

CHAPTER X

We cannot 'do' – Importance of realising the truth of this idea – Illusion of 'doing' and what produces it – In life everything happens, but in the work we must learn to 'do' – Going against the current – Inner 'doing' – A vicious circle and the way out – Co-ordination of centres – 'Doing' begins with 'not doing' – Inner control – Doing the impossible and what it means – Putting more pressure into one's efforts – Work on will – What is will in the full sense of the word and what is our will? – Our will a resultant of desires – Inner conflict and struggle – Giving up will – We only have short moments of will – Discipline – Necessity of remembering oneself – Consciousness means will – Aim as the controlling factor – Necessity of returning constantly to the question of aim – Self-will and wilfulness – Friction – Work against self-will – One can do nothing without school – Necessity of regular work – Crossroads – Creating moon in oneself – Centre of gravity – Super-effort – What creates stimulus for work.

WE MUST RETURN TO THE INNER PART OF THE WORK – to work on oneself. If you think about it, you will realize that the central part of your own work is understanding of the fact that we cannot 'do', of why we cannot 'do' and of what it means that we cannot 'do'. How can you understand that? Either by trying to do what you have never done before or by doing things in another way. Then you will see whether you can 'do' or not. Half of the questions asked are about 'doing' – how to change this, destroy that, avoid some other thing and so on. But an enormous effort is necessary to change even one small thing. Until you try, you can never realize it. You see, you do not think enough, observe enough. You can change nothing except through the system. This is generally forgotten. The system shows how things can be changed and done differently and from where one can begin. Even with the system it is tremendously difficult, but without the system it is impossible, absolutely impossible. When you realize that, you will begin to understand the value of the system, because with the system there is a chance, without the system there is no chance at all.

This idea that we cannot 'do' is very important and we must always return to it. If this idea is not clear, or certain features of it are not dear, ask questions about it, because it is necessary to understand and remember it. Everything 'happens'. People can 'do' nothing. From the time we are born to the time we die things happen, happen, happen, and we think we are doing. This is our normal state in life, and even the smallest possibility to do something comes only through the work, and first only in oneself, not externally. Even in oneself 'doing' very often begins by *not* doing. Before you can do something that you cannot do, you must *not do* many things which you did before. For instance, you cannot awake by just wanting to awake, but you can prevent yourself sleeping too much and too long.

Q. Does one sometimes have a choice between two possible happenings?

A. Only in very small things, and even then when you notice that things are going in a certain way and decide to change them, you will find how extremely uncomfortable it is to change things.

Q. Why is it that I cannot give up the idea of being able to 'do'? I have proved to myself so often that I cannot.

A. This is the most difficult and the most necessary thing to realize with your whole being, because so long as we think that we can 'do' we shall always put off the things that we actually *can* do if we work. As I said, we can 'do' things only in relation to ourselves – these are the things we have to begin with. But we shall never begin to study ourselves so long as we think we can 'do'. This is one of our greatest illusions.

Q. I can see that I have no choice in larger things, but it seems to me that I can do small things.

A. These small things happen according to certain definite circumstances which control them. You think *you* control them, but in reality they happen. We cannot 'do' because we are asleep. How can sleeping people 'do'? It is necessary to be awake; when one is awake, one can 'do'. 'Doing' is magic.

You must understand that nothing happens at the time it happens; the necessity of it happening was created long ago. Things happen by themselves; whether you do or do not do something may have been decided ten years before. Maybe your actions had taken a certain direction ten years previously and that determines what you will do tomorrow – you cannot change it.

We think we can take a certain decision and act accordingly. In reality we are controlled not by internal decisions but by external influences. If the internal decision corresponds to the external influence, we will do it, otherwise we will not. But we can create in ourselves powers to 'do'. Nature has made us machines acting under external influences, but with a possibility to develop our own motor. If there is no inner motor, we will always turn round in the same place.

Q. If a man sets an ideal for himself of how he ought to behave, would this not be what is meant by 'doing'?

A. The question is whether he can do it and whether he does it, because to make plans, to have ideals is one thing and to do it is another thing. It may be just good intentions. One of the chief features of our being is that we cannot do what we decide.

Q. Sometimes I have found that, with a little extra effort, you can make a great difference to other people in ordinary life. Isn't it doing?

A. It is an illusion, because if a thing must happen you will make this extra effort; if it is not to happen, you will not make this effort. You think you can make or not make this effort, that you can 'do' or 'not do'. But try to think in the right way, that you can 'do' nothing, that things happen mechanically. One thing comes after another and just happens or does not happen, and you cannot help it.

Q. But if you help a poor person to make his life tolerable?

A. If you help a poor person, it happens. If someone takes from this poor person what little remains to him, this also happens. One person will give him a penny, another will take away the last he has. It is first necessary to understand the *principle* that nobody can 'do' anything. If you think of life, not personal life but the life of humanity, wars, revolutions, you will see this clearly. You must try to find a right case for observation, because if you find something too small you will not see it. But if you find the right case, right conditions, right circumstances, you will very soon see whether you can do something or not. The simplest thing is to try and remember yourself. Can you do it or not? People think they can 'do' because sometimes they make certain plans and really get what they wanted. But this only means that they have got into a certain stream of events and things happened to coincide with their plan. When things happen like that we think that we did it, that we made a plan and did everything according to this plan. In reality it does not mean that we did it on purpose or knowingly and it does not mean that one can choose one stream of events or another stream; it is just accident. In every kind of work, in business, in travel and so on, it sometimes happens that things go successfully, but this only means that at a given moment, in a given place things went mechanically in a certain way – nothing more.

It is difficult for us to realize, for example, that when people build a bridge, that is not 'doing'; it is only the result of all previous efforts. It is accidental. To understand this, you must think of the first bridge that Adam built and of all the evolution of bridge. At first it is accidental – a tree falls across a river, then man builds something like that, and so on. People are not 'doing'; one thing comes from another.

Q. I think it is an almost childish question, but I can never see how things cannot be different. One does something and one cannot help thinking that one could do it differently.

A. But if you behaved in a certain way, it means that you could not behave in another way. If you could, you would have behaved differently. We are so accustomed to think that things could be different that we do not try to change the things we could change. We can change to-day, but yesterday is finished. If we change to-day, tomorrow things can happen differently. It looks like a contradiction, but it is precisely our belief that things can be different that prevents us from doing what we can to make them different.

Q. When one really begins to understand that one cannot 'do', one will need a great deal of courage. Will that come from getting rid of false personality?

A. One does not come to this understanding just like that. It comes after some time of work on oneself, so that when one comes to this realization one has many other realizations besides, chiefly that there are ways to change if one applies the right instrument at the right place and at the right time. One must have these instruments, and these again are only given by work. It is very important to come to this realization. Without it one will not do the right things, one will excuse oneself.

Q. I do not understand why one should excuse oneself?

A. One does not want to give up the idea that one can 'do', so that even if one realizes that things happen, one finds excuses, such as, 'This is an accident, but to-morrow it will be different'. That is why we cannot realize this idea. All our lives we see how things happen, but we still explain them as accidents, as exceptions to the rule that we can 'do'. Either we forget, or we do not see, or do not pay enough attention. We always think that at every moment we can 'do'. If you see in your life a time when you tried to do something and failed, that will be an example, because you will find that you explained your failure as an accident, an exception. If the same situation repeats itself, you will think you will be able to 'do', and if you fail again, you will again explain your failure as just an accident. It is very useful to go through your life from this point of view. You intended one thing and something different happened. If you are really sincere, you will see, but if you are not, you will persuade yourself that what happened was exactly what you wanted! When things happen in a certain way, we are carried by the current but we think that *we* carry the current.

Q. If one feels for a moment that one is able to 'do', say, to put through a particular job in one's ordinary work, what is the explanation of that?

A. If one is trained to do something one learns to follow a certain trend of happenings, or if you like, to start a certain trend of happenings, and then these develop, and one runs behind although one thinks one is leading.

Q. But if one has a right attitude?

A. No, attitude has nothing to do with it. Attitude may be right and understanding may be right, but you still find that things happen in a certain way – any ordinary things. Try to remember instances when you tried to do something differently and see how you always came back to the same thing even if you made a slight deviation – enormous forces driving you back to the old ways.

Q. Are all our actions controlled by automatic responses to outside influences?

A. No, we have many things already established, such as habits, usual ways of thinking, associations, buffers and many other things. So it is not simply influences to which we have a natural response. Many things are the result of previous influences

Q. I cannot separate the idea of not being able to 'do' from fatalism. When and how have we the power of choice and how do we differ from animals?

A. In the present state we differ very little. Our power of choice begins only when we begin to realize our situation, our mechanicalness, and when we begin to struggle for something else. There are possibilities for that. But this is a formatory way of thinking – either determinism or

freedom. Some things are determined, some less determined, some are in our power, if we know how to change them or how to turn them. Only, we must know. Everything is relative.

Q. When you said that we cannot help the same things happening, did you mean until our being has changed?

A. I did not speak about work. I said it was necessary to understand that *by ourselves* we cannot 'do'. When this is sufficiently understood, we can think about what it is possible to 'do', what conditions, what knowledge and what help are needed. But first it is necessary to realize that in ordinary life everything happens. Only when this is emotionally understood is it possible to go further.

Q. I do not understand the distinction between what one can and what one cannot 'do'. Why is it that one can struggle with negative emotions but one cannot make oneself awake?

A. Sleep is the form or the level of our being. One can do something with the help of the system, if the way is shown, but being awake indicates *the level of being itself*. So all this struggle with negative emotions, trying to stop unnecessary thoughts, trying to remember oneself – all this leads you to awakening, but you cannot awake before you awake.

Q. But is it their doing when people try to become conscious?

A. Yes; then one sees that one cannot. In trying to become conscious all man's work is his own.

It is only in this system that you are told clearly that you can 'do' nothing. All the other systems begin with 'doing' in one sense or another, for they say, do this or do that. This system is different. It is esoteric teaching, but in it you can begin in the conditions of ordinary life, it is not necessary to go to a closed school or to a monastery. Because of that it is particularly necessary to understand first of all that one cannot 'do' anything and that the only thing one can start to 'do' is trying to remember oneself – understanding the one and practising the other.

Q. I thought perhaps we ought not to take this idea that we cannot 'do' too literally?

A. No, quite literally. Only this refers to people who are not connected with any teaching. When one begins to study certain teachings or systems which give school methods, one has to try to do certain things. In the work we have to 'do', for if we do not try to 'do', nothing will happen. We have to 'do' from the very beginning – not much, but very definite things. If you can not identify it is already the beginning of 'doing'. If you can refrain from talk when you have an inclination to talk, that is already 'doing'. 'Doing' begins with going against the current – first in yourself, in personal things. You can try to remember yourself, then, when you begin to remember yourself you can get certain results and you will see that you can do more things, but all with regard to yourself. You will be able to do something about negative emotions, for instance, and to think in a new way. But outside you, things will continue to happen.

Q. Would you say that one way of beginning to 'do' would be to alter things in oneself so that things *happen* differently?

A. It is necessary once more to divide people into categories. Men 1, 2 and 3 can 'do' nothing – in their case everything 'happens'. If they do good things, it means that they cannot do bad things; if they do bad things, it means they cannot do good things. One thing is no better than another in that sense, because it is all mechanical. But when one begins to work, when one enters a school of any level, one already has to learn to 'do'. As I said, one has to begin with oneself – to know oneself, to study oneself, try to eliminate certain things, try to create control over other things and so on.

Q. Have we got to observe how we react?

A. Observing is always useful, but we always react in the same way. We have only five or six ways of reacting: only certain things happen to us and we always react in the same way to them. But if we try to do all that is advised, and not to do all that we are advised to refrain

from doing, things will change in the right way and one day, quite unexpectedly, we will be able to do something we could not have done before.

Q. Can we direct things that happen to us?

A. If we direct things in ourselves. If nothing unnecessary happens in us, we shall begin to be able to control things that happen from outside, but first we must control things in ourselves. So long as things are left to 'happen' in ourselves, we cannot control anything outside. How can it be otherwise? One 'I' decides to control things, but instead all its attention will be occupied with things that happen in us and outside us.

Q. If man can 'do' nothing, does it follow that all he can do is to control his own mental reaction to events outside his control?

A. Quite right. That is the beginning. If he learns to control his reactions, then after some time he will find that he can control more and more, and later it may happen that he will be able to control, again not all, for there is a very large gradation, but certain external events. But certain other external events cannot be controlled because they are of a different size.

Q. If I wish to obtain a particular result and fail, and if I then do the thing differently, will the result be still the same in spite of my effort?

A. You must not deceive yourself. If you do something and the result corresponds to your expectations, it is simply luck, chance – that is all. And in some cases you may do something entirely different and still have the same result.

Q. It seems that one is caught up in a vicious circle!

A. Certainly one is caught, and the system is the way out of this vicious circle, for in ordinary conditions of life one cannot get out.

Q. Would you say a little more about the effort to get out of that circle?

A. If you take all that is given in the right way and work with sufficient effort, the school or the system, call it what you like, will give you this possibility of getting out. There is no way out without school and without knowledge. Again, if you get the knowledge and do not make efforts, it will be equally useless.

When one is in a school, one is made to 'do', because one cannot make oneself, one cannot create sufficient force. But if one puts oneself in different conditions it will produce certain results. School is necessary because it is the conductor of neutralizing force. Otherwise one may have desire, one may make efforts, but one would not know how to start. It seems simple, but it is not simple.

Q. What would be the active and passive forces in this case?

A. Life can be taken as active force, and the passive force, I would say, is in inertia, habits, in all that 'happens'.

Q. How can you distinguish between an effort that is mechanical and an effort that is not?

A. There is no need to distinguish. Make efforts, and result will show.

Q. Do you mean that all I have really done in my life so far is to change one form of sleep for another?

A. It changed itself; you did not do even that. In life one has no control, but in the work one can acquire control. In the work there can be an escape from this state where we can do nothing and things 'happen'. Without the work there is no escape. A certain illusion of control is provided in life by ordinary education, but if circumstances change it all disappears.

Q. Then will you tell me please what is the chief thing that is holding me back from escaping?

A. Mechanicalness. In yourself things continue to 'happen' – things over which you should have control, but you have not acquired control. There are things in us which can and should be mechanical, such as physiological processes and things like that, and there are other things over which we must acquire as much control as we can, because they keep us from awakening. You do not realize to what an extent one thing in us is connected with another.

Everything is connected. You cannot do, or say, or even think anything out of the general line of things that happen.

Our four centres, intellectual, emotional, moving and instinctive, are so coordinated that one movement in one centre immediately produces a corresponding movement in another centre. Certain movements or certain postures are connected with certain thoughts; certain thoughts are connected with certain feelings, sensations, emotions – everything is connected. Such as we are, with all the will that we can concentrate, we can acquire some degree of control over one centre, but only one, and even that for only a short period of time. But other centres will go on by themselves and will immediately corrupt the centre we want to control and bring it again to mechanical reaction. Suppose I know all I should know, and suppose I decide to think in a new way. I begin to think in a new way but sit in the ordinary posture, or smoke a cigarette in the usual way, and I again find myself in the old thoughts.

It is the same with emotions; one decides to feel in a new way about something, and then one thinks in the old way and so negative emotions come again as before, without control. So in order to change we must change things in all four centres at the same time, and this is impossible since we have no will to control four centres. In school there are special methods for attaining this control, but without a school it cannot be done. On the whole, our machine is very cleverly thought out. From one point of view it has wonderful possibilities of development, but from another point of view this development is made very difficult. You will understand why it is made like that when you finally realize what consciousness and will mean, and then you will understand that neither consciousness nor will can develop mechanically. Every small thing has to be developed by struggle, otherwise it would not be consciousness or will. It has to be made difficult.

Q. I feel that if I had to do everything instead of relying on accidents nothing would happen to me at all, for my will is too weak.

A. Not doing is in itself a kind of doing. But at the same time you touch here a very interesting question. When you get control, fewer and fewer things will happen, and you will have to do even small things because they will not happen to you. But this is probably very far.

Q. Would you say that the sense of responsibility that one ought to do something useful in the world is imagination, since you say we cannot ‘do’?

A. It may be imagination or imitation, or it may be right. But in that case we must consider *what* and *how*, and *how* is more important than *what*. Most people think about what to do but not about how. Often the things they decide to do are impossible, like stopping wars and other such things.

Q. If we try to be conscious and try to see how things really are, would it change our situation so that things do not happen to us, but we do things as we wish to do them?

A. Certainly, this is the aim, but a very far aim. You see, first of all, here is a wrong use of the word ‘us’. You must remember that when it was said that things happen to all people and that people cannot ‘do’ anything, that referred to ordinary conditions in ordinary life – what is called normal life. But in this work we are trying to get out of this ‘normal’ life, so we already must ‘do’. Only we must first learn what we can ‘do’, because in our present conditions many things will continue to happen; but in certain things we can already have choice, we can show our preference, our will, as much as we can have will. So ‘us’ cannot be used in the same way as before. But you must understand that at first, the difference is not between ‘doing’ and ‘not doing’, but between trying to ‘do’ and trying to understand, and at present all your energy must be concentrated on trying to understand. What you can try to ‘do’ has been explained. We are trying to find things we can control in ourselves, and if we work on them, we will acquire control. This is all the ‘doing’ that is possible at the moment.

Q. Is the full realization that we cannot 'do' anything already a long step on the way to 'doing'?

A. Sometimes the step is too long, because every idea prolonged too far becomes its own opposite. So if you persuade yourself too seriously that you can do nothing, you will find that you really can do nothing. It is a question of relativity. As I said, not being able to 'do' refers to people without any possibility of school-work.

Q. I think I need a teacher. I find I can do nothing by myself.

A. A teacher cannot 'do' anything for you. You are given certain tasks and *you* have to do them. It is always like that. Instead of trying to 'do', try 'not to do'! You learn to 'do' by first learning 'not to do'. You are trying to do things that you consider desirable; try the other way round – not to do things that are undesirable.

You see, this self-evolution is not obligatory, not mechanical, there is no guarantee. It depends on effort. People often ask: 'How is it that I have been working so many years and have had no experience of higher centres yet?' And I ask them: 'Have you really been working so many years?' One counts from the time one has heard these ideas, but one does not try to calculate how much one actually worked – how many days, how many hours or minutes in each day. If one makes this calculation, one will see that there is no reason to expect any results yet, although one may have heard about it a long time ago.

Q. If we are machines, how can we change our being?

A. We cannot wait until we change. There is one very important principle in the work – you never have to work in accordance with your force, but always beyond your force. This is a permanent principle. In the work you always have to do more than you can; only then can you change. If you do only what is possible you will remain where you are. One has to do the impossible. You must not take the word 'impossible' on too big a scale, but even a little means much. This is different from life – in life you only do what is possible.

It is necessary to put more energy into things – into self study, self-observation, self-remembering and all that. And in order to put more energy into your work it is necessary to find where it is being spent. You awake every morning with a certain amount of energy. It may be spent in many different ways. A certain amount is necessary for self-remembering, study of the system and so on. But if you spend this energy on other things, nothing remains for that. This is really the chief point. Try to calculate every morning how much energy you intend to put into work in comparison with other things. You will see that even in elementary things, simply in relation to time, you give very little to the work, if you give any at all, and all the rest is given to quite useless things. It is good if they are pleasant things, but in most cases they are not even pleasant. Lack of calculation, lack of these elementary statistics is the reason we do not understand why, with all our best intentions and best decisions, in the end we do nothing. How can we do anything if we do not give any energy or time to it?

If you want to learn a language, you must learn a certain number of words every day and give some time to the study of grammar and so on. If you want to learn Russian and begin by learning five words a day, I will guarantee that you will never learn it. But if you learn two hundred words a day, in a few months you will understand Russian. It all depends on elementary statistics. In every kind of work or study there is a certain standard. If you give it a certain amount of energy and time, but just not enough, you will have no results. You will only turn round and round and remain approximately in the same place.

Q. I am one of those people who only learn five words a day, but I have always taken comfort in the thought that it is bound to work in the end.

A. No, it is necessary to put more pressure into it. Notice that even in conversations here only few people speak – the others only want to listen, for it is more peaceful, more comfortable. Then, you do not follow up thoughts. I give you very very many, but most of them you do not touch. It is laziness of mind, general laziness. This laziness must be overcome. You cannot get

anything by being lazy, or by doing one thing and leaving everything else. As it is I give you one line – you miss it. I give you another line – you miss that too. So in the end we have only missed lines.

As I said, every kind of work, every kind of state, needs a certain definite minimum of effort and minimum of time given to it, and the work we are trying to do needs more than many other things if we want to get even perceptible results. What does it mean to work practically? It means to work not only on intellect but also on emotions and on will. Work on intellect means thinking in a new way, creating new points of view, destroying illusions. Work on emotions means not expressing negative emotions, not identifying, not considering and, later on, also work on the emotions themselves. But what does work on will mean? It means work on one's actions. First you must ask yourselves: What is will in men No. 1, 2 and 3? It is the resultant of desires. Will is the line of combined desires, and as our desires constantly change, we have no permanent line. So ordinary will depends on desires and we can have many desires going in different directions. The line constructed out of all these angles is the resultant. This is our will. It may go in one direction one day and in another direction another day, and we think it is straight. So it is really the resultant of our blindness.

We have to ask ourselves on what the will of man No. 7 could be based. It must be based on full consciousness, and this implies knowledge and understanding connected with objective consciousness and a permanent 'I'. So three things are necessary: knowledge, consciousness and a permanent 'I'. Only those people who have these three things can have real will; that means a will that is independent of desires or anything else.

Q. You said no will was possible for us?

A. Will is a relative term: there are different wills on different levels. A mechanical man who never thinks of development has only a multitude of small wills that are quite mechanical. He has a certain desire: one side of him wants to do something and another side is afraid he will be punished if he does it. A struggle ensues between the different tendencies and the result of this struggle we call 'will'.

Q. Then in order to develop will one must go against desires?

A. First of all you must become one. You are many and you have hundreds of 'I's and hundreds of wills. If you want to develop an independent will you must become one and conscious. Will depends on unity and consciousness.

Q. If we are determined to do something we do not like, and manage to do it, are we not using will?

A. It may be fear; perhaps you are afraid not to do it, or you may expect some reward either in this life or the next – many things are possible. Generally we are either afraid of something, or expect some kind of benefit from it. As a rule the term 'will' is used in a relative sense, but when *we* speak of will, we speak of a certain level. Before we can speak of the possibility of will we must at least have a central point which can control the rest. Will means liberation from the mechanical state.

Q. Can useful unity be obtained by engrossment in some routine work that employs the majority of 'I's?

A. It cannot be called full unity, it is only relative unity, the unity of the 'I's employed in this work. One can train oneself very much by work of this kind, but it cannot touch the whole of you. There is no work that can touch the whole, it will always be only a small part of you.

Q. How can we change or wake if we have no free will?

A. If we had free will we would not be machines. How can a machine have free will? And how can we change? It was already explained that there is a possibility of change, but a very small possibility, and many different combinations of favourable circumstances are necessary in order to begin. Later, with each step, it becomes more and more difficult and requires more and more effort, and then, after some time, it becomes easier. But first a certain combination

of circumstances is necessary, and later hard work as well, because school is necessary. Without a school it is impossible to change oneself. Difficulties are so great and man is so weak that he can do nothing alone.

At present our will belongs to 'I's or groups of 'I's based on one personality out of many. But real will means one will, so it can only belong to a single 'I' or, if you like, to essence. So first we must be one at least at certain moments and then try to work to create will. One cannot become unified at once. Will is bound to come and go; at one moment we shall have will, at another there will be none. It will be a long time before we can speak about anything reliable in us, let alone anything permanent.

Q. How does will grow?

A. It cannot grow without effort. You have to save energy to collect enough for struggle with certain weaknesses. Suppose you realize something is a weakness and that you must struggle with it, but you find that you have not enough energy; you can then try to do some smaller thing which is not so difficult and in this way you will save energy. Generally speaking, we miss the opportunity of making small efforts. We disregard them, do not consider them important enough. Yet we can increase our capacity for making efforts only by making these small efforts which we disregard.

Q. Is creation of unity essentially preceded by inner conflict?

A. By realization of inner conflict. Inner conflicts are constant. Nobody lives without inner conflicts, they are normal and always there. But when we begin to work, conflict increases. When we do not work, we run away, we do not fight. What does 'work' mean? It means struggle with conflicting things. We have a certain aim, but many of our 'I's do not want to go that way, so naturally conflict increases. But the creation of unity is not the result of conflict – it is the result of struggle with conflict. We are many and we want to be one – this is one formulation of our aim. We realize that it is inconvenient, uncomfortable and dangerous to be so many. We decide to be at least less divided, instead of five hundred to become five. I feel that I must do something and I do not want to – this is conflict, and by constantly recurring it builds up resistance and produces unification.

Q. Does not resistance stop most people achieving anything?

A. Resistance may be very different in nature, because we have many habits, physical and mental, which sometimes we cannot overcome. Habits may be so strong that there is no place for anything new. There we come again to the question of schools, because by oneself, even if one knows, one cannot overcome either internal or external resistance.

Q. If everything is going smoothly and one is not aware of any 'yes' and 'no' conflict, is it a good thing to try and induce it?

A. There is no need. The moment one starts working, trying to remember oneself, trying not to identify, to remember the system, at once friction begins. Friction creates energy. If things are easy, there is no friction. But if you put spokes in the wheel of mechanicalness, this creates friction, which creates energy.

Q. What would unity mean? Is it unity between centres?

A. Unity is not between centres, because centres are different, but between personalities or groups of 'I's. Each centre has its own work and our centres are too coordinated, for the work of one centre mechanically produces work of another centre. This is not desirable at all, and it is partly due to this wrong co-ordination that personalities are not sufficiently connected; many of them are quite independent and contradictory.

Q. Can desire to develop be called will?

A. Call it desire, this is quite sufficient. It is not will. Will belongs to the whole and is another side of consciousness.

Q. In our state of consciousness can we know the difference between desire and will?

A. Certainly desire is when you do what you want, will is when you can do what you do not want.

Q. How can we make a right use of inner conflict?

A. It is very simple. One part of us – magnetic centre or one personality – wants to awake. But the larger part of us wants to sleep. You must decide on whose side you are, and then help that side.

In order to study how to begin work on will, how to transform will, one has to give up one's will. This is a very dangerous expression if it is misunderstood. It is important to understand rightly what 'to give up one's will' means. We have no will, so how are we to give up what we do not have? First you must realize you never agree that you have no will, you only agree in words. Secondly, you must understand that we do not always have will but only at times will in our state means a strong desire. If there is no strong desire, there is no will and so there is nothing to give up. At another moment we have a strong desire that is against work, and if we stop it, it means we give up will. It is not at every moment that we can give up will but only at special moments. And what does 'against work' mean? It means against rules and principles of the work or against something you are personally told to do or not to do. There are certain general rules and principles, and there may be personal conditions for different people.

Q. Should one ask for further personal directions?

A. Yes, but if one asks, one must obey. One is not obliged to do anything apart from following the general rules and principles if one does not ask, so before asking one must think twice.

Q. If one is prepared to obey, will you give directions?

A. If opportunity offers. It must be at a moment when you have will. There must be a definite desire to do something that affects work or other people. Usually we have bad will; we very seldom have good will. If you have good will, I do not speak about it; I simply say, 'Go on, continue, learn'.

You do not know how to think about will. One moment you realize that you are machines, but the next moment you want to act according to your own opinion. At that moment you must be able to stop, not to do what you want. This does not apply to moments when you have no intention of doing anything, but you must be able to stop if your desire goes against rules or principles, or against what you have been told. It often happens that people go on studying and miss these moments. They think they work when nothing happens. We cannot always work equally; at one moment passive study is sufficient, at another moment it is necessary to go against oneself, to stop.

Q. What causes these moments?

A. Desire. As I said, our will is a resultant of desires. It is not a system expression, it is an old psychological definition but a good one. Desires may be very different: they may be intellectual desires, such as desire to know, curiosity, or emotional, instinctive or moving desires. If one strong desire conquers, it gives direction to desires. I now speak of desires that may have a connection with the work.

Q. We are told to keep rules. This presupposes we can keep them, which would be 'doing'. It seems to me incompatible with the idea that we cannot 'do'.

A. Everything is relative. We can 'do' some inner actions, for we have a certain control. For instance, we have a certain control of our thoughts: we can think about one thing or another. This is the beginning of the possibility. If we continue to keep our interests directed in a certain line, our thinking process acquires a certain power and, after some time, it can create at least moments of self-awareness which, when it comes more often and stays longer, can begin to change other things. So there are ways out of this absolute mechanicalness. But if one is in conditions of ordinary life, without knowing that everything happens, one can do

nothing. The real possibility of changing these conditions begins with control of thoughts and control as far as possible of consciousness, that is, with inner work on ourselves. By doing this inner work, by trying to acquire control of oneself, one learns how to 'do'. It does not mean one can 'do', for one cannot; but if one begins, then, little by little, one learns how to 'do'.

Q. Is self-imposed discipline good, or must it be school discipline?

A. Discipline is good if it is discipline. But if it is just an arbitrary invention, then it can give no result. The most important aspect of discipline is not expressing negative emotions and not indulging in negative emotions. Mechanical tasks cannot give any result, but if you catch yourself at a moment of negative emotion and stop it – this is discipline.

If we want to be in the work, we must verify all our thoughts, words and actions from the point of view of the work. So if you want to work, you are no longer free – you must lose the *illusion* of freedom. The question is, have you freedom? Have you something to lose?

This is why self-remembering is necessary. Self-remembering is not only self-awareness, it means also a certain capacity to act in a certain way, to do what you want. You see, in our logical thinking, logical knowledge, we divide consciousness from will. Consciousness *means* will. In Russian, for instance, the same word is used for will and for freedom. Consciousness means will, and will means freedom.

Q. Is attention synonymous with will?

A. No, otherwise it would not have been necessary to use two words. But controlling attention is the beginning of will.

Q. You spoke about bringing things under control. What is it in us which controls?

A. That depends on what you want. In every particular line of action aim is the controlling factor. In work on yourself or study you have a certain aim. This aim will control your actions.

But you did not mean that: you asked what is there *in us* that can control. To answer this I must return again to groups of 'I's, in this case the magnetic centre. At present, in relation to our personal work, our aim is to be under the control of magnetic centre and not of stray 'I's, one of them interested in one thing and another in another thing. If every one of them wants to control us, it means that in the end nobody controls; but if we are controlled by magnetic centre it already means a certain control.

The determination and definition of aim is a very important moment in the work. It usually happens that one defines one's aim quite rightly, in quite the right direction, only one takes an aim that is very far off. Then, with this aim in view, one begins to learn and to accumulate material. The next time one tries to define aim, one defines it a little differently, finding an aim that is a little nearer; the next time again a little nearer, and so on, until one finds an aim that is quite close – to-morrow or the day after tomorrow. This is really the right way in relation to aims, if we speak about them without more precision. We can find many aims that have been definitely mentioned already. 'To be one.' Quite right, a very good aim. 'To be free.' How? Only when one acquires control of the machine. One person may say, 'I want to be conscious'; another may say, 'I want to be awake', or 'I want to have will'. These are all aims on the same line, only at different distances.

Q. I have come to the conclusion that most of my aims are too remote and I want to work more on the practical side.

A. Yes, because before you can reach remote aims, there are many things you can do here and now, and that is where this system differs from almost all other systems. Nearly all other systems begin with aims at least ten thousand miles ahead which have no practical meaning; but this system begins in this room. That is the difference and that is what must be understood first of all.

Again and again we must return to this question of what we want from the work. Do not use the terminology of the system but find what you yourself want. If you say you want to be conscious, that is all very good, but why? What do you want to get by being conscious? You must not think that you can answer this question immediately. It is very difficult. But you must keep coming back to it. And you must understand that before the time comes when you will be able to get what you want, you must know what it is. This is a very definite condition. You can never get anything until you can say, 'I want this'. Then perhaps you may get it or perhaps you may not; but you can never get it unless you know what it is. You can formulate it in your own way, and you must be sincere with yourself. Then you can ask yourself: 'Will the system be able to help me to get it?' If we remember our aim, think about it, find more and more reasons why we should work, our will will move in one direction and will get stronger. If we forget our aim, we get slack.

I have spoken about the question of aim because I advise you to think about it, to revise what you have already thought about aim and think how you would define your aim now, after a study of these ideas.

I would say that what a man can get, what can be promised him on condition that he works, is that after some time of work he will see himself. Other things that he may get, such as consciousness, unity, connection with higher centres, all come after this – and we do not know in what order they come. But we must remember one thing; until we get *this* – until we see ourselves – we cannot get anything else. Until we begin to work with this aim in view we cannot say that we have begun to work. So, after some time we must be able to formulate our immediate aim as being able to see oneself. Not even to *know* oneself (this comes later), but to see oneself. Man is afraid to see himself. But he can decide to take courage and see what he is.

Q. Is will part of being?

A. Yes, the same as consciousness and understanding. Only, if you work too much on understanding and knowledge and disregard will, then instead of growing stronger your will will become weaker, or remain the same as it was. If will remains undeveloped, the development of understanding cannot help much. One can understand a great deal and not be able to do anything about it. So from the very beginning one must start making serious efforts to develop will. As I said, with our will – the will of men No. 1, 2 and 3 – we can only control one centre, using all the concentration possible for us. Yet centres are dependent on one another. Control of more than one centre can only be obtained if you put yourself under some other will, because your own will is insufficient, and this is why school discipline and school exercises are necessary.

We have no real will; we only have self-will and wilfulness. If one understands that, one must have the courage to give up one's will. In a school special possibilities to give up one's will are made, so that if you give it up, later you may have your own will. But even without those special possibilities, if people watch themselves and are careful, they can catch moments when strong desire is present and ask themselves what they are to do in the light of the system. Everybody must find what his own situation is.

Q. What is self-will? And what is the difference between self-will and wilfulness?

A. There is no particular difference. Both are manifestations of the same thing – generally, manifestations of resistance. It is will created and controlled by opposition. This will we have, but it does not come from us, it comes from the obstacle. Self-will is when, for instance, someone sees that a man does not know how to do a thing and offers to explain, but the man says, 'No, I will do it myself', 'I will decide it myself', 'I don't want to listen to anybody', and so on. Wilfulness is much the same only more general – it can be a kind of habit. It is mechanical will, generally based on wrong assumptions about oneself and one's experience. Self-will is self-assertion. If you compare self-will with a normal action there is always some

opposition in it – you want to do something you should not do. It is very characteristic in work. In studying ideas you know that certain things you must avoid, but you want exactly those things. If you start with this in thinking about self-will you will find your own examples.

Q. How can we work against self-will? And is it possible for us, as we are, to recognize the moments when we have real will?

A. Not real will; real will is very far off. As I said, all we have is self-will and wilfulness, or small wills that change all the time. As to how we can work against self-will: you can study the system. There are certain demands in the system; things you must not do or must do. What can be opposed to self-will? There are only two things opposed to one another: work and self-will. Self-will wants to talk, for instance, and you must not talk about certain things, because if you do, you will only tell lies; there is a rule that you cannot speak about the ideas of the system to people outside before you know and understand them. A struggle ensues, and the result is according to which of the two conquers. In this way, from the very beginning, you meet with ideas of the work opposed to self-will. If you forget about the work, you are not working against self-will. The only way to struggle against self-will is to remember the work. It may be that at one moment the work does not enter at all, but at another moment it does enter, and in that moment you can understand what giving up self-will means. Ask yourself: Is it right from the point of view of the work or not? This is struggle against self-will.

In an ordinary man will follows a zigzag line or goes in a circle, this is why it is necessary to subjugate will. This subjugation trains it so that afterwards it can follow a definite line. When it becomes strong enough, it is no longer necessary to limit it. So will cannot be left as it is at present, for now it runs in all directions. It has to be trained, and in order to train will one has to do many unpleasant things.

Q. Are opportunities for training will always present if you can find them?

A. Yes, as I said, where there is friction. But that depends on what you want – on whether you want friction, on your decision, your state and your position. In the work every moment one has to overcome laziness, inertia, wanting to stop. If one does not work there is nothing to overcome, but if one works at anything one always has to overcome one's desire to stop working.

Q. If I make myself do something I do not want to do, is that friction?

A. Anything is friction, if you do it. But it is not enough merely to think about it. Only by friction can you create energy and develop will.

Q. Are vast amounts of internal friction and discomfort always a necessary preliminary to new development?

A. That depends on people. For some people more may be necessary, for some less. Again, it depends on what you want. If you just want to study, it is enough to see, but if you want to change something it is not enough to look at it. Looking at a thing will not change it. Work means friction, conflict between 'yes' and 'no', between the part that wishes to work and the part that does not wish to work. There are many parts of us that do not wish to work, so the moment you begin to work friction starts. If I decide to do something and a part of me does not wish to do it, I must insist as much as I am able, on carrying out my decision. But as soon as work stops, friction stops.

Q. How can one create useful friction?

A. You must start with some concrete idea. If you produce no resistance, everything happens. But if you have certain ideas, you can already resist identification and struggle with imagination, negative emotions and things like that. Try to find what really prevents you from being active in the work. It is necessary to be active in the work; one can get nothing by being passive. We forget the beginning, where and why we started, and most of the time we never think about aim, but only about small details. No details are of any use without aim. Self-

remembering is of no use without remembering the aims of the work and your original fundamental aim. If these aims are not remembered emotionally, years may pass and one will remain in the same state. It is not enough to educate the mind; it is necessary to educate the will.

We are never the same for two days in succession. On some days we shall be more successful, on others less. All we can do is to control what we can. We can never control more difficult things if we do not control the easy things. Every day and hour there are things that we could control and do not; so we cannot have new things to control. We are surrounded by neglected things. Chiefly, we do not control our thinking. We think in a vague way about what we want, but if we do not formulate what we want, nothing will happen. This is the first condition but there are many obstacles.

Effort is our money. If we want something, we must pay with effort. According to the strength of effort and the time of effort – in the sense of whether it is the right time for effort or not – we obtain results. Effort needs knowledge, knowledge of the moments when effort is useful. It is necessary to learn by long practice how to produce and apply effort. The efforts we can make are efforts of self-observation and self-remembering. When people ask about effort, they think about an effort of ‘doing’. That would be lost effort or wrong effort, but effort of self-observation and self-remembering is right effort because it can give right results. Self-remembering has an element of will in it. If it were just dreaming, ‘I am, I am, I am’, it would not be anything. You can invent many different ways of remembering yourselves, for self-remembering is not an intellectual or abstract thing; it is moments of will. It is not thought; it is action. It means having increased control; otherwise of what use would it be? You can only control yourselves in moments of self-remembering. The mechanical control which is acquired by training and education – when one is taught how to behave in certain circumstances – is not real control.

Q. Does giving up self-will involve giving up your own judgment?

A. It depends in what. Generally it means giving up childishness, inefficiency and lying. You have mistaken ideas about what giving up will means. First, you think it is a final action: that you give up will and have no more will. This is an illusion because we have no such will to give up. Our will lasts for about three minutes. Will is measured by time. If once we give up three minutes of will, to-morrow another three minutes will grow. Giving up will is not one action, it is a continuous process. A single action means nothing. The second mistake is not remembering certain principles to which you give up will. There are many principles in order to follow which you have to give up your will. The third thing is to avoid thinking in extremes; imagining the most difficult cases. Start with simple, ordinary cases. Giving up will only means remembering about the work. This way you learn how to create will; it is the method of developing it.

Q. Does giving up one’s will mean not to act without understanding?

A. You see, this is another of your mistakes. You think that giving up will means *doing* something. This happens very seldom. In most cases you are told *not* to do something. There is a great difference in this. For instance, you want to tell someone what you think of him, but you must not do it. It is a question of training. Will can be grown if a man works on himself and makes his will obey the principles of the work. Things that do not concern the work cannot be connected with it, but the more you enter into the work, the more things begin to touch upon it. However, this needs time.

When their chance comes and people are told to do something, or not to do something, they often go against it for what seems to them the very best of reasons. So they miss their opportunity. Time passes and later they may see that they have missed their opportunity, but it can no longer be replaced by anything. That is the penalty of self-will.

Q. It seems to me that if you give up self-will you actually get what you desire, for by giving up one's desire, one gets the desired result.

A. Self-will does not include everything you want. If you are hungry and want to eat, that is not self-will. Self-will means preferring to act by yourself and, in our case, not taking into consideration the work and the principles of the work. If my self-will is to swear, for instance, and I give it up because it is against the principles of the work, where is the desired result you speak of?

Some of our desires may be well hidden. For instance, a man may want to criticize someone and he calls it sincerity. But the desire to criticize may be so strong that he would have to make a really big effort to stop it, and a man cannot make really big efforts by himself.

I must repeat – in order to create will, man must co-ordinate his every action with ideas of the work; he must in every action ask himself: how will it look from the point of view of the work? Is it useful or harmful to me, or to the work? If he does not know, he can ask. If a man has been long in the work, there is practically not a single action that is not connected with the work; there are no independent actions in the sense that one can no longer act foolishly and without discrimination. One must think before one acts. This is the only method by which will can be created, and for this method school organization is necessary.

As I said earlier, self-will is always connected with self-opinions, a man always thinks that he knows. Then he comes to a school and realizes that he knows nothing. That is why preparation is necessary for school. One is usually full of self-opinions and self-will. A man who comes to a school must be ready to accept the teaching and the discipline of the school, or else he will get nothing. He cannot acquire will unless he gives up self-will, just as he cannot acquire knowledge unless he gives up self-opinions.

Q. Must one break self-will oneself, or have it broken?

A. One must break it oneself, and one must have broken it sufficiently to be in a school. One must be sufficiently free from it to accept things without a fight. One cannot keep all the old views and opinions and acquire new ones. A man must be sufficiently free to give up the old, at least for a time. He must be able to understand the necessity of discipline, for will cannot be created until one accepts a certain discipline.

Without school one can do nothing. One can try and try and nothing will come of it. When one is already connected with some kind of school, the chief thing is to start with work on giving up self-will. When self-will is sufficiently conquered, then it is possible to speak about different methods of work.

Q. How can I learn to act differently in life so as to avoid the same limited and recurrent emotions which I now feel?

A. To act differently in life is our aim. This is why work is organized, why we have to study different theories, remember different rules and so on. What you speak of is the far aim. We have to work in the system first. By learning how to act in connection with the system and the organization, we learn how to act in life; but we cannot learn how to act in life without first going through the system.

Q. I want to make a decision to work from which I cannot draw back.

A. This is one of our greatest illusions, that we can make decisions. It is necessary *to be* in order to make decisions because, as we are, one little 'I' makes decisions and another 'I', which does not know about it, is expected to carry them out. This is one of the first points we have to realize, that, as we are, we cannot make decisions even in small things – things just happen. But when you understand this rightly, when you begin to look for the causes, and when you find these causes, you will be able to work and perhaps to make decisions, although for a long time only in relation to work, not to anything else.

The first thing you have to decide is to do your own work and to do it regularly, to remind yourself about it, not to let it slip away. We forget things too easily. We decide to make

efforts – certain kind of efforts and certain kind of observation – and then just ordinary things, ordinary octaves, interrupt it all and we forget. Again we remember and again we forget, and so it goes on. It is necessary to forget less and to remember more, it is necessary to keep certain realizations, certain things that you have already seen and understood, always with you. You must try not to forget them.

The chief difficulty is *what* to do and *how* to make yourself do it. To make yourself think regularly, work regularly – this is the thing. Only then will you begin to see yourself, that is, to see what is more important and what is less important, where to put your attention and so on. Otherwise what happens? You decide to work, to do something, to change things – and then you remain just where you were. Try to think about your work, what you are trying to do, why you are trying to do it, what helps you to do it and what hinders you, both from outside and inside. It can also be useful to think about external events because they show you how much depends on the fact that people are asleep, that they are incapable of thinking rightly, incapable of understanding. When you have seen this outside, you can apply it to yourself. You will see the same confusion in yourself on all sorts of different subjects. It is difficult to think, difficult to see where to begin to think once you realize this, you start to think in the right way. If you find your way to think rightly about one thing, that will immediately help you to think rightly about other things. The difficulty is that people do not think rightly about anything.

Q. The thing I find most alarming is the ease with which I fall into a state in which no effort is possible

A. Yes, but if you arrange with yourself to make regular efforts, that will help you to go on. This is one of the realizable decisions you can make. In the work you must make only possible decisions, and decisions which have to be remembered.

Q. A few times a year a line of action becomes particularly clear to me. I have been subject to these moments all my life and have come to think it useless to take any serious action without what would ordinarily be called inspiration.

A. There are periods in ordinary conditions when nothing happens, and then there come cross-roads. All life consists of streets and cross-roads. Turning at cross-roads may even become more systematic if one has a centre of gravity. Then one thing will continue to be more important and one will always turn in the same direction. But inspiration has nothing to do with it. It is simply the realization of a moment when you can do something.

Q. Sometimes when I am trying to decide whether or not to do something, I find what seem to be good reasons from the point of view of the system both for doing and not doing it.

A. It is impossible to say anything about this in general, it depends on circumstances. Sometimes you can decide from the point of view of the system, and sometimes there are things in life you can decide without any relation to it, because you cannot always find a practical use for these ideas before you know them all.

There is an expression in the system, ‘to create moon in oneself’. Let us talk about what it may mean. It is a symbolical expression, and symbols in the form of diagrams or symbolical expressions are used for very definite purposes. A symbol expresses many ideas at once. If it meant only one idea, the answer would be simple; but a symbol is used to avoid long descriptions and to put many ideas into one sentence.

How to decipher a diagram or symbolical expression? In order to decipher a symbol, it is necessary to know the order of ideas included in it.

Now, if we ask what it may mean to create moon in oneself, we must first ask ourselves, what is the moon’s function in relation to organic life? The moon balances organic life – all external movements are balanced by the moon. What will happen if this function of the moon disappears? Will it be beneficial to an individual man or the opposite?

We must realize that all this refers to being. What are the features of our being? The chief feature of our being is that we are many. If we want to work on our being, make it correspond more to our aim, we must try to become one. But this is a very far aim. What does it mean to become one? The first step, which is still very far, is to create a permanent centre of gravity. This is what creating moon in oneself means. The moon is a permanent centre of gravity which balances our physical life, but *in ourselves* we do not have such a balance, so, when we create this balance or centre of gravity in ourselves we do not need the moon.

But first we must decide what the absence of permanent 'I' means. We have been told about many features of this, but they must be established definitely by observation, and in order to come nearer to the idea of creating moon in oneself we must distinguish what is important and what is unimportant. Then we must begin to struggle against the features which prevent us becoming one. We must struggle with imagination, negative emotions and self-will. Before this struggle can be successful, we must realize that the worst possible kind of imagination, from the point of view of obtaining a centre of gravity, is the belief that one can do anything by oneself. After that, we must find the negative emotions which prevent us doing what is suggested in connection with the system. For it is necessary to realize that self-will can only be broken by doing what one is told. It cannot be broken by what one decides oneself, for then it will still be self-will.

Let me repeat. Work on being is always struggle – against what you like doing or dislike doing. Say you like roller-skating and you are told to remember yourself. Then you must struggle against your desire to go roller-skating. What is there more innocent than roller-skating? But you must struggle against it all the same. Every day and every hour there are things we cannot do, but there are also things we can do. So we must look at a day and see what we can do but do not do.

There can be no rule 'You must remember yourself'. If you are told to do or not to do something, and you do not try, it means you do not want anything, you do not want to work.

You have sufficient knowledge. Now it is necessary to push work on being. We always try to escape from doing what is suggested.

Q. What is the purpose of struggling against self-will?

A. You remember how we started. The aim was to create a centre of gravity, create moon in ourselves. We cannot do it through self-will.

Creating moon in ourselves is connected with the idea of sacrificing suffering. When we begin to sacrifice suffering we begin to create moon in ourselves. We always want to keep our suffering, yet moon can only be created from our suffering. Only we must remember that giving up suffering is one action and creating moon is the result of a continuous series of actions.

Q. How is it possible to find the 'I's that prevent you from doing the things you are told to do?

A. The first time you find you did not do something that was suggested, find the cause. The second time, find another cause, and so on. Then, as I said, find the negative emotions which prevent you hearing what is said and following it. Either you dislike me that day, or somebody else, or the weather; then you feel justified in doing nothing.

Q. The making of effort is what you call struggle. But what do you call it if one does something without being aware of a struggle?

A. That means it happened. Four kinds of things can happen to us – by accident, cause and effect, fate and will. Struggle must be by will, intention. And you must be aware of your intention. You cannot make effort and not be aware of it. What is important is will-action.

Q. In those four categories, will is not often used, is it?

A. Will has to be used. We are never ready for work, but we must work all the same. If we are ready, then we are given other work for which we are not ready. In work one must try to use will – in so far as one has it. If one has an inch of will and uses it, it will grow and one will

have two inches, then three inches and so on. In the work we must learn to make super-efforts.

Q. What is a super-effort?

A. A super-effort can have many characteristics, but generally it is doing not what you think best, but what you are advised to do. From our own intentions we are ready to do many things, but we are not ready to do or not to do what we are told.

Q. In what way does super-effort differ from an ordinary effort?

A. It differs in degree, but not only in degree. Super-effort is effort made consciously, as much as we can, for a definite purpose which is not required by any external circumstances. We never really make serious efforts; it is all pretence, for we do not know what it means to make efforts. In exceptional conditions, when we are obliged to make efforts, we make them, but not super-efforts. Besides, ordinary efforts one makes in life are necessary, useful.

A super-effort may look useless for its purpose.

Q. I feel I am getting into a vicious circle. The more efforts I make, the more I see I cannot 'do'.

A. Then make more efforts and realize it constantly; make it more permanent. You will see that you are not always in the same state. People in ordinary life cannot 'do', but for you it is different – all the time you must try to do. You are always identified and you must not identify, you must watch your talk, you are constantly negative and you must struggle against negative emotions, you must remember yourself. All this is doing. You must observe these things and try to change them.

Q. Is it possible to transfer energy where it is wanted? I cannot do it.

A. This is generally connected with control. If you want to acquire control you must begin from where it is possible. So you must always study yourself and find weak spots where you can produce control. From another point of view they can be called 'strong spots', for they are weak from the point of view of mechanicalness. You cannot choose to do one thing before another for preference; one person can begin in one way, another in another way, but everybody must make efforts in some direction and find out what is possible and what is impossible. But for one person it is more profitable to make efforts in one direction, for another person in another.

Q. What creates stimulus for work?

A. Realization of one's present state. When one realizes that one deceives oneself, that one is asleep and one's house is on fire, always, permanently on fire, and that it is only by accident that the fire has not reached one's room at this very moment, when one realizes this, one will want to make efforts to awake and one will not expect any special reward. Since we do not realize that our house is on fire we always expect a special reward. What can one do in sleep? One can only have different dreams – bad dreams, good dreams, but in the same bed. The dreams may be different, but the bed is the same.

The above text constitutes Chapter X of *The Fourth Way* by P. D. Ouspensky.