

Newsletter 13: Adaptation, Conformity, Conditioning



January 2017

Dear friend of exact self-knowledge

Unfortunately self-knowledge at the beginning usually brings out unpleasant things for a long time. It is no coincidence that we humans tend to repress much of what we are, and how we behave and think, and even to hide it from ourselves. There is a lot about us that is not very noble at first. It is understandable that we then like to think that we are different, that we prefer to fool ourselves. Often only after a long process does the beauty of our being emerge and for many who embark on this journey, there is no guarantee that they will ever find their way out of the swamp of human misery into the inner beauty of this essence of being. It therefore takes a great passion for the beauty of the process of self-knowledge per se and a comprehensive perseverance to get to the bottom of the truth. It takes a passionate love for truth to fathom it all.

But finally, if you can mobilise within you this passion and love for truth and an unwavering perseverance towards self-observation, after many setbacks, after much failure, after much frustration, you will reach a critical point where everything changes, after which everything will become easy and truly a joy. For some it will take longer, for others less, but at some point, at least when you are gifted, the human form will fall away from you, as the warriors call this transition.

On the path of self-observation, you gradually and increasingly realise that the key to inner peace is linked to this reacting or not reacting to external and internal challenges. You begin to realise that you constantly split into an observer and an observed, and that this observer rarely agrees with 'what is' and instead always wants everything to be different, continually reacting to everything with rejection or consent. If one day you succeed through insight and increased awareness in silencing this inner commentator that so often becomes entangled in external actions, and succeed in finding an inner calm that accompanies out of compassion of stillness everything happening internally and externally, the human form will one day definitively fall away from you and you will find a home of joyful peace in your relationships beyond that of reaction and counter-reaction. The observer and the observed collapse within you when this human form is lost, or rather the observer ends in you. You no longer respond to every inner or outer challenge, but instead become one with it and let the challenge itself become active within you and find its right action. In this way the mind becomes completely independent of all challenges.

Now one could think that not reacting to anything either positive or negative, letting yourself become a vegetable, would lead you into total adaptation and conformity.

The opposite is the case. Being able to look out of inner stillness empowers you to see unclouded the reality of everything. Nobody can fool you. You see through everything, see it as it is. Because you are no longer forced to react with anger, despair or self-pity, the intelligence of stillness is able to directly deal with the challenge. The challenge itself can become active within you in this stillness and find a solution. You, or rather the stillness within you, are now in direct contact with everything and know how to deal intelligently with everything. It is precisely this action from out of stillness, from the inner centre, that breaks through the wall of adaptation, the facade of the human form in which most people have become entangled.

But before you can discover this inner place, you will probably need to travel a long way along the path of self-exploration. Not that it would take time. On the contrary, once you arrive, you will realise that this state of enlightenment was always immediately accessible. But we humans usually act stupidly. It takes a lot until we can grasp this simplest of the simple and surrender to it. Many different feelings need to be integrated; it is not easy to withdraw all reaction in the face of a challenge and to remain in stillness. It takes a lot of energy. Energy that you gradually build up through your perseverance in the process of self-knowledge.

The many feelings that want to arise in you as a reaction to every inner and outer challenge of life, their layering and endless differentiation that you get to understand by refining your perception and attention, all of this we want to discuss in the coming newsletters.

At first, this narrow inner space of feelings, which excludes and veils us from the real space, from the unlimited space of freedom, appears bewildering, endlessly confusing and chaotic. Only with time, or rather through close observation, does the simple order of these restricting ego states become apparent and through their recognition they begin to lose their power over you.

The first thing that you usually encounter when you set out on the path of self-knowledge is perhaps not an actual feeling, but instead precisely the adaptation of the human form in which the average person has lost himself. It is not actually a state of feeling, but rather the totality of our defence against inner proprioception regarding thoughts and feelings – a bulwark against honest, authentic realness and corresponding relatedness – our amassed resistance against the majority of feelings, which the agreement to conform among people has excluded from our inner repertoire.

This inner breakout from conformity will initially activate all the feelings that you will later need to integrate in inner stillness and retract as unnecessary reactions. You break through the wall of conformity into which you were forced by education, outside influence and shared living. This mainly happens internally, but often, because you do not see it better yet, there is unfortunately also a reaction externally. The path that leads you to being completely devoid of reaction, of which you still have no idea at this point, begins initially with regaining your authentic capacity to react.

Not that conforming is free of reaction. It is strictly maintained and determined by a set of constant inner reactions and ever-the-same rotating wheels of thought. But these reactions are consistently directed against all authentic feelings that want to arise in you and keep them held down and in a state of repression. The newly awakening capability within you to react, however, breaks through precisely this inner frozen layer and frees you for an already slightly larger space of inner freedom.

Self-knowledge is the path. There is no other path that leads to freedom. Yet self-knowledge is also a prison. In just the same way as with conformity, the uninterrupted, accurate, precise self-observation initially strengthens the imprisonment in yourself, in your ego. However, this is not important at the beginning of the process. You won't even notice. Only when you have become so refined in your perception that the loss of human form is within reach, will you realise this. And it is precisely this loss of human form that will lead to this self-centredness of self-knowledge also falling away from you; or rather the process of self-knowledge will lead into a process of meditation, in which the inner stillness that you have found, from now on moves endlessly within the stillness of the Whole. As soon as inner stillness is found and the structure of the ego – the human form, the adapted thought structures of social conformity within you – begins to evaporate, self-knowledge will cease to be an interesting process that has its own beauty, but which also captures you in a narrow space of human imperfection and unpleasantness. Only then does it become a process of freedom in which looking inward and

outward is a single, undivided event that reveals, from moment to moment, insight and the wonders of the unity of the essence of being.

But there is still a long way to go, if you are actually at the beginning of the process and not a genius who is catapulted into the freedom of meditation by a single glimpse of recognition.

What do warriors actually understand by this mysterious term when they speak of the human form? We tend to use the word conditioning to describe this and mean the whole pressure of adaptation and conformity to which we are exposed by the respective social conditions, by morality, religion and struggle for life. This pressure, which is passed on to us in the form of rules, laws, upbringing, education and training, forms us into an ego, usually preserving in us a structuring that kills all direct vitality in us or rather encases it in a form. The human form. Our self.

Conditioning and formation of an ego may be indispensable in the development into a human being. Even under the best conditions, even in the most ideal society, we would be subject to conditioning, to ego-formation. In itself, this would be unproblematic. It is natural. In a society that would be aware of this and that would have a keen eye for this process, we would be instructed from childhood on not confusing the ego with our being, with our actual nature, and instead learn to give it its rightful place as a useful instrument and handle it carefully as with a dangerous tool, fully aware of the danger of its degeneration. We would learn to switch light-footedly between the ego function and our essence, that is, between thinking and the free energy of perception, according to what is required of us in each case.

What makes the conditioning towards a separated ego-conformity so difficult, is the fact that a rotten, depraved society – as we have created it – not only forces us ultimately to the one-sided understanding of ourselves as a separated ego identity, but also additionally blights us from an early age by leading us into competition, envy and possessiveness – and in this context to the suppression of most natural impulses. It forces us into a conforming that serves the power structures within society. It does not want us to be free, authentic human beings, but rather functioning robots for its war, economic and pleasure machinery. It does not want us as independent individuals, but as consumers who depend on it.

Therefore, if we are interested in self-knowledge, then the breaking open of this conditioning must come first, the breaking out from adaptation and conformity, the breaking out from the prison of the ego structure forced upon us – the human form. Freedom must come first.

Behind this wall hides all the confusion of feelings: first the defensive feelings and then the rejected feelings, which are initially still childlike and perverted through their oppression. To liberate, understand and finally overcome them is the path of self-knowledge. We must be given the freedom to do so from the outset. This will occupy us in the next newsletters.

The freedom that is additionally brought by exact self-knowledge is the supreme sensitivity and thus the supreme intelligence in which the good can blossom.

May you know yourself, dear friend

Samuel Widmer Nicolet