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Preface (original 2020)

This is the second of three linked articles on Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises (EARTE). They are primarily intended to be used in conjunction with Autogenic Training, or similar trainings that facilitate an Amplified State of Consciousness [de Rivera 2017 / 2018]. The three articles are:

- A11: This group is primarily physical in nature – i.e. short physical exercises, some of which have specific neuro-physiological effects.
- A12: This group deals more explicitly with distressing emotional and feeling states, some of which involve expressive writing. This is the subject of the present article.
- A13: Here the emphasis is more on personal development – in terms of Self Realisation – and moving towards our Authentic Self.

The three articles are best considered as a whole; and to some extent the fruits of A13 can perhaps only truly manifest once we have done the spade work, as it were, of A11 and A12. Having said that, each of these three groups of EARTE overlap and complement each other.

However, in order to keep each set distinct, these Expressive ART Exercises are designated with an A, B, or C as tabulated below:

- A11: EARTE Series A
- A12: EARTE Series B
- A13: EARTE Series C

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New Preface relating to Second Editions (summer 2021)

A11 and A12 first appeared on the website in 2020, and A13 in early 2021. The fundamental rationale behind the EARTE exercises is to reduce human distress and lead towards wholeness. They have a different rationale and purpose from the “[Intentional Off-Loading Exercises](#)” taught by British Autogenic Society since its inception in the early 1980s – and this becomes increasingly clear as we move through Series A, and then on to the B and C series.

During the early 2000s I had become aware of Ekman’s work, and the research indicating that simply creating an angry face activates the neurocircuits of anger – and thus potentially RAGE [Panksepp 1998; Ekman 2002; Ross 2005X pp 14-15]. Since then, I have also become increasingly aware of other approaches to human distress, such as Mindfulness [Kabat-Zinn 2004; Kristeller 2021], Sensory-motor Psychotherapy [Ogden 2015], and the clinical application of the Polyvagal Theory [Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018; Dana 2018]. The EARTE series is the outcome of some of the dynamics implicit in the above, and embraces the concept of Autogenics 3.0 itself [de Rivera 2018].

All three articles are being updated during 2021 to also take into account approaches and research that I had not been aware of when the three articles were first written [e.g. Harris 2006; Walter 2007; Raffin 2020]. The EARTE approach is grounded in the concept that, in general terms, all the exercises have a fundamentally pro-homeostatic effect – generally mediated through the Ventral Vagal division of the Parasympathetic Nervous System [Porges 2011]. Where there is some debate about this, the new 2021 text will explicitly discuss the matter, and why the particular exercise has been included. These principles are in line with Schultz’s original concepts regarding Autogenic Training [Schultz 1951; Zannino 2017].

- Furthermore, in this new edition, at the end of each exercise there will be a brief résumé of the rationale / theoretical model upon which the exercise is based, prefaced by:

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE B ...

In all the work we do, it is important to have a clear idea as to the reasons / theoretical models that we are basing our approach upon.

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✿ **Notation for Second Edition:-**

significant changes / additions in the text are indicated in purple text.

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I. Introduction to Expressive ART Exercises Series B

General considerations

In contrast to Series A, the Series B exercises focus less on the physical, and more on noticing and becoming aware of distressing feelings, bodily sensations, and thoughts; acknowledging these with an open mind – and in this way befriending them [O’Donovan 2020, Wellwood 1983]; and expressing these in writing or vocally (**yet not generally verbally**).

Feelings are there to give us information about what is going on [de Rivera 2018¹]; so it is important that we recognise and honour them, and then deal with them mindfully.

That the birds of worry and care fly over your head,
this you cannot change;
But that they build nests in your hair, this you can change.

Ancient Chinese Proverb²

Ignoring, suppressing, or denying our feelings is a good way to let the birds build nests in our hair. [see also de Rivera 2018 pp 114-117].

This group of Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises (EARTE Series B), perhaps even more so than those in Series A and C, is recommended specifically in conjunction with Autogenic Training – or other [Reflective and Awareness Building³](#) approaches. The neuro-physiological underpinning of such training puts us in a good physiological and mental space to explore various parameters in our lives that may come up in the B series.

Taken as a whole, we can see that the whole Series (A, B, and C) of the Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises, or Expressive ART⁴ Exercises (EARTE), are facilitating [well-being](#) and personal growth.

Finally, as in the other articles in this series (i.e. all three: A11, A12, and A13), it is not intended that the series of exercises are read through in one or two sittings. Rather, that we read a section and then practise the exercise ourselves: in this way, we refrain from allowing the article to become simply an academic exercise; rather, we experience the EARTE first-hand.

Reflections on thoughts, feelings, and emotions

Our experience and perceptions of the world are influenced by our environment, family, society and culture. This means that human beings from different backgrounds will have different assumptions about the world, their place in the world, and the nature of feelings.

¹ See also Feeling Meditation and Meditation of Feelings [de Rivera 2018]; and F5 and F6 series of articles on the website: www.atdynamics.co.uk under the Autogenic Dynamics Section.

² Quoted by Graham 2018 p 55

³ Words and phrases in the main text that are described more fully in the glossary are notated in this way: [Reflective and Awareness Building](#)

⁴ The ART here can also stand for art in the sense of developing new skills to deal with the ups and downs of life.

In the west we have had a tendency to divide our experience into cognitive and non-cognitive aspects, the latter including emotions. In ancient Indian and Tibetan culture, there is no specific word for emotion.

Neither Sanskrit nor classical Tibetan has a word for 'emotions' as the concept is used in modern languages and cultures. This is not to say that the idea of emotion does not exist, nor does it imply that Indians and Tibetans do not experience emotions. Just as Westerners feel joy at good news, sadness at a personal loss and fear in the face of danger, so do the Indians and the Tibetans. Perhaps the reasons for the lack of such a word have to do with the history of philosophical thinking and psychological analysis in India and Tibet.

Dalai Lama 2005 p 184
The Universe in a Single Atom

As already indicated, this is in marked contrast to the west where there has tended to be a significant distinction between Reason and Emotions – at least until relatively recently – see, for example, Damasio [Damasio 1994].

In the next passage quoted from the Dalai Lama's 2005 book, he uses the phrase "afflictive states". Before delving into this, what does afflictive mean here?

Afflictive and Non-Afflictive States

The Collins English Dictionary (CED) states that an affliction is: "1. A condition of great distress, pain, or suffering. 2. Something responsible for physical or mental suffering, such as disease." [CED 1994 / 2011]. Affliction can then give rise to afflictive mental states. In this general sense, the present series of EARTE facilitate in reducing our afflictions / [afflictive mental states](#). Autogenic Training in practice can also help us to reduce the things "responsible" for such suffering. Some paths and perceptions will lead to increased afflictive states, whereas others will lead to non-afflictive – and wholesome states.

The Dalai Lama goes on to say:

Buddhist psychology did not differentiate cognitive from emotional states in the way Western thoughts differentiate passions from reason. From the Buddhist perspective, the distinction between afflictive and non-afflictive mental states are more important than the difference between cognition and emotions.

Dalai Lama 2005 p 184

So here from an ancient culture we have an entirely different meta-psychology, in which a major distinction is made between afflictive and non-afflictive states. Now such states can be caused by both thinking or feeling. For example, if we have negative thoughts about another human, this can be seen in terms of an afflictive state, arising perhaps as a result of having inadequate information regarding the other. Such afflictive states can be just as damaging to our being as distressing emotions.

..... Discerning intelligence, closely associated with reason, may be afflictive (for example, in the cunning planning of an act of murder), whereas the passionate state of mind, such as overwhelming compassion, may be a highly virtuous, non-afflictive state. Moreover, the emotions of both joy or sorrow may be afflictive, destructive, or beneficial, depending on the context in which they arise.

Dalai Lama 2005 p 184-185

So it may be that within the philosophical arena, deep humanitarian philosophy has to be informed by an understanding of human development from conception onwards, that embraces neuroscience [Schoore 2013A; 2013B; 2013C; 2012; 2012E; Sunderland 2016; Panksepp 1998; Panksepp and Biven 2012; Damasio 1994; 1999; 2003]. Without these, our ideas may be interesting yet without foundations – that is, foundationless.

We can see A11 in this series as some initial steps to get in touch with our bodies, through (mainly) physical exercises, and at the same time reconnecting with our PLAY and CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998]. The present article, A12, more specifically deals with afflictive states and potential remedies for these, while in A13 we will be dealing more with growth and further personal development – especially in the context of having experienced the exercises of the first two articles – and within a milieu of on-going meditative type / Autogenic Practice.

A further insightful discussion regarding what in Buddhist psychology are called Toxic Emotions, can be found in a paper on “Buddhist and Psychological Perspectives on Emotions and Well-Being” [Ekman et al 2005]. In contrast to western psychology, the ancient psychology originating with Sakyamuni regarded some emotions as fundamentally dysfunctional.

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II. EARTE Series B**Preamble to Series B – Story Follows State [Dana 2018]**

As indicated above, the Series B exercises are different in nature from those in Group A, as here the Expressive ART is generally through writing – in the cases of B1, B2, and B3; or in the case of B4, deblocking a blocked emotion.

The first in the series, B1, is to do with reflecting on a distressing emotion, in this case irritation / anger, in specific ways. Once practised, EARTE B1 can become a helpful foundation for the two subsequent exercises, the Expressive Writing B2 and B3.

All of Series B can be seen as helping us to deal with afflictive states (discussed above in Part I), including distressing emotions.

We can reframe our emotions – and our experiences of these emotions – by asking ourselves the question: “What is the information that the (distressing) affect is trying to give us?” [de Rivera 2018]. Reflecting on this can then lead us to developing a different relationship to such feelings. Otherwise, the emotion / affliction may “have us” [after Jung⁵].

- Part of the information that the affect is giving us is actually to do with the autonomic state our body is in at that moment. In terms of the Polyvagal Theory, the thought / feeling that is arising will reflect whether our Autonomic Nervous System is in Life Threat mode (Dorsal Vagal Parasympathetic Nervous System^[PSNS] – “immobility with fear”), Danger mode (Sympathetic Nervous System – mobility with fear), or the feeling Safe mode (Ventral Vagal branch of the PSNS) [Porges 2011]. This means that our thoughts, feelings, and behaviour, and indeed the “story” that we create in that present moment, is a function of our Autonomic State.

Story Follows State

Dana 2018 p 35

- In terms of Buddhist psychology, the second arrow will be much more likely to afflict us if we are in the Danger or Life Threat mode.

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As a prelude to B1, it may be helpful to reflect on these words of wisdom:

Anyone can become angry, that is easy – but to be angry with the right person, and to the right degree, and at the right time, and for the right purpose, and in the right way – that is not within everybody’s power, that is not easy.

Aristotle c. 320 BPE

In this context, if we handle our irritations / anger inappropriately, the result can be an increase in our afflictive state. More than two millennia later, we have:

⁵ Carl Jung, in commenting on complexes, used to say: “We do not so much have complexes as they have us.” [Jung CW Vol 8 paragraph 200].

I was angry with my friend:
I told my wrath, my wrath did end.
I was angry with my foe:
I told it not, my wrath did grow.

William Blake
1757-1827

My attention to both Aristotle and Blake in this context was not as a result of any wide “cultural” reading; rather, it was thanks to the wisdom of the late Jaak Panksepp, who starts and ends the chapter on “The Ancestral Sources of RAGE” with the quotes from Aristotle and Blake respectively [Panksepp & Biven 2012: Chapter 4: The Ancestral Sources of RAGE; p 145 and p 173]. Towards the end of the chapter, he says:

- ❖ “Psychotherapy can help patients to rid themselves of issues that would otherwise fester as negativistic and irritation ruminations”⁶ [op cit p 173].

Such beneficial outcomes can result from a wholesome relationship between therapist and client, in which trust and empathy develop – and thus facilitate life-enhancing Social Engagement ([Ventral Vagal System](#)) [Porges & Dana 2019]. Regular meditation / Autogenic Practice facilitates these wholesome pathways – including the exercises in the EARTE series. [See also [Figure 8.6C of B 24 p 34 on website.](#)]

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[Website article B 24](#)

Ross, Ian R.F. 2020 <i>Autogenic Switches and Well-Being</i> , especially Section 8.6: <i>Autogenic Training and the Third Autogenic Switch</i> , pp 31 – 34 (an extended version of the BAS Newsletter article above)	
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⁶ This statement from Panksepp is generally true. See also glossary note on [Cognitive Fusion](#) and [Cognitive Diffusion](#). Should our mental state and being “fuse” with a very traumatic memory, this can have bad / catastrophic outcomes. For example, this can happen in art therapy should the therapist not have the adequate skills and training [Springham 2008]. Neil Springham does not use the term Cognitive Fusion, yet I think this is what is occurring in the case study he describes. Thanks to Sue Holttum, Autogenic Therapist, for drawing my attention to this 2008 article.

EARTE B1: Expressive ART Exercise B1 –
Review of things that “make” me angry / frustrated / irritated

Please Note: this EARTE No B1 sheet is normally given out in the context of Autogenic Training (or other forms of Meditation / Counselling / Mindfulness Training) – *and as a prelude to EARTE B2 or other approaches.*
 It is not intended as an exercise to be done outwith the above context.

Preamble

This B1 exercise, as described here, focuses on irritation / anger / frustration. However, in principle and practice be used for other distressing feelings, such as sadness, anxiety, disappointment, jealousy, grief and / or feelings of loss.

Please adapt as appropriate. Whatever the focus, the exercise is best seen as a prelude to other EARTE, such as B2 (Expressive Writing).

Please Note:

Should our anger or other very distressing emotion be connected with a recent traumatic memory, please first discuss with your therapist (or arrange to see a therapist). If the trauma is from longer ago – and including childhood trauma – that still tends to take us in a downward distressing spiral, then use this Exercise only under professional guidance. See also [Cognitive Fusion](#).

The exercise

Distressing thoughts, feelings and emotional states can obviously adversely affect our well-being. This sheet is an aid to helping us to review what makes us angry⁷ – and what may have triggered the anger.

1. Please list below anything that has made you irritated / angry / frustrated / distressed in the last twenty-four hours.

•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

2./

⁷ This includes destructive feelings such as hatred / ill-will towards others. We may feel that we should not, as reasonable people, have certain emotions / feelings; for example, having negative / frustrating feelings from time to time towards members of our family and / or those for whom we love / care.

- Yet if the feeling is there, it is a real feeling, and the first thing to do is to acknowledge it. If we keep our emotions blocked, consciously or unconsciously, then unwholesome consequences ensue (See F4 on website: Some Consequences of Blocking Feelings.....*of not allowing ourselves to feel the feeling* – 2019; and de Rivera 2018 pp 114-117, the source of F4).

- 2. Now list anything that has made you angry / irritated / distressed in the last few days / weeks / months.

•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	
•	

- 3. Please list any other matters from the past that still make you feel angry or irritated or distressed. This could be something that occurred many years ago, for example: in early childhood; at home; at school; at work etc. This may relate to someone who is now dead; if so, include this in your list.

3.1
3.2
3.3

You may also wish to reflect on the following if they have not been adequately covered so far:

What are you most angry / distressed about in your life?

Who are you most angry / distressed with in your life?

What effect is this anger / distress having on your being?

*Reflect over what you have written over the next few days.
It may then be helpful to explore some of what has been written in the Expressive Writing Exercises B2 and B3.*

Post-script to EARTE B1: A flowing model of emotions

Anger is in itself a normal and healthy human emotion – for example, the anger a mother may feel if her child is threatened. However, other forms of anger – such as neo-cortically elaborated forms that include hatred and ill-will towards others – can best be regarded as toxic mind states [Ekman et al 2005].

Many of us in childhood may have learned, inappropriately, that anger is an unacceptable emotion. In this case, as we grow up, we may either not express our angry feelings (i.e. we suppress them); or, and probably worse still, we become unaware of them (a form of denial). Un-expressed anger, or denial of our anger, can lead to feelings of ‘upset’ and / or depression; and will be associated with toxic chemicals [“Mal-molecules” – Ross 2010] permeating all parts of our body, in addition to disturbed physical and mental functioning [de Rivera 2018 pp 114-117].

*** **

We can see emotions in terms of *e*-motion, where the ‘*e*’ stands for energy, and the ‘motion’ for movement. This means that healthy emotions involve flows of energy. In depression, our emotions can become blocked – so that we become *emotion-less* – and our energy ceases to flow.

It is important for our health and Well-Being that we develop skilful means for dealing with negative and / or disturbing emotions. In this way, we can increasingly begin to live in harmony, with an on-going flowing of “Eu-molecules” – i.e. life-enhancing molecules [Ross 2005X; 2010] – throughout our being.

Further ways of dealing effectively with distressing emotions such as irritation, anger, or general distress involve us in continuing to develop our Autogenic practice and skills, some of which are listed below.

- i. The Regular practice of the Standard Exercise Sequence.
- ii. The Partial Exercise: Neck and Shoulders Warm (de Rivera 3.0 format [de Rivera 2018]). or Neck and Shoulders Heavy (Luthe 2.0 format).
- iii. The Memory Exercise [de Rivera 2018 p 207-208 Footnote 54]
- iv. The Three Minute Exercise [Segal et al 2013].
- v. Also: when we feel a negative / distressing emotion, we “Name and Tame it” [Siegel 2010 pp 116; 246, and p 286 note 116 re Creswell et al 2007]. That is, we silently and repeatedly name the feeling within us without judgement.
- vi. The above facilitate [cognitive diffusion](#) [Harris 2006]. In contrast, Cognitive Fusion occurs when we identify with a strong feeling – and become as it were one with it: as in the formulation: “I am angry”. Here there can be a fusion of the anger / autonomic state with the “me” within. So here “my anger and I become one”. We can develop skilful means to reframe this in terms of, for example: “Hello anger, I am aware of you arising within...”; or “Hello anger, I see you are back again”. This distances ourselves from the raw emotion and aids cognitive diffusion.
- vii. Becoming mindful and aware of which autonomic state we are in that has produced the distressing feeling. In other words, whether we are in the Danger state of the Sympathetic Nervous System (mobilisation in the context of FEAR / RAGE) [Porges 2011 / Panksepp 1998]; Life Threat (immobilisation in the context of FEAR – the Dorsal Vagal branch of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System – PSNS), or the feeling Safe state – associated with wholesome

social engagement, CARE and nurturing and playfulness, reflecting that our ANS state is in the Ventral Vagal modality (of the PSNS) [Dana 2018]. (See also Section II. EARTE Series above, Preamble to Series B.)

For a more in-depth look at these Polyvagal dynamics, please see:
Deb Dana 2018: Polyvagal Exercises for Safety and Connection – 50 Client-Centred Exercises

viii. Feeling (Experiencing) the Feeling Meditation [de Rivera 2018; and website F5A].

ix. See also:

❖ Rumi: The Guest House:

<https://www.thepoetryexchange.co.uk/the-guest-house-by-rumi>

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE B1

Writing down what is bothering us has been shown to be an effective approach [See B2 and B3 below; Pennebaker & Chung 2011]. Simply completing the form above (i.e. the EARTE B1 Exercise) will help to diffuse feelings – getting them down on paper is very different from negatively ruminating about them in our mind, which can often be associated with SNS flight / fight dynamics or DV “I’m not good enough dynamics”. In this way we can allow ourselves to be moving more into a safe space of Ventral Vagal – associated with Social Engagement not just with others, but in terms of our own inner feelings of distress. This we can see as a step toward befriending our distressing feelings [Welwood 1983].

So the exercise per se can change our perceptions: Story Follows State [Dana 2018 p 35].

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EARTE /B2 /

EARTE B2: Expressive ART Exercise No B2: Expressive Writing format A

Research over the years has shown that Expressive writing can be an effective way of dealing with distressing emotions. In this section we will be looking at two forms of Expressive writing.

Format A deals essentially with distressing raw emotions that we may experience, and getting these down on paper without any form of analysis. We simply express on paper our gut feelings about the matter, with no judgement and without censorship. It is (normally) best to practise format A at least two or three times before moving on to format B. The latter has the same initial approach, but then differs in character in specific ways – see below.

As indicated in the introduction, it is suggested that these expressive writing exercises are done in conjunction with some form of regular daily practice involving “[reflective and awareness building](#)”⁸ [Sewell 2020; Kovacs & Corrie 2017] – such as Autogenic Training. This is for sound neurophysiological reasons. Regular forms of ‘Mind’ Training, such as Meditation / AT, change the neurocircuits in our brains towards Social Engagement [Porges 2012], and the activation of our inner nurturing and CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998]. This can then greatly facilitate the efficacy of Expressive Writing.

Expressive Writing format A**1) Preamble: Guidelines for the Exercise**

Please note: Pennebaker suggests that we don’t write about any trauma / major upset until at least three to six months after the event. Writing too soon following a major trauma can be counterproductive – or even re-traumatise us. If in doubt, I suggest that the matter is discussed with your therapist / counsellor / mentor.

Expressive writing has been shown to be an effective means of dealing with distressing feelings and emotions – by James W. Pennebaker and others during the last twenty-five years. This EARTE B2 (format A) follows the format specifically recommended by Pennebaker.

2) Guidelines for Expressive Writing A Exercise**2.1 General overview:**

1. We limit the writing to 15 minutes a session.
2. We repeat this either:
 - for the next two days or
 - once a week for three weeks
3. Note that in both cases this gives us three writing sessions of 15 minutes each.
4. We destroy – e.g. by burning (if safe to do so) or tearing up – what we have written once we have completed the exercise⁹ – this helps us to metaphorically and literally let it go.

2.2 Format A in more detail /

⁸ I had originally here used the term “Mental Training”; and changed this thanks to the wisdom of Ruth Sewell, Autogenic Psychotherapist, Exeter, UK. See also glossary: [reflective and awareness building](#).

⁹ That is, we destroy it right away. This is of particular importance if what we are writing about is anger, or anger related issues – and because it avoids the possibility of it being seen by, say, others in the family. Destroying the writing is less clear cut in some other forms of distress – and EARTE B3 format B discusses an alternative approach, and one recommended by Hanscom [Hanscom 2020].

Expressive ART Exercise No B2 continued

2.2 Format A in more detail

The following specific advice is adapted from Pennebaker & Chung 2011.

I would like you to write about your deepest thoughts and feelings about the most upsetting / traumatic experience of your entire life ******. In your writing, I'd like you to:

- really let go and
- explore your very deepest emotions and thoughts.

This may relate to your childhood, your relationships with others, including parents, lovers, friends, or relatives. You may also link this event to your past, your present, or your future, or to who you have been, who you would like to be, or who you are now.

You may write about the same general issues or experiences on all days of writing or on different topics each day. Not everyone has had a single major trauma but all of us have had major conflicts or stressors – you can write about these as well.

This writing is for you, and not for anyone else.

- Don't worry about spelling, sentence structure, or grammar.
- The only rule is that once you begin writing, continue to do so for the 15 minutes

Adapted from Pennebaker & Chung 2011 p 3¹⁰

****** With the proviso that this has not been within the last 3 to 6 months – see previous page. This is because such writing within this period can re-traumatise us.

Note that in this writing exercise¹¹ it is crucial that we write down both:

- a) **A description of what is bothering us**, for example a previous broken off relationship that we have not got over¹²; this will deal with the actual context of the events that took place.
- b) **Our “raw” (gut) emotional feeling towards these events / happenings**. These may be negative, destructive, neutral and / or positive.

Focusing only on the event itself is not helpful. We need to put our feelings into words¹³.

Sometimes /

¹⁰ i.e. page 3 in the internet downloadable version from ScienceDirect.

¹¹ The writing can take the form of a letter (**that we do not send**). This could, for example, be to: an ex-partner, our boss, someone who has died, our mother, our father – or the person we are caring for – or indeed ourselves.

¹² Another example would be negative / distressing / angry feeling relating to our Caring work.

¹³ This changes our brain dynamics and reduces amygdala activity, and thus reduces fears and anxieties; see also the research on Affect Labelling [Creswell et al 2007]; and B12 on website: “Affect Labelling, Autogenic Training, and reducing Emotional Distress”, based on Creswell & Lieberman.

Sometimes, expressing our deepest feelings / sorrow in poetry can have a profound effect. See, for example, Anesa Miller¹⁴ (“*When the world came down upon me...*”) [Miller 2020 on-line; and Panksepp 1998 page before Preface.]

2.3 Further comments regarding the exercise – in the context of experiencing distressing emotions

The suggestion is that if we have unresolved emotional issues as outlined above, we give expressive writing a go during the coming week or so. Procrastination may be part of the problem. In the final analysis, the only way to do something is to do it.

- You may like to look over B1: “Things that make me angry exercise” and work on some of the feelings expressed in that exercise.
- But the matter may not be to do with anger per se; perhaps it is to do with loss / grief. Focus on whatever feels appropriate.

Also, as indicated, it is important that we are continuing with our daily routine of Meditative type practice / Autogenic Training.

*** **

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE B2

This has to a large extent already been covered, especially referring to the work of Pennebaker [Pennebaker 1990 / 1997; 2010; Pennebaker et al 1987; Pennebaker & Chung 2011]. As already suggested, it is reasonable to surmise that such approaches reduce distressing affective states manifesting in increased SNS and / or DV activity, and at the same time increasing Ventral Vagal modalities; our story will change as we move into the latter [Dana 2021 p 35].

In addition, we have the non “scientifically proven” live experiences of poets and others. Excluding *vivencia* for left brain analytical reasons is not per se very scientific in terms of the true meaning of science. [See also McGilchrist 2009]

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Miller /	

¹⁴ Clearly, some writing can express our deepest feelings – such as in poetry – and if it feels appropriate, we of course can keep such writing. In such situations, we need to tune into our Authentic Self, our [Jen](#).

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EARTE B3: Expressive ART Exercise No B3: Expressive Writing Format B**1. Expressive Writing Format B: introduction**

Some AT therapists include expressive writing in their Autogenic approach, and there is good evidence for the efficacy of this in terms of our well-being [e.g. Pennebaker & Chung 2011]; and see EARTE B2 above. This method can be used for any distressing emotion, such as anger, irritation, and anxiety. It is of interest that Hanscom specifically includes Expressive Writing in relation to lowering our background Pro-I cytokines in the context of Covid-19 [Hanscom 2020; and web article A10].

It is suggested that we follow the Format A (EARTE No B2) for the specified three writings before we embark on B3.

In B3, we divide the page into three columns as indicated below, and then complete Column 1. We read over carefully what we have written, and then comment on this as indicated in Column 2, before moving on to, and completing, Column 3.

1.	2.	3.
Write in this column the negative, distressing or unpleasant feelings / emotions and thoughts (perhaps downwardly spiralling, often associated with “ Automatic Negative Thoughts”). i.e. this is really the same as Format A (EARTE B2 above).	Comment on any “errors of thinking” in column 1 that you become aware of. See rows B and C below	A more mindful assessment of the original thoughts Reframing
Examples		
e.g. i. “He said that which proves I am useless.”	No single event proves anything.	He was under a lot of pressure, and I can now see that he was distressed.
e.g. ii. Partner does something that irritates us..... “He / she <i>always</i> does that....”	“Always” – is that really so?	Actually, he / she is often generous.
Based on Hanscom 2020		

Figure B3.1

A new framework for the Expressive Writing Exercise Format B

Stage 1 (column 1)

It is essential that we initially just get the distressing feelings down on paper without any analysis. This means that in column 1, as Pennebaker says, we get our raw and uncensored feelings down on paper.

- This is different from negative ruminations.
- The act of putting the feelings down on paper externalises them, and is a first step in distancing ourselves from the feeling. This distance is required¹⁵.
- This can free us in several ways. For example, putting our feelings down on paper can be regarded as a powerful form of affect labelling [see Lieberman 2007, and B12 on website]; so this can help to free us from the negative affect. In addition, as Jung says, we do not so much have complexes as they have us – in which case, we cannot be free (in this sense). If we do not face our complexes, there is no way that they will not have us.

Columns 2 and 3 are for mindful reflections on what we have written: it is not to do with going into a downward spiral of negative ruminations. Rather, it is to do with constructive reframing.

¹⁵ Otherwise, our negative thoughts and ourselves can become one, as it were, leading to reduced confidence and a feeling of “not being good enough”.

2. Expressive Writing Format B: further comments on Stages 2 and 3

Having completed Stage 1, it can be helpful to go for a walk, or complete an Autogenic Standard Exercise sequence (or other form of Meditation), and / or sleep on the matter – before moving on to stages 2 and 3.

*** **

We then go on to columns 2 and 3, which have a different function: we begin to reflect on the situation with the potential that we can reframe matters in a helpful – and more accurate way (see also Thouless 1930 / 1974). This will begin to re-wire old thought patterns / negative [Habit Energies](#)¹⁶ [Hanh 2012] and their related ways of thinking, into new and creative and releasing feelings. Each new reframing we do is helping to change our old habitual and sometimes destructive neuro-circuits.

"Every recall is a reframe." That is, whenever we recall an important memory, nature opens up the possibility for us to reconstruct it on a molecular-genomic level within our brain. That is, we are constantly engaged in a process of creating and reconstructing the structure of our brain and body on all levels, from mind to gene.
Rossi 2002 p XV

3. Expressive Writing Format B – and our Autonomic State

From the above, it is clear that this second format of Expressive Writing – format B – is by its nature changing the dynamics of the expressive writing – in that here we can be reflecting on what we have written; this can give us valuable insights; and so may be very helpful to keep. These changing dynamics are underpinned by the Autonomic State that we are in – as illustrated in Figure B3.2.

	1.	2.	3.
	Write in this column the negative, distressing or unpleasant feelings / emotions and thoughts (perhaps downwardly spiralling, often associated with “ Automatic Negative Thoughts”). i.e. this is really the same as Format A (EARTE B2 above).	Comment on any “errors of thinking” in column 1 that you become aware of. See rows B and C below.	A more mindful assessment of the original thoughts. Reframing
	e.g. “He said that which proves I am useless.”	No single event proves anything.	He was under a lot of pressure, and I can now see that he was distressed.
ANS state	SNS (‘mobilisation with fear’) if said and feeling irritated or angry; or	Perhaps moving into <u>Ventral Vagal</u> – and at same time accessing Right Brain dynamics.	Ventral Vagal – linking in with compassion for self and other, and our <u>Reflective Function</u> [Knox 2003].
	Dorsal Vagal (‘immobilisation with fear’) if feeling cornered or no good		

Figure B3.2.
Expressive Writing Format B and associated Autonomic States

¹⁶ Habit Energies are essentially the same as what Pat Ogden describes as: [Procedural Learned Tendencies](#) (i.e. originating in childhood) [Ogden 2009].

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE B3

This has essentially been covered in the discussions above. As indicated in Column 1 of Figure B3.2, when we start the expressive writing about some form of distress, we will tend to be in a non-safe space; that is to say, from an autonomic perspective we will tend to be in SNS (flight / fight mode) or Dorsal Vagal in which we may be having a desire to hide (e.g. in a cave) and or are not feeling “good enough”. We can see the rationale / theoretical basis for B3 from two complementary perspectives.

- I. The actual writing (in columns) will tend to dissipate such autonomic states (as in EARTE B2); and the reflective writing of columns 2 and 3 will facilitate a move towards Ventral Vagal. When doing this, it is important that we embrace positive affect that goes with the writing. For example:

☼ He was under a lot of pressure – and I can now see that he / she was distressed.

We can formulate this reframe with positive affect and compassion for the person involved, and this will be in keeping with Spinoza’s statement: “An affect cannot be restrained or neutralised except by a contrary affect that is stronger than the affect to be restrained” [Spinoza 1677 – and see A11 page 5].

This means that the reflective writing of Columns 2 and 3 can change our state, and so our perception, and thereby our “story” more and more. We return to “Story follows State” [Dana 2018].

Story Follows State
Dana 2018 p 35

- II. However, we can also look at this in terms of our autonomic state when we start columns 2 and 3. From this perspective, when we fill in in columns 2 and 3 the process will be assisted if we are already in a Ventral Vagal State. An AT sequence, or a gentle walk in a park or the country, will facilitate being in a Ventral Vagal state before the reflective writing, and this state per se will allow us to see matters from a more impartial perspective. These dynamics are hinted at in the background colours in the Figure B3.2.

References for EARTE B3

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Expressive ART Exercise No B4: Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief**Preamble**

Grief and Loss are part of our common human experience and originate in Primordial Separation Anxiety – that we will all have experienced from time to time in our early childhood [Panksepp 1998; Panksepp & Biven 2012]. Such childhood Separation Distress is not in itself usually a problem, unless our parents / carers have not had the skills to nurture us appropriately following a separation – even when very brief.

Whatever our childhood experiences, problems in adult life can arise if we block our emotions¹⁷, in this case feelings of loss or grief.

This exercise may be of general interest for all of us – in that all / most of us will have experienced some separation distress in childhood and more recently. The exercise in Part II is primarily aimed for those of us who have blocked loss / grief, which we may, or may not, be aware of – i.e. it is specifically aimed at this group¹⁸.

Part I of B4**Some background reflections on pain and loss – and nature’s innate wisdom****1.1 Introduction**

Nature has given us human beings the ability to cry, and this allows us to express and process physical and emotional pain. Grief is the act of processing loss of any kind; tears and crying play an important part in this process. If crying is suppressed, tension is stored in the body and this may manifest itself in many unpleasant ways, such as: low mood, loss of interest, apprehension, irritability, general malaise, not feeling well, and various aches and pains, such as backache. Other reactions may include skin problems, allergic reactions, fluttering eye lids and coughing spells¹⁹.

Emotional pain is often related to loss / grief of some form. Women may find it easier to express such pain than men (e.g. for cultural reasons). This means that women may find this exercise easier than men, yet it may be even more important for men.

1.2 Blocked Grief

The exercise that follows is designed specifically for those of us who have in some way blocked / repressed our grief / loss²⁰ – so that it remains unexpressed. This is not in itself our fault. Luis de Rivera follows Luthe in calling this “forced crying”. On reflecting on this with a student of AT recently, we both had some reservations about this term, in that from an Autogenic perspective forcing anything is not generally regarded as a wholesome approach. Other terms that may resonate better for us are:

- Expressive Crying
- Priming Exercise to release unexpressed Grief
- Releasing Sadness

¹⁷ See, for example, F4 on website

¹⁸ This is my understanding following several discussions with Luis de Rivera – with gratitude.

¹⁹ Luthe called this exercise the Intentional Crying Exercise; this phrase can be misleading as tears / crying are not always essential for the efficacy of the exercise [see also Luthe 1982]. However, please also see de Rivera’s comments in the main text on the next page; *this priming exercise is fundamentally pro-homeostatic to set in motion nature’s way of releasing sadness /grief (i.e. through tears / sobbing).*

²⁰ i.e. if we do not suffer from such blocked grief, then there is no need for this exercise. (See footnote 17 above.)

Expressive ART Exercise No B4: Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief continued

The de-blocking exercise described in Part II is specifically for those of us who have blocked grief; this is usually unconscious – and in any case, no blame. As indicated above, de Rivera uses the expression “forced crying”, which appears in the quote below. Replace this phrase with another if it does not feel comfortable.

“Forced crying was the first neutralization technique invented by Luthe, to facilitate the acceptance of crying and the disposal of the chronic resistance to crying developed by education..... All the mechanisms involved in crying are subject to conscious control, except the lacrimal glands. Forced crying seeks to re-start the crying mechanisms to its natural functioning, undoing the learned inhibition of crying.”

de Rivera 2018 p 212 footnote 81 (from page 115)

A further discussion regarding the phrase “forced crying”

As indicated above, the phrase “forced crying” may not be quite the right expression in English, although it is the one used by Luis de Rivera from Madrid. As mentioned above, an AT student of mine commented that it does not feel right; and certainly the word “forced” feels unsympathetic to the idea that crying is a pro-homeostatic gift from nature. Alternative words / phrases to consider may include:

- ⊗ Deliberate
- ⊗ Enacted
- ⊗ Encouraged
- ⊗ Expressive
- ⊗ Imagined
- ⊗ Releasing Sadness
- ⊗ Replicated
- ⊗ Simulated

It is important that the word we use resonates within; and then, and even more important, *if we feel it is appropriate for us to do the exercise*, that we give the exercise a go with “unbending intent” – to completion.

In effect, this de-blocking of grief exercise allows us to re-connect with the free-flowing of grief – a gift of nature that may have become suppressed in us. Luis de Rivera comments:

On occasions, feelings might be of such a tremendous intensity, or they may come at such an early time in life, that the limbic system is not capable or mature enough to handle them. Nature has supplied humans with a unique pro-homeostatic mechanism to transfer overflowing strong feelings out of the feeling channel into the sensori-motor system: the natural reflex of crying. Crying discharges painful tensions without harm, through the activation of complex muscular systems and parasympathetic function. Luthe discovered early the powerful therapeutic effect of crying....

de Rivera 2018 p 115

This ‘powerful therapeutic effect’ can be realised in the deblocking exercise introduced in Part II.

*Expressive ART Exercise No B4: Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief continued***1.3 Possible causes of unexpressed grief include**

- i. the death of a loved one; this may or may not be recent;
- ii. the loss of a relationship; e.g. a marital breakup (from recently to long ago);
- iii. the loss of a safe / secure home in childhood (including having never experienced a secure base in the first place);
- iv. the loss of a feeling of living in a (relatively) safe world / environment;
- v. the loss of our health or part of our body (e.g. arthritis; chronic fatigue); mastectomy; and a loss of the feeling of well-being;
- vi. the loss of health in someone close to us;
- vii. loss such as being made redundant; being out of work, etc.
- viii. loss associated with pandemics – such as Covid 19
- ix. distress / dis-ease about what is happening to Mother Earth.

Remember: primordial sadness has its origins in Separation Distress in early childhood, and hence is interlinked with our PANIC and GRIEF circuits [Panksepp 1998; Panksepp & Biven 2012]. Nevertheless, the evolutionary result of the activation of these neural circuits was for there to be a re-uniting of mother and infant. While PANIC and / or GRIEF activate either the SNS (mobilisation with fear) or Dorsal Vagal (immobilisation with fear) or both [Porges 2011; Dana 2018], if the end result was the reunion of the child with the mother then Ventral Vagal circuits are reunited – and with this the flow of oxytocin and social engagement.

Also note: an earlier and not entirely resolved loss may make it more difficult for us to deal effectively with a subsequent loss. In this case, we need to address the earlier / original loss; for this, some form of counselling / psychotherapy may be very helpful.

Part II of B4**The Deblocking / Priming Exercise**

Note: this can be called a technical exercise to get in touch with blocked feelings of grief / loss

2.1 Preamble and further caveat to the Deblocking / Priming Exercise B4

As discussed above, from Luis de Rivera's perspective, this exercise is not for everyone; it is intended only for those who, for whatever reason, are not in touch with their grief / loss; that is, it has become blocked or is unavailable to them to express in the natural way nature intended.

Furthermore, as with other emotions, there are significant cultural differences regarding the acceptance of emotions and their expression. Raffin argues against the use of Luthe's Complementary Pro-homeostatic Approaches [Raffin 2020; Luthe 1982A; 1982B], at least until more research has been done. Other Autogenic Therapists have found them personally and professionally helpful.

It is quite possible that evidence for their use in one country / culture may not be generalisable to other places.

2.2 The Exercise: how to do it /

*Expressive ART Exercise No B4: Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief continued***2.2 The Exercise: how to do it**

[de Rivera 2018 pp 107-128; de Rivera 2018B)

This exercise is in itself quite simple and can often be done in just a few minutes. This means that, when we have the need, it can be repeated several times a day. There is no need to make a 'big deal' of it. Some may find it difficult to get into this exercise; in which case, we can imagine that we are an actor / actress who is rehearsing for playing the part of someone who gets bad news – and “breaks down” crying.

All the gestures of real crying are used, such as:

- facial expressions
- shoulders heaving
- sobbing noises
- perhaps covering our face with our hands.

“The crying mechanisms, which involve many muscles”, are so well blocked in some students that they “may be unable to allow a crying discharge. Forced crying or fake crying (‘imagine that you are an actor and are preparing for a casting that requires crying in front of the camera’) is a way of removing the social block.”

[de Rivera 2018 B mod.]

2.3 Duration of the exercise

- Continue the exercise for as long as you can comfortably manage.
- For some people this will only be for a few minutes.
- For others it may be considerably longer – e.g. twenty minutes or more.
- “Little and often” may be the way for some; whereas others may find longer sessions appropriate.
- In any event, for many of us we will need to persist at the exercise for a couple of weeks or so where there is a backlog of “crying need symptoms” [Luthe 1982] – i.e. extending back over months / years.

2.3 Some further comments²¹

It is important that we make sensible preparations before we start this exercise. We need to ensure that we are not going to be disturbed.

Curiously, crying and laughing overlap in their physiological mechanisms. Laughter itself can be very therapeutic. *Having said that, there is a great deal that is not at present understood regarding the neurobiology of crying [Bylsma 2018], and future research may well change our perspective on these matters.*

²¹ In Buddhist psychology, there is a fundamental reframe in which we begin to see loss as part of the normal human experience – for example, the story of the mustard seed and the mother whose baby has died.

○ See, for example: www.atdynamics.co.uk: Autogenic Dynamics section: B11 webpage – pp 5-6.

☸ From this perspective suffering and joy / happiness are eternal partners; we cannot have one without the other; and indeed it is through the universal human experience of suffering that we have the opportunity to process our suffering and turn it into “healthy compost” from which new shoots and flowers can emerge the following “spring”. We begin to see that birth, death, sorrow and joy inter-are. See also Hanh 2010; 2013. The Lotus Flower has its roots in mud. *See also Lao – e.g. Chapter 2 .*

It is possible that this exercise may release other emotions. For example, where there is a strong feeling of rejection (and therefore also loss), we may find anger arising within us. This may be an indication that we will benefit from the Expressive ART writing Exercise (see EARTE B2 and B3 above).

As indicated in the Preface, this article is intended primarily “to be used in conjunction with Autogenic Training, or similar trainings that facilitate an Amplified State of Consciousness.”

Should you have any deep concerns regarding the issues raised here, please see your counsellor / Autogenic Therapist – or seek professional advice.

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Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE B4 and the expression of blocked loss

Blocked emotions tend to surface in various ways, including increased SNS output, increased motor activity (e.g. becoming fidgety), and non-clear mental thinking [de Rivera 2018 pp 114-117; and website article F4]. Release of blocked feelings will tend to result in a return to Ventral Vagal dynamics.

In general terms, Autogenic Training is specifically aimed at developing appropriate skills to deal with the ups and downs of life, and so become independent of a therapist. Having said that, this EART B4 exercise for some may actually only be possible initially with the therapist present – when the client feels safe enough for feelings to be released. The situation does not necessarily have to be formally “therapeutic” in the sense of formal counselling / psychotherapy. This is illustrated beautifully in Susan Hill’s “In the Springtime of the Year”. The book is about a young couple in a rural community. The husband dies in a farming type accident in the early chapters: and the main focus of the book becomes the young widow’s journey from loss and a deep dorsal vagal state, to one of re-entering the life of the community. A pivotal moment in the book is described below, when she and a friend Potter meet several months after the death of her husband.

"Without any warning, the tears rose up and broke out of her, and Potter sat on his chair, saying nothing, and yet being a comfort to her, taking some of her grief on to himself.

She wept as she had never wept before in front of any human being and it was a good thing to do, it was of more value than all the months of solitary mourning. It brought something else to an end..... "

From: In the Springtime of the Year; Susan Hill 1974

“Without any warning, the tears rose up.....” This suggests that in this moment something became unlocked. Reflection suggests that at this moment, she felt safe enough to cry, with the simple and comforting presence of Potter. Perhaps such crying can only occur when we are feeling safe (Ventral Vagal); while SNS / DV inhibit crying.

Music can have a similar effect, as described by Mendelssohn when Baroness von Ertman, a piano pupil of Beethoven's, confided in him (Mendelssohn) some years after the death of her infant.

She (Baroness von Ertmann) told me that when she lost her last child, Beethoven was at first unable to come to her house any more. Finally he invited her to come to him, and when she came he sat at the piano and merely said: "We will converse in music," and played for over an hour and, as she expressed it, "He said everything to me, and also finally gave me consolation."

Felix Mendelssohn-Batholdy
Milan, 14th July, 1831

Quoted IN: Beethoven: his life, work and world.
H.C. Robbins Landon; Thames & Hudson 1992, p. 126.
ISBN 0-500-01540-6

*** **

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Raffin, Alessandra 2020 <i>What are the Intentional Offloading Exercises (IOEs)? History, definition, methodological issues and criticism.</i> o Unpublished British Autogenic Society PGCert-AT Thesis	
Robbins Landon, H.C. 1992 <i>Beethoven: his life, work and world.</i>	ISBN 0-500-01540-6

Also see on Website: www.atdynamics.co.uk ; autogenic dynamics section:

B 11: Transforming Distressing Mind-Body-States – from Negative Ruminations towards Well-Being
F 4: Some Consequences of Blocking Feelings.....of not allowing ourselves to feel the feeling

*** **

This concludes the section of this article specifically on the EARTE Series B²². In Part III, we can begin to see that the most fundamental aspect of the *raison d'être* for Series A and B is to enable us to flowingly move on to Series C.

²² It may be noted that in this EARTE series B, I have omitted the equivalent of Luthe's *Intentional Off-Loading Exercises (i-OLE)* on anxiety and anger. This is because I have reservations regarding these approaches, *from* various perspectives.

- ❖ As discussed in the New Preface to the Second edition (page 2), Ekman's research has previously shown simply making an angry face activates the neurocircuits of anger – and thus potentially RAGE [Panksepp 1998; Ekman 2002; Ross 2005X pp 14-15]. This is a general finding, whatever the emotional face we make.
- ❖ I am aware that some Autogenic Therapists find the anger and anxiety Off Loading Exercises helpful both personally and professionally. Yet when such exercises are introduced in these cases it is in the context of the therapeutic relationship / dynamics, not something learned from a web page.
- ❖ Luis de Rivera has relevantly commented that any “mental presentation or activity produces physical changes in the brain, which, in turn, induce changes in the rest of the systems / functions” [de Rivera 2018 B]. Both of these *i-OLE* have the potential to activate FEAR and RAGE circuits [Panksepp 1998] respectively, and so activate both SNS efferent and afferent activity. This would *suggest* that in themselves these two cannot be pro-homeostatic. Other approaches have the potential to resolve these matters by other means.
- ❖ Further reservations have been expressed elsewhere: e.g. Alessandra Raffin in her well researched document [Raffin 2020].

III. EARTE Series A and B as a prelude to Series C....

As previously discussed, the Series A exercises are mainly physical in nature, and these can help us get in touch with our playful side that may have become latent / suppressed. The Series B exercises are more specifically to do with on-going distress and unresolved emotional issues – and ways of dealing with these. As we develop skilful means for dealing with such issues, we will be building our resilience, and so making it less likely that the “Birds of worry” will build their nests in our hair [Graham 2018 p 55; and page 3 above].

The final article, A13 Series C, continues to some extent with these themes, yet more explicitly in the direction of wholeness and personal development, now that we have looked at issues that may have been addressed in A11 and A12; in this respect we can see the first two of the Series as a prelude to A13.

Luis de Rivera has observed:

.....a loving understanding of nature and of fellow humans develops gradually with the regular practice of autogenics³³. Ethical behaviour is the inevitable outcome of optimal physiological self-regulation, well-balanced psychological dynamics, and empathic socialisation. Rather than asking adherence to a set of precepts, I recommend the regular practice of autogenics, to secure the unfolding of your natural ability to become yourself entirely.

de Rivera 2018 p 27

The Footnote 33 in this quote is of interest:

³³Beyond resilience – the capacity to withstand trauma without deterioration – is the development of immunity to trauma through personal growth. My study of healthy persons who had surpassed severe crises reveals that their post-traumatic growth follows a sequence of seven psychological steps:

- i. Centring
- ii. Keeping calm
- iii. Minimising harm
- iv. Understanding the situation
- v. Deciding the condition
- vi. Becoming a proactive person
- vii. Evolving

See *Crisis Emocionales*, pp 173-188. The systematic application of this natural psychological evolution to eclectic psychotherapy has allowed me to create the method PSI – *Psicoterapia secuencial integradora* – Integrative Sequential Psychotherapy – see *Sindromes de Estrés*. pp 249-260.

De Rivera 2018 p 204
Bullet points added to original list of seven

Let us reflect on these seven steps a little further²³, in order to understand a little more deeply what is involved in this “psychological evolution to eclectic psychotherapy”.

- i. Centring: as in Meditation / Autogenic Training; yet also at any time of day / night should we feel perturbed. (For example, the somatic memory exercise [de Rivera 1999] or a Partial Exercise in Autogenic Training).
- ii. Keeping Calm – this being partly the result of i. above, as we establish a Ventral Vagal Autonomic State [Porges 2011].
- iii. Minimising harm: this will tend to be the direct result of i. and ii., as we will normally have moved out of an SNS fight / flight mode or Dorsal Vagal mode.
- iv. All of the above will facilitate us in understanding the situation. If we are autonomically disturbed, we are much less likely to “understand the situation”, as our “story follows state” [Dana 2018 p 35]. In the same way, a disturbed lochan cannot reflect the landscape, trees, mountains and sky accurately. Yet it is not just a question of understanding; we also have to accept it – or at least acknowledge it. (Lingering resentment [Davidson & Schuyler 2015] hinders us from developing new and wholesome ways of being.)
- v. Deciding the condition. This is a critical step. This means creating the conditions for transformation, or as de Rivera puts it more aptly for the initial step here: “create in your mind a future alternative you may prefer”. Creating in our mind such a future is not sufficient; we then need to act appropriately (see below).
 - ❖ Deciding the condition also embraces making a commitment with ourselves to bring about the necessary “changes to create the situation” we want.
 - ❖ As an analogy, should I want to have a week’s quietude in a remote area in the highlands of Scotland: I have to get there with the provisions that are needed.
 - ❖ This means making a commitment with myself to bring this plan to fruition.
- vi. Becoming a proactive person. To carry out the plan, I need to act, as discussed above. As the saying goes: “if I always do as I’ve always done, I’ll always get what I’ve always got.” And in this context, we are probably not wanting to get what we’ve always got!
- vii. Evolving: this is the wonderful stage, for if we developed and worked through i. to vi. above, vii will develop naturally; we are already on the path, on the way.

We are /

²³ Whether or not we have experienced a significant trauma.

We are much more likely to be able to work through the above if we have, or are developing, regular AT or other Meditative practices. As discussed elsewhere, such practices facilitate the activation of Nine wholesome Prefrontal cortex functions [Siegel 2007; Ross 2020]; and these in turn resonate with Luthé's Authentic Self [Luthé 1983] and the concept of Jen, which interlinks with that of Inter-Being.

In general terms we can see Autogenic Training as a Reflective and Awareness Building approach²⁴ in which we allow the body to settle and harmonise within (i.e. Autogenically); this process involves integrating unresolved dynamics within; and over time this enables us to develop our creativity and full potential.

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²⁴ Which overlaps with de Rivera's term: Amplified States of Consciousness Induction approaches [de Rivera 2018].

IV. Thematically Related Articles on Web

A 10	Towards Transformation: Surviving and Thriving in the era of COVID-19 and building inner long-term Resilience to the vicissitudes of life	2020
A 11	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises Series A	2021
A 13	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises Series C	2021
A 14	Mind-Body States in Meditative Practices	2022
B3 Part I	The Origins of Affect and Affective Neuroscience: <i>and the misplacing of Affect in the Neo-cortex</i>	2012
B3 Part II	Emotional Operating Neuro Circuits: <i>a brief introduction to Panksepp's model</i>	2012
B6	Perceptions, flowers, and reality	Update 2020
B 11	Transforming Distressing Mind-Body-States	
B 12	Affect Labelling, Autogenic Training, and reducing Emotional Distress	2011
B 17	Windows of Affective Tolerance: <i>Reflections on Childhood Distress, Procedural Learned Tendencies, and the Therapeutic Dyad in the context of Primary Process Emotions and the Polyvagal Theory</i> [based on Ogden 2006 / 2009]	2014
B 19	Reflections on a Secure Base – Bowlby, Ainsworth, Attachment and Well-Being	2017
B 20	Neuro-physiological reflections on developing a Secure Base	2018
B 22	A playfully sympathetic approach to the Polyvagal Theory <i>An introduction to Flourishing Autogenically</i>	2020
B 24	Autogenic Switches and Well-Being	2020
D 1	Reflections on foundations for mindful living (after Kabat-Zinn)	2011
D 3	Store Consciousness and Watering our Positive Seeds	2011
D 4	Duhkha, Impermanence, and Inter-relatedness <i>Some Reflections on Sakyamuni, Inter-relatedness, and Well-Being</i>	2012
D 8	Duhkha II: The Second Arrow and Sympathetic Afferents	2011-2017
D 9	Duhkha III: Reducing Duhkha: <i>Experiential Modes, Mindfulness and Intuitive Working Memory</i>	2011-2017
D 10	Look at the Cypress Tree	2015
D 11	Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: <i>from Duhkha to Sukha</i>	2016-2017
F 4	Some Consequences of Blocking Feelings.... <i>of not allowing ourselves to feel the feeling</i>	2019
F 5A	Feeling the Feeling Meditation (after de Rivera 2018)	2019
F 7	Meditation on Five Sounds that can Heal the World (after Hanh 2015)	2019

IV. A brief Glossary /

IV. Glossary

<p>Afflictive Mental States I</p> <p>With especial reference to Buddhist Psychology</p>	<p>In Buddhist psychology these are known as Kleshas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “Kleshas.....in Buddhism, are mental states that cloud the mind and manifest in unwholesome actions. <i>Kleshas</i> include states of mind such as anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, desire, depression, etc. Contemporary translators use a variety of English words to translate the term <i>kleshas</i>, such as: afflictions, defilements, destructive emotions, disturbing emotions, negative emotions, mind poisons, etc..” <p style="text-align: right;">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kleshas_(Buddhism)</p> <p>Much Buddhist thought and practice is put into investigating the nature of afflictive states, and reducing the causes of such states, including our own downward spiralling ruminations, that increase our human suffering [Hanh 1998; web articles such as: B6; D3; D4; D8; D9; D11].</p>
<p>Afflictive Mental States II</p> <p>With especial reference to Buddhist Psychology</p>	<p>In Western Psychology, it is generally assumed that all emotions have some value. In Buddhist psychology, some emotions / mental states are considered to be inherently unwholesome, and the central three of these are described as the Toxic Trio [Ekman, Davidson, Ricard and Wallace 2005]. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Hatred / ill-will towards others; ➤ Craving – in the sense that we are never satisfied, and always wanting more and more for ourselves (often at the expense of others); and ➤ The belief that we have a permanent separate self, and may be fixated on perceptions of “me” and “mine” – which may lead to a growing unawareness of inter-being and / or ubuntu. <p>All three are considered to be unwholesome / toxic.</p> <p>Hanh classifies unwholesome mental states as follows:</p> <p><i>i. Primary unwholesome states:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “greed, hatred, ignorance, pride, doubt, and wrong²⁵ views.” <p><i>ii. Secondary unwholesome states arise from these primary states, and include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “anger, malice, hypocrisy, malevolence, jealousy, selfishness, deception, guile, unwholesome excitement, the wish to harm, immodesty, arrogance, dullness, agitation, lack of faith, indolence, carelessness, forgetfulness, distraction and lack of attention.” [Hanh 1998 p 74] <p>The purpose of the Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercise is to reduce unwholesome mental states and increase wholesome states, such as: care and nurturing; compassion; consideration for others; empathy – and the inter-related nature of inter-being and ubuntu.</p>
<p>Amplified State of Consciousness/</p>	

²⁵ As opposed to Right Views. “The Pali word for “right” is samma and the Sanskrit word is samyak. It is an adverb meaning “in the right way”, “straight”, or “upright”, not bent or crooked. Right Mindfulness, for example, means that there are ways of being mindful that are right, straight and beneficial. Wrong mindfulness means that there are ways to practise that are wrong, crooked, and unbeneficial. Right and wrong ^(in this context - IR) are neither moral judgements nor arbitrary standards imposed from outside. Through our own awareness, we discover what is beneficial (“right”) and what is unbeneficial “wrong” [Hanh 1998 p 11].

**Amplified State
Of Consciousness
Induction (ASCI)**Adapted from F1
and B24 on webAfter Luis de
Rivera 2018

A concept originating in de Rivera's work indicating that different forms of meditation all result in an Amplified State of Consciousness. This is a much more profound change than the Relaxation Response.

"ASCI principle: passive concentration induces an Amplified State of Consciousness.

- Benson's Relaxation Response is identical to the autogenic state described by Schultz and co-workers, so we could name this principle the Relaxation Principle.
- I prefer ASCI (Amplified State of Consciousness Induction) because it conveys better the notion that, besides the psychophysiological changes, there is an amplification of:
 - a) the mental field,
 - b) inner world perception and
 - c) self-discovery.
- The Standard Exercises work on this principle."

[de Rivera 2017 /2018B]

Bullet points etc added - IR

In brief, Amplified States of Consciousness can be induced by various specific practices: hence the term Amplified State of Consciousness Induction (ASCI).

At an international meeting of psychotherapy in Switzerland in 2010, there was agreement to use the term "Amplified States of Consciousness Induction" to

- ❖ 'facilitate comparative studies of the increasing number of therapies using meditation methods' [de Rivera 2018 p 17].

I would include Tai Chi here as a form of meditation [Rosenberg 2017 pp xxi-xxii].

We need a term that embraces a group of approaches that facilitate well-being, Social Engagement and a feeling of safety [Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018]. In previous articles I have used the term 'Mental Training'. Yet this is not altogether satisfactory – see below.

- ⊗ Ruth Sewell, a therapist with an integrative approach (including Autogenic Psychotherapy) in Exeter, U.K., has reservations about the phrase Mental Training: "I resist this term as it is, potentially, a fierce/controlling term and strongly indicating a heavy cognitive bias. I don't have a specific replacement, but I tend to go for [reflective and awareness building...](#)". [Sewell email communication 12-XI-2020].

In this series of articles I use the term 'Reflective and Awareness Building' approaches to convey this. In general terms, any method that induces Amplified States of Consciousness will also be facilitating Reflective and Awareness Building [see also Kovacs & Corrie 2017].

Such approaches resonate with the ancient Chinese /Taoist /Chan practice of "turning the light around", meaning that we can return to our "Original Mind" – that is free of Ego-states (in an ego-centric sense) – which naturally brings about a realisation of Inter-Being [Ting-pin Lu: The Secret of the Golden Flower: VIII: 8; Lu b 798]. Lu, Tung-pin (born 798)].

Authentic Self /

<p>Authentic Self</p> <p>See also Appendix of A13 and glossary of E-03 on website for a more detailed discussion</p>	<p>A concept developed by Luthe [Luthe 1983] which represents the full potential development of each human being given their genetic endowment. This implies that it can be reached if we have appropriate parenting and education*** – and continue to develop throughout the rest of our lives. He contrasted the Authentic Self with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the Artificial Self – which is the false-self we may hide behind when, for example we are seeking approval of others. And: ii. the Natural Self which is the Self we have reached at any particular point in our life. <p>[See also Ross 2010 Appendix C3 in Essay 1 pp 36-40].</p> <p>*** This statements seems problematic and restrictive. Can we not reach our full potential if we have experienced, for example, a “not good-enough parent”? [Winnicott 1960 / 1965]. Let us reframe this: we all have access to our Original Mind, our Jen, and Ubuntu realisation at any stage in our lives, given a nurturing enough internal and / or external environment. Neuro-circuits are there in potential, yet may have been eclipsed by negative Habit Energies, axiomatically including transgenerational negative Habit Energies. Meditative Practices all help us in “turning the light around” [Lu b 798 : The Secret of the Golden Flower] and help us to restore our Original Mind.</p>
<p>Cognitive Diffusion</p> <p>See also Cognitive Fusion below</p>	<p>A term used in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy [Harris 2006], in which skills are developed to defuse distressing mind, thought, and feeling states by first accepting their presence. It is to be contrasted with Cognitive Fusion, in which we identify or become one with the distressing state. This is unwholesome and potentially dangerous, as “story follows state” [Dana 2018 p 35]; and will tend to lead to negative ruminations and the Second Arrow.</p> <p>There are six key components in Acceptance and Commitment Therapy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Cognitive diffusion ii. Acceptance iii. Contact with the present moment iv. The Observing Self (the idea of an aspect within us that is “unchanging, ever present, and impervious to harm” [Harris 2006 p 7]). This overlaps in some ways with the concept of Jen. v. Values: being clear as to our values, and honouring them. “Clarifying what is most important, deep in your heart.....” [Harris 2006 p 7]. vi. Committed Action.
<p>Cognitive Fusion</p>	<p>Cognitive fusion occurs when we identify with a (usually) distressed state and this then becomes fused in our body-brain continuum. When this fusion occurs we can no longer be the observer of what is going on within: rather, “me and my body state become one”. In the case of anger, this can activate a full-blown RAGE response in which the RAGE circuits take over. Such situations can occur in therapy, as illustrated by Springham in his paper: “Through the eyes of the law: What is it about art therapy that can harm people?” [Springham 2008]. This sensitive and compassionate article describes a patient who has been severely traumatised and then start on Art Therapy in which there are not sufficient safeguards.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ A central tenet of all therapies is that the patient / client / student of the practice is safeguarded, and this has been well represented in the standard teaching of the British Autogenic Society for students on the PG Cert Autogenic Training for some decades. <p>Safeguarding the patient and new Autogenic Training Teachers is well integrated in the de Rivera and the International Committee for Autogenic Therapy (ICAT) approach to training [de Rivera 2017: From Autogenic Training to Autogenic Psychotherapy], which has three levels of training:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) First Level: Autogenic Trainer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The first level, basic autogenic training, is very well organized all over the world..... The appropriate title at this level is Autogenic Trainer [de Rivera op cit];

Cognitive Fusion	<p>2) <u>The Second Training Level – the level of Therapy Autogenic Therapists</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The second training level is the level of therapy: applying autogenic training to medical patients and to psychological patients. This requires special medico psychological knowledge and carries special responsibilities that only people with clinical medical or psychological degrees can face” [de Rivera op cit]. <p>3) <u>The Third Level – the level of Psychotherapy Autogenic Psychotherapist</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “The third level is psychotherapy by autogenic methods” [de Rivera op cit]. <p>There is also a 4th level: Masters Level; and 5th Level: ICAT (International Committee for Autogenic Therapy) members level [de Rivera 2017].</p> <p>The Second and Third levels of AT Training would be required for patients in danger of developing Cognitive Fusion in therapy.</p> <p>The above three levels – at the least – are something that the British Autogenic Society can aspire to in the coming years with new cohorts of younger Autogenic Trainers / Therapists coming in.</p>
Habit Energies Short extract from glossary of B 20	<p>As we grow up, we take on certain patterns of behaviour and attitudes from our parents, ancestors, and teachers. Some of these may be helpful, some may be neutral, and others may be dysfunctional.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Buddhist psychology, these are termed Habit Energies [Hanh 2012], and overlap with Procedural Learned Tendencies [Ogden 2009] and Complexes (in a Jungian sense). ○ Negative Habit Energies need to be addressed, reflected upon within a safe mental space, and worked through so they can be dissipated, with the result that we can develop a more coherent narrative of our childhood; otherwise we are liable to pass them on to future generations (in which case they morph into transgenerational Habit Energies). ○ A more coherent narrative of our childhood can also be facilitated by the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). [See Siegel 2010B pp 171-175 for a helpful initial introduction to the AAI.]
Intentional Off-Loading Exercises i-OLE²⁶	<p>Autogenic Training has its UK origin in the work of Malcolm Carruthers and Vera Diamond who travelled to see Wolfgang Luthe in Canada in the (? late 1970s). Subsequently, Luthe ran a series of Workshops in London. In these he introduced the basic Six Standard Exercises of Schultz, in addition to covering the Pro-homeostatic intentional exercises (PIE)[Luthe 1982A; 1982B; Raffin 2020]; . During the next few years, the UK Autogenic Association (BAFATT as it was then) changed the name to the i-OLE.</p> <p>My understanding is that Luthe’s premise was that the individual learning Autogenic Training should first be firmly grounded in the Standard Exercises; if problems arose for the individual, Luthe would deal with these more in a psychotherapeutic fashion and on an individual basis. He would only consider the PIE some months into the AT training – which might well last several months.</p> <p>His approach was to give an extended period of time for learning AT, and not the eight or nine week course adopted in the UK and what later became the British Autogenic Association.</p> <p>His PIE were intended only for those who were having significant Autogenic Discharges that were not settling over time. Some AT therapists who attended Luthe’s workshops allow each of the Standard Exercise to be practised for a couple or more week before moving on to the next exercise. In this way, the psychophysiological shift [Luthe & Schultz 1969 Vol 1 page 1] was allowed to develop without time constraints. [Thanks to Luis de Rivera and Nida Ingham for some of the above background information.]</p>
Inter Being /	

²⁶ This section would not have been possible without background information given by Nida Ingham, to whom I am most grateful. However, any errors or omissions are naturally my responsibility.

<p>Inter-Being</p> <p>Adapted from B24 on web</p>	<p>A term coined by Thich Nhat Hanh [Hanh 1998 e.g. pp 24-27; 2012 pp 55-61].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ “Interbeing” is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix “inter” with the verb “to be”, we have a new verb, “inter-be”. <p>If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are [Hanh 2012 pp 55-56].</p> <p>In the same way as the sheet of paper, if we look deeply into each human being we see that our existence and being is interdependent and inter-related to everything: the cosmos, our sun, the moon, mother earth, our ancestors, the clouds, the air, and ground of our being. The concept of inter-being is fundamental to Buddhist psychology. The realisation of the inter-relatedness of all things acts as an anti-dote to what is sometimes called the Toxic Trio [Ekman et al 2005].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A modern realisation of inter-being can be found in the Systems view of life [Capra & Luisi 2016].
<p>Jen</p>	<p>In ancient China there was a human quality regarded more highly than any other virtue: higher, for example, than righteousness, higher than benevolence.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ “This quality was known as Jen, which can perhaps best be translated as human-heartedness”. (Watts 1995; page 25).
<p><u>Original Mind</u></p>	<p>An ancient concept of Taoist, Chan (a Chinese school of Mahāyāna Buddhism) and Zen practices [Suzuki 1970], referring to our original mind of the present moment, the live experience of the here and now – un-analysed by our Left Brain (vivencia – de Rivera 2018). This is the mind of non-discrimination and Inter-Being.</p> <p>Lu contrasts it with our “Conscious Mind” [Lu, Tung-pin (born 798): The Secret of the Golden Flower].</p> <p>Our Conscious Mind is the mind of discrimination, ruminations, “me and mine” concepts, with an axiomatic inability to grasp the Inter-Being nature of all things. We can equate such mental states to SNS (mobility with fear) and Dorsal Vagal (“I’m not good enough”), which keep us trapped within unwholesome assumptions, negative ruminations and Habit Energies.</p> <p>We can also link our Original Mind to our Ventral Vagal and appropriate Dorsal Vagal²⁷ in the Stillness that ensues during Meditation [Dana 2021 webinar]. In the hurly burly of life for centuries (at least in the western world), this Original Mind has tended to become eclipsed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ Our Original Mind will tend only to reappear with regular meditative type practices, which enables “the light to be turned around” [Lu op cit], which from a polyvagal perspective can be seen as relating to a switch back toward Ventral Vagal Dynamics. This inter-is with the Third Autogenic Switch [Ross 2020; and B24 on website].
<p>Procedural Learned Tendencies /</p>	

²⁷ That is: deep stillness in meditation is, in the context of the polyvagal theory, a hybrid autonomic state involving both the Ventral Vagal and Dorsal Vagal – it is immobilisation within a safe domain modality. [Dana 2021].

<p>Procedural Learned Tendencies</p> <p>Based on Ogden 2009</p> <p>From glossary of F4</p>	<p>As small children we are learning all the time; and we are learning how best to respond to the situation that we find ourselves in. Our brains respond to different situations / different family dynamics in different ways, and in terms of evolutionary perspectives this is an adaptive response. The adaptive response will be different in, for example, the following examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If we are born into and spend the early years of our life in a war zone; ○ If we are an orphan; ○ If we are born into a stable society with wholesome values; ○ If we are born into a family where one or other parent is abusive; ○ If we are born into a family with caring / nurturing parents and siblings; ○ If our mother / father dies when we are young. <p>While the adaptive responses may be appropriate at the time of development, they can subsequently become fixed / inappropriate responses (i.e. Procedural Learned Tendencies) – which can be very dysfunctional for us as adults. They can be difficult to un-learn. They overlap with Jung’s concept of complexes (e.g. Mother complex, which can manifest in positive, neutral, and negative ways); they also overlap with the Habit Energies described in Buddhist Psychology.</p>
<p>Pro-homeostatic intentional exercises</p>	<p>These exercises were developed by Wolfgang Luthe to help those patients / clients learning Autogenic Training yet were continuing to have disturbing Autogenic Discharges during the practice of the Standard Exercise after some months [Luthe 1982A; 1982]. They were not intended to be introduced routinely to those learning AT. If emotional problems were arising during the early weeks / months, Luthe would address these on an individual basis with the student of AT²⁸. See also intentional Off Loading Exercises.</p>
<p>Reflective and Awareness Building Practices I</p>	<p>A term I first came across thanks to Ruth Sewell, Autogenic Psychotherapist. Many therapeutic approaches now use, explicitly or implicitly, Reflective and Awareness Building modalities – and this term is very pertinent to this series of Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises.</p> <p>Previously, I have quite often used the term Mental Training to denote approaches that facilitate well-being, Social Engagement [Porges 2011], and personal and professional development. However, as discussed above in Amplified State of Consciousness Induction (ASCI) in more detail, the term Mental Training feels inadequate.</p> <p>Hence my use of the phrase Reflective and Awareness Building Approaches.</p>
<p>Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices II</p> <p>The concept also resonates with that of our Reflective Function [Knox 2003]</p>	<p>There is some debate as to what is the most appropriate expression for the learning of skills that promote well-being and wholesome personal development through the activation of our Ventral Vagal (VV) system. As indicated by de Rivera, the term Relaxation Response [Benson 1975] does not do justice to this, and de Rivera suggests the term Amplified States of Consciousness Induction for this process [de Rivera 2018]. This is excellent, yet outside academic circles can be un-illuminating.</p> <p>I have tended to use the term Mental Training or Meditation; both terms can be problematic for some of us. (e.g. Mental Training can imply an excess focus on cognitive function.)</p> <p>Ruth Sewell, a very experienced Psychotherapist and Autogenic Therapist, has suggested an easy to grasp and therefore helpful alternative phrase: Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices [Sewell email communication 12-XI-2020 – with thanks.] This phrase captures the essence of learning new skills (practices) that facilitate a moment by moment awareness of the autonomic state we are presently in. Recognising what ANS state we are in can enable us to develop the required skills to move from dysfunctional states to a VV state – when this is appropriate [Dana 2018; 2020; 2021].</p>
<p>Reflective Function</p>	

²⁸ Thanks to Nida Ingham for background information regarding Luthe. See also footnote 25 under intentional Off Loading Exercises.

<p>Reflective Function [Knox 2003]</p>	<p>The Reflective modality of humans has been a crucial part of many spiritual traditions, going back millennia. Jung’s approach to psychology and individuation is based to a large extent on reflective practices, and Knox highlights the importance of this approach for our well-being in a chapter of one of her books [Knox 2003 Chapter 6: “The Reflective Function”].</p> <p>☸ For a fuller description and diagram of these dynamics, see glossary of A 13.</p>
<p>Second Arrow</p> <p>Adapted from Glossary of D 11</p>	<p>There are many things in life that can result in us suffering. In Buddhist psychology the perceived cause is sometimes referred to as the ‘first arrow’. However, what can cause us to suffer deeply is not this, but rather what our minds tend to make of this. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ We may get a bad cold; and start to say to ourselves: “Why me? Why should this happen to me right now at this important time in my life?” ➤ We may be irritated by someone at college, at work, or in the family – and embark on negative ruminations about them in which we plot to get our own back – feeding the “negative wolf”²⁹ within with hatred and ill-will towards the other. <p>These are both examples of our response (the second arrow) inflicting more suffering within us than the original incident. Autogenic Training, and other Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices, can help us to prevent or deflect this second arrow from penetrating.</p> <p>The second arrow will tend to arise when our background Autonomic State is in Danger (Sympathetic Nervous System associated mobility with fear or anger), or Life Threat (Dorsal Vagal).</p> <p>See also linked article: D8: Duhkha II: The Second Arrow and Sympathetic Afferents</p>
<p>Toxic Trio</p> <p>Based on various sources including Ekman, Davidson, Ricard & Wallace 2005</p> <p>Adapted from D11 on web</p>	<p>In Western psychology, all emotions are regarded as having their rightful place in the totality of affects. In Buddhist psychology, certain affects / emotions are regarded as inherently unwholesome / toxic [Ekman et al 2005 – p 60]. These include the toxic trio, which “are considered to be fundamental toxins of the mind” [op cit p 60]. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Hatred / Ill Will towards others. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ With hatred, we tend to exaggerate the ‘bad’ / negative qualities in the other, while downplaying / discounting the positive qualities in the other. In addition, we fail to realise the inter-being and inter-relatedness of all things [Capra & Luisi 2014]. ii. Craving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ In the context of Buddhist psychology, craving can be considered to be an unwholesome aspect of the SEEKING system [Panksepp 1998]. For example, craving for power, prestige, fame and money are false gods in that they do not result in true well-being or happiness. They are linked to feelings of me and mine, in which we see ourselves as separate entities with a tendency to discount other people or their feelings. ➤ In craving we exaggerate the positive qualities and discount the negative / toxic elements of what we crave. iii. The idea that we have a permanent separate self. This leads to concepts of me and mine that can then lead to the development of hatred / ill-will towards others / craving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ In Buddhist psychology much play is made of the concept of empty and emptiness. Thich Nhat Hanh would say: “We are empty; empty of what? Empty of a permanent separate self. We are made up of non-self elements – including large chemical elements such as iron from long extinct stars” [à la Hanh 1998].

²⁹ As in the Story of the Two Wolves within us. See <https://www.habitsforwellbeing.com/the-story-of-two-wolves/> ; including an animated version of the story recounted by Sharon Salzberg.

<p>Ubuntu</p>	<p>An African concept that in essence is a reflection of Inter-Being. The spirit of ubuntu can perhaps best be described in the following short story:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An anthropologist once proposed a game to some children of an African tribe. He put a basket of fruit near a tree and told them that whoever got there first won all the sweet fruits. When he gave them the signal to run, they took each other's hands, running together, and then sat down in a circle and enjoyed their fruits. The anthropologist was perplexed, and asked them why they chose to run as a group when they could have had more fruit individually. After some silence, one child spoke up and said: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ "UBUNTU. How can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?" <p>'UBUNTU' in the Xhosa culture means: "I am because we are".</p>
<p>Well-Being</p> <p>Adapted from B-24 on web</p>	<p>Dr Martin Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania, has been one of the key players in the development of Positive Psychology in North America [Seligman 1990]. Seligman suggests that we can regard happiness as embracing three components. Angela Clow, Professor of psychophysiology at Westminster University, suggests that the concept of Well-Being may be a better word than happiness for British (as compared with North American) citizens (Professor Angela Clow in a talk on "Stress, Health and Happiness" at the Edinburgh International Science Festival on 09.04.2006). Dr Seligman's definition of happiness can be reframed as Well-Being to embrace:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pleasure / positive emotions. ○ Being engaged in wholesome pursuits / occupations. i.e. when we are involved in, and committed to, various pursuits / activities. The construct of Well-Being is thus not one of a passive "happy" state, but one that is engaged in – and I would add mindful – activity. ○ Meaning; and / or having a connection to some larger purpose. (This might be, for example, the ecology of our planet in the context of climate change.) [See also Frankl 1946; 1952]. <p>However, Well-Being requires us to embrace and acknowledge our distressing feelings and thoughts, and thus helps us to avoid negatively ruminating. See also the Rumi poem the Guest House on, for example: http://www.sagemindfulness.com/blog/rumi-s-poem-the-guest-house</p> <p>The work of Carol D. Ryff extends the concept of Seligman in extensive research that she has carried out in recent decades. She contrasts the Greek concept of hedonic approaches to life with that of the Aristotelian eudaimonia [Aristotle – 384 to 322] – which embraces the concept that the highest good is "about activities of the soul that are in accord with virtue", that is to say: "striving to achieve the best that is within us" [Ryff 2014 / 2015 p 2]. In her research she has identified six key areas for flourishing / well-being, which are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Self-Acceptance ii. Positive / wholesome relationships iii. Purpose in life (embracing meaning) iv. Autonomy v. Environmental mastery vi. Personal Growth <p>These key areas have their origins in the works of Erickson, Victor Frankl, Jung, Maslow, Rogers and others.</p> <p>Well-Being, in its deeper sense, is clearly far more than an individual matter. It also links in with the concept of Inter-Being, the inter-relatedness of all things [Capra and Luisi 2014], and mindfulness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☸ In this sense the Well-Being of each individual is intimately linked with the wellbeing of all. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ See also Jen and Ubuntu. <p>Reflective and Awareness Building practices such as Meditation / Autogenic Training facilitate these processes [de Rivera 2018 p 27; and footnote 33 on page 204].</p>

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