

# 3D TA

a discussion paper delivered by  
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November 8 1991 at

## THE 10TH AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS CONFERENCE

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### ABSTRACT

From 39 years' experience conducting rucksack camps that 'change the world' for the participants, the author has developed specific techniques for predicting, defining and evaluating strategies for change and strength.

The rationale for these techniques has been built into the Aliveness Concept, a 3D mountain-scape setting for the TA Ego-Gardens. It is a landscape where garden plants often spread outside the gardens, where people can get pathologically lost and where the Right and Left Brain are neighbours that sometimes won't even talk to each other.

The pictorial nature of the Aliveness Concept allows it to be easily communicated without jargon. The author uses the Aliveness Concept as a teaching/counselling framework in rucksack growth camps, whose participants range from 7 year old children to professional adults.

The 3D setting allows the identification of energy gradients involved in decisions, changes and stress. This in turn indicates ways to facilitate positive changes, to maximise personal power to get the most from life, to enhance communication and to nourish Intimacy. In short, it helps build common-sense.

The role of the Adult as a Story-Teller is important to the Concept's view of common-sense, where both memories of the past and imaginations of the future are important in directing the present.

Though the Aliveness paradigm does not attempt to explain the dualistic concept of the soul, it does treat the will as a separate function from the Ego-states, centring it in the all-pervading stroke-hunger, the universal need to feel alive. It places religious faith as the adherence to Epic Story made up or repeated by the Story-Teller, within which all other Stories are sub-plots.

The use of log-books by the participants is a means of accessing the Adult, and with open-ended evaluations these provide a flow of data which is used to evaluate the impact of the methods used.

## 3D TA

### THE ALIVENESS CONCEPT a decisional model

#### THE ALIVENESS CONCEPT INTEGRATES THE FACTORS OF CHANGE

The Aliveness Concept was devised to integrate observations and experiences over thirty-nine years of camps that changed the world for many of the participants.

#### THE BEST MODELS ARE EASY TO EXPLAIN

The model was designed to be able to be explained easily to Instructors who would continue my work, and to participants who wanted to continue the initial processes of change that they had enjoyed.

#### THESE FACTORS LIE BEHIND DECISIONS FOP CHANGE

In this model I wanted to **integrate factors that are important** in making decisions for change:

Freewill

Motivation for change

The options available  
 Imagination  
 The role of memories  
 Model based thinking  
 Personal responsibility  
 The role of beliefs  
 Right and Left Hemisphere functions  
 Energy and stress  
 Communications  
 Religious phenomena.

### **A NON-VERBAL MODEL CROSSES BARRIERS**

To achieve a high level of communicability, I used a large **non-verbal component, a three dimensional model** that could be formed, drawn, and described in concrete familiar terms. This diminished the need for jargon, and enlarged the access to the Right Brain.

### **SHORT SIMPLE WORDS ARE BEST**

To maximise the effectiveness of the model, I used a simple vocabulary, based on short Anglo-Saxon words. This helped the model to be seen as realistic and non-threatening. Furthermore, such a vocabulary could readily be adapted to young children or professional adults.

The model starts with motivation.

### **THE UNIVERSAL MOTIVATION IS THE WANT TO FEEL ALIVE**

The universal motivation is a want to feel alive. We all want to feel alive. Merely being alive is not enough. To be in a coma, unaware of the world and oneself is psychologically indistinguishable from death. We would rather feel good to be alive than sorry for ourselves, but even that is better than no feelings at all.

All decisions and behaviour seek to get things that make us feel alive now or later. We act as if we have an insatiable hunger for recognitions of our selfhood, for affirmations of our existence, for feelings of aliveness. All enjoyment hangs on the enjoyment of having this hunger filled.

The desire for things that make us feel alive is so basic and powerful that it seems to be the only reason anyone does anything. By making conditions that control the supply of things that make us feel alive, governments, economies and individuals control people.

### **WE FEEL ALIVE BY SENSATIONS, RELATIONSHIPS, FREEWILL, MEMORIES**

We can get this feeling of aliveness from our sensations of the world around, from relationships with other people, from using our freewill, and from **remembering**.

The most intense feelings of aliveness come from things that make us feel alive, that are unexpected. They are free, unconditional, and unearned. They have no strings attached. If they are good they are able to give the best feelings there are. If they are bad, they can give the worst feelings there are.

Things that make us feel alive that are conditional such as rewards and punishments are less intense in their effects, but can control people by controlling the source of their aliveness feelings.

### **WE IMAGINE A LAND O'HEART'S DESIRE WHERE WE FEEL MOST ALIVE**

We evaluate our life position against an **imagined ideal where** our potential to survive in, and enjoy the universe is satisfied. In that ideal lifestyle, we would never lack the best feelings of aliveness we can imagine. This is our 'land of heart's desire'.

Our 'land of heart's desire' is in no one place. It is wherever someone experiences a growing aliveness, exercises **freedom**, and lives without barriers. Whoever ventures in, grows in humanness. Such a traveller however short the stay, never returns the same person.

People organize their time and energy to select and harvest the feelings of aliveness from their world in such a way as to approach as closely as possible their 'land of heart's desire', and perceive their value in terms of their success in this attempt.

## WE USE OUR MEMORIES TO MAKE DECISIONS

We do not make decisions independently of our memories, but the faculty of decision is not a memory, and is not completely predictable.

Decisions involve inner negotiations with **memories** which are also interacting with each other by tension and association.

## MEMORIES COME IN POWERFUL CLUSTERS

The tensions between memories eventually causes them to interact with the decision faculty as if they were sorted into clusters of associated memories. The major clusters are of remembered Feelings, of remembered Rules, and of remembered Stories.

The influence of each of these clusters on decisions gives rise to three preferred options of behaviour. Each has its characteristic language, degree of satisfaction, feelings and emotional content.

## MEMORIES OF FEELINGS FOR FAST AND FREE DECISIONS

Memories of Feelings include memories of both frustration and fulfilment in the search for things that make us feel alive.

A decision in this region is guided by these feelings to act on impulse by re-enacting remembered situations without any attempt to think things through.

The resulting behaviour is spontaneous, impulsive, irrational, and maybe irresponsible or unruly. It seeks aliveness in sensual experiences, volitional actions, by **remembering**, and in establishing relationships with people.

Some key phrases expressing this mode of behaviour are: 'I don't care!', 'I did it without thinking', 'I'll do what I like!'. It is the stuff of fun and fights. Decisions made on the basis of feelings are the fastest and often make mistakes.

This mode requires the least energy to use and so is the usual avenue of decision when a person is very tired. It is highly **emotional** and is capable of giving the greatest satisfaction and the greatest pain.

Spontaneous behaviour provides unexpected and unconditional things that make us feel alive. Its **dominant feeling is one of freedom from rules** and plans. It is this freedom that feels threatened by others' attempts to control, and leads to defensive behaviour.

## MEMORIES OF RULES FOR SHORT CUTS THAT MUST BE OBEYED

Memories of Rules include those rules we have accepted **from** others and those we have made up for ourselves.

Not only do we remember the rules, but we also **remember the** way they were enforced. We not only remember being controlled, but how to control. Being subject to power, we learned power behaviour.

In using rules, we decide to think and not to act on impulse. However, to save **time** that thinking an action out fully would take, we use a short cut. We act on any rules we have accepted that seem to fit the situation. In using this area of memory, we are influenced by our memories of being subject to power and may re-enact **remembered** power behaviour that was associated with the rules we use.

The resulting power behaviour always involves control of oneself or others. It complains, blames, punishes, rewards, threatens and maybe rescues. A person behaving in this mode looks for aliveness in being able to control other people, oneself, or the world.

The language of the mode talks of 'going by the rules', and says 'I should', 'you must'. Decisions made on the basis of Rules are also fast, but make fewer mistakes than decisions made on Feelings.

The Rules mode requires more energy to use and maintain than the Feelings mode, but less than the Story mode. It is therefore a more likely form of behaviour as fatigue sets in. It is also an emotional area of the mind because of the early age at which the first memories were impressed.

In spite of this, Control behaviour gives the least satisfaction of the three options. It provides only conditional feelings of aliveness, which depend on maintaining a position of control by obedience to, or rebellion against the rules. Its **dominant feeling is one of power**. It is this power that feels threatened by others' exhibitions of **freedom**, and so attempts to control them.

### MEMORIES OF STORIES FOR PREDICTING IN UNTRIED OCCASIONS

We are inveterate Storytellers. We make up and tell each other story-patterns **about ourselves and** our world, linking experiences of trial and error into Story-plots of causes and effects in an attempt to make life predictable. When we use the memories of the Stories we believe, to predict how to get the best feelings of aliveness possible, in new and untried situations, we say we are using our common sense.

I have used the word 'story' instead of the textbook word '**model**' because it conveys the day to day meanings more easily than the word 'model'. The day to day meanings I attach to these patterns are:

- \* Like a story, they are imagined, or made up, or put together in the mind. They may not always be able to be drawn, or described, but can be recognised, and maybe acted out.
- \* Like a story, they can be true and accurate, or fictional and fantastic.
- \* Just as a story is not life itself, the patterns we make are not reality itself. It is as dangerous to confuse the patterns with reality as it is to confuse stories with real life.
- \* Like a story in the mind of its author, the patterns can be changed by decision.

In life we make up many short stories about specific parts of our life and make some progress towards an epic super-story about the world as we see it, in which all the other Stories are sub-plots.

We all started building these Stories at a very early age from very limited experiences. Some Stories are given to us ready made, others we make up for ourselves. Both however, must come as a result of sensory input. As we are continually receiving new sensations, so our Stories will require constant updating to cope with new information.

In using Stories, we decide to think out the probable results of actions by making forecasts on the basis of relevant Stories. The resulting behaviour includes observation, reasoning, explanation, prediction and experiment culminating in making plans about how to get the **most** aliveness from a situation. These plans may involve the appropriate use of Rules and the enjoyment of Feelings. Since the plan is custom built for the occasion, there is no re-enactment as in the other options.

A person acting in this mode says 'I think...' and '...probably'. Decisions made on the basis of Stories take the **most time**, but they have the potential to make the least **mistakes** of all the options.

The Stories mode requires the most energy of all the mind modes to maintain and use. It is hard to think this way when tired.

The Stories mode is informational, and has little emotional content. It is able to give double satisfaction, providing feelings of aliveness from successful planning and the appropriate use of Rules and Feelings. Thus it harvests both conditional and unconditional things that make us feel alive.

While working from Plan behaviour, the **dominant** feeling is one of responsibility for one's own decisions.

### WE USE MEMORIES TO SAVE ENERGY AND TIME

Personal behaviour is complex, and seldom is any one of these options carried to an extreme without combination with the others.

Decision **making** appears to involve a rapid examination of each **memory** bank in the order, Feelings, Rules, Stories, for information relevant to the goal. This is also the order of energy required to use the option, the time taken to reach a decision, and of the potential accuracy of the results.

### STORIES WE BELIEVE ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT IN DECISIONS

Of these options, the remembered stories by which forecasts and plans are made are the most important. They have the greatest potential to obtain things that make us feel alive, and can guide in the most effective use of the other options.

The most important Stories are Stories about ourselves, since they control our use of resources of aliveness. Accurate Stories about ourselves and our world provide the greatest capacity for personal growth.

### **STRESS COMES FROM UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS OF ALIVENESS**

Stress is always associated with decision making.

However, extra stress is experienced when the anticipated yield of things that make us feel alive is not gained from the option we have chosen. If a choice of behaviour is biased towards an unproductive option, even though there is much satisfaction available through other options, additional stress is felt as the bias is overcome and the energy of decision redirected.

People organize their time and energy to avoid stress and to harvest the best feelings they think they can get from their world, and so approach as closely as they dare to their 'land of heart's desire'.

### **WE CAN VISIT OUR LAND O'HEART'S DESIRE IN PEAK EXPERIENCES**

It is possible to achieve satisfaction that is indistinguishable **from** the ideal in experiences that have been described as 'contact' (Perls), 'peak' (Maslow) and intimacy' (Berne).

The common factor in these most satisfying and desirable human experiences is a high degree of willingness to affect and be affected by the world outside ourselves, and the people in it.

A group can be organised to provide an environment an environment that nourishes the capacity for intimacy and self actualisation in its members so that peak experiences are accessible and probable. In these experiences they visit their 'land of heart's desire'.

### **PICTURING THE CONCEPT**

An effective way of explaining the Aliveness Concept is to picture the Concept.

We all need things That make us feel alive, and when we set out to get them, we must travel through the mountain of memories we have accumulated in life. Making a decision is like coming down off a mountain to get supplies.



## A BIRDS' EYE VIEW OF THE MOUNTAIN OF MEMORIES

There is The Forest of Feelings. You cannot see far ahead. There is hardly a track. The forest hides precipitous drops and rocky escarpments. Going through the Forest can be fast and dangerous.

The Ridge of Rules is full of roads and tracks, some of them fenced. It is well sign-posted with directions, but the ways twist and wind through thickets and remnants of the Forest.

You can make fast progress down this Ridge, with more safety than through the Forest, but the tracks and roads control your going and arriving.

Common-Sense Country is marked by lookouts and observatories, libraries and museums. From here there are causeways built into the world beyond. People move through here slowly,

checking the past, looking ahead. Here you can look back to what has happened before, how things have turned out, and put them together in a kind of Story pattern to use the next time.

If you look hard, you can see that there are places where the landscapes seem to be mixed.

In Common-Sense Country there are a few Forest trees and some worn tracks. A few small scenic lookouts can be seen on the Forest rocks and as rest areas on the Ridge of Rules. There are Forest trees here and there between the Roads of Rules, and old tracks seem to disappear to nowhere in the undergrowth of the Forest. At times, people prefer to **come off the sides of the mountain somewhere where the landscapes mix.**

Somewhere on the mountain is the Point of Decision, the place we start from when there's a decision to be made. Sometimes it is around the middle, sometimes people prefer to start from half way down the

mountain. Though this might give a quick way off, this position biases the decisions, and the view you can get of the other options.

Checking the options is like walking around The **mountain side**. The closer you are to the top, the easier it is to get around. The further down you start, the more energy the ups and downs of the landscape take, so that many folk halfway down the mountain, do not shift very often.

When they check their options, people **seem** to start at the Forest of Feelings and may get as far as Comon-Sense Country.

It takes energy to make a decision, and the Forest of Feelings is the easiest place to start. It takes more energy to decide as they move through the options. Moving the point of decision from a favoured position takes even more energy, but it can be worth it.

## MAKING A DIAGRAM

The Concept of Aliveness can be diagrammed to summarise its features.

A diagram is best used after a picture has given the idea some connection with familiar things, and is a good way to integrate an array of information, to show its relatedness.

Two levels of diagram are illustrated, one being further from the picture and more abstract than the other.

FOR THE LOG BOOK



Feelings of Aliveness- UNCONDITIONAL, may also harvest some CONDITIONAL ones

Satisfaction- DOUBLE - successful planning and planned use of appropriate Rules, Feelings

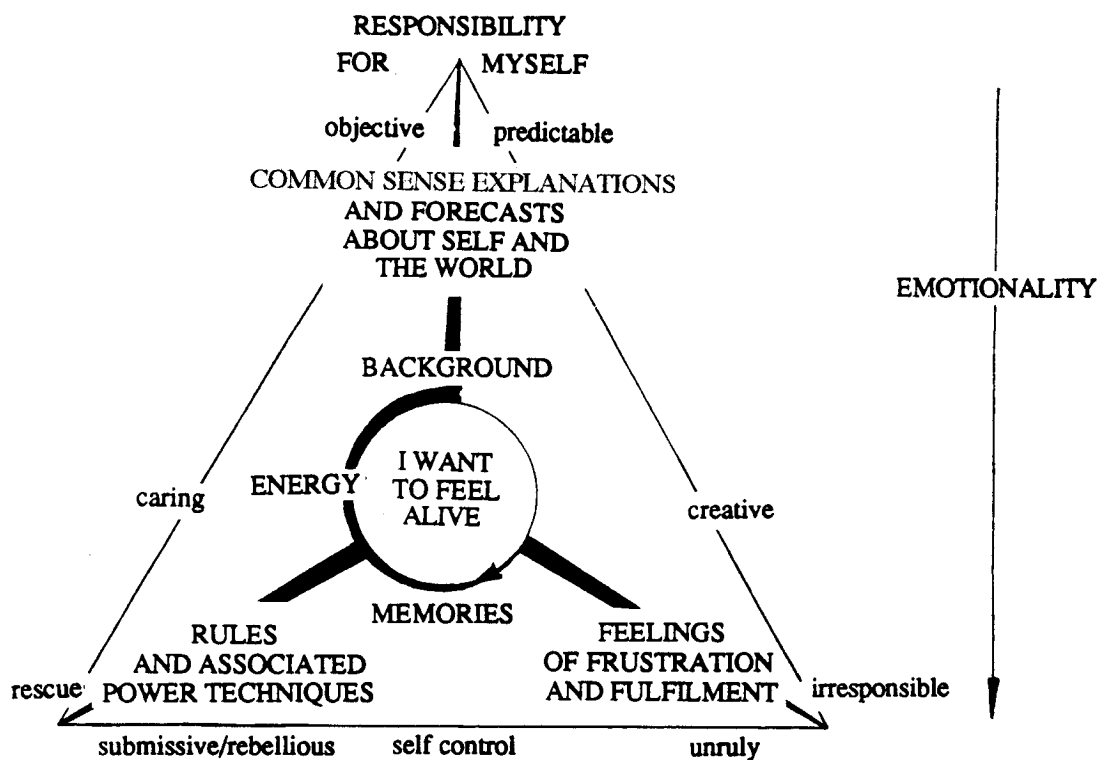
Feeling- RESPONSIBLE, UNEMOTIONAL - not threatened by displays of Control or Freedom

Energy of decision - MOST, hard to think this way when tired.

Accuracy - LEAST MISTAKES

Reaction Speed- SLOW, attempts to think things out fully.

Behaviour- 'I think', 'probably',  
observes, reasons, explains,  
experiments, predicts,  
plans



### CONTROL OF SELF, OTHERS

Behaviour- blame, punish,  
rescue, reward, complain,  
demand, threaten,  
'go by the rules',  
'should', 'must'.

Reaction speed- FAST, uses rules  
as short cuts to save thinking.

Accuracy - FEWER MISTAKES

Energy of decision- MORE THAN FEELINGS,  
Control easier than Responsibility when tired

Feeling - POWERFUL, EMOTIONAL, feels  
threatened by others' exhibitions of  
freedom so attempts to control them.

Satisfaction - can be LEAST

Feelings of Aliveness - CONDITIONAL

### FREEDOM

#### FROM RULES, RESPONSIBILITY

Behaviour- spontaneous, sensual,  
volitional, relational, remembering  
impulsive, irrational, irresponsible  
'I don't care', unruly, fun, fights  
'I'll do what I feel like',  
'on the spur of the moment'

Reaction speed- FAST, no attempt to  
think things out, without thinking',  
'What does it matter?'

Accuracy-OFTEN MAKES MISTAKES

Energy of decision- LEAST, usual  
thoughtstyle when very tired

Feeling - FREE, EMOTIONAL, feels  
threatened by others' attempts to  
control.

Satisfaction-IMMEDIATE, maybe great

Feelings of Aliveness- UNCONDITIONAL

## THE CONCEPT MODELLED

The Aliveness Concept can be modelled in three dimensions to provide an effective illustration of relationships.

The simple model of a mountain with three ridges helps make the idea clear.

For the mathematically minded, the model has the form of a triangular pyramid, whose base represents the areas of option and whose apex is the faculty of decision. The volume of the solid can be taken as proportional to the memory bank content available. The variation of the solid from a regular tetrahedron is a way of indicating the relative importance of an option to the whole person. The proportional importance of the options varies as a person matures.

## SOME FORECASTS

From the Aliveness Concept, forecasts can be made about the most likely ways people will react to each other:

- People will do something if they can see that it will bring them a feeling of aliveness. If you want people to do things, they will in turn expect a feeling of aliveness which may be sensory, social, or volitional.
- People will tend to repeat experiences that have provided them with good feelings they can remember. If you want someone to do **something** again later, they will need to be provided with good memories of this **time**.
- Fast reactions based on Feelings or Rules are more likely to be wrong than those that come from taking the time to think things out by Common-Sense. This is because the most powerful memories in these clusters came earliest in life and may not apply now.
- Following your own rules makes you feel secure, but making other people follow your Rules will make them defensive because they feel their freedom is threatened.
- Using your Rules memories to interact with people usually does not help make friends. Your Rules will probably trigger childhood feelings of being controlled in other people, and make them feel small. People usually do not enjoy this.
- Though it makes you feel good, there are times when using your Feelings and shoving off your **freedom** in front of others can make **them** feel insecure and threatened with loss of control over their personal world. This is especially likely if they are Rule based people.
- Using a replay **from** the Feelings **memory** bank, of being controlled, helped, or of rebellion, will often bring an answering display of Control behaviour, which may not be welcome.
- If you use your Feelings memories and replay of the free enjoyment of fulfilled wants to someone, it is usually taken as an invitation to play. If there is an answer from the free childhood Feelings of another, the two can have fun together.
- When, rather than a mere recital of memories, a **reasoning** response is required, you will need to use your memory bank of Common-Sense Stories, and to encourage a response from the same quarter. It will be little use to reason with someone who is stuck in a memory bank of Feelings or Rules, and will not come out. Then all one can do is wait. There is no sense in reasoning with these memories.
- The Common-Sense **Stories we make up about ourselves and others will affect our imagined ideal** on which we model our lives. **We shape our lives to our ideal** by seeking and selecting the alivenesses that bring us closest to it.
  - ❑ If we believe a Story that makes us more valuable than others, then we will put them down, while we expect them to be kind to us.
  - ❑ If we believe a Story that we are less valuable than others, we will put ourselves down, and expect other people to put us down even while we are being kind to them.
  - ❑ If we believe the Story that neither we nor anyone else is valuable in this world, we will both give and expect put downs.

- ❑ However, if we use the Story that we and others are all valuable, and equally so, we will not put others or ourselves down. People who use this Story both give and look for things that make it good to be alive.
- Those who value themselves enough to accept and give unconditional good feelings will find friends **more** readily because of this.
- Believing and using **Stories that undervalue** oneself or others, or the world around by words or actions will bring bad feelings and may go against survival. Treating people, events, or things at less than their real value may show as lying, teasing, scoring points off others, 'knocking', or 'putting down'. It is the usual way of upholding a belief system that has not been carefully thought out. Sometimes it is done to maintain a situation where one person does the thinking for another.
  - ❑ **Undervaluing hurts** the 'knocker' because it promotes inaccurate ideas of reality. It always hurts the target whether they join in or say nothing. Even though it is claimed to be 'in fun', put-downs set up a barrier to intimacy. **Undervaluing is destructive** in the long run to a group because no-one likes being 'knocked' and the target persons will distance themselves psychologically and physically to avoid the hurt.
- **Rule-based people** will be unable to recognise the role and origin of communication from the Feelings or Story mode, and so feel threatened by them. Rule-based people will communicate most easily with Rule-based communication aimed at their own option.
- **Feeling-based people** will be unable to recognise the role and origin of communication from the Rules or Story mode, and so feel threatened by them. Feeling-based people will communicate most easily with Feeling-based communication aimed at their own option.
- **Only the Story mode has the capacity to inspect the other options**, and so to be aware of the origin of a variety of communication modes. As a result it is not so easily threatened.
- It will take **more energy to maintain behaviour from the Common-Sense-Story** thoughtstyle than from the Rules mode, and this more than the Feelings base. Energy reserves will determine how long the Story thoughtstyle can be maintained. As energy diminishes, it will become increasingly difficult to maintain Story based thinking, and behaviour will return to the Rules mode, and as it is further depleted, to the Feelings base.
- Activities requiring a **change of thoughtstyle from the preferred position** of decision will produce stress which will show as fatigue, distaste, and a sense of insecurity.

The best trips, in both campstyle and lifestyle, come as people:

- Use the Story that they and others are both valuable and equally so, and by this **eliminate** putdowns.
- Give and accept plenty of unexpected things that make it feel good to be alive without earning **them**.
- Think things out rather than only going by Feelings and Rules.
- Often have the feeling of freedom.
- Feel responsible enough for themselves to,
  - ❑ accept others and the world around as they are, and to
  - ❑ disclose themselves as they are.
- Practise living with minimum defence, look for the moments when none is needed, and organize to extend these moments.

## WHEN THIS HAPPENS

People will be able to change their life plans they made from the perspective and imperfect knowledge of childhood.

People can make decisions on such a camp that will affect the rest of their lives.



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