

Freerangin' on -----

**'Finding Fuller 'Freerange' Fulfilment ----- ' Mike Robin**

*'Existential exploring ---- 'being and becoming''*

*'Man is a thought adventurer' (D.H.Lawrence, writer)*

*'To be what we are, and to become what we are capable of becoming, is the only end in life'*

*(Robert Louis Stevenson, writer)*

A pretty interesting existential ( and basic ---- ) question, which due to busy times and 'fast mainstream flow' may not always be asked, can be *'what should life be about?'*, followed then by *'how should life be lead'*, making the point too that the individual has the right to ask such questions and if appropriate, act on the answers. In practice it's not necessarily always the case, people lacking at times sufficient personal freedom, or operating under pressing circumstances, and/or feeling somewhat inhibited about any 'existential exploring', particularly maybe in 'big is best' cultural times -?

*(various writers have suggested that individuals, being 'miniscule organisms', have been inhibited by the modern 'big focused and organised' world – see later)*

Does the recent and current 'age of consumerism and materialism', fuelled and stoked by credit, focused, it's said by some, on short-termism, mean too that non-concrete areas such as longer-term values (eg.s loyalty, trust, motivation , care) and/or so-called 'expanded consciousness' realms such as , say, personal spirituality, then 'get the elbow', setting humanity on a precarious, non-rooted 'money manic' passage, as can at times, certainly to some, appear to be the case - ?

And a then result of such 'one dimensional' focus can be the automatic 'dumbing down' of society, reversing any potential civilising trends, causing difficulties and concerns for (many?) individuals - ? Maybe collective 'man' needs to take Fritz Schumacher's advice (of *Small is Beautiful* renown) and have a good 'stop and think' - ? And the thinking is, the individual needs to do the same to attain to 'personal full fulfilment' -----

How well, for instance, does the road of 'rampant materialism' lead to human fulfilment? And whilst the gilded life can appear to be a 'life of full-ness', is it in reality more a 'limited edition' route, a form of that old homile - 'all that glitters is not gold' - ? According to, for instance, development psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, who researched the area of 'psychological health' in humans, there are many and varied areas of important human needs – including social needs - the fulfilment of which to a degree is necessary for 'human fulfilment', then suggesting that those needs catered for by materialistic means, represent a limited and curtailed answer to the question of 'fuller (human) fulfilment'.

This piece then is directed at aiming to try to map out a little more fully the path to any 'Elysian fields' of the 'fuller fulfilment' ground.

The modern encountered difficulties appear too to extend beyond the 'existential thinking' realm. Here in the UK at this point in time (Jan. '19) for instance, it's reported that there's more than a few struggling with meeting life needs, (eg. the recent rise in the number of food banks) in which case maybe life can tend to be more about 'survival'. It's also reported that there are quite a few rich people leading luxurious lives, following the apparent current mainstream 'indicators' that being rich and leading such lives is the 'secret of success', happiness guaranteed ----- In a democracy with individual rights it is of course the individual's call as to how they see, and lead, their lives, and what they define as 'success' and happiness ----- For some, for instance, money may play only a peripheral role :

*'Self-reliance is the only road to true freedom, and being one's own person is its ultimate reward'*

(Patricia Sampson, *author*)

Even though some might say that society (eg. here in the UK) has gone backwards to be more 'tribal', with narrower outlooks (the 'if you're not with us you're agin' us' stance), others though might well argue a seemingly obvious point, i.e. individuals are individual, as ancient times folk also knew :

*'All birds, even those of the same species, are not alike, and it is the same with animals, and with human beings. The reason Watantanka ('Great Spirit') does not make two birds or animals or human beings exactly alike is because each is placed here by Watantanka to be an independent individuality, and to rely upon itself.'*

(Native American Sioux Chief)

***'In the herd ---- ?'***

It could potentially then be a pitfall, especially maybe for a 'freeranger', to become trapped in mainstream-defined values/non-values/priorities, representing then a barrier to individual fulfilment -? And with yet another interesting question coming up:

*' is man a 'herd' animal or an 'autonomous individual' -?'*

Modern society, with its 'free market' bias, could be said to have people down as 'lone economic units' with competitiveness hyped up and social instincts played down. The development psychologists might though point out, for instance, that individuals are individual, as the quote above indicates, with part of their 'needs' package though being 'socially' based i.e. 'beyond the individual' -? 'See-ers' from the east have suggested too that there is a progression in life for people, assuming there are no 'barriers' (eg. such as, say, lack of freedom) in the way, which runs as follows:

*Mass >>> Individual >>> 'Universal' eg. 'expanded consciousness'*

The pattern seemingly follows the line that initially the 'newish' individual without too much experience, tends to be a 'herd' animal taking advantage of the protection offered by the 'safety in

numbers' aspect. Then as the person proceeds through life experiencing 'directly' and for themselves, experiencing 'those twin imposters', success and failure, that they gain inner strength and security via their experiences (and learn to cope, for instance, with negative, 'failure' type situations), then becoming part or fully 'self-actualised', which basically means realising the fuller package of human potential character, giving then potential access to 'expanded awareness' states.

### ***'Psychologically healthy --- '***

This is supported, for instance by Abraham Maslow's work on 'mentally sound and sane' people – Maslow was reportedly the first psychologist who investigated 'mental health', as opposed to 'mental ill-health'. He was then apparently somewhat taken by surprise by the fact that many of his 'sound and sane' subjects reported experiencing 'peak experiences', in which they experienced enhanced understanding and 'life overview', joy, bliss, one-ness, and the like.

As the sequences above, and such actual 'peak experiences' suggest, there is then the possibility of the individual, having found their own 'right persona' with its package of abilities and understandings, can then progress to an 'expanded' or 'higher' level of consciousness, which some – many? – find to have a personal spiritual aspect – and all of which could have relevance to the question of human fulfilment -----

### ***'Secularism v. spirituality'***

In spite of western-type 'mainstreams' having moved significantly away from religion and spirituality (eg. here in the UK), it's recently been reported as above that at the individual level, over 80% of people report that there is a spiritual component to their lives, which would seem to be more 'grist to the mill' than the 'expanded consciousness' level (i.e. beyond 'small self' stage) exists, even if it is 'non concrete'.

*Buddha likened it for instance to the wind, not seen but nevertheless real), implying that spirituality is then important to people, at the 'direct experience' individual level).*

John Anthony West ( American writer ) felt that western-type scientific and rational thought limited opportunities for people to experience non-concrete so-called 'higher' states :

*'---- 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.'*

Mainstream factors are of course strong in that there's a considerable 'flow force' behind them, and it's seemingly at the individual' level in the sequence above that sufficient personal inner strength is gained to be able, to some extent at least, for the individual to resist the 'full cultural flow'. Those embracing 'mainstream life' could claim, for instance, that their position is 'right' in the sense that it's seemingly supported by a majority, so draw on the strength provided by 'group power'.

It might though be argued alternatively, for instance, that a life following the mainstream model of personal riches and luxury living is then following a 'limited edition' in that it centres on the 'early' stages (survival and security) of the 'hierarchy of needs' ( see below) sequence and so the potential of the next two more socially-orientated stages go unfulfilled, as then does the 'higher development of self' need stage, so not over conducive to 'freeranger' types - ? The 'heavily materialistic' life style perhaps could then act as a pitfall or cul-de-sac', not then leading to any 'fuller fulfilment', in that those individuals, not having progressed beyond the early sequence stages, then have no knowledge or awareness of the potential further stages of development ( as above), which could also be called ' stages of fulfilment' -?

### ***'Hierarchy of needs --- '***

Abraham Maslow was reportedly the first psychologist to study 'mentally healthy' subjects, from which he then identified 'layers' of human needs, starting with immediate ,basic needs (eg.s meeting hunger, shelter needs, then rising through the layers to the 'pinnacle' 'self-actualisation needs ( 'the fuller development of self' ) :

Self-actualisation (eg,s morality, accepting fact/reality)

I

Esteem needs (eg.s social recognition, respect, self-esteem )

I

Social needs (eg.s social belonging, social contribution )

I

Security needs (eg. ensuring longer-term on-going meeting of basics)

I

Basic needs (eg.s satisfying hunger, shelter needs)

Looking at the various need areas it's clear that whilst some, in a money economy, are most commonly directly related to money, (eg. satisfying hunger ), others don't necessarily have a direct link with money ( eg. s' social contribution, morality ), which suggests that any 'it's all about money' philosophy' could be limited and over-simplistic - ?

This work then takes the step of assuming a rejection of 'over strong materialism' as a route to longer-term, sustainable human fulfilment, and again then assumes that such fulfilment is realised by the individual's fuller development, which then carries the potential for 'higher/expanded' understanding and consciousness.

*(two expressions related to this subject matter are 'self-actualisation' and 'self-realisation'. For the purposes of this work, 'self-actualisation' is taken to mean the point at which the individual's*

*developed to gain the ability for full expression of her/ his range of abilities, characteristics and attributes. 'Self realisation' is taken to mean the 'realisation of real self nature' state an individual arrives at after expanded consciousness and involving the dropping of duality, rather the individual experiences a 'one-ness' with Tao (universal, natural law and energy) .*

### ***Why the need for a 'true, fuller developed self' search anyway -?***

Although some – many? – might think that they are 'their natural true selves', it's probably reasonably true to say that there are many external influences imbibed as a person navigates through life, many when they are young, some being benign, others less so. As an example, the social class system in the UK even not that many years ago was pretty rigid, with a requirement that people 'knew their place' in the hierarchy, and with seeming less freedom of expression and behaviour the lower in the hierarchy a person was.

It's also been recognised that the need for conformist behaviour was particularly restrictive for females in such a rigid system (*not to argue that social conforming is per se necessarily 'wrong', rather that when it reaches too strong and/or rigid a level, it can become an over-inhibiting factor for individual development and self-expression*).

There are various sources of social conditioning : family based conditioning, peer group conditioning, institution conditioning (eg.s schools, government), commercially-based conditioning plus of course powerful media-lead conditioning. A current argument is that via the prolific use of mobile devices, the social and peer group conditioning elements have become particularly strong in recent times, with for instance 'social norming' pressures then bearing down hard on the younger generations. Media influence is probably at a stronger level than ever before given the nature of modern screen life' - 'advertises at nearly every turn on TV' ---- along now with increased advertising exposure via internet and smart phones.

Maybe it's surprising that the human spirit survives in such a plethora of pressures on the individual; it may be of course that the 'human spirit survival' conundrum is a key issue of modern times, particularly if elements such as 'giantism' in the commercial sector and the emergence of the 'global economy' are taken into account -? Individual independence – freeranging – would appear to be under pressure – all the more important though, to 'keep the flame burning'? And as Fritz Schumacher said in his well-known work *Small is Beautiful, ' ---- 'to insist on the attributes of 'small'' (i.e. in the face of modern increasing 'giantism' ) .*

Modern writers such as Levine and Foley (see bibliography) suggest that individuals have become less empowered, the micro-small organism that is the individual inhibited by the increasing number of large, powerful organisations within modern culture. It's probable, for instance, that the average (very 'small' and unpowerful) individual has to deal with more large concerns than ever before.

Added to the factors touched on above, could also be the fact that modern life has become so specialised, potentially limiting horizons and that the considerable modern economic and social pressures on people often result in busy lifestyles, allowing less time for reflection and any potentially longer-term productive activities such as 'naval gazing'--- Is the 'natural real self' search in itself though a real and 'natural' need, for some at least -?

*'A man should be able to design a house, build a house, change a nappy (diaper), take orders, give orders, butcher a hogg, mend a vehicle, plan a garden, write a symphony, write poetry, build a wall -----, specialisation is for insects'*

( after : Robert A Henlein, *U.S. science fiction writer*), (who also wrote : '*Don't try to teach a pig to sing -it's frustrating – and upsets the pig*' )

### ***'Mind rules ----- ok? ---- not ok -?'***

Are there, though, barriers in terms of realising the 'true self' - ? 'Mind watching' for instance, can reveal quite a collection of fairly rigid mental rules controlling a person, emanating from the mind, which can come as something of a surprise. Take, for example, the situation where time is getting short to watch a certain TV programme, and the individual via mind prompts starts to hurry, under pressure to get to the TV in time. This might not necessarily be a problem except mishaps could be more likely in 'hurry' conditions – but does illustrate simply how the mind can 'automatically' take control and the individual becomes subservient to it.

Once the process of 'mind watching' ( via, say, 'mindfulness' technique practice – see later) becomes established, it can be surprising how much external conditions and events (i.e. external to the individual) actually determine, via the mind process, an individual's behaviour pattern and therefore their life.

Alternatively, though, the individual could take 'own control' and take the approach of '*so what if I'm a few minutes late for the TV programme- not the end of the world*' - i.e. now the 'real self' has taken control, avoiding 'automatic reaction' to mind prompts. This simple example serves to illustrate the two modes of operation . If 'taking own 'real self' control then serves to eliminate unproductive mind promptings, plus then helping to 'clear' mental processes, (which can then encourage 'natural existential insights' to arrive) then over time benefits in terms of realising 'fuller fulfilment' for the individual occur. The technique increasingly used to help in this area is 'mindfulness practice -see later for fuller details.

### ***More potential goodies -----***

A longer-term 'on-going' type of benefit too of 'mind watching' activity is that the individual is then strengthening their 'real self', and via the 'watching' process (often for instance opposing a pre-determined 'judging' habit ), then encouraging more 'self-nurturing' positive approaches, and building real, internal strength. As the individual proceeds with the 'mind watching', it can be a revelation as to how much the mind can be in control. Mind 'tapes' laid down maybe quite a time ago, but still active, may of course not be relevant or productive for current times, so an 'audit' of the running mental tapes can be a productive exercise, if then followed up by the 'spring cleaning' mind-watching mindfulness practice. (again, see later).

Zen people suggest that any 'fixed mental tapes', ideologies or sets of firm beliefs can suffer the limitation of not being flexible enough to cope with the whole range of dynamic effects life can throw up; therefore better to develop ability to cope with the dynamic effects rather than

developing over-fixed views and beliefs ---- and in effect, this is the cause to which 'mindfulness practice' is directed to, and of course, is helpful to the process of 'freeranging'-----

### ***'Then , and ---- now ----'***

Imagine living, say, a couple hundred years or so ago, maybe here in England. Home could well have been rurally situated – huge urban conurbations being then in their infancy – and the rural community would likely be small, and predominately agricultural, farms then needing a lot of manpower, with horses as the only added form of power ( *the human race owes a debt to the horse ----* ). A person's place in such a localised society would be 'settled and solid', in that they were small enough for everyone to know everyone else, and there would be, given the accepted and fairly rigid social hierarchy, an 'order', again adding to the experience of 'having an own place' within the society, with the squire at the top, followed by the parson, in turn followed by the schoolteacher.

The rise of large 'anonymous' towns and cities along with industrialised work situations and attitudes has then fairly obviously diminished the 'community effect' for people compared with the smaller rural experience. There's a fair bet that the average person wasn't literate, and anyway, there was no easy distribution system to bring the only media form – newspapers - quickly to rural areas. Life would be small-scale, parochial and relatively simple, with little chance of 'information overkill' -----

### ***'Changing patterns --- '***

It may not be particularly feasible to suggest that modern society reverts to a small-scale community based model, ( although some groups of people have organised their own 'mini communities' ), yet it is no doubt valid to be able to make comparisons and learn and understand the likely sociological effects of changes in living patterns.

Whilst 'society' and 'social' can appear at times to have less impact and meaning in modern more 'out-for-self' focused times, the reality is that societies exist, people live in them, and to some extent are defined by them, so to ignore or deny sociological factors could be an incomplete approach to comprehension of acting life forces and patterns, then leading to less than fully effective management of society -?

### ***'Unilaterally --- '***

The individual, of course, in a society in which individual rights are enshrined, has the option to a certain extent of taking a 'unilateral' approach and stance to their journey through life - in fact the individual who has understanding beyond any current 'mainstream' levels, probably needs at least a partly unilateral approach if she/ he is to thrive and fully develop as an individual entity.

The values/non-values and tenets then of a mainstream society can at times act as impediments and/ or barriers to individual development and attainment. The drivers of a culture eg. politicians often represent a minority of the total populace, so presumably such a culture will not necessarily

totally suit quite a few. Another key driver group i.e the business community, is not in itself a democratic entity.

### ***'Wealth equals happiness? Or, un-wealth equals unhappiness -?'***

The current mainstream emphasis on personal wealth accumulation, for instance, as the answer to human happiness and fulfilment can be questioned as to whether it's a complete answer to the situation, it being seen by some as a 'limited dimensioned' and over-simplistic approach. Maybe it'd be true-er as a 'reverse' - i.e. inadequate material resources can lead to unhappiness and un-fulfilment -?. The 'wealth equals happiness' notion could be an extension of the 'it's all about money' simple philosophy, which though, may struggle to cope with the more complete range of human needs - ? A complication within this type of approach could also be that the 'waters can get muddied' by the fact that given a strong money mainstream focus within a culture, a considerable 'money conditioning' factor can be created, again not necessarily able to always represent peoples' true needs -?

### ***'Own journey --- ?'***

*'You yourself must strive, Buddhas can only point the way ---- '* (Buddha)

The discussion then takes a further twist and turn in that according to some, (eg. Buddha, above) for 'fuller fulfilment', the individual then needs to proceed on their own journey, shown by the afore-mentioned eastern-originated sequence:

*Mass >> Individual >> Universal*

The younger individual, the argument goes, as yet lacking in life experience and so 'real inner strength', needs the protection and security of the 'mass' so tends to be 'socially normed'. As the individual then gains experience via, say, having experiences of both 'success' and 'failures' (top golfers for instance often say that to reach the top of their sport, it's often their previous 'failures' from which they've learn't and gained most from and in so doing gain inner strength, now more able to discern for themselves the values which are meaningful and true for them.) Such 'resilience strength' born out often out of adversity, then, the argument goes, contributes significantly to the individual's ability to 'keep their own counsel' and live life in a more 'real self' mode.

### ***'Homeward bound ---- ?'***

The 'individual strength' phase then at some stage is said to potentially open the door to accessing 'expanded' energy/consciousness levels, resulting in the individual then potentially unifying with universal energy experience, leading to experiences of 'health and wholeness', 'bliss and joy', 'healed and sorted' levels, a stage at which it's said people experience 'personal spirituality'.

This could well be the 'coming home' state it's said the individual can gain, the 'ultimate' in terms of human fulfilment, and reportedly the only state that can offer 'full security' to the individual. It does of course rely on the ability of the individual to be able to develop 'fully and naturally', and to not get 'waylaid' by any pitfalls that may exist in modern 'life as we know it'. Such a 'self-realisation process is then taken for the purposes of this work to be a realistic road to a 'fuller fulfilment'.



## ***Practical steps towards 'self-realisation' fuller fulfilment***

Given that as above modern life can impinge considerably on people, one reaction could be to 'renounce' modern culture and retreat from it. This maybe could be quite common, mentally at least, with maybe more than a few individuals not feeling 'in accord' with modern values and ways. Considering too how potentially intrusive the full force of modern culture can be, some degree of individual 'self- protection' may well be needed in order to protect the 'integrity of self'.

*One lady lives a 'later-life' hermit-like life in West Wales, living in a 'mud hut' in the middle of a wood. Her need was to connect strongly with nature and her simplified hermit-like existence helped her bye-pass the many distractions of modern 'norm' life'.*

Not everyone can, though, adopt a hermit-like existence, (although apparently it is an increasing trend ----). Maybe most though have to weave a route through, not wanting to relinquish their day-to-day responsibilities, so could have to create a 'culture countering' programme for themselves, and to suit themselves, in the quest towards any 'fuller fulfilment'. Maybe a good place to start would be with a 'towards self-realisation' map, and then 'fit in' useful practices to help the cause.

### ***An example outline route:***

#### *1/ 'Slowing system'*

On the assumption that for many, they will be involved in both busy schedules and a reasonable degree of day-to-day concerns/anxieties, a useful start could be undertaking practice (eg.s meditation, quiet time) to 'calm' things down and prioritise a bit of time each day to do this (see also later ). If possible, the establishment of a 'retreat' place or area, can be a help in this respect.

#### *2/ 'Undertake a "real me' assessment*

The individual can spend a bit of time weighing up, for instance, what, at base, is important to them, and then how well that fits with, for instance, current mainstream cultural priorities. So whereas modern culture can promote success for instance being the attainment of considerable wealth accumulation, an individual may rate such areas as health, community values, family relationships and personal development as important priorities for themselves; often maybe a collection of important priorities - ?

*(implying then that just 'money making' would be too simplistic and one dimensional as an only objective - ? An investigation by this author into the priorities of rural entrepreneurs revealed a complex rather than simplistic picture, with as many as sixteen different areas rated as 'important' or 'very important' )*

#### *3/ 'Me v. culture'*

Doing the exercise above may result in greater awareness in the individual of 'where they are' in comparison with general culture and it's probably at this stage that they can think in terms of whether they are 'ok' about heading out 'on their own path', or whether they might prefer to maintain the status quo. Some may prefer the status quo and the general culture priorities, and in

terms of individual rights, it's their call. Embarking on an 'own path' journey, a bit into the unknown as it were, involves some uncertainty, and maybe the promise of 'change', but also the potential enticement of more 'fulfilment'. To some this prospect may be of course exciting, maybe a little more daunting to others -? The fact that it could be a little daunting, might not necessarily mean that a person rejects the possibility ----

#### *4/ Assessing realistic practices for the individual*

Assuming the individual is interested in heading down an 'own path', the job now can be to ascertain how in practice to do it. If it's to be the hermit route it maybe relatively simple (although harder in practice) i.e. find a cave, meditate to clear the mind and hey presto, nirvana at some stage arrives – maybe quite an attractive proposition for some. On the other hand, if the 'real me' journey has to be fitted in with other commitments, it's a question of creating a workable 'programme'.

Not only is each individual likely to be inherently different, but also each individual's experience and current situation will certainly likely to be different, so an individually-tailored 'programme' is the likely answer. The sort of 'culture distancing' activities that can be undertaken (as many do) could be along the lines of the following:

-- *writing a regular 'me' journal* ----- *meditation practice* ----- *joining interest groups* -----  
*attending courses* ----- *writing* ----- *mindfulness practice* ----- *time in nature* -----  
*volunteering* ----- *nature activities* ----- *internet research* ----- *animal work/contact* ----- *re-*  
*training* ----- *book reading* ----- *spending retreat time* – *downsizing* – *reducing 'screen time'*

Any such list could no doubt be virtually endless - the deciding factor probably being that the activity works in the sense of supporting the individual.

#### *5) If relevant, and wished for, making longer-term lifestyle changes*

Examples: *downsizing* ---- *re-location* ---- *early retirement* ---- *hermit-ing* ---- *re-focusing* - *re-*  
*training*

*(again, individuals will likely go for strands that are both relevant and feasible for them)*

### ***'Onwards ---- '***

#### ***'Internal v. external' -?***

Another way of looking at things is to make an 'internal v. external' take. 'External' describes the mode of the individual being driven and responding to, the external (i.e. to the individual) prompts the 'mainstream' culture comes up with, notably currently: 'life success is being wealthy and having luxury lifestyles', and 'be a winner, if you're not a 'winner', you're a loser'. Both these lines have though been questioned as to their 'completeness' in terms of, say, meeting actual life fulfilment needs. 'Wealth' as a means to life success would, for instance, only seem to address one aspect, the 'having' aspect, and ignores any 'being/becoming' element and therefore the question of

personal development, and is therefore thought by some at least to be an incomplete and imbalanced approach.

'Winning' and 'being a winner' again may have potential limitations in that it's singularly focused and ignores any longer-term benefits failure situations can bring. Those top golfers, for instance, attest to the fact that they go through failure situations then acquiring the mental strength to be able to cope with the pressures at the top of the game. Many business people experience failures at some point, which the overcoming of which then adds to their future strength – the 'what doesn't kill you makes you stronger' syndrome. Maybe, though, the 'winning' approach may in fact be supported by people who have a strongish need of it as a defence against their own levels of insecurity -?

This work supports the fuller/full development of the person as the longer-term authentic answer to counter 'inner security' and to attain fulfilment, which in turn delivers contentment, fulfilment, sustainable happiness as well as rounded and complete humans.

### ***Towards self-realisation and fuller development/fulfilment -----***

As earlier, there are many potential impediments to the on-going development of the individual, not least the extent to which mainstream cultural factors might impinge on such development. One approach, therefore is to aim to do some 'mental spring cleaning' to then create room for a 'second phase' development process.

Two areas at least in this category can be addressed : factors relating to the individual themselves, and then 'external' factors relating to the wider mainstream culture which could potentially limit the individual.

### **Spring cleaning - external**

*Cultural cleaning:* The individual has been 'bombarded ' with cultural messages for many ages, from a 'cruel and angry' God in the first testament in the Bible condemning people to hell if they sin, to governments getting involved in 'micro management' telling people 'how to be', to modern advertising sending out strong 'social norming' messages (eg. often for instance beginning: 'we all want ----')

Stephen Levine, in his thoughtful book *A Gradual Awakening*, suggests that it's all added up to the individual then feeling 'un-empowered' to 'go their own way', think for themselves even, particularly as additionally, the individual feels her/his very small entity size in the face of a modern world filled with large ( powerful) organisations, some – many?- of which feel 'empowered' by their size to practice bullying-type 'big is best' tactics on their smaller 'prey'?

This raises the question of money, the current cultural position appears to be that 'money trumps everything', but for some at least, a shallow and simplistic culture then arises. Money, it would seem, has become the 'end', whereas some would argue that it's better place is as a 'means', with meeting a wider range of human needs, including those of a non measurable characteristics such as, say, 'loyalty', or 'caring' or 'being ethical', as real 'ends' - ?

*'Ah thinks money be's a good servant ----- but a bad master --- ' ( ol' boy Dorset (UK) farmer )*

One of the ideas behind the individual starting with a current assessment, i.e. an enquiry into what's important to them, is to move beyond simple monetary value to a fuller version of human needs and values (again, see 'self-actualisation, Abraham Maslow). The rise of the 'money and power' culture has been linked to the 'bullying' cultures often reported to be rife in organisations in modern times. (*recent (May.'19) survey of Charity organisation employees in the UK revealed major bullying-type problems*)

A report in a UK broadsheet paper, Feb. 2019 indicated that people in general are 'ok' with modern wealth accumulation and money focus. Does, though, the heavy mainstream accent on 'money accumulation' in itself then condition and 'money-tise' people, who with the strong accent on personal gain, are susceptible then to such 'money conditioning - ?

### **'Countering ---- '**

There are though, a host of tactics the individual can employ to 'spring clean' to 'counter 'larg-ist' power, of which some examples are:

*- limit TV – limit watching 'cultural conforming' programmes (eg. heavy use of 'competitivism' in modern programmes) – use of 'mute button - ----use of commercial breaks for other purposes  
---- avoiding/limiting use of news/newspapers ---- aiming to deal only/mainly with customer friendly firms ---- downsizing to beat high interest charges --- avoid cultural 'in' type programmes (eg. UK TV schedules currently packed with crime drama ) ---- relegate money importance (eg. work within set budget as opposed to following a 'more, more', route), avoid where possible the payment of high credit charges (eg.s credit card interest, 'loan shark' high interest rates).*

Again any list could be endless -it's of course the individual's call to come up with their own relevant measures, if they so wish...

### ***Spring cleaning (2) - 'internal'***

Given such a 'busy' and potentially 'invading' general culture as above, along with the 'largist' trends of modern times, it's perhaps a surprise that the individual human spirit survives at all -? Survive it does, because it's 'indomitable', but whether it 'thrives' is another matter, certainly, as above, it could be argued that the odds are somewhat stacked against 'thriving' - ? Dr. Sarah Darwin, a great-great granddaughter of the evolutionist Charles Darwin recently called for people to accept (in rich countries) lower standards of living to protect the environment.

*'We are living beyond our means, although politicians won't be likely to suggest this', she said.*

Add in insecurities for the individual emanating from such a 'power' culture (eg. *'the young in the UK are suffering anxiety in modern culture'*, recent report), plus seemingly increased 'social norming' pressures in 'the age of the screen', then it's not perhaps hard to see that it could be difficult for the individual to retain a 'calm and equitable' position, given the likely mental

pressures, so a process which helps the individual gain 'real control' over their mental processes is likely to be a helpful and useful, plus needed, facility.

*(some might suggest it could in fact also be a route towards personal liberation and 'expanded consciousness' access – a route to 'authentic fulfilment').*

A useful mechanism to help facilitate 'mental spring cleaning' for the individual can be the 'mindfulness' process - now an increasingly used process.

***The basics of the mindfulness practice process are:***

The individual undertakes to look at their mental output i.e. thoughts, mindsets or some of them, and rather than automatically 'follow through act' on such thoughts, aim rather to remain an uncritical observer of the thoughts, which then creates that bit of space and time for the individual to make a choice (i.e. not to go down the 'automatic' route indicated by the thought), so releasing the individual (it may take time and practice) from 'automatic reaction' behaviour induced by fixed mental patterns.

It can be particularly helpful, for instance, to 'solve' habitual unproductive thoughts, on the assumption that the 'perfect' human being may not exist, in which case each individual is likely to have some unproductive operating 'automatic' mental mindsets, often established in their past. As an example, a common (apparently) reaction to things 'not going to plan', is for the individual to 'beat themselves up' (in the UK, adult females 'beat themselves up on average eight times per day, recent report).

*Example sequences:*

- something happens 'not to plan' eg.s, spilling something, car not starting, argument etc.
- irritation response, leading via automatic reaction process to, say, anger, which could then have a counterproductive effective, and also prove to be unsatisfying and un-self-nurturing.
- now with mindfulness practice in place, the 'not to plan' event happens, irritation/impatience arises (i.e. is not suppressed), the individual now 'watches' this reaction (may take a bit of practice) rather than following the 'automatic reaction' pattern of anger, then, because of the 'watching' 'pause' effect, can then choose to not follow that route, rather to let any anger 'float by' without 'hooking into' it. A relatively simple procedure, but which can be surprisingly effective, and effectively 'freeing'.
- '*rush*' syndrome example : the 'rush, hurry, hurry' pattern is perhaps relatively common due to cultural expectations which can be demanding and 'perfection targeted', plus as a general reaction to life insecurity, and/or as a reaction to actual life stresses and pressures: the mind 'automatically jumps ahead' to the 'next event', putting the individual under pressure (and can tend to be a recurring situation causing an on-going 'under pressure' situation for the individual).

With 'mindfulness practice in place, the individual 'watches' the 'jumping ahead' mental process (I.e not suppressing it and aiming to avoid any judgement of it), and does not go into 'auto

reaction/behaviour' mode, rather let's the 'jump ahead' thoughts 'float by' and then focuses on the current activity.

*(it's likely for instance maybe that this particular 'groove' can be pretty persistent and will re-occur for quite a time, but gradually decrease in strength).*

If the same 'not hooking into it' procedure is practised each time the auto unproductive mindset rears its head, the 'auto' power of it gradually lessens, and the 'real self' power builds, building also real self-strength and status in the process.

*(and if the 'new system' fails now and again so what?— who said life had to be, or could be, perfect? Giving the self a break and not 'crying over spilt milk', it's now in the past, is productive practice, then allowing resolve to continue with the good work in the future – ----).*

### ***Mindfulness practice – potential beneficial effects***

The effects of mindfulness can be varied, with some longer-term than others. One relatively quick (but not necessarily immediate) effect is that it can 'release' a person from an undesired trait/behaviour. In the case, for example of 'rush' syndrome, whilst mindfulness practice won't likely stop such tendencies just like that, it does then offer the possibility of stopping the on-going 'auto reactive' behaviour pattern, and therefore any undesirable counterproductive effects of the 'rush' behaviour pattern.

These could range, for instance from increased chance of mishaps and/or miscommunications, to 'missing out' on enjoyment and pleasure of the moment due to the tendency to be 'automatically' moving onto the next thing. This last factor is also a longer-term potential benefit which could considerably then enhance a person's life plus having beneficial side effects such as, say, improving relationships.

The fact that mindfulness practice accommodates 'imperfection' and thereby encourages people to accept it (and therefore an important step to accepting themselves), can help significantly in terms of the individual 'facing fear', in that, so it goes, a considerable part of the fear that can be experienced, is of the 'not being ok' variety (witness the 'self-beating up' syndrome?). Gaining acceptance of self, 'warts an' all', leading then to more self-nurturing of the self, and real progress in terms of improving situations, can then all counteract any automatic 'unworthy self' conditioning, at the same time then strengthening 'real self' personas, giving people a real gain.

(there are many 'mindfulness' guide books available. One useful, user-friendly one, for instance is *the little Mindfulness Workbook*, Gary Hennessey )

### ***'Imperfecto ----- some 'in the way' barriers - '***

Is there anyone without weaker areas and/or 'flaws' - ? Probably unlikely - ? There are of course people who project themselves as such, and there is apparently an increasing 'being ok' anxiety, particularly amongst younger people, promoted maybe by a sort of 'super peer' pressure resulting from 'higher than ever' contact courtesy of high mobile phone use, as well as central pressure

from what some have called 'critical parent' type government, plus media/commercial influences and pressure -?

According to writers such as Levine (see earlier) there is a degree of disempowerment for people due to a culture seemingly ever 'Giant-ised' leaving the micro-small individual feeling 'powerless' in the face of such large-scale development. People probably have never before, for instance, had to deal with so many large-scale entities in the course of ordinary life, with there seeming to be as well something of a trend of 'big-itis', 'might is right', leading at times to bullying-type large firms behaviours.

Mainstream messages in terms of 'how to be' and 'how to lead life' can seem to be ever more cloying, the UK government, for instance, having been charged with aiming to 'micro manage' peoples' lives. Mainstream messages too can often tend to come over expecting 'perfection', which can pose a problem for people in that 'instant perfection' probably doesn't exist, and expecting it doesn't allow the needed resources – eg. space and time – anyway for any chance for 'perfection' levels to be achieved. There may be limited chance of escaping 'commercialisation' effects, considering how much advertising, for instance, goes on in current times, again potentially taking a person 'away' from their 'real selves'---

### ***'Getting real ---- '***

Again, mindfulness operates in the opposite way, in that it a) accepts imperfection and b) then works over time to change/and/or improve situations, if needed. In this sense it has been said to be more realistic, so helping the individual to connect more with realism, which in the short-term is then likely to be more effective in delivering the desired result(s), and importantly, then can act as a portal for the individual in time to 'realistically' proceed on to a more developed 'expanded real awareness' lifestyle (see shortly).

Such greater awareness is also helped from the get-go, in that with the individual developing the facility to be able to observe 'auto reaction behaviours', this then automatically increases awareness in terms of the source and frequency of some behaviours, plus how they can be changed if needed to that of a more productive type.

### ***The 'direct experience' -----***

Such practice is of course a 'doing' event, and the benefits are gained by the individual then gaining 'direct experience', a further benefit of which can be a move into 'self-nurturing' territory, which can happen particularly if the individual chooses an 'undesirable, imperfect' behaviour/trait to work with, inculcating an 'acceptance' process, which in turn promotes the 'self-nurturing' pattern.

The mindfulness process leads a person, via the 'watching' process, through now a 'non critical' and 'accepting' process that wasn't there before, bringing then the realisation that such a happening is feasible, and not only feasible, but can bring positive results, so encouraging then a more 'self-nurturing' 'self compassionate' general approach to replace a more critical style, often maybe to be experienced maybe for the first time, considering the evidence to the effect of the degree people are involved in 'beating themselves up' ----

Such a 'softer', more self-tolerant approach, directly experienced by the individual, can then translate to a more generally tolerant approach with likely added benefits for relationships and general approach within society. -----

**'Be aware ----- '**

Another feature of mindfulness practice is that because beneficial effects can often be experienced relatively quickly - some perseverance will though be needed - and as 'nothing succeeds like success', the practice, effects and benefits can be cumulative in that the individual can extend the practice gaining then ever more understanding and awareness, both of which can be useful attributes for life, helping then, for instance, to then better understand others. Socrates, all those many years ago, could well have been on the 'right track' -?:

*'know thyself'* ( Socrates )

In terms of gaining fulfilment, the theme of this work, in the longer term, and if the awareness levels gained are cumulative, then the individual can progress to fuller understanding via having escaped what's been called 'the tyranny of the mind'. Such 'exploration' may not be for everyone, but for those into it, maybe of an explorative bent, or in need of a more effective 'operating system', there's the possibility of then moving on to 'fuller fulfilment' territory, as the quote from Eckhart Tolle below indicates:

*' 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.'*

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

' The mind can be a good servant----- but a bad master ---- ?' Sometimes it can seem that the mind is an autonomous organ -with, erm, a mind of ,its own even ---- Taking a lead from the quote above from Eckhart Tolle,, the mind and its thoughts can though be 'instructed '– politely or otherwise - to 'shove off', go away and similar, and such practice can help 'mental relief' and strengthen the 'real self -----.

**'Hazardous modern life ---- ' money matters' - ?'**

Imagine having an ultra flash, luxurious lifestyle, money no object, a life of luxury, leisure, pampering, exclusiveness -? Must presumably induce a sense of privilege, entitlement, superiority – in fact as well as the five star plus living, perhaps that feeling of superiority may be one of the key motivations -? This, though, raises an interesting question:

*'Does having wealth make a person 'superior'?*



In relative terms maybe the answer's often 'yes', in that in a culture geared strongly to money making the accumulation of wealth will likely be a 'success indicator' and many people immersed in 'mainstream' priorities rather than, say, following Buddha-type exhortations to follow their own path, will be influenced and swayed by cultural norms. How about, though, in absolute terms – the couple of quotes below shed some doubt as to whether a person can be 'superior' via wealth accumulation:

Charles Kingsley (*writer*) was somewhat withering in his comment :

*'To have so much money, they must have been dull enough to want it in the first place'*

*'having a lot of money, they seem to think they're worth a lot'*

was another somewhat withering comment from an UK actor.

And the comment from Muhammed Ali's daughter casts doubt on wealth as a reliable guide to character :

*'Dad always taught us that what makes a person great is their heart, not their fame or wealth'*

Whether of course 'being superior' is a valid aim could be questionable, and the question as to *why people want/need to be superior* could also be pertinent. If, for instance, the answer is, as it could seem to be, to allay insecurity, then there are alternatives – developing real inner strength via the 'real self finding' route is one that seems evident ---

There have been more than a few instances of people 'making it', in terms of material success, and then saying '*is this it?*', the reality not quite living up to the expectations. On the other hand, it can presumably be pretty hard to question established levels of comfort, material pleasure and riches, but which may then could still represent something of a potential pitfall and/or barrier then to any longer-term 'fuller fulfilment' route -? Eckhart Tolle and co. would no doubt say, as the quote above, that a person's true mission in life is to reach their 'awakened' ('fully aware') state, to experience their true nature and real security and peace -----

***'Having v. being ---- ?'***

The strong drive on money making and wealth creation, often seemingly with an 'ever more' aspect, and focusing strongly on the 'having' aspect of life, can then lead by default little time or impetus for attention to the 'being' development aspect of life, which in terms of fuller fulfilment' quest creates problems, if indeed the path to it is via the fuller 'self-realising' development of the individual, a 'being' route - ?

The trend in modern western-style cultures has been and is towards strong money focus and money-based values/non-values, and in a freewill, individual-rights based democracy, it's the individual's call as to which life route she/he takes, and whether, for instance, that individual follows the heart --- or the head --- ? Back along, (in the UK) though, for instance, those seeking mainly

self-gain and a 'too avid' pursuit of money, were seen in general society as 'beyond the pail' non-quality people ---- times change ----

,

***'Real liberation ----- leading to authentic fulfilment - ?'***

One attribute the 'working-on-self' mindfulness practice route can claim is that it has the potential to liberate the individual from mental mindset straightjackets via the individual's own work and hence is 'direct experience', which it's argued, is an 'authentic' way. Mindsets are often fairly 'fixed' and indeed some may have been laid down some time ago, maybe even from childhood, and so may not work quite so well in more up-to-date times.

It seems probable that some – quite a few? - occur as a reaction response to insecurity and so are grounded in fear, and again maybe aren't so relevant as time goes on. Insecurity is probably a life condition that potentially affects most, if not all, and so much behaviour probably has it, or rather the reaction to it, as a basic motivational force - ?

Wealth creation and power seeking has been said to be, at basics, a reaction to insecurity in life, but then, as has been indicated, that it's a reaction not always guaranteed to bring long-term relief or success, as witnessed by many 'power' regimes through history which have ultimately delivered less rather than more, security.

The argument then moves to tackling insecurity 'at source' rather than developing strategies to cope, to appease or to defeat it. Yamate Kunihiro in his book *The Way of No-mind* (implying mindfulness-type 'real self' control rather than any 'loss' of mind), for instance, suggests:

*'It is only in harmony and unity with nature and natural universal forces that man can find real peace and security'*

That sounds nice and straightforward, and simple --- and 'ringing true' -? Easier, though, maybe to say than to do, in today's convoluted and conflicted world -?

***'Working on self - more on ----'***

Mindfulness then, provides such a route for the individual who's prepared to undertake such 'self-work'. Take, for instance the example touched on earlier, where the 'fixed mindset' is one of a 'rush, hurry, hurry' nature, and this is driven, at least in part, by base life insecurity. The individual in this case determines to 'see' the 'rush' tendency coming up: it may be, for instance, the tendency of the mind to be always jumping ahead to the next issue, thought or move, and then to change the action, from say, the 'automatic reaction' route of following the 'rush' trait, to, say, non-action, or uptake of a differing action plan.

This starts the process of 'disassociation' with habitual behaviour and thinking patterns, and so starts the process of weakening their hold and power (as 'fixed' mental patterns/mindsets can be well established, it is likely that the process will repeat many times, but over time reducing the strength of them, to the point of 'liberation', where the individual experiences then 'liberation from 'the tyranny of the mind', and entry into 'bigger self' world --- then creating the capacity to be able to connect with Yamate Kunihiro's natural universal energies -----

As a base driver in the example above of the fixed mindset, was 'insecurity', such a 'watching, not reacting' process also has the key effect of directly countering insecurity plus the additional positive of transferring 'power' from the mind, to the real self, which is then strengthened considerably by the process, as well as by the self-nurturing, non-critical process also inherent in the process, then inducing positive self-building rather than any negative 'self-knocking' behaviour.

The first move in the mindfulness self-work practice is acknowledging and accepting a 'less-than-perfect' aspect of the individual's character, (making here also the 'grand assumption' that no 'perfect' human being exists --- ). This also opens the door to 'realism' as opposed to any self-delusion, and yet another positive benefit of the process is the gradual expansion of the ability of the individual to take on board reality situations, culminating in the potential then to expand into 'bigger reality, the 'expanded awareness' territory, and, of course, the area then of 'fuller fulfilment --- - '

*(after a certain amount of space clearing 'mental spring cleaning' it becomes then possible for the individual to then experience 'existential insights' - universal truths which reverberate inwardly with 'real self' aspects --- )*

### **'Real' reality -----**

Does anyone really operate from their 'true self'? A person may think they are fully individual and unique, but are they - there are many external influences - family, peers, religion, commercial, society - that affect people, as well as, say, current mindsets and behaviours, plus effects from past experiences and events. It all adds up, and has been likened to a prism in a person's head which takes in reality and 'bends it' to be acceptable to that particular person - ok, not perhaps as much as the 'fake news' people - an extreme case?

The upshot, though, is that a person then doesn't experience 'real' reality, so could be hindered then in experiencing 'real self' and 'barrier-ed' in terms of then progressing to 'fuller fulfilment'. Zen people talk about cultivating the 'beginner's mind' - a mind 'open and enquiring', and able to take on board 'direct reality', important if fulfilment is indeed about connecting to a larger reality that is called 'Tao' - 'universal natural energy and law' ( and important therefore to take into account the 'less accountable' aspects of life such as human emotion, intuition and 'sixth sense' -? Interesting to speculate as to whether preoccupation with logic, rationality and scientific thinking is at base because it's easier to 'deal' with, and to measure and tabulate ----?).

The idea is that the individual recognises that the 'prism' exists and that therefore some 'mental spring cleaning' is in order, Again, mindfulness practice can help, in that by selecting an 'undesirable, unwanted', 'now irrelevant' character trait or behaviour, and practising mindfulness technique, the individual can then bypass the prism and takes a step towards reality, which then increases as the individual gains experience of the practice, and can then start, for instance, 'seeing' when, say, ego is at work trying to divert reality. Ego is said to be a potential danger to the individual in this respect, in the sense that ego responses aren't necessarily grounded in reality.

The cumulative effect is that the individual then sails a lot closer to reality than hitherto, to the point where he/she has sufficient 'reality momentum' to then connect with 'larger reality' and

merge to become unified with universal reality, and 'come home' to true, real secure , fulfilling living -----

' *When you accept 'what is', then you can see what's real - and you can act based on reality* '

(Internet spiritual teacher)

( A useful 'working with reality' book is *The Tao of Leadership* John Heider ( based on Lao-Tsu's words))

The spiritual teacher might have added that connecting with 'small-scale individual reality' may well be a key in terms of then being able to connect with larger 'universal' scale reality ----- and hence the individual is important ----- One of the key beneficial aspects of mindfulness practice is that it's a relatively simple procedure that can be carried out by the individual in their own time, and at their own pace, making the whole process relatively simple and straightforward.

### ***'Further Exploration ----- '***

Another similar 'avenue of exploration', used in this case by people such as stress/anxiety counsellors, is to journey along the sequence of rather than trying to become something else, or be somewhere else, then to focus on 'acceptance : 'being where it's at', noting any 'mental interference (i.e. the mind may well not be used to taking this approach), letting time pass, again noting but not acting in any 'mental impatience' impulses, aiming then to let things unfold more naturally, implying less 'human interference'.

### ***'Getting real ----- '***

This approach, which of course may take some getting used to, also implies 'facing' a reality, the reality of who a person actually is, warts and imperfections and all, (and bypassing any cultural 'perfection' expectations) thereby moving out of any 'I must be/want to be perfect' mental self-instructs. Paradoxically, some might say that this 'accepting imperfection' route is actually the route to perfection in the sense of then 'allowing' actual 'improvement progress' and the development of the full, natural persona, whereas the 'chasing perfection' route is of a mental construct nature, often based on exterior and/or self-conditioning.

The latter can happen even in the area of spiritual being – there are more than a few spiritual development sites on the net which pretty much say if a person wants to be spiritual, then they should be like this, this and that, and so forth. So then the individual can self-condition, saying to themselves, 'ok, i'll be compassionate', as this is a spiritual trait, as I've learn't from the internet'. This is mental conditioning, it's not the same as this condition (i.e. being compassionate) springing up internally and naturally, so is held to be 'inauthentic', a sort of trying to force the pace ( and therefore ego based -----). Real inner compassion then starts with 'compassion for self' - ?

## **'Authentically yours ----- '**

The alternative authentic route of self-development via 'facing' and then 'accepting' self, whilst it may well take some getting used to as it's often changing the operating mode from the 'I must be' self-conditioning mode, is then said to be more natural as it's based on realism, rather than any 'wanting' state (and it's effective at counteracting too much 'wanting'), and then is actually a more natural process in that it allows time for the process to work, which can help to take unhelpful pressure out of the equation.

By starting from 'where it's at' so accepting any 'less than perfect' aspects, it also helps the individual to come to terms with themselves and in so doing, treat themselves in a kindlier, more self-considerate fashion - self- nurturing, self-compassion in action. Over self-criticalness, 'beating selves up' and the like are still said to be prevalent in modern cultural times – likely a result of 'I must be perfect' conditioning' which then produces an unproductive over- pressurised situation. Sometimes such situations may be a result of general 'no,no' type of general conditioning, as for instance in the case of depression.

## **'Oh no , the 'no, no's' ---- '**

No doubt people can be depressed for valid reasons – for example, their situation isn't good and if 'hope' then disappears down the tubes, depression can presumably be a natural response. It's a negative energy state but nevertheless, part of life's potential experiences. If a person, due to say, society conditioning, has been trying to suppress such a state or avoid it, it may take a bit of time to be able to accept it; acceptance can though then be something of a relief.

The mind, though, might still 'protest' at the new situation, having been likely 'grooved' in the 'old' denial pattern for quite awhile, hence the mindfulness-style guidance to let any obstructive thoughts (eg. 'to be depressed is wrong' ) 'float by', and to aim not to hook into them. The idea of then 'letting time pass' can serve as a general reminder that 'Rome wasn't built in a day', and any process will take time - again mindfulness practice can be used to 'see' the mind wanting instant/fast results -----

*( not to suggest that by 'acceptance', depression becomes an 'ok' state - rather that if it's accepted that it exists, as current 'reality', that then opens up the possibility that the true causes of it can then be realistically investigated and solutions found, and/or the negative energy mental state can be recognised and 'bye-passed', which can be helpful in cases where depression has been initiated by, say, overlong periods of stress).*

## **'Non suppression --- '**

The 'mindfulness' type of process deals realistically with unproductive mindsets/thoughts in that it doesn't try to suppress them - putting a tin lid on things could likely create 'pressure cooker' situations - but rather 'allows' them, but then via the process of 'seeing' them occur and then changing from an automatic reaction pattern to a 'real self' controlling mode (eg. letting unproductive, obstructive thoughts 'float by' without reacting to them), gradually reduces the power of unproductive mindsets.

The process allows too that the thoughts will reoccur (like a pre-recorded tape) but gradually then lose their power to induce 'auto reaction', and with then 'the real self' gaining power (and control). It's a good, 'self-work', and a positive achievement, so also bolsters real self-image and self-regard, whilst at the same time introducing a more accepting, self-nurturing approach, so all round the individual becomes more proficient, and, importantly for the cause of fulfilment, more able to entertain and deal with, reality.

### ***'Ego pitfalls ---- ?'***

Mindfulness practice then tends to extend naturally to 'seeing' other existing thought processes, then to be able to assess whether or not they're still relevant or are counterproductive, and, importantly in terms of heading for fulfilment, to be able to see ego-lead 'wanting' patterns of behaviour, which can be problematical for several reasons. They can for instance distort reality, leading the individual rather up a path of 'ego desire', away from reality.

They can then lead to self-delusion, again away from reality, and also induce a false sense of security and confidence, again leading away from reality. Like the mind then, ego can't be necessarily trusted to work positively towards the fulfilment goal, but like dealing with counterproductive mind patterns, mindfulness practice can also be used to 'see' ( and then 'discount') unhelpful ego manoeuvres.

### ***'Captain ----!'***

'Seeing' and countering mindsets and ego moves can involve considerable work, but of course time is needed to do such work, and 'travel the way', which can then tale on a 'natural development' aspect, further motivation being drawn from progress made. The individual can reach a stage where they feel they have become 'master of their own ship' - in other words they have moved from being in 'auto reaction' behaviour patterns, where the mind has been the main controller, to now having developed sufficient awareness and 'real self' capacity, for the 'real self' now to be in control, with 'mind' now the servant, not the orchestrator, just as Eckhart Tolle's quote earlier indicated.

This represents considerable development and allied with the self-nurturing, growing awareness and the associated growth of 'inner strength, facilitates the individual to feel good and fully positive, and potentially then to experience the expanded stage of awareness, in which the individual can then experience unity with universal energy, bringing 'wholeness' and well-being , real security, fulfilment -----

### ***'Mapping ---- '***

Depending on how far the individual wishes to take it, there are a variety of possible positive outcomes. A possible 'fuller' mindful sequence might cover the following:

- Self -appraisal – what's important (i.e. to the individual rather than, say, automatic adoption of mass cultural priorities, also a part of strengthening authentic 'self trust' ).
  
- Spring-cleaning – looking at established 'fixed mindsets'

- Picking an 'unproductive' but active mindset
- Adopting a 'new approach' (eg. 'impatience' is selected as the established trait. New aim: to 'see' impatience arising, maybe when things aren't 'going to plan', watching the impatience impulse but not follow-up heading 'automatically' down that road -may take a bit of practice).
- Developing alternative approach to handling 'impatience' (eg.s, not reacting, letting current mindset thoughts 'float by'), developing a differing response)
- 'Letting time pass' - recognising that the fixed mindset is akin to a recorded tape, that will replay, so it's 'making haste slowly', and then watching the mind's 'impatience' for quick results ---
- Developing concurrently 'self-nurturing' ability to replace generally self critical moves. This then enables the individual to extend the 'mental spring clean' to other areas, particularly ego-driven aspects.
- Extending the 'watching' practice to other areas, eg.s other fixed traits/ mindsets, ego 'machinations' . The initial practice of mindfulness enables the individual to develop awareness ability, to build confidence and a more positive self-view, to then over time be able to extend the mindfulness self-aware practice into these other key areas.
- Reaching the point where, as Eckhart Tolle indicates, the mind loses its automatic, autocratic power, and becomes the 'servant' rather than 'the master', and the individual's real self – now in control - has grown to the point that it there is now real, authentic self-worth.
- Many of the 'unproductive traits' people experience are said to be underpinned by basic life insecurity, so have a 'fear' driven basis. Learning to counter them, so then escaping 'the tyranny of the mind' and becoming the 'master of the ship', means that the individual is becoming free from much of the underlying fear and insecurity, so potentially over time becoming their 'bigger' true self.
- A positive phase can occur at around this stage in which 'insights' arrive, existential constructive thoughts/concepts which resonate internally with the individual, and build-up an overview-type understanding, initiating a move from 'small self' to bigger self'.
- A move into 'bigger self' territory then can open the door to 'expanded awareness' territory and possible 'full self flowering', ( full 'self-realisation'), with associated 'out-of- the- world-as we know-it' positive experiences such as 'wholeness/oneness', bliss, joy, love, energy ----

Experiencing such 'higher' life experiences, (and according to internet information quite a few do) can/will lead to quite different life outlooks to, say. 'ordinary, modern life', so may need some handling, some support, and still a need to 'watch' for any 'ego' activity (eg. any temptation to feel 'higher', superior ---- the ego can be a bit of a stealthy and cunning operator ---- }

- It's said that when the individual experiences 'wholeness' and 'unity' with 'universal law and energy' (which can be quite a physical energy experience), then that person has 'arrived home', with often a personal spiritual aspect to it – and after quite a journey. Those who've travelled the

journey and had 'direct experience' of it, will likely attest to home being where there is most peace, most, natural security, and most fulfilment -----

(n.b's :

*Individuals feeling considerable stress and angst may be well advised to seek help and support initially. ( A good and useful book helping with 'nervous sensitisation', for instance, is Claire Weekes' Self-Help for Your Nerves ). )*

### **'Supporting ---- '**

Some individuals may well feel the need for support for such a self-development journey, which can be available in person and/or in written form (maybe a good idea, though, to steer clear of cults and self-centered, self-important gurus). The key selection criteria can be 'whose cause is this guide working for, their own or the help seeker - ?' Help/support sources may come from more than one source. As though, there's so much of it, and sometimes it may not always be authentic, a guiding thought might be: 'is this reverberating in me, 'ringing any internal bells' with me?'

It's maybe also not a bad idea to try to avoid too much material indicating to the individual 'how to be'. There can be at times, for instance, some emphasis on 'anger' being an inappropriate state, which if then converted by the individual to the notion 'I musn't be angry', then just adds to the burden of 'mind rules', producing non-authentic 'non angry-ness'. Mindfulness practice takes on board the current situation, imperfect as it may seem/be, with the process of 'allowing' it, but then not 'auto reacting' to it, creating 'space and awareness' for greater understanding of what's occurring with the individual, 'non-angry-ness' then happening naturally and authentically as a result of the individual's increased self-awareness and understanding.

### **End piece -----**

To be actively involved in work that is freeing a person from 'automatic reaction' patterns, as well as building 'real self' strength in the process, can bring good levels of satisfaction – and of course it's up to the individual how far along the way they go – there are probably elements of fulfilment to be gained at various points, regardless of whether any 'full journey' is undertaken. The understanding that 'going the whole way' will likely take a person 'home' i.e. to their real, unfettered home in the universe, where they are 'whole and healed', unified with 'all of creation', fully 'validated', experiencing joy, bliss and contentment , spiritual in the authentic personal sense----- seems to be quite away from 'life as is known', yet who knows what lies 'down the way' ----- and, as above, those that have made the journey tend to affirm the package of ' authentic goodies -----'

Against current cultural mainstream life, focused pretty heavily on material gain as it can tend to be, this 'nirvana' position can appear to be pretty 'far out', which though in itself doesn't necessarily mean it doesn't exist, again as people who have 'directly experienced' it can confirm (and it's likely



that it can only be experienced by 'direct experience – the individual doing their own work, making their own journey --- so again, in terms of, say, 'human race fulfilment', the individual is key, is important). It may be, though, that the 'bigness', complications and distractions of current modern life mean that relatively few get to experience the 'fully healed and whole' endpoint - -----  
\*?

This can also remind, that, as above and as Buddha himself said, the individual needs to make their own journey, travel the way themselves, a trend 'freerangers' instinctively respond to - ?. The respected psychologist, Jung, was for instance of the opinion that any such an 'enlightened' 'nirvana' position came from 'illuminating the dark', which many would find 'disagreeable', and so it would be a route travelled by a minority rather than a majority. BY 'dark', he may well have been for instance referring to unproductive habits/mindsets.

*(Has the 'nirvana' position, being rare, and being seen to be in a 'super-rare spiritual zone', maybe been then over-hyped and 'over-awed'? Some might see it as , say, a natural progression position open to humans who 'stay the course' - ?)*

### **More agreeable ---- ?**

Now there's a 'more agreeable' way via mindfulness practice of 'doing the self-work', it could be that more will travel/are travelling the route – the mindfulness movement is for instance already quite large, and the internet indicates expanding interest in individuals developing their 'being' side, having maybe found the mainstream focus on the 'having' side to be dimensionally limited -?

Plainly there are significant problems and imbalances in the world, given now generally accepted major planet degradation, whilst at the same time, 'luxury' levels of consumption continue apace., and for some, man having tended to become 'over omnipotent' - ?The planet's resources have also become 'skewed' with for instance wealth distribution having concentrated in huge spikes of individual wealth, likely maybe for instance to cause further ongoing problems of civil unrest, according at least to one billionaire on TV recently. Even the term 'billionaire' indicates virtually unimaginable levels of personal wealth, so maybe the one above with reservations could have a point -?

The 'love of money' also seems to have a 'mass appeal, perhaps not so surprising in cultures in which money-making can seem to attract, by a distance, the strongest focus. Money, though, is at base, a medium of exchange, so should the global amount of money reflect the level of global resources (and by implication, therefore, money hoarding by individuals may not be a long-term productive situation -?)?

Some might argue therefore that an over emphasis on money making and wealth creation has brought about a situation of significant imbalance. It's recognised these days that within the earth's eco-system there's a 'balancing mechanism/energy' which works to bring things dynamically towards 'balance'. Those therefore who are not solely wrapped up in the financial self-gain the 'having' approach tends to foster, and are paying attention to 'being' development, could be said to be responding 'naturally', in that they're 'going with the flow' of the balancing mechanism, working towards balance, and maybe 'middle way sanity'. and by then 'resolving' themselves, they are realistically putting their shoulder to the wheel in terms of heading towards resolving the bigger problems of the planet ----- ?

'Free-rangers by definition, take responsibility for themselves, for their decisions, for their actions.'. Because they are small – miniscule small – entities, they are probably undervalued in modern 'big is best' geared cultures, operating as these tend to on a 'power and money' basis. Yet because 'free-rangers' operate as they do, and take responsibility to think and decide for themselves, whilst at the same time accepting the limits and strictures of social life, to some extent at least, then to be able to be on their own development journey, doing their self-awareness work, they can then develop the facility to 'see' the boundaries and limitations that limited dimensioned cultures can develop.

' Big', may not then be always 'best', as time has often shown, so maybe it's time that 'small' in terms of 'developed individuals', had a more rightful place and say in things, and a better balanced, more supportive and effective world might be the outcome - ?

### **bibliography - books :**

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<i>Stephen Levine</i>	A Gradual Awakening
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