

Preamble to Expressive ART Exercises Series C

This is the third 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 Induction (ASCI) [de Rivera 2018]. The three are:

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

The subject matter of the three articles is, in general terms, covered sequentially in the Autogenic courses that I run. So we cover some of the Series A before moving on to Series B; and then towards the end of the course, some of the Series C EARTE are gently introduced. Discussions regarding our Authentic Self will tend to be premature if we have not dealt with distressing emotions / feelings covered in the exercises of Series B. For similar reasons, it is suggested that A13 is studied after A11 and A12.

As with the previous linked articles A11 and A12, each Exercise has its own references, and can be printed out as a single item if required.

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New Preface relating to Second Editions (summer 2021)

□ Expanded further for this second edition of Series C

A11 and A12 first appeared on the website in 2020, and A13 in early 2021. The fundamental rationale behind the EARTE exercises is that they reduce human distress and lead towards wholeness. In some areas they depart significantly from the British Autogenic Society’s teaching of the “Intentional Off-Loading Exercises”¹ (i-OLE), which had originally been developed by Luthe. 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 2003; Ross 2005X pp 14-15]. This led me to have reservations about some of the rationale and neurophysiological underpinnings and practical application of some of the i-OLE.

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 2020; Dana 2021]. 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 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.
- In all the work we do, it is important to have a clear idea as to the reasons / theoretical models that we are basing the approach upon.

Returning to the original 2020 / 2021 texts, it can be seen that many of the principles embraced by the new research were implicit in the first article, yet are now refracted more explicitly through the Poly-vagal theory [Porges 2011; Porges and Dana 2018; Dana 2018; 2021].

*** **

Autogenic Perspective /

¹Note that the term Intentional Off-Loading Exercises (i-OLE) appears to have been developed by the forerunner of the British Autogenic Society (i.e. the British Association For Autogenic Training and Therapy – BAFATT), and not by Luthe himself. Luthe’s term was Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises (PIE). The British i-OLE differ in some significant ways from Luthe’s original conception [Luthe 1961; 1982-A; 1982-B; de Rivera 2021; Raffin 2021].

Autogenic Perspective of EARTE:

Some authorities see Autogenic Training from what we could call a hypnotherapeutic perspective [Linden 2021], while others see it much more through the ancient meditative traditions [de Rivera 2018]. In my work as an Autogenic Therapist – whether in a group context (at my old surgery in Leith) or on a one-to-one basis – I have found a meditative and mindfulness perspective particularly helpful for approaching both *inner human distress* and *personal growth*; in essence, the *two* inter-are (see [Inter-Being](#)).

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Antonio Damasio, in his book “Looking for Spinoza”, comments on Spinoza’s concept that:

- “Happiness is the power to be free of the tyranny of negative emotions”² [Damasio 2003 p 175].

The tyranny of negative emotions is a major contributor to human distress, and will tend to arise when our Autonomic State is that of “mobility with fear” (Sympathetic Nervous System – SNS), or “immobility with fear” of the Dorsal Vagal branch of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PSNS) [Porges 2011]. On the other hand, when we move into the Ventral Vagal PSNS state, this tyranny will tend to dissolve.

All three of the EARTE Series, A, B, and C, when put into practice, will be facilitating movement towards our Ventral Vagal State – and especially this final Series C of the trilogy. In this respect, aspects of Series C resonate with Kai Kermani’s introduction of a focus on positive emotions [Kermani 1996]. In reflecting on this aspect of Kermani’s approach to the Intentional Off-Loading Exercises, Alessandra Raffin states:

The role of positive emotions in the psychophysiology of health improvement has been widely discussed in the literature [Cohn et al 2009; Lyubomirsky, King and Diener 2005; Tugade et al 2004; Fredrickson & Joiner 2002; Fredrickson 2002, Folkman & Muscovitz 2000].

- In particular positive emotions not only promote well-being and healthiness but also...
- generate positive changes, including a psychotherapeutic process [Fitzpatrick & Stalikas 2009].
- Introducing a positive emotion to work with, points the person’s attention to the importance of enhancing a positive emotional attitude as a prophylactic factor against the accumulation of stress [Folkman & Moscovitz 2000].

This suggests that the stimulation of positive emotions during AT teaching could represent an interesting addition to minimise or prevent the effects of distress....

Raffin 2021 p 22
Bullet points added by IR

² This section, signified by the double pink-purple line on the left, was not in the New Preface relating to Second Editions of Series A and Series B.

The statement: “This suggests that the stimulation of positive emotions during AT teaching could represent an interesting addition to minimise or prevent the effects of distress” is entirely in keeping with a [Polyvagal Theory](#) perspective in that positive emotions stimulate Ventral Vagal states; and in general terms this is in keeping with the thesis of the EARTE series of exercises – that they are all moving towards Ventral Vagal States (or in some cases, Ventral Vagal in combination with “mobilisation when feeling safe”³ [Porges 2011]).

Furthermore, this is in keeping with the ancient psychology of Siddhartha Gautama and “changing the peg” [Hanh 1998], and the philosophy of Spinoza: “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].

It is also the case that Autogenic Training per se will help to free us from the “tyranny of negative emotions”.

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- ✿ Notation for Second Edition: significant changes / additions in the text are indicated in purple text.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Michael Ross and Annie Sturgeon for their most helpful suggestions and proof-reading; to Ruth Sewell for her most helpful reflections; and to Chris Perrin for his sympathetic (Ventral Vagal!) understanding of Mindfulness Based approaches to Autogenic Training.

Part I: Introduction to Series C /

³ i.e. activation of the SNS associated with PLAY [Panksepp 1998].

A combination of Ventral Vagal activity with “mobilisation when feeling safe” (i.e. PLAY-ful wholesome SNS activity and PLAY). Dana describes this as a polyvagal hybrid state. See hybrid states in glossary under [Polyvagal Theory](#).

Part I: Introduction to Series C

This C series of Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises is different in nature from Series A and B, and in general terms are best left until we have worked through at least some of the exercises covered in A11 and A12 (series A and B respectively); they are more specifically focused on personal growth and development – and so enable us to move towards wholeness. These developments will themselves be closely associated with increased Social Engagement within ourselves and others, modulated through the newest part of the Autonomic Nervous System (see below). The exercises we will be covering are:

EARTE No C1	Authentic Pride and Resilience Exercise
EARTE No C2	Expressive Writing Reflecting our Authentic Self
EARTE No C3	Shame and Resilience Exercise
EARTE No C4	Wheel of Awareness
EARTE No C6	Gratitude
EARTE No C7	Touching Matters
EARTE No C8	Wonder and a sense of Awe

When covering these areas with Autogenic students, I usually start with the Authentic Pride Exercise: it is important that we establish contact with our inner core and humanity – before we move on to, for example, the Shame and Resilience exercise. Addressing both of these areas is greatly facilitated by having already developed a sound Autogenic (or other Meditative type) Practice.

EARTE C2: Expressive Writing on our Authentic Self can be seen as a bridge between C1 and C3.

The Wheel of Awareness exercise was developed by Daniel Siegel, and this can be introduced earlier or later in an Autogenic course, depending upon the inclination of the therapist and AT student.

It has been increasingly recognised within the scientific and therapeutic community that a sense of wonder / awe is of great benefit to our physical and mental well-being. Since the autumn of 2017, I have been teaching the Autogenics 3.0 version of AT, developed over a decade or so by Professor Luis de Rivera in Madrid [de Rivera 2017 /2018]. This 3.0 approach has ten Standard Exercises. In this format, the Breathing AT exercise is the tenth, and I find the introduction to a discussion on wonder / awe is best left till the breathing part of the Autogenic sequence has been integrated with the AT practice of the student. (I prefer the term student of AT to client / patient – in the sense that we are all students of life.)

*** **

Guide to Glossary entries: these are notated in then main text in blue, and underlined. For example: [Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices](#). Such practice facilitates activation of the Ventral Vagal part of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System – see [Polyvagal Theory](#) in glossary.

*** **

Part II: Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises
 Series C

Expressive ART Exercise No C1: Authentic Pride and Resilience Exercise

At times in our lives we may experience a poor self-image / low self-esteem. The Dalai Lama, many years ago, in discussions with western psychologists and neuro-scientists, was perplexed by our concept of poor self-esteem. In Tibet there is no such concept, and this may have arisen because the well-being of each person was considered in the context of the well-being of the whole community. "If one of us is sad, how can the rest of us be happy?" (See also: [ubuntu](#).)

However, in the west we are where we are, and low self-esteem is relatively common. This exercise is a means of reframing our perception of ourselves and is based on the work of Christiane Sanderson, and a workshop of hers that I attended some years ago:

The Circle of Authentic Pride

© Christiane Sanderson 2016
 London Shame Workshop 3rd December 2016

Authentic Pride

Authentic Pride is a positive healthy affect that is linked to positive self-esteem, [Self-Realisation](#), and Individuation [Jung]. It is important that we distinguish Authentic Pride from Hubristic Pride⁴, in which we may puff ourselves up and not realise, for example, that our achievements are the result of many factors – including other people and mother earth. Hubristic Pride is often associated with a Life Position of I+; U- in Transactional Analysis terminology⁵.

This present exercise complements our Autogenic Training practice, and also facilitates:

- ⊗ Building inner resilience;
- ⊗ Further development of Self-Realisation; and our
- ⊗ [Authentic Self](#).

In order to help us each identify our own sources of Authentic Pride, it is suggested that we fill in the blank segments of the Circle overleaf.

We go with the
 flow of our
 creativity in this
 exercise

- ⊗ Alternatively, it may be easier to simply use the categories (or a variation of these) in the circle, and then write paragraphs on each on a separate sheet of paper / notebook / journal. This method gives us greater scope and space to explore what is important for us.
- ⊗ Whichever method we use, it is important that we then take time to reflect on what we have written over the coming days and weeks.

⁴ Hubristic Pride is a common theme in myths – for example, the myth of Arachne and Athene – the latter the *goddess of arts*....[Greene & Sharman-Burke 2000; Part IV – Chapter 2 pp 192-195].

⁵ These Lifestyle Positions are briefly discussed in the handout CC-03: Assertiveness given to those who attend the AT courses that I run.

This exercise can act as an antidote to feelings of Shame and low self-esteem (discussed in EARTE No C3). However, for fundamental reasons it is suggested that we do this exercise – perhaps several times – before we consider EARTE C3.



The Circle of Authentic Pride
 © Christiane Sanderson 2016
 London Shame Workshop 3rd December 2016
 (Note the categories have been somewhat changed)

Figure EARTE C1 – Authentic Pride

Please Note: different segments relate to specific areas of potential authentic pride. If some of these do not resonate, then leave them blank or replace / create new areas that are important to you. We are each unique beings with inner Jen.
 ASCI: [Amplified State Consciousness Induction](#) – see glossary

Main Reference / sources:

- Sanderson, Christiane 2015. *Counselling Skills for Working with Shame* ISBN 978-1-84905-562-8
- Christiane Sanderson 2016: London Shame Workshop 3rd December 2016

Related theme: Jen and our Original Nature (See appendix 2)

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C1

In the introduction to EARTE C1, reference was made to the common experience of low self-esteem in the west, which had perplexed the Dali Lama. The underlying reason for this may be that in the west, for whatever reasons, more of us have a background autonomic state of Dorsal Vagal, which can translate experientially into “I’m not good enough”, and so a feeling of low self-esteem.

This follows the logic and rationale of: *story follows state*

Story Follows State

Dana 2018 p 35

If our autonomic state is in Danger / SNS (mobilisation with fear), or Dorsal Vagal (immobilisation with fear) we will not be able to perceive many of our authentic qualities.

However, we all have within us our original nature of Jen / human heartedness – because we all have CARE and nurturing circuits within even if these are latent.

Before completing this exercise it is helpful to engage in an Autogenic Sequence, which will prime our Ventral Vagal and harmonising circuits, and this will facilitate a wholesome and more accurate assessment in terms of our Authentic Pride modalities. We can do this in a playful and creative way, perhaps using different colours / crayons to depict the various areas covered in the Circle.

Consider:

The story / perspective that we create in the Authentic Pride Exercise follows our Autonomic State while completing it.

Jen cannot be without the activation of our Ventral Vagal system. Mindfulness, Meditative Practices and Autogenic Training enable our default autonomic state to become increasingly Ventral Vagal.

***Expressive ART Exercise No C2: Expressive Writing Reflecting on our
 Authentic Self and True Nature***

In this EARTE Series C (A 13), we return to expressive writing (as in EARTE No B2 and B3), but this time the subject matter is about tuning into our inner self and [Jen](#), to allow ourselves to become more in touch with our [Authentic Self](#). We can look at this exercise in terms of a path of inner transformation towards [Self Realisation](#).

Some suggestions for the Exercise

The expressive writing can include, for example:

- Where we would like to be (metaphorically or otherwise), in say twelve months, 5 years or 10 years' time.
- Reflecting on a positive experience (e.g. a meeting, a walk in the country, a new moon.
- Creative ideas that we have long cherished – yet for one reason or another have not realised.
- This may overlap with reflecting on what, in due course as we get older and less active, we feel that we may regret not having done – when we still had the time and energy..... This opens up the possibility of us finding the time and energy in time!

Such approaches can be seen in terms of an increasing realisation that counselling or self-reflection in times of distress is more than simply dealing with the difficult aspects of our life; it is also to do with developing and embracing our inner being so that we can express this

- ✿ authentically and creatively – and
- ✿ in so doing find wholeness within.
- ✿ This in itself can become a catalyst for inner transformation. As within, so without.

This type of Expressive Writing – in contrast to that covered in A 12 (the EARTE B2 Format A; see footnote⁶) – can certainly be kept for us to reflect back on in months / years to come. Keeping a Journal / Notebook for such writing can be most illuminating.

Rationale /

⁶ Where the teaching is normally to destroy the writing withing twenty-four hours.

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C2

Simply writing about something positive can induce activation of our Ventral Vagal system. While our present moment “story” follows state [Dana 2018 p 35], it is also the case that our state can follow our story. That is, we can make a conscious decision to act in a certain way to change our state – e.g. distressed children being taken out into a park / country changes their mental state / mood / autonomic state [Park & Evans 2019].

Further evidence for the wholesome effect of writing about positive / wholesome experiences / ideas comes from various studies [e.g. Bryant & Veroff 2007 pp 100, 201; Fredrickson 2003, 2009; King 2001; Burton & King 2004].

References and Sources for EARTE C 5

Burton, C.M.; & King L.A, 2004 The Health Benefits of writing about intensely positive experiences. <i>Journal of Research in Personality</i> ; 38, 150-163	
Bryant, Fred B.; Veroff, Joseph: 2007 <i>Savouring – A New Model of Positive Experience</i>	ISBN 0-8058-5120-8
Dana, Deb; 2018 <i>The Polyvagal Theory in Therapy – Engaging the Rhythm of Regulation</i>	ISBN 978-0-393-7-1237-7
Dana, Deb 2018: <i>Polyvagal Exercises for Safety and Connection – 50 Client-Centred Exercises</i>	ISBN 978-0-393-71385-5
King L.A, 2001 The Health Benefits of writing about life goals. <i>Personality and Social Studies Bulletin</i> , 27, 798-807	
Fredrickson, Barbara 2003 The Value of Positive Emotions. <i>American Scientist</i> – Vol. 91; pp 330-335.	Available via internet
Fredrickson, Barbara: 2009. <i>POSITIVITY</i> .	ISBN 978-0-307-39373-9
Park, G., & Evans, G. W. (2019). Environment and health. In C. D. Llewellyn, S. Ayers, C. McManus, S. Newman, K. J. Petrie, T. A. Revenson, & J. Weinman (Eds.), <i>The Cambridge handbook of psychology, health and medicine</i> (pp. 32–36). Cambridge University Press.	ISBN 978-1-316-62587-3

***EARTE No C3: Shame and
 Building Resilience Exercise***

As indicated on page 8, it is suggested that we do not practise this EARTE No C3 until we have read and practised the Authentic Pride Exercise.

Thank You

Part 1: Introduction

This exercise in principle is not dissimilar to C1 on Authentic Pride, in that it also uses a Circle as the starting point.

Please Note:

- This exercise is primarily intended for those who are on a [reflective and awareness-building](#)⁷ type course such as Autogenic Training 3.0 [de Rivera 2018];
- and / or are attending for counselling / psychotherapy and have discussed the nature of the exercise first;
- or are regularly practising Autogenic Training / Meditation.
- In general terms, it is usually best for us to be introduced to the Circle of Shame through a professional therapist / counsellor. They will be discussing the matter from their own Ventral Vagal autonomic state, and this enables us to feel safe and “contained” when we embark on the course – whatever may emerge.

Some initial reflections on shame

Shame is an emotion that we may all experience from time to time. As an adult, this may be a helpful emotion in that it can tell us that we have gone beyond a certain limit of what we inwardly feel to be acceptable; that is, it may indicate that we have breached our own moral / ethical code; and with this our [Authentic Self](#).

On the other hand, shame that originates from childhood (or more recent events) may be quite different. We may feel shame as a result of inappropriate behaviour / words of a parent or other person towards us. For example:

- a) In our culture, a boy may feel ashamed if he cries at the funeral of his grandparent, because he has been told that “big boys don’t cry”. So here the shame can be very present; and yet crying is one of nature’s ways of allowing us to grieve appropriately – and so can be a stepping-stone towards some form of resolution of the loss. The shame is more in the culture that results in the cognitive dissonance that may arise in boys in such situations.
- b) Shame can also arise in childhood with the loss of a parent, when we may feel guilty and that in some way it is our fault. The above dynamics can result in persistent low esteem – and some of us may benefit from one-to-one counselling in such cases. Long term unresolved shame can result in adverse health outcomes [Dickerson et al 2004], so it is important that we address these matters without procrastinating.
- c) Shame can also arise later in life – for example following rape. An impartial perspective might be that it was not our fault – yet we may still carry shame for decades [See also page 17; and Porges 2017 p 176].

⁷ See glossary; as indicated there, Ruth Sewell, an Autogenic Therapist colleague, introduced me to this concept, which I have found most helpful. See also Kovacs & Corrie 2017.

EARTE No C3: Shame and Resilience Exercise continued

Shame may be linked appropriately or inappropriately to sexual matters. In the case of sexual abuse by adults of children, the ingrained feeling of shame the child may experience are not of the child's making or fault; they have been caused by the abuse.

This present exercise on shame I normally introduce on a one-to-one basis, rather than in a group.

Suggestion for Shame and Resilience Exercise

The exercise described below should be seen as part of the process of developing Authentic Pride and Resilience. For this reason, *it is recommended that we practise.....*

- EARTE No C1: Authentic Pride and Resilience Exercise
 several times over a several days / weeks – until we are happy with it. We can then consider moving on to:
- EARTE No C3: Resilience Exercise to free us from inappropriate⁸ Shame.

See also: Prelude to EARTE No C3: Shame and Building Resilience Exercise on the next page.

To recap: we can distinguish broadly two types of shame⁹.

- a) The shame that we may feel when we have acted in a way that we realise was not good, and which may have resulted in us upsetting others – and perhaps ourselves. This is usually healthy, appropriate, shame.
- b) The hidden shame we may feel for something that may have happened in childhood, that we are aware makes us feel ashamed, yet was the result of some form of, for example, parental or sibling abuse, and was not of our making; yet we in some way feel guilty about it – or that in some way it was our fault.

This C3 exercise is specifically aimed at b) above.

⁸ In earlier handouts I had called this “inauthentic” shame. On reflection, I think this was a misnomer. The word “inappropriate” conveys the sense better.... that this form of shame, while feeling and being real to us, is inappropriate as it is not our fault ... but a result of some form of childhood trauma and or later abuse by others; or the result of inadvertent and inappropriate adult attitudes that we may have unconsciously internalised.

⁹ See also Gilbert 2010 for an insightful perspective on Shame, Guilt, and Justice.

Prelude to EARTE No C3: Shame and Building Resilience Exercise

Shame issues can discombobulate us and this will be driven by our autonomic state, which will tend to be either in the danger / SNS flight / fight mode, or in the life threat Dorsal Vagal mode. In order to address the areas covered in the Circle of Shame, it is important that we enter into it from a settled state of Ventral Vagal. With this in mind, it is suggested that we carry out:

- ❖ an Autogenic Standard Exercise sequence before starting the exercise; or alternatively....
- ❖we work through EARTE C3 with our therapist / counsellor in a protected and safe environment.

*** **

On the next page is a diagram: “The Wheel of Shame”. Look at the categories, which are simply examples and can be changed to more suitable / relevant categories for ourselves. And then we write down our feelings about the matters that concern us – i.e. in the relevant categories for us. Add other relevant categories as they come to mind.

As with C1, it may be easier to use the circle as simply a stimulus to write down on a separate sheet of paper or notebook / journal our reflections on the relevant categories for us – and our gut feelings about these. This forms the first part of the exercise.

The second part involves our [Reflective Function](#) [Knox 2003], in which we reflect on what we have written from a compassionate perspective – perhaps imagining that we are helping / counselling someone else who has expressed such concerns. In this connection, it may be very helpful to use the format of Expressive Writing Format B, discussed in EARTE B3 (A12 – Series B).

The Circle of Shame exercise for building inner resilience /

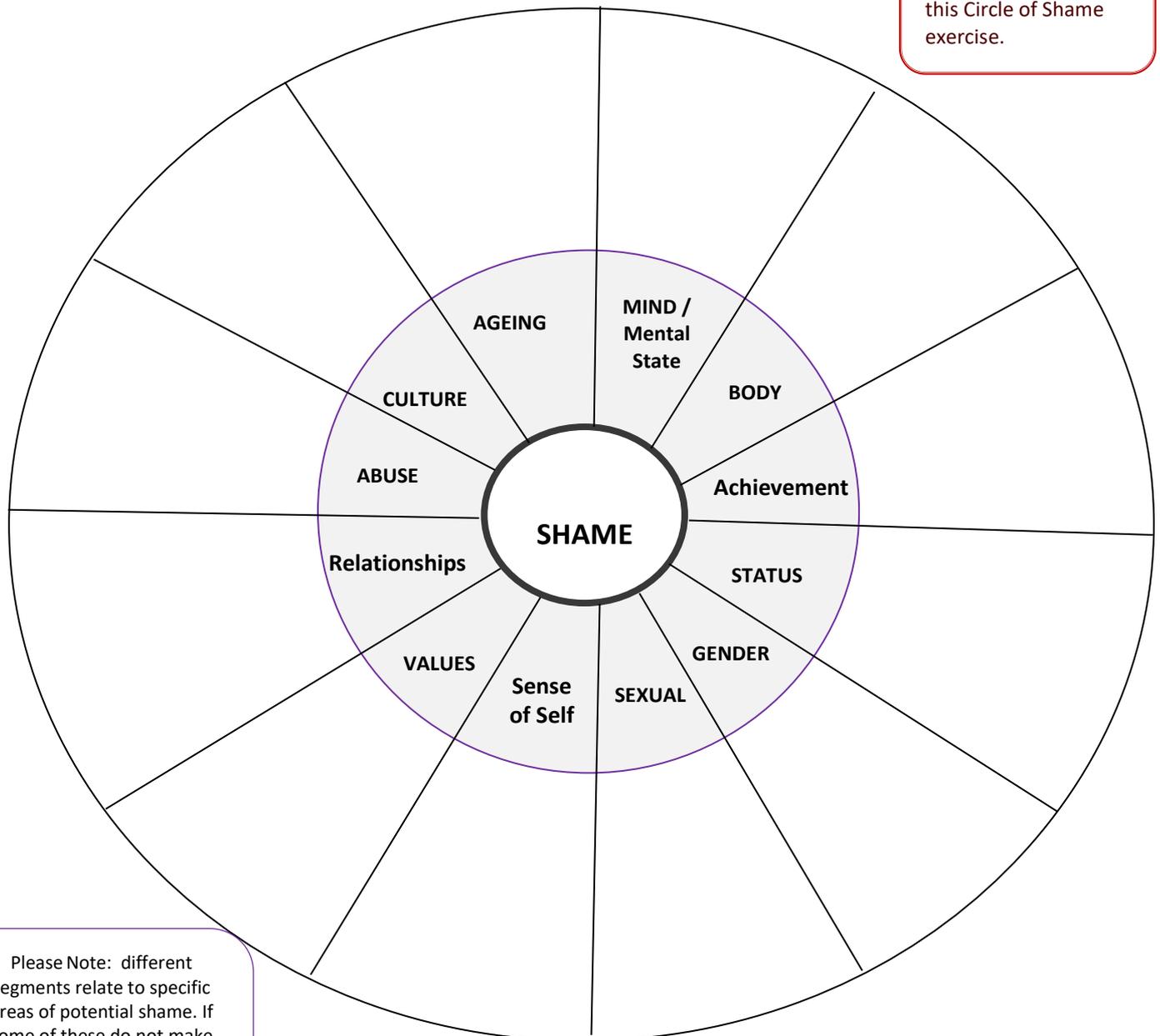
The Circle of Shame Exercise for Building Inner Resilience

© Christiane Sanderson 2016
London Shame Workshop 3rd December 2016

Part 2

To help identify sources of shame, please fill in the blank segments of the Circle of Shame. For example, under Mind and Mental State we might include: "I don't feel good enough". Remember this is a working document that can be added to as we explore (and become curious about) our shame experiences.

Please read pages 12-14 before working on this Circle of Shame exercise.



Please Note: different segments relate to specific areas of potential shame. If some of these do not make sense, please leave them blank or replace / create new areas that are important / relevant to you.
Thank you

Based on Sanderson 2015; 2016

Figure EARTE C3 Building resilience from the Circle of (inappropriate) Shame

Circle of Shame Exercise continued

Please add any further comments / feelings below.

This completes the first part of the exercise.

Part 3: Reflective writing on what we have written in Part 1.

As discussed on page 14, this involves reflecting on what we have written in Part 1, from a caring and empathic perspective. This axiomatically requires us to be feeling safe – and so in the Ventral Vagal domain.

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C3

Shame that we feel when it is not our fault, as discussed above, generally arises because we are not feeling safe or in harmony. This is because we are neurocepting danger or life threat (see [Neuroception 1](#) and [2](#) in glossary). The former is caused by the activation of our SNS in flight / fight mode (mobilisation with fear), the latter by the activation of our Dorsal Vagal in immobilisation with fear mode [Porges 2011].

In essence EARTE C3 is efficacious to the extent we can:

- i. Identify those areas that we feel shameful / not feeling good about from a
- ii. Safe Ventro Vagal Space (which may include being with a trusted other); and
- iii. then reflecting on this ([Reflective Function](#)), which implies that we are already in the Ventral Vagal autonomic domain.
- iv. This process can be facilitated by an exercise essentially the same as the Expressive Writing Format C discussed in the previous web article A12 [EARTE No B3: Expressive Writing Format B].

This process can then lead to a growing awareness that the shameful feeling was not our fault, and may well have its origins in our inappropriate and / or patriarchal cultural norms¹⁰, or in our neurophysiology. In this connection I have found the experience of a woman who after decades of distress came across the work of Stephen Porges, and wrote to him, illuminating.

¹⁰ “Cultural norms” meaning just that. This does not of course imply that such cultural norms are necessarily appropriate, ethical, or for the good of the whole community. See also Ross 2010 p 210.

“I received an email from a woman who was in her late sixties, and she described her experiences. When she was a teenager, a person attempted to strangle her and then rape her. Many years later, she was telling this to her daughter, and the daughter asked, ‘Why didn’t you fight? Why didn’t you do something?’ The mother was embarrassed and felt shame. Then she said, ‘I read about your Polyvagal Theory, and suddenly I feel vindicated and am crying now’. I was crying, too, just reading the email. But the issue was that *she understood that her bodily reaction of immobilisation was protective*. She realised on a visceral level that she felt proud of her bodily response. Her bodily reaction was heroic; she was not a victim.”

Porges 2017 p 176
 Italics added by IR

*** **

It can be helpful to write down your experience of this whole exercise in your AT diary or journal.

*** **

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EARTE C4: Wheel of Awareness

Based on, and extrapolated from: Siegel 2010A; Siegel 2020

This exercise is to do with our core being – and how we experience the world. With practice, it becomes a stabilising art that allows us to return to our centre, our core, our inner being. This central core embraces the concept of Jen, the human heartedness within each of us.

Central Concept:

This practice embraces the metaphor of a wheel to encompass the totality of our experience of life. Imagine, or draw, our inner being, our centred calm self, as being in the middle of a wheel – and thus at the Hub of the wheel.

- This central hub is always there whenever we feel the need to return to it.
- The Rim of the Wheel includes everything else (see diagram on page 20).
- Our central hub allows us to focus our attention on whatever comes into our awareness on the Rim.
- When our mind wanders or gets distracted, or we get distressed, we have the choice to return to our core, the central hub – and thus restore harmony.
- The central core embraces Present Moment States – when we are in the Being Mode.

The Rim of the Wheel

This includes anything we may become aware of. So, for example, this will include:

- ❖ Other people
- ❖ Our partner
- ❖ Children
- ❖ A bird singing
- ❖ Disturbing (negative) ruminations. This includes ‘pursuing the past’ and / or ‘getting lost in the future’ [Hanh 1990]
- ❖ Health issues
- ❖ Bodily sensations including:
 - Feelings
 - Emotions
 - Pains
 - Thoughts
- ❖ Philosophical / Religious / Spiritual matters
- ❖ Work issues
- ❖ Mind wandering during Meditation / AT sequence

The spokes of the wheel

When we become aware of anything (e.g. the examples above), we have the choice to focus our attention on them. We can regard this ability to focus on anything on the outer rim in terms of the spokes of the wheel. So the spokes become the conduit for our attention on our partner, parent, child, and any other issue / matter that comes into our awareness. Our ability to focus mindfully on many things¹¹ on the rim is of great importance for our well-being.

On the other hand, some things on the rim may be unwholesome and / or unhelpful, such as distressing ruminations – including pursuing the past or getting lost in the future [Hanh 1990].

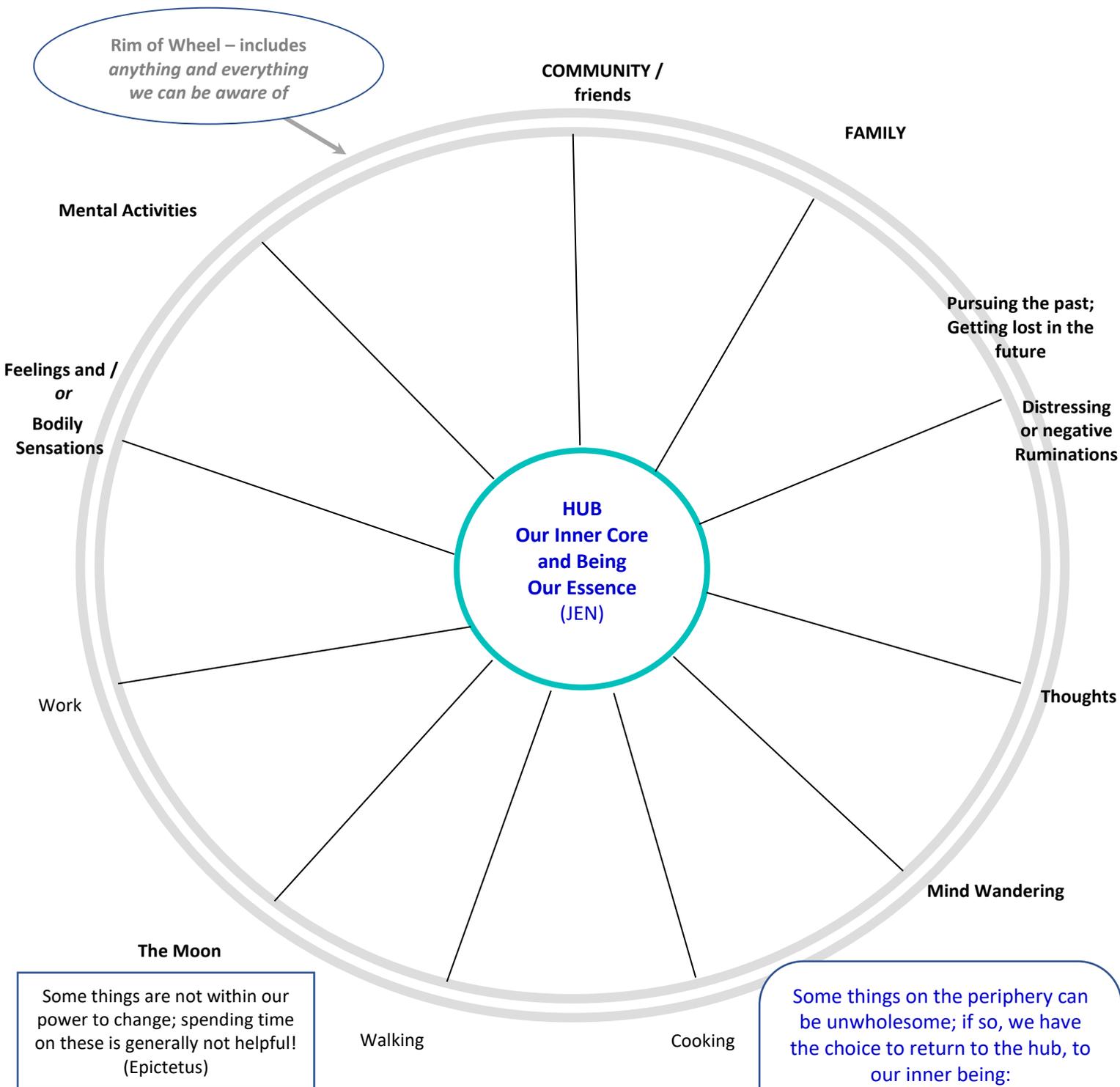
As we become aware of such mind wanderings, we can gently bring our attention back to our central core, our Jen, without judgement; rather, with gentleness and compassion. If we find bringing our attention back to our core difficult, then one of the following can help:

- ⊗ A Standard Exercise Sequence
- ⊗ A Partial Exercise (e.g. Neck and Shoulders Warm)
- ⊗ Gentle Breathing (e.g. Abdominal / Belly Breathing)
- ⊗ The Three Minute Exercise
- ⊗ Going for a walk – and becoming aware of trees, nature, birds – i.e. Being in the Present Moment.

Figure EARTE C4: The Wheel of Awareness /

¹¹ This does not mean many things at once. Despite the benefits of “multitasking” touted in recent years, several research papers indicate this is not the case [e.g. Aagaard 2019]. In the context of mindfulness, the essence is generally to be focused on the moment – and not on “multi-things”.

Figure EARTE C4-A: The Wheel of Awareness –
based on, and extrapolated from: Siegel 2010A; Siegel 2020



Some further reflections on the Wheel of Awareness

- i. Another metaphor for this concept is that of the ocean. Deep down in the ocean, there is calm; this calm reflects our Inner Core, our Inner Essence – our Being Present; and our Jen Nature.
- ii. The surface of the ocean may at times be choppy and disturbed; at other times calm and tranquil.
- iii. Distressing ('negative') ruminations distort our perceptions, and are like the choppy water on the surface of the ocean.
- iv. When we become immersed in "pursuing the past", or "getting lost in the future" [Hanh 1990], it is as if we are on the surface of the ocean, where it is choppy, and we are perturbed – and no longer anchored to our inner stability – that of our hub / core. (See also Figure C4 B below).
 - ⊗ In these situations, we can return along the safe spoke to our core being; our place of safety. This can be facilitated by gentle breathing – as in "It breathes me" or "Life Breathes me".
- v. When we hear a bird singing, or see a leaf with glinting rain drops on it, we focus our full attention on it – and so are in the present moment. This is the magic of a live experience – we could say we are vivencia-ing; in such moments we are simultaneously at the core, the hub, and on the rim – in a resonating dance between the two.

Also:

- a) Distressing ruminations tend to take us in a downward spiral.
- b) Feeling a victim can be seen as a particular type of negative rumination.
- c) This means that a) and b) above become like
 - a stone in the wheel of our car or our bike; every time the wheel goes around there is a discomforting clump-clump, or bump-bump.
- d) So the stone needs to be taken out – otherwise the rim becomes distorted.
- e) In these situations, we develop various skilful means to deal wholesomely with the matter. For example:
 - ⊗ Noticing the emotion and / or the distress; and acknowledging it (as in the Rumi Poem: The Guest House).
 - ⊗ Embracing the distress with CARE, nurturing and compassion – as we would our distressed child.
 - ⊗ Returning to our core – e.g. with an Autogenic exercise, a Partial Exercise, or the Three Minute Exercise.

In such ways, we can return to our inner core of safety, Jen – and feeling safe (i.e. Ventral Vagal safety).

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The figure below schematically illustrates our core stability in the depth of the ocean – or at the hub of the wheel.

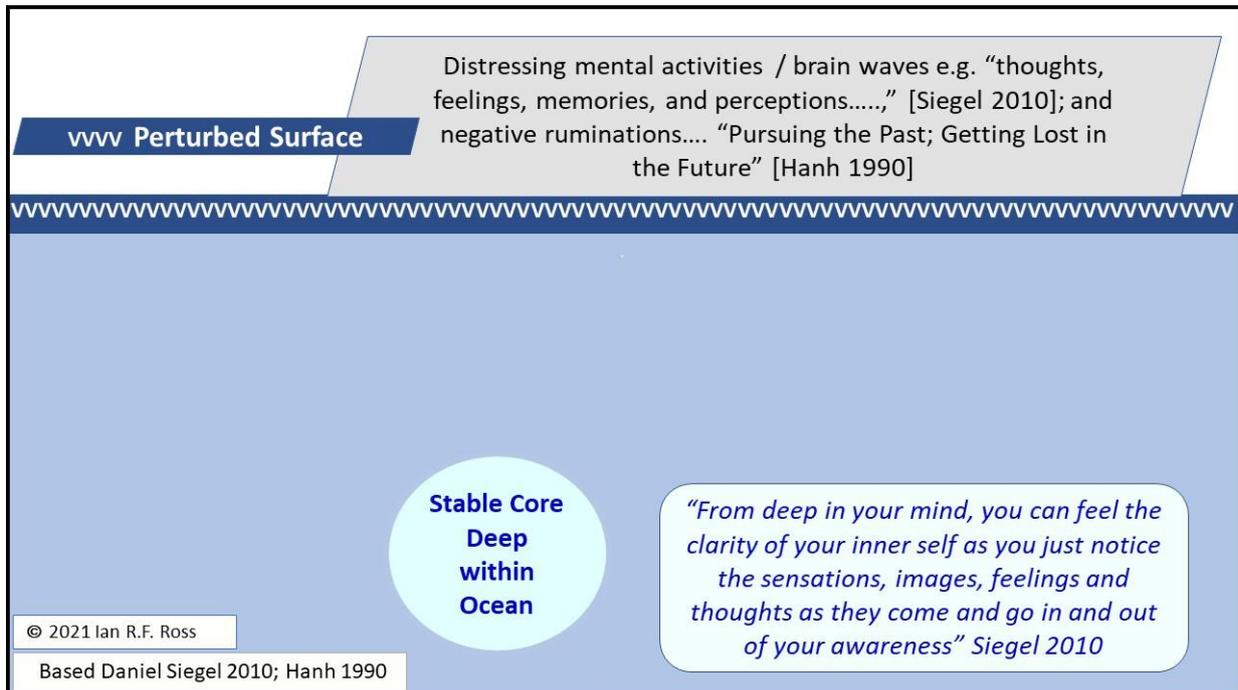


Figure EARTE C4-B
 Our Stable Core Deep within Ocean

Comment on Figure C4-B

- Perturbed thoughts, feelings and perceptions tend to arise when we are in an SNS (mobilisation with fear) state; or in a Dorsal Vagal (Immobilisation with Fear) state.
- While these states persist, so will the disturbed surface water.
- However, deep in the ocean we have our Stable and Safe Inner Core, which reflects our Ventral Vagal State – once we have re-established ourselves as being in this safe core.
 - ⊗ And from this settled perspective we can either let the “disturbance” pass by like clouds, or allow a reframing of the ‘disturbed perspective’ to arise (Cf. Feeling the Feeling Meditation [de Rivera 2018]).

The Wheel of Awareness and the metaphor of the ocean can both be seen as teachings on Meditation practices in general – including a Standard Autogenic Sequence.

Summary regarding the practice of the Wheel of Awareness

The wheel of awareness can be seen as a metaphor for life, and our present mental state. If we become perturbed in any way, we have this choice of returning to the centre. This requires practice, as outlined above and below.

- When our mind wanders or gets distracted, or we get distressed, we have the choice to return to our core, the central hub – and thus restore harmony.
- The central core embraces Present Moment States – when we are in the Being Mode.

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C4

In the beginning, it could be said that early animals survived with only one built in Autonomic Nervous System response, and this was the Life Threat (Dorsal Vagal) “Freeze” Response. The next major adaptation was the ability of animals to respond to potential danger with a more varied repertoire, that of the Flight / Fight response (activation of the Sympathetic Nervous System – mobilisation with Fear [Porges 2011]); and finally the emergence of the Social Engagement System in Mammals – that is the Ventral Vagal System. This enabled mammals to care for the longish childhoods of their biologically immature off-spring, and to tend and befriend each other [Sapolsky 2007; Taylor et al 2000]; and potentially nurture and care for other species (the myth of Romulus and Remus; and the true story of Binti – a chimpanzee who took good care of a child who had fallen in the chimp’s cage one evening [Panksepp 1998 p 252 & 259].

It can be argued that the default position of mammals is therefore not one of survival of the fittest, but rather one of co-operation [Taylor et al 2000; Sapolsky 2007]. In this connection, we can say that at heart, at the core of each of us, is a stable core permeated with “innate goodness” – our Original / Celestial Mind [Kornfield, 2008 ; Lü Dongbin / Cleary 1991; see also Appendix: Jen and our Original Nature].

Furthermore, there is good evidence for the “innate goodness” of children [Davidson 2018; Hamlin et al 2007; Hamlin 2010]; and this is demonstrated in the (southern) Africa concept of [ubuntu](#). We can regard our inner core (and the hub of the wheel) as being permeated with Jen – and CARE and PLAY and wholesome SEEKING circuits [Panksepp 1998]. This core inter-is with our Ventral Vagal Social Engagement system [Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018; Dana 2018].

The wheel of awareness is a metaphor, a symbolic representation of how this inner core can inter-relate to what we experience on the outer rim. And if we find ourselves distressed, we can return by the direct spoke to our safe centre of the hub; and from there reflect on our distress – and perhaps reframe it once we are re-established in the safety of Ventral Vagal. Story follows State [Dana 2018].

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EARTE No C5: Gratitude

Introduction

Some years ago, in the autumn of 2000, I was down visiting my brother Brian in Yorkshire. These were in the days before my late wife Maggie developed dementia, and Maggie and I were in the process of moving house – and were having difficulty selling our lovely Edinburgh flat, which had views to both Arthur’s Seat and the Pentland Hills. In one of our meditations, we each drew a card – and the card that, as it were, chose me was Gratitude. For the first ten minutes or so of the meditation, I was really irritated that I had got this, of all cards – at this time of not being able to sell the flat. However, during the meditation, my perspective changed profoundly – from one of irritation to one of gratitude: for Maggie, for having a job, for the wonders of nature¹².

I subsequently included this experience in some reflections on [Dana Paramita](#) (see thematically related article on web: D2).

In recent years, research has shown that gratitude, and expressing gratitude, can be a powerful antidote to negative thinking and depression, as Alex Korb says.

Gratitude is a powerful antidote to negativity, because it doesn’t depend on your life circumstance. You could be poor and starving and yet grateful for a warm breeze. Conversely, you could be rich and powerful and still be annoyed at the sound your husband makes when he’s chewing. Gratitude is a state of mind – in fact, there’s a gratitude circuit in your brain, badly in need of a workout. Strengthening that circuit brings the power to elevate your physical and mental health, boost happiness, improve sleep, and help you feel more connected to other people.

Korb 2015 p 151-152

A brief overview /

¹² On reading this over on 1st October 2021, I realise now that effectively this meditation opened the pathway for me to Feeling the Feeling Meditation, as described by de Rivera [de Rivera 2018; and see web article F 5A Feeling the Feeling Meditation].

A brief overview of some research linking Gratitude to Well-Being

The development in positive psychology some decades ago changed the direction of approaches to psychotherapy in some quite radical ways. We are now increasingly aware that our mood and thinking can have profound effects on our [well-being](#). Dr Martin Seligman, a psychologist at the University of Pennsylvania was one of the early proponents of positive psychology¹³, and suggested that human happiness – or the concept of well-being¹⁴ – embraces three components:

- i. Wholesome / positive emotions;
- ii. Engaged, goal directed pursuits / occupations (i.e. we are involved in, and committed to, various pursuits / activities.)
- iii. Meaning; and / or having a connection to some larger purpose¹. (This might be, for example, the ecology of our planet in the context of climate change.)

[Paraphrased from Davidson 2005 referring to the work of Seligman]

The Figure on the next page gives a summary of some of the important consequence of developing gratitude – and an increased sense of gratitude.

¹³ and played a central part in the development of Positive Psychology.

¹⁴ 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).

☸ Here Well-Being embraces the concept of Inner Harmony.

EARTE No C5: Gratitude continued

Modality	comment	References
Improved Social Support	Study shows that increased Gratitude led to increased Social Support – as would be expected with increased Social Engagement (Ventral Vagal PSNS) and oxytocin level.	Emmons & McCullough 2003 Porges 2011 Korb 2015
Improved Sleep Dynamics	A number of studies have shown improved sleep	Jackowska et al 2015
Depressive symptoms	Some, yet not all, studies have indicated reduction in serious symptoms of depression – including reduction in feelings of hopelessness.	Lin 2015 Korb 2015
Improved physical health	This is possibly mediated through improved levels of serotonin – which helps us to be proactive. Serotonin “improves willpower, motivation, and mood” [Korb 2015 p 15]	Emmons & McCullough 2003 Korb 2015
Increasing levels of Serotonin	Gratitude increases serotonin levels in anterior cingulate cortex <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Serotonin, as mentioned above, improves “willpower, motivation and mood” [Korb 2015], and is a natural mood stabiliser. 	Perreau-Linck et al 2007 (see below)
Increasing levels of Dopamine	“The benefits of gratitude start with the dopamine system, because feeling grateful activates the brain stem region and produces dopamine [Zahn & Moll 2009]. Additionally, gratitude towards others increases activity of the social dopamine circuits, which make social interactions more enjoyable.” Korb 2015 p 133	Korb 2015 [Zahn & Moll 2009]
Increasing levels of Oxytocin (some of which will be related to improved Social Support)	Gratitude embraces our connection with others, the cosmos, and for being alive. The neuro-circuits of gratitude are thus intimately connected with those of Social Engagement and our CARE circuits. “Oxytocin “promotes feelings of trust, love, and connection, and reduces anxiety” Korb 2015 p 15	Porges 2011 (with the mediation of Social Engagement through our Ventral Vagal System). Panksepp 1998

Figure EARTE C5: Some dynamics of Gratitude

A selection of Expressive Exercises /

EARTE No C5: Gratitude continued

A selection of Expressive Exercises to facilitate a Sense of Gratitude, and Well-Being

A sense of gratitude can be developed over time. Mindful practices and Meditative approaches will facilitate this process. It is important that we develop this sense spontaneously, and not as a duty – in which case we may become resentful, which will not help our well-being! There are countless ways in which we can express gratitude, and below are a few examples.

- I. A simple way to develop our sense of gratitude is for us – towards bedtime – to reflect on the day and identify at least one or two wholesome experiences for which we are grateful. Some research suggests that this may be more effective if done just a few days a week – rather than every day. Such an approach helps to prevent the practice becoming an automatic / unthinking routine. These reflections can be even more effective if we briefly write down what these experiences were. [See also Fredrickson 2003; 2009; Bryant & Veroff 2007.]
- II. Once or twice a day (or more) before we eat: we can reflect on all those people and factors that have made it possible for us to eat. This might include:
 - The farmers who produce the food.
 - All those involved in transporting the food.
 - The shop assistants from whom we bought the food.
 - The sun.
 - The clouds that bring the rain that plants, trees and crops need to flourish.

Without any one of these, the food might not be on the table.

- III. A more structured form of gratitude is to reflect on someone that has greatly helped us in our journey through life. We then write a thank you letter to them¹⁵, arrange to meet them somewhere for, say, a tea or coffee, and then given them the letter in person. This can enhance friendships and our bonds with other people – and our appreciation for their gift of being [see also Korb 2015 pp 151-160]. Sooner or later, it will be too late to thank them. In the era of Covid-19, a phone or Zoom (type) chat is much better than nothing.
- IV. One morning in the autumn of 2020 I went for a short road walk before work. There had been rain overnight, and on the pavement, under some trees, there were wonderful yellow autumnal leaves, freshly fallen, and glinting in the light. As we develop our ability to be in the present moment, we increasingly can appreciate the wonders that are all around – including on a rainy day. In the hurly-burly of life, it is very easy to be always “running”; doing this, doing that; “pursuing the past”, or “getting lost in the future” [Hanh 1990]. It is important for us to bear in mind that we are Human Beings, not Doings. If our mind is not quiet – at least several times a day – the wonder of life may pass us by.

All the wonders of life are already here. They're calling you. If you can listen to them, you will be able to stop running. What you need, what we all need, is silence. Stop the noise in your mind in order for the wondrous sounds of life to be heard. Then you can begin to live authentically and deeply.

Hanh 2015

¹⁵ This part of the exercise is still possible – and effective – even if the person has died.

EARTE No C5: Gratitude continued

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C5

This has, to a large extent, been covered in the above discussions and in Figure EARTE C5: “Some dynamics of Gratitude”. Distressing feelings arise when our Autonomic balance is disturbed – for example, when we are in the Sympathetic (Nervous Systems) Danger flight / fight mode (mobilisation associated with fear / anger); or the Dorsal Vagal Life threat mode [Porges 2011; Porges and Dana 2018; Dana 2018; Dana 2020].

Story follows state [Dana 2018 p 35]. That is, our perceptions, thinking and feeling follow our autonomic state; if we are in the above SNS / danger or the Dorsal Vagal / Life Threat zone, it is unlikely that we will be able to sense or feel gratitude.

Gratitude essentially implies that we are in the Ventral Vagal and wholesome Social Engagement state; and this state allows us to move much more easily into mindfulness and feelings of Gratitude. So, as with all the other EARTE exercises, a background and daily practice of some form of meditation – including Autogenic Training [de Rivera 2018] facilitates us being in the Ventral Vagal state for longer periods of time – and thus an increasing state of gratitude.

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EARTE No C 6: Touching Matters /

EARTE No C 6: Touching Matters

Introduction

Touch is fundamental for the well-being of mammals and humans. In the 1950s, the prevailing Zeitgeist¹⁶ in psychology was that of the behaviourists, who suggested all that baby mammals required was food, water and protection; with the implicit assumption that nurturing, gentle touch, hugging and human heartedness were irrelevant. In some drastic experiments, this was shown not to be the case [Harlow 1958].

By way of introduction to this section, we will quote from one section of B 20 on the website:

Extract from B 20 on web: Neuro-physiological reflections on developing a Secure Base

8.2 Affiliative Touch and Separation Distress

Harlow, Spitz, Bowlby and Ainsworth all became aware of the crucial importance that close nurturing and gentle (affiliative) touch can have on the well-being and healthy development of the infant / child [e.g. Harlow 1958, 2014; Spitz 1952, 2014; Bowlby 1951, 1969, 1973, 1980; Ainsworth 1967, 1989; and see the interlinked webpage B19].

Touch is of particular significance in childhood. Children are not able to regulate their emotions because their immature brains do not have a sufficiently developed frontal cortex (Sunderland 2006 e.g. pp 15-12). As parents will know, their distressed child needs close physical support for the upset to settle. This in turn will help to develop the child's pre-frontal cortex so that, in time, they will be able to modulate and regulate their own disturbing affects.

Ross 2014-website: C12¹⁷ p19

As already discussed, Separation Distress can be seen as an adaptive response provided the mother's CARE, nurturing and responsive system is working wholesomely. In this situation, the child's distress will be quickly settled on the re-union of mother and child. Affiliative touch normally has a calming effect [Craig 2015 p 173], and inter-is with Vagal myelinated activity and close mother-child social engagement [Porges 2011].

Affective¹⁸ touch is an interoceptive modality and it subserves homeostasis not only at the level of the individual but also at the level of the social community; it supports the health and well-being of the individual and the species.

Craig 2015 p 173

Affective touch receptors are found in all hairy parts of the body; but not in the palms of the hand, "where high acuity mechanoreception is needed" [Craig 2015 p 173]. A mother will tend to pick up her distressed child and fondle her / him with a gentle cuddle with bodily contact, for example, on the child's back and shoulder. This will then help to settle the child – and this will be interlinked with a switch from SNS activity (e.g. due to PANIC; FEAR) to (VV) PSNS activity in both efferent and afferent modalities.

¹⁶ Or: *Geist der Zeiten* "spirit of the times"

¹⁷ C12: Presence in Mind – *Autonomic Afferents and Well-Being* [2014]

¹⁸ Also known as sensual and affiliative touch

Research on these matters during the last several decades has shown that touch – in the sense of affiliative touch, is crucial for the well-being of mammals and humans. Lack of touch and nurturing in infants and small children can have catastrophic effects on their development – including brain development; for example, that of children in an orphanage in Romania [Sunderland 2016 p 50-53; also see B 20 on web: Figure 2.6B; p 15].

In October 2020 I heard a programme on serendipity / synchronicity by Claudio Hammond [Hammond 2020]. In this radio article, Claudia Hammond asks whether people have enough touch in their lives – especially in the era of Covid-19.

The pandemic – and social distancing – have changed how most people feel about touch. Yet even before Covid-19 there was a concern about the decrease of touch in society. In the programme, Claudia meets “John”, who, growing up during the Second World War, endured a terrible lack of touch in his childhood. He described how as a child he felt deprived of cuddles and hugs. His mother had dumped him on the lap of his grand-mother; and his grand-parents brought him up. He describes them as being caring, yet he does not recall ever being cuddled by them. He attributes this to his grand-parents’ Victorian up-bringing, when, in many families, children were rarely touched or cuddled by their parents. It was an age that had lost touch with touch.

After school, he would notice other children running up to their parents and being given a lovely hug. He wondered why he never received such hugs.

It was only years later, when he met his wife – that everything changed wonderfully for the better; and he began to realise that hugging is a healthy and normal part of wholesome family life – and for the well-being of adults. As a child he had felt alone and insular. This is in contrast to an interview recently on Woman’s Hour, when a woman described the wonderful warmth and affection she receives from her children when she returns home from work.

Skin Hunger

There is a word in Afrikaans (South Africa) called *velhonger*, which literally means “skin-hunger”. That is hunger for human touch. A woman once phoned up a therapist who practises massage, and said she was suffering from severe *velhonger*, and arranged a massage. When a parent in South Africa is soothing a fractious child, the term *vryfhomuit* is used, meaning “rub it out”. That is, rub out the fractiousness with gentle nurturing touch. These are good examples of the importance of touch to our well-being – and reinforce the work of Bud Craig on the importance of our affiliative touch afferent pathways from the body (skin) to the brain [Craig 2008; 2015].

My late wife Maggie developed Alzheimer’s Disease around 2005, and her condition gradually deteriorated. I was very fortunate in having excellent support from a Care Team which meant that she was able to spend the last few years of her life at home. During this period, I was aware of how much I missed her being – including her gentle touch. When I first met Bernie, now my wife, I expressed this in terms of feeling hypo-cuddled¹⁹.

The exercise described below (C6.1 et al) uses visualisation / imagination to re-connect with our sense of touch. Benson [Benson & Stark 1998] describes the use of visualisation to induce the relaxation response, by recalling a time when we felt relaxed: by visualising this, we recreate the “neuro-signature” of the original real-

¹⁹ Hypo-cuddled: too little cuddling. Cf Hypertension: High (too high) blood pressure; Hypotension: too low blood pressure.

life *relaxed* state – and *this*, in Porges' s terminology, activates our Ventra Vagal PSNS [Porges 2011; Porges and Dana 2018].

The two figures below illustrate a positive visualisation exercise:

Positive Visualisation Exercise



Figure EARTE C6.1A
 [Benson 1996]
 Woman on holiday – relaxed by lochan



Figure EARTE C6.1B
 [Benson 1996]
 Days, months and years later,
 the recollection of the original positive
 image
 recreates the original feeling

Original Images from Benson and Stark 1996 – *Colour Enhanced*

The re-creation by the woman of the original image (the vivencia of Figure A) induces the neuro-signature of that original experience *in the now present moment of Figure C6.1B.*

The Memory Exercise²⁰ advocated by Luis de Rivera can be seen in terms of re-creating the neuro-signature of the original positive memory [de Rivera 1999; 2018]. Some of the touching exercises described below may use memory to recall positive touching (vivencia-ing) moments²¹ in our lives .

The C 6 Exercise – embracing touch

This exercise can take a number of forms; all facilitate affiliative touch modalities and neuro-circuits. These will be associated with feelings of safety (modulated through the release of oxytocin [Graham 2018] and the activation of our Ventral Vagal PSNS). What follows below are three examples of the exercise. The neuro-physiological basis of these exercises is to recreate and re-establish our affiliative touch pathways. Affiliative touch [Craig 2015] is to do with Social Engagement and communications [Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018] with others we are, or have been, close to – such as, for example, a grand-parent. Note that this is not to do with auto-erotic types of touch.

C 6.1 Being Hugged

Preamble to C6.1

This is perhaps the best one to start with – if we can identify with it. My parents were both born in the first decade of the twentieth century, before the First World War (1914-1918). This was an era in Britain when,

²⁰ De Rivera now uses the Memory Exercise with AT clients in preference to the Partial Exercises. (I now normally introduce both and suggest to AT students that they practice each and find out which they prefer, and when.)

²¹ In both senses of the phrase.

in some families, touch and cuddling were not common (and even frowned upon), and this was certainly the case for my mother, Joy. Decades later, when my older brother Brian returned from Kenya⁽¹⁹⁶⁰⁾ having worked there on a farm (these days it would have been called a gap year), my mother later recounted to me a very poignant memory. On their reunion, Brian had given her a wonderful hug – which for her was unexpected – and the way she told me suggested that this reunion, and the hug, had affected her deeply. Brian, in the year away, had been transformed by those he met. Transformation can be difficult if not impossible if we are unable to break away from our dysfunctional family roots – we may have become stuck unconsciously in [Procedural Learned Tendencies](#) [Ogden 2009]²².

This series of EARTE C 6 exercises can help us to get back in touch with these affiliative touch pathways – which for some of us may have been latent for years.

C 6.1: Being Hugged exercise

- a) It can be helpful for us to adopt an armchair type Autogenic Position – and go through a single Standard Exercise sequence (or a brief meditation if coming from other traditions).
- b) Now, if we like, we can gently fold our arms in front of our chest²³....
- c) recalling a memory of being hugged – when this was associated with feeling safe, nurtured and cared for.
- d) This could be from, for example, a grand-parent, parent, sibling or friend.
- e) Allow the feeling of the memory to permeate the whole body....
- f)and stay with the feeling for half a minute – or longer.

We can repeat this exercise several times a day. Each time we do so, the neural signature of that original hug, when we felt safe, will be activated – with the potential of re-creating the affiliative touch pathways that were alive in the original experience (vivencia).

C 6.2 Hand on Heart (adapted from Graham 2018 pp 36-37)

- i. Adopt an Autogenic Armchair position.
- ii. It can be helpful to first do a single Autogenic Standard Exercise Sequence.
- iii. We now place both hands on the heart area of the chest....
- iv.breathing gently into this area, softly and deeply.
- v. We then recall, remember, (while breathing out) “just one moment from the past when we felt safe, loved, and / or cherished” (adapted from Graham op cit).
- vi. Allow this feeling of being loved and cherished to flow through, to permeate, the whole body, our whole being.....
- vii.staying with this feeling for half a minute or so.

This exercise can be practised several times a day – until it becomes established – meaning that the neuro-circuitry of the exercise has become firm as the “neurones that fire together wire together”

²² There are many myths and legends depicting such journeys – which only become possible by leaving our home / culture / comfort zone. See for example: Greene & Sharman-Burke 2000: Chapter 2: Fighting for Autonomy: Siegfried. Also, on a similar theme, Ross 2010 p 209 and especially 210 – ‘An expanded comment on Footnote on page 209’].

²³ Giving ourselves a hug, if you like.

[Hebb 1949]. The recollection of the “just one moment” will help to activate our Ventral Vagal [Porges 2011] and Affiliative Touch [Craig 2015] circuits.

In essences, this is a variation of the Memory Exercise developed by de Rivera (see above) [de Rivera 1999; 2018]; the potency of the exercise lies in the mental representation imagined / induced:

Any mental presentation or activity produces physical changes in the brain, which, in turn, induce changes in the rest of the systems / functions.

Adapted from de Rivera 2018B
 (any replacing a)

We can depict this schematically:

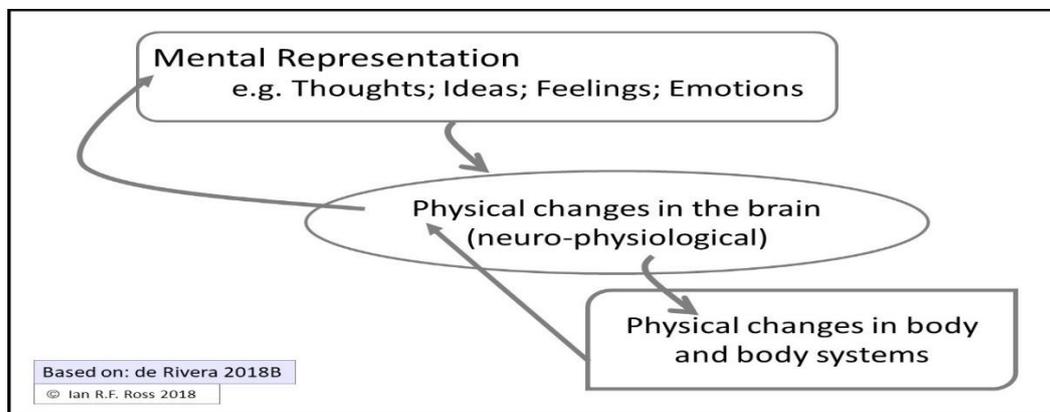


Figure EARTE C 6.2

Mental Representations and their effects and feedbacks
 Based on Ideo-plastic principle [de Rivera 2018B]

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Wholesome / Positive Mental Representations have
 Wholesome effects on our Well-Being

Let me give an example of this. In early December 2020, during the morning, I decided to have a short rest – starting with an AT sequence. I drifted off, and then had an image of a friendly face in front of me. I awoke from this with a smile on my face. In other words, the mental representation of the friendly face, as de Rivera says, was directly changing my physical bodily – and psychic – state.

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C 6.3 Nurturing our Hurt Inner Child (adapted from A 11 EARTE A9.2 pp 35-37)

This exercise is in some ways different from the two above, as here we are in essence allowing the affiliative touch pathways of our “hurt inner child” to be activated.

Variation of Heart Felt Exercise /

Variation of Heart Felt Exercise A9
Taking good care of our hurt inner child

Notated here as: C 6.3 Nurturing our Hurt Inner Child

- 1) Sit quietly in an Autogenic Position.
- 2) It may be helpful to start with a gentle Neck and Shoulders Warm Exercise.
- 3) We then gently lift up our distressed inner child, represented by the teddy bear / our cuddly toy....(or cushion)
- 4) and bring it to our heart.....
- 5) breathing in a slow long breath to the heart of the teddy – that is, the heart of our inner child – with warmth and
- 6) feelings such as:
 - ☼ tender nurturing
 - ☼ comforting...
- 7)and in this way loving and cherishing our teddy / distressed inner child
- 8)allowing a warm glow to permeate the being of our teddy / soft toy – and so our own being.
- 9) Gently breathe out with a long outbreath.....
- 10) continue for several breaths....
- 11) Allowing the exercise to continue for half a minute or longer.
- 12) Towards the end of the exercise, we can allow a gentle smile to caress our face, as we tenderly stroke the teddy.



Figure EARTE C 6.3A
 From EARTE A9 A

A representation of our hurt inner child – here as a cuddly hedgehog. Gentle caressing activating our Affiliative Touch Pathways.

Nurturing our Hurt Inner Child



Figure EARTE C 6.3B
 From EARTE A9 B

Bringing our hurt inner child, here represented by the hedgehog, to our heart; and so our inner child becomes touched by our heart.

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Reference and sources /

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C6

This has essentially been covered in the above discussions. Here we simply summarise the central matters.

- 1) Activation of Affiliative touch pathways settles our being [Craig 2012].
- 2) Such activation is only possible when we are feeling safe [Porges 2011].
- 3) For this reason, it is suggested that we practise an Autogenic Sequence directly before we embrace EARTE C6 – thus facilitating increased Ventral Vagal activity.
- 4) Recalling positive / wholesome memories (e.g. feeling safe with a grandparent) activates positive mental states – and thus bodily states. At the same time, this is re-creating a nurturing neuro-signature of that original memory [de Rivera 2018B; Benson 1996].

For a further discussion on Affiliative Touch, see Ross 2016 on website: E-03: Look at the Cypress Tree – Autonomic Afferents and Well-Being, Section: 10. Affiliative touch as an example of interoceptive sense and homeostasis – of “how do you feel”; especially Section 10.5 Affiliative Touch (pp 32-34).

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See also:

- B20: Neuro-physiological reflections on developing a Secure Base on website

EARTE No C 7: Wonder and a Sense of Awe

Preamble to C7

Certain emotions / mental states facilitate well-being, such as awe and a sense of wonder [Dickerson et al 2004; Jaremka et al 2013; Stellar 2015; and A 9 on website]. This is in contrast to (some forms of) shame, which can adversely affect our well-being and immune system.

Life and being alive is extra-ordinary; and at one level an eternal mystery. Whatever religious or [spiritual](#) beliefs we may or may not have, there seems to be an inherent conundrum in life and consciousness. At many levels, we do not know where we have come from, or where we will go. Where were we before we were conceived? What happens after death? Some people have particular belief systems that take care of such questions – yet for many the honest answer is that we do not know.

Underlying mystery
 Unfathomable
 Matter
 Atoms
 Sub-atomic particles
 Elements emerged
 Stars long extinct
 Composed of sun and clouds
 Rain and air
 Earth and Ancestors
 Full of non-self elements
 All Empty
 Empty of what?
 Separate Self
 Grain of Sand – Wild Flower – Cosmos
 Inter-Being
 What was before Big Bang?
 Who knows?
 Beauty in Truth of
 not knowing
 For in the unknowing
 Mystery Alive and Well
 Eternally
 Each being a mystery
 Part of profounder mystery
 Lao Tzu: Dao

IRFR 2021

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A sense of wonder, of curiosity, is vital for a child's vitality and experience of real life: of [vivencia](#). As beings, we are blessed with the possibility of wonder: or curiosity being catalysed by our SEEKING circuits [Panksepp 1998]. In recent decades, the word awe has perhaps been devalued. We need to get back to our original sense of awe – that is, as experienced by our ancestors.

Reflections on Awe

Extract from A-9 on web: Emotions, Well-Being and Immune Function:

Awe and Shame as modulators of Being – for good or ill (2015)

Awe is a concept of polarities: on the one hand, the wonder of a child at a butterfly; on the other hand, a sense of fear or dread or deep respect that can occur in numinous experiences. And our word awful is, of course, derived from awe; while awe-inspiring has an essentially positive connotation.

Awe-inspiring:

- Causing or worthy of admiration or respect
- Amazing or magnificent

Collins English Dictionary (CED)

Awful:

- Very bad, unpleasant
- Inspiring reverence or dread
- Overcome with awe; reverential

CED 2011

The implications of studies on emotions mentioned above [Dickerson et al 2004; Jaremka et al 2013; Stellar et al 2015] are:

- Wholesome ('Positive') emotions can act as anti-dotes to negative affect;
- Such emotions can lead to increased health and well-being (and, axiomatically, reduced physical and emotional dis-ease; and in time, also, reduced disease).

In the context of the use of the emotion "awe" in the Stellar study [Stellar 2015], this was in terms of "I feel wonder almost every day" [Stellar et al 2015 p 131]. It is probable that such a sense of wonder is linked to Mindfulness and being in the present moment [see also D 10 in this web series: "Look at the Cypress Tree"].

Some Primary Process Emotions [PPE – Panksepp 1998] are particularly linked to Awe. For example, as already indicated, our SEEKING system energises us and gives us the motivation to explore, to look at and to wonder – if we allow our SEEKING / curiosity to be in the *Present Moment*. In this sense, SEEKING and Awe are inter-linked – meaning that our natural curiosity facilitates a vivencia of awe. (Not in the sense that we consciously seeking out experiences of Awe.)

Figure EARTE C7 summarises some of the key PPE that can facilitate our sense of wonder / awe:

- CARE (Nurturing)
 - PLAY
 - SEEKING
- [Panksepp 1998]

These Primary Process emotions thrive when we feel Safe – i.e. when our ANS is in the Ventral Vagal mode
 See also [Polyvagal Theory](#)

Figure EARTE C7
 Primary Process Emotions [PPE] that facilitate a sense of wonder.

Note that these same PPE, and the neuro-chemicals associated with them, can act as anti-dotes to FEAR & RAGE [Panksepp 1998]

Further Reflections on Emotions and Well-Being

As discussed above, some emotions have been found to be life giving, healthy, and healing. Other emotions have been found to be toxic and life denying. To recap: certain emotions, such as shame, have been found to be toxic to our immune system; in contrast, a sense of wonder / awe has a beneficial effect on our immune system [Dickerson et al 2004].

In addition, wholesome ('positive') emotions have been shown to act as anti-dotes to negative / destructive emotions [Panksepp 1998; Damasio 2003; Ross 2010 pp 152-154].

C 7: Wonder / a Sense of Awe Exercise

In this exercise we focus on some present moment live experience / vivencia. For example, while watching a sunset or looking up at a clear night sky.

Alternatively, we can reflect on a previous experience full of wonder; such reflecting brings about an activation of those previous present moment neuro-circuits – “the neuro-signature” [Benson 1996]. Below is an outline for this reflective method.

- i. Start with an Autogenic, or meditative, sequence.
- ii. Then reflect on something that has occurred today, or in the last twenty-four hours, that we can see or reframe in terms of a sense of wonder.
 - ☼ This might be a blackbird singing
 - ☼ The sound of geese flying over
 - ☼ A joyful day with children
 - ☼ The sound of lapping water
 - ☼ A leaf whose veins are lit up with sunlight
 - ☼ A day in which we spend time just watching and being absorbed with bees buzzing gently from flower to flower
- iii. We can then move on to the wonder that we are alive – and that our sensory systems (eyes, ears etc) are picking up this information which is then being transduced into our conscious awareness.



In time, we may begin to realise that there are many opportunities each day to experience a sense of wonder, right now in this present moment. In other words, we can create a wholesome habit of vivencia-ing when we see a cloud or branches blowing in the wind. By adopting such approaches, a sense of wonder may arise spontaneously.

- ☼ This then becomes an Expressive ART Practice; and this can be enhanced by writing about it, in which we allow to flow on paper whatever is arising within us.
- ☼ Such writing, if we are inclined to, we can certainly keep.

Thematically linked article on website (www.atdynamics.co.uk):

- A 9: Emotions, Well-Being and Immune Function *Awe and Shame as modulators of Being – for good or ill*
- D 10 : Look at the Cypress Tree
- F6.2: Constructive Feeling Meditation 2: Existence
- F7: Meditation on Five Sounds that can Heal the World

Rationale / theoretical basis for EARTE C7

On this occasion I am not going to add anything (in terms of left-brain analysis) to the rationale and theoretical basis of EARTE C7. One of the reasons I was fascinated about Autogenic Training in the early 1990s was the efficacy of the live experience of AT practice. My background training was in medicine and General Practice, and I had become concerned that the emphasis had become overly “evidence based” – yet the evidence base of today may become the obvious error of those who practise medicine in years / decades to come.

Wonder and a sense of awe can be a numinous and spiritual experience, and to then analytically insist on proof is a little like analysing poetry. These matters remind me of the first line of Chapter 1 of the Dao (Tao) de Jing: to paraphrase:-

☸ The Dao that can be talked about is not the eternal²⁴ Dao

All things by immortal power
 Near or Far
 Hiddenly
 To each other linked are,
 That thou canst not stir a flower
 Without troubling of a star.
 Francis Thompson (c. 1859-1907)

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²⁴ Or real Dao

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Part III Epilogue on Series C EARTE

This Series C group of exercises is subtly different from those of Series A and B, in that they are specifically focused on continuing personal development – once we have some experience in the practice of the relevant exercises of Series A and B. In this sense the C series overlap with Luis de Rivera’s Meditation on Constructive Feelings [de Rivera 2018 Chapter 9, and his reflections on our “Internal World” in Chapter 10].

Regular practice of the Autogenic Standard Exercises forms the basis for the EARTE series, as it facilitates the regular activation of our Ventral Vagal System, leading to wholesome social interactions and a feeling of safety within. This in turn can lead on to [Self-Realisation](#) [Wallnöfer 2000 quoting Schultz], our [Authentic Self](#) [Luthe 1983], and the development of human heartedness ([Jen](#)). These in turn have the potential to transform into “a loving understanding of nature and of fellow humans” [de Rivera 2018 p 27]. Furthermore:

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

In turn, these changed physiological dynamics can lead to a deep sense of the nature of life and [Inter-Being](#). The concept of Inter-Being is close to that of the African concept of [Ubuntu](#).

Autogenic Training can be seen in terms of inducing the Relaxation Response [Benson 1975]. However, this is a somewhat reductionist and limiting concept. A more informed perspective on AT is to see it as one of the forms of Meditation which induce an [Amplified State of Consciousness](#) [de Rivera 2018]. In addition, Smith’s research identifies four categories of states that can arise from Mind Training including Transcendence [Smith 2007], which was the subject of an article in the British Autogenic Society Spring 2021 Newsletter [Ross 2021-N.1]. In addition, it is planned to have a more detailed website article in 2022.

Part IV /

Part IV

4. Overview of EARTE Series A, B and C from a neuro-physiological perspective

Many / most of the exercises discussed in the triad of articles on EARTE (A11, A12, and A13) are deeply rooted in our neuro-physiology – especially in the sense of facilitating well-being and the activation of our Ventral Vagal System – and hence, at least in the long run, in terms of wholesome social engagement and a sense of well-being.

Figure 4 gives a summary of some of the neurophysiological correlates of several of the EARTE in the A, B and C series.

- Note that some exercises may be linked to mobility with fear or immobility with fear dynamics; this is indicated with **. It is important that we are aware of this, and that we carry the exercise out to completion – to restore Ventral Vagal activity.
- And a further rider: it is suggested that these exercises are undertaken in the context of on-going Autogenic Practice (or other forms of Meditation): i.e. [reflective and awareness-building](#) approaches.

EARTE notation	Name of Exercise	Suggested Neuro-physiological underpinnings	References / sources and further comments
<i>Series A</i>			
EARTE A1	Playful Loosening Up Exercise	Ventral Vagal PSNS with SNS in playful state: mobility when feeling safe. (That is, the opposite of Danger induced SNS: mobility in context of fear / feeling un-safe).	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 This is a practical example of a hybrid manifestation of the Polyvagal Theory
EARTE A3	Mini General Exercise for releasing negative Affect (MGERNA)	PLAY – that is, SNS in context of mobility when feeling safe (i.e. without fear) plus VV PSNS – if the whole exercise is carried out in a playful-type manner. i.e. Playing at stamping feet; rather than stamping feet in anger	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp 1998 **Note that the first part of the exercise, if done in a non-playful way, can be associated with mobility with fear / anger and so activation of Danger SNS state of flight or fight.
EARTE A5.2B:	Constant Tone Exercise harmonising with breathing	Ventral Vagal PSNS	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Levine, Peter A. 2010
EARTE No A6	Movement, Breathing and Joy	SNS in context of feeling safe (i.e. without fear); and playful Ventral Vagal PSNS	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018
EARTE No A7	Playful Laughing on back while moving arms and legs ^(kicking)	SNS without fear; i.e. we are feeling safe; and playful Ventral Vagal PSNS	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018
EARTE No A8	Expressive Smiling	Social Engagement with Ventral Vagal PSNS. Embracing both Vagus Nerve (Cranial X) and Facial Nerve (VII)	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Rosenberg 2017
EARTE No A9 /			

Figure 4 Part 1

Neurophysiological correlates of various Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises

EARTE notation	Name of Exercise	Suggested Neuro-physiological underpinnings	References / sources and further comments
EARTE No A9	Heart Felt	Social Engagement with Ventral Vagal PSNS. Embracing both Vagus Nerve (Cranial X) and Facial Nerve (VII)	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Rosenberg 2017

<i>Series B</i>			
<i>EARTE No B1</i>	Review of things that “make” me angry / frustrated (writing down exercise)	**Recurrent ruminations about our angry / anxious feelings produce mental representations that will activate SNS in the context of “mobility with fear” (and FEAR / RAGE neurocircuits). Getting our feelings down on paper will tend to reduce this SNS activity – and move us towards VV PSNS dynamics	de Rivera 2018B In writing our feelings down on paper, we are both acknowledging the feelings (i.e. no longer blocking them); and taking care of the feelings – thereby activating our CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998; Porges 2011]
<i>EARTE No B2</i>	Expressive Writing format A	**SNS (anger / anxiety) dynamics dissipated by the expressive writing; this can allow VV PSNS to re-establish itself. Self-nurturing restored	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp & Biven 2012 Pennebaker, James W.; & Chung, Cindy K. 2011
<i>EARTE No B2</i>	Expressive Writing format B	Similar to EARTE B2 above for the Section 1 of this exercise. Section 2, where we reflect on “errors of thinking” in 1, overlaps with CBT approaches – and such reflection implies that we are able to move into a VV state. Section 3, in which we reflect mindfully on 1 and 2, facilitates reframing the situation and is quintessentially a VV state.	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp & Biven 2012 Pennebaker, James W.; & Chung, Cindy K. 2011 Hanscom et al 2020
EARTE No B4	Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief	**Blocked emotions activate our SNS (flight / fight mode). De-blocking settles this SNS activity – as we move in to VV PSNS dynamics.	de Rivera 2018 pp 114-117 Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018
<i>Series C /</i>			

Figure 4 Part 2
 Neurophysiological correlates of various Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises

Series C			
EARTE notation	Name of Exercise	Suggested Neuro-physiological underpinnings	References / sources and further comments
EARTE No C1	Authentic Pride and Resilience Exercise	Exercise breaks away from SNS dominated dynamics of feelings of danger, and Dorsal Vagal activated downward spirals of e.g.: "I'm not good enough": and restores VV PSNS activity – and CARE / nurturing circuits	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp 1998 Panksepp & Biven 2012 Dana 2018
EARTE No C2	Expressive Writing Reflecting our Authentic Self	Exercise can help us break away from SNS dominated dynamics (e.g. negative / depreciative ruminations) or DV self-doubt etc: and restores VV PSNS activity – and CARE (nurturing) and SEEKING circuits	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp 1998 Panksepp & Biven 2012 Dana 2018; Dana 2021A and 2021B Story follows State [Dana 2018 p 35]
EARTE No C3	Shame and Resilience Exercise	Please see main text. Shame in the sense used here coming from DV (social withdrawal) and SNS (mobility with fear). Exercise carried out with therapist once wholesome relationship established. ❖ Practise C1 before moving on to C3	Sanderson 2015. Porges 2011
EARTE No C4	Wheel of Awareness	VV PSNS restored as we move back to our core centre (hub of wheel) May help to restore a sense of meaning (modulated through SEEKING); especially when EARTE C4 carried out in Autogenic or other Meditative state	Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp 1998 Panksepp & Biven 2012 De Rivera 2018 pp 14-18 (in terms of Amplified State of Consciousness Induction)
EARTE No C6	Touching Matters	Facilitates activation of Affiliative Touch pathways; leading to increased VV PSNS and CARE circuits	Craig 2015 Porges 2011; Porges & Dana 2018 Panksepp 1998 Panksepp & Biven 2012
EARTE No C7	Wonder and a sense of Awe	Normally only occurs in VV state – yet sometimes sense of wonder tinged with SNS of fear (Awe-full) Also: research indicates that is associated with a boost to immune system [Dickerson et al 2004].	As we shift increasingly toward VV dynamics, a sense of wonder / awe naturally develops. [Dickerson et al 2004].

Figure 4 Part 3
 Neurophysiological correlates of various Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises

The series C group, as previously indicated, in contrast to series A and B, are specifically designed to expand our horizons – and can be seen more in terms of personal and professional development. In this way, they resonate with Luis de Rivera’s Constructive Feeling Meditation (Meditation on Feelings) [de Rivera 2018]. Both Meditation of Feelings and this series C can be more equated with “Deep” forms of Meditation – rather “Wide” forms – as described by Davidson and Goleman [Davidson & Goleman 2017] in their enlightening book: “Altered Traits – *How Science Reveals How Meditation Changes Your Mind, Brain and Body.*”

*** **

The EARTE series A, B, and C can help us navigate our path and journey through life. Series A and C I see in the long term as the most important to move into. Series B is of course important. As mentioned in the Series B section, I have adapted some of Luthe’s *intentional* Off-Loading Exercises²⁵ to the EARTE format. In all these matters, it is important that we graduate to approaches that have long terms benefits. Some approaches may be temporary – like sticking plaster. The purpose of sticking plaster for a wound is to allow the wound to heal; the healing comes from within, from nature, and the wonders of cellular healing. We can always ask the question: “Is this sticking plaster allowing true healing to occur; or is it more acting as a temporary remedy for the [Second Arrow](#) we have inflicted upon ourselves?”

In the long term, destructive emotions such as
 hatred and resentment can only be overcome by a stronger and positive emotion,
 such as CARE / nurturing and compassion –
 for ourselves and the other.

[Spinoza 1677; Damasio 2003; Goleman 2003 / Mind & Life Institute; see also: Ricard, Lutz and Davidson 2014.]

Postscript to EARTE ABC /

²⁵ But note: according to Alessandra Raffin, these were originally called “Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises (PIEs); and the name was changed in the early days of Autogenic Training in the UK to Intentional Off-Loading Exercises – with a rather different emphasis “.....the purpose of the exercises changed from tension and arousal intentional discharge – to intentional offloading of retained emotions.” Raffin 2020 lines 40-86). Generations of British trained Autogenic Therapists have been taught what some consider to be a corruption of Luthe’s original intent. See also [Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises \(PIE\)](#) and Luthe 1982 (Workshop Notes: Autogenic Training: *Complementary Prohomeostatic Approaches*).

Prof. Luis de Rivera trained with Luthe in Canada and so had first-hand experience of working with Luthe. He also has some reservations regarding the way the BAS approaches the “Intentional Off-Loading Exercises” – e.g. de Rivera 2012: Annual BAS Schultz and Luthe Memorial Lecture, London, 28.04.2012.

- ✿ See also web article E-03: Look at the Cypress Tree – Autonomic Afferents and Well-Being, Section: 10. Affiliative touch as an example of interoceptive sense and homeostasis – of “how do you feel”; especially Figures 10.4A and 10.4B that illustrate some aspects of de Rivera London talk to the British Autogenic Society [de Rivera 2012].

Postscript to EARTE ABC Series

Expressive **ART** Exercises help us to
 be in touch with our feelings and emotions
 in an accepting way.

Distressing emotions, including irritation and anger, are not in
 themselves our fault [Gilbert 2010]. However, what we do with them is
 our responsibility.

Furthermore, Feelings and Emotions are there to give us information
 about what is going on in our bodies [de Rivera 2018].

We allow ourselves

- a) to accept / acknowledge such distressing feelings without
 judgement, and
- b) where appropriate, we can release them in one or more of
 the above suggested ways.

As we become more accepting and Mindful, we can begin to
 become aware of our emotions arising, reaching a peak, and
 then falling – without us becoming “hooked” into them**.

[cf. Rumi: The Guest House]

As we become more aware and accepting of our feelings, whatever they
 are, we increasingly move into an inner space of safety: of feeling safe.
 This in turn will allow us enhanced and wholesome social engagement
 with others and within ourselves. That is, we befriend our inner being
 [Welwood 1983].

This in turn will lead to an increasing awareness of the **Jen** within us.

See also Appendix: Jen and our original nature – a story.

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** See also F5A on website: Feeling the Feeling Meditation
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5. Appendix Jen and our Original Nature

In ancient China there was a human quality regarded more highly than any other virtue: higher, for example, than righteousness, higher than benevolence.

This quality was known as Jen, which can perhaps best be translated as human-heartedness (Watts 1995; page 25).

Some psychologies tend to focus on negative aspects of “human nature”. Other philosophies suggest a deep innate beauty, goodness, and nobility within each human being. In Buddhist psychology this innate quality is called our Original Nature (or Buddha²⁷ Nature) and is well illustrated in the following story.

In a large temple north of Thailand’s ancient capital, Sukotai, there once stood an enormous and ancient clay Buddha. Though not the most handsome or refined work of Thai Buddhist art, it had been cared for over a period of five hundred years and become revered for its sheer longevity. Violent storms, changes in government, and invading armies had come and gone, but the Buddha endured.

At one point, however, the monks who tended the temple noticed that the statue had begun to crack and would soon be in need of repairing and repainting. After a stretch of particularly hot, dry weather, one of the cracks became so wide that a curious monk took his flashlight and peered inside. What shone back at him was a flash of brilliant gold. Inside this plain old statue, the temple residents discovered one of the largest and most luminous golden images of Buddha ever created

The monks believe that this shining work of art had become covered in plaster and clay to protect it during times of conflict and unrest. In much the same way, each of us has encountered threatening situations that lead us to cover our innate nobility. Just as the people of Sukotai had forgotten about the golden Buddha, we too have forgotten our essential nature. Much of the time we operate from the protective layer.

Jack Kornfield 2008 pp 11-12.

Kornfield goes on to say: “The primary aim of Buddhist psychology is to help us see beneath this armouring and bring out our original goodness, called our Buddha nature.”

So our Original Nature can become distorted and latent over time. Disciplines such as Meditation and Autogenic Training can help us to restore and re-contact the Original Nature in ourselves and others: this will involve developing our skills in Mindful Awareness, and befriending our emotions, whatever they may be [Welwood 1983].

References and sources

Kornfield, Jack: <i>The Wise Heart – Buddhist psychology for the West</i> ; 2008. ISBN: 978-1-84-604125-9
Watts; Alan: 1995. <i>The Tao of Philosophy – edited transcripts</i> . ISBN 1-870845-16-1
Welwood, John: 1983 <i>Befriending Emotion</i> : IN Welwood (Ed): <i>Awakening the Heart – East-West approaches to psychotherapy and the Healing Relationship</i> ISBN 978-0-394-72182-8

²⁷ The word Buddha means “The Awakened One”

Part VI
Related articles, Glossary, and References

6. Thematically Related Articles on Web

A 1	The Stress Response, the Relaxation Response, and the Tend-and-Befriend Response	2011
A 5	Autogenic Training, Psychotherapy / CBT, and Depression – <i>based on research by Krampen 1997 / 1999</i>	2011
A 7	Porges and the Polyvagal Theory – <i>reflections on clinical and therapeutic significance</i>	2012
A 8	The Polyvagal Theory <i>and a more sympathetic awareness of the ANS</i>	2012
A 9	Emotions, Well-Being and Immune Function: Awe and Shame as modulators of Being – <i>for good or ill</i>	2015
A10	Towards Transformation: Surviving and Thriving in the era of COVID-19 19 – and building inner long-term Resilience to the vicissitudes of life	2020
A 11	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises – Series A	2021
A 12	Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises – Series B	2021
B3 Part I	The Origins of Affect and Affective Neuroscience – <i>and the misplacing of Affect in the Neocortex</i> (based on the work of Panksepp)	2012
B3 Part II	Emotional Operating Neuro Circuits: <i>a brief introduction to Panksepp's model</i>	2012
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 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 4	Duhkha, Impermanence, and Inter-relatedness (Some Reflections on Sakyamuni, Inter-relatedness, and Well-Being)	2012
D 8	Duhkha II: The Second Arrow and Sympathetic Afferents	2017
D 10	Look at the Cypress Tree	2015
D 11	Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: from Duhkha to Sukha	2017
E-03	Look at the Cypress Tree – <i>Autonomic Afferents and Well-Being</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extensive Background Research Paper for talk given to the British Autogenic Society Annual Lecture 21st May 2016 	2016
F 1	An introduction to Autogenics 3.0 (based on the work of Luis de Rivera)	2018
F 2	An introduction to the Ten Standard Exercises of Autogenics 3.0 – <i>for those already practising the original Six Standard Exercise format</i>	2019
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

7. Glossary

Amplified State Of Consciousness Induction (ASCI)

Adapted from A 13 on Web

After 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.

I. 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 potentially 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](#)" approaches / training. [Sewell email communication 12-XI-2020 – with thanks].

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].

Autonomic Nervous System /

<p>Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) See Polyvagal Theory for fuller description</p>	<p>This consists of three parts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Sympathetic Nervous System activated in the Flight and Fight mode – i.e. when we are faced with Danger. II. The Dorsal Vagal section of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System (PSNS), dominated by the Vagus Nerve. (Vagus means ‘wanderer’, as this nerve ‘wanders’ all over the body.) This Dorsal Vagal system has two distinct functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) The part that is activated in situations of Life Threat – and generally associated with the collapse (and freeze) response. In humans this may manifest more in terms of dissociation, depression, not feeling good enough, and withdrawal /a wish to hide [Porges 2011]. b) An on-going background activity that facilitates, for example, daily healthy functioning of the digestive system [Dana 2018 pp 22-24]. <p>The Dorsal Vagal nerve is a very ancient part of the ANS, and is un-myelinated, meaning that neuronal impulses are conducted relatively slowly. Most of its activity is below the diaphragm.</p> III. The much newer Ventral Vagal section of the PSNS. This is the system that manifests, or rather has already manifest, when we are feeling safe, and underpins Social Engagement, nurturing, and wholesome care of children, adults, and society. It is myelinated, allowing neuronal messages to be conducted much faster. <p>There are also five “hybrid” states relating to play, intimacy, nursing mothers and quietude – see Polyvagal Theory [Porges 2011; Dana 2021-A; 2021-B].</p>
<p>Authentic Self See also 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 – <i>and continue to develop throughout the rest of our lives</i>. He contrasted the Authentic Self with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the Artificial Self – which is the false-self we may hide behind when, for example we are seeking approval of others; and: ➤ 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>A more detailed description of the concept of the Authentic Self is planned within the next article, A14 – scheduled for later this year (2021).</p> <p>Some may feel that the term Artificial Self is a misnomer – as it possibly implies a deliberate and conscious state. The term False Self (Winnicott 1960) may be nearer the mark – which will tend to arise where the messages we received from our mother / parents are ambiguous; such messages can arise in the “not good-enough parent” (no blame) as a result of their own disturbed inner world which is often in a non VV state [Porges 2011]. In other words, such parents are struggling with autonomic states that are frequently in the danger / SNS, or life-threat DV, modalities.</p> <p>From this perspective, the False Self in the individual will arise in early childhood as a result of the parent’s own mental state of autonomic dysfunction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There then arise in the child the trust – mistrust dyad, where the mistrust predominates for experiential reasons [Erickson & Erikson1997]. <p>From a polyvagal perspective, we can say that the False Self originally arises when our autonomic state is repeatedly disturbed: that is, in the danger flight / fight SNS mode – mobilisation with fear [Porges 2011], or the life threat dorsal vagal mode – immobilisation with fear [Porges 2011].</p> <p>Deb Dana /</p>

<p>Authentic Self <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Deb Dana emphasises that our “story” at any moment in time follows our (autonomic) state [Dana 2018 p35]. We can extrapolate from this and say:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Our False Self will originally arise when our autonomic state is not safe, creating as it were our “false self” to allow us to survive.) <p>A crucial aspect of Reflective and Awareness Building approaches is to develop our Authentic Self.</p>
<p>Changing the Peg i</p> <p>Adapted from Ross 2010</p>	<p>A concept from Buddhist psychology. It is suggested that negative mind states, including both destructive and negative emotions, can best be overcome by changing our inner mental state to one of a positive emotion / affect (Hanh 1998 p 207-209). This switch in our mental state is called changing the peg.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Interestingly, Spinoza developed a similar concept in which he stated that we can only overcome a negative affect not by reason alone, but by reason-induced-emotion [Spinoza 1677; Damasio 2003 p 11-12; Ross 2005X p 30-34]. <p>Studies in neuro-science support this concept; positive affects tend to act as anti-dotes to the informational substances associated with such negative mind states as anxiety, grief, and anger (Panksepp 1998; Ross 2005X p 31-32).</p> <p>In addition, meditation, and so by extrapolation the AT state, activates the Left Frontal Lobe (pre-frontal cortex) region of the brain, and this in itself reduces amygdala activity (especially fear / anxiety circuits) and helps in dissipating any pre-existing negative affect [Davidson 2003B pp 212-338; Ross 2006A; see also de Rivera 2018].</p>
<p>Changing the Peg ii</p> <p>Adapted from Ross 2010</p>	<p>“Changing the peg” is a Buddhist metaphor for the concept of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ dealing effectively with negative mind states / afflictions. <p>In rural / nomadic societies, if a peg (e.g. a tent peg) became rotten or damaged, it would be replaced by a carpenter with a new and wholesome peg. In the same way, if we are suffering from a negative / unwholesome affect, it can be overcome by replacing it with a positive wholesome affect – in the context of Meditation and Mindfulness.</p> <p>This concept was echoed by Spinoza who suggested that we cannot overcome a negative mind state / affect simply by reason or rational thought, but rather by “reason induced emotion” (Spinoza 1677; Damasio 2003; Ross 2005X Part 7).</p> <p>In modern Affective Neuro-science, Panksepp notes that activation of, for example, the CARE-circuits can release informational substances that act as antidotes to the FEAR- and RAGE-circuits. Thus we could say that, by extrapolation, Panksepp’s research supports this ancient concept of changing the peg.</p> <p>Changing the peg can also give us new insights and a new meaning to life.</p>
<p>Conatus Spinoza (1632-1677)</p>	<p>Spinoza developed a very particular type of ethics and philosophy that still has relevance today. He developed the concept of Conatus, which can be described as the tendency of each (thing or) being:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ “to persist in her or his own being”. <p>As refracted through the eyes of the neuro-scientist Damasio, this interlinks with, and embraces Spinoza’s concept that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ “Happiness is the power to be free of the tyranny of negative emotions” [Damasio 2003 p 175]. <p>If we can rid ourselves of such negative emotions, we will see more clearly into our own – and others’ – Original Nature.</p> <p>We can only “rid ourselves of such negative emotions” if we develop the skills to be more and more grounded in our Ventral Vagal system (of safety and social engagement); and so not lost in the modalities of danger (SNS with fear) or Life Threat (DV PSNS – immobility with fear). <i>We can /</i></p>

<p>Conatus <i>continued</i></p>	<p>We can reframe this in the terms of the Polyvagal Theory :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Story Follows State [Dana 2018 p 35]. ➤ The tyranny of negative emotions will be alive whilst our Autonomic Nervous System is engrained within the SNS with fear and DV with fear modalities. <p>On the other hand, as our Autonomic State moves more and more into the Ventral Vagal modality, happiness and well-being will flower. This is essentially a very ancient teaching of Taoism, as rendered in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ “The Secret of the Golden Flower” [Cleary 1991 translation from Lu Tung-pin (or Lu Dongbin (796 PE-1016 PE)]. <p>For many of us the move into a predominantly Ventral Vagal state may require help and support through some form of psychotherapy / counselling, and / or Mindful type practice / Meditation / ‘Reflective and Awareness-Building’ practices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ These can all facilitate Ventral Vagal dynamics – and so help in supporting our “own being”. ⊗ Once we are in the process of securing a firm Ventral Vagal foundation, we can develop our own unique practice embracing, for example, mindfulness, Tai Chi, meditation / Autogenic Practice – and / or the Secret of the Golden Flower. See also Polyvagal Theory (H: Hybrid State 5).
<p>Dana Paramita /</p>	

Dana Paramita

Adapted from Autogenic Handout for (advanced) AT students.

Also see D2 on website

In many traditions in diverse societies the act of giving has been considered to be of particular importance. For example, Jesus is said to have said: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” When I first heard this as a child, I assumed that the giving referred to something material – like a (physical) present. It was only later that I began to realise that the essence of this teaching was more to do with giving that which is not material: giving something of ourselves.

There is a lovely saying:

Give a man a fish,
 and you feed him for a day;
 Teach him how to fish,
 and you feed him for a lifetime.

In “The heart of the Buddha’s teaching”, Thich Nhat Hanh has a chapter on the six Paramitas. One of the Paramitas is Dana Paramita, which is to do with giving, offering, and generosity. In this brief overview we explore the essence of Dana Paramita.

- In Chinese, the symbol for Paramita has to do with crossing to the other side of a river.
- The implication of the six Paramitas is that they can help us to move from our present state of suffering, strife and discontent to the other shore of gratitude, love, understanding and meaning.
 - In order to cross over from the shore of suffering to the shore of joy and well-being, we have to do something: this something is called Paramita.
 - No one else can do this work for us: we have to do it ourselves; this involves considerable effort in a mindful sense – including:
 - Embracing some form of meditation / Reflective and Awareness Building practices that facilitate VV PSNS states.

Dana Paramita is specifically to do with giving – offering something positive – and generosity. Thich Nhat Hanh discusses eight, which are given below, to which I have added generosity and gratitude.

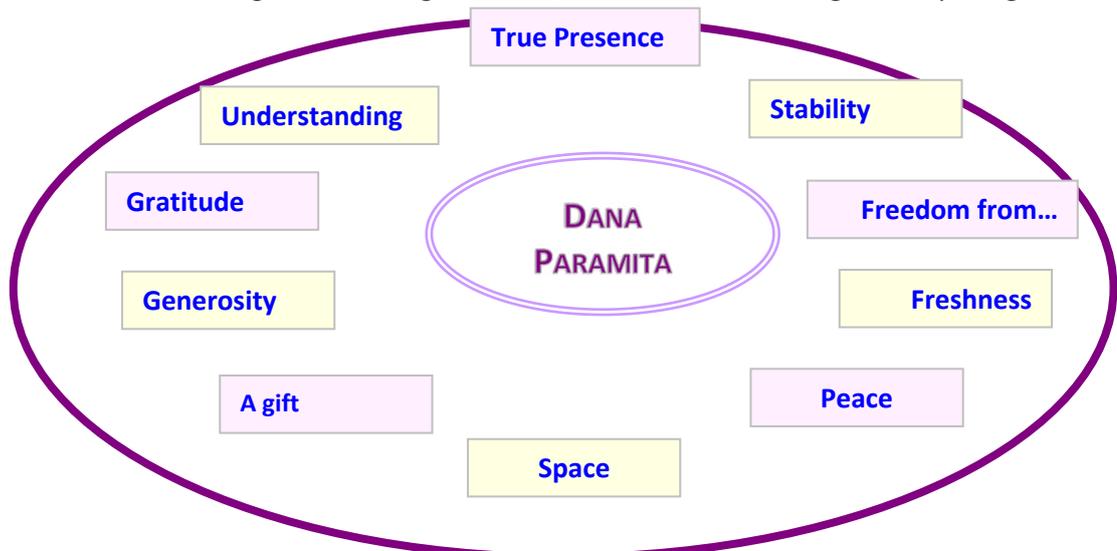


Figure G1 Dana Paramita

Dana continued /

<p>Dana Paramita <i>continued</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Giving our True Presence</u></p> <p>We will select one of these to allow us a greater feel about the nature of Dana Paramita:</p> <p>It is very easy to spend much of our time in a state of background “mental chatter” (or a pre-occupied mind) in which we are not really in the present moment, and thus are not giving our True Presence to the person we are with, for example our partner.</p> <p>If we focus on the present moment, and give our True Presence to those we are with at the time: or to a flower, a cloud, a mountain, a river – or any other aspect of nature and the cosmos: then we can experience deeply the true essence of our being.</p> <p>Thich Nhat Hanh gives a moving story of a very well-to-do Father who is also very busy with his work – and so is often away from home for days or weeks. He asks his son what he (the son) would like for his birthday. His son replies, after some reflection: “Daddy, I want you.”</p> <p>If we do not give our True Presence today, tomorrow it may be too late.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To give our True Presence is a wonderful gift. • To give our True Presence is to BE in the Present Moment. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>Giving our True Presence also embraces giving our True Presence, for example, to our Autogenic Sessions. See also Mary Oliver’s Poem: A Summer Day.</p> </div>
<p>Habit Energies</p> <p>From web article E4, itself a shortened and modified version of the glossary from B20, which gives a more detailed account</p>	<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. ○ 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.]
<p>Homeostatic Emotions</p> <p>Imported and adapted from B 20 on web</p>	<p>Damasio distinguishes the emotions, which can be unconscious, from feeling, which in this context is the subjective awareness of the emotion [Damasio 1994 – see also de Rivera 2018].</p> <p>What is an emotion? A feeling that requires a response – to satisfy the feeling or to consummate it.</p> <p>Craig defines a homeostatic emotion as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ “a homeo-statically motivated behaviour coupled in humans with a concomitant affective feeling from the body” [Craig 2015 p 303]. <p>A feeling or sensation (that arises from within the body – <u>interoceptive</u>) that requires a response to keep the individual in harmony can in this context be regarded as a homeostatic emotion, which we will become aware of as a result of the input from homeostatic afferents – including Autonomic Nervous System afferents.</p> <p>This then implies that homeostatic emotions embrace such modalities as pain and temperature (e.g., feeling pleasantly warm) – see below.</p>

Homeostatic

Emotions include:

- Pain (first pain = pricking pain; and second pain = burning pain)
- Temperature (cool; warm)
- Itch
- Muscle ache
- Gastric distension
- Vasomotor flush
- Taste: e.g. Sweet / Salty
- Affective / Affiliative / Sensual Touch.

Feelings such as: thirst / hunger / feeling too cold can be regarded as homeostatic emotions. In the case of thirst, for example: we become aware of our thirst, and that then motivates our behaviour to seek water / fluid refreshment. The primary process emotion that is activated in this pursuit for water is the SEEKING system [Panksepp 1998].

The SEEKING system has been described by Panksepp in terms of a general "foraging / exploration / investigation / curiosity / interest / expectancy / SEEKING- system" (Panksepp 1998 p 145). When we are thirsty, if we have interest / expectancy of finding water we seek out the right place. In the case of the Bushman, when the particular Bushman community are all hungry, the men go out with expectancy for the whole group.

Craig has this to say about the matter:

"The feelings from the body are characterised by a distinct sensation that is inherently coloured by a strong affect that is directly associated with a motivation that drives the behavioural responses needed to maintain the health of the body; in other words, the affective feelings from the body occur concomitantly with motivations for homeostatic behaviours. To my mind, that means that these combinations can be viewed as *homeostatic emotions*. This concept emphasises the essential homeostatic and autonomic roles of feelings from the body, it is consistent with the anatomical organisation, and it fits with the emerging ideas about embodied emotions."

Craig 2015 p 42

We can say that in some senses motivations and homeostatic emotions inter-are. The thirst drives the SEEKING system in a particular direction. If we are motivated by a desire for revenge, then this can activate the RAGE circuits in unwholesome ways. Yet here the motivation is still underscored by the jealousy / feeling of ill-will towards the other.

- If, on the other hand, our motivations are towards compassion for human societies and our world (mother earth), then the underlying emotion will be linked into our Primary Process CARE circuits. Such motivations will be linked in with frequent activation of VV PSNS afferents – and with wholesome forms of [Reflective and Awareness Building Practices](#).

Intentional Off-Loading Exercises i-OLE²⁸ [See also [Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises \(PIE\)](#) below.]

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.

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 mainly 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. 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.

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 Exercises to be practised for a couple or more weeks before moving onto 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 Ingham²⁹ for some of the above background information.]

In the present series I have included the physical motor exercise of Luthe (A1 in Series A), and the Grief / Crying / Sadness exercise (B4: Priming Exercise for De-blocking Grief). Not included are the Anxiety and Anger Off Loading exercises, as I find myself unable to integrate them with a wholesome understanding of the Polyvagal Theory [Porges 2011] that would allow me to feel that they are grounded in this perspective. For an insightful and excellent review of Anger in the context of the British Autogenic Society approach to this intentional Off-Loading Exercise, see Sue Holttum [Holttum 2008].

²⁸ 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.

²⁹ Zoom conversation with Nida Ingham, Autogenic Therapist on 19-09-2021; Nida was present at the second (1982) London Workshop run by Luthe.

<p>Inter-Being</p>	<p>A term coined by Thich Nhat Hanh [Hanh 1998 e.g., pp 24-27; 2012 pp 55-61]</p> <p>☸ ‘“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”. 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.’</p> <p style="text-align: right;">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 the negative / toxic mind states. A modern realisation of inter-being can be found in the Systems view of life [Capra & Luisi 2016].</p>
<p>Interoception</p> <p>Adapted from B 20 on website – which has a more extensive glossary</p>	<p>This term was originally coined by Charles S. Sherrington during the early years of the 20th century; he used it particularly to describe sensations from the viscera [Craig 2015 p 3].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It refers to sensory modalities that arise inside the body – and / or on the surface of the body – and these modalities are intimately connected with homeostasis [Craig 2015]. ○ Information is transmitted from the body / organs to the brain by afferent nerves. These afferent nerve fibres terminate in the brain (Dorsal Posterior Insular cortex) [Craig 2015 p 175], and include the following modalities: “pain, temperature, itch, muscle burn, visceral sensations, hunger, thirst, taste, and sensual touch” [Craig 2004]. <p>It will be noted that all of these are essential for homeostasis. Sensual Touch is also known as Affective / Affiliative Touch. See also Homeostatic Emotions. As the child develops and matures, it is important that she / he develop a good sense of interoception. This will be facilitated by a nurturing / “good enough” parent [Winnicott 1960 / 1965; Sunderland 2006; 2016].</p>
<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> <p>☸ “This quality was known as Jen, which can perhaps best be translated as human-heartedness”. (Watts 1995; page 25).</p> <p>See also Appendix A to get a fuller feel of this concept.</p>

Neuroception 1

Neuroception is, in essence, the unconscious detection of risk or safety by the organism which will be reflected in autonomic bodily states; for example: of life threat, danger, or safety [Porges 2017], which then sets in motion the (again unconscious) response of Freeze, Flight / Fight, or Social Engagement respectively.

Porges puts it succinctly thus:

- ❖ “Neuroception is the process through which the nervous system evaluates risk without requiring awareness. This automatic process involves brain areas that evaluate cues of safety, danger, or life threat. Once these are detected via neuroception, the physiological state automatically shifts to optimal survival. Although we are usually now aware of the cues that trigger neuroception, we tend to be aware of the physiological shift (i.e. interoception). Sometimes we experience this as a feeling in our gut or as an intuition that the context is dangerous. Alternatively, the system also triggers physiological states that support trust, social engagement behaviours, and the building of strong relationships. Neuroception is not always accurate. Faulty neuroception might detect risk when there is no risk or identify cues of safety when there is risk.”

Porges 2017 pp 19-20

Neuroception 2 /

Neuroception 2

Neuroception is a most helpful concept to be familiar with – even though it is not generally well-known. In essence, it is our unconscious, internal, bodily systems that determine whether we are facing life threat, danger, or safety: as a result, our Autonomic Nervous System (ANS) state will move into the most appropriate of these three modalities – and so is vital for our survival. However, the system can make an error. For example, a person who looks like an uncle or aunt whom in childhood we were afraid of can trigger our Danger / SNS (mobilisation with fear) response.

- “Neuroception is a wordless experience” [Dana 2018 p 36].

Our feelings, behaviour and thinking are to a large extent determined by the present moment autonomic state we are in, and so we can articulate this as:

Story Follows State
 Dana 2018 p 35

This expression “Story Follow State” can suddenly bring the relevance of neuroception and the Polyvagal Theory right into our moment by moment lives; neuroception is as it were wrapping herself around every thought, feeling, behaviour and the subsequent consequences that we experience; or more accurately, every thought, feeling and behaviour is arising from our present moment neuroception.

I have found the extended passage below from Deb Dana most illuminating.

We live a story that originates in our autonomic state, is sent through autonomic pathways from the body to the brain, and is then translated by the brain into beliefs that guide our daily living. The mind narrates what the nervous system knows.

- Story follows state.

Polyvagal Theory makes an important distinction between perception, which involves a degree of awareness, and neuroception, which is reflexive with cues triggering shifts in autonomic state without an awareness of the influence of the cues. Neuroception results in the gut feelings that move us along a continuum between safety and survival response. Neuroception might be thought of as “somatic signals that influence decision making and behaviour responses without explicit awareness of provoking cues” [Klarer et al 2014 p 7067]. Through the process of neuroception, the autonomic nervous system assesses risk and takes action.

- From a neuroception of unsafety, there is a move towards sympathetic mobilisation or dorsal vagal collapse.
- From a neuroception of safety, the sympathetic and dorsal vagal systems are inhibited, the ventral vagal system is in control, and the social engagement system is active and online.

Dana 2018 p 35-36
 Bullet points added

Personal development through, for example, Meditation, Autogenic Training, and / or Mindfulness can change the neurocircuits of our brains and bodies so that we are more often in the Ventral Vagal state of safety, wholesome curiosity, positive social engagement, and compassion.

<p>Original Nature</p>	<p>While some psychologies tend to focus on negative aspects of “human nature”, other philosophies / psychologies suggest a deep innate beauty, goodness, and nobility within each human being [Davidson 1018] . In Buddhist psychology this innate quality is called our Original Nature (or Buddha³⁰ Nature) and is well illustrated in the story of Jen and our Original Nature [Jack Kornfield 2008 pp 11-12; and see Appendix above].</p> <p>Jen is the quality of human-heartedness within each of us, and is underpinned by our CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998] and Ventral Vagal System [Porges 2011]. The innate goodness of small children is reflected in research cited by Richard Davidson [Davidson 2018;see Hamlin et al 2007; 2010; and see video clip link in reference. Also see Ross 2021-N.2].</p> <p>Meditation facilitates the development (or recollection) of our Original Nature, also called our Celestial Mind – when we enter quietude [Lü Dongbin / Cleary 1991. See also B22 on web 2021 edition: Section 6.3 <i>The Dynamics of Stillness</i> (as in deep meditation)].</p>
<p>Polyvagal Theory</p> <p>See also B 22 on web</p> <p>See also Vagus Nerve</p>	<p>The Polyvagal Theory has been developed by Porges over the last four decades or so. In essence, it can be described in terms of three components of the Autonomic Nervous System, that evolved sequentially over millennia.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Primitive, unmyelinated (Dorsal Vagal – DV) PSNS dating back to the evolution of vertebra / fish species (c 500 million years ago) . It has two essential yet quite different functions. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A. The background pro-homeostatic daily function of ‘healthy regulation of the digestive system’ [Dana 2021 – see also Dana 2020 p 11;]. B. Life Threat Dynamics: this is the system that operates unconsciously when an organism – such as ourselves – is severely threatened and “feigns death” / freezes or flops, and is associated with behaviour shutdown, thus acting as a primordial survival system. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ It is in essence a Pan-Immobilisation System when under severe threat (i.e. Life Threat), and sometimes is called Fear Paralysis [Levine 2010]. ○ The primitive PSNS evolved in evolution in the context of Immobilisation associated with unconsciously perceived (neurocepted) life threat. ○ This system worked well for reptiles, but is potentially lethal for mammals – as the shutting down of systems can threaten the integrity of the mammalian brain which is very sensitive to reductions in oxygen supply. 2. The SNS flight / fight system. This is in essence the Mobilisation system – e.g. when we are in danger. This evolved approximately 400 million years ago. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobilisation with fear – for either fight or flight. 3. The Myelinated /

³⁰ The word Buddha means “The Awakened One”

<p>Polyvagal Theory <i>continued</i></p> <p>See also: Vagus Nerve</p>	<p>4. The Myelinated (Ventral Vagal – VV) PSNS that evolved in mammals (circa 200 million years ago – Dana 2020] and is fundamental to Social Engagement / Social Communication. This involves, for example: /</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facial Expression ○ Listening ○ Vocalisation <p>This myelinated vagal system can only operate properly in situations where we are feeling safe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⊗ Myelin covers nerves and allows the neuronal messages to be transmitted much faster than is the case with unmyelinated nerves. <p>In terms of wholesome human interactions, it is perhaps more helpful to describe these as follows:</p> <p>A. <u>When we feel safe</u>, our Social Engagement System will be engaged in a wholesome way, and this is underpinned with VV dominance.</p> <p>B. <u>In situations of Danger</u>, the SNS takes over in terms of mobility in the context of FEAR (or anger / RAGE).</p> <p>C. <u>In Life threat situations</u>, we go into the freeze / flop response, which is the classic DV response of vertebrates and mammals. However, previous life threat situations can be activated in the here and now through memory or a present moment experience that triggers that previous emotional state. This can then lead to severe on-gong autonomic dysfunction associated with, for example, social withdrawal and / or depression.</p> <p>Furthermore, the following Hybrid Autonomic States have been described:</p> <p>D. Hybrid State 1: The Freeze part of the Life Threat situation – e.g. a deer freezing in the headlights of a vehicle while remaining standing. Here there is both Dorsal Vagal activity and SNS activity to give the leg muscle “tone” to prevent the legs collapsing (SNS in Fear / Life Threat) [Dana 2021-A; 2021-B].</p> <p>E. Hybrid State 2: PLAY: here we have mobility in the context of feeling safe (i.e., put another way, mobility without fear). Here we have a combination of VV and SNS in safe mode [Porges 2011].</p> <p>F. Hybrid State 3: Intimacy: here we have immobility in the context of feeling safe (i.e., put another way, immobility without fear). The ANS modalities here are VV and DV in conditions of safety [Porges 2011].</p> <p>G. Hybrid State 4: Nursing Mother; a similar hybrid state to E above with both VV and DV in conditions of safety [Porges 2011].</p> <p>H. Hybrid State 5: Stillness [Quietude – Lü / Cleary 1991]. A combination of Ventral Vagal with Dorsal Vagal when feeling safe (from neuroceptive perspective) arising in meditative states [Dana 2021-A; 2021B].</p>
<p>Procedural Learned Tendencies</p> <p>Based on Ogden 2009</p> <p>From glossary of F4</p> <p>See also Polyvagal Theory</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 where one or other parents (or both) have experienced, or do experience, severe trauma; ○ 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. In Polyvagal terms, they will often be associated with our autonomic danger / SNS mobility with fear response; or life threat / DV immobility with fear response.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ They can be difficult to un-learn. <p>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>

Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises (PIE).

On a personal note, I have found it difficult to come to a clear understanding of the intention, practice and efficacy of these PIE (and the BAS OLE). Different and experienced Autogenic Therapists present Luthe's work from quite different perspectives. In addition, the rationale for them seems to differ significantly from different experienced practitioners.

Luthe described the essence of these in his workshop notes: *Autogenic Training: Complementary Prohomeostatic Approaches* Autogenic [Luthe 1982]. Different Autogenic Therapists have different perspectives on the relevance and appropriateness of these approaches to Autogenic Training today [Luthe 1982; Bird 2015; Kermani 1996; de Rivera 2021; Raffin 2021].

The British Autogenic Society³¹ subsequently changed the name of these Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises to *Intentional Off-Loading Exercises* in the early days of the early 1980s. Some argue that not only was the name changed but their theoretical basis and practical application was as well [Raffin 2021; de Rivera 2012; 2021].

Raffin states:

- “During Autogenic Training (AT) practice some discharges can appear and disturb the AT execution. These discharges are considered by Luthe as evidence of brain discharging activity of retained neuronal material. To help what he considered as a natural brain homeostatic process, Luthe formulated the Prohomeostatic Intentional Exercises (PIEs). The name “prohomeostatic” explains clearly that the intent of Luthe’s exercises is to promote (pro) the homeostasis of the organism. Luthe focused the PIEs in enhancing the natural discharge of tension and high psycho-vegetative arousal connected to repressed behavioural needs, such as for instance a repressed need to cry. In his idea, the PIEs should simplify the regulatory activity of the brain in order to help the autogenic state establishment.....” [Raffin 2020 lines: 43-54 – with some minor changes / clarifications ^{AS/IR}].
-the name of the exercises changed from PIEs to Intentional Offloading Exercises (IOEs) and the purpose of the exercises changed from tension and arousal intentional discharge to intentional offloading of retained emotions. It is not very clear why and how this happened, but nowadays the IOEs represent an emotional offload training to use both in conjunction or independently to the AT practice [Raffin 2021 lines: 65-67]..... “These new versions of exercises were not accompanied by any scientific test nor was it put into relation to validated emotions models and emotional expression theories” [Raffin 2021 lines 73 - 74].

As indicated above, concern has been expressed regarding the original evidence base for these exercises [Raffin 2021], though it is also the case that many British trained Autogenic Therapists have found them personally and professionally useful.

The present author has had reservations about some aspects of these exercises (IOE), especially in terms of their possible activation of FEAR and RAGE circuits [Panksepp 1998]. The work of Ekman on emotions shows that if we simply make an angry face, this activates the anger (and RAGE) circuits within the body [Ekman 2002]. [See also Ross 2005X.]

This had been one of the driving forces for creating this series of Expressive Autogenic Resilience Training Exercises (EARTE). A number of these are based on the work of established and respected therapists, and for all of the EARTE I have given a neuro-physiological rationale for their use. While this is not the same as “evidence based” research, it does give a fundamental basis for such research. Separate from that, there has been positive feedback from many AT students who have practised these exercises.

Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices

The concept also resonates with that of our Reflective Function [Knox 2003]

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 River 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.

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.)

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 /

³¹ when it was called British Association for Autogenic Training and Therapy (BAFATT)

Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices <i>continued</i>	[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 Parasympathetic Nervous System state – when this is appropriate. Also see Polyvagal Theory .
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Reflective Function

Adapted from Glossary of E-03 on web – which give a more detailed account and describes further terms mentioned below that may be unfamiliar to the reader

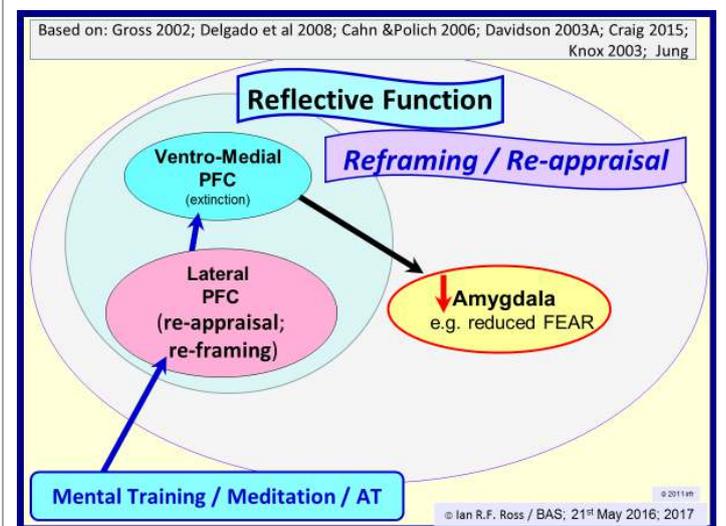
The Reflective modality of humans has been a crucial part of many spiritual traditions, going back millenia. Jung’s approach to psychology and individuation is based to a large extent on reflective practices, and Knox highlights the importance of this approach for our well-being in a chapter of one of her books [Knox 2003 Chapter 6: “The Reflective Function”].

Mental Training facilitates interoceptive awareness (awareness of what is going on in our bodies) and the Reflective Function. If our SNS afferents are bombarding our Right Anterior Insular Cortex, we will not be able to reflect well – partly because our amygdala will be aroused (for example, with FEAR / RAGE).

Meditative type practices have been shown to activate the Lateral Pre-Frontal Cortex, and can then have an important effect on down-regulating various Amygdala functions associated with flight and fight; this is done via the Ventro-medial Pre-Frontal Cortex, as illustrated in the Figure opposite (G-2).

Note that such meditative practices facilitate down-regulating certain (traumatic) memories (in psychology called extinction) and facilitates re-appraisal / reframing [Gross 2002; Delgado et al 2008; Cahn & Polich 2006; Davidson 2003A].

Our Reflective Function is also helpful in developing our own internal ethic, which itself depends on [theory of mind](#) and our CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998].



Glossary Figure G 2
 Figure G-11C in Glossary of E-03
 Pathways of re-appraisal and the Reflective Function
 [discussed more fully in Ross 2010 pp 208-213].

The Reflective function facilitates these pathways and so enhances re-appraisal, insight and Einfall – “a fallen-from-heaven”; see the Four Functions, op cit p 277

Innate Goodness	Research indicates that young infants tend to prefer positive / helpful type behaviours, rather than behaviours that frustrate / intimidate [Hamlin et al 2007; see references]. This overlaps with what is sometimes called our Original Nature , and the (ancient) Chinese concept of Jen , Human-Heartedness. If we experience a lot of fear and disharmony in our early years, this inner goodness may become distorted / lost sight of. Yet even then, the CARE and PLAY neuro-circuits are still there, even if latent: and can be activated later in life with the development of appropriate skills through inner work, counselling, psychotherapy and / or meditative / Reflective and Awareness-Building Practices . The natural state of becoming conscious human beings is that from conception onwards we are nurtured and cared [CARE circuits – Panksepp 1998] for. This being the case, research indicates that we are neurally wired from pre-birth to be cooperating, participant beings in the families, societies and communities we are born into.
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Second /

<p>Second Arrow</p> <p>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”³² 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 is much more likely to arise if we are in an SNS arousal (flight / fight) state or a Life Threat State (Dorsal Vagal). The Second arrow will tend to axiomatically dissolve as we move into a Ventral Vagal State.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✿ “Story follows State” [Dana 2018 p 35].</p> <p>See also linked article: D8: Duhkha II: The Second Arrow and Sympathetic Afferents</p>
<p>Self Realisation</p>	<p>A term used by Schultz which seems to overlap with Luthe’s concept of the Authentic Self. In the context of Autogenic Training, Schultz said: “In this sense our work leads towards the highest goal of psychotherapy (the highest stratum of existential values), to self-realisation.” [Quoted by Wallnöfer 2000 –see also appendix C in website article E-03.]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✿ The term Self here overlaps with Jung’s concept of the Self. The meaning is thus very different from ego – in the sense of ego-centric. ✿ Some therapists and philosophers talk about our Higher Self; this would link in with Self Realisation. ✿ Self Realisation and personal development are not possible when we are fixed in Danger or Life Threat neuro-physiology [Porges 2011; Porges 2017; Dana 2018]. ✿ Experiencing Danger and Life Threat, however, are prerequisites for developing resilience and Self Realisation. ✿ Concepts of our Authentic Self, Self Realisation and personal development are grounded within an ethical dimension [de Rivera 2018 p 27]; and inter-are with Jen, Ubuntu, and feeling Safe (VV PSNS) [Porges 2011; Porges 2017; Dana 2018]. <p>For a related perspective, with associated diagrams, please see web article B-20 (Separation Distress and Well-Being – <i>Neuro-physiological reflections on developing a Secure Base</i>) Figure 10, p 60 : ‘Mental Training, Primary Process Emotions and Self-Realisation’ and p 80 of glossary under ‘Self Realisation’ – including Glossary Figure G-04.</p>
<p><i>Spiritual /</i></p>	

³² 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>Spiritual</p>	<p>This can be a problematic word for many of us in the present era. However, the underlying concept is in essence important for all human beings, and I have found the following gives helpful insights into the notion.</p> <p>☸ “By spiritual we mean the needs and expectations which all humans have to find meaning, purpose and value in life: even people who are not religious have belief systems that give their lives meaning and purpose. Spiritual distress can hinder physical healing, and its identification may improve healing outcomes. Thus we consider this a dimension relevant in holistic health care.”</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Quoted from: The Department of General Practice (Edinburgh University); notes for 5th Year Medical Students – 2002.</p> <p>Spiritual distress will be associated with a disruption of our VV system – and an increase in SNS (danger related) activity and / or an increase in DV (Life Threat / Dissociation / Depression) modalities.</p> <p>A further interesting perspective on spiritual is given by Pollard:</p> <p>☸ “Some people find spirituality through religion; others find it through science, music, art or a connection with nature, while still others find it in their personal values and principles. No matter how it is defined, this elusive entity describes the way we find meaning, hope, comfort and inner peace in our lives.” [Pollard 2004]</p>
<p>Theory of Mind (from Glossary of E-03)</p>	<p>Theory of Mind reflects the ability of a human being to recognise that others have feelings and emotions like ourselves; this enables us to imagine ourselves in the shoes of another person. This is similar to empathy (sympathy – Trevarthen 2011). Small children have not developed a theory of mind – which can be tested in the so-called Sally-Anne test [Baron-Cohen, Leslie & Frith 1985]. Most children have developed a theory of mind by the age of four; autistic children are much less likely to develop the concept.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Our ability to be aware of our own and other peoples’ feelings is linked in to our interoceptive awareness.
<p>Ubuntu Expanded from glossary of A 12</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> <p>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.</p> <p>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:</p> <p>☸ “UBUNTU. How can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?”</p> <p style="text-align: center;">‘UBUNTU’ in the Xhosa culture means: “I am because we are”.</p> <p><i>What follows below has been added as a result of Annie Sturgeon³³ asking me the difference between Jen and Ubuntu; this is a good question, and below is my formulation:</i></p> <p>The concept of ubuntu overlaps with, yet is not the same as, Jen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If we are born into a society where ubuntu is the quintessence of the communities of that culture, then, in general terms, Jen will develop naturally [Liedloff 1975; Ngomane 2019]. ○ If, on the other hand, we are born into a culture in which individualism, “me first”, and ego dominate, then there may be no sense of ubuntu, and Jen will not naturally develop. That is to say, Jen will not develop as a natural and wholesome Habit Energy [Hanh 1998; and see Glossary of D11 on web]; rather, it will have to be worked on by each person – as part of the maturational process of life. <p>Jen and ubuntu will tend to emerge naturally in families and societies where the predominant autonomic state is that of one of Ventra Vagal activity. That is, Jen and ubuntu inter-are with the VV system.</p>	

³³ An Autogenic Therapist in Scotland

<p>Vagus Nerve</p> <p>Also see Polyvagal Theory</p>	<p>The Vagus Nerve is the tenth cranial nerve. Vagus means the “wanderer”. This nerve ‘wanders’ to many different parts of the body: hence its name. It is basically synonymous with the Para Sympathetic Nervous System (PSNS)**, which is divided into two parts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The very ancient (unmyelinated) Dorsal Vagal branch, which evolved with ancient animal forms including reptiles. It is activated in situations of Life Threat, precipitating the freeze response that develops unconsciously – i.e. we have no control over this. In traumatic situations, this can lead to dissociation – in which the trauma is left buried from consciousness. Recurrent activation of the DV can also be associated with depressive states and social withdrawal. ○ The much more recent (myelinated) Ventral Vagal system, which is essential for the social engagement of mammals, and underpins feeling safe. <p>Note that 20% of the nerves of the vagus are efferent (brain to body fibres); while 80% bring us information from the body to the brain (i.e. the afferent neurones). This means that the vagus nerve is extremely well attuned to give us information (albeit much of it unconscious – i.e. neuroception³⁴) as to the state of our body and inner being.</p> <p>** However, other cranial nerves in some respects can also be considered to be part of / complement the Vagus Nerve as they too are crucial for Social Engagement. In these we can include [Rosenberg 2017]:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cranial Nerve V: Trigeminal nerve ➤ Cranial Nerve VII: Facial nerve ➤ Cranial Nerve IX: Glossopharyngeal nerve ➤ Cranial Nerve XI: Spinal Accessory (to the trapezius and sterno-cleido-mastoid muscles)
<p>Ventral Vagal VV</p>	<p>Ventral Vagal (VV) signifies the Ventral Vagal and myelinated branch of the Vagus Nerve. VV activity is deeply interlinked with wholesome social engagement and feelings of safety.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ This is in contrast to the ancient, unmyelinated Dorsal Vagal (DV) branch of the PSNS that is associated with Life Threat.
<p>Vivencia</p>	<p>A Spanish word that I have adopted from Professor Luis de Rivera of Madrid. There is no exact English word for it, but ‘live-experience’ approximates to the meaning. In discussing the word, de Rivera says:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ “As we see later, words are handles we use to collect and combine concepts, so, for lack of a more concise term, we shall call the spiritual nuances we will be talking about ‘live-experience.’” [de Rivera 2018 p 29]
<p>Well-Being</p> <p>Adapted from Glossary of E-03 on website</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 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 on happiness can be reframed as Well- =Being as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pleasure / positive emotion; ○ Engaged, goal directed pursuits / occupations. i.e. we are involved in, and committed to, various pursuits / activities; thus the construct of Well-Being is not one of a passive "happy state", but one that also embraces engaged – 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] (Based on and paraphrased from Davidson 2005; with some additions). <p>Thus Well-Being, in its deeper sense, is clearly far more than an individual matter. It also links in with the concept of the inter-relatedness of all things, and thus mindfulness. In this sense the Well Being of each individual is intimately linked with the wellbeing of all. See also A3 on website: www.atdynamics.co.uk</p>

³⁴ Neuroception is the unconscious detection by the body of life threat, danger, or safety [Porges 2017], which then sets in motion the (again unconscious) response of Freeze, Flight / Fight, or Social Engagement, respectively.

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