

It seems eminently possible to the writers that in hierarchically based organisations (which in large degree are structured upon reward, punishment or legitimate power bases) the collaborative model in practice may have degenerated to a manipulative one. Thus, one would recognise it when managers withhold the scope of their intentions as to what changes are thought desirable in their subordinates, encourage subordinates to like them and feel dependent or indebted while giving an impression of openness, reinforce subordinates when they begin to see the problem as the manager conceives of it or implicitly threaten to withdraw patronage if it becomes necessary, and cautiously foster the emergence of group norms supportive of such a perspective. We do not know whether or not such a mutant form of power sharing leadership theory has developed widely, yet the possibility seems real. Should it have materialised in fact then the situation is serious indeed, for now organisational psychology would be lending legitimacy to management practices masquerading as progressive yet in reality being both retrogressive and unpleasant. Once again, almost unnoticed people would have been reduced to the status of objects.

to be continued next month

** This is an alphabetical listing as there is no senior author for this paper. (see next month).*

Anne Dickson

Breaking Out

AUTOMOD is Sargent's brainchild. After a gestation period of twenty years, the concept of automodification was developed and integrated until it emerged at last as Automod Inc. early this year. Since it was launched as part of the human potential movement in the U.S., the Automod network has rapidly expanded and the enthusiasm is spreading.

Tom Sargent answered some questions about Automod's concept, its relevance to human growth and its effective application.

What does Automodification mean? What does the method consist of?

Automodification is behaviour modification with a built-in contradiction. Behaviour modification is a method of changing human behaviour by reinforcement from the outside. Automodification of behaviour is from the individual who modifies his own behaviour. Take a simple behaviour modification model: a child learns that for each correct answer, he will receive a candy from his teacher. The candy is his reward. However, he might also learn that if he continually gives perversely wrong answers, he elicits a much more entertaining response - the teacher is perplexed, annoyed, exasperated. So when satiated with the candy, the child can operate his new reward

system on the teacher. She, on the other hand, has not grasped that the child has changed his reward system and continues to pursue the one line of action that *she* has learned will work and consequently rewards behaviour which she really deems undesirable. The child has learned self or 'automodification of behaviour. AUTOMOD offers a training programme which teaches individuals to interrupt and alter the controls imposed by others reinforcement.

Doesn't this imply that our behaviour is more or less wholly controlled by external stimulation as opposed to an independent act of volition?

Yes, it does have that implication. And this particular principle of behaviour modification is the one which people find most difficult to absorb at a meaningful level, especially the humanistic educators and psychologists. They can intellectually accept the idea of all these manipulative controls but they continue to live and counsel as if they didn't exist. There is a tendency to underestimate the extent and the subtlety of these controls . . . perhaps a tendency to fear them.

How does the concept of AUTOMOD belong in the humanistic movement?

The various branches of the human growth movement have an underlying common denominator - the aim is to enable the individual to reach his full potential in all aspects of his being, and to see that this is done mutually, not by an 'authority'. This requires the removal or at least the reduction of the effect of countless controls from outside which interrupt or remove the freedom of the person. The controlling patterns which he has learned as a child have to be replaced by an alternative behavioural structure. This is where AUTOMOD comes in. In AUTOMOD we train people how to examine and reassess their behaviour in the light of new information and to then learn how to shape his or her own future. The process is truly humanistic as the operator and the subject are one and the same person.

What sort of information does the individual need?

He needs to clarify the connection between one particular piece of behaviour and its external stimulation and to see the interdependency of one on the other. Let's take an example: a father pressures his son into excelling at school. He maintains a large emotional investment in his son's scholastic achievements and glowing prospects. His son, in order to retrieve his sense of mastering his own situation, adopts an anti-work stance and refuses to meet the school's requirements. His father's dismay reinforces his behaviour and he associates his action with the reward of feeling 'free' in opposing his father. If the son could see that his freedom is totally dependent on his father's continued opposition, he would understand that his 'freedom' is quite the reverse. He is kept firmly hooked into his position. What AUTOMOD does is to encourage a reassessment of the position and by building up the son's sense of identity - his ME - he can learn to substitute the reward of feeling 'free' for the reward of clear, intentional behaviour and the enjoyment of celebrating his ME. With practice, this new response can be integrated into his automatic behaviour pattern.

Is it difficult to see how a response which has been learned and reinforced for many years can be replaced by an equally automatic new response. How does this happen?

A sense of identity, the celebration of ME, becomes a positive reinforcement for all new behaviour. A sense of freedom, accomplishment and excitement about the changing behaviour is cultivated. We have found that an individual has maximum freedom from patterned behaviour when he is enjoying a strong sense of self. The individual is encouraged to move to that ME base. This is achieved by identifying the particular states of mind when the individual feels whole and secure and at home with his person. In these states, he is only minimally affected by any outside restimulation. He is persuaded to describe these situations and to precisely label the associated feelings. By constant reiteration, he provides an ever-growing reinforcement of his sense of self.

Have you evidence of how AUTOMOD works?

Yes. The tenets of automodification have been applied for many years in AA and Al-Anon, incorporated into what they describe as a 'selfish' programme. It was during my extensive work in this field that the concept of AUTOMOD began to take shape. There are countless examples of behaviour hooks in the alcoholic's relationships. A frequent pattern is: I drink and you want me to stop. If I give up drinking, you will win and I will lose. Therefore I will keep drinking and I will win. Simultaneously, the alcoholic may desire the concern expressed by the spouse and knows that when the drinking ceases, so will the concern.

In both cases the spouse's investment in the drinking reinforces the undesired behaviour. When the alcoholic uses automodification of behaviour, he will seek to disarm the effect of the spouse's concern. When the spouse uses automodification, she will find a way to focus away from the drinking behaviour in order to reduce the 'pay off'.

Are you claiming that only one person in a relationship need be involved through AUTOMOD for the method to be effective?

Yes, that is one of its advantages. In most patterned relationships, the behaviour of one partner is reinforcing the behaviour of the other and this process slides eventually into complete disintegration. When one person begins to use Automodification on himself (NOT on the other) that reinforcement abruptly ceases. Three things are clear: first, that continuation of the same behaviour will further damage the relationship; secondly, that by changing his behaviour, one person alone can end that reinforcement; thirdly, that there is no guarantee that ending the reinforcement will produce the desired change in the other person. This is unsettling. People will often deliberately opt for a predicted disintegration than cope with the anxiety of an uncertain conclusion.

An alcoholic can be helped through AUTOMOD in two ways. First, he identifies the sober ME and learns to enjoy and constantly validate it. The expansion of the whole ME is substituted for the expressed need for the spouse's concern. He can be taught to

intercept the 'You'll win - I'll lose' response and to change the reward to winning the struggle for *himself*. AUTOMOD is effective. It works for all of us. We are all hooked into positions which involve parent-child/child-parent recordings of some sort.

Are you optimistic about the expansion of AUTOMOD?

Very optimistic. You see, AUTOMOD is unique. It teaches the individual to disengage himself from the controls, not only interpersonal but also the large-scale deliberate manipulation of human life, by advertisers, politicians and others. It gives the individual a method of permanent use. It's been very exciting to see how quickly people have grasped and utilized the AUTOMOD method and to see, simply, how it works.

Anne Dickson, an educator and counsellor from London, is currently visiting in the United States and attending a variety of workshops and training programmes in humanistic education and psychology.

Mark Matthews

Memories of a Meeting

A Workshop on Integrated Sensory Awareness, May 8.

It was a beautiful Saturday morning, the sort of day for being in the countryside. It was ten o'clock, the scheduled time to start, and I was completely alone. Waves of anxiety, rejection and resentment. Was it the right day, the right place, where is everyone?

Chose a spot, relaxed, used alpha level to change mood, achieved calm optimism. Gradually people arrive. Half an hour later, fourteen of us were ready to start. I introduced myself and the theme briefly. Suggest and guide a few exercises. Small groups explore what is common and what is different. Pairs share problems or symptoms which prevent whole attention and involvement.

I introduce conventions for the day and talk of truth, faith, and belief systems. Suggest an exercise to explore stereotypes. The group rejects the suggestion. I wrestle with the contradiction of what is and my plan. Move on to small groups discussing psychic experiences. Follow with magnetic network exercise and a guessing game. The move from fun to tension adding variety but the energy is low.