

*A Few Examples of Exercises  
which are Implicit in*

Rudolf Steiner's  
The Philosophy of Freedom

By Timothy E. Nadelle

*with the support & assistance of the Exercise Advisory Group*

# **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

## **THINKING**

- Conscious Human Action: 2
- Desire for Knowledge: 2 – 3
- Thinking in the Service of Knowledge: 4 - 6
- The World as Percept: 7 - 8
- The Act of Knowing: 9 - 10
- Human Individuality: 11 - 12
- Are there Limits to Knowledge: 13 - 14

## **FEELING**

- The Role of Thought in the Formation & Universalization of Feeling: 15 - 16
- Exploring the I in Passive versus Conceptually Digested Feeling: 17 - 18

## **WILLING**

- Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise A
  - Quotations from the Philosophy of Freedom: 19 - 22
  - Exercise... What if I Had Consciously Fashioned a Motive?: 23
- Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise B
  - Quotations from the Philosophy of Freedom: 24 - 25
  - Exercise... What if I Had Consciously Fashioned a Motive?: 25 - 26
- Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise C
  - Quotations from the Philosophy of Freedom: 27
  - Exercise... What if I Had Consciously Fashioned a Motive?: 27 - 28

## **PART 1) THINKING**

### **Conscious Human Action**

The following exercise and its sequel were inspired by the content of the first chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter one are as follows:

“If there is a difference between a conscious motive of action and an unconscious urge, then the conscious motive will result in an action which must be judged differently from one that springs from blind impulse. Hence our first question will concern this difference, and on the result of this enquiry will depend what attitude we shall have to take towards the question of freedom proper.”

“The question is not whether I can carry out a decision once made, but *how the decision comes about within me.*”

### **The Exercise**

- In the following exercise, select examples from your life *which you are comfortable sharing* in a small group.
1. Look into your past and identify an action you took which resulted more from impulse. Bring the moment vividly before you.
    - *What was the action you took?*
    - *What were you feeling in the moment before you acted?*
    - *What was the motive which led to your action?*
    - *How did the decision to act come about within you?*
  2. Look into your past and identify an action which you took where you were conscious of the motive for your action. Bring the moment vividly before you.
    - *What was the action you took?*
    - *What were you feeling in the moment before you acted?*
    - *What was the motive which led to your action?*
    - *How did the decision to act come about within you?*
  3. What differences do you see in the manner in which the two decisions to act came about within you?

### **Sequel (for potential future use):**

Over the course of the day, make an effort to become aware at times when you are about to take action arising from an unexamined motive. Pause before acting and recognize the motive. Consider whether a different motive might more appropriately meet the needs of the situation.

## **Chapter 2, Desire for Knowledge**

The following exercises were inspired by the content of the second chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter two are as follows:

“This something more which we seek in things, over and above what is immediately given to us in them, splits our whole being into two parts. We become conscious of our antithesis to the world. We confront the world as independent beings. The universe appears to us in two opposite parts: *I and World*... But we never cease to feel that, in spite of it all, we belong to the world, that there is a connecting link between it and us, and that we are beings within and not *without* the universe.”

“**Dualism** pays attention only to the *separation* between I and World which the consciousness of man has brought about. All its efforts consist in a vain struggle to reconcile these opposites, which it now calls *spirit* and *matter*, now *subject* and *object*, now *thinking* and *appearance*. It feels that there must be a bridge between the two worlds but is not in a position to find it... Dualism sees in spirit (I) and matter (World) two fundamentally different entities, and cannot, therefore, understand how they can interact with one another.”

“**Monism** pays attention only to the unity and tries either to deny or to slur over the opposites, present though they are... monism has tried three different ways of meeting the difficulty. **Either it denies spirit and becomes materialism; or it denies matter in order to seek its salvation in spiritualism;** or it asserts that even in the simplest entities in the world, spirit and matter are indissolubly bound together so that there is no need to marvel at the appearance in man of these two modes of existence, seeing that they are never found apart.”

“**Materialism**... begins with the *thought* of matter or material processes. But, in so doing, it is already confronted by two different sets of facts: the material world and the thoughts about it. The material seeks to make these latter intelligible by regarding them as purely material processes... He overlooks that, in doing so, he is merely shifting the problem from one place to another.”

“The genuine **spiritualist** denies to matter all independent existence and regards it merely as a product of spirit. But when he tries to use this theory to solve the riddle of his own human nature, he finds himself driven into a corner. Over against the “I” or Ego which can be ranged on the side of spirit, there stands directly the world of the senses. No *spiritual* approach to it appears open.”

### The Exercise

1. Bring before yourself a question with which you are now genuinely involved.
2. Enter into the question from the perspective of each of the following world views. Be *true* to each worldview. If you were a devoted, intelligent representative of each of the following world views, how might you reflect upon your question? As you explore each one, ask yourself in turn what you would accept, modify or refute in each of these perspectives.
  - a. Dualism
  - b. Monism – materialism
  - c. Monism – spiritualism
3. Has the complexion of your initial question altered? Has your approach to answering it evolved?

## **Chapter 3 Thinking in the Service of Knowledge (Part I)**

The following exercise was inspired by the content of the third chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter three are as follows:

“Observation and thinking are the two points of departure for all the spiritual striving of man, in so far as he is conscious of such striving.”

“In sequence of time, observation does in fact come before thinking... Everything that enters the circle of our experience, we must first become aware of through observation. The content of sensation, perception and contemplation, all feelings, all acts of will, dreams and fancies, mental pictures, concepts and ideas, all illusions and hallucinations, are given to us through *observation*.”

“Whereas observation of things and events, and thinking about them, are everyday occurrences filling up the continuous content of my life, observation of thinking itself is a kind of exceptional state... We must be quite clear about the fact that, in observing thinking, we are applying to it a procedure which constitutes the normal course of events for the study of the whole of the rest of the world-content, but which in this normal course of events is not applied to thinking itself.”

### **Exercise, Part I**

#### **Observing Thinking in the World**

- 1) Observe an occurrence in your environment.
- 2) Think about your observation.
- 3) Observe the thinking that you did.

## **Chapter 3 Thinking in the Service of Knowledge (Part II)**

The following exercise in its two parts (A & B) were inspired by the content of the third chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter three precede each exercise.

### **Part A) Observing Thinking in Meditation**

“Observation and thinking are the two points of departure for all the spiritual striving of man, in so far as he is conscious of such striving.”

“In sequence of time, observation does in fact come before thinking... Everything that enters the circle of our experience, we must first become aware of through observation. The content of sensation, perception and contemplation, all feelings, all acts of will, dreams and fancies, mental pictures, concepts and ideas, all illusions and hallucinations, are given to us through *observation*.”

“Whereas observation of things and events, and thinking about them, are everyday occurrences filling up the continuous content of my life, observation of thinking itself is a kind of exceptional state... We must be quite clear about the fact that, in observing thinking, we are applying to it a procedure which constitutes the normal course of events for the study of the whole of the rest of the world-content, but which in this normal course of events is not applied to thinking itself.”

“What in all other spheres of observation can be found only indirectly, namely, the relevant context and the relationship between the individual objects, is, in the case of thinking, known to us in an absolutely direct way. I do not know on the face of it why, for my observation, thunder follows lightning; but I know directly, from the very content of the two concepts, why my thinking connects the *concept* of thunder with the *concept* of lightning....”

### **Part II, Exercise A):**

1. Observe the separate concepts which are reflected in the words of an excerpt from a verse. For example, work with the following excerpt from the words of Benedictus in Scene 3 of the Portal of Initiation: “*Light’s weaving spirit streams through widths of space to fill the world with being.*” Firstly, enter deeply into the essence of the concept “weaving”. Then, after a time, turn separately to the concept “spirit” and enter deeply into its essence.
2. Now, with your thinking, bring the concept “weaving” into relation with the concept “spirit”. Study how through their combination the countenance of each is modified and something greater comes into being. Bring other concepts from the verse into relation with what you have created, growing the living thought entity and taking note of the progressive transformations.
3. Finally, remove all of the concepts of the verse from your awareness. Observe your creative activity, the process through which the thought entity came into being.

### **Part B) Observing the Thinking “I”**

“An experienced event may be a set of percepts or it may be a dream, a hallucination or something else. In short, I am unable to say in what sense it exists. I cannot gather this from the event in itself, but I shall find it out when I consider the event in its relation to other things. But here again I cannot know *more* than just how it stands in relation to these other things. My investigation touches firm ground only when I find an object which exists in a sense which I can derive from the object itself. But I am myself such an object in that I think, for I give to my existence the definite, self-determined content of the thinking activity. From here I can go on to ask whether other things exist in the same sense or in some other sense.”

### **Part II, Exercise B):**

1. Take up now the second line of the verse quoted above, which is: “Love’s blessing warms ages of time, proclaiming revelation of all worlds.” As in the Part A) exercise, bring the individual concepts into mutual relation. Observe how, through your activity, concepts weave one into another, coming into movement, into life.
2. Turn your gaze away from the concepts and observe now the process of the thinking in which you were engaged.
3. Now turn your gaze away from the thinking. Observe the “I” through which the thinking came into being.

The two exercises can be summarized as follows:

Part A) Observing Thinking

- 1) Observe concepts
- 2) Observe their interweaving
- 3) Observe the thinking process

Part B) Observing the Thinking "I"

- 1) Observe conceptual interweaving
- 2) Observe the thinking process
- 3) Observe the thinking "I"

## **Chapter 4, The World as Percept**

### **Experiencing the Content of Pure, Unthinking Observation**

Exercise A, below, was inspired by the following content of the fourth chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom:

“We must ask ourselves how that other element, which we have so far simply called the object of observation and which meets the thinking in our consciousness, comes into our consciousness at all.

“In order to answer this question we must eliminate from our field of observation everything that has been imported by thinking. For at any moment the content of our consciousness will already be interwoven with concepts in the most varied ways.

“We must imagine that a being with fully developed human intelligence originates out of nothing and confronts the world. What it would be aware of, before it starts its thinking in motion, would be the pure content of observation. The world would appear then to this being as nothing but a mere disconnected aggregate of objects of sensation: colours, sounds, sensations of pressure, of warmth, of taste and smell; also feelings of pleasure and pain. This aggregate is the content of pure, unthinking observation.”

### **Exercise A) Experiencing the Content of Pure, Unthinking Observation**

#### 1. Observe and actively think about an object

Bring an object before you and observe it. To begin with, pay particular attention to any questions which arise for you and any active thinking you do in connection with what you observe.

#### 2. Eliminate active thinking

Now turn your attention gently away from those questions and that active thinking. Focus your attention instead on any concepts which identify or characterize the object and its features, for example, the concepts “book”, “soft cover” or the title of the book.

#### 3. Eliminate “given” concepts

Now turn your attention away from those concepts which describe or name the object and its features. Focus instead on concepts which define, convey, relate... sensory impressions. For example, the concept “book” is not a sensory impression. “Red” is a sensory impression; but it is also a concept. Focus on concepts which describe colour, texture, hardness etc.

#### 4. Eliminate sensory concepts

Now turn your attention away from the conceptual counterpart of your sensory impressions. For example, turn your attention away from the concept “cool” and let only the sensory impression(s) live within your consciousness.

#### 5. What do you now experience?



## Part B) Experiencing the Perceiving “I” and the Mental Picture

Exercise B, below, was inspired by the following content of the fourth chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom:

“... It is, then, not the *process* of observation but the *object* of observation which I call the ‘percept’”.

“...Even my feeling becomes known to me by becoming a *percept* for me. And the way in which we gain knowledge of our thinking through observation is such that thinking too, in its first appearance for our consciousness, may be called a percept.”

“... I perceive not only other things, but also myself. The percept of myself contains, to begin with, the fact that I am the stable element in contrast to the continual coming and going of the percept-pictures... When I am absorbed in the perception of a given object I am for the time being aware only of this object. To this the percept of my self can be added... I do not merely see a tree, but I also know that it is *I* who am seeing it. I know, moreover, that something happens in me while I am observing the tree. When the tree disappears from my field of vision, an after-affect of this process remains in my consciousness – a picture of the tree... My self has become enriched; its content has absorbed a new element. This element I call my *mental picture* of the tree...”

“... The failure to recognize the true relationship between mental picture and object has led to the greatest misunderstandings in modern philosophy...”

### **Exercise, Part B) Experiencing the Content of Pure, Unthinking Observation**

- 1) Bring your object before you again and observe it in any way you like.
- 2) Shift your attention towards yourself. Observe now the “I” which did the perceiving.
- 3) Turn away from the object or close your eyes. Observe the new element which you have absorbed as content into yourself: observe your *mental picture* of the object.
- 4) Now pull your attention away from the *content* of the mental picture. Instead, observe the manner in which it appears to you. Observe, the form, substance and characteristics of your mental picture.
- 5) What is your experience of the relationship between your mental picture and the object?

## **Chapter 5 The Act of Knowing**

### **Exploring the Self**

Exercise A, below, was inspired by the following content of the fifth chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom:

“The all important thing now is to determine how the being that we ourselves are is related to the other entities. This determination must be distinguished from merely becoming conscious of ourselves. The perception of myself reveals to me a number of qualities which I combine into my personality as a whole just as I combine the qualities yellow, metallic, hard, etc., in the unity “gold”. The perception of myself does not take me beyond the sphere of what belongs to me. This perceiving of myself must be distinguished from determining myself by means of thinking. Just as, by means of thinking, I fit any single external percept into the whole world context, so by means of thinking I integrate into the whole world process the percepts I have made of myself.”

“In thinking we have that element given us which welds our separate individuality into one whole with the cosmos. I so far as we sense and feel (and also perceive), we are single beings; in so far as we think, we are the all-one being that pervades everything.”

“The percept is thus not something finished and self-contained, but only one side of the total reality. The other side is the concept. The act of knowing is the synthesis of percept and concept. Only the percept and concept together constitute the whole thing.”

### **Exercise A) Exploring the Self**

#### 1) Perceiving

Vividly recall a moment when you took an action. What aspect of your self reveals itself to you now, as you consider your action? Perceive this aspect of your self. Remove all conceptual content from your consciousness. Remove the memory itself, so that you allow the pure perception of this trait or tendency alone to live within your awareness.

#### 2) Thinking

Think about what you have perceived in your self. At what times does this quality manifest? How does it combine with or influence other aspects of your self? How does it affect the people in your life?

#### 3) Synthesis

Observe the differences between your perceiving and your thinking about the trait. Witness the conversation which takes place between your perceiving and your thinking. What is the essential nature of this aspect of yourself, which you have observed?

### **Exploring the World**

Exercise B, below, was inspired by the following content of the fifth chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom:

“Let us see what this world of percepts is like: a mere juxtaposition in space, a mere succession in time, a mass of unconnected details – that is how it appears. None of the things which come and go on the stage of perception has any direct connection, that can be perceived, with any other... The separate facts appear in

their true significance, both in themselves and for the rest of the world, only when thinking spins its threads from one entity to another.”

“To explain a thing, to make it intelligible, means nothing else than to place it into the context from which it has been torn by the peculiar character of our organisation... A thing cut off from the world-whole does not exist. All isolating has only subjective validity for our organisation. For us, the universe divides itself up into above and below, before and after, cause and effect, thing and mental picture, matter and force, object and subject etc. What appears to us in observation as separate parts becomes combined, bit by bit, through the coherent unified world of our intuitions. By thinking, we fit together again into one piece all that we have taken apart through perceiving.”

“What then is a percept? The question, asked in this general way, is absurd. A percept emerges always as something perfectly definite, as a concrete content. This content is directly given and is completely contained in what is given. The only question one can ask concerning the given content is what it is apart from perception, that is, what it is for thinking. The question concerning the “what” of a percept can, therefore, only refer to the conceptual intuition that corresponds to this percept.”

### **Exercise, Part B) Exploring the World**

#### 1) Perceiving

Observe an object. Gradually - an intensifying exertion of effort will be necessary – to the greatest extent possible, set aside *all* conceptual content from your consciousness, so that what remains are only your sense perceptions of the object. If any concept emerges or re-emerges in your consciousness, gently let it go. (This is not a “success or failure” exercise. Partial progress is fine.)

#### 2) Thinking

Observe the object again, attending now to the concepts which rise up in your awareness. Explore their interconnections, how they weave and form the reality which manifests in your object and which connects it to the world.

#### 3) Synthesis

Observe the differences between your perceiving and your thinking about the object. Witness the conversation which takes place between your perceiving and your thinking. What is the essential nature of the object?

## Chapter 6 Human Individuality

The following exercise in its two parts were inspired by the content of the sixth chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter six are as follows:

“... we are not satisfied merely to refer the percept, by means of thinking, to the concept, but we relate them also to our particular subjectivity, our individual Ego. The expression of this individual relationship is feeling, which manifests itself as pleasure or displeasure.”

“Thinking is the element through which we take part in the universal cosmic process; feeling is that through which we can withdraw into the narrow confines of our own being. Our thinking links us to the world; our feeling leads us back into ourselves and makes us individuals.”

“For the universe as a whole my life of feeling can have value only if, as a percept of myself, the feeling enters into connection with a concept and in this roundabout way links itself to the cosmos.”

“A true individuality will be the one who reaches up with his feelings to the farthest possible extent into the region of the ideal.”

“A life of feeling, wholly devoid of thinking, would gradually lose all connection with the world. But man is meant to be a whole, and for him knowledge of things will go hand in hand with the development and education of the life of feeling.”

### Exercise

Remember to select events for Parts I and II which you are comfortable sharing in a small group.

#### Part A)

1. Recall a very brief event – just a moment - which brought about in you a painful feeling.
2. Perceive the feeling without at first thinking about it or even naming it. If the feeling was multi-layered, experience its various features, its nuances. Let the feeling speak within you.
3. Name the feeling or feelings, finding the concept(s) which identify it or them.
4. Now, think about the feeling. Consider what external factors evoked this feeling, identifying clearly and objectively what was at work in the world and how its expression brought about your feeling.
5. Consider what was already living in your self, which made it possible for the event to bring about in you the feeling. Was there an underlying thought about yourself or the world which was awakened by the event? Was there a desire or intention or striving you carry, which collided with the event?
6. Where do you find the good in the event?
7. Leaving your memory image of the event aside, bring the *thinking* you have just done about the feeling before you as a picture. What do you see?

#### Part B)

1. Recall a very brief event – just a moment - which brought about in you a pleasurable feeling.
2. Perceive the feeling without at first thinking about it or even naming it.. Let the feeling speak within you.
3. Name the feeling or feelings, finding the concept(s) which identify it or them.
4. Consider what external factors evoked this feeling, identifying clearly and objectively what was at work in the world and how its expression brought about your feeling.



4. Consider what receptivity in your self made it possible for the event to bring about in you the feeling.
5. To what extent did the pleasure derive from the event's transitory nature?
6. To what extent did the pleasure derive from something essential, enduring?
7. Leaving your memory image of the event aside, bring the *thinking* you have just done about the feeling before you as a picture. What do you see?

## Chapter 7 Are there Limits to Knowledge?

The following exercise was inspired by the content of the seventh chapter of the Philosophy of Freedom. Pertinent quotes from chapter seven are as follows:

“Every kind of existence that is assumed outside the realm of percept and concept must be relegated to the sphere of unjustified hypotheses.”

“The follower of a monistic world conception knows that everything he needs for the explanation of any given phenomenon in the world must lie within this world itself. What prevents him from reaching it can be only accidental limitations in space and time, or defects of his organisation, that is, not of human organisation in general, but only of his own particular one.

“It follows from the concept of the act of knowing as we have defined it, that one cannot speak of limits of knowledge.”

“If we set ourselves questions which we cannot answer, it must be because the content of the questions is not in all respects clear and distinct. It is not the world which sets us the questions, but we ourselves.”

“...It may be that, at any particular moment, this or that remains unexplained because, through our place in life, we are prevented from perceiving the things involved. What is not found today, however, may be found tomorrow. The limits due to these causes are only transitory, and can be overcome by the progress of perception and thinking.”

“We must clearly understand that *every* perceptual picture of the world owes its form to the organisation of the perceiving being, but also that the perceptual picture which has been thoroughly permeated by the experience of thinking leads into *reality*.”

“...every percept gives us only a part of the reality concealed within it, in other words... it directs us away from its inherent reality. Added to this is the further realization that thinking leads us into that part of the reality which the percept conceals within itself.”

“The *deepening* of knowledge depends on the powers of intuition which express themselves in thinking. In the *living experience* which develops in thinking, this intuition may dive down to greater or lesser depths of reality.”

### Exercise

1. Observe something: an object or a feeling or the memory of an event – whatever you like. Think about what you are observing.
2. As your thinking progresses, abide for a while with the first question which arises which you are unable to answer.
3. Investigate whether your inability to answer the question is...
  - due to accidental limitations in space and time OR
  - due to defects in your individual organisation OR
  - because the content of the question is not in all respects clear and distinct OR
  - due to some combination of these factors.

4. If your question is not clear and distinct, revise it. Otherwise, ponder how an answer to your question might be discovered sometime in the future, either by yourself or someone else.
5. Return to your thinking or think anew about what you are observing. In the process of this thinking, what have you discovered which, at first, remained concealed within the percept?
6. Let all the thinking which you have done (in 1 – 5) now rise up before you as a picture which you can observe.
7. What reveals itself through the picture?

## **PART 2) FEELING**

### **The Role of Thought in the Formation & Universalization of Feeling**

The exercise, below, was inspired by the following quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom:

Quotes from Chapter 1 Conscious Human Action, pages 11 – 12:

- i. “Pity enters my heart when the mental picture of a person who arouses pity appears in my consciousness. The way to the heart is through the head. Love is no exception. Whenever it is not merely the expression of bare sexual instinct, it depends on the mental picture we form of the loved one. And the more idealistic these mental pictures are, just so much the more blessed is our love. Here too, thought is the father of feeling.”
- ii. “It is said that love makes us blind to the failings of the loved one. But this can be expressed the other way round, namely, that it is just for the good qualities of the soul that love opens the eyes. Many pass by these good qualities without noticing them. One, however, perceives them, and just because he does, love awakens in the soul. What else has he done but made a mental picture of what hundreds have failed to see? Love is not theirs, because they lack the *mental picture*.”

Quote from Chapter 6 Human Individuality, page 86:

- iii. “One might be tempted to see in the life of feeling an element that is more richly saturated with reality than is the contemplation of the world through thinking. But the reply to this is that the life of feeling, after all, has this richer meaning only for my individual self. For the universe as a whole my life of feeling can have value only if, as a percept of my self, the feeling enters into connection with a concept and in this roundabout way links itself to the cosmos.”

### **Exercise: The Role of Thought in the Formation & Universalization of Feeling**

1. Picture a person, living or dead, whom you like or whom you love.
  2. Recall a time when one of that person’s good qualities was revealed to you through the person’s words or actions. (Preferably, choose an experience which does not directly involve you. However, if you were directly involved, *look now upon your participation objectively, as if you were a third party.*) Bring this incident before you as vividly as possible.
  3. What is that good quality which was revealed to you? What does that good quality tell you about the person?
  4. Turn your attention to the feelings which arise in you *NOW, in the present*, through this quality you have seen in the person. Enter deeply into your present feeling. Without yet naming it, let it come alive before the eyes of your soul.
  5. Now find the concept which expresses the nature of the feeling(s). Name the feeling (or feelings).
- \*\*\*\*\*
6. Think about your feeling. What does your feeling impart to you about life and the world?



7. Imagine someone is coming to you for advice after a time of earnest self-examination. He asks you, "How can I cultivate a more loving disposition towards the people in my life?" Informed by the quotes from Steiner in Part 1 and by your work with this exercise, what would you tell him?

## Exploring the Orientation of the I in Passive versus Conceptually Digested Feeling

The exercise, below, was inspired by the following quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom:

Quote from Chapter 8 The Factors of Life, pages 116 - 117:

- 1) "... Thus, for monism, feeling is an incomplete reality, which, in the form in which it first appears to us, does not yet contain its second factor, the concept or idea. That is why, in actual life, feelings, like percepts, appear *prior* to knowledge. At first, we have merely a feeling of existence, and it is only in the course of our gradual development that we attain to the point at which the concept of self emerges from within the dim feeling of our own existence. However, what for *us* appears only later is from the first indissolubly bound up with our feeling. This is why the naive person comes to believe that in feeling he is presented with existence directly, in knowledge only indirectly."

Quote from Author's Addition, 1918 to Chapter 3 Thinking in the Service of Knowledge, page 44

- 2) "... *only* in the thinking activity does the I know itself to be *one and the same being with that which is active*, right into all the ramifications of this activity. With no other soul activity is this so completely the case. For example, in a feeling of pleasure it is perfectly possible for a more delicate observation to discriminate between the extent to which the I knows itself to be *one and the same being with what is active*, and the extent to which there is something passive in the I to which the pleasure merely presents itself. The same applies to the other soul activities."

Quote from Chapter 7 Human Individuality, page 93:

- 3) "A life of feeling, wholly devoid of thinking, would gradually lose all connection with the world. But man is meant to be a whole, and for him knowledge of *things* will go hand in hand with the development and education of the life of feeling.

Feeling is the means whereby, in the first instance, concepts gain concrete *life*."

## Exercise: Exploring the Orientation of the I in Passive versus Conceptually Digested Feeling

*Work through this exercise by yourself first. As you will later be asked to recount your work within your group, you may wish to take notes.*

1. Recall a *brief* moment when you experienced a pleasurable feeling. Recreate the moment which led to the feeling, vividly. Find the concepts which characterize the feeling or feelings. What would you answer if someone asked you "What were you feeling?"
2. Consider the orientation of your I during that moment, *as the feelings manifested* (not before or after, but during the feeling experience). To what extent was your I one and the same being with what was active and to what extent was there something passive in your I, to which the feelings merely presented themselves?
3. *Think about* how the feelings arose at the time.
  - a. What exactly in the *world* – what specific thought or mental picture – brought about the feelings?
  - b. What is it about *you* – your characterological disposition - that made you feel the feelings in your own unique manner?

4. What does the feeling tell you about life and the world?
5. As you ruminate over these thoughts (re-think them if it helps), attend now to your *present* feelings, the feelings which arise for you in connection with your thinking. How would you characterize these feelings?
6. With respect to these present feelings... experience the orientation of your I. In this present moment, as the feelings manifest, to what extent do you (does your I) know yourself to be one and the same being with that which is active and to what extent is there something passive in your I to which the feeling merely presents itself?
7. What indications, if any, do your own experience working with the exercise suggest for the development and education of your life of feeling?

## PART 3) WILLING

### Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise A)

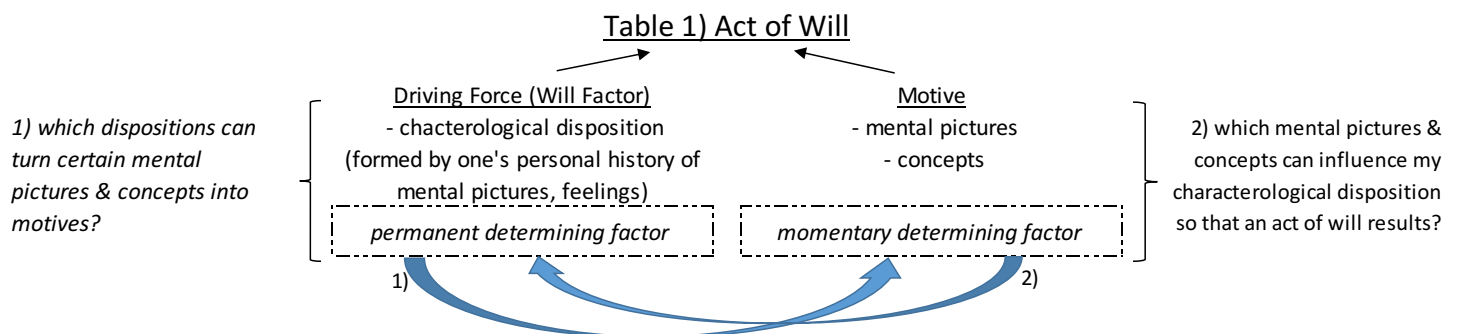
Freedom Callisthenics Exercise A) and Tables 1 - 3) were inspired by the following quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom:

#### Quotes from Chapter 9 The Idea of Freedom, pages 124 - 126:

“... we can gain insight into the connections between thinking, conscious I, and the act of will, only by observing first how an act of will issues from the human organisation. In any particular act of will we must take into account the motive and the driving force. The motive is a factor with the character of a concept or mental picture; the driving force is the will-factor belonging to the human organisation and directly conditioned by it. The conceptual factor, or motive, is the momentary determining factor of the will; the driving force is the permanent determining factor of the individual...”

“But one and the same concept, or one and the same mental picture, affects different individuals differently. They stimulate different men to different actions. An act of will is therefore not merely the outcome of the concept or mental picture but also of the individual make-up of the person... the characterological disposition... The characterological disposition is formed by the more or less permanent content of our subjective life, that is, by the content of our mental pictures and feelings... My characterological disposition is determined especially by my life of feeling. Whether I shall make a particular mental picture or concept into a motive of action or not, will depend on whether it gives me joy or pain...”

“We must therefore distinguish (1) the possible subjective dispositions which are capable of turning certain mental pictures and concepts into motives, and (2) the possible mental pictures and concepts which are in a position to influence my characterological disposition so that an act of will results. For our moral life, the former represent the *driving force*, and the latter, its *aims*.”



## The Driving Forces:

### Quotes from Chapter 9 The Idea of Freedom, pages 126 - 129:

“The driving force in the moral life can be discovered by finding out the elements of which individual life is composed. The first level of individual life is that of *perceiving*, more particularly perceiving through the senses. This is the region of our individual life in which perceiving translates itself directly into willing, without the intervention of either a feeling or a concept. The driving force here involved is simply called *instinct*. The satisfaction of our lower, purely animal needs (hunger, sexual intercourse etc.) comes about in this way...”

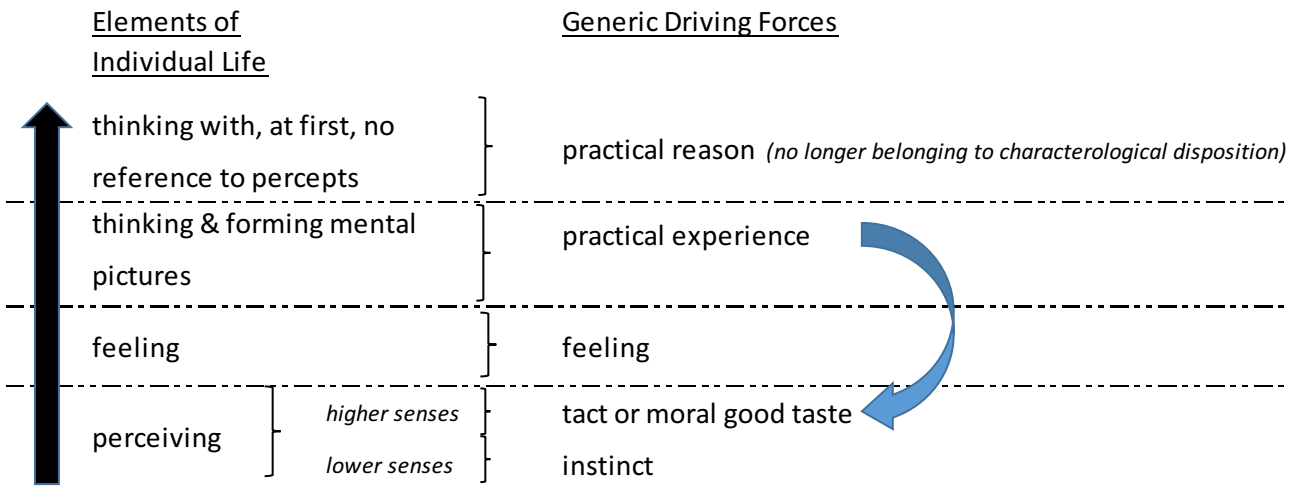
“This kind of determination of the will, which belongs originally only to the lower senses, may however become extended also to the percepts of the higher senses. We may react to the percept of a certain event in the external world without reflecting on what we do, without any special feeling connecting itself with the percepts, as in fact happens in our conventional social behaviour. The driving force of such action is called *tact* or *moral good taste*...”

“The second level of human life is *feeling*. Definite feelings accompany the percepts of the external world. These feelings may become the driving force of an action. When I see a starving man, my pity for him may become the driving force of my action... Such feelings, for example... are shame, pride... revenge... piety... love and duty.”

“The third level of life amounts to *thinking and forming mental pictures*. A mental picture or concept may become the motive of an action through mere reflection. Mental pictures become motives because, in the course of life, we regularly connect certain aims of our will with percepts which recur again and again in more or less modified form. Hence with people not wholly devoid of experience it happens that the occurrence of certain percepts is always accompanied by the appearance in consciousness of mental pictures or actions that they themselves have carried out in a similar case or have seen others carry out. These mental pictures float before their minds as patterns which determine all subsequent decisions; they become part of their characterological disposition. The driving force in the will, in this case, we can call *practical experience*. Practical experience merges gradually into purely tactful behaviour...”

“The highest level of individual life is that of conceptual thinking without regard to any definite perceptual content. We determine the content of a concept through pure intuition from out of the ideal sphere. Such a concept contains, at first, no reference to any definite percepts. If we enter upon an act of will under the influence of a concept which refers to a percept, that is, under the influence of a mental picture, then it is this percept which determines our action indirectly by way of conceptual thinking. But if we act under the influence of intuitions, the driving force of our action is pure thinking. As it is the custom in philosophy to call the faculty of pure thinking “reason”, we may well be justified in giving the name of *practical reason* to the moral driving force characteristic of this level of life... It is clear that such an impulse can no longer be counted in the strictest sense as belonging to the characterological disposition. For what is here effective as the driving force is no longer something individual to me, but the ideal and hence universal content of my intuition.”

Table 2) Driving Forces



The Motives

Quotes from Chapter 9 The Idea of Freedom, pages 129 - 130:

“The motives of moral conduct are mental pictures and concepts. There are Moral Philosophers who see a motive for moral behaviour also in the feelings... Pleasure itself, however, cannot become a motive; only an *imagined pleasure* can. The mental picture of a future feeling, but not the feeling itself, can act on my characterological disposition...”

“The mental picture of one’s own or another’s welfare is, however, rightly regarded as a motive of the will. The principle of producing the greatest quantity of pleasure for oneself through one’s action, that is, of attaining individual happiness, is called **egoism**. The attainment of this individual happiness is sought either by thinking ruthlessly only of one’s own good and striving to attain it even at the cost of the happiness of other individuals (**pure egoism**), or by promoting the good of others, either because one anticipates a **favourable influence on one’s own person indirectly through the happiness of others**, or because one fears to endanger one’s own interest by injuring others (**morality of prudence**). The special content of the egoistical principles of morality will depend on the mental pictures which we form of what constitutes our own, or others’, happiness. A man will determine the content of his egoistical striving in accordance with what he regards as the good things of life (luxury, hope of happiness, deliverance from various evils, and so on.)

The purely conceptual content of an action is to be regarded as yet another kind of motive. This content refers not to the particular action only, as with the mental picture of one’s own pleasures, but to the derivation of an action from a system of moral principles. These moral principles, in the form of abstract concepts, may regulate the individual’s moral life without his worrying himself about the origin of the concepts. In that case, we simply feel that submitting to a moral concept in the form of a **commandment** overshadowing our actions, is a moral necessity...”

“It is a special kind of these moral principles when the commandment is made known to us not through an external authority but through our own inner life (moral autonomy). In this case, we hear the voice to which we have to submit ourselves, in our own souls. This voice expresses itself as **conscience**.

It is a moral advance when a man no longer simply accepts the commands of an outer or inner authority as the motive of his action, but tries to understand the reason why a particular maxim of behaviour should act as a motive in him. This is the advance from morality based on authority to action out of moral insight. At this level of morality a man will try to find out the requirements of the moral life and will let his actions be determined by the knowledge of them. Such requirements are:

- (1) the greatest possible good of mankind purely for its own sake;
- (2) the progress of civilization, or the moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection;
- (3) the realization of individual moral aims grasped by pure intuition..."

"The principle of the progress of civilization, like that of the general good, is based on a mental picture, that is, on the way we relate the content of our moral ideas to particular experiences (percepts). The highest conceivable moral principle, however, is one that from the start contains no such reference to particular experiences, but springs from the source of pure intuition and only later seeks any reference to percepts, that is, to life..."

**Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise A)**

**The Dispositions which can turn various mental pictures and concepts into motives AND  
Mental pictures & concepts which influence my disposition so an act of will results**

1) In your mind, move backwards through the last days or weeks, until you recall specific actions you took which reveal the following generic driving forces. (See table below.) Record one action which corresponds to each driving force.

2) Once you have found an actual action example for each generic driving force, record also the specific driving force behind each action and record it. For example, for the generic driving force "instinct", a specific driving force might be "thirst".

**Table 3)**

Action	Driving Force		Motive	
	Generic (from Table 2)	Specific	Specific mental picture	Generic (from Table 2)
	practical experience			
	feeling			
	tact / moral good taste			
	instinct			

3) For each action, recall what you were thinking just before you acted. What specific mental picture became the motive for your action? Record it on the table.

4) Find and record the generic motive (from Table 2) which categorizes your specific motive.

5) Choose any one of your 4 actions from the table as an example to investigate more deeply. Recall the quote from chapter 9:

"My characterological disposition is determined especially by my life of feeling. Whether I shall make a particular mental picture or concept into a motive of action or not, will depend on whether it gives me joy or pain."

Contemplate the source of the joy which caused you to make this specific mental picture or concept into a motive of action. What feelings either supported or worked against your impulse to act?

6) Choose another example from your table. Examine more deeply what you were thinking before you acted. Why was this specific mental picture or concept so able to influence your characterological disposition that an act of will resulted?



## Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise B)

Freedom Callisthenics Exercise B was inspired by the following quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom:

### Quote from Chapter 1 Conscious Human Action, page 11

“...That an action, of which the agent does not know why he performs it, cannot be *free*, goes without saying. But what about an action for which the reasons are known? This leads us to the question of the origin and meaning of thinking. For without the recognition of the thinking activity of the soul, it is impossible to form a concept of knowledge *about anything*, and therefore of knowledge about an action. When we know what thinking in general means, it will be easy to get clear about the role that thinking plays in human action.”

### Quote from Chapter 3 Thinking in the Service of Knowledge, page 29

“For everyone, however, who has the ability to observe thinking – and with good will every normal man has this ability – this observation is the most important one he can possibly make. For he observes something of which he himself is the creator; he finds himself confronted, not by an apparently foreign object, but by his own activity. He knows how the thing comes into being. He sees into its connections and relationships. A firm point has now been reached, from which one can, with some hope of success, seek an explanation of all other phenomena of the world.”

### Quotes from Chapter 9 The Idea of Freedom

Pages 132 – 133: “In any particular act of will we must take into account the motive and the driving force. The motive is a factor with the character of a concept or mental picture; the driving force is the will factor belonging to the human organization and directly conditioned by it.”

Page 131: “It is a moral advance when a man no longer simply accepts the commands of an outer or inner authority as the motive of his action, but tries to understand the reason why a particular maxim of behaviour should act as a motive in him. This is the advance from morality based on authority to action out of moral insight. At this level of morality a man will try to find out the requirements of the moral life and will let his actions be determined by the knowledge of them. Such requirements are:

- i. the greatest possible good of mankind purely for its own sake;
- ii. the progress of civilization, or the moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection;
- iii. the realization of individual moral aims grasped by pure intuition...”

“The principle of the progress of civilization, like that of the general good, is based on a mental picture, that is, on the way we relate the content of our moral ideas to particular experiences (percepts). The highest conceivable moral principle, however, is one that from the start contains no such reference to particular experiences, but springs from the source of pure intuition and only later seeks any reference to percepts, that is, to life...”

Page 134: “The sum of ideas which are effective in us, the concrete content of our intuitions, constitutes what is individual in each of us, notwithstanding the universality of the world of ideas. In so far as this intuitive content applies to action, it constitutes the moral content of the individual. To let this content express itself in life is both the highest moral driving force and the highest motive a man can have, who sees that in this content all other moral principles are in the end united. We may call this point of view *ethical individualism*... The decisive factor in an intuitively determined action in any concrete instance is the discovery of the corresponding purely individual intuition.”

Quote from Chapter 12 Moral Imagination, pages 163 – 164

“Man produces concrete mental pictures from the sum of his ideas chiefly by means of the imagination. Therefore what the free spirit needs in order to realize his ideas, in order to be effective, is moral imagination. This is the source of the free spirit’s action... Moral imagination, in order to realize its mental picture, must set to work in a definite sphere of percepts. Human action does not create percepts, but transforms already existing percepts and gives them a new form. In order to be able to transform a definite object of perception, or a sum of such objects, in accordance with a mental picture, one must have grasped the principle at work within the percept picture, that is, the way it has hitherto worked, to which one wants to give a new form or direction. Further, it is necessary to discover the procedure by which it is possible to change the given principle into a new one. This part of effective moral activity depends on knowledge of the particular world of phenomena with which one is concerned...”

**Individual Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise B): What if I Had Consciously Fashioned a Motive?**

- 1) Move backwards until you discover an action you took which now disappoints you – an action in which you now recognize you fell short of the ideals you would like to embody.
  - a) *What were the generic and specific driving force of this action?*
  - b) *What were the generic and specific motive?*
  - c) *To what extent were you conscious of your motive at the time you acted?*
  - d) *Attend now to the feelings which arise in you in response to this self-knowledge. What are you feeling?*

Elements of Individual Life		Generic Driving Forces
thinking with, at first, no reference to percepts	}	practical reason
thinking & forming mental pictures		practical experience
feeling	}	feeling
perceiving		tact/moral good taste
	higher senses	
	lower senses	instinct

		Generic Motives
moral insight	}	realization of individual moral aims grasped by pure intuition
authority		progress of civilization; moral evolution of mankind
	}	greatest good of mankind
		conscience
	inner	commandment
	outer	
egoism	}	indirect egoism, through happiness of others
		morality of prudence
		pure egoism (promotion of one's own welfare)

- 2) The greatest good of mankind purely for its own sake
  - a) Bring before you the percept picture of the situation – *just prior to your action* - with as much detail and clarity as possible.
  - b) Reflect now upon the idea of *the greatest good of humankind purely for its own sake* as a comprehensive motive.
  - c) What specific motive emerges for you now, out of the *greatest good of humankind*, as the moral principle most appropriate to your percept picture?
  - d) What mental picture clarifies for you now out of that specific motive, as a possible alternative action you might have taken? (Keep in mind, the greatest good in this case will apply to the human being or human beings connected with the specific situation.)
- 3) The progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection
  - a) Once again, bring before you the percept picture of the situation – *just prior to your action*.

- b) Reflect now upon the idea of *the progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection*. Experience in your thinking how this idea “turns out to be a special case of the foregoing moral principal” (i.e. of the greatest good).
  - c) What new specific motive emerges for you now, out of *the progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection*, as the moral principle most appropriate to your percept picture?
  - d) Turn again to the mental picture you formed in the last step. How might you further refine or elaborate the mental picture of your alternative action based on your new specific motive?
- 4) The Realization of Individual Moral Aims Grasped by Pure Intuition
- a) Let all external moral principles fall away. One last time, bring the situation – *just prior to your action* - before you out of your memory with as much detail and clarity as possible.
  - b) What was the principle (or what were the principles) at work within this percept picture, to which – if the situation was now unfolding in the present – you would like to give a new direction?
  - c) From your individual perspective, what specific moral concept would have expressed the new direction most appropriate to that situation?
  - d) Had you adopted this moral concept as your motive, what different alternative action might you have taken?
- 5) Observe the progress of your thinking from steps 2 to 3 to 4. What transitions, developments do you see?
- 6) *Attend now to the feelings which arise in you in response to your work with the exercise. What are you feeling?*

## **Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise C)**

Freedom Callisthenics Exercise C) was inspired by the following quotes from the Philosophy of Freedom:

### Quote from Chapter 9 The Idea of Freedom, page 132

“If a man holds to the principle of the general good, he will in all his actions, first ask what his ideals will contribute to this general good. If a man upholds the principle of the progress of civilization, he will act similarly. But there is a still higher way which does not start from one and the same particular moral aim in each case, but sees a certain value in all moral principles and always asks whether in the given case this or that principle is the more important. It may happen that in some circumstances a man considers the right aim to be the progress of civilization, in others the promotion of his own welfare, and in each case makes that the motive of his action. But if no other ground for decision claims more than second place, then conceptual intuition itself comes first and foremost into consideration. All other motives now give way, and the idea behind an action alone becomes its motive.”

### Quote from Chapter 12 Moral Imagination, pages 163 – 164

“Man produces concrete mental pictures from the sum of his ideas chiefly by means of the imagination. Therefore what the free spirit needs in order to realize his ideas, in order to be effective, is moral imagination. This is the source of the free spirit’s action... Moral imagination, in order to realize its mental picture, must set to work in a definite sphere of percepts. Human action does not create percepts, but transforms already existing percepts and gives them a new form. In order to be able to transform a definite object of perception, or a sum of such objects, in accordance with a mental picture, one must have grasped the principle at work within the percept picture, that is, the way it has hitherto worked, to which one wants to give a new form or direction. Further, it is necessary to discover the procedure by which it is possible to change the given principle into a new one. This part of effective moral activity depends on knowledge of the particular world of phenomena with which one is concerned...”

### Quote from Chapter 12 Moral Imagination, pages 164 – 165

“Moral action, therefore, presupposes, in addition to the faculty of having moral ideas (moral intuition) and moral imagination, the ability to transform the world of percepts without violating the natural laws by which these are connected. This ability is moral technique. It can be learnt in the same sense in which any kind of knowledge can be learnt. Generally, speaking, men are better able to find concepts for the existing world than to evolve productively, out of their imagination, the not-yet-existing actions of the future. Hence it is perfectly possible for men without moral imagination to receive such mental pictures from others, and to embody them skilfully into the world. Conversely, it may happen that men with moral imagination lack technical skill, and must make use of other men for the realization of their mental pictures.”

## **Individual Freedom Callisthenics, Exercise C): Practicing the Art of Freedom**

- 1) Consider an act of will which you anticipate performing. It could be a very simple task, like doing the dishes. Or it could be a more complex action, affecting one or more people, involving a web of feelings and presenting a range of potentially sensitive outcomes, positive and negative.

- 2) The greatest good of mankind purely for its own sake
  - a) Bring before you the percept picture of the circumstances encompassing your approaching act of will, with as much detail and clarity as possible.
  - b) Reflect now upon the motive “the greatest good of mankind purely for its own sake”. Enter into the being of this idea, exploring its nature, feeling its essence.
  - c) Taking this idea as your comprehensive motive, what *specific* motive emerges for you as appropriate to the percept picture you have built? (Keep in mind, the greatest good in this case will apply to the human being or human beings connected with the specific situation.)
  - d) What mental picture emerges for you now as an action you might take?
- 3) The progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection
  - a) Once again, bring before you the circumstances encompassing your approaching act of will.
  - b) Reflect again upon the greatest good for mankind. Experience in your thinking how the idea of the progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection refines out of the idea of the greatest good.
  - c) Living with this refining gesture as an ideal, what specific motive emerges for you out of the progress of civilization or moral evolution of mankind, in relation to the percept picture you have built?
  - d) Turn again to the mental picture you formed in the last step. How might you further refine or elaborate the mental picture of your alternative action if your motivation now was to serve the progress of civilization, or moral evolution of mankind towards ever greater perfection?
- 4) The Realization of Individual Moral Aims Grasped by Pure Intuition
  - a) Let all external moral principles fall away. One last time, bring before you the circumstances encompassing your approaching act of will, with as much detail and clarity as possible.
  - b) What is the principle (or what are the principles) at work within this percept picture, to which you would like to give a new direction?
  - c) From your individual perspective, what moral concept expresses the new direction most appropriate to the situation?
  - d) Adopting this moral concept as your motive, what mental picture of an action to take emerges for you? Be as specific as possible.
5. Act and Reflect upon your action
  - a) Act in accordance with the motive you developed in the last step, i.e. the realization of individual moral aims, grasped by pure intuition.
  - b) To what extent in practice were you successful in unfolding your moral mental picture in the world?
  - c) What was the outcome of your action?
  - d) What have you learned?