CHAPTER 21
IDENTIFYING OUR EMOTIONAL TRAITS

After we have collected and registered our impressions, we can begin their assembly into a reflection of our personality. In this task, we can again take guidance from a jigsaw puzzle on how we can best organize our impressions. We begin assembling a jigsaw puzzle by bringing all game pieces into view. We do this to group pieces together that have common features. Similarly, we will want to bring all the impressions we have collected together in one contiguous area. There, we can sight them and sort them according to commonalities in their themes. But different media in which we have collected our impressions can make it difficult to review and join them coherently. It appears that our task of review and attribution can be best accomplished if we apply a unifying technology of representation to all our impressions. This permits us ready access to our impressions, to view them in the context of all other pieces, to compare them, and to assemble them into a comprehensive depiction of our personality in the most effective and efficient manner. Because the picture we are trying to assemble is a reflection of the constituents and the governance structures of our mind, it is also vital that we find a medium that can correspond to how the represented impressions and the traits they form associate in our mind.

Recordings of our verbal statements or demeanor would not allow us to retrieve our impressions, search through them, or switch our attention among them quickly. We might only be able to bring them into our attention by viewing or hearing them one at the time without keeping other such contents present. Further, such recordings would not leave us free to examine our records at our own pace. Their linear and timed qualities of presentation might encumber our comparative, associative, and distinction efforts. Other media beyond recordings of our voice or our behavior might or might not share some or all of their problems. Some representations may have communicative advantages that we might find difficult to equal with words. They may be particularly effective or efficient in the communication of emotional impressions. Nevertheless, we must apply perceptive and rational criteria and tools to identify our emotional traits, delineate issues, and define actionable content for the improvement of our happiness. This requires translation and representation of emotional concepts. Writing seems to satisfy these requirements best and seems to offer the best capabilities for the articulation of perceptive and rational concepts. While its coding may be different, it shares the quality of language with mental code. It also allows us better than any other medium to reflect on the

correlations and differences among represented contents by picturing their relationships through spatial organization. Its concurrent placement of content in front of us further gives us peripheral awareness of many items even if we are focusing on certain aspects at a time. Writing permits us to represent complex settings, to assess the functions of such settings, and to model changes or supplements to them. It allows us to arrange associations and distinctions of representative concepts until they match the associations and distinctions in our mind. To enable the relational positioning of written elements, we have to initially keep them mobile. Although an electronic format seems to fulfill that requirement, it may lack the ability to present a large amount of writing simultaneously. Hence, the representation of each impression on a separate paper medium seems to be the best solution at this stage.

Organizing our impressions and assembling the features of our mental traits is a gradual process. As we bring all our impressions into view, we begin to discern common and corresponding features among them. This allows us to lay out groups of apparently related pieces and may enable us to connect these pieces eventually on the bases of their observed correlations. The criteria according to which we organize our impressions will become perceptible for us as we sift through our impressions. Their characteristics proclaim the themes in our search for commonalities and association with other pieces. When we first group components together according to features that show relatedness, we may not succeed in observing the complete character of these components. Nor may we be able to clearly ascertain correlations of components with components or clusters that are assembled or to be assembled. Yet, as we group impressions by common or complementary criteria, we become increasingly empowered to determine associations.

The emerging representation of our personality displays higher complexity than a two-dimensional picture. Our impressions are split into those designating past and present circumstances and others describing our hopes and fears. They state in part how we came to this point, how we feel about our situation, and where we want or do not want to go from here. The impressions we have gathered might represent observed or imagined conditions and their interpretations. However, the reason we recall them conspicuously is that we ascribe sensations of pain, pleasure, fear, or desire to them. Such impressions move us. They stand for wishes to gain distance or for wishes of attraction. Our assembly of associated wishes can then provide a depiction of the needs to which they relate. As our needs gain definition, they reveal the issuing configurations behind them that constitute our emotional traits. Our registration of past and present experiences and imagina-

tions, our rational development of them, and the connection of these two sides through our impulses define the dynamic dimension of our emotional traits. That dynamic appears to be independent of our state of fulfillment. If the past was favorable, we wish to regain similar circumstances. If the present is favorable, we wish to retain it. If the past was painful, we want to escape similar circumstances for the future. If the present is painful, we wish for its replacement with pleasure. Our wishes appear to span into an additional, contrasting dimension. The present is a result of a past we cannot change. The future seems to be the opposite of that. Its possibilities appear to be open. Still, these two phenomena of apparent rigidity and of movement are closely linked in fact and in our mind. We draw our ambitions from the past up to the present through our experiences and draw on circumstances from the past up to the present as means to implement those wishes. What we may perceive as different dimensions are aspects of one continuum of evolving events. Our needs create tension in that continuum between a feared state of pain and an actuality of pleasure or between an actual state of pain and an anticipated state of pleasure. That tension is filled with the formulation of wishes by which we deem to advance current circumstances to yield our future. Our emotional traits are the issuing authority not only for our needs but also for remedial action. They issue our wishes to transform circumstances so we can obtain or maintain the satisfaction of our needs, to adjust our reality to our ideals.

Our initial association of elements may be rather unproblematic. The themes for association may be largely provided by our instinctive notions of common emotional traits. These categories include all specific traits that were formed as attachments to common traits. Any impressions that we cannot eventually attribute to the subject matters of our common traits might be indications of unrelated specific traits. Subsequent to a distribution of elements and clusters into receptacles named for existential needs, we may inspect each receptacle to organize its content into one or more sequences of pursuit. To assemble the impressions we have gathered into more comprehensive reflections of our emotional traits, we have to phrase them in terms of their underlying wishes and state the relationship of wishes that belong together. To reflect the pain-pleasure mechanism for every need, it is important to list all related wishes in their relative position. We must rank them in correlation depending on whether they are means or objectives of other wishes. We can establish the sequence or relative position of related wishes by listing the highest-ranking wish on top and potential means leading up to that ultimate wish in the sequence of their function below. Means that do not interrelate hierarchically but eventually

combine to a means or an objective can be listed in parallel steps of sequences. We may call the combination of all these listings our list of wishes. As we attempt to assemble impressions in each receptacle into characteristic sequences, we are bound to encounter apparent contradictions, shortcomings, or omissions that we can take as bases for additional discoveries and changes to our listings. To accommodate such changes, we should not place our listings into a format that cannot be easily changed at this time even after we have prepared initial listings. However, after we have grouped elements together, their number may be sufficiently contained to properly sight them in electronic format.

Initially, many of our impressions may be rather in the form of an observation or interpretation than a wish. A conversion into wishes may be unproblematic for positive impressions because we may simply follow our attitudes of desirability toward them. In the event of direct observations or imaginations, we may focus on our experiences of emotional effects. If impressions assume the shape of a metaphor, we may ask what they stand for to define a wish. Our task is more complicated when we encounter negative impressions because we have to examine what the opposite positive setting would be. Expressing a distinction between what is and what we want in a negative manner may be initially necessary because it may capture our needful state of mind most accurately. It might be all we possess of a wish that is under construction. We may wish to end current pain, to prevent past pain from returning, or to preclude anticipated pain. We may want to obtain distance from a hurtful object, person, or event. We may want to liberate ourselves from constraints or predations. If we have difficulties identifying the connected positive aspiration, we may have to begin our assembly by a listing of our negative sentiment. We may wonder whether such a listing is not sufficient. It seems that everything we want can be formulated in a manner of what we do not want. This might move us to deem it irrelevant whether we formulate our wishes in a positive or negative fashion. But that turns out to be incorrect. It may be true that any destination and manner of getting there can be expressed in negative terms. We may arrive at the same result as by naming a specific objective if we exclude all other possible objectives. Still, a positive description is far more efficient than describing all alternatives we reject. It is also more effective because of its clarity of vision. When we choose a negative formulation, our intent focuses on the absence of a state, on departure and rejection. When we formulate our vision positively, we concentrate on our destination and our attraction to it. This advantage of a positive formulation becomes essential because we customarily do not negate all possibilities that we wish to exclude in the

formulation of negative wishes. If we could define our wishes in this manner, we would invariably turn to a positive formulation because it is far more succinct. Hence, we commonly reserve negative formulations for wishes in which we have not been able to discern our objectives clearly. These wishes contain less information about their direction. They may only make us set out in the vessel of a need but leave us floating without aim after that is accomplished. While departure is a crucial first step, a general negation does not give us direction once have gained distance from a painful situation. Such direction can only come from stating where we want to go. Finding such direction can be challenging. However, it appears to be required to fulfill the underlying need. Stating our destination focuses us on the intermediate steps we have to accomplish to arrive there. It assists us to identify the tools and strategies to reach that destination. This formulation process can only take place if we term our wishes in a positive manner. For most of our wishes, it becomes impossible to designate all means and strategies we do not want to use. Unless we focus on fulfillment and what is necessary to reach fulfillment of a wish, we are not likely to succeed. A positive formulation of wishes thus fulfills an indispensable function in the pursuit of our happiness. Accordingly, we will have to reformulate wishes that initially came to us as negative impressions and give them positive substance. We must leave our pain and fear behind and commit ourselves to pursue the desire and pleasure of our needs.

Our impressions may leave us wanting for further information that would permit us to formulate entire sequences. Even our positive impressions may not be in the form of wishes yet. They may consist of fractions or refractions of perceptions, thoughts, or emotions that appear to lack clarity or purpose. We might be incapable of formulating a coherent wish with regard to them. Rather than dismissing such impressions, we must work with them until the reason for their appearance in our inquiries becomes clear. Even if we find impressions that clearly indicate wishes, these may appear isolated. Our inquiries may only have presented us with one or some of the means and objectives in the sequence of a pursuit. We may not possess sufficient markers to outline a sequence of pursuit and to fill in potential gaps. Some wishes may strike us as nondenominational. Their emotional attachments or utilitarian intentions may not be transparent. They may not appear to pertain to an identifiable ultimate objective. Together with more diffuse fragments, isolated wishes may present signals by traits that have difficulties making themselves heard for internal or external reasons. To gain complete insight into the constellations and dynamics among our traits, we have to examine the materials we have gathered for such

fragments and isolated wishes. Additional inquiries regarding such elements may prove to be particularly fruitful in revealing traits. Revealing their hidden character may constitute the most important feature of our undertaking to complete our council of traits. Therefore, none of our collected impressions should be deleted. We may want to keep these elements present in front of us in a physical receptacle of separate writings on paper until we can attribute them to already existing or new categories or can ultimately dismiss them as irrelevant.

Wishes and needs that have not or have not fully come forth in our discovery might require assistance in uncovering them. Our principal needs for individual and collective survival and thriving as well as other needs that might try to use underdeveloped, suppressed, or forgotten wishes and needs as allies in pursuing their interests might provide motivation that can supplement the resolve of hidden wishes and needs. We may illuminate a solitary impression or wish by picturing its causes, occurrence, implementation, and its consequences. We may also imagine its absence and the causes and consequences of such absence. We may evoke associated sensory experiences, emotions, rational thoughts, and behavior. We may ask why we have this impression or wish and why we cannot detect its cause or purpose. If we can place an impression into terms of a wish, we may ask what we hope to gain from pursuing the wish, why we assume its fulfillment will make us happy, and why we pursue it and not a conceivable alternative. We might question our answers until we arrive at a cause that we cannot parse anymore. This cause defines a need and its underlying trait.

We could employ such lines of questioning to overcome vagueness in our wishes. Even if we can attribute impressions or wishes to the context of an identifiable ultimate objective, they may remain inadequately expressed as practicable steps. We may incur impressions that have not matured to a state where they could serve to formulate a wish that is wholly representative of a need. We may continue to only possess fragmented wishes or elusive indications of them that require clarification and positioning. Even if our impressions are in the form of clear wishes, we have firm indication that they pertain to the same sequence, and we can position them within the sequence, the parts we have assembled may not form a seamless succession of stages up to an ultimate point of fulfillment. Here again, we may apply similar inquiries. But to resolve vagueness of steps and to fill gaps in sequences, we can also resort to the additional tools of taking cognizance of the surrounding information that defines an uncertainty or void to indicate how it might be mended. In connection with the upper edge of a deficiency, we might ask what conditions would have to prevail to fulfill a

wish to accomplish that upper edge. With regard the lower edge of a deficiency, we may ask what the immediate purpose of its completion is. In the event several stages must be explored, we would repeat both lines of inquiry until the entire uncertainty or gap is filled.

With this method of discovery, we incur a danger of interpreting and filling partial or missing articulations of steps with disingenuous implements and objectives. Establishing surrounding wishes may provide us with parameters into which completing information must fit if we are to pursue the underlying need successfully. However, such practical considerations will have to wait until later. During this phase of our investigation, we are not concerned about utilitarian aspects of sequences or the technical completeness of steps. Instead, we are trying to elicit the core concerns of needs attached to intermediate steps that we might have missed in our previous discovery efforts. While the astuteness of our pursuits will likely rank among our critical concerns, we have to resist conforming pressures that might stifle the expression of less utilitarian or even contrarian intermediate ideals that make us happier than technically optimized solutions. Before we venture to fill voids and uncertainties by references to their surrounding wishes and impressions of suitability, we will have to give these voids and uncertainties a chance to speak for themselves and declare their substance. Only after concentrating on missing information directly might we try to reconstruct it from surrounding requirements and consequences. A void or an uncertainty may be an indication that we view intervening steps between listed wishes to be of a purely technical character, or it might mean that we have deficiencies in our memory, knowledge, or imagination. We might also try to avoid such stages of pursuit because we regard them as burdensome, worrisome, or painful. These circumstances might be revealed if we query why we cannot identify deficient areas or why we do not possess more information about them. If these discovery methods result in alternative ideas of how to fill unarticulated or less articulated sections that are similarly plausible, we may have to test these ideas through trial by the happiness they confer.

We may employ these techniques for closing deficiencies to already established sequences even if we consider them sound to examine their authenticity and completeness. For this procedure, we would treat each wish we derived from previous discovery as if it did not exist, as if we were confronted with a deficiency. Posing and answering such questions irrespective of what our gathered impressions seem to indicate may produce additional insights. A comparison of the results with wishes and sequences we derived without such questioning may provide discrepancies whose grounds we would have to investigate.

Beyond the partial representation of traits, we may also have to contend with situations where traits fail to send us any signals during our discovery or we fail to detect such signals. Once we have collected the majority of our impressions and thus established a record to stave off undue influence, we might apply a supplemental discovery method to uncover such hidden traits. We might refer to purportedly common emotional traits that we observe in other humans to identify common needs that might be underpresented or distorted in us. We might further adopt indications of specific needs in our surroundings as incentives to investigate in us for similarities and differences. Our failure to sense a common or a specific need or a lesser intensity in its sensation may indicate that such a need may be in a state of complete or relative satisfaction in us and accordingly not strike us as a need. Yet, even if conditions of fulfillment are missing, such a need may not be or may be comparatively less developed in us for internal or external reasons. Our examination of other individuals' needs may furnish us with impressions of aversion or affinity that may indicate wishes or needs or nuances we failed to detect by previous means of discovery. We may take such impressions as bases for auxiliary inquiries in which we develop them the same way we approach original fragments or wishes.

When we arrive in our inquiry about wishes that delimit a sequence characteristic of a need at a level of requirements that we consistently consider as basic and common to pursuits of different needs, we have arrived at the lower boundary that defines a need. When we arrive in our inquiry about purposes of our wishes at purposes that do not assist another objective or do not assist another objective without changing into another line of motivation, we have arrived at the upper boundary in the definition of a need. This ultimate wish in a sequence and possibly certain steps in the sequence of its deduction seem to be nonnegotiable. They are nonfungible principles and objectives that we could not give up or compromise without fundamental damage to our happiness even if alternative, possibly technically superior means were available. These wishes constitute the essential wishes in our quest for happiness. They represent objectives of our needs, an ultimate essence of their underlying traits. The discernment of intermediate core wishes indicates that our needs are not solely defined by the ultimate wish to which sequences aspire. Although that ultimate wish designates the category under which a need is known, core wishes along the way indicate that needs are also defined by the manner in which we pursue an ultimate wish. Ideal pursuits may therefore not only champion solutions that are most efficient and effective in achieving the ultimate result. The most effective and efficient pursuit for the fulfillment of an

ultimate wish might not comport with a manner we might designate as ideal. While core wishes we discover may represent the same need as the ultimate wish to which they lead, they may also represent other needs whose interests might overlap and merge in their pursuits. Even apparent ultimate core wishes may be composites of several needs. At this stage of our inquiry, we sort sequences with this potential in mind but do not yet attempt to separate sequences we discern into needs.

Many of our core wishes are likely to match to an extent emotional traits that are resident in every individual. In addition, we may possess idiosyncratic core wishes that surpass, particularize, or otherwise modify the requirements of common needs or that stand on their own and merely coincidentally relate to other needs. Either way, idiosyncratic core wishes solidify the existence of idiosyncratic needs that distinguish our personality from the common denominators of human personalities. We should be able to derive a finite number of idiosyncratic core wishes. In as far as idiosyncratic core wishes are not grafted on common needs, they assume a quality of separate emotional traits as issuing authorities. If they modulate common emotional traits, we might describe the composite of every such modulation together with its common root as one trait. We may also describe the common and specific aspects separately as emotional traits. That designation seems to be easily justified regarding common traits because they can subsist separately from specific traits. Modulations of common traits, by contrast, could not exist without the common traits upon which they are grafted. Still, terming such aspects as traits comports with the notion of traits as distinguishing features. Moreover, modulating idiosyncrasies often exhibit sufficient autonomous programming to direct one or several common traits. They may even differentiate common traits into several idiosyncrasies that refer to the same common root. Idiosyncratic aspects seem poised to determine the direction of their underlying traits. Because of this defining and commanding position, idiosyncratic adjuncts to common traits deserve to be designated as traits as well. Designating both common and specific components as emotional traits to ascertain our motivations is therefore legitimate. Nevertheless, if specific traits are regularly linked with common traits, we may designate the composite as one emotional trait for purposes of attributing our impressions and obtaining orientation regarding our needs.

A wish or a sequence of wishes can pertain to different times. It may address a present wish or need, or it can pertain to a more distant objective to which we aspire for a different period of our existence. Although we may not have a certain wish or need now, we might foresee its development later. To the extent we have not experienced particu-

lar desires before, this would occur by referencing the experiences and requirements of other humans and our determination that we might encounter similar experiences and requirements. We may further understand that many of our needs move in recurring fulfillment patterns and that we will incur a requirement of fulfillment again in spite of their contemporary satisfaction. Other needs might continue to require supporting activity into the future by a constant demand.

If we cannot take any current steps to assist future fulfillment, desires related to that fulfillment are clearly not current. Their current pursuit might even impede or damage our current or later happiness. Then again, the fulfillment of a future wish or need may require effort, time, or other resources that make it necessary or prudent to begin its pursuit before we discern it. We might hence work on conditions that prepare for the future fulfillment of future wishes and needs. This may appear to confound the distinction between present and future wishes or needs because we must possess a present motivation to prepare for the fulfillment of future wishes and needs. Yet, as long as we stop at a certain point of pursuit and hold further steps in voluntary abeyance, we engage in preparations. Because we prepare for present wishes and needs as well, the distinction lies in the intention of following through without deferment. If we look forward to circumstances in our future and would not rather accelerate these circumstances and render them present as soon as possible, such desires are not present. They constitute anticipations of conditions we suppose we will want in the future. Clarity about and tracking future wishes and needs are important because these will lose their deferred status and because we must maintain our awareness of them so we will not unduly interfere with their chances of fulfillment. Accordingly, we may keep them on our list of wishes. Because many future plans require preparation, we should review our list of future wishes periodically. We should assess whether there are current steps we should take to support their fulfillment. But we must keep future wishes and needs separate so we do not confuse them with the current preparatory steps for their fulfillment. Because these current preparatory steps represent current wishes, we must include them in our list of current wishes. Still, while a separate listing of future wishes and needs is necessary for practical purposes of pursuit, the differentiation is of little pertinence for purposes of defining our emotional traits. Future desires reflect a current mindset even if the implementation of that mindset is deferred. They define our traits as much as current desires. Our current concern about and emotional attachment to securing our future affords them a current aspect. We may therefore include future wishes and needs in defining our traits.

Not all our emotional traits will be defined by classic sequences that carry us from deprivation to fulfillment. What we want does not necessarily present itself as a differential between what is and what we wish. Not all segments of our existence might be dissatisfactory to us. Some may already be in conformity with what we want. Nevertheless, describing such states of fulfillment is an important part in the definition of our emotional traits because they represent the ultimate objectives in the sequences we construct. Listing them also has a practical function. The current fulfillment of needs does not guarantee a future fulfillment. We have to be concerned about their future deprivation. If we only focus on what must be changed, we ignore or discount, and in consequence neglect, important sources of current happiness. This increases the risk that we may imperil, damage, or destroy current happiness. We must be careful not to unnecessarily interfere with our accomplishments while we attempt to mend our disharmonies. In addition to shielding our happiness from our interference, we may have to guard it against foreign interferences. Beyond that, most states of fulfillment and satisfaction abate by their nature. They may therefore call for maintenance or renewal. We must anticipate and keep up maintenance responsibilities if we are to experience timely future fulfillment of our needs. We cannot only concentrate on the pursuit of presently unfulfilled needs. We will have to spend part of our attention on keeping wishes that are already fulfilled in that happy state or on providing for their fulfillment if it should lapse. If we lose the harmony we already achieved over trying to reconcile our disharmonies, we may fail our purpose of improving our happiness. Such concerns are often naturally attached to our enjoyment when deficiencies have been met.

Because happiness and the underlying fulfillment of needs are fragile and ephemeral, attention to their maintenance implies a great chance of increasing our happiness and fulfillment. Thus, we must include preservation efforts into our list of wishes. It may assist our orientation if we show wishes for change and preservation separately. To the extent preservation efforts are not presently necessary, we may defer them to our listing of future wishes. But wishes for protection from our and external interference are ongoing. Moreover, many wishes for repeated fulfillment may not qualify as future wishes. The periodic reappearance of needs makes the fulfillment of deficiencies and maintenance measures difficult to differentiate. The efforts that keep fulfillment from slipping or minimize its decline may often resemble efforts of curing deficiencies that resume after deterioration. Even where efforts for curing deficiencies can be distinguished, such efforts may be covered by current wishes because we may have to presently prepare

for fulfilling the future recurrence of a need. Here again, the distinction between present and future wishes is only of practical relevance and does not matter for the definition of emotional traits. Sequences of preservation define the underlying traits as much as sequences to remedy deficiencies because they originate from the same concern for the fulfillment of the same needs. The same needs that motivate us to pursue an objective also motivate us to safeguard its accomplishment.

As we assemble emotional traits, we may come upon sequences that seem to pertain to the same need but may at least initially appear to stand apart. We have to list these sequences separately and explore their relationship. They may describe different facets of a need whose separate statement might be instructive or might be reconciled into a more general typical sequence. They may describe anecdotal instances of pursuit that are representative of their underlying, more general sequences. They may designate technical varieties in the pursuit of uniform objectives, valid selections for different situations that are not inherently inconsistent. We may also derive a variety of sequences that fall within a range of fulfilling the same need, albeit possibly at different levels. But we cannot be certain that our impressions have provided us only with sequences that can achieve the fulfillment of the related need, much less that their pursuit would cause us ideal fulfillment. We cannot even be assured that the wishes represented in sequences denote underlying traits. They could represent internal or external impositions that have not matured to the status of a trait. They may represent compromises that are contrived by a variety of causes. Present indications of sequences only provide us with base materials for building or confirming pursuits that represent our emotional traits in purer form. We must therefore question whether they establish the best imaginable manner of pursuit for a represented trait. But ideals merely describe the pinnacle of a trait and not its entirety. For a broad understanding, we must learn about its permutations. Qualifying sequences according to whether and how well they fulfill the need to which they relate we may assist us in arriving at such insights. For that purpose, we may list all sequences we have derived for a trait side-by-side.

A deeper investigation would be necessary where we encounter contradictory sequences. Although such contradictions might be situational and temporary, some of them might indicate more fundamental rifts that might not permit us to resolve such differences into one need. Apparent contradictions in sequences might indicate a struggle involving a number of specific modifiers to a common emotional trait, autonomous specific traits, or common traits. They might indicate unresolved issues in the defining of solutions that conform to our needs.

They might describe memories of mutually exclusive alternatives presented to us that we have dismissed, modified, or amended. We now have an opportunity to review whether we wish to revise previous determinations. As a basis for exploring the reasons for their contradictions, we must list these contradictions in side-by-side columns.

Even if we do not perceive contradictions in sequences that we ascribe to the same trait, sequences may represent several traits. They may represent mere variations within a range of solutions that we believe capable of coexisting without contradiction. While such a range may develop in reaction to different intensities or variations of a need or in reaction to different external circumstances, it may arise from the accommodation of other needs as well. We naturally tend to combine pursuits in an effort to satisfy a variety of needs. Needs may rely in part on the same strategies for their pursuits as a matter of their independent choice. They may also use common strategies that reflect a compromised arrangement resulting from overlapping conflicting interests. Such conflicts may be forced by external circumstances or by conditions that are intrinsic to the nature of emotional traits. The result of these phenomena is that steps in a sequence often serve more than one trait. Most of the impressions and wishes we collect and the sequences we construct from them may therefore be consolidations. In the competitive atmosphere of our personality and the pressures of our environment, sequences for the pursuit of a singular need may not stand much of a chance to be implemented. They may not even arise as a plan without being modified by other emotional traits. The pursuits of needs may be consolidated in countless diverse constellations. These may depend on the subject matter of a pursuit, exterior circumstances, the satisfaction level of our needs, and their attitudes generally, regarding other needs, and particular circumstances. The existence of such consolidated pursuits may prevent the clear distinction of impressions, wishes, and sequences and therewith the definition of emotional traits. Consolidations with other needs might show aspects of a need that the singular sequence does not reflect and may thus add to our knowledge of a trait. Still, to completely understand our emotional traits, we have to sort consolidated pursuits into their constituents' contributions. We may further have to reconstruct from the aspects of pursuits that we can separate ideal sequences for participating traits.

The apparent difficulty of accomplishing such a separation may make us wonder whether it is necessary. Then again, without understanding our emotional traits on their own terms and how they interact with one another, we do not know whether their interaction is optimized or even necessary for our happiness. Generally, the consolida-

tion of needs in our pursuits appears to us as less than ideal because it may force participating needs to deviate from their ideals. This may be more disturbing to us than concessions we make to forces exerted on us by the outside world. In those cases, we can remain internally true to ourselves and preserve our potential to impose our traits when circumstances change. We may be concerned that we have less flexibility regarding our needs. We may fear that mutual meddling by our needs could mire us in compromise as a state of unchangeable imperfection, mediocrity, or worse. The wishes and the sequences we have collected may not reflect a compromise in the sense of equitable solutions. Rather, they may reflect interference and the subjection of some needs by others, possibly in extremes. Even if participating traits would try to compromise in a way that preserves the possibility of one another's pursuits, they are all likely to sacrifice their ideals. They must exclude areas in which they substantively disharmonize and must reduce pursuits to areas in which their strategies can join or coexist. Consolidated needs may not only interfere with one another in the direction of the resulting pursuit. They may also compete for the same resources. A consolidated pursuit may reflect such a struggle for resources or, if participating traits attempt to harmonize, the requirement to manage the scarcity of available means by sacrifice. Consolidated pursuits may then represent a spectrum ranging from the suppression and captivity of traits by other traits to attempts to make room for all participants.

Still, even the positive intention of harmonization may strike us as a fall from our ideals because we are impressed by the pain or fear of deprivation of compromised needs. Because we may never be able to experience constellations where all participating needs are simultaneously fulfilled in their ideal ambitions, such a negative state appears to be chronic. The concept of an arrangement may only strike us as positive if we imagine that without it participating traits would engage in combat and cause results that damage us more. We may advance to consider that reductions in single pursuits may enable a harmonized maximum of fulfillment overall that arises from positive cooperation in pursuits. But we will not discern whether consolidations can attend such objectives nor will we be able to make proper adjustments unless we have ascertained a definition for every participating trait in its uncompromised, ideal requirements. Taking cognizance of our emotional traits separately from contortions of compromise is thus essential.

To find such purity, we may scrutinize consolidated sequences from the viewpoint of each participating emotional trait. We may detect these traits by registering the different types of dissatisfaction and satisfaction we sense with regard to the failure or accomplishment of a

particular step or an entire strategy. We may then examine sequences on whether they embody the most effective and efficient path toward the fulfillment of their participating needs. If the sequence comprises components that are less efficient or effective than imaginable or even available alternatives, it might be compromised. But this method suffers several distractions. Our notions of participating traits may be too undefined to decide effectiveness and efficiency in their service. Further, if we are not aware of the core wishes of participating traits that are inherent in their pursuit, we cannot distinguish a lack of effectiveness or efficiency that is attributable to compromise from an apparent lack that is due to the pure application of a participating trait. In addition, the demands of different traits to influence a sequence of pursuit introduce pressures that make intermediary wishes seem to hold value of their own and therefore resemble core wishes. We might also have difficulties distinguishing core wishes for each participating need from a technically most effective and efficient pursuit for such a need at this stage of our inquiry. Nor might we be able to detect a mere error.

We may have a better chance of understanding the participating emotional traits in their pure form if we ask what choice we would ideally make in their pursuit at every step of a consolidated sequence. We would ask as if we could act solely in the interest of one need at a time and would not have to take other needs or the insufficiency of resources into consideration. This may present us with branches springing from a consolidated sequence at multiple junctures. The collective of these branches for each participating need points to sequences that approximate our ideal for such a need. We may list such deviations for each participating trait in a sequence and again ask if it represents the ideal path at each juncture. If we determine that it does not, we would inquire what step is ideal, taking into account how this affects the remainder of the sequence. This method might help us develop our understanding of participating emotional traits somewhat, but it might not create ultimate clarity about them in their ideal form. The problem we are likely to face with regard to most if not all our traits is that we do not know what their ideals are. This is the reason we engage in their exploration. These ideals persist in us as a matter of the patterns that genetic and acquired traits have set for their fulfillment. But our knowledge of what it takes to match these patterns is incomplete. We may only find convincing evidence of their existence because we can determine that occurrences do not meet their requirements. Existential needs and possibly also acquired needs may give us instinctive direction regarding the steps and the sequences we must undertake to fulfill them. These instincts may send us rather specific impulses when

we are confronted with circumstances of actual or of feared deficiency. But their direct emotional quality may render it problematic for us to abstract defined steps and sequences that we can describe as ideal. We may obtain a better footing by referring to our experiences with traits and our imagination based on them. Yet, unless we have experienced ideal fulfillment regarding a need, our experiences can only point us in ideal directions by comparing and rating these experiences. While our imagination may extend that direction, it merely posits unconfirmed presumptions. Our perceptive and rational mind might be able to contribute to formulating ideals by taking note of the factual conditions that are necessary to meet the apparent objectives of needs, the factual circumstances of actual and feared deficiency, and effective and efficient sequences that link these states in a pursuit. Only, such technical aspects might not meet our ideals because the objectives we can glean from emotional traits may be too imprecise. Moreover, technical proficiency in meeting them may be subordinated to procedural core wishes that constitute partial ideals of a trait in themselves.

The impressions that we have collected and the wishes and sequences we have derived are likely to encompass all four of these categories of direction. We must review all of them in the context of one another to comprehend where they are pointing us. Together, they are bound to significantly narrow our understanding where our ideals are located and what they might be. We may be able to use their correlation not only to clarify them but also to build additional indications of our ideals by extrapolating based on their relative positioning. Relating them will eliminate much of the complexity that our impressions, wishes, and sequences may initially present. As we see clearer regarding our ideals, we may observe that an approximation toward some of them necessitates generalization. This may be central to the definition of ideals to fulfill their function as guiding principles regardless of the particularities of our circumstances. If the specificity of an ideal would preclude us from connecting to it from any situation in which we find ourselves, it could not justly claim to represent the entirety of a need. We may therefore list such an ideal as a sequence of general criteria. Other ideals may not impart a requirement of preserving inclusiveness through generality. They may be specific in their direction without incurring any loss of functionality. In this case, we may succeed in devising a sequence of particular steps. Some of such ideals may not be definable as uniform sequences. Needs might demand varied manners of pursuit to provide ideal fulfillment. Where that applies, we would list such alternative sequences for the same need separately or find a typological description that covers the range of variety they demand.

Ultimately, the only way to develop our understanding of ideals beyond the foundations established by our collected impressions and their correlation, and to confirm our deductions about our ideals beyond those we already have confirmed with our experiences, would be through trials that prove whether implementations advance us closer to or meet our ideals. To exclude misinterpretation, we would have to undertake these trials for each need in isolation from other pursuits. It seems doubtful, however, that this could be arranged. The settings of our mind may not permit us to test one need exclusively without the involvement by any other needs. Additional difficulties are likely to be presented by our individual or a general inability to marshal all means whose arrangement we imagine to result in ideal fulfillment as well as by interferences with the implementation of these means. We may not be able to achieve certainty how many disappointments we encounter are, and how much in them is, attributable to our lack of technical capacity or error, extraneous constraints, or our lack of insight regarding the essences and the requirements of our emotional traits. Nor might we know how much of our dissatisfaction might be attributable to superficial or fundamental conditions of our traits. Distinguishing such causes necessitates that we become more knowledgeable about us and our surroundings. To reveal our ideals in spite of such distractions, we will have to scrutinize causal relationships. This capability is bound to increase as we engage in varied combinations of pursuits in varied situations. Although this may confront us with an abundance of distractions from identifying attributes of individual traits, the combination of such occurrences may provide illuminations of aspects that may assist our investigation. At this initial organizational stage, we are concerned with establishing a favorable basis from which such further explorations can be undertaken. We attempt to give our search direction and to thus minimize our risk and damage while maximizing our potential benefits. With our growing understanding of our traits, we may be able to develop competent forays to sharpen their concept toward their ideal either by additional consideration or focused testing.

Our arranging of impressions, wishes, and sequences regarding our ideals also offers us practical guidance even if we are not equipped to define ideals in their ultimate contour. The direction we derive improves our ability to rate pursuits in how well they match our traits. It permits us to gauge, particularly within the realm of our experiences, whether a pursuit fulfills the requirements of a need minimally or better and how it compares to alternatives. That understanding can substantially relieve the burden of trial and error in our pursuits. The next chapter addresses available mechanisms for the pertinent evaluations.