

W E R N E R E R H A R D

A Special Guest Seminar

On the Nature and Value of the Training

1981

WERNER ERHARD

I have to tell you a story.

You don't know the Jack Tarr Hotel, it's a shame. It makes this place look wonderful.

The Jack Tarr Hotel has plastic chandeliers in the ballroom where we do the training.

And they've done a lot to improve it. I don't want to bad-rap them.

It looks very nice now. In the old days, it was questionable, however. And there was this really wonderful guy sitting over in about this part of the training, and he put his hand up when we were sharing, and he stood up, and I said, yes, his name happened to be David, and he said, listen.

And this was a guy you could tell who'd been around, he'd been into things. You know, lots of people in California have done everything. David's done everything, and you could tell.

Some of you, some of us, you can't tell we've done everything. But some of us, you can kind of tell. With David, you could tell.

He was dressed like he'd done everything. So David stood up and he said, "listen. I have been to the greatest monasteries in the world.

I have been to monasteries located at 12,000 feet in the Himalayas and sacred mountains. I have been back into the wilderness of Nepal, across the border into Tibet. I have spent months in solitary relationship with masters.

I have been in India. You know, the whole gamut. He told me the whole thing.

And he said, I can't tell you how annoyed I am that I'm going to get enlightened under this damn plastic chandelier."

NARRATOR

In 1971, Werner Erhard created a two-week-end training designed to transform your ability to experience living. Since that time, he has been applying the principles of this training to social as well as individual transformation.

Among the activities generated by the people who have completed the training are the Hunger Project, the Breakthrough Foundation, the Holiday Project, and the Est Foundation.

In early 1981, for the first time in several years, Mr. Erhard traveled around the United States and delivered a series of special guest seminars about the nature and value of the training. The following are excerpts from this 13-city tour.

WERNER ERHARD

You know, I wish I could find another way to do these guest seminars. Actually, this is the first special guest seminar that I've done in many, many, many, many years. And it's a real privilege for me because one of the things that many people don't know is that there's not the training and enrolling for the training.

See, lots of people think that there's the training. There's this process of enlightenment or transformation or getting it or whatever you'd like to call it. And then there's registering for the training or enrolling for the training or the process of this kind of a guest seminar.

And that's really very inaccurate. It's all a piece. The process of enrolling for the training is as much of the training as the training itself is.

And the process of registering will have a great impact on people's lives. And if you ever talk to the graduate who invited you here, you're a guest tonight, if you talk to the graduate who invited you here, perhaps you have discussed this a little bit, they'll tell you very clearly that the results of the training begin when you register for the training. You don't have to wait to get into some ballroom or meeting room on a Saturday morning for the training to begin.

The actual results that accrue to people, the benefits that accrue to people, start when you register for the training. And this process of enrollment is really a part of the training. And it's very difficult for people to get that because it looks like they're sitting there figuring out whether they want to vote for or against it.

And I want to be very clear that we didn't invite you here tonight to vote for or against it. See, there are no sides with respect to this. And the truth is that 273,000 people have participated in this training in the last nine years.

And overwhelmingly, not the majority or even most, but almost all of the people who have been through this training, almost all of that 273,000 people when surveyed say that it was the single most important experience in their life in terms of contributing to the quality of their life.

And not surprisingly, in that same survey of graduates in which thousands and thousands and thousands of graduates responded to a very large and complex survey form, and by the way, it was also checked with all those graduates who did not respond to see that it really represented all graduates. And in fact, it did.

By telephoning people who had not responded and filling out the questionnaire with them, they could then cross-check. But the point is that the other important, the training was the single most important thing in their life in terms of making the greatest impact on the quality of their life. The only thing which was on a par with the training was people's family life, and it was on a par with the training.

Everything else in people's lives, everything else in people's lives, their education, their government, their job, their careers, was if this was the training and this was people's family life in terms of the importance of its contribution to the quality of their life. Everything else was down here like this.

And not because people didn't like it.

Because in another question, when we asked them, to what would you like to see us make a contribution? Where should we focus our energy in helping to make things work better? One of the very primary places for people was government.

So it wasn't that they didn't like politics or government. It was simply that the way it was hadn't made a very big impact on the quality of their life. Now, you may have been invited here tonight if you were a guest to come see Werner Erhard.

And maybe you came out of curiosity to see what I looked like or whether I could handle myself.

Not an important enough reason for me to be here, and I doubt seriously if it's really appropriate for you to be here on that basis.

And so I want you to know why I think you're here tonight, so that you know where I'm coming from and speaking to you tonight.

See, my sense is that you are here because you have a real commitment to the quality of life. To the quality of your life, to the quality of the lives of those close to you, to the quality of the life of the people in the country in which you live, but really to the quality of all life, just plain ordinary to the quality of life. And it's not something you talk about necessarily, and it's not something you discuss necessarily, but it's really where you're coming from. It's who you are. It's the stuff that your unexpressed dreams are made of. It's the stuff that when you get closest to yourself and you're most in touch with yourself, that you're in touch with.

That aspect, which I'll call a commitment to the quality of life. And that's what this is about here tonight. You see, the person who invited you here tonight knows that the training that they went through has made the single biggest contribution to the quality of their life of all the experiences that they've had.

And on that basis, (applause) and on that basis, they want you to take the training. And it's really that simple. So what this seminar is about tonight is giving you, the guest, an opportunity to enroll yourself in the training.

That's the purpose of this evening.

NARRATOR

Then, from the Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C.

WERNER ERHARD

Yes, the advisory board is a board of about 120, something like that. Some of them are emeritus members of distinguished individuals, mostly from the United States, but from around the world, who've made important contributions to society.

We ask them to come together two or three times a year to advise us how to make what we're doing more available and more useful. They once did a study on the most important outcome of the training. What was the place in which the training made the greatest impact in people's lives?

Was their conclusion from their study that the place in which the training made the greatest impact was in the quality of people's family lives? Man, you have no idea what it's like to really complete, to really dissolve the issues, to really take down the walls between you and your parents, whether they're living or dead. They still live in your experience.

I wish I had the time to tell you about it. You have no idea what that does to you in your life. Lots and lots and lots of places where you have not been free to be yourself, where you haven't been really able and capable, are unconsciously, unknowingly to you, tied up with the unresolved relationship with your parents.

And you want to know what? You don't have to go over it scene by scene by scene, moment by moment, incident by incident. In the training, you discover a capacity within yourself for what we call context, so that you don't need to dredge up all of the past.

You're able to create a context of completion around it, which suddenly frees you in your relationship with your parents so that you're able to express the natural love that's there and experience the natural love that's there, regardless and transcendent to the circumstances. Now you can interact with the people you love out of that experience of being loved and being complete and loving.

There's enormous amounts of outcomes in the training.

I hate to give a list of them.

Some people go through the training and they begin to lose weight spontaneously, without the agony. Some people go through the training and they simply lose the desire to smoke.

Some people go through the training and some of the things that they've been carrying around with them, like sense of insecurity, financial insecurity, is a big thing for people today. You know, they kind of, it's not, they're all right, to get that nagging sense in the back that they're not quite secure enough. What if something happened, or what if this went wrong, or what if that went wrong?

For many people, those things resolve in the training and suddenly you're able to be in the world with no sense of insecurity. You don't give a damn what happens. It's not like you don't care.

It's like you know you're big enough to handle it. You're big enough now, but why carry those senses of insecurity? At any rate, that's another thing that people report.

People report remarkable abilities to break through in their relationships. Invariably that'll be one of the things that people report. Real breakthroughs in their relationships, with their spouse, with their children, with their parents.

People report an ability to be more effective on their job, to communicate more effectively, to kind of be big enough to encompass people.

In other words, when you're in an interaction with somebody, sometimes you have the sense it's them over there against me over here, and sometimes they're pretty big and you're pretty small.

A transformed sense of self is not self as object or thing.

It's a sense of self as space. So you become the space in which this thing and that thing are. The things in it are never bigger than you.

That begins to give you a facility, a faculty, an ability to relate with other people, to communicate with other people, to be with other people. A way that makes you more effective is more nurturing. I told you about people who have jobs in which they feel they get burned out after the training.

Suddenly these very same exact jobs begin to nurture them. They're no longer burned out by the jobs. They're nurtured by them.

People are able to do things they always wanted to do and could never either quite find the time or whatever excuse it was. One of the things that gets handled in the training is your excuses for not being fully alive.

It's a very interesting thing about transformation.

People think it's a badge you get. You've been through the training, you get this badge, and now you're a graduate. That's it.

You can relax, everything is all over for you. That's the graduates laughing. Because everything is not all over.

As a matter of fact, if anything, everything has just started. And that's the sense that you get.

By the way, you want to know that those people who are applauding were very successful, very able people, psychologically very sound before they took the training.

Very important for you to know that. I want to tell you about some research that was done. There was research done on people before they took the training, just after they finished the training, and then three months later.

The psychological testing organization that did it said, look, Werner, you can expect some improvement from before the training to after the training. Otherwise, why would people be taking the training in the first place?

That's obvious.

But then it will trickle down, and it will level off someplace. And wherever it levels off, and we'll know that, contrasting where they are three months later, we'll know wherever it levels off, that's really what you're delivering. Not the big high people will come out with after the training, but whatever they're left with over time. Fair enough. We wanted to know that. Now, after the training, it was a big jump up, predictable.

Three months later, it had not dribbled down. It, as a matter of fact, had increased, much to the surprise of the psychologist in the testing organization. It made them very interested in the training.

As a matter of fact, they took the training. But the point that I want to make with you is that the training is not something that is a kind of a badge that you get, and then that's it. No.

The training is something you will never get over.

NARRATOR

The following interchange took place in Newport Beach, California.

GUEST

My question tonight is that in my life, I sometimes find myself doing some things that I really don't want to do, but I'm not aware of that until I'm involved. Can the est training help me with that?

WERNER ERHARD

I like questions that are honest-to-God questions, not questions that people have made up in their concepts, but stuff right out of a person's life. I really want to thank you for asking an honest-to-God question. I want you to know that I don't have a pat answer for you.

It's a little bit like I'd like to have a give-and-take, maybe. I'm going to respond out of my experience of the training and out of my observation of people who have been through the training, and then maybe you'll have something you want to say back to me. I don't have a pat answer, and I wouldn't want to give you one if I could think of one.

But I do want you to know that the training is kind of remarkable in this respect. Freud discovered that a lot of counterproductive behavior in people's lives, a lot of nutty things that they did, came from experiences which were counterproductive because they were held in the unconscious.

See, a lot of people misunderstood what Freud said.

A lot of people think that negative experiences in your childhood was what Freud discovered to be the source of suffering in adulthood. That isn't what he discovered at all. He didn't discover that.

He discovered that experiences, that certain kinds of experiences, which when held in the unconscious memory, produced counterproductive behavior in people's lives, got them to do automatically things they didn't want to do.

Now, that was Freud's discovery. We have actually discovered another phenomena parallel to Freud's discovery. We discovered this in the training. And that is this. And it's a very much more kind of general thing rather than being a kind of problem in psychiatry.

The training is not psychiatric. It's really more a life kind of a thing. And what we've discovered is that that about which you are unaware. See, not unconscious. Unconscious is like it happened to you and you can't remember it. That about which you are unaware.

That, you know, for instance, if you were... I've been skiing and I can remember when I first got on skis. When I first got on skis, my consciousness narrowed down to about like this.

And then I noticed as I got a little better skiing, it got out to here. And finally, I had a big breakthrough one day. It got out to the tip of the skis.

And I haven't gotten it any further than that, but anyway. But anyway, it was a big breakthrough. So, in other words, the scope of my consciousness expanded.

One of the things that you'll find in the training is that the things that have been kind of using up your consciousness, mostly mental things, in the back of your head, kind of, you know, if you sit still, you can hear the voice, that thing kind of quiets down after the training.

And your sense of consciousness is expanded. It's not that you see something new, it's just that you've taken a bigger picture.

And so I think people would tell you, with respect to the question that you asked, that after the training, you're kind of, instead of being a player in life, you know, and then this happens, and this happens, and this happens, and this happens, instead of life being that sense, you begin to have the sense of yourself as the space in which it's happening.

So you're kind of with yourself, almost.

Not peering at yourself, but being with yourself.

And you kind of can see you're about to put your foot in it, usually.

Now, what is your first name?

LANA

Lana.

WERNER ERHARD

Lana?

Lana, the other thing is, that I don't want to pretend to you that once you've been through the training, you don't ever put your foot in it. Because I know you put your foot in it after the training a lot.

I put my foot in it plenty.

But one of the things which I really feel I have developed out of my experience of the training, and developed quite naturally, is that while I put my foot in it, I can almost always instantly catch myself, and invariably, I'm big enough now to admit it. See, in the old days, it was so important to me to be right all the time, to look good all the time.

I was so afraid of, I don't know what, losing people's approval, losing my own approval. I was so afraid of not making it, that I couldn't tell one on myself, you know? That I couldn't say, hey, you know something, I just lost my temper with you, and that's stupid, and I apologize, and now what is the real point to this discussion?

Let's get at it. You know, I couldn't do that in the old days. And I noticed that whatever it is, I'm able to do that now.

So I think, yes, that the training does expand your sense of space, so that you have a sense not of just being this thing here, operating in this set of circumstances, but you have the sense of being this space in which you're operating. So you're literally being with yourself. And then even when you do put your foot in it, you have a greater capacity to respond to that intelligently.

So, any more about that, or anything to say about that?

LANA

No, I was just going to say, that sounds like what I want, to be more aware.

WERNER ERHARD

Good.

I want to try to give you a little idea of what it's like in the training. First of all, the training is a very exciting place to be. There's something really happening in it.

And the training is done in an atmosphere of real dignity. It's not done in an atmosphere of kind of politeness, or done in an atmosphere of social grease, but it's done out of a sense of real compassion for the people who are doing it. The men and women who do the training start out as trainer candidates already with a professional background of some kind.

They've either been executives, or attorneys, or psychologists, or psychiatrists, or MDs. Most of them have some kind of a professional background before they become trainer candidates.

It now takes us, I think, at least the least amount of time that we've been able to train people, even with these kinds of backgrounds, to be trainers is three years.

And on average, it would be a bit more than that. Whoever would do your training would have not less than four years of a combination of experience and training. And many of the trainers have been trainers and therefore have experience of seven, eight, and nine years.

So the people who are doing the training are very highly qualified to do the training. And the single... Let's see, I don't want to say it that way.

There are a couple of aspects to becoming a trainer that are really very fundamental in the process of becoming a trainer. And perhaps one of the most important of those aspects is to have a real insight into the validity of people and the dignity of people. As you and I know, lots of times we aren't very dignified in a very real way.

We may be dignified in an outward way, but, I mean, not in an inward way. I mean, all of us have the experience perhaps from time to time... In fact, I do want to say perhaps all of us have the experience from time to time of being small or petty, of being kind of me first, ungenerous.

And lots of people are afraid that's who they are.

As a matter of fact, if you examine people very carefully, you've had the chance to examine thousands and thousands of people, you find that many of us are the person we put out into the world so as to hide the person we're afraid we might be. The person we most want to hide that person we're afraid we might be, the person we most want to hide that from is ourselves.

So we're running very fast in this kind of a treadmill to keep our best foot forward, to look to ourselves like a good guy. And lots of people are afraid to take the training because they're afraid to find out who they are. They literally are afraid they may be this person that they've been attempting to hide.

As I say, most particularly attempting to hide from themselves. One of the things you discover in the training is that you are really three people.

You are the person that you've put together that combs his or her hair and puts on the right clothes and knows how to say things correctly and has been educated to whatever degree you've been educated and knows how to get along in life and wants to look good and wants to gain other people's approval and wants to be successful and wants to be right but doesn't want to be seen to be overly ambitious.

You know, that whole thing. That's kind of the one we put out there. And you do come face to face in the training with the person you're afraid you are.

And you get to experience that very directly and very straightforwardly. You get to experience all of your own foolishness, all of your own pettiness, all of your own smallness, all of your own lack of integrity. And you come to grips with it in a very honest way.

In a way, and that's one of the things about the training. The training is a very safe space. See, the training is actually done in the privacy of your own experience.

In other words, you don't drag out for view all of your pettiness and your et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. But you have the space, the opportunity, the freedom to actually examine yourself and to take a look at yourself very honestly. To come face to face with yourself.

The interesting part about it is that, you know, in the training, some people share, some people never share during the training. The training works just as well for people who've gotten up and shared as for people who don't. But oftentimes, the biggest glimpse, one of the most important glimpses you'll get into yourself, one of the most important sights you'll get into yourself is seeing yourself in somebody else who you think is an absolute fool.

It's a very sobering experience. And a very exciting experience, too, by the way. Because in the training, you kind of also get to that third person.

The person you really are. And at any rate, the trainers, the people who are conducting the training have a profound sense of that ultimate self. Your ultimate self.

And they are doing the training out of that profound sense of your ultimate self. So the training is not done with a kind of agreed on dignity. It's not done with a ceremonious dignity.

It's done with true dignity. The dignity wherein you are recognized for who you really are. The training is also done at the level of self-determination.

No one does anything to you in the training. The training is something you do yourself. The trainer makes the opportunity for you to do it.

It's not that the trainer knows something that you need to know or that if you knew, you'd be all right. It's that the trainer knows that you know something that if you knew you knew, it would substantially alter the quality of your life.

So you see, the training is often about things you already know.

But it's about knowing them in a way that actually makes a difference.

Some people want to know how come the training works for everybody. It's very simple.

The training's already inside of you. It's not something you get that gets added on to you that you then carry around with you. That stuff's pretty worthless anyhow.

Everybody knows the stuff you add on to yourself eventually falls away if you don't reinforce it. The training doesn't need any reinforcement. So there's no ideology.

There's nothing that you join. You don't belong to something. You aren't co-opted.

You don't suddenly start sounding like me. You suddenly start sounding like you.

So that's why the training works for everybody, because it's already inside of you.

It's like where I live on the west coast in San Francisco. Sometimes that big bridge that goes from San Francisco across the bay, the Golden Gate's hidden in the clouds. But it's there, and it's big.

The wind comes along and sweeps the clouds away. It doesn't put the bridge there. But suddenly you can see it.

Training works like that. Some people are afraid of being conned. No, they're not.

Not really. People are afraid that other people will think they've been conned. That's very bad.

People are very frightened that other people will think or find out that they've been taken in. Listen, this is the training. You go home tonight and take a minute and take a look at how much of your behavior is really motivated, how much of your interactions with other people, how much of the way you are in life is really motivated by a desire to make sure that nobody thinks that you've been taken in or conned.

You watch how much of what comes out of your mouth in your interaction with other people is to prove to them that you know you haven't been conned, you haven't been taken in, you aren't a sucker. If I wasn't a sucker, I don't know what is. Who the hell else would be avoiding being a sucker?

You're a sucker anyhow. I told you this is the training. Almost.

People say they'll call me bad names in the training. No, they'll tell you the truth in the training.

So I'm going to tell you the truth.

The truth is you've been conned. You don't have to worry about being conned. You've been conned.

You are conned. I'll tell you the biggest con there is. It's a societal, cultural con.

It goes with the species. The con is that something, or someone, or someday, you are going to be happy. If you take a look, our whole culture is based on that.

As soon as you get married, then you'll be happy. If that doesn't work, as soon as you get divorced, then you'll be happy. As soon as you get educated, you'll be happy.

As soon as you become the vice president, you'll be happy. As soon as you become the head of the department, you'll be happy. As soon as this happens, you'll be happy.

If you can only have more money, then you'll be happy. Longer vacations, then you'll be happy. Shorter work hours, then you'll be happy.

Or whatever it is.

That's an absolute con. You aren't ever going to be happy.

Now you don't need to go to the training.

Now you know.

See, this is it!

You think it's going to work out.

No, it did, and this is the way it worked out.

You don't like it?

Shame on you!

I had the opportunity to be with and learn from a man who is considered today Japan's foremost living Zen master. A man by the name of Yamada Mumon Roshi. A very beautiful, very old, lovely, radiant human being. At the end of my stay with him, he did a series of calligraphies. You know, brush paintings, characters, ideographs. He's also considered one of Japan's foremost calligraphers. One of the calligraphies is the sign for happiness. And the caption underneath it, also in Japanese ideographs, is I don't want it.

See, he isn't conned. His life is not about getting happy. He isn't organizing what he does in order to get happy.

You don't like happy? Put any other word you want in behind it. His life is an expression of who he is.

And that's the experience of transformation. It's what the training's about. You're being conned out of the training, not into it.

The est training is offered now in 35 cities around the world and in five different countries. The training is offered not only in the United States, but in Canada, in Britain. We've had programs on the continent in France, Sweden, Germany, and Switzerland.

The training is done in India. There's an enormous demand for the training in India. Way bigger than we can even come close to satisfying.

And we just recently completed our first training in Israel. We've done the training in the fifth grade classroom in Watts. We've done an all-black training both in Oakland, California, and Harlem, New York.

We've done a training for people of only Hawaiian descent in Hawaii. We've done the training in various prisons, in the Alderson Women's Prisons, in the Lompoc Federal Penitentiary, in the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary, in San Quentin. San Quentin, by the way, is the kind of penitentiary where the guards are tougher than the inmates in most prisons, and they better be.

You go into San Quentin to do the training, and they ask you to sign a release that says if you're taken hostage, they don't trade anything for you. The trainers get an additional training in a place like San Quentin. The training has been done with city governments.

The training has been done with rural city populations. The training has been done in medical schools for residents and for medical students. The training has been done for lots of police officers.

About 500 members of the Los Angeles Police Department, for example, are graduates of the training. I want to tell you a little bit about the kind of people who've done the training. The youngest person to ever take the training was five years old.

The eldest person to ever take the training at the time she took the training was 96 years old. 11,000 people were 55 or over when they took the training. 18,000 people were 17 or under when they took the training.

One out of every 10 graduates, that's 26,000 people, is an educator. One out of every eight graduates is a manager or executive. That's 28,000 people.

5,000 graduates are in the legal profession. One out of every 15 graduates is in the health profession. A doctor, a nurse, a therapist, a psychiatrist, a psychologist, like that.

The average graduate has the equivalent of 15.5 years of education. And obviously our graduates range in education from not having gone to high school, where many of the inmates in the prisons were, to people who are internationally famous for their intellect and their academic prowess. The average, however, as I said, is 15.5 years of education.

One out of every four graduates has an advanced degree, a master's degree, a doctorate, or a professional degree. There are 276,000 graduates of the training. There are 1,000 new graduates on average every week, approximately 50,000 new graduates a year.

There is an average of 635 graduates in every congressional district in the United States, and one out of every 800 people in this country is a graduate.

NARRATOR

Then into the music hall in Houston Texas

WERNER ERHARD

I first want to give you a bit of a picture of the training itself.

There will be about 200 people in that room, depending on the size of the room, and that's what limits the size of the training, is the size of the room.

Usually the maximum that we want in a training is 350 people. In that way, we can establish a certain relationship and a certain feeling in the group, so that the person who sits at this corner of the training is not so far away from the person who sits at that corner of the training that they can't see each other and kind of get a sense of each other. But my guess is that the room there will hold about 200 people.

There will be about 200 people sitting much like the people in this room are sitting, theater style. They'll look much like the people in this room look. There'll be some people who've flown in from other parts of the country, maybe even somebody from outside the country who's flown in.

There'll be the age that the people in this room are, anywhere from teenagers in the normal course of events, children who take the training, take it in a special training for children, where the hours are different and many of the other things are different. So about the youngest people in the training will be teenagers. It could be somebody in their 90s there.

There'll probably be at least, you know, let's say four or five older people or people that some of us consider older. I've talked to them. They always consider other people older.

Somehow this thing is always relative. But there'll be maybe one or two people who sit up front all the time and they'll be people with a hearing loss who don't hear well. We organize it so that they sit up front all the time so they can see the trainer more readily.

The chairs usually won't be those kinds of chairs. They'll be those padded chairs that are in hotels that stack, that have a pad on the seat and a pad on the back. And the platform that the trainer stands on will only be this high, just enough so that the trainer, he or she, can see to the back of the room.

In the back of the room there'll be people who sit in the back of the room all the time during the whole training because anybody with a medical problem who has to take medication on a regular basis will sit in the back of the room so that we can give them their medication, make sure they take it on a regular basis.

Some people who have diabetes, for instance, need to eat more regularly so they'll be sitting in the back so that they can eat every so many hours.

People with a medical problem who have to go to the bathroom frequently will sit in the back.

I better talk about bathrooms because that's always very important to people.

It's interesting. I used to say that you have to answer the same questions for people who are interested in the training that you have to answer for a kindergartner when they go to their first day of school.

The first thing is, when is my mother going to pick me up?

So the training starts at 8.30 in the morning and you'll get out, your mother can pick you up sometime between 11 and 2 in the morning. And the second day and the third and fourth day of training start at 9 o'clock instead of 8.30. First morning starts at 8.30.

You should get there a little early so you can get your name tag and be seated and be ready. And also that you can find a place to park so that your parking can be handled for all day because, as I say, your mother won't pick you up until 11 or 2 in the morning.

Usually people have eaten in the morning before they come. There's one meal break during the day, long enough to have a meal.

Some people bring a meal with them. Some people go out for a meal. The meal break is long enough to get a meal.

And then when you go home at night, you can have your third meal unless you're more tired than you are hungry. Then you can go to sleep early. There's a bathroom break.

That's the second thing. Where's the bathroom? All kindergartners want to know that first day of school.

There's a bathroom break every four hours. Now, people in the training, what will happen is the trainer will deliver data. Now, I've delivered some data tonight, but I have not delivered it quite in the way in which I would do it in the training.

See, for instance, I'm going to give you a piece of data from the training. And this comes in the first half of the first day. The trainer will say, Your life doesn't work.

And your mind will click into gear about, Oh, yes, it does. And I'll tell you what, I got this and I got that, and you can't tell me that. And how do you know anyhow?

And et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. Now, I've actually said that a couple times tonight. But I've had the velvet glove on tonight, you see.

So I haven't said it so that it really kind of penetrated too much.

Now, you see, you just listening to me? And you're able to handle my little intrusions pretty nicely.

Well, that's too bad. You don't get away in the training. You do not, thank you.

You don't get away in the training. No kidding. You scramble and run and try it.

You don't get away. The reason you don't get away is not that the trainer is clever, but that you have a real commitment to getting what the training is about. The training is a remarkably exciting place.

I mean, whole big stretches of your life come into view, and suddenly they fall into place and you can understand things in your life which you've only been explaining heretofore. But I want to be real clear that it's all a function. And this whole process that we've set up for enrollment is also a function of a real commitment to the quality of your life.

And so this enrollment process is a – see, the enrollment process is not to get clear about the training. You are never going to be clear about the training. Even after you do it, you won't be all that clear.

The doubt that you need to sort out tonight in order to register yourself in the training is not the doubts about the training. It's the doubts, if you've got any, about your own commitment to the quality of your life. Now, some of you came here tonight already determined that you were going to enroll in the training, and no matter how bad I was, it doesn't make any difference to you.

You're going to enroll anyhow.

So another group of people who came tonight with the sense that they wanted to enroll in the training, and they just wanted to kind of get a little bit more sense about it, perhaps be with some graduates some more, perhaps have the time while I was talking to kind of let it settle with them, and it has now settled for you. So you two are handled.

Those two groups are handled. I'll tell you what to do in a minute. Then there's a third group of guests who came tonight who are now agonizing about this.

And, oh, yes, I would like to, but I have this problem, and there's money, and then what about I don't have time, and I work on the weekends, and gee, they might not let me go to the bathroom, and I have to eat all the time, and I'm, you know, whatever, all that nonsense. And there are some people who are afflicted with a disease called procrastination. It seems to run their lives.

You know, people have to think it over.

See, one of the things you'll find out in the training is that what you think doesn't have anything to do with the outcomes in life.

See, for some people, the hardest part of the whole training, as terrible as it is, is enrolling in the training.

Please don't make it that way for yourself. So stupid. I know it's difficult.

I don't mean to be silly about it. I know it's not a nothing choice to make. I know it's a profound choice to make.

And I know that you get up on the edge, and it's kind of like teetering on the edge of the diving board. You know, you get right up there on the edge, and, yeah, you want to go in, otherwise what the hell are you doing in the diving board? But, gee, it looks like a long way down there, and maybe the water's cold, and maybe I shouldn't do this.

But after all, I'm up here to do it. Well, let me first off tell you, and I tell you out of the experience of 280,000 people, the water's fine. And second off, the way to get off the board is step out.

The rest of it takes care of itself. And what I mean by that, see, it's interesting. It's really very, very interesting.

If you want to take the training, and there's something stopping you, take a look and see if that thing that's stopping you, not the circumstance, this particular circumstance, but this quality in your life, this thing that's stopping you, see if that isn't exactly the thing you want to get handled in the training.

And let me tell you that the instant you register in the training, the training begins, and you begin to handle that thing. See, when you register for the training, you are taking a definite and positive step towards handling those things which have been handling you.

Subtly, maybe.

Not that you can't explain them away, but those things which have been subtly shaping your life. When you register in the training, you take a positive step towards handling those things which have been handling you.

The way to register for the training, if you've got a problem or a barrier or a consideration, or whatever it might be, the way to handle that is register first. And then in the space of having registered, then handle the problem. And you'll find that you've got the strength and the wherewithal and the insight to now handle the problem.

You're here tonight, and you want to take the training, and you've got a problem. You're still a little skeptical, you're still a little uncertain, you're concerned about your financial security, whatever it might be. Register in the training.

Get that done, and in that space, you'll have the wherewithal to handle the problem. The training starts when you register for it. It's that simple.

The people who invited you here tonight, the graduates, know that the training is a profound, remarkable experience. And their purpose in inviting you here tonight comes out of their regard for you. It comes out of, yes, and I'll say it in public, their love for you.

And the person who invited you here tonight invited you here because they want you to take the training. It doesn't make a difference to them. And they want you to take the training.

They do want to share this profound and remarkable experience with you out of their knowing what kind of a contribution the experience makes to the lives of people and out of their relationship with you. Yes, as I say, out of their love for you. See, all my life, I knew I had something to contribute.

I knew I had something useful to do. But I could never get the kind of support I really needed. I mean, I really couldn't get the kind of support I really wanted from the people I worked with or from my family or from my friends.

About nine years ago, I discovered how come I couldn't get support. And since that time, I have gotten a ridiculous, enormous, magnificent amount of support. What I discovered now about ten years ago was that I wasn't being supported because I wasn't supportable.

Real simple. See, if you said to me, gee, this is something I did, I thought it was great, I would say, yeah, but that was fine for you. And if I said, well, I'd like to do this thing, but I've got this problem, and you came up with an answer, I'd say, yeah, but.

See, there was no way you could do anything for me. You could not do anything for me. I did everything on my own.

I never did anything anybody wanted me to do or anything anybody asked me to do. I was literally un-supportable. I always had an answer.

I could never give another human being the privilege of contributing to me, of contributing to my life. I wasn't big enough to share that opportunity with someone else. I couldn't tolerate doing something where someone else could say I contributed to this person's life.

If you're a guest, be big enough tonight. Be supportable.

NARRATOR

Now, back to Newport Beach, California.

DAVID

Good evening. I'm one of those persons that you were speaking about an hour ago or so who has been suffering along with a very good friend who has been telling me about est.

WERNER ERHARD

And telling you, and telling you.....(laughing)

DAVID

And what made it even harder is that he's one of my favorite people in the whole world.

WERNER ERHARD

I understand. (laughing)

DAVID

Well, I took your advice and he helped me end both of our miseries this evening. I'm now registered.

(Applause)

WERNER ERHARD

What is your first name?

DAVID

David.

So I'm registered for the training. My question is that I have a significant apprehension.

WERNER ERHARD

Yes?

DAVID

My apprehension specifically is this. I've been in many situations. I'm 40 years old.

And so I've lived my particular life for about 106 years.

WERNER ERHARD

Right. (Laughing)

DAVID

And...

WERNER ERHARD

(Laughing) That's great.

DAVID

I've been in...

WERNER ERHARD

Let me write that down. Hold on for a second. (Laughing) That's great.

That will be in the training soon.

DAVID

So I've been in a variety of situations. Some of which have made me feel very alive and very fulfilled. And some of which have made me experience pain.

When I'm visualizing what I've signed up for... I'm visualizing something that has been rumored regarding the training that, seriously now, I will be a person who, as part of this training, will have my very inner, private soul bared to a dispassionate trainer in front of 200 strangers.

WERNER ERHARD

Okay, that's...

DAVID

My question is, is that going to happen? I'm ready, but... I hope we're all going to be there.

WERNER ERHARD

That's great. David, listen. I want you to know something.

I'm really pleased with the question because I know it's a question in the back of lots of people's minds. And I really prefer to answer the question after someone has enrolled.

Obviously, I'm going to do what I don't prefer to do and answer it before for lots of people here.

But, you see, you really handled that aspect in your willingness to confront that aspect.

In other words, in my view, you had the opportunity to make a choice about whether that kind of personal pain that you're speaking about and very kind of intimate personal pain is more... The avoidance of that is more important to you than the quality of your own life.

And I have to tell you that the way in which you answered that question is already enormously valuable.

And I suggest that you will find the values of that in the coming days before you ever get into the training. So, I just have to validate that and I have to acknowledge that because it's something for which I have a lot of respect.

And it's not just a kind of personal respect. It's something which I want to share the opportunity...It's an opportunity I would like to share with other people.

And I think you've done a really brilliant job of doing that and I appreciate the good humor with which you did it as well. But now let me try to get to the quality in the training. The training will almost undoubtedly reach deeper in you than...

I don't want to say that any experience has because I'm going to assume a guy who's lived 106 years has been... like you and I have... has been gotten to a couple of times.

But I want you to know that the training will reach very deeply inside you but it will do it in a different way than other things have reached deeply inside you. It will reach at those sore spots or points of pain. It will penetrate into them.

And you should know that the training is hardball. It's not kidding. It's after the truth.

And it gives you the opportunity to get at the truth but it does it in a very interesting way.

The trainer will not get inside the depths of you.

You will get inside the depths of you.

With an objectivity... I really want you to get this part. With an objectivity which you perhaps have not had available to you in other situations which got deeply into the painful aspects of one's psyche.

So let me... I really want to try to get this across. This is a little technical and I apologize for it but it's a good opportunity to get to some technical data which I think is useful for some people in the room.

And those of you who don't like it, too bad.

You see, in the normal course of events when you get down inside yourself what is at issue is something which you'll hear more about in the training called surviving. If you take a look at your own depths out of the need to survive your view of those things makes them persist.

In the training you will look at certain aspects of yourself certain experiences of yourself certain views of yourself certain senses about yourself but you will look at them with nothing at stake. I mean, the training is designed and the trainer knows how to create for you the opportunity to be with yourself in such a way that you just take a look at it. You will find that the grip that those things have had on you will disappear even though the memory of them will not.

In other words, they'll still be there for you but they won't have any effect on you.

The other aspect of the training is that the training will touch you profoundly in that place which is the exact opposite of sensitive or tender but it will touch you I promise you and I don't make that promise generally but out of my experience of what you've said I can tell you that the training will touch you very deeply and it will touch you profoundly and when the trainer and the other people in the training and you are together you will be touched in a way that will move you very deeply in a way over which you will never get, David.

The training is an experience over which people never get.

(Applause).