

Exercises in Mental Discipline of the Emotions

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Recent discussion has brought to the foreground an important issue which Bardson didn't speak about directly in IIIH -- the necessity for control and discipline of the emotions. Although such emotional discipline is a direct result of both the mental discipline and the soul mirror work, it is still worthy of specific attention since so many budding magicians fall prey to their own habitual emotional reactions. Emotional discipline is also an important part of attaining the astral Equilibrium of the Elements that, if ignored, can lead to years of frustration.

While the **experiencing** of our emotions must not be repressed, they must still be examined and understood, and their **expression** must be within our conscious control. Just as the initiate's thinking must be reshaped into a useful tool, so too must their emotions be transformed from knee-jerk reactions, into conscious choices of expression.

As with the transformation of the thinking processes, this transformation of the emotional processes begins with detachment and observation. Here then are series of exercises which will lead from observation, through to discipline and ultimately, to the conscious use of emotion as a means of clear Self-expression.

Exercise #1:

Choose a piece of music that is very sentimental and which you know can stir up a strong emotional response within you. Play it through once and let its sentiment play with your emotions. Just go with its emotional flow. Abandon yourself to it and really get into the emotions it makes you feel.

Now play it a second time and, as before, go with its flow. After a few moments, step back from that flow of emotions and separate yourself from them. Observe them exactly as you observed the mind's chatter in the first mental exercise of Step One. Listen to the remainder of the piece of music from this detached perspective and observe how your emotional body is being manipulated by the music.

Now play it a third time and resist involvement with the sentiment of the music. Refuse to involve yourself in the emotions that result from the music's manipulation of your emotional body.

With a fourth playing of the musical piece, alternate between giving in to the experience of the piece's sentiment and stepping back from involvement. Work at gaining that power of choice to participate or not, as **you** wish.

Now choose other, equally sentimental pieces of music and practice your ability to engage and disengage at will. As you're practicing that ability, take careful note of the ways in which this mechanism works. What sort of input results in what sort of emotional result? Why? What parts of **you** are involved in that process? Etc.

Exercise #2:

Repeat exercise #1 but this time, with a piece of music that gets your foot tapping and your body dancing, something that stimulates and cheers you. As before, work to gain that power of choice to participate or not, and examine the workings of this mechanism as well.

Exercise #3:

Now repeat the same exercise, with the same aims, but this time, view a beautiful painting or picture that moves you deeply. Also view images that disturb you. As always, work to gain the power of choice to participate or not in the emotions which images elicit and examine the mechanism.

Exercise #4:

Now apply the same exercise to poetry and to stories that move you, both favorably and unfavorably. Gain that power of choice and examine the mechanism by which ideas affect your emotional body.

Exercise #5:

Now watch a movie or television program that you know will stir deep emotions with its strong sentiment. Exercise your power of choice and examine the mechanism by which images *and* sound *and* ideas affect you when they are combined.

Exercise #6:

Now extend this exercise to your everyday encounters and the emotions that they generate. Gain that precious power of choice and examine very closely the mechanism by which live interaction affects your emotional body.

Exercise #7:

This exercise is a departure from the first six. Here you must *create* an emotion within yourself. This is really an extension of the Step Two sensory concentration exercise, except here, the feeling one creates is emotional instead of tactile. Practice this in private meditation until you can invoke any emotion you wish, at will.

Exercise #8:

Now put these abilities into action and make your emotional expressions conscious acts of will. During your everyday encounters, first note the emotion as it naturally arises. Before you express it, examine it and see if it exists as you would choose to express yourself. If it does match your true will, then consciously and willfully express it as it is. If, on the other hand, it does not match your true will, then modify it and express an

emotion that does.

My best to you,
:) Rawn Clark
17 Dec 2003

>> *There is one thing concerning emotions that confuses me. During really *successful* meditations, I find myself overwhelmed with the emotion of (lack of a better word) Divine Love. Everything seems so perfect, I cannot help but cry. I am in the NOW so to speak when this happens. I am then exactly where I should be. This emotion feels like something I should be striving for and not something I can observe. Sometimes it comes like a flood and too beautiful to detach from. What then? Is this only a trick of the mind? Because if I feel this, achieving a perfect EOM for example becomes trivial. Such peace in this emotion... <<*

Emotional discipline must encompass *all* of the emotional responses, including those that are "too beautiful to detach from". This doesn't mean that your experience is in any way negative or must be suppressed. Instead, it must be penetrated more deeply.

Its pursuit however, should occur in its own context, as a specific exercise and not during an EOM session. Indeed, the emotional experience that you're describing would constitute an interruption of the EOM state. If this has arisen during EOM practice then, like all distractions, it must either be let go of so that you can continue EOM, or you must intentionally exit the EOM in order to explore it properly. Otherwise, you will not be able to progress any further in the deepening of your EOM state.

This emotion is an effect, not a cause. I suggest that you look beneath the emotion for its cause. Beneath that *feeling* of immense joy is a very important realization about the nature of existence. It is the perception of that realization which causes the feeling but your absorption in the feeling itself masks the *direct* perception and prevents your *direct* experience of that profound realization.

My best to you,
:) Rawn Clark
18 Dec 2003

>> *I have trouble distinguishing between detachment and repression. Especially when it comes to emotional tones. What is the difference between resist involvement, refuse to participate and repression? <<*

Repression is when you deny the *existence* of an emotion that you are nonetheless experiencing. Repression is done out of fear and denial. What I suggest here however,

does not *deny* the emotion that is experienced. Instead, it honors the emotion and then shifts the awareness to a position of detachment for the purpose of truly coming to know the essence of the emotion. Please note that in my previous post, I carefully distinguished between the *experience* of an emotion and the *expression* of emotion. It's the immediate participation in the experience of the emotion that one detaches from and examines the mechanism of.

With repression, you deny the emotion itself and separate yourself from it without ever coming to understand it. In this sense it still controls you just as much as if you had let it sweep you away. But if you do as I've suggested then you come to understand the emotions that arise within you. This enables you to *express* them *consciously and intentionally*, with the full awareness of what caused them to arise and what aspects of yourself are manifest through them.

>> *On this line of work, what is one supposed to do with emotional difficulties rising through self-crafting work? (seems to be reactions, a sense of "I"ness an old-self who resist change) <<*

Well, examine them, learn from them and transform them. Here is an example where emotional discipline is essential -- without it, these emotional reactions will delay your progress, but with it, these emotional reactions can move you forward even more rapidly because they hold within themselves the key to your advancement. Internal resistance actually points the way to where we *must* tread.

My best to you,
:) Rawn Clark
18 Dec 2003