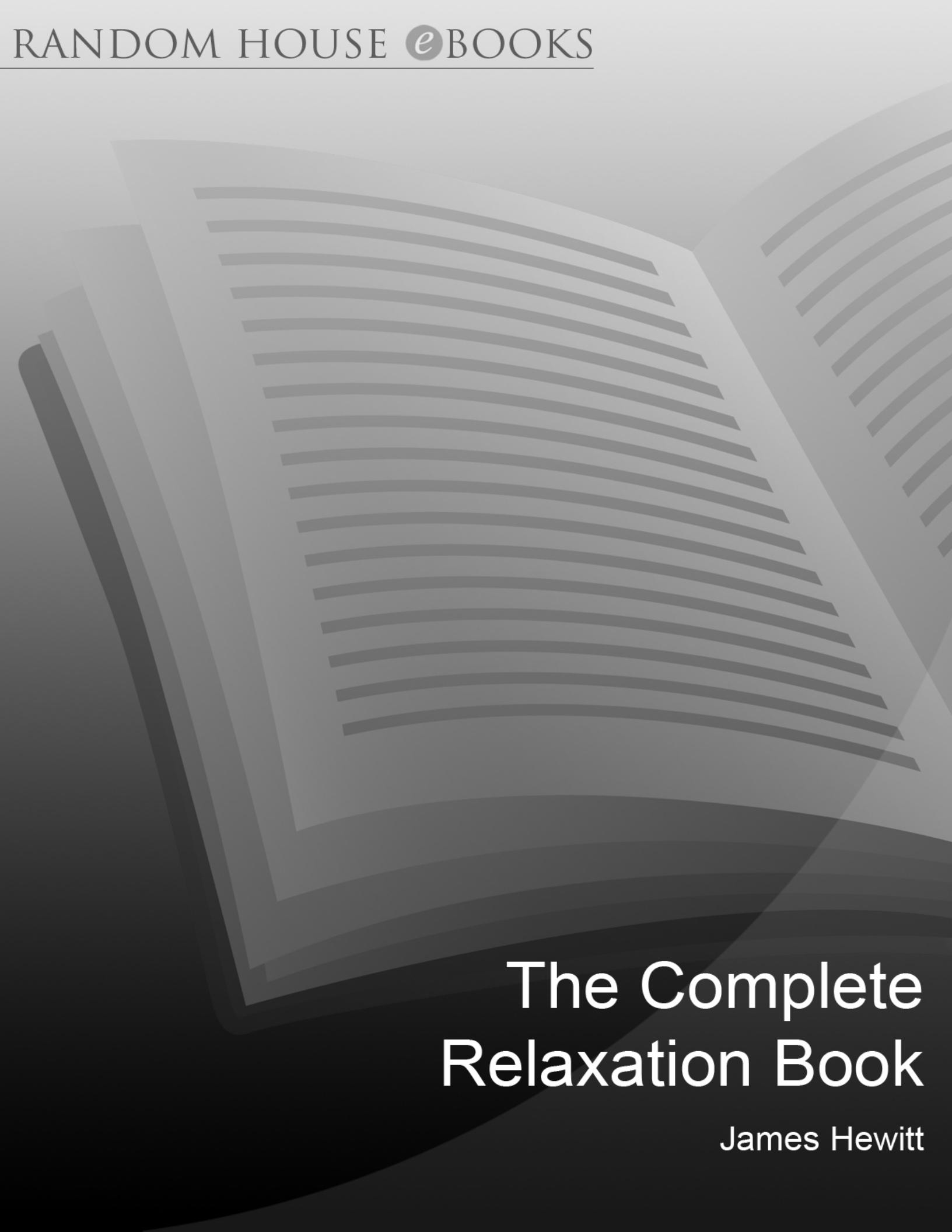


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The Complete Relaxation Book

James Hewitt

Contents

About the Book

Also by James Hewitt

Title Page

Preface

1. Letting Go for Life

2. Progressive Relaxation

3. Relaxation in Action

4. Hypnosis and Self-Hypnosis

5. Autogenic Training

6. Biofeedback

7. Poised Posture and Poised Breathing

8. Meditation for All

9. Meditation in Everyday Life

10. Relaxation and the Mind's Reaches

11. The Art of Poised Living

Bibliography

Index

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About the Book

Stress is a major cause of disease today. This book is a manual of instruction in the art of relaxation. Based on thirty years of study and experience, it is a unique synthesis of the techniques of Western therapies and Eastern mysticism.

James Hewitt starts with a survey of those empirical, Western relaxation techniques which yield physical and emotional benefits: progressive relaxation, self-hypnosis, autogenic training, biofeedback, and posture and breathing exercises. These exercises relax tense minds as well as tense muscles, and open up the possibility of 'peak experiences'. Carried over into everyday life, the deep psycho-physical relaxation they induce leads to enhanced, 'poised' living and integrated well-being.

He then turns to an examination of Oriental techniques such as Yoga, Zen and other Buddhist methods. The reader can then find the technique most suited to his temperament and situation.

(Previously published as *Relaxation East and West*)

Also by James Hewitt

The Complete Yoga Book

The Complete Relaxation Book

James Hewitt



Preface

Looking now at the contents of my youthful works on relaxation and at the plan of the present volume, I discern two main differences. Missing in the earlier works were the presentation of meditation as a method of deep relaxation, and, apart from tentative pointers, discussion of what might be called relaxation's wider dimensions. These were discoveries I made later, through study and practice.

The 'relaxation' that is the subject of this book is not relaxation in the popular usage of the word, as a transient respite from work and from the cares and responsibilities of living. This book is about deep psychophysical relaxation – which scientific investigation shows to be deeper in several ways than deep sleep – and about carrying relaxation into everyday thought, feeling and activity, manifested as poised living.

It is connected, too, with the profoundest experiences known to human consciousness, however you choose to interpret them. Relaxation followed right through offers a way – even a 'Way' in the Eastern sense of a mystical 'path' – to expansion of consciousness, to greater freedom from conditioning, to spiritual unfoldment and experiential wisdom.

THE BOOK IN OUTLINE

[Chapter 1](#) states the aims of this book: to describe practical methods from both East and West to induce deep states of relaxation and to show how relaxation can be the basis for an art of poised living, which can be achieved despite the

stressful nature of modern life. Poised living is not just a health-protection method or a therapy. It is a lifestyle for the development of full humanness (self-actualization) and for letting go and opening up to mindfulness of being.

Chapter 2 describes progressive relaxation, the primary Western therapeutic method of deep muscular relaxation. Relaxation is taught here as a neuromuscular skill, which can be learned like any other, such as buttoning a coat or driving a car. By developing your kinaesthetic sense, or muscle awareness, you can learn to recognize tension in the skeletal muscles and to let go from it - that is, relax the muscles. This is done progressively from toes to scalp; the muscles controlling speech and imagery, associated with thinking, may also be relaxed.

Chapter 3 is concerned with the application of muscular relaxation skill in everyday activities, using minimum effort for maximum effect. Muscles not essential for any action should be relaxed (differential relaxation). Energy is saved, efficiency increased.

Chapter 4 gives instruction in self-hypnosis, with suggestions for deep relaxation. It should be noted that all hypnosis is in a sense auto-hypnosis, as the cooperation of the subject is essential. Self-hypnosis can be learned by most people and the mind's remarkable capacity to respond to implanted suggestions harnessed for dissolving tensions, changing habits, treating illnesses, inducing confidence, self-improvement and for personal growth.

Chapter 5 discusses autogenic training which has attracted much interest in Europe, although therapists in Britain and the USA have been slower to use it. It resembles both progressive relaxation and self-hypnosis and uses auto-suggestion to induce feelings of muscle heaviness, warmth and so on.

Chapter 6 describes the instrumental techniques used to monitor our biological function. Biofeedback belongs to our technological age. It is a kind of push-button self-mastery,

giving Yогin-like powers over body functions normally beyond voluntary control. Although the subject is not sure how he or she is doing it, brainwave rhythms can be altered, blood pressure lowered, and deep relaxation induced – all in response to monitored signals on electrical instruments. A principle of ‘let it happen’ is the key to success, just as it is in all relaxation methods and in Eastern tranquillity practices.

[Chapter 7](#) describes the important techniques of poised posture and poised breathing. If the body is carried well and harmoniously balanced, actions are performed with the minimum of fatigue, and the lungs and other internal organs have room to function well. Body posture also influences inner posture. In this chapter we see how Zen posture and the Alexander method may be combined.

[Chapter 8](#) describes methods of meditation that are acceptable to everyone: simple techniques that calm body and mind. The physiology of meditation has been studied by Western scientists who have found it to be one of the simplest ways of eliciting the ‘relaxation response’. Some people see meditation as a way to higher consciousness or to enlightenment.

[Chapter 9](#) deals with the continuing benefits of meditation in day-to-day living. Any activity in daily life can become a medium for meditation awareness. Mindfulness or bare attention is a mental hygiene, defeating stress, heightening perception and triggering peak experiences, which develops detachment and self-knowledge.

[Chapter 10](#) opens with an account of how auto-suggestion may be used in states of deep relaxation which give contact with the unconscious mind. Relaxation is an essential preliminary to the manifestation of most so-called paranormal powers. When the conscious mind and will are pacified, the deep-seated true will may emerge. Relaxation is also the essence of the peak experience – moments of delight, meaning, and ego-transcendence. Mystical

experience may be viewed as the ultimate relaxation experience. The chapter concludes with a discussion of altered consciousness and the possibility of higher states of consciousness.

[Chapter 11](#) outlines the strategy for the use of the relaxation practices and gives a picture of the likely attitudes, psychology, philosophy and world view of the man or woman realizing a poised life. The characteristics of poised living are largely those described by Abraham H. Maslow for self-actualizing people. Peace of mind can be sustained in 'plateau living'. Poised living finds inspiration in philosophical Taoism, which teaches a special feeling for Nature and letting go to life's flow. The spirit of philosophical Taoism continues to animate Zen. Ordinary living is effortless flow and constant celebration.

1 Letting Go for Life

THIS BOOK IS a manual of instruction in the art of relaxation, or *letting go*, at various levels, employing techniques from both Western therapies and Eastern mystical traditions in a fruitful synthesis.

The practice of letting go releases tension from body and mind and opens up awareness – thereby improving health and protecting against disease, conserving and integrating energy, enhancing psychophysical skills, and promoting psychophysical poise. Letting go is essential to tapping the deep-rooted powers of the unconscious mind and to expansion of the mind's reaches. At its highest cultivation, letting go from the tension-knot that is the ego or I-process triggers the freedom, spontaneity and enlightenment that is the ultimate goal of the mystical traditional systems.

THE ESOTERIC PSYCHOLOGIES

It should be noted that the mystical religions of the East are primarily esoteric psychologies, using meditation supported by postural training and the cultivation of certain ego-dropping attitudes, to attain enlightenment and a transformation of the quality of consciousness. The paths they describe are open to all, and in the last twenty years or so Western interest in them has grown considerably.

Letting go is at the heart of practice in these traditions and has a major influence on the generation of poised attitudes.

Physical poise is promoted in the East by smooth, flowing body exercises and by postural training, such as are found

in Indian Hatha Yoga and the Chinese slow-motion movements Tai chi ch'uan. Yoga body exercises - really postures that are held motionless - have become popular with many Western men and women, who, when asked the practical benefits derived from such practice, always mention the relaxation they induce. Body and mind are brought into harmony through such exercises, but the effectiveness of Eastern body-mind training becomes immeasurably greater when the body controls and postural realignments are practised together with meditation and the cultivation of poised attitudes to Nature, to other people, and to living. Then the full dimensions of these Eastern systems are revealed and may be incorporated in poised living.

In this book I have drawn eclectically on techniques and attitudes from the Eastern psychologies - in particular from Hindu Vedanta, Buddhism, Taoism and Zen. Taoism and Zen are especially valuable in supplying methods and attitudes conducive to poised living and integrated wellbeing. Philosophical Taoism, most of all, provides inspiration and shapes our overall attitudes and practices, while Zen, which philosophical Taoism influenced, provides practical techniques for poise of body and mind. Zen is itself a practical way of life, and views body and mind as a unity.

FOLLOWING THE TAO

In this book I am attempting to establish what could be viewed as a practical basis for a kind of Western Taoism. By Taoism I mean what is generally called 'philosophical Taoism' and not the religion of that name. Philosophical Taoism has only four important 'scriptures'. They are the works of Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, Lieh Tzu and Huai-nan Tsu. Lao Tzu's aphoristic *Tao Te Ching* is an inspiration for any person who values poised living, and the *Book of Chuang Tsu* is a witty and wise commentary upon Lao Tsu's work, as

well as being a classic exposition of philosophical Taoism in its own right.

All things belong to the One, to the all-pervasive Tao. Tao is the silent, ineffable power and intelligence of the universe, supplying its life-energy and its forms, though it is itself formless.

'To adjust oneself to events and surroundings casually [i.e. with naturalness and relaxation] is the Way of Tao,' Chuang Tsu stated. Philosophical Taoists taught that one should live calmly, cheerfully and compassionately; that true strength lay in gentleness and true will in letting go and not-forcing. The wise life style is to work and live in harmony with Nature's laws. Their views on protecting the balance of nature are echoed today by the ecologists, and their views on the nature of the universe have affinities with the findings of modern physics. Joy is found in natural spontaneity and in being fully human. Be passive like a mirror and respond to surroundings like an echo to a sound. Calm acceptance leads to a sense of unity with what is. One seeks to live as naturally as rain falls, grass grows and fish swim.

He who follows Tao is strong of body, clear of mind and sharp of sight and hearing. He does not clutter up his mind with worries, and is flexible in his adjustment to external conditions. The heaven cannot help being high, the earth cannot help being wide . . . and all things of the creation cannot help but live and grow.

(Chuang Tsu)

Following the Tao is one way of describing the way of poise and relaxation.

ZEN

The philosophy and practice of Taoism found a congenial home in the empirical Ch'an (Japanese, Zen) Buddhism. The Zen masters teach letting go as the basis of seeing into one's nature, and of finding unity with Nature and the

Universe. The supreme Zen enlightenment experience of 'satori' (or *kensho*) is the ultimate letting go, the ultimate relaxation experience, charged by the realization of one's essential unity with the One, the Tao. Robert Linssen, in *Living Zen* (p. 288), writes: 'No satori is possible without relaxation of body, emotion, and thought.'

A common enlightenment experience is reported by people of different races and cultural traditions. Interpretations vary: theist, non-theist, pantheist, mystical, non-mystical, religious, non-religious, and so on. But whatever the interpretation - what William James called 'overbelief' - there remains the *experience*. There is a common psychological experience and great similarities of technique for eliciting it. The essence of the experience is a profound relaxation: the stripping away or jettisoning of illusions and inessential burdens.

Sages throughout the centuries have spoken or written of the need to let go from or drop the ego or I-process, with all its attachments, cravings, defences and clung-to possessions. You have to relax ego-striving and ego-tension and make yourself open and available for the liberating experience, which is experiential knowledge of what Thomas Merton called 'the ground of openness': that which Eastern esoteric psychologists call an 'emptiness' and which is paradoxically a fullness. Alan Watts wrote, in *Beyond Theology*, that ultimate faith 'is not in or upon anything at all. It is complete letting go.' Krishnamurti put it: 'You cannot choose Reality. Reality must choose you.' This requires relaxation and open awareness. Poised attention without self-projecting leads to awareness of the workings of the I-process and to the possibility of an abrupt and total unmasking, so that you see, as the Zenists say, your original face or true (Buddha) nature.

Intellectual people tend to look to Jnana Yoga, the path of self-inquiry, for methods to reach enlightenment. Here the key question is: 'Who or what am I?' Devotional

temperaments favour Bhakti Yoga, the path of surrender to something infinitely greater than oneself. These two approaches are found in all the major mystical traditions; both require letting go, for the former approach sees through the phoniness and pettiness of the ego, so that it is let go from or dropped.

MEDITATIVE AWARENESS

Bare awareness is the solvent that removes the ego's tensions and its defensive armour. According to the Eastern traditional psychologies, behind the 'I' that has been built up by thought, memory, feelings, and social conditioning lies pure consciousness, the ground of being. It is the task of meditation to reveal it.

There are two kinds of meditation practice. The first kind occurs in motionless sitting, usually in a posture conducive to effortless and poised use of the meditation method. The other kind of meditation accompanies everyday activities, which become infused with the clarity and peacefulness of pure awareness and being.

Thought is not suppressed during meditation, but psychological devices, in which passive awareness is the main component, are used which quieten the mind. The methods described in [Chapter 8](#) for sitting meditation can be used by any reader and will prove beneficial in deeply relaxing body and mind and in cultivating clarity of consciousness. The succeeding chapter shows how mindfulness or bare attention can achieve similar results in daily activities. The pure quality of consciousness during the sitting periods will also infuse ordinary activities, whatever they may be, particularly in the period immediately following meditation.

One result of learning bare attention is that perception becomes direct, with a minimum of interference and distortion from thoughts and accompanying feelings. For

most people, awareness of grass and tree and cloud, of sunlight and air on skin, and of feelings, are through the words by which they name these things. Their perception is not direct, but conceptual.

Direct perception is a keynote of Zen experience, by which perception of the 'ordinary' is enhanced and becomes 'marvellous'. There is a heightened sense of reality when awareness centres lucidly in the present.

FREE, SPONTANEOUS AND OPEN

Dr D. T. Suzuki, the greatest expert on Zen to write in English, said that the aim of Zen training is to set us free from all forms of bondage. This is true of all the esoteric psychologies and we have seen that these psychologists regard the ego, with its projections, cravings and defences, as the major cause of illusion and captivity. A sense of freedom also comes through using the body with natural efficiency, eliminating unnecessary tensions so that perceptions, feelings and the mental life can flow effortlessly.

As a symbol for Nature, the Chinese use a phrase, *tzu-jan*, meaning 'of itself so'. So each individual consciousness, being *of* nature and *of* the universe, as well as *in* them, is *itself so*. Hence the importance of naturalness and spontaneity in Taoism and Zen, and in the arts and sports influenced by them.

It is important not to strive for results, which is the ego's principal activity. Then consciousness is found to be effortless, *of itself so*, and silence, stillness and space or emptiness the true nature of the mind. Then feelings and sensations come and go like wild geese crossing an expanse of clear sky; open awareness reflects them but does not struggle either to deflect them or to try to retain them. So also with thoughts. This is a new mode of consciousness for most people, but one whose profound value will be

appreciated once it has been experienced even momentarily.

There is a danger that is easily overlooked; in recognizing the importance of letting go and of no longer forcing the mind to behave in certain ways or to stop behaving in certain ways, we make the mistake of making an effort not to be effortful. Success in letting go from tension in the body muscles will show the way to avoid this trap, for the same problem exists in attaining relaxation at any level, and practice in muscular relaxation makes a sound basis for learning the art of letting go, which is what relaxation is.

Awareness in poised living is open primarily to the living moment, to the continuous process of birth in the present, which means opening up to a greatly increased sense of reality. Thus the cultivation of increased openness, relaxation and psychophysical poise is not just a way of releasing stress and improving health, but a way of self-actualizing, of expanding consciousness and of experiencing reality more directly and intensely.

Once relaxation and spontaneity in living have been tasted, all manner of paradoxes make living sense: that by losing one's self one finds one's Self; that the profound seriousness of living is best recognized by living lightly (without unnecessary physical or psychological burdens); that we can play the game of fighting the things we dislike, while recognizing at the same time the necessity for their presence as part of the total scheme of things, of the interplay of the opposites, the *yin* and the *yang* of the Chinese universal view. That the best 'means' of achieving supreme wellbeing is by 'no means', by simply letting go.

With right relaxation and open awareness, morality takes care of itself, unforced. Compassion and other valuable and harmonious qualities arise as a natural outcome of poised, spontaneous living. The free, relaxed person experiences wellbeing in doing what is right.

The discovery of natural moral wisdom is matched by the discovery of natural body wisdom. The practice of relaxation helps the body discover its natural instinctive wisdom, which in turn favours body-mind harmony and unity. That is why a Japanese person interested in Zen will often train in judo, swordsmanship or archery, or some other Zen-influenced physical art.

The characteristics of people experienced in the art of poised living, as I see the art, are largely similar to those Abraham H. Maslow described for what he called 'self-actualizing' people; people who actualize natural human growth potential. Prominent among these characteristics are openness, naturalness, spontaneity, autonomy, acceptance, creativity, capacity to love, a strong sense of reality, and ego-transcendence. Not for nothing did Professor Maslow frequently use the word 'Taoist' to describe the process of self-actualization and the personality of self-actualizers.

The self-actualizing person, according to Maslow, is likely to be familiar with 'peak experiences': moments of intense transcendental delight. When very intense, such experiences are sometimes described as 'mystical', or as examples of people experiencing 'higher consciousness'. I state with some confidence that mastery of the art of poised living generates Taoist/self-actualizing characteristics and triggers more peak experiences, or the capacity to spend long periods at a higher 'plateau' level. A discussion of these matters will be found in [Chapter 11](#).

Poised living is accessible to everyone, regardless of belief, with the exception of fanaticism or ideological rigidities. Acceptance, tolerance, what Wordsworth called 'a wise passivity', and openness to being are integral parts of a poised approach to living. When you are oriented toward 'being' rather than 'having', things are done and enjoyed for their own sakes rather than for what the ego can get out of them.

LIVING POETICALLY

Maslow's 'self-actualization' is not the only term for living used by a philosopher and psychologist that relates to my concept of *poised living*.

There is Dr Erich Fromm's use of 'well-being', defined by him on p.91 of *Zen Buddhism and Psychoanalysis* (Harper and Row):

Well-being is the state of having arrived at the full development of reason: reason not in the sense of a merely intellectual judgment, but in that of grasping truth by 'letting things be' (to use Heidegger's term) as they are. Well-being is possible only to the degree to which one has overcome one's narcissism; to the degree to which one is open, responsive, sensitive, awake, empty (in the Zen sense). Wellbeing means to be fully related to man and nature affectively, to overcome separateness and alienation, to arrive at the experience of oneness with all that exists . . . it means also to be creative. . . .'

In Dr D. T. Suzuki's contribution to the same book, he uses the expression 'artist of life'. The artist of life lives creatively in the here-and-now, every moment a birth, free as the wind, having let go from a self encased in egocentric existence. Dr Suzuki said that the true artist of life was described succinctly by the Zen master T'ang: 'With a man who is master of himself wherever he may be found he behaves truly to himself' (p.15).

There is also R. H. Blyth's use of the word 'poetical'. 'The way of poetry,' wrote Professor Blyth, in *Zen and Zen Classics* (Hokuseido Press, vol. 1, p.17), '. . . consists in giving the highest possible value to every moment.' And (p.21): 'What we have to do is not live traditionally or nationalistically or Asiatically or Christianically or Buddhistically or Zennically, but poetically - whatever that may mean in actual practice.'

All the terms discussed refer to living with relaxation and poise. Maslow was very aware that the attitudes he attributed to 'self-actualizing' people were 'Taoist'. Fromm in

his last years found that humanistic psychology had much to learn from Zen, and when Suzuki spoke about 'artists of life' he had living by Zen in mind. Blyth wrote of 'living poetically' in a Zen context.

The message of Taoism and Zen is that the human organism can be trusted to regulate itself spontaneously and efficiently in a state of open awareness, sensitive, awake and alert, and relaxed to the immediate moment without trying either to repel or to wrest anything out of it. This is the state of mind which the Chinese call *wu-wei*, meaning 'not-interfering' or 'not-forcing'.

The greatest value of poised living is that even so-called 'ordinary' living is transformed. Zen master Ummon, in the tenth century, preached a sermon - 'Every day is a fine day.' Thoreau, at Walden in the nineteenth century, put it slightly differently when he wrote of 'a perpetual morning . . . morning is when I am awake and there is a dawn in me.' Thoreau was being an artist of life when he stated, 'Living is so dear, I did not wish to live what was not life,' and 'To affect the quality of the day, that is the highest of arts.'

Wellbeing is choosing life rather than continuing with a dead automatism, and it is made possible through letting go and opening up, through relaxation and psychophysical poise. It is allowing and creating the right conditions for growth to full humanness. Growth includes the unfoldment of those powers and the expansion of consciousness described in [Chapter 10](#).

RELAXATION METHODS

Letting go at a psychical level is greatly facilitated and given a solid base for practice by acquiring skill in muscular relaxation. Various Western techniques for inducing deep muscular and mental relaxation are described in the first half of this book. You can experiment and discover those which work best for you.

By practising one or more of these body-mind relaxation methods, the effects on your mental life are soon experienced, and you become aware of the profound significance of altering the quality of consciousness. A new note is heard: it is the call to freedom from anxiety and conditioning that brings emancipation from egocentric existence. In the esoteric psychologies, this freedom is called enlightenment.

Empty, lucid, self-illuminated,
With no over-exertion of the power of the mind.

(Sengtsan, *The Hsinhsinming*)

Western and Eastern methods of psychophysical relaxation work well together. The benefits from such a practical synthesis are available to all, and are possible even in the teeth of the stress disease epidemic now gripping Western civilization.

STRUGGLING WITH STRESS

Modern man is battling to establish a healthful state of equilibrium between himself and his environment. His psychophysical organism is called upon to adapt to rapid changes and to numerous severe and unprecedented stressors, which are both physical and psychological, both obvious and hidden. Though making life easier for people in some respects, the rapid development of technology in the twentieth century has brought its own peculiar stresses of complexity, competition and change. Ordinary life today is dangerously stressful for millions of the citizens of the world's most developed nations.

The signs of inability to relax are ubiquitous in modern society. As industrialization and technology spreads - dehumanizing, depersonalizing, and pressurizing - the symptoms of so-called 'nervous tension' become more apparent. Some of the obvious symptoms are anxiety,

nervous troubles, headaches, muscular aches and pains, insomnia, jitteriness, restlessness, dependence on drugs, alcohol and tobacco, and the inability to 'unwind' even when the conditions are favourable. There are, too, numerous psychosomatic disorders and diseases, often unrecognized for what they are.

Doctors report that more than half the patients seen in general practice often display puzzling symptoms that may be attributed to the effects of stress. The incidence of 'mystery illnesses' is growing. Stress undermines the body's defences and disease strikes at the weakest points. Hypertension or high blood pressure is probably the most serious effect of tension, because its symptoms may stay hidden for years. It leads to narrowed arteries and to heart disease, so that suddenly and without warning the hypertensive person may be struck down by a heart attack or a stroke. One hundred years ago heart attacks were rare in any age group: now young as well as old are common victims.

Stress is 'the modern disease', or dis-ease. Distinguished physicians in America and in Europe warn that stress is a major killer.

THE ANTIDOTE FOR STRESS

Drugs are not the answer to stress. At best, they are palliatives; they do not get to the root of the problem. One becomes dependent on them, and there are often harmful side-effects.

Relaxation - deep muscular relaxation and the cultivation of poise in every department of living - is the natural way of releasing tension and the effective antidote against stress.

The 'fight-or-flight response' has been described in many books and in newspaper and magazine articles. We perceive a threat to body or ego - our body mobilizes all its forces for fighting the threat or for running away from it. Mobilization

means increases - in heart rate, blood pressure, metabolism (burning fuel), and so on. The trouble is that while actual fight or flight makes use of the body mobilization, the nature of modern life for most people gives few outlets for real fight or flight and the threats are daily and numerous. The body stays keyed up almost permanently and blood pressure may stay elevated. One way or another the body is harmed. The fight or flight response, as I said, has often been described. Less well known is its opposite, a later discovery, the 'relaxation response'.

The physiology of the relaxation response is decrease - in heart rate, blood pressure, breathing rate, oxygen consumption, metabolism, blood lactate, blood cortisone levels, brainwave frequency and muscle tension. Some of the decreases are extraordinary: oxygen consumption decreases to levels only found in very deep sleep or hibernating animals.

A detailed study of the relaxation response has been made by Dr Herbert Benson of the Harvard Medical School, in the USA. He studied the response in meditators, but in his book *The Relaxation Response* he gives a table of different techniques eliciting the physiologic changes of the relaxation response. These included various forms of Eastern meditation, progressive relaxation, autogenic training, and hypnosis with suggested deep relaxation. All of these relaxation methods will be described in this book. Readers are invited to experiment with methods and to find which methods relax them most.

The ability to relax and to take a relaxed and poised attitude to life - developed as an art when not innate - is essential for good health and for self-fulfilment. It means giving up the characteristic Western urge to be always up and doing and making an effort. Effort, it will be shown, is the thing to avoid for attaining a relaxed state. In contrast, wonders may be achieved by learning to 'let it happen' and to become at one with life's flow.

BENEFITS

Reasons why you should learn to release tension from muscle and mind and to cultivate poised living will unfold as this book proceeds, but the following is a summary of the likely main benefits:

Improved health

Greater vitality

More energy in reserve, and a more economical and productive use of energy

Protection against stress, now a major killer, and from numerous psychosomatic disorders and diseases

Frequent elicitation of the relaxation response - which means a marked slowing down of physiological processes in the deep relaxation state. Increased alpha waves

Freedom from unnecessary tension

Protection for the heart and against high blood pressure

Improved digestion

Natural aid for all healing processes

Quicker onset of sleep and sleep of more refreshing quality

Poised posture in sitting, standing, walking, and all life's activities

Poised inner posture

Increased efficiency and economy of effort in work and play

Improved performance in arts and crafts, sports and games

Greater spontaneity in living

Feeling 'good' in the sense of good muscular and mental tone

Greater nervous stability and calmness

Reduced nervousness on important occasions

No dependence on tranquillizers or sleeping pills

Freedom from unrealistic fear and anxiety

Increased courage and confidence

Relaxed sense of humour

Enhanced sense of beauty