



## **A Kindle (eBook) version in English is now available on amazon.com**

This summer the physical version in the Swedish edition of my book “Let the Personality Bloom” had sold out. Therefore, I had to produce more books;-) At the same time I decided to update the book.

Now I also have published **an English Kindle version of the book at Amazon**. In this way I avoid the obstacle for buyers that there is no interface in English on the Swedish internet book stores. That have irritated me...

Not so many changes in the book. Mostly the new and more professionally designed symbols for the factors

A new "recipe" for the main thread in the book: How to be successful with personal development, when you use the HumanGuide concepts?" The former method was too ambitious...

### **Now is the method...**

1- Do the test

2- Figure out the first version of your StrengthStrategy based on your testresult

3- Decide what is your three Powergoals (there is a book...) to start with. Moreover, you can get a god support by using the webapp [your.humanguide.se](http://your.humanguide.se)

Then you can use the webapp [your.humanguide.se](http://your.humanguide.se) as a kind of turbo – a digital dictionary (the content partly from the book)

You know the eBook format is very practical even if many people today still prefer a real book. It is another feeling and what you are custom with. Perhaps I will also do an audio version, because more and more are listening on audio versions. You know it could be a good possibility in many situations, which could be boring e.g. travelling, cleaning, etc. However, you need to be aware that doing two things aren't mindfulness... You aren't in the present. In my opinion this aspect isn't binary, but sometimes it is good to only be in the moment and also be open to new experiences – also by chance;-)

**Anyhow eBooks have certain advantages** – especially mine, because many readers have told me that they use it as a kind of dictionary. They could say like this: After I have finished the book I understood that I had learnt a lot. It was easy to read, but I now realised that it contained very condensed knowledge. One of these readers was an engineer, which pleases me very much;-)

What is then the advantages? Well,

- you can read in much more situations
- many say “Knowledge is the lightest burden” – in this case zero to add a book;-)
- you can add book marks
- you can add notes
- information is searchable

Hmmm. I have recently understood one problem with an eBook. You don't see it, so you need to have some system, which reminds you on having the book or establish new customs for reading...

Knowledge greetings and to our success,  
Rolf

p.s. If you search for the book at [the Amazon](#), then it is best to search for **let the personality bloom rolf kenmo**. The paper version is the old version. I don't think I will produce a new paper version, because there are so many advantages with an eBook, but it takes some time for people to adopt...

## Testimonials...

*"I was recommended the book and was hooked. I have learnt more than I so far have learnt in my 26 years of life! Your book touched me. It gave me new perspectives, a new tolerance level. It has been of great help for me."*

LS, Pharmacist

*"Unbelievable good book. I suppose the best I have read. What has impressed me a lot that you have got all so concentrated, i.e. no buzz or unnecessary information. Only "fact-knowledge" clear as a bell, which you can use immediately. I have already had great use of the knowledge both in my private life and at work. Sometimes I am using the book as a "dictionary". I am 32 years old, so I feel a little that I have got a life experience and knowledge, which I do not yet have. I have learnt more about myself and other people, but as you write in the book: You have to continue with your development all the time."*

JB, Engineer

*"I have read the book once and then two more times. I have also lent it to friends, because it is worthwhile reading. The book has given me deeper understanding that people are different, why they are different and how they express themselves. I apply the book's messages in all my relations. Foremost it has helped me in my relation with my boss and my life partner. I notice that I have got a deeper understanding of myself and how I behave. I have now keys and tools to act in alternative ways, which has enriched my life!"*

CK, Teacher

*In the book Let the Personality Bloom Rolf Kenmo categorizes our qualities in what he calls "Eight Boxes". With help of these eight boxes we can plot in our personality in order to coach ourselves and other people. Our different qualities have both a front and a back side. The back side is not negative. It shows instead a development potential. The author shows also how different qualities cooperate or collide. Moreover, Kenmo uses his own life as an example. Let the Personality Bloom brings also up topics as mental training, stress and positive thinking. He inspires the reader to do a PersonCompass and a FuturePlan. Kenmo is thorough in his writing and what he shares. He also uses a metaphorical language, which gives new perspectives on the theme "Know thyself".*

Ylva Florman, BTJ Bibliotekstjänst (Library service), BTJ-info 17, 2009

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# Preface

This book brings up the most important things I have learnt about personal development so far in my life. I have sorted out the pearls among my experiences and I hope that they can be useful to others. The essential thing is not the pearls, however, but that you get a clearer picture of your personality and its consequences. This makes it easier for you to find yourself. Many people give universal advice to others without taking into consideration that the advice must be adjusted to the recipient's personality to be successful.

I hope that with your efforts, the book and its concepts, you will get a richer and more pleasant life. It is not a quick solution. My recipe demands that you step by step construct your plan for the future. In other words, you sometimes have to make an effort to reach your goal, but you will be richly rewarded along the way.

When you implement your plan for the future you will make new experiences that will cause you to adjust and change directions of your plan. There is no point in running fast if you are running in the wrong direction.

Where I feel it could be interesting to enter more deeply into something I refer to different books for more information. You will also find some comments to a few books under the subheading "About Literature" in the last chapter "Good Luck".

I want you to know what is characteristic of me. In that way you make more of the book, since you understand what motivates me. I will give you this information in terms of the same fundamental psychological needs (factors) you will find in your personal profile, which are described in the chapter "Step 1: Estimate your own personality".

I have the following dominant factors with their consequences for the contents of the book

<b>Need</b> ( <b>factor</b> , in the book written in <i>italics</i> )	<b>Consequences</b> (The factors are explained at large in the chapter ”The Personality Theory Eight Boxes”.
<i>Power</i>	I look for results. I am also very active and I am not afraid of resistance.
<i>Quality</i>	It is important that things work. Things must be solid. I am not interested in half measures. I also have stamina. The lessons and methods must be good and valuable to people.
<i>Structure</i>	Reasoning must be logical and rational. Conclusions must be based on facts. Information must be well structured and clear.
<i>Imagination</i>	I am interested in many <i>different</i> things. You will probably notice that some perspectives are a bit unusual. I like to stick my neck out if I feel that something is bad, or capable of development, as I prefer to call it.

All the things that I recommend I have tried myself. I have only included those things that I have found useful. Many of them are things that I use on a daily basis. Some things have become habitual and others I try to learn how to practice in a good way.

My vision is to make more people able to reach outstanding results and thereby being at their best as often as possible. By ”outstanding results” I do *not* want to contribute to increasing the compulsive pursuit of achievement in society. Instead, I want more people to approach their full capacity and lead good lives.

For all the things I have learnt in the area of personal development I would particularly like to thank the psychologists Lars-Erik Liljeqvist

and Bo Haglund. They introduced me to this area in 1975, and since then it has been one of my major interests. I received new inspiration and sparring in the 90s, when I got in touch with the psychologist and therapist Mary Norman. At the end of the 90s I met Leo Berlips, a Dutch living in Sweden, who is also a psychologist and therapist. Through Leo I got several global Szondi contacts – see more about that below in the Preface. Leopold Szondi is the author of a useful personality theory, which you will learn about in the book. I would also like to thank my family and friends, who have had to endure my constant search for new and useful experiences. Above all, my wife Katarina. Thank you!

I also want to thank my language consultant, Christina Mansicka, for increasing the quality of the book. Another thanks goes to her mother, Monica Mansicka, who made the illustrations, except for the self-portrait in the chapter "The Example Rolf Kenmo". Finally, I want to thank for the opinions and ideas from the great number of friends, colleagues and customers who since 1998 have read parts of the book in the form of compendia.

I hope that you will find my experiences useful. If some things are self-evident to you, you may simply skip those passages.

Tullinge, spring 2001

Rolf Kenmo

### **My Co-operation Partner in Brazil:**

"When I first met Rolf Kenmo, in July 1999, in a global Szondi congress at the university in Louvain-la-Neuve in Belgium, I was admired with his vivacity and spontaneous happiness, when presenting the HumanGuide concepts to a serious public, composed mostly of intellectuals and psychoanalysts. He used simple terms, when addressing the drive *structure* of the personality theory, based on Leopold Szondi. At the end of that year he invited the participants of the congress to experience the on-line version of the HumanGuide test, in the expectation of receiving feedbacks that would enable him to improve his tool.

Attending to that invitation, I did the test and was impressed with its rapidity, simplicity and accuracy. This motivated me to develop the

Brazilian version of the test and to translate the book into Portuguese. The project took six years and was concluded in February 2007, with a validity and reliability study. The results of the HumanGuide test were very positive and showed that the profile obtained with it is reliable and valid.

In March 2009 the Federal Psychology Council in Brazil ([SATEPSI](#)) has approved the HumanGuide test. It is the first approved on-line test in Brazil to be used in the Human Resource context.

The HumanGuide concepts presented in the book stimulate people to reflect about life and the choices they do, besides offering a very useful instrument for coaching and for actions that aim the human development in companies and in life in general.

São Paulo / Brazil February 2009

Giselle Welter

### **The Second Edition 2001: 1.1**

This edition does not carry a lot of changes. New passages (altogether about five pages) are

- *The Benefit of Concepts for Personality.* The purpose is to motivate the use of concepts and explain how they should be built in order to be constructive. A lot of people are against concepts for the personality, in spite of the fact that they use emotionally charged words to describe themselves and others. What most people turn against, however, is negative and confining caricatures, such as "anti-personnel mine".
- *Make the Right Diagnosis!* The aim is to emphasize the importance of a well-founded diagnosis before you take any measures. Avoid wishful thinking and don't be afraid of discussing the diagnosis with other people before making major ventures.
- *Meditation and Breathing.* The purpose is to describe a certain type of meditation and how it can be used for personal development and well-being. Breathing is also discussed since it is an essential part in meditation as well as in good health in general.

Furthermore, the concept *personal mark* is launched. In the same way that there are trademarks, you can also say that each person has his/her personal mark. It is what you stand for and what you are. Look after your personal mark and it will be of great use to you.

### **The Third Edition 2002: 2.0**

This edition includes a whole new chapter (ca 30 pages). The chapter is "The Personality Theory Eight Boxes". The chapter has been added since many readers wanted to learn more about the different factors in the personality theory, and preferably in relation to various aspects of life. The personality theory is now presented from different points of view in the following chapters

- *Step 1: Estimate Your Own Personality.* The personality theory is presented in outline.
- *The Personality Theory Eight Boxes.* In this chapter the origin of the theory and the different factors are described. Typical behaviour of each factor is then presented in relation to a certain theme (9 themes).
- *Coaching Self and Others.* You are advised on how to deal with typical problems for each factor. The purpose is to give advice adjusted to the individual with the factor in question, instead of giving general advice that seldom proves useful in practice.

In the last chapter the passages on stress have been somewhat extended. For example, the workings of the brain under stress are treated. In addition, I present a comprehensive concept for each factor, which is to clearly point out the stress risk of the factor when it is not handled in a good way. The exaggeration is an integral part of all the concepts, to make you aware of the fact that it is a burden and that you should get rid of it. The exaggerations are ...

<i>Sensibility</i>	Sensitivity exaggeration
<i>Power</i>	Performance exaggeration
<i>Quality</i>	Duty exaggeration
<i>Exposure</i>	Audience exaggeration
<i>Structure</i>	Order exaggeration
<i>Imagination</i>	Expansion exaggeration
<i>Stability</i>	Safety exaggeration
<i>Contacts</i>	Companion exaggeration

**Please note!** Someone pointed out that a exaggeration could become a self-fulfilling prophecy. There is certainly a risk, but you can also look at the concept from a different point of view. When you know which "illness" you have, you know what to cure and hence it is easier to find the right medicine. You can also compare it to the relief you feel when you are told you have appendicitis, instead of worrying about the probable cause of your stomachache.

**Please note!** A factor can also have a too dominant back. Another aspect of this is that the need which the factor represents is not satisfied, something which can be countered by meeting the need in a better way.

The chapter "Tips For Successful Development" has been supplemented with a passage on why the brain works in the same way each time, and how this behaviour can be changed.

### **The Global (in English) Edition 2005 1.0 – Let the Personality Bloom**

This edition (also published 2007 in Portuguese in Brazil "Deixe a Personalidade Florescer") does not carry a lot of changes. There are some

changes connected to e.g. literature and similar, which are only related to Swedish conditions.

New passages are

- The Preface, which has been completed with persons outside of Sweden, who have helped me in different ways in order to make a good application of Szondi's personality theory for everyday life
- The chapter "Step 1 – How to Interpret a PersonProfile" has been changed so that there is now a possibility to estimate your own personality. The more precise personality questionnaire and connected information are used in a more advanced concept for development of individuals and teams. Therefore, the chapter has received a new heading: "Step 1 – Estimate Your Own Personality"
- In the chapter "The Personality Theory Eight Boxes" there are no comments about the ThemeProfile, because – as mentioned above – the precise personality questionnaire is not dealt with in this edition
- To the chapter "Good Luck" I have added some books written by Szondi. Anyone interested in finding out more about his theory and its application will find the listing useful.

Moreover, since the last edition I have registered the name HumanGuide® as trademark for my concept. I like this name because it points out that every human being can have use of the concept in order to be guided to higher life quality. Many competing concepts only result in a profile, without answering the question: What to do next? The trademark HumanGuide® is also used on the Internet e.g. [www.humanguide.eu](http://www.humanguide.eu), as the main entrance to "the HumanGuide® world".

As mentioned above, Leo Berlips helped me to come in touch with "Szondians" abroad. The first time was when I took part in the XVth SIS (=Szondi International Society) Meeting, which is held every third year, this time at the university, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium, in 1999. There I got great help – and get continuously – from M. D. Robert Maebe, one of the organizers of the meeting. Moreover, I there met

- Ph. D. Friedjung Jüttner, Zürich, who was at the time working at Szondi Institut in Zürich. He has given me special help with the development of the German version of the HumanGuide® questionnaire
- Psychologist Giselle Welter, who works as a human consultant in Sao Paulo, Brazil. She has helped me develop the Portuguese version of the HumanGuide® questionnaire. Moreover, she is now my agent in Brazil.
- Psychologist Christian Clair, who works as a psychotherapist in Beziers, France. He has helped me with the development of the French version of the HumanGuide® questionnaire.
- Ph. D. Jaakko Borg, Finland, who works at the University of Tampere, Finland
- Ph. D. Takahisa Yamashita, who works at the University of Saitama, Japan

With the help of these people the concept could be translated from Swedish into English, Portuguese, French and German. I am on my way with a Spanish version, now assisted by Leo Berlips and his great network.

From all these Szondians I have had great help in many aspects in developing and improving my HumanGuide® concepts, which originate from Leopold Szondi's personality theory. Other Szondians, at this meeting as well as the next one held in Zürich in 2002, have also inspired and encouraged me in my work.

I also wish to give special thanks to Thomas Seiler, today CEO at ublox AG, Thalwil, Switzerland, who has helped me to develop the German version of the HumanGuide® questionnaire. Moreover, he has been using the HumanGuide® in his business since 2000 and has given me very valuable feedback.

One problem with the use of Szondi's theory is that there is still very little documentation in English. One early and important contribution in this respect is Richard Hughes' book "Return to the Ancestors". Richard is a professor of Religion at Lycoming College, Williamsport, Pennsylvania, USA. I very much appreciate the feedback I have got from him while writing this book.

Olof Rehn has since 1997 been another important partner in the development of the HumanGuide® concepts. Olof, who is a psychologist and therapist, is one of the persons who have the greatest experience from using Szondi's theory in therapy in Sweden. Moreover, he is the author of the concept Open Windows, which is a very efficient and "funny" method for team development and for increasing people's self-knowledge. Olof and I have also made a successful combination of our concepts.

Finally, I want to give thanks to the Internet, which in many ways has made all this development possible;-) Thomas and Olof, see above, have found me on the Internet, for example. Giselle in Brazil and I have pursued most of our communication via the Internet. Etc.

This edition of the book will coincide with the first Portuguese edition, which Giselle Welter will publish in Brazil.

### **The Fourth Edition 2009: 1.0**

This edition is based on the Global edition and the Brazilian (Portuguese) edition (see above).

The factor *relation* is now renamed *sensibility*. The former did not differentiate it enough from the factor *contacts* as the two factors were perceived as too similar by first-time readers. The word *sensibility* carries more meaning and indicates that the individual is well versed at using all her senses. You could say that the most prominent feature of *sensibility* is being sensitive to delicate and subtle changes in interaction with other human beings, or in other words a good "feeler".

Moreover, I will add some ideas, which I hope can be useful.

### **Fifth edition 2021: 1.0**

Update of the symbols for the eight factors. Update of step 2 with the StrengthStrategy template and step 3 to choose three Powergoals to get a good personal development.

# What Do You Want to Achieve?

Off and on I have tried to write poetry. I was at my most active after my divorce and before I started living with a new woman. The poetry was a way of handling the strong feelings that this process involved. Sometimes deep misery, and sometimes incredible happiness. Here is a poem I feel is suitable as an introduction to the book.

## What Mountain?

There you stand, lost,  
which way shall you go?

Should you try the plains  
or the mountains?

Should you choose Kinnekulle (a hill)  
or K2 (the mountain)?

Soon enough you will find the answer,  
if you both try  
and listen to **your** voice.

## Sofia!

Sofia Dettmann (physician and Paralympics medallist in Sydney 2000)  
contributes with another aspect  
"Never let someone else put limits to what you can do!"

I read her comment in an evening paper. It was Sofia's answer to the question: How could you become a doctor, what with your myelocoele and wheel chair?

## What About You?

# About the Book

## Who Can Benefit From the Book?

I want the book to be useful to many people. Men as well as women. Young people as well as old. The person with limited life experience as well as that with more extended life experience. Of course, the person with least experience will benefit the most from the book.

My ambition is that the book will compensate for a certain lack of comprehensiveness, which I have found in books aimed at facilitating people's lives. When you have read the book you will have a clearer view of yourself. You will find it easier to understand other people once you have learnt a useful personality theory. This also makes it easier to cooperate with others. By learning the benefit of positive thinking and having good tools in that area, you will more easily discover the opportunities in life instead of all the obstacles. By starting to think of some important aspects of life you will be better able to shape your life in a desired manner. The down-to-earth style of the book makes it easier for you to reach results with your plan for the future.

The aim of this book is to give a good basis for your plan for the future. You can still benefit from the book even if you don't make a plan for the future. However, if you make such a plan the chances that your own vision will come true will increase considerably.

Hopefully, I have maintained a reasonably humble tone in the book, so that you won't think it contains the answers: "Once I know this, I am done". You are never done with your development in life. That would only mean you have got stuck.

A centenarian was asked as to the formula for becoming so old. "I read the paper every day, take a daily walk and a small schnapps." I heard about this from a 92-year-old lady, who was concerned: "Do I have to be a hundred years simply because I take a schnapps each day?"

## How Can I Benefit From the Book?

Some questions that can be answered are the following

- How can I take my personality into consideration in order to have a good life?

- How can I achieve the things I really want?
- How can I have more fun in life?
- What fundamental principles should I nurture in my life?
- Can I achieve my goals in spite of the many obstacles?
- Where can I find new directions for my personal development?
- How do I start and persevere in my changes?

### **When Can the Book Be Useful?**

The book can be of use in many situations, such as

- When you're young and want to choose path or you're unemployed
- When you're not happy with your present job; when you're wondering about the suitable direction for you, because of future or present changes in your work situation
- When you want to solve specific problems the book is meant to work as a "dictionary" to help you find out how to tackle a problem
- When you need inspiration

Or very brief: When you want to have a better time at work and in life!

### **The Structure of the Book**

The book is made up of the following parts

#### **About the Book**

I have tried to give you good operating instructions to the book. For that reason I have been particular about the table of contents and the headlines. So as not to make the table of contents too lengthy I have only included the subheadings of the theoretical chapters.

#### **Personal Development**

Here I bring up what I feel are good foundations of personal development.

#### **Positive Thinking**

It is an important attitude to life since it has such strong leverage, both in terms of motivation and purposefulness. I hope that positive thinking will give turbo effect to the contents of the book.

### **Step1: Estimate Your Own Personality**

Here you will learn more about your personality.

### **The Personality Theory Eight Boxes**

The personality theory is essential to the book, since it makes it easier for you to find yourself and understand others. In this chapter you will learn a great deal about the origin of the theory and its eight factors.

### **Coaching Self and Others**

For each factor you will be given tips about how to handle difficulties of various kinds. The first few passages will give you general tips about coaching plus an outline on the causes of stress and the appropriate management.

### **The Example Rolf Kenmo**

I feel that it is easier to learn something if you are given an example. I chose to use myself as an example, since that is the person I know best. The example shows how my life has evolved since birth. It is not an autobiography. I have concentrated on how my personality has affected my life. Subconsciously at first, since I didn't know much about the personality theory before 1975, and then consciously.

### **Step 2: Making a StrengthStrategy**

Here you will learn how to best use the strengths of your personality to get well at work and for the rest of your life.

### **Efficiency or Life Balance?**

Here I discuss different views on the goal of life. Is it to fit in as much as possible or to have a good life balance that suits you and the people around you?

### **Step 3: Choosing Three Powergoals...**

Here you get tips to choose three Powergoals and why it is smart, for example, to reduce the number of "musts". They also help to make it easier to say NO.

## **Tips For Successful Development**

This chapter gives you tips and examples on what to do to succeed in your growth.

## **Different Opportunities**

Hopefully, you will here find information that will make you interested in from time to time go outside your comfort-zone.

## **Good Luck**

A few words on the road to more blooming;-)

## **References**

I did not include a long list of literature, although the list could be made long. Many books that I have read have made me disappointed, and therefore I have only brought up those that have really meant *a great deal* to my personal development. You will find a list of those books in the chapter "Good Luck". I sometimes wonder, when reading a book with an extensive list of literature, whether the author has really read all those books.

Nevertheless, I thought it could be interesting to know where I have worked. I was employed by Svenska Esso AB (1968-72 and now Statoil), Statskonsult AB (1972-80) and Eurocard AB (1980-81). Since then I have run my own consulting firm. As a consultant I have worked in most environments, in private industry as well as public administration. Service companies as well as production companies. Large companies as well as small ones, but mainly large companies. Since I started my own business the biggest clients have been Eurocard AB, Holmia AB, Vin & Sprit AB, Norba AB, Lion Ferry AB (now a part of Stena), Ericsson Utvecklings AB, Posten, Aftonbladet, WM-data (now Logica) and Föreningsparbanken (now Swedbank), plus a number of computer consulting firms.

# Personal Development

## I Take Charge

Since you are reading these words you are most likely interested in personal development. This is the first and most important foundation of personal development. "I take charge", as they say in the military. You do not let the circumstances and people around you govern your life. You constantly aim at shaping your life to make it as good as possible. Of course, you can't influence everything, but quite a lot!

I'm very fond of the words by Matti Bergström, a Finnish brain researcher: "The more you have chance on your side, the more you know you're on the right track." My interpretation is that it isn't chance that is at work, although you're sometimes inclined to think so. If you know where you want to go you will see the possibilities that fit your vision (or goal). Even your subconscious will help you if you dare listen to your inner voice. By acting consistently you are also sending a clear message to people around you, whom it is easy for them to perceive, and hence you will attract like-minded people. However, the price may be that you repel those who do not like the message, but that may be a price you are willing to pay... It is also easier to pay that price if you have a good relationship to your life partner and have close friends.

## Egg or Peach?

An important decision is whether you want to be "an egg or a peach". Some people go for strengthening the shell of the egg. Others want to be a peach, i.e. have a soft skin and a hard and solid stone in the middle. The first strategy means putting a lot of energy into defending oneself, and the other means, among other things, co-operating better without losing one's aim in life.



Before I continue my discussion I would like to bring up a problem of concept. I have discovered that there is a certain haze of abstraction around all compound words beginning with "self-", such as self-confidence, self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-assurance, self-image, etc. For that reason I feel it is important to explain what I mean by the "self"-concepts I use in the book. The concepts are

- Self-confidence, i.e. believing in one's own ability to do things
- Self-knowledge, i.e. knowing one's strengths and weaknesses
- Self-esteem, i.e. knowing who you are and being able to admit it

I will explain this using an example of a low and a high value respectively for the three "ESSES".

A person with bad self-confidence does not think him-/herself capable of doing anything. A person with good self-confidence believes him-/herself capable of doing many things, if not at once, at least after some practice. The self-image is very important here. If a thoughtless teacher tells you that you will never be able to learn maths, that prediction will often become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

A person with little self-knowledge has a hard time to find his/her way in life, as well as understanding other people's behaviour. The contrary applies to the person with great self-knowledge. It is also important that

one's self-knowledge is as accurate as possible, and ideally that it agrees with other people's perception. If not, problems may occur and other people may think that you have little self-knowledge.

A person with low self-esteem has problems making decisions, among other things because he or she depends on other people's opinions. Using a model from transactional analysis in order to explain this, you may say that he/she takes the life position "I'm not OK", and does not want to make a fool of him-/herself. (More on life positions below.) A person with high self-esteem can afford to fail and takes the life position "I'm OK and you're OK".

You may say that the eggs with strong shells have great self-confidence (which is superficial) and the peaches have high self-esteem (which is profound). The eggs have – according to this metaphor – great self-confidence, if they have created a strong shell, but weak self-esteem. This makes them very vulnerable. They may blow up at criticism and follow the principle "attack is the best method of defence".

Mature peaches, on the other hand, have great self-confidence as well as high self-esteem. They feel it is OK to exist. They don't have to accomplish anything in order to be OK. If they are criticized their first reaction is not to defend themselves, but to examine whether the criticism is justified. Then they decide if they need to take the criticism seriously. They reason along the line: If many people criticize me in some respect, there must be something to it. But if it is just one person it may well have to do with that specific person, and you just need to be observant if more people make the same comments in the future.

Or to be brief: Eggs have a performance-based self-esteem, i.e. if they not perform well, then they feel more or less worthless. Peaches on the contrary have a *value-based self-esteem*, i.e. if they not perform well, then they still are OK.

Or very brief: A beetle needs to open its shell in order to fly;-)

Together with self-esteem it could be natural to bring up jealousy and envy. What is the difference?

Jealousy means that when you think of yourself as having no value. Then you are eager to supervise your relations and you see them more or less as you possess them. This is not a practical value in life... It is better to "decide" that you are valuable and then you will be freer in your

relations. Of course it is not easy to “decide” that you are valuable, if you don’t have had that value before, but there is no other way!

Envy means that you like to be someone else, but as you understand, that is impossible, even if you are tempted... However, it is easier to accept that fact, if you put this question to yourself: Is it possible or interesting for me to have exactly that person’s life from birth to now? Of course it is human to be envy, but not practical...

## **Different Life Positions**

There is an interesting enumeration of life positions in transactional analysis, which is described in several books. Life position is the position you often take in relation to other people. The positions are

- I’m not OK – You’re OK, unfortunately a position which many people take. Above all it leads to low self-esteem (see discussion above).
- I’m OK – You’re not OK, which is not very good for either the position-holder or society at large. You could become a criminal, for instance. You could also join a sect that condemns those who do not belong to it. This keeps the sect together, but everything is based on an illusion.
- I’m not OK – You’re not OK, which leads to great problems, and the person in question are in urgent need of help. Everything looks bleak.
- I’m OK – You’re OK, which means that you have come far in your peach-development (according to the metaphor above). The position is recognized as a person, whom is pleasant to be with. You feel secure and welcome, feel no demands for achievements, and are confident, maybe even harmonious.

If you are mostly in someone of the three first positions you need to develop yourself in order to get a higher life quality. However, that is not so often easy, because your parents and/or other people in your surrounding can have acted in a non-supportive way, so you have been marked very strongly of that position - as constant dripping wears away a stone...

You can compare with the treatment of young elephants. They are tethered up with a rope. However, when they become bigger, they could easily break the rope, but they are accustomed to the rope and think it is not possible... Moreover, the brains for both elephants and human beings like to follow their routines, because they need then less energy. This of course is also an obstacle to handle.

What can you do about it? Well, read this book and use the knowledge;-) Especially useful in this matter is the chapter “Positive thinking”.

## **Examples of ”Peach Behaviour”**

What characterizes peach behaviour? An example from my world as a consultant is that an ”egg” would rather buy services from a company like McKinsey & Co, since that choice would not be questioned. ”Peaches”, on the other hand, dare take the risk of engaging a less known consultant, even though such a choice is often controversial. Furthermore, the ”eggs” like to bask in the glory reflected from the celebrity consultant.

Another example is from The Body Shop. They made a market survey that showed that their customers had few common denominators. The age span was great, for example. One common quality among the customers, however, was their high self-esteem. They like what The Body Shop stands for and have no need of impressing others with the brand of luxury perfume they use.

As a matter of curiosity I may mention the French expression ”J’ai la pêche”, which in direct translation means ”I have the peach”. The expression means being in top form. It is true that a peach can easily be damaged, but that does not apply to the stone. Another curiosity is that the Nobel Prize winner in economics 2001, George A. Akerlof, used peaches as a metaphor in his thesis on asymmetrical information. Peach, in this context, means a piece of goods that is better than expected. Lemon means the opposite.

## **Life Balance – A Constant Effort**

What do you want with your life? This is a question that you need to answer from time to time during life. One thing is important: To have the best balance possible over time. Above all is to have a good balance

between work, spare time and your family (or the equivalent). If life is mainly made up of work or a certain interest, life becomes lopsided. In the end it is difficult to change course to a better mix that best matches one's own needs. Naturally, you must take good care of your family and friends in order to have harmonious relations to them. Strive for a long-term and healthy compromise between your own interests and theirs. Look at yourself as the pilot of your own life. If you take too much to the right (work, for example) or left (family), you will come off course. If you steer too much upwards you will end up in "heaven" and lose touch with the ground. If you steer too much downwards you will crash.

Many people find it hard to say no. When you know what you want it is considerably easier. For example, if someone wants you to take part in an activity that conflicts with your values or what you want to achieve. Of course, it is not always that easy to take sides, but if you know what you want it is easier to strive for a certain line in life.

## **Sound Personal Development**

Some people try to cover up all their shortcomings. That is not a wise strategy. It is better to develop one's strong sides. Efforts in that area will give the best results.

Of course you must also work on your shortcomings, but you should spend least energy in that area. Otherwise it would be like spending all your energy on the weeds in a garden. If you, on the other hand, buy nice plants they will suck up all the nourishment so that the weeds wither away. It is also wise to tackle only one shortcoming at a time.

Make sure to distinguish between your real shortcomings and the backs of your strong sides (=fronts). For example, a lot of people who are creative (=front) have lack of objectivity as a back. They think most things are possible. How else could they be creative? The front of a quality must be made to dominate and the back be kept on a reasonable level. It is probably impossible to completely eliminate the back. But a creative person could get a partner who is very objective and able to give feedback on bold ideas. In this way the ideas can be developed towards more realistic forms.

Finally a simile. A few years ago I went on a raft down the river Klarälven in the Swedish province Värmland. It was slow. We went at a

speed of two kilometres an hour. We were instructed to start punting and paddling towards lands a few kilometres before our landing-place, so as not to miss it. We were also told not to despair if nothing happened during the first five to ten minutes. It takes time before the force we put in can change the direction of several tons of timber in a stream. Against that background you may think: "Who would be so stupid (or capable of development, in positive thinking) as to try to paddle upstream?" In other words: You need to float with the river and go ashore where it is natural and suitable. But remember that you can change the position, direction, width, etc. of your river. You don't have to stay the same forever.

## **Know Thyself**

Even the ancient Greeks thought the best advice to another person is: Know thyself! "Gnothi seauton" is an inscription in the temple of Delphi, which is ascribed to one of the Seven Wise Men of Greece. The first time I encountered it I didn't think it all that difficult, but as time went by I realized it is a never-ending task.

You need to remember what works out well and why. The same goes for the things that don't work out. Was it due to something in your personality or did you just have a bad day? Or was it because of something you haven't learnt? Keep in mind that we have a tendency to underestimate the things we do best. Likewise, the things we do less well we tend to overestimate in other people.

It is also important to pay attention to how other people describe you. What the negative comments are. But remember that other people's comments depend on their personalities and their situation at the time. A bad day, for example, often results in critical comments. Mature people find it easiest to give praise.

When you receive feedback from others it is good to encourage them to be specific, to give examples, so that you understand their points. They can also use other people's behaviour in order to exemplify what they mean.

## **Life Script**

You may believe in fate. Another way of seeing it is to talk of a life script, as it is called in transactional analysis. To a certain degree you can predict

a person's life, unless something dramatic occurs. The life script is built around culture and tradition. It is also based on a person's experiences (imprinting) – particularly from childhood.

A life script of the average Swede could be: Go to school – get a job – find an apartment – get a life partner – have a family – get a bigger apartment – encourage the children's development – be promoted at work – celebrate one's 50th birthday – retire. The script may contain values like "Don't think you're worth anything", "One must always do one's share", "We must all help one another and keep from fighting", etc.

It is sensible to examine one's life script. There may be something in it that ought to be questioned. Something that prevents sound development. When your life script is outlined you may discuss it with a close friend to see if there are reasons to change the script. You rarely make dramatic changes, since it is better to let the changes ripen in a natural way.

If you are going to work with a new person it could be wise to chat a little in order to get to know him/her, or, so to speak, get a sense of the other person's life script. Once you have that it is easier to co-operate.

To get a grasp of someone's life script is particularly important when you are recruiting. You may ask what the habits are in that person's family. What has influenced what? What is the attitude to work, theory, health, ethics, other cultures, etc? How do you expect the next five years to turn out? Surprisingly often you may discover a main thread in a person's life.

## **Enriching and Personal Development**

All of us have negative luggage that we need to get rid of in an appropriate manner. All of a sudden a problem arises – often in connection to stress in one way or another. It can be tempting to stow it away and act as if nothing has happened. But, unfortunately, that strategy does not work, since sooner or later the problem pops up again – most often with renewed strength.

If looked at from a positive point of view, you may say that this type of problem frequently occurs when you are ready to deal with it. When you have enough energy and feel confident. It is good to bring up the problem with someone you have a good relationship with. Who is truthful

and constructive? Who will help you with new perspectives, other points of view, other experiences, challenging questions, tips about solutions, etc. Sometimes the solution lies in bringing up a difficult memory and handling it in a sensible way. You may need a psychotherapist for that. Sometimes the solution is simply to talk about it and adopt a new approach to the problem. You can try doing something in a new way, after having reflected upon the worst-case scenario. Concerning measures to take, you may find useful tips in the chapter "Positive Thinking".

In order to choose the right path for your enriching (purification) you must pay attention to feedback. And actively look for feedback. Negative as well as positive. It is essential that your perception of yourself is as accurate as possible. Otherwise you run the risk of prioritizing the wrong things in your personal development.

Positive feedback can guide your ventures. Concerning negative feedback it is important to notice even small hints and insinuations. It may be something very important which the other person has difficulties to express since it is strong criticism. When you think this is the case you should ask the other person to develop his/her views until you understand them. Ask for an example. It may be hard to do this, but the benefits of handling important criticism are enormous. Asking for help is often emotionally charged, and it demands confidence in others. If this is difficult for you, you must develop your trust.

A short story may concretize what enriching is all about. Michelangelo, who made a beautiful statue of David in Florence, was asked: "Wasn't it difficult to make such a beautiful statue?" "No", he said, "The only problem was to take away the stone that wasn't David!"

## **The Marshmallow Test and Impulse Control**

Walter Mischel performed the experiment during the 60s on four-year-olds in a preschool at Stanford University. The children were mainly those of Stanford lecturers, professors and other employees at the university. The experiment was performed as follows: The children were tested separately and told that if they could wait while a few tasks were done they would be rewarded with two marshmallows. The "tasks" took

about 15-20 minutes. If not, the children were only allowed the one marshmallow before them.

A follow-up 12-14 years later showed that those who could "postpone their need gratification"

- had greater emotional competence
- did well
- had great self-confidence
- were better able to cope with stress and problems in life

On the whole they were more enterprising and active.

The children (ca 30 %) who could not wait often took the marshmallow in front of them after only a few seconds. The follow-up showed that these children had different types of difficulties. They had fewer social contacts, were less able to deal with setbacks, were suspicious and touchy, etc. You will find more information in the book "Emotional Intelligence" by Daniel Goleman.

What conclusions can be drawn from the experiment? It is obvious that anyone who wants to reach a goal can benefit from the ability to "postpone need gratification". However, that ability carries a risk. You may never get need gratification, or too little need gratification. You keep being "good" and get lost in your ambition to please others. Here, too, there is a need for a reasonable balance over time.

The great thing, though, is that you can develop your ability to control your impulses. This is one of the reasons I have included the following chapters

- Positive Thinking – gives support when something is difficult to achieve
- Step 1: Estimate Your Own Personality – increases your understanding of your own behaviour
- Step 2: Making a StrengthStrategy – helps maintaining a good course in life
- Step 3: Chosing three Powergoals – gives strong support for what your really want to achieve

## **Is It Possible to Change One's Personality?**

This is not an easy question. In principle, one's personality should be regarded as something that resists change. There are limits to what is possible.

Your driving forces are to be found in your personality. These forces must be given an outlet, and preferably in a constructive way. If you have a great need of contacts, you need to meet other people quite often. If you are alone for a longer period you experience symptoms of withdrawal. If you have many and intensive contacts the need will be filled. A sound basis for a good life is to live in harmony with your needs, to make sure they are satisfied with appropriate frequency.

One way of looking at personal development is that the more you develop, the more your personality is evened out, which means that all the needs reach about the same value on the scale. Interestingly, an infant always seeks to satisfy all his/her needs immediately when they arise. Then the upbringing and environmental influence begin and sometimes the child goes astray, which then has to be "corrected" through personal development later on in life. Personal development is achieved through various insights, for example "You can't please everyone". That insight makes it easier for you to put your foot down. Development can also take place when you heal your childhood wounds, etc.

## **Social Competence**

Social competence is of great use if you want to develop. It is, however, a great area that would demand several books to cover. Now, is there a simple formula for increasing one's social competence? In a way, since there are the three important SSS, which preferably should have high values. The essences are

- Self-confidence, i.e. believing in one's ability to do things
- Self-knowledge, i.e. knowing one's strengths and weaknesses
- Self-esteem, i.e. knowing who you are and being able to admit it

In the beginning of this chapter I explained what I mean by these concepts.

This book aims, to a great extent, at increasing your self-knowledge. With that knowledge as a base, combined with positive thinking and the like, you may increase your self-confidence. And then you have good chances of entering a positive circle, since you direct your efforts to matching tasks and succeed in your undertakings, which increases your self-confidence.

Concerning self-esteem, we did not all get an equally good start, depending on how our parents and/or the people around us acted in our childhood. Still, you can increase your self-esteem through working with personal development, for example by striving for the positive circle mentioned in the paragraph above. And you mustn't give up, although it is true what the Swedish poet Karin Boye says: "It hurts when buds burst."

Great social competence means that you get a rich and prosperous life. It doesn't necessarily mean that you get a lot of money. Instead, you become more and more harmonious, which is even more valuable.

The great social competence also makes it easier for you to co-operate with other people. In practice, it means that you have greater influence, receive more truthful feedback (or can better understand what other people mean), find it easier to deal with difficulties, have more fun, etc.

## **The Goal of Personal Development?**

First of all, the goal should be seen as a vision, a travel direction. Or it can be seen as a moving target, since new insights often mean that the goal needs to be revised. A permanent feature of the vision should be to get to know you better and try to match your own needs as well as possible, without hurting anyone else. This gives you more and more harmony in your life. But you are never done with your development. If you think you are done one day, it only means that you are treading water and not living your life to the full.

If you take any life situation as a starting-point, you may say that a mature person uses that quality (personality factor) that is most appropriate to the situation at hand. If the mature person is short of appropriate factor it is natural to seek help from something or somebody.

# Positive Thinking

## The Purpose of Positive Thinking

Positive thinking is always important. It is, however, particularly important concerning personal development. You have to look for the positive in every situation. What is interesting is solving the problems. If it is not possible or if you don't have the resources or the right to make decisions, or something else necessary to solve the problems, you simply have to accept it. As long as the obstacles remain, of course.

Some people think that the pessimist and the optimist are right equally often, but, undeniably, the optimist leads a more pleasant life. There are even scientific studies that show that the optimist draws benefits from his/her attitude to life. Studies have shown that positive thinking improves the treatment results for people with alcohol problems, as well as recovery after bypass and breast cancer operations.

Naturally, you shouldn't sweep the negative under the carpet, but you should avoid talking about the problems more than necessary.

## Handling Negative Thoughts and Feelings

When I first learnt to be systematically positive, negative thoughts and feelings were more or less forbidden. A typical overreaction when you adopt something new. Now I am of the opinion that the negative must come out and those around you have to accept it. Such behaviour cleanses the psyche and the air. On the other hand, you should avoid clinging to the negative and letting it influence your whole life. In those cases you need to find a positive alternative.

You can describe negative feelings as a fire burning inside you. If it is put out before it has burnt itself out, you end up with a lot of debris. If the fire is allowed to burn out by itself, there will only be fine-grained ashes left, which will disappear in time. You may say that an important task for psychotherapists is to help you find and light old fires. Then they should help you make sure they burn out in the best way possible. In the same way you need to accept, as a fellow-being, that other people have negative feelings and try not to ward them off unnecessarily. If someone is angry or sad, that is the way it is, regardless of how appropriate you think it is. The sooner you confirm that feeling, the faster it will "burn

out". You may still have another opinion about it all, but that is an entirely different thing.

In the same way you can be a "fellow-being to yourself" and allow your unpleasant feelings to come out. You will then grow and get rid of ballast.

In some cultures you can engage professional mourners at funerals to help people give outlet for their sorrow. When my father died the minister said very wisely to me the night before the funeral: "Sorrow is something you have to go through, you can't get round it. That only creates problems one way or another." At the same time he made an illustrating gesture with his hand. This made a profound impression on me. It is an insight that has been very helpful to me.

Buddhists have a practical way of looking at it. They distinguish between pain and suffering. You can't escape the pain. You may get hurt, you may get robbed, you may get beaten, etc. Everything creates pain, but you decide how much suffering the pain will cause. Buddhists strive to understand that everything perishes, which makes it easier for them to deal with loss.

## **Positive Fixation**

Positive fixations are good in order to have a clear goal, i.e. get a clear view of what you want to achieve. In this context it is important to realize that humans have difficulties understanding the word "not". What does that mean? Well, if you are instructed in soccer "not to hit the post", the mental image is "hit the post".

Positive fixations are also important for instructions. Avoid talking about all the nine ways in which something should *not* be done. The instruction should give information about the CORRECT behaviour. This makes the instruction shorter. And the risk of being confused by all the incorrect ways is dramatically reduced.

It is also valuable to use positive formulations. Note the difference between

I am in hell!

*I am in paradise, indeed on the outer edge,  
but on my way to the centre of paradise.*

Bad!

*Capable of development!*

In the left column it is easy to feel that everything is useless, whereas in the right column there is still hope.

## Positive Vision

Once in a while we are stuck with a doomsday prophecy. The worst thing about them is that they run the risk of becoming self-fulfilling prophecies. Positive thinking can turn this around. If you create a positive vision there is always *the possibility* that this vision will be self-fulfilling.

A lot of people have systematized this in sports. There it is called mental training – see the next passage.

The beauty of a positive vision is that you will "see when ripe plums are about to fall into your mouth".



Or, to put it differently: To a sailor that doesn't know where he or she is heading, no wind is right.

There is, however, a certain danger with positive visions. Since they most often come true in real life, you must make sure they are the right