



THRESHOLDS OF PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Transforming inner blocks into developmental opportunities with Psychophonetics

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Slovak version published in Vitalita magazine, Slovakia, 2023

The Supreme Principle is Buried in One's Heart-Mind...There is nothing exists outside our minds, there is no supreme principle exists outside our hearts (Wang Yangming, School of the Heart心學; 陽明學, 1584)

There slumber in every human being faculties by means of which he can acquire for himself a knowledge of higher worlds...At every moment the listener may say to himself: that, of which they speak, I too can learn, if I develop within myself certain powers which today still slumber within me. (Rudolf Steiner, Knowledge of the Higher Worlds 1904)

The major task of 21st Century psychology is not the restoration of pathology back to normalcy—but the transformation of all life challenges into opportunities for spiritual development. (Yehuda Tagar, Psychophonetics, 2014)

There was always a stream of thoughts in human evolution, North and South and East and West, alongside the mainstream of external culture, which claimed that the spiritual world is real, intrinsic and internal to the individual human soul. This is not a philosophical intellectual assumption. It is a personal, intimate reality for those who can find it inside of themselves. This reality is not automatically and passively available to people. Something has to change in the given personality, to be transformed so that the same psychological dynamics that obscure it—becomes transparent to it, letting this *Supreme Principle* as Wang Yangming calls it—to shine through from the inside of the individual soul. This process of individual transformation is called in many languages: *Initiation*.

The Threshold

The transition from the limitations of ordinary, sense-perception, intellectual reflection bound consciousness into this transparency requires the crossing of individual thresholds. From one side these thresholds appear to be blocks, prisons, adversaries of personal development. From the other side, they are the very process of preparation for the higher self-knowledge one is seeking. These principles are universal and ancient. The crossing is always individual and personal.

This used to be the domain of very special people in the past. Now it is time for everyone to be special person. So much of what we call personal challenges, problems, personal development, potential subjects for psychotherapy are in reality, individual thresholds of initiation into one's own higher knowledge. Psychophonetics is a methodical support, encouragement and skilling for the crossing of personal threshold in individual initiation. It is a process of transforming life challenges, in whatever form they come—into thresholds of spiritual development.

In Psychophonetics, the term *Threshold*, indicates the boundary between one's present self and one's potential future self. Present self is not capable of moving on into its next stage of development without taking a decisive step in self-awareness, self-transformation, new kind of action, letting go of old, dysfunctional parts of oneself and invoking/creating/mobilizing new self-potential hitherto dormant and inaccessible.

At every step of the transition between these two levels of oneself - there lives a threshold: that step is not possible on the basis of the old self. Something has to shift. You, as you are, cannot cross it—you have to change in order to be able to cross it. Overcoming the threshold is the necessary test and the inner training for facing the reality on the other side. The threshold for taking a step in one's development, can appear as instinctive fear of emotional pain, as self-disrespect which result in giving too low priority for facing oneself, for taking oneself seriously, for dealing with the difficult on your path, as doubting one's own reality and strength, or as addiction.

The purpose of all Psychophonetics Threshold processes, is to identify the gap between present and future self as the underlying cause of undesirable behavioural, relationship, self-conduct and health symptoms, and transforming it into a practical opportunity for personal development.

The Guardian of the Threshold

Fundamental to the esoteric teaching that was made public through the writings of Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the 20th century the idea of the *Guardian of the Threshold (Knowledge of the Higher Worlds)*: before making a step into one's real higher knowledge, preparation is needed in soul development and transformation through which the required strength can be acquired, without which direct exposure to higher self-knowledge can destroy the unprepared soul. In Psychophonetics personal development and spiritual development: every step in personal development requires spiritual activity and every real step in spiritual development, requires real psychological change. That is not an issue of speculative theories on spiritual realities and various forms of theology. These do not require any personal transformation. They present only

intellectual activity that does not require real personal change. An actual step in personal development requires preparation. The actual step in personal development to be taken and the preparation for it are considered a continuum of one self-educational process.

An inner being inside one's own greater self, is present in such moments, stopping you, at least for now. In Psychophonetics, this inner being is called *The Guardian of the Threshold*. It is there in order to prevent the self from crossing a Threshold before being ready for it. The Guardian of the Threshold is present in many forms, stopping the unprepared person from making the next step in his/her development. It manifests as a block in one's will to move.

For us, that block is not the enemy, it is the Guardian *Stop sign* saying: *you are not ready for that—prepare*. The Guardian is a potential friend, a tough friend, who reflects the soul's reality to the one who wishes to make a real step in their development. We cannot ignore it, we cannot fight it, we have to work with it. Most of the time the Guardian will appear in disguise as a stubborn resistance for doing something the person knows he/she has to do. It is easy to project it onto other people, one's biographical challenges, life situation, and blaming them all for the block, explaining it away. In reality, most of our hindrances in personal development are various expressions of our own Guardian, trying to tell us that we are not ready for the step that we wish to take, that preparation is needed. For some, the Guardian of the Threshold appears as an independent being in its own form: a being of many eyes looking at you, challenging you to take a step. For most people, it manifests as paralysis of will.

Through many years of striving to apply these esoteric indications to actual psycho-development work in many countries, a few developments of the concept of the Guardian of the Threshold as originally given in 1904 took place through Psychophonetics work. In fact, these realisations mark the development of this method itself. The major one is: the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold must no longer be limited to a one-off dramatic moment dividing one's life into two parts, before and after the crossing of the threshold. The idea of crossing the threshold has evolved for me: we must work with the threshold as if it is there in our life all the time, broken into a myriad of many mini-thresholds in one's daily, personal, relationship and professional life. We cross the threshold or we fail to cross it every day.

Three possible responses to the Guardian

After many years of research and clinical experience in a few countries, I came to the realisation that there exist three major possible responses to the blocking caused by the Guardian of the Threshold:

- 1) **Fighting the Guardian:** The Guardian is being perceived as one's **Enemy** and is being fought against. It does not give way.
- 2) **Obeying the Guardian:** The guardian then remains the major block for one's real development. Many excuses are being developed to explain it away with the same result: no development takes place. In that case, the Guardian inevitably becomes the **opposite** of one's personal development. In Psychophonetics teaching, it is called that opposite: the **Double**.
- 3) **Learning from the Guardian:** using the Guardian blocking effect as a mirror to expose to our consciousness what is it in us that needs to change and be transformed, to enable us to cross the Threshold in front of us. In that case the Guardian becomes one's best **Friend**.

Transforming blocks into opportunities with Psychophonetics:

Introduction to the Three Beasts on the Threshold

One's Double—the 'Anti 'I' in the soul—manifests through archetypal negative forces of inner destruction in the human soul. Every real step in self-development necessitates encountering with these forces. In this journey, people inevitably encounter dimensions of their soul life of which they were unconscious before. In his esoteric teaching (1923), Rudolf Steiner describes the major typical obstacles that a true seeker on a spiritual development path is bound to face as he/she is preparing to cross their own threshold towards the next level of spiritual awareness. He describes them as **three archetypal Beasts on the Threshold: Fear** of the spirit, **Hate** of the spirit and **Doubt** of the spirit, created by one's own lives on earth.

In applying Steiner's meditation of the three Beasts on the threshold, to the personal psycho-development of normal people today, in accordance with process of individuation that proceeded exponentially during the past century—I came to the conclusion that Fear of the Spirit is now acting as *fear of one's own deeper reality*; Hatred of the Spirit is now self-hatred; Doubt of the Spirit is now *self-doubt*. The threshold, as described before, in being considered in Psychophonetics, not as a one-off cataclysmic event close to the pinnacle of one's initiation, but as a mirror broken into a thousand pieces, enabling people to face their thresholds in their daily human life. In this light—*life itself becomes an initiatory process*.

The immediate effect of overcoming any aspect of any of the Three Beasts on the Threshold is a tangible strengthening of the presence, resilience and effectiveness of one's own 'I'. ¹

¹ The meditation on the Beasts on the Threshold is sourced in Rudolf Steiner's esoteric teaching, lesson 1 of class 1 of the School of Spiritual Science: <https://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA241a/English/eLib2016/19240215p01.html>

1. The Beast of Self-Fear

The Will's evil power, estranging one's body from one's soul

Any step towards real direct knowledge of oneself and the world, and every step in self-knowledge, which is essential for real knowledge, will be challenged by fear of that knowledge. This fear is mostly unconscious, habitual and hidden, deeply entrenched. It has life of its own, it was created over many cycles of life, deeper than one's recent biography. Every step in self-knowledge requires a step in personal change, and personal change is scary: something has to die and something new must be born. Yet, at the same time, deeper than all other desires—is the desire for self-knowledge and self-transformation. *Fear is a sickness of the will.* It can only be healed by mobilizing new courage. Here is a piece of a stark factual paradoxical reality: *only direct encounter with one's own fear and with its source: the Beast of Fear can mobilise the courage required for the crossing of that threshold.* Waiting for courage to appear before facing one's fear is the very *opposite* of real personal development. ***Courage can only be created by facing fear.*** It is a free choice.

One major Psychophonetics process for overcoming The Beast of Fear requires activating a vivid memory of a moment of courage from any point in one's life and being inspired by it. Then coming back to now and facing the present fear. Courage must be mobilized and grow through confronting fear.

All fears prevent a direct knowledge of truth as the fear instinct is to cover, hide, defend, attack, block out reality. All knowledge is based on self-knowledge and knowledge of anything requires interest and empathy with the reality to be known. Therefore, all fear is an opposition to true knowledge. The opposite of fear is the courage to know and to face reality, whatever reality is.

Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.²

Every act of overcoming self-fear rejuvenates and enlivens the whole Qi, reconnecting one's body with one's soul. **Fear paralyses and freezes our will** and with it freezes this organic connection of body and soul. The disconnection is being created instinctively. The reconnection can only take place consciously.

2. Beast of Self-Hatred

The evil counter-force of human feeling.

² Steiner, R. First Class of the School of Spiritual Science, class 1.

Self-hatred, in all its manifestations is a sickness of the feeling life. Human feeling life is an organ of one's own soul-spiritual constitution that is based in the *Etheric Heart* of everyone, living in the whole organism through the breathing process. Every nuance of change in one's feeling-emotional life, effects the breathing process directly. Indeed, self-observation of one's feeling process is one of Psychophonetics major processes of feeling self-awareness. Healthy feeling life breathes freely. Contraction, toxification and blockage to one's feeling life would express itself directly in one's breathing.

Self-hatred, self-disrespect, self-negativity, self-judgment, self-criticism, self-rejection, negative comparisons, the perfectionist, echoes of parental disapproval, putting oneself down—all these are one and the same: emanations of the internal Beast of Self-Hate. The mocking, toxic internal character of self-hatred appears to be one's own voice. It is clever and sharply intellectual, specialising in putting oneself down, completely heartless, cruel and sarcastic. It claims the superiority of inner moral authority. Often disguised in the image of the traces of parental criticism left in our soft inner-child bodies inside.

For real personal/spiritual development to progress, Self-hatred has to be completely exposed, confronted and unmasked, to be observed objectively as an internal fact, thus, losing its internal power to harm. Confronting self-hatred as an inner reality, marks a step forward from the business-as-usual of the tradition of 20th Century psychotherapy. The assumption that all psychological complexes are traceable back to childhood traumas and parental deficiencies cannot address the full complexity of human reality. That level of psychological discourse can only address the cognitive/emotional dimension of human complexity, from the dysfunctional/therapeutic angle. This level of psychology has broad applications, universal academic/professional recognition, and is still dominant in mainstream academic psychology. As we have already spent more than a century with this limited parameter, language and remit of modern psychology, it is actually not more modern than modernism itself³. By incorporating the reality of Threshold into psychology, the major purpose of psychology itself shifts from fixing psycho-pathology into evolutionary *psycho-development*: its underlying motivation is not the restoration of normalcy, but the further development of the individual. As Professor Stan Lifschitz, head of psychology training in the University of South Africa said when welcoming me to teach Psychophonetics in his country:

Psychophonetics appreciates the complexities of the human form. It conceives of humans as multi-modal and it respects people as ecological beings. It is an approach which offers possibilities to

³ Modernism refers to a global movement in society and culture that from the early decades of the twentieth century, sought a new alignment with the experience and values of modern industrial life. A socially progressive trend of thought that affirms the power of human beings to create, improve, and reshape their environment with the aid of practical experimentation, scientific knowledge, or technology (Wikipedia).

healers working in Africa as it recalls the fullness of what living could be. (Professor Stan Lifschitz, Head of training for Clinical Psychologists, University of South Africa, Pretoria)

Psychophonetics is a pioneer of psycho-development and its fundamental working proposition is that the attainment of psychological health requires an ongoing developmental movement from a primitive -normative state of consciousness towards the ideal of a higher human-beingness, *Das Übermensch* to use the Nietzsche term⁴, which lives as a dormant potential in everyone.

In light of psycho-development, the major hindrances on the Threshold are there to fulfil a developmental purpose: in order to overcome them, a new, hitherto unused personal potential must wake-up and evolve into functional operation. That new faculty of soul *IS* the actual desired development. Seen in this light, overcoming Self-Hatred with Psychophonetics requires the mobilisation of its opposite: compassion, love, heart.

Hatred has its own life. It is very seductive and very widespread. It has been a dominant power in the history of the 20th century and is still going strong in 2023. When infected by hatred, one's intellect provides the active dynamics of hatred with rational excuses, explanations and justifications, like a layer covering up for a criminal client. But the rational is the cover-up, not the real cause of hatred; biographical/psychological explanations of it are also a cover-up of its existential present-time reality. Self-Hatred lives like a living parasite in our feeling life, like a growing cancer which lives off our feeling life while destroying it from the inside at the same time. It is the major active ingredient in the populist politics of hatred. *Hatred is sickness of the Feeling Life.*

The opposite of hatred has to be mobilised individually in order for self-hatred and the chronic hatred of others, to be overcome. What is the opposite of hatred towards the essence of oneself? What is the essence of oneself anyway? From a certain point of view and I am aware that there are many other points of view possible here, the essence of oneself is the all-human nature of humanity, what unites humanity as a whole within the cosmic order, manifested through individual human beings in a personal form. Knowledge of the all-human reality is the essence of self-knowledge of the individual. Therefore, self-hatred means hatred of humanity as a whole, while its opposite is personal knowledge of the all-human spiritual reality of humanity. The opposite of essential self-hatred is the individual enthusiasm for true knowledge of humanity and its universal context of existence.

⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, 1883.

Your flame for knowledge must subdue him. ⁵

Soul fire, enthusiasm, passion for truth, commitment to the real knowledge of humanity, can overcome it. Hatred is unconsciously directed against the spiritual dimension of human life. It always lies. Hatred cannot stand the light of human truth. Hatred is a soul-parasite and parasites hate sunlight. The fire of human truth would destroy all parasites when they are exposed to it like the light of the sun. The lie of hatred does not want to be exposed. Hatred always comes with its intrinsic propaganda. Hatred serves fear by hiding it intellectually and Fear, in turn, provides Hatred with the instinctive power of survival. That is the *mafia* relationship between the Beast of Fear and the Beast of Hatred. That is why all oppressive dictatorial regimes combine hatred and fear in their tyrannical control of the people. Any real step towards real human knowledge will be attacked and challenged by this instinctive Hatred directed at one's own spirituality and at the spirituality of others.

Deeper than Hatred, lives the human heart and its innate, natural fire of enthusiasm, interest, honesty and love for the deeper human truth. All children are of this nature before being corrupted by the prevailing social reality of their normative environment. Love of truth and love of people is one and the same. The encounter and confrontation between one's human wholeness and one's hatred is the major process here. Mobilizing the reality and energy of the memory of moments of true love in action—can support the crossing of that Threshold.

3. The Beast of Self Doubt—*the Denier*

The evil counter-image of Thinking, Self-Doubt is the most insidious of all the three *Beasts on the Threshold*, being the most hidden one, too close to oneself to see. It is a distortion of thinking itself. It is the doubt in one's own human reality—the most intimate and hard to catch of the three Beasts. It comes from the inside of one's nerve system and one's reality-formation process. What we call *reality*, is not given to us. Our sense of orientation based on our personal reality, is a construction of perceptible experience and individual reflection. It is vulnerable to doubt from the start. Both personal perception and personal conception of the world and of oneself, can go wrong. We need it confirmed all the time. In the physical world, the physical world itself can confirm it much of the time. But in the inner world of thoughts feelings, willing, relationship, emotions, desires, frustrations, dependencies of being evaluated and judged by others, as a huge part of our reality—in the complexity of the inner world—the

⁵ Steiner, R. First Class of the School of Spiritual Science, class 1.

possibility of self-doubt can easily be overwhelming for the vulnerable, growing sense of the certainty of the personal reality and authority of the individual.

Into this vulnerability, in the formation of personal certainty—self-doubt enters. We are vulnerable to self-doubt because we actually need it for the formation of individual thinking. In the right proportion, it supports our individuality. It is a necessary ingredient in the process of individual critical thinking, without which there can be no individuality at all. It is needed in the formation of individuality in the same way that salt is needed in the baking of bread. Then it tends to destroy the very self-certainty that it helps to create. Chronic excessive *Self Doubt is a sickness of thinking itself.*

Paradoxically and surprisingly, the only possible healing of self-doubt is an act of self-creativity. What I create myself, what is coming out of my own being consciously—that I do not doubt. I am the genuine origin of my creative act, I know how it has come into being, I made it—I don't doubt it. Doubt cannot enter between me and myself regarding what is coming consciously and directly out of myself. A mother does not doubt that the child that came out of her, is her own child. The father may doubt its origin, not the mother. Only what you have consciously created, cannot be doubted, for you are its source, it came from you. A mother cannot doubt the child she gave birth to is her real child, and a painter cannot doubt that this is his/her own creation.

Every knowledge accepted from another source and believed in, is a potential prey for doubt, but self-created knowledge is immune from it, though not completely. A change in self-identity can give rise to doubting a previous stage of self-identity, but creation that expresses one's core of being, diminishes the power of the doubt. Self-Doubt is an internal parasite that has its own parasitical life inside one's thinking life. Exposing the doubt that has its own life in oneself—is the major process in overcoming the Beast of Doubt. Mobilizing special experiences of creativity can help minimize the presence of the doubt.

Your creative knowledge must make it yield.⁶

In the Psychophonetics process, a special test is used in exposing the Beast of Doubt to imaginative perception—which everyone has these days, but do not know it. The question can be asked: *Is it real?* If the answer is *yes, it is real*—which is hard to contradict in view of all the very real damage that it has done—a

⁶ Steiner, R. First Class of the School of Spiritual Science, class 1.

paradoxical statement is ceremoniously made: *The Doubt is real. This is the end of the Doubt.* Take it or leave it, but try it first.

This is the minimum I can say in this context about the concept of the Threshold, the *Beasts on the Threshold* and the process of overcoming them in the journey of personal initiation, with Psychophonetics methodology. I know it all sounds strange to an untrained listener who hears it for the first time. I would not even try to communicate it in this format as pure conceptual formation. This is not what I am doing here. I am sharing my clinical-educational experience with many people in many countries over many years and sharing here in writing my life, my professional experience, and the content of my training of professional counsellors, psychotherapists and psychosomatic healers over many years. Strange as it might sound, this theory works in people's processes and lives.

I choose to end with the quote of the original conclusion of that unique teaching from 98 years ago in Central Europe. Heaven and earth have changed drastically in these lands over the past century of turbulent European history, but these eternal teachings of deep initiation have not changed in their validity to modern personal development:

Only when you've defeated the three
Will wings sprout upon your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
to consecrate itself in healing.⁷



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Websites

International website: practitioners - www.psychophonetics.com.au

English: School of Empathy - www.psychophonetics.com

⁷ <https://rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA270/English/eLib2018a/19240215p02.html>

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