



Neither Foes nor Loving Friends

A Guide to Identifying the Causes of a Major Area of
Personal Stress



Eric Townsend

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**A Guide To Identifying The Causes Of A Major
Area Of Personal Stress**

by

Eric Townsend

One of the *Get Ready for Life* series
Series Editor—Eric Townsend

*“If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you
If all men count with you but none too much”*
from “If” by Rudyard Kipling

This book is one of the “Free Zone—FriScientology” books that were published after the early 1980s turbulent period when many Scientology members were either excommunicated (declared suppressive) or left the official Scientology body voluntarily. Therefore, it does not have the approval of Scientology’s official organizations. It is a sign of joyous freedom from an organisation which had become odious. It was a period of a good deal of confusion. Where possible, we have bookmarked these PDF files so that, with a sufficiently large computer screen, you can see the bookmarked items on a list to the left and rapidly move from one to another. This item was at one point downloaded from Antology.info.

This book was published and copyrighted in 1987 by Erik Townsend (which is a pseudonym).

It has its background in Scientology data with regard to what they called Suppressive Persons and Potential Trouble Sources. In the years around 1983, there had been a great deal of confusion within the Church of Scientology, and a large number of people had either left voluntarily or been thrown out (often by being ‘declared suppressive’). It was issued as a paperback printed book. The original PDF edition was placed for public use (free download) on the Antology.info internet site in 2022; this new version was typeset and proofread by Louise May in 2024 and placed for free download on Antology.info.

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Many people have contributed to a greater understanding of the subject dealt with in this book. Without their insight, courage, and wisdom, this book would not have been possible. This work makes no claim to be original but hopes to continue the work they started.

Eric Townsend

August 1987

Also available in the *Get Ready for Life* series:

How to Get More out of Life

How to Have More Time

How to Have More Money

How to Communicate Better

Introduction

This booklet is one of a series that aims to help you get on better terms with life. That means you being more aware of what causes you and other people to behave in certain ways. Once you can recognise what is going on around you, you can be more in control. This reduces the biggest single cause of personal stress, which is not feeling in control of what is happening to you.

The principles outlined in this booklet are not based on any religious or moralistic belief system. They are the fruit of observation of how we and those around us live our lives. You are not asked to take anything on trust. Certain ideas are presented to you, which you should compare with what you have experienced in your own life and what you have observed of the way others live their lives. You can then judge whether you think these ideas are true or not.

At the end of each chapter, you will find a section that asks you to answer certain questions based on your own experiences and observations. These questions are designed to help you assess the principles outlined in the booklet and relate them to your own life.

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Chapter One:

Ups and Downs

On some days, we wake up feeling bright and glad to be alive. It helps if the sun is shining, but it is not an essential requirement.

Sometimes, there is an obvious reason. When we were children, it was birthdays or Christmas. As adults, it is more likely to be the start of a holiday or a day we are going to meet an old friend. Other times, however, there seems to be no particular reason that we can identify.

Then, there may be days when we wake up feeling the reverse. Everything seems black and gloomy, and we want to go back to the oblivion of sleep. The only difference here is that we seem to be able to come up with a reason for the bad feeling much more easily than for the good feeling.

Whichever way the feeling is, most of us get up and carry on with the day as usual. As a result, the first feeling of the day, good or bad, usually wears off within a few hours.

There are some people, however, for whom the weight of the bad feeling is too heavy for them to shake off. These people carry it with them through the day and inflict its consequences on those around them. Can you think of someone who does that?

We often say these people are 'moody' because they cannot control the moods that afflict them. The weight of their mood is such that they cannot throw it off. It dominates them,

sometimes for several days at a time. They show this by being ratty, unreasonable, morose, touchy, pessimistic, or all of these things.

We would say that people in this state were difficult to live with or to work with. The main problem is their changeability! If they were like that all the time, we would learn to either accept them like that or find a way to avoid dealing with them. You may find some people who are moody all the time, but many people who are afflicted by moods are also very charming and often talented. Most of the time, they are positive, confident, and competent, but when they have one of their moods, then they decline quite suddenly into a shadow of their former selves.

Another term that is used to describe people like this is “depressed”. A person will often say they feel depressed, and those around them will usually nod their heads understandingly. We accept the word readily, but nobody actually stops to ask what it means.

If you have been able to bring to mind someone who fits the description given so far, here is another characteristic you may recognise. They get minor illnesses quite regularly. The type of illness they get is rarely severe, usually headaches, colds, upset stomachs, backache, skin conditions, insomnia, sinusitis, etc. Often, the same condition keeps coming back. When they go to the doctor, the usual diagnosis will be a ‘stress-related condition’, and rest or tranquilisers will be the usual prescription.

Sometimes, a person who is subject to these depressed moods can put on a good ‘social front’, particularly at work. In these cases, all you see is the bluff, jolly exterior, but the telltale sign is a regular pattern of illness.

I don't want you to think I am saying it is not normal for things to get us down. We all experience circumstances where a number of things go wrong, and we get disheartened. But within a few hours or days, we are back in there pitching. We quickly sort out who or what is wrong and start to do something about it.

The difference is that when a black mood hits one of the people we are talking about, they feel there is nothing they can identify that is wrong, or they feel their problems are so many or so general that they can't fight back. They become listless and unable to do anything well. They make silly mistakes, forget things, are inexplicably clumsy, and lose things. This reduces still further their ability to do anything effective to change things.

When they are down, some snarl and blame everybody else in sight, others decline into tears, and yet others draw into themselves in brooding silence. To seek escape, some increase their intake of alcohol, tobacco, coffee, food, or sweets. Some sleep too much, while others have to drug themselves to sleep at all.

At the end of this chapter, you will be asked to find people who, in your experience, fit this description. To help you, here are two examples.

One is a business executive who recently started in a new job. He describes his situation as follows:

"I started with enormous energy and enthusiasm, but after a couple of months, I got very depressed and mildly ill. This included sweating, feeling weak, a running nose, and catarrh. I didn't want to have any time off work, but I went to the doctor. All he said was I must have been working too hard. He told me to rest and gave me a tonic. About a week later, I made a sudden recovery and felt fine. But then, a few weeks later, it happened again. Now, I don't bother the doctor about it; I just carry on. I can do my work reasonably well, but I feel I have to fight through a barrier of exhaustion. I usually compensate by spending the weekend in bed."

A young girl describes her difficulties with controlling her weight:

"I can go for a couple of weeks sticking to my diet. I can reach and hold my target weight with no great difficulty. In fact, I don't think about it much because

I am so busy. Then, for no apparent reason, I get depressed, and everything seems pointless. I start to eat things I don't need to cheer myself up. My studies and my other projects all seem too much effort. I don't know where to start, so I just mope about and watch TV or sleep. I feel guilty, of course, and then I eat more. It seems like I'm falling into a deep pit. I climb out eventually, but it scares me because I know it can suddenly happen again."

Must we accept the pattern described in these two examples? Is it inevitable for some people, maybe including ourselves?

The purpose of this booklet is to give one explanation of how it comes about and to indicate what can be done about it.

I do remind you not to take my word for it. Look for yourself and see whether it is true in your experience of life. Don't be too hard on yourself, however. It is very difficult to make fair judgements about yourself from the inside. For this reason, it is best to look at other people before yourself. This is what you are asked to do in the following practical section.

At the end of each chapter in this booklet, you will find a section headed *Practical*. This contains questions, which you are asked to think about and answer.

The purpose of these questions is to get you to look around in your own life to see whether the principles described are in line with your own experience. Later on, you will be asked to work out ways you could apply these principles in your own life to your advantage.

Sometimes, you will be asked for information to use in a later chapter, so write down your answers, preferably in a notebook.

Don't skip over the practical questions and exercises. They will be a great help in assessing what you read in this booklet.

Chapter One Practical

1. Think of people you know or have known who are vigorous and effective and who seem to be in control of their lives. Now, ask yourself if any of them also suffer from occasional moods of depression or recurrent illnesses. Write down the names of up to three of them. We will come back to these names later.

Chapter Two:

The Reasons Why

People who fit the condition we have been describing are often said to suffer from ‘ups and downs’ in their lives. This is quite accurate since if they were down all the time, they couldn’t be said to be ‘depressed’. They have to have an upper condition to be depressed from. People who experience this condition go from being cheerful, confident, and effective to gloomy, ineffective, and apathetic.

The individuals themselves say they feel dull and lethargic. They feel they can’t cope with normal things. Life seems pointless, and when they are in that state, they don’t really care about anything. Above all, they say they feel depressed or low. This leads on to some questions.

First, what state have they been depressed from? Do they consider that their high is their normal state from which they are depressed or lowered? Or do they think the up is a rare and undeserved privilege? Answers will vary, but most will say they consider the natural state for them is to be up.

So, the second question is, what pushed them down? The word *depress* is usually used to suggest that nothing in particular did it. But at their best, these people are hardly likely to be pushed around, nor are they inclined to drift with the tide. Something of considerable force must have ‘depressed’ them. I would prefer to use the more active word *suppressed* since I would consider that there must have been a cause that did it, and the word *suppress* prompts one much more readily to look for a cause.

So, what do the people who suffer from this depression (suppression) attribute it to? You will hear such things as “This recent weather has been getting me down,” or “It’s this three-day ‘flu everybody is getting,” or “I have been overdoing it lately,” or “I’m just run down,” or “I must have a period coming on,” or even “I usually get like this when I visit the north/south/city/country”.

The range of reasons that different individuals suggest are extremely varied and sometimes very unusual. Yet, the condition is very common and easily recognised. The medical explanations offered tend to revolve around ‘nerves, stress, and tiredness’. These, however, are still more a statement of symptoms rather than causes.

What is very rarely suggested is the possibility that the cause is *another person*. Occasionally, someone will mention that their boss has been getting them down, but almost immediately, they will add other reasons that are more socially acceptable for being depressed or ill.

In our society, the idea that one person does anything to affect another to the degree of making them ill is so contrary to our ideas of human rights that we can’t easily confront it.

Chapter Two Practical

2. Write down all the usual and unusual reasons you can remember hearing people give for being depressed, low, or ill.

Chapter Three:

Cause and Effect

You may be sceptical about the idea that depression of a person's natural good state, or suppression as I would prefer to call it, can be caused by another person.

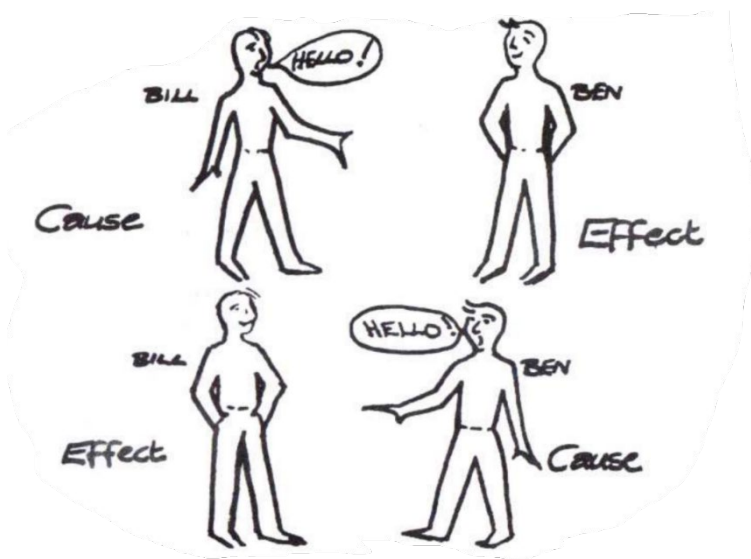
You would agree that a person who has been wrongfully arrested or taken hostage in a bank robbery would be likely to feel suppressed and depressed, particularly if it had gone on for some time. But surely it doesn't apply to normal everyday life? Let us go back to the fundamental basis of our relationship with other people.

There are times when we think we would like to be completely free of other people and go off to a desert island on our own. Yet that feeling wouldn't last long if it came true. Our most fundamental need is to interact with others. That is why the cruellest form of punishment is considered to be solitary confinement.

The key word in looking at human relations is the *inter* in interaction. Strictly speaking, the word means 'between' two or more people or things. It also implies, however, that the action between two people goes two ways. When we meet, you ask me how I am, and after I have replied, I am expected to ask you how you are. The conversation thus flows both ways.

When you ask me a question or make a statement, you are causing communication to be started. You could be described as *cause* because it was your initiative that caused the communication to start. I have not done anything on my side other than respond to your initiative by answering your question or agreeing with your statement. Since I am just responding to your initiative, I could be described as being *effect*.

If I then ask a question or make a statement, I become cause, and you, therefore, become effect. This interchange of roles is illustrated in the diagram below.



The interchange of roles of cause and effect between the participants is expected in conversations. It is also expected in the giving of compliments, presents, invitations, and favours. This is the nature of the harmonious interaction between people that is such a human need.

The principle of interaction between two people is an exchange of being cause and effect. The principle goes a lot wider than conversations. In the sending of letters, if you send one, you can expect to get one back. If you are invited to someone's home, you would be expected to return the invitation. But the exchange doesn't need to be in the same currency. I may need to borrow something from a neighbour but will look for some favour to do for him in return. Failing all else, a sincere thank you will suffice to balance the transaction if there is nothing else I can do.

So, how would suppression fit in? Well, to return to conversation, we are all familiar with the idea of the 'bore'. This may be the ex-military variety sitting in his club or the local gossip standing in wait at her garden gate.

The characteristic they have in common is that they insist on staying at *cause* to tell you all about their particular interest. No matter how you wriggle, they won't let you take the initiative, and they won't let you end the so-called conversation. It is really a monologue from them, with you getting in the occasional nod or grunt.

If they are continuously at cause, that puts you continuously at effect. Can you recall being in that situation? How did you feel? Could you describe it as feeling suppressed?

The reason one feels suppressed in that situation is that one is not permitted to have one's turn at being at cause. One cannot initiate one's own communication nor get away. You may experience a feeling of being trapped, like a milder form of being held as a hostage.

It would be equally wrong of you to expect to be at cause all the time since you would have to put the other person at effect all the time. Suppression could, therefore, be defined as *not being permitted to take one's turn at being cause*.

The principle of being suppressed applies a lot more widely than just conversations. The basic feature of being suppressed, as we just said, is not being permitted to take one's share of being at cause, that is, initiating what one wants to say or do. You should not confuse this with being active and busy. One may be getting a lot done, but if one is running around just carrying out the will of somebody else, one is not at cause but at effect.

To help you get a nice clear picture of what we mean by somebody who is always at effect, think of Cinderella. It is interesting that she is such an internationally known character. She is not only a famous Pantomime character, but there are Italian and French operas about her and a Russian ballet!

Cinderella couldn't do what she wanted. She worked all day doing the bidding of others and received no recognition or even thanks for what she did, nor was she permitted to express her opinions! So much was she at effect that it took a Fairy Godmother to sort it out.

Chapter Three Practical

3. Copy the drawing on page 12 and put it in your own phrases.
4. Note three occasions when someone forced opinions on you and would not let you get away.

Chapter Four:

The Nature of Suppression

The word ‘suppression’ is most readily associated with totalitarian governments suppressing individual rights and freedoms. The most familiar dictionary definition of suppression is “The act of putting down by force or authority.”

This may seem very appropriate for governments suppressing revolutions or even individuals it considers dangerous. We should also examine the idea that one individual can suppress another. The threat of physical violence or restraint is not necessarily a part of suppression at an individual level. While we can recognise physical duress in the tactics of a schoolyard bully, it is, however, not the only way to suppress someone.

If we agree that suppression is one individual not being permitted by another to do what he wants, then there are many ways to achieve this. Much more effective than threats of physical violence is to make the person feel that he is not capable or worthy of doing what he wants to do. Even more effective is to reduce the person to such a state of uncertainty that he doesn't even know what he wants to do. The advantage of this is that the suppressed individual thinks it is his fault, not that of the person who suppresses him.

Let us look at some examples. Tom was a bright school leaver who decided that he was not going to college but would get started on his career. He worked hard on the daunting task of finding a promising job despite everybody telling him the only good jobs went to college graduates.

Eventually, he landed a job as a trainee manager in a shoe retailing chain store. He was as pleased as a dog with two tails and really keen to do his best with this opportunity.

A few months later, Tom is a very different person. He is still quite lively but at times gets dejected and apathetic. He has taken up smoking, he is having difficulty sleeping, and he gets bad headaches from time to time.

When asked about his job, he is not so optimistic.

He says, "It was alright at first, but now I'm pretty fed up with the manager. He's nice enough on the surface and to customers, but he never misses an opportunity to make me feel like an idiot when I make mistakes. The trouble is I am making a lot of silly mistakes at the moment. I feel he is constantly checking up on me and trying to find things wrong to pick me up on."

Tom would like to leave but isn't hopeful of getting another job with prospects that easily. He can't ask for a transfer until he has been in that job for at least a year.

Another example would be Annie, the youngest daughter of an elderly widow. All of Annie's brothers and sisters have married and moved away from the area. She still lives with her mother, who is now a semi-invalid. Annie works hard as a secretary but comes home promptly each evening to prepare the evening meal.

She would like to go out more, but her mother dissuades her with a variety of reasons “for her own good”. These may be the weather, or the danger to women out on their own at night, or danger of road accidents. In fact, Annie’s mother makes a point of telling Annie all about the current newspaper items on these matters.

She puts her warnings in the form of such apparently considerate remarks as “Don't go out tonight dear, the weather is terrible, and the forecast is worse. You know how easily you catch cold! Stay in here in the warm”. Annie now has few friends and rarely goes out in the evenings.

For our third example, let us look at Millie, who works as a clerk in a mail-order company. She is in a small section with one other person. Millie is ambitious and would like a promotion. She does her job well but can see other ways it could be done better if her section was run differently.

Unfortunately, her colleague, Carol, has been there a lot longer and doesn't really want to change. When Millie puts up a new idea, Carol will find a variety of things that might go wrong. Once Millie has answered those, Carol has to fall back on “I think we did try that once before, but I can't remember why it didn't work” or “It might not be company policy”. All these negative responses are, of course, meant to be 'helpful' as she wouldn't want Millie to be seen in a bad light by making changes that didn't work.

The manager of the whole department has many problems with the other larger sections and doesn't care how things are organised as long as he is left alone.

Occasionally, Carol is persuaded to try something new. However, as Millie doesn't enjoy good health, Carol frequently has to cover for her. During these times, the new systems either go wrong or records unaccountably get mislaid. So, before long, they go back to the old ways. No wonder Millie is frustrated and depressed.

What do all of these examples have in common? Well, the suppressed individuals are not permitted to do what would be in their real best interests for them to do. They are being suppressed by somebody else who is getting them to act in their (the suppressor's) interests.

This is most obvious in the case of Annie and her mother. With Tom, his manager sees him as a threat. He would like Tom to be incompetent so that his (the manager's) competence, authority, and ability to run the shop are unquestioned. Carol does not want change that would, she feels, reflect badly on her. She is suppressing Millie to maintain the situation as it was before Millie came.

What makes them different is the method of suppression that each uses. Tom's manager uses criticism and harassment to keep Tom off balance. Annie's mother keeps Annie in a state of fear and insecurity. Carol uses uncooperativeness. She also undermines Millie's confidence and causes her to worry about how it will reflect on her if her ideas fail.

Chapter Four Practical

5. Write down up to three examples you can think of where someone is or was being suppressed by another. You may include examples from history or literature if you wish.
6. Try to spot the particular methods of suppression used in each of the examples you have chosen to answer in 5. above. Note down the method used next to each example.

Chapter Five:

Financial Suppression

One can still come across cases of people being physically suppressed, particularly children and the so-called mentally handicapped. Fortunately, these instances are comparatively rare. We have, however, looked at three examples of suppression that were fully effective but not based on threats of physical abuse or restraint.

Another method of suppression of one individual by another is by means of financial control. A common example of this is a husband who keeps his wife short of money to run the house and look after the children. The husband may withhold money from his wife in order to spend it on himself or on other people, or he might even save it. What he does with it is less important than that he can use withholding it to keep his wife dependent on him. He is using it as a control mechanism.

Here is an interesting way to test if that is what he is actually doing, rather than the problem really being a shortage of money. What is his reaction when his wife suggests she goes out to work to supplement the family income by her own efforts? You will often observe that although the initial response may be favourable, then all sorts of difficulties get put

in the way. Women are already at a disadvantage when they return to work after having children; an uncooperative response from her husband can easily undermine his wife's self-confidence.

A further factor in this form of suppression and many others is uncertainty. Having to manage on a limited budget is bad enough, but it is much worse for a wife in this position if she can't be sure about how much she will get or when she will get it. It would also be a mistake to think that this situation is only to be found among poorer families!

There is a reverse situation that is not uncommon. This is where a wife keeps her husband in a state of uncertainty about the bills he will have to pay because of her apparent inability to manage money. It is also very easy to build up worrying debts by extravagant use of the family credit cards.

Many married couples think that the best means of managing money is to have a joint bank account. This, however, can be a very powerful tool for suppression. This can happen when one party spends more than the family budget can afford, which causes problems for the other partner. Alternatively, the fact that each partner's spending can be scrutinized by the other means that one or the other may be inhibited from spending money on a personal interest. Even in the happiest marriage, it seems that there is a need for some privacy or personal discretion.

Suppression by means of the control of the purse strings is not uncommon in family businesses. Here, the younger family members are often poorly paid and kept in constant uncertainty. Similarly, the children of the 'wealthy' are sometimes discouraged from taking certain kinds of work because it does not fit in with the family's public 'image'. Instead, they are kept in a state of uncertain financial

dependence that is usually insufficient to maintain the lifestyle in which they have been brought up.

Employment is, of course, an area that lends itself to financial suppression. Since the days of slavery, nobody has been forced to work by threats of punishment. The financial system that operates in our society means that a person can offer his services to the highest bidder and can change his employment whenever he wishes. This system works very well for some but reduces others to a situation that could be described as 'wage slavery'. When a person is reduced to working long hours on low pay to support a family and still has to do without some basic requirements, then it is arguable if they are any better off than a slave.

We may regard the employer who pays badly as suppressive, and to the extent that he exploits people, he is. This, however, is obvious suppression and can be spotted and acted against by variety of means. Much more subtle is individual by someone with authority over the particular employee who is suppressed.

The suppressor may not be the actual 'employer' but a foreman, manager, or supervisor. Here, the suppressor manages to convince the suppressed person that he has no choice but to stay there and submit to whatever indignities are imposed on him or her. Usually, the suppressed person comes to believe that he is in the best position he can hope for. This is because he has been told that his limited abilities, education, or training are such that he could not do as well anywhere else. This may be supplemented by the belief that external factors, such as 'the unemployment situation', are such that he could not even get another job.

The suppressor then uses his power over the suppressed person to create an atmosphere of uncertainty,

particularly over the possibility that the suppressed person may lose his job. As a result, he is continuously worried and uncertain about his future employment. This job insecurity has a devastating effect on his confidence and his competence to do the job. So worried does he become about keeping his job that he becomes a shadow of his former self and incapable of any initiative.

Less common today, but still to be found, is suppression based on the promise of inherited wealth. In the past, rich elderly people were able to buy love, or at least attention, with specific or vague promises of what was to come to be passed on in their will. Fortunately, today, there is far less need for people to depend on the promise of inherited wealth for their financial security. This was not the case in former times, as can be seen from some of the situations described by Jane Austin and in many well-known Victorian novels.

In all the types of financial suppression, the suppressed person has a strong feeling of dependence. This makes them much less effective at whatever they set out to do because of the amount of attention they have on the person on whom they are financially dependent.

Chapter Five Practical

7. Find three examples where someone you know has been kept in a state of financial dependence by another. Write down their names, and next to each one, write a description of their health, confidence, activity level, and happiness as far as you can assess it.

Chapter Six:

The Emotional Factor

Suppression by financial control may be common, but the economic factor is not the whole story. In a developed economic society, there is enough freedom of choice in the ways to gain an income for anyone to break out of suppressive financial dependence sooner or later.

Circumstances change, children grow up and become less tying, unworkable marriages come to an end, and elderly relatives do eventually die. Even the underpaid worker will one day realize that he is worth more and will find an employer more willing to recognise his talents. Even the employee who is suppressed by a particular manager may get a lucky break and find his boss has been fired or had a heart attack!

But some people don't break out. We can see this most obviously in family situations, but we also see in a working situation that an abused employee could obviously get another better job but doesn't do so. The question we have to ask ourselves is: Why?

Why does a person stay in a position of financial dependence? Why does the deprived wife stay with a partner who is so obviously suppressing her? Why does the exploited son stay working in his father's business where his ideas are disregarded and he is used as cheap labour? The short answer is that they feel they have no choice. They are stuck there with no alternative course of action they feel able to take.

From the outside, we would say that anything was better than what they have to put up with. So why do they feel

so helpless? Well, could it be that they have been fed certain ideas by their suppressor? In the case of the son in the business, his father tells him regularly that he is useless and very lucky to have a job in the family firm as nobody else would employ him. In the case of the financially deprived wife, her husband probably tells her that she can't manage money and is a poor mother and asks how she would manage without him.

Next question is, why do they believe such rubbish? Because for them, the hoped for approval and support of their suppressor is very important. For some reason, they believe that their survival depends on staying with that person and winning approval for their actions and perhaps even their existence!

A simple way of describing this is emotional dependence. Another word sometimes used to explain it is "love". There is, however, a major difference between emotional dependence and love, which we will examine later in this chapter. For the moment, let us examine this concept of emotional dependence.

Let us say for the moment that it is emotional dependence that keeps our two examples of suppressed persons in their position of economic dependence. They believe they have no choice but to be there because of something they may think of as love or obligation, responsibility or duty. What is more, they usually feel safe and relatively secure in that situation despite its unpleasant features. They feel they are better off there than they would be anywhere else. They honestly believe that they deserve no better!

All of this stems from a tragically low opinion of themselves and their capabilities. Where does this opinion come from? Primarily, of course, it comes from their suppressor. They are kept in that state of dependence because the suppressor has sensed that the other person is capable of being suppressed by emotional means. He or she (the suppressor) has carefully built up a series of emotional tools that they can use to keep that emotional control.

An amusing example of how this works, in this not very amusing subject, occurs in Henry Fielding's novel 'Joseph Andrews'. This is an extended romp through 13th-century England, very much along the same lines as 'Tom Jones', also by Henry Fielding. At one stop, the landlord of the inn where the hero is staying is discovered misbehaving with a maid in the hayloft. There is a considerable fuss, particularly from the landlord's wife. After a while, she relents and agrees to forgive him, provided the maid is sent packing and that she (the landlord's wife) has the right to remind him every day of her generosity in forgiving him.

This is a classic example of suppression. The landlord's wife worked out she would be better off using emotional means to keep her husband under control than she would be if she threw him out. In this case, the means of suppression was guilt. Other such means can be pity or fear or appealing to a person's 'better nature'.

The usual means for exerting this kind of suppression are often repeated words or phrases. These are used to keep the suppressed person 'reminded' of his or her feelings of duty, love, debt, obligation, or guilt; in other words, to maintain his or her emotional dependence. In Fielding's novel the words may have gone something like: You go off chasing young girls after all is done for you. You ungrateful wretch”.

Here are a few more examples of phrases that can be easily recognised as suppressive reminders:

- “I gave up a good job to marry you. I could have had a career and nice things of my own.”
- “All the hours I spend working to earn money that you waste and squander.”
- “Here I am slaving over a hot stove to bring up your children while you go gallivanting all over the place.”
- “All the sacrifices we made for your education, and this is how you repay us”.

- “Me with my bad heart, and now you want to go and...”

At first, these statements will be made in full. After a while, however, a shorthand version is all that is necessary. Even just a sigh or a look is sufficient to remind the suppressed person of their obligations and to cause them to desist from their own preferred actions. All of this has the result that the suppressed person is kept at *effect*, that is, not able to do what they want but having to do what somebody else wants.

We said earlier that a satisfactory interaction with another person only comes about when there is a two-way flow. In other words, there has to be a willingness on the part of both parties to be effect of the other for some of the time. If one must be at cause all the time, then it will not be satisfactory to the other person who must be continually at effect. After a while, the one who is always at effect will show signs of being suppressed. The most obvious sign of a person who is never able to be at cause is that they experience ups and downs in their moods, often combined with recurring illnesses.

So, we can now ask what the difference is between emotional dependence and love. When there is a relationship held together by emotional dependence, the dependent person is stuck at effect of the person on whom they are dependent. In true love, there is a two-way flow of communication, opinion, attention, and action. Here, we have a true willingness to allow the other person to be cause over us and us to be effect of that person in equal balance to them, allowing us to be cause over them. Provided both people share the same intentions, then a harmonious balance will emerge. If one person is willing only to be at cause and not effect, then the other is in danger of being suppressed if they allow themselves to become emotionally dependent.

Many loving relationships start off as love but get degraded into emotional dependence. This happens when one

party becomes dominant and moves to being continually at cause the other allows him or herself to become continual effect. This is usually a gradual process, and there is always a danger that a truly loving relationship will drift this way. The factors that may cause it to happen are many, but various, so there is a need for eternal vigilance. It is a lot easier to allow it to develop than to put it right!

Chapter Six Practical

8. Write down up to five phrases you have heard or can imagine that one person may use to exert emotional control over another. You may include examples from literature, plays, or films if you wish.

Suppressed Person Symptom List

- Feeling unable to do what one knows one is fully capable of. Often accompanied by feeling stupid.
- Feeling confused and unable to decide what to do next. Often results in a lot of time being wasted.
- Feelings of stress and anxiety but with no obvious or sufficient reason.
- Feeling irritable and inclined to overreact or act inappropriately to events that irritate.
- Making mistakes, forgetting things, and having minor accidents, e.g. breaking things, falling over, and getting cuts and bruises.
- Having minor illnesses that keep coming back, such as headaches, back pain, allergies, skin complaints, upset stomachs, and nasal/sinus trouble.
- Feeling embarrassed, uncomfortable, and inadequate in the presence of someone who is suppressing them.
- Inclined to swing in mood from being cheerful and productive to depressed and inactive.

Chapter Seven:

Who are the Suppressors?

So far, we have been looking primarily at the people who are showing the tell-tale signs of being suppressed. I have suggested they are being held mostly at effect by the actions and attitudes of another person. This person has the power to influence their environment and actions by emotional, financial, or other means.

But what about the people doing the suppressing (the Suppressors)? Who are they, and why do they behave so cruelly?

The unfortunate truth is that there are tendencies to dominate and suppress others in all of us. We are all potential suppressors, just as we are all potential suppresseses. There are few of us who have not at some time imposed our views or will on somebody else and thus suppressed their efforts to be themselves. Most typically, this occurs with children or dependents. When a noisy child annoys us, maybe we hit him or punish him harshly in some other way. Later, we are sorry and vow to have more patience in the future. There are people, however, who would stoutly defend his or her action of hitting the child both then and on other occasions, with such

statements as “That's the only way to handle kids. If you don't show them who's boss, they'll end up running the place!”

There will also have been occasions when we have promised to help someone else and then decided our own preferences were more important. Once again, we probably had a twinge of remorse at the time or afterwards. Another more suppressive person would perhaps justify his actions by saying: “I may have said I would at the time, but they should know how busy I am. I can't be at everybody's beck and call. They should get it sorted out themselves, there's nothing to it really”.

In both cases, the person knows the action is harmful to the other. You would experience regret. A really suppressive person does not regard his behaviour as wrong because it inhibits the survival of another. He sees it as right because it promotes his (the suppressor's) survival.

It would seem that there are some people who see their own survival being achieved only at the expense of others. The suppressive person believes that suppressing those around him or her is a natural action for their survival. It is only we on the outside who can see that his or her suppressive actions are needlessly cruel.

This idea of some people having a strong inclination to suppress others in everyday life may be difficult for you to accept if you have not come across it before. In these enlightened times, it is unfashionable to condemn anybody for their antisocial behaviour. I ask you only to look around you and see honestly what is there. If your observations are different from the ideas expressed here, then do not accept these ideas.

To help you recognise the behaviour I have been talking about, here are two typical examples for you to

consider. They are not exaggerated, being based on real people. Look carefully to see if you can recognise something of their character in people you have encountered.

The first example is a businessman, whom we will call Jeff. Jeff seems very successful. His business has enjoyed whirlwind growth over the last four years. He is a source of many clever ideas. He is extremely energetic in getting them implemented. The trouble is that he soon loses interest in a particular idea and leaves it to his staff to follow the project through. He himself is on to his next scheme and has time for little else. The whirlwind nature of the growth of Jeff's company reflects his personal style of working. He is always on the move, but nobody is certain where he is until he turns up. This is because he is rather secretive about his movements. He is frequently late for appointments and sometimes doesn't get there at all.

Jeff is very hard working, probably a 'workaholic'. He may be slow to get going in the morning sometimes, but he is prepared to work late into the evening. The trouble is he expects others to be there and work late even if they started at the normal time.

If someone is able to pin him down on something he should have done, he will be evasive at first, then aggressive, and finally, charming. Oh yes, Jeff is capable of being extremely charming! He is also witty and can always come up with amusing ways of describing others' weaknesses. He frequently comes up with surprising news on the misfortunes of others. He himself is extremely suspicious of others who seem to be doing well, jealous of the success of others, and bears grudges for real or imagined slights.

What do we find when we look at his associates? We find his staff harassed but putting a brave face on it. They are

constantly having to make excuses for his broken appointments and promises. They are trying to pick their way through and tie up the ends of projects that he started but did not involve them in from the beginning. It is not just that he doesn't brief them fully; he is also genuinely forgetful. His desk and files are full of uncompleted jobs, and he can rarely find any piece of paper that he wants. Thus, his secretaries, colleagues, suppliers, and even some of his customers are kept in a state of suspended animation around him, worrying about things that he ensures they don't have the information or authority to resolve. They, too, are part of the whirlwind, and who do you think is at the centre?

Our second example we will call Mrs Briggs. She is now in her late sixties. Unlike Jeff, she does not do much and, in fact, has not actually done much since her children were young, about thirty years ago. She herself has a heart condition now, but it doesn't cause her any problems except that she has to take things easily. Mr Briggs has retired recently and since then has not enjoyed good health. He has had a series of strokes that have left him just about able to walk but very slowly. Their youngest daughter, Mildred, lives nearby. In fact, she moved recently, soon after they did, so she could continue to be near her parents. This is just as well because although Mrs Briggs can drive, she hasn't done so for years, and now Mr Briggs can't drive either, Mildred has to drive them about when they go anywhere.

Mildred was married some years ago and has a daughter, Jennie, from that marriage. Jennie is now a teenager but is quite a lonely girl. She has not been doing well at school and doesn't associate much with others of her own age. She seems to prefer the company of older people. The most remarkable thing about Jennie and her mother Mildred is that

despite their different ages, they both look, walk, and talk remarkably like Mrs Briggs. Mildred, in her early forties, has grey hair like her mother, and there seems little likelihood of another marriage. Jennie has already lost the blush of youth. Her clothes and conversation are those of a middle-aged lady. Jennie has a young dog. This dog is nervy and snappy and has even started to resemble Mrs Briggs. The hairs on its face are going grey!

So how is it that this little old lady has been able to have so much influence? The theory says that the apparently unhappy condition of the people most closely associated with Mrs Briggs indicates that she is suppressing them. But can we be sure that she is responsible for the condition of her family? Well, unless we lived every day in that household, we could not be sure. I can only tell you of some of the characteristics I have observed and let you judge if there might be a connection.

Mrs Briggs seems a very nice, charming old lady. Her conversation does, however, concentrate on the negative aspects of life and other people. She does not find it difficult to be critical of others... but in the nicest possible way. In a group with other members of her family, she will answer questions for them before they have a chance to speak. She will also change arrangements that others in the family have made. She doesn't seem to get involved in quarrels herself, but somehow, quarrels do tend to happen around her. She willingly takes on the role of peacemaker!

All of this is very circumstantial, but let us apply the test of cause and effect. Are the people around Mrs Briggs fulfilling their own purposes? Are they likely to be having their turn at being cause?

In taking these two examples, we can see the wide range of forms suppressive people may come in. While the

differences are obvious, what do these two examples have in common? The key similarity is the impact they have on those around them.

The people who work with Jeff are in a constant state of uncertainty and worry. Most of their attention is taken up with dealing with the consequences of the things Jeff is at cause over. They have little or no energy left to take initiatives of their own. Anyway, Jeff would soon divert them if they were to try. The result is that in his business, there is only one person at cause. Whatever the consequences might be for the long-term health of the business, at least Jeff feels moderately safe at the centre of his whirlwind.

Mrs Briggs doesn't set out to do much, so she needs to have people around her to look after and entertain her. But she needs to keep them dancing to her tune. She does this by playing them off against each other and keeping them dependent on her good opinion. They respond by trying to be as much like her as possible, and even the dog senses this and follows suit.

The common thread in suppression is the need to stay at cause over people around you. The suppressive person is actually driven by fear. They fear that if the people around them are permitted to become strong or powerful, they will use that strength and power against them.

Earlier, I said we may all go in for a bit of suppression now and again. We, in our turn, may be the victim of somebody near us being a bit suppressive at times. However, such small episodes are much easier to identify and overcome than living with or working for a classic suppressive person who has spent a long time perfecting his or her skill at suppressing others.

In later chapters, we will deal with the techniques suppressive people use and how to handle them. In the

meantime, the next practical will help you to learn to spot them.

Chapter Seven Practical

9. Identify up to three people you know or have known who consistently suppress those around them. Look at the condition of the people around them. Write down any other suppressive symptoms that you can identify. Note down any methods you think the suppressive person is using. Leave space to add more techniques as you learn about them in later chapters.

Chapter Eight:

More Suppressive Ways

Suppressive people come in all shapes and sizes. That is why you may not have recognised them before. Although we have looked at a few illustrative examples, there are certain broad characteristic types that may help you in the future to identify people who are suppressing you or trying to. These characteristics can be seen as a descending scale of obvious aggression down to very passive but nonetheless effective suppression. If you have read anything about the concept of a scale of human emotions, sometimes called a tone scale, you will recognise the pattern.

At the top, we have the most outgoing and obvious type of suppressive person. Usually, he is openly hostile, aggressive, bullying, and destructive. This type visibly enjoys crushing, abusing, and terrorizing others. In the last chapter, we looked at Jeff. He most probably belongs in this category despite his apparent redeeming qualities of charm and wit. You can get an idea from Jeff's style of behaviour how much a person's real aim can be disguised.

Nonetheless, if all suppressive people acted like Jeff, it would make the job of identifying them relatively easy. In contrast to the obvious aggressive type, you can find him in the

form of cold, unemotional perfection first. No matter how hard you try, you will never please him. He is the master of making you feel inadequate with a lifted eyebrow, a dry pedantic comment, or an unresponsive shrug.

Sometimes, suppressive people hide the hostility behind a jovial mask. These people appear jolly and humorous but manage to include plenty of critical barbs and put-downs within their bright, witty conversations. If you listen carefully, you will observe that they consistently ridicule, mock, and undermine others. Sometimes, they will even do it to the face of the person concerned! If challenged, they will cover themselves by saying something like, "Can't you take a joke?"

Another form the suppressive person can come in is the merchant of fear. This is the carrier of sad and upsetting news. He or she knows all the local, national, and international bad news and will relish telling you all about it. He or she (and there seem to be more shes down here) will recommend doing as little as possible, never doing anything new or unconventional, certainly not taking any risks. In fact, they would prefer you to *do* as little as possible.

A variant of this is the people who collect 'deserving cases'. They are quick to tell you of the terrible conditions in which most people are obliged to live their lives. This can then be used to make you feel guilty about any pleasurable activity you may be considering. In fact, they manage to get their victims to feel guilty about even feeling happy. The insidious nature of this form of suppression is that individuals with the normal amount of concern for their fellow man will find themselves in competition with the suppressive person. Attempts to put the misfortune of others in proportion will open one to the accusation of lacking sympathy for others.

Another way a suppressive person can operate is to smother you with 'kindness'. This has the effect of overriding your ability to do something for yourself. You have possibly experienced how this feels when staying as a guest in someone else's house. That is not to say that an overly attentive host or hostess is being suppressive, but imagine what it would be like to live in a house where someone was doing that to you all the time!

A method some people use to be suppressive is the apparent direct opposite of suppression. This is the professional victim. He is a person who uses his unhappiness and afflictions to pull you down to being at effect in the face of their hopeless misery. Once he gets his clutches on you, you can expect a constant stream of draining visits or phone calls. He fails to act on your repeated advice and wears you down with his overwhelming hopelessness. If you have no experience with this type of person, ask any professional medical or social worker whether they exist.

A difficulty we have with spotting suppressive people by means of such descriptions is that the individual may not stay at the same place on the scale all the time. They can move up and down into adjoining categories according to how well or ill they are feeling at the time. Usually, it is better not to start with the behaviour of a person to see if they are suppressive. It is better to be able to identify the symptoms of being suppressed first. One can then look around to find the source from which it might be coming. It is when you are making the final choice of who is responsible for the suppression that these identifying characteristics are helpful.

There are some other common types of suppressive behaviour that it may help you to know about when trying to

spot who is exerting a suppressive influence on you. Some of these are outlined in the rest of this chapter.

In commerce, you find customers who will operate suppressively if you let them. This type of customer sees business as a battle to get the best prices and longest credit out of you and everyone else he deals with. In every transaction, he seems to be looking for a potential grievance. If anything doesn't go his way or he feels he has been out-maneuvered, he takes the matter higher or goes to the law. You will find he is embroiled in disputes and lawsuits with everybody from the local laundry to the tax authorities. His time is taken up mostly with these disputes, but he also absorbs vast amounts of other people's time by involving them in his disputes.

Another typical suppressive activity is compulsive talking. People who do this do it with the aim of destroying other's attempts to communicate. They talk continuously so that they can control the so-called conversation. They may ask questions but won't usually give the listener time to answer or will interrupt to give their thoughts on what the answer should be. They also often change the subject of discussion, usually just as you finally get to the point of expressing your opinion.

If we analyse this in terms of cause and effect, then clearly, the suppressive person is not allowing the other person to be cause. They would move to effect if they had to stop talking and listen. We may regard suppression of this type as trivial because we think we can always give such a person a wide berth. But what about if we find ourselves working for such a person or find we have one in our family?

Another type of suppressive person uses some particular characteristic that they have to claim an advantage over other people. So, they insist on emphasizing such differences as family origin, class, race, skin colour, religion,

and education. Such prejudice is regrettably common. Look for the person who makes a particular point of emphasizing it at every opportunity.

We still have remnants around today of a huge edifice of suppression built on the platform of religion. The classic religious suppressive used hellfire and damnation to obtain conformity to established social norms. He would also use it to instill fear into the hearts of young and impressionable people. Not only was this a heartless form of suppression, but it also denied the recipient any of the genuine benefits of religion. Regretfully, often, this suppressive was the pastor himself, using fear as a means of keeping his 'flock' under his control.

Religion also fed another form of widespread suppression. This was the idea of respectable, conforming, 'God-fearing' behaviour. Thus, a close, small community would establish the norms for respectable behaviour, often based on supposed religious precepts of behaviour. Anyone who did not uphold these norms would be put under enormous social pressure to conform, especially by their family. Literature is full of characters who suffer this form of social suppression.

Sex is used regrettably often as a method of suppression. The most common pattern is for a suppressive man to enforce sex as a means of putting another person at effect. This does not just apply to rape. In a marriage, a man may regard his high sexual activity as an indication of his healthy virility, but in fact, he may really be using sex to suppress his partner.

In the case of a promiscuous person, he or she is using sex to suppress a larger number of people.

Withholding sex is more usually used by women as a means of suppression, but it is not their exclusive preserve. Withholding sex as a suppressive activity is sometimes combined with displaying initial interest in order to arouse the other person prior to withholding sex.

This 'blow hot, blow cold' technique is also used outside sexual relations as a means of keeping the suppressed person in a state of worried uncertainty. Suppressive people who have some social or commercial standing are able to keep a large number of people in a state of worried uncertainty through the liberal use of a mixture of smiles of approval and frowns of disapproval. Showbiz has a lot of these people and gives us the image of the megalomaniac movie mogul surrounded by a flock of worried 'courtiers'.

It is the aim of the suppressive person, by one means or another, to keep the people around him or her as weak and as ineffective as possible. They may exercise open domination of these people but only once they have got them to a point where they can't fight back. The techniques they will use to achieve this dominance are many and varied, and usually hidden. The aim is to get all the people who could pose a threat to the suppressive person to a point where they are under his control or completely ineffectual.

On examination, you will usually find that people in this extreme state of suppression are held there for one or more of the following reasons:

1. They fear retribution in the form of violence, deprivation, blackmail, or some other form of punishment.

2. They feel they are dependent on the person who is suppressing them, either for financial support or protection.
3. They don't want to hurt the feelings of the suppressive person because of emotional closeness or dependence, often confused with love.
4. They have become so lacking in confidence and causitiveness that they are paralysed into being unable to oppose anybody.
5. They have a vague, unexamined belief that they deserve no better than the treatment they are getting.

Chapter Eight Practical

10. Look again at the answers you wrote for the last practical. Can you now add any further techniques to those used by the suppressive people you selected? You may have found some new people who operate in a suppressive way. You may add them to your list at this point.

Chapter Nine:

Where to Find Suppression

We have looked at a variety of the types of suppressive behaviour we might encounter. Next, it may be helpful to look at the form it takes in certain areas where it is very commonly found. Let us start with education.

All children start school enthusiastic and eager to learn. They will be extremely fortunate to get through their education without encountering one suppressive teacher.

The suppressive teacher operates in a number of ways. He makes the subject dull and unattractive to his students. He does not relate the subject to everyday life, so the student is not motivated to learn since he sees no relevance to the life he leads now or will be leading. He skips intermediate steps or fails to clear up misunderstandings, thus leaving the student floundering. The teacher does not take responsibility for seeing the subject is understood by the student and just blames the student for his stupidity. He justifies himself against any criticism by reference to the way that he was forced to learn or claims he is only using 'tried and trusted' methods.

Teaching students, children or adults, is a process requiring great sensitivity. The subject must be presented well for the student to absorb it. If not, the student will quickly

come to blame himself. A suppressive teacher can easily make a student feel that he is stupid, and this belief in his mental inadequacy can plague a person for the rest of his life.

But don't believe that all the suppression begins with the teacher in the classroom. Many of the books used for teaching were obviously written to advertise the great knowledge of the writer, rather than to make the subject interesting and relevant. If you are learning a new subject, try this test yourself. Pick up several books and read the section about the same topic in each book. The difference between the most clearly and most unhelpfully written will surprise you. Ask yourself, 'What was the writer's real intention in writing this book?'

We have looked at suppressive tactics in business. A suppressive businessman uses the opportunities that business provides to entangle others in a web of confusion from which they have great difficulty escaping, and which drains their resources. There are, however, many other suppressive styles in operation in business and other professions.

If one looks at any large organisation, one usually finds one or two suppressive people busily creating chaos and confusion. This is their chosen occupation rather than the job they are paid to do. Instead of supporting and advancing the enterprise that employs them, they undermine it with their self-centred action. They are often quite unproductive but manage to create an air of importance around their job because of the amount of other people's attention it absorbs. This attention consists of worrying about whether they will get the cooperation or supplies they need or clearing up the costly mistakes that result from dealings with this suppressive person. This 'chaos merchant' person generates confusion that spreads

well beyond the area his function should normally involve, which is why its source is usually difficult to spot.

In the professions, we encounter people who are very well placed to be suppressive if that is their inclination. The advantages they have are that their function is primarily to advise, and they have an area of specialist knowledge with which to impress their clients. They are not paid to produce anything but to advise. Suppressive advisors will tend to be ultra-cautious and negative in their advice. Instead of advising a client of his options, they spend their client's time speculating about technicalities in jargon that makes the client feel incompetent and helpless. Ironically, not only is the client being suppressed in this situation, but he is also paying the bill!

The further an activity gets from having to produce a measurable result, the easier it is for a suppressive individual to carve himself a little niche from which to operate. So, the larger bureaucracies contain many such people. The function of these bodies is often to monitor and control the activity of others. This puts the suppressive in his ideal position of being able to criticise, quibble, and delay without himself being accountable for achieving anything. That is not to say that all our government and public service employees are suppressive people! The majority are dedicated and hard-working people. Unfortunately, the nature of the work and the management style of bureaucratic organisations are such that they accommodate and tolerate suppressive people.

In previous chapters, we have looked at some of the instances of suppression found within the

family. This area of suppression is perhaps the most suffocating because there is so little chance for relief from the daily reinforcement of the suppressive situation. It may start

from the time a couple forms a relationship, even before marriage. One partner feels that they have to undermine the causitiveness of the other, because they feel themselves threatened. This is not a fully conscious decision, of course, but that partner believes there is a real danger that they could be overwhelmed by the other and then go into permanent effect.

A relationship as intimate and candid as marriage means the partners have few secrets from each other. There is, thus, plenty of material to be used suppressively. We have mentioned how sex is often used to suppress. In a marriage, sex is equally likely to be the subject of verbal innuendo or grievance-mongering. Thus, we find jibes about declining sexual powers and diminishing attractiveness and comparisons with other partners, real or imagined, to generate jealousy and uncertainty. So subtle and clever can the verbal fencing of marriage become that it is often the subject of comedy. There can be, however, fewer things less comic than seeing one partner in a marriage crushed by the other until all that remains is a sickly shadow.

Sometimes, a couple can be happily cohabiting until the arrival of children. The husband may then become jealous of the attention the children take, or the wife may be jealous of the freedom her husband still retains. He or she feels they are declining in significance in the family and may then start on a process of undermining their partner. Rearing children, of course, provides many new opportunities for criticism and blaming, the principle tools of suppression!

Once the suppressive partner has got their mate under control, they will probably start suppressing the children. The means used may vary, but the aim is always the same: to reduce the causitiveness of the children so they are little or no trouble

and, thus, little threat to the causitiveness or convenience of the suppressor.

Children are both very impressionable and very dependent on their parents, so they can be suppressed quite easily, or at least appear to be. They usually get their revenge short term by being 'naughty' and having lots of 'accidents'. Long-term, they do it by withholding love in later years when they have finally gained their freedom.

The means of suppressing children are rarely brutal. Much more common is the reduction of the children's causitiveness by creating doubt in their ability to think for themselves. They then become reliant on the thinking and approval of the suppressive parent. The most common means used to achieve this by suppressive parents are fear and ridicule.

A parent can create an atmosphere of fear of illness, violence, animals, self-injury, and weather, in other words, dangerous environments. Children are by nature curious and, if suitably encouraged, will explore and challenge their environment as they grow up. If the hazards of the environment are exaggerated and the child is not permitted to challenge and overcome them, he or she ends up a very fearful young adult. Such a person is easy to keep under control by continuing reference to the dangerous environment.

Ridicule is frequently used to invalidate the ideas of the child. The suppressive parent will then superimpose his or her own views or interpretation of events. How many times have you heard parents say to children, "Don't talk such rubbish", or words to that effect? The child becomes fearful of expressing an opinion that will be ridiculed and learns to express only opinions that will be approved of. The child will then begin to think these are their own opinions. Another

suppressive habit you may have observed is when the parent doesn't give the child a chance to speak for himself but answers for him.

Since, for many children, this situation continues even when they become adults, we can see where the 'mother-in-law' conflict situation comes from. Here, the new entrant to the family is not familiar with the pattern of suppression that their partner has been subjected to for many years. They cannot understand why their partner does not seem to have a mind of their own. They inevitably clash with the suppressive parent who is not going to give up control of their child easily. In the resulting battle, the odds are weighted heavily against the newcomer! The result of failure is that the son or daughter-in-law fits in, or the marriage does not last.

Once one becomes aware of suppression, one can see it in many areas of everyday life. In the community, there are people whose job it is to help and advise people in need. Unfortunately, one can find even in these 'caring professions', some individual social workers, trade union officials, nurses, doctors, and even pastors whose behaviour can only be described as suppressive towards those who come to them for help. Their clients leave them feeling more inadequate, blameworthy, and hopeless than before they came. The suppressive in this situation is less interested in restoring the causitiveness of their clients than in boosting their own morale. This, the suppressive person sees as enhancing their own competence!

In the Arts, we can see how creative people are frequently subject to suppressive people. Creative people and performing artists produce their work in very overcrowded professions where they rarely achieve the appreciation they need, and success is precarious. This hunger for recognition

makes them extremely vulnerable to the opinions of critics and other unproductive hangers-on. These hangers-on often have had ambitions to be artists themselves but were unable to make a success of it. They then find themselves in a good position to undermine the confidence of those who have made more progress than they did.

Suppression is usually a force towards conformity to so-called 'accepted standards'. Personally insecure people, which is what suppressive people are, tend to feel safer if people around them are conforming to accepted and safe patterns. In this chapter, we have mostly been examining specific instances where an individual suppresses another. There is, however, a tendency towards suppression wherever large groups of people are together.

This can be seen in places like the schoolyard or a large workplace, such as a factory or general office. Here, the pressure on the individual to conform to accepted standards is very strong. The usual methods used to enforce conformity are gossip and ridicule. Where this suppression starts from is sometimes difficult to spot, but you can be sure that there is at least one suppressive person at the bottom of it all!

You can see clearly the activity of a considerable number of suppressive people in the mass media. This is evident in the way that many newspapers and TV stations look for the bad news angle. They use bad news to create an atmosphere of fear, which reduces the causitiveness of large numbers of individuals who become afraid to go out or to trust other people.

If one encounters journalists in their work, one will find that many of them are heavily suppressed by their editors. The climate in which they work is one where sensationalism and superficiality are the requirements of the job. This makes

most of them cynical and untrustworthy. The result is that much of the information we receive about the world in which we live is filtered and biased by the media for its own ends. This makes for the large-scale suppression of many people who cannot see the difference between the world portrayed by the media and what they can observe around them.

Chapter Nine Practical

11. Go back over this chapter and look again at each of the areas of suppression mentioned. Write down examples you can think of that relate to each of the areas covered.

Chapter Ten:

Identifying the Suppressor

We have said that we are all capable of suppressive behaviour at some time. So, it is possible to remember an unusual situation where someone behaved badly and conclude from that they are suppressive. It is very important to get the correct source of suppression. It is, therefore, necessary to look at the consistent behaviour patterns of the individual you suspect might be the cause of suppression occurring to you or others. Here is a list of twelve key characteristics of suppressive behaviour that can help you in making your assessment.

1. The suppressive person's conversation centres on the doings of others, gossip, and rumours and includes a lot of criticism of the people involved. At the most overt level of suppression, this criticism and hostility may be directed openly at the person concerned. At more covert levels, it takes the form of gossip and character assassination behind a person's back. You may also observe them sowing dissension between two parties by giving each of them slanted versions of the other's comments. Much of their stock in trade is hearsay, slur, speculation, and innuendo.

2. A sure sign of a suppressive person is the condition of their associates and family. Are they subject to poor health? Do they seem flustered and tense? Are they overwhelmed with problems? Do they make mistakes and have accidents? If so, then they are being suppressed. This does not mean the suppressive person does not get ill himself, but his illnesses tend to be occasional, severe, and dramatic rather than the recurring minor ailments that afflict his associates. The exception is the suppressive person who actually uses his or her illness as a means of suppression!
3. Here is another simple way of judging how suppressive a person's behaviour is. How do they pass on information? Do they rush to pass on bad news and fail to pass on the good? Does there tend to be a regular emphasis on the negative and pessimistic in the information they pass on? A suppressive person will often alter information to make it sound worse or counter unavoidably good news with some negative or pessimistic comment. You will find suppressive people are pretty poor at passing on any information completely and correctly. Part of their suppressive technique is to create uncertainty and anxiety by indicating there was a message but not passing on sufficient information for the recipient to know clearly what to do.
4. Suppressive people have an obsessive aversion to being told what to do. On the other hand, they like to control others and tell them what to do and think. This control is rarely productive, but the suppressive person feels that if he can keep others busy, they will not have the energy left to attack him. If put in a position where

he has to do what someone else decides, in other words, he has to be effect of them, and he will probably react in one of several ways. He may go into an angry rage; he may agree but then do nothing; or he may make some show of doing it, but it will be slow and incomplete. The suppressive is demanding of others but cannot accept others demands on him. He is frequently cruel and unfeeling to others but cannot accept the same treatment. The classic example of this is the practical joker. How does he react when somebody pulls a similar trick on him?

5. A suppressive person maintains that rules are made to be broken... by him! He sees norms of ethical conduct, rules, regulations, and laws as good to the extent they protect him from others, but he doesn't feel they apply to him. He will talk quite openly about his unethical actions, even his criminal ones, without any remorse or regard for the effects that those actions may have on others. Supreme selfishness is the key to understanding this characteristic. He is the person with a string of driving and parking offences but who maintains it is all the fault of the traffic police.
6. The suppressive person is never to blame for anything in his own eyes. He is, therefore, an expert at misdirecting responsibility. If something goes wrong, he will immediately find some way of blaming those around him at the time or those who were involved previously. If there really is nobody else to blame, he blames inanimate objects! He himself does not take responsibility for anything that goes wrong. He must, in all circumstances, be right! This need to be right in

- all circumstances is a character thread you can see in many of these tell-tale traits of the suppressive person.
7. Another characteristic that identifies the classic suppressive person is his attitude to community problems. He will usually tend towards violent, vengeful, and destructive solutions, such as capital and corporal punishment. In national and international affairs, he will favour capital punishment, military interventions, bombing, or even 'nuking' as long as he doesn't have to take responsibility for carrying it out. He will be antagonistic to positive and constructive action to improve social harmony and community relations. He will consider such initiatives to be soft and bound to fail. His response to criminal and other antisocial activity will be more concerned with revenge than cure.
 8. As part of his need to be right, a suppressive person will talk in generalities or support his views with all sorts of unreliable sources. Often, when he has no evidence for his views, he will fall back on generalities like, "Everybody knows...". Naturally, most of these views will be bad news calculated to create alarm and despondency. He will quote something as irrefutable because he read it in the newspapers or was told it by 'a man in a pub'. He will claim support from any source that suits his opinions and prejudices without any attempt to scrutinise the reliability or motives of that source.
 9. A suppressive person usually displays the habit of not completing cycles of action. A cycle of action can be seen as moving from *start* through *continue*, finally arriving at *finish*. This suppressive person will be

surrounded by uncompleted cycles of action, in other words, projects that are only partly completed. Their room or house will be full of part-done household jobs, unanswered letters, unpaid bills, part-read books and magazines, and a welter of things got out for some forgotten reason but never put away. While we all have a tendency not to complete our cycles of action, the suppressive person not only does it to extremes but also ensures it causes maximum inconvenience to other people! Not only does he leave his own jobs uncompleted, but he involves other people in them and prevents other people from completing their own cycles of action. If asked to assist in doing a job, he will find reasons to delay or change the original plan. If he is required to bring something for a group task, you can be sure he will forget it, be late, bring the wrong thing, or find some reason why he thought it was not necessary. Even as an executive who is required to get his staff to do certain jobs, a suppressive person will still interfere and cause delays, which make the work more difficult to get done. We can see this suppressive characteristic as an aversion to other people successfully achieving their goals. Other people achieving their goals is in conflict with the suppressive person's need to be in control of everything going on around him. Anything taking place successfully without his involvement is seen as some sort of threat to his survival by the suppressive person. We can see this pattern in the way a suppressive person usually communicates. He does not let other people complete their statements or questions before he interrupts with his own statement. He asks questions

that he answers himself but avoids answering other people's questions. If asked for a decision, he will talk around the subject, introduce various conflicting ideas, and then walk off, leaving the issue still unresolved.

10. A suppressive person has a very poor appreciation of other people's property. He will 'borrow' other people's things without their permission and often either return them in damaged condition or forget to return them at all. The same applies to money. He will borrow money irresponsibly, that is, without any realistic thought about how or when he is going to pay it back. Sometimes, he needs it for 'surefire' schemes to make a quick fortune. When this doesn't materialise, he will shed responsibility for the debt at the same time as he loses interest in the scheme. His underlying attitude is that 'nobody really owns anything' and that he has a natural right to whatever he needs for his well-being at the time. You will find, however, that he is not so generous when other people want something from him!
11. The suppressive person has grave doubts about the subject of help. Helping others is, of course, undesirable because those helped would get stronger, to his disadvantage. Anyway, why would anyone help someone else? The helper must have a hidden motive to take advantage of the person they are supposedly helping. If you suggest that a person who is behaving suppressively should get some help in changing their attitude and behaviour, then watch out for fireworks! They will vigorously maintain there is nothing wrong with them, that any problems surrounding them are caused by other people, and if anyone needs help, it is

you!

Don't be deceived, however, if someone you believe is acting suppressively does agree to try something you suggest. Watch carefully, because they will go along with it just enough to be able to say they tried it, but look how little it did for them. They have let you appear to get at cause but now have you even more at effect. Not only did they try it and found it didn't work, but everything that happens subsequently, from colds to car crashes, can be blamed on this failed help.

12. Be prepared for the suppressive person to appear quite normal and civilised, even pleasant and friendly, and to be doing quite well in life. They are often very clever and hide their true nature very well. So, here is one last tell-tale clue! A chronic suppressive personality will try to convince you that anything unfortunate that happens to you is not very important, slightly absurd in fact, and that you probably brought it on yourself anyway. On the other hand, if anything happens to them, it's important, extremely serious, unjust, and beyond repair.

These, then, are the typical characteristics of suppressive behaviour. Before we point fingers, we should always remember that we are capable of some of these from time to time. The hardcore suppressive person, however, displays most of them most of the time. Looking at these characteristics of suppressive behaviour, it is very easy to get depressed ourselves. We may begin to wonder if we are the source of most of the suppression we can see in our lives. Let me put your mind at rest. If you have got this far without dismissing this booklet as rubbish, then you are most unlikely to be very suppressive.

The above characteristics are all expressed in the negative. However, they all have their positive redeeming side. It is the balance between a person's good and bad behaviour which determines whether someone is a hardcore suppressive or not.

It is important, therefore, to maintain a balanced outlook. The practical exercise which follows is designed to redress the balance.

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12. Take a big sheet of paper and crease it lengthways down the middle. This gives you two columns. Write the numbers 1 to 12 equally spaced down the extreme left of the page.

Now, in the left-hand column, write a brief summary in your own words of each of the suppressive characteristics outlined in this chapter.

Next, write the equivalent positive behaviour against each one in the right-hand column.

Chapter Eleven:

What to Do About It

You may feel that this book has spent too much time telling you what suppression is and not enough telling you what to do about it!

A lot of emphasis has been put on describing what suppression is and how to identify it because being able to identify it accurately is the first and most vital step to handling it.

In fact, you need to be able to identify suppression in two stages. The first is to recognise the symptoms that tell you suppression is going on. The second is to examine the situation carefully to spot where the suppression is coming from. I hope that what has gone before will help you in doing this. You have two checklists to help you: the list of Symptoms of Suppression at the end of Chapter 6 and the Suppressive Behaviour Checklist at the end of the booklet. This latter list can be compared with the practical exercise you did at the end of the last chapter.

If you yourself are experiencing mild suppression, sometimes just doing these first two steps is sufficient to eliminate the suppression. If you are able to analyse the situation accurately, you have put yourself to some extent at

cause. You have been able to stand back from the situation and observe what the other person has been doing to put you at effect.

You may feel, however, that you want to correct the behaviour of the person who is suppressing you. You may want to sort him out, put him on the right road, and thus stop him behaving suppressively to you and others.

This is praiseworthy, but hazardous. The fact that this person can put you at effect shows that they already have a strong influence over you. Trying to show them the error of their ways is likely to provoke a strong reaction, which you may not be able to cope with. The better plan, I would recommend, is to proceed gently towards putting yourself back at cause without drawing any undue attention to what you are doing. The aim should be not to reform the person who is suppressing you but to reduce or eliminate the effects they have on you.

A major part of suppression is making you feel you are at fault. Once we realise someone is saying or doing things to make us feel worried, agitated, inadequate, or guilty, then we can be, to some extent at, cause in choosing how to respond.

In some cases, that choice may be to do nothing very different but just play along, much as before. The actual difference is you can now observe what they are trying to do and perhaps have a little inside laugh at it!

Unfortunately, there are many other more serious instances of suppression where identification is only the first stage of correcting the situation. The circumstances of suppression will vary, and the realistic action that can be taken may be limited in the short term. This is particularly true where there is an additional bond of financial dependence or family relationship. In these cases, it is not feasible to get back at cause

in a sudden dramatic act of 'kicking over the traces'. It is nearly always possible, however, to do something to start being more causitive, thus getting your relationship more into a balance of cause and effect.

There are various categories of action you can take to deal with somebody who is suppressing you. These can be divided into *handling*, *confronting*, and *separating*.

Handling

Handling is doing something to restore some causitiveness without obvious or dramatic change. The objective could be said to be getting yourself more at cause without the other person realising that you are doing so.

The most important way that suppression is exerted is by words, namely what is said in apparently normal conversations. So, the first step is to be able to control better the conversations you have with suppressive people. One technique to learn is how to acknowledge a contentious statement without committing yourself to an opinion. The ideal is to be able to answer such statements with a neutral acknowledgement, such as, 'I see what you mean', which isn't actually an agreement, and then cheerfully change the subject!

There is enormous value in being able to steer a conversation and thus keep it away from difficult subjects that you know will probably lead to trouble. The aim is to keep the conversation on neutral, even trivial, subjects. If something contentious looks to be coming up, you should know how to guide the conversation away. The skills that enable you to do this are covered, together with drills you can practice, in the booklet in this series called 'How to Communicate Better'.

The next question to ask is, 'Do I have to be having this conversation in the first place?' There are times when we can avoid contact with a person who upsets us. If you know you will meet him or her in the canteen at a particular time, then change your mealtime sometimes or take sandwiches. If you do happen to encounter that person in the street or in a shop, then plead an urgent appointment that you must rush off to. The aim is to minimise your contact with the person you find suppresses you.

Another thing you can do is to 'dilute' the influence that person can have on you by having someone else there. For example, if you feel obliged to go to visit them, take someone else with you. The suppressive person will usually find it more difficult to say upsetting things to you with an audience.

There are small things you can do that put you less at effect because you do get in some control. Much suppression comes from being put in a position where you feel you have to comply with given instructions completely and immediately. Rather than agree at once, you can try to negotiate a delay so you can do it at a time preferable to you. If you can't manage this, don't agree too readily; make it clear that it is something you believe you have a choice about. The ideal would be to get agreement to him or her doing something for you!

Less satisfactory, but still sometimes beneficial, is minimum compliance. If the suppressive person asks you to do something in a particular way, you can alter it to a degree just to be different. Children do this instinctively if they feel suppressed, which is the origin of the claim made that they do things in a way that is designed to annoy. It is true they actually sometimes do!

This is also a developed art in the military, where an officer who abuses his authority will often receive minimum

compliance to his orders. This can be a slow-motion salute or a strictly literal following of instructions. It is usually called extreme stupidity, but it does give some relief to the person being suppressed and may be the difference that enables a suppressed person to survive! Some readers will be familiar with the survival potential of this method from the novel 'The Good Soldier Schweik' by the Czech writer V. Hasek.

A further method for getting a bit at cause without provoking a major reaction is to appear to give in! Sometimes, a strategic retreat is better than a long, dragging argument that you know you will lose anyway. Catch him or her unawares by suddenly saying, 'You're right'. If you are being blamed for something, then suddenly say you realise now you were wrong, accept the blame, and ask what you can do to make it right. You may so catch out the other person that he will be unable to give you an answer. It will certainly stop the immediate complaint, and as you have suddenly removed his source of grievance, you may leave him floundering, which has put you slightly at Cause!

Confronting

The second category of action that can be taken is called *confronting*. This means confronting the person who is suppressing you with some of his actions. As I said earlier in this chapter, it is not realistic to attempt to achieve a total reform of the suppressive person while you are still, to some extent, being affected by his suppressive actions yourself.

This confronting is done in the hope that when shown or told of some of the results of his behaviour on you, he can be prevailed upon to change those actions which affect you.

This requires considerable courage. It represents a steeper gradient response than just the *handling* type of actions described above. The classic case is the need sooner or later to stand up to bullying. Our admiration is unbounded for the smaller schoolboy who decides to take on the school bully and put an end to his suppression. Unfortunately, bullying is not an exclusively male preserve, and although physical duress may not be used among young girls, the pain suffered is just as real. In the adult world, the techniques of bullying or suppression are less obvious, but the underlying reality is just the same.

The confronting of a person who is suppressing you will take a bit of planning. You must decide what you are trying to achieve and the things you can say that will contribute to achieving it. This will involve identifying the many things that are better left unsaid. Expressing how much you feel you have been wronged has no part in bringing about beneficial change. Emotions must be kept under a tight rein. If you are coolly in control, you can adjust your tactics according to the reaction you get.

The ideal is to get a discussion going on a rational basis and keep it that way. This requires picking the time and place very carefully. The person you have to confront is best approached when they are not tired, irritable, or immersed in the problems of their everyday life. Create a favourable climate to start with by talking to them about things that interest them. Then, gradually introduce to them the subject of your relationship and how the things they do affect you. Do your best to explain that their actions do prevent you from being and doing what you want to be and do, even though they don't intend that result. Having got some acknowledgement that this might be the case, be ready with a shopping list of things you would like changed in your relationship.

The next step is to implement the agreed changes as soon as possible. In the event of backsliding, you can use humour to remind the suppressive person of your agreement.

If you have tried the above course without any significant improvement, then you can console yourself that you did try. This will be necessary if you have to resort to stronger means. These stronger means would include assertiveness, sarcasm, ridicule, and threats. Assertiveness could include challenging their vague statements, altered communications, or snide comments. Be ready with such rejoinders as, "Who told you that?", "What grounds have you got for saying that?", "I didn't say that, I said...", "Who do you actually know who that happened to?", "What are you actually saying?" etc. etc. You may be surprised to find that after a while, other people in his or her vicinity start doing the same thing!

Sarcasm has been termed the lowest form of wit, but it has its uses. Rather than be directly rude, you can make it clear that you consider you are being put upon. For example, if asked or told to go to get something, you may say, "Would you like me to polish your shoes while I'm there?" This may serve to draw attention to the number of demands being made of you. It may lead to some embarrassment of the suppressive person and some reduction in the demands made on you, or at least more consideration in the way the demands are made,

Ridicule requires an audience to be effective. People who suppress others use ridicule a lot, so don't be too squeamish if you feel it is the only way to get back at cause over someone who is suppressing you. The technique is to tell a third party about the way you are treated in front of the person who is suppressing you. Keep it light and jokey to ensure you do not embarrass your audience too much. This also enables

you to avoid too much criticism afterwards by claiming it was mostly joking, though there was an element of truth in it! Despite maybe having to climb down, you will have achieved something of value. You will have shot out into the open your view that the other person's behaviour is suppressing you. From then on it will be much easier to make specific protests when suppression is taking place.

Threats are obviously the most extreme form of confronting. If reason and sarcastic hints have failed, it may be necessary to introduce some discipline into the situation. This would usually be a request for change, otherwise you will change something. This doesn't have to be a showdown with an either-or ultimatum. In many circumstances, this can be done with very little unpleasantness, as long as you remain polite and firm. Suppose a regular visitor to your home has an upsetting effect on you by criticising someone you like. You may dress it up a little, but your threat would be that unless he or she cuts out their critical comments, you would rather they didn't come to see you.

If an employee of yours is upsetting you, and maybe other people, call them in and make it clear you know what is going on. Then tell them that you want it to stop, and if it doesn't, you will dismiss them, irrespective of the time and trouble it takes. You will find they will mend their ways, or they will leave of their own accord,

If you are the employee of a suppressive boss, then turn the situation around. Say that unless they change their behaviour towards you, you will quit, even if you have to wash dishes to support yourself. You can supplement the threat by saying that if you do leave, you will send a strong letter of complaint to Head Office about them. If there has been financial irregularity or sexual harassment, then you may hint

that there are people you could inform. This is obviously distasteful to do, but if you have been suppressed by these means, you must not be squeamish about using the same means (not illegally, of course) to dig yourself out.

Face-to-face confrontation is always best if you can manage it. However, unlike assertiveness, sarcasm, or ridicule, this is slightly less necessary in issuing an ultimatum. If you feel unable to face the person, then you could do it by letter and then follow it up by a telephone call. This has the advantage that you can express your views clearly without the pressure of the person being in the same room.

Whichever way you do the confrontation, it is essential that you prepare by writing down your thoughts and sorting them out beforehand. Having decided on your plan, stick to it despite the inevitable bluster and attempts to divert you from what you want to say.

Separating

There are situations where all efforts to bring about a favourable change in the relationship have failed. The suppressed person now faces the prospect of being further pressed down and succumbing to a state of total effect. They may be left with a few apparent concessions to their causitiveness, but these will still be subject to withdrawal or threat of withdrawal by the suppressive person. A parasite doesn't benefit from killing the host on which it lives!

The easier situations in which to bring this about are employment, business, and social relationships. If you are the employee of a boss or have a colleague who is suppressing you, then leave that job or ask for a transfer. In business, if you have

a customer or supplier who is suppressing you, a not uncommon situation, then find a way of doing without him or her. In a social situation, you can find a way of avoiding any contact with a particular person. If you have tried gentler means, be prepared to tell them, and your other friends, why you wish to have no further dealings with them. With a difficult neighbour who is upsetting you, one option you have is to move house. Maybe the person who comes after you won't be sensitive to the same things as you are.

The toughest situations to handle are family situations. Unfortunately, this is also where the worst cases of suppression are to be found. It is all very well to tell a suppressed wife with young children that she should leave her husband, but the practical difficulties are enormous. A suppressed teenager will find it very difficult to make their way in the world on their own if they leave home. A young child will find it impossible.

Practical matters are, however, not the only difficulty. We have touched before on the distorting effect of love and also the social expectations related to love. A person may be prepared to look objectively at their relationship with another and say that love does not exist in any real mutually beneficial way. However, the social pressures on them to be seen as a 'good' wife, husband, child, or even parent are enormous. If love did exist in the past, then it is difficult to face up to the fact it may have degenerated into social dependence.

Sooner or later, a suppressed person who can recognise they are suppressed and who wants to change the situation will have to analyse the love content of that relationship. It seems perfectly possible for someone to suppress someone whom they also love. It is also possible for someone to love someone who is suppressing them. This makes choices even more difficult!

I should say again that separation is the last resort. There are many, many things that can be done to improve family relationships once one recognises what is going on. Some of these have been dealt with in this chapter, but there are others. One of the things one must do is to look honestly to see if there are things you are doing yourself that contribute to the other person's need to suppress you.

If a quiet and rational analysis of the situation has led you to the conclusion that separation is the only avenue left, then you must plan your actions very carefully. An impetuous decision to walk out of the door and never come back will lead to needless pain and discomfort. It will also achieve little if you have to come back with your tail between your legs within a few days. In fact, it will be a setback because it reinforces your dependence on that other person.

It is desirable to decide in advance what you want to achieve by the separation. Maybe you want to give the person who is suppressing you a quick shock. You may hope that he or she will then realise that you do not have to stay with them. You may then be able to get them to look at your relationship with new eyes. In this case, you would intend the separation to be temporary, so it is sensible that you provide some means for them to communicate with you.

Alternatively, you may wish to make the separation partial so that you can pursue more of your personal goals and purposes. This seems an attractive compromise, and indeed it is if the suppressive person genuinely agrees to it rather than agrees under pressure but intends to counter-attack. If you intend to threaten complete separation to get what you want, be very sure you are willing to go through with it.

If you have tried all other measures and have concluded that the separation must be permanent, then make

plans accordingly. If you fear some unpleasant or violent reaction, then it is desirable that you should arrange to go somewhere where you can't be found or directly communicated with.

Depending on your plans, you should take legal advice, if necessary, beforehand. Leave or send a letter saying what you have done and explaining why, as best you can. State what legal plans you have made and settle as many practical matters as you can beforehand.

Separation does not have to be sudden. The process of gradual lessening of dependence can be applied very skillfully. An example of this I heard of was one of an elderly married couple whose children were grown up. The husband was very unhappy and felt that his wife's suppressive behaviour towards him was the cause. His son had bought an old house that needed considerable renovation in another part of the country. So, the father started visiting the son to help him with work on the building. These visits got longer and longer until the day came when it became a natural progression for the husband to tell his wife that he would not be coming back!

This last section has inevitably moved to a gloomy conclusion. It should be emphasised that separation from members of your family will be very painful for you as well as them. It is a last resort to be considered when all else has failed. If a person feels tempted to employ this solution without trying the other methods suggested, perhaps they are more motivated by ideas of revenge than a genuine desire to improve the relationship. After all, 'separation' is the ultimate failure to confront and handle the other person or persons.

Much better is a gradual approach to regaining some causitiveness in the relationship. This may be tough,

challenging, and slow, but it is by far the best solution. It is also immensely rewarding and a very good training for living with others.

Chapter Eleven Practical

13. Read through this chapter again and make a list of each of the types of action that can be taken. As you do so, write down a practical example of how each might be done.

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Chapter Twelve:

Mothers Smother

Suppression is to be found in many forms and variants. The degree to which a person is inclined to feel the effects of being suppressed by another depends on what is going on around him at the same time. If he is under great pressure from unusual external factors, he will have less energy and resilience to absorb the usual pressure from someone who is suppressing him. Once he reaches his limit of absorption, he will show signs of stress and then start on the ‘up and down’ pattern, usually getting ill on the ‘down’. He will look for all sorts of explanations but very rarely identify the source as being a person.

He may be persuaded to think in terms of someone else suppressing him and depriving him of his causitiveness. In trying to find the person who is suppressing him, he will naturally look among his enemies. This is the surprise that comes in the second part of the title of this book. The last place we would expect to find someone suppressing us is among our ‘loving friends’, as Kipling calls them.

“If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you
If all men count with you but none too much”

It is among our so-called 'loved ones' that most surprises are to be found. The friend whom we have taken into our confidence has the information we have given to him or her to play upon our fears. The same is true in marriages and families. With friends, it is possible to end the relationship once suppression has shown itself. With family ties, it is much more difficult. We should be aware of some of the more common variants of suppression to be found in families so that we do not overlook them in our search for the source of suppression.

Suppression between husbands and wives often stems from one partner feeling they need to protect him or herself from the other. If one partner feels that the other is stronger, more successful, or just happier than they are, they may see this as a criticism of their own lifestyle and purposes. A husband may show signs of jealousy when his wife starts to make progress in her career and has to spend more time out of the home. A wife may feel that her husband's wider interests exclude her, and she becomes jealous of his enthusiasm. The partner who believes he or she is weaker may then embark on a campaign of undermining and suppressing the other. The husband may do this by complaining that the house and children are being neglected. The wife left at home may get ill, so her husband has to stay with her more.

The suppressive person in this case feels inadequate in comparison to their partner; in fact, they feel all the symptoms of being suppressed themselves! The only way they can respond is to try to minimise or suppress their partner. As we saw in earlier chapters, there are many subtle and apparently innocent ways for one partner in a marriage to suppress the other so that their suppression stays undetected. This kind of suppression is also difficult to spot because the suppressive

person may only be suppressive to their partner. We could call this person a one-off suppressive, although they are capable of using their suppressive techniques on others if they feel themselves threatened.

This can lead to a further variant. In this, the suppression between husband and wife goes both ways. With both real and imagined suppression around, the couple quickly forgets who started it and why. Regrettably, we all know couples whose main activity seems to be knocking lumps out of each other, except when they unite to attack somebody else. This was very accurately portrayed in the play and film 'Who's Afraid of Virginia Wolfe?'

Examples of children being suppressed by their parents are regrettably common. This can start at an early age when parents may be unwilling to let their child express him or herself. On the other hand, it may start only when the child starts moving towards independence. It can also be imagined by the child who fears the responsibilities of independence. Sometimes, the child can have a good, healthy relationship with each parent but feel suppressed by both parents when they are together.

You may well have been wondering whether suppression in families can go the other way. I regret to say, although it is very unpalatable to do so, that some children do succeed in suppressing one or both of their parents. A child quickly learns how to use emotional blackmail, and children have enormous resources of stubbornness to get their own way. Occasional bouts of heavy discipline are no match for a determined child! The whole subject of child-rearing is a large one and will be the subject of another book in this series. In the meantime, it can be said that the causes of children being

suppressive to their parents are the same as for adults, and the solution is the same as for adults.

It is common that 'mothers smother', albeit with love, but large families are generally quite smothering for young people when they are trying to find themselves. This is because the family establishes certain norms of behaviour and achievement. The child who cannot fit in gets considerable pressure, sometimes economic, to conform. A graphic picture of this and its results can be seen in the portrayal of Sebastian Flyte in *Brideshead Revisited*.

In looking at the example of Sebastian Flyte, we can see how complete financial dependence robs a person of any feeling of being at cause. A child born into a very wealthy or powerful family, like Sebastian, will usually have great problems in establishing his own identity and causitiveness, particularly in financial terms. A child who has money lavished on him or her has great difficulty in achieving financial causitiveness and ultimately financial independence. It is very rare to find a child of wealthy parents generating a fresh fortune of his own.

Some people use enforced generosity as a means of suppression. James Joyce used to go to enormous lengths to avoid anyone else paying a restaurant or bar bill. Very nice for his guests, you may think. In fact, his guests were regularly put at effect by this action. They were deprived of the opportunity to repay his generosity and thus have their share of being at cause.

We can apply this principle to a wider social picture. I am not seeking to make a political point, but it is noticeable that when the State takes over the role of provider, it usually robs the individual receivers of their feeling of being at cause. Examine the way individuals treat public facilities for which

they do not pay directly and over which they exercise no choice. Then, compare the way they treat facilities for which they pay directly. If a person feels they are effect of centrally imposed facilities, they will feel all the usual symptoms of suppression. They will then try to get back at cause, at best by neglecting them and at worst by vandalising them!

In this booklet, I have tried to give sufficient examples for you to recognise one or two and then start looking for yourself. Please don't accept that suppression exists because I say so. Look around you and see what is there to be seen.

It is a difficult area because most of us want to see the best in other people. We will try to make allowances and give them the benefit of the doubt. That is very laudable, and while we should do our best to be fair and helpful to our fellows, we should not allow that wish to blind us to seeing what is actually happening. Much of what we see is open to interpretation, of course, but we should be prepared to see the worst as well as the best.

Spotting suppressive people is difficult because they come in so many shapes and sizes. It is usually easier to spot suppression first and then work backwards to find who is the suppressor. Correctly spotting where the suppression is coming from is desirable if effective remedial action is to be taken. It does get easier to identify suppression and where it is coming from once you have spotted one or two glaring examples.

In earlier chapters, we looked at the variety of suppressive people we may encounter. The remedial action which you should take for them all is much the same.

The main variable is how much scope you have to get yourself quickly back at cause. The best approach is to start at a very gentle level. You may be surprised how little self-

assertion is necessary to achieve a back-off by the suppressor. Once you have achieved one small victory, you can move to a slightly greater degree of causitiveness. We could call this increasing the gradient approach.

On the other hand, be ready for a possible blowback reaction. Somebody who has been successfully suppressing you for a while is not going to give up that position easily. That is why if your initial moves are gentle, you are less likely to alert them to what you are doing. If, however, you do get a strong reaction, then back off as gracefully as you can. Learn from that experience. Maybe you tried for too much too soon. Start planning your next attempt. Do not give up.

Most of the suggested remedies for suppression have been specific and require you to spot who is trying to suppress you. That, however, is not always possible to do quickly. So, here is a general antidote that you can use whenever you feel a bit suppressed but can't be sure where it came from or can't immediately do anything about it.

Many people are deceived into thinking relief will be obtained from sleep because they feel tired and perhaps a little groggy. The best answer is the very opposite. The short-term relief for all forms of suppression is physical exercise. Perhaps you have heard enough about the theory of suppression to see why!

In today's culture, the most fashionable form of exercise is jogging, but cycling, yoga, aerobics, or swimming will do equally well. In fact, any form of physical exertion will achieve the desired end. We started this chapter with Rudyard Kipling so let us end with his very practical solution, which still works very well today:

“The cure for this ill is not to sit still,

Or frowst with a book by the fire;
But to take a large hoe and a shovel also, and
dig till you gently perspire.”

You may like to know more about the ideas and therapies discussed in this booklet. If so, there are other books in the Get Ready for Life series that you would find worth reading. If you would like to know about therapists or self-help groups using these techniques, possibly in your area, you can write to Anima Publishing, who will forward details of local contacts to you.



Chapter Thirteen:

How to Help Others

After reading this book, you may well feel that it does not apply to you at the moment. You may, however, know someone to whom it does apply and who you wish to help. These notes are intended to help you in this endeavour.

First, it is very likely that you can see the suppression and its source much more clearly than they can. It is essential that you do not tell them your views on the source. They will have to build up their causitiveness first to a level to be able to recognise that they are being suppressed. It will then take even more confront for them to identify who is suppressing them.

With a bad case, the first step is to calm the person down. Talk to them outside the suppressive environment. Try to get them away from the suppressive person for a few days if you can. Then, talk to them about the symptoms of suppression. Get them to read relevant bits of this book. Get them to do some of the exercises. If they are being heavily suppressed, you will need a lot of patience. They will find every reason not to look at the evidence of their suppression and its origin. You will find you need to sit with them while they read the book. You may have to do the exercises by discussion with them, but do get them to write down the answers if you can.

Try to raise their causitiveness in areas outside those in which they are being suppressed. Physical exertion, manual work, or sport are ideal to start with.

Once they have confronted the idea that they are being suppressed and they decide who is doing it, then you can start to work out a plan with them. Remember the principle of gradient. Start with a very small move towards causitiveness. Talk to them about only one step, and then let them do it. Do not frighten them with the prospects of steeper gradients to come.

If you know the communication drills, start and finish each of your discussion sessions with five minutes of silent 'Confronting with eyes open'.

Give them plenty of moral support but don't try to think for them or try to do for them what they must do for themselves.

Good luck!

Appendix

Suppressive Behaviour Checklist

Plus Characteristics

Passes on good news; tries not to be critical or hurt feelings

Associates are healthy, happy, and doing well

Passes on information accurately & completely
Receives instructions and advice open-mindedly

Respects laws and regulations; considerate to others

Willing to take the blame and admit if in the wrong

Positive solutions to social problems; reform of offenders

Reports specifics and quotes sources accurately

Completes most actions doesn't leave for others

Respects the property of others and returns loans

Open minded to new ways of helping people

Concerned & interested in the welfare of others

Minus Characteristics

Likes bad news; critical of you and others; relies on gossip and hearsay

Associates make mistakes and are often ill

Unreliable at passing messages, twists meanings
Resists and resents all guidance; uncooperative

Very selfish, intolerant of rules & conventions.

Can't take responsibility or admit being at fault

Violent and vengeful solutions to social problems and offenders; prefers revenge

Talks in vague generalities and relies on popular myths

Leaves uncompleted jobs and problems for others

Borrows others' things and money irresponsibly

Suspicious of help and antagonistic to helpers

Obsessively self-centred, unconcerned with others

Glossary

The following are words and terms that have been used in this book in connection with suppression. There are also some terms or initials that are sometimes used when discussing this subject.

Button: A particular subject or reference that a suppressive person knows will upset his victim. Like a button on a radio, when you press it, you get a reaction.

Cause: The person who initiates an interchange by opening a conversation, sending an invitation, making a proposal, etc.

Effect: The complement to cause. The person who receives and is expected to respond to the conversational initiative, the invitation, or the proposal.

Gradient: The principle of a little more each time. If a person is starting to get back at cause with someone, it is best if he starts in a small way and progresses by gradually increasing steps from there.

PTS: Present Time Suppressed person.

Roller Coaster: American name for a fairground ride, which in England is called a Switchback. It refers to the 'ups and downs' pattern exhibited by a person who is being suppressed by another.

SP: Suppressive Person.