

COMMENTS ON "HOW TO GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO.

Dr. Brian Lynch clarifies and explains how we human beings might better understand ourselves with more patient acceptance of our basic emotions. I have found Dr. Lynch's approach helpful personally, and have shared his insights with others who also find his ideas helpful. Dr. Lynch is most proficient in the art of communication that conveys a compassionate understanding of how we might go about having more positive than negative affective (emotional) experiences—an imbalance we all seek! His original and crisp methods of presentation also provide a delightful medium to learn about the many practical insights he shares with readers about what it means to be a more (rather than less) positively affective human being." Jim Duffy, Ph.D., Psychologist

"Thanks for sharing your book with me Brian. I have enjoyed reading it immensely. It's a book to be read thoroughly and several times. It has made me think of so many things about my own life." Gabriela Ortiz-Monasterio, Mother & puppeteer

"Dr Lynch has the gift of clear, uncomplicated communication. He presents the hugely important work of Silvan Tomkins in a way that anyone can comprehend. He provides an access key to understanding the complexity of our emotions, so crucial to those in need of change and personal development. Compulsive reading." Brian J. Nuttall MSc. PG. Dip. Psychotherapy British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy Accredited Counsellor United Kingdom Registered Counsellor

"Dr. Lynch has a unique grasp of the pith of Tomkin's work. He weaves his interactions with clients into Tomkins' ideas in a way that makes the work very accessible and meaningful." Lauren Abramson, Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Johns Hopkins University

PATIENT COMMENTS (altered to assure anonymity):"...at first I thought this was a simple book, but it's not, it is deep.." Heroin addict.."a group of us has been getting together on the porch and reading it." Person seeking help in a relationship."...I call it my bible.." Alcoholic" I understand my emotions now, why I do things. People need to read this." Depressed patient



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LYNCH

BRIAN LYNCH, M.D.

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Knowing your emotions
and how to use them

12 STEPS TO EMOTIONAL HEALTH

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HOW TO GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO

KNOWING EMOTION AND HOW TO USE IT

*Twelve Steps To
Emotional Health*

Brian Lynch



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*To my Parents,
my mother
who directed my interest
and
my father
whom I now understand.*

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Nothing is easier for me than to thank those whom I must, and wish to, acknowledge for their help in the writing of this work. The first is Dr. Silvan S. Tomkins, a man I never met but whose work the great majority of this book is based on. I am confident that his work will be a major force in the forming of our thought and culture in the coming years. It is my privilege to have come so close to knowing one of the great minds the world has known.

Followers of the great mathematician Paul Erdos refer to themselves as having an Erdos number, meaning that they are so many generations removed from the master. I have a Tomkins number of two. The intermediary is Donald Nathanson. Dr. Nathanson, on the basis of an unsolicited e-mail, took a chance on a family doctor many miles away by showing interest in him and, above all, encouraging him. His work, *Shame and Pride: Affect, Sex and the Birth of Self* is the standard introduction to Dr. Silvan S. Tomkins.

Dr. Jim Duffy came to my attention through the Silvan S. Tomkins Institute. I have never met a person more immediately involved in paying attention to the feelings of those that he is dealing with than Jim Duffy. The value of his support and his more than gentle critique of the material cannot be quantified.

To my friends that I have shared this material with, thank you. I hope it has been of some use. I have certainly benefited from your input. In

name they are Margaret Lowmiller, Rev. David McShane, William Randolph, Robert Surlles, Dr. Henry Stark, Gabriela Ortiz-Monasterio, Cecile Savage and J.J. Hernand for his artwork.

None of this would have been written if it were not for what Sondra Paradis has taught me. Without the meeting of true minds that we have, so much understanding of the world would be but theory to me.

Now for those that have given me the overwhelming privilege of letting me know more of them than, often, any other person in their lives, my patients. Through their individual and group work, we have become friends. As always the student teaches the teacher, nothing could be truer. If it were not for the obvious need for confidentiality I would name each and every one of them, they, more than anyone, taught me that it is not “us” and “them.” It is just “us.”

TO THE READER

This book is a general primer meant to reach a broad audience.

This book has what many, maybe all, readers will find to be new material and a new way of looking at the world; although much of the information has been available for some forty years.

To the specialist the material might seem so foreign that they will turn away and dismiss it out of hand. If not, I hope that the material will complement theories with which you already work.

To the general reader: whether you have picked the book up out of general curiosity or because you are trying to solve a problem, I have tried to not be technical. I have tried to make the material as accessible as possible while being as complete as one can be in such a short book. I do not wish this to be considered a “popularization” of more serious work. Given the subject matter, what one takes away from the work is very personal, and each has to assign a value to what has been gained.

To doctors and patients, I hope this will give you new eyes with which to practice a truly holistic medicine.

INTRODUCTION

This book presents material that is almost entirely not my original product. Why then write the book? I write it because I believe I have a special perspective on the material. I am a Family Doctor who has always wondered about the basic connection of mind and body. It may not be known to the reader that psychiatrists, who are first educated as medical doctors, are not well respected by many in that profession. And many a psychiatrist thinks little of Internist or Family Doctor. To be sure, much of the public is very skeptical of all doctors and particularly of psychiatrists. This is a sad state and I hope this book does something to remedy the situation.

Family Medicine began only thirty years ago and whether Family Medicine is aware of it or not, I believe it was formed to try to bring the two worlds of mind and body together. There used to be only the “general doctor” who did everything, with the emphasis being on “everything.” They had to treat the mind and the body. Many of us still go to the general doctor and many of those general doctors are family doctors, Family Practitioners, such as myself. These general physicians, it is estimated, care for about half the problems that we relegate to the “mind.” Thus the general and family doctor also becomes an advisor or sage for many difficult family and other interpersonal problems. This book is an attempt to make practical a theory and thus give doctors, patients, and the general public a way to see the relationships in a new, powerful, and useful way.

The idea of rewriting the 12 Steps from the AA movement came from leading therapy groups. The more I read them, the more I felt that, if rewritten, they would be a wonderful way of introducing some new and powerful ideas about how we function. My groups have responded well to them. That said, this is *not* a book about addiction although this aspect of life is covered. My 12 Steps concern our general emotional health.

Finally, the basis for the book is a theory called Affect Theory developed by Silvan S. Tomkins and significantly added to by Dr. Donald Nathanson. There is a brief explanation of the word “affect” in the first appendix. The use of the word “affect,” in an introduction such as this, for the most part, only serves to confuse.

Tomkins’ work is massive in its scope and many will spend a lifetime studying it. Dr. Nathanson made Tomkins’ work much more accessible. The attempt here is to take things a step further and make the theory even more accessible. That said many might disagree with some of my interpretation of Tomkins. In the end the idea of any work is to have a conversation and get people to think about what you are writing about. I want you to think about how we are put together as a whole. We have a long way to go, despite Silvan Tomkins, in figuring out how we are put together.



The Twelve Steps To General Emotional Health

We came to realize that we are profoundly emotional beings and that unless we understand our emotions we are very often powerless over our own actions and are powerless over the world.

We came to believe that by knowing our own powerful emotions we can maximize peace and joy in our lives.

We made a decision to start on a path of understanding how our thinking and actions are often profoundly determined by our emotions, past and present.

We came to an understanding that only by taking a detailed emotional inventory, an inventory of our anger, fear, distress, disgust, and shame and by assessing what we are really interested in and what really makes us happy- will we truly be able to change our thinking and actions.

That we have expressed to others, when appropriate, and ourselves the exact nature of our feelings thereby gaining some power over our feelings.

By doing all of the above steps, we naturally became ready to be accepting of the world and others as it is and as they are.

By the above we came to accept ourselves as we are and to understand that when we have hurt ourselves or others we have done what we have done due to our own hurt that was unmanageable. Thus it is counterproductive and damaging to blame ourselves and others.

Made a list of all persons we have harmed and made an inventory of how we felt at the time we hurt them and made amends when appropriate if possible and beneficial to all concerned.

We have tried to understand why we felt the way we did, thus understanding why we did what we did. We have come to understand that we feel before we think. We have worked towards understanding that others like ourselves, have trouble controlling emotion and thus, often, what they do.

We have continued to think about our basic emotions, daily, if possible. We have come to know each emotion in our own personal way. We have monitored ourselves for feelings of guilt, which we have come to see as counterproductive. When we do things that hurt others, or ourselves, we look to what we were feeling at the time, thereby understanding ourselves better, as well as making amends to those we have hurt and thereby not experiencing guilt but joy.

We Sought, through the practice of a daily emotional inventory and meditation on that inventory, control over our actions and lives without ever expecting perfection of others or self in this regard.

Having come to know our emotional lives, we have gained the ability to employ our interest and experience in a new type of interaction with others, one of mutual interest that will lead us to maximize joy in ourselves and with others

“Men decide many more problems by hate, love, lust, rage, sorrow, joy, hope, fear, illusion, or some similar emotion, than by reason or authority or any legal standards, or legal precedents, or law.”

DE ORATORE, Marcus Tullius Cicero

CHAPTER 1

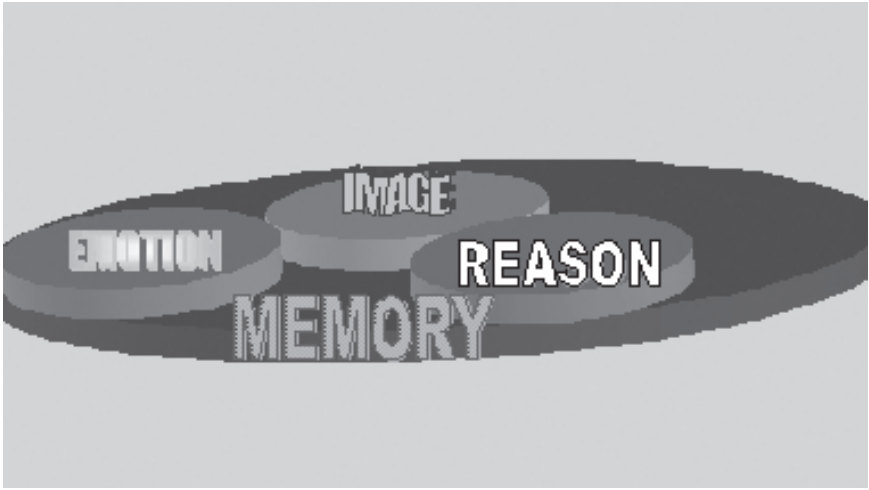
Emotion, Memory, Reason

STEP 1

We came to realize that we are profoundly emotional beings and that unless we understand our emotions we are very often powerless over our own actions and are powerless over the world.

Emotion! What is it and how does it affect us? Almost everyone went to school and learned many different things. If you think about it there was little said about our emotions. I want to offer you a way to think about emotion and reason and their relationship that will help us all get through the day feeling better.

Can I show you that emotion is profound? Can I show you that emotion almost totally controls us and our actions and reactions to the world? I think I might have a pretty easy job as you would not be reading unless you were interested in emotion. You know it is important. We all do, but most of us are confused about it.



The way I am going to show you that emotion is important is by presenting some ideas. Almost all of these ideas are not mine but come from several men who took a great deal of information and put it together in an organized way.

We can agree that when we think of the human being we can say that we have at least these parts and capabilities: 1) emotion 2) reason 3) and the ability to capture and recall images, such as in being able to simply see something and then recall the memory of seeing it.

Ask yourself if there is any fixed order to these three components.

Such as:

Reason	_____	Emotion	_____	Memory
Emotion	_____	Memory	_____	Reason
Memory	_____	Emotion	_____	Reason
Emotion	_____	Reason	_____	Memory
Reason	_____	Memory	_____	Emotion
Memory	_____	Reason	_____	Emotion

Does the order make any difference? I suggest that the order does make a difference.

In the diagram, please think of “image” and “memory” as the same for the moment.

What am I talking about?

It is simply this. If you were to turn around in a bank and see a man with a gun, what would be the order of events? What if you tried to run or if you tried to disarm the man or make yourself as little noticeable as possible? Why would that take place? Is it because you thought about things first or because you reacted on the basis of memory and emotion?

Another take on the example above. You now have your newborn baby in a bassinet that you placed on the floor behind you. You are shot at and step back on your baby killing it. What happened? I think it is obvious that the first thing that took place was that we felt an emotion: fear or anger alone or in combination with another emotion such as distress or a feeling of confusion instantly took place. Then what happened? What happened was that your body moved and did things automatically? How can it do things automatically? It can do so through memory. Of course, this is an extreme example. Do things always happen this way? They do in the most simple of situations. Let's say I come downstairs in the morning and start playing with the dog. Why did I start playing with the dog? I think it is because I was after a feeling of interest, interest in another living thing. Why? Because, I expect, I was interested in having a feeling of joy. Did I really reason about this before I did it?

Now while I was playing with the dog, the automatic coffee maker has made my coffee and I begin to smell it. I am having such a good time with the dog, but I also want my coffee. Don't I FEEL a bit confused or irritated? Just a tiny bit? Did I think about the coffee first? I think the aroma stimulated my nose; this brought back memories of all the other mornings, which recalled memories of me enjoying my coffee, so I think about getting the coffee. But for me to do this my interest in and activity with the dog, which I am enjoying, has to be interrupted, and this has to be a tiny bit irritating. In the end, I may drink my coffee and play with the dog, thus getting double enjoyment!

Now let's take another example that is somewhere between a bank robbery and playing with a dog. I am at a gathering and I see a person I do not know but find I am interested in. What is at play? Do I reason that he or she is handsome or beautiful? I think not. How could I? Maybe I turn around and immediately I am interested. Only after quite some time will I start thinking about my observations, about my emotional response to the image of the person. I start to see that he or she has a lot of make up on, or I see that the suit does not fit so well.

Simply reading this step or the rest of the book will not necessarily convince you of the need for the first step. The whole point of this is simply to invite you to think about the idea that emotion comes first and then we think and do, or do and think.

For those who would like more reasons or proof there is a great deal of thinking and scientific support for these ideas. A psychologist, some fifty years ago, had the idea that babies were born with emotions. Now, this may seem obvious to many of the readers but it is not obvious to everyone.

It seems we are born with the ability to feel physically and emotionally. We are born with the ability to capture images, remember them, and recall them. We are born with the ability to think about things.

Think of babies: which comes last? Is it not thinking! The baby can smile, laugh, cry, get angry, and remember where his bottle is long before it can talk. Not that babies cannot reason before talking, but observation shows us that they communicate, first, much more through emotion.

Many people think we learn our emotions from other people. But if this is true, how can a baby have such a great smile at such an early age! Charles Darwin, the famous author who wrote about the theory of evolution, long ago, studied the fact that all over the world people have the same expressions on their faces. Since Darwin, several others have studied this in detail and found that, indeed, a smile in Borneo is the same as a smile in the United States.

So we have some clear real life examples and some research that supports my position. What do you think? Do you think that you feel before you think? When you read these pages, please think all you want. Please try and think of situations where you have done something solely through reason. I spent a long time studying people who wrote about such things as “pure reason” but I have found that the problem with them is that they missed the fact that to think about anything we first have to be INTERESTED in it. Is interest reason? Well, I think it is not. Think of the beautiful woman or handsome man at the party. What does reason have do with it? Interest is a powerful emotion.

Some people immediately object and say that such things like science are not emotional, solving a problem is not emotional,

What is the sum of $2+2$?

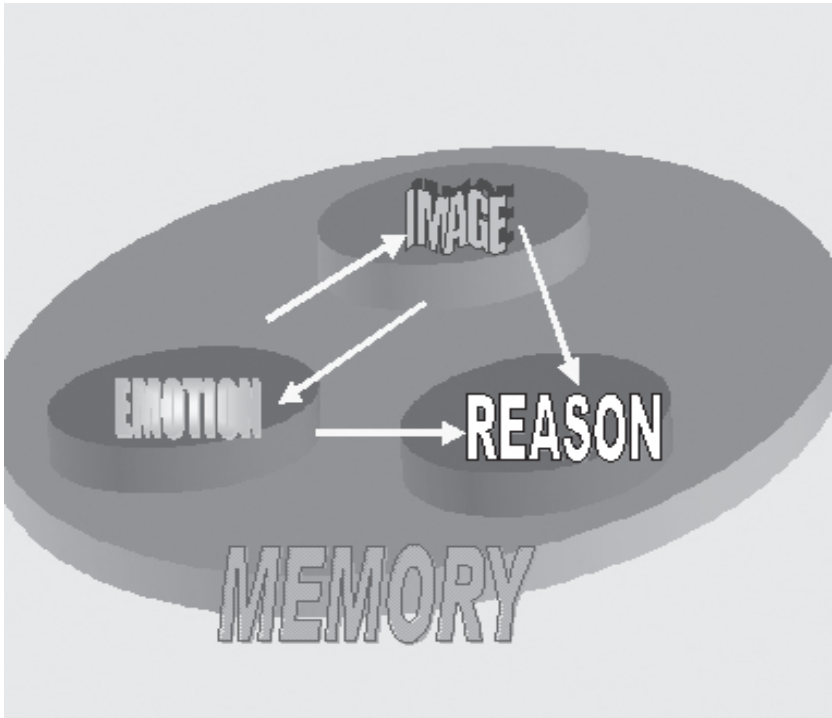
You might have read that and immediately have solved the problem and the number 4 flashed across your mind. You sensed the tiniest bit of joy. On the other hand, although you knew the answer you might have had a tiny bit of ill feeling when you realized I was asking you to solve a “problem.” Why? I think it is often because we never liked school much. Maybe we were frequently scolded. Maybe we were always given the message that we were dumb. Nevertheless almost every one knows the answer to $2+2$, so even though you may have felt bad, a tiny bit bad, you now feel good.

Still some might feel a bit insulted or bad as did a member of a group I read this to. Why? Because he felt that I was, for a moment, insulting him with such an easy problem.

Now what if I pose the problem of

$$70242 \times 23 = ?$$

Here many, many more people are going to feel a tiny bit bad, maybe not just a tiny bit but a lot. I picked up a book on emotion and I am asked to solve a math problem! I HATE MATH! Emotion?



What happened? I will talk a great deal about our interest being interrupted. If you had a “negative” response to this problem, your interest was interrupted, you felt a tiny bit bad. This feeling, this uncomfortable feeling, is what I want you to always pay attention to. If you are the math whiz, had no bad feeling, and did the problem in your head, then please try to empathize with us mortals!

We very often lack power over our own actions and over the world. I say that we are often powerless over our actions and the world. Of course, no one is always powerless. Emotion, Memory and Reason all work together. We would not be here if reason was not very powerful or if memory was not very powerful. I am trying to point out that memory and reasons are so powerful that they obscure the basic importance of feeling and emotion. Feeling is background to everything and, therefore, not so much noticed. In being the background, although it is not noticed, it turns out to be the most “powerful” or important of the three, because it is first.