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# THE CLOSED MIND

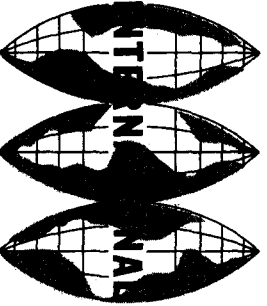
BY

DR. SANFORD I. BERMAN



DO YOU THROW AWAY THE KEY?

The **INTERNATIONAL** COMMUNICATION INSTITUTE



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THE CLOSED MIND

I am not ashamed to confess that I am ignorant of what I do not know.

--Cicero

To be conscious that you are ignorant is a great step to knowledge.

--Disraeli

To recognize what things you know, and what things you do not know-- this is wisdom.

--Confucius

The "I," "I am right," and "I have the truth," lurks beneath the gregarious ignorance, the fatuous mistakes and the primitive misunderstandings of men. "I know" too often becomes "is necessarily true."

"I know" appears to be almost an unconscious presumption of mankind, actually meaning "I prefer," "I feel," or "I wish" which are hardly adequate criteria for truth. Hence, the necessity of constantly doubting our most cherished beliefs and those of others.

--The Author

Men are four:

He who knows not and knows not he knows not; he is a fool-- shun him.

He who knows not and knows he knows not, he is simple-- teach him;

He who knows and knows not he knows, he is asleep-- wake him;

He who knows and knows he knows, he is wise-- follow him!

--Arabic Apothegm

Man, proud man,  
Drest in a little brief authority,  
Most ignorant of what he's most assured.

--William Shakespeare

An attitude of this kind-- "You can't tell me anything about that"-- has an effect quite similar to that of a pus sac in the brain.

--Wendell Johnson

THE CLOSED MIND

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## CAN WE KNOW IT ALL?

Let me ask you a question that you may or may not have thought about before, "Can we ever know all about anything?"

Think about that for a while. Is there anything that we can know all about? Can we ever say, after examining something, "I know all about it."

I once had a finger-printing expert in class who insisted that he knew all about finger-printing. Fortunately, there was another finger-printing expert who quite conclusively proved that he did not.

As far as we know, we cannot know all about anything. The more we consider this question, the more we realize that we do not know all about anything. There are so many factors, relationships, minutiae inherent in the simplest or smallest thing.

Take a pencil, for example. Can we know all about a simple, little pencil? If we make a detailed examination of this simple product we might see that from the "four corners of the earth" rare ingredients are gathered for some pencils. Smooth, silvery graphite from Ceylon and Madagascar. . . . jet black graphite from Mexico. . . . slick, oily clay from Bavaria. . . . rubber from Malaya. . . . straight-grained American cedar. Even from the arctic seas comes spermaceti, the whale oil wax used in some pencils. From the foundry's inferno comes brass to make pencil tips. But the rarest ingredient of all is still not included, and this is the years of research and experience that goes into the finished product known as a "pencil." Experience in refining, blending, assembling, research, testing, quality control, etc., are about aspects of the pencil impossible to know all about. We can ask questions of who, what, where, why, when, and how relative to all of these ingredients that make up a pencil. Actually, we can ask questions ad infinitum about the simplest of things.

At this point, students very often say, "But one can know all that one has to know." This may be true. But this is also an entirely different question. The question is, "Can we know all about anything?"

For now, it is important that we realize that, as far as we know, we cannot know all about anything. No expert, no scientist, no engineer, no specialist can tell us all about his area of specialization. In fact, the opposite usually occurs. The more he learns, studies, does research and tries to answer the questions in his field, the more he realizes how little he knows, so vast is man's potential world of knowledge.

Now, my second question is, "Have you ever met individuals who act as if they know all about something?" How often have we met people who act as if they know it all. How easy it is to assume knowledge that we do not have.

Before we consider this barrier to effective communication let us go a little more deeply into why we cannot know all about anything. What are the limiting factors of our acquaintance with things?

### Limiting Factors of Our Acquaintance With Things

1. Time. Time is one of the limiting factors of our acquaintance with anything. In making a study, research, analysis or investigation we have a limited number of seconds, minutes, hours, days, etc., in our observations. Usually, however, in our everyday observations we have but a fleeting second in observing the world of reality. We are living in a dynamic world, and we have only a certain amount of time to observe things.
2. Space. There is no physical position that will give us full focus on all aspects of a thing. Look at any object and you must, of necessity, abstract some characteristics and eliminate others. George V. Denny Jr., who for years was famous as the moderator of America's Town Meeting of the Air, shows the relationship between where you stand and what you stand for.

My professor of geology at the University of North Carolina used to begin his course with this admonition: "The first lesson I want you to learn is that things are largely what they are because they are where they are. And that goes for people and ideas as well as rocks!"

During my post-broadcast talks when America's Town Meeting of the Air is on tour, I often tell this anecdote and hold up a ball which, from the

audience's point of view, is black.

"What color is this ball, please?" I ask.

Invariably, someone shouts, "Black!"

"Right," I admit. "From your point of view the ball is black. Yet from the point of view of those of us here on the platform, it is white. If you insist that what you see is right, and we insist that what we see is right, we can get nowhere.

"You might overcome us with the power of ballots or bullets, but," -- and at this moment I turn the ball around-- "as we see now, the ball is both black and white."

What does this mean in terms of human relations? The tragedy is that we cannot turn our social, economic and political problems around for each other as readily as we turn a black-and-white ball.

You are bound by your heredity, your environment and your habits of thinking, and I am bound by the same limitations. The only way for us to settle our differences and arrive at sensible conclusions is through honest discussion, with integrity of purpose and mutual respect. This is the nearest approach to the scientific process that is available to us in the field of human relations.

3. Complexity. Another reason why we cannot know all about anything is that the world is extremely complex. To unlock the secret of atomic energy required the work of many scientists all over the world for many generations. The man in the street is frequently accused of dealing in half truths, but where is the whole truth to be found?

We hear that everything must have an explanation, that it is only a question of knowing the facts. But since we cannot know all of them, we must limit our questions and remember that we are drawing from an unlimited source with only a very small bucket.

The more our scientists ponder and explore all areas of human knowledge, the more we realize the vastness and complexity of man and his world. But it is the "simpleton" who wants to simplify the world of reality in his quest for certainty--the simple solutions to problems, the easy answers and pat cures, the lust for the absolute. From the cures of cancer to the cures of unemployment, we want to achieve the absolute, the certain.<sup>1</sup> But we know that in a world of complexity, of dynamic relations

1. John Dewey, The Quest for Certainty.

and indeterminateness, certainty and the absolute are impossible. William Jennings Bryan had this to say to those who were continually looking for the simple answers: "Let him find out, if he can, why it is that a black cow can eat green grass and then give white milk with yellow butter in it."

4. Stereotypes. Walter Lippmann, in his classic book, Public Opinion, has indicated how our stereotypes limit and control our ways of thinking and voting. In fact, Lippmann's definition of a stereotype implies the limiting factors of our perceptions and selections when he says, "Stereotypes are an ordered, more or less consistent picture of the world, to which our habits, our tastes, our capacities, our comforts and our hopes have adjusted themselves."<sup>2</sup>

Klineberg reports how "scientific research" sometimes falls victim to these all-pervading stereotypes.

In connection with the qualitative characteristics of the brain, the early investigations of Bean (Bean, R. B., "Some Racial Peculiarities of the Negro Brain," American Journal of Anatomy, 5: pp. 353-432) have focused attention upon possible Negro-White differences. In a series of studies Bean arrived at the conclusion that the frontal area of the brain was less well-developed in the Negro than in the White, and the posterior area better developed. He believed that this difference paralleled the "known fact" that the Negro is inferior in the higher intellectual functions and superior in those concerned with rhythm and sense perception. Another important difference was in the depth of the convolutions of the cortex, those of the Negro being much shallower and more "child-like" than those of the White. There were also differences in the shape of the corpus callosum, which connects the two hemispheres of the cerebrum, and in the temporal lobe, but these were not regarded as having any direct psychological significance.

It happened that these studies were carried out at John Hopkins University under the direction of Professor Mall, head of the Department of Anatomy. Mall was for some reason un-

2. Walter Lippmann, Public Opinion (New York: Macmillan Co., 1922), p. 95.

certain of Bean's results, and he repeated the whole study (Mall, F. P., "On Several Anatomical Characters of the Human Brain," American Journal of Anatomy, 1909, 9: pp. 1-32) on the same collection of brains on which Bean had worked; he took the precaution, however, of comparing the brains without knowing in advance which were Negro and which were White. When he and his associates placed in one group those brains which had rich convolutions and in another those with convolutions which were shallow, they found exactly the same proportions of Negro and White brains in the two groups. When further they measured the size of the frontal and posterior lobes in the two groups of brains, they found no difference in their relative extent in the two races. Mall came to the conclusion that Bean's findings had no basis in fact, and that it had not been demonstrated that Negro brains differed in any essential manner from those of Whites. Incidentally, these two studies taken together illustrate in a very significant manner the importance of stereotypes and "mental set" in determining what one will see in any given situation. There can be no doubt that Bean was sincere in his belief that he had observed these differences between the two groups of brains. It seems clear, however, that because of the expectation of finding signs of inferiority in the Negro, and because of his knowledge of the racial origin of the brains he was examining, he actually "saw" differences which did not exist. In any case, Mall's more carefully controlled study testifies to the fallacy of the popular assumption that one can recognize a Negro brain by the presence of certain definite inferiorities.<sup>3</sup>

5. Interest. What we are interested in will indicate what we abstract or select from the world of reality. Each one of us has different interests and, very often, these interests and what we see will tell more about us than what we might be looking at.

Two medical specialists were off on a holiday. "These girls in Florida certainly have beautiful legs, don't they?" said the orthopedist, after an appreciative look around the beach.

3. Otto Klineberg, Social Psychology (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1940), pp. 291-292.

"I hadn't noticed," said his companion. "I'm a chest man, myself."

On the Athens, Texas, golf course, a shapely miss, attired in the briefest of shorts, stepped up to the number one tee and prepared to address the ball. Three caddies and five male golfers stepped aside and watched. She swung prettily, hooked the ball and lost sight of it. "Could you tell me where my ball went?" she asked the onlookers. Sheepish grins passed over eight faces. Not one of them had his eye on the ball.

Ruch indicates how interests affect human perception.

Let us suppose that a geologist, a farmer, an artist and a real-estate promoter are looking at the same plot of ground. The geologist's attention might be attracted to the layers of rock exposed when the road cuts through a hillside, for such layers tell much about the physical history of the region. The farmer would probably examine the soil and any plants or weeds growing on it. The artist might walk about until he found the position from which the landscape was a balanced composition to be painted. The real-estate promoter would look the property over carefully to see how it could be subdivided. The objective stimulus is the same for all four of these individuals, but their interests differ. Their attention and consequent behavior vary accordingly.<sup>4</sup>

6. Physical factors. There are many physical factors, often closely related with position or space limitations, which indicate what we abstract or select from the world of reality. Physical factors such as light, sound, heat, nearness, farness, etc., also determine human perception. Alfred Korzybski, in an article called "The Role of Language in the Perceptual Process" shows how darkness influenced four different abstractions from one situation.

In a railroad compartment an American grandmother with her young and attractive granddaughter, a Romanian officer, and a Nazi officer were the only occupants. The train was passing through a dark tunnel, and all that was

4. Floyd L. Ruch, Psychology and Life (Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Co., 5th. edition, 1958), p. 269.

heard was a loud kiss and a vigorous slap. After the train emerged from the tunnel, nobody spoke, but the grandmother was saying to herself, "What a fine girl I have raised. She will take care of herself. I am proud of her." The granddaughter was saying to herself, "Well, grandmother is old enough not to mind a little kiss. Besides, the fellows are nice. I am surprised what a hard wallop grandmother has." The Nazi officer was meditating, "How clever those Romanians are! They steal a kiss and have the other fellow slapped." The Romanian officer was chuckling to himself, "How smart I am! I kissed my own hand and slapped the Nazi." 5

7. Language. The title of Korzybski's above article implies the relationship between language and human perception. Much important scholarly research and study has been done in several different disciplines to show how language and the structure of language indicates the kind of world we see. Anthropologists and linguists such as Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, along with Alfred Korzybski, have emphasized the important role that language plays in thinking, perceiving and behaving. This relatively new thesis is considered throughout this book. But there are other aspects or limitations of language that must be considered. For it is this very tool that we use in communication--language--that is not only inherently ambiguous but, by nature, greatly limited.

No sentence in any language tells all that can be told about situations. For instance, the sentence the man pumps well water does not tell whether the man is young or old, tall or short; it leaves us uninformed about the color of his skin and hair and the character of his clothing. We do not know whether the weather is hot or cold, in what part of the world the work is being done, or even whether the speaker is a witness to it. Neither do we know what kind of a pump is used or how deep the well is or what sort of water it produces. We do not even know whether the pumping is going on at this moment; perhaps it is an habitual operation by a man who just now is asleep. Any of these things can be told in any

5. Robert R. Blake and Glenn R. Ramsey (ed.), Perception: An Approach to Personality (New York: The Ronald Press, 1951).

language, but no language is likely to tell many of them about any one occurrence. 6

Every statement uttered is true only in part, for it is possible in human speech, even in the most artful human speech, ultimately to say only one thing at a time, and there are a thousand other aspects of the same fact that any one fragment of discourse can never even broach. 7

8. Sex. The differences between male and female are great and these, too, are indicated in human perception. This is one of the reasons why husbands and wives have so many arguments, because they assume that the other should observe the world of reality as they do. What is of importance to the husband might be of no concern to the wife; what is of great value to the husband is of little or no value to the wife. Each perceives an outward world through an inward world of his or her own.

We were seated in the lobby of the hotel as she walked swiftly by us, turned a corner sharply, and was gone.

"That's an uncommonly good-looking girl," I said to my wife, who was deep in a cross-word puzzle.

"Do you mean the one in that imitation blue taffeta dress with the green and red flowered design?"

"The girl that just walked by."

"Yes," said my wife, "with that dowdy rayon dress on. It's a copy of the one I saw at Hattie Carnegie's, and a poor copy at that. You'd think, though, that she'd have better taste than to wear a chartreuse hat with it, especially with her bleached hair."

"Bleached? I didn't notice her hair was bleached."

"Good heavens, you could almost smell the peroxide. I don't mind a bit of make-up, provided it looks fairly natural. But you could scrape that rouge off with a knife. They ought to add a course in make-up to the curriculum at Smith."

6. E. H. Sturtevant, Introduction to Linguistic Science (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1947), p. 57.

7. Irwin Edman, Philosopher's Quest (New York: The Viking Press, 1947), p. 47.

"Smith? Why Smith?"

"From her class pin, of course. You must have noticed it hanging from her charm bracelet."

"I wasn't looking at her wrist."

"I'll bet you weren't. Nor at those fat legs of hers, either. A woman with legs like that shouldn't wear high-heeled patent-leather shoes."

"I thought she was a very pretty girl," I said apologetically.

"Well, you may be right," said my wife.

"I was busy with my puzzle and I didn't notice her particularly. What's the name of a President of the United States in six letters, beginning with T?" 8

9. Sense limitations. We have limitations of our nervous system, which is a reason why man has invented microscopes, telescopes, etc., as a kind of added nervous system. If we compare ourselves with animals, we see certain limitations of our senses compared to certain animals. In fact, man is now studying the amazing senses of animals to learn something of their nature for possible military, civilian and humanitarian values.<sup>9</sup> A dividend that can result from the study of different species is the derivation of models that can be the basis for development of useful electronic equipment. An understanding and utilization of these biological principles can almost certainly lead to an increase in the versatility and a decrease in the size of future electronic instruments. For example, a mathematical model of the beetle's vision is the basis for the development of a ground speed indicator. The use of ultrasonic cries for echo location by the bat is well known, if not yet fully understood. Its precision, speed, and freedom from interference make this a profitable system for study by the physicist, not only for military purposes, but as an aid to the blind.

The sensitivity of the moth's ear in intercepting hostile bat sounds surpasses that of our most advanced microphones. The sonar system of porpoises and whales gives indications that they have a highly developed and accurate location sense. Many fish have electroreceptors which they use to detect obstacles. The rattlesnake is equipped with exquisitely sensitive temperature receptors. When two balls of equal size differing minutely in temperature are presented to the snake,

8. Newman Levy, "The Camera Eye," The Atlantic Monthly, December, 1952.

9. B. G. Holzman, "Beetles, Bats and Ballistic Beasts," Science, September 23, 1960.

it will invariably and unhesitatingly strike at the warmer. Certain insects have highly developed smell receptors. The antennae of male silk moths are highly sensitive to the odorous material produced by females of the same species, which they can detect at great distances.

Hairs of various flies are amazingly sensitive to certain chemicals--some to salt, some to acid, some to alcohol. Spiders and some insects have mechanoreceptors by which they can detect minute vibrations, which they use for localization of prey or enemy. The lobster has a beautifully designed equilibrium sense organ which is sensitive to vibration and to movement in various directions, to maintain position in one plane or another. Bees use polarized light in returning to a source of nectar or to the hive. Some birds use clocking sounds for echo locations. In the owl, the shape of the head is related to a highly developed sound-locating system which enables the animal to pick up its prey in the dark.

The more we study animals, birds, insects, and other forms of life, the more we realize how limited are man's senses in comparison.

10. Culture. The great liberator of the twentieth century has been the study of anthropology. It has replaced man's egocentrism and ethnocentrism, the tendency to study other cultures from our own point of view, with the realization that other cultures must be studied from their point of view, world picture or cultural assumptions. It has broadened man's understanding of man tremendously. It has placed in proper perspective the importance of cultural conditioning, in understanding man's behavior and his place in the scheme of things.

We do not truly understand and appreciate the importance of culture as a limiting factor in our international relations, international politics and dealings in the United Nations. Dr. Telberg points out some of the cultural and linguistic difficulties we get into by not being conscious of these factors in the United Nations.

"What the Distinguished Lady Representative has just suggested proves that women can be more than decorative--they can also be useful."

With this jovial remark, a United States Delegate looked at his Soviet Colleague in the Population Commission of the United Nations and awaited a smile of response. None came. The Russian sat stiff and unsmiling. In Russia there are no jokes about women drivers or women delegates, so beloved by the Americans. The Russian conception of courtesy, therefore, forbade the Soviet Delegate to do anything but freeze into a silent disapproval. The well-meaning American attempt to find common ground by means of a joke thus increased, rather than decreased, the psychological distance between the two delegations. ....

One of the most deeply rooted, and largely unconscious, features of any culture is what the psychologists call the time perspective. Within the United Nations, at least three different time perspectives operate.

"Gentlemen, it is time for lunch, we must adjourn," announces the Anglo-Saxon chairman, in the unabashed belief that having three meals a day at regular hours is the proper way for mankind to exist.

"But why? We haven't finished what we were doing," replies--in a puzzled manner that grows rapidly more impatient--an Eastern European delegate, in whose country people eat when the inclination moves them and every family follows its own individual timetable.

"Why, indeed?" placidly inquires the Far Eastern representative, hailing from a country where life and time are conceived as a continuous stream, with no man being indispensable, with no life-process needing to be interrupted for any human being, and where members of electoral bodies walk in and out of the room quietly, getting a bit to eat when necessary, talking to a friend when pleasant; but where meetings, theatre performances, and other arranged affairs last without interruption for hours on end, while individuals come and go, are replaced by others, meditate or participate as the occasion requires, without undue strain, stress, or nervous tension.

As one or the other group persists in its own conception of the time perspective, as the Anglo-Saxons demand that the duration of

meetings and conferences be fixed in advance and that meals be taken regularly at fixed hours, and as the Russians sit irritated and the Latins puzzled and the Secretariat frantic--as this condition continues, mutual friction grows, murmurs of "unreasonableness" are heard around the room; and, when the issue under discussion is an important one, overt accusations are hurled across the room of "insincerity," "lack of a serious approach to the problem," and even "sabotage."

The Latins, on the other hand, far from employing sarcasm, prefer to sprinkle their speeches with a liberal amount of poetic imagery, metaphysical expressions, and literary allusions.

During the General Assembly meeting in Paris, a Latin-American delegate pleaded for the inclusion of the phrase, "from the cradle to the grave," in the Article of the Declaration of Human Rights dealing with social security. He wanted to insure that a worker, or rather, a citizen, should be covered by measures of social protection in just that manner: from the cradle to the grave. He meant precisely, literally, what he said.

"Such phrases have no place in a serious document," pronounced a Western European delegate.

"But the Declaration should be beautifully worded," argued another Latin delegate.

"It's a legal document--not a poem," muttered a Benelux member.

A member of the United States Delegation whispered darkly into a neighbor's ear:

"Why not 'from womb to tomb'? At least it rhymes!"

Before the final text of the Article was settled upon, several other poetical versions were suggested. Some others, quite unprintable, shortly made the rounds of the corridors outside the conference rooms. 10

There are many other variables involved in human perception. A person's ability or capacity, his existing knowledge, education or training all play an important role in abstracting. Change and process are important limiting factors, for we live in a dynamic world where things, as well as ourselves, are constantly changing.

10. Ina Telberg, "They Don't Do It Our Way," UNESCO Courier, Vol. III, No. 4, May 1, 1950.

Our evaluations and perceptions are personal. As we see in the following example, whether a man represents labor or management, indicates what he will see.

A cartoon chart of "The Four Goals of Labor" was clipped from a C. I. O. newspaper and photostated. A new legend, however, was attached at the bottom: "From June 3 National Association of Manufacturers Newsletter." Twenty C. I. O. members were then shown the ad and asked if they thought it was a fair presentation of labor's goals. Four grudgingly said it was and two couldn't make up their minds. The remaining fourteen damned it as "patronizing," "loaded," "paternalistic," "makes me want to spit." 11

Religion, as we have seen in past presidential elections, not only determines how a man will vote, but what he will see or how he will behave. An atheist, someone once said, is the person who goes to a Notre-Dame, Southern Methodist football game and doesn't care who wins!

We could extend indefinitely our list of the limiting factors of our acquaintance with things. But, for the moment, to emphasize this realization, let us add an et cetera. The et cetera will also play an important role in our consideration of dogmatic behavior.

#### ABSTRACTING OR TO ABSTRACT

These limiting factors indicate that our perception or understanding of anything must, of necessity, be partial. From the totality of any fact or situation we select or abstract some-- but never all.

Let us now define an important technical term, abstracting or to abstract. "Abstracting" or "to abstract" is to select some characteristics and eliminate others. As Korzybski says, "We see what we see because we miss all the finer details." 12

When I look at a brown chair, I am abstracting the color of brown. When I feel it, I am abstracting the feeling of hardness. Notice how many

11. William H. Whyte, Jr., Is Anybody Listening (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1952), p. 22.

12. Alfred Korzybski, Science and Sanity (Lancaster, Pa.: The Science Press Printing Co., 1933), p. 376.

other characteristics of the chair I am not abstracting.

Man is a symbol-using, symbol-creating and rationalizing being. He can abstract from any point of view that he chooses.

The luggage-laden husband stared miserably down the platform at the departing train. "If you hadn't taken so long getting ready," he admonished his wife, "we would have caught it."

"Yes," the little woman rejoined, "and if you hadn't hurried me so, we wouldn't have so long to wait for the next one!"

During a recent economic mission to Greece, Ambassador Porter tells of what took place.

"A banquet given in my honor in Macedonia was given with oratory. When I was finally called upon to speak, it was past midnight. Since I was tired and sleepy, I made my remarks brief but cordial. 'It's indeed a pleasure to be here tonight with you good citizens of Greece. You Greeks and we Americans have very much in common. We like to eat, we like to drink, and we like to sit around and talk.'

"The next day, the Communist paper blazed on its front page that I had insulted the Greek people. 'Ambassador Porter,' the paper reported, 'said that we (Greeks) are just like Americans, gluttons, drunkards and gossips.'"

An Estonian refugee leader is credited with a diverting illustration of dialectics, the "logical" process by which good Marxists are supposed to arrive at conclusions.

Some peasants, the story goes, once came to their priest and asked him what dialectics are.

"It is difficult to explain," the priest said, "but suppose two men, one clean and the other dirty, come here. I offer them a bath. Which one will take it?"

"The dirty one," the peasants replied. "No," said the priest, "The clean one, because he is accustomed to bathe. The other attaches no value to it."

"Now who would take the bath?" the priest asked.

"The clean one," was the answer.

"No," said the priest, "the dirty one, because he needs it. Now who would take it?"

"The dirty one." replied the peasants.

"No," said the priest, "both of them for the clean one is accustomed to bathe, and the dirty one requires it."

"Now," said the priest, "which one would take the bath?"

"Both," replied the peasants.

"No, neither, for the dirty one isn't used to bathing, and the clean one doesn't need it."

"But, Father," the confused peasants interrupted, "each time you say something different, and each time it is the answer which suits your arguments."

"Ah, my children," replied the priest. "Now you know what dialectics are!"

## WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT DOGMATIC

### BEHAVIOR?

#### "ALLNESS" ORIENTATION:

##### A BASIC MISEVALUATION

When we are not conscious of abstracting, when we assume more knowledge than we really have or when we act as if we know it all, we fall victim to the "allness orientation." This is the person with the closed mind, the person who thinks he knows it all. This is the person who has the disease of "psychological arteriosclerosis"-- a kind of hardening of the attitudes!

(1) Extremely subtle. One of the reasons why this allness orientation is so pervasive among us is because it is so extremely subtle. This, I believe, is one of the most important aspects of the allness orientation. It manifests itself in small as well as large ways. No one, it appears, is immune from it. Notice how subtle it can be.

The young man said in a faint voice, "You don't want to buy any life insurance, do you?"

"I certainly do not," the sales manager replied.

"I thought you didn't." the embarrassed solicitor said, and headed for the door.

Then the sales manager called him back and addressed the confused and frightened young man. "My job is to hire and train salesmen, and you're about the worst salesman I have ever seen. You'll never sell by asking people if they don't want to buy. But because you're apparently just starting out I'm going to take out \$10,000 worth of insurance with you right now. Get out an application blank." Fumblingly the salesman did so and the deal was closed. Then the sales manager said, "Another word of advice, young man. Learn a few standard organized sales talks."

"Oh, I've already done that," the salesman reported. "I've got a standard talk for every type of prospect. This is my organized approach to sales managers."

While this allness orientation manifests itself in the extreme form of dogmatic behavior, it is much more prevalent in all of us in the other forms of misevaluations considered here. It should be a reminder that this subtlety is a most pernicious enemy of effective communication and intelligent behavior.

(2) Refusal to learn. Although we find this allness orientation manifested in many different ways, one of our major concerns is in the field of education. The problem in education is not that students or adults cannot learn, the problem is that some students come to class with the attitude, "Show me something I don't already know!" The moment a person believes that he knows all about anything, learning stops. Such an attitude, usually on the unconscious level, is one of the major barriers in education today. Too many of us come to situations, learning or otherwise, with these kinds of pre-judgments (prejudices) that get in the way of our learning or understanding. We make up our minds too quickly (signal reaction). We jump to conclusions too readily. We do not know how to manifest the "uncommon sense" of pausing, delaying and saying, "I don't know." "Let's see," because we are not taught this, on the whole, in our educational institutions.

Teachers, executives, parents--almost all of us are concerned with the problem of teachability. What makes a person teachable, open to new ideas? What allows a person to change, adapt or keep up to date?

There is no person or organization that is not concerned with this problem of teachability versus rigidity in himself or in others. Too many of us listen to and believe only that which fits into our pre-conceived notions and are, therefore, unteachable. We are unwilling to learn that which is new or different.

Epictetus said, "It is impossible for anyone to begin to learn what he thinks he already knows." Perhaps Irving J. Lee stated the problem in education best when he said, "In a sense, the goal of all learning is to keep learning. Maybe we have to learn how to learn."

Those who are in the position of teaching or training others are continually faced with this problem. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why general semantics is so meaningful to teachers, executives, military and police officers, and others who deal with many people. Certain men, given a position of authority, a title, or a uniform, become afflicted with allness. They may not realize it, but it is there. They stop asking questions and start giving answers. They do less listening and more talking. They are more rigid in their thinking and planning, less flexible in their orientation toward people, situations and things.

One of the reasons why executives or adults in business and industry have responded so well to this kind of training is that they see it so much in their daily lives. The subtle, unconscious assumption that one knows it all, or assumes more knowledge than one really has, seems to be continually with us. We need special training and educational emphasis in overcoming this unfortunate barrier to effective communication and intelligent behavior.

(3) Refusal to listen. Another way in which the allness orientation appears is in the refusal to listen. We find this "semantic blockage" between husbands and wives, labor and management, parent and child, East and West, Negro

and White. The following example illustrates this allness in the refusal to listen to a medical diagnosis made by a doctor because he was a Negro.

The young Negro doctor, fresh from Nashville's Meharry Medical College, learned what he was up against as soon as he started to practice in Sanford, in the heart of Florida's orange-grove country. His first emergency was the case of a woman suffering from what he decided was a ruptured ectopic (outside the womb) pregnancy. When he arrived with the ambulance at the hospital, the head nurse, a white woman, demanded scornfully: "Who told you that you could make a diagnosis?"

Dr. George Henry Starke had to turn his patient over to the white doctor on duty; no Negro was allowed to practice in the biracial hospital. The white doctor let him sit in on the operation, which saved the woman's life, and confirmed Starke's diagnosis. When it was over, the head nurse snapped: "Well, you're the first Negro I ever saw that could make a diagnosis." 1

Sometimes we set up an "allness" barrier to communication that is hard to penetrate. Because we assume "we know it all," we don't or won't listen.

(4) Refusal to look or look again. When we already have our minds made up or when we have already "pre-judged" the situation, it is very difficult to accurately observe the world of reality. It is so easy to see what we want to see.

Sometimes this allness does not allow individuals to look at the facts; it is so easy to verify our assumptions. We often hear the saying, "Seeing is believing." Actually, the opposite is much more psychologically true. "Believing is seeing." First, we believe and then we see what we believe. Many experiments in psychology and transactional psychology have verified this. The trained observer, however, doesn't observe with a closed or prejudging mind. The good detective, fire chief, scientist, safety expert, etc., those who make investigations, must continually keep an open mind and look for other alternatives, causes, variables, etc.

1. Time Magazine, January 19, 1952, p. 71.

Too often, after making an investigation, individuals act as if they have "observed everything." It is difficult to get some "trained experts" to go back a second time and investigate again, because they assume that they have "seen everything." And, if they do go back for a "second look," they too often go back with the same old assumptions and, obviously, arrive at the same conclusions. It is no wonder that they verify their old assumptions by "seeing or concluding exactly what they did the first time."

(5) Refusal to change or keep up to date. The allness orientation which results in the refusal to change or to keep up-to-date can have disastrous effects on individuals, families, companies, nations, etc. Ultimately our survival depends upon our keeping up-to-date. But there are many areas where the refusal to change results in humor, irony or tragedy: The fifty year old "girl" who acts as if she were sixteen; the mother or father of an adult who treats the person as if he or she were still a child; the president of a company who refuses to change the policies of the company to fit the changing facts ("What my father did was good enough for me"); nations with the "Maginot line mentality" who are convinced of their own invincibility.

Husbands and wives often find it difficult to communicate with each other because of this allness.

The suburban bus was crowded and I could not help overhearing a couple amiably pursuing a rambling argument about some domestic triviality. The husband, I thought, had the better of it. But as he completed a statement that seemed to settle the matter, his wife calmly captured the game and set.

"Now look here, George," she said firmly. "I already know what I think--so don't try to confuse me with a lot of facts!"

Charles Kettering has said that, "Some minds are like concrete, all mixed up and permanently set."

The history of the military, industry, science, medicine, education, religion, has been full of the "power structure" of that era that refused to

change or keep up-to-date.

Bertrand Russell has said. "Recognizing the fact that ideas change is the essential difference of a Dogmatist and a Liberal. The Dogmatist holds his values to be absolute whereas the Liberal holds his to be tentative." 2

Lewis L. Strauss, former Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, likes to illustrate with this story that invention has not come to the end of its tether:

In the 1870's a bishop who had charge of a small denominational college made his annual visit and stayed with the president. The bishop boasted a firm belief that everything that could be invented had been invented. The college president thought otherwise. "In 50 years," he said, "men will learn how to fly like birds."

The bishop, shocked, replied, "Flight is reserved for angels and you have been guilty of blasphemy."

The name of the bishop was Milton Wright, and back home he had two small sons --Orville and Wilbur.

(6) Assuming knowledge that one doesn't have. We continually see this form of allness in business, industry and inter-personal relations. Perhaps one reason for this is because it is so easy to do. There are, of course, deeper psychological reasons for it. To presume to have knowledge that we don't really have is an easy way of compensating for our feelings of intellectual inadequacy. This is a good way of not appearing "stupid."

Actually, however, we are COMPOUNDING our ignorance with stupidity. We are all ignorant in many areas. (I am using ignorance in the scientific sense meaning "lack of knowledge.") We lack knowledge in many areas--so great is man's knowledge today.

But we behave "stupidly" when we presume to have knowledge that we don't have.

One night Leopold Stokowski was conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra in the rendition of Beethoven's Leonore Overture No 3 and the offstage trumpet call twice failed to sound on cue. Directly

2. Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays (New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1950.

after the last note of the overture had been played, the angry Stokowski rushed to the wings with murder in his heart. He found the trumpeter struggling in the clutches of a burly watchman. "I tell you, you can't blow that darn thing here," the watchman kept insisting. "There's a concert going on inside."

A friend of mine, who is the father of twelve, volunteered to baby-sit one evening so his wife could have an evening's relaxation at the movies. "Don't let a single one of them come downstairs," his wife instructed him as she went out.

He promised to carry out orders to the letter and had just settled down to a book when he heard steps on the stairway. "Get back upstairs and stay there," he commanded sternly.

He read in peace for a few minutes, then again heard soft footsteps. This time he added the threat of a spanking. Soon he again detected stealthy sounds, and dashed out in time to see a small lad disappear up the top steps. He had hardly returned to his book when a neighbor came in distractedly. "Oh, Fred," she wailed, "I can't find my Willie anywhere. Have you seen him?"

"Here I am, Ma," said a tearful voice from the top of the stairs. "He won't let me go home!"

To lack knowledge is one thing. But not to recognize our ignorance is something else. The arrogance of the scholar often looks like humility compared with the arrogance of the ignorant man. "Nothing is so sure of itself as ignorance," said Ludwig Lewisohn. In fact, the willingness to admit our ignorance is often an endearing trait, but our pride and vanity inhibit us from the frank admission that we do not know.

One of the biggest problems in executive development or teaching people on the job is to get them to admit that they do not understand some of the procedures or operations. If they are a graduate engineer or business school graduate, they seem to feel that it is a serious reflection on their expensive education if they cannot immediately apply "the book" to some specific problem. The most serious blunders, we have

found, are made by those who refuse to confess their limitations to themselves.

Irving Lee points out the relationship between the assumption of knowledge, communication failures and traffic accidents when he says, "Accidents occur, difficulties arise, and conflicts and misunderstandings result not because we don't know, but because of what we assume we do know. Let me see if I can make that clear. Rousseau said in his book Emile, 'Remember, ever remember that ignorance has never been productive of evil, but that error alone is dangerous, and that we do not miss our way through what we do not know, but through what we falsely think we know.' " 3

(7) Refusal to ask questions. Coupled with assuming knowledge that one doesn't have is the refusal to ask questions. Notice the assumptions of the watchman in the first example given above. How easy it would have been to ask the trumpeter just one question, "What are you doing here?" But those who assume more knowledge than they really have, don't ask questions. They act on inferences as if they were factual.

This is a particularly prevalent occurrence in business and industry. How often will a person give a directive or make a statement to another with both the speaker and the listener assuming that they understand each other? Countless times, money and energy are wasted or lost because either the speaker or the listener, or both, didn't take the time to ask a question, to see if they were both on the same channel of communication.

(8) Jehovah Complex. The "know it all" is another manifestation of the allness orientation, usually resulting into generalized dogmatic behavior. Dogmatism can be seen in many ways and reminds us of the result gotten by the man who crossed a parrot with a tiger. His friend asked him, "Well, what did you get?" "I don't know," replied the other, "but when he talks, we listen!"

3. Irving J. Lee, "Speaking Straight, Thinking Straight," National Safety Council, p. 18.

Many of the problems of the world are caused by people either refusing to admit they have been wrong, or refusing to act for fear of being wrong again. The obvious effect in both cases is a kind of paralysis.

If we could only concede the fact that we have made mistakes in the past, but have set about to correct them, and will make more in the future, we would be able to get a lot more done.

The most important result, however, is that we might protect ourselves against the "Jehovah Complex" of thinking ourselves infallible. Bertrand Russell has stated, "It is not enough to recognize that all our knowledge is, in a greater or less degree, uncertain and vague; it is necessary, at the same time, to learn to act upon the best hypothesis without dogmatically believing it." <sup>4</sup>

You might recall the story of Nick Christofilos, the "Crazy Greek" who stuck an effective pin in the bureaucratic pomposity.

Christofilos, an electrical engineer in Greece, kept writing to the Atomic Research Laboratory at Berkeley, California, about his newly discovered principle of strong focusing for atom-smashing. Government scientists called him a crackpot, "The Crazy Greek" and wouldn't even read his letters.

The principle on which Christofilos took out a patent stayed in the laboratory files for a year or more while the Atomic Energy Commission scientists worked it out themselves. They could have saved themselves considerable time, trouble, and money if they had bothered to spend an extra few minutes analyzing the Christofilos correspondence.

What happened to Christofilos isn't surprising. Experts and authorities often fall into the trap of disdainful anyone who doesn't proceed in accepted or orthodox fashion. What is surprising is that the scientists had the good grace--and good sense --to admit the mistake, pay Christofilos \$10,000 for a patent license, and then put him to work.

4. Bertrand Russell, Unpopular Essays, p. 28.

It is difficult to evaluate the value of Christofilos' ideas--the author and chief promoter of the Project Argus.

(9) Self-satisfied man. The self-satisfied man is another result of the allness orientation. He is secure in his ignorance, complacent in his own little world and satisfied that his "common sense" is knowledge. This, of course, is a bad trait in a scholar, scientist, student, executive, or anyone who wants to broaden his understanding of himself and the world around him. In fact, a scientist ceases to be a scientist when he is satisfied that he knows enough. Thomas Edison said, "Show me a thoroughly satisfied man-- and I will show you a failure." The man who is satisfied with himself will never attempt to solve the complex and challenging problems that confront him and, similarly, the company or nation that is satisfied with itself is dooming itself to extinction.

Sydney J. Harris points out the relationship between the self-satisfied man and his "common sense" when he says, "Both the ignorant man and the educated man are satisfied with themselves; the ignorant man calls his ignorance common sense, and the educated man calls his information knowledge; it is only the wise man who knows how little knowledge he has and how useless is his common sense for solving uncommon problems."

Common sense tells us that things are alike or identical. Uncommon sense tells us that things are not alike or identical and that a little difference can make a big difference. The uncommon sense of Galileo, Newton, Einstein, Darwin, Freud, Copernicus and others resulted in drastic departures from the science of the era. Scientific progress is predicated upon uncommon sense, the seeing of differences, new answers for old questions. Common sense tells us that the world is flat, but Copernicus thought otherwise. Perhaps this is one of the reasons why common sense does not serve us too well in scientifically trying to understand the world of reality--it's just too common!

(10) Refusal to delegate responsibility. One of the unfortunate manifestations of allness in business and industry is the refusal to delegate responsibility. Some executives, for one reason or another, refuse to delegate responsibility.

They do not realize that when they do not delegate responsibility to others, their problems multiply in a geometric ratio.

(11) One-way communication. Another result of the allness orientation in business and industry today is one-way communication. We find too much communication going from top-down and not enough from bottom-up. If you have management, whether military, police, industry, government, etc., with an allness orientation at the upper levels, don't be surprised if you get only one-way communication--top-down. This is one of the major reasons for such poor communication today. It is very difficult to accurately estimate the amount of time, money, and energy that is being wasted today due to poor communication. Reflections from executives and managers, however, indicate that it is an appalling figure.

During one of our courses for Army Officers at the Traffic Institute, Northwestern University, I mentioned that if they receive a directive and do not understand it, they should ask the sender, "What do you mean?"

A Colonel raised his hand and said, "Do you mean that if I receive a directive from a General and I'm not sure what he means, I'm supposed to ask him, 'What do you mean?'"

I answered, "Yes."

The entire class roared with laughter and the Colonel shouted back, "You don't understand the military!"

There are many unfortunate communication implications in the Colonel's reply. If you have men at the top of any organization with an allness orientation who do not allow you to get on their channel of communication, don't be surprised if you have one-way communication--and a lot of other difficulties besides.

(12) Poor mental health and inferiority complexes. One final comment might be made relative to the relationship between the allness orientation, inferiority complexes and poor mental health. There are several aspects of this problem that we should like to consider first.

Everyone has an inferiority complex and is inferior in some ways. Accepting one's natural inferiority is a healthful and realistic attitude. This is not too often realized. It is the person who does not feel inferior to others in some respects who is often more emotionally disturbed than those who do.

This is another aspect of the allness orientation. But the real test of the inferiority complex is whether or not such feelings are realistic or neurotic. If they are realistic we must do our best to accept them and live with them--for if they are realistic, any effort to overcome them is bound to end in disaster.

Everybody cannot be all things. Very often, however, inferiority feelings arise from attempting to be too many different things to too many people. This circular relationship should be noted--it is the inferiority complex that creates further inferiority complexes in an unending vicious circle.

The relationship between the inferiority complex and the allness orientation comes about in the following way: Let us say that a person has lost an arm, a leg, an eye, his hair, etc. To accept this loss as a limited aspect of his total being is one kind of evaluation, but too often this loss--and the inferiority complex relative to it--spills over as if it covers all of him. Instead of saying "I lost an arm," he says, "I am no good." Notice how easy these feelings of inferiority can generalize or "spread out" into areas where they don't belong.

Manchester, England--(AP)--Surrounded by bottles of hair tonic, Frederick Barr, 23, shot himself to death at his home.

His father and brother told an inquest that the youth had only one worry: His hairline was receding and he feared he would become bald.

The coroner returned a verdict of "suicide while the balance of the mind was disturbed."

Dr. Hamrin of Northwestern University's Guidance Department tells of a young lady who informed him that she had an inferiority complex. He asked her to compare herself with four of her friends in each of their most common activities. The girl rated herself third best in dancing,

second best in studying, first in swimming, and last in rollerskating, etc. He then defined an inferiority complex as feeling inferior to everyone in everything. The girl went out feeling quite relieved and perfectly normal.

As we have seen, the allness orientation manifests itself, and is just as deadly, as a physical disease. It is no exaggeration to call it one of man's most dangerous psychological diseases. Wendell Johnson stated this analogy better than anyone else when he compared the allness orientation to a pus sac in the brain.

To say, "That is nothing new" is all too often to say, in effect, "I have stopped learning about that." It is one of our most common and effectively paralyzing ways of expressing an attitude of allness. To call something "old stuff" frequently indicates nothing about what we so label; rather, it reveals simply that we do not intend to make any effort to increase our knowledge, to improve our understanding, or to change our habits. "Old stuff" means, "I know it all already." An attitude of this kind--"You can't tell me anything about that"--has an effect quite similar to that of a pus sac in the brain. 5

#### PROPER EVALUATION:

##### THE "NON-ALLNESS" ORIENTATION

While the allness orientation is a mis-evaluation, its opposite, the "non-allness" orientation is proper-evaluation.

This is the kind of an orientation where an individual realizes the limitations of knowledge in his thinking, speaking and behaving. Rather than having an allness orientation with the assumption that he knows it all, he manifests a non-allness orientation with the realization that he does not know it all.

While the allness oriented person tends to put a period or an exclamation point after his

5. Wendell Johnson, People in Quandaries (New York: Harper and Bros., 1946), p. 182.

sentences as if to say, "This is it PERIOD or EXCLAMATION POINT!", the non-allness oriented person realizes that no matter what he says, he has not exhausted all of the details of whatever he was talking about. In other words, to the non-allness oriented person, there is always an et cetera. In fact, this is one of the devices to eliminate or lessen allness.

In many fields of human behavior we find people who act as if there were no more ETC'S, as if they knew all about something. But we know that one cannot know all about anything, that there is always more to be said. We should, therefore, be conscious of the ETC. Consciousness of the ETC, is the device to lessen allness. Non-allness is a consciousness of the ETC. It is also being conscious of abstracting.

So, there are two ways of eliminating or lessening allness:

1.) By being conscious of abstracting. When we are conscious of abstracting, we are conscious of selecting some characteristics and eliminating others, and the limited, partial acquaintance with things. We are, therefore, conscious of the fact that we cannot know it all.

2.) By being conscious of the ETC. When we are conscious of the ETC., we are conscious of the fact that no matter what we say, more could always be said. We do not talk and act as if we have exhausted all of the details about anything.

When you have that sense of non-allness, the uncommon sense of the ETC., you are a little bit more malleable and less rigid. You are a little bit easier to live with, for yourself and for others. You will have more agreement rather than disagreement and conflict, for you will at first consciously try and later "automatically" see the viewpoints, perspectives and assumptions of others as well as your own.

There is a great difference between the man who has strong beliefs about something and yet "remembers the ETC." and the person who has equally strong beliefs but "forgets the ETC." The first one is teachable, he will hear people out, he will keep an open mind, he

listens to other points of view. The person who forgets the ETC. closes his mind to new or novel ideas, he becomes rigid and inflexible to those people, situations or things that run contrary to his "allness opinion."

People who are willing to admit they don't know, usually acquire the incentive to DO--do research and find the answers. They are DOERS.

On the other hand, people who always make believe they know, never really try to find out what they don't know. This is a false pride and a bad trait in the make-up of an executive, husband or wife, parent and child, student, worker, officer or worker in any occupation or in human behavior generally.

To admit that you don't know is the beginning of wisdom, providing you then do something about it.

#### WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT "ALLNESS" IN OTHERS?

Wisdom begins at home. It is easy to see the mis-evaluation of allness in others, but wisdom begins when you can see it in yourself. Some people cannot see it in themselves--this is a sure sign of allness.

We have indicated some reasons for the allness orientation and some ways of achieving the non-allness orientation.

But what about allness in others? How can we change the allness orientation in others?

It is not easy. But here are a few suggestions and conclusions on what to do about allness in others.

1.) We must be sure that in our talking and acting that we don't start the circle of allness.

The allness orientation is a learned or conditioned pattern of behavior. If we have learned to be dogmatic and a "know it all," we can also unlearn it. It is obviously not that easy. But for most people, the non-allness orientation can be achieved to a large degree.

We must work at ourselves--no one can do it for us. Others can help, however, because each one of us responds to his semantic

environment. If we have a semantic environment of dogmatism, be it in a family, company, military, classroom, etc., we would not be surprised if it will infect all or most members of the group.

Juvenile delinquency is sometimes started by an allness father who says, "Everything my son does is no good." If he behaves toward his son in such an allness, hostile manner, don't be surprised if the son looks for others to respond to in the same manner. This circular pattern of allness or non-allness can be created in any organization or family.

2.) We can do a good deal of dissolving allness in others by:

a. Assuming a non-allness orientation ourselves. Wendell Johnson once said, "If you want to be a genius, find yourself a genius, follow him around and see what he does." If we want to train others in a non-allness orientation, we must do so by example--by our own behavior. I should like to see one "Island of Sanity" (non-allness oriented person) in each family, department, organization, and see it "seep through" into the behavior of others around our Semantic Man. \*

b. Quietly, over a period of time, teaching them the principles.

Why do we say "quietly" and "over a period of time?" Because we don't want to fall victim to the allness orientation ourselves in trying to change the allness in others. We must do it in a quiet, non-allness manner. You and I have created our own world of sanity from the world of unsanity, complexity and change. We will not readily change our "ego systems," defense mechanisms and self-concepts. We are not open to suggestion. So, if you are to change others, you must do it quietly over a period of time, in a non-allness manner.

\* See the author's profile of the "Semantic Man" in Understanding and Being Understood.

3.) We must realize that there is no necessary relationship between a person's education, intelligence and his allness.

As a teacher, I am most concerned about this conclusion. My observations and experience, and that of thousands of others, verify the fact that there is no necessary relationship between a person's education, intelligence and his allness. We find the allness orientation among the most educated just as we find the allness orientation among the uneducated. On the other hand, we find the non-allness orientation among the educated as well as among the uneducated. A person's allness or non-allness seems to be a personal or individual thing.

Although our educational institutions should teach or train a man in the generalized non-allness orientation, this is not so. Some scientists or specialists are scientific or have a non-allness orientation in their laboratories. But, once outside the laboratory, they are just as "unsane" as the rest of us.

I have had executives verify this conclusion relative to scientists in their companies with a further question, "Isn't it interesting that the very men who are instrumental in changing the lives of others, are so resistant to change when it affects them?"

If our thesis is true, that we find individuals with an allness orientation at all levels, then we have an important educational job to do. As Korzybski said, "People who control our symbol systems, control us." Those who control the power structure of society--in government, the military, United Nations, the Pentagon, science, education, etc.--control us. For our own survival they need to be trained in the assumptions that have the greatest survival value--the non-allness orientation.

4.) We must realize ourselves, and teach others to realize, that this allness shows itself in "all" degrees, in "all" variations, in "all" circumstances and in very SUBTLE ways.

The "non-allness" and "allness" orientations were best described by Irving J. Lee. He had presented this "profile" in an advanced class

in general semantics, but he had never written it down in the more formal style of a paper or article.

This is not a piece of finished writing--it is some notes that were found among his papers after his death. It is probably the beginning of something he was going to write. He is interested, here, in what he calls "viable men." He defines and characterizes them as follows:

Viable--capable of living or developing, as viable seeds, physically and psychologically fitted to live and grow.

I know some viable men.

They keep pushing beyond the horizons of what they already know.

They refuse to be stuck in yesterday.

They won't even remain rooted in today.

They are teachable.

They keep learning. They continue to see and listen. All their horizons are temporary.

They don't deny today's wisdom--rather they add dimensions to it.

They have strong faiths, belief, aspirations, but they know the difference between belief and bigotry--between knowledge and dogmatism.

They are acutely aware of the limits of what they know.

They are more likely to wonder and inquire than to dismiss and deny.

They know a great deal, but they also know that they do not know it all.

I also know some stunted, deadened men.

Their outlooks have been blighted--their interest diminished--their enthusiasm restricted--their sensitivity limited.

They are the old fogies, though they may be young in years.

They strive only to stay where they are.

They see only the dimensions of what has already been explored.

They search with their eyes only for what is old and familiar. They have frozen their views in molds.

They have narrowed the wave lengths.

They are imprisoned in the little community--the little dusty dungeons of their own minds.

They are the conflict carriers. 6

6. Irving J. Lee and Laura L. Lee, Handling Barriers in Communication (New York: Harper and Bros., 1956), pp. 148-149.

The following booklets by Dr. Berman are available from the International Communication Institute.

1. Understanding and Being Understood. \$2.00
2. Why Do We Jump to Conclusions? \$1.00
3. The Closed Mind. \$1.00
4. How to Lessen Misunderstandings. \$1.00

Further reductions are given when ordering greater quantities for schools, colleges, companies, book stores, etc. For information on reduced rates, write to the International Communication Institute, P. O. Box 10075, San Diego, California 92138.

"The Closed Mind" is a limited version of the author's book, "How to Think, Communicate and Behave Intelligently: An Introduction to General Semantics." The latter includes the following consideration of the relationship between language, thought and human behavior: How to pause, delay and analyze situations; Why we jump to conclusions and the differences between a statement of fact and an inference; What can we do about the "know it all"; How can we lessen misunderstandings; Why abstract words get us into trouble; The importance of seeing differences; When it is safe to generalize; The importance of change and how we can learn to keep up to date; The danger of the "either/or" way of thinking; The semantics of happiness; Principles of good mental health; The importance of small talk; The importance of orienting your life by facts rather than words.

This and a list of other writings of the author may be obtained by writing to the International Communications Institute, P. O. Box 10075, San Diego, California 92138.