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Dear XXX:

Thank you so much for allowing me the privilege of reading and commenting on XXX. The most difficult part of my assignment is deciding which is more impressive: your pioneering work as a student of change and growth, and the breakthrough long-term study that you have created and lovingly developed and followed for close to half a century, or the book you have written about it, which, to my mind, stands as a monument to one of the most impressive lifetime achievements that I have ever seen.

The purpose of this letter is to offer you some thoughts as to taking this manuscript and revising it in such a way that it will meet the expectations of a trade publishing audience. As we have discussed from the outset, the approach that I will propose has a primary obligation to preserve the integrity of the intelligence of the work. There can be no “dumbing down” for the lay reader. Rather, we want to meet the lay reader where he or she is. This person is likely to be an educated, intelligent individual, most likely an adult capable of mature reflection about life. This person may not have the psychological training to handle the terminology of a psychological monograph, but this person does have the intelligence to absorb and reflect upon the ideas to present. So it’s really about translating

your ideas into a method of delivery that again, preserves the integrity of the work while taking into account the needs and expectations of the intelligent reader.

Doug, I'm sure you've already noticed, this is a very long letter. That's because I will be taking you through the entire manuscript, practically page by page, offering you specific suggestions, thoughts, and guidance about how to transform the material into a book appropriate for the trade audience. Before I do so, I'd like to offer you some thoughts about how to make the book in an overall sort of way meet the expectations of such an audience. Let's begin with the question of a defining of terms. I think the reader who goes through the entire manuscript carefully will wonder what exactly you are studying and what guidance you want to offer the reader. For example, there are a number of different terms that are used almost interchangeably for the progressions in people's lives that your study has measured over the decades. These terms are: growth; change, maturity, healthy growth, success; psychological wholeness, and maturing. This may sound like an obvious question, but do you mean the same thing by all of these words? I wonder whether this is the case. So for starters, I would urge you to pick one term to define exactly what the topic of the book is, whether it's healthy growth, maturity, or another choice. Keep in mind that some of these terms aren't all that attractive to readers. For example, "maturity" implies either old age, as in (Modern Maturity) or dullness. Who wants to be "mature"? It sounds like the antithesis of having fun! I think that if I become overly mature, I will become far too straight laced to have a good time. Maybe it's my own immaturity speaking, but I think that's part of the reason why my wife loves me, why my kids love me, and why my friends enjoy me is because I'm not always the most mature guy on the planet. Whenever you use either the term

maturity or maturing, it sounds either like a euphemism for growing old, or for growing boring. So I'm not sure that's exactly the right word.

In other places you use the terms growth, healthy growth, and psychological wholeness, and at one point, success is contrasted with healthy growth, as if they were two distinct things. The problem with growth in and of itself, is that growth isn't always positive. Tumors grow. Crime grows. So I'm not sure that we're talking about the promotion of growth. Healthy growth is probably the most accurate term for the kind of development that the book is studying. So I think your readers would like to see, early on, a specific definition of healthy growth. I think they'd also like to see it in the context of all the various activities that adults normally experience. The ones you mention in the book are finding satisfaction with work, finding intimacy, communication and sex in marriage, striking a satisfactory balance between marriage and work, becoming a parent, and developing a set of ethics. These are the areas that you focus on in the book. I'd like to suggest that you explore more deeply an ancient Greek notion that you touch upon early in the manuscripts, one that unfortunately does not reappear. That is the concept of Arete, which could be understood to be excellence or even psychological excellence. Arete implies that a person is excelling in all areas, in work, in marriage, as a parent, in one's ethical or spiritual life. I'm wondering if you would want to make a case for Arete for the best definition of healthy growth. No one else to date has captured Arete as a trademark for his or her own popular work. So the field is clear for you to become the Arete person! (I'm just trying to get you on Oprah right now!)

There's something noble about the term Arete, of course. It gives people a goal and something to shoot for, a measure against which they can mark their own lives. So I'm

wondering if Arete could become the defining principle for the book. It certainly encompasses all the areas that you talk about. This therefore becomes a book that shows how one individual has made a life study of Arete, what it means, how to achieve it, how people fail at achieving it, and what we can learn from the mistakes of those people.

Let's talk for a moment about the case histories that you present. They certainly dominate the manuscript, and taken together, they constitute the bulk of the book. I've got two very serious concerns about these stories. First, they simply go on too long. The second is that most of the stories are fairly depressing. The individuals depicted in the stories for the most part lead very untidy and often very unhappy lives. Their marriages end in failure, frequently due to the man's inability to communicate with or be intimate with his wife. The men are often dissatisfied with their work, the women with their marriages and home lives, and the children with one or both of their parents. These stories are awfully distressing. Even the story of Tex, who is held out early on as a model of what can go right in a person's life, has that same pattern of dispiritedness, desuetude, and divorce. If you were reading this book, and not the author of it, would you want to spend so much time reading about the lives of people who did not achieve Arete? Or didn't even come close, for the most part? Or came close, only to have death snatch away the prize? I'm really not sure that's the case.

Most of the time, in popular books by psychologists, *Love's Executioner*, or *The Man Who Mistook His Wife For a Hat*, or even *The Art of Loving*, stories about analysands or interview subjects or study subjects are relatively brief. The key thing is what the author makes of all those stories. Here you have a ratio of about 20 paragraphs of story for every paragraph of analysis. Keep in mind that the reader is not really interested in these

individuals. The reader is interested in... the reader! The reader only wants to read about the stories of the case histories *insofar as they demonstrate a path for the reader to achieve a better life*. Once a reader says, “This story doesn’t apply to me,” or “This story is too depressing,” or even simply, “This story is too long,” we’ve lost the reader. And that reader might be a literary agent, or an editor at Simon and Schuster or Random House, or simply even browsing in the bookstore. These are risks that we simply cannot afford to run. No reader wants to be depressed, or bored, or feel that the case histories don’t relate to his or her life. So I would urge you to condense these life histories to no more than a page and a half each – that’s about all the reader needs. Maybe two pages, maybe three, but certainly not 10 to 15 pages. And the analysis section, by contrast, needs to be radically lengthened. It’s just not enough to have a reader essentially wade through 10 or 15 pages of story only to find a few sentences of explanation or analysis, followed by a few pages of further analysis that may or may not really tie in the reader’s life to those stories. So one of the most important things you can do in order to make this book really acceptable to a mainstream audience is to recognize that readers want to see themselves in the characters, in the case histories that are presented, want to admire the people in the case histories, and want to learn lessons other than the lesson of “don’t be like these people!”

The danger of presenting so many lives that were clear disappointments to themselves and their spouses and families, is that the reader might think you take a highly deterministic view of life. The reader might come to the conclusion that you studied people for a half a century, that pretty much all of them were incapable of making anything but the slightest moves out of their misery into something better, that most of them were still

suffering from the same sort of psychological and mental blocks in their sixties that they were in their thirties, and that nothing can be done about this. A major concern about the manuscript in its current form is this: where are the steps to change? What can people do in order to avoid the negative experiences that the case studies present? I know that the answer is in the last few pages. But that's not really how we want to organize this book for the trade audience. Let's take a quick look at the difference between a trade book and a monograph. And forgive me if this is stating the obvious.

In a monograph, the author has to establish his or her credentials first, and then explain how the study was conducted. Both the credentials of the author and the study, have to be described in such a manner as to survive (often fairly brutal peer review). Only when these first two preliminary matters have been handled—the nature of the author and the nature of the experiment the author has conducted—can the author then begin to describe what he or she has learned. The author is limited in a psychological monograph or in any study for other professionals in one's field to observations that can be demonstrated to have come from the study itself, and therefore ought to be able to be replicated by others in the field. Flights of fancy, speculation, ideas that come into the author's head while performing the painstaking work of creating and putting on an experiment – all of these are virtually verboten. The community of one's scientific peers is hardly likely to look with favor upon observations and obiter dicta that are not directly grounded in the research.

The difference between a monograph for other members of the psychological community document, on the one hand, and a trade book, on the other, are similar to the differences between commuting to work at the hospital or laboratory and putting in a 12-

hour day, and, dare I say, enjoying the sunshine in a beautiful Mexican fishing village on vacation! It's that different. In a trade book, the mere fact that a publisher has chosen to publish the book is pretty much all the authority a lay reader needs in order to accept as gospel truth, anything—and I mean *anything*—that the author chooses to say. It doesn't matter that 49 out of 50 of his top colleagues think that the person is an outrageous quack. It doesn't matter that every examining board in the field has discredited the person's work. As long as the book is published, the credentials of the author are automatically found in the mind of the reader. That's very different from the sort of proving of oneself that one has to do in order to have one's study accepted in a scientific sense by one's colleagues and peers.

Additionally, when it comes to the methodology of the study itself, readers don't care! Readers assume that you wouldn't have written a book if you didn't know the stuff was true. Readers just figure that you're the expert, you wouldn't lie to them, because your reputation is on the line, and you're willing to state your truths. And the reader is willing to take on faith that the methodology that you used was appropriate for determining the results that you received. Again, there's no such thing as peer review by lay readers. How many people talked over with their physicians the Atkins diet before they started eating beef and cream in large amounts? How about nobody! Everybody just jumped on the Atkins bandwagon, with whatever results they received. Not always good results. There is no peer review, really, when it comes to trade books. In fact, it's really the opposite—the broader the claim, the wilder the surmise, the more outrageous and shocking the underlying principle of the book, the more likely it is that readers will buy the book in droves! Once again, the Atkins diet is a demonstration of this phenomenon. Atkins says the complete opposite of everything that

every other diet doctor has ever said—eat the cheeseburger. Order the steak. Eat the fat. Enjoy yourself. And so on. Was he right? Is he discredited by most of his peers? Of course! Does that get in the way of publishers publishing his books, or readers buying them in droves? Of course not! His sales, which are in the millions, or even in the tens of millions, back this point up entirely.

I'm not at all suggesting that you use flimsy science or irresponsible conclusions as a means of getting a book deal. Far from it. I'm just simply trying to illustrate the point that the standards are extremely different in the trade book world than they are in the world of academic publishing. The fact that you have a book out gives you all the credibility you need – if you are an author, you are the authority. And we don't need to know much, if anything, about your study, maybe just a little bit, to assure us that you actually did conduct some sort of study. We just want to know what the results are. And we are willing to follow you wherever you want to lead us, because you are the authority. These are the considerably less stringent rules by which the game of trade publishing is played.

What does this mean for our purposes? It means that the lessons that you want to teach the reader – that healthy growth or Arete, can be achieved by following these steps, or cannot be achieved because human nature is so deterministic – that's the heart of your book. The lessons are the heart of your book. Not the methodology. Right now, the manuscript in its current form, devotes a huge amount of time to the methodology and raw data of the study that you have conducted over these last almost 50 years. The trade reader would beg of you to remove from the book 95% of the references to the methodology, and practically all of the raw data. Instead, the reader wants you to lead off with your most striking

observations. You don't have to spend more than a page or so telling us who you are. You don't have to spend more than two or three pages telling us about the study. Instead of the way that the manuscript is currently organized, which is using the methodology of the study as its organizing principle, you get to write your trade book about what you discovered, and not so much about how you came to those discoveries.

That's really the key to the letter. The manuscript often speaks about the effects of women's liberation on society (more about that later). What I'm talking about is *your* liberation from the way you've always had to do things. You've always had to document, document, document. You've always had to explain in specific detail, the methodology, lest your colleagues and peers hammer you for failing to do so. It's a different day now. You're addressing a different audience, and they really want you to eliminate 95% of the information about the methodology.

Let me give you a metaphor for what I'm talking about. Let's say that you are sitting in a Cantina near the hotel, reading this letter over a cold beer. Someone comes along, a man who notices that you look American, and who looks American himself. Let's say he is in his mid-forties. He orders a beer and sits at the adjoining table, and asks you, in a friendly way, what you are reading. You explain that it's a letter about a book that you've written. Naturally, he wants to know what the book is about. You tell him that the book is about whether and how people can achieve healthy growth in their lives.

At this moment, it looks as though an electric charge has passed through his body. He sits up much straighter in his chair. He neglects his beer, his eyes widen. He says, "Boy, do I need to read your book! My wife just left me and I had no idea that she was unhappy.

My kids hate me, and I don't understand why, because I work so hard to take care of them. I work hard at my job, and I've always made good money at it, but it just wears the hell out of me. I thought maybe if I came down to Mexico for a few weeks and just hung out here in this village, maybe I could get my head on straight and figure a few things out. What does your book say?" The purpose of the remainder of this letter is to take you, as I said earlier, virtually page by page through the manuscript to bring out certain points about translating this material into a manner that will be acceptable to a trade audience. But if I had my way, I would have you pretend that this fellow American, sitting next to you in the Cantina, is hanging on your every word, and you tell him (with a tape recorder conveniently whirring unobtrusively) everything that you've ever felt and believed about human nature and the ability of people to change. You might begin by telling him, in what I clearly see as your modest way, that you have essentially pioneered a new way to study long-term change and growth in people, (And that there has never been a study like yours in the entire history of American psychology. You are establishing your bona fides very quickly). You might then tell him that you studied the same hundred or so people by interviewing them and testing them at length every X number of years, a total of five times over approximately 45 years. That's about all the methodology he really wants to know! After all, his hair is on fire! His marriage, his family, his work life are all disasters in his mind, and all he wants to do is to know how to change.

Without referring to any of your notes, or your manuscript, or study results, or anything else, with just simply the knowledge that you carry in your head as you vacation in Mexico, I would urge you to take each aspect of this man's life and talk to him about what

you've learned. He's a smart guy – he probably has a net worth of, say, \$1.5 million not unlike the people in your study. He probably has the same kind of education that they received – maybe he didn't go to Haverford, maybe he went to a state school, a good state school, instead of an expensive private school. But he is a smart, thoughtful, intelligent guy. He doesn't really have any psychological training, and his eyes might glaze over at any psychological jargon introduced into the conversation. So you don't have to “dumb down” to talk with him. You just have to take out some of the psychological specialty words and say things in a manner that this intelligent individual, who clearly craves to know what you know about change, can understand.

I'd probably start with the issue of marriage. I might share with him everything that you learned about what men need to know in order to have a healthy marriage. How do they have to treat their wives? What sort of communication skills do they need? What role does sex play? (As I've learned from your book, sex is practically the ultimate barometer of the health of the marriage!) What do you take seriously in a wife's criticisms of you, and what can you shrug off? How much do you have to toe the line? To what extent is infidelity either inevitable or acceptable? What makes a man in a marriage act in a mature fashion? How can marriage help a person grow up? How can a troubled marriage be a springboard to Arete? And so on. In other words, I would ask you to put together in a relaxed, (friend-to-friend, and not peer-to-peer) sort of way everything you think, know, believe, surmise about marriage. While references that you make to some of the people that you interviewed would be interesting, he probably wouldn't want you to devote 20 minutes of talk to any one individual or couple. He might want you to dip into some or all of the stories about your

subjects, but only insofar as they can show him something he needs to know about how to have a better marriage himself. Remember that as nice a person as you are, he's not interested in you. And as fascinating as your interview subjects have been over the years, he's not even interested in them! All he cares about is himself, and that mirrors the interests of every single trade book reader. Trade book readers are people who are not interested in the betterment of society through the dispersal of knowledge. They're not trying to make the world a better place. They just want to have a better life – more money, a better marriage, a nicer car in the driveway, less obnoxious kids, or whatever. If anything, they would see the psychological study as the drill bit that they have to buy in order to get what they really want – which is a hole.

Okay, you and he have now finished a couple of beers, and you've told him everything that you've learned about marriage. And the beautiful thing is that since there's no "peer review" for conversations in bars in Mexican fishing villages, you are under no obligation to stick to what you've learned in the study. You can also express ideas that came to you in the course of the study that may not be backed up by specific facts that you can point to, or that other researchers could replicate if they were to replicate the study. You are free to tell him anything you want. That's the beauty of writing for a trade audience. You get to be completely liberated.

Now that marriage is handled, let's turn to the issue of work. What have you learned about work, over the half-century of this study that can help this individual in his quest to find a meaningful and satisfactory work life? That's probably a discussion for another couple of beers. And then you'll want to do another chapter – oops, I just gave away the game! I

mean, another discussion over a couple more beers about how to strike a balance between marriage and work. How do you have work satisfaction (don't say vocational satisfaction, because his eyes will glaze over, especially after all this beer!) while at the same time, keeping your marriage together? What about vocations or hobbies? How do you whip those into the mix? As in the discussions about work and marriage, bringing everything that you learned about the balance between work and marriage from the couples that you have studied, but only insofar as it will help your interlocutor have a better balance himself. He doesn't want abstract knowledge. He didn't come to Mexico for that. He isn't buying you beer after beer (isn't that what readers do for us?) in order to hear raw data or long stories about people he hasn't met (and probably wouldn't care to, based on the hash they have made of their own lives!). He just wants to know what you know that can help him create a better balance between work and marriage.

Now you might broach the subject with him about counseling. What are his thoughts about counseling? He probably has the same sort of attitude about therapists that so many Americans do – that they're crazier than the patients! This might be a great time, as the sun sets and the two of you order some dinner, to talk about how therapy really does change lives. How he can benefit from therapy. How the right counselor can help him cut through the problems in his life and help him develop a much happier and more successful approach to life. So there might be an entire discussion about the question of counseling, and that would be a chapter in the newly reorganized version of this book.

Ethics – the development of an intrinsic spiritual system – turns out to have been extremely important in the drive for Arete—at least that's what I learned in my reading of

your manuscript. So perhaps this would be a great time to have a chapter—that is to say a discussion over dessert, with our new friend, about the importance of developing an ethical code, and about the limitations of religion. I do not get the sense from the book that the author of this book is an enormous fan of organized religion. I don't know if I'm reading too much into what I see in the pages, but I don't see a lot of admiration for organized religion. Is this strictly your own opinion, or is it buttressed by the experience of some, many, or even all of the participants in the study that you have made? What good, if any, is religion, and how does it relate to the development of ethics by which to live? Again, how does having an internal compass help a person in the path toward Arete or successful, healthy growth?

The sun is set, and maybe you're sticking to beers, or maybe just ordered a pitcher or two of margaritas. In other words, you guys are settling in for a long night of conversation. That's fine with me, because we now have the fascinating topic of androgyny to discuss. Maybe I'm reading too much into this, but I get the sense from your manuscript that in addition to men being men and women being women, there are also traits that are especially masculine or feminine. The sense I have from your book is that men can harbor, feminine traits and women masculine traits, and that this is actually a good thing. In other words, the ideal, healthy, balanced individual is someone who experiences life from both sides of the gender divide. In other words, the road to Arete runs through androgyny. So you may want to make the sparkling claim to your fascinated listener that androgynous people – men and women who have a full complement of masculine and feminine traits – are the ones who experience and enjoy the healthiest growth. (Or did I misinterpret what I read in the book?)

I think your concept of androgyny is really fascinating, and it deserves a much greater treatment than it currently receives in the book. We all know that women become a bit more masculine as they age, due to the cessation of estrogen manufacture, and men become more feminine as a result of the diminishment of their testosterone development. What you're saying is something even more powerful – this is a good thing, and that if men and women who would develop their opposite sex traits earlier in life, without waiting for the testosterone or estrogen to dry up, they'd be happier, healthier people, and that much closer to achieving Arete. So I'd like to see you develop a whole lot of material about androgyny, simply by talking it through with your new friend in the bar.

A couple of pitchers of margaritas later, he might confess to you that what he's going through is nothing more than a midlife crisis. At that, you pounce. "There's no such thing as a midlife crisis," you explain, and this whole business about "passages" or clearly defined "stages" is total hogwash. Let's face it – if you work in the business of people with eating disorders, you wouldn't hesitate to tell them that the Atkins diet is dangerous, misleading, and lethal. So here's the time for you to take on with equal abandon those people who are propagating ideas that your studies conclusively prove are wrong! I'm getting here to the subject of the myths at the very end of the book. Specifically, the myths of the midlife crisis.

Actually be a really great title for your book – "The Myth of the Midlife Crisis," since everybody in the world believes that these things are automatic, and you are coming along, and saying that you've got the data that proves that there's no such thing. At any rate, this would be a great time for you to expand upon the myths that you mention, which really would be wonderful marketing hooks for your book.

Then you might do another chapter about what Arete looks like in its entirety – what does the emotionally healthy person, who has achieved healthy growth or Arete, look like? What does his or her life look like? Paint us a picture of what our lives can be like. That’s the way to a book. So you would be interweaving stories from all the various interviews in each chapter as appropriate. Just keep in mind that fellow ambling into the bar whose life is in such disarray, who really needs the guidance that you can offer, because you are the world’s leading authority on the subject both the ability of the adults to change and grow, and you cannot go wrong.

Let’s leave behind our new and revitalized compatriot, so that he can catch a quick flight back to the States and get his merits, family, and work back on track with the ideas that you have shared with him. I just want to touch upon a few different points before we get into the remainder of the letter, where we will go page by page. In no particular order, they are as follows:

1 – There are plain just too many surveys and different types of tests and studies. I’m wondering if you can present for the reader early in the book – either in the first or no later than the second chapter, the best study that you can offer someone who has a limited amount of time, in order to analyze exactly where he or she is in terms of healthy growth. We’ll get more deeply into this as we go page by page, and I will point out the places where there are simply too many surveys battling for space in the reader’s mind. But the main thing is, let’s just focus on those that will make the biggest difference.

2 – I would urge you to eliminate most references to other people’s works, and also to your own other books. Unless we really need to know who Vaillant or Fromm is, or what

they said, I would omit them altogether. Again, remember that you are not writing a monograph in which you have to build a case strictly on the results of other people's work. Here, you can just go right to the heart of the issue, which is *how you feel* about the issues you're talking about. As for your own books, it's somewhat immodest to refer repeatedly to those titles, unless they were already major bestsellers that the reader should be expected to have read already.

3 – Cut down on the amount of dialogue in the stories. Obviously I want you to cut down considerably on the size of the stories, but only report dialogue when it is really juicy, revelatory of character or conflict. I'll give you examples as we go through the manuscript.

4 – Despite the fact that I am using a number system here, try to avoid using paragraphs that begin First, Second, Third, Fourth, and so on. It's a little too didactic for the market you're trying to reach.

5 – The study begins with men, and women only are interviewed, as I understand it, in the fourth and fifth waves. So why does Barbara lead off? She's a woman, and something of a depressing story at that. I'm not sure she's the most inviting person with which to begin the book. I suppose that if you really wanted to keep things very, very simple, without doing a whole lot of new writing, I would simply reverse the entire order all the chapters. Put your last chapter first, your next to last chapter second, and so on, so that you are starting with your conclusions, and only then getting into the stories. I would save Barbara's story for the last possible moment, or better yet, just dip into it as necessary to buttress the points, because there's really not much that's appealing about the way her life turns out. If you are reading the book instead of writing it, or if you had to sit next to her on a plane, would you

really want to hear her life story in depth? (I pray that she isn't someone very close to you as I make these potentially insulting remarks!) I don't mean to insult anybody; I'm just questioning the sense of starting with stories about a person who is neither part of the primary group of individuals you studied—men—and one whose life is so sad.

6 – There is too much uncertainty. There are too many times when we are told to make what we want to of evidence, or that the tests that have been conducted do not offer accurate or empirical evidence. I will point out for you later in this letter every single case in which these things happen. They all have to be rooted out mercilessly. First of all, the reader is not capable of making analyses of psychological raw data – that's the job of a professional, and that's why the reader is reading the book. Second, you don't want to ever talk about things that are in doubt. Stick to what your study actually proves, and toss out of the book any references to places where the research falters. It's better to inculcate confidence in the reader than inject a note of doubt, which could (unintelligible...) the entire edifice.

7 – Be careful about the way you portray yourself relating to the women in the story. There are just a few too many hugs and a little too much fascination with some of the women! You'll see what I mean.

8 – The advice at the end of the book is basically parenting advice. Are you suggesting that the current generation of adults is doomed, and the best we can do is teach our children how to achieve healthy growth? I'm not really sure, at the end of the day, as to how you come down on whether people can trigger healthy growth in themselves. Or are you very deterministic about human nature – we are what we are, and we will be wherever nature and life's events take us? Or do we get a chance to really grow?

9 – The ending is really flat. This ought to be your place to have a big finale, summarizing for the reader everything you’ve learned in a lifetime of living and studying your fellow human beings. To just drop off each chapter, and certainly the end of the book, with a fairly flat recital of guidelines, search points, is to fail to live up to the expectations of the reader, which is that you are going to take us on an exciting journey, and that you are going to maintain your own level of excitement about it throughout. In other words, don’t turn your back on the lecture hall a minute before the bell rings.

Okay, those are a lot of points to digest. Let’s now turn to the manuscript itself, and see how these points, and others, evidence themselves.

Doug, I’d like to take you now page by page through the manuscript. I’ll be referring to specific sentences and paragraphs in the following manner: 1 1 1 means page one, paragraph one, line one of that paragraph. I will be counting from the top of the page, regardless of whether the paragraph begins at that page or continues from the previous page. My purpose is to make sure that you know exactly to what I am referring. So let’s jump right in.

PREFACE

The reality of prefaces, forewords, and introductions in the trade publishing world is that no one reads them. You may want to put anything of serious importance to the reader into a chapter one, because it’s safe to assume that the trade reader has been trained to skip all prefatory material and jump right to page one. I don’t know why this is the case, but I know that it is almost a universal fact. Anything of importance might be overlooked in a

preface, foreword or introduction and for that reason I strongly advocate taking from the preface anything of great value and putting it into an appropriate place in the manuscript.

2 2 1 – This seems like a somewhat gratuitous attack against Graham. He is a businessman, certainly a well-known one due to his relationship with Oprah, but he isn't really an acclaimed expert on psychology, as I understand it. I'm not sure that beginning with the remark about Graham serves the book well. Graham is something of a hero to millions of intelligent people in this country for the simple reason that he is "man enough" for the most powerful woman in the entertainment world, Oprah Winfrey. So I'm not sure what is served by setting up this book, or positioning the author as someone who is more able and adept to offer psychological insights than a highly prominent businessman, whose business it is not to do likewise. In other words, why risk alienating the reader by appearing to beat up on Graham, whom the reader tends to like?

2 2 4 – Whose growth was blocked – if someone said, "Let's go to a party tonight! There are going to be a lot of people there whose growth is blocked, and whose marriages are stale and boring." Would you want to go? Probably not. This is an illustration of how the reader will react to the characterizations offered.

3 3 1 – Why is Kelly's position so important? I understand that there is the synchronicity of his speech in the beginning of your work. But what does that mean to the reader? Why should the reader care what Kelly said half a century ago?

4 2 11 – Here, buried treasure--the book should begin with principles, or the principles should arise early on. Otherwise, the reader has to go too far to get what he or she needs. That, in a nutshell, is the difference between a trade book and a psychological

monograph. In a monograph, you can't make sweeping assertions until you have first provided the footwork. Trade publishing is exactly the opposite. Establish your bona fides generally with a paragraph or two about your life work, and then show the reader exactly the breakthroughs that you are offering, as we had discussed earlier.

4 3 1 – Barbara strikes me as a choice difficult to explain. The survey is primarily about men, and only secondarily about the women in their lives. Indeed, women were not even interviewed until the second or third wave, and they might never have been interviewed had there not been that experience of the woman listening at the door. So if we are primarily studying men over this length of time period, why are we starting with a woman? Especially with a woman whose story, while provocative of empathy, is not exactly the role model for how the reader wants to live his or her life.

5 1 1 – I'm not sure that the expression "Why not?" carries enough impact in print. In a psychologist's office, I'm sure it's the exact right tone to take. It's non-threatening, it's friendly, it's warm. In print, though, it comes off slightly differently. It almost asks the reader to offer you reasons why he or she should not rank the causes. This phrase appears a few times throughout the book, and I'm not sure it really is the best way to reach a reader in print and have him or her do what you want.

5 1 2 – Your own growth for your age—I'm not exactly sure that this is a clear expression—I'm not sure I understand what is meant here. I'm 45—what sort of growth for my age should I be examining? I'm sure the reader would ask the same question.

5 3 6 – Questionnaire – I would urge you to move the questionnaire up to a much earlier point in the book. It ought to come no later than the second chapter. First establish in

chapter one what your breakthroughs are, what the book will teach, what the book will offer, and then, either at the end of Chapter one or at the latest in the beginning of Chapter two, offer your questionnaire. This will give the readers a baseline for understanding themselves in relation to the material that you are presenting them.

6 14-5 – Fatherhood is just simply too important to bury at the end of a story that only partially touches on fatherhood. Since fatherhood is such an important aspect of or engine for growth, it ought to get its own chapter.

6 3 4 – The term, “Women’s Liberation Movement” is somewhat dated by now; more often, it is referred to the Feminist Movement. This is a very important point, because even that term, Women’s Liberation itself has an antiquarian and dare I say, chauvinist feel to it. To speak of feminism is to speak on the importance of a woman’s right to choose, and the other important rights women have won over the last 30 years. To speak of, “Women’s Liberation” is almost to cast doubt on the importance of these breakthroughs and of the movement itself. Certainly, few women under 40 would think to refer to the feminist movement by the earlier term. We don’t want to seem outmoded in our thinking, especially to younger women readers.

6 1 2 – Smothering Jewish parents – Jews by a lot of books and you happen to be employing a Jewish writing coach! I’m wondering if such a phrase might cause Jews to cringe. The fact is that many Jewish mothers are indeed smothering, but the same could be said of many other ethnic groups. I’m wondering whether Jews might feel somewhat looked down upon or singled out. I don’t think the problem is that the parents are Jewish; the

problem is the smothering nature of the relationship. It almost seems like a gratuitous anti-Jewish remark.

7 1 3 – Modern Icarus – beautiful phrase.

7 3 2 – Est – this may seem hard to believe, but I think no more than one in 10 Americans under the age of 40 could tell you what Est was. Younger readers are familiar with the Forum, which you accurately identify as an outgrowth of Est. Est was so controversial that the kind words you say about it, that it was dedicated to empowering people to assume responsibility for their own growth, while very likely true, is likely to be quite controversial. Some people look back with great fondness at Est for the way it transformed their lives. Others think of it as a cult-like organization that would not let people leave a seminar to go to the bathroom. While one points of view may have more validity than the other, I'm not sure that unabashed praise of Est, especially so early in the book, will go unchallenged by readers who lived through the '70s. It's amazing how one assertion can cause the reader to have a conversation with the book that the author never intended. We don't want to go off mission for the sake of making a case, even for something that helped so many people as Est did.

7 3 5 – Gayness – is this an acceptable word? A question for Richard Lederer!

7 4 1 – Wavering and conflictual marriage and unfulfilling sexual lives through 42 years – as Walter Cronkite would have said, that's the way it was. But is that something that will entice a reader? Would you, if you were not a researcher in this area, want to hear about 42 years of unfulfilling sex?

8 1 3 – As Yogi Berra might have asked, “Can’t anybody here play this game?” Joe and Julie – discontented and frustrated – are not exactly role models for mature growth. Again, how much pain is a reader willing to subject himself or herself to in order to learn how to grow?

8 5 2 – Twenty principles – now we’re talking! That’s what I call buried treasure! These 20 principles ought to be in the first chapter of the book, or very soon thereafter.

8 5 4 – Why not? – if we ask the reader why not, the reader is likely to give us a reason why not!

11 5 1 – Silently tolerated – bravo! Everybody loves it when the author makes his or her spouse a hero!

11 3 1 – Only its failures married – brilliant evocation of a different time and place in a minimum number of words. Perfect writing.

12 1 1 – We never want to change the name of a character as we report that character in a book. Instead of saying, Barbara and then Barb, we need to keep it consistently one or the other.

15 3 6 – Like a rubber band and stock market bubble – you don’t want to mix metaphors in a sentence.

15 4 1 – This sounds a little too self-congratulatory. This goes back to the issue of how we want to present the author in a book like this. The achievement is what it’s all about; the author wants to be somewhat self-effacing about the greatness he has brought into the world.

15 5 3 – Relationship.

16 1 10 – Round up – we only want to quote the people when their words express something more piquantly than a narrator could. In fiction, the only two proper uses for dialogue are to convey conflict and character. Otherwise, in fiction, we summarize, instead of spell out all the conflict that does not have dialogue or drama in it. I would urge the same thing here. We only want to have characters speak in their own words when they say something better than we, as the narrator, could say it.

16 2 3 – You mentioned that several objective standards measure her success – but what are those standards? Money? Prestige? Awards? We want to know.

16 3 1 – This is a fragment, and with the several negatives in it, a fairly hard one to understand. I think this deserves a second look.

16 4 2 – It's not really fair to tell the reader that you've described a character in a different book if the reader is not likely to have read about that character. *Lives of Hope*, I presume, was written for an audience of psychologists and not a trade audience. If the reader has not really had access to that other character, why make the reader feel bad for not having encountered Jim before?

17 5 1 – "I felt Bob's irritation." I would take this out. It makes it sound as though you are siding too much with Bob against Jim. That would violate the expectation of the reader, that a psychologist would keep his counter-transference or other emotions to himself.

18 1 – This paragraph indicates that Jim is a hard-working and accomplished man. I think the reader's attitudes towards both Bob and the narrator would be to get off Jim's

back! Okay, so the guy isn't perfect at home. He does everything else in his life so well – why make a federal case over such trivia?

18 2 3 – But not the children foremost: again, a fragment that ought to be a full sentence.

18 3 6 – Lack of intimacy – this is something that readers are already aware of. Everybody knows that lack of intimacy is a major contributing factor to a marriage. In a trade book, we've really got to tell the readers things that they might not otherwise have ever known.

19 1 – I love this paragraph – everything about it is great. I love the fact that you are explaining how you are testing for emotional growth. This is wonderful.

19 2 – We just made too big a leap. We were talking about the testing procedure, and so we would expect to hear more about testing in the next paragraph. I think we've come back to Bob and Jim too soon.

19 27-9 – Cultural permissiveness – that's certainly true for the last 10 years, as the study goes back to the 1950s. Are you seeing a changing openness over the decades?

21 4 – Consciousness-raising and survived it – this gives the impression to the reader that the women's liberation movement met with very little favor in the mind of the author. I am no fan of political correctness, but few readers would fail to take umbrage at criticism of a movement that just about everyone believes has accomplished some important things for all women.

(23 5?) – This is the test that the reader ought to be taking. Again, it's the difference between presenting a study to other members in one's field, and essentially taking on a

reader as a client through the vehicle of the book. The reader wants to go through the same process as your subjects went through. Anything else would be like the difference between reading about chocolate pie and eating chocolate pie. Your readers want to taste chocolate pie for themselves.

21 2 – Don't tell anybody that anything was tedious! That should be our little secret.

21 3 5 – At the end of the chapter – again, this goes to my concern about the ordering of material in the book. We just don't want to make the reader have to wait that long to get vital information.

22 4 3 – Rorschach inkblots – I'm sure your readers aren't aware that these tests are still considered useful and effective. They've been the subject of so many nightclub jokes through the decades that readers might wonder whether they really have any validity. I think you want to make a case for how they work, and perhaps even include some in the book, if they were an important part of the methodology of the survey. Again, we are seeking to replicate for the reader the experience of going through at least one wave of the survey that you performed.

23 2 1 – Personality trait survey – yikes! Just how many ways were these people tested? It might seem like a little bit of overkill – two to three hour interviews, inkblot tests, 20 questions, and now 80 traits – is it possible to slim this test taking down to an amount that a reader of a trade book would be willing to undergo?

23 4 3 – Medals – for what?

24 1-4 – These first four short paragraphs at the top of page 24 ending with the words “medical needs” – does this really serve the reader? This has a feel of raw data as opposed to textured analysis. I’m just not sure why it’s necessary or helpful.

25 2 2 – You trekked 10 times in Nepal? Wow! What an extraordinary thing to do! That’s something I would love to do, and I think it makes you even more intriguing in the mind of the reader. I think the more such information about yourself that you can provide, the better. It makes you much more worldly and experienced in the mind of the reader than the stereotypical picture of the psychologist, who has spent endless hours in library (catalogues?), but has never experienced nearly as much of the real world as they have.

25 3 – Et seq. – same point as before – why do we have all this dialogue? It’s not extremely dramatic and it could easily be summarized.

25 last line – 26 1-4 – I think the reader will feel awfully resentful to have waded through such a long story only to come away with pithy and important, but yet all too brief analyses of that story. Right now, the ratio of story to key factors as reported on page 25 and 26 is something like 20 to one. In other words, we have about 20 times as much story as we have analysis of that story. I’m really not sure that this is the best way to go. In fact, I would advocate strongly reversing that ratio, and giving us a much briefer version of Barbara’s story – and the stories of each of the individuals and couples to follow – and going much heavier on analysis. This is an example of this point.

27 – Again, instead of women’s liberation, I would say feminism. You don’t want to be seen as taking a pejorative view of something which is so dear to the hearts of so many of your book-buyers!

28 2 1 – Pause – no way! The book has to move at a gallop, and we never want to pause for anything! We want the reader to tear breathlessly through this life-changing book, without any excuse or reason to stop reading. To tell the reader that we are going to pause is almost as if we were promising the reader that the next chapter is not going to be very interesting so they might as well find something else to do. I would urge you to eliminate such language.

29 Chapter 2 title – Again, the book is far too much about the study and not nearly enough about the reader.

29 – Questions. This chapter has the style, the feel of a FAQ on the Internet. While this may work well for websites, I'm not sure it really works well for a book. Websites and books are two totally different means of providing information. On the Web, the assumption is that the reader has little time or patience, and is likely to click away somewhere else if he or she does not get the desired answer immediately. In a book, we have a different assumption – the reader is going to spend as long as it takes to pull from the book everything he or she needs to know about the subject. We can assume more patience on the part of a book reader than on the part of a person surfing the Web. Everything about a book makes the reader more patient – we have been socialized down the centuries to expect that reading a book is a relatively slow experience. Not so the Internet, where the expectation is immediate gratification. I don't think we want to toss away the assumption that a reader is willing to stick with us to learn all about the subject matter that we want to share with the reader. So I don't think a FAQ really makes sense here. Also, this puts too much of the stress on the study and not enough stress on the end user, the reader. So I would take out

those questions at the top of the page and instead just jump right into the material on page 30.

30 1 1 – Budding clinical psychologist – this is a brilliant, funny sentence, and I would urge you to make this the first sentence of the book.

32 1 – As I mentioned in an earlier e-mail, I also went to Amherst. As this is the only mention of your Amherst experience, I'm not sure your time there was entirely positive! Hard for me to speculate from this distance. At any rate, the sentence structure in this paragraph does need a bit more attention. I think there's just too much information in the first sentence of the paragraph.

31 1 5 – What is a religionist? Is this someone who believes in religion or practices religion in his or her life? If so, that's more than half the country, and a very substantial portion of your readership. If you use the term religionist as roughly equal to the term "cultist," you would be insulting and alienating a very large number of decent people who buy books and believe in God. More Americans are subconscious Jungians than subconscious Freudians!

31 2 – Again, omit the questions, and this chapter will have a much nicer sense of flow.

32 1 2 – Wife standing outside the closed door – a great moment, well worth recounting. I love that.

32 3 1 – Paralyzing argument – were you really paralyzed? This sounds like a little bit of hyperbole. You never want to have a reader, staring at a word and asking, "Is the author

really being honest here?” If we lose credibility in the small things, we will never regain it for the larger claims we make.

33 1 2 – Wives who persuaded their husbands – fascinating.

33 2 3 – Popularized midlife crisis – I don’t think that midlife crisis is popularized in the sense that it has been made popular. I don’t think there’s anything popular about having a crisis. What has been “popularized” is the *notion* that a midlife crisis exists. This is one of the key myths that your book debunks, so you want to be very precise with the language here.

33 3 3 – But many more Jews – the reader is going to wonder why Jews didn’t come immediately after Protestants and before those was no religious affiliation and Quakers. It just seems odd.

33 3 7 – Why are these books mentioned here?

34 1 1 – What is success? What is healthy growth? Most people want to be successful in their lives. If by success, you mean success defined narrowly, as in financial terms, I see your point. But I’m not sure how success and healthy growth could be teased apart from each other. I love the list of people you have interviewed. It’s fantastic. That’s a great asset of the book.

35 2 1 – Needing a net worth – these are wealthy people! On one hand that’s great, because everybody likes to read about wealthy people. But isn’t it possible that your readers who do not have such substantial net worths might be turned off at this point and say, “This book doesn’t apply to me, because I don’t have that kind of money”?

36 1 3 – Undeveloped pornographic film in California – that’s a really great comedic line. It makes the question of why California would even care about pornographic film being brought into the state, or whether it makes a distinction between developed and undeveloped film of that nature. I love it.

37 1 5 – Again, why these books?

37 1 6 – Less affluent participants – does this mean people who have a net worth of a mere million dollars? Or are we talking about middle-class people, even working-class people? Probably not working-class, since they are college educated, but I think a little more precision would be appropriate here.

38 1 3 – Since I view the men and women as colleagues trying to understand a fascinating person, most became involved in our search – I think this is a little unclear. Are you saying that they themselves are fascinating people whom they themselves are trying to understand? It’s a little hard to follow.

39 2 2 – Incite your own biases – could you explain this?

39 3 1 – Exploit a strong bias – what does it mean to do that? I’m not sure this is a precisely clear phrase.

39 3 6 – What does validated trans-culturally mean? Again, this is the kind of phrase that would make perfect sense to your fellow professionals. It would be instantly clear to them. But to a lay reader, the phrase would cause a lengthy pause and probably some head scratching.

39 3 negative 2 – Maturing changes – what are maturing changes? In an effort to reduce the number of words, I’m afraid that some meaning has been lost here.

42 1 – Fall of 2002 – I would omit the year, because would make the book seem instantly dated.

43 4 – If I were a talented writer – you already are. You might say if I were a novelist instead.

43 negative 1 – Are you looking at who changed, or who grew, or both?

41 4 5 – Re-given – and I'm not sure that is a lovely enough word for the quality of your book.

42 4 2 – Self-reports by reasonably mature persons – this is a great point. Fascinating.

42 4 6 – MMPI – what's that? Is this yet another test that people have to undergo in order to figure out if they're having any change?

42 5 2 – Dave – we don't want to refer to people we have not yet met.

44 2 – I would omit this paragraph, because I'm not sure why you want to bring it up. If it didn't work, it's not relevant to the trade reader.

44 4 2 – Vaillant – I recognize this name in a dim sort of way from my own reading about psychology. But I have no way to know how important he is. It makes sense in a book written for one's peers to mention without further description the name of a great individual in a given field. But that's not really appropriate for a trade book for lay readers, who don't know who this person is, and frankly may not be all that interested. The only expert they really care about is you!

44 5 1 – Same point about Robert White.

45 2 – Appendix A describes in detail the study's methods and procedures – then what was this chapter about? I think this chapter provides about all the detail we need. You

may want to say that those interested in further detail about the study are welcome to read Appendix A.

46 1 – I would omit this paragraph because I'm not sure it adds something.

47 2 2 – What is psychological wholeness? What are we aiming for, in other words? What is success or healthy growth by the standards of your study?

48 1 1 – You're losing me here – this paragraph is terrific if you're a professional and very confusing for the lay reader. Lay readers aren't stupid – they just don't have the focus to bring to bear on such widely disparate pieces of information.

48 2 2 – Personality sectors – what are these? I didn't know my personality had sectors. These are terms that need to be defined clearly along with symbolization, other-centeredness and so on. I'm also wondering if you could find terms that don't sound like psychological shop talk. These words make a lot of sense to the professional reader with adequate background in the field, but talk to me! I'm a bright guy, but I don't want to get lost in psychological terms. Is it possible that you could invent equivalent terms for the lay reader that say the same thing? For example, what's the difference between other-centeredness and compassion? A lay reader could relate to a term like compassion or even a new phrase like "committed compassion" if you want to hone it in some way, a lot more easily than other-centeredness. This is vital, because so much of the book is about the development of these dimensions.

48 2 2 – What makes this belief controversial? And why must something be transculturally general or universal? I'm not surrounded by people from Papua New Guinea. Make the case that the study is even more important and more psychologically revealing

about human nature because it's just as true about people who practice (cargo?) cults as it does about people who use Blackberry e-mail devices. Why should it be controversial? Wouldn't it be good enough if you could just explain how people in societies like ours function? Again, how does it help the reader to know that everybody all over the world is similar as far as this goes?

49 1 1 – May become more reflective? That's not much of a promise. Don't you want to say they should become more reflective? I think you want to introduce some judgment here. I could be wrong, because I don't want to start passing judgment on psychological concepts. All I'm saying is that if the promise of psychological growth in which you, the author of this book, are going to be my tutor, is that my mind may become more reflective, then is it worth it for me to keep reading? What kind of results can you promise? What kind of benefits am I likely or highly likely to receive as a result of reading this book? I know that if I eat less, I will lose weight. It's not that I may lose weight. I will lose weight. If I eat less at McDonalds, I will lose weight. What kind of promises, if any, can you offer the reader that psychological healthy growth will provide?

49 3 1 – “To clarify the model's dimensional categories” – is that the kind of phrase that a reader will expect to find in a trade book? Again, it's not about dumbing down, it's just about expressing things in a more conversational or more approachable way. Also, where are these quotes? I'm not sure I found them all the time. And also, we're about to get into a series of quotes from teenagers. I'm really confused about what these things are doing here.

50 3 1 – Bloomfield Hills – I thought we were talking about adults! Suddenly we are talking about kids. This is far too wrenching and surprising a change, and I don't really think it works.

50 3 6 – There's no way you can tell me that high school kids know about the term symbolization. What terms do they use in order to express these changes that they are experiencing? Those are the sorts of terms that will make more sense to your adult readers as well! Again, the reader is going to be absolutely bewildered as to how we got from adults to high school students.

51 3 – How can such spontaneously (cited?) growths – why do we have yet another quiz? The reader is going to be absolutely bewildered by which quiz is the one that matters.

53 3 1 – Now we could have some vigorous arguments – I'm really not in love with that phrasing at all. The reader doesn't want to have arguments with you. The reader is not a colleague. The reader is a disciple at your feet, a student, and is simply not in a position to argue with you. Also, if your measurement is so subjective, then how efficacious is the study as a whole? This sentence raises far more questions than I think you want to raise.

53 4 1 – You may now be saying “So what? What can this admittedly not too precise way of measuring healthy growth tell us?” -- That is exactly the question the reader is asking, and the last thing you want to have is the reader raise the question midway through your explanation of it.

55 2 1 – Ninth grade girl – I don't understand the relationship between the ninth grade girl and Barbara. Also, why do we care so much about Barbara? The reader doesn't care about Barbara; the reader cares about the reader.

55 4 1 – Mark Van Doren – this is a really great quote. This may sound shocking, but unless the reader has recently rented *Quiz Show* from Blockbuster, it's highly unlikely that the reader has any idea who Mark Van Doren was. You want to identify him.

56 5 – McGrath – I'm not sure the reader would have any idea who this person is, or would care. The reader really doesn't want insights from other people. The reader wants your insights. Otherwise, why write for the trade market?

58 3 1 – Wearily acknowledged – great phrase. Beautiful. I think you want to pull together all the material about parenting into a single chapter.

59 3 1 – Whitehead identifies – this is perfect language for a monograph, but it's a real problem for a book for lay people. Why should the reader care about Whitehead? The reader wants to know what you have identified, and only wants a brief summary of what has gone before your work. Also, the idea that creativity is a sign of autonomy is quite interesting. But what does it mean to the reader? Which comes first – creativity or autonomy? If I'm an adult struggling to be more mature, or happier, or to be experiencing more joy in my life, what do I do first? In other words, how can this be put in a way that will give the reader a practical means of establishing the kind of results that you promise?

59 4 3 – I don't know how to interpret her creativity – then it shouldn't be in this book. The book is not about what you cannot do. The book is about what you have done for others, and what you therefore can do for the reader.

60 3 2 – Clues suggesting vulnerabilities – this is vital. This is absolutely at the core of the book. This is the kind of thing that we do not want to risk burying. The fact that it is a surmise of yours may warrant the caveats you place around it, when writing for a

professional audience. Professional readers will not accept surmises without data. The reader, however, on the other hand, looks at your lifework and says that you have earned the right to make surmises and leaps. Let grunts in the laboratory replicate your work. But the reader wants to know your wisdom now.

62 3 1 – No apprehension she won't be able to control this regression – the double, or even triple negative notwithstanding, I don't think most people have any idea what controlling a regression means. Also, what does it mean to convert experiences from productivity into creativity?

62 4 1 – PSQ – we're back to methodology. The reader will view a return to a study of methodology. Get the reader moving again!

62 4 4 – Not income – why not?

63 2 1 – As I mentioned earlier, we have to define the terms precisely.

64 2-7, and all of 65 – Again, we really cannot speak or generalize about individuals the reader has not yet met.

66 title – I understand why you are naming the chapters after the individuals whom you are studying, or their pseudonyms. That makes perfect sense from the methodological standpoint. It's a great way to organize data. But the reader doesn't care about data. The reader wants results. That's why I urge you to get away from naming your chapters after people, and instead to name the chapters after the specific aspects of growth that you wish to discuss in it.

66 1 4 – This sentence is a really long way of saying that if your work makes you happy, that can make up for an unhappy home life. Is there really anything in the sentence that I have just written that is not present in the longer sentence on page 66 2 4?

66 3 1 – Why should the reader care that he stayed with you? Also, same place, only 6 ft. 3? That's pretty tall in most people's books.

67A – I understand why you appreciate this so much. And I certainly understand your love for Richard and for his accomplishments as a wordsmith. This chapter is for the most part, a very lovely paean to this wonderful long-term friendship that the two of you have been privileged to enjoy with one another. I'm wondering why the reader needs all this information, though. The reader will be questioning why there is so much background information about one individual. The problem is that when you've got so much information about the subject of the story, in this case, Richard, or Mary, or whomever, the reader might say, "I don't really see myself in the story. Therefore the lessons don't apply to me." That's the danger of providing so many pages of information, and even excerpts from the subject's work.

68 4 6 – How does Rorschach testing work? How can somebody make such a judgment on the basis of three cards? How many cards does it usually take? Keep in mind that the lay reader doesn't know much about psychological testing, but most likely finds it somewhat suspect. We are all individuals and we want to think of ourselves as unique. Most people simply don't like the idea that they can be reduced to stereotypes or sectors or categories, especially by a professional asking slippery questions. Take a look at the way psychological evidence is introduced in courtrooms. Everybody knows that both sides

marshal their experts, who are paid to say whatever that side of the case wants them to say. So most people in our society probably hold a psychological testing in fairly low repute. Lie detector tests are inadmissible in court; inkblot tests, as we discussed earlier, have been the butt of so many jokes over the years that the layperson may not realize that they still have efficacy; and psychologists themselves have been portrayed in the movies and on television as unstable so often that readers wonder what makes them such fine judges of human nature to begin with. Right now, we have the case of one professional, you, giving credence to another professional, whom we have never met, using a technique for which we as lay readers have no basis for judging, namely inkblots. This is going to stretch the credulity of the reader.

69 2 – Jewish heritage – everything you say here about the Jewish heritage checks out. I don't think anybody will have a problem with any of this.

69 3 3 – You always want to capitalize the word Jew.

70 5 4 – Rich wants to know his SAT scores? What will a reader make of that?

71 – There is just way too much biography.

72 4 2 – Testing Harvard's Law School case method – is this a courteous way of saying that he didn't finish? You don't want to raise more questions than you answer.

73 2 1 – Principal traits – here we go! Now the reader's getting something that can make a difference for the reader. The reader's never going to have the brilliance or great career or fascinating lifestyle or experiences of a Richard Lederer, who is one of the greatest geniuses of our age. Everybody who knows and loves books and words knows and loves the work of Richard Lederer, and tens of millions of Americans have read his columns, attended

his speeches, and read his many books. Lederer is off the charts in terms of accomplishments, and has pretty much designed his own unique niche in American letters. I don't think anyone could possibly dispute any of the foregoing. I'm just wondering if we're getting a little too much of his story, given the reader's overwhelming preoccupation with... the reader.

75 4 – Very Christian community – what's the implication here? That Jews are louder than Christians? Do you see the potential concern that a Jewish reader might have here?

77 – Now we are back to still more biography.

78 2 5 – Boy-scout and fail-safe – while I share Richard's delight in etymological discoveries, it just seems awfully far afield from the subject of this book, Healthy Growth. We've got to stay on message.

79 4 4 – Make what you will out of Richard's comments – in other words, you are presenting an inkblot for the reader to interpret. Readers don't have the ability or the training to make such interpretations. The reader wants you to guide him or her.

80 – Kvell.

82 4 1 – Again, way too much biography, given the nature of this book.

84 3 1 – Troubling question and interpretive uncertainty – if the tests cannot be interpreted in a certain manner by you, the leader in the field, then the reader will automatically believe they have no value whatsoever.

84 4 1 – Or could the PSQ be a less valid measure of maturity for such perfectionists? A book for a lay audience is hardly the place to question the efficacy of a given test. That would be something to discuss with your colleagues.

87 1 1 – Integration (completive?) – can we find a more pleasing term for this and the other key expressions – location, cognitive, stability self, stability values, and so on? And in addition, what is the difference between stability self and stability values?

87 3 3 – Does anyone want to see in print the fact that he has these situations in his life? I know I wouldn't!

88 3 1 – Cognitive stability – again, these terms are just way over the head of typical readers. Also, is the book claiming everything that the reader needs to know about high achievers can be measured from the life of this one individual, whose outstanding achievements are far beyond the expectations of virtually any other human being in his generation?

89 5 3 – Sociopathic zombies – excellent. Here you're getting at something really important – the fact that people can be book smart and have no bedside manner, or even be able to get along with others in any sort of social way. (That's certainly the impression that many people have of doctors!) I wish you would talk much more about the importance of balance and how to achieve it.

90 2 – Nobody knows what longitudinal studies are. This is not fair to Barry, your lay reader in such terms. Also, the one-liners that follow over the next couple of pages going up to 93 don't synthesize your learning about high achieving people. They're just left there for the reader to make what he or she will of them. That's just not fair to a lay reader.

95 title – I loved your reference to the Great Santini. I'm wondering if you could shorten it and just say something like Being Mrs. Santini. The reader will understand exactly what you mean, because the Great Santini was such a great cultural reference.

95 2 1 – I had no choice – the reader will assume that you had total choice, as you are the author of the study.

96 1 2 – Heyday of the women’s lib movement – again, it’s just too 1975 to refer to feminism as women’s lib. It makes the person who utters such a phrase sound like an opponent of absolutely everything that feminism stands for, and even trivializes the entire movement. Don’t get me wrong. I’m no radical feminist. But you can alienate a lot of readers who do respect what feminism has brought about in a positive way.

97 3 1 – Beautiful description. As always, I wish these stories could be radically shorter.

99 3 3 – No other adults will learn to become readers – that’s a perfect indication of his character and dedication. Fantastic.

103 2 2 – Love is sex and love is therefore intercourse – a brilliant formulation.

103 3 2 – Her oldest boy claims she acted seductively – fascinating. How does she feel about this? Aren’t you going to give her a chance to defend herself?

103 – Second episode? We need specifics about the first episode. Otherwise, it’s just an unsubstantiated claim by the son, who may have his own agenda for speaking in a demeaning manner about his mother.

106 1 1 – A very special warm hug – this is one of the places in the manuscript where the author may be unwittingly displaying a greater level of attraction to an interview subject than may be appropriate!

106 6 – Interpersonally – now that’s a piece of jargon, I’m sure you would agree.

108 – What lessons to draw – again, we’re not just looking for short answers. We want really intense analysis. What we really want to know is how you feel about it. That’s why I’m talking about liberation for the author.

112 Chapter 6: Mary -- I’ve got the same concerns as usual about this chapter. Far too much story and far too little analysis. Also, it’s a bit “on the nose” to give a religious woman the pseudonym Mary. It’s almost a little too obvious why you chose the name Mary. This, other references to religion, and the term “religionists” might lead some readers—or even many readers—to believe that the author of this book does not consider religion an appropriate or sensible aspect of life for mature individuals.

113 24 – Understanding female’s healthy growth – I think this phrase needs a little bit of attention. Understanding women’s healthy growth? I think you’ll agree that a second look would be good.

113 to 122 – This really has to be cut down considerably. It’s just too much information.

122 4 1 – The Broccoli Incident – I love the name of this, because there is some very gentle humor in it. I would omit the sentence at the end of it; “That is the end of The Broccoli Incident.” Frankly, that’s not the end. It may be the end of that particular moment, but it is a turning point in her life. I love the fact that broccoli, a funny-sounding food name, “by virtue of the K sound in it” would be the turning point in the life of a marriage.

126 2 1 – My flimsy understanding of Freud is that he didn’t have much use for religion. This reference of his seems to be a swipe at Mary’s religious convictions. You seem to be saying that she couldn’t deal with reality, so she turned to God in order to control her

unruly impulses. Is religion in your mind a tool for mature persons to consciously suppress and control unruly impulses? Is that all there is to it? Is that a fair assessment of the way religion strikes you? That's how it comes across in the book. If that's not how you feel, then you may want to take a look at the places in which religion comes up.

128 4 1 – A principal reason why counseling can be so effective – I'm not sure that the quote for Mary really backs up that assertion. Linda likes me and accepts me. Linda is a paid friend. Readers who distrust counseling and psychology—and there are many!—will question Mary's commitment to therapy, the way Freud seems to be questioning Mary's commitment to religion. And are psychologists and therapists really non-judgmental? I have a hard time believing that. I think they are trained to suppress expression of their judgment, but they're not non-judgmental. And their pocketbook would be hurt if they expressed too many negative judgments! How many people would willingly pay for therapy if the therapists were consistently mean to them? So I'm not sure you've really stated a very strong case for counseling. If Linda is so accepting of Mary, would she continue to see Mary if Mary could no longer afford to pay? What does that make Linda? And doesn't that make Mary look a little bit foolish? As a professional in the field of psychology you are convinced, with good reason, about the efficacy of therapy. But a lot of your readers don't have that same sense of conviction, and as we both know, there are a lot of crummy therapists out there, giving the profession a bad name. So you really have to sell your readers on the idea that counseling can make a difference.

132 last paragraph – I'm not sure that the byplay between yourself and Harriet really is appropriate for the book. All of your readers accept your wife's opinions, but she has not

been validated as a co-equal expert in your field. Also, don't worry about inflaming readers. You're the professional. We trust your judgment.

133 2 1 – This is a beautiful paragraph. The last sentence, “Too developed communizing strengths...” is a fascinating point, and I'm wondering if you could make it in a language that a layperson could more clearly understand. What I think I hear you saying is this: if women spend too much time focusing on the needs of the group, they won't focus on their own needs. And they will stay stuck. Is that what you're saying?

133 3 2 – Interpersonally feminine – what does that mean? In what other way could they be feminine? Also, I don't think I saw anywhere in the book, a description of how men could be feminine or women masculine, and yet psychological androgyny is something for which you have a good deal of respect. I think that point ought to be clarified.

136 1 2 – Summum.

137 2 1 – Androgyny – this is something that, as I discussed earlier, ought to be developed more fully. It's a very new and fascinating idea. At least it's new to me.

138 1 – Empty eggshell – on one hand, this is fascinating. On the other hand, I remember reading similar statements in the *Feminist Mystique* written in 1964. I'm not sure that we are really saying anything new that hasn't been noted before.

138 2 3 – “They had identified with their other-centered interpersonal role” – does that mean that they spend too much time thinking about other people and not enough about themselves? It's not dumbing down to say things in a non-professional or non-jargon-laden manner.

140 last paragraph – Jewish mystique – that’s such a vague concept, despite the book that has been written about the topic. I’m not sure that your Jewish readers will agree that there is a Jewish mystique, or that it means the same thing in every case. Again, it has to do with the way Jews are perceived by others. I think you’re potentially creating discomfort with phrases like that, or at least with that phrase.

141 2 6 – After 20 years of what? Of practice? Or of training and practice?

142 1 1 – What’s not clear here? Isn’t regular sex reason enough?

(144?) – Plain with a tinge of red to her dark hair – that’s a very unappealing way to describe someone. It makes her sound utterly unattractive. Isn’t there something about her that would be appealing to the reader?

150 3 – The remark about dropping his last alimony check into his ex-wife’s grave is very funny, but it doesn’t really make Charlie look like much of a standup guy. I’m just not sure that your reader will want to keep reading about a man so hostile. In 156, we’re going to be told what Charlie’s life tells us about maturing. But how much could he have matured, if that’s how he feels about his ex? Frankly, it’s a highly immature reaction. After all, it takes two to tango, and two people to make a bad marriage.

162 2 1 – Small pilot study – what study is that? Are you referring to the entire study as a small pilot study? That’s either false modesty or it destroys the entire premise of this book, which is that the study gives you the right to show others what healthy growth is all about.

163 2 1 – This is the sort of reference that is appropriate for professionals, but has more to do with methodology than with serving your lay reader.

164 2 1 – How a clinical diagnostician goes about – again, it’s just too much of a love affair of methodology. Readers just don’t care how this information comes to the hands of the diagnostician. We just want you to get it, synthesize it, and show us how to use it to have a better life.

169 5 2 – I liked this person, and finally we have an individual, whom the reader can say, in a tentative manner, at least, “Perhaps, here is someone who would be a model for me.”

173 3 8 – The Fromm reference comes, I believe, from the opening pages of “The Art of Loving,” one of my favorite books, and one that I have read and reread many times. For that reason, I understand when you say “the marketing personality,” because you are, I believe, referring to Fromm’s notion that people translate themselves into a marketable commodity for dating purposes. But I’m something of an exception in that you are referring to one of my favorite books; what would a reader who’s not familiar with that book make of that phrase?

175 2 2 – I have kept in touch with her after the divorce – like the long hug earlier, this is going to raise the question of why you, a man so devoted to his wife he put her name on the cover of the book, are maintaining ties or interests in women in the study! (I’m just looking out for your interests!)

180 last paragraph, 4 – I knew that Aaron was creating another firm, but knew nothing about it – do you mean that you knew nothing about the specifics of the nature of the firm? To know nothing about it would mean that a person wouldn’t even know about its existence. A small point, but again, you don’t want the reader staring at the page.

187 2 3 – Why not? – again, language that may provoke the reader into finding reasons why not! Also, (it identified??) saying that the reader would expect the author not to repeat, unless for pedagogical reasons, lessons that we have learned earlier. For the same reason, I'm not going to repeat yet again, the points that I'm making about the structures of the chapters. As we go forward, I'm just going to limit myself to specific points that need addressing.

206 4 1 – Very speculatively – that's a line for one's colleagues, but not for the lay reader.

209 1 1 – Same-sex (not same-sexed). I think this chapter really ought to be about friendship, and not about one individual.

209 last paragraph 4 – 50 judges from each culture – judges from each culture -- now we are being told about another survey. It's just too many surveys and studies, you might want to bring it up in context, by ending the chapter with it simply gives it too much importance.

213 2 1 – I have always been fond of Dave. This makes the reader wonder whether you can be fair to those interview subjects for whom you do not feel the same level of fondness. This whole subjective paragraph ought to be omitted.

214 2 5 – Atheistic beliefs -- I'm just wondering whether beliefs can be atheistic, or whether atheists hold assertions rather than beliefs, and so on.

214 3 2 – I like Dave's life experience. It makes him an interesting case study.

215 1 1 – Fabulous paragraph.

219 last line – Much to the surprise of their husbands – very intriguing – and revelatory. How well known is this fact? I'm wondering whether this ought to be the focus of the book, a minor focus, but something you want to talk more about.

223 2 2 – Impetuously – who is making this pejorative judgment? After all, we've already established that you favor Dave!

227 2 4 & 5 – I worried and I was relieved – is the author's process really appropriate for the book? It seems to cross a line that ought not be crossed.

229 last paragraph – Yin.

231 3 3 – Failed to capture the essence – is it really appropriate to get into the arguments with your subjects?

232 4 1-2 – In the context of some of the other references to Judaism, I'm wondering if this is really appropriate. It makes it seem as though Judaism just isn't worth reading about; if the books he had given you were about auto mechanics or quantum physics, perhaps they might have reached your bed table.

235 1 3 – Talk about buried treasure! Sexual compatibility is so important, as we point out. That ought to be something that we touch upon much earlier.

237 – Tex. I have to admit the Tex was a great disappointment to me. He was spoken about in such glowing terms earlier in the book, and yet he turned out to be just about as shut down as most of the other men in the narrative. I'm wondering why Tex deserves to such glowing praise earlier on.

238 3 6 – Off-putting – whatever happened to the non-judgmentalness of counselors? If people really want to get through counseling, I'm wondering if remarks like

this might give them the sense that, as they suspected, a counselor is just one more person who won't like them.

259 3 1 – Maturing can continue through middle age. If this is one of the central tenets of the book, it shouldn't be buried on page 259.

261 3 2 – what's the difference between gender and femininity? I think I understand – it's not the fact that they are women that makes them more ethical. It's that they have the feminine quality of honesty in greater abundance than do men. But if that's what you're saying then you really want to spell that out. Again, this comes back to the question of androgyny, which is something well worth exploring more deeply.

262 1 10-11 – Great questions.

263 2 5 – Everyone had affairs. How disheartening. Are you saying that an affair-free marriage is not even worth shooting for? What exactly are you saying about fidelity? Is it an equally masculine and feminine tendency? Who commits adultery? Does anyone not commit it? Does committing or not committing adultery have anything to do with maturity? On a gut level, most people would think mature people don't sleep around. Is this not the case?

264 4 1 – Please don't view these to be highly reliable? If they aren't reliable, then how can you possibly build a study around them? The reader has every reason to expect that the data that you provide is legitimate. Otherwise, what's the point?

272 1 1 – These fragments, as they are accurately described, are really just raw data. What purpose do they serve for the lay reader?

272 4 1 – Is this hug really worth mentioning? Again, the hugs and the desires to see particular women again may tend to reduce the credibility of the work

273 3 2 – Fewer.

273 4 1 – Wanted to fly out to Hollywood – what is the reader going to make of a happily married man wanting to fly across the country to see the wife of a study participant, herself a study participant in her own right, making magic? I think you see my concern!

275 4 1 – Do you understand why – I’m afraid the reader will understand all too well!!!

281 1 2 – Still struggling – so where’s the growth? You question why he was unable to sustain his growth. So do we.

281 2 negative 2 – why the exclamation point within the parentheses? Is it a problem for someone to want to have a party at a restaurant that Nixon and Reagan both frequented? Is it odd for a Jew to want to hold an affair there? I think the question mark within the parentheses raise far more questions, and disturbing questions than they answer. I would omit it.

283 last paragraph 1 – Very happily, but recently as a little unhappy – I think this needs to be rewritten. For many years, Joe has rated his marriage as very happy. Recently, he has changed that rating to “a little unhappy.” Or something like that.

293 2 6 – I don’t think I could find the place, but I think someone else just said a little while ago that he wanted to increase his net worth by the same amount. Is that a box they can check? Or just a coincidence?

294 4 3 – Feeling the magic, fumbling and trying to describe how she moved me – what’s going on? It sounds as though the author has very strong feelings for the subject!

299 2 5-6 – I do not have his complete information – I think you’ve got decades of information from the women, combined with a half century in the field, which is more than enough background to offer hypotheses for the lay reader.

302 3 –Extroversion.

301 1 1 – Rickety, dumpy and forgetful – a very funny phrase. Beautiful. (Also, coincidentally, the name of the law firm that represents me. Just kidding.)

303 2 2 – I’d like to stop and talk for a moment about this Biblical reference. I don’t think there’s any problem with using a Christian reference to describe the process of maturity. So it’s not from a Jewish perspective that I have concerns about this. My simple concern is this: Paul, actually Saul, did have a religious conversion. Are you suggesting that religious conversions are the only route to maturity? Or are you just saying that here is a story about a person who changed? I like the use of the word testament, but I really wonder whether it raises more questions than it answers.

306 2 4 – You’re saying the changes episodic initiated by changing external demands for new adaptations. Is there any way that an individual can promote change himself or herself? Or are we passive, waiting for events to come along and trigger in us a need for change?

306 3 1 – Who is Kelly, and why should I care about him? I’m buying *your* book!

308 2 3 – Late teens and early 30s – that’s not much of a surprise, as most American males of that age live life as though they were in a beer ad. What can you tell us that is new about this time period in a man’s life?

312 2 1 – In this paragraph, there’s a distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic religious values. It would appear that intrinsic values have to do with ethics or virtue, as (with?) 312 2 5 & 6. Again, extrinsic religious commitments have to do with belonging to a religion. Yet another swipe at religion. Why?

315 4 4 – The men’s judges disagreed with the men’s judges? Aside from the obvious typo of some sort here, there’s a much larger and more troubling question – who are these judges, and why are we returning to methodology?

317 4 4 – What do the statistics tell us? Is there anything that we can learn from the fact that a lot of people feel one way and a lot of people feel the other? Is the difference between the two groups large enough to be statistically significant? Again, we’re looking for more analysis than for data.

324 1 2 – Can you explain the Clinton “artifact”? What exactly does that mean?

326-328 – This is the key of the book. It’s just doesn’t want to be buried here.

329 1 4 – Growth can continue far into adulthood if the conditions are favorable -- what exactly can we do to make conditions more favorable?

329 3 1 – Invariant universal bio-psycho social sequence of stages – is that a long way of saying that men don’t have passages? Or that people don’t have passages? That (Gel?) Sheehy is wrong? How would you express this idea if you were sitting over beers in a café in the village in Mexico?

331 3 – Big dreams – this is really striking, as is the idea that mentoring is a myth, and so is a midlife crisis. This is really the heart of the book and it ought to lead off the book, instead of (start it off?).

335 3 3 – You’ve got to tell us who these people are. Also spelling – Erickson?

336 3 2 – If you’re going after Sheehy, it cannot be an oblique attack. You’ve got to really lean into it, and show us exactly why she’s wrong. Either your study makes you the expert, or it doesn’t. I think it does.

339 1 – No repeating necessary. We remember.

341 4 1 – The developmental task of adolescents is their own healthy growth – what exactly does that mean? What is a developmental task? Their own healthy growth as opposed to whose healthy growth? And so on?

347 2 4 – Any marital word to the “early 30s” – what does this mean? What is a marital word? A word about marriage?

351 2 1 – 21 attributes of parenting – what are they? Do I need to know them?

352 3 1 – Is this an argument with Vaillant? What he involved in studies of alcoholism, and is he or was he on the board of Alcoholics Anonymous? I’m wondering if I’m thinking about the same person.

354 2 9-11 – The mother having the same issues as the daughter – that’s amazing, and if anything, it ought to be brought to the forefront of the book.

297 3-6 – Physically healthy men and women are mentally healthy, and so on – do we really need 50 years of studies to discover these facts? I think these are the surmises that have governed societies, going back at least to the ancient Greeks. We’ve got to say new things, and we cannot risk as being perceived as offering statements that readers would already believe.

298 2 1 – Adults are responsible for their own well-being – a lot of people have been saying this in the last 10 years or so in this country. There has been a movement toward the importance of personal responsibility, even as the general culture has shifted away from such a notion. There are a lot of people talking about this. What do you want to say about it? This is far too important a point to leave unsubstantiated. The next line – parents aren't directly – is a fragment, and needs to be re-written. The next sentence also needs much more fleshing out.

357 2 2 – What 20 guidelines? Where are they? Did I miss them? And now why do I come back to children?

359 2 6-7 – I get the sense that you are a fan of President Clinton, except for his sexual peccadilloes, and that you are not especially a fan of George W. Bush (the president). Is that the case? Should you readers have the ability to try to read between the lines of your political opinions?

363 – Adult predictors of adult outcomes – it seems as though mature people stay mature, and immature people stay immature. How can people make their own lives better, or does your work point to a fairly deterministic approach to life?

364 – Growing into maturity, how? The book has been all about adults and their lives. The prescriptive part of the book now turned to the question of how to be a good parent. It almost seems as though you're giving up on the possibility of ways for adults to make their own lives better. I just want to pull out one of these suggestions. Let's take a look at number 11 on page 368. What if I don't have a 10-year-old child? What do I do for my three-year-old, or is she too young for this kind of coaching into emotional growth? What

about my 15-year-old, would she be too old, or too unreachable, because she's too deeply into her teens? The reader's going to want to know why a 10-year-old has been singled out here. And then we slide in the next paragraph immediately into a retiree named Joe. Joe, and his hook. What about all the people between the ages of 10 and retirement? Is there any hope for them?

370 last paragraph – Erich Fromm -- you knew him? This would be very exciting to readers like myself, who think so highly of him! What was he like? What was his love life? And incidentally, that line “help a person become more and more alive” is fabulous. What a perfect way to summarize the whole purpose of therapy or analysis or psychology, or psychiatry. That is the mission, which you are undertaking by seeking to present this material to a trade audience. Your mission really is summed up by that sentence. How do you take people who are feeling levels of unhappiness in their lives and make them feel more excited to be alive, more alive?

371 3 1 – Adam and Jean – if they meet your criteria, and if they have such a fine mature life together, why didn't they get a chapter on their own? Why do we have to wait until the very last three pages (which many readers will never get to!) before we meet them?

372 3 2 – Ideally make your living at it – how does this advice help the individual with a spouse, a large mortgage payment, and two kids in college? How, for example, does a professionally dissatisfied real estate attorney make the leap to writing novels? Telling the lawyer to write a few pages a day of the novel in his spare time, which is what the first sentence in that paragraph suggests, makes sense. But we don't ever want to give advice that would cause the reader to say, “Thanks a lot. But how can I do that?” We don't ever want to

give advice that the reader can't take in its current form, or at this particular stage of their lives.

374 2 1 – Why are we getting comments from Rich here? This is *your* book, and I'm wondering why the spotlight is yielded at this critical moment as the last few pages, to someone else, no matter how wise. Also, why are just some of us put on this planet for a purpose? The implication is alarming – that the majority of people are here for no purpose whatsoever! You don't really believe that, do you?

375 1 1 – A professor of linguistics – is there someone we have already met? Why are his thoughts so important at this juncture?

375 4 1 – Fully accept yourself – okay, but how? Create a strong foundation or interpersonal blessings – what does that mean? And if I don't believe in God, what is a blessing? Live “out of the mainstream”? Physically? What if I like the benefits of living in the city? Or are you speaking in a metaphorical or metaphysical sense? Should I not belong to a religion? Should I not belong to a gym? What is the mainstream? What's wrong with it? And why should I live outside it? Seek out and fulfill responsibilities – for any particular purpose? Any kind of responsibilities? An extra-marital affair carries a lot of responsibilities – the responsibility not to get caught, the responsibility not to get the other person pregnant, and so on. Will any sort of responsibilities do? How can I keep hope alive, if only some of the people on the planet have missions, and I don't think that I'm one of them? And so on? In other words, I'm not sure that you really want to end the book with these statements, unless you can really back them up with much clearer guidance as to how the reader can act on them so as to have a better life.

Doug, I know that this is a long letter, but I'm sure that you understand that I wanted to give you everything I possibly could in terms of a new approach to thinking about the material. I hope that you're pleased with this, and not overwhelmed by it, and I look forward to discussing it with you, either by e-mail from your current location or by phone when you return to the United States. I wish you a wonderful rest of the trip, and I certainly look forward to further discussion with you about the book.

Sincerely,

Michael Levin