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Processes of the Mind

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The world is so full of push-button devices, that the youth of today can hardly realize an age when there was no button to push; an era when there were no electric lights, no trucks or motor busses; no telephones or radios; none of the many conveniences which we now consider indispensable to our very existence. This easy life has lead a great majority of us into a way of easy thinking. We push the button of our minds just as we would push the button of the reading lamp at our bedside and we confidently expect the mind to answer the summons without further effort on our part.

The ability to think wanes with disuse. Even a trained mind needs exercise. We take so much for granted that we have allowed our power of observation and analysis to lie dormant and unless we push some button, preferably the button of intelligence, we are in danger of becoming as mechanistic as the age which has produced us—or shall I say, as the age which we have produced? There is matter for thought in that phrase—Are we the result of our environment? Do we control the devices which make life for us an easy round of enjoyment,—devices which should be our servants? Do they not rather control us? Think for a moment along these lines.

What would we do without our daily paper and its reams of printed matter? The actual knowledge or information which we garner from most daily papers could be condensed into a column or two. Yet we read assiduously even the advertisements of bargains for which we have no possible use. Why do we spend our energy in doing this? Habit, the habit of the age. It must have gotten hold of us or we would not do it. It consumes time, and yet we are forever excusing lapses of duties on the plea that we have no time in which to do the things we should do. With clock-like precision we divide our day into definite duties. Our entire scheme of living is so rigidly dependent upon a time-table, that we fall helplessly into a routine which becomes so definitely a part of ourselves that we do not have the strength or the courage to break away from it. This has its influence on our method of thinking. If, for any reason, our schedule of thought diverges from the time-table we have adopted then something goes wrong,—there may even be an accident along the lines.

Some of us think only in one direction. Ours is a one track system and often a narrow-gauge track at that. We may attain some degree of dexterity along the particular road we have to travel. Like a good salesman who knows his territory, we know just what confronts us and just where we are to stop over for the night and what town to visit in the morning. Let our minds but be shunted onto another track and we become confused, often hopelessly lost.

Now why should those of us who have intelligence become mere automatons? Why should we feel so utterly inadequate when the mind is asked to travel along unfamiliar roads? Why should we flounder in a mire of bewilderment whenever a fact is presented to our minds from an unaccustomed angle? It is because we have never really learned how to think.

Thinking is a precious gift but, like all precious things, if it is safely locked in a vault, never used, never brought to light, of what use can it be? Like plants, it thrives in the light.

I believe firmly that the large majority of people whom we designate as ordinary, really have, back of their placid self-content, a mind that is worthy of development. I believe that in most cases it is mental laziness which keeps them in a narrow rut where the body is sheltered and comfortably immune from even ordinary hardships. If we reason at all with ourselves we say, "Our mind does not have to work—let some one else's mind work for us, why should we bother."

Thinking is a process. Like all processes it must be set in motion. If the mechanism of the process is at fault, our objective is not attained. We call in an expert who examines the machinery and tells us what is wrong.

If we repair or replace the deficient parts, we can resume our journey of thought, the machinery runs smoothly and our product becomes satisfactory, —sometimes even more than satisfactory. So it is with the process of thought. Often we cannot even find the lever which starts the machinery of thought and unless we start we cannot expect to produce anything, or to arrive anywhere.

The starting lever in the process of thinking varies with the objective of our train of thought. Is it philosophy; is it religion; is it ethics; is it professional? What is it we are after? We do not go to the station and haphazardly take any train that happens to present itself. We must know our destination and we must have our ticket and that ticket must be shown when asked for. In our efforts at thinking, how many of us have a ticket? How many of us know where we are going or when we have arrived? So the lever which starts our mind on its journey must be the destination at which we are to arrive. Often we have difficulty in starting the train. The engine may lack lubrication; the steam pressure may not be sufficient for the load we have to pull; we may want to start on too steep a grade. All these things we must consider in beginning our voyage of thought. A skilled engineer has less difficulty than a novice. Repeated experiences have taught him to start in the right way. But, be it remembered, he too, at one time, was a novice; he, too, had to begin.

To begin thinking we must first and foremost have the desire to think. No one can expect to do even reasonable thinking who does not care to think. You may say to me, "What is the use of thinking when so many greater minds have thought for us and have set down in print for us to read and to profit by, the results of their thinking". Yes, that is true. In all directions capable brains have been busy exploring the vast and unfamiliar recesses of the universe. According to their ability they have marshalled all the facts, have set in order all the known results and have drawn their conclusions. If we had accepted blindly all thought-results of every earnest and honest investigator, we might still be in the dark ages. It is only by challenging the results previously obtained that we can progress. In whatsoever field of investigation you may mention there has been controversy. Logical progress has been attained only at the expense of constant questioning. Often this questioning has been followed by the most drastic reaction and the entire edifice, carefully built up by one school, has been ruthlessly pulled down by another. It does not matter what may be presented to you in written form, however earnestly and carefully it has been prepared, you should never accept anything without using the processes of your own mind, in an endeavor to clearly understand, *before* giving your

approval. Only constant vigilance in the realm of logical investigation can equip us, in a reasonably safe way, for these pit-falls of false reasoning with which the world is crowded and always will be. Some of this illogical thinking is the result of narrowness and incompetence; much of it, the result of utter ignorance and false assumption. Against such dangers our own minds must guard us. We dare not accept blindly what is given to us. We must weigh and ponder. Thus it would seem that whether we would or not, we must use our own brains; even though others have done work for us, we must check that work. Not only must we do this in order that we may know whether we shall accept what has been given to us, but we must do it so that our mind may find occupation and may, through generous application, develop into a full-fledged servant. For the mind is a servant and not to use this servant is wasteful. You would not keep a servant about you and find no employment for him. It would seem a preposterous wrong and that servant, if he be an honest one, would rebel at such treatment. Just so does the mind rebel. Many are the evil consequences following the wilfull disuse of the mind. Every argument points toward the same conclusion. *We must use our minds.*

I have said that we must have both desire and objective in our process of thinking. How do we develop these; what is their origin? Anything that stimulates us creates within us a desire. Desire is the longing to possess. We may not, indeed we do not always desire the right things; and having attained the things we desire we do not always know just what to do with them. A clever writer of advertisements can induce, in a majority of us, a desire for something which our calmer judgment would discard as utterly worthless to our uses. It may actually be useful to some one but it does not in any respect answer any need we may have. Yet, through some emotions, which the clever writer knows how to awaken, we crave a tooth brush for which we have absolutely no use or a fur coat which our climate will never allow us to wear, or a book which we never intend to read. Our attics and store-rooms are witnesses to the cleverness of the advertising writer. So, I say, false desires may be awakened, even base ones—but desire can be awakened in every one. So a desire for thought should also be capable of being awakened. Curiosity is a very important factor in the development of thought. In fact, I am inclined to think that curiosity is the prime factor in all mental processes. We become interested through curiosity and since all human minds are intrigued by the unknown, it becomes a potent element. But it is not the only factor. Mere curiosity will not carry us much farther than the threshold of thought. That step is all important, but what is the use of opening the door and not entering

upon an unfamiliar domain. Merely to become aware of the source of sound cannot complete our investigation of the causes, the meanings, the effects of that sound. These must each, in turn, be investigated. Our idle curiosity develops into a conscious and earnest desire to penetrate more deeply into the inner meaning of things. That is where our objective begins.

Well ordered, well trained thought is a source of pure delight. Just as a voyager sets his sail to discover unknown countries, so we may set sail for an objective which we surmise to exist but of which we cannot definitely possess ourselves. Think of the intense joy of those ancient discoverers. Think of the courage, the devotion and the adventures. Think of Columbus as he stood by his mast, unafraid, undisturbed, eager and certain that before him lay the land of his desire. On all sides were doubts and threats. On every hand the struggle to persevere. But towards all threats, to all disparaging arguments, he had but one answer. Looking westward, he rose to his full height and with outstretched arm he pointed before him, earnestly and forcefully, saying, in deep, impressive voice, "Yonder lies India." It wasn't India! It wasn't the land of his dreams! But it *was* an unknown land and Columbus found it. The thrill of discovery, the ever present expectation of reaching his goal, kept him unswerving in his path, and he won.

So must we enter into the realm of the mind, with the same eagerness that assails the discoverer. There are things out yonder which we have not touched. Let us provision our ship; let us man it with strong hearts and brawny arms; let us take our place at the helm and sail forth into the unknown and, God willing, discover another continent.

Having once conquered this unknown, this vast, lonely space, how eager do we become to adventure further still into unknown harbors, into coral reefs of everlasting delight. Fear is lost, timidity and doubt cast aside and all that we are conscious of is the intense stimulus of creative thinking. There can be no greater joy than this. And it is only in this spirit that thinking can yield a definite result. We, too, may discover an America instead of that India which we had set forth to find and our enjoyment is all the keener because we have come upon the unexpected.

Having, therefore, shown you, as I trust I have, that the lever which starts the train of thought is desire, stimulated by curiosity, and that this desire must be followed by a definite objective, let us ascertain how that objective is formed in our minds and how we may recognize it.

Each one, in the path of life which he has chosen to pursue, has, of a certainty, encountered difficulties which he must surmount or else remain hopelessly behind. When the difficulties seem to become insurmountable,

one of two major things will happen:—he will either abandon that path or he will dig his way around the obstacle he has encountered. Never losing sight of his objective, he keeps constantly in mind the road he has chosen to pursue and in the end rejoins the path which leads him towards his goal. Now the process of digging his way around an obstacle involves this very thing we are talking about. That same voyager whom we have followed in his adventurous career no doubt met adverse winds and currents. Most cautiously to tread his way through dangerous shoals and treacherous reefs before he concluded his journey. Do you suppose that he gave no thought to these risks? Did they deter him? Thoughtful, always, of the safety of his crew and his vessel, upon whom after all, depended the success of his enterprise, he wisely altered his course when danger threatened, thus keeping his vessel in clear waters. So we, who likewise shall meet with problems that will tax our ingenuity, must know how to lead our thoughts around these obstacles, never faltering in our firm belief in the wisdom and appropriateness of the objective which we have chosen. Thus do we train our observation. We must be able to see things from all sides, to account for all contingencies, to prepare for all unexpected and undreamed of emergencies. All this we must do, and more. We have no choice other than the right way of thinking. For there can be no slipshod, half-baked, inconsequential reasoning which, while it may temporarily bridge over a difficulty, will lead us finally to discouragement and despair. Better downright defeat than a compromise, where clear thinking becomes the issue. Defeat may only be temporary. If we insist upon exercising our brains we may learn and even profit through defeat. Compromise is sometimes permissible when it merely defers a conclusion, but it must never, in itself, be a conclusion. To compromise and to pause, in order to gain time, breath, and renewed courage, for further progress, that sort of compromise may be indulged in. But it must not be done too often, for frequency creates habit and habit, especially a weak one, is difficult to overcome.

Thought is built up link by link. Whenever we find a flaw in our building process we must pause to strengthen it. For the weight of the chain, beyond the weakened link, may become too ponderous, causing the entire chain of reasoning to break. Then we must begin anew. Better to look after that weak link while the metal is hot. Better to reshape it, temper it, strengthen it, before we go on with our building. Unwise it is to wilfully or carelessly overlook a flaw which patience and renewed labor may remedy.

The right way of thinking usually brings results,—sometimes sound, sometimes otherwise. But the wrong method usually results in confusion

and chaos. In thinking aright we bring to bear a logical sequence of ideas. One thing leads directly to another. Many links may present themselves as candidates for our chain of thought. We must learn to reject those that have no direct bearing upon our theme. However alluringly these side issues of thought may appear in passing, we must not be misled by them. If they present attractive possibilities for future development, let us take note of them and, for the moment, lay them aside. But we must never allow ourselves to be lured away from that straight and direct course of reasoning which we should follow in order that we may arrive at the conclusions which we have set out to establish.

It is well to begin early in life with this process of thought building. For when the mind is young it is elastic and lends itself to greater strains. It can, with less fatigue, withstand the attacks of relentless and unrelated inquiries. In older age the mind becomes easily bent and we experience greater difficulty in adjusting our thoughts to newer impressions. This is often called obstinacy and obstinacy does not lend itself to liberal thought. It really is not obstinacy; it is merely mental torpor and this is the most difficult sort of resistance to overcome. We should not allow our minds to become implacable. Elasticity of thought is an absolute requisite in order that impressions may directly reach the mind and be quickly assigned to their proper places. The brain is like a great filing system. If we keep this system in reasonable order we can, from the tabulated files of memory, select the very thought we want, after which the mind will go on functioning evenly and effectively. If the mind is inelastic and cannot, at the proper time, seize upon the particular memoranda of which it is in need, the sequence is lost and we flounder in our thinking. That is what is meant by the necessity for concentration. We must become keenly alive to every possible suggestion. Thus we are so keyed up to the thought we need that the slightest suggestion is caught and used, if there is any possibility of doing so. In concentration all the sensitiveness of our machinery of thought is brought to a test. Let us assume that we are suddenly and unexpectedly asked a question. We must instantly call to our aid the servants of the mind in order that we may answer the demands made upon us. Usually we say, "Let us think a moment". That requires concentration. We must not only unlock the desk and open up the files but we must know which particular file contains the information we are seeking. In all offices of life, the ability to concentrate becomes an important element in our success. How do we train the mind in this respect?

Generally it can be done without assistance from the outside. We have quite simply to recall some random phrase, some locality, some half-

forgotten incident of the past and ask ourselves a question relative to it. By repeating this process we learn, after a while, the shortest route to the answer. Persistence is required; we must continue our efforts despite the fact that, at first, we seem to arrive at no result. Often the answer we seek eludes us, baffles us and we may never settle the particular question which has presented itself, yet the ineffectual effort we have made will prove to have been of greatest benefit. This is a sort of setting-up exercise and by taking this exercise routinely we train the mind to greater assurance and to increased speed. We find, after a while, that the mind *will* reply. Almost all cases of failure to improve the power of concentration can be attributed to mental torpidity. The real, earnest desire to accomplish a purpose must have been lacking.

We must always take into account that frequent stumbling block, dearth of background. Where there is nothing upon which to build, all the concentration in the world will not create a building. If nothing is there, nothing will come forth. Background is the scaffolding used in building thought.

Background is of two kinds, inherited and acquired. The inherited background may be exceedingly fine but disuse will cause it to sink into dull, unresponsive, sluggish inertia. Nothing seems capable of moving it and we might have inherited nothing. Acquired background, we achieve through our own efforts. The quality of the background that is achieved is not always as fine as that which we have inherited and of which we make proper use. That sort of background produces the finest results in all-around thinking. The mind is alert, ready at a moment's notice to grasp significant thought, to place that thought where it belongs and to make use of it. This is the strength which has been given us by way of inherited experience and those who have this kind of background work under a greater advantage than those who have it not.

It does not follow, however, that acquired background is not to be sought after. Indeed, if we are to think at all we must possess ourselves of some sort of background—inherited, acquired or even borrowed. Borrowed background is like a debt we owe and cannot repay—it grows more and more burdensome and unmanageable. But acquired background is a fine asset to possess and the majority of human beings can acquire background. What do I mean by background? It is the store house of knowledge and is acquired through persistent and intelligent observation. Its ramifications are endless. Should we acquire background only in one given direction we may become experts in that particular field of thought but

we also become narrow in our range of thought and a narrow mind can see only one side of a question. There are invariably two sides to all questions and sometimes more than two. Without a broad background we are not able to burden our minds with more than one side of an issue and often we are uncertain as to which side of a question we are thinking upon. Therefore it behooves us to cultivate background even though we have not been born with one. Background really means culture and if we wish to ally ourselves with the better things in life we must cast our lot on a higher plane. We must make a choice of what path we are to follow. A path which leads upwards gives us a greater horizon, a broader field and a more universal outlook, an unlimited vision. Later, we will examine this question of vision more closely. Who, in his right mind, would not prefer such a view? A downward path leads to limited vision, to distortion, to narrowness, to depression and to dissatisfaction.

Therefore, in our choice of the paths of thought which we are to pursue, we should, if we would meet the responsibilities which our intelligence imposes upon us, seek the open, the ascending, the more difficult path. We must remember always, in making our choice, that it is more difficult and takes longer to ascend than to descend. But once having reached the heights, our recompense becomes immeasurable.

Therefore, given the premises that we will cultivate our thoughts, that we will direct them towards finer things, what is it that we must strive to do? What frame of mind must we maintain? A frame of mind, be it understood, is a condition of receptivity, an attitude of welcome, a constant desire for further awakening and improvement. The frame of mind makes it possible to search for finer things. This, first of all, means constructive thinking, logically built up. To build up anything requires forethought. The process is usually slow in the beginning. It is like all building, a methodical process. We must think fundamentally. If our foundation is built on bed rock, our wall will stand. It may not be a beautiful wall, but it will stand the strain and will answer the purpose for which it has been built. Sound, constructive reasoning enables us to sustain thought. Unsustained thought becomes futile and ineffective. It leads only to confusion and despair.

Constructive thinking not only increases the capacity of our minds, but it increases that joy in achievement which comes occasionally to many who have conscientiously undertaken a task and brought it to a satisfactory conclusion. The satisfaction we obtain from pure mental joy is more lasting, more profound, more stimulating than that obtained from mere material experiences. This is the greatest recompense that can come to us. Clear,

constructive sequences of thought offer us the same possibility for enjoyment that the art of music brings to many of us. If for no other reason, it should encourage us to train our minds.

Let us assure ourselves that the advantages of training the mind are so great that there can be no question of choice. It depends altogether upon the manner in which we wish to conduct our future lives, along the broad highway of intelligent observation or down in the tangled by-paths of ignorance and self-delusion.

Let us ask ourselves these simple questions—What are we trying to achieve? What ambitions have we? What amount of energy are we willing to give towards the furtherance of this ambition? What plane of thought shall we choose to guide our method of achievement? Have we the will to give ourselves to this approach? Have we the strength of body and character to persevere?

If we can answer all these questions frankly and in the positive direction, then we should be able to make of ourselves strong, right-minded, intelligent citizens, no matter what our field of endeavor shall be. By choosing to use our minds in this manner we inevitably ally ourselves with those forces which work for good towards a nobler and finer purpose in life. Whether we acknowledge it or not, there is an aristocracy of the mind and if we care to count for anything in the upbuilding of our environments we must join ourselves to the ranks of the thinking class. Nor do we need to become exclusive or snobish by doing so.

Many people believe that only the highly educated individuals can become thinkers. That does not follow. What is mostly required is intelligence, for without the power of reasoning we cannot expect to profit through thinking. Idle thought, undirected thought, aimless thought is sometimes an amusement, but seldom, if ever, profitable.

We need amusements. The mind too strictly confined to the business of thought, tires as quickly as the mind too strictly confined to any other business. It behooves us, therefore, in our search for advancement, to devise means and methods of amusement. Amusement is a tonic for the mind just as food is a tonic for the body. Amusement enables us to renew the energy of thought necessary to attack the peculiar problem upon which we have become engaged and to solve it in a more stirring and whole-hearted manner. It is a pause between deep breathing; it tones and refreshes the processes of thought. It is most important that we shall know where to seek our amusements. Haphazard amusements may not induce the rest, the pause which our thinking process exacts.

Amusements have a distinct function in life. They influence us in

our way of thinking. To maintain a higher level of thought we must maintain a higher level of amusement. The more selective we become in the choice of our amusements, the more our mind exacts further selectivity and the joy we thus obtain becomes so great that it creates within us a stimulus as well as an amusement. The amusement thus becomes a recreation, a condition which all of us need. A tired mind, enmeshed in the tangle of continued and complicated thought, requires periodical recreation. The word itself implies the effect that we are seeking, "re-creation"—renewal, feeding, rest, building up and freedom to think in different directions. No man can render fullest service, no matter how brilliantly and efficiently his mind may be functioning, if his thoughts are constantly at highest tension. He must relax; and to find an outlet for his tired nerves he must seek new approaches, new reactions. Trivial things may rest him for a while but the reaction leaves him rather dissatisfied. He feels that his time has been wasted, that he has not only let down his mental barriers but that his very relaxation makes it harder for him to climb back to his normal condition. The problem, therefore, resolves itself into finding some relaxation, which, while occupying the mind in an entirely different direction, should be one that does not lower the morale or the efficiency of his thinking power.

There are so many recreations from which we may choose and which, at every moment of their functioning, stimulate within us a higher endeavor, that it seems unintelligent for us to select those recreations which debase us. It is ever more difficult to rise than to fall and every opportunity given our morale to slide down hill increases the labor of bringing it back to a normal condition. This sounds as though we should deny ourselves the lighter pleasures, the joys to be found in trivial diversions. Not at all. In our recreations, as in all things, we obtain from them very much what we put into them. If we lower our standards in our periods of recreation, we are just by that degree lowering the standards of our whole scheme of life. It all conforms to a curve such as the mathematician plots in his study of progress.

In some form or another the creative mind of the artist is endeavoring to provide recreation for the tired mind. In most professions the question of art seldom enters into consideration. There seems to be a misconception in the mind of most people as to the function of art in our lives. It is mostly a case of gross ignorance. Confronted with facts in which we have never before shown an interest, we become bewildered because we have never been informed.

Music, in a measure at least, we can all understand. Indeed there

is within most of us a greater natural urge towards music than towards any other of the creative arts. True, our normal instinct does not ordinarily select a very high type of music. That does not matter, if we but have the desire to rise above the trivial. We must always bear in mind and take it for granted that we have the ambition to better ourselves. We *do* want to rise above the ordinary. Otherwise this dissertation would have no point.

Given, therefore, the desire to better ourselves, we would, without question, grow to be more critical of the music which we seek as a recreation. If, because it no longer responds to the enquiry of a searching mind, we become tired of it, we may know that we have exhausted its potentialities and must seek for something deeper, finer, nobler, to satisfy the cravings of our mind. When this does not happen, music ceases to be a recreation and becomes a habit and, so far as its aesthetic reaction is concerned, might just as well have been the most ordinary rhythmic sound.

Even should we choose baseball as a recreation, and there might be much worse choices than that, we would not always be satisfied with the rattle-trap performance of an alley team. The mere fact that it really afforded us recreation would stimulate within us the desire for the best that there is in baseball and we would seek it. So in music, we could not continue to be satisfied with the mediocre; we would constantly grow with our increasing and more intimate association with it. So long as it really continued to be a recreation and not merely an amusement, we would not pause until this very recreation had stimulated us to a high degree, thus refreshing our nerves, our minds and our spirits. Music is within the reach of all. It is true that we can be trained in the deeper appreciation of music just as we may be trained in any appreciation. But there is a larger possibility for enjoyment in good music than in the expression of any of the creative arts. It is not necessary to be a skilled musician in order to obtain from it, in a marked degree, just that sense of change, of rest, of diversion and of stimulus which a brain-fagged condition requires. The taste for music grows. We crave it as we do food. It is food for the mind, and food for the mind is just as necessary as food for the body. Let us search always for the thing which gives us peace and forgetfulness. The more it draws our minds away from the petty struggles which have occupied us in the routine of our daily lives, the better it becomes for us.

Good drama is another means of recreation. Unfortunately, with the advent of the spoken picture, much, that was formerly given to us on the legitimate stage, has become less vital. Young people especially are stimulated in the wrong direction. In a tired condition, the mind is more

easily led astray in its pleasures than under any other circumstance. If, therefore, the mind is directed by means of the drama into a questionable path, the reaction cannot be stimulating, it may even become debasing. In the case of music this reaction may likewise occur, but where sound is concerned the mind must build up its own images. In the drama, however, the image is presented to the eye and the mind responds more easily to graphic as well as audible suggestion. Therefore we should select with care the kind of drama we choose to witness, the suggestion being more direct and the reaction going deeper. Who can measure the limits of reaction?

Good drama is most excellent as a rest for the tired mind. Good drama will envelop us, as it were, in an emotional mantle which will cause us to forget ourselves as we are drawn towards and into the characters presented. It may do more than that—it may solve problems for us over which we have worried for many an hour. It will solve them, if the drama is good, in a manner that should not depress us or leave us mentally bankrupt. The mere spectacular stage representation is a splendid source of rest. There is not only the enjoyment of music and color, but usually the added pleasure of gracious rhythmic movement. Just as a mother rocks and sings her child to rest, so a good spectacular performance soothes and rests the tired mind, and, like children, we drift away from worry and unrest and give ourselves to pure enjoyment. Such emotions are necessary and we should seek them. A mind that is working in a rut becomes callous, the delicacy necessary to sound reasoning becomes dulled and we are in danger of thinking unconstructively.

Almost any hobby that we pursue with fine enjoyment gives us the mental rest which all thinking minds require.

Some people enjoy book collecting, others stamp collecting. These hobbies are fine, in their way, if we do not allow them to become an obsession. An obsession is just as likely to fatigue our minds as our legitimate line of thought. It occupies the mind too exclusively, it fences it in, it does not permit the mind to take excursions into side paths of pure delight, nor does it in any way stimulate imagination and imagination is one of the most desirable traits that can be sought for. In any field of thought, whether strictly professional or otherwise, lack of imagination is disastrous. No vision can be formed without imagination. Imagination evokes vision and vision is the one sign post that guides us towards our chosen goal. Unless we are subnormal, we must, to some extent at least, have within us the power of imagination. The lock may be rusty and we may have some difficulty in turning the key in the lock. Or the key may have been

mislaidd and we must either fit a new one or force the door, to obtain entrance. Most of us are unwilling to make the physical effort needed to obtain this entrance and in self-defence we proclaim that we have no imagination, thinking thus to free ourselves from further responsibility. We may be lacking in imagination, but very few of us are utterly devoid of it. If it is locked up, dormant, even as a person might be who is confined in a closed room, then we must find ways to awaken it.

One of the best means to stimulate imagination is to indulge in day dreams. Let any incident, however trivial and unimportant, attract us; let us try immediately to associate it with some incident remote or present, in our own lives and then let fancy weave an analogy between the two, never mind how fantastic this connection may seem. Gradually an image will form; imagination has been awakened and is struggling to emerge. The door will be unlocked. Like all exercises that are systematically enjoyed, the exercise of the imagination should not be allowed to default. Steady effort in a given direction results in better image than superintensive and sporadic application can produce. So, having unlocked the doors of your imagination, do not allow them to close again. It will become easier with every vision that is formed. Music, humanity, nature, poetry and what not, will give the impulse necessary and a vision will form almost without an effort. We all know how easily we are led to "see" things in cloud forms. That does not require a conscious effort. Some of us seek it eagerly, others are too bored to lose themselves in the joy of it, too satisfied with more material things. Thus a source of pleasure and recreation is denied them which might ordinarily help them to the more thorough enjoyment of their material pleasures.

These processes of the mind, which we have been following, are the very essence of higher living. Those of us who in any way whatsoever have close contacts with human beings, must take heed, must meet more than half way the opportunities presented by an open mind. Open-mindedness is one of the finest qualities we can possess. It enables us to cast aside prejudice. Nothing can be narrower than prejudice. All human beings have their limitations. Some of these limitations we are born with and some of them we ignorantly impose upon ourselves. The very best and wisest have such limitations. The open mind, recognizing these traits in fellow beings, takes them into consideration and does not pre-judge. Hidden away in a dark, forgotten cranny of the mind there may lie an unlooked for limitation which may alter our entire conclusions concerning our fellow men. Prejudice does not see these facts but condemns without reason. The open mind holds up these weaknesses to the light and if they are to be condemned

they have at least been carefully considered, justly weighed. There has been no one sided judgment.

Let us, therefore, if my premises are correct, retain an open mind, a mind free from preconceived judgements; minds that are alert, broad, sensitive, frank; minds that have been kept sweet and honest through joyful recreation.

Thinking thus and acting in accord with these thoughts we cannot fail to give our chosen work the very best that lies in us. Only by so doing can we hope to retain our self-respect and become useful to others; only thus shall those who know us retain their faith in us.

January 23rd, 1932.