

OTHER GUIDED EXPERIENCES

The following “guided experiences” were inspired by the book “Guided Experiences” written by Silo (<http://silo.net>). Below is the original text, as written in 1996.

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INTRODUCTION

The following guided experiences are a response to the need of incorporating some interesting subjects into the weekly meetings of personal work. I have tried to make them useful above all to those who are just joining the Movement and to the new regenerators, keeping them simple as much as possible while stressing what is positive. They were written and tested in our council during the last semester of 1996.

Hoping that they serve the above-mentioned purposes, I would appreciate your comments, criticisms and suggestions for new contributions.

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PS: As of June 21, 2001, Council P of Council 1 has become Council 13.

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *MY POSITIVE ASPECTS*

Purpose: This reflection on our positive qualities helps us reconcile with ourselves. It helps us to base our life on stressing the best, since this will give us a sense of proportion regarding our shortcomings, and will finally outbalance them. Besides, this positive outlook will further extend to the way we see others, society, and life in general.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

I am in a comfortable and quiet place, seated next to a person whom I deeply respect. This person -who is like a guide to me- is very wise, kind, and with internal strength. I feel understood, accepted, and supported by this person. I feel in a relaxed and joyful mood. (*)

My guide tells me: "You came to ask me for help on how to improve your life; so listen very carefully and think over my advice. I will suggest to you something that may not be easy, but is precisely what you need.

"For many years many have pointed out only your negative aspects. They told you about what you are not, what you lack, what is wrong with you, your shortcomings and weaknesses. You got used to seeing yourself as a half empty glass."

My guide says so, showing me a glass on the table. Actually, I see it as half empty. In front of me there is a full-length mirror. I watch myself in the mirror, and I cannot help noticing some flaws in my clothes, in my body, in my appearance. (*)

My guide goes on saying: "And you got used to being in a continuous struggle against those negative aspects, that is, against yourself. Reflect on this..."

As I remember all those times, people and situations, I see how true are my guide's observations. (*)

"This stress on negative aspects may have created in you some permanent tensions, a lack of joy, a lack of faith in yourself and, perhaps, feelings of guilt and inadequacy, or envy and resentment. (*)

"But all this may not have ended in you; it may have also extended to the way you see people and situations. If so, it has made you somewhat bitter, critical and hypersensitive, losing faith in others, in society and in the future. (*)

"Now, since you want a change in your life, I would like you to do the opposite. Try to find out your positive aspects, your qualities, your skills, the strong points going for you. (*)

"See all the positive that you have, that you are, the best of yourself. Identify those good things, and accept them wholeheartedly as very much your own. (*)

"Now, I would like you to take a strong resolution to see the best in yourself and in others. Make a firm commitment to try to improve and perfect those qualities. (*)

As I do that, I see the glass on the table as half full. Its liquid is pure and crystal clear. This time I see my reflection on the full-length mirror, and I like the person I see. I am aware that there is room for improvement, but now this does not overwhelm me, since I count on many strong points to do it. I am sure that this change of viewpoint will make me a different, better person. (*)

I want to go out and express this change in my daily life. I thank my guide and I leave the place with an expansive feeling of elation.

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: The guided experience may be repeated several times until achieving the desired effects. In daily life, we should train ourselves to see the positive qualities in others and in the situations.

Reading (choose from among following):

- Chapter VII. Pain, suffering and the meaning of life - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo)
- Paras 19, 20, and 21. Chapter IX. Contradiction and unity - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo)
- Paras 2 and 3. Chapter II. Humanness and the external look. The Human Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo)

Discussion: Whose interests does it serve that we lay stress on feeling inferior, inadequate, useless, impotent, sinful, etc.?

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *THE SINKING SHIP*

Purpose: This experience identifies different approaches regarding critical situations and lets us reflect on their appropriateness. Finally, the experience suggests a positive and practical approach.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

I am travelling on a liner. From the promenade deck, I watch the sea bathed by the full moon, and the lights of the distant coast. All around me, there are many fellow passengers, and everybody is having a good time. People are chatting and laughing, surrounded by the music. Everything is fine, proceeding according to schedule. (*)

All of a sudden, I hear a loud thud and I feel a shock in the deck, under my feet. Most people have not noticed it, while some seem to have heard the noise. They stop talking for a while, look around searching for the cause but, unable to locate it, they resume their conversations. (*)

I feel uneasy, because I'm sure I have heard or felt something. Maybe there is something wrong. How can I remain indifferent?

I go down the stairway towards the lower decks, searching for something or someone to account for the noise.

Soon I come across a group of officers who are excitedly discussing something. I approach them, and they tell me that something has hit the ship's shell and water is flooding the stowage. The ship will start sinking and there is not much time left to evacuate it. (*)

I go back in a hurry to warn my fellow passengers, and help them for the evacuation. I reach the lounge and the dining room where they are talking, dining, and dancing, unaware of the impending danger. Through the loudspeakers, the captain gives out the news and instructions for evacuation. While the music is still going on, confusion breaks out around me.

Next to me, some of them, obviously high on alcohol, make fun of the announcement, dismissing it as a mistake or a joke. Others, instead, advise: "Don't you worry, everything is going to be all right. There is nothing we can do. And we better not do anything, since the officers will surely fix the problem." And they merrily resume what they were previously doing. (*)

However, some women and children start sobbing, while next to them someone sombrelly states: "O sure! There is nothing we can do about it. But the officers will not be able to manage anything. This is bound to be a disaster. Even before boarding I knew that something was wrong, that this was going to be a bad trip." And some nod their agreement, while others shake their heads in despair. (*)

I turn around and see that some have opened, started reading something aloud from a book, while others have closed their eyes and started praying. There is little I can do here, so I leave the place and go back to the upper deck. (*)

Here, I see a man, quite overweight, and sweating from the effort of trying to ready a lifeboat to save himself and his family. Others try to prevent it, just in order to

take his place. Angry arguments and fighting ensue. As this racket goes on, a lady cries that somebody has just snatched her gold chain. I wonder how can somebody (*)

Next to me, coolly witnessing the scene, a man looking like a character out of a Hindi film, says: "See? Why to worry about them? They are a bunch of idiots. They don't deserve anything better, and they will get their due." I reflect on these words for a moment. (*)

I see that some other passengers stand apart with an air of resignation, trying to muster up courage. They are stiff as military men, as though anticipating the worst. I observe them and try to understand their attitude. (*)

Now, I make a fast reflection. I know there are life-jackets and lifeboats for everybody. Besides, the coast is not very far. By now, the officers must have broadcasted our SOS. It is clear that everybody can be saved, if we don't end up trampling each other.

The officers are now readying the lifeboats. So I join them and help them in distributing the life-jackets and organising the evacuation. I help a mother and her children and after that, an old couple who are too weak to fight their way. I make others stand quietly in line, giving priority to women, children, old and ill people. Others start following my example. (*)

We are now sailing towards the nearing coast. The dawn makes everything visible. In spite of their sad faces, everybody seem to be safe. The old couple smile at me in gratitude. I also smile to myself and feel a deep sense of satisfaction. I did the right thing, and I am sure I would do it again. I am thankful that, in spite of the pressures of the emergency, I neither betrayed the people nor the best of myself. (*)

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: These different stances can be related to everyday situations, seeing them in ourselves and in others. Reflect on what is the meaning of betraying ourselves or others, and how to avoid it.

Reading (choose from among following):

- Paras 3, 4, and 5. Chapter X. The Valid Action - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Principle 10. Chapter XIII. The Principles. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Point 1. Some stances in front of the present process of change. Letters To My Friends (Silo).

Discussion: How do the above attitudes apply to the present crisis in society?

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *A POSITIVE APPROACH*

Purpose: Inadequate role models prevent us from getting the best out of social relations. This experience invites us to train our imagination with positive roles, thus enabling a similar approach in actual everyday situations.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

There is a get-together going on. My family, relatives, and friends are here. There is a joyous atmosphere all around me. They all chit-chat and laugh, while the music is playing. The dresses, the lights, and the decoration add multiple colours to the scene. I also feel joyful. (*)

I help in organising the snacks and the drinks. I take some on a tray and offer them to the invitees. (*)

Smiling, I welcome some new arrivals, and make them feel at home. (*)

I notice someone who is keeping aloof, perhaps feeling shy. I approach this person and introduce myself. We exchange a few comments, and then I introduce this person to others. (*)

I notice that some of the guests are very elegant. Some others seem very gentle and sympathetic. I observe others, how they relate to each other, and try to guess how they are feeling inside. (*)

There is someone who is out of tune with the rest. This person is rather aggressive and critical. I try to guess why this person is behaving that way. I guess there are tensions and problems behind such an attitude. (*)

Overcoming my initial reaction, I go and ask this person about various matters until the root of tension comes up. I encourage this person to feel free and open up. I just listen sympathetically. After this relief, this person is more relaxed and mixes with the rest. (*)

Now I am in a group. It is my turn to speak. They ask me about my projects, my opinions, my things. I elaborate on everything. Without any embarrassment, I speak sincerely with enthusiasm and conviction. (*)

The get-together is ending. Slowly, the invitees are leaving the place. There are the last-minute jokes, laughter and goodbyes. I feel related to all of them and satisfied with myself. I think that, for me, meeting them was more than just a formality.

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: Notice the roles you could not play, and their connection with actual situations. Repeat the experience until being able to play them in your imagination, and check your progress in everyday life.

Reading (choose from among following):

- Points 5 and 7. Chapter III. The External Landscape- The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).

- Principles 4, 10 and 12. Chapter XIII. The Principles. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Page 47. Second para. First Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).
- Page 71. Point 5. Direction and change of situation. Third Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).

Discussion: Why it is necessary, possible and desirable to overcome self-enclosure and lack of communication in our immediate environment.

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *AN IMPORTANT DECISION*

Purpose: Decisions on important matters are best made after relaxing. Otherwise, we risk being carried away by internal and external pressures into disorderly thinking and, consequently, taking the wrong steps. This experience introduces us to the sensations accompanying relaxation and decision-making, which can later be used in actual situations.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

We are on a week-end holiday, in a mountain tourist resort. My friends are busy, noisily deciding what to do next. My heart is uneasy, and I feel like being on my own for a while. So I tell them that I will join them later, and I start walking up towards the top of a nearby hill. (*)

As I climb the slope, I notice the monkeys in the trees around me restlessly jumping around, quarrelling, and making noise. My mind is also restless and my thoughts resemble those monkeys. (*)

Now I have reached the top of the hill, leaving everything and everyone behind. Being mildly tired by the exertion, I find a fine spot to sit and rest. Here I am, finally, alone with myself. In front of me, the scenery unfolds with an unlimited view in all directions. Down below in the valley, hardly visible, I glimpse the city from where we have come. All the noise, frenzy and pressures belong there. Here, only peace and silence reign. (*)

The weather is mild, and the air is pure. The sun is bright and the sky is clear. A soft breeze freshens me. I breathe slowly and deeply, but gently. As I breathe in, all this peace and silence fill my whole being. As I breathe out, all my tensions and worries are expelled from me. (*)

My mental turmoil subsides noticeably as I follow my breathing. After a while, I feel lighter, completely relaxed and fully aware. My mind is now cool, calm and collected. I can focus it at will on whichever object I want. (*)

This is the condition I have yearned for during the rush of the last few months. I know that this situation will not last for long, so I decide to make good use of it. I will reflect on that important decision that I have to take, and that I have postponed until now. I focus my attention on it. (*)

Clearly and deliberately, I pose all the facts and factors that play a role in this decision. Images associated with them cross my mind, but they cannot carry me away. When I notice I am about to lose my coolness, I regain my balance with a deep breathe. (*)

I carefully balance the pros and cons of every major alternative course of action. (*)

I foresee the long-term consequences for me and for others of my possible decisions. (*)

Finally, the best among all possible alternatives dawns on me. All the pieces of the puzzle click harmoniously into place. (*)

I recognise my decision as sound since I am not a prey of usual compulsions or internal violence. Although it may entail effort and difficulties, deep within me I feel that it is the right course of action. My mind and my heart are in agreement. Thus, my actions will carry the strength of internal unity. (*)

Energised by this breakthrough, I stand up and, looking at the distant city, I make a silent affirmation. Within myself, I thank having delayed this decision until now. Otherwise, external pressures and my own internal tensions would have taken over and misguided me. (*)

Now I turn around, and with firm steps I start going back, down the slope, heading towards the tourist resort. As I pass them by, the monkeys watch me in silence. I smile to myself, even as my friends greet my return with their jokes and laughter.

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: The attitude that is trained through this experience should later be applied whenever crucial decisions are to be taken. The work with the Internal Guide can make this attitude even deeper and stronger.

Reading (choose from among the following):

- Chapter VII. The Rider and His Shadow - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Points 1 and 2. Chapter IV. Dependence. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo). (Important: Note that it refers to the beginning, not to the culmination of the inner road).
- Points 1 and 2. Chapter XV. The Experience of Peace and The Passage of The Force. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Principle 8 and 11. Chapter XIII. The Principles. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Pages 85-87. Synthesizing. Third Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).
- Point 5. Direction and change of situation. Third Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).

Discussion: Who or what takes the important decisions of our lives?

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *THE TIMECRAFT*

Purpose: What we believe about the future is just a belief, not a fact. The future is not written, but is built through the choices we make. However, beliefs -- either positive or negative-- actually condition the way we think, feel, and act. Therefore, it is important to have faith in our own future; in the future of our immediate environment, and of humanity in general. This will make us, and those around us, live better lives. Moreover, this increases the chances that our faith will be supported by facts.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

My friend and I are with a group, visiting our most advanced technological research institute. Our tour guide takes us through various halls and laboratories, explaining in simple terms the ongoing research and the breakthroughs made. We are shown devices to make water drinkable, to get electricity from natural sources, to eliminate pollution, and many more. They are all inexpensive and safe, both for human beings and nature. (*)

I remain behind with my friend, commenting on one of these gadgets. All of a sudden, we hear an amiable voice saying: "Oh, this is just the tip of the iceberg. There is more than you can imagine." The voice sounds uncannily familiar. We turn around to face a smiling old gentleman, with long white hair and beard. He must be one of the researchers, since he wears their white overall with an ID card on the breast pocket. It reads "Dr. I. Hope." In his pleasant presence, I feel that we have met before, but I cannot tell when or where. (*)

"Is that so?" My friend sounds amused and challenging. "Then, prove your claim."

"I would, if you could spend just a little of your precious time." Still smiling, the old man puts the ball in our court. I hesitate, doubting whether he is serious about it. "Well, then, young ones?" He prods us further.

My friend and I read an interrogation mark on each other's face. However, my curiosity has been aroused. So, I take the lead, and giving my friend a quizzical look, I reply with humorous defiance: "Please, Sir. Try and amaze us."

"Then, follow me, and see for yourselves." He starts walking, showing us the way. We follow him going up a nearby staircase and, down a corridor, until we reach a laboratory. At the entrance door, marked with high security warnings, he places his hand on a luminous plate. The heavy door opens with a hiss, and, once we all are inside, it closes. This looks promising. (*)

The room is quite large and brightly lit, without any other windows or exits. On the door, I notice a big red button with a legend: "In case of emergency, press the button to activate the alarm and open the door automatically."

In the ceiling, I notice water sprinklers that work in case of fire. On the walls, there are air-conditioning outlets that keep the temperature pleasant and the air clean. (*)

Very sophisticated instruments cover a wall. Monitors display multicoloured graphs, and panels glitter with dancing lights. Strange keyboards and control knobs defy our guesses.

At the centre of the room, there is a sort of big white egg on a platform. Perhaps it is made of plastic, steel, or some other unknown material. I can see that this capsule has a windowed hatch. (*)

The old man explains that this is his own toy, the most advanced research on time. "I have developed this timecraft applying state-of-the-art technology to the ancient wisdom of the sages. It was all clear in the scriptures, which only a few know to read."

"Now, if you want to try something really new, be my guests."

"How does it actually work?" I try not to show my excitement.

"You can 'travel' either backward or forward in time. Actually, your body does not move, but you feel you are 'there.' It is like living a realistic dream. You can be either in the past or in the future. It is completely safe -I tried it myself and it works." (*)

I am left without words. I could have never imagined something like this. However, I realise this is a unique opportunity. I may solve something that haunts me, something worth knowing: What is the future of humanity? What will be the outcome of these difficult times? Are things going to get better or worse? (*)

I decide to go ahead and try it. I communicate my wish to the old man, who nods and invites me to enter the capsule. Then he closes the hatch, and we communicate through the microphone. I sit on a cushioned armchair, having the outline of my body shape. The upholstery is made of flaps hanging from all sides. Following the old man's instructions, I wrap those flaps round my body, arms and legs. When I zip them up, I look like an astronaut. I feel quite comfortable and can move my limbs freely. I put on strange gloves and a big helmet. Inside the helmet. Inside the helmet, which covers my eyes, is a television screen as wide as the range of my vision. For the time being, all I see is white light around me. I realise that all this is connected to the instruments outside. (*)

All throughout my body, I feel a vibration. A pleasant sensation of a mind shift numbs me for a second. Then, a scene begins to take shape. People and cities, known and unknown, unroll and turn around me. I am not sure whether I am witnessing it or I am in it. Everywhere, there is confusion and uncertainty. Like watching a movie trailer, I learn about growing unemployment and mass hardships; mental disturbances, drug-addiction, and suicide; crime, market crashes, riots, and wars. Old social pillars collapse and paper tigers fall apart. Individualism pervades the masses retreating into fundamentalism or the foolish pursuit of pleasure and escapism. I witness all this, unable to do anything about it. (*)

How far ahead of my own times am I? How many months or years am I witnessing? In the central square of an unknown metropolis, thousands celebrate as multicoloured fireworks burst in the dark sky, and a huge screen announces the turn of a new year. I realise it is the end of the old --we have reached the turning point. As I stand watching, somebody seems to notice me; and, coming closer with a broad smile, gently smears my forehead with a dash of golden powder. (*)

As I keep peeping into the future, I notice things I have missed before --so engrossed was I in the negative. I see Life stirring everywhere, among the debris of the old world. I see common people coming together, joining hands, and reaching out for others in solidarity. I grasp a new sensibility blooming simultaneously throughout the world. It is a chain reaction that gathers momentum. A new meaning

is arising, and the previous darkness is dispelled. It is the end of mankind's childhood, it is the end of violence. I see new bonds being established. So far unthinkable, positive developments start taking place until, finally, the wealth of humanity is shared by all. It is the dawn of a new era, the dawn of the universal human nation. (*)

Moved by this indescribable scene, deep within my heart something breaks free, sending out waves in all directions, expanding far beyond my old self. As I let myself be taken by the experience, every shape melts into pure light, into a timeless silence... (*)

"Are you all right?" I notice concern in the old man's voice.

"Yes, I am," I reassure him while getting rid of the helmet, gloves and the rest. "Much better than ever before!"

As I step out of the capsule, he says: "Sorry to have interrupted you, but I had to stop it before time. Now, if you'll excuse me, I must go. By the way, now --as ever-- the choice is yours." Then, he bends his head, and darts out of the room. After some hesitation, my friend and I also leave. Going down the staircase, we come across our tour guide. Impatiently, he demands: "Where have you been all this while? I was searching for you all over this place!"

My friend apologises: "We were upstairs, in Dr. Hope's laboratory."

"Come on, my dear friend! I know all the researchers, and there is no-one by that name. Besides, I checked it myself, and upstairs there is nothing but empty rooms to be assigned to future projects."

"Aha!" My friend and I say in unison, and start to laugh. Our tour guide looks at us as though we are crazy. Then he retreats, turns around, and, nervously, starts walking back to the group, still turning his head in our direction.

We follow him slowly, and join the others. Many questions buzz in my mind, but my heart is filled with a strong positive faith that I will express in my everyday life.

Joyfully, I shout at our guide: "So there is room for future projects, you said? You can bet on that!"

Turning around and smiling, he cracks: "Anything you say. But you would be more credible without that golden powder on your forehead!"

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: Give hope and encourage the best in others. Get yourselves used to seeing the good aspects of life and of your activities. Get yourselves used to seeing the good aspects of your immediate environment: family, couple, work companions, neighbours and friends. Get yourselves used to promote faith in the future, in humanity, in life. Make things positive!

Reading (choose from among following):

- Chapter XIV. Faith - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Pages 66-67. The positive factors of the change. Second Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).
- Paragraphs: "Good is what affirms: 'There is still a future.' Bad is to say: 'There is neither future nor meaning in life.' " "Because, if faith in oneself..." till the end. Message given by Silo - Souvenir November 1, 1981 (Bombay).

Discussion: Naive faith, fanatical faith, faith with foundation.

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *THEIR POSITIVE QUALITIES*

Experience:

Purpose: It is important to be equally capable to see the negative and the positive sides of everything. Moreover, it is very useful to be able to shift from one standpoint to another. Still, it is up to us to decide which qualities outweigh the others in the final balance. Since present times make negative attitudes an easy pattern to fall into, we propose an exercise to educate a positive view of people and situations. This capacity will also make us less prone to be swayed by the suggestion of negative environmental influences.

Brief relaxation

It is holiday time and we are at a funfair. I am accompanied by family members and some of my best friends. All around there are people, having a good time. Children are playing, having cool drinks and ice cream. The whole place is coloured with small lights, balloons, ribbons and garlands.

Strolling at a leisurely pace, we go on playing games at various stands, watching the show at others. There are rides and puppets for the small ones, and also curiosities such as strong men, bearded women, fire eaters and what not. (*)

Obedying an inner call, I feel like walking a little ahead of the group which is hanging around one of the stands. As I keep moving ahead, I notice an old lady seated behind a table on one side of the path, away from the crowd. Her dress is exotic, but vaguely familiar. An oil lamp burns, dimly illuminating her face. Slowly she shuffles a deck of strange cards.

She seems to be a sort of soothsayer. She stares at me as though recognising me, smiling knowingly. She nods me to come closer. Hesitantly, I go and sit on a low stool in front of her. Her face is criss-crossed by wrinkles; but those are wrinkles from smiles and laughter. Her eyes are piercing and bright, with a spark of humour.

“I will tell you your future, young one, if you help me along.”

I guess this is some new style of fortune telling, so I collaborate. “Well then, how can I help you tell my future?” I say -half bemused, half intrigued.

“Here,” turning a card, “Is your family. I’ll tell you what irks you about them.” When I stare at the pictures on the strange card, they seem to grow larger and come alive while she tells me, accurately, my grouses against them. I feel nonplussed, but I agree she is dead right. (*)

“Now you tell me what is positive about them,” she says. I manage to come up with a few things. I am amazed myself, since I have never felt this way about them before. (*)

“Then,” turning another card, “these are your relatives.” I see them on the card, while she tells me exactly what I think is wrong with them. (*)

“Is there anything good going for them?” she scornfully asks.

“Of course!” I say, almost indignant. And I list their positive qualities I have never thought of before. (*)

"This is your everyday life," she shows me another strange card. "And these are your complaints about it." She describes my everyday complaints. (*)

"But you do recognise that it is not that bad, don't you?," she asks.

I reluctantly admit to many good aspects of my life, many of which I notice and acknowledge for the first time. (*)

"Now, this is a real test." She turns another card on which I see the person I dislike the most. She tells me all my criticisms about the character. (*)

"Things may be as I told you or may not. But make an effort to recognise at least one positive trait in this person." I agree it is challenging, but I try my best to be impartial. (*)

"Well, young one, if you spoke sincerely and tried sincerely, then your future will be brighter every time you do this. Your future is written in your thoughts. Thoughts produce and attract actions. Thoughts with faith produce and attract stronger actions. But thoughts repeated with faith produce and attract the maximum strength in actions." I reflect on her words. (*)

"Remember: At every cross-road you make a choice. And accumulating choices you draw your path. That path is your life and your future. Therefore, as the wise man said, love the reality you build!"

"All right, but why did you call me, of all passers-by?" I ask her.

"Things are the other way around. It was not I who called you. You were asking for this since long. And I always respond, if the call is strong enough."

"Now, you go and take your life in your hands!" She dismisses me with a gesture and a warm smile. I stand up, still dazzled by the experience and the realisation of a great truth. (*)

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: Get yourselves used to see the positive side of everything and to share it with others. Try to manage in daily life according to what makes situations positive.

Reading (choose from among following):

- Chapter II. The Reality - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Chapter V. The Internal Landscape - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Principle 12. Chapter XIII. The Principles. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Point 5. Human freedom: source of every meaning. Fifth Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).

Discussion: Are the mass media balanced regarding positive and negative viewpoints? Do they equally report positive and negative news?

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *A POSITIVE RELATION*

Purpose: Present times make relations difficult in our immediate environment. It becomes increasingly difficult to foresee how relations will evolve. However, we can certainly put the best of ourselves into a relation, thus increasing the chances that things will work well. This entails a review of the terms on which we relate to others. This experience guides us through such review, helping us to improve our relations.

Brief relaxation

Experience:

I am in a beautiful park, with a person to whom I can openly confide my most personal matters. I would say this person is someone who will not stand in judgement, and will not betray my trust. Besides, my friend has a knack for seeing through my words and into my heart, having a dispassionate approach to personal matters. Still better, this person has no stake in my personal life, and thus I feel I do not run any risk if I talk openly. In sum, somebody who just wants my internal unity, just wants me be at peace with myself and others. (*)

After some time of my beating around the bush, this person asks me straight away: "What is it that is bothering you?" My first reaction is to say: "Why? Nothing!" But I refrain from doing that, and take a moment to order my ideas and reply. Then, I say: "There is a person with whom I have a pending situation. There are some matters which are not clear between us.

"This makes me somewhat reluctant to open up completely with this person." I continue. "Plenty of time has gone by without any breakthrough. How long will it continue like this? I know I may do something to surmount the stalemate, but I am uncertain about the course of action."

"Who is that person?" My friend softly asks.

I reply, not without some hesitation, for I was unwilling to acknowledge it even to myself. (...)

"Well then," my friend says, "now tell me about the main aspects of the situation." I tell everything as I understand it. (*)

"All right. Now tell me how do you feel about it." This time I try to be as sincere as possible. (*)

"Tell me, have you tried your best to communicate with that person? Did you try different approaches and in different opportunities? Did you honestly try to bypass your pride?" I reflect along these lines. (*)

"Besides, did you ever try to put yourself in the person's shoes? Try to understand how this person may feel about all this." I guess there may be something useful in this, so I make the effort. (*)

"And what about possessiveness? How much have you tried to shape this person's feelings, views, and behaviour according to your own views? How much have you refused to accept the person as the person is?" I try to be sincere. (*)

“There is a golden rule for human relations. You should review your relation with that person on its basis. That is, did you try to treat that person the way you would have that person treat you?” (*)

“Finally, there may be aspects you only know; aspects that perhaps you may acknowledge only to yourself, aspects related to the agreement between your thoughts, your feelings, and your actions. See what is there.” At my friend’s behest, I delve deep into my feelings, motivations, and other factors I only know. (*)

Now I feel I have a much better insight of my relation with that person. I have got a few hints to try a different, more positive approach. While I am still reflecting, engrossed in these realisations, my friend looks at me and smiles knowingly. Then he says: “To feel the humanness in the other is to feel the other’s life as a beautiful and multi-coloured rainbow that moves further away in the measure that you want to stop, trap or snatch its expression. Someone may move away from you, but you would find comfort within yourself, had you contributed to break his or her chains, to overcome his or her pain and suffering.” (....)

I am not quite sure whether I understood his words thoroughly. In any case, I feel I should go and meet that person. Thus, I thank my friend for having listened to me patiently and for having assisted me with my reflection. I greet my friend, stand up and walk away happily. The sun, the greenery, the flowers, the birds singing; everything in the park seem more beautiful than before.

Sharing of the experience: Participants share their experience.

Recommendation: Use this guided experience whenever applicable to relations. Although absolute coherence may be difficult in daily life, the search for it gives a positive orientation to our relations.

Reading (choose from among following):

- Chapter V. The Internal Landscape - The Internal Landscape - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Principles 1 to 12. Chapter XIII. The Principles. The Inner Look - To Humanise The Earth (Silo).
- Point 5. The change and the relations among people. First Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).
- Any point from 4 to 10. Third Letter. Letters To My Friends (Silo).

Discussion: What would be the effect of applying similar approaches -as those glimpsed in the guided experience- to social relations among groups, communities, countries, cultures?

WEEKLY MEETING OF HUMANISATION

Practice: Guided Experience: *THE WELL OF PEACE*

Purpose: The following experience introduces us to deeper works of relaxation, and helps us find peace and joy within ourselves whenever in need. Besides, it enables us to glimpse what may lie beyond the troubled boundaries of our tense ego.

Experience:

I am accompanied by a group of people. Some are my family members, some are my dear friends. We all are in a beautiful hilly park, which few people know and visit. We have come here to enjoy a holiday together. (*)

We are in the lap of nature, sitting comfortably in a circle under the shade of big trees. (...) The trees are in a meadow that extends all around us, and there are plenty of other trees in which different fruits ripen and flowers of many colours bloom. (...) I can hear the soft sound of pure water running in nearby streams. I listen to the singing of birds, while I watch beautiful butterflies fluttering around. The weather is also very pleasant. (...) I breathe the pure air deeply but gently. Throughout my body, I feel an invigorating sensation of well-being. I also feel in harmony with everything. (*)

One of my friends suggests that we all close our eyes, and try to enhance the positive feelings associated to this situation. We all like it, and follow this suggestion. I close my eyes, and become aware of my state of mind, my mood, and my body sensations. (*)

I follow the further suggestions of my friend who, with a gentle and slow voice, tells us: 'Feel the sensations of your close friend, the body. We will now take a tour of our bodies, bringing a sensation of well-being to it. Let's start by feeling the sensation on our forehead. (...) Make this a pleasant sensation of softness, of mild heaviness, or freshness. Relax your forehead. (...) Make this sensation of relaxation slide down to your eyes, as though it were fresh water slowly flowing down your body. (...) Then follow that sensation to your nose. (...) Now, relax the muscles of your mouth, and then the jaws. (...) Go down to your neck and relax it. (...) Continue going down with your pleasant sensation to the shoulders, let those muscles loose. (...) From the shoulders, follow the sensations of your body to the upper back, feeling the muscles there and relaxing them. (...) Keep moving down, to your middle back and finally reaching your buttocks, always feeling a pleasant sensation coming to those muscles and melting their tensions. (...)

Now, let's go back to your shoulders. Feel the pleasant sensation of relaxation in both shoulders, and make it flow from both the shoulders down to your chest. (...) Feel the muscles of your chest dropping their tensions, relaxing, allowing you to breathe more deeply. (...) Keep moving this pleasant sensation down to the stomach (...), relax your belly from top to bottom. Let's leave our bodies completely relaxed. (*)

I feel a deeper sensation of well-being pervading my whole body. My friend continues: "Now, without moving, I want you to hold hands with those sitting next to

you, to your left and to your right.” As we join hands, we form a wide circle of togetherness. (*)

“Now,” my friend says, “feel a pleasant sensation, like a positive feeling within your chest, in the middle of your chest, more or less where your heart is.” (...) “Feel that pleasant sensation. Let your mind dive and dwell deep within your chest, where that positive feeling abides.” (...) “Now, gently and slowly, begin to expand that sensation, make it grow bigger and bigger. (...) Feel that positive sensation expanding from the centre of your chest. (...) Feel it expanding in all directions, as your breathing becomes deeper. (...) Feel it expanding; let your breathing follow it. (...) Let your heart open, and follow that positive feeling growing and expanding. (...) Feel that positive sensation reaching your whole body, relaxing it deeply.” (...) As I do it, I follow this expansion with my whole being, letting my heart open up, fearless and happy. (*) (*)

We open our eyes spontaneously. I realise that we have all experienced the same. We remain just like that, silent and happy, with a blissful expression in our faces. Everything looks brighter. We keep joining hands, relishing this rare feeling of togetherness and oneness. In this magical moment, I feel that the pettiness of the “I” humbly bows to the greatness of the “We.” (*)

Sharing of the experience: Participants comment on their experiences.

Recommendation: Repeat this experience until mastering it, and every time you need to strengthen your social activity of humanisation. Conduct this experience for the benefit of others any time the opportunity arises.

Reading: Paras 1, 2, and 3. Chapter XV -The experience of peace and the passage of the force. The Inner Look. *To Humanize The Earth*, by Silo.

Discussion: In daily life, is there any relation between our internal state and our situation of communication, togetherness and solidarity with others? Does any of them produce the other or are they mutually interlinked? Do positive feelings produce good actions, or do good actions produce positive feelings?