

Dancing Between the Raindrops



By
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Polystasis, Character, and
The Psychodynamics of Anticipation
In a VUCA-Plus World

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**Coaching, Polystasis, Character,
and the Psychosocial Dynamics of
Anticipation in a VUCA-Plus
World**

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Atlantic Soundings Press

Dancing Between the Raindrops: Polystasis, Character, and the Psychosocial Dynamics of Anticipation in a VUCA-Plus World

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Preface

It's raining outside. We need to go out in the rain. We would love to be "singing in the rain" alongside Gene Kelly. Where is the lamppost from which we can swing? And where are the waterproof shoes that we can deploy for dancing in rain puddles?

For most of us, it is a matter of simply walking or running through the rain, perhaps with an umbrella in hand or at least wearing a raincoat and perhaps some rubberized boots. At times, we must simply "grin and bear it." We are trudging through the rain, getting soaked to the bone, and grumbling under our breath about the perfidy of the current weather. Perhaps we are uttering some half-believed observations about our need for this rain.

Between the Rain Drops

Then there is the matter of "Dancing Between the Raindrops." What a silly, saccharine ditty. We obviously can't dance between the raindrops. Better to go out in the rain and dance like Gene Kelly in weather-treated shoes. Poetically, this phrase suggests that we should somehow keep up our spirits and keep moving forward despite facing diversity. "Buck up and give it the old college try!" While this positive perspective might be of value at times, I think there is another deeper and perhaps more valuable meaning that we can assign to this phrase.

If we take a step back and examine the phrase in greater depth and think of its metaphoric relevance, then there is something about the directive inherent in this phrase that makes particularly good sense in our mid-21st-century world. We are living in a society that confronts us every moment with raindrop challenges—be they environmental, economic, or political. Somehow, we have to live and work around these challenges, rather than being trapped or frozen in anxiety and despair regarding the conditions in which each of these challenges now operates. Conditions such as volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction.

VUCA-Plus

In essence, complexity (C) concerns the many elements and dynamic interaction among elements that have to be considered, while Volatility (V) refers to the rate and shifting rate of change among the elements. The other two terms have to do with epistemology (acquisition of knowledge and definition of reality). Ambiguity (A) concerns the assessment of both the evidence available regarding reality and the meaning assigned to this reality. The fourth term, Uncertainty (U) concerns the stability of any assessment made about reality. Does reality change over a short period of time? Why do an extensive assessment if our world is constantly shifting? VUCA is deservedly becoming the coin of the realm among contemporary organizational and societal analysts.

I add two other conditions that are prevalent in mid-21st-century life. They are turbulence and contradiction (the “plus” in VUCA-Plus). Some things are rapidly moving, while others are engaged in cyclical movement under turbulent conditions. Other things are not moving at all or moving chaotically. The systemic Impact concerns the operations of a world in which four systems operate simultaneously. These four systems create the “white water” world prevalent in mid-21st-century societies (Vaill, 1989/2008). Navigation of a white-water environment requires an ongoing search for balance and direction, which in turn requires ongoing attention to the shifting conditions of this environment.

Contradiction is to be found at every corner of our mid-21st-century societies. We find this condition existing in contradictory advertisements for health-style remedies, romantic getaways, and many pathways to happiness. Even more profound sources of contradiction are found in politics and social policy. We often face a choice between two options, each with both an upside and a downside. Furthermore, the achievement of one is likely to reduce the achievement of the other. Our governmental leaders solve a major social problem. In doing so, they increase the national debt.

The need for control of pornography on the Internet is great, but so is the need for an Internet that is free of constraints and values imposed by one group of “believers.”

In the rainy weather of mid-21st-century life, we face many difficult choices that often lead to negative outcomes in our personal lives and our collective lives.

Polystasis

I propose in this book that we can “dance” around these big raindrops by embracing a dynamic, feedback process that I have identified as Polystasis. Unlike the usual pull toward return to a state of homeostasis, I am proposing that we have the opportunity to live with and even survive in a state where the baseline is always changing (Poly-stasis), and where we are guided by a psychosocial template that provides us with guidance as we receive and respond to feedback from the VUCA-Plus world in which we are operating.

Polystasis blends the concept of Statics (stabilizing structures) with that of Dynamics (adaptive processes). Operating in human systems, we are guided by certain core outcomes that do not readily change (statics); however, we must also be open to modifying these guiding outcomes as our environment changes. The static notion of homeostasis is inaccurate—especially when applied in our VUCA-Plus environment. It is in our attunement to feedback arriving on an ongoing basis from the world in which we live that we can be adaptive and can “learn into the future” (Scharmer, 2009). We can anticipate the rain and prepare to dance around the raindrops . . .

Thinking and Feeling

As a psychologist who has been influenced by the Neo-Freudian theories of those aligned with ego psychology and those operating from an object relations perspective, I believe that Polystasis involves both the brain and heart. Both cognition and emotions.

The interweaving of thinking and feeling. I am particularly intrigued with the recent “discovery” that regret might be a more motivating emotion than either gain or loss. We try to avoid making any decision that we will later regret. We hate to miss an “opportunity” or to shrink from taking bold actions. For example, a sports fan would rather watch a game that their team loses than fail to watch the game. While witnessing a win is most gratifying, witnessing a loss is preferred to not witnessing the game at all.

From a polystatic perspective, the avoidance of regret would be motivated by painful anticipation of some beneficial event or experience of which we have failed to avail ourselves. We can imagine hearing about a game after it is over and wishing that we were there. Second-hand accounts are rarely satisfying. We might even be annoyed that someone other than us was at the game and doing the recounting.

We can apply the polystatic perspective to matters of potentially greater import. Do we accept the invitation to participate in a meaningful discussion at our company’s or community’s decision-making table? We can anticipate our feelings of being left out if we don’t attend. What if the decision was to do something of which we don’t approve? Regret-filled emotions would course through our mind, body (and soul) alongside feelings of guilt and/or annoyance regarding the decision that was made. We must attend the meeting, even if we anticipate that it could be boring or that our input will be ignored. Other priorities are set aside just so we have no regrets regarding the meeting. We don’t want the rain to fall as we sit outside the meeting room. . . .

Acknowledgements

When I was mulling, percolating, and finally writing this book, I was beholden to Kevin Weitz, Jeremy Fish, Gay Teurman, and Suzi Pomerantz, who are four of my teachers-colleagues-mentors. I also wish to acknowledge the important source of insights I have received from colleagues participating in our monthly digitally

mediated Salus Forums. Peter Sterling was one of our guest presenters at this forum. I am fully indebted to him for the concept of Allostasis, on which I have built my concept of Polystasis.

In the midst of this substantial gratitude, I must also point to sustaining support I have received from my wife, Kathleen O'Donnell, and other members of my family. They have allowed me to remain a hermit for at least four hours each day. While I am no longer teaching or serving as president of my graduate school, I am a student/learner when reading the articles and books I consume each year. I am also something of a teacher to those who read the books I write. Hopefully, the ratio of input (books read and ideas received from colleagues) to output (my writing) is appropriate.

Section One

Dancers in the Rain [Introducing the Raindrops and the Dancer]

Chapter One

The Rain: VUCA-Plus [It is Pouring!]

In Seinfeld, a richly insightful T.V. series, one of the main characters (George Costanza) has a major decision to make about a job for which he has applied. George shows up for the job interview. He completes the interview but is not certain if he has been offered a job.

During the last part of the interview, the man doing the interview indicated that "George was perfect for the job." George has also indicated that he and the interviewer were on the same "wavelength" with regard to how they think the other person is thinking and feeling. The interviewer is suddenly called away from his desk and does not return. George leaves the office without knowing for sure if he got the job. George finds out that the man is now on a week-long holiday. What should George do?

The Anticipations of George Costanza

Option One is to assume that he doesn't have the job and therefore doesn't show up for work on Monday. However, if he does have the job, then he will be in trouble for not showing up. There is a second option. George assumes that he does have the job and will show up for work on Monday. If he doesn't have the job, then his statement that he is on the same wavelength as the man doing the interview is challenged. It will be embarrassing to show up for a job that he doesn't have.

In making the decision, George weighs the two options and decides the best option is to show up for work and pretend that he got the job. Then, when the person doing the interview shows up after the weeklong vacation, George will be fully "ensconced" in his job.

While this episode of Seinfeld is intended to generate a series of laughs, it also illustrates the power of anticipation. George must

anticipate what will happen when the interviewer returns to work and discovers that George has been showing up for work. This form of anticipation requires somewhat long-term envisioning. It involves considering what will happen in several weeks and how George might think and feel after confronting the interviewer's possible reactions to the decision George made to show up for the job.

There are even more immediate anticipations on George's part. He has to envision how he will feel and what he will think when showing up for work on Monday. What does he do during the coming weekend to prepare for Monday morning? And there is an even more immediate matter of what George imagines his thoughts and feelings to be during the first hour (or even half hour) after he chooses between the two options. Will he be racing back and forth in his mind and body between the two options? Will he instead defer thinking about the job? Instead, he can go over to Jerry Seinfeld's home and chat about other matters (or even ask Jerry for his advice).

George might even be strongly influenced by what he imagines to be his immediate reactions to the difficult situation in which he finds himself. How is he likely to find "temporary relief" (borrowing from the pain-killer ads) from the difficult choice he must make? He might immediately decide to "forget the whole thing" and look at the want-ads for another job opening. This fits with George's often tentative nature. Instead, he might "stand tall" (as a short man who usually doesn't feel very brave or competent). "I will show up for work and let someone dare tell me to go home! If they don't send me home, then I will come to the office every day and just sit there until someone gives me something to do!!!"

The Anticipations of Mid-21st-Century Citizens

Obviously, there are many specific challenges that mid-21st-century citizens face as they live and work in their own communities and nations. These challenges might, as in the case

of George Costanza, relate to finding a job. It might relate to a decision about commuting by car or train into a major city or simply finding fresh and uncontaminated water when living in a small rural community. There might be domestic challenges concerning a child going off to college or a grandparent who is struggling with dementia. Unanticipated challenges might also emerge. As noted by the Medieval cartographers, “there may be dragons” that have never been seen before. George Costanza had to imagine the unimaginable: showing up for a job that he might not actually have. That’s a big dragon!

As noted in my reflections on the reactions of George to the two options, much of the thinking and feeling that takes place requires some *thinking and feeling forward*. If we are to be successful in making choices in a challenging world, then we must be able to effectively anticipate not only the outcomes of decisions we make, but also the thoughts (cognition) and feelings (affect) we are likely to encounter on the journey to this decision and to the implementation of actions that result from the decision that is made.

These challenges are unique to each person and to each society in our world. However, as I have already mentioned in the preface, there are the almost-universal challenges associated with the volatility (U), uncertainty (U), complexity (C), and ambiguity (A) in our collective lives, as well as the equally as challenging turbulence and contradiction that we all encounter every day. This is the VUCA-Plus of mid-21st Century life. It generates multiple challenges, each of which requires a distinctive form of anticipation.

I will dwell briefly on the meaning to be assigned to each of the VUCA-Plus terms. In essence, complexity concerns the many elements and the dynamic interaction among elements that have to be considered. We must anticipate the impact of each element. By contrast, Volatility refers to the rate and shifting rate of change among the elements. Our anticipations will have to be frequently

modified. The other two terms have to do with epistemology (the way in which knowledge is acquired and reality is defined).

Ambiguity concerns the assessment of both the evidence available regarding reality and the meaning assigned to this reality. Under conditions of ambiguity, we must frequently reexamine our anticipations and reflect on biases that might distort what we anticipate. The fourth term, Uncertainty, is about the stability of any assessment being made regarding reality. Does reality change over a short period of time? Why do an extensive assessment if our world is constantly shifting? Why even anticipate what could happen if we don't have a fundamental hold on reality?

Turbulence is the fifth condition that I append to the four fundamental VUCA conditions. Under conditions of turbulence, there is an ongoing intermixing of four different dynamic states that lead to the need for frequent adjustment in the anticipation of broad-based movements in our environment.

The sixth condition I have added concerns the contradictions we find in our mid-21st-century environment. We not only find environmental conditions that differ dramatically from one another, but also competing values and desired outcomes, each of which can make a legitimate claim to be of high priority. Under these contradictory conditions, we are not only likely to anticipate quite different environmental states but also differing desirable outcomes that might guide our subsequent decisions.

The VUCA-Plus Challenges and Anticipation

VUCA is deservedly becoming the coin-of-the-realm among contemporary organizational analysts. I suggest that my addition of turbulence and contradiction to this set of conditions contributes to our even deeper understanding of mid-21st-century life. In this book, I will be viewing each of these challenges from several different perspectives, provide further considerations

regarding the impact of each condition on the cognitive and affective way we engage the process of anticipation, and offer several distinctive strategies for addressing each of these challenges

I now offer a bit more detail regarding each of these six VUCA-Plus challenges. I also suggest some unique ways in which to view and act upon these challenges.

Volatility

Volatility refers to the dynamics of change (accelerating rate, speed, and intensity) as well as unexpected catalysts of this change. Basically, volatility concerns rapid change in an unpredictable manner. Volatility has a systemic impact on our world: changes are occurring everywhere. There are change curves on top of change curves (Bergquist, 2014). There is also an immediate personal impact. We are often surprised and unprepared under conditions of volatility.

As I noted, our anticipations must be frequently reconstructed. Furthermore, we often can't even anticipate that we will need to alter our anticipations. For instance, if we are in the business of real estate, it is hard to anticipate what will happen regarding not only the upcoming prices of homes, but also to anticipate mortgage rates, potential shifts in the job market where we are selling homes, and even the potential impact of climate change on the attractiveness of homes located in specific environmentally sensitive areas.

While we might be able to anticipate the yearly rise and fall of home prices and sales potential during a specific time of year, these other factors can drive prices and potential sales up and down in ways that can't be anticipated. There are also technological changes that impact one's role as a realtor. Potential buyers and sellers can gain information themselves regarding the housing market, and there are website tools that become partners with the person-to-person interactions between realtor and client.

It is not easy being a realtor under these volatile conditions. One must either save up for a “rainy day” (low sales), join a large firm that offers financial buffers, hold down a second job, or live with someone who supplies a more stable income. At the psychological level, someone in the real estate business must be able to manage their own anxiety associated with the volatility. Under these conditions, it is also critical that one thinks slowly and carefully about their work: For how many dollars should we list this house? When do I suggest that my client accept a specific offer? How do I help my client address their own anxiety associated with this important decision in my life?

I once was acquainted with a very successful realtor who attributed her success to previous work she was a social worker. Apparently, a “crisis intervention” is often needed when working with someone or some family that is selling or buying a home under volatile conditions. One’s own anxiety as a realtor must be placed on hold or effectively managed when working with an even more anxious client.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty refers to the lack of predictability. This condition concerns the increasing prospects for surprising, “disruptive” changes that often overwhelm our awareness, understanding, and ability to cope with events. Uncertainty concerns a lack of continuity and a resulting lack of clarity regarding what is going to happen from day to day. There is a systemic impact.

Under conditions of uncertainty, it is hard to plan for the future or even one or two days from now, given that nothing seems to be permanently in place. Contingency (reset) planning is required rather than tactical or strategic planning (Heath, 2025). At the personal level, conditions of uncertainty require that we keep our schedule tentative and our expectations quite flexible.

Our task of anticipation is particularly taxing under conditions of uncertainty. As I have already mentioned, it is tempting to

abandon the task of anticipation altogether. For instance, if one is in the business of managing a pharmacy, what should one do in the anticipation of another outbreak of COVID or some other pandemic? Can we really know much about how a specific virus will mutate and hit the human population hard? And what can we know for “certain” about the availability of drugs to treat the virus, given both the complexity of the medical supply chain and the uncertainty that is associated with government policies? So, let's just set aside anticipation and wait for the “pharmaceutical storm” to hit!

This is a good way to lose one's job – of that we can be certain. So, we meet with those managing pharmacies in other stores in our chain. Or, if we are running an independent pharmacy, then we meet with other independent pharmacists in our region. Some contingency planning takes place: How do we ensure that the drugs will be available without spending too much money or stocking up too much of this drug? How do we collectively influence governmental policy or recommend changes in the supply chain? While these anticipatory efforts might not be sufficient to address the drug crisis when it does take place, the efforts do help us avoid a sense of helplessness and the accompanying anxiety we will experience. We can anticipate that we will be anxious, and we can anticipate that there will be ramifications for us regarding job performance. And we can do something about this right now!!

Complexity

Complexity entails the multiplex of forces operating in our world as well as the apparent inconsistent flow of information. Complexity also concerns the sensitive interdependence of everything we touch. This leads to a pervasive sense of confusion—making it hard to arrive at smart decisions (steeped as we are in the moving dance of reality). The condition of

complexity concerns the presence of many different things and events that simultaneously impact life and work.

There is a systemic impact. It is very hard to make sense of or even find meaning in what is occurring every day. Slow thinking is required rather than fast thinking (Kahneman, 2011). There is also a major personal impact. We often must spend a considerable amount of time trying to figure out what is happening before making decisions or taking actions.

Slow thinking is required because there is a lot to think about under conditions of complexity. Many different elements and forces must be considered. This means that multiple anticipations must be engaged, along with a single, integrated anticipation that can help guide actions to be taken. I illustrate this challenging process of anticipation by turning to the work that one must do if working in the business of travel planning. We sit in our suite located in a large shopping center, waiting for the next person to show up who wants to find comfort and joy on an international cruise.

There are still customers who are doing business all over the world and are asking you to help with travel plans. However, most of your clients are looking for relaxation rather than work. Furthermore, they know that they can simply go to a cruise website and sign up for a weeklong trip sailing around the Caribbean; however, they are not sure when they really want and don't trust the claims made on the cruise ship website. They want your expert advice and would like to book their trip with you.

This is where complexity enters your suite. There are many factors to take into account. It is not just a matter of finances, but also a matter of what your client can "realistically" expect from the one-week cruise. Much as in the case of the realtor, you are doing a bit of psychotherapy with your client so that you might get a clear sense of what they "really" want and what they can "really" expect. Many other factors must also be considered regarding

such factors as size of the ship, whether or not it is “family-friendly” (and what your client would prefer), weather conditions at various times of the year, political conditions operating in this region, and the delicate matter of booze (is your client looking forward to spending some time in a state of at least partial inebriation).

How do you handle all of this complexity? Your client might want a quick and easy solution to their travel challenge; they might grow impatient with the many questions you are asking. They might also not appreciate your probing questions regarding financing (what can you afford?) or liquor (are you looking for a plan that includes all alcoholic drinks?) Perhaps, the Caribbean is not the right place for your client: how would you approach this potential shattering of their dreams?

We have to anticipate a variety of reactions from our client to each of the questions we ask. We also have to anticipate their overall, integrative reactions to the emerging travel plans: Are they happy? Are they disappointed? Are they becoming more anxious? Are they becoming more realistic about their vision of what the weeklong trip could be, and is this acceptable to them? How many modifications can be made to the tentative plans that our client brought to this meeting with me?

We are likely to find our work challenging with many clients in many fields where human interaction is required. An important decision is rarely about to be made by any of us that requires an assessment of and reflection on one simple element in our life. As object relations theories note, our psyche is made up of many actors, observers, and decision-makers. This has always been the case since human beings created a prefrontal cortex and the capacity to imagine both good and bad outcomes. What’s new is the environment in which we now live. It is becoming more complex, with many different elements that are related to one another in multiple ways. This means that our diversified psyche

is now paired with a diversified environment, making for a high level of complexity when we are navigating VUCA-Plus.

Ambiguity

Ambiguity is the condition of 'haziness' in which both cause and effect are hard to attribute. Relativity seems to cast a shadow over established rules. The condition of ambiguity weighs heavily on our ability to function and make choices while holding on to inconsistent data. Ambiguity concerns the presence of many things and events happening at the same time. Our imposing world is confusing and often easy to observe clearly and consistently.

The systemic impact of ambiguity concerns a loss of trust. We can't trust the accuracy of what we see or hear or of what "experts" tell us (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024). More than the other five VUCA-Plus conditions, this condition of ambiguity forces us to accept a social constructivist rather than an objectivist perspective on reality (Berger and Luchmann, 1966). When ambiguity prevails, all bets are off regarding the appropriate verification of truth.

What about the personal impact? Under conditions of ambiguity, we often must look and listen a second and third time to ensure that what is seen or heard is accurate. Even then, our view of the world is seen "through a glass darkly." We are vulnerable to messages offered by those who assure us that we are "correctly" seeing the world. Alternatively, we create our Bubble of Belief and remain steadfast in our view of the world in one particular (often ideological) way (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024).

Imagine that you are an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Anthropology at a local community college. Your students are primarily older working adults who attend your classes in the evening. While they are likely to find anthropology and sociology interesting subject matter, it is hard for them to concentrate on what you are saying after a long day of work, and often, some job-

related or home-related problems. You are faced with the challenge of sharing ambiguity with your tired and distracted students. You could simplify things, but this would not be an honest approach to teaching.

There are simply taxonomies of cultural differences; however, these taxonomies are misleading and often dated, given the impact of globalization on many cultures in the world. There are no longer “pure” cultures. You could teach about racism, gender biases, and both ethnic and religious biases in American society. However, you know there would be backlashes both from your students and your administration.

Furthermore, our society no longer has a very clear picture of what is really happening in the United States regarding these matters, given the polarization of America. Everything concerning values is contradictory and contentious. You would inevitably be teaching political science as well as sociology when dealing with controversial matters such as race, ethnicity, religion, and sexual preferences. It is not just the students who are tired and distracted. As someone at the bottom of the postsecondary education totem pole, you also are not in a position to embrace ambiguity.

Turbulence

As already noted, I add two other challenges: turbulence and contradiction. They are both interwoven in the fabric of VUCA. They each add a further layer to the challenge we now face in our mid-21st-century society. Furthermore, turbulence and contradiction often pair up with one or more of the other VUCA conditions to add even more weight to the mid-21st-century burden.

In describing Turbulence, I am turning to a metaphor offered by Peter Vaill, who suggests that we live in a “white water” world. I have added to Vaill’s metaphor by noting that this whitewater system incorporates four systems that are exemplified by the

properties of a turbulent stream: (1) rapid change (flowing segment of the stream), (2) cyclical change (the stream's whirlpools), (3) stability/non-change (the "stagnant" segment of the stream), and (4) chaos (the segment of a stream existing between the other three segments).

All four of these systems are operating in our current environment. For instance, if we examine the COVID crisis, we find that rapid change occurred as the virus rapidly spread and communities throughout the world were massively impacted. Cyclical change was to be found in the patterned way that COVID-19 entered and spread in a community – and tragically in the way this virus or a sister virus probably will return.

We can find stability and non-change in the resistance to new norms and rules regarding addressing future virus invasions. All of this leads to the growing presence of the fourth system: Chaos. This is to be found not only in the inconsistent way we were each living our lives in response to the virus but also in the way public policies were formulated and revised in the United States and many countries over the past decade – and are soon likely to mutate (Christakis, 2020).

All four subsystems also exist in the world lived by people who seek out assistance and guidance in psychotherapy sessions or sessions of executive coaching. As a therapist or coach, you are likely to find that your incoming patient/client is complaining that their world is moving too fast for them. They want a place to 'hide out' from the rapid changes they are facing: "My wife wants us to move just when I have settled into my new job." "I have to belt down three or four drinks each night because there are constant demands for readjustment of my job in the corporation." "I also seem to grow anxious before the start of every meeting, not knowing what new thing is coming forward." "I arrive home at night, after a long day of work, and my husband is talking about rearranging our finances to take care of the latest increases in the cost-of-living".

Alternatively, you welcome a patient/client who is stuck. Nothing is working for them. They face the same problems each day and fail to solve them all the time. In many cases, your patient/client is depressed and does not see any way forward in their home life or in their work life.

It is often our job, as a therapist or client, to note patterns in their life that keep them moving forward. These patterns might be cyclical in nature (how your patient/client begins to feel each Spring or after the completion of a sales push at their company). The pattern might instead be manifested in the appearance of specific kinds of events (whenever my wife cooks that special meal for me) or when specific outcomes are achieved (I feel great when my daughter scores a goal during a soccer match).

Sometimes, we help our patient/client “live in” the chaos that exists in their work or life. We help them learn how to manage the anxiety associated with this chaos, or how to find or create a “sanctuary” that enables them to escape from the chaos and find a mode for rejuvenation. At other times, we serve as nothing more than a witness to and empathizer of the chaos and seeming randomness of our patient/client’s world.

In essence, our job as therapist or executive coach is to be present in all four subsystems of our patient/client’s life. As I will note shortly in this book, it is a matter of helping the person we are serving with the balancing and centering of the “kayak” in which they are traveling in the turbulent environment.

Contradiction

Contradiction concerns the frequent presence of radically different constructions and interpretations of reality—and the differing meanings assigned to the constructed reality. It should be noted that Contradiction is perhaps the most soul-wrenching of the six VUCA-Plus conditions. Valid and useful messages are delivered to us every day. However, they often point in quite different directions. They provide guidance and encouragement

that lead us potentially to quite different outcomes. We are encouraged to eat one brand of cereal today and are told to eat a different brand tomorrow that “is much better for us” or “is more likely to be our child’s favorite”.

We are also told one day that most (or at least some) cereals are good for us. On another day, we are told they are bad for us or worthless in the promotion of health. In one of our favorite magazines, we read about a major study that reports findings suggesting that moderately consumed cereal is good for our health. We need fiber in our well-balanced diet.

Furthermore, cereals in one form or another have been around since humankind first wandered on earth. How can a grain of wheat or corn be bad for us? One day later, we read an Internet article detailing the corrupt marketing of cereal. Even the so-called “organic” and high-fiber cereals offer little health-related value. Furthermore, the price of cereal is unconscionable. We are paying primarily for the fancy box in which the cereal comes to us and for the marketing of this cereal – not the grain itself.

It is challenging to recognize that each side of the contradiction often needs the other side to exist to find direction and energy. We need a strong enemy if we are to build commitment to our cause. Having lost an election, our political party becomes the “loyal opposition” and often finds greater clarity and coherence in this role than when we are in power. We need to spend money on fancy cereal boxes precisely because other cereal boxes on the supermarket shelves catch our attention. We need to anticipate the other side gaining strength and demanding attention as we focus on the first side. A swing back and forth between two different anticipatory tasks often takes place. While this swing can be frustrating and sometimes counterproductive, it is often essential when dealing with two outcomes that are of equal, but contradictory importance.

To illustrate this pull between two desired outcomes and two realities, I offer the Jewish tale of the very wise rabbi. This religious leader was asked one day to mediate between two members of his synagogue who were caught up in a major dispute. The rabbi's assistant joined him for this mediation. First, one of the contentious parties offered their case. The rabbi nodded his head and proclaimed repeatedly: "You're right, absolutely right." The rabbi then met with the second contentious party. Once again, the rabbi proclaimed "You're right, absolutely right." After the second party left the room, the rabbi's assistant declared in an exacerbated tone: "Rabbi, how could you agree with the first party and then turn around and agree also with the second party. They can't both be right!" The rabbi reflected for a moment and then commented: "You're right, absolutely right."

I offer a non-rabbinical example of contradiction playing mayhem on the capacity of a city council member to anticipate what is about to happen and to help other members of the council formulate an action plan. Our council member has served for more than a decade in this position and has been a strong advocate during this time for establishing a strong economic base in her community. She has always supported efforts to make her community more attractive to upper-middle-class folks, who could find well-paying jobs in a nearby city.

Our councilwoman had helped to gain state and federal funding for a freeway system that would enable these high-income residents to easily commute to the city. She also supported the establishment of local community culture, including promoting community theater, a weekly farmer's market, art-on-main street, and a series of concerts at the local high school auditorium that featured nationally-known artists. Our council member was very proud of her accomplishments in making her community attractive to people who can provide the community with a strong economic base.

Then along came a new reality. Her community had priced people out of the housing market who had been the heart and soul of this community for many years. These were the farmers living near her town, and the men and women working in the fields owned by these farmers. There were also the local merchants, owners of small local businesses, and the young adults who had grown up in this community.

Affordable housing was now a major issue that she and other members of the city council had to address. There is also the matter of rising property taxes. As land values in this community rise, so too do the taxes to be placed on the homeowners. The new residents can afford the higher taxes and appreciate the use of these increasing tax revenues to repave the streets, renovate the city hall, and construct a new high school filled with high-tech teaching devices.

Most of the new residents of her community are content with what their community has become. They don't want any low-cost housing to serve as a "blight" on their "precious" town. They approve the new streets, city hall, and high school. The work accomplished by the city council is applauded. Reelection of current city council members is assured. However, the "old-timers" in this community—with whom our city councilwoman grew up—are angry. They feel betrayed by the city council and believe that current members of the council have been "bought off" by the new wealth in their community.

Our councilwoman was facing a major contradiction. The new residents can make a strong argument that they were attracted to this community precisely because of its newly acquired upper-middle-class appeal: "They are right. Absolutely right." Reactions against this perspective can be anticipated from the "old-timers." On the other hand, the old-time residents who had been the backbone of the community have an equally strong case to be made for securing their "right" to remain as respected members of this community: "They are right. Absolutely right." While they

may be right, the old-timers can anticipate strong counter-reactions from the newcomers.

What does she do? How does she serve both constituencies, knowing what their reactions will be to any proposal offered by the other constituency? Our councilwoman's own perspectives and emotions swing back and forth. Her votes during council meetings often seem unpredictable and even inconsistent. Other council members worry about her mind and heart: Is she no longer capable of being a thoughtful member of the council? And where does she really stand on these important issues?

For our council woman, there is a struggle to somehow reconcile the two contradictory positions. How do we establish low-cost housing and establish a more flexible tax code, while also retaining the new "upscale" nature of this community? She thinks that she has found an answer, but it soon slips away as she anticipates the reactions of several different constituencies to this proposal. State and federal programs to support low-cost housing appear on the horizon. However, they soon disappear with a changing administration or are burdened with too many restrictions. She can't anticipate any assistance at either the state or federal level.

She also can't anticipate much empathy or support from other city council members. Most of these members of the city council don't seem to have any problem with the contradiction. They vote consistently with either the old-timers or the wealthy newcomers. Contentious debates and frozen policy positions are alive and well in these city council chambers. This is one dynamic that she can anticipate. Our councilwoman wonders if her colleagues on the council are right: perhaps she does need to retire.

Contraction, Polarization, and the Cave

I wish to push the consideration of Contradictions a step further by suggesting that contradictions are often polarities. This being the case, we can turn to the remarkable insights and strategies

regarding polarities offered by Barry Johnson (1992/1996). As the “dean” of *polarity management*, Johnson identifies polarities as “interdependent pairs that need each other over time.” He notes the soul-wrenching effect of polarities: “They live in us and we live in them.” According to Johnson, polarities are pervasive. “They exist in every level of system from the inside of our brains to global issues.” Their soul-wrenching impact is based on their “unavoidable, unsolvable (in that you can’t choose one pole as a sustainable solution), indestructible, and unstoppable” presence.

The systemic impact of Polarities and Contradictions centers on the credibility of advice being offered by people and institutions that can be trusted. Credibility is being challenged because the advice one trusted source offers is often inconsistent with the advice offered by a second trusted source. When we bring in dynamics associated with polarities, then we are likely to discover that advice offered by the second source is often triggered by the first source. The first source, in turn, becomes more vociferous (and often more extreme) in its pronouncement regarding what is correct and good in the world. The debate between two warring givers of advice is fully engaged. The intended recipient of useful advice is often left on the sidelines.

Many years ago, Plato offered the allegory of people living in a cave. These cave dwellers never directly review the world outside the cave but rely on the shadows being cast on a cave wall—these shadows produced by placing some shapes in front of a fire lit on the cave’s floor. Another version of the allegory identifies the source of the cave’s shadows as the blocking of light at the cave’s opening by people passing in front of the cave.

Once again, reality is equated with the shadows on the wall. Reality is not identified with events occurring outside the cave. Believing that these shadows are “reality”, we find that the cave dwellers obtain an interpretation of meaning to be assigned the shadows from a trusted “expert” who lives with them in the cave.

Soon, there is widespread reliance on the expert's interpretation rather than reliance on the shadows themselves.

I wish to update Plato's allegory by introducing the condition of Contradiction. We find that multiple experts offer alternative interpretations regarding the shadows. These interpretations are not aligned with one another. The debate between confident but contradicting interpreters ensues. Some of the cave's "experts" go even further. They claim that these are just shadows. They point to the figures inserted before the fire to produce the images on the wall.

Other experts might suggest that a "real" (or alternative) world exists outside the cave. The cave dwellers are confused and frightened. To whom do we listen? What do we do with those experts who are not to be believed or trusted? Do we ignore these experts? They are hard to ignore since they hang around the cave and offer disturbing observations. Do we instead throw them out of the cave—but then we would have to acknowledge that a world exists outside the cave? It is all soul-wrenching.

We need not live in a cave. Even outside the cave, we find it difficult to live with and be guided by contradictory information. All of this has a personal impact on us. We must change our minds—or at least be open to new perspectives and ideas. Agility is required (reference) along with an enduring tolerance for dissonance that repeatedly appears in our assignment of meanings to shadows appearing in our world.

These shadows represent not only what exists out in the world but also that which exists inside us. Our minds and hearts are saturated with multiple images of self and reality (Gergen, 1991/2000). Midst contradiction (alongside the other five conditions of VUCA-Plus), we must somehow find the capacity to think deliberatively about difficult issues (Kahneman, 2011) and engage a high level of social intelligence in our interactions with other people (Goleman, 1995). Quite a tall order . . .

Implications of VUCA-Plus Conditions

In our mid-21st-century world, we must make decisions that take VUCA-Plus conditions into account, especially when anticipating what is about to occur in our environment. There is ambiguity, uncertainty, and contradiction, which make it difficult to predict what is about to occur or what the response might be to actions we could take. Polarizing values are present, making thoughtful consideration and caring compassion difficult to sustain; furthermore, these decisions are subject to frequent review and modification as we alter what we anticipate and try to navigate our volatile, complex, and often turbulent VUCA world. Goal setting is often unrealistic. The ad hoc character of our VUCA-Plus world often produces a feeling of infinite possibility and an unrealistic sense that the sky's the limit.

Failure and disenchantment frequently are associated with a lack of realistic goal setting unless the process of designing and managing our life or the life of our organization includes not only the re-examination of context and strategy but also the regular re-examination of goals. Another frequent problem we face in a VUCA-Plus world concerns the complex interpersonal- and task-related skills needed to run an organization—or government. We are often “in over our heads” when seeking to build and sustain a viable working relationship with other people.

Thus, we must enter the challenging world of VUCA-Plus with several critical skills. First, is the ability to think and anticipate in a careful, systemic manner about the world swirling about us. It is easy to think quickly with nothing but a desire to make the anxiety go away. We are fleeing the lions—but to little avail. Second, we must acknowledge the stress associated with VUCA-Plus challenges. We must be mindful of this stress—and find ways to reduce it while being proactive in responding to the VUCA-Plus challenges.

Finally, our problem-solving and decision-making in a VUCA-Plus environment must be done in collaboration with other people. It is difficult and often unwise to anticipate alone. We are not strong enough to confront the VUCA-Plus challenges alone. It is in collaborative dialogue with other important people in our life that we find the courage, clarity and strength to not just make sense of our mid-21st Century world but also learn from the VUCA-Plus challenges and find nourishment and sense of self-purpose in successfully confronting these challenges.

Anxiety in a VUCA Plus Environment

We are likely to be living with anxiety when seeking to navigate our personal life and anticipating what is about to occur. When we are anxious, it is easy to stay with outdated anticipations, for any change in how we think our environment operates will only increase anxiety. The lions we see are often just the anticipation of potential lions. It seems that anticipating is seeing and seeing is believing. It is critical that we look forward when we navigate our VUCA-Plus environment; however, what we expect to see often becomes what we “think” and “feel” that we are seeing. This is a fundamental manifestation of self-fulfilling prophecy.

At a collective level, we often find that leaders of mid-21st-century institutions face the “perfect storm” of organizational anxiety. They must deal with major VUCA-Plus-related challenges alongside the anxiety that accompanies these challenges. They must lead through the anxiety experienced by specific members of their organization. Furthermore, it seems that anxiety is quite contagious. One anxious person in an organization (or any group) can readily spread this anxiety to everyone else in the organization.

Diffuse anxiety (“angst”) often pervades specific departments in the leader’s organization. The diffusion can be even greater. Angst can pervade their entire organization and even the society in which it operates. We are anxious individually while being

collectively anxious. This anxiety can be induced in many different ways. And there are multiple sources of organizational anxiety. It also works oppositely. When many of us are anxious in a collective setting (such as an organization or community), then we are all likely to be anxious. This is a manifestation of the contagious nature of anxiety.

If the challenges of VUCA-Plus are to be met, then the anxiety (and angst) that accompanies (and is often elicited by) the six conditions of VUCA-Plus must be understood and contained. I attend to the nature and dynamics of anxiety in this section of Chapter One. In some ways, the contagion of anxiety is quite adaptive. When human beings were living on the African savannah, they were among the weakest and slowest creatures to populate this often threat-filled environment. It seems that we humans survived (and ultimately thrived) by working collaboratively via language and strong family and clan bonding. We all wanted to know if something was threatening one or more members of our group so that we could act together to fight or flee from the source of the threat. Anxiety served this purpose.

Anxiety as a Signal

Many years ago, Sigmund Freud (1936) wrote about the signal function of anxiety. At the time, he was pointing to how anxiety alerts us to an important psychic reality: we are moving into dangerous territory regarding unconscious processes. We can expand on Freud's analysis by considering the collective signaling function served by anxiety in warning us (as families or clans) about sources of danger that are real (such as predators, crop failure, or the pending invasion of an adversarial clan)—or are anticipated or imagined.

Two sets of neurobiological mechanisms might be implicated in Freud's signal of anxiety. These are the sympathetic and countering parasympathetic systems that serve critical functions in our daily journey through a shifting and at times challenging

world. Within each of these two systems, specific neurochemicals play a central role. We can probe for a moment into the nature of these chemicals and, more broadly, the neurobiological basis of collective (and contagious) signaling anxiety.

First, there is the sympathetic system and adrenaline (also called epinephrine) – one of its primary agents and a key activator of our anxiety. When we are anxious, epinephrine and other arousing chemicals course through our veins and muscles. We are primed to take action that can alleviate the anxiety, be it against an approaching predator or an invading clan. Without the sympathetic system in place, we would probably not feel anxious. Many of the anxiety-reducing pills that some of us take are in the business of blocking sympathetic activation.

The countering parasympathetic system also comes into play regarding the signaling function of anxiety – especially as this anxiety becomes contagious. In recent years, neurobiologists have come to recognize the important role played in our lives by a specific neurotransmitter: oxytocin. It serves as a central agent in the parasympathetic system. Often referred to as a “bonding” and “nurturing” chemical, oxytocin is coursing through our brains and veins – more than is the case with most animals. Oxytocin pulls us together and makes us particularly fearful of being alone and isolated from family and clan members. We want to be close to others and feel threatened when others feel threatened. Anxiety is contagious and spreads rapidly precisely because we are pulled toward bonding.

Contagious Signals

This secretion of oxytocin could be considered the basis of empathy and might even be mediated by something called “mirror neurons,” which are activated in us when we experience the wounding (physical or psychological) of other people. While the role played by mirror neurons is still quite controversial, there is very little dispute regarding the typical (and necessary)

bonding of human beings with one another and the high level of sensitivity regarding our discomfort with witnessing the potential or actual suffering of other people with whom we are bonded, further intensifying the contagious and signaling nature of anxiety.

Clearly, we are attuned to the signal of threat transmitted by other people. This signal can be based on “legitimate” threats: the lion can be stalking us or the tribe living in the next valley can be plotting to take over our hunting ground or pastureland. However, as made famous by Robert Sapolsky (2004), we are quite adept at creating imagined lions. We can falsely conclude that our neighboring tribe is plotting against us. It’s not hard to project evil intentions onto our in-laws or former spouse. Thus, there can be “false alarms” that we have to manage with just as much skill as the alarms based on reality.

As parents, we must help our children sort out the difference between the bad things in life that are real and the “unreal” monsters lurking under their bed at night (equivalent in contemporary life to the imaginary lions of the African savannah). As leaders, we must assist with addressing the imagined VUCA-Plus monsters lingering under our organizational beds. We are expected to discern the difference between valid signals and invalid signals. Leaders are “paid big bucks” to detect the real from the unreal. This can be quite a challenge in the world of VUCA-Plus.

There is a second task of discernment that is assigned to us, as leaders. This discernment is needed to differentiate between various types of anxiety that are precipitated by the kind of issues we face in our organizations (and our life outside the organization). We must not only sort out and anticipate the real and imaginary predators but also determine what kind of predator (issue/challenge) confronts us. I propose that we face four types of issues. Each type of issue evokes a particular kind of anticipation and possesses its own threat and opportunity for

resolution. Here are the types—as they relate specifically to the overarching challenges of VUCA-Plus and as they produce anxiety and alter anticipation.

A World of Puzzles, Problems, Dilemmas, and Mysteries

The concept of VUCA has become quite commonly introduced into considerations of 21st-century organizational challenges. I would suggest that we move beyond the VUCA and VUCA-Plus environment by considering not just the content contained in these analyses, but also the nature of the issues embedded in this environment and the threat each condition poses.

I propose that four types of issues are addressed in this environment. The most prevalent of these issues are not puzzles. However, the most important and most difficult to resolve are problems, dilemmas, and mysteries. These latter issues represent the fast, powerful (and elusive) lions that actually threaten us in the mid-21st Century savannah. I briefly describe all four types and identify the distinction threat(s) each of them poses.

Puzzles

Puzzles are the everyday issues that anyone working in an organization must face. Puzzles have answers. They are unidimensional in that they can be clearly defined and easily quantified or (at least) measured. Puzzles concern such things as changing a production schedule to accommodate a major new order or determining the appropriate fee for a new, longer training program. Changes in organizational policies to accommodate new federal laws can be “puzzling,” as can the rearrangement of office space or distribution of parking spaces.

With a puzzle, the parameters are clear. The desired outcome of a puzzle-solution process can readily be identified and is often important to (and can be decided by) a relatively small number of people within an organizational or community setting. It is most

important to note that puzzles are based on challenges that can readily be anticipated. They tend to recur, are widely known and understood, and rarely catch many people by surprise. It is the type of issue rightly passed to the lowest level of responsibility where the necessary information is available. Puzzles were quite common in pre-VUCA-Plus organizations.

Anxiety arises from failure to solve a puzzle. The desired outcomes are clear and the inability or unwellness to achieve these outcomes is cause for concern and even punishment (demotion, loss of pay, removal from the job or project). Was the wrong person assigned to this task? Didn't we have enough resources? Was this the wrong solution?

There is yet another source of anxiety that is not often acknowledged – though it is frequently present. Those who have identified and perhaps started working on a puzzle discover that it is not actually a puzzle but is instead a problem or dilemma. There is a moment of shock – and perhaps some freezing. Then a shift in perspective and practice must be engaged. Otherwise, there will be repeated unsuccessful attempts to solve the puzzle.

Researchers who study complex systems use a landscape metaphor to distinguish a complex challenge from simpler challenges faced in various systems, including organizations. Miller and Page (2007) provide the image of a single, dominant mountain peak when describing one type of landscape. Often volcanic in origin, these imposing mountains are the highest point within sight. There are no rivals. For those living in or visiting the Western United States, we can point to Mt. Rainier (in western Washington) or Mt. Shasta (in northern California). Mt. Fuji in Japan exemplifies this type of landscape.

You know when you have reached the highest point in the region, and there is no doubt regarding the prominence of this peak. Similarly, in the case of puzzles, one knows when a satisfactory solution has been identified. And one can stand triumphantly at

the top of the mountain/puzzle, knowing that one has succeeded and can look back down to the path followed in reaching the solution/peak.

We know how the peak was reached, or the puzzle is solved. We can readily replicate the actions taken. Conversely, anxiety fills us when we have failed to reach the peak and can't figure out how to be successful in the future. Unfortunately, other landscapes are much more challenging—and these represent the dominant environment of VUCA-Plus. Our mid-21st-century world is filled with collective angst precisely because many issues we face are NOT puzzles.

Problems

The second type of issue that a 21st-century leader faces with VUCA and VUCA-Plus can be labeled a “problem”. Some other authors have described these as “wicked” issues. Problems can be differentiated from puzzles because multiple perspectives can be applied when analyzing a problem. Several possible solutions are associated with any problem, and multiple criteria apply when evaluating the potential effectiveness of any one solution.

Many more cognitive demands are placed on us when we confront problems than when we confront puzzles, given that problems do not have simple or single solutions. Anxiety often arises in conjunction with these cognitive demands. Problems are multi-dimensional and interdisciplinary in nature. They are inevitably complicated and anxiety-inducing in that they involve many elements (Miller and Page, 2007). All of this leads us to acknowledge that problems are not easily anticipated—though we know that we live in a world where surprising problems will inevitably pop up. But we are often unprepared for this specific problem. And are reticent to acknowledge that they can be anticipated, given the specific VUCA-Plus environment in which we dwell and operate.

Any problem can be viewed from many different points of view. Thus, it is difficult to clearly anticipate. And it is unclear when they have been successfully resolved (producing even more anxiety). For example, we find a technical solution and realize the problem has financial implications. We address these financial implications and soon find a whole host of managerial concerns emerging that are associated with the problem. We are perplexed, befuddled – and anxious.

Researchers and theorists who are seeking to understand complicated problems often describe the settings in which problems emerge as “rugged landscapes.” (Miller and Page, 2007, p. 216) This type of landscape is filled with many mountains of about the same height (think of the majestic mountain range called the Grand Tetons or the front range of the Rocky Mountains that citizens of Denver, Colorado, see every day), as compared with a landscape in which one mountain peak dominates (think of Mount Rainier). In a rugged, complicated landscape, one finds many competing viewpoints about which mountain is higher or which vista is more beautiful. A similar case can be made regarding the challenging VUCA-Plus problems facing the 21st-century leader. How are clear, consistent, and accurate judgments made when we are anxiously torn in multiple directions?

Dilemmas

When certain issues that managers face appear impervious to a definitive solution, it becomes useful to classify them as dilemmas. While dilemmas like problems are complicated, they are also complex, in that each of the many elements embedded in the dilemma is connected to each (or most) of the other elements (Miller and Page, 2007). We may view the problem from one perspective and take action to alleviate one part of the problem; we then immediately confront another part of the problem, often represented by an opposing stakeholder group.

Dilemmas are intimately aligned with the challenge of uncertainty in the VUCA model and the challenge of turbulence in the VUCA-Plus model. Anticipation becomes even more challenging because there are often multiple, intermixed events and situations bombarding us at any one point in time. Uncertainty and turbulence travel hand-in-hand with personal and collective anxiety. We tighten our policies regarding new product development and creativity drops off. We increase prices to increase revenues and find that we are losing customers, thereby losing revenues.

Leaders do not always recognize a dilemma for what it is. They want to avoid the anxiety associated with uncertainty. New leaders who have not fully understood or acknowledged the unique nature of VUCA-Plus tend to see problems and dilemmas in a limited or simplistic way. They attempt to deal with them as if they are puzzles—hoping they are operating in a quiet stream rather than a turbulent river.

Turbulence is bad enough. The dilemma often is even more challenging. At times we find that the issue is a set of nested dilemmas. One set of conflicting priorities exists within another set of conflicting priorities. For instance, we want to pay one employee a bonus but are concerned that if we do so other employees who find out about it will be resentful and less likely to collaborate with their bonused colleague.

This dilemma, in turn, resides inside an even bigger dilemma: we want to increase salary and benefits for all our employees, yet also are trying to keep down costs because the market in which our product is being sold is highly competitive. These are complex dilemmas - not readily solved puzzles. Feelings of anxiety do not reside so much in potential failure; they reside more often in our inability to know how to address the issue at hand.

Living in a VUCA-Plus environment, contemporary leaders often confront the challenge of dilemmas and even nested dilemmas at

almost every turn. As in the case of problems, dilemmas can be described as “rugged landscapes.” (Miller and Page, 2007) However, because dilemmas involve multiple elements that are intimately interlinked, they are far more than a cluster or range of mountain peaks of similar size.

This type of complex landscape is filled not only with many mountains of about the same height but also with river valleys, forested plains, and many communities (think of the Appalachian Mountains), as compared with a landscape in which one mountain peak dominates or in which a series of mountains dominate. In a complex, rugged landscape, there are not only competing viewpoints; these differing viewpoints are intricately and often paradoxically interwoven.

Life as a leader (or member of an organization) is often even more challenging and anxiety-filled in a VUCA-Plus environment. As leaders, we are likely to find that we are living and leading not just in a complex, rugged landscape. We operate in what Miller and Page (2007) call a “dancing landscape.” Priorities are not only interconnected. Priorities are shifting, and new alliances between old competing sides are forged. The landscape begins to dance when a world of complexity collides with a world of uncertainty, turbulence, and contradiction. Anxious leaders must learn how to dance.

Mysteries

When addressing the challenges associated with dancing landscapes, we enter a domain in which problems and dilemmas seem to merge into mysteries. Mysteries operate at a different level than puzzles, problems, and dilemmas. Mysteries are too complex to understand and are ultimately unknowable. It is inevitably viewed from many different perspectives, systematic and deeply rooted in culture and tradition. Mysteries have no boundaries, and all aspects are interrelated. Anxiety associated

with mysteries resides deep in our heart (and soul)—it is existential (May, 1996/2015).

A specific mystery is profound. The matter of anticipation is far removed from the mystery as it appears. We can do nothing but be awe-struck, sink into despair, or turn for guidance to some wise and soulful teacher or counsellor. Desired outcomes are elusive, yet they linger with all members of a society. They serve as the foundation for all sacred institutions in this society—for, ultimately, mysteries are spiritual in nature. Unlike puzzles, problems, and dilemmas, they are not secular. Eliade's (1959) distinction between sacred and profane is directly applicable.

Mysteries are beyond rational comprehension and resolution. They must be viewed respectfully because, as noted, they are awe-inspiring or just awe-full (Otto, 1923/1950). Depending on one's perspective, mysteries are the things "we take to God" or at least "take to heart". We don't turn to an organizational leader, public official, or high-paid consultant. Instead, we turn to our pastor, a worldly friend, or (as a child) our wise grandmother for guidance (or at least reassurance) when confronted with a mystery.

The typical description of VUCA captures several of the most important dimensions of organizational mystery. The term unpredictable (U) is particularly relevant. As Taleb (2010) has noted, many Black Swans are to be found in our 21st-century world. Many VUCA-Plus events are like Black Swans—they can be imagined but are not likely to ever be encountered—until they occur. Specifically, some mysteries relate to traumatic and devastating events: Why did I get out of the World Trade Center while my desk-mate perished? Why is there evil in the world? Why did lightning strike our freighter but not the one next to it? Why did my child die before me?

Mysteries also encompass many positive events and moments of reflection. They can not only evoke threat and elicit anxiety-producing adrenaline but also evoke comforting memories and

elicit pleasurable oxytocin. We ponder the source and meaning of a mystery: How did I deserve all these talents? Why have I been so blessed in my professional life? How did I ever raise such an exceptional child? How did I earn so much affection from these people at my retirement party? What is my destiny? Why did I fall in love with this person? Why did this remarkable person fall in love with me? Operating in a container of safety, privileged reflections on these questions can occur. Lingering joy and appreciation replace existential anxiety.

Locus of Control

There is one additional dimension to be considered when identifying the sources of anxiety. This dimension concerns our assignment of control in a specific situation. We perceive mysteries as taking place outside our sphere of control or influence. Psychologists call this an external locus of control and note that some people are inclined to view most issues as outside their control (that is, as mysteries). By contrast, puzzles are usually perceived as being under our control.

Psychologists, such as Julian Rotter (1966), have identified this perspective as an internal locus of control and note that some people are likely to view all issues as being under their control (as puzzles). Anxiety for those with an external locus of control is likely to reside in their sense of helplessness in the face of threatening external forces that seem overwhelming. For those with an internal locus of control, anxiety is more likely to reside in their overwhelming sense of personal responsibility for everything that is happening in their life.

Problems and dilemmas are usually complex mixtures of controllable and uncontrollable elements. To successfully address a problem or dilemma, one typically needs a balanced perspective regarding the internal and external location of control. This is an important discernment in which to be engaged—and often quite difficult to engage when members of an organization (and

particularly leaders of the organization) are anxious. When anxious, we revert to our preferred perspective (internal or external locus of control).

As I have noted, the sources of anxiety are likely to differ depending on one's locus. We are overwhelmed in different ways and find it difficult to provide any kind of discernment, including distinguishing between the types of issues we confront. It is indeed quite a challenge—but worth the effort—to focus on the type of issue we are facing. One of the most helpful inquiries when facing problems, dilemmas, and (in particular) nested dilemmas is for us (individually and collectively) to identify what is and what is not under our control. It all comes down to anticipation. Do we anticipate that an upcoming challenge is something over which we have control, or do we feel powerless and are left hoping for the best outcomes as determined by some external source? A problem or dilemma embedded in a rugged landscape is more likely to have components under at least our partial control than is a problem or dilemma embedded in a dancing landscape. We are more likely to feel a modicum of internal control when we are rested and feeling optimistic. When we suffer from VUCA-Plus exhaustion and from collective Angst, then everything is likely to feel out of our control.

When we can anticipate the near and local future, then we are more likely to consider the impending outcome to be at least partially under our control. As Daniel Gilbert (2006, p. 21) has noted:

We want to know what is likely to happen so that we can do something about it. . . . Knowledge is power, and the most important reason why our brains insist on simulating the future . . . is that our brains want to control the experiences we are about to have.

Even if the outcome is out of our control, we feel some sense of control if we can successfully predict and anticipate what the

external controlling operation with be. Anticipation and control are tightly interwoven.

Conclusions

We are about to step out of our secure home into a VUCA-Plus rainstorm. The winds are swirling all around our home and we know that many challenges face us when we open the front door. I am suggesting that we must fully appreciate the stormy VUCA-Plus environment that we are about to enter. This is especially under conditions when real (and imagined) threats trigger our anxiety.

A myriad of VUCA-Plus challenges are associated with identifying and addressing puzzles, problems, dilemmas and mysteries. We typically want their issues to be puzzles that they can control or perhaps mysteries for which they have no responsibility. We are anxious when moving outside the domain of puzzles. Puzzles can be solved—and we know when we have solved them. Mysteries are outside our control, so we don't have to feel it is necessary to resolve them. But problems and dilemmas—these are much more difficult to address. We must determine which aspects of the problem or dilemma are under our control and which are not. Typically, we engage this determination while experiencing some anxiety, for a confusing mixture of internal and external control is inherent in problems and dilemmas. That's what makes them so difficult to address.

A second set of challenges concerns the values inherent in the role we might play as leaders. In this responsible role, we are often considered much more successful, in terms of both fortunes and fame, if we can "solve problems"—often by approaching them as puzzles. This criterion of success is prevalent in a VUCA-Plus environment. It takes a strong dose of courage, commitment, and persistence for us as mid-21st Century leaders to acknowledge that the challenges are problems and dilemmas—which are not easily solved and need everyone to roll up their sleeves and work

toward resolution. Anxiety fills the air, and adrenaline fills the veins as we collectively face real and imagined VUCA-Plus threats.

Fortunately, oxytocin exists alongside adrenaline. We can bond while frightened. We can close ranks and collaborate in finding elusive solutions to elusive problems and dilemmas. As Robert Simons (Simons, 2005) has noted, we can design jobs and teams in such a way that the VUCA-accelerated challenges of accountability and authority can be balanced with the provision of support by other people and divisions of an organization in which one is working. A systemic, collaborative perspective is required when the important role played by all members of an organization is acknowledged, and assistance is provided by all members of the organization on behalf of this importance.

Chapter Two

Searching for Serenity in a VUCA-Plus World [Running for Cover from the Rain]

Where do we begin in providing an encapsulated (yet compelling) description of the challenging mid-21st Century world in which we now live and work? How do we best describe our reactions to the swirling rainstorm in which we are about to journey? We can use words like "bewildering", "incomprehensible," or "chaotic". These words describe how we feel, think, or see. During the 1990s, a word was often used to describe the shifting conditions in the world of the late 20th Century. This word was *Postmodern*. This term was used to identify a new way in which knowledge was being generated and expressed, as well as ways in which the world in which we live was being conceived. And predictions were being made about the changing nature of this world.

Beyond the Postmodern

During this period of time, I wrote a book called *The Postmodern Organization* in which I not only addressed some of these epistemological and scientific issues but also identified ways in which late 20th-century organizations were changing, largely in response to shifts in the fundamental nature of the society in which these organizations operate.

Postmodern Epistemology and Societal Characteristics

My first step was to build on concepts and observations made by poststructuralists, deconstructionists and critical theorists – particularly Frederick Jameson (Jameson, 1991). I wrote about the constructivism (versus objectivism) of many social narratives and, in particular, the critical role played by language in the

construction of reality. I also focused on the globalism that became dominant after World War II, alongside the increasing segmentalism (nationalism and factionalism among ethnic and racial groups). Most importantly, I explored the fragmentation and inconsistency to be found in the various images being drawn regarding late 20th-century society.

At the conclusion of this consideration of postmodern epistemology, I had this to say about the elusive condition of postmodernism (Bergquist, 1993, p. 34):

Each of the pressing themes of postmodernism (constructivism, language as reality, globalism, and segmentalism) contribute to an even more basic theme that often makes the very analysis of the postmodern condition particularly difficult. In essence, it is virtually impossible to make a definitive statement about our contemporary world because this world is filled with contradictions and discrepancies. We are living in a world that is simultaneously pre-modern, modern, and postmodern.

This final sentence is particularly important to keep in mind. We were living during the late 20th Century in a world that was filled with premodern and modern societies, as well as emerging postmodern societies. And this is still the case. Often labeled meta-modernism, there is much to consider in the interplay between premodern, modern, and postmodern.

I spent a considerable amount of time in the Postmodern Organization book differentiating between the characteristics of premodern, modern and postmodern organizations, focusing on size, complexity intentions, and boundaries. Table One contains a summary of the distinctions I drew:

Table One

	PREMODERN	MODERN	POSTMODERN
SIZE	SMALL ORGANIC GROWTH	LARGE ECONOMY OF SCALE	VARIABLE SIZE “FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION”
COMPLEXITY	SIMPLE UNDIFFERENTIATED FAMILY-BASED STRUCTURES	RELATIVELY SIMPLE UNIFORM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	HIGHLY COMPLEX HYBRID ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURES AND PROCESSES

	PREMODERN	MODERN	POSTMODERN
INTENTIONS	TACIT/ IMPLICIT [IMPORTANT BUT ASSUMED]	RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT INTERNAL: PROFITABILITY ("BOTTOM LINE") EXTERNAL: PUBLIC RELATIONS ("WHATEVER SELLS")	VERY IMPORTANT CHARTERING: MISSION VISION VALUES PURPOSES POSTMODERN "GLUE"/"ANCHOR"
BOUNDARIES	TACIT/ IMPLICIT [IMPORTANT BUT UNACKNOWLEDGED]	VERY IMPORTANT UNIFORM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES [THE BUREAUCRACY] WORK VERSUS HOME	RELATIVELY UNIMPORTANT CUSTOMER-FOCUS PARTNERSHIPS AND ALLIANCES "TROUBLING AMBIGUITY"

I also attended to broader operational characteristics to be found in premodern, modern, and postmodern societies. I examine modes of communication, the nature of capital and the nature of worker values. Table Two contains a summary of the distinctions I was drawing:

Table Two

	PREMODERN	MODERN	POSTMODERN
COMMUNICA-TIONS	ORAL INFORMAL: BASED IN FAMILY AND COMMUNITY	WRITTEN FORMAL: BASED IN LAW AND BUREAUCRACY	ORAL:DIGITAL INFORMAL: BASED IN INTERACTIVE NETWORKS

	PREMODERN	MODERN	POSTMODERN
CAPITAL	LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES REPUTATION	MONEY	KNOWLEDGE INFORMATION
WORKER VALUES	NUTRITION SHELTER QUALITY OF LIFE	JOB SECURITY COMPENSATION (SALARY AND BENEFITS) JOB SAFETY	MEANINGFUL WORK INFLUENTIAL IN WORKPLACE INTERPERSONAL WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

Finally, I explore the differences to be found in the core function of leadership in each of the three societal forms. Table Three provides a summary of the distinctions I identified:

Table Three

	PREMODERN	MODERN	POSTMODERN
LEADERSHIP	THE GREAT PERSON WISE BRAVE VISIONARY	THE GREAT SYSTEM CENTURY OF THE MANAGER DELEGATION/ SUPERVISION COMMUNICATION/ CONFLICT-MGMT/ PROBLEM-SOLV/ DECISION-MAK MOTIVATING/ GOAL-SETTING AND MONITORING	THE GREAT CONTEXT [PERSON AND SYSTEM IN INTERACTION] LEARNER ENTREPRENEUR SERVANT “RIGHT PERSON AT RIGHT TIME IN RIGHT PLACE”

While I was able to expand on and make “real” the distinctions to be drawn between premodern, modern and postmodern, I also offered some cautionary notes. In my summary appraisal of the postmodern conditions, I (Bergquist, 1993, p. 32) point to the irony inherent in the postmodern theorem:

Ironically, all of these diverse phenomena provide evidence of the universal presence of a postmodern world. The inconsistencies of the hypothesized postmodern era allow the postmodern analyst to never be proven wrong. Any data (other than absolute uniformity, which will never be the case) fit into the postmodern model, for the more discrepant the data, the more confirming these data are of the postmodern hypothesis. Show me evidence of modernism and I will declare it amenable to my postmodern analysis. Show me premodern styles and forms, and I will be equally convinced that my postmodern hypothesis is correct. As in the case of a Freudian analysis of dreams, all evidence can be used in a way that confirms the initial hypothesis. Thus, in some ways, the world picture conveyed by postmodernists can't be disproven, for contradictory evidence is itself part of the postmodern premise.

It is in this complex, self-confirming condition that we find not only the strength and durability of postmodernism in a fast-changing world but also its ultimate demise. Identified as false or pseudo-modernism by some social critics, there is a sense that everything being said about the postmodern condition is actually just modernism outfitted with a new cloak. The end of modernism has been declared many times over the past two centuries and certainly remains dominant in the way most contemporary societies have operated (other than those still in a resilient premodern condition).

We might be fully justified in saying that postmodernism was just a clever, attention-getting way in the late 20th century to get noticed by the press and sell books (*The Postmodern Organization* has been one of my most widely read and frequently cited books). What then about the 21st Century? Is the term postmodern now past its prime? Has its cloak in modernism been fully revealed? Does the self-referencing and self-confirming nature of postmodernism leave it exhausted and discredited?

Perhaps we invent a new label, such as Digi-Realism, Altermodernism, or even Dark Enlightenment, to portray our mid-21st century society. I am starting to use the terms *Ironic Condition* and *State of Irony* to describe our contemporary world community (or at least our mid-21st century American society). These titles might be nice and tidy, but they don't say much about what this world looks like or how we think about and feel about it. While we are waiting for a new term to find favor in our multi-media world, perhaps we can simply declare that we might be living in a Post/Postmodern world.

Post/Postmodern Epistemology

The fragmentation and saturating contradictions to be found in the "postmodern" world of the late 20th century seems to have produced a profound skepticism about all forms of expertise and the many "alternative realities" that have shown up in recent years. We have become saturated with the diverse (and often contradictory) perspectives and practices we are supposed to embrace (Gergen,1991/ 2000). We are pulled toward a reality that provides serenity (a state of stability, certainty, simplicity, clarity, stability and consistency). We create a Bubble of belief which enables us to block out all challenging perspectives and find ways to justify and reinforce what we "know" to be reality.

I have recently co-authored a book about these crises of expertise and belief with my colleague, Kevin Weitz (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024, p. 62). In this book, we offered the following observation:

Most of us live in turbulent times – life can be challenging if not downright tough. Living in high-stress environments, we often need to access expert advice and follow the direction of leaders to better navigate the bumpy pathways and survive stormy seas. But we need to do this with some level of skepticism and critical thinking.

Experts and leaders are fallible – some even have Machiavellian tendencies and are driven to

manipulate those around them for personal gain. Blindly following their advice and direction is often a pathway to greater angst and challenge. So, it is not surprising that many people are skeptical of expert advice. However, it is surprising (and sometimes distressing) to discover that some people blindly follow the advice of pseudo experts and Machiavellian leaders without questioning their levels of expertise and their motives. The guide is wrong and the captain of our ship doesn't know what they are doing. We find ourselves on the wrong pathway and on a ship that is floundering.

In this brief statement, Kevin and I conveyed something about the crisis of expertise that seems to pervade our mid-21st century post/postmodern world. This also was a time when an attendant crisis of belief is apparent. In another recent book, I (Bergquist, 2025, pp. 43-44) write about the emergence of a Bubble of Belief that protects us from the challenge of shifting realities and nonreliable experts:

There is a strong pull in our [mid-21st-century] world to be rigid rather than flexible and open to new perspectives and practices. We become stubborn if we are not prepared for a high level of uncertainty and new learning. We find one specific way to be in the world and look for other people who similarly think and act. Together, we create a Bubble of Belief. We collectively push for laws that enforce this one way of being in the world and seek to elect those leaders who are just as committed to this one way of thinking and acting. If we can't elect them in a legitimately recognized manner, then we are likely to join with others in manipulating the existing system or impose our own choices by force. Our

rigidity leads to authoritarianism—as a cure for the seeming malady of uncertainty.

I expand on this observation regarding the Bubble of belief (Bergquist, 2025, p. 47):

We live in a world that is . . . complex (with many parts that are interconnected) . . . We must consider many different things and multiple, interrelated events that simultaneously impact our life and work. The systemic impact of this complexity is great. It is hard in mid-21st century life to make sense of or even find meaning in that which occurs every day. At a personal level, this means that we often must spend a considerable amount of time trying to figure out what is happening before making decisions or taking actions. Slow thoughtful analysis is required (rather than fast “knee-jerk” and habitual thinking) This requires discipline and sustained concentration—which is hard to maintain in our fast-moving world.

Here is where the crisis of belief enters our post/postmodern epistemology (Bergquist, 2025, p. 47):

There is an alternative. We can choose to reframe our world so that it is not complex. We can ensure that fast, habitual thinking wins the day. This requires that we radically distort the reality of our mid-21st-century life. To do this distorting of reality, we must join with others who similarly distort their world. We can engage in even greater distortions when relating to these other people who perceive reality in a manner aligned with our perceptions.

We form an echo chamber with those who think like us. Our Bubble of Belief is impenetrable. We devote energy (and money) to ensure that those who lead

and have power will think like us. They might even have helped to “teach” us how to reason in this simplistic and fast manner. We are fully devoted to these people who are now in authority—or are vigorously (and often violently) seeking to be in authority.

Given these observations on my part, I would propose that the epistemological danger of our post/postmodern world is not the presence of arbitrary constructivism, fragmentation, and segmentation. Rather, the danger concerns the escape from these postmodern conditions to a state of epistemological freeze and the creation of a world in which its inhabitants are confident about their own beliefs and skeptical (and perhaps even violently disturbed) by any alternative construction of reality.

Post/Postmodern Conditions

While most of the characteristics of postmodern (as well as premodern and modern) organizations and societies that I identified in 1993 still seem to be accurate today, there is a broader set of conditions that seem to be increasingly representative of mid-21st-century organizational and societal life. These conditions have recently been captured in the four words I introduced in the preface. These words have often been offered and grouped together to distill the challenges we now face. As I have already noted, these four words are volatile (V), uncertain (C), complex (C) and ambiguous (A). As a consolidated group of conditions, they are identified as VUCA. I have added two other conditions: turbulence and contradiction. Pulling together these six conditions, I have identified the VUCA-Plus aspects of mid-21st-century life and work.

In this chapter, I wish to broaden my consideration of each VUCA-Plus element. I not only interweave these six conditions with the crises of expertise and belief, but also identify polarities associated with each condition. I also introduce the “shadow” of

each VUCA-Plus condition. These are the conditions of stability (as opposed to volatility), certainty (vs. uncertainty), simplicity (vs. complexity), clarity (vs. ambiguity), calm (vs. turbulence), and consistency (vs. contradiction). Together, the six oppositional conditions create a state of *Serenity*. While there is much positive to be said in the short run about this state, the costs are great regarding the relationship between Serenity and any clear and accurate perception of the “real” world in the mid-21st Century.

VUCA-Plus Polarities and the Search for Serenity

As I have noted, VUCA and VUCA-Plus can be of great value to those who assess, plan, and predict while serving in the mid-21st Century role of leader or expert. The challenges associated with the six conditions of VUCA-Plus are deservedly considered large in number and size. Each condition is fraught with multi-tiered problems and dilemmas often nested inside one another. We must make decisions in settings filled with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity. Choices must be made in a turbulent environment swirling with contradictory versions of reality and polarizing values.

We are worn out, having to grapple every day with the conditions of VUCA-Plus. It seems that the weather is never sunny and calm. Personal and collective anxiety grip us, based on our frequent encounters with both real and imagined lions. Many observers of our contemporary social condition have gone so far as to suggest that this is an era of Great Exhaustion (Newport, 2016; Stoycheva, 2022). Thoughtful consideration and caring compassion are required—even when we are overloaded and tired. Furthermore, analyses we have made and decisions we have enacted are subject to frequent review and modification as we try to navigate a turbulent and contradictory VUCA world.

Angst and Serenity

I propose that collective anxiety (*Angst*) is linked specifically to the six conditions of VUCA-Plus. These six conditions make the amelioration of Angst much more difficult. This cognitive and affective difficulty, in turn, tends to pull us toward simplistic, reality-denying, and polarizing beliefs and solutions. There is an important ramification here for those who step out into the rain and seek to lead.

These leaders often must deal with the major VUCA-Plus-related challenges that escalate and sustain collective Angst. These women and men seem to be stranded on a boat that is caught up in the “perfect storm” of societal Angst. This is especially challenging when confronted with a major disruptive wave such as COVID-19 that is washing over the boat (Mura and Bergquist, 2020). Leadership in our 21st-century societies has become even more challenging given these unique Black Swan waves, as well as the big VUCA-Plus waves that are crashing over our boat right now.

The fundamental challenges in a VUCA-Plus environment involve determining what is “real” and how one forms beliefs, as well as predicting and making decisions based on beliefs and an assessment of this elusive reality. These thoughtful reflections are not easily engaged when the waves are crashing over us. We are anxious and exhausted. It is tempting to seek an easier way to meet mid-21st-century challenges. An alternative exists right before our “eyes” (and hearts).

Rather than confronting the challenges of VUCA-Plus, we can find ourselves in a real (or invented) land of serenity. Instead of volatility (V) we find stability (S). Uncertainty (U) is replaced by Certainty (C). We find SC rather than VU. This is a world of Simplicity (S) rather than Complexity (C), while the ambiguity (A) of VUCA-Plus is replaced with clarity (C). Another SC replaces CA. We find a two-fold SC. It is SC².

Serenity loves redundancy – and we have it with two SCs! Dwelling in this wonderland, we no longer have to navigate a turbulent environment. Rather, there is calm. There is also consistency rather than contradiction. We can add calm and consistency to the world of SC². We now find the compelling “charm” of our six alternatives to VUCA-Plus in full operation. SC²⁺ is alive and well!

Serenity is achieved when these SC²⁺ conditions converge. SC²⁺ provides a formula for the achievement of Serenity. Together, these six conditions of serenity yield something of a utopian environment. Stability, certainty, simplicity, clarity, calm, and consistency perhaps even offer us a touch of Eden . . . without the snake.

Seeking Serenity

On the surface, serenity does look quite tempting. It reduces Angst and opens the way for fast thinking and facile solutions (Kahneman, 2011). Furthermore, we can readily find Serenity in our world – at least short-term Serenity. Furthermore, it is easy to construct a Bubble of belief that contains all of the conditions of serenity. And it is not hard to find other “believers” who have constructed a similar Bubble.

Unfortunately, over the long term, serenity is often elusive and short-lived. Our Bubble can be quite vulnerable, given the many challenging conditions of VUCA-Plus. Furthermore, if we find Serenity in our mid-21st-century life, it may come at a cost. Much is lost when reality is distorted, and thoughts and actions become rigid. Most importantly, integrity is lost concerning our relationship with other people and our social system.

For instance, *Stability* requires establishing strong structures, processes, and attitudes. This makes adjusting to the shifting conditions in our mid-21st-century world difficult. We establish what is equivalent to physical (and psychological) triangles to create and maintain stability. However, triangles are not easy to

adjust. Unfortunately, our 21st Century demands agility. This means flexible structures, processes, and attitudes. We similarly find that *Certainty* (the second condition of Serenity) requires a rigidity of thought. It is hard to be both certain and creative, yet the shifting conditions of our mid-century society require that we be creative. This often means operating in organizational cracks (Stacey, 1996) and the intersections between organizations (Johansson, 2004).

As a condition of serenity, *Simplicity* requires us to narrow our vision and our verification criteria. The cost of Simplicity is conveyed in the often-told story about the man standing beside the light pole looking for his lost keys, knowing that his keys are not located near the light. We attempt to find simplicity by standing near the light rather than searching for the problem where it resides. Similarly, we search for *Clarity* by standing at a distance and reconstructing what we are seeing so that it becomes clear. We “fill in” what we don’t see or hear, so everything is comprehensive and meaningful. Jerome Bruner, a noted psychologist, suggests we go “beyond the information given” (Bruner, 1973). Even more broadly, we participate with others in the social construction of reality (Berger and Luckmann, 1966) so that we might see, hear, and understand more “clearly.”

There are two remaining conditions of Serenity (the + in SC²⁺). We find what seems to be *Calm* when we remain silent and immobile. However, this might not be a condition of Serenity. It might be a threat-induced freeze. We can easily mistake Calm for the Freeze response we make when attacked as a weak and slow creature on the African Savannah (Sapolsky, 2004). We act just like the other slow and weak rodents of the savannah who freeze rather than fight or flee. The defenseless rodents remained motionless. They hope the predator does not see them or ignore them and walk away. As Savannah inhabitants, we humans similarly would not move a muscle, hoping for nonrecognition or

indifference. Unfortunately, we were much harder to ignore than the rodent – especially when an attacking tribe approached.

Most of us no longer live on the African Savannah. Lions and invading tribes no longer threaten us. However, we frequently face other real (and imagined) threats. We still freeze when confronted with mid-21st Century challenges – at a time when we should be taking action. Unlike other undermanned creatures, modern-day humans don't shake off our freeze. Rather, we remain frozen in a physically unhealthy state of arousal for an extended period. Furthermore, we are easily eaten by lions (legitimate sources of threat) when we are frozen. We are “devoured” even more frequently by the unprocessed stress that the real or imagined threat triggers.

Similarly, we are inclined to get eaten when we insist on being *Consistent* and congruent in our beliefs and actions. We take wrong action and distort reality to avoid dissonance. We desperately seek out congruence and consistency between our self-image and our actions, between our espoused theory and theory-in-action (Argyris and Schon, 1974), and between our values and our choices in life. Serenity comes at the cost of integrity.

Like Faust, we sell our soul. Now, in exchange for “peace of mind.” This exchange might require something more – that we sacrifice our lives. We are frozen in consistency. We are vulnerable to many anticipated and unanticipated predators. It seems that Serenity isn't always a desirable state when we try to survive on a 21st-century savannah inhabited by VUCA-Plus lions.

Given this summary description of costs associated with Serenity, I turn now to a more detailed analysis of the six conditions of serenity as each relates to its VUCA-Plus counterpart and to the crises of expertise and belief. I identify several distinctly different ways in which challenge appears in our 21st-century world. These

differences are framed as the left column and right column of polarity. In most cases, the left column represents a more conservative perspective on this challenge, whereas the right column is more likely to be at the cutting edge. I then identify ways in which the accompanying option of Serenity can be achieved to escape from this specific VUCA-Plus challenge. This allows me to expand on the costs associated with engaging each condition of Serenity (SC²⁺) and constructing a Bubble of belief.

Volatility and Stability

Volatility refers to the dynamics of change: its accelerating rate, intensity and speed as well as its unexpected catalysts. The Left Column perspective on volatility centers on *Commitment* in the midst of volatility. This perspective concerns being faithful. We act in a consistent and sustained manner. In this way, other people can readily understand and predict our behavior. What about the Right Column? The focus from this perspective is on *Contingency* in the midst of volatility.

This perspective concerns flexibility. We keep options open and allow learning to occur in order to modify the actions taken. An appropriate engagement, often guided by an “expert,” would involve emphasis on the intentions (goals, vision, values, purposes) associated with the issue being addressed. Which of these intentions should (must) remain constant and which can change depending on the shifting circumstances associated with this issue? How open can our Bubble of belief be to modifications?

The Search for Stability

We live in a rainy world of rapid unpredictable change. Furthermore, from a systemic perspective, volatility involves multiple changes that are often interwoven with one another. The rapid changes, cyclical changes, and chaotic changes of a white-water world are clearly evident. The personal impact of volatility on our sense of continuity and stability is profound. Our Bubble

of Belief is vulnerable. Expertise is readily swept away in turbulence.

We are often surprised and unprepared. Consequently, we look for some form of continuity and stability—a safe island on which we can land after being tossed about on a stormy sea. This island of safety offers a cure for the ailment of volatility—but at quite a cost. The cost is the loss of reality and the construction of a world that relies on a dualistic alignment with authority and a splitting of good from bad and “us” from “them”.

We look out over our mid-21st Century world and find nothing that resembles *terra firma*. Miller and Page’s (2007) would suggest our world resembles a rugged landscape. There is no one dominant element (no single presiding mountain); rather there are a host of mountain ridges and valleys. We find no single intention (goal, purpose, desired outcome) standing out as of greater importance than any other intentions. Furthermore, as Miller and Page noted, the landscape might be dancing. Priorities are constantly changing.

Unexpected (“Rogue”) events are to be seen in our rugged and dancing landscape. They blow up expertise and shatter Bubbles. The Rogue events are big things that occur in an organization or community. They often serve as the base for the powerful narratives that are to be found in all social systems. These are narratives about heroic actions, foolish or even disastrous decisions, or a moment of courage or honesty. These are frequently repeated stories about a critical and unanticipated decision made at the crossroads in the life of the organization or community. The success of an underdog (person or department) is often conveyed.

“Black Swan” is an appropriate label for the remarkable and powerful events that have caught our world by surprise (Taleb, 2010). We all know that swans are white—but what happens when a Black Swan is discovered? Similarly, how could we have

predicted the Arab Spring, the election of an African American as president, or the expanded use and influence of the Global Internet. And could “experts” have done a better job of predicting these events?

As Taleb has noted, unanticipated rogue events are often governed by power laws (exponential increases) that move the rogue event quickly from small to large. Within organizations and communities, small variations in the dominant pattern of the system can lead to major changes in certain, unanticipated ways. These are the rogue events and the emergence of a whole flock of Black Swans. The rogue event is often preceded by periods of great stability (strongly entrenched patterns). This is what makes a rogue event so surprising and is the reason why this event has such a powerful impact.

We secure *Stability* (the first condition of Serenity) by dismissing or ignoring the Black Swans. An island of safety and stability awaits us when we pull ourselves away from our stormy 21st-century world. Our island can be surrounded by a large body of water. We vigilantly protect ourselves from the outside world. Our island might instead be surrounded by a small stretch of water and perhaps a sand bar that can be crossed at low tide. We hesitantly let in the outside world. We must consider how isolated we wish to be and for how long a period.

An island that is remote from the mainland can serve as a *Buffer* against an unanticipated rogue event. In an organizational setting, this buffer might be a financial reserve or a human resource reserve. The latter reserve can be created by the cross-training of employees to step into functions other than their own if emergency action is required. The buffer might instead involve diversification of an organization’s offerings. As in the case of a healthy ecosystem, product and service diversity in an organization enables it to survive changes in its “environment.” Similarly, a community is more “adaptive” if its population is diverse (in terms of ethnic identity, race, socio-economic position,

age, and gender identification) – despite the declarations made by advocates of “homogeny”.

This is one area where expertise can be beneficial. Jospeh of the Old Testament was one of the first recorded buffer experts. Through his dreams, Joseph (with many -colored coats) offered counsel to his pharaoh regarding an upcoming famine and the need to build a major reserve of grains to feed the people of Egypt. In contemporary times, we find many buffer experts who take a pessimistic view of the US (or world) economy and advise us to pull our money out of the stock market and convert it to secure bonds or even convert it to cash (to be stored under our mattress).

While buffers help to secure stability, they also require an expenditure of surplus money and time—which isn’t always available in organizations or communities (especially when VUCA-Plus is prevalent). Buffers also can become an excuse for “hanging in” with the old way of doing things. Agility usually requires that leaders of an organization recognize the real consequences of remaining unchanged—even though it is tempting to delay executing a new initiative when a buffer is available. As system dynamics specialists (e.g. Meadows, 2008) have repeatedly demonstrated, delays can dramatically change the outcomes of a new initiative if and when it is finally enacted.

Leveraging and Trim Tabs

There is a more constructive way to find Stability amid volatility. We can offer *Organizational Leverage*. We set up a small stabilizing event or process in our organization or community to offset the volatility—much as we find with Buckminster Fuller’s insightful analogy regarding “trim tabs.” Fuller’s trim tab is a small metal plate on the rudder of a ship that is set against the current direction of the ship—thus providing hydrodynamic stability for the boat. We set up a stabilizing trim tab in an organization as a countermeasure against newly emerging volatility and instability.

For instance, when a rogue event occurs, we should remind our employees of our founding mission. This was done by the leaders of a major banking firm when they faced (unexpected) competition from another major bank that was dramatically changing several of its banking services. A major initiative in this bank focused on the founding story of the bank. Core values are represented in this founding story.

The leaders of this bank recognized that they were about to introduce major changes in their operations to counter their competitors' new initiatives. They wanted to be sure that these changes were still aligned with the founding values. Reminders of the founding story served as a trim tab for this bank—and it yielded some benefits. However, this stabilizing initiative soon lost energy. Employees were not particularly interested in studying the bank's history when they had to learn new skills and acquire new knowledge aligned with new ways in which this bank needed to operate (to survive).

A stabilizing trim tab was also introduced by the leaders of a utility company. Retired employees at all levels of the organization were invited (as volunteers) to mentor newly hired employees. The retirees provided a stabilizing history, knowledge of the business (at all levels), and a diverse set of skills that helped guide and support the transition of these employees into their new jobs. Once again, this trim tab intervention was of limited value. New employees politely listened to the "old timers" but paid more attention to the "new stuff" they had to learn.

We find that stability is rarely gained when engaged indirectly through trim-tab intervention. Conditions of volatility usually require direct action to "right the ship." This typically means that leaders of the organization introduce *New Structures and Processes* without relying on trim-tab countermeasures. Volatility produces stress and there is no escaping it with history or foundational values. We might set up a matrix structure that enables our organization to rely on existing functional departments (finance,

R and D, production, etc.) while readily establishing new product or service lines. We can also introduce organizational processes that acknowledge both the value of stabilizing expertise found among those employees who have worked for many years in the same job, and the value of emerging expertise to be found in job rotations and ad hoc task forces (made up of both old and new employees from different divisions and levels of the organization).

Contingency Planning and Pre-mortem Reflection

At an even deeper level, Stability and Serenity are to be found in an organization's or community's plans for its future. The inability to avoid stress under conditions of volatility requires that we do some planning for rogue events and Black Swans—rather than ignoring them. *Contingency Planning* is needed. This mode of planning requires (as the name implies) that we plan for various contingencies—some positive and some negative. I (Bergquist, 2014) have written about a related planning process, *Pre-mortem Reflection*, that has been advocated by behavioral economists.

While we are accustomed to doing “post-mortem” assessments after a project is finished, Daniel Kahneman and his colleagues (Kahneman, 2011) propose that we engage in slow and critical thinking before initiating a project. While optimism is valuable as fuel needed to start a project, it is also important to recognize potential problems and barriers associated with the project. Pre-project reflection helps a project team prepare for possible challenges (contingency planning). This reflection also helps to reduce the depth of a change curve that inevitably accompanies major new projects or changes in an organization's operations.

Over the past decade, I have frequently encouraged planning teams to identify and address probable problems and barriers associated with the project or organizational change that is about to be mounted. This is contingency planning and pre-mortem planning. However, I often take contingency planning and pre-

mortem processes further as a constructive way to find stability in a volatile world. I invite them to identify Black Swans that might impact their project or change. The shade of black can vary--with both unexcepted positive events lighting the way and darker negative events posing a major challenge.

When I work with a nonprofit organization these rogue events often involve surprising new sources of money or loss of financial resources. Unanticipated changes in public policy regarding funding priorities are introduced when I am working with a government organization. Dramatic shifts in the size or focus of a competitor are common when I am working with a corporation. I even introduce some more humorous or “far out” Black Swans just to lighten the conversation and encourage creative problem-solving.

The swan might be the pill that significantly increases our intelligence or the landing of friendly aliens on Planet Earth. I sometimes suggest that the Black Swan is the elevation of one member of the planning team to the position of Emperor. They are commanding all operations in the world! The key factor is encouraging agility rather than stability amid volatility. Planning must be contingency-based and engaged prior to initiating a project. Strategies for securing stability such as buffers, history, retired employees, and trim tabs must be viewed as adjunctive to confronting the stress and challenges associated with Volatility.

While I am not an “expert” on contingency-based planning, I can help leaders become experts themselves when engaging this agile process.

Uncertainty and Certainty

Evolution and adaptation to an evolving environment require variance and uncertainty (anomalies). While we may seek to create a Bubble of belief and find a stable and predictable environment in our mid-21st-century life, we are likely instead to

discover a lack of continuity and a resulting lack of clarity regarding what is going to happen from day to day in our life. Our Bubble of belief becomes even more vulnerable unless supported by a very large collective Bubble of belief. There is an important systemic impact with regard to this condition of uncertainty. It is hard to plan for the future or even for one or two days from now. Nothing seems permanently to be in place. At a personal level, we must keep our schedule and expectations quite flexible.

Uncertainty refers to the lack of predictability, the increasing prospects for surprising changes that are disruptive and often overwhelm our awareness, understanding, and ability to cope with events. In this case, a Left-Column perspective on Uncertainty would center on the *Assimilation* of changes into the existing framework. This perspective concerns making sense of and finding meaning in what is occurring in the present reality. By contrast, a Right-Column perspective on Uncertainty would center on *Accommodation* to changes by adjusting or reworking the existing framework. This perspective concerns learning from and adapting to what is occurring in the present reality.

The appropriate management of this polarity would involve the creation and maintenance of a learning organization (Argyris and Schön, 1978). Emphasis is placed in such an organization (or community) on the learning that occurs following either success or failure in addressing issues associated with uncertain conditions. In such an organization, lingering assumptions are tested, biases are uncovered, and comfortable Bubbles of belief are set aside in favor of a more dynamic, learning-based norms and processes.

In a Learning Organization, the polarity is addressed by recognizing that learning always involves structures and concepts that already exist (assimilation). We don't acquire anything of importance if the incoming experience is alien to us. However, as we bring in and incorporate new information, the existing

structures must change (accommodation). New experiences bounce off us (they are dismissed) if we are unwilling to accommodate them. A joint assimilation/accommodation process is required. An organizational learning expert might be recruited.

The Search for Certainty

There is a strong pull in our VYCA-Plus world to be rigid rather than flexible and open to new perspectives and practices. We become stubborn if we are not prepared for a high level of uncertainty and new learning. We find one specific way to be in the world and look for other people who similarly think and act. Together, as I have noted, we create a collective Bubble of Belief.

The search for *Certainty* is a major driving force for many people. It is probably the most compelling of the six pathways to Serenity. In writing about the quest for certainty, John Dewey (1929) had the following to say:

When theories of values do not afford intellectual assistance in framing ideas and beliefs about values that are adequate to direct action, the gap must be filled by other means. If intelligent method is lacking, prejudice, the pressure of immediate circumstance, self-interest and class-interest, traditional customs, institutions of accidental historic origin, are *not* lacking, and they tend to take the place of intelligence.

We see even in the early 20th-century perspective of John Dewey that the lure of Serenity is present. We can easily replace intellectual assistance with prejudice, immediate pressures, self-interests, customs, etc., that lead us to certainty, the comfort of Serenity (SC²⁺), and a collective Bubble of Belief.

Three Paths to Certainty

Here in the middle of the 21st Century, our search for certainty might require that we *Confine Ourselves* to a small, confined silo where we can control (and therefore predict) everything. We set

up large, thick boundaries between ourselves and those who are “other.” (Oshry, 2018). In search of Serenity, we establish a closed system that can’t sustain itself over the long term.

Ironically, this confinement strategy is aligned with a “modern” approach to management: the focus is on control so one can predict and subsequently plan and execute without disruption. I am reminded of the witch in the musical *Into the Woods*. She confines her daughter in a tower so that nothing can harm her. However, the daughter can’t survive (psychologically) in this closed system and must find a way to escape the tower. Like the witch, we often suffocate those which we love when we seek to find safety and certainty for them.

If we can’t control and build strong walls and towers, then we must *Limit Our Aspirations* and house these aspirations in the past: “We have always done it this way and will always do it this way in the future.” This is the perspective of the recalcitrant in Everett Rogers (1962) model of innovation diffusion. The recalcitrant is a person who is resistant to all new ideas. They are never likely to “leave home” and venture into new territory.

Actually, a recalcitrant often seeks out certainty and resists change because they were “burned” in the past by uncertainty – when they were trying to introduce something new in their organization or community. Failure in the enactment of new ideas not only leads to the loss of the idea but also to the loss of someone willing to try something new.

There is a third path. We ensure certainty by *Finding and Securing Power* in a system. With power comes control. And with control comes an ability to do things “the good old way.” There is also the matter of self-fulfilling prophecy. We can establish a system of power that will ensure our own assumptions about other people (and ourselves) are being fulfilled.

We assume that those “Other” people are unskilled, untrustworthy, and/or different from us. Without any power,

they will fulfill our expectations--because we are free to act in a manner that elicits their poor performance, disruptive behavior, and/or strained relationship with us. We project all forms of negativity onto them. They become part of what Carl Jung would call our personal "shadow." Without power, these "Other" people are unable to oppose these personal projections. Furthermore, these personal projections often become part of a society's collective "shadow".

It seems that Certainty comes at a great cost. We can partially manage volatility with some pre-mortem planning; however, certainty is another matter. For us to be "certain" about something is to be removed from any serious attempt to deal with the other five conditions of VUCA-Plus. It is impossible to be certain when volatility, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction are swirling around our Head and Heart. Our Bubble of Belief is likely to undergo severe battering under these stormy conditions.

Complexity and Simplicity

Complexity entails the multiplex of forces, the flow of information that seems contradictory, and the sensitive interdependence of everything we touch. This leads to confusion, making it hard to arrive at smart decisions. We are swept up in a moving dance of reality.

A Left-Column perspective on Complexity would center on being *Clear-Minded* amid confusion. The central concern is sorting out what is most relevant and easily confirmed while dancing with reality. The opposing Right-Column perspective on Complexity would center on being *Open-Minded* amid confusion. From this perspective, we would be primarily concerned with recognizing and holding on to the multiple realities that reside in the dance with reality.

Expert coaching and consulting services can be appropriately and effectively used in addressing this polarity through the use of polarity management tools (Johnson, 1992/1996; Johnson, 2020).

And through encouragement and even facilitation) of slow, reflective thinking described and advocated by behavioral economists. Daniel Kahneman (2011), in particular, emphasizes the importance of avoiding fast, habitual thinking. Slow thinking incorporates both clarity of mind (identifying and setting aside biases and sloppy heuristics) and open-mindedness (consideration of alternative perspectives, practices, and options).

It is critical that thinking and decision-making slow down while we are saturated with the pervasive anxiety that accompanies Complexity (and the other conditions of VUCA-Plus). The polarity between clear-mindedness and open-mindedness can be effectively managed with the use of tools offered by Kahneman and his colleagues, especially as they consider the opportunities and challenges associated both with collective agreement (potentially leading to biases) and collective disagreement (potentially creating disruptive noise)(Kahneman, Sibony and Sunstein, 2021).

Complexity

We live in a world that is not just complicated (with many moving parts) but also complex (with many parts that are interconnected) (Miller and Page, 2007). We must consider many different things and multiple, interrelated events that simultaneously impact on our life and work. The systemic impact of this complexity is great. It is hard in mid-21st-century life to make sense of or even find meaning in that which occurs every day.

At a personal level, this means that we often must spend a considerable amount of time trying to figure out what is happening before making decisions or taking actions. Slow, thoughtful analysis is required (rather than fast “knee-jerk” and habitual thinking). This requires discipline and sustained concentration—which is hard to maintain in our fast-moving world. We also find it hard to concentrate when facing the other

VUCA-Plus conditions (ambiguity, uncertainty, volatility, turbulence, and contradictions).

As I have already mentioned, there is an alternative. We can construct our Bubble of Belief and fill it with SC² serenity. Simplicity is assured . . . at least in the short term.

The Search for Simplicity

Clearly, there is a strong, widespread push for simplicity in our lives. This push is aided in the mid-21st Century by the media we consume. We don't have time or energy for nuanced, fact-filled expertise to be found in technical reports, challenging digital narratives, or socially critical books. We ask other people at work to "give it to us in bullet points." We want to know the ten keys to success or the seven steps to take on the journey to health (or even happiness). We want sound bites when we pick up the news on our handheld device or even when we view our evening news on cable TV. "Tell me what I need to know and how I solve my problems. Make it fast and digestible." Our Bubble of Belief needs a few new, confirming "factual" bullet points to strengthen the Bubble's fortification.

This demand for simple information and simple solutions is particularly prevalent when mid-21st-century Angst is swamping the country or at least invading our workplace or household. However, Angst and this search for simple, easily digestible views of reality are not new. It goes back to at least the world of Ancient Greece and the insights offered by Plato in his allegory of the cave.

I first offered his allegory in the preface to this book. As you might recall, Plato proposed that we live in a cave and never gain a clear view of reality. Instead, we view the shadows that are projected on the walls of the cave. We live with an image of reality (shadows on the wall of the cave) rather than with reality itself. Plato notes that we have no basis for knowing whether we are seeing the

shadow or seeing reality, given that we have always lived in the cave.

Shadows on the Wall

Plato speaks to us from many centuries past about the potential fallacy found in our search for simplicity in 21st-century societies. He is describing a much older Bubble of Belief that could be produced collectively by citizens of any society during his time. Most importantly, Plato notes that in our search, we can never truly know whether we are living in the cave or living in the world of reality outside the cave.

It gets more complex. In the midst of a rainstorm, we might even choose to leave the real world and escape into Plato's cave. Now, in the middle of the 21st century, we easily construct our Bubble of Belief and look for others to share this bubble. We might no longer be living in the cave where we were born, for we have become very good in our post/postmodern world in finding or creating caves that fit with the tenets, values, and assumptions residing in our Bubble of Belief.

Today, if we do escape into a cave or create a new cave, we find ourselves living with an expanded cast of characters in the cave. First, something or someone is standing near the opening of the cave. Specific narratives and perspectives serve as partitions blocking out some of the light coming into the cave. These partitions are cultural or personal narratives that we meet with every day. We don't see reality. Someone or something else determines which parts of objective reality gain access to the cave and are projected onto the wall. Those holding the partition have grown up in the cave; however, they may embrace a different agenda from many (perhaps most) cave dwellers. They may even control the media in our mid-21st Century world.

There is yet another character in our contemporary cave. This is the reporter or analyst. We don't have enough time in our busy lives to look directly at the wall to see the shadows that are

projected on the wall from the “real” world. The cave has grown very large. We often can’t even see the walls of the cave and the shadows. We wait for reporters to tell us what is being projected on the wall and for the analyst to tell us what the implications of these images are for us in our lives. At times, we might even turn to historians of the cave to trace wall image patterns and trends.

Our reporters and analysts—even our historians—share their interpretations in sound bites. Thus, we are three steps from reality. Furthermore, as I noted in the Preface, we might face the unsettling condition of Contradiction. We are offered differing and often contrasting analyses. This may lead us to dismiss or “tune-out” some of the reports, analysts, and historians. We get our interpretations of the cave shadows on our “favorite” (soul-source) cable network, or a dominating social media tool such as Tick Tock.

Once we have selected the expertise to which we will listen, we come to believe, on behalf of Serenity, that the shadows on Plato’s cave walls are “reality.” And we accept only one rendition of these shadows. We don’t recognize that someone is standing at the entrance to the cave and selectively determining which conditions of reality get projected onto the wall. We don’t acknowledge that someone else is standing inside the cave offering us a description and analysis. We don’t accept that alternative (and contradictory renditions) might be valid.

We can hope for a direct experience or at least for “honest” interpretations. Yet, we remain confused about what is “real” and often don’t trust our direct experience. Our crisis of expertise involves not just the expertise offered by other people, but also our own expertise. We only move, with great reluctance and considerable grieving, to a recognition that reality is being constructed for us. And that we need to attend not only to the construction but also to the interests and motives of those who stand at the entrance to the cave and those who offer us their interpretations.

Plato's allegory of the cave does provide us with the opportunity to gain insights through our reflections on the nature of the cave. We can critically examine the world that is projected onto the walls of the cave and the nature and agenda of the interpreters. This requires that we tolerate or even feel comfortable with Complexity. We should also consider whether or not to step outside the cave (direct experience). However, we must recognize that we might lack the ability or be allowed to step outside the cave. Or we might just be stepping into another cave.

Perhaps it is safer to remain inside the cave than to venture outside without the help of interpreters. Should we (and can we) face the profound challenge of unmediated experiences (stepping outside the cave)? This certainly leads us far away from Serenity and a considerable distance from any Bubble of Belief. However, this distancing from Serenity and Bubbles does open the door (or cave entrance) to the fresh breeze of VUCA-Plus diversity—and a viable reality.

Ambiguity and Clarity

Ambiguity concerns the 'haziness' in which cause-and-effect are assessed. Causes are hard to attribute. Relativity seems to trump established rules. Conditions of ambiguity weigh heavily on our ability to hold contradictory data and still function and make choices. An accompanying Left Column perspective on Ambiguity would focus on *Tolerating* this haziness. The primary concern would center on patience and being willing to remain in "limbo" until such time as the haze clears and actions can be taken. The Right Column perspective stands in opposition. This perspective would focus on *Engaging* the haziness. The primary concern is establishing a viable "truth" and "reality" upon which one can base and guide actions

Appropriate coaching and consulting services can be requested to address the ambiguity-based polarity. Those providing these services can introduce multiple templates for assessing the nature

of any challenging issue. One of these templates concerns the identification and analysis of both the immediate issue (the figure) and the context within which this issue is situated (the ground). A second template concerns the distance from which a specific issue is being addressed. It should be examined close up (as an intimate portrait) (proximal perspective) and at a distance (as a broad landscape) (distal perspective).

The third template involves temporal distance. The issue should be examined as it is currently being experienced (present time) and as it will probably be (or could be) present at some point ahead of us (future time). The polarity of engagement and tolerance is managed when each of these three templates is applied to the analysis of an important issue. The convening issue can be viewed from multiple perspectives, which allows for both immediate engagement and tolerance of certain immediate circumstances as well as longer-term and “bigger picture” engagement and tolerance.

Confusion and Blurry Vision

Living in the mid-21st Century, we are likely to find that many of the things we encounter and events happening around us can be quite confusing. Our rainy world is often not very easy to observe clearly. The conclusions we reach about reality are often not consistent. Our collective blurry vision has an important systemic impact. As a society, we can't trust the accuracy of what we see or hear. Furthermore, we can't trust what “experts” tell us about the world in which we are living (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024).

If we are being honest with ourselves, then we are forced to adopt a social constructivist view of the world. There is no fundamental reality that can somehow be accurately assessed. Rather, there are alternative constructions of the “real” world, which leave us with no clear, unambiguous sense of what is real and what is false. The traditional objectivist perspective must be abandoned. There is no objective way to assess the real world. We are living in Plato's

cave. The light projected on the wall is often flickering and not seen clearly.

What does this mean for us personally? It means we often must look and listen a second or third time to ensure that what is seen or heard is accurate. We must examine our assumptions and our constructed frame of reference if we are fully to appreciate our distinctive worldview. This task is quite challenging, given all of the obstacles that are blocking our vision and creating our Bubble of Belief. How do we deal with what Frederick Jameson (1991) once called the “troubling ambiguity” of postmodern life?

We can regress to what William Perry (1970) labels a “Dualistic” perspective. We subscribe to the reality offered by one particular “expert” who arrives at our doorstep with a mantle of authority. This authority can come from academic or research-based pedigrees or a position of power. Unfortunately, academic-based and research-based credibility can readily be questioned given the instability of academic institutions and research in the mid-21st Century (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024).

Credibility can also be found in the repeated appearance of specific information (accurate or inaccurate) on the Internet. Apparently, many of us living in the mid-21st century are convinced by volume and redundancy. It must be true if we read and hear it often enough. Perhaps this maxim has always held true—predating the Internet. It gets even worse when this instability is accompanied by acknowledging social construction as an underlying framework for assessing the value of expertise. Patterns and assemblies of “fact” are assembled, making an “alternative reality” that much more acceptable.

With this assault of both defensible and indefensible “truths”, we face the prospect of transitioning to what Perry titled a “Multiplistic” perspective. All expertise and expert messages are questioned. When faced with an assault of truths, it might be preferable to turn away from “credible” expertise and volume of

information as primary reasons to accept what we see and read. We are guided instead by power and authority. Power is much more stable and reassuring than academic credentials or redundant Internet-based information. It is authority embedded in power that will often win the day when the world is saturated with ambiguity and flooded with information. Regressive Dualism triumphs and joins with an authoritarian perspective: We believe and follow those who rule. Those who advocate a version of reality that doesn't align with those in charge retreat to a corner of the cave. Those who suggest that there are multiple versions of reality are driven out of the cave . . .

The Search for Clarity

As we look at the rain-filled post/postmodern world (from inside the cave or outside the cave), it is important to consider what we are looking at and what we are not looking at (ignoring) or seeing through a distorted lens. This means that we look back at our own attention strategies. Michael Polanyi suggests that we attend to that from which we are attending (Polanyi, 1969). The lens we are using greatly impacts what we are seeing. Most importantly, as I suggested about templates, we can look at objects and events that are distant in time and space, or we can look at objects and events that are close to us in time and space.

The distant (distal) objects and events are usually seen more clearly than objects and events that reside very close to us in time and space. Thus, in our search for clarity, we often remain at a distance and view everything from afar. We become historians of the past and might believe we need only replicate what we think worked in the past. As Mark Twain suggested, history might not repeat itself, but it does rhyme—and we can view this history through a lens that we believe is objective and free of present-day emotions and biases.

We also seek clarity by reducing everything to a distant number rather than a more intimate narrative. Statistics provide at least a

probability. This is reassuring in our search for certainty along with clarity. This “ideographic” approach to assessing reality enables us to accurately predict how many boxes of Cheerios will be consumed this month. We are given a specific number and a prediction that hovers on the edge of certainty). We don’t have to taste the cereal or even meet anyone who has chosen this cereal. We can look at a distance and need not get emotionally involved with anyone eating Cheerios today.

What happens when we focus on a specific person's choice of a particular cereal (or something other than cereal for breakfast)? Everything gets less clear and less certain. We are suddenly involved in a “nomothetic” assessment, with a focus close up on the actual muddy act of making food choices at breakfast. The cereal eater might surprise us. They might choose a waffle rather than Cheerios. They haven’t eaten a waffle in more than a decade. We are witnessing a Black Swan. Why the waffle? Does the breakfast eater even know why they made this choice? Behavioral scientists have won major awards (in economics rather than psychology) by delving into these fuzzy decision-making processes. They are willing to live with ambiguity and have offered many valuable insights based on this tolerance of ambiguity (cf. Kahneman, 2011; Ariely, 2008; Ariely, 2012; Thaler, 2015; Lewis, 2017).

What happens when we move in even closer to the subject of our study? What happens when this “subject” is us? What do we do with personal and highly intimate portraits of our life experiences? Often known as phenomenological studies, these inquiries inside our psyche produce insights of great value to not just ourselves but also other people.

I would point, in particular, to the autobiographical and visual portrayals of his internal psychic dynamics provided by Carl Jung (1963) in *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* and in his large, breathtaking volume titled: *The Red Book* (Jung, 2009). In these two documents, we encounter him “upfront and personal.” Very few

other psychologists (or authors of fictional or nonfictional books) have been as brave (though Jung did request that *The Red Book* not be published until after his death).

The phenomenologists take it one step further. They challenge the assumption that one can objectively report events or describe objects. Like Michael Polanyi, phenomenologists push for an exploration of one's own biases and perspectives as an observer and commentator on human behavior. Instead of trying to be objective, one can be honest and transparent. That means being candid about one's assumptions, biases, and purposes for writing about or discussing a specific event or object. One of the best ways to do this is to be interviewed about one's direct experience regarding this event or object.

I personally witnessed the profound engagement in this process of phenomenology on the part of a graduate student attending my graduate school in the early 1990s. Living with AIDS, my student had just lost his partner to this disease. I encouraged him to "enter the mouth of the dragon" and focus his dissertation on the experience of losing one's partner to AIDS and preparing for one's own death (which was likely during the early years of AIDS).

My student took on this profoundly challenging task by conducting in-depth interviews with six other men with AIDS who were grieving the AIDS-related death of their partner. Taking a phenomenological stance, my student was first interviewed by a colleague regarding his own experience. During this interview, his own biases, fears, hopes, and reasons for conducting this study were revealed.

I have never seen a more "objective" study in which everything was revealed regarding the researcher's biases, assumptions, and motivations. His dissertation ended up being rough but saturated with profound insights not only concerning AIDS but also the processes of grieving and dying. My student died several months

after completing his dissertation and being awarded a well-deserved doctorate.

This dissertation process was close and personal for me. I can't be objective about it even more than 20 years later. For me, the whole engagement is unclear. It is filled with my feelings of admiration, sadness--and a sense of privilege that I was able to be with him for this final act of his life. Thus, I, like most people, can be clear from a distance but not clear up close and personal. Numbers are simpler than narratives. Big distal and ideographic pictures are clearer and less emotionally distorting than local pictures which are proximal and nomothetic). Serenity can ultimately be achieved only by closing our eyes and our hearts. Our Bubble of Belief is typically blind to authentic feelings as well as valid information.

Turbulence and Calm

The white water is all around us at this point in the 21st Century. We are living in a turbulent world. Some things in our life and work are moving rapidly, while others are moving cyclically. We are also likely to find that some things are not moving at all—even if we would like them to move. Perhaps, most importantly, some things in our lives and work are moving chaotically. They are swirling about unpredictably. We might be able to adjust temporarily to one of these four conditions. However, we might soon find that we are facing a different set of conditions that require a different manner of planning, execution, and leadership.

What is the systemic Impact? The four systems (rapid change, cyclical change, non-change, and chaotic change) are all operating simultaneously—and they are often bumping into one another. There is another important factor that we must add to this complex equation. We know that any system will become chaotic when it moves fast. Overly rapid change damages everything in a system and makes this system hard to manage. Thus, in a world where accelerating change (the first system) is becoming more

prevalent, we find that chaos (the fourth system) will also become more prevalent. The cyclical changes—that are more predictable—will become less prevalent.

Stagnation (the third system) will also tend to decline in magnitude—or it will become more isolated from the other systems. While a reduction in the size of this third system might initially seem to be a positive outcome, we find that this is not the case, for the third system is often a source of stability for any system (especially a human system). That which Talcott Parsons (1955) called “latent pattern maintenance” tends to reside in the third system. Furthermore, we know that the nutrients in a natural system (such as a mountain stream) reside primarily in the so-called “stagnant” portion of the stream. This is where leaves eventually end up and sink to rot (convert into new forms of nutrition for other living beings in this stream). We might find that this same nutritional function is being served in human systems. This third system is just as important as the other three.

Centering and Balancing

Given these characteristics of a “white water” world, we find that the personal impact is likely to be great for any of us who are living and working in this environment. The white-water world requires a search for balance and a centering direction, which in turn requires ongoing attention. Under conditions of turbulence, we can’t remain serenely seated in our Bubble of Belief. While there are only meandering streams in our Wonderland of Distorted Reality, there are many turbulent rivers in our post/postmodern world. This river is fed by the persistent rain to be found in the mid-21st-century society where most of us dwell.

We need a kayak when navigating the white water. Canoes will tip over. They don’t offer the agility of kayaks. There is another requirement. We must find our center of gravity when steering our kayak through the white water. Peter Vaill (1989/2008) goes so far as to suggest that this center of gravity is often found in a

core set of principles and values. We might even adopt a spiritual perspective when searching for this center of gravity.

One might wonder if this core can be found in basic religious beliefs or an alliance with some authoritarian figure. Do we find balance when guided by firm religious tenets or the dictates of a strong leader? I would suggest that this is rarely the case. For this leader and their beliefs, alliances, and tenets are much too rigid. Like those operating the canoe, these leaders can only move in one direction (forward) and must shift their rigid perspective (single-bladed paddle) from one side to the other when navigating the white water. These leaders are working with a “one-dimensional” tool when counterbalancing and adjusting to changes in the water’s direction. This makes navigation very difficult. Similar limitations are found when leading an organization or community through white water. Single-edged solutions don’t do the trick in turbulent environments.

By contrast, the person navigating a kayak engages a two-bladed paddle that makes counterbalancing and shifting directions much easier. Similarly, a multi-dimensional tool makes white-water navigation in an organization less challenging. Successful white-water leaders employ a variety of tactics and strategies when navigating the white water. At times they stick to tried-and-true procedures, while at other times they might rely on new procedures generated and tested in skunkworks.

The leader might look for a competitive advantage by venturing out to a new international market or they might look for a collaborative advantage by joining a consortium started by one of their competitors. The term *Agility* can readily be applied to successful kayaking—and successful leading of a mid-21st Century organization. This term does not readily apply to a person or organization caught up in the vice grips of a rigid religious belief, authoritarian rule or collective *Bubble of Belief*.

A Left Column perspective would focus on *Centering* amid multiple changing circumstances. A “kayaking” perspective primarily concerns searching for and finding the core, orienting place that provides one with balance and direction. Agility plays a central role in moving the double-bladed paddle back and forth. A Right Column perspective focuses on *Balancing* amid multiple conditions of change.

From this perspective, we must allow for and participate in many balancing points and direction shifts in our work and life. For the kayaker, this means looking “downstream” to prepare for the upcoming challenges presented by the white-water river they are navigating. What might be found around the next bend in the river and how does my current position on the river prepare me for what might await me around the bend? Kayakers and leaders do contingency planning when navigating their turbulent environment.

Keeping with the white-water metaphor, we can address this polarity appropriately and effectively by focusing proximally (up close) on our centering and simultaneously focusing distally (at a distance) on what might await us. Specifically, this means using centering (and agility) to think outside the immediate box and “lean into the future” (Bergquist and Mura, 2011) with forethought.

Otto Scharmer (2009) offers a *Theory U* way of thinking about and acting in a world of turbulence. He writes about “learning into the future.” When engaging in this anticipatory learning, Scharmer suggests we must first seek to change the system as it now exists. Scharmer emulates John Dewey’s suggestion that we only understand something when we kick it and observe its reaction. However, Scharmer goes further than Dewey. He proposes that we must examine and often transform our way of thinking in the world—which requires both centering and forethought—if this change is to be effective and if we are to learn from this change in preparation for the future.

From the perspective of whitewater navigation, this would mean we experiment with different ways of engaging our kayak in our current whitewater world. We particularly try changes based on a process of anticipation that I will consider in much greater detail in the third section of this book. Specifically, we make what I will call “polystatic” predictions about how the river is operating around the next bend. Will there be more rocks, a greater drop in elevation, more bends in the river? We take “notes” on how our kayak is behaving in response to changes in our use of the paddle, our way of sitting in the kayak, etc.

Scharmer requires that we not only try out several ways of kayaking, and take notes on these trials, but also explore and embrace new ways of thinking about kayaking and the dynamic way it operates in the river’s turbulence. These new ways are activated by what we have learned from the current trials. The new ways, in turn, influence other changes we might wish to test before reaching the next bend in the river. Effective learning becomes recursive and directed toward (leaning toward) the future.

This type and level of learning is challenging. Furthermore, it is hard to determine which changes to make and how best to learn about them. These processes are difficult to deploy while still navigating the current white-water world. An expert on white water navigation might join us in the kayak (without tipping it over!). They can help us manage the real-time interplay between centering and forethought.

It takes a particularly skillful coach or consultant who is herself both centered and forethinking if she is to be of benefit in the management of this dynamic, turbulent polarity. The request should read: “Coach or consultant requested who is willing to travel – on a white-water river. They must be willing to learn in real time alongside their client. A proclivity toward leaning into the future is a prerequisite.”

The Search for Calm

It is understandable why we search for calm while navigating a treacherous white-water world. We are not only living with perpetual rain but are seemingly required to navigate a river that is anything but calm. Like many other people, we experience the aforementioned Great Exhaustion (Newport, 2016; Stoycheva, 2022). We might steer our craft to a quiet place on the river (the stagnant system) or pull our craft over to the side of the river and sit on the bank for a short while. In an organizational or community setting, we look for calm in several ways.

The most obvious is the consumption of mind-altering and emotion-altering substances. We drink a beer or something “stronger” while sitting on the bank. Things seem to be a bit less turbulent after one or two cocktails. We avoid dealing with multiple life crises by downing a bottle of wine every evening or by taking some of the pain-killing pills we obtained to treat a sore back. The pills seem to be helping as well with our sore life.

Alongside the pills are the denial and isolation strategies. We focus on only one segment of the white-water system. We may see only the recurring challenges—such as the annual audit or the drop in Fall sales. We might instead focus on the part of our life that has remained the same for many years. We still go down to the local tavern and drink with our buddies. We leave the swirling world around us at the front door of this welcoming Bar. Daily rituals of many kinds make it a bit easier to deal with the ongoing changes.

Conversely, we might be addicted to the thrilling challenge of fast-moving operations in our organization. There are always crises and challenging deadlines. As long as we focus on the short-term, we don’t have to worry about the long-term and serious, deep-seated challenges to our business. We never look down the river to what awaits us, for the current rapids offer us sufficient “highs”. Neuroscientists tell us that we can easily get addicted to

our own adrenaline. Under these conditions, a vacation from the “stress” of work ends up being unpleasant—for we are in withdrawal from our addictive internal chemicals. Similarly, we need the threatening competitor (“it is all win-lose”) as well as toxic (and addictive) company politics (“Can you believe what he/she did! We must counter it!”).

The calm might be applied at one moment as a short-term stress-reduction technique: “I am calm. I am perfectly calm!” We take a deep breath, meditate, listen to soothing music, work out in the gym for an hour, curl up for a brief midday nap, sit in the hot tub, or take a long shower. We might instead apply some “micro-aggression” against someone lower in the pecking order of our organization or community. A few of us are calm after we kick the cat, insult our daughter, or harass a clerk in our office. Some of these short-term remedies do work. We are calm--but only for a brief moment and sometimes at the expense of other people or our productivity.

Finally, there is a major, long-term calming strategy. This involves the search for sanctuary (Bergquist, 2017). We find short-term relief in the stress-relieving mini-sanctuaries we create (music, hot tub, meditation, etc.). This mini sanctuary might be a large, soft chair in our living room where we can read or listen to recordings featuring our favorite jazz pianists. We might also find this mini sanctuary in our garage, where we can work on a new cabinet, or in a spare room where we set up our easel and find a container for our paintbrushes.

However, this might not be sufficient. Many of us long for relief that is not momentary. We find (or create) sanctuaries that last a day or two (festivals, fairs, vacations, etc.). Or we find sanctuaries that can last for a longer time. We can spend an extended period at a Zen Center or Recovery Center. Traditionally, sanctuaries were often established for people who had lost a battle or violated some societal norm. These losers and transgressors would enter (or escape to) a sanctuary that provides healing and learning. The

heiau called “The City of Refuge” on the Big Island in Hawaii has served this important function.

Sometimes, sanctuary is embedded in a ritual (such as evening prayers for the Jew or one of the five periods of prayer for the Muslim). Sometimes it involves a routine, like stopping in the park to feed pigeons on the way home from work at the end of the day or having a quiet cup of coffee in the staff room of a busy corporation. Not always, but often enough to keep us engaged, these moments take us to a place we call our true home. We are rested and renewed. We say, “Now I am more myself again.” Sanctuary enables us to stop, hide, retreat, rest, and become “more ourselves again.” We find calm away from the turbulence of everyday life. We find a way and a moment in which to abandon our restrictive Bubble of Belief. Perhaps, we can even step outside our cave for a moment and glimpse something of great beauty or soulful wonderment (Keltner, 2024).

Yet, we can’t live in a sanctuary all the time. We might heal and learn in a Heiau, but must return to a rainy post/postmodern world and VUCA-Plus conditions that continue to do damage and elude comprehension.

Contradiction and Consistency

We have now arrived at the final condition of our VUCA-Plus environment. This condition is more likely to drive people to Perry’s Dualism and an authoritarian regime than the other VUCA-Plus conditions. It is also the condition that is most likely to prove challenging to leaders who view themselves as open-minded. We are confronted with valid (though often ambiguous) messages constantly being delivered. We often wish they would remain vague, for clear messages may point in different directions.

At a trivial level, we are inundated with advertisements that conflict with one another. Which, after all, is the best way to

brighten our smile? Do we need one of those fancy whitening trays prepared by our dentist or will one of those much less expensive whitening toothpastes be sufficient? And what about mouth odor, wrinkles, and digestive challenges? There is a false sense that we are free when we make all these trivial choices.

As Erich Fromm (1955) noted many years ago, marketing orientation is pervasive in American life (and in most other Western countries). This orientation distracts us from real matters of freedom (Bergquist, 2024). In mid-21st-century life, this distraction is not confined to Western societies. We even find it in the very different societal structures of China (Ma, 2019). Yet, we discover a new set of challenges amid this widespread escape from true freedom. These challenges center on contradictions in the marketing messages we receive every day. It is hard to be Serene if the world is hitting us hard from many different angles and forcing us to make difficult decisions about things that aren't ultimately of importance.

At a more profound level, we find ourselves living with two or more contradictory Bubbles of Belief. We listen to experts who offer quite different perspectives and advice. No wonder we experience a crisis of expertise and belief. Political candidates offering perspectives and practices one day seem to contradict what they propose one day later. Furthermore, one set of political candidates seems to be living in a quite different world from another set of candidates. There often does not seem to be a meeting ground. The moderate candidate and those advocating compromise seem out of date with current polarized political realities.

The splitting of political reality into profoundly contradictory camps is exacerbated by the misinformation, lies, and distortions offered by one or more camps (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024). It is one thing to acknowledge that there are valid differences in the way two political candidates view the problems their constituents are facing. It is quite another thing to be confronted with profound

differences based at least in part on the inaccurate information provided by one or both candidates. Contradictions based on different viewpoints can be addressed through constructive dialogue, whereas falsehoods and deliberate lies often can be addressed only through litigious confrontation.

A major societal impact occurs when contradiction saturates our 21st-century life. Credible advice is offered by people and institutions that can be trusted. However, the advice is often inconsistent. As a result, we can't trust any expertise, since the "experts" don't seem to agree on anything. We collectively regress to Multiplicity—using William Perry's term (Perry, 1970). Faced with no one clear "reality," we decide that there is NO true reality. We turn collectively to expedient alignment with an authoritative version of "truth." Whoever has the most power and the highest status provides the "truth." Those who offer their version of the truth from outside the circle of power and status are ignored or isolated. The new golden rule is in effect: "Those with the gold will/should rule [and provide the truth]!"

At a personal level, contradiction can have a challenging impact. To remain "sane," we often must change our attitude about certain issues or at least be open to new perspectives and ideas. It is not hard to try out a new teeth-whitening procedure. It is much more difficult to change our political affiliation or attitude about an important issue, such as domestic violence or climate change. Our Bubble of Belief is much more likely to be filled with political attitudes than with tooth-whitening preferences.

Psychologists and behavioral economists, such as Dan Ariely (2012), have conducted experiments revealing that we become cognitively "lazy" when tired, overwhelmed, or alienated. We fall back on habitual behavior and fast thinking (heuristics). Under these conditions, we not only can "relax" our critical capacities but also take "delight" in finding that the contradictions disappear. We listen to one expert and one point of view (Weitz and Bergquist, 2024). We rely on one source of dental advice and

one political party. There is no need to ever depart from our individual or collective Bubble of Belief.

Life becomes much easier: “Don’t change the news channel or pick up a newspaper or social media posting that offers an alternative interpretation of the daily news—or even a more balanced perspective.” After a hard and demanding day of work and time playing with our kids, the last thing we need is a thoughtful analysis offered from several different political perspectives. Enough already! We experience the Great Exhaustion. Authoritarianism makes it much easier to relax and retire from the daily challenges of life and work. No more contradictions. It is all clean and simple. Our Bubble of Belief is soundly in place and will never be disturbed by contrary messages.

Perspectives, Practices, and Polarities

Contradictions exist when we are presented with two or more perspectives or sets of practices that are of equal validity and are equally useful. However, these perspectives and practices differ significantly from one another and are not readily reconciled. The Left-Column perspective would focus on *Appreciating* the value of each viewpoint or practice before choosing the best one. The primary concern from this perspective is determining where the greatest truth is to be found. And which option is most aligned with our values. The Right-Column offers an alternative perspective. It concerns *Integrating* diverse perspectives and practices. The primary concern from this perspective is the recognition that there is one (and only one) unified reality that can be viewed from multiple, complementary perspectives. The differing perspectives and practices that we encounter are only components of a larger, unified perspective or practice.

These two columns need not remain in conflict with one another. A tool called Polarity Management was first introduced by Barry Johnson (1992/1996) to address the many contradictions we face

in our individual and collective lives. We turn to the perspectives offered by Johnson. As he notes, we tend to linger briefly on the advantages inherent in one option when confronted with two viable options. Then we begin to recognize some of the disadvantages associated with this option. We are pulled to the second option. Yet, as we linger on this second option, we discover that this perspective or practice has flaws and disadvantages. We are led back to the first policy—and must again face the disadvantages inherent in this first option.

The swing has begun from option one advantage to option one disadvantage to option two advantage to option two disadvantage back to option one advantage. We are whipped back and forth. Anxiety increases regarding the swing and failure to find the “right” answer. The vacillation also increases in both intensity and rapidity. This is what the dynamics of polarization are all about. Inadequate time and attention are devoted to each option.

Polarity management begins with reframing our focus from Either/Or to Both/And—thus bringing in the Right-Column focus on Integration. The next step is to recognize the value inherent in each perspective or practice—thus bringing an Appreciative focus to the Left-Column. Rather than immediately jumping to the problems and barriers associated with each option (which drives us to the second option), we spend time in the appreciative column seeking a better understanding of the merits associated with each option. Only then do we consider the “downside” of this option—and only then do we turn to the other option (once again noting its strengths and then its downside).

With this preliminary analysis completed, we shift our attention to what happens when we seek to optimize the benefits of either option at the expense of the other option. We search for rich insights and productive guidance in each option, rather than seeking some simple resolution of the contradiction. An important cautionary note is introduced at this point. Barry

Johnson warns that we must not try to maximize the appeal of any one side. Rather we must carefully optimize the degree to which we are inclined toward one side or the other. How serious are we about our exclusive focus on one side and how long will we sustain this focus? We must balance the duration of our stay on one side with consideration of the other side.

Optimizing also means we must find a reasonable and perhaps flexible set point as we act in favor of one side or another. Finding these acceptable optimum responses and repeatedly redefining them is the key to polarity management. We must be flexible in both our appreciation and our integration of contradictions. Johnson has one more important point to make regarding the management of polarities. He identifies the value inherent in setting up an alarm system as a safeguard against overshooting either side of the polarity. It would be prudent to build an alarm system that warns us when we may be trying to maximize one side and are on the verge of triggering negative reactions coming from the other side. As in the case of turbulence, we must seek both balance and forethought while addressing contradictions.

The Search for Consistency

Must we engage the difficult slow-thinking processes advocated by Daniel Kahneman when we seek to manage contradictory perspectives and practices? Do we need to call up Barry Johnson and use polarity management? Instead, we can find consistency and eliminate contradictions by adhering rigidly to a schedule, by listening to one group of experts, and by retaining a collective Bubble of Belief. The same outcomes are produced every time we adhere to this schedule and belief structure. If we have a regimented routine and stable set of beliefs, there are likely to be predictable impacts on other people and our environment. Everyone is relieved.

When this routine and range of beliefs are highly restricted, each outcome will be closely related to other anticipated outcomes.

They will be fully consistent with one another. We order the same breakfast at our nearby restaurant. We know how this meal will assist digestion and prepare us for a day of routine work. We are wearing a suit of psychic armor made of one material. It is without any unnecessary joints or openings that might allow for flexibility, variance, inconsistency, or incongruence. As I will suggest in Section Two, we are clad in a metal suit, like the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*—unable to move and in search of a heart. We protect ourselves with “character armor” (Reich, 1972) that admits no intrapsychic challenge (dissonance) or contradiction—but at considerable cost. Much like the Tin Man, we not only lose all flexibility but also our unique and authentic self (our heart) when donning the armament of deeply protective character.

Consistency is also achieved when all diverse, external viewpoints are blocked out. The club one chooses to join is highly selective. The “other” is never allowed in. Homogeneity is of the highest priority, and *Groupthink* is a prerequisite. We don’t want “no bad news” (to quote from *The Wiz* a musical remake of *The Wizard of Oz*). This purity of thought and belief is often reinforced by a formal or informal “black ball” system. One is admitted to the club only when everyone inside the club agrees to the invitation.

Admission to the “inner temple” requires not only a test of shared belief but also a process of “purification” (or “initiation”). Initiates are required to sacrifice a part of their identity. They endure trials that test their commitment and willingness to subjugate themselves to the will of those already residents of the inner temple. Purification ensures consistency. All inconsistencies are scrubbed away. Serenity (SC²⁺) is assured. However, this is quite a sacrifice to make on behalf of one’s search for consistency. Cognitive and emotional congruity are attained but at the cost of a deeper level of personal integrity.

Finally, we find consistency when we become “true believers” (Hoffer, 2010) This often accompanies our entrance into the inner

temple. A set of permanent beliefs is chiseled on the wall of the temple. A set of tenets in our religion or life philosophy requires us to think, feel, and act in a certain manner. Each of the tenets is compatible with each of the other tenets. We find a long history of debate and resolution associated with each tenet that ensures full alignment. As a “God-given” gospel, it purportedly contains no contradictions (though many are present but never acknowledged).

Each tenet is aligned with an overall view of the world and a set of commandments regarding how one should act. There is nothing but consistency in our life when there is full alignment with the food we eat, with the prayers we pronounce several times each day, with the people (“fellow believers”) we allow into our life, with the person we choose to marry, and with how we are preparing for our own death. All these “faithful” preferences and practices are contained in a well-fortified Bubble of Belief. They fit within a single comprehensive and rigid framework established within the Bubble. With this framework in place, there is little opportunity for contradictions to arise in any domain of our world or at any moment in our life. Yet, at what cost?

Conclusions

In essence, there are two ways to address the challenges of our post/postmodern world and the VUCA-Plus conditions that face us every day. We can escape to Serenity (SC²⁺)—and absorb all of the costs associated with this condition of denial and dysfunction. Instead, we can remain with these challenges. We can find ways to embrace and find both energy and partial solutions within each challenge. We can even “manage” the polarities inside each of the six VUCA-Plus conditions. There is so much more that can be done with post/postmodern challenges and VUCA-Plus conditions than hightailing it to a rabbit hole.

Having made this brash statement, I ask myself a fundamental question: Am I overly optimistic in suggesting that we don’t need

to escape into Serenity? Can we really dance between the raindrops? A second question is posed: Can polarity management help us face the challenges of post/postmodernism and VUCA-Plus? I also ask a third question. Can we hold on to two or more contradictory beliefs without dropping one of them? Perhaps I should replace these three questions with a fourth and fifth question. Fourth, do we have any other option if we are to be successful in addressing the overwhelming challenges of post/postmodernism and VUCA-Plus? Fifth, if there is another option is it just some disguised form of regression toward Serenity? Is it simply a form of pseudo modernism (the same old thing in a new cloak)?

Management of post/postmodern and the polarities inherent in each VUCA-Plus condition requires a level of meta-learning. While journeying through the rainstorm and navigating the turbulent river, we must be reflective regarding our perspectives (Kahneman, 2011) and our practices (Schön, 1983). We learn how to manage each condition and each polarity by reflecting on and learning from this management. We discover ways to more successfully identify, analyze, and manage the VUCA-Plus polarities.

I propose that Polarity management enables us to hold two or more beliefs in abeyance as we slowly and thoughtfully consider the merits and drawbacks of each belief. I believe that we can apply what we have learned from engaging each of these six conditions to our broader appreciation for our mid-21st-century world. This meta-learning enables us to lean into and learn into a future that will undoubtedly pose even greater challenges than we now face.

Am I being too optimistic? The alternative is to remain frozen on a 21st-century savannah populated with many post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus lions. We would stand motionless and helpless in this threatening environment. We would feel unresolved

polarities, which are coursing through our psyche and soul. Not very healthy . . .

Chapter Three

The Dancer [Polystasis and Anticipation]

The raindrops are falling. In fact, there is a major post/postmodern rainstorm brewing outside that is filled with all six of the VUCA-Plus conditions. We must leave our secure homes and step out into the rain. While, as I have noted, we might seek out a place of serenity where rain never falls, the cost of this serenity is the loss of any sense of reality and the inability to engage in an authentic way with other people.

We must become nimble-footed dancers amid the raindrops. This requires an agility of thought, feelings, and actions that is attuned to the feedback being constantly received regarding the ongoing, shifting conditions of VUCA-Plus and the many challenges of post/postmodernism. I propose that our capacity to be nimble dancers requires a quite different way to conceive of the way we engage our world.

Allostasis and Polystasis

Homeostasis has been the prominent perspective regarding dynamics operating in any system. Supposedly, we live in a world with a strong tendency for things to move back to some preferred state after being thrown out of kilter by some external event. Our blood pressure increases as we are determined to outrun the lion—be this lion real or imagined (Sapolsky, 2004). Our blood pressure returns to its normal level after we have eluded the lion. The thermostat in our living room is set to return the temperature of this room to 70 degrees after it drops by several degrees when we open the window for several moments on a chilly winter day. After our master craftsman returns from sick leave, we will return to the regular rate at which our high-priced chairs are produced.

Homeostasis and Allostasis

All well and good. However, we are finding that the world doesn't work this way. We live in a world of allostasis rather than homeostasis. Introduced by Peter Sterling (2020) about the physiological regulation of our body, Allostasis refers to an organism's capacity to anticipate upcoming environmental changes and demands. This anticipation leads to adjustment of the body's energy use based on these changes and these demands. Allostasis shifts one's attention away from a homeostatic maintaining a rigid internal set-point to the brain's ability and role in interpreting environmental meaning and anticipating environmental stress.

Peter Sterling (2024) puts it this way:

Nearly all physiological and biochemical regulation is continuously and primarily managed by prediction, even the smallest changes when a thought flashes through the mind and predicts something that needs either raising or lowering various systems to adjust to the predicted demand. Corrective feedback is used secondarily when predictions fail. To me, this is the origin and purpose of the brain, to manage these predictions. When our body returns to "normal" from a deviation, normal is not due to a set point but to the brain's prediction that this is the most likely level of demand. How the brain does this across time scales from milliseconds to decades and spatial scales from nanometers to meters, is a huge mystery.

The interactions that occur between the brain and body are quick and fully integrated, making it difficult to distinguish between these two functions. The brain predicts and the body responds in a highly adaptive and constantly changing manner.

While Peter Sterling, as a neurobiologist, has focused on the body's use of neurotransmitters, hormones, and other signaling mechanisms, we can expand his analysis by looking at the function of stasis in all human systems.

Polystasis and T.O.T.E.

Not to distort Sterling's important description and analysis of the allostatic processes operating in the human body, I am introducing a new term: *Polystasis*. I have created this word to designate the multiple functions engaged by complex human systems in addressing the issue of stasis. As Peter Sterling has noted, it is not simply a matter of returning to an established baseline of functioning (stasis) when considering how actions get planned and taken in a human system.

Early in the history of the cognitive revolution and aligned with the field of cybernetics (feedback theory), three prominent researchers and scholars from different disciplines came together to formulate a model for describing human planning and behavior. George Miller, Eugene Galanter, and Karl Pribram (1960) prepared *Plans and the Structure of Behavior* that described the dynamic way in which we are guided by a reiterative process of acting, testing, modifying, and re-engaging our behavior. They presented a T.O.T.E. (test-operate-test-exit) process repeatedly engaged as we navigate our world.

As with T.O.T.E., Polystasis blends the concept of Statics (stabilizing structures) with that of Dynamics (adaptive processes). Operating in human systems, we are guided by certain core outcomes that do not readily change (statics); however, we must also be open to modifying these guiding outcomes as our environment changes. As Sterling has proposed, the static notion of homeostasis is inaccurate—especially when applied in our challenging VUCA-Plus conditions and stormy post/postmodern environment. The Polystasis model incorporates three processes.

Appraisal

First, there is Appraisal. As Peter Sterling has noted, there is an ongoing need to monitor the environment in which we operate to determine if a new baseline (desired outcomes) is required. We informally or formally predict the probability that our current desired baseline of functioning can be achieved. Is it even desirable? At this point, I introduce a concept offered by another neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio (2005). Damasio proposed that a somatic template continually provides information regarding our bodily state. Perhaps, this template plays a central role in Sterling's Allostatic process. Similarly, there might be a set of psychosocial templates that we frequently reference when making polystatic predictions and adjustments. These templates offer a view of our psychological status and the status of our external world (especially our social relationships).

While the psychosocial template operates at a different level from the somatic template, they are closely intertwined. The psychosocial template might actually be infused with the somatic template. As Anthony Damasio (2018) has concluded, feelings (and the somatic state) play a major role in our cognitive processes and in the fundamentals of our consciousness. In many ways, we "feel" our thoughts, decisions, and actions. We anticipate our emotional reaction to what we think is about to happen. We act upon this affective data as much as we act upon our cognitively based anticipation of near-future occurrences. A psychosocial template and intense template-related feelings are likely to trigger our attention when something is threatening us.

Under these conditions, we must ask a fundamental discerning question: Is it a thought or emotion that is arising inside our Head and Heart, or is it an externally based threat? As Richard Lazarus noted many years ago (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984), threat appraisal is complex and involves a multistage process. Elsewhere, I have suggested that we establish three threat

categories in our Amygdala (Bergquist, 2011). I derived these categories from the semantic differential of Charles Osgood (1957). Is this threatening entity not interested in our welfare (bad)? Is it strong (rather than weak and ineffective)? Is this threatening operating in an immediate active manner (rather than inactive or threatening at a temporal or special distance)? Our Amygdala is triggered, leading to an immediate change in our somatic template. This soon leads to a change in our psychosocial template as we better understand (correctly or incorrectly) the nature and scope of the threat. As Robert Sapolsky (2004) notes, we then engage fight, flight, or (more often) freeze in response to the real or imagined threat.

Alternatively, the psychosocial template is triggered when something a bit “different” occurs in our psyche or in the world where we dwell. The “new” template doesn’t match the template that existed a few minutes before, or with some relatively stable baseline template we have built during our lifetime. It is a “deviant” template that draws our attention and impacts our polystatic process. Sometimes called a *Schema* (Bartlett, 1995; Piaget, 1923/2001), the more stable template concerns our view of how other people see us and how much control we have over external forces impinging on us. Michael Polanyi (2009) might propose that we lack full awareness of this template. We have only tacit (rather than explicit/conscious) knowledge of this psychosocial template—or the somatic template identified by Damasio.

While the Amygdala-based appraisal will trigger survival behavior, the deviance-based appraisal is likely to trigger further exploration and even a growing appreciation of that which is different. For instance, the unexpected soaring upward of a pitch in a musical composition may portray love and aspiration. Just as the plunging downward of a pitch might powerfully portray despair. Similarly, we are drawn to a painting that in some way “deviates” from what we would usually expect, much as a

compelling photograph offers an unaccustomed viewpoint. Even humor often requires that we be caught off-guard by the final turn of the story.

The motivational hierarchy offered by Abraham Maslow (2014) provides us with a way to understand the general appraisal made by human beings. I propose that we can expand on this understanding by introducing the dynamic appraisals operating in both the world of Allostasis and Somatic templates and the world of Polystasis and Psychosocial templates. These templates and dynamic appraisals best describe the source of ongoing moment-by-moment adjustments in human behavior.

At the immediate (proximal) level, our appraisals are dictated neither by the long-term (distal) search for fulfillment of a Maslow need, nor by the simplistic stimulus-response process offered by early behavioral psychologists (such as Clark Hull and B. F. Skinner). The model of immediate, proximal appraisal that I have proposed fits much more closely with that offered by Miller, Galanter, and Pribram. We are constantly altering our *Appraisal* (Test) of the current state based on information derived from our somatic and psychosocial templates.

Adjustment and Action

We *Adjust* if the current baseline of desired functioning is no longer appropriate. As Sterling proposes, we identify a new level of functioning. An alternative ("allo") stasis is based on predictions regarding the probability of success in achieving this baseline (stasis). Miller, Galanter, and Pribram propose that we are *Operating (O)* (Adjusting) when we establish a new stasis.

We *Act* on behalf of the new baseline of desired functioning. In keeping with Miller, Galanter, and Pribram, we again *Test* (appraise) to see if the adjusted level is still appropriate given ongoing environmental changes and our experience of acting on behalf of the new stasis. T.O.T.E. and dynamic feedback systems are alive and well in the Polystatic world.

Under homeostasis, daily adjustments are made via what I would identify as first-order change (Argyris, 2001). They require first-order learning that is usually based on habitual ways of thinking. Such a model of stasis might effectively operate in a highly stable world. However, our world might be operating in a rugged and perhaps even moving (dancing) landscape that looks nothing like a flat, stable plain (Miller and Page, 2007).

There is no return to a previous state. Rather as Sterling proposes, adjustments are made based on what we predict will be the next setting of this dancing environment. These adjustments require shifts in the interpretation of environmental meaning and anticipation of specific environmental challenges. These shifts, in turn, require second-order learning and second-order change (Argyris, 2001).

Polystasis Comes Alive

All of this may seem mechanistic and abstract (an occasional critique of Miller, Galanter, and Pribram's T.O.T.E. model). However, Polystasis comes alive when we recognize that this recursive process moves quickly. It is often not amenable to the slow thinking described by Daniel Kahneman (Kahneman, 2011) nor to the reflective practice of Don Schön (1983).

Polystasis also comes alive when we apply it to real-life situations. For example, my blood pressure might not return to "normal" if I am anticipating other lions (real or imagined) (Sapolsky, 2004). A new "normal" is quite fluid--for I continue to appraise, adjust, and act (moving through the hostile environment of the Savannah). Polystatic processes are essential to my survival in this anxiety-ridden environment. Dynamic feedback based on T.O.T.E. is alive and well in this hostile environment. I am also alive and well—thanks to polystatic processes.

Thermostats and Body Temperature

I next offer an example of Polystasis by returning to the classic homeostatic example of thermostatic regulation. I must live in a comfortable environment. I address this matter by adjusting the thermostat if I anticipate the window remaining open to provide some ventilation. However, I can make an even more immediate adjustment. I can choose to put on or take off my sweater. I can change chairs. These actions enable me to sit further away from the window.

Even more immediately and intimately, my body will adjust based on what it predicts I will do to accommodate the temperature change. I know that the thermostat is a slow and often secondary Polystatic player. The homeostatic adjustments of the thermostat will often arrive late. They are not very effective when compared with the act of adding or removing the next layer of clothes or moving to another chair.

Production, Craftsmanship, and Stress

What about our production of finely crafted chairs? There is the more distant ("distal") solution. Just as we may have to change the thermostat in our home, a decision might be made to train someone else to build the high-priced chairs. We do this if we are uncertain about the long-term health condition of our master craftsman. However, our polystatic adjustments are much more immediate (proximal). They are based on immediate predictions regarding what is taking place on our production floor.

As the production manager, I immediately predict that something has to change when my master craftsman calls in sick. I set new (temporary) standards and priorities regarding what we will produce today. We'll increase production of the cheaper chairs. Predicting the future (distal planning) I will inform our marketing person that we need to push the sales of these cheaper chairs (at least for a short duration).

At an even more proximal level, my mind will be predicting that my body's stress level is about to increase. I will be activating the sympathetic level for a short duration until I get things "arranged" and "adjusted" for the coming production day. I will also spend some time reflecting on what is likely to be the longer-term health status of my senior craftsman. I can overthink and over-worry (inventing lions) or be realistic (assessing the presence of real lions).

How I approach this task of planning for my craftsman's absence will have a major impact on how I manage my body and production staff. That which is essential (the financial viability of this company and the quality of the finished product) will provide important guidance and stability (statics) as adjustments are being made and remade at all levels (dynamics) under the conditions of Polystasis.

Shifting Templates

The key point is that the baseline itself is likely to repeatedly change when Polystasis is operating in a shifting (dancing) environment with changing somatic and psychosocial templates constantly at play. This change might involve quantity (raising or lowering the baseline) or quality (shifting to a different baseline). We remain vigilant regarding real and imagined lions.

Our templates are fully available to us—even if we remain unaware of their powerful presence. We weigh the costs and benefits of changing environmental conditions (such as an open window in Winter). Our priorities are considered. Do we want fresh air, or do we want to reduce the cost of heating in our home? We determine that reduced costs are essential. As a result, we not only keep the window closed but also reduce the thermostat to 66 degrees and put on a sweater.

Our body (somatic template) predicts and anticipates this change. Adjustments are made that enable us to live in a cooler

environment. The baseline has changed. A new level of homeostasis might be established with a change in the thermostat, but this is a secondary adjustment. Settings on the thermostat will (or may) remain in place until the Spring, while the clothes we wear and the windows that we open will make a bigger, more immediate difference. We can do a better job of meeting our goal of reducing heating costs by wearing a sweater or closing the window than by moving the thermostat up a notch.

We alter our ways of adjusting to (and buffering) the impact of shifting conditions (as noted by our deviant psychosocial template). Our craftsman reports in sick. We can do nothing and hope for the quick recovery of our craftsman. Perhaps we recommend that he visit a doctor or consume some chicken soup. We might wishfully anticipate his rapid recovery or the healing power of chicken soup. Our errant prediction, in this case, might put us in jeopardy of making wrong decisions and failing to adjust production schedules or change production priorities.

Alternatively (Peter Sterling's Allo), we can anticipate (predict) and plan immediate (proximal) changes in the schedule and priorities. We can anticipate a need to meet financial quotas by altering our promotion of chairs in a specific price range. We remain keenly aware of what is occurring on the production line (Test). We change our production plans if this is necessary (Operate), see if this alteration is working (Test), and then turn our attention away from the production line (Exit). We have scheduled a meeting with the head of marketing regarding potential changes in promotional priorities.

Leadership and Management of Change

If we turn our attention to leadership in an organizational system, we find that there is much we can do and must do about predictions at both the proximal and distal levels. At the short-term (proximal) level, stress-management techniques and production shifts that I have already mentioned can be engaged.

At the longer-term (distal) level of prediction, we anticipate what might happen in our world –such as our craftsman being sick again. As the owner of a small business, we must be prepared for many possibilities. To remain “stuck” with one homeostatic standard is to lose the agility required of someone who owns a business.

At the same time, we must be cautious about becoming “trigger-happy.” We must avoid being afraid of lions that aren’t present. Furthermore, each major change in the baseline brings about a challenging change curve. A major change can impact both the level and quality of production and service rendered. Those working on the production line might not be skillful (or motivated) when pumping out cheap chairs. They might themselves be oriented to slower, fine craft work.

The change curve can also damage morale among those working in the organization. Those on the line might resent having to “sell their soul” (and their craft) on behalf of the bottom line (producing cheaply made chairs). There is also the matter of self-fulfilling prophecies. We must be sure that our anticipations are not self-fulfilling. Our master craftsman becomes sick again because of stress associated with making up for lost time when returning to work or because he fears being replaced by a craftsman who doesn’t get sick.

Leadership and Reparation

I mention one specific condition of Polystasis that is relevant as a difficult societal issue facing us in the United States. This has to do with the policy of *Reparation*. American policymakers are faced with the challenge of determining if it is appropriate to provide certain citizens with compensation for their lost wages as a result of gender, racial, or ethnic discrimination.

What about the loss of income for their ancestors who served without pay as slaves? How does one determine the appropriate restoration of that which has been essential for a specific group of

people who have experienced long-standing discrimination and/or physical violence? The baseline will be shifting as we begin reflecting on the appropriate restoration. Hope increases or it is squashed during these deliberations. More is anticipated or less is expected about financial reparations or the offering of apologies.

How ultimately do we assign value to loss of hope or loss of dignity? What payment is due for physical abuse or even death? The answer(s) to these difficult questions reside(s) in assigning meaning and value to specific environmental conditions both past and present. This meaning and value will shift from moment to moment and from one constituency to another constituency. Nothing restores the homeostasis of a discriminatory society, especially if this homeostasis involves returning to a previous mode of repression.

Ongoing Change, Costs and Heuristics

The environment must (and will) continually shift. Anticipations will change repeatedly as potential solutions are proposed. The meaning will be reconstructed multiple times as each constituency seeks to understand and perhaps appreciate the perspectives offered by other constituencies. Different values will emerge and gain ascendance as different constituencies are brought to the table. Baselines are constantly shifting. Predictions are frequently modified. Potential actions are proposed and abandoned with the shifts in baselines and predictions. Polystasis will prevail.

Before leaving this focus on Polystasis, I wish to reiterate that this rapidly moving process often comes at a cost. As I mentioned when introducing Polystasis, the quick engagement of appraisal, adjustment, and action is not amenable to slow thinking--not to reflective practice. Our somatic and psychosocial templates are frequently adjusted in ways that might not align with reality.

Imaginary lions are a specialty of modern humankind. Polystasis is aligned with noncritical, knee-jerk reactions.

Don Schön (1983) has cautioned us about these reactions. Schön is likely to reintroduce his teaching of urban planning courses at M.I.T. He would undoubtedly suggest that planning in this domain will inevitably require Polystatic processes. As is the case with reparations, urban planning inevitably involves changing baselines, altered predictions, and complex action plans, for an urban landscape is inevitably rugged and dancing. The psychosocial templates associated with urban planning are often raw and misguided, especially when urban politics are involved.

Daniel Kahneman (2011) would join Schön in urging restraint. Fast thinking should be avoided when operating in a dynamic polystatic manner. Kahneman may suggest that Polystasis and the formulation of psychosocial templates are vulnerable to the inappropriate uses of heuristics. We often use simplistic and outmoded heuristics when shifting our template, changing our baseline, and making predictions in a dynamic environment.

We might, for instance, apply a Recency heuristic. Adjustments are the same as the last time we faced this environmental shift. We put on a sweater the last time we felt a chill. We took specific action the last time we lost an indispensable worker (our accountant). We can take the same action regarding our absent craftsman.

Polystatic adjustments can become habitual. A heuristic of Habit is applied. We always slip on a sweater at this time of day (imagining that the temperature in our room will change). We indiscriminately apply the same employment policy regardless of the employee being considered.

Then there is the matter of Primacy. The first action taken when facing a challenge remains with us. We messed up the first time and learned to avoid this situation at all costs. This is still the case. I never recovered from the chill when opening the window last

week. I will keep it closed until it is Summer. I will never forget that this employee got sick at a critical moment. I can never rely on him in the future.

Given this potential vulnerability of recency, habit, and primacy we must ask: how do we adjust to a new or changing baseline? Adjustments will operate differently when we face an essential challenge and when motivations (and anxiety) are high. We are inclined to think very fast and be especially noncritical when the stakes are high. Emotions are intense. Furthermore, we might always imagine a threat when we are tired or distracted—we indeed become “trigger-happy.” Anxiety becomes a common experience. Retreat and isolation become common polystatic actions.

Kahneman’s fast-thinking heuristic might even be the easy labeling of people with different skin tones, especially those from a different socioeconomic level or culture. We immediately view these people as different. They become the “Other” (Oshry, 2018; Weitz and Bergquist, 2024). Our proximal environment becomes threatening when we encounter a person with darker skin or someone speaking with an accent. We rapidly and uncritically predict trouble. We imagine a dark-skinned lion or a lion from another continent. The baseline changes as we shift into survival mode. We take action to avoid this person.

Conclusions

All of this means that we need to be careful about the assumptions we are making and the heuristics we are applying under specific conditions. These are conditions that involve essential matters or that hold the potential of being threatening. It is in these conditions and at these moments that we must be particularly vigilant and reflective.

We must ask ourselves: is this situation really like the last one? Can I do a better job this time in coping with this challenging

situation? If this is truly important (essential) then perhaps I should get some assistance. I might have to open up to differing points of view. Is this genuinely threatening or am I only imagining that it is threatening?

In short, Polystasis might be an essential adaptation given our shifting post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus environment. However, this process can also lead us astray. We must indeed be vigilant and reflective.

Section Two

Coaching to Character [Trudging through the Drenching Rain]

Chapter Four

Oiling the Tin Man's Armor and Healing His Heart I: The Nature of Energy and Anxiety

In Section One, I offered a hopeful description of mid-21st-century residents who can find adaptive ways to anticipate the challenging conditions they are about to encounter, so that they might prepare for and adjust their baseline aspirations and psychosocial templates in accordance with what they anticipate. I propose that with the effective engagement of polystatic processes we are able to dance between the raindrops or at least can minimize the disruptive impact of these raindrops.

In this section, I also offered a somewhat more pessimistic or at least challenging portrait. It was a portrait of a mid-21st-century world that is often drenched with rain. Furthermore, the rainy conditions that residents of the mid-21st-century are likely to experience will leave them saturated with the anxiety of VUCA-Plus and unable to navigate their way through the stormy state of post/postmodernism.

The conditions of VUCA-Plus and state of post/postmodernism certainly don't seem conducive to any dancing around the raindrops. It would appear that we must, instead, trudge through the rainstorm. This requires courage and the capacity to divert energy away from defensive maneuvers to a constructive addressing of VUCA -Plus and post/postmodernism.

While I focus in Section Three on the means of dancing through the raindrops via anticipation, I focus in this section on the challenges associated with a rainstorm that is drenching and the human psyche that is often immobilized (frozen) by the "troubling ambiguity" of post/postmodernism. I focus on a heart that often is wounded or absent as a result of the sustained anxiety

associated with rainy VUCA-Plus conditions. In addressing this matter of drenching, freeze and heart, I turn to the well-known story about a tin man who was drenched by a rainstorm, rusted (frozen) in place by the rain, and living under the belief that in the midst of immobilization he has no heart.

The Tin Man of Oz

I begin with this story of the Tin Man which is taken from a book written by Frank Baum and translated into a famous movie called *The Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy from Kansas has just landed in a strange land called Oz, having been carried there by one of the tornadoes that were all too common in the Dust Bowl countryside where Dorothy lived.

Seeking to return to her home, Dorothy is instructed to follow the Yellow Brick Road to the Emerald City, where the great Wizard of Oz will help her with this return journey from the land of Oz (and the sound stages of the MGM movie studio). Dorothy is joined on her journey by her dog (Toto), who has been swept up with her. They are soon joined by a scarecrow who is searching for his brains.

The three of them come to a crossroad where they encounter a man who is made of tin. He can't move. His armor rusted shut during a rainstorm. The Tin Man was able to mumble about an oil can, and his first request was soon fulfilled. Oil was squirted into his tin joints, and our tin character of Oz was soon able not only to move freely but also to make a second request. He is looking for a heart and proves that he doesn't have one by thumping on his hollow chest. The Tin Man joins Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and Toto on their journey. He hopes that the all-powerful Wizard can provide him with a heart.

This story about Oz and the Tin Man frames the narrative that we are about to engage. I offer a premise: What if we could assemble a team to diagnose and treat the ailments articulated and exhibited by the Tin Man? Here is what our team would determine. First, we know that he has been frozen in time. We don't know the duration of his inability to move. But it must have

been quite traumatic for him. Will he forever dread rain (or even more generally water)? We need to provide the oil so that he can move about freely. We might even suggest that he find armor in the future that is more flexible—or at least rust-proof. There is more to be done.

We also wonder a bit about the veracity of the Tin Man's account. How could he have rusted so quickly after standing for a short while in the rain? Could there be some other reason for the frozen armor? Is he actually afraid of the rain or of something else that is threatening him (perhaps something in the forest)? And where did he find the armor--or did he construct the armor himself? Possibly, it is just psychological armor.

Our diagnosis leads us to the all-too-obvious conclusion that our Tin Man believes he has no heart—and as a result fears that he is unable to care deeply about anyone or anything. Almost immediately, we recognize that the Tin Man does have a heart. Jack Haley, the noted vaudevillian and character actor who plays the Tin Man, speaks with a very gentle and kind voice.

Haley leads us to believe that this man of tin actually does have a great big heart. However, his heart seems to be encased in restrictive armor. There is an issue of denial or an even deeper failure to acknowledge what is hidden away. The Tin Man banged on his chest. It seemed to be empty. Yet he does have a heart. He might have to prove to himself that he has a heart by engaging in the fulfillment of some “heart-felt” mission.

Members of the Diagnostic Team

Enter our diagnostic team. It is headed by two men whom we have recruited. They are fully qualified to help oil the Tin Man's armor. Perhaps they can also oil the armor worn by mid-21st Century men and women. They might even be able to help heal the Tin Man's heart—and the hearts of armored men and women of our own time. We introduce these two men. We also introduce several adjunct members of the diagnostic team who have much to say about armor and hearts.

Wilhelm Reich

Wilhelm Reich was born to Jewish parents in Austria on March 24, 1897. He received his medical degree from the University of Vienna in 1922 and became deputy director of Sigmund Freud's outpatient clinic. Reich soon became one of Freud's favorites, and at one point, he was considered to be the successor to Freud in the burgeoning psychoanalytic field.

However, he eventually fell out of favor with Freud (as did Jung, Adler, and many other aspirants), largely because he was moving beyond the prescribed boundaries of traditional Freudian practice. While Reich aligned with Freud regarding the importance of sexuality, he was developing his own unorthodox theories and practices regarding the nature of sexual energy. This departure from the "normal" views regarding sex would later lead to major controversy and even legal problems for Reich.

Moshe Feldenkrais

As in the case of Wilhelm Reich, Moshe Feldenkrais's parents were European Jews—living at the time in what today is the country of Ukraine. Moshe was born in 1904 and was raised in Belarus. Having moved to Palestine in 1918, Moshe Feldenkrais worked as a laborer and began to study self-defense (including Ju-Jitsu). Following his subsequent migration to France during the early 1930s, Feldenkrais obtained a degree in engineering. He subsequently was awarded a Doctor of Science degree from the University of Paris. Marie Curie was one of his teachers.

Feldenkrais' interest in the interplay between the human anatomy and movement became more immediate after World War II, when a personal injury led him to begin developing his own approach to rehabilitation. Feldenkrais began to offer lectures and training programs regarding his new treatment methods and published his first book on his method (*Body and Mature Behavior: A study of Anxiety, Sex, Gravitation and Learning*). In this book, Feldenkrais (2005) touched on some of the same topics as Reich. Like Reich, he also became interested in many other topics and theories—including those offered by Gurdjieff (a noted mystic).

We have recruited two additional members to our assessment team. In the real world, they have both strongly influenced our other primary actors (Robert Sapolsky and Wilfred Bion) and our current understanding of armor and wounded hearts.

Robert Sapolsky

I will reintroduce the perspectives offered by Robert Sapolsky – this time as a member of our treatment team. A recipient of the MacArthur Foundation Genius Award, Robert Sapolsky is not just the author of the previously cited book on Zebras, ulcers and imaginary lions (Sapolsky, 2004), he is also a noted researcher and lecturer in the diverse fields of animal (particularly primate) behavior and human neurobiology. Over the years, he has split time between the forests of Equatorial Africa and the laboratories of Stanford University. Sapolsky combined research he has conducted in these diverse fields when writing best-selling books on stress and human society.

Wilfred Bion

Best known for his theories of small group behavior, Wilfred Bion applied his understanding of the psychodynamic nature of anxiety to the treatment of patients in England. He worked out of the Tavistock Clinic in London and was oriented to the object-relations school of psychoanalysis. Bion was particularly impacted by his own experience as a British officer during World War I and as a therapist working with the psychiatric casualties of World War II.

Now on to the diagnosis of the Tin Man (and current-day tin men and women).

The Nature of Energy

Our diagnosis focuses on the encasement of the Tin Man in armor and the resulting blocking of any movement. While contemporary men and women may not be encased in physical armor, they can be “encased” in a set of psychological conditions that block the flow of energy that is required for physical movement to take place.

Both Reich and Feldenkrais focus on Energy – but not the hydraulic energy imagined by Freud. Pre-electronic hydrology was big during his years. It concerns the flow of viscous substances. What did energy mean for Reich and Feldenkrais? We must identify the options and ways that energy is identified and used in the world. Before doing so, I provide an opening gambit offered by Feldenkrais in his introduction to *The Potent Self* (Feldenkrais, 1985, p. xli). In this statement, Feldenkrais sets the stage for consideration of differing perspectives on the source of psychic energy and different ways in which this energy is engaged:

Ideas, good or bad, get hold of us if they fit into the general background of the picture we make to ourselves of the world. Modern psychology began to flourish at a time when the thermos-dynamics theory of heat and the theory of potential were final] put on a firm basis and clearly formulated by some of the most eminent scientists of that time. Thus, the idea that energy can neither be created nor destroyed became more or less common knowledge. Any educated person knew this, and it was quite natural to formulate the libido theory on the same lines, that is, to be analogous with the energy theory. Emotional energy could accumulate, be dammed up; and, as it could not be destroyed, either steam had to be let off or sublimation had to take place. The same background prevails today and some excellent authors, who now see quite clearly the fallacy in the libido analogy, inadvertently make the same mistake with other emotional manifestations-such as aggression.

With this summary statement, Feldenkrais has set the stage for an exploration of the diverse ways in which energy has been conceived. Feldenkrais is correct in noting that energy became a favorite topic with the early 20th-century focus on thermodynamic energy. However, energy was traditionally identified in Western Societies as the movement of bodily fluids or bodily parts around the human body. Energy is identified as Chi. There is a general sense in most Asian societies that the

natural world is a dynamic, self-sustaining, and self-organizing world.

By the last decades of the 20th Century, much of the attention was directed (as a result of the neurobiological revolution) to the ways in which energy is engaged in our brain. This neural energy is usually conceived as either electrical in nature (firing of neurons) or neural chemical in nature (chemical messengers and chemical “bath” and resulting reactions at the synapse). With this all-too-condensed summary, we can explore the various forms of energy that have been identified during the past century.

Tangible energy

While “Energy” is often deployed as a metaphor regarding the way in which people are motivated and devote attention to specific matters, it has also been identified in quite tangible terms – as something that can be seen (or at least measured). As Feldenkrais mentioned, the early 20th Century focus was on Energy as a thermodynamic phenomenon. It was manifest as Heat. Central to this conception of Energy was a disturbing assumption concerning an ultimate dystopia based on the thermodynamic property called entropy (each conversion of energy from one form to another form results in a reduction in the overall quantity of energy). Given this property of entropy, the entire universe dies with ultimate and final diffusion of all energy.

A psychological conception of energy directly concerns the nature of attention: that which directs our senses to what is interesting and important. What is it that we should immediately process? Where do we look for threats as well as opportunities? We can readily detect this attention and the setting of priorities in the behavior of people we have observed. This is the “cognitive” dimension of Energy.

There are also the affective and motoric dimensions of Energy. It seems that Energy has often been equated to Emotional intensity. Our energy is “burning” in us and is on display to other people in our behavior. This display of energy is often manifested in our physical activity. Much as in the case of thermodynamic

processes, we are converting biochemical energy to muscular energy (and movement). This is the process of “burning” the stored-up calories in our body.

Intangible manifestation of energy

While there are these quite tangible ways to conceive of (and measure) the engagement of Energy, the most common ways in which Energy is conceived when considering human behavior are often not tangible. They can only be inferred. We find Energy in Resilience. Human beings find ways to come back from adversity. We honor the energy expended by survivors. We speak of the unique Energy that is on display among people with disabilities or “swimming upstream” as outliers or “others’ (from a different culture or embracing a different lifestyle or gender identification).

There is also the matter of Mental health. In these cases, energy is ill-defined – but it is considered of greatest importance. Often, the state of our mental health is measured by the amount of “energy” we have and how we use this energy. Depression is often identified by the loss of energy and even the inability to engage in action. As my colleague, John Preston, has noted, the decision to do something (take action) involves many parts of the brain. “Will-power”, in other words, is quite challenging to engage. People who are depressed often are unable to link together all of the cortical functions needed to take action.

Similarly, we find that people with major phobias are confronted with unbounded energy – yet directed toward the blocking of specific actions (such as leaving one’s home and communicating with other people). The phobia, in turn, is built around the eruption of anxiety – a topic to which I will turn shortly. As all of our diagnostic experts would emphasize, there is a powerful connection between energy and anxiety. The Tin Man’s energy may be bound up in his armor in part because he is anxious about something. About what might he be afraid?

The impact of energy

Finally, let’s consider some of the impacts that energy (whether tangible or intangible) has on human behavior. First, Energy

impacts on critical points of Decision in our lives. High levels of accumulated energy are often needed to complete an important task. However, especially high levels of energy (especially when blocked) can lead to dithering (moving back and forth quickly) and polarization (a larger time frame or broader perspective swinging back and forth). Energy engages the activity. However, the activity is ill-directed and filled with ambivalence.

Like the energy found in Lightning, there are sporadic flashes of Energy in the actions taken by human beings. Energy is being converted to action; however, this action is neither consistent nor productive. On the other hand, Energy can be engaged in a sustained manner. It helps to direct the setting of life priorities. Throughout life, we are balancing different sources of energy (physical and psychological nourishment) as well as different uses of energy (constructive and destructive to self and/or other people).

We can also see and feel the impact of Energy when we are engaged in activities that reside in the threshold between anxiety (overwhelming challenge) and boredom (lack of challenge). This threshold, called *Flow*, often sets the stage for a highly effective use of energy. The threshold of Flow is also the threshold of learning (between demand for accommodation/challenge) and demand for assimilation (support).

Csikszentmihalyi (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), the psychologist who first identified the motivating process of Flow, suggests that it can be found in conjunction with many life activities, ranging from climbing a mountain to dancing at a disco or solving a complex engineering problem. Csikszentmihalyi also points to much smaller micro-flows that occur throughout our daily lives. A micro-flow might occur when finding the right piece to fill a space in a puzzle, determining the best angle for preparing a still-life floral painting, or discovering the best word to complete the sentence in an essay you are authoring.

Reich and Feldenkrais on Energy

We turn to the historical analysis offered by Matt Reese in his introduction to Feldenkrais' *The Potent Self* [1985, p. xiii]. He is considering the perspective of both Reich and Feldenkrais on Energy—especially when compared to that offered by Freud:

... Freud was convinced that the needs of society make sexual fulfillment and the satisfaction of the desires of the "id," or instinctual self, impossible: For Freud, the best we can do is to sublimate or, redirect, our vital urges. In contrast, Feldenkrais, and Freud's disciple, Wilhelm Reich, believed that appropriate psychological conditions can allow individual fulfillment, and bring into play more optimal levels of bodily function. In parallel to Reich, Feldenkrais emphasized that our conflicts are embedded in our bodies, and ask for specific attention in the body.

Though Reich's practical approach differed from Freud's, their ideas about the nature of sexuality had much in common. Concerning sexuality; however, Feldenkrais differed from the Freudians both in practice and theory. *The Potent Self* begins with a critique of the Freudian perspective. Freud and Reich's therapeutic process aimed to release the emotional pains held in our muscular tensions by emotional catharsis. For both, repression and its alternatives are treated as the blockage and movement of energy.

Feldenkrais (1985, pp. xlivi-xliv) has this specifically to say about the role played (or not played) by energy in determining the nature and course of human behavior (especially sexual behavior). He argues against any theory of sexuality that is based upon the notion that sexual and emotional responses can be addressed as forms of "energy":

The energy analogy does not hold good for emotional urges because there is no question of energy here, but of forms of action. Aggression is a form of behavior, not an energy. There is no such thing as dammed-up aggression

that increases in pressure until the dam breaks down and aggression flows freely. It is a great mistake to think that it is dammed-up aggression that produces neurotic behavior.

If energy is not the dominant way in which to understand and explain human behavior, then perhaps we have to turn to anxiety as a critical determinant. Or is it energy intertwining with anxiety that tells us about the ways in which we behave—or at least something about the behavior and ailment(s) of our Tin Man.

The Sources of Anxiety

When we are considering the nature of ailments that have befallen the Tin Man and keep him frozen, we must not neglect the second major ailment. The Tin Man believes that he doesn't have a heart. In addressing this ailment, we must once again ask if what the Tin Man has reported is true. We know that he might have been frozen in place by disruption in his flow of energy rather than some rain rusting him in place. Similarly, he might actually have a heart but either does not have access to it or is denying its existence. This lack of access or denial can readily be attributed to the presence of powerful and repressive anxiety.

Just as the Tin Man's energy might have been blocked by anxiety, so might his relationship to a heart that resides within him. This heart is the site of emotions that the Tin Man might find to frightening or overwhelming to accept. His heart is also the site of courage and of aspirations that he might now want to accept as part of himself.

Fortunately, we have the right people on our diagnostic team. It is in the focus on anxiety that we find the richest and most insightful analyses offered by both Reich and Feldenkrais. Furthermore, they are among the most insightful analysts regarding the impact of anxiety on the ability and willingness to move forward with courage and aspiration.

It is therefore appropriate that we listen to what Reich and Feldenkrais have to say. We turn first to Feldenkrais. While I have previously addressed the issue of anxiety as it has been addressed

by Sigmund Freud and his followers, there are additional insights to be offered by these two members of our treatment team.

Sources of Anxiety: Feldenkrais

A review of the observations offered by Feldenkrais in his extensive writing reveals two major ways in which anxiety is produced and experienced by each of us. These two sources are aligned with the observations made by several other health care practitioners who specialize in the treatment of psychosis and trauma. Feldenkrais's two sources relate to the infantile fear of falling and the lifelong failure to complete an act that would thwart a threatening attack. I turn first to the fear of falling.

Fear of falling [Loss of support]: Feldenkrais (2019, p. 61) identifies a source of anxiety that was earlier considered by Harry Stack Sullivan to be of central importance.

To sum up, the inborn fear is that of falling. The anatomical structure makes it imperative that the next fear that can be sensed is that of loud noises. The unconditioned sensation of anxiety is elicited by stimulation of the vestibular branch of the eighth cranial nerve. All other fears and sensations of the anxiety syndrome are therefore conditioned. The basic pattern of all fear and anxiety is the irritation of the eighth cranial nerve through at least one of its branches. The fear of loud noises is not inherited and not instinctive. In all normal infants, however, that reflex will be the first conditioned one because of the similarity of their anatomy.

It is quite understandable that Feldenkrais points to the fear of falling and the accompanying motoric (physical) responses, for his work always returns to the basic impact of physiology and movement on human feelings (and thoughts). He posits the following (2019, p. 61):

Fear and anxiety are here seen to be the sensation of impulses arriving at the central nervous system from the organs and viscera. We shall see later that all emotions are connected with excitations arriving at the vegetative or

autonomic nervous system or arising from the organs, muscles, etc. that it innervates. The arrival of such impulses to the higher centers of the central nervous system is sensed as motion.

Ironically, and sadly, little attention has been given to Sullivan's emphasis on the fear of falling nor Feldenkrais's proposal that falling is closely aligned with anxiety. It is disappointing to note that this fundamental fear which is to be found in all of us has found little acceptance in the mental health and physical health community.

There is much that can be formulated regarding the way in which a fearful parent might find their fear transferred to their child when the child is being held. A nervous cradling of the child can lead to their fear that they will be dropped and that their parent's instability could easily lead to an increase in the child's own sense of insecurity. There may be fear not only of physically being dropped, but also of being dropped emotionally.

Does the Tin Man, for instance, fear his emotions because they will leave him vulnerable? Standing alone in the forest, does the Tin Man anticipate that there will be no one to "catch him" when he "falls" in love, hate, despair, hope, etc. Perhaps the mere presence of Dorothy, the Scarecrow (and even Toto) is sufficient to help the Tin Man reclaim his heart. He might not have to travel to Oz for this reclamation to take place.

Failure to act [freeze]: There is an important theory regarding trauma that suggests we are traumatized because of our inability (often as a child) to complete the act of thwarting the attack by a hostile entity (Levine and Frederick, 2009). We are hit by a "bully" or by our irate parent—and can do nothing about it. Even more dramatically, we are raped by an adult member of our family or are severely beaten by an abusive parent. We are weak and can do nothing about it.

Martin Seligman (Seligman, 1991; Seligman, 1992) would suggest that we feel powerless and hopeless. Furthermore, there is no one else coming to our rescue or helping us in the future to avoid the

attack. The world appears to be quite hostile. We are passive recipients of whatever the punishing world has to offer us. This becomes the “perfect storm” for a lingering trauma and accompanying state of lingering anxiety. The anxiety, in turn, produces physical and mental health impairment.

Feldenkrais (1985, p. 11) offers the following observations regarding this important source of anxiety. He notes the physical and psychological impact of a frozen state (inaction) in the face of an attack. We find no protection against the attack, leading to a broad-based disruption in our functioning:

At the root of all anxiety, where education has failed lies inner compulsion to act or to check action. And compulsion is sensed when motivation for action is conflicting; that is, when the habitual pattern that the person can enact is sensed as compromising the persons security. The feeling of security is linked with the image of self that has been cultivated in the dependence period. Thus, for some people, their good looks--for others, absolute unselfishness, absolute virility, superman ideas, absolute goodness and all kinds of imaginary, untestable notions, habits of thought; and patterns of behavior--have served as a means of obtaining affection, approval, protection, and care. Compulsion is sensed when there is a threat of any of these means becoming ineffective; the person feels endangered and left without any means of protection. When there is objective danger, with no means of defense, the result may be real destruction. In cases of internal compulsion, the only possible result is inner collapse, as there is no objective danger. The anxiety experienced in the face of real danger would normally be experienced by most of us. But the anxiety which is due to inner compulsion has no apparent reason; it is essentially linked with the means of getting security that the person has formed during her personal history.

Thus, for Feldenkrais, there is an important distinction to be made between “everyday” anxiety associated with some impending threat and the type of anxiety that is based in a compulsive sense that we are unprotected and vulnerable in life. We look for security and can’t readily find it. The Tin Man experiences the “real” existential anxiety that leaves him frozen in place.

Combination of Falling and Failure to Act: There is an important point when Feldenkrais (1985, p. 121]) combines a fear of falling with the fear that we can’t protect our self. He points to the physical conditions that tend to be precipitated by these fears:

All incorrect *acture* can be traced back to premature or too violent demands made on the person. The contractions that are maintained in all action as a personal manner of doing, irrespective of the act, always express an emotional attitude. The attitude found most frequently is that of insecurity or the masquerade of ignoring it. Physiologically stiffening the body, lowering the head, sinking the chest, contracting and flattening the abdomen-when performed not in the course of a purposeful action, but as acts in themselves are protective acts. The reactions to falling (protection of the head from overhead threats; protection of the throat, the pit of the stomach, the soft “underbelly,” the genitals) are all produced by flexor contraction and are all effective measures that give a sense of relative security in face of sudden or great danger. They either offer a hard, bony obstacle to the threat, or they withdraw the vulnerable soft organ as far as possible. The flexor contraction is inhibitory to extensors, and insufficient tone in the antigravity extensors is the resultant rule in bad posture.

At this point, Feldenkrais (1985, p. 121) expands his perspective by identifying multiple sources of anxiety (emotional attitudes) that arise from a lost sense of security and that profoundly impact on the human conditions:

Bad *acture* may be due to doubt, fear, hesitation, guilt, shame, or impotence. Or to other emotional attitudes

formed in one's personal experience of the world, all depending on the kind of security the environment has brought the individual to consider as essential for her safety.

With this statement, we can return to the Tin Man's heart. There are many feelings that he might not wish to confront or even acknowledge. This blocking of the heart contributes to and is aided by the armor (physical rigidity) that the Tin Man has placed on himself.

We thank Moshe Feldenkrais for his insights about anxiety and are ready to move on. What about sources of anxiety identified by Wilhelm Reich, our second diagnostician? Do they tend to align with those identified by Feldenkrais?

Sources of Anxiety: Reich

Like Feldenkrais (and his fellow psychoanalytically inclined colleagues) Wilhelm Reich tends to look toward the early days in the life of a child when searching for the sources of profound anxiety. He specifically proposed that anxiety arises as a result of childhood fears, a pull between the internal/instinctual world and the outside world of reality, and ambivalence regarding his relationship with important people in his life. I turn first to his reflections on childhood fears.

Childhood Fears: Reich joins with Sigmund Freud in his belief that a child holds many fears. However, unlike Freud, Reich focuses on the fear of punishment (though Reich's focus on punishment might align with the fears evoked by Freud's superego). As in the case of armor being used to protect the warrior in medieval battle, the armor clad by the child might serve a protective function (Reich, 1972, p. 52):

If we trace the formation of the character into early childhood, we find that, in its time, the character armor ensued for the same reasons and for the same purposes the character resistance serves in the contemporary analytic situation. The resistive projection of the character in the analysis mirrors its infantile genesis. And those

situations which seem to appear by chance but actually are brought about by the character resistance in the analysis are exact duplicates of those childhood situations which caused the formation of the character. Thus, in the character resistance, the function of defense is combined with the projection of infantile relationships to the outer world.

For Reich, the fear of punishment often shows up as shyness or childhood phobias which, in turn, create the armament (Reich, 1972, p. 157):

It turns out . . . that this first transformation of the ego, e.g. the shyness does not suffice to master the instinct. On the contrary, it easily leads to the development of anxiety and always becomes the behavioral basis of childhood phobia. In order to maintain the repression, an additional transformation of the ego becomes necessary: *the repressions have to be cemented together*, the ego has to harden, the defense has to take on a chronically operative, automatic character. And, since the simultaneously developed childhood anxiety constitutes a continual threat to the repressions; since the repressed material is expressed in the anxiety; since, moreover, the anxiety itself threatens to weaken the ego, a protective formation against the anxiety also has to be created. The driving force behind all these measure[s] taken by the ego is, in the final analysis, conscious or unconscious fear of punishment, kept alive by the prevailing behavior of parents and teachers. Thus, we have the seeming paradox, namely that fear causes the child to want to resolve his fear.

At this point, Reich moves to the heart of the matter, linking the fear of punishment directly to the formation of character armor and notes that the armor is not easily removed (Reich, 1972, p. 158):

Thus, the armoring of the ego takes place as a result of the fear of punishment, at the expense of id energy, and

contains the prohibitions and standards of parents and teachers. Only in this way can the character formation fulfill its economic functions of alleviating the pressure of repression and, over and above this, of strengthening the ego. This, however, is not the whole story. If, on the one hand, this armoring is at least temporarily successful in warding off impulses from within, it constitutes, on the other hand, a far-reaching block not only against stimuli from the outside but also against further educational influences.

We find that character armor can sometimes be successful in addressing childhood fears; however, it rarely is consistently successful, thus necessitating its permanent presence to defend against future fears (or childhood origins).

Inner vs. Outer world: A second source of anxiety is to be found in the ongoing pull between our internal world, which is governed by instincts, and our outside world that is governed by the demands of reality. We find that Reich identifies an ongoing struggle that is similar to Freud's ongoing battle between the Id and the Superego on the one hand, and the Ego on the other hand. Reich (1972, p. 155) offers a unique perspective, however, in suggesting that character armor is put in place to buffer this struggle and the associated anxiety:

In the vernacular, we speak of hard and soft, noble and base; proud and servile, cold and warm people. The psychoanalysis of various characteristics proves that they are merely various forms an armoring of the ego against the dangers of the outside world and the repressed instinctual demands of the id. Etiologically, there is just as much anxiety behind the excessive politeness of one person as there is behind the gruff and occasionally brutal reaction of another.

We find that Reich is not only setting the stage for a description of the armor with which we protect ourselves, but also for differentiating different kinds of armor that are manifest in diverse behavior patterns (personality characteristics).

Ambivalence: This condition is represented in a vacillation between strivings toward hate and strivings toward love that operate on the surface layer of the psychic apparatus. Reich (1972, p. p. 274) proposes at a deeper level that ambivalence corresponds to the forementioned pull between instincts and reality. The pull between love and hate resides, ultimately, at a much deeper level:

[Ambivalences] are the manifestations of a clash between a libidinal impulse ceaselessly striving for expression and fear of punishment which inhibits it and prevents it from being translated into action. Often (in the compulsive character, always) the love impulse is replaced by a hate impulse which, in the depth, pursues the goal of the love impulse but is also inhibited by the same anxiety as the sexual impulse.

At this point, Reich (1972, p. 274) offers a brief dramatic portrayal:

[D]epending upon its genesis and the depth of its function ambivalence has three meanings:

- a) "I love you, but I am afraid of being punished for (love-fear).
- b) "I hate you because I am not allowed to love you but am afraid of gratifying the hate" (hate-fear).
- c) "I don't know whether I love or hate you" (love-hate)

We will leave our initial exploration of Feldenkrais' and Reich's formulations regarding energy and anxiety with this remarkably simple insight regarding the relationships between love, hate and fear. This remarkable three-fold portrayal might serve as the base for an entire theory of interpersonal relationships. At the very least, it can serve as an important diagnostic point in addressing Tin Man's ailments.

The Tin Man's heart might contain all of these mixed combinations of powerful emotions. Perhaps it is simpler for the Tin Man to remain motionless in the forest rather than make decisions about or act on his volatile and contradictory emotions. Better to remain frozen and immune to outside influences (that

might trigger his emotions) than to stay engaged in living, loving, and acting. Then along comes Dorothy, the Scarecrow and Toto. . .

We turn to contributions that can be made by other members of the team who are diagnosing the source and nature of our Tin Man's armor and finding ways to treat the wounded heart. It seems that armor and heart are not easily understood. Successful attempts to remove the armor and heal the heart might require a diverse set of insights.

The Encased Body: Robert Sapolsky

As we consider the insights that can be provided by the additional members of our diagnostic team, there are several new questions that we might pose if we are to be effective in treating armor and wounded hearts. First, we must ask: How does the heart get encased? Robert Sapolsky provides an insightful answer.

As I have already noted, Sapolsky (2004) moves us onto the African Savannah and faces us with the challenge of escaping from a major predator-- such as a lion! He also poses another equally great challenge: how do we deal with the stress associated with "imaginary lions"? In essence, Sapolsky is proposing that humans are physiologically ill-equipped to successfully (in most instances) run away from lions. And this leads to the encasement of our heart. Quite a leap from lions to encased hearts – but here is how it operates.

Confronting Lions

Our body moves all of the energy away from whatever it is doing when the lion is sighted. We stop eating or relaxing. Instead, we redirect our energy to the muscles, heart and other bodily functions that are needed for a successful dash to safety or for successfully whacking the predator's head (if it's a small lion or a less imposing animal). The stomach shuts down, for we don't want to concentrate on eating; we want to concentrate on not being eaten. Furthermore, various slow-developing response systems are put on a back burner. We don't have time (nor

immediate need) for systems such as those needed when getting ready for reflecting or mediative practices – or sleep.

When any animal is responding to "real" predators, the response system ("flight or fight") works perfectly. The body can handle the temporary strain of the frightening Savannah. That is why zebras don't get ulcers--they are frightened by real lions and their physiological system knows how to adjust to the strain of fleeing from the lion. Humans seem to differ from zebras (and many other animals) in that we do get ulcers and many other stress-related illnesses. There appear to be two fundamental reasons why we are so vulnerable to stress.

The first reason is that humans tend to use a strategy other than fight or flight when addressing the challenge of an impending attack by a lion. It is the aforementioned strategy of freezing. We stop in our tracks and try to remain motionless and silent. We have all seen this third strategy in operation: the deer that is frozen in the headlights of our automobile, the squirrel that freezes in its tracks when it sees us approaching the tree. Humans often prefer to use this third strategy – perhaps because we're not fast enough to flee nor strong enough to fight.

The Freeze that Wounds

Here is where the encased heart enters the picture. This third strategy of freezing is the one that is likely to give us the most trouble in our current environment. There are two ways in which we freeze. First, we freeze when we are physically hurt. This freezing activates the healing functions of our body (the parasympathetic system). If one is about to lose a significant amount of blood, then fainting may reduce blood loss. The second type of freeze is the one we witness with the "deer in the headlights" phenomenon. We see a danger and go into immediate immobilization. We are aroused (sympathetic system), but we stay still to avoid the predator rather than either fight or flee. We hold ourselves motionless, hoping not to be seen.

Most of us no longer live on the African Savannah and rarely, if ever, face a menacing lion. However, human beings have the

capacity to envision something that is not physically present. This capacity is adaptive (favorable for our evolution) when it comes to planning for and envisioning potential escape routes from potential predators. It is very maladaptive when it comes to envisioning lions and other predators that, in reality, don't threaten us physically. These "lions" can be an over-demanding Board of Directors, an overdue financial report, a competitor for market share, or an irate customer. Our body reacts to these "lions" as if they were a physical danger.

When facing imagined lions, we find that we can only deploy a freeze pattern and are unable, ever, to either fight or flee. We are constantly aroused and yet are frozen in inaction. This stress gets translated into a host of painful mechanisms (anger, depression, or panic attacks). We learn to freeze and hold on. We never let go. The energy we have generated in preparation for the lion is never released into either fight or flight. Sapolsky proposes that people get ulcers because they can imagine lions that come in many forms. While our mind knows that these lions don't really exist, our body doesn't. It prepares for the fight, flight, or freeze, turns off the digestive system, begins to pump activating hormones into our body, and ensures that we don't fall asleep while running away from or seeking to overcome the lion.

Sapolsky's analysis is certainly provocative. And he is certainly not alone in proposing that humans get into physiological trouble because they can imagine threats that their bodies don't realize are imagined. However, something is missing here. Other animals (at least mammals) can imagine things that aren't there. Dogs can anticipate a walk around the block when the collar is put on them. Cats often sulk when their owners are about to leave on a trip. So, why do people get ulcers?

Wounding of an Encased Heart

There appear to be three possible reasons why we as humans tend to wound ourselves. Each reason holds significant implications with regard to character armor and the encased heart. First, humans may see more imagined lions than do other animals. Perhaps other animals are more selective about what they

imagine. The sulking cat may be able to imagine the departure of her beloved owner, but she might not begin to imagine other possible misfortunes, such as a failure on the part of her owner to leave out food for her, or the potential attack on her by the family dog.

There is a second possible explanation: our image of lions may be more vivid than is the case with the images generated by other animals. We know how to make the imagined predator quite menacing, and we can flesh out this image—extending it far into the future and far out in physical space. We can readily imagine that the over-demanding Board of Directors will be around for many years to come. When we are stressed out or depressed, there is often a vision of the world never getting better than it is right now. We look far into the future and see nothing that seems positive for us.

We can also extend our imagination outward to a chain of events that could do us great damage. We can trace out the "real" and "possible" negative consequences of not submitting that overdue financial report. We can envision a world in which our competitor not only commands a greater market share but actually puts us out of business. We can even imagine ourselves not only yelling at the irate customer, who is becoming increasingly obnoxious, but also losing our job, house, and even family as a result of this one misjudgment. We are terrific at spinning out remarkable stories and can scare ourselves (and our bodies) to death with these stories.

There is a third possible reason why we as humans wound ourselves and get ulcers—and other animals with imagination do not. Other animals may have better ways of coping with the resulting stress. Obviously, some animals cope with imaginary threats by either seeking to fight against these threats or by running away from the imagined threats. They don't just freeze in the face of the imagined threat. The fight and flight strategies mobilize the arousal system; the actual physical fleeing or fighting drains it off. Furthermore, in the case of the fight strategy, there is an immediate testing of the threat's reality. If you begin to fight

the imaginary lion, you are likely to discover very soon that it is imaginary. Conversely, if you either flee from or stand motionless in the face of the imaginary lion, you will never discover that it isn't real.

There may be many other coping strategies that are successfully used by other animals. While no other animal, as far as we know, practices yoga, perhaps they can move into a state of consciousness that leads them out of the arousal state into a state of restful consciousness. Some animals might also be coping effectively in ways that resemble the successful coping of humans when they lived on the Savannah. They are engaged in physical activities that drain off the excess energy set in motion by the imagined lion. They live outside most of the time and thus benefit from the tranquilizing effects of the sunlight.

Even if these animals remain stressed for a brief period of time while imagining lions, they soon get some restorative sleep (having been physically active for an extended period of time or having moved into a yoga-type state of consciousness). By the way, we are not completely alone. Most of the other animals who get ulcers or other stress-related diseases (such as rodents and deer) tend to rely on this freezing strategy. Perhaps the Tin Man is human enough to emulate the ineffective response to stress. His armor is a tangible manifestation of the frozen condition.

Variations of Imagined Lions

There is another important set of lessons to be learned about human survival and the imaginary vision of lions on the Savannah. These lessons concern the differences among individual humans in the nature of imagined lions that they find to be stressful. All of us are stressed by the same things: we all find real lions to be stressful (if they are attacking us) and we all worry about our own death and the death of other people in our life whom we love. Yet, each of us also finds certain things to be more stressful than others.

Furthermore, stress has both a specific and a general impact on human physiology. Stress ultimately changes every organ in the

human body. Stress is systemic, not specific. However, stress also has a very focused physiological impact on specific organs. For each of us, certain organs are uniquely sensitive to stress and this specific profile of sensitivity creates unique patterns of personality, abnormality and illness. This is where the insights offered by Reich can be quite helpful. He identifies specific muscular blockages that help to create and maintain unique human characteristics—that is what character analysis is all about.

As Reich noted, the profile of stress (and muscular blockage) may be genetically determined or established early in life. A child might be exposed to a specific stressor that has a particularly strong impact on a specific organ. Once the profile is established, the "rut" grows deeper. The armor thickens. Sapolsky describes this rutting process:

... stress responses tend to spiral up and down. First, we are triggered. Then, we react to being triggered with confusion, humiliation, and even anger (I'm angry because you scared me). This becomes a spiral of stress. For intense stressful events, we create [a memory] that never goes away.

In essence, anything that triggers a memory of this event will trigger an intense emotional reaction that may never be resolved during our lifetime. We are caught in an ever-deepening rut. Our armor becomes rusty. Our heart no longer seems to be present. Like the Tin Man, we are vulnerable and powerless-- and must wait for some other person (such as Dorothy) to help us out. Chaos theorists suggest that this process of "strange attraction" is to be found in any system that is dynamic and filled with interdependencies.

There are ongoing states of stress and distress for people who have established a rutted stress profile and stiff armor. As in the case of the tipping point in physical systems, there is a moment where we are overwhelmed beyond repair. We become weak and collapse. The agents that initially are there to fight the stress soon become the internal enemy. The armor that is meant to protect us

becomes our enemy. We see this operating in a rather mild fashion when we "catch" a cold. It is evident, in more dramatic fashion, when one's immune system begins to attack the body. And when someone who has faced trauma in their childhood now finds themselves unable to deal with any stressful situation (even if it is only mildly traumatic).

The deeply rutted stress and character armor profile can have a profound impact on our life. Stress and armor impact on both the physical and psychological quality of the life we live and the duration of our life. For some of us, stress has a focused impact on peripheral organs that are not essential to life. For most of us, however, stress hits our most precious, life-giving organs (such as the heart and digestive system). We now know that the latter (very large) group of people will live shorter lives because of their imagined lions. Or they will live long lives but remain frozen in place like our Tin Man.

Escape from Pain

We must add one other ingredient to this potent and often life-threatening mixture. This ingredient can't be traced back to the African Savannah but rather is a product of our modern era. In fact, it is a product of the 21st century and concerns the meaning that is assigned to stress and associated pain and suffering. Prior to the 20th century and the introduction of such analgesics as aspirin in Western medicine, pain was assigned a specific meaning by the culture in which the sufferer lived. There was no way to avoid the pain if we were injured or ill; therefore, we tried to assign some value or meaning to the pain. And our society helped out by providing a culturally based explanation.

The pain may have signified a message from God indicating that we have committed an evil act. The pain might instead be a statement from God that we have been chosen to serve other people or to suffer for other people. Alternatively, the pain might be related to a specific disposition or view of life (we have a "healthy" or "unhealthy" attitude). At the very least, the pain indicated that we were sick or injured and thus drove us to seek a cure. Without a cure, there was continuing pain.

Today, most people just want the pain to go away. They are less interested in the cure since they can be relieved of pain without being cured. An important tension is created at this point. The physician or therapist often holds a different agenda from the patient: the physician or therapist is interested in a cure, while the patient is interested in relief from the painful symptoms.

Therefore, given that pain no longer has any meaning, and we seek primarily to relieve the pain, the stress associated with imagining a lion has a double impact. We not only experience the stress associated with the imagined lion—we also try desperately to alleviate the pain that is associated with this stress.

The pain is trying to tell us that we need to do something to reduce the stress, but we wish instead to eliminate the pain--through the use of drugs, food, alcohol, or other substances. This concerted effort to eliminate the pain distracts us from the source of the pain--namely the stressor—and leads inevitably to increased stress and further efforts to eliminate the pain associated with the stress.

The analgesics themselves further disrupt human physiology and leave us even more vulnerable to the physical maladies associated with prolonged stress. We numb ourselves and this numbing further strengthens the encasement of our heart. We don the protective armor identified by Reich and worn by the Tin Man. This armor and the unacknowledged heart may protect us temporarily from the pain—but at great cost.

Unforgettable Fear

Another lingering influence of the African Savannah is the reaction of a specific center in the human brain, our amygdala. Located below the cortex, this small neural mechanism appears to play a major role in our detection of dangerous entities out in the world. In essence, whenever we take in a stimulus, it is processed through two neural mechanisms: the cortex and the amygdala. The cortex takes its time in processing this stimulus, providing a rational and systematic analysis of the potential of the entity

represented by this stimulus to do harm. The amygdala operates in a much quicker and less thoughtful manner.

There is an immediate judgment made about the harmful or harmless nature of the perceived entity. Does this entity wish to harm us? Is it strong? Is it active? If the answer to all three of these questions is "yes," then our amygdala is triggered—even if the entity is imagined. Furthermore, there is an immediate emotional (chemical) reaction to this judgment if the entity is judged by the amygdala to be dangerous. This emotional reaction only goes away or is at least diminished after other areas of our brain have a chance to do their own, more rational and objective analysis. Following three or four seconds of deliberation, our brain usually concludes that there is no impending threat.

We have all experienced our amygdala in operation. We are walking down a path in the forest and suddenly jump backwards, with a rush of adrenaline, viewing something that might be a snake or a stick. Quite understandably, when we are living on the Savannah, it makes much more sense for us to make a wrong decision and leap away from a harmless stick than it is to hang around and be bitten by a poisonous snake. Better to be safe (and feel a little foolish) than to be sorry and risk one's life with a toxic snakebite. Many entities on the Savannah can do us harm—especially if we don't react quickly. The amygdala is our lifesaver.

It seems that the amygdala sets up primitive templates that serve as a mechanism for matching the threat and non-threat appraisals. A mental template of "snake," for instance, might be established, such that any long, thin, dark object is matched and creates an emotional reaction (whether it is a stick or a snake). Where do these templates come from? Are they wired in? Could Carl Jung (1955) be correct when he suggested that there are certain archetypes that we have inherited from our ancestors?

Our current understanding of the operations of the amygdala is not sufficient to answer this important question about archetypal inheritance, though it does appear that at least some of the primitive templates are acquired ("learned") after birth. Recent research findings suggest at the very least that the physiological

modifications that we make in our physical and cortical structures when confronted with threat can be passed on at birth to our children. Furthermore, it appears that templates (whether created before or after birth) are not subject to the usual decay function. Apparently, we never lose these templates. There really are "unforgettable" fears. And this is where it gets interesting and where the amygdala can run us into trouble when it is engaged many miles and years away from the African Savannah.

It is not just snakelike objects that end up as matches to amygdala templates; we also create interpersonal templates. If we were traumatized as a young child by a man with a white beard, then we are likely to create a template that alerts us in the future to any man we encounter who has a white beard. We have an immediate, short- term reaction to white bearded men and this emotional reaction is only tempered after our cortex processes the data in a more rational manner and concludes that this particular man is not a danger to us.

We then correct our impressions – or do we? Perhaps there is a lingering fear, a subtle background emotion that influences our relationship with this person? This is the interesting and most important feature associated with the operations of the amygdala. When does the amygdala (which never forgets) cease to have an influence regarding specific relationships in our life? Do we strengthen our armor or immediately engage our persona when encountering a certain “type” of person?

The Blocked Heart: Wilfred Bion

What does it mean to block off or deny the existence of our heart? Put in somewhat less poetic terms. why do we block out and deny our feelings? Reich and Feldenkrais agree that Anxiety is a primary culprit. How then do we address the anxiety that serves as a barrier between our daily life and our heart? While our team has been brought in to provide a diagnosis, it might be time, as we close this chapter, to consider at least one of the treatment options. One member of our diagnostic team, Wilfred Bion, has quite a bit to say in this regard.

Metabolism

Fundamentally, Bion (1995) suggests that the primary question should be reframed: what does it mean to manage and transform anxiety? To use Bion's term, what does it mean to *Metabolize Anxiety*? The term "metabolism" was borrowed by Bion and other psychoanalytic theorists from the field of biology. In the case of biological metabolism, we find a process concerned with chemical reactions in the bodies of all mammals (and many other living organisms).

Through metabolism, we convert food to energy that is needed for many cellular operations (creation of proteins, lipids, nucleic acids, and carbohydrates, as well as the elimination of waste). A similar process is described by Bion, though metabolism now involves the conversion and redirection of psychic rather than physiological elements from an "unhealthy" (maladaptive) to a "healthy" (adaptive) state.

Beta Elements

According to Bion, two fundamental elements exist in human consciousness and thinking. One of these elements is labeled *beta*. These elements are the unmetabolized thoughts, emotions, and bodily states that we always experience—whether they come from the outside world or from inside our individual and collective psyches. These are Sapolsky's imagined lions. Among the inside collective elements are the three widely acknowledged basic assumptions that underlie interpersonal and group functioning: dependency, fight-flight, and pairing.

These basic assumption elements, along with many other beta elements (such as dreams and collective myths and fantasies), are associated with anxiety. They represent some very important and often maladaptive elements in the human psyche that need to be transformed. The basic assumptions themselves are likely to dominate critical interactive functioning if the elements of anxiety

are not metabolized. Furthermore, if we engage Reich's analysis of character, the sources of energy blockage and rigid character formation in a patient would be found in these beta elements.

Alpha Elements

For Bion, the metabolized elements—that he labels *alpha*—are those that we can readily think about and articulate. These metabolized alpha elements would include the identified and articulated cause of the anxiety, as well as the impact of anxiety on the critical functions we identified above. Perhaps most importantly, alpha elements are often valid perceptions of reality and processes associated with the capacity of patients to learn from experience—and to learn that the lions are imaginary.

This is all well and good—we move beta elements to alphas individually and collectively. This is a valid description of successful metabolism among individuals and in organizational settings, based on observations and analyses offered by Bion and many other object-relations-oriented therapists and group facilitators. However, this description doesn't tell us much about how metabolism takes place. How do we turn Beta elements into Alpha elements?

Beta to Alpha

One way to approach this question is to note the critical role played by psychic containers. When being addressed in a psychotherapeutic session, the emerging anxiety is contained through the establishment of therapeutic ground rules and a compassionate and nonjudgmental stance taken by the therapist. Put simply, the psychotherapeutic session becomes a safe place where a patient can reveal anxiety-filled elements of their own thoughts and actions that they might consider “unacceptable” or at least alien to their own self-image.

This still doesn't do the trick. We would suggest that Bion (like Reich) tends to focus on the fundamental strategies of

psychoanalysis in his writing about metabolism. These include such ego-based processes as the slow and careful introduction or re-introduction of unconscious (beta) elements into consciousness, so that they might be tested against reality and either isolated or transformed into productive action (sublimation). These also include a focus on dreams, fantasies, and childhood memories, with the therapist helping their client gain access to this material.

The therapist also assists their client in determining the accuracy of this beta material, and more importantly, its impact on current perceptions of relationships and reality, as well as its impact on current decisions being made and actions taken. Sapolsky would offer a translation: which of the lions are real and how, realistically, can we address these lions. After all, we are not living as weak and slow animals living on the African Savannah. We are skillful, knowledgeable, and courageous. We can wrestle many lions to the ground or find a way to avoid or escape from them.

Back to Bion. Beta elements, such as dreams, are interpreted and implications are drawn regarding how the dream's content tells the dreamer something about their own wishes and fears. Dreams enable the therapist to address the nature and purpose of beta elements, thus helping these elements to become sources of new learning (alpha) rather than barriers to the free flow of energy in the patient's body. Bion is quite optimistic in this regard. He is inclined to emphasize that once these elements are brought to consciousness, his patient will be open to new learning from their continuing experiences in life.

When the conversion of beta to alpha is successful, learning is not distorted nor dominated by unprocessed Beta elements. Successful conversion for Bion involves the close alignment of learning with an accurate appraisal of ongoing experiences. Ego functions are in charge with regard to the personal psyches of patients. Like the Tin Man of Oz, Bion's patients are seeking not only to loosen their armor but also heal their hearts. Like

Sapolsky's ancestors on the Savannah, Bion's patients want to be realistic about lions and wish to learn through alpha-aligned experiences how best to address the challenges imposed by real lions.

With this introduction to the treatment plan that might be formulated to treat the Tin Man's ailments, we move to some of the treatment suggestions that would be offered by Feldenkrais in conjunction with Sapolsky, and those offered by Reich in conjunction with Bion.

Mobilizing the Person: Feldenkrais and Sapolsky

Robert Sapolsky has taught us quite a bit about stress and lions. We can take what we have learned from him and apply it to our understanding of armament and wounded hearts. His insights can help us in our treatment of the Tin Man of Oz, as well as all of the Tin men and women of the mid-21st Century (including each of us). Based on what Sapolsky has taught us, we can first propose that our heart is shielded from reality. We easily imagined lions. Second, the shield is not adequate to protect us from these lions. The shield is much too rigid for us to ever fight the lion. Furthermore, the shield is too heavy for us to escape the lion.

Shaking It Off

We suggest that the shield can do nothing more, as a rigid and heavy structure, than help us stay in place. Laden with armor, we can only freeze—as the rodents do in Africa. However, the rodents can “shake off” the freeze, but humans in our shields just stand there frozen, with our hearts racing away. The heart, in turn, can do nothing in its frozen state except wrought damage to other parts of the human organization. As well as inflicting damage on itself.

It is at this point, with the insights that we have just gained from Robert Sapolsky, and the translation we have made of what he has taught us about life on the African savannah, that we bring back the treatment team. We now recognize that the armor and

wounded heart must be confronted not just with psychotherapy but also with physical manipulations that will enable us to do something other than freeze.

We might not be able to fight our lions, but we certainly can move away from them. At least we can place some oil in the armor so that we can address the stress associated with the lions in a more effective and physiologically appropriate manner. We request the presence of the second major member of our treatment team. Moshe Feldenkrais has much to say about the oiling of joints and abandonment of freeze. He has much to teach us about physical movement.

The Touch That Heals

The Feldenkrais Response concerns much more than just putting oil in the armor. It is not just a matter of squirting oil on the tin man's armor. A Feldenkrais practitioner (and virtually every other physical therapist) will be touching the tin man's arms and legs to help him move. The role of touch is critical. It is through touch that we most effectively convey our caring about another person and even our empathy for the pain they are experiencing. Some health care workers are allowed to touch their patients/clients. Others are not. The most important healing is often done by those who can touch (Bergquist, Guest and Rooney, 2002)?

There are other human service providers who also can touch (and heal). I am reminded of my mother's hairdresser who attended to my mother's hair every week following the death of my father. The hairdresser (a very wise woman) told me that the real (probably unrecognized) reason my mother (and many other widowed women) got their hair done each week was so that they could be touched. The hairdresser noted that she gently touched and lightly messaged the women's shoulders while tending to their hair. She talked about their soothing facial expressions when touched. For the Feldenkrais therapists, touch is everything. They assist clients in moving their shoulders, back and legs. Gentle physical support is provided that enables the therapist's clients to

recover lost (but natural) movements and to find renewed flexibility and recognition of bodily functions.

Words That Heal

Finally, it is important to listen to the Feldenkrais practitioners when they talk about moving beyond the oil and even the touch. Words are important when these practitioners are encouraging and helping clients move their body. As I will note in the second chapter in this section, Feldenkrais emphasized the role that self-image and life purpose plays in the ability and willingness of people to shed their armor and move forward with purpose.

This movement not only enables one to move without additional oil, movement also provides important access to the heart. Feldenkrais (with Robert Sapolsky's support) will propose that the Tin Man finds his heart by taking action (along with Dorothy, Scarecrow, and the Lion) against the wicked witch. It is through ongoing action that one overcomes the trauma (which is sustained because nothing is being done to complete the act of defending against the abuse or finding retribution against source of the abuse. As Levine, and Frederick (Levine, and Frederick 2009) suggest, we move from a state of powerlessness to one of active engagement: we awaken the tiger within us.

Healing the Heart: Reich and Bion

In his early influential (but controversial) book on the development and treatment of human character disorders, Wilhelm Reich described encrusted attitudes that functioned as an "armor." Reich was to bring together mind and body when he proposed that this armor was physically manifest in chronic muscular spasms.

Dissolving the Armor

Reich believed that it was possible to dissolve the armor. This, in turn, would help the therapist and client to achieve a major goal of psychoanalysis: bringing back the memory of the childhood repression that had caused blockage in the first place. While Reich brought in the physical dimension of human misery, he made use

of traditional psychoanalytic techniques, when seeking to identify and release the energy trapped in the patient's body.

This trapped energy causes the rigidity of physical structure and spasms of the patient's muscles. Armor is created to protect the patient for a short period of time – much as the shaking and physical movement are meant to release the rampant anxiety. However, when the energy is trapped for an extended period of time, then character armor is established as a way of being (character) in the life of the patient. Riech focused on the patient's neurotic symptomatology – particularly defensive routines (such as regression, denial, and projection). He used words to heal but also explored other modes to dissolve the armor. These are modes that got him in trouble later in his career.

Unfreezing the Heart

At the heart of the matter was the blocked flow of energy caused by the pervasive anxiety that existed in the patient's life. Much as Robert Sapolsky would note in recent years, the patient's body was frozen in place with the potential attack of imagined lions. From this perspective, one can see the psycho-physical treatment being most effectively engaged when it attends to the anxiety associated with the character armor.

Given this perspective, we brought in another member of our treatment team, Wilfred Bion (1995). He introduces the process of metabolism as a way of transforming anxiety into a constructive form of energy that helps to liberate and complement the other forms of energy that are locked in the patients' armament. For Bion, it is not just a matter of opening access to the Tin Man's heart. He also believes that a healthy, accessible heart helps to convert frozen energy into active, mobilizing energy.

Conclusions

For Bion, it is a matter first of healing the heart. Then comes the release of our Tin Man from his armor and his joining of Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and Toto in their journey to Oz. However, before they begin the journey, there is a bit more mending to do of our

Tin Man. We ask Reich and Feldenkrais to stay with us and join the treatment team—so that the mobilization and healing are sustained—given that our characters of Oz are going to encounter many other “rainy” challenges and trials that leave them drenched and often lost in the storm. The Tin Man and his colleagues require both courage (despite anxiety) and force (making use of the converted energy).

We consider treatment options that nourish courage and enhance energy in Chapter Five.

Chapter Five

Oiling the Tin Man's Armor and Healing His Heart II: Reich's and Feldenkrais's Preparation for Treatment

We return to the story of the Tin Man in *The Wizard of Oz*. In the first chapter of this section, we focused on diagnosis. We are ready to prepare for treatment. The author of this wonderful multi-book tale (and musical), Frank Baum, seems to have decided that this mission-quest was “just what the doctor ordered” (Baum himself being the authorial doctor).

Like Baum, we can send the Tin Man on the mission with Dorothy, Toto, the Scarecrow (and later the Cowardly Lion). It is a twofold mission. They are not only on a perilous journey to the Emerald City (where Oz resides) but are also confronting at every turn the Evil Witch (and her flying monkeys). The witch is trying to thwart their efforts, obtain the ruby slippers from Dorothy, and avenge the death of her sister (who was hit by Dorothy’s falling house).

As we all know, the movie produced by Baum and MGM has a happy ending (which is very important given the trying times of 1939 when the movie was released). The Wizard was able to assist the Tin Man in acknowledging that he has a heart by awarding him a philanthropic award – in the shape of a heart. Furthermore, it should be noted that the weapon used (inadvertently) to kill the Witch was Water! Thus, any trauma regarding rain and water would have been abrogated for the Tin Man (who had a name, by the way. It was “Hickory” – but we don’t really ever use his name).

Thus ends our story. Perhaps we were not needed in addressing the requests made by the Tin Man? Or might we have done a better job than Frank Baum or MGM? Did the Tin Man really need to go to the Emerald City and discover that the Wizard was actually a huckster? If nothing else, our treatment team might be needed to address the ills of real people rather than those created on sets of the MGM studio.

I propose that our treatment team has much to do in the real world, for there are many Tin Men and Tin Women to be treated and Frank Baum isn't around to provide the happy ending. Today, many of us are stuck in our own personal armament. We are defending against the often-traumatizing challenges of mid-21st Century life. Psychological rain is falling on us. Our armor is quickly rusting. Our hearts are wounded and encased in the rusted armor. We need some oil and some healing of our heart.

Two Primary Members of the Treatment Team

Enter our treatment team. It is headed by Wilhelm Reich and Moise Feldenkrais, the two men we recruited for our diagnostic team. They are fully qualified to help oil the armor of mid-21st-century tin men and women--and they can help to heal the hearts of these troubled men and women. I provide a more complete introduction to these two men in this chapter.

Wilhelm Reich

Wilhelm Reich was born to Jewish parents in Austria on March 24, 1897. He received his medical degree from the University of Vienna in 1922 and became deputy director of Sigmund Freud's outpatient clinic. Reich soon became one of Freud's favorites and at one point was considered to be the successor to Freud in the burgeoning psychoanalytic field.

However, he eventually fell out of favor with Freud (as did Jung, Adler and many other aspirants), in large part because he was

moving beyond the prescribed boundaries of traditional Freudian practice. While Reich aligned with Freud regarding the importance of sexuality, he was developing his own unorthodox theories and practices regarding the nature of sexual energy. This departure from the "normal" views regarding sex would later lead to major controversy and even legal problems for Reich.

Perhaps of equal importance was Reich's shift to a radical political posture. Along with many other young analysts, Reich sought to blend the psychological theories of Freud with the social/political theories of Karl Marx (this effort centered on what became known as the Frankfort School). He even spent time in Russia with his wife in 1929, during the time when the Soviet Revolution had successfully deposed the Czar and Joseph Stalin was in full control of the country.

As a young clinician in the 1920s, Wilhelm Reich expanded psychoanalytic resistance into an inclusive technique called character analysis. According to Reich, character attitudes were developed by an individual to block against emotional excitations. These attitudes (and their physical manifestation) became the object of treatment. These encrusted attitudes functioned as an "armor," which Reich later found to exist simultaneously in chronic muscular spasms. Reich published a highly influential book in 1933 regarding the development and treatment of human character disorders.

This classic work was titled *Character Analysis* (Reich, 1972). This book and subsequent publications by Reich became highly influential in the psychoanalytic community, even though he personally remained an outcast in the formal psychoanalytic community. Through his presentation on character armor, Reich was able to bring mind and body together. Character analysis opened the way to a biophysical approach to physical and mental disease and the treatment of these ailments.

With a life that was often in turmoil (multiple marriages, affairs with patients, and failed clinical and teaching appointments), Reich eventually migrated to the United States in 1939. He established an institute focusing on sexual energy (based on his theory of “orgone energy”). As in the case of character armor, this theory regarding biological energy (with a sexual focus) was never given much formal support. However, it strongly influenced the work of other members of the medical and mental health profession—especially Alexander Lowen (1994) (the architect of “bioenergetics”). Reich’s theory even received the attention of Albert Einstein!

Wilhelm Reich’s life ended tragically. He was hounded legally for his political views and for marketing strange (unproven) electrical gadgets (including orgone accumulators). He ended up in a Federal Penitentiary. Reich was also considered to be mentally ill by many people (including those in the press) given his “bizarre” interest in UFOs and various psychic thought processes. Wilhelm Reich died in prison on November 3, 1957.

Moshe Feldenkrais

As in the case of Wilhelm Reich, Moshe Feldenkrais’s parents were European Jews—living at the time in what today is the country of Ukraine. Moshe was born in 1904 and was raised in Belarus. Having moved to Palestine in 1918, Moshe Feldenkrais worked as a laborer and began to study self-defense (including Ju-Jitsu). Following his subsequent migration to France during the early 1930s, Feldenkrais obtained a degree in engineering. Subsequently, he was awarded a Doctor of Science degree from the University of Paris. Marie Curie was one of his teachers.

Like Reich, Moshe Feldenkrais was strongly influenced by his encounter with a masterful teacher. In his case it wasn’t Sigmund Freud; rather, it was Jigoro Kano, a leader in the field of Judo. Having earned a Black Belt in Judo, Feldenkrais began to blend his engineering background (studying the structure of human

bodies) with his Judo (studying human movement). This exploration would soon be engaged in a different country. Like Freud, Feldenkrais, as a Jew, had to escape to England in 1940. He aided the war effort by serving as a science officer in the British Admiralty.

Feldenkrais' interest in the interplay between the human anatomy and movement became more immediate after World War II, when a personal injury led him to begin developing his own approach to rehabilitation. Feldenkrais began to offer lectures and training programs regarding his new treatment methods and published his first book on his method (*Body and Mature Behavior: A study of Anxiety, Sex, Gravitation and Learning*). In this book, Feldenkrais (2005) touched on some of the same topics as Reich. Like Reich, he also became interested in many other topics and theories—including those offered by Gurdjieff (a noted mystic).

In 1951, Moshe Feldenkrais returned to Palestine (now Israel, an independent Jewish state). He again applied his scientific knowledge to ongoing defense efforts (this time it was Israel)—and became the personal trainer of David Ben-Gurion (Prime Minister of Israel). Feldenkrais' fame (and work) soon expanded—especially in the United States. He offered training programs in both Israel and the United States during the 1960s, 1970s and early 1980s.

The Feldenkrais method involving the gentle manipulation of the body had arrived—though it had its detractors. They were not as vehement as those who criticized Reich's methods, but they still led to some push back from both sides of the mind-body debate. The widely accepted integration of physiology and psychology had not yet taken place. Moshe Feldenkrais died on July 1, 1984 at age 80 in Tel Aviv Israel.

Similarities

There were several common characteristics in both the background and life experiences of Reich and Feldenkrais that

helped to shape their perspectives and practices. First, they both claim a Jewish heritage—with all of its opportunities and challenges. One element of this heritage is the importance placed on the human body by Judaic theology. While Christianity tends to be enamored with the mind (and spiritual matters)—often pointing to the evil wrought by the lustful physical body—Judaism has always acknowledged the vital role played by our body in both the secular and sacred world.

As Jews and as advocates of cutting-edge perspectives and practices, Reich and Feldenkrais were often outsiders in their chosen profession and outliers regarding the treatment procedures they were advocating and teaching. Deeply embedded in their innovative work was a shared interest in many different fields of inquiry. They were both Interdisciplinarians and brought ideas from other cultures and many different sciences to bear on their own treatment methods.

Along with their more cerebral interests, it should also be noted that both Reich and Feldenkrais loved machinery. For Reich, this love ended up in his construction of various contraptions that accumulated psychic energy. Feldenkrais's love was somewhat more mundane and grounded in his engineering background. He was interested in the machinery of the human body (as well as machinery that contributed to the defense of countries where he resided).

Finally, there were important similarities that resided in the social/political environment in which both Reich and Feldenkrais operated. They were both mixed up in political and warfare matters. Reich spent time in Russia during the 1930s and was strongly influenced by the words offered by the Communist leaders and by the “good” things he witnessed in this communist (and authoritarian) society. Conversely, Feldenkrais seems to have been operating more as an engineer and patriot than as someone who was exploring revolutionary ideas about the way

in which a country should be governed. He was contributing to the war effort in Britain and to the defense of Israel.

Reich's beliefs regarding Communism got him in trouble when he migrated to the United States. His attention to the verbiage of Communist leaders (such as Stalin) also seems to have been misaligned with his disdain for words (in psychotherapy). When working with patients Reich was more likely to focus on what the patient's body was telling him than what was coming out of our mouth—yet he listened to the word of Stalin rather than to the message being sent from Stalin's arrogant physical stance or his actions. We will see that this misalignment regarding words and body also seems to be showing up in Reich's actual therapy sessions.

Feldenkrais found a much less rocky road on which to travel while living in Europe and Palestine/Israel. This did not mean that Feldenkrais was immune to utopian thought or experiences. Before Reich was spending time in Russia, witnessing the outcomes of the 1918 revolution, Feldenkrais was in Palestine during the actual time of this revolution (1918). He witnessed (and may have participated in) the remarkable societal invention known as the kibbutz. This collaborative farming enterprise had been initiated in Palestine only a few years earlier.

For Feldenkrais, cooperation and shared governance was being engaged in a rural setting where people worked together on the land. Feldenkrais was himself not afraid to get his hands dirty and his body moving as a laborer In Palestine. The utopian vision of cooperative labor to be realized in the kibbutz was quite different from the utopian vision of collectivity that was promulgated (and distorted) by Joseph Stalin. While Stalin was declaring his utopian vision from a balcony in Moscow, the kibbutznik were enacting their utopia in the earth of Palestine.

Both Feldenkrais and Reich offer analyses concerning the functioning of the human being that bring together elements of

the human being that are often treated separately by those who are seeking to understand how we all operate and often are also seeking to heal those human elements that are dysfunctional. Feldenkrais provides a portrait of the human brain that is holistic (anticipating many of the contemporary perspectives on cortical functions). Reich's portrait is holistic in a different manner: he is looking at the intimate relationship that exist between body and words.

While Feldenkrais and Reich take a somewhat different approach to finding integration of human elements, I suspect that they would support one another's perspective if they had even met one another. Most importantly, their holistic perspectives inform the concepts they offer regarding human dysfunction and the treatment modalities they recommend (and practice themselves) to ameliorate these dysfunctions.

Feldenkrais: Dynamic interplay among cortical functions

In setting the stage for his description of treatment plans that help to "oil" the armor, Feldenkrais (1981, p. 19] writes about evolution of the brain:

Nervous structures do look for order, and find it when and wherever it exists and make one where it does not exist. Only a very complex nervous assembly, consisting of such a great number of units as there are in most living creatures, needs consistency and constancy of environment. Primitive nervous systems do not play tennis, nor do they swing from one branch to another thirty feet away. Primitive systems are slower and are not so dependent on organizing invariants. All living creatures are smaller and weaker than their grown-ups, some for shorter some for longer intervals of time. Weak organisms need a more or less constant consistent world so that they can learn and grow into strong organisms.

The organism is in itself quite a world of microbeings which needs constancy, order, invariance, homeostasis. if it is to exist.

Thus, for Feldenkrais, the simpler organisms are just fine living with less complex neurostructures – as long as their environment remains consistent. We might even say that they are fine when living with and protected by their own armor and living in a specific, limited environment. They could stand there is the woods and not move for many years—provided that the woods don't change. Then along comes Dorothy and the Scarecrow, who oil the armor and allow the Tin Man to move. This, in turn, means that the Tin Man (with his complex brain) can move through a variety of environments on his way to Oz.

Feldenkrais (1981, p. 24) adds to this evolutionary analysis by considering the status of organisms when they are born:

When we pass in review many of the species it becomes evident that the lower the species' place on the ladder of evolution the more complete is the wiring in of the nervous system at birth. The connections of the synapses, neurons, or what- ever are ready and the apprenticeship is shorter the lower the species are on the ladder. In man, we see the extreme end of this process. The human infant has the longest apprenticeship of all the species, to my knowledge. Although everything necessary to maintain life and growth is already connected in the nervous and glandular systems at birth, the specific human functions are not wired in at all. No baby was ever born who could speak, sing, whistle, crawl, walk upright, make music, count or think mathematically, tell the hour of the day or night, or know what it is to be late. Without a very long apprenticeship lasting several years none of these functions has ever been observed. As far as these specifically human functions or activities go, the connections or the wiring in of the neural structures have

advanced already in the womb but compared with those of the adult they are non-existent.

For Feldenkrais (1981, p. 25) there is a strong preference in all organisms for order and an invariant environment – even when organisms (such as human beings) have the increasing capacity to handle change and new environments. This often means that a disorderly environment is made orderly when processed by the brain. All elements of the brain operate in an integrated, holistic manner to ensure this order:

The neural substance that organizes order in its own functioning also makes order in its environment which in turn improves the orderliness of neural function. The neural substance organizes itself and thereby selects and alters the incoming messages from the environment into invariant sets to make repetition possible. It takes many continuously changing messages from the environment before the organism succeeds in perceiving them as unchanging entities. So great is the ability of the nervous system that it creates order where instruments made of any other matter will register a blur of continuous variations. Just think of taking a photograph of a greyhound running toward you while you are sitting on a galloping horse.

Thus, it is not clear that the Tin Man really wanted to be oiled and set free—just as it is not clear that the cowardly lion really wanted to take on the challenges of a disorderly (and threatening) environment. Both the Tin Man and Lion might have been perfectly content to remain in the forest (with forests from the perspective of many psychoanalytic and Jungian analysts representing a primitive state of being). We regress, in other words, so that the world we perceive and that we process can remain orderly.

Finally, Feldenkrais (1981, p. 72) turns to the distinction to be made between the less complex brain of most organisms and the highly complex brain that has evolved in human beings:

Your brain, and mine, have a very long history. Our nervous systems are among the most complex structures in existence. They have very old layers covered by less old ones and then more recent layers. Each new layer is a formation that functions more finely. The older are primitive, and abrupt in the all-or-nothing way. Each layer checks the older ones and supersedes them. The newer the formation the finer its function. It makes action more graded, more differentiated. The older structures function more reliably faster and need less apprenticeship. The newer layers switch themselves off and allow the former more reliable swifter formation to take over and assure survival. The finer, more varied newer parts will take over once the emergency has ended. The old structures are not destroyed; they just become latent, less obvious but essential in an emergency. Any situation that cannot be dealt with at leisure will produce a regression, i.e., the older formation will take over. The newer the neural structure is, the slower it is. Gradation and variety need time and apprenticeship for deliberation and choice, following the weighing up of the pros and cons.

In this extraordinary analysis, we find the anticipation of contemporary neuroscience analyses, as well as the analyses offered by those in the emerging field of behavior economics. First, Feldenkrais offers an important distinction between the ‘old’ brain and “new brain” (primarily prefrontal cortex). As more recent analysts, such as Jonah Lehrer (2009) have noted, the new brain is easily overwhelmed by emergencies and acts slowly when under pressure. The old brain tends to take over in these challenging stressful situations. If there is nothing but stress in

one's life, then the old brain will always be in charge and orderliness will be demanded. The armor remains in place and new environments are avoided.

Behavioral scientists such as Daniel Kahneman (2011) join with Feldenkrais in noting the slow process being engaged by the new brain. For Kahneman, emphasis is placed on deliberation and choice. Slow thinking is required when weighing pros and cons. I would suggest that this slow thinking, in turn, is a perquisite if we wish to leave the forest and journey to Oz or some other destination that in no way resembles the forest.

All of this processing of the external environment and all of this shifting from one part of the brain to another part requires that all elements of the brain are involved. A holistic-operating brain is required whatever the stage of evolution to be found in any living species—thought this holism is particularly important in the life of an evolved species such as the human being who has a choice between various states of neural and behavioral freedom. As “evolved” humans we can choose to leave the forest –though only if we recognize the challenges we will face as well as the complex neural processing required in these changing and challenging environments.

Reich: Words and Body

Freud spoke of the power based in the “talking cure”, believing that words (psychoanalytic treatment) could heal the body (curing “hysteria”) as well as the mind (curing “neuroses”). Reich similarly believed that words could play a major role in confronting the physical as well as psychological elements of character armor. Coming out of his Jewish heritage (as does Freud and Feldenkrais), Reich finds it easy and comfortable to integrate the mind (particularly verbal functions) with the body.

We can trace this integration and the power of the word back to the first statements in the Old Testament of the Bible (Torah) in which God *Said* there would be light, water, land, living

creatures – and ultimately human beings. It is through words and pronouncements that God created the university – and our Jewish practitioners of psychotherapy and physical therapy created physical and mental health.

In many ways, Reich moves beyond Freud by providing an integration of word and body. He proposes that character armor is formed through the dynamic interaction between the body and the language used by the person encased in armor. Reich not only takes a jab at Freud's diagnosis (verbal identification) of his own throat cancer, but also at Freud's emphasis on verbiage in traditional psychoanalysis and deemphasis on the body (particularly the muscular structure and tension within this structure). Reich offers the following observation regarding this interaction between body and language in *Character Analysis*:

... apart from its function as communication, human language also often functions as a defense. The spoken word conceals the expressive language of the biological core. In many cases, the function of speech has deteriorated to such a degree that the words express nothing whatever and merely represent a continuous, hollow activity on the part of the musculature of the neck and the organs of speech. On the basis of repeated experiences, it is my opinion that in many psychoanalyses which have gone on for years the treatment has become stuck in this pathological use of language. This clinical experience can, indeed has to be applied to the social sphere. Endless numbers of speeches, publications, political debates do not have the function of getting at the root of important questions of life but of drowning them in verbiage.

In this quote we see that language is often the villain and that sole reliance on the word will never adequately address problems associated with character disorders. However, it should be noted that Reich confronts a contradiction here. While offering a clear

position on the mis-used or over-use of verbal language in psychoanalysis, Reich was still reliant on “the talking cure” (as Freud originally called it) when seeking to discover defensive routines that are blocking the flow of energy in his patient’s body.

Reich also makes use of verbally based therapy to bring about the diminution of these defenses. This inherent tension in Reich’s original work is somewhat resolved in his later almost exclusive attention to the redirection of bodily energy through the use of machinery (energy accumulators). Those (such as Lowen) who built their own work off of Reich’s original perspectives and practices, have also tended to have a more consistent focus on the body and less on the talking cure.

Outliers

There is another important characteristic shared by Reich and Feldenkrais. They are both rebels. Malcolm Gladwell (2008) would identify them both as Outliers—and in this capacity we find that both of them found both success and repression. Gladwell might be pointing to cultural influences (their Jewish heritage) or to the way in which they approached elusive issues (from a holistic perspective). We can turn to another observer of rebellion and unique forms of success, this being Thomas Kuhn. Writing about scientific revolutions, Kuhn (1962) employed the term “paradigm” when describing the deeply embedded set of assumptions and structures supporting “normal science.”

Kuhn suggests that a change (revolution) in a specific scientific domain often comes from someone who resides outside the mainstream of normal science--because of their ethnicity, gender, geographic location, or lack of affiliation with a prestigious institution. Reich and Feldenkrais certainly resided outside the mainstream of their own fields of endeavor (psychotherapy and physical therapy). Like virtually all paradigm-challengers they both found little support initially for either their perspectives or their practices.

Feldenkrais (1985, p. 91) reflects directly on the deeply embedded and rigid opposition to his own work and the subsequent cost of rebellion:

We teach such a rigidity of mind and body that we need “breaking in”, for any but familiar, habitual conditions. In fact, the human nervous system is eminently suitable for change. Our early experience prepares us for conditions analogous to those known our parents, allowing only for minor differences. Any significant change demands a deep, revolutionary modification in our attitude and response. Using the property of the nervous system, which we work so hard to diminish, it is possible to form individuals capable of coping with a changing world without such intense emotional upheavals that bring many to prostrated breakdowns.

Feldenkrais (1985, p. 91) also identifies “emotionally unstable” conditions (both collective and individual) that are particularly conducive to the emergence of “revolutionary” ideas, while reminding us of the challenge faced by the revolutionary outlier:

We find emotional instability almost universally (1) in nations that are in the process of deep social and economic transformation, and (2) in people who dare to deviate from the traditional mode of action of their parents, their class, or social group. Those who have dared to go off the beaten path, and would have had a chance of getting somewhere if they were properly equipped, are precisely those who have failed to make even the usual success of their lives.

Gladwell should reframe Feldenkrais’ rather pessimistic appraisal by indicating that the result of the revolutionary’s work might not be so much the absence of ‘usual’ success in their life, but rather the presence of an “unusual” success. It is not only the revolutionary’s perspectives and practices that are “new” – it is

also the fundamental criteria of “success” that resides outside the existing paradigm.

Differences

The background and experiences of Reich and Feldenkrais were in many ways quite similar. Both men envisioned and enacted therapeutic approaches that incorporated both body and mind. Nevertheless, the treatment modes that emerged for these two pioneers were intended to further different aims. Wilhelm Reich and his follower, Alexander Lowen (1994), wished to directly heal the wounded human heart as well as the human body. They believed that energy, which usually flows freely through our body, has been blocked as a result of some trauma in our earlier life. The blockage and sustained stress and muscular tremors resulting from this blockage produce rigid character armor. The trauma itself must be treated, and this requires talk-based psychoanalytic treatment.

This psychotherapeutic perspective is not held by Feldenkrais nor the practitioners he trained. Feldenkrais was less concerned with directly healing the wounding heart than with providing clients/patients with the tools needed to move freely and live life in a healthy manner. It is through the “liberation” of the human body that we get on with our life, rather than being immobilized in a rigid physical structure. For Feldenkrais, stress is reduced through movement, whatever the source of this stress. If we heal the body, then the healed heart is likely to follow. It is a matter of digging in the dirt (physical movement-oriented therapy) rather than speaking from a balcony (verbally based therapy).

Healing the Heart: Wilhelm Reich

As a highly controversial (and some would say “mad”) psychoanalyst, Wilhelm Reich offered a profound insight into the Character Armor that some of us wear as a means of protection against vulnerability. Reich (1972) proposed that this armor was

contained primarily in our muscular system. Furthermore, it was a form of psychic defense that contained the history of the patient's traumas. For example, later in life, Reich attributed Freud's jaw cancer to his muscular armor, rather than his habit of excessive smoking. He went further, suggesting that Freud, as a Jew living in antisemitic Vienna, was always "biting down" impulses, rather than expressing them. Freud's armor was thus concentrated in his mouth and throat.

Given this brief background, we are ready to address several questions: Is Reich's character armor the same encumbering our beloved Tin Man of Oz? What about the tin women and men of mid-21st-century life? Like Sigmund Freud, our Tin Man required some treatment of his joints. However, was the Tin Man more fortunate than Freud in that he got some oil to liberate his armor and could join Dorothy, the scarecrow, cowardly lion, and Toto in a mission-quest that would eventually liberate his heart?

These questions are important to ask—even if the Tin Man is a fictitious character in Frank Baum's novels (and Hollywood's movie). They are important to ask because we see Reich's character armor in people with whom we associate (and perhaps in ourselves). We observe a pattern of rigid behavior and seeming indifference among many women and men to the interactions of people around them.

It is not that these men and women are sociopaths or hermits living in a cave. They work with and around other people and are often quite effective in getting their work done and monitoring the work of fellow employees. And these folks clearly care about those with whom they live and work—it is just that this caring attitude doesn't show up very often. Like the Tin Man of Oz, they all have a large heart—but it is encased in their armor.

Character Armor

Character, as Reich uses the term, is equivalent to what today we call "personality." We now tend to use the term "character" when

describing the presence or absence of virtue in the decisions being made and actions taken by someone. For Reich, it is not a matter of virtue—it is much more a matter of the dynamics operating inside people who are quite rigid in their behavior as well as their values and perspectives on life. To the extent that “virtue” is a part of Reich’s “character armor” it is a virtue that is resistant to any change and is applied indiscriminately (and often with passion and a touch of vengeance) in all situations.

Having set the stage for Reich’s (1972, p. 155-156) presentation of a more detailed and systematic portrait of character armor, Reich offers the following description:

[W]e have to deal with . . . the factors that cause the character to assume the definite form in which it is operative. In this connection, it is necessary to call to mind some attributes of every character reaction. The character consists in a *chronic* change of the ego which one might describe as a *hardening*. This hardening is the actual basis for the becoming chronic of the characteristic mode of reaction; its purpose is to protect the ego from external and internal dangers. As a protective formation that has become chronic, it merits the designation "armoring" for it clearly constitutes a restriction of the psychic mobility of the personality as a whole. This restriction is mitigated by the noncharacterological, i.e., atypical, relations to the outside world that seem to be open communications in an otherwise closed system. They are "breaches" in the "armor" through which, depending upon the situation, libidinal and other interests are sent out and pulled in again like pseudopodia. The armor itself, however, is to be thought of as flexible. Its mode of reaction always proceeds according to the pleasure-unpleasure principle.

We thus find that Reich’s character armor has an atypical relationship with the outside world. The armor not only rigidifies internal dynamics. It also protects against the influence of the

external world. Our Tin Man no doubt "weathered the storm" in his armored condition. The rain, wind, and snow would have little impact on him.

Reich (1972, p. 155-156) continues:

In unpleasurable situations the armoring contracts; in pleasurable situations it expands. The degree of character flexibility, the ability to open oneself to the outside world or to close oneself to it, depending upon the situation, constitutes the difference between a reality-oriented and a neurotic character structure. Extreme prototypes of pathologically rigid armoring are the affect blocked compulsive characters and schizophrenic autism, both of which tend toward catatonic rigidity.

We find in this statement an interesting (and often overlooked) condition of Reich's character armor. It can expand and contract. While the armor always remains in place, it is "situationally" adaptive to the outside world. What would a "pleasurable situation" look like? Will psychotherapy make a difference? We will consider these matters shortly. Now on to the final section of Reich's (1972, p. 155-156) summary description of character armor:

The character armor is formed as a chronic result of the clash between instinctual demands and an outer world which frustrates those demands. Its strength and continued *raison d'etre* are derived from the current conflicts between instinct and outer world. The expression and the sum total of those impingements of the outer world on instinctual life, through accumulation and qualitative homogeneity, constitute a historical whole. This will be immediately clear when we think of known character types such as "the bourgeois," "the official," "the proletarian," "the butcher," etc. It is around the ego that this armoring is formed, around precisely

that part of the personality which lies at the boundary between biophysiological instinctive life and the outer world. Hence we designate it as the character of the ego.

In this final statement, Reich seems to be paying homage to Freud's basic assumptions about the clash between instinctual urges (the Id) and societal expectations and requirements (the Ego). Reich moves beyond Freud, however, when he introduces up to the ways in which character armor relates to specific societal roles (a topic to which I will turn shortly). At this point, we turn to the matter of flexible armor – does it suggest that armament can be a "state" condition rather than a "trait."

Trait vs. State: Armor as character or symptom

Perhaps the most important questions to ask when seeking to treat the rigidifying effects of armor is to determine if the armor in one's client or patient can readily be removed or if it remains firmly (and resistantly) in place. Can the armor be worn during battle but taken off when the battle no longer is being waged? If this is the case, then the armor can be considered a temporary and situationally based *State* of one's personality. Does it expand and contract as Reich suggests?

Is the armor, instead, being worn even at home, long after the war is no longer being waged (and lions have long since left the savannah)? We see armor being worn all the time in the painful and poignant portrayal of the drill sergeant in *The Great Santini* (a movie based on Pat Conroy's novel). While armor probably should be worn when this man is training new Marine recruits, it should be taken off when he is at home. Instead, he wears competitive armor while playing basketball with his son on a backyard court.

He overwhelms his young son and finishes the game by slamming the basketball into the net. He exits the court leaving behind a devastated son. The sergeant's wife stops him and reminds him that the purpose of playing the game was not to win but instead

to spend some quality time with his son. The sergeant had lost the father/son relationship game big time. He couldn't take off his armor. Armor for the sergeant was permanent. Under these conditions, the armor is considered a permanent part of the person's personality. It truly is character armor and is identified as a personality *Trait*.

I turn back to Reich's (1972, p.48) own words to gain greater clarity on this issue:

Whereas the symptom corresponds solely to one definite experience or one circumscribed desire, the character, i.e., the person's specific mode of existence, represents an expression of the person's entire past. So a symptom can emerge quite suddenly, while the development of each individual character trait requires many years. We must also bear in mind that the symptom could not have suddenly emerged unless a neurotic reaction basis already existed in the character.

This statement would suggest that character armor is an established trait that is not easily changed. While character armor might not be embedded in one's genes it is acquired gradually over time (from childhood to adolescence). While there might be state based "symptoms" that emerge periodically during one's lifetime, the character armor is impervious to the outside world. The Tin Man could have remained unchanged (though perhaps rusted) for many years in the forest.

What then about the potential impact of psychotherapy on the armor—can therapy at least expand the armor. Here is what Reich (1972, p. 48) declares:

In the analysis, the neurotic character traits as a whole prove to be a compact defense mechanism against our therapeutic efforts, and when we trace the origin of this character "armor" analytically, we see that it also has a definite economic function. Such armor serves on the one

hand as a defense against external stimuli; on the other hand it proves to be a means of gaining mastery over the libido, which is continuously pushing forward from the id, because libidinal and sadistic energy is used up in the neurotic reaction formations, compensations, etc. Anxiety is continually being bound in the processes which are at the bottom of the formation and preservation of this armor in the same way that, according to Freud's description, anxiety is bound in the compulsive symptoms.

Thus, it seems that therapy can have only a limited impact—for the libido (and primitive impulses) are not going away meaning that one must remain on guard with armor fully in place.

Reich (1972, pp. 167-168) has this final statement to make about the matter of trait and state:

Summing up, we can also say that the neurotic character, both in its contents and in its form, is made up entirely of compromises., just as the symptom is. It contains the infantile instinctual demand and the defense, which belongs to the same or different states of development. The basic infantile conflict continues to exist. *transformed into attitudes which emerge in a definite form*, as automatic modes of reaction which have become chronic and from which, later, they have to be distilled through analysis.

By virtue of this insight into a phase of human development, we are in a position to answer a question raised by Freud: are repressed elements retained as double entries, as memory traces, otherwise? We may now cautiously conclude that those elements of infantile experience which are not worked into the character are retained as emotionally charge memory traces; whereas those elements which are absorbed into and made a part

of the character are retained as the contemporary mode of reaction.

With this conclusion, we are inclined to consider Reich's character armor to be bound up in a highly resistant psychic formation. It is a trait that contains childhood memories and fears that are never forgotten or resolved. It is a trait that requires constant vigilance against powerful, ever-present instinctual drives and impulses. It contains armament that might expand or contract but is always present. The Tin Man remains unmoved – until Dorothy and the Scarecrow show up. Can contemporary Tin Men and Tin Women look forward to a liberating Dorothy or Scarecrow? Is there a squirt of oil and liberation of the heart to be found in the future of these rigidified men and women of the mid-21st Century? That is the fundamental question to be addressed in this chapter.

Armor as a holistic portrayal with a homeorhetic perspective

In seeking to answer the question of treating character armor in the mid-21st Century I will dwell a bit longer on Reich's description of dynamics associated with the formation and maintenance of character armor. I approach this further analysis of Reich's work by offering a related concept: *homeorhesis*.

Central to Reich's conception of the psychic armament that is to be found among many people (especially those who come to him for therapy) is a version of what many systems theorists call homeorhesis. While most of us are aware of the tendency of all systems to return to homeostasis (point of balance) if they are to remain viable, the process of homeorhesis is less commonly identified or appreciated. This is the tendency of viable systems to return to some established pattern. It is not only that systems tend to return to some performance level (homeostasis)--systems also tend to return to a way in which this performance takes place (homeorhesis).

Reich (1972, pp. 51-52) has introduced a form of homeorhesis in his description of the dynamics operating in the formation and maintenance of armor:

The character armor is the molded expression of narcissistic defense chronically embedded in the psychic structure; In addition to the known resistances which are mobilized against each new piece of unconscious material, there is a constant resistance factor which has its roots in the unconscious and pertains not to content but to form. Because of its origin in the character, we call this constant resistance factor "character resistance."

It is in Reich's description of "character resistance" that we find the powerful process of homeorhesis ("typical behavior") in operation:

On the basis of the foregoing statements, let us summarize the most important features of character resistance.

Character resistance is expressed not in terms of content but normally, in the way one typically behaves, in the manner in which one speaks, walks, and gestures; and in one's characteristic habits (how one smiles or sneers, whether one speaks coherently or incoherently, how one is polite and how one is aggressive). . .

It is not what the patient says and does that is indicative of character resistance, but how he speaks and acts; not what he reveals in dreams, but how he censors, distorts, condenses, etc. The character resistance remains the same in the same patient, regardless of content. Different characters produce the same material in a different way. The positive father transference of a woman suffering from hysteria is expressed and warded off differently than that of a woman suffering from a compulsive

neurosis. Anxiety is the defense mechanism in the former; aggression in the latter.

For Reich (1972 p. 126), the basic orientation remains in place even if severity of the neurosis is reduced. Patterns of behavior remain in place even if they appear less often or in a less dramatic manner. Ideally, strong patterns of behavior that get us in trouble when we are anxious are now used in a helpful way. The pattern doesn't change – it just might be less disruptive:

. . . [T]he patient's entire being undergoes a "change," which is more apparent to people who do not often see the patient than it is to the analyst. The inhibited person becomes freer; the fear-ridden, more courageous; the overconscientious, relatively less scrupulous; the unscrupulous, more conscientious; but that certain indefinable "personal note" is never lost. It continues to show through, no matter how many changes are brought about. The overconscientious compulsive character will become reality oriented in his conscientiousness; the cured impulsive character will remain impetuous but less so than the uncured character; the patient cured of moral insanity will never take life too hard and will consequently always get through easily, whereas the cured compulsive will always have some difficulty because of his awkward- ness. Thus, though these traits persist even after a successful character analysis, they remain within limits which do not constrict one's freedom of movement in life to the extent that one's capacity for work and for sexual pleasure suffer from them.

It is in this very powerful pull to remain unchanged at a fundamental level that we observe Reich's holistic perspective in full operation. Like Feldenkrais, Reich views human behavior as a unified (and unifying) system that is not easily changed concerning its fundamental properties (homeorhesis).

Impact of Armor

I conclude my reflections on Reich's character armor by pointing to the impact of the armor on the life of those who have clad themselves with this armor. In brief we know that character armor restricts movement and choice. Furthermore, it blocks the flow of energy and leads to the loss of energy—for considerable energy is required to contain anxiety. If the flow of energy is blocked, then there is little to combat the anxiety.

Put in other terms, character armor produces the "freeze" response that I wrote about earlier in this book. We imagine lions (sources of anxiety), find these lions to be quite powerful and fast. As a result, we can neither fight the lion nor run away. Instead, we must "freeze" in place (hence the armor). This freeze, in turn, requires that our movement is restricted—and our choices limited. In this state of helplessness (and hopelessness) we are vulnerable to the attack of additional imaginary lions and to an even greater increase in anxiety. A vicious cycle is precipitated, leading not just to mental dysfunction but also the attack on physical health.

Reich (1972, pp. 82-83) offers his own insights:

[T]he character erects itself as a hard protective wall against the experiencing of infantile anxiety and thus maintains itself, notwithstanding the great forfeiture of *joie de vivre* which this entails. If a patient having such a character enters analytic treatment because of some symptom or other, this protective wall continues to serve in the analysis as a character resistance; and it soon becomes apparent that nothing can be accomplished until the character armor, which conceals and consumes the infantile anxiety, has been destroyed.

The central question can again be broached: can the character armor be "destroyed." Can the Tin Man actually discard his armor. What remains of the Tin Man when the armor is removed?

For Reich (1972, p. 200), the restriction in movement ("freeze") is actually brought about by the Ego (realistic element of self) in recognition that new environments can't be handled if the armor remains in place. In fact, the new environment is likely to trigger an even greater strengthening of the armor:

Through the armoring, therefore, the ego receives a certain strengthening. At the same time, however, and precisely as a result of this, the ego's ability to act and its freedom of movement are curtailed. And the more the armoring impairs the capacity for sexual experience, the more closely the ego's structure approximates that of a neurotic, the greater the likelihood of its future breakdown.

Thus, we see that character armor remains in place as a result of not just the challenge offered by instinctual impulses (functions of Freud's Id) but also recognition by realistic elements of one's internal psyche (functions of Freud's ego) that change and the movement to new environments will often make things even worse.

Given these reinforcing, homeorhetic dynamics, it is easy to appreciate the resistance of someone with strong character armor to embark on a journey of change. Why venture to Oz and its many challenges when it is quite adaptive to remain fully protected in the forest. I would suggest that the challenge to change is even more daunting for those people who cloth themselves with armor as part of their job.

The Armor of Uniforms and Roles

Sometimes, we see armor that people display in quite visible ways. They are wearing uniforms and are often engaged in roles that relate to safety and life-and-death issues. They are police officers, firemen, members of the military, physicians, and judges. We want to see them in uniform and are at least mildly disconcerted when they are in "civilian" clothes.

There is even the armor of the C-Suite. The men are “required” to wear coat-and-tie. There are the comparable tailored dress or pants suits for female execs. It is only the renegade software executive of Silicon Valley who can wear polo shirt and tan pants. It should be noted that the armor can be abandoned on casual Friday. Nowadays there is also the “anything goes” (at least below the waist) attire when working at home and communicating via Zoom.

The armor of those providing safety and treatment, as well as those in the C-Suite, seems in one sense to be very appropriate and justified for these men and women from diverse professions and occupations. It is a matter of collusion: we want these uniformed men and women to be error-free. They must at least pretend to be error-free. Better yet, wearing the armor, they come to believe that their decisions and actions are error-free.

They need to reduce (perhaps even eliminate) their own cognitive dissonance: I must believe that I make no mistakes. Otherwise, as someone who is imperfect, I am undeserving of this uniform and the people’s trust in me. Those in uniform are vulnerable to vulnerability (the shattering of their image). Who do they turn to for help – other members of their same role group? Unformed people tend to hang around uniformed people. What about those who rely on the uniform? They are also vulnerable and need to ensure that they can trust the competence and intentions of those in uniform.

Armor and Persona

A “softer” version of Reich’s character armor is to be found in the description of “persona” by Carl Jung and his associates (Jung, 2013). As a prominent psychoanalyst who broke away from Freud, Jung suggests that all of us carry around and present to other people a “mask” (persona) that allows us to present a self that is appropriate to the specific setting in which we find ourselves. While this persona can be changed somewhat from one

setting to another, it tends to become rather stiff and unchanging as we grow older or as we begin work in a specific job and are assigned a specific role in our family and society. The persona becomes rigid and takes on the characteristics (and pathology) associated with Reich's character armor.

The Persona does serve a positive function when it doesn't become rigid. Personas not only enable us to act in a predictable manner (which is reassuring to other people with whom we interact) but also enable us to "engineer" our own presentation self: we can be kind, humorous, challenging, aloof, earthy . . . whatever works best for us.

Most importantly, our persona protects us from vulnerability. Like the Cowardly Lion, we can appear to be fearless when we are actually terrified. We can appear competent when faced with a task that is way over our heads ("beyond our pay grade"). At times, we need a mask given the diverse and unexpected challenges of mid-21st Century life and work.

The Impostor Syndrome

Finally, there is the armor worn by an impostor. In returning to Oz, we know that the Wizard was an imposter. He was found out by Toto and soon had to provide "real" assistance to Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion – and our Tin Man. We might also view the Lion as an imposter. He is pretending to be ferocious – and brave – yet is actually a coward. We might even think of the cowardly lion and the Wizard as having their own armor. In many ways, the impostor away from Oz is simply one form of "celebrity" that is engaged for manipulative purposes. The manipulation leads to creation of a public figure that is either a distortion of reality (like the Lion) or an entirely fictionalized character (like the Wizard) that has been created by someone for personal gain and power.

As in the case of Sennett's analysis of the actor on stage, the impostor exists and is successful because other people go along

with the false reality. In the world of Oz, it is only the dog, Toto, who points out the cowardly ways of the Lion as well as the deception of the Wizard. Without Toto's hold on reality, there is collusion between the impostor and his/her "audience."

Kets de Vries (2003) notes that we want to believe that the impostor is the real person. It is important (even critical) that this person is skillful, knowledgeable, kind or whatever we wish them to be. This is another case of dissonance reduction. Just as we want policemen to be honest, physicians to be knowledgeable and CEO's to be skillful, so we want the impostor to be the real thing (whether serving as an accountant or airline pilot).

Kets de Vries uses the term "true impostor" when describing the intentions and behaviors of those people whose "identity is based on impersonations rather than actual attainments and accomplishments." He uses a different term when describes the rest of us folk: "neurotic impostors." We are the "individuals who feel fraudulent and imposturous while actually being successful." We have "an abiding feeling that [we] have fooled everyone and are not as competent and intelligent as others think [we] are."

While Kets de Vries has identified a specific subset us who are living in contemporary times, we would suggest that the term "neurotic impostor" applies to most of us. It is recognition of the "persona" we carry with us most of the time or even the "character armor" we wear as a burden when interacting in our challenging and ever-changing world. As a colleague once said (in quoting some unnamed source): "which of us won't be taking the first train out of town tonight when told that all has been found out about us and will be revealed tomorrow to everyone in our life!"

Oiling the Armor: Moshe Feldenkrais

Unconscious dynamics were just as important for Moshe Feldenkrais as they were for Reich. However, these dynamics

were primarily concerned with the implicit way in which human beings (and virtually all sentient organisms) engage and monitor their bodily functions and physical movements.

From a physiological perspective we can point to the source of most monitoring of these functions and movements in the more primitive (reptilian) brain. Known officially as the archipallium brain, this sector of our brain resides primarily in the brain stem and consists of the medulla, pons, cerebellum, mesencephalon, the oldest basal nuclei – the globus pallidus and the olfactory bulbs.

We rarely pay attention to the operation of these functions or the coordination of these movements – unless we are attempting somehow modify one of these functions (very hard to do) or learn a new skill associated with the movement. For instance, we can pay attention to our breathing and try to slow it down, ensuring that it is guided by the movement of our belly. Or we simply decide to take a deep breath.

This is all fine and good; however, we can't keep attending to our breathing. We must attend to other matters. So, at some time (in short order) our breathing once again becomes "unconscious" and is turned over to our reptilian brain. Similarly, we can learn a new way of hitting a golf ball or, for the first time, learn to ride a bike or steer a car. We are attentive to each (or at least most) steps in the required movement; however, once again we must eventually relegate this movement (now skillfully embedded) to the primitive sector of our brain.

Thus, the lack of consciousness comes not from a repression of primitive impulses, but rather from a relegation of many functions and movements to our primitive brain. We don't block the movement of energy in our body as a result of anxiety; rather, we direct some of this energy to the "automatic" but essential life-sustaining functions of our body. Just as the free flow of energy requires that we "unfreeze" our psychic functions, so the proper

functioning of our physical body requires that energy is free flowing and not “frozen” in place.

For Reich, the free flow of energy is the outcome: it helps us heal our heart; for Feldenkrais, the free flow of energy is the means to an outcome that is just as important: the freeing of our bodily functions and our movement. Feldenkrais provides the oil that frees the Tin Man to move and join the journey to Oz. Reich provides the psychic insights that enables the Tin Man to find his heart in Oz.

The Whole Body

At the heart of Feldenkrais’s perspective is a focus on the entire human body. He attends to all of the functions and movements that we tend to take for granted. At the center of Feldenkrais’s systemic perspective, is one of the physical positions we assume that is often taken for granted: this is our Posture.

Feldenkrais (1985, p. 53) firmly stakes his position regarding the importance of posture and corrects the limited (non-systematic) perspective that most of us take when thinking of posture:

First, the idea of posture itself is fairly new, and in most minds posture and position mean the same thing. Posture is misleading; it suggests fixity as much as position. For example, we say someone has a nice posture when we mean that she stands straight; that is, vertically, she stands as high as she can; in other words, she has assumed a straight vertical position. Well, one can assume a good position while having bad posture, because posture is concerned with the way the good or bad position is achieved.

It is here where Feldenkrais’s systemic perspective becomes fully visible:

Position describes the location and configuration of the various segments of the body. Posture describes the use

of the entire self in achieving and maintaining this or that change of configuration and position. Posture is therefore describing action, and is a dynamic term. One can slouch, lower the head, and adopt the most awkward position in good posture and assume the same position in very bad posture. Posture relates to the use made of the entire neuromuscular function, or more generally, the cerebrosomatic whole; that is, the way the affect, the motivation, the direction, and the execution of the act is organized while it is performed. Posture must, therefore, be used to describe the way the idea of an act is projected and the way the different segments of the body are correlated to achieve a change or maintain a state. A cripple may have excellent posture, although the positions he assumes are all abnormal.

We see in Feldenkrais' perspective a holistic portrait of the human body. All elements of the body work together to yield a firm structure (posture) which can be conducive to positive health or conductive to ill health. Furthermore, operating as a single, unified force and function, our body provides a tone that impacts profoundly on our sense of well-being. Much as Reich's character armor is a fully integrated feature of the human personality in some people, so the posture (representing the full body functioning) is an important feature of the human presentation of self and mode of navigation in the world.

Feldenkrais's posture (in its fullest systemic manifestation) provides us with a holistic sense of "well-being" much as Antonio Damasio's (2005) somatic template provides us with an ongoing (and typically unconscious) sense of mood -and well-being. Neither the information provided by our posture nor by our somatic template is conscious; however, it has just a great impact (or perhaps greater) on the way we think, feel and act in the world.

Touch

For Feldenkrais, additional emphasis is placed on another physically based aspect of human experience that is rarely acknowledged. This aspect is: Touch. Like posture, touch impacts on our basic sense of well-being—and strongly influences our interpersonal relationships.

In making the case for the important role played by Touch, Feldenkrais (1981, p. 5) notes that words can hide – however body (touch) can never hide:

Words, as somebody said, are more to hide our intentions than to express them. But I have never met anybody, man or animal, who cannot tell a friendly touch from an evil one. Touching, if unfriendly even in thought, will make the touched stiff, anxious, expecting the worst, and therefore unreceptive to your touch. Through touch, two persons, the toucher and the touched, can become a new ensemble: two bodies when connected by two arms and hands area new entity. These hands sense at the same time as they direct.

I would push the analysis even further by suggesting that the “authority” to Touch another person is very important regarding all manner of social interactions. We touch other people by shaking their hand, giving them a hug, or simply touching their hand or shoulder. In recent years the matter of touch has taken on greater significance. Who can we touch and who can't we touch? In what way, if any, can we touch other people? Politicians are allowed (even encouraged) to shake hands and perhaps a pat on the back and a hug for those who are close associates—but nothing more (as we know from some actual or threatened scandals). Gender, age and nature of relationship play a critical role. Social norms, conventions and even legal rules inform our touching behavior—as does the role we might be playing as a “professional.”

In the health care sector, for instance, some medical professionals (such as doctors and nurses) can “touch” a patient, while this is “off-limits” (other than handshakes) to administrative staff, technical support people and most volunteers. Teachers can’t touch their students, nor can psychotherapists, lawyers, financial planners or architects (to mention just a few of the professions). Veterinarians can touch our pet – but not us! Those who cut or dress hair can touch (but not below the head), while physical therapists have full reign to touch most parts of our body. This is where Feldenkrais enters the picture as someone doing “physical therapy.” He can not only touch his clients, he can also encourage them to touch and be touched by other people.

Speech

Feldenkrais (1981, p. 143) goes on to trace out implications of non-verbal functions (particularly tone of speech) that are operating in the human body for psychotherapy:

Many things are not obvious. Most psychotherapies use speech to get to unconscious, forgotten, early experience. Yet feelings go on in ourselves long before speech is learned. Some pay attention not to what is said but to how it is said. Doing this enables one to find the intentions behind the structure of the phrasing, so that one can get to the feelings that dictated the particular way of phrasing. In short, how one says what one does is at least as important as what one says.

In this statement, we find Feldenkrais pointing to the “nonverbal” aspects of speech – which have received more attention in recent years [notably through the writings of Albert Mehrabian (2007)]. Once again, we find an element of human behavior (how we speak) that is rarely conscious – but is often telling (especially to other people) regarding our attitudes about not only ourselves but also the person with whom we are relating.

It is not only touch that we can rarely hide. It is also how we convey words. We can point to numerous analysts of nonverbal communication over the years who have identified many other ways in which deep-seated attitudes, emotions and interpersonal concerns “leak out” through our facial expressions and spatial distance from other people—as well as Feldenkrais’ posture and tone of voice. (e.g. Sommer, 1969; Hall, 1990)

Habits of thought

With the assessment by Feldenkrais of the power inherent in many bodily functions—I have only mentioned three (posture, touch, tone of speech)—are we likely to find that this power extends to the very way in which we think. While it is clear from Damasio’s analysis, that the somatic template can at times disrupt and distract our thought processes, it is another matter to suggest that our body influences the very way in which we think about our own internal psychic processes and about the world in which we operate. We know that non-verbal movements (such as touch) and tone of voice can impact our relationships with other people—do changes in these relationships change the way in which we think: We know that our gut has more neural links to our brain than any other system in our body—but does this mean that our thinking is influenced by what is happening in our Gut.

The most obvious way in which to make a connection between physical functions and bodily movements as they might influence thought is to consider their impact not on the slow, deliberative thinking that is based primarily in the pre-frontal cortex, but in the fast, often habitual thinking that is based primarily in our limbic system (particularly the amygdala). Given that the limbic system is more closely tied in with the reptilian brain, it is easier to speculate that the fast thinking (portrayed by Daniel Kahneman, 2013) is more vulnerable to “bodily” influences than is slow thinking. Kahneman focuses in particular on the heuristics that form the base for fast thinking.

Heuristics, such as relying on the latest information we have received or looking at the world in the same way as most other people, will mostly play a central role if we are tired, distracted or anxious. These conditions are all related to bodily functions. We might push it even further. Are there “bodily heuristics.” Do we move beyond the knee jerk reaction when we respond automatically (and autonomically) to a particular state of body? Are there some fundamental heuristics associated with our posture.

Just as character armor may influence the way in which we think and feel about ourself and our world, so our posture (viewed from Feldenkrais’ holistic perspective) might help to determine or at least frame the way in which we think about ourself and our world. Perhaps there is a heuristic associated with feeling in or out of “alignment” or a heuristic associated with being “in touch” or “out of touch” with an idea or feeling.

It is not just our thinking and our bodily functions that become habitual, but also our resulting behavior. We are engaged in elusively obvious actions, as the title of one of Feldenkrais’s books suggests (Feldenkrais, 1981). We know these behaviors are occurring, but we fail to acknowledge their prevalence. One of Feldenkrais’s acolytes, Alfons Grabher (2010, p. 55), puts it this way:

For very common tasks we do many hundred times per day, like turning the head to the left and back to centre again, everyone has their way of doing so. It's far more difficult to look at the details of this move because they are hidden by habits. To look beyond these habits and become aware of the actual movement, is a key learning requisite in the Feldenkrais Method. Being able to learn to focus on movement itself (in- stead of focusing on a goal) is an intrinsic part of every lesson.

We can turn specifically to Feldenkrais's (1981 p. xxix) own words:

Many troubled relationships come from inadvertently carrying over seemingly good habits of thought to where they do not apply. Somehow we behave as if good habits are always good. We think or rather feel that we need not bother about behaving otherwise. It is not so obvious that good habits can make us unhappy. It is an elusive truth. Yet habitual lack of free choice is often, nay, usually, disastrous.

This final point made by Feldenkrais is a real dilly. He goes beyond the Behavioral Economists in their suggestion that habitual (heuristic-based) thinking and decision-making is easy to do and is likely to be the fallback when we are tired, distracted, or under stress. Feldenkrais suggests that we somehow assign a positive value to these habits and that we are not motivated to seek out alternatives to our habits.

Leon Festinger (1957) and his colleagues in the field of social cognitive psychology might propose that we are likely to experience very uncomfortable cognitive dissonance when considering new habits (and declaring our old habits to be less than great). Feldenkrais offers a simpler explanation: we are often happy with our current habits and see no reason to change them. Truth about the actual destructive impact of many habits apparently is quite "elusive."

I offer a third option. Our habits and the way we move and portray ourselves (in clothes, mannerisms, and modes of speech) are reinforced by the deeply embedded social norms and expectations of the society in which we live and operate. The truths about our habits are elusive precisely because they are supported and encouraged by the social system in which we live. Like fish that swarm in our seas, we are not only unaware that there is an alternative to the swarm but are also unaware that we

are swimming in water. I illustrate this point by turning to an analysis offered by Richard Sennett, a highly insightful critic of social behavior.

The Fall of Public Man

Much as we went beyond Reich's own perspectives to reflect on the armor that is found in society—as a way of exploring the armor to be found among 21st Century men and women—so we will go beyond Feldenkrais's analysis to explore an element of human behavior to be found in society. In this case we first turn back to the way people related to one another at an earlier period of time. In *The Fall of Public Man*. Richard Sennett (1976) writes about the shift in human behavior and non-verbal expressions that occurred in European society several centuries ago. These shifts relate directly to what Feldenkrais has to say about the influence of human functions and bodily movement on our sense of self and society.

For many years, the condition of European cities was deplorable. Sewage ran in the streets (which were nothing more than muddy wastelands of filth and disease). The bodies of those living in these conditions were constantly being challenged. Men wore hats and walked with their womenfolk on the curb side of the street because inhabitants of the rooms located in the buildings beside them were pitching their waste products out the window and onto the street (and hats) below. Human movement was being strongly influenced by life on the streets.

Under these conditions, there was no need to “dress up” when going outside. Rather, formal wear was reserved for “at home” living. Men, women, and children wore their fine clothes at home and presented their refined manners at home. Thus, “private man” was refined. They left their courser behavior for the streets outside—where a primitive battle was being engaged between their own health and the pollution to which they were exposed.

Contrasting with “private man”, “public man” was crude and less restrained. Reich would say that the character armor was reserved for domestic life during these times. Feldenkrais would say that the freedom to act in public was a source of anxiety reduction (as compared to the limits to action required in the home). The Jungians would concur that the “persona” was most consistently engaged at home and that the “persona” was less restrictive in public.

According to Sennett, this all changed with an improvement in the conditions of European cities (as well as shifts in numerous other conditions of European societies). Folks began to dress up when going outside and dressed in a more informal manner when at home. They were suddenly less restricted in their movements when in their own domestic setting. Feldenkrais would suggest that this might have changed the very way in which these “private” men and women viewed themselves and the outside world.

We see this at an extreme during the second half of the twentieth century, with the common attire at home often being sweatpants. This looser and more comfortable clothing allowed not only for the abandonment of restrictive armor (dressing formally), but also for the opportunity for free action and exercise (after all, “sweatpants” were initially intended for exercise and athletic endeavors). By contrast, as we have already noted, the office attire became suits, ties, pantsuits suits and finely styled hair. In the twenty-first century, as we have also noted, the options have expanded with “casual Fridays”, work at home, and digital communication. Do we find that “casual” attire and “casual” behavior result in “casual” thought and feelings?

Richard Sennett wants us to remain for a little while in an era when the public man became more formal and ceased to be the less protected, hat-wearing citizen of an earlier era. He noted that there was one sector of European society that remained quite open, unprotected, and devoted to dramatic activity: this was the

actor in theater (and later movies). This person exposed the vulnerability of humankind via the roles he/she played on stage. They also became “victims” of exposés that focused on their private lives. They were subject to public scandals (“acting out”) as extensively conveyed in newspapers and other printed tabloids (and later radio and television).

In essence, the actor signed a pact with the devil: I get to be successful in show business but yield the rights to my personal life. Sennett noted that this led to the creation of “celebrity” status. Furthermore, celebrity status was soon assigned not only to actors and actresses, but also political figures and even some business leaders. We are fully aware of this Faustian trade-off today: if you want to be successful in many fields, you must become “famous” and a “celebrity” with your personal life (strengths and weaknesses) all available for public display and analysis. We need only look at the public scandal created by Wilhelm Reich and Moise Feldenkrais, who were both “outliers.” For Feldenkrais, this meant the constant struggle to gain a “positive reputation” with his practices being considered “reputable” rather than being “fringy.” For Reich, this outlier status even meant incarceration and untimely death

How do we work with a public figure – a “celebrity” – who has lost her/his private self? What do they protect? In exposing their own vulnerability, do they teach other people, inspire openness among other people, or simply play into the fantasy worlds and envy of their public? To what extent are the leaders with whom we work – who do not qualify as “celebrities” – burdened with some of the trade-offs of “celebrity-ship” (without all of the financial remuneration)?

The key issue would seem to be the setting of appropriate boundaries. When does “public man” (and “public woman”) step out of the spotlight and avoid personal vulnerability? We often help our highly successful clients to find a sanctuary to which they can retreat (Bergquist, 2017). This sanctuary should not only

provide strong boundaries but also be a source of renewal and a place where our client can act freely!

They can interact with family, friends, and colleagues who are fully trustworthy. For the client we have already mentioned, she is purchasing a home in another city where she can be “herself.” One of our other clients finds this sanctuary closer to him. It is his sailboat that is moored in a nearby bay. For a third client, it is her cottage on a lake. One of our other clients identifies his sanctuary as nothing more than the daily trip by car to work.

There is also the matter of “retirement.” When does the public figure step away from her highly constrained and quite public role? What is her next role in life? And can she find gratification in this new role? What about the legacy that this public figure leaves behind? It is important for our client to recognize that she may be stepping “off stage” but her accomplishments (and stumbles) will remain “on stage” for many years to come. In some sense, she is only slowly retreating from the spotlight. She can now act with greater freedom—the armor can be replaced with a comfortable sweatsuit.

Vulnerability: Armor and Heart

In conclusion, we return to the work of Manfred Kets de Vries. He proposes that leaders are often addressing the vulnerability of those working with them, as well as their own vulnerability. The more vulnerable we are in any specific situation, the more challenging our own psychological equilibrium (Kets de Vries, 2003). In seeking to re-establish equilibrium, we are likely to engage in splitting (separating the world into clear-cut “goods” and “bads”), projection (ascribing to other people what we reject in ourselves), or denial (refusing to acknowledge what is going on inside ourselves or in our environment). These are all primitive defensive routines that we witness going on all around us today (and not just in our clients). They are routines that rigidify our

persona and block the movement of energy in our body. We arm ourselves on behalf of our vulnerability.

Facing this vulnerability, we must gain a steady sense of self, gain the capacity to test reality, and tolerate anxiety and uncertainty in our life—if we are to set aside our armor. Kets de Vries suggests the following goal: “the ease with which the individual can articulate his thoughts and emotions, his ability to perceive the relationship between his thoughts, feelings, and actions, and his desire to learn . . .” We would suggest that these goals are worthy of our efforts to shed our own armor—or work with those who are heavily armored.

This work is especially important when we are addressing the needs of women and men who face the challenge of leadership or are in the business of providing safety and ensuring equity in our troubled society. At times, they must clad themselves with armor, cloak themselves with a persona, or confront their own sense of being an impostor who might soon be exposed. They must think twice about the actions that they take and about how these actions can help to relieve the inevitable anxiety that they experience. All of this is inevitable—but it need not be habitual. All of us should check out our own armor, our restricted movement, our persona, and our impostor fears. Are we vulnerable? Are we stuck? Do we know when to move and where to go? Are we immune or perhaps frozen in place? Answers are required.

Conclusions: Reich meets Feldenkrais

The two men never meet, though their “conceptual” paths crossed at the Esalen Institute in California. Both Feldenkrais and Reich’s protégé, Alexander Lowen, provided training at Esalen. This is a legendary retreat site where body and mind intermingled during the late 20th Century. It was a primary site of the human potential movement in the United States. Furthermore, the spirit of Fritz Perls and Gestalt was alive and well at Esalen—along with the

rich and provocative theories and perspectives of Fritjof Capra, Theodore Roszak, George Leonard, and Abraham Maslow

By contrast, the training provided by Feldenkrais in Massachusetts would have been less oriented toward the Gestalt-based integration of body and mind, and more oriented toward the structural mechanics of bodily movement (Feldenkrais's background). Differences between the orientations offered at Esalen and Amherst probably paralleled the contrast between East Coast human relations training (offered by the National Training Laboratories in Bethel, Maine) and West Coast human potential training (offered at Esalen and other seaside and wooded settings).

I would suggest that the perspectives and practices of Reich and Feldenkrais have converged in recent years with the formulation of an integrative model of physical and mental health treatment. Called the *Biopsychosocial* approach to the assessment and treatment of human ills (Satterfield, 2013), we suspect that both Reich and Feldenkrais would have smiled at the alignment of this approach with their own views.

They might even have gently (in the case of Feldenkrais) or more vociferously (in the case of Reich) taken some credit for the formulation of this approach – and with some justification. Most importantly, they would have found that this integrative approach might guide effective treatment of tin men and women of our mid-21st-century world. Perhaps these restricted and self-wounding clients could now begin to move freely. And their heart could be healing.

We thank all members of our treatment team for the wisdom they offer and the hope they engender in treating rusted armor and encased hearts.

Chapter Six

Oiling the Tin Man's Armor and Healing His Heart III: Reich's and Feldenkrais's Treatment

The Tin Man is waiting alongside Dorothy and the Scarecrow. Toto is racing around beneath their feet and in the nearby forest restless to get on with their journey. These characters of the legend of OZ are patiently waiting for Wilhelm Reich and Moshe Feldenkrais to show up before restarting their trip to Oz. Dorothy, the Scarecrow and the Tin Man have taken a few moments to reflect on the validating of the Good Witch's claim that the Wizard can solve everything. Even though she is a "good" witch, Belinda is inclined like all witches to distort reality and place everyone in the "absolutely good" or "absolutely bad" category.

Our thoughtful colleagues concluded that anyone who is ruling an entire city (especially if it is Emerald in color and perhaps in substance) can't be all good or all bad. Mayors, emperors and other rulers are likely to be a bit dishonest in declaring their capacity to solve all problems. As a resident of Kansas, Dorothy suggests that they call in two experts regarding the matter of armaments and the healing of hearts. She recommends Wilhelm Reich and Moshe Feldenkrais.

Neither Reich nor Feldenkrais are politicians. Rather, both are noted experts on these matters - though each is quite controversial. Dorothy and the Scarecrow convince the Tin Man that it is worth a try. If either Reich or Feldenkrais are successful, then the trip to Oz can focus on the Scarecrow's acquisition of a brain and Dorothy's return to Kansas (possibly bringing Reich and Feldenkrais along with her). With his new mobility and heart,

the Tin Man can be of great service to both Dorothy and the Scarecrow. If they can only get Toto to calm down a bit . . .

Reich: Healing the Heart

We can first reintroduce Wilhelm Reich. We have already listened to his own initial account of armor and the healing of hearts. To begin with, Wilhelm Reich (1972, p. 42) is aligned with Freud in offering a topographical point of view. The technique being used is dependent on the particular element of the psyche being addressed (Id, Ego, Super-Ego). Reich, however, moves beyond Freud in his expansive perspective on the dynamics operating in a psychoanalytic program. He believes that unconscious matter can't become conscious until such time as the resistance of the patient has been addressed. Dr. Reich isn't done. He offers a third point of view that he identifies as economic and structural. It concerns the distinctive strategies to be used with each patient – depending in large part on their character structure.

Addressing the Resistance

Like Feldenkrais, Reich begins by inserting oil into the joints of the armor. The heart can't be healed until the joints have been oiled. However, in Reich's case the joints are psychological in nature and the "oil" is focused on confronting the initial resistance in therapy.

This initial confrontation is critical for Dr. Reich. It must precede any in-depth interpretive work (Reich, 1972, p. 29):

. . . interpretations involving deeper probing have to be avoided as long as the first front of the cardinal resistances has not become manifest and been eliminated, regardless of how abundant, clear, and obviously interpretable the material may be. The more material a patient recollects without having produced corresponding resistances, the more circumspect one must become. Faced with the choice of interpreting unconscious contents or taking up evident resistances,

the analyst will choose the latter. Our principle is: No interpretation of meaning when a resistance interpretation is still to come. The reason for this is simple enough. If the analyst offers an interpretation before the dissolution of the germane resistances, the patient will accept the interpretation for reasons related to the transference, in which case he will wholly deprecate its importance at the first sign of a negative bearing, or the resistance will follow afterwards. In either case, the interpretation has forfeited its therapeutic force: it has fizzled out. Such an error is very difficult, if at all possible, to correct. The path which the interpretation must take into the deep unconscious has been blocked off.

Reich (1972, p. 29) goes on to make a telling (and distinctive) point regarding the sequencing of analytic activities:

It is important not to disturb the patient in the unfolding of his "analytic personality" during the first weeks of treatment. Neither should the resistances be interpreted before they have been fully developed and in essence understood by the analyst. Naturally, the moment at which a resistance is interpreted will depend largely upon the analyst's experience.

The key question becomes: How does the analyst identify the source and nature of the resistance. Usually, it involves both the direct observation of the patient's behavior as well as the analyst's interpretation (though not revealing) of underlying psychic dynamics. I first turn to what Reich (1972, p. 30) has to say about the identification of the patient's source of resistance:

... [T]o dissolve the resistance, the analyst must know the unconscious material pertaining to and contained in it, yet he has no way of reaching this material because it is shut off by the resistance. Like the dream, every resistance has a historical meaning (an origin) and a contemporary relevance. The impasse can be penetrated by first divining the contemporary meaning and purpose of the resistance from the contemporary situation (the

unfolding of which the analyst has observed) and from the form and mechanisms of the resistance, and then working through it with corresponding interpretations in such a way that the germane infantile material is brought to the surface. It is only with the help of the latter that the resistance can be wholly dissolved. There are of course no rules for the ferreting out of the resistances and the divining of their contemporary meaning. To a large extent, this is a matter of intuition--and here we have the beginning of the non-teachable art of analysis. The less blatant, the more concealed the resistances are (i.e., the more the patient deceives), the more certain the analyst will have to be of his intuitions in order to gain control. In other words, the analyst himself must be analyzed and, over and above this, he must have special gifts.

Reich (1972, p. 3) goes on at this point to consider the nature of what he calls "latent resistance":

What is a "latent resistance"? They are attitudes on the part of the patient which are not expressed directly and immediately, i.e., in the form of doubt, distrust, tardiness, silence, obstinacy, apathy, etc., but indirectly in the analytic performance. Exceptional docility or complete absence of manifest resistances is indicative of concealed and, for that reason, much more dangerous passive resistance.

Ironically, these most dangerous forms of resistance are among those that are most readily apparent to the analysts. Like the armor being worn by the Tin Man, the resistance is being worn and is manifest in ways that are immediately apparent. One of these ways is described by Reich as "breaking the basic rules."

Breaking the Basic Rules: The resistance is often identified as character resistance as a way to capture its power and pervasive appearance as part of the character armor. It shows up in a variety of different ways early in the therapy program. Often it is a matter of the patient "not following the basic rules." (Reich, 1972, p. 43) The patient shows up late for their therapy session. Or the patient

either accepts the therapist's interventions uncritically or rejects them without giving the rejection any thought.

There is an important point to be made. The behavioral patterns often suggest that the patient doesn't yet really trust the therapist—often because of the long-standing neurosis, living in a “neurotic milieu” or failure to obtain help from previous therapists. Reich notes that this initial lack of trust is usually based in one's Ego—not in one's more primitive irrational fears.

This failure to follow the basic rules is usually addressed initially as an “instructional” issue—with the therapist pointing out the basic rules and providing information that might help the patient increase their trust in the therapist. Later, the failure to follow the rules is addressed in an interpretive manner, with the therapist exploring deeper issues regarding trust and rules.

Reich (1972, p. 49) offers the following suggestions regarding the approach to be taken at this later stage in identifying and analyzing the character resistance:

In addition to the dreams, associations, slips, and other communications of the patients, the way in which they recount their dreams, commit slips, produce associations, and make their communications, in short their bearing, deserves special attention. Adherence to the basic rule is something rare, and many months of character-analytic work are required to instill in the patient a! halfway sufficient measure of candidness. The way the patient speaks, looks at and greets the analyst, lies on the couch, the inflection of the voice, the degree of conventional politeness which is maintained, etc., are valuable cues in assessing the secret resistances with which the patient counters the basic rule. And once they have been understood, they can be eliminated through interpretation. It is not only what the patient says but how he says it that has to be interpreted. Analysts are often heard to complain that the analysis is not progressing, that the patient is not producing any "material." By material, what is usually meant is merely the content of

the associations and communications. But the nature of the patient's silence or sterile repetitions is also material which has to be used fully. There is scarcely a situation in which the patient does not produce any material, and we have to lay the blame upon ourselves if we can't make use of the patient's bearing as material.

Resistance vs. Symptom-Relief: while patients often come into therapy to reduce specific symptoms (such as anxiety or phobias), the therapist doesn't immediately work on these symptoms. (Reich, 1972, p. 46) There are several reasons for this lack of initial attention to symptoms. First, the patient usually has a lack of insight regarding the nature of their "illness." The patient usually doesn't describe its frequency of occurrence or its full impact on them. Second, the patient has usually built up an extensive and highly resistant rationalization for their symptoms. They try to make these symptoms somehow seem sensible and "normal" (even though it is hurting them in a deep and sustained manner).

Working on the Resistance: In focusing on the resistance, Reich finds many ways in which to help his patient identify its source. In one case that Reich describes, the patient recognizes that he is afraid the analyst will "deprive him of his ideals." (Reich, 1972, p. 67) As many analysts observe, successful analysis often involves kicking a patient out of Eden.

Our Tin Man, for instance, would be free to fear the many challenges of the Forest. Ensconced in his armor, the Tin Man needs to make no decisions; he has lived "happily" in this one spot in the forest (a small patch of grass beside the Yellow Brick Road). Another patient was deeply embedded in a "transferred father resistance." (Reich, 1972, p. 104) The therapist had become the father, and the patient wanted no part of his abusive father.

Reich (1972, p. 35) offers the following description regarding how best to address the transference:

In an analysis that is proceeding correctly, it is not long before the first substantial transference resistance arises. To begin with, we must understand why the first

significant resistance against the continuation of the analysis is automatically, and in keeping with the legitimacy of the case's structure, tied in with the relationship to the analyst. . . . At first, the resistance is directed solely against what is repressed, but the patient knows nothing about it, neither that he bears something forbidden in himself nor that he is fending it off. As Freud demonstrated, the resistances themselves are unconscious. But the resistance is an emotional stirring corresponding to an increased expenditure of energy, and for that reason cannot remain buried. Like everything else that is irrationally motivated, this emotional stirring also strives to achieve a rational foundation, i.e., to become anchored in a real relationship. Now what could be closer to hand than to project, and to project upon that person who brought about the whole conflict through his insistence on the disagreeable basic rule?

Reich's (1972, p. 35) holistic perspective (like that deployed by Feldenkrais) is apparent in his requirement that the resistance (and underlying neurosis) be addressed from all sides:

Using the cardinal resistance as a kind of citadel, as it were, the analyst must undermine the neurosis from all sides, instead of taking up individual peripheral resistances, i.e., attacking many different points which have only an indirect relation to one another. By consistently broaching the resistances and the analytic material from the first transference resistance, the analyst is able to survey the situation as a whole, both past and present.

Thus, we find that an interpretation of the resistance serves as a gateway to an engagement with the underlying neurotic symptoms. In keeping with our analogy, as I have already mentioned, Tin Man's armor must first be oiled before there is an attempt to heal the heart. Reich (1972, p. 41) sums it up this way: "resistances cannot be taken up soon enough in the analysis, and that, apart from the resistances, the interpretation of the

unconscious cannot be held back enough." The analyst holds back the interpretation until the resistance (armor) has been oiled — then the Tin Man (and patient) is ready for the more intimate exploration of his heart (neurotic symptoms).

Here is an example offered by Reich (1972, p. 80) regarding how the transition takes place from addressing the transference to addressing the underlying neurotic issues.

. . . [A] patient never becomes emotionally involved and remains indifferent, regardless of what material he produces, one is dealing with a dangerous emotional block, the analysis of which must take precedence over everything else if one does not want to run the risk of having all the material and interpretations lost. If this is the case, the patient may acquire a good knowledge of psychoanalytic theory, but he will not be cured. If, confronted with such a block, the analyst elects not to give up the analysis because of the "strong narcissism," he can make an agreement with the patient. The patient will be given the option to terminate the analysis at any time; in turn, he will allow the analyst to dwell upon his emotional lameness until it is eliminated.

For Reich (1972, p.80-81), this is not a short-term process. He would never have subscribed to the present-day emphasis on short-term therapy.

Eventually it usually takes many months (in one case it took a year and a half) the patient begins to buckle under the continual stressing of his emotional lameness and its causes. In the meantime, the analyst will gradually have obtained sufficient clues to undermine the defense against anxiety, which is what an emotional block is. Finally, the patient rebels against the threat of the analysis, rebels against the threat to his protective psychic armor, of being put at the mercy of his drives, particularly his aggressive drives. By rebelling against this "nonsense." However, his aggressiveness is aroused and it is not long before the first emotional outbreak ensues (i.e., a

negative transference) in the form of a paroxysm of hate. If the analyst succeeds in getting this far, the contest has been won. When the aggressive impulses have been brought into the open, the emotional block has been penetrated and the patient is capable of analysis. From this point on, the analysis runs its usual course. The difficulty consists in drawing out the aggressiveness.

It would seem that the Armor is not just being oiled. It is also being beaten on by the analyst. The thumping might reveal a wounded heart; it certainly will arouse a reaction from the patient—and this helps to “break the emotional block” (the psychic armor).

Addressing the Neurotic Symptoms

How then are the neurotic symptoms confronted? It is often the case that Reich (1972, p. 89) focuses on the patient’s anxiety, for this anxiety is often directly associated with the underlying neurosis. Furthermore, the anxiety often impacts the patient’s daily life immediately, thus providing a motive for delving deeply into the conditions that precipitate this anxiety:

The patient's attacks of anxiety were accompanied by palpitations and a paralysis of all volition. Even in the intervals between these attacks he was never wholly free of a feeling of uneasiness. Frequently, the attacks of anxiety occurred quite suddenly, but they were also easily provoked when, for example, he read about mental illnesses or suicide in the newspaper. In the course of the previous year his work capacity had shown marked signs of deteriorating, and he feared that he might lose his job because of his reduced performance.

We find in this brief description of one patient’s experience of anxiety a clear example of what Robert Sapolsky (2004) describes in our previous chapter as a state of Freeze. When we are frozen in anxiety, imagining many threatening lions, there is little opportunity to perform our job—or as Reich often suggested—

establish satisfactory interpersonal relationships or a gratifying sex life.

We also find a focus in Reich's work on the armor itself. The armor is being oiled and perhaps beaten upon. The armor is also being studied by the analyst and the patient. Why was the armor worn in the first place, and why is it still being worn? Are there imaginary lions against which the armor is supposed to protect? Is there a "good" (though irrational) reason to remain standing in place fully clad—and frozen--in armor? Given the armor and frozen posture, what damage is being done to the heart of the Tin Man and the analytic patient?

I turn again to the words offered by Reich (1972, p. 48):

Whereas the symptom corresponds solely to one definite experience or one circumscribed desire, the character, i.e., the person's specific mode of existence, represents an expression of the person's entire past. So a symptom can emerge quite suddenly, while the development of each individual character trait requires many years. We must also bear in mind that the symptom could not have suddenly emerged unless a neurotic reaction basis already existed in the character.

Reich is clearly suggesting that the armor has usually been in place since his patient was a child. Thus, the imaginary lions were first threatening early in life. The lions often appeared as threatening parents or as unsupportive environments in which the powerless child was forced to live. As a psychoanalyst, Reich (1972, p. 48) is also pointing to the powerful role played by libidinal urges, which the child will find to be just as threatening as any external "lions":

In the analysis, the neurotic character traits as a whole prove to be a compact defense mechanism against our therapeutic efforts, and when we trace the origin of this character "armor" analytically, we see that it also has a definite economic function. Such armor serves on the one hand as a defense against external stimuli; on the other

hand it proves to be a means of gaining mastery over the libido, which is continuously pushing forward from the id, because libidinal and sadistic energy is used up in the neurotic reaction formations, compensations, etc.

Reich believes that Anxiety is continually being bound by the armor. While Sapsolsky would probably suggest that Anxiety produces a Frozen condition, Reich is more inclined to reverse the order. For Reich, the armor comes first and then the Anxiety. The state of Anxiety is Frozen and returns the favor by keeping the armor in place. Reich points to a similar dynamic operating in Freud's initial theory. For Freud, anxiety is bound up in what he calls the "compulsive symptoms."

Using the Transference

Reich (1972, pp. 127-128) notes that Freud has identified three tasks (or stages) associated with work on a patient's transference. There is first the establishment of durable positive transference. Reich agrees with Freud that a patient must establish a trusting and appreciative relationship with their therapist if the therapy is to work. This movement beyond Ego-based building of trust should be taking place during the first sessions of therapy. The transference now has a less rational side to it. AS Freud noted, this second stage of transference is used by the therapist to move beyond the resistance to the therapeutic work on the underlying neurotic symptoms.

The third stage of positive transference is engaged as the therapist seeks to meet the major challenge of extracting repressed elements and to "bring about dramatically complete and affective abreactive eruptions." (Reich, 1972, p. 128) For both Freud and Reich, these "eruptions" involve strong emotional expressions—often expressions of grief, anger, fear, or longing. A dream is interpreted in a manner that produces strong, emotionally laden memories of childhood. A critical interaction with a significant person in the patient's life produces the content for an insight-filled interpretation by the therapist regarding the emotions accompanying (and often directing) this interaction.

None of this can occur without a strong positive transference. If this transference is not present, then the “repressed elements” become threats and the abreactions become unacceptable for the patient. Later, object relations theorists would suggest that the positive transference provides a “container” for the anxiety induced in the therapy session. Without this container, the anxiety spills out and intensifies. With the container in place, anxiety can be successfully “metabolized.”

What about negative transference? At first, it is engaged by the Ego as a defense against the therapeutic engagement itself. (Reich, 1972, p. 130) Breaking the basic rules is a strong expression of the negative transference. Later, the negative transference relates directly to the patients’ character armor. Understandably, a patient might develop a negative relationship with his therapist if the patient is threatened with the loss of his armor and with suddenly becoming naked in a world that intends to harm. The Tin Man might want to retain his armor—even if the therapist is trying to heal his heart. Reich (1972, p. 337) even ruminates briefly on the potential existence of Freud’s death instinct. This instinct might push against life (and the elimination of armor and neurotic symptoms) as well as encourage the patient to view his therapist as the “enemy.”

Reich also touches briefly on the issue of counter-transference—the moments in therapy when the analyst’s own psychic dynamics enter into therapeutic interaction. Reich (1972, p.147) offers the following comments:

Without going into the whole complex of questions, we will illustrate the problem of counter-transference with a few typical examples. It is usually possible to recognize by the way the case is proceeding whether and in which area the attitude of the analyst is defective, i.e., disturbed by his own psychological problems. The fact that some cases never produce an affective negative transference is to be ascribed not so much to the patient's block as to that of the analyst. The analyst who has not resolved the repression of his own aggressive tendencies will be

incapable of accomplishing this work satisfactorily in his patients and might even develop an affective unwillingness to form an accurate intellectual appraisal of the importance of the analysis of the negative transference. His repressed aggression will cause the analyst to regard as a provocation the patient's aggression which has to be roused. He will either overlook negative impulses in the patient or obstruct their manifestation in some way. He might even reinforce the repression of the aggression by exaggerated friendliness toward the patient. Patients quickly sense such attitudes on the part of the analyst and thoroughly exploit them in warding off drives. An affect block or an excessively solicitous bearing on the part of the analyst is the most telling sign that he is warding off his own aggression.

Is the analyst squirting in the oil with a bit of vehemence? Is he banging on the armor a bit too hard? It is, of course, helpful that there are other people around to ensure that this aggressive act doesn't go too far. The Tin Man had Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Toto (and later the Lion) to counter the countertransference. An analyst will hopefully have a supervisor to help him address his own transference.

Feldenkrais: Promoting Movement

I reintroduce Moshe Feldenkrais, a member of our diagnostic team and now our treatment team. I also return to the Tin Man and recount his fateful story. Plenty of time is available for the retelling of the story, since Dorothy, the Scarecrow, the Tin Man, and Toto are waiting for the arrival of both Reich and Feldenkrais. An accurate rendering of the story might also be important, given that both Reich and Feldenkrais are looking for causes on the way to the prescription of treatments. The story goes something like this: the Tin Man is standing, frozen in place on the grassy knoll by the yellow brick road. A sudden rainstorm left him rusted in place. After hearing a muffled cry and instructions from the rusted Tin Man, Dorothy found a container of oil sitting beside the Tin Man.

Apparently, the Tin Man had previously been faced with the challenge of potential rusting and had an oil can nearby to prevent getting frozen in place. The Tin Man asked Dorothy (and the Scarecrow) to squirt some oil into his mouth. He could then talk and immediately asked Dorothy and the Scarecrow to squirt oil in his joints so that he could begin to move. And could tell them how he got into this predicament. Apparently, the Tin Man was caught off guard when the rain suddenly poured down. He immediately rusted in place and couldn't grab the oil can and lubricate his joints.

We might anticipate some of the questions that Reich or Feldenkrais could ask. How did the Tin Man get rusted so fast? We might also notice that no rust was apparent on the shiny armor worn by the Tin Man. What actually kept the Tin Man from moving? While we are pondering this question regarding the real cause, we can follow Tin Man's narrative.

The Tin Man not only told Dorothy and the Scarecrow about how he got frozen in place—he also told them about his very sad condition of having no heart. He confirmed this condition by banging on his own empty chest. Dorothy then convinced the Tin Man that he should join her (along with the Scarecrow and Toto) on their journey to Oz, so that he could get a Heart from the mighty Wizard.

I am sharing this story (and accompanying critique) regarding the Tin Man because it is more aligned with the sequences of treatment focus offered by Feldenkrais than it is with the focus offered by Reich. For Feldenkrais, the treatment always begins with movement and freeing up the physical constraints, just as is the case with the Tin Man.

First, the musculature around the mouth of the Tin Man is lubricated, so that the Tin Man can not only tell the story about why he was standing there but also offer directions about the oiling of other joints in his armored body so that he can move. Only then can the Tin Man articulate his wish for a Heart. Similarly, for Feldenkrais, the mouth is itself a muscle. Movement of the mouth is required before there can be any articulation of

personal hopes, fears, and wounds. It all begins with movement—even verbal articulation. While Reich begins with the Heart, Feldenkrais (like Dorothy) begins with oiling the joints.

There is a second reason why I have offered a more detailed description of Tin Man’s predicament when introducing Feldenkrais’ treatment strategy. The first scene in the Tin Man’s narrative exemplifies the perspectives and practices offered by Moshe Feldenkrais. We can note that the Tin Man didn’t just want assistance with movement; he also wanted to find a heart. Furthermore, the situation calls for a critical examination of the real reasons for the Tin Man’s freeze. It seems that everything is connected. We are provided with a holistic portrayal of the Tin Man’s maladies. This same holistic perspective is to be found in the work of Moshe Feldenkrais.

It is also important to note that the Tin Man was not satisfied with gaining mobility. He wanted mobility so that he could do something important to him. And he couldn’t do something important without a Heart. Like Feldenkrais, the Tin Man believes that his own self-image and sense of purpose (Heart) are very important. The lack of a Heart might actually have contributed to the Tin Man’s frozen condition. Heart might be more important than rain. He might simply have had no reason to move, given that he had no Heart. Moshe Feldenkrais would no doubt have pointed this out to the Tin Man.

Feldenkrais probably would have taken it a step further. He would have gently suggested that the Tin Man probably didn’t even need the oil can, for he “rusted over” quickly because it wasn’t really rust, it was the fear of being mobility. He was frozen in place as a result of his own anxiety about living in a threatening wood and having no clear direction regarding his own life. In “letting go” of his fears, the Tin Man could recover his own mobility even after the threat of a rainstorm. Feldenkrais’s physical therapy-based practice builds on this notion of letting go and managing stress associated with pending threats (real or imagined).

Together with the Tin Man, Moshe Feldenkrais can provide a comprehensive strategy that integrates Head, Heart, and particularly Muscles and Joints. He would no doubt approve of Dorothy's suggestion that the Tin Man join her on the journey to Oz. Feldenkrais would have approved not because the Wizard would provide the Tin Man with a Heart (Feldenkrais would have known that the Wizard is a fake)—but because the journey itself would provide the Tin Man with a purpose. In this purpose and in the attendant movement, the Tin Man would find that he already has a heart.

With this introduction, we not only wish Dorothy, the Tin Man, and their companions a safe journey to Oz, but also turn specifically to the word of Moshe Feldenkrais regarding the major perspectives and practices he has to offer not just the Tin Man but also all of us who are stuck in our own threatening mid-21st-century woods.

Everything is connected to everything else

As we have found with Reich, Feldenkrais (2010, p. 19) strongly advocates the Essential Unity of Mind and Body

The central idea behind all we are discussing is the following: The mental and physical components of any action are two different aspects of the same function.

However, his treatment strategy tends to be opposite to that engaged by Reich. Building on the psychoanalytic focus on internal psychic processes, Wilhelm Reich tends to move from the mind to the body. The opposite is the case for Moshe Feldenkrais. He moves from the body to the mind.

In treating the Tin Man, Feldenkrais would have begun with oiling the Tin Man's immobile joints. If one starts with the heart (as Reich is inclined to do) then the body is still encased. The heart might be “healed”—but the body still can't move. The repaired heart can only yearn for freedom. The Tin Man might even wish that he were still without a heart (and consciousness) so that he wouldn't have to stare out at the forest without the ability to engage this forest in any way.

Outcomes: In commenting on the outcomes that are likely to occur if one engages in Feldenkrais-oriented practices, Alfons Grabher (2010, p. 15) offers this impressive list:

Carriage of the head (where 4 out of 5 senses are located) improves; shorter time needed to fall asleep; better coordination in rock climbing; Strength of grip increases; Appearance of being younger, better skin tonus; fewer concerns about "small" things; Less distress about disturbances; reduction of work related stress; reduction of neck tension; relief from lower back pain; Learning efficiency improves; Ability to concentrate improves; Ability to enjoy movement and life as a whole increases; Find harmony and healing; More flexibility for mind and body; improved balance and motor skills; fluidity and ease of movement; Improvement of motor control and refined movement; Increased flexibility of spine; More energy, less fatigue; Gastrointestinal function normalizes; Having more options in life; Fewer headaches; Ability to relax improves; Better sleep; Eye-hand coordination improves;

Grabher (2010, p. 15) includes psychological as well as physical outcomes:

More positive feelings about self; Improvement in overall health, general well-being and experience of quality of life; Attention improves; fewer angry outbursts; become more aware of your body's posture, alignment and patterns of movement; Well-being increases; less depression and more interest in life; Range of motion increase; decreased moodiness; Mood improves and subjective well-being increases; Habitual tension decreases; Pain decreases; Depth perception improves; Spatial awareness increases; Kinesthetic sense improves; Balance improves; Anxiety and Depression decrease . . .

At this point, Grabher (2010, p. 20) returns to the fundamental purpose for which the Feldenkrais method is being engaged – and it is a purpose that relates directly to the Tin Man's predicament:

Every lesson, besides having a wide range of benefits, leads the student towards gaining enough range of motion to be able to perform daily activities without restraint. The less physical and mental force is applied, the greater the results. The increased range of motion (without stretching) could come as a result of various improvements; better internal body organization ("better organization" is a Feldenkrais concept), a lower muscle resting tonus, yet at the same time being more ready for movement, a more harmonious timing of the opening and closing of various joints, various synergy effects (e. g. relaxing the neck muscles will also relax the hamstring muscles), or maybe other causes altogether? Feldenkrais very obviously works, but there's still a lot of research that needs to be done to be able to understand how it works.

He ends with this cautionary note regarding the need for more research. Unlike the Wizard of Oz, who proclaims the capacity to achieve a wide range of outcomes without providing any evidence, Feldenkrais does want to accumulate evidence of success. We are reminded that the Wizard closely resembles a Kansas-based seller of unproven medicines who purports to offer cures that require no work by the person seeking to be healed (other than swallowing the "miracle" drug).

In reviewing the credentials, values, and perspectives of Feldenkrais, we are particularly impressed that Feldenkrais (like Reich) is interested in how everything about the physical body and psyche of the people he is treating is interwoven. This integrative perspective might be particularly important in the treatment of the Tin Man since he is about to embark on a complex and dangerous journey with Dorothy and the Scarecrow. Perhaps Moshe can offer some specific examples of ways in which this integration works.

Examples of Integration: Moshe pauses for a moment and then offers the following example. As is often the case, he turns to the

physical body. He quotes from Grabher's (2010, p. 6) book written about his technique:

One thing you will notice is that each time you find a difficult spot to track there will be a simultaneous change in your breathing. At any moment of confusion, stop and wait until your breathing gradually becomes normal again. After a while, you will notice that the more your breathing remains continuous, the more you will find that the flow of spatial images of heel and toe becomes easier. And you will be surprised how quickly the time then begins to pass.

If you now stretch out the right leg, you will notice that it seems longer. You will experience a change in the kinesthetic sensations not only of the muscles and joints of the right foot but also of the entire right side of your body. The right eye will seem more open-and it actually is. All of the right side of the face will actually be longer and the muscles more relaxed.

If you stand up, you will also notice definite changes in the movement of the right foot and the way it feels against the floor. In fact, there will be various changes noticeable in all of the right side of the body. (p. 6)

He continues to quote Grabher (2010, p. 29):

With this lesson I want to show how to let go of habitual tension in the hip joints. How to let go, in a literal sense. This will help with having the legs standing with less effort. It will also lead to a very nice feeling around the hip joints, a sort of relaxation and feeling at ease. We will also attempt to transfer this feeling to the chest, neck and shoulders. There's a twist to it: a twist in the torso occurs when the pelvic girdle is rotated in relation to the shoulder girdle (and vice versa). This lesson will enable you to release habitual tension in your chest, and thus be slightly more upright - experiencing a feeling of being taller, more at ease in standing. After such a lesson some

women might experience having a bigger "chest", due to a more upright posture.

Nervous system, Brain and self-image: Feldenkrais (and Grabher) go even further in showing how everything relates to everything else. Grabher, 2010, p. 48) is quoted again:

The lesson starts in a supine position, lying on the back. To guide students into this lesson, it might be helpful to give a few cues: "feel the floor behind your head. It's just there. Reliably so. Your head is resting on it. Your head is supported by it. No need to hold your head. No need to hold your shoulders. They are carried by the floor. Feel the weight of your head weighing on the pillow. Let go, let your head and shoulders rest."

It is at this point that Feldenkrais (relying on Grabher) brings about the most important connection—at least with regard to the Tin Man's preparation for moving on behalf of Dorothy and the Scarecrow's welfare (Grabher, 2010, pp. 8-9):

In final analysis, the only part of our being that holds a relationship with the external world is the nervous system—the senses and the rest of the body serves only as a means for action and information gathering. It is obvious that the head, bearer of the teleceptive senses, has active participation in all of our relations with external reality. Thus, the way in which the head moves constitutes the essential ingredient in our self-image, and the vertebral column lying below it has an equally important role, because it makes rotation possible in the cervical and lumbar spine.

These considerations show the importance of the skeleton's role in our self-image. The head, resting on the pelvic structure by means of the vertebral column, is involved in every action--passive, active, or orienting--that relates us to the external world.

Yes, a clear and positive self-image is the key to Tin Man's commitment to the welfare of his colleagues and to his upcoming

courage and determination in traveling to Oz. It is when the Tin Man is feeling good about himself and his ability to be of assistance to other people that he is mobilized and empowered. There is no need for the deep analysis offered by Wilhelm Reich. A bit of oiling of the armor and addressing other elements of physical movement and balance can do the trick.

Self-image at the center of the integration

A more detailed description of the relationship between physical movement and self-image is offered by Grabher (2010, p. 10)

If one does a detailed examination of persons in this manner and if there are truly gross differences between their self-image and their objective performances, one can be sure that there will be truly gross defects in their control of those sections of their body. For example, people who habitually hold their chest with an exaggerated tightness, as if they had just exhaled, discover that their self-image of the chest is two to three times deeper than the chest actually is. Inversely, people who habitually have an exaggeratedly expanded, inspiratory chest position will underestimate the depth of their chest. A detailed examination of all the body parts yields many such surprises, particularly in the pelvis and the anal-genital region.

Once we come to see that one's degree of self-control directly mirrors one's self-image, we can understand why we find it so difficult to improve our bodily performance by focusing only on the learning of specific actions. instead, we might well surmise that to improve one's self-image so that it more nearly approximates reality will result in a general improvement in one's bodily actions.

Another perspective on this integrative dynamic is offered (Grabher, 2010, p. 4)

The musculature is following a pattern dictated by one's self-image. This uniquely individual pattern is felt subjectively to be both obvious and inevitable. This is

because habitual patterns are imprinted in the nervous system. The nervous system reacts to exterior stimulation with this habitual ready-made pattern, for it has no other available pattern of response. In order to bring about the kind of dynamic change we are suggesting, these compulsive patterns need to be removed from the nervous system, leaving it free to act or react—not according to habit, but according to the given external situation.

A final statement regarding this integration (Grabher, 2010, pp. 12-13):

Inasmuch as feelings and sensations do not tell us what is actually taking place, we have no recourse but to avail ourselves of mental processes, of judgment, understanding and knowledge, if we wish to be certain that what we feel and sense is really what we want to happen. Without such means being called into service, the errors that might occur could very well be fatal.

Our actions are organized according to a self-image that was formed, as it were, by accident. It is a self-image which is made up of feelings and sensations. This being the case, it is elementary to point out that our actions—when based on areas of our self-image that are less than clear—may result in errors, such as doing the opposite of what one thinks one is doing or doing something that has no clear relation with what one feels one is doing.

The key point, according to Grabher, is that these actions will occur without us being aware that they have occurred. The subconscious (and unconscious) continues to reign supreme.

Peremptory ideation and self-image

This brings us to the concept of Peremptory Ideation that is offered by George Klein. This concept can serve as a bridge between the work of Feldenkrais and a psychoanalyst such as Wilhelm Reich. Klein (1967) proposed that there is often a stream of images, thoughts and feelings coursing through our head and

body at any one point in time. This stream resides below the level of consciousness and is labeled “peremptory” by Klein because it can demand attention and infuse our conscious thought with new, compelling content.

We might, for instance, be streaming an image of the traumatizing car accident we were in several years ago. Suddenly, we feel a chill and are afraid to drive to work today. Or we are already driving and have to either turn off the road or slow our car down to a crawl. The peremptory ideation might instead be quite positive. An image of our child at their 10th birthday party is playing at the back of our mind, accompanied by feelings of joy and gratitude. While we are currently attending a meeting at our corporate office, it is hard to pay attention to the person who is speaking--and we are reminded of the “true” priorities in our life. We might be labeled as a “daydreamer” on this occasion. Daydreams are often populated by peremptory ideations.

Peremptory ideation might also be related to (or even be a determinant of) our image of self. Grabher writes of self-images that help to organize our actions (including our posture, tone of voice, facial expressions, etc.). The self-image at any one point in time could very well be a peremptory ideation—or at least a part of or outcome of this ideation. Our sense of self is influenced by and perhaps carried by an image, thought, and/or feeling from some occasion in our past life. Feldenkrais meets Reich and other psychoanalysts.

We are embarrassed by some trivial error because this error has triggered a peremptory ideation that picks up instances of past errors and the feelings associated with these errors. Our self-image is temporarily tarnished. This negative self-image is manifest in our hunched-over back, our shallow breathing, and our dropping facial muscles. We look “down in the mouth.” Other people notice this and relate to us as if we were bruised and battered. In appearing to be embarrassed and defeated, we actually become that much more embarrassed and feel that much more defeated. A tightly looped, integrative mind-body cycle of negativity is engaged and not easily disrupted or changed.

Self-image, self-organization, appreciation/acceptance, and letting go

At this point, we can return to the perspectives offered by Feldenkrais. We can begin to further unite some of the rich concepts offered by Feldenkrais (and conveyed by Alfons Grabher) and connect them to contemporary insights offered by theorists and researchers in other fields. We begin with the sense of appreciation for and acceptance of the natural movement of the human body for some purpose.

Finding the natural purpose of movement: Grabher (2010, p. 19) describes the typical Feldenkrais session and emphasizes the non-demanding nature of these sessions:

There are no stretching exercises in Feldenkrais classes, in the sense that muscles are pulled against resistance. In this regard there is no warm-up stretching, no cool-down stretching, no hold-the-posture stretching; no static, dynamic, nonballistic, AIS, not even PNF stretching. Such stretching methods are not part of the Feldenkrais Method.

The purpose of movement is to be appreciated (Grabher, 2010, p. 53):

When a muscle is used for a movement that it's not meant to do normally, or if it's disturbing other muscles' work, in Feldenkrais we call this "parasitic action". We use this strong term because instead of contributing these muscles draw energy from a movement and make it less efficient, maybe even painful in the long run. In other modalities this is called "energy leak".

We find close parallels to this perspective in the work being done in the area of appreciative inquiry-- or what I retitle and expand on as "appreciative perspectives" (Bergquist, 2003; Bergquist and Mura, 2011). From an appreciative perspective, the "natural" work being done within organizations is to be acknowledged, understood, and supported. It often contributes to the ongoing stability (and success) of the organization.

The “key” to ongoing, sustained achievement in an organization is often to be found in the “common” narratives of everyday successful operations in an organization. Sometimes described as the “vernacular” work of the soul (Moore, 1994; Briskin, 1996), these daily operations are often taken for granted or become the subject of “planned change” in the organization. As in the case of Feldenkrais’ “parasitic action”, the artificial patterns of behavior that are inserted into an organization without respect to the organization’s sustaining culture can be counter-productive and even toxic.

Stability and appreciation are often of greater value than change and “improvement.” Feldenkrais would probably enjoy holding hands with the practitioners of appreciative inquiry and those practitioners, like myself, who seek to find and support the best practices operating at the present time in an organization – it is about creating an “appreciative organization” (Bergquist, 2003).

Self-Organizing: Feldenkrais’ perspective of appreciation relates to yet another concept that is prevalent in contemporary organizational (and systems) theory. This is the concept of “self-organization” (a fundamental building block for the science of chaos). For Feldenkrais (and Grabher), there is an important element of trust that comes with their work in facilitating movement. They trust the ability of their client’s body to make appropriate adjustments (self-organization) when any one part of the body is moving during a treatment session.

Grabher (2010, p. 54) speaks of this as a gentle way of working with a client, on behalf of the “natural” self-organizing tendencies and capacities of the human body:

In one lesson Moshe Feldenkrais gave the following advice: “Do it more gently at the points where it is difficult. Do not try to push more, but at the points where it is difficult, do it more easily, a gentler movement, more slowly. Then, slowly it will-organize itself.” He does not say, “then, you will be able to organize it” or “then you will know how to do it”.

The key phrase here is "then it will organize itself". It is the nervous system that organizes movement. And a healthy nervous system will always try to make the best possible choice, given the information and possibilities available at the time.

Remarkable! If our nervous system is healthy, then it will self-organize the entire body in an appropriate manner. As in the case of an appreciative perspective regarding organizational functioning, the adjustments being made are self-reinforcing. The nervous system becomes healthy because the body is moving in a natural way. The body moves more naturally and in a self-organizing manner because the nervous system is healthy.

Similarly, individual behaviors and patterns of behaviors that are appreciated are likely not only to occur more frequently but also in a more skillful manner. Many years ago, Carl Rogers proposed that people are least likely to change and improve if they are being asked to change, and are most likely to change and improve when they have received positive regard--what I would identify as appreciation.

Appreciation of Individuality: The engagement in appreciation extends in yet another direction for Feldenkrais and his followers. There is appreciation for the distinctive way in which each of us moves in our world. We walk and talk (and relate to other people) in a manner that is aligned directly to our distinctive sense of self-identity. Alfons Grabher (2010, p. 22) puts it this way:

In Feldenkrais classes we approve of a person as who this person is, and we try to show variations and choices. We don't blame someone for what others would perceive as not good or wrong (e. g. if one shoulder appears to be higher than the other, if someone holds his/her head in a pecking position, if some muscles are too weak, if someone slouches while sitting, if a posture is not in alignment with a school or technique, or if someone's breathing appears to be too deep or too shallow or in the wrong places, etc). Instead, we enable a person to notice what is possible for her/himself and acknowledge that a

person is always trying to move to the best of her/his ability.

This is a strong statement about honoring diversity and both accepting and fully appreciating the positive and purposeful leaning of all of us into a distinctive future.

Going Easy and Letting Go: We can go one step further in describing the way in which people behave when finding Feldenkrais's methods to be helpful. We can look at both the behavioral side and the side of neural functioning. We turn first to the behavioral side and rely once more on Grabher's (2010, p. 87) account of how it is possible to go with easy—even in a world that promotes the triumph over adversity:

Our culture celebrates the idea of pushing the limits. When trying to achieve something, no amount of stress seems to be too much. "Feel the burn", "destroy those legs", "no pain, no gain" are the mantras. Jane Fonda pioneered this philosophy in the 1980s, and while her taped workouts aren't selling any longer, her catch phrases live on.

Pushing yourself to the limits might give you satisfying feelings in sports and working out, but for in the field of somatic learning pushing it won't have the same effect. You might have some short-term success, but as the stress levels drop, so will your gains.

At an even simpler level, Feldenkrais is about less (rather than abundance). Another departure from prevailing contemporary views (Grabher, 2010, p. 87):

For learning and refining movement, less is more. It's just so much more effective. If any move hurts, stop immediately. That is your body telling you to not do that particular movement. However, if you discover that something feels pleasant, linger there for a while; that is your body telling you that you need that movement.

Feldenkrais is about learning to let go, literally (Grabher, 2010, p. 34-35)

Everybody knows how to contract muscles. When someone grabs a cup, gets hold of a chair to move it, or pulls on a door - there is contraction. Everybody is familiar with this feeling and can relate to it - using muscle power to contract, flex, extend and twist, to pull or push or squeeze or hold onto something. Less commonly trained, yet equally important, is that muscles can be released. However, this does not refer to the term "extension", performed by extensor-muscles. Just like contraction, releasing and letting go of muscle contractions involves a certain kind of feeling and intention. For many people it seems quite challenging to develop this skill, to find this feeling; and yes, for some it actually takes a while to find it and get better at it.

Perhaps this is the most important lesson for the Tin Man to learn. He might not have needed the oil or even the assistance of Dorothy and the Scarecrow (though their caring attitude is certainly gratifying). He could move without assistance. His body was not hollow but was instead filled with self-organizing properties that would enable the Tin Man to travel all the way to Oz without difficulty. Perhaps, his "heart" was to be found in this self-organization—and in self-organizing on behalf of some greater purpose (such as assisting his newfound friends in their journey to Oz).

Multi-level processing

While it was the Scarecrow that complained of not having a brain, it was important for the Tin Man (along with Dorothy and later the Cowardly Lion) also to have brains. For Feldenkrais, the brain (central nervous system) must play an important part in the self-organization of behavior—and benefits from this self-organized behavior. The marvelous self-reinforcing pattern that we have repeatedly witnessed with Feldenkrais (and Reich).

Body and Mind: In one of the essays included in *Embodied Wisdom*, Moshe Feldenkrais offers the following insights regarding the multi-level processing of the human brain and the tight interplay between mind and body (Grabher, 2010, p. 21)

What is important is that thinking involves a physical function which supports the mental process. No matter how closely we look, it is difficult to find a mental act that can take place without the support of some physical function. Contemporary thinking about the structure of matter indicates that it is only a manifestation of energy--something more attenuated, such as thinking itself.

He offers an analogy in seeking to make sense of the complex, multi-tiered nature of human thought (Grabher, 2010, pp. 21-22):

It is our familiarity with certain phenomena that makes it difficult to appreciate them clearly. For us, speed is a very real thing--tangible and measurable. Even so, we can neither touch nor measure speed. It is an abstraction. In order to measure speed, we have to take note of changes in certain physical points in space. But we can go further by measuring an abstraction of the already abstract idea of speed: that is, we can measure acceleration and deceleration, provided we always take note of changes in physical points in space. We can even go to a third level of abstraction and trace out a statistical curve of the variations in acceleration. But in what way is this any different from what happens within us when we are thinking?

Holding to this analogy of three levels of abstraction, note its parallel to mental process: For example, I may read a page absentmindedly and then ask myself if I understand it. Whereupon I reread the page, noting whether or not I am comprehending it. Then I read the page a third time, asking myself why I did not understand it the first time.

Interdependence: It is at this point that Feldenkrais (Grabher, 2010, pp. 21-22) brings the analysis back to the interweaving of mind and body:

... [W]e can see the similarity of these two analogies, and we can appreciate that a change in speed is possible only with an accompanying change in the physical process supporting it. Any change in the latter means a change in the former. Mental process produces a change in its physical substratum, and a change in the physical substratum of thinking manifests itself as a mental change. In both instances, looking for the origin of the change is futile: Neither a change in speed nor a change in thought is possible without a change in its physical substratum.

While Feldenkrais is being quite abstract regarding the interplay between mind and body (as is often the case with his writings), Grabher offers very specific and detailed descriptions. He (Grabher, 2010, p. 77) begins by focusing on the physical movements and reflections on physical movements that are engaged during a Feldenkrais session:

In Feldenkrais classes, students are invited to quite a different way. Instead of trying to tell them how to move correctly, e.g. getting up from sitting to standing correctly, or sitting correctly, standing correctly, walking correctly, to turn correctly (and so forth), students shall develop the feel of what's actually happening when they engage in a movement.

First and foremost this is about bringing attention to specific movements. For example, how a certain joint moves naturally, and how it moves in relation to the rest of the body. This can be as simple as the first (and second and third) joint in your pointer finger on your dominant hand. In which directions does it flex/extend easiest? From anatomy books we know it's a hinge joint. An anatomy book may say: "A hinge joint allows extension and retraction of an appendage [...]" Such definitions are

very precise, but also quite abstract - even with a nicely drawn, detailed picture. Some anatomy books go into great detail, with fascinating pictures from carefully chosen angles.

Grabher (2010, p. 77) can now bring in the mind – but only as it operates as a bodily function:

Yet how is this intellectual knowledge transferred into the body? This is quite a significant question - -and the answer cannot be found within the realm of mind and reason. It's not enough to just memorize anatomy books. A quick wiggle of a particular joint won't make a memorable, beneficial experience either. To make the transition from intellect to physical reality, one has to engage in a learning experience that includes the body as well as the mind.

The state of wakeful consciousness is made up of four elements: movements, sensations, feelings, and thoughts. If these four activities are absent, one soon falls asleep. It is taken as a matter of fact that movement and sensation are central nervous system functions; but, beyond this, we are proposing that mental process is the same kind of function.

Both Feldenkrais and Grabher proposed that our bodily functions are contained within our mental system. As a result, our mind is consistently being influenced by the state of our body. Their perspectives seem to be directly aligned with those of Antonio Damasio (2005), who proposes that our mood and sense of self are constantly being adjusted based on the overall tone of our body.

At this point, Grabher brings in the domain of feelings. These, too, according to Feldenkrais, are central elements in a holistic sense of movement. Apparently, our central nervous system embraces not only physical movement and sensations but also feelings. I turn now to this critical issue that is being addressed by both Reich and Feldenkrais – this is the issue of how we all address fear and anxiety. Was the Tin Man frozen in place because the Forest

is a terrifying place (not because of the rain)? And, as I have posed before in this book, are we likely to be frozen in place when facing the terrifying forest of our own mid-21st-century world?

The making and oiling of Armor

I now shift my attention specifically to ways in which Feldenkrais addresses the matter of feelings – and more specifically the matter of anxiety, stress, and freeze. Much like Robert Sapolsky (2004), Feldenkrais conceives of anxiety as being locked up in our actions (or inactions). Under conditions of stress and the resulting conditions of anxiety, our body tends to get bound up and locked in place (Sapolsky's state of freeze). If stress is sustained and anxiety becomes a constant state of affairs, then our body becomes permanently locked in place.

The Red Light Reflex: Grabher (2010, pp. 56-57) provides the following account of what occurs under conditions of stress. Borrowing from Thomas Hanna, he writes about the “red light reflex”:

Thomas Hanna identified three reflexive postural tendencies caused by stress and coined one of them “the red light reflex”. He explains that this involuntary reflex pattern contracts all the muscles of the front side of the body. It is triggered by negative feelings such as fear, worry, apprehension, and sadness. Signs of this habituated pattern include rounded shoulders, the head extended forward over the body, sore neck and shoulder muscles, contracted abdominal muscles, shallow breathing, depression, digestion problems, constipation, and many more. In this regard, Thomas Hanna writes: “By learning to regain both awareness, sensation, and motor control of muscles - an educational process that can only be achieved through movement - the brain can remember how to relax and move the muscles properly.”

Grabher (2010, pp. 56-57) offers an even more detailed description of what Sapolsky would identify as the state of freeze:

The reaction of fear involves a violent contraction of the flexor muscles--especially the abdominals--and breath holding. This is accompanied by a series of vasomotor disturbances: the pulse quickens, perspiration increases, and in extreme cases, trembling and defecation may occur. . . . The strong flexor contraction is accompanied by a simultaneous inhibition of its antagonist, the extensor muscles, causing the knees to bend and making it difficult to stand upright. The disturbances that are typical of anxiety: vertigo, vomiting, and other symptoms--are the same as those generally seen when the vestibular functions are disturbed.

Grabher (2010, p. 57) goes on to identify the psychological manifestations of this anxiety-induced freeze and offers the Feldenkrais perspective on the interlocking of body and mind:

Thus, we have established what is the underlying pattern in the formation of anxiety complexes ingrained states of fear, indecisiveness, and chronic self-doubt. Additionally, we have pointed out the interdependence of feelings on the one hand and central nervous system functions on the other hand, showing how they affect bodily posture and create typical patterns of muscular tonus.

Grabher has described a condition that is apparent in the lives of many of us who reside in the anxiety-ridden world of the mid-21st Century. We are forever clad in armor and stand motionless like the Tin Man in our own threatening forest. The armor is only loosened with therapeutic oil and only removed with the gentle engagement in movement. Grabher (2010, p. 19) offers this technical description:

A general improvement in the way we use our skeleton allows us to enjoy the full range of movements of the joints and intervertebral disks. All too often, the bodily limitations that we believe are due to not being limber are, instead, caused by habitual contraction and shortening of our muscle of which we are not conscious. Unwittingly,

our postures become distorted, and the joints of our bodies suffer unequal pressures.

Much as we can challenge the Tin Man's assumption that the rain froze him in place, Grabher (2010, p. 19) joins Feldenkrais in challenging the assumption that we act old and cranky because of our age:

Degeneration of the joint surfaces imposes, in its turn, a further restriction of muscular activity so as to avoid pain and discomfort in movement. Thus, a vicious circle is established, which gradually distorts the skeleton, the spine, and the intervertebral disks, resulting in an elderly body whose range of movements is reduced long before we have become old. Actually, age has little to do with this sad event. On the contrary, it is quite possible to restore the body's ability to perform every movement of which the skeleton is capable.

Grabher (2010, p. 19) offers optimism in suggesting that we can become limber at any age:

Up until sixty years of age, anyone of good health who is not suffering serious illness can attain this optimal ability with little more than an hour of retraining for each year of one's life. It is possible to attain this condition even beyond sixty years--depending on the person's intelligence and will to life.

A specific intervention ("Stop Technique") is introduced by Grabher (2010, p. 17) to illustrate how the Feldenkrais method is applied in unlocking the frozen body:

Certain esoteric disciplines make full use of the following technique for training reversibility: The learner suddenly has to freeze in whatever position he happens to be at the instant the teacher commands him--and to keep holding this position, no matter how strange or uncomfortable it may be. But by deliberately holding still until the command to relax, the learner becomes conscious of all the typically habituated and inefficient ways in which his

body's parts are arranged. When movement is resumed, the learner has an enhanced consciousness that is the first step in learning reversibility. Gurdjieff calls this the "Stop Technique" and uses it extensively.

It is interesting to note that Grabher is turning to a technique introduced by Gurdjieff – another visionary advocate of holistic health.

Body and Mind: Finally, I wish to present one other statement made by Grabher (2010, p. 17) regarding the Feldenkrais technique. It concerns the critical connection between bodily functions and self-image:

By a careful use of methods of this kind one can overcome the bodily limitations caused by an arrested development in one's self-image. The improvement of this self-image carries with it an expansion of the range and number of movement patterns at one's disposal. Thus, improving our skill of reversibility goes hand in hand with a general improvement of our conscious temporal and spatial orientation.

Grabher (2010, p. 23) sums it up in this way: "[W]e would like to reiterate how crucial the control of musculature is in the control of self."

General Treatment Strategies

How do members of our treatment team address the issue of armor – whether their clients have clad themselves in the armor (as apparently is the case with the Tin Man) or the armor has been placed on them by society and their profession or position in the C-Suite? What do members of our team do about their client's persona? Do they leave it alone, or suggest that their client seek out a Jungian analyst?

An Appreciative Approach

Taking an appreciative approach, do members of the team help their client see the value of and appropriate use of their persona

(and perhaps even their armor)? Do they at least help the person they are treating identify the nature of their persona and armor? Do they help their client better understand the dynamic interaction of their persona and armor with their shifting environment?

Most importantly, as both Reich and Feldenkrais have stressed, there is an important interdependency and even integration of the mind and body. Even more specifically, thoughts and anxiety are interwoven. We are not anxious until we think about (envision) something, and don't effectively reduce anxiety without doing some important thinking. Furthermore, using Kahneman's term, this must be slow thinking. Fast thinking only amplifies anxiety. Slow thinking allows for the metabolism of anxiety.

Sapolsky's (2004) imaginary lions come center stage in this strategy of reflection and engagement. We must help our armored client by challenging their assumptions about the attacking lion. First, what is the nature of the attacking lions (whether they are real or imagined)? Are the lions coming from outside us or from inside us? This inquiry helps us (and our client) identify a potential paranoid stance. The enemy from within becomes the enemy from outside.

We then ask: Are there really lions? This helps us (and our client) identify a potential projective stance. The powerful forces operating inside us get projected outside. The "internal lion" is quite scary. It can be a source of internal power, as was the case with the projections of internal power to the Wizard of Oz. Internal power is threatening, whether it is available for the benefit of the person holding this power or for this person's determination. Internal power incurs responsibility and a need for vision and purpose. It requires that we don't just stand there frozen in the forest. We must agree to embark on the journey to Oz.

We are now ready to engage in two helpful roles, based on this requirement that body and mind unite and that thought interplays with anxiety. One of these roles is asking questions; the other role is making suggestions.

Asking the Right Questions

While we are thankful for the many insights and recommendations offered by both Reich and Feldenkrais, we believe there are other perspectives to be taken, many of which bring together the ideas offered by these two men. We would suggest that the team consider approaching their armored/masked client by posing the following questions gently and appreciatively:

What is the purpose of the armor (persona)? How does it help people with whom you relate in your role?

Their ability to readily identify your role (particularly important under conditions of stress and the need for rapid response),

Their sense of safety in relating to you and asking for your assistance (recognizing your expertise or carefully defined role) and/or

Their assumption that you will act in a predictable manner (no room for surprise under conditions of stress and the need for rapid response).

When can you take off your armor (persona)?

In what setting?

With what people (your family, friends, peers in the same role)?

What are the “secondary gains” associated with this armor/persona

Status

Personal security

Job security

Hide what is “really going on” inside.

While it is important to ask our Tin Man some of these tough questions (centering on the matter of getting stuck in place by something other than the rain), we can also offer some suggestions that build on the techniques presented by Feldenkrais. The Tin Man can attend to his posture, his breathing, and even his heart rate (for he does have a heart!).

Offering Some Suggestions

Which of his movements seems to be not only natural but also liberating for him? What happens to his body (particularly his armor) when he conceives of himself as a brave warrior who can go to battle for his colleagues (rather than staying frozen in the threatening forest)? Do his movements come more freely as he “prepares to work on behalf of his newfound friends”?

At this moment, we might introduce some of Reich’s analytic techniques—for the Tin Man is frightened of the forest for some reason and holds on to a negative, powerless self-image to serve some purpose. We can help the Tin Man explore his earlier life, or at least what goes through his mind and body when something scares him in the forest. We might find that a peremptory ideational stream is triggered that amplifies whatever the source of Tin Man’s initial fears.

We might even find that the Tin Man is imagining “lions” in the forest (as Robert Sapolsky suggests)—and we can go further by exploring why the imagined lions might have served an important function earlier in the Tin Man’s life (but are no longer needed). Thus, Reich helps liberate the Tin Man from his negative self-image, while Feldenkrais helps the Tin Man discover that the benefits of a positive self-image outweigh the challenges he will face.

Yes, the forest might be frightening and, yes, there might be some danger inherent in the journey with his colleagues to the Emerald City. However, the feelings associated with a liberated body are wonderful. The Tin Man will acquire a spatial and temporal perspective that extends far beyond his armored body and confining forest. Most importantly, the movement of his body on

behalf of serving his newfound friends provides the Tin Man with a deep, abiding purpose in his life.

Moving Beyond the Tin Man's Movement

All of this leads us to consider treatment strategies beyond just those engaged with the Tin Man. We can identify many potential clients – not just the Tin Man. The conditions of VUCA-Plus (volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction) produce many armored men and women. Furthermore, stormy post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus conditions can cause us to become psychologically rusted in place like the Tin Man.

One of our potential clients is a high-ranking member of the judicial system in her state. She has to wear a “uniform” while doing her job and is often featured in the local news. As a result, she can’t go out to a local bar to hang out with friends and have a few drinks. She even finds it difficult to take off her “uniform” while going out in public. As a result, our client has purchased a second home in a city far away from her state, where she and her husband can enjoy an evening out “on the town”.

This delightful and deeply dedicated public servant loves going out to small nightclubs and dancing the night away: no uniform and no mask (or at least a different mask). Members of her treatment team might encourage her to do more of the same and find ways to find this “sanctuary” in her own local community. She might also use envisioning exercises that produce relaxing images (and perhaps even a positive peremptory ideational stream) that provide moments of sanctuary even in the midst of our jurist’s harried day of deliberations and administration.

Let’s move the challenge of treating character armor up a notch. How do we work with an impostor? Perhaps we are more in the role of helping our client identify impostors in their life or their own fears of being an impostor? Does the impostor really want to abandon their role? The secondary gains can be quite compelling. Are they growing tired of being the impostor, or have they begun

to believe their own lie and can now live comfortably with their false self? Reality and the “truth” can get quite confusing.

Perhaps a “personal SWOT analysis” is appropriate. What really are your impostor-client’s strengths (that can be truthfully acknowledged and engaged), and what are the weaknesses that this client should acknowledge (as a first step toward moving into a more authentic role)? And to whom should the impostor-client first convey this more realistic analysis of strengths and weaknesses?

What about the environment in which the impostor is working? Given that the impostor is often quite narcissistic, it might require quite a bit of “heavy lifting” for us to bring the realistic threats (as well as realistic opportunities) to the attention of our client. The impostor might be quite gifted with regard to opportunities. However, even here we are likely to find both false opportunities and “botched” opportunities – from which one’s client can learn (with our help).

Impostership

We have one other suggestion. We have gained it from observing our cowardly lion and wizard. Perhaps we can advise our client to engage the “real” world in a manner that makes full use of our imposter’s actual skills and talents. If nothing else, our imposter knows how to “sell” themselves and their ideas. Perhaps our client can become an effective advocate for some important cause.

Alternatively, our client (like the Lion and Wizard of Oz) can actually begin acting on behalf of another person’s welfare. Would some work at a homeless shelter or assistance on a suicide prevention hotline be appropriate? We suspect that in many instances, the imposter fears being found out, thrown out on the street, and waiting in line at a shelter for food and lodging. The imposter might have even contemplated suicide when confronting the prospect of being found out. They might find that their own armor is cast aside when they do battle against a wicked witch in their own community.

Conclusions

Dorothy and the Scarecrow are waiting alongside the Tin Man. Toto is still racing around beneath their feet and in the nearby forest. He is increasingly restless to get on with their journey. Wilhelm Reich and Moshe Feldenkrais have worked with Tin Man, and our metallic colleague declares that he is ready to join his colleagues on their trip to Oz. He offers a few dance steps and is the first to sing about being “off to see the Wizard – the wonderful Wizard of Oz [though he is fully aware that the Wizard is not needed for his own liberation from tin].” Dorothy, the Scarecrow, and the Tin Man can now reflect even more critically on the validation of the Good Witch’s claim that the Wizard can solve everything.

It seems that both Dorothy and the Scarecrow have learned something themselves from Reich and Feldenkrais. They are both now more fully aware of the important role played by a positive, empowering self-image – as well as the need to not just believe everything a “good fairy” is saying to them. They might even be aware that Glinda the Good reminds them of someone in their own past life in Kansas. Perhaps a bit of positive (but uncritical) transference had occurred, especially for Dorothy as she was overcoming the trauma associated with being caught up in a house-lifting tornado.

There is one other important lesson learned by Dorothy (and perhaps also the Scarecrow and Tin Man). The support of other people is needed when we embark on a major journey of discovery and self-renewal. We are truly returning to “home” when that home is filled with people in our life who are appreciative and supportive of our journey in a variety of ways. I turn to the nature of this support in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven

Oiling the Tin Man's Armor and Healing His Heart IV: Finding Support and Guidance

Apparently, it takes a village not only to raise a child but also a village (or at least many caring family members, friends, and colleagues) to heal one's heart. This certainly was the case with Dorothy as she finally arrives at the Emerald City and defeats the Wicked Witch.

Dorothy is assisted not only by her four colleagues (Scarecrow, Tin Man, Lion, and Toto) but also by citizens of the Emerald City. Aside from the adornments that were applied to Dorothy (and her travel mates), the Wizard himself assisted in helping Dorothy heal her heart (returning to Kansas). Even the Winged Monkeys were there to celebrate Dorothy's planned trip by Balloon to Kansas (not required, given her slippers).

Healing the Hearts of Wizard of Oz Characters

In this wonderful tale of a young woman, Dorothy comes to full realization regarding the value of home and the people who populate her daily life. Her heart is filled with unacknowledged and often contradictory teenage longing for both attachment and individuation. She wants to run away but also is still in need of her aunt, uncle and farm hands.

Individual and Collective Desires

After Dorothy is swept up in the tornado and lands in Oz, we encounter three characters who join Dorothy in her trip to a

destination, Oz. These characters closely resemble the three Kansas farmhands. Toto is the “transitional” object—the one character who is with Dorothy in Kansas and in Oz. The three characters themselves have a good reason to travel with Dorothy and Toto to Oz. Each of them has something that they deeply desire. This unmet desire is deeply wounding. Hearts are empty and wounded.

Much as the case of Dorothy, our three beloved characters discover that what they seek is already available to them. I wonder if the farmhands back in Kansas also have unmet desires. At times, do they also want to leave the farm and find something new and different? We also encounter the huckster (closely resembling the Wizard) who is peddling falsehoods. Perhaps, he also would like to be doing something else—just as the Wizard wants to get away from Oz and is last seen flying off on the balloon that was supposed to transport Dorothy back to Oz. It was Glenda the Good who was the realist and didn’t seem to desire an escape to somewhere else (though she might have mourned the evil turn and eventual death of her sister – as portrayed in the musical “Wicked”).

Leadership and Healing

It is interesting to note that our three characters assume posts of leadership in Oz (as the Wizard flies off in his balloon). Like *Gulliver’s Travels* and many other “children’s books,” the Wizard of Oz books offered critical commentary regarding leadership in America during this turbulent time—the Depression years of the 1930s. Perhaps, leadership is only successfully engaged when the primary needs of a leader have been realized – and when these needs reside outside the domains of power and status. A desire to gain wisdom (scarecrow), compassion (tin man), or courage (lion) is admirable and fully aligned with successful, sustained leadership on behalf of human welfare.

Beyond the matter of leadership, we find insights into the healing properties of interpersonal relationships in the Frank Baum-based movie about the land of Oz. In my previous chapters, I focused on the Tin Man and ways in which not only his armor was oiled but also his heart was healed. In this chapter, I wish to turn to the support that Tin Man received from his colleagues. Like Dorothy and the other characters, the Tin Man found his heart as it beat in response to the remarkable care and commitment found in his relationships with Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion—and even Toto. Scarecrow offered thoughtful analyses under conditions of stress and crisis. The Cowardly Lion offered resolve and action (if reluctantly) in meeting the threat of winged monkeys and an evil Witch. The Tin Man received unconditional love and support from Dorothy and Toto. This was pretty much everything that the Tin Man needed (other than his own internal strength and resources).

Let's now take our analysis out of Oz and direct it to the support and guidance to be found in interpersonal relationships and in our own head and heart—support and guidance that are required in our "real" life. As in the case of the Wizard of Oz, we are likely to find some insightful resemblance between the Tin Man's "support group" and the supporting relationship that we require in meeting the "real" challenges of mid-21st-century life and work. Reality and fantasy often find a way of complementing one another.

I specifically focus on ways we can manage the challenges and accompanying stress of contemporary times—while fulfilling our own needs and life purposes (healing our Heart). All of this must take place in a world that is becoming increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous, turbulent, and contradictory (VUCA-Plus). There may not be a wicked witch trying to mess with us; however, VUCA-Plus conditions and a post/postmodern setting can be very witch-like and threatening.

Given that we are living in the challenging world of VUCA-Plus, it is appropriate on occasion to gain a perspective on the nature and strength of each of these specific challenging conditions. I introduce an inventory in Appendix A that provides you with a series of questions about the environment in which you are working and living. Please imagine that you are being interviewed about the challenges that you are facing. And you are responding to the interviewer by offering (checking) one of five options as to the accuracy of a specific description for you. There is not one correct answer for everyone – especially given the many different settings in which people completing this inventory are likely to be working and living. The only correct answer is your honest appraisal of each statement.

Managing Life and Work Changes

Given these VUCA-Plus conditions, we must prepare for life and work changes. This means acknowledging the level and rate of change that is taking place and preparing for the physical and mental challenges associated with this change. An inventory, a series of questions, and some concepts can be of use when we are reflecting on past changes, as well as preparing for future changes.

Life Changes and Stress

The inventory I am providing (Appendix B) is an update of one prepared by Richard Rahe and his colleagues during the late 1960s. The focus of this Life Change Scale is on the transitions that we all experience in our lives and the stress that is associated with these transitions. We are asked in this inventory to reflect on current changes in our lives, to explore past and future transitions, and to consider how these transitions are managed – successfully or unsuccessfully.

We can begin this assessment of life and work changes by briefly discussing the concept of transitions. In a study of the effects that various human relations training programs have had on

organizations, Charles Seashore found that participants, whether individuals or organizations, are unlikely to alter the directions in which they are currently moving simply as a result of the training. A program can, however, enable them to manage more effectively the rate of change; major transitions in life can thus be either accelerated or decelerated. Seashore concluded that the effective management of transitions is a valuable skill, especially in a world that seems to be changing at an increasingly rapid rate.

The work of Thomas H. Holmes and Richard H. Rahe also seems relevant here. In a 1967 study, these two physicians found that specific changes or life transitions are correlated directly with the occurrence of physical illness and emotional disturbance (findings that have only become more relevant and have been further substantiated by later studies). The greater the number and magnitude of major life changes in a one-year period, the more likely it is that physical and emotional problems will occur during the subsequent year. Effective management of transitions is something we can work on and vitally affects our lives, both physically and emotionally.

Given this introduction, we turn to the Life-Change Scale. After completing the scale and calculating one's life-change score, there is an occasion for reflecting on the implications of the total score. In general, a score of 200 or more reflects a high level of transitions, though scores of 200 are rather common in our post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus world. A score of 300 or more indicates that the respondent has experienced exceptional life transitions during the past year and might want to give serious consideration to the physical and emotional costs of these transitions. A score of less than 100 can reflect either contentment or a protected situation.

It is now time to engage in an even more detailed and individualized assessment of the rate of change experienced:

- Have there been any other important transitions in your life this past year that were not included on this list? What score would you give these changes for yourself?
- Relative to the assigned scores, which of the transitions do you think have been most difficult for you? Which has been easiest? Why?
- If you were to relive this past year, which of these transitions would you like to avoid? Which transitions would you like to have experienced that did not occur?
- Some of the transitions on the original list are generally quite positive for most people. Which of the transitions that have occurred for you this past year have been most positive? Which have been the most negative? Have both types of transitions been stressful for you? Which type was most stressful?

It is now time to place the current transitions score on the Life Transition Grid (see template in Appendix C).

Pattern of Life Transitions

We can record either the score obtained from the scale or an estimated score if the scale score seems inaccurate. The current stress score is to be recorded at the appropriate point of intersection between one's current age (horizontal axis) and one's life-change score (vertical axis). Probable transitions scores are then plotted for both the past and future.

This process begins when those points in one's past are identified, when major transitions occurred, and then those points when life was particularly stable are identified. Similarly, probable time periods in the future are identified when major transitions are likely to occur and when relative stability will prevail. A line from birth to death is then drawn that connects these points. Other, less significant periods of transition and stability might also be identified, so that the line becomes more definitive (with several

ups and downs).

Consideration is then given to ways in which hopes and fears associated with major life transitions are handled:

- Have the transitions tended to be too fast or too slow? Why?
- Have certain types of events tended to precede or even precipitate major transitions?
- What have been the typical consequences of major life transitions? Immediate impact? Impact after one year? Physical illness? Health? Depression? Exhilaration? New relationships? The termination of old relationships?
- Have you consistently and consciously taken any specific actions to make these transitions more satisfying? What actions?

Attention now shifts to ways in which we manage transitions. What are the most effective ways to manage these changes? The concepts offered below regarding managing transitions might be considered at this point.

Some Strategies for Managing Major Life Transitions

One must acknowledge first of all that transitions and change are stressful. Furthermore, positive transitions – marriage, promotion, an award – may be as stressful as negative ones. A U-shaped curve seems to accompany most major life transitions. At first, after the transition has been initiated, the mood of the person or organization that is undergoing the transition will tend to turn from optimism to pessimism; excitement may give way to disillusionment. Production will fall off until the bugs are worked out in the system; the change will proceed more slowly than expected; advocates of the change will discover negative consequences or side effects that were not anticipated. Only at a

later point, after the person or organization has traveled through this "valley of despair," will transitions begin to reap some benefits – if they have been successful.

The planner of a personal or organizational change must anticipate this period of stress and introduce ways to reduce its negative impact. Perhaps the simple anticipation of stress is itself one such way; several other, more specific suggestions follow. As in the case of the Tin Man of Oz, these suggestions often involve support offered by other people. This support can be engaged through formal ceremonies (such as occurred at the Emerald City) or through assistance provided by those people with whom we interact on an individual basis (as in the case of the support offered by other characters in the movie). Some strategies involve finding one's own internal resources of support that have always been there, much as Tin Man found that he already had a heart.

Ceremonies

Every culture creates specific events that signal major life transitions for a member of the group. For example, in most societies, the entrance into puberty, marriage, birth of a child, divorce, and the death of a loved one are the focus of a ceremony. Similarly, many organizations acknowledge the entry of new people into the organization by means of initiations, orientation programs, social gatherings, and so forth. Most organizations also have some type of ceremony to acknowledge the promotion, move, or exit of individuals from the organization.

Ceremony serves two important functions in helping people manage life transitions alongside post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges. First, it helps anticipate the stress that is associated with the challenges and transitions. The ceremony serves as a signal, formally telling us that some intensive times are immediately ahead. Second, the ceremony indicates that other people care about this transition

and are available for support in this endeavor. In a society that seems to be increasingly less ceremonial, we must plan for our own ceremonies.

We should provide ceremonies for significant others. Remember that the marriage ceremony may be more important to the transitional processes of the parents than to those of the newlyweds. Perhaps the practice of some couples, who periodically renew and update their marriage vows as a means of acknowledging the changes that have continued to occur in their relationship, is as important for them as the initial ceremony. Similarly, team off-sites serve to maintain and deepen the personal relationships tested during the year, especially for dispersed teams.

Support Group

Most people who successfully address post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges and effectively manage a major life transition describe the critical role played by several people who have served them in a variety of functions: the *nurturer* helps us feel better or stronger; the *friend* empathizes with our predicament and often provides a humorous perspective; the *expert* provides important information to help us implement, accelerate or slow a transition; the *clarifier* helps us better understand the current and probable future nature of the transition; the *predictor*, someone (with relevant expertise) who is willing to let us know what the consequences would be if certain decisions are made about the transition; and the *challenger* who forces us to reexamine our actions, values or expectations. Usually, people are more in need of the nurturer if the transition is particularly rapid and in need of the challenger if the transition is too slow.

In their recent study on the relationship between interpersonal relationships and happiness, Waldinger and Schulz (2023, pp. 104-107) have offered a list that expands on the one I provided. They identify people who offer safety and security, along with

those who promote learning and growth. Other members of the support group would provide emotional closeness and be people in whom we can confide. Another element of support comes from those who can help us identify and affirm our unique identity and can share experiences with us (so that we discover how we are alike and how we are different from other people in our life).

Waldinger and Schulz would be remiss if they failed to recognize the important role of support that comes from someone with whom we are intimate. There is also the matter of bringing someone into our life that can provide assistance, which can come in the form of valuable information or practical and tangible assistance. Finally, there is the source of support that is often neglected. This is the support that comes from someone with whom we can have fun and with whom we can relax.

Ideally, a support group consists of people who fill one or more of these roles. Waldinger and Schulz emphasize the multiple roles of support that specific people can fill in our life. They offer a checklist that their readers complete. This checklist identifies specific people and the role(s) that they might play. Members of a support group need not know each other; they may never even have been in the same room together when assisting someone.

Yet they all have one thing in common: they all know how to provide support to the individual addressing a VUCA-Plus challenge, living in a post/postmodern society, or going through a transition. And they are willing to provide this support. It is the responsibility of that individual to integrate the different perspectives of the members of their group and to be sure they are not asking only one or two people to fill all of these roles—such as their spouse.

I would suggest another powerful interpersonal relations tool that was first provided by George Kelly (Kelly, 1991; Kelly, 2015) in his two volumes on the psychology of personal constructs. Called the

Role Construct Test (later called the Repertoire Grid), a respondent is asked to determine how several important people in their life are alike and different from one another. By looking at the clustering of people with similar attributes and with different attributes, Kelly was able to identify specific personal constructs (or schemas) that helped to guide one's relationship with other people. In many ways, Kelly was offered a paper-and-pencil-based "factor analysis" of the way in which we categorize and (based on this categorization) relate to and work with other people in our life.

A similar analysis could be done in determining the roles that other people play as sources of support. Having identified a list of 10 to 15 people who support us, we can (like Kelly) identify how they are similar to and different from one another. With this analysis in place, we can construct our own personal list of support categories. And we can determine how they are similar to or different from the lists I have offered and Waldinger and Schulz have offered.

If we find that our list does not include all of those on the two lists offered in this book, then it might be time to look for differing kinds of support from other people in our life. Perhaps we need to find a fun-loving friend during stressful periods. Or we might look for the gentle challenger or someone who helps us gain a better sense of who we are and what we should be doing (perhaps counter the challenging conditions of VUCA-Plus).

A professional coach can be of valuable assistance in not only helping us identify sources of support, but also in the analysis of the nature of support that is available (perhaps helping with a Kelly Role Construct analysis). It is critical that a coach serve this function when they are about to close the coaching engagement. They should leave the client with support resources having been identified and analyzed at the end of the coaching assignment, especially if they have been the primary source of support for their client.

Incremental Change

Change should be planned from a long-term, wide-range perspective, rather than from a short-range or piecemeal point of view. In planning for change, however, it is often essential that the desired change be broken up into small, manageable units that have short-term and rather modest goals.

A series of small change curves is usually preferable to a single large one. Furthermore, if a series of small change projects are identified, it is possible to initiate a second project when the first encounters significant resistance. Small projects can also be sequenced in a way that will meet current needs and concerns, while also being responsive over the long run to more basic and far-reaching problems.

Diffusion of Interests and Activities

If one change absorbs all or most of a person's or organization's attention, then this transition is likely to be stressful, for the person or organization has no other interest or activity that can provide stability or variety. In preparation for a transition, one should ensure that other areas of interest in one's life do not get set aside during the change process. Given the tendency of many people who are experiencing stressful transitions to focus intensely on the change, other roles, goals, and activities must be reinforced as salient features of the person's or organization's life.

Managing the Stress

Stress will inevitably accompany post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges and changes in life and work. Our Wizard of Oz characters certainly experienced their own moments of stress. Actually, they experienced many moments of stress, ranging from an attack by the Winged Monkeys to finding a lack of support from the fraudulent Wizard. If, like the characters of Oz, we encounter many stress-filled challenges over time, then we are likely to establish "stress ruts."

We are exposed repeatedly to threats—however, unlike the zebra living on the savannah of Africa, we not only respond to the threat of “real lions” (such as threatened attack by another person or the potential of job loss), but also the threat of “imagined lions” (such as feeling insulted by an email we have received or imagining the potential impact of a revenue shortfall in our organization) (Sapolsky, 2004). These ruts are grooved deeper with each stressful event and lead to permanent structural changes in our nervous/hormonal systems. We become increasingly vulnerable (“trigger happy”) to stress. Below are five tactics that help to reduce stress.

Tactics

Stress can be reduced when the following behaviors are engaged:

1. Avoid this specific stressful situation in the future.
2. Participate in activities that reduce stress once it has occurred, like practicing mindfulness, centering, and slower, even breathing.
3. Identify “sanctuaries”: settings and times when and where one can relax and “re-create” (allowing the body to recover from the stress and resulting physiological impact).
4. Obtain a good night's sleep (restorative stages of sleep take place only under conditions of deep and sustained relaxation).
5. Avoid excessive use of substances (including alcohol) that may temporarily elevate mood but can soon lead to depression.
6. Spend time with other people who you find “enjoyable” rather than just those people who might further your career or support a special project.

An appreciative approach can be engaged as we identify ways in which, times during which, and places in which we are already operating in a manner that is aligned with these five tactics.

Strategies

Awareness: stress ruts continue to grow deeper with each stressful event. We become increasingly “trigger-happy.” And these ruts are permanent. They don’t go away when we finally decide to lead a less stressful life. They are enduring neuro-physiological “wounds” that do not heal. When these stress-ruts are established in our bodies, they can only be countered and thwarted by either the complete removal of stress from our life (very difficult in the 21st Century) or by the use of medications that moderate the stress (and place us in the vulnerable position of being drug-dependent and often less vigilant and alert). The third alternative – which is most often taken – is the moderation of the stress through the heavy consumption of alcohol, cigarettes, or over-the-counter drugs. Stress reduction can’t wait until tomorrow. It is a critical issue to be addressed by us today!

Sunlight: Recently, it has been widely acknowledged that “lumens” (light from the sun) trigger neurotransmitters in our brain that are very calming and uplifting. The absence of sunlight can contribute to depression, anxiety and related mood disorders (often identified as “seasonal” disorders). We should try to expose ourselves to at least 15 minutes of sunlight each day. This exposure should come through our eyes (no sunglasses), though obviously we should not look directly toward the sun and should wear appropriate clothing (including a hat) and sunblock lotion.

When we are preparing for an event that could be quite stressful, we should take a brief walk outdoors. This activity helps to reduce stress and can be very calming (especially if the setting is beautiful and peaceful, and if fresh air is abundant). If a walk outdoors is not feasible or appropriate, then we should consider using a “light box” (which provides full-spectrum light), or at the very least,

find ways to work in a room with natural lighting or full-spectrum lighting.

Exercise: Exercise is also widely accepted as a practice that can significantly reduce stress and is the top long-term preventive health measure. Most animals avoid or reduce stress because they engage in physical activities to escape from or fight with the source of stress (the proverbial lion). We can similarly reduce the physiological arousal associated with preparation for flight or fight by engaging in physical activities (exercise).

While we have known about this fight/flight dynamic for many years, recent research suggests that humans are much more inclined to engage in a third activity (or inactivity) when faced with a threat – this is “freeze.” Like other animals that are not very fast and not very strong, human beings living on the Savannah tried to remain very quiet when confronting a real or imagined lion.

This is a smart stance to take for a short period of time – the lion will soon move on. We can once again be active (and “burn off” the stress-related neural and hormonal stimulants that accumulated when we were frightened by the lion). Unfortunately, we often stay “frozen” for a lengthy period of time when confronting imaginary lions, given that these mental lions don’t leave us, but linger in our thoughts and feelings. As a result, our bodies “burn up” with the excessive chemicals that don’t get burned off when we remain frozen. We can educate ourselves about the destructive effect of “frozen behavior,” and we can get some exercise – especially after being exposed to real, potential, or imagined threats.

Socializing: Finally, we have become increasingly aware that stress can be reduced through the establishment of (and active engagement in) social networks. Several neurotransmitters that are activated by “bonding” activities serve (like lumens and exercise) as stress-reducers. This does not mean that the social

network must be extensive (there can be too much of a good thing), but it does mean that stress is rarely reduced by long-term social isolation. We all need to “cocoon” sometimes and bow out of the social “rat race.” However, sustained isolation produces depression and increases stress. Computer networking doesn’t seem to be sufficient (in fact, extensive time on the computer can actually increase depression). There must be some face-to-face interaction (or at least audio interaction via phone, Zoom, etc.)

We can identify those interpersonal relationships that are most gratifying and stress-reducing. How do we further cultivate these relationships? How do we diversify these relationships so that we find “bonding” experiences at work, at home, and in our neighborhood? Many years ago, Robert Bellah and his colleagues (Bellah et al, 1985) wrote about “lifestyle enclaves.”

These are the new communities in 21st-century societies. These are social networks made up of people with similar hobbies, interests, values, and life purposes (ranging from a Polka club to a Porsche car club and from a poker club to a support group for children of alcoholics). We can identify “enclaves” to which we now belong or would like to join. We must participate without “guilt” in the enclaves that already please us and that help to reduce the stress we inevitably encounter in our busy lives.

What to Avoid

There are several important strategies and actions to avoid when managing stress in our lives. First, it is important not to “over-dream.” While compelling aspirations are important sources of motivation and guidance, they must be realistic. Studies of errant motives of achievement often suggest that achievement goals can be set too low (leading either to lethargy or routinization of one’s life work). Conversely, achievement goals can be set too high (leading to dismay or failure to launch).

Most importantly, when there are unrealistic expectations than one is inclined to place all control in some external entity – be it

fate, luck, or the intervention of a Divine entity (such as God or Allah). Is it too far to our own Emerald City – even with the help of our friends? A critical but caring friend or an executive coach can also be of great value in helping us set goals that are challenging but achievable.

This first strategy to avoid leads us to a second strategy that can increase stress rather than reduce it. We make false assumptions about how someone or something else can really help us. This is once again a matter of locus of control. Do we really need to journey all the way to our Emerald City in order to heal our Heart? Can we really rely on the Wizard of Oz to solve all our problems – or even some of them? Like the Tin Man (and his companions), can we find relevant strengths (and perhaps even a solution to our problem) inside our Head and Heart?

Third, we need to be acutely aware of the potential abuse of substances – be they alcoholic drinks, tobacco products, or heavier-duty drugs. Remember the poppy fields on Dorothy's journey to the Emerald City! We even need to be thoughtful about our consumption of caffeinated drinks. A former colleague of mine, John Preston, is a noted clinical psychologist who has cautioned all potential psychotherapy clients to moderate or even reduce their caffeine intake while undergoing therapy. Caffeine can make us “trigger-happy” when we confront personal challenges during therapy sessions. We are already aroused by the coffee we drank before coming to the therapy session and are likely to become even more aroused (and less competent in addressing the therapeutic challenges). Preston has assisted his clients by creating a Caffeine checklist. I have modified this checklist and include it as Appendix D.

Conclusions

I close by acknowledging that Dorothy (and her colleagues) each deserve considerable credit for the engagement of their individual wisdom, compassion, and courage. Each of them could not have healed their own hearts without the assistance of their colleagues.

However, their own strengths and strategies played a major role in their successful journey to the Emerald City—and in healing the hearts that each engaged on the way to meet the Wizard of Oz.

The Wizard might have been a huckster and charlatan, but he seemed to know something about the spirit and soul of those people with whom he interacted. The emerald glow of Oz conveyed hope and healing—outcomes that would bless the life each of us is now living in a post/postmodern world of VUCA-Plus.

Section Three:

Coaching to Anticipation [Dancing Between the Raindrops]

Chapter Eight

The Coaching of Prospection I: Polystasis and the Psychosocial Dynamics of Anticipation

If character is about what is sustaining us from one moment to the next, as we march through the rain, wearing no raincoat or holding umbrella, then anticipation is about adjusting from moment to moment (dancing between the raindrops). We can admire the courage inherent in the act of marching through the rain.

However, we can seek to emulate the agility to be found among those people who can dance between the many VUCA-Plus raindrops and navigate through a post/postmodern rainstorm. This emulation of agility is founded on an important (and often overlooked) aspect of skillful human performance. This is the capacity to accurately anticipate what is about to happen in our life.

As sentient beings, we humans are always dwelling slightly in the future. In our relationships with other people, we have to anticipate what they are about to say or do. We predict their feelings and their attitude about us from moment to moment. When driving a car, we must anticipate what the cars in front of us, beside us, and behind us are about to do. Without this glimpse or prediction into the near future we are dangerous drivers and not very skillful or graceful in our interpersonal relations. It is with some justification that we could label ourselves as *homo futurus*.

More generally, we human beings, as *homo sapiens*, are complex in our thoughts and our actions. We dwell in a three-tiered world of

past, present, and future. I might be steering right now through the present-day world; however, “ghosts” of the past are influencing (even “haunting”) by perceptions and interpretations of the current world in which I am operating. Most importantly, there is anticipation of what will come in my immediate future, as well as in my longer-term future. I will defer gratification in anticipation of some future reward and will be fearful of what is just around the corner.

As professional coaches, we are in the business of helping our clients gain a clear and valid sense of what exists in their current world. This requires that our clients gain a sense of and appreciation for the way their past experiences influence their perception and interpretation of the world they now confront. There is also the matter of identifying and appreciating the ways anticipated futures influence their current perceptions, interpretations, and actions.

In this chapter, I examine ways the past and future shape our current reality. I focus in particular on the future and what might be titled the *psychosocial dynamics of anticipation*. Daniel Gilbert (2006) has coined the term, *Prospection*, when reflecting on and discussing this future-oriented process. He specifically identifies this process as: “The act of looking forward in time or considering the future” (Gilbert, 2006, p. 1).

I propose that this psychosocial dynamic of Prospection is founded, in turn, on an important newly identified biopsychosocial function that I have called *Polystasis*. I propose that this function plays a central role in the decisions our coaching clients make and the actions they take. Furthermore, I provide a description of the Polystatic process and its relationship to Prospection and the psychosocial dynamics of anticipation.

Polystasis and Anticipation

Given the important function served by Polystasis, it is important to gain some understanding of and appreciation for the polystatic function and explore some of the ways this function influences diverse human behaviors and connects to both the past and present. I now offer my preliminary attempt to provide you, the reader, with an understanding of and appreciation for the role played by Polystasis in our life. This will set the stage for my consideration of the ways we might address Polystasis and Prospection during our coaching engagement.

Elsewhere, I (Bergquist, 2025) introduced the concept of Polystasis, building on the neurobiological concept of Allostasis proposed by Peter Sterling (2020). I (Bergquist, 2025, pp. 76-77) offered a summary of Sterling's radical perspective on neurobiological functioning:

We live in a world of allostasis rather than homeostasis. Introduced by Peter Sterling (2020) about the physiological regulation of our body, Allostasis refers to an organism's capacity to anticipate upcoming environmental changes and demands. This anticipation leads to adjustment of the body's energy use based on these changes and these demands. Allostasis shifts one's attention away from a homeostatic maintaining a rigid internal set-point to the brain's ability and role in interpreting environment meaning and anticipating environmental stress.

I turn specifically to a written comment that Sterling (024) sent to me:

Nearly all physiological and biochemical regulation is continuously and primarily managed by prediction, even the smallest changes when a thought flashes through the mind and predicts something that needs either raising or

lowering various systems to adjust to the predicted demand. Corrective feedback is used secondarily when predictions fail. To me, this is the origin and purpose of the brain, to manage these predictions. When our body returns to "normal" from a deviation, normal is not due to a set point but to the brain's prediction that this is the most likely level of demand. How the brain does this across time scales from milliseconds to decades and spatial scales from nanometers to meters, is a huge mystery.

The interactions that occur between the brain and body are quick and fully integrated, making it difficult to distinguish between these two functions. The brain predicts and the body responds in a highly adaptive and constantly changing manner.

I (Bergquist, 2025, p. 77) then introduced my own expansion on Sterling's Allostatic model:

While Peter Sterling, as a neurobiologist, has focused on the body's use of neurotransmitters, hormones, and other signaling mechanisms, we can expand his analysis by looking at the function of stasis in all human systems. Not to distort Sterling's important description and analysis of the allostatic processes operating in the human body, I am introducing a new term: *Polystasis*. I have created this word to designate the multiple functions engaged by complex human systems in addressing the issue of stasis. As Peter Sterling has noted, it is not simply a matter of returning to an established baseline of functioning (stasis) when considering how actions get planned and taken in a human system. . . .

The model of Polystasis blends the concept of Statics (stabilizing structures) with that of Dynamics (adaptive processes). Operating in human systems, we are guided by certain core outcomes that

do not readily change (statics); however, we must be adaptively open to modifying these guiding outcomes as our environment changes.

As Peter Sterling has proposed, the static notion of Homeostasis is inaccurate. A dynamic model of Allostasis (at the bodily level) and Polystasis (at the psychosocial level) is required, especially in our post/postmodern world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus).

Polystatic Appraisal

The Polystasis model incorporates three processes. First, there is Appraisal. As Peter Sterling has noted, there is an ongoing need to monitor the environment in which we operate to determine if a new baseline (desired outcomes) is required. We informally or formally predict the probability that our current desired baseline of functioning can be achieved. This is where anticipation first appears in the Polystatic process. Is our current baseline viable, given what we anticipate? Is our current baseline even desirable?

At this point, I introduce a concept offered by another neuroscientist, Antonio Damasio (2005). Damasio proposes that specific *Somatic Markers* are attached to specific images we generate. A certain somatic reaction is elicited when we are considering an idea or past experience. Our “Gut” clinches up when we think about an embarrassing experience from our past. Our heart accelerates when reflecting on the elaborate dinner we are planning for our loved one.

Damasio also introduces the concept of *Background Feelings*. At any one point in time, we feel “a certain way” that is created by not only our emotions and clusters of somatic markers related to ideas and experiences that are swirling around our mind, but also by our physiological state (levels of energy and fatigue, lingering illnesses or injuries, stage of one’s biological cycle, etc.)

Templates and Schemata

I propose that these various ingredients come together in what I call the *Somatic Template*. This template is more than a set of Damasio's somatic markers. It is a general monitoring device that keeps us abreast of our overall physiological state. This template may play a central role in Sterling's Allostatic process. Similarly, there might be a set of psychosocial templates that we frequently reference when making polystatic predictions and adjustments.

Perhaps, this template plays a central role in Sterling's Allostatic process. Similarly, there might be a set of psychosocial templates that we frequently reference when making polystatic predictions and adjustments. These templates offer a view of our psychological status and the status of our external world.

A psychosocial template might trigger our attention when something is threatening us. Previously, I have suggested that we establish three threat categories in our Amygdala, and derived these categories from the semantic differential of Charles Osgood (1957): good/bad, strong/weak, and active/inactive. As I have noted, this Amygdala triggering soon leads to a change in our psychosocial template as we better understand (correctly or incorrectly) the nature and scope of the threat.

Our anticipation is "charged" by this appraisal of threat. Alternatively, the psychosocial template is triggered when something slightly "different" occurs in our psyche or in the world we inhabit. The "new" template doesn't match the template that existed a few minutes before, or with some relatively stable baseline template we have built during our lifetime. It is a "deviant" template that draws our attention and impacts our polystatic process.

While the somatic template concerns how our body is operating and "feeling", the psychosocial template associated with Polystasis concerns how we are seeing and "feeling about" the world in which we are operating. The psychosocial template is a

component of or at least is closely associated with the aforementioned *Schema*. While the psychosocial template, like the somatic template, is constantly shifting, the schema remains stable and changes only slowly over time. The schema is founded on our sense of self and a set of assumptions we make about our relationships with other people and circumstances in our world. Our anticipations are strongly influenced by the schema we have formed early in life. Put simply, we are inclined to “see” our world through the lens of our schema—especially when we are viewing other people and their relationship with us (Young, Klosko, and Weishaar, 2006).

It is also important to note that we have only tacit (rather than explicit/conscious) knowledge of templates (Polanyi, 2009). We lack full awareness of either our somatic template or our psychosocial templates, even though they both strongly influence the decisions we make and actions we take. Schemas are equally inaccessible to immediate awareness. Another connection is important to mention. Our psychosocial templates and our psychological schema may be closely tied to the somatic template. We inevitably “feel” what we are seeing and what we anticipate.

Polystatic Adjustment

Having completed our appraisal and formulated our anticipations, based on the application of unconscious templates and schemas, we are ready to make some psychosocial changes. We *Adjust* if the current baseline of desired functioning is no longer appropriate. As Sterling proposes, we identify a new level of functioning. An alternative (“allo”) stasis is based on predictions regarding the probability of success in achieving this baseline (stasis). At the psychosocial level, we adjust our planned actions based on predictions and anticipations regarding the probable success of these actions. Baselines are likely to be adjusted along with the plans.

It should be noted that polystatic adjustments are often needed. While a homeostatic perspective on human operations is based on an assumption that these operations are being conducted in a closed system, the polystatic perspective is founded on the quite different assumption that human operations are being conducted in an open system. When operating in a closed system, one can anticipate that all of the relevant variables are locked in place.

These variables include such important matters as the intentions, strength, and activity level of specific living entities (Osgood's semantic differential), the strength and consistency of nonliving but dynamic entities (such as weather and temperature), and the presence of permanent objects (such as chairs and buildings). We know what the variables are and can usually make an accurate assumption about the magnitude of each variable and its relationship to the other relevant variables.

By contrast, an open system is one in which new variables enter the picture and change their magnitude and relationship to other variables. When operating in an open system, one will frequently experience a shift in their somatic template. Baselines often must be readjusted and anticipations modified.

The space in which we operate is thrown even more open given the frequent appearance of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradictions (VUCA-Plus) in our contemporary post/postmodern society. There are many raindrops and frequent rainstorms. Thus, given the inevitable presence of open systems in our mid-21st-century environment, we must acknowledge and embrace the indispensability of polystatic adjustments.

Polystatic Action

We act on behalf of the new baseline of desired outcomes as well as our new predictions regarding the relative effectiveness of potential actions to be taken. Our anticipations produce our new actions. In essence, Polystasis represents a dynamic, highly

interactive interweaving of appraisal, adjustment, and action. Clear and accurate feedback is needed to determine appropriate levels of adjustment. Open channels for the flow of information between these three phases are critical.

All of this may seem mechanistic and abstract; however, Polystasis comes alive when we recognize that this recursive process moves quickly. It is always tempting to engage fast thinking (Kahneman, 2011) and nonreflective practice (Schön, 1983) when engaging a lively poststatic process. Unfortunately, Polystasis is often not amenable to the slow thinking described by Daniel Kahneman (Kahneman, 2013) nor to the reflective practice of Don Schön (1983). We must be quite intentional when faced with complex post/postmodern issues.

Polystasis also comes alive when we apply it to real-life situations. For example, while my anticipation of losing money might be assuaged by a bank loan I have just received, my heart rate and level of anxiety might not return to “normal” if I am anticipating unpredictability in the stock market. A new “normal” is quite fluid—for I continue to appraise, anticipate, adjust, and act (moving through a dancing, monetary landscape).

I also am likely to adjust my anticipation of the nature and quality of a relationship with another person when I first meet them after “knowing” them only on a website. I am flipping back and forth as I try to apply an existing template in my appraisal of this person. If this relationship is important, then I must somehow find a way to slow down my appraisal and spend some time “getting to know them” before moving forward collaboratively with them.

Polystasis and Survival

Polystatic processes and dynamic feedback systems are essential to my survival in our often “hostile” and anxiety-producing post/postmodern environment. The key point is that the baseline itself is likely to repeatedly change when Polystasis is operating

in a shifting (dancing) environment with changing somatic and psychosocial templates constantly at play. This change might involve quantity (raising or lowering the baseline) or quality (shifting to a different baseline). We remain vigilant regarding real and imagined challenges.

At the same time, we must be cautious about becoming “trigger-happy.” Each major change in the baseline brings about a challenging and often disruptive change curve (Bergquist, 2014) of which we must be aware. There is also the matter of self-fulfilling prophecies (Argyris and Schön, 1974). We must be sure that our anticipations do not lead to actions that do nothing more than justify the anticipation. For example, our decision not to trust a colleague can lead our colleague to become less trustworthy (or at least forthcoming) precisely because they sense our hesitation and our failure to trust their intentions or competence.

Costs of and Remedies for Polystasis

Before leaving this focus on Polystasis, I wish to reiterate that this rapidly moving process often is expensive. As I mentioned when introducing Polystasis, the quick engagement of appraisal, anticipation, adjustment, and action is not amenable to slow thinking--nor to reflective practice. Our somatic and psychosocial templates are frequently adjusted in ways that might not align with reality. Imaginary lions are a specialty of modern humankind. Polystasis is aligned with noncritical, knee-jerk reactions.

Don Schön (1983) has cautioned us about these reactions. We are in demand as a physician, psychologist, or urban planner. Under these professional demand conditions, the dynamics of Polystasis might leave us breathless. We have little time to reflect on our professional practices. Daniel Kahneman (2011) would join Schön in urging restraint. Fast thinking should be avoided when operating in a dynamic polystatic manner. Kahneman may

suggest that Polystasis and the formulation of psychosocial templates are vulnerable to the inappropriate uses of heuristics.

We often use simplistic and outmoded heuristics when shifting our template, changing our baseline, and making predictions in a dynamic environment. We might, for instance, apply a Recency heuristic. Adjustments are the same as the last time we faced this environmental shift. Polystatic adjustments can also become habitual. A heuristic of Habit is applied. Then there is the matter of Primacy. The first action taken when facing a challenge remains with us. We messed up the first time and learned to avoid this situation at all costs.

All of this means that we need to be careful about the assumptions we make and the heuristics we apply under specific conditions of anticipation. Many conditions in mid-21st-century life hold the potential of threat. It is in these conditions and at these moments that we must be particularly vigilant and reflective. We must ask ourselves: Is this situation really like the last one? Can I do a better job this time in coping with this challenging situation?

If this is truly important, then perhaps I should get some assistance. I might have to consider differing points of view. Is this genuinely threatening, or am I imagining that it is threatening? In short, Polystasis might be an essential adaptation given the aforementioned post/postmodern conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus). However, this process can also lead us astray. We must indeed be vigilant and reflective.

Prospection: The Psychosocial Dynamics of Anticipation

The Polystatic process involves intricate and intimate relationships between perception and behavior. Anticipation is the primary bridge that brings these two fundamental elements of human performance into close alliance. Daniel Gilbert (2006, pp.

5-6) introduces his own views on anticipation and the process of Prospection by pointing to the unique capacity of human beings and other sentient beings to imagine:

The greatest achievement of the human brain is its ability to imagine objects and episodes that do not exist in the realm of the real, and it is this ability that allows us to think about the future. As one philosopher noted, the human brain is an “anticipation machine” and ‘Making future’ is the most important thing it does. . . .

All brains—human brains, chimpanzee brains, even regular food-burying squirrel brains – make predictions about the *immediate, local, personal, future*. They do this by using information about current events (“I smell something”) and past events (“Last time I smelled this smell, a big thing tried to eat me”) to anticipate the event that is most likely to happen to them next (“A big thing is about to _____”).

From this point of anticipation, sentient beings move on to action. As Gilbert (2006, p. 8) observes, “our brains are meant for nexting.” Along with the chimpanzee and squirrel, we human beings are always looking forward. We are learning from what has just occurred and are adjusting our anticipations, preparing for the next moment and next experience.

We behave and act upon the world. The world, in turn, “teaches” us new lessons. We are surprised by events that we didn’t anticipate and “take notes” regarding what we might do differently in the future. Our perceptions, anticipations, and behavior are tightly intertwined.

Given this close alliance between perception and behavior, with anticipation serving as a bridge between these two functions, performance can be viewed from both ends of the Polystatic process. At this point, I turn from Gilbert’s Prospection to my considerations of both Polystasis-based perception and behavior.

Perception

From the perception end, one can take an *Intrascopic Perspective* on performance. Polystasis can be viewed as operating from the inside out. Anticipation produces behavior. Our assumptions regarding what is about to occur if we perform in a certain manner will influence subsequent behavior. We can push even further.

The Intrascopic Perspective can focus on the even deeper state we experience as a feeling. This feeling may be rooted in an emotion that lingers in our psyche. We change our anticipations based on the emotions we are feeling. A state of fear provides anticipations that are quite different from what we anticipate if we are enthusiastic or suffering from a state of shame. At an even deeper level, our psychosocial template (and eventually our somatic template) might not seem "right." We can "feel it in our bones."

Our anticipation will look quite different depending on the "intuitive" feelings in "our bones." Tony, the protagonist in the musical (and movie) *West Side Story*, sings about a strong feeling associated with his anticipation that "Something great is coming!" (a song written by Leonard Bernstein with lyrics by Stephen Sondheim) Conversely, Queenie, the very wise cook on a showboat, senses that something bad is coming. "Mis'ry's Comin' Aroun" is sung by Quennie to a haunting, very dark tune written by Jerome Kern (with lyrics by Oscar Hammerstein) for the musical *Show Boat*.

A famous study was conducted many years ago by Stanley Schachter and Jerome Singer (Schachter and Singer, 1962), in which they injected an arousing chemical into their subjects and then noted how they reacted to and interpreted their external environment. As compared with subjects injected with a non-arousing chemical, the "aroused" subjects found themselves feeling very angry when placed in a setting where they were frustrated.

Anger or a desire to leave this “hostile” environment soon followed. The “cold feelings” that these subjects initially experienced were soon translated into an anticipation of an emotion-evoking setting—and they soon “found” (or produced) this setting. Appropriate behavior would soon follow in a “natural” world. Emotions (as produced by a specific neurochemical) were influencing anticipations. Schacter proposed a two-factor theory of emotion, indicating that there is both a physiological and cognitive side to any emotion.

Behavior

Conversely, we can take an *Exoscopic Perspective* by first looking at the behavior. Our external presentation influences our internal sense of self. In theater, a major school of acting (“method acting”) begins from the outside and then moves inward. Actors put on their costumes for a specific play and soon find the internal character that corresponds with this costume. William James once declared that our emotional state arises from our behavior rather than the other way around. We run away from a threatening bear and conclude that we must be afraid of the bear, given that we are running away from this animal.

As in the case of the *Intrascopic Perspective*, we can push even further regarding our *Exoscopic Perspective*. Our behavior is influenced by the events occurring in the world and, more generally, the setting in which we find ourselves. Many behaviorally oriented psychologists believe that virtually all of our behavior is determined by these external events and settings, rather than by any internal state of mind (personality).

We can push in another direction by identifying several kinds of behavioral movements associated with ongoing anticipations. First, there are the dynamic, positive looping anticipations of gratification and success. We find *Accelerating Optimism* operating as our behavior becomes more active and goal-directed. We rush forward, anticipating the next moment as good as, or even better

than, the current moment. Csikszentmihalyi's "micro-flows" might even occur, or the entire rush forward might be experienced as one of his highly motivating Flows. I am reminded of accelerating passages from Tchaikovsky's Little Russian Symphony (Number Two).

A variant on Accelerating Optimism is *Deferred Optimism*. We anticipate that something wonderfully gratifying is possible in our future; however, we determine that we must persist in our journey toward the achievement of a goal that will yield this gratification. We buy tickets to attend the concert where Tchaikovsky's Second Symphony will be performed and imagine the enjoyment that awaits us at the concert, despite the money we have just shelled out for the tickets. We enroll in a graduate program that will challenge us for several years but will yield a diploma and future job prospects. We go into training for an upcoming marathon and work hard, anticipating a rewarding experience upon completion of this long run.

This deferred optimism helps to define and drive an entire society. As Gilbert (2006, p. 19) has observed:

Americans of all ages expect their futures to be an improvement on their presents, and although citizens of other nations are not quite as optimistic as Americans, they also tend to imagine that their futures will be brighter than those of their peers.

I would note that in the few years since Gilbert offered this observation, the world may have changed for many Americans and citizens of other countries. Anticipation regarding future status might be less optimistic than it had been. The Lingering Pessimism, to which I will soon turn, might be a state of anticipation that is sadly present among many of us living in a post/postmodern world filled with the challenges of VUCA-Plus conditions.

Before turning to other anticipatory states, there is one thing more to say about Deferred Optimism. Gilbert (2006, pp. 18-19) suggests that something even better might be occurring when we anticipate a reward awaiting us at the end of a challenging journey. When pleasure is forestalled, we can get “double the juice from half the fruit.” Even if we don’t achieve our goal, just the anticipation of the reward is itself rewarding. From a negative perspective, we see this operating in gambling addiction. The anticipation of a jackpot can be highly rewarding even if we are never winners of the lottery or walk out of the casino with money in our pocket.

Another form of positive anticipation comes with strong positive emotions. We are in the arms of someone we love or are reflecting on a special moment in our life (perhaps a flow experience). The movement forward is slow, for we are savoring what is occurring at the present moment. This form of *Passionate Optimism* is expressed in another piece of classical music, the Adagietto in Gustav Mahler’s Fifth Symphony. Supposedly written as an expression of Mahler’s love for his wife, Alma, this Adagio moves slowly, with soaring, sustained passages.

A third form of anticipation takes on a more negative tone. We experience *Lingering Pessimism* when anticipating that our life will continue to be filled with unpleasantness or may even become worse. When we are in a state of situational depression, the accompanying negative anticipation can be immobilizing and even life-threatening. Why do anything if we are frozen in fear and anxiety, or if we anticipate a particularly hungry lion?

I am reminded of another composition by Peter Tchaikovsky, this being the Sixth Symphony (*Pathétique*). Having composed this symphony during a state of sustained depression, Tchaikovsky offers very slow passages that often sound like weeping. Why move forward when nothing good is anticipated? It is better to stand still (frozen), so that things don’t get worse. Tchaikovsky writes about his late life compositions (including the Sixth

Symphony) as requiring “sheer will-power,” with inaction and freezing being the preferred state for someone like Tchaikovsky who is depressed.

A fourth form of anticipation that is accompanied by emotions is actually a state where our anticipation is disconfirmed. A classic example of *Disconfirmation* is found in humor. We find something delightful if it is not what we expected. For example, there is the old Henny Youngman one-liner joke that beings: “Take my wife.” We anticipate that he is about to say something about his wife. Instead, he says: “Please.” It is now not a joke about what Hennie’s wife has done. It is about getting rid of his “nagging” spouse. The whole, very short, joke becomes: “Take my wife . . . please.”

We also see plentiful (and often enjoyable) use of music to surprise us and disconfirm our anticipation, in the compositions of George Gershwin, especially when he inserts jazz elements. The opening clarinet statement in *Rhapsody In Blue*, for instance, extends longer and moves higher than we anticipate. We might say the same about the soaring of the violin in Vaughn Williams’ *Lark Ascending*. We find both of these unanticipated passages to be both beautiful and “breath-taking.”

Finally, there is the complex and often “thrilling” intermixing of positive and negative anticipation. My colleague, Suzi Pomerantz, offered an example of a dynamic interplay between these two states of anticipation and the emotions associated with each state. She describes our ride on a Roller Coaster. During the slow ascent to the highest point on the roller coaster, we are filled with an increasingly strong emotion associated with anticipating the severe drop at the highest point.

We are growing increasingly fearful and anticipate the experience of dropping fast at the highest point: “Why did I decide to take this ride?” “Is there any way I can get it to stop before we reach the top?” Alternatively, we are looking forward to the existing

acceleration of our car as it rolls over the top of the coaster: "Wow, I can't wait until we reach the top! This is going to be very exciting!"

Suzi notes that there is often a shift in anticipation and emotions as we come toward the bottom point of the roller coaster's first drop. We realize that we are strapped in and that we have survived the first drop: "Hey, maybe I can begin to enjoy the continuing race of our car around this rollercoaster track. I am safe and don't need to worry about falling out!" Alternatively, we want to find a way to make the rest of the ride even more exciting. We might take our hands off the car railing and begin waving and perhaps shouting after each of the following turns and drops. "This is all very exciting. I can't wait for a second ride on this coaster!"

During this form of *Dynamic Interplay* between anticipatory states, we shift back and forth in forecasting what is about to occur (physically and emotionally). The frequent adjustment ends up being enjoyable for most of us. Over a considerable period of time, this enjoyment was ascribed to an increase in adrenaline. The term "*arousal jag*" was used to explain why we would subject ourselves to the intense fear of riding a roller coaster (Berlyne, 1960).

Long before the term "Flow" was used, "*arousal jag*" was considered an adequate (or at least preliminary) explanation for "autotelic" (self-goal directed) motivation. We appear to enjoy a sudden shift in level of arousal. The reason for scaring ourselves by riding on a rollercoaster (or viewing a scary movie) seems "foreign" (an anomaly) to the prevalent motivational model of achieving some external goal (such as eating a nutritious meal or finding safety from a threatening entity).

Schacter vs. James

For many years, a debate was waged by theoretical and research psychologists who either took the Jamesian Introspective perspective that behavior precedes emotions or an Exoscopic

perspective, bolstered by Schacter's two-factor theory, that emotions will precede and play a key role in determining behavior. Polystasis provides an interactive, feedback-based perspective on the relationship between the internal state and external state.

The internal state includes not only Schacter's physiological factor, but also the underlying psychosocial and somatic templates. The external state includes not only Schacter's cognitive factor, but also the baseline and anticipations associated with the appraisal and adjustment phases of the Polystatic process. The internal and external states are constantly shifting and interacting. Anticipations are strongly influenced by both states. The appraisals, adjustments, and actions being taken require both our feelings and our anticipated setting.

Emotions sit in the middle of this interaction—being influenced both by the shifting world outside and the underlying and constantly-shifting psychosocial template and somatic template that reside in our psyche. Furthermore, changes in our emotions will influence our psychosocial template (and eventually our somatic template). Conversely, emotional shifts will inevitably alter the way in which we see our current setting and what we anticipate regarding changes in our current setting and any accompanying events, especially as related to behavior in which we are about to engage.

Anticipating the Lion (or Horse)

Anticipation and the polystatic process are built on the foundation of imagination. Unlike any other animal, human beings can imagine things that do not exist. They can envision a future that is yet to occur or a setting (Shangri-La) or entity (unicorn) that has never existed and probably never will exist. Robert Sapolsky has focused on one source of imagination that often serves no positive purpose. He observes that we can "imagine" lions (Sapolsky, 2004). These "lions" can be an

upcoming due date for an important project or the absence of our teenage son after curfew. A demanding boss or a frustrated spouse can be menacing. It is not hard for us to imagine a world that is saturated with many threatening people and situations.

Actually, we don't imagine lions existing in our current setting, for there are no lions present in our life. However, we can anticipate lions. When we dwelt on the African Savannah, there were actual lions that threatened us. The Savannah was indeed quite threatening, given that we were weaker and slower than most of its other inhabitants. Furthermore, many of these animals wished to eat us or at least scare us away from their offspring. Engaging the Semantic Differential criteria, they were not interested in our welfare, were strong (relative to us), and were quite active (faster than us).

Given this situation, we were not in a position to fight the threatening beast (unless we were Tarzan). Flight was also not an option. The best we could do was Freeze, thus emulating the behavior of other weak and slow residents of Savannah. Most of our fellow freezers were rodents of many sorts. Like us, these small animals would hold very still and hope that the threatening beast would either not see us or would lose interest in us. I witnessed the value of this strategy when visiting the lions while consulting with a corporation in South Africa. Sitting on a jeep with several other human beings, I was told to remain very still when we drove up to a pack of lions. Not much has changed since we humans dwelt in large numbers on the Savannah.

While we emulated the rodents, they held one advantage over us. After several seconds, they would shake off the adrenaline that had accumulated while they were frightened yet also frozen. We humans are not inclined to shake off this energizing neurochemical; furthermore, we are likely to remain frozen for more than a few seconds. Especially when we are imagining the lion, the freeze might remain in place for many minutes, given that our imaginary lion is likely to linger with us for a long time.

Perfect Storm

In this way, we produce a perfect physiological storm. The adrenaline is coursing through our veins and sustaining our sympathetic state of arousal. Yet, we do nothing about draining off this energizing system and remain in a sympathetic state. Our polystatic process is messed up in this state and with this sustained energizing of a body that remains immobile.

We continue to anticipate the lion. This being the case, we continue to activate our body in preparation for fight or flight from the lion. We even reset our polystatic baseline. The dial is now set on the survival mode—as are our psychosocial and somatic templates. As Peter Sterling has noted, it isn't our body that is at fault. It is just doing, appropriately, what our imagination is telling us is the “reality” to which we must respond.

Our imagination also takes us in more positive directions. We can anticipate the tooth fairy, Santa Claus, and “gift horses.” This is what is commonly found among gamblers who “know” that a long stretch of “good luck” is awaiting them at the casino or the sports betting bar near their home. These forms of gambler's luck” can damage us as much as the real or imaginary lion. We must challenge our anticipation regarding luck and can't assume that “luck is a lady tonight” (to borrow from Frank Loesser's *Guys and Dolls*).

There is a second important point. As the sage would suggest, “don't look the gift horse in the mouth.” The horse's teeth might reveal that this horse is very old or worn out. However, an imagined horse is assumed to have a fine mouth. It is young, ready for the Kentucky Derby, or ready to be a dear companion. Just remember to never look in its mouth if you are willing to reject it as a gift. You might also wish to recognize its imaginary status. Are you just hoping that the horse is a “gift”? Is the horse really a “gift” that comes with no strings attached?

Valence, Magnitude, and Duration

Anticipations tend to change when we are confronted with shifts in three environmental characteristics. They are valence, magnitude, and duration.

Valence

The most important (and often dramatic) change involves a shift in valence from positive to negative anticipation or from negative to positive. The baseline changes abruptly, as does the level and type of physiological arousal. Positive anticipation is often accompanied by a parasympathetic state. It is as if we are awaiting a feast or a moment of quietude. A very exciting positive anticipation (especially one involving action) can produce a sympathetic state; yet, even in this sympathetic state, we are likely to obtain a squirt of dopamine when anticipating great outcomes (such as the gambler looking forward to positive results at the poker table). It is much more likely that the sympathetic system is aroused when anticipating a negative event, situation, or outcome. Whether anticipating a real or imagined lion, our body prepares for fight, flight, or freeze.

Another important consideration regarding valence concerns the mixture of positive and negative anticipations. Human beings have the capacity to not only envision malevolent lions and benevolent tooth fairies but also envision a future benefit arising out of an immediate cost: "It will hurt but be good for me in the long term." We can anticipate that the Flu shot will be painful, but also anticipate that we will spend the next year flu-free.

We can anticipate the struggle to make ends meet when we are setting aside money for our child's education; however, this negative anticipation is offset by our anticipation (and envisioning) of attendance at our child's college graduation. Thus, it would seem that we are capable of embracing shared positive and negative anticipations. *Homo Economicus* can defer immediate

gratification (small negative utility) in favor of greater long-term gratification (large positive utility).

Magnitude

Then there is the very important matter of magnitude. Is this a big ferocious lion or a kitty kat that is snarling at us? As one of the three semantic differential categories that may be triggering our amygdala and sympathetic system, the strength of a threatening (negative) anticipation is critical. A small, menacing cat is likely to produce Fight or Flight (we can kick the cat or simply move away from the cat). A large, menacing lion is more likely to produce Freeze, since we aren't going to be able to do much about attacking or escaping the lion.

In the world of "real" lions, we are likely to fight against a small change in personnel policy or simply ignore (escape) a silly regulation about parking permits at work. On the other hand, a major change in governmental priorities that cancels our job in human services is likely to leave us frozen with a sense of Rage, coupled with feelings of being Helpless to do much about this injustice and unwise shift in priorities. In the latter case, our entire psychosocial template is likely to come crashing down. We don't know who to trust or what to do in what has become an alien world.

The strength (size) of a positive anticipation also impacts the amount of dopamine being injected into our bloodstream: do we imagine a small jackpot or a bonanza? Are we going to get a new, challenging job assignment or a major promotion at work? Either of these could shift us to our sympathetic system; however, the major promotion might produce a bigger "high" for us. With the major promotion, there also might be a shift in our psychosocial template, though this shift is likely to be gradual as we slowly embrace an altered perspective on our organization and our role and responsibility in this organization.

Duration

Temporally based anticipations also influence our bodily state, our baseline, and our subsequent actions (if any). If we anticipate that the positive or negative event or setting is very short-term, then we are likely to make no adjustments. This is just a “blip” on our psychosocial “radar.” We can pretty much ignore this “flickering” of a potentially pleasant or disturbing outcome—unless we are particularly “trigger happy” having repeatedly experienced small events or settings like this, or no believe that this event or setting portends something bigger in the near future.

For instance, a small “slight” (such as a raised eyebrow or quiet “grunt”) might set us off in our relationship with someone we have come to distrust over time. Similarly, we might find that the offering of minor praise by our supervisor triggers a dopamine high because we think this “could be the start of something big!” Our anticipation may produce more dopamine than the praise does.

What if we anticipate an event that we expect to be extended over time, or a setting in which we are likely to dwell for a “lifetime” (or at least a few months)? Long-duration anticipations will inevitably require a major shift in our polystatic baseline or even in our psychosocial template. The challenge is one of sustaining attention to this event or setting over the long term. As human beings, we are skilled in “adapting” to changing conditions and soon begin taking them for granted. For instance, numerous studies have shown that people who have won a large lottery will end up returning to the socio-economic level (or at least lifestyle) to which they had long been accustomed.

Similarly, it is hard to remain forever in a stressful condition without moving into a state of denial about what is happening, numbing ourselves with stress-reducing drugs, or moving away from this event or setting. We can only stay frozen for a limited period of time; to remain in this state over a long duration is to

court physical and mental collapse. There is also the matter of “imagined lions” or “imagined gift horses.” It is hard to keep imagining what isn’t real for an extended period of time. Short-duration lions and gift horses are fine—they tend to fade away unless we fall into a psychotic state brought on by persistent stress or a persistent search for a dopamine hit.

Mind of the Beholder

As I have just suggested, the magnitude and duration of an anticipated event is often in the mind of the beholder rather than in the “real” world. It is not hard for the human imagination to produce big lions and situations that will “last forever.” Humans are even more adept at choosing between the positive and negative. There is the fabled story of the “optimistic” boy who opened the door of a room that was filled with manure. This boy became very excited because he declared that with all of the manure, there must be a pony in there somewhere.

Conversely, the “pessimistic” boy opened the door and found a pony standing there in front of him. This boy began to cry, anticipating that he would have to clean up all the manure left by this pony. The “optimistic” boy clearly is anticipating a positive event (discovering the pony) and a pleasant outcome (riding the pony). A negative anticipation resides in the head and heart of the “pessimistic” boy who imagined spending all of his hours cleaning up after that damned pony. Ultimately, valence is often in the head and heart of the person doing the anticipation.

I am acquainted with a very special woman who exemplifies the “pessimism” of our boy crying about the manure. She is always anticipating that things will go awry. She anticipates that conversations between two people will inevitably be contentious. She always assumes that a new project being engaged by leaders of her organization will fail.

All of this motivates her to be very caring of other people, since she assumes they have just been engaged in a negative interaction

with another person. She also works extra hard on the project to ensure that it is only a minor failure rather than a big catastrophe. This makes my acquaintance a wonderfully caring person and a diligent worker. However, this comes at a great cost for her. I anticipate a negative outcome: her burnout. Or am I being too “pessimistic” in my own anticipation of her fate?

Conclusions

Up to this point, I have focused on the common patterns of Polystasis and Anticipation to be found in all of us, as we navigate our challenging world. There are important differences, however, in how polystatic processes operate, given that each of us is inclined toward certain anticipations (some positive and some negative). Furthermore, we not only hold tightly to specific anticipations but also act in a way that tends to affirm these anticipations. The concept of Personality (and character) in the field of psychology is built on and reaffirms this foundation of anticipation.

In Chapter Nine, I take one of the oldest and most widely used models of Personality off the shelf. Called the Enneagram theory, this model produces nine personality types that influence one’s anticipations alongside one’s psychosocial template and polystatic baseline. In other words, the world looks and operates in a quite different manner depending on the Enneagram lens one applies to polystatic appraisals, adjustments, and actions. So, stay tuned . . .

Chapter Nine

The Coaching of Prospection II: The Enneagram and Psychosocial Dynamics of Anticipation

As we consider the Internal state that influences anticipation, the matter of personality will inevitably emerge. Personality plays a major role in determining the schema we apply to the world in which we act. As I have noted, the psychosocial template (and the somatic template) are important elements of the schema. While the schema (and personality) represents relatively stable components of the human psyche, the templates do shift constantly (or at least frequently) in our dynamic, mid-21st-century environment.

Furthermore, while the polystatic process tends to focus on the shifting conditions of our internal and external world, it is important to acknowledge and seek a full understanding and appreciation of the role played by Personality regarding the process of Prospection.

There are many different models of personality types. Each of these comes with differing anticipations based on the specific personality (or character) being considered. I will illustrate how anticipatory psychology can be applied to personality types by focusing on one of the oldest and most respected models – this being the Enneagram.

Our enneagram type leads us to differing anticipations. I offer a set of brief suggestions about the nine anticipations (both positive and negative) of the Enneagram (based on Helen Palmer's version

of the Enneagram). At the extreme, each Enneagram type anticipates a large amount of something (positive) or the complete lack of this something (negative). What this something is differs for each type.

Enneagram One: The Perfectionist

Helen Palmer offers the following summary description of the background and current perspective and behavior of someone with a strong Enneagram One orientation (Palmer, 1991, p. 72):

Ones were good little girls and boys. They learned to behave properly, to take on responsibility, and, most of all, to be correct in the eyes of others. They remember being painfully criticized, and as a result they learned to monitor themselves severely in order to avoid making mistakes that would come other people's attention. They quite naturally assume that everyone shares their desire for self-betterment and are often disappointed by what they see as a lapse of moral character in others. The Perfectionist outlook is encapsulated in the image of Puritan ancestors. They were hard working, righteous, fiercely independent, and convinced that plain thinking and goodness would prevail over the shadow side of human nature.

If we explore the anticipatory reactions of Enneagram Ones, we find both positive and negative reactions. On the positive side, there is the prospect of living in an orderly world, or more immediately, the prospect of finding a room one is about to enter as being tidy, or a relationship in which one is about to enter being highly predictable and constrained by social conventions or formal role.

The Enneagram One is likely to “light up” (a drop of dopamine in their bloodstream) when anticipating that the people with whom they are about to interact are responsible and to be trusted – they

have “moral character.” The “light up” is also likely to occur when anticipating that a highly structured, rule-based (even legal) system is available for interactions with another person.

While Emily Post’s guidelines are no longer in vogue, one gains a sense that Enneagram One’s would like Emily’s etiquette to be back in force. There is a “proper” way to arrange the silverware, and a proper way to respond to a dinner invitation (even if it is sent by email or texted!). When an Enneagram One anticipates that things will be done “right” then they can “relax” (their parasympathetic system is softly engaged).

By severe contrast, the Enneagram One’s sympathetic system kicks in violently when disorder and unpredictability are anticipated. The person with whom one is about to meet has been a “mess” in recent days and has acted in “strange” ways during previous meetings. More generally, the world that the Enneagram One anticipates joining in the morning after a bracing cup of tea is likely to be volatile and filled with ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction. The prospect of entering this VUCA-Plus environment fills the Enneagram One with dread. The predominant post/postmodern setting makes it even worse.

This dread-filled anticipation can be self-fulfilling for the Enneagram One. They enter the VUCA-Plus world with a strong desire to slow things down, impose structure, and resist variation; these “ordering” actions will often produce “kick-back” leading to even greater volatility, ambiguity, and turbulence. Other people in their life don’t want to be controlled, ordered about or forced to play certain roles prescribed by the Enneagram One.

Counterforces will produce contradiction and even higher levels of anxiety and rigidity in the Enneagram One. Rules that are imposed are rules that are violated or at least indirectly “messed with” in a messy post/postmodern setting. A vicious cycle is created, leading the Enneagram One to seek refuge after a day of turbulence (often retreating to a romantic comedy on the Cable

channel or to a “safe” novel about the good old days of courtesy and character).

Enneagram Two: The Giver

The second Enneagram configuration is founded on a process of social give and take. Palmer (Palmer, 1991, p. 101) offer the following summary of Enneagram Two:

Twos move toward people, as if seeking an answer to the inner question Will I be liked? They have a marked need for affection and approval; they want to be loved, to be protected, and to feel important in other people's lives. These were children who learned love and security by meeting other people's needs. As one outgrowth of their search for approval, Twos develop an exquisite personal radar for the detection of moods and preferences. Givers say that they adapt their feelings to suit the concerns of others, and that by adapting, they are able to ensure their own popularity. They also report that if they are not getting the approval that they need that the adapting habit can become compulsive, to the point where they forget their own needs in a driven attempt to flatter others as a way of buying love.

In their anticipation of what is about to happen, Enneagram Twos are inclined to focus on interpersonal relationships. They anticipate how other people will react to the “gifts” being given to them by the Enneagram Two. This gift might be an invitation to the Enneagram Two’s party or trip on their boat. It might instead be a favorite book, a recipe for Crème Brûlée, or a new silk scarf. The Enneagram Two could be offering the recipient a ride to their doctor’s appointment, or an evening of babysitting so the recipient can attend the local theater with their new boyfriend.

Whatever the nature or size of the gift, the primary concern of the Enneagram Two will be directed toward the reaction of the gift’s

recipient. Will the recipient be grateful? Beholding? Resentful? Skeptical? Will the recipient try to hide away from the Enneagram Two, believing that there is a “hook” embedded in the gift being given (there often is)? Will the recipient instead be seeking out the Enneagram Two, looking forward to receiving more gifts (or at least acknowledgement)? Even if there is a hook attached to the gift, the person who is hungry for attention and appreciation will stay attached to the Enneagram Two.

What happens to the psyche and somatic template of the Enneagram Two when they are anticipating a positive relationship with another person, and what happens when a negative outcome is anticipated? The positive outcome may be a statement of gratitude by the recipient of the gift or receipt of a reciprocal gift. The warmth associated with this anticipation is equivalent to that felt by the gambler when entering a casino.

The Enneagram Two plays out the scenario of gratitude and shared gift-giving. They have high expectations. Which means that they can be easily disappointed with the actual outcome of the interaction. They feel ‘hurt’ (the stabbing feeling) or angry regarding the recipient’s “insensitivity” or “ingratitude.” There is often an escalation of gift-giving quantity and quality. The Enneagram Two tries to increase their own emotional “hit” by providing a bigger gift—and expecting a bigger gift in turn from the recipient (who might wonder if the escalation will ever end!).

In addition to the failure of a gift recipient to live up to Enneagram Two’s expectations, there is also the immediate anticipation of the upcoming interaction not going well. The “insensitive” and “ungrateful” recipient can be expected to continue operating coldly. The Enneagram Two is either “required” by society, their job assignment, or the expectations of other people in their life, to act in a very “nice” manner to this *^+&#!^* person. The gift is given with a sneer, is almost thrown at the recipient, or is given only after several awkward minutes. This anger-filled or hesitant display is often interpreted negatively by the recipient. In a self-

fulfilling manner, the recipient is indeed not terribly grateful about receiving the gift, nor are they particularly “warm” in their interactions with the Enneagram Two.

The recipient might react in several other ways when confronted by Enneagram Two. They might feel patronized (the gift being primarily given to establish dominance). Instead, they might feel “put upon” (expected to deliver their own gift in return). As someone who feels little control over their relationship with an Enneagram Two, the recipient might even feel resentful of the Enneagram Two’s “intrusion” into their life.

Yet, with all of these potential negative anticipations and outcomes, Enneagram Two offers an invaluable service in most societies. They provide splendid service as a Flight Attendant or waiter. They ensure as committed social workers, diligent caregivers in senior living facilities, and owners of halfway houses. The service being rendered is “priceless,” and the gift of care and compassion is to be honored.

Enneagram Three: The Performer

The third enneagram perspective is founded on achievement and fulfilled purpose—the hallmarks of successful life in most mid-21st-century societies. While most of us are pushed toward the successful accomplishment of many projects during our life, there is a specific Enneagram type that places these hallmarks at the top of their list. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991, p. 134) offers this summary description:

These were the children who were prized for their achievements. They remember coming home from school and being asked about how well they had done, rather than how they felt about their day. Performance and image were rewarded, rather than emotional connections or a deep involvement in other people's lives. Because they were loved for their achievements, they tend to

suspend their own emotions and focus their attention on earning the status that would guarantee them love. The idea was to work hard for recognition, to take on leadership roles, and to win. It was very important to avoid failure, because only winners were worthy of love. Threes . . . are high achievers who have identified with the American popular image of youth, energy, and a competitive life.

Anticipation is particularly important for the Enneagram Three. While I have proposed that anticipation is central to all polystatic processing, the awareness of this anticipation is often not fully present among many people. The Enneagram Threes, however, are fully aware. As Palmer notes, the Threes will often set aside their emotions (and other life priorities) when anticipating a rewarding accomplishment. More than is the case with the other eight Enneagram types, the Threes “live for tomorrow” and are guided by their anticipations (often found in a checklist of things to be accomplished).

When their anticipatory checklist includes many “doable” tasks, the Enneagram Three is likely to “light up.” Their energy surges (a sympathetic response), and their somatic template is filled with positive bodily sensations (taut muscles, strong heartbeat, focused attention). Once again, something similar is occurring for the Enneagram Three and the gambler. They both find gratification in anticipating success. And this gratification is often greater than what occurs when success is finally achieved.

The Enneagram Three is more likely to feel relieved (than gratified) after accomplishing many important tasks. A stiff drink, a glass of wine, or quiet time spent in a comfortable chair are more likely to follow the completion of a to-do list than is a dance of joy or “whoop” of accomplishment. Soon, there is preparation for the next day (or week) when success can be anticipated. Dopamine “injections” are more likely to follow the planning for success than the achievement of success.

Then there is the matter of Negative anticipations. The Enneagram Three looks forward to failure rather than succeeding in efforts to complete a specific task. They may anticipate major barriers that get in the way of completing important tasks. Inadequate resources might be available, even though Enneagram Three is assigned responsibility for completing a specific project. Under conditions of overwhelming challenge and insufficient support, the Enneagram Three is likely to experience massive stress.

Their body is preparing for battle with a real or imagined Lion (Sapolsky, 2004). It is a battle that they know can't be won. The "lion" is much too strong and fast. The weak and slow human can rarely fight or flee. Instead, like a rodent on the African Savanna, the human being must freeze in place and hope they will be ignored by the Lion. While rodents will cease the freeze after a few moments and shake off the accumulated adrenaline, we human beings are likely to remain frozen in place for an extended period of time, thereby doing major damage to body, mind, and spirit.

This is particularly the case with Enneagram Threes. Threes not only produce many real and imagined lions in their identification of multiple tasks that are to be accomplished, they also produce higher levels of adrenaline when confronting the lion than is the case with other folks who are less invested in successfully defeating the lion. Other Enneagram types tend to be more realistic when anticipating their ability to confront the lion with strength and knowledge. Unlike Tarzan, who could use brute force when attacked by a lion, most folks either avoid work that involves lions or find ways to cooperate with or "buy off" the lions in their life.

For the Enneagram Three, physiological and psychological "burnout" often follows repeated confrontations with lions and repeated attempts to freeze when being confronted by lions. Even when the Enneagram Three is occasionally successful, like

Tarzan, in defeating the lion, the anticipation of new battles and new defeats produces inappropriate, sustained, and destructive sympathetic responses in their bodies. Type A stress, high blood pressure, and heart attacks often accompany the Enneagram Three's anticipation of lions, especially if this anticipation is negative.

Enneagram Four: The Tragic Romantic

If Enneagram Three might best be portrayed in a movie by a hard-hitting action filled story of Wall Street, the production of a new-fangled automobile, or the Horatio-Alger type life story of a person who rose from poverty to great wealth and success, the Enneagram Four movie is likely to involve deep tragedy and intense love, with a Bronte-like script shot on the moors of England. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991, p. 168) offers her own summary of this fourth type:

Fours remember abandonment in childhood, and as a result they suffer from a sense of deprivation and loss. Their inner situation is reflected in the literary prototype of the tragic romantic who, having attained recognition and material success, remains steadfastly focused upon the lost love, the unavailable love, a future love, and a picture of happiness that only love can bring. To understand this worldview, you need to project yourself into a state of mind where decisions are based as much upon the shifting chemistry of mood as upon the perception of actual facts; and where conversations are remembered as much for their feeling tone and innuendo as for whatever words were actually expressed. Depression is a frequent mood.

Anticipation for the Enneagram Four inevitably involves the sense that something of emotional importance is about to take place. The Enneagram Four must "brace themselves" for this impending encounter. This often means becoming highly vigilant

(complete with a squirt of dopamine). The somatic template is “alive and well” with all senses being fully alert. The Enneagram Four can even smell better (“What perfume are you wearing?”) and be highly sensitive to touch (“Your caress is amazing’). With this “bracing” comes a filtering system in full operation. Those things that are trivial get screened out in favor of those things that are deeply meaningful and moving.

I am reminded of a scene late in the Hollywood version of Lerner and Lowe’s *Brigadoon*. This musical is Enneagram Four-saturated. Gene Kelly is sitting at a bar, reminiscing about his loving encounter with Cyd Charisse in a mythic Scottish village. His fiancée is talking to him about their upcoming wedding and Gene’s lack of attention to her. Gene doesn’t hear her (and is inattentive as his fiancée observes). The bar is humming with many conversations, yet all that Gene can hear are the words and songs sung by himself and Cyd in *Brigadoon*. That which holds little emotional meaning simply receives very little attention. Anticipation is directed to that which is likely to hold great meaning.

For the Enneagram Four, positive anticipation requires two features. First, there must be engagement in a deeply emotional and personally insightful experience or relationship. *Brigadoon* will gain attention long before plans for a wedding (that never takes place). The second feature is the nature of this experience or relationship. It has to be pleasantly powerful. Cyd Charisse fills the bill. Gene’s fiancé does not. For the Enneagram Four, the anticipation of a pleasant experience or relationship can also be tinted with a bit of remorse. This makes the experience or relationship much more meaningful. Cyd Charisse is enticing not only because of her beauty and grace (as a great dancer), but also because Gene can’t be with her. That which is desirable but unavailable is most enticing for the Enneagram Four. I point again to the unrequited romances on the English moors.

What about the negative anticipation of an Enneagram Four? Pure hell awaits the Enneagram Four if they anticipate engaging for a sustained period of time in only superficial experiences and relationships, such as Gene Kelly anticipated with his fiancée. Hell for this person is an emotional wasteland where time passes by with few experiences or relationships of any meaning or importance taking place. The negative anticipation is likely to be compounded by a self-fulfilling prophecy. A superficial relationship is anticipated and, as a result, the Enneagram Four is inclined to invest very little in the relationship, thus making it truly superficial.

Gene Kelly is likely to have directed little meaningful attention to his fiancée if they were to marry. They would end up in the type of superficial marriage portrayed by Steven Sondheim (another champion of Enneagram Four) in many of his Broadway musicals (especially *Company* and *Follies*). Life in this wasteland for the Enneagram Four is likely to be associated with substance abuse, depression, and even the potential for suicide. While tragedy might only be imagined by the Enneagram Four, this state can be “tragically” realized if the Four anticipates only negative experiences or superficial relationships in their world.

Enneagram Five: The Observer

Some of us prefer to sit on a bench at the top of a nearby hill and watch the world go by below us. As Enneagram Fives, we take notes, make observations, produce theories, and formulate predictions about what is happening below and why it is happening. Most importantly, the Enneagram Fives believe that this observational stance enables them to do a better job of anticipating what is about to occur. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991, p. 204) provides her own summary description of the Enneagram Five:

The Observer's ego is like a castle, a high, impenetrable structure with tiny windows at the top. The occupant

rarely leaves its walls, watching who comes to the door in secret, while avoiding being seen. Observers are very private people. They like to live in secluded places, away from emotional strain. They are often at home with the phone unplugged, and they watch the action from the edge of a crowd, making tentative effort to join. Fives felt intruded upon as children; the castle walls were breached and their privacy stolen. Their strategic defense is withdrawal, to minimize contact, to simplify their needs, to do whatever they can to protect the private space.

Private space is protected so that the Enneagram Five can not only predict what will be happening in their life but also control to some extent the appearance of unanticipated people and events. In many ways, the Enneagram Five is seeking to dwell in a closed system, where their “pet” theories and redundant predictions will always prove accurate. I suspect that the original theory of homeostasis was formulated by an Enneagram Five scientist/theorist. If Enneagram Threes view open systems as opportunities for advancement and success, Enneagram Fives are likely to perceive openness as a major threat.

Engaging Jean Piaget’s (Piaget, 1974) model of learning, we could identify Enneagram Fives as assimilating learners. They “assimilate” incoming experiences within their existing frame of reference and set of theories. Even if the system is open, the Enneagram Five will treat it as closed and constrained without their own conceptual box. By contrast, the Enneagram Three is likely to be an accommodating learner. They adjust their own perceptions and anticipations based on what the incoming experiences are teaching them. The Enneagram Three dances to the shifting tune of their environment, while the Enneagram Five beats a steady rhythm on their conceptual drum that is immune to the incoming tune.

What then are the positive anticipations of the Enneagram Five? They look forward to engagement in an exciting, complex, and

dynamic experience or relationship – provided it can be fit into their existing conceptual framework. One might refer to the “good day” spent by a psychoanalyst who is working with interesting patients for six hours--all of whom eventually confirm the analyst’s own theory about the human psyche. There is the excitement of someone who is challenging the existing theory, but who can be “assimilated” by making clever use of one’s existing framework as an Enneagram Five.

Negative anticipations arise if the patients being seen never seem to “behave themselves” (confirm the analyst’s theory). An Enneagram Five also faces a negative anticipation if they are expecting to engage in nothing but mundane, “everyday” experiences or relationships. While the Enneagram Four fears an emotional wasteland, the Enneagram Five fears living and working in a cognitive wasteland.

They would hate doing behavioral therapy and focusing on the homework habits of teenagers. Better a tortured composer or painter seeking to rediscover their creative “juices”. Whether sitting behind a coach on which a patient lies or observing the activities of a community from a safe spot on the hill, the Enneagram Five wants “excitement” – but on their own terms and in the safety of their therapy office or on a safe hilltop.

Enneagram Six: The Trooper

The Enneagram Six lives in a world that seems to be filled with threats. The negative anticipations for them tend to outnumber the positive anticipations. Yet, the Enneagram Six keeps moving forward and is someone you want on your side. Helen Palmer provides this summary portrait of the Six (Palmer, 1991, p. 237):

Sixes lost faith in authorities when they were young. They remember being afraid of those who had power over them, of being unable to act on their own behalf. Those memories have carried over into adult life as a

suspiciousness of other people's motives; Sixes try to ease this insecurity by either seeking a strong protector or by going against authority in the Devil's Advocate stand. There is both the wish to find a leader, to give one's loyalty to a protective organization, such as the church, or the company, or the university, and an equal mistrust of authoritarian hierarchy. The dutiful posture and the Devil's Advocate stance both stem from the suspicion of authority. Because they are afraid to act on their own behalf, Sixes have problems with follow-through. Thinking replaces doing because attention shifts from the impulse to act on a good idea, to an intense questioning of that idea from the point of view of those who might disagree.

A former colleague of mine, who is something of an expert on the Enneagram, not only declares himself to be an Enneagram Six, but also reveals that he worked for several years in a US federal agency that is in the business of security and espionage—and is filled with Enneagram Sixes! What better enterprise for the Enneagram Six than spending everyday finding verification for the basic assumption that our world is filled with danger and deceit.

There are some positive anticipations in the psyche of an Enneagram Six. They are likely to glow a bit when they can anticipate receiving access to valid information about what is really going on in a potentially threatening setting. I suspect that my colleague and his security-oriented collaborators found that their whole body (somatic template) felt energized when they picked up a top-secret report that revealed the “truth” about some clandestine operation.

I further suspect that my colleague and his Enneagram Six co-workers were often torn apart when reading this report. On the one hand, they wanted to believe that this report is accurate and that they can trust and be loyal to the leaders who authorized and

prepared this report. As Helen Palmer noted, Sixes wish to find a leader they can respect, trust, and follow. On the other hand, as Helen Palmer noted, the Sixes approach this report with an inherent distrust in authority and a firmly held belief in the inevitable corruption of power.

Here is where the negative anticipation kicks in. The Enneagram Six's fight/flight reactions will kick in when they believe that they are being denied access to valid information. They also find their body churning when they worry about being unaware of what is actually going on in a potentially threatening setting. As Helen Palmer observes, Enneagram Sixes has problems with follow-through. I would suggest that this absence of action is a sign of freeze.

As I have noted, this is the option available to human beings who are too weak to fight their foe and too slow to get away from the impending threat. In this state of freeze, the Enneagram Six may, as Helen Palmer suggests, be all-thought and no-action. Alternatively, they may appear to be thinking but are actually churning with the adrenaline that accompanies freeze. With no action in the face of a threat comes the body-destroying impact of sustained stress. While Enneagram Three is inclined to burn out because of the number of real threats they face in this ambitious life, the Enneagram Six is inclined to burn out because of their inability to successfully confront the imagined or real threats that they face in their work and life.

Enneagram Seven: The Epicure

As we enter the world of Enneagram Seven, the vista is filled with hope, promise, vision, and an enjoyment of the "lush life." All of this requires a fair amount of redirected and distorted anticipation of reality. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991, pp. 275-276) has this to say, in summary, about the Sevens. She begins by grouping together three of the Enneagram types:

Points Five, Six, and Seven, grouped on the left side of the Enneagram, represent three different strategies for dealing with childhood fear. Sixes, at the core fear point, overprepare by vigilantly scanning the environment, and Fives withdraw from whatever makes them afraid. Sevens, looking not at all concerned, move toward people in an attempt to charm and disarm with pleasantries. Faced with a frightening early life, Seven children diffused their fear by escaping into the limitless possibilities of imagination. Sevens do not broadcast anxiety. They do not look afraid. They tend to be lighthearted and sunny, often addicted to planning and play. . . . This is the point of Peter Pan, of the Puer (and Puella) Aeternus, the eternal child. This also is the point of Narcissus, the youth who fell in love with the image of his own face reflected in a pool.

It is not surprising that Helen Palmer references several mythic and literary figures when describing the world of the Enneagram Seven. I would add another image, inspired by the work of Michael Goldberg, who has written about both the Enneagram (Goldberg, 1999) and Homer's *Odyssey* (Goldberg, 2006). I would suggest that the Enneagram Seven aligns with the world of the lotus eaters to be found in the *Odyssey* (and other romantic tales). Eating the intoxicating leaves of the Lotus plant, the inhabitants of a mythic Mediterranean island find no purpose in life other than to savor the dream-like life they are leading. As Epicureans, the Sevens seek out and enjoy many things in their life – food, music, art, drama, or sightseeing.

Singing about their home away from the island, yet finding no desire to return to this home, the Lotus Eaters exemplify the Enneagram Seven's ambivalent attitude about remaining where they are and seeking an alternative future. I am reminded of the Tarot card representing the charioteer. One remains on the chariot (home) while racing forward in flight or combat. A similar image

can be found in the snail's slow travel while carrying its "home" on its back (the snail's shell). Each of these images conveys something about the Enneagram's own journey through a lifetime. A Seven is always on the move, dreaming of a future that is never attained. Yet the Enneagram Seven is always carrying their "home" with them and insisting that they never want to leave this "home."

The anticipations of the Enneagram Seven can be just as complex and filled with ambivalence as the home they don't want to leave—and always leave. Positive anticipations center on the realization of a dream and living in a world of rich opportunities and pleasures. Yet, positive anticipations also center on remaining just where they are right now. A bit of intoxication enables the Enneagram Seven to feel "fine" with where they are right now. What then do the Seven's want? Something new or their current situation? Is their positive anticipation filled with this ambivalence? Yes.

What about the negative anticipations? Enneagram Sevens dread feelings associated with the failed realization of their dream. They fear a life sustained in a world that is bleak and filled with despair. The lotus leaves enable the Enneagram Seven to buffer some of this fear. Their somatic template is saturated with dopamine or some numbing chemicals. This template is required because, at some level, the Enneagram Seven is fully aware of their fated dreams. They constantly seek to escape from this negative anticipation by always dreaming of a desired future (that is never realized). Or they are lingering at a sumptuous feast of food, song, escapist drama, or recall of travel to an exotic land.

Enneagram Eight: The Boss

The focus of an Enneagram Eight is on control. They wish to "take charge" of their relationships with other people and the environment in which they operate. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991,

p. 306) offers the following vivid portrayal of the Enneagram Eight:

Eights describe a combative childhood, where the strong were respected and the weak were not. Expecting to be disadvantaged, Eights learned to protect themselves, becoming exquisitely sensitized to the negative intentions of others. Eights see themselves as protectors. They see themselves as shielding friends and innocents by placing them behind their own protective bodies while continuing to struggle against unjust odds. Rather than being cowed by conflict, Eights find their identity as enforcers of justice, taking great pride in their willingness to defend the weak. Love is more often expressed through protection than through demonstrations of tender feelings. Commitment means taking the beloved under the wing and making the way safe. The central issue is control. Who has the power and will that person be fair? The preferred position is to take charge, to one's own power over the situation, and to maintain control over other strong contenders.

I can return to one of the central characters in Homer's *Odyssey* to provide an even more dramatic portrait of the Eight. I refer specifically to the Cyclops. This is a powerful, single-minded (one-eyed) combatant. He uses force to influence (and compel) the behavior of other people. As Palmer noted, the Enneagram can also be our protectorate. In the game of American football, there is a large (and often fast) member of the offensive team who typically plays the position of Guard (right next to the Center).

This "Pulling Guard" often races out ahead of the running back, blocking anyone on the defensive team wishing to tackle the running back. In life away from football, we often look for a "pulling guard" in our own life. This is a person who is defending us against those who wish us harm or wish to block our progress on some project. As a pulling Guard, the Enneagram Eight can be

welcomed in our life, though they can also be unwelcome if they are serving as our “bossy” supervisor or as our demanding parent.

One might immediately assume that the Enneagram Eight is not afraid of anything. Like Cyclops, isn’t this person lashing out without fear at anyone entering their cave without being invited in? Actually, the search for control and domination is based on a profound fear that one is lost without control and dominance. As Helen Palmer notes, it is all about being strong rather than weak. One has to have the power if they are to accurately anticipate what is about to occur in their “cave.”

Positive anticipation is to be found when the Eight has full authority to exert control in a specific setting or, better yet, in a broad setting (“If I were king!”). Negative anticipation arises when the Enneagram Eight is forced to comply with a set of orders delivered by someone else. Hell exists in an organizational setting where the Enneagram Eight has been given significant responsibility for performing a task. Yet they have been granted little authority to perform the task successfully.

The Cyclopic Eight finds that they also receive little help from anyone else while expressing their anger and frustration. Other people tend to avoid their cave when they are thrashing about. As we find with the other Enneagram types, the Eight’s aggressive behavior fulfills their expectation that other people are often indifferent to the Eight’s welfare (“it’s dog-eat-dog”). The self-fulfilling prophecy can also take the form of realized fear that, without control, one is lost—for the Enneagram Eight is often looking for a new job if they are not in charge. They have to find another cave and look (often in vain) for a setting where they have full control.

Enneagram Nine: The Mediator

Our mid-21st-century world is desperately in need of Enneagram Nines. These are the folks who bring people together from opposite sides of the road. They mediate, moderate and sometimes mollify. Helen Palmer (Palmer, 1991, p. 345) offers the following portrait of this ninth Enneagram type:

Nines are the children who felt overlooked when they were young. They remember that their point of view was seldom heard and that other people's needs were more important than their own. Eventually Nines fell asleep, in the sense that their attention turned from real wishes and they became preoccupied with small comforts and substitutes for love. Realizing that their own priorities were likely to be discounted, they learned to numb themselves, to divert their energy from priorities, and to forget themselves. When a personal priority does develop, it can be easily sidetracked. Errands can become as pressing as an important deadline... The closer a Nine gets to having the time and energy available for a priority, the more attention can get diverted into secondary pursuits.

Yes, the Nines are often overlooked. I often find that Enneagram Nines are a middle child and in this role are not only neglected but also serve as the buffer between their older and younger siblings. With this early upbringing, the Niners are, as Helen Palmer suggests, inclined to subordinate their own needs and wishes to those of other people. The Nines also learn how to mediate between their older and younger siblings. Their experience and acquired skills in mediation can come in quite handy when they are grown adults.

I take specific pleasure in mentioning that one of my heroes, Dag Hammarskjöld, is often identified as an Enneagram Nine. An often-overlooked diplomat (though posthumous recipient of the

Nobel Prize) Hammarskjöld served as Secretary General of the United Nations. Often identified as the diplomat who “built the UN”, Hammarskjöld brought together widely diverse (and often contentious) perspectives and interests among the initial UN members. Hammarskjöld was the quintessential mediator and moderator.

In shifting our attention to the Enneagram Nine’s anticipations, I would suggest that the Nine’s positive anticipations would be associated with their presence in a setting where it is possible to bring multiple parties together on behalf of a viable resolution. Much as Dag Hammarskjöld, George Mitchell and Jimmy Carter were often appointed as “peacemakers” later in their life, so the Enneagram Nine is likely to “light up” when receiving an invitation to assist a peace-making process—even though they may later regret this invitation given the grinding work of coming to a peaceful resolution.

More generally, the Enneagram Nine likes finding themselves in a setting where one can appreciate multiple perspectives and values regarding a specific stress-filled issue. They are the ultimate “relativists” who can appreciate both sides of an argument. When serving in an active “peace-making” role, they also embrace what William Perry (1970) identifies as “commitment in relativism”—meaning that they see both sides of the issue but are committed to finding a resolution rather than just appreciating both sides.

A strong set of negative anticipations is to be found in the Enneagram Nine’s psyche. The fear of being overlooked and taken for granted tops the list—though the Enneagram Nine might not admit to this fear (or even be fully aware of its lingering presence). The self-fulfilling prophecy reenters the picture. Not wanting to be rejected for inserting their own needs and perspectives into the mediation process, the Enneagram Nine will often withhold their own needs and perspectives, thus fulfilling their fear of being overlooked.

Negative anticipation is also found in the Enneagram Nine's psyche when they find themselves in a setting where there is no possibility of successful resolution. Having a record of successful negotiations in previous settings, the Enneagram Nine, as mediator, is expected to be successful and may even be held responsible for the resolution of a long-standing conflict. One wonders about Hammarskjöld's own mental and emotional state when finding little success in leading a UN mediation of conflict in the Congo. What was on his mind when his plane crashed in a mysterious manner while flying to the Congo?

There is one other way in which negative anticipations are likely to plague an Enneagram Nine and throw their somatic template out of kilter. The Enneagram Nine fears being bypassed as a "peacemaker." What if they are no longer invited in? What if they find themselves in a setting where we are one of the contentious parties?

Hammarskjöld found himself in contention against the constitutionally elected government of Lumumba. He took a stand ("commitment in relativism"), but this commitment got him in trouble. Beginning in childhood, the Enneagram Nine is tiptoeing between firmness and weakness, between concern for resolution and concern for upholding one's own values and sense of justice. As Kermit the Frog declared, "It's not easy bein' Green." It's also not easy being an Enneagram Nine.

Three Sets of Clustered Anticipations

Each of the nine Enneagram types is distinctive, as we can see from the unique descriptions of each Type offered by Helen Palmer. However, there are important ways in which each Type clusters with two of the other types regarding their perspective on the world—and way(s) in which they anticipate what is about to happen in their world. The following are three different sets of clusters offered by Helen Palmer, and two other noted Enneagram experts and authors—Don Riso and Russ Hudson (2003).

Instincts, Feelings, and Thoughts

One of the alternative models of Enneagram types is offered by Riso and Hudson (Riso and Hudson, 2003). For these two Enneagram specialists, “each type has a particular way of coping with the dominant emotional theme of its Triad.” (Riso and Hudson, 2003, p. 68)

Riso and Hudson (2003, p. 68) begin with a triad consisting of the Enneagram Eights, Nines, and Ones. Their triad is called “instinctive”:

In the Instinctive Triad, Eights act out their anger and instinctual energies. . . . Others can clearly see that Eights are angry because they give themselves permission to assert their anger, vitality, and instinctual energy directly and physically. Nines deny their anger and instinctual energies as if to say, "What anger? I am not a person who gets angry." Nines are the type most out of touch with their anger and instinctual energies, often feeling threatened by them. . . . Ones attempt to control or repress their anger and instinctual energy. They feel that they must stay in control of themselves, especially of their angry feelings and instinctual impulses at all times. They would like to direct these energies according to the dictates of their highly developed inner critic (superego), the source of their strictures on themselves and others.

If we turn our attention to the matter of anticipation, we might propose that Enneagram Eights are inclined to anticipate that the anger is justified and that it is acceptable to express this anger. The world is a threatening place, and the Eights believe they have sufficient resources (power) to successfully display anger. By contrast, the Enneagram Nines anticipate that the setting in which they are operating is one in which anger is totally unacceptable. As moderators, they are in the business of helping to manage (and perhaps suppress) any expression of anger. They should

themselves epitomize restraint. Could Jesus be the ideal for Enneagram Nines to emulate?

Finally, we find that Enneagram Ones anticipate an orderly world of their own creation where the display of anger would be “distasteful” and “unbecoming” of someone living in a world of “decency” and “civility.” If Anger should appear in one’s psyche, it should be repressed. A bit of freeze is preferred to fight and even flight would be “unmannerly.” So, for an Enneagram One, it is a matter of serving other people in a proper manner, regardless of your feelings about them. If you can’t be polite, then be quiet—for one should never anticipate that an angry gesture is called for in an orderly world.

Riso and Hudson (Riso and Hudson, 2003, p. 69) identified the second Enneagram triad as based in the domain of Feelings. It includes the Enneagram Twos, Threes, and Fours:

In the Feeling Triad, Twos attempt to compensate for their underlying shame by getting other people to like them and to want them in their lives. They also want to convince themselves that they are good and loving by focusing on their positive feelings for others while repressing their negative feelings, such as resentment at not being appreciated enough. As long as Twos can get positive emotional responses from others, they feel wanted and thus have value. Threes try to deny their shame and are potentially the most out of touch with underlying feelings of inadequacy. Threes learn to cope with shame by trying to become what they believe a valuable, successful person is like. . . . Fours attempt to avoid their underlying shame by focusing on how unique and special their particular talents, feelings, and personal characteristics are. Fours focus on their individuality and creativity as a way of dealing with their shameful feelings, although Fours are the type most likely to succumb to feelings of inadequacy.

The keyword offered by Riso and Hudson is Shame. As we are about to see, the feeling of Shame is central to another of the Enneagram triads. Shame is addressed by Twos through their application of an appeasement strategy. Give people what they want, and they will like you. You need not feel ashamed of yourself if everyone thinks “you are grand.” However, for the Enneagram Twos, the anticipation of being likely (positive) or not being liked (negative) can be grating on the heart and one’s sense of self-importance. Enneagram Two’s highly demanding psychosocial template is accompanied by feelings of resentment and dependency.

For the Enneagram Threes, anticipation of fruitful enterprise serves as a salve against painful feelings of inadequacy and shame. As a Three, we feel good about ourselves at the end of a hard day of successful work. We can even get addicted to the dopamine we induce in ourself at the end of this productive day – as we anticipate another day of success. Like the gambler, we get a “hit” from the anticipation of success even more than from the actual success.

Finally, the Enneagram Fours possess an even larger palette of fantasized anticipation than the Threes. They can anticipate imagined positive falling in love or producing a work of great beauty (dipping a bit into their adjacent Enneagram Three proclivity). There are also the haunting anticipations associated with being abandoned by someone who is loved or falling into a state of despair following a futile effort to create something of great beauty. One need only pick up a Brontë novel or read the autobiography of a despairing artist to acquire an appreciation of the Enneagram Four’s sense of both ecstasy and shame.

The final three Enneagram types (Five, Six, and Seven) constitute Riso and Hudson’s (Riso and Hudson, 2003, pp. 69-70) third triad. This triad is embedded in Thought.

In the thinking Triad, Fives have anxiety about the outer world and about their capacity to cope with it. Thus, they cope with their fear by withdrawing from the world. . . Fives hope that eventually, as they understand reality on their own terms, they will be able to rejoin the world and participate in it, but they never feel they know enough to participate with total confidence. . . . Sixes are the most anxious type and the most out of touch with their own sense of inner knowing and confidence. Unlike Fives, Sixes have trouble trusting their own minds, so they are constantly looking outside themselves for something to make them feel sure of themselves. . . . [N]o matter how many security structures they create, Sixes still feel doubtful and anxious. . . Sixes may also respond to their anxiety by impulsively confronting it - defying their fear in the effort to be free of it. Sevens have anxiety about their inner world. There are feelings of pain, loss, deprivation, and the general anxiety that Sevens would like to avoid as much as possible. To cope with these feelings, Sevens keep their minds occupied with exciting possibilities and options - as long as they have something stimulating to anticipate, Sevens feel that they can distract themselves from their fears. . . Thus, Sevens can be found staying on the go, pursuing one experience after another, and keeping themselves entertained and engaged with their many ideas and activities.

As repeatedly noted by Riso and Hudson, this thinking triad is dominated by a countering force and feeling – this being anxiety. All three Enneagram types anticipate something happening that is malevolent, strong, and active (fulfilling all three semantic differential criteria). Fives try to evade this pit of anxiety by remaining aloof and “thoughtful” about the world in which they dwell. They try to remain a far distance from the pit. For the Sixes, the pit is nearby.

Fives fully acknowledge and even appreciate the breadth and depth of the pit of anxiety. They may even venture into the pit by choosing to take a job involving security, violence, or subterfuge. The critical anticipation of the Enneagram Six concerns the motivations and degree of loyalty to be found among those who venture into the pit of anxiety with them. Those who lead them into the pit are particularly subject to scrutiny: can we anticipate that their actions will be trustworthy?

Finally, there are the Enneagram Sevens. Like the Fives and Sixes, they are fully aware of the pit of anxiety and recognize that this pit ultimately is to be found residing inside their own head and heart. The Sevens anticipate that they themselves might not be capable of living with this anxiety. Like the antelope on the African Savannah, the Sevens try to escape from their lion (anxiety); they do so by distracting themselves with the anticipation of realized dreams. Like the antelope, they race away from their lion by anticipating locating in distant lands where there are no lions and no pits of anxiety. A new home awaits the wandering Seven, which offers a respite from overwhelming anxiety.

Fear, Shame, and Anger

As Helen Palmer noted concerning Enneagram Seven, the nine Enneagram types tend to cluster in several threes that relate to interpersonal feeling and the anticipation of specific types of interpersonal relationships. These feelings are Fear, Anger, and Shame. A psychosocial template that is saturated with feelings of fear will look quite different from one saturated with anger or shame. Baselines that focus on the state of fear in one's psyche will produce anticipations that differ significantly from baselines primarily concerned with anger or shame. Interpersonal relationships that are dominated by concerns regarding the experience and expression of anger look quite different from relationships in which fear or shame are of primary concern.

Palmer suggested that Enneagram Types Five, Six, and Seven are oriented toward (and anticipate) the emotion of Fear. People in this triad feel fear of being harmed. So, they struggle with taking balanced action, trusting others, and emotional vulnerability. This triad is also known as the head triad. The head triad makes decisions from their head and logic. Emotions are most repressed in this triad. The somatic template is alive and well—but is being ignored or bypassed by the Enneagram types in this triad. Only anger is included to leak out of the fortified somatic template.

One finds that the psychosocial template is being constructed and continually revised based on one's cognition, rather than one's affect (feelings). As a result, the somatic and psychosocial templates are not always in alignment—producing physiological states (somatic template) that are not compatible with psychological states (psychosocial template). We are feeling “fully in control” yet are perspiring and jiggling our feet. We are “feeling fine,” yet are “obsessed” regarding the details in a project we are about to launch.

Many Enneagram experts suggest that Types Eight, Nine, and One are oriented toward (and anticipate) the emotion of Anger. People in this triad react with anger, whether it's repressed or expressed, to avoid being harmed. The anger triad struggles with processing emotions, expressing their need for vulnerable connection, and recognizing frustration. This triad is also known as the gut triad. Those Enneagram types associated with the gut triad make decisions from their instincts and gut.

The somatic template is in charge, and the psychosocial template takes orders from this somatic source. This sometimes means that we are nervous in a situation that we anticipate is very safe. WE feel anger, yet nothing is happening in this situation that should justify this anger. Our behavior doesn't make much sense: we avoid or leave a situation that we anticipate will ultimately be a

source of gratification for us. Something is "wrong." We feel compelled to "step aside."

The Enneagram Two, Three, and Four cluster is oriented toward (and anticipates) the emotion of Shame. Individuals in this triad often feel unworthy of love, leading to image-consciousness and fear of judgment. This triad is also known as the heart triad. The heart triad makes decisions from their heart and emotions. Emotions are strongest felt in this triad. While these emotions can include respect, appreciation, success, and love, they also can include shame, sadness, and regret. A psyche battle may ensue between these positive feelings and the negative ones. All too often, the battle is won by the negative feelings. Behavior scientists have found that the avoidance of regret is stronger than the realization of success. We are much more concerned with somehow letting a great opportunity pass us by than we are anticipating the celebration of success.

Shame is an even stronger emotion. It will often dominate the somatic template and strongly influence the psychosocial template. First, it should be noted that shame is much more intimate than regret—or guilt. Unlike Regret, which concerns behavior we did or didn't take, or Guilt, which is about our behavior and reactions to our behavior, Shame is about who we are. It is about permanent disconnection from other people. Shame is formed early in life, when we feel unwanted or unloved by significant others. One might feel Guilty about being dishonest with a friend or feel regret not telling a friend that we are sorry for our dishonesty.

However, even more deeply, we feel shame about being the kind of person who is inevitably dishonest with someone we care about. Shame concerns our fundamental sense of self. We feel embarrassed when we assume that we look bad in someone else's eyes. Conversely, we feel ashamed because we think we are bad.

We appear naked with all of our inherent badness showing through. There is an old adage that declares: "Which of us wouldn't leave town if told that everything about us is about to be revealed?" Some of us might stick around; however, the Enneagram Twos, Threes, and Fours will go online to book a ticket out of town on a bus, train, or Uber that quickly takes them far away.

There is another important, compelling aspect of Shame. This is not only one of the most deeply felt emotions. Shame is physically painful. Neuropsychologists have found that shame impacts our body as if we have just been stabbed in the gut. This certainly is not a somatic experience that we wish to inflict on ourselves. Hence, Enneagram Twos, Threes, and Fours are particularly motivated to address anticipated shame by appeasing, achieving or fantasizing in a manner that blocks or diminishes this shame before it consumes our full heartfelt (and head-felt) attention.

Moving Toward, Against, and Away from Other People

Building on distinctions drawn by the noted psychoanalyst, Karen Horney, Riso and Hudson (2003, p. 187) identify three clusters related to three specific anticipations about interpersonal relationships.

A second, and usually more useful, way to analyze your scores is to add them according to what we call the "Horneyan Groups." In Personality Types we noted that the psychiatrist Karen Horney's aggressive types, or those who "move against people," correspond to the Enneagram assertive types Three, Seven, and Eight. Her compliant types, or those who "move toward people," correspond to the Enneagram dutiful types One, Two, and Six; and her withdrawn types, or those who "move

away from people," correspond to withdrawn types Four, Five, and Nine.

The three Horney-based clusters closely relate to the three-fold cluster of interpersonal feelings. When feelings of anger are dominant, a movement against other people is prevalent. The movement away from other people prevails when feelings of fear are dominant. The movement toward other people is manifest in an interesting way when feelings of shame are prominent. Specifically, the anticipation of another person being the source of or at least associated with our fear will lead us to move away from them. We "fear" that the other person or group of people is stronger, quicker, and more active than we are. So, we had best stay away from them.

The polarization that is tragically common in our present society is aligned with this dominance of the fear factor. One might ask if Enneagram Fours, Fives, and Nines are particularly adaptive in mid-21st-century societies, given the predominance of assertive and dominating leadership styles (Enneagram Eights?). It might be good "survival" tactics to go deep inside one's psyche (Fours), or remain outside the fray (Fives), or spend time trying to buffer the blow of the assertive "bullies" (Nines).

When we consider the internal world in which an anger-based psychosocial template "rules the roost," then it is to be expected that the Enneagram Three, Seven, and Eight see their external world as one in which assertive behavior is appropriate. We need to push against other people if we want to get anything done (Threes), if we want to realize our dreams (Sevens), or if we want to be sure that we are in charge and have control of things (Eights). Our mid-21st-century world might be conducive to these motives given the threat inherent in conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus).

Thus, those who are responsible for addressing post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges might be included to “push against other people,” while those who are impacted by these aggressive leaders might be included to “move away from other people [and the aggressive people in particular].”

As I have mentioned, the relationship between the feeling of shame and the predilection to “move toward other people” is interesting and a bit nuanced. When we feel shame regarding our own behavior or the indictment of our behavior offered by other people, it might be tempting initially to move away from other people and go into hiding. Yet, shame is a feeling that often can only be assuaged by understanding, appreciation, support, and (yes) loving relationships with other important people in our life.

When we anticipate love expressed by other people, then there is a renewed (or new) possibility that we can begin to love or at least forgive ourselves. We are told that what we did is “alright” or “understandable” given the circumstances. This appreciation articulated by another person enables us to reframe, re-interpret, and re-appraise our own actions. Our psychosocial template is not filled with acceptance, appreciation, and support. We can “go bravely into our new world” without a sense of personal shame and worthlessness. This appreciative psychosocial template might be even more appropriate than a template that leads us to retreat in a mid-21st-century world filled with VUCA-Plus raindrops and often inundated with post/postmodern rainstorms.

Conclusions

It is time to move on to the matter of coaching perspectives and practices regarding anticipation, given the important distinctions to be drawn between the nine Enneagram types and the clusters of types, as well as the fundamental processes of polystasis that I have introduced. It is time, in other words, to fulfill the promise

inherent in the title of chapters in this section of the book. What does the “coaching of anticipation” mean?

If we live in the immediate future, through our anticipations, then it would seem that professional coaching could be of great value in helping to clarify anticipations and, in some instances, assist in modifying anticipations. Later in this book, I consider some of the coaching perspectives and practices that could prove valuable in this regard. I explore both coaching that occurs at a deep emotional level and coaching that focuses on cognition and behavior. I invite you to join me in this exploration.

Chapter Ten

The Coaching of Prospection III: Influencing Polystatic Cognition and Behavior

This is the third chapter concerned with the application of professional coaching to the assistance of a client in effectively anticipating what is about to occur in their environment, so that appropriate and informed action can be taken. In the first two chapters in this section, I proposed that one can be effective in providing this service as a coach if they understand and appreciate the vital role played by Polystasis in gaining a valid anticipation of what resides in the environment and governs the actions in which we are about to engage.

Chapter Ten concerns how, as a coach, we can influence the cognition and behavior related to the polystatic-based anticipation process. Before turning to the domains of behavior and cognition, I wish to provide a summary of the polystatic process that I more fully described in Chapter Eight.

Polystasis

As I have noted, Peter Sterling (2020) recently offered a radical revisioning of the way our body operates. He proposed that we live in a world of allostasis rather than homeostasis. Allostasis refers to an organism's capacity to anticipate upcoming environmental changes and demands. This anticipation leads to adjustment of the body's energy use based on these changes and these demands. Allostasis shifts one's attention away from a homeostatic maintenance of rigid internal set-points to the brain's ability and role in interpreting environmental meaning and anticipating environmental stress.

In the first chapter in this section, I introduced an expansion on Sterling's Allostatic model, which I labeled *Polystasis*. I created this word to designate multiple functions engaged by complex human systems in addressing the issue of stasis. Peter Sterling has noted that it is not simply a matter of returning to an established baseline of functioning (stasis) when considering how actions get planned and taken in a human system. As Peter Sterling proposed, the static notion of Homeostasis is inaccurate. A dynamic model of Allostasis (at the bodily level) and Polystasis (at the psychosocial level) is required, especially in our mid-21st-century world of post/postmodern-related volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus).

Related in some ways to the perspective offered by Hawkins and Blakeslee (2004), who focused on the function of prediction in the operation of human intelligence, the polystatic process is embedded in the critical operation of anticipating the near future. While Hawkins and Blakeslee proposed that prediction requires the creation of a guiding map stored in memory, our polystatic model relies on the preparation of templates that guide both the emotional and cognitive elements of the anticipation process. As I noted in Chapter Eight, we human beings (and perhaps all sentient animals) are living not in the present but in the near future. We are *homo futurus*.

Polystatic Appraisal

In this earlier chapter, I suggested that when the Amygdala is triggered, we are likely to change our psychosocial template. Our anticipation is changed and “charged” by this appraisal of threat (or opportunity). While Damasio’s somatic template concerns how our body is operating and “feeling”, the psychosocial template associated with Polystasis concerns how we are seeing and “feeling about” the world in which we are operating. It seems that our amygdala provides much of the energy for the polystatic

process to operate, while the psychosocial template provides much of the information (as acquired from one's environment).

The distinction between energy and information is critical, as Rock and Page (2009, p. 21) note in setting the stage for tracing out the implications of neuroscience findings for the field of professional coaching. As they observe, our life "is a flow of energy and information." I would specifically propose that the polystatic process is itself a flow of these two fundamental entities. While Energy comes primarily from the amygdala, and more generally, the Emotional Element of the polystatic process, it also comes secondarily from the Cognitive Element. We get excited about an anticipated event, whether positive or negative. We are motivated by the positive (and negative) environment we are about to confront. The relationship we anticipate in the coming moments encourages us to become more closely involved with this person or to abandon this relationship as soon as possible.

Similarly, while Information comes primarily from the Cognitive Element of the polystatic process, and more generally from the environment in which we are about to operate, information also comes secondarily from the Emotional Element. It is particularly important to note that we must infer our Emotional information. Our feelings do not present themselves to us in a straightforward manner as do people or events "out there" in our environment.

In many instances, we only derive information from our Emotions by concentrating on our feelings via meditation or by gaining insight from some form of biofeedback or neurofeedback. We might even rely on assistance offered by a depth-oriented psychotherapist to gain access to and interpret our emotions. As professional coaches, we can also assist our clients in deriving information from their Emotional state, though we are not in the business of offering intense psychotherapy. We are more in the business of helping our clients identify and label emotions when they naturally emerge during a coaching session, rather than

eliciting these emotions through intense probing of our client's past history of abuse or neglect or current history of trauma.

Polystatic Adjustment

As I noted earlier, we adjust the current baseline of desired functioning if it is no longer appropriate based on the application of unconscious templates and schemas. At the neurobiological and somatic template level, this has to do with what is called the brain's "error-detection function" (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 153):

Our brains have functions to detect changes in the environment and to send strong signals to alert us to anything unusual. These error-detection signals are generated by a part of the brain called the orbital cortex. . . that is closely connected to the brain's fear circuitry in a structure called the amygdala. These two areas compete with and direct brain resources away from the prefrontal region that promotes and supports higher intellectual functions. As a result of error detection and amygdala activation, we act more emotionally and more impulsively. Our animal instincts start to "take over."

Given the origin of error-detection signals in the orbital cortex (the site of our seeing functions), it is almost as if we are "viewing" our emotions from inside our head (and heart). The so-called object relations theorists of the psychoanalytic school actually portray intrapsychic "objects" interacting with one another in what might be considered an internal theater of conflict and attachment. Our orbital cortex might somehow be observing this theatrical "production" and warning the amygdala of what is going on. Our anticipations would in turn be influenced moment-to-moment by what is being observed in the orbital cortex and reacted to in the amygdala. All of this might only exist in my own imagination. After all, this is nothing but neural tissue. But what happens when the vast number of neural entities in our brain get together and do some feeling, thinking, and organizing of behavior?

From a polystatic perspective, the error-detection signals provide a somatic level (and Emotional) corrective to the cognitively based appraisal. Aligning with what I suggested in Chapter Eight, Rock and Page identify the critical role played by the amygdala. I have expanded on what they have to say by noting that the amygdala may rely on three criteria originally proposed by Charles Osgood (1957), these being the valence (intentions) of the person or event creating change in the environment, as well as the person's or event's strength and level of activity. I also mentioned that assessments made by the amygdala can be both positive and negative. Detected changes may lead one to conclude that good, strong, and active things are happening in one's environment. They need not be bad, strong, and active threats.

While Rock and Page are focusing on the "animal" side of our assessments and anticipations, there is also the side offered by us as *homo sapiens*. At the psychosocial level, we adjust our planned actions based on predictions and anticipations regarding the probable success of these actions. The Cognitive Element of the polystatic process is engaged (operating primarily in the prefrontal cortex).

As I noted in Chapter Eight, Emotional and Cognitive Elements operate in two different systems—one that is closed and one that is open. When operating in a closed Emotional system, one can anticipate the stability of all relevant variables, such as the intentions, strength, and activity level of specific living entities, as well as the strength and consistency of nonliving but dynamic entities (such as weather and temperature), and the presence of permanent objects (such as chairs and buildings).

By contrast, in Chapter Eight I suggested that an open system is one in which new variables are frequently (perhaps constantly) entering the picture and changing their magnitude and relationship to other variables. Somatic templates, baselines, and anticipations often must be modified. Adjustment of our psychosocial template is particularly likely, given the frequent

appearance of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradictions (VUCA-Plus) in mid-21st-century society. The troubling ambiguity of post/postmodernism is created by this open space, leading to the invaluable contributions of polystatic action.

Polystatic Action

We act on behalf of the new baseline of desired outcomes as well as our new predictions regarding the relative effectiveness of potential actions to be taken. Our anticipations produce new actions. Both important benefits and high costs attend Polystasis. We must first recognize that this recursive process moves quickly. Polystasis is often not amenable to the slow thinking described by Daniel Kahneman (Kahneman, 2013) nor to the reflective practice of Don Schön (1983).

The quick engagement of appraisal, anticipation, adjustment, and action is vulnerable to the application of short-cut heuristics. Our somatic and psychosocial templates are frequently adjusted in ways that might not align with reality. Imaginary lions are a specialty of modern humankind. Polystasis is easily aligned with noncritical, knee-jerk reactions.

At this point, it is appropriate to introduce the professional coach, who can be of great value in helping their client reflect on their assumptions (Schön, 1983), avoid “knee-jerk” heuristics, and slow down their thinking (Kahneman, 2011). This assistance is particularly important as it focuses on the function of anticipation, which serves as the backbone of the polystatic process.

As I have noted, human beings live not in the current moment but in the moment that is anticipated in the immediate future. In my writing, I have often suggested that we must “lean into the future” as we navigate our world (e.g. Bergquist and Mura, 2011). Otto Scharmer (2009) has similarly suggested that we must “learn into the future.” The three domains of anticipation (behavior, cognition, and emotions) are all available to the influential work

of a professional coach as they help their client lean and learn into their immediate future. Both energy and information are brought to the fore through the coaching of anticipation.

Before identifying coaching strategies related to these three domains, I wish to introduce a foundation concept related to the polystatic process and the ability to lean and learn into the future. This concept is Appreciation.

An Appreciative Perspective on Polystasis

The concept of Appreciation emerged during the early years of this century (Srivesta, Cooperider, et al. 1990), in association with the emergence of positive psychological perspectives (Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). As related to the process of anticipation, an appreciative perspective refers, first, to the assumption made by Peter Sterling that our body is always accurate in response to anticipation; it is our mind that messes things up.

Rather than try to change our body (though the injection of a mood-altering drug), we must change our mind by focusing on our behavior, our cognition and/or the emotions that produce or are influenced by our behavior and thoughts (cognition). We are leaning and learning into the future when we make accurate anticipations of the near future, which enables our body to be effective in doing what it is supposed to do.

Appreciation refers, secondly, to the identification and full appreciation of an appropriate and valid anticipation leading to an adaptive response. We “catch ourselves getting it right” rather than dwelling on the times when our anticipation is inaccurate. As a coach, we should help our client identify and appreciate the moments when they got their anticipation right. Let me offer a hypothetical example of how we “get it right.”

Imagine serving as a performance coach working with Ludwig van Beethoven, the renowned 19th-century composer, during the

later years of his life. This would be a difficult assignment not only because Beethoven was growing deaf, but also because he was a troubled man who was reportedly very difficult to engage in a positive and supportive conversation. However, Beethoven apparently had a few moments of positive anticipation while working on his 9th Symphony (the crowning composition of his career. In preparing Beethoven's hypothetical "memoirs," Caroline Sinclair (2012, p. 96) provides the following narrative:

[T]his was a new level of happiness; in the Ninth, the feeling was . . . profound, for I wished to rejoice in the love of God, and in the brotherhood of man - and what could be greater than these? I truly felt that God was nearer to me than to any other artist when I was writing the Ninth. Moreover, I associated with him without fear, and I felt, also, that in front of me was the possibility of infinite growth. It seemed that this was, perhaps, the first time in my life when I was in a mood where I anticipated good things to befall me, the feeling being not at all disagreeable. I was incited by such moods as this, which are translated by the poet into words, but by me into tones that sound, and roar, and storm about me, until I have set them down in notes. To me, language has ever been an inferior way of communicating; music is far superior, and has the power to express regions of the soul better than any words can do.

This would be an exceptional opportunity when working with Beethoven to provide coaching with a focus on anticipation. First, one would probably be very supportive of Beethoven's anticipation. One appreciates Beethoven's thoughts and feelings and helps Ludwig clearly discern the nature and depth of his newly found anticipatory perspective. Perhaps, one can even do a bit of spiritually based coaching regarding his relationship with God. As a coach, one can help Ludwig reflect on ways to sustain the feeling of happiness. Using coaching strategies, one can help

Beethoven build on the anticipation of good things about his work schedule, his physical and psychological health, and the setting in which he was to prepare his greatest symphony.

While Beethoven would have been “a tough customer/client,” our coaching quiver is potentially filled with many arrows (Bergquist and Mura, 2011). Some of these arrows are appreciative in nature and relate directly to the matter of anticipation. We can help our client both lean into and learn into the future by helping them focus on the behaviors that inform and influence their anticipation of the near future. Our client can also benefit from appreciative coaching strategies that focus on cognition and help them appraise and adjust their psychosocial template and their specific anticipations.

Finally, there is the matter of emotions. Our body and mind together produce emotions (the primary energizing agency). Furthermore, we rely on our psychosocial template to generate information (the second critical agency). This information, in turn, helps us validate and/or modify our emotions. As I previously suggested, professional coaches can assist their clients at several different levels in helping them identify and trace out the nature of their emotional reactions to specific settings and specific actions they have taken. While emotions come from our past and linger in our present-day psyche, they can provide invaluable guidance regarding the most desirable state of our near future. We can “feel” into our future, accompanying our leaning and learning into this future.

With this brief introduction of all three domains of anticipation, we are ready to launch into an exploration of several appreciative coaching strategies related to the domains of behavior and cognition. The third element (Emotions) will be given considerable attention later in this book.

Behavior

The fundamental question that we might pose to our coaching client concerns: *Why?* We all know that in “polite society” one should never ask “Why?” However, professional coaching is not about being “polite.” It is about being helpful to our client by asking them provocative and insight-inducing questions. These questions often concern the reasons why one’s client has taken certain actions regarding other people. The answer to the “Why?” question often takes one of three forms that relate to the matter of anticipation.

One form of anticipation concerns what is often called “the theory of mind.” When we are young or when we are older and in a stressful setting, we are inclined to assume that other people think and feel like we do. Our client might respond to our “Why?” question by indicating that they have acted in a particular way and responded to this person in this way because they anticipated that this other person is thinking and acting in a similar manner:

I would be upset if someone said this to me, so I assumed that Susan would be similarly upset about what I told her. I would probably react by wanting to get away, so I anticipated that Susan would also want to leave the scene. So, I tried to block her exit.

A second form of anticipation relates to feelings. Once again, the theory of mind can be applied. This theory now applies to our client’s psychosocial template:

I anticipate that Kevin would feel this way, because this is how I think most people would act/react. I softened my approach to him because I anticipated that he would feel quite hurt by what I have to say.

Our client’s psychosocial template includes an assumption that people are “hurt” by any critical comment made about them.

The third common type of anticipatory assumption concerns past history. This person acted or reacted in a certain way in the past. They can be expected to act or react in a similar manner now and in the future. This third assumption resides in something I will soon address more fully. This is the theory of attribution. We are inclined to attribute the behavior of other people (but not our own behavior) to some underlying and unchanging personality trait. “They have always behaved in this manner and always will. Their actions are firmly embedded in their fundamental character.” This third assumption may be played out in the following way by a coaching client:

Geraldine is someone who is always angry about something. I anticipate that she will express anger about the proposal I am about to make. I must prepare for her forceful, negative response.

The concept of self-fulfilling prophecy is relevant here. If my client assumes Geraldine will respond in an angry manner and prepare himself for a negative encounter, then he is likely to act in a defensive and guarded manner. This may provoke Geraldine, encouraging her to question what is really going on and what is not being said. Geraldine might indeed express anger, but it is not regarding what has been said; instead, it is about what has not been said. A vicious circle has been created: anticipation of anger leads to defensiveness, which leads to actual expression of anger, which leads to further defensiveness, etc.

Given these three anticipatory dynamics that are revealed by asking the fundamental coaching question (Why?), what might be ways in which a coach can help their client move beyond potential behavioral traps associated with inaccurate and often self-fulfilling anticipations? I offer two strategies. One is based on the action science of Chris Argyris and Don Schön. The other coaching strategy is based on the model of self-efficacy presented by Albert Bandura.

Polystasis and Action Science

The dynamics just described concerning anticipatory dynamics were insightfully described by Chris Argyris and Don Schön (1974) in their collaborative work on the relationship between the theory that we espouse and the theory that we actually engage (theory-in-use). Reframed from the perspective of Polystasis, we can propose that what we anticipate is informed not by some psychosocial template that we can readily articulate; instead, it is informed by (even governed by) a psychosocial template that is often not one we can easily identify—or perhaps not one we are comfortable acknowledging.

Our espoused psychosocial template might contain stated beliefs in remaining open-minded about other people whom we don't quite trust or even like. Our psychosocial template-in-use, on the other hand, might be filled with assumptions about how "this kind of person" operates on a different set of principles than we do or that anyone we don't trust should never have access to our true feelings.

For Argyris and Schön, the key to working effectively with other people resided in the engagement of a process first identified as "action research" by Kurt Lewin. Building on the work done by Don Schön (1983) on reflective practice as well as Kurt Lewin's work, Chris Argyris (1985) described a process of taking action in the world (experimentation) and reflecting on what is to be learned from this action. Re-labeled "action science, the guiding principle was to learn from one's involvement in the real world rather than relying on what one has read in a book or been told by other people.

As Don Schön repeatedly noted, the separation of research from professional practice has been destructive of both research and practice. Effective practitioners (whether in medicine, law, or psychotherapy) should always be testing their hypotheses (espoused theory) against what they are experiencing in their

daily practices. They are engaged in research just as much as those working in a chemistry laboratory or running a rat down a maze. I would suggest that this reflective practice is being engaged on an ongoing basis by all of us as we acquire feedback from our environment regarding the actions we have taken based on our anticipations.

Argyris and Schön provide an analytic tool that makes the process of reflective practice and action science fully accessible to us as we confront difficult challenges (especially those involving interpersonal relationships). They construct a table with a left and right column. In the left column, one places a segment of a set of behaviors that have taken place or are envisioned between oneself and the other person with whom one has a challenging relationship. In the right column, one places a statement regarding what each person is thinking and feeling in the midst of the enactment of their specific behavior.

For instance, we might prepare a left-right column table regarding our upcoming meeting with someone we will call “Susan”. Our left column might include a statement we make to start the conversation (“I want to share my concerns with you about the speech you delivered yesterday.”) The right column might include our anticipation regarding how Susan will react (“She is going to become very upset and angry regarding what I have to say”). The second item in the left column might be the statement that we anticipate will be made by Susan (“I look forward to hearing what you have to say. I always appreciate your feedback.”). In the right column, we insert our anticipation (assumption) of what Susan is thinking and feeling (“This is going to be awful, and I should brace myself for some bad news!”).

The next statement, located in the left column, might include the first segment of the feedback to be offered to Susan, followed by a right column statement regarding my anticipation of how she will react. In the left column, we then prepare what we think Susan’s statement will be upon hearing the initial feedback. A

right column entry would then include what we think Susan will be thinking and feeling at the time when she offers her reaction to this initial feedback. The left and right columns are subsequently filled with further anticipated statements being made (left column) and further thoughts and feelings in reaction to these statements (right column).

This left column/right column exercise is being prepared precisely to set up a framework regarding what we are anticipating will occur during this specific upcoming conversation with Susan. Note that we “don’t believe” Susan when she indicates that she looks forward to receiving the feedback. What if Susan is being honest? Have we set up conditions for Susan to change her mind regarding the benefit of our feedback? Assuming that Susan will be defensive and perhaps even hurt and angry regarding our feedback, do we offer the feedback in a way that increases her mistrust or suspicion regarding our intentions in providing the feedback?

For instance, Argyris and Schön observe that we often “ease-in” when offering feedback that we don’t think the recipient will like. We don’t directly deliver the feedback but instead cover it over with false praise (“this was a wonderful statement, filled with great insights, however . . .”) or hesitant qualification (“I might be mistaken, but I think you did something . . .”). The recipient of our feedback is likely to assume that we are holding back because what we have to say is quite harmful. They become defensive. We offer even more false praise, or even more qualifications and defensiveness further increase. A “vicious circle” of increasing mistrust is created.

If Chris Argyris or Don Schön were to enter the picture at this point, they might suggest that we test out an alternative scenario, where we believe Susan when she indicates that she is looking forward to our feedback. They would challenge us to review and potentially revise our psychosocial template regarding how

people in general react to negative feedback and how Susan, in particular, would react to what we would like to tell her.

First, Argyris or Schön might ask why we are giving Susan this feedback in the first place, if we anticipate that she will just get defensive and angry. They might bring up a comment they have often made in their books: Just because we get a bit defensive when receiving negative feedback does not mean that we are not open to learning from this feedback.

It is always difficult to hear “bad news”; however, these are the occasions when we can learn most about our behavior and how we can do a better job in the future. Engaging our polystatic perspective, the message might be: “Our anticipation regarding Susan’s ‘real’ interests in our feedback might be inaccurate; perhaps we need to consider an alternative anticipation”.

Either Chris Argyris or Don Schön might also suggest that we are setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy if we set ourselves up to respond by “easing in” when anticipating Susan’s defensiveness. Our tentative presentation of the feedback could make Susan increasingly uneasy about what we have to say, which leads to us being even more tentative and Susan being even more defensive. It gets even more complicated and destructive. The vicious cycle becomes “self-sealed.”

If Susan is very defensive, then we certainly can’t tell her that we think she is defensive. Susan, in turn, can’t let us know that she thinks our feedback is being delivered ineffectively or that she thinks we are holding back the “really bad news”. Nothing of real importance can be shared. The situation turns increasingly “ugly.” Both parties are holding on to anticipations that lead to future avoidance. We have decided to avoid Susan at all costs in the future, given her defensiveness. Susan is similarly determined to avoid future interactions with me and certainly will never request my feedback in the future.

We could turn the self-fulfilling prophecy on its head by beginning with the assumption (anticipation) that Susan is open to our feedback. Our willingness to share what we have to say without “softening it” might convey to Susan that our feedback is not intended to be harmful and is really not that “bad” and, even more importantly, that we trust (anticipate) Susan’s strength and commitment to ongoing improvement. We anticipate openness and success, which leads to actual openness (on Susan’s part) and success (our delivery of helpful feedback), which leads to further openness and success resulting from this interaction (and others in the future).

Argyris and Schön might offer one other suggestion. At some point, we might want to share our assumptions and anticipations with Susan. We would engage in what is sometimes called “meta-communication” (Bateson, 1972; Watzlawick, Beavin, and Jackson, 1967), where we talk about what we have just been talking about. With Susan, we reflect on our own concern about how she might take our feedback.

Susan could then reflect on how she really felt when we offered to provide her with feedback and indicate what she has done with the feedback that was provided. Both parties learn from this process of meta-communication. While a modicum of trust must be established between the two parties before this powerful process can be engaged, it ultimately can be a source of important shared insight. Joint reflective practice has been engaged. Action science is in full operation.

While it would be nice to bring in Chris Argyris or Don Schön, this is not feasible, given the long timespan between their initial presentation of the left and right column exercise. There is also the long distance of most of us from the Harvard (Argyris) and MIT (Schön) campuses. Furthermore, we don’t need their assistance, for we can effectively “coach” ourselves. Furthermore, we can use the left and right column exercise when serving as a coach to our clients. I recommend the following set of steps. They not only

build on what Argyris and Schön have offered, but also incorporate concepts derived from the polystatic perspective.

Step One:

Identify the behavior you have enacted or expect to enact.

Identify what you anticipate would be this person's reactions to your behavior

Identify what your likely behavior would be following the other person's action/reactions

Step Two:

Why do you anticipate that this would be this person's actions/reactions?

What might be their alternative actions/reactions? How might your behavior influence the engagement of their alternative behavior?

Step Three:

What do you anticipate happening following this engagement?

Do you anticipate that this would result in good outcomes, bad outcomes or both?

On what do you base this anticipation?

At this point, it is often helpful to role-play the anticipated interaction, with the coach initially playing the role of the feedback recipient (after finding a bit more about this person's past behavior and even their "character" as assessed by one's client). As alternative behaviors are explored, the coach and client might even change roles, with the coach demonstrating actions that can be taken based on alternative sets of anticipations.

Self-Efficacy and Attribution

Another approach to addressing behavioral change that relates to anticipation comes from the noted behavioral psychologist Albert

Bandura (1997). He introduces the concept of *Self-Efficacy* and relates this concept to one's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. From the perspective of Prospection, Bandura's self-efficacy could be manifest in one's anticipation of success and fulfillment in meeting a specific challenge. Much as Beethoven anticipated artistic success in completing his Ninth Symphony, one can anticipate learning from a difficult task, finding support in one's attempt to achieve an ambitious goal, and receiving recognition and reward in reaching a major goal.

Applying a social learning model to the study of human behavior, Bandura proposed that an individual's actions and reactions, including social behaviors and cognitive processes, in almost every situation are influenced by the actions and outcomes they have observed regarding other people. This social learning perspective suggests that our anticipations of what immediately lies in front of us are strongly influenced by what has occurred in the lives of other people with whom we affiliate. Our psychosocial template is founded on the amount and type of learning we have gained in our world of interpersonal relationships.

Bandura identifies four factors that affect self-efficacy. The first is *Experiencing* success in one's life and work. You can't fake the achievement of outcomes. Taking an appreciative approach, we assist our clients as a coach to identify moments and times in their past when they have been successful at completing a task. We help Beethoven identify other occasions in his life when he anticipated the successful completion of a musical composition. What enabled Beethoven to sustain this anticipation—and what barrier(s) did Beethoven enact to block this sustained anticipation.

The second Bandura factor is *Modeling*, or "vicarious experience." Bandura is particularly noted for this form of social learning. We acquire knowledge and skills by watching other people doing something successfully. I would suggest that we not only learn from this observation but also increase our own positive

anticipation of being successful. As a coach, we might suggest that our client watch someone else complete a task that they must themselves soon engage. We might encourage them to find a mentor (even if they are “senior” members of their organization) or pick up a book providing directions on how to be successful or watch a recording portraying the successful performance of a relevant task.

The third factor is *Social persuasion*. This factor for Bandura is about how we are “persuaded” that we can be effective. We seek to match the challenges we face with support from other people (Sanford, 1980). When assigned major responsibility, we need comparable authority, as well as encouragement and assistance from other members of our organization (Simons, 2005). When serving as a coach, we can not only offer our own encouragement and assistance but also help our clients find other sources of support in their work setting. We often need to be persuaded that we can be effective and that our positive anticipations are justified.

Finally, there are *Physiological factors*. This brings us to the first elements in a polystatic process: our somatic template and our emotions. As Bandura notes, it is hard to feel self-efficacious under conditions of stress. When feeling “lousy” about our body and mind (as manifest in a disturbed somatic and psychosocial template), one is likely to feel “lousy” as well about the prospects of being successful regarding the challenges we face.

As often reiterated in our Polystasis model, our anticipations are strongly influenced by our bodily condition, regardless of any “realistic” prospects of being successful. Beethoven often felt discouraged about his work on symphonies that were to become widely acclaimed. His negative anticipations often resulted not just from the high standards he set (mental factor), but also from his poor health and, in particular, his loss of hearing (physical factor). We “feel” into the near future as much as we “think” into this future.

Attribution theory is closely related to the self-efficacy model offered by Albert Bandura. This theory is concerned, as the title implies, with how people attribute the cause of specific events and how these attributes influence one's sense of self. From one perspective, one assumes responsibility for all of their actions. They retain an internal locus of control. This means not only that one's successes and failures have a major impact on one's sense of self-worth (and self-efficacy), but also that their anticipation of this success or failure will strongly influence their actual level of accomplishment. High levels of self-fulfilling prophecy are found among those who assume high levels of self-control.

Conversely, from another perspective, one assumes that most causes reside outside themselves. They attribute success or failure to other people, other institutions, the environment, or some form of fate or divine judgment. Self-esteem and self-efficacy are minimally influenced by outcomes, for with a strong external locus of control, one will often feel powerless and unaccountable for any outcomes. A strong external locus leads one to look to other people and institutions for guidance regarding what to anticipate when engaging their world.

The matter of attribution also concerns how we view the behavior of other people. While we tend to believe that our own behavior is determined by external factors (especially if we have an external locus of control), we are likely to believe that other people operate from a consistent set of beliefs (personality). Many of us hold this bifurcated theory regarding human behavior. A state (environmental) theory explains our own behavior, while a trait (character) theory explains everyone else's behavior.

This bifurcated theory is useful when we want to believe that the behavior of other people will be predictable, and that our own behavior is flexible and adaptive; however, this bifurcation also gets us in trouble when we fail to acknowledge the variable behavior of other people and/or the consistency of our own behavior. Similarly, we are likely to be surprised when our

anticipation of another person's behavior doesn't fit with our expectations regarding their usually "consistent" behavior.

When we often are surprised and must frequently adjust our interpersonal anticipations, then we may be forced to adjust our fundamental psychosocial template. We begin to acknowledge the way in which events and environments influence other people's behavior and ways in which attributions must be viewed as complex and variable--much like the post/postmodern world in which we now live.

Cognition

A polystatic approach to the processes of anticipation is inherently systemic. It is based on the assumption that our appraisal of the environment in which we are about to operate is wholistic in nature. We don't focus on one segment or aspect of our environment when anticipating what is about to be the nature of this environment; rather, we focus on the entire entity when making the appraisal, when adjusting our anticipation, and when taking action based on this adjustment. Not unlike Kurt Lewin, in his formulation of field theory, I propose that we continually construct systemic portraits of the environment in which we are about to act. Lewin calls these "topological maps" and offers tools for the construction of these maps.

Polystatic Force Field Analysis

Lewin's most widely used tool is Force Field Analysis. One first identifies a specific goal or desired outcome in the field one is about to enter and then identifies forces in this field that enhance and those that block our movement toward this goal. The analysis then moves to an assessment of the relative strength of each force, and to consideration of ways in which to add more positive forces or strengthen those already present. Finally, attention turns to the negative forces and determination of ways in which to reduce or isolate each of these forces. Most importantly, Lewin noted that

with the addition of each new positive force, there will be the addition of a new negative force or strengthening of an existing negative force.

I similarly have suggested that we must engage Charles Osgood's triad of threat when reviewing our process of anticipation. Building on Osgood, we determine if specific elements in our environment are working against (blocking) our best interest (a negative valence), are strong, and are active. Moving beyond Osgood, we also identify specific elements that are working on behalf of our best interest (positive valence), are strong and active.

Mixed together and interacting, these positive and negative elements comprise our immediate systematic portrayal ("topological map"). Most of this appraisal process aligns with Lewin's force field analysis; however, I add the level of activity to the analysis alongside strength. I would suggest that one of Lewin's forces has an impact on our movement toward a goal, not only because they are strong, but also because they are actively involved in the field (rather than remaining passive or inert).

I also consider another factor regarding the elements in an anticipated environment. We must take into account not only valence, strength, and activity, but also the expected duration of each element. Returning to Lewin's force field analysis, this would mean that consideration is given to the "staying power" of each force. Lewin does take this factor partially into account when he considers the amiability (or vulnerability of each force to being changed. How stable are the positive forces, and can they readily be eliminated or reduced in strength?

How resistant are the negative forces to being eliminated or reduced in strength? In the case of a polystatic analysis, one looks not just at the 'staying power' of a specific element if subjected to changing conditions, but also more simply to the probability that this element will "hang around" for a while, whether or not pressures of change are impinging on this element. When we are

anticipating the environment that we face in the coming moment, we might not have time to assess its “changeability.” However, we do want to know if it is likely to still be present for some time.

As a coach, we can be of value to our client in helping them engage in a polystatic force field analysis that begins with the identification of an upcoming challenging situation and a desired outcome when facing this challenge. The analysis then turns to identifying positive and negative elements, levels of strength and activity, and, finally, the anticipated duration of each major element. With this cognitively based analysis in hand (and mind), one’s client is prepared to make appropriate and accurate appraisals of the actual environment in which they are about to operate. Their anticipations are likely to be reliant on these appraisals rather than the inevitable emotional biases the client holds when preparing to face the challenge.

Let me offer a brief example, based on a real coaching engagement I had with a religious client (with some of the facts being slightly modified to preserve anonymity). This client was a liberal Rabbi who was about to make a presentation at a meeting with other leaders of his particular Judaic persuasion. He was going to propose some modifications in Jewish dietary restrictions – a big deal! He anticipated major opposition to his proposal and knew that he would be entering this meeting with a heart filled with both conviction and fear.

We conducted a polystatic force field analysis, beginning by identifying his desired outcome (acceptance or at least willingness to consider modification in the restrictions). We then identified both the positive and negative elements (forces). These included both some frustration with the various ways the current restrictions are interpreted (positive valence), and resistance to any change in long-standing traditions (negative valence). I helped him identify additional elements (both positive and negative), following which we assessed the strength and level of activity of each element. Specifically, we focused on the duration

of concern about the frustration and the duration of traditional resistance.

My rabbinical colleague concluded that concern about widespread frustration is probably short-lived, while resistance to modifying a religious tradition is undoubtedly long-term. However, he also noted that some of his fellow rabbis, who are young and open-minded, are anxious to “stir things up.” They are impatient about the enduring barriers to necessary reform. This impatience is likely to endure, and the liberal faction of his rabbinical community is not going away. The members of this faction are young and committed to reform. They represent a positive, strong, and active element in the setting he will soon enter.

As a result of our coaching session, my rabbinical client went away from our session holding on to a more positive anticipation regarding reactions to his proposal. He also formulated a new plan of action based on his reframed anticipations. He decided to communicate by email with his liberal colleagues, requesting that they join him in offering the proposal, or at least be actively supportive of his request for consideration of dietary reform.

It should be noted that the force field analysis I conducted with my rabbinical client was represented on a flip chart, rather than just being discussed orally. I find that polystatic dynamics are often best presented in graphic form. Arrows are drawn. Springboards and barriers are drawn that activate or block the arrows. A goal or desired outcome is placed above or to the right of “all the action taking place.”

Most importantly, a graphic portrayal on a flip chart enables a coaching client to get “some distance” from the challenge they are facing. The powerful forces and elements that are identified can be seen and modified from a more “objective” point of view. If no flip chart is available, then a whiteboard might be engaged or the

analysis might be conducted on a computer screen using graphic tools, with the resulting portrayal being projected on a wall.

Polystatic Cross-Impact Analysis

As a coach, I not only modify the force field processes proposed by Kurt Lewin by bringing the dynamics of anticipation. I also find that a systemic polystatic-based analysis requires consideration of the interrelationships between the various elements of the environment in which one's client anticipates working. As Miller and Page (2007) have noted, important systems are not just complicated (many elements) but also complex (these elements related to one another).

I find that my coaching clients are much more likely to request my assistance in managing a complex rather than just a complicated issue. Anticipation of complexity requires a more systemic analysis than is the case with a force field analysis. While the elements in a Lewinian analysis are considered to be operating in isolation from one another, the elements in something called a cross-impact analysis are all interacting with and jointly influencing the strengths, activity level, duration, and (sometimes) even the valence of this element.

Originally developed by Theodore Gordon and Olaf Helmer to help determine how relationships between events may impact resulting events and reduce uncertainty in the future, I have often used Cross-Impact Analysis to assist clients in anticipating their own future. I have modified this analytic tool to make it compatible with a polystatic perspective.

Alongside my coaching client, I prepare a matrix on which all the major elements in a system are placed on both the left side and at the top of the matrix. Together with my client, I then examine the relationship between one element and each of the other elements to determine the extent to which the valence, strength, activity level, and duration (VSAD) level of the first element influences the VSAD of the second element. Does the first element assist (up

arrow) or block (down arrow) the second element—or do they operate independently of one another (“0”)? And how strong and sustained is this assistance or blockage (multiple arrows)?

This same analysis is conducted with each of the other elements as they relate to all of the other elements in the matrix. Not only does the cross-impact consideration of each element with the other elements provide a client with a clearer sense of the interdependence of the system’s elements, a cross-impact consideration also provides an even broader, systemic portrait.

If the matrix is filled with up-arrows, then we find the portrayal of a highly “enmeshed” system in which action taken about any one element in the system will spread quickly to other elements—a “pinball effect”. Conversely, if the matrix contains many down-arrows, then a condition of “win-lose” is being portrayed. The elements operate in opposition to one another. As a result, one must carefully prioritize one’s actions, for whatever actions one takes, it is likely to negatively impact other parts of the system.

There are also matrices in which many “0s” are prevalent. This matrix represents a “disengaged” system. Nothing relates to anything else. This system can be treated as complicated rather than complex. In such a system, planning requires a set of independent actions, as well as careful consideration of the action that should be of the highest priority. The “disengaged” status of this system also suggests that some work might need to be done that yields good reasons for cooperation among the elements and provides a heavy dose of integrative thinking regarding the overall purpose and welfare of the system.

Conclusions

The systemic portrait that a force field analysis and cross-impact analysis yield is likely to reveal something about the emotional life, psychosocial templates, and dominant anticipations that undergird the operations of this system. If many forces (both

positive and negative) are found on the force field chart, then one must wonder about the potential dominance of an external locus of control. Having completed the analysis, one imagines standing on the bow of a ship that is being tossed about in a stormy sea. Fair weather and a favorable wind are anticipated, but they have not yet arrived. We feel powerless and dependent on the weather. Perhaps another ship will come to our rescue.

On the other hand, a chart that contains few positive or negative forces suggests that movement is in 'your hands.' This means that one might not need to do anything more at this point than "get on with" movement to the desired goal. However, there might be some hesitation in moving forward (which probably helped to motivate the engagement of this analysis in the first place). Under these conditions, a new analysis might be conducted that focuses on forces that are operating inside one's head and heart.

A polystatic perspective is particularly valuable in this regard. Several tough questions might be engaged: Are there any anticipations that you have which could block your movement forward to your desired goal? Are the blocks you anticipate based in large part on a valid assessment of what is out there in the environment? If so, then perhaps a return to the original force field analysis is required. Are the anticipated blocks instead based primarily on something that you "feel" or some powerful emotions that are associated with movement toward (or achievement of) the desired goal? If so, then the new Head-and-Heart force field analysis should be conducted.

The cross-impact analysis generates similar insights (or at least questions) regarding emotions, templates, and dominant anticipations. Many up-arrows suggest that members of this system are likely to retain an optimistic psychosocial template, feel good about working in this system, and anticipate positive outcomes resulting from whatever actions are to be taken. Conversely, a matrix in which negative arrows are abundant portends a pessimistic psychosocial template ("dog eat dog"),

negative feelings about working in this system, and anticipation of negative (or unexpected) outcomes regardless of the actions being taken.

Finally, we find the “disengaged” (“0” filled) cross-impact matrix to be indicative of a system in which “there is no there, there.” Glue is lacking that binds members of this system to some greater purpose. Feelings of alienation or indifference are likely to prevail, accompanied by a psychosocial template that is devoid of much content. Members of the system often don’t even bother to anticipate any outcomes because they don’t feel like their actions will make much of a difference anyway. A sense of powerlessness and hopelessness leaves one without appreciation for any polystatic perspective regarding a specific “0” filled setting. In such a setting, homeostasis might provide a valid perspective. Everything does fall back to some stable state when no one really “gives a damn . . .”

All of this suggests that Emotions show up whenever we are using the force-field and cross-impact tools. We are also likely to experience the activation of our orbital cortex and amygdala when “viewing” and “feeling” our cognitive processing of anticipations and reflecting on behaviors elicited by these moments of anticipation. It seems that we can’t leave our body behind when we live into the near future. Our neurobiology taps us on the shoulder and suggests (often forcibly) that membership in the anticipatory decision-making body should never be restricted to rational, thoughtful, and information-based elements in our psyche.

There is much that emotional and intuitive elements in our psyche can contribute positively and creatively (Lehrer, 2009). Our prefrontal cortex should never run the show. If it does, for a short period of time, then other parts of our neurological system will soon demand a hearing and divert energy away from current behavior patterns to behavior that is primarily protective (fight/flight) or non-existent (freeze). All hell breaks loose. We

have created our own ship that is wallowing in an Emotional, Cognitive, and Behavioral storm. . .

So, stay tuned for our consideration of these “stormy” issues . . .

Chapter Eleven

Coaching of Prospection IV: Influencing Polystatic Emotions and Self-Organizing Neurobiological Functions

Our current understanding and appreciation for human motivation, attention, and behavior isn't what it used to be. While for a long time we tended to view human beings as well-oiled machines that sought out a state of rest, we now view human beings as energetic organisms that seek out activity as a way to experience competence and achievement (Maslow, 2014; White, 1959). A primary desire to remain in or return to a state of rest is to be found only among those who are depressed or addicted to some mind and body-altering drug. Rest is sought only when we are tired and seek out restoration of energy so that we might once again be active achievers.

We have similarly found that human beings normally do not seek a return to homeostasis. Rather, as Peter Sterling (2020) has recently proposed, we are constantly shifting the baseline of our desired physiological state based on the changing environment we encounter from moment to moment. I have proposed that Sterling's model of Allostasis can be extended to a model of what I have labeled Polystasis. The polystatic process concerns the shifting of ways in which we establish a desired psychosocial baseline as we interact with a social environment that is constantly shifting. The polystatic process enables us to constantly adjust our motivation, attention, and behavior based on a dynamic

Up to this point, I have offered yet another way in which human motivation, attention, and behavior can be viewed. I have suggested that we operate not in the current state of our environment; rather, we are operating in the environment we anticipate will be present several moments in the near future. We live, as *homo futurus*, as vital, competence-seeking beings who are constantly adjusting their desired psychosocial baseline in anticipation of an always-emerging environment.

I turn first to Emotions and then to the closely related matter of neurobiology and self-organizing systems as they impact the polystatic process of anticipation. Our emotions constitute the element in the “polystatic” process that provides most of the energy and some of the information needed to engage this dynamic, adaptive psychic process.

Having considered some of the operations involved in applying Emotions to the polystatic process of appraisal, adjustment, and action, I turn to the agency of the human psyche that is most closely associated with our Emotions. This agency is our neurobiological system, with its many levels of functioning, and a surprising lack of any central coordinating unit. As a self-organizing, highly adaptive system, our brain and its many adjunct parts provide ample resources for our successful engagement in a complex, feedback-based process of Polystasis (contrasting with the traditional model of homeostasis).

Emotions

I begin this exploration of the third dimension of anticipation by providing another brief case study regarding one of my coaching clients (with certain facts again being altered to preserve anonymity).

My client, John, was the head of the major division of a large law firm. His division had been an independent, very successful firm for many years, but was bought up by a much larger national law

firm. He has difficult relations with the head of the large firm and often fiercely defends the remaining independence of his own firm. John struggles with the “insanity” of his position in the law firm—feeling caught between loyalties to his division and “demanded” loyalties to the firm that owns the business. To find some “sanity,” John spends one day each week as a “real” lawyer. He is an internationally renowned expert in a particular area of the law and finds it gratifying to still make use of this expertise—at least for one day a week.

Leadership and Freedom

Unfortunately, the one-day-a-week commitment always requires that he spend extra hours at night and on the weekend responding to the demands of his administrative job. As we talk, my client often looks wistfully at a large picture of a sailboat that he owns, which is hanging on the wall behind his administrative desk. John often speaks about the absence of time for sailing this cherished vessel.

John is married to a woman who holds a very high political position in their community. He talks about the inability of the two of them to go out for a drink at a bar in their community, for fear of what other people will say. The two of them are often invited to public events but must “behave themselves” at these events. John and his wife decided several years ago that they needed to buy a condominium in a city located many miles from their community. They anticipated that an occasional visit to this condo would enable both of them to “loosen up” and enjoy some freedom in their life. Unfortunately, they have found very little time to visit their “sanctuary” since they purchased it. Perhaps it was a “silly” idea and simply a decision based on exhaustion rather than rationality.

John tells me that he greatly appreciates our sessions, for he has no one else to talk with about the “personal matter” he shared with me. Such matters as the consideration of retirement from his

administrative position and fighting for the return of his division to independent status. He can't talk with his wife about potential retirement because this would disrupt everything in their life (her salary as a public official is surprisingly low). He certainly can't talk with other people in his office or with anyone in the main office about his dreams regarding "corporate revolution."

I gently share with John something we know about the psychologically based challenges of leadership. We know that assumptions regarding the motives and abilities of leaders are increasingly devoid of reality, the higher one's position in an organization. They are often either idolized or demonized (Kernberg, 1998). As I shall note shortly, this pull toward leadership-based distortions relates to a psychological dynamic called Projection. I also tell John about the loss of freedom that comes with increasing power and authority. I convey an insightful story written by George Orwell (2009). This story concerns the requirement that a British officer in India shoot an Elephant that is doing damage in the village where he serves as an administrator.

Walking down the road to kill the elephant, our officer reflects on his own strong desire not to kill this magnificent beast, as well as the requirement that he engage this regretful act in order to preserve his authority in the village. We pay a great price for our power. John can anticipate that there will be strong negative reactions if he varies his administrative practices very much to make these practices more gratifying for him or make him more successful as an administrator. Even if people around John might wish for these reforms, they are likely to find it hard to make the adjustments. Perhaps "everyone" wants John to change, but "nobody" wants John to change.

Leadership and Openness

Finally, there is the matter of openness and disclosure. I inform John of something that he already knows in his heart. The higher

the position and more authority one has in an organization, the less ability one has to share and disclose. In this book, I have given extensive attention to the description and treatment of Wilhelm Reich's *Character Armor*. I focused on healing the Wizard of Oz' Tim Man, who exemplifies the rigidity and lack of access to one's heart that are common in those fortified by character armor.

Many people in formal positions of authority (such as police officers, judges, and physicians) wear uniforms not only to project this authority, but also to protect themselves (character armor). We don't know much about these people in uniforms; furthermore, even when a person in authority (who must be "responsible") wears no uniform, they must not say much about themselves or about how they are feeling at any one moment concerning their reactions to the person they are serving.

Psychotherapists, lawyers (and administrators) are to keep their feelings and personal stories to themselves. John acknowledged this restriction when he mentioned that I, as his coach, am the only person he can talk to about what is most deeply bothering him in his role as law firm administrator. John is not alone in this regard. Many professional clients and clients in positions of authority have similarly shared with me that I am the one person with whom they can share their emotions and the basis for these emotions. They anticipate that disclosure at their worksite would be unacceptable.

I recall sitting on the bleachers of a baseball field near the hospital where my client served as director of a specific department. We both looked out at the field and imagined a game being played. My client would slowly reveal some of his deepest concerns, using a baseball metaphor to convey these concerns ("I'm afraid I will strike out.") ("They are going to throw me a curve ball, and I won't be able to hit it."). He was only able to share these concerns by leaving his office, facing out to the baseball field (rather than facing me), and conveying all of his deep concerns in metaphor. Only under these conditions did he feel comfortable with his

disclosures. Power and authority certainly come at a big price when it comes to sharing feelings and concerns.

A quite poignant set of observations was shared with John. The higher the position, the more power and the more authority one has, the greater is the possibility that anticipations will be based primarily on emotions, rather than on an accurate appraisal of one's setting. Feedback from other people is likely to be distorted and inappropriately motivated. Rewards anticipated from one's environment are often absent, while unanticipated kickback may frequently occur. As a result, accurate cognition and appropriate behavior are sometimes quite elusive. As a leader, one is likely to rely on Emotions, given the unreliability of either cognition or behavior. This is the opposite of what should be expected from those in a leadership role.

Emotions and the Anchor

As we bring anticipation into the picture, the concept of *Emotional Anchor* is important. There are points or events in our daily experience that bring us back to a fundamental emotion. In the genre of popular music, this event can be the refrain—the return to the main theme of the piece of music. This refrain typically conveys in song and in lyrics some basic emotion—be it love, longing, sorrow, or regret.

I recently listened to a recording of John Tavener's remarkable work for solo violin, strings, and tam tam, called *Mahashakti*. This minimalist piece includes a periodic sounding of the tam-tam (a small metallic instrument that is struck much like a gong). I found my emotions of joy mixed with sorrow coming to the surface whenever this soft beat occurred in Tavener's work. My emotions were sustained because I was anticipating the gently reverberating sound of the tam-tam.

We find a similar anchoring in our non-musical life. A compliment offered by a customer reminds us of the reason we

are performing a particular task. John's large picture of the sailboat that is hung on the wall behind his administrative desk might also serve as an emotional anchor. The picture might remind John of what he is missing in his life and why he needs to periodically review his priorities and baseline.

The clear reminder serves as an anchor for our emotions. It reaffirms our baseline. For Beethoven, it was the anchor of Joy (as represented in Schiller's poem) that kept him moving forward in creating the Ninth Symphony (Sinclair, 2012). For John, it could be his return to "doing law" one day a week. This weekly anchor could remind him of why he entered this field in the first place and why his work as an administrator is critical to the continuation of legal practices in his firm. Emotional anchors clarify and reaffirm our purposes and meaning in life.

Coaching and Emotional Anchors

The identification of emotional anchors can be of great benefit when we serve as a coach. Offering an appreciative perspective, we can help our client identify those moments and events that elicit deep emotions in them. These moments and events can help our client identify not just their goals and aspirations, but also the baseline(s) that they use when anticipating something in their life. While a psychosocial template can be engaged to assess threat, it can also be used to assess potential pleasure and gratification. Working with a client, we can help them appreciate the emotional anchors in their life and the way(s) in which these anchors can be introduced into their psychosocial template.

For instance, Tavener's *Mahashakti* (like many of his pieces) is often best heard while in a contemplative state. We can reflect on the complex emotions that the tam-tam sound elicits, and (perhaps with the assistance of a coach) consider how these interwoven emotions appear in our daily life or, especially, in anticipation of an upcoming important event. For me, the intermixing of joy and sorrow relates to my upcoming visit with

my brother, who is suffering from dementia. I “know” in my heart (psychosocial template) that my time spent with him will be filled with joy (recalling our many years together), mixed with sorrow (knowing that he can’t recall these years). John Tavener’s *Mahashakti* can help me prepare for this upcoming visit.

Polystasis and Depth Psychology

Clearly, as illustrated in my own experiences of Tavener’s *Makashaki* and Beethoven’s engagement of joy in his composition of the Ninth Symphony, our Anticipations are often rooted in our emotions. The question to be posed is: How deep is this rooting, and how pervasive is the influence of emotions on our anticipations? It is tempting to turn first to the “king of emotions”—this being Sigmund Freud. While it is tempting to turn to his concern (even obsession) with the sexual urge as the predominant emotion, I prefer to consider one of Freud’s later conceptions (Freud, 1990/1936). It concerns the role of anxiety as an emotion that signals the potential emergence of unconscious content that will be threatening to us if allowed to enter consciousness.

Operating with a strong Victorian attitude (Rieff, 1979), Dr. Freud might suggest that a splash of anxiety across our face moves us to anticipating unacceptable urges that could get us in trouble. We want to “tell off our boss” and experience a bout of anxiety when thinking of engaging in this action. A handsome man is attending the conference where we will be speaking. Relationships with our spouse have been problematic recently. We are at a bar in the hotel, and after a couple of drinks, he suggests that we follow up with drinks in his room. Anxiety wells up, and our superego takes charge. We decline his offer.

O. Hobart Mowrer (1961), a noted behavioral psychologist, might even chime in at this point. He would suggest that our anxiety arises from our genuine sense of Guilt. Our potential actions are not aligned with deeply held values. We are splashed with a bit

of stinging anxiety and decide to return to our own hotel room, call our spouse, and do some more preparation for our upcoming speech.

We could also turn to one of Freud's one-time colleagues, this being Carl Jung. Dr. Jung might enter the conversation about anticipation by agreeing with Dr. Freud that we are strongly influenced when appraising our current setting by unconscious forces. However, these forces arise not from some super-ego or God-driven condemnation of certain urges; rather, they arise from our feminine (*animus*) and masculine (*anima*) attraction to certain "shiny" objects, people, and events (Jung, 2013).

We are animated in our anticipation of something we find attractive, compelling, and exciting. It is a bit like what James Redfield (2018) described in his best-selling book, *The Celestine Prophecy*. I would suggest that something we encounter is "shimmer." Engaging the concept of synchronicity (also explored by Jung), Redfield wrote about the remarkable vibration that comes with encountering and accessing some deep, integrative energy.

At an even deeper level, our anticipations could be directed by the appearance (real or imagined) of strong archetypal images (Jung, 1978). Our handsome gentleman at the bar might be charming, representing a *puer aeternus* (eternal child) archetype. We are enthralled with his wit and sense that anything is possible in life. If a male, our boss might trigger the archetype of a domineering father. If female, our boss might evoke the archetypal image of a malicious witch. None of these archetypal images represents anything like reality; however, each of them can strongly influence our anticipation of upcoming interactions with the person who elicits one of these images.

Anticipation and Object Relations

We might invite one final set of psychoanalysts into our exploration of Emotions and anticipation. These are the so-called

“object relations” theorists and therapists who dwell on the way each of us produces certain psychic objects and allows our experience of these objects to influence how we view and act in the world. Turning not to the archetypal images of Carl Jung, but instead to early life experiences (particularly with one’s mother), the object relations theorists tend to view relationships with other people that are troubled as subject to such dynamics as *psychic splitting* (this person is either all good or all bad), *projection* (moving part of oneself that is unacceptable or disturbingly powerful to the other person) and/or *containment* (looking for someone who can help contain our anxiety) (Greenberg and Mitchell, 1983).

We can apply our Polystatic perspective to an appreciation of these dynamics. We might suggest, for instance, that our anticipation of impact regarding a potential action is determined by whether or not we think the person we are planning to engage is good or bad. The Osgood semantic differential is in full operation regarding valence!

We might instead anticipate that the person we are engaging will react to us in a way that we might if fully aware of our own perspectives and motives. Beyond what Argyris and Schön proposed, the process of projection involves the unconscious generation of assumptions about other people that relate to our own psyche. We don’t realize that these assumptions are really all about us—not them!

I return to the challenges facing John, our legal administrator. As a man in a position of power, he is particularly subject to projections from other people with whom he interacts. These folks will be inclined to project fear of their own power on John—worrying that he might take advantage of them. Alternatively, they split off John and make him all good or all bad, or they look to John to contain all of their anxiety by solving all of their problems, reassure them that everything will work out fine at the office, or simply be that “wonderful” person who will always

greet them with a caring smile. The splitting of good and bad can lead to a dramatic shift in attitude regarding John if he ends up not being the all-powerful and all-caring leader that they had expected (anticipated) him to be.

Neurobiology and Emotions

In recent years, attention has been directed in the field of neurobiology to processes that closely align with those proposed by psychoanalysts. While the analysts for many years have interwoven their therapy-based observations or (and inferences about) human motives and behavior with speculations regarding the biological origins of these motives and behaviors, it is not until recent years that a neurobiological foundation for their work has been built. Obviously, the neurobiology of Emotions is an area of greatest concern to psychoanalysts; furthermore, this area of neurobiology is closely aligned with our model of Polystasis.

Channel and State

Specifically, attention has been devoted to a distinction regarding what has been called the “channel” and “state” functions of the human brain (Solms and Turnbull, 2002). Most of our cortical functions are dependent on information derived from external sources. This is particularly the case regarding forebrain (prefrontal) functions. Information from the external world is “channeled”:

. . . the information processed by these [functional] systems comes in discrete bits and is communicated via *distinct and specific pathways* [channels]. Information transmitted is not widely distributed in the brain as a whole but, rather, is targeted with great accuracy to other discrete regions. (Solms and Turnbull, 2020, p. 34)

The “state” functions operate in a completely different manner. They are dependent on internal sources of information:

Here, the means of communication is more gross and involves widespread and global effects that reflect changes in the state of the organism rather than in specific information processing channels. (Solms and Turnbull, 2020, p. 35)

Given this distinction, I suggest that the somatic template and psychosocial template are closely associated with the “state” functions.

Furthermore, most of the internal sources of information are likely to be related directly to our Emotional state. Most importantly, just as our polystatic anticipations are holistic rather than focused on a single element in our environment, it is probably required that our primary source of information on which we base these anticipations is general and holistic in nature.

Thus, it is likely that our anticipations and appraisals are closely related to our State operations and deeply invested in our Emotions. “Channel” information certainly provides important cognitive correctives to these Emotion-based anticipations but might not play the primary determining role.

The implications of these findings and speculations are great for those of us engaged in assisting clients with their anticipations. It would seem that Emotions, “gut” feelings (somatic template), and often untested assumptions about our relationships with other people (psychosocial template) are important.

Multiple Memory Systems

I wish to bring into our exploration of anticipation one other finding from the world of neurobiology. We now know that we operate primarily with two memory systems. One of these systems helps us navigate daily, habitual operations. Often called the *Procedural (Implicit) Memory System*, this is the cortical function that operates when we are driving a car, hitting a golf ball (if we are a skilled golfer), or simply walking down the stairs (if we are

not neuro-damaged). We easily retrieve memories that guide our skillful operations of these procedures. Most of our heuristics (fast thinking solutions) operate out of our procedural brain. Our “knee-jerk” reactions exemplify procedural heuristics.

The second system is usually called the *Episodic or Expository (Explicit) Memory System*. Specific memories of past events, as well as memories of potential problem-solving and decision-making processes, are brought to the fore when dealing with a new, complex, or elusive issue. While procedural memories are usually engaged without any conscious awareness of their application, episodic memories are engaged in a fully conscious manner. As Solms and Turnbull (2002, p. 163) note, these memories are not just stored and retrieved. They are lived! And, as lived memories, they are intrinsically emotional.

Damasio might enter the conversation at this point, suggesting that episodic memories always come with an attached somatic marker. Furthermore, the challenges being faced are inevitably multi-tiered when anticipating a complex event or working in a complex mid-21st-century environment.

Multiple post/ postmodern issues are nested in one another and often even contradict one another. This being the case, one’s Emotional state is likely to be equally complex and saturated with contradiction. Under these conditions, a holistic somatic template and a broad-based psychosocial template must take the place of a focused somatic marker.

As a coach, we can provide valuable assistance to our clients as they consciously review their psychosocial template (what are you thinking?), and, to the extent possible, even their somatic template (what are you feeling?). Most importantly, as Daniel Kahneman (2011) advocates, we must encourage our client to avoid the use of fast-thinking heuristics when addressing multi-tiered issues – as tempting as it is to escape into a rabbit hole of procedural serenity (Bergquist, 2025).

As a coach who is focusing on assisting their client to accurately and flexibly anticipate the near-future world they will engage, the advocacy of consistently implemented *Slow Thinking* (Kahneman, 2011), *Reflective Practice* (Schön, 1983), and *Appreciative Perspectives* (Bergquist and Mura, 2011) is critical.

Socio-neurobiology

As a professional coach, we now have the opportunity to avail ourselves of insights from the emerging field of social neurobiology. In this field, a close (even intimate) relationship exists between our brain and our relationships with other people (Rock and Page, 2009). The amygdala becomes not just the emotional center of the brain, but also its social center, “social issues such as status and belonging being the [issues] being the ones we feel strongest about.” (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 426). For those who are working in this field, there is an orientation toward a contextualist perspective on the way our brain and mind operate in a social field (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 426).

Several important points emerge from this contextualist perspective. First, powerful interpersonal relationships produce strong emotional reactions that, in turn, strongly influence the nature and quality of these relationships. For instance, some research findings suggest that both therapist and patient “light up” as lovers when engaged in psychotherapy, whereas the counsellor and client “light up” as friends when engaged in career counseling. Polystasis is alive and well!

Second, the semantic differential categorization that I have introduced might also be alive and well in our psyche when we are anticipating what is about to occur. Our amygdala might be sorting out the threatening and non-threatening elements to anticipate in our immediate environment. In our role as an executive coach, we can be of great value in helping our client identify their own Amygdala-driven anticipations and find ways to address these strong anticipations.

Relationships and Reality

Linda Brothers (2001) has taken the social neurobiological perspective a step further, suggesting that we create reality in our relationship with other people and that our mind is actually embedded in a collective enterprise with the people with whom we relate. Much as Harry Stack Sullivan (1953) suggested that our personality is dependent on our relationship with another specific person (rather than being an enduring, unchanging character trait), our mind, according to Brothers, is dependent on interpersonal context. We think in connection with other people, much as we create our values and guide our behavior in connection with other people (Gilligan, 1982; Gilligan, 2023).

If Brothers is correct, then, as noted by Rock and Page (2009, p. 15), “a coaching mind-set represents a shift from an individualistic to a contextual and social understanding that supports social cognitive neuroscience.” Brothers’ findings also suggest that both the emotional and cognitive elements of the anticipation process are critical—and that both are strongly dependent on the specific relationship in which we are engaged with other people.

Even when anticipating an event or a relationship without the engagement of other people, we are likely to be projecting specific attributes on this event or relationship. We create reality on behalf of emotions and thoughts that exist in our own mind, and the projected emotions and thoughts to be found in the projected mind we have created.

Without the input of other people, our near future is an “ink blot” that we choose to “interpret” on behalf of our own hopes, fears, and needs. We refuse to live in the present and are determined to anticipate the near future, even if this means fabricating elements of this future in our own mind. As a coach, we can become that connecting mind that alleviates the need for a fabricated and projection-based mind. This might, quite simply, be the primary

function we serve as a professional coach (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 428).

The Neurobiology of Polystasis

The recent upsurge of findings from the field of neurobiology provides us not only with new insights into the Emotional element of the polystatic anticipation process, but also with insights regarding other important aspects of the polystatic process. Several years ago, I joined with my colleague, Linda Page, to identify some of the important findings from neurobiology that hold implications for professional coaches.

In each instance, findings hold implications for our understanding of Polystasis. I combine and sort through the list that Linda Page prepared, add other findings to the list, and offer in each instance some of the polystatic implications and implications for professional coaching.

Procedural Memory

Habitual behavior requires the shifting of knowledge and skill sets from focused, intentional, and explicit (conscious) memory systems to another memory system located in a different part of the brain. As I have already noted, this system is often considered our “procedural” memory. This second memory system is holistic, much less accessible to intention. It is implicit (unconscious) in nature. We are likely to find that the psychosocial template is composed primarily of procedural memories. The template contains untested assumptions about what people in general believe and want, as well as a wealth of often-distorted past experiences regarding relative success or failure in working with other people.

When coaches try to “break up” the habitual behavior of their clients, they may be trying to move stored material between two different memory systems. Resistance to the disruption of

habitual behavior and the challenging of existing psychosocial template may be based not only on our fear of changing established behavior patterns, but also on the profoundly difficult task of moving stored memories back from the implicit system to the explicit system where these memories were first formed.

Neural Networks

Our psychosocial constructs (paradigms, schemata, left-column beliefs and assumptions) may be much more deeply embedded in and reinforced by and through complex, highly redundant, and multiple-level neural connections and networks than we had previously thought to be the case. While our psychosocial template will shift a bit from moment to moment, given new information arriving from the changing environment and feedback we receive from actions we have taken in this environment, there is an underlying set of neural networks that are much less likely to be modified by any one change in our environment. While Polystasis speaks to our capacity to be flexible and adaptive (the accommodating aspects of our learning process), the constructs contained in our neural networks speak to our desire for stability and continuity (the assimilating aspects of our learning process).

To examine (let alone attempt to “break up”) these constructs as a coach working with clients may be quite difficult. The outcomes of such a disruption may be difficult to predict. What does this mean for the coach who is encouraging her client to see things “in a different way”? First, it means that there is likely to be some initial resistance. This is not a “bad” sign; rather, it is a sign that this “different way” is being taken seriously by her client.

Second, the coach might want to consider a “different way” of presenting the “different way.” For example, the coach might want to couch what they say in a metaphor or analogy (Bergquist,

2021): “it is as if you were . . .” Third, the coach might use the resistance as an opportunity to assist her client in exploring his cluster of assumptions that are motivating the resistance: “let’s spend a few minutes exploring the source of your resistance.” This approach only works if the coach is not herself being resistant to her client’s resistance. This can be a “learn-able” moment for the client and can actually yield greater benefit for the client than is any adoption of the coach’s way of seeing things.

Anticipation and the Binding of Anxiety and Planning

We immediately process all (or most) incoming stimuli through “templates” in our Amygdala (mid-brain). We process these same stimuli through our cerebral cortex at a later point (1 or 2 seconds later) and more slowly. While many of the processes of anticipation originate in the prefrontal cortex, the ultimate, “enriched” anticipation that governs our polystatic adjustments involves a bridging between the prefrontal cortex and the limbic system’s storing of memories (hippocampus) and triggering of emotions (amygdala). As Daniel Gilbert (2006, p. 14) has suggested, the binding of anxiety (limbic/amygdala) and planning (prefrontal cortex) is engaged primarily through anticipation and thinking about the future (Prospection).

In most cases, the binding enables us to eventually temper the immediate reactions of our Amygdala by means of this more “rational” cortical analysis. The Amygdala “templates” are applied to each incoming stimulus to determine whether or not this stimulus represents a threat to us (or perhaps an opportunity for personal pleasure). I have proposed that Charles Osgood’s Semantic Differential (Osgood, 1957) provides the major criteria for determining threat: good/bad, active/passive, and strong/weak. Many of these Amygdala templates are probably established early in our life or may actually be “hard-wired.” We

might even find the appearance of Carl Jung's archetypes (Jung, 1978).

I would suggest that the amygdala plays an important role not only in the assessment of possible threat but also in the anticipation of pleasure. We look forward to a pleasant interaction with a specific person based on past experiences with this person and input from our psychosocial template. A shot of dopamine might accompany this anticipation—just as it does when the addicted gambler enters the casino or when our lover removes their clothes (or our clothes). There might be no more powerful engagement of the polystatic process than in the anticipation of threat or pleasure. If Carl Jung is correct, this power might often relate not only to the squirt of a feel-good neurochemical but also to the triggering of a deeply held and fundamental archetype related to an evil figure or force, or to a benevolent, seductive, and pleasure-evoking siren.

What occurs when a coach is working with her client on difficult issues that may evoke fear-based templates? How does a coach either bypass or counter the emotional impact of these templates? First, I would advise the coach to be thoughtful, caring and patient. Once a threat template is activated, it can be engaged indiscriminately to include the coach himself. Second, the coach should "appreciate" the fear manifest by his client. "I can certainly appreciate why you might feel anxious at this point, for there are several good reasons to worry about what might occur." The coach can then articulate some of the "good reasons."

The coach, at this point, not only is being empathetic; she also is being a bit rational and objective regarding their client's fears. At this point, the client can themselves become a bit more rational and objective. As a coach, I often increase the "objectivity" by listing the "good reasons" on a flip chart or at least on a piece of paper. It is then possible to identify some of the "good reasons"

not to be quite so fearful and some “good ideas” regarding how best to address these fears. What actions can be taken that reduces the sense of helplessness and hopelessness that often accompanies the activation of the amygdala’s fear-based template.

Third, it is important to recall that the role of a coach does not include exploring the initial source of any emotion. The coach is not a therapist! She is not in the business of somehow “correcting” the emotion; rather, she is in the business of helping her client manage the emotion as it has been elicited in the present situation. This “at-the-moment” managing of emotions can be just as beneficial as an in-depth analysis of the emotions’ etiology.

Stress Ruts

We return to the matter of stress ruts. As already noted, we establish stress ruts when exposed repeatedly to real or imagined threats. These ruts are grooved deeper with each stressful event and lead to permanent structural changes in our nervous/hormonal systems. We become increasingly vulnerable (“trigger-happy”) to stress. “Trigger-happy” somatic templates dominate the polystatic process.

Anticipatory reactions are warped and focused on events and people out in the world who can justify our emotional reactions: “That damned Gregory always gets on my nerves!” “I know that this meeting would be a complete waste of my time!” Most importantly, we must acknowledge that stress-ruts do not go away over time. Permanent links are established between our prefrontal cortex and our limbic system. We must avoid establishing these strong links rather than assuming that these links will go away or that some drug (alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizer) will provide a stress-related roadblock.

How might a coach assist her client in identifying and even seeking to avoid or reduce the impact of these stress ruts? First, the coach can encourage his client to reduce the number of stress-producing events in her life. Obviously, this is not a simple assignment. The stress is often associated with a client's job. As a coach, one can at least suggest that a client set aside their work when at home, take more frequent vacations, or plan for more "coffee breaks" (preferably drinking something other than heavily caffeinated coffee).

It is important to keep in mind the possibility that one's client might be addicted to the "high" that comes from successfully confronting a stressful event—or even (like the gambler) anticipating this success. When addicted to one's own adrenaline, there is a painful process of withdrawal that can be just as severe as that experienced by someone withdrawing from alcohol or an opiate.

The withdrawal from one's own adrenaline will often be manifested as depression or unregulated anger toward other people or toward one's job. As a coach, we can assist our client in anticipating that this withdrawal can occur when they reduce their exposure to stressful situation. It is not unusual, for instance, for an "addicted" workaholic to experience depression rather than relief when finally taking a vacation or spending a weekend with their kids.

Second, as a coach we can encourage our client to engage in activities that help to "burn off" the neurochemicals that have been activated by the stress. Physical exercise is often the best vehicle for this "burn off." Third, there are activities to be engaged that reduce stress impact more gently. These include medication and other forms of mindfulness, as well as a stroll through the park with a dear friend or spending time playing with one's own child or a grandchild.

A fourth coaching approach involves some life planning. “Perhaps you need to find another job.” “Perhaps you should consider retiring at this point in your life.” At an even more basic level, this life planning can involve identification of personal values and life purposes, that are then weighted against the health-related costs associated with ongoing encounters with stressful events: “You want to serve other people, but can’t do so if you are always on edge or if you are no longer healthy enough to provide this service.” “You claim to be placing your family at the top of the list; yet you are always too stressed out at the end of a long workday to spend much time with members of your family.”

Physiological Preparation

Our daily behavior is profoundly impacted by our patterns/decisions regarding sleep, exercise, exposure to light, and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other mind-altering drugs (including caffeine). We not only create stress-ruts but also alter our polystatic anticipations. From a polystatic perspective, we are likely to find that the anticipation of events in our immediate future is saturated with emotions if we are “hyped” up with a strong dose of caffeinated coffee or if we have not slept soundly for several days.

Emotions will overwhelm the cognitive appraisal required to thoughtfully anticipate what is about to happen or the effect our behavior is about to have on the person we are meeting. Our amygdala rules when we are intoxicated. We will focus on meeting our addictive needs when we are entrapped by alcohol or even tobacco.

Other features of our environment, such as care for other people or job performance, are set aside, and we anticipate only how our body is about to feel when we are without a drink or cigarette. It

may be hard to assist other people until they are “physiologically primed” or prepared for this assistance. If we are “trigger-happy,” then we are likely to find it hard to address anxiety-provoking issues in our life. It will be difficult to concentrate on a difficult issue if we continue to focus on meeting an addictive need.

Should a coach insist that her client be physiologically prepared for the challenges of coaching prior to beginning the coaching process? As I previously noted, my colleague, John Preston, a seasoned psychotherapist and best-selling author, has suggested that therapists should insist that their clients moderate their caffeine intake before engaging in any psychotherapeutic engagements. Building on an inventory prepared by John Preston, I have published an inventory for calculating one’s caffeine intake that can be given to one’s coaching clients as they begin their work (Bergquist, 2020). A high score on this inventory suggests that one of the first steps to be taken in the coaching engagement concerns lowering of this score. Our polystatic anticipations and bodily reactions to what we anticipate will be skewed if the caffeine score remains high.

Intimacy and Friendships

Apparently, the neurochemistry associated with the formation of intimate relationships is quite different from the neurochemistry associated with the formation of friendships. In both cases, powerful, chemically based bonds are formed. These bonds are reinforced whenever our intimate or friend appears before us – our body literally “lights up” with neuro-chemical responses – but quite different when the other person is considered a friend rather than an intimate.

Apparently, the neuro-chemical reactions of a patient in psychotherapy (especially when it is long-term and depth oriented) more closely resemble that of an intimate relationship

than that of a friendship – and these neurochemicals are released in both the patient and therapist. The processes called “transference” and “countertransference” may be something more than the replication of patterns and images from previous intimate relationships (including parents). These processes may involve the release of neurochemicals that are the same as those released in our intimate relationships.

From a polystatic perspective, it is as if we are playing a trick on our body when we enter into a psychotherapeutic relationship. We begin to “believe” that this is an intimate relationship (transference) and anticipate that romance is soon to ensue. Our body prepares for this romantic encounter believing what our brain has indicated is about to occur. Conversely, the anticipation in a counselling relationship is that this will more closely resemble a friendship than an intimate relationship. Our body prepares for the friendship, preparing much as it does when we meet with a colleague for lunch.

What about the coaching relationship? Is it more like a friendship than an intimate relationship? What if coaching, like therapy, releases neurochemicals that replicate intimate relationships? What are implications for the profession of coaching? I have already mentioned that we must remind ourselves as professional coaches that we are not psychotherapist; yet our neurobiological system might be declaring that we are doing therapy and are “in love” with our client. Boundaries are suddenly important.

Even if we aren’t “in love” with our client (and they aren’t “in love” with us), there is still the pull toward gaining a strong emotional “hit” from our client. For instance, we now know that the simple act of giving advice will often give us a hit of dopamine. While our client might be reflecting on our advice in a detached and rational manner, this advice is having a much less detached and rational impact on us when we deliver it. We must

be reflective of our own coaching practices (Schön, 1983) and continually determine the real reason why we are offering specific services (advice) to our client.

Taking Action

Emotions provide us with feelings about the world in which we live. They also provide us with the “get-up-and-go” that we need when getting out of bed in the morning or taking decisive action regarding a pressing matter at our worksite. Apparently, as I have already noted, one of the most difficult things for human beings to do (concerning neuro-processing) is to move from thought to action. A large portion of our brain “lights up” when we decide to do something (what in the old days we would call “will power.”)

These are also the areas of the brain that are often impacted by clinical depression. The sense of hopelessness and helplessness that was first articulated by Martin Seligman (1992) aligns with the inability for us to assemble all the parts of our brain needed to move to action. Bringing in the somatic markers of Antonio Damasio (2005), we might speculate that these markers are the points where the many necessary parts of the brain come together when pushing us out of bed or moving us to action regarding that critical decision.

I also suspect from a polystatic perspective that the assemblage of multiple parts of the brain to produce action is often (if not always) experienced as an anticipatory emotion (such as “looking forward” to breakfast or receiving praise for taking “courageous” action). It would seem, given these neuroscience findings, that some of the most difficult (and perhaps most important) work that coaches do is assist their clients in moving from thought to action – in helping them “fire up” these multiple portions of their brain.

Mirror Neurons

Another major finding that may hold major implications for the field of professional coaching concerns the apparent presence of mirror neurons in our neurophysiological system. In a series of controversial research projects and articles, it has been proposed that certain neurons will fire when a person is observing someone else doing a task, and these neurons tend to mimic the neuronal firings of the person being observed. Thus, when we watch someone performing a physical act, mirror neurons will fire that mimic the neuronal firings in the person being observed.

Some of these mirror neurons seem to teach us how to carry out actions by simulating an observed action and creating a neural template/map for how it's done. But much more than this, many scientists believe that mirror neurons help us develop our "theory of mind" regarding other people. This is a theory we develop over time during our youth that enables us to understand the intentions behind the actions taken by others, and possibly the social meaning of their behaviors and emotions. As Rock and Page (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 431) speculate:

Might the firing of neurons when observing the intentional actions of others account for our capacity for empathy and our ability to develop a theory of mind? It does appear that we grasp the experience of others through direct experiences of ourselves, through sensing, not thinking. When someone is feeling sad, we know so partly because we also feel sad.

Furthermore, many scientists believe that the evolution of our mirror neurons probably facilitated the evolution of language and, simultaneously, the evolution of culture. Perhaps, the polystatic capacity to anticipate how another person might wish to know what we are thinking and feeling provides the incentive

for inventing a way (language) to let them know what we are thinking and feeling. Even more broadly, we might want to ensure that the nuances of what we are thinking and feeling have been effectively conveyed and even that the communication of these thoughts and feelings is sustained beyond the one engagement with another person. We create works of art to ensure and sustain the nuances. Cultural artifacts are produced because we anticipate that other people are just as hungry for full appreciation of other people's ideas and emotional states as we are.

Art, music, literature, theater, poetry and architecture are not products of an isolated mind and heart. They are created on behalf of a belief that other people care as much as we do about full appreciation for one another and for the culture we have created. Our mirror neurons may be activating our appreciation of other people and the culture we have created together because we have observed other people appreciating one another and the artistic productions of our culture. It is possible that we will come to appreciate that painting in our national museum because we witness other people appreciating it. Perhaps, we are "charged up" by a powerful speech being delivered by a charismatic speaker in part because we witness other people being "charged up" (whether this speech was delivered by Adolph Hitler at a Nuremberg rally or Martin Luther King on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial).

From a polystatic perspective, our baseline regarding the value of a work of art might be adjusted as we adjust our anticipation of appreciation for this painting or sculpture based on our observation of other people's appreciation for this painting or sculpture. Our psychosocial template(s) devoted to culture might be altered based in part on the reactions of other people to specific cultural artifacts.

Our mirror neurons associated with enjoyment and gratification might be activated as we watch other people look intently at the Van Gogh paintings in the Chicago Art Museum or grasp their sense of awe upon first viewing the Winged Victory of Samothrace at the Louvre in Paris. We are collectively enthralled by a great work of art. Mirror neurons may play an important role in determining what we anticipate when using language to interact with another person or when anticipating our reactions to a great (or not so great) work of art.

Beyond the matter of language and art, mirror neurons influence the fundamental way in which we feel about and interact with other people. Specifically, there are many implications for professional coaching regarding the social neurobiology of mirror neurons. What do mirror neurons have to do with the formation of empathy (both in the client and coach)? To what extent does an effective coach “understand” her client in part because some of her own neurons are firing in ways that mirror the experiences and actions of her client?

Are there ways in which effective coaches help a client acquire a new skill set by observing other people (and even the coach herself) provide leadership, solve problems, make decisions, etc.—and is this skill set acquisition based at least in part on the activation of mirror neurons in the client? We do not yet have clear answers to these questions; however, we can anticipate that the answers to be found in this domain of social neurobiology will provide us with new insights and valuable guidance in our work with clients.

Polystasis as a Self-Organizing System

As we expand on the model of polystasis, it is important to remind ourselves that our brain has no central operating system. Like many complex and dynamic biological systems, our brain is a “self-organizing system” that is led not by some leading part but

rather from the interactions between parts of the system that exist side-by-side (the “neighborhood effect”). Just as a flock of birds or swarm of fish move in a remarkably coordinated manner as a result of each bird’s or fish’s immediate reaction to the bird or fish right next to them, so we find that human systems also move in a remarkably powerful and coordinated manner because each participant in this system tends to immediately react to the movement of the person next to them.

We can observe this often graceful “swarming” of human beings in their secular movement through an airport terminal or in the sacred circumambulatory movement of Islamic worshippers seven times around the Kaaba in Mecca during the celebration of Hajj. These movements, whether sacred or secular, are self-organizing. As those who engage in something called “agent-based modeling” (Wilensky and Rand, 2015) have noted, no choreographer or dictator is coordinating this movement. Each person (“agent”) is navigating in coordination with those agents who are moving (or living) next to them.

Emergence

Furthermore, it seems that surprising reconfigurations of a system often occur as this self-organizing system becomes more complex (often when an additional element is added to the system). Called Emergence, this reconfiguration is represented in the simple (but surprising) emergence of water from the combination of two gases (hydrogen and oxygen), as well as in the profound reconfiguration of various lifeless chemicals, some hot water and other yet-unknown elements to produce something that we call life.

Rock and Page offer the following summary of this radical emergent reconfiguration of complex systems (Rock and Page, pg. 78):

Emergence is possible because agents in complex systems effectively organize themselves rather than being

controlled by some central authority. An example is our immune system, which consists of agents throughout our body that identify, communicate about, and respond to threats to our physical dynamic stability.

The discovery of self-organizing behavior seems to contradict the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which says that systems tend toward disorder, or entropy. . . . A self-organizing system can readily respond to its environment, adapting if possible. According to complexity theorists, this adaptation generally leads to increased complexity in the system.

An important point is being offered here by Rock and Page. It is not only that complex systems tend to be self-organizing (the “neighborhood effect”) and adaptive, but also that the adaptivity of a system tends to increase its complexity.

Tagging, internal models and building blocks

Rock and Page (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 79) turn to the writing of John Holland in identifying the key characteristics of self-organizing system:

- *Tagging*—recognizing, naming, or labeling entities. . .
- *Internal models*—simplified representations of the environment. . . .
- *Building blocks*—components that can be recombined to make new components . . .

I propose that Polystasis operates as a self-organizing system and that Emotions provide the tagging function that enables us to quickly anticipate that something is about to be good or bad, strong or weak, or active or passive (Osgood’s semantic categories). Our somatic and psychosocial templates provide us with internal models that help guide our actions in response to environmental conditions, while our dynamic polystatic-based feedback process

enables us to quickly and frequently recombining the components based on altering baselines and shifting anticipations.

Co-Evolution

Rock and Page (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 79) identify another important feature of complex, self-organizing systems. These systems co-evolve with other systems that they encounter:

Open systems not only adapt to the environment, they also influence the environment by importing and exporting across the system boundary. The environment is changed as a result, and so it also evolves over time as the systems within it evolve.

In the world of Polystasis, this co-evolution dynamic would play out in shifts regarding our anticipation of features in the environment we encounter from moment to moment. Our interactions with this environment bring about changes in this environment, resulting in modifications of our anticipations regarding this environment.

At times, this co-evolution can lead to what I have identified as self-fulfilling prophecies. Changes in the environment are created by our anticipated vision of this environment. We anticipate “hell,” prepare for ‘Hell’ and create “hell” through our actions. Conversely, we anticipate “heaven,” prepare for “heaven” and create “heaven” through our actions.

More often, the self-fulfilling prophecy is not dominating our actions and reactions. Rather, we are attuned to a world “out there” that is operating independently of our anticipations. As a professional coach, we can be of great value in this regard when working with a client who is deeply, emotionally attached to a specific version of their world, and to specific outcomes. We can help them discern what is a world of their own making and what is a world to which they adapt (as a self-organizing system) – and about which they learn for the future.

Self-Referencing

There is one other theme associated with self-organizing systems that Rock and Page introduce (borrowing from the work of Margaret Wheatley). This theme concerns self-referencing. It plays a central role in any human self-organizing system (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 85):

Self-reference is a concept from complexity theory that has particular relevance to leadership. Wheatley suggests that if a leader can identify a core of values and vision, and can refresh this core through dialogue, she or he can reference this in order to maintain personal integrity through difficult times. . . . The principle of self-reference applies also at the organizational level, especially during turbulence. A strong corporate identity can provide independence from environmental change and can serve as a guide to the organization's evolution. When the environment demands a new response, there is a reference point for change.

This use of self-referencing as a way to guide organizational evolution relates directly to the polystatic concept of varying baselines. Anticipation always requires that what is expected in the immediate future is tested against the established baseline. We are frequently altering the baseline as we appraise the shifting environment in which we are operating. This feedback-based process of appraisal and adjustment is self-referencing and, as Wheatley suggests, is often engaged at an organization level by the organization's leadership.

Rock and Page (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 85) propose that:

A well-developed organizational identity includes a strong sense of purpose. When they have a

purpose to refer to, staff members are able to work more independently and effectively.

In alignment with Rock, Page and Wheatley, I would propose that self-referencing and a reliance on self-correcting baselines is critical to the enduring life of any human system.

Collective and personal baseline elements

Embedded in this proposal is an assumption that self-referencing at the broad organizational level enables those working within the system to engage in their own self-directed, polystatic adjustment to the changing environment in which they are operating. Having incorporated the organization's own baseline within their personal baselines, those helping to move an organization forward will be guided by goals and purposes that are shared by all (or at least most) members of the organization.

As a professional coach, we can be particularly effective if we help our clients discern the various levels of their polystatic baseline. Which elements of this baseline come from the sharing of purpose and goals with other members of the organization? Which elements are held at a more personal (or team) level? Having discerned these different elements, our clients will become more discerning of the different sources of environmental feedback that will (and should) influence their baseline.

Some of the environmental changes impact the collective elements of the baseline—elements such as bottom line, productivity, and organization-wide morale. Other changes in the environment produce an impact that hits at more personal elements—elements such as level of personal performance, relationships with co-workers, and personal motivation.

We are likely to find that distal shifts in collective baseline elements are infrequent, given the complex, often turbulent (and even contradictory) way a post/postmodern environment operates at contemporary organizational levels (Bergquist, 2025). Forces in one direction are muting forces operating in a different direction—leading to a standoff. Much more frequent shifts are likely to take place at the proximal, personal level as our emotional reactions to ongoing organizational events require adjustments in our polystatic baseline.

Thus, in many complex post/postmodern organizational settings, we are likely to retain a “hybrid” baseline that is always both changing and remaining surprisingly stable. As a thoughtful and effective coach, it is often of great value for us to help our client identify and learn how to ‘live with’ hybrid baselines that may lead us to contradictory anticipations: “everything is changing. And nothing has really changed!” Very post/postmodern!

Attention Density

The self-referencing process serves one other important function in the creation and maintenance of a self-organizing system. When we have gained a clear sense of both personal and collective purpose, then we have a better sense of what we should focus on in our often-complex environment. In appraising the probable shifts in our immediate environment when determining what to anticipate, it is clear that we can’t focus on everything. We have to be selective in our attention to this environment. This focused attention, in turn, not only influences how we manage our baseline and adjust our anticipations, it also alters the fundamental operations of our brain from moment to moment.

We return to Peter Sterling’s basic description of the allostatic process (Sterling, 2020) from which I derived the polystatic process. As Sterling notes, our brain impacts our body, and our

body, in turn, influences our brain. Rock and Page take it one step further. They propose that our brain assembles information from multiple sources in varying ways when it is specifically attending to one aspect of the environment rather than another aspect. Specifically, selective attention alters the composition of neurological operations in our brain in ways that are congruent with that to which we attend (Rock and Page, 2009, p. 181):

Attention density is the quantity and quality of attention paid to a particular circuit consisting of connections among neurons in the brain. . . . Our brains structure information as mental maps, or circuits, for every word, picture, experience or concept for which we have any associations. One word or idea may trigger responses in visual, emotional, kinesthetic, auditory, or, memory, and language centers.

If we could somehow record the attention density process at any one moment and play it back in slow motion, we would find that information from the environment is being assessed to determine if this environment has shifted in some way from what it was a moment before. If a shift has occurred then the “new” environment is compared to internal information (words, pictures, experiences, concepts) that is organized and presented in part as the psychosocial template and as the self-referencing polystatic baseline.

A quick appraisal is made regarding the extent to which anticipation of what is to occur next in the environment needs to be altered. This very quick process, as Rock and Page note, occurs in a specific neural circuit or tight cluster of neurons in our brain. As they also noted, this circuit may involve centers throughout our neural system. The speed as well as density of this attentive process is exceptional. It is repeated many times at each stage of feedback-based Polystasis. Multiple adjustments and actions follow the initial appraisal.

As a professional coach, we can assist our client in determining where they want to focus their attention. Attention density impacts the way in which we are integrating and “making sense of” those aspects of the environment to which we are attending. We see the world differently depending on the density and varied internal and external properties incorporated in our attention.

What we attend to influences (and often determines) our anticipation of what is about to happen in our world. That to which we attend also influences (and often determines) what action, if any, we take in this world. We attend, anticipate, feel, and act into our immediate future. This is what it means to “lean into our immediate future.” And what it means to “learn into our near future.” This concept of attention density also holds major implications for how we lead into the more distant future.

Given this preliminary description of the neurobiology of Polystasis and anticipation, we bid farewell to our coaching client, leaving them immersed in high-density attention to the task of anticipating what is about to occur in their challenging life, facing VUCA-Plus conditions and a post/postmodern setting.

Conclusions

With my exploration of cognitive and behavioral elements of the polystatic process, and the exploration of the emotional element and accompanying self-organizing neurobiological processes in this chapter, I am ready to conclude my initial perspectives on Polystasis as related to Prospection. However, I recognize that the preliminary perspectives I have offered regarding Polystasis and the psychosocial dynamics of anticipation are still ill-formed and lacking in the precision that a theory or model acquires after many years of articulation, amendment, and application. Still, I hope you find what I have offered to be of value when engaging professional coaching with clients who face the daunting post/postmodern prospect of leaning, learning, and leading into the near and distant future.

I anticipate that not all of what I have written in this book has been clearly shown to yield either insight or application for you as a professional coach. In an attempt to increase the value of this book for you, I have added a final chapter, which (to borrow a musical term) I consider a “Reprise” to the main work I have done in presenting the polystatic perspective and offering my version of Daniel Gilbert’s Prospection.

Section Four

Reprise: Insights and Implications

Chapter Twelve

Coaching of the Dancer [How to Navigate Between the Raindrops]

In bringing this book to a close, I turn my attention specifically to the matter of coaching our clients regarding their dance between the raindrops. Specifically, what does the polystatic model offer as a way to guide this coaching process? And what else can be derived from the analyses offered in this book for those engaged in professional coaching?

VUCA-Plus and Learning

I first address these questions by providing excerpts that summarize the insights and implications found in each of the initial chapters concerning VUCA-Plus.

1. Coaching and consulting services can be appropriately and effectively used in addressing this polarity through encouragement (and even facilitation) of slow, reflective thinking described and advocated by behavioral economists. Daniel Kahneman, in particular, emphasizes the importance of avoiding fast, habitual thinking.

2. Appropriate coaching and consulting services can be requested to address the ambiguity-based polarity. Those providing these services can introduce multiple templates for assessing the nature of any challenging issue. One of these templates concerns the identification and analysis of both the immediate issue (the figure) and the context within which this issue is situated (the ground). A second template concerns the distance from which a specific issue is being addressed. It should be examined close up (as an

intimate portrait) (proximal perspective) and at a distance (as a broad landscape) (distal perspective).

3. The third template involves temporal distance. The issue should be examined as it is currently being experienced (present time) and as it will probably be (or could be) present at some point ahead of us (future time). The polarity of engagement and tolerance is managed when each of these three templates is applied to the analysis of an important issue. The convening issue can be viewed from multiple perspectives – which allows for both immediate engagement and tolerance of certain immediate circumstances as well as longer-term and “bigger picture” engagement and tolerance.

4. Effective learning becomes recursive and directed toward (leaning toward) the future. This type and level of learning is challenging. Furthermore, it is hard to determine which changes to make and how best to learn about them. These processes are difficult to deploy while still navigating the current white-water world of post/postmodernism. An expert on white water navigation might join us in the kayak (without tipping it over!). They can help us manage the real-time interplay between centering and forethought. It takes a particularly skillful coach or consultant who is herself both centered and forethinking if she is to be of benefit in the management of this dynamic, turbulent polarity.

5. An analysis could be done in determining the roles that other people play as sources of support. Having identified a list of 10 to 15 people who provide us with support, we can (like Kelly) identify how they are similar to and different from one another. With this analysis in place, we can construct our own personal list of support categories – and determine how they are similar to or different from the lists I have offered and Waldinger and Schulz have offered. If we find that our list does not include all of those on the two lists offered in this book, then it might be time to look for differing kinds of support from other people in our life.

Perhaps we need to find a fun-loving friend during stressful periods. Or we might look for the gentle challenger or someone who helps us gain a better sense of who we are and what we should be doing (perhaps countering the challenging conditions of VUCA-Plus).

6. A professional coach can be of valuable assistance in not only helping us identify sources of support, but also in the analysis of the nature of support that is available (perhaps helping with a Kelly Role Construct analysis). It is critical that a coach serve this function when they are about to close out the coaching engagement. They should leave the client with support resources having been identified and analyzed at the end of the coaching assignment—especially if they have been the primary source of support for their client.

Character and Defense

In the first section of this book, I note that it is not easy living with the troubling ambiguity of post/postmodernism and the challenging conditions of VUCA-Plus. The world around us always seems to be raining on us with volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction. We get saturated navigating through the rainstorm of post/postmodernism.

There seems to be no other alternative than to trudge through the Rain. We might be wearing a raincoat—engaging in such defensive maneuvers, such as denial or distortion, to protect our psyche. Perhaps we are opening an umbrella, hoping that this will protect us from the VUCA-Plus rain. We search for and perhaps find serenity while huddling up under our umbrella or a convenient alcove. However, we know that our mid-21st-century fate requires that we eventually get wet and a bit weary in trudging through the rain. At the very least, we declare, this “builds character.” But at what cost?

I now summarize the highlights of what was written in the second section of this book. You might want to think of this Reprise as a set of Cliff Notes, like the ones that were commonly available to accompany our required reading when attending college. In this case, however, there will be no test awaiting you—other than the test that comes with considering ways in which to apply the insights and implications identified in this section of the book about raindrops and character.

Energy, Anxiety, and Stress

I begin with highlights to be extracted from Chapter Four. Members of the treatment team I have assembled begin to consider the pathology of the Tin Man—particularly his rusted armor and missing heart.

1. Our Tin Man believes that he has no heart—and as a result fears that he is unable to care deeply about anyone or anything. Almost immediately, we recognize that the Tin Man does have a heart. However, his heart seems to be encased in restrictive armor. There is an issue of denial or an even deeper failure to acknowledge what is hidden away. The Tin Man banged on his chest. It seemed to be empty. Yet he does have a heart. He might have to prove to himself that he has a heart by engaging in the fulfillment of some “heart-felt” mission.

2. While contemporary men and women may not be encased in physical armor, they can be “encased” in a set of psychological conditions that block the flow of that energy that is required for physical movement to take place.

3. A psychological conception of energy directly concerns the nature of attention—that which directs our senses to what is interesting and important. What is it that we should immediately process? Where do we look for threats as well as opportunities? We can readily detect this attention and the setting of priorities in the behavior of people we have observed. This is the “cognitive” dimension of Energy. There are also the affective and motoric

dimensions of Energy. It seems that Energy has often been equated to Emotional intensity. Our energy is “burning” in us and is on display to other people in our behavior. This display of energy is often manifest in our physical activity. We are converting biochemical energy to muscular energy (and movement). This is the process of “burning” the stored-up calories in our body.

4. As my colleague, John Preston, has noted, the decision to do something (take action) involves many parts of the brain. “Will-power”, in other words, is quite challenging to engage. People who are depressed often are unable to link together all of the cortical functions need to take action.

5. Energy impacts on critical points of Decision in our lives. High levels of accumulated energy are often needed to complete an important task. However, especially-high levels of energy (especially when blocked) can lead to dithering (moving back and forth quickly) and polarization (bigger time/bigger picture swinging back and forth). Energy engages the activity; however, the activity is ill-directed and filled with ambivalence. Like the energy found in Lightning, there are sporadic flashes of Energy in the actions taken by human beings. Energy is being converted to action; however, this action is neither consistent nor productive.

6. Feldenkrais reveals two major ways in which anxiety is produced and experienced by each of us. Feldenkrais’s two sources relate to the infantile fear of falling and the lifelong failure to complete an act that would thwart a threatening attack.

7. There is much that can be formulated regarding the way in which a fearful parent might find their fear transferred to their child when the child is being held. A nervous cradling of the child can lead to their fear that they will be dropped and that their parents’ instability could easily lead to an increase in the child’s own sense of insecurity. There may be fear not only of physically being dropped, but also of being dropped emotionally.

8.Martin Seligman would suggest that we feel powerless and hopeless. Furthermore, there is no one else coming to our rescue or helping us in the future to avoid the attack. The world appears to be quite hostile. We are passive recipients of whatever the punishing world has to offer us. This becomes the "perfect storm" for a lingering trauma and accompanying state of lingering anxiety. Anxiety, in turn, produces physical and mental health impairment.

9.For Reich, the fear of punishment often shows up as shyness or childhood phobias, which, in turn, create the armament. Reich proposes at a deep level that ambivalence corresponds to the pull between instincts and reality. A vacillation between strivings toward hate and strivings toward love resides, ultimately, at a much deeper level.

10.When any animal is responding to "real" predators, the response system ("flight" or "fight") works perfectly. The body can handle the temporary strain of the frightening Savannah. That is why zebras don't get ulcers--they are frightened by real lions and their physiological system knows how to adjust to the strain of fleeing from the lion. Humans seem to differ from zebras (and many other animals) in that we do get ulcers and many other stress-related illnesses.

There appear to be two fundamental reasons why we are so vulnerable to stress. The first reason is that humans tend to use a strategy other than fight or flight when addressing the challenge of an impending attack by a lion. It is the aforementioned strategy of freezing. We stop in our tracks and try to remain motionless and silent. This strategy of freezing is the one that is likely to give us the most trouble in our current environment.

11.There are two ways in which we freeze. First, we freeze when we are physically hurt. This freezing activates the healing functions of our body (the parasympathetic system). If one is about to lose a significant amount of blood, then fainting may

reduce blood loss. The second type of freeze is the one we witness with the “deer in the headlights” phenomenon. We see danger and go into immediate immobilization. We are aroused (sympathetic system), but we stay still to avoid the predator rather than either fight or flee. We hold ourselves motionless, hoping not to be seen.

When facing imagined lions, we find that we can only deploy a freeze pattern and are unable, ever, to either fight or flee. We are constantly aroused and yet are frozen in inaction. This stress gets translated into a host of painful mechanisms (anger, depression, or panic attacks). We learn to freeze and hold on. We never let go.

The energy we have generated in preparation for the lion never is released into either fight or flight. Sapolsky proposes that people get ulcers because they can imagine lions that come in many forms. While our mind knows that these lions don't really exist, our body doesn't. It prepares for the fight, flight or freeze, turns off the digestive system, begins to pump activating hormones into our body, and ensures that we don't fall asleep while running away from or seeking to overcome the lion.

12. There appear to be three possible reasons why we as humans tend to wound ourselves. Each reason holds significant implications with regard to character armor and the encased heart. First, humans may see more imagined lions than do other animals. Perhaps other animals are more selective about what they imagine. There is a second possible explanation: our image of lions may be more vivid than is the case with the images generated by other animals. We know how to make the imagined predator quite menacing, and we can flesh out this image—extending it far into the future and far out in physical space.

There is a third possible reason why we as humans wound ourselves and get ulcers—and other animals with imagination do not. Other animals may have better ways of coping with the resulting stress. Obviously, some animals cope with imaginary

threats by either seeking to fight against these threats or by running away from the imagined threats. They don't just freeze in the face of the imagined threat. Fight and flight strategies mobilize the arousal system; the actual physical fleeing or fighting drains it.

Furthermore, in the case of the fight strategy, there is an immediate testing of the threat's reality. If you begin to fight the imaginary lion, you are likely to discover very soon that it is imaginary. Conversely, if you either flee from or stand motionless in the face of the imaginary lion, you will never discover that it isn't real.

13. Stress has both a specific and a general impact on human physiology. Stress ultimately changes every organ in the human body. Stress is systemic, not specific. However, stress also has a very focused physiological impact on specific organs. For each of us, certain organs are uniquely sensitive to stress, and this specific profile of sensitivity creates unique patterns of personality, abnormality, and illness.

Prior to the 20th century and the introduction of such analgesics as aspirin in Western medicine, pain was assigned a specific meaning by the culture in which the sufferer lived. There was no way to avoid the pain if we were injured or ill; therefore, we tried to assign some value or meaning to the pain, and our society helped out by providing a culturally based explanation.

The pain may have signified a message from God indicating that we have committed an evil act. The pain might instead be a statement from God that we have been chosen to serve other people or to suffer for other people. Alternatively, the pain might be related to a specific disposition or view of life (we have a "healthy" or "unhealthy" attitude). At the very least, the pain indicated that we were sick or injured and thus drove us to seek a cure. Without a cure, there was continuing pain.

Today, most people just want the pain to go away. They are less interested in the cure since they can be relieved of pain without being cured. An important tension is created at this point. The physician or therapist often holds a different agenda from the patient: the physician or therapist is interested in a cure, while the patient is interested in relief from the painful symptoms. Therefore, given that pain no longer has any meaning, and we seek primarily to relieve the pain, the stress associated with imagining a lion has a double impact. We not only experience the stress associated with the imagined lion—we also try desperately to alleviate the pain that is associated with this stress.

14. It seems that the amygdala sets up primitive templates that serve as a mechanism for matching the threat and non-threat appraisals. Where do these templates come from? Are they wired in? Could Carl Jung be correct when he suggested that there are certain archetypes that we have inherited from our ancestors?

15. When being addressed in a psychotherapeutic session, the emerging anxiety is contained through the establishment of therapeutic ground rules and a compassionate and nonjudgmental stance taken by the therapist. Put simply, the psychotherapeutic session becomes a safe place where a patient can reveal anxiety-filled elements of their own thoughts and actions that they might consider “unacceptable” or at least alien to their own self-image.

16. Based on what Sapolsky has taught us, we can first propose that our heart is shielded from reality. We easily imagined lions. Second, the shield is not adequate to protect us from these lions. The shield is much too rigid for us to ever fight the lion. Furthermore, the shield is too heavy for us to escape the lion. We suggest that the shield can do nothing more, as a rigid and heavy structure, then help us stay in place. Laden with armor, we can only freeze—like the rodents do in Africa. However, the rodents can “shake off” the freeze, but humans in our shields just stand there frozen, with our heart racing away. The heart, in turn, can

do nothing in its frozen state except wrought damage to other parts of the human organization, as well as inflict damage on itself.

17. The role of touch is critical. It is through touch that we most effectively convey our caring about another person and even our empathy for the pain they are experiencing. Some health care workers are allowed to touch their patients/clients? Others are not. The most important healing is often done by those who can touch.

18. Movement provides important access to the heart. Feldenkrais (with Robert Sapolsky's support) will propose that the Tin Man finds his heart by taking action (along with Dorothy, Scarecrow, and the Lion) against the wicked witch. It is through ongoing action that one overcomes the trauma (which is sustained because nothing is being done to complete the act of defending against the abuse or finding retribution against the source of abuse. We are awakening the tiger.

Armor, Touch, and Movement

I turn now to Chapter Five and considerations of the Tin Man's treatment by members of the team I have assembled. Attention is focused in particular on the Tin Man's armor.

1. Processing of the external environment and shifting from one part of the brain to another part requires that all elements of the brain are involved. A holistic-operating brain is required whatever the stage of evolution to be found in any living species—thought this holism is particularly important in the life of an evolved species such as the human being who has a choice between various states of neural and behavioral freedom. As “evolved” humans we can choose to leave the forest, though only if we recognize the challenges we will face as well as the complex neural processing required in these changing and challenging environments.

2.Character, as Reich uses the term, is equivalent to what today we call “personality.” We now tend to use the term “character” when describing the presence or absence of virtue in the decisions being made and actions taken by someone. For Reich, it is not a matter of virtue—it is much more a matter of the dynamics operating inside people who are quite rigid in their behavior as well as their values and perspectives on life. To the extent that “virtue” is a part of Reich’s “character armor” it is a virtue that is resistant to any change and is applied indiscriminately (and often with passion and a touch of vengeance) in all situations.

3.Perhaps the most important question to ask when seeking to treat the rigidifying effects of armor is to determine if the armor in one’s client or patient can readily be removed or if it remains firmly (and resistantly) in place. Can the armor worn during battle be taken off when the battle is no longer being waged? If this is the case, then the armor can be considered a temporary and situationally based *State* of one’s personality. Is the armor, instead, being worn even at home—long after the war is no longer being waged (and lions have long since left the savannah). Reich’s character armor is bound up in a highly resistant psychic formation. It is a *Trait* that contains childhood memories and fears that are never forgotten or resolved. It is a trait that requires constant vigilance against powerful, ever-present instinctual drives and impulses.

4.Sometimes, we see armor that people display in quite visible ways. They are wearing uniforms and are often engaged in roles that relate to safety and life-and-death issues. They are police officers, firemen, members of the military, physicians, and judges. We want to see them in uniform and are at least mildly disconcerted when they are in “civilian” clothes. There is even the armor of the C-Suite. The men are “required” to wear a coat and tie. There are comparable tailored dresses or pantsuits for female execs. It is only the renegade software executive of Silicon Valley who can wear a polo shirt and tan pants.

Nowadays, there is the “anything goes” attire when working at home and communicating via Zoom. The armor of those providing safety and treatment, as well as those in the C-Suite, seems in one sense to be very appropriate and justified: we want these uniformed men and women to be error-free. They must at least pretend to be error-free. Better yet, wearing the armor, they come to believe themselves that their decisions and actions are error-free.

5. The impostor exists and is successful because other people go along with the false reality. In the world of Oz, it is only the dog, Toto, who points out the cowardly ways of the Lion as well as the deception of the Wizard. Without Toto’s hold on reality, there is collusion between the impostor and his/her “audience.” Kets de Vries notes that we want to believe that the impostor is the real person. It is important (even critical) that this person is skillful, knowledgeable, kind, or whatever we wish him/her to be. Just as we want policemen to be honest, physicians to be knowledgeable and CEO’s to be skillful, so we want the impostor to be the real thing.

6. The lack of consciousness comes not from a repression of primitive impulses, but rather from a relegation of many functions and movements to our primitive brain. We don’t block the movement of energy in our body as a result of anxiety; rather, we direct some of this energy to the “automatic” but essential life-sustaining functions of our body. Just as the free flow of energy requires that we “unfreeze” our psychic functions, so the proper functioning of our physical body requires that energy is free flowing and not “frozen” in place. Feldenkrais provides the oil that frees the Tin Man to move and join the journey to Oz. Reich provides the psychic insights that enables the Tin Man to find his heart in Oz.

7. The “authority” to Touch another person is very important regarding all manner of social interactions. We touch other people by shaking their hand, giving them a hug, or simply touching

their hand or shoulder. In recent years the matter of touch has taken on greater significance. Who can we touch and who can't we touch? In what way, if any, can we touch other people? Politicians are allowed (even encouraged) to shake hands and perhaps a pat on the back and a hug for those who are close associates—but nothing more (as we know from some actual or threatened scandals). Gender, age and nature of relationship play a critical role. Social norms, conventions and even legal rules inform our touching behavior.

8. The most obvious way in which to make a connection between physical functions and bodily movements as they might influence thought is to consider their impact not on the slow, deliberative thinking that is based primarily in the pre-frontal cortex, but in the fast, often habitual thinking that is based primarily in our limbic system (particularly the amygdala). Given that the limbic system is more closely tied to the reptilian brain, it is easier to speculate that the fast thinking (portrayed by Daniel Kahneman) is more vulnerable to "bodily" influences than is slow thinking. Kahneman focuses in particular on the heuristics that form the base for fast thinking.

Heuristics, such as relying on the latest information we have received or looking at the world in the same way as most other people, will mostly play a central role if we are tired, distracted, or anxious. These conditions are all related to bodily functions. We might push it even further. Are there "bodily heuristics"? Do we move beyond the knee-jerk reaction when we respond automatically (and autonomically) to a particular state of body?

Are there some fundamental heuristics associated with our posture. Just as character armor may influence the way in which we think and feel about ourselves and our world, so our posture (viewed from Feldenkrais' holistic perspective) might help to determine or at least frame the way in which we think about ourselves and our world. Perhaps there is a heuristic associated

with feeling in or out of “alignment” or a heuristic associated with being “in touch” or “out of touch” with an idea or feeling.

9. Manfred Kets de Vries proposes that leaders are often addressing the vulnerability of those working with them, as well as their own vulnerability. The more vulnerable we are in any specific situation, the more challenged is our own psychological equilibrium. In seeking to re-establish equilibrium, we are likely to engage in splitting (separating the world into clear cut “goods” and “bads”), projection (ascribing to other people what we reject in ourselves), or denial (refusing to acknowledge what is going on inside ourselves or in our environment). These are all primitive defensive routines that rigidify our persona and block the movement of energy in our body. We arm ourselves on behalf of our vulnerability.

10. When we are addressing the needs of women and men who face the challenge of leadership or are in the business of providing safety and ensuring equity in our troubled society, we must recognize that sometimes they must clad themselves with armor, cloak themselves with a persona, or confront their own sense of being an impostor who might soon be exposed. They must think twice about the actions they take and how these actions can help to relieve the inevitable anxiety that they experience. All of this is inevitable—but it need not be habitual. We should all check on our own armor, our restricted movement, our persona, and our impostor fears. Are we vulnerable? Are we stuck? Do we know when to move and where to go? Are we immune or perhaps frozen in place? Answers are required.

Movement, Thoughts, and Feelings

In Chapter Six, we focus on the treatment of our Tin Man, with a focus placed on Reich and Feldenkrais’s exploration of movement in relationship with thoughts and feelings. We begin with a reflection on the challenge faced by our tin man.

1.Apparently, the Tin Man had previously been faced with the challenge of potential rusting and had an oil can nearby to prevent getting frozen in place. The Tin Man asked Dorothy (and the Scarecrow) to squirt some oil into his mouth. He could then talk and immediately asked Dorothy and the Scarecrow to squirt oil in his joints so that he could begin to move and could tell them how he got into this predicament. Apparently, the Tin Man was caught off guard when the rain suddenly poured down. He immediately rusted in place and couldn't grab the oil can and lubricate his joints.

How did the Tin Man got rusted so fast? We might also notice that no rust was apparent on the shiny armor worn by the Tin Man. What actually kept the Tin Man from moving? While we are pondering this question regarding the real cause, we can follow the Tin Man's narrative. The Tin Man not only told Dorothy and the Scarecrow about how he got frozen in place—he also told them about his very sad condition of having no heart. He confirmed this condition by banging on his own empty chest.

2.A clear and positive self-image is the key to Tin Man's commitment to the welfare of his colleagues and to his upcoming courage and determination in traveling to Oz. It is when the Tin Man is feeling good about himself and his ability to be of assistance to other people that he is mobilized and empowered. There is no need for the deep analysis offered by Wilhelm Reich. A bit of oiling of the armor and addressing other elements of physical movement and balance can do the trick.

3.George Klein proposed that there is often a stream of images, thoughts, and feelings that is coursing through our head and body at any one point in time. This stream resides below the level of consciousness and is labeled "peremptory" by Klein because it can demand attention and infuse our conscious thought with new, compelling content. Peremptory ideation might be related to (or even be a determinant of) our image of self. Self-images help to organize our actions. The self-image at any one point in time

could very well be a peremptory ideation—or at least a part of or outcome of this ideation.

Our sense of self is influenced by and perhaps carried by an image, thought and/or feeling from some occasion in our past life. We are embarrassed by some trivial error because this error has triggered a peremptory ideation that picks up instances of past errors and the feelings associated with these errors. Our self-image is temporarily tarnished.

This negative self-image is manifest in our hunched-over back, our shallow breathing, and our dropping facial muscles. We look “down in the mouth.” Other people notice this and relate to us as if we were bruised and battered. In appearing to be embarrassed and defeated, we actually become that much more embarrassed and feel that much more defeated. A tightly looped, integrative mind-body cycle of negativity is engaged and not easily disrupted or changed.

4. The key to ongoing, sustained achievement in an organization is often to be found in the “common” narratives of everyday successful operations in an organization. Sometimes described as the “vernacular” work of the soul, these daily operations are often taken for granted, or they become the subject of “planned change” in the organization. The artificial patterns of behavior that are inserted into an organization without respect to the organization’s sustaining culture can prove counterproductive and even toxic. Stability and appreciation are often of greater value than change and “improvement. Feldenkrais would probably enjoy holding hands with the practitioners of appreciative inquiry and those practitioners who seek to find and support the best practices operating at the present time in an organization—it is about creating an “appreciative organization.”

5. If our nervous system is healthy, then it will self-organize the entire body in an appropriate manner. As in the case of an appreciative perspective regarding organizational functioning,

the adjustments being made are self-reinforcing. The nervous system becomes healthy because the body is moving in a natural way. The body moves more naturally and in a self-organizing manner because the nervous system is healthy. Similarly, individual behaviors and patterns of behaviors that are appreciated are likely not only to occur more frequently but also in a more skillful manner. As I have already noted, Carl Rogers suggested that people are least likely to change and improve if they are being asked to change. They are most likely to change and improve when they have received positive regard--what I would identify as appreciation.

6. Most importantly, as both Reich and Feldenkrais have stressed, there is an important interdependency and even integration of the mind and body. Even more specifically, thoughts and anxiety are interwoven. We are not anxious until we think about (envision) something, and don't effectively reduce anxiety without doing some important thinking. Furthermore, this must be slow thinking. Fast thinking only amplifies anxiety. Slow thinking allows for the metabolism of anxiety. Sapolksy's imaginary lions come center stage in this strategy of reflection and engagement. We must help our armored client by challenging their assumptions about the attacking lion.

First, what is the nature of the attacking lions (whether they are real or imagined)? Are the lions coming from outside us or from inside us? This inquiry helps us (and our client) identify a potential paranoid stance. The enemy from within becomes the enemy from outside. We then ask: Are there really lions? This helps us (and our client) identify a potential projective stance. The powerful forces operating within us are projected outward. The "internal lion" is quite scary. It can be a source of internal power. Internal power is threatening, whether it is available for the benefit of the person holding this power or for this person's determination. Internal power incurs responsibility and a need for vision and purpose.

7.What is the purpose of the armor (persona)? How does it help people with whom you relate in your role: (1) Their ability to readily identify your role (particularly important under conditions of stress and the need for rapid response), (2) Their sense of safety in relating to you and asking for your assistance (recognizing your expertise or carefully defined role) and/or (3) Their assumption that you will act in a predictable manner (no room for surprise under conditions of stress and the need for rapid response). When can you take off your armor (persona)? In what setting? With what people (your family, friends, peers in the same role)? What are the “secondary gains” associated with this armor/persona: (1) Status, (2) Personal security, (3) Job security, (4) Hide what is “really going on” inside.

8.Yes, the forest might be frightening and, yes, there might be some danger inherent in the journey with his colleagues to the Emerald City. However, the feelings associated with a liberated body are wonderful. The Tin Man will acquire a spatial and temporal perspective that extends far beyond his armored body and confining forest. Most importantly, the movement of his body on behalf of serving his newfound friends provides the Tin Man with a deep abiding purpose in his life.

9.Let’s move the challenge of treating character armor up a notch. How do we work with an impostor? Perhaps we are more in the role of helping our client identify impostors in their life or their own fears of being an impostor? Does the impostor really want to abandon their role? The secondary gains can be quite compelling. Are they growing tired of being the impostor or have they begun to believe their own lie and can now live comfortably with their false self? Reality and the “truth” can get quite confusing.

10.Perhaps a “personal SWOT analysis” is appropriate. What really are your impostor-client’s strengths (that can be truthfully acknowledged and engaged) and what are the weaknesses that this client should acknowledge (as a first step toward moving into a more authentic role). And to whom should the impostor-client

first convey this more realistic analysis of strengths and weaknesses?

11.What about the environment in which the impostor is working? Given that the impostor is often quite narcissistic, it might require quite a bit of “heavy lifting” for us to bring the realistic threats (as well as realistic opportunities) to the attention of our client. The impostor might be quite gifted with regard to opportunities. However, even here we are likely to find both false opportunities and “botched” opportunities – from which one’s client can learn (with our help).

12.We have one other suggestion that we have gained from observing our cowardly lion and wizard. Perhaps we can advise our client to engage the “real” world in a manner that makes full use of our imposter’s actual skills and talents. If nothing else, our imposter knows how to “sell” themselves and their ideas. Perhaps our client can become an effective advocate for some important cause.

13.There is one other important lesson learned by Dorothy (and perhaps also the Scarecrow and Tin Man). The support of other people is needed when we embark on a major journey of discovery and self-renewal. We are truly returning to “home” when that home is filled with people in our life who are appreciative and supportive of our journey in a variety of ways.

Healing, Support, and Guidance

I conclude this second section of the book with a chapter that focuses on the best ways in which to oil the armor and heal the heart. Here are excerpts from this chapter. I begin by turning back to the story of the Tin Man and his colleagues in Oz.

1.Like Dorothy and the other characters of Oz, the Tin Man found his heart as it beat in response to the remarkable care and commitment found in his relationships with Dorothy, the Scarecrow, Cowardly Lion, and even Toto. Scarecrow offered

thoughtful analyses under conditions of stress and crisis. The Cowardly Lion offered resolve and action (if reluctantly) in meeting the threat of winged monkeys and an evil Witch. The Tin Man received unconditional love and support from Dorothy and Toto. This was pretty much everything that the Tin Man needed (other than his own internal strength and resources).

2.I specifically focus on ways we can manage the challenges and accompanying stress of contemporary times – while fulfilling our own needs and life purposes (healing our heart). All of this must take place in a post/postmodern world that is becoming increasingly saturated with VUCA-Plus. There may not be a wicked witch trying to mess with us; however, VUCA-Plus conditions can be very witch-like and threatening. Given these VUCA-Plus conditions, we must prepare for life and work changes. This means acknowledging the level and rate of change that is taking place and preparing for the physical and mental challenges associated with this change

3.Have there been any other important transitions in your life this past year that were not included on this list? What score would you give these changes for yourself? Relative to the assigned scores, which of the transitions do you think have been most difficult for you? Which has been easiest? Why? If you were to relive this past year, which of these transitions would you like to avoid? Which transitions would you like to have experienced that did not occur? Some of the transitions on the original list are generally quite positive for most people. Which of the transitions that have occurred for you this past year have been most positive? Which have been the most negative? Have both types of transitions been stressful for you? Which type was most stressful?

4.Have the transitions tended to be too fast or too slow? Why? Have certain types of events tended to precede or even precipitate major transitions? What have been the typical consequences of major life transitions? What have been the immediate impacts?

What about the impacts after one year? Physical illness? Health? Depression? Exhilaration? New relationships? The termination of old relationships? Have you consistently and consciously taken any specific actions to make these transitions more satisfying? What actions?

5. Ceremony serves two important functions in helping people manage the post/postmodern setting, the VUCA-Plus challenges, and major life transitions. First, it helps anticipate the stress that is associated with the challenges and transitions. The ceremony serves as a signal, formally telling us that some intensive times are immediately ahead. Second, the ceremony indicates that other people care about this transition and are available for support in this endeavor. In a society that seems to be increasingly less ceremonial, we must plan for our own ceremonies.

6. Most people who successfully address post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges, while effectively managing a major life transition, describe the critical role played by a support group. Several people have served them in a variety of functions: the *nurturer* helps us feel better or stronger; the *friend* empathizes with our predicament and often provides a humorous perspective; the *expert* provides important information to help us implement, accelerate or slow a transition; the *clarifier* helps us better understand the current and probable future nature of the transition; the *predictor*, someone (with relevant expertise) who is willing to let us know what the consequences would be if certain decisions are made about the transition; and the *challenger* who forces us to reexamine our actions, values or expectations. Usually, people are more in need of the nurturer if the transition is particularly rapid and in need of the challenger if the transition is too slow.

7. Waldinger and Schulz identify people who offer safety and security, along with those who promote learning and growth. Other members of the support group would provide emotional

closeness and be people in whom we can confide. Another element of support comes from those who can help us identify and affirm our unique identity and can share experiences with us (so that we discover how we are alike and how we are different from other people in our life).

8.Having identified a list of 10 to 15 people who provide us with support, we can identify how they are similar to and different from one another. With this analysis in place, we can construct our own personal list of support categories—and determine how they are similar to or different from the lists I have offered and Waldinger and Schulz have offered.

9.If a series of small change projects are identified, it is possible to initiate a second project when the first encounters significant resistance. Small projects can also be sequenced in a way that will meet current needs and concerns, while also being responsive over the long run to more basic and far-reaching problems.

10.Given the tendency of many people who are experiencing stressful transitions to focus intensely on the change, it is essential that other roles, goals, and activities be reinforced as salient features of the person's or organization's life.

11.Avoid a specific stressful situation in the future. Participate in activities that reduce stress once it has occurred, like practicing mindfulness, centering, and slower, even breathing. Identify "sanctuaries": settings and times when and where one can relax and "re-create" (allowing the body to recover from the stress and resulting physiological impact). Obtain a good night's sleep (restorative stages of sleep take place only under conditions of deep and sustained relaxation). Avoid excessive use of substances (including alcohol) that may temporarily elevate mood but can soon lead to depression.

12.Stress ruts continue to grow deeper with each stressful event. We become increasingly "trigger-happy," and these ruts are

permanent. They don't go away when we finally decide to lead a less stressful life.

13. We should try to expose ourselves to at least 15 minutes of sunlight each day. This exposure should come through our eyes (no sunglasses), though obviously we should not look directly toward the sun and should wear appropriate clothing (including a hat) and sunblock lotion. When we are preparing for an event that could be quite stressful, we should take a brief walk outdoors. It helps to reduce the stress and can be very calming (especially if the setting is beautiful and peaceful, and if fresh air is abundant).

14. Our bodies "burn up" with the excessive chemicals that don't get burned off when we remain frozen. We can educate ourselves about the destructive effect of "frozen behavior," and we can get some exercise—especially after being exposed to real, potential, or imagined threats.

15. We all need to "cocoon" sometimes and bow out of the social "rat race." However, sustained isolation produces depression and increases stress.

16. Many years ago, Robert Bellah and his colleagues wrote about "lifestyle enclaves." These are the new communities in 21st-century societies. These are social networks made up of people with similar hobbies, interests, values, and life purposes.

17. The Wizard might have been a huckster and charlatan, but he seemed to know something about the spirit and soul of those people with whom he interacted. The emerald glow of Oz conveyed hope and healing—outcomes that would bless the life each of us is now living in a post/postmodern world of VUCA-Plus.

Anticipation and Agility

From the first chapters on Prospection, I excerpt the following Insights and Implications. Making use of these insights and

implications, we can assist ourselves and our clients in dancing between the raindrops of post-/postmodernism and VUCA-Plus.

Perfect Storm and Valence

1.An effective professional coach will assist their client in identifying the assumptions made and the heuristics applied under specific conditions of anticipation. Many conditions in mid-21st-century life hold the potential of threat. It is in these conditions and at these moments that our client must be particularly vigilant and reflective. We encourage our clients to ask themselves: Is this situation really like the last one? Can I do a better job this time in coping with this challenging situation? I might have to consider differing points of view. Is this genuinely threatening, or am I imagining that it is threatening?

2.A perfect physiological storm takes place when our coaching client anticipates a threat. Adrenaline is coursing through their veins and sustaining their sympathetic state of arousal. Yet, our client often does nothing about draining off this energizing system. They remain in a sympathetic state. Their polystatic process is messed up, with sustained energizing of a body that remains immobile. Our client continues to anticipate the lion. This being the case, they continue to activate their body in preparation for a fight with or flight from the lion. They even reset their polystatic baseline. The dial is now set on the survival mode—as are their psychosocial and somatic templates. As Peter Sterling has noted, it isn't our client's body that is at fault. It is just doing, appropriately, what their imagination is telling them is the “reality” to which they must respond.

3.The most important (and often dramatic) change that can occur with a coaching client involves a shift in valence from positive to negative anticipation or from negative to positive. The baseline changes abruptly, as does the level and type of physiological arousal. Positive anticipation is often accompanied by a parasympathetic state. A very exciting positive anticipation

(especially one involving action) can produce a sympathetic state; yet, even in this sympathetic state, our client is likely to obtain a squirt of dopamine when anticipating great outcomes (such as the gambler looking forward to positive results at the poker table). It is much more likely that the sympathetic system is aroused when anticipating a negative event, situation, or outcome. Whether anticipating a real or imagined lion, our body prepares for fight, flight, or freeze.

4. The strength (size) of a positive anticipation by our coaching client impacts the amount of dopamine being injected into their bloodstream. Do they imagine a small jackpot or a bonanza? Are they going to get a new, challenging job assignment or a major promotion at work? Either of these could shift our client to the sympathetic system; however, the major promotion might produce a bigger “high.” With the major promotion, there also might be a shift in our client’s psychosocial template, though this shift is likely to be gradual as they slowly embrace an altered perspective on their organization and their role and responsibility in this organization.

5. What if our client anticipates an event that they expect to be extended over time or a setting in which they are likely to dwell for a “lifetime” (or at least a few months)? Long-duration anticipations will inevitably require a major shift in our client’s polystatic baseline or even their psychosocial template. The challenge is one of sustaining attention to this event or setting over the long term. As human beings, we are skilled in “adapting” to changing conditions and soon begin taking them for granted.

Personality and Anticipation

1. There are many different models of personality types. Each of these comes with differing anticipations based on the specific personality (or character) being considered. One of the oldest and most respected models is the Enneagram. Our enneagram type leads us to differing anticipations. At the extreme, each

Enneagram type anticipates a large amount of something (positive) or the complete lack of this something (negative). What this something is differs for each type.

2. The nine Enneagram types tend to cluster in several threes that relate to interpersonal feeling and the anticipation of specific types of interpersonal relationships. These feelings are Fear, Anger, and Shame. A psychosocial template that is saturated with feelings of fear will look quite different from one saturated with anger or shame. Baselines that focus on the state of fear in one's psyche will produce anticipations that differ significantly from baselines primarily concerned with anger or shame. Interpersonal relationships that are dominated by concerns regarding the experience and expression of anger look quite different from relationships in which fear or shame are of primary concern.

Emotions and Coaching

1. In working with a client, it is important to keep in mind that shame is an even stronger emotion than either the thrill of success or disappointment of failure. It is even stronger than the emotion associated with regret. Shame will often dominate the somatic template and strongly influence the psychosocial template. Unlike Regret, which concerns behavior we did or didn't take, or guilt, which is about our behavior and reactions to our behavior, shame is about who we are. It is about permanent disconnection from other people. Shame is formed early in life, when we feel unwanted or unloved by significant others.

2. It is also important when working with a client, to keep in mind that when we anticipate love expressed by other people, there is a renewed (or new) possibility that we can begin to love or at least forgive ourselves. We are told that what we did is "alright" or "understandable" given the circumstances. This appreciation articulated by another person enables us to reframe, re-interpret,

and re-appraise our own actions. Our psychosocial template is not filled with acceptance, appreciation, and support. We can “go bravely into our new world” without a sense of personal shame and worthlessness. This appreciative psychosocial template might be even more appropriate than a template that leads us to retreat in a mid-21st-century world that is filled with post/postmodern and VUCA-Plus challenges.

Energy and Information

A second set of insights and implications is derived from the third chapter of Section Three on coaching to anticipations. First, the distinction to be drawn between energy and information is critical for us to keep in mind as professional coaches. Our life is a flow of energy and information. The polystatic process is itself a flow of these two fundamental entities. Our work as a coach is to help our client observe and potentially modify the flow of their own energy and information. Energy comes primarily from the amygdala, and more generally, the Emotional Element of the polystatic process. Energy also comes secondarily from the Cognitive Element. We get excited about an anticipated event, whether positive or negative. We are motivated by the positive (and negative) environment we are about to confront.

Cognition and Coaching

1. The relationship we anticipate in the coming moments encourages us to become more closely involved with this person or to abandon this relationship as soon as possible. Similarly, Information comes primarily from the Cognitive Element of the polystatic process, and more generally from the environment in which we are about to operate. Information also comes secondarily from the Emotional Element. It is particularly important to recall, as professional coaches, that we must infer our Emotional information.

2. Our feelings do not present themselves to us in a straightforward manner as do people or events “out there” in our environment. As professional coaches, we can assist our clients in deriving information from their Emotional state. We are in the business of helping our clients identify and label emotions when they naturally emerge during a coaching session, rather than eliciting these emotions through intense probing of our client’s past history of abuse or neglect or current history of trauma.

3. From a polystatic perspective, the error-detection signals we generate in our body provide a somatic level (and Emotional) corrective to the cognitively based appraisal. It is important to keep in mind, as professional coaches, that a critical role is played by the amygdala. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the amygdala may rely on the valence (intentions) of the person or event creating change in the environment, as well as the person’s or event’s strength and level of activity. Detected changes may lead one to conclude that good, strong, and active things are happening in one’s environment. At the psychosocial level, we adjust our planned actions based on predictions and anticipations regarding the probable success of these actions. The Cognitive Element of the polystatic process is engaged (operating primarily in the prefrontal cortex).

Heuristics, Appreciation, and Coaching

1. As a professional coach, we can help our client reflect on their assumptions, avoid “knee-jerk” heuristics, and slow down their thinking. This assistance is particularly important as it focuses on the function of anticipation, which serves as the backbone of the polystatic process. Human beings live not in the current moment but in the moment that is anticipated in the immediate future. We must “lean into the future” as we navigate our world, and we must “learn into the future.”

The three domains of anticipation (behavior, cognition, and emotions) are all available to the influential work of a professional

coach as they help their client lean and learn into their immediate future. Both energy and information are brought to the fore through the coaching of anticipation.

2. The concept of Appreciation emerged during the early years of this century in association with a positive psychological perspective. As related to the process of anticipation, an appreciative perspective refers, first, to the assumption that our body is always accurate in response to anticipation; it is our mind that messes things up. Rather than try to change our body (though the injection of a mood-altering drug), we must change our mind by focusing on our behavior, our cognition and/or the emotions that produce or are influenced by our behavior and thoughts (cognition).

3. We are leaning and learning into the future when we make accurate anticipations of the near future, which enables our body to be effective in doing what it is supposed to do. Appreciation refers, secondly, to the identification and full appreciation of an appropriate and valid anticipation that leads to an adaptive response. We “catch ourselves getting it right” rather than dwelling on the times when our anticipation is inaccurate. As a coach, we should help our client identify and appreciate the moments when they got their anticipation right.

4. As professional coaches, we should keep in mind that our body and mind together produce emotions (the primary energizing agency). Furthermore, we rely on our psychosocial template to generate information (the second critical agency). This information, in turn, helps us validate and/or modify our emotions. Professional coaches can assist their clients in identifying and tracing out the nature of their emotional reactions to specific settings and specific actions they have taken. While emotions come from our past and linger in our present-day psyche, they can provide invaluable guidance regarding the most desirable state of our near future. With our assistance, a coaching

client can “feel” into their future, accompanying their leaning and learning into this future.

Anticipation and Coaching

1.The fundamental question that we might pose to our coaching client concerns: *Why?* We all know that in “polite society” one should never ask “Why?” However, professional coaching is not about being “polite.” It is about being helpful to our client by asking them provocative and insight-inducing questions. These questions often concern the reasons why one’s client has taken certain actions regarding other people. The answer to the “Why?” question often takes one of three forms that relate to the matter of anticipation.

2.One form of anticipation concerns what is often called “the theory of mind.” When we are young or when we are older and in a stressful setting, we are inclined to assume that other people think and feel like we do. Our client might respond to our “Why?” question by indicating that they have acted in a particular way and responded to this person in this way because they anticipated that this other person is thinking and acting in a similar manner.

3.A second form of anticipation relates to feelings. Once again, the theory of mind can be applied. This theory now applies to our client’s psychosocial template. Our client’s psychosocial template includes an assumption that people are “hurt” by any critical comment made about them. The third common type of anticipatory assumption concerns past history. This person acted or reacted in a certain way in the past. They can be expected to act or react in a similar manner now and in the future.

4.This third assumption resides in something called the theory of attribution. We are inclined to attribute the behavior of other people (but not our own behavior) to some underlying and unchanging personality trait. “They have always behaved in this manner and always will. Their actions are firmly embedded in their fundamental character.”

Espoused Theory and Theory-In-Use

1. When engaged in professional coaching, we can make use of a powerful tool involving the identification of theories we actually use rather than just espouse. From the perspective of Polystasis, we can propose to our client that what they anticipate is NOT informed by some psychosocial template that we can readily articulate; rather, it is informed by (even governed by) a psychosocial template that is often not one we can easily identify – or perhaps not one we are comfortable acknowledging. Our espoused psychosocial template might contain stated beliefs in remaining open-minded about other people whom we don't quite trust or even like. Our psychosocial template-in-use, on the other hand, might be filled with assumptions about how "this kind of person" operates on a different set of principles than we do or that anyone we don't trust should never have access to our true feelings.

2. Chris Argyris and Don Schön provide an analytic tool that makes the process of reflective practice and action science fully accessible to us as we confront difficult challenges (especially those involving interpersonal relationships). They construct a table with a left and right column. In the left column, one places a segment of a set of behaviors that have taken place or are envisioned between oneself and the other person with whom one has a challenging relationship. In the right column, one places a statement regarding what each person is thinking and feeling while enacting their specific behavior. The left and right columns are subsequently filled with further anticipated statements being made (left column) and further thoughts and feelings in reaction to these statements (right column).

3. They would challenge us to review and potentially revise our psychosocial template. For instance, just because we get a bit defensive when receiving negative feedback does not mean that we are not open to learning from this feedback. It is always

difficult to hear “bad news”; however, these are the occasions when we can learn most about our behavior and how we can do a better job in the future.

Reflection on Anticipations

1.Engaging our polystatic perspective, the message might be: “Our anticipation might be inaccurate; perhaps we need to consider an alternative anticipation.” Argyris and Schön might also suggest that we are setting up a self-fulfilling prophecy if we set ourselves up to respond by “easing in” when anticipating defensiveness. Our tentative presentation of the feedback could make the recipient of this feedback increasingly uneasy about what we have to say, which leads to us being even more tentative and the recipient being even more defensive. It gets even more complicated and destructive. The vicious cycle becomes “self-sealed.”

2.Argyris or Schön would also suggest that we test out scenarios that yield positive outcomes. They might offer one other suggestion. At some point, we may want to share our assumptions and anticipations with the recipient. We would engage in what is sometimes called “meta-communication,” where we talk about what we have just been talking about. Both parties learn from this process of meta-communication. While a modicum of trust must be established between the two parties before this powerful process can be engaged, it ultimately can be a source of important shared insight. Joint reflective practice has been engaged. Action science is in full operation.

3.The following set of coaching steps builds on what Argyris and Schön have offered and incorporates concepts derived from the polystatic perspective.

Step One:

Identify the behavior you have enacted or expect to enact.

Identify what you anticipate would be this person's reactions to your behavior

Identify what your likely behavior would be following the other person's action/reactions

Step Two:

Why do you anticipate that this would be this person's actions/reactions?

What might be their alternative actions/reactions?

How might your behavior influence the engagement of their alternative behavior?

Step Three:

What do you anticipate happening following this engagement?

Do you anticipate that this would result in good outcomes, bad outcomes or both?

On what do you base this anticipation?

4. At this point, it is often helpful to role-play the anticipated interaction, with the coach initially playing the role of the feedback recipient (after finding a bit more about this person's past behavior and even their "character" as assessed by one's client). As alternative behaviors are explored, the coach and client might even change roles, with the coach demonstrating actions that can be taken based on alternative sets of anticipations.

Self-Efficacy, Surprise and Coaching

1. Albert Bandura identifies four factors that affect self-efficacy. These factors are important for a professional coach to keep in mind when coaching about anticipation. The first is Experiencing success in one's life and work. You can't fake the achievement of outcomes. Taking an appreciative approach, we assist our clients as a coach to identify moments and times in their past when they have been successful at completing a task.

2. The second Bandura factor is Modeling, or "vicarious experience." Bandura is particularly noted for this form of social

learning. We acquire knowledge and skills by watching other people doing something successfully. I would suggest that we not only learn from this observation but also increase our own positive anticipation of being successful. As a coach, we might suggest that our client watch someone else complete a task that they must themselves soon engage. We might encourage them to find a mentor (even if they are “senior” members of their organization) or pick up a book providing directions on how to be successful or watch a recording portraying the successful performance of a relevant task.

3. The third factor is Social persuasion. This factor for Bandura is about how we are “persuaded” that we can be effective. We seek to match the challenges we face with support from other people. When assigned major responsibility, we need comparable authority, as well as encouragement and assistance from other members of our organization. When serving as a coach, we can not only offer our own encouragement and assistance but also help our clients find other sources of support in their work setting. We often need to be persuaded that we can be effective and that our positive anticipations are justified.

4. Finally, there are Physiological factors. This brings us to the first elements in a polystatic process: our somatic template and our emotions. As Bandura notes, it is hard to feel self-efficacious under conditions of stress. When feeling “lousy” about our body and mind (as manifest in a disturbed somatic and psychosocial template), one is likely to feel “lousy” as well about the prospects of being successful regarding the challenges we face. As often reiterated in our Polystasis model, our anticipations are strongly influenced by our bodily condition, regardless of any “realistic” prospects of being successful.

5. We are likely to be surprised when our anticipation of another person’s behavior doesn’t fit with our expectations regarding their usually “consistent” behavior. When we are often surprised and must frequently adjust our interpersonal anticipations, then

we may be forced to adjust our fundamental psychosocial template.

6. We begin to acknowledge the way in which events and environments influence other people's behavior and ways in which attributions must be viewed as complex and variable--much like the post/postmodern world in which we now live. We must engage the Triad of Threat when reviewing our process of anticipation. We determine if specific elements in our environment are working against (blocking) our best interest (a negative valence), are strong, and are active. We also identify specific elements that are working on behalf of our best interest (positive valence), are strong and active.

Force Field Analysis

1. Mixed and interacting, these positive and negative elements comprise our immediate systematic portrayal ("topological map"). Most of this appraisal process aligns with Lewin's force field analysis; however, I add the level of activity to the analysis alongside strength. I would suggest that one of Lewin's forces has an impact on our movement toward a goal, not only because they are strong, but also because they are actively involved in the field (rather than remaining passive or inert).

2. I also consider another factor regarding the elements in an anticipated environment. We must take into account not only valence, strength, and activity, but also the expected duration of each element. Returning to Lewin's force field analysis, this would mean that consideration is given to the "staying power" of each force. Lewin does take this factor partially into account when he considers the amiability (or vulnerability of each force to being changed. How stable are the positive forces, and can they readily be eliminated or reduced in strength? How resistant are the negative forces to being eliminated or reduced in strength?

3. In the case of a polystatic analysis, one looks not just at the 'staying power' of a specific element if subjected to changing

conditions, but also more simply to the probability that this element will “hang around” for a while, whether or not pressures of change are impinging on this element. When we are anticipating the environment that we face in the coming moment, we might not have time to assess its “changeability” but we do want to know if it is likely to still be present for some time.

4. As a coach, we can be of value to our client in helping them engage in a polystatic force field analysis that begins with the identification of an upcoming challenging situation and a desired outcome when facing this challenge. The analysis then turns to identifying positive and negative elements, levels of strength and activity, and, finally, the anticipated duration of each major element. With this cognitively based analysis in hand (and mind), one’s client is prepared to make appropriate and accurate appraisals of the actual environment in which they are about to operate. Their anticipations are likely to be reliant on these appraisals rather than the inevitable emotional biases the client holds when preparing to face the challenge.

Cross-Impact Analysis

1. Cross-Impact Analysis can be of value to coaching clients in anticipating their own future. I have modified this analytic tool to make it compatible with a polystatic perspective. Along with my coaching client, I prepare a matrix on which all the major elements in a system are placed on both the left side and at the top of the matrix. Together with my client, I then examine the relationship between one element and each of the other elements to determine the extent to which the valence, strength, activity level, and duration (VSAD) level of the first element influences the VSAD of the second element. Does the first element assist (up arrow) or block (down arrow) the second element—or do they operate independently of one another (“0”)? And how strong and sustained is this assistance or blockage (multiple arrows)?

2. This same analysis is conducted with each of the other elements as they relate to all of the other elements in the matrix. Not only does the cross-impact consideration of each element with the other elements provide a client with a clearer sense of the interdependence of the system's elements, a cross-impact consideration also provides an even broader, systemic portrait. If the matrix is filled with up-arrows, then we find the portrayal of a highly "enmeshed" system in which action taken about any one element in the system will spread quickly to other elements—a "pinball effect". Conversely, if the matrix contains many down arrows, then a condition of "win-lose" is being portrayed. The elements operate in opposition to one another. As a result, one must carefully prioritize one's actions, for whatever actions one takes, it is likely to negatively impact other parts of the system.

3. There are also matrices in which many "0s" are prevalent. This matrix represents a "disengaged" system. Nothing relates to anything else. This system can be treated as complicated rather than complex. In such a system, planning requires a set of independent actions, as well as careful consideration of the action that should be of the highest priority. The "disengaged" status of this system also suggests that some work might need to be done that yields good reasons for cooperation among the elements and provides a heavy dose of integrative thinking regarding the overall purpose and welfare of the system.

Systemic Portraits

1. The systemic portrait that a force field analysis and cross-impact analysis yield is likely to reveal something about the emotional life, psychosocial templates, and dominant anticipations underlying the operations of this system. If many forces (both positive and negative) are found on the force field chart, then one must wonder about the potential dominance of an external locus of control. Having completed the analysis, one imagines standing on the bow of a ship that is being tossed about in a stormy sea.

Fair weather and a favorable wind are anticipated, but they have not yet arrived. We feel powerless and dependent on the weather. Perhaps another ship will come to our rescue.

2. On the other hand, a chart that contains few positive or negative forces suggests that movement is in 'your hands.' This means that one might not need to do anything more at this point than "get on with" movement to the desired goal. However, there might be some hesitation in moving forward (which probably helped to motivate the engagement of this analysis in the first place). Under these conditions, a new analysis might be conducted that focuses on forces that are operating inside one's head and heart.

3. A polystatic perspective is particularly valuable when focusing on anticipation during a coaching session. Several tough questions might be engaged: Are there any of your anticipations that could block your movement forward to your desired goal? Are the blocks you anticipate based in large part on a valid assessment of what is out there in the environment? If so, then perhaps a return to the original force field analysis is required. Are the anticipated blocks instead based primarily on something that you "feel" or some powerful emotions that are associated with movement toward (or achievement of) the desired goal? If so, then the new Head-and-Heart force field analysis should be conducted.

4. The cross-impact analysis generates similar insights (or at least questions) regarding emotions, templates, and dominant anticipations. Many up-arrows suggest that members of this system are likely to retain an optimistic psychosocial template, feel good about working in this system, and anticipate positive outcomes resulting from whatever actions are to be taken. Conversely, a matrix in which negative arrows are abundant portends a pessimistic psychosocial template ("dog eat dog"), negative feelings about working in this system, and anticipation of negative (or unexpected) outcomes regardless of the actions being taken.

5.Finally, we find the “disengaged” (“0” filled) cross-impact matrix to be indicative of a system in which “there is no there, there.” Glue is lacking that binds members of this system to some greater purpose. Feelings of alienation or indifference are likely to prevail, accompanied by a psychosocial template that is devoid of much content. Members of the system often don’t even bother to anticipate any outcomes because they don’t feel like their actions will make much of a difference anyway. A sense of powerlessness and hopelessness leaves one without appreciation for any polystatic perspective regarding a specific “0” filled setting. In such a setting, homeostasis might provide a valid perspective. Everything does fall back to some stable state when no one really “gives a damn . . .”

Armor and Anchors

An additional set of insights and implications comes from the final chapter on the coaching of anticipation.

Emotions and Coaching

1.In helping coaches be more effective, I often turn to the agency of the human psyche that is most closely associated with our Emotions. This agency is our neurobiological system, with its many levels of functioning, and a surprising lack of any central coordinating unit. As a self-organizing, highly adaptive system, our brain and its many adjunct parts provide ample resources for our successful engagement in a complex, feedback-based process of Polystasis (contrasting with the traditional model of homeostasis).

2.My coaching clients often tell me that they greatly appreciate our sessions, for they have no one else to talk with about the “personal matter” they shared with me. Matters such as considering retirement from his administrative position and fighting for the return of their division to independent status. My clients often struggle to discuss potential retirement with their

intimate partner because this would disrupt everything in their lives. They certainly can't talk with other people in their office about any dreams regarding "corporate revolution." I often gently share something we know about the psychologically based challenges of leadership. We know that assumptions regarding the motives and abilities of leaders are increasingly devoid of reality, the higher one's position in an organization.

3. We pay a great price for our power. Our coaching clients can anticipate that there will be strong negative reactions if they vary their administrative practices very much to make these practices more gratifying for them or make them more successful in their administrative role. Even if people around our client might wish for these reforms, they are likely to find it hard to make the adjustments. Perhaps "everyone" wants our client to change, but "nobody" wants our client to change.

Character Armor and Coaching

1. Many people in formal positions of authority (such as police officers, judges, and physicians) wear uniforms not only to project this authority, but also to protect themselves. They are shielded in *Character Armor*. We don't know much about these people in uniforms; furthermore, even when a person in authority (who must be "responsible") wears no uniform, they must not say much about themselves or about how they are feeling at any one moment concerning their reactions to the person they are serving.

2. Even those providing professional services are to keep their feelings and personal stories to themselves. Many professional clients and clients in positions of authority have shared with me that I am the one person with whom they can share their emotions and the basis for these emotions. They anticipate that disclosure at their worksite would be unacceptable.

3. The higher the position, the more power and the more authority one has, the greater is the possibility that anticipations will be based primarily on emotions, rather than on an accurate appraisal

of one's setting. Feedback from other people is likely to be distorted and inappropriately motivated. Rewards that are anticipated from one's environment are often absent, while unanticipated kickback may frequently occur. As a result, accurate cognition and appropriate behavior are sometimes quite elusive. As a leader, one is likely to rely on Emotions, given the unreliability of either cognition or behavior. This is the opposite of what should be expected from those in a leadership role.

Emotional Anchors, Signals, and Coaching

1. As we bring anticipation into the picture, the concept of *Emotional Anchor* is important. There are points or events in our daily experience that bring us back to a fundamental emotion. The identification of emotional anchors can be of great benefit when we serve as a coach. Offering an appreciative perspective, we can help our client identify those moments and events that elicit deep emotions in them.

2. These moments and events can help our client identify not just their goals and aspirations, but also the baseline(s) that they use when anticipating something in their life. While a psychosocial template can be engaged to assess threat, it can also be used to assess potential pleasure and gratification. Working with a client, we can help them appreciate the emotional anchors in their life and the way(s) in which these anchors can be introduced into their psychosocial template.

3. Clearly, our Anticipations are often rooted in our emotions. The question to be posed is: How deep is this rooting, and how pervasive is the influence of emotions on our anticipations? One of Sigmund Freud's later conceptions concerns the role of anxiety as an emotion that signals the potential emergence of unconscious content that will be threatening to us if allowed to enter consciousness. A splash of anxiety across our face moves us to anticipate unacceptable urges that could get us in trouble. Our

anxiety might even arise from our genuine sense of Guilt. Our potential actions are not aligned with deeply held values.

4. As a coach, we should be aware that our clients' emotions (and our own emotions) are strongly influenced when appraising our current setting by unconscious forces. While these forces may arise from some super-ego or God-driven condemnation of certain urges, they might also arise from our attraction to certain "shiny" objects, people, and events. We are animated in our anticipation of something we find attractive, compelling, and exciting.

5. We are also animated by the unconscious pull toward or away from other people. Our attractive and our troubled relationships with other people are subject to such dynamics as *psychic splitting* (this person is either all good or all bad), *projection* (moving part of oneself that is unacceptable or disturbingly powerful to the other person), and/or *containment* (looking for someone who can help contain our anxiety).

6. We can apply our Polystatic perspective to an appreciation of these dynamics. We might suggest, for instance, that our anticipation of impact regarding a potential action is determined by whether or not we think the person we are planning to engage is good or bad. We might instead anticipate that the person we are engaging will react to us in a way that we might if fully aware of our own perspectives and motives. The process of projection involves the unconscious generation of assumptions about other people that relate to our own psyche. We don't realize that these assumptions are really all about us—not them!

Neurobiology and Coaching

1. Most of our cortical functions are dependent on information derived from external sources. This is particularly the case regarding forebrain (prefrontal) functions. Information from the external world is "channeled." The "state" functions operate in a completely different manner. They are dependent on internal

sources of information. The somatic template and psychosocial template are closely associated with the “state” functions. Furthermore, most of the internal sources of information are likely to be related directly to our Emotional state.

2. Most importantly, just as our polystatic anticipations are holistic rather than focused on a single element in our environment, it is probably required that our primary source of information on which we base these anticipations is general and holistic in nature. Thus, it is likely that our anticipations and appraisals are closely related to our State operations and deeply invested in our Emotions. “Channel” information certainly provides important cognitive correctives to these Emotion-based anticipations, but might not play the primary determining role.

3. Given this distinction, I suggest that the somatic template and psychosocial template are closely associated with the “state” functions. Furthermore, most of the internal sources of information are likely to be related directly to our Emotional state. Most importantly, just as our polystatic anticipations are holistic rather than focused on a single element in our environment, it is probably required that our primary source of information on which we base these anticipations is general and holistic in nature. Thus, it is likely that our anticipations and appraisals are closely related to our State operations and deeply invested in our Emotions.

4. We now know that we operate primarily with two memory systems. One of these systems helps us navigate daily, habitual operations. Often called the *Procedural (Implicit) Memory System*, this is the cortical function that operates when we are driving a car, hitting a golf ball (if we are a skilled golfer), or simply walking down the stairs (if we are not neuro-damaged). We easily retrieve memories that guide our skillful operations of these procedures.

5. Most of our heuristics (fast thinking solutions) operate out of our procedural brain. Our “knee-jerk” reactions exemplify

procedural heuristics. The second system is usually called the *Episodic or Expository (Explicit) Memory System*. Specific memories of past events, as well as memories of potential problem-solving and decision-making processes, are brought to the fore when dealing with a new, complex, or elusive issue. While procedural memories are usually engaged without any conscious awareness of their application, episodic memories are engaged in a fully conscious manner. These memories are not just stored and retrieved. They are lived!

6. As a coach, we can provide valuable assistance to our clients as they consciously review their psychosocial template (what are you thinking?), and to the extent possible, even their somatic template (what are you feeling?). Most importantly, we must encourage our client to avoid the use of fast-thinking heuristics when addressing multi-tiered issues – as tempting as it is to escape into a rabbit hole of procedural serenity. As a coach who is focusing on assisting their client to accurately and flexibly anticipate the near-future world they will engage, the advocacy of consistently implemented *Slow Thinking, Reflective Practice, and Appreciative Perspectives* is critical.

Social Neurobiology and Coaching

1. Several important points emerge from the contextualist perspective offered by social neurobiology. First, powerful interpersonal relationships produce strong emotional reactions that, in turn, strongly influence the nature and quality of these relationships. Second, our amygdala might be sorting out the threatening and non-threatening elements to anticipate in our immediate environment. In our role as coach, we can be of great value in helping our client identify their own Amygdala-driven anticipations and find ways to address these strong anticipations.

2. A social neurobiological perspective can even lead to the conclusion that we create reality in our relationship with other people and that our mind is actually embedded in a collective

enterprise with the people with whom we relate. We think in connection with other people, much as we create our values and guide our behavior in connection with other people.

3. When anticipating an event or a relationship without the engagement of other people, we are likely to be projecting specific attributes onto this event or relationship. We create reality on behalf of emotions and thoughts that exist in our own mind, and the projected emotions and thoughts to be found in the projected mind we have created.

4. Without the input of other people, our near future is an “ink blot” that we choose to “interpret” on behalf of our own hopes, fears, and needs. We refuse to live in the present and are determined to anticipate the near future, even if this means fabricating elements of this future in our own mind. As a coach, we can become that connecting mind that alleviates the need for a fabricated and projection-based mind. This might, quite simply, be the primary function we serve as a professional coach

Polystasis and Coaching

1. Habitual behavior requires the shifting of knowledge and skill sets from focused, intentional, and explicit (conscious) memory systems to another memory system located in a different part of the brain. As noted, this system is often considered our “procedural” memory. This second memory system is holistic, much less accessible to intention. It is implicit (unconscious) in nature. We are likely to find that the psychosocial template is composed primarily of procedural memories. The template contains untested assumptions about what people in general believe and want, as well as a wealth of often-distorted past experiences regarding relative success or failure in working with other people.

2. When coaches try to “break up” the habitual behavior of their clients, they may be trying to move stored material between two

different memory systems. Resistance to the disruption of habitual behavior and the challenging of an existing psychosocial template may be based not only on our fear of changing established behavior patterns, but also on the profoundly difficult task of moving stored memories back from the implicit system to the explicit system where these memories were first formed.

3. Our social/psychological constructs (paradigms, schemata, left-column beliefs and assumptions) may be much more deeply embedded in and reinforced by and through complex, highly redundant and multiple-level neural connections and networks than we had previously thought to be the case. While our psychosocial template will shift a bit from moment to moment, given new information arriving from the changing environment and feedback we receive from actions we have taken in this environment, there is an underlying set of neural networks that are much less likely to be modified by any one change in our environment. While Polystasis speaks to our capacity to be flexible and adaptive (the accommodating aspects of our learning process), the constructs contained in our neural networks speak to our desire for stability and continuity (the assimilating aspects of our learning process).

4. To examine (let alone attempt to “break up”) these constructs as a coach working with clients may be quite difficult. The outcomes of such a disruption may be difficult to predict. What does this mean for the coach who is encouraging her client to see things “in a different way”? First, it means that there is likely to be some initial resistance. This is not a “bad” sign; rather, it is a sign that this “different way” is being taken seriously by her client.

5. Second, the coach might want to consider a “different way” of presenting the “different way.” For example, the coach might want to couch what they say in a metaphor or analogy: “it is as if you were . . .” Third, the coach might use the resistance as an

opportunity to assist her client is exploring his cluster of assumptions that are motivating the resistance: “let’s spend a few minutes exploring the source of your resistance.” This approach only works if the coach is not herself being resistant to her client’s resistance. This can be a “learn-able” moment for the client and can actually yield greater benefit for the client than any adoption of the coach’s way of seeing things.

Amygdala and Coaching

1.I suggest that the amygdala plays an important role not only in the assessment of possible threat but also in the anticipation of pleasure. We look forward to a pleasant interaction with a specific person based on past experiences with this person and input from our psychosocial template. A shot of dopamine might accompany this anticipation—just as it does when the addicted gambler enters the casino or when our lover removes their clothes (or our clothes). There might be no more powerful engagement of the polystatic process than in the anticipation of threat or pleasure. This power might often relate not only to the squirt of a feel-good neurochemical but also to the triggering of a deeply held and fundamental archetype related to an evil figure or force, or to a benevolent, seductive and pleasure-evoking siren.

2.What occurs when a coach is working with her client on difficult issues that may evoke fear-based templates arising from the Amygdala? How does a coach either bypass or counter the emotional impact of these templates? First, I would advise the coach to be thoughtful, caring, and patient. Once a threat template is activated, it can be engaged indiscriminately to include the coach himself. Second, the coach should “appreciate” the fear manifested by his client. “I can certainly appreciate why you might feel anxious at this point, for there are several good reasons to worry about what might occur.” The coach can then articulate some of the “good reasons.”

3. The coach, at this point, is not only being empathetic, they are also being a bit rational and objective regarding their client's fears. At this point, the client can themselves become a bit more rational and objective. As a coach, I often increase the "objectivity" by listing the "good reasons" on a flip chart or at least on a piece of paper. It is then possible to identify some of the "good reasons" not to be quite so fearful and some "good ideas" regarding how best to address these fears. What actions can be taken that reduce the sense of helplessness and hopelessness that often accompany the activation of the amygdala's fear-based template?

4. Third, it is important to recall that the role of a coach does not include exploring the initial source of any emotion. The coach is not in the business of somehow "correcting" the emotion; rather, she is in the business of helping her client manage the emotion as it has been elicited in the present situation. This "at-the-moment" managing of emotions can be just as beneficial as an in-depth analysis of the emotions' etiology.

Stress Ruts, Self-Addiction, and Coaching

1. We establish "stress ruts" when exposed repeatedly to real or imagined threats. These ruts are grooved deeper with each stressful event and lead to permanent structural changes in our nervous/hormonal systems. We become increasingly vulnerable ("trigger-happy") to stress. "Trigger-happy" somatic templates dominate the polystatic process. Anticipatory reactions are warped and focused on events and people out in the world who can justify our emotional reactions. Most importantly, we must acknowledge that stress-ruts do not go away over time. Permanent links are established between our prefrontal cortex and our limbic system. We must avoid establishing these strong links rather than assuming that these links will go away or that some drug (alcohol, tobacco, tranquilizer) will provide a stress-related roadblock.

2.How might a coach assist her client in identifying and even seeking to avoid or reduce the impact of these stress ruts? First, the coach can encourage his client to reduce the number of stress-producing events in her life. Obviously, this is not a simple assignment. The stress is often associated with a client's job. As a coach, one can at least suggest that a client set aside their work when at home, take more frequent vacations, or plan for more "coffee breaks" (preferably drinking something other than heavily caffeinated coffee).

3.It is important to keep in mind the possibility that one's client might be addicted to the "high" that comes from successfully confronting a stressful event—or even (like the gambler) anticipating this success. When addicted to one's own adrenaline, there is a painful process of withdrawal that can be just as severe as that experienced by someone withdrawing from alcohol or an opiate. The withdrawal from one's own adrenaline will often be manifested as depression or unregulated anger toward other people or toward one's job.

4.As a coach, we can assist our client in anticipating that this withdrawal can occur when they reduce their exposure to stressful situations. It is not unusual, for instance, for an "addicted" workaholic to experience depression rather than relief when finally taking a vacation or spending a weekend with their kids. Second, as a coach, we can encourage our client to engage in activities that help to "burn off" the neurochemicals that have been activated by the stress. Physical exercise is often the best vehicle for this "burn off."

5.Third, activities are engaged that reduce stress impact more gently. These include medication and other forms of mindfulness, as well as a stroll through the park with a dear friend or spending time playing with one's own child or a grandchild. A fourth coaching approach involves some life planning that may involve

identifying personal values and life purposes weighted against the health-related costs associated with ongoing encounters with stressful events.

Physiological Priming, Intimacy, Actions, and Coaching

1. Our daily behavior is profoundly impacted by our patterns/decisions regarding sleep, exercise, exposure to light, and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, and other mind-altering drugs (including caffeine). We not only create stress-ruts but also alter our polystatic anticipations. From a polystatic perspective, we are likely to find that the anticipation of events in our immediate future is saturated with emotions if we are "hyped" up with a strong dose of caffeinated coffee or if we have not slept soundly for several days.

2. It may be hard to assist other people until they are "physiologically primed" or prepared for this assistance. If we are "trigger-happy" then we are likely to find it hard to address anxiety-provoking issues in our life. It will be difficult to concentrate on a difficult issue if we continue to focus on meeting an addictive need. Should a coach insist that her client be physiologically prepared for the challenges of coaching prior to beginning the coaching process?

3. Apparently, the neurochemistry associated with the formation of intimate relationships is quite different from the neurochemistry associated with the formation of friendships. In both cases, powerful, chemically based bonds are formed. These bonds are reinforced whenever our intimate or friend appears before us – our body literally "lights up" with neuro-chemical responses – but quite different when the other person is considered a friend rather than an intimate. From a polystatic perspective, it is as if we are playing a trick on our body when we

enter into a deeply therapeutic relationship. We begin to “believe” that this is an intimate relationship (transference) and anticipate that romance is soon to ensue. Our body prepares for this romantic encounter, believing what our brain has indicated is about to occur.

4. Conversely, the anticipation in a counselling relationship is that this will more closely resemble a friendship than an intimate relationship. Our body prepares for friendship, much as it does when we meet with a colleague for lunch. What about the coaching relationship? Is it more like a friendship than an intimate relationship? What if coaching, like therapy, releases neurochemicals that replicate intimate relationships? What are the implications for the profession of coaching? I have already mentioned that we must remind ourselves as professional coaches that we are not psychotherapists; yet our neurobiological system might be declaring that we are doing therapy and are “in love” with our client. Boundaries are suddenly important.

5. Emotions not only provide us with feelings about the world in which we live, they also provide us with the “get-up-and-go” that we need when getting out of bed in the morning or taking decisive action regarding a pressing matter at our worksite. Apparently, one of the most difficult things for human beings to do (concerning neuro-processing) is to move from thought to action. A large portion of our brain “lights up” when we decide to do something (what in the old days we would call “will power.”)

6. I suspect from a polystatic perspective that the assemblage of multiple parts of the brain to produce action is often (if not always) experienced as an anticipatory emotion (such as “looking forward” to breakfast or receiving praise for taking “courageous” action). It would seem, given these neuroscience findings, that some of the most difficult (and perhaps most important) work that coaches do is assist their clients in moving from thought to

action—in helping them “fire up” these multiple portions of their brain.

Empathy, Mirror Neurons, and Coaching

1. Another major finding that may hold major implications for the field of professional coaching concerns the apparent presence of mirror neurons in our neurophysiological system. Certain neurons will fire when a person is observing someone else doing a task. These neurons tend to mimic the neuronal firings of the person being observed. Thus, when we watch someone performing a physical act, mirror neurons will fire that mimic the neuronal firings in the person being observed. Some of these mirror neurons seem to teach us how to carry out actions by simulating an observed action and creating a neural template/map for how it's done.

2. But much more than this, many scientists believe that mirror neurons help us develop our “theory of mind” regarding other people. This is a theory we develop over time during our youth that enables us to understand the intentions behind the actions of others, and possibly the social meaning of their behaviors and emotions. Our mirror neurons may be activating our appreciation of other people and the culture we have created together because we have observed other people appreciating one another and the artistic productions of our culture.

3. Beyond the matter of language and art, mirror neurons influence the fundamental way in which we feel about and interact with other people. Specifically, there are many implications for professional coaching regarding the social neurobiology of mirror neurons. What do mirror neurons have to do with the formation of empathy (both in the client and coach)?

4. To what extent does an effective coach “understand” her client in part because some of her own neurons are firing in ways that mirror the experiences and actions of her client? Are there ways in which effective coaches help a client acquire a new skill set by observing other people (and even the coach herself) provide leadership, solve problems, make decisions, etc.? And is this skill set acquisition based at least in part on the activation of mirror neurons in the client?

Polystasis as a Self-Organizing, Emergent System

1. As we expand on the model of polystasis, it is important to remind ourselves that our brain has no central operating system. Like many complex and dynamic biological systems, our brain is a “self-organizing system” that is led not by some leading part but rather from the interactions between parts of the system that exist side-by-side (the “neighborhood effect”).

2. Just as a flock of birds or swarm of fish move in a remarkably coordinated manner as a result of each bird’s or fish’s immediate reaction to the bird or fish right next to them, so we find that human systems also move in a remarkably powerful and coordinated manner because each participant in this system tends to immediately react to the movement of the person next to them.

3. Furthermore, it seems that surprising reconfigurations of a system often occur as this self-organizing system becomes more complex (often when an additional element is added to the system). Called *Emergence*, this reconfiguration is represented in the simple (but surprising) emergence of water from the combination of two gases (hydrogen and oxygen), as well as in the profound reconfiguration of various lifeless chemicals, some hot water and other yet-unknown elements to produce something that we call life.

4. I propose that Polystasis operates as a self-organizing system and that Emotions provide a tagging function that enables us to quickly anticipate that something is about to be good or bad,

strong or weak, or active or passive. Our somatic and psychosocial templates provide us with internal models that help guide our actions in response to environmental conditions, while our dynamic polystatic-based feedback process enables us to quickly and frequently recombine the components based on altering baselines and shifting anticipations.

Co-evolution, Self-Fulfillment, and Coaching

1. Another important feature of complex, self-organizing systems is that they co-evolve with other systems that they encounter. In the world of Polystasis, this co-evolution dynamic would play out in shifts regarding our anticipation of features in the environment we encounter from moment to moment. Our interactions with this environment bring about changes in this environment, resulting in modifications of our anticipations regarding this environment. At times, this co-evolution can lead to self-fulfilling prophecies, with changes in the environment being created by our anticipated vision of this environment. We anticipate “hell,” prepare for ‘Hell’ and create “hell” through our actions. Conversely, we anticipate “heaven,” prepare for “heaven” and create “heaven” through our actions.

2. More often, the self-fulfilling prophecy is not dominating our actions and reactions. Rather, we are attuned to a world “out there” that is operating independently of our anticipations. As a professional coach, we can be of great value in this regard when working with a client who is deeply, emotionally attached to a specific version of their world and to specific outcomes. We can help them discern what is a world of their own making and what is a world to which they adapt (as a self-organizing system) – and about which they learn for the future.

Self-Referencing and Coaching

1. Self-referencing is one other theme that plays a central role in any human self-organizing system. A strong organizational

identity can provide independence from environmental change and can serve as a guide to the organization's evolution. When the environment demands a new response, there is a reference point for change. This use of self-referencing as a way to guide organizational evolution relates directly to the polystatic concept of varying baselines.

2. Anticipation always requires that what is expected in the immediate future is tested against the established baseline. We are frequently altering the baseline as we appraise the shifting environment in which we are operating. This feedback-based process of appraisal and adjustment is self-referencing and is often engaged at an organizational level by the organization's leadership.

3. Self-referencing at the broad organizational level enables those working within the system to engage in their own self-directed, polystatic adjustment to the changing environment in which they operate. Having incorporated the organization's own baseline within their personal baselines, those helping to move an organization forward will be guided by goals and purposes that are shared by all (or at least most) members of the organization.

Shifting Polystatic Baselines and Coaching

1. As a professional coach, we can be particularly effective if we help our clients discern the various levels of their polystatic baseline. Which elements of this baseline come from the sharing of purpose and goals with other members of the organization, and which elements are held at a more personal (or team) level?

2. Having discerned these different elements, our clients will become more discerning of the different sources of environmental feedback that will (and should) influence their baseline. Some of the environmental changes impact the collective elements of the baseline—elements such as

bottom line, productivity, and organization-wide morale. Other changes in the environment produce an impact that hits at more personal elements – elements such as level of personal performance, relationships with co-workers, and personal motivation.

3. We are likely to find that distal shifts in collective baseline elements are infrequent, given the complex, often turbulent (and even contradictory) way an environment operates at contemporary organizational levels. Forces in one direction are muting forces operating in a different direction – leading to a standoff. Much more frequent shifts are likely to take place at the proximal, personal level as our emotional reactions to ongoing organizational events require adjustments in our polystatic baseline.

4. Thus, in many complex organizational settings, we are likely to retain a “hybrid” baseline that is always both changing and remaining surprisingly stable. As a thoughtful and effective coach, it is often of great value for us to help our client identify and learn how to ‘live with’ hybrid baselines that may lead us to contradictory anticipations: “everything is changing and nothing has really changed!”

Attention Density and Coaching

1. The self-referencing process serves one other important function in the creation and maintenance of a self-organizing system. When we have gained a clear sense of both personal and collective purpose, then we have a better sense of what we should focus on in our often-complex environment.

2. In appraising the probable shifts in our immediate environment when determining what to anticipate, it is clear that we can’t focus on everything. We have to be selective in our attention to this environment. This focused attention, in turn, not only influences how we manage our baseline and adjust our anticipations, it also

alters the fundamental operations of our brain from moment to moment.

3.If we could somehow record the attention density process at any one moment and play it back in slow motion, we would find that information from the environment is being assessed to determine if this environment has shifted in some way from what it was a moment before. If a shift has occurred, then the “new” environment is compared to internal information (words, pictures, experiences, concepts) that is organized and presented in part as the psychosocial template and as the self-referencing polystatic baseline.

4.A quick appraisal is made regarding the extent to which anticipation of what is to occur next in the environment needs to be altered. This very quick process occurs in a specific neural circuit or the tight clustering of neurons in our brain. This circuit may involve centers throughout our neural system. The speed as well as the density of this attentive process is exceptional. It is repeated many times at each stage of feedback-based Polystasis. Multiple adjustments and actions follow the initial appraisal.

5.As a professional coach, we can assist our clients in determining where they want to focus their attention. Attention density impacts the way in which we are integrating and “making sense of” those aspects of the environment to which we are attending. We see the world differently depending on the density and varied internal and external properties incorporated in our attention.

6.What we attend to influences (and often determines) our anticipation of what is about to happen in our world. That to which we attend also influences (and often determines) what action, if any, we take in this world. We attend, anticipate, feel, and act into our immediate future. This is what it means to “lean into our immediate future.” And what it means to “learn into our near future.” This concept of attention density holds major implications for how we lead into the more distant future.

Deep Learning and Coaching

1.I wish to open the door a bit further in addressing the issue of deep learning, as it might be related to coaching, and perhaps even to the Polystatic process. While Deep Learning is usually related to a class of computer-based algorithms that produce a “deep” hierarchy of digital-modeling layers which transform input data into progressively more abstract and composite representations, it can also be conceived of as a set of ongoing adjustments (learning) in one’s anticipation of the immediate future—that is Polystasis. There are layers of anticipation that are each focused on a specific aspect of reality. They operate hierarchically to produce a coherent, composite, and integrated representation of the immediate future for someone navigating a challenging environment. Anticipatory assessments take place in short, simple ways (stochastic learning) that move quickly, producing a seemingly smooth and fluid set of adjustments.

2.As Richard Powers suggests in *Playground*, deep learning can be considered a massive observational and many-trial test operation. Power conceives of AI-based deep learning as a process in which hundreds of millions of pages of evidence are taken into consideration when anticipating how a specific human being is likely to make specific choices about a car to purchase, how much money to make, or which charities should receive a donation. If deep learning AI algorithms “were starting to know [human beings] in ways no human could, [then] they could see things in the data that eluded everyone, without blindness or bias, strictly by correlating all the evidence.”

3.I propose that the Polystatic process is doing something like this with the neural algorithms that produce ongoing observations and pilot-tests (Miller, Galanter and Pribram’s TOTE). Frequent, quick assessments are being made that can lead to accurate predictions about and appropriate decisions made regarding the car to buy, money to make or charity to support. While, as Powers

suggests, AI may soon be able to engage in Polystasis faster and better than we humans can, this does not mean that we should fail to appreciate the remarkable deep learning, polystatic processes in which we humans are engaged every moment of our waking life. Perhaps, like high-powered AI algorithms, we can dance between the raindrops that are often found in our world.

4. As coaches, we can align ourselves with the deep learning processes that are to be found not only in AI-based algorithms but also in the T.O.T.E. related processes of human cognitive and emotional learning. In our role as coach, we can encourage our clients to reflect on their ongoing environmental assessments. Our clients begin to slow down their thinking (Kahneman) to consider the nature of environmental anticipations they are making. They can focus, in particular, on potential self-fulfilling prophecies that creep into their anticipations. With your encouragement and guidance, coaching clients can surface their own shifting baseline of desired outcomes. Engaging in reflective practice (Schön), our clients can review their dominant psychosocial templates and search, once again, for biasing self-fulfilling assumptions about what is “real” in their world.

5. While our clients (and we as coaches) might not attain the level of human understanding that Richard Powers thinks is possible with deep learning AI algorithms, they might be able to do a better job of managing the post/postmodern challenges associated with prevalent conditions of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence, and contradiction (VUCA-Plus). They might be able to dance between the raindrops and navigate the rainstorm.

Conclusions

As I have mentioned, the preliminary perspectives I have offered regarding Polystasis and my perspective on Prospection are still ill-formed and lacking in the precision that a theory or model acquires after many years of articulation, amendment, and

application. I am speculating about the human version of Power's AI algorithms and the potential of gifted professional coaches to assist their clients in a human form of deep learning. Still, I hope you find what I have summarized to be of value when engaging professional coaching with clients who face the daunting prospect of leaning, learning, and leading into the near future.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The VUCA-Plus Environmental Inventory

We are living in a very challenging world—and it is good on occasion to gain a perspective on the nature and strength of specific challenges. This inventory provides you with a series of questions about the environment in which you are working and living. Please imagine that you are being interviewed about the challenges that you are facing and respond to the interviewer by offering (checking) one of five options as to the accuracy for you of a specific description. There is no one correct answer for everyone—especially given the many different settings in which people completing this inventory are likely to be working and living. The only correct answer is your honest appraisal of each statement.

Here is a brief description of each option you can check:

Never Accurate [1] = I find that this statement is not at all related to the current environment in which I work and live.

Rarely Accurate [2] = This statement might occasionally be applicable to the current environment in which I work and live.

Sometimes Accurate [3] = I find this statement to be applicable with some regularity to the current environment in which I work and live.

Often Accurate [4] = I find this statement to be applicable most of the time to the current environment in which I work and live.

Very Accurate [5] = I find that this statement fully captures the daily reality of the environment in which I currently work and live.

Tell me about the environment in which you operate.

1. Many different natural and human environments must be considered when planning for any initiative

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
-------------------	--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

2. There always seems to be a new environment with new technology requiring a lot of experimentation and testing before implementing new initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
-------------------	--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

3. There always seems to be multiple interpretations of the current environment—with emerging technologies mudding up the water rather than providing clarity.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
-------------------	--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

4. It is hard to predict the outcomes related to many initiatives given the chaos that often reigns supreme in the environment.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
-------------------	--------------------	-----------------------	-------------------	------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

5. All thoughtful considerations in planning for most initiatives require attending to multiple geographies, locations, and cultures.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

6. The environment always seems to be changing when planning for and managing an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

Tell me what it is like to plan for an initiative at this point in time.

7. When planning for an initiative, it is common for some changes to be easily made while other changes are very difficult is not impossible to enact.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

8. When planning for an initiative, it is common for many relevant situations to be quite divergent in their form and/or context.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

9. Multiple sets of regulations, documentation requirements, laws, procedures and political interests must always be taken into account when planning for and managing most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

10. It is often hard if not impossible to make valid plans or choices in response to events—given current information that is available.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

11. There are many “unknown unknowns” in the world when planning for an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

12. When planning for and managing any initiative there are often rapid changes of circumstances.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

What is it like trying to figure out if something is working at the present time?

13.Deliverables associated with specific initiatives usually can't be easily defined or assessed.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

14.It is rare regarding any initiative that there is clear governance and straightforward decision-making.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

15.Competing "hidden agenda" always seem to be abundant regarding most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

16.It is hard to determine the outcomes related to many initiatives, since the available sources of information are often in disagreement.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

17. Outcomes are not easy to envision with regard to most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

18. The scope of most initiatives is elusive--not well defined and without firm approval of all relevant constituencies.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

How are you dealing with the information needed to do something under the current circumstances?

19. There are many risks associated with not being able process all the information correctly when planning for most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

20. When planning for and managing an initiative there usually are both predictable and unpredictable circumstances.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

21.it is often hard to identify all the stakeholders and their relationships to an initiative when planning for and conducting these initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

22.Most important initiatives seem to reside at points of profound and often heated contention.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

23.Causal relationships related to a specific initiative often seem to be changing. It is hard to rely on anything.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

24.Relevant information is often hard to obtain when planning for an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

Tell me about what it looks and feels like to be operating in our current environment

25.The environment looks and feels like white water swirling around me.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

26.The environment looks and feels like a heavy, enveloping fog.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

27.The environment looks and feels like a massive tug-of-war between competing parties.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

28.The environment looks and feels like a heavy enmeshed network of many nodes/points/boxes.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

29.The environment looks and feels like it is being plotted as a wavy line on a chart.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
---------------------------	----------------------------	-------------------------------	---------------------------	--------------------------

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

30.The environment looks and feels like an expanding cone of possibility.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

Describe how you manage in the midst of our current world.

31.Rapid changes in supply/availability of needed resources are common with regard to most initiatives.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

32.Many parties must often be involved in an initiative: subcontractors, organizational departments, multiple organizations.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

33.Most initiatives seem to be filled with competing interests and desired outcomes.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

34.The “real” agenda never seems to be very clear regarding most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

35.Can rarely use only a few and proven technology components when planning for and managing an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

36.Connections between tasks are rarely clear when managing an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

Tell me about how decisions are made and how risks are assessed in the world where you operate.

37.Risk factors are not well known and are often hard to document regarding most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

38. Most initiatives require interfacing with multiple technologies, projects and/or operations.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

39. Risk factors are often a source of contention. It is often hard even to agree on how to document the risks associated with most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

40. It is hard to define, determine or manage risk when planning for most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

41. It is hard to establish and maintain known, well-defined objectives with regard to most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

42. Risk factors are not well known and are often hard to document regarding most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

What is known and what is not known in the world that you live in each day?

43. When planning for an initiative, most of the necessary information is well known and accessible. However, the vast amount of information makes it hard to navigate once the initiative is underway.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

44. There often is not agreement on what is “knowable” and what is “unknowable” in the world when planning for an initiative.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

45. Most initiatives seem to reside at the border of human knowledge and at the boundary of the future.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

46. The cause of an event is understood, but it is unknown when and which implications it will have if any at all regarding most initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

47. Solid contracts can rarely be relied on throughout the duration of an initiative.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

48. The “knowns” and “unknowns” related to a specific initiative often seem to be shifting. It is hard to remain certain about what we know.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

Tell me about the potholes and pitfalls that often are encountered in your execution of a plan.

49. There are many stakeholders associated with most initiatives—often with time zone/cultural differences.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

50. There never seems to be adequate timeframe with good slack in schedule when planning for an initiative.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

51. When planning for an initiative, it is common for many relevant situations to be unique in their form and/or context.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

52. Some stakeholders associated with specific initiative never leave (even if we want them to go away), while other stakeholders don't seem to hang around very long (even if they are critical to this initiative).

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

53. Some information is available with regard to specific initiatives, but the volume or nature of this information can be overwhelming to process.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

54. There is rarely agreement regarding what is "hidden" in the agenda and what is readily apparent for all stakeholders to see.

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Very
Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate Accurate

[1] ____ [2] ____ [3] ____ [4] ____ [5] ____

A few final observations about your work at the present time

55.Despite a lack of other information, the basic cause and effects of specific events as they relate to a specific initiative are known, which means that change is possible but not a given.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

56.It never seems to be simple to do planning—there is rarely straightforward/sequential execution.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

57.It is rare that an initiative has been engaged many times before. This makes it hard to learn from the past.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

58.There is usually no agreement among the stakeholders regarding the desired deliverables associated with specific initiatives.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

59. It is hard to determine the outcomes and causal relationships related to many initiatives, since there is no past information to help predict these outcomes.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

60. We seem to be living in a time and in an environment that is filled simultaneously with rapid change, repeated change and non-change. It is quite a mixture.

Never Accurate	Rarely Accurate	Sometimes Accurate	Often Accurate	Very Accurate
[1] ____	[2] ____	[3] ____	[4] ____	[5] ____

The VUCA Plus Environmental Inventory:

Score Key

Directions

To determine the total scores for each of the six environmental categories, record the score for each item associated with each category and then add together the scores for this category to determine the total score.

Volatility

6. _____

12. _____

17. _____

20. _____

29. _____

31. _____

41. _____

47. _____

50. _____

56. _____ Total _____

Uncertainty

1. _____

10. _____

18. _____

24. _____

30. _____

35. _____

40. _____

46. _____

49. _____

55. _____ Total _____

Complexity

5. _____

9. _____

14. _____

19. _____

28. _____

32. _____

38. _____

43. _____

53. _____

57. _____ Total _____

Ambiguity

2. _____

11. _____

13. _____

21. _____

26. _____

34. _____

42. _____

45. _____

51. _____

59. _____ Total _____

Turbulence

4. _____

7. _____

15. _____

23. _____

25. _____

36. _____

37. _____

48. _____

52. _____

60. _____ Total _____

Contradiction

3. _____

8. _____

16. _____

22. _____

27. _____

33. _____

39. _____

44. _____

54. _____

58. _____ Total _____

Total Scores

Volatility _____

Uncertainty _____

Complexity _____

Ambiguity _____

Turbulence _____

Contradiction _____

Range of Scores

Very Low: 10-15 [Total Score]

Low: 16-22

Average: 23-30

High: 31-40

Very High: 41 and Above

Implications

Very High: This condition seems to be having a profound impact on your life and work. You are required to address your world in a new way. This is required whether or not you want to make changes in the processes of problem-solving and decision-making in which you engage. The challenges accompanying this condition might seem to be too great at times for you to address in a consistently successful manner. It is important that you take care of yourself and avoid UVA-Plus induced burn out. You might even wish to consider ways in which to avoid some of the pressing challenges that are associated with this condition.

High: This condition is likely to often be a source of disruption in your life and work. It forces (or enables) you to make changes in the way in which you assign priorities and feel about the world in which you are interacting. You are likely to be solving problems and making decisions in a way that differs from how you approached these critical processes in the past. This condition is likely to be a source of stress in your life—though this stress might be experienced as a source of excitement and opportunity.

Average: This condition is likely to play a role in your life and work but is unlikely to have a major impact or to have much of an influence on the problems you face, the decisions you make or actions you take. This condition is more of an annoyance and periodic source of inconvenience for you than serving as a major challenge.

Low: This condition is likely to be of only marginal concern to you. It rarely plays an important role in your life. You know this is impacting on the life and work of other people with whom you associate, but it is only of minor importance for you.

Very Low: It is remarkable that this condition doesn't seem to have touched your life or work. You are either living and working in a very protected environment, or you have found a way in which to avoid challenges associated with this condition. However, you might wish to challenge your own assumptions about the lack of impact which this condition has had on your life and work. Could you be in denial?

Appendix B: Life-Change Scale

Each of the events listed below represents a significant change or transition in the lives of most people. Each change also has a certain amount of stress associated with it, regardless of whether the change is positive or negative. Please examine each of the changes listed below to determine if this change has occurred in your life *during the past twelve months*. If the change has occurred, then record the given stress score that is associated with the change in the space located to the right of the event. After you have examined the entire list, you might want to add one or two life changes to the list (space is provided at end of list and assign your own stress score to this/these item(s). Then add up all the stress scores that you have recorded in the right-hand column. Record this total at the bottom of the score sheet.

Life Event	Stress Score	Your Score
1. Death of a significant other	100	
2. Divorce	73	
3. Separation from significant other	65	
4. Jail term	63	
5. Death of close family member	63	
6. Personal injury or illness	53	
7. Marriage	50	

8. Fired at work	47	
9. Marital reconciliation	45	
10. Retirement	45	
11. Change in health of family member	44	
12. Pregnancy	40	
13. Sex difficulties	39	
14. Gain of new family member	39	
15. Business readjustment	39	
16. Change in financial state	38	
17. Death of close friend	37	
18. Change to different line of work	36	
19. Change in number of arguments with significant other	35	
20. Mortgage over \$100,000	31	
21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	
22. Change in responsibilities at work	29	
23. Son or daughter leaving home	29	
24. Trouble with in-laws	29	
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28	
26. Significant other beginning or stopping work	26	
27. Beginning or ending school	26	
28. Change in living conditions	25	

29. Revision of personal habits	24	
30. Trouble with boss	23	
31. Change in work hours or conditions	20	
32. Change in residence	20	
33. Change in schools	20	
34. Change in recreational activities	19	
35. Change in religious or spiritual activities	19	
36. Change in social activities	18	
37. Mortgage or loan less than \$100,000	17	
38. Change in sleeping habits	16	
39. Change in number of family get-together	15	
40. Change in eating habits	15	
41. Vacation	13	
42. Celebration of major religious holiday	12	
43. Minor violations of the law	11	

TOTAL SCORE _____

Appendix C: Life Transition Grid

Life Change Score/Age	0-15 Years Old	15-30 Years Old	30-45 Years Old	45-60 Years Old	60-75 Years Old	76 Years Old+
450-525						
375-449						
300-374						
225-299						
150-224						
75-149						
0-74						

Appendix D: The Caffeine Checklist

Our daily behavior is profoundly impacted by our patterns/decisions regarding sleep, exercise, exposure to light, and the consumption of alcohol, tobacco and other mind-altering drugs (including caffeine). It may be hard to assist other people until they are “physiologically primed/prepared” for this assistance. If we are taking more than 250 mg. per day of caffeine, then we are likely to be struggling with inadequate (interrupted) sleep. At 350 mg per day of caffeine, we are likely to experience a diminished capacity to focus on a specific issue for a sustained period of time.

The following Caffeine Consumption Checklist can help us determine our average consumption levels per day—to see if they total 250 mg or even 350 mg of caffeine.

Caffeine Assessment Checklist

....	You Drink	A.	B.	A x B
	This on	Number of	Number	Average
	A Regular	Uses per	Mg. per Use	Daily
	Basis	Day (Aver)	(e.g. 100 mg)	Total
	(Yes/No)	(e.g. "4")	(100 mg=8oz)	

Beverages and Candy

1. **Drip-Brewed Coffee** 100 mg (8 oz cup) _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

2. **Store Coffee:** 150 mg (12 oz mug) _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

[175 mg (14 oz mug)]

[Starbucks 250 mg (20 oz mug)]

3. **Black Tea** 50 mg (8 oz cup) _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

4. **Hot Chocolate (Starbucks)** 20 mg (12 oz) _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

[25 mg (16 oz cup)]

[30 mg (20 oz cup)]

5. **Caffeinated Soda** 40-50 mg _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____
(e.g. Coke, Pepsi) (12 oz can)

6. **Super-Caff Colas** 70 mg (12 oz can) _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____
(e.g. Jolt)

7. **Energy Drinks** 80 mg per can _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____
(e.g. Red Bull) (8+ oz can)

8. **Milk Chocolate Candy** 6 mg per oz _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

9. **Other** _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

Over-the-Counter Medications

1. Max Strength Anacin 32 mg per tablet _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

2. No Doz/Vivarin 200 mg per tablet _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

3. Extra-Strength Excedrin 65 mg per tablet _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

4. Other _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

Prescription Medications

1. Cafergot 100 mg _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

2. Fiorinal 40 mg _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

3. Darvon 32 mg _____ A. _____ B. _____ A x B= _____

TOTAL CAFFEINE INTAKE ON AN AVERAGE DAY _____

Starbucks [Obtained from Starbucks Website]

De-Caff Coffee

12 oz Tall 20 mg 16 oz Grande 25 mg 20 oz Venti® 30 mg

Latte/White Chocolate Mocha

12 oz Tall 75 mg 16 oz Grande 150 mg 20 oz Venti® 150 mg

Frappuccino®

12 oz Tall 90 mg 16 oz Grande 115 mg 20 oz Venti® 160 mg

Café Au Lait

12 oz Tall 115 mg 16 oz Grande 150 mg 20 oz Venti® 195 mg

Caffé Americano (Espresso)

12 oz Tall 150 mg 16 oz Grande 225 mg 20 oz Venti® 300 mg

Use of Insights Generated by the Caffeine Checklist

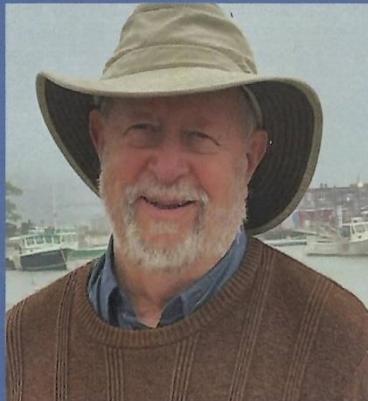
Given your assessment of average level of caffeine consumption, you might wish to address on the following issues:

- Identify the sources of caffeine in our daily life and reflect on the impact of this caffeine on your capacity to concentrate, manage stress and work effectively in interpersonal relationships.

- Consider ways in which to remain alert other than through the consumption of caffeinated products. Perhaps exercise, a morning ritual (such as taking a shower, yoga, stretching) or a good night of sleep.
- Identify settings in which you are most likely to consume caffeinated beverages—before breakfast, during breakfast, on the way to work, around the water cooler, during lunch, after lunch, on the way home from work, during dinner, etc. The environment in which one consistently finds oneself during a specific time of day plays a powerful role in creating expectations and priming one's body for the intake of specific foods, beverages, etc.
- Vary the environment in which you operate from day to day. Habitual behavior can be more easily controlled if the environment is varied. For example, instead of eating breakfast before leaving for work, one can eat breakfast at a local diner once or twice a week on the way to work. Similarly, one can chat about the day's news and events with a colleague while walking around the block rather than at the water cooler (with a cup of coffee in hand).

Dancing Between the Raindrops

*Polystasis, Character, and
The Psychodynamics of Anticipation
In a VUCA-Plus World*



William Bergquist is a consultant, coach, and educator. He has authored more than 60 books, served as president of an international graduate school of psychology for four decades, and founded and curated four digital libraries of psychology, coaching, and health.

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