

ReChanneling the Integral Complex of Being

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Refining, redefining, and reinstating
your values through the infinite
fusion of mind, body and spirit.

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This is the first in a series of essays—transcribed from motivational lectures and workshops—designed to illustrate methods of ReChanneling negative behavioral addiction into positive and authentic self-affirmation. These are methods to reinstate and reassert our innate disposition as compassionate, dynamic, and principled human beings. This program is called “ReChanneling the Integral Complex”.

There is little suffering greater than that of an individual who deems him or herself powerless to effect change. In someone who is consumed by harmful behavioral traits, this feeling of helplessness, of inadequacy, can exhibit itself in anguish, despair, shame, even grief. One major dysfunction of many standard behavioral recovery programs is their adoption of powerlessness as an acceptable catalyst for growth; others focus on eliminating the negative behavior without providing a compensating and positive replacement. The perception of impotence—the belief that we are not the steward of our own behavior, our values, our well-being—is an unhealthy misconception that can severely inhibit our potential for growth and change. Reconciliation with and recovery from immoral and maladaptive behavior is achieved only through unequivocal acceptance of our condition, and our willingness to change. In the tradition of Platonic elegance, we are all innately drawn towards the desire for excellence—qualities that contribute to our authenticity and moral fortitude. A person of authenticity, being true to self, is one who lives in accordance with his or her better desires, motives, ideals, or beliefs, and whose sum of intents and actions is thus manifest as beneficial to self and society.¹

¹ Mullen, R. F. (2016). The Art of Authenticity: Constantin Stanislavski and Merleau-Ponty, *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 7, p. 3. New York: Davis Publishing Company.

In order to change our condition of moral inadequacy to one of virtue we must accept full responsibility for our actions. We are the agents of change, of transformation; the only higher-power that truly needs to be acknowledged and accessed is that which preexists within each of us. Assigning responsibility to another for our own impaired behavior is clear impediment to recovery.

ReChanneling seminars and workshops are designed to illustrate methods to replace negative addiction, maladaptive behavior, and any accompanying anxiety and dis-ease into positive aspects of self-affirmation. Through this methodology, rather than embracing every negative emotion, behavior, and perception as entrenched elements of our being, we recognize them as opportunities for *ReChanneling*. It is judicious to embrace our innate capabilities as well as deficiencies; blessed with unique abilities, so also are we endowed with inadequacies. We live within the extremes of the Golden Mean and there are a myriad of experiences and situations between the two absolutes. Understanding and accepting our overall level of competence allows us to embrace and enhance our proficiencies while addressing our deficits—a skill set significant for growth.

How does the program of *ReChanneling* facilitate transformation from maladaptive behavior to recognition of our value as a vital contributing member of society? *ReChanneling* is a behavioral modification program created by the author that combines contemporary cognitive and experiential remedial theories with the authentic presence and emotional recollection of Stanislavski, and the *Abhidharmic* concepts of mindfulness governance. Most remedial programs concentrate on the elimination of negative habits, which leaves a psychological emptiness that needs to be compensated, and we find ourselves seduced into filling this emptiness with immediate gratifications that may or may not be beneficial. There is an energy flow that

accompanies every action, including all habits—fruitful and destructive—and when we cease a negative or immoral behavior without providing a positive and comparable replacement, we run the risk of embracing similar negative behaviors to fill the void. We must intentionally replace the bad habit, the negative moral addiction, with one of positive and corresponding power. And we accomplish that task through *ReChanneling*—a method of self-motivating behavioral modification. Those of us who have hurtful tendencies that we have determined demand rectification do not eliminate the problem by simply and arbitrarily eliminating the negative impulse (which in-and-of-itself is far easier said than done). That negative expression, that flawed disagreeable habit, must be rechanneled into a positive one—one with comparable force and energy in order to fill the void left by the elimination of the maladaptive behavior. We phase out poor behaviors by replacing them with positive and comparable ones through the process of *ReChanneling*. The sense of loss from the disposition of the maladjusted conduct that we have held onto for years is mitigated by the energy that accompanies the acquisition of the positive behavior. With *ReChanneling*, negative habits and maladaptive behaviors are not replaced with similar defeating habits but are consciously rechanneled into positive and comparable aspects of positive and productive living. Through the power of our individual will as the initiator of *ReChanneling*, we control and facilitate the transformation—and this dynamism becomes the foundation of recovery. To iterate, the only higher-power that needs to be acknowledged and accessed in this program is that which already resides within each of us.

ReChanneling examines methods to refine, redefine, and reinstate our better values, which supports the firm belief that we all aspire to the greatest good through moral inculcation via survival altruism², and the involution³ of consciousness. This aspiration towards goodness is

² Mullen, R. F. (2016). Debunking the Origins of Morality. *Academia.edu*. Moral inculcation and altruism are spawns of the same survival necessity.

easily subverted by the consequences of life. Through *ReChanneling*, we refine that goodness extant within us, redefine that which has been distorted or falsified, and reinstate that which has been lost or misplaced. The methods found in *ReChanneling* are effective in the resolution of multiple behavioral neuroses including social and other anxieties, coping with loss or a stressful situation or condition, depression, and other symptoms of distress and *dis-ease*.

ReChanneling addresses our psycho-physiological imbalance by helping to refine, redefine, and reinstate positive values through the infinite fusion of the mind, body, and spirit which I call the integral complex of being or the *Beingness* Complex. Too often, we address the obvious mental depression without involving the somatic and spiritual. We search for pharmaceutical relief for a condition of the physical, mental and bodily, without taking into account the emotional catalysts and how they affect and are affected by our inner *being*. The *beingness*-complex is the integrality of the mind, body and spirit as it strives for natural homeostasis. It is the *totality* of a human person, reflecting the involution of the conscious, and the manifestation of the body, which facilitate the mental progression of consciousness. Each constituent overlaps, influences, and interdepends upon the others, the gestalt containing feelings, emotions, and intellectual thoughts in its more conscious complexities; each component must be addressed for balance and authentic recovery.

ReChanneling easily incorporates the primary elements of cognitive behavioral therapy. Cognitive theory assumes that maladaptive behavior and poor self-image (components of *dis-ease*) are the result of inappropriate or irrational thinking patterns caused by ingrained reactions to situations and conditions experienced by the individual. It addresses the restructuring of the mind, the rerouting of our neural networks by disputing these irrational thoughts and beliefs and

³ The concept of involution-evolution posits that *some-thing* instills (thrusts) its force or being into the depths of matter in order for consciousness to evolve. Involution is required for evolution because *some-thing* cannot evolve from *no-thing*.

substituting rational ones in their place by means of cognitive repetition until they become automatic or habitual replacements to the irrational thoughts. The behavioral component of CBRT (cognitive behavioral *ReChanneling* therapy) requires the individual's participation in an active, structured therapy group consisting of people with similar discomforts or neuroses, training these individuals to modify their negative tendencies through activities that address the poor behavior with alternate repetitious exercises and behavioral activity called 'experiments'.

ReChanneling encourages the individual to consciously replace the maladaptive behavior with one of positive and comparable value while addressing the integral components of the mind, body, and spirit. *ReChanneling* emphasizes the homeostasis of the *beingness*-complex through the combination of contemporary cognitive and experiential remedial theories, the authentic presence and emotional recollection of Stanislavski's *method*, and the *Arbhidharmic* concepts of mindfulness governance.

Constantin Stanislavski honed his behavioral techniques to train his actors to engage the integrality of perception, the somatic, and the emotional in order to foster a genuine interconnectedness, opening the *curtains* to reveal the genuine character of a person as he or she relates to other individuals. As all the world is a stage, and we are its actors, the revelation of our true character and intention establishes the foundation for authenticity in presence and communication. *Abhidharma* mindfulness or awareness is one of the seven spiritual or psychological faculties that forms an essential part of Eastern practice; the application of which facilitates the seventh element of the eightfold path of *right* practices (insight, resolution, speech, conduct, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and introspection).

When Philosopher Emma Goldman wrote, “the idea of God implies the abdication of human reason and justice”⁴, she was merely advising that the potential for a good life is preexistent, and adopting god (or anyone else for that matter) as excuse for our own behavior usurps our ability to take full ownership of our current condition and, even more importantly, of the magnificent person we have the potential to become—the person who recognizes the capacity to expand the boundaries of normal life into one of extraordinary vision and courage. Those who claim that we cannot change, that we’re too firmly ensconced in our behavior (that you can’t teach an old dog new tricks) have either failed in their own endeavors, resigned themselves to their condition, or truly believe that their moral behavior is beyond reproach. Let me assure you, my personal journey towards redemption is vivid illustration: if I can change, anyone can change. For a good portion of my life I was a consummate prevaricator, a cheat, a petty thief, and an excessive alcoholic. (As a guilt ridden, Irish Catholic second son of an alcoholic, drunkenness was an easy habit to acquire). In short, I was not a very good person and, subsequently, not a happy one, vainly searching for mind-numbing alternatives rather than facing the true reality of my condition. I desperately sought answers from peripheral and ambiguous sources, rather than looking within. I was arrested, not once, but at least four times. I was a cocaine abuser and a pharmaceutical junkie. As a youth, I even voluntarily committed myself to an asylum on two occasions. I prayed they would cure my condition with miracle drugs but was merely provided a bed and nutrition. (In truth, I probably *needed* a place to stay for a couple of days; it was either that or get a job). The stories I could share, but I think you get the picture. I would go to any lengths to blind myself to my condition. Then, as a result of intensive inner-discourse, studies in behavioral psychology, philosophy, religion and spirituality, and the

⁴ Goldman, E. (1910). The Philosophy of Atheism. In *Anarchism and Other Essays*. New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association.

application of the integral aspects of *ReChanneling*, I equipped myself to make the better choices. I rechanneled my negative conduct into positive aspects of living, renouncing repetitive poor behaviors by replacing them with good ones. I share my story with you in order to illustrate that I have been where many of you find yourself now. No matter who you think you are or what you have done, no matter how despondent or perceptually degenerate, you have the capacity to change by *ReChanneling* all of that negative energy and unacceptable conduct into positive thought and action. Throughout the years, I had explored multiple programs for emotional adjustment. I studied self-realization, primal therapy, behavior modification, rebirthing, self-hypnosis and other desperate attempts at recovery. I spent time in a Catholic seminary, researched Vedāntism, Buddhism, Unitarianism, Stoicism, Agnosticism, and so on. Each provided valuable insights, but I was searching for some marvelous, miracle revelation that would show me how to become a good person—neither comprehending nor being adequately advised that the courage, strength, and goodness were extant within me. Then one day, several years ago, I finally decided I had endured quite enough. I couldn't live with myself any more (and frankly, no one else could live with me either). I had to eliminate the pain of a horribly flawed existence. I went back to school, *ReChanneling* much of my negative energy into research and application. I earned my Ph.D. in philosophy and religion. My dissertation⁵ was on advanced human potential—the capacity that resides within all of us to harness that special aptitude for extraordinary living, that inherent capacity to lift the human spirit. Since then I have published academic articles. I facilitate workshops and seminars on positive motivation and the modification of *dis-ease*. I have reviewed scholarly works for the American Psychological Association, and have presented before numerous academic organizations. I mentor CBRT

⁵ Mullen, R. F. (2015). *Evolutionary Panentheism and Metanormal Human Capacity: A Psychobiography of Michael Murphy*. Ann Arbor, MI: ProQuest.

therapy sessions, and speak about *ReChanneling* at every opportunity. A director and teacher of Stanislavski's method of authentic presence, I incorporate relevant exercises into this program of *ReChanneling*. My academic concentration in Asian and comparative studies focused on the *Abhidharmic* method of mindfulness enhancement and its scientific applications. Further essays will illustrate my own battles with maladaptive behavioral addiction, and the methods I and others have employed to rechannel our moral turpitudes into positive self-affirmation. Admittedly, while *ReChanneling* can place us on a path to moral redemption, the brass ring of perfection is unachievable as the sophistication of virtue is a perennial work in-progress. The journey, however, must indeed begin with the first step.

Among the philosophical enigmas that have perplexed humanity since the onset of cognitive reasoning are the following: How did we get here? What is the meaning of life? What is our true purpose and what is the significance of our perceived insignificance? Let me offer a couple of hypotheses. First of all, to conclude that humankind is the end-product of cognitive development is, perhaps, a bit shortsighted and egocentric given evolutionary evidence. Darwinism suggests (actually determines) that if humankind is the successor to a species or series of species then it must also be the forerunner. So maybe this is the validity for which we search, the significance of our being: that of our advanced species laying the groundwork for an even superior one as a conduit of consciousness. This is not a novel concept. Plato spoke of his Guardians or philosopher-kings. Philosopher and scientist, Teilhard de Chardin wrote of super-personalization, a radical advance on all forms of life that have gone before and will succeed humanity. Aurobindo Ghose, one of the most influential cross-cultural philosophers of the past century, envisioned a new race, a new culture, a new world as the result of the natural processes of cosmic evolution. He once wrote, "it may well be concluded that the aspiration, the urge, the

persistent endeavor in man is a sure sign of Nature's will for a higher way to fulfillment, the emergence of a higher status".⁶ Perhaps, then, we are the precursor to an advanced mutation of consciousness, one that evolves from our best qualities yet even better. Not only is the concept more substantial than apocryphal celestial beings, it is one that should inflame us with pride and humility because it offers the possibility that our indispensability is as the architects of an advanced and more perfect consciousness, thus endowing humanity with an extraordinary and significant purpose. Father Teilhard wrote, "to judge from the rapid developments of thought in the short period of a few dozen centuries, this youth [humankind] bears within it all the indications and the promises of an entirely new biological cycle".⁷ Or, rather than the infinite endurance of our personal consciousness, perhaps it is the quality of our moral character—our goodness, our compassion, our love—that is the validation of our significance. Perhaps it is the aggregate of our best qualities that constitutes an evolving collective consciousness. And maybe it is this consciousness, ever-expanding as we embrace our innate potential for goodness, that will give birth to an advanced intelligence and spiritual awareness. And even if this doesn't come to pass, I suggest to you that, no matter our beliefs, our philosophy, or our spirituality, if rediscovering all the things that make us good and subsequently happy—all of the intrinsic and beautiful qualities of our true nature that contribute to our own well-being and that of the community—than isn't that time well spent? Sartre tells us that, "when we say that man is responsible for himself, we do not mean that he is responsible only for his own individuality, but that he is responsible for all men".⁸ Perhaps it is enough to be happy and good in our lifetime on

⁶ Ghose, A. (1939-40). *The Life Divine*. As quoted in Krinsky, S. (2012). *Readings in Sri Aurobindo's The Life Divine*, Volume 1. Oakland, CA: Lotus Press.

⁷ Teilhard de Chardin, P. (1955). *The Phenomenon of Man*. New York: Harper Perennial, p.277.

⁸ Sartre, J. P. (1989). Existentialism is a Humanism. From *Existentialism from Dostoyevsky to Sartre*. W. Kaufman (Ed.). New York: Meridian Publishing Company, p. 4.

this earth and to share that passion with others—and let the future resolve itself, as the future is wont to do.

Upcoming essays will provide an overview of what program of *ReChanneling* provides in workshops and seminars. They are intended as a guide to transformation through the *ReChanneling* of our negative behavioral issues into positive and reaffirming aspects of self-fulfillment. With the help of this time-tested psychological, philosophical, and spiritual behavioral modification technique, I believe that we can each relearn to radiate our inner strength and determination, and change any negative behavior into positive self-affirmation. Do we all not strive to be better and happier, and to share this instinctive probity with others—to make a better world for ourselves, our children and those who follow? Do we not want to stop the sadness and destitution that confronts so many of us and so much of humanity on a daily basis?

There are three conditions which must be addressed as we take on the endeavor of transformation through *ReChanneling*. First, we must take full ownership of and responsibility for our condition—the person who we think we are and upon which we want to improve. The second action is the rejuvenation of our innate, positive willpower, which has been so seriously damaged by our maladaptive behavior. And the final condition that must be addressed is that of forgiveness, not only for the persons who influenced our behavior when we were a child, but we must also forgive ourselves. That self-forgiveness addresses transgressions against another *and* self-transgression—for lack of inner fortitude, laxity in virtue, for wallowing in self-pity and self-doubt.

Responsibility. To recap: recovery from immoral and maladaptive behavior is achieved only through unequivocal acceptance of our condition, and our willingness to change. It is recognition of our moral infirmities that motivates us towards transformation. Do you really like

who you are now? Are you truly satisfied with the person you believe you have become? Yes, as a child you were susceptible to the wishes, demands, and beliefs of your caregivers. So thank them for their good works, and forgive them for their failings but not let them hold your spirit forever hostage. While not liable for events beyond our control, we are responsible for how we react and interpret those events. As the cliché goes, while we do not have control over the cards we have been dealt, we *are* responsible for how we play the hand we have been given.

Why is it imperative to not use god as excuse or savior for our condition? Because if we truly believe the power to change is resident within us, then so must be the responsibility for our condition. No matter what humanity purports to believe, it has no viable concept of what constitutes omnipotence, nor the ability to achieve one. We were not created in god's image and likeness. Social Darwinism proves that we created gods in our image and likeness. God is our ego, endowed with all the powers to which we aspire but cannot attain, and of which we do not think we are worthy. The promises given to us by god are mere manifestations of our own desires. It is our belief in god that sustains our hope of immortality. It is no small wonder that the idea of a divinely-linked soul has carried so much cultural weight throughout history; it is wickedly depressing to think that all the emotions and memories, frailties and strengths that constitute our individuality may seem irrelevant. Due to our megalomaniacal assertion of specialness, it is difficult to accept that our species is logically finite. Science allows for the existence of anatomically correct, homo-sapiens for two-hundred-thousand years, while the complex symbolic and creative activity that underscores humanness traces back less than half of that. Dinosaurs endured for one-hundred-and-sixty-five million years! It is estimated that ninety-nine percent of all species that ever lived on our planet have been consumed by nature. It is obvious that homo-sapiens also has a shelf-life. We persuade ourselves we are created for a

reason, that there must be a grand plan, but suffer in the ignorance of what that plan might be. There has to be a point for our existence, we plead. What is our legacy?

We create gods that look like us because that is the only way that we can even touch on an understanding of that incomprehensible enigmatic. We fear the unknowingness of the unknown, we're terrified of change, and we despise and are bewildered by the extent of our ignorance. We worship gods like us because our narcissism demands we be special, and the reality of our condition and our perceived smallness terrifies us. Gods provide sanctuary for our fears. I'm not entering the pros and cons of the probability of a creational and inconceivable force, a genesis to everything, and it seems apparent that of whatever that inconceivable component consists, like cosmic dust, it ostensibly resides within each and every one of us even though we are incapable of grasping what that incomprehensible component is.

When we personalize what we call god, we trivialize it. It's time to reevaluate our primitive concepts. Our gods are earth gods. In the current known universe there are over one billion trillion stars,⁹ and quantum science suggests other universes as well. How does humanity maintain even a perceived manifest destiny within such a great and formidable reality? Is there significance in our insignificance? The answer is an unequivocal yes. It lives in our innate potential to improve our condition, to expand and evolve, to refine, redefine, and reinstate our virtuous and loving natures, and to share these qualities with others.

Willpower. The second condition for recovery is the rekindling of the tenacious vitality of positive willpower—the strength and depth of our inner determination. Whether willpower is used to establish and maintain a system of maladaptive behavior or one of positive growth is entirely up to the individual. All of us have vast reserves of willpower; it's like a muscle—the

⁹ The Gaia spacecraft is currently pinpointing the positions of approximately one billion stars in the Milky Way alone.

more we use it, the stronger it becomes. Yielding to temptation is not being unwillingly overpowered; it's a lapse of the courage and conviction to do what is right. We choose what to choose, and a poorly chosen option that leads to pain and suffering reveals its wrongness in psycho-physiological complications that have the power to harm every fiber of our being, and those of others with whom we are inextricably intertwined. It is through the power of our will that we learn to embrace change rather than fear it. Recovery demands change. *ReChanneling* is change. Transformation is change. And even if our initial choices may be imperfect, our good intentions provide foundation for recovery. The road to hell is not paved by good intentions but by inaction; without intent there is no deliberate action, without action there is no progress. Every decision we make is determined by who we think we are, and what we can and should become is determined by what we believe we can become. Willpower allows us to attempt new ideas, to risk taking that first step towards transformation. The ability to direct our thinking as we choose is provided by the power of our will.

Forgiveness. We cannot hope to function as fully conscientious beings without absolving our own transgressions as well of those of others whose behavior contributed to our moral dereliction. This forgiveness, which underscores the attributes of compassion, love, and tolerance is indispensable to the revival of our inherent goodness. The ability to forgive is essential for transformation so that we can unencumber ourselves of the unresolved antagonisms of resentment, bias, and intolerance which eat away at our very souls. Forgiveness requires opening our hearts—letting go of our stale and stagnant identities, expectations, and beliefs; it opens us to new possibilities. Forgiveness is essential, even for those acts deemed unforgiveable, because dwelling on past transgressions overwhelms our capacity to transform. When we keep these feelings inside us we remain broken; forgiveness is the catalyst to the healing of this brokenness.

It is important to recognize that forgiveness is not an act of condoning the behavior of those who have harmed us, or our subsequent actions. Even though such conduct may seem perceptually indefensible, forgiving them cleanses our soul of anger and resentment. We forgive in order to promote change within our self. Forgiveness is the disposition of the bitterness and anger that permeates our mind, body, and spirit, freeing up space for things beneficial to our transformation.

The act of self-forgiveness is even more demanding because we treat our own inadequacies with even more rigor. Self-forgiving is the letting go of our guilt and the abandonment of the things that fill us with so much negativity, we leave little room for possibility. Our psyches are splintered by the internal clash between the self that wants to change and the self that impedes and obstructs. Self-forgiveness begins when we reach the conclusion that our disconnectedness, brought on by our inability to confront our inner-demons, becomes so fundamentally discomfoting that resolution is essential for emotional survival.

Future essays will address tried-and-true, cross-cultural methods that facilitate the *ReChanneling* of negative behavior into rewarding and positive thoughts and actions that lend themselves to the reacquisition of our authenticity. I realize we have already covered a lot of territory, a lot of seemingly divergent themes. I guarantee you it all comes together, intersects beautifully, as we continue down this path together. Life is short but it can be phenomenal, as we are all endowed with the profound ability to lift the human spirit.