

Contents

	page
Contents	1
Acknowledgements	1
Preamble to Preamble	2
1. Preamble	2
2. The Golden Light of Universal Compassion – initial reflections....	4
3. The Exercise	5
4. Reflections on the position of our hands in The Exercise	6
5. Some examples of variations our approach to Compassion Meditation	6
6. Flexibility in approach	6
7. Commitment to Compassion for Life	7
8. Thematically related articles on website	9
9. Some Background Reflections and Concepts in the form of a Brief Glossary	10-16
10. References and Sources	17

Notation: words and phrases in the glossary are notated thus.

Acknowledgements: as previously, great thanks to Annie Sturgeon, Autogenic Therapist, and Michael Ross, my brother, for their proof reading and suggestions.  
 Thanks also to all those who have contributed to my continuing education since I retired from General Practice in 2005

\*\*\* \*\*

### Preamble to Preamble

In the preamble below there are five terms / expressions used with which the reader may or may not be familiar. If you are not familiar with these, just allow the word to be and go with the flow of the general sense. Each one of these five terms is in the glossary should we not be familiar with any or all of them.

#### 1. Preamble

This is the first of two companion Meditations on Compassion, the second being F 13. Both of these are intimately linked to the concept of Inter-Being. Four interlinked articles are planned:

- ☸ F 9: Interbeing Part I: Constructive Feeling Meditation Series (Please see footnote<sup>1</sup>; and the glossary entry on this matter.)
- ☸ F 10 Compassion Part I: Constructive Feeling Meditation Series (this article)
- ☸ F 11: Inter Being Part II: A complementary approach to Part I (F 9)
- ☸ F 13: Compassion Part II – Constructive Feeling Meditation Series.

Compassion for ourselves and others tends to arise naturally from certain perspectives or points of view – and this will lead to Well-Being for ourselves and others. In this sense we can call them “Right Views”<sup>2</sup>. Central to such perspectives is the realisation of the inter-connectedness of all things [Capra & Luisi 2016C], which is intimately linked to [Inter-Being](#) [Hanh 2012]. This article is grounded in the concept of Inter-Being, and it may be helpful to reflect on F 9 before embarking on the meditation part of this article.

\*\*\* \*\*

---

<sup>1</sup> In the context of these web articles, I am using the term Constructive Feeling Meditation to cover what Luis de Rivera notates as: “Meditations on Feelings” [de Rivera 2018 pp 129 145]. The four areas he covers are: Calm, Existence, Zest and Love. In these we are, as it were, re-creating feelings of, for example, calm or zest that we have previously experienced, so that that feeling can be recalled in this present moment and in this sense “static”. I have covered the first three of these in the articles designated as F6.1; F6.2; and F6.3., and in these I have attempted to retain de Rivera’s original concept. However, I am aware that the series of articles from F7 onwards (i.e. including the present F10 article) depart significantly from de Rivera’s original concept, as they invite us to explore concepts such as Inter-Relatedness, Compassion, and illusions with zest and curiosity in this present moment, in ways that are constructive and life enhancing. This means that they are not static but rather dynamic meditations. For further details, please see [Constructive Feeling Meditation](#) in Glossary.

<sup>2</sup> Right in the sense that it leads to flourishing and well-being. Thich Nhat Hanh is very eloquent on this matter regarding Right Views, in the context of the Ennobling Eightfold Path of Buddhist psychology:

The Pali word for “Right” is *samma*, and the Sanskrit word is *samyak*. It is an adverb meaning “in the right way”, “straight,” or “upright,” not bent or crooked. Right Mindfulness, for example, means that there are ways of being mindful that are right, straight, and beneficial. Wrong Mindfulness means that there are ways of practice that are wrong, crooked, and unbeneficial. Entering the Eightfold Path, we learn ways to practise that are of benefit, the “Right” way to practise. Right and wrong are neither moral judgments nor arbitrary standards imposed from outside. Through our own awareness, we discover what is beneficial (“right”) and what is unbeneficial (“wrong”). Hanh 1998 p 11 <sup>footnote 1</sup>.

Compassion can be born /arise from a tender age, and is inter-connected with “[Theory of Mind](#)” and our [Innate Goodness](#)<sup>3</sup> [Davidson 2018 video; see also B 25 on website: “Themes of Neuroscience relevant to Well-Being”].

When we experience anxiety or anger, we are aware that the live experience [vivencia – de Rivera 2018) of this is unpleasant. This is the nature of our human condition, and it reflects our body-mind’s response to [Danger](#) and / or [Life Threat](#) [Porges 2011].

If someone is angry with us, we tend to become upset – perhaps irritable, and perhaps fearful. This is a natural and reactive response to their words, posture, and demeanour, modulated through [neuroception](#) – and our evolutionary history. A great problem with this is that it can quickly lead us down a dysfunctional path of negative ruminations – a classic example of the [second arrow](#) resulting in more damage than the first arrow.

If we reflect on how the other person is feeling when they are angry with us, we can realise that she or he at this moment is not feeling comfortable or good in themselves. So, at this moment in time, they are suffering. If we respond angrily, or ignore them, this tends to increase their suffering. They are needing our understanding, not our (unconscious) automatic response of disapproval / rejection / anger.

No blame here for ourselves while we are ignorant of what is really going on within us. When the other person is angry or irritated with us (or *seems* to be), we are neurocepting this (i.e., our brains are picking up unconsciously cues that we may be facing danger / life threat). This in itself will result in our untrained mind feeling uncomfortable and / or under threat.

As a result, we ourselves may increasingly misinterpret what the other person is communicating to us. For example,

We may interpret their facial expression of 😊 as 😞.

Some of these dynamics are discussed further in B10: Snakes, Conditional Stimuli, and Equanimity  
(Approaches to treating mind-body disturbances)

With the awareness of such dynamics going on within the other and ourselves, we become mindful of the distress that they (and possibly we) are experiencing, and from this compassion in us can be born. These perspectives are examples of Right View and Right Mindfulness (see footnote 2 on previous page).

<sup>3</sup> See also: Davidson 2018 video; and B 25 on website: “Themes of Neuroscience relevant to Well-Being”

## 2. The Golden Light of Universal Compassion – initial reflections....

This is the fourth exercise described by Akong Rinpoche [Akong 1988].

With this exercise we cultivate the attitude of being open to others and learning how to serve them. Open up to all of your thoughts, feelings, sensations, with the awareness that your natural experience is the raw material for your positive development. This refers not only to good experience. Even very negative thoughts or emotions can become the basis for compassion. For example, if someone has a lot of anger, that person will go on having negative feelings to other angry people until their own anger is acknowledged. Once they do recognise their own anger and its harmful consequences within: then there arises naturally a feeling of compassion to others who suffer from anger because they realise how dreadful it is to be in this state. Even anger can be a source of compassion.

Akong Rinpoche 1994 p 117

Anger is not a pleasant state to be in. We may even feel possessed by the anger; and from this, hatred and ill-will towards others may arise. If we ourselves feel uncomfortable when we are angry, then we can realise that in these moments we are suffering. If someone else is angry, with us or someone else, we can, with mindfulness, see that they are, in this present moment, not in a good place and / or are suffering. This is a good example of [Theory of Mind](#).

In this way, we can allow our own experiences, whether wholesome, unwholesome, or neutral to become:

- “Valuable and useful to others through the process of transformation.”

Developing compassion in each of us may become easier with the realisation that we each have within us human-heartedness (Jen) and Innate Goodness – and these will arise spontaneously and naturally when we are feeling safe within. This then allows for a flowing and flowering of our innate nurturing and CARE circuits [Panksepp 1988; Panksepp & Biven 2012].

\*\*\* \*\*

In this meditation we can visualise the Golden Light of Universal Compassion moving out from us into the world – and hence into other beings. Akong Rinpoche goes on to say:

..... Try not to block anything but to have confidence that you are going to work with whatever arises. As thoughts and feelings arise let them flow out to benefit all beings. Cultivate the feeling, “from now on I am working for the good of everyone”.

Akong Rinpoche 1994 p 117

### 3A. The Exercise /

### 3. The Exercise

#### The Golden Light of Compassion Exercise

(After, and based on, Akong Rinpoche)

Duration: 20 minutes

Adopt an erect and dignified posture (as in the Autogenic “Armchair Position” or the “Three Minute Exercise” – Segal et al 2013 pp 196-197, 208, 238-240)

- 1) Take a few moments – perhaps several breaths, to settle –
  - Alternatively, we can do a very brief Autogenic Sequence
- 2) Resolve that whatever comes up, or is our experience right now in thoughts, feelings, and bodily sensation – whether neutral, negative, or positive – is an ok feeling / thought / sensation to have, and that this is going to be of great use as the seeds for generating compassion.
- 3) Visualise a wide-open space, in which there is a gate or a door.
- 4) With each outbreath, imagine the feeling, mood, whatever the sensation(s) is, to pass out through the gate...
  - ☸ “With the confidence that they are being transformed into universal compassion in the form of a golden light which passes through the gate to all who live.....
  - ☸ “Feel that this golden light of compassion is equally available to everyone everywhere...”
- 5) We can then gradually feel, imagine, that “the whole of space is filled with light” for the benefit of all beings....

Repeat this exercise daily for two weeks.

Based on Akong Rinpoche 1994 p 118  
All quotes direct from Akong

\*\*\* \*\*

See how the above goes for a few days.

Make it your own in an Autogenic sense

#### **4.. Reflections on the position of our hands in The Exercise**

Our posture may have an important influence on this – and other – meditative exercises. Barbara Fredrickson comments: “Laboratory experiments demonstrate that having your hands palm-side up can spark positivity, whereas having them palms down can spark negativity”. [Fredrickson 2009 p 207, with footnote<sup>5</sup> on page 263, referring to the work of Cacioppo et al 1993.] In the light of this, it may be beneficial in this type of exercise to adopt a palms up position<sup>4</sup>. Note that this is different from the standard AT practice of the modified Armchair position (when the chair does not have arms), and we rest our hand palms down on our thighs. It may also be that the palms down position tends to allow focus more within ourselves, whereas the palms up position facilitates a focus on external matters, such as compassion for others.

I think the best approach is for each of us to become curious and try different postures / hand positions, to clarify what is best for us and under what conditions.

#### **5. Some examples of variations our approach to Compassion Meditation**

- Some may prefer to visualise that they are in a quiet place outside – say by a river or the sea – and the golden light is then, for example, flowing out from us into the surroundings and atmosphere for the well-being of all.
- Or we may prefer to imagine that it is well after nightfall, on a warm evening with a clear sky; and the flowing golden light is perfusing the whole of space to the stars.
- I have found that imagining I am on top of a hill – or on a clear mountain top, facilitates this approach – and the golden light is flowing out to the whole country and world and to all beings.

\*\*\* \*\*

#### **6. Flexibility in approach: for example:**

##### ***From a Mountain in Tibet***

Flexibility in our approach to developing skills for Well-Being is important, so that we can honour the unique path that each of us has to travel. Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche, in his remarkable and captivating book: “From a Mountain in Tibet”, has become greatly experienced and wise in helping people. He escaped from Tibet with his brother Akong Rinpoche (and a few others) at the time of the Chinese takeover of the Tibetan region, and suffered many traumas and losses. Gradually he transformed his life – and then his work, dedicated to helping others.

---

<sup>4</sup> The palms up position can also be seen as similar in some ways to our posture when we welcome someone with open arms. Such a posture facilitates an open heart. See also: [Which is Better Hand Position for Meditation, Palms up or Down? - Fitsri](#)

I have learned not to be rigid in my thinking about what change looks like, or how and when it will pan out. It doesn't matter to me whether someone is a monk, a nun or a lay person.

☸ All that matters is that they are kind to themselves and others, and tame their own mind.

This is the teaching of the Buddha in a nutshell.

My whole approach has been built on flexibility, because reality is not as solid as it appears, so it helps to approach it with as few fixed ideas as possible. I always say that our minds should be as flexible as a Willow tree – the trunk is solid and rooted but the wind can blow the branches in different directions. When our minds are like this, we ourselves are healthy and we can help anyone we meet, because we do not insist on the correctness of any single philosophy or piece of advice.

My attempts to help people have always been grounded in trying to identify what it is they need, rather than imposing my ideas on them.

Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche 2020 p 226

From A Mountain in Tibet

Paragraphing and bullet points added

“And tame their own mind.” Lama Yeshe’s brother, Akong Rinpoche, wrote a wonderful book “Taming the Tiger – *Tibetan Teachings for Improving Daily Life*”; as will have been gathered, the first part of this article is based on Akong’s book.

A further perspective on flexibility in approach can be found in B 26: 2.III: Loving Kindness and Compassion – pp 7-10.

\*\*\* \*\*

## **7. Commitment to Compassion for Life**

Sakyamuni had the insight to see that our suffering and distress are to a large extent the result of how our minds work and interpret the world and ourselves – and these insights are elaborated in the four Ennobling Truths. Many of us grow up with a common pattern of negative ruminations, which we can see in terms of the [Second Arrow](#). This is part of our neuro-physiological make up, and in this sense not our fault. Yet with this realisation, we have the response-ability to change. Our brains are “plastic”, and so we can change and develop throughout our lives.

Such change does not grow on trees; rather, it requires within us a specific intent to practise wholesome skills – including some form of meditative practice.

Towards the end of Chapter 10: Transformation, Lama Yeshe says:

I could not commit, because my mind’s innate wisdom was obscured by negativity. Once the intention to shift from negative thoughts and emotions into positive ones had flowered in my heart, that downward spiral was reversed. It was very difficult to turn things around, but, once I had, my life began to flow in an upward spiral. We can all do this.

Lama Yeshe Lasal Rinpoche 2020 p 178

And with that upward spiral, Lama Yeshe adopted the commitment to compassion for himself – and from there to compassion for helping others.

Regular Autogenic Training practice – or some other form of meditation, can in general terms allow us to do the same<sup>5</sup>.

See also B27 on website: e.g. section: [2.III: Loving Kindness and Compassion](#)

\*\*\* \*\*

Bessel van der Kolk, discussing mindfulness in the context of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, states:

“There's a German researcher by the name of Tonia Singer, who is probably the best mindfulness researcher around who researched a whole bunch of different forms of mindfulness methods, and she finds that mindfulness is only useful if accompanied by self-compassion and self-understanding. If it doesn't go together with self understanding for which she studied IFS, internal family systems, it is not largely helpful. But *as long as you don't have a compassionate attitude towards yourself, mindfulness is not helpful either*.

Bessel van der Kolk 2019 p 89

Italics and underlining added by IR

This is of great interest and importance, as it suggests that some form of compassion training is crucial for Well-Being. The inference I draw from the above is that:

- ✿ Through engendering a *compassionate attitude towards ourselves, mindfulness becomes particularly helpful and nourishing to ourselves and those we are in contact with.*

Ian Ross  
52 Hopetoun Terrace,  
Gullane,  
East Lothian,  
EH31 2DD  
October 2022  
[ross425@btinternet.com](mailto:ross425@btinternet.com)

<sup>5</sup> This mainly depends on meditation allowing us to be in the “Safe Space” of the Ventral Vagal state much of the time – which is the case for most of us. The caveat here is that if we are suffering from recurrent hypervigilant states (SNS mobilisation in the context of Fear / danger), or the Life Threat (of the Dorsal Vagal Para-Sympathetic Nervous System), then meditative approaches may be compromised. Following severe trauma and / or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, we may need to seek help from those specifically trained in trauma therapy [van de Kolk 2014; 2019].



**8. Thematically related articles on website**

B10	Snakes, Conditional Stimuli, and Equanimity (Approaches to treating mind-body disturbances)	
B 25	Themes of Neuroscience relevant to Well-Being	2022
B 26	Well-Being and Flourishing as a Skill we can Develop	2022
B 27	Three Key Types of Meditation and their varying and specific effects on Well-Being	2022
D2	Dana Paramita	2011
D11	Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: from Duhkha to Sukha	2017
F1	An introduction to Autogenics 3.0 – based on the work of Luis de Rivera	2018
F5A	Feeling the Feeling Meditation Part I	2019
F6.1	Constructive Feeling Meditation 1: Calm (After de Rivera)	2019
F6.2	Constructive Feeling Meditation 2: Existence	2019
F6.3	Constructive Feeling Meditation 3: Zest (After de Rivera)	2019
F7	Meditation on Five Sounds that can Heal the World (after Hanh)	2019
F 9	Inter-Being Part I: Reflections and Meditation <small>(Meditation on Constructive Feelings Series)</small>	2022
F 10	Constructive Feeling Meditation: Compassion Part I: Meditation on Compassion I (after Akong Rinpoche)	THIS ARTICLE

Two further articles on the themes of Inter-Being (Part II) and Compassion (Part II) are planned for 2023, designated as F 11 and F 13 respectfully – both from a Constructive Feeling Meditation perspective.

**9. Some Background Reflections and Concepts in the form of a Brief Glossary /**

### 10. Some Background Reflections and Concepts in the form of a Brief Glossary

<p><u><a href="#">Akong Rinpoche</a></u> 1940 – 2013 (8th October 2013)</p> <p>See also: <u><a href="#">Lama Yeshe Rinpoche</a></u></p>	<p>Akong Rinpoche, his brother, and a small group escaped from Tibet during the Chinese military operations during the 1950s*. He subsequently set up Samye Ling in Scotland, a Buddhist centre – that runs retreats for lay people of any or no spiritual path.</p> <p>His brother who escaped with had a difficult time in the transition from his original family and safe-haven home in Tibet; yet eventually became a great spiritual teacher with the name of Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche.</p> <p>*Note that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The UN General Assembly condemned the Chinese invasion of the Tibetan region on November 18, 1950. See also <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-49921173">https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-49921173</a></li> </ul>
<p><u><a href="#">Avalokiteśvara</a></u></p>	<p>The name of the Buddha of Great Compassion.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>☸ Avalokita means “looking deeply”.</li> <li>☸ Ísvara means “master”.</li> </ul> <p>From this emerges the concept:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “The one who has mastered him or herself through the practice of looking deeply into the heart of reality, attaining the greatest possible freedom.”</li> <li>○ “Thanks to Avalokiteśvara’s capacity to look and listen deeply, he / she can understand his / her own suffering, and from this deep understanding arises a great compassion.”</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">Hanh 2017 p 30</p>
<p>Constructive Feeling Meditation /</p>	

Constructive  
 Feeling  
 Meditation

Luis de Rivera includes two types of meditation in his Autogenics 3.0 [de Rivera 2018]. For the avoidance of confusion in the English language, I use a different notation for these two forms, as indicated below.

De Rivera’s Notation [de Rivera 2018]	IR Notation
Feeling Meditation	Feeling the Feeling Meditation ○ e.g., F5A
Meditation on Feelings	Constructive Feeling Meditation ○ e.g., F6.1, F6.2, F6.3; F7, F9 & F10.

The website Constructive Feeling Meditations of F6.1, F6.2 & 6.3 each follow fairly closely Luis de Rivera’s 2018 approach. However, in the web series F7 onwards, the meaning of Constructive Feeling Meditation somewhat changes, as outlined below – which is an adaptation of the Preamble to F9 on Inter-Being Part I.

Preamble

Constructive Feeling Meditations complement Autogenic Practice, and are an integral part of Luis de Rivera’s Autogenics 3.0. [de Rivera 2018 pp 129-145<sup>6</sup>].

In these meditations on Constructive Feelings, de Rivera states that they are:

❖ “a static meditation because the focus is on the unchanging selected feeling”  
 de Rivera 2018 p 130

This does not exactly work for the feeling / realisation of, for example, Inter-Being or Compassion<sup>7</sup>, which by their very nature are dynamic and evolving phenomena. However, I am including these within the Constructive Feeling Meditation group as I feel this is where it rightly belongs, and I sense that this is in the spirit of de Rivera’s perspective. In this meditation we allow our feelings and reflections to evolve in time, that is, during the meditation itself. Inter-Being is essentially about the flowing nature of life; while Compassion can be seen to arise from our “Innate Goodness” [Davidson 2018] and our CARE and nurturing circuits [Panksepp 1998] which operate optimally when we are in the Ventral Vagal dynamic of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System, and thus feeling safe – and at the same time feeling tuned in to others through our wholesome Social Engagement circuits [Porges 2011].

The /

<sup>6</sup> De Rivera calls this series of Meditations: “Meditation on Feelings” – and these meditations are based on Constructive Feelings that are “deemed beneficial for your personal development” [de Rivera 2018 pp129-130]. I have opted to call these Constructive Feeling Meditations, to distinguish them from Feeling the Feeling Meditation (generally a meditation on a distressing feeling) – which de Rivera notates in English as “Feeling Meditation”. See also F5A: “Feeling the Feeling Meditation” on this website.

<sup>7</sup> Or others in this series such as F7: Five Sounds that can Heal the World.

<p><a href="#">Constructive Feeling Meditation</a> <i>continued</i></p>	<p>The initial part of F9 (Inter-Being) and F10 (this paper) give a general overview of these respective matters. Then, with some of these ideas resonating within our being, we can go on to the actual constructive feeling meditation on these respective matters.</p>
<p><a href="#">Danger</a></p>	<p>The basic flight / fight response – activated by the Sympathetic Nervous System. Results in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ “Mobilisation (of body) in context of fear / anger [Porges 2011].</li> </ul> <p>This response is activated through unconscious processes – <a href="#">neuroception</a> – that alert us to external (or internal) danger. Neuroception can at times be wrong. For example, childhood traumas may have resulted in the development of appropriate neuroception of danger then (i.e., in childhood). These patterns may repeat in our adult lives when they are no longer appropriate.</p>
<p><a href="#">Four Noble Truths</a></p> <p><u>Or better:</u> <a href="#">The Four Ennobling Truths</a></p>	<p>In brief:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. There is suffering. For example: loss of any form; death; betrayal; war; family feuds and upsets.</li> <li>II. There are causes of suffering – and these are mainly due to the way our minds respond to that initial suffering. This suffering is catalysed by the <a href="#">Second Arrow</a>.</li> <li>III. There is a way out of suffering – by recognising that the mind is the cause of suffering – including the deep wounds inflicted by the Second Arrow..... The way out of suffering manifests in the Fourth noble truth.....with .....</li> <li>IV. .... The teachings of the Eightfold Path, which embraces “ethical conduct, meditation practice and wisdom.....” [Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche 2020 p 172] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✿ Meditation practice facilitates the development of CARE circuits [Panksepp 1998], nurturing and Compassion for all beings, partly through</li> <li>✿ The activation of our Ventral Vagal Para-Sympathetic Nervous System – which is associated with wholesome social engagement with ourselves and others. [Porges 2011; see also Singer and Klimecki 2014; van der Kolk 2019].</li> </ul> </li> </ol> <p>Hanh gives /</p>

Four Noble Truths  
*continued*

Hanh gives an interesting perspective that may resonate more with many in the west. He re-orders and reframes the Four Truths as follows:

	Notation Number in original
1) Well-Being: there are skilful paths that lead to flourishing, compassion, and Well-Being. We ourselves have to practise these; no one else can do this for us. These skilful practices will result in our Bodies and Being – being in the Safe Space of the Ventral Vagal Para-Sympathetic Nervous System (PSNS) [Porges 2011]	III. The cessation of suffering
2) The Skilful Paths that lead to Well-Being. These are encapsulated in the Eightfold Ennobling Path – which is central to Buddhist teaching – yet is only a part of that wisdom and psychological approach towards flourishing for ourselves and the community.	IV. The Eightfold Path
3) The fact that there is suffering in the world is an inescapable fact. There is birth, life and death. Impermanence is an integral part of the cosmos and so of life.	I. Suffering: and the recognition that there is suffering.
4) The recognition that there is an ignoble path that leads to suffering. This is generally not recognised while we are in this state – and will include negative <a href="#">Habit Energies</a> – and being unaware that our responses are often triggered by our bodies neurocepting Danger (mobilisation for flight or fight connected with FEAR or RAGE – Panksepp 1998); or Life Threat – and the Dorsal Vagal PSNS [Porges 2011].	II. the “Arising of Suffering” as a result of unskilful approaches to life.

Based on Hanh 1998 pp 9-46

From this perspective we can start by developing and practising skilful means that facilitate harmony and Well-Being within, thus in time reducing our distress and increasing our wholesome social engagement – *with ourselves and others*. These dynamics are modulated through the Ventral Vagal division of the Para-Sympathetic Nervous System [Porges 2011].

Habit Energy /

<p><u>Habit Energy</u></p> <p>Habit Energies can be neutral, negative, or positive.</p>	<p>As we grow up, we take on certain patterns of behaviour and attitudes from our parents, teachers, and ancestors. Some of these may be helpful, some may be neutral, and others may be dysfunctional. In Buddhist psychology, these are termed Habit Energies, and overlap with Procedural Learned Tendencies and Complexes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In the context of habit energies, the image is sometimes given of a man on a horse; the man does not know where he is going because the horse has a will of her / his own.</li> <li>➤ The horse in this context is our habit energy [Hanh 1998 pp 24-25].</li> <li>➤ Habit energies can influence us at an unconscious level and so lead to volitional actions that may later perplex us – that is, we can be driven by these unconscious forces.</li> </ul> <p><u>Complexes</u>, in the Jungian sense, are forms of habit energies. These can be passed down to us by our ancestors, and in turn we can pass down these complexes (energies) to our offspring. These may manifest in terms of <u>Procedural Learned Tendencies</u> [Ogden 2009].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Negative habit energies can very easily be transmitted to our children, starting when the baby is in the womb. Hanh suggests pre-marriage classes to reduce such negative transmission.</li> </ul> <p>For a fuller exposition of Habit Energies, please see the glossary of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ D 11: Sukha: Paths of Well-Being, PSNS Afferents, and Inner Warmth: <i>from Duhkha to Sukha</i> p 36</li> </ul>
<p><u>Innate Goodness</u></p>	<p>Research indicates that young infants tend to prefer positive / helpful type behaviours, rather than behaviours that frustrate / intimidate [Hamlin et al 2007; see references; paper available on-line].</p> <p>This overlaps with what is sometimes called our Original Nature, and the (ancient) Chinese concept of <u>Jen</u>, Human-Heartedness.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ If we experience a lot of fear and disharmony in our early years, this inner goodness can 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 mental training.</li> </ul> <p>Compassion can be seen to reflect this general desire of humans to help others – rather than to harm them. Davidson’s research suggests that underlying this is an innate goodness, which can flourish in all of us [Davidson 2018]; this flourishing can be greatly facilitated if children grow up in a nurturing and caring milieu.</p>
<p><u>Inter-Being</u></p> <p>The /</p>	<p>A term coined by Thich Nhat Hanh [Hanh 1998 e.g., pp 24-27; 2012 pp 55-61]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⊗ ‘ “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.’</li> </ul> <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.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The concept of inter-being is fundamental to a wholesome psychology, society, and world.</li> </ul>

<p><a href="#">Inter-Being</a> <i>continued</i></p>	<p>The realisation of the inter-relatedness of all things acts as an anti-dote to negative / toxic mind states. A modern realisation of inter-being can be found in the Systems view of life [Capra &amp; Luisi 2016].</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Inter-Being is closely related to the concept of emptiness. Hanh, in this context, asks “Empty of what?”; and he replies: “Empty of a separate self”. Empty of a separate self implies that we are full of non-self elements – just like the sheet of paper. We are full of the sun, clouds, the earth, our ancestors, and elements from long extinct stars. An inference that can be drawn from this is that it is a mistake to see ourselves as “separate observers” of what is going on and what is around us, in us, and in the cosmos. Rather, we are participant observers, or perhaps more accurately, participants of life [Hanh 2017 p 35; and the whole book].</p> </div>
<p><a href="#">Jen</a></p>	<p>In ancient China, there was a quality that was considered higher than any other; it was not, for example, courage, or beauty, or perseverance. It was Jen.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> <p>This quality was known as Jen, which can perhaps best be translated as human-heartedness (Watts 1995; page 25).</p> </div> <p>We can get more in touch with the sacred and human-heartedness within each of us by mental training which facilitates our CARE / nurturing circuits [Panksepp 1998], and activates our positive emotions through the increased activity of our Ventral Vagal para-sympathetic nervous system afferents [Porges 2011].</p>
<p><a href="#">Neuroception</a></p>	<p>The unconscious process which alerts us (body-brain-mind continuum) to Life Threat, Danger, or Safety [Porges 2011].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In evolutionary terms, this has been vital for our survival.</li> <li>○ However, neuroception can at times be wrong: for example, detecting danger when there is no actual danger. (e.g., Such as a car back-firing and heard by someone who has lived in a war zone).</li> </ul> <p>In addition, negative rumination can develop as a result of inappropriate neuroception that detects danger or life threat when there is none in this present moment.</p>
<p><a href="#">Life Threat</a></p>	<p>Life Threat in this context is the mammalian response to a danger that is so severe that we cannot flee or fight: as a result of which we may collapse – such as a gazelle that has been chased by a lioness and cannot get away. In this situation this can be a very adaptive response; the collapse is processed through neuroception – and can result in the gazelle poing – again unconsciously. This may have the effect on the lioness that the “dead gazelle” is unwholesome to eat. These same circuits may be activated in humans when things are not going well for us and we may feel like hiding (e.g., going into a cave), generally withdrawing from social contact, and feeling not good enough. These can be seen as features of the second arrow.</p>
<p><a href="#">Second Arrow</a></p>	<p>An event or thought or emotion can upset us, and in Buddhist Psychology this is called the First Arrow. However, this is generally not what causes us on-going suffering, which is caused by mental processes that take over our mind such as negative and downwardly spiralling ruminations – which can include catastrophising. These ruminations are the essence of the Second Arrow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ See also Second Noble Truth in the <a href="#">Four Noble Truths</a></li> </ul>



Theory of MindAdapted from  
D11 on website

Theory of the Mind embraces our ability to realise that other people have different perceptions and beliefs from ourselves. In children up to the age of three this is not neuro-physiologically possible. By the age of four this ability develops in most of us.

The following two extracts from Wikipedia are informative:

Theory of mind is the ability to attribute mental states—beliefs, intents, desires, pretending, knowledge, etc.—to oneself and others and to understand that others have beliefs, desires, intentions, and perspectives that are different from one's own. Deficits can occur in people with autism spectrum disorders, schizophrenia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, as well as alcoholics who have suffered brain damage due to alcohol's neurotoxicity.

Theory of mind appears to be an innate potential ability in primates, including humans, that requires social and other experience over many years for its full development. Different people may develop more, or less, effective theories of mind. Empathy is a related concept, meaning the recognition and understanding of the states of mind of others, including their beliefs, desires and particularly emotions. This is often characterized as the ability to "put oneself into another's shoes". Recent neuro ethological studies of animal behaviour suggest that even rodents may exhibit ethical or empathetic abilities.

Extract from Wikipedia on 18.X.2016: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory\\_of\\_mind](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Theory_of_mind)

♻️ We can see compassion as an emerging attribute of Theory of Mind.



A Spider's Home  
East Lothian 2022

References /



**10. References and Sources include**

Akong Tulku Rinpoche: 1994 Taming the Tiger – <i>Tibetan Teachings for Improving Daily Life</i>	ISBN 0-7126-6220-0
Capra, Fritjof; & Luisi, Pier Luigi, 2014. The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision	ISBN 978-1-107-01136-6
Cacioppo, J. T., Priester, J. R., & Berntson, G. G. (1993). Rudimentary determinants of attitudes: II. Arm flexion and extension have differential effects on attitudes. <i>Journal of Personality and Social Psychology</i> , 65(1), 5–17. <a href="https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.1.5">https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.65.1.5</a>	
Davidson, Richard: 2018 (26 <sup>th</sup> December 2018) Video of UNESCO MGIEP’s Eighth Distinguished Lecture – discussing well-being as a skill, the importance of the brain in achieving well-being and how well-being can contribute to larger common good of human flourishing. See: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lggEMJdk07U">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lggEMJdk07U</a> <a href="#">Eighth Distinguished Lecture by Prof. Richard Davidson (Complete Video) - YouTube</a>	
Fredrickson, Barbara L. 2009 <i>Positivity – Groundbreaking Research Reveal How to Embrace the Hidden Strength of Positive Emotions, Overcome Negativity, and Thrive</i> ISBN 978-0-307-39373-9	
Hamlin, J. Kiley; Wynn, Karen; Bloom, Paul 2007: Social Evaluation by Preverbal Infants Vol 450   22 November 2007   pp 557-560   doi:10.1038/nature06288 © 2007 Nature Publishing Group See also YouTube clip: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anCaGBsBOxM">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=anCaGBsBOxM</a>	
Hanh; Thich Nhat: 1998. The Heart of the Buddha’s teaching – <i>Transforming suffering into peace, joy and liberation</i> (and includes core chapters on the Eight-Fold Path)	ISBN 0-7126-7003-3
Hanh, Thich Nhat: 2012. The Pocket Thich Nhat Hanh	ISBN 978-1-59030-936-0
Hanh; Thich Nhat: 2017 The Other Shore – <i>A new translation of the Heart Sutra with Commentaries</i>	ISBN 978-1-941529-14-0
Lama Yeshe Losal Rinpoche 2020 From a Mountain in Tibet – <i>A Monk’s Journey</i>	ISBN 978-0-241-432927-2
Ogden, Pat. 2009. Emotion, Mindfulness, and Movement: Expanding the Regulatory Boundaries of the Window of Affect tolerance. IN: <i>The Healing Power of Emotion – Eds: Diana Fosha, Daniel J. Siegel, &amp; Marion Solomon</i> pp 204-231	ISBN 978-0-393-70548-5
Panksepp, Jaak: 1998. <i>Affective Neuroscience: The Foundation of Human and Animal Emotions</i>	ISBN 0-19-509673-8
Panksepp, Jaak; & Biven, Lucy. 2012. <i>The Archaeology of Mind: Neuroevolutionary Origins of Human Emotions.</i>	ISBN 13-978-0-393-70531-7
Porges, Stephen W. 2011. <i>The Polyvagal Theory – Neuro-physiological foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, Self-Regulation</i> ISBN 978-0-393-70700-7	
Singer, Tania; and Klimecki, Olga M. 2014 Empathy and Compassion. <i>Current Biology</i> 2014 Sep 22;24(18): R875-R878. doi: 10.1016/j.cub.2014.06.054	
Van der Kolk, Bessel 2019: CE21 – TRAUMA CONFERENCE: THE BODY KEEPS SCORE – TRAUMA HEALING WITH Bessel 31st January 2019. Transcript of live CPD conference available from Pesi UK	
Watts; Alan: 1995. <i>The Tao of Philosophy – edited transcripts</i>	ISBN 1-870845-16-1
Segal, Zindel V.; Williams, J. Mark G.; & Teasdale, John D.: 2013; Second Edition. <i>Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression</i>	ISBN 978-1-4625-0750-4

\*\*\* \*\*