

No Hello Thanks Goodbye Please Sorry Yes



PRACTICAL GUIDE

TO THE

7 WORDS SYSTEM

A comprehensive disclosure of the ideas behind the system and how best to study it so that you can optimise life management skills and spiritual wisdom

James Burgess

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1	PLEASE	69
Structure of book	2	Keywords	69
7 Words Training	5	Q21 Commentary	70
Q21 Questionnaire	8	Life Lessons	71
		Visionary Goals	72
NO	13	Sufi Perspective	73
Keywords	15	Exercises	74
Q21 Commentary	16	DLP	76
Life Lessons	17	Change Process	77
Self Confidence	18	Moral Fibre	79
Sufi Perspective	18		
Exercises	20	SORRY	81
DLP	22	Keywords	83
Wordbending	24	Q21 Commentary	84
		Life Lessons	85
HELLO	27	Spirituality	86
Keywords	29	Sufi Perspective	86
Q21 Commentary	30	Exercises	88
Life Lessons	31	Baroness	89
Influence	32	DLP	90
Sufi Perspective	32	7 Subtle Forces	91
Exercises	34		
DLP	36	YES	92
Zeitgeist & Levels	37	Keywords	94
		Q21 Commentary	95
THANKS	40	Life Lessons	96
Keywords	42	Trust	97
Q21 Commentary	43	Sufi Perspective	98
Life Lessons	44	Exercises	99
Relationship	45	DLP	101
Sufi Perspective	45	Depression	102
Exercises	47		
DLP	49	AFTERWORD	106
Case Study	50	20th Century Progress	106
Love Affair	52	The Meaning of Life	111
		Great Cycles of Change	112
GOODBYE	53	7 Emotions in Sufism	115
Keywords	55	7 Deadly Sins	116
Q21 Commentary	56	Salt Puppet	117
Life Lessons	57	Addenda	121
Management	58	7 Words Associates	123
Sufi Perspective	60	Guides and their Work	124
Exercises	61	Other Applications	125
Satisfaction Index	62	7 Words Theatre	126
DLP	64	Types of People	127
7 Words of Conflict	65	Exercises & Keywords	131

TESTIMONIALS

John Wilkes, Head of Risk and Value, Anglian Water Services

Having worked with James Burgess and used 7 Words as a business tool, I can clearly see that it works. I can recommend its use, whatever your business issue.

John Lavan, Senior Partner, Sarras Management Consulting

If you want to change the way you think - and improve results - apply 7 Words!

Sandra Bagdonaite, Clinical Psychologist, Kaunas

I am working as a psychologist in an orphanage. The 7 Words system helped me to understand what kind of energy these children need; the more I study 7 Words, the deeper are the understandings that come to me.

Dom Sakoilsky, Relate Manager, Bristol

7 words is a life-changing system which clearly highlights areas of our being / relationships / psyche. It is an insightful doorway which invites the participant to wake up to a clearer way of being!

Louise Bennett, Stoke

7W has become a powerful tool in my life and as a Relaxed Birth and Parenting Practitioner; it offers valuable insights into clients. It has transformed the way I think and helped me in my relationships.

Margie McCallum, Death and Dying Counsellor, Findhorn

I have just been back through my responses to DLP and am amazed at the depth and breadth of what I explored: it is a hugely powerful self-development tool.

Gintare Balcytyte, Vilnius

I use '7 words' as a coloured glass when the sight gets blurry and messy. There are even seven colours which help me to observe the variety of life itself but at the same time to obtain the balance.

Graham Martin, Newcastle

7Words has both gravitas and simplicity. It takes over where traditional psychiatry and psychology leave off. It should be available on the NHS! It has facilitated the balancing of different aspects of my personality and moved me much closer towards full personal empowerment. Here are 7 Words about 7Words: inspirational, instigatory, empowering, motivational, transformative, balancing, and healing.

Ernesta Dziovalaite, Vilnius

The DLP course has accompanied me through very significant life changes for the past year or two. The clarity afforded by the beautifully simple 7 Words system is like a beacon, which reveals universal patterns reflected in one's life, giving a constant sense of direction and self-confidence.

FOREWORD

This book contains a system of 'Revolutionary Thinking' – the 7 Words – and guidance on how to use it, in all walks of life.

Herein lays extraordinary insights and powerful ideas that merit revisiting again and again. Read and reread them. Have them read to you. Meditate on them. Experience them changing how you feel. Let the words wash over and through you. Allow each wave to reach into every nook and cranny of your being, refreshing and revitalising what you say, think, feel and do.

The 7 Words System contains ways to optimise our personal life and business management; it works. I know because I've studied, taught and used it myself for almost six years now and it has transformed my life and has enabled me to access, understand and give expression to my very soul.

Expect your perceptions to change, and delight in how differently you will see the world, and your place and role in it. Embrace this work. Use it. Share it. Let it transform your life, as it has done mine.

The work is a culmination of all that James has done and is doing in his life to teach and share the wisdom and insights he has gained over many years as an international teacher, management trainer, counsellor and Sufi guide.

RICHARD GREY

Founder, 7 Words Theatre

Director, 7 Words Training Ltd.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Richard Grey and I have been working together for many years now, to present to the world the 7 Words System. It's been a privilege for me to find someone so true to the spirit that the 7 Words seeks to capture. He also has journeyed in Sufism and other teachings, and has embodied the principles of clarity, sincerity, kindness and enthusiasm. More than anyone I have met, he looks for the very best he can find in the people he meets, is quick to praise and very slow to criticise. The world would be a better place with more like him!

Other major influences that allowed this work to become possible are acknowledged in my previous work 7 Words Principles and Practices, although I will here reiterate the deepest gratitude for my Sufi teacher, Nigel Hamilton, and my NLP trainer John Seymour.

JAMES BURGESS.

Dorset, UK. 2012

INTRODUCTION

This book presents a new idea.

An idea is potentially a very powerful thing because so much that we do depends upon our perception of what is real and what is right. Yet when we look carefully at these reasons for our decisions, we find them to be insubstantial. What is real? What is right? Who can ever really answer these questions except subjectively? Everything depends upon how you see it, and how you measure its importance. Yet no two people agree on these things. It depends so very much on what they understand at the level of ideas, and mostly our ideas were given to us with a moral, religious or political spin that distorted the truth. Very few people are able to think clearly and honestly, untouched by these forces.

We have – at the turn of the Millennium – reached a position where humanity is facing untold, numerous dangers that even threaten the survival of the species. Surely it has become intuitively clear that we have collectively to change the way we think if we are to have any realistic hope of reaching the third Millennium. The way we think can be changed, and has to be changed, so that the results of processes of thought are helpful. At present, they are damaging. Profoundly damaging. Not only collectively as a species but also individually – so much so that most people are entirely unable to train their minds to create happiness. It is entirely normal for most people to blame external situations for their feelings, blind to the deeper truth that not only the feelings but the situations themselves can be controlled by a clear, trained mind.

Learning how to apply the 7 Words System frees the mind of the distortions of thought that give rise to unpleasant emotionality and confusion. What follows is greater clarity, and empowerment; we get to choose more of what we love and desire, and less of what we fear and dislike. Everything begins with thought, so if the structure of how we have been conditioned to think is corrected then we can legitimately expect to experience major lasting improvements in our circumstances and sense of well being.



HOW THE BOOK IS STRUCTURED

The introduction and conclusion form the outer bits of a sandwich that has 7 layers – one for each of the 7 primary words: No, Hello, Thanks, Goodbye, Please, Sorry and Yes. Each of the words has its own 7 layers as follows:

BASIC IDEAS

This gives an overview of the primary word itself, how it relates to the other primary words and is described and defined by its own keywords.

KEYWORDS

The core meaning of each primary word is discovered when we unlock its secret using these keys, which describe and define what we mean when we use them. They are extremely powerful tools for understanding a person or a situation, and promoting an optimal outcome.

Q21 QUESTIONS

This questionnaire very often leads to transformational shifts of perception with oneself and clients. Here the three individual questions for the related primary word are studied in depth to help gain deeper insights as to why we ask them.

LIFE LESSONS

The work we have to do on ourselves, both individually and globally, is shown by the dysfunctional sides of the 7 Words. What happens with a weak or distorted expression of the principle? How do we recognise the absence of a quality?

7 WISDOMS

Students on the 7 Wisdoms course, which leads to the qualification as Certified Practitioner, go through exercises to help explain the ideas and embody the states. The how and the why is given here for 40 exercises, together with deeper perspectives from Sufism and other angles of approach, including the personal benefits gained by mastering the 7 wisdoms.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME

Each question from each module is looked at, to help trainees with their submissions. DLP is the way to study 7 Words if you are unable to attend a Certified Practitioner course; it also is a requirement for you to become a 7 Words Guide.

ESSAYS

A study of various subjects of interest – depression, conflict, relationship and so on – expressed with the clarity that is found by structuring the ideas in the 7 Words sequence.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

SELF-CONFIDENCE

Just imagine if you were always able to be firm in your boundaries, never overwhelmed, and clear about your identity, certain about your choices, and always completely truthful, would that not guarantee self-confidence!

INFLUENCE

Social skills are learned with the four keywords of Hello, and when you know how to give exemplary attention at a very deep level then you know how to influence others.

UNDERSTANDING RELATIONSHIP

Life is all about relationship – and it is far from easy to know how to succeed in this area. The lessons of Thank You are central – appreciation, giving of the heart and so on.

MANAGEMENT

We all have to manage our lives to some extent and the tools explained here are no less useful for individuals as they are for whole organisations. How to realise when it's time for a change, how to make optimal decisions and how to implement them are all shown.

HOW TO GET WHAT YOU REALLY WANT

Fulfilling your desires depends upon knowing exactly what you intend, and organising your thoughts properly so that you keep your eyes on the prize.

CLARIFYING YOUR SPIRITUALITY

We may not necessarily call it God or Allah, but we've all got a central core of spirituality of some kind within us – and when that is understood and defined, then life becomes supremely fulfilling. It is very inspiring to unlock secret aspects of your spirituality.

LEARNING HOW TO TRUST

We learn how to let go of anxiety, control obsessions, and fear – to unclench the grip of dissatisfaction with life so that happiness can re-emerge.

7 WORDS SYSTEM

This is a non-dogmatic method that bridges the gap between spiritual and material worlds – not only a path for the serious seeker but also a management tool that has widespread applications in all aspects of private and corporate endeavour.

The range of applications is without limit; its scope is universal. Already the 7 Words System is embedded as a methodology in worlds as diverse as management consultancy, counselling, parenting, birthing, death and dying, spiritual guidance, therapeutic theatre and so on, with further areas in development such as addiction recovery and mainstream education at kindergarten and sixth form levels. The fundamental principles, coming through Sufism and other mystery traditions, has been taught for at least 1400, and perhaps thousands of years.

The system is defined by the idea that in all the complexity of human associations, there are only 7 core aspects of interaction; they are captured by the 7 primary words. These 7 archetypes of expression are the essential themes within all relationships and activities – archetypes – and they operate sequentially. We journey through stages of understanding, from No to Yes, spiralling towards the final wisdom that transcends any models or explanations. There are 7 wisdoms to grasp, which eventually after many repetitions of the cycle, we will come to see as one universal wisdom, which we have for convenience simply chosen to see as if it were 7.

It is a new way to look at everything – what we do, how we think, how we feel and what we believe in. It is about how we focus the mind and awaken the depth of heart. The idea is that these 7 words are basic – and that by deepening our understanding of these fundamentals, we can come to a much better sense of who we are, what needs to be done and how to make the right moves.

The system, when approached with the head, gives rise to ideas – and when approached with the heart, gives rise to 7 distinct inner states that inform our emotions. Mastery of the system requires us to learn how to move at will from one state to another in response to inner and outer motivations. When we train ourselves to embody these 7 principles as states, then both our rational and emotional responses become appropriate and helpful.

7 WORDS TRAINING

It is not enough to accept and understand the ideas behind this system, because if such an approach is only mental, and does not touch the heart fully, it will not get the principles into the body as states of being. This requires us to train. This means to learn by repeated practice how to gain deep and lasting body-knowledge of the principles such that we can call upon them at will, as a completely authentic expression of being. Only then can we claim to have knowledge of the system.

1. NO: self-confidence. Self-confidence comes from knowing who you are, where your strengths and weaknesses are, and what to do to make the best of what you are. We look at a number of our important life roles, the best of our qualities, and notice where there are areas of concern. We look at aspects of self-deception as we face the truth about what is actually going on in our lives. If we are to feel happy in the long term then we must develop a firm foundation upon which to build a solid secure life; this depends upon clear enforceable boundaries, self-honesty, clear choices and authentic living.

2. HELLO: influence. Influence is what allows us to enjoy the feeling that we matter, that we are worth our place in the world, that we impact upon others and can move things our way to some extent. There are lots of different areas of influence – for example, in our love relationships, how we are at work, the personal magnetism in our atmosphere, how to reach out to children, how to make friends and respond to community interests in a certain way. This can be measured and worked with to increase the effect we have upon others. The mind is seen as an integral aspect of our spiritual nature, which must be made clear in focus and strong of purpose if we are to avoid confusion in favour of creativity.

3. THANKS: relationship. We need people in our lives to give meaning and joy. We need to learn how to blend and harmonise with another so that the special softer qualities can emerge. We find that we can improve our experience of loving relationship by remembering to put into practice some very simple understandings. We understand that listening has great value in relationship, so does showing appreciation and tangible demonstration of our valuing someone as more important than others. We learn how to ask questions in such a way that a person can answer from the depth of the heart, which has profound healing implications for both people.

4. GOODBYE: life management. We all voyage from birth to death doing the best we can to negotiate through stormy waters, and the majority don't do very much to manage the journey at all. They stumble around from one crisis to the next, without much by way of a plan or strategy, hoping for the best, even expecting a different result to come from the same behaviour. What folly! Even a three step process, though imperfect and somewhat temporary, is enough to deal with almost all that comes up: define the problem clearly, choose an alternative, and make the change. This weekend is about realisation that life is change and that we can learn how to manage change well and to our advantage. A single word can make a huge difference – the critical keyword, found by careful study of Q21.

5. PLEASE: visionary goals. We move ourselves towards what we focus on, and focus itself attracts the completion of desire. From this we see how important it is to have a clearly defined, specific, optimistic vision for the future, free of ambiguity and doubt. There are 7 steps to go through to achieve our goals – all simple, all required. Yet few of us are sufficiently clear minded to know what to go for, so we need to spend time looking at what we find important enough to dedicate ourselves too. Finding a vision is the first step towards its realisation, and seeing this in terms of qualities as well as events is an important breakthrough of comprehension about who we are becoming.

6. SORRY: spirituality. More potent even than the survival instinct, the religious instinct operates within us all. Many reject the unacceptable face of organised religion itself, with its corruption and false doctrine, and yet most hold onto a deep sense of the sacredness of life. The power of a person who is deep-seated in faith can be awesome, and all of us become stronger when we find our true unique path. The essence of all spirituality is reflexive self-consciousness – seeing yourself through the eyes of another. Learning how to do this is rather tricky, and has a lot to do with how we manage feedback and apology.

7. YES: trust. The final wisdom is surrender. Having mastered ourselves in all aspects of worldliness, paradoxically we learn how to control by letting go, how to win by giving up, and how to learn more by grasping less. We sink into the mystery, only to find that we had been looking in the wrong place for something we already had within. This is so much more than an esoteric idea – it becomes a way to live – and attracts opportunities that you could never have imagined! Meditation, games and breathing exercises are included, plus opening up individuals and the group to a greater sense of self-determination, so that control issues can be looked at more easily.

7 WISDOMS

This is a course of weekends that leads to receiving certification as a 7 Words Practitioner. Its purpose is to train participants in the 7 Words skills, ideas and exercises that together open minds and hearts to bring awareness to our strengths and weaknesses, so that the one may be celebrated and the other addressed. It is often a transformative experience.

Students are guided through a series of simple techniques to create shifts of perception relating to the 7 fundamental life principles. Each weekend reawakens self-confidence and clarity to an ever-greater degree, enabling the control of life circumstances and the deepening of inner harmony. The course leaders are both registered 7 Words Guides: Sufi leader, James Burgess, and professional trainer, Richard Grey, who deliver training and consultancy in both personal and corporate settings.

Each of the primary words is linked to a life quality – No is self-confidence for example – and we use the 7 Words to strengthen this quality. So rather than simply studying the principles of the system, we study the applications, see it working in practice so that students gain the benefits that they will then begin to pass on to others.

DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME

It's not necessary to attend workshops and seminars to learn the 7 Words; the Distance Learning Programme (DLP) is an alternative. This course requires that the student engages fully with the material on all levels so that the 7 wisdoms are embodied as well as understood mentally. For this reason it is considered a more advanced level of study than the course of weekends, and is certainly expected to involve emotional process.

Each student is assigned a supervised tutor, who guides them through the 7 stages by responding to the modules submitted over a period, of probably two or three years, until both are satisfied that the process is completed. Each module is marked and feedback is offered by the tutor where the student has not demonstrated exemplary understanding of the material. A failed module may be resubmitted. The 7 modules need not be submitted in sequence, except that the first must be first and the seventh last. They align with the 7 primary words, and the purpose of each module is to promote:

No	Self-confidence and empowerment
Hello	Influence
Thanks	Deepening in relationships
Goodbye	Decisive, effective life management
Please	Discovery and achievement of goals
Sorry	Understanding your spirituality
Yes	Enjoyment of opportunity.

DLP is a necessary but not sufficient qualification to become a 7 Words Guide. Typically the people doing DLP are living abroad or those who have already become practitioners and are going further with their studies, anticipating the possibility to become Guides. It is essential to have some post qualification experience working in the role of trainer, teacher, counsellor or guide – also to associate with other associates and take some active part in furthering the 7 Words System and its administration.

GUIDANCE

HEALING HUMANITY'S THINKING

According to Sufi mystic Pir Vilayat Khan, humanity's thinking is a source of cosmic pollution. We, as a species, are fouling up the universe by the way we think. It is a shameful thing to come to terms with, and a real challenge for us to pick up and work with. We have the duty – on a cosmic level – to train ourselves and others to change our thought processes, so that we become a force for the good rather than a problem for someone else to have to deal with because we are unable or unwilling to take responsibility.

QUESTIONNAIRE Q21

Most students and practitioners will find it helpful to use Q21. It is very incisive and designed to be intuitive so that in healing, guidance, and teaching scenarios we can get straight to the point and set about the deepening of understanding that is a prerequisite for resolving issues. Let us always try to remember that our clients – whether formal or informal – are real people and we have a measure of responsibility to respect their feelings.

- NO** Do you prevent people from taking advantage of you?
Do you keep to your No decisions?
Do you mostly feel free from imposition?
- HELLO** Are you truly interested in the views and attitudes of others?
Do you make opportunities to meet new people?
Do you make friends and contacts if you go to a new place?
- THANKS** Do friends and associates often thank you for your kindness?
Do you often give gestures of appreciation?
Do you easily win children’s confidence?
- GOODBYE** Are you good at avoiding being 'stuck in a rut'?
Do you have courage to move into the unknown?
Do you quickly let go of the past?
- PLEASE** Are you an assertive person?
Are you good at choosing and asking for what you want?
Are you likelier to take action than to grumble?
- SORRY** Do you make amends if you cause someone harm?
Are you relatively free of guilt?
Are you a person who can “forgive and forget”?
- YES** Do you usually wake up feeling enthusiastic?
Do you “take life as it comes” with easy acceptance?
Are you using your talents well?

CLIENT RAPPORT

Inevitably, if we are to develop a better rapport with others, we need to form closer bonds of empathy and, through a deeper understanding, express greater tolerance and compassion. As this spreads from individual to individual we hope that our communities will become more and more based upon principles that ennoble humanity rather than debase it. This will in time bring governments into alignment with the wishes of the people so that corruption, despoiling and war may fade away from the human psyche. They are aspects of the mental ill health that — if they are to be healed — requires right thinking and right speech. It is futile to hold anyone to blame for the problem — this simply increases it and focuses attention and energy away from the solutions. Let’s remember that we are all, (even the ‘bad guys’), sons and daughters of parents who were unable to treat us more consciously.

TIPS WHEN USING Q21 WITH A CLIENT:

- Be aware of your own intention, and decide whether to declare this to your client. Then focus your attention on the client and all that is going on for them.
- Approach every client with big ears and a radiant heart.
- Establish rapport and trust by obtaining your client's permission to fill in Q21 with their responses.
- Don't presume anything.
- Check any assumptions you do make.
- Be observant. Maintain eye contact as much as possible. Read the questions first, then look at your client to ask them. Asking the questions in order (1-21) or randomly is likely to have different effects.
- Be aware that your tone of voice, words you emphasize, and the natural punctuation you introduce when asking the questions will all affect how the client responds. Try to speak calmly and clearly.
- Notice any pauses, stumbles, and hesitation your client makes when thinking about their answers.
- Monitor and calibrate your client's body language, including their breathing. What is it telling you? Match it, and their energy level, where appropriate, to maintain rapport.
- Remain open, neutral and non-judgmental to all possibilities.
- Listen carefully and actively to all that your client says. Occasionally reflect back to your client what you have understood them to say and check they agree.
- Do not coach, train, teach or tell without the client's permission.
- Ask open questions rather than closed ones.
- Use silence. This often elicits further responses that could reveal important clues.
- Be confident in the process. It works!
- Trust your intuition and ask questions to check it.
- Close with the question – "Is there anything else you'd like to say?"

BIG EARS AND RADIANT HEART

It is very difficult to see oneself objectively, well actually impossible, so it is a true service to another to give them a degree of honest feedback. Many of us have involvement with others that centres on the giving of attention — and in some cases it is mostly a one-way conversation rather than an exchange, perhaps because the other has more need than we have at the moment. This can be in friendship, or even as a healer, or maybe with a stranger. Whichever it is, let's simply define the other person as 'the client'. Although it may sound a little too formal, it will help to remind us of the nature of the involvement, which is an opportunity for healing and actually does have a degree of formality.

The secret to being a good healer is to have big ears and a radiant heart. Let's focus for the moment on the ears — the importance of listening to others — since in general this is an area where so much improvement can be brought about with such a small degree of effort. Listen.

Listen doesn't mean hear; there's more. Hearing is passive and uncommitted and listening is much more involved. There are two distinct aspects to the process of speaking — the verbal and the non-verbal — and good listening requires that we relate well to both aspects. Non-verbal messages are delivered mainly in the tone of voice and body language and

can be seen as the most important part of the message because this is the aspect that the person cannot easily conceal, so is much more authentic and free from social and other pressures.

However, though it may be the tip of an iceberg, it is the verbal content that we have to work with — these are the words we are offered and represent what is consciously (partly) opened up for the exchange. There are clues in the specific choice of words that show how best we can relate to our conversational partner. For example, if John says *'my wife is going to have a baby'*, we may want to focus some attention on his concerns about her; if he says *'I'm going to be a father'*, we would be likelier to form better rapport by talking about John's new life role and its attendant issues and responsibilities.

Good listening requires that we are able to some significant degree to suspend our own attention needs, to pull back from expressing our opinions or experiences. Here: Alice says *'I'm feeling depressed because my boyfriend has left me'*; it is hardly appropriate to grab the focus of attention back with a pseudo-empathy *'I know how you feel, Peter left me last week'*, because Alice wants to talk about Alice not Peter. Great help can be given to the process of healing our thinking if we can learn to improve listening skills, and apply them more often.

Q21 RELATIONSHIP

- NO** Does your partner demonstrate respect for you?
Do you each have and follow your own individual paths?
Are you honest with your partner?
- HELLO** Do you give and receive enough attention?
Is it fun to be together?
Do you often know what each other is thinking?
- THANKS** Do you feel appreciated?
Do you spend a lot of your free time together?
Do you love each other?
- GOODBYE** Is the relationship dynamic and constantly evolving?
Are you both developing new perspectives?
Does each of you contribute significantly to financial decisions?
- PLEASE** Are you able to discuss future plans enthusiastically?
Does your partner willingly help when you ask for support?
Are you sharing a major life project together?
- SORRY** Does each of you shoulder responsibilities in the relationship?
Do you both say Sorry and make amends?
Can you let go of resentments and move forward?
- YES** Do you give each other enough space?
Do you feel a sense of freedom within the partnership?
Can you trust the future is bright and happy together?

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE ABOUT Q21:

- Q21 is a process with its own power.
- If we're not aware of what's really going on, it doesn't mean it's not happening.
- Clarity will be revealed about different things at different times for different people.
- We don't have to fix things. Our task is not to heal our clients. It's to help them heal themselves!
- Yearning for healing, evidenced by a willingness to do Q21, is often followed by resistance to healing.
- The 'juice' of a session is often in the last few minutes.
- There are no 'right' and 'wrong' ways to do Q21. There are no 'right' and 'wrong' responses. We each have to find our own way with it. Try to be sensitive and 'tune-in' to the situation and the client's level of interest and enthusiasm in the process.
- You can start a discussion about your client's scores using any and every one of them. If you are not sure what to say, simply reflect back what is on Q21 by saying ... "I notice that you scored X for the question Y. Tell me about that."
- All the questions are designed to be provocative. Expect them to provoke!
- The questions provide opportunities for high quality attention to be focused on any and every aspect of a person's life.
- This quality of attention and what emerges can often be uncomfortable and challenging.
- Individual scores do not matter to the facilitator. They may well do to the client (e.g. we are conditioned to believe that 8 is better than 7).
- Low scores are not 'bad'. High scores are not 'good'.
- 'Low' and 'high' scores for individual questions can be amongst relatively 'high' and 'low' scores respectively for other questions in the same word group, e.g. 9,2,9 or 3,8,4 for HELLO.
- Identifying a critical keyword is a process that benefits from paying close attention to the client's reactions.
- Reading from the section headed 'Types of People' may be helpful.

ANALYSIS OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Total Scored

This has significance when compared to an earlier score of the same person or to the average for their social group. There are rather marked differences between different countries with New Zealand scores high and UK scores low. A total around 147 is normal. Below 120 suggests a person who is not really content with all their circumstances and under 100 is rather rare and indicative of quite an unhappy person. A high score shows an overall sense of well-being and good self-esteem, someone who sees that they are getting 'more' out of their lives, which they find rich and rewarding.

Low Range of Scores

If there is rather a small range between the lowest and highest individual scores — say minimum 7 and maximum 9 — this is indicative of one whose emotional expression is somewhat controlled. They're not giving much away, so it may not be meaningful to interpret the results at all. Perhaps they need to be asked to re-examine the questions and be more expressive. A low range with high scores can indicate a well-balanced person whereas a low range with low scores perhaps also suggests that the person is well adjusted, yet finding life a little tedious or dull.

High Range of Scores

This may be indicative of 'something more underneath', that we need to penetrate further to discover something that needs explanation. Clearly the person wants to communicate their feelings and is engaging thoroughly with the questionnaire process.

Low Score for Particular Question

If an individual question draws a particularly low score, it can be seen as a cry for help and deserves a lot of attention. In this case there's no need to interpret the entire questionnaire — the person is clearly asking to focus upon this indicated issue above all else.

Consistently High Scores

Some people feel very good about who they are and how life is treating them — so they give high scores for everything. This suggests that no great imperative exists for them to open up about their problems — and yet why are they doing the questionnaire? Is there a clue that can be found? The only 7 scored in a line of 8s, 9s and 10s can speak volumes. And if 10 is scored then you could ask 'are you really sure you could in no way improve this area of life?'



No

NEVER OVERWHELMED

The No word is thought daunting. It's usually the wrong answer — not what we want to hear — the response that stops us in our tracks. Or equally, the word we would rather not have to say to someone else because it's not what we think they want either. It may mean bother. It indicates refusals, rejection, absence and denial, also resistance, disagreement and opposition — and a string of other things that are often directly contrary to our sense of what we want. And yet how could we learn without it? Without constraint, what is freedom? Without scarcity, what is abundance? Without selfhood, there would be no relationship. These aspects of human experience actually derive from the fact of limitation — as do compassion, patience, rationality and discipline — because they wouldn't be needed in a world without it.

There's something very compelling about the need we feel to separate ourselves out by having an outer rim or 'edge', which determines that we are 'not anything else'. If we are to express ourselves as unique individuals, then we do need to create and maintain boundaries.

Of course others — who feel the same way — may well disagree with us about where one outer rim begins and where another ends because in a world of scarce resources, we compete. Humanity is not exempt from the need to look to its survival instincts and these include challenge and competition. There are bullies and others who would take from us what is not offered, so we need to find ways to hold our space, to defend it when necessary and to develop strengths and strategies in order to do so. Otherwise we would become slaves to poverty or someone else's will. It is a primal reflex to protect ourselves and to guard our families and friends from potential harm, so that we are secure to continue the life of self and clan.

On a national level the force that guards our boundaries against intruders is the military. Their function is to march the frontier looking strong and resolute. For this reason, border guards and immigration officials can often look rather fearsome and intimidating. The tricks of their trade are uniforms, badges, military procedures and guns. Atomic bomb tests and other forms of sabre rattling are used to proclaim 'it would be folly to attack!' and intimidate; this strengthens boundaries and thus actually reduces the risk of war. On a domestic level, the home has a front door, often locked to guard against intrusion; we feel cautious in case a stranger decides to relocate our valuables and cash.

On a personal level, the No atmosphere is conveyed by physical bearing, type of eye-contact, choice of clothes, manner of speech, postures and facial signals — all designed to have an effect that requires others to approach with greater sensitivity and respect. When these ‘etheric’ boundaries are clear and strong, they reduce the need for more robust displays of force. We see that a strong No defends the peace by protecting us from the kind of intrusion that would necessitate a forceful response.

If we build our houses on shifting sands we won’t be respected. It’s the same if we build our personalities on wavering boundaries and insubstantial beliefs. ‘*Who am I?*’ is a series of creative choices and individual identity is a living statement of a package of values that have repeatedly asserted themselves, constantly evolving and refining over a lifetime in order to give substance to some inner sense of ‘am-ness’. ‘Am true, am useful, am kind, am honourable’ are expressions of the fundamental building blocks of humanity that are seeking to be owned by an ‘I’...we name am-ness ‘I’ — and allow it to become the centre of our world.

What follows is ‘Who am I?’ Isn’t that the big question we ask ourselves — perhaps even as we ask ‘what is life’s meaning?’ It may be that to answer these questions separately is not really feasible because they are so intimately connected — that we choose both. So the ‘I’ is identified by a series of choices, it is a self-determined concept not given but won, chosen, created, and is identified by the behaviours, thoughts, beliefs and feelings that distinguish me from another. These arise out of the unique conscious and unconscious strategies of the ‘self’ as it struggles to become more aware. Every day in every life, each of us is tested by circumstances requiring a response, and in this way life demands of us the statements by which we create the exact contours of our unique identity.

It is rather obvious that we are unable to accept all limitations and follow all opportunities – we can’t turn both right and left at the crossroads; we have to reject options all the time. When we choose, we say No to all other options — they no longer exist, consigned to history. Thus honed into single-minded focus, the mind concentrates upon satisfaction, undisturbed by doubts and ideas of tempting options. The power of concentration can then burst open closed doors — and a new sense is awakened through which we perceive deeper meaning.



This changing perception unlocks the mystery: *that it is meaning that gives freedom to involvement.* Without meaning, what is life? Without freedom, life is slavery. Without involvement, life is wasted. These three qualities are so interconnected that they can be seen as aspects of each other. Freedom is an aspect of meaning, an ingredient of involvement. Meaning is the purpose of involvement, the value of freedom. Involvement is the spending of freedom’s gift and the meaning of life. In this is found the mystery of No.

KEYWORDS

The 7 primary words may seem unambiguous, yet actually they mean different things to different people, according to how the words were first presented and experienced during childhood, very frequently with an emotional spin like the anger and fear with which No is delivered to the baby who breaks the rules or approaches danger. We need to define what we want them to mean, and there are keywords to do this – four for each of the 7 primary words.

BOUNDARIES

We mark boundaries to establish where we draw the line. If challenged, this is where we make our stand — to confront and engage. We cannot depend upon our society’s justice system to take care of our needs for the maintenance of good boundaries, we ourselves have that responsibility and it requires us to be honest and forthright about our personal power. We need to use whatever strengths we have to defend our position and we need to be both firm and clear in the application of them in support of our statement of negation.

One could, as a matter of elegance, be courteous and gentle, offering words of explanation with the words of refusal, yet these are not significant issues — what is significant is clarity and firmness: *‘I am saying No. I mean No. I will not discuss or negotiate and if necessary I am strong enough to enforce my decision. The answer is No. I hope this does not offend and yet even if I do offend, I still have no intention whatever of changing my decision. No. Am I making myself clear?’* From this it is understood that we are presenting a resolute statement of our position.

IDENTITY

By the contours of our boundaries, we give definition to who we are. ‘Who am I?’ is a series of creative decisions, rather than simply an uncovering of something hidden. Identity is a living statement of a package of values that have repeatedly asserted themselves, constantly evolving and refining over a lifetime in order to give substance to some inner sense of ‘am-ness’, first described by qualities rather than identity. ‘Am true, am useful, am kind, am honourable’ are expressions of the fundamental building blocks of humanity that are seeking to be owned in a unique package by an individual ‘I’.

CHOICE

It is meaning that gives freedom to involvement. Without meaning, what is life? Without freedom, life is slavery. Without involvement, life is wasted. These 3 qualities are so interconnected that they can be seen as aspects of each other. We tend to choose what is meaningful to us — so that having chosen, our involvements feel like the expression of freedom rather than the loss of it. By these choices we make known to others, and ourselves, the truth of who we are. In other words, our choices speak the truth of who and what we are, and we make them by saying No.

TRUTH

Moments of truth occasionally come upon us when we face a defining point in our evolutionary process. These watershed events in life are remembered more vividly than most experiences since they are sharply focused and mark some kind of turning point — often characterised by a test of authenticity, when we refuse to be false or bullied. To know the truth all we need to do is to surrender to it, because it is all around us in every moment in everything we perceive and experience. It is necessary to be highly attuned in order to be conscious of what is actually happening and to know that we are part of the greater whole. Such sensitivity is not easily accessible, and yet it is the unfolding towards such sensitivity that makes a spiritual path the most fascinating of all adventures.

Q21 COMMENTARY

We look at the whole operation of the Q21 questionnaire in depth as part of the Thank You exercises, including tips on interviews and interpretations. For now, we seek to penetrate deeper into the primary word by looking at its three associated questions. Each questionnaire item can uncover an important issue that you or your client may benefit from looking at. The following comments may help to focus on the deeper matter.

DO YOU PREVENT PEOPLE FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF YOU?

“That’s not fair!” we proclaim as a heartfelt complaint against injustice in the world. And we do it again and again as though we are surprised, unable to grasp a simple truth that actually life doesn’t dish up justice very often. People mostly take what they can and somehow find a way to justify that as OK... unless we stop them. It is for us to make our boundaries clear and enforceable so that others respect us and our choices. If we don’t do that, well then actually it’s our problem.

DO YOU STICK TO YOUR NO DECISIONS?

A true No is strong and consistent, not often changed by the persuasive voice of another. If it isn’t, then it’s just not real and will be frequently challenged or ignored. It doesn’t work to offer a wishy-washy hint at No. Let it be said clearly, firmly and once, then the tone of voice, the posture of body and expression of face will convey certainty and be respected.

DO YOU MOSTLY FEEL FREE FROM IMPOSITION?

Whatever we may think we’re doing to keep strong boundaries, it is important to notice how we feel. If unable to be true to the inner self then somewhere our personal boundaries are compromised. This could be because we are projecting a false image – one that pleases parents, bosses and peers – and pretending all is well instead of clearly refusing to play their silly game. The resultant discomfort and inconvenience of making a stand is temporary, and more than compensated by the sense of dignity that develops within us.

LIFE LESSONS

We recognise the absence of a quality in calling it weak, and in this section give a few clues to describe the types of problems or occurrences associated with a person who exhibits such weaknesses. The words can also show as strong but, with a distorted expression of the principle, weaknesses and distortions manifest personally and globally.

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Giving in too much to persuasion and pressure, not knowing what to stand for, unable to make choices, inability to distinguish truth from hoax.

If we are weak with any of these words, we tend to be weak in both ways – so we neither give nor receive respect if No is weak. Weak boundaries mean that we get invaded; we cannot protect ourselves or our situations, and feel less of a person because of it. We lose self-respect and self-confidence and cannot stand up for what we believe in. So we give up belief in anything and drift through life as a resource for others to exploit according to their desires not ours. The personality lacks backbone and cannot be considered strong or dependable. Anger is frequently felt, yet rarely expressed effectively; the person is not taken very seriously and lacks integrity and personal power.

DYSFUNCTIONS

This section of each chapter is about strong but distorted expressions of the words. For example, whereas a weak No has difficulty maintaining boundaries, uncertainty about identity and makes no clear choices, a strong, yet dysfunctional No may be seen as bullying authoritarianism and severity of discipline, generally having arisen through over-strict parenting. If a child is raised by parents whose general demeanour is of this type then to a degree, the child will necessarily take on those qualities, either in the active or passive sense. In the self-abusive case, the child will grow to become an adult who continues to be subjected to strict authority and bullying. In the abusive case, the child grows to become what they perceived either or both parents to have been: dominating and controlling people, denying independence of identity, intruding upon others without regard for their boundaries. In practice these two modes of behaviour alternate within one person, although one will be more frequently visible.

GLOBAL ISSUES

War, theft, rape, and bullying...these are examples of what can arise where boundaries are weak. There is no solution to be found in taking the moral high ground and saying that the aggressor is to blame. It doesn't work. Simply put, he must be stopped. There needs to be a very strong No, if we are to be safe from intrusion. Rather than deplore the aggression, we need to do whatever is needed to avoid being a victim, and to keep out the invader. Whatever is needed. If persuasive words and peaceful demonstrations are enough, that's good. If not then significant effective pressure must be applied to protect against the force of those who intend to invade.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF NO

SELF CONFIDENCE

Our natural condition is one of self-confidence, evidenced by babies and young children, who are often fearless to the point of recklessness. In order to reclaim and build upon it, we need to practise the four keywords of No, which will establish strong enforceable boundaries, and a clear awareness of who we uniquely are, and what we choose to feel and think about things, irrespective of pressure from peers, parents and politics. The final test, which can raise us up to become very commanding and impressive spiritual beings, is to speak only the truth in every situation. This is not only evidence of confidence, it also builds it. And make no mistake, confidence is power.

SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

INTRODUCTION

The 7 Words System is based on the traditional Sufi teaching that describes the nature of reality as having 7 clearly described aspects. These are called planes of consciousness, said to be different qualities of light that arise according to its vibrational rate. In Sufism, light is a term used as a metaphor; it equates exactly with what scientists measure as energy. Both scientists and mystics acknowledge that everything is energy, even physical matter, which is the expression of energy in its slowest form.

A study of the 7 Planes is typically carried out during silent retreats and can take years to complete – because, in order to fully grasp them, the ideas themselves need to be embodied as states. This makes the wisdom of this teaching rather inaccessible to most people. So there has been developed a more intuitively obvious approach that employs 7 of the simplest words we all know. This is pleasing to the part of us that wants our spiritual nature and our material nature to be clearly integrated. Often a seeker will find sacred text offers something of importance – a golden nugget that offers inspiration and comfort – yet the student will not make the connection that explains how that has anything to do with raising children or getting a good job: hence the 7 Words, which tries to bridge that divide.

Each of the planes will be described as a Sufi teaching. In summary – the Earth Plane is to do with physical existence and its challenges and lessons; its essential mystery is abundance. The Astral Plane relates to our ability to find solutions, to use intuition, to focus emotions and thought towards creative outcomes. Next, the Plane of Love, Harmony and Beauty is where we awaken our experience of the joy and the power of love through the expression of compassion. The 4th Plane is called the Heroic, its main theme is authenticity and it engages us fully with the shadow nature of our psychological imperfections, frequently

externalising inner conflicts. The higher planes are less self-centred. We learn all about sacredness on the 5th, the Plane of Splendour, and the purpose and qualities of sacredness. We become aware of those aspects of our being that can only be explained with the further study of what we call angels. The Immaculate State, 6th Plane, is close to purity itself; beyond that is Unity, which is all but unimaginable. These 7 planes form a cosmology, so that they can be used to form a complete perception of the nature of reality and therefore, of course, oneself.

EARTH PLANE

The Earth Plane is to do with physical existence, its challenges, lessons, unique experiences and joys. It expresses the slowest vibration of energy – called light by Sufis. As both scientists and mystics have perceived, what seems solid is in fact very spacious, matter is actually energy in form.

What distinguishes physicality is that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time. Boundaries are firm. This gives rise to the experience of limitation when we are stopped from getting what we go for. Lessons around this include patience, tolerance, acceptance, and perseverance. By experiencing the need for these qualities, we can then integrate them into our character and develop a more beautiful personality – considered of great worth by Sufis. Choice is another quality developed in response to limitation, so we are obliged to define and refine our identity, bringing clarity and precision to an otherwise indistinct ego.

The ego tends to be rather reactive because it feels a need to be resilient against the imposition of outer forces claiming space. It really is quite impossible to exist on the Earth plane without an ego, because one must have a physical body. That body requires nourishment, which must sustain my body not yours. Instinct is strong, and spiritual awareness is often not much in evidence. Suffering therefore occurs, and this may well assist in the remembrance of one's divine spiritual nature. Also our humanity awakens through our compassionate response in witness to the suffering of others.

Typical earth people are manual workers, whose pace is slow and steady. Farmers are the best example. These people plod unhurriedly through the long days, quietly attending to their duties and tasks, never getting very emotional, knowing how things work, how seasons rotate and that nothing much is worth getting excited for.

The message of the Earth Plane is the wisdom of how to accept what cannot be changed, how to struggle to overcome what can, and learning to tell the difference between the two. The reward for learning Earth Plane mysteries is abundance.

EXERCISES

These are examples of exercises used during training courses, and are typically employed in groups. The purpose generally is to bring greater awareness to the students of both the principles and embodied practices of each of the 7 primary words. It is not necessary always to keep the exercise for the associated word, many can be found useful for more than one by changing the emphasis. The Baroness could be Hello, Siberian Express as Thanks, Study of Text anywhere, and so on. Also let the form evolve as circumstances change, we can be creative, as we always are.

STUDY OF TEXT

How

Read aloud a paragraph from this book, perhaps twice, and discuss the contents with the students. Challenge assumptions and interpretations. The 7 Words System is young and ready to express itself differently in every situation. Another rich source of inspiration may be found in trying to affirm whether you agree that the keywords are well-chosen, especially if a translation is attempted into another language, or indeed community. The business world needs a different set, reluctant as it is to use words like remorse, and heart. The list of 42 types of people later in the book has a special concentration of ideas too.

Since the collection of commentary on the system is ever growing, our web sites are a useful source to find articles from various associates and submissions by students of the DLP. These can be studied too.

Why

Giving voice to ideas is significantly more substantial than reading alone and silently; the voice adds commitment and depth of knowledge. Anyone's opinion is a valid input that can broaden our general wisdom of the system as a cosmology. It has no dogma, save for the affirmation of 7-ness as a perceptual convenience.

BRING AN OBJECT

How

Students are invited to bring something from home, or found in nature, which feels important to them – a rugby ball, a picture, a certificate, a stone, an apple – something that is for them related to the primary word being studied – then discuss with a partner or the group why it has such special significance.

Why

This very simple exercise makes people choose one thing over another, and explain something of their life and values. It usually produces results of some significance in self-awareness.

MUHASABA

How

Record the actual circumstances of your life today. Where you live, how you make income, whether you are in relationship, the state of your health, whether you are happy, what interests you, what motivates you, etc.

No: Keeping the wolf from the door, financial security

Hello: Social life, hobbies and new interests

Thanks: Love, dear friends, home and family life

Goodbye: Career and path of personal development

Please: Dreams, visions, goals and ambitions

Sorry: Good conscience, responsibilities

Yes: Attitude to ageing, death and enforced changes

Why

People are often ungrounded and do not acknowledge the facts of the matter. Writing things down brings greater clarity; truth emerges. “*Are you in relationship or not?*” can be quite a profound question. Also this serves to record a time period so that later we can make reference to it and see how things have changed. It can be done monthly or every few months to real advantage.

ROLES & QUALITIES

How

Students choose 7 roles they have in life – son, mother, sibling, employee, dog-walker, writer, teacher, civilian, disciple or whatever is central – they also choose 7 qualities that they feel are strong or important in their lives. A table is then created to show how satisfied they are with each quality in each role:

A Satisfied; B OK; C Not so good; D Disappointed.

Why

Although generally compassionate, we may not be so with or as a father; although generally adventurous, we may not be so in relationship. Awareness is the beginning of improvement.

GLAMOURS

How

Discuss the idea of delusion and describe each of the following examples. The number of typical delusions is many, well beyond this list (Theosophist Alice Bailey describes more in her books). Get students to choose the three or four that they identify with most closely. Discuss with a partner.

Athlete	Physical strength
Renegade	Isolation, aloneness, aloofness
Narcissistic wound	Love of being loved
Martyr	Self-sacrifice
Trickster	Active scheming
Impoverished artist	Creative work
Holy warrior	Conflict: impossible righteousness and peace
Psychic	Psychic perception instead of intuition
Scientist	Materiality
Emotional performer	Sentimentality
Workshop leaders	World saviours and teachers

Why

We are all somewhat delusional, living in a fog of self-deception. Awareness and disclosure of self-delusion is the beginning of the end of this enslaving condition because freedom is aligned with truth.



DLP

The Distance learning programme is for two categories of potential students – those who cannot attend Certified Practitioner courses and those who have already completed one and want to go further in their knowledge of 7 Words, perhaps eventually becoming a Guide. DLP is carefully tutored so that the student receives individual attention at quite an intimate level, and is encouraged by the rather incisive honest feedback, to look deeply into the psychological issues that prevent their full enjoyment and success in life.

Each module is aligned with one of the primary words, so each of the 7 aspects of the student's life and personality profile is attended to. It is expected that the student will need to address long-standing core issues and reach a greater degree of authenticity and self-disclosure. Let us remember that the 7 Words System is more than a package of ideas; these wisdoms also need to be embodied as states if they are to be mastered, and this course pushes and draws the student further into the realisation of those states.

MODULE 1 (NO) – MATERIAL

a) Write a letter to your tutor about what you hope to gain by doing the course.

The first exercise is quite challenging because, as one student has put, *“my reluctance to define my expectations for the course is actually a reluctance to define myself”*. This indeed is the purpose of the letter and to address this DLP question nudges the reluctant student towards greater self-definition, and sharpens their attitude towards the whole course. By becoming specific about what this is and is not, a person sets the scope of the whole journey and puts it on the right track. Of course, this lesson has applications in other aspects of life – it's good to know clearly where you intend to go before you begin a journey.

b) Prepare a 600-1200 words summary of the book suitable for an article or press release for a chosen market, e.g. young girls' magazine, serious scientific journal, local newspaper. Indicate the market for which you have chosen to write.

From the letter and the article it becomes immediately obvious how well the student understands the system – and also how well they can switch position and adjust the presentation of their ideas to be received well by the reader.

An ideal submission as an article would have a distinct flavour that matches the preferences and expectations of the intended readership; it would make reference to the system's theories, and it would include a degree of personal interpretation from the writer. In this way the student learns to blend their understanding of the system as a unique living mixture of the perspectives of the originator, themselves as evolutionary representatives, and the final audience, or 'end user'.

WORDBENDING

Is it our purpose, when communicating, to deceive — or is it to develop a true and deeper understanding? Although it is thought and affirmed that it is normal social behaviour to convey good and useful information, that to lie is immoral and in certain circumstances criminal, nevertheless our use of language gives plenty of evidence of a stronger impulse — to cover the facts with words that do not tell it as it is. So what of this phenomenon — which we'll call 'wordbending'? In some cases there is artistic merit or symbolic significance in the employment of a word or phrase that does not literally point to its true meaning and this makes a valuable contribution to the beauty of a language. As an example: 'raining cats and dogs' has no intention to deceive; the metaphor is rather colourful and innocent. There is also the idea of 'variety use' that suggests it is entirely normal for people to employ words with 'artful ambiguity' in order to promote a softer exchange of information, where non-verbal communication is of greater consequence and both parties are aware of the subtle uncertainty they are leaving in the air. Courtship is full of this. (So is sabre rattling).

Yet there are other seemingly gentle discrepancies that bend the truth and cause some confusion because they lack clarity, accuracy or sensitivity to the listener. 'Back in 5 minutes' usually indicates a much longer period of time — and a person is actually quite unable to decipher the message reliably. The phrase 'ethnic cleansing' is repellent, partly because it refers to a shameful and terrible crime, and partly because it has been contrived to suggest to the unconscious mind a meaning entirely opposite to its true meaning; it is not cleansing at all, it is genocide and stains humanity profoundly. 'Spin doctoring' is another phrase that rankles. Doctors are good people who are under oath to serve their patients' needs, whilst 'spin doctors' are often today seen by the public, not entirely unfairly, as professional deceivers — whose primary purpose is to cover the facts, and dress them with a rosy tint.

It is assumed that the way we think and the language we use are interdependent, because the processes of mind require language in order to formulate ideas. So concepts unfold as a language unfolds. A feeling can be felt as a feeling and yet, to understand it, we need thought. A sensation can be perceived as a physical stimulus, yet to codify it, we need thought — and thoughts have to be formed around language. It's beyond the scope of this book to enter the debate about the way mind actually handles language.

Those interested will no doubt become familiar with the various works of linguistic giants like Ludwig Wittgenstein (who developed ideas about the relationship of thoughts expressed in language to the actual state of affairs in the world), Noam Chomsky (the 'Newton' of modern Linguistics), and their colleagues. For example, Piaget in his study of the stages of a



child's learning discovered that the earliest function of speech is more to do with symbolization — an inner experience — than with the outer expression of communication. Bertrand Russell is quoted as saying 'Language serves not only to express thought but to make possible thoughts that could not exist without it'. Sapir (echoing Wittgenstein's 'the limits of my language mean the limits of my world' claimed that the world is perhaps even created by language and stated: '...the real world is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. No two languages are sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same worlds with different labels attached.' With his most promising student he came up with the Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis of Linguistic Determinism: Language determines the way we think.

From this it can be reasonably suggested that if language is corrupted then thinking cannot be otherwise. If there is no clarity in our language then we can't speak clearly. We are thereby somewhat deprived of the main tool by which we develop ideas and formulate our thoughts — in the exchange of views and opinions during conversations. It's true that this lack of clarity can be overcome by vigorous disciplines of mind, such as is necessary in professional education for example, and yet for most people such corrective mental exercises are not undertaken. So how can any reality other than an uncertain one be built upon such uncertainty?

Most people would probably — for all practical purposes — have No to mean 'probably not', because that's what it meant in real terms when they learned it from Mum and Dad. If Mum said 'No', although from her tone and actions we can see that what she meant was 'perhaps I will if you continue to badger me', then for us that's what No means. If Dad said 'Sorry' with clear indications that gave out something more like: 'I suppose I have to apologize for the sake of form, but really I feel no remorse for what I did', then for us that's what Sorry means. Despite dictionary definitions, these corrupted meanings are the deepest impressions we have to build on, and they form the basis of what we think, say and do. More than this, we also came to learn that 'people don't say what they mean' and 'to be normal like Mum and Dad, I have to bend my words too'.

THOUGHT IS CREATIVE...

Words have real importance. Words matter. The mind and body respond to what they hear the voice saying, so we can talk ourselves into illness or good health, poverty or wealth, misery or happiness according to the specific words that we allow to grace our speech. It is tempting to complain to your husband '*You never take me out!*' or to your child '*You little nuisance!*' or to yourself '*I am stupid!*' and yet it would be wiser to refrain from negative messages of this type. Such curses as these can and do actually, though very subtly, influence life circumstances to lead to the fulfilment of the complaint. We shall all eventually reap what we have sown.

The words we speak change the atmosphere around us. Even our thoughts do that. People respond to that atmosphere even more than they respond to the actual words — so the life that we experience has a lot to do with what we think and what we say. If, even in jest or good humour, we say what we do not truly think, then we give off a confused and confusing

atmosphere, which if continued generally, creates a life of confusion. We don't want it. We need to care more about the importance of the words we use, and train ourselves to speak true and clear. This is what makes for a true and clear life. This is what we do want. False speech leads to confusion in one's thoughts, to self-deception and to ambiguous life circumstances that are stressful.

It is both physically and psychologically healthy for us to speak clearly and truly. The misuse of words can easily cause misunderstandings between people, which very often lead to tension and perhaps eventually conflict. It is the normal thing to feel insecure when confused or deceived and left in ignorance; this insecurity is a danger that threatens peace. It is often profoundly dangerous. To move towards a more peaceful society, we need to become clearer and more straightforward in our speech and thoughts.

MAVIS THE WORDBENDER

Mavis the Wordbender goes into her butcher with a piece of meat she bought yesterday, slaps it on the counter with a huff and a puff says 'I wouldn't feed that to my dog!' What does she mean? We can find 7 different interpretations...which one do you think is really what she meant?

No. "This dog meat isn't suitable"

Hello. "I am offering information about my dog's culinary preferences"

Thanks. "You're the kind of friendly fellow that can take a joke"

Goodbye. "... and you can forget my future custom!"

Please. "I want this exchanged for a piece of better quality suitable for my husband and me"

Sorry. "You are a scoundrel! I blame you"

Yes. "It's too good for my dog, I'll eat it myself"

If you chose Please then probably you are right, and you get special bonus points for mind reading; if Sorry — it seems that you already understand the dysfunctional expressions of the 7 Words.

HELLO

HAPPILY EXPLORING LIFE'S LIMITLESS OPTIONS

Whereas No is necessary to establish selfhood, it can have the effect of isolating us; the purpose of Hello is to end this isolation. It is a reaching-out, a move towards connectedness and relationship so that the sterility of one can become the potency of one and another. Without connection, we simply have chaos — a formless mash where nothing touches harmoniously upon anything else and no two beings are linked by mutual attention. It's by the exchange of attention that entities form a bond that ends chaos and creates something, and this communication is the Hello state: a willingness to give and receive attention. If No is more 'closed against' then Hello is more 'open towards'.

This can be observed in how we are with people and also with ideas. It's probably more childlike to have an appetite for new ideas because the young have great capacity to assimilate new things, and naturally enjoy learning (although they may not be quite so open to new people as that openness can so easily threaten their precarious sense of security). Ageing tends to fix people into habits and it is a rare example to find an old person who loves parties as much as they used to.

Hello is an enquiry to check out whether No (rejecting) can be released and a journey taken through Thank You towards Yes (merging). Typically its body language includes smiles, eye contact, reaching out of hands and a tone of attitude to show interest, with good listening, gestures of rapport and an awareness of the other's point of view. Conversation is the normal expression, through which there arises an exchange of ideas that lead to mutuality, points of agreement, and often a suggestion of further contact in future. Other social skills enhance the power of our Hello — courtesy of manner, openness, good humour and optimism, fashionable dress, knowledge of current topics and perhaps a more particular expertise in skills that have relevance to those we want to attract into our lives. Such skills will be typically entertaining or useful as an exchange, for example our occupational talents. Exchange arises normally in human interaction — whether an exchange of goods or attention — because people tend to expect to receive in equal measure to what they've given, or they feel cheated. Communion is also a natural condition and this arises where an exchange of attention is exemplary.

HELLO

Professionals who want to win our attention have learned how — the movie producers, media moguls, and marketing executives who know how to use trance techniques, sensationalism, mystery, suspense and so on — and they know its value. Attention is the real juice, rich indeed when it flows in expressing fascination. We are especially enthusiastic about welcoming into our lives anything or anyone that fascinates us because we receive a delicious boost that seems like good attention-food. Even if a person is disreputable, dangerous or offensive, we still want to say Hello if they fascinate. Yet if someone were good, even saintly, they'd be short on company if they were boring.

There is a lot to gain from becoming more deeply connected with another; the richness of life flows more powerfully as the mutuality of involvement sparks into an awakening of that which was dormant. However, our attention capacity is limited and also its focus can only be allocated to one thing at a time, so we have to give something up in order to take something up. It may be worthwhile to consider this before stepping into another involvement. These are the very choices we have to make in order to fashion life how we want it to be. What shall we release of the old in order to become open to the new? Mostly it is necessary to move away from our safe routines and to trust in the future if we want to have something new enter our lives — there needs to be space because we can't add to a cup that's already full.

Curiosity, a truly Hello-like word, is a desire to learn; it is through curiosity that the human race has expanded its awareness to all aspects of life in the material universe and all aspects of life in the subtle realms. It is the mother of invention easily as much as necessity and is one of the major factors that led to humanity becoming the most influential species on this planet.

Ancient wisdom teaches that every aspect of our external reality is simply a reflection of the inner world: what we get in life can never be other than what we have become inwardly. Our emotional issues, our confusions, misunderstandings and imperfections in wisdom are all 'painstakingly' reproduced in the world. An angry person will find there to be anger in the world, a cheat will be cheated, violence will be done to a violent person and a

muddled person will be surrounded by mess and confusion. This is wonderful! Instead of being uncertain about what's wrong with ourselves inwardly, we can simply look at the external evidence in hard truth: there it is! That's what's wrong.

Instead of needing to go through inner processes of change, we have the more accessible tool of the outer world to help us — in other words by changing our circumstances then we will begin to change ourselves. Whatever comes into our lives can be seen as a healing opportunity so, by dealing as fully as we can with everything as it comes up, we can externalise our process of psychological healing.



KEYWORDS

ATTENTION

As the body requires food, so the psyche seeks the nourishment that is provided by attention — and the results of under-nourishment are profound. Attention is the real juice. There is a lot to gain from becoming deeply connected with another. The richness of life flows more powerfully as the mutuality of involvement sparks into an awakening of that which was dormant. We take on some of the qualities of the people that we give our attention to and with whom we mix, and unconsciously we become like them in certain ways. Even when our attention is concentrated on a subject rather than a person, well-being is enhanced.

OPENNESS

The Hello archetype applies to anything new: new concepts, new experiences and new attitudes — so this suggests a general openness to life, a welcoming of the unknown with lively interest and willingness to make contact and absorb new ideas. Curiosity is a desire to learn, and it is through curiosity that the human race has expanded its awareness to all aspects of life in the material universe and all aspects of life in the subtle realms. It is the mother of invention easily as much as necessity.

As we expand the horizons of our social life, we receive gifts, learn to express talents and realise aptitudes. Each newly discovered aspect of the external world has equivalence inwardly so we sense an inner development of our potential, an arising of possibility, the stimulation of imagination — and we feel the urge to expand further as our hopes and dreams take on a more substantial dimension: they acquire more substance.

EXCHANGE

What do we get when we say Hello? We get pulled and pushed, required to, obliged by, bullied, interrupted, seduced, dominated, bothered, insulted and generally disrespected by insensitive, uncaring, selfish people. So what is so valuable that we pay such a price? Is it the fun, the wit, the playfulness, the ever-flowing river of sparkling, ephemeral pleasure-joy-sensation-aliveness? Can it really be only these distractions for the mind? No. There is another compelling reason: the answers we seek to major life questions are found only by engaging with others; solutions to all questions are found only when we expand our readiness to embrace a new person or a new idea. This will always entail exchange.

COMMUNION

When the Hello archetype is expressed at the most subtle of levels, we are in essence saying Hello to God: communion. It's a mutual process, God/Goddess is saying Hello to us too, and when this happens, the contours of our more habitual world shift so that we find ourselves subject to different laws.

Communing with nature allows us direct access to the self-evident reality of material existence: we see metaphors in the lives and cycles in nature that give us an intuitive grasp of the underlying patterns by which we are governed. There's no compromise, no negotiation, no respite from the hard truth of corporeal life and yet, despite the violence and harshness, its beauty awes us.

Q21 COMMENTARY

ARE YOU TRULY INTERESTED IN THE VIEWS AND ATTITUDES OF OTHERS?

People can feel whether our interest in them is genuine, and if it is then they respond positively and open up. Such an exchange can lead to a mutual expansion of opportunity and understanding, and of course allows us to express more of our own ideas and experiences. Without such opportunities then there is a tendency to let life go by without keeping abreast of the changing nature of reality. And be aware...it's not enough to respond to our feelings of interest – we may need to do work to cultivate those feelings.

DO YOU MAKE OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET NEW PEOPLE?

Travel broadens the mind. It expands our awareness of everything in life by showing us new ways to do things, new things to do and different perceptions. Spiritual and personal growth is measured by whether our perceptions are constantly shifting: it's good to change our minds. Meeting new people makes us engage with the part of us that yearns to travel because we need a similar attitude of attention – one that acknowledges unknowingness and responds with healthy curiosity.

DO YOU MAKE FRIENDS AND CONTACTS IF YOU GO TO NEW PLACE?

A casual encounter may change our point of view for a while, yet the integration of a permanent change of awareness requires something of more substance. To absorb into our life new people and the new ideas they bring is to make solid a shift of perception which then forms an aspect of our new mind-set. From this is born new plans and new circumstances, a breath of fresh air that invigorates and sustains openness. It supports a healthy mental attitude and all that goes with it.

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Unable to give sincere profound attention, antisocial, small-minded, bigoted, poor sense of how to interact unselfishly, lack of depth in comprehension.

This is someone whose circle of life is small and repetitive like a hamster on its wheel, a dull, undistinguished personality that lacks real intelligence or wit. The mind is lacklustre, opinions are those shared by millions, inherited unconsciously from TV soap operas and potted, one-sided news summaries. They may not so much be lonely as caught up in one or two fixed relationships usually within the family setting where conversations are simply repetitions of previous ones with little or no variations from the approved script and largely indistinguishable from those of yesterday or even the next door neighbour's.

DYSFUNCTIONS

In some cases many ideas and a lot of social contact are often forced upon a child too early and there arises a neurotic condition as a result. It's probably so commonplace that it is not always perceived as neurotic, yet we have to consider whether certain aspects of a strong Hello nature are really indicative of a healthy personality.

The child, forced by circumstances to relate to strong-minded, insensitive adults will have to develop a strategy in order to hold on to an inner sense of identity. That strategy could mean shying away from involvement or relating on a surface level, intuitively saying and doing whatever brings smiles and cooing noises from these strangers. Later in life the child outgrows the protective inclination to be gauche, reclusive and timid in company, and becomes the reverse: a butterfly with little depth of conversation, shallow, fickle and insincere, possibly nosey or a gossip and even given to promiscuity, wanderlust and rampant curiosity in social relationships — an orientation obsessively mental rather than feeling.

GLOBAL ISSUES

The Press and communication media exist in order to offer information, and yet this primary purpose — to inform — has been overtaken by other agendas. These include secrecy and deception and the use of images of violence and sex to entertain. It also includes use for propaganda purposes, to promote a given attitude deceitfully. Much of what is shameful that is carried out in public service would not be done if it were public knowledge.

Hello suggests openness, an exchange of views, education and giving attention to current affairs. Even the majority of newspaper readers — those, whose minds are set upon given attitudes, who are fixed of belief and prejudiced against new ideas — are part of the problem. They can become part of the solution by challenging the purveyors of false information.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF HELLO

INFLUENCE

The skills of Hello develop influence. Often called social skills, they help us to find our place easily within our normal milieu, make friends and contacts, and initiate exchanges by which we enable ourselves to function effectively. Our primary concern is with attention. This is an energy that flows between people, and can touch each person at a very deep level. It has not only strength but qualities too; it can be positive or negative according to the intention of the giver and the perception of the receiver.

Without understanding the currents of attention flowing within an exchange, then you do not understand the exchange. When you do, then you can set the course of unfolding towards a required outcome. Qualities of attention can be cautious awareness, sexual attraction, deference, curiosity, and so on, including the very high form of it – as admiration.

Admiration is a special kind of attention – an energetic flow from one to another – and a person who is admired and receives a lot of attention can learn how to harvest this special form of life force so that it can be stored for later use. It is stored in the form of prestige, which basically is crystallized attention. Thus do famous people become prestigious and wield extraordinary influence. Their influence is expressed in their ability to command others' attention at will, and this leads to various advantages and favours.

SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

ASTRAL PLANE

Whereas it is physicality that expresses Earth Plane reality, here we move into the realms of mentality. The Mind. In this world, we include all thought, beliefs, ideas, imagination and the emotions too shallow to touch the deeper feelings of the heart. Thoughts live here; they have a life that has power, duration and longevity. The power and influence of a particular thought-form depends upon the passion behind its inception and the specific clarity of focus. So it is wise to exercise caution with what we allow to dominate the mind's attention. If we dwell on painful feelings, morbid ideas and pessimistic expectation, then we are creating powerful negative spells that have a life of their own.

This is most clearly seen in the wider sphere of public behaviour, where beliefs and fashions of morality come and go in waves and cycles. These cycles have tended to be rather slow, measured in centuries rather than decades. Yet with the birth of the Internet – an extraordinarily meaningful representation in physical terms of the Astral Plane – humanity's mind is racing quickly through unprecedented shifts of attitude, which are influencing political realities in a way never occurring before in history. We can see clear evidence of where the

world's attention is being placed: sensational news, sex, travel, music, social networking and, rather surprisingly, astrology. These are the leading themes of Google's keyword searches today.

In this lifetime, the Astral Plane is what goes on inside our head. There is the grosser, more demanding world to cope with – the physical reality of the Earth Plane – which keeps us grounded by having to cope with putting food on the table and a roof overhead. Were it not for this, some people would find their mind's lack of focus rather troubling, to the point of madness or serious constant confusion...and of course some do already. Leaving the Earth Plane after death, the situation reverses – instead of the mind being inside us, we are inside it. Sufis teach that we return to Source stage by stage, with the Astral Plane next. In simple terms we live in the world that we have created during this life by the choice of what we mostly thought about. This deserves serious consideration.

The darker, heavier emotions of negativity give rise to the Lower Astral – a world of violence, hatred and fear. Whereas the lighter side of this plane, the Upper Astral, is all fun and joy; it is the place of creative genius, where answers are found to puzzles and we express art for art's sake. We can see the importance of living now to develop a mental and emotional approach to life that is calm, easy and pleasant – assuming we want a calm, easy and pleasant after-life to inhabit.

Let us not speak as though this reality is elsewhere and later; it is not – it is here and now. When we indulge our fears, anxieties, addiction and depressions and general negativity, then we slip into the Lower Astral. When we are curious, playful, creative and even a little bit naughty, then we enter the upper reaches of this 'plane of the djinn spirits'.

Djinn are mischievous, free and powerful inhabitants of this realm; their name has given rise to the word genius and genie in the bottle! Freeing the mind from external blinkers, and yet mastering it yourself – this gives awesome power. This is the mystery of this reality and is accessed by learning how to say Hello. When we are masters of Hello, we gain considerable influence in all the worlds.



EXERCISES

SPEAK A WORD

How

Get people to say one of the primary words. There are several variations on this exercise. A circle goes around where everyone says No, next round they say Hello, and so on. Or a person responds with No to various questions the others might ask: *“Will you pass me the pen please?”* No! Or a particular person has a problem with a particular issue *“Do you want some more cake?”* No!

Why

Often just a little bit of practice in a safe environment is enough to empower someone who has had difficulties. Also we get to hear how other people say the words. Instead of “No!”, we can say no quietly and with a smile.

SIBERIAN EXPRESS

How

Each member of the group tries to persuade the others why they should be included in a party of four travellers who embark together on a long train journey. Their skills and interests, and of course their personality, are very important factors. Then everyone chooses three companions with whom they wish to travel.

Why

The results are shown to everybody, so people get honest feedback about how accepted they are socially. Often shy people are much more popular than they knew – and confident types are suddenly made aware that they are less welcome than they thought! Also, it becomes clearer which of ones skills and qualities are socially influential.

KEYWORDS

How

Read out and discuss the four keywords: why these relate to the primary word, how they sponsor the associated quality. What are strong boundaries for? Why does Choice relate to No? If you are strong in No’s keywords does this really lead to greater self-confidence?

Why

The keywords really do unlock mysteries, and solve problems. We try to bring greater familiarity and understanding to this extremely important aspect of the 7 Words teaching by getting students to discover, and own keywords for themselves. Reading in a circle significantly changes the attitude of attention of the listeners, and builds confidence in those who do the reading.

COMMUNION

How

A table of objects is placed at the centre of the group. Each person selects one thing – a candle, a flower, a Buddha, an incense stick – and enters a deep concentration, possibly after meditation, into the nature of the object, penetrating its hidden depths, discovering its connectedness to all things, feeling its special qualities, understanding life through its unique perspective. Then the person speaks as if they were that thing: *“I am incense, I come from the distant land of Nepal, and my smoke brings an atmosphere of peace and prayerfulness...”* perhaps for a few minutes or so.

Why

Training attention to see things not only more deeply, but also from another viewpoint, is the beginning of reflexive self-consciousness, which is a sublime mystery.

7 ASPECTS OF...

How

Choose a typical life experience – a love affair, the learning process, a general election, a river – and find an elegant way to discover and present the 7 stages or aspects of the subject.

Why

It is affirmed that there are 7 aspects to each and every life process, that all life is dynamic and that each situation is better understood when we see it in the context of the 7 interactive archetypes. As soon as we train ourselves to look for them, we begin to see them in anything that we choose to take a careful look at. This deepens wisdom and develops consciousness.

DLP

MODULE 2 (HELLO) – ATTENTION

a) Look at newspapers, TV programmes, adverts, etc., to find out where the world is placing its attention at this time and comment on this in 7 Words terms.

Society's attention is directed by the media, and this direction changes according to the vagaries of the Zeitgeist. It is meaningful for us to notice these shifts because they lead history. Whatever is coming next is heralded by the media, and we need to be keenly aware of these shifts in awareness if we are to claim any influence. To analyse the various aspects of the media – newspapers, TV, internet, films etc. – in 7 Words widens our ability to perceive the universal nature of these dynamic foundation principles of life.

b) Repeat this exercise describing where you personally are placing your attention, especially considering the people you connect with and other inputs such as books, films, courses, hobbies and activities.

Energy follows attention. If your attention is directed, consciously or unconsciously, towards a particular type of story, then that story becomes likelier to become your story. So are you looking for peace or war, love or fear, comfort or adventure? Perhaps the primary words and related keywords can help you gain a better sense of what you are allowing yourself to open up towards?

c) Create an informal document for yourself, a bit like a CV, to advertise your skills and preferences in 7 Words terms. Include what you really want to receive in return for what you offer.

Exchange is a two-way thing. Very often a person has an unconscious bias to give more or to take more. This needs to be balanced so that our expectations are to give and receive in equal measure. In this exercise, we can learn to notice something of how our strengths and weaknesses have formed the extent and limitations in our skills and experience.

d) Sit quietly with something from nature like a leaf or flower, a tree or an animal, for 15 minutes or so. Meditate upon it. Describe in 7 Words terms what you learn from this practice.

The right brain contributes hugely to our overall intelligent comprehension of what is occurring in a situation and what to do as an appropriate optimal response. Entering the state of communion can exercise these more subtle dimensions of our understanding, and profoundly deepen our skills in reflexive self-consciousness.

ZEITGEIST

‘Wasn’t it only a moment ago that I kissed my first love? Those days of sunshine and laughter, picnics and parties, romance and music — where did they go? When did I change? When did it all change?’ Of course, it never did anything else but change and those treasured moments that register most poignantly in the psyche as memories of a golden age, are like the sparkles that grace a rippling stream in the morning sunlight — the icing on the cake. Life is ephemeral in all its glamour. We are entranced by it and even live as though the glamour was in fact reality. For the most part we all flutter and dance in the winds of these changes and know little actual stability. Yet somehow, intuitively, we do know of another, deeper reality. We are born, we celebrate and enjoy, we cry and suffer, and we die — across all cultures, religions and ages — despite wave upon wave of changes. These waves of change are evidence of what is referred to as the zeitgeist — literally the ‘time ghost’ — the spirit of the age, which is a veil that disguises and hides the deeper eternal truths in life.

What a crazy spirit it is! One minute it wants us to behave like this — the next like that. In the 60’s miniskirts for women, long hair for men — and by the 80’s the hippies are replaced by yuppies. In the 80’s Europe was still divided by the apparently permanent Iron Curtain and less than 20 years later was forming an expanded economic union with countries only recently controlled by Moscow. This Time Spirit is fickle and insubstantial, yet what a power it wields! We are entranced by it — and it is perfectly able to change every one of us. This it does by moulding our tastes in dress, our fantasies recorded in cinemas, our heroes and heroines, our sense of what is erotic, what is taboo, what is right and wrong, our ethics, manners, aspirations and aversions. This is even to the point of reinterpreting the myths and history that underpins our beliefs about what is fundamental and real.

Despite all evidence that passing things have no true value, we still affirm what appeals to us from within the zeitgeist’s contemporary package of attitudes that we call the current trend or fashion. This is how the contemporary thinking of humanity is made known. This force of zeitgeist is the power behind marketing moguls and propaganda ministers. History records the peaks and troughs of these trends in terms of the major characters and characteristics that punctuate the era. The people who are recorded are those who have been able to perceive the next rising wave and surf it, eventually becoming spokespersons for the wave, giving voice to its meaning. The words used are very often catch phrases that can be political or economic such as ‘Sieg Heil’ or ‘Guinness is good for you’. They can also be cultural, for example ‘Property is theft’, which supported communism’s growth from an idea of Marx into a power that rivalled capitalism for a half century.



We can look at how we create the conditions of our age. Groups form themselves around a currently popular idea or set of ideas and attract members who align with the shared ideal and can, to an acceptable degree, reconcile the group's ethos with their individual opinions, beliefs and values. This is true for Quakers and Hells Angels alike. Groups that grow tend to gain influence and promote a particular world-view and show a measure of capacity in shaping the future of communities. Communities can become nations, and within any era there are nations, empires and multi-national corporations that push and pull to express the tidal waves of change that are recorded in history. Like-minded individuals form their collective identity and promote the truth of their collective perspectives above the perspectives of others, reaching out to define as 'real' anything held as important to that group. This is because the ephemeral — that which is ever-changing — often appears to be meaningful and lasting, not only to each of us individually but also collectively, to the point that the particular cultural group will develop its laws and moral codes to validate its own world-view as the 'Truth'.

But it's not Truth. It passes. What is basic, stable and true does not pass — it is everlasting. We are collectively taken in by the illusion of zeitgeist into believing in a fad, the 'flavour of the month'. And the politicians and marketers want us to fuel their wave with our belief and support — indeed they are almost certainly caught up in it themselves and can honestly think they've discovered the secret that we all want and need. That makes it dangerous — the spokespersons come to believe in their own glamour as though it were real. Yet their illusions are neither valid nor innocent of purpose.

THE EVERLASTING PATTERN

So what is the universal pattern that is stable, basic and true? Can we look beneath the illusion; can we pause for a moment's contemplation? Life is so fast and complicated, it's so easy to be emotionally overwhelmed — yet if we reflect carefully and clearly we may find simplicity within the complex. We may find that which is not swayed by fashion and can be held as stable throughout the whole of recorded time. It's true that it may be more convenient to look for the universal pattern in a place that is more convenient for us, yet surely it's obvious that for thousands of years we haven't found the answers where we have been looking. It's time to look elsewhere. Instead of looking toward greater achievements in technology, we might benefit by remembering what is simple and everlasting.

Can we see that seven simple words are enough to codify all of life? They are among the first words we learn in childhood and yet they are not understood or used particularly well, despite their simplicity. By renewing our focus upon these primary words we can simplify and deepen our attitudes to how we choose to live.

No Hello Thanks Goodbye Please Sorry Yes

WHY 7?

Khalil Gibran has written

“We shall never understand each other until language is reduced to seven words”.

Is this allegory or profound literal wisdom? If we’re looking for a set of words that represent the everlasting pattern, then we need their number to be enough — and yet none to be redundant. It seems that 7 are required as necessary and sufficient to explain life’s various aspects. The number 7 has become associated with mystery and good luck in many cultures, and is celebrated more widely than any other number in so many ways, even seeing it where it is not scientifically distinct — in the rainbow. Other examples are found in literature and culture and in knowledge systems that defy the materialist’s longing for proof (e.g. chakras).

Can we get any sense of why 7? If we can imagine how the early examples of humanity developed in their awareness, we would perhaps be drawn to speculate on their understanding of the sky. They would routinely observe very few moving bodies in the heavens — Sun, Moon, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn and, for the really observant, Mercury. It’s quite normal to try to infer meaning in phenomena, all the more so for an untutored, superstitious person who is always in danger. So the sky surely represented mystery — the unknown and unknowable. In particular, it could well be that the night sky most promoted wonder and expanded consciousness. Perhaps in this way, because of the planets, 7 became symbolic of mystery and imagination — indicating a pattern that lies out of the reach of everyday understanding.

LEVELS

Since the system is universally applicable, it must apply to itself and so, in some situations, it is helpful to break down one of the primary words into a further analysis of 7. This idea is rather subtle and complex, yet it can explain why there may be confusion when identifying which primary word best describes a scenario. Look at this example:

It’s 1960 and the people in Plymouth want to continue to cross the River Tamar when their decrepit ferry finally expires. Addressing this question with 7 Words – No is the refusal to swim, Hello an exploration of possible alternatives, Thanks is the preference for modern comforts, and Goodbye is the decision to build a bridge, rather than replacing the ferry. Please is project management – with its own 7 Words. These could be: No, scope; Hello, optioneering; Thanks, human resources; Goodbye, risk and value analysis; Please, enabling; Sorry, feedback systems; Yes, delivery.

Scenario: A scruffy youth chewing gum applies for the position as Project Manager, and is rejected. Which primary word describes this?

Answer: It is the No of the Thanks of the Please! No is the rejection of the unsuccessful applicant; Thanks is the recruitment team building process; Please is the intention to build the bridge. From this we can see how we need properly to identify the level at which we are analysing a scenario if we want to pinpoint the appropriate primary word.

THANKS

THE HEART AFFIRMS NAIVELY KIND SCENARIOS

Thank You is innocent and warm-hearted; it can demonstrate vulnerability and, because of that, bring joyful tears. It is in the atmosphere conveyed by a sincere act of giving and showing appreciation for the qualities we value in our loved ones. Somewhere in our secret recesses we have kept alive this innocence that was most becoming when we were children. It is joyous and kind, it knows only of sharing, it accepts what is — for what it is, and is excited by each new day's dawning in expectant anticipation for the pleasure of responding to the unknown.

As adults we may look back upon certain days with profound nostalgia. Perhaps a simple memory of a quiet family day out when a child made a daisy-chain, the rain that fell so suddenly upon the picnic that we needed to dash for cover to avoid a drenching. The simple things are often remembered because they can touch the heart.

In any situation, there can be found an aspect that is worthy of appreciation. If the positive qualities are not apparent then we can redefine seemingly negative things and learn to turn them around so they work for us — or better — for the greater good. Perhaps then we will come to appreciate all life for its own sake, including the challenges, because they make us stronger, including the suffering, because it promotes compassion and including the disappointments, because we trust they will always be eventually overtaken by a better opportunity.

The meaning within gestures of appreciation lies in the feeling, and unless actually felt and sincerely expressed, then there will be a hollowness.

As we get to know someone better during the Hello stages of development, we settle into a level of acceptance of the person, their ideas and behaviours and so on. The protective shields around the heart relax, allowing the feeling centre to operate. Usually this experience is enjoyable. What began with social courtesy and grew into genuine interest has flowered into enjoyment and we feel warmth and appreciation so we express (push out) these feelings towards the other as a natural spontaneous response. This appreciation has the effect of raising the value of the other; they become more valued, more valuable — not only to you but also within themselves.

THANKS

In the 7 Words context whereas Appreciation is generally acknowledging worth, Valuing implies specific measurement of worth in relation to something else. Idealistically, this is shown within the spirit of art. Certain artists invest their lives in the pursuit of bringing awareness to the importance of detail upon the sense we have of beauty, as though they have access to another dimension of life simply by their enhanced perception of detail. It's not what we see but how we see that makes such a difference. As with artists, so with playful children there is still present the natural ability and inclination to find whatever there is to find in any situation. This demonstrates that perception creates the value of the object. Simply put this equates to *'beauty is in the eye of the beholder'*. Yet how do we address the real challenge: how can I train my eyes to choose to behold only beauty?

The sympathy of love is a resonance that unites one with another in such a profound bonding, a connection that no material lordship will diminish. To heal the neediness arising from childhood problems, an individual will go through a process of self-awakening that has particular stages and aspects. Certainly this process will be unique for each of us and yet not without a common pattern that can be understood. This includes having to reorient our motivations towards the directions of Love and Truth. We each have to face the truth of who we are and learn to love ourselves completely, even the grubby bits. Were we to be self-judgmental we could not be free from judging against others and therefore imperfect in our love — because conditional love is not Love. Love cannot be love if it is measured, since measurement is not a facility of Heart.



KEYWORDS

APPRECIATION

In showing appreciation we are demonstrating first and foremost that we do not take for granted, that we are aware of what we ourselves gain and enjoy from a particular involvement. By its very nature, appreciation must make a distinction between this and that — the whole point being that the one appreciates the other specifically — and so it requires clear identification of the person being appreciated, and why. It is not only involvement itself that we are appreciating; it is the particularities of the involvement, and the qualities that we experience through it, which makes us feel good and true to ourselves.

VALUING

We can see that we offer our thanks differently according to the value we feel to express. Appreciation is generally acknowledging worth, whereas Valuing implies specific measurement of worth in relation to something else. It's rather wonderful to notice that in the act of saying Thank You, both giver and receiver are raised in value. Each feels that something of importance has occurred in the connection made by the gesture.

What we choose to develop is a direct statement of what we value — in life and in ourselves, so we can choose to train ourselves to serve those ideals and goals that we find worthwhile. The cost for this course of training could not be higher — it is one's life, whose purpose has much to do with the determination and expression of our value system.

GIVING

Giving is entirely a natural, healthy response to receiving — much more an expression of health than holding. A person who holds is said to be 'tight', so it is seen that there may be a link between tightness or rigidity of the body and a reluctance to give: a pliant material is said to 'give', that is to give way or bend rather than resist and compete. A person who does not give is called a miser and is expected to suffer misery and be miserable.

There can be so much said in silence by the exact appropriateness of the gift, and the giver demonstrates an intimate knowledge by choosing exactly the right thing to give form to the gesture being made. The gift itself has magic because it can focus feelings to a point of a breakthrough to a new realisation, an admission of mutuality, sharing, specialness, importance...love. We can reach a state where no cost is too high as long as the expression of the love felt has been truly communicated.

HEART ESSENCE

No amount of persuasive rhetoric, materiality or coercion can achieve as much influence as the power of heart. Love is not any the less strong because it is soft, nor is it impotent against gross forces; it has its own way and its own time, working on subtle planes unconsciously and gently. Open-hearted people are quite innocent and even childlike, often with a spontaneous readiness to play. In essence, both love and truth have qualities dependent for their exaltation upon the other; love is incomplete unless married to truth. When strong in our truth — in other words not fanciful about who we really are and what love really is — we are tolerant, kind and caring, accepting what comes with an open heart. Otherwise we can be lost in a false world, deluded about life's realities and somewhat insecure as a result, unable to reach the depth of heart or indeed real love.

Q21 COMMENTARY

DO FRIENDS & ASSOCIATES OFTEN THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS?

We get out of life what we put into it, so a good way to find out how well we express appreciation is to notice how much we receive. It costs so little to show others how much they mean to us yet so often we forget to make those small gestures that let them know. Kindness is a powerful agency of the heart that can resolve problems, avoid obstructions, soften emotional pain and promote harmony and happiness. Ingratitude can leave a stain on the heart that poisons the mind and robs us of joy.

DO YOU OFTEN GIVE GESTURES OF APPRECIATION?

How frequently should we be kind? Is twice a year appropriate at Christmas and on birthdays? Perhaps such institutionalized rituals of giving are important as a base line below which we do not fall – yet surely a smile, a word of thanks, a gentle touch or a grateful glance can be offered more often. It's the thought that counts, not the monetary cost. A spontaneous bunch of flowers can mean more than an expensive ritual gift.

DO YOU EASILY WIN CHILDREN'S CONFIDENCE?

Kids usually know whether an adult has a warm heart. It takes gentleness, sincerity and a soft tone to win the trust of a child, so if we can learn to feel in tune with children then probably we have learned the secret of heart-centredness. Simply focusing attention on our heart feelings is enough to develop a greater depth of rapport – which actually is appreciated by adults too. Healthy, mature adults are not afraid to play children's games; from time to time it's good to be vulnerable and let go of the serious grown-up image.

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Taking people and life for granted, having no system of values, poverty consciousness and meanness, churlishness, serious cold-heartedness, heartless lack of grace.

This person has nothing much to offer a child because they lack a sense of wonder. For them, rain is inconvenient, the sun is troublesome, unexpected visitors are seen as impolite to turn up unannounced, spontaneity is very suspect. They can dampen any day with their grumpy mood and never seem to appreciate the joys of life at all!

DYSFUNCTIONS

There are parents who really dote too much on their child. The child is appreciated too much, is valued as more important than anything else and this gets interpreted as better than other children. Typically there is a superabundance of material gestures of affection. A rather interesting word is typically used to describe this condition — the child is ‘spoilt’.

Later, as an adult such childhood programming will usually show as a person who wants to continue the illusion that they are special — more special than others — and they don't need to provide what they want for themselves because it is given freely by a dotting loved one. The parent-substitute is most likely to be the spouse of course, and yet the attitude of expecting to be spoiled is seen in a wider context too. Such a person shows signs of conceit, even narcissism and has other aspects of behaviour, which are childish — perhaps always needing to get their own way or there will be a tantrum.

GLOBAL ISSUES

Sadly our race has not yet found a sufficient degree of appreciation for human life in all its variety, and so we have too little compassion towards those who need help. This gives rise to the shameful pervasiveness of hunger, disease, poverty, slums and shanty towns. We can see signs of improvement however if we look at the march of history. In times before instant media coverage, we would hear indirectly and late of others' suffering, so the news would be of interest to the mind but not touch the heart. Now with television we are invited to see the poignant facts with more immediacy, no longer through a glass darkly — and it touches us more deeply.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF THANKS

KEYS TO RELATIONSHIP

The keywords are very useful tools that can help us to find out what we may need to do to rebalance the way we are in our partnerships. Certainly most of us can do better than we are doing in relationship by giving the whole matter more careful thought. First of all, we need to move out of ‘cloud cuckoo land’ and bring ourselves back to reality. In the real world there are problems, there are emotional upsets, there are misunderstandings, and there is hurt, deceit, mistrust — and so much else that gets in the way of our happiness. Often the most painful of these problems get triggered through interaction with our ‘special other’. The sooner we acknowledge this, the sooner we can get stuck into the challenge of dealing with the difficulties that come up for us.

It is very much more productive and enjoyable to approach these issues with curiosity than with anger and blame — or even hurt and guilt. If either or both parties can maintain this healthy attitude of loving curiosity, then most of the friction becomes minimal. It’s also worth noticing whether the words you give to your lover are more often supportive and appreciative.

Words of appreciation are a healing balm in relationship. Most of us received less acceptance in childhood than we needed, and want to get it now from a lover. That does not have to render the relationship dysfunctional when done truthfully and with care. Certainly it is appropriate to avoid the opposite! Relationships really don’t flourish at all well when there is taking-for-granted, or constant criticism.



SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

LOVE, HARMONY AND BEAUTY

The third of Sufism's 7 Planes of Consciousness is called the Plane of Love, Harmony and Beauty. It has correspondence with the softer side of the Heart Centre and is linked with the word Thanks within the 7 Words system.

As the name suggests, this plane is where we experience the heart – and such things that connect with the heart's association with compassion. Compassion – “suffering with” – is free of the expectation or need for exchange; it is given, simply because it is the essential nature of Heart to give. In this context the word Love is indicative of unconditional love, so it goes beyond the focus of love that requires conditions, like sexual passion or romance.

Nonetheless it is relational. We identify a certain quality of energy which we call love, by noticing a feeling in the heart area, and this arises typically when we are with another person – or at least remembering that person. In some people it can also easily arise in other situations, as when we experience profound beauty or joie de vivre. The nature of our relationship with these people or things is harmonious. Harmony in music is found when two or more voices are singing melodies that are different and yet mutually supportive and together graceful and elegant.

An interesting formula is offered by Sufis – that the perfection of Love is Harmony, and the perfection of Harmony is Beauty. This is a deeper idea than might immediately be obvious and warrants careful consideration. Can Harmony therefore exist without Love? Can Beauty ever be perfected without Love? In relationship, do we look for Harmony and Beauty as evidence of Love? In the context of our Third Plane studies have we to infer that Beauty is a heart quality?

Although no doubt the larger purpose of our study of Sufism is to open all centres and rejoice in the fullness of our being, this path is essentially a path of the heart (not all spiritual paths are so). As such we expect to expand our ability to feel the beauty of life, to live in harmony with all we meet and to radiate compassion unreservedly. This usually means that we are soft, often childlike, a little naïve, trusting and perhaps easily given to expressions of joy and sorrow. We feel and are quick to shed a tear in the presence of the poignancy of life, great beauty or another's misfortune.

Such qualities are not conducive towards worldly achievements, so the harshness of daily life may intimidate or overwhelm. People with strong 3rd Plane resonance are quite family-oriented, often good at providing nurture, care, an emotionally secure home life and general sense of belonging. They can lack the thick skinned robustness needed to struggle against competition or aggression.

EXERCISES

Q21

How

Each person completes the questionnaire by themselves; then the completed forms can be quickly passed around in a circle so each briefly sees the others. Ask them to comment on their experience of doing Q21, what they looked for in others' scores, and what meanings they intuitively drew from the results. Look at: main total, highest and lowest words, low-scoring individual questions, range of scores, presentation and so on.

Why

This develops self-awareness, use of intuition, personal honesty and sensitivity to other people's issues.

Q21 WITH A CLIENT

How

Separate into 2's. Allow 20 to 30 minutes each way before switching roles. The interviewer reads out the questions to the client, in order or randomly, entering the scores. Discuss the results together, being especially interested in lowest scoring words and questions. These indicate the life issues that will respond best to careful, insightful attention.

Why

Q21 is a helpful tool that can quickly and incisively bring to light a person's pivotal issue and lead to breakthroughs in understanding. There is much to learn about how to be a good interviewer – how to develop rapport, not to influence the client, how to convey caring and compassion and, without being intrusive or ineffective, how to penetrate beneath the numbers towards the truth of the person, and their readiness to address key life issues.

INTRODUCE YOUR PARTNER

How

Spend a few minutes interviewing your partner about their life situation, their feelings and aspirations. Reverse roles. In a circle, you present your partner to the group, telling the group what facts and impressions you have gained. Consider banning or encouraging taking notes – this alters the focus of attention.

Why

It expands our awareness of perception and develops reflexive self-consciousness. Listening is a primary skill in all things, so this exercise trains us in that. Also we are able to learn how someone else sees us, and perhaps feel good to have received such good quality attention.

CIRCLE OF APPRECIATION

How

Each member of the circle chooses one person about which to say something very affirming: “John, I really enjoy your gracefulness” or “Sue, you are someone I know I can always trust to tell me the truth”. This can be repeated. If you don’t know someone very well, still you can say something sincere about them which you appreciate – like their manner or appearance.

Why

This creates an atmosphere of love.

TALKING STICK SHARING CIRCLE

How

A Talking Stick that has a sacred quality is more suitable for this Native American tradition – perhaps one that was specially sought, then decorated and kept safely between sessions. Who has the stick may talk, or indeed not talk, and expect others to remain silent, so that a profound degree of exemplary listening is sponsored. The stick rests in the centre until someone decides to begin. Having spoken, they pass the stick to a neighbour; typically to the left according to tradition. The stick progresses around the circle, perhaps twice, and then is returned to the centre. It can be picked up again by any individual, who returns it to the centre after speaking. When all has been said, only then is the session complete.

Why

One can express more poignant feelings when there is no risk of interruption.

MY FAVOURITE PEOPLE

How

Get students to list the 21 people whom they most want to be in their life.

When they’ve done that, ask them to categorise them by what function they mostly fulfil: Family & Relationship, Friends, Work, and Spiritual Life.

Discuss in pairs, then in a group.

Why

This not only brings a lot of insight into who these special people are – and therefore how to acknowledge in future the value they hold, it also shows which of the four categories are being well served by the people in one’s life, and therefore how the categories are valued.

DLP

MODULE 3 (THANKS) – QUESTIONNAIRE

Q21 is a helpful tool that can quickly and incisively bring to light a person's pivotal issue and lead to breakthroughs in understanding. Use it often for your own growth then use it with others as you gain confidence with it. Tips for interviewing are shown early on in this book – in the Guidance section of the Introduction. Make no mistake, Q21 is a powerful tool, useful for self-awareness, counselling and guidance, to be used with care and careful attention to the results it may trigger in the client.

a) Every week, for 4 weeks or more, record your scores using Q21 and comment on the results.

Normally, we would expect to observe two types of information – given by the ups and downs of mood swings in response to the everlasting circumstances of life, and the slower inner pattern of personality. Give very careful thought to the scores you record. To an open intuitive mind, they will offer clues about what is going on for you, and why. Especially notice the very low scores and give these your attention. Also consider why the deeper trends are what they are. Over a longer term, a year or two, even these are likely to change as you develop.

b) Using Q21, interview at least 4 people and report on your experiences as an interviewer.

As a general universal truth, the observer has an effect upon the observed – so with Q21. Here you are offering to influence the self-awareness, and therefore the life path, of the client. By keeping your mind clear and your heart radiant, the influence will be helpful. Remember not to lose yourself in the Q21, it's a tool, nothing more, so don't forget there is a real person in front of you. Your job is to make the client feel more positive about life, even as you hold up a mirror that delivers uncomfortable truths.

c) Interview both partners in a relationship using Q21, record their scores and discuss the issues that you can see might come up for them because of their 7 Words profiles.

One may be strong on Please, the other weak on No; this shows you that the one will probably dominate the other in relationship. You might enquire – are you allowing your partner to take the lead, or is this reluctant, based on powerlessness? What do you want to do about this? Or there may be a different clue – the strong Please may be met by a strong Yes, and the scenario is entirely harmonious, the one wants to lead, the other to respond.

Partners very strongly influence each other in the way they each present their personalities, and this shows up in their scores for Q21. So if for No the one has a low score in relationship, they may yet have a very high score at work for example. This can be checked out with a separate question. See the case study that follows to give some idea of how to use Q21.

CASE STUDY

Ben is an Englishman in his mid-forties living in very comfortable circumstances. His career as a software analyst began rather later than the norm and his high salary was won at the cost of putting in extra hours and suffering perceived abuse by his uncaring boss. He felt constant anger/frustration and eventually chronic depression, which his daily habit of marijuana could not relieve for more than a few hours. For some time he lived with constant moodiness and poor health, a morose and rather antisocial person with no evident joy or sparkle in his stressful existence. Nevertheless, for all his troubles his essential nature held true and he was not deserted or forgotten by his long-standing friends for his deeper qualities. In earlier days he was always kind, generous in giving good attention, genuinely interested in the ideas of others, loyal in friendship and highly intelligent with an easy humour. He was always polite, ever caring and considerate, with a grace and dignity of bearing that inspired trust and confidence. At a low point of his struggles he registered the following scores...

BEN		It was very difficult for Ben to be enthusiastic and accepting of what life threw at him when he was in such poor health and depressed (Yes) especially when he became unable to hold his own space against intrusive people who had little respect for his boundaries (No) and when he seems to have lost a clear sense of who he really was (No) underneath the suffering. The more he allowed this state of affairs to continue, the worse it got and his resourcefulness diminished (Hello) along with any useful input of ideas from a social group (Hello). At the same time he was losing the ability to terminate the life circumstances that were no longer helpful (Goodbye). His previous clear sense of direction was getting blurry (Please) although he never lost his warm-heartedness (Thanks) or sense of personal responsibility (Sorry), two of the outstanding features of his essential nature.
Thanks	22	
Sorry	21	
Please	16	
Hello	15	
Goodbye	14	
No	12	
Yes	10	
Total	110	

From a counsellor’s viewpoint, it can be seen that a major reorientation was needed — especially in the areas suggested by the lowest scores Yes, No, Goodbye. The total score 110 is particularly low and indicative of a person lacking many of the qualities and attitudes that support a meaningful and happy life. The lowest scoring individual question indicated an almost complete lack of enthusiasm for beginning a new day.

Ben became more frequently unable or unwilling to go to work. Eventually this provoked an absolute confrontation that led to a change of job and the beginning of resolution of the core issue. There can be some discussion about what actually was the core of the problem — his scores make it clear that it lies somewhere in the regions of Yes, No and Goodbye — and life circumstances point to Goodbye as the turning point — and yet it was worth considering that perhaps several factors were inter-related and each in need of attention. Certainly the reluctance to face the realisation that *‘all was not well, and never could be’*, and the very late decision to move on, made a difficult situation become impossible. We can be equally certain that saying Yes to life is hardly feasible when health is always poor and there is huge resistance to go to work in the morning — even if the work is fascinating.

THANKS

Yet the core issue in this case may be seen as a weak No. Ben was looking to define his identity through his ability to receive recognition at work — he is gifted and goes unrecognised, which reduces his self-confidence and undermines his dignity and capacity to maintain firm and clear boundaries; hence the abuse at the hands of businessmen in pursuit of profit, unable to value the more refined qualities of a gentle, introspective thinker.

BEN	Before	After
Thanks	22	27
Sorry	21	27
Please	16	20
Hello	15	21
Goodbye	14	22
No	12	19
Yes	10	19
Total	110	155

The next chapter of his life story could easily be written as follows: he had not learned to say No, he was again abused; his capacity to say Goodbye was used up so he had to stay in another dispiriting job. His soul refused, his body rebelled, he was diagnosed as either physically or emotionally incapable of work and forced to retire, a sad and broken man. A happier tale can be told of a man who has regained his youthful charm and vigour and is reclaiming his life, he now has more time and attention for his children, he's enthusiastically engaged in local social events, less ambitious and yet more fulfilled in his work. He has about him a newly discovered aura, a stronger

personal boundary that suggests he will not be so easily taken advantage of again. His questionnaire results show that he has kept close to his basic profile and yet strengthened in all areas.

His wife is Julie and she was a 'child of the 60's', at the centre of everything, into the fashions, music and the drug culture of that era, spending all her summers at pop festivals. She was one of the most widely known and popular figures in her hippy world. She became central in creating a community and organising camps for people who shared her interest in the alternative culture, and she shared the parenting of her 2 children with their father from whom she was separated. Meeting Ben, Julie began to embrace a new set of values and found herself able to enjoy the creature comforts afforded by his stressful occupation without buying into his problems, and so went through the period of his gloom without losing her own inherent pragmatism and optimism, although we can see from these scores registered at that time, she was not entirely equipped to withstand the downward pull of his depression.

JULIE	Before	After
Hello	29	29
Yes	26	25
Please	24	26
Sorry	24	25
Thanks	22	26
Goodbye	21	24
No	16	22
Total	162	177

Her weakness in No and Goodbye tied in with his weaknesses in No and Goodbye, so neither of them could reject the intolerable and move on — indeed for Julie, whose capacity to accept (Yes) is pronounced, life has never been intolerable. After the major breakthrough, her high-scoring profile remained entirely unchanged except for a general improvement in the 3 lowest areas. It was her strong social nature (Hello) and optimism (Yes and Please) that helped her simply to keep on going, waiting for the time when 'Ben felt happier'. We can see that neither is very strong on boundaries (No) so they may still need to watch out that they don't get taken

advantage of. The strong Thanks show a marked and shared level of appreciation for what life offers — and with Julie's strong Hello we can imagine (a sometimes slightly reluctant?) Ben being socially active. Both scores are well above average and it seems like they have weathered the storm and they can look forward to sunny times again.

7 STAGES OF A LOVE AFFAIR

No. We would not be able to form a close bond of intimacy with just anyone, so we discriminate against unsuitable matches according to the criteria that characterize who we are. It is normal to be somewhat reserved and cautious before letting down our guards.

Hello. A softening away from isolation begins with courtesy and friendliness and in time, if circumstances support it, friendship. Out of the urge towards intimacy the imperfections are overlooked and the many differences are seen as interesting areas for learning. This is the 'getting to know you' phase with its courtship rituals and which can include sex even before a heart connection has opened.

Thanks. Whereas the intense mutual attention of romance and sex, (falling in love), is enough to overwhelm caution and wisdom and blast the feelings, underneath the melodrama a quiet gentle fondness of the heart speaks of a deeper abiding love arising, which can be self-sacrificing and supportive of the other.

Goodbye. The various turning points are marked by: realisation of attraction, decision to move forward, first kiss, first night, betrothal, marriage and perhaps others. There are many moments that underline the intensity of the whole experience and these are Goodbye moments because they create irrevocable shifts in position. Quarrels and conflicts are evidence of committed involvement, always hinting at the possibility of endings.

Please. After each shift the sense of separateness is diminished as two move towards becoming one 'joined at the hip'. The couple is seen as an item whose intentions are unified, whose dreams are shared, whose visions of the future dovetail. Cooperative ventures are undertaken e.g. babies.

Sorry. Others are cast aside as the couple grow more aware that their responsibility to 'the relationship' has to take some precedence over some of their personal feelings. Instead of asserting their individual position they each learn to let go more and forgive injuries inflicted by the other.

Yes. In the later years, each is an aspect of the other. It is almost meaningless to try to perceive them absolutely as individuals because their merging is an expression of a willing surrender to the marriage. They are one as the couple.

GOODBYE

GO ON! ONLY DECISIONS BOOST YOUR EFFECTIVENESS

Everything comes to an end, so we need to have a process of completion in order to mark the finish clearly and irrevocably. Firstly there is the realisation that either we have fulfilled our purpose or have discovered that it is unfulfillable. Next the decision, which is a resolution to act upon that realisation and so go through the necessary processes of completion to tie up all the loose ends – which allows us to move on, and successfully let go of the past.

The cycle of ordinary life can be seen as a succession of stages from No to Hello to Thanks and to Goodbye. We don't like our circumstances (No) so we look outwardly for improvement (Hello), for a time we feel value in a situation (Thanks) and eventually we move on (Goodbye).

Each of the seasons has its own beauty, and each of the ages in life has value. Yet the inertia of habit can make it quite difficult to respond enthusiastically to signs that the season has shifted and that the time has come to change direction. Old cycles have to end so that new cycles can begin — this is nature's law of constant change. We need to respond, and we're not sure how — and because our rhythms are comfortable and feel secure, we tend not to step out of the life-track of what is normal for us, yet, if we stubbornly refuse to respond, then the signs of the need for change will strengthen and become more uncomfortable.

A project has three phases: beginning, middle and end. To begin is to express hope, the doing bit in the middle is for joy and the end is a realisation. Our end, in the sense that it is our purpose, is better described as the achievement of realisation. Neither failure nor success is as valuable as realisation. Success does not bring the rewards that are imagined — perhaps the form of them is achieved and measured in the hollow terms of fame and fortune, yet the greater treasure has surely to be realisation.

Perhaps one day we wake up with an uncharacteristic lack of enthusiasm for work, or feel too tired to bother to phone the boyfriend. It may be that the headaches are getting more noticeable nowadays or the empty feeling after sex lasts longer. Somehow, out of the misty ambiguity of feeling, an ill-defined shape of a thought emerges that is a little disturbing and unwelcome — and therefore quickly forgotten, ignored, denied and hidden. Yet of course it

returns and gains clarity until the realisation has to be admitted: *'I have doubts about whether this is right for me anymore'*.

Though it is tempting to take the easy path, this is illusion; this path is not easy forever, not even for very long — it seduces us only to catch us, and sooner than we know, we find that it is even more difficult to escape the prison of our patterning. We may want to revise aspects of the path we are following and this revision can apply at the level of method — or deeper — at a level of substance, a re-visioning. Rather than change the job and leave the spouse, we might want to stop getting drunk and being so selfish; this could produce the change we prefer. However if there is dawning a realisation that it is actually the goal itself that is fundamentally wrong then we need to acknowledge that we have reached a crisis.

There is in all decisions a need for timeliness, the right time being not too soon and not too late. If we decide something too early, there may be more information available from which we could have made a better decision, there may be insufficient support from what is around us. Early decisions are made out of impatience, even recklessness, and can lack discrimination and sensitivity. However by waiting too long, the iron once hot may grow cold before we strike. Late decisions are more typical of fearful types who would rather make nothing than make a mistake. A fruit eaten too early or too late is never delicious.

Major decisions will be the enactment of a 'compelling reality'. In other words we make them out of a sense that 'what must be must be' and we have no questions about whether it is right or not — we feel that it has to be this way to express the truth of who we are. A choice can be made out of a sense of personal preference — yet somehow a decision is more than a choice and much more emphatic. It is a 'cosmic event', a shift in the framework of reality that touches upon everything else and reworks the operation of one's destiny. This is an idealistic interpretation perhaps — and yet gives a sense that there are profound questions being resolved about what is our soul's purpose in life, and these questions are the stuff of the big life decisions. In other cases we tend to select out of expediency rather than principle.



Unless we are ready to commit ourselves thoroughly to our decisions, then they are not truly decisions. If we want our decisions to carry weight, to be effective, respected and to hold good, then we have to be resolute. Other options have ended. It helps our decision if we make an announcement, which calls upon community support to help us be more resolute. Thus, the decision to move on is celebrated and made irrevocable — such as at weddings, graduations, retirement parties and so on. Such announcements bind us into the depth of society, forcing clarification and commitment.

KEYWORDS

REALISATION

There is wisdom in knowing how to balance what has been against what can be. Each of the seasons has its own beauty, and each of the chapters of our life has value, yet the inertia of habit can make it quite difficult to respond enthusiastically to signs that the times have shifted and that the point has come to change direction. Comfortable and secure, we tend not to step out of the life-track of what is normal for us. So we may struggle to realise this: that we are either growing or dying. Let us be aware that a joyless, repetitive, humdrum, mindless life is not life at all; it is dying in disguise.

DECISION

The Goodbye instant is a link between two stories — the past and the future — which seem rather similar and yet have at least one major axiom different. The past holds us back and the future pulls us forward towards new lessons. We have to act. Action demands of us a greater degree of involvement than passivity and we are stimulated to a greater degree to touch depths of feeling that are not always engaged. It requires the resolution of dilemma; dynamically, it gives proof of decision.

The very requirement of a decision is that we engage in order to awaken more fully, and penetrate into the deeper recesses of the self. Action can often express some quality or inner decision that might otherwise go unnoticed and would be left in the ethereal world of the unrecognised.

COMPLETION

Although Goodbye itself is momentary, the process that surrounds it takes time. It is necessary to close down what has been opened and attend to all outstanding questions so that resolution takes place properly. Typically we don't want to take responsibility to finish everything off tidily because it is more enjoyable for us to direct attention towards what will be and not what was.

Our motivation to 'do the right thing' comes out of a sense of self-image that 'I am the kind of person that finishes what s/he starts': a dignity of identity. Also it preserves and strengthens will, which otherwise could be undermined. The importance of completion is to do with tying up loose ends so that we can journey into the future knowing that there are no issues that will pull us back and diminish our possibilities for success in what is now about to begin.

MOVING ON

Moving on is likely to be an adventure — it is better like this because it helps us to make a clean break — although it can feel rather dangerous. It is good to set off from a prepared position of strength, having some degree of purpose, certainty of resolve and whatever resources we may need for the journey. Enthusiasm, born of the heart, is the joyous motivating vibrancy that carries us forward from a separation towards future involvements, and if we ride this wave as would a surfer then we have the right approach towards meeting an unknown future. As an old door begins to close we are somehow squeezed to bring out more from a situation. An irreversible ending approaches, and there is an intensity of vitality to be felt, which has an energizing effect that pushes us to a deeper level of self-examination and self-expression. Perhaps in this is to be found the greatest gift of all: the wisdom, which validates and explains the purpose for the involvement and the need for it to finish.

Q21 COMMENTARY

ARE YOU GOOD AT AVOIDING BEING STUCK IN A RUT?

Life is about movement so being stuck in any situation is not healthy. There is a strong tendency for all of us to continue to do what we have always done, and this carves the track of our lives. It becomes increasingly difficult to cut new paths when the old ones are deep and unquestioned so we may be caught up or bogged down without knowing we are. We must realise that such unconscious habits of behaviour need to be avoided lest we become trapped and begin to lose vitality.

DO YOU HAVE COURAGE TO MOVE INTO THE UNKNOWN?

Typically many people fear the unknown. It takes decisive courage to overcome our disinclination to take risks, and this applies to all areas of life. New job, new town, and new relationship – these are all obvious. What about new opinions, new perceptions, and new beliefs? We know so very little! The universe of possibilities is vast and mainly unexplored, waiting there for our readiness to have an adventure.

DO YOU QUICKLY LET GO OF THE PAST?

This question is profoundly correlated with happiness. To be happy usually means that we can let go of what we cannot influence. Mulling over our personal history can be useful if it brings a better awareness of the present, yet dwelling on past pain, lost opportunities, errors of judgment and so on – this will never bring us what we want. Life is now; it is the only thing that is real. So when we have properly completed our involvements, and tied up what needs to be resolved, then to move on requires us to let go.

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Getting stuck, being indecisive, holding on too long, failure to complete on promises and responsibilities, fear of change, tendency to give up, over-dependency on others.

These are fixed types who seem to prefer staying in an unhappy situation rather than giving something new a try. Whether it's lack of courage, lethargy or terrible indecision, they stay put when most of us would be long gone. Life is all about how to manage the changes – so someone who does not manage, and does not change, inevitably begins to deaden.

DYSFUNCTIONS

A strong and yet dysfunctional expression of Goodbye can arise as a result of a childhood lived with too much Moving On, perhaps army children posted to far-flung places, moving home every year or so. Another form of inappropriate Goodbye is the case where a child loses a parent and is left with feelings of abandonment, rejection, desertion, powerlessness and an expectation of under-nourishment.

Who would be surprised if this gave rise to anger and resentment in the grown adult? We might expect to see a loner, unwilling and unable to trust that attachments of the heart will lead to anything that lasts. Rather than stay around for someone precious to desert them, at the first sign of danger they will dash off injured. There is reluctance to form long-term commitments, a failure to deliver the goods, a poor sense of responsibility for the emotional impact that their leaving will cause. This is the rolling stone gathering no moss, with no extra baggage and no fixed abode — never fully present here and now, yet perhaps with an optimism for a brighter time where the restlessness will abate and there will be a nourishing love that cannot escape.

GLOBAL ISSUES

The war-like attitude of humanity has clearly reached absurd levels now that we are taking on an opponent whom we can never defeat, and anyway who nurtures us continually without asking for payment. Our abuses against Mother Nature are no longer being ignored by her. In response there have been a 'few shots across the bow', like Hurricane Katrina, which seem to have produced no more than a ripple of concern.

Environmental issues, Global Warming, terrible pollution, and GM foods are just a few examples of problems that won't just go away. Let's be awake to the reality that we have allowed those in authority to slip into an unwinnable war that can only lead towards suffering and destruction. It is the eleventh hour.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF GOODBYE

MANAGEMENT

Sadly, it has to be acknowledged that many – perhaps most – people are rather stuck in a rut, unable to work out what to do next. However, good managers keep abreast of the changes and realise what's going on within a larger context, and they are willing to make proactive decisions about what needs to be done, and then see it through to completion. We all have to manage our lives, and the skills needed are no less useful for individuals as they are for corporate executives. To optimise your career, organise a village fete, or to run a multinational, you will need to know about decisions, project management and meetings.

DECISION TOOL

The 7 Words Decision Tool is a more complex version of the Satisfaction Index (see later). With this tool, which can be accessed on line through the website, we are able quickly to organise our thoughts and refer to our feelings so that both right and left brain functions operate. It records the 7 criteria by which we arrive at our decisions, and their relative importance. We also record our scores for each, so that then we can see which of several options is best for addressing a very specific problem or opportunity. Since our whole life direction comes from the decisions we make, it is crucial both to focus the mind clearly, and check out the body's intuitive information record as feelings.

CAREER

7 Aspects of Career might include: **No**, defining our identity; **Hello**, considering options which will hold our attention; **Thanks**, its value in promoting happiness; **Goodbye**, potentials for advancement; **Please**, our self-image as a goal; **Sorry**, a sense of community service; **Yes**, retiring gracefully into the position of 'elder'.

Employment Profiles:

No	Accountant, Security, Inspector (<i>Firm boundaries, discrimination</i>).
Hello	Entertainer, Salesman, Tour Guide, Receptionist (<i>expansive, open, friendly</i>).
Thanks	Kindergarten Teacher, Personnel Officer, Artist (<i>warm, appreciative</i>).
Goodbye	Traveller, Buyer, Journalist (<i>completions, resolution</i>).
Please	Team Manager, Executive, Project Leader (<i>clear intention, ability to co-opt</i>).
Sorry	Doctor, Nurse, Priest, Arbitrator (<i>non-judgemental, unbiased</i>).
Yes	Counsellor, Publican, Secretary (<i>tolerant, accepting</i>).

PROJECTS

7 Aspects:

No	Purpose
Hello	Resources
Thanks	Orientation
Goodbye	Job Delegation
Please	Enabling
Sorry	Controls
Yes	Testing

MEETINGS

Types of Meetings / Aspects of Meetings

No	Marking boundaries
Hello	Exchange of information and attention
Thanks	Engendering rapport
Goodbye	Taking decisions
Please	Intending to persuade
Sorry	Needing to account for behaviour
Yes	Getting the okay

SALES

Customer-centred approach to selling

No	Stand off until the customer wants attention
Hello	Engage when appropriate by offering information
Thanks	Listen to what the customer says
Goodbye	Lead the customer towards the next stage of buying
Please	Invite the customer to imagine ownership of a specific item
Sorry	Negotiate and deal with every objection to purchase
Yes	Gather the Gold

SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

HEROIC PLANE

The fourth of Sufism's 7 Planes of Consciousness is called the Heroic Plane. It has correspondence with the heart's stronger qualities and is linked in the 7 Words System with the word Goodbye.

However pleasant it feels, to enjoy the nurturing security of the Plane of Love, it can get a bit boring for people whose natural predisposition is more dynamic and inclined to rise to challenges. And this is what the 4th Plane is about. It is not especially joyful, although it has its own sense of celebration. It is more to do with baptism by fire – the burning away of impurities through often uncomfortable processes of tests and rigours. Here the spiritual disciple learns lessons of self-control and ardent purification.

Within the realms of relationship we often see the energies of both Venus and Mars. If Venus is 3rd Plane then Mars is definitely 4th. The warrior needs to contest with another in order to sharpen his wits and strengthen his will, and although the purpose of doing so evolves into battling the self, it begins through the conflict where two motivations clash. Martial arts and violent sports are examples of preferred activities for 4th Plane types, where occupations can often include negotiation – in business, diplomacy, or politics.

On the Plane of Heroes, there are winners and losers. It is overseen by archangelic beings – the Seraphim – and these fiery cosmic characters blow their trumpets to raise a celebratory fanfare whenever they witness the forces of light defeat those of darkness. We feel this ourselves as a sense of exaltation when we resist temptation or overcome an agency of negativity. Do we not blow our trumpets a little when we have successfully stood firm on a matter of principle?

Through external conflict we are learning how to develop the necessary qualities to deal with the inner conflicts that inevitably arise for the true seeker. Each of us is somewhat false at times, we fail to ring true when struck by life's demands and we capitulate to greater forces that we deem to be wrong. It is for us to perfect a sense of right and wrong – not as a judgement to rise self-importantly above others, but as the foundation of truth upon which to construct an authentic life path. As we do so, we are tested. It is always so – and we must stand firm if we are to claim our greatest birth right.

This is not a place on which to dwell. There are real and serious dangers for people who spend most of their time engaging 4th Plane issues. The fire can be destructive – it does not support ordinary domestic life, nor yet prayerful, monastic rhythms, because its energy is too passionate, unbending, and uncomfortable. It can lead to burn out, isolation and bigotry. In fact, the distortions on this plane can be the most difficult of all distortions. Fanatics, tyrants and zealots are as likely as heroes.

There are plenty of occasions when we are clear of conscience, strong of will, with fire in the heart and God on our side – and yet we lose a battle. Dark forces prevail. Then we have to retreat, accept the setback, regroup our resources and reaffirm our expectation of success. The 4th Plane knows no fear, no surrender and no exhaustion...so be careful! Yet without it, no access to the higher glories is found – this is part of the 5th Plane mysteries.

EXERCISES

CRITICAL KEYWORD

How

This is an advanced use of the questionnaire Q21, based on the fact that each primary word is described and defined by four keywords. By careful examination of Q21 plus sensitive and insightful discussion with the client – who must be ready for a life change – the interviewer can suggest a critical keyword. This keyword points to the pivotal issue that needs attention, and if resolved will offer disproportionately favourable benefits. Often, but not always, a client's lowest scoring primary word will hold the critical keyword. It is the one that has greatest potential for life improvement.

Why

Generally, rather than try to deal with vague feelings of dissatisfaction, it is easier to work with a single, specific life issue. The client is more likely to do this if offered a keyword.

CIRCLES OF 8

How

One client and 7 others, who each take one of the 7 primary words, form a circle. The client indicates their question: "Shall I go to university?", "What can I do about my rude boss?"

Then, in turn and perhaps in order from No to Yes, each responder offers advice in alignment with their word's wisdom. The first argues against the proposal, or perhaps in favour of strong boundaries; the next speaks of opportunities to meet new people and ideas etc. Afterwards the client is asked to comment, acknowledging which of the words touched them most deeply.

Why

The client's perspective widens; usually they get some body response from one or two of the words, which helps them make an informed decision. The others learn to present the underlying principle of their words, detached from personal bias.

CRUX POINTS

How

Students create a list of the major turning points in their life-events that marked a watershed, after which their journey moved them towards a very different outcome. Then ask – who initiated this event? You or another?

Why

Are you taking control of your life, or are you responding to external forces of change?

SATISFACTION INDEX

How

A) Sort these into what is most important to you in relationship:

- Material Security
- Company
- Caring
- Involvement
- Shared Future
- Personal Development
- Sex

B) Create a list of the top four of them and score them 1 to 10, according to your level of satisfaction:

Involvement	8
Shared Future	6
Company	9
Caring	9

C) Do this calculation

		Score	Factor	Sum	Possible	Shortfall
1 st	Involvement	8	x4	32	40	8
2 nd	Shared Future	6	x3	18	30	12*
3 rd	Company	9	x2	18	20	2
4 th	Caring	9	x1	9	10	1
Satisfaction Index =Total				77%	100	

D) Satisfaction Index is 77%

* Focus of Attention is “Shared Future” because its potential for improvement is highest.

Why

The student learns where they need to put more attention. The most sensitive area, Focus of Attention, is the one that would contribute most to improve the index if that area were taken up to a score of 10.

Other examples

Above, we have used one example of a theme – relationship. Below we have others.

SATISFACTION INDEX – SUGGESTED KEYWORDS

7 WISDOMS	NO: SELF CONFIDENCE	HELLO: INFLUENCE
N: Self Confidence H: Influence T: Relationship G: Management P: Visionary Goals S: Spirituality Y: Opportunity	N: Security H: Fun & Pleasure T: Love G: Courage P: Focus S: Responsibility Y: Adaptability	N: Wealth H: Knowledge T: Family G: Personal Power P: Prestige S: Position Y: Lightness
THANKS: RELATIONSHIP	GOODBYE: MANAGEMENT	PLEASE: VISIONARY GOALS
N: Material Security H: Company T: Caring G: Involvement P: Shared Future S: Personal Development Y: Sex	N: Self-Discipline H: Imagination T: Values G: Decisiveness P: Assertiveness S: Sensitivity Y: Trust	N: Healthy Body H: Active Mind T: Open Heart G: Integrity P: Attainment S: Conscience Y: Freedom
SORRY: SPIRITUALITY	YES: HOW LUCKY ARE YOU?	FREE TEST & REPORTS
N: Conviction H: Shifting Perception T: Compassion G: Authenticity P: Sacredness S: Self-Awareness Y: Inspiration	N: Feeling Rich? H: Trusting Intuition? T: Feeling Loved? G: Taking Risks? P: Good Career? S: Being Healthy? Y: Ever the Optimist?	www.7words.co.uk

DLP

MODULE 4 (GOODBYE) – WORK

Our careers and the way we develop our roles in society often include many Goodbye moments. Typically we must decide things, complete tasks and move on. Look at your present position in the context of where you are in an unfolding development process. Also think about how effectively you respond to changes in your circumstances that necessitate shifts in your life. Address the following points:

a) *Discuss your work in 7 Words terms.*

Which primary words are most required for your position? What are the 7 words of your work? Which of your strengths and weaknesses become most obvious to you and others at work?

b) *To resolve any outstanding issues in your life, what decisions could you take?*

Not only as a career development, but in all aspects of life, are you moving through the changes as the prime initiator, or as a hapless incidental factor in someone else's ambition? Are you stuck in any aspect of your situation – relationship, career, home life, kids, friends, spirituality?

c) *Identify a particular project or life stage you need to complete upon. Describe in detail all the things that must be done, and from this create a timed job list.*

You are no doubt in the middle of several projects – big and small scale, from raising your children to doing this week's shopping. What needs to be done to finish them? If it seems overwhelming try chunking down in smaller stages that can be moved on easily. One stage is the plan – so make your job list into a plan where all the jobs are clear and feel realistically attainable in real time.

d) *Look back on the period since you began the course and describe what has moved away from you that will not return.*

The DLP takes time, perhaps two or three years. In that period you surely will have changed your circumstances, your perceptions, your dreams, even your personality. So how is that coming along? If you cannot see that anything significant has changed yet, then look again! Things have gone that will never return, and it's important to notice that. Release is central to the Goodbye processes of life.

And what if there really is nothing to report, and nothing of significance actually has moved much. Then ask yourself, are you sure you want to change? It's somewhat scary! People think they want development – that sounds good, but will they let go of what has become comfortable and controlled about their lives. Not so easy, eh?

7 WORDS OF CONFLICT

Let's stop seeing conflict as bad. Conflict is inevitable; it is a feature of all life and it leads towards deeper harmony on a more authentic level. It arises when two sincere motivations clash, it creates friction and heat and it often moves the participants to take up staunch positions and intrusive behaviours. Yet it is this response to conflict – not the conflict itself – that we need to change, because it is fear-based and lacks wisdom. People fear the loss of position or the loss of their dignity and prestige...issues to do with boundaries and identity. This indicates a lack of trust and a sense of unreasonable prideful, self-importance.

There is within conflict an unparalleled opportunity to expand one's perception of life, by seeing a situation differently, from another's viewpoint. Without an expansion of perception, no growth occurs. Openness is the question here. Having opened up a wider vista, then a person has to either take on a compromise – not optimal – or to resolve the matter on a deeper level. This requires a degree of skill at negotiation and a true willingness to seek authenticity. If you still feel in the right, then you have to learn how to persuade!

Getting what we want in life depends quite a lot upon finding out and knowing what we appreciate and exactly what values are worth the effort. Unless we come up against another with a different set of values, then we simply have no way to find out whether we are following the best course when we continue to do what we've always done. Much of our behaviour, perhaps most of it, has been inherited by copying parents – or imposed through social pressure from peers and authority figures. So typically, when we follow our own inner guidance and do something different, we find ourselves in conflict with these people. It can be rather upsetting, and many of us prefer to avoid the conflict rather than feel the painful feelings of rejection, attack, mistrust and fear that can arise.

Others however are ready to engage in the conflict and become willing to press their point. In theory this does not have to be aggressive, yet indeed often generates a fiery mood and stimulates fight or flight strategies that emerge as a natural condition, the adrenals send a signal that one is threatened, preparing the body for extra effort in case the threat becomes dangerous. The mind so often loses clarity of focus when this happens and we may not always say words that are kind or even informative. Yet the life force within, awakened by all this conflict, challenges us not to allow the 'dying of the light' (to quote Dylan Thomas). We need to have the realisation that we must change; it is life itself.

To create an optimal outcome, it's good to keep the "eyes on the prize". In other words, know what you are fighting for and don't get distracted. Press for one thing and keep bringing the focus back to that outcome. At a more harmonious level of involvement, it is possible to achieve a result that pleases both parties. This can be done with exemplary skills of cooperation and an expectation of agreement.

GOODBYE

It is of great importance to show respect and really quite foolish to perceive the other person as wrong; it leads nowhere. From their perspective they are making an important point, one that validates their life choices, one that they hold precious. It may be that they – or we – have no willingness to adopt a new position, that we feel quite stubborn, even self-righteous – yet sooner or later we are required to soften our position if we are to maintain involvement. Perhaps what matters most of all is to refrain from blame and accusation. Let another person cherish their own life view, and let it not be attacked or ridiculed. Be responsible for you and yours.

Whatever the outcome, let there be no resentment or gloating either – be graceful in success as in defeat. We can even learn acceptance that the very idea of winners and losers is unhelpful. Life is ever teaching us new ways, and this often requires a degree of conflict. So from time to time we should welcome a healthy debate, a challenge to the status quo, a rebel's voice and vigorous teenager wildness. It not only keeps us on our toes, it helps us find a deeper sense of what really matters to us and to others.



PLEASE

PLAN LIFE ENDLESSLY ANTICIPATING SPECIAL EXPERIENCES

How come we keep repeating the same process? We often just travel around again to where we have already decided to leave — same relationship issues, same work problems, same family arguments — we travel in circles. By this process of trial and error (No, Hello, Thanks, Goodbye, No...) we can come to a vague inner sense that *'There must be more to life than this.'* Perhaps even: *'I've had money, sex, position and the good life and I'm still dissatisfied, actually I'm depressed'.*

Spirals are much more the symbol of what is needed in a healthy life. They are circles extended into another dimension, retaining the essential cyclical nature of life whilst adding the sense of progression towards a higher goal. Please has the effect of adding this dimension, which opens doors to new horizons of possibility. We have to learn — and really understand — that we don't need to do something today the same way we did it yesterday.

We are the ones taking the initiative with Please, we act out of our own impulses and we act vigorously upon another, so Please is associated with assertiveness and often indicates implied authority. In saying this word we have clear intention to shift another's position in order to facilitate the realisation of our desired outcome. As a consequence of repeatedly doing so, our personal power increases. We become a constant force that bends reality to our goals, shapes understandings towards our beliefs and draws us closer towards the realisation of our vision. However we can only access the truly extraordinary power of Please by going through a process of inner alignment.

The tremendous personal authority that grows must be matched by the corresponding degree of personal responsibility. If, by our atmosphere alone, we bend the conditions of reality to our will, then we have to accept responsibility for all the implications of this — even those unseen. It behoves us to behave with more grace and deliberate sensitivity since, without the inner condition of modesty, the word Please is potentially very forceful.

There are two conditions needed for Please — a clear vision and an attitude of supplication. Concentration and cooperation works. Arjuna — the greatest of archers — was asked to describe the bird at which he was aiming: *'I cannot!'* Why not? *'I can only see its eye!'* That's concentration. We need to know exactly what we want if we are to achieve our goal, and it adds considerably to our chances if the goal is specific yet flexible, well defined and stated positively, and enhanced by the anticipation of celebrating success.

Although the past seems to be written in terms unimpeachable, the future is certainly not. It's a virgin canvas, and we stand at the easel, brush in hand. To add a new facet to life begins by imagining it, since if we never have a dream then we can hardly expect to have a dream come alive. Asking ourselves the question 'what if ...' stimulates imagination. *'What if I had enough money? What if I studied and earned a qualification? What if I changed my image? What if I spoke up? What if she likes me too?'* By stimulating imagination we awaken an inner faculty that energizes and empowers us to act, to seek solutions and opportunities and to look for something more in keeping with our heart's desire.

This inner faculty is much more substantial than we might think — it is not just fantasy, a day-dreamy kind of pleasant way to waste a few spare minutes. The act of envisioning is a specific way of focusing that sidesteps objections, and therefore dissolves the negativity of pessimism. *'What if'* is a clever device. With it, we can suspend our disbelief and so unlock the powerful tools readily available in the psyche, whose function is to create futures for our satisfaction. *'What if'* temporarily puts aside the heavyweight saturnine burden of being realistic, which at this stage is inappropriate.

Of course we can't be specific about our intention until we have gone through a process of enquiry by which we discover the whys and hows of what we intend. *'Why?'* is a question that can be answered from the perspective of past or future. Let's be careful to guard against doing something just because we have been used to doing it and it's 'what we do' — that may be answering *'why?'* from the past. We need to find out what we are trying to achieve in the larger sense of whether this achievement will support our vision. Then and only then do we consider how to go forward with it. It is a confusion to construct intention primarily out of expediency, because then we would get what is easy, not what we really desire.

Desire is a healthy force of motivation that guides and energizes us towards a realm of experience that brings joy and vitality to uplift the soul. The desire for sexual union and the desire for union with God are both aspects of desire. To desire is a full-on, no-holds-barred, naked passion of such intensity that an avalanche of life force swirls around and around ready to be called to service. It is dangerous, exciting, beyond morality and reason — a madness that can overwhelm and destroy. No wonder people are shy of it — and yet it is life. To harness it is our life task and our life joy. The harnessing can be learned, and needs to be learned; otherwise the passion will cause destruction or be dissipated and become ineffectual. In order to guide desire towards a particular result, we need to learn how and why to concentrate the mind.

KEYWORDS

VISION

Too often it is we who are at the effect of someone else's cause — in other words we are serving someone else's ambition rather than our own vision. This needs to end if we are to align with soul, because the soul — though it may well be pleased to serve another's vision — will never choose to be subservient to the pursuit of the ego-ambitions of another.

To survive there are certain requirements that are absolute and not negotiable and it is necessary, if we are to build a robust vision, to do so upon the foundations of these requirements. The fluffy vision, pink and pretty, is the soft and comforting dream that dream-sellers entertain us with. A realizable vision is the stuff of the hero/ine: those who are few in number and aspire to establish values and act out of principle to realise their own uniqueness of spirit.

INTENTION

It's not enough to have a vision; there needs also to be the will to make it happen. We are tested: 'Is what we want worth the effort?' Or perhaps putting it differently: 'Do we really want this or is it just a wish?' Wishing is quite different from wanting; it is rather fanciful and carries no expectation of achievement, in fact it is often specifically identified with the impossible 'I wish money grew on trees', whereas wanting aligns with intention and expectation of achievement.

COOPERATION

Nothing can be done alone, we need help. So who will help us? Suppliers of goods, services, advice and permissions — these are all real people, each with their own vision and intentions, as are staff, co-workers, friends, families and strangers. Our intention has to find a way to integrate with theirs if we are to prove successful in our endeavours. In the case when a number of people are all aligned in single focus upon a common aim, then much is possible.

Cooperation is working together: to have it requires that each party is pulling towards the same end. Without this sense of a shared communal purpose, it is better to resist inappropriate involvements and maintain independence until the possibility comes along for suitable co-working. Without it, we are condemned to exist as small and usually insignificant particles instead of enjoying being part of a larger richer experience.

PRAYER

In sacred use 'Please' becomes 'Please God' or prayer. Prayer is 'please with a sacred atmosphere'.

Its purpose is to align our single-minded, passionate clarity with the will of God. Both meditation and prayer seem to be essential in spiritual development and both are processes of the mind. With meditation there is a sense of allowing a relaxed and attentive mind to open up its love of a subject in order to see the way that universal patterns are made knowable.

In contrast to meditation, prayer is passionate. Picture and passion produce prayer. An idea willed by an expectant mind becomes an event; this is surely one way to define magic — all magic is applied prayer, all action is prayer, we could call it psycho kinesis. It is thinking with feeling, an idea desired and willed, and the more wholeheartedly and assured the attitude we adopt, the prompter is the realisation. So we can see that desire, therefore love, is a necessary component of prayer.

Q21 COMMENTARY

ARE YOU AN ASSERTIVE PERSON?

Being assertive means that we push forward into the world with clear intention to change somebody else's position. Our vision, of how things can be improved, is a powerful force that motivates us to impact cooperatively upon others so that we change the way things are, certainly improving our own circumstances and hopefully the other person's as well.

ARE YOU GOOD AT CHOOSING AND ASKING FOR WHAT YOU WANT?

There's nothing wrong with desire – it is craving that is unwholesome. To get our desires fulfilled, it is necessary first to become very clear about specifically what we want. In order to be assertive we need to know what it is that we are asserting. This may involve overcoming patterns of self-denial, fears of being considered selfish, and even faulty understandings of religious dogma. Then we need to ask for it, because we all need help in one form or another. Prayer has a special way of focusing support at the highest level of being.

ARE YOU LIKELIER TO TAKE ACTION THAN TO GRUMBLE?

Grumbling is an expression of pessimism and negativity and does little or nothing to enhance our wellbeing. What works is taking action. We need to focus positively on the required result and speak in words that suggest an expectation of success. Such an attitude will align our own will to succeed with those involved with us, and will strongly support the attainment of our goals.

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Uninspired life path, lacklustre life, weak will, boredom, despondency, lack of true involvement, inadequate support, serving reluctantly, under-achievement.

The gifts of free will and creativity are lost on such types of people, who do not imagine a better future, nor do they take steps to improve the life of others. They have few skills in winning cooperation, and make very poor leaders, seem blinkered and unaware of the rich magnificence of opportunity in any situation. To them, spirituality is more to do with obedience than freedom.

DYSFUNCTIONS

A strong please applied without much awareness, amounts to coercion, dominance, enslaving, over-ambition and generally getting what you want without much attempt to reconcile it with what others want.

Please is a real power — it cuts through muddle and confusion; it focuses attention on an object and aligns people to pull together. If a parent represents a clear and constant force of will acting upon a child towards the fulfilment of the parent's objectives then the child is likely to develop an equally strong focus, and the capacity to cajole others to achieve specific objectives. They can be charming, persuasive and inspiring, yet lack the willingness to compromise or defer, although they will cooperate wherever it suits their purposes to join forces with a useful ally. Many politicians and hard-nosed business managers fall into this category.

GLOBAL ISSUES

Acting assertively, without regard to the other person, leads to aggression and human rights violations. There are more slaves today than there have ever been on Earth and, although it is gratifying that the percentage is smaller, individual slaves are not interested in that. Women and children are constantly subject to abuses because they have not sufficient physical strength to defend themselves. Political prisoners are often tortured so that a corrupt regime can strengthen its grip. The world watches as children are forced to work in Dickensian conditions, as so many women are treated as sub-human and as vast populations in poorer countries — slaves and forced workers — serve the tiny minority who abuse them.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF PLEASE

VISIONARY GOALS

We are creative beings; such is the essence of our lives. We cannot avoid this, and yet we can ignore it. However, when we come to terms with the ability that we have, to make entirely new ways to do things, entirely new perceptions and artistic works – then life becomes a constantly joyful expression of one possibility after another.

It's not only to do with art works either – every problem demands our creative input; every unstructured day requires us to think up some way to be, something to do. The secrets to learn in order to awaken this facility are the keywords for Please. When we have them, then we want to use them to write the script of our life drama big and bold, rich and colourful, onto the movie screen of life, that stands before us in every moment.

ARE YOU SERIOUS?

It is very unlikely that you will be able to embody the wisdom of the 7 Words without a genuine process of reflection, discovery and application. A perceptual shift is the only true measure of any kind of personal or spiritual development – you have to change the way you think, the way you see things, if there is to be any permanent value to your experiences and studies. So, are you serious? Is it really your intention to change your processes of thinking permanently?

If you want to become a doctor, accountant or architect, then you will need to spend long years studying the theory, and longer years putting the ideas into practice. Why would you expect it to be different for the kind of breakthrough envisioned with this system? It's not a quick fix, it's a path.

A path is a direction. We are all moving one way or another, and whether we move in a tangled confusion, or in a circle, or in a directed, forward-moving progression towards a required result depends upon whether we have a path. It doesn't really matter much which path is your preference as long as you choose something, because any path is better than no path at all, and you can change.

The best path does not lead to a destination; it leads towards a destination. We do not want to arrive at the end of the path because that would leave us without a path, and yet our journey has no end. We want the path to be ever-wending, and never-ending! It's better to light a candle than complain about suffering in the dark, especially as the darkness is really self-imposed.

So we need to do work on ourselves, we need to study, seek guidance and practice living in a better way. It's rather trite to observe that we'll always get what we've always got if we always do what we've always done. By reading this book, and studying 7 Words, you are embarking on a journey of self-discovery and personal transformation using a system of Revolutionary Thinking.

SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

PLANE OF SPLENDOUR

The 5th Plane of consciousness called the Plane of Splendour is represented by the word Please. It is associated with the archangelic realm of Cherubs, which are not cute little baby angels at all, they are unimaginably vast and powerful, self-aware spiritual beings that never incarnate but simply live throughout eternity singing the praises of God. Clearly they relate to the throat chakra, and are invoked by sacred chanting and prayer.

Prayer is not to be trifled with. Giving voice to an unwelcome state and set of circumstances, and calling upon God's power to manifest them is seriously unhelpful and ill advised – yet this is done more often than not. People so often pray for what they want – and in so doing accentuate wanting. It is desire and expectancy, coupled with a state of gratitude, that empowers prayer. Please is about desire and expectancy as the 5th Plane is about sacredness.

These two attitudes of being are profoundly linked. Desire is seen as sacred in Sufism – as it is in Buddhism too, actually; it is attachment to desire, or craving that leads to suffering. Desire itself is the most sacred evidence of the love felt between two things or people whose soul destiny is to share and cooperate in the sublime, divine act of creativity. Through sacredness, this essential life-force is optimised.

Sacredness rarely arises of itself – the exception is when Nature reaches awesome extremes of beauty and in the passages at birth and death. Otherwise we need to create it. We do this with such practices as chanting the holy names, burning incense and lighting candles, kneeling before an altar and spontaneously making up prayer. Sometimes even religious practices can awaken this state if the practitioner is sincere and free of cynicism and habit. A general rule of thumb is useful too: peace leads to sacredness and sacredness leads to peace.

Spirituality has been corrupted and distorted so badly and for so long that many people throw the baby out with the bathwater. Some reject God simply because they see how insincere some priests are and feel the emptiness and foolishness of so much of the scriptures. That's sad, and unnecessary.

We can find our own way to the Source. The malpractices of religions are to be seen as tests. The gullible are gulled. Be more aware then! Do not accept the false gold of doctrine and prescribed morality, work it out for yourself – find out what makes you feel sacred and follow that. It takes more than 4th Plane courage – it takes 5th Plane inspiration.

EXERCISES

VISION STATEMENT

How

Take a client or group through 7 stages of this visioning process to bring about a major life change. A visioning process is more powerful if various aspects are carefully attended to; we use a mnemonic POSERSEA.

- P. Be positive*
- O. Take your own part*
- S. Specificity – exactly what do you want?*
- E. Evidence – how will you know when you have it?*
- R. Resources available to call upon?*
- S. Size – should you go for something smaller first? Or bigger?*
- E. Ecology test – if you were offered this would you accept unreservedly?*
- A. Alternatives available that would be equally acceptable?*

Why

We consciously create our life circumstances through a process of envisioning the future and then overcoming obstacles in order to realise the vision. This is optimized with clear focus and efficient method, which necessarily includes planning.

CV FOR GOD

How

Imagine meeting God or St Peter at the Pearly Gates. You have to convince them that you deserve your place in heaven. Write your CV to get yourself in!

Why

Self-proclamation has its usefulness. All too often, people have accepted a lesser vision of themselves, because parents or peers have tried to keep them down. Getting people to state what they are happy to have achieved is potentially very empowering.

BACKWARDS FROM DEATH

How

If you knew you had only one minute to live, what would you do? One hour? One day? One week? One month? One year? Ten years? Create your bucket lists!

Why

Death is the most important aspect of life, and when it becomes the focus of our attention, its certainty and imminence brings about a vitality otherwise absent. Sufis teach: die before you die. Others say: live as if you would die tomorrow, farm as if you will live forever. This exercise helps us to remember to get on with it before we forget how and why.

PEOPLE YOU ADMIRE

How

From real life or fiction, find three characters whom you admire, and consider what qualities they have, which earns your admiration.

Why

The soul is on earth to develop qualities, and this mechanism operates first by admiring qualities in others. To recognise them will enable us to develop them. In other words we fulfil our personal potential by developing the very qualities that we admire in our heroes and heroines.

TOMBSTONE QUALITIES

How

Ask: What three qualities would you put on your father's tombstone and your mother's...and what would you want recorded on your own?

Why

A child intuitively wants to please both parents, typically by copying their primary qualities. Often parents become polarised – so the child has the task of reconciling pairs of opposing qualities, trying desperately to be acceptable to both parents simultaneously. This exercise helps to bring awareness to the fact that we struggle to live out our own destiny in the face of profound unconscious patterns inherited from parents.

COACHING TO 10

How

Take any one of the questions on Q21, and find out what would make a difference to that score. For example: "Do you wake up feeling enthusiastic?" Score: 4. Interviewer asks: "What would need to happen for that to become a 5?"

Why

The purpose we have with Q21 is not only to identify the facts of the matter, but also to stimulate improvements. Asking such a question is very provocative. Even when someone records 9 – then why not 10? What would it take? This is a very useful technique for high scoring people who are reluctant to acknowledge their dissatisfactions with life. Scores of 10 can also be questioned – "*Is there really no way this can be improved?*"

DLP

MODULE 5 (PLEASE) – VISION

The 7 Words System is a neutral framework that can facilitate the realising of any vision. The stages of realisation can be set out with Please's keywords: Vision, Intention, Cooperation, and Prayer. It is to be seen that in order to realise one's own vision, it becomes beneficial and perhaps even necessary to support the realisation of the visions of others in your social group, and to call upon the highest within yourself through an attitude of prayerfulness that brings self-inspiration, and often inspires others to help you.

a) Describe in 7 Words and in detail your most optimistic, realizable vision for your future in the context of life in the 21st century.

Detail is important for this exercise, no less than optimism. An ill-defined vague sense of what might be nice in the distant future is really not very impressive, or indeed workable, as a vision. It will not create the future you deserve. Trying to describe your vision clearly and fully, you will find that your life direction was not quite as focused as you had assumed.

1. Clarify your intention to act in response to what you understood from Part a).

Dreaming is good, and necessary – but not sufficient. Intention is usually evidenced by the existence of plans and the collecting of resources. It is often announced, and frequently referred to, so that one can continually reorient 'back to message' – the script of your life drama.

c) Create a petition or personal statement that demonstrates your intention to realise a certain aspect of the vision described in Part a). Get 7 people to sign it.

Your community is a powerful source of resources, without which you will find it hard or even impossible to realise your vision. Not only that, people close to you will hold you focused and challenge any behaviour that contradicts your avowed intention. If you are serious about getting what you have envisioned then this feedback is golden.

d) From a religion, not your own or your parents', find a prayer and write a few paragraphs about it and why you have selected it.

Let's not throw the baby out with the bathwater when we reject formal religion – their prayers have juice, and we can gain real benefit from employing them. True prayer requires an exalted state of consciousness, and certain words can help us get into those states when we gain the benefits available through frequent repetition.

It is good to research how various peoples present their spirituality, so that we expand our choice of options, and learn to overcome unconscious prejudices and dogmatic belief, which we all have to some extent, and which limits, as an available resource, our ability to experience the joy and also the worldly effectiveness of being in a state of sacredness.

7 ASPECTS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS

This process can be applied at any level whether it be personal, corporate or global. The first step in affirming what we want is clearly to define what we don't want. This has to be done very specifically indeed.

No. Define your problem specifically and clearly – this is unacceptable

Hello. Brainstorm and research; discuss options

Thanks. Feel which option best expresses your true preferences

Goodbye. Decide what you want and announce it

Please. Visualize your improved future in great and specific detail

Sorry. Be considerate towards others who will be touched

Yes. Be adaptable and accepting towards unlooked – for results

POSSIBLE OMISSIONS OR ERRORS

No. Failure to define the problem. Despite the strong emphasis in alternative bookshops on positive methods to engineer life changes, in practice the main task is not really to affirm what we want; it is to clearly define what we don't want. NLP students know about this. We have to get to the exact physical aspects of the particular life circumstance that we want to change. Say something like: *'I experience my father as uncomfortably invasive whenever he speaks to me disdainfully about my career prospects'*.

Hello. Inadequate information and contacts. Is it reasonable to expect to jump immediately from problem to solution without due process? That's not what life is about. We need to consider options, to enquire into possibilities, to be open to change our ways a little bit. There is vast energy wastage simply because information and contacts are not respected and developed fully.

Thanks. Failure to take human feelings into account. On a personal level, we need to be honest about the gap that exists between what we would like to be, and what we are. It's good to strive for something that would express an elevated version of who we want to be, yet actually if it feels awful, then there's a very good chance that we won't sustain the new situation. So we need to imagine how it would feel actually to be in the circumstances we're proposing. Equally, the machinery of business and government will never run smoothly unless and until the human factor is embraced as a necessary and valuable factor.

Goodbye. Indecisiveness and slovenly attitudes towards completions. Committees in general are renowned for their indecisiveness, especially the local soviets in the ex-USSR. If we postpone our decision until there is only one possibility remaining, then we can't be blamed for making a mistake! What crazy logic! What nonsense! Is it thought that errors of omission are not errors? And yet we all suffer from failure to complete. When a shopkeeper gives us a plastic bag are we aware enough that unless we act wisely its disposal will probably cause additional pollution? Do we always keep our files up to date? Do we routinely throw out old clothes to the charity shops? In other words are we willing to deal fully with the implications of a decision before making it?

Please. Indistinct intention and inability to win cooperation. It's no good just saying '*I want to get closer to God*' or '*I want to be happy*', these are so indistinct that nobody can actually understand what we mean. Most importantly, we ourselves can't. So we don't know what we want and therefore we don't know how to get it or even when we've got it. Say something like I choose to find a home with everything I enjoy and need, and I will enjoy attracting cooperation to help me get it.

Sorry. Lack of awareness and irresponsible dealings with other people. We live in a world where there are other people with their own agendas, and their own situations. Some of these will be touched as we progress towards fulfilment of our own visions, and occasionally there will be those who feel upset when we get what we want. We need to watch out for this, and try to minimise their upset, even promote their own vision-fulfilment, as a way to diminish the resistance against us. It's not only nicer; it's also more effective.

Yes. Intolerance and inflexibility; failure to flow. Rigidity is evidence of death not life. We will never get exactly all we want, so we do need to accept what comes instead. Life is about flowing through the changes, and although we can nudge things our way, we need also to acknowledge the larger picture over which we have no influence at all. Can we stop the sun shining or the tides rising? King Canute was trying to demonstrate this wisdom.



MORAL FIBRE

According to various teachings, not excluding Christianity, there are 7 expressions of attitude and behaviour that dignify a person. These are reflected here in brief terms using the 7 Words System.

No. In order to be authentic and trustworthy, a person must establish boundaries – and respect the boundaries of others. Civilisation, and our freedom of will, rests upon the foundation principle that each of us has a right to be a unique individual, and a duty to control ourselves to avoid violent imposition upon another's person and property. Clearly saying No specifically establishes one's borders of personal interest and informs others of our requirement upon them to show respect and restraint. Without making this statement unequivocally and truthfully, then when intrusion occurs, we are not entirely without a measure of fault ourselves. When there are no defined boundaries in place, strongly and consistently reinforced, then it is futile and irresponsible to hold someone else to blame for invasive behaviour against us. Victims so often are unwilling to acknowledge their own complicity in unpleasant circumstances, despite having done little or nothing to protect their personal interests and develop resilience to defend against abuse. It is also fair to say, and of significant consequence, that any person with an appropriate degree of self-respect will invariably show respect to others.

Hello. Living in close contact with others will always involve interaction with people whose values, beliefs and behaviour differ from our own. It is important to keep an open mind about these differences, and to be willing to listen and learn from others. To be sincere, and therefore of real value, this must include the willingness to change our own perception about the nature of things. Right and wrong are conceptual constructs that are subject to evolutionary and revolutionary processes. Major shifts in humanity's orientation are constantly and rapidly taking place – for example, consider the huge changes in western attitudes towards sexuality, economics, politics and spirituality since the Sixties. Also, a short journey by 'plane will take us to a place where the people live by very different codes of conduct. Morality is not an absolute; it is space-time dependent, an attribute of a particular society and a particular time. We need to allow others to see the world differently from us, and not get too worked up about that, by acting as though our critical value judgements were somehow helpful, and that our own judgements are somehow God-given and theirs are not.

Thanks. Pleasure is not happiness, it does not lead to happiness, nor can it ever replace it. The deep sense of joyful well-being that underlies all meaningful human activity is a result of the pursuit of values that we hold dear to our heart. We truly appreciate only that which touches the core of our being as a feeling of connectedness. Naturally, one of the strongest is shown by how we experience family. If fortunate enough to be blessed with a loving family, then we feel cared for and have a sense of belonging and the deep security that arises out of knowing there is always home to support us. The homeless, orphans and outcasts so often are somehow sadly empty. We can extend this feeling. We extend the atmosphere of love by showing heart-felt gratitude and appreciation, giving gestures that show how we feel.

This can apply to all things, all beings – friends, country, work, animals – because it is the heart's essential purpose to radiate love wherever it casts its attention; it is a blessing and has tangible positive effect, enriching both giver and receiver simultaneously.

Goodbye. Mostly, life is routine and people live out today rather like yesterday until all of their yesterdays exceed all of their tomorrows, and they have become habituated to mediocrity. This is thought expedient by most people – if indeed they think about it at all. Yet life presents a constancy of change and complexity for us to deal with – and when we are challenged we have to make decisions about some very important issues. Do we accept or do we stand? It would be immoderate to suggest that one should always stand on principle – there are plenty of occurrences that do not warrant the firming up of backbones, because they are trivial, insufficiently understood or because we lack the clout to make an impact and would lose rather than gain influence. Yet at certain times we are called upon to become firm in our resolve, to confront oppression or to bring an end to some situation that no longer serves our highest vision or desires. It takes clarity, honesty, courage and personal power to let go of a secure, accepted position and to strike out into unknown regions of experience. It is a hero's journey. Those who do not take it inevitably underachieve and lose vitality.

Please. An intriguing proposition is that there is but one true morality: optimism. If we each focus on the hope of a better world, and truly understand that everyone else's vision will be accommodated fully within that, then we engender an atmosphere of mutual cooperation that is greater than the comparatively inconsequential differences of approach. Of course this affirmation is very visionary – yet that is what is now required. We need to adopt a positive collective vision of a bright future. From our thoughts and words come the deeds that build life's circumstances. If we are to survive and prosper, then we cannot ignore our collective duty to monitor our words, even our thoughts, so that we are a constant force of optimism, and that our sacred gift of creativity is used towards positive outcomes.

Sorry. We say Sorry to indicate that we have been somewhat insensitive, thoughtless, under skilled or whatever, and that we regret that another's feelings or circumstances have been impacted negatively by us. When relationship is more important than ego, then Sorry is a naturally arising condition that communicates remorse. When ego is the more important, then pride prevents this healing force from flowing. To avoid the need to say Sorry, we must learn reflexive self-consciousness. It is the essence of spirituality: do as you would be done by. Any inability or unwillingness to learn this will eventually be indicated by the prick of conscience.

Yes. Of course we cannot control every aspect of life, so we need to learn acceptance for those matters that lay beyond our remit. We are so small in the cosmic order of things; vast reaches of time and space are apparent, yet we somehow lose sight of Infinity. It is a great and noble thing that a person claims a degree of relevance, even importance – yet in the highest sense, we must surely allow that the forces that control our destiny are supreme and incontrovertible. We die. Living with the awareness of the certainty of death is a very vitalising spiritual practice. It behoves us to surrender to something greater, and balances our feelings of self-importance with humility. This feeling of surrender can arise comfortably within us, and we then find it easier to allow things to unfold as they must.

SORRY

SENSITIVITY OFTEN REQUIRES RESTRAINING YOURSELF

Perhaps in Please we became aware of a life-vision, and now with Sorry we have a higher degree of awareness of why that vision has to be so. It's to do with refinement. The refining process is described with the keywords of Sorry — beginning with responsibility; developing the feeling of remorse, then repairing the damage so that we can release our attachments to the past. There are often difficulties arising in life where two motives collide, acted out by individuals or groups and sanctified as causes, creeds, political imperatives and so on. Also there is the more straightforward case where the desire of one doesn't reconcile with the desire of another. This is so often the case that we can safely see it as the normal life condition; certainly it's the one that wins most of our attention.

We may think we yearn for unending harmony and yet there's no evidence for this except the myth of fairy stories that allow protagonists to live happily ever after — after the collision has been resolved, incidentally. The collision of motivations offers us what we actually want and need out of our time on earth. We want collision in order to refine identity, in order to deepen involvements, in order to come to a better knowledge of others and ourselves. Yet there is no need for collision to be seen as beyond our capacity to handle. We can grow to meet the challenges, and the proof that we have grown lies in whether we can release them.

A lot hinges on our concepts of responsibility. We can see this word to mean 'an unwelcome duty or burden', and yet we can also see it as the ability to respond. Further, we can accept responsibility for being who and what we are and the effect we have upon another. A highly developed, responsible adult can acknowledge that they are, or at least should be, able to respond to any person or situation without causing upset — and therefore if they do cause upset, they are responsible.

By contrast, let's consider what it means to be irresponsible. The sense we have is of a person who acts without concern for the effect of their actions, without the ability or intention of controlling themselves in order to act within acceptable limits, someone who cares little for the inconvenience caused to others and does not clean up the mess they make. This person is not to be trusted and allows things to happen that need to be prevented, they are poor leaders and cannot maintain authority, and they are not given to attend to their commitments and duties without close supervision. Ironically, such a person

may be the one who says Sorry frequently because they have been found wanting and exposed in their dereliction of duty. For them the Sorry word slips easily off the tongue — and yet is neither meant nor believed in any profound sense. It is an expedient only, and lacks the depth required to ground it in real terms.

In every spiritual teaching the golden rule is seen, reflexive self-consciousness, think about the effect you have on others before you act:

Jesus	Do unto others as you would have others do unto you
Buddhism	Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful.
Confucius	Do not unto another that you would not have him do unto you. Thou needest this law alone. It is the foundation of all the rest.
Hinduism	This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee would cause thee pain. (The Mahabharata)
Islam	No one of you is a believer until he desires for his brother that which he desires for himself.
Judaism	Whatever thou hatest thyself, that do not to another.
Taoism	Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss.

A person who does not feel remorse might be forced to say Sorry as a discipline and yet, in the absence of the true Sorry body state, will say the word with a voice that betrays the lack of sincerity. It is better not to shed crocodile tears; the listener can hear whether or not the message is sincerely felt because the voice expresses itself quite clearly and authentically with its tone so that content and quality are in agreement — what is said and how it's said are in harmony. Authenticity is always a true gift and any false declaration of feeling will rebound. In some cases, we cannot access the feelings expected of us, and yet always it is rather more proper to give voice to the truth. Words can always be found to avoid offence.

At times we allow ourselves to do something that we know will create an unwanted result. We all do it. Perhaps the first important thing is to be honest with ourselves about the fact that we knowingly do what is wrong. Whether this is a little thing or a big thing is actually secondary — we still feel the prick of conscience. This lets us know that our thoughts, words or actions have impinged badly upon the outer universe and offers an opportunity to reaffirm our intention to do the right thing next time. The prick of conscience and the related feelings of remorse are rather subtle and so we need to be careful to 'listen out' for them. They show us the path towards release and the healing that release affords.



KEYWORDS

RESPONSIBILITY

The association between Sorry and guilt is a major concern because it often stimulates a defensive attitude of pride, which is really quite the reverse of what is required. Faults arise — and it is indeed sometimes through a carelessness that amounts to irresponsibility or even negligence, yet blame does not repair the damage, neither does it prevent recurrence. Responsibility does. The past is past; blame pulls us back. What works is to establish who is able and willing to respond to future needs.

People are programmed to believe that to say Sorry is to take the blame, and so there is nothing left to say to capture the meaning of: *'I regret my insensitivity and feel sympathy and remorse for any distress it may have caused'*. This does appear a healthier interpretation than *'I'm guilty and therefore a bad person'* which seems to be what underlies the reluctance many people have to say Sorry.

REMORSE

It is useful to distinguish between the quality of pity or compassion and the quality of remorse. It is a gentle courtesy to express sorrow on receiving the news of someone's bereavement — we might even say *'I'm sorry to learn of your grandfather's death'* — yet this is not remorse; it is sympathy. Perhaps what we mean might be better put: *'I am sorrowing to hear of your loss.'* Remorse suggests a feeling of regret that arises on discovering that something we have done, or omitted to do, has resulted in the pain or inconvenience of another. In other words: a) we accept responsibility, and b) we feel regret. Without these two factors, any apparent expression of remorse will seem inappropriate or hollow, lacking sincerity.

REPAIR

A person who is fully self-responsible and sensitive to the feelings of others will feel remorse if their behaviour impinges painfully upon another — and will hurry to make amends. That bit is rather important — to make amends. *'If it's my fault, then it's my responsibility to repair the damage'*. Only then will both parties be able to release any emotional issues that have arisen and truly to forgive and forget. In most cases — at least on a personal level — the primary requirement to relieve injury is to offer attention, so that the person quickly understands that there is recognition that they feel hurt or inconvenienced by our insensitivity.

Attention is a real force; it has effect. Allowing someone the opportunity to speak of their pain, to complain and even to criticise or blame, we are helping them to release — which is nicely described as *'letting off steam'*. Often there may well additionally be a need for appropriate material compensation to a level that satisfactorily deals with the injured party's feelings.

RELEASE

Perhaps we can renew our sense of what forgiveness is, and how to practise it more easily by making it a bit more everyday and ordinary — not linked to pride, blame and guilt. Something more like this: *'I'm not attached to an image of myself as faultless, my behaviour was wrong or insensitive and I regret causing pain or inconvenience. I feel remorse and ask for forgiveness in order to release the emotional tension arising out of possible resentment'*. If an experience of Sorry is true and profound, then all issues are dissolved. Forgiveness arises; the past hurts and resentments become softer and softer until we can actually forget the insult or intrusion.

Q21 COMMENTARY

DO YOU MAKE AMENDS IF YOU CAUSE HARM?

In some spiritual groups, on camps etc, we can observe the process called 'karma yoga', which raises the concept of chores to a new level. By doing work in the spirit of sacred service, the effect is to heal ourselves of issues that trouble us. This is the way to understand making amends. It is not done simply to justly compensate the other. It is done to repair the damage in ourselves that is evidenced by our insensitivity to others. When we do the right thing by others, we feel good on a soul level. It's worth it; benefit outweighs cost by a dimension.

ARE YOU RELATIVELY FREE OF GUILT?

This question is also profoundly correlated with happiness. From a truly spiritual perspective, guilt is always wrong – and blame too. So whatever we do that is motivated by guilt or blame will always lead towards an unsatisfactory result. We need to avoid that behaviour, whatever the cost, and to let go of guilt – or our chances of joy are very significantly diminished.

ARE YOU A PERSON WHO CAN FORGIVE AND FORGET?

We all do what we think is right. If we think that someone is doing something wrong then it's just because their model of the world is different to ours. It explains all the friction and resultant conflict. Forgiveness is more than excusing someone's bad behaviour; it is much more. Forgiveness is a state of grace that enables a person to release resentment and be fully responsible for everything that they experience in life. It heals the poison of blame and guilt.

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Hubris, insensitivity, carelessness, missing the point, shallow relationships, lack of understanding, insularity, joyless pleasure, inconsequential life path.

Since life is nothing without real relationship, these people tend not to reach the depth of experience that is available to others. True relationship is deepened as we soften the ego, and care about the effect we have on others. Someone who has no sense of remorse gets to become rather dried up, aloof and actually proud of their sad insularity as the proof of how impregnable is their fortress mentality.

DYSFUNCTIONS

Some people take it upon themselves to be responsible for another's faults, yet whereas a healthy degree of sensitivity and honest self-criticism naturally forms a part of the normal person's psychological profile, there are limits beyond which it is not helpful to burden oneself. The child of a martyr can grow to become a martyr. They can grow to display a self-pitying personality and be given to victim consciousness — in other words, they expect to be 'done to'; they feel it's all their fault — *'It is true; I am guilty'*. In another frame of mind they might become persecutor and be lost in blame. *'It's his fault; he's to blame. Punish him'*.

If humanity would only release guilt and blame, what a joyful day that would be! Where is the advantage in blame? Who gains? And why must we consider the phrase 'at fault' to be synonymous with 'guilty'?

GLOBAL ISSUES

The law is based on a fairly simple set of ideas: The community decides rules and those who go against them are accountable to the community to make good restitution or suffer loss of personal liberty. It seems reasonable. However — what about the responsibility of the lawmakers and the enforcers? Are they also fully accountable? If not then justice is a sham, just a means to control the poor and maintain the currency of those in power. It's not justice; it's a device of power.

Democracy is held up as a high ideal and the expression of fairness in politics. Perhaps we need to look again at this. Clearly it is preferable to tyranny — but equally clearly it doesn't actually work very well the way we operate it at the moment. New ways need to be found so that those in power are made more liable in law — and those who are unwilling to account for their mistakes are removed from positions of authority.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF SORRY

SPIRITUALITY

Though it really seems as though we are all separate beings, the spiritual wisdom is that in fact we are all One, and the sense we have of separation is actually an illusion. It is feasible to experience this as a self-evident, intuitively obvious truth for those willing to go on a spiritual retreat and practise certain exercises that expand consciousness. Having experienced this, or having faith in the idea, we want to behave appropriately in our everyday affairs. Such behaviour is called reflexive self-consciousness and is the essence of the mystery of Sorry, accessed by the associated keywords.

We not only express remorse and make amends when we learn that we have impinged insensitively upon another – we learn to avoid doing so, and find a way to get what we want without upsetting anyone else. This is not a question of morality; it is a question of what works best for all concerned. Inevitably we reap what we sow, so it serves as an expedient strategy; it is also a more elegant way to express personality. The continued practise of this golden rule is an entirely valid, effective spiritual path.



SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

IMMACULATE STATE

There is a state of being, which we can learn to reach at will, where distinctions between good and bad, or right and wrong, simply fade into nothing. Such a state equates to the 6th Plane of consciousness, called the Immaculate State by Sufis, and corresponds in the 7 Words System to the word Sorry.

Typically, in human interactions motivations clash and feelings are hurt, egos are bruised and material property is lost or damaged. The word Sorry is demanded – wrongly perhaps – to admit guilt rather than fault, as if to suggest *'you are at fault, therefore guilty, therefore a bad person... and I require your reluctant apology to demonstrate my superiority and to diminish your ego-strength'*. Horrible isn't it!

Yet in the immaculate state, on the 6th Plane, one has no attachment to ego, nor even morality and therefore, and especially, not judgement. Here, by Sorry, we mean *'my insensitivity has disturbed your peace of mind, and I regret that'*.

Think of this as a place of perfect stillness, a white mountaintop, cold and pure, free of all emotion, clear sighted, clear minded and open to the clear blue sky of cosmic awareness. The world and its frenetic duplicity is scurrying about in the villages and cities – but these are as distant as one's childhood days, vague memories of no concern because present perceptions are all-embracing and awakened.

To reach this enlightened state requires training in techniques of meditation. The normal mind – 'Gross Mind' or 'Monkey Mind' – is ill-equipped to maintain its equilibrium, so often jumping from one topic to another and delighting to find cause for argument and prove itself right at the expense of another's wrongness. Through meditation, a serious student will learn how to still the Gross Mind so that the perceptions of the Subtle Mind are available. With this more refined approach to life one sees more clearly the mystery that is hidden beneath the apparent.

The fundamental mystery is that the apparent is not truth. Truth is subjective; 'reality' is illusion in fact – we make it all up. This becomes quite clear when we maintain 6th Plane awareness for a while. Those who know of this, but have not experienced it, sound like empty drums when they do their preaching – and the wisdom becomes corrupted. Christians preach *"Judgement is mine, saith the Lord"*. That's supposed to mean *"Leave it to Me"*, not *"I am a judgemental God"*. The wisdom here is simple – *'do not judge another as right or wrong; do not judge yourself as good or bad'*. And if you touch the 6th Plane, you can experience why this wisdom is so.

EXERCISES

SPIRITUALITY: PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT

How

Students are asked to share in a circle, perhaps with a talking stick, their answers to the following three questions:

What is the background of your spiritual life?

What purpose does it serve?

Where are you now with your spirituality?

Why

The opportunity to express their feelings on this highly charged topic brings the student to an excited state – of inspiration, anger, disappointment...and helps to heal psychological issues of some importance.

APOLOGY AND PARENTS

How

In pairs, imagine that your partner is someone to whom or from whom you feel an apology is due – more powerful if it is a parent – and act out the scenario where the apology is given and received, or not! As the other, the parent for example, be awkward about it to make it more real.

Why

Most life issues are to do with this question. We hold resentment as a poison in the mind and body because we resent something done to us, or feel guilty about something we feel we did wrong – whether this is realistic or not. This exercise heals resentments, blame and guilt to some extent.

POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE FEEDBACK

How

Your partner offers you sincere feedback from their perception of you – one positive and affirming, the other negative and critical. You receive it and consider the wisdom of it. This has to be done very sensitively indeed!

Why

Sincere feedback aids self-awareness-this is an exercise in genuine reflexive self-consciousness.

BARONESS

How

Divide the group into smaller groups of four or five. After reading the story and without consultation, rank the characters, from 1 through 6, in the order of their responsibility for the death of the Baroness. Next, work with the other members of your group and decide upon a group rank for each of the six characters. All members of the group must agree upon the ranking. Then come together as a whole group and try to establish complete consensus.

WHO'S FAULT?

Once upon a time, in the land of cream and honey, there lived a Baron and Baroness. They lived in a large, well-constructed castle that was located on an island in the middle of a wide, fast-flowing river. A drawbridge connected the island to the mainland at the river's narrowest point. Rumour had it that the Baron also kept alligators in the river to prevent swimmers from reaching his island. One morning it became necessary for the Baron to visit the outlying districts. As he prepared for his departure, the jealous Baron warned his beautiful wife, "Do not leave the castle while I am away. If you do, I will severely punish you upon my return."

As the hours of the morning passed, the pretty Baroness grew lonely. Despite her husband's warning, she decided to go see her lover who lived nearby. "Surely my husband will not return before sunrise," thought the Baroness. So she ordered the servants to lower the drawbridge and to leave it down until she returned. After spending several pleasant hours with her lover, the Baroness returned to the drawbridge. However, as she approached the drawbridge she found it blocked by a madman wildly waving a wicked knife. "Do not cross this bridge pretty Baroness or I will kill you," he screamed.

Fearing for her life, the Baroness went back to her lover and asked for his help. "Our relationship is only a romantic one," her lover said. "I will not help you get across the bridge." The Baroness left her lover and sought out a boatman. She explained her plight to the boatman and asked him to take her across the river in his boat. "I will do it, but it will cost you 10 roubles", the boatman said. "But I have no money with me," the Baroness protested. "That is too bad. No money, no ride," the boatman replied. Her fear growing, the Baroness ran crying to the home of a friend. Again she explained her situation and begged her friend to lend her the 10 roubles to pay the boatman's fee. "If you had not disobeyed your husband this would not have happened. You have created your own situation and I will give you no money," said her friend. Dawn was coming and her last resource was exhausted. The Baroness returned to the drawbridge. Again she pleaded with the madman but to no avail. In desperation she tried to run past him but failed. She was slain by the madman.

Why

It is very difficult to address this question calmly without being overtaken by emotion. It could be an Hello exercise – but it is too highly charged for that. One needs to see things from another perspective, and be free of blame.

DLP

MODULE 6 (SORRY) – SELF-HEALING

This needs to be approached with great care and sensitivity, and requires a degree of sacredness and humility. In the previous modules we have learned quite a lot about incisiveness and thrust. We are now learning about compassion and the effect we have on others.

a) Meditate on reflexive self-consciousness: in other words, try to put yourself at the other end of what you do and have done to others, and imagine that you can experience the feelings of someone you have hurt. Write about the feelings this brings up in you.

The mind is drawn into the world of duality so very easily, and quickly limits its options to one side of an issue – thereby becoming divided and divisive. It is not a path of knowledge. All issues have two sides, both equally God-sponsored, and yet neither is as close to true knowledge as that which is above duality. There is a place above the differences between this and that, a place of the higher mind. This place is reached as a life option only when we can see things from the other point of view.

b) Discuss what you feel you are owed by a person who has injured you or hurt your feelings.

Resentment is a poison in the mind. It must be released if we are to be free, and such a release can only begin to take place when we are truthful about the perceived injury and our lasting chagrin. The truth is that we are still a bit peeved about something – be honest about that.

c) Discuss also what you feel you owe to a person who feels upset with you.

Guilt is no less damaging to our sense of wellness than is blame. They exist as two sides of a coin; neither is in any way helpful and each is profoundly detrimental to our chances of happiness. In order to release any harmful feelings we may still have, we need to register that we hold a sense of owing something – even if only an apology – to someone whom we feel we mistreated in some way.

d) Describe a situation in which you feel the 7 Words System has facilitated healing.

Very often a shift of perception is required in order to heal some outstanding psychological issues that we are holding. Indeed, often such a shift is all that is required. We can feel it when it happens usually, and certainly we can notice it in our situations. Also, by giving excellent attention, we can help others to go through their own healing process so simply by embodying these 7 wisdoms, we gain the possibility to offer healing attention to those we meet.

7 SUBTLE FORCES

If we had a headache and took a tablet designed to settle the tummy, we would not necessarily be healed of the headache because the tablet's properties – valuable healing properties – were actually suitable for a different need. This is rather obvious when we think in physical terms, yet can we apply this to other aspects of life?

Our psychological ill - health, whose signs are anxiety, compulsion, depression and so on – which we all have sometimes – can also be addressed with remedies. In this case the healing takes place on a non-physical level and is evidenced for example by the flow of clarity, truth, compassion and empathy, which can be termed “energies-that-have-qualities”. There are 7 distinct types of such energy, because there are 7 distinct types of all energy, as frequently suggested throughout the history of philosophical text from Pythagoras to beyond Rudolph Steiner and Khalil Gibran.

Describing these energies, we are lost for words – unless perhaps we bring the words to their most basic form: No, Hello, Thanks, Goodbye, Please, Sorry and Yes. Each of these 7 primary words, when authentically understood and integrated within an emotionally mature individual, creates a ‘field of energy’ that registers most deeply on the level of psychology: an interplay of thoughts and feelings. In other words, each of the 7 words has an effect upon the mind and the heart, which translates into how we think and feel.

Now, there is a flow of energy between two people when they meet and interact at a meaningful level. Like the wind blows – or flows – from high to low pressure areas, energy flows from the one person who has abundance to the other who has an insufficiency. As a result of the exchange, healing occurs. It arises because natural balance is approached as this restorative energetic flow takes place. Typically delivered unconsciously, there is a signal from the person who has needs to signify insufficiency. Perhaps this takes the form of dysfunctional behaviour: the person behaves angrily, self-pityingly, arrogantly or whatever. This emotionality is equivalent to the headache, a sign that rebalancing is required.

When we master the 7 words, we will have learned two important skills: firstly the ability to recognise dysfunctional behaviour as a signal rather than an attack or defect; secondly the ability to respond with the appropriate pure archetypal energetic state: No, Hello, Thanks, Goodbye, Please, Sorry or Yes. When we respond pure and true with one of the 7, then healing is promoted.

For example, it may be quite inappropriate for a parent to offer soft loving care and unconditional support to an angry teenage lad who habitually is overly intrusive. The generous, loving response is ‘Thank You’ type energy and does not match what is offered by the teen. His anger is No-like in a dysfunctional sense, and needs No-like responses – the firming up of boundaries, and a few home truths. This would actually better serve his fundamental need to develop a clear strong identity to cope with life, instead of conditioning him towards the false expectation that such careless behaviour will bring him lasting benefit.

We all have the potential to become a constant healing force by fully embodying these words and their seven wisdoms, since then we learn to move with ease from one state to another, able to respond appropriately to everyone and each situation we meet.

YES

YOU EMBRACE SITUATIONS

Yes acts as a guiding light or beacon, towards a path that is available to us, and good. In whatever we do, we always encounter a degree of resistance, because it is a condition of life to have to overcome inertia, yet we can generally say that the right path is the one illuminated by green lights — the Yes sign for motorists. If our life path is mostly punctuated by red lights, delay, restrictions, problems, illness and trouble, perhaps we need to check again whether we are pointed in the right direction. There is value and importance in rising to meet and overcome occasional challenges, and yet a life lived only in conflict is ceaseless struggle and is unlikely to offer a peaceful heart. Yes relaxes tension and leads to peace. Isn't this the word that we all long to hear — and the one that we want to say? It indicates that we are allowed and that we are accepted. The door opens to us, horizons expand and we are free to follow the direction of our desire.

We need to be clear that Yes is chosen in preference to No by someone able to exercise choice. Put differently, a disempowered victim repeatedly abused, and so surrendering to the inescapable reality that they are suffering, cannot truly be seen as saying Yes. Such a person is simply expressing a weak No. So if one is weak in No, then one is unlikely to be truly strong in Yes. Yes is the suspension of No.

The movement from a strong (and therefore enforceable) No toward an unreserved Yes is studied in the formula: Permission, Acceptance, Agreement and Surrender. Whereas Permission shows the overcoming of reluctance to say Yes, Acceptance indicates that there is no such reluctance and the starting point is one where the inclination to say Yes is balanced equally with inclination to say No. By affirming the status quo, we see that Permission has a general prejudice against anything new, whereas Acceptance has not. Beyond this, Agreement is a coincidence of Yeses, an inclination to say Yes. With Surrender there is no need to agree because Yes is assumed without decision.

The Yes person has no great attachment to the past or to logic; there is a fluidity of personality that enables them to swim with the moment, having no personal agenda except the preservation of agreement. Perhaps this type of person is a little detached from mainstream values, which pursue goals and measure success in numbers or material terms. Yes types are less likely to be found in positions of institutional authority, where No is more the requirement. All of us wield a degree of authority as parents, as older siblings, as

owners of pets and as leaders — and we will notice how our tendency whether to say Yes and how to say it, impacts upon those whom we control. Yes answers are likelier to win affection in the short term, although if long-term respect is wanted, then it needs to be balanced with No.

By embracing the unexpected, we expand the contours of our lives. We can go into deeper realms of acceptance by allowing our feelings to transform. Prejudice is conditioned into us at various degrees of unconsciousness from the deepest emotional levels of programming in the womb, to the subtle mental persuasions of headlines and banners. The clearing of these distortions needs to take place within our emotional body as well as the mental. This has to be done in practice — there must be consciousness brought to bear upon the reactive habit of prejudice in real life situations.

There are examples to be found of active mutual reciprocity, where two people are more willing to serve the other than themselves. In such cases the most profound realisation can occur of the heights of spiritual awareness that may transpire between individuals, despite all the struggles and pressures in life. Perhaps we could imagine an old couple, loving and devoted, each overwhelmingly grateful to the other for a life shared in love. Within such contact, an atmosphere arises that goes beyond normal attitudes of behaviour and invokes a quality of sacredness that allows a grace to become perceptible. There is an easy sense of being, a sparking quality and a readiness of understanding that speaks of higher spheres of life. This is the gate to surrender.

We've touched upon the heightened state of grace achievable when two people are in mutual agreement; we could look at the kind of life that can be experienced when we are able to maintain such a condition unilaterally. In this case there is no requirement that we are in agreement with another because we have taken ourselves to a place where we can say Yes to whatever comes, and it makes no difference whether we agree with it or not.

What power is such that it can overcome the seemingly primary urge of an individual: the survival instinct? There is clear evidence that another urge is inherent within humanity, and, against all materialistic logic, will often hold sway against all other motivations — the religious instinct. In a worldly context, words like surrender and submission speak to us of loss of identity, defeat, an unacceptable but overwhelming force that we have to bow down to. This lack of ability to defend is categorized as a weak No. In a spiritual context however, the ability to put aside one's selfhood in order to surrender to a higher, spiritual authority is to be seen as a strong Yes. This seems to be what is meant in Christianity by 'Thy will be done' or in Islam, whose creed is fundamentally submission to Allah.

KEYWORDS

PERMISSION

As a birth right, it is rather to be assumed that an individual has a certain authority to forbid. The rights given and protected both by law and common practice have to do with not being violated, and not being denied access to what is needed for survival. If there exists the authority to forbid and it is relaxed, there is permission. Permission suggests allowing. Someone, perhaps in authority or exercising the individual's birth right, suspends the right to refuse and is willing to allow the request of another. In response to the application of a person who wants something from us, the process by which we come to relax our attitude from No to Yes can be called negotiation.

ACCEPTANCE

Often what we are asked to accept will go against what we have come to believe in or expect. Of course, otherwise there's nothing to accept, because we agree. Our suspicion of change and the inertia of our love of the familiar are often very strong. Acceptance suggests the need to be more open than we were before in order that our awareness of possibilities is expanded.

Without such openness we are constrained within what is available and we would therefore be limiting not only the scope but also the likelihood of our vision-fulfilment. Surely it is clear that in order to change our circumstances we have to change ourselves? This inevitably requires us to accept new factors into the equation of lives.

AGREEMENT

Agreement is harmonious alignment. I want what you want, we both want the same. An exchange that takes place under these conditions is rather special. Each party is inclined towards saying Yes, they seek opportunities to agree, they actively promote harmony out of an inner sense of being harmonious. An obvious example would be two innocent lovers, rapt and in the wonder of love, each trying to meet every need and desire of the other. A less fanciful version might be the constant mutual cooperation of two or more people who are working towards a shared goal using methods that are clear and settled.

SURRENDER

Beyond other levels of Yesness, there is a level of acceptance that has a spiritual quality that we can call surrender. What is surrendered is the sense of self-importance, in the realisation of the Unity that is all-embracing and all-pervading. If all comes from God, if all is God, then why resist or refuse anything? Yes is a response indicating the giving up of personal resistances. It is responsive in its nature and therefore feminine; its mystery may be beyond the understanding of the more masculine thrusting types that tend to dominate most fields of human activity. We can know of God through books and conversations. Is that enough? To

know *of* God is about as delicious as knowing *of* chocolate. There is written throughout the ages, stories of women and men who wanted more intimate relationship with God, so they reached out and they put all other things aside so that their reaching out was primary. These mystics sought knowledge of God, they sought knowledge in God and they found knowledge as though through the eyes of God. They exemplify the principle of surrender.

Q21 COMMENTARY

DO YOU USUALLY WAKE UP FEELING ENTHUSIASTIC?

Typically a child is actively involved in the experience of joyful curiosity within the very first moments of waking. That's the natural state, free of fear. In contrast, so many adults are resentful at having to get up and go to work. Each awakening is troubled immediately with anxiety or a depressed mood. Those first feelings are eloquent testimony to the expectations we have for the day ahead and so let us know whether we have a relaxed acceptance that whatever comes will be fine.

DO YOU 'TAKE LIFE AS IT COMES' WITH EASY ACCEPTANCE?

As time goes by, more and more we come to see that we somehow survive even worst-case scenarios. Our expectations often go unfulfilled, and instead our fears are realised, yet still we manage to pull through. It's true that occasionally we often get almost exactly what we want, yet truer that actually we get something else, and truer still that the something else actually becomes the better option. So why not relax then? Why resist what can't be changed?

ARE YOU USING YOUR TALENTS WELL?

It is surely obvious that we all have amazing talent? All that we need to do is to trust our ability, and then we find ourselves to be supremely resourceful and capable of unthinkable achievements. Nothing is to be gained by believing in our limitation – except limitation itself. By surrendering to the highest within us we allow a greater life-force to operate through us, which expresses itself in the form of knowledge and talents. These need to be used in order to claim them, and therefore our full magnificent birth right to be wonderful people!

LIFE LESSONS

WEAKNESSES

Typical issues: Control, fear of future, stress, disappointment, inability to adapt, slow to align with changing times, left out, constant tension, anxiety, attached to outcomes.

These people are tight, and bring unnecessary tension that limits both the scope of life and the happiness available to them and those around them. Often in positions of petty authority, they clamp down on the flow of things and, by making sure nothing goes wrong, they make sure that nothing is ever really right either.

DYSFUNCTIONS

An extremely liberal upbringing has its own problems and will be likely to give rise to an attitude in adulthood that will be fraught with difficulty. Such a person may well be unable to discriminate easily between right and wrong, have no ethical code, no respect for a sense of moderation and will be at risk of leading a dissolute life, debauched and self-indulgent, given to abuse through misuse of alcohol, drugs and every kind of gratification. Sexual standards are more likely to be extremely permissive beyond the point of socially accepted norms.

It's all too easy for a child to get a habit for such pleasures before they develop self-control and awareness of the need for taking responsibility for oneself.

In fact, by having the practice and expectation of always being told Yes, a person can tend towards parasitical lifestyle and never find a better way to be, because no friction has been given, and no will-to-overcome has therefore developed. It would be hard to learn how to earn one's own living when nothing had ever been denied previously.

GLOBAL ISSUES

It is shameful that an ordinary person, who may be kind, caring, responsible and gentle-minded, should be exposed to abuse and violence for no reason than their ethnicity, religion, sexuality or choice of clothes. It shames humanity. The answer lies in more tolerance since persecution is based on fear of the unknown and narrow-mindedness towards minor differences.

To deal with the underlying issue properly requires acceptance for minority groups. There is often a tension that arises when one group defines itself as different from another by its choices of practices and beliefs. To reduce this requires us to look for points of agreement, to actively seek harmony and expect peaceful sharing.

7 WISDOMS – THE WISDOM OF YES

TRUST

When we are very young, we quickly learn that life is dangerous and scary, if not often life-threatening, then at least a constant challenge to our sense of comfort and security. We develop unconscious processes, the clench and the flinch, that speak of our fear of invasion, and we start to try to control our experiences of life as much as possible.

Yet to rid ourselves of fear, as adults we must somehow unlearn this damaging unconscious behaviour and train ourselves to relax into the challenges, and find a way to trust in life. This is the gateway to freedom, true spiritual freedom. When we can do this, a very special quality unfolds that is easy and joyful; things tend to work out sooner rather than later – and always eventually. Trust is the body state of innocence and optimism, and is closely aligned with happiness. Yes, of course we will sometimes be taken; there will always be someone whose hoax takes us in when we are trusting types – but so what! Is that such a big price to pay for happiness?

The unconscious thirst for knowledge has drawn many ideas into human consciousness for many millennia, and it is this magnetic thirst that we are responding to as we are presenting our ideas about 7 Words. Each of us – guides, practitioners, tutors and associates – must allow ourselves to trust that we are able to funnel inspired knowledge when called upon by our clients, students and friends, and to remember that 7 Words is an elegant funnel.

Many systems of thought attempt to rationalise the experience of life, philosophy and science in particular, and other types of systems are overtly irrational and demand faith – intuition’s big sister – for example religion and patriotism. Few, if any, approach knowledge from both sides and so carefully avoid dogma; 7 Words does this. So let us keep it pure – and not teach “truth” or morality – these are audacious and dangerous presumptions, so we allow the student to create their own idiosyncratic versions of reality,

helped rather than instructed by the 7 Words.



SUFI PERSPECTIVE

7 Planes of Consciousness

UNITY

In Sufism, there are “7 Planes of Consciousness”. These are metaphors for the different ways in which “light” – or energy – can exist. We study this phenomenon of the gradation of light using the number 7, partly because it is a convenient size (neither too small not too large for us to understand) and partly because this number appeals to humanity’s intuitive sense of cosmic truth.

We see that there is much agreement between mystics and scientists upon this major point – that energy takes on different qualities according to its rate of vibration. Whereas the latter group talks of wavelengths that give rise to colours, the former talks of Planes of Consciousness that begin with the heaviest expression of energy, materiality, and spans through differing realities towards the transcendent level. This level is the 7th Plane. It is called Unity by Sufism and corresponds to the word Yes in the 7 Words system.

We cannot speak of the experience of the 7th Plane – simply because such experience is beyond us. We can conceptualise Unity, we can extrapolate what it must be like in theory, and we can aspire to touch the waves of its vastness as we might dip our toes into an ocean. Yet how can we, phenomenal beings, know the experience of the great and mysterious All-and-Everything that we represent by the word God. There is not even a hint of meaning in the sound of that word – which lacks any attempt to be onomatopoeic. In Arabic, Allah sounds like breath; in Aramaic Abwoon feels profoundly mysterious and creative, in Sanskrit Aum fills the world with music and a feeling of universal harmony. Sadly, simply saying the word God usually leads us nowhere spectacular at all.

Poets point towards the imagined knowledge of God – Leonard Cohen suggests we might need to “sink into the mystery” – and musicians and composers, perhaps Bach and Beethoven more than most, can take us to the threshold if we would but surrender to their magic. Artists try too – Roerich and others make it obvious that they’ve gone beyond, and actors also sometimes try to help us – I’m thinking now of Rowan Atkinson as a Christian minister in a film telling us that actually God is a mystery and whether we like it or not, we just have to accept that.

So there it is – acceptance and surrender, keywords for Yes, are required tools for the task. The more we let go of our grasping for knowledge, the more we are available to receive it. The less we control, the more we enjoy... it is the fool’s wisdom, the madzab in Sufism, the one with nothing to protect or defend, the one who trusts in his cloak and begging bowl. The word dervish means “threshold” or doorstep...and that’s how close we can get to the realm of the 7th Plane.

EXERCISES

OPEN SPACE

How

Get all participants to ask for what they want to give, or receive during the time available – a day, a weekend, a week – have this facilitated into a programme of activities that becomes the group's experience for that period.

Why

An ideal process for a Yes group because Open Space is ideally leaderless, and can very elegantly and authentically embrace the energy of the moment.

TRUST GAMES

How

Get an individual to fall backwards into someone's arms, or jump down from a table into a catching group. Get a person to lead their partner blindfold on an interesting walk.

Why

Trust is a Yes-like body state that can be taught and learned; this is one training method.

MEDITATION

How

Sit comfortably in silence. Still the mind by holding your attention on the rhythm of breath.

Why

Right brain knowledge is awakened when the mind is silenced. This promotes peacefulness and the ability to see the true relationship between things.

BREATHING INTO BODY TENSION

How

Find a place in the body that is holding tension. Score the discomfort on a scale 1 to 10. Breathe into that place, and relax. Repeat this three times. Look again at your score.

Why

We learn that we have a measure of control over how we stress the body.

YES

TALENTS

How

Ask these three questions and discuss the answers with the group:

- *What talents did you have once that you no longer employ?*
- *What are you especially talented at now?*
- *What potential talents are yet underdeveloped in you?*

Why

Talents are natural within us and flow through us if we give permission for them to do so. These questions can inspire students to reclaim lost abilities and find new ones simply by trusting more.

INTERESTING QUESTIONS

How

Ask the group these questions and share or discuss their answers.

- *Think of a time when your plans went wrong, yet the eventual outcome was very much better than you had imagined.*
- *What was your best adventure? To have it what exactly did you say Yes to?*
- *What do you want to happen when you die?*
- *Is there something new and exciting that you would do if opportunity arose?*
- *What is your most stressful control issue?*

Why

These questions are chosen because a) they bring awareness to the general experience we all have – that trusting the future is a valid strategy for which there is supportive evidence in our past experience; b) they open up thoughts of a better future; c) they draw attention to any habits we may have of clenching with fear against an uncontrollable future.

DLP

MODULE 7 (YES) – CONTROL

Each primary word has its associated state of being that includes attitudes of mind, emotional disposition and even bodily, physiological aspects. Yes is relaxed and yielding and ultimately leads to relinquishing control completely. It is the opposite of the state of being that comes with control.

a) Comment on the relationship between your deep-rooted fears, your methods of controlling or manipulating other people, and how your personal power is expressed both appropriately and dysfunctionally.

It requires impressive self-knowledge and self-honesty to admit that we have fears, and control issues that come out of that. All of us tend to control others when we can get away with it. Some of us get away with it a lot, and effectively bully our way through our challenges with very little sensitivity and awareness of others' needs. It's not really OK to do that.

b) Explain how the knowledge of the 7 Words System can lead to a more effective yet more relaxed life that respects the needs of self and others in beautiful balance.

One would hope that it will take the rest of your life to answer this question!

There are three rules to live by:

- You can never really hurt anyone without their permission.
- Blame and guilt are always wrong and anything motivated by either will have an unwanted outcome.
- Everything that happens is to your long term advantage.

Do not expect people to agree with these rules, or indeed with the philosophy behind the 7 Words; it is all contentious in some way to someone. What is important is whether you agree with the ideas, and find your own way to live by them and present them to others.

By this point in your studies, you have probably come to understand that much of what people are generally taught by schoolteachers and priests is simply not so. Unfortunately, much of the recent teachings of New Age wisdom lacks any evidence that it is inspired, workable as a philosophy, or even well-defined as a system of ideas. So, left alone to decide what is useful, beautiful, true and good – what is your position?

Let your life be the answer to this question, and let it change frequently according to the stages of your evolutionary journey.

DEPRESSION

By Carinne Allison

THE JOURNEY TO DEPRESSION

NO

The roots of most depression lie in No. Depression is sometimes seen as repressed anger, which belongs with No. The violation of an individual's boundaries in childhood is abuse. This can be physical, mental, emotion, psychological or sexual. Such abuse leaves us with unclear or non-existent boundaries and sets up patterns of abuse, self-abuse, co-dependency, addiction, manipulation or other dysfunctional behaviours in adulthood.

It also leaves us with a confused sense of identity. We don't know who we are and we spend a lot of time trying to be whatever other people expect of us – or we believe the lies we were told and take on the identity forced upon us by our abusers. Instead of unfolding as a result of free, proactive choices that reflect who we are, our lives become a series of reactions to situations over which we seem to have no control, or which have been forced upon us by others.

One day we wake up and realise we do not know who we are or what we want. Our life is out of our control – we have given (or they have taken) our power away to our lovers/bosses/children/parents/friends. We are living a lie. Is it any wonder we feel angry? However, we may not be aware of our anger, because we were told we don't deserve any better, so we don't feel we have a right to feel angry. Or we may have long ago lost any connection to our emotions. This unrecognised anger leads to depression – as does the sense of helplessness that arises from years of abuse/self-abuse, loss of control, manipulation.

HELLO

In depression we become self-absorbed – the pain of depression demands our attention. Depression leads us to isolate ourselves, partly to protect ourselves and partly to protect others. We have lost faith in agencies outside ourselves (even God) – after all, they've been controlling us all our lives and look what a mess we're in. And we cannot trust ourselves – a lifetime of bad boundaries, shifting identity and poor choices speaks for itself. We've learned to mistrust others – they've abused and manipulated us for too long, and the social skills we learned from them are flawed. We don't know how to have a 'normal' relationship – and who in their right mind would want anything to do with such a flawed, miserable [insert adjective of your choice] individual as me? For me, Hello is about risk, and the other side of that coin is fear. In depression, we are paralysed by fear.

YES

THANK YOU

Dysfunctional Thank You is about low self-esteem and depression throws that into stark relief. Far from being appreciated and valued as children, we are more likely to have been humiliated, or simply ignored. We may be attracted to charming, charismatic people who abuse us. Their self-assurance and charm is probably maintained at our expense (in public), but the abuse goes on behind closed doors. We may appear charmless and worthless by comparison, outside the house. Our sense of self-esteem, like our sense of identity, is controlled by other people. We lose the ability to affirm ourselves and in extreme cases, humiliation at the hands of our abusers leads us to develop ‘toxic shame’.

GOODBYE

In depression, the weight of everything that has happened in the past can become unbearable – we feel like the ghost of Jacob Marley, dragging behind us great heavy chains forged throughout our lifetime. The sense of grief can be overwhelming, with bouts of uncontrollable crying that last for hours. The normal process of Goodbye is completely beyond us as we are overwhelmed by all the hurt, manipulation, abuse, confusion.

PLEASE

Why don’t we just ask for help? By this point we are not capable of doing so – we have long since given away our power, we have isolated ourselves, lost trust, and our self-esteem is so low that we don’t feel we deserve it. We are totally overwhelmed by grief and paralysed by fear. Besides, we wouldn’t know how to ask for what we wanted, even if we knew what it was! At this point, hopelessness sets in. We don’t deserve anything good, we’re worthless – so what’s the point of having a vision? What’s the point of prayer when we’ve lost faith in anything? Thoughts of suicide might creep in – if there’s no hope, why carry on?

SORRY

The two sides of this coin, for me, are responsibility and blame. It is likely that poor boundaries have led to much confusion in this area. We have probably been blamed for many things that were not our fault – one of the characteristics of abuse is that abusers blame the victims. We may, therefore, be accustomed to taking responsibility for other people’s ‘stuff’, while lacking the ability to take responsibility for our own ‘stuff’.

This can also lead to carrying a huge weight of guilt, if we are constantly told it’s all our fault. We may also get stuck in blaming someone else – after all, if it wasn’t for the abuse, we wouldn’t now be depressed, so we blame the abuser. Another dysfunctional aspect of Sorry is judgment – and if we’ve been judged harshly in the past, we will judge ourselves harshly now.

This is not helped by people who have never been depressed, asking us questions like, “What have you got to be depressed about?” or “Why not focus on all the good things in your life?” and other unhelpful remarks. Such remarks imply that we could get rid of the depression if we tried hard enough. Our own self-criticism tells us that we are not as good as other people, we are flawed, inferior, defective, weak.

YES

YES

Now we reach the ‘tipping point’ – but we have to make a choice. Some people choose denial – *‘I’m not depressed, there’s nothing wrong with me, I’m just a bit stressed at work, that’s all; I just need a drink to wind down when I get home, nothing wrong with that’*. That’s okay, because it’s possible to change our minds at any point – that is to say, when we’re ready. At that point, we can say, “Yes”. The keywords for Yes are Permission, Acceptance, Agreement and Surrender, and as soon as we are ready, they all come into play. When we stop fighting our depression, we give ourselves permission – to feel awful, to feel useless, to have no appetite or energy, to be tired and weepy, to want to avoid people – in other words, to be depressed. As soon as we give ourselves permission, we accept our depression and stop fighting it. We can now begin to deal with it and the process of recovery can begin.

THE JOURNEY TO RECOVERY

YES

When we give ourselves permission and accept our depression, it is like we sign a peace treaty with it. We can let go for a while and just go with the flow. Yes, we will need to deal with it – but not yet. For now we just surrender. This process may take a few days, a few weeks, or a few months, but for however long it takes, we need to just sleep, cry, stay in bed, stare at the wall – whatever we need to do. We will know when the time comes to move on.

SORRY

Having given ourselves permission and accepted our depression, we no longer need to judge ourselves. Depression is an illness, like any other – we don’t judge people for having asthma or diabetes, so why should depression be any different? Our attitude to blame changes, too. It may still be someone else’s fault we’re depressed, but at the end of the day that’s not helpful. We are the ones who have to deal with it. If we release our judgment and blame and take responsibility, then we can make progress.

PLEASE

When we can see depression as just another illness, we can seek treatment, like we would for any other condition. Now we can go to our GP or mental health team and ask for help. This may be medication, counselling, psychotherapy, self-help group, reading self-help books, or a combination – in addition to other treatment for specific aspects (e.g. dependency issues or family therapy). The mere fact of having taken some positive action towards recovery will lift some of the weight of depression, and some of the help offered will help with the next step.

GOODBYE

The issues that caused the depression in the first place need to be addressed and with the help provided in Please, this is now the time to deal with them. This is likely to take some time. I also believe it is important to grieve at this stage – for lost dreams, spoiled

YES

childhood, all the disappointments and missed opportunities of one's life. We may also need to make some decisions regarding our lives – we may need to re-examine our priorities, or part company with those who abuse or manipulate us. This is part of the process of Completion, which we must undergo before we can move on.

THANK YOU

As we deal with our childhood and other issues, we begin to feel better about ourselves, our self-esteem rises and we learn to affirm ourselves. Our sense of self changes and we begin to value ourselves. We feel we do, after all, have something of value to share with others. Our life has meaning.

HELLO

Armed with our new sense of self we are ready to venture out into the world. We are no longer paralysed by fear. We reconnect to and learn to trust our emotions. Our trust in ourselves, others and God grows as we take small risks, pushing ourselves a little bit further each time.

NO

Now we have found a sense of who we really are and we no longer put up with abuse or manipulation. Our boundaries are stronger and we can say “No” to our abusers – and others who ask too much of us. We take back our power, control over our own lives. We make our choices freely, respecting who we are, and we live our truth. But we have also learnt along the way where we are vulnerable, what work still needs to be done, what our stumbling blocks are. My prime stressors are tiredness, stress and financial instability, so I protect these. I consider my energy and stress levels before agreeing to do extra hours at work, and I monitor my finances carefully to avoid the situations that trigger depression. And I use art to push myself to foster acceptance, play, courage to fail, letting go of judgment – it terrifies me, but it works.



AFTERWORD

20TH CENTURY PROGRESS

We were born into a century that began with gaslights, telegraphs and horse-drawn carriages, where death from tuberculosis was commonplace and male homosexuality was punished with hard labour — and ended with a population bored long ago with watching yet another rocket being launched into space. These symptoms of social and technological progression are easily identified, and yet what about our humanity itself? Using the 7 words as a measure, we might be able to discover a new slant on our real inner evolution, to find out whether there was an equivalent inner progression.

NO

Whether we like it or not, the primal instinctual drive of men will propel power-possessors to further their claims and to take what is not offered if they have the clout to do so. Hitler is an obvious example. However he didn't act within a vacuum; there were circumstances that lifted him up and these were rather No-like. In some way he accurately embodied the unquestioned and unquashable dignity of character that Germans (quite reasonably) feel they have as a national identity. Their lifeblood was at that time symbolised by the Ruhr coal fields, and these were taken from them as a harsh punishment in reparations for World War I. Collectively the Germans said No to having their economy destroyed and their pride annihilated. Equally, when the Fuhrer went power-crazy Churchill said No to him. It is said that what Hitler most hated and feared was the ethereal boundary along the English Channel that the British created through visualisation at 9pm every night when, at Churchill's behest, they held a minute's silent vigil.

The twentieth has been dubbed the 'century of total war' and is easily seen to have been the theatre for acting out historical clashes between opposing forces as strong and irresistible in the human psyche as tectonic plates are within the Earth. The pervasive push of imperialism will always be resisted by the power of independent self-determination — a

David will always be found to challenge a Goliath — that is certain; even in the face of vast empires trying to squeeze out their vitality, the little man (or woman) will insist on having the right to choose. Kemal Attaturk refused to lose his country's proud identity and shaped modern day Turkey out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire. Excesses and awful abuses are so often sanctioned by heroes and villains — whose glory or defamy are after-the-fact illusions created by the winners who write the history books — yet nevertheless, there is the noble aspect of humanity itself. We say No! whenever our birthright of uniqueness is threatened.

The right to say No is conferred upon the voters in a democracy and a feature of the century was the effectiveness of peaceful protest movements from the very start with anti-imperialist risings in Asia and Africa and workers movements in Europe, India and USA — and in 1905 300,000 workers demonstrated in Moscow. This trend continued throughout the period and various organisations were created to embody causes. The cause of Democracy had high profile — and indeed the right of women to vote was fought for by the Suffragettes. Other examples in the UK included the poll tax riots, which forced Thatcher's resignation, and the women of Greenham Common who helped to achieve the truly remarkable withdrawal by America of its nuclear Cruise missile base. A bunch of women had to live like animals without sanitation for months, years even, and they forced the greatest military machine ever known to back down and rethink. The power of saying No peacefully!

HELLO

We are by nature social animals — and the century that began without much awareness of telephones, ended with one billion mobiles supporting a trillion text messages a year. There were rather more 'Hellos' said than ever before. Also through cinema, TV, tourism and Internet there was an expanded awareness of other people and many new ideas from all over the world. We even began space exploration and stood on the Moon. A photo of planet Earth from space is a major contribution to the raising of awareness, since we really got the picture of our home as a fragile little ball floating in a void. Einstein offered a new understanding of the relationship between energy and substance, from which there arose one of mankind's greatest mental achievements: the Big Bang hypothesis.

Our openness to new concepts accelerated exponentially during the age of widespread education, widely published cheap books, TV documentaries and popular science fiction. It was the era of the media explosion and, although these media were often used to expand corruption with the deceits of propaganda and advertising, still the net effect was to inform the wider population. This exploded again when the Internet was born — with its own abuses, including computer viruses (what a strange idea to a 19th century mind!). Bill Gates selling software replaced Howard Hughes selling petrol for motor cars as the richest man in history. Each is to do with Hello. Also the favoured medium of exchange went through two big changes in support of the snowballing of trade. For 7000 years we had used metal coins — still very popular in 1900 — and, by 2000, paper money had generally ceded its importance to the new currency: binary digits stored electronically.

Freud, Jung and others awakened totally new understandings about the workings of mind and the healing power of attention, and in music and art there were messages that encouraged us to see the world differently — from Picasso, Dali and Aldous Huxley to George Orwell, John Lennon and Andy Warhol. Gorbachev's policies of openness and economic reform — Perestroika and Glasnost — softened Russia's final emergence into the modern world; after centuries of feudalism, they held their first democratic general election (as did India).

Our privacy took a bit of a beating of course — CCTV, satellite surveillance, J. Edgar Hoover's FBI, identity checks and body searches — a rather more intimate contact with uniformed strangers than we'd normally want — that pushed the boundaries of what was considered socially decent.

THANK YOU

This energy form also progressed quite well in the recent period of our species' development. We could perhaps want to see the anti-Tsarist revolution in 1917 as just the latest in a long series that had frequently punctuated the 19th century and happened to take hold because the common folk had this time been armed (against a foreign foe). However, there was an ardent idealism that made it stick — Lenin's sincere vision of a communism that would (and did) lift millions upon millions out of abject poverty. Socialism also took hold in the West and became a real force that counterbalanced the long tradition of imperialism that went hand-in-glove with capitalism and the impoverishment of the masses. Trade Unions were formed to raise employers' appreciation of the value of workers in the equation of wealth — and technology at last was directed more towards rescuing ordinary people from drudgery — eventually into the comfort zone of middle class and their aspirations of house ownership and DIY weekends. We began to value people and ensure that their basic comforts and needs were being met.

Poverty and hunger were more often highlighted, but despite this it's unlikely that many people would know that there are an equal number of obese people as hungry ones (1.2 billion) — and that actually about half the world is undernourished, being deficient in micronutrients (vitamins and minerals). Also, that of the 9 million annual deaths from starvation, 5 million are children. Interestingly, by the year 2000, some 40% of food crops were being wasted in Britain and America. Still, widespread awareness grew about the extent of hunger and need because of Bob Geldof's Live Aid and Feed the World campaigns. We have America to thank for its generous Aid programmes, the Red Cross for offering medical attention in dangerous places, St.Teresa of Calcutta for her lifetime of caring and Oxfam and other charities too. The alternative media have been instrumental in directing our gaze away from the East-West axis, and instead towards the North-South polarization of haves and have-nots.

GOODBYE

Goodbye moments are written as history; it's what history books are about. To pick out the important events from everything reported is a bit of a guessing game about the future. Do we see Thatcher as an uncaring tyrant who put back the march of democracy

and humanity by redistributing wealth from the already-poor to the already-rich and disenfranchising the poll-tax renegades? Or should we accept that as the bosom-buddy of Reagan she helped to force the collapse of a bullying empire through the Star Wars arms race that broke the Soviet bank? Was Neville Chamberlain a peacemaker, a naïve foolish optimist, or a truly wily pragmatist, when he waved his piece of paper in the air proclaiming 'peace in our time' just a year before the invasion of Poland?

We've seen the British Empire recede and its world influence move across the Atlantic with the gold reserves that were paid to the US to provide troops and arms against the Nazis. We've seen various heroes bring completion to historical eras — Gandhi, Mandela and Lech Walesa in a Gdansk shipyard. The world of music was totally transformed in the 60's as the new world promised a bright dawn, and Bob Dylan told us all clearly 'The Times they are a-changin''. We even experienced yet another 'end of the world is nigh' collective fear at the millennium and again in 2012.

Yet in the context of world history, all of this is relatively minor compared to the really big issue of environmental damage and climate change. What's happened is that we have learned how to produce things without learning how to dispose of them — so there is a build-up that is unsustainable. The Sun's effect upon the Earth is to create carbon and, for several billion years, this has been stored up as gas, coal and oil. We have released that too quickly into the atmosphere by producing too many people and cars, so it has formed a thick cloud of carbon dioxide that prevents the Earth from cooling down properly. The true cost of production includes safe disposal of its associated waste — the Goodbye bit — and we need to realise that now; we all have to pay for what we consume — and the 20th Century was certainly consumerist if nothing else! And talking about payment — the huge amount of credit that grew and grew year by year is a measured statement of the extent to which we failed to complete upon our purchases.

As yet we haven't produced a true world-shattering environmental hero to champion our cause. There are animal rights activists, Greenpeace, Friends of the Earth and so on — and certain TV personalities, perhaps outstandingly David Attenborough whose intrepid and inexhaustible life work has informed and inspired his viewers about how urgent it all is: 'Act now or lose something unutterably precious'. Maybe we need a real 'Rainbow Warrior' to force the issue because the oil barons must be stopped now if we want to have even a chance to continue living the way we want to and not to have to say Goodbye to the whales and a thousand other beloved examples of natural beauty.

PLEASE

It may seem to some that we have lost touch with the spiritual aspect of life, that the 20th was a godless century of materialism. Think again. Traditional religious practices had so often become nothing more than empty worship of the status quo, as though God was a thing crystallized into a scripture and hierarchy instead of a living, feeling, evolving Being. It is these hollow observances that fell into greater disfavour, whereas the spirit of experimentation and discovery has actually created a previously unknown popularity for a rich and fascinating plethora of ways to praise, new and old: from aromatherapy to Zen. The reinvigoration of spirituality is a truly major feature of our times, including radical re-

examination of Islamic, Christian and Jewish practices. Also, there were two outstanding visions affirmed during the course of those turbulent times — The United Nations charter and possibly the most famous speech made: Dr.Martin Luther King’s “I Have a Dream”, which affirms racial equality.

SORRY

What about Sorry — have we learned much about that recently? Sadly not quite enough. Still, it’s on the move. Whereas the reparations after WW1 were so severe that they gave rise to WW2, the Marshall Plan of economic aid actually settled post-war Europe and helped to create a previously unknown tranquillity, in a region known for its warlike past. This in turn allowed disparate parties to join into a major world economic force — the European Union. This is what happens when blame and revenge are put aside.

There was (eventually) a softening towards criminals. Although transportation to Australia was no longer in vogue, Siberia was the place to send Soviet citizens who were accused of crime, albeit imaginary crimes in many cases. However, this declined by the millennium and prisons had become significantly more salubrious than 100 years earlier; also the death penalty was far less likely to be imposed.

At Nuremberg and Tokyo the 1945 trials were fair attempts at justice for war criminals. Tyrants like Rudolf Hess, and later Saddam Hussein, are treated more gently than perhaps they ‘deserve’, not for their benefit but for ours. Whether they will ever learn to say Sorry is their business; ours is to withhold blame. Yes, they are responsible and must be held accountable — but they must be given the chance for atonement. This is because it dignifies humanity to do so. The process of requiring leaders to become accountable is a major civilizing force that has gained ascendancy. There are still terrible abuses of power including mass murder, yet the unimaginable numbers slaughtered last century — not in war but by their tyrant governments — are at least remembered and counted (169 million), whereas in earlier centuries they were mainly ignored and forgotten.

A different form of tyranny might properly be included as a dysfunctional expression of Sorry. Drugs. Vast resources are poured into the production of narcotics, pharmaceuticals and alcohol. These control the behaviour of large sections of the population who at first refuse, then later become unable, to take responsibility for their physical needs (for good diet and exercise) or emotional well-being, and end up subject to the tyranny of addiction, often losing their capacity for remorse and the healing release that it brings.

YES

Freedom is another social phenomenon that was furthered. There had been staunch prejudices brought forward from Victorian times — against so many minorities and even majority groups like women and the poor. Then women got the taste of personal independence working in wartime factories — and they didn’t want to surrender it — so instead



men had to surrender some of their elitist attitudes. Birth control — especially the Pill — enabled a sexual revolution that underpinned the Permissive Society. Homosexuality became okay. Actresses and pop stars glittered and pranced, suggesting that ‘anything goes’, with explicit, even lewd displays from Marilyn Monroe, Madonna, Elvis Presley and Mick Jagger for example. The ultimate fantasy figure of Princess Diana somehow represented an anti-institutional proclamation of freedom. She engendered acceptance for her all-too-vulnerable human qualities.

Unfortunately we have some way to go in the matter of tolerance. There was persistent persecution of individuals because of their religious and racial backgrounds. The growth of neo-Nazism points to a deep-rooted fear that humanity is holding onto; it comes out as bigotry, xenophobia, sexual harassment and race hatred. Now anyone with a turban or a dark complexion is at risk of being feared (even shot at) as a terrorist just because Bin Laden has that kind of appearance.

Ah well! For all its continuing problems, humanity’s progress was spectacular during that glorious century! Now the 21st is starting to show itself to be quite a different proposition. What can we expect for ourselves, our children and our children’s children? We know there will be more war, bullying and abuse, we know there will be technological advances as if from sci-fi novels and by now surely we know that climate changes will transform the face of the Earth. Yet the big question — will there be a breakthrough of awareness? Will we collectively start behaving like mature adults?

THE MEANING OF LIFE

No. The meaning of life is to experience yourself. It is that simple. That doesn’t make it easy however, because there are forces that pull us and push us away from the true centre of who we are, and these pressures are powerful, non-stop and immediate from the moment we take our first breath – and actually before even that! It is a huge task and a great achievement to find a place within ourselves that is authentic, reliable and incorruptible. When we have this, then we have a strong foundation upon which to build a meaningful life.

Hello. Our life circumstances both mirror and contribute to the development of character. We express ourselves into the world, and this shapes the world, yet equally we are impressed upon by the world, and this shapes us. These interactions are perpetual and on-going as we let curiosity lead our attention, and our attention lead our involvements. Whatever gets our attention will surely have influence upon our character as it is shaped – although never outside of the range of possibility that is the horizon of our potential. Certainly potential is unlimited, yet it expands and moves in an orderly fashion, as does the horizon at sea.

Thanks. We find that some of our interactions have a deeper quality than others. Firstly, the power of empathy generates in us such a feeling of belonging that we are awakened into a sense of something bigger. Intimate loving relationship tends towards family feelings, which tend toward clan-, tribe-, nation-, race- and even species-rapport.

Thus we are able to reconnect with the depths of that which makes us who we are, and our core values that drive our sense of appreciation.

Goodbye. Yet we are not defined uniquely by such a process, in fact we have to give away aspects of our uniqueness in order to belong. So, opposed to empathy, a second force is triggered inside us when the unique self feels its individuality at risk. This force refutes. The fiery, challenging, heroic aspect of our unique individuality decides to stand on principle. I AM ME! The seduction of comfort and the security of belonging are overpowered by the freedom-urge of spirit – and then individually we desire to travel onwards alone.

Please. Away from the twin forces of seductive familiarity, and the glamour of the rebel, a more powerful sense of true self can emerge. This is felt in sacredness; this is the purpose of sacredness – to become aware of the bigger picture. We reach up to find the most glorious vision we can imagine, where who we are, and who we are with, co-create a splendid reality that is rich in colour, opportunity and joy – free from the need either to conform to family values or to reject them.

Sorry. During this visionary process, the push of our personality is met by the push back of another's. This is required if we are to learn to see our circumstances and our human potential from other perspectives. Through this refining stage, we come to know something of the deepest mystery that exists in all the worlds. It cannot really be explained in words. It has such a truth that can only be experienced when intuitively we trust the physical body to recognise and take on the actual state of being that reflects what the enlightened mind has merely understood.

Yes. Resistance, ambition, self-proclamation, and morality are all then perceived as follies. Of course they have real worth as devices that show of our imperfection of understanding, and give us a palette for our artistry as we create our lives – yet the real mystery is not found there, it is found when we sink into it. We let all that comes and goes fascinate us for a moment then, with a Mona Lisa smile, we let it all pass us by.

GREAT CYCLES OF CHANGE

Earlier we identified the zeitgeist as a major force that casts a veil of illusion over humanity's thinking. We considered whether 7 words might be used to examine the deeper waves that underlie all changes. Let's look briefly at the greater cycles of change, underneath the babble of so much detail and so many opinions — look at the major facets of human evolution, at least the Homo Sapiens bit. We can say that civilisation began to express awareness **significantly** above the animal level when tools were used. Before that human behaviour very closely resembled that of certain animals — in particular by surrendering to the inevitable danger and hardships of life because no better condition was imaginable. This suggests Yes, the acceptance of what comes without resistance. The tooling-up of the hunter-gatherers coincided with their saying No! They no longer accepted fate and chose a new reality wherein nature could be tamed a little. The truth was affirmed that humanity was a significant partner in the co-creating of Earth conditions. *We are no*

longer sleeping children of the Earth Mother; we are awakening and growing up'. Our prehistoric Yes became No, the beginning of the story of civilization.

NO

The Agricultural Revolution marked a major universal shift in humanity's thinking and was clearly No-like. Fences were constructed around land, establishing both clear boundaries and the identity of those who were normally allowed inside them. People were required to choose to belong to a particular social group — and not to any other, and not to continue their hunter-gatherer meanderings. Foragers who wouldn't invest their labour into putting down roots were excluded. Thus clans became nations and, protected within the walls of their city-states, they grew wealthy.

HELLO

The Hello era that followed accelerated as people developed their languages, shared knowledge, skills and ideas and learned more about getting along with neighbours — who had become much more permanent. Without land to tie them down, the early hunters had had less need for social skills, being able to refuse involvement if they felt uncomfortable. As exchanges opened up, communication took on an even greater level of importance. To exchange surpluses and find 'new breeding stock' required that various groups reached out the hand of friendship in trade — or the less friendly version in skirmishes with neighbouring groups.

Curiosity also became a major factor that promoted travel and cultural exchange. Its twin sister inventiveness applied itself to overcome hardships and came up with ideas like yoking oxen and irrigation — mechanical devices that can be seen as early heralds for the next leap forward — the Industrial Revolution. The building of railways and telegraphs and spreading of newspapers even to the working folk are all clues that this period was the flowering of the Hello era. The world, previously an inconceivable concept, was now navigable by even the poorest wayfarer with enough spark and an ardent curiosity.

THANK YOU

As much as the seeds of Hello were clearly visible within the No-like Agricultural Revolution, the seeds of the Thank You era can be identified within the industrialization process. Leisure became increasingly known as a major social phenomenon — until it became widespread across all classes in the developed world. The poor were still relatively poor — yet only by contrast to the richer rich. In the middle of the 20th century many ordinary working people were rescued from domestic drudgery by washing machines and they could watch TV and drive cars. People became free to appreciate the good life, to express options about what they valued. The governments of rich countries gave compassionate aid to the hungry. And, at least for a while, we felt thankful.

GOODBYE

The Information Revolution could be said to have arisen in the mid 1960's when microchip technology enabled electronic things to come about. This made the processing of data incomparably faster and fanned the flames of humanity's obsessional lust for

information. Now we are given all the information we need to see that the Industrial Age was not handled very elegantly — we had forgotten to deal with all of its ramifications — and the first major complaints were becoming clear. Words like ecology, global warming and CND were introduced into our language, firstly by a group of people who were born around the late 1940's.

In the Goodbye era we would expect to observe the 4 keywords: realisation, decision, completion and moving on. Well, indeed, now we are — at least some of us — coming to the realisation of what the Industrial era has done. Next comes decision, and this is not so clear. Unfortunately, those who can really make a difference, the powerful Western industrialists, are not yet willing to decide. When they do decide we will need to go through a stage of completion. Our task is to reach completion on the Industrial Revolution — to clean up. Only then can we expect to move on.

There is good reason to expect a tidal-wave type of change as the baby-boomers of 1946/7, who were born to express humanity's moving on from wartime, begin to retire at 60. This is the hidden bomb whose long shock-wave blast has rippled throughout the post-war period and is being projected into a future where it is ready to explode. Pensions will become increasingly tight and great pressure will arise to allocate diminishing resources to ageing and unproductive voters (as long as democracy holds). But these same people have had to compete all their lives for limited resources and have become quite used to making governments change their position — on matters like the Vietnam War. And we have to acknowledge that when they came of age in 1964, they pushed the boundaries of convention like never before.

As they reach retirement, they are doing whatever they can to look after their own interests. Unfortunately, whereas now it takes three workers to fund one retired person during the next 20 years or so the dependency ratio will worsen and by 2036 it will need to be only two. We'll all have to work harder, longer and more effectively by a margin of 50%. Either we wake up to this now and do something or we can learn to expect that as old folks we will be cold, hungry, sick and uncared-for. Goodbye is ruthless; a decision must cut the past from the future. We need to make a difficult decision that will change the face of economics and politics forever, and we need to make it now.

PLEASE

Please will be next, and unified intention, cooperation and prayer will be the qualities of the era. Please begins with vision, so perhaps we may pray for a collective vision of world peace brought about through a widespread shift of awareness. These major revolutionary shifts are happening more quickly as 'time speeds up'. It took tens of thousands of years for hunter-gatherers to learn their lessons, thousands for the agricultural wisdoms to be assimilated and a couple of hundred until we saw the ambiguities of industrialization. So 50 years after the Information Revolution of the Sixties, we ought to be ready for another — a bedrock change in how we see things, how we think and how we act upon those thoughts. Presumably this can be called the Consciousness Revolution.

7 EMOTIONS IN SUFISM

No: Anger, its gentle brother irritation, and its fearsome distortion rage, point to our need to express more authentically the truth of our individual identity, by proclaiming clearer boundaries. But how do we know who we are? Well, whatever makes us angry shows us what we are not – so we move away from that to another situation until we feel less irritable and less likely to trigger anger in another.

Hello: Curiosity doesn't kill the cat, although its distortion, nosiness, might be enough to provoke aggression. We are a naturally curious species, and that gives rise to the spirit of inventiveness, exploration, creativity and the pursuit of knowledge. All of these sponsor the widening of our horizons and therefore the refinement of perception. Through this we evolve.

Thanks: Love makes the world go around". That may actually be true on some level, since it is gravitation that fuels the Earth's orbit around the Sun: the power of attraction. When this same principle is felt in a human, it is very pleasing and inspiring. Distorted, love shows itself as possessiveness, and such a need usually leads to rejection.

Goodbye: Grief allows us to move on. Research has shown that people who have problems about letting go of the past are much more likely to be unhappy. The painful feelings of loss that can arise in life need to be experienced deeply and fully if we are to be free of the debilitating sense of impotence and depression that can otherwise develop. So for example, rushing headlong into a new relationship after a failed marriage may be quite unhelpful since that would probably restrict the ability to grieve.

Please: Envy is what motivates a baby to learn new skills; it is what stimulates adults to overcome inertia and achieve more of their potential. It is not a deadly sin at all, but actually a gift from God. When denied, and therefore distorted, it degenerates into the green eyed monster called jealousy – with its inherent sense of resentment. That will never take us to joy.

Sorry: Fear is a totally natural feeling that is good; its usefulness has to do with stopping us doing something stupid that might threaten our emotional well-being or cause harm to the physical body. Perhaps we can think of it less emotively as caution. Of course, if we deny our fears – in other words pretend we are not afraid – then a distortion will develop, in this case probably panic.

Yes: Joy. Isn't this what we all really want? It's like happiness with a sparkle. Its relationship to pleasure is rather misunderstood perhaps. Lots of us pursue pleasures of the senses, even to the point of obsession. Yet pleasure does not lead to joy; it is joy that leads to pleasure. In joy we find that simple things, natural things, are profoundly more pleasurable than the glamour of the physical senses that we spend our money on.

Emotions are seen here as different from feelings. Whereas the range of emotions can include fear, anger, guilt, jealousy, hate, conditional love, greed, lust, sexual arousal, curiosity, depression, ennui, contempt, victimhood, hysteria, defiance, and excitement; pure feelings are expressions of either the presence or absence of joy or unconditional love.

7 DEADLY SINS

Can we meaningfully draw associations between the primary words and these notorious dysfunctions of behaviour given to us by Pope Gregory in the 6th century?

Anger is associated with No. Typically the expression of anger is a response to the feeling that we have been abused. In order to protect ourselves from the damage that our own anger causes us, we have to establish clear boundaries and apply them early so to prevent any would-be aggressor from invading, As a defence against the anger of another, it is required that we behave with sensitivity and respect toward the boundaries of the other, according to their sense of appropriateness rather than ours.

Lust is associated with Hello. There are stages in the development from disconnectedness towards closeness, and these are as important within the context of sexual attraction as much as other types of involvements. In the absence of sensitive timing and a degree of restraint, the body's yearning for physical intimacy can be felt or expressed without the socializing grace of the courtship rituals that slow down the process of connection so that heart can operate.

Gluttony is associated with Thank You. This condition arises when even too much is not enough to satisfy. If we don't appreciate what we have, then we want more — and yet it is not more that we need. What we need is to value what we have. Without learning this, nothing will ever satisfy us.

Sloth is associated with Goodbye. Sloth prevents us from moving on. It is the condition that inclines us to stay where we are when really we should be ready to leave behind the comforts of the moment and say Goodbye. Slothful people seem unable or unwilling to finish the job and move on, even though they may realise that their inertia is potentially harmful.

Avarice is associated with Please. When Please goes to inappropriate levels, greed arises. The capacity we have to get what we want is taken beyond moderation, often simply to demonstrate (to ourselves or others) that we can have anything — even everything!

Pride is associated with Sorry. Pride does seem to be the most common reason that we withhold apology. We get lost in self-importance and just can't accept how anything we have done (or omitted to do) has been responsible for another's discomfort. Sorry is missing. Lost in our own feelings, we have little or no sensitivity to the feelings of another, so remorse is denied.

Jealousy is associated with Yes. It is a feeling of ill-will directed to another person by someone who compares himself to that other and is unwilling or unable to accept his own circumstances — usually to do with possessions or position (especially relationship).

SALT PUPPET

Teaching stories have arisen throughout the world and throughout history as a method to present students — often children of course — with an easily digestible small package of ideas. Typically they can be entertaining; all types of people like to be entertained. Usually they are humorous and often the ‘moral of the story’ is fairly clear. This clear moral however, may not always be the main message. A more subtle understanding can sometimes be teased out, especially if traditional symbolism is included, which is known within the culture that gave rise to the story. This applies to certain of the stories, which are held alive by their entertaining qualities and survive as profound teachings in a hidden, seemingly innocuous form. Tarot Cards are examples of the same principle. We can look at the Salt Puppet story as a way to discuss a Sufi idea to do with the ‘7 Planes of Consciousness’, the mystical teaching that inspired the 7 words.

The terminology here is metaphorical because, unlike science, mysticism attempts to awaken intuitive knowledge, which can then be aligned with the rational, so that both the surface and the depth are addressed. We can liken the mind to the surface of the ocean of knowledge and the heart to its depth. Oceanic knowledge must include the understanding of heart, which is accessed when rational and intuitive are well balanced. Metaphor, like poetry, art and music, helps to develop intuition. It’s best to recognize that intuition is a normal function of the brain, which develops with use and atrophies if unused. If we trust it, it becomes more trustworthy — though of course it will never be 100% reliable. It can be felt as an inner sense of rightness — and yet is rather similar to another inner sense, which is more the urge of ego disguising itself as intuition. Hence there is a real need to balance intuition with rational thought.

Inasmuch as the scientist can detect a range of wavelengths (some of which are visible as light), a mystic can detect vibrations, which have equivalence to the scientist’s physical wavelengths. These are perceptible as feelings and thoughts — as well as the more obvious gradations of light. It is convenient to discuss the range of vibrations as having 7 demarcations, which Sufis study as planes of consciousness, each of them being a level of vibration that can be perceived as a type of life experience. The story illustrates them.



THE SALT PUPPET

Anon (through Rabia)

Once upon a time there was a puppet made of salt who had travelled a long time through dry and desert places until one evening he came upon a sea which he had never before seen and didn't know what it was. The puppet asked the sea: 'What are you?' 'I am the sea' it replied. 'But' the puppet insisted, 'What is the sea'. 'I am'. 'I don't understand' said the puppet made of salt. 'I want very much to understand what I can do to know you!'

The sea replied 'That's easy, touch me!'

The salt puppet timidly touched the sea with the tip of his toes. At that moment he realised that the sea began to make itself perceptible, but at the same time he noticed the tips of his toes had disappeared. 'What have you done to me?' he cried to the sea. 'You have given a little of yourself to understand me' the sea replied.

Slowly the salt puppet began to walk into the sea with great solemnity as though he were about to perform the most important act of his life. The further he moved along, the more he dissolved but at the same time he had the impression that he knew more and more about the sea.

Again and again the puppet asked 'What is the sea?' until the wave covered him completely. Just before he was entirely dissolved by the sea he exclaimed: 'I exist!'

COMMENTARY

The first of the 7 Planes of Consciousness unfolds as the Earth Plane. This is the lowest grade of light, the slowest. It is perceived through the 5 normal senses as the physical universe. The word No is used to represent the fundamental reality here on Earth — that no two objects can occupy the same space at the same time. Things are necessarily defined — and what defines their identity is a physical boundary. Every aspect of all realities is mirrored on Earth, so there is tremendous richness in form, each type realizing an idea and examining the truth of that idea. Everything is one thing or another — so choice has to develop and so do patience, perseverance and steadiness. Out of these qualities, the personality grows more beautiful and develops mastery as it attempts to find balance and rules for living that help to provide for nourishment and protection.

Once upon a time there was a puppet made of salt who had travelled a long time through dry and desert places...

The realm of time necessarily refers to the Earth Plane because it is the only one where time is experienced as sequential and historical. The puppet image is of an unreal caricature whose movements are rigid and dependent upon external forces for motivation — the metaphor of an ordinary person. The salt indicates that the person is dry and can only survive in this form by staying in the desert, with its lifeless imagery.

The 2nd Plane is called the Astral and is described as the psychic realm. It relates to our thoughts and emotions. Here the waves of vibration (of light) are experienced in the mind as thought and imagination, dreams and intuition. It is very creative and playful realm where freedom, mischief and fun are more the norm. When we are more in tune with this level of vibration, we delight in making up new ways to do things, especially to solve problems or be artistic. It is here that we experience resourcefulness, genius, intuition, talents, clarity, the understanding of others' emotions and views. Our subconscious desires sometimes surprise us by popping out willy-nilly. People like Peter Sellers and Mozart are typical of this plane — 'djinn spirits' for whom routines and committed relationships are difficult and whose genius offsets their social ineptitude.

...until one evening he came upon a sea which he had never before seen and didn't know what it was. The puppet asked the sea: 'What are you?'

The astral realm contains the sense of following intuition just for the sake of curiosity and without minding whether it's right or wrong — because the djinn spirit is careless and carefree. Our salt puppet — at evening time, just before night befalls him — has followed his intuition and found something entirely new to play with. He's curious and asks 'what are you?' (not 'who are you?'). This is the Hello stage.

The 3rd Plane is known as the Angelic Realm, the Plane of Love, Harmony and Beauty. Love is beyond mind; it obeys its own laws and is not constrained by logic or ideas. It feels in the heart. To access this vibrational level we look for joyful beauty, subtle gentleness — which we see in flowers, trees and landscapes, artistic expression of harmony, the watery sensitivity of relationship and the practice of compassion. We appreciate the value of things and give of the heart in response to these feelings. It equates to Thank You.

'I am the sea' it replied 'But' the puppet insisted 'What is the sea.' 'I am.' 'I don't understand' said the puppet made of salt 'I want very much to understand what I can do to know you!' The sea replied 'That's easy, touch me!' the salt puppet timidly touched the sea with the tip of his toes.

The sea was identified at first only verbally — appearing therefore only to the mind of the salt puppet, who persistently attempts to engage in a shallow relationship — and yet felt frustrated by his inadequate level of knowledge. He asks for guidance and receives an instruction that is new to him — he has never been asked to touch water before. He feels timid now because he's on unfamiliar territory — as we all do when we are overtaken by the heart of love. He touches another — with an exquisite sensitivity and sense of crossing a line that may not later be re-crossed.

The 4th Plane has a lot to do with crossing the line. It's called the Heroic Plane and is associated with masters, saints and prophets — types like Jeanne d'Arc, Gandhi, Alexander the Great, Martin Luther King and a thousand others who had no willingness to compromise. It is accessed through the practice of truth — no bargaining with your soul. Christ certainly had a 4th Plane aspect — turning over the moneylenders' tables in the temple. Qualities associated here are fiery conviction, missions, strength of character,

power, faith, will, transformation, struggle, mastery, confronting injustice — and eventually surrender to divine will, wisdom and the ability to balance forces. It is the Goodbye vibration — realisation, decision, completion and moving on.

At that moment he realised that the sea began to make itself perceptible, but at the same time he noticed the tips of his toes had disappeared. 'What have you done to me?' he cried to the sea. 'You have given a little of yourself to understand me' the sea replied

A real moment of truth — the instant of realisation, the arising of an inner force — that could easily have been expressed as anger or violent rejection — but which is confronted within oneself instead. The need for instantaneous decision and the movement into the unknown. There's a profound sense of the release of childishness as adult wisdom unfolds with a depth of personal responsibility. Rites of passage are 4th Plane. The 5th Plane is called the Plane of Splendour. It has associations with knowledge of perfection, sacredness, excellence, praise, prayer, cathedrals, glorification, peacefulness, Goddess in Nature, self-respect, dignity, chanting, rituals, majesty, bringing God into life — the priestly vibration. The word Please is enacted within this atmosphere of wanting to bring a sacred vision to Earth.

Slowly the salt puppet began to walk into the sea with great solemnity as though he were about to perform the most important act of his life. The further he moved along, the more he dissolved but at the same time he had the impression that he knew more and more about the sea.

The solemnity of his gestures, the walk of dignity, the sense of fulfilling the soul's act — the most important ever — are clues of his inner state of great reverence. The salt puppet has come to know that, for him at least, the sea is God, here on Earth. He wants this now, like never before. Having touched God, nothing else will do, the world begins to disappear, the self begins to disappear. The 6th Plane is known as the Immaculate State. Its access is through forgiveness. 'Life is lived fully only when one feels free to die.' Purification, purity, hope, rebirth after the despair of despoilment, soul's innocence, pure light of consciousness, desire for perfection, indifference to other desires, no interests, detachment. Holy Spirit. The word Sorry is truly said to engender a state of forgiveness and brings about refinement of the individual, a sense of egolessness. (That is why it's so difficult for so many of us to say it sincerely.)

Again and again the puppet asked 'What is the sea?' until the wave covered him completely.

Even though the sea is salty, its essential nature is not salt; similarly the puppet's essential nature is not lifeless salt, in isolation. There is a deeper truth within the ocean of God. Drawn by a something in the briny sea that it senses is akin to itself, yet infinitely greater, it has to lose all of its imperfections — those unyielding aspects that he had come to love passionately as self — and unite with a greater being to lose itself in the ocean of spirit in order to go forward into God. Sufis call this fana (effacement). The 7th Plane is transcendental — beyond all phenomena and beyond description.

Just before he was entirely dissolved by the sea he exclaimed: 'I exist!'

The story of the Salt Puppet ends with the two words 'I exist'. In the beginning, his identity was established and appeared incorruptible because the dry desert — a place lifeless and without the greening of water — was safe. He knew nothing of water, and was curious to find out — so he risked his toe. He then knew of surrender, and equally he knew of the sea. Choosing the mystic life, he undertook an act of great sacredness and gave up his primary attachment, his physicality, in order to gain knowledge of God, which the sea here symbolizes. Quite by surprise and without any previous expectation or hope he discovers existence is not what he had thought before — and now he has it! I exist!

Are we willing to risk a toe in order to discover for ourselves whether existence is not quite how we thought it to be? The journey from No to Yes begins and ends with identity: 'I exist!' Perhaps the emphasis has changed now, whereas in No we were proudly proclaiming 'I', with surrender we are more humbly acknowledging 'exist'.



ADDENDA

QUESTIONNAIRES

There are other questionnaires for various purposes, and some of these can usually be downloaded from the website <http://www.7words.co.uk/members-area/>

Q21 Parenting

Q21 Recovery

Q21 Facilitators

Q21 Birthing

Q21 Relationship

Q7 Sales

Q7 Meetings

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

How

In 2 minutes, make a list of all the things that you feel grateful for. Pause. Continue for another 3 minutes.

Why

Apart from the obvious, from this exercise we can notice that some of the most important things we love do not quickly come to mind. Time pressure tends to cost us some of that which really is too precious to let ourselves lose sight of.

INVOLVEMENT WITH 7 WORDS ASSOCIATES

ETHOS: To develop insight and skill in the application of the 7 Words System and to show understanding towards those without such awareness.

VISION: We intend to change humanity's thinking so that all people become free to enjoy sustainable abundance and live with greater consideration for one another.

TO BECOME AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER YOU NEED TO:

- Agree with the organisation's ethos and vision
- Help to spread awareness and use of the 7 Words System
- Be accepted into membership
- Pay the subscription

TO BECOME A CERTIFIED PRACTITIONER YOU NEED TO:

- Be an Associate
- Have satisfactorily completed an Approved Training Course
- Be nominated by 3 Associates, of whom one is a Certified Practitioner
- Demonstrate skill, experience and intentions to the satisfaction of a Guide
- Submit your vision for publication on the website
- Annually reaffirm your commitment to the criteria for membership
- Receive a certificate that will give you:
 - Permission to refer to yourself as a *Certified 7 Words Practitioner*
 - Endorsement to lead 7 Words Introductory Seminars
 - Free access to certain training tools and study material
 - The entitlement to appoint Associates

TO BECOME A GRADUATE YOU NEED TO:

- Be an Associate
- Have satisfactorily completed a Distance Learning Programme (DLP)
- Be nominated by a Tutor
- Demonstrate understanding of 7 Words principles
- Submit your vision for publication on the website
- Annually reaffirm your commitment to the criteria for membership
- Receive a certificate that will give you:
 - Permission to refer to yourself as a 7 Words Graduate
 - Endorsement to facilitate 7 Words Development Groups
 - Free access to certain training tools and study material
 - The entitlement to appoint Associates

TO BECOME A GUIDE YOU NEED TO:

- Have at least 12 months experience after certification
- Have passed both the DLP and an approved Training Course
- Be appointed by the Core Group
- Have gained some experience in 7 Words as a trainer or assistant trainer
- Demonstrate willingness to continue development in 7 Words
- Take an active role in the administration of 7 Words Associates
- Receive permission to lead an approved training course and give certification

GUIDES AND THEIR WORK

Certified Practitioners who graduate with the DLP and continue to develop with the 7 Words teachings can be elected as Guides. They represent the 7 Words at a higher level of responsibility and invariably will be engaged in training and guidance work employing this system. Their responsibility includes ensuring the continued evolution and outreach of the teaching.

James Burgess



7 Words has been his primary focus since 2000, used for personal consultation and guidance, management consultancy and training, and for leading spiritual retreats and 7 Wisdoms courses. James has written widely on this subject, always employing 7 Words to create the thought process that brings clarity and simplicity to complex subjects. With Richard and Laura, he runs 7 Words Training Ltd, whose purpose is to bring the 7 Words System into 21st century corporate thinking.

Richard Grey



Richard's special initiative has centred on 7 Words Theatre. Profound personal transformations often occur with this work, as participants come to new and surprising realisations about the nature of reality and their own unique responses to it! He is a trainer, coach and management consultant, with a background in bringing awareness of sustainability issues to the corporate sector.

Dominique Sakoilsky



Dom has been a teacher and guide for many years, especially keen to bring the depth of heart into relationships, parenting and birthing. She is a celebrated trainer of doulas, and has recently published her teachings in a lovely book *7 Secrets of a Joyful Birth*, which explains in 7 Words how to make this much-misunderstood event into a wonderful spiritual experience.

A.N.Other



There is a place for you to join us. The work is visionary in its outlook; we want to change the world to make it a better place. As a Guide you will have responsibility to keep the 7 Words System alive and flourishing, and to help ensure it continues to do so in the future, always a positive influence in the lives of its clients and students, a force for good in the world that you influence.

OTHER APPLICATIONS

There are quite a number of areas where the system has taken root in Great Britain, New Zealand, Russia, Latvia and especially Lithuania, where twice-yearly retreat courses are popular. New members are joining in a steady flow, and several practitioner training courses are running or planned. DLP student numbers have doubled in a year. Here are some examples of the ways in which the expansion and interpretation of the system's reach and usefulness is in evidence.

EDUCATION

UK Schools – Over 16s. Young mums going through rites of passage processes based on 7 Words.

NLP. Early stages of creating a 7 Words module to include in the master practitioner training course.

Unicorn Camps. 7 Words has been on the programme on this “*university on the green earth*” since 2000, to support life change processes in development classes.

Kindergarten. Discussions are underway in Lithuania relating to the creation of government sponsored pre-school courses based on 7W.

MANAGEMENT

Water Industry. Two major water companies have used 7 Words for consultancy and project management review.

Sales Training. An innovative approach to training using 7 Words, teaching reflexive self-consciousness to sales assistants.

Gender Dynamics. A marriage between 7 Words and the Gender Dynamics initiative from Pauline Crawford's *Corporate Heart* is in use to facilitate management re-visioning and team building.

Leadership Coaching. Several versions, including the *Which Bus?* coaching method employ 7 Words principles.

COUNSELLING

One to One. Questionnaire Q21 has gained a reputation for being one of the most incisive of procedures some professionals have ever seen for personal counselling.

Recovery. Research into replacing the 12-step AA programme with a slimmer less God-centred 7 Words approach.

Death and Dying. Findhorn's Margie McCallum's initiative to bring solace and spiritual guidance to those close to the final journey is based on 7 Words.

7 WORDS THEATRE

ACTING OUT THE WORDS

How

For 10 minutes or so, two people interact in intuitive drama, according to the facilitator's suggestion of a theme. One is a salesman, the other a housewife; one a politician, the other a reporter; one a suitor, the other an undecided maiden...

Having watched the drama, other students discuss what they perceived and then try to find each of the 7 words, some perhaps because they were omitted.

Why

This highly effective exercise embraces so many variables – conscious and unconscious processes, use of body gestures, words and concepts etc. There is a challenge to find all the words...yet they are there to discover. It can trigger deep feelings and new levels of self-understanding. Handle with care!

DRAW A WORD

How

With paper and coloured pencils or pens, draw one of the primary words. Version two: With paper and coloured pencils or pens, draw one of the primary words in relation to one of your parents.

Why

Many of us have non-verbal comprehension of many things, and this must be accessed non-verbally.

WALKS

How

Ask the group to walk around the room in a casual natural way, and then simply ask them to concentrate on one of the primary words. Their walks will change. Discuss this as a group. Then ask half to walk as No, half as Please, for example, and experience the relationship. Variations and advanced levels can be added according to the leader's skill and imagination.

Why

Learning to become aware of the words as body states in an important step towards being able to choose them at will, and thereby influence situations in life, with or without words. Mastery of the 7 Words comes when you can use them non-verbally!

TYPES OF PEOPLE

The individual interpretation of high or low scoring primary words — strong on No, weak on Goodbye and so on — can be dealt with intuitively after gaining some grasp of the main ideas of the 7 words. It is also meaningful to consider the various scores in combination; the 42 possible results are briefly explained here. They are meant as preliminary suggestions for further contemplation, a guideline for a person to use as help towards a deeper sense of self-awareness.

NO IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

- HELLO** There can be reluctance to embrace new ideas and new people, fixity of habit, a reflex against trying alternatives. Life can be rigid and set firm into patterns of defence.
- THANKS** By blocking out so much, what is wanted may also be accidentally excluded. The warmth of human connection and appreciation of life's blessings cannot easily pass through a door that always remains closed.
- GOODBYE** Perhaps what was entirely appropriate once is no longer valid and valuable. There may be an outworn self-image that needs to be released in order to move forward to new opportunities.
- PLEASE** Defining life negatively is one way to be very restricting — *'I know what I don't like'* can actually attract exactly what we don't like. It's more fruitful to pursue a more optimistic vision based on positive statements of preference and desire.
- SORRY** Life is rather harsh for those who cannot easily admit their weaknesses. Modesty is a rather more pleasant and sustainable condition than the aloofness of pride. *'Beyond a healthy discipline, be gentle with yourself'* (Desiderata).
- YES** There are times when controls need to be relaxed so that the unpredictable elements of life are admitted. To be constantly clenched, through fear of being out of control, is damaging. There is a need to take risks sometimes.

HELLO IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

- NO** A need may exist to develop discrimination and apply more thought to priorities in life. We can't accept everything that is available and are required to choose what has importance; otherwise we are likely to become overwhelmed.
- THANKS** Is the grass always greener in another field? It may be better to learn how to appreciate what there is here and now rather than to indulge an appetite for excitement and just take the familiar for granted.
- GOODBYE** It's not reasonable to believe we can breathe in without breathing out. If we take on new things without completing and letting go of the old, then life becomes cluttered and unmanageable, we spread ourselves too thinly and nothing is properly finished.

PLEASE Within the range of opportunities available, it is good to become focused on a clear goal and set out to achieve it. There are resources available to help in this and yet they can be harnessed only when we ask for cooperation.

SORRY Living on the surface of things has its advantages, yet a deeper and more mature involvement is gained only when we take more responsibility for ourselves and the effect we have on others.

YES A more balanced life is less frenetic and can be created by trusting more in the natural flow of things and letting ourselves have time to relax and assimilate, accepting periods of quiet as valuable and important.

THANK YOU IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

NO It may be useful to question whether a certain looseness around boundaries comes from innocent idealism — that all people are to be appreciated for who and what they are — or an inability to discriminate and establish a clear sense of personal identity.

HELLO Perhaps a sense of inwardness or diffidence is holding back a natural capacity to relate more widely with new people and new situations. By expanding horizons, an inherent open-heartedness will have greater scope for expression.

GOODBYE All things must come to an end and there is often sorrow at parting, yet we cannot hold onto our yesterdays however enjoyable they have been. The sensitive heart has its own strength and will cope with the changes.

PLEASE Do not rest too long at the comfortable motel or the journey will be forfeited! There is a need to put aside contentment and comfort if one is to continue to move forward — also a need to show initiative and focus on a specific goal.

SORRY It may be hard to admit mistakes and show a compassionate understanding of another person's hurt: it takes a deeper degree of awareness and humility. Being kind and loving may not always be enough.

YES A true appreciation of life's abundance can flow out of trusting that the future holds a greater joy than the past, by opening up to the unknown and accepting the gifts in whatever comes along.

GOODBYE IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

NO There may be a tendency just to allow others to act against us knowing how easy it is to move on when things become unacceptable, yet it's better to set clear boundaries earlier to prevent the need to be forever running off.

HELLO Would we really be better off in isolation? There can be real value in developing new contacts and since moving on is quite easy, we can take a few risks without a fear of getting stuck and bored.

- THANKS** It is eventually unsustainable to keep on moving on in the hope that the next one will satisfy. Any lack of appreciation is an inner state and is very likely to arise again and again whatever the external circumstances.
- PLEASE** If you never have a dream, how can you make a dream come true? Define what is wanted and move steadily towards it, instead of careering around hoping to bump into a situation that fits an intuitive, yet ill-defined specification.
- SORRY** Dashing off injured is not the most effective strategy for dealing with painful feelings. It's better to understand what's going wrong and take more personal responsibility for the injuries that repeatedly arise.
- YES** Moving on is often employed as a form of control and can be an habitual technique used to avoid having to deal with certain unpalatable truths about life. It's also sometimes important and good to trust the processes of life and accept whatever comes along.
- PLEASE** IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:
- NO** It is a necessary, but not sufficient, aspect of attainment to be clear about goals. It is also required that we know what to (and how to) reject what is not wanted just as a filter serves the purposes of refinement.
- HELLO** Without cooperation, nothing much of value is achieved. It is good to develop social skills in communicating, relating and so on, in order to include others in the pursuance of our vision.
- THANKS** Achievement can be rather hollow without appreciating the process of endeavour itself, not only what is achieved. Also it's good to notice the people around and to enjoy their input into our lives.
- GOODBYE** Completion is important. We need to tie up loose ends and let go of what has been if we are really to move on towards new horizons, otherwise we will be carrying extra baggage that doesn't serve us.
- SORRY** There is a need to be mindful of those whose toes we step on as we pursue our goals. A ruthless or insensitive attitude — and the resultant resentments — can be tempered with a little thoughtfulness.
- YES** Around us there is already a superabundance of life's wonderful fruit, ripe for the plucking, so it may be worth accepting the easy way instead of always creating something new and challenging.

SORRY IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

- NO** It may be easy for us to say it's our fault when something goes wrong — yet it may be wiser to encourage others to develop their own sense of responsibility rather than to apologize willy-nilly.
- HELLO** It may be necessary to learn how to live with certain insensitivities in others and open up to allow a greater exchange to take place with new people. This will allow further development in the ability to practice forgiveness and compassion.
- THANKS** Openheartedness is to do with warmth and pleasure as well as the rather lofty yet detached sentiment of tolerance and forbearance. Is it possible to be more in touch with simple feelings of fondness?
- GOODBYE** In its fullest sense, personal responsibility includes proper fulfilment of obligations, completion through the tying up of outstanding issues and timely movement. This is more than simply making amends for disappointments caused.
- PLEASE** Please teaches that clear goals and cooperative involvements lead to attainment. It's likely that there will be a few eggs broken in the making of an omelette — is this ever avoidable really?
- YES** Some things cannot be controlled — that's life — and it's better to accept what must be accepted without feeling at fault or responsible for another's trials and tribulations.

YES IS THE STRONGEST SCORE, AND THE WEAKEST IS:

- NO** A rather childlike sense of naivety and innocence — even saintliness — can be experienced when we say Yes to life, and yet there are hard realities to face; for these we need to establish who we are and where we put our boundary markers.
- HELLO** New growth opens out of new contact and there may be opportunities lost if we stay always in the comfort zone and enjoy an easy-going style of life. It may require taking initiative to pursue friendship and hobbies.
- THANKS** A river is rather Yes-like: ever flowing around obstacles and allowing itself to be drawn to the sea. Yet let's remember that to travel upon the river is to notice the life around and to deeply appreciate its myriad qualities.
- GOODBYE** Although we can accept what comes without difficulty, a closer look at circumstances may reveal that it's time to close down a few things that have served their purpose and thus be more prepared for the new adventure that's ready to emerge.
- PLEASE** If we are in love with others then we will easily and naturally align our vision with those of the people around us. Sometimes taking the initiative is a part of the whole harmonious scheme of things — more so than always accepting things as they are.
- SORRY** Healing old resentments begins with acknowledging them and continues with taking responsibility for change. Acceptance of everything can't be sustainable in the long term, there is also a need to reject and release pain and injustice.

EXERCISES & KEYWORDS

20	Study of Text Bring an Object Muhasaba Roles & Qualities Glamours	NO	Boundaries Identity Choice Truth
34	Speak a Word Siberian Express Keywords Communion 7 Aspects Of	HELLO	Attention Openness Exchange Communion
47	Q21 Q21 With a Client Introduce Your Partner Circle of Appreciation Talking Stick Sharing Circle My Favourite People	THANKS	Appreciation Valuing Giving Heart Essence
61	Critical Keyword Circles of 8 Crux Points Satisfaction Index	GOODBYE	Realisation Decision Completion Moving On
74	Vision Statement CV for God Backwards from Death People You Admire Tombstone Qualities	PLEASE	Vision Intention Cooperation Prayer
88	Coaching to 10 Spirituality Apology and Parents Baroness	SORRY	Responsibility Remorse Repair Release
99	Open Space Trust Games Meditation Breathing into Body Tension Interesting Questions	YES	Permission Acceptance Agreement Surrender
126	Acting out the words Draw a word Walks		