

ness of the mind. They were the new owners of a simple secret which, had they known about it earlier, might have eliminated their need for a doctor.

The windmills and dikes they spoke of so knowingly are a comparison I use to give troubled people an idea of what probably has gone wrong inside them, what they themselves may have done to cause it, and what they can do to correct it.

Almost everyone knows that windmills and dikes are the main types of control which people in The Netherlands use to keep water from flooding their country. But to make sure, I point out that a windmill doesn't just decorate romantic landscapes. It is a form of water pump that also is used on many American farms, especially in the prairie states.

**W**INDMILLS need constant attention and work. You always have to expend energy to keep them in repair. If they break down, their owners may be in serious trouble. That in itself is a worry.

But there is no such strain or anxiety with a dike. Build a dike right the first time and, except for having to inspect it occasionally, your worries about being flooded are over. You can relax and enjoy life, because besides holding back the raging waters the dike permits you to lay out orderly canals. Along those canals, at your command, the waters flow peacefully.

Now apply these two defense systems to your emotions. We all know that, if left uncontrolled like the sea, emotions can swamp us. So our first object is to get them under control. If the kind of control we choose, however, is a flock of windmills, we find ourselves caught up in a frenzy of effort to make sure our defense system doesn't break down. The measure may work, but to keep it working takes a lot out of us in nervous energy. The constant strain makes us so edgy we "could scream." In time it may actually make us sick.

Instead of windmills, therefore, I try to get troubled patients to see the benefit of building permanent dikes for their emotions. They are agreeably surprised when—like the housewife and the teenager—they find that as the dike goes up, quiet canals for draining off emotional surpluses begin to take the place of turbulence. With a little practice, these patients are soon deepening their canals and using them, like people of The Netherlands, to add something positive to their lives.

What happens here is the opposite of what occurs in psychosomatic illness. There you have actual bodily disorders arising from emotional conflicts which the patient buries deep inside himself, either without realizing it or by means of energy-wasting "windmills."

**F**OR A CLOSE-UP of how emotions can hurt us physically, take anger. This is the emotion hardest to deal with in our civilized society. Say that, for the sake of appearances, you choose not to get angry. Unfortunately, the energy that would have become anger doesn't just evaporate. If not discharged in some way, it turns inward. This is so because when you are angry, certain other phenomena occur besides the feeling of anger, such as muscle tension and higher blood pressure. Blood pressure, if kept elevated, thickens artery walls and makes them stay thick. Soon we have chronic hypertension, a key factor in heart attacks.

What can we do to direct our emotions so that they help us instead of hurting us?

The first thing is to accept those emotions with-

out false shame or guilt. You can acquire the ability to do that by reminding yourself that anger, for example, is normal. In that way you will overcome the need to repress your emotions. The simple fact that you are no longer denying they exist will, in turn, enable you to find ways of discharging these feelings and of preserving mental health.

Specifically, there are three constructive ways of discharging your emotions:

1. Play in the right way, and do it regularly.
2. Work in the right way, and don't overdo it.
3. Make friends in the right way, and remember that others, too, have emotional problems for which they may not yet have learned the secret of dikes and canals.

In everyday life, we can keep our emotions from either bottling up to hurt us or running wild to hurt others by making regular, sensible, conscious use of play. At least 90 percent of play is aggressive and involves hitting something: golf, tennis, ping pong, hunting, fishing—you name it. In play

with getting on with the job, when we grow bored with relaxing in the bosom of our family, then work is a curse. We are overdoing it. We are on the brink of trouble—unless we can find a breather for ourselves in athletics or in a totally different, preferably unremunerative, kind of work like mowing the lawn or laying a patio in easy stages.

Women, too, need relief from the frustrations of their day. What wife and mother isn't constantly battling something? Household dirt is an endless frustration. Washing, mending, cooking, and caring for often-quarrelsome children can become a torturous routine.

A family will have only themselves to blame if they do not see to it that Mother gets relief before the "blowup." This may take the form of a golf-club membership, swimming at the shore, or nothing more elaborate than a \$2.50 badminton set for the back yard. The thing that counts is making sure Mother gets time off for play—and then actually plays.

### Emotions and Science

■ This article should not be misinterpreted as suggesting that each of us is his own best physician. Today the average person faced with emotional difficulties has at his command an arsenal of highly trained medical talent to aid and direct his recovery. He should use it. This arsenal includes:

1. **The psychiatrist**, who is a medical doctor with years of specialized training in afflictions of the mind to round out his complete knowledge of the body and its processes;

2. **The psychoanalyst**, also a physician, is a specialist within psychiatry who by encouraging the patient to delve into his past life seeks to bring to light the hidden causes of mental disturbances, and so to effect a lasting cure;

3. **The psychologist**, who is not a medical doctor but whose long studies of mental

function and human motivation enable him to guide normal minds to the fullest development of their capacities, and to aid in the recovery of mental health by those who cannot manage the ordinary tensions of existence unless they get help.

In addition, as physicians, the psychiatrist and psychoanalyst have access to a remarkable new array of medications which make it easier for the person in need of help to cooperate with and benefit from those who are trained to give it.

My sole purpose in recommending the building of dikes and canals to control emotions constructively is a preventive one. For, in the last analysis, mental health begins and ends in the patient himself. It is his to cultivate or to neglect. May these words help to reduce neglect among all who read them.

we work off our feelings of hostility, frustration, and anger by hitting something inanimate instead of a fellow human being.

It doesn't seem to make too much difference whether we channel the outlet for our emotions into play actively or passively. When we get riled up at a ball game and yell, "Kill the ump!" we enjoy the activity more for having done so. The excitement of people watching a boxing match is a classic example of how even spectator sports provide us with orderly canals for draining off excess antagonism.

Work, too, can supply us with healthy channels for discharging emotions if we bear in mind that up to a point, which will be different for everyone, work by its very nature is competitive. We are constantly striving to do a better job than the next fellow and earn more money than we really need because it shows how much more talented and aggressive we are.

Up to a point, work done in that spirit can be healthy. When it becomes an obsession, however, when we resent weekends because they interfere

All of us need to take positive emotional-discharge measures if we hope to achieve anything like true over-all fitness. This means 1) developing and using canals of the right kind of play and work to siphon off the accumulated antagonisms of each day, and 2) providing in that way the "something extra" of improved muscle tone. Combined, these two spell health.

So endowed, each of us is infinitely better equipped to make friends because we have discovered how to resolve the welter of hostilities inside ourselves that interferes with friendship. We can keep friends in spite of the frictions that inevitably arise because we now understand the mechanism behind those frictions and can make allowances for it. We can be better neighbors in spite of the tensions we suffer because we have faced up to the truth about our emotional selves and found it not frightening, not undignified, not shameful, but simply part of being human.

We have faced it, and found it manageable. And from our success we see, to our amazement and delight, that others, too, have taken heart.