



BODILY TOOLS AND MENTAL ATTITUDES

Every act has a goal which must be aimed at with the proper means or tools. If your present goal is to write a letter to a friend, the proper tools to use are letterhead, envelope and pen, a solid table and a suitable source of light. These are the *physical tools*. If the letter is meant to show a firm grasp of the theme and a good measure of warmth and feeling, you will do well to put yourself in the right mood and to be in fair command of memory, logic, language and style. These are the *mental tools*. But even with the best physical and mental tools you may fail at the job of writing if fear intervenes, if you think you are incompetent and feel insecure. This is your *mental attitude*. If the latter is that of self-distrust, it will create self-consciousness and will deprive you of the spontaneity which is needed for precise aiming.

The organs of the body are tools. Heart, lungs, stomach and others are physical tools employed in the service of bodily functions. Thoughts, feelings, impulses and others are mental tools employed in the service of psychological behavior. Whether they will work properly and will aim correctly at their goals will depend on your mental attitude. If the latter is that of self-distrust you will be suspicious of your tools (of digestion, circulation, impulses, feelings, etc.) The greater will be your distrust of the organs, the more disturbed will be their functions. The more their functions will suffer, the more intense will be the symptoms. And all of it will be the direct outcome of your faulty mental attitude of self-distrust.

If, after due examination, I tell a patient that his is a nervous ailment, the implication is that his physical and mental tools are in good condition and that the only thing wrong with him is his mental attitude of self-distrust. In Recovery he is instructed that his warped attitude is caused by a distorted, unrealistic philosophy. To cure a nervous patient means to change his mental attitude, that is, to make him drop his romanticisms and intellectualisms and to substitute a realistic outlook. If this is accomplished, a mental attitude of self-trust is installed, and the physical and mental tools of the body can then aim straight at their goals, without fear, without self-consciousness, without morbid preoccupation.