



THINK FOR YOURSELF

CHAPTER TWO

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Chapter 2 - Situations

Situations *are* Life

The whole of the conscious life of a human is made up of situations. Without situations *you just wouldn't have a life*. You may be alive, yes, conscious of existing - but nothing would ever occur, you would never have a reason to act, even to move, nor could you ever progress or develop as a Being - in knowledge, in understanding, in feeling.

Situations are necessary, inevitable. You're in one situation after another every waking minute of your life. You cannot avoid it. In a way, you could say that your life on Earth is one long situation - made up of a ceaseless procession of shorter ones. People normally think of themselves being in a 'situation' when they're experiencing some sort of crisis: so when things are going smoothly or happily for them, they don't think there is any situation. But there is!

A situation is a set of circumstances forming the basis for an incident. And whether those circumstances are unpleasant or traumatic, or very favourable for you, it makes no difference: it's still a situation. It's just like the scenes in a film or play: each one has a background or setting. It could be a room, a street, a field, the interior of a car or a telephone box. The setting, plus the incident which takes place, make up the situation. It could be one man facing an angry crowd or a person lying in bed, alone, peacefully dreaming of the summer holidays. You're never out of a situation. It doesn't have to be a crisis, unpleasant, a problem: you could have won the lottery, found a coin, or merely greeted a neighbour in passing. Situations are the means of living your life.

So, are situations deliberately arranged or put there for us? As always, when considering any aspect of life, you've got to decide whether you believe the happenings around you are random, or whether everything is arranged and controlled (allowing for Man's free choice) by a Higher Intelligence. If you believe that the Universe, Nature, good fortune, disasters, life and death, are all random - born out of chaos, and therefore purposeless - then, as you are an object of mere chance, there's just no point in trying to understand or harmonise with what chance brings about, because the rules will keep changing, randomly. In that case, you're just a piece of flotsam in the middle of a vast ocean, at the mercy of the unpredictable wind and waves, and other haphazard forces of nature.

But you can be sure, with absolute certainty, that there is an overall Universal Intelligence, which allows nothing random to occur - no chance happening - no matter how it may appear on the surface. Even Man's free choice is restricted, much more than he imagines - and the effects of those choices are allowed for within the Pattern of the Universe.

The Purpose of Situations

Now we come to the purpose of this constant stream of situations. Proponents of the theory of 'Evolution' never have to be bothered giving a reason as to why things happen, according to their theory, because the answer is always the same - it all "just happened". But the real purpose, as far as Man is concerned, is this: tuition, training. When you come to Earth, you come to school. A practical school - no theories. Situations are the lessons. Is it your purpose on Earth to obey a list of rules written down by controllers of primitive tribes hundreds or even thousands of years ago, as in 'holy' scriptures?

Or is it your purpose to leave this Earth a far more evolved Being than when you arrived, far more highly developed - a more aware and understanding entity. It's either that or a matter of wasting your 20, 40 or 70 years just filling in the time as pleasantly as possible from birth till death - of satisfying your emotions and wants as much as possible, or as much as others will allow. But the latter isn't your purpose for existing on this Earth: you would have gained nothing you could take with you that would benefit yourself or any other Being. You'd be no better off than when you started.

You may decide you do not want to develop or evolve, but nevertheless you did come to Earth to learn. It's your choice whether to learn or not, that is optional - but *the lessons are not optional*. So whether you take advantage of those lessons, take the opportunity to benefit from them, that is entirely up to you - but you will not be able to avoid living through the situations arranged for you.

So how you can use the situations to your advantage, how you can learn from them? Situations reveal to you how you are inside. Your reactions during situations reveal your attitudes - your wants, likes and dislikes, your fears, hates, weaknesses - the emotions which rule your life. These reactions are all indications of your overall intention, your attitudes to all aspects of life. You can know just how and in what ways you need to change, improve and develop, by assessing to what degree these attitudes are governed by your conditioning, your selfish or demanding ways, compared with the way your Higher (intelligent) Self would be. Also, situations show you the consequences of employing such attitudes, and that is the surest guide of all. However, it's no use comparing your behaviour patterns with your society's current rules - they will probably be the rules that formed your conditioning in the first place.

It's no use someone explaining something to you if you don't listen. It's no use someone showing you something if you don't look. So - it's no use your situations revealing your attitudes, your real personality, if you don't observe yourself within those situations. Observing yourself in action, so to speak, is all-important. Habitually observing yourself, and your reaction to situations, is absolutely necessary if you're at all serious about changing to a higher level of awareness, a higher level of the understanding of what is going on around you - which is quite possible for everyone, without exception.

There's no need to be concerned that you may become self-obsessed, self-centred, by constantly observing yourself. Self-centredness is pandering to your personality, to your wants, concentrating on satisfying your emotions - in a way a form of self-glorification by those who are self-satisfied. Critical self-observation is done with the intent of self-improvement. It's not smugly looking at your good points, but looking for faults and failings, for any bad attitudes you can change. There's a world of difference.

Discovering the Pattern

Now to get back to the original point, about the constant stream of situations being a continuous learning process - another way of learning from situations is learning by practical experience. As already stated, situations don't happen by chance: they're not random, and neither are the *consequences* of your way of dealing with them. And there *are* always consequences, whether you're aware of the connection or not.

You either change for the better, or become entrenched in set, indoctrinated ways, and the blind and unknowing lifestyle that goes with them, and all its attendant problems. When you do make the effort to change your attitudes to people and events, then watch carefully for the changes in your circumstances - in the quality of your life. You become calmer, with better judgement, more tolerant. You're not as easily offended or upset by the ways of others. You become more in control of yourself - of situations - of your life.

Look for a *pattern* - the relationship between your changes of attitude and the changes of your life circumstances. It's there! But like the connection between your fixed attitudes and their consequences, it needs your effort to observe before you can see it.

Especially in complex situations, a pattern only normally becomes visible when you're aware that one exists - and look for it.

It can be like a primitive person being in the middle of a city at the rush hour. Standing on the footpath in the middle of the crowds of people going in all directions, he could be forgiven for thinking all was a random scurrying about. He wouldn't be able to see any pattern at all in the movement of people. But if you were to take him to gaze down from the roof of a high building, he would see how they were coming from various offices and going towards many stations or car parks or bus stops. The pattern of movement would then begin to become clear. You must look for the pattern in *your* life, that shows you the connection between your attitudes, or intention, and the quality of life arranged for you. How the quality of life could change as a result of changing your attitudes.

It's necessary to become accustomed to observing yourself. Observing yourself means watching your reactions in a situation, and as the strongest and most blatant reactions will show themselves in crisis situations, these are the best ones to start with. What I mean is - if someone makes a casual remark and you feel just slightly irritated, it's much more difficult to notice it than if someone grossly insults you in public and you feel a reaction of extreme anger and embarrassment. So to start with, watch yourself in the more extreme situations.

At first, you may be so emotionally involved in reacting to the person or events that you forget to observe yourself. So start by reviewing the situation *after* the crisis, when you've calmed down sufficiently to view it a bit more impartially, though it's better if there are still traces of the aroused emotion left, to remind you of how you really felt. And 'felt' is the key word. Your actions are unimportant from the point of view of this exercise.

Once you're practised in reviewing the situation in this way, then set your intention to observe your reactions *at the time they occur*. This is more difficult, and you must plan it in advance. Your determination to observe your reactions must be stronger than the emotions aroused during the situation - and that takes effort. Remember that you're looking for reactions to people and events, and that they're automatic; therefore they'll all be emotions - feelings which you don't control. If they automatically arise, then obviously *they* are controlling *you*.

In fact, you're looking at your emotional state, in varying degrees. It could be blind rage because someone has insulted your religion, anger because someone has insulted your girl friend or partner, annoyance because they pushed in front of you in the queue, just irritation because someone is talking loudly when you're trying to read or merely a faint dislike of a man wearing an earring. All these cases are degrees of hatred, although of course we don't like to call it that. It could also be pity, love, jealousy, envy, fear or loathing - or any combination of two or more at the same time.

Observe also the physical effects - faster heartbeat, sickliness in the pit of your stomach, blood rushing to your head, or draining from your cheeks, hands shaking, faster breathing, and many others. These would only be symptoms of your inner reactions - but they could serve to show you just how much you've been affected.

And don't just concentrate on the 'negative' aspects, observe the 'positive' reactions as well - when you feel satisfaction, proud of a job well done, pleased with compliments, loved and wanted, and so on - when you're made to feel good. Use crisis situations first - the reactions are more extreme and therefore easier to observe. Then try watching the milder situations. The awareness, understanding and benefits of this will be incalculable.

Recurring Situations

Sometimes the thought of a particular situation that's actually occurred in the past may keep going through your mind, coming back again and again. You have no control over it, and it's very rare that you suddenly decide: *I'm now going to sit down and relive such and such a situation again*. The thoughts just come to you.

You cannot change a situation that has gone, but it is possible to examine the attitude you had at that time, and change that. So your Higher Intelligence has made a little arrangement for you: instead of *physically* going through the same situation time and again, you may receive thoughts to enable you to keep on reliving the same situation *in your mind*.

I'm not referring now to scenes of happy times you've enjoyed in the past, I refer to the situations where you've been highly affected emotionally: made angry, embarrassed, jealous, guilty, self-pitying or some other strong emotion.

If you're having recurring thoughts about a certain incident, recalling what he did, she said, you replied and so on, you'll probably find yourself *experiencing the same emotions* you experienced at the time of the original incident, even if not so strongly. If so, then it means that if a similar situation arose again in the future, you'd react in the same way emotionally. In other words, you would not have changed your attitude since the original incident. But each time the scene of the incident replays itself in your mind, it's another chance given to you to review your attitude. In that case you *really do* need to look deeper and see how you could have dealt with the situation in a more caring and intelligent way. That is what your Higher Self is trying to tell you.

Once you've done this, and know you'd feel differently, act differently - less emotionally and with more consideration of the other parties - then there would be no need for the recurring thoughts to disturb you further. Your righteous anger or resentment or self-pity would be gone, and you'd handle all similar situations in a much better and more intelligent way in the future.

It's just the same when you're plagued with a recurrence of the same type of situation in real life. As long as such repeated, troublesome or disturbing situations continue to occur, you haven't learned the lesson of the situations, and you haven't changed your attitude accordingly. For example, if you experience troublesome neighbours and you change house several times, but still seem to end up living next door to similar awkward or disagreeable neighbours, then you can be certain that it's way past the time when you should be seriously looking at your own attitude, your own emotional feelings towards others. Inner change is definitely needed.

It is not intelligent for you to go on living through the same type of situation in your everyday life - keeping on thinking it's not your fault, that you don't need to change, refusing to review the situation (the lesson) and always coming up with the same attitude (the same answer), whilst blaming someone or something else for your misfortune. In fact, the best way to allow the same conflict-type incident to keep on making your life a misery is to keep on thinking you're all right as you are, and that it is just the others who are in the wrong. It never fails. Of course, this is not to say the other parties involved are not also to blame to some extent - they could well be. But it's not my objective, at the moment, to tell *them* how to improve their lives - I'm explaining to you how to improve *yours*, so let's leave them out of it.

Two People - Two Situations

In any interaction between humans, if there are two people involved, then there are two situations: if there are three people involved, there are three situations - one situation for each person to deal with. It's up to you to deal only with *your* situation - without the accountability of others.

It's up to them to deal with their own situation (their part of the interaction), because that is what was arranged for them, not for you - that is a matter between themselves and their own Higher Intelligence.

Assuming you do want to change your lifestyle in this respect, remember it's no use trying to change your attitude when you're in the middle of a situation, caught up in it emotionally. The only way to break the cycle is to look and learn, then re-set your attitude or intention *for the next time*. It will help you to see the point of this if you accept the fact that each situation you find yourself in is a *learning situation* (a lesson), specially arranged for you, for your benefit, to give you an opportunity to improve, to develop - and in doing so, to improve the quality of your lifestyle. Never is it wise to pass over or forego a situation - it should always be faced mentally and considered in its entirety.

Unfortunately, in our homes, our education system and our religions, we've never been told the reason for recurring situations and recurring thoughts, or even the fact that situations are intended to be lessons; so how can we be blamed for not dealing with them properly? We can't - until we learn all about situations. But from there on, you will be able to observe the *pattern* of the effects of learning and changing, or of refusing to learn.

Treat recurring thoughts as extra lessons, which save you going through the same situations physically, time and again. Use them to make your learning process shorter and easier, your development swifter and smoother.

Now you know why situations occur and how to use them, you can start a new and exciting life, develop a new awareness, a new understanding, and finally leave this Earth life well and truly prepared for the next stage, knowing you have made good and full use of all that was arranged for you, by your Higher Self, before you even came to this Earth.

There is the old saying that no-one seems to dispute, 'When you leave this Earth, you can't take anything with you.' Yet this is far from correct: one purpose of your life on Earth is to gain something, and take it away with you when you leave - the 'Essence of understanding'. It's necessary for the next stage of your journey.

Summary

- 1) Situations are the means of living your life.
- 2) Situations are necessary - and unavoidable.
- 3) There is a Universal Intelligence that allows nothing random to occur.
- 4) When you come to Earth, you come to school.
- 5) Learning is optional, but lessons are compulsory.
- 6) The attitudes you apply to situations always bring corresponding consequences - good or bad.
- 7) Look for the pattern - the relationship between your changes of attitude and the changes in your lifestyle.

- 8) Observe yourself in situations, and see the Pattern.
- 9) Recurring situations are a sure sign of a need to change your attitudes to certain aspects of life.
- 10) Whenever there are two people involved, then there are two situations.
- 11) When you leave this Earth you can (and should) take something with you - the Essence of understanding.

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

