

Part IV — The Secrets of Emotional Control

from *How You Can Be Happy* (1926)

by William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S.

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Sources for Part IV, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) William S. Sadler, M.D., **“Do People Get On Your Nerves?”**, in *The American Magazine*, October 1925, pp. 24-25, 156, 158, 160
- (2) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., ***Worry and Nervousness***, Or, *The Science of Self-Mastery, New and Revised* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co, 1923)

Note: The passage cited in 4:4.2 appeared in the original 1914 edition of *Worry and Nervousness* as well.

- (3) William S. Sadler, M.D., F.A.C.S., ***What a Salesman Should Know About His Health*** (Chicago and New York: The Dartnell Corporation, 1923)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author (or 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.

Note: Since *How You Can Keep Happy* is full of such passages, I have pinked only the especially significant ones.

- (f) **Light blue** indicates passages which strongly resemble something in the Urantia Book, or which allude to the Urantia phenomenon.

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IV: THE SECRETS OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL

4:0.1 IN OUR discussion of the essentials of happiness, the luxuries of happiness, and joy-killers, frequent mention has been made of the instincts and emotions; this phase of our subject is more fully presented in the appendix, for the sake of those who may be disposed to give more thought to the biologic and psychologic aspects of human instincts, emotions, sentiments, and convictions.

4:0.2 In this section I desire to give more attention to the question of emotional control, to explain to my readers more fully and in detail how to go about this business of gaining control of the emotions, and thus directly to insure the possession of happiness.

4:0.3 Since the control, or the failure to control, our emotions is directly and indirectly responsible for our experience of happiness or unhappiness, it becomes highly important that we know how to become masters of our emotions, to become experts in the practice of the art of intelligent self-control.

“DO PEOPLE GET ON YOUR NERVES?” (*The American Magazine* 25)

[contd from 1:3.59] Now let us suppose that *you* are one of these high-strung, inordinately sensitive souls;

that you carry your nerves on the outside of your skin; and that somebody is always getting on them.

This means that

4:0.4 Now, let us suppose that you are one of these high-strung, inordinately sensitive souls;

that you carry your nerves on the outside of your skin, and that somebody is always getting on them.

If this is the case, it would be a good thing to remember that

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

you are the slave of everybody who gets on your nerves.

But since you have this trouble, the one thing you want to know is what to do about it, and that is the purpose of this article (*TAM* 25).

[contd] You

are certainly doomed to lifelong suffering unless you acquire some degree of emotional control.

I have just talked with a newly married woman.

She thought she was entering into a lifelong union with a hero, and something has happened since her marriage to disillusion her.

She says he is always hurting her feelings; that he is unkind; that he is not thoughtful; that he is cross.

She got sick and went to bed the other day because he read his paper nearly the whole time during breakfast, and hardly spoke to her.

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*you are the slave of everybody who gets on your nerves.*¹

They have you all wrapped around their little fingers. They play the tune and you dance. They take snuff and you sneeze.²

But since you have this trouble, the one thing you want to know is what to do about it, and that is the purpose of this section.

4:0.5 You

folks who are hypersensitive

are doomed to lifelong suffering—unless you acquire some degree of emotional control.

I have just talked with a newly married woman.

Of course, in marrying her husband

she thought she was entering into a lifelong union with a hero, but something has happened since her marriage.

She says he is always hurting her feelings; that he is unkind; that he is not thoughtful; that he is cross.

She just got sick and went to bed the other day because he read his paper nearly the whole time during breakfast, and hardly spoke to her,

and she says he even comes home in the evening, gets in a comfortable chair, puts on his slippers, smokes his pipe, and just reads and reads.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

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She had supposed they would spend all of their lives courting just like they did before they were married (*TAM* 25-26).

She supposed they would spend all of their lives courting just as they did before they were married.

[contd] I don't want to excuse this man.

4:0.6 Now I don't want to excuse this man.

I believe there ought to be courtship after marriage.

I believe there ought to be some courtship after marriage.

Maybe some married man will read this and straightway go and buy his wife a box of candy, or take home some flowers.

Maybe some married man will read this and straightway go and buy his wife a box of candy and take home some flowers.

It wouldn't do any harm if he did.

It wouldn't do any harm if he did.

It is hardly a square deal to court a woman morning, noon, and night before you are married, and then forget all these things after marriage.

But

4:0.7 But,

on the other hand,

I told this woman that her husband had to make a living;

I told this woman that her husband had to make a living,

and get the money to pay her servants and keep up the automobile;

that he had some other things to do in life besides just keeping up these little attentions of their courting days.

that he had some other things to do in life besides just keeping up these little attentions of their courting days,

That didn't make much headway.

but I didn't seem to make much headway.

She is brokenhearted; she is killed. She didn't tell me so, but I think she has just about reached the conclusion that all men are brutes—cruel, hardhearted, selfish animals.

Next, I advised her to go home and try the plan of a trained nurse I knew who got married,

4:0.8 I advised her to go home and try the plan of the trained nurse I knew, who got married,

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

and when her husband began bringing the morning paper to the breakfast table,

she excused herself and returned with her sewing.

She sat at the table and sewed a little, and then ate a bite.

He took the hint and stopped reading the paper at the breakfast table (*TAM* 26).

[contd] In contrast with this story, I should tell you of one of my friends,

a man who married a confirmed hysteric.

The very moment his wife couldn't have her way—the very moment her will was crossed—

she had a regular fit, keeled over, rolled her eyes, and for all the world acted just as if she were dying.

She got perfectly stiff sometimes, while on other occasions she cried, screamed, and carried on in outlandish fashion.

She kept her husband scared to death for eighteen months, until he had her examined and diagnosed;

and now both of them—with the help of the doctor—are struggling to get the best of these cantankerous nerves.

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and when her husband began bringing the morning paper to the breakfast table,

she excused herself one morning and returned with her sewing.

She sat at the table and sewed a little, and then ate a bit,

until finally her husband stopped reading and asked, "What's the matter?" "Oh, nothing, I just had some important sewing I wanted to finish."

He took the hint.

4:0.9 In contrast with this story, I should tell you of the misfortune of one of my patients,³

a man who has married a confirmed hysteric.

Just the moment his wife can't have her way—the very moment her will is crossed—

she has a regular fit, keels over, rolls her eyes, and for all the world acts like she were dying.

She gets perfectly stiff sometimes, while on other occasions she cries, screams, and carries on in an outlandish fashion.

She kept her husband scared to death for eighteen months—until he had her examined and diagnosed;

and now both of them—with the help of the doctor—are struggling to get the best of these cantankerous nerves.

This husband is having to “bring his wife up;” to administer the discipline her parents should have given her when she was a child (*TAM* 26).

[contd] Fortunately, her husband was very fond of her,

and so,

when we broke the news to him as to what the real trouble was he was willing to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

This husband is having to “bring up his wife”—having to administer the discipline that her parents should have given her when she was a child.

1. NERVOUS SLAVERY— EMOTIONAL SPRAWLS

4:1.1 It is remarkable how many “spoiled children” a doctor meets in his office. If you are once “spoiled,” you will remain “spoiled” until you take yourself in hand and undo the “spoiling.”

4:1.2 Perhaps it might help some reader if I told the story of this woman and what had to be done to help her overcome these hysterical fits. She was twenty-six years of age, an only daughter; had been raised in a good home, one with a fair amount of discipline, but her parents had always allowed her to have her own way. Frankly she was a spoiled child. Both her parents were very nervous; her mother had this same hysterical tendency, but had been more fortunately raised and had kept it under more or less control most of her life.

4:1.3 Fortunately, this woman’s husband was very fond of her

(and you should understand that she was a woman of many estimable traits, there were a lot of splendid things in her character)

and so,

I say, the husband being very fond of her,

when we broke the news to him as to what the real trouble was, he was willing to enlist for the duration of the conflict.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

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The woman herself was not at all enthusiastic about following out our régime,

but she was convinced that the diagnosis was right, reluctant though she was to admit it (*TAM* 26).

[contd] A PRACTICAL nurse

was employed for three months, and put in immediate charge of the case.

In general, we treated this grown-up woman just as we would an infant—three months or three years old.

She was given just a certain amount of time in which to get up and dress.

She ate breakfast on the dot.

Her breakfast was provided for her—

When I explained partially the course of procedure,

the woman herself was not at all enthusiastic about following out our régime,

but she was convinced that the diagnosis was right, reluctant though she was to admit it,

and so at last the fight began. She decided to declare war on her slave-driving nerves.

4:1.4 A practical nurse,

a woman with considerable horse-sense,

was secured for three months, and was put in immediate charge of the case.

This woman has a written program made out a week in advance which covers what she is to do every hour of the day from 6 o'clock in the morning to 11 o'clock at night. The nurse even has instructions as to what she is to do for her at night in case she doesn't sleep well, so that the whole twenty-four hours of each day is provided for.

4:1.5 In general, we treat this grown-up woman just as we would an infant—three months or three years old.

She is given just a certain amount of time in which to get up and dress

and make her toilet.

She eats breakfast on the dot.

Her breakfast is provided for her—

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

most of which she liked, but some things which were good for her she ate whether she liked them or not.

She did a certain amount of housework immediately after breakfast, and went with the nurse to do the marketing.

She had a pretty busy morning, varied from day to day, owing to the needs of the household, until her light lunch at twelve-thirty.

From one to three

she lay down in bed and relaxed, whether she slept or not (*TAM* 26).

[contd] At three o'clock the program began again, and kept up until her six-thirty dinner,

and then the nurse went off duty, and her husband took charge for the evening.

Every other evening was spent at home in relaxing,

and she was allowed to do as she pleased until her evening neutral bath at nine-thirty.

Alternate evenings with this rest treatment at home, she went out in society, to entertainments, lectures, or shows.

She was a very busy woman.

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most of which she likes, but some things which are good for her she eats whether she likes them or not.

She does a certain amount of housework immediately after breakfast, goes with the nurse to do the marketing.

She started out walking three blocks a day, with the addition of one block each day.

She goes through a pretty busy morning, varied from day to day, owing to the needs of the household, until her light lunch at 12:30.

From 1 to 3

she rests. That is,

she lies down in bed and relaxes whether she sleeps or not.

At 3 o'clock the program begins again, and keeps up until 6:30 dinner,

and then the nurse goes off duty, and her husband takes charge in the evening.

4:1.6 Every other evening is spent at home in relaxing;

she is allowed to do as she pleases until her evening neutral bath at 9:30—

a bath at 98° F., which she takes for twenty minutes.

Alternate evenings with this rest treatment at home she goes out in society, to entertainments, lectures, etc.

She is a very busy woman.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

But that was only the background, the foundation of her cure (*TAM* 26, 158).

[contd] In studying her case we made a list of thirty-two pet peeves, hoodoos, and what-not

that worried her, got on her nerves, or that give her fits.

We arranged these pet peeves in the order of their gravity or severity, starting out with the smallest ones first.

They were each written on a piece of paper, along with specific instructions for the nurse to carry out.

These envelopes were numbered, and one was opened every other day.

That is, they tackled a new trouble on each morning following her evening of rest at home.

She has now gone through twenty-five peeves on this list, and has made good (*TAM* 158).

[contd] THE greatest test came when her husband was away from home for ten days,

and we selected that occasion as an opportunity for making her remain alone in the house after dark.

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But that is only the background, the foundation of her cure.

4:1.7 I am just coming now to the real cure.

In studying her case we made a list of thirty-two pet peeves, hoo-dooos and whatnot;

that is, things that worry her, get on her nerves, or that give her fits.

We arranged these pet peeves in the order of their gravity or severity, starting out with the smallest ones first.

They are each written out on a piece of paper and underneath specific instructions given for the nurse to carry out.

These envelopes are numbered and they are opened every other day.

That is, they tackle a new one on the morning following her evening of rest at home.

She has now gone through twenty-five of this list, and has made good,

though it has been really pitiful at times the way she has begged to be let off and how she has trembled like an aspen leaf when forced to do something of which she is afraid.

4:1.8 The greatest test came when her husband was away from home for ten days

and we selected that occasion as an opportunity for making her remain alone in the house after dark.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

It was necessary for the nurse to visit the neighbors and explain what was going to happen, and to communicate with the policeman on the beat,

because the patient threatened to yell if she was left alone (*TAM* 158).

[contd] Night came on, and the nurse started out to walk around the block, saying she would be back in about five minutes.

The moment she left the patient began to scream, and kept it up until the nurse got back.

But on the next evening the nurse was gone ten minutes and the woman screamed only two minutes.

The third night the nurse was gone fifteen minutes, and the woman did not scream at all.

She has recently remained at home by herself after night for three hours with very little perturbation (*TAM* 158).

[contd] You see, it can be done if we only make up our minds to go through with it, and have some friendly counsel or trustworthy guide to pilot us along.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

It was necessary for the nurse to visit the neighbors and explain what was going to happen and to communicate with the policeman on the beat,

as this woman carried out her threat to yell if she were left alone.

The nurse informed her she was going to walk around the block and would be back in five minutes,

but the moment she left the house this woman began to scream and she kept it up until the nurse got back;

but on the next evening the nurse was gone ten minutes, and the woman screamed only two minutes.

The third night the nurse was gone fifteen minutes, and the woman did not scream at all.

She has recently remained at home by herself after night for three hours with very little perturbation.

2. TAKING YOURSELF IN HAND

4:2.1 You see, it can be done if we only make up our minds to go through with it and have some friendly counsel or trustworthy guide to pilot us along.

It might be profitable to go more into detail with this case, but there is so much to tell that I think perhaps this is enough to give a practical suggestion as to how we do this sort of thing.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

It is just like developing weak muscles into strong muscles; it requires exercise.

Thinking and wishing and willing alone never get us anywhere;

we have to get right down to brass tacks and actually *do* the very thing we are afraid of or that we dislike (*TAM* 158).

[*Note*: Here, Sadler abandons the psychotherapist persona he'd adopted when writing *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* and *Worry and Nervousness*. In neither of those books did he suggest using corporal discipline on "hysterical neurotics" or other unruly adults.]

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It is just like developing weak muscles into strong muscles; it requires exercise, practice.

4:2.2 Thinking and wishing and willing alone never get us anywhere;

we have to get right down to brass tacks and actually do the very thing we are afraid of.

Now, most folks are able to do this for themselves; they don't need to have a nurse for three months, but in these bad cases it requires three or four months under supervision to get them over the grade.

4:2.3 Perhaps I ought to explain that in one of the earlier encounters in this case, this woman hauled off and slapped her nurse right in the face when she tried to urge her on to carry out the written program. The nurse called me for instructions and I said: "Be kind, but treat her like a spoiled child. The next time she slaps you, turn her over your knee and spank her." The next time she slapped the nurse she got the spanking. She never slapped the nurse again.

4:2.4 We have to treat these people like spoiled children. Of course, I believe in all these new-fangled notions about psychology and suggestion, whether dealing with nervous children or hysterical patients, but I am frank to say that in the case of either the spoiled child or the hysterical neurotic, when I fail to get results, when they don't mind me after I have tried all my suggestions, then I believe in the old fashioned method of "laying on of hands." In the case of children, psychology is sometimes best when "applied with the hand."

4:2.5 In the case of this grown-up woman, the hysterical wife who is but a spoiled child, we recognize that her parents fell down in her early training. Perhaps they were afraid; maybe she had spasms when she was a baby if her way was crossed, and thus scared her poor parents almost to death. This business of making her stay alone after dark should have been fought out by her parents when she was a baby. She should have been put to bed in a dark room and left alone to go to sleep. If she raised a fuss, it should have been fought out in a successive round of battles, whether it took one week or three weeks, and thus the whole thing would have been settled then and there.

[contd] Every time fathers and mothers fail to teach their sons and daughters self-control when they are young, especially if they are nervous children,

then, later on in life, husband or wife, or someone else, will have to do the teaching;

but the lessons are so much easier to learn when you are young! (*TAM* 158).

4:2.6 Every time fathers and mothers fail to teach their sons and daughters self-control when they are young, especially if they are nervous children,

later on in life, husband or wife, or someone else, will have to do it;

and these lessons are so much easier to learn when you are young.

It is so much better to fight this out with children before they are four or five years of age, when they forget all about it, rather than after they are grown up, when the memory scars of the struggle of wills and battles of wits will linger in their minds.

4:2.7 I trust that the parents who may chance to read this book will, if they have nervous children, get the advice of their doctor and go about this in dead earnest, determined to teach their children self-control while they are yet in the cradle.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

[contd] Appetite is where first to practice self-control.

Children should be taught not to eat between meals.

Even very young children get angry if their meal is disturbed; and how many grown-ups make silly fools of themselves over eating!

A perfectly sane, level-headed business man will go home at night and rave like a semi-insane man

just because dinner is late, or some little thing about the meal doesn't happen to suit him.

He spoils his own digestion by such emotional blow-outs, and also upsets the digestion of the whole family (*TAM* 158).

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4:2.8 Appetite is the first place to begin to practice self-control.

Children should be taught not to eat between meals—

to control their appetite.

Even very young children get very angry if their meal is disturbed; and how many grown-ups make silly fools of themselves over eating.

4:2.9 A perfectly sane, level-headed business man will go home at night and rave about like a semi-insane person

just because dinner is late or some little thing about the meal doesn't happen to suit him.

He not only spoils his own digestion by such emotional blow-ups, but also upsets the digestion of the whole family.

Hard biscuits would not disturb the stomach as much as these temper explosions.

4:2.10 The other day I was called to see a woman who was in bed, prostrated, for no other reason than that her husband had unexpectedly brought a friend home to dinner the evening before. Amid copious tears she would say: "Just think of it—he brought him without saying a word to me—why didn't he tell me he was going to bring company?"

4:2.11 I have a patient, a lawyer, who was criticized by one of his partners; after indulging in a “blow-up” he has settled down to “pouting” and depression—has made up his mind that he is a “perfect failure,” and wants to “quit the whole business”—and I presume he would if he did not have a wife and two children dependent on him. We are helping this man over this trouble by teaching him that what he calls unfair criticism is nothing but kindly and necessary suggestion, that he misinterprets and magnifies it in his own mind and then allows his oversensitive nervous system to over-react. If he keeps up his present efforts to take his troubles philosophically he will be on top within the next year.

4:2.12 Why get furious just because you were so careless as to smash your thumb while driving a nail? Why should taking down stove-pipes or other house-cleaning stunts thoroughly upset the average individual?

4:2.13 The most senseless of all anger is that which parents manifest towards their children. How foolish to give way to one’s nervousness and get mad just because the children have done some annoying thing—something all children do, and nothing but what you did when you were a child.

4:2.14 You may have heard about the little girl who, after her mother had indulged in a disagreeable display of temper over some trifling misdemeanor, asked her this embarrassing question: “Mama, dear, why is it when you get mad it is temperament, and when I get mad it’s temper?”

[See 3:8.14.]

4:2.15 I advise parents never to correct or punish their children when they (the parents) are angry. Cool off before you presume to discipline the younger generation.

4:2.16 Not long ago I met a cultured woman who had “gone to pieces” over the fact that her sister, who lived with her, was always biting her finger-nails; the whole affair being only proof that both women were highly nervous and uncontrolled.

4:2.17 One of the worst cases of nervous prostration I have seen in years was brought on by the collapse of a social climber. The climax came when her rival started some derogatory gossip about her. Following a personal encounter, with its emotional accompaniments, our patient took to her bed and will probably remain there for a few months.

4:2.18 It is a wise person who can journey through life and attempt the conquest of reasonable difficulties without undertaking too much—without attempting the impossible. Good judgment is an important factor in human happiness. Discretion is often the better part of valor.

4:2.19 Our over-developed *vanity* and *pride* are at the bottom of many of our unseemly emotional sprees. We can't expect to soar to the heights without sometimes getting a fall. You know the old proverb says: “Pride goeth before a fall.”

[It is literally true, “Pride goes before a fall” (111:6.10).]

3. PSYCHIC ADJUSTMENT AND READJUSTMENT

[contd] We can't expect to go through life and escape altogether the experience of *self-abasement*.

We can't reasonably expect always to be "on the top of the world."

Nevertheless,

[*Compare: A solitary life is fatal to happiness (111:4.7).*]

we can't afford to remain in an environment that keeps us forever ground down and oppressed.

Better make a change for a while and be a big fish in a little puddle than always the little fish in the big pond.

Don't allow yourself to be browbeaten too long.

A little suffering of this sort may be good discipline, but if too long continued, it sours the soul and kills all ambition.

Sooner or later this slavish sort of life begets an inferiority complex which is incompatible with normal happiness,

and destructive of the joys of self-assertion and *elation*.

But you should learn how to be a good loser (*TAM* 158).

4:3.1 We can't expect to go through life and escape altogether the experience of self-abasement.*

[*See Appendix for further discussion of this emotion.]

We can't reasonably expect always to be "on the top of the heap."

Nevertheless,

too much of this is *fatal to happiness*.

One can't afford to remain in an environment that keeps one forever "ground down" and oppressed.

Better make a change for a while and be a "big fish in a little puddle" than always the "little fish in the big pond."

Don't allow yourself to be brow-beaten too long.

A little suffering of this sort may be good discipline, but if too long continued, it sours the soul and kills ambition.

4:3.2 Sooner or later this "slavish" sort of life begets an "inferiority complex," which is incompatible with normal happiness

and destructive of the joys of self-assertion and elation.*

[*See Appendix for further discussion of this emotion.]

Learn to be a "good loser."

4:3.3 But do not go to the other extreme and seek revenge. Joy attends the forgiving spirit, while sorrow and regret are the final rewards of all who allow their better natures to be ravaged by the barbarous desire for personal vengeance. I know a beautiful girl who has “got it in” for one of her associates in the office. She feels that this other woman has received favors, compliments, and promotions which rightfully belong to her—because of her longer service for the company. She says her rival is haughty and disdainful and that she snubs her and otherwise slights and mistreats her—and so this young woman has just dedicated her life to “getting even”⁴ with her enemy. She is on the verge of a nervous breakdown because of this hatred.

[contd] The more experience I have, the more I am convinced that *idleness predisposes most of us to emotional sprees.*

4:3.4 The more experience I have, the more I am convinced that *idleness predisposes most of us to these emotional sprees.*

Man is certainly a working animal.

The Creator certainly designed that man should keep busy.

The anatomists tell us he was not even made to sit down!

The anatomists tell us he was not even made to sit down.

He was made to stand up to work and lie down to rest.

He was made to stand up to work and lie down to rest.

However that may be, I am more and more convinced that healthy activity, useful employment, constant diversion, and variety of activity

However that may be, I am more and more convinced that healthy activity, useful employment, constant diversion, variety of activity—

are the things that help us control our emotions and find that satisfaction of self-expression

these are the things that help us eliminate these emotions and find that satisfaction of self-expression

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

which prevents emotional sprees or nervous blow-ups on the one hand, and alcoholic sprees and drug addiction on the other (*TAM* 158).

[contd] When the mind is idle and the body is inactive, the brains gets to traveling in circles, and all the while physical and nervous energy accumulates,

until presently the explosion point is reached and something is bound to happen (*TAM* 158).

[contd] Our natural instincts

cannot be obliterated.

They must, sooner or later, find adequate, legitimate, and wholesome self-expression.

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which prevents emotional sprees or nervous blow-ups on the one hand, and alcoholic sprees on the other.

4:3.5 When the mind is idle and the body is inactive, the brain gets to traveling in circles, and all the while physical and nervous energy accumulates,

until presently the explosion point is reached and something is bound to happen.

Of course, if we have a lowered nerve tone and are already suffering from brain fag and neurasthenia, this is made worse, and it is a very simple and easy matter to blow up on the least provocation; but I should like to strongly emphasize the fact that the less one has to do mentally and physically, the more likely they are to fall into this chronic habit of periodic emotional sprees. Activity, still better, useful employment, is the one great remedy without which all other remedies are likely to fail.

4:3.6 Our natural instincts,*

[*See Appendix for further study of instincts,]

whether they be hunger, sex, or of another nature,

cannot be obliterated;

they cannot be permanently dammed back;

they must, sooner or later, find adequate, legitimate, and wholesome self-expression.

The practice of self-control does not mean that we are to formulate taboos and otherwise seek to dodge our instincts and emotions by denying them;

but that we are to seek for an understanding as to how they may be properly controlled, safely expressed, and wholesomely guided (*TAM* 158).

The practice of self-control does not mean that we are to formulate taboos and otherwise seek to dodge our instincts and emotions by denying them;

but that we are to seek for an understanding as to how they may be properly controlled, safely expressed, and wholesomely guided.

4:3.7 And when it comes to the battle with instinct we should remember that each individual represents a long line of human inheritance. The hereditary determiners for brain cells, nerve tissues, and ductless glands run away back, and not a little of the struggle that we must go through to become captains of our own souls is determined by the biologic laws of inheritance operating many decades before we ever saw the light of day.

4. TANGLED EMOTIONS— CROSSED WIRES

4:4.1 Now this question of emotional elimination is a big one when it comes to its practical application, and one that would fill a whole book by itself if we tried to go into detail, but perhaps we can illustrate it best by taking an actual case. Here is a man 25 years of age. He is not well; he is nervous; more or less depressed. He was active and athletic when he was younger but in the last three or four years he has about quit playing. He has worked pretty hard until the last year, and now is beginning to lose interest in his work. He had quite a religious training when he was a youth, but he has lost faith in most of it, and has quit going to church.

In fact, he has about given up everything pertaining to religion. He has a good moral training and in his earlier years bravely controlled his sex urges, but in the last few years he has begun to wobble on this. He is all mixed up—as he himself described it—“all balled up.”

4:4.2 Now what are we going to do with a case like this? We recognize that all these primary urges or instincts are legitimate, but as we have said, they need to be controlled, not necessarily suppressed. Well, this is how we go about it:

[*Compare:* Dr. Cabot has arrived at the conclusion that there are but four essentials to the real enjoyment of life.

These he calls work, play, love, and worship (*Wary and Nervousness* 327).]

We recognize that there are four great and universal avenues for self-expression or emotional elimination,

and they are *work, play, religion, and sex,*

and when I use the word sex in this connection I use it in a very broad sense—I use it in its spiritual and social aspects, as well as in its more commonly restricted meaning.

4:4.3 What we are aiming at in a case like this is a well-balanced life. We want his work and play to be balanced. We want him to get enthusiastic about both; to talk to himself until he can sense the importance of a new interest in his work, and then come to see that he should vary the monotony of his occupation by daily relaxation, play, and recreation; and then we try to get him to take a sane and sensible view of religion; not necessarily theology. We are very careful about what we ask him to believe to start with.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

[contd] Religion is extremely important in helping to overcome emotional sprees. In fact, I reckon that my patients are going to be able to

In fact, I reckon that my patients are going to be able to

get the upper hand in the fight for composure

eliminate their spiritual emotions

if they believe in two fundamental things:

if they believe in two fundamental truths:

first, a Supreme Being or Power of some sort; and, second, a hereafter of some kind (*TAM* 158).

first, a Supreme Being or Power of some sort; and second, a hereafter of some kind.

4:4.4 If I can persuade one of these emotionally repressed persons to start with me on these two points, I will take my chances on getting them fixed up in their spiritual life (from a health standpoint) as time goes on. From a medical standpoint just these two things are essential to getting the spiritual or religious emotional channels to working; and then we have to get right down to brass tacks and help them fix up their sex life, help them to understand their own feelings and emotions and what to do about controlling and adjusting their natural biologic urges along this line; and here we have to work out a reciprocal working arrangement between sex and religion just as we had to formulate a balanced working program for work and play.

4:4.5 We don't accomplish anything if we allow these people in their effort to get along with their sex instincts, to infringe upon their religious convictions, and here is just where the personal equation comes in.

We have to take up each person and help them in accordance with their training, their conscience, their ethics, and moral standards; we have to deal with them in accordance with their inherent physical nature, and it is in this very realm that conscience makes us so much trouble—

[See 1:7.49, 3:10.2.]

conscience—which always tells us to do right but never tells us what right is; which some people come to think of as the voice of God to the soul, but which is largely a psychologic creation and one that is susceptible of education and training.

4:4.6 At any rate, these two problems must be worked out. We have to find a formula for each individual that will advise him to be good and live in accordance with his conscientious convictions, and at the same time, not be sick as the result of such righteous living.

4:4.7 It is difficult to go into all the details of these problems because they are so highly personal. They have to be solved for each individual. Every normal person must go through this struggle some time or other in his life, and if it is bravely faced and intelligently handled, a great deal of unhappiness and sorrow can be avoided.

[contd] A few months ago I had an interesting experience in the case of an unmarried woman, about thirty-three years of age,

who was certainly suffering from tangled emotions and repression of instincts.

It was a pitiful case.

She had lost interest in life itself.

4:4.8 A few months ago I had an interesting experience in the case of an unmarried woman, about 33 years of age,

who was certainly suffering from tangled emotions and repression of instincts.

It was a pitiful case.

She had lost interest in life itself.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

The first things we did was to put her to work.

She had not worked for eighteen months.

There was a two-months battle to get her back on the job;

but by the end of the third month, we had her both working and playing (*TAM* 158).

[contd] At one time she had been very religious, but had given it all up as superstition;

and now came the task of getting her to crystallize her religious emotions

around a few simple, fundamental beliefs.

She was willing to believe three simple things:

first, that there was a Supreme Being;

second, that there was a hereafter of some kind;

and, third, that Jesus was an extraordinary being of some sort.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

The first thing we did was to put her to work.

She had not worked for eighteen months.

It was a two months' battle to get her back on the job.

By the end of the third month we had her playing.

She didn't like to play at first, but after six weeks of golf and other recreational activities, she began to get back into the swing and then the real battle began.

4:4.9 She, at one time, had been very religious, but had given it all up as superstition,

and now came the task of getting her to crystalize her religious emotions,

in a simple and childlike fashion,

around a few fundamental beliefs

so that she could begin to derive comfort and satisfaction from them; but she did it.

She was willing to believe three things;

first, that there is a Supreme Being;

second, that there is a hereafter of some kind;

and third, that Jesus Christ was an extraordinary being of some sort—

yes, she was willing to accept Him as the Son of God. She had many reservations about this point, but it was enough to get her started,

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

Within a few weeks she began to pray
(*TAM* 158, 160).

[contd] She didn't pray as she did
formerly,—that is, ask the Supreme Being
for this, that, and the other thing;

but she prayed

as a sort of communion.

“I think I pray now like a bird sings,” she
said.

“I just want to express myself in that way.

I really am beginning to enjoy life and I feel
like telling someone I am glad I am living”
(*TAM* 160).

[contd] From that time on I never
bothered about her any more.

She now sleeps well, and is gaining in flesh.

and within a few weeks she began to pray
in a simple fashion.

She didn't pray as she did formerly—that
is, ask the Supreme Being for this, that,
and the other thing,

but she prayed,

she said,

as a sort of communion.

And she said one morning—“I think I
pray now as a bird sings.

I just want to express myself in that way.

I really am beginning to enjoy life and I
just feel like telling someone I am glad I
am living.”

4:4.10 From that time on I never
bothered about her any more.

She managed her own program, and
where religion is going to lead her, I don't
know. She may join a church some time.
I am not concerned, in a medical way, as
to where religion takes her. My purposes
were accomplished when I got her started.
Then the problem of her sex and social
life came up, and we were able to work
out a satisfactory solution, a program that
provided elimination of her social
emotions, and one that was in every way
consistent with her religious standards
and spiritual convictions.

4:4.11 In other words, we had to work
out a reciprocal, balanced, arrangement
between ethics and society, between
religion and sex. What has happened?

This patient sleeps well, and is gaining in
flesh

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

In nine months from the time the battle was begun, she was a happy, normal, efficient woman (*TAM* 160).

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

and in nine months from the time the battle was begun, she is a happy, normal, efficient woman.

Of course, I don't say we always have so easy a time solving these problems. We don't usually work out such transformations in less than a year, but this is a fairly typical case and many others come out just as well if we give them a little more time.

4:4.12 It does require time to make these changes and, adjustments, to re-educate the mind, and develop decision. Really, after all, it is largely a question of common sense, the avoidance of extremes. We must recognize the many-sidedness of human nature and accept the principle that while our biologic urges cannot be suppressed, they can and must be controlled. They can be coordinated, there must be a harmonized blending of the whole—one phase of our emotions must not be allowed to overrun us and override all others and dominate us to our own hurt and to the suppression of equally important emotions.

4:4.13 Practically regarded, it is a problem of proper co-ordination between work and play, and between sex and religion, and it is indeed interesting to see how play rests us from work and prepares us for the struggles of the next day, and how work makes us long for play and gives zest to our recreation.

III: SAFETY VALVES FOR SURPLUS ENERGY (*What a Salesman Should Know About His Health* 103)

6. Religion—Love of God (*What a Salesman Should Know About His Health* 116)

I think it is a significant thing that the sex instinct and the religious impulses are aroused in a young man at about the same time—

that is at puberty.

I think it is more than passingly significant and suggestive that

religion was intended to help us in the control of sex, when we stop to think that it is just around the age of twelve to fifteen that the sex emotions begin to appear in a young man's life, and it is at just about this same age that his tender and definite religious impulses are also felt (*WSSKHH* 118-119).

4:4.14 It is also interesting in this connection to note that the sex and religious emotions are aroused in human beings at about the same time,

that is, at adolescence.

At the very time the sex nature is unfolded, that is also the time, as psychologic investigations have shown, when the religious nature begins to develop. There seems to be some design on the part of old Mother Nature in having these two tremendous impulses aroused concurrently, for as we all know, sex is such a tremendous urge that there is no other emotion that can counterbalance or control it except that equally strong and powerful force which we call religious conviction.

It is certainly significant, something more than accidental, that

these two phases of human nature should be brought forth and allowed to manifest themselves at about the same time.

5. THE TECHNIC OF EMOTIONAL CONTROL

“DO PEOPLE GET ON YOUR NERVES?” (*The American Magazine* 25)

[contd from 4:4.11] WHILE we cannot escape from our emotions,

we can learn to control and manipulate them (TAM 160).

XXXVIII: THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CONTROL (*Worry and Nervousness 1923* 509)

EMOTIONAL MANIPULATION (*Worry and Nervousness 1923* 509)

For instance, an individual can see to it that he does not neglect religion on the one hand nor become a religious fanatic on the other.

We can see that we do not become cold and indifferent to our loved ones,

nor indulge in such affection that it tends to weaken and debilitate our entire character.

We can form a dislike for things ugly without indulging in excessive hate.

We can experience righteous indignation in the presence of sin without indulging in an outburst of violent anger.

In other words, we can learn to become temperate in our emotional life,

4:5.1 While we cannot escape from our emotions,

we can learn to control and manipulate them.

[*Note: Some of the rest of section 5 (up to 4:5.12) appeared in the article in paraphrased form; the text Sadler chose for inclusion in HYCKH is the one that appeared in Chap. 38 of the 1923 edition of Worry and Nervousness.*]

For instance, an individual can see to it that he does not neglect religion on the one hand, nor become a religious fanatic on the other.

We can see to it that we do not become cold and indifferent to our loved ones,

nor indulge in such affection that it tends to weaken and debilitate our character.

We can form a dislike for things ugly without indulging in excessive hate.

We can experience indignation in the presence of sin without indulging in violent outbursts of anger.

In other words, we can learn to become temperate in our emotional life

and that is simply another way of pleading for adequate self-control (*W&N* 509-10).

and that is simply another way of saying that we have learned self-control.

[contd] We can learn how to have self-confidence without being guilty of carrying about a swelled head.

4:5.2 We can show that we have courage to tackle our nerves. We do not have to go at this problem of self-control like a child. Let us be men and women. Make up your mind that you will refuse any longer to have nervous fits just because you can't have your own way.

4:5.3 We can learn how to have self-confidence without being guilty of carrying about a swelled head.

We can practice reasonable humility without falling into the habits of self-depreciation that make us unfit to mingle with our fellows and achieve success in our worldly careers.

We can practice reasonable humility without falling into those habits of self-depreciation that make us unfit to mingle with our fellows and achieve success in our worldly careers.

We can learn to appreciate the beautiful, and to enjoy things lovely and artistic without, on the other hand, becoming victims of ultra-disgust as we stand in the presence of things ugly and inartistic.

We can learn to appreciate the beautiful, and to enjoy things lovely and artistic without, on the other hand, becoming victims of ultra-disgust as we stand in the presence of things ugly and inartistic.

It is not necessary that our emotions should interfere with our happiness, on the one hand, or jeopardize our health on the other.

4:5.4 It is not necessary that our emotions should interfere with our happiness, on the one hand, or jeopardize our health on the other.

We can learn to restrain our natural instincts and strong emotions without going to those extremes of suppression and denial

We can learn to restrain our natural instincts and strong emotions without going to those extremes of suppression and denial

which contribute to temperamental explosions and nervous breakdowns (*W&N* 510).

which contribute to either temperamental explosions or nervous breakdowns.

We can learn to indulge the imagination, even to day-dream,

4:5.5 We can learn to indulge the imagination, even to day-dream,

and engage in phantasy,

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

without becoming victims of imaginary disorders, fictitious sensations, and other trumped up nervous vagaries.

We do not have to become cold blooded and, in the language of the street, “hard-boiled,” in order to avoid becoming a victim of hysteria and neurasthenia (*W&N* 510).

[contd] We can crave sympathy, desire companionship, and seek human association,

without going so far as to indulge in hysterical gyrations and nervous protestations, in order to secure an audience—to secure attention and sympathy.

We can strive for some real achievement in life that will attract attention, and not depend on a nervous breakdown to get the good will and solicitous sympathy of your family and friends (*W&N* 510).

[contd] Capitalize your strong points, and seek to win the compliments of your friends and neighbors;

instead of stooping to capitalize your illness, your nervous weakness, in order to gain their attention and sympathy (*W&N* 510).

FACING THE FACTS (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 506)

[contd] If you have wobbly nerves, you cannot run away from them.

There is no need of taking a vacation.

A trip to California will not cure you.

You are up against the plain proposition of acquiring self-control—that is all there is to it.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

without becoming victims of imaginary disorders, fictitious diseases, and other trumped up nervous vagaries.

We do not have to become cold blooded and, in the language of the street, “hard-boiled,” in order to avoid becoming victims of hysteria and neurasthenia.

4:5.6 We can crave sympathy, desire companionship, and seek human associations,

without going so far as to indulge in hysterical gyrations and nervous fits, in order to secure an audience—to secure attention and sympathy.

We can strive for some real achievement in life that will attract attention, and not depend on a nervous breakdown to get the good will and solicitous sympathy of our families and friends.

4:5.7 Capitalize your strong points, and thus seek to secure the compliments of your friends and neighbors;

instead of stooping to capitalize your illness, your nervous weakness, in order to gain their attention and sympathy.

4:5.8 If you have wobbly nerves you cannot run away from them.

There is no need of taking a vacation.

A trip to California will not cure you.⁵

You are up against the plain proposition of acquiring self-control—that is all there is to it.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

Doctors, remedies, cure-alls, and what not, will not avail.

Gird yourself for the battle, prepare to take up the struggle and to fight it out on this line of improving your self-control if it takes all summer—and all winter (*W&N* 506).

THE EMOTIONAL STRUGGLE (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 511)

[contd] And so this struggle with one's nerves, after all, turns out to be a question of strength of the moral nature.

This whole nervous battle is in reality an ethical struggle.

We are all engaged in it.

The normal, average person wages the battle without much ado,

whereas the victim of weak nerves, the neurotic individual, makes a great hullabaloo out of this normal fight of life

and seeks to attract undue attention to himself by the much ado he makes over these commonplace struggles with one's primitive nature—

with one's biologic instincts and normal human emotions (*W&N* 511).

“DO PEOPLE GET ON YOUR NERVES?” (*The American Magazine* 25)

You nervous folks must get over the idea of being *distinctive*.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

Doctors, remedies, cure-alls, and what not, will not avail.

4:5.9 Gird yourself for battle, prepare to take up the struggle and “fight it out on this line” of improving your self-control “if it takes all summer”—and all winter.

4:5.10 And so this struggle with one's nerves, after all, turns out to be a question of the strength of the moral nature.

The whole nervous battle is in reality a character struggle.

We are all engaged in it.

It is a struggle which none of us can dodge.

4:5.11 The normal, average person wages the battle without much ado,

whereas the victim of spoiled nerves, the neurotic individual, makes a great hullabaloo out of this normal fight of life

and seeks to attract undue attention to himself by the fuss he makes over these commonplace struggles with his primitive nature—

with his biologic instincts and natural emotions.

4:5.12 You nervous folks must get over the idea of being *distinctive*.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

Give up the notion of outdoing the other fellow, and settle down to the business of living with yourself as you are and the world as it is (*TAM* 160).

[contd] You must not waste all your mental efforts trying to banish undesirable thoughts.

Bad thoughts are like “squatters”—they hold title by right of possession.

Devote your mental efforts to positive thinking;

choose your thoughts, selecting those ideas which you honestly and sincerely want to dominate your thinking;

and then give these new and favored ideas and emotions a lifelong lease on your mind (*TAM* 160).

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

Give up the notion of out-doing the other fellow, and settle down to the business of living with yourself as you are and the world as it is.

Nervous folks should remember that every human being has to grow up and learn self-mastery.

4:5.13 You must not waste all your mental efforts trying to banish undesirable thoughts.

Bad thoughts are like “squatters”—they think they hold title by right of possession.

Devote your mental efforts to positive thinking—

choose your thoughts—select those ideas which you honestly and sincerely want to occupy and dominate your mind;

and then give these new and favored ideas and emotions a life-long lease on your mind.

Now, if you really mean what you have done, these new tenants will begin to move in and take possession of the mind, and they will eventually see to it that the old idea-tenants are put out and kept out. These new lease-holders will not long tolerate the objectionable presence of these old and troublesome thoughts and emotions.

6. IMAGINATION IN THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CONTROL

XXXVIII: THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CONTROL (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 504)

THE RÔLE OF IMAGINATION IN THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CONTROL (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 518)

[contd] I find a great many nervous people who are failing in their effort to achieve self-control because they are fighting ignorantly.

They are trying to win the battle by sheer force of will, by strength of resolution, etc.

Now, will power has its place, decision is absolutely essential to the conquest of disordered nerves,

but many of these nervous sufferers would make better progress if they would learn how to use the *imagination*,

if they would become more clever actors, if they would learn to substitute on themselves, to step out of their shoes, figuratively speaking,

and for the time being make believe they were someone else;

assume the rôle of the desirable individual they are trying to be and for the time being play that their old, undesirable self is non-existent (*W&N* 518).

So many nervous people are wearing themselves out fighting what I call “sham battles.”

4:6.1 I find a great many nervous people are failing in their effort to achieve self-control because they are fighting ignorantly.

They are trying to win the battle by sheer force of will, by strength of resolution.

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and for the time being make believe they are someone else;

assume the role of the desirable individuals they are trying to be, and for the time being play that their old and undesirable selves are non-existent.

4:6.2 So many nervous people are wearing themselves out fighting what I call sham battles.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

They use their imagination for the purpose of framing up difficulties, obstacles, and other fictitious sorts of situations

that occupy all their energies, trying to overcome, surmount, and otherwise get around these creations of a diseased imagination.

Now, what we want these nervous individuals to do is to switch over from using their imagination in this work of incessantly fighting “sham battles,”

and utilize these psychic powers of phantasy and creative imagination to

produce ideal and desirable rôles, to become actors in the drama of deliverance, to utilize the imagination in the work of furthering recovery and effecting deliverance from our unhealthy mental moods and our chronic fear habits (*W&N* 519).

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

They use their imaginations for the purpose of framing up difficulties, obstacles, and other fictitious sorts of situations,

and so they occupy all their time and energy trying to overcome and otherwise get around creations of their diseased imaginations.

Now, we want you nervous folks to switch over from using your imaginations in this work of creating fictitious troubles and fighting sham battles,

and employ your imaginations so as to

help yourselves out of the fix your nerves have gotten you into.

4:6.3 We want you to act just as an actor does on the stage in a play. We want you to make believe you are what you want to be and then act the part. All you nervous folks have imaginations; there have been many times in your younger lives when you wanted to be actors or actresses, and now you have the chance. Settle in your minds just what you want to be and ought to be and then do a first class job of acting. Do it so well, so impress your friends with your acting, that they will believe you are this new and superior person, just as you sometimes forget when you are at the theatre and for the time being really believe what you see on the stage is real.

4:6.4 And this is the way you can use your imaginations to help you become such clever actors that you can really hasten your cure and help yourselves out of the nervous habits which have gotten such strong control over you.

XLI: THE CONTROL OF REACTION
(*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 555)

USELESS STRUGGLING (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 555)

[contd] Self-control is not gained or best practiced by the exercise of sheer force of will.

When rightly understood and intelligently practiced, self-control does not require a strenuous effort or a fierce struggle (*W&N* 555).

It is true that a vast majority of nervous people seek to attain self-control through strenuous efforts, and this is exactly the reason why so many of them so often fail.

Let us take, for example, the case of some neurotic individual who is seized with a strong impulse to say or do a certain thing,

a thing which his better nature tells him is unwise.

Now, in his mind he says, "I wish to do this thing but I shall control myself; I will not do it."

This is the usual procedure in the effort to acquire self-control.

Not understanding a better method for controlling and antidoting impulses,

4:6.5 Self-control is not gained or best practiced by the exercise of sheer force of will.

When rightly understood and intelligently practiced, self-control does not require such a strenuous effort,

and this is exactly the reason why many of you so often fail.

Let us take, for example, the case of some neurotic individual who is seized with a strong impulse to say or do a certain thing,

something which his better nature tells him is unwise.

Now, in his mind he says: "I wish to do this thing but I shall control myself; I will not do it."

This is the usual procedure in the effort to acquire self-control.

4:6.6 Not understanding a better method for controlling and antidoting impulses,

the better self permits the impulse to go on through the mind, to traverse the nerves, and to reach the muscles,

and then on the very eve of the execution of the act—after the body is all set to do the thing you wish to do—

then the moral self intervenes and seeks to countermand these orders to the muscular system,

and usually does so by setting in operation a contrary impulse which passes to an opposing group of muscles, and very often the act is prevented.

Now, it must be apparent to the reader that this is an exceedingly wasteful and extravagant method of practicing self-control.

The far better way would have been to “nip the impulse in the bud;” to have stopped the undesirable wish in the making.

Nervous people must come to see that it is their thinking that needs to be controlled more than their acting,

or, to put it differently, that they need to control the *reacting* to their thinking, to prevent undesirable and unhealthy reactions to even their own thoughts, feelings, and emotions (*W&N* 555-56).

[contd] The result of all this tardy and bungling effort at self-control is that opposing sets of muscles are set the one against the other,

there is an inordinate tension of both nerves and muscles, various groups of muscles pulling and working against each other;

the better self permits the impulse to go on through the mind, to traverse the nerves, and to reach the muscles,

and then on the very eve of the execution of the act—after the body is all set to do the thing you wish to do—

then the moral self intervenes and seeks to countermand these orders to the muscular system,

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4:6.9 The result of all this tardy and bungling effort at self-control is that opposing sets of muscles are set the one against the other,

there is an inordinate tension of both nerves and muscles, various groups of muscles pulling and working against each other;

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

there is, obviously, an intense mental and physical conflict going on, and as the result of all this unusual effort the nervous sufferer may indeed be able to hold in check some overt act.

But see how much good vital energy has been wasted.

The physical strength is depleted and the nervous energy is well-nigh exhausted.

A great effort has been put forth with nothing advantageous to show for it.

The worn-out individual, it is true, may congratulate himself on his superb self-control,

but he is, nevertheless, greatly exhausted as the result of his needless efforts,

and is much disconcerted by the inordinate fatigue

which all but overcomes him (*W&N* 556).

[contd] The human nervous system may be compared to a city telephone exchange, with its central operator, sub-stations, etc.

The economical method of practicing self-control is to kill impulses at their origin, to destroy wishes as they are born, to control mis-thinking and imagination at their sources.

If you want to control an impulse which is constantly leading you to wrong acts, you want to establish your censor at the central telephone exchange.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

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The worn-out individual, it is true, may congratulate himself on his superb self-control,

but he is, nevertheless, greatly exhausted as the result of his needless efforts,

and is much disconcerted by the inordinate fatigue

which never fails to put in its appearance as a result of these "sham battles."

4:6.10 The human nervous mechanism may be compared to a city telephone exchange, with its central operator, sub-stations, etc.

The economical method of practicing self-control is to kill impulses at their origin, to destroy wishes as they are born, to control mis-thinking and imagination at their sources.

4:6.11 If you want to control an impulse which is constantly leading you to wrong acts, you want to establish your censor at the central telephone exchange.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

That is the place to kill the impulse before you begin conscious and muscular reaction to it.

In other words, the economical method of attaining self-control is to *prevent exhausting and weakening reactions to undesirable impulses.*

If you do not form the habit of killing these impulses as they arise in the mind,

you will not only be worn out by action and reaction after they have gained access to the muscles,

but you will fail in your efforts because these slight but undesirable impulses will merely await some more convenient time when your better self is off its guard,

and then they will steal across the threshold, flash to the muscles, and you will find yourself automatically—unconsciously—acting;

that is, habitually reacting to your impulse by doing the very thing you so honestly resolved never to do again (*W&N* 556-57).

Now, the way to get at this thing is not to say, “I wish to do something, but I will not do it; I will control it;”

but rather go right back in your mind, dig up the soil, plant the seed, and cultivate a new habit of thinking;

really, actually, and honestly change your desires, change your viewpoint, make up your mind on this one thing and bring yourself where you can honestly say,

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That is the place to kill the impulse, before you begin conscious and muscular reaction to it.

[*Note:* The rest of 4:6.11 and all of 4:6.12-14 plus part of 4:6.15 appear in the article in modified form.]

In other words, the economical method of attaining self-control is to *prevent exhausting and weakening reactions to undesirable impulses.*

If you do not form the habit of killing these impulses as they arise in the mind,

you will not only be worn out by action and reaction after they have gained access to the muscles,

but you will fail in your efforts because these slight but undesirable impulses will merely wait some more convenient time when your better self is off its guard,

and then they will steal across the threshold, flash to the muscles, and you will find yourself automatically—unconsciously—acting;

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4:6.12 Now, the way to get at this is not to say, “I wish to do something, but I will not do it; I will control it;”

but rather go right back in your mind, dig up the soil, plant the seed, and cultivate a new habit of thinking;

really, actually, and honestly change your desires, change your viewpoint, make up your mind on this one thing and bring yourself where you can honestly say,

“I will not wish to do it, therefore I will not.”

That is what we mean by “nipping impulses in the bud,” killing them while they are “a-bornin” (*W&N* 557).

True self-control, then, consists in changing the mind, in mastering the art of making up the mind, in controlling desire at its fountain-head, in preventing the full birth, growth and expression of an undesirable wish.

Ideally, self-control becomes the triumph of the better self over desire.

It is most successfully practiced by the deliberate and premeditated control of our wishing—

the disciplining of our wants and desires and wants (*W&N* 557).

UNCONTROLLED THINKING (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 559)

[contd] The trouble with a lot of nervous folks is that they allow their thinking and imagination to run wild.

Their brain is a spoiled child, their desires know no discipline, their impulses are wild and rowdy,

their emotions charge through the mind and overflow into the body with the abandon of a flock of bandits.

Now, you cannot take such unregulated minds and such uncontrolled nerves

“I will not wish to do it, and therefore I will not.”

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It is most successfully practiced by the deliberate and premeditated control of our wishing—

the disciplining of our supposed desires and wants.

7. THE MISCHIEF OF UNCONTROLLED THINKING

4:7.1 The trouble with a lot of nervous folks is that they allow their thinking and imagination to run wild.

Their brain is a spoiled child, their desires know no discipline, their impulses are wild and rowdy,

their emotions charge through the mind and overflow into the body with the abandon of a flock of bandits.

4:7.2 Now you cannot take such unregulated minds and such uncontrolled nerves

and start out to control the body in the presence of such a chaotic state of mind.

You cannot make the body act in accord with the dictates of civilization, when the mind is in such a barbarous and uncontrolled state (*W&N* 559).

[contd] We have got to recognize that people are controlled by their hearts, by their desires, and not by their heads—by their intellects.

This is recognized in the Scriptures, where we read that it is “out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaketh.”

We are asked to “love the Lord with all our hearts;” we are further told that as a “man thinketh in his heart, so is he;” and even the Wise Man said that “a merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”

It is a question of heart-felt affection, heart-felt devotion, heart-felt conviction, that we are dealing with,

and when we start out to conquer nerves success depends on heart-felt resolution, heart-felt reconciliation with the decision to quit doing those things which make us nervous and keep us sick (*W&N* 559-60).

[contd] It makes no difference whether the basis of our nervousness is suppression, repression, sensitiveness, painful self-consciousness, the “feeling of our feelings,” depressive moods;

or whether our nervousness consists in some sort of “defense reaction” which we are instinctively putting up to our feelings of inferiority or what not.

and start out to control the body in the presence of such a chaotic state of mind.

You cannot make the body act in accord with the dictates of civilization, when the mind is in such a barbarous and uncontrolled state.

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and when we start out to conquer nerves, success depends on heart-felt resolution, heart-felt reconciliation with the decision to quit doing those things which make us nervous and keep us sick.

4:7.5 It makes no difference whether the basis of our nervousness is suppression, repression, sensitiveness, painful self-consciousness, the “feeling of our feelings,” depressive moods;

or whether our nervousness consists in some sort of “defense reaction” which we are instinctively putting up to our feelings of inferiority or what not.

SOURCE OR PARALLEL

Whatever our feeling is at the mental core, that is where it must be remedied.

Our emotions must be brought under the control of our real selves, our moral selves.

We must learn to deal with emotions and feelings, not with actions and habits.

First set the impulses right, and in time your acts will be under the control of your new desires (*W&N* 560).

THE PASSION FOR TRUTH (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 566)

[contd] Nervous sufferers need to develop a real passion for truth, a master sentiment for facts.

In human experience, our strongest wishes flow from our most profound sentiments and convictions,

and if the desire to know the truth about oneself becomes the guiding sentiment of your soul,

then you will be enabled quickly to gain control of all your reactions to false feelings, unhealthy impulses, and enslaving emotions (*W&N* 566).

“DAY BY DAY” (*Worry and Nervousness* 1923 568)

[contd] It is all right to say, in one’s mind, “Day by day, in every way, I’m getting better and better,” etc.

That is a helpful state of mind.

But when we are confronted with the mastery of nerves,

we are face to face with a condition, not merely a theory.

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

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SOURCE OR PARALLEL

IV: HOW YOU CAN KEEP HAPPY

We must know how to control our acts one by one, as well as to suggest to ourselves, “Day by day,” etc.

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[*Note:* The first sentence of 4:7.10 appeared as the final sentence of the article.]

The mastery of nerves requires the development of *stamina*,

4:7.10 The mastery of nerves requires the development of *stamina*,

the acquirement of self-control, the increase of our personal power over our own conduct,

the acquirement of self-control, the increase of our personal power over our own conduct,

and this is done not only by thinking but by *acting*.

and this is done not only by thinking but by *acting*.

We are face to face with the problem of controlling, changing, and directing our reactions to both our thinking and our environment.

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Everything depends on the way we react and not merely on the way we think about our difficulties (*W&N* 568).

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1. Every man is a slave to every other that annoys him (William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Physiology of Faith and Fear* [1912], p. 403).
2. (All nations sneeze when one of the great powers takes snuff.) from “The Midway Messages of 1943,” 7:12.
3. Sadler was obviously flexible with the details when telling his stories.
4. And then, as if to make a bad matter worse, [Judas] persistently harbored grudges and fostered such psychologic enemies as revenge and the generalized craving to “get even” with somebody for all his disappointments (193:4.2). [Note that “get even” is also put in quotes.]
5. See 2:5.22.