

CASE STUDY 3.2.3 Learning to Swim

A little girl had the greatest difficulty in learning how to swim. The mother, who had learned dereflection in conquering her own sleep disturbances, tried the same idea on her daughter. The girl did not learn swimming because she anxiously observed the rhythms of her motions which prevented natural body movements and landed her under the water. This increased her anxiety and exaggerated her self-observation which in turn interfered with arm and leg rhythms.

The mother took a tape recorder to the beach and played a cassette fairy tale loud enough so the girl could hear it while learning to swim. She learned it in four days and on the fifth had to be admonished not to venture too far out.

Interested listening automatically achieved a reduction of “hyperreflexion” (exaggerated attention) and hyperintention (exaggerated wish to enforce something). While the child thought of the fairy tale, and not of her swimming, natural body movement took over.

This simple example confutes the homeostasis principle. Today we are primarily concerned with self-finding, self-strengthening, self-actualization, and similar ego-centered goals, and yet, an exaggerated occupation with the “beloved ego” is harmful. We are basically self-transcending beings, focusing on a reality-even by way of a fairy tale.