

Chapter 3.16 Emotional Management Suggestions

This chapter is about using neurolinguistic programming (NLP) to help yourself manage your emotional life. There are several paragraphs on brain functioning which are summarized, in the following paragraph. Then I talk about some general principles, followed by the Emotional Management Suggestions found at the end of the chapters.

Most of our brain functioning is out of our awareness, and this includes our emotions. A conscious desire and decision to change an emotional state is ineffective. Some knowledge of the brain functioning is useful in knowing what we do control. In the article to follow, I have underlined what I think is particularly significant. Basically what you need to realize after reading the information about the brain is that 1) our reptilian brain is much like the brain of serpents and it functions out of our awareness. The mammalian brain is on top of the serpentine brain and it also functions out of our awareness. Our primate brain, which is called the neocortex, is on top of the old mammalian brain; 2) We are conscious of some of the functioning of the neocortex, and it is through the connections of the neocortex to the old mammalian brain that we have any awareness of the functioning of that part of our brain; 3) Our emotions, instincts, sexual attractions and value judgments are all centered in the old mammalian brain and are not changed by consciously deciding to change them.

The following is an excerpt from a sub-page of www.kheper.auz.com but any query at an internet search engine with the buzzword "Paul McLean" and "triune brain" will report numerous links.

The Triune Brain

Archipallium brain (reptilian brain)

paleomammalian brain (limbic system)

Neopallium brain (neocortex)

The neurologist Paul MacLean has proposed that our skull holds not one brain, but three, each representing a distinct evolutionary stratum that has formed upon the older layer before it, like an archaeological site: He calls it the "triune brain." MacLean, now the director of the Laboratory of Brain Evolution and Behaviour in Poolesville, Maryland, says that three brains operate like "three interconnected biological computers, [each] with its own special intelligence, its own subjectivity, its own sense of time and space and its own memory". He refers to these three brains as the neocortex or neo-mammalian brain, the limbic or paleo-mammalian system, and the reptilian brain, the brainstem and cerebellum. Each of the three brains is connected by nerves to the other two, but each seems to operate as its own brain system with distinct capacities. This hypothesis has become a very

influential paradigm, which has forced a rethink of how the brain functions. It had previously been assumed that the highest level of the brain, the neocortex, dominates the other, lower levels. MacLean has shown that this is not the case, and that the physically lower limbic system, which rules emotions, can hijack the higher mental functions when it needs to.

It is interesting that many esoteric spiritual traditions taught the same idea of three planes of consciousness and even three different brains. Gurdjieff for example referred to Man as a "three-brained being". There was one brain for the spirit, one for the soul, and one for the body. Similar ideas can be found in Kabbalah, in Platonism, and elsewhere, with the association spirit - head (the actual brain), soul - heart, and body in the belly. Here we enter also upon the chakra paradigm - the idea that points along the body or the spine correspond to nodes of consciousness, related in an ascending manner, from gross to subtle.

The Reptilian Brain. The archipallium or primitive (reptilian) brain, or "Basal Brain", called by MacLean the "R-complex", includes the brain stem and the cerebellum, is the oldest brain. It consists of the structures of the brain stem - medulla, pons, cerebellum, mesencephalon, the oldest basal nuclei - the globus pallidus and the olfactory bulbs. In animals such as reptiles, the brain stem and cerebellum dominate. For this reason it is commonly referred to as the "reptilian brain". It has the same type of archaic behavioral programs as snakes and lizards. It is rigid, obsessive, compulsive, ritualistic and paranoid, it is "filled with ancestral memories". It keeps repeating the same behaviors over and over again, never learning from past mistakes (corresponding to what Sri Aurobindo calls the mechanical Mind). This brain controls muscles, balance and autonomic functions, such as breathing and heartbeat. This part of the brain is active, even in deep sleep.

The Limbic System (Paleomammalian brain). In 1952 MacLean first coined the name "limbic system" for the middle part of the brain. It can also be termed the paleopallium or intermediate (old mammalian) brain. It corresponds to the brain of the most mammals, and especially the earlier ones. The old mammalian brain residing in the limbic system is concerned with emotions and instincts, feeding, fighting, fleeing, and sexual behavior. As MacLean observes, everything in this emotional system is either "agreeable or disagreeable". Survival depends on avoidance of pain and repetition of pleasure. When this part of the brain is stimulated with a mild electrical current various emotions (fear, joy, rage, pleasure and pain etc) are produced. No emotion has been found to reside in one place for very long. But the Limbic system as a whole appears to be the primary seat of emotion, attention, and affective (emotion-charged) memories. Physiologically, it includes the hypothalamus, hippocampus, and amygdala. It helps determine valence (e.g., whether you feel positive or negative toward something, in Buddhism referred to as vedana - "feeling") and salience (e.g., what gets your attention); unpredictability, and creative behavior. It has vast interconnections with the neocortex, so that brain functions are not either purely limbic or purely cortical but a mixture of both. MacLean claims to have found in the Limbic system a physical basis for the dogmatic and paranoid tendency, the

biological basis for the tendency of thinking to be subordinate feeling, to rationalize desires. He sees a great danger in all this limbic system power. As he understands it, this lowly mammalian brain of the limbic system tends to be the seat of our value judgments, instead of the more advanced neocortex. It decides whether our higher brain has a "good" idea or not, whether it feels true and right.

The Neocortex, cerebrum, the cortex, or an alternative term, neopallium, also known as the superior or rational (neomammalian) brain, comprises almost the whole of the hemispheres (made up of a more recent type of cortex, called neocortex) and some subcortical neuronal groups. It corresponds to the brain of the primate mammals and, consequently, the human species. The higher cognitive functions which distinguish Man from the animals are in the cortex. MacLean refers to the cortex as "the mother of invention and father of abstract thought". In Man the neocortex takes up two thirds of the total brain mass. Although all animals also have a neocortex, it is relatively small, with few or no folds (indicating surface area and complexity and development). A mouse without a cortex can act in fairly normal way (at least to superficial appearance), whereas a human without a cortex is a vegetable. The cortex is divided into left and right hemispheres, the famous left and right brain. The left half of the cortex controls the right side of the body and the right side of the brain the left side of the body. Also, the right brain is more spatial, abstract, musical and artistic, while the left brain more linear, rational, and verbal. The web site The Brain From Top to Bottom stated, "Information from an external stimulus reaches the amygdala (which is a part of the old mammalian brain) in two different ways: by a short, fast, but imprecise route, directly from the thalamus which is part of the old mammalian brain): and by a long, slow, but precise route, by way of the cortex. It is the short, more direct route that lets us start preparing for a potential danger before we even know exactly what it is.

In summary the statements above indicate that the old mammalian brain (limbic system) functions out of our conscious awareness and controls our emotions. But the Limbic system as a whole appears to be the primary seat of emotion, attention, and affective (emotion-charged) memories. Our value judgments also are centered there. As he understands it, this lowly mammalian brain of the limbic system tends to be the seat of our value judgments, instead of the more advanced neocortex. It decides whether our higher brain has a "good" idea or not, whether it feels true and right. Blink of the eye actions and decisions are centered there also. Information from an external stimulus reaches the amygdala (which is part of the old mammalian brain) in two different ways: by a short, fast, but imprecise route, directly from the thalamus (also part of the old mammalian brain): and by a long, slow, but precise route, by way of the cortex. Malcolm Gladwell has written a best seller, Blink The Power of Thinking Without Thinking in which he discusses the actions, decisions and judgments that are made in the blinking of an eye –too fast to be a conscious process. Sometimes this can be life saving as in the case of a firefighter, who suddenly told his crew to get out now, seconds before the floor collapsed. He claimed it was ESP, but he was able to

remember what made the fire unusual. The kitchen fire was not being put out with water and the fire was very hot and strangely quiet. (Which was evidence that the fire was in the basement) (Page 123). Or it can be disastrous in the case of policemen who fired at and killed a man who looked dangerous but turned out to be unarmed (page 191).

What control do we have over our emotions? The input for the emotion is originally through the short, fast, imprecise route. The neocortex is involved later and the specific mental image and sound is associated with the emotion. Our emotions, our value judgments, our biases, our fixed limiting beliefs are all based in the old mammalian brain. How do we gain access to those areas in the old mammalian brain since that is out of our awareness? I like the analogy of a bar code. Each emotion has a bar code, which connects it to the neocortex. What is that bar code and how can it be specific for each individual emotion? The bar code is the specific sensory data of the stimuli, which created the emotion. The richness of the details of the sensory data is what makes each emotional bar code unique. NLP labels this submodality distinctions. Your mind can make any changes that can be made with a video camera. Where you see the image seems to be most important? Is it to the right or left or up or down? What is the size? Are people life-sized or smaller or larger? How bright is it? Is it in color or black and white? Is it in focus or blurred? How much contrast is there? Does the background fade away or stand out? Some of the submodality distinctions with auditory data are placement of the sound (where do you hear it coming from—Is it from within you or outside of you and how far away is it?), loudness, pitch, tone of voice, rhythm, timbre, and does the sound come from a specific point or is it all around you? Kinesthetic sub-modalities include where in your body do you feel it and how large is the feeling? Is it constant or rhythmic? How heavy or light? What temperature? Is it in your skin or muscles or bones or gut? Do you have a boundary or can people see right through you? Do you feel a connectedness to anything outside of you? There are a multitude of smells. The submodality distinctions are usually out of our awareness; however, by making a conscious effort we can become aware of the submodality distinctions (or bar code) connected to a specific emotion. Once we know the bar code then we can change it and that will change the emotion. Click on Chapter 3.1 Changing Internal Images In Chapter 3.1 Changing Internal Images to Minimize Emotional Impact I discuss how, by directly changing the mental image the emotion can be dampened or intensified. Click on Chapter 3.2 Fast Phobia Cure Click on Chapter 3.6 Shame and Guilt Click on Chapter 3.12 Resentment The bridging over procedure is described in Chapters 3.2, 3.6, and 3.12 as a way to deal with guilt, resentment and panic. The change is made more specific by comparing the picture of the undesirable emotional state to the picture of an analogous experience in which you didn't have the undesirable emotion. Picture #1 is the problematic emotion and Picture #2 is an analogous situation in which you didn't have the specified emotion. Often the major difference between the two pictures is the location. Sometimes the change is to move the picture from right to left. Why this changes the emotion doesn't make sense unless you have the concept that this changes the bar code.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.1 Changing Internal Images to Minimize Emotional Impact.

It is possible for you to change your internal images and to control the response you get from them. One way to increase the intensity of a pleasant memory, is to make the internal picture of the memory bigger, brighter, closer, in color, and a movie. You can have the opposite effect if you move the picture away, make it smaller, dimmer, black and white, and a “still” picture. This reduces the intensity of the emotion. Similarly, if you have a negative image of a situation, for example, when you were embarrassed, by making that image bigger and brighter, the embarrassment increases. If you change that image by moving it away, making it smaller, out of focus, dimmer, a still picture, and in black and white rather than color, then the intensity of your feeling is much less. Basically, this is an example of how you can control your brain and your emotions.

There are two ways in which you can experience visual images. If the image is what you saw through your own eyes, then this is called an associated image. If the picture was taken outside of yourself through a video camera, then this is called a dissociated image. When making a dissociated image, the you have much less emotional response. When you have an associated image, then you experience the feelings you had at the time. You can take any memory that is unpleasant or not particularly useful and see what happened as though the whole scene was taken with a camera and shown on a movie screen. Then your emotions become much less intense.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.2 Fast Phobia Cure

Many of my clients including Billy have learned to use the procedure for all sorts of situations. Basically any time you have a mental picture of an incident and negative feelings are produced, you can use the fast phobia cure procedure. To learn to do this on your own, select a mildly traumatic or irritating event. Use whatever procedure allows you to have a relaxation response—meditation, music, sitting in your favorite chair, yoga, chanting, or imaging your favorite scene in nature. You need to maintain the relaxed feeling throughout seeing the movie. Have a special someone hold your hand if you think that would help. The movie will start before the incident and end after it is over. 1. See projected onto the screen a black and white photograph of yourself before the incident. 2. Take a seat in the imaginary theater. 3. Float out of your body and up to the projection

booth. Check to make sure you are relaxed and comfortable. 4. You cannot see the screen and what you see is yourself in the theater seat watching the screen. Then watch yourself seated in the theater watching the movie of the incident. 5. After the movie is over, change the black and white image of yourself at the end of the movie to color. 6. Imagine stepping into the image on the screen, so you are inside the film, as you run the movie backwards rapidly to a time before the incident happened. 7. Repeat steps 5 and 6 several times. 8. Test your results. You will be surprised that the old feeling is no longer there or at least is a lot less intense. Then you can repeat with an incident with more intense feelings. The crucial element is to be able to remain relaxed while watching yourself watch the movie.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.3 Internal Conflicts: How to Free Billy from Dahmer's Grip

To help yourself in dealing with an internal conflict, you need to be aware of the conflict. Physical symptoms are often the result of unresolved internal conflict. An assumption of NLP is that every part of you has a positive intent. One hint is to notice how you express the physical complaint, and assume that this expression is literally true. "I have a pressure headache." "I feel like I can't swallow" (what someone is pushing you to accept). "She gets under my skin." "My skin crawls." Go inside and ask your unconscious what having that symptom is trying to do for you. One man had frequent headaches, which prevented him from working. The headache was essentially saying, "When the pressure gets so high, I am going to force you to quit work for a while." The challenge is to find other ways to fulfill the positive intent. This man had a lifelong pattern of committing himself to projects without considering how he was going to get the time or energy to fulfill the commitments. After he changed this pattern, his headaches became infrequent. Sometimes, when he felt a headache coming on, he was able to bargain with the part of himself that produced the headache. He said to himself, "If you hold off the headache today and allow me to finish this commitment, I promise I will take a break tomorrow." The headache held off, but, of course, he had to honor his promise to take a break the next day. Having to rely on will power is another indication of an internal conflict. The power of the will is used to keep another part of the person under control. The person often views that part of himself as his enemy. If that part takes over, then the person may say to himself like the comedian Flip Wilson quipped, "The devil made me do it." The person disowns part of himself. A presupposition of NLP is that every part of each of us has a positive intention. I have often asked people who are struggling with their weight what the part of them that overeats wants to accomplish. Some responses have been: "It pleases my mother." "I want to get my money's worth." "It is the one thing that I can do for myself." "Eat because the people in China are starving." "My mother believed that as long as you were sitting at the table you should be

eating.” “It is a sin to waste food, so I have to eat everything on my plate.” “As long as I am eating I won’t be lonely.” “If I am fat, then guys won’t hit on me and my husband won’t be jealous.”

If you are achieving a goal through will power, I am not advising you to give up that accomplishment. Ask the part of you, that you are controlling through will power, what that part is trying to do for you. I assume that part has a positive intent, although the end result may be negative or self-destructive. Go inside and wait for an answer. Often the answers seem strange. If you have been trying to get rid of that part of yourself, it might take a while for that part to trust enough to give an answer. Once you have an answer, then you need to find more effective ways of accomplishing the same thing. It is best to come up with at least three new options.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.5 Curing Panic Attacks

The bridging over procedure is useful with a variety of undesired emotions, such as panic, anxiety, embarrassment and resentment. The suggested procedure is the same as described in the chapter on resentment. The first picture is the mental image you have of the person as you feel the anxiety. Be aware of the location of the image. How close is it? Is it at eye level or above or below—center or to the right or the left? How big is the person? Is the person life-size or smaller or larger than life? The second picture is an analogous situation in which you didn’t feel any anxiety. If you are anxious around certain people, then what people are you not anxious around? Find out all the details about the second picture that you did for picture #1. Except in rare instances, the mental images will be in different locations. As you start to move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2, be aware of any objections that you feel. If you have trouble moving the picture, stop and figure out what objection you have. Then move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2, and, if there was a difference in size, change that. Give yourself a few minutes and then check the results by remembering the situation in which you were previously anxious. Be delighted at the power you now have over your emotions. Feel the difference this is making in your future, and see the freedom that it is giving you.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.6 Shame and Guilt

If guilt is because you knowingly violated a standard of behavior, then you should plan how to uphold your standards in the future. If someone pushed your button and you responded automatically, go to Chapter 2,1. If it was related to anger or resentment, I refer you to those chapters.

The procedure I use most frequently in changing guilt which is not reasonable or logical is that of “bridging over” which is also described in Chapter 3.12. In this procedure you make two mental images and become aware of the differences between the two images. Then you change the image that makes you feel guilty to be like the image that doesn’t make you feel guilty. 1. Feel the guilt and then be aware of the mental image that produces that guilt. Where do you see it? How far away is it? Is it in the center or up or down or to the right or the left? How big is the image? Are the persons life-size? Is it a movie or a still picture; is it in color or black and white? This is picture #.1 2. Think of an analogous situation in which you don’t feel guilty. For the analogous situation to feeling guilty because there were conflicting standards of behavior, I use the example of being on the phone and the person doesn’t want to end the conversation, and you need to leave to make an appointment. Hopefully, you didn’t feel guilty when you had to hang up. If you are feeling guilty without any logical reason because you did or didn’t do something which would have prevented a tragedy, then remember a situation in which had you acted on hindsight and had done something differently, then some undesirable event would not have occurred. For example, you suggested going to a restaurant and your whole family came down with food poisoning, and you didn’t feel guilty about suggesting that restaurant. As with Picture #1 become aware of where you see the image, etc. 3. Then notice the differences between the two mental images. Usually distance, location and size are the most important. 4. Then make Picture #1 to be like Picture #2. If you have any difficulty moving or changing the picture, ask yourself if there is any part of you that objects in any way to the changes. Then after a few minutes, test your results by making the image that used to result in your feeling guilty. The guilty feeling should be gone or significantly reduced in intensity.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.8 Creation of an Alternate Past

You do not have to be a victim of your memories. Chapters 3.1 and 3.2 provide some tools to change the mental images and internal conversations to minimize or eliminate the negative impact. Creating an alternate past is an additional step after using those procedures. If you have lost contact with a person or he or she is deceased and you feel that it would have been beneficial for a certain interaction to have taken place, you can create an alternate past. You may have

had a cut-off or feel there are unresolved issues, or just wish that you had been able to be emotionally closer to that person. Give to the other person the personal resources that would have enabled him or her to have the desired interchange. See and hear how having those resources would have changed him or her. The more sensory details you can imagine, the more impact will this have. Then give to yourself the resources you will need to have this interaction. First see and hear yourself having the interaction. Then step into your body and experience what it feels like as you have the interaction.

If you feel stymied because you repeat the same self-defeating pattern over and over again, despite decisions to change the pattern, then look inside for a fixed limiting belief going back to childhood. The belief can usually be stated quite simply in absolute terms. I think it would be very difficult to change a limiting belief without professional help. The procedure listed below is given to provide some guidelines for yourself or whoever is helping you with it.

To change the belief, you need to go back emotionally to the original situation when the belief was created. You will probably be aware of the emotion connected with the limiting fixed belief. Be aware of the emotion and take it back to the earliest time that you remember having that emotion. Usually this is early childhood—elementary school days or earlier. What is the situation and who is involved?

Then create an alternate past. Assume that the primary person or persons involved had a positive intent in their actions, although the result of their actions may have been destructive. Change the primary person by giving him or her personal resources which enable him or her to carry out the primary intent more effectively. First, see and hear the difference that these resources are making in the person. Second, see and hear how the interaction is different. Third, experience in your imagination actually being that person with those resources. Fourth, step back and see yourself as a child, and decide what resource or resources you would have needed to cope with the situation in a more useful way. Fifth, see and hear how the resources would have changed the younger you. Sixth, step into the body of the younger you, and experience having those resources and reacting differently. While still imaging being your younger self, decide the belief that you now have which replaces the old limiting belief. Imagine how having had that new belief would have changed past situations. Then imagine how having that new belief will be changing your future.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.9 Identification with Dahmer

So what can you do if you have an undesirable behavior which occurs at times of

emotional stress? If you are mistreating others as you were once mistreated, you are acting out of identification with the person who mistreated you. There are usually triggers that initiate the behavior. The content is less important than how the person looked or how the person sounded. First, figure out whether you respond more to what you see or what you hear. It is easier to change the trigger than it is to eliminate it. If you respond to a tone of voice, you could make the voice sound like Sylvester the cat, or Mickey Mouse, or your favorite singer, or blend in with your favorite or silliest music. If you respond to a certain expression, you could see the person as a toy soldier, or as a paper doll, or any cartoon character. Select the changes that are most effective in minimizing your emotional response. Then go back in time and imagine making those changes in situations in which you previously had little control. Then go forward in time, and imagine making the changes in situations which are likely to occur in your future. The more you repeat this, the sooner the new program will become automatic.

You can also create an alternate past as described in the previous chapter.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.11 Anger and Rage

Violence occurs when you feel you have no other choice. Remember when you felt angry. Did you feel as though you were powerful and had lots of choices, or did you feel like you were at the end of your rope and didn't know what to do? Having choices minimizes the risk of violence. So if you have times when you go into a rage or even get angry, how can you use something similar to what was effective for Billy? First, check if there is any part of you that has any objection to being able to control the anger, and if you are willing to make a firm commitment to change. Next would be to have a way of obtaining a relaxation response. Some examples of effective means are meditation, progressive relaxation, prayer, chanting, yoga, and listening to music that creates a relaxed state. Popular magazines are full of these techniques, and most of them are effective. The trick is to be able to have that relaxed state when you need it. If you are similar to most people you have what I call triggers or buttons, which automatically shift you into an angry state. The moment just after that trigger is fired is when you need the relaxed state. You might assume that what the person said fires the trigger, but it is almost always how the person said it. The reaction is too quick for the person to have thought about it. I ask clients. "Can your trigger be pulled if you see the person but don't hear him or her?" Then can your trigger be pulled if you hear the person but don't see him or her? That way you can determine whether the trigger is visual or auditory. Auditory triggers involve tone of voice, pitch, rhythm, accent, volume, and timbre. Visual triggers involve posture, finger- pointing, expressions, looking down one's nose, in your face,

blank stare, look of disgust or disdain. Do some research on yourself; find out specifically what the trigger is. Usually the trigger originated with a parent or sibling.

The sound “bluuuuuee” accessed the relaxed state in Billy. Then you need to find a sound that reminds you of the relaxed state. Then hear that sound and notice how that creates the desired state. Then do with yourself what I did with Billy. Go back to a situation in which, had you been able to hear that sound and feel the relaxation, it would have made a difference. Feel the difference it would have made and see the freedom it would have given you. Do this for a few instances. Then imagine a situation in the future when your button is pushed, and you start to get angry. Hear that sound and feel the relaxation; then feel the difference it is making in your future, and see the freedom it is giving you. This procedure is called future pacing. You need to rehearse this new behavior several times, so it will kick in when you need it. One of the principles of NLP is that anything worth doing is worth doing poorly at first. So if this doesn't work the first time and you get angry, then learn what you can from the experience. My hunch would be that there was already some change. Then repeat the exercise.

Emotional Management Suggestions

Chapter 3.12 Getting Rid of Resentment

You may want to get rid of resentment. The suggested procedure is the same as described earlier in this chapter as bridging over. The first picture is the mental image you have of the person as you feel the resentment towards him or her. Be aware of the location of the image—how close—eye level or above or below—center or to the right or the left. How big is the person—life-size or smaller or larger than life? The second picture is an analogous situation in which you didn't feel any bitterness. The picture may be of a time when you had positive feelings towards this person. It may be of a time when a person harmed you or slighted you and you did not feel resentment. Examples are listed earlier in the chapter. Find out all the details about the second picture that you did for Picture #1. Except in rare instances, the mental images will be in different locations. As you start to move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2 be aware of any objections that you feel. If you have trouble moving the picture, stop and figure out what objection you have. Then move Picture #1 to the location of Picture #2 and if there was a difference in size, change that. Give yourself a few minutes and then check the results by remembering the person you used to resent. Be delighted at the power you now have over your emotions. Feel the difference this is making in your future and see the freedom that it is giving you.

Personal Remarks.

I would like to digress from Billy's therapy to talk about what I do to maximize flow in my life and to give suggestions to the reader. Finding flow involves positive action and planning. Sports and games are ways of creating a challenge, which require utilizing all your skills, and require your total concentration in order to meet the challenge. However, even mundane chores can be made into a challenge. I want to weed eat as fast as possible while still doing a thorough job. When mowing the lawn, I want to find the most efficient route with the fewest U-turns.

Csikszentmihalyi (1997) discusses the rewards of a good conversation. He said "The first step is to find out what the other person's goals are: What is he interested in at the moment? What is she involved in? What has he or she accomplished, or is trying to accomplish? If any of this sounds worth pursuing, the next step is to utilize one's own experience or expertise on the topics raised by the other person----without trying to take over the conversation, but developing it jointly. A good conversation is like a jam session in jazz, where one starts with conventional elements and then introduces spontaneous variations that create an exciting new composition."

In summary, in leisure as well as work, a person has a higher quality of life by being active and creative rather than passive.