

23 December 1950

Mother reads out her article “Concentration and Dispersion” (*On Education*), then comments on it:

To solve a problem, to learn a lesson, a lot of concentration and attention is needed, everyone knows that — an intellectual attention and concentration. But concentration is not only an intellectual thing, it may be found in all the activities of the being, including bodily activities. The control over the nerves should be such as would allow you a complete concentration on what you are doing and, through the very intensity of your concentration, you acquire an immediate response to external touches. To attain this concentration you need a conscious control of the energies.

Are you conscious of the energies you receive and those you spend?

One is more or less conscious of the energy one spends, especially when one wastes it too much! It is a question here of the constant exchange between receiving and spending! Before the age of reason, little children receive a lot of energy and they spend it lavishly, without thinking, and this allows them to play for hours together without getting tired. But gradually, as thought develops, one begins to measure and calculate the energy spent — usually this is futile, for unless you have the knowledge of the process of receiving energy, it is better to spend freely what you get than let it stagnate within you.

First, you must become conscious of the receiving of energies, their passing into your being and their expenditure. Next, you must have a sort of higher instinct which tells you whence the most favourable energies come; then you put yourself in contact with them through thought, through stillness or any other process — there are many. You must know what energy you want, whence it comes, of what it is composed. Later comes

23 December 1950

the control of the energy received. Ninety per cent of men do not absorb enough energy or they take in too much and do not assimilate what they take—as soon as they have had a sufficient dose they immediately throw it out by becoming restless, talking, shouting, etc. You must know how to keep within you the received energy and concentrate it fully on the desired activity and not on anything else. If you can do this, you won't need to use your will. You need only gather together all the energies received and use them consciously, concentrate with the maximum attention in order to do everything you want.

And you must know how to give a real value to what you *want* to do—what the higher part of your being wants to do—for to do what one *likes* to do is not difficult.

*What is concentration?*

It is to bring back all the scattered threads of consciousness to a single point, a single idea. Those who can attain perfect attention succeed in everything they undertake; they will always make a rapid progress. And this kind of concentration can be developed exactly like the muscles; one may follow different systems, different methods of training. Today we know that the most pitiful weakling, for example, can with discipline become as strong as anyone else. One should not have a will which flickers out like a candle.

The will, concentration must be cultivated; it is a question of method, of regular exercise. If you will, you can.

But the thought “What's the use?” must not come in to weaken the will. The idea that one is born with a certain character and can do nothing about it is a stupidity.