



# THINK FOR YOURSELF

CHAPTER THREE

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## Chapter 3 - Mental Self-defence

### You are a Machine Operator

We've seen how your life is made up entirely of situations - situations you cannot avoid. Yet many times, as these situations usually involve other people, they can seem very difficult to cope with: it's almost as if you are under attack. Many times this is actually the case - and this is where you need some system of **mental self-defence**. But first of all let's establish what we're supposed to be defending.

Your body is important. It's the vehicle that carries you around. It's the machine that performs physical tasks for you. You are the driver. The vehicle contains automatic devices for sensing the world around you. But your mind is more important. The body is there to serve the mind. The mind is there to serve you. You are not your body: you are not your mind. You could say you live within the mind, within a body - for a fixed, specified period of time. And you are, in effect, a prisoner within that mind until your allotted span on Earth is up.

Consider a farm machine designed to cultivate and harvest the fields. It has a cab on the top with all the informative dials and sensors, and the controls for operating the various processes. The cab (with its control unit) is like the mind, the brain of the vehicle. You are the driver/operator within the cab. If someone attacks the machinery, it could stop its operation for a time, then usually the damaged part can be repaired; but if someone attacks and damages the nerve centre, the control unit - then you can be in serious trouble.

Thousands of millions of pounds are spent each year in this country alone on trying to protect or repair damage to the body. Yet the health and welfare of the mind are considered to be of relatively minor importance, and so little is known about it by the established medical authorities. Those who are supposed to repair sick or damaged minds, the psychiatrists, have a worse rate of suicide, and therefore mental imbalance, than the general public, according to World Health Organisation figures and other medical sources. And after all, the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

Ask yourself whether you consider that such people are fit to mess with your mind? All I am saying is that before you place your mind and your sanity in the hands of the modern, self-proclaimed mind experts, seriously ask yourself the question, 'Is it safe?'

### Emotional Assault

Now it's time for you to learn how to protect yourself against emotional assault - the assault on your mind - with all its resulting symptoms, because *no-one else is capable of doing it for you*. So let's get down to business.

You may feel extremely vulnerable to being "got at" by other people, or very easily get hurt or agitated. If so, it's necessary to understand just what occurs to *cause* this mental pain and disturbance in the first place: only then can you see how to defend against it.

There are two aspects to it: one is a matter of being *hurt*, the other a matter of being *damaged*. When someone is attacked or beaten up physically those two elements are present - the pain suffered and the damage to the body.

The pain may be temporary but the damage to the flesh, bone, organs and body functioning can be long-lasting or even permanent. Scars and deformities can be internal and unseen, or visible on the surface.

Mental abuse can be just the same, and the consequences just as serious, with the mind suffering instead of the body. To really understand what is going on, it's necessary to get one fact clear: *all feelings and emotions are thoughts*.

### **Feelings are thoughts**

Now, traditionally, the mind has been regarded as the source of reasoning, calculated action, while the heart is the seat of all feelings and emotions. But that is just a fantasy, based on the fact that strong emotional activity seems to affect the body in the region of the chest. This is merely the symptom of certain states of mind affecting the functioning of the body in that area.

Worry and apprehension can cause digestive problems and therefore pains in that place. Fear or excitement can cause the heart to beat fast. Love or longing can cause an "ache" in the region of the heart. Loss of a loved one, a sort of "lurch" in that area every time he or she is recalled to mind. Great emotional pressure in mind can cause the heart to just "miss a beat" or malfunction drastically - or cause irregularities of breathing. Again in the chest area.

Nevertheless, the heart is not the seat of emotion. The heart is merely a pump - a machine for pumping fluid round the body. Nothing more. Certain expressions still remaining in the English language can give the wrong impression too - such as hard-hearted, warm-hearted, kind-hearted, broken-hearted. Still, all senses, feelings and emotions are *thoughts* existing in the mind of man.

Thoughts are actual physical things - not just floating abstractions of no real substance or consequence. You live your whole life by means of thoughts. They can please you or torment you, make you happy and fulfilled or destroy you, cause you ill-health and pain of body.

But there's a vital difference between a body under attack and a mind under attack: the body can possibly deflect a blow, reposition limbs and other parts so as to avoid the blow, or direct it to a harder or more resilient area; or it can ride with the blow to lessen the effect. But once the blow has landed, the receiving area of the body has to more or less passively accept it, and the pain and damage it inflicts (although this will vary in degree according to the health or condition of the body, of course). It is, however, the *weapon* which inflicts the injury, and the body which passively accepts it.

### **It is the Human Mind That Injures Itself**

With the mind, it is the reverse. It's not the 'blow', so to speak, that causes the injury or pain, it's the emotional *reaction* to the blow that causes the suffering: if you don't hear the insult, you don't feel the hurt. No reaction - no suffering. In other words, it's the human mind that *injures itself*; and without knowing, understanding, and constantly bearing in mind this one basic fact, you cannot begin to protect yourself.

*In effect, the injury is self-inflicted.* And it is the ignorance or non-understanding of this fact which could lead you to go about defending yourself from mental attack by using the same tactics as you'd use against a physical attack. You'd be concentrating on dealing with the attacker, trying to demolish or destroy him, retaliating, verbally defending yourself, justifying your position, getting the first blow in and attacking the enemy before he can attack you, nervously anticipating an attack, getting ready to run, or avoiding contact. With an attack on the body, those tactics may work: with an assault on the mind, those tactics are bound to fail.

## Who Dunit?

Now before we go any further, let's just establish who or what might attack you, and in what way. It could be people or circumstance, but what we're mostly concerned about here is people. It's interaction with people that seems to wreak the most mental havoc.

Mental suffering can come about by what others say *to* you or *about* you, or what they do to you. We can reduce it to some basic examples, such as being called names, being unjustly treated, by being accused of socially unacceptable behaviour, made to feel guilty or embarrassed, or merely being put down - in fact, any human interaction which causes you to feel hurt or causes highly disturbing hurtful emotions to erupt.

Often, both physical and mental assault are combined. For instance, when you're mugged, or someone breaks into your home and robs or destroys your possessions, the emotional hurt can be far worse than the physical or material damage. It doesn't have to be a person that causes you mental grief, it could be natural or seemingly random events and circumstances. However, at the moment we're only concerned with the first - person to person hurtfulness.

We know that there are many ways in which people can instigate pain and turmoil of mind for you by their words, directly to you or indirectly about you, and by their actions. But the same way of protecting yourself applies, so for convenience I'll mostly refer to instances of other people assaulting you verbally.

Now, let's get back to self-inflicted injury - you would be considered insane if every time someone criticised you or called you names you slapped yourself across the face, or slashed yourself with a knife. And it would be even more insane if you slapped yourself again, or reopened the cuts, every time you thought about the incident later. *Yet that is what you do* - mentally though, not physically.

To extend the analogy of physical, self-inflicted injury: every time someone verbally abused you, what would a sane person think if you then *blamed* the person who said the offending words to you or about you, for your self-inflicted slaps or cuts? You could well be put away in an asylum for the insane. Yet mentally, you've been doing the identical thing on a daily basis - *and* feeling quite justified in being like that.

The usual retort to this is, 'Why shouldn't I blame them? Why should they get away with treating me or my loved ones like that?' But you never have any need to bother about exacting justice from anyone - for the simple reason that in the long run everyone gets what they deserve, what they merit: their own Higher Intelligence sees to that. No-one gets away with anything, ever, though it may appear so at the time. Life is one long teaching situation, and the consequences of one's actions and attitudes are part of the lessons. No matter what someone has done to you or to someone you care for - they will never 'get away with it.' So you can throw that excuse into the rubbish bin.

## Out of Conditioning

How did it come about, this self-inflicted punishment? The answer is that it was *implanted in your mind* as being the proper way to react. In other words it was a part of your social conditioning - indoctrination: preconceived, pre-packaged ideas prepared for you, many centuries ago in primitive times, handed down to you by your immediate 'elders and betters', and imposed on you from childhood.

What I said to you about inflicting *physical* injury on yourself because you'd been criticised or called names - well, that was normal practice, too, many years ago. It was called *penance*, and people were encouraged or coerced into lashing themselves with whips or knotted ropes (or getting others to do it for them), wearing horse-hair garments next to their skin to torment them, or walking on their knees on open ground or paths, their knees bloody, worn and often shredded to the bone.

And those are just a few examples.

And all this merely because they were criticised or called names by their leaders of religion and their fanatical followers. This has been going on for many thousands of years, originally a custom of the most primitive and barbaric tribes. Crazy, isn't it? But self-inflicted injury and self-sacrifice have always been very popular methods of trying to appease the wrath of the gods, and where the blame for this lies is something for *you* to consider. Were the indoctrinators to blame for imposing such a way on the masses, or were the individuals themselves to blame for accepting that indoctrination?

But it wasn't just the physical torment that they were taught to inflict on themselves, it was also the mental torment - the guilt, the shame, the fear which their religious leaders told them that they *should* have, and made sure they did have, if they didn't obey the rules of that religion, rules that no-one could live up to and were often unnatural.

We are all born with the guilt of Original Sin upon our souls, they told us: we should be ashamed of having natural, healthy thoughts about sex, for instance, of consuming a drop of alcohol, placing a bet on a horse, of not attending a church (or synagogue, temple or mosque), of not bowing down (at least mentally) before a priest; we should be *god-fearing*. Guilt - shame - fear, you see?

Even to the extent (not too long ago) of people being told to wear sackcloth and put ashes on their head, or confess "sins" publicly, or be called "bastards" if their parents did not have priestly blessing for their union. All calculated to inflict the burden and torment of humiliation, guilt and shame. This is called 'conditioning'.

On the other hand, for those who were meek followers of the beliefs of their particular area, self-righteousness, anger, intolerance and hatred against others who didn't follow the same beliefs and rules was encouraged. This is called 'indoctrination'.

That is one of the major origins of your automatic emotional reactions to verbal assault - your self-inflicted injuries. Once you have reached the age of reason, and are no longer legally under the control of religious parents and priests, then the blame must lie solely with yourself. *You don't have to buy what they're selling*. In the past, it was dangerous not to. But not here, not now.

I hope everything is beginning to fall into place now, and that you're starting to see the whole picture. All the ways I mentioned from the past actually go on today - in several countries. But now we're only concerned with *emotional* self-injury - and that occurs throughout the whole human race now, like a universal disease. I know we appear to have digressed from our original topic, of how to defend yourself against mental torment, but it really is necessary that you see it all in perspective.

So in order to eliminate painful emotional reactions, at the outset make a firm resolve that one way or another you're not going to inflict upon yourself the injury of emotional torment. Be prepared to look in a new way. Remember, you're actually embarking on a training course, so you must put each of the following recommended exercises into action one step at a time.

Become accomplished or well at ease with one practice before you embark upon the next. Trying to put everything into operation at once would be too overwhelming. It's not enough to *rationalise* that a new idea is correct; you've got to actually *feel* it to be right. It takes effort and practice. It's not enough to change your opinion. You'll see what I mean as you go along.

### **The Six Steps**

So - here's where you start your training: let's look at what steps to take.

### **Prepare in Advance**

First, when you suffer a mental assault by another, some sort of action or encounter must take place, which we'll refer to as 'the situation'.

Before any situation arises, *prepare yourself in advance* to look during the situation and see just what physical effects the emotional reactions have on your body.

*Make a written note*, as soon as possible after the situation occurs. At the time, notice any change in heartbeat, breathing pattern, blood rushing to or draining from the face, or any other similar symptom. Notice any feeling in the pit of the stomach, slight dizziness - just *any way at all* in which your body has been affected. The more serious, hurtful and emotional the situation, the better for purposes of observation.

If at first, in the heat of the moment, you don't remember, or get too involved in the situation to be able to observe yourself, then do it as soon as possible afterwards - but before the emotional reaction has faded. If you do find that the physical effects are fading before you can note them down, because the emotional agitation causing them is fading, then re-live the situation mentally. Go over what the person has said or done to you in order to get back the injured feeling, and give yourself the chance to note the full physical effects.

This does need effort and practice, but it's a very important step - and you'll discover the profound benefits later. A similar technique is explained in the chapter on situations, to help to eliminate the need for recurring unpleasant or harmful situations.

### **No Outward Reaction**

*The second step* - and again you'll need to prepare yourself well beforehand - is to firmly resolve not to react *outwardly* to the attack, the next time it occurs. Then carry it through. For the moment, never mind the turmoil or agitation within - just concentrate on putting on an *outward* show of being totally unaffected. *Reverse your outward display of emotion*: if you normally respond vigorously or loudly or excitedly during that type of situation, then act as if you are calm and unaffected. Do not respond to the attack or provocation in the way you used to. Try to look serene, or amused, or as if you hadn't noticed. Or very pointedly ignore it. Or even walk calmly away. If in these situations you usually go quiet, embarrassed, or with a head-down attitude - act normally as if nothing has happened: talk in a normal voice, change the subject, address someone else. Choose your own way - as long as you don't *show* you're affected emotionally.

Now it's important to realise this is only a *temporary stage* - a step forward in your training course. Because by itself, without going on to eliminate the harmful emotional state itself, without reaching the stage of becoming truly unaffected within, it would be just an empty gesture. But once you've learned how to eliminate the inner emotional reactions - then you will achieve a true inner calm, and you'll be able to see clearly what is occurring and deal with any situation impartially, which is the best possible way for all concerned. No need for acting then, or straining to appear unconcerned.

Don't try it - *do it!*

### **Observe Yourself**

The *third step* is very similar to the first - observing yourself. Only this time, it's your mental state that you must take note of - how you've been affected *emotionally*. This is where you must be scrupulously honest with yourself. And why not? No-one else is going to know.

There may be certain aspects of yourself you don't want to acknowledge - feelings you're ashamed of, or think you ought not to have, or that put you in a bad light.

It doesn't matter, they're merely reactions. They could include jealousy, envy, hatred or whatever. Just note them honestly. If there's no label for them, express them in other words. This step can be brought into play when you've had a little practice with the second step. Then apply them both together.

None of the three steps will be easy, because your social conditioning, your emotional reactions, will be trying to dominate your mind at the time, but with a little practice and a little determination, each project will get easier all the time, until it becomes almost automatic.

### **Live It**

The *fourth step* in your training is to study, or very seriously consider, the two basic points I made earlier: one, that the injuries to the mind are self-inflicted; and two, the origin of mental self-abuse is your conditioning. Think about them. Allow them to sink into your mind. Deliberately apply them to all you hear and see around you. See how they operate - in every person, in every aspect of life. Observe the devastating results they have, the misery they cause. Make it an active study. Allow your common sense to take over from traditional way of thought founded on superstition.

Constantly bring to mind the two points until you can "*feel*" the rightness of what I'm trying to tell you. As I said, it's not enough to change your opinion, you must *live it*. It needs the effort of putting your new understanding into practice. Then you will have earned your immunity, your defence against self-inflicted injury of the mind, of the emotions. Your reward will be inner calmness and peace of mind.

The whole of life is a training ground. Situations are arranged, tailor-made for each individual, like the obstacles in a specially designed obstacle course. You are never at the mercy of situations, or of fate, as they say: everything is pre-arranged for you. Make the best use of it.

### **Go Willingly**

The *fifth step*: *go into the learning situations willingly*, because they are placed there for your own benefit. Not as a child going to classes he hates, with the enforced learning of non-understandable lines from Shakespeare, or dates in history from which he can see no benefits, now or later; but go as someone willingly selecting a course vital to their present well-being and their future survival. When you have encounters with people who would cause you mental strife - don't regard them as opponents and react by retaliating. Remember - self-defence is enough: your only real enemy is your conditioning.

### **You Cannot Change the World - Only Yourself**

If it's raining, it's intelligent to get yourself a waterproof coat and hat: no use trying to hit back at the rain.

And if you're thinking that you'd be all right if it wasn't for all the people who get at you, then you're mistaken. If you destroyed hundreds of people whom you considered were causing you grief, hundreds more would take their place - as arranged. You cannot change the world - only yourself. The thorough realisation of this is *your last step*.

To strengthen your immunity, you need practice. So look out for situations, and welcome them. You are not just a weak spark of your Higher Self - you have been given enough Essence to handle any situation it has placed you in - and that means *any situation* you ever find yourself in. The Essence, the strength, is there - it's just that you have been taught not to use it.

I mentioned earlier two aspects of assaults on the mind - the hurt and the lasting damage. Well, the damage amounts to the fact that your mind has not only been attacked in the past - but *invaded*.

The current assaults are merely the *triggers* of your emotional reactions, your inner self-inflicted distress.

The real invasion started when you were in your cradle. It progressed through your school days, and has insidiously continued ever since.

Merely recognising it for what it is, is sufficient to remove it permanently, and allow the scars of your conditioning to heal.

Just to remind you once again: if someone insults you in passing, and you don't hear it - you can't react. And no reaction - no mental agitation or distress.

So, when you wear your new-found immunity - no reaction, no distress. Your mental self-defence is impregnable.

### Summary

First, here are some basic facts you will need to bear constantly in mind, if you are to successfully practise the art of mental self-defence.

- 1) You are not the body. You are not the mind. You are a spark of Essence, a point of consciousness that merely inhabits the body temporarily.
- 2) The heart is not the seat of emotion - but merely a mechanical pump. Senses, feelings, and emotions are all thoughts existing in the mind.
- 3) With physical assault, it is the blow or cut which causes the pain or damage. With mental assault, it is your *reaction* to the blow which causes the pain or damage. It is, in effect, the human mind which injures itself.
- 4) With physical assault - guarding against or evading the blow is a good tactic.
- 5) With the mind - this tactic is of no use, because you can never prevent or avoid mental assault.
- 6) It is a form of insanity to punish yourself because someone criticises you or insults you.
- 7) The urge for self-inflicted emotional injury is the result of lifelong conditioning - either cultural or religious.

The following are some practical steps to take, in eliminating painful and damaging emotional reactions to assaults on your mind:

- a) Observe the physical effects of the emotional reaction.
- b) Change or reverse the outward reaction to the attack (but as a temporary measure only).
- c) Constantly bear in mind the fact that injuries of the mind are self-inflicted.

- d) Apply the common-sense test to your automatic, conditioned reactions.
- e) Go into all learning situations willingly.
- f) Realise that it is useless to blame others. Don't try to change the world, change your attitude towards it instead.

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The Singer not the Song, but the Writing, not the Writer.

