



Mindfulness, Evolutionary Perception, Evolutionary Actions: Toward An Educational Movement At All Levels

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Abstract: Our overall focus is on presenting the concepts of mindfulness, evolutionary perception and evolutionary actions—coupled with the initial development of an interdisciplinary science of human behavior—as providing the basis for an evolutionary movement at all levels with ever greater power to solve personal and world problems. For this to occur, it is essential to reach not only an academic audience, but also a general audience, and to focus on formal education no less than informal education. We will begin to touch all of these bases by (1) presenting these ideas to the general public, (2) making them available on YouTube, (3) including references to our recently published and available articles, and (4) presenting our ideas to a wide sociological audience. We three writers of this article have been joined by seven others from the sociological community who share our vision along with our actions. We are fully aware of the magnitude of our task, yet the enormous problems of our times call for nothing less than extraordinary aims, despite the difficulties involved. Much of this paper is devoted to presenting the key ideas in our book with its focus on the incredible potential powers of the individual and its interdisciplinary approach to making progress on personal and world problems: *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, 2nd ed., 2024, by Phillips and Savage, with contributions from Andy Plotkin, Neil S. Weiss, Max O. Spitzer, Sergio M. Sanseverino and Ray Porter. We have concluded this paper with a new proverb contrasting with an ancient Japanese proverb (Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare), namely: **MINDFULNESS, EVOLUTIONARY PERCEPTION AND EVOLUTIONARY ACTIONS CAN SOLVE PERSONAL AND WORLD PROBLEMS.**

Keywords: mindfulness, evolutionary perception, evolutionary actions, science of human behavior, bureaucratic way of life, evolutionary way of life, democracy.

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Introduction

Given the existence of mammoth and highly threatening problems throughout society, there is no question in our minds but that a social movement toward solving personal and world problems is required, and the sooner the better.

A Science of Human Behavior as the Basis for a Problem-Solving Social Movement

However, that social movement must be grounded on nothing less than an interdisciplinary science of human behavior in the hands of educators who can teach it at all levels. Further, that education must be informal no less than formal, reaching out to the full range of social media. For example, it must reach Facebook and website audiences as well as those watching television.

Toward Reaching an Academic Audience

One step in these directions is our work—together with Alecea Standlee, Bill Tarman-Ramcheck, Andy Plotkin, Arnold Kraft Sherman, Neil S. Weiss, Ray Porter and Charles Thorpe—toward the development of a new Section of the American Sociological Association, “Paradigmatic Sociology.”

The Section’s focus is on developing a science of human behavior with tools for continuing personal evolution everyone can learn to use. By so doing, we seek to remedy what was missing in the countercultural movement of the 1960s. An initial achievement was a course of study, “Paradigmatic Sociology: Toward an Interdisciplinary Science of Human Behavior.” The syllabus has been published by the American Sociological Association in Trails (<https://asanet.org/article/view/paradigmatic-sociology-toward-an-interdisciplinary>).

Toward Reaching a General Audience

The focus of this paper is on a general rather than an academic audience, where individuals will be able to access, on the internet, the ideas we will present in what will be much like a town hall meeting (go to behavioral-scientists.com several days after each session, and from there to YouTube). Together with Tom Savage and Ray Porter, Phillips had planned to give a four-part seminar at Sarasota’s Selby Library Auditorium on the October 2025 Tuesdays (7th, 14th, 21st and 28th) at 3:30-4:30 P.M. This is the outline of our plan, which had to be cancelled because of a serious medical problem that Phillips had to address:

Oct. 7th (Phillips & Tom Savage): Overview of a new educational movement. Oct. 14 (Phillips & Ray Porter): Our basic problem. Oct. 21 (Phillips & Porter): Solution for the individual. Oct. 28 (Phillips & Porter): Solution for Society. Book given out free: *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, (2024), by Phillips & Savage. Discussion will take up 1/2 our time.

Oct. 14th: Unsolved problems like nuclear warfare, dictatorship, AI & climate change are threatening what is depicted on the cover of the *Creating Life* book: disaster striking the ship of state, with the Titanic crashing into an iceberg. Our basic problem: a formal and informal educational system emphasizing an anti-democratic

bureaucratic way of life—persisting hierarchy, narrow specialization, and personal conformity. Articles published in 2025 will be given out on the 14th and 21st, anticipating sessions.

Oct. 21st: The Development Of The Individual Can Yield The Evolution Of Society. Every single one of us is born with fantastic intellectual, emotional & problem-solving potentials which, when fulfilled, can turn our ship of state away from that iceberg. The seminar is designed to help all participants do so. Our textbook can teach us & others a science of human behavior which integrates knowledge from all the social sciences.

Oct. 28th: If we rate self-image on a scale from 1 to 10, where 10 was achieved by Einstein, Beethoven and Edison, then we can all learn to move toward 10 & then go on to limitless evolution, based on our learning a science of human behavior. Ray Porter, journalist, will present a direction for developing a society built on the Enlightenment dream of a democratic and fulfilling way of life for everyone. Bernie will help to show how we can actually make that vision a reality with mindfulness, evolutionary perception & evolutionary actions.

Human potentials were illustrated by Bernie’s doctoral dissertation and its partial publication, based on interviews with 968 individuals age 60 or over from New York City and Elmira, New York. Interviewees seeing themselves as “middle-aged” versus “old” were far more knowledgeable, happier and social, despite personal hardships. We all can continue to develop our self-images, based on interdisciplinary knowledge, and then go on from there to address personal and world problems.

The centerpiece of our effort to move toward presenting a science of human behavior as a tool for the individual will be the book by Phillips and Savage, *Creating Life Before Death: Before Disaster Strikes the Ship of State*, 2nd ed. (2024).

Since that book appeared, we have developed a detailed guide to its wide-ranging contents to help readers locate its many departures from our present-day highly specialized efforts to understand human behavior and solve our problems. Our three-part focus here parallels that of the book: (a) The fundamental problem within contemporary societies; (b) A direction for solving this problem for the individual; and (c) a direction for solving this problem for society.

Guide to *Creating Life Before Death*

Code:	a	=	The basic problem
	b	=	Toward a solution for the individual
	c	=	Toward a solution for society

Page numbers in the book precede the code.

Examples:	1a.	=	The basic problem illustrated on page 1
	14b.	=	Toward a solution for the individual on page 14
	37c.	=	Toward a solution for society on page 37

1a Our double crisis

3b The further development of the individual yields a solution

4a. Our bureaucratic way of life: hierarchy, specialization, conformity

4b. An evolutionary way of life: questioning authority, developing one's own understanding, beyond narrow specialization

7a Narrow specialization: The 9/11 catastrophes and the Challenger disaster 7a. Eleven accidental movements toward World War III

6a. Narrow specialization: The blind men and the elephant 8a. The Holocaust as an example of bureaucracy

10b. Solution based on Phillips's article, "Sociology's Next Steps?"

10b. The power of the individual: Socrates, St. Luke, Voltaire, Funakoshi, Pogo 11b. Jane Addams and the development of "head," "heart" & "hand"

11c. John Dewey's vision of education in all institutions 12b. We're not limited by IQ

12b Our biological makeup points toward personal evolution

13c. The post-WWII technological revolution in Japan, based on kaizen 13-14b. We're all scientists in everyday life

15-16b. Interaction, vs. narrow specialization, is the nature of the universe

16b Tom's story, "It isn't Mrs. Johnson," illustrates the incredible potential of the individual 16-17b YOU are journeying toward creating life before death

21a. The Doomsday Clock

22a. Tom's suggesting the see-saw metaphor for our way of life

23a. Marx's early study of alienation: physical, personality, biological, social 24a. Tom's outlining the Buddhist monk's story of the closed mind

24-25a. WWI changed novels and film from optimism to pessimism 25a. Gramsci and McQuarrie: cultural domination by the corporate state

25-6a Tom's having experienced the Ferguson story emphasizing conformity

26-27a. Conformity to narrow specialization yields "unanticipated consequences" 27a We've lost the world of orality in much of education

28a. Why good marriages fail

28a. Why corporate execs and politicians lower expectations 28-9a. The Bob Newhart story of lowered expectations

29a. Our failure to learn about ourselves in school 29-30a. Our outward orientation in everyday life

30a. Gurdjieff & Ouspensky on our outward orientation 31a. Ouspensky on the outward orientation of education

31a. Tom's observation of our playing roles in society and losing sight of ourselves 32-3a. Ivan Illich: we're "schooled" by society to conform

33a. Paolo Freire—education emphasizes hierarchy & conformity

33-4a Tom's insight into advertising as yielding trivial choices that substitute for democracy 34a Retirement yields loss of emotional development and problem solving

37s. Tom's use of Alice in Wonderland as metaphors for our bureaucratic way of life 39b. The power of the scientific method

39-40b. Tom's example of the stairway as a metaphor for personal evolution 40c. Polak/Busch on the holistic nature of successful social movements

40-41b. The individual achieving "a sociological imagination," based on C. Wright Mills 41c. Polak/Busch on constructing the future

41-2c. The Brandeis brief as a direction for solving legal problems

42-3c. Brown vs. Board. of Education: Desegregation based on social science knowledge 43a. The general failure of social scientists to enter the mass media

44-5c Gouldner's "reflexive sociology" would help to yield a powerful social science

45c Tom's studies of Buddhism and the Eastern strategy of lowering unrealistic aspirations 45-6c. Hellen Keller and the power of language

46-7c. Gradation and dichotomy in language: Korzybski, Hayakawa, Van Vogt 48-9c. The power of metaphor for understanding and solving problems

49-51b. Tom's illustration of emotional development, using Charles and the Aida opera 51-2b. Walt Whitman's vision of everyone's ultimate worth

52-3c. The Medici Effect and Arthur Freed: Interaction and interdisciplinary knowledge 55b. Check out a person at the library

55-5c. Tom's interdisciplinary occupations saved the wedding on the beach

56c Schumacher on Buddhist economics: develop self, interact, produce goods 57-8. Scientific and linguistic education of workers yields productivity

59c. Tom Brady, Super Bowl 51, and the power of social structure

60c Cracking the Enigma Code: the Medici Effect and power of social structure 60-61b. Maslow on peak experiences

65-6c. Tom's image of the auditorium

67a. Dukkha as a central problem of the human race

68a. Harlan Cleveland and "the revolution of rising expectations"

69a. The Invisible Crisis of Contemporary Society (2007/2016): (1) Gap is increasing,

(2) Hierarchy yields an increasing gap, (3) Equality yields decreasing gap 69a Durkheim: gap is increasing, can yield suicide (Suicide, 1897)

69-70a Joseph Conrad's Lord Jim: the Patna, Muslims, Mecca,

suicide

70-1a. Karen Horney's The Neurotic Personality of Our Time (1937): advertising raises unrealistic expectations and can yield neurosis

71-2a. Georg Simmel: Intellect over emotions and relationships in modern society

72c. Tom's illustrating 19th century optimism, using Edward Bellamy's Looking Backward 72a. Tom's using WWI to exemplify 20th century pessimism (10 million killed, 30 million wounded)

72-3a. Tom's using 1776 play ("Hey, hey, mama, look sharp") to illustrate emotional power 75a. Advertising's fantasy world matches our own fantasies

76a. The failure of radio, tv and the internet to yield profound education 76c. Tom's vision of an evolutionary world

78-9a. Vidich and Bensman; The technique of particularization, the falsification of memory, and the externalization of the self to avoid facing basic problems

80a. "Hookups" rather than emotional relationships illustrate ex on campus 86c The East-West strategy: realism followed by personal development 87c Robert Fuller: Somebodies & Nobodies; Overcoming Rankism

88c. Thomas Pettigrew and LindaTropp: 515 studies, 250,000 respondents: equal-status contact reduces prejudice

88c. Harold Kincaid and Value-Free Science: there is no such thing

92c Susan B. Anthony, Elizabeth Stanton: 19th Amendment giving women the vote

93c Tom's use of Camus on existentialism to broaden our thinking

93c Jon Turner's Laws of Emotions illustrating positive and negative reinforcement 101-2a. Plato's allegory of the cave exemplifying our basic problems

104-5c. Einstein: science without religion is lame; religion without sciences is blind 105-6a. Addiction: a habit subordinating individual development to external habits 111-12a Milgram, Obedience to Authority: 65% conformed to giving 450 volts

113-14a Stanford prison experiment: humiliated prisoners and sadistic guards 114-16ac: Levin experiment: aggression, personal development119-21

119-21c: Gandhi's satyagraha: egalitarian behavior

124-5b: Astrid Cruz: following Jonathan Livingston Seagull

125-6c: Larry Thompson, President of Ringling College (where Tom has a scholarship fund) on children's creativity

129-201c: William Ernest Henley, "Invictus" 143c: Tom's poem, "The Tree of Life"

159-61c: Constructing the future: Fred Polak, Larry Busch 160c: The Leaf: gift to the next generation

155-6: The East-West strategy for personal and world evolution 157c: Turner's laws of emotional energy carried further

159-61c: Constructing the future

Mindfulness, Evolutionary Perception and Evolutionary Actions: Keys to Education

The concepts of "mindfulness," "evolutionary perception" and "evolutionary actions" point to specific ways of making use of the intellectual ("head"), emotional ("heart"), and active ("hand") powers of the individual. The book, Creating Life Before Death, provides us with a more general focus on "head," in its Part 1 (Vision "Head"), Part 2 (Commitment "Heart") and Part 3 (Action "Hand"). As a result, what the book achieves is numerous clear demonstrations of the incredible power of the individual to solve problems by using one's intellectual, emotional and action-oriented powers.

Yet it does not focus on those three particular concepts with their very special ways of accessing our thoughts, emotions and actions. We see those powers clearly demonstrated within the numerous examples in the foregoing section of this paper. This is of great importance at this time in history, given our mammoth and unsolved problems coupled with academia's lack of focus on the powers of the individual.

However, all of these examples point to no more than hints as to just how any individual can succeed in making full use of his or her intellectual, emotional and problem-solving powers. For example, what might one do when others treat one as inferior to themselves? How does one deal with a lifetime of such experiences? And what about the situation where one puts oneself down, and where such behavior has continued for year after year? Granting one might even agree that one has the potential to change such behavior, how does one actually proceed to do so?

This analysis does not in the least take away from the importance of psychiatrists, psychologists, ministers and friends in helping the individual deal with such problems. Our own argument for the importance of the ideas of "mindfulness, evolutionary perception and evolutionary actions" is an idea in addition to the tools people are presently using to solve personal and world problems. Our confidence in knowledge pointing toward the development of a powerful science of human behavior.

Three papers published in 2025 have focused on these three concepts, and they can be accessed on the internet, for they've been published within an open-source journal: the ISAR Journal of arts, Humanities and Social Sciences. They are: (1) Phillips, "The East-West Strategy: Toward Solving Personal and World Problems," 3(8), 1-6; (2); (2) Phillips, "From a Bureaucratic toward an Evolutionary Way of Life," 3(7), 37-44; and Phillips and Savage, "How to Save the World: Developing a Social Movement toward Personal Evolution," 3(6), 90-102. (To access these articles, go to ISARpublisher.com, hit the name of the journal on the left, scroll down to "Archive" in the center, then scroll down to the correct volume and pages, and hit PDF).

We can make use of an ancient Japanese proverb to summarize the nature of mindfulness, evolutionary perception and evolutionary actions: "Vision without action is a daydream; action without vision is a nightmare." However, mindfulness and evolutionary perception can yield a vision, while evolutionary actions can provide the actions fulfilling that vision.

To illustrate mindfulness, it may be easier for one to fall asleep by not thinking about past or future problems or solutions, but rather by focusing on something quite specific that does not invoke such thought, like the sound of one's breathing or the counting of sheep. When driving a car, mindfulness alerts one to momentary awareness of what is ahead of and surrounding one's car, traffic lights, and one's speed, by contrast with talking on a phone or to a passenger. Overall, mindfulness helps one to accomplish what is most important in any given situation, granting that a minority of one's attention can address other things.

As for evolutionary perception, normally we perceive phenomena without thinking of the source of those perceptions, namely, ourselves. This pattern of behavior conforms to the outward orientation of the conformist way of life we've followed since the moment of birth. Evolutionary perception, by contrast, centers on not only the perception of oneself while one is looking outward or listening to external sounds. It includes understanding of oneself as the most evolved being throughout the entire known universe. The result is a positive

reinforcement of oneself, helping to develop one's self-confidence and self-image. And that personal development can continue, yielding ever greater power to solve problems.

It is this combination of mindfulness and evolutionary perception that can set the stage for evolutionary actions, which have to do with solving personal and external problems, including helping to address the biggest ones facing the human race. To repeat what was stated above, Phillips encountered an aspect of this process when writing his doctoral dissertation at Cornell University, based on the analysis of 968 interviews with individuals aged 60 or over from New York City and Elmira, New York. Those who identified themselves as "middle-aged" versus "old" or "elderly" were generally better adjusted, happier, and more social in their daily lives, despite such problems as the death of a spouse or a forced retirement.

As a result, we can coin a new proverb:

MINDFULNESS, EVOLUTIONARY PERCEPTION AND EVOLUTIONARY ACTIONS CAN SOLVE PERSONAL AND WORLD PROBLEMS.

KEY EXAMPLES FROM THE GUIDE TO CREATING LIFE BEFORE DEATH (2025)

PROBLEMS

3-4 (Tom at age 7: bureaucratic way of life)
 7 (9/11 and the Challenger flight)
 8 (The blind men and the elephant)
 11 (Wizard of Oz: before)
 22 (See-saw metaphor)
 30 (Ouspensky: Our outward orientation)
 33-4 (Advertising's trivial choices of products)
 46-47 (Dichotomy: Korzybski, Hayakawa, Van Vogt)
 65-66 (Tom's metaphor of the auditorium)
 69-70 (Lord Jim: isolation vs. interaction)
 80 (Hookups with no emotion)
 101-102 (Plato's allegory of the cave)
 111-112 (The Milgram experiment: hierarchy)
 114-116 (The Levin Experiment: the majority)
 157 (Turner's laws of emotions)

SOLUTIONS

3-4 (Tom at age 7: evolutionary way of life)
 40-41 (Mills's The Sociological Imagination)
 12 (We're not limited by IQ)
 11 (Wizard of Oz: after)
 39-40 (Stairway metaphor)
 159-161 (An inward-outward orientation)
 42-43 (Brown vs. Board of Education)
 46-47 (Gradation: Korzybski, Hayakawa, Van Vogt)
 41-42 (The Brandeis briefs)
 15-16 (Ours is an interactive universe)
 59 (Tom Brady and the Patriots)
 52-53 (The Medici Effect)
 88 (Pettigrew and Tropp: contact theory of prejudice)
 114-116 (The Levin Experiment: a minority)
 157 (Turner's laws of emotions: an evolutionary direction)