HOW
HOW

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IN THIS PROCEDURE, Ladies and Gentlemen, we will attempt to locate and remove the patient’s resentment.

Resentment often manifests as a knot of gristle beneath the jaw, sometimes a lump or node against the spine, and I have marked a typical spot for incision at the seventh dorsal vertebra. Patient is forty-one years of age, male. No known allergies. A history of dyspepsia, memory loss, and rage. The pre-op log shows that a double course of anesthesia was required to stop the patient from gritting his teeth. Certainly, he’s still conscious; that is both medically advised and the order of the court.

Because the condition in question is terminal if not cured, we need not be unduly wary about severing nerves and shredding connective tissue during the initial incision from dorsal seven to cervical six. I prefer a jab-and-pull technique, as such, a fairly strenuous maneuver requiring a certain amount of arm strength, which lays the spine and scapular integuments open to view. Suction, please. If caught early, as the abstract in your folders explains, resentment can be treated with an aggressive regimen of B-complex vitamins and inpatient compassion, but our subject has manifested late-stage symptoms of the disease for most of his adult life, so more invasive measures were clearly indicated. On the salmon-colored sheet, you will find summaries of several incidents that suggest the progressive state of the syndrome, including a link to surveillance video in which the patient tips over and repeatedly kicks a shopping cart with a wobbly wheel, stopping only when he has broken four toes, and you see
me now rooting around fairly liberally with a Crimean forceps for the calcified root of this puling discontent.

Resentment may alternately reside in a migrated bolus or clot. In an instance like this, where we are forced to open the leaves of the back like a book to skim for the irregularity, advanced staunching performed by teams of three is necessary. I'll step back to show you that we've uncovered no visible sign of the disorder here. But do you smell it? It's the fishy, corrupt smell underneath the iron tang of blood. So we approach, though we do not yet enter, the realm of radical measures. In a less advanced case, where the patient's first thought upon waking each morning was not hatred for the middle-school baseball coach who twenty-two years ago nicknamed him *asswipe*, it might be possible to close up and go home, recommend chemical paralysis and assisted living, but urinalysis and the M.M.P.I. both indicate toxic levels of rancor, multiple organs compromised by a storm of umbrage, so we proceed with the indignectomy.

With a No. 2 Balkan augur, then, I bore a channel with some haste directly into the mandible, through the skin and subcutaneous matter one inch inferior to the earlobe, reducing to powder the finely knitted bones there where the problem possibly lies. Inspecting the bore hole in vain for a filmy lump or residue, we now repeat the procedure on the contralateral side. Clean goggles, please. I now separate the inferior maxillary bone from the skull with a Rwandan wedge and a series of controlled hammer blows. A long and painful course of plastic surgery will repair some of the damage done here if the patient survives, but cosmetic concerns are secondary; our patient would have been dead within days had he not been detained and sentenced to our care. The poisoning of pigeons on his lunch hour, you'll see on the goldenrod arrest history, occasioned his last of many involvements with the judicial system. Before that, the hate mail to the Vice-President and the Vice-President's wife. And the rear pocket of your folder contains the relevant sections of the patient's termination report for sexual harassment and identity theft, committed after he suspected a coworker of eating his leftover pizza from the staff refrigerator. Given the dire nature of these episodes, it is particularly unfortunate that we have, as you see, once again failed to locate the source of the disease.

And so, with a Macedonian bone saw, I notch the pelvis on either side to facilitate removal of the genitals. A standard scalpel applied circumferentially finishes the job nicely, and if I can ask you to bring me that specimen tray, young man, we'll send the excised matter to the lab for immediate biopsy. We'll need a specific density test on the pulverized
testicular matter, a centrifugal analysis of the remaining tissue to target deposits of gall and acrimony. It should be obvious that these tests are catastrophic and allow no possibility of reconstruction, but of what utility are his sexual organs to a person who has only masturbated for the last decade? Who admits that every woman above the age of eleven frightens him? Moreover, would it even be ethical to allow their further use to a man who once wrote *Rape my boss* on a to-do list? These are the kinds of decisions they can’t teach you to make in medical school.

And so we see that the tests have come back inconclusive. Note the elevated though not abnormal levels of spite and abhorrence as we click to the next slide. The weak positive for neoplastic venom. Gentlemen, the best efforts of modern science are sometimes in vain. Therefore, I will now perform the expedient mandated in such cases by Louisiana law and terminate the patient with a gunshot to the heart. Cover your ears. And there. Nurse, please note the time of death. In the interests of thoroughness we’ll send the brain for analysis, though experience suggests his brain will look much like yours or mine, will share the same essential shape and texture, the same concealed and foggy corners. Somewhere in him is the thing that killed him. It’s best to remember that he was dying when he came to us.
YOUR LIFE IS REPLET with inefficiencies. As your Eubios consultants, it is our obligation to state this plainly so you can face the problem clearly. Remember the DVD we played at your Orientation: Only by appraising yourself with a critical eye can you hope to achieve a life of meaning and focus instead of the life of shame and doubt your self-survey indicates. To this end, the Expanded Mid-Term Report you hold in your hands—a special amenity reserved for our Total Being members—moves beyond the physical to address the interpersonal, personal, and inner-personal. Of twelve possible Spheres of Waste, it has been determined that you inhabit twelve. Total remediation could possibly be the work of years. But when your aunt enrolled you as a Eubios member, she stated her belief that inside you was a better you she knew you could be, a you you could be proud of. You have stated that you agree. You will take the first step toward that you when you open this Report and begin reading. Please notice the Reflection Questions on the attached page.

Of all your compromised Life Areas, the one most characteristic of your particular manner of wasting is Self-Cleaning, specifically Showering. Consider: If you are inefficient in your most private moments, when you are in your own best care, how can you hope to practice efficiency in the larger world? The following data, compiled from twenty-two visits to the lavatory space by your Eubios Field Squad, reveal, first, that you commonly stray from your task before you begin it by activating a small television beside the unused second sink of your vanity. If you submit a
Pledge Card committing to choose a single channel and leave the television tuned to it while you shave, we will not mandate its removal in our Final Report. However, our observations show that you change the channel, on average, 37 times per morning, a practice that requires not only the time to manually retrieve the remote—2 to 3 seconds, during which time shaving is suspended—but also the time to dry your hand before you retrieve the remote, or to dry the remote after you use it, followed by a moment of neural paralysis as your visual field reorients itself to the new arrangement of scrolling scores and text boxes that characterize the news and sports programs you prefer, a hiatus during which you not only cannot further the act of shaving but also cannot successfully absorb information. A current-events post-test showed that you “get” almost none of what you see: Questions you missed included “Who is Vice-President of the United States?,” “Who is in first place in any division of baseball?,” and “Who or what is Fallujah?” As importantly, human cognition studies show not only that “surfing” produces information handicap but also that it yields no net gain of pleasure. And you have reported that you hate all your favorite TV channels. At a cost of three minutes per day—0.003% of your daily consciousness plenum and 460 hours over the balance of your life—you will agree that the price of your bathroom viewing habits is too high.

The focus you show undressing and entering the shower is excellent. Initial wetting, beyond reproach. But our Video Lifebrary shows that you consistently utilize up-and-down soaping. Our policy is circular soaping. This is just scientific. A more serious problem is your practice of saving and combining the shards of soap that remain when each bar melts or breaks. Nine times in June you bent and groped for soap fragments when they split from the larger bar you had melded them to. The economic benefit of this practice is nearly unmeasurable in whole numbers, and the reminder of human frailty occasioned by squatting naked in a wet receptacle constitutes an unacceptable debit from your self-esteem. As for crossing your arms, closing your eyes, and just making bubbling noises for several minutes as the water streams over your face, we will be equipping you with skills designed to make the rest of your day an experience you will not be compelled to postpone with this and other forms of flagrant stalling.

Other irregularities will require lengthy review (for example, the use of three different brushes for your hair), but most fall within the plus- or minus two percentage points we allow for Idiosyncrasy. In summary of your effectiveness at Morning Toilet, our conclusion is that missteps force
you to rush and blunder the central act, with the result that you often fail to wash portions of your body (left armpit 14 times, anterior genitals 5 times), and that you are not a very clean person.

Installation of a Classis II-Series HauteCoacher ($1999) will eliminate those time-wasting moments of standing in front of your closet and hating every piece of clothing you own.

At Eubios we like to say that what you hope to avoid is the feeling of traveling in circles, a condition we call *déjà you*. Of finding yourself back at point A one year older, two years older. Of asking, Why haven’t I grown? What happened to my resolutions? Your aunt listed as her most significant concern for you your frequent change of profession. Our work with excellence metrics and Feck Theory suggests that the American average of five career changes is detrimental to self and society, so you must see that, with six jobs in the last ten months, you are doing pronounced harm to yourself. We have enclosed and ask you to consider a brochure detailing our CPR (Career Path Resuscitation) Program, a patented system of marionette strings, ventriloquism, and light electrical discouragements that has provided many of our clients with relief.

In the meantime, please note the following recommendations regarding two areas of your Work Life. First, we urge you in the strongest possible terms to begin telling the truth. Like public speaking or singing on key, truthfulness is a talent not everyone has; being among the have-nots, you will need to think of truth as a skill you can develop, like typing or archery, a competency you can acquire through drill and practice. From the indirect dishonesty of playing Chuzzle for an entire eight-hour work shift to the direct, unusual lies you tell co-workers—that you have a Siamese twin, for example—a large part of your day is spent in mild to gross falsehood. You do not own a racing motorcycle capable of speeds exceeding 175 miles per hour. The discoloration on your cheek is a birthmark, not a scar from frostbite suffered on the south face of K10. You were not a child-master of Hatha yoga. Eubios consultants in the client workplace obey a strict policy of observant non-participation; but our commitment to that policy has never been more seriously tested than on the day you told your supervisor you had leukemia. We yearned to take you aside and produce from our accordion folder the Satisfaction and Outcome tables on lying, which show lying to be one of the least fulfilling of human activities. We wanted to brief you on recent scholarship in the epidemiology of lying, which finds that the statistical spread and damage of a lie makes telling one much like coughing a communicable disease into the faces of
those around you. Moreover, instruments under development in our lab reveal as yet unexplained gray deposits left by lies upon the soul. But we maintained our stance of observant non-participation as you employed the terminology you had gathered that morning from WebMD to perpetrate your lie and as Jennie M., your supervisor, reached across the desk in tears to take your hand. As you embellished and consolidated your story through the day for the consumption of your colleagues, we watched and waited. Even an individual like yourself with Social Intelligence scores in the 20th percentile must see that this lie (not told toward any purpose our observations could uncover) will follow you for the remainder of your tenure at this job and cost you many hours of maintenance. What you do not see, but must be convinced of, is that inefficiency is unhappiness. And that there is something other than unhappiness to be lived. We assure you there is! Happiness is real! We can show you the graphs.

Meanwhile, here is a second, more easily addressed Work Flaw you can remediate before we get our equipment set up: you have very, very poor mouse skills. You frequently Minimize when you mean to Restore and Restore when you mean to X-out. Also, please realize that since your fingers are already on the keyboard when you type a search topic, hitting “Enter” is a more expeditious way to begin that search than lifting your right hand from the keyboard, securing the mouse, wiggling it to locate the cursor, and zeroing in on the tiny “Go” button. Finally, most unnecessarily, you double-click online. This superfluity arises from failing to recognize the difference between word processing and navigating the Internet. To prevent accidentally disappearing screens and unintended double purchases, as well as to quiet office rumors that you lack the basic skills for your job, please take our word that a single click will activate any online link. Also, find a quiet moment to remedy your fear or ignorance of the right-click, which contains many useful functions to speed your workplace tasks.

Think of it this way: every object in the world contains not only utility but also waste. The waste of considering it, cleaning it, repairing it, of insuring and storing it. If you imagine a complex of lines emanating from every object to represent the ways it relates to other objects and intersects with the life of man—in short, all its physical and metaphysical possibilities—you will have some idea of the web of associations waiting to trap and dissolve the modern mind. The Mentis 2.1 Diagnostic Brainchip that our technicians installed in your medulla reveals a mind so distracted by thought options that it can no longer choose. We see this frequently. There
is a sense that all thoughts can now be thought and that thinking them
doesn’t hurt enough to make not thinking them necessary. And a further
sense that the traditional duties of the mind—weighing, discerning, decid-
ing—are too arduous and, like cooking and walking, best left to people
of the past. How can you know, for example, how seriously to take your
aunt’s cancer? In an age when they can just remove her ovaries? In a day
when, if you just sit in front of the TV long enough, Mandy Patinkin will
offer the precise -trex, -brex, or -statin for her problem? In a time when
she mostly won’t feel any of what they do to her anyway?

As an opening thread, these thoughts, taken from your Brainscript of
last Monday, are acceptably coherent. But taking the five minutes of cog-
nitive activity that succeed these ruminations concerning your aunt, we
find significant cause for worry: Twenty seconds wondering whether your
middle finger, when you raise it in traffic, makes its point with proper
force since it is shorter than your index finger and not of impressive thick-
ness. Did people seeing your middle finger infer inadequacy in you as a
person and a man? Could they even see you and your finger behind your
tinted windows? Ten seconds flexing the finger and wondering whether a
finger could be strengthened and enhanced like a biceps, then forty-five
seconds imagining the accidents that might befall or be caused by a man
with superhumanly strong fingers—tearing open his own nose while pick-
ing it, driving ink pens straight through the credit card slips he was signing
and into the laminated sales counters beneath, pulverizing the clitorises
of the women who would beg him to fingerbang them when word about
his extreme digits got out—and then typing a few words really hard just
to get the feel of what that would be like. A minute and fifteen seconds
plotting when you would next masturbate. Ten seconds: Did she feel pain?
If so, and she probably did because she was a very stoic lady, was it more
of a stab or an ache? Or just a discomfort, not empirically worse than an
upset stomach, the way the pain you felt at the dentist was bad mostly in
terms of the idea of it when in reality it hurt more to pull a hangnail? Eight
seconds swearing to God that you could just put your head down on the
keyboard and fall asleep, nonsense trailing across the screen as your cheek
depressed the keys. Where did other people get all their fucking energy?
And how unfair was a world where it looked increasingly like you were
never going to own a BMW? It’s not like you were asking for a fucking
Lamborghini, just a conservative Cashmere-Silver 1-Series like the one on
the manufacturer’s homepage, not even necessarily with the leather inte-
rior, and this willingness to compromise ought to count for something. It
was a fact, common sense said so, that there were ample resources in the world for everyone to own the car of his liking—or there would be if we didn’t keep dumping money into the useless black hole of Africa and Congress could get off its corrupt ass and we could finally kill off the unions. Of course there would have to be a vetting process for people receiving the vehicles, to ascertain that they weren’t documentedly evil or reckless crackheads or deeply annoying to the majority sensibility in their dress, speech, and personal habits, like Jennie M. So Jennie M. enters the hearing room to make her case before the Auto Board, and guess who’s behind the table. You! That’s right, bitch, how do you like me now? Imagine how quickly her fat-lady bossiness would disappear when you went off-script and asked a few specially designed questions: If you were able to smell your own coffee breath, how long would it take before you threw up? True or False: The point of eating a Weight Watchers meal for lunch is lost if you eat two. What hole in your education or deep personal stupidity has allowed you to reach adulthood pronouncing the *–th* at the end of words as an *–f*, and do you know that this makes you an object of ridicule among your employees, even the ones you think are your friends, and that they often imitate you to liven up the soulless office you run? *I just saw the boss wif the regional manager. Walking Souf? Norf. I hope she brushed her teef. As long as she took a baf.* And while you had her there, you would further point out that whatever institution gave her her *MBA* ought to be bombed into nothingness as a sponsor of intellectual terrorism, and that last year’s suits would be best left in last year’s closet, in memory of the thinner woman they had once fit. Turning then to your peers on the Auto Board, you would propose that in this case no car at all should be assigned, but instead the only conveyance appropriate to the personal worth and gravity of the applicant: a clown’s tricycle. Thirty seconds on how, in truth, you’d always preferred bigger women, women Jennie M.’s exact size, in fact; and that if there were some psychosurgical process by which everything that made her her could be comprehensively scoured from her interior and replaced by a personality capable of intelligent thought, she would be about the best-looking woman you could imagine, especially her calves and ankles, so sweet and fat, and you were definitely going to jerk off as soon as you got home, or maybe even right now in the company bathroom because nobody else was getting a hell of a lot done today, so what the fuck did it matter? Twenty seconds weighing the linguistic, social, and moral differences between *gray* and *grey* and reconfirming what you’d known since childhood in a way that preceded decision, that you were a steadfast *a*-person, and wondering what sort of fey sleazoid could possibly favor *e*. Sixty seconds, a long time
by your standards, smarting over the injustice of a God that could create creatures capable of pain and then give them consciousness.

At Eubios it is not our business to render ethical judgments. Our business is distribution, direction, and duration. By any of these measures, the preceding Brainscript reveals a mind unable to focus on its task, i.e., preparing a spreadsheet of the average weight-per-unit of the chickens provided to the nugget-making company you work for. Your mind has the same relation to itself as a morbidly obese person who will not stop eating the potato chips he knows are killing him. Two things are true of this person. One, he will never achieve any form of success he can be content with because he must punish himself for his own self-wrecking by producing ongoing moments of failure. Two, the taste of healthy food has grown repellent to him. Like this person, your mind lives on junk-jokes and junk-ideas, junk-hopes and junk-declarations, gorging itself on the very things that make it sick. You have lost your taste for the genuine interactions that studies show sustain life and give organisms, even laboratory mice, a sense of purpose. You failed to visit your aunt, the person who raised you, each of the last three times she was in the hospital; our observations have turned up no evidence to contradict the notion that you live in stark friendlessness; and by self-reporting, you haven’t performed an embrace with another human being in 210 days. At elevated levels, self-love and self-hate converge and meet at a point, graphs show. We need cite no further evidence than the 14 straight hours of “Flavor of Love” you watched on 6/9–6/10 to know that you are very near that point.

But your situation is not hopeless. We have re-skilled clients whose cases were more advanced than yours and helped them to achieve as much as three to five years of efficient and meaningful life. We specialize in small changes with large results. At the Recommendations Consult, we won’t be using words like love and happiness, we’ll be using words like maid service and Post-it notes, alarm clock and direct deposit. We believe a daily planner will help. We'll show you how to get started and stay committed. Essentially what’s necessary is attaining a personal force and gravity beyond the reach of all the things you see and hear. It is often said we are in an age of efficiency. The opposite is true! A person in sympathy with the age, responding to its cues and opportunities, would explode into a million floating pieces. It is a problem of the soul now measurable by science, and only science can fix it.

Your aunt will soon be gone, William. Then all you’ll have is you. Be the best you you can be!