T GOING ACCORDING TO PLAN



IS THAT THERE NEVER WAS A PLAN.

© BRILLIANT ENTERPRISES 1974

As a little experiment let me ask you to quickly free associate to your ideal self. What are the qualities you would have—personal qualities, physical appearance, interpersonal relations with people, spiritual—if you were just as you wanted to be?

After you have made this list, go back over it and divide it into two parts: the ideal self which you believe is realistically attain-

able, and the ideal self which may not be realistically attainable. List those qualities that you think are attainable

and those that may not be attainable*

Spend some time thinking about your attainable ideal, your vision of who you would like to become, your real goals for yourself. Stop reading for a bit, close your eyes, and just enjoy the image of yourself as you'd like to be. Imagine yourself acting in ways you'd like to act, looking as you'd like to look, being who you'd ideally like to be.

BEHAVIORAL SELF-MANAGEMENT

In the book *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden*¹³ a teenage girl suffers a schizophrenic episode and is sent to a mental institution. The girl lives in an ugly fantasy and cannot accept the world of reality. Her therapist at the institution is a very loving, kindly person who spends many hours trying to win the girl's confidence

*We need a balance between goals that are too high, and perhaps unrealistic, and goals that are not high enough. I believe our attainment may, to a certain extent, be limited only by our vision. Thus, even though we can't fly unaided, we should remember that it was through imagining the possibility of flight that the airplane was invented.

and trying to understand her inner reality of imagination and fantasy.

Finally, the girl is allowed to leave the institution on a trial basis, to live in the surrounding community. The other patients are excited about her leaving, for if she can succeed, they feel there is hope for them.

The girl arrives in the community, rents a room, and is full of fear and hope. However, soon she is lonely. A particularly poignant passage describes her joining a church choir in order to meet people. Standing next to strangers, singing, she feels alone and afraid. She doesn't know what to say to these people, or even how to begin a conversation with them.

She returns to the hospital. The other patients feel her defeat; they despair of ever again leading normal lives. When I read that passage I too feel helplessness and sadness. Yet, how could we have expected anything different?

Adolescence is a time during which most of us learn, albeit gropingly, important social skills: how to look at another person, how to initiate conversations—these are the skills of building friendships. How can we expect a person who has been isolated from society for several years to return to that society successfully without any practical preparation? The girl lived in a mental institution during those crucial adolescent years and did not have an opportunity to build relationships with peers. Of course she failed. She had never been taught the skills that would allow her to succeed. Understanding the frightening and menacing fantasy inside her mind was important. But it was not enough. She needed, in addition, to learn the *basic skills of normal human interactions*.

We have already discussed the first skill necessary for self-management—precise awareness through self-observation. Precise awareness is viewed as a necessary but not sufficient technique for obtaining self-control. Once individuals have observed their behavior, evaluated it, and set a goal, there are several additional strategies they may choose to use. These strategies may be broken down into three groupings: those that involve *environmental planning* (strategies which occur prior to the target behavior); those that involve *learning specific skills of the target behavior*; and those that involve *behavioral programming* (which have to do with what one does *after* the target behavior has occurred or has *failed* to occur).

Environmental Planning: Changing the Environment

Prearranging Antecedents and Consequences

One aspect of this technique involves *arranging the environment in such a way that it facilitates our acting as we want to act*. This environmental planning (stimulus control) occurs before the occurrence of the target behavior (i.e., the behavior that we are interested in changing or facilitating). Remember that we have a *physical* environment, a *social* environment, and an *internal* environment. All of these must be considered in our efforts to achieve our desired goals.*

In the East, an example of environmental planning may be found in the quiet, peaceful, simple furnishings of a meditation room (physical environment). This room is planned in such a way that extraneous distractions will be reduced, thus enabling the individual to focus more clearly on the task of meditation. Other examples of environmental planning include meditation with a group of people (social environment) in order to ensure daily practice (this is using social reinforcement to encourage the performance of certain actions). Similarly, in formal Zen meditation, the use of the *kwat*, a slap administered by the Master to a "non-concentrating" student, represents a preplanned manipulation of the social environment (punishment) to reduce nonalert behavior

*Environmental planning goes counter to our popular cultural notions of willpower and self-management. For example, most of us would agree that a person who engages in an avoidance response—i.e., who avoids an environment or situation in which he would feel uncomfortable, or which he felt he couldn't handle—is showing a lack of willpower, a lack of self-control. It would seem that a person who truly had willpower would face the situation head-on.

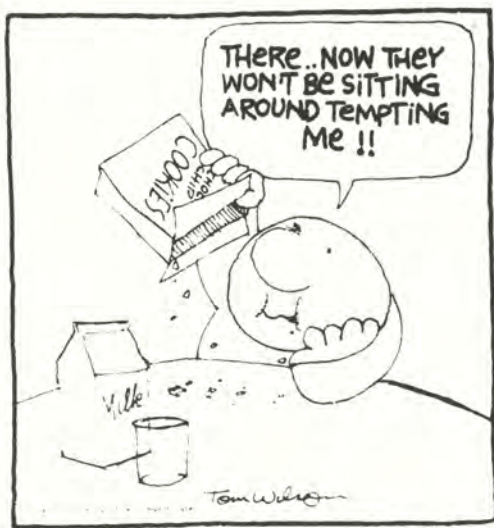
Let me share an example that changed my view. When I was working with heroin addicts, my feeling was that because I was experienced in some of the most sophisticated self-control strategies in both Eastern and Western disciplines, I would be able to use heroin and not be overcome by it. As I worked more extensively with the addicts, however, I became aware that heroin was an incredibly powerful stimulus, and one I felt could control me, rather than my being able to use it as I pleased. I realized that I didn't have enough "willpower" to use heroin, and therefore made a decision to face my limitations and avoid a situation I didn't feel I could handle: using heroin. A similar view is expressed in the East, in which to avoid a powerful stimulus (e.g. water going around a rock) is seen as a convincing demonstration of self-control. Thus, self-control, or willpower may involve a variety of responses, one of which may be to avoid certain situations or environments which one does not feel competent to deal with.

and to make achievement of the meditative state more likely. Meditation itself may be seen as a type of internal environmental planning in that it may help one deal with subsequent fearful events with greater calmness.

In these examples, relevant environmental cues and social consequences have been planned in a way that will influence the occurrence of the target behavior.

A clinical example of environmental planning in the West may be drawn from the self-control strategies that have been developed to deal with obesity. Persons watching their weight are instructed to plan their home environment to encourage "slim eating" — e.g., using pictures of models who look healthy and thin; posting warnings on the dangers of obesity; arranging for there to be no high-calorie foods in the home; having low-calorie snacks in the front of the icebox.

Ziggy



Time Out

In the West, the technique of *time out* also involves environmental planning. We have probably all used "time-outs" informally — e.g., in the middle of an argument with a friend, we may leave the room (or be left!). Time out is a means of separating participants

from a potentially explosive situation before that occasion occurs. This may entail telling an aggressive child that if he starts to hit a peer in school, he is going to be sent to a "timeout" room. This arrangement should be discussed *before* the actual problem occurs. This may be seen as a type of *contract*, and contracting is an important concept in behavioral self-management.

Contracting

A contract is *an agreement that is made with another person or with oneself* (a self-contract). Contracts facilitate self-directed change by creating positive consequences for reaching our goal and aversive consequences,* for noncompliance. Some contracts are informal. Most of us have made these informal, unwritten contracts, sometimes known as Grandma's Law (You may have desert after you've eaten your spinach). Other contracts may be stated explicitly, even in writing.

MISS PEACH

By Mell Lazarus



It should be noted that contracts are only an aid in helping us make changes. As we will see in Chapter 4, they are not sufficient without a *motivation and commitment to change*. If there is no commitment to change, then the contract will be empty. For example, a contract made to "get along" better with one's peers is shallow if the person makes such an agreement and then continues to behave in the same old way, expecting the *others* to change their behavior. There needs to be a *spirit* of love and cooperation behind any contract that is made.

Once there is a motivation to change, some specific guidelines are helpful in making up contracts. Contracts should be fair,

*Bandura has suggested that self-regulative incentives improve performance not because they strengthen or extinguish a preceding response but because of their motivational function (i.e., anticipated satisfaction of desired accomplishments. (See Bandura, "Self-reinforcement: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations," *Behaviorism*, 1974, 4, 133-155.)

honest, clear, reward small amounts of change, and involve the consent of all parties concerned.¹⁴ Contracts should be made at a quiet time. They shouldn't be made right after an incident that has made you upset or angry. Wait until you have relaxed yourself and are feeling better; then see what it was that caused the problem and try to work out a contract that may prevent the undesirable behavior from happening again.

An example of a contract form you may wish to use is provided below. As this contract form illustrates, we can make contracts with other people, as well as with ourselves.

SELF-MANAGEMENT CONTRACT

Dates of contract: From _____ to _____

I _____ agree to _____
(Note specific target behavior)

in the following situation(s) _____
(Note specific circumstances)

I plan to accomplish this by _____
(Note specific overt and covert environmental planning strategies and specific skills)

If I keep this contract, I shall be rewarded with _____
(Note rewards to be provided by yourself or others)

(Signature) _____ (Date) _____

(Witness) _____ (Date) _____

Learning Specific Skills Involving the Target Behavior

Another important area in developing effective behavioral self-management strategies may involve the target behavior itself. For example, consider the target behavior of meditation. It should be clear by now that merely putting a person in a quiet environment doesn't ensure proper meditation. That person must know how to assume an appropriate posture, focus on breathing, and stop internal dialogue. Similarly, an overweight person needs to learn the skills that will make possible enjoyable, healthy eating: learning about proper diet, eating slowly, putting silverware down between bites, paying attention to the food's texture, smell, and taste, and so on. Likewise, the teenager in *I Never Promised You a Rose Garden* needed to learn the appropriate interpersonal skills in order to relate positively with others: initiating conversations, listening carefully, maintaining eye contact.



In the following section we discuss two of the more common self-management skills used in social learning theory: relaxation and systematic desensitization.

Relaxation

For many of us, an important behavioral self-management skill involves learning how to reduce anxiety, and manage stress and tension. A technique frequently used for this is progressive relaxation.¹⁵ This involves systematically paying attention to each of our muscle groups. We are taught to flex and tighten various muscle groups in order to learn to recognize tension; then we are taught to let go, relax, and untense the muscle group. We are taught that just as we can make ourselves tense, so too we can learn to relax ourselves.

Each of us has certain places in our body that feel the effects of tension and stress more than others. By going through all the muscle groups we learn precisely how to pinpoint these areas. You may have noticed that by relaxing your throat, you can often stop your internal tension.

Below are listed a set of instructions for relaxing.¹⁶ You may try the technique yourself, either by having a friend instruct you or by reading the material into a tape recorder, and then playing it back. The phrases in italics should not be read into the tape recorder. They are printed here so that after you have gone through the different muscle groups, you can return to a particular part of your body that feels tension and spend additional time relaxing that part.

Progressive Relaxation Exercises

Now is the time to relax. Find a nice comfortable position on a bed or on a floor mat and try to relax as much as you can right now. I am going to ask you to tighten certain muscles and study the sensations that come from these muscles while they're tense, and then notice what happens when you relax them and continue to relax them further and further.

Hands and Forearms. To start with, clench your right fist and try to keep all the other muscles in your body relaxed. Your forearm will be down flat (holding it up makes some tension in your upper arm). Study the feelings of tension in your forearm. Notice the location of the muscles and how they feel when they're tensed. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Relax now, all at once—don't ease off—let everything go all at once and then study the sensations in that muscle group as muscles relax further and further. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now, of course, it goes more quickly if you can do it with both fists at once — so this time clench both fists. Once more study the sensations in these tense muscles — and as they begin to get a little tired locate them very clearly and specifically. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And again, let go all at once without easing off — relax. Now study the sensations as these muscles relax further and further. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Upper Arms. Now pull your forearms up against your upper arms as far as you can, keeping your forearms relaxed — you can tell they're relaxed when your wrists are limp. Fold them up right now and feel your biceps work and study the pattern of tension in your biceps — locate these muscles in your upper arms. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax. Let your arms flop and each time notice the contrast between how the muscles feel when they're tense and when they're relaxed. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now straighten your arms out — completely straight — and try to turn your elbows inside out. Feel the muscles work up the back of your upper arms — study the feeling of tension in this muscle. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . . And a final word about the thing that you do in order to relax the muscle — *enjoy the good feeling* as the tension gradually goes off more and more. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now raise your arms out to the side. You have nothing to push against so it will take a little more time before the muscles get tired enough for you to feel the tension in them. These will be the muscles up across the tops of your upper arms and the muscles from the points of your shoulders up to the back of your neck. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And now relax and study the sensations as these muscles relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Forehead. Now raise your eyebrows and pull your scalp down to meet your eyebrows so that you can feel the tension in your forehead and up across the top of your skull. Study the pattern of tension. Don't worry if you can't feel your scalp — lots of people can't. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now and just feel your forehead smoothing out and enjoy the good kind of creeping sensation as the muscles in your forehead and scalp relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Once more raise your eyebrows and feel the muscles work up there. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

This time instead of letting everything go, try to let go approxi-

mately half the tension in your forehead and try to keep it in a disciplined way at that level—stamping out the fluctuations so that the level remains constant. [Pause]. . . . Then let half of that go and once more try to keep it at that level without letting it vary upward or downward. [Pause]. . . . And half of that. [Pause]. . . . And half of that. Try to maintain just a tiny level of tension so that you can become aware of it when your forehead begins to tighten up just a little bit. [Pause]. . . . And relax now—let it all go and just enjoy the good feeling as your forehead relaxes and smooths out—gradually lets go and relaxes. [Pause for relaxing]. . . .

Now frown—pull your eyebrows together across the top of your nose—feel the muscles work there? Almost makes you feel angry, doesn't it? [Pause for tensing]. . . . Then relax. Let it go. [Pause for relaxing]. . . .

Eyes. Now close your eyes tightly—this will perhaps use a little bit of your frowning muscles. You can feel the circular muscles that go all around your eye and your eyelids and maybe a little of your muscle that wrinkles your nose is there. [Pause for tensing]. . . . Then relax—let all the tension go out and let your upper lids rest very gently on your lower lids. [Pause for relaxing]. . . .

Now as we continue through the rest of these muscles I want you to leave your eyes closed so that you'll be able to attend more easily to the sensations that are coming from your muscles without the interference of seeing things around you. If you find it uncomfortable to keep your eyes closed, open them for just a second and then close them again as soon as you can comfortably do it. Now, keeping your eyes closed, roll your eyes in a large circle and feel the muscles work as you move your eyes to the right—now notice those muscles that move your eyes downward—to the left—and up—and around—don't work them too hard because it's easy to strain your eyes. [Pause for moving eyes in circle]. . . . Then relax. Study the sensations as the tension goes out of these muscles that move your eyeballs about—think of looking at nothing and just let all those muscles go. [Pause for relaxing]. . . .

Mouth. Now act as if you were going to brush your upper teeth and retract your upper lip. You will find the two muscles that you use to do this—one that pulls up the middle of your upper lip and the other that pulls up the corners of your mouth—like when you smile. Now feel these muscles work. [Pause for tensing]. . . . And relax now—each time noticing what you do to

relax and just observing for a moment the sensations those relaxed muscles give rise to. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now pucker your mouth—feel the circular muscle around your mouth work. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Jaws. Clench your teeth—but try to leave your lips relaxed—clench your teeth and feel the muscles work there and in the corners of your jaw and on up to your temples. If you can't feel them in your temples, reach your finger up to your temple and feel them work there. Study the sensation of tension in these powerful muscles that close your jaw. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Relax now and just let your jaw hang slack and let all the tension go out of it. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Tongue. Now push your tongue forward against your teeth and feel the muscles work. Now pull your tongue back and feel the muscles work there. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now—just let your tongue lie very passively in the front of your mouth. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Throat. Now push the back of your tongue upwards and feel your voice box move with it. Once more, if you have trouble feeling this, put your fingers on your Adams apple—feel it move—now push the back of your tongue down and feel your voice box go down and feel the tension go in the upper part of your throat. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. Let your tongue relax, as well as muscles that operate your tongue in the upper part of your throat. Pretend that you are going to clear your throat and feel your throat close. Feel it—hold it—study it—let go. Relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now swallow and observe what happens—notice the wave of relaxation that follows the wave of tension down your throat. Try swallowing now and note the wave of relaxation that follows it. And next, elaborate that wave of relaxation—just let your throat open up and relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . . Now, swallow and stop in the middle with your throat contracted. Study the tension pattern. [*Pause*]. . . . Then relax it. Just enjoy the good feeling as your throat opens up and relaxes. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now think of humming a high note. Feel the tensions in the muscles that tighten your vocal cords. [*Pause*]. . . . Relax now by singing the scales downward—feeling the changes in the level of

tension in the muscles and finally ending up by picturing yourself forming a very low restful note as your vocal cords relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Shoulders. Now move the points of your shoulders forward and together. Feel the muscles work from the points of your shoulders down to your breastbone. These are your pectoral muscles. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Now relax a minute. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now pull your shoulders back as if you were trying to touch the points of your shoulders behind your back. Feel the muscles work in *between* your shoulder blades and *around* your shoulder blades. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now — and just feel the relaxation spreading all around your shoulders, all the muscles around your shoulder blades and upper back muscles and over the top of your chest — just let your shoulders droop and sag. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Neck. Now move your chin as you try touching your chin to your chest. Feel the tension [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Now try to move your head to the right and to the left at the *same* time. Now, holding your neck stiffly, study the tension [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And let all the muscles in your neck relax — just let them all go at once. Let them relax so deeply that if a breeze came along it would blow your head from one side to the other, almost as if you had no bones in your neck at all. Take no responsibility for the position of your head. Don't worry about its position — just let it be carried passively. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Back and Pelvis. Now, leaving your neck relaxed and working just from your shoulders down to your pelvis, arch your back gently — raise your back up. Arch it and feel the muscles work, the two great columns of muscles down your spine. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now rock a little bit — just rock your pelvis from side to side and feel a little more tension in one of these muscles and then in the other [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Now relax and just lie still and feel yourself sinking deeper and deeper into the bed [floor] as your muscles let go and relax more and more. Each time notice what you do in order to relax the muscles so that you can use this later. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Buttocks. Now tighten your buttocks. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . This should be easy to feel because this includes the largest mus-

cle in you body along with a couple of others. Now relax and just sink back into the bed [floor]. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Thighs. Now tighten all the muscles in your thighs. In order to do this, tighten the muscles that would move your knees together and at the *same* time the muscles that would move your knees apart—and at the *same* time the muscles that would push down and would raise your thighs—and then, to top it off, think of crossing your right leg over your left, similarly your left leg over your right. Study the pattern of tension. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now and just let all these muscles lengthen and smooth out—relax. Feel the muscles let go as they gradually lengthen and expand. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Lower Legs. Now point your toes downward so that they are in a direct line with your legs. Feel the muscles working in your calves—study the pattern of tension there. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Pull your toes toward you and feel your muscles work up your shin. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Feet. On the next one you have to be rather careful because it is easy to cramp these muscles. Try this with your toes. Curl your toes under—feel the muscles work up under your arch [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Feel all your muscles smoothing out and relaxing so that you are completely relaxed now from the top of your head to the tip of your toes and that you continue to let all these muscles relax more and more. After being good and tight when you have tensed them, the muscles can continue to be more and more deeply relaxed for as long as 20 minutes.

Abdomen. Now, harden your abdominal muscles as if somebody were going to hit you in the stomach. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Now harden your abdominal muscles again and study the pattern of tension—perhaps adding a little bit of an *attempt* to sit up. [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Okay—once more—tighten these stomach muscles. This time pull your stomach in and tense [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . Now push it out—and in—and out—and relax. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . .

Chest. Now, take about three-quarters of a deep breath, hold

your breath and at the same time *try* to breathe in. Feel the muscles work—now, *try* to breathe out—feel the muscles work [*Pause for tensing*]. . . . And relax now. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . . Now, as you did that perhaps you noticed that as you tried to breathe in you could feel your diaphragm flatten and then as you tried to breathe out you could feel it arch up. So let's try this once more—three-quarters of a deep breath—hold it—keeping your throat closed, *try* to breathe in some more. [*Pause*]. . . . Then *try* to breathe out [*Pause*]. . . . In . . . Out . . . In . . . Out . . . Feel your muscles work in your chest and diaphragm. They are powerful muscles which can help you to breathe correctly without running out of air.

Now, practice a different kind of breathing than usual. Breathe in—only leave your abdominal muscles relaxed while you raise your chest to breathe in. Using only your chest to breathe in, breathe in a little more deeply and a little more slowly than usual and then let everything go each time you reach the top of a breath. Breathe in deeply and slowly and then let it out. Breathe in slowly now by using your chest muscles. Hold it. . . . Let go. Again: breathe in slowly. . . . Hold it. . . . Let go. . . . This time when you reach the top of your breath, just let these muscles go for a few seconds *so that you don't have to do any work with any muscles in your body while you exhale. Let this be a signal to relax every other muscle in your body a little bit more and drift down gradually deeper and deeper* each time you breathe out. Again, breathe a little more slowly and a little more deeply than usual. . . . Hold it. . . . And then let go. Make no positive effort whatever when you are breathing out—just let the natural elasticity of your chest pour the air from your lungs. [*Pause for relaxing*]. . . . As you continue breathing, relax a little more slowly and a little bit more deeply, letting everything go, so that each time you breathe out it's like a sigh of relief.

Now, just continue relaxing like that for awhile now—deeper and deeper—without concentrating, because concentrating usually involves a little eyestrain. Attend to the sensations which are coming from your muscles. If any muscle has a little bit of residual tension left in it then you should be able to feel this tension—it will kind of “stick out” above the others. Lie quietly and passively and feel these sensations coming from your muscles along with the good feelings that come from your muscles as they relax further and further—perhaps finding one that sticks out a little bit. [*Pause for only three or four more breaths and sighs of relief*]. . . .

Now, relax from the tip of your toes to your head. Relax consciously, now your toes [3-5 second pause between parts of the body] . . . feet . . . ankles . . . calves . . . thighs . . . pelvis . . . stomach . . . chest . . . shoulders . . . arms . . . wrists . . . fingers . . . throat . . . neck . . . mouth . . . eyes . . . eyebrows . . .

If you notice any little bit of residual tension, just try to find the source of that muscle and turn it off—don't try to relax by moving because you always have to shorten a muscle in order to move. It will take longer to relax the muscle if you move it. Just take the muscles where you find them and let them go down from there.

Now, in order to impress your overall feeling of relaxation, start counting backwards from 10 to 1. With each count, see if you can become a little bit more relaxed and perhaps get a little more of a drowsy, sleepy feeling. 10 . . . 9 . . . 8 . . . 7 . . . 6 . . . 5 . . . 4 . . . 3 . . . 2 . . . 1 . . . Now continue relaxing like that—deeper . . . and deeper. . . Just let the chemicals of relaxation do you all the good they can. Relax for 10 to 20 minutes—or simply go to sleep. When you are ready to arouse yourself, gently move a hand, then an arm, a foot, then a leg. Open your eyes gradually. Treat yourself to a quiet, relaxed arousal!

Note: For people with physical problems, it may be advisable to consult your doctor regarding these exercises.

Systematic Desensitization

This is one of the more widely used behavioral techniques for dealing with fears and phobias.¹⁷ Basically, the technique involves taking a fear or concern that we have, and imagining that fear while we are in a state of deep relaxation. The theory behind systematic desensitization is that if we are relaxed and comfortable, then the bad feelings that normally occur in association with a stressful or fearful event will begin to lessen, and eventually disappear.*

Below is a brief list of instructions that may be useful in helping us to desensitize ourselves to fearful or stressful situations.

*For alternative theoretical explanations of the effects of systematic desensitization, see Bandura, "Self-efficacy: Toward a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change," *Psychological Review*, 1977, 84, 191-215.

Desensitization Instructions. As in almost any behavioral strategy, the first thing that is necessary is to define the area of concern. For the purposes of this exercise, think of two or three mild concerns or fears that you have and list them below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Sometimes, to help us pinpoint the nature and extent of our fears, it is helpful to use a "fear survey schedule."¹⁸ This survey contains 105 items that are often sources of fear and anxiety. Illustrative items from this survey include such things as sharp objects, looking foolish, arguing with parents, meeting someone for the first time, making mistakes, being a leader, death, being with a member of the opposite sex, bats, sudden noises, expressing positive feelings, etc.

Once you have picked an area of concern, you can make a list of specific experiences (real or imagined) that relate to that fear. These items should range from the least fear-arousing situation (causing just a slight twinge of anxiety) to the most fear-arousing situation. It is usually worthwhile to come up with ten to twenty different events; these should be listed in increasing order of anxiousness. (Behaviorists call these "subjective units of disturbance"—SUDS.) An example of such a list, related to the fear of public speaking, is presented below; from least fear arousing to most fear arousing:

- I am called by a local school group to give a talk at the annual dinner a year from now.
- It is six months from the talk, and I get a letter in the mail confirming the engagement.
- Four months from the talk, I pass one of the members of the group on the street, and he tells me how much he is looking forward to my talk.

- I realize that the talk is two months away, and although that still gives me a lot of time to prepare, I begin to feel the pressure.
- I begin to make notes on the talk, and find it difficult to concentrate. I begin to wonder if I will have anything worthwhile to say.
- There are three weeks left before the talk. I've finished the first rough draft, and don't think it is any good. I get a mild choking sensation in my throat.
- There is only one week to go. I see an announcement in the school newsletter announcing my talk. I feel the time pressure closing in on me.
- The night before the talk—I'm reviewing my notes. I feel the butterflies in my stomach, and know I'm going to have trouble sleeping.
- It's 5 P.M. the evening of the talk, and I get in my car to drive to the dinner.
- I've just been introduced, and the audience is silent as I walk up to the podium. I spread my notes out.
- I'm in the middle of the speech. I look up at the audience and can't tell if they're listening or interested.
- When I look back down at my notes, I can't find my place. My mind goes blank. I stutter and stammer, and the audience begins to stir restlessly.

Once you have constructed a hierarchy of events, the next step is to relax yourself as per the instructions we have already given. Once you are relaxed, imagine the least fear-arousing item on the list (e.g., I am called by a local school group to give a talk to them at their annual dinner a year from now). If tension occurs, stop the scene and again relax yourself. Once you are relaxed, try to visualize the scene again. If there is still tension, stop the scene, and relax again. Once there is no tension in the presence of a specific scene, proceed to the next scene (e.g., It is six months from the talk and I get a letter in the mail confirming the engagement).

Continue in the above manner until you can visualize all scenes contained in the list with no anxiety. You may wish to practice this daily, for about 20 to 30 minutes. It should be noted

that if you are dealing with a very severe fear or phobia, it may be important to seek professional help.

Behavioral Programming

In addition to environmental planning and skills relevant to the target behavior, self-management may involve behavioral programming.* This type of self-management concerns strategies related to what the individual does *following the occurrence of a target behavior*. These consequences may involve self-reward (verbal, imagined, material) or self-punishment (verbal, imagined, material). In other words, how we deal with ourselves if we successfully carry out our goals. Do we give ourselves a reward? What kind of reward? Is it a verbal pat on the back? Imagining the positive reactions of others? A visit to the concert we've wanted to attend? Or do we punish ourselves? Do we tell ourselves that we could have done still better, that we didn't try hard enough?

If we don't meet our goals, how do we deal with ourselves? Do we give punishment? What kind of punishment?

All of us maintain a constant internal dialogue, rewarding and punishing both ourselves and others. The way we reward ourselves, the way we talk to ourselves and others, is often rather random or counter-productive when viewed in terms of the goals we are actually trying to achieve.

We may punish ourselves after a good job for not doing better; we may likewise punish ourselves when we don't seem to be succeeding, rather than giving ourselves encouragement and hope. *Behavioral programming strategies teach us to make the*

*According to social learning theorists, there are three ways by which we learn: operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and modeling. In simplified form, the distinction between these three is as follows: Operant conditioning refers to the relationship between a behavior and its consequences (e.g., reinforcement or punishment). Classical conditioning (e.g., systematic desensitization) refers to the pairing or association of one stimulus with another. In the case of desensitization, the feared image is paired with relaxation so that eventually the feared stimulus loses its fear-arousing properties. Modeling refers to *learning by observing*: vicarious learning. This type of learning does not involve either reinforcement or pairing of stimuli. For a complete discussion of these distinctions, see Albert Bandura, *Social Learning Theory* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1977); see also D. Whaley and R. Malott, *Elementary Principles of Behavior Modification* (Kalamazoo, Michigan: Behaviordalia, 1970).



"HEY! IS THIS ALL I GET
FOR TELLIN' THE TRUTH?"

consequences of our actions more related to our own self-chosen goals. In this way we can "get on the same team with ourselves."

Let us now look at the behavioral programming techniques of reinforcement and punishment and see how they can best serve us.

Reinforcement and Punishment

In technical language, reinforcement and punishment refer to a stimulus (X) administered contingent upon a certain behavior (Y). Reinforcement stimulus (X) increases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again. In other words, if you do someone a favor (Y), and he thanks you (X), there is a higher likelihood that you will be inclined to do him a favor again. Punishment stimulus decreases the likelihood that the behavior will occur again. In other words, if you do someone a favor (Y) and she slugs you (X), there is a lower likelihood you would be inclined to do her a favor again. Let us now look at how reinforcement and punishment may be used to our advantage. We will discuss specific reinforcement, global reinforcement, specific criticism, and global criticism. We will talk primarily about social and self-reinforcement in terms of

images and words. However, especially in our society, material self-reward is often used quite effectively too.

Specific Reinforcement

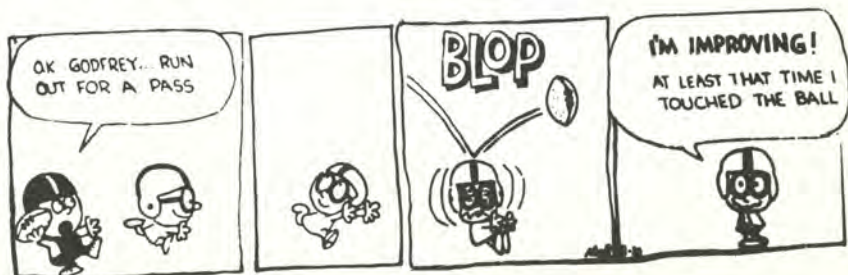
Reinforcement for specific behaviors would include such statements as:

- I feel proud of how much progress I am making in my self-change project.
- Thank you, John, for raking the leaves.
- You wrote that essay well, Jean.
- Thanks for helping me with the dishes, Sally.
- I sure did a good job in that counseling session.

This type of reinforcement, to be optimal, should follow certain guidelines. First, it should be clear *what behaviors are being reinforced*. Second, the *timing* of the reinforcement should be as soon after behavior as possible. Third, if a new behavior is being learned, reinforcement should be *liberal and frequent*. Further, since a new skill takes time and practice to learn, and perfection is rarely achieved the first time, reinforcement should occur for *small increments of improvements (successive approximations)*.

Successive Approximations. Successive approximation involves setting a graduated series of subgoals, which are more easily reached than the major goals, and reinforcing ourselves upon attaining each increasingly difficult subgoal.

Godfrey gives himself encouragement for "touching" the



ball — which is a successive approximation to catching it. We, too, should be kind both to others *and to ourselves* for the attempts we make at new behaviors.

Global Reinforcement

Global reinforcement is noncontingent; it does not need to come after specific kinds of behavior — there is no specific reason for this type of reinforcement. Global reinforcement includes such statements as:

- You're a great son.
- You're a great daughter.
- I really love you.
- You're a good person.

Often we make the mistake of using global reinforcement for specific tasks: You're a good person because you just got a raise. Johnny, what a good boy you are for raking the leaves. The prob-



"THAT'S A GOOD GIRL!"

lem with global praise for a specific act is that a person may come to feel that his worth is dependent upon success. If this individual doesn't succeed, he may feel he can't be loved.

Global reinforcement should come at times unrelated to a specific task. This type of reinforcement can be called the "big cuddle": telling a child with a big hug that you love him; sharing warm feelings with a spouse; showing feelings of warmth and acceptance with ourselves.

Specific Criticism

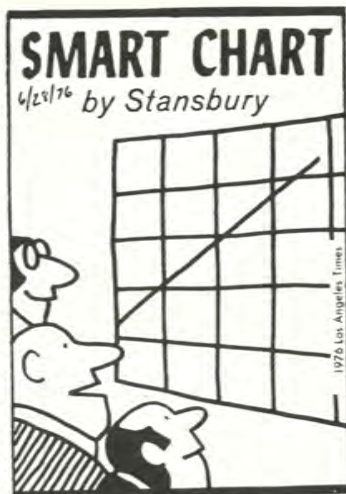
Criticism for specific behaviors would include statements such as:

- Johnny, please quit running in the hall.
- Jimmy, I don't think you understand how to do these types of math problems. Let me explain.
- This soup tastes too salty, Jan.
- That backhand shot I just made was too low.

Giving a constructive criticism is not easy. First, it should be *specific*—dealing with the behaviors to be changed. Second, if possible, it should involve an *alternative*. To "Johnny, please don't run in the halls" we can add ". . . we can run when we get outside." (Running is not inappropriate in certain environments. If you take away one behavior—running—provide an alternative.) Third, ideally, criticism should be *nonthreatening*. One of the most effective ways to present a criticism was suggested by Lloyd Homme. He called it a sandwich (reinforcement/criticism/reinforcement).¹⁹ Rather than "The soup tastes too salty, Jan," you might say (1) "Thanks for making dinner tonight. I sure appreciate it. The salad is terrific"; (2) "For my own taste, next time, I'd like a bit less salt in the soup"; or (3) "The vegetable casserole looks and smells exquisite, Jan."

Sometimes it may seem stilted to make a "full sandwich." A rule of thumb is to end with a compliment, not a criticism. ("The casserole sure smells good—but this soup is awfully salty").*

*A new behavior often feels contrived at first. Don't let that bother you. As long as your honest intent is to share your feelings and give constructive feedback, then a criticism in the "sandwich style" has the intent of being as gentle as possible.



"This year's sales incentive is tropical cruises blended with fear of job loss."

Specific Punishment. Criticism may also involve a type of punishment, as in the case of grades. We need to decide whether we are using criticism for feedback to bring about improvement in performance, or as a means of punishing poor performance. Punishment involves aversive consequences that occur after an undesired behavior. For example, a person who decides he wants to quit smoking may punish himself by giving a dollar to his most hated charity every time he smokes a cigarette. Or a person who wants to stop drinking may imagine himself starting to take a drink, then imagine an immediate feeling of nausea. This is called *using a covert (internal) image as punishment*. Or the individual who is trying to remove an unwanted thought may place that thought in his mind, and then yell STOP! This is operant punishment—referred to as *thought stopping* in the behavioral literature.

It is important that when punishment is used, it should be for a *specific behavior*, and not directed at the person (either others or oneself); the punishment should be *time-limited*, and *follow immediately upon the occurrence* of the undesirable be-

havior. A desirable alternative behavior should be formulated and its occurrence liberally enforced. When the above guidelines are followed, punishment techniques seem to be effective. However, it is unclear how effective they are for long-term change; and whether or not they involve any unhealthy side effects.

Global Criticism

I would suggest that this strategy is *never* useful. Examples of statements using global criticism might be "You're a bad boy," "She's an evil person," or "I'm really worthless." According to the social learning viewpoint, which stresses the situation specificity of behavior, global criticism is not accurate. Further, there's nothing a person learns from it that is of use.

The chart summarizes our discussion of punishment and reinforcement, suggesting the constructive use of each.*

	Specific Behaviors	Global Traits
reinforcement	yes	yes (big cuddle)
criticism/punishment	yes	no

Some Additional Thoughts on Reinforcement

It is perhaps commonplace to say that all of us wish to receive praise and reinforcement. Yet, even though we know it feels good to get praised, we are often very sparing in the kinds of praise that we give to others, and to ourselves. Keep in mind that praise can be verbal.



*In relation to this chart, it is interesting to think of the global personality traits used in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual II (DSMII), a manual for professional mental-health workers to use in evaluating a person's mental health: e.g., neurotic, psychotic, manic-depressive, schizophrenic. For some of the implications of these labels, see the discussion of trait labeling in Chapter 5.

TEACHINGS OF THE ZEN MASTER & THE GRAND CONDITIONER
Praise and reinforcement can also be nonverbal.

THE LOCKHORNS



Think of a person that you're very close to. What do you say to him, or how do you let him know you are close to him? Think about that for a minute, and then jot down a couple of ways you have recently shown affection, either verbally

or nonverbally

In addition, it's sometimes hard for us to accept praise gracefully from others. For example, think of how you respond when someone praises you. Do you let that person know how good it makes you feel? Do you become self-conscious, and find it hard to accept the praise? Be aware of how you respond the next time you receive praise from another person.

Self-reinforcement: One Type of Internal Self-statement

Perhaps hardest of all is to give praise to ourselves. We are taught as children that to praise ourselves is narcissistic and egotistical. Thus, when we do praise ourselves out loud, we often get punished. When we criticize ourselves, we often get comforted—and told, "There, you're really pretty good—don't be so hard on yourself." We internalize those "rules," and we learn to talk to ourselves in critical ways, with very little praise. We do this because that mode of talking has paid off in the past.

Ask yourself this: How much do you like yourself? A little? Moderately? A lot? Now ask yourself this: when is the last time you've shown yourself that you like yourself? What's the last "treat" or the last pat on the back, the last reward you've given yourself? It's too easy to become our own worst critic. And yet, as the saying goes, if we aren't for us, who will be?

Let me ask you to make a list of the five things that you might say to yourself that would make you feel good. Include examples of both specific and global reinforcement.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Because we are so sparing in the kinds of positive things we say to ourselves, it is often difficult to list positive statements we

make to ourselves. Therefore, I would like to push you a little bit on the above exercise. If you didn't list five positive things you can say to yourself, please stop and go back, and complete the exercise. Become aware of any resistance you may be feeling to doing this exercise.

After you have completed the list of positive statements that you can (or do) make to yourself, I'd like you to think about and list five things, or events, that make you feel good. One way of finding out what's reinforcing to you is to look for something you do frequently — this involves what Premack has referred to as a "high-probability behavior."²⁰ If, for example, you ask a child what he likes to do, he may say he doesn't know. However, if you watch him during free time, and note that he plays basketball a lot, you may infer that this is a high-probability behavior, and he finds it reinforcing.

If you are still having trouble listing five things that are reinforcing to you, you may wish to go through several magazines and cut out pictures or scenes that make you feel good. You may also wish to draw or paint scenes that give you a good feeling. Once you have done this, try to figure out what it is about that scene that you like. In other words, first identify a positive feeling in an intuitive holistic way; later, analyze precisely why it is a good feeling.

Another device that may be useful in helping us recall things or experiences that give us joy or other pleasurable feelings is called a "reinforcement survey schedule." This survey contains many different items, such as the following: eating (candy, fruits, nuts); solving problems (crossword puzzles; figuring out how something works); listening to music (classical, Western country, jazz, folk); animals (dogs, cats, horses, birds); watching sports; reading; dancing; playing sports; shopping; gardening; hiking; being praised (about appearance, about your work, about your hobbies, about your physical strengths, about your mind, about your moral strength); making somebody happy; babies; having people ask your advice; talking to friends; being close to an attractive person; making love; peace and quiet.

Take some time and think of five experiences, activities, events that you find very reinforcing, and list them below:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

How often during a week do you do the things that make you feel good? How often do you say things to yourself that make you feel good? This may be an area in which you'd like to gather self-observation information and then try to increase.

Additional Uses of Internal Images and Self-statements

Most of us are almost always engaging in some sort of internal dialogue with ourselves. Often these dialogues are just gibberish, and not worth paying attention to. Sometimes the dialogues may be productive; other times, however, the dialogue may work against our own best interests.*

For example, when Eugenio Montare, an Italian poet, was given the Nobel prize for literature, he reacted to the news by shutting off his telephone and refusing to answer his door. The prize, he said, made his life "which was always unhappy, less unhappy."

Perhaps it is necessary for the struggling artist to have a world view of suffering and despair. Yet it seems apparent that there will be a relationship and perhaps even a self-fulfilling prophecy between the statements that Montare makes to himself and how he feels about himself and his life.

We have seen that the internal statements we make about ourselves and our behavior can serve as a type of reinforcement or punishment for that behavior. Likewise, how we picture ourselves

*One astute, anonymous observer of human nature has suggested the following continuum along which internal dialogue may occur: talks with God; talks with angels; talks to self; argues with self; loses argument with self.

and our actions—what *images* we have—can also influence what we do. These “internal events” can also have many additional uses.

Let us look at some of the ways in which our mind (what we say and what images we have of ourselves) and our body (what we do and how we act) interrelate. Let us look particularly at when this interaction serves our best interests, and when it doesn't.

In a behavioral approach, an effort is made to precisely pinpoint the nature and content of our thoughts, as well as their order in a sequence (i.e., do they represent antecedents to actions, actions themselves, or the consequences of actions?). Using this approach it is possible to determine the most constructive use of thoughts and images for our own particular goals. These covert images and statements may have many uses. Some involve helping us learn to perform behaviors better (*self-instructions, covert self-modeling* as rehearsal); some include behavioral programming (e.g., images or statements as consequences for actions—*self-reinforcement or self-punishment*); some involve learning to attribute to ourselves competency to direct our own lives (*positive self-attribution*); some involve setting a vision or image of ourselves (*covert self-modeling as goal setting*); some involve learning to obtain a perspective; some involve means of initiating actions (*antecedents to behavior*); some self-instructions help us interrupt maladaptive behavioral sequence; and some help us increase our motivation to succeed, and succeed well.

Let me give a few illustrations.

Covert Images and Self-statements as Behavioral Rehearsal.

Internal statements and images may provide a practice, or rehearsal, for an actual behavior. (This is the same as a successive approximation to the actual overt behavior.) For example, research has suggested that practicing a dialogue to ask for a date facilitates actually performing the action.²¹ Covert images may similarly be used to facilitate a psychomotor task. As Arnold Palmer has noted, one way to increase our ability to judge proper putting force is to imagine that we are rolling a ball toward the hole from where our putt lies. He suggests that the amount of force required to toss the ball up to the hole is the same as is needed to stroke it with a putter. Thus, he says, “If you can imagine how much force you need to toss the ball to the hole, you can readily transfer this image to your actual putting stroke.”²²

A study with student basketball players showed this relationship between imagery and action. A group of students were randomly divided into three groups; one group took a pre-test on the first day, practiced free throws for a certain amount of time, each day for 20 days, and took a post-test on day 20; the second group took a pre-test on the first day, and a post-test on day 20, with no practice in between; the third group took a pre-test on the first day, a post-test on day 20, and imagined throwing free throws during the days in between. If they missed a shot in their imagination, they would then imagine themselves correcting the mistake. Group one improved 24% between pre- and post-test; group two didn't improve at all; and group three improved 23%.²³ Thus, imagery is a successive approximation to the actual act, a kind of rehearsal which may sometimes be as effective as actual behavioral practice.

Covert Images and Self-statements as a Means for Stress and Tension Reduction. Recent behavioral attempts to develop stress- and tension-reduction training packages have altered the traditional systematic desensitization paradigm in both theory and practice. As noted earlier, in classical systematic desensitization, relaxation preceded the fear-arousing imagery. In the new paradigm, the fear-arousing situation itself becomes a cue for relaxation.²⁴ This new procedure involves training in deep-muscle relaxation and then learning to notice anxiety by imagining the fear-arousing situation and maintaining that situation in the imagination. While maintaining the tension, the person practices controlling arousal by means of *muscular relaxation*, *covert self-modeling* (i.e., observing ourselves acting in a competent and successful fashion in the anxiety-arousing situation), and *self-instructions* to cope with the situation (e.g., "Relax," "I am in control," "I can handle the situation").

The practice of self-modeling and self-instruction may be considered both a type of goal setting (e.g., imagining how we would like to act in stressful situations) and a type of *rehearsal*, a means of reaching our goal.

You may wish to take just a moment and recall a situation in which you have felt anxious in the past, or one in which you anticipate feeling anxious in the future. Go through the situation in your mind, and let yourself experience the feelings that occur. Now, keeping the image in your mind, begin focusing on your

breathing, giving yourself instructions to "let go, relax." Keep the image in your mind. Now, practice acting in that situation as you would like to act. It's *your* mind—you can have it imagine anything you want to do! Let it imagine you acting just the way you would like to. Let yourself play with different types of self-instructions and modeling that seem most appropriate for you.

Covert Self-statements as Attributions. When an event occurs, what do you say is the cause of that action? Does it make a difference whether the event that occurs is something good or something bad? What we say is the cause of the action is referred to by psychologists as "attribution."

Most attribution tests try to determine whether an individual attributes life events to outside causes beyond his control or to variables within his personal control. I would suggest that the variable of personal control needs to be defined even more precisely, in order to distinguish between personal control of negative events, and personal control of positive events. Let me illustrate the reason for this by giving excerpts of conversation with several patients I have seen. These are examples of attributions which, even though they are not in the patient's best interest, were said frequently.

- I'm an alcoholic because I can't control my life.
- I'm afraid to try anything, like writing, because I'm sure to fail.
- If I go to a party, people will think I'm awkward and ungraceful.
- I just don't know how to be a loving person. No wonder no one gets close to me. I drive them away.

Note that in each of the above examples the individuals *are* taking responsibility for their actions. However, these are *negative* actions and *negative* consequences for which they are taking responsibility. For these individuals, if an event goes positively, they do not take any personal credit. If it goes negatively, it is their fault. One patient noted that when he had a warm, intimate conversation with someone, and overcame his "shyness," this was because "the other person had a good personality"; or "I don't understand what happened"; or "something outside myself took

over." Further, to this person the negative events seemed more real. Looking back on a day or a week and evaluating it, the good, positive things were perceived as a fluke and dismissed, while the bad things were seen as the "stuff of life, the real events." If individuals believe that they are in control of their own lives, and competent to direct their own actions, they will be more likely to act in a self-directed and purposeful manner. This belief can be influenced by the kind of verbal explanations they make to themselves.

It may be worthwhile to observe for a week the kinds of "attribution" statements you make. At the end of the week, you may wish to evaluate which statements appear to be in your own best interest, and which are not. You might also wish to make a list of positive self-attributions which you *do* make or which you would *like* to make to yourself. Keep this list accessible, and, if appropriate, practice instructing yourself to increase the frequency of these types of positive self-attributions.

SELF-CONTROL, FREE WILL, AND DETERMINISM: SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

Skinner Is Right: We Don't Have Freedom

At the start of this chapter we saw different ways that our social, physical, and internal environments can influence our behavior. Skinner, among others, has pointed out that unless we realize the way we are influenced by the environment, we are not free. Let us take the overweight person as a case in point.

Although there may be a few people who are overweight because of a genetic condition, most of us are "naturally" overweight because of our environment. Most of us live in a culture of plenty — advertisements, restaurants, stocked cupboards. Because we are influenced by our environment we "naturally" feel hungry when confronted by these stimuli. For example, recently after a large Japanese dinner, my wife and I were walking by a pizza parlor.

"Umm," I said, "do you smell that pizza? I'm hungry."

My wife responded: "Are you hungry, or does the pizza smell good?"

Although she was right in her distinction, for most of us, when something smells good, it means we're hungry and should eat. When the clock says dinnertime, it means we're hungry. As long as we remain conditioned by external cues, and the culture is a culture of plenty, we will "naturally" be overweight.

The Existentialists Are Right: We Do Have Freedom

If we believe that we are determined by the environment, then what hope is there for us to exercise our free will and overcome the limits of the environment? There is a great deal of hope, and this hope is summarized in the line by Sir Francis Bacon: "Nature, to be commanded, must be obeyed."

In order to take control of our own lives, we must become aware of the ways we are influenced by our environment. In the "overweight" example, we need to become aware of the external stimuli that make us "want" to eat; and then we need to turn inward to hear the "real" internal signals (in this case, of hunger).

However, that is not enough. As long as we say we are naturally overweight, as long as we say "Oh, it's not my responsibility — it's my unconscious; it's genetic; it's the environment" we still are allowing ourselves to be passively determined.

We must also believe "as if" we have free choice, and affirm our ability to take responsibility for our own actions. At this point we will digress momentarily to say something about this "as if" concept. The psychological "as if" is similar to faith in religious terms. The difference may be that the new religion — science — has shown us that if we believe certain "as ifs" there will be certain consequences. Our new religious testimonials are merely the empirical research cited in the scientific journals. For example, if we believe a "doctor" is taking care of us, we often "spontaneously" recover, even though the "cure" is nothing more than a sugar pill.²⁵

There are many different ways this "as if" comes up in this book. First, we need to believe "as if" we have free will. Until we believe that, we will continue to be passively determined. Second,

during times of crisis, which is discussed in Chapter 3, we need to make an affirmation that our life is worth living, that our goals are worth choosing; and that I, as an individual, am worth taking time for. There is no way to empirically verify this affirmation. Kierkegaard called this the *leap of faith*; Sartre called it the *leap of choice*.

Third, as we discuss in Chapter 5, if we believe "as if" we are worthy and dignified people, we soon become that way. The beliefs, in a real sense, create the reality.

There are many people in the environment (in therapy, teaching, education, the legal system) who are in a position to influence us to take responsibility for our actions. Therapists, for example, may try to teach (or shape) a client to this belief by such statements as follows:

- I can't decide for you. You have to make the decision yourself.
- You realize that this is an important choice for you, and that by not deciding you are actually making a decision.
- You need to learn to act from choice, not compulsion.
- You can't blame the rules for making choices for you; it's your choice whether or not you decide to follow the rules.²⁶
- Anxiety tensions are part of *your own doing*, and can be decreased if you identify the anxiety tension patterns and relax them.²⁷
- Don't say "I can't" [choice outside oneself]; say "I won't" [choice within oneself].

The legal system likewise teaches individuals the importance of taking responsibility for their own actions. For example, in the Patty Hearst trial, in order to determine legal culpability, it was important for the jury to question whether or not physical duress or coercion overwhelmed "free will."

Thus we have the resolution of a paradox. The scientific literature suggests that initially we may be determined by environmental and biological influences (i.e., we are not free). However, significant others in our environment may help "determine" us to take responsibility for our own actions, and to take an active part

in choosing our own destiny (i.e., we are free). In this latter capacity, the existential writers provide us an invaluable service. They hold us accountable for our actions—thus we are seen as responsible for our choices, and able to learn to choose.*

It is only when we can see how we are conditioned, see what consequences and cues shape our behavior, that we can begin to develop the personal standards by which we want to live and decide whether or not we want to continue to be shaped by these stimuli. As Erich Fromm pointed out, before a person can act according to his own conscience, he must have transcended the limits of the society into which he was born. Learning to see the kinds of cues and consequences that are expected of us and the cultural mores to which we are socialized is the first step in this "transcendence." For this reason, writers such as Jose Delgado urge that students be "taught awareness of their own mental and behavioral activity and shown how to use their intelligence, deciding which behavioral determinants to accept and which to reject."²⁸

Thus, we have seen that the first step in behavioral self-management involves learning to see *the ways we are determined by the environment*. The second step involves believing "as if" we have free will and can *take responsibility for our own actions*. The third step is to *use certain techniques*, such as environmental planning and behavioral programming, *to increase our freedom*.

This concept of freedom needs to be seen along a continuum.† For example, we can see that being in jail or in a locked institution would limit the amount of physical freedom we have. Since social

*As we will see in Chapter 5, the paradox becomes even a bit more complex: (1) Skinner is right: we are determined by the environment; (2) The existentialists are right: we are every moment free to choose, and should act from choice, not compulsion; and (3) the Eastern disciplines are right: we need to let go of our concepts such as free will, choice, determinism; we need to cease always trying to feel in control of life, thereby letting go, yielding, and opening ourselves to experiencing the universe in a way that doesn't concern itself with causes.

†Just as freedom needs to be seen along a continuum, so do self-management, and willpower. In our culture, however, the belief is that people either have willpower or they don't: some people just seem to "have" more self-control and willpower than others. Social learning theorists believe that this willpower is not innate, but *learned*. Therefore, as more self-regulation skills are learned and practiced, we come to have more "willpower." Willpower is merely a descriptive label applied to a certain set of actions and thoughts. All of us can learn to have and perform these actions and thoughts.

learning theorists believe that there is a continuum of constraint, and that freedom is not an absolute concept, the individual is always being determined by the environment. Therefore, one aspect of "being free" involves *arranging the environment* so it will be possible for us to act in ways we "choose" as part of our vision.

Freedom also involves *perception of consequences*. When an individual confronts a situation, it is important to be able to not respond reflexively, but rather to pause and *perceive* several alternative actions. To do this, one has to be aware of antecedents which normally cause reflex responses, and to have the skills (e.g., social, physical, cognitive) to execute the perceived alternatives.

Also, our freedom may be limited by consequences. We may learn that certain behaviors are punished and certain behaviors are praised. Awareness of the consequences of our actions—how they may affect ourselves and others—is necessary so that we can "freely" choose our course of action, or to posit alternatives that help us achieve the consequences we want.

<i>Antecedent</i>	<i>Behavior</i>	<i>Consequences</i>
1. Recognition of stimuli that cause us to respond mechanically.	1. Development of skills for a variety of behaviors.	1. Ability to prearrange these to encourage certain "free" actions.
2. Actual physical environment—e.g., prison, etc.	2. Ability to perceive consequences of alternative actions.	2. Recognition of how the consequences of our actions influence our behavior.
	3. Ability to recognize when behavior comes under stimulus control.	
	4. Ability to not allow ourselves to be bound by reflex responses to stimuli.	

By learning about antecedents and consequences of our behavior, and by learning certain self-control skills, we are able to learn to "control the variables that alter [our] own behavior"²⁹ As Skinner noted, "We are all controlled by the world in which we live, and part of that world has been and will be constructed by men. The question is this: Are we to be controlled by accident, by tyrants, or by ourselves in effective cultural design."³⁰

SUMMARY

In this chapter we discussed the advantages of ordinary awareness: they included such things as information processing, memory storage, reassurance, predictability, and systematic observation of our relationship to the environment to see how we are influenced by that environment.

Then we described the kind of precise awareness involved in behavioral self-observation strategies: discriminating and labeling a behavior; determining its antecedents and consequences; evaluating the results of our observations; and setting a goal, which involves determining whether one wants to increase the behavior, decrease the behavior, or learn a new behavior (i.e., new skills). This is quite different from the kind of awareness we described in step five of meditation, in which there is no goal setting and in which one lives in a present-centeredness — without discriminating, without labeling into categories, and without evaluating. The importance of goal setting was emphasized, both for daily achievement and for freely choosing a vision of who we want to become.

We noted that after we have observed the data, evaluated it, and set a goal, there are several additional self-management techniques we may use to reach that goal. These techniques comprise a variety of strategies that are individually tailored to the specific concern of the individual. These strategies may include environmental planning, which occurs *prior* to the behavior in question. This may entail prearranging antecedents (stimulus control) or prearranging consequences (e.g, time out; a contract). Other strategies may involve behavioral programming, concerning events and actions that occur *after* the target behavior has been accomplished. Specific self-management techniques were discussed, including reinforcement, punishment, contracting, thought stopping, relaxation, and systematic desensitization. Special attention was paid to the role of covert thoughts and images in self-management: as rehearsal, self-instructions, self-modeling, and for obtaining a detached observation.

The role of behavioral self-management techniques was discussed in relation to learning how to "get on our own team." These techniques teach us to become aware of how we are being influenced by our physical, social, and interpersonal environment;

of how we have developed self-defeating habits—of acting, of thinking, of emotional reflex responses, of negative attributions, of sparingly reinforcing ourselves. Self-management skills help us develop sensitivity to our internal selves—so we may hear the bird in our breast singing. They also teach us how to change our habits so that they are constructive and more self-fulfilling. We thereby learn not only to hear the bird in our breast sing, but we also learn the means to follow the melody of the song.