

Dear Networkers:

The time has come. After all these months with lots of person-to-person communication, but little group interchange, I feel like issuing a communique which will bring us somewhat up to date on what I know, etc. I have been doing lots of interesting things these past months [in fact, for the past 3 years] and think that I am moving in the right direction, if slowly.

The most important news I have is that my wife and I have re-integrated ourselves into a group and we're going to reach some goals together. It's been tough at times to take responsibility, etc., but at least something has been possible along these lines.

Other than that I have continued to work along lines which seem to hold the most promise for me and I make no claims for them for others. Perhaps it is a sign of progress that I restrict my area of knowledge as I do. What I know, I know. And that ain't much. What others do seems more understandable to me at this point but far be it from me to claim I know.

It does seem to me, however, that there is one basic point which can be very useful to anyone investigating the sort of problems that we study. Let's divide up what we know or think we know into two groups [this is not an either-or system; I concede the graduated differential scale between the two extremes I choose to highlight here]: [a] that which we know by our unmediated awareness; and [b] that which has been translated from (a) into an abstract area, or symbolic form, i.e., something which is empty in itself but which derives its significance because it is about something else which we know directly.

Now the content of group [a] is non-verbal, we know it directly, and as long as we say nothing about it, it has particular meaning for individual awareness. And group [b] is all right for an individual but becomes ambiguous when communicated to another person [I mean by verbal communication or direct, overt physical means; let's leave "theta" perceptics out of this unless you can actually do it.].

Whenever we think we are communicating verbally with someone else, we are making the assumption that our meanings for the symbols [i.e., his and mine] are close enough to the other's so that the content of group [a] which we are trying to communicate is actually communicated.

If this one assumption were ever handled adequately by a person, it is likely [it seems to me] that his attitude toward verbal communication might be altered radically. Maybe not. But certainly it would be difficult to argue in the face of this, i.e., to try to argue about some point, etc., when one realizes what a slender thread such argument hangs on.

Moving into the field of group [b] knowledge, there is another aspect about assumptions. It is this: Within a logical system, everything is based on certain assumptions called "primitive" by the logicians. Each of the primitives is independent of all others, and the group of primitives is capable of giving birth to everything else in the system. Yet the logicians themselves will never maintain that such assumptions are "true" or "valid" or have any necessary reference beyond this particular system.

The conclusions which come out of a system, however redundant, trivial, or obvious, are no more valid than the primitive assumptions which form the foundation. And yet people sometimes act as if their conclusions are not only true but that these conclusions invalidate all other conclusions covering the same subject. Sometimes people even kill each other because of such disagreements.

I am not out to reform the world. The hardest thing to do is to get a person to see that he is assuming something when he knows the "something" is not an assumption, but "true." Like in certain systems of religion. To the select

group in our network, however, I bring this subject out for discussion because each of us has supposedly professed an interest in this sort of thing. Or am I assuming too much?

I do have a specific point to bring out. Not too long ago I came across [deviously] three basic assumptions which I recognized as being nothing more than assumptions. They happen to conflict rather strongly with most of this culture's present views. Which fact is irrelevant, but interesting. I decided to give these three assumptions a work-out to see what would happen.

In the ensuing 2 or 3 months I have had some interesting experiences with them. For instance, one night this past week I got into quite a disagreement with my wife. I went out on the sun deck to think it over and I took a look at the incident in view of these three points. It made lots of difference. I was actually able to drain off a lot of the charge by merely thinking about the thing differently.

- [1] I am not my body.
- [2] I am fully responsible for everything I am willing to take the responsibility for.
- [3] I use mock-ups to accomplish my purposes.

They are independent of each other and I consider them to be primitive, in the logical sense. They do not or would not make sense to most people but they have implications for the events of my life. In every area I keep running up against these things. And the thing is--I get better results with these than with other assumptions which I used to use. But--now I know that these are only assumptions whereas I used to think my assumptions were not just assumptions but were facts.

I can see now how many times I have gotten into disagreements because of hidden assumptions on both my part and the other's. First one must be aware of what exists, then one can take responsibility for it, and then, and only then, change it.

In the early days of dianetics, and even up to a year ago, I used to laugh off the idea that a therapist or healer should be able to heal himself before working on others. Now, however, I think just the opposite. And so I view with little interest the efforts of some of the dianetic community to save the world in their very aberrated way. I figure that a person who hasn't gotten around to taking responsibility for himself isn't going to be able to take much for somebody else. As my friend Ed Calkins says so well--there is only one person you can really change, and that is your own self.

I have attached a current, revised membership list. We have lost a few members, gained several, and still carry a few who don't yet seem to be doing much communicating. I think we have all seen the wisdom of our do-nothing policy about non-communicators. In time they will weed themselves out or we will do it on a selective, individual basis. Some of us are having some very fine correspondence among ourselves. I think it would be nice if more joined in but let's leave it up to them--and to the communicators.

For now--I'll sign off. I am enjoying the contacts I am having with everybody, and getting a lot of good out of them. If anybody wants to write me about any of my remarks here or elsewhere, go ahead. I'll answer.

ARC,

Harry Fortune

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