

CONCLUDING REMARKS: AN EVOLVING PROCESS

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OVERVIEW. After reiterating the manual's initial two goals--clinical training and a research protocol-- the first section of the concluding remarks overviews the issue of Control Therapy's uniqueness, and discusses the manual's educational goal—therapist self-exploration (psychology from the inside out)--, and the goal of, where appropriate, offering CT as a complement to other approaches. The second section raises larger questions about the art and science of therapy, the uses and misuses of human control, and the role of human free will. The final section is a reminder of the top of the hour glass—our vision, hopes, and goals, for ourselves, our clients, our world—as each of us metaphorically moves through the hour glass of life.

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CONCLUDING REMARKS: AN EVOLVING PROCESS

We began this manual by saying we had two goals:

- 1) *Clinical Training*: providing a clear and accessible guide for training clinicians in the use of Control Therapy;
- 2) *Research Protocol*: developing standardized procedures necessary for treatment research on Control Therapy to be replicated and advanced.

The first goal is necessary so that clinicians can work with clients who are suffering and who might be helped by Control Therapy. We hope that by breaking Control Therapy down into modules, it has become clear that there is nothing esoteric or hard to learn. Trainees unfamiliar with Control Therapy may have some initial apprehension, wondering if this approach has any links to skills and theories they've learned in the past. Most students are happy to learn that Control Therapy asks therapists to make full use of their existing conceptual frameworks and interpersonal skills.

The second goal is necessary to ensure that research on the clinical effectiveness of Control Therapy is replicated and extended. Control Therapy is an evolving process, seeking and striving, through empirical study and evaluation by researchers and clinicians, to find ways that can enhance and improve the health and well-being of clients. Further, from a real world standpoint, as a relatively new kid on the therapeutic block, Control Therapy will benefit from additional research comparing it with more established approaches, in order to demonstrate its effectiveness as a treatment of choice for specific clinical populations.*

CONTROL THERAPY: UNIQUENESS AND COMPATIBILITY

We believe there are several unique aspects of Control Therapy that may make it a treatment of choice. In this section, we want to highlight those qualities. At the same time, we also want to acknowledge the potential for integration and complementarity between Control Therapy and other approaches.

EXPLORING OUR THEORY. Darwin is purported to have said that a geologist without a theory is just a counter of stones. As should be clear from this manual, we believe each therapist should work to evolve their own personal theory of therapy (and life!). We need to be guided by a theory. In fact, all of us are, although often the theories are implicit rather than explicit.

Our theories, as we have shown, tell us what we believe about human nature, what are the goals of health, what are the barriers that keep us from getting there (e.g., disease etiology), and what interventions can be used to achieve health. The self-

* It would also be helpful to continue to expand this research cross-culturally. The SCI has now been translated into simple Chinese (Shinzili) and is available at controlresearch.net. Also, currently in preparation are a traditional Chinese version of the SCI (Mei-Rong); a Spanish version (R. Santibañez); a Korean version (Sung Hyun Park, & Seoung Yun Sung); and a Hebrew version (A.H. Zohar).

exploration throughout this manual is an effort to help each person refine his or her theories. We have encouraged you, as therapists and researchers, to reflect on and discuss the extent to which there are similarities and differences between Control Therapy and your own orientation.

Although this manual doesn't dwell on the nature of control theory per se, it does raise some theoretical questions about the therapist's orientation and views of human nature. We would be happy if this manual challenged those with different therapeutic approaches to think through their theories more critically and precisely; as well as caused them to explore in a more refined way their view of health and to what extent control may be at least an aspect of it.*

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF CONTROL THERAPY.

Over three decades ago, we published the first article to explore the scientific and clinical interface between Eastern and Western self-control strategies.¹² As noted in Module 1, Control Therapy had its origins and roots in this work comparing self-regulation strategies, both Western (e.g., behavior self-control, cognitive therapy) and Eastern (Zen and Vipassana, mindfulness meditation). Building on those efforts, an *integrative theory of human control* was pioneered and developed.¹ A clinically useful means of assessing the theory through a *control profile* for each individual (including desire for control, overall sense of control in the general and specific domain, agency of control, and modes of control) was also created and tested. The *modes of control* represented and embodied a way of understanding human control that was not culturally limited, but involved delineating positive assertive, positive yielding, negative assertive, and negative yielding.

Further, through the control profile and Control Mode Dialogue, a method of refining the client's goal, and then of *matching* that control profile and goal to an individually tailored control-enhancing clinical intervention was generated. By "deconstructing" interventions into their component parts and building blocks, it is possible (as noted in FAQ 9.3) to suggest ways that they can be used to complement each other, as well as combined and integrated. This method became the basis for the Control Mode Rehearsal, as well as its contingent practice in the natural environment. Finally, a systems model of Control Therapy, offering feedback and evaluation of each of the components, was developed.

Therapists from other theoretical orientations may find that this Control Therapy Training Manual helps them reflect on and provide insights into how control processes may actually be operating within their own approach. The Control Profile and control stories may help clinicians think about their clients in ways that facilitate additional insights and understandings.

* What is "ultimately" important to us as humans? *Meaning* (life's purpose, understanding); *belonging* (love, community, connectedness); *competence* (achievement, work, contribution). We believe that a "sense of control" is both a parsimonious theory and way to understand and umbrella each of these constructs; and that "control" in its various forms (assertive, yielding, self, other) is a critical means for achieving those goals. However, we can understand other approaches highlighting these constructs as paramount (e.g., life's purpose, love, meaning) and sense of control being subsumed under one or more of them. The debate over what is the "truest" most comprehensive theory is beyond the scope of this manual. (cf Appendix 10).

The modes of control may be helpful as a new way to understand how a sense of control can be achieved (i.e., through the two positive modes of control). Specific control-based interventions and combinations of building blocks (e.g., the Control Mode Rehearsal; the use of “xujing” centering and dongjing (finding the best graduated assertive/yielding response) may also be helpful as part of their clinical armamentarium. Finally, the integration of theory, research, and practice which serves as the foundation of Control Therapy, and the Control Therapy System’s Model for Feedback and Evaluation, can be helpful in understanding and refining Gordon Paul’s insightful remarks over forty years ago about the importance of matching a specific treatment to an individual client with a particular diagnosis. As we have emphasized throughout the manual, Control Therapy has a systematic methodology to match control-based interventions to a particular client’s control profile for a specific clinical concern and treatment goal.

EDUCATIONAL GOAL: PSYCHOLOGY FROM THE INSIDE OUT.

On the first page of this manual, we wrote

*“As context and intention, we share this material in
an effort to help reduce distress and
to bring increased health, healing, and happiness
to those who suffer, and
greater wisdom for those who seek it.”*

We intended in writing this manual, to meet this broad meta intention through addressing the two narrower goals of clinical and research standardization. However, in the course of writing the manual, a third goal emerged. This goal involved providing the clinician an opportunity to, in the paraphrase of Socrates in Module One, “Know thy...control profile, control dynamics, and control stories.” Throughout this manual, we have invited you, the reader, to explore and reflect upon your own beliefs—about your view of the nature of the universe, human nature, how much voluntary control we have over our thoughts, feelings, behavior; the goal of psychological health, and the barriers and obstacles that must be addressed in order to help individuals become less distressed, happier, and wiser. As we have shown, these views impact and are intimately woven with your theoretical orientation and how you view yourself as a therapist, the therapeutic relationship, and how you understand your clients.

Strictly and technically speaking, this third goal is not a “standardized procedure of Control Therapy,” is not really directly measurable by the items in Appendix 1 (the Adherence Checklist to Determine Competency and Skill Development in Control Therapy), and is more of a “process” goal. Yet this goal of self-exploration became a critical one in the course of writing the manual for two reasons. First, each of us is a person first, and a healer/therapist/clinician second. If the manual can help us as humans reduce our own distress and suffering, and create greater health, healing, and happiness in ourselves as individuals, we would certainly count that as worthwhile. Secondly, the underlying assumption of the approach used in this manual is that it is our understanding of ourselves that becomes the level and depth of our ability to share our teachings (and our self) wisely and compassionately with others.

This manual in particular, and Control Therapy in general, can be understood as educational. We hope this manual becomes a teaching manual, not only for how to apply Control Therapy with others, but as a guide to self-learning and discovery. We included

the self-exploration/self-management project in the first three modules, not only as a training exercise, but because we believe that for Control Therapy to evolve, we as individuals need to do our personal homework and look at how we personally can continue to evolve in wisdom, compassion, and understanding. We might call this psychology from the “inside out.”

Below we share some personal comments from individuals who have received training in the use of Control Therapy:

- “I’m a perfectionist, but realized a lot of the time I will not actually have control over certain aspects of my life, and the yielding mode can really help me.”
- “I feel I’m becoming less controlled by others, have greater understanding of what it is I truly value, and a greater sense of personal control.”
- “When I lose control, I tend to get very angry and lash out, and I’m learning other ways to address those feelings of not being in control.”
- I’m learning to not criticize myself so harshly when things don’t go smoothly and also to be less judgmental with myself and others
- Control is not easy to achieve, but with practice, I can be less emotional and calm myself down in challenging situations. I’ve learned not to react so quickly in tense situations, to pause, and visualize how I want to react.”

You may also wish to review your personal control journal, and note what personal discoveries and insights you have gained during the training sessions.

COMPLEMENTING OTHER APPROACHES. Even though we believe there are aspects of Control Therapy that are unique, we have also acknowledged that Control Therapy is built upon and owes an enormous debt to other therapeutic approaches. Thus, we do not see CT as a final ultimate panacea, or a closed system. Rather, we hope that in addition to the above goals of the manual, an additional goal of this manual might be that those from other perspectives will see aspects of Control Therapy that can be helpful and incorporated into their own therapeutic work

BROADER QUESTIONS AND ISSUES

ART AND SCIENCE. Although in this manual we talk about a “standardized, systematic approach,” with “countable behaviors” and goals clearly defined as behavioral objectives; and although we identify “10 training objectives” and use an “adherence competency checklist,” we are neither unaware nor unappreciative of the intuitive art that goes into psychotherapy. We honor that, and hope that what we have provided here can enhance and perhaps provide a framework for the artistic aspect. As in sumi-e drawing or flower arranging, graceful flowing lines and beautiful multi-tiered flower placements can result from systematic learning and practice.

Further, sometimes theories, though necessary, imprison. At times it is necessary to take a step back from thinking in terms of control issues/stories and how they are related to the client’s presenting symptoms, and then reenter the relationship from a place of deep listening to the client without any preconceived notions.

FREE WILL, EFFORT, AND HUMAN CONTROL. We begin this discussion with what may sound like a paradoxical statement:

“We don’t have as much control as we believe we do; and we have the potential to develop even more positive control than we believe possible.”

In terms of the first part of this sentence, there is a phase in each of our lives, like the first stanza of the Zen poem, in which we believe we have free will and awareness, but we are really naïve, conditioned, and reflexive. For example, our “desire for control” is often reflexive and culturally conditioned, so that we always want more and feel things are “never enough.” We can’t really have true free will until we realize how conditioned we are (i.e., just how reflexive and automatic many of our actions and desires are).

The second part of the sentence suggests that awareness of such habitual and conditioned tendencies gives us the opportunity to develop new, less reflexive ways of acting and exercising control, both assertive and yielding. This improvement, requires effort, and, like any new behavior involves some tumbles and setbacks. It also requires a willingness to learn and grow. To use an analogy from childhood, it’s as if each of us sometimes says, “Hey, I can crawl. I already know how to get around. How do I know that walking is so great, and I bet it’s going to be hard, as well as embarrassing, to try something new.”

With practice, we believe humans can affect considerable control over aspects of their lives—both through the assertive mode and the yielding, accepting mode; and that they can learn to become more aware, take more responsibility for their choices, and increase control over their thoughts, feelings, and behavior in a health-enhancing way.

Free will and choice increases and evolves on the other side of a deeper, more refined, and reflective way of being. Then, in any situation, we have the opportunity to pause, consider our goals, values, and options (cognitively, emotionally, behaviorally), and make a choice about how we really want to act.

Although there is no question that the environment (people and physical space) affect our behavior, we have a certain degree of choice about how we react to those environments and people. We can, to a certain extent, choose the environments and company we keep, and we can even create certain events in life--such as watching a mood altering movie, or music we listen to-- as a way to modulate, modify, and even produce feelings within us.

It follows that the more conscious we can be of ourselves, the more clearly we will be able to recognize the extent to which, where, why, and how we focus our attention are choices that determine how we see the world. These choices in turn can both reflect and influence our internal states. Further, the more we can be non-defensively self-aware, and allow into our consciousness (in a self-accepting, non-punitive, way) *all* of our experiences, the more we will be able to see ourselves (and others) clearly. This gives us the opportunity to choose to learn from mistakes, ask for and offer forgiveness when appropriate, and find the courage to change habits and patterns that are not as skillful or healthy as we would like them to be. This is the best wisdom of which we humans are capable. In using it, we may find that we have more resourcefulness and resourcefulness than we give ourselves credit for.

USES AND MISUSES OF CONTROL. The research is clear that control can be a positive factor in both physical and mental health. Some have even posited that the ability to gain control, is essential for human survival. The micro level—e.g., a toddler learning to walk-- to the macro level-- e.g., human efforts to cure disease and understand our world and our place in it—can be understood as extraordinary, even miraculous aspects of the human quest for control, what Robert White has called the “joy in being a cause.”

However, we also know that sometimes efforts for active control have negative consequences, personally (e.g., anorexia, anger and hostility); interpersonally (power struggles, the desire to be right and in control); and, globally (wars, environmental impact). Clearly we as a species have to learn to harness the healing power of control and rein in its potentially destructive aspects. In this context, learning the yielding mode of control and efforts at internal self-control, and learning how to “control” our desire for control when it is excessive and harmful, are also critical.

TOSSING A COUPLE OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN A BOTTLE OUT INTO THE WORLD. This manual is concerned with helping therapists address their clients’ clinical issues, and assisting researchers in extending and advancing research on control therapy. However, therapy doesn’t occur in a vacuum, and political and religious issues not only shape and motivate clients, but also create the cultural context in which we live. Therefore, as the manual concludes, we would like to throw out a couple of broader control theory-related research ideas and questions related to politics and spiritual beliefs in hopes that someone might become interested in exploring them further.

Specifically, we know from prior research that individuals can gain a sense of control through downward comparison: ie., “I was sad I had no shoes until I met someone who had no feet.” Though this may be a reasonable coping strategy in some areas, in other areas it is problematic, especially when it involves elevating one’s own orientation beliefs, and life situation and demeaning other groups whether based on religion, ethnicity, nationality, gender, or sexual orientation. Our goal in the following discussion is to suggest that using control theory, control profiles, and the “control mode dialogue” might be a way to further extend and deepen understand and conversation about these critical issues. Below we discuss this briefly on a political level, and in terms of worldview about the nature of the universe.

On a political level, it would be interesting to assess the control profiles of individuals who identify themselves as “Republican,” “Democrat,” or “Independent.” What would their “modes of control” look like? their “agency”; their desire for control; their sense of control? What would be the differences (and similarities) in profiles between those who are “far” left and “far” right?

Each political party takes differing positions on the balance of personal control and governmental control that is helpful to create and maintain a just society. Sometimes these views can degenerate into a mean-spirited reliance on negative modes toward the other party, and self-righteous positive modes towards one’s own views: e.g., Republicans say they are for entrepreneurship, courage, economic risk-taking and a strong defense (q1, positive assertive) and are for trusting (q2, positive yielding) laissez

faire free market capitalism. They accuse the Democrats of over regulation and big intrusive government (q3, negative assertive) and being soft on defense (q4, negative yielding). Democrats say they are compassionate and want to help those who are the most vulnerable in a society; and value negotiation and diplomacy, as well as appropriate government oversight of unfettered capitalism (q1 and q2); while accusing the Republicans of being war mongers, greedy, and insensitive to the needs of the disadvantaged (q3).

An interesting question is what is it about our individual personality, experiences, upbringing, and control stories that causes us to come down on one side of the political divide versus the other?

As hopefully has been made clear in this manual (think of the mode dialogue exercise), the modes represent different sides of each of us. From a political perspective, there is some truth in each party's positions. We need both positive modes for healthy individual (and societal) functioning. Exploring differing control profiles of individuals analyzed by political affiliation might help develop more sophisticated understanding of the process by which people align themselves with different political parties and positions; and eventually might lead to more productive dialogue among people and parties representing different emphases and worldviews.

On a spiritual (and existential) level. In Module 2, we discussed the relationship between your worldview and the role of human control. The question being asked here is what is the control profile of individuals who believe in different world views: e.g., theistic, non theistic (the latter including the distinct philosophies of existentialism and Buddhism for example). Further, what might be the differences in control profiles of those who believe there is only one "truth" and their religious tradition is the only way to reach that understanding of God/the universe (i.e., one path up the mountain); and those who have a view that there may be many paths up the mountain (even if they personally choose to follow one). Further, what might be the *similarities* among control profiles of fundamentalists (those who believe there is only one path up the mountain—theirs) regardless of their specific tradition?

Might understanding differing control profiles as well as control stories and dynamics help us in beginning a more sophisticated dialogue between faith traditions and those with differing world views?

These are complicated issues, but we would argue they are also urgent and critical ones. For the sake of reducing pain and suffering on a societal and global levels on our planet, and increasing mutual understanding and dialogue, we hope someone finds this bottle and is intrigued to explore it further.

OUR SHARED JOURNEY THROUGH THE HOUR GLASS

THE LIMITS OF HUMAN CONTROL, THE IMPORTANCE OF TRYING, COMPASSION AS A CONTEXT. If we take a few steps back, look at the stars and galaxies, and imagine the earth rotating on its axis around the sun, it's amazing that we have the chutzpah to believe we have any control at all in the world! It's important to remember that in the process of therapy—and life itself—we are small creatures on a small planet in a small solar system in a small galaxy. This is not a reason for fatalism and helplessness. But it is a reason to honestly and compassionately face our limits.

On the one hand, we want to “practice what we preach,” striving to become exemplars of optimal control in each of the domains of life. In Zen, as we have discussed, the instruction is “When you walk, walk; when you sit, sit; above all don’t wobble.” We want to follow Gandhi’s advice to “Be the change you want to see in the world.” The Gita says, “Let there not be a hair’s breadth between will (what you decide) and action (how you act).” This applies to being centered and calm, and also to acting in the ways of the world. The Gita integrates these two skills by saying that one who can “*see action in inaction*” (even while calm centered, as in meditation, recognizing that blood is coursing through the body, the heart is beating, the mind is awake); and “*inaction in action*” (even while we act, we attempt to stay centered and calm), “*that person is wise among all.*”

This is all sage advice yet, as you have probably experienced for yourself (in other aspects of your life, and perhaps even more consciously during your work with this manual), there is no such thing as “perfect” self-control. There are limits to our ability to stretch and grow in a positive assertive sense just as there are limits to how much we are able to yield and accept. We are human, after all! And we do wobble. There are times in life when we simply don’t know the correct course of action. As noted, we think a footnote to the Zen saying might be needed: “When you wobble, wobble well!” (Or as best you can).

FACING SUFFERING—WITHIN AND WITHOUT. Further, as the Buddha pointed out, each of us eventually will have to face the three messengers of aging, illness, and death in our own lives, as well as in the lives of loved ones. All of us have, or will have wounds, places where we’ve been broken, and at times feel crushed.

We all know the challenges of overcoming our individual selves and connecting with others. Yet, no matter how well we do the “tai chi dance” of relationship, no matter how well we forgive, and dialogue successfully, from one perspective, in this earthly plane, all such efforts end: marriage ends either in divorce, or, even with the most devoted love, in death. Our bodies, no matter how well we care for them, are doomed to decay and fail. It is the irony recognized by the playwright Chekov, a physician who knew that even as you try to cure a patient, it is only a temporary reprieve. We humans have awareness of the suffering of life. Part of our task is to learn how to cope, deal with, and come to terms with necessary losses that are part of life. This involves mourning, grieving, and ultimately trying to come to some kind of peace and equanimity with the “1000 sorrows.”

Yet, it is said “1000 sorrows, 1000 joys.”

We also can have awareness of life’s beauty and preciousness. This is all we have. How can we keep our focus on what is important and valuable in life? Like the person in the Zen tale faced with the fierce, teeth-baring tiger above and the sharp, jagged rocks below, we have the ability to pause, make a choice, and taste the “sweet” strawberry in the here and now. We also have the choice to courageously move forward with our lives. We can recall Hemingway’s Old Man saying, “Man can be destroyed, but not defeated.” We can learn to adapt, to grow, and, as best as possible, learn to find ways to let the “light shine though the cracks” of places where we have been wounded and broken.

We have the opportunity to learn the lesson that Miriam taught, after the Israelites had crossed the Red (Reed) Sea after leaving the slavery of Egypt. Egypt (*mitzrayim* in Hebrew) means “narrow places.” Crossing the sea can represent, metaphorically, leaving

our internal “narrow places” where we are enslaved, and crossing into a higher sea of consciousness. Yet, as we know the story, the Israelites still had forty years of wandering in the wilderness to face in order to reach the “promised land.” Miriam’s lesson? She led the Israelites in dance. We have the choice to take a break from effortful focus on difficulties, hard times, and suffering, to pause and celebrate, to dance in our hearts and minds along our journey.

We also have the capacity to face mindfully and directly difficult and challenging aspects of reality; and, without avoiding or denying, to choose “how we want the story to end.” Recall the story of the parents of a murdered child, shared in Module Three, who didn’t want evil, negative thoughts to have the last word. They model for us how it is possible to face a horrendous event—the meaningless, senseless death of a loved one – with courage, intention, and seeking to find meaning. Rather than letting her terrible murder be the final word, they created a sense of control by choosing to determine the ending of their daughter’s story--an honoring and celebrating of a meaningful life.

This is not to say that facing such challenges and adversity is easy. Rather, it may be impossible to face all the challenges life sends us with perfect self-control. Sometimes we’ll wobble, but we should try to wobble as well (and compassionately) as we can, and choose as healing and wise a response as we are able.

HEALING THE WORLD. In addition, just as our smallness and vulnerability in the universe can produce feelings of helplessness and being out of control, so too can the pervasiveness of suffering in this world. If we look around at poverty, homelessness, war, and disease, it is impossible not to be aware of the world’s suffering. Once we break through denial, it is understandable that we can become overwhelmed at the enormity of this suffering. There is suffering in this world that is part of the human experience, and no amount of control efforts can ever completely ameliorate that.

However, as many spiritual traditions suggest, while it is not entirely up to us to solve the problems of the world, it is our responsibility to make some contribution toward solving these problems. One way to address this is through the metaphor of yoga stretching. If we do not stay slow and centered in a stretch, we can push too hard and injure ourselves. From a centered place, however, each of us may be able to find ways to stretch toward one or two degrees more involvement with the posture (and with life’s suffering). In dealing with the messengers, each of us may be able to develop one or two degrees more of acceptance. Each of us has to find the balance between acceptance (quadrant two) and stretch (quadrant one) that feels wisest and most compassionate to us.

Simply because we are limited in our ability to exert positive control in each mode does not mean that the effort is not worthwhile. If we can only improve two, three, or four degrees, that can make a substantial difference in our lives and the lives of others.*

It seems to us there must be some part in each of you reading this manual (and in us writing it) that is basically optimistic about our ability as humans to change and grow in positive ways, or else we wouldn’t be in the health and healing professions. We seek to affect positive control and reduction of suffering in ourselves and others wherever we can.

* Think of the difference a few degrees makes in our body temperature: e.g., 98.6 to 102.

We are all fellow travelers on a temporary journey through the hourglass. Compassion and love are needed as a context for our efforts to teach, learn, and practice positive control in our lives.

THE BREATH CYCLE REVISITED. At the end of Module Two we discussed the breath cycle as it related to the modes (and agency). As we conclude this manual, we would like to extend and deepen that exercise of the breath cycle as a metaphor of the life cycle, and its possible implications for “daily practice” in our lives. Each moment is a chance to learn and reflect. Each breath is an opportunity to be curious about what is happening in the here and now, an opening to new experiences.

In breath.

First in-breath. Imagine you are a newborn baby that has just come out of the womb. If you had self-awareness, you might wonder if you were going to be able to breathe! (as your doctors and parents worry). You are totally helpless, and it is due to the beneficence of the environment (the presence of oxygen) and the development of your lungs, that you can take your first in-breath.* Our feeling with that first in-breath would likely be one of gratitude, appreciation for our body’s natural wisdom and for the environment’s grace.** The breath cycle also helps us realize our interdependence. We may take a breath. But we need oxygen to be present. That in itself is something for which we may wish to express gratitude. And by extension, for all the “others” who who keep us alive, support us, and nourish us in the “web of life.”

Daily practice. One way to carry this attitude into daily life is, as some spiritual traditions suggest, to wake up every morning with a gratefulness prayer or affirmation.

Competent to navigate the world. Every time we voluntarily breathe in, we can also imagine ourselves practicing a positive assertive action competently, a reminder to learn to trust our “self” and our ability.

Out breath. But all of us have to address times when we don't have active control. We all have to let go of each breath. Therefore, every time we breathe out, we can imagine ourselves letting go with serenity.

Daily practice: Forgiveness: Letting go. Again, one way to carry this attitude into daily life is, as some spiritual traditions suggest, a nightly prayer of forgiveness, before going to sleep. In this prayer we ask forgiveness from others, we forgive others, and we forgive ourselves for hurts caused intentionally or unintentionally by thought, word, or deed. (If we are not yet ready to forgive totally, we might begin with a *successive approximation* such as “May I start to want to begin the work of the process of forgiveness”).

Last out-breath. Now swing to the other end of the continuum. Imagine that you are about to exhale your last out-breath. Before that last out-breath, presumably you would have wanted to have lived life as fully as possible. With a final letting go, we would have wanted to have made amends and be at peace with our life. We would want to forgive all who have hurt us, and be willing to let ourselves go.

* Interestingly, the Chinese word for fate has two characters, one meaning environment, one heredity. We are at the mercy of “fate” with our first breath. For those of a theistic persuasion, you would still be personally helpless, though believing your fate is in God’s hands.

** And, theistically, for God’s beneficence.

Based on our personal philosophies and control stories, each of us has to decide the context and manner in which we take our last breath and face death. For some, this letting go can be facilitated by our views about the nature of the universe—letting go into the non-theistic “Way” of the Tao, the xujing cosmic void, the isness of Buddhism; or into the theistic “One.”

In the meantime, before our death, the act of facing that last out-breath while there is (we hope) still a next in-breath to follow, may help us consider and reflect on how we can best live our lives during the time we are physically here on earth.

REMEMBERING THE TOP OF THE HOUR GLASS

Pause for a moment and remember the vision of yourself at the top of the hour glass. Now, try to remember your motivation for why you first chose to go into the field you did, as you chose a profession and began your journey down the hour glass. We suspect that at least part of your motivation was to be a person who could bring kindness, healing, wisdom, and compassion to others.

In learning about theories of personality, systems of psychotherapy, filling out paper work, implementing research protocols, even writing books and manuals—all parts involving a narrowing of the hour glass-- the larger goal sometimes can be forgotten. We all need to frequently reflect back on the qualities that we want to bring with us on our journey down the hour glass.

Carl Jung once said, “Learn your techniques well and be prepared to let them go when you touch the human soul.” We might refine these sentiments just slightly, using the Chinese proverb we’ve discussed about the finger and the moon. Techniques are just fingers. All therapeutic approaches, including Control Therapy, are just fingers. Our goal and vision—our moon—is to touch human souls, to be that which we teach, to help others in a wise, thoughtful way, to reduce unnecessary suffering in those with whom we come into contact. Theories and techniques may be helpful toward pointing the way. But they are not the way.

We want to make sure that when we reach the bottom of the hour glass-- when the grains of sand of our life have run out-- we have been as true as possible to our vision at the top. Thus, it is incumbent on all of us to remind ourselves and each other of our larger vision, and help light the way, by our thoughts, speech, actions, and deeds. Together, we seek a deepening, evolving wisdom for ourselves and our world.

As we conclude we would like to remind you of the context we mentioned in the introduction: You have begun an experiential journey, both learning Control Therapy through a self-management project; and now beginning to teach CT to others seeking your guidance. We hope you find this expedition an insightful, meaningful, worthwhile, and enjoyable learning experience, both for yourself and for your clients and/or the participants in your research .

And, as you serve as a healer for others, may you also take time in your own life for yourself...to taste the strawberry... and to dance.

We wish you-- wherever you are on your journey through the hour glass-- blessings of peace, health, and healing. And, to paraphrase Rumi’s poetic words,

May we all, wherever we are,
learn to be the soul of that place.