

# Introjecting and Eating

by Eugene Haliday

Both as an organism and as a personality **one grows by assimilating new material**. To compare the acquisition of habits, attitudes, beliefs or ideals to the process of taking physical food into the organism strikes one at first as merely a crude analogy, but the more one examines the detailed sequence of each, the more one realises their functional identity.

Physical food, properly **digested** and **assimilated**, becomes part of the Organism; but food which 'rests heavy on the stomach' is an **INTROJECT**. You are aware of it and want to throw it up. If you do so, you get it 'out of your system'. Suppose, instead, you suppress your discomfort, nausea and tendency to spew it forth. Then you 'keep it down' and either succeed finally in painfully digesting it or else it poisons you.

When it is not physical food but concepts, 'facts', or standards of behaviour, the situation is the same. A theory which you have mastered - digested in detail so that, you have made it yours - can be used flexibly and efficiently because it has become 'second nature' to you. But some lesson which you have swallowed whole without comprehension - for example, 'on authority' - and which you now use 'as if' it were your own, is an **INTROJECT**. Though you have suppressed your initial bewilderment over what was forced into you, you cannot really use such foreign knowledge and, to the extent that you have cluttered your personality with 'gulped-down' morsels of this and that, you have impaired your ability to think and act on your own.

As commonly used, the word 'social' often means being willing to **introject norms**, codes and institutions which are foreign to man's healthy interests and needs, and in the process to lose genuine community and the ability to experience joy.

To eliminate **INTROJECTS** from your personality, the problem is not to accept and integrate dissociated parts of yourself. Rather, it is to **become aware of what is not truly yours**, to acquire a selective and critical attitude towards what is offered you, and above all, to develop the ability to **'bite off'** and **'chew'** experience so as to extract its healthy nourishment.

With biting, chewing, and the very important functions of **locomotion** and **ability to approach**, the child has the chief types of **aggression**(outgoing) **available to him** and **under his control for his own growth**. These, obviously, are not anti-social, although they are the very **antithesis of passive confluence**. But if these biological activities are not used in the service of the growth functions - as **initiative, selection, overcoming of obstacles, seizing upon and destroying in order to assimilate** - THEN the surplus energy finds discharge as displaced aggressions - domination, irritability, sadism, lust for power, suicide, murder, and their mass-equivalent, war. The organism does not develop in **continuous creative adjustment** with its environment - so that the 'I' is a system of **executive functions concerned with orientation and manipulation**. Instead it is saddled with an 'I' which is a thrown together collection of unassimilated **INTROJECTS** - traits and qualities taken over from the 'authorities', which he cannot stomach, relations which he did not bite off and chew, knowledge he doesn't understand, fixations he cannot dissolve, disgust he cannot release.

## A number of exercises:

1. **Concentrate on your eating without 'reading or' 'thinking'**. Simply **address yourself to your food**. Meals have for us become social occasions for the most part. The primitive goes off by himself to eat. Follow his example to this extent.
2. **Set aside one meal a day to eat in solitude, and learn how to eat**. This may take about two months, but, after that, you will have acquired a new taste, a new source of enjoyment, and you will not relapse. If you are impatient, this will seem too long. You will want magical effects, quick results without effort. For you yourself to get rid of your **INTROJECTS**, you yourself must do the destroying and the reintegrating.

- 3. Notice your resistance to addressing the food.** Do you taste the first few bites and then fall onto a trance of 'thinking', daydreaming, wanting to talk, meantime losing contact with the taste? Do you bite off your food by clean, efficient action of the front teeth? In other words, do you bite through on a sandwich held in your hands, or do you close your jaws part way then tear off a hunk? Do you ever use your molars up to the point of complete destruction of the food, that is, liquefaction? Just **notice** whatever it is you do, without deliberately changing anything. **Many changes will occur spontaneously if you keep in contact with your food.**
- 4. As you eat with 'awareness', do you feel Greed? Impatience? Disgust?** Do you blame the hurry and bustle of modern Life for your gulping of meals? Is it different when you have Leisure? Do you avoid food that is flat and tasteless, or do you just 'down it' without demurring? Do you experience a 'symphony' of flavours and textures in your food, or have you so desensitised your palate that it all tastes pretty much alike?
- 5. When it is not a matter of 'physical' but of 'mental' food, how does the matter stand?** Consider the same questions with regard, for instance, to your intake from the printed page. Do you skip over hard paragraphs or do you work them through? Is your taste for the sweet and easy alone - Light fiction or 'feature' stories - which you can gulp down without active response? Or do you compel yourself to partake only of 'heavy' literature, though you get little pleasure for your effort?
- 6. What about your visual intake as you watch television?** Do you fall into a kind of trance and drink in the scenes? Study this as an instance of confluence.

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## **Divide the Food**

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Divide the Food-Tract into five parts:

- Examination of food in the mouth
- Intake in the oesophagus
- Digestion in the stomach
- Assimilation in the small intestine
- Elimination from the colon

So also with the division of the function of mental processes:

- Examination (sensation)
- Intake (perception)
- Digestion (analysis)
- Assimilation (synthesis)
- Excretion (out-throwing of useless data)