

SUPPRESSION

Suppression is the primary psychological mechanism that leads to emotional and spiritual dysfunction. The central purpose of all psychotherapy is to clear suppressed material that is affecting us adversely. Suppression is something that we all do. Those who reach the point of severe distress have merely gone further in suppressing than the average person; those who are considered well balanced suppress less than normal. The standard of emotional health in our society, therefore, is far below the potential possible for humankind, but this just has to do with our current evolutionary level of growth.

*Suppression begins
with resistance*

It is important to understand how suppression works. When something is resisted, a condition is set up within us that affects us deeply. The electromagnetic field surrounding the individual, known as the aura, actually becomes steeled against letting in any outer experience that is resisted. In effect, resistance builds a shield to the exchange of energy on the psychic level, where experience primarily takes place. This shield is quite tangible on the psychic level, and may be felt and seen by a psychic. A person with ordinary but sensitive perceptions often can sense the shield, or “wall,” around people who are particularly suppressed.

With inner feelings, resistance has a similar effect. A kind of energy shield is built around the feeling centers, so feelings will not be allowed into consciousness. As experiences occur and are resisted, the energy of the feeling encounters the shield. The energy is unable to be released because it has been blocked rather than absorbed; it cannot complete its cycle; *it cannot discharge into consciousness*. What we don't realize is that when the energy of a feeling is not released, it does not go away but stays with us, in latent form, as part of the psychic energy body.

The motive behind resistance to an unpleasant experience is that we would rather not feel the pain involved. Avoidance of feelings is not always done out of deliberate choice but often because we lack the

knowledge to confront life directly. We don't know why or how to experience fully so that there are no loose ends, no lingering or unresolved energies. Over time, the habit of resistance results in chronic blocking of the centers and accumulation of the suppressed energy. Thus, we do not succeed in avoiding the feeling, as we intend, but merely prevent the energy from entering our field of awareness.

Suppression operates both inwardly and outwardly

Suppression is the act of rejecting experience from the field of awareness. Outwardly, we suppress awareness of aspects of other people, happenings, and conditions that are displeasing. We close ourselves off to vital parts of life, becoming judgmental and self-centered. We call something evil when it merely conflicts with our "need." Inwardly, we suppress awareness of painful feelings, including anything about ourselves that we dislike, such as perceived faults or weaknesses. External suppression can make us limited and bigoted, but the consequences of internal suppression can be even more severe.

We think that it is possible simply to close the door on negativity and walk away from it. We forcefully try to exclude pain from our awareness by any number of evasive maneuvers. What we are doing, however, is rejecting ourselves, because the pain *is* part of ourselves. In our rejection, we deepen the inner split; we go in the opposite direction from integration and wholeness; and we ultimately feel the consequences in depression, despair, and hopelessness.

When we suppress an unpleasant feeling, we interrupt the natural flow of energies. We do not allow the feeling to clear itself, to resolve itself, to regain its natural equilibrium. The energy becomes trapped, held in storage in a static condition. Where does the energy get stored? It is held in what has come to be called "the subconscious."

Suppression creates subconscious Karma

The mechanism of suppression, therefore, creates much if not all of the mysterious subconscious that has been puzzled over and glamorized

since Freud. The subconscious is nothing more than a buildup of energies, potential forces that lie dormant because they were never adequately resolved when they originally occurred. In rejecting our experience, we have created the reservoir of the subconscious. In Eastern terms, the buildup of subconscious forces is called *Karma*.

THE SUBCONSCIOUS

The subconscious is simply a part of ourselves from which we have turned away. The capacity of the mind to achieve withdrawal of awareness and subconscious containment of energies is itself remarkable, and although it appears to be mostly unbeneficial, the habit of suppression and the influence it has had on us has been a major factor in shaping our life and history. We have chosen to turn away, but we can easily turn back to the feelings in the subconscious if we so desire. The inner wall that has grown to divide ourselves is not that solid; it is more like a gray area, where tips of the iceberg are always coming into view. We have only hypnotized ourselves not to fully see and feel those hidden things.

The problem with suppression of feelings is that the feelings are not resolved but merely hidden. When something is suppressed, it is made temporarily unconscious, only to accumulate and break forth at some later time. Anger, for example, does not dissolve when suppressed but remains as forceful as when originally felt, except that it is no longer within the field of awareness. When it erupts, it is likely to cause much more damage because of the buildup that has occurred.

Suppressed feelings influence us in even more far-reaching ways. They leave us much in the position of being ruled by hidden forces – forces that at times can seem uncontrollable, like a separate entity with an independent intelligence and will. We become guided by neurotic, unconscious urges that lead to irrational, self-destructive behavior. We are attracted to the wrong people, reject the right people, and become compulsive, addictive, and unreliable, all in spite of our best intentions. Our urges are strong and difficult to oppose. Indeed, opposition is impossible because the suppressed energy eventually has to come out. Holding it back will only bring a more destructive release later. We go

through life leaving more or less a shambles behind us, accumulating more unresolved energies and adding to our Karma.

*Energy is what
becomes suppressed*

Unpleasant feelings as well as unresolved situations are the kinds of things that are suppressed, but when we suppress, it is *energy* that is put into storage. Emotions can run high, and emotions are nothing but energy moving through the centers of consciousness. When people interact, there is an energy exchange between them. Energy is what enables us to have experiences. Experiences are kinds of energy that we assimilate. Of course, I am referring to psychic energy, which is not yet generally recognized by science. Nevertheless, subconscious energy can build to a considerable strength. It becomes part of our personality, affecting us as well as others.

Since we suppress in consistent yet individual ways, we build a reservoir of negative energy of a specific type. Some people suppress mainly anxiety; some, the sense of worthlessness or sexual frustration, for example. The suppressed energy then creates patterns: unconscious, individualistic ways in which we meet life. Patterns would not be a problem, except that they are often negative, keeping us from full realization of our creative power. Because patterns are usually unconscious, we don't know that it is we who are limiting ourselves.

*Suppression leads
to addiction*

To suppress requires psychic energy. It takes energy to suppress energy; it takes energy to block. The demand for energy becomes a drain on our resources, creating conditions that encourage the addictive cycle. Because addiction provides energy, taken either from outside sources or inner reserves, it facilitates suppression. When this additional energy is not available, it is not as easy to suppress, and we come face to face with our pain. Thus, when we suppress, energy is diverted from its positive and constructive expression; we become split, working against ourselves, unaware of our self-undoing.

Repression

When the suppression syndrome becomes unconscious, it is called *repression*. Repression is the same as suppression, except that there is no awareness of feelings or the avoidance of them. For example, if you are sad but do not consciously recognize your sadness, it becomes repressed. Proper release is not possible, and the sadness is stored subconsciously. Repression, unfortunately, is common in the modern world. Freud, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, said that he thought it was unavoidable. His statement is even more appropriate today. Repression comes about because of all the desensitizing that we undergo. Life is so busy, so anxiety ridden, with our attention constantly enticed outward, that we do not realize what our real feelings are. We have lost touch with ourselves.

Continual repression results in neurosis and extensive blocking of the human organism. The result on the emotional level is addiction, depression, and unconscious destructive patterns; and on the physical level, disease. Blocked energy easily can reach the level where it affects the physical, and what is disease but blockage? Looking at prevalent twentieth-century ailments such as heart disease and cancer, I can't help but feel that a main cause is the buildup of subconscious negative forces that the modern way of life encourages. However, it should not be forgotten that humans have been creating their subconscious all throughout history, so modern life should not be condemned outright. The average person, now and in previous times, has always had personal blocking and Karma to contend with.

We are all so similar when looked at from a distance. We all have unconscious yet individualistic tendencies that keep us from reaching our maximum potential. Rarely do we fully realize the higher side of our nature, the love and creative centers. Rarely do we relate to others or ourselves directly, without distorting grossly through our own particular filters of suppressed energy. We must recognize the truth without becoming pessimistic. We are as we are because life and consciousness is evolutionary. We are growing, and in progress. Our capacities only reflect our current levels of growth.

Let's look specifically at some kinds of feelings that are commonly

suppressed or repressed, becoming buried in the subconscious. Our feelings usually relate to the following areas:

SURVIVAL: Fear, anxiety, insecurity about health, money, possessions, death

POWER: Anger, hostility, aggressiveness, helplessness

SENSATION: Sexual and sensual feelings

NURTURING: Cravings for food, alcohol, smoking, drugs, general emotional neediness

SIGNIFICANCE: Worthlessness, lack of self-esteem and meaningful social identity

HEART: Loneliness, jealousy, hate, sadness, grief

Different feelings may be linked, forming complex systems of blocking and suppression. Thus, sexual issues may be associated disharmoniously in one person with security issues and in another with power issues. The accumulation of these negative energies results in stress. If we knew how to dissolve and avoid the buildup of negative energies, we could avoid stress.

The buildup of suppressed energy can vary over short or long intervals. Short-term emotional suppression can happen with fears, sexual impulses, or any feeling that cannot be dissolved immediately. For example, a person may experience frustration in the workplace and not know how to release it, and then go home and take it out on the family. The attempt to release the energy by venting on a neutral party is known as *displacement*. Displacement is common, resulting in hurt feelings, miscommunication, and damaged relationships.

Long-term avoidance of feelings builds a structure of a quite different and unsuspected magnitude. It can build to the extent that a person's whole life is shaped by internal forces of which there is no conscious knowledge. Conditions that were unresolved in the past have a way of recurring with new faces or circumstances, and we have the choice of taking responsibility and experiencing, or avoiding and suppressing once again.