

PSYCHOSYNTHESIS SEMINARS

1966/67 SERIES

Second Meeting: October 21, 1966

Subject: Demonstration of a Technique of
Group Exploration of Consciousness

Speaker: Shirley Winston, M.A.

Participants:

Arnold Berrett, M.D.
Mrs. Marilyn B. Rosannes Berrett, Ph.D.
Jack Cooper, M.D.
Miss Sharon Healy
Frank Hilton
Mrs. Hilda Hilton
Mrs. Martha Crampton Lazure, M.A.
Rev. Weston A. Stevens
Graham Taylor, M.D.
Mrs. Shirley Winston, M.A.

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Editor's note: The first part of the meeting was given over to a demonstration of the methods used by Mrs. Winston with two other groups which she conducts on a regular weekly basis.

All the participants in the seminar took part in the tasks and movements assigned. First, each one had to draw on a sheet of paper some animal or living creature, the choice being up to them. They were then asked to put the drawing on one side for the time being.

The first instructions concerned posture: each had to see how aware he was of his body, its position, comfort, degree of awareness of contact with whatever he was sitting on, etc. Then the request was made to make one movement only with the aim of achieving a more comfortable position, followed by a further period of registering awareness of bodily feelings, etc. Then a third movement was requested, followed by another period of self-observation.

Then, with the shoes removed, the participants were told to stand up, become aware of their sense of balance, of contact with the floor, etc. They were asked - while keeping erect with the feet motionless and the eyes closed - to swing in a circle in a clockwise direction, then gradually reduce the circle until they came to rest at the central point of balance; and again become aware of how they felt, etc.

Next, one had to let the body bend forward, with knees slightly bent, in a completely relaxed position, the arms and head hanging downwards. One had then to imagine oneself as a puppet with strings attached to various parts of the body being pulled by a puppeteer. First the string pulled the right arm upward and suddenly released it. This was repeated for the left arm. Then the string pulled first the right buttock, and released it; then the left one.

Standing upright one had to imagine the navel being pulled ~~backward~~ so that the whole back arched. In resuming the upright position, the instruction was to imagine the vertebrae as building blocks, and to place one block on top of another until the spine was straight. One then imagined the sternum being similarly pulled backwards so that again the back arched, beginning with the upper part of the trunk; and the "building block" method of straightening the spine was repeated.

Then followed a series of neck and shoulder movements: first the head was allowed to drop as far as possible towards the right shoulder blade. As the strain on the muscles of the left side of the neck brought pain, then one had to tap the muscle with the flat of the right hand until the tension and pain disappeared; and finally stand still and feel the difference between the right and left shoulders and neck muscles.

This was then repeated with the head dropping towards the left shoulder blade.

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Then one had to imagine a chalk attached to the extreme tip of the right shoulder blade, and with it, in imagination, to write on a blackboard his Christian name. This was then repeated with the tip of the left shoulder blade, the surname being written with the imaginary chalk.

Next, with the imagined chalk being in the right ear the request was to write a word - any word. Similarly, with the chalk in the left ear a second word was written.

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With the participants sitting they were told to expel all the air from their lungs with a hissing sound, and to resume breathing in the manner that came naturally. This hissing was repeated several times, followed by a period of self-observation, of body awareness.

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In the next stage the participants were asked to bring the palms of their hands together, as flat as possible; to maintain the pressure and imagine the two hands were merging into one; to try to feel this sense of touching and merging. Then the hands were very slowly drawn apart until one lost the sense of touching previously registered; then the palms of the hands were again brought together, then slowly drawn apart to see if the feeling of being in touch could be maintained even though the hands were widely separated.

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Next the group split into couples standing with their hands palm to palm. Again one registered the sense of touch and contact and drew the hands slowly apart to see if feeling could be maintained and, if so, for what distance. (This was done with the eyes shut.) At the close each couple dropped their hands and looked at one another eye to eye for a short period.

The group then sat with eyes closed and was given a brief "guided day-dream". Each had to imagine himself in a house alone and hearing a noise, something alive; then going to look for it in the rooms and finding nothing until he came to the door of the cellar. He was told to open the door to see what was in the cellar, and whatever it was to feed it or give it whatever it wanted. The participants then opened their eyes and, if they wished, described what they had experienced.

The concluding task was to again draw a picture, on paper, of an animal and when it was finished, to compare it with the first picture drawn at the beginning of the session.

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DISCUSSION

Shirley Winston: Does anyone want to comment?

Mrs. Hilton: I noticed some of us - and I certainly was - yawning a lot.

Winston: In the exercise you stimulated breathing and you were feeling more relaxed; and the body was beginning to take over - if you want to think of it in terms of homeostasis, it was getting a chance to work. In our ordinary way of sitting, standing and moving we do not perhaps permit it, but it does when we get out of the way. Most of these exercises have this purpose, to get out of its way and let it function.

Cooper: I was thinking of an experiment in which a person was able to do exactly that - see the body function from a distance; and this is part of it.

Winston: Yes, and how did you feel?

Cooper: Well I was trying to let the body do whatever it wanted to do, but then I have practiced this for a number of years so I find it easy to go into the various relaxation postures, and let the body take over.

Winston: Was there anybody who noticed a particular point at which the body took over, even if only to a slight amount?

Rosannes Berrett: But I object to anyone taking over; I believe we are all aiming at self-control and aware of it to some extent.

Winston: Yes; however, there is one kind of control that is quite conscious and deliberate, and another that is a kind of flexible homeostatic control, which functions better than a conscious control. (Rosannes Berrett: It all depends on the degree of consciousness.)

Winston: As regards the exercise with the hands, I wonder what your experience was; were you able to sense something with your hands that you were not able to sense before?

Hilton: Yes, there was definitely more flexibility towards the end of the exercise.

Cooper: I was aware of heat in mine; it built up and up. But I noticed in doing the final exercise with Graham Taylor his hands were as cold as ice.

Hilton: Even now as I touch my fingertips there is more sensitivity.

Lazure: We were aware of our heartbeat - the pulse in the tips of our fingers.

Winston: Was there anyone able to experience the contact after the hands were no longer actually touching?

Stevens: After about the second or third time of being in contact.

Hilton: How far is that touching sensation a real sensation or a memory? If I close my eyes and think back I can feel the contact again.

Winston: I would not know that. I do not know how one would distinguish between actual sensation and memory. How do your hands feel now Dr. Cooper?

Cooper: Very warm, very comfortable. It feels as if there has been a contact in the interior, but the hands feel a little cold on the outside.

Hilton: Mine are now much more sensitive.

Healy: Mine feel very nice - I can enjoy them now.

Berrett: I can't say that I feel any difference.

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Discussion following the making of the second drawing - the final exercise of the whole series. Ed.

Winston: Does anyone want to display their two drawings?

Cooper: My first one was something like a rabbit, my second one was a little elephant. I tried to make the elephant even bigger but it would not work.

Hilton: My second drawing was an elephant too - my first one was a cat.

Berrett: My second one was bigger.

Rosannes Berrett: My second one got happier.

Lazure: My first one was a bird, my second one became a big fat round owl.

Taylor: My first one was a dachshund, my second one became an eagle.

Mrs. Hilton: My first one was a dog; and then I drew a cat.

Winston: You may be interested in looking at some drawings done by members of my group - of "before" and "after" animals. Here is one who drew a cat and then it became a cock crowing; and this one changed from a little bird to a much bigger cat. Here is another who started with a cat and became a giraffe.

It is quite typical and usual for the second drawing to become larger; or, if the drawing itself does not become larger, the second is of a larger animal. In some cases the second becomes more openly aggressive, or more free or more mobile.

Graham: Yes, my dog took off and became an eagle, and Martha's bird became an owl.

Lazure: Well, my first one was a sort of abstract drawing - like an Aztec bird; and with the second one, the animal, I thought of a round fat woodchuck but there seemed to be a merger of the two and it came out as an owl.

Winston: Here is another set of pictures that I particularly want to show you - some of them are really good. Here is one where the first is a giraffe which you think is not going to get bigger, but in the second one becomes either a dinosaur or a dragon. Notice the outburst of aggression. This person really let the

animal out of the cellar! And another interesting thing is the spiral shape of the tail; did anyone else here tonight find themselves drawing spirals? Or wave-like shapes?

Cooper: Yes, in both of mine. Berrett: Yes.

Winston: Here is another where a person went from a cat to a giraffe - really stretched out! But here is another one where he went from a giraffe to a flying bird; so you see the direction. (Cooper: Yes the direction became free.) Here are some human figure drawings: these two - from a nice quiet prim girl to a running tomboy. Incidentally, you will understand that I am selecting the good ones, for this does not always work.

Here a snake drawing came first, but it turned into a duck. You will notice that the duck is fuller and more detailed, more of a feeling of a person.

Here is another set of figure drawings: in the first a man is seated stiffly and in the second a man is coming at you with aggression. These drawings are from later sessions, after the animal drawings.

Before we look at them closely let me explain that these two groups I am conducting meet the same evening, one right after the other. And in the first group there is a young man who has a bone disease; he is quite deformed and needs crutches. His mother is in the second group, so I have before and after drawings from both of them on the same evening. Here is the man's first drawing: as you will see, the figure is seated quite stiffly and cannot stand. In the after-session drawing the figure has shrunk; the deformity is visible as you can see in the foot and distortion of the leg but the figure is standing. There is more acceptance of the deformity, he is actually less handicapped. His mother's drawing was very interesting: the first picture she drew is an idealized picture of this boy - in reality he is quite handsome and plays the guitar, and she has drawn him, of course, as being quite healthy. Her after-session one is really quite a good picture of herself. So we got her back into her own body - maybe, hopefully! Now the next time around we had the animal drawings, and the boy drew this nice seated puppy with a sort of pathetic look in its eyes; and at the end of the session we had this nice, spiral, wavy snake. His mother started with this nice seated cat; and then after her session she came out with this one of the snake which is surprisingly like the one drawn by her son, although she had not seen her son's drawing. So that on a fairly deep level, I would say, these two are somehow tuned in; and it is going to be a while perhaps before the symbiotic relationship between the mother and the son breaks down.

Let me show you just one more, because it is such a fine example. In this "before" drawing we have this hen or chicken, and afterwards we got this very nice rhythmic underwater design where we have the spiral and the waves; it is peaceful certainly, but there is more movement. And if you look at this fish it has a mighty sharp nose.

I have rather rushed you through some of these exercises, and we would have got more out of some of them if we had taken longer; but I think we did fairly well considering the time. From your drawings you can see that in a way there has been an effect - a feeling of your body, shall we say on unconscious levels that came up into consciousness? I think you were surprised to see how the drawings had changed.

Now let me tell you something of what we are doing with these "exercises" in the classes I am conducting:

In a sense I am very glad that these courses are not given as therapy. I do not call them therapy; they are courses in explorations in consciousness. Certainly there is the implication that people who come and work in these courses will begin to experience - as they go on - a greater awareness as well as a greater ease in their body, and actually be able to achieve more in their lives. So it has a therapeutic goal, but the courses are not given as therapy per se.

There is a great advantage to this because people who take the courses do not consider themselves patients and they do not behave as patients. They behave like students; they apply themselves as students. They may be patients of psychotherapists elsewhere, and they can take all their resistance and all their sickness to their therapists, but when they are with me they are expected to - and by and large do - try to bring out their strengths, their capacities. The courses are being held in the Hollis Unitarian Church where Weston Stevens is the minister, and this also is something of a departure for the church. In the past it has given courses in things like painting, drama, fencing, and what was called a "Growth Group" in which people sat around and talked, but they have never had a course like this before; and I do not think many churches have. What has been very heartening is that people have turned out in such numbers that the two classes have been pretty well full; and we even have a waiting list of a few for the next course when we start again. The people who attend represent the full range of individual functioning, some functioning very well, some barely at all. We have only had three meetings so far of this present course so it is too soon to say just what is happening, but people attending have said such things as:

"I feel more peaceful a day or so after the class" or "I feel more aware." One man said, after we had done some sensitizing such as we did with the hands tonight, that he went around for a few days thinking that the soles of his shoes had suddenly worn thin because he was feeling so much more through them. So there is a response going on.

Now in order to keep the people interested, motivated and working, I instituted a system of assignments. Not everybody is required to do these; they are completely optional, but this is a 'gimmick' of mine, for I want to see which people will choose to do them and what happens to them. The assignments are things of this order: for one whole day notice a particular color - suppose you select turquoise or chartreuse or tangerine; notice that color everywhere it occurs and then write down what you did and how you felt afterwards. Or listen for sounds in a particular way. I also asked them to look at people and try to imagine if that person were an animal what type of animal he or she would be, and try to see the animal in the person. These are things that will guide the people in using their senses more acutely, and I am beginning to get written reports that they have done just this; they are using their eyes and ears more and they are feeling more alive as a result.

I also ask the people to write down something about their own potentials - what potentials they have developed and which remained undeveloped. And then I tried tailoring some special assignments to individuals. In a sentence completion test, one woman said about clothes, "Clothes fill my washing machine." I took this to mean that she denies her own femininity. (Berrett: Perhaps she has many children!) No, other women work just as hard but they do not think of clothes as being primarily something to wash. My assignment for her was for her to design

the most beautiful clothes that she could, and sketch them and bring me the sketches; which is a very direct approach. Instead of going into the whole thing of her not feeling like a woman, etc., I got her to do something in which she had to think of herself as a woman.

You may have wondered what was the purpose of some of the things we did tonight which are only a very small sample of a very wide-range of what I call "exercises", for want of a better word. They are things to do to increase the ability to relax, to sense the body, to be aware of oneself, to breathe more freely, and eventually to relate more directly to the environment and to other people.

In the directed fantasy I think you all recognized our old friend "the Leuner Technique", which was done in an obvious and almost blatant way and perhaps for those who are too familiar with it it was not very effective. Are there any of you who had an experience that you would care to share or any point that might be interesting?

Lazure: Well I saw a cute little woodchuck in the cellar.

Mrs. Hilton: I saw a cat.

Winston: I wonder if anyone particularly noticed the furriness of whatever was in the cellar?

Cooper: I saw the cutest little rat you ever saw - with long furry ears.

Winston: I think this emphasis on the texture of what was seen had something to do with the work on sensitizing the hands. (Lazure: Yes, I wanted to pat the little thing.) So, these two things do work into each other; whatever is done during the session could well have an influence on what comes out in the fantasy and what is drawn in the picture afterwards.

Stevens: ...I thought I would be giving the person I saw in the cellar something to eat but instead I gave him a wood carving set so that he could use his hands, to carve. And it fell together in my mind that this was exactly what this person did need, to sublimate aggression....

Winston: I found when I did this fantasy with my group that food was not the only thing people wanted to give. The crippled young man who did these drawings, saw a snake, and he took it up to the bathroom and gave it a bath. And there was a woman who was quite affected; she saw a skeleton of her father but it had eyes in it - just a skeleton with open staring eyes; and she closed the eyes. She said that was all that it wanted and then it could rest; which I think had significance for her. She had tears in her eyes as this was going on.

Someone asked me how I accounted for the difference in the drawings - the fact that the second drawings are almost always larger - and this is true whether they are human or animal figures. Also, where I have asked people to write something before and after sessions their handwriting usually expands. I think that the expansiveness is a direct result of the relaxation of muscles all around the body which literally allows it to expand more with every breath we take. As the muscles relax and we stretch out, the body physically expands; also, as we become sensitized, the area of awareness expands and in a way the direct field of consciousness grows, because we are more aware - tactually, visually, or in whatever way we have been working. So almost always there is a feeling of expansion as a

result of the session which shows up immediately in drawings. What I don't know is, if followed over a period of time, will the person begin to expand so that his first drawings - say on the tenth session - be larger than the drawings he made in say the first or second session. This remains to be seen - what the trend is.

The fact that figures in the second drawings often show a great deal more movement, has I think to do with the fact that relaxing muscles enables people to feel their own mobility more, and perhaps working directly with the shoulders gives the feeling of wings. I do think that there are other factors at work; that along with increased respiration there is probably increase in other functions - may be circulation is stimulated, and possibly some physiological functions are reflected in the spiral movement which appears in some of these drawings. Have you any comments on this?

Hilton: What you have been saying, Shirley, reminds me very strongly of what was emphasized in the Psychosynthesis Meeting in London last month, the fact that we are concerned with bio-psychosynthesis; that we cannot deal with a patient on psychological levels alone but must include the physiological, and that the two go hand in hand. It is interesting that there is a fight going on at the present time in one of the London medical journals on this very point: some psychiatrists are arguing solely in terms of physiological causes and treatment and some on psychological levels only. They are making it a question of either black or white, instead of combining the two and seeing that both methods are complementary. We must work on all levels at once.

Winston: Not only have you to work on all levels at once, but the levels are so shifting and affect each other so directly; the increase in respiration shows itself immediately in the figure drawings. When I cannot get people to relax by physical exercises I give them an image, like a puppet, which for some people does permit them to move more freely; and if that doesn't work I can use many others.

One rather grim "exercise" which you would expect would give people a nightmare, is to have them lie down and imagine the following: (Incidentally, you people here might like to try to go along with it in imagination, quickly as I am describing it, to see how it feels).

Relax completely, close your eyes, feel the place between your leg and your body where there would be a line if your leg were to be detached at this point - you see this kind of thing in a doll that has been joined together with elastic. And now imagine a guillotine coming down and chopping off your leg at that point. Now imagine the other leg and the line where it could be cut off, and the guillotine coming down and cutting it off. Then go to one arm; at the shoulder is a joining line; imagine that is chopped off. And then the other arm - chop that off at the shoulder, and last of all, find the place where your head is joined to the body and let that be chopped off. And now feel your body as it is; there is no pain and no blood, but the different parts of your body are disconnected. And now let yourself be, and let yourself move, let yourself exist in this condition. Your head, legs and arms have their own life and they don't have to respond to the body. Just let things happen.

I don't know how you people feel about this - I am not going to ask you to stay with it long enough, but to some people this has the effect of enabling them to move with a great deal more freedom, less inhibition, and less muscular tension. Of course, it sounds very gory; but I wonder how you respond to this one.

Cooper: My response was that of thinking in terms of the movement that would be possible. It would be a kind of snakelike movement; or you might have to assume some kind of random jumping movement, like a jumping bean as it were. I was trying to make some movement.

Taylor: My reaction was that I visualized something like the pictures of Chagall - with the head and the various limbs floating off into space - and my body going round and round, off in free space - anti-gravity, non-gravity, agravity, weightlessness, drifting.

Winston: This is a response that many people have - a feeling of liberation. It is difficult to understand why this should be, but this has given me a completely different slant on the whole subject of masochism. What the masochist is really after is not the pain at all but a kind of liberation. So for some people this cutting off of the head and limbs gives them that feeling of weightlessness. How did your (Dr. Taylor) body feel when you were in free space?

Taylor: Freedom, in a sense; although I had an intellectual perplexity or doubt - I was wondering whether I was my head or whether I was my body; but then I figured that the way the instructions went I was to be identified with the body, so the head disappeared and I felt freedom, in a sense.

Cooper: That's a quick way to lose weight! (laughter)

Winston: Well for some people it is a way to lose over-rigid control, inhibitions, muscular tension. I cannot even begin to tell you how you know what technique is going to work. Sometimes I think that intuitively I pick the right thing; sometimes I lay an egg! But there is always enough material once you begin to get the feeling of working with fantasy; and people you work with begin to tell you things that help them, and you learn what will release others.

Rosannes Berrett: I would be very leery of this for some people, because this causes the kind of fantasy that schizophrenics experience. It is a complete detachment and I would be very doubtful of it. I would advise caution for what you want is to get integration not detachment.

Cooper: But from another standpoint, I have worked with schizophrenics with this technique, not necessarily as she has outlined it at the moment, but we have devoted quite some time to it in these psychosynthesis meetings, and it actually brings them back from their detachment back into something real. They come back to their body. (Rosannes Berrett: But you have in some way to integrate them.) The way I start with them is to have them look at a picture for a minute and then have them put the picture down and tell me what they saw; and then to repeat it and go over the points they had missed. Then to have them listen to music, and rather than have them listen from an emotional standpoint, have them try to pick out one instrument, to focus their attention on where they are, and so gradually teach them. I have a program of isometrics, and you get a tremendous amount of bodily awareness by pressure, pushing one muscle against another. The success with this method is amazing. At the moment I have a very serious paranoid schizophrenic, and I am teaching him the piano, one finger at a time. He will sit there for an hour at a time using just this one finger (Rosannes Berrett: You are detaching) Yes, I am detaching him and putting him together. And this is the aim of it, rather than try to loosen him up.

Winston: I don't know about using this with people who come in seriously disturbed.

Taylor: Don't you think it would depend upon the degree of preparation, and that you work up to this gradually rather than doing it 'cold'?

Winston: This is part of it, but what I do is have them move in this way, and then I point out that there is some coordination. Now what is doing the coordinating?

Rosannes Berrett: You point that out? (Winston: Yes) You've told him that he has lost his head, which in his own fantasy are the feelings he has had; so if you can establish that he hasn't.....(Mrs. Hilton: But are we not speaking of two different types of people anyway? I think that Jack's type of patient and Shirley's are quite different.) (Dr. Cooper: Right, Shirley's people are not schizophrenics.)

Winston: No; these people are not hospitalized. But even perhaps with the very sick person - and I have worked with some very sick people - it is a case of getting to the point where they realize that there is some coordination going on, and then asking "Well now where is the coordination coming from?" You have to help them to sense that there is a coordinating center. Now I have done this with mostly over-intellectual and very rigid or compulsive people; and there may well be an underlying schizophrenia that they are afraid of - which is why they are doing all this compulsive hanging on. However, when they - under careful control, with somebody watching - are able to let loose and act as if they had no head or act as even if they were puppets - even functioning together as puppets, I ask them "Who is pulling the strings?" (Rosannes Berrett: Yes, you are putting them together again.) Yes, putting them together again; and then they feel that they don't have to have this tight control. But when they are much looser and freer there is still a center and everything is behaving in regard to this center - and much more gracefully and more easily than when the control is all in the head. That is the point that I make. Sometimes I work with schizophrenics; and there is one who, in doing the directed dream fantasy, will see five or six different copies of herself - there is one in the cellar, one in this room, and one in that, so that she really feels herself split up. And one thing to do is not to panic, but let her gradually begin to bring them together.

In the exercise of writing with the shoulder blade - the gimmick there was that we performed a highly coordinated task with a part of the body that normally never does such a thing, so that we broke down the chronic tension that most of us have in our shoulders. I think that most of us felt relaxed after that.

Writing with the ear, of course, breaks down the tensions of the neck. It uses the muscles in a completely unexpected way. Now if I had asked you to do all this coordinating with the shoulders you would have said "I can't do it; my shoulder won't move that way," but as soon as I gave the image of writing your name you could do all kinds of things with the shoulder blade. When I asked you to write any word that you thought of, I did not ask you what word you wrote. If you are going to do this with people in therapy it will be very interesting to find out what the words are; quite often they are obscenities. So if you wrote an obscenity you are normal! (laughter)

Hilton: Have you thought about identifying the "puppeteer"?

Winston: Well, who did you think the puppeteer was? Did you feel any pull on your hands or any other part of your body?

Hilton: Yes, I felt the shoulders being pulled back - which is something I know that I need to do.

Winston: Well, who do you think was doing what you needed to do, but you are not doing for yourself?

Hilton: Whether it is responding to the basic laws of nature or the healing process, I don't know. It isn't the doctor who heals, he simply aids the healing process.

Winston: I think that quite often what takes over is not the basic laws of healing, but that the body is healing itself and the person begins to do what he needs to do himself.

Healy: I don't quite understand; I am not well versed in psychotherapy, but is the image an analogy for the physical movement? Is it by relaxing you feel better or is it a natural result of the physical activity?

Winston: I really ought to have warned you: if you don't know anything about psychotherapy don't try to learn it from me, because this is not a very popular method of psychotherapy. Not many people in the field use this. However, physical relaxation has been used as a means of therapy by a minority....

Cooper: By a minority in this country! In other countries this is accepted and people are actually trained in using it; but here in the United States we shy away from it.

Lazure: I read a very interesting report today of a paper that was given at the APA meeting. Someone from Utah spoke of a course in self-actualization. (Winston: Yes, that was Herbert Otto) Apparently the people who took his course and combined it with some kind of physical development succeeded twice as well as the others.

Cooper: We are very definitely behind in this country because we are not body conscious particularly. We are more material conscious - machines, automobiles, etc. and we pay little or no attention to our bodies; and if our attention is brought to it we resent it.

Berrett: Yes, I had a thoracic surgeon visit us from Britain, about three weeks ago, and he was saying the same thing. For example, in English hospitals, they lay great stress on physio-therapy before chest surgery - teaching people how to breathe, to move. In England, on a thoracic unit, after a man has had a lung removed it is not unusual for him to sit up and have breakfast the next morning; he is in relatively good shape, but in this country they are 'dead' for about four to five days.

Winston: Yes, and another application is in childbirth - the natural childbirth people will give relaxation and breathing exercises, and patients go through childbirth much more easily.

Rosannes Berrett: There is a very small growth in this direction.

Cooper: Yes, it is moving. When I first heard of this in 1931 it was practically unknown - I reviewed the literature and could only find references to it in Sweden and Denmark, but nothing in this country at all; and then gradually the corrective therapists - Rusk and some of these people - began to bring in this muscular business, but in terms of callisthenics. And if you go up to the Center where they teach physical education - in Chicago or Washington I believe it is -

you will see some of the sickest people you ever saw - scrawny and underdeveloped - actually teaching physical conditioning and physical therapy. So we have a very definite block against it. We are not body conscious.

Berrett: No, we are "General Motors" conscious! There are about six million cars produced every year....this means that people are not going to use their bodies; they have a machine to cart themselves around in!

Cooper: There is a new book - published in 1965 - by a professor of the University of Illinois on physical conditioning, which gives a tremendous amount of documented material. He is on the President's Fitness Council, etc., and in the book he gives ten tests; if you score over 100 points you are in pretty good shape. This morning I used it with my group out at the Penitentiary and no one could score much over 40, so it is amazing in really what bad shape we are in from the standpoint of physical fitness. (Berrett: Could you mention one or two of the tests?) Yes, one is measuring the difference between your chest fully expanded compared with the stomach fully relaxed. With men the difference should be five inches, in women it should be ten inches. Another test is to do 20 situps; and one that is very difficult to do is to run in place for sixty seconds, then take three deep breaths and then hold your breath for 30 seconds - you get 15 points if you can manage that one! The rest are various exercises such as sit-ups, leg pull ups, and the "nip-up" - where you sit down on your legs and then in some manner get up on your feet. Another one is standing on tip-toes with your hands out-stretched and holding the position for 30 seconds. So, you can run your own tests and find out what shape you are in.

Healy: Would you say then that a dancer who is taught to have a lot of control and body awareness and who is physically fit would perform on your tests very similar to the people you have had in your sessions?

Winston: No. There is a tremendous misapprehension that dancers are in any better control of their bodies or more aware of their bodies. If anything, they are very much alienated from their bodies. They have learned to use their bodies as instruments. (Cooper: Stereotypes) Yes, they are not in their bodies; as a matter of fact, many of the exercises that I have done I learned from a man who was a teacher of dancing. He learned a whole lot of these things from trying to learn to teach dancers to be natural with their bodies. Very often they can dance with perfect control of their bodies, but as soon as they are not dancing they have no control; they are nowhere.

Cooper: I had a case this summer; a girl about 15 who visited us from France; she was a ballet dancer, and she wanted to go roller skating with us. She had never been on roller skates in her life before and when we took her down to the rink it was all we could do to keep her on her feet. Instead of roller skating she was actually dancing - I was holding her up while she was trying, for she had no conception at all of balance or anything that might resemble body consciousness. She just wasn't aware of it, for she had learned her ballet dancing in childhood just the same way as we learn walking. And if you try to teach someone who doesn't know how to walk you will have to go through all the motions. Our walking is as automatic as driving a car. We had something the same thing in the Service; men were not conscious of what they were doing and the results of it and we had to simply retrain them.

Rosannes Berrett: Will you be discussing psychosynthesis?

Cooper: This is bio-psychosynthesis. This recognition of the "bio" is what we are trying to bring back in this country.

Winston: I would like to mention another principle that is very important to any attempt to correct the body functioning. For some reason, Americans think of that immediately in terms of exercise, like the physical education teachers - drilling and such. What happens with them is that you may get some development of muscle - the muscle becomes big and hard - but there is no awareness; it is not being done by that thing in the body that regulates itself. Then the muscle development is completely artificial, and as soon as you stop practicing, it goes away; it does not remain a part of the natural repertoire of movement. You will remember that when I tried to get everybody to sit better - I didn't actually tell you to sit better because if I had done so you would have put yourself in an artificial position. The principle is to stimulate the body to find its own optimum state; so that when we stimulate breathing, then the body begins to find its own optimum breathing rate, and then we begin to yawn and stretch in order to make that adjustment automatically or instinctually or whatever you want to call it. If you tell people "Breathe in, breathe out!" they go away and breathe as they always do; but if people will practice even for a short time during the day just feeling themselves breathe, and moving so that they feel they are breathing a little more satisfactorily, eventually it becomes almost like a righting reflex - the body will begin to find its way to breathe better most of the time. And similarly with the rest of the body: with the "building blocks" I tried to get you to orient your spine, not to get you to hold it in a particular way but to find a way to balance it. I hope eventually that the people who work in my classes will begin automatically to put their spines in a position that feels good, because they will begin to know what feels good. It is a very different approach to physical training. I do not know whether it is used in other countries but in this country, even the people connected with the Physical Fitness Movement have not yet begun to really use the body, use the body's own resources.

Hilton: To answer your question more specifically (Dr. Rosannes Berrett) regarding psychosynthesis, I would say that tonight has helped to demonstrate one of the essential points of psychosynthesis - this inner self, this inner core of selfhood as distinct from the psychological and physiological functions; this center that can control and integrate the psychological functions (Rosannes Berrett: And become aware of the center of consciousness too, of course?) Yes, "you" as being distinct from your mechanism.

Cooper: This we call "dis-identification" or "self-identification" depending what you are looking for. (Hilton: The two go together.) Right, you identify with the self, the core, and this is what I think makes psychosynthesis unique, this philosophy or theory. Whether we can prove it or not, I do not know and that is why we are sitting around having these seminars.

Rosannes Berrett: So generally in your seminars what you are doing is developing consciousness in some form or another, of this core or whatever you want to call it?

Cooper: Not at everyone; we take various aspects of psychosynthesis.

Hilton: Last winter one meeting was given to the theory of the will and the use of the will in therapy - with a case history; another meeting dealt with the

Desoille technique of the "Guided Daydream"; another to the Leuner technique of "Initiated Symbol Projection" (Rosannes Berrett: So you go through the different aspects?) Yes; then of course there is the book, Psychosynthesis, by Dr. Assagioli. You will find that many of the techniques given there are ones that have been in use for a long time but in psychosynthesis they are being used in a different frame of reference.

Rosannes Berrett: You mean all the different "schools" are being put together?

Cooper: Yes, but around this central "core". If you contact that central core then all these methods fall into place; it does this synthesizing. If you want to think of it in chemical terms, this is the catalyst.

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END OF SESSION