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## **1. Introduction:**

This is the second in the Series of Meditations on Constructive Feelings.

To recap: Luis de Rivera, in his 2017/ 2018 book “Autogenics 3.0 - *The New Way to Mindfulness Meditation*”, introduces two types of Meditation that can follow an Autogenic Sequence. The first of these is Feeling the Feeling Meditation, and the second is Meditation on Constructive Feelings. Luis de Rivera focuses on four constructive feelings / emotions:

- a) Calm
- b) Existence
- c) Zest
- d) Love

In this article, we focus on the feeling of existence.

## **2. Existence – and the concept and awareness of Existence**

We tend to take our existence for granted; yet, once we reflect on the matter, to exist and be conscious is something quite remarkable.

In this Meditative exercise we mindfully focus on existence, our awareness of our own existence, and the existence of others and all things. I have found this Meditation both interesting and illuminating. We will all experience it in somewhat different and unique ways, and that is one of the amazing aspects of existence.

Many things may come to mind. For example, the extra-ordinary fact that we exist at all; that we are conscious: that we can become aware of the breeze on our face, the sound of music, and the smile on a child’s face.

The exact word that we focus on in this meditation is of secondary importance: it is more an inner feeling – resonating within us. It can include perceptions such as the ‘Awareness that I Exist’, Awareness, Being Alive, Being Present, and the ‘miracle of being Conscious’.

I have found de Rivera’s brief exposition on existence – and on this meditation – most helpful and illuminating [de Rivera 2018 pp 134-135<sup>1</sup>].

Existence is such an extraordinary experience that everything else is only a little detail. It is right to pay attention to all the details of life if you wish, but always keep in mind that they are only little details. As happens with calm, there are many words for the feeling of existence. One is “being present,”<sup>2</sup> which is often thought of as an act of will or as a cognitive effort. In fact, it is the natural expression of the feeling of existence. Glimpses of *being* may come spontaneously during somato-sensory meditation, and more frequently during feeling meditation.

de Rivera 2018 p 134

This meditation can help us to reframe our entire outlook on life.

<sup>1</sup> For some, his book may be worth getting just for these two pages!

<sup>2</sup> See, for Example: “Present Moment, Wonderful Moment” [Hanh 1991].

This meditation can also be revealing and transformational even when we are in a very distressing state / circumstances. Let us listen to de Rivera's wisdom again.

After the experience of strong disturbing feelings, if you persist on the [passive-acceptance](#) attitude when the feeling seems unbearable, there is a sudden change to the feeling of existence. Remember that passive-acceptance is not giving any appreciation, in favour or against, to anything that comes to mind. This is easy when banal things or light feelings come, but it is much harder when what comes up are strong feelings of desperation, hopelessness, and the like. Yet, the attitude is the same, and you know well how to keep it. The only trick is to remember that you have to maintain the passive-acceptance attitude..... I discovered the feeling of existence after going through "point zero,"<sup>3</sup>.....

de Rivera 2018 p 134

### **3. Constructive Feeling Meditation focusing on Existence**

We start with an Autogenic Sequence (this can be single sequence, rather than the normal three). Then, after the final "Life Breathes Me" or "It Breathes Me" (in the de Rivera 3.0 model of AT), we focus our attention on existence, and our experience of existence.

We reflect on the meaning of existence for us, in a Mindful way. This will be different for each of us. It might include, for example, the real-isation that:

- the warmth in our body is a continuation of the warmth in our parents, and all their ancestors;
- the water, tea, coffee, or apple juice that we have ever drunk is thanks to countless factors, including clouds and the sun. Without clouds, no rain; without the sun, no plants / trees, no photosynthesis, and no replenishing oxygen;
- the make-up of our body is only possible as the result of heavy elements made in long extinct stars, that are now, for the present moment, part of our body;
- our awareness, our consciousness, is inter-dependent upon many factors; that would not have been possible, in modern terminology, without the "big-bang";
- a sense of wonder, the experience of a lovely sunset, a bird singing, would be impossible without existence;
- we can only be really in touch with our own existence – and that of others – if we are rooted in the present moment.

Such reflections may lead us to a greater awareness of [Inter-Being](#). As we practise this constructive meditation on existence, on being present, we may experience a change in our zest for, and love of, life.

The above are simply some examples and reflections on the exercise.

The point of this short article is to reflect, and then practise this meditation on existence – and be open and accepting to whatever comes to mind, whatever comes to us<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> For a discussion on this "point zero", please see Appendix I.

<sup>4</sup> For example, new ideas and awarenesses may come to light. As indicated, Constructive Feeling Meditations start with a single AT SE sequence. The phrase "Life Breathes me" can itself lead us towards a sense of wonder.....

Luis de Rivera comments:

Meditation on (Constructive) feelings is a general approach. It does not follow a particular therapeutic aim, it is suitable for universal application, and it is appropriate for anyone wishing to expand their awareness about themselves and the universe. Therefore, the feelings selected are “truly constructive feelings”, taught by ancient schools of wisdom....

de Rivera 2018 p 132

slightly modified from de Rivera's original text and his own English rendering

Constructive Feeling meditations can expand our view of the world, and facilitate the realisation of the interrelatedness of all things [Capra & Luigi Luis 2014] and Inter-Being<sup>5</sup> [Hanh 2012]. At the same time, these meditations can lead us to a sense of increasing wonder [see for example F7 in this series]. Such feelings can be catalysed by the initial Autogenic Standard Exercise sequence, and the phrase “Life Breathes Me”.

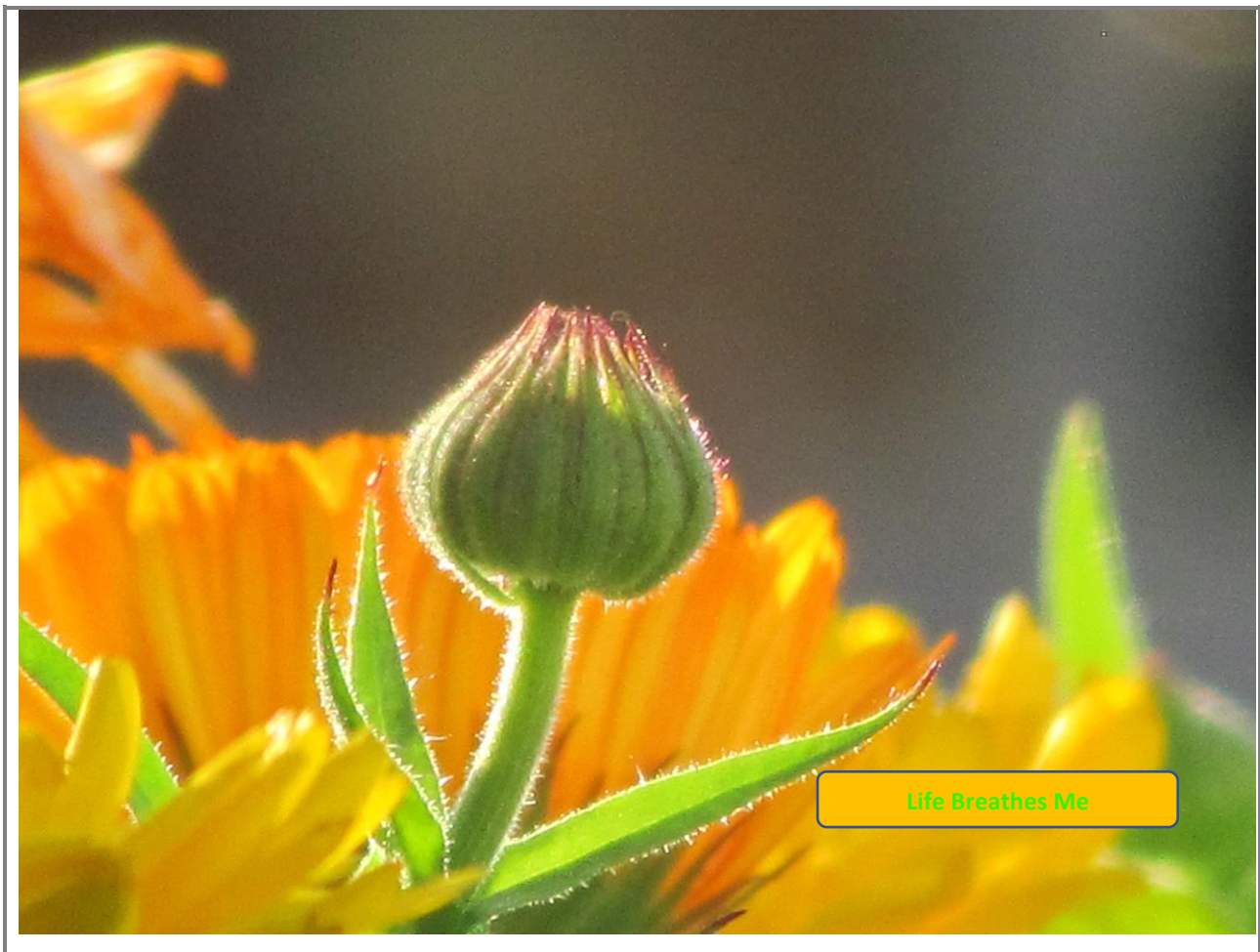


Figure 3  
A Moment in Eternity

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<sup>5</sup> See F6.5 in this series.

#### 4. Appendix I

##### **Feeling Low, the Zero Point, and an Emerging Constructive Feeling on Existence**

###### 4.1: Overview

This type of meditation can be revealing and transformational even when we are in very distressing circumstances. While this is not the envisaged state we would normally be in for this meditation on existence, it may be helpful to realise that a sense of the wonder of existence can come to us through meditation – even when we are starting from a low place.

Let us listen to de Rivera’s wisdom again.

After the experience of strong disturbing feelings, if you persist on the [passive-acceptance](#) attitude when the feeling seems unbearable, there is a sudden change to the feeling of existence. Remember that passive-acceptance is not giving any appreciation, in favour or against, to anything that comes to mind. This is easy when banal things or light feelings come, but it is much harder when what comes up are strong feelings of desperation, hopelessness, and the like. Yet, the attitude is the same, and you know well how to keep it. The only trick is to remember that you have to maintain the passive-acceptance attitude.<sup>6</sup> See my note 82 if you want to find out how I discovered the feeling of existence after going through “point zero,” and avoid the mistake of giving value to suffering.....

de Rivera 2018 p 134

Luis de Rivera then comments on how he “discovered the feeling of existence after going through ‘point zero’ ” by referring the reader to footnote 82 [de Rivera 2018 pp 212-213]. A discussion of this can be found in 4.2 below.

Returning to de Rivera’s above quote, he goes on to say:

Suffering is a feeling like any other and has no particular value whatsoever. Do not believe that the feelings of despair or of impending death are permanent. They are not. When the experience cannot get any worse, and you maintain passive acceptance in this “zero point,” you would discover the great feeling of existence. When everything is lost, you realise that all you have is life and that this is the most valuable thing.....

de Rivera 2018 pp 134-135

###### 4.2: Zero Point and Beyond

So here de Rivera is saying, implying, that when we are feeling really low, if we continue with the meditation on Passive Acceptance ([Autogenic Acceptance](#)), a remarkable new sense, new feeling can emerge. We can depict this pictorially thus.

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<sup>6</sup> See at the end of this quote, which is based on footnote 82 from de Rivera [de Rivera 2018 pp 212-213].

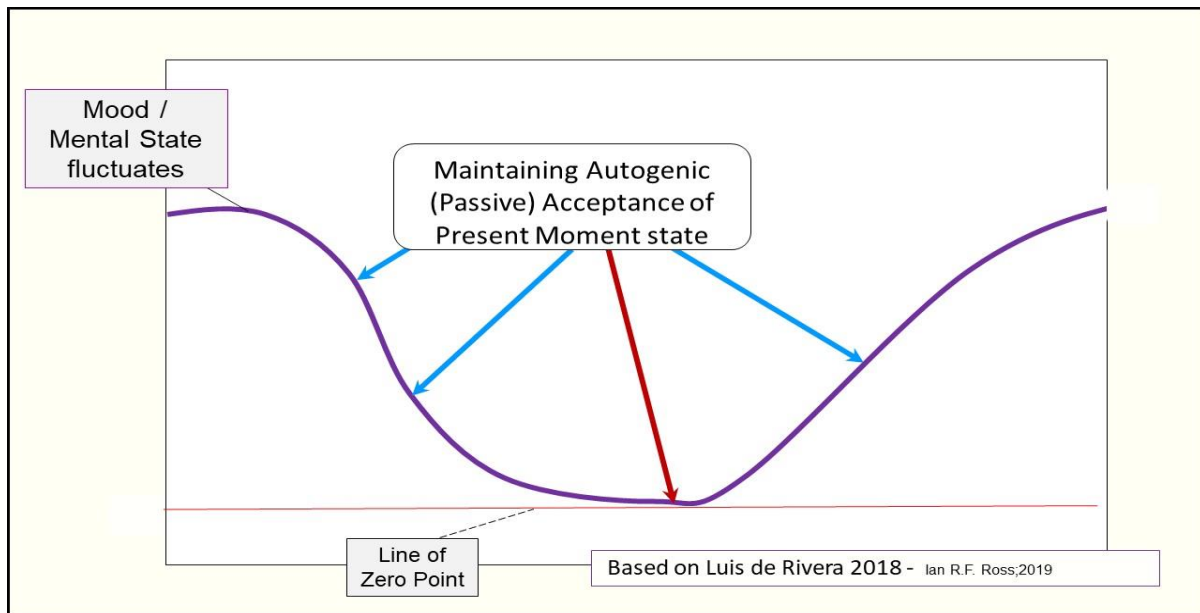


Figure 4.2

## Autogenic Acceptance of Distressing Mood / Affect during Meditation

Comments on Figure 4.2

- 1) The fluctuating mood state is represented by the purple line.
- 2) The diagram illustrates schematically the situation in which our mood is, or is becoming, increasingly low.
- 3) The meditation consists of acknowledging and noticing this mood state, and then, with Autogenic Acceptance, allowing ourselves to experience the feeling / mood in an accepting non-judgemental way.
- 4) Initially, this may mean that we become aware of our mental state going down and down; that is OK; for we are simply noticing, recognising, that this is our present moment state.
- 5) At the back of our mind may be the story of the King and the Ring: "This too will pass."
- 6) As we stay with the feeling, we will eventually get to the lowest possible state of that feeling, described by Luis de Rivera as the Zero Point....
- 7) At this stage, something remarkable happens: we notice that our feeling has bottomed out at this Zero Point: it is no longer going down.
- 8) With this may come the realisation that we exist; yet with a new awareness and sense of wonder....
- 9) ....and with this we find we are no longer sinking, but rather returning to the land of hope and Present [Vivencia](#) Moment: to the miracle of existence. We may even hear the words of Anesa Miller singing in our being:

"And that's how I climbed out  
of the grief that has no end."<sup>7</sup>

This "zero point" meditation is interlinked with the Feeling the Feeling Meditation – see F 5A in this series.

<sup>7</sup> See Appendix II

## 5 Appendix II

At the beginning of Jaak Panksepp's monumental 1998 "Affective Neuroscience – *The Foundations of Human and Animal Emotions*", these words appear:

'I dedicate this book to my lost child, Tina, and my friend Anesa Miller, who supported me when I was in need<sup>8</sup>.'

Below the dedication, this poem appears:

When the world came down upon me  
and the sky closed like a door,  
sounds filled my ears from far away,  
I lay down on the floor.

And no one near could find me,  
and nothing near was mine.  
I sank into the floorboards  
from the voices, soft and kind.

Until one thought got through to me,  
one image filled my mind:  
a pencil and a paper lying  
close to hand, nearby.

Somehow I took them up and traced  
one word and then the next,  
until they linked together in a chain  
that first perplexed the darkness  
in my eyes, then,  
rowing on my paper barque,  
I soon was far away  
and saw the water trail I'd left  
rise up into a chain –  
a ladder reaching high above  
to light and sound and friends.

And that's how I climbed out  
of the grief that has no end.

Anesa Miller: *A Road Beyond Loss*; 1995

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<sup>8</sup> His daughter Tina, with three of her friends, had been killed in a terrible car crash [Panksepp 1998 pp 127-129].



## 6. Glossary

This Glossary overlaps with that of F6.1

<p><b>Autogenic Acceptance</b></p> <p>This phrase, suggested by IR as an outgrowth of Wallnöfer's Autogenic Concentration, is an alternative expression for de Rivera's <a href="#">Passive Acceptance</a> [de Rivera 2018].</p>	<p>An alternative expression for <a href="#">Passive Acceptance</a>.</p> <p>Passive Acceptance is a term that de Rivera uses to distinguish it from the <a href="#">Passive Concentration</a> taught in Autogenic Training (see also <a href="#">Autogenic Concentration</a>) [de Rivera 2018].</p> <p>Passive Acceptance is the suggested mental state we adopt when our Passive Concentration wavers, with perhaps a distressing thought intrusion / memory / emotion. In this situation, we notice, recognise and acknowledge the intrusion, yet we do not get hooked into it.</p> <p>As soon as we recognise the intrusive thought / feeling (Passive Acceptance), we return to the focus of our concentration (e.g. to "Solar Plexus Warm") without judgement (or criticism that our mind has wandered).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ See Passive Acceptance in glossary for a more thorough exposition of the term.</li> </ul> <p>Autogenic Acceptance can also be taken to embrace the acceptance of any and every feeling as it arises: if distressing, we can mentally "name and tame" the feeling [Siegel 2010B]. For example: "Hallow sadness, I see you are back again". "Hallo anger, I see you are arising within me."</p> <p>Here we do not get involved with the emotions arising: rather, we embrace it with Autogenic Acceptance – and we will begin to recognise that it has a beginning, a middle, and an end [see Figure 2 of F 5A article in this series].</p>
<p><b>Autogenic Concentration</b></p>	<p>An alternative term for <a href="#">Passive Concentration</a> used by Wallnöfer (2014).</p>
<p><b>Active Concentration</b></p>	<p>A term frequently used by Schultz and Luthe to indicate a form of concentration when we are focused on striving to get a particular result / solution to a problem; this means that Active Concentration is goal directed.</p> <p>Widespread research indicates that if AT students adopt such a striving, goal-orientated approach to the Autogenic Exercises the results will not be moving towards "neutral or pleasing / relaxing" states [see Luthe 1970 <sup>Volume 4</sup> Table 2 page 16].</p> <p>Cf. the non-striving approach in Autogenic Training, which is generally called <a href="#">Passive Concentration</a>. Wallnöfer (2014) uses the term <a href="#">Autogenic Concentration</a>.</p>
<p><b>Inter-Being /</b></p>	



<p>Inter Being</p> <p>Adapted from Glossary of B 20 on web</p>	<p>A term coined by Thich Nhat Hanh [Hanh 1998 e.g. pp 24-27; 2012 pp 55-61].</p> <div style="border: 1px solid #00aaff; border-radius: 15px; padding: 10px; margin: 10px 0;"> <p>“Interbeing” is a word that is not in the dictionary yet, but if we combine the prefix “inter” with the verb “to be”, we have a new verb, “inter-be”. If we look into this sheet of paper even more deeply, we can see the sunshine in it. If the sunshine is not there, the forest cannot grow. In fact, nothing can grow. And so, we know that the sunshine is also in this sheet of paper. The paper and the sunshine inter-are.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Hanh 2012B pp 55-56]</p> </div> <p>The concept of inter-being is fundamental to a deep realisation of our own existence and mortality. The realisation of the inter-relatedness of all things acts as an anti-dote to the toxic trio. A modern realisation of inter-being can be found in the Systems view of life [Capra &amp; Luisi 2016].</p>
<p>Non-striving</p> <p><i>Adapted from F1 in Series</i></p>	<p>A term often used by AT therapists with regard to an appropriate mental approach to the Standard Exercises. In these, we focus on the part of the body in question (e.g. with the phrase “arms and legs”) and the accompanying adjective (“heavy”) in a non-striving way. That is, we are not trying to make the arm heavy: rather, we are focusing on the arms and legs and noticing how they are, what the live experience in the limbs is at that moment.</p> <p>Any <i>striving</i> or determination to make the arm heavy is counter-productive; it is a little like <i>trying</i> to get to sleep.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Sleep comes to us as a gift of nature; not by trying to get to sleep.</li> <li>○ In the same way, gently focusing on the part of the body related to Autogenic Phrase (e.g. Solar Plexus Warm) facilitates, in time, us getting in touch with, and noticing, the inherent warmth within the tummy.</li> </ul>
<p>Passive Acceptance</p>	<p>A term used by de Rivera to distinguish it from the <a href="#">Passive Concentration</a> taught in Autogenic Training.</p> <p>Passive Acceptance is the suggested mental state we adopt when our Passive Concentration wavers, with perhaps a thought intrusion or a memory or emotion. In this situation, we recognise the intrusion, yet we do not get hooked into it.</p> <p>As soon as we recognise the intrusive thought / feeling (Passive Acceptance), we return to the focus of our concentration (e.g. “Solar Plexus Warm”) without judgement (or criticism that our mind has wandered).</p> <p>Luis de Rivera puts it this way:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “Passive Concentration is fixing your attention on the autogenic focus, without any expectation or demand.</li> <li>○ “Passive Acceptance is, in a way, the opposite of Passive Concentration. Images, memories, and other contents may come to</li> </ul>

<p>Passive Acceptance <i>continued</i></p>	<p>your awareness, but you ignore them, you <i>pass</i> so much that you do not even care to reject them. At the same time, you accept that those elements come to your mind, but do not entertain them....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ “.....as soon as you notice that you are drifting .....return to passive concentration in mental contact and with the autogenic formula. In nautical terms, passive concentration is the anchor that moors you into the somato-sensory experience, while passive acceptance keeps you aware of the currents and winds<sup>9</sup>.”</li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;">de Rivera 2018 pp 148-149</p>
<p>Passive Concentration</p> <p>[From glossary of F1, itself an extract from Ross 2016; based on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Luthe &amp; Schultz 1969 Glossary p 232 and 238]</li> </ul>	<p>A term used by Schultz and Luthe to describe the state of mind in Autogenic Training that will facilitate the <a href="#">psycho-physiological shift</a> [e.g. Luthe and Schultz 1969 page 1]. They distinguished Passive Concentration from <a href="#">Active Concentration</a> with which most people are more familiar – the latter being goal directed concentration that is often associated with striving.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Their research, and that of others, indicated that Active Concentration – (associated with striving) – was associated with relatively poor results in Autogenic (Standard Exercise) Training [e.g.: Luthe 1969 Volume IV pp 11-17].</li> </ul>
<p>Psychophysiological shift</p> <p>Adapted from Glossary of Ross 2010</p>	<p>A term originally used by Schultz (<i>Umschaltung</i> – Schultz 1932; 1991) to describe the psychological and physiological changes that come about unconsciously when we are doing a session of Autogenic Training (Standard Exercises). These changes are associated with activation of the <i>myelinated</i> Para-sympathetic Nervous System [Porges 2011; 2017] and the concomitant rest, repair and recuperation modalities associated with this, and a feeling of inner safety [Porges 2017].</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This psycho-physiological shift “facilitates and mobilises the otherwise inhibited activity of recuperative and self-normalising brain mechanisms” (Luthe &amp; Schultz; 1969; p 1).</li> </ul>
<p>Second Arrow</p>	<p>A term borrowed from Buddhist Psychology, to indicate our tendency as humans to negatively ruminate about an event, thought, or feeling. The initial cause of this is implicitly the first arrow; but this first arrow is not the real problem. The real problem is what we then do, think, feel, or ruminate about.</p> <p>The Second Arrow tends to take us into a downward spiral that (in this sense) is self- inflicted.</p> <p>Epictetus states a similar idea in his famous:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ “Men are not disturbed by things, but the view they take of things.” [Epictetus (55 – c 135 PE) was a Greek Stoic philosopher]</li> </ul> <p>Feeling the Feeling Meditation (see F 5A in this series) can be seen as a skilful means to avoid the pitfalls of such negative ruminations.</p>
<p>Vivencia /</p>	

<sup>9</sup> (by IR) i.e. aware of the thoughts / feelings as passing phenomena that we do not get hooked into. If we get hooked, that is no longer Passive Acceptance, and there is a danger that we may ruminate into a downward (and often negative) spiral (cf. the [Second Arrow](#) in Buddhist Psychology).

<p>Vivencia</p> <p>From glossary of F1 in series</p>	<p>A Spanish term used by Luis de Rivera that does not have an exact English translation [de Rivera 2018]. It is sometimes rendered as “Live Experience” with perhaps added associations of the numinous.</p> <p>Such live experiences are the opposite of left-brain analytical thinking. If we go out in the country at night and look at the starry heavens, or the emerging bud of a tree in spring, then we can have a live experience if we are there in that present moment.</p> <p>The <a href="#">non-striving</a> focused attention of the Standard Exercises in AT allows us to tune into the live-experience of the body at that moment, and in each subsequent moment.</p> <p>Modern urban life, with all its hustles and bustles, may result in us having days on end without vivencia, without being in the present moment. Yet, whatever age we live in, this is also an attitude of mind:</p> <div style="border: 1px solid blue; border-radius: 25px; padding: 20px; margin: 20px auto; width: 80%;"> <p style="text-align: center;">                     What is this life if, full of care,                      We have no time to stand and stare.                       No time to stand beneath the boughs                      And stare as long as sheep or cows.                       No time to see, when woods we pass,                      Where squirrels hide their nuts in                      grass.                       No time to see, in broad daylight,                      Streams full of stars, like skies at night.                       No time to turn at Beauty's glance,                      And watch her feet, how they can                      dance.                       No time to wait till her mouth can                      Enrich that smile her eyes began.                       A poor life this if, full of care,                      We have no time to stand and stare   <span style="display: block; text-align: right;">W. H. Davies</span>                     appearing originally in “Songs of Joy                      and Others”, published in 1911                 </p> </div> <p>🌀 Well-Being / flourishing (partly) depends upon us having daily live experiences.</p>
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**7. Other thematically related articles in this F series on the web:**

F 1	An introduction to Autogenics 3.0 – based on the work of Luis de Rivera
F 3	Basic Principles of Autogenic Training
F 4	Some Consequences of Blocking Feelings – <i>of not allowing ourselves to feel the feeling</i>
F 5A	Feeling the Feeling Meditation I
F 6.1	Constructive Feeling Meditation I: Calm
F 6.2	Constructive Feeling Meditation II: Existence (this article)
F 6.3	Constructive Feeling Meditation III: Zest
F 6.4	Constructive Feeling Meditation: IV: Love and Self-Nurturing (especially in context of low self-esteem)
F 6.5	Constructive Feeling Meditation: V: Inter-Being
F 6.6	Constructive Feeling Meditation: VI: Compassion and Joy (the four immeasurables)
F 7	Meditation on Five Sounds that can Heal the World (after Hanh 2015). The first of these Sounds is the sound of Wonder.

**8. References / sources include:**

Capra, Fritjof; & Luigi Luis, Pier, 2014. <i>The Systems View of Life: A Unifying Vision</i>	ISBN 978-1-107-01136-6
de Rivera, Luis: 2017 <i>Autogenics 3.0: The New Way to Mindfulness Meditation</i> Second Edition 2017	ISBN 978-1548-162054
de Rivera, Luis: 2018 <i>Autogenics 3.0: The New Way to Mindfulness Meditation</i> Second Edition Revised 2018	ISBN 978-1548-162054
Hanh, Thich Nhat: 1993 (1990). <i>Present Moment, Wonderful Moment – Mindfulness Verses for Daily Living</i>	ISBN 0 7126 4737 1
Hanh, Thich Nhat 2012A <i>A Pebble for Your Pocket – Mindful Stories for Children and Grown-ups</i>	ISBN 978-1-935209-45-4
Hanh, Thich Nhat: 2012B <sup>e.g. pp 38-44</sup> <i>The Pocket Thich Nhat Hanh</i> (a wonderful short introduction to Thich Nhat Hanh's perspective)	ISBN 978-1-59030-936-0
Hanh, Thich Nhat, 2015 <i>Silence: the Power of Quiet in a World Full of Noise</i>	ISBN 978-06-222469-9
Hanh, Thich Nhat: 2017 <i>The Other Shore – A New and profound translation of the Heart Sutra with commentaries</i>	ISBN 978-1-941529-14-0
Luthe, Wolfgang; & Schultz, J.H., 1969. <i>Autogenic Therapy: Volume I; Autogenic Methods.</i> [BAS 2001]	ISBN 0-356-22736 -7
Luthe, Wolfgang; 1970. <i>Autogenic Therapy: Volume 4 Autogenic Therapy – Research and Theory</i> [BAS 2001]	ISBN 0-356-22739-1
Miller, Anesa: <i>A Road Beyond Loss</i> ; 1995 Quoted by: Panksepp, Jaak: 1998. <i>Affective Neuroscience: The Foundation of Human and Animal Emotions</i>	ISBN 0-19-509673-8
Porges, Stephen W. 2011. <i>The Polyvagal Theory – Neuro-physiological foundations of Emotions, Attachment, Communication, Self-Regulation.</i>	ISBN 978-0-393-70700-7
Porges, S.W. 2017. <i>The Polyvagal Perspective</i> [on line: <a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1868418/">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1868418/</a> ]	
Porges, Stephen W. 2017. <i>The Pocket Guide to The Polyvagal Theory: The Transformative Power of Feeling Safe</i>	ISBN 978-0-393-70787-8
Ross, Ian R.F. 2010. <i>Autogenic Dynamics – Stress, Affect Regulation and Autogenic Therapy.</i>	ISBN 978-0-9563993-0-4
Siegel, Daniel. 2010B <i>Mindsight - transform your brain with the new science of Kindness</i>	ISBN 978-1-85168-761-9
Schultz, J.H; 1932 / 1987 /1990. <i>Das autogene Training.</i> Georg Thieme Verlag – Stuttgart – New York.	ISBN 3-13-401419-X.

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