

Norbert Fabián Čapek

**K SLUNNÉMU BŘEHU:  
průvodce šťastným životem**

**(To the sunny beach: the guide to a happy life)**

first edition 1939

published also as

**Nálada a Její Vědomé Tvoření  
(The conscious creating of a mood)**

the second edition 1947

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### General Overview:

This book represents one of the Čapek's most popular published contribution. It offers an explanation of the principles of human life from a psychological point of view, practical directions for how to deal with daily problems, and how to improve readers' lives in general, particularly from a religious perspective.

### Note:

This syllabus may serve as an overview of Čapek's writing to those who cannot read his texts in the Czech language. It is not intended as an objective summary of the book, but it still may provide an insight into the Čapek's thoughts. The book can be found in Wiggin Library at Meadville Lombard Theological School under the number BF 521 .C3 1939 and BF 521 .C3 1947.

### Content of the Book:

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#### **1. About the Appropriate Attitude**

Čapek explains that everyone's mood can be controlled. In every difficult situation we can choose between two reactions: one of anger, or one of a "smiling philosopher." We can be masters of our mood, and we can develop a constantly calm mind.

#### **2. Secret Intelligence**

People, as creatures, should see clearly their own evolution continuing through history for thousands of years. Each person has a power and intellect which is connected with the intellect of the universe. The intellect of the Universe can be perceived in Nature. We can utilize the ability of our soul to control our consciousness and subconsciousness.

### **3. Threshold of Consciousness**

Čapek explains the principles of consciousness and subconsciousness.

### **4. Analysis of Human "I"**

Čapek defines the human "I." The phenomenon of experiencing of "I" is distinct from consciousness and personality. "I" is one of the functions of the human soul, and in many aspects illusionary. Čapek uses "I" in terms of a complex of connecting elements between our personality and the external world.

Religious conversion, for instance, is a mental psychological transformation of "I." Čapek uses three examples of his own conversions.

We can prepare a plan of how to develop our "I" by ourselves. This issue is further developed in chapter 21.

### **5. Hidden Desires and Interests**

People often lack control of their behavior. They experience conflicts between instinctive desires and ideals stated by their consciousness. Everybody has to choose his or her own way of catharsis. The selection of it, however, should be conscious and not done at random. People should know ways to manage conflicts between desires and ideals.

### **6. Symbols of Inner Struggles**

Čapek talks about the power of subconsciousness. We can and should develop the skill of autosuggestion and relaxation. However, to understand and control one's subconsciousness is very difficult, especially when it is protected by the walls of old suggestions which were rooted there by strong authorities during our childhood such as parents, teachers, or priests.

### **7. The Art of Calming Down**

The modern way of life in our time causes problems in our nervous systems. It is common to suffer from various kinds of neurosis and to be constantly irritated and wrathful. Many people do not sleep, eat, talk, listen, read, and so on, very well. We should learn how to improve our general life-style and how to be centered and calm. We should not waste our energy.

### **8. Relaxation**

Relaxation should become a basic part of our lives. Čapek talks about four kinds of relaxation developed by Prof. Jacobson from the University of Chicago.

After we master the basic skill of relaxation, we can combine it with autosuggestion.

### **9. The Impact of Breathing on Mood**

Breathing is very important for healthy and happy life. People have become accustomed to breathing in a harmful way. They should notice how they breath and improve it, if needed. Furthermore, breathing practice in relaxation can be particularly good.

### **10. Controlled Thinking**

The human brain is not an independent source of thoughts but an instrument of the thinker. We can control it, therefore we can be masters of our thoughts. Čapek uses several examples of Asian masters' teachings on how to master our minds.

### **11. Power of Emotions**

Will and intellect are not as powerful sources of motivation as emotions. Emotions also can be more effective than medicine. We should learn to control our emotions like the driver leads his horses.

The two most harmful emotions are anger and fear. We should add anger and fear to alcoholism and other bad habits as being equally harmful. We can oppose anger and fear by trust and love, which are the two most beneficial emotions.

### **12. Controlling of Fear**

We can control fear by devotion to a certain mission and ideal. Also, our effort will be successful if we accept ourselves as spiritual beings. The Universe is not hostile to us; we just need to understand and to know the Universe more: it is our wider existence, source of our life, and the mystery of our will to live. If we are aware of this, our hearts cannot be controlled by fear. We are a part of the Eternal; where we are there the universe is.

### **13. Controlling of Pain**

Pain of any kind can be controlled if we know how to relax and restrain from tensions. Relaxation can serve as narcotic without side effects.

It is important to prepare ourselves ahead of time for difficulties of any kind by regular training and exercise.

### **14. Joy to the Mind**

There are many kinds of joys and sorrows, both are mutually related and either negative or positive.

Religion can help people to deal with their stress. The right religion is such which takes away fear arising from sadness and heals. It is not important how much it talks about God but how much positive joy it brings.

A good mood and joy have a general positive impact on our physiological and psychological life. The rich sources of joy are hope, trust, and devotion to our ideals. Joy should not be understood in terms of a mere sensual or instinctive delight, but rather in a spiritual sense. Joy and pleasure should not be our ideals but realizing our ideals should be our pleasure and joy.

### **15. Controlled Will**

Will is an instrument of the soul, not of the body. A healthy will is peaceful, purposeful. It is steadfast effort directed toward the reaching of a goal. The path toward a strong will is the path to ourselves.

Love and deep interest are the best sources of our will. Without love, interest, and an ideal, and therefore without will, a human being would die like a flower without the sun.

The best training for our will is to follow strong ideals of social justice, a better social order, and a pure religion.

### **16. Mood and Relationship to People**

Kindness, empathy, acknowledgement, compassion, and love are the basic criteria for living in a good mood. Unselfish love in our attitude to other people is difficult to learn, but the fruit of our effort is rich.

### **17. Mood and Fatigue**

Understanding our bodies and how the energy works there is important for the conscious creating of mood.

Čapek uses a scheme by William James to describe the levels of energetic reserves in a

human body. People often fail to differentiate between being tired and exhausted. Our reserves are usually much deeper than we suppose. If we are motivated, it is not difficult to overcome our fatigue.

### **18. Colors and Mood**

Colors effect our mood. It is important to tune our living environment in an appropriate combination. Colors can heal and be beneficial in many ways. They help us to keep our optimism.

### **19. To See Beauty**

To see the real substance of beauty requires a certain spiritual development. Everything in our environment can be perceived as either ugly or beautiful; it depends on our minds. The world as a global complex can be perceived as beautiful if we are able to see it as such.

Beauty is a friend of love and life. The right beauty is moral, omnipresent, and divine. Experiencing beauty moves us closer to God.

### **20. Mood of Abundance**

The spirit of plentitude supports good mood as well, in contrast to the spirit of poverty. We have enough of everything that is needed for nice and pleasant lives, but often we do not notice for we focus on our lack of something secondary.

Having the spirit of plentitude means to focus on the goal and to know that we can get enough resources to reach the goal. Every day is a new occasion, and in every minute we can enter a new path.

### **21. The Path of Imagination**

Imagination or creative thinking is the sign that the human is in relation with the Power which created the world. Imagination is a crucial element of human progress.

Our societies have professionals who use their imagination working in many areas of development. However, we are missing professionals working in the area of spiritual engineering, and the conscious planning and creating of mood. Nevertheless, it is everyone's duty to stop living randomly, and to start living according to a consciously created plan.

A human at a high level of development is called to consciously be a creator of the world in, by, and for which he or she lives. A person's basic equipment for such a life is his or her imagination and creativity.

Čapek describes how to create a plan for our new life utilizing our imagination, using a parallel with the construction of a building:

1. Create a new picture of what you want to become.
2. Finish every detail of the picture.
3. Place your "I" and our consciousness into the picture (move there spiritually).
4. Create this spiritual picture in matter – in real daily life.
5. Further develop this picture every day.

We should work carefully with our mind and imagination. We have to be aware that creating a picture of what we want to be becomes real in the moment of its creating. We can certainly change it constantly, but we cannot get rid of it. If we suppress it, then it will enter and grow in our subconsciousness.

The crucial aspects always should be the basic idea, its moral level, and high spiritual status.

Čapek talks about his conviction that such values as peacefulness, love, kindness, and beauty are NOT purely abstract or dependent on people's agreement. Instead, they are absolute values, the powers and vibrations of the all-encompassing Soul which is present in us. We are related to this Soul of the universe by powers and vibrations. The intensity of our connection depends on our devotion to them. Daily practice and exercise is the basic element required for a more beautiful life.