

Chapter 24 — The Art of Therapeutic Suggestion

from *Worry and Nervousness: Or, The Science of Self-Mastery* (1914)

by William S. Sadler, M.D.

© 2026 Matthew Block

Sources for Chapter 24, in the order in which they first appear

- (1) William S. Sadler, M.D., *The Physiology of Faith and Fear: Or, The Mind in Health and Disease* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1912)
- (2) Dr. Paul Dubois, *The Psychic Treatment of Nervous Disorders (The Psychoneuroses and Their Moral Treatment)*, Translated and Edited by Smith Ely Jelliffe, M.D., Ph.D. and William A. White, M.D. (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909, Sixth Edition, Revised)
- (3) August Forel, M.D., *Hygiene of Nerves and Mind in Health and Disease*, Authorised Translation from the Second German Edition by Herbert Austin Aikins, Ph.D. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1907)
- (4) George Lincoln Walton, M.D., *Calm Yourself* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1913)
- (5) Dr. Frank Crane, "The Practice of Greatness by Words"

Note: This newspaper article appeared on Oct. 24, 1913 in the *Grand Forks Herald* (Grand Forks, North Dakota). Sadler probably read it in a Chicago paper or in a town where he was lecturing.

- (6) James J. Walsh, M.D., Ph.D., *Psychotherapy* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1912)

Key

- (a) Green indicates where a source author (or earlier 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) **Bold type** indicates passages which Sadler copied verbatim, or nearly verbatim, from an uncited source.
- (f) **Pink** indicates passages where Sadler specifically shares his own experiences, opinions, advice, etc.
- (g) **Red** indicates either (1) an obvious error on Sadler's part, brought about by miscopying or misunderstanding his source, (2) a statement by Sadler that contradicts an earlier statement of his, or (3) an otherwise questionable statement of his.
- (h) **Gold** highlights words or phrases that will be discussed in a later analysis.

Work-in-progress Version 20 Oct. 2026
© 2026 Matthew Block

XXIV: THE ART OF THERAPEUTIC SUGGESTION

24:0.1 IF THE influence of the art of suggestion in the realms of health and disease were better understood, there would be much less of superstition surrounding many an ancient miracle, and less of mystery attached to many present day remarkable and phenomenal cures of disease.¹

XXXIII: THE CURE OF WORRY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

MENTAL THERAPEUTICS, OR SO-CALLED SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

The systems of the ancient medicine-man and the modern bogus healer

are all based on the destruction of fear and the generation of faith (*PF&F* 372).

XXXVI: THE SCIENCE OF SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 427)

[contd] By suggestion ... is meant the systematic use of any means which will bring about the arousal of an idea

or any other process or state

in the mind of a subject or patient (*PF&F* 427).

The therapeutic methods of the ancient medicine man and the modern bogus healer

are alike dependent on the curative power of "suggestion."

They owe their healing results to the power of suggestion to generate faith and destroy fear;

and by suggestion we mean the systematic use of any and all means which will result in the arousal of new ideas

or set in operation other emotional processes

which are able to exert a favorable or healing influence

upon the mind of the patient.

SOURCE

XXXIII: THE CURE OF WORRY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

MENTAL THERAPEUTICS, OR SO-CALLED SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

[contd from 6 rows up] Trust and confidence are the mental states prerequisite to the banishment of worry,

and, for the time being,

it matters not whether the suggestions responsible for the change in the mental state are true or false—the physical effects are just about the same (*PF&F* 372).

IX: PSYCHIC SYMPTOMS OF NERVOUSNESS—[Etc.] (Dubois 103)

But the dictionaries teach us that the words “suggest” and “suggestion” are used with a sinister meaning (D 107).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

It is possible, by means of suggestive therapeutics,

to banish fear and worry,

and, as far as the immediate and physical effects are concerned,

it matters little whether these therapeutic suggestions are true or false—the immediate healing effects are just the same.

Of course, the ultimate effects, in the case of false suggestion, upon both the mental and spiritual natures, is altogether unfortunate and undesirable.

SUGGESTIVE THERAPEUTICS DEFINED

24:1.1 Therapeutic suggestion may be either direct or indirect.² It may be persuasive or it may be educational in its trend. Again, suggestions may be true or false—in fact, the majority of our suggestive therapeutics in the past has been tinged with more or less deception.

Indeed, the very term itself, to many minds, suggests a sinister sort of medical deception.

SOURCE

[contd] We do not speak of suggestion when, by honest persuasion and a logical setting forth of good reasons, we have influenced the conviction of our neighbor, when we have led him to a determination which he will have no cause for regret (D 107).

Suggestion implies that good faith has been more or less imposed upon;

that, by using subterfuges of a facile logic, one has gotten around the subject, and led him to views which he would not have admitted if he had followed the counsels of reason and his own good sense (D 107).

However, in the last few years the word has taken unto itself a less perplexing acceptance.

One says of a book which makes one think: "It was a very suggestive work" (D 108).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

24:1.2 The dictionary definition of the term "suggestion" does not set forth the idea of honest persuasion and indirect education,

and so nervous patients sometimes resent the term, feeling that

it implies that their confidence is to be more or less imposed upon,

that subterfuges are about to be employed in the treatment of their disorders.

It must be explained to such patients that suggestion as used in psychotherapy (at least as I understand and use it) merely represents the preliminary and persuasive stage of educational therapeutics—that stage in which it is altogether necessary for them to experience the benefits of treatment, but in which it is not always possible fully to explain to their disordered reasoning powers the every detail and wherefore of the methods of treatment followed by their therapeutic teacher.

And so I think in recent years the public mind has come somewhat to appreciate this new meaning which attaches to the term "suggestion,"

for we frequently hear such expressions as "that was a very suggestive book," etc.

I: PSYCHOLOGY (THE SCIENCE OF MIND)—WHAT ARE SPIRIT AND MIND? (Forel 1)

13. *Suggestion*. By *suggestion* is understood a very peculiar kind of psychic (*i.e.*, mental), or, more properly, psycho-physical, reaction,

in which an idea—usually connected with a perception—becomes so intense and narrow, the mind becomes so filled with “one idea,”

that this idea loses its ordinary associations with its corrective counter-ideas, breaks violently through common restrictions and releases cerebral activities that are usually independent of it and generally, if not always, subconscious.

Suggestion dissociates what is otherwise associated.

Brains in which dissociation is easy are therefore especially suggestible.

Suggestion generally releases those activities whose content is such that they can be pictured by the senses, and does it in such a way that the “subject” is unconscious throughout of the means by which it takes place and is therefore astonished at what happens (F 35-36).

24:1.3 Forel has given us a very good statement or definition of suggestion as applied to medicine in the following language:

24:1.4 By suggestion is understood a very peculiar kind of psychic (*i.e.*, mental), or, more properly, psycho-physical, reaction,

in which an idea—usually connected with a perception—becomes so intense and narrow, the mind becoming so filled with “one idea,”

that this idea loses its ordinary associations with its corrective counter-ideas, breaks violently through common restrictions, and releases cerebral activities that are usually independent of it, and generally, if not always, subconscious.

Suggestion dissociates what is otherwise associated.

Brains in which dissociation is easy are therefore especially suggestible.

Suggestion generally releases those activities whose content is such that they can be pictured by the senses, and does it in such a way that the “subject” is unconscious throughout of the means by which it takes place and is therefore astonished at what happens.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUGGESTION

24:2.1 The three following paragraphs are from my work before referred to, *The Physiology of Faith and Fear, or the Mind in Health and Disease*.

XXXVI: THE SCIENCE OF SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 427)

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 428)

When an idea becomes uppermost in the human intellect, when a certain notion becomes set in the mind, there are only two ways of removing it.

One is by suggestion, and the other is by the development of the opposite ideas by a process of reeducation.

Suggestion becomes then

one of the greatest known methods for changing, improving, cleansing, and strengthening the human mind (*PF&F* 428).

The marginal consciousness, by which I mean the consciousness of all ideas and emotions that are not at a given moment in the centre of the field of attention,

while it is normally a beneficent servant, may, nevertheless, in a sense, tyrannize in our lives.

This marginal consciousness is described by many as the 'subconscious mind.'

24:2.2 When an idea becomes uppermost in the human intellect, when a certain notion becomes set in the mind, there are only two ways of removing it.

One is by suggestion, and the other is by the development of the opposite ideas by a process of reeducation.

Suggestion becomes then,

next to reeducation,

one of the most successful methods for changing, improving, cleansing, and strengthening the human mind.

24:2.3 The marginal consciousness, by which I mean the consciousness of all ideas and emotions that are not at a given moment in the centre of the field of attention,

while it is normally a beneficent servant, may, nevertheless, in a sense, tyrannize in our lives.

This marginal consciousness is described by many as the "subconscious mind."

SOURCE

Normally, I say, it is a beneficent servant, because in the marginal or dim consciousness are conserved all those ideas and other mental complexes which are not required to meet our present needs.

They are conserved in such a systematic order that when, in the course of suggestion, any mental process comes into attention it brings out from the dim marginal area its appropriate supplement;

and it is when this supplementary image discharges into activity that the course of suggestion becomes complete.

This marginal consciousness is a tyrant when its contents over-freely and without system attach themselves to the contents of clear consciousness,

and so disturb the balance of the mind and render unreliable the course of our judgments.

Continuously, even without our apprehension, this marginal consciousness influences the character and the ebb of processes in our vivid consciousness.

It is not something different and apart from our usual conscious life, but an integral part of it (*PF&F* 428-29).

The art of scientific suggestion consists in placing an idea in the mind in such a way and under such circumstances that it shall become dominant; that is, so that the mind is caused to be possessed by that one idea.

This dominant idea plays the role of a liberator—it breaks up harmful associations of ideas, and so creates an opportunity for the establishment of new and healthy groups of ideas.

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Normally, I say, it is a beneficent servant, because in the marginal or dim consciousness are conserved all those ideas and other mental complexes which are not required to meet our present needs.

They are conserved in such a systematic order that when, in the course of suggestion, any mental process comes into attention it brings out from this dim marginal area its appropriate supplement;

and it is when this supplementary image discharges into motor activity that the course of suggestion becomes complete.

This marginal consciousness is a tyrant when its contents over-freely and without system attach themselves to the contents of clear consciousness,

and so disturb the balance of the mind and render unreliable the course of our judgments.

Continuously, even without our apprehension, this marginal consciousness influences the character and the ebb and flow of the processes of our vivid consciousness.

It is not something different and apart from our usual conscious life, but an integral part of it.

24:2.4 The art of scientific suggestion consists in placing an idea in the mind in such a way and under such circumstances that it will become dominant; that is, the mind is caused to be possessed by that one idea.

This dominant idea plays the role of a liberator—it breaks up harmful associations of ideas, and so creates an opportunity for the establishment of new and healthy groups of ideas.

SOURCE

It brings about a dissociation between certain powerful ideas and physical actions, and often dissolves those physio-mental associations which are responsible for obsessions and bad habits (*PF&F* 429).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

It brings about a dissociation between certain powerful ideas and physical actions, and often dissolves those physio-mental associations which are responsible for obsessions and other bad habits.

SINCERITY AND TRUTHFULNESS

24:3.1 It is my settled opinion that the greatest and most permanent good is to be accomplished by always telling the patient the truth. I do not mean by this that we should always tell our nervous patients the whole truth; but what I do mean is, that we should not tell them anything that is intrinsically or fundamentally untrue.

24:3.2 In so far as it is desirable to treat the patient by suggestive methods, let us base our curative suggestions upon good physiological and psychological law, for in this way, and only in this way, can we hope to build up a sure therapeutic foundation from which our healing endeavors can be carried forward to completion in sincerity and with perfect confidence.

XXXIII: THE CURE OF WORRY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

MENTAL THERAPEUTICS, OR SO-CALLED SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

In our efforts to help the individual over his worries and other mental difficulties, we should ever recognize that there are true and false suggestions.

True suggestions appeal to the reason, deal with facts, point out causes, and offer a cure which is rational and right.

24:3.3 And so in our efforts to help the patient over his worries, we must recognize the possibility of using both true and false suggestions.

True suggestions appeal to the reason, deal with facts, point out causes, and offer a cure which is rational and right.

SOURCE

False suggestions (and the world is deluged with systems of mental healing based upon falsity and untruth) appeal to the imagination.

They aim to give immediate relief although temporary; they aim to “heal the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly”;

they seek to produce immediate effects, no matter at what future expense of pain to the body, disappointment to the mind, or destruction of the soul.

All methods of sympathy, suggestion, and advice to mental sufferers should be based upon truth, free from falsity and deception (PF&F 372).

XXXVI: THE SCIENCE OF SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 427)

THE UNIVERSALITY OF SUGGESTION (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 429)

[contd] In the author’s opinion, the science of suggestion is best carried out by making these suitable impressions upon the mind during the waking state (PF&F 429).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

False suggestions (and the world is deluged with systems of mental healing based upon falsity and untruth) appeal to the imagination.

They aim to give immediate relief although temporary; they aim to “heal the hurt of the daughter of my people slightly;”

they seek to produce immediate effects, no matter at what future expense of pain to the body, disappointment to the mind, or destruction of the soul.

All methods of sympathy, suggestion, and advice to mental sufferers should be based upon truth, free from falsity and deception.

24:3.4 It is needless to add that,

in the author’s opinion, the art of making therapeutic suggestions is best practiced by making these impressions upon the patient’s mind during the waking state.

In the ordinary or average case I do not look upon hypnotism as of any real curative value, but have come rather to regard it as a hindrance to securing permanent results in psychotherapy.

AN AGED REMEDY

[Source?]

No more powerful testimony to the value of suggestion can be found than the very fact that there exist to-day scores of different methods of treating disease, some diametrically opposite, all of which are more or less successful.

Various schools of medicine and the numerous therapeutic specialists are all more or less successful in treating and apparently curing disease.

John Alexander Dowie comes along teaching the existence of a physical body afflicted with disease because the devil controls it.

He also taught that God heals disease in answer to prayer, thus destroying the devil's power. Dowie cured thousands.

Mrs. Eddy and Christian Science teach that there is no physical body, no sickness; that these things exist only in the mind; and likewise they are able to cure other thousands.

Both of these teachings cannot be true, yet both can cure disease.

It is simply a problem in suggestive therapeutics, and the element of cure is not the correctness of either their physiological or their theological teaching.

24:4.1 Suggestion is literally as old as the hills. It has always been the chief asset of the successful physician; and it has ever been a dominant factor in the work of the successful preacher.

24:4.2 No more powerful testimony to the value of suggestion can be found than the very fact that there exist today scores of different methods of treating disease, some diametrically opposite, all of which are more or less successful.

Various schools of medicine and the numerous therapeutic specialists are all more or less successful in treating and apparently curing disease.

John Alexander Dowie came along teaching the existence of a physical body afflicted with disease because the devil controlled it.

He also taught that God heals disease in answer to prayer, thus destroying the devil's power. Dowie cured thousands.

Mrs. Eddy and Christian Science teach that there is no physical body, no sickness; that these things exist only in the mind; and likewise they are able to cure other thousands.

Both of these teachings cannot be true, yet both can cure disease.

It is simply a problem in suggestive therapeutics, and the element of cure is not the correctness of either their physiological or their theological teaching,

SOURCE

but rather the intensity and sincerity of the faith which the sick one exercises respecting the idea upon which he depends for healing (PF&F 436-37).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

but rather the intensity and sincerity of the faith which the sick one exercises respecting the idea upon which he depends for healing.

AUTOSUGGESTION

24:5.1 The ideal method of treating one's mental difficulties is by means of autosuggestion. Form the habit of reasoning with and directly suggesting good ideas to your own mind, instead of allowing unfortunate combinations of ideas and feelings to possess and dominate your experience.

CALM YOURSELF (Walton 1)

Instead of always associating the feelings of physical fatigue with the idea of being cross and grouchy, try a little experiment in suggestive therapeutics on yourself and you will be surprised to see how quickly and effectively it will work.

What I mean is this: The association "tired and cross" has become so fixed in our minds that to separate them would do violence to our ideas of the proprieties. But just try the experiment once, as I have elsewhere suggested, of **going home** after a hard day's work, saying to yourself,

Some evening when you are completely worn out, **on the way home**

reverse the usual association of idea and feelings from

"Why **tired and cross**;

"tired and cross"

to "tired and happy" and keep running over the new phrase in your mind, something after the following fashion: "Tired and happy"—"tired and satisfied"—"tired but smiling"—

SOURCE

why not tired and good-natured?"

You will find it a good deal easier than you think to carry out the suggestion, and the chances are you will give your family a surprise party (W 8-9).

Another friend says that nervous prostration could not be so easily disposed of. He says he frets because he is tired.

In point of fact, I think the principal reason he gets so tired is because he frets (W 7-8).

XXXIII: THE CURE OF WORRY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

AUTO-SUGGESTION, OR POSITIVE THINKING (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 372)

Train the mind to think *positive thoughts*. (PF&F 372).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

"tired and good-natured."

You will then begin to smile at yourself. It will seem a bit funny at first,

your smile will soon become contagious to the family and the entire evening at home will be quite different as the result of the auto-suggestion you have practiced upon yourself.

I know this is true from personal experiences and every one of my readers also knows that this teaching is entirely true. We all know about these things, but we do not work at them steadily.

One patient says he "frets because he is tired."

In point of fact, I think the principal reason he gets so tired is because he frets so much.

We do not faithfully live up to the psychological light we already have.

24:5.2 Again, it is sometimes necessary carefully to

train one's mind to think *positive thoughts*;

that is, instead of constantly saying to yourself “I can’t do that,” or, “I can’t do this,” turn the illogical tables suddenly on yourself, yes, literally surprise yourself by saying: “I can do this,” and “I will do it,” and the result of this sudden change of front, on your personality, will be that your indolent and rebellious mind will soon swing around into obedient lines, and you will soon find yourself accomplishing twice the work with one half the stress and strain.

24:5.3 Some folks need to acquire the power of rising right up and “talking turkey” to themselves. A lot of good people are falling down in life, they are failing to make good, simply because they allow their own lazy brains and undisciplined minds to scare them—literally to bluff them—by constantly harping on their lack of ability, their lack of brains, and otherwise leading to such a degree of self-depreciation that they utterly fall down in the accomplishment of their life work.

24:5.4 I stood up in my office a few years ago, and made a twenty minute speech to a brainy, talented ne’er do well, about twenty-seven years of age. and much to my surprise he pulled himself together, waked up and became a success in life. He has been simply doing swimmingly ever since, and I became convinced that there were large numbers of apparent failures in life who only needed that some good Samaritan should come along in the role of a psychological alarm clock to wake them up—to set them earnestly and enthusiastically at work.

THE OVERTHROW OF WORRY

No amount of mental resolution and moral determination, in and of themselves, will be able to overthrow and cast out worry.

Positive thinking is not only required in the battle against worry, but it is essential that our positive thinking shall also be *opposite* thinking.

We must overcome worry with its opposite mental states; we must cultivate faith and trust.

This is the one vital factor in the permanent cure of worry:

Replace the worry thought with an opposite thought which will occupy the mind and inspire the soul.

Drive out fear thought by exercising faith thought.

This is the substitute cure for worry; and when backed up by the strong resolution of a determined will, this method will always be found effective.

Even in the moral and spiritual treatment of worry it is the substitution principle that works best.

Replace the doubting, restless, and fretting attitude toward God, by a calm, confident and trustful belief in the wisdom of the Great Mind which is directing the affairs of this universe (PF&F 373).

[contd] Have the moral courage to enforce your own anti-worry mandates.

24:6.1 No amount of mental resolution and moral determination, in and of themselves, will be able to overthrow and cast out worry.

Positive thinking is not only required in the battle against worry, but it is essential that our positive thinking shall also be opposite thinking.

We must overcome worry with its opposite mental states; we must cultivate faith and trust.

This is the one vital factor in the permanent cure of worry:

replace the worry thought with an opposite thought which will occupy the mind and inspire the soul.

Drive out fear-thought by exercising faith-thought.

This is the substitute cure for worry; and when backed up by the strong resolution of a determined will this method will always be found effective.

Even in the moral and spiritual treatment of worry it is the substitution principle that works best.

Replace the doubting, restless, and fretting attitude toward God, by a calm, confident, and trustful belief in the wisdom of the Great Mind which is directing the affairs of the universe.

24:6.2 Have the moral courage to enforce your own anti-worry mandates.

SOURCE

When you have commanded the mind to cease worrying, keep right after it and see that it does.

In all these little things that harass one's soul, as some one has said, "Don't forget to remember the probability that *you have not*, as well as the possibility that you have, made a mistake" (PF&F 373).

XXXI: THE PHYSIOLOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF HABIT (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 338)

COOL-HEADEDNESS (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 345)

Most of us need to learn to take ourselves less seriously, and some ought to learn to take even their work less seriously.

It was a wise mother who said to her nervous daughter, "My child, you cannot possibly exaggerate the **unimportance of things**" (PF&F 346).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

When you have commanded the mind to cease worrying, keep right after it and see that it does.

In all these little things that harass one's soul, as some one has said, "Don't forget to remember the probability that you have not, as well as the possibility that you have, made a mistake."

THE ART OF SELF-RIDICULE

24:7.1 It is a great calamity to form the habit of taking one's self too seriously.

Most of us take ourselves far more seriously than the world does.

It is sometimes necessary to tell our melancholic patients that

it is impossible for them to overestimate the **unimportance of things**.

Most nervous people need to learn how to become indifferent to their fears, their feelings, and their emotions.

24:7.2 The art of self-ridicule—the ability to discern the funny side of one's own human nature—is a very effective health practice, a genuine mind healing procedure.

SOURCE

XXXIII: THE CURE OF WORRY (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 371)

THE PRACTICE OF SELF-CONTROL (*The Physiology of Faith and Fear* 373)

Some persons can be reasoned out of much of their worry,

others are best helped by judicious **ridicule**.

You can sometimes help a woman to overcome her absurd fear of a tiny mouse

by reasoning with her along the line of showing that the mouse is far more afraid of her than she is (or should be) of the mouse.

If reason does not effect a cure,

try **ridicule** in such cases as these unreasonable fears (*PF&F* 374).

*The secret of the treatment of worry is the acquirement and cultivation of **self-control**.*

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

It is a well known fact that

sometimes when you are unable to argue with or reason people away from their worries,

you can literally **ridicule** them out of their fears.

You can sometimes help a woman to overcome her absurd fear of a tiny mouse

by ridiculing her after all efforts to reasoning have failed.

And so when logic is powerless to pry you out of the slough of despond,

don't forget to try a little wholesome **ridicule** on yourself.

As it were, step out in the crowd and take a look at yourself and don't be afraid to indulge in a hearty laugh when the ridiculousness of your attitude is tardily borne home to your own consciousness.

THE HABIT OF SELF-CONTROL

24:8.1 The secret of success in the treatment of nervousness and cure of worry is all bound up in the attainment of **self-control**—

the science of self-mastery.

SOURCE

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Whatever the means of psychotherapy or the means of mental healing, the one great object is self-discipline—mind training—will power.

The victor in the fight with fear—the soldier who vanquished his nerves—is the soul that

Purpose to be a brave captain of your own mind.

bravely dared to captain its own mind,

who dared to out-general his perverted habits of thought in the great game of life, whose successful goal is the conquest and mastery of self.

24:8.2 And so you, the reader, owe it to yourself to

Summon to your aid all possible spiritual help, moral resolution, and mental decision.

summon all possible spiritual help, moral resolution, and mental decision,

to avail yourself of every physical means of grace to the mind,

and then, having made a declaration of emancipation to set free the mind from the domination of worry and the body from the tyranny of vice, go forth into the world as sons and daughters of God—

Dictate positive commands to the faculties which direct the physical sensations that influence the bodily state.

in full command of all your mental faculties and in full control of every physical power.

Learn to be a master of your moods.

24:8.3 Let us master our mental moods,

control our physical passions, and, from henceforth, be so free from our psychic whims, that we shall be able to sail straight away toward our goal of manifest destiny;

SOURCE

Do not permit yourself to drift along like a helpless, rudderless bark,

tossed to and fro by every sensation of pain

and every wind of mental distress (*PF&F* 373-74).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

no longer will we allow ourselves to drift along aimlessly as the rudderless, helpless bark we have been,

tossed to and fro and up and down by every trivial sensation of pain,

and driven off our course by the whimsical winds of unnatural fear and our own mental confusion.

THE GOSPEL OF SURRENDER

24:9.1 In the battle with “nerves” there never fails to come a time when the secret of success is to be found in graceful surrender. In every fight of faith to overthrow fear, the patient sooner or later reaches the place where, for the time being, farther progress is impossible, and graceful surrender—peaceful non-resistance—is the only course left open. This is the pass reached by the apostle Paul, when he so pathetically but bravely wrote:

[Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content (Phil. 4:11, KJV).]

“I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.”

24:9.2 It is sometimes extremely difficult to teach the nervous patient when to fight and when to surrender. As a general procedure I have advised them somewhat as follows: Assume a militant attitude toward your disordered nerves and disturbed mind; gird on the therapeutic armor, begin the healing fight, and remain in the struggle until both mind and body are well habituated to the spirit of the conflict,

and then, before the depleted mental powers and the weakened nerve energies are completely and fully exhausted, learn how to relax, surrender, yes, even to laugh at and ridicule your fears and smilingly to ignore your sensations of distress and feelings of fatigue.

CONTEMPLATION OF THE GREAT

24:10.1 In this connection I cannot do better than to quote a clipping which has been sent me, accredited to Dr. Frank Crane and entitled, "The Practice of Greatness by Words:"

"THE PRACTICE OF GREATNESS BY WORDS" (Crane 6)

You take exercises for the muscles of your arms, legs and back; why not take an exercise occasionally for your soul?

Your spirit, or ego, or self, or whatever you may call that invisible something that is more really you than your body; that something which thinks, loves, feels, imagines, and wills is well worth a little training.

Here is a suggestion. There are certain great ideas, represented by certain great words. These words have power-volts in their very sound. Every time you think one of them you grow greater.

Take to bed with you the following seven words. As you lie, waiting for sleep, say them over, one by one, to yourself.

You take exercises for the muscles of your arms, legs and back: why not take an exercise occasionally for your soul?

Your spirit, or ego, or self, or whatever you may call that invisible something that is more really you than your body; that something which thinks, loves, feels, imagines, and wills is well worth a little training.

Here is a suggestion. There are certain great ideas, represented by certain great words. These words have power-volts in their very sound. Every time you think one of them you grow greater.

Take to bed with you the following seven words. As you lie, waiting for sleep, say them over, one by one, to yourself.

SOURCE

Or, better, take a half hour during the day, in silence and solitude, and practice the feeling of these terms.

1. GOD. Never mind about your belief or disbelief. Say that word ten times, slowly, with pauses between. Think of what is above, below, around, and in all things. Spread your mind out upon the universe. Practice the sensing of the infinite.

2. STARS. Say stars. Think stars. Try to reach the feeling of stars. Let your fancy climb to the top of the night sky. Get the vibrations of those measureless distances, those suns, galaxies, sweeping worlds; all silent, luminous, immense, swift-whirling, yet orderly. Happy you if you can induce a bit of star feeling within you!

3. MOUNTAIN. Repeat some names of individuals: Mont Blanc. Himalaya, Orizaba, Matterhorn, Popocatepetl. Get your mind up among the noiseless heights. Let the serenity, the eternity of the words filter into you.

4. OCEAN. Go a-sailing, out of sight of land. Be surrounded for a moment by waste, wild waters. See on all sides only horizon. Stand, in your imagination, by the seashore. Hear the surf boom. Do not talk. Do not make phrases. Feel!

5. TREE. Call to mind the most majestic tree you know. Touch its rough trunk. Look up at its wide branches. Stand from it and see its outline against the sky. Get some of the tree feeling into your spirit. Think trees: it's a wonderful relief from thinking dishes and dustrags.

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Or, better, take a half hour during the day, in silence and solitude, and practice the feeling of these terms.

1. GOD. Never mind about your belief or disbelief. Say that word ten times, slowly, with pauses between. Think of what is above, below, around, and in all things. Spread your mind out upon the universe. Practice the sensing of the infinite.

2. STARS. Say stars. Think stars. Try to reach the feeling of stars. Let your fancy climb to the top of the night sky. Get the vibrations of those measureless distances, those suns, galaxies, sweeping worlds; all silent, luminous, immense, swift-whirling, yet orderly. Happy you if you can induce a bit of star feeling within you!

3. MOUNTAIN. Repeat some names of individuals: Mont Blanc. Himalaya, Orizaba, Matterhorn, Popocatepetl. Get your mind up among the noiseless heights. Let the serenity, the eternity of the words filter into you.

4. OCEAN. Go a-sailing, out of sight of land. Be surrounded for a moment by waste, wild waters. See on all sides only horizon. Stand, in your imagination, by the seashore. Hear the surf boom. Do not talk. Do not make phrases. Feel!

5. TREE. Call to mind the most majestic tree you know. Touch its rough trunk. Look up at its wide branches. Stand from it and see its outline against the sky. Get some of the tree feeling into your spirit. Think trees: it's a wonderful relief from thinking dishes and dustrags.

SOURCE

6. DAWN. Think of sunrise, of the freshness of life, of hopeful beginnings. Induce, if you can, a sense of sunrise.

7. MORE. It is a sonorous word. Repeat it—slowly, significantly, and note how you grow. The word lifts you up. expands you.

Don't try to argue. Just say these seven words. Let them boom across your consciousness. Somehow they will still and banish your littleness. You will come to a great calm. You will have a sense of poise. You will get a sense of remoteness from affairs. You cannot describe it, nor impart it. It is a secret.

Your self-contempt will vanish. You will cease to think yourself a nothing, a puppet insignificant.

You will feel that you are, deep in your hidden life, great and strong and wonderful. For who can think such thoughts and be wholly little and contemptible?

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

6. DAWN. Think of sunrise, of the freshness of life, of hopeful beginnings. Induce, if you can, a sense of sunrise.

7. MORE. It is a sonorous word. Repeat it—slowly, significantly, and note how you grow. The word lifts you up. expands you.

Don't try to argue. Just say these seven words. Let them boom across your consciousness. Somehow they will still and banish your littleness. You will come to a great calm. You will have a sense of poise. You will get a sense of remoteness from affairs. You cannot describe it, nor impart it. It is a secret.

Your self-contempt will vanish. You will cease to think yourself a nothing, a puppet insignificant.

You will feel that you are, deep in your hidden life, great and strong and wonderful. For who can think such thoughts and be wholly little and contemptible?

PSYCHIC CONTAGION

24:11.1 When a large number of susceptible individuals are exposed to a strong suggestion, there sometimes occurs a veritable epidemic of imitation—psychic contagion. Erratic individuals are sometimes able to inculcate their absurd notions into the heads of scores of apparently sane individuals who will follow them to any foolish length. Minor traits of character, peculiarities of disposition and eccentricities of temperament are observed to go through entire families and even neighborhoods.

Of course, in the case of this family resemblance, heredity may play some part, but psychic contagion is the chief factor in most instances.

XI: PSYCHIC CONTAGION (Walsh 688)

[The uncontrollable movements of the Phrygian Bacchantes] represents the earliest forms of what came to be known afterwards as St. Vitus Dance when it spread among a number of people (W 688).

Epidemics of St. Vitus' Dance

have been traced to suggestion;

Contagious Trifles. (W 688)

Coughing is as much the result of imitation as anything else (W 689).

coughing,

Sighing, for instance, is quite contagious (W 689)

sighing,

Everyone knows how contagious yawning is (W 688).

yawning,

all lend themselves readily to suggestion,

Laughing, for instance, is particularly contagious among young folks ... (W 689).

as do laughing

Crying has something of the same contagious nature ... (W 689).

and crying,

in fact, all forms of emotion.

Psychic contagion is further shown in

Expectoration is largely dependent on imitation, sometime conscious, but often quite unconscious (W 689).

the expectoration habits of men.

SOURCE

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

Tobacco chewing is going out of fashion,
but still men remain incessant spitters.

Why should men spit more than women?

It is recognized that we have “a spitting sex” and that men spit from force of habit, boys imitate them, while women and girls almost never spit (W 689).

Habit is the answer,

We have a spitting sex because of psychic contagion ... (W 689).

and psychic contagion is the explanation.

Fads and Health. (W 689)

24:11.2 Imitation is far-reaching in its influence,

The mental influence spreads from one to another. It may be that a particular fashion, as in houses or in clothes, is especially ugly. That makes no difference (W 690).

dominating our clothes fashions,

as well as accounting for the numerous crazes that attack society from time to time, as typified in

Bicycling comes in and goes out; roller skating attacks nearly every one of the young folks and then is abandoned (W 690).

the bicycle craze, roller skating;

Suicide Contagions. (W 691)

and even suicidal tendencies

rise and fall in accordance with

Finally it was agreed that the most potent influence in bringing about the imitation of the [suicide] epidemic [in Emporia, Kansas, in June 1901] was the publication of the details of the suicides in the papers (W 691).

newspaper publicity.

Murder. (W 691)

[contd] In almost the same way murders prove contagious. Especially is this true of murder and suicide together (W 691).

Murders of a particular kind are also suggested in the same way,

Prevention. (W 693)

We have had many burglaries and holdups and stealings of various kinds as a consequence of boys and even girls seeing the pictures of crimes in the moving-picture show (W 693).

and “waves of crime” are almost annual experiences in our large cities.

Favorable Influence. (W 692)

24:11.3 Psychic contagion, or the **psychology of the mob**, may also be utilized as a therapeutic agent.

We have called attention to this in former chapters by the statement that neurasthenics and neurotics should never be alone.

People in a crowd stand fatigue better than when alone (W 692).

All of us stand fatigue better in a crowd than when we are alone.

Soldiers marching in step do not notice their tiredness to such a degree and even forget their sore feet (W 692).

You can walk twice as far with the same amount of weariness on a cross country tramp in congenial society, than if you should undertake a solitary journey of equal distance.

Psychology of the Mob. (W 692)

An alarm of **fire** will, if a few persons lose their heads, lead to the most serious consequences (W 692).

Fire panic is another case of psychic contagion,

and all this can be overcome by

SOURCE

Fire drills in schools enable children to get out in a few minutes without confusion when without them the most serious results could be looked for (W 692).

Prevention (W 693)

I have found over and over again that the prohibition of reading the newspapers for a time did many nervous people much good (W 693).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

the fire drills such as are conducted in the public schools.

In fact, the suggestion-power of newspapers is so powerful that

I often find it necessary temporarily, to stop my nervous patients from reading the daily press.

THE CURATIVE POWER OF SUGGESTION

IX: PSYCHIC SYMPTOMS OF NERVOUSNESS—[Etc.] (Dubois 103)

Human suggestibility is incommensurable.

It enters into every act of life,

colors all our sensations with the most varied tints,

leads our judgment astray,

and creates those continual illusions

against which we have so much trouble to defend ourselves, even when we exert all the strength of our reason (D 113).

24:12.1 The power of suggestion is immeasurable.

It enters into our every thought and act of life.

It colors every sensation and emotion of human experience.

It is able to deceive reason and belittle judgment,

and creates a sort of continuous panorama of illusions,

which we are forced to struggle against throughout a life time.

SOURCE

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

It is possible to generate ideas by suggestions

[contd] The power of an idea is such that, not only does it distort a preexisting sensation or an idea, but it can create the sensation in its entirety.

and ideas are in turn able to create feelings and sensations;

There is no difference for the individual who feels it

and there is absolutely no difference, for the individual who experiences it,

between a pain provoked by a peripheral sensation and that which results from a simple mental representation—

between the painful sensations provoked by peripheral irritation and those which result from a **central** excitation—

there is no difference to you

between the real pain and the imaginary pain.

between a real pain and an imaginary pain,

and as Dubois has said:

More often the patient does not possess any criterion by which to decide the question, and the physician himself is frequently puzzled over its settlement (D 113-14).

Often the patient does not possess any criterion by which to decide the question, and the physician himself is frequently puzzled over its settlement.”

24:12.2 As an illustration of the power of suggestion and how it becomes necessary sometimes carefully to set the stage in order to maintain the patient's confidence throughout a course of treatment, I give the following case:

Mrs. D——, married, thirty six years of age. had been paralyzed for three and one-half years. She had made some improvement, but not enough to enable her to get around without a crutch and cane. A careful physical examination, including that of the nerve showed every evidence that this woman was not paralyzed.

Of course, it was impossible to say that she had not been paralyzed either actually or hysterically at some time in the past. She was told that in our opinion within two months, approximately, she would be entirely cured and would be able to walk without crutch or cane; and then she was put into the Institute to undergo a course of treatment, embracing hydrotherapy, electricity, massage, etc. In connection with these physical measures, she was given treatment in educational therapeutics (in this particular case—partly on the “suggestive” order—twice a week) and it is interesting to note that her improvement as to walking ability was exactly proportionate to the faith and hope which were aroused by her psychic treatment. She made steady improvement and, as was promised, she was fully restored and able to walk without crutch or cane at the end of two months’ treatment: but even to this day, no amount of argument or reasoning will convince her that she was not paralyzed. She attributes her remarkable recovery more largely to the physical treatment which she received, and this is probably due to the fact that all sorts of mental treatments, healing cults, etc., had been tried previous to her coming under our care, and all had proved unsuccessful; and, incidentally, it was our knowledge of the failure of all these methods that led us in this particular case carefully to arrange a course of physical treatment to supplement our psychotherapeutic efforts, and to adopt a measure of “suggestion” in addition to our customary regime of reeducation.

FEAR OF POISONING

24:13.1 The power of suggestion to influence the functional behavior of a patient's circulation is shown in the case of a patient I recently had, a young woman of neurotic heredity, twenty-two years of age, who believed she was being poisoned in some insidious manner. First, she thought the poison was put in through the key hole into her bedroom, and she worked herself up into a hysterical frenzy over this, as about this time there was a great deal being published in the newspapers about white slavery, the needle man, etc. Finally after being persuaded that this could not possibly be true, by taking her to the hospital and showing her how long it took and how many ounces of ether were necessary to narcotize a patient, she conceived the idea that poison was being put in through the water tap in her room. She refused to either drink the water or wash in it, and finally she settled upon the notion that poisonous gas was escaping from the tap, even though she did not draw the water. This sort of thing went on for about a year and a half. Then I finally made ready a hypodermic syringe, in the water of which I dissolved a very small amount of sugar of milk from a tablet taken from a bottle on my desk, telling her that its injection into her system would probably markedly affect her heart, but not to worry, that it was a necessary procedure connected with her cure.

24:13.2 Immediately upon the injection of the harmless solution of sugar of milk, her heart began to flutter, she became dizzy, her face was alternately paled and flushed, and after this had continued for about three or four minutes, I opened the bottle of sugar of milk and began calmly to chew up the tablets and swallow them down until I had eaten the whole bottle, almost fifty tablets. Suffice it to say that the girl had brains enough to recognize what had happened and as far as I know, from that day to this, she has not been known to worry about subtle poisonings or needle men. Indirect suggestion sometimes works more quickly than direct education.

THERAPEUTIC MAXIMS

24:14.1 In the battle against nerves, the successful soldier must learn how to wrest triumph from defeat; must learn how to

[From Wiki: Union General Ulysses S. Grant wrote the famous line: "I propose to fight it out along this line if it takes all summer" on May 11, 1864, during the Battle of Spotsylvania Court-House in Virginia.]

"fight it out along this line, if it takes all summer."

The neurasthenic must encounter his difficulties with such courage that obstacles will only serve to breed the spirit of indomitable conquest. The neurotic soul must cheer himself on in the struggle with the assurance that some day recovery will become auto-matic, that the good work will go on unconsciously and without constant and earnest effort on his part.

He must learn that when mental discipline and self-control have been practiced to the point where sixty per cent or more of his mental operations are normal and healthy, then the balance of psychological gravity will be all on the side of sound thinking and healthful impulses; and then it is that victory begins automatically to perch upon his torn and dusty banner, while the fight from this point on is easily and surely won.

CALM YOURSELF (Walton 1)

24:15.2 In the succession of battles which invariably go before the final victory, we have found it very helpful to put in the hands of our patients, as was suggested by Dr. Walton, certain phrases, or maxims, which the nervous patient may use as a sort of battle cry, to cheer him on when the struggle grows hard. Some of these phrases which have proved helpful to our patients are such as the following: "Hold the fort," "Never say die," "Sand the track,"

In point of fact, the maxims that have helped me most are these: "Play ball," "Get busy," and "Saw wood!" (W 43)

"Play ball," "Saw wood,"

"Never give up the ship," "The worst is over," "I'll get there yet,"

"Get busy—and stick to it,"

"Play the game square and take the score like a man,"

"Never touched me" (W 14).

"Never touched me."

SOURCE

The business man of to-day is making use of psychotherapy when he hangs signs in his office bearing such legends as

“Do it now,” “Keep busy to keep happy.”

The Elm Tree Press is doing the same by publishing such suggestions as “Cheer up, the less you have the more there is to get”;

and “When you are down in the mouth, think of Jonah—he came out all right (W 13).

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

24:15.3 A lot of good is being done in the world by

hanging up these suggestive mottoes around in business offices, such as

“Do it now,” “Keep busy to keep happy,”

“Cheer up, the less you have the more there is to get,”

and, “When you are down in the mouth, think of Jonah, he came out all right.”

SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER

1. The miracles (so-called) of ancient medicine man and modern bogus healer are alike dependent upon suggestion.

2. The practice of suggestion does not necessarily imply the employment of deception and subterfuge; it rather embraces the use of persuasion, inspiration, and education.

3. The science of suggestion is the art of endowing good ideas with a new power that will enable them to overthrow their mischief-making fellows.

4. In suggestion, good ideas are supposed to grow up in the subconscious mind until they are sufficiently mature to assert themselves and liberate the patient from the tyranny of fear and other erroneous beliefs.

5. Therapeutic suggestions may be either true or false, but only the true make for permanent results and complete recovery.

6. Suggestion as a remedy is as old as the hills and accounts for the fact that widely differing systems of healing and schools of medicine are equally efficacious in curing disease.

7. The ideal method of treating one's difficulties is by auto-suggestion. You can practice mental therapeutics on yourself just as well as to employ some one else to do it for you.

8. Positive thinking as well as opposite thinking is essential to success in mental therapy.

9. A lot of good people allow their own minds to bluff them. They scare themselves out of success and into certain failure.

10. Worry is never cured by resisting it as such. You drive out fear-thought by exercising faith-thought.

11. It is a calamity to form the habit of taking yourself too seriously. The world does not regard you seriously, why should you take yourself so seriously?

12. The art of self-ridicule—the ability to see the funny side of your own nature—is an invaluable health practice.

13. Self-control is the secret of curing worry and banishing the blues; and all this means mental discipline with increased will power.

14. Make a declaration of emancipation. Be independent of your mental moods, physical passions, and psychic whims.

15. When fighting has done all it can, learn how gracefully to surrender and be content with your lot.

16. Practice the contemplation of great things and great thoughts. Spend a little time thinking about the big universe you are whirling around in.

SOURCE

24: WORRY AND NERVOUSNESS

17. Psychic contagion is a real thing. The psychology of the mob is the great proof of the power of collective suggestion.

18. Epidemics of excitement, nervous disorders, crimes, and suicide result from psychic contagion in the community.

19. Fads in dressing, bicycling and roller-skating are the result of imitation and suggestion.

20. The universal reading of the daily press contributes powerfully to psychic contagion in the community, state, and nation.

21. The power of suggestion is immeasurable. It enters into every thought and act of life, it colors every sensation and emotion of human experience.

22. When the psychic struggle goes hard, it is highly helpful to have some battle cry, such as "I'll never give up the ship," and cling tenaciously to it until the crisis is passed.

1. *Compare:*

Suggestion, either true or false, is the key that unlocks many a medical mystery, and explains the cure of mental diseases in all times and by a thousand different methods (*PF&F* 372).

2. *Compare:*

We know that direct suggestions are profoundly influential. It must be constantly kept in mind, however, that indirect suggestion, suggestion that does not come by any formal method, but that is represented by the examples of those around, also has great weight (Walsh 692).