



Inner



Source

### 8 ideas

- How Did I Get Here Again?
- Is There A Right Person?
- In a Relationship But Still Alone?
- Forgiving and Self Acceptance?
- What Is Me and What Is Not?
- Alcoholism and Addiction vs True Needs?
- When To Stay - When to get Out
- What Will I Become?

## Idea #1 The Compulsion To Repeat The Past

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*Idea #1 The Compulsion To Repeat The Past  
Destructive Impulses,  
The Will To Power  
and The Pleasure Principle,  
are the underbelly of the repetition compulsion,  
often disrupting our maturation and growth.  
We need to identify repetitive destructive  
patterns and work on them.  
Then we can have  
rewarding relationships.*

## Groundhog Day - The Movie

### Repeating The Same Day Over And Over

Life has a way of repeating itself. And it sure does so in this comedy with a message. Bill Murray is the cold-hearted, cynical weatherman (Bill Conners) stuck with his crew in a small town on Groundhog day. Bill becomes *conscious* that he is reliving the same day over and over, and not leaving the town as he expected. He is puzzled at first, then anxious, and finally despondent and suicidal. He tries to kill himself and discovers that he cannot. He just wakes up the next day at the same time in the same bed and in the same hotel room. He is immortal and cannot escape the repetition that way. He is doomed to repeat this day until he gets it right.

Each day Bill meets the same people who say and do the same thing. They don't remember what happened yesterday, but Bill does. So he has a chance to learn and change.

Andie MacDowell (the news crew producer) turns out to be his

## Groundhog Day - The Movie

reason for opening his heart and getting back on track. On a first “date”, at dinner she reveals,

“Believe it or not I studied 19th century French poetry.

Bill guffaws and says,  
What a waste of time.”

Bill Murray now gets smacked,  
smacked, smacked across his face.

## A Second Chance

The next day, they are in the same restaurant at the same time. Bill remembers the scene from “yesterday, but Andie does not.

Andie repeats what she said the day before.

“Believe it or not I studied 19th century French poetry.”

On this day Bill responds to her in french and in a drippy poetic style. Andie McDowell says with a full rich smile,

“You speak French”.

Progress.

At first it may look like he’s just saying it, and we see the possibility of a developing con artist or worse, a psychopath. But that will not be Bill’s way out of the repetition in this film. The path and the way out is for Bill to *open his heart*, and that’s the only way he can win Andie and the only way he can get out of this town.

## The Story Of Harriet

### Harriet and Jonas

Harriet and Jonas would show up in my office every week, reliably and on time, for over a year. The minute Jonas and I began speaking Harriet would interrupt or redirect the conversation.

For example, if I presented a food combo that I knew Jonas, a very picky eater, would puzzle at, Harriet would let out a screech and go oughhhh!, thereby robbing Jonas of the opportunity of figuring out what he thought of me and my idea and not allowing me the opportunity to interact with Jonas over my puzzling suggestion.

In some of the meetings Harriet would appear to grab onto Jonas attention at the very beginning of the session, rivet her eyes to his and then engage in non-stop banter, without pause or break or any way for a third party to participate in a subdued and easy manner. Harriet and Jonas would often continue on like that for the entire meeting and then leave.

Finally, I assertively called a halt to this pattern. Within, the remaining portion of the session, Harriet remained quiet, or at least took a background role, and allowed Jonas and I to interact, and responded or assisted when asked.

In the very next meeting, one week later, Harriet repeated the same pattern of riveting her attention to Jonas and engaging him in non-stop banter. After a few minutes, I called a halt, reminded Harriet of what she had agreed to last week. She said she remembered and once-again allowed me to talk with Jonas.

This pattern now repeated for several more weeks. Like Groundhog day, Harriet would enter the room with Jonas, rivet her

## The Story Of Harriet

eyes onto his and initiate their reciprocal rapid fire conversation about nothing. I would call a halt and remind Harriet of last weeks agreement, she would then allow Jonas and I to talk.

At some point it felt OK to ask Harriet if she remembered our agreement of last week.

She said, yes.

"Then why do you begin each meeting as if we did not meet the week before and already discuss this?"

"I don't know."

"Is it that you don't agree with my way of structuring the meeting?"

"No."

After several more weeks of this, I asked,

"Do you think you might have a memory problem?"

"I don't know, I might."<sup>1</sup>

### The Harriet Solution (partial)

Harriet was offered a new job at twice her current salary. One of the complaints about her on her previous job was that she did not wait to hear what the person she was talking to was about to say. She filled in and completed their sentences. If she took the new job, this would be noticed immediately and because of the nature of the position, she would probably be asked to leave.

### Harriet's Exercise

I suggested that she attempt an exercise. She was asked to listen and remain *entirely silent* in our meetings, from beginning to end,



no matter how painful it was to not respond and no matter how frustrating it would be to not correct any errors or misinterpretations in the conversation, especially any that I might be getting from Jonas about how she was treating him. If she were asked a question, she could answer, *in one sentence*.

Harriet accepted the challenge. She, like Bill murray, was now conscious and for the time being, motivated. With our history of discussions behind us, Harriet succeeded in the meetings with Jonas and on her new job as well.

Last I heard her ability to remember and to listen is helping her earn the big bucks.

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Alcoholism and Addiction vs True Needs?  
When To Stay - When to get Out  
What Will I Become?

Peeling The Onion

## The Compulsion To Repeat The Past<sup>234</sup>

How Did I Get Here Again? <sup>5</sup>

*The Poems Version Of Idea #1*

Jeff Landau, Ph.D.

### Peeling The Onion

a current situation sets in motion

an acid drip

searching our psychic architecture

looking for crevices to lay upon

the layers of like minded memories

energized cohesively

down to the bottom

to the beginnings

of our life

and before

Here I sit - stand - walk in circles

mind flutter cluttered

thinking to myself

What am I doing here?

How did I get here again?



When I talk about  
How did I get here again?

I'm layering downward through time  
relationships,  
drinking,  
marriage,  
children,  
childhood

When I talk about  
How did I get here again?

I'm talking about

No-way-out-perception

I'm talking about  
having to stop on the way to going somewhere  
and never getting there  
never, never getting there  
over and over and over again

Peeling The Onion

never getting there

How did I get here again?

means never getting there

I can't count the number of places I never got to

and ended up sitting

in a pool of emotional blood

saying to myself

why is this happening?

what is going on?

lacking all understanding of

the causes of things

and my participation in it all

the laws of relationship

and my involvement . . .

How did I get here Again?

Is There A Right Person?

In a Relationship But Still Alone?

Forgiving and Self Acceptance?

What Is Me and What Is Not?

Alcoholism and Addiction vs True Needs?

When To Stay - When to get Out

What Will I Become?

## Part 2

### How Did I Get Here Again?

How Do I Get Off The Wheel  
Without Getting Enlightened?<sup>6</sup>

### The Causes Of Things Can I Learn?

Can I learn to anticipate events?  
play in my mind?

fantasize, imagine, theorize  
anticipate and imagine it all

if this, then that..... but if that, then this .....

How Did I Get Here Again?  
Is There A Right Person?

In a Relationship But Still Alone?

Will I allow myself more than one way

of knowing the world

Forgiving and Self Acceptance?

What is Me and What is Not?

Alcoholism and provide the background for logic dance

When To Stay and When to Get Out

What Will I become?

## The Causes Of Things

### The Gap, The Moment Of Possible Change

If we learn what causes things to happen

we may be able to exert some control

over their reoccurrence

Well, first of all,

it's already a leap in consciousness

to realize that there are causes to things, to events

that there are sequences and consequences . . .

or to be very careful about it

reliable correlations

You know...

if A occurs it is highly likely that B will also occur

OK, so how does that apply to me?

The consciousness that I am immersed in these laws,

these causes of events,

The consciousness that I exist

and that these events apply to me

nourishes my freedom of choice

When we realize that one event causes  
another event to happen  
we can anticipate and imagine  
the gap  
between this moment  
and the imagined moment of the predicted event  
we can imagine our old response and feelings  
and all of the possible new ways we could be  
seeing my future  
changes it<sup>7</sup>  
the gap is our moment of freedom  
free floating  
with awareness of here and there  
This is the beginning  
of how we can get more control  
over our experience of our life and events  
There can be choice in my life  
I can choose.

## The Causes Of Things Am I Defending Against Total Insanity?

from the surge of memories  
lying deep in the unconscious  
memories from childhood,  
love and hate bound and twisted  
murderous rage,  
buried,  
waiting to be released  
bursting the ego bubble  
destroying the structure of my mind

Am I defending against madness?

Should I lie down and free associate.

listen to my dreams  
and make "the unconscious, conscious"?



## Choice, Awareness and Me

So, if you find yourself walking in circles  
saying, “How did I get here again?”  
you now know that you can learn,  
change,  
anticipate,  
protect your sanity,  
and predict and alter your reactions to the same circumstances  
the next time they occur

It all sounds very reasonable, right?  
but know that it takes a long time  
to catch on to the fact that

*you*

are in the same place again  
and that you don't have to be there  
the next time around.

## The Causes Of Things

### Solving a Problem

#### Addendum

When I was an undergraduate psychology student, I worked as an assistant in the experimental psychology lab. I remember discussing a newly discovered phenomenon with another fellow. If you put two rats in a “Skinner box” with a grid floor and apply an electric current, the rats would stand up and attack each other. The discussion centered around the idea that pain in a social context produced reciprocal physical attack on an unlearned basis.

One day, I walked into the lab and saw a cartoon pasted on the wall. One of the rats was standing on the shoulders of the other. Both rats were looking upward in the direction of the experimenter. The rat on the bottom was saying to the rat on top,

“When he goes to pull the switch,  
bite his hand.”

The Causes of Things

## InnerRESOURCES 8 Ideas Map

# InnerRESOURCES 8 Ideas

Focus Points For The Mind, A Map, An Ecosystem Mindset

### Idea #8

#### Self Actualization What I Will become

Higher Order Needs also drive our maturational destiny.  
Love. Truth. Justice. Helping Others.  
Our dreams of who we would like to be.  
These become forces as tangible as bread and water.  
No short-cuts.  
No Emperor's New Clothes.

### Idea #1

#### The Compulsion To Repeat The Past or How Did I Get Here Again?

Entropy, The Will To Power and The Pleasure Principle, are the underbelly of the repetition compulsion, often disrupting our maturation and growth.  
We need to identify repetitive destructive patterns and work on them. Then we can have rewarding relationships.

### Idea #7

#### When To Stay and When To Get Out

When should we give up?  
Give up our individual will and way of doing things.  
When should we "lose ourselves" by surrendering to our relationship, family, and community.  
And when should we simply give up the relationship because we would lose ourselves and gain nothing greater in return.

### Idea #2

#### Is There A Right Person?

Is It Me Or The People I'm Choosing?  
The Problem Of Self, Identity and, interchangeability  
Our drives are constant, repetitive, and indiscriminate. They project fantasies and intimidate others into playing roles in our "body-part object" mental life. Getting beyond the self-absorption "mirror" stage and survival orientation of the drives and choosing and relating to real people is the only chance we have of finding the right person

### Idea #3

#### In A Relationship But Still Alone

Isolated states of mind established to insure the survival of our essential being continues to surround us. With such a wall as part of us, reality itself is tenuous. We find it hard to experience ourselves -or others.  
Reaching out, trusting, and reactivating the growth of our fragile selves must go on -in or out of relationship.

### Idea #4

#### Forgiving and Self Acceptance Breaking Destructive Patterns

The Problem of Anger, Blame and Guilt  
Recognizing that rage can be caused by external circumstances such as the trauma of "the invader" we still need to deal with internal causes-the will to power, self righteous arrogance, rage, love and guilt - powerful emotions that bind us to the past and feed the repetition compulsion.  
Letting Go- Walking Around It.  
Forgiving and Self Acceptance help us move on with our lives.

Choice

### Idea #6

#### Addictions vs Our True Needs

Some experiences reduce our needs.  
Others nourish and help us grow.  
Still others stimulate our need for more experiences, to the point that our survival and growth is ignored - and our life is threatened.

### Idea #5

#### What Is Me and What Is Not Me?

The longing to merge into oneness- to stop the feeling of separateness is one of the forces that drives us into relationships.  
This merger produces both bliss and primitive aggression.  
Like any developmental process, however, the individual self soon proclaims its existence. Boundaries.

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## Exercises and Questions

*At this very moment, are you where you want to be in your life, or are you asking yourself why am I here - again?*

- Are you experiencing No-way-out-perception?
- Are you feeling somewhat hopeless about this?

*Do you think that there are causes to the events in your life?*

- Do things just happen or does your "choice" matter in it all?

*Can you learn?*

- Are you wondering why you are getting into the same place over-and-over again?
- Are you able to identify why this is happening?
- What role are you playing in this repetitive outcome?
- Can you imagine new ways of being the next time you get a chance to do so?
- If not, what might be getting in the way?

*Do you have choice and influence in creating your life*

- Can you think of an example?

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[A Promise To Point You In The Right Direction, Exercises and Questions, March 2008](#)

[Idea #2 Is There A Right Person](#)

[Happy Valentine's Day, Exercises and Questions, February, 2008](#)

[Talking, Communicating, and Knowing](#)

[Empathy, How Does Analysis Cure? Heinz Kohut's view. January, 2008](#)

[Meditation In Action, Captain Videos Ring](#)

[\(and the secret compartment for hiding messages, December, 2007](#)

[Schizophrenia, Alcoholism and Addiction,](#)

[Jeff Landau, Ph.D. Interviews Dr. Hyman Spotnitz](#)

[Merger With Another Phenomenal Ecosystems](#)

[The Stress-Less Program](#)



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Harriet and I were also meeting individually. The discussion about memory also came up when Harriet repeatedly asked for the day and date when she made out a check at the end of the meeting.

<sup>2</sup> In general, there seems to be more awareness of the fact that we tend to repeat the same thing over and over again even though our actions may no longer be rewarded and even though in fact they may be followed by very negative consequences. In alcoholism and the addictions, it is understood that patterns of behavior that initially brought pleasure and relief may now bring nothing but personal suffering. In recent years the Compulsion to Repeat the Past, or as Freud called it, the repetition compulsion, has been a major concept in popular self help 12 step groups. I've thought about it as an initial developmental stage and use it as the first InnerResources Idea.

<sup>3</sup> The Compulsion To Repeat The Past can also point to Freud's Death Instinct, and/or the concept of Entropy or undoing forces (See, A History Of Aggression In Freud: Paul E. Stepansky, N.Y. International Universities Press, 1982; Landau, Jeffrey S, A History Of Aggression In Freud: Paul E. Stepansky, Modern Psychoanalysis, Vol.9, #2, 203-208). Many others have discussed this idea, from Ouspensky to Bill W (Alcoholics Anonymous (1936) 3rd Ed. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, New York City, 1976). The struggle to create life choices in the face of constant undoing forces is what this first idea is about.



<sup>4</sup> The universal-timeless, pre-historical nature of the repetition compulsion is also discussed by the Jungians who show it as depicted by the Uroboros, a serpent biting its own tail (Neuman, E. *The Origins and History of Consciousness*). The Uroboros shows up in cave drawings and pottery from all over the world and is associated with “dissolution”- “undoing” forces, entropy, in the physical universe, and with repetitive self-attack in the spiritual realm (*Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism*, Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche). The Uroboros is also associated with incestuous longings for absorption into the womb mother, or for Freudians, merger and incest with the real mother. Piaget has shown the “circular reflex” to be a very early developmental stage in the history of the individual. Forces of self-destruction and dissolution are in play before life, before consciousness in both the history of the race and the individual. That’s what we start with. In the absence of family support, love and life around us, the predisposing forces underlying the repetition compulsion would leave its mark on our fragile developing psychic architecture and could lead to our untimely death.

<sup>5</sup> Adapted and updated from Poems From InnerRESOURCES 8 Ideas, and the 1987 edition of Let’s Talk: The Relationship Newsletter: The Compulsion To Repeat The Past, Summer, 1987, p4.

<sup>6</sup> The reference here is to the Buddhist “Wheel Of Life”, and our repetitive and fixed excursion from one domain to another, and to the cycle of life, death, and rebirth. The question being asked here is whether we can achieve some measure of freedom in the here and now.

8 Ideas Newsletter, Idea #1 The Compulsion To Repeat The Past,  
Endnotes

<sup>7</sup> This is exemplified nicely in the pop film version of Einstein a la Nicolas Cage in Next, and of course Freud's view of making the unconscious conscious.

## 8 ideas

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