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**SUGGESTOPEDIA AND SOME ASPECTS OF  
THE PSYCHOPHYSIOLOGY OF THE  
POTENTIAL ABILITIES (RESERVES) OF  
PERSONALITY**

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Let us first remember that the potential abilities of personality (the reserves) are not built by suggestopedia. They exist independent from it. It is well known that their amazing manifestations were observed by the ancient schools of the occult. Nowadays some of them (regarding saving memory tracks in the brain) are very clearly demonstrated at brain surgeries. They are a very common phenomenon in the practice of psychotherapy and particularly in many hypnotic experiments. It is hardly necessary and possible to mention here the large number of scientific

publications which clearly prove the existence of a large potential of reserves in the brain, in the mind and in the personality.

Suggestopedia is one of the attempts to use some of this sleeping abundance in us. Suggestopedia is a science of the art and the art itself to learn to a certain extent in the “Prometheus zone” of our potential abilities. Each cleverly and consciously organised teaching process relies to a certain degree (albeit little) on the potential abilities of the students and assures their development. It is relatively slow because it is restricted by the social suggestive norm and the belief systems for “can” and “can not”. Suggestopedia however functions with less dependence on those “norms” and “systems” when it is being applied according to high theoretical and practical standards. This enables one to activate the reserves, the potential abilities of the human brain and personality to a certain extent. I do not mean all the reserves, all the potential abilities, but just those which respond to the purposes of suggestopedia.

What are the aims of suggestopedia? In general these aims are to accelerate the learning process by several times, and to make the assimilation of new material easier, less stressful, deeper, more creative, and of longer duration.

Bearing in mind that suggestopedia continues to evolve (as a science and as a method) and that its practical application depends on many socio-psychological factors, one can distinguish between different levels of the concrete aims of suggestopedia. As they will depend on the specific

suggestopedic reserves which can be freed by a well-applied suggestopedia, of greater importance for us would be to name the potential abilities of the personality which it could activate to one extent or another. It has been proven experimentally and practically that suggestopedia frees and uses to a certain extent the following specific basic and accompanying potential abilities of the personality:

I Basic potential abilities (reserves) – directly necessary for the success of the teaching process:

1. Increasing of the volume of the memorised information units for a time unit 100-200 % and more than that which is permissible with the social suggestive norm (exceeding the expectation).
2. Increasing the duration of what has been memorised.
3. Turning of the classical “Ebbinghaus type of curve of forgetting“ into the typical suggestopedical type of “curve of spontaneous recall“ or “of the high start plateau“ with a considerably slower decreasing curve.
4. Increased memory effectiveness – easy involvement of what has been memorised into the intellectual creative process.
5. Increased activity of mental and creative processes.
6. Increased concentration and flexibility of attention.

II Accompanying potential abilities (reserves) – by-product (compulsory):

1. Optimal increased autocontrolled positive emotional tonus in the process of hyperacquisition.

2. Lack of hypertension by the hyperacquisition.
3. Liberation from the fear of learning and hyperlearning.
4. Reduction of the fatigue to absence of fatigue and even an effect of rest after the process of hyperacquisition.
5. Psychotherapy effect on many diseases after the process of hyperacquisition.
6. Strengthening of the body's immune system during and after the process of hyperacquisition.
7. Broadening one's view of life.
8. Disalienation and improving of the abilities to communicate.
9. Improvement of the balanced and harmoniously developed person, widening of interests.
10. Improving, calming and harmonizing of the objective physiological data (EEG, skingalvanic reactions, various forms of sensitivity, motor reactions, associative experiment, blood pressure and pulse) during and after the process of hyperacquisition.
11. Keeping the basic suggestopedic reserves activated (regarding memory, intelligence, thinking, attention) for a long time (months, years) after completing the course, without repeated reinforcement.
12. Holding the multimind, module simplified scheme of personality development, the scheme of the "drawers", suggestopedia increases considerably the integration of the "different personalities" in us, of the different minds, intelligences, consciousnesses, modules and "drawers". Thanks to its multilevel

relaxation-suggestive and structure-holistic associative approach (unlike all clinical conditioning suggestive-dissociating and suggestive-partial approaches) suggestopedia improves the completeness of the communications and the development on the “horizontal line“ (interhemispheric unity of the brain) as well as on the “vertical line“ (cortex-subcortex unity). This is confirmed by the aforementioned complexity of the released and used basic and accompanying (by-product) suggestopedic reserves. Hence the considerable perspective for personality development and greater combination of the wealth of its “separate personalities“ into a unity.

Of particular importance in the releasing of the potential reserves of the brain are: the character of the additional phenomena and the reserves. It is important how pure the “by-product“ is. For example, if the release of some memory “reserves“ is accompanied by fatigue, brainwashing, automatic subordination, loss of creativity, as happens by hypnosis most often, it is in fact only a manipulative procedure, evidence of psychophysiological mechanisms other than the mechanisms we are interested in. And yet the revealed reserves could have positive characteristics of the “by-product“ and at first sight could activate the desired psychophysiological mechanisms. If a certain limit is not observed, however, if the degree of the released reserves for one reason or another goes beyond the permissible maximum, unpleasant complications might later appear in stressful situations. The main criterion for this is the character and the volume of the released accompanying (by-product) reserves. If they decrease more and more, if they acquire the character of negative neurogenic

conditioning, if they become quite rigid, the volume of the material given to be mastered has to be changed immediately. This is why it is absolutely essential that all teachers should be well trained, should have passed an examination and should have acquired a certificate.

On the other hand, the well-applied suggestopedia is an excellent method of psychotherapy. At the same time, through the association and dynamic connection of all the “numerous levels“, suggestopedia is a psychohygienic and psychoprophylactic method. The multiplicity of personality and the large number of activation levels were observed in our experiments as well. This, in hypnosis, we called “level X“: when a certain phenomenon appears only at a certain level of depth and inhibition. Schizophrenic symptoms were appearing spontaneously in this case.

The multiplicity of the functional levels with their personal characteristics starts already at normal perception, as by perceiving only one simple stimulus irritant we summarise in our mind a complete picture. We look at things the same – yet we see things differently. These differently built images are not only with regard to the separate individuals but with respect to the different personalities inside us. At one time in a certain state we see, feel and think one thing; at another time in a different state with no external changes – another.

On the question of the polymorph structure of personality many interesting and valuable articles and monographs on the theme of: “Left and right brain hemisphere“, “Divided consciousness“, “Multiple personality“, “States of consciousness“ have been published.

Suggestopedia posed and started solving these questions mainly from the practical point of view 25 years ago. Phenomenologically and partially theoretically they were posed in science as early as the end of the last century. Pierre Janet offered the dissociation concept in his dissertation in 1889. But long before that in ancient times up to present time, many religions and beliefs speak of taking possession by good or evil spirits. In Christian literature the case is known of sending spirits into pigs which drown in the sea. "My name is Legion" says the devil. The theoretical explanation is irrelevant in this case. The important thing is that the cognition of the polypersonal structure of man has centuries old history. We are interested in the practical side of the question, however: what is the role of this polypersonal structure? Is it relevant only in case of illness or in health as well? Can it be made use of? If in clinical medicine the dissociation of the personality is a symptom of a disease this can be accepted as a "negative reserve". The hardly obvious, mostly unconscious dissociation of the personality in health, if it is transformed into more meaningful integrity, could possibly be of good use. It is accepted in suggestopedia not to absolutise wholeness. One has to consider the structure as well so that one does not produce "amorphous personalities". Wholeness does not exclude the consideration of the elements, but the elements are, always, considered as a part of the whole, the specific whole. "Drawers – yes, but as part of the chest". Separate personalities in one individual – yes, but as a part of the integral personality. If the brain had preferred during centuries of its development to specialize the activities of its left and right hemispheres (which was proven for speech as early as 1860 when the French surgeon and anthropologist Pierre-Paul Broca

proved the lateralisation of those functions) despite the obvious tendency of reactions integrity, it seems nevertheless that one has to consider accordingly the details of the separate levels – but always for the sake of the whole, not in isolation.

The question is to create connections between the separate functional systems, because it is very well known from psychopathology that the absence of a certain level of unity of the separate functional levels of the brain, of the mind and of the personality is at the root of the pathological psychophysiology, of illness. This unity, this connection has to be spontaneous and simultaneous in order to be natural. At the same time it should not be absolute because a slight level of dissociation, of multiplicity and partiality could be a defence mechanism in psychotraumatic situations. Now it becomes clear how complicated the question is of the integrity of personality, of the unity of the mind, of the relation whole-part and of the interhemispheric relations. Each teaching process is successful on one hand if it is in accordance with the physiological regularities of brain activity in acquiring new information, and on the other hand – tendencies in the development of brain activities, of mind, of personality. Hence one of the great responsibilities of each teacher.

One of the psychophysiological characters of the mechanisms for revealing the suggestopedic complex reserves is the spontaneous and dynamic variative psycho-relaxation combined with reinforced informative hits. The variative psycho-relaxation causes a number of functional structures and systems, new personalities, new ways of thinking and reacting and of acquisition. Each level of relaxation is connected with the respected levels

of vigilance, of states of consciousness, of attention, with the state modules and interhemispheric characteristics specific for it. Generally speaking the relaxation itself combined with selective concentration has a good effect on the educational process. It depends, however, which of its numerous levels will be achieved and made use of. Certain information is acquired easier at certain levels and with more difficulty at others. The combination of all acquisitions from more or less optimal levels of vigilance, of psychorelaxation in an integrity, and their involvement “on the surface“ in the normal, usual, most common function level for a certain personality, the separate effects add up to a considerable extent and the result is definitely positive.

The predominant relaxation atmosphere, the pleasant emotions, the games, the harmonic communicativeness, and especially the contacts with selected classic art pieces as well as the joy because of the success in learning strengthen the antineurotic, the educational and the physiological effects. All this is not enough, though – it is necessary to create an adjustment of reserves, to exchange the unconscious or semiconscious belief system for a new one, for new abilities. This is the most complicated part of the suggestopedic work. It is a question of serious theoretical and practical training.

The whole complicated physiological operation in suggestopedia leads to a number of physiological and biochemical activations. They are described by us elsewhere. Here we will recall our interpretation with additional concepts resulting in this report.

First of all we have to stress that the global approach in suggestopedia, the dynamic variative psychorelaxation and the complexity of the enforced incoming information speak clearly for the involvement of the central nervous system at all levels. In view of the indivisible functional unity of the central nervous system with the peripheral and vegetative nervous systems as well as with all biochemical and general somatic functions, it is easy to reach the conclusion for the involvement of all these functions and systems. From a physiological point of view, this is a general activation of the whole personality. The question is which systems are dominating and leading. Suggestopedia activates, for one thing, the connections – between the two hemispheres and between the cortex and subcortex. At the same time the hypothalamus, the limbic system and the reticular formation of the main brain are activated – again in their complicated relations of course.

The hypothalamus regulates the vegetative, endocrine and emotional-instinct functions. Each of its numerous nucleus pairs differentiated in four groups bears one or the other function (parasympathic-sympathic, sleep-awakeness, emotions, instinctive behaviour etc.). In these functions the neuromediators are activated: noradrenaline, acetylcholine, serotonin, prostaglandin.

The limbic system includes subcortex and cortex structures in the front brain. It relates to the vegetative-visceral, affective, instinctive activity, behaviour activity, awakeness-sleep and attention-memory. The cortex structures are the oldest parts of the cortex and include orbit-frontal sections, girus hippocampi, pes hippocampi, hippocampus, girus singuli etc.

In the subcortex structures are included the amygdale nucleus and septum pelucidum. The structures of the limbic system activate or suppress the hypothalamus, which is the final common path of the vegetative and emotional functions.

The reticular formation relates to the clarity of consciousness and the cycles of awakesness-sleep. The biochemical factors here are first of all: acetylcholine, noradrenaline, and serotonin. It seems that the serotonin suppresses the noradrenaline and contributes to the reduction of vigilance to sleep. The same effect is achieved by suppressing the catecholaminergic (noradrenaline) systems.

Because of its antidistress effects suggestopedia has to influence the stress biochemistry – the increased hormonal activity of the front part of the hypophysis, increased release of the adrenocorticotrophic hormone (ACTH) and activation of the diencephal-hypophysical area with increased secretion of the adrenal cortex.

Psychophysiological effects of suggestopedia have been studied so far on psychological and physiological level. They have not been studied on a biochemical level but the conclusions above are subject to general logic. The first studies were published 10-15 years ago. The later ones, which in general confirm and extent the first ones, will hopefully be published shortly. Part of the research was repeated and confirmed by other authors. Some achieved only the tendency of our results without reaching the high level achieved by us. But it is a question of carrying out more complicated experiments which require preliminary training with us.

Some critics appeared as well. They were concerned mainly with the statistics of the experimental material. For instance the monograph of Georgi Lozanov was criticised before it was printed only on the basis of the galleys, where, of course, there were some mistakes. Later, in printing, those mistakes were corrected. It is also reported that the mistakes have been made in the tables by the adding of averages to get new ones. But from the examples mentioned, it becomes clear that the critics do not know the rule to work out the averages with different weight – different number of participants in the separate experiments. Or, separate tables are being looked at without being put into the general context of all complex research. Most often the critics offer their own variations of suggestopedic teaching.

Some criticism is directed towards the name “suggestopedia“. The implementation of suggestion in the teaching practice has been criticised and it has been pointed out that this is a well-known approach in teaching. They simply miss the fact that the term suggestion has not yet been defined precisely. We found 27 definitions in literature – there are probably even more. We separated ourselves from all the other definitions and particularly the ones relating to automatic subordination, conditioning and brainwashing. Our definition exceeded even the bounds of the simple clinical suggestion without hypnosis of any kind. It came closer to the concept of suggestion as a factor to reveal our reserves, our reserve complex, very close to the concept of the suggestion of the classical art and its influential, psychocatharsis and harmonising functions. The suggestopedic practice confirms the reality of this definition.

As for the other forms of suggestion, the clinical type of suggestion used in pedagogy long ago according to some authors, one must say that this question has already been discussed in several places. We will quote here only the most outstanding author in this respect who lived at the end of the last and the beginning of this century. His name is Berillon. He summarised the known facts of suggestion in pedagogy before suggestopedia. He writes about “the implementation of the hypnotical suggestion in pedagogy“, about “treating pathological habits such as onanism, onychophagy, kleptomania, inability to hold urine, character disorders, alcoholism and various intoxications where the lack of will is always a predominant syndrome“.

It is obvious that this is suggestion of a different area and under different circumstances. In such a clinical suggestion of a hypnotical type the reserves mentioned by us which involve the freedom and creative development of the personality can not be released in their complexity. Neither can the psychophysiological regularities of suggestion which we have mentioned be activated in suggestopedia.

Hence always when we operate in the area of suggestopedia we need to know for sure which definition we proceed from, what kind of psychophysiological mechanisms we want to activate and which reserves of the personality we want to release and make use of.