

I have been continuing to work on the problem of communication from the purely physical point of view, how to resolve the factors of time, effort, money, speed, etc. I have used both the duplicating and circular letter methods. Up til today, however, I was operating with what I would call not enough data. But to my great surprise I got back in the mail my circular letter number one.

On that, my first venture, I had not specified the order or sequence of rotation and, as a result, it was sort of haphazard. The last person who got it was eighth and he returned it to me, for some reason (not specified) instead of continuing it on its way. It took just about 6 days on the average for each person it reached, so that's pretty fast forwarding, when you consider the time that must have been spent in the mails.

I now have a couple of more ideas about the uses, purposes and effectiveness of the different modes of communication. These I am writing up for general consumption here. It might be said with some validity that we are hammering out some new data about communication. For me, at least, this network is a new experience and these ideas are new. What is surviving seems to be good.

For instance, there is one thing you can accomplish with a circular letter which you can't with the duplicated, simultaneous letter but which we thought could be done with the latter. And that is to get opinions about opinions quick enough to allow a real interplay. A little reflection will show why. There are even now 22 members in our network. Figure out on your own slide rule the amount of writing, time, and especially the delay, it would take to get 2d or 3rd order cross-comments on just one communication by one member. But with a circular letter this is not the case. An individual gets the bundle of communications, reads them through, thinks of his own pearls of wisdom, writes them out and forwards the mess to the next person. All in just six days average.

The gimmick in the procedure is that at the end of the line sits the originator who can, if he wants to, be an editor. He can take that bundle with all the opinions and sift out the stuff he thinks is worthwhile and then issue the edited version as a communication. And that is what I intend to do here.

I don't intend to do it with every one of these communications and perhaps I won't duplicate all the edited versions. But with this first one I will. And at some future time, I might knock off an edition and send that out as a new circular letter. Or I might send the whole bale of material to those particularly interested in it. There are just a whole constellation of possible actions we might take in this respect.

Recently I have tried out a new gimmick in circular letters. Instead of having just one sequence, I broke the group down into 3 sub-groups and sent out 3 carbons, one to each sub-group. Each sub-group has about 7 members, a sort of a workable number. Later I will get them back and have more data on that method. But it is something to think about now while the experiment is in progress.

My tentative conclusion as of now, just about 4 months after the start of our network, based on the amount of communication both by duplication and by circular letter, is that both have their places and that each one of us can probably use both. There is something particularly stimulating, apparently, about a collection of opinions as in a circular. On the other hand, it's impossible to beat the simultaneous mailing out of a viewpoint, for certain purposes. Instead of limiting ourselves to one or the other, or only one expression of each, let's see how many different ways of communicating we can find and exploit them all.

For instance--send 2 copies of a simultaneous communication so that the recipient can mark up one with comments, interpretations, etc., and mail it right back. That would speed up communications on a personal basis.

At this point I don't know, any more than anyone else does, what the final outcome is going to be on our problem of the ultimate size of the net. My own viewpoint on this problem is that we should let anyone join who wants to and then let us all communicate as we please with whom we please. It shouldn't be too hard to see that under these conditions, the communicators are going to communicate and the others aren't going to. This system will allow a natural balancing or homeostasis to take place. Any arbitrary methods of limiting membership, of voting to include or exclude, in fact, any methods of interfering with what people feel like doing or are willing to do on their own self-determinism, will, in the end (in my opinion)

disrupt our functioning here in this net. So I advocate having only one rule: "There shall be no rules." But whatever the outcome of this problem, we will ultimately have (at any one moment) a finite number of members, and the need for validated methods of communication (at minimum effort). So I propose (and you dispose) that we all use our ingenuity to figure out all the possible variations in methods and we may yet find some better ones.

Along this line, I note that several of our members have proposed tape recorded communication. This method is already in use by some other people in dianetics and it appears good. I have a Wilcox-Gay operating at $3\frac{3}{4}$ "/s and I shall be very interested in participating in tape letters. I have loaned it out temporarily and so can't initiate anything for awhile but if I receive something, I will be able to play it back and record my contribution on it. The nice thing about tapes is that you can always do it over if you don't like the way it came out the Nth time.

In the following resume I am going to try a little condensation and maybe I'll even re-phrase the comments. There are about 8 single-spaced typed pages of comment to boil down. My aim is to condense this down to about 2 pages, more or less. If anybody is really interested in reading the original comments, just write me and I'll send them on (to be returned to me afterward or forwarded to some other member who wants to see it).

Since there must be (as of this writing) 13 members who have not been exposed to the original letter which acted as the stimulus for the responses, I am going to reprint those parts of it which were germane. About half of that letter was just abstracting about communication, etc., without value for the purpose here. From the original letter of 9 Nov '52:

"While verbal symbols are admittedly inadequate for many things, it is likewise true that much can be said in words. ...Lately I have been working with 'illusions.' Don't try to pin me down on what an illusion is because then I will have to commit myself on what reality is and then I will be in trouble. In many ways it seems to me that an illusion is the belief than an aberration is actually going to lead to enhanced survival. When it doesn't, we get disillusioned. ...All your philosophies, systems, etc., etc., that have occupied the attention of man since thinking first began, it seems to me, have failed or succeeded in direct proportion to how much weight they gave to self-determinism. Because I happen to believe that everything can be explained in those terms.The assumption must be made to begin with that I am self-determined. ...I assert that I am the cause of whatever happens to me. More specifically, I cause all my own feelings. This one point seems to be essential to the process and yet the hardest to understand. But it works. Pragmatically, it is enough. I have actually been able to make some progress in learning how I turn on and off certain feelings. Right at this point, for instance, I am having some success in being aware of physical sensations and of ideas simultaneously. I can stay right with it in the process of an incident which I would formerly have described as 'restimulative.' The word 'restimulate' is misleading for me now. Since I cause all my own effects, to tell another person that they are 'restimulating' me is to blame them for causing me to feel a certain way. That's out now."

*****comments follow*****

POPE: "I'll buy your self-determinism, Harry, with one proviso, namely, it must not be used as an excuse to trample roughshod over the rights of others. Further, it can be carried to extremes that are slightly ridiculous. ...It appears that the world today is made up largely of individuals who have lost their tolerance for the rights and privileges of others. It would be a shame if dianetics contributed to this movement and yet that seems to be where we are headed. Let's remember that there are more dynamics than the first and we can be self-determined without being authoritarian and self-centered. ...Every now and then I hear of a case where someone has been turned against dianetics by an auditor trying some new technique-- particularly when it is tried in public. I wonder if we are giving enough attention to possible invalidation of the preclear or to his loss of self-esteem? SET and SEL (self esteem threat/loss) points are potent rocks on which to wreck the ship of auditing. And so often you do not know just what affects a person's self-esteem. Think it over."

SMITH: "To say that everything can be explained in terms of self-determinism seems to me like quite a statement. Reminds me of some others which explained everything in terms of sex, or food, or shelter....It (self-determinism) is exceedingly important to people who do not have it, and once they have it, well, perhaps they cannot help wondering what all the fuss is about. Once a person realizes that nothing can determine his actions, other than himself, then he no longer needs to wage battle over his right to be self-determined. The definition of illusion that Fortune gives looks pretty good to me. ...We can observe people daily, among them ourselves in all probability, who have illusions that their aberrations are necessary for survival. I cannot go along with the idea that whatever happens to me I am the cause of--not individually. I have a concept of joint responsibility. It's like keeping the brakes fixed in my car so I do not cause an accident that will in turn destroy others, and they in turn are growing food so that I can eat and live, and someone else is doing something else so that we all will survive."

TULLIS: "Another word I think we can do without is 'processing' as a transitive verb. To say that you are 'processing' another person is to say that you are doing something to another person. Hubbard carries this to its final absurdity when he asserts that for the period he is 'processing' the other, the auditor 'owns' the preclear. The fact is that any results achieved by the process (and I'm not denying that there is a process, mind you) were already latent in the preclear. Any transforming that is done is done not only with the preclear's consent but with his active cooperation. One 'processes' a jug and makes a lamp out of it. The jug is not consulted. There's a different 'process' in process when a preclear becomes a clear, no matter how illuminating, no matter how sparks may fly."

ED CALKINS: "After your tone reaches a comfortable level, restimulation is a good thing. The purpose of all dianetic processing is to restimulate charged areas and then discharge them. ...(when a charged area is contacted) I feel a little shock somewhere back in my brain, like touching a filling in a sensitive tooth. When I feel that, I either stop and discharge the offending circuit instantly, or make a note of the restimulative phrase or circumstance, to be taken up for thorough investigation later. ...Not (restimulated) more than once. ...Self-determinism, of course, works both ways, and on all dynamics. Shake off, ignore, or discharge others' attempts to control you, and restrain or discharge your own desire to control others. And don't forget, a wish to control someone may be disguised behind an attempt to help that person. ...If some people lost their aberrations, they wouldn't have much left. That's why I don't have a clear to show the world--my preclear disappeared completely the instant he reached optimum. ...I lose more pre-clears that way. ...Remind yourself that there is no sharp division between one dynamic and the next...."

FRED HAND: "That ('an illusion is the belief that...) is a real pregnant type thought. ...We have here an example of a fruitful definition. The ordinary one--that illusion is a false abstraction (inference) from sensory data, etc.,--is only descriptive. ...Generally a philosophy of this type (which explains everything by one single principle, i.e., self-determinism), namely monistic--does stimulate thought and progress, but does not adequately explain events when closely analyzed. In other words, a monistic philosophy functions better heuristically than normatively. ...Self-determinism should not be construed as a hunting license for people of tone 2.1 who enthrall themselves by Thetan Acupuncture (I can be just as obscure as anybody). Broadly, can we put it that a person is self-determined means that he is completely responsible for his own behavior, and perhaps also for what occurs to himself? Total full responsibility on or near the event level is a concept which is still a little blank to me. ...The people who seem to make up the world are, really, a small minority who happen to make more noise and throw more weight about than the majority do--as individuals. Many of these articulate minority people are ego-centric and exhibitionistic, behavior patterns not often compatible with tolerance and consideration for the rights and emotions of others. ...It looks like self-determinism and responsibility are getting in a confused state again. Look--what we need is not some more acts of faith affirming LRH's formulation, but rather a parallel formulation as Pope and Fortune seem to be

working on so that we can translate these two concepts (self-determinism and responsibility) into terms understandable and usable by each of us. ...Excuse me, but who says these terms are out (referring to Fortune's statement that the use of 'restimulate' and 'restimulated' was out)? I submit that reforming and prohibiting (strong term, I know, but...) changing the terminology and suppressing words does not change the situations, processes, and events to which the words refer, or used to refer. ...If Hubbard says the auditor 'owns' the preclear, we can either say that Hubbard errs because he has used a word 'wrongly', or we can inquire what Hubbard means by the word he uses. This latter is not always easy either. The main topic of Fortune, 'self-determinism,' is a good example. Tullis then adequately distinguishes the two senses of 'process' so why the objection to the term before? ...Does anybody want to be aberrated? Maybe Fortune's 'illusion' concept here. I suspect this situation is less simple. For many years psychiatric people have commanded neurotics to be not aberrated and told them that they could 'straighten up if they wanted to,' and the neurotic asks the people how to straighten up, and apparently does want to be unaberrated and instead gets worse. Then comes dianetics-scientology-eidetics-etc.-etc., The aberrees abruptly and finally are able to de-aberrate themselves, or to be de-aberrated by the new techniques. There is, distinctly, a difference. There is an ambiguity in this whole (if you really want to--) concept."

WALLACH: "I construe Harry's basic premise to be more reflexive in nature than some of my previous indorsers. That is, I don't believe he is saying 'everything that occurs is a result of the self-determinism of Harrison Q. Fortune.' And if he is saying what I think he is saying, I largely agree with the concept that 'all my actions, thoughts and attitudes--as well as the external effects, however cosmic in nature, which result from these either directly or indirectly--are originated by (or in) my self-determinism.' No physical laws violated, no spiritual concept involved."

Further comment on original idea and on comments by Fortune:

I am really quite impressed by the range and intensity of the chorus provoked by my original letter. There are some very helpful ideas in that mixture and I know that I have benefitted from the exchange.

My original idea about self-determinism is stated pretty well by Wallach in his comment. I did not originally mean that my self-determinism is taking care of the universe, if that impression was given. I would rather make this statement: "I am cause of and responsible for everything that occurs within my epidermis, and a convenient way to summarize it would be to use the idea of states and describe these states as 'thought-effort-emotion' states." As for explaining everything in terms of self-determinism--that wasn't my idea, really. Rather, self-determinism is a very useful concept to describe the optimum method of function of people. My original words were misleading in this respect. It is no strain to see how all of us are having what Howes calls the "semantic problem." And he states in his latest opus (Dr. Howes Discusses...) that he has never met a man who had been completely "de-semanticized." I presume he includes himself.

This latest book by Howes is about the best thing that I know of at this time. No--it won't "clear" you or me but it is certainly proving to be a big help to me as I strive to push my way through the morass to an optimum state.

Note: I am very sorry about this but I find that I left out the comments of two networkers--Dick Kerlin and Jean Marshall. Since I'm about out of space, I'll have to leave them out... It was an oversight.

Well--this has been an experiment and a lot of fun. I hope others will be encouraged to do likewise and together we can all work to increase the quality and quantity of the communication. It may be an illusion to exchange data--but I don't think so, here and now.

ARC

Harry Fortune