

## Chapter 37 — The Reëducation of the Will

of *The Physiology of Faith and Fear: or, The Mind in Health and Disease* (1912)

by

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### Sources for Chapter 37, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) Jules **Payot**, Litt.D., Ph.D., *The Education of the Will: The Theory and Practise of Self-Culture* (Authorized Translation by Smith Ely Jelliffe, M.D., Ph.D., Twelfth American Edition) (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909)
- (2) Dr. Charles F. **Winbigler**, *Suggestion: Its Law and Application* (Los Angeles: Published by the Author, 1909)
- (3) Boris **Sidis**, M.A., Ph.D. and Simon P. **Goodhart**, Ph.B., M.D., *Multiple Personality: An Experimental Investigation into the Nature of Human Individuality* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904)
- (4) Oliver **Huckel**, S.T.D., *Mental Medicine: Some Practical Suggestions from a Spiritual Standpoint* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1909)
- (5) E. W. **Taylor**, M.D., “Simple Explanation and Re-education as a Therapeutic Method,” in Morton Prince, M.D., et al., *Psychotherapeutics: A Symposium* (Boston: Richard G. Badger, The Gorham Press, 1909)
- (6) John K. **Mitchell**, M.D., *Self Help for Nervous Women: Familiar Talks on Economy in Nervous Expenditure* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1909)
- (7) George Lincoln **Walton**, M.D., *Those Nerves* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1909)

### Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (or a previous Sadler book) first appears, or where he/she reappears.

- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and Sadler pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.

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## XXXVII: THE RE- ÉDUCATION OF THE WILL

37:0.1 IN the practice of psychotherapy, reéducation must be recognized as a distinct process of mental training. While it may include the valuable and powerful elements of suggestion, it is, nevertheless, dependent for its success upon intelligent, methodical, and persistent educational processes; it is a method of reforming the patient's habit of thought respecting himself, his nervous difficulties, and his other disorders.

### I: THE EVILS TO BE OVERCOME (Payot 3)

Everybody feels the **disproportion** between the excessive **culture of the mind**

and **weakness of the will** (P 20).

### XIV: HOW TO USE SUGGESTION ON ADULTS (Winbigler 298)

**Self-mastery** is manhood in its glory (W 306).

Two men accidentally locked vehicles on a highway.

37:0.2 The will-power of most people is comparatively weak; that is,

there exists a tremendous **disproportion** between the high degree of modern **intellectual culture**

and the humiliating **weakness of the will** in the average man.

**Self-mastery** is not the crowning virtue of the age.

Self-control is the crying need of the hour.

Two men accidentally bumped into each other while walking along a busy street.

## SOURCE

The one stuttered and swore and called the other man all kinds of names.

After he had gotten through, the other man said:

“You have told me what you thought of me,

but I have the consolation of knowing that you do not know what I think of you.”

The other man was so ashamed of himself that he stepped up and said: “Give me your hand and forgive me” (W 306).

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One of them, a high-strung nervous sort of fellow, turned around and began to abuse his brother with all sorts of cursing and swearing,

while the other stood there calmly listening,

and when the abuse had stopped, he said:

“Now, brother, you have told me all about what you think of me,

but I have the satisfaction of knowing that you do not know what I think of you.”

It was such a jolt to the nervous fellow that he shook hands and apologized for his lack of self-control.

## ORGANIZATION OF THE MIND

37:1.1 It will be well in this connection to call attention to the plan upon which the human intellect seems to be organized for work.

## I, IX: NEURON ORGANIZATION AND MULTIPLE PERSONALITY (Sidis & Goodhart 52)

[contd] The investigations of Golgi, Cajal, and others point to the fact that

the **nerve-cell**, especially that of the cortex of the higher forms of life, is an **independent unit**.

The **neurons** form **combinations** of greater and greater complexity;

It is now generally agreed among physiologists and psychologists that

the **nerve cells**, especially those in the cortex of the brain, are individual and relatively **independent units**.

These nerve cells, called **neurons**, form associations and **combinations** of increasing complexity.

SOURCE

the groups form systems, communities, constellations.

These organizations of neurons are not of an anatomical, structural character, but of a purely functional relationship (S&G 52).

The individual mind may be regarded from this point of view as a complex system of many minds

or, more strictly speaking, the psychophysiological individual may be viewed as an organization of many subordinate individuals (S&G 52).

“ ... By means of association fibres the groups are organized into systems, the systems into communities, the communities into clusters, the clusters into constellations, and each of the higher more complex aggregates is more feebly organized by less stable association fibres” (S&G 53).

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The associated groups of neurons form systems and communities,

and these in turn are organized into clusters and constellations.

This organization, in fact, is that of the mind and not of the brain;

it is purely mental, functional, and not in any sense material or anatomical;

so that the organization of the human mind may be looked upon as a complex system of specialized and coordinated powers of consciousness, presided over by the supreme power and authority of the will.

The human intellect may be looked upon as being a complex system of many minds.

As in other phases of life,

the stability of these psychic coördinations decreases as their complexity increases.

SOURCE

[contd] Now, if the constitution of the individual mind be made up of many subordinate individual minds, or of individuals less complex in character, we may well conceive the formation of secondary individualities or of **secondary personalities** in the various states of mental dissociation and degeneration (S&G 53).

[See Chap. 35 and Appendix C.]

[Source?]

III, VI: THE FADING MOMENTS (Sidis & Goodhart 249)

[contd] The hierarchy of moments, from the lowest to the highest ... may be arranged in a series as to intensity and vividness of consciousness ranging from minimum to maximum through all degrees of intensity and vividness. The maximum of **intensity** is in the focus, in the nucleus of the moment,

the minimum is at the periphery (S&G 249).

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This fact, I may say in passing, may be of assistance in accounting for the phenomenon of **multiple personality**,

which has been discussed in another place.

37:1.2 In the practice of psychotherapy, reëducation is nothing more or less than a process of mental re-formation—new groups of ideas are created, and by persistent repetition are forced into positions of power and influence in the scheme of mental organization. The false conclusions, the harmful and unhealthy ideas and groups of ideas, are forced into the background, while the new idea becomes enthroned in a position of power and authority.

37:1.3 While the **intensity** of mental action is greatest in the central consciousness,

it should be remembered that

If, however, the intensity and vividness of consciousness decrease from the centre to the periphery, the extent of **content** increases.... It is clear, then, that as we pass from the centre to the **periphery** the number of outlived moments increases proportionately (S&G 251).

the **contents** of the mind—the number of association groups, etc.,—is greatly increased as we go out toward the **periphery**,

the marginal consciousness.

The central consciousness is concerned with a small number of clear and vivid thoughts, while the marginal consciousness is occupied with an almost infinite host of thoughts and ideas, all of which are more or less hazy and indefinite, and even unconscious.

37:1.4 It is interesting to observe, in this connection, that

A **lighting up** of the subconscious regions can also be brought about by the **use of toxic drugs**.

the **use of certain drugs** is able to **light up**, or make connection with, the marginal consciousness,

The pent-up neuron energy becomes liberated from lower and lowermost moment, consciousness becomes concomitantly manifested and **long forgotten experiences well up to the centre of consciousness**; outlived moments become resurrected and rise to the surface of full consciousness with all the vividness of a present reality.

so that **long-forgotten experiences may be called up into the central consciousness**.

Thus De Quincey, in his “Confessions of an English Opium-Eater,” tells us that

Thus De Quincey, in his “Confessions of an English Opium-eater,” says:

“the minutest incidents of childhood or forgotten scenes of later years were often revived.

37:1.5 “The minutest incidents of childhood or forgotten scenes of later years were often revived by the use of opium.

## SOURCE

I could not be said to recollect them, for if I had been told of them when waking, I should not have been able to acknowledge them as my past experience.

But placed as they were before me in dreams like intuitions and clothed in all their evanescent circumstances, and accompanying feelings, I recognized them instantaneously” (S&G 251).

[Source?]

II, I: FAITH AS A VITAL FORCE  
(Huckel 65)

As Dr. Lewellys F. Barker says:

“The patient afflicted with a so-called ‘functional’ nervous disorder must, it is true, believe in his physician, but the physician’s task is to re-educate the patient to believe in himself.

## 37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

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## IDEAS AND EMOTIONS

37:2.1 A great many of our psychic difficulties arise from a failure properly to control our ideas and regulate our emotions. Others fail to distinguish between their ideas and their emotions. They experience emotions, and then in their confusion, are led to believe that they had really formulated an idea, when they had only experienced a passing emotion, due partially to transient disturbances in the circulation.

37:2.2 It frequently develops that the mind becomes concentrated upon our failures, focussed upon our weaknesses, and there is no hope of success until this matter is controlled or overcome.

As Dr. Barker says:

37:2.3 “The patient afflicted with a so-called ‘functional’ nervous disorder must, it is true, believe in his physician; but the physician’s task is to **reeducate** the patient to believe in himself.



## SOURCE

More than half the ills of one class of nervous patients depend upon a loss of confidence in their own ability, upon a sense of past failure and of future impotency.

They have tried to do things outside their powers, and, having failed, have become convinced that they cannot in any way be efficient.

Their minds are concentrated upon their failures and their disabilities, instead of upon their successes.

It is necessary to teach them how again to become confident and self-reliant, by assigning to them small tasks, well within their powers, and proving to them that they are capable of overcoming difficulty after difficulty.

Many may soon be taught to count victories where formerly every effort spelled defeat” (H 65-66).

## II: THE ROLE OF THE EMOTIONAL STATES IN THE WILL (Payot 70)

[contd] The possibilities of power that the emotional states have over our wills can not be exaggerated (P 70).

## 37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

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37:2.4 The power of emotions for good is not to be ignored,

but they become a dangerous psychic influence when allowed to wield the balance of power in the mind.

It is very easy for an overpowering emotion, in the presence of an unusual situation, entirely to override the will, to displace reason and judgment, literally to sweep the sufferer off his feet.

SOURCE

It is quite possible for a **strong emotion** to drive away the true **interpretation** and to suggest a hallucinatory one which takes the place of the other in our consciousness.

Without stopping to speak of fear in the **night**, which puts the most absurd **interpretation** upon perfectly natural **noises**,

we may remind ourselves how hatred can blind us to the most evident facts (P 74).

[W]orldly people, whose tastes and incapacity have made them superficial, and who never go down deep enough in their own hearts to find out what their real feelings are, ... get into the habit of imagining that they are really feeling the **conventional sentiments**

which it is the **proper** thing in their world to appear to feel,

and this habit finally kills in them the possibility of experiencing real emotions.

This subjection to "what people would say" turns out very agreeable and polished individuals

without the slightest **originality**,

pretty **mechanical** puppets who are worked by strings in other people's hands (P 75-76).

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**Strong emotions** interfere with the correct **interpretation** of sensations,

and otherwise have a tendency to disorganize the reasoning power of the mind as well as to stampede the judgment and the will.

Emotional people may hear all sorts of strange **noises** during the **night** and grossly **misinterpret** the most commonplace disturbances.

37:2.5 There is an unfortunate class of people who have become "**conventionally emotional**";

they are socially trained to experience only those emotions which are **proper** and decorous;

and while they seem to possess well-controlled and beautifully ordered minds,

they have lost their individuality and **originality**;

they have become merely social automatons, **mechanically** following the fashion;

they have but the one standard for the regulation of their thought and conduct—  
“What will people say?”

## THE CONTROL OF EMOTION

It is very evident that if we can juggle with our perceptions and our sentiments which are fairly stable and permanent,

the emotional states would have no difficulty in disturbing those delicate psychological conditions known as **memories** (P 76).

[U]nder whatever form a muscular action takes place, it makes necessary an **expenditure of energy**.... When an impression strikes the senses, the **heart suddenly begins to beat more rapidly,**

the respiration is accelerated, and all the functions of nutrition are, as it were, touched with a whip (P 84).

Our self-esteem is wounded or some malicious **gossip** is brought to us, and immediately, in spite of ourselves, we have a physiological reaction.

37:3.1 If the mind is not carefully organized, and the thinking conducted in a systematic and orderly fashion,

the emotions, when running riot, may even go into the realm of **memory** and there pervert, distort, and destroy our very recollections of things.

Emotions **excite the heart to increased action,** and in a variety of ways produce an extravagant **expenditure of vital energy.**

This is probably due to the fact that when strong emotions are experienced, the higher nervous centres, so to speak, take it for granted that the body will be thrown into more or less violent sympathetic action; thus they anticipate the need of increased circulation, and at once start the machinery to going at increased speed.

37:3.2 Why should intelligent human beings be so agitated and thrown into extraordinary panic by hearing a piece of **gossip,** or by discovering that some one has told a falsehood about them?

SOURCE

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Just the other day we saw a splendid woman almost go into a fit of hysteria upon learning a bit of gossip about herself which had been peddled about the neighborhood.

Our heart begins to beat irregularly and convulsively... The blood is sent rushing to the brain in violent jerks, ... starting up a torrent of violent thoughts, visions of vengeance, and absurd, exaggerated impractical ideas.

She had palpitation of the heart,

twitching of the muscles, pain in her right side, and a violent headache, which lasted for two days. She was first white in the face, then flushed.

And this picture represents the common experience of those who suffer from deficient emotional control.

Our philosophy looks on helplessly at this wholly animal outbreak of passion, which it disapproves of and deplors. Why this helplessness? Simply because our emotions have invariably an antecedent visceral disturbance over which our wills have no control (P 86-87).

It is nothing more or less than an animal outburst of passion,

although it may be called "righteous indignation," and by sundry other dignified and civilized names.

37:3.3 Emotion represents a very intimate interassociation between the mind and the body. The man who would acquire a high degree of self-control must begin on the emotions. Never suppress or annihilate them—rather control and coördinate them.

SOURCE

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Those who have chronic congestion in any one organ of the body; those who suffer chronically from cold hands and feet and pale skins, are much more likely than others to become victims of violent emotional outbreaks. To balance the circulation and purify the blood will greatly aid in securing control of the emotions.

[I]f the emotions are so strong in us;

If the emotions are not controlled,

they will eventually evolve into veritable psychic desperadoes,

if they domineer **in their own fashion** over our perceptions, memories, judgments, and reasonings,

charging around through the mind **in disorderly fashion,**

and if the fiercer emotions even **annihilate the tenderer ones;**

utterly **destroying the finer sensibilities,**

if, in a word, they exercise almost unlimited despotism, they will remain **tyrants** to the end,

building themselves up into **tyrannical masters,**

swaying the mind at will,

and will never take orders from our **reason** or bow to our will (P 89-90).

and utterly supplanting **reason** and judgment.

37:3.4 It is a common experience that

Nevertheless, when an emotion wells up within us, we can refuse to allow ourselves to express it externally. For the expression of **anger**, it is positively necessary to have the fist clenched, the jaws set, the muscles of the face contracted, and to pant as one draws one's breath.

**anger** is augmented by indulging in muscular gesticulations and physical demonstrations.

I can command my muscles to relax and my lips to smile; I can check my spasmodic breathing and draw my breath slowly (P 95-96).

To suppress the physiological reaction of temper

SOURCE

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Is it not true that dogs and children, and even grown-up people,

does much to control the anger at its seat—in the mind.

who begin to fight with each other in play,

A common illustration of this is shown in the case of children,

generally end up by getting angry with each other in earnest? (P 93)

who often begin their pranks with a playful scuffle

and end up with a dead-in-earnest, hand-to-hand slugging match.

**HOW NEUROSES ORIGINATE**

“SIMPLE EXPLANATION AND RE-EDUCATION AS A THERAPEUTIC METHOD” (Taylor, in Prince 77)

From the foregoing discussion I wish to emphasize the following points: First, the wide prevalence of neuroses based on ignorance

37:4.1 The larger part of our nervous disturbances and psychic disorders have their origin in wrong methods of thinking—false conclusions and uncontrolled emotions.

rather than inherent or acquired weak nervous organization (T 82).

Examples may make this clearer.

For example,

A patient consults a physician in a highly disturbed nervous state popularly known as neurasthenic. The analysis of the entire situation reveals the fact that this patient considers that he has lost his memory (T 82-83).

a woman begins to lose her memory, so she thinks.

From this as a starting point he argues, legitimately enough from his knowledge, as follows:

She at once begins to reason that

SOURCE

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I cannot remember what I have read; my memory must therefore be weakened; memory is a fundamental quality of the normal mind; my mind therefore must be failing,

a loss of memory means loss of mind,

and forthwith one of the commonest and most distressing and incapacitating phobias is developed, namely, the imminent fear of insanity. In such a commonplace instance as this it is clear that the patient's mind has worked out a rational conclusion from false premises... (T 83).

and that loss of mind eventually spells insanity;

so she at once begins to plan on going crazy.

She thinks about it, worries about it, and talks about it until her mind is so unsettled that she consults a physician. Unless she is rescued by the skilful employment of reëducation, it is even probable that she may effect a temporary derangement of her mind.

A further example illustrative of the point of view I am attempting to impress

37:4.2 Another illustration of the origin of nervous disorders

is the mental condition ordinarily associated with insomnia.

is found in the attitude that many persons take toward loss of sleep and its consequences.

There is a deeply rooted feeling in the popular mind that

It is a universal belief that

sleep is an absolute essential to continued mental health and conversely the deprivation of sleep is a direct sign of both physical and mental breakdown (T 83).

one will soon get sick or go crazy if he does not have regular sleep.

SOURCE

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The treatment [of a patient troubled by lack of loss of sleep] stated in barest outline was in the first place to explain that ... complete physical and mental rest without sleep would suffice to restore him for work of the succeeding day,

and finally that could he compose himself to such complete physical and mental rest, sleep would naturally follow (T 84).

I have in mind a patient, a middle-aged man of active business interests, who ... assumed that inasmuch as sleep was essential to continued health and he was certainly not having a normal amount of sleep, he could not continue well (T 84).

It would be easy to multiply cases of this sort, illustrative of the part which **incorrect deductions** play in the development of most varied neurotic conditions (T 85).

It is not generally known that

ordinary rest in bed, or even being comfortably seated in a chair, will very largely take the place of sleep.

The layman does not understand that he can go without sleep for weeks, and have comparatively little sleep for months, without in any way permanently or seriously harming the mental or physical health, provided he is able quietly to lie in bed and rest.

We frequently find persons who have reasoned and worried themselves into a state of chronic neurasthenia because they do not sleep soundly for eight or nine hours every night.

They talk about their disturbed sleep, their lack of sleep, their inability to sleep—it has become a hobby with them; they think about it and talk about it all the time. A great many of these persons, if they would become thoroughly indifferent to sleep, would probably be able to secure an abundance of refreshing rest in short order.

37:4.3 These are but common illustrations of **false methods of reasoning** which make nervous wrecks out of many people.



A nervous dyspeptic will render himself miserable over what his dyspepsia might grow into, when the truth is, his stomach troubles would largely disappear if he would quit thinking about them. So, in many other ways, nervous and emotional people reason themselves into a maze of difficulties, and worry themselves into a tangle of fictitious troubles and imaginary obstacles.

### METHOD OF PRACTISING REËDUCATION

37:5.1 More or less psycho-analysis must precede the successful practice of psychic reëducation. It will not be necessary here to repeat the principles underlying psycho-analysis or mental diagnosis, which were discussed in the chapter on psychotherapy.

Our first object as practitioners is the determination so far as lies in our power of the exact cause of the condition we are called upon to treat. In other words, a diagnosis is demanded.... We must search the mind of the individual for the source of his discomfort in appropriate cases in exactly the same spirit in which we search his body for the source of other discomforts (T 79).

After having carefully examined the mind of the patient

and having arrived at a diagnosis of the underlying causes of his nervous disorders and psychic difficulties,

The word “explanation” used in the title describes somewhat inadequately the actual procedure, which consists essentially in the following steps:

the method to be pursued in the process of reëducating the patient’s mind and strengthening the will may be summarized as follows:

## SOURCE

First. After eliminating or properly estimating **physical** causes

the mental attitude of the patient toward his ailment should be carefully determined; in other words, a **diagnosis** should be made.

Second. This is best accomplished by **allowing him to tell his complete story** rather than by a primary process of interrogation on the part of the physician (T 79).

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37:5.2 1. Make sure that you have not overlooked any **physical** condition or bodily disease which may be acting as a contributing cause in the mental disturbances or nervous disorders.

See that digestion, circulation, metabolism, and elimination are proceeding normally.

37:5.3 2. One of the best methods of arriving quickly at a mental diagnosis is to **allow the patient to tell his story**—talk it all out.

It is the author's practice, after getting pleasantly settled in the office and becoming fairly well acquainted with the patient, to start him on his story and never to interrupt, never to ask a single question, until he has finished talking. We knew of a nervous woman who talked of herself this way for an hour and a half; made up her mind she was the "biggest fool in town"; analyzed the cause of her difficulty, and within six weeks had practised reëducation and auto-suggestion on herself to the point where she was completely restored. It was one of the most successful and remarkable cases the author has ever met.

37:5.4 3. After the patient's story is told, **arrive at just as accurate a diagnosis** as possible respecting the false methods of reasoning and the erroneous conclusions which have led him into this neurotic condition.

SOURCE

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It is absolutely necessary that the definite ideas, emotions, and false conclusions shall be isolated, preparatory to the successful employment of reëducation.

[contd] Third. Having determined the false point of view almost invariably revealed which has led up to the neurosis

37:5.5 4. Now that the examination and diagnosis are completed,

the time has come for reëducational therapeutics.

Begin at once to point out to the patient the exact error in the working of the mental machinery.

the attempt is made to explain why such a series of events as that disclosed would be likely to lead to this result (T 79).

Explain simply, fully, and specifically, wherein the trouble lies.

Be methodic and positive as far as you are conversant with the case. Explain things to the patient honestly, frankly, and fully, just as they appear to you. Lay aside all this nonsense about laymen not being able to understand their diseases. If explained in plain English, it is the author's experience that most patients are able to understand their difficulties just about as well as a physician. Endeavor to make a logical, full, and rational presentation of the whole thing to the patient's mind, just as it appears to you.

[contd] Fourth. Having impressed the patient with the correctness of the physician's point of view

37:5.6 5. The next essential step, having laid matters before these nervous patients, is to secure their full confidence and hearty cooperation;

the process of readjustment begins, or, to use the more popular but possibly too comprehensive term, his re-education (T 79).

and then day by day and week by week continue that persistent, systematic, and methodical work of repeating this story, building it up, developing it and adding to it from time to time,

## SOURCE

Fifth. This is accomplished by pointing out in a painstaking way the correct way to mental health through a realization on the part of the patient of his previous misconceptions

and through an accompanying effort toward the establishment of more rational mental adjustments (T 79-80).

[The possibilities of the method] are that it may be used by any intelligent physician who realizes its importance; the personality of the physician about which we still continue to hear plays a small part in its success. It requires no special training,

psychological or otherwise,

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until the new teaching comes to occupy the centre of the stage and effectually drive the old and false ideas into the background.

37:5.7 6. It is highly important that

these nervous patients should specifically recognize wherein their former mental habits (their old ways of looking at things) were wrong.

It is highly essential that they should individually recognize their mistakes and acknowledge them, for in these cases confession is good for the soul. See to it that their false ideas of disease are cast out of the mind.

Make them definitely promise to work with you toward the development of the new and right ideas.

## T H E R A N G E O F REEDUCATION

37:6.1 It will readily appear that

the practice of this method of psychotherapy requires no unusual skill, no extraordinary knowledge,

not even special knowledge respecting psychology on the part of the practitioner.

SOURCE

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beyond that which every educated physician might easily acquire (T 85).

It is entirely possible for certain people who have awakened to a recognition of their psychic condition to practise this method upon themselves; in which case it would, of course, partake largely of the nature of auto-suggestion.

Any physician can practise this method upon his patients; any intelligent parent can utilize it in child culture; any wide-awake teacher can use it in the work of teaching. And herein lies its greatest power; that is, it is practical and entirely free from deception, sophistry, and delusion. This method is certainly the most simple, and at the same time the most successful, of all the procedures of modern psychotherapy.

37:6.2 It is a great mistake to shock nervous patients by telling them they are abnormally neurotic, neurasthenic, or psychasthenic.

[Repeated from 37:4.1: From the foregoing discussion I wish to emphasize the following points: First, the wide prevalence of neuroses based on ignorance rather than inherent or acquired weak nervous organization (T 82).]

It is our practice to tell such patients that they are in difficulty as the result of ignorance,

or from long-continued misinterpretation of their emotions, or as a result of false reasoning and the formation of unsound conclusions.

We often explain to such patients that they have reasoned entirely right, that they are not to be blamed for the conclusions they formed, but that their mistake consisted in the fact that

## SOURCE

[Repeated from 37:4.1: In such a commonplace instance as this it is clear that the patient's mind has worked out a rational conclusion from false premises ... (T 84).]

It is a common-sense method of approach to many of the minor ills and some of the major disorders to which all persons are exposed.

It does not demand hypnotic procedure, or the use of suggestion

as that word is ordinarily employed.

Its essential basis is an appeal to reason and herein naturally lies its wide applicability (T 85).

It will naturally fail in the psychoses, in hysterical states associated with fundamental disorders of personality, and in obsessional conditions of a high degree of fixity, matters to which no doubt others taking part in this discussion will refer (T 85).

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they began to reason from a false premise;

and then we seek to make clear to them the falsity of their premises, substituting therefor a true basis. Almost immediately they begin the process of reasoning themselves out of trouble, just as formerly they so disastrously reasoned themselves into trouble.

It is not so debilitating and humiliating to be told that we are ignorant as it is to be told we are neurotic or neurasthenic.

37:6.3 This method of reëducation may be used on a large range of worried, nervous, so-called neurotic patients.

It demands neither hypnosis nor suggestion,

as that term is ordinarily understood.

It occupies the greatest possible field of psychic endeavor;

and while it is useful and successful in a large number of cases, and results in greatly strengthening the mind, in the end it is found to be nothing more or less than a process of reëducating the will.

It must be remembered that

it is probably inadequate in marked cases of hysteria, in disorders of personality, and in extreme cases of obsession.

## REFLECTION AND ACTION

[The mind with a weak will thinks rapidly and superficially. The strong will compels deep, deliberate, and logical thought (6:3.1).]

37:7.1 The strong mind acts slowly; the weak mind acts quickly, on the spur of the moment.

### III, I: THE PART OF MEDITATIVE REFLECTION IN THE EDUCATION OF THE WILL (Payot 141)

While in reverie or **day-dreams** the attention sleeps, allowing a troop of ideas and sentiments to dance lightly in and out of consciousness, permitting the whimsical and unforeseen combinations according to chance association of ideas,

**Daydreaming** is good for the imagination, and is a pleasant and profitable exercise for the mind;

nevertheless, we should never allow the creations of our daydreaming to assume control of the intellectual reins.

We need to cultivate the habit of

meditative **reflection** leaves nothing to chance (P 141).

**reflection**—

that is, of thinking before we act.

The acquirement of the reflection habit would save us a great deal of unnecessary suffering and sorrow.

[contd] Nevertheless, it differs wholly from **study** which aims to acquire exact knowledge, in that its tendency is not to stock the mind with facts, but to make it glow with creative energy, or as Montaigne has said, “to forge the mind, not furnish it” (P 141).

By reflection we do not mean **study**, or mere thinking.

While **study leads to knowledge**,

**Study leads to knowledge**,

meditative reflection should lead to **action** (P 143).

but reflection is manifested in **action**.

The highest degree of reflection is possible only in the presence of a high degree of will-power. As we strengthen the will by reëducation, the mind will have a better opportunity to reflect, and then our actions will become better ordered and controlled. (See Fig. 36.)

**Payot** has very fittingly described the processes which take place when the mind is held composed and under the influence of a dominant idea. He says:

In chemistry we learn that if one plunges a crystal into a solution in which several substances are held in saturation,

the molecules of the same nature as the crystal, drawn together from the depths of the solution by some mysterious attraction, will begin to group themselves slowly around it.

The crystal grows little by little, and if it is kept perfectly quiet for weeks or months, it will form those wonderful crystals whose size and beauty are the joy and pride of the laboratory.

But if the solution be constantly jarred or disturbed, the deposit will be formed irregularly, the crystal will be imperfect and will remain small.

The same thing is true in psychology.

If one keeps any psychological state whatever in the foreground of consciousness it will insensibly, by an affinity no less mysterious than the other, gradually attract to itself other intellectual and affectional states of the same nature.

37:7.2 “In chemistry we learn that if one plunges a crystal into a solution in which several substances are held in saturation,

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If one keeps any psychological state whatever in the foreground of consciousness, it will insensibly, by an affinity no less mysterious than the other, gradually attract to itself other intellectual states of the same nature.



## SOURCE

If this condition is kept up for a long time, it will gather around it an organized group of forces of considerable power, and will acquire a decisive and almost absolute control in consciousness, silencing every other idea that is opposed to it.

If this “crystallization” goes on slowly without disturbance or interruption, it will acquire a remarkably strong character.

The group of feelings thus formed will be sharply defined, powerful, and calm.

And, here we may note that there is perhaps no idea which cannot, if we so wish, create within us such a group or “clan” of associated ideas.

Religious ideas, maternal feeling, and even such low, despicable sentiments as love of money for its own sake, may rise up in us and gain this powerful ascendancy (P 144-145).

[contd] But few are the men and still fewer are the young men who possess the calmness necessary to carry on this work of slow “crystallization” (P 145).

The most efficacious way of attaining this mastery of self is to arouse vigorous likes or vehement dislikes in the soul.

He must there fore try to keep in mind certain reflections which will help him to make himself love work and detest an easy, useless, stupid, idle life (P 150).

## 37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

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## SELF-MASTERY

37:8.1 “The most efficacious way of attaining this mastery of self is to arouse vigorous likes or vehement dislikes in the soul.

We must, therefore, try to keep in mind certain reflections which will help us to make ourselves love work and detest an easy, useless, stupid, idle life.

**SOURCE**

Moreover, words follow one another so quickly and call up such a multitude of pictures that none of them achieve any distinctness.

As a result, these superficial evocations merely fatigue the mind uselessly.

A sort of stupefaction is produced by this jumble of images which comes to nothing.

The remedy for this evil is to see things clearly and in great detail.

For example do not say: "My parents will be pleased!" but call up a picture of your father, imagine that you are seeing the manifestation of his joy at each of your successes, picture him receiving the congratulations of his friends and his family.

Try to imagine your mother's pride, and her pleasure during the vacation when she strolls up and down on the arm of the son of whom she is so proud; imagine yourself invisibly present at the evening meal where they are talking of you (P 152).

**III, III: THE ROLE OF ACTION IN THE EDUCATION OF THE WILL (Payot 208)**

[contd] Meditative reflection is an indispensable element in the education of the will, but by itself it is powerless.

It gathers the scattered forces of the mind together for united action and gives enthusiasm and incentive;

**37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR**

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37:8.3 "Meditative reflection is an indispensable element in the education of the will, but by itself it is powerless.

It gathers the scattered forces of the mind together for united action and gives enthusiasm and incentive;

## SOURCE

but, just as the strongest winds of heaven pass uselessly by if they meet no sail to swell and drive forward, so even the most powerful emotions lie sterile if they do not, each time that they arise, contribute some of their energy to our activity,

in the same way that some of the work a student does is registered in his memory (P 208).

Nothing is lost in our psychological life; nature is a most scrupulous accountant.

Those actions which appear the most insignificant, if only they are constantly repeated, will form for us in the course of weeks or months or years an enormous total which is inscribed in organic memory in the form of ineradicable habits (P 208-09).

This crystallization of our energy into habits can not be accomplished by meditative reflection; it requires action (P 209).

We must add to these observations, that unmethodical, *scattered* work is very wearying, and that what often is imputed to the work itself, comes from work which is merely badly directed.

The thing that wearies one is the multiplicity of occupations which bring with them none of the joy of an accomplished task.

When the mind is drawn in several different directions, it always has a sense of dull uneasiness during its work.

It is the undertakings which are left in a rough, unfinished state that give rise to such wearisome mental worry (P 243).

## 37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

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This crystallization of our energy into habits cannot be accomplished by meditative reflection alone; it requires action.

37:8.4 "Unmethodical, scattered work is very wearying, and what often is imputed to the work itself, comes from work which is merely badly directed.

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It is the undertakings which are left in a rough, unfinished state that give rise to such wearisome mental worry."

## SYSTEM IN THOUGHT AND WORK

III: CONTROL OF NERVOUSNESS,  
CONTINUED (Mitchell 70)

System (Mitchell 90)

System is what is wanted, a methodical, planned system,

elastic enough to be livable, and yet exact enough to hold one to the performance of certain duties at certain stated times (M 91).

To make your necessary duties and work as systematic as possible is an approach to performing them automatically

and saves small anxieties, does away with the constant making of decisions, and the over consideration of trifles.

37:9.1 As a part of the therapeutics of reëducation, the author has found it very desirable to

insist upon the reorganization of the patient's life upon a systematic basis,

to make provision for the regular and periodic performance of certain tasks,

so that when established in healthy channels,

these acts shall become automatic;

in other words, to lay the foundation for good habits, to whose power we trust for the final overthrow and vanquishing of the bad habits.

Further, the systematic method of doing big things

assists in overcoming the tendency to worry over the difficulties represented by a host of inconsequential trifles in the daily life.

Now, it is necessary to watch some nervous patients.

SOURCE

37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

By advising system I do not mean to recommend that sort of **craze for orderliness**

which so often **defeats** itself and causes more trouble than it brings help (M 90).

I: OF NERVOUSNESS IN GENERAL—  
(Mitchell 11)

**Neurasthenia** (Mitchell 12)

A case of real nervous exhaustion may be so bad as to render the patient unable to exert so much nerve-force as is needed to walk up stairs but one hears a person who is merely rather tired and irritable announce with unctious that he has **nervous exhaustion** (M 14).

It is very important that

you do not too soon over-emphasize the necessity for system, or else the patient may merely throw his mental switches and suddenly acquire a veritable **craze for orderliness**,

and thus **defeat** the real purpose of your therapeutic procedures.

It is necessary to study one's strength, and then to arrange for a proper amount of physical and mental work, and not be too easily frightened by apparent weariness of mind and body;

for what some patients call **"nervous collapse"** is nothing more or less than a common, everyday tired feeling—normal and natural fatigue.

37:9.2 Systematic, natural, and honest ways of thinking about things and looking at things will do much to deliver nervous people from their bondage. We must learn to call things by their right names and to look upon them in their true relationship.

There is nothing to be gained by allowing jealous, high-tempered, gossiping women to call their troubles "sensitive nerves,"

## SOURCE

To quote a personal experience, in my note-books of the past year are found cases described by the physicians referring them as “neurasthenias” among which are several varieties of insanity, some of them actual wild mania, others of beginning softening of the brain, of melancholia, of hysteria, and not a few which turned out on examination to be well-defined forms of clearly marked organic disease ... (M 13).

### Definition of Nervousness (Mitchell 15)

The disease or disorder, the original “causing cause” of the nervousness, may be very remote, may be mental, moral, or physical, but to treat the resulting symptom with any fair promise of success we have to seek out this source of trouble and remove it (M 20).

## IX: FEARS (Walton 103)

The cultivation of courage by taking thought may seem like pulling oneself up by the boot-straps; but courage and cowardice are purely mental traits

and can be materially modified by mental processes (W 105).

Better play the game than bewail the handicap (W 110).

## 37: THE PHYSIOLOGY OF FAITH AND FEAR

while one doctor calls it neurasthenia and another hysteria.

The best way is to put your finger directly on the devilment, and then work intelligently for its removal.

37:9.3 Too many people are nervous cowards. Their souls are literally filled with fear, but it should be recognized that

courage and cowardice are mere states of mind,

and that they are susceptible of control by the will-power.

Thousands of people are constantly bemoaning their shortcomings and recounting their obstacles. Of just such people it has very fittingly been said,

“Better play the game than bewail the handicap.”

## SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. Reëducation, as a procedure in psychotherapy, is dependent for its success on intelligent, methodical, and persistent educational processes—it is a reforming of the habits of thought respecting oneself.

2. The human mind is organized on the basis of associated groups of ideas which are in turn formed into systems, communities, clusters, and constellations, with increasing complexity. This organization is functional, not anatomical.

3. The central consciousness is active with a small number of clear and vivid thoughts, while the marginal consciousness is occupied with an indefinite host of hazy and even unconscious thoughts and ideas.

4. Many psychic disorders arise from a failure to control ideas and regulate emotions. Nervous disturbances frequently result from the continuous contemplation of one's failures and blunders.

5. It is entirely possible for an overpowering emotion absolutely to override the will, to displace reason and judgment, to sweep the sufferer off his feet.

6. Uncontrolled emotions disorganize the circulation, agitate the nerves, and diminish strength. On the other hand, a well-balanced circulation assists in gaining control of the emotions.

7. If the emotions are not properly controlled, they may evolve into psychic desperadoes, demoralizing the intellect, tyrannizing over the will, and utterly supplanting all judgment and reason.

8. Anger is usually augmented by gesticulations and other physical demonstrations. To suppress the physiological reaction of temper does much toward controlling anger.

9. Many nervous disorders owe their origin to false fears—fear of losing the memory, fear of going crazy, fear of losing one's mind from lack of sleep. Such sufferers are cured by demonstrating the falsity of their fears.

10. Following psycho-analysis and mental diagnosis, therapeutic reëducation is practised by repeatedly, frankly, and fully explaining the real cause of the patient's nervous disorder, pointing out specifically wherein his reasoning and conclusions are false.

11. Reëducation is adapted to the treatment of all sorts of neurotic and neurasthenic patients. It requires neither hypnotism nor suggestion. It is inadequate for the cure of profound hysteria, persistent obsessions, and disorders of personality.

12. Strong minds act slowly; weak minds act on the spur of the moment. Study leads to knowledge, but reflection leads to action. "Crystallization" of thought goes on slowly in the mind—calmness is essential.

13. "This crystallization of our energy into habits cannot be accomplished by meditative reflection alone; it requires action."

14. An essential part of reëducation is the reorganization of the life conduct upon a systematic basis. The systematic method of doing big things assists in overcoming the worry about small things.

15. Some nervous persons make a craze out of orderliness. They have "nervous collapse" on experiencing the least mental weariness or physical fatigue. We have too many nervous cowards. "Better play the game than bewail the handicap."