

## OPENING THE CASE

A lecture given on  
24 November 1950

### Handling the Mind's Mechanics

The computation of a case is of number one importance in that it gives you the mechanical basics and a method by which you can take a set of factors in the case and understand the case, as opposed to attempting to go through just the routine of putting a person in reverie, sending him back down the track, finding nothing, and bringing him up to present time.

The Accessibility Chart tells you how to compute. There is no variation in Standard Procedure. The chart just gives you a method of computing the state the case is in.

There is probably nothing more destructive in an inept auditor's hands than repeater technique—or you might call it right-back-at-you technique. The right-back-at-you technique is highly destructive to the preclear's pride and actually lays into the case a communication break lock.

The fellow says, "I can't get anything."

So the auditor says, "All right, repeat 'I can't get anything.'"

The preclear as a human being has told the auditor "I can't get anything." Yes, it may be out of an engram, but when the auditor has said "All right, repeat 'I can't get anything,'" he has told the preclear in effect that the preclear hasn't any thought of his own about it and that he isn't communicating with the auditor.

So it becomes doubly important or doubly destructive. By throwing that phrase back at him, the auditor is also breaking down the preclear's reality because he is saying "You can't think," which is part of the preclear's reality.

There are two divisions to a case: one is the mechanical trouble with a case and the other is the statement trouble with a case.

Language has gotten into the engrams and as such is very important.

That is the statement side of the case. Engrams contain statements which can accomplish practically all the trouble that anyone could figure out. "I can't see," "I can't feel" and "I can't hear" are examples of such statements. So there is the statement side of the case.

The fellow says, "I can't get at this, I can't get into it," and the auditor is assuming that all that's wrong with this case is a statement, whereas most of the trouble with this case is over on the mechanical side of the ledger. That has to do with the mechanics of mind operation: too much emotion on the case, the person invalidated too often, the mind's effort to reach this and that in the case, and the way engrams are stacked up and crossed over and scrambled, just in terms of other perceptics than statements.

For instance, a piano playing hasn't any words in it, yet sometimes an engram will contain a piano playing. It is just a perceptic of sound. It doesn't say "I don't like music," yet we notice that this preclear does not like music. So if the auditor says "Well, let's go over this phrase 'I don't like music,'" he is assuming immediately that it is over on the statement side of the case.

About eighty percent of what is wrong with this case is over on the mechanical side. In this instance it is the perceptic of piano music that he is objecting to, because it restimulates an engram.

Now, let's just for a moment wipe out language and everything it means as far as aberration is concerned, just abandon it for a moment as aberrative, and we will find out that what we have left on the case is pain, tactile, the whole category of the perceptics, too much emotion, invalidation's and numerous other factors—in other words, we have the mechanics of mind operation.

As a matter of fact, a person can actually have invalidation's without any recourse to language whatsoever. For instance, a girl is cooking a cake, and she is very proudly going along. Of course, she is getting flour on the floor and so forth. She has just cracked her second dozen eggs when Mama comes in, takes one look at this mess, shoves her aside and goes to work cleaning it up. Although not a word has been said, that is an invalidation.

The action says, "You have no place in this kitchen. You can't bake a cake." Furthermore it says immediately, "I haven't enough affinity for you to be tolerant of your actions." As a result there is a mechanical situation which, although it hasn't any language in it, is a perfectly valid lock.

Another example would be a fellow who is knocked down. Somebody comes along and kicks him, and there is the sound of shoes, the tactile of being kicked, the pain of being kicked and the kinesthesia of being kicked. Somebody else walks along and kicks him some more. Another person picks him up and slams him into a chair someplace, cuffs him a couple of times and walks away. There hasn't been a word said, but there is an engram. This engram has got physical pain in it and it has got an affinity break in it.

The person couldn't talk back, nobody tried to reason with him in any way, he had no purpose for being there and he was helpless, so there is a break right straight across the boards. It is understandable how, as a mechanical engram, that would in itself give a person a certain hostility. So the next time he is tired and he hears a foot scuff or a kicking sound, the engram becomes restimulated and he feels that human beings are kicking him.

Another example would be an automobile accident where a man looks in through the car door and finds his wife dead. Not a single word has been said. There is the physical fact of her death. That is a grief engram, but it doesn't contain the statement "You have to feel sorry."

These are the mechanics of mind operation.

A man cannot go back down his own time track which is supercharged with emotion and be inside himself all the way back down that track. That is a mechanical inability. There is no statement preventing it. The thing is just too highly charged.

You are trying to get off the charge.

Let's say that every time your preclear, as a little boy, started to cry, somebody came up to him and hit him without saying a word. That is a control circuit on a mechanical level. The person is actually saying "You can't cry," but he isn't verbalizing it.

That is how engrams work.

Dogs, for instance, have very full engram banks, and they have never rationalized a single word in them. The words in them are just that much more sound. Did you ever see a neurotic dog? There are lots of them. There are neurotic and psychotic horses as well. No language in there says "You are crazy." The horse is just crazy. He gets crazy on a mechanical level. He has been beaten, punished, manhandled and mauled about until he finally gets up to a point where he is crazy. If you get on this horse and start to run down the road, beware! He is likely to run right straight into a tree, head on. Then people will look at you and say, "What's the matter with you? Don't you know how to ride?"

That horse is crazy. He isn't crazy because you said something to him while you were riding him that restimulated him. Just the kinesthesia of having somebody on him and the tactile of having a bit in his mouth were enough to restimulate his engram.

We are dealing with twenty-six perceptics. Language is just an incidental. It is a special aspect of the perceptics of sound and sight.

Words read off a page are occasionally much less aberrative than words which are heard, because there is a mechanical force to the sound of a voice, there are actual sound waves to it, whereas sight waves seldom glare enough. But if you get a big, glaring electric sign, you will very often get a very heavy impact off a written word.

We pulled a circuit off a fellow once who had been standing in a penny arcade with his hands on an electric shocker machine, and right above him was this sign in neon lights which said, in effect, "Learn to control yourself!"

You occasionally will get a computation on a case which says that the written word is aberrative and the spoken word is not. Therefore everything that that person reads becomes aberrative, but spoken words are less aberrative to him.

Speech is a specialized portion of sound and sight; it is a subdivision of two of the twenty-six perceptics. That should give you an idea of its relative importance.

However, our language gets rationalized by the analyzer and goes back and reevaluates engrams. They are restimulated, and because we deal so much with speech, and so many people are so worried about speech, and these mechanical actions are translated so easily into speech, speech has a special aberrative value all its own.

Speech is learned by mimicry and the observation of action. A baby hears the words get out and sees somebody leave. He thereafter learns, when this is seen several times, what get out means. Or somebody says "Get out" to the baby and boots him out, so that is what it means. It is a special sound accompanied by something going out; and there's kinesthesia, tactile, visio and all sorts of things mixed up in the definition of get out. The words mean an action. The person knows that now, and when this reappears down in the engram bank, the earlier engram can get restimulated mechanically.

The mechanics of restimulation belong at a mechanical level. Any sound or perceptic can restimulate an engram, not just speech. For instance, a person is kicked and knocked out. The next point of the engram is the sound of footsteps and there is also the smell of some onion soup cooking. Then there is some music playing off in the distance and an old car driving up the street somewhere. That is the total of the engram.

This person may then go on for a long time without that engram being restimulated. Then one day he is very tired.

A person has to be a bit weary for an engram to key in. Therefore it is tough to key in the first one because the child's analytical awareness is very high; but as engrams cut in, his analyzer, as its standard state, cuts down more and more until engrams are very easy to restimulate, because the engram bank only restimulates when the analyzer itself is attenuated in its awareness. Sometimes children go until they are four or five years of age before they get any engrams keyed in. Then they start into the dwindling spiral, and after a while get to be adults!

So this person is tired, he hears some footsteps and smells some onion soup. We don't need the car or any of the rest of the perceptics, or even the kick. Because he is tired, he has analytical attenuation. All of a sudden this person feels nervous; he feels he should leave or do something, and he can't quite focus his attention on what is wrong. Actually that is the trouble with engrams: they don't tell the analyzer what to fix the attention on. So the person's attention

scatters. He knows something is wrong in the environment but he can't find it and so becomes nervous.

After that, when cars go by which sound like that old car, he has a slight awareness of something, but it is merely a fear of the unknown because he cannot focus on what it is.

That is how an engram keys in. After that, any perceptic which is in that engram can key it in some more.

You'll notice there was no speech in this. If we start to add in the speech, we find out that this engram would have been much more serious if it had had a "Stay there" or a "You can't feel anything" or something similar in there. Now we are adding in the statement side of the engram. And that is why human beings can evidently go crazier than horses; the statement side can be run in over on the mechanical side and it just compounds the felony. So statements should not be your main point of concentration.

It happens that this whole society is just a little bit aberrated on the subject of language. It should be. English is one of the most aberrative languages that exist, except for Japanese. Japanese is just crowded with homonyms and its slang is something to wonder at. It is worse than English, but English is right behind it. Take any English cliché literally and it means something else, so the language is a sort of double- or triple-talk language. To the reactive mind it means one thing, to the analytical mind it means another.

The way one would deaberrate a language would be to fix it up so that its literal meaning and its analytical meaning were identical, so that no analytical phrase, when read literally, would do anything but define—differentiate.

There is an appalling lack of differentiation in pronouns in the English language. A language should be built on the basis of exactly defining every pronoun. If a fellow's name is George, his personal pronoun I should probably be George-A. And when somebody is speaking to him the phrase would probably be George-E. And if you were speaking to a whole crowd, you would address one person in it and say George-E-plus. In this fashion you would get a relatively unaberrated language.

So we are dealing with the mechanical side of the case, divorced from language, and then we put the language on top of it.

But let's keep them divorced for a moment more. Here we have this person who was kicked, and the engram has been restimulated. Then one day this person has his dog kicked to death before his eyes. All right, there is grief. There has still not been a word said along this line. The early engram had to do with kicking and with footsteps, and the same perceptics appear in the killing of the dog and there is now a grief charge. The original level at which this first engram could operate was not very high. It wasn't supercharged; it just had some pain in it and so on. But now we get a grief charge there and the intensity, or charge-up, of the engram comes way up.

If we take off the dog's death in processing, the tension on that engram goes back to where it was before. This is why you take the grief charges off the bank. It is mechanical.

Here is an engram of somebody being kicked, with certain perceptics in it, and here is a grief charge with similar perceptics which intensifies this earlier engram way up from five volts to five thousand, immediately.

Even though no pain has taken place in this second engram, it is a terrific loss and there is physical pain on which it can append. But there has to be this first engram. If the dog-being-kicked-to-death incident couldn't latch on to an earlier engram, it would be an incident which could be taken apart more or less analytically. A person would feel bad about the dog being kicked, but he wouldn't get a psychosis or neurosis as a result thereof. He would

just have a reaction to the dog being kicked, and after that he would probably not react because of it. He might say, computationally and otherwise, "I don't like dogs being kicked. That was an awfully good dog, and I think I will go get another dog." He could stand up to it. But having the earlier physical pain under it, it supercharges the lower engram.

That is why you have got to get these affinity, reality and communication break engrams off the case, because it takes the tension out of the bank. It is still mechanical.

The statement side of the engram compounds the felony. For instance, after this fellow has been kicked, and then his dog is kicked to death, someone comes along and says, "You can't cry," "You have to control yourself," and "You have to be a big boy like Father," giving him a valence shifter and a shut-off and so forth.

In processing this person, the auditor finds out about the dog and finds out that there is probably an earlier engram in there that this one is appended to. He tries to get the preclear to go through this secondary engram and nothing happens, because it is held down by a standard type of circuitry—"You can't cry," "You have to be a big boy," and so on—which suppresses the charge. The auditor is trying to get this charge to blow so the bank will deintensify, and it doesn't; so he has got to find out why it doesn't blow.

He asks the preclear "Who in your family didn't like tears?" "Who in your family didn't like to cry?" and so forth, and traces it back, and finally finds the dominant on the case. He traces the circuit phrase back as early as he can on the case and deintensifies it, and then he comes back to this engram. He doesn't just abandon the thing and say, "Well, fine, we've got this fellow's emotions turned on."

There is only one reason the auditor is trying to turn these things on, and that is so that he can get the five thousand volts out of the situation. So, he gets rid of the circuits "You can't cry" and "You have to be a big boy like Father," and when he has got the worst of that off the case he comes back and addresses the moment the dog was kicked to death; the fellow cries, and the case deintensifies. The bank is then not as highly charged, so the person can go back down the track more easily.

This is so significant that there is no psychotic or severely neurotic person in existence (unless it is by virtue of having had his brains hacked up or shot out) who didn't get that way through a dominant—a person trying to dominate him or other individuals, someone seeking to control other people. The worse the dominance and the heavier it is, the more liable is the individual to psychosis and neurosis—because that's the circuitry; that's what keeps the bank charged.

If the person could have seen the dog kicked to death and then just sat down and wept about it, he would have deintensified it right there and gotten off probably about eighty or ninety percent of that charge, leaving only about ten percent for the auditor to pick up afterwards. Even if he could have gotten off fifty percent of it, it wouldn't have assisted, to any marked degree, his future aberrative pattern. But because of charge suppressed in the past by control circuitry or other types of circuitry, he has a very tough bank. It has been supercharged by all this emotion which is inaccessible to him, having been curtailed off by circuitry.

When you start into a case and the fellow says "I can't get into that," give him the benefit of the doubt. Don't go into statements. Look at it from the mechanical side of the case. This has to do, mostly, with the mechanics of mind operation.

Take an auditor who pays attention to nothing but mechanics and an auditor who pays attention to nothing but statements, and find out which one of them can resolve a rough case. You will find out that the auditor who pays attention to nothing but statements will not be able to, and the auditor who pays attention to nothing but mechanics will be able to resolve the case. That is the difference between these two things.

This does not mean statements are not important. It would be impossible to separate these things completely, but the auditor who paid attention to nothing but the mechanics—the charged bank, the physical pain on the bank, the perceptics and so forth—would have a better chance of resolving the case than a person who paid attention to nothing but the statements. Actually, to resolve the case you have got to pay attention to both.

So pay attention to these mechanics of the case, of a bank supercharged with grief. Pay attention to the existence of the engram as something received personally rather than out of valence, and to the value of picking up, for instance, automobile sounds and pianos and so on out of engrams, because they're all sounds. Then take the statement side of it and add that in to make a complete picture.

When somebody says "I can't get into it," don't ever say to him "Go over 'I can't get into it,'" because you would be laying in a lock. You might just as well kick him!

It is true that a person who knows he has engrams will begin to look for these engrams' reaction in his awake speech, but as an auditor don't coax him into it. Assume that in present time, with his analyzer on, he does not talk out of his engrams. Don't ever throw at a person the fact that he is talking out of his engrams, or try to convince anybody he has engrams, because you are working right at the heart of insanity.

It is relatively true that a person who is in present time—or even when he is stuck on the track—walking around in the workaday world, is not reacting to any enormous extent out of his engrams. Sure, he gets upset, and sure, he feels he can't sit down and write a letter to anybody, and he isn't doing so well, but just leave him alone as far as his having engrams is concerned. Don't try, yourself, to assert control over other human beings because you know they have engrams. That is an Achilles' heel, and it works both ways. That is an effort at controlling another human being, to try to convince him that he is doing what he is doing out of and because of his engrams. You would be invalidating him as an individual, by saying in effect "Aha, you haven't got any ideas of your own. You're nobody. You only talk out of your engrams. You only get these ideas from somebody else." You could work on a person like that and probably wind him up in an insane asylum.

It would be even worse to feed the fellow's statements back to him in processing for the purposes of repeater technique, because at that moment he is depending on you as an auditor. You are in solid communication with him. You are trying to punch up to him the reality of his past life, but there is no need to feed back his engramic commands to him to get processing done.

He knows he is going back after engrams. What you should do is consult his file clerk. The preclear says, "I can't get into it." What you don't do is say to the file clerk "Is this the phrase which is keeping us out of the engram?" The file clerk will probably say yes, but it is possibly about twenty-two engrams up the bank from the one you want. So you are evaluating, then, to pick up that phrase which the preclear has just used and feed it back to him. That would be preempting the duties of the file clerk.

Now, this is the right way: The fellow is lying there and he says, "I can't get into it." The auditor thinks it is a statement that is keeping him from getting into it. So the auditor says, "The file clerk will give us the phrase which is preventing an entrance into this. When I count from one to five that phrase will flash into your mind. One-two-three-four-five (snap!)."

The fellow may or may not come up with "I can't get into it." If he does, his file clerk gave it to him. And if he compares it to what he just said, he usually says, "Ha-ha, I was talking out of an engram." The auditor doesn't punch it up. He doesn't tell him "Oh, yes, you were." The auditor lets the file clerk work with him on it, and the preclear won't mind it a bit. The chances are pretty good that the phrase that will come up is "There isn't any door here," not "I can't get into it."

You get the actual material that is in the engram you are trying to reach by getting the flash answer from the file clerk. If the preclear's file clerk isn't working, there are other ways to go about it.

The person who, while actually in the engram, tells you suddenly "I can't get into it" is probably informing you analytically that he can't get into it. The chances aren't even fifty-fifty that he is talking out of that engram. The chances are very good that he is talking out of an engram that is someplace else on the track, and that by making him repeat that, you will jump him into another engram—completely aside from the fact that you will lay a lock into him by forbidding him to speak. That is saying, in effect, "Nothing is coming out of your analyzer; it's just out of your engram bank after all, you bum." There goes affinity, and you won't get much processing done that way.

The latitude which has already been used on the subject of picking up the preclear's words and feeding them back to him is, even at its narrowest, not justified by the results, because you can get a flash from the preclear and you very often get an entirely different phrase that explains the whole thing.

It is true that a man running through an engram is more likely to use phrases out of that engram than he is out of his own analyzer, because his analyzer is shut down. So the reactive mind can come through much more easily when he is in the engram.

Very occasionally when the file clerk can't get through well and the preclear is having a bad time, you know that the preclear is obeying some phrase—for instance, "I can't talk"—because he has just used it. But he has used maybe fifteen or twenty phrases since then, so you fish back to the phrase "I can't talk" that you know explains this and tell him to go over it. Probably the preclear won't connect it with what he said before.

But don't use it consecutively. Don't pounce on him. Let the phrase go by. For instance, a person habitually says, "Oh, I don't know, I just can't see that," and all of a sudden his visio goes off while he is running an engram. Say, "Could it be the phrase 'I can't see that'? Give me a yes or no," and the person says, "Yes!"

Even in the present-time social concourse never say to someone "Oh, you're just talking out of your engrams. You know that's in an engram." That is bad Dianetic manners. And never feed a preclear back his own conversation, because the preclear will go into a relative state of apathy. A case can be halted in its forward progress by too much of this and too much use of repeater technique. The chances are that the trouble with the case is mechanical anyway, unless you are shooting for circuitry.

If you are trying to get out basic area engrams and this person has a lot of difficulty trying to get phrases, then you haven't got this case in a shape to erase engrams.

Usually, if you can get the person into the early basic area and into his own valence, he will thereafter just run right straight on through the engram in his own valence without bouncing or getting misdirected. None of the action phrases will really have any effect upon him, because he is listening to two people quarreling, or to Mama complaining, and he understands it for what it is. He'll go through it three or four times, and it will be gone.

When he is out of valence, however, and somebody says "Get out," he gets out, because he isn't well differentiated as to himself and other people. He has got himself confused with Mama, so he is in Mama's valence.

Insanity is too close an identification. An identification of himself with another person makes him react to commands given to the other person.

For example, a person is running an incident in which he is being dragged along a hospital corridor, and a nurse says to an intern, "You had better go back after it." The person's lack of

differentiation makes him think he is being talked to (he would have to be pretty well out of valence for this to happen), so he promptly goes earlier on the track in response to the nurse's command.

Action phrases are only action phrases when you are working people out of valence. But they are very important to watch because most people in the early parts of the case are out of valence.

A person who was solidly in his own valence would have a rather hard time getting and keeping a chronic somatic. But practically nobody is in his own valence because pain, all by itself, can knock a person out of valence.

This is the mechanical side again. Pain itself is a valence shifter. Grief charges are also valence shifters, all by themselves, without any valence shifting command.

None of the aspects of the mechanics of mental operation could be created by language alone. The mechanical aspects of the mind, such as bouncers and deniers and so on, have their actual beginning over in the mind's mechanical operation, and the words merely designate some point of it. The person in the society, through learning the language, has agreed that a certain statement means a certain mechanical thing in the physical world, so when this statement appears in an engram, it approximates the mechanical thing.

You couldn't turn a person into somebody else just by a valence shifter unless the person already had a mechanical gimmick in his mind that let him turn into somebody else. There are plenty of horses around in some other horse's valence, and there are plenty of dogs around that are in their masters' valences and vice versa. That works both ways.

Standard Procedure is as it is. It is unchanged. These points are all in Standard Procedure. However, this outline tells you how to compute on a case so as to know when to use the various points of Standard Procedure.

I have advanced your knowledge of Dianetics to the point of being able to look over a case and know at what point to enter the case. You ought to be able to take the Accessibility Chart, look it over and look over your preclear and say "Well, this case starts here." In other words, if it has lots of grief on it, and no particular circuitry, this case starts at point 5. Or you can look at a case that is just a bit tougher and say, "Well, look, we can start this case by breaking circuits right now."

The auditor sees that this fellow is super-controlled, so he asks him, "Do you ever cry? How did you feel when your father died?"

"Well, I guess I felt pretty bad but I didn't cry about it."

As a matter of fact, he will look at the auditor and a couple of moments later his chest is heaving. The auditor thinks to himself, "Suppression of affinity, reality, communication engrams—circuits." So he starts this case off by getting circuits. If he can't get any circuits, he has to start breaking a few locks.

"When was the last time somebody told you you were a liar?"

The preclear says, "Oh, I don't know. Nobody really ever—oh, yes, my wife. Yes, she is always saying I'm a liar."

"Let's remember the first time your wife said you were a liar."

Down the track he goes on Straightwire, and the auditor starts knocking communication break locks off the case.



Or he says, “When was the last time somebody told you you were blind?”

“Nobody would ever say anything like that to me.”

“Okay, when was the last time somebody said that you just couldn’t see anything?”

“Oh, ‘couldn’t see anything’—that’s my boss.”

And up come some attention units into present time, because that is of course another communication lock: he can’t see. Remember that communication is perceptics.

Start this case by breaking some locks, and after a while you’ll get it to a point where the preclear can remember some circuits. Get him to do that, and then run some circuits and shoot them off the case. Then maybe you can run some ARC break engrams.

You work another case a few sessions, or maybe even just one session, and you see that he is pretty badly occluded. Well, just see if you can get some memory off him. “Do you remember the house you lived in when you had measles?”

And the preclear says, “I never remember where I live.”

“Well, do you remember one of your school teachers?”

“I never remember people.”

“Do you remember a comic strip character?”

“I never remember people.”

“Who am I?”

“Oh, you’re Joe.”

“Well, you remembered me. So you can remember people.”

“Ha! So I did! Yes, that’s right.”

That is how Straightwire is entered on that echelon.

If you are talking to somebody and you say “What did you have to eat for breakfast?” and the person keeps on going “A-a-a-a-a,” and you say “Well, how do you feel?” and he says “A-a-a-a,” that preclear is out of communication! So you enter his case above point 1 on the Accessibility Chart, and you just ask him about this and that, and maybe pick up a matchbox and give it to him, or offer him a cigarette, or just sit with him there. Or if he is going “A-a-a-a,” you can go “A-a-a-a,” too.

The person may look at you and say, “That’s wrong with you too, is it?”

And you say, “Yes, I’ve been troubled with that most of my life. It’s terrible, isn’t it?”

Try to jockey in there and get any contact.

To take a worse case, you sit down and say, “You know that epizudic which you have consistently? I think I could do something for that.”

And he says sneeringly, “Yeah? Well, doctors are no good.”

“Well, this isn’t medicine. This is Dianetics.”

“Yeah, one of them quack things.”

“Well, I think something could be done for this.”

“Aw, what are you talking about? Nobody can do anything for this. That’s my epizodic.”

Well, you have got a job of reaching his personality, because he is not there. He is accessible only to disagreement. But talk to him a while and you might finally find out that he is violently interested in horse racing. So you say, “You know, I won five bucks on a horse once.”

“Yeah, you did?”

“Yeah, it was out at Tanforan, and the horse’s name was Heartbroken.”

“Oh, old Heartbroken! You know, I won twenty-four bucks on Heartbroken one time! It was back in the spring of 1925!”

You have gotten into communication. You go along the line a bit further, perhaps seeing the person on many occasions, and the first thing you know, this person is accessible to Straightwire. There’s where you enter the case.

So the Accessibility Chart is actually a chart of case entrance.