

Explorations into 'expanded awareness/consciousness' territory -----

Intro -----

Part two of 'Wising Up ---- or Dumbing Down' fairly naturally follows part one, in that part one sought to take the wider view of the subject area, whereas part two, whilst continuing in general theme mode for a couple of sections, then focuses more on the individual's potential path to any 'expanded awareness', on the premise that such a path is potentially open to all, whilst at the same time, it's recognised that the powerfully 'fast flow' of modern corporate 'largist'- influenced cultures may, as some (eg. the writer Michael Foley in his book *The Age of Absurdity*, Erich Fromm (*below*)), are suggesting, inhibit individual exploration and development.

A further, then, adopted premise is that whilst there are natural social responsibilities that are relevant to people living within societies, it is also important to recognise the sovereignty of the individual and the existence of individual freedom, both of which as above, may be under a degree of pressure/threat.

'In the end, such a ('consumer culture') civilisation can only produce a 'mass man', incapable of independent choice, incapable of spontaneous, self-directed activities – docile, disciplined to monotonous work ---- increasingly less self-responsible – governed then by conditioned reflexes .

(Erich Fromm , *The Sane Society*)

The (freerange) individual, though, questing their own way through life, may then have potential unique access to the blisses of what's been called the 'second meadows' of 'expanded awareness' ----

'To pierce through the illusion of separateness, to realise that which lies beyond duality – that is a goal worthy of a lifetime ---- ' (Leonardo Da Vinci)

'To find yourself, think for your self' said Socrates

Looking at 'new age' type material on the internet could perhaps beg the question as to whether the general trend these days is more the opposite of that which the quote above proclaims, in that there seems to be quite an emphasis on external (to the individual) direction, with seemingly myriad texts indicating to a person how they should 'be' to be spiritual, and how to reach 'nirvana' - ? Is 'complexity' being increased rather than the reverse - ? Lao-Tsu from way back was indicating that a simple life might have something going for it. His quote could describe pretty much the opposite to modern 'more, more', 'accumulate, accumulate' life (*latest (2017) reports indicate just 1% of the world's population own 50% of the world's wealth*) :

'If you want to be free, live simply, use what you have, seek to gain contentment from where you are. Of course the world is full of novelty and adventures. New opportunities come along every day. So what - ?'

It looks as though Leonardo could be on the same wavelength - ?

'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication' Leonardo Da Vinci

'---- very little indeed is necessary for living a happy life' said Marcus Aurelius

John Lane, in his work *Timeless Simplicity – Creative Living in a Consumer Society*, outlined the premises linked to modern materialistically-based life :

*' Success equals material success
Material success and prosperity equal happiness
Material success is the goal of every human being'*

To generalise, though, used to be the province of 'idiots', as the saying went - ? It might take quite a bit, though, to get off the ' mass-flow gravy train', to then quest and 'think for self', abandoning to some extent them 'safety of the herd'. - ? But then, if 'herd' life proves to be unfulfilling, maybe the effort involved in living and thinking independently ('freerange life') will be worth it, in more ways than one, as the spiritual master Buddha indicated :

' Strive yourself, work out your own salvation, don't rely on others.'

Some, such as Fritz Schumacher, have likened modern life progress to a 'boulder, hurtling down a hill' and called for a 'stop and think', before the boulder 'crashes' (eg. is climate change heading 'for a fall' - ?)

(Feb. '18, reports that modern 'consumer man's' chase after 'the good life' is fast outstripping the Earth's resources – maybe it is getting a bit urgent to start thinking 'longer term'- ?))

Books offer many words in the cause of 'salvation' - , but could they, in their proliferation, be counter-productive in fact, to the cause of people gaining more awareness, to the point of 'expanded awareness' - ? Is there too, too much 'to do' made out of the 'nirvana' chase, which can of course be a powerful (over-powerful - ?) draw - ? A Zen proverb comments on this score :

'Before enlightenment, chop wood, carry water.

After enlightenment, chop wood, draw water'.

And as an old Dorset (UK) farmer said a good few years ago now :

'Tek yer time, boyo, tek yer time --- '

Because the 'enlightenment goodies' are so lustrous, allied with the idea that modern money-orientated 'consumer' life could be, according to some at least, innately dissatisfying, lacking in meaningful 'dimensional depth', maybe there's then a particularly strong element of 'wanting' within the 'expanded awareness' arena - ? This could lead to over-focus on 'output' ('getting the goodies', 'how a person should be to be spiritual' etc.), to the detriment of the 'input' side - there's so much material available which might too push things in this direction.

One strategy for the 'seeker' individual could be, for instance, to take the goal, the end point 'for read' (and presumably there's not too many who wouldn't want joy, bliss, well-being--- ?),

and consciously then not focus on this output area, favouring spending time and focus on the 'input' area, such as 'working on self' - ? (and then 'letting time pass', to see how things work out in the longer run - ?) Being 'the life explorer', as it were, and seeing how things pan out - ?

(as in most areas, 'input' generally comes before 'output'-----).

Besides there being a possible 'over wanting' type of pitfall, another area of possible difficulty lies in the fact that so much of the available 'expanded awareness'/spiritual awakening' type material is of a generalised nature, and the 'context' of the individual can then be easily overlooked, particularly given the sheer weight and volume of such generalised 'spiritual word matter'.

There seems to be relatively little available which offers helpful, practical aid in the cause of 'starting at the beginning' – an 'intuitively logical' place to start - by asking of the individual 'where are you now' and even giving some help and support to the individual to help her/him identify their current position (on the basis that quite a portion of life is led in 'low consciousness' mode - ?). Such a situation could be to some extent surprising given the personal and individual nature of the journey towards any 'expanded awareness' - ?

Again it seems 'common sense logical' that any journey needs to start from 'where it's at' - ? One of the potential inhibitors of course maybe that looking at the 'where it's at' position may involve facing a degree of 'imperfection' - ? But then again, there don't seem to have been too many 'perfect people' on the planet, and some might say that most could happily well wear 'L' plates as the 'natural' condition - ---- The 'open mind' position anyway is likely to lead to more possibilities - ? Anyone with 'psychological baggage' from the past may of course need to aim to resolve (with help?) issues before being able to 'travel forward' .

This follow-on work (from *Wising Up* pt. 1) supports the notion and plan of such 'individual salvation', hopefully providing something in the way of help and succour -----.

1 : 'Lofty Contemplations ----- '

'Away with the fairies ----- ?'

A reasonably strong school of thought has it that 'understanding is the key', and that understanding comes about by the individual's 'direct experience' involving 'self-questing', thereby gaining self knowledge, understanding and awareness. For some though, particularly maybe of the dynamic, rational type, such 'self work' maybe smack too much of navel contemplation and therefore get somewhat shorter shrift - ? Others might aver that to undertake self-examination with clarity and honesty actually takes guts and some courage - ---- Perhaps D.H. Lawrence might again have a say : '*Man is a thought adventurer*', maybe implying that 'exploration' is a natural human need, at least for some - ?

Let Buddha too have a say on the question as to whether or not '*Wising Up*' 'bliss' states are feasible, and, presumably under certain conditions, available to individuals :

' The wind doesn't lend itself to being grasped by the hands, or to being touched. But nevertheless, there is such a thing as wind. Just so, there is nirvana ('bliss' state), but one cannot point to nirvana, either by its colour, or its shape'

and,

'You yourself must strive (quest) – Buddhas can only point the way --- ' Buddha

'Hard and fast ----- ?'

The age of materialism could too be said to be the age of, the 'concrete', with accountants as its 'high priests', measuring only physical accountable entities - ? Less discernable areas such as, say, individual motivation, loyalty, commitment, trust, do not seem then to have thrived that well or been that valued, let alone intangibles such as intuition, innateness, in such a 'hard-edged' climate.

Similarly, spirituality, although valued by many individuals, (*recent – Dec. 17 – news reports suggest its importance to 85 – 90% of the world's population*) again in 'collective culture' could, in western-style cultures, be said to have 'withered on the vine' to some extent. (partly at least maybe as a reaction against paternalistically-presented creeds – ?) Even more 'exotic and esoteric' states such as 'expanded consciousness' and nirvana, the 'bliss state', are perhaps not then likely to prosper and bloom in such times - ? The question though, probably still remains :

'have the jewels been thrown out with the waste, has the baby been thrown out with the bathwater - ?'

Maybe it's been too easy (and simplistic-?) to ditch non-tangibles such as spiritualism, awakening, awareness, expanded consciousness, transcendence, enlightenment, even - ?

'Scaling the heights ----- ?'

It could be, for instance, that the degree of rationality that's existed within the reigning logical, scientific approach within western cultures has not then been 'balanced' with other states (eg.s innateness, intuition, heart/feeling/emotions), and that any 'mind restricted' approach (such as that of logic), is then too limited to encompass any more holistic 'expanded consciousness' human experiences - ?.

The renowned scientist, Einstein, for instance, comments :

'The intellect is indeed a formidable muscle ----- but it has no personality'

as does John Anthony West (in *Mystery of the White Lions*) :

' --- the problem with the scientifically minded ---- what they call 'reason and 'right thinking' isn't rational at all ; it's simply the rationalisation of the 'spiritually flat earth' of their own inner world. Since they experience nothing transcendent or divine, they deduce there is nothing, which is actually negative credulity, not science.'

Such 'expanded-level' consciousness experiences have been recorded (see again 'H's' case-study *Wising Up* pt. 1) within western type materialistic cultures, suggesting then that they are not necessarily just of the 'magic and mystery' variety., but being 'small, individual events, maybe then don't attract too much notice and/or credence - ? As before, Abraham Maslow, the

psychologist who reportedly first researched 'human psychological health' (as opposed to mental ill-health) was surprised to find how often, for instance, that the 'psychologically healthy' people who were his research subjects reported experiencing mystical 'peak' experiences of intense joy and bliss.

And as Linda Tucker comments, in her *Mystery of White Lions* book :

' (the)--- route to spiritual evolution is clear ----- we all have our own unique journey to walk----'. Until we re-align ourselves with the forces of light, of sunlight, of light energy which breathes life into each and every life form on this planet, we are aligning ourselves with darkness.'

'From the beginning ----- '

Presumably though, it may need to be added that the individual may well have work to do to develop and then accept their understanding of '*where they are now*' (eg.. identifying earlier influences/ conditioning, particularly maybe from natural existential fear sources), which may be determining current behaviour pattern, and in so doing then setting themselves free from such conditioned responses (meditation/mindfulness practice may well help with this – see later)), before then developing any ability to 'align with light'.

The well-known psychologist, Carl Jung, for instance, held that 'enlightenment', was in fact just that, i.e. attained by people 'enlightening' their particular 'state of darkness', rather than, say, any 'airy fairy', 'happy, happy' versions of sudden 'instant joy/happiness', and that over efforts for the latter – and notions of 'bliss. joy and love' can be presumably powerful attractors for many - could then actually impede any 'real' progress - ? The 'states of darkness' might , for example, be fear states, over-weaning competitive/power states, states of 'unknowing'/ confusion, states of non/under personal valuing and/or 'fog' points/stages along the 'personal journey' , as well of course as real suffering being incurred by people- ?

' Education matters ----- '

There is a school of thought, too, that many individuals experience intense 'spiritual' type experiences (and conversely, that organisations don't/can't have such experiences) - that is, it is an individual-centred process, a fact which would then confirm again that the individual, even in any current age of 'large' organisational power, is yet important. Some individuals, for instance, report experiences of 'altered, expanded consciousness' states (eg..the *Wising Up* part 1 case-study of "H" who experienced a sustained (for awhile) 'expanded consciousness') on the basis that as in more ancient times, such 'expanded' levels can only be accessed at the (micro small) individual level, but maybe are potentially impeded by any 'individual de-importance' trend which modern 'big entity' (i.e. many large powerful organisations) life may well have instituted - ?

(in his Age of Absurdity book, Michael Foley talks of individuals 'disempowered' and 'cowed' by 'largist' culture, including modern media. Stephen Levine in his A Gradual Awakening work also suggests that individuals have been dis-empowered by 'largist' undermining of individual strength).

'Supra health ----- ?'

The pursuit of 'individual excellence' leading to 'holistically healthy' (a sort of 'super health'

state) levels of living was reportedly superseded by organisational power based on a new 'rationality', changing the quest from one which could only be followed 'internally' at the individual level, then giving the individual importance, to one in which 'excellence' was now defined externally to the individual due to the rise of organisational power (eg. religious movements), reducing the key role of the individual and thereby in effect 'disfranchising' the individual.

(Robert Pirsig in his renowned book 'Zen and the Art of Motorcycling' suggested that, for instance, the individual rather than organisations is the natural, innate guardian of 'life quality').

Some might consider, for instance, that such a shift away from individual importance was an essential point at which things 'went awry', and that such a situation remains as one of the essential base 'faultlines' of modern human life ---- ?

'Don't 'gimme gimme money '-----

Does modern life bring with it considerable pressure on the individual to conform to certain behavioural patterns (eg. to be, for instance, strongly focused on wealth gaining) - ? One (Michael Foley, *The Age of Absurdity, as above*), suggests that with such strong trends (eg. for on-going 'change'), then amplified by considerable media presence and pressure, an automatic authoritative 'force' then 'bears' down on people, who then feel relatively powerless to resist., and, for instance, with the media flow itself having potential negative effects :

'being subjected these days to so much information, can cause the eclipse of common sense',

was the quote for instance from one author.

'Freerangin' ---- '

Whilst though, modern life would seem to be considerably 'mass' based and focused strongly on material, money and power gain, there are still individuals ('freerangers?'), possibly/probably a minority of the population, who are drawn to the idea/feeling that life is a 'journey of development' and that the material side is only one dimension, that there are then many more dimensions to be explored, some of which although seemingly intangible, can nevertheless be real.

(so has modern materialistically-leaning life over-simplified what in reality is multi-dimensional life complexity - ? eg. the prominent single objective of 'maximising profits compared with sixteen objective areas rural lifestyle entrepreneurs rated as 'important/ very important').

Kunihiro Yamate , author of the mind-challenging entitled book , *The Way of No Mind*, considered for instance that any headlong charge chasing material gain (to the 'super want' as opposed to, say, the 'need' level), was an essentially doomed attempt at assuaging basic existential anxiety, amplified further by base faultlines such as de-franchised individuality and associated non-connection with "Tao' (natural, universal life force).

'Life journeying --- ?'

Those struggling with meeting basic need levels of material provision may naturally tend to be fully occupied with that, but presumably those with the opportunity of activity beyond basic material needs levels have more of individual choices - ? Some are of the opinion that a modern 'power culture' move has been to restrict people via creating for them 'harder times' (eg. reduction of security such as changes to employment contracts and common use of zero hours contracts) to facilitate a 'power experience' in controlling others, for the few, but in the process reducing/limiting the opportunities for people to experience 'further development' states (and ultimately then, fulfilment and 'bliss' experiences - ?)

Such individual choice has been maybe historically more evident in traditional-type eastern cultures, which seemingly placed lower emphasis on the material level, and more on the individual development/ personal spiritual level (many eastern cultures appear though now to have gone/be going down the more materialistic route eg. a modern saying in China directed towards males 'no money, no honey' (female attention)).

One of the concepts/processes, probably eastern-originated, was that of :

Mass >> Individual >> Spiritual

One interpretation of such a sequence could be that the individual proceeds through life gaining experience and allied personal strength, then becoming, if not 'hindered' (by, say, rules of repressive and/or over-commercialised regimes), more able to make their own judgements and form their own values, the implication then being that they then might reject some of the 'mass' cultural conditionings they have imbued earlier in life/are potentially imbuing currently. They are, so to speak, now (freerangers?) 'treading their own path', and that 'naturally' – again if unhindered -+ then can lead to 'expanded awareness' ground' (eg. spiritual territory of the personal variety).

'Handy ----- '

Such a view might then tie in with some western-originated thought on 'expanded human realms'. Charles Handy, for instance, the well-known UK business guru and writer, talks about the various types of individuality, ranging from the 'out-for-self, self-gratification' level to the 'pursuit of honourable individualism' which could relate to the individual self-challenging by extending her/his-self beyond the limitations of 'small self' to become then the 'bigger' entity (might a similar process be involved in any 'expanded awareness' sequence, requiring the individual to seek and 'go beyond the self' , to then find different 'expanded' pastures' - ? (One relevant book, for instance, refers to the various levels as differing 'meadows' (*The Second Meadow*, Archie Hill)).

1b ---- more 'lofty contemplations -----'

'Masterful ---- '

One traditional eastern process of helping 'expanded awareness' seekers' to 'go beyond themselves' is via the use of mentors, often called 'Masters', people who presumably had already 'made the journey'.

(note of caution : it may be that not all 'masters', guru's and the like are necessarily effective for the individual – some might operate, for instance, more out of ego/self gain).

One of the key roles of such mentors was/is to get people out of their habitual mental processes/grooves and into a state wherein the mind was not necessarily the dominant factor.

'Awakening is the process of de-programming'

'Enlightenment is the unprogrammed state' (Jed McKenna)

To do this , their methods could look somewhat bizarre to conventional thinking – they might suddenly give someone a 'whack', for instance, or even, reportedly, throw them out of the window (!). Another tactic would be to give them a so-called 'unsolvable' riddle called a 'koan' to solve , to help individuals to better see the machinations of their own minds and to develop then understanding of such ' mental machinations' and developing an awareness 'beyond the mind'.

The rationale behind the 'treatment' could be that many, if not most, people are not unnaturally caught up within their own mind and mental processes, which can have considerable 'conditioning' influences, but that these then can act as 'limiters' to accessing any 'bigger picture'. The individual operates, as it were, at the 'micro' level, rather than the 'macro' level, and the 'shock' treatment is to stimulate the move from the 'grooved' mental waves involved in the 'micro' situation – from 'the protected harbour to the open water', as it were.

'Over the top ----- ?'

Another traditional method of gaining 'distance' (hence a degree of freedom) from the mind then to develop 'overview', has been via meditative/mindful processes, in which people are then encouraged to observe non-judgementally what arises internally for them, mentally and emotionally, but not necessarily to follow-up act. Again the process is said, with practice, to enable the individual to gain some distance 'from themselves', i.e. from their current mental processes, to then be in a better position to gain self-objectivity and then to better 'real -self-manage', and through such process become adept at self-knowledge and understanding, which some (Socrates, for instance), have held as the route to self-freedom (then leading to any 'transcendence' states - ----).

'----- this over- all mindfulness is a general scanning that occurs from having encouraged deeper looking. Painful attitudes and desires have less chance to just appear full-grown in the mind when we can see them coming ----- ' (Stephen Levine , A Gradual Awakening)

Creating such 'distance' then also gives the individual that bit of space and time, as it were, to be able to choose their particular reaction/non-reaction, as opposed to responding 'automatically reactively' via traditional (i.e. to them) 'instant' reactions. ('seeing' 'unproductive' mental processes egs. escaping reality when/if difficulties occur, self-delusional patterns of living). Any such 'unconscious' reactive behaviour patterns would likely not lead to greater awarenesses on the part of the individual, and therefore not aid any 'expanded awareness' processes, in fact, maybe the reverse i.e. helping to maintain a level of lower consciousness - ?

'Awakening (to fuller consciousness) involves the process of separation of thinking and awareness, the mind then becoming the servant of the individual rather than her/his controller'

Eckhart Tolle (Spiritual writer)

'Productive mental contemplation ---- ?'

Meditation/mindfulness practice is said to also aid the enabling of 'bigger picture access', involving a process which over time can 'still' the mind, leaving as it were a blank page on which then can be writ 'new' stuff – people suggest that at the 'still' mind level, then insights come naturally - it's as if there's been a 'tuning in' to a different wavelength, the barrier that was, i.e. the limitations of a 'busy mind', now no longer existing. There would though seem to be a risk involved in such processes, in that the individual 'risks' giving up some of their 'known self' to proceed into more 'unknown waters'.

Practically, this could mean, for instance, potentially giving up known positions – the 'ism' positions, the ideologies, for instance, for the unknown. This may not be too much of a problem though for some who have become, say, somewhat fed up of life within their own skin, as it were, or others for whom change has become necessary to move beyond untenable situations. (and may well need some help/mentoring), or others who for instance are natural 'thought/being adventurers' - ?

'Multi - dimensional ----- ?'

It may be reasonable to state that people as well as other natural phenomena are 'bio-diverse'. A study, for instance, (by this author), of people running small rural enterprises, for instance, indicated that their objectives for their enterprises were diverse, ranging from environmental care, to profit making, to personal development, to staff and community welfare, to adequate cash flow, to longer-term capital building aims and so forth, and that each situation's array and priorities of these varied objectives was *unique*.

Rather than than just work with an assumed objective area – e.g. making maximum profits - one of the important lessons/processes for anyone giving advice to such a disparate group of people was then to firstly review their current unique array of objectives including their priority positions, before then ascertaining their particular unique array of resources at their disposal (and itself for instance is far from a homogeneous commodity). These steps then needed to be followed by assessing their current enterprise position (for example, how viable/potentially viable is the current/future profit level - the viable profit level itself being unique for each situation) and also to assess the unique levels of motivation, energy and range of abilities of the participants..

'Non-attracting opposites ----- '

It's perfectly then possible, for instance, to propose two diametrically opposed courses of action to two enterprises, depending on their circumstances as above, and conclude that the right advice has been given to both – to offer generalised advice would then indeed be 'to be an idiot' as the phrase has it. For one, for instance, the circumstances and objectives might indicate an expansion programme fits the bill, for another, say with over-pressing financial commitments, a programme of some contraction and rationalisation might be better suited/needed.

For these lifestyle businesses/enterprises, once the 'adequate' level of profitability has been reached (necessary for the on-going functioning of the enterprise), the wider array of objective choice opens up (this group of rural lifestyle entrepreneurs identified sixteen different objective areas they rated as 'important/very important'), and the priority choices are then often made via lifestyle priorities – they are 'feeling' based as well as 'head' focused.

'Zaney Zen ---- ?'

One of the 'restrictions' of modern culture might lie in the fact that in a rational, logic orientated culture ('head' based'), there's been a lack of room and priority for tempering via 'feeling' ('heart'), a condition Robert Pirsig was amplifying in his renowned *Zen and the Art of Motor-Cycle Maintenance* work. The example above of offering differing advice tailored to the situation could be said to be a *zen - based* approach, where as offering fixed, standardised and/or ideological-based advice would be non *zen*, or an '*ism-ed*' approach. Keeping things 'simple' (such as, say, employing standardised advice) can help make for an easier life but runs the risk of coming unstuck in actual reality.

Adopting the single-dimensioned, simple business objective of 'making profit' or 'making maximum profit' can have the effect of then denying the other considerable number of lifestyle objectives then causing less resolution of them and less life satisfaction – the situation could said to have been over-simplified.

Individuals could be said to be similar to small businesses, each with their unique set of resources, their unique 'life position' and their unique set of personal objectives. Taking on board the sixteen major areas involved within the multi-dimensioned reality small business scenario is of course a more complex task and takes skill, experience and life knowledge on the part of people making life management decisions within these situations – but then their greater inputs then lead, as the argument goes, to a fuller and more multi-dimensioned take on life, then leading to the scope for a fuller and more satisfying life ----- .

One entrepreneur on the west coast of the USA, for instance, recognising that his employees as individuals managed complexity in their lives, then successfully simplified his business by removing the need for the management layer.

'Higher ---- or lower ---- ?'

As an example of taking the 'ism'd' approach, one UK university textbook author, for instance,, strongly urged his readers (largely young people) to take up 'entrepreneurialism', and indeed, then expressly forbade them to read any further unless they'd 'take the 'entrepreneurialism' pledge. If a sector of society allegedly devoted to 'objectivity', critical examination, and individual freedom of enquiry, starts to take such a limited, simplified and autocratic approach as above, perhaps though freerange-type hope for the future may be in diminished supply - ?

'Mind you -----'

A relatively modern expanded programme that aims to help individuals who are seeking broader pastures is that of the 'Mindfulness' programme, which seems to have become quite an extensive movement in western countries in recent times. Again, one of the key parts appears to be the process of reducing the level of mental activity so that a fuller awareness of

the 'now' can occur – such connection with the 'now' (which in effect is 'reality' - ?) can then help balance out any over-riding power of the mental process, to then produce more health, energy, relaxation and so forth, bringing then tangible benefits, as well as presumably helping those who seek any 'expanded consciousness' states to do so. Meditation is also said to provide such tangible 'holistic health' benefits as lowering stress levels, as well as help facilitate any 'expanded wavelength' access.

It's probably as well to reflect a little also on the 'cost' side of the equation. From the various methodologies outlined above, it seems relatively clear that the individual needs to be willing and prepared to cultivate the 'open minded' development approach to maybe able to make, erm, headway, which implies the need either to be able to give up fixed notions,, beliefs and ideologies, or at least suspend/demote them for a period, a condition which would also seem to apply to fixed aims. For some of freerange-type 'exploration' tendencies, this may not be too much of a difficulty, but to others, for instance, a greater level of barrier may be encountered - ?

'None so blind ----- '

It could seem then that there could be a variety of routes leading towards 'expanded awareness' states, and that presumably the character and the position of the individual could no doubt be major dynamic influences, calling too on intuitive powers (which may of course have stagnated somewhat in modern rational, scientific times - ?) It's perhaps hard at times for those involved in large powerful organisations not to be inculcated in the 'big is best' type of mantra, then making it difficult to understand that the micro-small entity that is the individual can at times 'know best', and particularly where their own selves are concerned - ?

Despite the 'mass-ing' trend that large organisations can promote, it's probably not too bad to remember that life, including human life, is bio-diverse and multi-stranded and strata-ed, with the possibility that much of it lies beyond the 'normal' parameters of the average individual and/or organisation. This would probably mean good news for 'freerangers' – there's much to explore -----

'The 'second meadows' beckon ----- '

For those of 'life exploration' bent, such as, say, 'freerangers', the desire and need to progress to 'a higher plane', 'the second meadows' could be a dynamic natural phenomenon,, kickstarted, maybe by a feeling of dissatisfaction with 'ordinary life', that it can be over-limited 'dimensionally', and the 'there should be more to life', (presumably 'general culture' can't cater for all the multifarious bio-diverse range of human needs and interests - ?) There can be barriers within 'life as we know it', a common example in wealth and power driven days could be that of 'vested interest', acting as a drag on further exploration, and sometimes even a regressive force, as some have claimed in the case of, for instance, climate change denial.

'Common or garden ----- ? '

Could 'expanded awareness' / 'higher consciousness' states in fact be a natural state of man, occurring as a progression from, say, self-actualisation, the state of full human potential, or, say, the natural outcome of any re-build process - ? The fact that such 'expanded or higher' states do not seem to necessarily be much evidenced, may not mean that potentially they

cannot/do not exist ; there may be for instance 'barriers' in modern cultures to their manifestation. If 'expanded awareness' states do occur as follow-on development from ,say, 'self-actualisation', then time and experience would seem to be of the essence for them to occur as well as a need for 'cultural nourishment' - ? Modern western-style cultures have for instance appeared to be though more of a 'youngist' variety, so maybe not necessarily over-conducive to the more languid fuller flowering of the older generations - ?

'Barrier-ed ----- ?'

Modern cultures have too fairly obviously tended to be geared towards materialism and to wealth and power creation – i.e. 'having' orientated as opposed to 'being' orientated, and as such maybe less conducive therefore to such 'life exploration', from the individual's point of view. The 'largist' organisation-led nature of such cultures have also been said to have become a barrier to individual questing and fuller development, people feeling 'small and insignificant', and therefore 'unempowered' , in the face of such large organisation power, some of which has been documented, maybe unsurprisingly, as being of the 'bullying' variety.

'I'm not worthy ----- '

Some commentators (eg. Stephen Levine) mention a general feeling amongst people of 'unworthiness', maybe not too surprising considering traditional cultural conditioning such as 'everyone's a sinner' - ? In the UK in the past general cultural conditioning such as 'it's not ok for a person to be good at whatever' existed, which again presumably could potentially undermine positive personal development. Even the area of 'expanded awareness' states itself could presumably represent potential barriers - ?

The promise such states hold – joy, health, energy, bliss, understanding - could perhaps easily come over as a 'heady mix', maybe attracting people to strive for it who might not, for instance be at an appropriate stage, and inducing maybe, unrealistic expectations, over- effort and over 'wanting', along with attracting commercial pressures in this area of self-development, as well as possibilities of fake support and or help regimes. (eg. fake gurus) - ?

' Common unquities ----- '

Some hold that there are probably far more individuals operating at the 'expanded awareness' level than is commonly thought, the idea being that such individuals, experiencing such high-level goodies (joy, understanding, 'oneness', bliss, compassion, love and so forth), find then no need to then to broadcast re themselves or to promote themselves and any sense of superiority, being then 'fully secure' within themselves (i.e. different from the 'position and power' external validation stances of current cultures).

They could likely too, be aware that their 'high energy waveband' operating system differs considerably from that of 'the materialist norm' (considered by some to be a low energy level plane), and that they then short-term adapt and modify themselves to connect to others at differing awareness/energy levels.

The human animal is said to be a complex biological, emotional and to some at least, spiritual being, (recent reports indicate, for instance, that at the individual level, spirituality could be important for as many as 85 – 90% of people), with every example not only being physically different and unique, but with added differentials resulting from past and present family, peers, cultural and self conditioning, resulting in a totally unique organism – some say

too that people are developed over time, over several/many lifetimes, which is presumably 'logically' unprovable but could help to explain some of the at times considerable differences between people - ?

'Self-perspective -----'

'Mass' cultures can at times appear to be intolerant and un-accomodating to individual differentials, inducing then possible potential self-critical approaches – recent (April '17) research, for instance, indicates that adult females in the UK self-hit/blame on average eight times per day, presumably then creating the possibility of a culture-induced over-critical sense of self, which then can work against any realistic and objective practical self-assessment and any self-acceptance needed for 'expanded awareness level' living .

Because of this, and because of the degree of uniqueness of the individual, the emphasis for 'self-work' is placed on non-judgemental self-witnessing, which is then the basis for the development of more accurate self- reality assessment, then resulting in creation of on-going accurate and realistic longer-term self-assessment and self-management. Such an approach also carries with it a recognition that 'mass' cultural influences could be of the over- critical and under self-nourishing variety.

2 : Practical 'expanded awareness' routes -----

Working along pragmatic lines, and recognising that individuals are bio-diverse and what applies to and suits one person does not mean that the same would necessarily be true for the next person, this section seeks to look at some of the measures and activities an individual interested in journeying towards 'expanded awareness' might look at and even take up. The next part (pt.3) looks in particular at a possible 'self-work' route to 'expanded consciousness'.

'Turn on --- off --- ?'

Some of what is written about the 'expanded awareness' states could be described as 'esoteric spiritual mysticism', which for some - many?, might be something of a 'turn-off', in the sense that such areas then appear to be remote from normal experiences of life. Other potentially inhibitory factors would also seem to come into play, such as, for instance, any over-strong 'norming' factors within a culture, which some have argued that along with movements such as globalisation and widespread media influence, have grown ever stronger, to the detriment of 'individual strength'. Allied to this is the common human experience of background 'existential fear' in life, in this case probably both of the 'unknown' and also of being 'out of the norm', so in all, there could be considerable influences which could inhibit any 'treading of any higher ground' - ?

(once, though, 'fear has been 'passed through', as it were (eg. fear of failure being then diminished by survival of actual failure), a more 'open', 'down-to-earth' approach may then be more possible, in which areas can then be looked at which hitherto may have been too sensitive to open up, or even 'taboo' ground - ? A fear seemingly more to the forefront in modern times, appears to be that of 'not being ok', again which might fit with the scenario of dwindling individual strength - ? (and then part of the mission might be to find 'missing' individual strength -----)) .

The purpose of this section is then to aim to explore various strands to examining the 'expanded consciousness' levels which may be practically helpful to those seeking to help themselves in such exploration. There is talk of 'old souls', which could then beg the question as to whether people operate on differing energy levels, different wavelengths, as it were, having a variety of experiences in 'levels of conscious living', with the possibility of some of those with, say, more 'self-aware' experience, then being able to function with expanded awareness and consciousness.

Individuals who are (still) reading these words, for instance, may be those for whom such 'expanded levels' exploration has become more of an active interest/need, and to whom they may then be relevant (whilst again then not being necessarily particularly currently relevant to others). To strike a brief note of possible warning and reiterating Jung's words :

'enlightenment is about illuminating the darker places'

There may be a danger for instance of a 'chasing the rainbow' scenario, especially given the perceived parcel of potentially 'blissful' end results. Practically, Jung's statement could be then converted into the exhortation for the individual 'to be where they're at' (i.e. in various stages/degrees of imperfect 'un-illumination'), then guarding against any 'wild goose' chases ---- And after all, realism can only start where it's real - ?

(it's recognised that in practice it's not necessarily uncommon for people to adopt 'escape' mode as a form of 'reality denial', and that it's not necessarily always possible to be in a current position for 'reality facing'. It's also recognised that 'spiritual awakening' type of searches can in themselves be used as escape routes to avoid any current 'being where you are' reality).

There may well be multi channels by which 'expanded awareness levels' can be accessed. Some might seem, for instance, to be almost facile : *'the door is always open, a person has just to walk through it'*, is for instance a relatively common eastern-originated saying. Even this simple method, though, would seem to be dependent on being at a stage of knowing the existence of the 'door', and its location, that there's also not too much, erm, baggage impeding the entrance, and knowing too the sort of active role she/he needs to play - ?

'Towards bliss ----- ?'

'Downsizers', for instance, may well for instance, be re-jigging their lives to get a better balance - the 'work/life' balance being a prominent priority - going for more 'quality' in life, sometimes too sacrificing some 'quantity' to get it. They may well for instance opt to then spend less time working, possibly then also making less money, but gaining in the 'being' area - their level of 'life experience' has increased to the point of being able then to shrug off the 'money and power' thrall in favour of the more balanced life and becoming a more 'balanced' person, with perhaps then a greater possibility to more fully develop to 'self-actualisation'. Others can take more radical steps to give themselves 'space and time' :

B lives a hermit lifestyle in a remote wood. She had gradually found life becoming problematical and over-complex, taking her away from her instinctive feeling to be more natural by connecting more to nature itself. She now leads a contemplative, more individualistically spiritual style of life having created the time and space needed for it.

T had a modern life with high earnings and a full complement of modern materialistic trappings

– high- end homes, cars and holidays. Life was good, and she viewed herself as a modern 'success'. Then, though, things started to unravel. She was unexpectedly made redundant and her high-end boyfriend ended their relationship. Her friends urged her to get right back 'into the fray' but she was in shock and intuitively felt she needed some recovery time. It was then that 'the little voice' came to her, suggesting that she wasn't as happy or fulfilled as she had thought and that she needed to 'dig deeper'.

This was scary but something in her , she said, made her 'follow the voice', interested to see where it took her. The upshot was that she realised that she needed time to 'stop and think', to re-evaluate, which she was able to facilitate by renting a cottage at reasonable cost in an out-of-the-way area with which she was familiar . She lived alone, simply and cheaply – her redundancy funds financing the period - for nearly a year, finding that the peace and slower pace of life then enabled her to get in touch with inner, deeper feelings. She discovered that she had a deep need to give out care and love and ultimately she changed life course to a lower paid position in a children's home, gaining in her words, 'a far fuller, richer life'.

'Fast flow free-ing---- '

'Freeing' from the 'fast flow', for instance, might not always be the easiest move - many may feel somewhat 'trapped' by current circumstances, for instance - and it maybe that only a minority can make such radical changes as in the case studies above. Even though major change may not be on the agenda due to, say, current commitments, such as family responsibilities, it may well still be possible to introduce smaller measures to provide more 'me' succour and support, against 'the fast flow', such as :

consciously driving slower altering 'pace', regular 'time out' focussing in self sustaining, regular meditations going deeper 'within', and to also help de-stress and 'slow down', 'mindfulness' practice ----to help with 'seeing' particularly any unhelpful repetitive mind-thought patterns, and then to give that bit of space from them to be then able to not 'auto-respond' ---

There's no doubt many possible different small measures – the individual can and will select those suitable and feasible to themselves. Maybe the important thing is to persist with them – it may take a bit of time to experience any effects, (eg. with meditation) which can then help to encourage further efforts, 'success breeding success', as it were.

It may then be useful to to look, in non-judgemental mode, (which can also help with 'objective analysis') at any inner thoughts/voices which are saying , for instance,, that such self time and self-attention are, say, 'over self-indulgent', and to then be able to recognise the degree to which previous external and self conditioning is operating in current attitudes and behaviour – this can then lead to the ability to change these long-playing grooved 'records', which can then support the productive, positive process of taking 'real self' control, which in turn bolsters self-image and self-acceptance ----- and of course, self-awareness.

(again, the mind can be 'watched' for signs of it being impatient for results and such an impulse can then be 'bypassed' and/or 'discounted'. (one self-help mentor put forward the 'float' concept - letting negative and/or obstructive thoughts 'float by or away', helping the process by then being able to see them as separate entities rather than an integral part of 'self'). Some might feel the need to counter any unproductive thought patterns in slightly stronger fashion, such as instructing them to 'go away' (or words to that effect, polite or otherwise----)

Others may have sufficient resources to then avoid the fast flow, in that they no longer need to

'engage' to provide for their needs. This may help in any 'slow down' process, although their may then be a potential 'pitfall' in terms of temptation to follow an 'easy life' pattern, 'comfortably stagnating' then in terms of personal growth, and then potentially forfeiting any 'expanded awareness' advantages? Money, though, can bring positives, according to recent (2018) published research results, the main thrust of which was interestingly not necessarily the degree of materialism it provided, rather that money can give individuals a degree of autonomy, a form of 'life freedom'.

Practically transcendent -----

To take a practical approach, the intention then is to here explore three possible routes to 'expanded awareness' in more detail, all of which contain cores of 'adapted self-acceptance' from the individual's point of view, (and which seem likely to involve a degree of 'treading an own path'), then reviewing some of the conditions the individual may be able to create to help in the process.

The three 'potential' routes are :

- *The possibility that the 'expanded awareness' experience' becomes feasible after 'self-actualisation', that is, the individual developing to the fuller/fullest self-potential,*

- *The possibility that the fuller/fullest awareness state can occur via a particular process (such as, for instance, in the case of 'H', who in effect, and with help, 're-built' a 'new self').(see Wising Up --- pt.1)*

- *The possibility that the fuller/fullest awareness state can occur after 'self awareness work'*

(eg. expansion of self-knowledge/understanding via meditative/mindful processes – see later, pts. 3 & 4)

These three 'routes' would then involve practising and then experiencing a level of 'self-acceptance', especially in terms of taking the self 'as it is' rather than 'as it is wished to be'. In modern times of 'big' corporate power and influence, governments involving themselves at 'ordinary' levels of life, continuous commercial pressures and huge media presence and activity, the cultural influences and pressures on individuals could seem to be formidable, presumably then creating the possibility of difficulties for people to be able to find the space, time, motivation and strength to 'know themselves' - ? Various authors have, for instance, talked about the considerable forward cultural momentum created in modern times, no doubt exacerbated by the modern clarion calls of 'change, change, and 'innovate, innovate', and carrying people along in a 'fast flow' -----

The existence of such a myriad of influences might then lead to the need for a 'base' set of conditions in which the individual has space and time to 'find themselves', particularly important maybe if such 'expanded awareness' states can only be realised at the individual level, rather than via 'organisation' levels, i.e. by the individual seeking, questing and actively involved in the process of developing 'being' by taking life as a 'work in progress' and avoiding the possible potential pitfall of getting over- waylaid, say, in the 'having' mode or via any 'over

comfort' situations.

(this isn't to suggest that 'having' is per se wrong, only that 'money mania' being what it is, it could perhaps be easy to get over-hooked into following that route too avidly, at the expense of 'being' development - ? (there have been reports in the press, for instance, of wealthy people stressing over their position in the 'wealth league', then needing therapy) One way of helping to get some relief from any 'money mania' type addictions, which can be forceful, can be to work at seeing money as a means, rather than an 'end', and to actively differentiate between 'wants' and needs').

Route : 'Realising the self----- '

The 'self-actualisation' route lies broadly in line with the research of Abraham Maslow, reportedly the first psychologist to study and research into 'mental health' (as opposed to 'mental ill-health'). He found that his research subjects progressed through various 'need' areas – from 'base' need fulfilment egs. hunger, thirst, up through various social needs fulfilment, to a pinnacle need fulfilment of reaching the 'full personal potential' position - he labelled these the 'hierarchy of human needs' – and if development was 'unhindered', it could then naturally lead to the 'self-actualised' position, at which the individual has pretty much realised their full potential (Maslow's work is still used in modern times).

As the self-actualisation specification, outlined below, and drawn up by modern-day psychologists, shows, the self-actualised features indicate an individual of advanced capabilities and sensibilities, and one, given these levels of skills and 'inner development', who likely then experiences a strong sense of self worth, then leading 'easily and naturally' to a full self-acceptance position.

(self-acceptance, though, can presumably occur productively at any 'less than perfection' stage, in the sense that by facing and accepting the 'less than perfection' situation, the individual is taking important first steps in aligning themselves with reality (rather than, say, being in denial of any 'imperfections')).

The thinking is that such 'self-reality aligning' can then lead to later on being able to come to the point of being able to align with 'bigger, universal reality', to then be able to gain the 'oneness' (i.e. with Tao, 'universal reality') experience, in which such goodies as bliss, love, compassion and so forth are manifested.

The self-actualising person : (see 'Add-on 2' at end for fuller reference)

- 1 Perceives people and events accurately, without undue interference from their own preconceptions.
- 2 Accepts self and other, including imperfections, but seeks improvement where possible.
- 3 Is spontaneous - especially in their thoughts and feelings.
- 4 Focuses on problems outside self, rather than being insecure and introspective.
- 5 Is detached, so that they are not unduly thrown off course by awkward events.
- 6 Is autonomous, and remains true to self in spite of pressure to conform.

- 7 Appreciates good and beautiful things, even if they are familiar.
- 8 Has peak experiences of intense positive emotions of a sometimes mystic quality.
- 9 Has close relationships, but only with a few carefully chosen people.
- 10 Respects others, avoids making gratuitous fun of people and evaluates them according to their inner qualities rather than race or social class.
- 11 Has firm moral standards, and sense of right and wrong, though these may be different from many other people.
- 12 Is creative. This is perhaps one of the most fundamental aspect of self actualisation, and is seen as the result of the other aspects listed above. By being open-minded and open to their own, actual experience, the self-actualising person sees things in novel ways and can draw innovative conclusions from established information.
- 13 Is not 'enculturised' i.e. retains individual assessment and judgement.

(Arnold et al, *Work Psychology*)

The relevant line of thinking is that such a highly developed 'freerange-type' individual is the 'self-actualised', 'fully formed', and 'resolved self, so now without the need to take any 'un-real' measures , such as , say, distorting/denying reality to self protect. Experiencing then their 'full self' also leads them naturally to a high level of self-acceptance , so with this and the lack of need to self protect, they are then more in a position to be open to, and experience bigger 'beyond-the-self' universal forces and awarenesses, and that such a 'transcendent' stage is then a normal and natural state, albeit at the 'advanced' level and not necessarily in super abundant evidence in so-called 'normal life'.

(Maslow, for instance, was taken somewhat by surprise by the frequent reports from these 'psychologically healthy' people of peak experiences of supreme joy and bliss).

So , the thinking might go, get on with life, live it as a development journey of discovery, aim to avoid pitfall and cul-de-sacs, and 'expanded awareness' will come at some stage, i.e no need to specifically strive for it - ? 'Wanting' could be in fact a hindrance – possibly leading to a form of over trying and/or of 'trying to run before walking' - ? Developing acceptance of 'being where you are' (i.e. even if it's, perceived to be 'imperfect'), is then useful to any process of self-development - ' the journey starts with a single step', but the step needs to be 'in the right place' - ?

This line of thinking is supported to some extent by Maslow's own findings, reporting that many of his 'psychologically healthy' research subjects, i.e. people who had had 'fuller development' experience, reported experiences of 'high's' involving intense positive experiences of joy, bliss, well-being and love, and it could be that the same is experienced in the current culture at the individual level by such developed persons, even if it may not at first glance appear to 'fit' that well with modern culture - ? (Maslow wrote about 'peak experiences' in his further work *The Farther Reaches of Human Nature*).

'Push - pull - ?'

Such an analysis can tie in with eastern-originated teachings, which whilst indicating that 'pushing too hard' to get to a goal can prove to be in the longer-term counter-productive, and that it could be more of a case of the individual 'getting out of their own way', also 'striving' in the form of questing on the part of the individual – a form of needing 'to be in it to win it' - is necessary – freeranger territory? It's perhaps important to define 'striving' as 'seeking', as opposed to 'trying hard', trying to 'force' a result - ? Teasingly, eastern Masters hint that striving is necessary to then be able to know and understand the art of 'non-striving', for instance, setting 'koans', ('unsolvable riddles') for their followers to try to wrestle with.

If a person becomes, via a self-actualisation 'natural' process, then 'fully formed', then the job could just be to 'lax' it, and to sit back, enter into 'the dance of life' and enjoy - ? If it's all there anyway, where's the need to get on the 'more, more' trail - ? (and might the 'more, more' impulse be a basic 'unknowing' response trying to allay existential fear - ?) People experiencing these 'transcendent' levels tend to report the 'no sweat' syndrome - everything's easy and natural ----- and life is 'bliss' -----

'Low energy - high energy - ?'

The fact that 'advanced expanded consciousness' development' maybe relatively little witnessed may reflect more on the current times – the argument could be that modern times are 'lower level' geared, both in terms of energy quality (eg. incorporating considerable levels of negative energy impelled by hyped-up competitiveness and over self-focus, 'pushing out' for instance 'positive fellow feeling' social impulses- ?), and in terms relating to Maslow's need strands, times with a heavy materialistically-leaning focus, for instance, being more in line with 'lower level' needs - ?

It's interesting to speculate too, as to whether any 'over -focus' on these lower level need areas (eg. survival and security needs, strongly linked to money) has lead in itself as above to some modern problem areas in 'barrier-ing' movement on to the more progressive needs areas (eg.s. self responsibility and esteem, social contribution), causing then limitations and possible internal conflict and frustrations - ?

The inference could be that people are then less able to progress up through the hierarchy of needs and so have then restricted opportunity to reach any self-actualisation ('full potential') level, and then on to any expanded 'transcended' states.(some have argued, for instance, that here in the UK, peoples' security has been undermined by successive governments and business movements as part of a 'people control' strategy (eg. half of people employed in the academic sector recently reported to be on zero or short-term contracts, the rise of a 'low employee-needs' focused part of the culture (the so-called 'gig' economy)).

If this is the reality, the implications are clear – peoples' ability to progress through the need layers to the 'experiencing' full potential' level, will be impeded . Whether such a situation is wise for a nation could be debatable, in that a significant portion of 'people productivity' is then foregone - ? In terms of cultures seemingly having increasingly gone down a 'control' rather than 'people potential' route, in recent decades, it might not be though an over-surprising situation - ?

(It may be useful here to give a quick re-cap on Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs'. Maslow's research amongst 'psychologically healthy people (he was apparently the first to study this

group) led him to form 'hierarchy' theory, in which he postulated that first human need priorities were to satisfy 'base' needs (eg.s food, hunger, shelter), then the second tier of needs was that of 'security' (i.e. for instance to ensure a regular and on-going supply to cover 'base' needs), then the third tier of social needs (eg.s social contribution, social recognition), fourthly then to 'higher' social needs (eg, social responsibility), then culminating in the fifth tier, that of 'self-actualisation ' (becoming the fullest package of self, fulfilling self-potential) It's the meeting of this final 'top' level need that the idea has come about that this could be a launch pad to 'larger universal awareness', and the experience of 'oneness' – being 'in tune' with 'universal energy')

In terms of 'self-build' and/or 'self-work', (see later), the individual may need to be prepared to bypass any such cultural limitations, whilst recognising their existence. Cultures can and have differ significantly, and with people being so diverse, it's debatable whether for instance, a culture can be 'all things to all people' - ?

'Negative – positive - ?'

A concept forwarded back along by another human motivation theorist, Fred Herzberg, could be also be of some use.. He proposed that some factors involved for instance, in the workplace, acted as 'negative inhibitors' to people engaging their full motivation power (eg.s monotonous, boring work, inadequate/poor supervision), whereas other factors could act as positive motivation promoters (eg.s engaging types of work,, opportunity for input into work situations). Furthermore, and importantly, if negative inhibitors were currently active, this would 'barrier' activation of the positive factors. Similarly then, if Maslow's lower level needs are not being well met (eg. 'security'), this could then mean that access to higher level needs remain 'barrier-ed' - ?

Assuming for the moment, that the individual's access to the higher level needs (in hierarchical terms) is not 'barrier-ed', then the upshot of this form of analysis could be that the (freerange?) individual in progression on a ' life's journey', does then not have to consciously focus too much directly on expanded awareness/'transcendence'/'enlightenment' attainment - the natural development of life acts as the 'launch pad' to expanded consciousness levels . The focus then is on 'being where they are', in the knowledge that life is progressive and will bring the necessary development if the individual is open to it, and that then any 'expanded awareness' state would likely be a natural outcome at some stage - ?

Adopting this approach could then also help relieve any tension relating to 'expanded awareness' search', which again in itself could act as a barrier to attainment. Any state which appears to offer 'the works' – health, energy, bliss. love – could prove to be a strong magnet, potentially causing 'over-attraction', 'over-trying' approaches -? It may be that such a pattern happens naturally to a person not 'barrier-ed' by past and/or current cultural impediments - a counter argument could be that the modern individual has been and still is subject to so many 'conditioning' influences, that a certain amount of de-conditioning work could be applicable to most people - ?

The 'New Build' Route ----- ?

There are apparently quite a number of 'expanded awareness' experiences resulting from when 'systems failure' resulting in breakdown is then addressed in 'newbuild' fashion i.e. the failure is accepted – it might have occurred for instance due to overlong stress experiences, an 'over-trying' situation, and/or the individual not feeling a good 'fit' with the prevailing culture

– and then a 're-build' process put into action. This, according to 'H' (see case study in *Wising Up* --- pt 1), is what happened to him :

'At the time it was quite hard – I just wanted relief and to escape from the 'darkness' I seemed to be in, it was just like being in a 'black hole' with no chink of light, but my mentor via her stress self-help book was pretty tough – my strong level of 'wanting' to escape my unpleasant reality was, according to her, part of my problem, and part of her 'process' was to get me to accept 'where I was', however dreadful I was feeling about it.

(How much of H's dread and unwillingness to face his 'failure situation' might have been due to cultural expectations affecting him, as well as activated personal fear levels - ? This was a time when mental stress and illness were far less culturally acceptable than nowadays).

This was in fact the opposite of the 'escape mode' I was in at the time, and this 'acceptance' (which took some time to happen, with quite a few 'setbacks') then put me in a 'reality position' to be able to work forward to improve the situation. Although she seemed to take a tough approach, something inside me told me to go with it, it was what I needed, and to be fair, she was also empathetic and understanding of me and my position, which looking back was important – it seemed as if she'd reached right down to me in my dark, 'light-less' 'prison', giving me a lifeline, and also, importantly, then had stood by me in spite of my many 'failures' (i.e. setbacks) .

It was hard to do though, and there were many reverses - setbacks my mentor called them – and the fact that she accepted this situation but still kept up encouragement and knowledge to get me to 'see' what was happening, and how I was impeding (by continued efforts to 'escape') was critical in my staying the course.. Gradually it became easier though, as the grip of my negative mental grooves lessened and I started to 'glimpse' new more positive possibilities.

After quite awhile – possibly around eighteen months - once I'd moved from the negative sphere into the positive sphere, progress was then more pronounced, with on-going insights of 'knowing' occurring at regular intervals, and then one day – 'click', the last piece seemed to fall into place and to my surprise I found myself instantly in the sunny uplands of 'expanded consciousness' – I would describe it as a 'grace' state – energy, health, joy, 'one-ness', bliss and the like. The whole process took some time, around three years, and I certainly wouldn't have got there without the key help and support of my mentor – looking back, she was absolutely superb.'

(mentor book - *Self Help For Nerves* by Claire Weekes)

Such an example then begs the question as to whether, as Carl Jung had it, that the 'real' path to any 'expanded awareness', 'enlightenment' states is 'bringing light to darkness', involving a 'coming to terms' with reality, however imperfect that might be judged to be, a possible 'facing the demons' situation for the individual (and therefore such 'advanced' positions can only be accessed by *individual* questing and effort), and whether some of what is propounded as 'enlightenment teaching' is in reality more to do with aiming to 'escape the darkness', and its fear - ?

(H would no doubt remind at this point that key help such as he had had himself, may well be necessary for some within this process, and that his initial position had been extreme. Jung himself suggested that such a 'facing the fear' situation would be disagreeable to many and uptake then be limited. On the other hand some might have, say, become dissatisfied with their current personas, and be relatively ok about working for change/improvement from a self-recognised 'imperfect' position. Others of course may be keen 'inward bound' explorers)

H, for instance, also said he'd then had difficulties since his 'expanded awareness' experience, particularly in terms of aligning his new-found 'expanded awareness and understanding' state with 'ordinary life', but always retained an inner core of inner strength and confidence which he put down to having gone through a 'facing fear' process, and so losing the 'fear of darkness' (a base 'existential' fear?).

(he suggested for instance that one way this manifested itself was in the fact that he no longer had any fear relating to 'being wrong', or criticism).

(Such fear levels might also work in a mass, collective fashion, with individuals then becoming 'infected' with a type of 'fear virus', on the 'it's hard to stay sane in an insane world' basis - ?)

'Self-rebuild - ?'

It's interesting to speculate as to whether individuals themselves could 'take themselves on' and unravel, for instance, the layers of conditioning that will inevitably have been acquired, (i.e. to then become their 'real selves'), which presumably would then entail self-questioning their own thoughts, applying the test as to whether their origin was conditioning generated or part of their innate selves.

(is all conditioning self-inflicted - ? i.e. even if 'externally' influenced (eg.s parental, cultural, peers, authority based), the individual still has to 'adopt' it and internalise it, which is then good news in that it can then if required be 'unadopted' by the individual concerned. The 'mindfulness' self-work techniques can be useful in this respect, also allowing the individual to come to a realisation that the output of the mind, i.e. thoughts, are not necessarily from their innate 'real selves', so freeing themselves from what's been called 'the tyranny of the mind'. Could this be a 'base' component of 'freedom', therefore of particular interest to 'freerangers' - ?)

'Pausing life - ?'

Part of the process could be for a person to take 'time out' (on a full-time or part-time basis) to stand back from current culture/society, to then be able to 'self-enquire' into their own reality and what was/is innately important for them. This could be then combined with the mindfulness 'mind watching' process – 'seeing' thoughts 'non-judgementally' as they occur, in effect then ditching/byepassing unhelpful thought patterns, then creating a 'mind freeing' process whilst building awareness. No doubt some – probably of the 'freeranger' genus – anyway are predisposed to Lawrence's 'thought exploration', viewing such traits as 'expanded awareness' as natural development paths ----- ?

3 : 'Free-ing the Self'

The self-work route can of course overlap the 'new build' way and probably could often in effect be the same process. Some might well feel that real freedom is 'freedom from self', or maybe more precisely, freedom from what's been called 'the tyranny of the mind', and then moving to then

'real-self' generated operating systems then naturally leading to 'universal natural wavelengths' . Socrates for instance spoke about the understanding gained acting then as the 'free-ing' (i.e. from automatic 'mind' responses, for example) mechanism to presumably then enable access to universal 'Tao' wavelengths. And as the spiritual writer Eckhart Tolle (see below) puts it :

'Awakening is the separation of thinking and awareness ; the mind does not then 'run the show', rather, it becomes the servant of awareness.'

It may be that some , though, may not particularly want to 'self examine' (to then be able to 'self-accept'), wants an' all, either feeling uncomfortable or fearful in such activity, or not particularly feeling the need for such a process. The psychologist Carl Jung.('*enlightenment is bringing light to darkness*'), felt, for instance, that many would find such a process 'disagreeable', so uptake might be limited.

Benefits over time ---- ?

On the other hand, there may also be those who are 'fed up' with their present personas, plus those who actively wish to explore ' higher ground', sometimes seen as by Archie Hill in his book of the same name, as the 'second meadows', and as in 'H's case, those who are in need of a 'new operating system'. Work on the self can be rewarding, giving skills, experiences and self- understanding and awareness that can bolster 'real' self- view (and therefore self- acceptance) and, life management and understanding, as 'H', the case study participant in *Wising Up ----* pt.1, illustrates , quoting also the use of and the help of meditation practice :

'Looking back it was quite a long haul getting out of the 'black hole' of depression I'd got into and a lot of the progress was due to developing understanding and acceptance of my situation, with the invaluable help of my mentor via the self-help book I was using. I'd been so desperate to 'escape' my seemingly inescapable predicament, that there was a lot of fear and tension, which was in effect preventing recovery. Ultimately - and it took a lot of doing and with a lot of setbacks – it seems I had to come to terms with my situation, and accept it, at least in the short-term, imperfect and unsatisfactory as it was, before I could then make positive recovery progress. I had to learn to exist, as it were, in the negative sphere, and work through that, before I could then operate in the positive phase.

Doing meditation certainly also helped a lot, in that I slowly developed some calm to then help with gaining the ability to look at thoughts arising, which then gave space and time to 'process' them and to 'bypass' for instance, the obstructive 'fear' thoughts, rather than automatically react and respond to them in a fearful mode, which then had the effect of adding to the fear load, It also helped me realise how much the mind 'has a mind of its own', as it were, which then can to act as the controlling element. This process was good in that to be able to develop such mind overview also gave me a much needed feeling of progress and success, which further boosted my efforts and progress, and developed these skills even further'.

Echart Tolle, the writer on personal spirituality matters, comments more fully on the separation of thinking from awareness :

'Awakening is a shift in consciousness in which thinking and awareness separate ----- Instead of being lost in your thinking, when you are awake you recognise yourself as the awareness behind it. Thinking then ceases to be a self-serving autonomous activity that takes possession of you and runs your life. Awareness takes over from thinking. Instead of being in charge of your life, thinking becomes the servant of awareness'.

(*A New Earth : Awakening to Your Life's Purpose* Eckhart Tolle)

He was at pains whilst relating his tale to point out how troubled he had been and the key role his mentor had played, particularly in helping him 'through the darkness'. His trip was in fact from deep 'darkness' to 'light' – one which then culminated then in a 'transcendent expanded awareness' experience. He emphasised that he had had to adopt/try 'a new route/system', one which he instinctively had latched onto when first opening the self-help book which then proved to be so pivotal for him.

Giving up the 'known self' was then not a problem for him, but no doubt for some – many? - it could be a point of resistance - ? Similarly, he said he had had no option other than to ultimately 'face the fear', difficult as that was – he was already deeply immersed in it. Again, presumably for some this might not be a particularly easy process to carry out (and there may well be a need for assistance and support). Others, of course, might revel in 'self-exploration - ? (D.H./Lawrence, *'we are thought explorers'*). Still others of course may not be keen to open what they might see as a 'tin of worms' – and it is obviously their own call.

Given usual levels of 'normal', base, existential fear, might the role of meditation might prove to be important, as the individual can then undertake the process of *'facing themselves and any fear'*, at their own pace, privately and in their own time (again, more severe anxiety states may well need help and support) - ? The earlier stages might well prove to involve a degree of difficulty, and some degree of persistence is probably needed, then over time developing the useful facility of being able to 'bypass' the obstructive thoughts that can come, such as thoughts of impatience to get 'quick results', of 'not being ok' or say, 'to not have problematical situations'.

Once experience of the process is gained, and as 'nothing succeeds like success', then the process can become more comfortable, and in itself, less fearful. As above, for some maybe , such a self-finding 'freerange-type' journey may well be an adventure , welcoming any 'facing fear' challenge involved - ?

Added plus-es ----

Another positive help in this area no doubt is that 'mind watching' is done at the individual level but without judgement – in other words the process of 'beating the self up' can , as part of the 'realism' process, be 'watched' in itself, and legitimately put aside, enhancing self-acceptance , particularly of any 'less-than perfect' aspects. Assuming 'existential fear' (eg. Fear of not being 'perfect' or 'ok) could well be present for most, and could be said to be a natural phenomenon' (though often maybe enhanced/enlarged by 'collective mass trends/expectations/mores' - ?), presumably therefore no personal blame or shame needs to be allocated by the individual concerned, or by others in terms of experiencing 'fear'.

.('the individual doesn't have to take on responsibility for the current ('imperfect') state of the world but can then accept their own small individual sized on-going level of responsibility (if they develop a desire to do so) to then act as a positive force in the world '-----) (after : M. Scott Peck)).

Practising the 'non-judgemental' approach implies often that a less critical stance is then taken – the self is in effect treated more kindly, in a more compassionate manner, less 'perfection expectation', which can then be a key for that individual to then be able to respond

outwardly in compassionate mode. The process of then 'facing' 'existential fear', and so 'unmasking' it and its power, involves too a certain amount of courage, so is to be lauded and encouraged – with then the due rewards to be claimed further down the line ----

'Being OK / not OK'-----

The question of 'being ok' (i.e. within society) has been said to be a base existential fear for many, due no doubt to a formidable array of factors such as the individual's innate and 'natural' fear level, strong 'peer pressure'/relationship influences, past cultural conditioning of the individual, the actuality of uncertainty/insecurity, the individual's journey through life (eg. not always knowing the route), the dynamic 'hit' factors individuals can face (egs. health, relationship, economic factors), the current cultural conditioning of the individual, including 'external' conditioning factors such as media , religious, governmental influences – the list could indeed be long-----.

. *'Most people are other people'*, said Oscar Wilde, presumably meaning how much the 'self' is affected by others, implying perhaps not then leaving enough 'real self' - ?

'The hardest thing is to be yourself' 19th century female author.

And a more modern take from a rising young actor in a broadsheet UK paper very recently (Oct '17) :

' It's the hardest thing to live authentically'

Historically , it may not have been too easy to be a 'relaxed 'ok' self"', particularly when according to religious teachings, ('conditioning'), the individual for instance was 'automatically a sinner' - ? In some cultures, particularly of the authoritarian, dictatorial variety, little scope for individuality was /is available, so not too much scope for 'finding the self', let alone self-acceptance. Other cultures were specifically 'know your place' (generally in the lower echelons----), again maybe not offering too much support to individual self-worth estimations.

Social conditioning could be a significant influence - back along in the UK, for instance, to be good at something was discouraged, presumably social conditioning arisen from a fear of people becoming 'too big for their boots', so individuals and individual prowess were 'kept down'.

Then in addition to all the above factors not necessarily working in the individuals favour, there's the spiritual scenario of freewill man 'off on his own, and then finding her/his way back home' - ' man' as it were is 'separate', 'out in the wilderness', 'doing own thing' and ultimately needing to learn/re-learn 'oneness' reality - quite a scenario all round, though undoubtedly some individuals didn't/don't make too bad a fist of it - maybe it's 'organised, collective man' that most needs to make the progressions - ? (*perhaps, for instance, by limiting 'financial pull'- ?*)

'At home ----- ?'

It's not an uncommon message from people that have experienced 'transcendental oneness' that they then feel 'fully at home', fully validated as an individual, fully 'at one', so maybe there's a corollary - that is, there can then exist a natural state of discontent with 'normal'

life and/or 'the self', as is currently known - ? (and therefore the fullest measure of 'self-love' may not be appropriate until naturally experienced at the 'oneness at home' ultimate stage - ?) Some can appear though to have a degree of difficulty contemplating that situations could in reality be negative, less than perfect, unsatisfactory, untenable --- and have then a preference to see through 'rose tinted lenses' – an 'uneasiness maybe linked to the author's observation below - ?

(and individuals may of course be inhibited by cultural expectations on them - ?)

Stephen Irvine (*A Gradual Awakening*) addresses this area :

'The sense of unworthiness, it seems, comes out of our being talked out of, trained out of, conditioned out of, trusting our natural being. It is a result of being turned away from ourselves, being taught to distrust ourselves. ----- we have come to think we are not worthy of self-love – because we have lost our natural love of ourselves, our natural self-respect.'

Others (eg, Fromm, Foley, Pirsig et al) have commented on the fact that the 'miniscule-small' powerless individual is daunted to 'self-think' and 'self-determine' in the face of a world dominated and run by 'large' organisations – organisations, firms and governments – seemingly often acting in their own interests, maybe at times at the 'expense' of the less powerful in society – (particularly relevant maybe in 'money and power' based cultures - ?) ?

One UK broadsheet writer too, in a recent (Oct. 17) piece about the 'self'-orientated' cultural trend in modern western-style societies, criticises it as being 'self-obsessed' and 'neurotic', presumably then leading to an 'unexpanded, small-self' view of the world , which then would seem though to be an unlikely cause for a writer such as Stephen Levine to espouse - ? Probably, though, the 'self-love' Stephen Levine refers to is the 'work on self, self-nurturing' variety then leading to 'self-care and compassion', then facilitating 'care and compassion for others - ?

Would the modern science-influenced accent on 'logic and rational' by default undermine authentic natural individual powers such as innateness, instinct , intuition, innateness , 'sixth sense' - ?

'Heaven --- and hell --- '

Humans influence affairs, presumably to a considerable extent -----.

'Man creates ---- and heaven or hell can be the result'

(Richard Feynman, former renowned US scientist)

Take for instance some potential effects of 'free market' type of thinking within western style materialistically-based cultures, in which market forces reign supreme, then relegating human factors (say, quality factors such as ethics and values) by default to a less significant role.

Specific influences of this culture have been said to be the degree to which people have been conditioned to become highly competitivised, money conditioned and to operate as lone individual economic units, with the effect of by default social priorities/fellow feeling becoming more marginalised and a key 'individual/social' balance, according to some , becoming adversely influenced..

Such a drive to competitiveness then also appears to place great emphasis on 'winning;' and needing to 'be right' (which could be a compensating force to try to produce/force 'okness' - ?), but which then might produce 'unnatural' level of efforts to maintain such a position, as again Stephen Levine refers to :

'----- it's the sense of unworthiness which maintains ego. The ego is not so much an entity out to conquer the world ; much of the momentary grasping we call ego is a compensatory mechanism trying to disprove unworthiness. When the sense of unworthiness falls away, there is a good deal less ego to support.'

The pursuit then of self-knowledge and self-awareness via say meditation and, say, 'mindfulness' techniques, could then lead to less need for ego, given the real knowledge and understanding the individual will have likely then gained, leading also to true reinforcement of self-image and real internal strength - ?

4 : Aspects of the 'self-work' route:

The 'work on self' route could be said to be one of two broad approaches, one of which could be broadly described as 'being being taught how to be spiritual'. This method is no real surprise as it has been a common way, for instance, of treating younger people in education. In terms of accessing any 'expanded awareness' states, though, it may have its limitations, in that there is the feeling that the way needs to be 'real and authentic', rather than 'manufactured', as well as it being the individual's own journey. So, for instance, using 'compassion' as a marker, in that it is often quoted as being a trait of an 'expanded awareness' individual, a person could be told/taught that they should be 'compassionate – the question then becomes - would they then, though, be able to show genuine compassion to another - ?

If, for instance, they had experienced mainly negative critical-based conditioning in their past, the argument might be that they could then struggle to emanate genuine positive compassion from within themselves, they could only produce 'contrived compassion'. On the other hand, the effects of the other broad approach, the process of undertaking work on themselves to gain self-understanding of the drivers of their attitudes and actions, could well involve realisations of limitations and/or restrictions within their own current set-up, as well as at the same time instituting more of a self-nurturing approach, then releasing a natural facility to exhibit compassion for others , the self-work having then also stimulated growth and development within the individual.

The renowned psychologist, Carl Jung, was of the opinion that the 'self-work' route was the key to authenticity, ('enlightenment is the illumination of darkness') but that because it could be perceived to involve some difficulty, and quite possibly experiencing some fear too, he felt it would not necessarily be a popular chosen route . In practice though it's clear that many individuals - most even(?) - will not operate at the 'perfect being' level, being human after all implies some 'imperfections' - ?

One inhibitor to peoples' ability to 'own up' to imperfections which is said to have increased in recent times due to 'social norming' trends, is the presence of strong cultural 'perfection' norms that can give the message that people should be 'instantly perfect' (i.e. no room for

'work in progress'), and that their aspirations and characters should be defined within such a relatively narrow array of external (i.e. to them) 'success norms' (eg. 'the individual should be wealthy/seeking for evermore wealth').

There is in modern western-style cultures the relatively strong accent on 'external validation' in which the culture sets the standards of 'success' (i.e. externally to the individual – in modern times wealth and power for instance appear to be strong success factors, but again for instance do not cater too well for people for whom development and 'being' in life are important).

People interested in following any 'expanded awareness' path are fairly obviously following a development and 'being' route, so general culture is not offering too much scope for such people - in fact due to such a strong focus on material gain and externally -rated 'ok'ness, it could be argued that general culture has a potentially negative impact on non-concrete life areas. This then can represent a degree of real difficulty in that individuals then have to be prepared to some extent 'swim against the tide' to follow 'being' development paths.

Some, of course might see any such difficulties as challenges to take on, and if the individual is prepared to take a bit of a plunge and, for instance, admit to a degree of imperfection, the actual self-work doesn't have to be necessarily overly difficult and, of course too, the individual can do the work in private and at their own pace, in their own time/ The individual can identify their own bit of 'imperfection' – say, a tendency to rush at things too much, or a tendency to want to avoid difficulties/problems (or whatever), and then use, say, mindfulness technique to 'watch' these 'imperfect' impulses occurring, then creating that bit of space and time to be able then to avoid automatic reaction syndrome, and, as it were, change the record (*see below for more on this*).

The assumption is made here for this work, then, that 'real' and authentic responses are important in terms of leading to a level of 'self-reality' which can then be effective in terms of further down the line keying into any larger reality ('expanded consciousness') wavelengths, and that the self-work route is a route likely to deliver the desired results.

'Meditation 'overview' ----

To facilitate 'mind and thought watching', then creating space and freedom for the individual from automatic mental reaction, (real 'freerange country - ?), meditation can be partly used to 'slow up the system' (here making an assumption that modern life is fast-paced), to then give more opportunity to watch the current operating system at work without self-blaming or judging (for example, thoughts that 'drive' the individual to, say, want things to be 'instantly perfect' ('unrealism') – the idea then being that such 'impulse thoughts' can be seen, but with the small time gap which meditation/mindfulness can help facilitate, not necessarily automatically reacted to and/or acted upon..

The 'slowing-down' helped by the meditative process can help give the individual that bit of 'time and space' to watch the thought process, and the thoughts, hence potentially avoiding automatic enactment related to the thought(s), in this case, for example, going straight into dissatisfaction because of perceived 'imperfection'.

Such a mind watching process can then lead the watcher to realisations as to the source of such 'self impulses', often lying in previous external and internal conditionings, the

understanding of which can then also help considerably in the process of the individual gaining freedom from what's been called 'the tyranny of the mind'. Might this in fact be a 'base' move in terms of 'feeling free', attaining full 'freeranger' status- and leading to access of any 'expanded consciousness' states - ?

' Seeing ----- is believing ----- ?'

The 'work on self' self-knowledge gained as mentioned above, can then lead into a 'bigger picture' level of understanding, an 'overview' style of 'holistic knowing' (as opposed to limited dimension 'mind knowledge'). On the self-knowledge journey, valuable insights can occur which can contribute significantly – it's as if the individual at this stage is going beyond 'self' and enabled to 'tune in' to 'higher energy' wavelengths. The ability to gain overview understanding was traditionally sometimes called 'seeing' and people with this capacity were known as 'see-ers'.

These people had probably experienced then a level of understanding that they became 'holistically knowing', so 'belief', as mentioned in the heading above, is not really the appropriate medium. The old saying was "believe nothing of what you hear, and half of what you see", whereas the see-er's 'knowing' could be at a more fundamental, holistic 'being' level.. This state is said to be only 'realised' and 'understood' via direct experience, (i.e. by the individual), in which case it isn't available to be accessed just at 'mind' level.

'Getting real ----- '

Working then on the assumption that the 'first move' to the process ('journey') of tuning in to the 'bigger reality' is then to tune to the current individual reality experience, the 'being where you are' state, which often involves then accepting 'imperfection' as a current state in the shorter-term to be able then move forward in the longer-term.. This may sound reasonably straightforward but in practice may be a bit more difficult - it would involve for instance, recognising and then giving up (via for instance help from meditative practice) any 'self-deluding' small-made private versions of reality, which of could, for instance, also involve giving up any 'over addictions' to 'comforts' (on the basis that such 'comfort addictions' could then act as 'pitfalls' on the 'being' development journey - eg. wealth accumulation addiction for instance might apply in some cases, - ?)

Existential fear levels, sometimes maybe exacerbated by cultural influences, could also influence abilities to 'take reality stock' ('being busy', for instance, to 'prove' a successful life', and 'be ok', is sometimes used as an example of an 'automatic' existential fear response pattern, and is a currently (2017) reported trend). The state of 'wanting/needing to be ok', and then involving undue 'external' (i.e. to the individual) influence and concern via, for instance, social norms, is also cited as a common block to 'getting real' – maybe the power of social peer and culture forces shouldn't be underestimated - ? The same could for instance, act as a barrier to the route to any 'expanded consciousness' 'second meadows', in that the flow of the natural processes could then be impeded. One eastern spiritual guide mapped , for instance, one of the key natural processes as :

Mass >>>> Individual >>>> Spiritual (personal)

In earlier, less experienced days, the individual is, say, influenced often largely by current cultural influences, then as experience increases along with personal strength, moves onto a more independent individually-driven plane, then via 'individual realism acceptance', has the

opportunity to develop into the 'beyond the self' sphere, which could involve, for instance, personal spirituality. Such a pattern, though, may not be over discernable in 'mass culture' in modern times, it's thought, due to 'narrow' focus for instance, on material gain.

(No doubt many experienced people experience their own 'journey of progression' through life. Recent reports indicate that spiritual matters and experience are in fact for instance relevant for a large majority of individuals – estimated at around 85 – 90% - maybe the cultural 'drivers', who appear to have espoused in recent times a more secular approach, need to take note - ?)

'Time --- of the essence ---- ?'

Time is no doubt needed for any such 'getting real' process to occur (again, aided by, say, meditative/mindfulness processes): to move from 'A' to 'Z' just like that in one easy 'go' is probably not a realistic proposition, especially in terms of longer-term viability, just as any trying to 'run' before 'walking' is likewise something of an unrealistic proposition.

(again, many cultural 'mores' can, though, seem to act to push individuals into the 'non-reality' realms. There is currently (2016/7) apparently a reported trend for instance, of the wealthy stressing over their rankings in the wealth stakes,(presumably influenced by a heavy 'competitivism' mass culture component),, together with an associated increase in the use of therapy by them. It's often said, too, that 'mass' cultural forces can often act as 'perfection conditioning' , presenting individuals with scenarios that suggest they should be 'instantly 'perfect, with 'perfect' often, for instance, being defined by commercial interests, through, say, the considerable power of advertising. Such influences, though, then can tend to be seen in perspective at the 'individual' stage, with then the ability to discount them if needs be.)

'Calming down ----- '

So, the argument goes, the individual, with some commitment, can choose to work to drop all the stuff that goes with such trends, such as over-worrying how others see them, (as before, 'seeing' such thoughts forming and gradually getting to react automatically less to them, they thereby losing their 'control' power) and settle down (meditation may still be a help) and 'be where he/she is', as in the longer run they'll be 'stronger and more content' (which anyway others will be admiring of ----- in a real sense?) As a further ploy, the individual may decide not to employ the common ('mass cultural') mode of being 'target/result' focused, on the basis that any stress/anxiety involved within that mode is then bye-passed, removing a potential blocker to actual progress, which, the argument goes, will occur naturally and at its own pace (i.e. if the self-work 'inputs' are made, then, if 'un-barriered', the 'outputs' then follow). A practical example could be, for instance, the giving up of chasing on the 'more, more' route, rather settling for a fixed income and working within that , as many 'downsizers' have undoubtedly practiced.

(n.b the above paragraph, though, is not written though, with the intention of encouraging 'social insensitivity' – according to developmental psychologists, social needs and sensibilities are essential integral needs for humans. If though they are too 'to the fore', say in the form of strong social norming, then causing social anxiety, then a 're-balancing' with more emphasis on real individual needs and strength may be needed))

Facing, accepting and then 'unmasking' basic long-term on-going existential fear leading to a greater acceptance and appreciation of reality (as no doubt happens with many individuals), may well be a route to 'second meadows' – the good news being that the individual if she/he

so wishes can do the work needed by themselves (and/ or of course with help if needed/desired) and at their own pace and at their own level.

(as before, if stronger anxiety states exist, there may well be a need for some help and support, as in H's case).

When P's 'conventional' life unravelled, he was instinctively drawn to slowing his life and thoughts down, facilitating this by moving for awhile to a 'remote' cabin on the estate of an acquaintance, spending then quiet time 'getting to know myself' more as he says, feeling that he'd been 'hurtled along' somewhat by mainstream life. He emerged after a few months with a different take and differing path to life, one which he's found 'infinitely personally more rewarding'. He found the initial period quite difficult feeling himself to be in something of a 'no-man's land' but gradually let his 'system' settle within the quiet surroundings and relative isolation, and as he says, his 'real' self' started to emerge naturally..

The 'Master' experience -----

Some may feel the need anyway for a mentor which might lead to faster progression (the main potential problem lying maybe in finding someone who has travelled the route to act as mentor - ?) Someone who'd experienced a level of 'expanded consciousness', writing on the internet, made the point that being with others on the same journey, or particularly with someone who'd already made that journey (eg. traditionally a 'Master', maybe 'mentor' might be a more up-to-date term?), could be an immense support and help to the seeking/developing 'real' individual . He suggested that experiencing expanded level consciousness was so much easier under these conditions (and the point's already been made above that being in 'ordinary (i.e. materialistic-level) life' might impinge on the ability to 'go higher'). Many westerners have, for instance, travelled to the east to this end, to be then metaphorically, if not physically, 'thrown out of the window' ----- .

A 'Master/mentor' experience presumably does not necessarily have to be 'live' as H's case-study shows, in that his support was a self-help book. The 'mind' though, has been said to have the ability to develop cunning self-asserting/deluding ploys, and the individual working alone probably then needs to adopt the 'doubt everything' approach and regularly practise the process of 'stilling the mind' (for which meditation is a useful tool) to then allow 'universal insights' to happen, which can be experienced 'holistically' as opposed to just on a one-dimensional mental level.

'It's good to be able to change from 'transmit' to 'receive' to then be able to 'tune into' the 'universal wavelengths and energies' ---- ' Anon

5 : 'Self-work Route Practicalities ----- '

Given then that general cultures as above, might not be currently (2017/8) over-conducive to 'expanded awareness'/ 'spiritual awakening' attainment, the questing individual might then have to take their own initiative(s) to head in that direction. For those interested in exploring to find the 'second meadows', it might be useful to re- highlight a potential path, whilst bearing in mind that no doubt there could be more than just one route available. One potential

path route as mentioned above is highlighted below – the individual will likely be the judge of whether it has any appeal for her/him, particularly if it 'strikes any inner chord' with them. On the other hand, some might just be interested and try to give this route a 'whirl' ----

The self-work route itself has at least shown potential results in that it's to some extent based on 'H''s case-study (previously), and has a degree of logic involved in that connection with one reality (i.e. the 'self reality') could seemingly lead smoothly to connection with other realities, and to some at least, it's a process that can 'ring true' – there presumably though by definition can be no hard and fast certainties or outcomes in the business of exploration - ? Adopting such a 'self-work' approach could also presumably act as a measure of exercising a level of self-responsibility, which might be a useful contributor to an individual's progression - ?

' not necessarily so ----- ' (Zen Master)

Suggested Process :

Route outline :

1st stage :

The individual, alone or with help, identifies any potential negative self-trends/processes that currently occur 'automatically' (possible common egs. : *problem/difficulty avoidance, on-going self-criticality, stressing, 'rushing' mode, over politeness/ingratiation, over compliance, 'being busy', 'perfection targetting', lack of preparedness, aggression, general impatience, and so forth*).

By choosing what's perceived to be a potential negative-impact trait, the individual takes an important step towards a fuller reality position . General intolerance-based goals and expectations imbibed from 'mass culture', can often be unrealistically high, (the 'instant perfection' scenario) and restricting in terms of 'un-allowing' the individual time and resources to develop to any such 'perfection' level. Again, by taking the step to recognise and accept a degree of 'imperfection', the individual is taking a step to fuller understanding and self-acceptance, leading via mindfulness-type work, then to the possibility of real, self-managed control over their own lives, as well as connecting more strongly to reality

2nd stage :

The individual determines to employ mindfulness technique and self-watch and observe the occasions in which the identified self-trend/process occurs (eg.s 'rushing' at jobs/activities, always expecting 'instant perfection'). The individual 'allows' the identified trend (i.e. aims to avoid any automatic rejection when trend shows, or any 'beating self up' reactions – both in themselves worthy of the 'watching treatment) and notes when this trend is occurring, and notes any secondary mental activity eg, any thoughts which are judgemental/critical of the trend. Because self-criticality may have been the norm in the past and therefore a 'grooved' mindset, it is likely then to re-occur , but as 'practice makes perfect', a non-judgemental watch of the process in action can become more functional over time – i.e. take the 'critical sting out of the process - some persistence could though be needed.

3rd stage :

Over time, the 'watching' process works, as it then develops that bit of space and time to enable the watcher to then actively choose (rather than be 'set' in automatic response mode) to continue with the automatic behavioural responses or not to, and/or to then respond in a different preferred manner. It's the creation of this 'pause' effect, enabled by a non-critical process of self-watching, that then leads to the opportunity of choice as the basis for behaviour, as opposed to any habitual automatic reaction behaviour, which in turn then means that the individual takes more self control, gradually then becoming increasingly grounded in the new reality, as well as boosting self-confidence and self-strength.

(A 'secondary' benefit can also occur, in that the individual in effect changes from an automatic self-critical approach to self, to a more 'allowing', compassion-based approach, then leading to a generally more self-nurturing take on life, with associated benefits, and also, over time, an ability to take a more compassionate approach to dealing with others.)

The process facilitates the individual becoming free of the automatic reaction forces which have operated hitherto, and to gain awareness of 'auto traits', which can then be a real foundation step to self-growth and freedom itself ----- the individual becoming 'master of their own ship -----' As 'fear' can be the basis for the existence of negative traits, and self-critical 'beating self up' behaviour, the 'self-watching' process can also perform the key function of diminishing such fear over time, with positive ramifications for both self -- acceptance, self -nurturing and positive 'realism' living, all of which could then well contribute significantly to the cause of 'expanded awareness' living, and accessing 'the second meadows'.

4th stage

The self-work 'watching' a particular pattern then tends to extend, with use and practice, to the individual then being able to 'watch' her/his mental processes in general, to the point then of realisation that whilst previous conditioning has often lead to the individual operating on a given and self-made set of 'rules', such fixed rules aren't always effective when dealing with on-going 'new' dynamic situations. Such fixed mindsets, said to be common in individuals and 'ism' movements, often with existential fear/ insecurity as their source, have been labelled as being part of the 'tyranny of the mind', in that there's then a lack of mental freedom with which to meet the conditions of dynamic situations as they occur.

5th stage - 'Fuller - and deeper -'

(fuller self-knowing, opening then the door to wider knowing/understanding, in turn opening door to 'second meadows')

'Awakening is the process of de-programming;

' Enlightenment is the de-programmed state' (Jed McKenna)

At this stage , and with set mental mindsets becoming less all-controlling, (*Eckhart Tolle's idea of the mind becoming the servant, rather than 'running the show'*) the individual can experience then more 'real self' freeranger type of conditions, which as a positive experience

can then further bolster self-acceptance, said to be one of the keys to then experiencing a wider 'expanded' consciousness' .

Meditation practice, which in itself helps to facilitate self-watching, can also give relaxation at deeper levels, then useful to contribute to any 'awakening' process (i.e developing self awareness of 'automatic processes' within the individual) involved in gaining expanded awareness levels and help to 'see' the machinations of the mind (and to then have the facility to 'bypass' those that are unhelpful) and develop and be open to deeper levels of understanding and insights,.

Stephen Levine (*A Gradual Awakening*) offers some useful insight :

' We don't have to be afraid to see anything. In a clear seeing of anger, or insecurity, or of fear or doubt, each thing is defused, its reactive power dissipated. ----- We don't suppress it, or act it out ---- we just watch it come --- and go --- --- we may not know the root of such feelings ---- it's ok not to know ---- it then leaves room for knowing'

It's good to know that such work can be done in this sort of relaxed, non self-critical manner, (and individually so at a pace and level of intensity to suit that particular person) the practice of which can then help dissipate any over-critical 'beating the self up' tendencies ---- then leading to the ability to handle the self more compassionately---- then leading to the ability to handle others with more compassion ----- .(the 'real' route to 'compassion' - ?)

'Realistically speaking ----- '

As an example of the 'new realism' gained, people who have benefited from such a 'self-watching' process, then tend to be more grounded, illustrated by the fact that they can be more realistic about their expectations, not now being on the 'fast-flow, mainstream' treadmill of having to try attaining any over-high general 'cultural expectations' ; rather they are now treading their own (freerange?) path , making their own objectives---- (as many , for instance, with experience, of course do).

A useful further effect is that a better perspective of 'failure ' can be realised, one that can take the approach of being somewhat sanguine about it, then adopting the realistic approach of 'not being able to get it all instantly right, always opportunity for another try', which can suitably take pressure off, and so become a de-stressing/life affirming process. Being based at the individual level, such a self-awareness creation process can 'fit', in that it can proceed at the pace suitable for that individual.

(maybe at this point it's worth pointing out that the now 'well-adjusted' and increasingly aware individual from this process will likely then to be somewhat different from the average 'fast flow entrapped' person' ----)

'gurus' abound ----- ?

For some, some help and guidance may be needed and/or wanted, and there are many so-called 'new age' self development movements which exist, from traditional eastern-style gurus to modern more 'man-made' strands of religions. Some have been charged with being more

about money making or supporting egos of gurus, than the development of the individual. It could be an area that is ripe for 'subtle ego activity', so if help is needed, then it's perhaps important to employ intuition if possible (and bearing in mind that individual strength may have been weakened in 'largist' culture - ?) and choose a help source which feels 'right', perhaps the acid test question being :

'does this person/movement exist to support/help the individual (in a real sense) or are they more about meeting their own agenda /objectives - ?'

In a competitivised, heavily self- orientated world there are no doubt many movements aiming to exert their own influences and ideas. The 'real self'-strengthening, self-watching procedures can then help the individual navigate any such minefield to make choices that suit, and that prove to be beneficial. The argument is that the 'real' mentors will have the level of understanding that their process needs to be non-egotistical (they have their own sufficient internal strength and security) and therefore free to focus on the needs and development of the 'seeker', which is then the real route to progress and in turn will provide 'goodies' for all involved. One helpful book which articulates such leadership (and based on Lao-Tsu's teachings) is *The Tao of Leadership* by John Heider.

Again, a key advantages of the 'self-work', 'self-watch' process is that it can take place at whatever level, so anyone can 'give it a go' at their own pace and level, and as they proceed, gaining strength and confidence, in actuality then over time, become their own coach -----

'Straight ('normed mass'?) are the roads of improvement, crooked ('bio-diverse individuals'?) are the ways of genius ----- ' (Will Blake)

'Talent does what it can, --- genius does what it must' (name in blog folder) (Levine quote p. 130)

6. Support From History : The American Transcendentalism Movement from the 19th Century

The 'on the make' self-seeking money-orientated culture of modern times (2017) appears to operate without too much reference to any ethical/value considerations – the thing is to 'be the winner', virtually at all costs, it seems at times, with any social sensibilities seemingly often getting then 'short shrift'. The potential problem, though, could be that such a situation, in which the focus on personal gain and wealth accumulation is so strong, can then have the effect that some real human needs can be by default get over-low priority, particularly maybe those of any social constituents, with the culture then becoming 'imbalanced' and lopsided, leading to potential limitations and 'imbalance' problems, particularly relating to the needs of the individual - ?

One movement supporting the individual which arose in eastern America in the 1800's became known as the 'transcendence' movement, apparently drawing off sources such as the Unitarian church, eastern traditions of personal spirituality and eminent European thinkers such as Swedenborg. This movement focused more on the individual, maintaining that the essential nature of man, if 'mass uninfluenced', was good, and that it was the prevailing culture and its institutions which then potentially 'sullied' man and threw her/him

off course . This could sound very much like 'freerange' type of thinking, plus that of major spiritual mentors such as Buddha :

'your own salvation is down to you - don't rely on others'

(i.e. the individual needs to 'walk their own path' , which could be the mid part of the eastern-originated sequence : 'mass >> individual >> spiritual (personal)' - ? Some have suggested that this would be a 'selfish, egotistical' move, but others point to the fact that 'unbarrier-ed' man has natural social and fellowship strands and needs which act to prevent over self-absorption).

Prominent American 'independent-ists' at the time such as Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau were part of this group. The further important consideration, no doubt explored by the transcendentalists, is the question as to whether in fact 'real' spirituality is an individual event, only accessed by *individual* 'questing' - ? If this is so, then there can be implications for the world as is currently known in which 'large' ('big is best', 'might is right') can tend to predominate, 'small' then automatically tending to be being seen to be of low importance, (and the traditional purveyors of spiritualism (i.e. organised religions) being themselves 'largist'). Under the transcendentalist and 'freerange' type analyses, 'big' predominance would then be 'putting the cart before the horse' - the 'small' - the individual - now being the most important unit, in terms of accessing any 'expanded awareness/higher consciousness' states.

The potential problem for some, though, could be that 'the rush to large' (eg. the business mantra in recent times of heavy focus on growth, 'being big') appears to be basically fear /insecurity driven, and a self-perpetuating /increasing vortex-type trend - the more 'big beast' power predators in the world, the greater the need to collectivise for safety, then increasing the propensity of 'big', then intensifying the need for protection, then ---- '

Some argue that such an 'auto-reaction' trend is limited in its ability to solve problems, particularly of the longer-term type such as planet degradation and may well in fact increase them (particularly with an associated 'out-for-self' cultural philosophy - ?), and that a more aware approach involving more understanding of the forces and trends involved , and man's role and responsibilities, is needed for better on-going world 'survive and thrive' conditions - ?

Using this type of analysis would then lead to the thinking that the 'big is best' route might not in the longer-term be the potentially most effective path, and has the added (major?) drawback of then being limited in the ability to develop and/or support the fuller development of people or their ability to access any transcendental (eg, 'expanded awareness') states. The transcendentalist movement to this end supported the 'sanctity of the individual', and the cultivation of self-reliance, self-responsibility and, presumably, the 'unbarrier-ed' individual's full development to the 'self-actualisation' (the 'full potential' position) level, leading then to the possibility of accessing greater/expanded awareness levels

7 : Endpiece -----

'The Freerange Individual'

Spending reasonable amounts of time in quiet green oases, working in comfortable patterns, variations and paces, being 'master' of the 'little ship', can be 'balm for the soul'. Not so good maybe, though, for creating adrenalin for a more modern fast-paced life, but pretty good to practice Fritz Schumacher's exhortation to have a 'stop and think' - ? Growing things can bring a strong awareness of basics - such as, for instance, if the sun don't shine, and the rain don't fall, then, finito!. Back to basics, back to thinking 'it's all in pretty much of a hurry, these days

to where?

for what?

(or is it more about appeasing base, existential insecurity, as Yamate Kunihiro suggests - ?)

Aiming higher, aiming for the bigger, expanded awareness self, for even the so-called 'enlightened' state - but is it all 'eyewash', as some might perhaps describe it, particularly in an analytical, material-gear world, 'dumbing down' as some might say, as opposed to 'wising up' - ?

'A man's reach should be beyond his grasp, else what's a heaven for?' (Browning)

'Over - comfortable materialism ----- ?'

In this age of so-called 'affluenza', have the sparkling array of goodies on offer, for instance, bedazzled and stopped/slowed up the 'restless spirits' - ? Is there now, for instance, a case of 'lost vision and faith' - and now, only if it can be felt or touched, it is to be believed - ? Spiritualism in the form of organised paternalistic western church delivery, for instance, has declined and secularism arisen, but is there a chance, though, that *'the baby may have been thrown out with the bathwater'* along the way, the 'baby' in this instance, being a personal spiritual aspect to life - ? This theme is quite well-worn : William Blake for instance was delivering it back along a bit now - around 1800 to be more precise.

(reports in the broadsheet press in late 17 indicate that any increased 'mass' trend of secularism apparently has not in fact reduced the incidence of spirituality, estimating that spirituality could in fact be important to as high as 85 - 90% of individuals).

In modern times and in western climes, the historical parental and paternalistic approach of religious orders might well have palled, thwarting maybe fuller personal/individual development, important probably to growth-seeking freerangers, who at the very least are likely to want to operate 'multi-dimensionally', as opposed to single-dimensionally at any base material level. This may then mean investigating, for instance, such areas as 'expanded consciousness' and/or personal spirituality - ?

No doubt many so-called 'ordinary' people do report what they describe as spiritual experiences, but at the individual level - maybe in reality spirituality can only be experienced at this level - ? Spiritual experience may not be verifiable by mass analytical methods, but does that necessarily render it invalid? If it's real and beneficial to the individual, (and, presumably not over-harming others), then maybe it needs to be accepted as real and

genuine human experience - ?

(being of the 'non concrete' variety, spiritual matters maybe can at times get summarily dismissed by rational, scientific-type minds - ?)

'Peakers ---- '

Maslow, the psychology researcher already referred to, was apparently surprised by the number of his 'psychologically healthy' subjects who reported 'peak experiences', citing experiences of intense joy, well-being and mystical-type moments, and went on to specifically investigate such phenomena, concluding that they could be real, 'authentic' experiences and that an 'expanded level of being/consciousness' could be a real possibility, having been experienced by some (and as many are reporting in modern times – see '*spiritual awakening*' on the net.)

A significant minority of humans actively seek to attain expanded states of being via the personal growth movement, and many spiritual teachings of eastern origin aver that the business of humans is to grow in a spiritual sense, some suggesting that every human will ultimately (some say after maybe many lifetimes - ?) end up in a 'state of grace', experiencing full awareness, 'one-ness', love, bliss and compassion.

Whilst all the spiritual stuff might sound far-fetched to some and to an extent removed from current experience, maybe it's not too bad an idea to recall that the experience of every human is essentially likely to be limited – individuals after all being small organisms – and that it could then be likely there's the potential to experience outside the individual's current realm, whilst also of course retaining some suitably critical facility to detect any hocus pocus. The area of spirituality, non-concrete as it is, could presumably be a potential, erm, nirvana for fraudsters. In other words, to practice good freeranging, keeping the mind relatively open, and enquiring, along with an appropriate measure of wariness.

Maybe the 'expanded' level can be investigated by examining Maslow's highest human need level he identified, that of 'self-actualisation' - becoming the fullest version of self a person can become, which can reverberate strongly for those freerangers on a journey of personal growth and the exploration of their individual natures and potential.

'Outrageous luck --- or what ---- ?'

Some have said that as full satisfaction, joy, well-being and so forth arrive when the individual 'arrives home' at 'oneness' with 'Tao', the natural universal energy that is said to be ever operating, a degree of dissatisfaction with 'life as is currently known' is an appropriate response, (which may of course not sit over comfortably with any said-to-be common tendencies to wish not to see things in a negative light - ?)

The idea that 'help from the universe' can/might become available to 'seekers', (and people who experience spiritual 'awakenings' report increased 'synchronicity' in life), is another fairly common strand to the 'expanded consciousness' tale. 'H', the subject of the case-study in *Wising Up* –pt. 1, said that his help 'came to him', rather than him actively seeking it :

'I'd stopped the car on double yellow lines in a small rural town and was heading into a second-hand bookshop, thinking 'what am I doing, this isn't me, someone's pulling my strings, I'm acting like a zombie'. Nevertheless I went in and straight over to a huge wall of second-hand

books, reached up and started to read the first book I pulled out, immediately and instinctively recognising that this book was for me, it was the help I was in need of (which it proved to be). I have no explanation for what happened, other than the possibility that I was in receipt of guiding help -----

Pure, outrageous luck, or 'help from the universe' - ? Who knows, really ---- ?

'Second meadows seeking ---- '

Finding 'the second meadows' may involve though some modern cultural difficulties and restraints in that modern culture can send the message that it's good to be focused and 'results orientated', particularly placing strong emphasis on 'wants', whereas in many ways the 'expanded consciousness' journey could seem to need the opposite, in terms of less focus on 'wants' and more on 'understanding/knowing' - ? There's the suggestion, for instance, to develop the facility to 'let things unfold', to then become 'the natural person', which again could be the anti-thesis of the modern 'driven' and target focused variety - ?

Modern fast-paced and 'hurry' rhythms may not help any 'enlightenment' cause, especially if, influenced by 'wants', they lead to a version of 'running before walking' - ? To get from 'A' to 'Z' could take a bit of time (ref. Stephen Irving's *A Gradual Awakening*), with varying stages involved, which might then be difficult to arrange for many caught up in a fast-paced cultural mainstream - ?

Maybe as that old boy Dorset farmer said, some years ago now, *'Tek yer time, me boyo, tek yer time'*.

'Idiotcy ---- '

'To generalise', they say, *'is to be an idiot'*, and so it may also not be the best idea to come up with prescriptive blueprints for this 'intangible' area - ? Humans as individuals presumably are at least to some extent inherently unique – bio-diversity applying, and those who are 'on the 'being development' journey', will likely be at differing places/levels. Peoples' conditioning experiences could well vary considerably and their circumstances will also likely be different and unique for each individual.

Is though, the 'expanded/transcendent awareness' area relevant to all? It may well be, for instance, that to people struggling for existence and survival, which presumably can apply to so-called advanced and developed countries as any other (recent reports - a considerable portion of children in the UK officially categorised as 'in poverty'), may have neither time or energy, therefore motivation to go beyond their own current struggle. Others may settle for 'life as is known', not having strong exploratory urges and/or being, say, materialistically well-off,, and/or being for instance in a strong and satisfactory (to them) social position.

The high control element of modern 'gig' economies in which people generally appear to experience lower security levels due to fewer work benefits (eg. lack of sickness pay, zero hours contracts) may then impact negatively on their ability to reach the higher levels of human needs, then acting as a 'barrier' to gaining any 'expanded awareness' states - ?

'Where it's at ----- ?'

There's some idea that to 'be where you're at' could be a first step on the development journey, potentially impaired, though, by any 'culturally perfect' expectations existing within cultures, and possibly expectations of individuals themselves, wishing to see themselves for instance in a particular light. It could be that developing an ability to see and accept the self in a so-called 'imperfect' state is the first step to personal freedom (and expanded consciousness levels) and takes a degree of courage on the part of the individual. The argument here is that by aligning with an individual 'reality', that individual can in effect be opening the door to connecting with the 'larger reality', then leading to the experiences on 'one-ness', full validation, bliss ----

(Eastern tradition has this 'larger reality' as 'Tao' – natural laws of the universe. Some modern spiritual guides such as Eckhart Tolle, refer for instance, to 'universal intelligence'.)

'Exploring ---- '

For those with the exploratory 'freerange' bent, interested in 'the development journey', and not entrapped at 'lower' need levels, the possible existence of 'second meadow bliss life' could though yet be of interest. The oft-quoted multiple benefits of 'transcended living' could in themselves act though as 'inhibitors' to reaching any such 'expanded awareness' state, creating possible 'over desire' for some - ? (for example, it could be that 'mind rules' reflecting an individual's understanding of 'how a spiritual person should be' could be a result of strong desire for 'positivity' - ?)

Aiming to reach a state wherein joy, energy, health, happiness, reverence, bliss, security and love are said to be the norm experiences, can presumably create 'heady' atmospheres then inducing maybe impulses of over-wanting and over-trying, both of which could impede, for instance, in the process of 'reality gaining', which some say is an important constituent of 'expanded awareness' - ? The individual finding and accepting their own 'real' position (as opposed to, say, living in a self-constructed 'un-real' world) could be a key to then experiencing a bigger, wider, universal reality - ?

' Small --- could still be 'beautiful' - ?

Fritz Schumacher, in his renowned work *Small is Beautiful*, suggested that as life as is known appears to be evermore geared to 'giantism' in the form of large organisations, large government central control, so it was then, in the interests of 'balance', important to insist on the attributes of 'small'. He could well have been thinking along Robert Pirsig's lines that the individual is where values lie and are generated – the individual is the guardian of 'quality', and is therefore important, in spite of what existing 'largist', 'big is best' cultures might transmit.

The ever-decreasing and tightening scenario of 'power and control' systems, beloved of 'large', then create insecurity (eg. the 'big beasts in the jungle' preying on 'small' – an anti civilisation model?), then nurturing the cause of 'size' as a defence against insecurity, then creating further insecurity, then evoking a 'more size' response (clarion call : 'economies of scale') then creating more insecurity ---- could this be the paradigm of modern life with individuals at the mercy of 'jungle life' rather than, say, man taking responsibility and taking civilising control, with an aim to create, say, Ruskin's 'noble people,, to the benefit of most,

rather than, say, the privileged few - ?

The eastern-originated sequence goes :

Mass >> Individual >> Universal (expanded consciousness, personal spirituality)

Maybe also useful therefore to bear in mind that the individual could be the gateway to 'expanded consciousness/awareness' states, which then aren't available at, say, any 'organisation' level- ?

(*therefore also to mature, self-responsible communities/societies - ?*)

' Big is best ----- ??'

The advance of 'largist' culture could then be said to by default be at the expense of the 'small', so the individual gets then less - less in material terms and less chance to seamlessly ascend the 'needs development' scale - ?

(*in the UK the ratio of the pay for instance of 'top' people against the average pay has widened considerably, public service pay has stagnated for the last decade, having been held down according to latest (April, 2017) reports, plus recent examples of exploitative commercial practice*),

To counter such 'mass' cultural trends, the individual can work to both understand the situation in which she/he finds themselves, and at their own salvation, aiming to redress the balance as far as possible in terms of providing for their own needs – both of which moves could be described as 'classically freeranger'.

' *Work out your own salvation – don't rely on others*' Buddha

' Home, home --- on the freerange --- '

One viewpoint has it that individuals are very small pieces of consciousness/ potential consciousness, a small chip off a big block, and that they've appeared in physical form on this planet to further their 'consciousness growth', and to the point where they become 'fully conscious' (i.e. 'enlightened'), then to remain 'transcendent'. Whilst some may find such considerations somewhat far-fetched, others do 'feel' this process, often being drawn to the feeling of 'completeness' and 'oneness', and can tend to describe it as a process of 'coming home'.

The individual is a small 'micro' entity in a 'macro' world (let alone the universe), so would it then be somewhat over-expectationary to expect the single individual 'to know all' - ? It 's probably then pretty reasonable to suggest that there could be a lot for the individual to 'find out', which then would explain why individuals, some at least, have a natural urge to explore – to 'freerange' - ?

The recognition that the individual is somewhat limited, yet capable of 'taking on more' both can take short-term pressure off, acting as a 'release valve' (i.e. not having to be 'instantly perfect'), and can encourage hope for the future, a powerful motivating force - ?

'Help from the universe ---- ?'

A further factor oft quoted is the fact that as the individual journeys along the exploratory self and universal discovery route, there can develop a sense and feeling of 'not being alone' – that there is a guidance and support system at work, (a 'God helps those who help themselves' scenario - ?) one which can also inspire and stimulate the individual, and which can though only be experienced by the questing individual her/his self. This could contrast quite strongly with, for instance, the more modern cultural phenomenon of individuals being seen as small 'lone economic units', ever competing and ever seeking 'more', which whilst may be good for 'business', is no doubt at least questionable as to how good, in the end, it is for individuals, particularly if it collides with, or barriers, peoples' need for 'self-exploration' and self-growth - ?

'Barrier-ed ---- ?'

One of the potential restrictions to accessing any 'expanded awareness' could well be an understandable fear of 'giving up the self'. No problem of course for those who have experience of the grander 'universal oneness' (see below) - then it's far more a case of 'moving on to bigger and better things', so maybe the best approach is the 'exploration' way, to see 'what's there' and where it ends up', an approach of course which will likely anyway suit those of an exploration bent, plus those who need and/or want to find a different 'operating system'.

The individual 'questing' could well be a precursor to the 'main event', which could then be described as a feeling of 'coming home', of being 'fully formed', 'whole' and comfortable in 'own skin', of 'being healed', in a 'holistic' sense, of joining (re-joining - ?) a bigger unity, universal 'Tao', of being in a rightful place, experiencing full holistic health, 'oneness', bliss, universal energy and love - of being fully and freely 'connected', of being 'natural and right', fully validated -----

And there's probably nothing just quite like it -----

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Add on (1)

Self - actualisation

Modern psychologists, including the eminent Prof. Cary Cooper of Lancaster University (UK), have sought to put more meat on Maslow's frame by identifying the modern characteristics of the 'self-actualised' person, and it's these characteristics which could seem to be relevant to 'freerangers':

The self - actualised individual:

'Perceives people and events accurately, without undue interference from own preconceptions'

Maybe not quite so simple to do in practice - ? Who hasn't some or other axe to grind or 'vested interest' ? Accumulated experience over time bringing a 'more you know, the more there is to know' type of awareness, may well help in terms of the individual developing the capability of taking an objective view, and of course another angle is to cultivate the 'open mind' approach, which many undoubtedly do, although in recent times the 'closed mind', vested interest approach could seem to have gained ground.

Transactional analysis, which seeks to clarify psychological states, identifies that the individual comprises of three basic states : Child, Parent and Adult. The 'Child' is the feeling, spontaneous part of the individual, the 'Parent' the judgemental, responsible side, and the 'Adult' the 'weighing the evidence in the balance' objective state, said to be a later maturing element, and the area corresponding with this particular self-actualisation characteristic.

Time, presumably, is also necessary for a reasonable level of self-knowledge/awareness to accumulate, which can then be used to, say, offset any self- known prejudice to ensure an objective take on the situation. An individual, for instance may have had certain political conditionings/leanings all their life, but even though they're still relevant, now puts these aside and votes differently because of a dynamic situation - another political party, say, having a perceived better policy on a key current issue.

The self-actualised individual:

'Accepts self and others, including imperfections, but seeks improvement where possible'

Accepting not only self but others – quite a tough spec - ? - and accepting imperfection in the same breadth. Probably useful to remember, the statement describes the ‘finished article’ – for most it could be more of a case of ‘work in progress’ - ? A few decades back, the UK had hierarchical, quite strict, social codes which can appear to have given the message that the individual wasn't that important, and what mattered was ‘organised society’ (eg. 'you must think of others before yourself'). Maybe today's 'focus on the self' philosophy is the other end of the spectrum, possibly a longer-term reaction to the 'non-self' times, which potentially presumably could then have left many reared in those times with low self-esteem issues , and some ‘accepting self’ problems - ?

Such an example can perhaps illustrate why it can be important for the individual, maybe with some help, to freerange and develop understanding and answers for themselves, which can then offset any possible negative conditioning effects, such as in this case, over-strict social strictures potentially restricting individual development.

'Accepting others including imperfections' gives though room to manoeuvre, in that it gives some space to take them ‘as they are’ and release any self-inflicted pressure that they should be like ourselves. ‘Acceptance’ though, can be a concept that can cause some confusion at times, in that does it mean, for instance, that any behaviour is then ‘acceptable’ - ? Another, pragmatic approach, though, could be to ‘accept’ in the short-term the situation as it is, whilst in the longer-term working for change for the better if needed - ?

The more freerange ‘work’ the individual does, perhaps the easier this apparent contradiction is to cope with, in that as the individual via growth ‘work’ is strengthening the self in a real way, the self then becoming surer of own ground and better then able to take on board and cope with other sorts of personalities. A ‘saving grace’ too, is that there is then the rider to ‘seek improvement where possible’- the last phrase probably being meaningful in that not necessarily all situations are easily improvable- some may be pretty difficult.

The self-actualised individual:

'Is spontaneous – especially in their thoughts and feelings'

One minute the spec is to be able to recognise and then ‘put aside’ prejudices and pre-conceptions, in order to be objective via the ‘Adult’ ego state, and yet now also have the facility of ‘spontaneity’ -? Perhaps, though, again, this referring to the ‘finished actualised product’, means that such a well-sorted person will then automatically come over spontaneously, the reality of which will be that there's been a lot of previous work and growth. Expert pro golfers, for instance, often seem to have reached such a state of ‘effortless perfection’, but have obviously previously worked and practised hard to get to this point. Probably a neat state to attain to, especially if it's as a ‘life operator’, and a neat feeling being ‘on the way’ towards it - ?

The self-actualised individual:

'Focuses on problems outside self, rather than being insecure and introspective.'

Again probably important to keep aware that this spec is of the advanced ‘finished article’. Insecurity and introspection may not be bad per se, in that it's presumably possible that a certain amount at times could need to be gone through to reach the ‘sorted’ state - ? (and if it's the case, it's the case, it's 'where it's at' ----) It has been commented that one of the limitations

of the 'out-for-self' philosophy is that by its design it encourages self-absorption, in itself maybe a form of 'over' self-focus, and therefore by default restricts the capacity of the individual to take on board any wider picture, not necessarily a situation conducive to freeranging.

The self-actualised individual:

'Is detached, not unduly thrown of course by awkward events'

Presumably, such a characteristic implies the individual possessing inner strength and 'moral fibre', courage and integrity, which again might imply quite strongly that the individual has grown and developed over time, and that this process has involved the individual gaining her/his own strength and values, (and in the process, 'free-ing' from social conditioning), which in turn, may imply that freeranging has been a part of the process and that developing such personal assets is the pay-off of practising freeranging - ?

The self-actualised individual:

'Is autonomous, and remains true to self in spite of pressure to conform'

This characteristic again emphasises the role of real individual strength, gained in the crucible of valid individual experience, and the ability such strength can give to be able to manage the sometimes difficult job of resisting social pressures felt to be potentially injurious. Some have argued that today's culturally conforming pressures may be greater than anytime previously because of such an extensive media presence and use, and because of a strongly 'mass'-focused culture, by default then potentially limiting in terms of fuller individual growth.

The wider world tends to be experienced by the small organism that is the individual through the media, which by definition has to present selected and filtered items, and parts of which may put a deliberate bias into the content. (not to mention the existence of 'fake news'). The general effect, too, needs consideration – some believe that, for instance, news coverage is over-biased towards negative events, reflecting a cultural position i.e. involving considerable negative energy.

News providers might presumably validly argue that they are accurately representing events, although presumably there has to be a 'mass' effect – little Johnny and his parents' joy at him getting through important exams will be discounted as news against wider-impacting news, which if in actuality is largely negative in nature, could then contribute to a negative-energy environment.

Although the individual's news is indeed 'small', it may be still capable of having a 'big' impact, such as, say, an uplifting effect on people generally, so maybe more balance with more small positive and meaningful news and less large, negative and remote news would give a better (more balanced - ?) milieu for people to operate within, and with a bit more focus on 'small human' news, a better balance and more meaning, particularly maybe for freerangers - ? Modern large-scale commercial times can potentially induce indirect socially-conforming pressure:

One TV programme recently showed an individual embarking on a freerange type of trip, trying to discover 'real' independence in the traditional home of the 'free', the USA. He aimed to cross America by car coast-to-coast, but only staying in small independently-owned establishments

and buying gas (petrol) from independent sellers. It proved to be a hard mission, and he had to get off the beaten track often to get any joy.

He railed against the fact that 'big focus' times had created large-scale chains of impersonal, homogeneous eating and bedding facilities across the country, expressing the concern that one effect could be then the creation of a homogenisation process creating homogenous, non-independent people.

When this is linked then with, say, the impersonality of the food and other goods buying systems, the idea that the 'system' is moulding people, and by default then reducing individuality, sociability and independence, may not be so far-fetched, and of interest and some reasonable concern to freerangers.

The self-actualising individual:

'Appreciates good and beautiful things, even if they are familiar'

Is it 'human nature' to respond positively to 'good', say, to a 'feelgood' news story on TV - ? At a guess it could be so, which is good news, although presumably not everyone may necessarily comply, for various reasons. Such a state would also reiterate that humans are social animals - would it, for instance, be pretty hard and against human nature not to respond to, say, a child in distress - ?

Does, though, any mainly self-orientation geared culture then by default de-emphasise the social aspect, and therefore put human positive response as above at some risk? Would such a narrowly focused 'self' culture then be too single-dimensional, in need of more balance between important multi-dimensions, (eg. social as well as individual), and is therefore the individual being culturally restricted to a smaller, narrower view, thereby limiting ability to 'see wider'? (and hence to see and relate to 'good and beautiful things' - ?).

If so, maybe there's a case for a degree of 'cultural re-balancing' - ? 'Seeing wider' and appreciating good and beautiful things could be one of the essences of freeranging - one of the key benefits and returns of making the self-investment necessary. Presumably, creating 'harmonious balance' between important life-sustaining areas (egs. individual, social, environmental, security, economic, sustainability etc.) is a key priority for government, and one at which any 'vested interest' type of political party system might at times struggle with - ?

The self-actualising individual:

'Has peak experiences of intense positive emotions of a sometimes mystical quality'

In recent times (and maybe of course before) inquiry into energy beams and sources have revealed that it appears that some (few-?) people have been able to operate on different energy patterns - similar maybe to switching to a different wavelength - and that these individuals can then receive energy through these that is positive and beneficial. Maybe the experience of intense 'peak' surges has something to do with such energy waves - ?

Such concepts maybe sound somewhat far-fetched in current times, of which it's been said that the wavelength generally operated on currently is low, due to the emphasis on lower, base, material levels. If there is some reality in this, and many freerangers presumably may well want to keep at least an open mind on it, then the implications could be that in current

times it will be harder rather than easier to have expanded-level experiences, which, though, might in turn offer self-evident proof to some that they don't exist - ?

An eastern concept gives that such 'expanded' human experiences are attained through the process:

Mass > Individual > Spiritual (personal level)

which again might be a more difficult concept for some given the trend particularly in the west to secularism and hence away from spirituality, possibly accelerated in a scientific, analytical age geared towards logic - ?

Logically, though, is it impossible to escape from logic - ? Maybe it is useful to gain access to non-mind restricted modes ---- ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Has close relationships, but with only a few chosen people'

Maybe this high-spec individual has in the past had more relationships than he/she has currently – in the process of developing to the high spec the individual gains self-knowledge and 'naturally' becomes more 'discerning', and quite possibly 'rarer' - there may not be too many alike around, and after all, 'birds of a feather----'.

If the 'mass > individual > spiritual' concept has merit, then to get to the 'advanced' point, an individual has undertaken the self-knowledge/self-discovery/self-awareness journey, which is individual and unique to the individual, so there could be an 'aloneness' factor – the higher is gone, the rarer the air, the fewer the people - ? A load of baloney - ? But nevertheless seems to make some sense, and of course – open mind – who knows? Could help to explain some of the considerable differences between people - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Respects others, avoids making fun of people, evaluating them according to inner qualities, rather than external factors such as wealth, race or class'

A tramp, for instance, could be a self-actualised person, but is unlikely maybe to get much modern-day respect and recognition, in a culture wherein wealth, power and trappings are deemed to be the important success indicators - ? Any such self-actualised individual presumably would have a pretty healthy level of self-respect, which could well have been enhanced by taking on the self-development work in itself, and which then externally translates to respect for others, but perhaps not so easy to practice without a solid foundation of self-respect -?

It would seem likely that a society comprising of self-actualisers/developing self-actualisers could be productive and creative. Would, though, a human self-actualised society ever be a realistic possibility? At this point maybe a little unlikely, but, perfection being 'the far off goal', and maybe freerangers can 'do their bit' - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Has firm moral standards, and sense of right and wrong, though these may differ from others'

A school of thought holds that absolute standards don't exist, only relative standards, (the 'only winning matters' school of thought) whilst others believe such a view to be dangerous, one leading to 'moral decline' due to lack of a firm and clear moral compass. Could it be the relatively high degree of self-knowledge the self-actualiser accrues in her/his journey which then leads to their own clearer vision of right and wrong - ? The important step, maybe, particularly for freerangers, is to make the journey, and discover for self what matters, what's important, what's 'right and wrong' - ?

The self-actualised/realised individual:

'Is creative. As a result of the factors above, themselves a result of the individual's efforts of self-inquiry into 'what is', such an individual practices open-mindedness and openness to their experiences, seeing things in novel ways, drawing novel conclusions and developing novel solutions/applications'

So, an answer, or even 'the' answer (?) to generating innovative activity, is to ensure that the 'organisation' creates the conditions suited to self-actualisation, to the fuller development of individuals and a work environment which recognises and values peoples 'inner' qualities - ? It might be interesting to see it done, although it could be likely that it is done often at the more 'micro' level - ? (research, for instance, by this author, indicated that the majority of longer-term effective staff managers in the UK rural sector employed involving and nurturing rather than controlling and exploitative practices and approaches).

The 'innovative' outcome, though, may just be that modern 'progress' is at too fast a rate, losing the anchor core of human existence, vital to self-actualisation itself, and that, innovatively, there's a need to 'take a break', and even go backward a step or two, to then find a 'right road' on which to travel, a process which freerangers are no doubt doing for themselves. Maybe, too, having a beer or two, whilst having a break, possibly a Bank's beer, which is, as their slogan says, 'Unspoilt by Progress' ----- .

And finally, the self-actualised/realised individual'

'Is not unduly influenced, enculturised or trapped by the prevailing culture'

Well, she/he is a freeranger -- -----

Add-on 2 'Possible countering measures'

Example measures countering any 'fast flow' over-momentum

(taking a 'working position' that unalloyed modern culture not necessarily conducive to expanded level awareness creation) :

- slower driving speed - use of mute button on adverts - choosing firms showing
- individual respect - avoiding 'have a nice day' establishments - daily meditation(s)
 - limiting screen time - avoiding smart phone preoccupation - avoiding abrupt/rude people - 'downsizing' - selecting 'boss' - avoiding exploiting/bullying managers
- practising 'limiting money impulses' - practising compassion-based activities
- - daily 'paying attention' (eg. to surroundings, weather, etc.) walk - daily mindful hour
 - limiting 'unconscious-making' activities eg. drink(?) - daily blessings, attributes count
- practising Buddhist-type 'right living' - self-enquiry into 'inner self' and values

(non - exhaustive list - example only)