

CHAPTER ONE

The Nature of Your Condition and How We Can Help

The physician is concerned not, like the naturalist, with a wide range of different organisms theoretically adapted in an average way to an average environment, but with a single organism, the human subject, striving to preserve its identity in adverse circumstances.

—Dr. Ivy McKenzie



*Trigger 5B13: A dried leaf,
crumbling into dust.*

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Welcome to the Institute

My name is Dr. Peter Tompkins, and although I am supervising your treatment, you do not remember me. Indeed, due to your unusual circumstances, you remember very little. This is understandably confusing, but I hope you will keep an open mind about what I have to say.

You are a patient at the **Orphic Institute for Advanced Studies**, where I oversee your case. We are a private research hospital dedicated to the treatment of disorders that traditional medicine has deemed incurable. Recently, you suffered a traumatic shock that caused a rare form of memory loss called profound retrograde amnesia; in other words, you experienced a total loss of memory. You have no conscious recollection of your life prior to this event. Although we have had remarkable success in treating many forms of amnesia, your particular case has proven intractable. We at the Institute believe that this trauma was caused by some action on your part, and your mind has created a barrier as a way of protecting you. On an unconscious level, your own mind is unwilling to let itself heal.

We—that is, you and I—had discussed various possible treatments, and you decided that your only option was an experimental drug called **Mnemosyne**. This chemical creates a connection between the unconscious minds of those who take it—in essence, it allows someone else access to your memories. This connection is very weak, and if a healthy mind were to try to see into yours, your memories would be drowned out by that person's own experiences. In the case of someone with severe memory loss, however, the mind is quiet enough to hear the echoes of another. To take advantage of this, we have developed a treatment in which patients with your condition help each other recover their memories.

Upon deciding to undergo the procedure, you were kept at the Institute until **two to four additional patients** with similar conditions could be found to assemble a therapy group. The treatment also required removing the memories you had built while at the Institute, which is why you do not remember me or any of our conversations. For that I apologize. If we are successful, however, this small amount of confusion will have been more than worthwhile.

You are now ready to begin what we believe will be an effective cure for your amnesia. If all goes well, you will remember everything about your life.

A Word of Caution

Before we continue, you must understand that whatever you did in your past is in the past—you do not have control over what has gone before. As the treatment progresses, you may discover that the person you were does not match your expectations. Indeed, the person you were may turn out to be someone you do not now wish to be. The cause of your trauma might be something accidental that you blame yourself for, but it might be some intentional act that you undertook with full knowledge of the consequences.

You may feel at times that the other patients have control over your past. This is not true. Your fellow patients will reveal the person you were. While you do not have control over that person, you do control how you feel about it and what sort of person you will be after today.

The Structure of This Text

The next chapter, **The Treatment Procedure**, describes how to perform the therapy.

The following two chapters provide additional guidance and examples to help you in your treatment. **How to Get the Most out of Your Treatment** provides in-depth advice on using each part of the therapy most effectively. This material is as important as the directions themselves; it is broken out to make the process easier to follow, understand, and refer to later. The **Example Treatment Transcript** is a written account of another group undergoing the procedure and is provided to help you understand how the parts work together as a whole.

An afterword, **Notes From the Waking World**, includes material on how this treatment was developed as well as some advanced treatment options. You may or may not find it useful—some patients are quite interested in how we created the treatment, while others find it distracts them from the process.

At the end of the book are **Appendices**. **Appendix I** and **Appendix II** contain documents critical to the treatment. **Appendices III-VI** provide summaries and examples of the material found in **Chapters Two** and **Three**. The rest complement the material presented in the **Afterword**.

It has been my great pleasure to serve as your physician at the Institute. I only hope that I have prepared you sufficiently for what lies ahead. You are about to undertake a great voyage, an odyssey into your own mind. Good luck.

— Dr. Peter Tompkins, MD PhD
Director, Orphic Institute for Advanced Studies

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Subject experiencing global amnesia, cause unknown at this time. An extensive medical therapy is indicated in order to address the

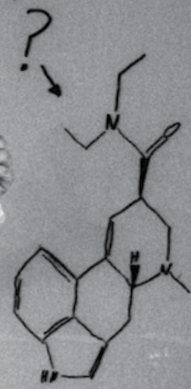
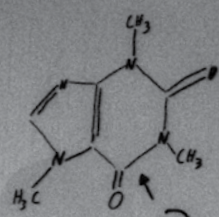
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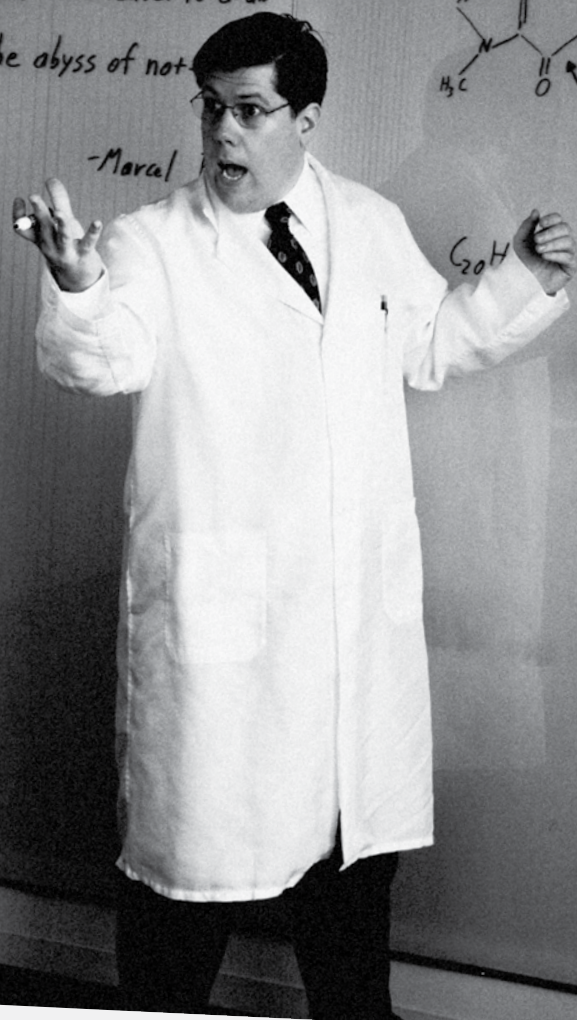
1: HOW WE CAN HELP

memory [...] would come like
et down from heaven to draw
from the abyss of not

-Marcel



C₂₀H₁₇N



extreme paranoid personality
the chances of recovery have as yet to be determined.