

My Journey in Life

A Student Textbook
for Developing
Loving
Relationships



INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

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A Student Textbook for Developing
Loving Relationships

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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION

**My Journey in Life:
A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships**

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Comments on the Course

My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships (formerly *My World & I: The Way of Love*)

“The most valuable idea, which permeates the whole book, is the idea of chastity. It is a message that our young people, bombarded as they are from all sides by the media and society that chastity is no longer a value, need to hear now more than ever.”

A group of parents
St. Petersburg

“This book deserves the most positive evaluation. The authors are high-level professionals. More importantly, they have an acute feeling for the importance of the family and the preciousness of children. This combination of high professionalism and emotional concern is wonderful. In fact, only such people can be trusted to prepare children and teenagers for family life.”

Vladimir Arkhangelsky
*Senior Researcher, Scientific Research Institute on Family
Russian Ministry of Social Protection*

“This book is extremely important. As a textbook focused on the young generation, in its reflections about the value of family and its role in the life of a person and in society, this edition is unique. The urgency of the textbook is underscored also by the crisis of the family in the modern world. Delicately and with taste, the text promotes the idea of the unification of cultures, of which family relationships are meant to be the prototype. It is written in a beautiful style that blends the traditional with the contemporary, combining material of different cultures into a harmonious whole.

“Although not mentioned directly, the book represents an attempt to counteract anti-family values and lifestyles that are current in modern society in a way that is free from the didactic-ness typical in many textbooks. The authors conduct a conversation with the student, engaging him on various themes in a way that encourages the student to think. The book encourages reflection and discussion in a workshop type of atmosphere. By offering guidance in family relationships through the skillful use of author-student dialogue, *My World & I: The Way of Love* teaches us the ABCs of family life.”

A.I. Antonov, Ph.D.
*Chairman of the Department of Family Health & Social Policy
Moscow State University*

“Including subjects about human life based on universal values in the school curriculum is one of the most urgent needs of the contemporary age. At the same time such subjects should be careful not to carry too direct and declarative a message, but be sensitive to the needs and interests of teenagers in the context of their day-to-day experiences. In my opinion the textbook *My World & I: The Way of Love* fits these requirements exactly. The moral and spiritual problems of family relationships are presented through the prism of love, the greatest of all values, but about which we are often embarrassed to discuss with our children.

“The preciousness of love, the ability to tell true love from false love, the responsibility of love, understanding what masculinity and femininity means, the nature of the love relationship between a man and a woman in marriage, the nature of the love relationship between parents and children – all these are in the circle of topics that this textbook discusses.

“Especially interesting and significant is that universal values along with marriage and family traditions are presented in the context of different world religions: Confucianism, Buddhism, Judaism, Islam and Christianity. On the one hand it broadens the horizons of our youth, helping them to understand the culture, religion and tradition of other people. On the other it demonstrates that, different as they are, all cultures regard love, fidelity in marriage, the responsibility of marriage partners for each other and for their children, and mutual respect between parents and children, as the highest values.”

S.A. Belicheva, Ph.D.

President of the consortium “Social Health of Russia”

“This course is extremely valuable as it is devoted to an eternal problem: the preparation of young people for marriage and family life. The nucleus of this problem lies in a contradiction: the desire for personal freedom is confronted with the competing desire to experience close, loving relationships in the context of a family. The creation of a successful family is based on a spiritual and moral unity, a unity of ideals. The authors aspire to present a system of values that young people should pay attention to while planning their life and creating their families.

“The structure and contents of the course are well thought out and logical, worked out around a core set of ideas. After beginning with a general conception of the purpose and meaning of life, the lessons turn to a discussion of issues connected with the physical and social development of the person and then to the question of relations among family members, where the value of cooperation is emphasized. At the end of the book further issues concerning marriage, sexual development, moral choice and love are explored. The book is permeated with the general idea of moral choice based on values.”

A.S. Belkin, Ph.D.

*Chairman of the Department of Pedagogics & Pedagogical Technology
Urals Pedagogical Institute, Russia*

“The course is deeply humanitarian, addressing itself to questions concerning the meaning of life. The teaching methodology developed by the authors of the program is effective in encouraging the development of the student’s character.”

I.V. Iofina, Ph.D.

Senior Teacher

L.V. Uzlova

First Deputy Director

*Institute for the Regional Development of Education
Ekaterinburg, Russia*

“Great attention in this textbook is given to the role of the family in the spiritual growth of a human being. The family is presented as a “university” of human relationships. The authors succeed wonderfully in combining traditional understandings with a serious discussion of modern problems in the areas of communication, love, marriage, friendship, responsibility and mutual understanding.

“It is important to mention that the textbook stresses and promotes interreligious and intercultural understanding, which has become vital if we are to maintain peace and stability in our world. The authors delicately show that the norms and values of different cultures do not contradict each other but are fundamentally in agreement and complement each other in many ways.”

M. Lutfulloev, Ph.D.

*Director of the Scientific Research Institute of Pedagogical Science
Dushanbe, Tajikistan*

“This course is urgently needed by today’s teenagers. In fact it should have appeared long ago. It fills a desperate need in the context of modern school education. In Russia, where serious changes are taking place, it has special relevance for it provides a counterbalance to the negative trends perceived by students during our current period of social instability. It presents an alternative system of values, the awareness of which will help children to form healthy relations with other people.”

A. Mudrik, Ph.D.

Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Science

“Teaching this course in the Gymnasium fostered the philosophical understanding of the meaning of life, self-awareness, character development of the students and broadened their worldview.”

A.A. Munkueva

*Director of the Linguistic Gymnasium
Ulan-Ude, Autonomous Republic of Buryatia, Russia*

“I have been working with children for more than ten years and can confidently say that everything connected to love is very interesting for them. That’s why the teacher who takes responsibility to help them to go through life with the fewest number of mistakes has to choose material very carefully. In my opinion *My World & I: The Way of Love* effectively addresses the most pressing questions of today’s young people.”

Svetlana Smirnova

St. Petersburg teacher

“Despite the fact that the textbook contains material which reflects the spirit and principles of different cultures, both traditional and contemporary, connected to the issues of love, family, sexuality and human relationships, it is able to achieve a unity of feeling by expressing a clearly articulated viewpoint. In reading and working with this book, one receives a great uplifting and inspiring influence. Even I, as one who has been working in the field of education, social philosophy and ethics for more than thirty years, upon reading this book came to a new understanding on several important spiritual and moral points.

“This is not only a textbook on questions of marriage and family, but also instructs us in the acceptance of people of other cultures by seeking to comprehend their values. The authors help us to see them, not as people of “heresy” and deviation, but as those who have chosen a different path to spiritual perfection, corresponding to their place, time and conditions of life.”

Y.V. Sokolov, Ph.D.

*Professor of Theory & History of Culture
State Academy of Culture, St. Petersburg*

Students’ comments

“I understood that the quality of my love, my friendships, and my relationships with people finally depends on me.”

Maria Aniskina

10th grade student, Ryazan, Russia

“This course helped me to solve many problems, to understand myself and to gain self-confidence. It helped me to change my relationship with my parents for the better. It made me think about my past behavior and about the meaning of life.”

Mikhail Grigoriev

10th grade student, Ryazan, Russia

“I am sure that the knowledge I gained through these lessons will help me to create a strong loving marriage and family, to live respecting my parents, to more confidently express my love and to become a person needed by others.”

Yevgeny Kuznetsov

11th grade student, Samara, Russia

“These lessons differ from our regular lessons so much. In other classes we are given knowledge, which serves to develop our brain. Here the knowledge we receive helps us to develop our spirit and heart. In these lessons we are taught kindness, understanding and love towards others, which are so much needed in our society now.”

Anastasia Zakirova

11th grade student, Kazan, Autonomous Republic of Tatarstan, Russia

Preface

The *My Journey in Life* series represents a unique collaboration of an international team of educators and writers. The original versions, appearing under the title *My World & I*, were published at a time when the Cold War was coming to an end and opportunities for ventures between the democratic and communist worlds were opening up in many different fields. Thus, they are probably the first of their kind covering an area of vital concern to cultures throughout the world—the moral education of children. In the nations in which they are being used, these books offer a refreshing approach to the field and are seen as a valuable resource supporting the character development of the young generation.

The early 1990s was a period of optimism when many people throughout the world harbored the hope that lasting peace and harmony was finally within our grasp. However, as the shadow of the Cold War receded, other problems came to the fore to show us that we were still a long way from this ideal. Both the democratic and former communist worlds were being afflicted by similar social problems, such as ethnic conflicts, youth violence, alcoholism, drug abuse, divorce and family breakdown, and a proliferation of sexually transmitted diseases. These problems were symptomatic of a severe crisis of values born of a century that placed the highest priority on scientific and technological development while neglecting to honor and promote the traditional values that had provided a sense of social cohesion and spiritual well being. Brought up to believe that scientific knowledge could solve all of our problems, young people were cast adrift to find answers for themselves in fundamental areas of human life, such as the maturing of their character, preparing for marriage and raising a successful family.

In many of today's societies there is no longer any consensus about right and wrong or which values should lie at the heart of education. Children often seem to question all values and authority, leaving parents and teachers unsure how to guide them. Ignoring the deeper questions about life, many young people pursue a hedonistic lifestyle of self-gratification, seeking to find happiness in material pursuits.

The International Educational Foundation (IEF), through its activities and publications, is seeking to address this worldwide challenge by offering an approach that combines the best of contemporary and traditional values, spiritual and material values, and Eastern and Western values. We call this a universal values approach. It is an approach that emphasizes what we have in common by stressing timeless values and presenting them in a way that can appeal to the idealistic sensibilities of young people transcending cultures.

IEF works in the fields of character education, youth purity education, marriage and family education, and service education or voluntarism. In the field of character education, we have been emphasizing the need to cultivate the hearts and consciences

of children in addition to the education of their intellects, which has been overemphasized during the past century. Based upon the teachings of Dr. Sun Myung Moon, known as the Unification Principle, the *My Journey in Life* two-volume series is an attempt to meet this need.

By teaching universal principles and values, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Character Development*, seeks to help those in their early teens to develop their heart and character, emphasizing the importance of mind/body unity, the development of the conscience, and sexual purity. As a support, it includes the moral and ethical teachings of the world's great religious traditions, which are at the root of most of the world's cultures.

With lesson themes such as "What Kind of Person Should I Become?," "What to Live For?" and "The Challenge of Life," the text engages pupils in internalizing fundamental values that are at the center of good character. In this way the curriculum seeks to help young people develop the inner strength to resist negative peer pressure and detrimental social influences that are so rampant in today's world.

Fundamentally, this book challenges the student to examine the principles and resultant values that constitute a meaningful life. It offers three basic life goals as a framework for this: becoming persons of mature character, establishing loving relationships and family, and making a positive and creative contribution to society. If young people can be made aware of these life goals and be inspired to strive for them, it will greatly help them to resist the destructive temptations of drugs, crime and promiscuous sex. Ultimately, such socially destructive influences will only be overcome by offering young people an achievable alternative that speaks to their most fundamental hopes and dreams in life.

The second volume, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*, written for those in their mid-teens, focuses on human relationships, particularly in preparation for marriage and family. It includes topics on human sexuality, marriage, family, conflict resolution and social responsibility. It also covers problems such as divorce, single parent families, alcoholism and experiencing rejection. The book features marriage and family traditions in the world's religions to demonstrate that there are basic universal norms of human love and its sexual expression. In this way students can develop their vision of a realistic ideal for their relationships and future marriages while being aware of the pitfalls along the way.

If the evaluations by pedagogical experts and the reflections on the part of teachers and students who have used this curriculum are any indication, then it would seem that both *My Journey in Life* books have been a resounding success. Receiving high praise for their content and interactive methodological approach, the curriculum has inspired both teachers and students to strive for higher ideals in their lives. For example, in one study conducted among teachers using the material in the Ivanovo Region of Russia, a high majority of them reported a significant impact on their own personal character development.

Due to circumstances the *My Journey in Life* series appeared first in Russia, followed by many of the former Soviet republics. However, this work was envisioned long before the actual publication in the early 1990s. Although first used in Russia, they were written with the young people of the entire world in mind. Thus, these texts should not be seen as a translation of the Russian, but represent improved editions of the original English texts. In response to numerous requests from around the world, IEF wishes to offer these English editions for your use. I encourage you to translate them into your national language and to contextualize the contents using literary sources and examples from your own culture. You may draw upon IEF's experience to assist you in this process.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the sincere investment of heart and effort by the many people involved in the production of these books. Working under my guidance on the original writing team were Myra Stanecki-Kozlowski, William Haines, Dorothy Kolomeisky, Anna Bzhiska and Prof. Bronislaw Bitinas, a well-known pedagogue from Vilnius University in Lithuania, who served as scientific editor. This team worked long hours with a sense of urgency investing their creative energies to produce the first editions. Others who worked in the creation of the Russian editions were Kevin Convery, as art director, Claude Aubert and Arthur Dagilev, in design and layout, and many others too numerous to mention by name. All of their efforts are deeply appreciated. As well I would like to express my gratitude to those who worked on the present English editions of these books: Robert Beebe—project coordinator, Jack Corley and Thomas Phillips—advisors, Josephine Hauer and Hyun Jin Schuller—copy editors, and Gareth Davies—research, and Renee Corley—proofreader. I would like also to give a special word of thanks to Ittetsu Aoki and his team for their valuable support of this project.

My hope is that these books, which have given much inspiration and joy to thousands of school children and their teachers in the former Soviet Union, in their English editions will benefit countless others throughout the world and contribute to the character development of the young generation in many different nations and cultures.

Dr. Joon Ho Seuk
President, IEF International
Director, My Journey in Life Project

Historical Background

Founded in 1990 by Dr. and Mrs. Sun Myung Moon to promote moral and ethical values in education, the International Educational Foundation began its work in Moscow just as the Soviet Union was collapsing. Soon after Dr. Moon's meeting with Mikhail Gorbachev in the Kremlin in April 1990, in cooperation with the Soviet Ministry of Higher Education, IEF sponsored a series of International Leadership Seminars in America for more than 3500 students and professors. On this foundation, in November 1992, with the support of the Russian Ministry of Education, which invited delegations from each of the 88 regions of the Russian Federation, IEF held conferences in the Crimea under the theme "Spiritual Renewal and School Education in Russia". In addition, more than 300 school directors from the Ukraine attended. In all, more than 1,600 participants took part in the conferences, whose theme was the necessity of moral and ethical education. The lectures were based on the fundamental values and concepts of the Unification Principle, emphasizing their use as a foundation for moral education.

Participants found the theme of the program timely. With the collapse of communism the ideological framework for the teaching of morals and ethics had been suddenly discarded. At the same time young people struggled to understand how to employ their newly found freedoms. Many chose to pursue with abandon the material benefits long denied them. In reaction to the collectivism of the past the post-Soviet period saw the rise of extreme individualism.

As a result of their experience in the program the participants were inspired by the challenge of developing a curriculum to promote moral and ethical values to young people in an engaging and contemporary manner. The next step was organizing a group to undertake this task.

In January 1993, an international writing team working under the guidance of IEF president, Dr. Joon Ho Seuk, was assembled in Moscow and set about preparing a curriculum in time for the new school year beginning in September. Thus began the first project of the International Educational Foundation in the former Soviet Union.

Working at a rapid pace, the first edition of *My World & I: The Way of Unification* (original title of *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Character Development*), intended for 13-15 year olds, was published together with an accompanying teacher's manual. In the summer of 1993, IEF held its first Teacher Training Workshops in order to train teachers how to use the new curriculum. In these workshops lectures explaining the philosophical foundation of the curriculum were presented as well as lectures suggesting innovative methodological approaches appropriate to the teaching of the material. In 1994 IEF produced a second volume of *My World & I*, subtitled *The Way of Love* (now *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*), written for 15-17 year olds. In subsequent years IEF went on to publish

other student textbooks, teacher's manuals, and handbooks for parents, designed to be use for various age levels. Many of these have been translated into different languages with the support of various ministries of education. Each year IEF conducts hundreds of training seminars involving thousands of teachers throughout the CIS, Baltic States and Mongolia to instruct them on the use of the materials. At these seminars and in other ways, hundreds of thousands of books have been distributed in these countries. Currently more than ten thousand schools are using IEF course materials.

From a Mature Character to a Loving Family

Dear reader,

The first volume in this two-part series, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook in Character Development*, provided a guide to help you realize your potential in becoming a person closer to full maturity, in which your physical and spiritual aspects are in greater harmony. On this journey we have seen that the values you choose act like a guiding light that encourages you to express, create and improve yourself. By now, you must realize that you are the sculptor of your own heart and character.

However, every one of us lives among people and together with people. You cannot be happy when everybody is unhappy around you. It is very difficult to stand apart from others, even if it is the way to goodness and personal growth. Personal growth and maturity can be achieved only through relationships with others, especially those that we love and are dear to us, such as our family. We mature insofar as our relationships with others, with those we love, are harmonious. The name of this immediate relational environment is “family”.

The family is the first and most personal environment that affects our well-being and it influences our potential to reach maturity throughout our lives. Family is also a goal of human life: all of us are born to live with the person we love most in order to continue our lineage. Families are the building blocks of a society and, therefore, one of the primary means of creating a healthy society. No more attractive social solution has yet to be found than: “Through a healthy family to a healthy society.” These are some of the issues that will be discussed in this second volume of the series, *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Developing Loving Relationships*, which finds its inspiration in the vision of Dr. Sun Myung Moon.

In the course of life, individuals find themselves in different roles, which are often determined by age and birth order. During our childhood and adolescence we primarily take on the role of a son or daughter. These are often difficult roles to be in. Children must trust and depend on their parents while they naturally recognize them to be in the position of authority figures whom they love. A sense of independence, however, is an important element for adolescents to experience as they grow toward adulthood. This process is inevitable and very important. It is essential that during this molding phase the bond and trust to the parents is maintained and not severed. Parental love and support is crucial and can aid adolescents in realizing their identity and strengthen their sense of autonomy.

Conflicts during this important time period are evitable. However, the ability to resolve such conflicts can be very positive and lead to growth of the adolescent as well as the parents. Such difficulties teach the becoming adult that conflicts will occur in life. Often these are the moments that develop character and give us a sense of

self. It may be a moment of great empowerment. The ability to resolve such conflicts is a part of becoming and being an adult. When approached sensibly by the parents it can be a wonderful opportunity to teach a very valuable lesson through their role modeling positive values in their relationships.

On the other hand, when parents cannot and do not fulfill their responsibility properly, other persons, such as teachers, may take on some of this responsibility. If parents abdicate their responsibility, this can cause much pain and drastically thwart the development of the growing child. Through this book the authors offer their guidance. They hope that they will be able to help you to understand how to behave in many kinds of situations and how to retain the main value of childhood—the warmth of family relations.

Youth has its own course and the search for personal happiness and love are inevitable. Within this complex maze one will experience success as well as failure; one will sometimes make good and sometime bad decisions. There are countless numbers of novels out there, describing the life of perfect happiness. Reading these novels one might get the impression that humans have mastered the art of achieving happiness and love in life. However, reality presents a different picture. Most people are still searching for the best way to flavor their life with more happiness and love. Poor decisions are made over and over again. Instead of learning from the lives of previous generations we often find ourselves making the same or similar mistakes, especially when it comes to matters of the heart. How can frustration, agony and pain in matters of heart and love be reduced, so we may attain authentic happiness? This has been a mystery for many generations that the authors of this book attempt to uncover.

According to an ancient legend, a human soul consists of two halves—one masculine and the other feminine. When a human being is born, they are the owner of only one half. For that reason every person longs to find the owner of the other half. Those who succeed will find happiness. Let this book be your guide in finding your other half.

It is noteworthy to mention that this book, one devoted to solving the problems of family and love, was published originally in 1994, which was proclaimed “The Year of the Family” by the United Nations. The authors hope that you who are reading it will be able to fulfill your potential as a member of the human race, living in harmony with the earth as our common home. Good luck!

B.P. Bitinas

Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences

Pedagogical University of Vilnius, Lithuania

Scientific Editor of My Journey in Life

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CHAPTER 1

Love—The Greatest Value

All people without exception have the desire to love and be loved. Love occupies the mind of so many on a daily basis. It is perhaps the most written about topic of most poems and songs. The majority of songs are written about love, in no matter what country you find yourself in. However, not all of them speak about the joy of love. There are also many songs about love that was lost, unfaithful love, the search for love, falling in and out of love.

Why do people read novels, watch movies and sing songs about love? Because love touches a chord that vibrates within every person's body and soul. We want love that fills us up completely and flows through every vein in our body, which will last forever. No one longs to find someone who will love them only temporarily, for a few months or a few years. That could hardly be called love. No one dreams of a love that will be only partially satisfying. We all seek love that fills us completely, that totally intoxicates us. And we want to remain in love for the rest of our lives. Is there anyone who does not seek that kind of love?

At the same time why is love so unpredictable, so mysterious, so intangible? Why can we say that in the end we do not really know what love is? Why does love so often carry

such a false veneer? Why are so many people confused by love? Love, like water, seems to be so light and fragile, yet its power to cause harm is tremendous. It is so insubstantial that it has no solid boundaries, yet a person can drown in it and die. Love can cut and be as brittle as ice, and it also can disappear like a cloud. Yet, like water, love is that which sustains all life.

Therefore, it is definitely a worthy pursuit to find out what love is despite the elusiveness of it. Is it something you can deliberately go out and get, or do you wait for it to come to you? Are some people destined to find love and others not? How can you be sure you found it? Is it really worth the trouble to find?

What is love?

Can love be defined ? What are the elements and characteristics of love?

In order for love to exist there has to be a circuit between two people. When one person gives love to another, and the desire to return love arises within the other person, a circuit is created which often becomes a treasured bond that neither want to break. Eventually the bond created between the two may become so strong, that they never want to separate. No force in the universe could break that bond. In this case the two partners become as one being. They can't imagine anything else but to perpetuate their love.

Why and how can this kind of love be created? Could some kind of give and take between two people appear like love when it is not in reality ? Why does a circuit of love, once started, sometimes die? How can a relationship of love be revived? Is this actually possible?

There are a lot of things that are not love, however much they may look like the real thing. Perhaps this is the reason why there are so many broken hearts and dreams in our world. C. S. Lewis said that "to love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will certainly be wrung and possibly be broken." Let us examine some of the features of authentic love.

Complementarity

In the natural world most things exist in pairs. Everything exists due to the give-and-take action between two complementary entities. All things living and nonliving exist in this kind of relationship. An electron whirls around a proton. Planets orbit around the sun. Lineage is passed on through the partnership of men and women. By the same token, one pole cannot exist without the other. Similarly, there are only two genders, not three, not four. Not only are there only two genders, but they are also perfectly complementary, physically as well in many social and emotional aspects. It is fascinating that the ratio of baby boys and girls born annually is almost always 50-50. They are indeed meant for each other!

Much about masculinity and femininity can be learned from nature. It is not something that we discover just by having sexual relationships. We are attracted to the opposite sex because we are intrinsically meant to find fulfillment with our complementary other.

Constancy

Another quality that reflects the nature of love is constancy. A mother gives her child love without ever thinking about the costs that are involved or the sacrifices that she might have to make. A loving mother gives every ounce of her strength to give birth to her child, bears any kind of pain, nourishes her baby with her milk, spends many nights awake in order to comfort her baby, worries about her baby's health every day and sacrifices anything to assure the health and well being of her child. After so many sleepless nights and years of sacrifice, when her child is grown, will that mother bill her child for all the expense and sacrifice? No. Because no amount of money can repay the love that a mother invested in her child. The only currency she can accept in return is also love. That child, in turn, when raising his or her own children cannot help but give all the love he or she received to his or her own children.

Loving someone does not mean to withhold love depending on the good or bad deeds done by the other person. The old adage "love is blind" could mean that a person may be blinded into thinking something is love when it is not, but it originally meant love is non-judgmental. It is love that says, " I love you just because you



are you.” Would a mother testify against her beloved son in a court of law? Even if she knew he had done something wrong and accepted his term of sentence, she would defend her child’s goodness in her heart to the end, always looking at him with loving eyes. A person who loves in this way loves the other person through thick and thin. A wife will keep loving her husband even if he is going through very hard times and feels discouraged and hopeless about his job, or finances, or even his worth. A husband will love his wife even when she loses her youth and begins to turn gray. True love is love that says, “You are more precious to me than my own life, for loving you is my whole reason for being.”

Eternity

Every generation lives for the sake of the next generation. Love seeks to perpetuate itself. Love gives life meaning. This is why many people feel that love is more precious than life itself. Life is created through love. Before you were born, your father and mother were drawn together because of love, and in a moment of mutual surrender to love, you were conceived. Therefore, love precedes life. Because of this the birth of a human being is considered more precious than any material thing in this world.

Did you ever stop for a moment to realize that practically every one of the billions of individuals in this world came into existence because of the love between a man and a woman? Because an entire lineage is created through love, it can be perpetuated from generation to generation without decreasing in value.

Power of love

Pitirim Sorokin, a Russian émigré who founded the School of Altruistic Love at Harvard University, was convinced that people should know about the ways and power of love. Sorokin spoke of five aspects or dimensions that characterize one’s ability to love.

He called the first dimension *intensity*. When we see someone who preaches about love, but does not practice it, then we know that the intensity of their love is just about zero. An example of low intensity of love is when someone gives a few coins to a beggar on the street, when he may have hundreds of dollars in his pocket. The highest intensity on the other hand means the willingness to give up something precious and meaningful for the sake of love. The ultimate example of high intensity love is being willing to die for the sake of another. As Jesus said: “Greater love has no man than this, than he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13)

There are known many examples when a soldier on the battlefield rushes out into enemy fire to rescue a fallen comrade. However, that same soldier may a few hours later be once again a perfectly ordinary person. He may not even be especially friendly to the man he rescued. His love was of only a short *duration*, which is the second of Sorokin’s dimensions. Most people do not want to experience love that is

temporary and only lasts a day, or a year, but forever. Couples who marry seek for a love that will last forever, in sickness and in health, through both good and bad times. This is because true love is eternal.

Another dimension of love is *extension* or scope. There are people who love only themselves or their families. How broad is *your* love? Can your love cross the boundaries of race, nationality and religion? Would you be even willing to marry a person of a different race, nationality or religion?

The fourth dimension is *purity*. Pure love is loving another for what he or she is, not for what the other possesses or with the expectation to get something in return. No one wants to be treated as a means to an end. One will quickly feel used and taken advantaged of when loved with an ulterior motive.

The fifth dimension is *adequacy*, the connection between the purpose of love and the actual results. While I may genuinely love someone very much, the results of my love might still be harmful. We are all familiar with the pampered child who has been spoiled by love without discipline. Sometimes love has to be tough to be kind. Inadequate love is unwise, ignorant and blind, and exhibits a wrong choice of priorities and inappropriate behavior. True love always finds the appropriate behavior for any situation.

Conditional love

Of all the various forms of love, the highest and most mature is the love that gives without expecting anything in return. It is selfless and unchanging. Of course, everyone desires to be at the receiving end of love, but a mature person continues to love even when he is not loved in return. This love is *unconditional*. Although unconditional love might seem somewhat farfetched, it can be commonly observed as parental love. Unconditional love does not calculate how much has been given and decides that it is enough. Unconditional love knows no limits.

Human beings long for such unconditional love. However, *conditional* love is also

necessary in order for growth to occur. Conditional love, guided by principles and expectations, challenges a person to grow and become a better version of themselves because it forces one to think of the needs of another rather than

of oneself. Parents are often proud of their children's accomplishment and sometimes they are disappointed by their behavior. In that sense, parental love is earned. It encourages the child to become independent, self-disciplined and responsible for what he does. Knowing that one has been able to make someone else happy is one of the greatest joys of life. It strengthens our self-esteem and makes us feel that we can contribute something of unique value to others. We feel that we can make a difference. Of course, parental love should be patient, tolerant and unconditional, but conditional love is also very important for our growth.

On the other hand conditional love can be misused. "Deserved" love can easily leave a bitter feeling behind that one is not loved for oneself, but only because one pleases the other person. When love is immature and self-centered, it controls and



manipulates. This type of conditional love prevents us from being our true selves. We have to meet other peoples' conditions to receive their love:

"I will love you *if* you make enough money"

"I will be your friend *if* you do what I want to do"

"I'll love you *if* you have sex with me"

We often find ourselves setting conditions for people to be worthy of our love. To love and to be loved means to be able to trust someone and be vulnerable. This is difficult for many, since most of us struggle with many fears that inhibit our ability to love deeply. We often wonder with much apprehension if we can allow ourselves to be open and vulnerable. Most of us are afraid to be hurt, to have our hearts broken and to feel pain. What makes a particular person worthy of my trust and love? Will he be compatible with me and be able to meet my needs? Will I be able to live with those irritating and annoying habits of his? Such concerns lead us to place conditions on our openness. Thus, it is not easy to keep a loving heart.

Unconditional love

Receiving love unconditionally gives us a deep sense of peace, security, contentment and well-being. Unconditional love means that we are loved for whom we are, not for how much we give back. It need not be deserved or acquired and cannot be controlled. We are loved not because we meet certain conditions, but because of our uniqueness. This does not mean that we should rest content with the way we are. Although unconditional love gives us a sense of well-being, it can also inspire us to be a better person and to constantly improve ourselves. In an atmosphere of unconditional love, we feel free to let our full, unique potential blossom without fear of losing the love that means so much to us. Unconditional love makes it possible for us to believe in ourselves, to feel we are valuable and good. It strengthens our self-esteem.

How do you know whether you have found genuine love? You know that you are loved unconditionally when there is nothing you could do that would ever separate you from the love another person has for you. As the 43rd president of the United States, George W. Bush, once said to his twin daughters "You can't make me stop loving you, so quit trying so hard." Once the heart has opened and we have been deeply touched by another person, we are affected by that person for the rest of our lives, no matter what form the relationship may take.

When we love unconditionally, we will gain the ability to love the whole world step by step. Each person becomes our brother and sister. This is the essence of Christianity—love all people as brothers and sisters.

False love

But is this reality? We may be able to envision what true love is, but for most people the reality is far, far different. Almost everyone longs for this ideal of love, has tried to love, but has been hurt, betrayed, and disillusioned. Each year more people decide to break a marriage than to begin one. Why is there such a high rate of divorce? People marry or engage in sexual relations because they think they are in love, but if love were truly present, could it simply disappear? There is a big difference between genuine love and what often passes for love in our world.

We can easily be taken in by what we may call false love. True love and false love sometimes have the same starting point. They may even look alike for awhile, but the different directions of these loves ultimately brings dramatically different results. True genuine love is unconditional, selfless, and unchanging. It does not come with a price tag attached. It produces true joy and happiness. False love is a love that revolves around oneself and seeks to fulfill one's own immediate needs and desires. This kind of love is conditional and changeable.

When love is not genuine it does not last and cannot bring happiness in the long run because it is centered on the person's own needs. When two people are in a relationship, each expecting their needs to be fulfilled by the other, rather than thinking what they can give to each other, the relationship eventually will shake and fall apart. This principle is difficult to see, especially in the beginning of a romance, when everything just seems so perfect. At such times one's ability to see things as they really are is greatly impaired. But, because the motivation for the relationship is self-centered, true fulfillment and satisfaction never comes. Although no one wants such love, we often find ourselves caught in it and hurt by it.

Reviving the family ideal

The wounds and scars that shallow, selfish love leaves behind should teach us to seek a less self-destructive kind of love. However, the habits that are still being passed down from generation to generation die hard and it is difficult to heal the damage it has created. Many people today feel we have to go back and investigate the ideal of the family as the school of love.

Most of us spend the first two decades of our lives with our parents who love and raise us, and educate us about the world. Thus, it is within the family that we have our most profound and influential experiences. We learn how to make relationships, how to love, how to behave, what's good and bad. We often unconsciously model our parents attitudes and behaviors that we have observed from an early age. Whether we are loved and how we are loved influences greatly our sense of self-worth. The

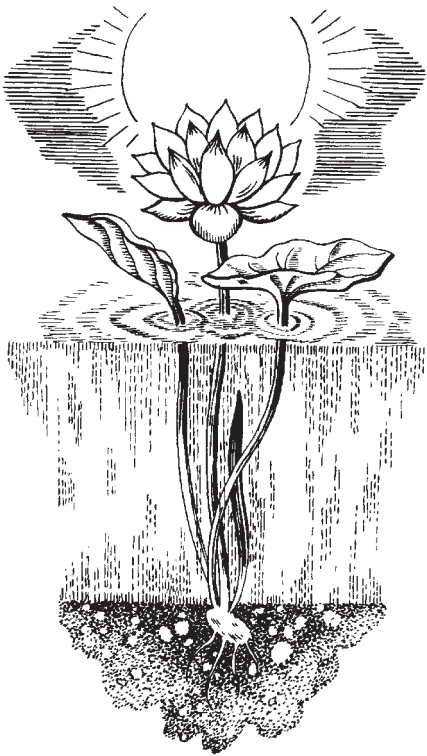
tinest infant can sense whether it is loved or not. A loving and supportive atmosphere helps to mold a human being of great and noble value.

So, this is the question that every person entering adult life faces: How can I find and experience the greatest love: the kind of love that everyone dreams and fantasizes about, the kind of love that poets write about, singers sing about, writers write novels about, the kind of love that is portrayed in movies? How can I have that kind of love: the kind that will last forever?



How can I experience unconditional love?

- ✕ Choose to be around people who love and care about you without conditions and unrealistic expectations. People who have a strong and secure sense of themselves will let you be you and accept you for who you are. Be around people who encourage you to be the best you can be, who believe in you. Surround yourself with those who make you want to be the best that you can be. And then be that kind of a person for others.
- ✕ The world is full of judges. Cultivate relationships with people who do not criticize and judge you. Your anxiety level will drop dramatically because you do not feel like you are on trial. Neither should you judge others. We are here to love and learn from each other.



- ✕ Does it mean that a person who unconditionally loves you is always nice to you and has no expectations of you? Being simply “nice” and being unconditional are two different things in this context. Being simply “nice” means that a person sometimes will approve of self-centered behavior, because they don’t want to risk upsetting the person or jeopardizing the relationship. However, unconditional and genuine love will not accept self-centered behavior because its concern runs deeper than just wanting to get along all the time. Rather it keeps the other person’s best interest in mind. Because this love deeply cares about the other, it encourages him to become a better person. This is a true expression of love. However, even if the person fails to change, he will still be loved and will be expected to do the same for others.
- ✕ Become your own best friend. Don’t be too hard on yourself. Stop criticizing yourself constantly for every little fault. Recognize your strengths and good qualities. Give your best at all times and appreciate even small steps of improvement. The better you feel about yourself, the greater your self-confidence and it will help you to improve your attitude towards others.

Individual Exercise



Find different examples of love: in literature, in the life surrounding you or in your own experiences. In which of these cases was love conditional? Formulate those conditions, using the following examples as a guide:

I’ll love you as long as...

you look attractive

I’ll love you if...

you don’t embarrass me

I will be your friend if...

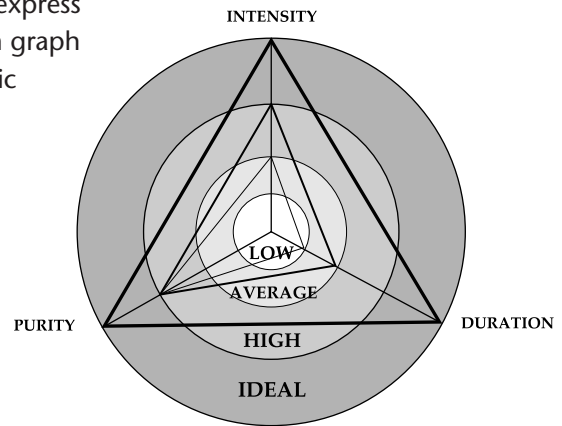
you stop being the friend of...

For Your Journal



The purpose of the following assignment is to evaluate the love between you and a person who is dear to you. In order to do that you can use three of the five dimensions of love we discussed earlier—intensity, duration and purity. Each one of these dimensions can be evaluated as “ideal”, “high”, “average”, and “low”. Evaluate your love towards that person and vice versa.

It would be useful to express the results of your work in graph form. Draw four concentric circles. Each one of them should correspond to one of the levels of your evaluation. Also draw three lines corresponding the three dimensions that are being evaluated. Connect them with lines (this can be done using different colors). Compare the resulting triangles with each other as well as with the triangle corresponding to the expression of true love.



If we are honest, we will learn a lot about love through this exercise, which can help us to move towards becoming a more kind and loving person.

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

The Velveteen Rabbit

by Margery Williams Bianco

This favorite children's tale contains a great deal of wisdom about the nature of true love as that which goes far beyond external appearances to reach into the heart of a person. As the story says, it is not something that happens all at once but grows almost imperceptibly over a long period of time. When love is real, it can never be lost.

The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was so old that his brown coat was bald in patches and showed the seams underneath, and most of the hairs in his tail had been pulled out to string bead necklaces. He was wise for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else. For nursery magic is very strange and wonderful, and only those playthings that are old and wise and experienced like the Skin Horse understand all about it.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came in to tidy the room. "Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?"

"Real isn't how you are made," said the Skin Horse. "It's a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become REAL."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes," said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once, like being wound up," he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once," said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time...Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

"I suppose *you* are Real?" said the Rabbit. And then he wished he had not said it, for he thought the Skin Horse might be sensitive. But the Skin Horse only smiled.

"The Boy's Uncle made me Real," he said. "That was a great many years ago; but once you are Real you can't become unreal again. It lasts for always."

The Rabbit sighed. He thought it would be a long time before this magic called Real happened to him. He longed to become Real, to know what it felt like; and yet the idea of growing shabby and losing his eyes and whiskers was rather sad. He wished he could become it without these uncomfortable things happening to him.

One night the Boy's Nana gave him the Rabbit to sleep with.



That night, and for many nights after, the Velveteen Rabbit slept in the Boy's bed. At first he found it rather uncomfortable, for the Boy hugged him very tight, and sometimes he rolled over on him, and sometimes he pushed him so far under the pillow that the Rabbit could scarcely breathe. And he missed, too, those long moonlight hours in the nursery, when all the house was silent, and his talks with the Skin Horse. But very soon he grew to like it, for the Boy used to talk to him, and made nice tunnels for him under the bedclothes that he said were like the burrows the real rabbits lived in. And they had splendid games together, in whispers, when Nana had gone away to her supper and left the night-light burning on the mantelpiece. And when the Boy dropped off to sleep, the Rabbit would snuggle down close under his little warm chin and dream, with the Boy's hands clasped close around him all night long.

And so time went on, and the little Rabbit was very happy—so happy that he never noticed how his beautiful velveteen fur was getting shabbier and shabbier, and his tail coming unsewn, and all the pink rubbed off his nose where the Boy had kissed him.

Spring came, and they had long days in the garden, for wherever the Boy went the Rabbit went too. He had rides in the wheelbarrow, and picnics on the grass, and lovely fairy huts built for him under the raspberry canes behind the flower border. And once, when the Boy was called away suddenly to go out to tea, the Rabbit was left out on the lawn until long after dusk, and Nana had to come and look for him with the candle because the Boy couldn't go to sleep unless he was there. He was wet through with the dew and quite earthy from diving into the burrows the Boy had made for him in the flower bed, and Nana grumbled as she rubbed him off with a corner of her apron.

"You must have your old Bunny!" she said. "Fancy all that fuss for a toy!"

The Boy sat up in bed and stretched out his hands.

"Give me my Bunny!" he said. "You mustn't say that. He isn't a toy. He's REAL!"

When the little Rabbit heard that, he was happy, for he knew that what the Skin Horse had said was true at last. The nursery magic had happened to him, and he was a toy no longer. He was Real. The Boy himself had said it.

That night he was almost too happy to sleep, and so much love stirred in his little sawdust heart that it almost burst. And into his boot-button eyes, that had long ago lost their polish, there came a look of wisdom and beauty, so that even Nana noticed it the next morning when she picked him up, and said, "I declare if that old Bunny hasn't got quite a knowing expression!"

CHAPTER 2

My Neighbor and I: A Motto for Life

Over thousands of years, human civilizations have had various ideas of justice and different standards of behavior. We also have some sayings that sum up our own perspective on life. It may be something like “might makes right”, “I’m all right, Jack”, “look out for number one”, “honesty is the best policy”, or “put others first.”

It is possible to see how ethics has developed and evolved in history and its relationship to the level of civilization.

Law of the jungle

The essence of this principle is very simple. You steal my chicken, I’ll steal your cow. You kill my slave, I’ll kill your son. You give me a black eye, I’ll break your nose. The thought process is basically “how can I get ahead of the other person?” Such retaliation easily gets out of control and initiates a chain reaction of responses which can continue for generations. Verbal insults escalate until they are backed up with violence. This is often the origin of the notorious blood feuds between families and nations that never seem to end. Such escalations happen partly out of revenge and partly to teach the other a

lesson. However, this kind of behavior doesn’t solve the problem and no lessons are really learned.

Although we may call this the law of the jungle, and attribute it to primitive cultures, a remarkable number of people in the 21st century still abide by this very rule. They persecute those who offend them. Nations at war have often tried to deter or punish their enemies through a massive escalation of violence. How can a society ever progress when this is the code of conduct of its members?

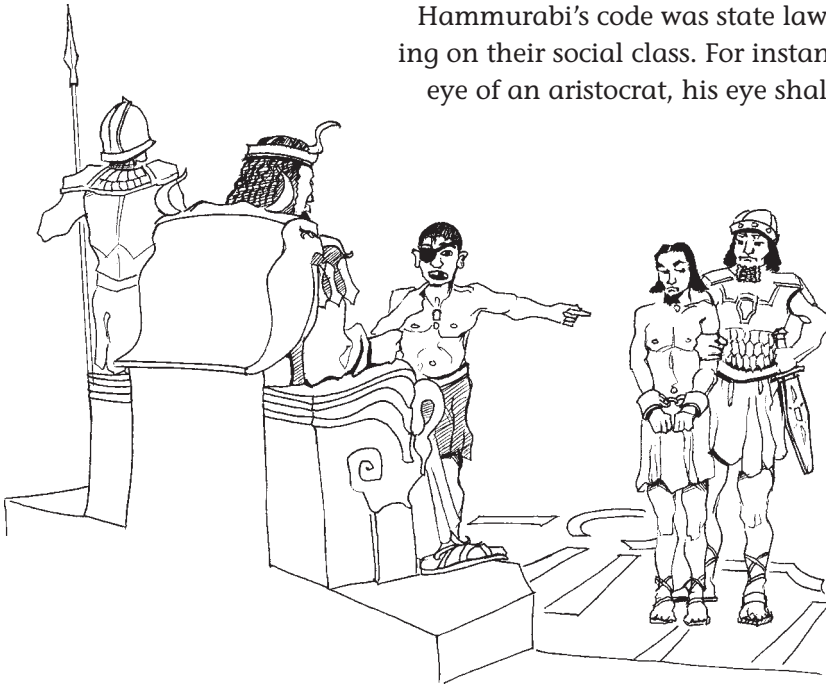


Eye for eye

One of the most advanced legal codes of the ancient world was that of Hammurabi, king of Babylon in 1800 B.C. It was based on the principle of an “eye

for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.” Although we might dismiss this also as primitive, we can find the same sort of principle expressed through such sayings as “evening the score”. This was a great step up on the ladder of justice from the law of the jungle. Instead of knocking out all of the person’s teeth, you knock out just one! If only some people in our own society were as advanced as this!

Hammurabi’s code was state law and it treated people differently depending on their social class. For instance, it stated “if a noble has destroyed the eye of an aristocrat, his eye shall be destroyed. If he has destroyed the eye of a commoner, he shall pay one mina of silver.”



A similar principle underlies the Old Testament’s code of justice where, instead of literally taking an eye for an eye, a system of fair compensation was worked out. If you injured someone you had to compensate them with some amount of money or other goods according to a generally agreed scale of compensation. The Judaic Law was God’s law and therefore applied equally to everyone. No one, not even the king, was above this law.

The Golden Rule

The ethical systems that have developed in the world’s major religions, including Christianity and late Judaism, are all based on the idea of reciprocity. It is the moral point of view that one must take into consideration the effects of one’s actions on other people. In order to do this we have to be able to empathize with others and see things through their eyes, not just through our own. There are two main variations on this view, which is often referred to as the Golden Rule.

In the fifth century B.C., Confucius was asked, “Is there any one word that can serve as a principle for the conduct of life?” Confucius answered, “Perhaps the word is reciprocity: do not do to others what you would not want others to do to you.” Here we think, “Suppose the other person was me? How would I feel?” We act out of compassion. We do not hurt others because we feel their pain as our own. We see someone suffering and we are touched because we can imagine how the other person must feel. So, if you don’t like to be hit, do not hit others; if you do not like to be ‘put down’, do not ‘put down’ others.

For Jesus this kind of worldview was too passive. Instead he taught that we should “do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” In this case, we actively help those who need help because we realize that if we were in that situation we ourselves would want to be helped. We listen to others because we want to be listened to. We respect others because we want to be respected. We treat others as if they were extensions of ourselves. We love our neighbor as ourselves.

Loving your enemy

But Jesus went beyond even that. He said that we should love not merely our neighbors but even our enemies. Of course, few people in the past 2,000 years have been able to practice that quality and depth of love. It seems so unrealistic and

unnatural. Those few individuals that did practice it are remembered by history as saints. Some, such as Boris and Gleb, the two able sons of Prince Vladimir of ancient Russia, were slain because they refused to fight their brother. Others such as Abraham Lincoln made their enemies into friends. Although for many of us such a standard of love may seem too idealistic, we should know that some were able to reach that level of love.

Boris and Gleb

Prince Vladimir of Kiev was responsible for the conversion of Rus to Christianity in 988. Vladimir had twelve sons. After his death the eldest, Sviatopolk, attempted to get rid of his brothers so that he could become the sole ruler of the country. He chose Boris as the first object of his attack. Boris was the head of a strong detachment of his father's troops. Though quite young, Boris was popular among his men and had already acquired a reputation as a skillful leader in defending the country against nomads. Yet, he did not resist Sviatopolk and was pitilessly murdered. Before dying he asked God's forgiveness for his brother. Boris was in the prime of his youth and wanted to live, but as a Christian he felt that he was not justified in bringing about the death of others in defense of his own life. He was prepared to lead his men into battle when they were protecting their families and homes against barbaric invaders. This time the situation was different, for his enemy wanted only Boris' destruction. Boris decided to sacrifice his life in order to follow Christ's example by accepting an innocent suffering and death. His brother Gleb followed his example and perished a few days later in similar circumstances.



Sviatopolk later paid for his crime against his brothers. Yaroslav, another son of Vladimir, avenged their deaths by driving him out of Rus. Yaroslav was given the throne of Kiev and his reign brought great prosperity to the land. He is remembered in Russian history as Yaroslav the Wise.

Choosing the future

So, where are you on this scale of righteousness? When something bad happens, how do you respond? Do you let your behavior and attitude be determined by others or by yourself? For example, when we say, “he makes me mad,” we are pretending that we are not responsible for our emotions and behavior. Too often we claim that how we are is a result of our environment or background. Therefore, we can never be different. We think we can never change. It is other people who make us happy, sad, or angry. It is other people’s fault if we are in a bad mood. If this were true then free will would be simply a fabrication of our imagination and we would not be free but merely a slave of our emotions, impulses and circumstances.

The alternative is to recognize that we are responsible for the way we are and the way we act. Being in control of one’s emotions means that we can decide how we are going to act in certain situations. We can decide how we are going to be affected by our environment. In the *Gulag Archipelago* Russian author Alexander Solzhenitsyn recognized that there were two kinds of people among the labor camps of Siberia: those who allowed themselves to be molded by the environment and became corrupted, and those who decided that how they felt and who they were was not going to be determined by the system. Even in such inhumane circumstances, they kept their integrity and inner freedom. So we, too, should mature in a way that we can have that kind of freedom. Freedom to choose and to act based on values and principles— not impulses.

It is good to reflect on what values or mottos that we hold dear. Then perhaps our relationships with others can develop in a positive way. We can escape from being the victim of our circumstances and instead be their master, creating a better environment around us and a better version of ourselves.

Individual Exercise



Please answer the questions or complete the statements:

Me:

- 'It's my life and I can do with it whatever I like'. Is this true?
- What do I want others to think about me?
- What three (non-material) things could I not live without?
- The single most important thing to me in my life is . . .
- I am the type of person who . . .

Others:

- Are human beings more valuable than animals? Why? What is the value of a human being?
- Are there any beliefs that all people have in common?
- Are people responsible for their actions?
- Are human beings basically good or basically evil?
- What I value the most in others is . . .
- I feel really good when other people . . .

Society:

- What do we gain or lose from being members of society?
- Who decides what a society is like?
- Does my behavior make a difference to my society? Why or why not?
- I want to live in a society that . . .
- I believe that the main responsibility to create a good society lies in the hands of . . .

Future:

- What do I think the world is going to be like in ten years? Will things be the same, better or worse?
- Am I going to make a difference in changing the world?
- What do I dream of doing with my life in the future?
- What do I see myself doing five years from now? How about in ten years?
- If I could contribute one thing to the world, what would it be?
- My ideal world is . . .

For Your Journal



- What is the guiding motto of your life?
- Into which category (law of the jungle, eye for an eye, Golden Rule, or loving your enemy) does your moral decision making fall?

Eight Degrees of Charity

In the twelfth century Moses Maimonides, the great Jewish philosopher of the Middle Ages, formulated eight 'degrees' of charity. Starting with the lowest, they are:

1. Giving grudgingly.
2. Giving willingly but less than you could.
3. Giving only when you have been asked.
4. Giving before you have been asked.
5. The receiving person knowing who has given but the giving person not knowing who has received.
6. The giving person knowing who they are giving to but the receiving not knowing who has given.
7. The giving person not knowing whom they are giving to and the receiving person not knowing who has given.
8. Giving in such a way as to make the receiving person independent and never in need of charity again.
 - Where do you stand on Maimonides' scale?
 - Describe what goes through your mind when you give to others.

CHAPTER 3

Me in a Group

We are constantly reminded that our daily lives take place within groups and around other people. Some groups consist of peers, some are close and others are not, some are pleasant and others are not. At home, in class, on the street, the grocery store and many other places we encounter people with whom we communicate and form relationships. We constantly find ourselves in group situations or surrounded by people. Of course, sometimes we seek solitude and long to spend some time alone but, generally speaking, we find that we cannot live without other people.

Let us look at the phenomenon of groups. The subject of group dynamics has always been of great interest, but only in the 20th century, especially in the last few decades, has the group become the object of scientific study. Scientists have formulated a lot of questions. Here are some of them:

- ✕ What kind of groups are there and what differences are there among them?
- ✕ How are groups formed and what makes people remain in a group?
- ✕ How do people communicate within a group?
- ✕ How does a group change the behavior of its members?
- ✕ How do different groups interact with each other?



Let us make it clear that we are speaking of small groups, i.e., groups in which members can constantly meet each other, communicate and interact. The minimum number of people that constitutes a group is two, such as: partners in a game of chess, two friends, etc. The maximum varies and primarily depends on the circumstances. Some examples of small groups are: a family, a school class, a football team, etc. As for large groups, they function quite differently and are based on some common feature, such as citizenship in a nation, senior citizens, youth, women, inhabitants of a state or province, people of one religious persuasion, people of a certain race, etc.

In reality each of us belongs to several groups at once. What does it mean to us?

1. Within a group we communicate, i.e., exchange information, thoughts, ideas. We enrich our spirituality, feel empathy and make friends.
2. Within a group we express ourselves. The group appreciates and encourages us. We feel free to boast of what we have got or what we have done.
3. A group protects us from pressure from outside. There is a sense of closeness.
4. Within a group it is much easier for us to feel free in our behavior, as long as the others behave similarly or, at least passively, approve of our behavior.

These are some positive aspects of being in a group. But there are negative aspects as well. More than 40 years ago American scientists showed experimentally that a person acts differently within a group than outside of that group. This phenomenon is called group pressure. Experiments were usually conducted in the following fashion: prior to a group gathering the investigator tells all or some members of the group to make deliberately wrong statements. The persons whose behavior is under study do not know this. For instance, in reference to a blank screen, the investigator may say: "A black dot has appeared on the screen.

Where is it?" Two or three members of the group answer, "It is in the upper right corner of the screen. Now it is moving towards the center. Moving down..." Although not true, other members of the group tend to stop believing their own eyes. Some people even "see" the non-existent dot. Many such experiments have been conducted, and it was demonstrated that only a few people were able to stand their ground. Such people, called "non-suggestible", make up 25-30% of the population.

However, such experiments are not absolutely necessary. Probably you yourself have noticed how people's behavior often changes when in a group. They act in such a way to attract the attention of other group members. Within a group an idea may arise to do something socially unacceptable, even criminal behavior, which the group members would be unlikely to do when alone. There are other negative aspects as well that can certainly influence an individual. For instance, we can easily become dependent on a certain group. We connect our self-esteem and self-respect to how other members of the group perceive us. Rumors are also a common thing in groups. Members of a group act on information that circulates within the group, no matter whether it is true or not. This is how rumors spread and how a common opinion can sometimes develop into a group mentality. Oftentimes everyone's sense of responsibility decreases because all within the group are waiting for someone else to take initiative.





Thus, a group can have either a positive or negative impact depending on its purpose for existence. For example, some clubs exist for the sake of some socially significant goal and perform actions which are valuable for other people. Unfortunately, there are other groups (gangs, Mafia) which come together for the sake of socially inappropriate behavior. In these cases their unity becomes a negative factor both for the members of the group and for the society.

One more point. We can be influenced only by a group that we value and is important to us. Then, we value membership in and the opinions of the group. This is usually our peer group. Our peers can exert considerable influence on us and steer us into certain directions in life. That is why parents want their children to make friends with those who can be a good influence on them. Parents try to isolate their children from “bad influences”. But they do not always understand that friends are not chosen in response to orders. You know that your choice of friends is influenced by whom you feel drawn to or admiration for. Each of us tends to choose friends who accept us the way we are. While the group may help us to develop our self-esteem, it often can be in a negative direction. Group influence is so strong that it can be difficult to get back on the right track. This is a very common obstacle and challenge in the development of teenagers.

Therefore, let us remember this when we discuss different problems of communication— whether with parents, teachers, friends or classmates. It’s true that communication and life in a group play an important role in our development as human beings. All of us are interested in our future—what kind of people we’ll become and how our relationships with others, especially those who are closest to us, will grow.



Something to think about



- Is it important for a person to have already determined his values before he becomes part of a group?
- In what ways can a group influence someone in a bad way if he has not already decided for himself what actions are good and what bad?
- In what ways may a group influence someone for the better?
- Can you think of any situations in which a person who is unsure of his own values may be persuaded by a group to do something which is wrong?

For Your Journal



Imagine that you can create any type of group you would like. You are the leader and founder of your group. What type of group would you create? What would the members of this group do? How would this group influence other people (people who are not a part of the group)?

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

CHAPTER 4

Leadership

“There are two ways of spreading light – to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”

Edith Wharton, 20th century American writer

For some people, leadership is a natural talent – it’s just a part of their personality. For others, leadership is a skill that is learned or emerges in emergency situations. If you are on a hike with a group of young teenagers, for example, and the adult leader becomes seriously ill, would you volunteer to take charge and go seek help? Would you naturally begin organizing the younger children with tasks and help keep them calm? Would you discuss and think of a plan to care for the group as well as the adult who is sick? Often, leaders emerge in a crisis.

There is also leadership by example. You can set the example of doing homework first in your family, picking up litter around your apartment building or volunteering for chores at school. This kind of leadership is inspirational to others through consistent activity that sets a high standard.

Some clubs and associations have an elected leadership where you might become the head of the chess club, soccer team, sewing club or student council. You are responsible to direct and guide the organization to accomplish its goals. If you are a leader, then others are following you. To lead means to go in front of others, to see beyond the present circumstances and to believe in your vision.

We probably have all experienced a really awful teacher, coach or club leader. The memories are almost always bitter. We need to think: what are the qualities of a good or great leader? How do you recognize someone who is worthy of your loyalty and support? Here are some qualities to look for in a leader:

Good leaders serve others. Among some great historical leaders, like Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa or Albert Schweitzer, are those who really served and cared for people, animals or the environment.

Good leaders inspire leadership in others. Those who follow good leaders feel themselves growing in heart and character, having a sense of nobility and honor about what they are doing. Good leaders share their power through believing, trusting and giving credit to those who support them. They give credit where credit is due instead of pulling attention always to themselves.

Good leaders communicate and plan well. Good leaders listen to the advice of others and are willing to examine suggestions — even those from the lowest ranks of the group. They are good planners and decision makers as well.

Good leaders learn and grow. Good leaders are always on the look out for better ways to do their jobs and improve themselves. They are aware of their shortcomings. They know that they must lead through example, not just through position and authority. They set a good example of honesty and trustworthiness. They apologize when necessary.

Good leaders take good care of themselves. Good leaders know how to balance serious work with play. They take time for reflection and planning. They know the value of investing in their relationships with friends and family.

Good leaders are also good followers. Even the most knowledgeable leader can learn from someone else. Wise leaders seek out mentors and the advice and example of others.

To lead, one must follow.

— Lao Tsu, ancient Chinese sage

The above points tell us that leadership ability is the product of one's character. Who a person is in a sense is more important than what he does. Internal character is more significant than external ability. There are plenty of people with all kinds of natural talent but who fritter it away because they did not have the self-discipline, humility or sense of teamwork to put it to good use. Best-selling author Steven Covey speaks of primary and secondary greatness. Too many people, encouraged by an ador-

ing world, focus on secondary greatness—the development of their external abilities—to the neglect of primary greatness—the development of their character, the result being that even their external abilities burn themselves out through misuse and they are left with nothing.

The vision factor

One of the key elements of leadership, and which perhaps

distinguishes a leader from a manager, is having a sense of vision. A manager must be a good organizer, takes care of his people and makes sure that the organization is operating efficiently to achieve its goals. But a manager is working within a certain framework that has already been determined. A leader, on the other hand, creates a new framework within which to operate based upon new goals. He sees things that no one else can see. He sees the possibilities of what could be but is not yet. Those future possibilities become as real to him as the present reality and he is a person who commits himself to fulfilling that dream without becoming bogged down in countless day-to-day distractions. He is a person who knows what he wants and is

ready to marshal all of his energy to achieve it. He is a Henry Ford, a Thomas Edison, a Martin Luther King—who through their vision and foresight transformed the world in which we live.

Possessing a vision is one thing, but being able to communicate it to others and inspire others with it is just as important to effective leadership. The vision must be transformed into an



If you can dream it, you can do it.

— Walt Disney

image that others can see and get excited about. A good leader is able to make others feel that his idea is their idea. He gives them a sense of ownership over the project, which motivates them and lends to them a sense of responsibility. There is a sense of working together for common purpose. The leader is the head; the others are various parts of the body—all different in function—but united in purpose.

Nothing in the world can take the place of persistence.

Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with great talent.

Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb.

Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts.

Persistence, determination alone are omnipotent.

—Ray Kroc
founder of McDonalds restaurants

Once the vision has been effectively communicated, it must be sustained. Leadership means being able to continually keep followers, whether they be employees, club members or students, motivated and focused on the goal. All too often projects are begun with great enthusiasm but over time peter out as people lose their focus and sense of purpose. Thus, an important element of good leadership is determination and constancy—keeping focused on the goal over sometimes a long period of time. This creates a sense of clarity and trust in the organization, paving the way to genuine accomplishment.

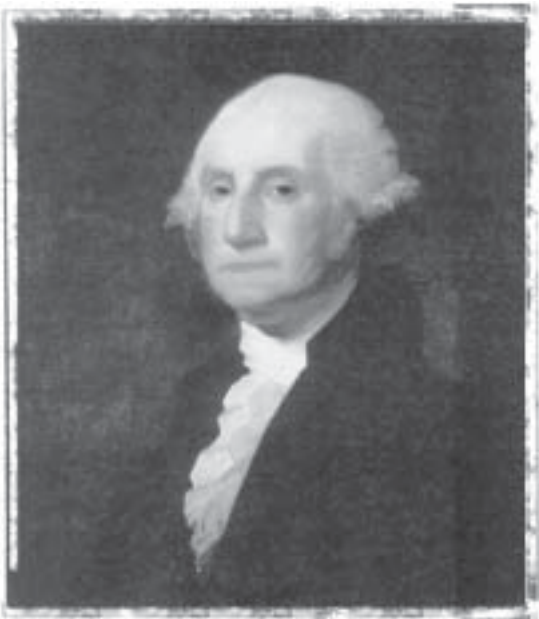
Obviously successful leaders must have confidence in their own ability to lead and in their ideas. It does not mean to be arrogant. Far from it. As we've said good leaders must have the humility to learn from others. But it means that, while being

aware of their shortcomings, leaders know their strengths as well. They do not worry about their inabilities, but are secure enough in themselves to surround themselves with subordinates who can make up for their leaders' deficiencies. Over time good leaders will work to develop and improve their abilities.

True leaders

Finally, we can say that to be a good leader you must be a 'people-oriented' person. You have to like people and like to be with others. Much of a leader's time is not his own. You must be available to others, sometimes late into the night; ready to answer questions, give guidance, exhort and encourage when necessary. Thus, a leader must be able and willing to give up his or her personal desires for the sake of the larger purpose. It means that he must have dominion over himself before he is qualified to have dominion over others. Otherwise, he will misuse his authority and end up exploiting others for his own gain.

Beyond this, you have to have sincere care and concern for those you are leading.



Some people 'lead' through fear and intimidation, through reward and punishment, but this is not leading. This is control and manipulation. In the long run people will rebel and leave. Exceptional leaders are those who project a parental concern for their followers, so much so that their hearts are moved to acts of great sacrifice and devotion. Thus, Mahatma Gandhi was referred to by his people as *bapu*, meaning 'father'. George Washington has been called the "father of his country". Among women, Mother Teresa's title is an expression of the motherly love she showered upon the poorest of the poor in Calcutta decade after decade. Such leaders are able to strike some chord deep inside of people through their personal example of commitment and sacrifice that arises from a parental heart.

Coping with failure

Ask any successful leader and he or she will tell you that the road to success is littered with many setbacks and failures. A good leader is not one who somehow has been able to avoid failure, but is one who learns from it and moves on. For many people the word 'failure' is a dreaded word that has a ring of finality to it—a signal to

give up, that one just doesn't have what it takes and never will. Their fear of failure, if they allow it to dominate their minds, becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy. They doom themselves to failure.

Successful leaders, on the other hand, are those who take an entirely different attitude. For them, failure is not the end of the world. Rather they see it as a temporary setback from which to learn and overcome. If mistakes were made, they need to be analyzed and corrected. Their vision remains intact. They keep their focus on the goal and continue to pour their energy into it. Thomas Edison is known to have commented that the discovery of the proper filament that would work in a light bulb was preceded by a thousand failures. Nelson Mandela

spent 28 years in a South African prison before he emerged to become its first black president. Abraham Lincoln suffered many electoral defeats on various levels before being elected the 16th president of the United States.

In every case it is the commitment to a higher vision that gives great leaders the strength to overcome adversity and allows them to finally attain success in their field. They are excited and energized by that vision, and in the process, they excite and energize others. They tend to see life as an adventure. All the ups and downs they experience as they proceed on their course are all a part of that adventurous life.



Questions for Discussion



The great English statesman, Benjamin Disraeli (1804-1881), once said, "I must follow the people. Am I not their leader?" When is it a good idea for a political or social leader to follow the desires or dreams of his people? Describe another circumstance when it is not a good idea to do so? American politicians rely a lot on the results of opinion polls taken by professional pollsters. What are the risks and benefits of this practice in crafting a nation's policies and laws?

Individual Exercise



Research one of the following major historical leaders. How did this person change the society and world around them? What were the characteristics of his or her leadership style? Were the results of the person's leadership good or bad for his or her people, for the world?

Alexander the Great
Joan of Arc
Napoleon Bonaparte
Abraham Lincoln
Adolf Hitler
Nelson Mandela

For Your Journal



Your desire is to invent something that will improve the daily lives of ordinary people. What are some of the questions you will need to explore to achieve your goal? How does becoming a successful inventor make you a leader? What are the responsibilities of the creator of a new product? What are some consequences that he should think about before bringing his product to market?

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

CHAPTER 5

How We Communicate

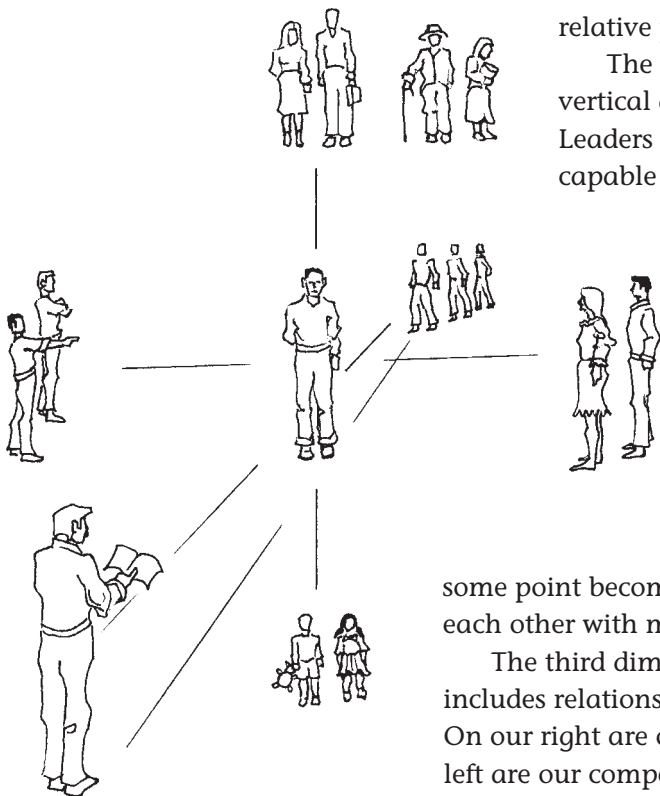
Human relationships can be divided into two fundamental types: vertical and horizontal. Within this division there are many more subdivisions. We enter mutual relations with others in different dimensions and directions.

The first dimension is purely vertical and reflects the interrelations of generations. We can say that our seniors (parents, teachers, other adults) are “higher” and possess some kind of authority, whereas children and younger people are “lower”. This does not mean that the people in the “upper” position are more valuable than those in the “lower” one. It simply signifies that the nature of the relationship is vertical – from up to down, older to younger – and that there is a certain “one-way” nature in the relationship. For example, a child cannot say to his parents, “Hurry up! Sit down at the table and eat properly”, but his parents do have this authority. In many cultures, the language itself reflects this principle and relational truth. Language often differentiates words and expressions depending on the relative position of the people involved.

The second dimension assumes a combination of the vertical and horizontal factors and reflect relative competence. Leaders of some groups are our peers who happen to be more capable and experienced than us, while in other groups there may be adults that guide us, such as our teachers. These relationships have a clear order but, unlike those of an absolute vertical order, they can and do change with time. Thus, over time a student may come to surpass her teacher in knowledge of the subject matter. Moreover, students often have the opportunity to take a subjective role in their class when they present material, report about projects and give various types of presentations.

Any person who is now a subordinate may at some point become a superior. Recognizing this helps both sides to treat each other with mutual respect.

The third dimension presents the purely horizontal factor and includes relationships which can be characterized as “right” and “left”. On our right are our brothers and sisters, colleagues and friends. On our left are our competitors, opponents and those we treat with indifference or detachment. These kinds of relationships are usually “two-way” because they imply that both parties are on the same level and that they relate to each other in the same way. But in life we often observe a breach of such reciprocity. For example, between husband and wife





there may be a longing for intimacy and trust on one side that is not reciprocated by the other.

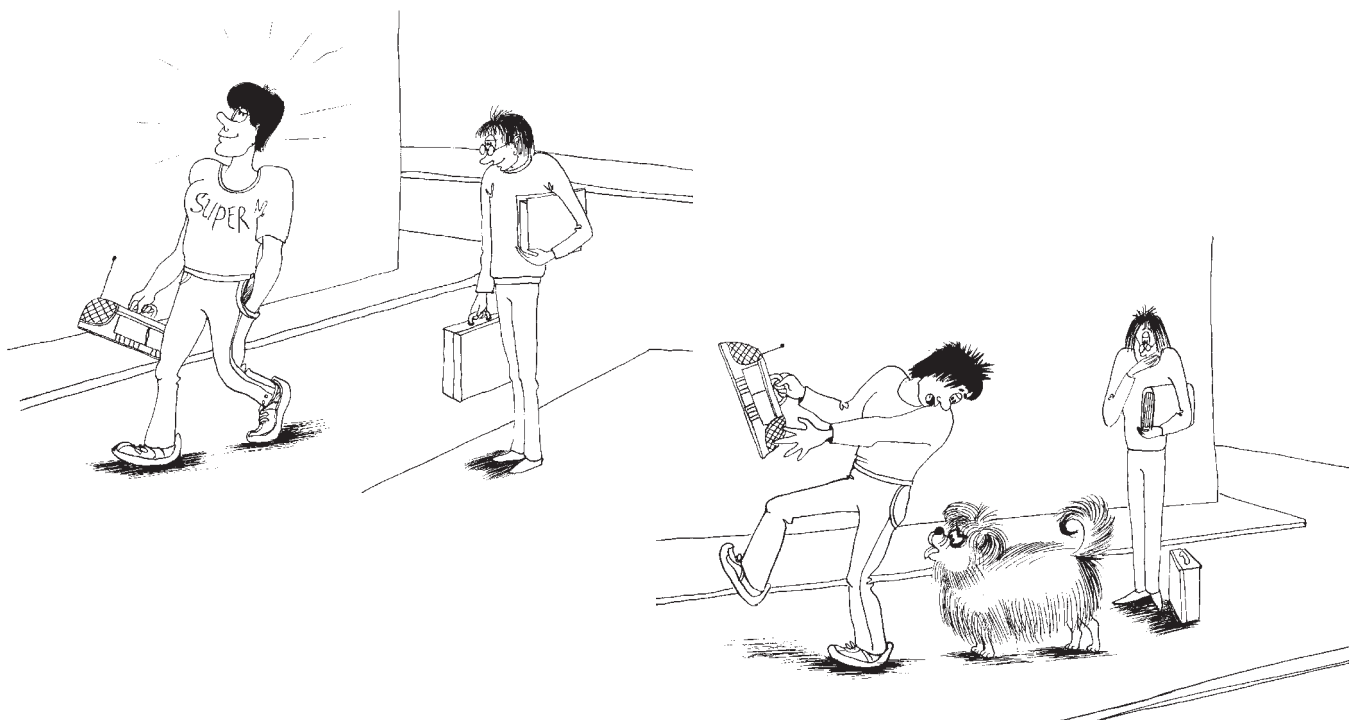
We easily communicate with our friends and with those with whom we feel sympathetic, but are often unwilling to relate with our rivals, opponents or those who wish us ill. Many of us would be glad to avoid such relationships altogether, but this is a mistake, because eventually such relationships may turn out to be fruitful.

Abraham Lincoln, one of America's greatest presidents, was one man who did not shy away from such people. In 1864, as he campaigned for re-election, he was faced by a determined and malicious opponent, Charles Seward, from within his own party. Seward used every opportunity to degrade Lincoln's character. In the end Lincoln won the nomination of his party and the election. After it was over, he astonished his aides by asking Seward to take a senior post within his administration. How could he work with such an enemy? Lincoln was sure that he could make a friend out of his enemy. Moved by the new president's big-heartedness, Seward became an important member of the government and a friend. When Lincoln was shot a few months later, it was in Seward's arms that he died.

The truth is that there is no one who is incompatible with us. True, some people are more difficult to relate to, perhaps very difficult. However, such people challenge us to make more effort to love them. If we can do that, then we will have the added bonus of being able to love all such people of similar character.

In order to establish any relationship, it is necessary to meet the person, get acquainted and feel some friendly attraction. The exception is in the family where all members know each other naturally. But the majority of relationships, especially horizontal ones, develop on the basis of mutual purpose or personal attraction. There are perils with this way, because one's first impression may be not the most accurate. Studies have discovered the following most frequent mistakes:

- ✗ **Inequality.** We tend to overestimate people who surpass us in a feature significant for us. For instance, if I am physically weak, I overestimate a physically strong person, automatically attaching to him other noble qualities.



- ✗ **Preconception.** We have a higher opinion of those who like us and a lower opinion of those who dislike us. For instance, lovers usually do not see any drawbacks in each other at first.
- ✗ **External impression.** We often judge a person by their outward appearance. For instance, we tend to attribute kindness and intelligence to a good looking person. It was Gogol who wrote: “Beauty works genuine miracles. All the spiritual drawbacks of a beautiful woman, instead of causing disgust, become somehow extremely attractive”.



Kindle at every meeting, whenever you can, a candle of love. Bring joy and inspiration to every heart. Take care of every person as your own family member. Give to strangers the same love and kindness that you give to your close friends.

— Abdul-Baha (Baha’i faith)

These mistakes happen because we already have an idea of the kind of person with whom we want to communicate and befriend. As soon as we meet a possible future partner, we just take this ready notion and label the person with it. Each of us has “reserves” of such desired images, which emerge when we encounter others.

In such ways we form our friendships. But there is always the danger that something will destroy a good relationship and friends may become enemies. There may be arguments or misunderstandings, resulting in mutual avoidance and even hostility. However, there are tried and tested ways to preserve a friendship.

The most important thing is mutual understanding. Members of a group must “speak the same language”. In their conversation they use words and expressions in the same manner. Personal relationships are deepened by doing activities together, such as playing games and doing other things of interest. Relationships have a great opportunity to deepen especially when they involve activities that benefit other people.

Very significant is what psychologists call empathy—feeling, suffering and rejoicing together. Empathy engenders trust, tolerance and openness. It helps us to be sensitive to each other and it can prevent people from hurting each other. When one communicates with a close friend, every word, every expression, every gesture carries meaning. Finally, it is vital to remember: every person is different, so we should approach others sensitively. Communication in this way is positive and will improve any relationship.

Individual Exercise



You overhear the following conversations in the hallway at school. Which one sounds strange to you? Why?

Dialogue A

Misha (ninth grade student): Hey, Alexei, what's up? I thought that biology test on Friday was way too hard. How did you do?

Alexei (ninth grade student): Misha, I thought that the test was very fair and if you had studied for once you would have thought so, too!

Misha: Gee, Alexei, I think you're crazy. That test was too hard. I don't have all day to study, you know.

Alexei: Maybe the next test will be easier for you, Misha.

Misha: Yeah, maybe. Hey, where are you going now? Do you have a coin for a phone call?



Dialogue B

Misha (a ninth grade student): Hey, Sergei, what's up? I thought that biology test on Friday was way too hard. What are you trying to do by giving your students an exam like that?

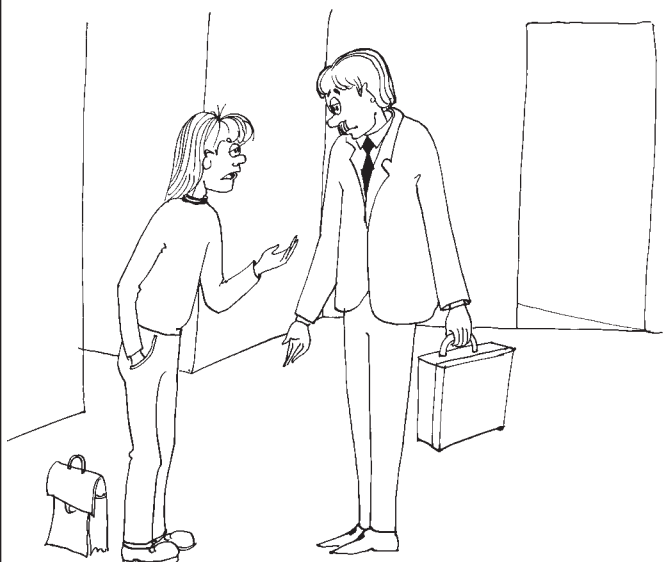
Sergei Bovis (biology teacher): Misha, I thought that the test was very fair and if you had studied thoroughly for it you would have thought so, too.

Misha: Gee, Sergei, I think you're crazy. That test was too hard. I don't have all day to study, you know.

Sergei: Maybe the next test will be easier for you, Misha.

Misha: Yeah, maybe. Hey, where are you going now? Do you have a coin for a phone call?

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.



CHAPTER 6

Respect in Relationships

Each of us is a unique individual, and we each have our own opinions and perspectives. Yet we should respect other people even if we disagree with their views. Respect makes people feel good because it affirms their sense of value. A person who is able to respect others has a certain dignity because she has something to offer others. A person who disrespects others has virtually nothing to offer.

If we want other people to respect us, we should respect others. We may think we are better good-looking and smarter than a friend, but how can we be so certain that we truly are?

If we value someone, we spend time and effort to prepare to meet them. We want to glow, to look good for them. And when we do that, we surely project much more self-confidence. We communicate more effectively and our respect for ourselves and

for them shows! But when we do things half heartedly, our shortcomings tend to show. It is because we do not get totally involved. This may backfire when we realize that we are not as appreciated as we would like to be.

Remember that respect is an attitude. It shows that we value the other person. Respect means having a good attitude toward a person in spite of his mistakes or shortcomings. It is possible to adopt this kind of attitude only when we learn to recognize their good qualities.

One young man said, "My father is never disappointed because he always tries hard to discover traits he can respect in every person. He claims that he always finds more than he originally expected!"

Some people expect others automatically to be a certain way and become sorely disappointed when that does not happen. It is far better for us to judge a person based on what he is, not on what he is not. If we become disappointed, instead of becoming angry with the person who did not meet our expectations, why not reflect on those expectations? Maybe the person lived up to his own expectations of himself. He did the best he could, and hence is worth respecting on that basis.

When we show respect for those around us, we



naturally renew and develop those relationships. Problems occur when we fail to show respect. Then we see only the stains on their clothing, notice their messy hair, and become offended by their behavior. We get easily annoyed when he stands in our way, takes the chair we were going to sit in, or eats the piece of fruit we were planning to eat. But if we have love and respect, we simply don't notice anything bad, and the features that used to cause bad feelings can even seem attractive!

Respect and love

When we speak about respect, one can't help noticing that this attitude is important not only in a relationship between two people. Today whole societies are disintegrating because there is a lack of respect and love. Students do not respect their teachers while teachers do not respect their students. In the workplace employers and employees show disrespect for one another. Disrespect in relationships is propagated by the media every day through TV, movies and songs. All social behavior begins in the family. If a husband and wife do not respect one another, their children will adopt that kind of behavior and disrespect their parents and others. Many children today yell at their parents, swear at them, and even order them around. We have forgotten basic rules of civility, which are based on respect and love. Respect should be established first. On that foundation love can develop.



An attitude that is closely connected with respect is forgiveness. Genuine forgiveness is not a formality but is expressed sincerely from the heart. This is the kind of forgiveness that was taught by the founder of Christianity, Jesus. He called upon people to forgive their enemies and those who were far from the path of righteousness.

The ability to forgive reflects a parental heart of love. How many times have our parents forgiven us, despite our many mistakes and faults? How important it is for each of us to inherit such a parental heart of love and forgiveness, not only towards our own children, but towards all people.

Only then will arrogance and the desire to dominate someone else be absent from our relationships.

By this time in your life your ability to see from another person's point of view should be well developed. So, instead of concentrating on what we think of other people, we should consider and reflect on how other people view us. This can help us think about our own behavior and attitudes.

We need to learn to relate to others heart-to-heart. We do this by cultivating our respect for others, as well as by being sensitive to and perceiving their emotions and needs. One important way to do this is by being a good listener. People feel appreciated and genuinely valued when someone else shows courtesy and love by listening to them. Listening means much more than just hearing the words being spoken. Listening involves being interested in and receptive towards the other person. If he feels you are genuinely interested in what he has to say, he will also relate to you with respect and gratitude. Merely pretending to be interested in another person



doesn't work, because relationships are mostly influenced by the degree of our sincerity rather than by our words.

Some people can't look each other in the eye while having a conversation. They prefer to stare at the ceiling or the floor. Why is it that we often pass each other without acknowledging the other? Is it out of embarrassment? When we respect something, we naturally handle it with care. We should be even more careful when relating to people! All of us know what it's like to experience pain and suffering. Why then should we cause more pain in others? If we have respect for a person we would not talk behind his back. We would care enough to think and formulate a respectful answer before speaking.

All of us need affirmation. Our feelings need to be acknowledged. So affirm someone and recognize his goodness! All it takes to begin with is a smile and a simple "hello". If you respect somebody, don't be afraid to show it.

Individual Exercise



Make two lists with numbers one through five. Label the first list "people I respect the most." Label the second list "people who I feel show me the most respect." Before making each list, think carefully about the people and what they do that elicits your respect and, in turn, makes you feel respected.

Who are these people—your family members, close friends, teachers, famous actors or singers? Is it more or less difficult to respect people you know very well? Is the respect you feel for a famous figure the same as the respect you feel towards your friend?

For Your Journal



“Problems begin to arise in relationships when we fail to show respect.”
Do you agree with this statement? What may cause us to lose respect for someone?

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

The Old Grandfather and His Little Grandson

by Lev Tolstoy

The grandfather had become very old. His legs would not carry him, his eyes could not see, his ears could not hear, and he was toothless. When he ate, bits of food sometimes dropped out of his mouth. His son and his son's wife no longer allowed him to eat at the table. He had to eat his meals in the corner near the stove.

One day they gave him his food in a bowl. He tried to move the bowl close, it fell to the floor and broke. His daughter-in-law scolded him. She told him that he spoiled everything in the house and broke their dishes, and she said from now on he would get his food in a wooden dish. The old man sighed and said nothing.

A few days later, the old man's son and his wife were sitting in their hut, resting and watching their little boy play on the floor. They saw him putting together something out of small pieces of wood. His father asked him, “What are you making, Misha?”

The little grandson said, “I'm making a wooden bucket. When you and mama get older I'll feed you out of this wooden dish.”

The young peasant and his wife looked at each other and tears filled their eyes. They were ashamed because they had treated the old grandfather so meanly, and from that day they again let the old man eat with them at the table and took better care of him.

CHAPTER 7

Understanding Each Other

In relationships it is important to show understanding first, then seek to be understood. In order to establish good relationships with our families and friends we need to understand them in order to communicate effectively.

People can see the same thing very differently. One person may approach a problem with a creative and intuitive mind, while someone else approaches the same problem from an analytical and logical viewpoint. Each may think their own view is the correct one, based on the “facts.”

The more deeply we can understand others, the more we will value them. We need to learn to listen to our families and friends and extend understanding to them. We need to see situations and the problems they face through their eyes. We can also try to view our own problems from the perception of our parents, teachers and friends.

Empathic listening

Empathic listening is listening with intent to understand. We look from the other person's perception and see the world the way they see it. We understand how they feel. Empathy is not the same as sympathy. Sympathy is feeling pity for someone. Empathy is not necessarily feeling pity but rather fully and deeply understanding another person, both emotionally and intellectually.

Much more is involved in empathetic listening than understanding the words being spoken. We still listen with our ears but we also listen with our eyes and our heart.

When other people speak to us we may sometimes ignore them or not really listen at all, or pretend to listen: “Yeah. Uh-huh. Right.” Perhaps we do listen attentively and focus on the words that are being said. But very few people practice empathetic listening which is the highest quality of listening.

Ivan: I can't understand my little brother. He just won't listen to me.

David: You don't understand your little brother because *he* won't listen to *you*?

Ivan: That's right.

David: I thought that to understand another person *you* needed to listen to *him*.

Ivan: Oh yeah! *(Pause)* Well, I do understand him. I know what he's going through, because I've been through the same thing myself. What I don't understand is why he won't listen to me.



Ivan has no real idea what is going on inside his little brother's head. He only thinks about what is in his own mind and thinks he knows what his brother is going through. It is certainly easier to see from our own point of view. We want to be understood, but often we fail to try to understand others. Through empathetic listening we attempt to understand what it is that is going through other people's minds and hearts. We don't assume that other people see the world the way we do. It means to open our ears sincerely to what people have to say.

Unclear expectations

How many times have we had conversations like this?

"You said..."

"I did not! I said..."

"No, you're wrong! You never told me..."

"Oh, yes I did! I definitely remember saying..."

The root of most difficulties in relationships is unclear expectations. Whether it is a mother communicating with her child about house chores or an office manager dealing with the work of his staff, unclear expectations can lead to misunderstandings, disappointments and distrust.

People often have expectations that are not outwardly expressed, but assumed. In a marriage, husband and wife usually have expectations of one another. Although these expectations may not have been communicated or even consciously recognized, satisfying them creates trust in the relationship while breaking them creates distrust.

It is important in new situations for everyone to clearly state their expectations. Problems can develop by simply assuming that our own expectations are automatically understood and agreed upon by other people. Simple misunderstandings can become complicated leading to personality conflicts and communication breakdowns.

Sometimes making our expectations clear takes a lot of courage. It often seems easier to pretend that differences do not exist and to hope that things will work themselves out. However, it is better to admit our differences and work together to create expectations that everyone can agree upon.

Seek to be understood

After seeking to understand, seek to be understood. Seeking to understand requires consideration towards others. Seeking to be understood requires the courage to express oneself honestly.

Effectively presenting our ideas involves the quality of our character, our ability to relate to others and the logic of our argument. When we can present our ideas clearly

while showing an understanding of the other person's viewpoint, we enhance the validity of our own views. Understanding the other's point of view gives one a better perspective of the larger picture.

By making an effort to understand another person's perspective our own viewpoint changes. Not only does it make us a better communicator but efforts to understand others also helps to broaden our own views. This is why we should seek to understand other people.

Becoming a good communicator

A good communicator is aware of what is going on within himself and others. Self-awareness is being in touch with our own perceptions, views, feelings and desires. Outward awareness means observing the feelings and emotions in others, "reading" their body language, beyond merely listening to what they say. An obvious example

is if someone says in a loud voice that he is not angry. The passionate outburst of someone declaring that they are not upset about the subject matter is a clear indication that the opposite is probably true.

To really understand others, we need to be able to interpret the shorthand that we all use to communicate. For example, people often generalize. Generalizing can be convenient and save time, but it can also be harmful. If someone says "Girls can't be trusted", the word "girls" should be interpreted to mean a specific girl that the speaker can't trust.

Failing to communicate clearly can lead to misunderstandings, unnecessary accusations, or distortions. Saying things like "You drive me crazy" or "You give me a headache" are distortions. Sometimes we go even further, using statements like "I know that you wanted to hurt me," or "I know you don't care about me." Cause-effect accusations usually reflect our resentment or desire to protect ourselves, and not the real situation. These kinds of messages only block our

understanding of one another.

It is also very important for us to take responsibility for our own feelings, perceptions and desires. We need to express them in clear, responsible terms without being harsh, rude and commanding. For example, it is better to say "I need you to return the science book you borrowed from me", rather than demanding "Give back the book you borrowed from me!"

A good communicator has the courage and ability to give good feedback. One form of good feedback is to confront the other person on how they look, sound and seem to feel. For example, "You seem angry. Your jaw is clenched and your fist looks tight and you haven't spoken for thirty minutes." Confronting is an act of communicating the truth. Secure partners communicate honestly with each another.

Apologizing sincerely

When we hurt others or cause misunderstandings, we need to apologize and do so sincerely. This may seem obvious, yet it is often very difficult. Apologizing can resolve bad feelings and open new paths for communication.



"I was wrong."

"That was thoughtless of me."

"I did not show you respect, and I apologize."

"I embarrassed you in front of other people. I wanted to prove my point, but I shouldn't have done it at your expense. I'm very sorry."



It takes a lot of inner strength to apologize humbly from the heart. People who are insecure and have a lack of self-worth often feel that apologizing makes them appear weak and vulnerable. They are afraid that others will take advantage of them. Their self-view is based on the opinions of others. They worry about what others might think. They usually justify their actions by pointing at the other person's wrongdoing. "Well, maybe I did do that, but look at what you did." If they apologize at all, it is usually superficial.

Win/win relationships

Win/win is a state of mind and heart that always seeks the benefit of all parties involved in the communication process. A win/win solution to problems and disputes means that everyone involved will feel committed to the plan of action to resolve a problem. Win/win views life as cooperation, not competition.

We can build and keep win/win relationships on the foundation of our personal honesty and integrity. If there is strong trust and mutual respect, people are focused on issues, not on personalities or positions.

When there is trust, we know that we can be open. Even though we may see things differently than others, we feel assured that our opinions will be heard respectfully. The others know that, in turn, their opinions will be respected by us. Everyone is committed to trying to understand each other's point of view and to work together to find solutions that will be satisfactory for all parties involved.

Perhaps it is most difficult to reach a common understanding when communicating with people who are guided by a win/lose mentality. For them it is about winning and losing and not coming to some kind of happy resolution. It is about "getting it my way". People with this kind of mentality tend to use any means to get their own way.

Four important steps to any win/win solution

1. See the problem or situation from the other point of view.
2. Define the main issues and concerns involved.
3. Decide what would be a fully acceptable solution.
4. Determine possible alternatives to achieve the solution.

The most effective way to deal with such people is to express genuine courtesy, appreciation and respect for them and their viewpoint. We should listen intently, yet not be afraid to express our own viewpoint. We should avoid responding in an emotional manner as this will only fuel their determination to get their way.

Open communication has the power to solve minor problems and major crises. It takes a continuous investment of mind and heart. While the path is not an easy one, it is a journey filled with incredible rewards, as we learn to connect more deeply with ourselves, others and the world around us.



Sveta and Olga, who live in neighboring flats, have the following conversation one night:

Olga: I want to go to the store tonight to get some milk for breakfast tomorrow morning. Will you go with me?

Sveta: I'm afraid to go out to the store so late. Two weeks ago some guys took my little brother's wallet and his leather coat.

Olga: Sveta, I don't want to go alone. But, anyway, those type of things don't happen very often. You can't live your life in fear.

Sveta: Olga, I know it sounds stupid, but I am really afraid. I don't want to take a chance. My brother was so scared when he came home he was crying. I just don't want to take a chance.

Olga: Thanks, Sveta. Now I won't have any milk for tomorrow morning. Maybe I should just ask Tanya to go, I know she would.

Questions for Discussion

- What do you think of Sveta's attitude towards Olga?
- Sveta tells Olga that she shouldn't live her life in fear, but how honest is she about her own fear?
- How do you think Olga feels after this conversation?

For Your Journal



Before the next class practice empathic listening. Try it as an experiment. After you have had an opportunity to be an empathetic listener write down what happened: What kind of a situation was it? What did you say to the other person? How were you able to see things from the other person's point of view? How did the person react to you? Was the person surprised? What was the final result of your empathetic listening?

CHAPTER 8

The Thief and the Mask

There once lived a wise king with a beautiful daughter. The time came for her to be married and he wanted her to have a variety of choices. So he advertised for prospective suitors to present themselves at the palace for selection. There were just two requirements: to have a good character (the king's preference) and to be good looking (the princess' choice).

Among the people who saw the advertisement was a thief. His life of robbery and deception had marked his face, though he had once been handsome. Lines of deceit and untrustworthiness had disfigured his looks. But his natural cunning was aroused by the idea of competing for the princess' hand. "I can find a way," he thought "to do better than the others." So he secretly visited a famous mask-maker and had a mask made that transformed him back to the innocence of his youth.

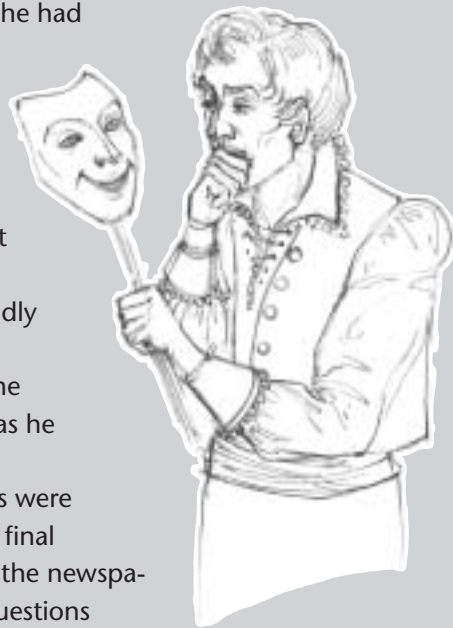
With the help of the mask, the thief progressed rapidly through the early rounds of selection. At first, he would come home and laugh at how easily he had deceived the king's advisers. "How foolish they are!" he told himself as he looked at his real face in the mirror each night.

After a few weeks, however, he realized that matters were getting out of hand. He had become one of the twenty final candidates, all of whom had their pictures published in the newspapers. Reporters stood outside his door and asked him questions about his private life, which, of course, he was most reluctant to disclose! He feigned humility, saying that he expected to be eliminated and that his personal life was unimportant. He could no longer take off his mask but lived in terror that his true identity would be revealed.

The time came when he was notified that he had been selected as one of the three final candidates. Realizing that if his true identity were discovered he surely would be executed, he decided to leave the country the following morning. But as he came out of his house, he was greeted by two soldiers sent by the king to be his bodyguards. It was too late!

On the final day of the contest the thief walked to the castle for what he was sure was the last time. He hoped desperately that he would lose to one of the other candidates, but it was of no use. The princess had already made up her mind. She talked to the other candidates just long enough to be polite. Then she took him by the arm and told her father, "This is the one!"

In a last attempt to avoid disclosure, the thief took the king aside. "Your Majesty, " he said, "I am honored, but I need time to prepare. Can the wedding be delayed by one year?"



The king was happy to oblige. Of course, the thief's real intent was to run away as soon as he could. However, this proved to be impossible. He was now the second most famous man in the kingdom. Crowds surrounded his house hoping for a glimpse of the future king. He was invited to give speeches, attend parties and, worst of all, to kiss babies. He hated babies! And while doing all these things, he had to keep up the pretense of virtue and honor, living the lie that was the mask, which he wished he had never bought. For a whole year he lived as a noble person on the surface, all the time squirming within at his own corruption.

Finally the day came for the Royal Wedding. Certain that he would be exposed and would have to face death, the thief went to the palace with a heavy heart. When the princess came to greet him, he asked to be with her for a short time alone. As they retired to a small room, she thought, "Maybe now he will kiss me!" Instead, he threw himself at her feet.

"Your Royal Highness," he cried, "I have a terrible confession to make. Can you forgive me!" And he told her the whole story of his deception; how he was not a handsome prince at all, but an ugly thief. When he had finished there was a long moment of silence. Finally the princess spoke.

"I'll forgive you," she said, "but only on one condition. Take off your mask and show me who you really are!"

It was the most he could do to bring his hands to his face. Trembling with shame and fear, he pulled the mask off and turned to face the princess.

"You monster!" she shouted, and slapped him in the face.

"Yes, yes, I know," he mumbled. "I—"

"What kind of stupid trick is this?" shouted the princess again. "What are you trying to do to me?"

"What do you mean?"

"Take this!" she said, and gave him a mirror. He looked. And looked again. Then he looked at the mask and into the mirror again. They were identical!

By living as a good and righteous man for an entire year, he had changed. Since his actions had been good, he had become good without noticing it. But there was no doubt: he *had* changed.

Fortunately, the princess was now beginning to see the funny side of the whole affair. "Come on!" she said "Let's pretend this never happened." And the new couple went off to see the king. In future years, when they became the new rulers, people considered the former thief the wisest and most compassionate king they had ever had.

That is the end of the story. So, what is this tale about? Why is it in this book?

Obviously, the main idea of the story is that even a vicious person, who tries to live in accordance with the demands of a noble life, can step-by-step, without noticing it, become noble himself. What do you think? Is this possible?

The reason we may object to this idea is our negative attitude to adaptation. Usually we call it hypocrisy or *conformism*. Yet, perhaps there are some situations worthy of us conforming to and others which are not.

In daily life we experience different manifestations of adaptation that seem very natural. For example, if we are discussing a subject that our friends find unpleasant, we may decide to agree with their point of view that we don't necessarily hold for the sake of the friendship. Sometimes we may be called to publicly support a person with whom we privately disagree. We often find ourselves in situations that require tact and maturity so that we do not offend others or cause a negative result in some way. Adaptation or conformity is a fact of life that can lead to either good or bad results depending on the circumstances.

Questions for Discussion



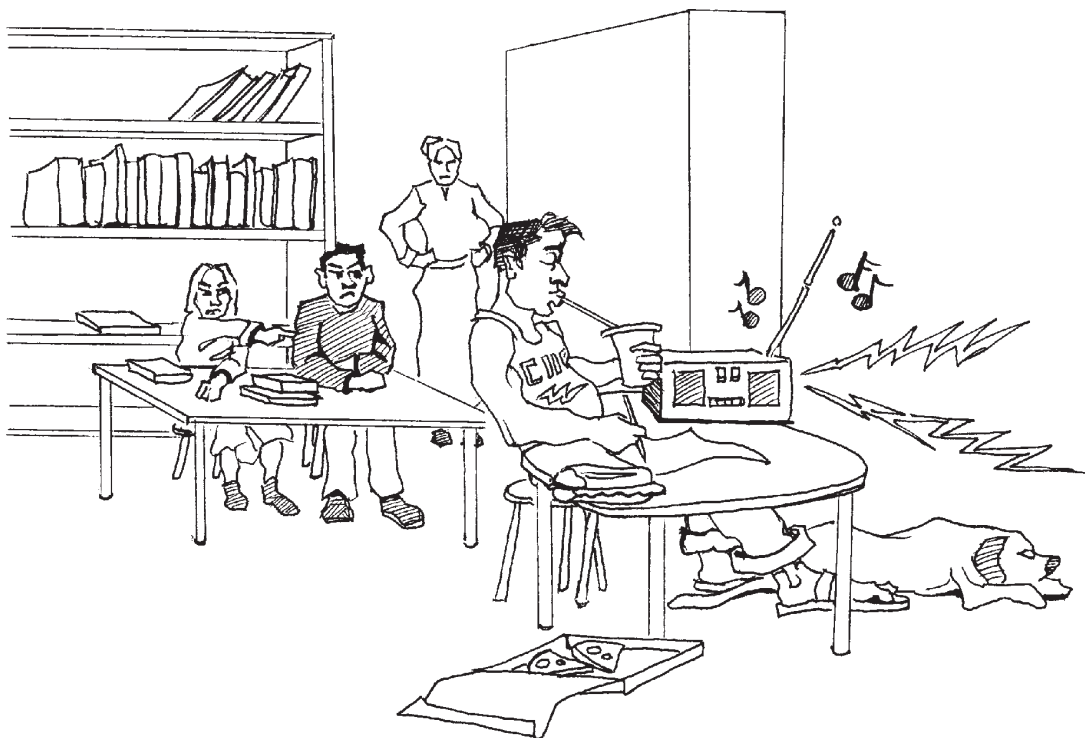
1. Find examples from life and literature that show both the good and bad aspects of people adapting to their environment and to people.
2. Why is it that some people seem to change their character through trying to live up to certain expectations while others do not?
3. What do you think are the positive and negative aspects of conformity on one's character?
4. How does a person feel when he is trying to conform to certain norms of behavior that feel unnatural to him?

CHAPTER 9

Freedom to Make Decisions

Each one of us is free. However, this freedom is limited by who we are. We are born into a particular family and grow up in a particular society with particular values. Whether we were born to Eskimos, in New York or Moscow, or on a farm will greatly affect our lives. The opportunities we would have and the decisions we could make would be different. We cannot dissociate ourselves from our background. It is important to realize that where we came from affects who we are and the values we live by. It deeply influences the way we live.

At the same time, although there are many things that limit our options in life, such as instinct, genetic heritage, history, education or experience, we are not completely bound by them. Unlike other living creatures, human beings can consider their options and choose among them. We have creativity and imagination which enable us to respond to situations in different ways. And each decision we make changes us. If we face an obstacle and give up, we may develop a habit of giving up when facing some kind of difficulty. The feeling of being a victim can come to dominate our experience. On the other hand if we learn to rise up to challenges, we develop a strong character and will. Life becomes exciting as we actively shape our own future. A mature person recognizes this and can honestly say, "I am who I am today, not because of my circumstances, but because of the choices I made in my life."



Every decision we make has consequences. We are responsible for the consequences of our decisions and how they impact our character. Freedom and responsibility are not opposing forces but go hand in hand. Freedom is not doing whatever I please without regard to the consequences. Actually, this kind of behavior leads to loss of freedom. Not only that, but in all societies any person who wants to 'be free' must consider how his actions will affect others—and how the actions of others will affect him. Without these considerations freedom becomes a sham.

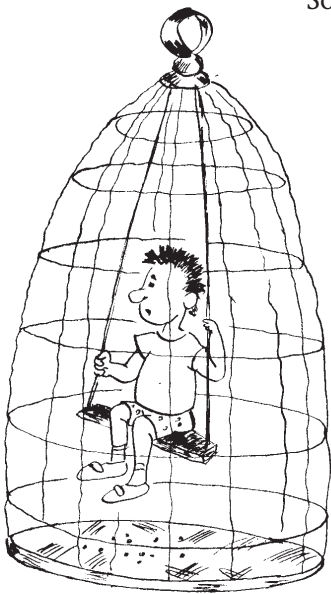
The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations in 1948, recognizes the close connection between rights and duties, freedoms and responsibilities, in human life. Only by respecting others can people respect themselves. The Declaration states:

"All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards each other in a spirit of brotherhood.

In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society."

So, real freedom:

- ✗ is always accompanied by responsibility
- ✗ always pursues actual results (not fantasy)
- ✗ always seeks to make others happy
- ✗ always results in goodness
- ✗ always results in more freedom



Despite the fact that most people would agree that we are responsible for our own decisions and behavior, many of us are surprisingly careless in deciding what to do and how to act.

Every day of our lives we are making decisions. Some are trivial while others are of vital importance. How do we come to the right decision? Is there always a right or a best decision? What do we do if we realize we have made a mistake?

Decisions, decisions

Take a moment to think back about some of the more important decisions you made in the past year. Write down about five or six decisions, and then rank them in order of importance from the most to the least. Next, think about how you made those decisions. Do you recognize any of the approaches listed below?

- ✗ A **logical** decision. I collected, checked and sorted out all the information available and then decided what would be best based on the facts.



- ✗ An **impulsive** decision. I didn't think about it much. The main thing was to make the decision and get on with more important things.
- ✗ An **emotional** decision. It was based on my feeling; what I wanted and what I felt attracted to.
- ✗ An **intuitive** decision. It was hard to explain, but it just felt inside that it was the right and appropriate thing to do.
- ✗ An **emergency** decision. It was very important to get it right, but there was no time to agonize over it.
- ✗ A **representative** decision. I knew that many others would be affected and influenced by my decision, so I thought it through very carefully.
- ✗ A **bitter** decision. I knew someone would be hurt, but it couldn't be avoided.
- ✗ A **responsive** decision. I was concerned about other people's opinions, so I listened to what they had to say and took account of their advice and suggestions.
- ✗ A **prayerful** decision. I didn't know what to do, so I just prayed and asked God for his guidance.
- ✗ A **guided** decision. I felt it was out of my depth so I asked my parents/mentors for advice.
- ✗ A **group** decision. I felt that we all needed to be involved and take responsibility for the outcome.
- ✗ A **rash** decision. I knew at the time that it was probably a mistake, but I neither had the time nor the inclination to think seriously about the consequences.
- ✗ A **delayed** decision. I didn't rush into deciding. Rather, I put off the decision for as long as possible. At the time I felt it was going to be an impossible choice. In the process I went through much agony.
- ✗ A **default** decision. I did nothing and matters took their own course.

Questions for Discussion



1. Are some of these approaches better or worse than others? If so, why?
2. Arrange these types of decisions into categories (for instance, decisions that are made independently, on time, are well grounded, etc.)
3. For each of these categories, discuss:
 - a) a situation where that type of decision is appropriate
 - b) another situation where that same type of decision is inappropriate
4. Which type of decision making might be best for the following?
 - Deciding whether to go to college or get a job
 - Deciding which university to attend
 - Deciding on a career
 - Deciding whether to report a friend for stealing
 - Deciding whether to have sex before marriage
 - Deciding whether to continue an unmarried pregnancy or get an abortion
 - Deciding whether to marry a certain person
 - A friend calls to tell you she is about to commit suicide
 - You are offered drugs at school and your friends urge you to try

For Your Journal



Have there been any decisions you regret having made? Are they irreversible?

Now think about three really important decisions that you may have to make in the next ten years. Which is the most important for you? Will you use the same decision making process in each case? Why or why not?

How much will these decisions depend on external circumstances and how much on your own will? What does freedom to decide mean for you?

The Hike

Alex, Sergei and Oleg loved nothing better than to go hiking. One day, as they were hiking in the countryside, it began to get dark. They hurried to get back to the campsite.

"Let's go this way!" said Alex, as they came to a steep ravine.

"It looks dangerous to me," said Oleg, peering over the edge.

"Why don't we go back the same way we came?"

"Because it will take an hour longer and get dark before we get back, dummy!" said Alex. "Anyway, we'll be fine. What do you think, Sergei?"

Sergei was silent. Actually he thought it was a pretty stupid idea. But all afternoon Alex had been teasing him about being overcautious, calling him chicken and a baby. It was time to take a stand.

"Looks okay to me," he said, and without delay they set off down the steep slope. Almost as soon as they had begun, Alex, who was the most experienced, knew they had made a mistake. Still, he decided to carry on because he didn't want to face the scorn his companions would pour on him if he admitted his mistake. Then, suddenly Oleg, who was in the lead, slipped on a loose stone and tumbled to the rocks below,

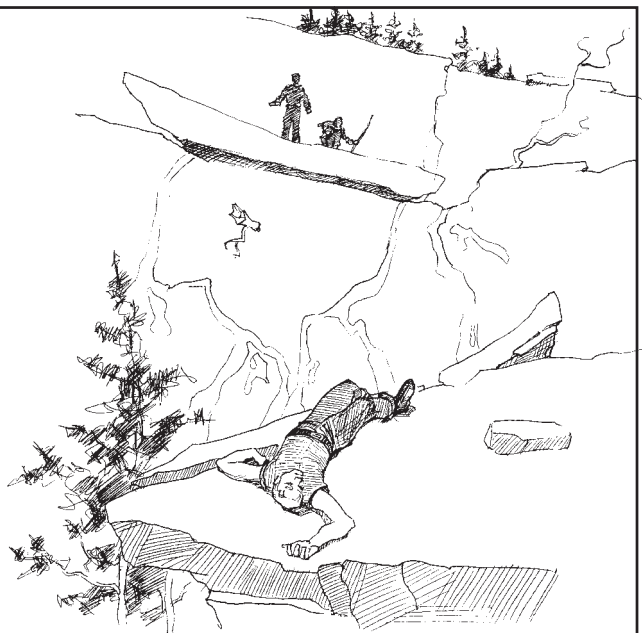
Scared, his companions made their way down as quickly as they could. They saw that Oleg had a deep cut in his leg and was in great pain. Alex and Sergei exchanged glances.

"We'll have to carry him down to the campsite," Alex said grimly. "We should be able to get help there."

They made their way as quickly as possible, but progress was slow. By the time they arrived everything was closed. By this time Oleg was almost unconscious.

"What about that?" Sergei said, pointing to the cafeteria, now closed for the night. "They must have a phone! I know it's locked, but..." He looked to Alex for support. "We could always break a window and force ourselves in."

"We can't do that," said Alex. "It's a crime. We'd be arrested."



Something to
think about



- What do you think of the nature of the relationships among Alex, Sergei and Oleg? Are they real friends?
- What can you tell about the character of each of them?
- What types of decisions did they make according to the list in the text of the chapter?
- How 'free' were they in their decision-making? How responsible?

The Prophet

by Alexander Pushkin

The following extract is from a poem written by the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin in remembrance of those who were executed after the failed Decembrist uprising in 1825 in St. Petersburg. It is a reminder to us of the price paid by those in history who made courageous decisions in the cause for freedom. The true source of freedom and happiness lies in our inner self if we do not compromise our conscience. No external power can take this away from us.

...Then, swiftly drawing
His shining sword, he cleaved my breast,
Plucked out my quivering heart, and, somber
And grim of aspect, coolly thrust
Into the gaping hole an ember
That ran with flame... I lay there, dead,
And God, God spake, and this He said,
"Arise, o sage, my summons hearing,
Do as I bid, by naught deterred;
Stride o'er the earth, a prophet, searing
The hearts of men with righteous word."

CHAPTER 10

Cyber Ethics

The Internet offers an unprecedented opportunity to explore ideas, communicate and develop new relationships. It is a vast network of computers, people, organizations and new business ventures, but isn't it important to think about the ethics of an Internet Citizen – sometimes called a 'netizen'?

The technology of the Internet was developed by the U.S. military to facilitate communications between the computers and computer networks of the military, defense contractors, and university laboratories that were doing defense related research. Its networks were designed to be a decentralized, self-maintaining series of redundant links, capable of rapidly transmitting communications without direct human involvement or control and with the automatic ability to reroute communications if links were damaged or unavailable. No single entity – academic, corporate, governmental or nonprofit – administers the Internet. It exists and functions as a result of the fact that thousands of separate operators of computers decided to use common data transfer protocols.

No one, therefore, owns or manages the Internet – it's like a continual frontier. As a new medium of communication and community, the Internet holds the likes of heroes, villains, curiosity seekers, snake-oil salesmen, teachers, wise men, fools, charlatans, sincere travelers and regular folk. With this new terrain and the freedom granted to you, the traveler, you are advised to proceed with a few principles in mind!

Internet use reflects character

The way you choose to use the Internet reflects your character. Are you the type that thinks that it's okay to do anything you can get away with? Most people would admit that unbridled personal freedom must be balanced with a consideration of the impact their actions have on others, on the common good. Some folks misrepresent themselves to others in chat rooms – they describe themselves as older, richer, smarter, more talented, a different sex, etc. Why do you think doing this is not so good, even if you can get away with it? What might be the dangers of doing this?



"Whenever you are to do a thing, though it can never be known but to yourself, ask yourself how you would act were all the world looking at you and act accordingly."

— Thomas Jefferson
U.S. President (1801-1809)

Words mean something

The Internet – e-mail, chat rooms, interactive real-time dialogue – is all about speaking, listening and responding. Sometimes it is easy to forget that there are real people behind the words; so we might say things that we would not normally say to a person right in front of us. Even though free speech is protected on the Net, it is clear that irresponsible or threatening talk should be taken very seriously. That is why those who engage in such talk are not immune from legal prosecution.

Jack wanted to express his hurt and angry feelings when his girlfriend dropped him for another classmate. So he sent around a story to the class by e-mail about “some girl in class” that held some very personal information about his former girlfriend and her family. The details were such that nearly everyone could tell who it was. Jack defended himself when confronted by the teacher by saying: “I can write whatever I want on the Internet. It doesn’t have to be true. It’s my right of free speech.”

But what about the others’ right to privacy? Just because it is not a face-to-face environment, can we ignore the impact of our words on the lives of others? What’s wrong with the way Jack thinks about his role and responsibilities as a Netizen?

Deleting e-mail messages – are they gone forever?

Many people who use e-mail or chat rooms to communicate with friends or to send and receive inquiries mistakenly think that after they have deleted their messages they are gone forever. This is not so. The system administrator – the business or organization that manages the server – may be making frequent backups of the system, which will include all your personal e-mails! Also, you should realize that any persons who received your messages probably still has them on their computer and may have forwarded some of them on to others.

Remember, whenever you send a message electronically, your words are in a form that allows them to be easily forwarded to another person. You have no control over where your words may end up. Even an encryption system that makes it very difficult for your words to be read by others is not fool proof. Your personal files can be accessed by others with system privileges and may be invaded by a “hacker”, i.e., someone who can break into your system electronically.

Many companies consider personal e-mail files on the company system to be public property and thus employees’ privacy rights are limited in this regard. Unless your employer has made a binding agreement to assure the privacy of your electronic communications, he has the right to read any message you post.

Group discussions

There are literally thousands of group discussions of various kinds on the Internet. People are talking about everything, from health problems to academic topics to sharing personal dreams to giving advice for the aspiring writer to

The president of a small university wanted to know whether the Internet was being used mainly for academic or personal purposes. He asked that all the e-mails of the past week be forwarded to his e-mail file and discovered that some faculty and staff wrote negative things about his new initiatives. They were reprimanded for misuse of university property.

swapping a good recipe for apple pie. What are some general rules to keep in mind when participating in an informal or formal discussion group?

- ✗ Remember that there are many people on the list and, if you're not careful, your message will be forwarded to everyone.
- ✗ Short messages are more likely to be read than long, verbose ones.
- ✗ If you want to speak directly to one person, then send the message to him, not to the entire group.
- ✗ Keep to the topic of the group.
- ✗ When replying to someone else's message, leave in enough of the message to remind the readers of the issues to which you are responding.
- ✗ When posting a general question to the whole group, have the answers sent to you directly. Then summarize the contents for the entire group.
- ✗ Learn the proper administrative procedures for subscribing to a list as well as canceling your subscription.



Beware of strangers!

While there are many great things about the Internet, there are also some real dangers, especially for young children and teens who tend to be idealistic and trusting of strangers. There are unethical folk out there in cyberspace who would like to get you to reveal many personal matters, such as your age, habits, desires, etc., simply for the sake of their own gratification. Some of these people only want to invade your privacy, others may want to entice you to meet them in person for unscrupulous reasons. Remember, you cannot tell the true age, gender or character of a person through e-mail dialogue. How can you be sure that the information you are being given is trustworthy or correct?

Cyberstalkers are very likely to use the online equivalent of 'candy.' They will make a special point of saying very sweet things to you, things that make you feel really good. They will usually take your side if you are having any problems with your parents or teachers. What they are doing is trying to gain your confidence and trust by making you feel comfortable in communicating with them. This behavior is sometimes called 'grooming.' You are being groomed, or flattered, so that you will become willing to do something that you would not otherwise be likely to do.

"It is truly a sad world when you have to be suspicious of someone who says nice things to you. It is important to learn to be discerning. There are situations where you deserve praise for what you have accomplished. But if you get the uncomfortable feeling in your gut that something is not quite right, you are probably correct. Trust the feeling!"

Nancy Willard, *The Cyber Ethics Reader*

Follow these guidelines to be safe while traveling on the Internet:

- ✗ Never give out personal information such as your address or telephone number without knowing how the information will be used.

- ✗ Never agree to meet with strangers that you have met online without checking with your parents, teachers or a responsible adult.
- ✗ If your chat-partner says, “Let’s keep this a secret,” see this as a suspicious sign.

Tell your parents, teacher or another trusted adult if you suspect that you have been approached by a voyeur, cyberstalker or untrustworthy person on the Internet. Be sure to save all your e-mail communications as evidence. Your prompt action to report may protect others from a dangerous situation.

For Your Journal



What are your parents attitudes and concerns about your using the Internet? Try to think of some healthy and unhealthy uses of the Internet. Has your use of the Internet been beneficial to your personal development? Have there been ways that you have been able to help others through the Internet? Give some examples.

CHAPTER 11

Suicide

A tragic event happened in our class. Two of our classmates, Ilya and Kostya, committed suicide by throwing themselves out of a 14th floor window.

As with every suicide there are always reasons why it happens. Those reasons are created by people. Is suicide therefore a kind of self-murder? There is no single person who can be blamed because everybody is guilty in a sense!

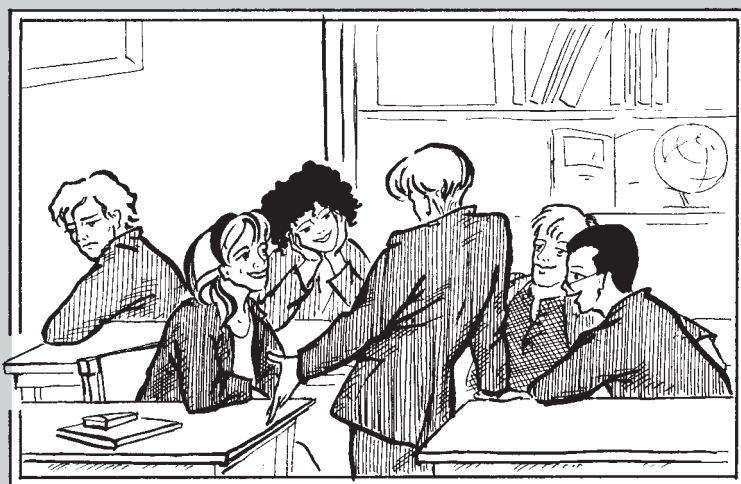
Ilya was obsessed with the idea of suicide. He would say, "You must be *somebody* or you needn't live at all. But whatever I do, nothing comes of it". He tried to commit suicide several times in the last three years but always survived.

On Wednesday, instead of going to school Kostya went to Ilya's place. At 11:20 a.m. several people saw them falling from the 14th floor. They didn't even scream.

When we heard about it the next day we didn't believe it at first. After school we all went to see the person who was investigating this case. He said that notes had been found in both Ilya's and Kostya's pockets about who they were and where they lived. Kostya had also left a note at home saying "went to save Ilya". The woman who opened the entrance door for them said that, as they were passing by, she overheard Kostya trying to talk Ilya out of his plan. He was saying that either they would both jump or neither of them would.

Ilya had his sixteenth birthday just two weeks before while Kostya was still only fifteen.

Ilya came from a well-off family. He had everything, but his parents never paid much attention to him and he was always left alone. I remember him telling me about a dream he had four years ago. He dreamt that he had died and that red roses were brought to his grave where they opened immediately. At his funeral, you might not believe it, when red roses were thrown into his grave, they opened a few minutes later. If somebody had told me this I wouldn't have believed him and would have



thought that it was just someone's imagination (God knows what may be seen by a person who has lost a friend), but I saw it with my own eyes!

Kostya lived with his mother, and now she is all alone! He always tried to help everybody, was very clever, liked chemistry and biology, wrote poems and loved his mother very much. He always confided in her, told her everything. And now he has made her feel so lonely! Kostya himself used to say that committing suicide is the last thing he would do.

Kostya was an extraordinary person, very much like his mother: kind, compassionate and tender. After everything that's happened we visited her several times; we feel so sorry for her and want to help her but we don't know what to do. What can we do to make her feel a little better? By the way, what happens to a person after his death? It cannot be that our friends go nowhere. Where do they go? Why is our life so cruel and why do things like this happen?"

The letter you have just read is not made up. This really happened. Can you imagine being how these boys' parents must have felt? How about their classmates? Things could have been sorted out a day or two before all of it happened. If only Ilya's parents had stayed home that day. If only some boys had come by and taken Ilya with them to school. If, if, if... And all of a sudden there is only —emptiness, nothingness.

You may or may not have come across such a tragedy in your own life. But let us think about the fact that *one in ten high school students reach the point where they ask themselves: to live or not to live?* Some only think about suicide. Some actually attempt to commit suicide and fail. But for others, this attempt will be the last event of their lives.

This problem is serious enough to reflect on. First of all, let us try to understand what makes many teenagers take this fatal step?

It would seem that the decision to commit suicide is an extreme step taken by a person who has decided that his problems are insoluble. Interviews with teenagers who recovered from suicide attempts at first glance seem to indicate the opposite. One girl could not give any reason except, "Well, I quarreled with my boyfriend." Another girl said, "No real reason, except for a quarrel with my parents."

The problem is that easily teenagers can come to the point where they see everything very narrowly and in a negative way. All they see are troubles and misfortunes. They may come to feel a deep sense of hopelessness and finally conclude that life is not worth continuing.

The tragedy of suicide is that most problems teenagers face can be alleviated if proper attention is paid to them. What may appear to be an irreparable tragedy to someone in a psychological crisis is in reality a trifling difficulty.

Perhaps, this subject wouldn't be worth too much attention but an intriguing moral question was asked in the above letter: "*As with every suicide there are always*



reasons why it happens. Those reasons are created by people. Is suicide therefore a kind of self-murder? There is no single person who can be blamed because everybody is guilty in a sense!"

From this point of view we are all guilty when a suicide takes place because of our hardheartedness and blindness. Suicide is a sign of the callousness of the human condition. It implies that we didn't notice that somebody nearby was in despair and needed our help. Even a failed suicide attempt is a

great personal tragedy.

Let us think about that terrible event that was described in the letter. Several times Ilya tried to commit suicide because he considered himself to be a failure. As he said, *"You must be somebody or you needn't live at all. But whatever I do, nothing comes of it"*.

What determines a person's value? If we believe that the value of a human being is determined solely by his intellectual abilities, then we are far less valuable than modern computers. Only a couple of hundred geniuses might qualify as being worthy to live. This is a rather gloomy outlook.

So, for what do we value our friends and relatives? Is it for their intelligence? We may in part, but not for this alone. We also value them for their courage, integrity, beauty, generosity, sincerity, honesty, selflessness, ability to love, sense of humor and so on. If we look into ourselves, we'll find that each of us has a unique combination of these and other qualities. *Everyone* is talented and beautiful in his own way; you only need to discover your own uniqueness. Rather than concentrating on our shortcomings but instead seeking to develop our good qualities, other people will also see our best selves. They will appreciate our character and love us more.

If we go back once more to the reasons for suicide, they may seem to be quite different: a quarrel with parents, broken relations with a boyfriend or girlfriend, school troubles, a wicked deed, etc. Nonetheless, they all have the same root — fear of loneliness, fear that you may find yourself in a situation when there is nobody that can understand, love and forgive you despite your faults and shortcomings.

Here it is important to affirm that everybody is a unique person who deserves to be loved; that life itself has value. There will never be another person exactly like you. Simply due to this point, you are worthy of being loved and respected. If you can believe and remember this, you will surely find a person who will love you—not for your beauty or your mathematical talents—but just for whom you are: a unique person.

Maybe today you are facing some problem: your school life is a mess, your parents are always scolding you or maybe they don't seem to care about you, or your best friend just betrayed you. Whatever. Everybody has moments of despair when life seems to consist only of misfortunes and suffering, when close and loving relationships seem to be part of the lives only of other, more fortunate people. If your life today appears to be dark and gloomy, the main thing is not to give way to despair

but to remember that eventually your situation will change. Believe that one day you will find love, friendship and understanding.

Many teenagers who make up their minds to commit suicide do it not because they want to die but because they do not see any way out of their miserable situation. We must be sensitive to the lives of those around us. The problems which seem insoluble to someone may not be as serious as they appear. If we are sensitive, a simple smile or a few sincere words may have the effect of saving a human life.

Religions on suicide

When we speak about helping people who want to kill themselves, we cannot avoid the religious perspective on the matter. All religions affirm that life is a pre-

cious gift given to us by God. Just as we did not choose to be born, neither do we have the right to take our own life. Our life is not just our own but has been entrusted to us for a purpose. We do not have the right to violate that trust. If we understand the preciousness of our life, then no matter how difficult our problems are, we will feel that no problem is worth the extinguishing of our life.

Another point to consider relates to the fact that a person usually decides to commit suicide as the 'final solution' to his or her problems. However, most religions teach that our existence continues after death. We do not leave our problems behind when we depart from the physical world. Life on earth is precious because this is the time when we are meant to grow spiritually and develop our ability to love in preparation for our life in the eternal world. If we deliberately deprive ourselves of this opportunity by ending our life prematurely, we are not solving our problems at all. On the contrary, we have added another one: eternal regret for the committed deed. (For more on life after death, see Chapter 7 of *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook in Character Development*).



For Your Journal



Write a short essay on "Why suicide is no answer".

Imagine the situation where one of your friends has decided to commit suicide. How would you persuade him not to do it? How would you speak to him? What action would you take? What personal qualities should you have to be able to comfort and guide a suicidal friend? Who else would you turn to for help?

A Simple Story

Author Unknown

One day, when I was a freshman in high school, I saw a kid from my class walking home from school. His name was Kyle. It looked like he was carrying all of his books. I thought to myself, "Why would anyone bring home all his books on Friday? He must really be a nerd." I had quite a weekend planned (parties and a football game with my friends Saturday afternoon), so I shrugged my shoulders and went on.

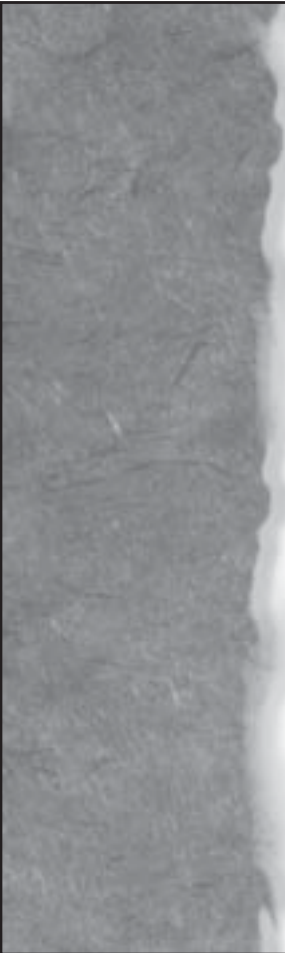
As I was walking, I saw a bunch of kids running toward him. They ran at him, knocking all his books out of his arms and tripping him so he landed in the dirt. His glasses went flying, and I saw them land in the grass about ten feet from him. He looked up and I saw this terrible sadness in his eyes. My heart went out to him. So, I jogged over to him and as he crawled around looking for his glasses, I saw a tear in his eye. As I handed him his glasses, I said, "Those guys are jerks. They really should get lives." He looked at me and said, "Hey, thanks!" There was a big smile on his face. It was one of those smiles that showed real gratitude. I helped him pick up his books, and asked him where he lived. As it turned out he lived near me, so I asked him why I had never seen him before. He said he had gone to private school previously. I would have never hung out with a private school kid before.

We talked all the way home, and I carried his books. He turned out to be a pretty cool kid. I asked him if he wanted to play football on Saturday with my friends and me. He said yes. We hung out all weekend and the more I got to know him the more I liked him, and my friends thought the same of him.

Monday morning came, and there was Kyle with the huge stack of books again. I stopped him and said, "Boy, you're gonna really build up some serious muscles with this pile of books everyday!" He just laughed and handed me half the books.

Over the next four years, Kyle and I became best friends. When we were seniors, we began to think about college. Kyle decided on Georgetown, and I was going to Duke. I knew that we would always be friends, that the miles would never be a problem. He was going to be a doctor, and I was going for business on a football scholarship. Kyle was valedictorian of our class. I teased him all the time about being a nerd. He had to prepare a speech for graduation. I was so glad it wasn't me having to get up there and speak.

Graduation day came, and I saw Kyle. He looked great. He was one of those guys who really found himself during high school. He filled out and actually looked good in glasses. He had more dates than I had and all the girls loved him. Boy, sometimes was I jealous! I could see that he was nervous about his speech. So, I smacked him on the back and said, "Hey, big guy, you'll be great!" He looked at me with one of those looks (the really grateful one) and smiled. "Thanks," he said.



As he started his speech, he cleared his throat, and began. “Graduation is a time to thank those who helped you make it through those tough years. Your parents, your teachers, your siblings, maybe a coach, but mostly your friends. I am here to tell all of you that being a friend to someone is the best gift you can give them. I am going to tell you a story.”

I just looked at him with disbelief as he told the story of the first day we met. He had planned to kill himself over the weekend. He talked of how he had cleaned out his locker so his Mom wouldn’t have to do it later and was carrying all his stuff home. He looked hard at me and gave me a little smile. “Thankfully, I was saved. My friend saved me from doing the unspeakable.” I heard the gasp go through the crowd as this handsome, popular boy told us all about his weakest moment. I saw his mom and dad looking at me and smiling that same grateful smile. Not until that moment did I realize its depth.

Never underestimate the power of your actions. With one small gesture you can change a person’s life. For better or for worse, God puts us all in each other’s lives to impact one another in some way.

Eleanor Roosevelt once wrote: “Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.” Show your friend how much you care. You never know just how much of a difference it may make.

CHAPTER 12

What's Happening to Us?

Parents!

I cannot go on like this anymore. I have to speak my mind and I am past caring who I speak to.

What's happening to us, and more to the point, what's happening to me? Why, only two years ago everything was so easy and so much fun, but now wherever I go—be it school or home, I feel I'm going to die from depression?

Why have I become such a clumsy fright? A heron's legs are sticking out of these "fantastic" Finnish high-boots my parents paid a small fortune for. But why can't they see? Of course, the boots are great, but not on my legs! And the heels. I'm like a clodhopper as it is, and such footwear will make me two heads taller than everyone else in my class!

Why is everyone else normal while I'm five foot six, long-nosed, and bound to get pimples soon? Who would want me like this? There was a dance at school on Saturday, and again I was stuck in the corner all evening.

Or take today. Our teacher began to "educate" us again. "Do this, don't do that. This is moral, that is immoral". But we are adults! Can't she understand? She treats us like babies. She been teaching us since fourth grade and maybe six years are nothing to her,



but haven't we grown up since then? When will these grown-ups finally see that we are not babies any more?

At home it's no better. There didn't seem to be any problems before, but now it's different. As soon as you get home you hear: "Well, what's going on at school? Did you study anything new?" As if there is nothing in the world but school! You turn on the music and hear: "Your tape player is too loud again! How can you listen to such noise!"

In general, my parents are alright, and I am really fond of them. But why have they become so difficult to get along with? Sometimes I come home and want to have a normal conversation; but in a couple of minutes I lose my temper and the talk turns into a shouting match. So it's better not to start. They say they "want the best for me", but how can they be so sure they know better than I do myself? Why can't they just trust me a little bit? I'm nearly grown-up now, not a toddler!

So the only way out is to shut myself in my room, put on the earphones or bury myself in a book. But I can't sit in a room the rest of my life!

If only I could find some way to relax! At least before, I could share everything with Olga, but now she's head over heels in love with some guy. So I'm absolutely alone. If only I could fall in love, too! But with whom?

Last week I met a boy (he was even as tall as me—such a rare piece of luck!), but my "prince" wanted to neck at once. This is called love?

Parents and teachers, basically all grown-ups, think there's nothing but thoughts of love in our heads. My parents are not too bad in this sense, but Olga's parents... Every evening it's the same: "Instead of chasing boys, you'd better do your math or do the laundry! You only know how to put on your mini-skirt, paint yourself like an Indian and go off who knows where!"

Goodness, I'm ready to run away to the end of the world if only I could find someone to understand me. Isn't there any way to get out of this depressing situation?

Hey, my prince! Where are you?

Take Olga again. From hearing her parents, you might think she's dating every day, sitting together in the last row at the movies or kissing in a doorway somewhere. Not at all! She has simply found a caring person! Her Sergei is so nice and easy to deal with, no rudeness or moralizing.

But other boys! Well, how can anybody understand them? They're capable only of so-called "clever" jokes, as if they've just learned where children come from. Can they really expect to win a girl's attention in this way?

Sometimes it seems to me that we are all playing some game that we have long been sick and tired of, but are somehow ashamed to admit it. Can anyone really enjoy this? As soon as we get together, boys begin to tell dirty stories or boast. They cannot seem to avoid colorful "epithets" (while pretending they do it accidentally—"Oh, sorry, this is not for a girl's ears"). And, on the other side, girls just giggle and blush.

If you venture to speak about something else, they'll wonder what's wrong with you. But I'm sure everybody is dreaming about the same thing—escaping from this charade and finding real love that will last for the rest of your life. Haughtily showing off to classmates, saying, "Now I too have tried everything", just doesn't cut it after a while.

Hey, parents! It's a charade, nothing more! Rudeness, two earrings in one ear, parties till midnight!

But where is the real me then? When am I, my real self? Just alone with this notebook? What do I really want from life?

From the diary of Sveta, 15

My dear daughter, we haven't talked for such a long time. I know how hard it is for you now. Your father and I were also fifteen once. We also had the experience of dating for the first time. Our parents did not understand us also and neither did we understand them.

My darling girl, we love you so much! We want you to grow up to be pretty and happy! How can we learn to understand each other, to love each other? Because no matter what happens, I have nobody as close and dear as you.

I know you suffer now because of your height. You stoop and are afraid to wear high heels. My darling, in a couple of years the boys will have grown up, and you will have become a slender pretty girl that everybody will gaze at! By then, your height will be just a little bit more than average. Don't stoop and your clumsiness will disappear soon.

Yesterday I had a day off, so I stayed at home, made a nice dinner and bought some ice-cream. I thought you would come home from school and we would have a good chat. But you came in, grumbled something without looking and shut yourself in your room again, turning on your tape player full volume. Of course, I lost my temper and began shouting at you. So there was no nice chat.

Perhaps my time was different, and the problems were different, too. But I love you! Why can't we understand each other?

Now, about this boy. Last week late at night I saw you two kissing near the entrance of our building. Sveta, I am so afraid for you! I am afraid in your inexperience that you will do foolish things just because you do not want to be a "wallflower".

One day you'll be a mother, too. You'll have a daughter of fifteen, and you'll quarrel with her during the day and suffer at night, just like I do now.

Or maybe we can find a common language? You see, it's hard on me, too. You are growing up, changing, so our relationship is changing as well.

Let's try once more, okay?

— From the diary of Anna Vassilyevna, Sveta's mother

Oh, Svetka, Svetka,

What must I do for you to notice me?

Do you remember? I invited you to dance at the last party, but you looked down on me with such contempt as if I were not human being. If it were not me but that smart fellow from the 11th grade, I think you would have jumped at the chance!

What kind of people are you girls? You dress up, put on make up, and whisper in corners, but if anyone tries to come near you, you're like a stone wall. Of course, you are grown-up ladies, and we boys are only into playing games.

With this attitude you show displeasure at every little thing: "You vulgar things"—and shower us with contempt. One would think you must have something else in mind.

Svetka, Svetka . . . Why don't you see all this? You know I am sick and tired of playing the class joker myself. But tell me, please, what should I do for you to notice me?

Listen! I also hate all those stupid jokes. I wish I could be a proud handsome guy, suave and sophisticated. Then you would be sure to fall for me.

What a fool I was selling newspapers and saving money. I so much wanted to buy you a birthday present. And when I tried to give it to you, all you could say was, "Oh, my parents already gave me a similar chain". I don't know how I stopped myself from throwing that chain away right there and then.

Svetka, I like you all the same! But how can I convince you that I'm a person, too? What must I do for you to pay attention to me?

I can't stop thinking about you!

— From an unsent letter of Yura, 15



Most of us will come across such problems in our relationships with people, whether it's our classmates, friends, parents, or teachers. That is why it is so important to understand these problems and the way to overcome them.

What is happening to us? And what is happening to those around us?

Why do we feel ourselves to be grown up, but our parents and teachers still treat us like babies? Why does nobody seem to understand? Why don't our parents trust us?

And what is love? A classmate invites me to the movie theater. Is it love already? A girl, who before did not pay me any attention, tries to speak to me during breaks and invites me over to her house. She's in love with me, right? And what about me? How do I feel about her?

Often, when we are searching for answers to these questions we are only concerned about our own feelings: *I* feel bad, *I* am not understood, *I* am liked by somebody. But what about the people around us? Do they feel bad, too, and suffer as much as we do because they don't feel understood either?

Maybe if we try to discuss these things honestly and openly, we could resolve all these harassing problems, doubts and contradictions. What do you think?

Time of changes

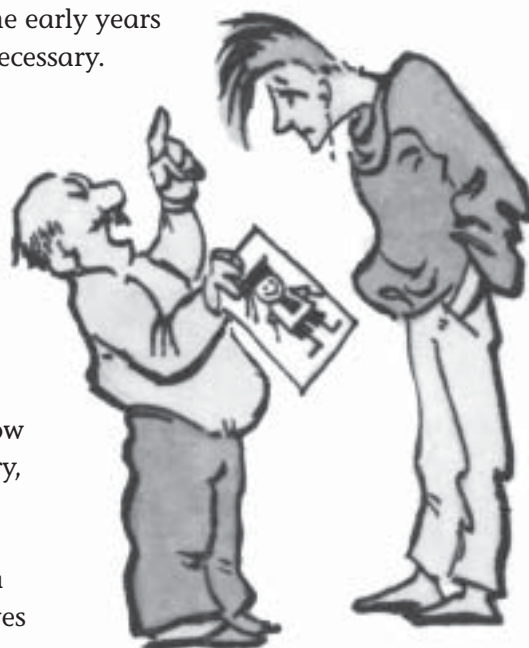
We are all probably aware that we have gone through a lot of changes during the past few years. First of all, our appearance has changed. We have also discovered new desires and interests. The people we liked before do not seem to be so interesting to us anymore. Why are these things happening? Because it is part of the process of changing from children into adults. It is natural that as we grow older our attitude towards the world and people will change. It is a process that we all go through. It is good to understand this process so that as we go through it we will cause the least harm to ourselves and others.

So, what do we know about this period when the adult trying to emerge out of us gradually is ousting the child in us?

One difference between a child and an adult is that a child is still dependent on its parents. In the early years of a person's life dependence on adults is necessary. But, step by step, the realm of freedom expands. The desire for independence, for the right to freely choose the course of our life is in all of us, and especially grows in the teenage years.

This is the most attractive thing in being an adult—the freedom to make your own decisions, whether it is how you spend money or what kind of friends you associate with. No one dictates to adults how they should live their life. Quite the contrary, other people depend on them, such as their subordinates and their children.

This transformation from a child into a grown-up takes place gradually and involves



no magical instant transformations. Then, why is it often so painful? Why do problems continually crop up—problems in dealing with friends, parents and teachers? Why do we feel grown-up, but are treated like children? Why are parents always complaining of the “difficult age”? Are we really so difficult to deal with? If so, what exactly is the difficulty?

It is very important to find the answers to these questions. If we can, perhaps the problems will not look so awful.

So let us try to understand what is happening to us. We shall begin with the simplest issue—with the biological and physical changes that take place.

Teenage years: A physiologist's viewpoint

From the perspective of physiology, the teen years are characterized by intensive growth, increased matter exchange, and greatly intensified activity of the internal glands. Considerable change occurs not only in the physiological but also in the psychological sphere. These changes are not necessarily simultaneous. The rate of reconstruction of different areas is different. This includes a divergence in the formation of different psychological qualities (for instance, the development of will may lag behind the development of intellect), and different bodily characteristics (height and weight do not increase proportionately), as well as some features of sexual development. Often, due to individual peculiarities of development, social and psychological maturity lag behind sexual maturity, and this engenders a certain disharmony, especially in relations with other people.

Except for the first two years of life, never does a person grow so quickly as during adolescence. A teenager's height increases by 3-5 inches per year! Girls grow most actively at the age of 11-12, while the most intensive growth of boys takes place at 13-14. Thus, boys, who at first lag behind, after 15 overtake girls in height.

The motor apparatus is reconstructed, while the chest and respiratory muscles develop rapidly. The lungs grow; their volume and area increase as well as their vital capacity. The growth of the size of heart during this period is also great, its volume increasing by almost a quarter each year. The state of the nervous system is also changing; the activity of the sub-cortex increases, which causes greater nervousness, lack of restraint and unstable emotional reactions. The brain develops, especially its higher parts around the forehead (frontal lobes). This gives a teenager increased possibilities in his thinking: perception becomes clearer and focused attention is more deliberate. In plain language a teenager is becoming more clever.

But the greatest changes take place in the area of hormonal regulation. The internal secretion glands are entirely reconstructed. Under the influence of hormones produced by the internal secretion glands, turbulent physical growth occurs. Sexual maturity is also greatly affected by these glands. The sexual organs develop as well as secondary sexual features.

The reaction of the nervous system is also connected to the rapid growth and changes in the organ systems. Teenagers become more emotional and they easily get tired. This can manifest itself in sleepiness as well as in increased excitement. This often brings about an inadequate (either too emotional or, on the contrary, too apathetic) reaction to events. This often leads to problems in communication, especially with adults.



Considering all of these biological changes, we should note that despite the fundamental reconstruction of the physiology of the person taking place at this age, it would be too simple to think that puberty is just a biological phenomenon. It is also accompanied by a widening and deepening spiritual and social maturity.

Within a few years not only physical, but mental, moral and social growth takes place. The sprouts of adulthood are appearing everywhere. The physical self is reconstructed, one's self-concept changes, relationships with adults and peers change, interests shift and cognitive activities become richer. Everything is in motion at this time: some features gradually disappearing while others emerging. All this takes place in a rather short time, accompanied by unexpected surprises since the development process has such an uneven character. Personal problems may manifest themselves in various forms, especially with respect to adults, such as rudeness, hostility, stubbornness, resistance and secrecy.

So, what are the main features of the personality formation of someone who is soon to enter the adult world?

A psychologist's viewpoint

Psychologically speaking, the unique features that emerge in a teenager's personality is a sense of unique identity and an intense desire to be considered grown-up. (We are not little kids any more and want others to recognize our adulthood, don't we?). This phenomenon is called "the sense of adulthood" by psychologists and is explained by a number of reasons.

The first reason is puberty. These very palpable changes make a teenager appear more adultlike to others and to oneself.

Another reason is the teenager's growing independence as reliance on parents decreases.

The notion of one's own adulthood appears more concrete as teens look toward the adult world and find much of interest and in common. They search for possible professional and social identity. Often teenagers choose fields of activity where they feel most confident through their knowledge of some subject, success at a sport, etc. Connected to this, some teenagers will test the knowledge and skills of an adult, to find some weak point and in this way feel superior: "I can assemble a radio-set while he can't even replace a blown fuse". (Let us admit to ourselves that we have done such a thing more than once, haven't we?)

This sense of adulthood also emerges through communication with older friends. In the course of such communication a teenager feels impelled to claim his rights—the same independence and "freedoms" that his older friends already possess.

The passage into adulthood implies a transformation of the rights, duties and privileges of childhood. This demands a reorientation from old norms and values to new ones—from childish to adult ones.



So, we want to claim new rights. These claims come out mainly in our relationships with adults. What do we desire most of all? We want adults to treat us as equals. Why should other people be able to tell us with whom we may be friends or when we should come home? Who gave them the right to have such unlimited authority?

We want to be trusted, respected as persons and have independence, don't we? And if not, our unrealized desire manifests itself as protest. But sometimes neither we nor adults realize that the protests themselves are not the end, but the means by which we are trying to end the childish norms of our relationship and to live according to new norms. (By the way, can't you remember some occasions in your life when such protests went too far and did become the end? There seemed to be no real reason to protest, but because of your pride, you didn't stop).

Probably we are all suffering from the same types of problems. We want more freedom and more rights. But are we ready to take on bigger duties as well? We don't realize that duties and responsibilities make up a substantial part of adult life. Thus, it is difficult to speak about the greater freedom of adults because with freedom comes responsibility. Sometimes the responsibility can be such that the person feels not free at all. This is also part of growing up: realizing one's responsibility, one's duties to those around us.



The inevitable romanticism

What else do we desire besides independence?

Everybody has thought about the future. What will it be like? What does life have prepared for us? We may have quite different ideas about our future life, but all of us want to experience something significant and great. If it is love, it must be an all-absorbing passion; if it is monetary gain, it must be sufficient not only for a simple life, but for a glamorous one. We may not outwardly admit such desires because we realize in quite an "adult way" that big dreams often break into pieces as they meet the reality of life. But deep down inside we still hope that one day our dreams will come true in spite of everything and that our life will never become humdrum and dull.

Such romanticism is an inevitable feature of youth and it would seem that it shouldn't cause problems. But if we think about it, sometimes it does lead to a kind of alienation from reality, an ignoring of the facts, that gives worry to our parents and teachers. A sign of maturity is being able to balance our romantic ideals with reality.

Absolutism and skepticism

Another feature inherent in adolescents is the categorical and straightforward voicing of judgments. Often this kind of frankness is accompanied by reluctance to accept anything that differs from their beliefs, especially when comes from authority figures. Whereas previously a child will accept the voice of an authority without question, as a teenager it no longer carries the same weight. In the process of growing up and becoming independent, questioning authority is a natural expression of one's moral and intellectual quest. However, if the person does not develop his own set of values, he can easily adopt an attitude of moral relativism and begins to justify all kinds of dubious behavior. The teenager can be at the same time both a judgmental



moralist and an indifferent cynic. He oscillates back and forth between absolutism and skepticism.

Once in a while all of us have the desire to analyze, criticize, judge and condemn everything around us pitilessly. This feature is typical of young people as they realize that the people who have taught them values are not infallible and that

society is not a safe haven. It is easy to criticize people who have brought the world to its current state. The question remains, however, whether we can improve what previous generations have left behind.

The new communication style

Of course, communication with peers always has been important to us. As the years pass, however, friendships change and evolve, so that certain ones acquire a special place in our lives. Why are these friendships so important to us? The reason is simple. We are attracted to their essential equality, in contrast to our relations with adults. Our peers are those with whom we are passing through life together. We share similar experiences. They seem to understand us. We have a common language. These friendships are evolving along with our own maturing. As our personality and interests develop, solitude becomes unbearable. We feel the need to share our perspective on life as well as new feelings and emotions as we experience them. We seek to be taken seriously, which often seems not to be the case with adults.

The values that prevail in these new, deeper friendships are respect for personality and human dignity, equality, honesty, loyalty and a willingness to help each other. Each of us dreams of having a true friend and of being a true friend to someone. But even such a noble desire sometimes brings on rather unpleasant emotions, such

as feelings of resentment, anger and jealousy, as when our friend begins to demonstrate warm feelings towards someone other than ourselves. Because our friendship is precious to us, we can become too demanding and sensitive. We are all subject to such feelings to some extent, and there is nothing wrong about this. The important thing is the way we deal with these feelings.

Age of love?

In our changing relations with others there is one more dimension which cannot be ignored. Until recently, you probably communicated and made friends exclusively with those of your own gender: boys with boys, girls with girls. Now your circle of friends is changing. Every once in a while you notice a boy and girl about your age talking a walk, sitting on a bench or going out to the





movies together. They may claim to be just friends. But this is a special kind of friendship based on a new feeling—on romantic love.

The development of such love is in part related to the advent of puberty, which marks gaining the biological ability to become a mother or father. This happens naturally and does not depend upon our desire. It comes with the age and can be neither hastened nor postponed. It is also quite personal; for some the time comes earlier, for others later. Its early coming is not a merit, and its late coming is not a fault. Everything depends on the physical constitution of the person. This said, the feeling of love is not simply the result of the physical changes taking place in our bodies. It is primarily a spiritual phenomenon, connected with the desire for deeper communication.

This kind of love has long been a subject of fiction, so it is quite easy to find examples in literature. Such literary images such as Romeo and Juliet, Antony and Cleopatra or Cyrano de Bergerac and Roxanne help us to understand the infinite beauty and difficulty of love.

Nevertheless, many people wonder “What is love? How do I recognize it? When do I know that I truly love someone?” All these are valid and vital questions. The uncertainty associated with these questions has been the cause of much unnecessary heartbreak and pain. Many young people have suffered due to premature efforts to discover answers before they were ready to handle such relationships.

It is natural to be interested in love, to seek to understand and experience its fragrance. Love is not easily grasped. Often patience is a necessary virtue for discovering the answers to the questions we so desperately seek to answer. It is important that we don't jump into something blindly and foolishly because we feel the need to experience what love is. But what is just as important is not to try to experience love as soon as possible out of fear of being late bloomer, or out of the desire to look grown-up and experienced in the eyes of our peers. Love is too serious to treat it as simply a sign of our “adulthood”. In these vital years of transformation, we undergo so many changes it is essential that we devote our energy toward our own personal growth. It is a time when we can learn about our individual uniqueness and discover

our talents as well as develop our ability to love. At this time of our life our emotions and feelings are usually very close to the surface. Infatuation and physical attraction can often be misinterpreted as love. However, love is not something based on mere infatuation. If we can learn not to act on the first feelings of infatuation and instead dedicate these years to our spiritual and moral growth, in the future we will undoubtedly discover a much deeper kind of love on the foundation of the development of our heart. A heart that wasn't thrown away on previous so-called love relationships will be ready to give and receive a more profound and genuine love.

For Your Journal



Imagine that you are a movie star. You are 25 years old and have thousands, if not millions, of admirers, especially among teenagers. You have been asked to give an interview for a teen magazine. Your words will influence the minds of many young people throughout the world. Remembering the problems you faced when you were a teenager, you would like to use this opportunity to give help to the readers of this magazine. Write in your journal some of the things you might say.

CHAPTER 13

Polarity: Masculinity and Femininity

As human beings we share common experiences. Each of us has a soul and a body. Beyond this, we are either a man or a woman. A man, while being predominantly masculine, also has some aspect of femininity inside of him. Likewise, a woman, although predominantly feminine, has some aspect of masculinity inside of her. An ancient American Indian saying states that, "Within every man there is the reflection of a woman, and within every woman there is the reflection of a man."

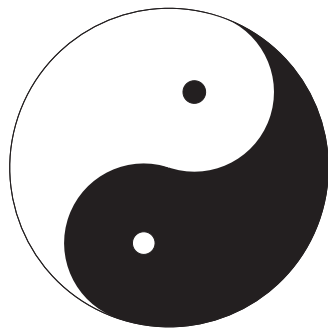
Our sex is determined at the moment of conception by the presence of X and Y chromosomes, with girls having an XX configuration and boys an XY. Even though we all have aspects of both masculinity and femininity inside us, we have a dominant sexual energy that is determined by our bodily form. If we are born a woman, we have a woman's destiny. If we are born a man, we have a man's destiny.

Extensive studies have shown that from conception to adulthood, in virtually every kind of society, boys and girls have different bodies, brains, and temperaments due mainly to nature rather than nurture or upbringing. Boys tend to be more aggressive, exploratory, volatile, competitive, dominant, career-oriented, visual, abstract, impulsive, muscular, appetitive, tall, and compulsive sexually. Girls tend to be more nurturing, stable, peaceful, communicative, audible, sympathetic, dependable and balanced.



Of course, these tendencies are shaped by environment and culture and are modified in crucial ways by society. Most of these characteristics are cross-cultural. These are generalized characteristics, and actual persons may deviate greatly from these characteristics.

The ancient Chinese philosophical text *I Ching*, or Book of Changes, which teaches that everything is the product of two forces or principles, known as *yang* and *yin*, describes male and female energies and their interrelationship in life so that we may understand the difference in their essential natures. Within the symbol of the *Tao* (the Supreme Ultimate) shown below, it is clear that the masculine (*yang*) and feminine (*yin*) energies fit together perfectly in one circular form. They are not opposites, nor are they identical. Rather, they are complementary. The dot within each form signifies the seed of the other. Within their duality is harmony and completion. Here are the essential qualities of the two principles:



Yin

relationship
space
community
nourishing
unity
responding
spontaneous
oneness

Yang

individualization
time
hierarchy/order
fertilizing
polarity
initiating
planned
differentiation

According to the I Ching, yang, the masculine energy, originates as heaven. Yin, the feminine energy, is pictured as the earth or nature.

The female energy

As expressed in the *I Ching*, the earth is always looking toward heaven, toward God. This is how the feminine energy, the earth, the bearer of children, the Mother, is continually connected to God. She has the quality of devotion. The feminine is the principle of relatedness. “Embracing all things, it becomes bright and shines forth. Its essential characteristic is glad acceptance—it embraces all things as though in a vast womb.”

The feminine energy is receptive, gentle and accommodating—the sustainer and foundation of life. If we never experienced nurturing, we could not survive. To live we must have food, and that food comes originally from our mother’s milk and then later from Mother Earth. We constantly need that nurturing energy in order to live.

Nurturing means giving. Feminine love is expressed in devotion and loyalty in relationships. *Yin* is the principle of maintaining relationships—it is the force that gathers and unites people. By nurturing her husband, her children, other people, plants and animals, the feminine quality of devotion emerges and grows.

Flexibility is also a *yin* quality. For example, the tree has roots that go deep into the earth. The tree can live a long time and grow strong because it can bend in the wind. The roots have gone so deep that the tree is able to withstand the pressure of a hurricane by yielding and being flexible. The same principle exists within a pregnant woman. Her body accommodates the growing child in many different ways. Conception, pregnancy, childbirth, breast-feeding, child rearing—all these represent the fact that flexibility accommodates strength and other important aspects of creativity.



The male energy

According to the *I Ching*, when the male energy is in balance, it is like heaven. Heaven is always looking toward the earth. The man must reach toward the woman to find God. Male energy is strong, outgoing, and directive. The authority of balanced male energy gives a man a sense of direction. When masculine energy has direction, it needs to be responsible. Responsibility and leadership are the main attributes of the male energy. Its course alters and shapes all things until each attains its true, specific nature. To live in accordance with the masculine energy is to bring peace and security to the world through one's activity in creating order.

Traditionally it has been said that a man is honorable if he is true to his word. If a man is committed to his word, he is trustworthy, perhaps even a man of God. When a man does not take responsibility for his masculine energy (actions), he loses his backbone. Male energy manifests the structural and active aspect of creativity. Creativity is reflected through productive action, and with action comes the responsibility for what we create.

Healthy male energy perfectly complements female energy. Our energies are in complementary balance, which gives us great vitality and harmony. There is an important disadvantage in relying exclusively on either the masculine or feminine energy. Neither aspect can realize its full potential without relating to its opposite. Human nature can reveal itself in its essential wholeness only when *yin* and *yang* are brought into conscious communion and harmony with each other.

This gives us a better understanding of why marriage is important not only *between* the sexes, but also in the sense of the masculine and feminine qualities *within* each individual. The masculinity inside us strives to actively organize and initiate, while the femininity receives, integrates and harmonizes. Both are equally valuable and necessary. While this integration occurs, it is important that a man develop his feminine side in a uniquely masculine way and a woman develop her masculine side in a uniquely feminine way so that neither one simply imitates the behavior of the opposite gender in a superficial way. Masculinity and femininity are strongly attracted to each other. When these essential natures are in balance, only then are husband and wife able to represent the full splendor and dignity of their partnership.

For Your Journal



- 1) What are three of your most thoughtful questions from this chapter?
- 2) Describe some of the emotional and psychological differences that you notice in male and female persons.

Femininity

by Susan Brownmiller

It is fashionable in some quarters to describe the feminine and masculine principles as polar ends of the human continuum, and to sagely profess that both polarities exist in all people. Sun and moon, yin and yang, soft and hard, active and passive, etcetera, may indeed be opposite, but a linear continuum does not illuminate the problem. (Femininity, in all its contrivances, is a very active endeavor.) What, then, is the basic distinction? The masculine principle is better understood as a driving ethos of superiority designed to inspire straightforward, confident success, while the feminine principle is composed of vulnerability, the need for protection, the formalities of compliance and the avoidance of conflict—in short, an appeal of dependence and good will that gives the masculine principle its romantic validity and its admiring applause.

Femininity pleases men because it makes them appear more masculine by contrast; and, in truth, conferring an extra portion of unearned gender distinction upon men, an unchallenged space in which to breathe freely and feel stronger, wiser, more competent, is femininity's special gift. One could say that masculinity is often an effort to please women, but masculinity is known to please by displays of mastery and competence while femininity pleases by suggesting that these concerns, except in small matters, are beyond its intent. Whimsy, unpredictability and patterns of thinking and behavior that are dominated by emotion, such as tearful expressions of sentiment and fear, are thought to be feminine precisely because they lie outside the established route to success.

Something to
think about



- What do you think of the characterizations of masculinity and femininity as expressed in the above passage?
- Are they flattering or disparaging characterizations?
- Are they accurate expressions of true masculinity and femininity or distortions of them?
- Do you feel that the author has a bias for or against one or the other?
- Why do you think the author feels the way she does?

CHAPTER 14

The Social Formation of Man and Woman

“So God created man in his own image ... male and female He created them.”

— Genesis 1:27

We are born as either a man or a woman. The difference is not only in the structure of our physical body. In the previous chapter we discussed masculinity and femininity in terms of ancient Chinese philosophy. Now we will look at some other factors that impact our distinct social identity and character.

The development of each of us, whether man or woman, is a long process. We are not yet complete as persons at the age of 18. Many more years of experience are needed for a person to understand what being a man or a woman means.

For example, a man is not only a person capable of work. A woman is more than just an object of attraction. Let us ask ourselves several questions. What is a genuine man or woman really like? Are some occupations more appropriate for men and others for women? Here are some general characterizations that are often attributed to each gender:

Woman: kind, feminine, tender, caring, honest, hard-working. Raises children. Makes dinners and breakfasts. Takes care of her husband. Her priority is the well-being of her family.

Man: brave, clever, strong-willed, courageous, masculine, noble. Is able to provide for the family. Protects his wife and children. He can withstand a difficult situation. He can fix fuses and hang bookshelves.

Many of these definitions may seem old-fashioned and stereotypical, in view of the many changes that have taken place in recent decades. Nevertheless, even very young children have concepts about the social differences between men and women. Here is an amusing case: Researchers asked some kindergarteners to put pictures in two piles: “father’s things” and “mother’s things.” The result was striking. Practically all the children, no matter whether their father was an idler or not, put into the “father’s” pile: the pictures of the TV set, newspapers, fishing rods, armchair, etc. The washing machine, the broom, the vacuum cleaner and the shopping bag were all in the “mother’s” pile.

Such distribution can hardly be considered ideal (at least, women are not likely to agree with it). But this little experiment makes us think about the ideas we have held unconsciously since our early childhood. Do they reflect a reasonable distribution of roles between men and women, or are they simply stereotypes and prejudices?

Everyone has an image of the ideal man and woman. But how much do we correspond to these ideals ourselves? Why should we strive to achieve them at all; why do we need those qualities? Men and women were created for another, to experi-



ence the joy of love, to love one another as husband and wife, and eventually love our own children. That is why we are not only different but also fundamentally dual parts of a harmonious design. This is the very reason why it is so important to develop our innate qualities.

Let us turn to femininity. In recent years the strong, independent type of woman has become more valued by society. Many girls nowadays feel embarrassed to appear old-fashioned, unattractive or even feminine in a traditional sense. They want to be seen as buddies in the company of their friends, and begin to act more like boys, smoking cigarettes and using rough language. In this way they are trying to prove to themselves and others that they are no different from boys.

But such behavior may reflect only a desire to gain in social status with men and have nothing to do with expressions of true masculinity or femininity. Often women with an unhappy family life are those who seem to deliberately conceal their femininity through a sharp voice, a free, roughish manner of conduct, intolerance, a constant desire to prove they are right. By contrast, expressions of femininity in marriage affect husbands in two ways. On the one hand they become more masculine due to feeling the need to support and protect the family. On the other hand the hard features of their character soften and gradually they become more tender and kind—and wives feel more loved and happy.

Female “weakness” contains a great strength. Girls who reject it, consciously or unconsciously, deny themselves the chance to have a specifically feminine influence on men. You may not be thinking about marriage now, but it is important to gradually prepare for marriage by developing real masculinity or real femininity in yourself.

How can we understand the features of real masculinity and real femininity? Are there any universal criteria? Features that are considered masculine in the East may be thought feminine in the West, and vice versa. In Western societies a well-bred man lets a woman go first, opens doors for her, and does not allow her to carry heavy bags. But in many Eastern countries such conduct is considered unmanly.

Each culture has its own notions of the ideals of men and women. No matter how these ideals may appear, they usually are divided into different, complementary social roles. Besides, such qualities as responsibility and reliability always characterize a genuine man, and tenderness and compassion are features of a good woman. These features are not given to us at birth, but rather are acquired as a result of a constant effort to overcome struggles

All of us strive to be happy. Some of us are waiting for the beautiful princess to walk into our life, and other are waiting for the knight in shining armor who will sweep us off our feet. Most of us dream about finding the love of our life. But do we have the ability to really see other people's uniqueness? What do we see as we look at our classmates? Boring girls who do nothing but study? Awkward, smelly boys? Or are you gradually beginning to see something new in your classmates? Suddenly the girl whom you teased so frequently turns out to be an attractive young lady, and the boy you never looked at twice has turned into a handsome young man.

The cultivation of a good balance of masculinity and femininity within oneself requires an active participation and communication in many kinds of relationships. For a man, it is vital to communicate with female relatives, such as his mother and sisters, as well as female classmates. Similarly, for a woman it is important to communicate with the men in her life in order to develop her femininity.

It would be wrong to think that simply because we are not in love with one of our classmates we are missing out on something. On the contrary, adolescence is a time when we can develop brotherly and sisterly attitudes toward one another and feel like members of one family. This means respect and genuine love for one another.

Many girls feel they are grown-up and expect others, particularly their classmates, to treat them as such. Sometimes they may feel annoyed because of the seemingly childish behavior of the boys they know. But if a person wants to be respected, it is necessary to treat others with respect first. If you treat the boys in your school as immature and not worthy of your respect, don't be surprised if they treat you as a conceited bore.

Boys are often annoyed by girls who don't take them seriously or who try to control them. With their male friends boys can have "adult" talks, but when talking with female classmates, all "adulthood" vanishes into thin air.

It is difficult to find a simple and natural communication style—warm and friendly but without the flirting and games that so often lead to genuine suffering. The only way to achieve this is to treat each other with sincere respect and to appreciate the best qualities of your classmates. Be attentive to each other. Manifest genuine

male or female qualities yourself. Then you will have fewer problems.

Only a true masculine man and a true feminine woman are able to find each other and create a good family. A genuine man is emotionally stable, keeps his word and speaks with deeds, not hollow phrases. He has a strong character, is reliable, modest and persevering. He is resolute, active, independent, steady in adversity and enterprising. Reliable—"He is like a stone wall!" Real masculinity implies orderliness and logical thinking.





Genuine femininity means subtlety of feeling, tenderness, flexibility, emotional richness, sharp perception of beauty, sympathy, ability to understand others, compassion, selflessness and capacity to change and adapt. Since ancient times women have been apprehensive about change and uncertainty. Women are characterized by loyalty, patience and steadiness in daily routine.

All this is eternal and permanent. Fashions come and go, but when it is time to create a family, boys dream of a feminine wife, and girls of a masculine husband. We must prepare ourselves for our future mate on a daily basis.

Something to think about



- Do you and your classmates generally agree on the different social roles of men and women?
- Are there any social roles that overlap?
- Do you think that social roles are the same now as they were 5, 10 or 20 years ago? Are social roles changing? If so, how?
- Have you ever spent time in another culture or country? How were the social roles of men and women the same as in your country? How were they different?

For Your Journal



Although still uncommon, there are some families in which the man chooses to stay home with his children and take care of the house and general affairs while his wife works and is the breadwinner. Usually this kind of arrangement is agreed upon by the husband and the wife and considered desirable by both. If you are a boy, would you like such an arrangement? If you are a girl, what is your point of view about such an arrangement?

CHAPTER 15

Marriage and Family in Confucianism

CONFUCIUS

Confucius, or Master Kung as he is known in China, was born around 551 BC in the Chinese principality of Lu. As a young man he immersed himself in learning and held several government posts. But after a while he left the government to establish himself as a tutor, attracting brilliant and devoted disciples. He conversed with them on many diverse subjects and problems. He taught them literature, personal conduct, how to be true to oneself and the importance of practicing honesty in social relationships. Through his tutoring services he sought to influence society.

Although he claimed that the mandate for what he did came from Heaven, Confucius did not speculate or talk about God or the gods. Nor did he think of himself as an innovator but merely as one trying to restore the true way of life that had existed in the Golden Age (the time of the early Chou dynasty, around the 11th century BC). He compiled and edited many books on Chinese traditions, music and philosophy. He said his ambition was that “the old people should be able to live in peace, all friends should be loyal and all young people should love their elders.” For the remainder of his life he wandered from state to state offering advice to rulers.

Confucius’ political career was a complete failure, but within a few generations he was regarded as the mentor of Chinese civilization. He founded a class of scholars who were to become China’s ruling elite. He himself became the most important figure in Chinese history. In 130 BC the study of Confucian texts became the basic discipline for the training of government officials, a pattern that continued until the Chinese Empire collapsed in 1905. Confucianism did not merely affect government: Confucian values were embraced by the Chinese people.

For more than 2,000 years his teachings have profoundly affected one quarter of the world’s population. Japan, Korea and much of Southeastern Asia deliberately imported Confucianism. Still shaped by the Confucian ethic, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and now China have become one of the dynamic centers of world economic growth.

Human nature

Confucius taught that the ultimate purpose of life is realized in the cultivation of authentic human nature and a good society. The ultimate source of this ideal “human nature” is Heaven. Persons harm themselves when they pursue activities contrary to the realization of this profound human nature. Self-cultivation demands living in accordance with moral principles. The moral path of cultivation should be natural, since it is the principle of human nature, yet it takes constant effort to be realized.

“The moral principle begins in the relationship between man and woman, but ends in the vast reaches of the Universe.”

— Confucius

Confucius saw that human relationships were the crucible for the formation of character. Thus human fulfillment is impossible to fulfill through solitary effort alone. Only through opening ourselves to others and forming relationships with different kinds of people can we achieve a rounded personality. We have immense potential and many hidden faculties that can be realized only in relationships.

Familial relations are paramount, since Confucius explained that what distinguishes human beings from animals is having parents. Human beings have to *learn* what it means to be human. This is achieved by learning from others who are on the same road to discovering the meaning of humanity. Our parents are our primary role models for being human and have the greatest influence in shaping our character and personality. In families there are grandparents, parents, elder and younger brothers and sisters and other family relations. Confucius taught that the happiest person is someone who has experienced a good relationship with his parents and/or his children.

The parent–child relationship

Some people live a virtuous life, do great deeds or leave behind insightful teachings and in this way achieve immortality. They leave behind a great legacy and historical imprint. For most people, fame seldom extends beyond that of their immediate family. This is why ancestor worship was so important in Asian society. Chil-

dren could maintain the worship of the ancestors and keep the family name alive.

Confucius realized that the excessive cult of ancestor worship had some unhealthy consequences. Sometimes elaborate rituals took the place of genuine human feeling and concern. Therefore he tried to shift the emphasis of Chinese religion from ancestor worship to filial piety, saying, “You are not even able to serve people. How can you serve spirits?”

Filial piety is expressed physically in caring for one’s parents, protecting and valuing one’s own body and, most importantly, having children. Apart from bringing dishonor to one’s family name, not having children is seen as the greatest tragedy.

“When a man is born, his parents wish that he may one day find a wife, and when a woman is born, they wish that she may find a husband. Every parent feels like this.”

— Mencius
a Chinese Confucian philosopher

Confucius was able to recognize the deep aspiration of people as they grow older—namely, to have children and grandchildren. He could see that nothing makes parents happier than having loyal children and grandchildren. Without children and grandchildren people’s spirit grows old. Children keep people young and give them



“He whom the superior man pronounces filial is he whom the people of the state praise saying with admiration, ‘Happy are the parents who have such a son as this.’ ”

— Confucius

hope for the future. The freshness and innocence of a young child can refresh even the most tired mind and body. At the same time nothing brings a person more heartache and sorrow than deceitful children and bad grandchildren.

According to Confucius, children’s financial support of parents is the most basic expression of filial piety. More important than physical care is the ability to regard parents’ wishes highly and nourish their dreams. After the parents die, children should offer sacrifices and keep their memory alive after their death. For three years after his father’s death, a filial son follows

his father’s will and completes any matters left unfinished. When a filial son achieves something new, his name as well as his father’s becomes known and honored.

“True filial piety consists in successfully carrying out the unfinished work of our forefathers and transmitting their achievements to posterity.”

— Confucius



Since we owe our existence to our parents, our life is inextricably linked to them. So for Confucius, the father-son relationship is absolute. Hence his saying, “There are no erroneous parents under Heaven.” We should never sever our ties to our parents. A son should protect his father, no matter what the situation might be. Children should obey and honor their parents and avoid doing anything that would disgrace them.

Confucius, though, was not unaware of the reality of family relations. He knew that many

difficult issues and emotions exist between parents and children. What should children do when their parents have failed to live up to the duties of parenthood? Should they disobey, ignore or reject them? In these particular cases Confucius thought it was the child’s duty to reprove his parents and lead them back to what is right. He even said that a filial son would disobey his parents if obeying would bring dishonor to the family. For example, Confucius instructed a filial son to endure only a light beating from his father. He should run away from a severe beating so as to protect the body entrusted to him by his parents and also out of respect for the fatherliness that may have been temporarily obscured by rage. A filial son would go against his parents’ wishes for the sake of bringing them great honor.

The superior person devotes effort to the root, for when the root is established the Way will grow. Aren’t filial piety and brotherly respect the root of human-heartedness?

The education of children

Children’s education is central to Confucianism, since it is through their own children that parents are to achieve immortality. The most important factor in a child’s education is the parents’ own example. If a father expects his son to be loving and respectful, he himself must be an example of a loving and respectful person.

"If you do not practice the Way yourself, you cannot expect it to be practiced even by your own wife and children. If you do not impose work on others in accordance with the Way, you cannot expect obedience even from your own wife and children."

— Mencius

The proverb on the left of Confucius' foremost successor applies not just within the family but also in all social relations, and the key is "serving my father as I would have my son serve me; serving my elder brother as I would have my younger brother serve me." In Korea whenever a household makes some special food, they take some of it to the older person who lives next door. The following story illustrates this point.

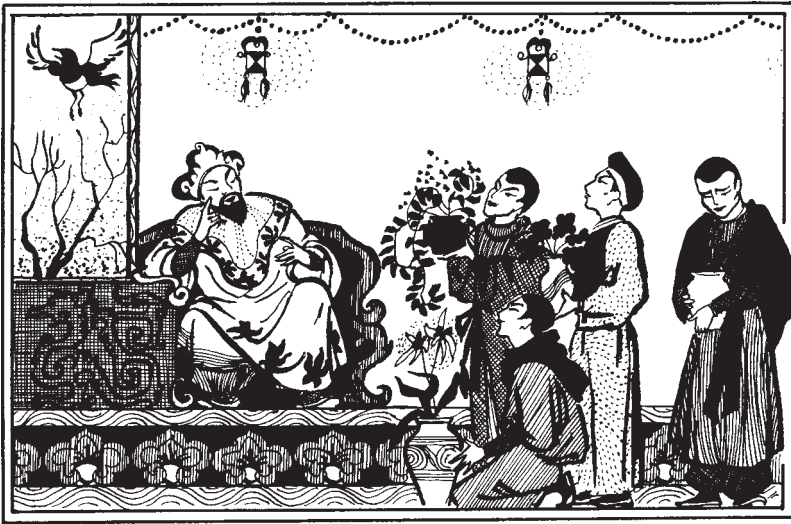
Once there was an old grandmother, daughter-in-law and grandson who lived together in a small house. The neighbors would often bring good food to this home. The young mother would take the food and feed her son, although the food was meant for the grandmother. Time passed and the grandmother died. The son married and had children, so the young mother became a grandmother herself. The son, now a father, followed his mother's tradition. When food came for the grandmother, he would take it and feed his children. The grandmother complained, "Son, when you were a boy and nice food came, I didn't eat it, I served it to you. Now it's your turn to serve me. Why are you serving only your babies?" He replied, "I'm just following your example. When grandmother was here, you never served her, you just served me. Now I will serve my son, not you, because this is what you taught me." The grandmother could not find a response.

Although it is easy, and automatic, to blame someone else for difficulties one might encounter, Mencius encouraged people to reflect on their own character when problems arose.

"If others do not respond to your love with love, look into your own benevolence; if others fail to respond to your attempts to govern them with order, look into your own wisdom; if others do not return your courtesy, look into your own respect. In other words, look inside yourself whenever you fail to achieve your purpose."

— Mencius





In the Orient children are not strongly disciplined until they go to school, usually at the age of 7. However, when they arrive at school, they are fiercely disciplined and there is immense pressure to study hard and achieve good educational results. It is thought that to discipline a child too young may damage his character and inhibit growth. At a young age a child just needs to be guided in the right direction.

“Why does a gentleman not take on the teaching of his own sons? Because in the nature of things, it will not work. A teacher neces-

sarily resorts to correction, and if correction produces no effect, he will end by losing his temper. When this happens, father and son will hurt each other instead. ‘You teach me by correcting me, but you yourself are not correct.’ If father and son hurt each other, it is not a good thing. In ancient times people taught one another’s sons. Father and son should not demand goodness from each other. To do so will estrange them, and there is nothing more inauspicious than estrangement between father and son.”

— Mencius

Asian education traditionally emphasized the true view of how the world is organized. In the past, children would begin their first studies with the *Great Learning*. Although its content was complex for 7- or 8-year-olds, it was studied and committed to memory so that its wisdom might be recalled later in life. *The*

Great Learning essay was regarded as the gateway through which beginners entered the path of virtue.

Excerpt from *The Great Learning*

If there is righteousness in the heart,
there will be beauty in the character.

If there is beauty in the character,
there will be harmony in the home.

If there is harmony in the home,
there will be order in the nation.

If there is order in the nation, there
will be peace in the world.

For Your Journal



Reflecting on the way you treat your parents, how do you expect your children to treat you in the future? How can your descendants become better than your ancestors?

What does it mean to be a member of a family? Make a list of the personal characteristics that you inherited from your mother and the personal characteristics that you inherited from your father (include physical characteristics, attitudes, values, etc.). What personal characteristics do you have that are unique (that neither your mother nor your father have)? Imagine that you were born in a different culture. How do you think it would influence the development of your personality?

On Children

by Khalil Gibran

And a woman who held a babe against
her bosom said, Speak to us of Children.

And he said:

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you.

And though they are with you yet, they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts.

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls.

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,

but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.

The archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might that His arrows may go swift and far.

Let your bending in the archer's hand be for gladness;

For even as He loves the arrow that flies,

so He loves also the bow that is stable.



CHAPTER 16

Am I My Own Boss?

At school after the last lesson Marina saw that her friend's backpack was tightly stuffed and came to know that her friend was going to leave home and stay at the home of an acquaintance who had agreed to give her shelter for a week or so.

Marina: "Cool down!"

Sveta: "I am sick and tired of that home! I'm sick of my parents and their constant moralizing and complaining, those tedious Sunday dinner-parties, their acquaintances and colleagues with their children, heaps of dirty dishes in the evening. Everything. All this reminds me that it has been decided for me where I am to study, with whom I am to make friends, what clothes I am to wear! Dad's sister, Aunt Irina, knows better than I how I should live. Why doesn't she mind her own

business? Why doesn't Mom like any of my friends? I

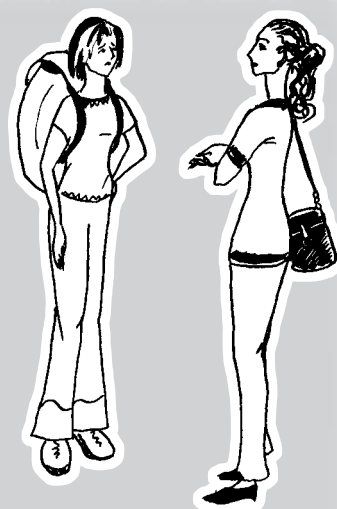
understand her hints about Kirill perfectly! I have to introduce them to each of

my new friends for them to be examined. If you knew how sick and tired I am of being interrogated daily! My life is my life."

Marina: "One doesn't choose one's parents."

Sveta: "Oh, don't you start! You know your parents never contradict you. You may do what you please, there are no restrictions for you. By the way, when did you come home last night?"

Marina: "Who cares when I came in? I come home and it's empty. No one even says hello. Mother cares only about her problems, father is sitting buried in a newspaper. I speak with your mother more than with my own."



Since the day we were born, our parents have been responsible for us. We depend on them. Whether we like it or not, we begin our life in our parents' home. Most of the time it is comfortable: We have everything we need and spend our time happily, at least in the first years of life. We learn to walk, often cry and are naughty, but often we are showered with generosity and kindness.

But then everything changes and conflicts between parents and children arise. The story does not seem to have a happy ending. Why does a parent's embrace seem too tight, and the next moment their care feels like domestic tyranny? Why are parents so easily offended?

What parents say...

Teenagers are rude; they have no respect; they forget how much their parents have done for them. They were such sweet children when they were small.

They know nothing about life, they haven't seen hard work, but they are so arrogant in judging everything.

They don't take responsibility for their actions, but want to be treated as grown-ups. Yet the consequences are left for the parents to deal with.

Sometimes they like to shock their elders with their obscene behavior.

They wear ugly clothes, listen to horrible music and behave defiantly. You never know what to expect from them.

What teenagers say...

Parents want us to copy them. They want to see their own youth in us, while we don't want to repeat their mistakes.

Parents are worried about what neighbors will say—and their friends, and their friends' neighbors, and their friends' friends.

Parents are so boring, we have nothing to talk about.

They get offended at any little thing. Mother starts crying, father is shouting. Then we are not on speaking terms for weeks during which time we don't get any allowance.

They envy us because when they were young they didn't have enough fun. So they don't allow us to be free.

Which side do you agree with?

Which particular statements sound true to you?

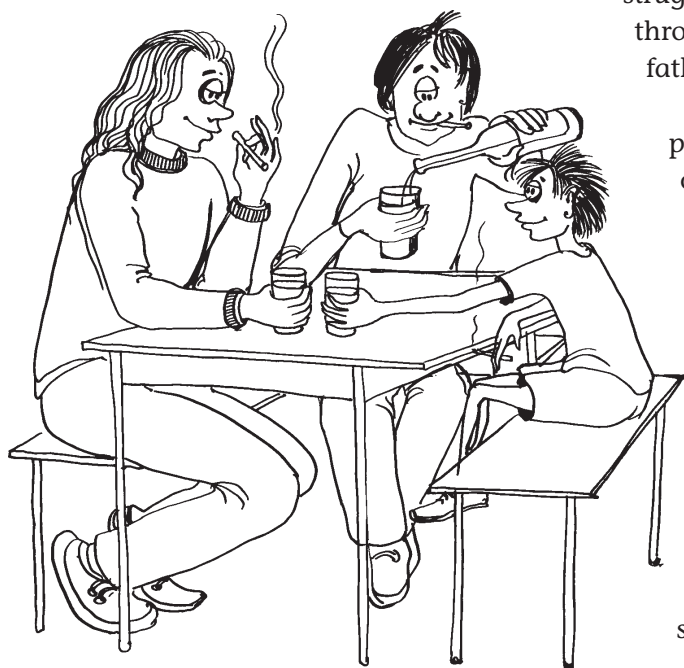
In the life of each person there comes a time when one has to bear responsibility for one's actions. For parents, who have been used to guiding and controlling their child, this may be difficult to accept. Parents need to remember that the aim of their efforts and love ultimately is not to bring up an obedient child but to let their child form an independent personality.

As we grow up, we take one step at a time toward independence: the first day at school, the first great friendship, the first date, the first holiday away from home, the first wages, graduating from school, etc. Through these transitions both children and parents experience great joy, which is often mixed with sadness and sometimes

struggle. Some children become free of their parents through tragic and painful circumstances: a mother dies, a father drinks, or parents divorce.

Still, these are only variations of one inevitable process: Parents lose control of their children, while children gain greater freedom of thought and action. On this new level of relationship parents and children must learn again to trust each other, to support each other and to respect each other's feelings. We must never forget that we owe our present independence and adulthood to our parents. They were our first teachers and educators. They were the first to give us ideas about this world. They read our first books to us, and looking at our parents we learned to make decisions, to forgive others and to laugh.

For teenagers, independence often means distancing oneself from nagging parents. They may spend all their time with their friends, disagree with



their parents on everything and want to do things their own way. However, this form of independence may actually be an escape. Does adulthood really express itself in smoking, hanging around in the street all day long, and using obscenities before teachers and parents? That's not adulthood. That kind of behavior is taking a huge backward step away from adulthood.

Being an adult means to take responsibility for one's actions, to have control over one's emotions, and to avoid hurting loved ones. Being "grown-up" means thinking seriously about the future, without hoping that parents will take care of it or that it will sort itself out.

Because we feel grown-up, we expect to be treated as such. So it is painful for us not to find that kind of respect. Yet, have we tried to help our parents accept our independence and respect our decisions? Let us develop our relationships with parents, teachers and friends in a different, more adult manner. Let us avoid thinking in a self-centered and self-serving way. We should make the effort to understand our parents and find compassion for them. Now we, who consider ourselves grown-up, are responsible for our relationship with our parents. This means that we are not dependent on them in every respect, but that we consciously choose to have an attitude of respect, gratitude, forgiveness, understanding and obedience. This is a difficult choice for a grown-up.

What are the main reasons for disagreements between parents and children? Is it money, clothes, friends, or coming home late?

Imagine the following situation. You have planned to spend the weekend in the country with your friends, but your mother is firmly against it. What will you do? You may consider yourself grown-up enough to go to the country without your parents' permission and merely inform them about it. There are different ways to approach this situation. One way is to state in an angry voice, in front of your friends, that you are ashamed and are sick and tired of staying at home with our parents. This possibility will more than likely result in upsetting and hurting your mother.

How can this situation be approached differently? First of all, let us look at this situation from a different point of view. Why doesn't your mother want to let you go? Can she really want you to have no friends and to grow up dull, reserved, clinging to her apron strings all your life? Certainly not. She is just worried about you and does not want you to get into bad company and begin smoking and drinking. Every time she hears news reports about crime, your mother most probably holds her breath and is worried sick. She is afraid something has happened to her child. Try to understand your mother and to relieve her fears, even if they are exaggerated. Give her more details about your friends, their families, their interests and hobbies and about what you talk about. It might be worthwhile to introduce them to your mother. Promise her that you will be careful and will call her and tell that everything is all right. Offer to help her with the household work on the following weekend.

But if it turns out that you have to stay at home, don't create unnecessary conflicts with your parents. The more they know you, the more they will trust you and the less they will worry when you come home late.

What should you do if your parents do not like your best friend? First of all, at least listen to the opinion of your elders. The right to choose your friends is yours, but you should give your parents' experience and intuition some thought. You could tell them more about your friend, and try to understand what your parents dislike about him or her. If your mother resents your friend calling you for a walk late at night, or the fact that your schoolwork has deteriorated due to these walks, then you should think about it seriously. But if your mother simply doesn't like your friend's hairstyle, tell her what it is that you like so much about your friend and what makes him or her so special.

Victor: “Say, Grandfather, when Dad was a teenager, did you make him come home by 11 pm and give you a report on everything?”

Grandfather: “Not at all. I trusted your father. Even when he was a small lad.”

Victor: “That’s what I am talking about. I’m sixteen. There are things I can decide by myself and wouldn’t like to share with my parents. Sixteen is old enough to get some freedom, isn’t it, Grandfather?”

Grandfather: “Certainly, sixteen is a good age to begin to keep your room tidy by yourself. Just remember what a mess you and your friends made in the apartment during your parents’ holiday! You think you are grown-up, don’t you? Possibly, but first you must prove it to your elders and win their trust and understanding. Do you know how your father won my trust? He had a hard time, but he didn’t slam the door. Instead he told me what he didn’t like and tried to understand me as well.”



Every family and culture has certain traditions and forms of relationship between parents and children. They are always relationships of love and filial loyalty. There is no doubt that as time goes by, the relative positions of parents and children change. The children become stronger, and the parents become weaker. The children grow up and mature while the parents grow old. However, the deep respect and esteem for one’s parents remain unchanged. Parents’ love for their children is also unchanged.

Children respond to love from their parents with deep loyalty and faithfulness. Children will always have that

kind of respect for their parents, no matter what happens. Parental authority is based not on their being older and wiser but rather on the special position the parents hold in the family. The family is a special kind of community that they have created, nurtured and invested all their love in. These bonds that we share will remain forever. No one can give us what our parents have given us.

“Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the God thy Lord giveth you.”

— Exodus 20:12

Something to
think about



- Why do we need our parents’ presence and guidance, even as we grow older?
- On the other hand, why does the care of parents often seem exaggerated and overbearing?

An Impossible Father

A father had three sons. He had a plot of land that had to be cleared of trees so that it could be cultivated. The father asked his first son to take an axe and chop down the trees. The trees were numerous, and they were so hard that they were called “iron bark.” On top of that it was a scorching day.

The first son dutifully started to work. Soon, however, it became clear that the edge of the axe was blunt and the axe-handle was loose. He had worked and sweated for many hours before his mind started to drift to the river behind the yard, and he began to think that his father was wrong. At last he decided that his father would understand if he went to the river. So off he ran. The father could see him from the window and was very upset.

The father put the axe in its place and asked his second son to do the same. The second son likewise obediently started to work. Soon he too realized that the edge of the axe was blunt and the handle was loose and did not hold the axe well. But if his father had told him to do it, he would do it, and nothing would stop him, for everyone knew how obliging and strong-willed he was. Still, he thought, how could his father be so stupid as to expect that any person could work under such conditions? The axe kept falling on his foot, and by midday he had lost his determination and stopped working. The father saw from the window what was going on and again was very upset.

The father picked up the axe and turned to his third son. The third son took up the work obediently. Soon he too saw that the edge had gone blunt and the axe-handle was loose. The sun was in its zenith. An hour later he began to think:

“Father is no fool. He understands the work can’t be done like this. I think I’ll go and talk to him—he will think of something.”

He turned to the house. The father could see his son from the window and felt hope in his heart.

“Father, it is impossible!”

“What is it, son?”

“Look, the axe edge is blunt and the axe-handle does not hold it at all. Besides it is so hot! I thought we could talk it over.”

The father’s face was illuminated by joy. It was the thing he had been waiting for—trust.

“Certainly, let me help you. First we shall sharpen the axe and fix the handle, and then why shouldn’t I go down and swing the axe together with you?”

CHAPTER 17

Let's Give the Floor to Parents

Relations with our parents often leave much to be desired. It probably would not be easy to find someone who considers his or her familial relations to be perfect. Can any of us say that our parents are always understanding, supportive and trustworthy?

Yet, when a conflict arises, do you ever try to see the situation from your parents' point of view? Why do you think that you and your parents disagree? Do you know their interests in life and what they are concerned about? Why do they see problems where you cannot?

Let us imagine a meeting of our fathers and mothers. What might they talk about?

Children in their parents' eyes

- ✕ I don't know about you, but in the last two years there have been changes in our family, which, frankly speaking, we are not happy about. I feel a gap growing between my daughter and me. I think our children are leaving us for their own world with its own laws. There is no room for us there.
- ✕ Oh yes, my son seems to think his mother and I are hopelessly obsolete. Of course, he is right—at school we didn't have many of the subjects they have now, and I just can't understand a lot of their homework. But that's no reason to think he is the cleverest person in the world and to treat us with such open contempt. In everything he says it seems he's implying, "It's no good talking to you about it. You won't understand, and anyway it will bore you!"
- ✕ You know, I feel these problems are partly our fault too. Of course, we are from a different generation, and the problem of the generation gap has always existed. But still, we are older and more experienced, so let's not just complain about them, but look for a solution. As far as I remember, when I was 15 I often felt like my kids feel right now. I also hated people who criticized me all the time. I thought I was already grown-up and could determine my life by myself.
- ✕ So what do you suggest? Should we let them do anything they want? Should we forget about our responsibility as parents? We feed and dress them, but they are never satisfied! They want freedom! And tell me, please, who will keep them out of trouble? They are always up to mischief, but when it is time to be accountable for what they've done, they're not there!
- ✕ The thing is, they are proud of their "adulthood" and feel grown-up, but they behave like babies. If you want to be respected and trusted, then you have to earn the respect first.

- ✕ Look, here is something I don't understand. Whom are we discussing here—some abstract teenagers or our own children? I personally love my daughter and try to understand her and her point of view. I think every person is worthy of respect just because of the person he or she is. It doesn't have to be won in some special kind of way. Of course, you are right, our children often ignore our advice and try to have their own way. But you must agree that we are also to blame.
- ✕ Can anyone here say that they have never hurt their son or daughter, even by accident? And if we have hurt them, how many of us are ready to admit it, apologize and ask for forgiveness?
- ✕ We can't just indulge our children in everything! Take my son, for instance. I have approached him in various ways and tried to talk him. He is no fool. He reads a lot, but when it comes to school ... this year alone his school has called me three times: First he skipped classes, then he was rude to his teacher ... Well, I can understand that he is an adolescent and wants to assert himself, or maybe it was just the right weather for cutting a few classes. I used to be 15 too. But how can you justify his blatant disrespect toward his teacher? Besides, I don't think he has ever tried to imagine how I feel when I have to meet his teachers or the headmaster. Oh yes, he resents all the moralizing. But what about me? Why should I be responsible for his actions? If you are so grown-up, then, please, spare your father your teachers' complaints.
- ✕ Me, I have no special problems with my daughter, but still I feel concerned. She has changed so greatly in the last year. She used to be happy and communicative, but now she always wants to be alone. As soon as she comes home from school, she rushes to her room, locks herself in, and God knows what she dreams about. She answers all my questions absentmindedly, as if nothing catches her attention. She's become silent and reserved. Something is happening to her, but I don't know what it is. I don't know how to make her trust me. Am I not her mother, do I not love her enough? Then why is there such alienation?



- ✕ We have the same situation at home. I used to complain that my son was so sharp and aggressive. At a single word he would explode and slam the door or argue with us. But now it's even worse—he just ignores us. Everything I say to him he ignores. You might as well talk to a wall! To be honest, I have no patience with him. We have arguments every week because I cannot allow our son to ignore us completely!
- ✕ You know, I think many of our problems are just due to the fact that we are trying to maintain our power over our children who are growing up. They feel it and work out a defense, insolence or indifference. My daughter also has become sharp and quick-tempered during the past year, but I try not to pay attention to it, and instead show that I regard her as an adult whose opinion is important to me. I have begun to tell her about my problems, and sometimes ask advice from her. And I see that it helps Olga and makes everything easier for me too.
- ✕ As for me, I am raising two children alone. You work like a horse in order to feed and dress them; on the way home you spend an hour or two standing in traffic; then come home and begin cooking and cleaning. There is no time for parenting, for understanding. Sometimes I get so tired during the day, and when I get home I see my elder daughter just sitting there and listening to music without lifting a finger to help. When she sees me, she makes a face (moralizing again!) and leaves the house as soon as possible. "Ma, I am going for a walk." And in the kitchen there is a pile of dirty dishes. How can I not lose my temper? Can't she see how hard it is on me? She is a girl, and a future housewife. I feel so hurt and lonely. If not her, then who will understand me? So Lena runs off and I am left sitting in the kitchen crying.
- ✕ I think everything is fine. My daughter has grown up. She has her life and I have mine. Are children really the only purpose for our life? As for me, I don't feel like an old woman yet.
- ✕ Well, the children are going to stay under our wings for a long time, whether we want it or not! In our family all the problems are about money. My son is 3 inches taller than me, but he still thinks that his mother and I must indulge all his whims. And clothes! He doesn't want to wear the jacket we bought him last year anymore—it's out of fashion. A magnificent two-cassette tape recorder is no good—he wants a video player! And allowance! Tell me please, how much allowance does a 15-year-old need? I think they are grown-up enough to solve such problems by themselves, without turning to Daddy and Mommy each time. You need money? Go and earn it! There are a lot of job opportunities out there nowadays.
- ✕ Yes, of course, you're right. Our children lack initiative. But you know, earning money by themselves isn't the solution either. Take my Alex. Recently he went to some corporation to make some money. I should have been happy, but instead I have even more troubles. First, every evening I have nightmares. Maybe someone has attacked him, taken his money or beaten him. He never comes home before 10, and once he came with a black eye. I ask him, "What's the matter?" and all I get is silence. And he has begun to feel so grown-up and financially independent that his parents can't tell him anything anymore. A week ago I saw a pack of cigarettes in his bag. I confronted him. "Do you smoke?" "Well, Mum, I'm not a child anymore!" he tells me. And the other day on my way home I met him with some girl who was wearing a super-mini and too much makeup; it was awful! Of course, now he is a desirable boyfriend. He can buy her chocolate and take her to the cinema. But the fool does not understand that the girls are interested not in him but in his money and in having a good time. But he won't hear anything about it. "I am an adult. I know with whom I should go out."



- ✕ Oh, you are so right. This subject is better avoided. Take my Helen. She just seems to fly from one romance to another. On the one hand I am glad that boys like her, that she is popular with them. But isn't it too early? And one more thing: If she doesn't take her affairs seriously now, what will happen in three or four years? How is she going to build a relationship with her future husband? But as soon as I try to talk to her about it, she waves me away: "Mum, life is different now. And besides, it is too early for me to think about a family. Wait till I am 25, then perhaps ..." What words must I use to explain to her that at 25 it may be too late to change one's attitude about life?
- ✕ I have quite the opposite problem. My son—he's 15—has fallen seriously in love with our friends' daughter. His whole purpose of life revolves around Kate. If you could only know how I'm afraid for him. He thinks it's true love. And of course, he thinks that no one has ever experienced such a feeling before and that no one can understand him. Kate is a nice, calm girl. She likes Igor, but nothing more. This makes him suffer even more.
- ✕ My son is suffering from loneliness. I can see how unhappy and lonely he is, how much he needs support, but I cannot talk to him about it. He keeps it all inside of him and is afraid to let anyone get close. Does he really think I won't understand? I was also 15 once, and I was in love with a classmate. He doesn't realize that I suffered just like he. It was a deeply painful experience. Had there been a wise adult near me at the time, how much easier it would have been for me! And how much I want to be such a person for my son! Then he would at least feel that there are people who really care about him, that not everyone rejects him.
- ✕ My daughter has recently fallen in love too, and her boyfriend is very keen on her. But frankly speaking, I am even more worried. They are only 15! Oh yes! First love! I

understand it. But isn't it too early? My Irene and her Sergei are locked onto each other. Nothing else exists for them—no books, no theatre, no other people. They live for each other and are absorbed in their own problems. At the beginning of the romance Irene was all beaming, but now she is exhausted by feelings she cannot cope with. Our children don't understand yet that love is not a magnificent and light feeling, but something much more serious and powerful. But she regards all my attempts to speak to her about it as a parent's usual nagging. How can I protect her from making mistakes? I cannot just forbid her from doing things. The forbidden fruit is sweet, you know. But every day I get more and more concerned. Both she and her boyfriend are too young to control their feelings. Don't they see the line they shouldn't cross at 15?

This discussion could go on forever. Because all parents are anxious about their children, they all suffer from the misunderstandings and alienation that spring up in family relationships. There are as many problems as families. But one thing unites everyone—both parents and children: All of us want to be happy. All of us want to be loved and understood.

Perhaps some of the thoughts above have reminded you of similar problems in your own family and will help you to see the people with whom you live in a new light. Perhaps you will feel their worries and sufferings, and see that in spite of all their shortcomings (and who has none?) they wish you well and love you. When you are suffering, they suffer too. They want to help you. And maybe, although they don't show it, they hope for your understanding, help and support just as much as you hope for theirs.

So let us try to understand the world of adults. In a few years you too will be an adult, then you will have a family, children and your own problems with the generation gap. Then you will be looking for a path to the hearts of your own children. If you think about this, maybe it will help you to try to understand your teachers and parents more.

For Your Journal



Recall a conflict that happened in your family and describe it first from your own perspective. Include not only the subject matter of the conflict but also your feelings at the time. Then describe the same situation from the perspective of the other person, such as your parents. Try to imagine their feelings, and describe the situation the way they would. Then suggest a possible solution to the situation in which neither party feels hurt or insulted.

The Blind Man's Daughter

An old Korean folk tale

There once lived a most devoted couple who, after many years of waiting, finally were blessed with a lovely daughter, whom they named Shim Chung. Sadly, the family's happiness soon turned to sorrow when Shim Chung's mother, worn out by childbirth, died while the child was still a baby.

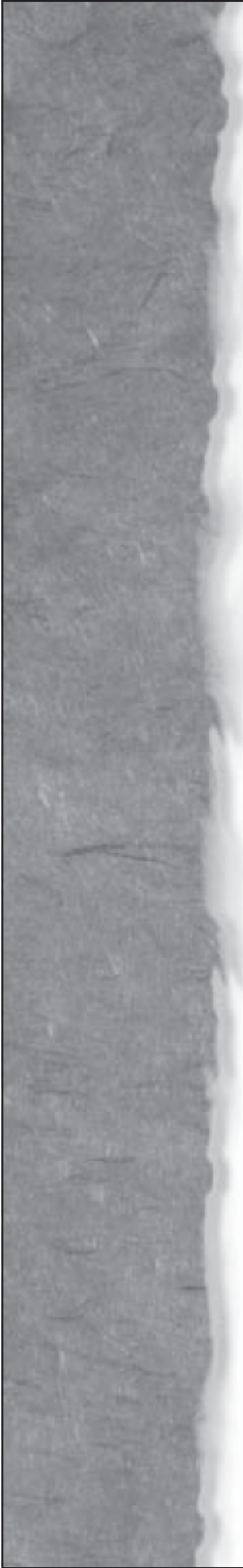
To make matters worse, her father was blind, and reduced to begging daily for food for himself and his little girl. But their kind neighbors all helped, and she grew up to be a beautiful and faithful daughter. As soon as she was old enough, she began to work in the village so that her father could rest at home. Her care for her father and her sweetness and smiles gained her a reputation throughout the district.

One day the family had an unexpected visitor, a wealthy lady from a nearby town. "Shim Chung," she said, "why don't you come and work for me for a few months? I will treat you like my own child, and your father will lack nothing. If you like, I can adopt you as my daughter." Shim Chung was strongly opposed to this last condition, but her father was very pleased that his daughter would have a chance to see a little more of life. "Please, do go," he urged, "I'll be fine!" However, as he sent her off, he began to shed bitter tears. "What a poor father I am, to let my daughter go away from home to work! If only I could see, I could get a job and take care of her as a father should!"

As the days went by, his bitterness and regret grew, until one morning in great distress he rushed out of the house, not thinking about where he was headed. Suddenly—splash! He had fallen into the river. "Help, I can't swim!" he cried. Before he could come to harm, he felt strong hands on his shoulders, lifting him out. His rescuer introduced himself as a monk, and to him the father poured out his sorry tale.

"I understand," said the monk. "If you want to see, I will pray to the Lord Buddha for you if you make an offering of three hundred sacks of





rice. Then you will be cured." Not thinking of how he could possibly pay, the distraught old man gave his promise to the monk, who nodded gravely in acknowledgment.

Once he got home, the enormity of his foolishness hit him. "What a fool I am," he thought, "to promise heaven what I can't give." He was crying like that when Shim Chung came home, and between sobs he told her the whole story.

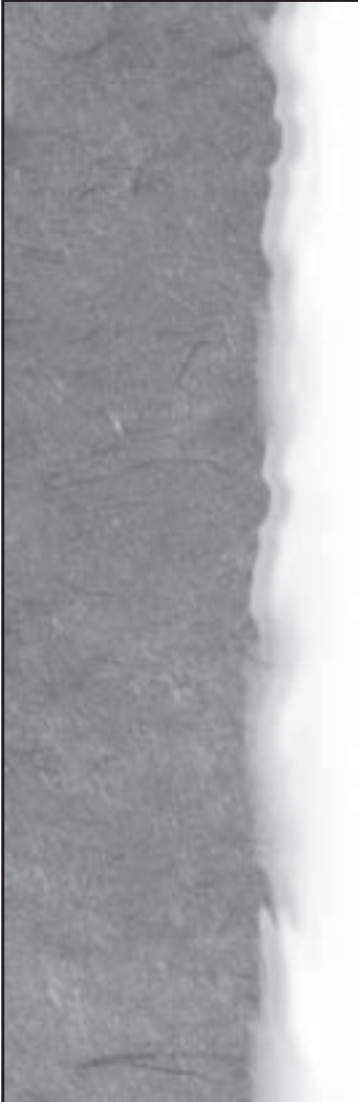
"Don't worry, Father," she said, though she was deeply disturbed. "We'll think of something." When her father had calmed down, she went into the village to think. Her feet led her down to the harbor, where she saw a boat docking. Some of the sailors were arguing with some village women. Pushing her way to the front of the little crowd, she discovered that the sailors were soon to make a great journey to see the Emperor. In order to survive the journey, they wanted to sacrifice a virgin to the king of the seas. According to a tradition, by doing so they would be spared from dying in a storm. To the father of such a girl, they would pay enough money for ...three hundred sacks of rice.

"Go away!" said the village women. "We don't need your money ruining our families!" How shocked they were when Shim Chung calmly stepped forward and offered herself! The deal was done, and home she went to tell her father that she had found the money to fulfill his pledge. Sad to say, he was so relieved for his own sake that he did not ask where it had come from, thinking that perhaps she had borrowed it from her benefactress. Only as she was leaving for the last time did she break down in tears and tell him her terrible bargain.

"What a fool I am," he groaned again. "What good will it do if I gain my sight but cannot see my daughter?" But it was too late for regret. On the high tide Shim Chung sailed away. The sailors were much taken with her beauty and hoped that there would be no storm, so that they would be able to spare her life. But before long a violent wind blew up, and they knew that they would have to make their grim sacrifice. "Don't worry," said Shim Chung. "I chose this way and I will save your lives for your wives and children." With tears they bound her hands and feet and threw her into the waves, which at once subsided.

Shim Chung was taken to the Sea King in his ocean palace. Moved by her filial piety and her beauty, he took pity on her and invited her to live with him under the sea. For the few days she was there, it seemed that the sun shone a little brighter through the waves above. But at length she came to him and begged "Noble king! Please let me return to the land of the living! I miss my poor father and I am worried about him." Though he was sad to see her go, the Sea King felt that he had to honor such a dutiful daughter. So when Shim Chung was sleeping, he had her placed in a giant lotus blossom which he sent floating gently to the surface.

The next morning, fishermen from the nearby country were astonished to see the golden blossom floating on the water. "Let us take it to our king," they thought. "Surely he will give us some rich reward!" And so the lotus was brought before the king, who ordered it to be opened. Imagine his surprise when from inside the flower stepped the most



beautiful girl he had ever seen! It was love at first sight, and with great celebration they were soon married.

Shim Chung was very happy with her new husband, who was a kind man. She sent word at once back to her village, but her father was nowhere to be found. Scorned and rejected by the scandalized villagers, he had taken his stick and begging bowl and vanished into the countryside.

Shim Chung thought of her father every day and often cried for him in private. One day she had an idea. "Let's hold a banquet for three days," she proposed to her husband, "and invite all the blind men in the country!" She felt sure that this would bring her father to the palace.

However, the first and the second days of the banquet passed with no sign of him. Even though hundreds of blind men streamed into the palace grounds, she looked among them in vain. On the third day she had just about given up hope when she heard the familiar "tap tap" of her father's cane as he ambled round the corner. His rags were worse than those of all the other beggars, and his back stooped in shame for the way he had lost his daughter. He had in fact decided that he was unworthy to come to the banquet, but his empty stomach overcame his remorse at the last moment.

"Father!" cried Shim Chung, but he shrank away. "Who are you?" he quavered. "A ghost or a witch? My Shim Chung is dead, dead on the ocean floor where I sent her by my stupidity." Only after many embraces could he believe that his daughter was still alive. "Heaven saved me," she cried, "because I loved you so." She kissed him, and at that moment his eyes were opened. The daughter whom he thought he would neither hear nor see again stood before him in splendor.

Something to
think about



- What is the moral of this story?
- The story mentions the concept of filial piety. What is that?
- What do you think of the relationship between the blind man and his daughter?
- Do you think it is true that if you sacrifice for the benefit of someone, as the daughter did for her father, that eventually you will receive some kind of blessing in return?

CHAPTER 18

Money, Money...

To live in this world we need money in order to acquire what we need and want. However, it often seems that we are short of money. Sometimes we can barely survive. This can make us feel frustrated or envious of those who have more than we do. We may think that happiness depends on money, or, as it is often put, "Happiness is not in money but in its amount." But what amount is ever enough to attain happiness?

If we sat down and wrote a list of all the things we would like to own, it would be a very long list. We might want good food; an apartment downtown facing the river; maybe a two-story country house; many vacations to tropical places; designer clothes; a stereo system; a new car. The list could be endless. Undeniably money opens many doors.

But even owning all the things you wished for couldn't prevent you from feeling dissatisfied once again, leaving you with the feeling of something missing. Very soon you would be able to come up with another long list of things you would need to be happy! Our desires are limitless! These desires can cause a great deal of frustration. However, it is not bad to think about our material desires, the value of money, what money can buy, how to obtain it and how to manage it well.

There is another problem that we have to think about: inequality. Some people seem to be very well off while others are poor. If money is the source of our self-esteem, we can easily feel envious if we have less than others, or else look down on

others if we have more. However, if we are secure in our sense of identity, we realize that it is very superficial to judge people on material wealth. A person's true worth is measured not by wealth but by the quality of heart and character.

Often we envy people if they have something we don't and think that if we had what they have we would be happy. Often we are unhappy not just because we don't have something, but because someone else does. If that person did not have it, then we would be happy. What does this say about our





character? Can we see beyond a person's external appearance and truly value that person for what he or she is? Do you want to be evaluated by the labels you wear? Is this our source of value? Is this the source of our identity in life? If your friends like you because of your money, what will happen if you suddenly lose it all?

Financial strategies

As early as high school most of us come across the problem of not having enough allowance. What can be done about it? There are three main solutions to the problem:

1. You can ask, implore and persuade your parents to give you more money. If your parents are rich, this may not be a problem except that you may become spoiled. In fact, you already may have more than enough money. But even if one's parents have enough, it is rather humiliating to ask and beg them for money when one considers oneself to be grown up. This is especially true when our parents may just be able to make ends meet. In any case, it is easy to forget how hard our parents have to work to earn that money.
2. Alternatively you can accept that you do not have enough money and just tighten your belt, lower your expectations and re-order your priorities. Decide what is most important: to finish school, go to university, be a sports champion, learn to play the piano perfectly, learn a foreign language, become a qualified mechanic or whatever it is that you desire to be. We are only young once, and much of our life in the future will be spent in earning a living. It is only natural to be ambitious and aspire to improve our situation and that of our family.
3. An increasingly popular solution is to find ways to earn money oneself. Sometimes it is easy to get a job as a babysitter, in a car wash, as a tutor or by distributing newspapers. Whatever work you do, you will have new experiences and will have to learn how to deal with different situations. If you are not working in a regular job but, say, cleaning car windscreens, you will probably come across challenging situations. If you are working with a group of teenagers, how should



you divide the money? What should you do if another group takes your area? What if the client does not pay you? Each of these situations presents challenges and has to be dealt with in the best way. In this way you can gain experience and learn how to work together with other people.

Ethical challenges

It is always tempting to look for easy money. However, there are some ways to make money that are clearly immoral and wrong, others that are completely honest, and others that fit into the large gray area in between. At one end of the scale is the school bully who demands lunch money from others, often younger than himself, threatening them if they do not give it. Some lure people into gambling and then cheat them out of money. They make easy money by exploiting innocent and gullible people. Also at this end of the spectrum are people who sell goods they know to be defective.

Even if one is making money honestly, there are still ethical dilemmas with which one is often faced and one's integrity tested. In free market countries an entrepreneur is someone who uses his creativity to satisfy the needs of his customers. The more creative he is and the more customers he satisfies, either through the services he provides or through the good quality products he produces for a reasonable price, the greater will be his reward or profit. An entrepreneur is thus a creator of wealth. This creativity can be as valuable and satisfying as artistic creativity. Thus we can see that the state of being rich can be different: Everything depends on its moral foundation.

Why work?

People work for a myriad of reasons, many of which overlap. Here are various reasons why people work:

- ✗ Money for themselves.
- ✗ To support their family.

- ✗ Satisfaction of using their talents for the common good.
- ✗ Spend time in a constructive way.
- ✗ They enjoy working.
- ✗ They feel their work is valuable.

Through working we can develop ourselves in many directions. First of all, by supporting ourselves we gain self-respect. We are not relying on anyone else. We have grown up. Beyond this we can contribute to others. We can support our parents, and when we marry we can support our own family. This gives value to our work and to our life in general. We are living for the sake of others. This makes our work much more meaningful because it enables us to give to others.

“I want as much money as I can get for as little work as possible” is a comment people frequently make. But if this is our attitude when performing a job, can we really enjoy what we are doing or feel any pride in our work? Does such an attitude really make us happy? Being idle and lazy is not fulfilling.

There are people who try to make as much money off others as they can. They overcharge or try to cheat their customers and even gang up with others to keep prices artificially high. This attitude is very mercenary.



When someone treats us in such a manner, we feel exploited or taken advantage of. If we adapt this kind of attitude, it will destroy us and corrupt our personal relationships. We will earn the reputation of being untrustworthy. We may end up with money, but no friends.

The purpose of a business should be to serve the customer. In a free market managers and employees are generally polite and courteous to each other, whether in a restaurant or an office. Their aim is to help their customers, whether the customers buy something or not. Part of the reason is that if a business produces poor goods or provides poor service, customers will look elsewhere. Therefore, badly managed businesses are replaced by well managed ones. If you had the choice between a shop in which the service was good and one in which the assistants were rude, to which would you go? In the long term the most successful businesses are the ones that produce good quality products that people want at a reasonable price and with good service.



Individual Exercise



Put the following in the order you would regard as most important in choosing a job:

Good money from the start; honest occupation; good prospects for advancement; social status; personal interest; recognition; the opportunity to serve other people; the opportunity to use your talents; short hours; opportunity to develop skills; good relations with co-workers; the feeling of doing something useful; self-respect; personal development.

What can money buy?

There have been many people throughout history who grew up in rich homes and lived in great luxury, yet felt that there was something missing. They felt that there must be more to life than money and all that goes with it. There were some things money could not buy. People such as Buddha and St. Francis of Assisi went as far as renouncing their wealth, giving it to the poor and starting on a spiritual search for true value. Many others have used their wealth for the benefit of their community, establishing schools and hospitals for the poor, hospices for the dying and housing for the homeless. Other people thought truth or beauty or love to be more precious than material wealth. They did not devote their considerable talents to the making of money. Many great scientists, in their deep desire to understand the universe, forgot about material luxuries.

An excerpt from *The Seagull* by Anton Chekhov

Myedvyedenko: Why do you always wear black?

Masha: I'm mourning for my life. I am unhappy.

Myedvyedenko: Why? [*Meditatively*] I can't understand. ... You're healthy; your father, although not rich, is quite well off. My life is much harder than yours. All told, I get twenty-three rubles a month, from which something will have to go to a pension fund, and yet I don't mourn. [*They sit down*]

Masha: It isn't a question of money. Even a poor man can be happy.

Myedvyedenko: That may be so in theory, but in practice it's more like this: There is mother, two sisters, my little brother and myself—on a salary of twenty-three rubles. We need to eat and drink surely? We need tea and sugar? Tobacco? A stiff proposition, isn't it?

Masha: [*Glancing at the platform*] The performance is going to begin soon.

Myedvyedenko: Yes. Nina Zaryechny is the actress and the play is by Konstantin Gavrilovich. They are in love, and today their souls will be fused in an attempt to create a harmonious artistic union. But your soul and mine have no common points of contact. I love you, and from anguish I can't sit at home; every day I walk six miles here and six miles back, and only get indifference from you. It's understandable. I'm without means, I have a large family to support. ... Who would want to marry a man who can scarcely feed himself?

Masha: Nonsense! [*Sniffing at her snuff box*] Your love touches me, but I can't return it, that's all. [*Holding out the snuff box to him*] Help yourself.

Myedvyedenko: I'd rather not. [*A pause*]

Masha: It's sultry. We shall have a storm tonight. You're always philosophizing or talking about money. According to you, there's no greater misfortune than poverty; and, to my mind, it's a thousand times easier to go in rags and to beg than—Still, you won't understand that...

Something to think about



- What is it that you can and cannot buy with money?
- Which are the most valuable things and why?
- Why is it that rich people are often unhappy?
- What is the source of happiness?
- Why do Myedvyedenko and Masha not understand each other?

Planning a budget

So, you found an honest way to earn money. The next question is what to do with it. Do you keep it all for yourself and expect to still receive an allowance from your parents? Do you tell your parents that now you will be responsible for your own finances and that they do not have to support you any longer? Do you give some to your parents as a contribution to your upbringing? Or do you put it all in the family “pot”? If the latter, then you will have the right to have some say about the family budget.

Whether you give your money to your parents or not, the question still arises of how you spend your allowance or the money that you earn.

- ✗ Do you splurge on sweets and snacks, comics and magazines, and makeup? Or do you spend it on entertainment, such as records, movies, etc.?
- ✗ Do you spend all your money on yourself or do you spend some of it on presents for other people?
- ✗ Do you plan how you are going to spend it each week or do you just go out and spend it right away?
- ✗ Are you a saver? Do you invest some of your money in something that will keep its value so that you can save up to be able to buy something big?



Wise spending

Money has to last, and the first step to achieving that is making a budget. There are people who enjoy budgeting because it enables them to plan the future and think about their priorities. Other people find it a bore, because it forces them to be responsible. Controlling one's money is surprisingly difficult. It is so easy to waste and have nothing to show for it. There are many temptations, such as smoking and gambling, that consume money.

It does not make much sense to plan future spending before you have some idea of how you spend your money right now. You may not spend the money the same way every day, but at least it will give you a rough guide. For six weeks or so, record in a notebook every bit of money you receive and spend, down to every penny. That way you will get a good idea of where the money goes and where it shouldn't be going.

Your spending will fall into main areas such as:

- ✗ **Everyday expenses**—food, travel, newspapers.
- ✗ **Regular outgoings**—paying your parents for your keep
- ✗ **Irregular items**—holidays, clothes, treats, etc.
- ✗ **Unpredictable expenses**—for emergencies. You can't really budget for them, but you should have something in reserve.

For Your Journal



Make a study of your present spending. Think over the past couple of months and list all of the things on which you have spent money. After you have made the list, write the approximate amount of money you spent for each item. Now label them individually as either a "need" or a "want." How much do you spend on things that you need? How much do you spend on things that you want but do not need (even if they are very nice to have)? Add up the total approximate amount of money that you have spent.

Make a second list. This list will be your ideal for how you would like to spend your money. Use the same amount of money on this list as you did on your first list.

How are your lists different? Are there ways you could manage your money so that you could get the things that you really want?

CHAPTER 19

Divorce and Children

Today in many countries of the world, 50 percent or more of marriages end in divorce. Even traditional societies are experiencing increases in the divorce rate. The result is that each year millions of children experience the trauma of seeing their parents separating.

Here are the feelings of some young people who have gone through that experience.



I really thought I wasn't going to see him again, because the only thing I knew about divorce was that if your parents divorce, you stay with your mom and you never see your dad again. I remember actually asking my dad, "Which city will you go to?" I really did.

For many children, the worst fear is that they will never see the absent parent again.

One of the strongest feelings about the breakup and the parent's departure is anger.

I've got no feelings for my dad. I see him now and then when he's in town. He doesn't buy any birthday presents or New Year presents. But it doesn't bother me anymore. I've gotten used to it.



One of the few positive aspects about divorce is that some children believed that their relationship with their fathers has actually improved after the breakup.

When he was at home, which wasn't very often, he never took me out and he was very strict and always criticizing me and telling me to do things. But now that they've split up, I get on a lot better with him and he takes me out quite often and we have more fun. I like him better now.

For many children, divorce produces many changes in their lives: moving, changing school, new domestic routines.

I think if you haven't got a dad, you've got to help your mom with the housework. We've got our own routine. My sister does my mom's and her ironing, and I do my brother's and my own ironing. Mum used to do all

the repairs in the apartment. But our uncle taught my brother how to do some things, so he tries to do most of the repairs now. We've been brought up mainly without our dad, and we get on just as well without him. We've grown up pretty fast. You have to be independent.

Nearly all children say they do not want or do not know how to tell their friends that their parents have split up.

I can remember hiding it from my friends. I used to get embarrassed talking about it, and I didn't want them to know. I used to think that if I talk to people, I'd be making excuses for myself. I think I was a bit scared of people's pity. When my mom and dad were divorcing, it was scandalous then to have divorced parents. I remember my friend—her mom and dad divorced when she was about 4 or 5, and she hid it from everyone in her class, until I started to tell people that my mom and dad were divorced. I don't think she had any good reason for it, she just did. We both felt we were the only people in the whole school with divorced parents.

For many children, there is the problem of trying to adjust to their parents finding new partners.



I felt pretty jealous. I mean, after you've had your dad to yourself for a while and then somebody else comes in and your mom shows her love for him rather than you, you get very jealous. And I got jealous. I hated it. I was so nasty. I used to sit in the room and give off nasty vibes or make really underhand comments. I frightened quite a few of them off.

Many children feel that the experience would have been easier to handle if their parents had only explained and discussed more what was happening.

I think parents should talk about it with their kids and see what the kids' points of view are and how they feel about it. And they should talk about how they're going to work it out and get jobs and a new house. Then the kids will be able to understand what is happening. And they should let them know that other people go through this, because we thought we were the only ones.

Group Exercise



Talk about the experiences these children have described. What can you learn from their comments about the difficulties they faced when their parents divorced or separated?

The effects of divorce

You probably feel that the worst thing you can imagine is your parents breaking up. When parents argue and fight in front of children, it is very painful. A child doesn't know what to do and feels that he or she is being split in two. To a child it seems as if the whole world is falling in. If your parents have already separated or divorced, you may feel sad, abandoned and rejected. You may blame yourself for their breakup. If you are older, you may realize that it is a parental affair, but you probably still feel angry, lonely and resentful.

If you are very distressed, your schoolwork may deteriorate and you may become emotionally upset and depressed. You may not feel friendly toward others or to the world at large. You just want to be by yourself and think about what has gone wrong. Sometimes teenagers become romantically involved as they try to compensate for the loss of their parents' love. This can bring about even more problems. It is difficult to cope with such an experience.

If your parents remarry, this too can introduce new challenges. You may or may not like your stepparent. He or she may or may not like and love you. You may feel that if you accept your stepfather, you are betraying your real father. There are a lot of emotions and feelings to be sorted out. Sometimes it seems easier to escape from such things into one's own little world. However, at some point you have to come to terms with your feelings if you are to grow and move forward.



Unfortunately, the likelihood of divorce is much greater for those couples who have come from broken families than those who have come from stable homes. Our parents are our role models. If they behave in a certain way and deal with problems in a certain way, we are prone but not destined to do the same. So if our parents solve their marital problems by divorcing, there is a chance we'll do the same. In order to prevent this, it is advised that you find an alternative source of parental love, such as a mentor, who can support your social and emotional growth.

With whom should I live?

Olga is talking with her best friend, Sveta, in Olga's kitchen. Both girls are seated at the kitchen table.

Olga: (Crying) I love them both, but they can't accept that. They're tearing me apart.

Sveta: What do you mean?

Olga: Well, they hate each other now. That's hard enough anyway, but what's worse is they think I should take sides. If Mom says something bad about Dad, she thinks I should agree. And Dad's the same way.

Sveta: So what will you do?

Olga: I don't know. I can't sleep, I can't eat, and I can't concentrate on anything. My schoolwork is terrible, but I just don't care anymore. I'm just dreading the day when I'll have to make a choice.

Sveta: What kind of choice are you talking about?

Olga: You're lucky, Sveta, you know that? Your mom and dad get along. They really seem to like each other and respect each other. I never really thought about that until ...



Sveta: I guess I am lucky. Funny, isn't it? You never really think about your parents—about their relationship. They're just kind of there.

Olga: I have to choose between them. With whom I want to live, I mean.

Sveta: Won't the court decide?

Olga: No. That would be easier. But since I'm as old as I am, I have to choose. And I love them both, I really do. And one of them is going to be hurt. Still, I have to decide.

Sveta: I'd hate to be in your position. *(Pause)* Maybe if you tried to make a list—you know, pros and cons.

Olga: (Hurt) Of my parents? I can't do that. I told you, I love both of them.

Sveta: No, I don't mean that. I mean things like, where will they live? Will you have to change school? Who will keep the apartment—your mom or your dad?

Olga: I don't know.

Sveta: I think you'd better find out. Then you can make the best choice.

Olga: The best choice? Sveta, haven't you been listening?

Sveta: (Squeezing Olga's hand) I know it's hard. But the more you know about the situation, the better. And living with one parent doesn't mean you're rejecting the other.

Olga: I guess not.

Sveta: Of course not. You can't be in two places at once. But you can be in two places at different times—you know, weekends, holidays, and so on. Can't you spend that time with the parent you don't live with? You'll work it out. I know you.

Olga: I hope so.



Questions for Discussion



- What consequence of the divorce bothers Olga most?
- What do you think about Sveta's suggestion that Olga make a list?
- What do you think about Sveta's statement "You never really think about your parents. They're just there"?
- Was Sveta right to conclude, "You'll work it out, I know you"? Why might we avoid trying to give simple answers?
- Who suffers more from a divorce—the parents or the children? Can there be such a thing as a "painless" divorce?

CHAPTER 20

The Single-Parent Family

Many children are growing up in single-parent families. The reason for this may be the death of a parent or it may be divorce. Sometimes, if parents are alcoholics or drug addicts, they are deprived of parental rights and their children are forced to live with someone else. In recent decades many couples have had children without marrying, and in such cases usually the mother raises her children alone.

One-parent families exist all around us. Almost certainly you know some children who live with their mother, with their grandparents, or perhaps with their father. Sometimes it seems there are almost no ideal families around.

Every family has its own customs and problems, but there is one thing most will agree upon—each of us would like to live in a family in which we are surrounded by the love of both parents. If our own family does not measure up to our ideals, we may feel pain. If this is the case, we first must understand how to keep our dignity under the circumstances and learn to grow up to be a harmonious and loving person. We need to see ourselves not as victims but as survivors. Even if we personally have a



good family, someone very close to us may be living in a one-parent family. In this case any love, wisdom, and understanding we provide not only will help our friend but also will help us to learn and grow.

A single-parent family

If you live with only one parent or with a relative, it is important for you to understand that you are by no means inferior to other children. Having only one adult in your family does not degrade your value as a person. Ultimately the kind of person you will become, and what you will attain in life, depends on you, not on your circumstances. Many outstanding people, including the founders of the world religions, began their lives under very sad circumstances.



Overcoming difficulties in life can help us to become loving, responsible people, if we find enough love and strength within ourselves. By working through our life challenges we can help those around us who need support and understanding. In this way we become more mature and gain experiences that will help us in future difficulties. But this is possible only if we overcome our difficulties with love, keeping our dignity and helping others, rather than isolating ourselves and indulging in bitterness.

Of course, this advice applies to all difficulties, not just those resulting from the absence of a parent. Every one of us faces tribulations in our life, and we have to learn to deal with them. It is very important to be able to find a positive dimension in any situation, no matter how unfair it might seem.

Only then can we grow from the experience and turn it into something positive. Many extraordinary people realized this, and saw in this very approach a real way of overcoming difficulties. In fact, all of Dostoyevsky's works are permeated by only one theme—the way through sufferings and deprivation to real beauty, real humanity, wisdom and love.

Overcoming difficulty

In any situation the most important thing is to not limit yourself with a negative focus on your own troubles. Try to see the problem from the viewpoint of other people. Help others despite your difficulties. By doing so, you often can solve your own difficulties.

For example, if you are a boy living alone with your mother, what can you do under the circumstances? You can choose to resent the whole world and your mother and to live with this constant resentment. But what is gained? Yes, the situation is not fair, but you can solve nothing by resenting your fate. Is there a better choice? Yes, there is. Try to find some positive aspects to your situation, no matter how hard it may be. For instance, while there may not be a father beside you, there is still a mother, grandmother and grandfather who love you dearly. Some people may not have even that.

I had suffered because I had no shoes until I met a man who had no feet.

Most of us tend to compare our circumstances with people whose life is much easier than ours, and therefore it seems that we have been wronged or deprived of something. Quite naturally questions then arise: Why me? What for? Why am I worse than others? Then we begin bearing a grudge, become

A Religious Dimension

When life puts difficulties in front of us, we often begin to feel inadequate. It seems that we are not as good as other people. (Haven't you faced a similar situation yourself: "Oh, you have no father? Your mother can't afford to buy you decent clothes? Sorry, but you are not fit for our company!") But it would be wrong to believe that our value is determined by external circumstances that are beyond our control.

Many religions state that each human being is unique and God's child. From this point of view, no matter who your parents are, whether they exist or not, whether they are criminals or alcoholics—you are a unique person and your value is absolute. Each of us is an embodiment of the ultimate divine nature that is reflected in everyone in a different way. We are all pieces of a big puzzle. Each piece is absolutely unique, and none can replace another. Even if only one piece is missing, the picture will be incomplete. Life works in a similar way. We are all unique, and the picture of the world would be incomplete if any of us disappeared. Here is the way various religions express it:

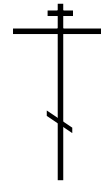


Buddhism: Every being has the Buddha nature. This is the self.

—Mahaparinirvana Sutra 214

Christianity: Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?... For God's temple is holy, and that temple you are.

—1 Corinthians 3.16-17

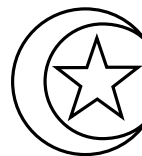


Judaism: Beloved is man, for he was created in the image of God. But it was by a special love that it was made known to him that he was created in the image of God.

—Mishnah, Abot 3.18

Islam: I have breathed into man of My spirit.

—Koran 15.29



Hinduism: The shining Self dwells hidden in the heart. Everything in the cosmos, great and small, Lives in the Self. He is the source of life, Truth beyond the transience of this world. He is the goal of life. Attain this goal!

— Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.2



gloomy and sulky and see nothing but the awful injustice everywhere. Our problems, instead of being solved, accumulate. This attitude leads us nowhere. But when we remember those whose life is harder than ours, we feel new strength to overcome our difficulties.

On the other hand, when you try to see the situation from your mother's perspective, you will realize how hard it must be for her. Your life is ahead of you. It may be very successful, you may have a lifelong love, interesting work and travel. Your future depends only on yourself and what you make of it. Life is there to be conquered by you. Your mother, on the other hand, works very hard—mostly out of necessity. We often think about love and how important it is to us. It fills our dreams and thoughts. Your mother, too, in her youth must have dreamed about the love of her life. Nevertheless, she remains alone with you. And she has far fewer hopes for the future than you. You are her brightest hope now. Can you imagine how difficult it must be? Your mother most likely hides her sorrows from you. When you reach that kind of understanding, your personal problems will seem not so bad at all.

The wisest way is to become a genuine man, so that your mother knows she has someone to rely upon. What does it mean to be the man of the house? Of course, there is an external side: hanging the bookshelf, repairing the electric iron, putting a leg on the chair, etc. This is important because doing so shows that you are grown-up enough to share at least part of your family's responsibilities. But there is a deeper aspect too: feeling responsible for everything that is going on. When difficulties arise at home, you are ready to bear part of the problem and give support as well as protect your family. This will make life easier for your mother, and it will help you later when you have a family of your own.



A girl growing up without a father

Any hidden resentment you may feel toward your father may turn into resentment and mistrust of all men in general. This may create challenges in creating your own family. In situations like this, the best way is to find something positive and dwell on that, rather than the negative. Being a girl, it may be easier for you to understand your mother. Through such understanding, compassion will grow between you—a deep understanding of each other's pain and problems. On the base of this emotional intimacy, it will be much easier for you two to overcome all difficulties with dignity.

When there is no man in the house, your knowledge about the world of men may not be as full as if you had brothers and a father. It is advisable under these circumstances to develop relationships with other men who may take on the role of a parental figure, such as uncles, teachers and your friends' fathers. Creating healthy relationships with father figures in your adolescence will help you to overcome many of the challenges that might arise in future partnerships.

What are the consequences?

In spite of the difficulties that come with growing up in a one-parent family, there is still a way for you to become a deep, mature, grown-up person.

But it is also necessary to understand the nature of the situation and the impact it has on your life. Realizing this may help you to avoid the same mistake in the future.

All of us dream of love. But infatuation often brings people to have sex without thinking of the consequences. Suddenly the girl is pregnant. What do you think will happen next? Almost certainly her child will grow up without a father. Even if the father does marry the mother, statistics show that such urgent marriages are the least stable. The question arises: Do you really want to sacrifice the future of your child because of your current infatuation? This is of concern not only for girls, although in most cases it is the young mother who takes care of the child. But what would the "dad" feel, knowing he has a child somewhere who certainly will be challenged by being fatherless? If we think about it, we may be led to make more responsible decisions.

Imagine you are married. It would be naive to suppose that there will be no problems or conflicts in your marriage. How can you solve them? It is no secret that people nowadays part even without a serious reason. They are just tired of each other. Love has gone. Someone has been betrayed. And what about the children? Maybe this discussion will help you in the future, when you encounter difficulties in your own family.

Returning to our theme of discussion, it is important to remember that we have no right to accuse anyone, especially our parents. The only thing we can do and must do is to help them as well as ourselves. We should determine not to repeat any mistakes our parents may have made, and we must become responsible persons not only for our own sake but also for the sake of our future family.

For Your Journal



- Do you think that a child from a single-parent family will have more responsibility than other children his age who live with both parents? How will it influence his growing up?
- In what ways do we learn how to communicate with members of the same and opposite sex through our family relationships? Give examples of how girls learn to communicate with men through their relationship with their father. How does boys' communication with their mother determine the future style of relationships with women? How does life in a single-parent family influence children's ability to create relationships with people of the opposite sex? Are there any positive points?

Katya's Story

My name is Katya. My father died when I was thirteen years old. I have a sister who is seven years younger than me. Once my dad was gone I had to help my mom a lot. I became responsible for knowing where my little sister went after school and I did most of the shopping. My mom came to really depend on me, not just for shopping and taking care of my sister, but I was her best friend. My dad had been really strict with us when he was around, while my mom would basically let us do anything without asking. When I was a little older I could go anywhere and do almost anything I wanted. My friends had to be home at early hours and always tell their parents where they were going, but I didn't. It was fun in a way, and my friends envied me, but actually I wish that my dad had been there to guide me more. Although he was very strict, I really felt his love through his concern.

Then my mom got a boyfriend. He was a very good person. After a short while he moved into our apartment. Mom became much happier and I liked having him around. He never told my sister and I what to do, but always listened to our ideas and struggles. But I wish that they could have got married before starting to live together. I was embarrassed for my friends to find out. I also felt that my mom was not there for me as much. She didn't need me like she did before and that hurt. I still miss my dad. While he was alive I never realized how much I loved him and needed him.

Questions for Discussion



- How do you think the atmosphere in the home changed after Katya's father died?
- Do you think Katya and her sister feel more insecure?
- Why does Katya miss her dad so much?
- Why do you think Katya feels embarrassed at having her friends find out that her mother is living together with her new boyfriend?

CHAPTER 21

Marriage and Family in Buddhism



Buddha taught that in our lives we constantly suffer. The reason we suffer is that we are continually dominated by desire. To end our suffering and find inner peace, we must follow the Eightfold Path (see Chapter 17 in *My Journey in Life: A Student Textbook for Character Development* for an explanation of the Eightfold Path). By living a life based on this way, eventually we can attain Nirvana, a state of consciousness in which we feel no greed, hate or ignorance. Instead we feel a deep peace and compassion for all living creatures.

Buddha taught that ideally to follow such a path, a person should become a monk or a nun, renouncing all worldly ties and living a celibate lifestyle.

“The wise do not call a strong fetter that which is made of iron, wood or fiber; much stronger is the fetter of desire for gold and precious stones, for sons and wives. These seem soft but drag a man down, and are hard to undo. Therefore some men cut their fetters, renounce the life of the world and start to walk on the path, leaving pleasures behind.”

— Dhammapada, 345-46

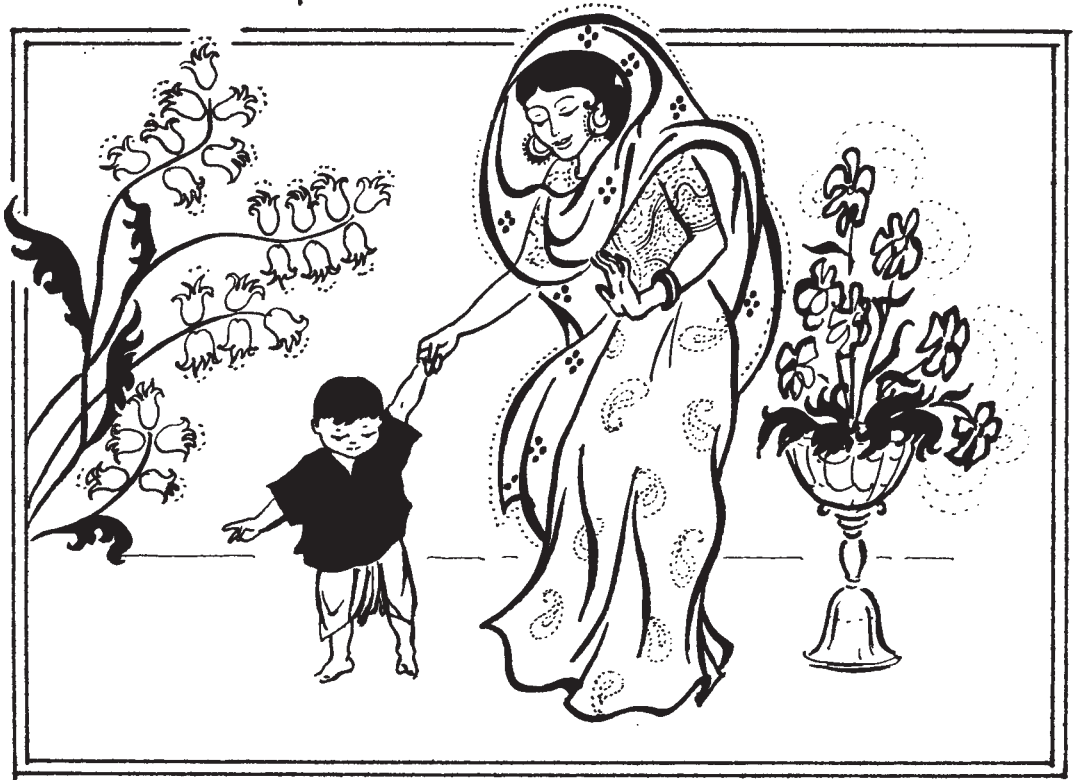
Many people do not feel a calling to become a monk or a nun. In this case, Buddha said that they should marry and become good husbands and wives, fathers and mothers. Through doing so they also can grow spiritually and receive great blessing. That's why Buddha put great importance on family relationships, because they can be a source of either great joy and enrichment or else of suffering and spiritual harm.

Buddhism teaches that what most people call love is a need for others rather than the wish for their well-being. When people say, “I love you,” it often means “I want you for myself.” If we truly loved a person, we would never tire of working for his or her happiness. Instead, what people really never tire of is working for their own happiness. It is this need or selfish desire that creates problems and suffering in human relationships.

Buddha did not talk about the existence of God. He was concerned that speculating about the existence and nature of God would distract a person from the important task of spiritual growth and perfection. So, when a very superior religious man

To support one's father and mother,
To care for one's wife and children,
And to have a peaceful occupation.
This is the highest blessing.
Generosity, good conduct,
Helping relatives,
And blameless action.
This is the highest blessing.

— Sutta Nipata 262



asked Buddha, “Who are the gods?” Buddha replied, “Let father and mother be your gods.” In other words, the best way to serve God is to serve one’s parents.

Mother’s love

Buddha taught that a mother’s love is the closest parallel to pure love or compassion that an ordinary person can understand. For this reason he held up a mother’s practical, generous and selfless love as the model for all relationships.

“As a mother who would give up her life for her only child—this is how you should feel toward all beings.”

— Buddha

By meditating on the kindness of mothers, Buddhists believe that they start to have some understanding of what genuine, selfless love is all about. Here is what one Buddhist has said about his mother:

“My mother’s kindness is responsible for all the opportunities I have of making use of my physical body and of leading the sort of life that I do. If she hadn’t taken care of me when I was in the womb, I wouldn’t have been born alive. If she hadn’t fed me well afterward, I wouldn’t have enjoyed the various functions of my physical body, such as using my eyes to see the most beautiful objects, my ears to hear the most beautiful sounds, my nose to smell the sweetest perfumes, my tongue to enjoy the most delicious tastes, or my body to enjoy sexual love and have many children.

Also being skillful and creative with my hands; all this depends on my mother’s kindness. My mother always took care of me, feeding me properly, protecting me from dangers, directing my life, and making me study so that I could have a comfortable life and good reputation. From the time of my conception she has been worried and concerned about me.”

— Lama Zopa Rinpoche, *The Wishfulfilling Golden Sun*



Meditation

One Buddhist meditation is to contemplate the kindness of mothers. You might try the following exercise:

Close your eyes to avoid distractions and try to picture your mother, or someone who you feel is an ideal mother, or someone who you feel has been most like a mother to you. Think about the times when she looked after you when you were a child. Remember the games she played with you; the things she taught you; the things she gave you; the places she took you; the way she looked after you when you were ill. Let all the memories of your mother return to you now. Then consider the following statements: A mother loves her child without expecting anything in return. Whether sick or tired, depressed or run-down, a mother will do everything within her power to give to her child. Even if her child abuses or neglects her, or turns out to be unpleasant and unkind, a mother will continue to love and care for that child. Try to generate a feeling of warmth and gratitude toward your mother.

Family ethics

Buddha first taught his code of social ethics for a householder to a young man called Sigla. In this speech Buddha outlined the duties of parents and children, husbands and wives, teachers and friends.

Duties of parents

Buddha taught that there are five ways in which parents show their love for their children:

1. by guiding them away from evil
2. by persuading them to do good
3. by providing them with an education
4. by setting them up in a suitable marriage
5. by handing over their inheritance at the right time.

The first few years of our life are the most formative, and the people who make the greatest impression in our life are our parents. It is not only what our parents say but also what they really are and do that we absorb. We enter the world and are cultivated through our relationship to them and their moral values. This is why it is important for parents to set a good example for their children to follow.

Buddhist family life is intensely affectionate. It is full of joy and laughter. There is a great tradition of giving: food, presents, hospitality and help. All kinds of giving are greatly enjoyed. It is a close and ordered unit in which the respect felt in the mind is expressed by the body and tongue. This discipline is not fear of punishment, but trust and mutual respect. Buddha taught that evil is its own punishment: It makes our life ugly and ends in regret, even after many years of pleasure-making.

Duties of children

Buddha taught that there are five ways in which children should minister to their parents:

1. by supporting their parents
2. by performing their duties as children toward their parents
3. by maintaining the family lineage and tradition
4. by acting so as to be worthy of their inheritance
5. by performing religious duties and offering religious gifts in their parents' name even after the parents are dead.

Buddha said that children can never repay their parents for giving birth to them, for all the love, sacrifice and kindness they have given. However, some parents do not live up to the standard that Buddha described. In this case, rather than reject them, Buddha taught that children should help their parents to change. "If one has immoral parents, one should inspire them to be moral. If one has stingy parents, one should be generous and inspire this virtue in them. In this way a child can more than repay the debt he owes to his parents."



Marriage

The basis of Buddha's teaching on marriage is that every thought, action and word should be for the sake of the other's welfare. Thus marriage is not an impulsive affair, but grows from an ever-deepening mutual understanding. Yet marriage is not for the couple alone, because in the Buddhist tradition they also will care for their parents and children, and indeed any member of the two families who needs support. Marriage is therefore for the sake of the community and not merely for the private satisfaction of two partners.

Like every experience, marriage should help us to become better people. We can develop spiritually by learning patience, concentration and developing wisdom. Our spouse is a fellow traveler and mentor on this path to enlightenment.

If both wife and husband hope to be in one another's presence so long as this life lasts and in the future life as well, they should have the same faith, the same virtue, the same generosity, the same wisdom; then they will be in one another's sight so long as this life lasts and in the future life as well.

— Buddha

Within marriage Buddha recognized the need for different roles through which each spouse could complement the other. There is no sense in which one is superior to the other. Superiority is to be found instead in loyalty, gentleness, generosity, calm and dedication to the Noble Path.

Duties of a husband

The five ways in which a good husband fulfills his responsibilities to his wife are by:

1. honoring her
2. treating her with respect
3. being faithful
4. sharing authority with her
5. showing his appreciation by giving her presents.

Duties of a wife

The five ways in which a good wife responds to and loves her husband are by:

1. managing the household well
2. being hospitable to his family as well as her own
3. being faithful
4. taking care of the family's belongings
5. skillfully and industriously completing her duties.

Also Buddha taught that there are four roles that a wife fulfills:

1. She watches over her husband with loving sympathy, like a mother
2. She holds him in respect and quietly honors him, like a younger sister
3. She is glad to see and be with him at any time as a best friend
4. She is as obedient and loyal as a faithful family servant.



The wedding

In some Buddhist countries it was the tradition and moral duty for every young man to spend at least three months in a monastery before marrying. Here he would learn about Buddhism and develop his spiritual life. Only after receiving such training was a man considered worthy of becoming a husband. Usually the first question to a suitor was whether he had completed a term as a monk.

In most communities the marriage ceremony is largely non-religious, although monks are invited into the home of the bride on the morning of the wedding. They are offered a special feast and, in return, recite Buddhist scriptures (*the paritta*) to protect the bride and groom. The monks then return to their monasteries before the wedding ceremony begins. They neither witness nor participate in the ceremony.

Sexuality

Buddha did not judge or condemn the sexual instinct but pointed out that it could be dealt with in three ways:

1. We can be dependent on our sexuality in a way that generates righteous worldly pleasure and happiness. In such a relationship both man and woman are deeply dependent on each other.
2. We can abuse and pervert our sexuality through lust, hatred and greed. If we follow this path, we tend to create pain and suffering both for others and for ourselves.
3. We may live neither dependent on it nor ignoring its real nature. We become free of dependence on it.

This last is the Middle Way in which sexuality is acknowledged and regarded compassionately without being indulged in ways that lead to suffering. One masters sexual desires instead of being their servant. The only place in which sexual relationships are free from guilt and lust is within marriage. Here it is the natural expression of a deep, loving relationship.

Buddhists believe that sexual relationships outside marriage result in suffering. This is because such relationships are based mainly on the desire for pleasure rather than unselfish love. For this reason, such relationships hinder our spiritual growth. We become even more dominated by our desires, and sexual thoughts fill our minds. We also become entangled in relationships that are dishonest and selfish. If we use people as a means to satisfying our own desires, we can never really know who they are. This makes the relationship empty, and as a result we become lonely. To escape from this loneliness people often make the situation even worse by finding yet another partner. For a Buddhist, sexual freedom means freedom from slavishly serving sexual desire.

Adultery

Faithfulness in marriage is an absolute. Buddha taught that from the moment of marriage a man must regard all women other than his wife as either his mother, sister, or daughter, depending on their age.

“Four things happen to the thoughtless man who takes another man’s wife: He lowers himself, his pleasure is restless, he is blamed by others, he goes to hell. Yes. The degradation of the soul, a frightened pleasure, the danger of the law, the path of hell. Considering these four, let not a man go after another’s wife.”

— Buddha, Dhammapada, 309-10

Questions for Discussion



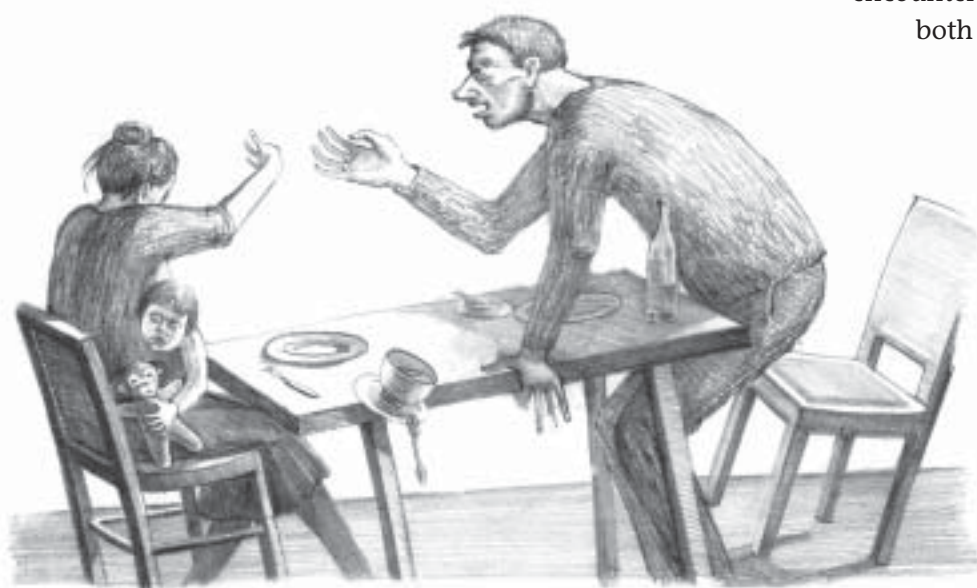
- Buddhists seem to value a mother's love more than the love of a father. Why do you think this is? Do you think that a mother's love in some way differs from a father's?
- How do you think selfish love can harm both others and ourselves?
- Why do you think a Buddhist is expected to spend some time in a monastery before marrying?
- Why don't Buddhist monks attend the wedding ceremony?
- Discuss how the Buddhist view of love and sexuality differs from the contemporary Western view.
- Non-Buddhists might interpret sexual permissiveness as sexual freedom. Act out a discussion between a Buddhist and a non-Buddhist who believes in sexual freedom.
- How did Buddha advise children to treat their parents? What do you think of his advice about dealing with parents who are not ideal?

CHAPTER 22

Problems with Alcohol

No one sets out to become an alcoholic. People simply like how alcohol makes them feel—relaxed, without a worry in the world. Young people are particularly vulnerable to the consequences of the misuse of alcohol. A teenager's body takes more time than an adult's to recover from alcohol abuse.

Under the influence of alcohol, people often do things they regret later. For example, the majority of casual sexual encounters come about when one or both partners are under the influence of alcohol. When



you are drunk, you do not really know what you are doing. You say things that sound incredibly clever to you, but incredibly stupid to everyone else. Chances are that the following morning you will not like what you have done, if you can remember anything at all.

What are the effects of alcohol?

Alcohol has varying effects on different people. Most people think that alcohol is a stimulant, but, medically speaking, alcohol is a depressant. It slows down your reaction times and clouds your ability to judge movement and distances. Even walking and speaking become a problem when you drink too much.

It's important to realize that alcohol is a drug and is addictive. The more you drink, the more you want to drink and the more you need to drink to get the temporary feeling of excitement and well-being. But drinking is not all pleasure. After a night of drinking you will certainly feel the effects—a hangover. It is not at all exciting and glamorous. It is a horrific headache accompanied with feelings of regurgitation. The main reason is dehydration: Alcohol makes the water move out of your body cells and into the blood and urine in order to flush out the excessive amounts of alcohol, which is toxic for your body.

Moreover, over a period of years alcohol will cause cirrhosis of the liver and such effects as brain damage, stomach problems, vitamin deficiency, high blood pressure, depression, etc. It is very dangerous for pregnant women to drink. Even a small amount of alcohol in the mother's bloodstream may cause mental retardation or other birth defects in the child.

The overall social costs of alcohol abuse are staggering. Alcohol causes the loss of millions of working days, is directly related with many industrial accidents and is often a factor in suicide. The people who suffer most from alcohol are often not the drinkers themselves but other, innocent people. For instance, driving under the influence of alcohol shows a terrible disregard for human life, not just of the driver and his passengers, but of many innocent parties as well.

Sergei's Story

My name is Sergei. I am 28. Six years ago I got married. We had two sons, 5 and 3 years old.

One day I came home from work a little early. I thought it would be a surprise for my wife and the boys. But when I got home, I found they were still out. There was a note on the table from my wife saying that they were shopping and would be back at five. I settled down to read the paper.

When I looked up, it was already five thirty. When six o'clock came, I began to get worried. I called some friends to see if she was there; they hadn't seen her. At seven o'clock I called the police. I knew something was wrong as soon as I told them my name.

"We need you to come to the station," a voice said. "A car will pick you up in ten minutes."

Those ten minutes, and the short drive to the police station, were the longest of my life. As I entered the building, a grave-faced officer approached. "Mr. Ivanov," he said, "I'm very sorry. There was a runaway car accident this afternoon. Your wife and your children ... " He cleared his throat. "I'm sorry. They were killed at once."

In one afternoon my whole life was wiped out. All gone.

It turned out that the driver was only 20 years old. He'd been drinking, and had lost control of the car just as my family was about to cross the road. He wasn't even scratched himself. But he took away everything that had made my life worth living.

Alcoholism in a family

Children of alcoholics often suffer terribly. Teenagers with an alcoholic parent usually experience a mixture of fear, anger, depression and confusion. They want to express their love toward their mom or dad, but the affects of alcohol have made them act like different people, not the parents their children once knew. Often children feel guilty, ashamed and responsible for their parents' behavior, even though they can't really do anything about it.

Here are the stories of two teenagers:

Tanya's Story

"My name's Tanya, and my father has a serious drinking problem. I'd say he's an alcoholic. Because of him, life at home is often miserable and always nerve-wracking. I never know just when he's going to get drunk. Sometimes he's all right for a week or so, and I start to imagine that he's got over it and he'll be a normal dad again. Then I'll come home one day and find he's been on the bottle again. I think that's the most difficult thing, never knowing what I'm going to find when I get home. Never knowing what to expect. So far he hasn't hit me, but he gets so angry sometimes I think it's just bound to happen one day.

"Mom still says she loves him, but I think she's losing hope. The other day she was crying her eyes out. I tried to comfort her, but she couldn't stop. She has to do all the work around the house now, all the little things Dad used to do. He's more like a child than a man, and it's getting worse. We don't have any close relatives or anyone I could really speak to. I just feel we're trapped in a cage. Last week it got so bad I just had to talk to someone, so I stayed behind after school and spoke to my teacher. She tried to be kind, but I don't think she knows what to do either."

Alexei's Story

"I hated my father for what he was doing. I hated him for drinking, and I was afraid of him when he was drunk. One day on the train he drank a whole bottle of vodka and started singing and laughing loudly. Then he started trying to kiss a lady in the next seat. When my mom complained, he hit her. I can't remember if I cried, but I hated him even more.

"Eventually, they got divorced, and I thought my problems were over. But they weren't. At school my work got worse and my grades slipped. I just didn't care about it so much anymore. I used to think about going to university, but now I think what's the use of even finishing school?

"In the end I started drinking myself, trying to lose my troubles in a bottle. Even though it works for a few hours, I always feel worse afterward. It looks like my dad has turned me into an alcoholic as well."

Can alcoholics get better?

Alcoholism is a disease. An alcoholic is a sick person, and therefore needs to be loved and helped, not judged and rejected. The difficulty is that an alcoholic simply cannot stop. At the same time it is impossible to help an alcoholic without his cooperation. So if one of our relatives suffers from this disease, he or she needs our support. It's almost impossible to cope with alcoholism alone.

Although medical treatment is used as a way to cure alcoholism, one of the most effective treatments is a form of group therapy. This is the approach of Alcoholics Anonymous, a worldwide association that brings together groups of alcoholics who

meet to support and encourage each other to get better. Alcoholics Anonymous offers a non-judgmental fellowship to which the person struggling with alcoholism can bring his despair and also accept himself or herself as a sick person needing to be cured. For an alcoholic the danger of becoming sick again remains for the rest of his or her life, so a person who wants to be cured has to find the strength to never drink again.

Probably the most important problem encountered by the families of alcoholics is a feeling of shame, resulting in isolation and sometimes despair. They may not believe that things can change. In such a situation it is important to realize that your family problem is not unique. Try to find other families suffering from similar problems. You would be able to find more ways to cooperate to help and support each other.

Suppose your alcoholic father wants to stop drinking. If you keep in touch with another family in which there is also a person eager to quit, such contact may help him, give him the kind of support he needs at moments when it is so tempting to have a drink. There are support groups for the children and spouses of alcoholics in many countries. If such a group is already active in your city, don't hesitate to turn there for help; they are sure to help you.

Never blame yourself for the problems arising in your family. Alcoholism approaches gradually, and during the initial stage every person can and must stop by himself. But when it becomes an addiction, an alcoholic needs the help of the entire family to cope with it. Remember, your mom or dad's alcoholism is not your fault. But you may be the very person who will be able to help your parent overcome it. Then the atmosphere in your family may improve.

Contacting other families with alcohol problems has another advantage. A drunk person is unable to analyze his actions correctly and therefore may be unaware of the pain and suffering he is causing his family. When one is sober, one does not remember what one was doing when drunk. Thus alcoholics often don't understand that they are torturing their families.

If you meet families with similar problems, the alcoholic in your family will have an opportunity to look at himself objectively, to see the consequences of alcoholism—the difficulties of children, relatives and his or her spouse. Often the family's financial situation worsens and relationships with friends become strained. To see it in another family is easier than in one's own, because there would be no moral disapproval or strong emotional involvement. This awareness might be the first step on the way toward the decision to stop drinking and to pursue the path of recovery.



Questions for Discussion



- Are there any positive aspects of drinking? Why do you think societies continue to allow people to drink?
- What are some problems that teenagers living with an alcoholic parent might have to deal with?
- Who might be able to help Tanya or Alexei with their problems—a friend from school, a relative, a teacher, a doctor? If you were Tanya or Ivan, whom would you ask for help?

For Your Journal



Imagine that you have an alcoholic parent. Write a letter explaining your feelings to a) your older brother who is away at university or in the army or b) a relative. This person has always been a help to you; but at the same time you are also a little afraid that he might develop a similar problem, because he also drinks a lot.

CHAPTER 23

Communication Skills

Communicating well is important for problem solving and is one of the most valuable skills in life. Communication can be defined as the giving or exchanging of information. However, the essence of communication can be described best as mutual understanding. At the root of most personal problems is a failure to thoroughly understand one another. Disagreements are magnified and complicated by our inability to see the world not only through one another's eyes but also through each other's minds and hearts. We misunderstand one another and then mistrust motives and different points of view. With good communication skills we can be more confident of clearly understanding another person's needs and being accurately understood in return. Good communication means sharing not only words, ideas and information but also feelings, emotions and sentiments.

How well do we solve problems and conflicts? Do we make an effort to prevent problems and conflicts from happening in the first place?

Growing up is often accompanied by frequent clashes between parents and children, especially teenagers. Many adolescents feel their parents are controlling, overbearing, old-fashioned and "too strict."

"My life is run by my parents. They tell me when to get up, when to go to bed, when to do my homework and what to eat. They're so strict that I'm not even allowed to do the things my friends can do. They act like I'm 5 years old."

Lena, age 15

Some feel their parents pressure them too much.

"My older brother was like a perfect person. He got straight A's and was captain of the basketball team. My parents always tell me, "Why can't you be more like your brother?"

Max, age 14

Others feel their parents don't really care about them.

"My dad never shows me any affection."

Nina, age 15



It's natural that parents want to protect their children from harm until they are old enough to make healthy, safe and wise decisions on their own. Adolescents are usually in a hurry to grow up and strive for more independence. Often they like doing things that their parents feel they're not ready for. This can create a tug of war between adolescents and their parents.

If our parents' expectations are making us unhappy, as in Max's case, it's easy to feel resentful. We might even think that there is something wrong with us. If, like Nina, our parents don't show us affection, we might feel that they don't really love us. Often parents don't realize that we may feel upset. Parents love their children very much, but sometimes have a hard time showing affection. They also may forget to take time out of their busy lives, even though they really love us. It is important to communicate our feelings to our parents in order for any change to occur.

Let us look at some communication skills that can help in communicating effectively. These may be especially useful in communicating your feelings to your parents.



Sending the message

Communication consists of sending a message or talking, and receiving a message or listening. When talking to others about a problem, there are two ways to approach them. Either you can let them know what they are doing wrong or you can tell them what you feel about the given situation. Telling people what they are doing wrong tends to make people feel angry, hurt or defensive. When this happens, communication is blocked and arguments can easily start. Very often the person will feel blamed and accused and feel that his personality, rather than the issue, is being attacked.

When people feel like they're under attack, they usually defend themselves by either denying or fighting back. If you tell someone, "It's your fault!" or "You can't be trusted!" the

other person usually will argue back by denying the accusations. He or she might even return the attack by saying thing like: "It's not my fault, it's your fault!" or "It's you who can't be trusted!"

Here is an example of this type of communication between a parent and teenage daughter.

Parent: Where have you been, young lady! It's past midnight and you're two hours late. You simply cannot be trusted!

Daughter: Oh fine, the minute I walk in, you yell at me without even letting me explain!

Parent: I've had enough of your excuses. You never care about anyone but yourself!

Daughter: You're the one who doesn't care. I could have been dead or something, and all you do is yell at me. You never let me tell my side of the story!

Parent: Don't you talk to me like that! That's it! No going out with your friends for the rest of the month! (*Communication has completely broken down.*)

Rather than accusing the other person, the better strategy would be to try to express how you feel about a situation or an issue. Perhaps you'd like your parents to understand what you are saying. Maybe you'd even like to change the situation or behavior that's causing the problems. Conveying how you see a given issue lets the other person know how you feel, without attacking him or her in a personal way. This type of communication can help prevent fights because you are talking about just one situation, not what "always" or "never" happens. Perhaps if the parent in this example had expressed concern instead of accusing, things might have gone differently.

Parent: I've been so worried! It's after 10 o'clock. I didn't know where you were!

Daughter: Gosh, I'm sorry you were so worried. The bus broke down, and I had to walk to the next stop and wait for another one. I tried to call, but the only phone nearby was broken. I'm really sorry.

Parent: Well, at least you tried to call. The important thing is that you're home safely.

This time the parent expressed worry and concern to the daughter. Since the daughter didn't feel blamed or attacked, she had nothing to deny and no reason to attack back. She had a chance to explain, and a verbal conflict was prevented. If the parent had accused the daughter, could the daughter still have prevented the conflict?

Parent: Where have you been, young lady! It's past midnight and you're two hours late! You simply cannot be trusted!

Daughter: Can I have a chance to explain what happened?

Parent: No! I've had enough of your excuses. You never care about anyone but yourself!

Daughter: When I have a good explanation but can't say anything that I am feeling or thinking, I feel very frustrated. (*Daughter stays calm.*)

Parent: Oh, all right, tell me what happened.

Daughter: The bus broke down, and I had to walk to the next stop to wait for another one. I knew you'd be worried and I tried to call, but the only phone nearby was broken. I'm really sorry.

Parent: Well, I guess you did all you could. I'm sorry I yelled at you, but I was so worried.

Daughter: I am sorry.

Parent: Me too.

By calmly explaining the situation instead of being defensive, the daughter kept the lines of communication open and avoided a fight. Of course, there is no guarantee that things will always go this smoothly. However, we have a better chance of being understood when we state things calmly and clearly.

How to send "I-messages"

There are three steps to communicating clearly. Although we don't always have to use these three steps and they don't have to be done in this exact order, it does help to follow them.

- Step 1:** First, we describe the situation or behavior that is causing problems. Be specific and talk about only one situation or behavior at a time. Avoid name calling, blaming and accusing, and try to avoid using the word “you.” For example: “When I’m not allowed to go camping with my friends” sounds much better than “When you don’t let me go camping with my friends.”
- Step 2:** Next we describe how we feel when this situation or behavior happens. “When I’m not allowed to go camping with my friends, I feel really upset.” This sounds better than “You make me so upset when you don’t let me go camping with my friends.”
- Step 3:** Finally, we explain why we feel this way. “When I’m not allowed to go camping with my friends, I feel really upset because sometimes I want to spend more time with them. They tease me about not being allowed to spend the night away from home.”

Of course, there is no guarantee that things will always work out smoothly. But young people tend to do better with communicating this way rather than saying things like: “You always treat me like a baby!”

Timing is also important. If we approach our parents about wanting money to buy something, but it’s just before payday, we may not do very well. We need to open conversations at a time when our parents are likely to be receptive. Of course, some things just can’t wait. But if there is an option, think about timing.

What do we communicate through our body language? Tensing up, turning away, slouching, rolling our eyes, pointing a finger or shaking a fist are all examples of body language. It’s important to be aware of how our body language may affect our messages. What was our tone of voice like? If we express our feelings in an accusing tone of voice, our message may not be well received. It’s best to speak in a calm tone of voice. This usually will have a soothing effect on the other person and help us to think clearly as well.

What if we express ourselves to our parents and they come back with an accusation? When this happens, it’s very easy to respond angrily. Soon we’re back in a fight cycle, tossing accusations back and forth. No matter how angry we may feel, we need to remain calm. Listening skills will help more with this problem.

Receiving the message

Sometimes young people ignore their parents or express their defiance in different

ways. Most of us are experts on how not to listen. However, this kind of behavior actually tells the other person that we consider what he has to say not worthy of our listening. In paying attention, we let the speaker know that he has a right to whatever feeling or opinion he is expressing. This doesn’t mean we have to pretend to agree. We may not feel that our parents’ viewpoint is accurate. Yet, just as we believe that we have the right to our own feelings and opinions, we should respect the fact that they have a right to theirs. If we can communicate understanding and a respectful attitude to our parents, our relationship with them will go much more smoothly.

So how we should listen?



Step 1 is called passive listening. This means, for example, keeping quiet, not interrupting, standing still and looking at our parents when they speak to us. With passive listening we simply pay attention.

Step 2 is called active listening. Nodding or shaking our heads and making simple responses like “uh-huh” or “really” are examples of active listening. This encourages our parents and let them know we are listening. Using simple phrases like “that’s interesting” or “I never thought of that” or asking short questions such as “What exactly do you mean?” or “What happened next?” can promote a conversation and open lines of understanding to each other.

Step 3 is called mirror or reflective listening. When we listen in this way, we become like a mirror, reflecting back what has been said to us. This means that we reflect upon the feelings behind the words. Let’s go back to the first example.

Parent: Where have you been, young lady? It’s past midnight and you’re two hours late! You simply can’t be trusted!

Daughter: Sounds like you’ve been really worried about me. (*Identifies underlying feeling and reflects it back to the parent.*)

Parent: I sure have! I’ve been going out of my mind with worry. What happened? (*Calms down enough to ask a question.*)

Daughter: The bus broke down, and I had to walk to the next stop to wait for another one. I tried to call, but the only phone close by was broken. I’m really sorry. (*Gets a chance to explain.*)

Parent: Well, at least you tried to call. The important thing is that you’re home safely. (*A fight is avoided.*)

In using reflective listening, the best way to start is by saying something like “I bet you’re feeling ...” or “are you saying that ...” or “I guess that makes you feel ...” and then filling in the feeling. However, there may be words to use that would describe the underlying feelings of your parents even better. For example:

Parent: You never want to do anything with your family. You’re always away with your friends.

While this parent is feeling anger, beneath the anger he or she may be feeling ignored and unimportant. Perhaps the parent is afraid that we don’t care about him or her anymore and don’t enjoy spending time with the family. This parent even may be feeling a little jealous.

Sometimes people hide their real feelings. We might say something like “sounds like you’re feeling angry,” not understanding that the other person is actually feeling confused or hurt. Usually this is not a problem and the other person may simply say, “No, I’m not angry, I’m confused.” But sometimes such an explanation may be misinterpreted. For example:

Daughter: Sounds like you’re feeling confused.

Parent: Don’t you tell me I’m confused! You’re the one who’s confused!

Fortunately this kind of situation is easy to fix. We just need to correct ourselves: “I guess ‘confused’ wasn’t a very good word to use. You’re probably feeling angry.” If we don’t get the feeling right the first time, we shouldn’t let it throw us off. Just try again.

A common mistake is to start out using reflective listening, but then switch over to accusations. Soon we’re back in the same old fight.

Daughter: I guess you're really annoyed at me for tying up the phone.
(*Uses reflective listening.*)

Mother: I sure am. I've been trying to call home for the last two hours.
How many times have I told you not to tie up the phone like that?

Daughter: Well, you don't have to yell. You're always yelling at me for everything!

Mother: Don't talk to me that way! You stay off the phone the rest of the night.

If the daughter had stayed with reflective listening, things might have turned out better.

Daughter: I guess you're really annoyed at me for tying up the phone.
(*Uses reflective listening.*)

Mother: I sure am! I've been trying to call home for the last two hours.
How many times have I told you not to tie up the phone like that!

Daughter: You must have felt like wringing my neck! (*Reflects back feeling.*)

Mother: I sure did! Who were you talking to for so long? (*Calms down enough to ask a question.*)

Daughter: I was talking to Sveta. I didn't realize how long I was on. We were discussing a science test we have tomorrow. We were just chatting.
(*Has a chance to explain.*)

Mother: Well, things have to change, because sometimes I need to reach you before I come home from work. I wanted you to take the chicken out of the freezer. But now there's not enough time for the chicken to defrost.

Daughter: Maybe we could have that leftover meat loaf. Maybe from now on I could stay off the phone until you're home. (*Instead of fighting, they solve the problem.*)

What if our parents deny, ridicule or in some way belittle our feelings?

Of course, we may feel hurt and angry. Still, try to stick with this type of communication, since accusations only make things worse. However, you may need to talk to someone else about it, such as your other parent, a grandparent, an older brother or sister, a teacher or a friend.

Improving communication skills isn't easy. It takes effort, commitment and respect. But when we invest in relationships, the quality of our lives and the lives of others improves. We can practice these skills not only with our parents but also with many different people in different situations. With practice and perseverance these skills will develop and grow, becoming a natural part of our lives.

Group Exercise



Dialogue A

In your class, select two students to read the following dialogue between a teenager and her mother:

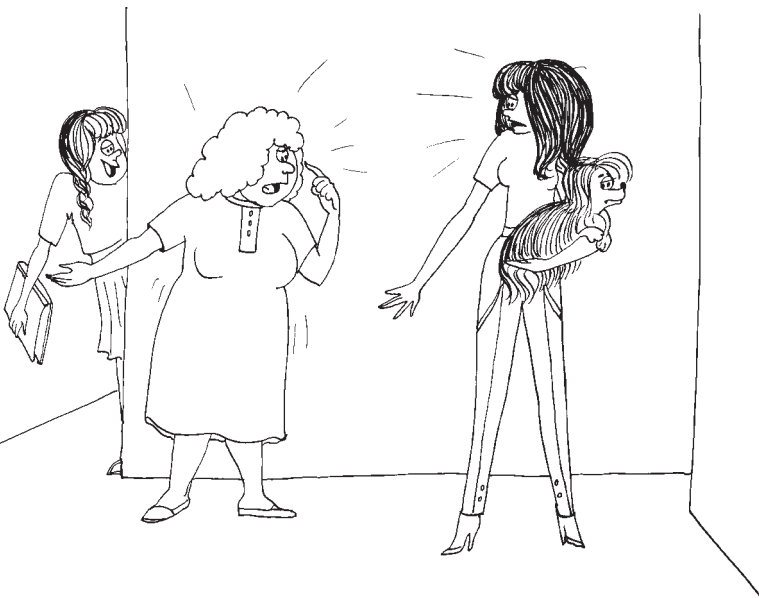
Mother: "Where do you think you are going dressed like that at ten o'clock on a school night? Do you always have to sneak around? Why can't you act more like your older sister Masha?" *(The mother is immediately accusing).*

Daughter: "Mom, you're always on my back! I was just going to take the dog out for a walk. Why do you always assume I'm doing something wrong? Plus, you always compare me to Masha, and I hate it!" *(The daughter counters with a defense that her mother is always accusing her, and makes a generalization).*

Mother: "You say you are just going to take the dog out for a walk? Am I supposed to believe that? Are you lying again? Is your boyfriend outside waiting for you?" *(The mother ignores her daughter's statement, and comes up with another attack)*

Daughter: "You're always accusing me! I'm just doing what I'm supposed to do! You never listen to me! You really hate me, don't you?" *(The daughter contributes to the breakdown of the conversation, bringing in more generalizations).*

Mother: "You have no respect! You treat me like a prison guard. Just go to your room. Maybe you can think about your obnoxious behavior and come out with an apology. You cause me so much grief!" *(Total communication breakdown).*





Dialogue B

Now, have another two students read the following dialogue:

Mother: "Where do you think you are going dressed like that at ten o'clock on a school night? Do you always have to sneak around? Why can't you act more like your older sister Masha?" *(The mother is immediately accusing).*

Daughter: "I was just going to take the dog out for his walk." *(The daughter answers in a non-defensive tone).*

Mother: "Oh, really? Dressed like that? I would have thought you were going to try out for the main role in a Hollywood film." *(The mother, not responding, is still accusing).*

Daughter: "When I am only trying to fulfill my responsibility, I feel really upset to be made fun of for dressing the way I like to dress." *(The daughter expresses herself without accusing her mother).*

Mother: "I know, but it really bothers me to see you dressing up like some kind of fashion model." *(Still accusing).*

Daughter: "I don't mean to upset you, Mom. Please tell me what in particular bothers you." *(She doesn't make a counter attack, but instead acknowledges her mother's statement).*

Mother: "I just want you to dress like a decent young lady. Please put on a longer skirt. Then you may go ahead." *(Still not communicating very well, but the daughter could defuse the situation somewhat).*

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

CHAPTER 24

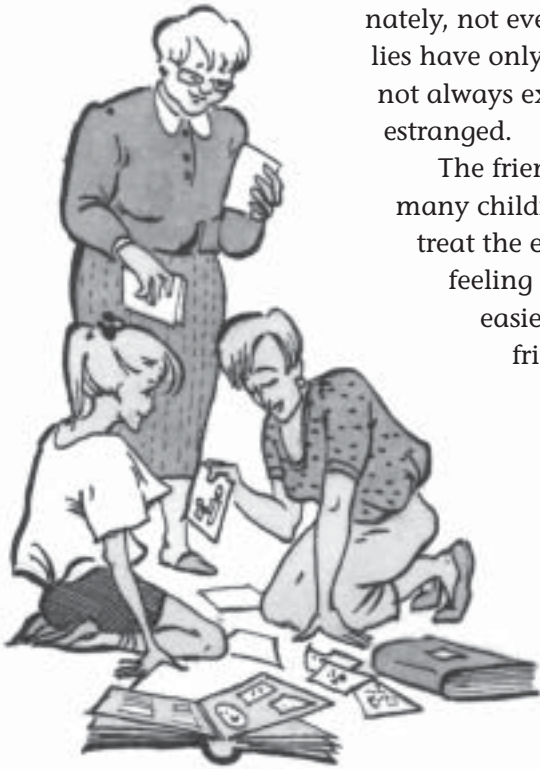
Friendship in the Family

Let us consider whether a father can be his son's friend and vice versa. Can brothers be friends? The opinions of specialists diverge on this issue. Some think that the relations between close relatives are essentially different from those between friends. Others believe that friendship can take place in all kinds of relationships. If two people, no matter what their social position, respect each other and communicate on equal terms, we can consider them friends. They become friends when each begins to sincerely care about the other. Doesn't being brothers mean being friends? Don't we say about friends who share everything in life, both good and bad, that they are like brothers?

To throw light onto this question, first we must understand that all types of relationships—those between parents and children, between brothers, between spouses and between friends—always start with some definite ideal expectations. These expectations are partly similar. All people have a need for love and care. Their expectations will be to experience love: the desire to make each other happy. But these relationships also have differences that cannot be ignored.

What are the main features of friendship between brothers and sisters? Unfortu-





nately, not everyone has a chance to experience such friendship. Many families have only one child. Even those people who have brothers and sisters do not always experience friendly relations either, because the siblings may be estranged.

The friendship between brothers and sisters is best seen in families with many children in which the elder take care of the younger and the younger treat the elder with respect. The very expression “my elder brother” has a feeling of pride to it. Those who trust their elder brothers or sisters find it easier to form other relationships, for they naturally build on the friendly relations they have established in the family.

If the attachment of the younger to the elder is quite natural, what makes the elder seek friendship with the younger? It is natural to think that the reason is the example of our parents, and the instinct of motherhood and fatherhood inherent in all of us. But there is also a deeper reason.

Through making friends with our juniors, taking care of them, we express our personality, projecting ourselves on younger friends and persuading them to follow our ideas. It is no accident that those who aspire to a profession based on personal relations (teacher, psychologist, doctor, etc.) are recommended to try communicating with their juniors: If you like communicating with them

and having them as friends, then you are suited to one of these professions.

On the other hand, it is clear that relations between brothers and sisters are blood relations and have an additional dimension that does not exist in relations between friends. There is a deeper sense of duty. Brothers can work together, rest together, and go through life side by side, like friends. Even if one of the brothers has committed a crime, the tie of blood and sense of loyalty may make the other brother save him at any cost, even giving false evidence. That is why the law doesn’t take into account the evidence of close relatives. The ideal relations between brothers are moral in their essence. If my brother lies to me or steals from me, morality tells me to forgive him and not to separate from him under any circumstance.

Now about friendship between parents and children: Many of us may think such friendship is impossible, for the parents’ responsibility is to demand and the children’s duty to obey. Indeed, a father or mother must guide the actions of the son or daughter and be an authority for them. Friendship, on the other hand, is based on equality. The relationship of a mother and daughter or father and son suggests inequality. If a son or daughter behaves immorally, the parents must remember their parental duty.

But all this doesn’t contradict the ideal of real friendship between parents and children. At the age of 11 or 12 you realized that you have a personal-





ity, that you may know what is demanded of you but that you may not obey; at 13 or 14 you felt the need to be understood, the need for an adult to understand you. This person may be a teacher. Even though a person can appear in your life such as a relative or your friend's parent, most often you hope that this role will be fulfilled by your parents. This is the basis for friendship between parents and children.

As early as the 17th century the English philosopher, psychologist and pedagogue John Locke advised parents: *"When a child is small, demand from him; when he grows bigger, make friends with him."* It is good when parents follow this advice. But in reality it goes the other way round: Parents go on demanding from you, as if you were still small, and ignore your need to be understood. What can

you do and how can you change your parents' attitude toward you? To answer this question, let us think about what makes up friendships. The obvious features are common interests, purposes and activities. It is not very important what kind of activities they are; the important thing is that we pursue a common goal. So the first step toward friendship with parents is an activity performed together—such as taking care of the car or repairing your home together with your father, cleaning or sewing together with your mother. Many of us have gardens—a lot of opportunity there! Of course, at first sight such an idea is not very appealing. You may have much more interesting things to do outside your home. But it helps you to make friends with your parents. Try to overcome your feelings; then say to your father or mother, "I would like to do this together with you."

Nothing seems to strengthen the friendship between parents and children like hikes and trips together. Often on Saturdays and Sundays the cities are full of adults and children with their backpacks on their backs. It would be nice for us to do so too. Imagine a boating trip, sleeping in tents, evening at the fire! Why not suggest such activities?

Friendship, though, is more than shared activities. What do you talk about with your close friends? Of course, you share your secrets. Trust is the main feature of a real friendship. Commonly shared personal stories will strengthen your bond with your father and mother too. Of course, it is not easy to be open with parents, for they may fail to understand, but it is definitely worth the try. Begin with simple questions such as: "Dad, may I ask you ... " If you have not had a frank relationship before, your parents at first may be surprised at your trust. Don't be embarrassed or surprised, for adults need openness much more. If your attempts are successful, you may move on to more important issues.

Of course, openness is most important where there are failures or unhappiness. Children's suicide attempts usually are caused not so much by the children's failures as by the fact that they have no one with whom to share their feelings. Researchers have shown that those who are most successful in life have had some adult with

whom to share their feelings between the age of 16 and 22.

So friendship between parents and children is not only possible but also necessary for you and for your parents. There is hardly anything better than saying about a mother and daughter: “They are like two girlfriends” or about father and son: “It is a real friendship.”

The Jewish understanding of marriage is based on the commandments given to Moses for mankind at Mount Sinai. Since marriage was instituted by God,

For Your Journal



Describe those activities you do together with your parents, those situations that impressed you the most and left the most pleasant memories. What do you think is the ideal kind of relationship with parents? Can you think of a real example of such a relationship?

If Only

Author unknown

Lately I take long walks by myself. I think about life and death — things everyone wonders about, I suppose. Sometimes I walk for hours, but I always end up at the same place.

Today it was a crisp November afternoon. Not one person was in sight when I arrived. My feet moved toward the little mound of dirt, just as they had yesterday, and the day before, and the day before—every day for the past month.

I took my usual kneeling position beside the small stone inscribed with these sad tidings: “Here lies Timmy Langdon — Born May 23, 1957, Died October 14, 1965”. The words sent new shocks up my spine, just as I knew they would. For even after a month I still could not believe it. When I thought of Timmy, I thought of a golden-haired boy hurrying off to school or baseball practice, not a cold form here with all these strangers.

Something else troubled me, and I don’t think I will ever forget it. I had come home from school after a long and hectic day. Mrs. Trimble had decided our reports were due tomorrow Instead of next Friday. Mr. Johnson was kind enough to warn us of a history test on the last five chapters to be given tomorrow. Anyway, dotted here and there among these big headaches was my usual homework — algebra and bookkeeping. I had come draggin’ into the house with my “it’s been a hard day” look. Mom knew better than to ask about my day.

As I headed for my bedroom I heard two small voices laughing, I opened the door and there sat Timmy and a little neighbor friend at my desk looking at my lipstick. They weren’t making a mess. In fact, they were being very careful not to. Anyway, this was the straw that broke the



camel's back, and I lost my temper. I told them to get out and never to come back into my room when I'm not home and to "stay out of my stuff, you little pest!" I must have called him a pest four or five times. How could I have been so crude?

Tim's face turned beet red, and I know he was sorry and ashamed. He even apologized; but oh, no, I couldn't let him get away with it. I had to be firm.

At the dinner table Tim was unusually quiet and didn't eat much, but I guess I was the only one who noticed, because Mom and Dad were talking about so-and-so and should they go to the reception two hundred miles away. After supper I excused myself and got to work. While I was working, I felt someone watching me. I turned, and there stood Timmy in the doorway.

"Please close the door," I said curtly.

He hesitated, then slowly closed it, with a hurt, puzzled look.

"I'll make it up to him," I thought, then turned my thoughts back to my work.

The next morning was warm, and I felt fatigue as I climbed out of bed. I hurriedly dressed and dashed out to the breakfast table, I had five minutes to eat. Timmy was the only one at the table. Mom was cooking eggs in the kitchen. As I sat down, I felt his warm, brown eyes on me, and I met his imploring gaze with a cool stare.

"Are you still mad at me?" he asked.

"I suppose so." I really wasn't, but I felt he hadn't learned his lesson yet.

“I’m sorry, I won’t do it again.”

“We’ll see,” I said cuttingly. Then hurriedly gulping the last of my breakfast, I grabbed my books and ran for the bus stop, purposely ignoring him. But as I hurried out the door, something about the sadness in his eyes brought a guilty feeling, and I remember thinking, “I’ll make it up to him later.” That was my trouble. I was always in too much of a hurry to get close to him.

That was the last time I saw him alive — at the breakfast table.

The next time I saw him, he was lying under a white sheet.

I had come home from school as usual with my mind full of my usual thoughts. I noticed my brother’s badly twisted bike on the lawn. I suddenly felt panic sweeping over me. I ran for the house, my heart beating in my throat. The kitchen was quiet. There was no dinner cooking. The living room door was shut, and I was terrified of the circumstances that were happening on the other side; but the silence of the kitchen was too much to bear and I found myself pushing the door open.

My mother was sitting in the rocking chair with Father kneeling by her side, holding her shaking hand. Their faces wore identical expressions — very pale with eyes staring straight ahead. When Mom saw me she stood up and took me in her shaking arms.

Timmy had been in a hurry to get home and start on the new model airplane Mom had bought him. He must not have been looking as he came racing across the street. The driver of the car didn’t see him till it was too late. I had read of this type of thing many times in the newspaper; but it happened to other people, not to me, not to my family.

The next few days were full of tears. I cried until my eyes were dry and red and tears just wouldn’t come anymore. I couldn’t eat for days. I couldn’t sleep very long. I would always have the same dream of coming home from school that day.

I remember so many small things he had done for me — things like getting me a glass of water while I was studying, polishing my shoes when I was in a hurry, bringing me dandelions, showing me his new baseball bat (which I thought was a bore). If only I could do it again. If only I had one more chanceÉ

Suddenly I wished more than anything to talk with him if for just five minutes. And when he would ask me, “Are you still mad at me?” with his brown eyes studying my face, I would take him in my arms and say, “No, my darling, I’m not mad anymore, and I’ll never be mad at you again.”

I slowly got to my feet from the misty grass. My legs were cramped and stiff from kneeling so long. I pulled my coat tighter, because November gets chilly in the late afternoon. Then I started for home.

CHAPTER 25

Marriage and Family in Judaism

Judaism does not consider celibacy for its own sake to be a virtue. The physical and emotional union of man and woman is regarded as the natural state for mature human beings.

So the LORD God caused man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken from man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man." For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

— Gen. 2:18, 22-24

In Judaism a married couple are considered as a whole in which the qualities of each contribute to the fulfillment of the couple. Thus Jews regard marriage as necessary not only to bring children into the world but also to allow the individual's personality to develop. Marriage is the most intimate relationship, quite different from any other relationship in creation.



Most Jews feel the need to marry a Jewish partner. Orthodox Judaism disapproves of interfaith marriages, as the couple may face serious difficulties over how their children should be brought up. The issue is very important for the children, since whether a child is considered to be Jewish or not is decided solely by the mother's lineage and religious commitment. If she is Jewish, the child is Jewish, regardless of the father's religion or culture.

Matchmaking

Until relatively recently Jewish parents were responsible for selecting their children's mates. Either the father or a professional matchmaker, called the *shadkhan*, arranged the match. Matchmaking was a highly respected vocation, and even rabbis were members of the profession.

The Midrash [the collection of rabbinical commentaries on the Scriptures] tells the story of a Roman noblewoman who asked a rabbi what God had been doing since he created the world. "Matching couples," came the reply. "What?" exclaimed the woman. "Even I can do that."

She lined up a thousand of her male slaves with a thousand of her female slaves, and decided who should marry whom. The next day they all came to her with complaints. Some were injured. "I don't want her," said one. "I don't want him," said another.

The lady sent for the rabbi and told him, "What you said is true. There is no god like your God."

All the blessings that a man receives come to him only in the merit of his wife.

— Talmud

In traditional Jewish communities people still try to find out as much as they can about a proposed partner's character, background, interests and ambitions before a meeting is arranged. If two people are obviously unsuited, the meeting is not arranged. This way there is a reduced chance for heartache. If it seems that they might be well suited, the couple meet. It is then up to them whether they wish to meet again and develop a relationship. Where this method of partner selection is followed, marriages are generally successful and happy. The divorce rate is extremely low.

The wedding

On the Sabbath before the wedding the groom is called forward in the synagogue to read from the Torah or the Prophets. When he has finished, he is greeted with cries of "*mazel tov*"—good luck. Before the wedding it is traditional for the bride and groom to fast. This allows them to take stock and seek God's forgiveness for all their past mistakes and provides them with the opportunity to start their married life together with a clean slate.

Jewish weddings always take place under a *chuppah*, a canopy held up by four poles that usually are decorated with flowers. The



chuppah, representing heaven, symbolizes the presence of God in the marriage. The bridegroom is the first to be led under the chuppah. The groom's parents are joined by the bride's mother and the rabbi. The last to arrive is the bride, led by her father or another close relative. In many communities her entrance is accompanied by instrumental and vocal music. The following is an outline of the service that follows:

1. The cantor sings a greeting to welcome the bride and bridegroom:
"Blessed are those who come in the name of the Lord! We bless you from the house of the Lord. May He who is supreme above all, who is blessed above all, who is great above all—may He bless the bridegroom and the bride."
2. The couple are addressed briefly.
3. The rabbi recites two blessings over a cup of wine. The first is the blessing that is always recited before drinking wine. The second praises God for sanctifying the people of Israel by His commandments about marriage. The wine is then passed to the groom and bride, who both drink from the same cup.
4. The *Ketuba* is read. It is the marriage contract, which is simply a statement of the husband's intention to feed, clothe and be with his wife. It also provides the bride with a fixed level of material well-being in the event of the dissolution of the marriage or widowhood.

The Seven Benedictions

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created the fruit of the vine.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created all things to Thy glory.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created man.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast made man in Thine image, after Thy likeness, and out of his very self, Thou hast prepared unto him a perpetual fabric.

Praised be Thou, O Lord, who hast created man.

May she who is childless be exceedingly glad and rejoice when her children shall be reunited in her midst in joy. Praised be Thou, O Lord, who gladdenest Zion through (restoring) her children. Mayest Thou gladden the beloved friends [the newly married couple], as Thou didst gladden Thy creature [Adam] in the Garden of Eden in time of yore. Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, who gladdenest the bridegroom and the bride.

Praised be Thou, O Lord our God, King of the universe, who hast created joy and gladness, bridegroom and bride, rejoicing, song, pleasure and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship. Soon may there be heard in the cities of Judah, and in the streets of Jerusalem, the voice of the bride, the jubilant voice of the bridegrooms from the nuptial canopies and of youths from their feasts of song. Praised be Thou, O Lord, who gladdenest the bridegroom and the bride.

5. The groom then places a plain gold ring on the bride's finger and says, *"By this ring you are married to me in holiness according to the law of Moses and of Israel."* In accepting the ring the bride shows that she is freely entering into the marriage.
6. The rabbi then chants the Seven Benedictions (*Sheva Berachot*), which is the main component of the service. He praises God for creating the human race, creating joy and gladness and bringing happiness to the couple.
7. After the ceremony the groom breaks a wine glass. This is an ancient practice to remind people of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem and that however happy they might be in this celebration, their joy is never complete without the Temple.
8. Immediately after the ceremony the bride and groom are taken to a private room where they can spend a few moments together. As the bride and groom leave, those present greet them with *"mazel tov."*
9. In traditional communities the celebrations continue for a whole week. There is a celebration feast every night, and the bride and groom are

honored guests in different homes. At the end of each meal the *Sheva Berachot* will be said.



Judaism has always affirmed that sexuality is derived from a natural and good human desire. The Talmud discusses sexuality very frankly yet modestly. It recognizes that sexuality plays an important part in human relationships and can generate very powerful emotions. For this reason sexual behavior must be carefully regulated.

Like all the major religions, Judaism teaches that sexual behavior is only acceptable within marriage. Even then, it should be holy and not casual and lustful. Adultery is strictly forbidden. Incest, which in Jewish law is a type of adultery, is also forbidden. These injunctions maintain the purity of relationships and allow intimacy to be safe.

Divorce

If a man divorces his first wife—even the altar
(of the Temple) sheds tears.

— Talmud

Judaism places great value on marriage. If a marriage seems to be faltering, every effort will be made to save it. Sometimes it is recognized that divorce is the best solution. If two people have tried to save their marriage and in the end agree to divorce, no

obstacles are put in their way. Since marriage is not a sacrament but a voluntary decision and act, Judaism has an ancient and very precisely described divorce procedure. Jewish divorce involves writing and giving a *Get*, a document certifying that a marriage has been terminated. A *Get* is issued by the *Bet Din*, a religious court consisting of three rabbis. After the divorce both sides are free to remarry, although the woman has to wait for at least three months to make sure she is not pregnant.

Parents and children

Judaism encourages a close relationship between parents and children. This is partly because the life of a Jewish family is filled with ritual, ceremony and celebration that bring the family together as they share a common life and common experiences. Such a life means that they share the same values and find similar meaning in life.

Because God commanded Adam and Eve to multiply, Jewish families are often large. Children are regarded as a great blessing. Judaism teaches that parents and children have certain responsibilities to one another. Parents are expected to feed, clothe and educate their children. Education plays a very important role in the life of Jews. “Teach your son a trade,” says the Talmud, “or you teach him to become a robber.” In the first century Jews organized primary schools for their children. At a time when the majority of people in Europe couldn’t read or write, Jewish communities were characterized by a high level of literacy.

Children are expected to take care of their parents. They must treat their parents with respect and avoid hurting their feelings or causing them even minor irritations.

“And these matters which I command you today you shall take to heart. And you shall teach them carefully to your children, and you shall speak to them.”

— Deut. 6:6-7

The Ideal Wife

A wife of noble character who can find?

She is worth far more than rubies.

Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

She brings him good, not harm, all the days of her life.

She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands.

She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar.

She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls.

She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard.

She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks.

She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night.

In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers.

She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy.

When it snows, she has no fear for her household; for all of them are clothed in scarlet.

She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple.

Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land.

She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes.

She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come.

She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue.

She watches over the affairs of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

Her children arise and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her:

"Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all."

Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.

Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate.

— Prov. 31:10-31

Jewish parents are expected to raise their children to be moral people. They are to give moral guidance and, more importantly, be an example. The commandment "Thou shalt honor thy father and mother," as well as Jewish literature, are filled with wise sayings that guide parents and children.

"Parents should never make a favorite of one child. For some yards of bright cloth the children of Israel were made slaves in Egypt."

— Midrash Rabba

"Do not threaten a child. Either punish or forgive him."

— Semachot

"A person should never tell a child he will give him something and not keep his promise, because in this way he teaches the child to tell lies."

— Talmud, Succot

There are also many stories, often humorous, that help to guide relationships in the family.

A distraught father once came to Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov. "Rabbi, what shall I do?" the man asked. "My son is drifting into evil ways." "You must love him," replied the rabbi. "But Rabbi," the distressed man continued, "you don't understand. He lies and cheats. He works on the Sabbath. He even steals." "Oh, that's different," said the rabbi. "In that case you must love him even more."

Family life

Jewish family life is inseparable from religious life. The two are so completely interwoven that any attempt to separate them would be artificial and misleading. That a home is inhabited by Jews is made clear to visitors by the *mezuzah* fixed to one of the outside doorposts. This slim, elongated box contains on a hand-written parchment the text of Deuteronomy 6:4-9. It announces to Israel that God is One, that God

is to be loved with "all your heart and all your soul and all your might," that this love is to be the motivation for every day and ordinary actions and that it is the cornerstone of what is taught to the children in the family.

The mandate of the *mezuzah* has to be translated into specific observances and customs beyond the front door, within the family circle. The Hebrew term for family, *mishpacha*, denotes not only parents and children but also grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, etc. It indicates both kinship and a high degree of interdependence.

The life of an observant

Jewish family is full of different traditions. There are many festivals, blessings connected to different life situations, special clothes and special food. These traditions bring family members closer together and help the family to share a common life, common values and common spirituality. This strengthens the unity and stability of a family.

The home is the first classroom of religious education for Jewish children. Parents show them by personal example how they should live as Jews. In their everyday life Jews try to fulfill the biblical directive, "know Him in all your ways" (Prov. 3:6). Thus ordinary actions such as dressing, eating a meal or going to bed are all transformed into ways of serving God. As the children grow up, their parents encourage them to take part in living Judaism. Following the traditions makes a child fully aware of his or her Jewish obligations.



Festivals

Jews have many festivals and special days during the course of the year, which are observed at home as well as in the synagogue. Some of these are major celebrations, when ordinary, day-to-day affairs such as working, going to school or shopping must cease. Instead, Jews spend a great deal of time at prayer or celebrating with their families. Others are less important occasions, and ordinary life continues much as usual.

The Sabbath

God said to Moses, "I have a precious gift in My treasure house. 'Sabbath' is its name. Go and tell the people of Israel that I wish to give it to them."

— Talmud

The Sabbath is the most important of all the Jewish religious festivals, beginning each week at sunset on Friday and ending on Saturday night when the stars appear. The Sabbath commemorates both the creation of the world and the deliverance of the people of Israel from Egypt. The Sabbath is a day with a special atmosphere of joy and peace and as such is thought of as a foretaste of the coming age of the Kingdom of Heaven.

The Sabbath is a day when Jews are forbidden to do any work. It is much more than just a "day off." It is a holy day—a time when Jews do not work so that they can devote themselves to prayer and study of the Torah. Jews spend the last day of the week resting and reflecting, just as God rested on the Sabbath after creating the world. The Sabbath is a time for relaxing with the family.



The atmosphere on the Sabbath is different from the daily life during the rest of the week. Because no work may be done on the Sabbath, all preparations must be done beforehand. Therefore Friday afternoon is a busy time. The Sabbath is thought of as an honored guest who comes to visit each week. The house is cleaned and the best cutlery and crockery prepared. Everyone bathes and dresses in Sabbath clothes.

Just before sunset, the mother of the family lights the Sabbath candles and recites the blessing. The father and his sons attend synagogue. On his return the father blesses his children and praises his wife with the words of Proverbs chapter 31.

After washing their hands as an act of purification, they gather round the table for the Sabbath meal. It is a different meal from any other. The family eats special foods, sings songs between courses and the parents often tell stories to their children. These might be stories from the Bible, or about great Jewish men and women of the past. It is a relaxed, unhurried meal in which they enjoy each other's company.

The next morning the family goes to the synagogue. After lunch the family may study the Torah together or go for a walk or have friends around. The Sabbath finishes with a service, *havdallah*, which marks the end of the holy day. Blessings are recited over a cup of wine and a box of spices. The spices speak of the fragrance of the Sabbath day, which will be carried over into the new week.

Celebrating Pesach (Passover)

Pesach celebrates the salvation of the Israelites and is connected to the events that happened more than 3,000 years ago when the prophet Moses called by God led the people out of slavery in Egypt into the Promised Land.

During the commemoration service, which every Jewish family attends every year, those present are removed from daily existence and carried back to the events of enslavement, suffering and miraculous redemption of the Exodus event. On the table are objects that symbolically remind them of the events. Object include matzo, which represents the unleavened bread that the Israelites ate during their long slavery in Egypt, bitter herbs to remind them of the bitter life in Egypt, and salt, which symbolizes the tears shed by the Israelites while in bondage.

Through celebrating such festivals, the Jewish family is drawn very close together and feels part of the people of Israel, stretching back more than 3,000 years.

Questions for Discussion



- How do you think the celebration of festivals draws the Jewish family together?
- Why do people celebrate and what do you think are the benefits of celebrating, for the family and the community?
- What kinds of things do Jewish children learn in the family?
- Why do Jews usually marry Jewish partners?
- How is a religious marriage ceremony different from a secular ceremony?
- What are the main values of Jewish family life?
- How do you think the Jewish family helped the Jewish people to survive for nearly 2,000 years without a land of their own?

Individual Exercises



You have decided to set up a marriage bureau. You want it to be a romantic place where people can find a partner with whom they will be happy for life. You have to decide what the basic questionnaire should ask. You need to find out information about people and what kind of partner and relationship they are looking for.

What will be the layout of the questionnaire? What kinds of questions should be asked in order to discover the real intentions and interests of people and help you match a person with a good partner?

For Your Journal



What traditions do you have in your family? What significance do they have for your family? How important for you are these traditions? How is it possible to find deeper internal meaning for your own life through such traditions?

CHAPTER 26

Cain and Abel

In the Bible there is a famous story of two brothers who quarreled, with one killing the other. The themes of this story are familiar to us from our own struggles with people. The following is an adaptation of the biblical story based on Louis Ginzberg's *Legends of the Bible*. Alongside the written Torah (the Old Testament) Judaism recognizes the spiritual authority of an oral tradition that includes many details and elaborations of the stories of the Patriarchs. The oral Torah was written down and became known as the Talmud from which Ginzberg drew much of this story.

Cain and Abel

Adam and Eve had a son whom they called Cain. Some time later they had another son, Abel. While they were still children, Eve had a dream in which she saw the blood of Abel flow into the mouth of Cain who drank it avidly. Adam was worried in case the dream foretold the murder of Abel by his brother. To try to avoid this fate, he separated the two lads and taught them each a different occupation.

Cain became a tiller of the ground and Abel became a keeper of sheep. The bad feeling Cain felt for Abel began when they both made offerings to God. Abel offered the best of his flock for the sacrifice; but Cain first ate his lunch and then offered God the leftovers. God accepted Abel's offering but rejected Cain's. Cain, though, thought he had been wronged and he became very angry.

Then God said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, won't you be accepted too? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door. It desires to have you, but it depends on you whether you master it or it masters you."

Cain still felt that he had been treated unfairly and later got into an argument with Abel. "I believed that the world was created



through goodness,” Cain said, “but I see now that good deeds bear no fruit and that God rules the world with arbitrary power. Otherwise, why would God accept your offering and reject mine?” Abel disagreed. “God rewards good deeds,” he said. “If your sacrifice has not been accepted but mine has, it’s because my deeds are good and yours are wicked.”

These harsh words were not the only cause of Cain’s hatred toward Abel. Love for a woman also inflamed their relationship. Their parents wanted Abel to be married to an exceptionally beautiful girl whom Cain desired for himself. Therefore he was constantly brooding and thinking of ways of getting rid of his brother.

Before long the opportunity arose. One of Abel’s sheep had trampled on a field that had been planted by Cain. In a rage Cain shouted to his brother, “What right have you to live on my land and let your sheep pasture over there?” Abel retorted, “What right have you to use the products of my sheep and to make garments for yourself from their wool? If you will take off the clothes made from the wool of my sheep and pay me for the meat you have eaten, then I will leave the land.” “Who is to stop me from killing you?” demanded Cain. “If you do, God will avenge me and punish you for your wicked deed,” replied Abel.

At this Cain threw himself upon his brother. However, Abel was stronger and soon Cain was begging for mercy. Abel released him, but scarcely was Cain free than he turned against Abel and killed him.

Cain decided to run away because he could not face telling his parents what had happened. However, God spoke to him and said, “Where is your brother Abel?” “I don’t know,” he replied. “Am I my brother’s keeper? It is true that I killed him, but it is your fault for accepting his offering and rejecting mine. If you had accepted my offering, then I would not have felt envious and would not have killed him.” So Cain refused to acknowledge his responsibility and refused to repent.

Whether the story of Cain and Abel is historical or not, the theme of two warring brothers is repeated in countless families. It also occurs in various forms in the myths of different cultures, and reappears in literature and drama to this day. These stories are not to be dismissed because they are myths. Myths have an important role to play in our understanding of human nature. Like all myths, the story of Cain and Abel reveals timeless wisdom about the human dilemma.

Myth

A traditional story of unknown authorship, which seeks to describe, explain and give meaning to some important question that arises from human experience, such as how the world and people were created, and the origin of evil.

Cain and Abel’s relationship was severely challenged when Cain’s offering was rejected. If they had been able to love each other, they could have established a tradition of brotherly friendship and reconciliation for future generations to follow. Instead they set up the pattern of murder and revenge that remains common in society today.

There were three things that Cain and Abel quarreled about: justice, love and possessions. Cain felt that he had been treated unjustly, which led him to deny the goodness of God. Abel disagreed and the first ideological argument occurred. They were rivals for the love of the same woman. And finally they argued over who owned what.

When we read this story, complex emotions are often aroused. On the one hand, Cain was obviously wrong—murder is never justified. Killing his brother was a terrible crime and it did not solve the problem. Cain became burdened with guilt

from which he could never escape. But on the other hand, there were reasons why he did what he did. Let us think about ways in which the conflict between the brothers could have been resolved.

In doing so, we should discuss the role of Abel. What was his responsibility? In a way he seemed blameless. He made the offering correctly, and clearly the disputes over his bride or his sheep wandering on Cain's crops were not reasonable grounds for murder. Nevertheless, Abel should have been sensitive and realized that his elder brother felt hurt and rejected. He should have seen that his brother needed to be comforted and understood. He should have loved Cain. If Cain had recognized that Abel loved him more than anyone else, he would have given up his false ambitions and arrogance. Having won Cain's trust, Abel would have been able to explain to Cain why his offering had been rejected and to help Cain to make a pure offering. Instead, through his insensitivity and arrogance he antagonized his older brother even more.

Self-righteousness is a common flaw among those who perceive themselves to be blessed by fortune or the gods. As the Russian philosopher Nikolai Berdyaev pointed out, Cain's agonized question "Am I my brother's keeper?" is the very question that Abel should have asked himself.

Cain should have been more self-critical instead of becoming angry and judgmental. He was self-centered and thought that what pleased him was good, and what upset him was wrong. He was unable to see things objectively. No matter how angry he felt, he should have remembered that Abel was his brother.

Something to
think about



The story we have read describes the deterioration of a relationship between two brothers. Questions that arise are relevant to each of us. Let us think to what extent we ourselves, when relating to other people, express the attitudes of Cain and Abel.

- Why did God accept Abel's offering but reject Cain's offering?
- When a friend gives you a present, do the motives for giving matter? What is more important to you—the present itself or the heart behind it?
- What caused the conflict?
- How often does envy cause problems in your relationships?
- How could Cain have discovered why God rejected his offering?
- What do you do when you fail in something?
- How might Abel have responded so that Cain would not have become so angry?
- What do you feel when you do something much better than your classmates?
- Why was Cain so reluctant to accept responsibility for what he had done?
- When you know that you have made a mistake, what do you do? Are you ready to acknowledge it or do you prefer to hide it out of fear of losing the love and respect of others?
- What would have changed if Cain had repented?
- How can a conflict between two people be solved when one of them has made a serious mistake, betrayed or deeply hurt his friend?

- How could Adam and Eve, the parents of Cain and Abel, have acted to prevent the tragedy?
- When there is a problem between you and one of your friends, do you ask for help from a mediator (parents, other friends, etc.)?
- How do you resolve interpersonal conflict in your life?

Group Exercise



- Act out the story of Cain and Abel and discuss their feelings.
- Rewrite the story so that there is a happy outcome.
- Find examples from daily life, newspapers, etc., that contain the themes found in the story of Cain and Abel.

What does the story of Cain and Abel teach us?

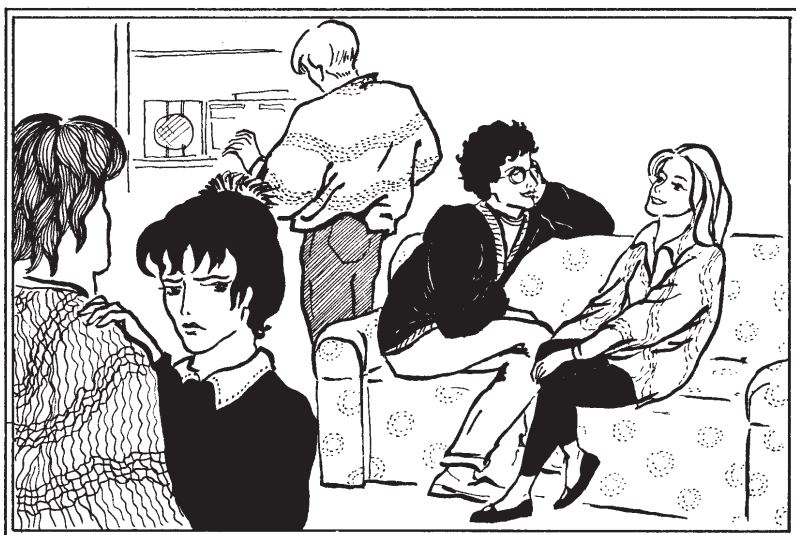
Let us look at some patterns in human relationships that can be traced back to the story of the fight of two brothers.

Jealousy and envy

The source of much human conflict is jealousy and envy. When we envy someone, for whatever reason, our feeling toward that person changes. Envy can poison even the best people, and can easily lead to anger, resentment and hatred. As a result, people end up doing terrible things. We saw that Cain's problem with Abel started when Cain envied Abel.

There are different causes of envy. We may envy a brother or sister if they are receiving the love we think belongs to us. We may feel jealous if someone we love finds satisfaction in a relationship with someone other than ourselves. Jealousy is like the shadow of love. It is not something we can easily control.

Tanya is angry with Boris, her boyfriend. She was a few minutes late meeting him, and found him chatting with two girls outside the cafe. They were both very attractive and Tanya was jealous.



Katya was envious of her younger sister Natasha. The presents their parents gave Natasha were always much more expensive than the ones they bought for her.

Nikolai was furious with Alexia. They had just had a blazing row at the disco, and she had deliberately danced during a slow number with one of his friends.

Jealousy can be extremely destructive. Some people treat their loved one like a possession. This possessiveness denies the other person's independence and freedom.

One man's recollection of being the eldest son

I was the eldest boy. I remember that there was sunshine and bliss for the first four years until my brother arrived. It was as if a bomb went off, and after that for a long time the general feeling was gray and dismal. Like many eldest children, I'm sure I was "spoiled" at first but therefore resented the new arrival even more. Because of that I got myself in everyone's bad book as a result.

Jealousy can also be positive. It can act as a warning signal, telling us to protect a precious relationship.

The only real cure for jealousy is personal growth and maturity. When we love someone unselfishly, we are happy to see that person happy, even if we are not the cause of that happiness.

An elder brother might react to the birth of a sibling by being jealous because the love that he monopolized is now shared with a rival.

In order to overcome such jealousy, one has to understand the happiness that the baby brings to one's parents and love the baby because one's parents do. How will that make the parents feel? They will be proud of and love their oldest child even more. If we sincerely love someone, we are not jealous. We are happy that they have companions other than ourselves.

Anger

Have you ever felt like hitting someone when you are in a temper? Or kicking the dog? Do you ever slam the door when you are in a bad mood? Are you ever overcome by the desire to smash something really expensive when you are mad?

Anger is a very common emotion. But anger is not merely a personal matter. Like a stone thrown into a pond, it sends out ever widening ripples, affecting our personal lives, wrecking friendships and families. It can lead to disruptive behavior, vandalism and even violence.

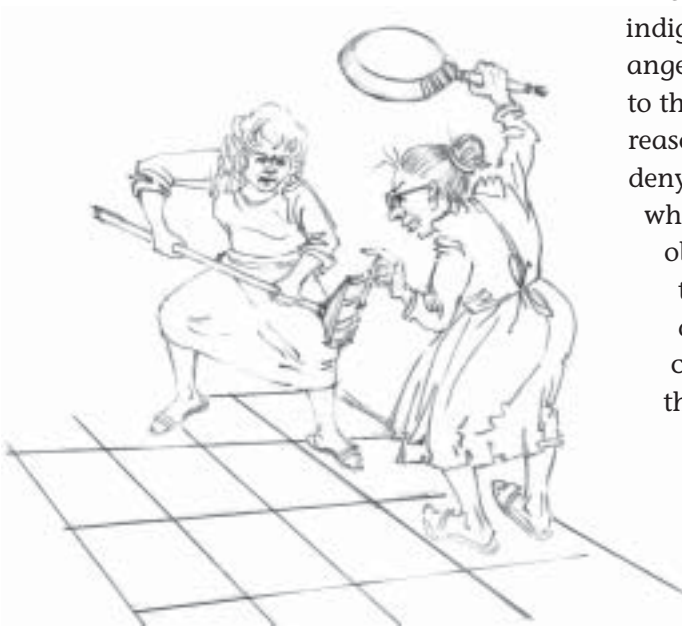
When we are angry, we feel a terrible sense of aggression. We feel like a volcano ready to explode. When a person loses control of his anger, he can do terrible violence to those who threaten what he regards as precious.

Anger can be expressed in different ways:

- ✗ Angry actions such as slamming the door or hitting someone.
- ✗ Angry signals such as giving someone the "cold shoulder" or a "look that can kill."
- ✗ Angry words such as hurtful insults.
- ✗ Angry tones so that pleasant words are filled with venom.

There are three types of anger: rage, resentment and indignation. Rage is destructive anger. Uncontrolled anger is very frightening to the person who is angry and to those around. It can easily result in violence. For this reason people often try to suppress their anger and to deny that they feel angry. Often this leads to resentment, which quietly seethes beneath the surface. Although less obvious than rage, it can be more destructive, not only to the person's own physical and mental health but also to others. Indignation is anger that is used creatively and for goodness. It is a righteous anger that refuses to let others be mistreated.

We all have to learn how to deal with anger, both within ourselves and in others. As we saw in the story of Cain and Abel, neither brother was successful in this respect. Cain could not control his anger, and Abel responded to Cain in a way that made Cain even angrier.



The causes of conflict

Human conflict has many causes. One of these is envy—resenting others for something that they possess, for example, money, a good car, fashionable clothes or even a beautiful face. It seems unfair that they have more than we do. If something bad happens to them and they lose what they have, we are secretly glad. When we feel this way, it is easy to see only their bad aspects. We feel critical about them and denigrate the good things they do. Everything about them grates on our nerves. We see things only from a self-centered point of view. Even though these kinds of conflicts are often hidden, they are very powerful and can lead to mutual hatred.

Another cause of conflict is pride. Suppose we have been asked to do something that we feel is “beneath us” —a menial task, which someone of our intelligence should not have to do. We may sulk and not do what we have been asked to do. We just abandon our responsibility. We cannot let go of our sense of pride to cooperate with others on a project.

Conflict may result also from arrogance. We think that we can run things better than the person whose job it is to do so. We spread rumors about him to destroy his character, and oppose everything he does. Next we elbow him aside, taking over his position and making ourselves the leader. Having done this, we try to win everyone else’s support for what we have done. Anyone who disagrees we ostracize.

Most likely each of us is to some extent familiar with these feelings. There is no need to pretend that we don’t have them. It is better to learn to deal with them, to overcome them with dignity, so that we won’t repeat the tragic story of Cain and Abel. From this discussion we can see that there is more to conflict than physical violence. Violence is just the expression of uncontrolled feelings of jealousy, envy, arrogance, hatred and the desire to take revenge. How can we learn not to be enslaved by these feelings? Is there any other way out of this situation?

In the next lesson we will discuss another biblical story of two brothers—Jacob and Esau. This one is an example of how enemies can be reconciled.

Individual Exercise



Andrea is a figure skater of 15 who has been competing in a regional figure skating contest. She began skating seriously at the age of 9 and greatly admires all the top Russian skaters, hoping someday to become like them. Most of the participants in the contest are excellent skaters. Andrea has been training for several years with her coach, John, who is also a friend of the family. He has not charged Andrea’s parents any fee for his time and effort.

Andrea’s parents take her to the local skating rink two nights a week and every Saturday morning at 6 a.m. to practice. Because Andrea has been away so much lately, her sister has been taking on Andrea’s chores at home.

Everyone’s sacrifice pays off and Andrea wins first place in the freestyle, sixteen years and under category. The following is a list of statements that Andrea might make in her acceptance speech when she is presented with her award.

Which statements would you include in your speech if you were Andrea? Why?

Which statements would you omit from your speech? Why?

What statements, if any, would you add?

Individual Exercise



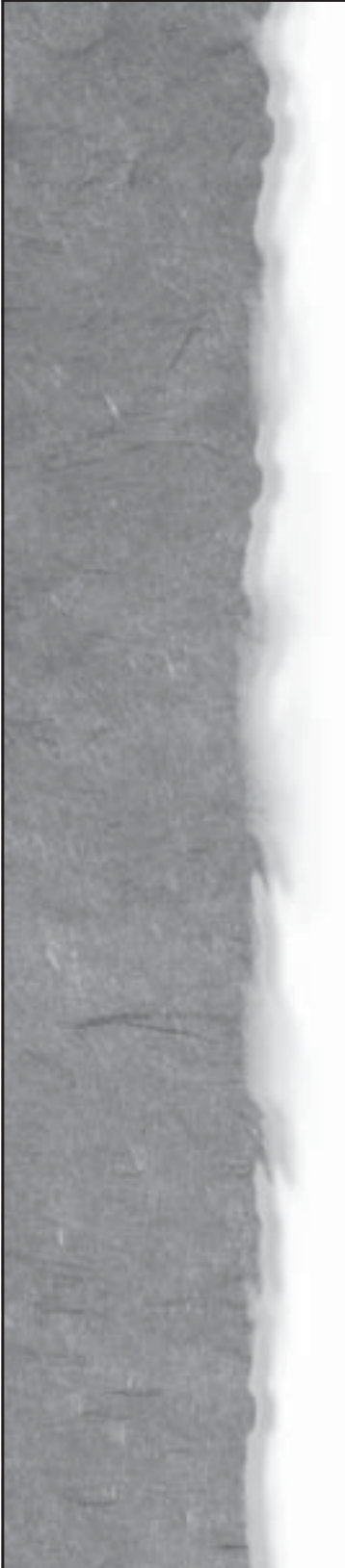
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1. I just can't believe I won.
2. I guess I was lucky.
3. Training for this competition has been hard work.
4. I am very proud of myself.
5. I think I'll probably win the national championship as well.
6. My parents have been a great help in many ways.
7. I'd like to thank my coach.
8. Some of the other contestants could have worked a little harder.
9. I'd like to share this honor with...
10. Without the support of my sister Helen, I probably would not have made it.
11. I feel privileged to have competed with the best in this area.
12. I guess I just have natural talent.
13. I'd like to become a professional skater and make some money to pay for all my hard work.
14. Many thanks to...
15. This has all been very exciting. It's going to be hard to go home to my humdrum life again.
16. Winning this competition is the result of a team effort.
17. I've had fun all the way.
18. Even though we were competitors, I regard the other skaters as my friends and I'm proud of them all.
19. I'd like to thank the judges and the organizers who sponsored this competition.

For Your Journal



Describe a time when you became very angry with someone and lost your temper. How could you have dealt with the situation differently?



If

by Rudyard Kipling

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, but don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream — and not make dreams your master;
If you can think — and not make thoughts your aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken,
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stop and build 'em up with worn out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with kings — nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And — which is more — you'll be a Man, my son!

CHAPTER 27

Jacob and Esau

In contrast to the story of Cain and Abel there is another biblical story that gives an account of a sibling relationship of hatred, division, violence, resentment and mistrust, which is transformed by reconciliation and the act of giving. The story of Jacob and Esau portrays how two brothers were able to change themselves and reconcile after many years of bitterness and separation.

Jacob and Esau

Abraham's son Isaac married Rebecca, who did not bear children in twenty years. After they prayed, Rebecca conceived twins who struggled within her womb. She received a prophecy from the Lord that: "Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger."

Rebecca gave birth to twins, two sons they called Esau and Jacob. Esau was born first, which is why he was considered to be the elder son. When the boys grew up, Esau became a skillful hunter, while Jacob was a quiet man who stayed among the tents. Isaac, who had a taste for wild game, loved Esau, but Rebecca loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking some stew, Esau came in hungry from an expedition. He said to Jacob, "Quick, let me have some of that red stew! I'm famished!" Jacob replied, "First sell me your birthright." "Look, I am about to die," Esau said. "What good is the birthright to me?" But Jacob said, "Swear to me first." So he swore an oath to him, selling his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. Esau did not value his birthright.

When Isaac was old and blind, he said to Esau, his older son, "I am now old and blind and don't know when I will die. Hunt some wild game for me and prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die."

Rebecca overheard their conversation. When Esau had left, she told Jacob to get two young goats, so that she could prepare a tasty meal for Isaac. Then Jacob was to pretend he was Esau and take the meal to Isaac so as to receive the blessing himself. Jacob was reluctant to do this, but his mother persuaded him.

Jacob pretending to be Esau went to his father and said, "I am Esau, your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please eat this meal I have prepared so that you may give me your blessing." After he had eaten, Isaac blessed him and said,

May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness—an abundance of grain and new wine.

May nations serve you
and peoples bow down to you.

Be lord over your brothers,
and may the sons of your mother bow down to you.

After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" "I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau." Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him." When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry. Isaac said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing." Esau said, "He has deceived me these two times: He took my birth-right, and now he's taken my blessing!"

Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said, "Soon my father will be dead; then I will kill my brother Jacob." When Rebecca heard what Esau had said, she arranged for Jacob to go to stay with her brother Laban and look for a wife. On the way there Jacob had a dream that God would protect him and bring him back to his father's house in peace.

Laban had two daughters; the older was called Leah, and the younger Rachel. Leah was very plain, but Rachel very beautiful. Jacob immediately fell in love with Rachel and told her father, "I'll work for you seven years in return for your younger daughter, Rachel." Laban agreed and Jacob worked seven years to get Rachel. Seven years passed and seemed like a few days to him because of his love for her.

After the seven years were up, Laban held a wedding feast for Jacob. However, the next morning Jacob woke up to find beside him not Rachel, whom he loved, but Leah. Jacob was very upset. However, when he found out that there was a local custom that insisted on the elder being married first, he agreed to work a further seven years for Rachel.

During this time Jacob was deceived many times by his uncle. He still prospered and his family grew and he acquired large flocks, servants, and camels. After twenty-one years had passed, he had another dream in which he was guided to return to his homeland. With Laban's blessing he set out with his family and possessions to return home.

Jacob was rather apprehensive about meeting Esau. He sent messengers ahead of him to meet Esau. The messengers returned and informed Jacob that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men. Jacob was afraid. Then Jacob prayed, "O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac, O LORD, who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,' I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become a large group. Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and

attack me, and the mothers with their children. But you have said, 'I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.'

The next day Jacob made a gift for his brother Esau of two hundred goats, two sheep, thirty camels, fifty cows and bulls, and thirty donkeys. Jacob sent each herd of animals with a servant thinking, "I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me."

The following morning Jacob set off with his family to meet Esau. When he saw his brother, he went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached him. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept. Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children. "Who are these with you?" he asked. Jacob answered, "They are the children God has graciously given your servant." Then the maidservants and their children approached and bowed down. Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down. Esau asked, "What do you mean by all these droves I met?" "To find favor in your eyes, my lord," he said. But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself." "No, please!" said Jacob. "If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably. Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need." And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

Adapted from Gen. 25-50



Something to think about



Like the story of Cain and Abel, the story of Jacob and Esau can teach us a lot. We should reflect on the motives behind the actions of the two brothers. By doing so, we'll be able to think about our own actions and motives, which may help us to find new ways to solve conflicts. So, let us turn to the story of Jacob and Esau.

- Why did Esau sell his birthright?
- What are the priorities in your life? What is most important to you, and what is secondary?
- Was Jacob justified in taking the blessing? Was there a better way?
- When you pursue a goal, do you think you can use any means?
- Was Esau justified in wanting to kill Jacob?
- Imagine that someone really hurt you. What would you do? Would you do anything out of desire to take revenge? Is such a desire ever justified?
- Why did Jacob continue to work for his uncle when he was treated so badly?
- What would you do if you hurt a friend and then moved to another city, without apologizing?
- Why did Jacob go home, even though he knew Esau might still be seeking revenge?
- If there is a serious conflict between two people, can it be healed by time alone? Does the person who caused the conflict have the right to forgive himself because a long time has passed?
- Why did Jacob's gifts and attitude impress Esau so much?
- Imagine that you have a conflict with a friend or your parents. What would do in order to reconcile? Would it be enough simply to buy an expensive present?
- How can the example of Jacob and Esau be used to solve problems of human relationships today?
- Does this example work only on a personal level, or can it be applied to relationships between groups of people, including nations?

What does the story of Jacob and Esau teach us?

When we read the story of Cain and Abel, we saw that Cain could not overcome his anger and therefore killed his brother. In the story of Jacob and Esau we can see that there was nearly the same outcome. What was the difference?

Dealing with resentment

The reconciliation of Jacob and Esau came about because both had changed. When Jacob took the birthright and blessing by trickery and deception, he did not consider how Esau would feel. Only in Haran, when he himself was tricked and deceived by Laban, could he understand how he must have hurt his brother. If Jacob had behaved in the same way toward Laban and sought his death, then there could have been no possibility of reconciliation with Esau.

Fortunately, even though he was treated unjustly, Jacob did not complain or bear a grudge. Had he done so, his soul would have been poisoned with resentment. Instead he forgave his uncle and worked hard for him, even though Laban often cheated him out of his wages. Jacob's deep love for Rachel must have helped him to endure and overcome. Through the suffering that he experienced his heart and mind were purified and deepened. He became a man of real character.

Isn't it easy, when we experience injustice, to complain and become angry and resentful? However, it is good to stop and think. We can reflect on our life and think about occasions when we have treated someone badly. Are we reaping what we have sowed? Even if we cannot think of a past misdeed on our part, revenge will not solve anything. It will multiply and perpetuate injustice and diminish and corrupt our own character. What is important is how we respond to the way we are treated. Through any experience we can either grow or decline.

Making amends

How should we react when someone is angry with us? Unfortunately it happens all too often. We may upset someone by what we say or do. Or we are on the receiving end of someone already in a bad mood. Unless something is done to make amends, a good relationship can easily get worse and die. For example, if we inadvertently offend someone, we may need only to apologize for the matter to be forgotten. If we break something valuable, an apology may not be enough and we may have to replace the broken item or do something else to show our sincerity. In any case, we have to do whatever is required to restore the original wrong.

To restore his relationship with his brother, Jacob had to change as a person so that he could appreciate why his brother felt so angry with him. Even at the risk of his life, he had to love his brother who wanted to kill him. So he gave Esau a large gift that had taken him many years to earn. He did not give it arrogantly but very humbly and magnanimously. Because it was given in this way, Esau did not even want to receive it. All the past bad feelings and memories were washed away by Jacob's sincere heart.

Esau too had changed. He did not kill Jacob and he did not arrogantly regard Jacob's gift as the compensation he deserved. His heart was open enough to be touched by Jacob's attitude and gift, and he was willing to forgive and be reconciled. Jacob's love was stronger than Esau's hatred.

Do the ends justify the means?

When most people read the story of Jacob and Esau, they think that Jacob is a very unsavory character and does not deserve to be blessed. He deceives his elder brother into selling him the birthright, deceives his father and steals the blessing from Esau. Does this mean that the ends justify the means?

Jacob wanted to have the position of the eldest son and even used dishonest means to achieve it. So let us examine this aspect of the story more closely.

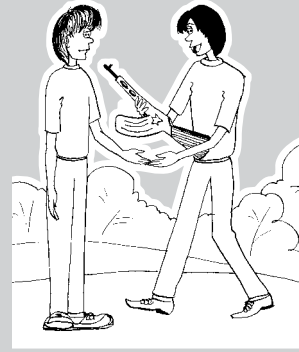
The first question that arises is: Should Jacob have been the one to receive the blessing and inherit the position of eldest son? When Rebecca was pregnant, she received a revelation that the elder son was to serve the younger son. This is why Rebecca helped him to take it. Esau clearly did not value his birthright, since he sold it for a bowl of soup. Clearly food was more important to him than the ancestral lineage. He could have asked someone else, such as his mother, for food. Jacob realized the value of the birthright and the blessing and even risked his life to get it.

Since he had sold Jacob his birthright, Esau should have allowed Jacob to receive the blessing. Esau did not take the implications of transferring the birthright to Jacob seriously. He did not keep his word and did not tell Isaac that the blessing was now



The Toy Gun

When I was a small boy, I used to play with my best friend every afternoon. Our favorite game was setting up our army of toy tin soldiers. I was especially proud of a little machine gun that someone had given me and I even marked it a special way. Then one day the machine gun disappeared. What was worse was that I discovered that my friend had taken it. Because of the little mark I had made, there was no doubt in my mind. I said nothing and my friend said nothing, but our happy little world lay in ruins. I *knew* that he took it, and *he knew* that I knew that he took it, and I knew that he knew that I knew. We could not face each other, we could not play together. Then, in a day or two he came up to me and said: "I am sorry. I took your gun. Forgive me." "Oh, forget about it," I answered. "What do I care!" Suddenly all the world around us was bright and happy again. Everything was so good, it felt like Easter.



rightfully Jacob's. Jacob was in a dilemma. How could he obtain what was rightfully his?

The way Jacob took the birthright and the blessing was not right. He did not have the maturity of character to realize the consequences of his actions. That is why he had to go through a suffering course of twenty-one years. He was reaping what he had sowed, paying the price for his earlier trickery and dishonesty. Although the birthright was his, he should have earned it. So Jacob had plenty of time to reflect on his former recklessness. Eventually he had to reconcile with Esau and win his respect. Jacob thought that through trickery he could take a short cut, but instead found he had taken a twenty-one year detour.

Had Jacob been an exemplary younger brother and won Esau's heart and respect, Esau naturally would have recognized that Jacob was more worthy than he. He would have gladly given Jacob the birthright and commended him to their father.

So Jacob should have been the one to receive the blessing, but the way he went about it was wrong. Only the proper means are justified in attaining an end. Improper means may even make it impossible to reach the desired end.

Individual Exercises



- Think of someone who is angry with you and try to restore that relationship.
- Make a play of the story of Jacob and Esau or develop your own story using the same theme.
- Think whether there are some groups in your class that have poor relations with each other and try to change this.

Teens Who Envy

The action takes place in the school cafeteria at lunch time. Nina and Helen are sitting opposite each other at a long table. At the far end is Dmitri. Finishing his lunch, Dmitri picks up his tray and walks past the girls.

Dmitri: Hi, Nina, Helen. How are you doing?

Nina: Hi, Dmitri. That was a quick lunch.

Dmitri: Growing boys like me work up an appetite.

Nina laughs, but Helen is not amused.

Helen: (Mocking) "Growing boys like me". *(In a normal tone)* Who does he think he is, anyhow?

Nina: Dmitri?

Helen: Yeah, Dmitri. He's nothing but a spoiled brat.

Nina: (Surprised) I gather you don't like him.

Helen: The boy who has everything? I'm afraid not.

Nina: So he's rich, so what?

Helen: Why are you defending him all of a sudden?

Nina: What's wrong with him? I like him. Maybe you just don't know him.

Helen: What's to know?

Nina: Like I said, he's a good kid.

Helen: He can afford to be. He can afford anything he wants.

Nina: I get it. Just because he has a rich dad, that makes him a jerk.

Helen: That isn't what I said.

Nina: I think you're jealous.

Helen: So what if I am?

Nina: Look, Helen, Dmitri can't help who his parents are.



Helen: What is this? Is he your boyfriend?

Nina: You know better than that.

Helen: You mean, why would a boy from the rich part of town go for a girl like you?

Nina: No, that isn't what I mean. I mean that he's just a friend.

Helen: You call him a friend. He's nothing but an egotistical —

Nina: He is not.

Helen: (*Surprised*) Why are you sticking up for him so much?

Nina: Why are you attacking him?

Helen: I don't have to listen to this. I thought we were friends. I thought we cared about each other. And you choose that...that stuck-up goon over me.

Helen jumps up, grabs her tray and stalks off. For a moment Nina sits by herself, randomly jabbing a fork into what's left of her lunch. She doesn't see Dmitri coming back.

Dmitri: Mind if I sit down?

Nina: I thought you were gone.

Dmitri: Just cleaning off my tray. (*Sitting beside her*) I couldn't help but hear what was going on. I mean, I wasn't trying to eavesdrop, but Helen's voice does carry. (*Pause*) It's kind of dumb, but anyhow, thanks.

Nina: Helen can't help it, I guess. It's just the way she is. But you can't help it either.

Dmitri: I suppose, everyone is envious of someone. Or something.

Nina: Maybe. But most of the time, it's just a passing thought. Except maybe for young kids.

Dmitri: (*Smiling*) You know who I envy?

Nina: Who?

Dmitri: You, and...well, Helen too.



Nina: For heaven's sake, why?

Dmitri: I've never talked about this to anyone before. But sometimes I wish I could escape. Sure, I like to be able to get pretty much what I want, but...

Nina: But what?

Dmitri: This is really weird. I have this darned...responsibility, I guess. This thing where, somehow, I have to be perfect, you know?

Nina: What do you mean?

Dmitri: There are lots of people like Helen. I mean, in the sense that they're envious.

Nina: Jealous, you mean.

Dmitri: Okay then—jealous. Anyhow, I feel as if they're judging me all the time. There's this gigantic spotlight following me everywhere I go. *(Laughs)* Not really, but because of my background, my family, everything I do is judged, is looked at. I hate it. Once in a while, I just want to be me. I just want to be like everyone else.

Nina: Wow. I never would have thought of that.

Dmitri: Sure, having parents who are well off is pretty darned nice—most of the time. I'm the first to admit it. But at other times... I'd just like to be one of the crowd. You know?

Questions for Discussion



- Are Helen's actions typical?
- Whose behavior is more typical, Helen's or Nina's?
- Do you admire Dmitri? Why or why not? Do you believe him when he says he would like to be one of the crowd?
- Why does Dmitri say that he envies Nina and Helen?
- Is Dmitri exaggerating his feelings of responsibility?
- Do you think that people make a conscious decision to act in a certain way towards others? Why or why not?

CHAPTER 28

The Family as the School of Love

What is most valuable to you? Knowledge? Authority? Freedom? Fame? Money? These may all be important, but for most people, none of these is more valuable than their family. Is there anything more valuable than one's parents and siblings or one's spouse and children? Why do we love our family so much? Why do we like "love"? Love is what we are created for. Our family members are the nearest

people with whom we can sustain a loving relationship throughout our entire life.

The family historically has been the principal means of transmitting culture, moral and ethical principles, religious beliefs, traditions and ways of understanding the world from one generation to the next. Traditionally the family has been the way people have learned the values of personal integrity, loyalty, fidelity, and selfless love.

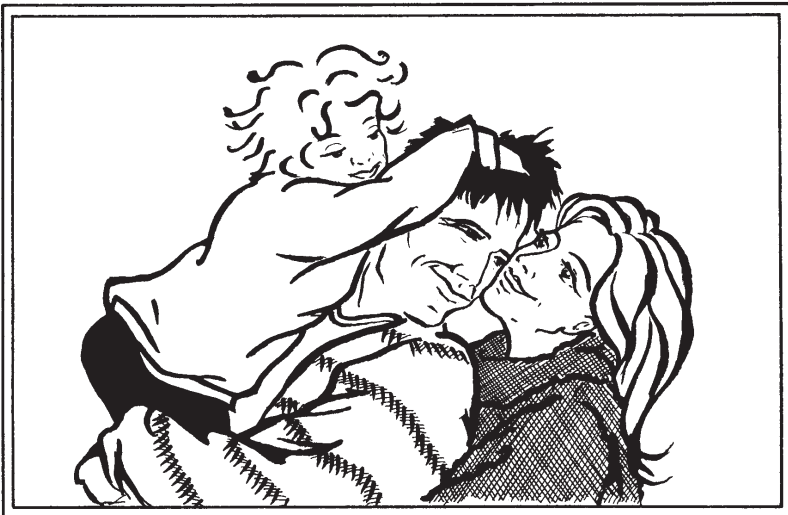
Bonds between husband and wife, parents and children, and brothers and sisters are the foundation of our life and who we are as a person. Any family

system is composed of connecting relationships. Each person is a unique part of the system. Each person not only has his own unique personality but also carries an imprint of the whole family system.

Understanding this, it is not surprising that every religion emphasizes purity, love and right relationships within the family.

Although we may certainly love our family, difficult relationships occur within our daily life with each other. Often we take out frustrations on our family. Sometimes we may feel imprisoned by their demands and expectations, although they love and accept us. Others experience very little praise from their family. At times it may be difficult to freely communicate and express our true self at home. At other times we're just out of touch with each other because

it is difficult for teenagers to understand what it's like to be a parent and parents might forget what it's like to be a teenager.



I am my family as well as whatever uniqueness I have actualized as a person.

I am an individual and group simultaneously.

My reality has been formed by my relationship with each person in the system.

The four realms of love

There are four realms of love in every family, and there is an orderly development of these realms of love. Since everyone starts as a child, we first develop a feeling of love toward our parents. Consequently the first realm of love is *children's* love. When another child is present in the family, the relationship of love between *siblings* develops. This realm of love also develops among close friends. When a man and woman mature, a new realm of love develops. They may marry and enter a *conjugal* relationship. When a husband and wife have a child, they develop the realm of *parental* love. These are the four stages of love through which each of us learns how to love.

Siblings' love and conjugal love are called horizontal, because the parties are of a similar age and position. In comparison, children's love and parental love are called vertical, because there is a difference in age and position. Horizontal love should find itself most fully expressed in the mature love between husband and wife

As we grow from infancy through childhood, going to elementary school, middle school, high school and college, our parents remain important in our life. In children there is a natural filial piety toward our parents and respect for our elders. As brothers and sisters, we learn the meaning of friendship and cooperation. As spouses we cultivate fidelity. As parents, we develop sacrificial and unconditional love.

In the same way that we cannot attend high school until we complete elementary school—if our ability to love at each stage is not developed, we will find it difficult to love in succeeding stages. We will become a good husband or wife only when we have learned to become a good brother or sister and a good friend. In this sense, we can say that with the maturation of son's love and brotherly love (or friend's love), true husband's love is established. For example, if a boy has a good relationship with his sister, he is more likely to have a good relationship with his wife. The true husband thinks that he was born for his wife and would die for her sake. The same follows for a true wife. A husband and wife of true love and true happiness are one in love, and each lives for the sake of the other. This is an ideal couple.

We can become true parents when we have learned to be a good husband or wife. Children should be able to say, "Our parents are the best parents in the world; let's strive to have what they have." The love of true parents automatically embodies all four realms of love. To fully appreciate a deeper and higher realm of love, first we must experience the special qualities of love in relationships of the previous contexts.

So even if our parents are not perfect, we still should try to become a loving son or daughter so that we can become a better parent to our own children. If our brother or sister does not respect us, we still should respect them and what's important to them, so that we may become a husband or wife who will unconditionally love and

accept our spouse. Such a family will be one of beauty and harmony creating a happy and healthy home. You may be wondering why you should concern yourself with these matters now at such a young age, but it is important to remember that what kind of person you will be in the future depends on who you are right now.

Children's love

What kind of love does a child have? He is the essence of receptive love. A baby is aware of only his own needs and desires—to be fed and kept warm and secure. He is not at all aware of the needs of anyone else, but only demands and receives the outpourings of his parents. However, no parents complain that their baby is acting selfishly. Parents are moved by his innocence and helplessness and give their baby every-

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

— Matt. 18:1-4



thing he wants. When the baby is content, parents will beam with satisfaction.

A child's love is responsive love. Usually a child has complete faith that his parents know everything.

Children especially need direction, as their role is to learn. They are curious and filled with wonder. They need to learn how to use their powers to know, love, feel, choose and imagine. A child develops the quality of faith and trust, obedience and gratitude. He learns how to love his parents as the source of his life. As adults, we need to retain that childlike receptivity and responsiveness to truth and love.

Siblings' love

As a child grows and develops independence, he develops a sense of his own identity as well as his own point of view. He learns how to love himself as a unique and valuable person, developing conscience and the ability to decide between right and wrong. He becomes more aware of others, realizes there are different types of people, and develops empathy toward those who are different. In sibling relationships the ability to share and give grows. Brothers and sisters and friends learn mutual love, giving and receiving on an equal level. In the process of learning to live with and relate to and love others, they learn the values of honesty, commitment, sharing, cooperation and patience.

This is the stage for expanding creativity, for learning how to read and write and draw. Children learn how everything works, mechanical things and natural things. Boys fantasize about being a hero. Girls dream of marrying a handsome prince. Children always think they will be great, and at this stage nothing seems to stand in their way. This is healthy, for it expands a child's mind and gives him courage.

During our teenage years, we learn to control our impulses—our passions, anger, jealousy, greed and impatience. This is necessary so that we can establish solid relationships by acting with integrity. All of us eventually realize that our goal is to meet our spouse, and we begin to focus on the time when we will have our own true love. This is how we prepare ourselves for marriage and parenthood.



Conjugal love

At the time of marriage, a man occupies the woman's world, and a woman occupies the man's world. This is the power of true love. At this point a man and woman are ready to commit themselves completely to one another. They devote their mind, body and future to each other. This is the stage in which love truly blossoms. If you take love away from a man and woman, there is nothing that can make them unite, because they are so different.



A man and woman form a circuit of love and power flows. Electricity builds up between them. Finally, quivering with thousands of volts, they unite in a tremendous explosion, creating a huge fireball of love. This is the stage in which they can really find freedom—the freedom to love completely. Once a person decides to take full responsibility for another, he can be truly free to love that person. It is when a person's realm of love is small and self-centered that he is not free. This is the place where the freedom of love can even create new life.

Parental love

When a husband and wife give birth to a child, a whole new way of loving begins. Their whole focus is on providing the child with everything he needs. This is the beginning of learning how to love another person without expecting anything in return. Parents give and forget. If a child is sick, the parents stay up all night to take care of him.

Parents know what a child needs in order to grow and develop confidence. When a child makes a mistake, the parents don't condemn him but rather help him to see his mistake and grow. The most precious value of parents is that they want their child to be better than themselves. They want him to grow and achieve things that they only dreamed of. All parents want their child to be taller, smarter, more creative, more attractive, more loving and more resourceful. Parents cannot help but do everything they can for their children.

Within a healthy family system there are healthy roles. The parental role is mainly to model. Everyone in the family is affected by the parents' relationship. Parents should model:

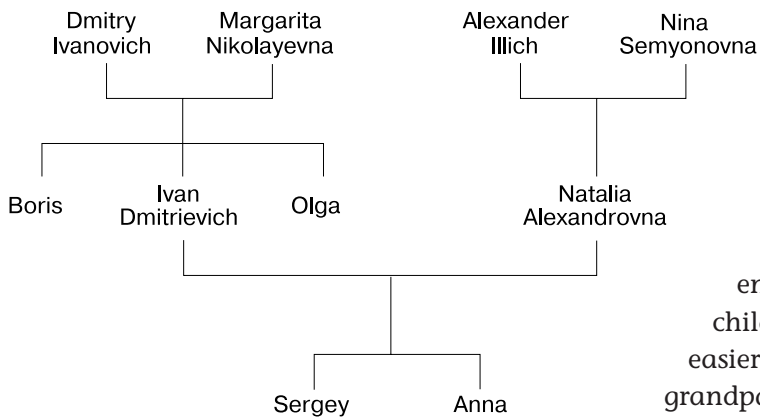
- How to be a brother or sister.
- How to be a man or woman.
- How to be a husband or wife.
- How to be a father or mother.
- How to be in an intimate relationship.
- How to have good boundaries.

Today many young people grow up with only one parent. Some children who have only one parent become stronger by making the best of their situation, but the love relationship between a father and mother is not lost without consequences. A good father and mother share the same heart of love for their children, but express it differently. They have different priorities, different ways of educating and disciplining children. They establish a different kind of relationship with their children. It is important for everyone's emotional, spiritual, and psychological health and development to receive both the masculine and feminine expressions of parental love.

The palace of love

Let us consider whether members of a family can experience all the types of love that are possible within a family: children's love, siblings' love, conjugal love and parental love. In order for this to happen, the family must consist of at least three generations. Only then can all types of love be experienced and inherited.

Family Tree



In a good family the grandparents are in an important position. The parents and grandchildren should be able to naturally look up to them as the elders and to ask for advice, especially regarding family traditions and customs. In this sense the grandparents are like the guardians of the past, keepers of the treasure store of practices of their lineage. It is the grandparents' responsibility to ensure the welfare of their children and grandchildren. Children often find it easier to talk about intimate matters with their grandparents than with their parents. Grandparents can be the mediators between parents and children when there are difficulties in the relationship.



The parents are in a central position. They are masters of the present moment and conductors of the family's activities. How they exemplify love between themselves is the most essential ingredient for a happy family. If they fight, then the whole family can break down and will negatively impact the children. The parents must cultivate between them a genuine heart of love.

The children are the hope of the future for their parents and grandparents. Parents cannot live their children's lives, no matter how much guidance they may give them.

A family should be the union of three generations. Each family should examine their situation, throw away bad habits and form new, good ones. If we live for the sake of others, investing all our heart, then we not only help other people but also become more harmonious people ourselves.

The world is our family

There are millions of families in the world. Unless we are accustomed to proper relationships within the family, we cannot relate to the many different kinds of people harmoniously. The love between parents and children is vertical love. The love

between husband and wife is horizontal, as is the love between brothers and sisters. All these dimensions comprise a sphere. People who have completed the four realms of love have perfect relationships in all directions and can develop a well-rounded, balanced character and be able to relate comfortably to any kind of person. Therefore, the family is indeed the training ground of all kinds of relationships.

We cultivate our heart through relating to grandparents, uncles and aunts, cousins, in-laws, nieces and nephews, grandchildren. Extended family

relationships develop our attitude toward the rest of humankind. We learn respect, loyalty, cooperation and compassion. Thus we can exhibit altruistic, unselfish love toward all members of the human family. We should feel that other people of all age groups are the extension of our family. When we see an old man on the street, we should respect him as our grandfather. When we see a middle-aged woman behind the cashier desk, we should treat her as we would our own mother or aunt; and when we see little children playing, we should feel concern for them as if they were our own younger brothers and sisters.

Other people are not nameless people whom we can mistreat, but rather our extended family. We should embrace people of all races and nationalities as our own brothers and sisters. The more embracing our love, the greater our life will be. As our family experience develops our emotional intelligence, we are led closer to our perfect self.



Family Interview

The family is the original source of values in most peoples' lives. When looking at our family's heritage we may find interesting differences and similarities when comparing past and present upbringing methods. Your homework is to interview an older family member—a parent or a grandparent—to find out what has changed and what has remained the same in the way children have been raised. How does your upbringing compare with the person's whom you interviewed? Is it similar or different? How and why?

Questions to ask:

1. What would you say were the values most strongly stressed in your upbringing?
2. Can you remember any events in your childhood that made you realize the importance of those values?
3. Do you think that the values you had were the same as most of the other children of your youth?
4. Was there ever any disagreement between you and your parents about values? How were these differences handled?
5. What values have you tried to hand down to your children? What are the major differences between your upbringing and the upbringing of your children? Why do you think things have changed?
6. What did your family like to do together?
7. What did your family quarrel about the most?
8. Who was the head of your family?

The questions below are to be answered by you after the interview:

1. Which values discussed by the person you interviewed do you consider most important? Do you think you will try to hand them down to your children? Why or why not?
2. Do you see any differences in values between you and the person you interviewed? What are they and why do you think they exist?
3. How would you characterize your family's values?



Write the names of all your family members on separate pieces of paper. Fold the papers so that the names are covered. Then pull one piece of paper out and read the name on it. This is your “beloved” for the week. For one week you should love and serve this family member, making him or her feel like the most special person in the world. Without being asked, find things to do for this person—for example, washing the dishes, walking the dog, doing the laundry—to make his or her life easier. Make little cards, write a poem, give flowers—anything that makes this person feel loved and special.

Do at least one nice thing for your beloved each day. Resolve not to fight or argue with this person for at least one week (and don’t try to make up for it later!).

Notice how the attitude of your beloved changes toward you. Notice how love creates more love. Notice that no matter how much love you give, there is always more to give. You never run out.

At the end of the week choose another name from your pile and serve your new beloved with all your heart. After you have served all of the members of your family, you can ask them if they would like to try this exercise with the whole family.

If they say yes, then write everyone’s name down on separate pieces of paper and have each family member pick one piece of paper. If it is their own name, they should fold their paper again and select another name. Do not let each other know whose name is on the paper. The person whose name is on your piece of paper is your beloved for the week. Serve each other secretly for two or three days without letting your beloved know who you are. After a few days, try to guess the identity of your secret admirer. Whether your family is large or small, this is a simple and fun exercise that can improve your relationships tremendously and create a wonderful atmosphere at home.

For Your Journal



- How many grandparents do you have? Pick one grandparent to write about.
- Do you see this grandparent very often?
- Where did he/she grow-up?
- Did this grandparent's mother work? If so, what did she do?
- Did this grandparent's father work? If so, what did he do?
- How many children were in his/her family?
- What do you like/admire most about this grandparent?
- Do you think his/her life at your age was similar to or different from yours? In what ways?
- What was this grandparent's favorite holiday, or thing to do?
- Do you think your parents are raising you in a way similar to the way they were raised or differently? Explain.

CHAPTER 29

Marriage

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove:
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

— Sonnet 116, by William Shakespeare

By looking at marriage, a tradition that most cultures regard as one of life's most revered passages, we can explore further the relationship of man and woman. Cultures change. Lifestyles fluctuate. Modes of thought come and go with the passing of time, and yet the institution of marriage remains.

There is a deep cultural and spiritual drive for men and women to marry. Woman was born for the sake of man, and man for the sake of woman. What does every man desire? An ideal wife. And the wish of every woman is to meet an ideal husband.

The spectrum of marital love

Even though divorce rates are climbing, every newlywed couple believe that a wonderful life-long love affair is *especially* destined for them. The thrill of romance, becoming best friends, the tranquility of belonging, learning the sweetness of intimacy, the heights and the depths—are all aspects of love that are a basic part of marriage.

“Stirring-the-oatmeal” love is also part of marriage. Stirring oatmeal is not exciting, but it symbolizes a relatedness that brings love down to earth. It represents a willingness to share ordinary human life



and to find meaning in the simple, unromantic tasks: earning a living, living within a budget, making breakfast, feeding the baby in the middle of the night, etc. “Stirring the oatmeal” means that two people transform even the unexciting, difficult, and mundane things into a joyful and fulfilling component of life. They find value and beauty in their daily interaction.

When a couple are genuinely bonded with one another, they are willing to enter into the whole spectrum of human life together. Is not a man different at dawn from what he is at sunset? And a woman too? And does not the changing harmony and discord of their variation make the secret music of life?

And is it not so throughout life? A man is different at 30, at 40, at 50, at 60, at 70; and the woman at his side changes as well. Isn’t there a peculiar harmony through youth, the period of childbirth, the period of young children, the period of grandchildren, the period of waning passion but mellowing delight of affection, the dim period of the approach of death when the man and woman look at one another with the apprehension of separation? Is there not throughout it all some unseen, unknown interplay of balance, a kind of harmony and completion like a symphony which moves with a rhythm from phase to phase, so different, so very different in the various movements? Yet one symphony made from the music of two strange and incompatible lives, a man’s and a woman’s? This is marriage—quite a mystery! And this oneness, gradually accomplished throughout a lifetime, is the highest achievement of time or eternity. From it all things human spring—children and beauty, the true creations of humanity.

Marriage is a journey of transformation. In the union of men and women, acceptance is often the most basic binding thread. Anything less than total acceptance will not realize the extraordinary potential of our human nature. To accept another requires the sacrifice of oneself and a willingness not to be oneself but to be *ourselves*. If a husband and wife are able to accept one another completely, they are very close to being able to accept many other people as well. If anyone *truly* loves another, he has the potential to love other people. Those who enter into marriage by that act alone do a great service to humanity.

Marriage in public

Marriage is not something to be entered into lightly, as it is a commitment not only between two people but also with the community. Other people are depending on them to make the marriage work for the continuation of the family and community. In nearly every society throughout history the marriage ceremony has been considered a public ceremony.

A married couple, by going through a public marriage ceremony, are saying, “We are ultimately to be held accountable for making this work. We will need all your support. Together with your hopes for us and our commitment to each other and to you we will fulfill this promise.” If wedding vows stipulated conditions or were a contract for only a temporary arrangement, it wouldn’t be a “wedding” at all.

Why are people who attend a wedding happy to witness this event—so happy indeed that they may cry? Because everyone is moved to see two people committed for life and soon to bear children who represent the joining of two lineages into one lineage that will go on before them into the future. A wedding represents the past, present and future coming together into one point. Thus it is very sacred. What if the people who attended that wedding were invited to another wedding a few years later with the same bride but a different bridegroom? Even if they wished them well, could they have the same excited feeling, the same hopes, the same joys, the same anticipation?



No matter what form the marriage ceremony takes, one thing is clear: Through marriage we enter a whole new world. We learn to see what we haven't seen before, do what we haven't done before, feel what we haven't felt before, understand what we never understood before, love in ways that we have never loved before. Many new, unexpected, unprecedented things take place. Above all, marriage is a new task and a new seriousness and a challenge. If a couple are successful in their marriage, their lives will be filled with infinite love and happiness, but if they are unsuccessful, the results can be devastating to all involved.

Acceptance and intimacy

How is true happiness attained in marriage? In the first stages of a relationship we show off our best side. We dress well, show our best manners and do almost anything to attract the other person.

However, we all carry burdens from the past, and so in time a couple will discover each other's strengths and weaknesses, good habits and bad habits. We need to understand that in married life we also will feel negative things about our spouse. We need to learn to understand, accept and love each other fully. It takes time but *can*

happen and *should* happen.

Here is a letter one woman wrote to a friend, regarding her relationship with her husband:

I am now safe and secure in our love. We are free to communicate about anything to each other. We are not afraid to expose ourselves and our faults, because we know that we accept each other just as we are, with all our frailties and faults and good points. How wonderful it is to know that no matter how poorly I perform, I will still be loved. And that has to make me perform better.

Here are some aspects that make up the bond of intimacy, closeness and a wonderfully happy marriage. They are given in no particular order:

- ✕ Shared feelings.
- ✕ Physical touching of an affectionate, non-sexual nature.
- ✕ Spiritual harmony.
- ✕ Open communication and honesty.
- ✕ Absence of psychological defenses.

- ✕ Sensitive appreciation of the mate's physical and emotional responses.
- ✕ Similar beliefs and values.
- ✕ Imparted secrets.
- ✕ Genuine understanding.
- ✕ Mutual confidence.
- ✕ A sense of warmth, safety, and peace when together.
- ✕ Sexual pleasures lovingly shared.
- ✕ Signs of love freely given and received.
- ✕ Mutual responsibility and caring.
- ✕ Complete trust.

Of course, no marriage certificate guarantees these qualities in a relationship. To become so finely tuned to each other demands time and conscious effort from both partners. This is precisely why the most precious and rewarding intimacy can be experienced only in a permanent relationship of marriage. The resulting closeness lifts the relationship out of the commonplace and into the unique and irreplaceable. If marriages are made in heaven, their maintenance occurs in an earthly setting, which requires knowledge, patience, willpower and unselfishness. If one can acquire and develop these before marriage, the chances for a good, enduring marriage and an ever-growing love are almost 100 percent!

A true marriage

The first step in marriage is to recognize the power of the lifelong union between a man and a woman and to understand that it involves a lifelong commitment to *marriage* itself. In marriage we grow beyond ourselves. When we are sincerely married, it is impossible to be selfish anymore. In a good marriage we think about our husband or wife before we think about ourselves.

At the marriage ceremony we make a commitment to our partner and to the world that we are together as a couple. We commit ourselves to being with this person and to staying with this person. This means we can go through difficult experiences without leaving or even threatening to leave.

By committing to marriage itself, we come closer to our partner than ever before. Instead of rejecting him or her, withdrawing, closing off, and separating, we digest the undesirable experiences and emotions, and as a result we experience a more profound love. Every time we overcome difficulties, we receive greater understanding. We become more mature, less selfish, and less self-oriented, developing compassion toward our fellow human beings.

An emotional or physical attraction by itself fades quickly. Without a spiritual commitment to the "God" in one's spouse, there is little chance of weathering the difficulties that will arise.

The same sense of commitment and responsibility that we have in bearing children has to be present when going into a marriage. If you cannot make that type of commitment, then it is better not to marry yet.

Being a human being is not just about the self. Hence, if you want to have children, get married. If you want to live with someone for the rest of your life, marry that person. No one should take marriage lightly. Responsibility is the essence of commitment.

Restoring love restores society

The insecurity that has developed within modern societies comes from the erosion of the institution of marriage. What has resulted is the undermining of all other commitments—to other people and relationships, to work. In terms of human



relationships, marriage is the most solid contract that we can make. When we are committed and responsible within a marriage, our commitments to ourselves, to our children, to our work, and to our fellow human beings will be solid. Our word will be valued. The power of marriage brings value, worth, and commitment to our ideals. Those ideals become valuable because they are backed by sincere devotion in

The path that leads to marital happiness is so narrow that two cannot walk upon it unless they become one.

serving something and someone beyond ourselves.

When we are capable of developing a deep inner relationship with our partner in marriage, we will be able to do the same thing with our fellow human beings. Responsible marriages encourage the sense of community that modern societies lack. The marriage commitment gives us the power to stabilize and rebuild the fabric of a good society.

Thoughts on love and togetherness

The following three excerpts all contain thoughts about love and togetherness. Which do you like best? Why? Can the main ideas translate into practical advice for couples considering marriage?

"A good relationship has a pattern like a dance and is built on some of the same rules. The partners do not need to hold on tightly, because they move confidently in the same pattern, intricate but gay and swift and free, like a country dance of Mozart's. To touch heavily would be to arrest the pattern and freeze the movement, to check the endlessly changing beauty of its unfolding. There is no place here for the possessive clutch, the clinging arm, the heavy hand; only the barest touch in passing. Now arm in arm, now face to face, now back to back—it does not matter which. Because they know they are partners moving to the same rhythm, creating a pattern together, and being invisibly nourished by it."

— Anne Morrow Lindbergh, 20th century American writer

"A togetherness between two people is an impossibility, and where it seems, nevertheless, to exist, it is a narrowing, a reciprocal agreement which robs either one party or both of his fullest freedom and development. But, once the realization is accepted that even between the closest human beings infinite distances continue to exist, a wonderful living side by side can grow up, if they succeed in loving the distance between them which makes it possible for each to see the other whole and against a wide sky!"

— Rainer Maria Rilke
20th century German poet



"It takes years to marry completely two hearts, even of the most loving and well-assorted. A happy wedlock is a long falling in love. Young persons think love belongs only to the brown-haired and crimson-cheeked. So it does for its beginning. But the golden marriage is a part of love which the bridal day knows nothing of.

"A perfect and complete marriage, where wedlock is everything you could ask and the ideal of marriage becomes actual, is not common, perhaps as rare as personal beauty. Men and women are married fractionally, now a small fraction, then a large fraction. Very few are married totally, and then only after some forty or fifty years of gradual approach and experiment.

"Such a large and sweet fruit is a complete marriage that it needs a long summer to ripen in, and then a long winter to mellow and season it. But a real, happy marriage of love and judgment between a noble man and woman is one of the things so very handsome that if the sun were, as the Greek poets fabled, a God, he might stop the world and hold it still now and then in order to look all day long on some example thereof, and feast his eyes on such a spectacle."

— Theodore Parker, 19th century Unitarian minister

Individual Exercise



Ask married older friends and relatives to tell you the story of their life together, finding out all you can about married life. What do their stories tell you about the need for physical and emotional intimacy? About what makes a good relationship? About one's experience of love as one becomes older? What promises did they make to each other on their wedding day? Are they keeping those promises? Is their relationship different from the expectations they had before they wed? How so? If they had a son or daughter who recently became engaged, what advice would they give him or her to establish a successful marriage and family life?

For Your Journal



The Prince Charming and his Fair Lady who fall in love at first sight and ride off to live happily ever after in palatial splendor are purely fictional. Real life is never so simple or so perfect, yet we all have our dreams and our fantasies.

The difficulty comes in striking a balance between our dreams and reality. Keeping this in mind, write down your own description of an ideal marriage. What are reasonable dreams, actual goals to work toward? And what dreams are too fantastical, so far beyond reason that we are doomed to disillusionment and disappointment if we hold on to them?

CHAPTER 30

Devotion

A story about lifelong devotion by Josephine Haver

"Grandfather, let's take a walk in the park. I'd like to get an ice cream," Jana said, picking up the worn brown sweater from the hall closet.

"OK, some fresh air will be good for these old bones." The 80-year-old picked up his cane and accepted the folded arm of his granddaughter as they walked carefully toward the park.

"I've seen you at the fountain in the east end of the park almost every morning this past month as I walk to school," remarked Jana. "Are you feeding some special pigeons there?"

Grandfather chuckled softly, "No, not exactly. I am meeting with someone special – my dearest friend."

"Really?" Jana said with surprise. "Who's that?"

"Well, your grandmother, of course."

"Uh, Grandfather ... Grandmother died two years ago."

"Yes, I know, but she never left my heart, and we used to feed the pigeons and talk about world affairs, the troubles of our friends and our different tastes in books ... oh, all sorts of things we'd talk about. I go early in the morning to carry on our talks during a time when no one is around. People might think that I'm crazy – talking to a ghost!"

"I guess she must be very real to you, even now," Jana said somberly. "Why do you have a conversation when you are not sure she can hear you?"

"Well, the kind of friendship and love that we shared remains after the body is long gone. It's kind of like a special telephone line connected directly to that person's heart. I don't know if she can hear the words or the topics, but I know that she can feel the feelings. ... Yes, I send my feelings to her every day. I know that she gets them because they are returned. When I think about her love for me, I still feel that I can conquer the world and solve any problem. Why, there's nothing I wouldn't have done for her."

Jana sat down slowly on the bench near the ice cream stand, carefully handing the cane, worn smooth by years of use, to her grandfather's wrinkled hands.

"You know, Jana, I was so awed by your grandmother, I didn't even ask for a kiss until we were at the altar. She was like a precious treasure to me, and I wanted to let her know

that my kiss represented lifelong devotion, not just desire or immediate pleasure. I remember that kiss so well.” Grandfather looked into the distance.

“Well, there are plenty of nice ladies who would love your company, your jokes and your laughter now,” Jana said, thinking that he must be lonely.

“Jana, I have lady friends – but none would be able to replace those special memories, and I want to respect those memories. Please understand that I am not lonely. I am alone, but I am still devoted to your grandmother. She holds my heart forever.”

Jana grew silent. She thought about last Saturday night’s pajama party when her 8th grade girlfriends were sharing secrets about their “first kiss.” She had felt awkward because there was no story for her to tell. “I want *this* kind of story,” she thought, “the kind that Grandfather has. I want someone who will love me forever and be that devoted.”

Her decision not to give away her first kiss did indeed make a good story, and Jana wrote many more in her future as a successful author, mother of two children and devoted wife of a wonderful man.



Questions for Discussion



- Do you admire the grandfather’s devotion to his deceased wife? Why do people often visit graves or special places to reflect on or talk with friends or loved ones who have died? Is this a weakness in human nature, a special quality, or evidence of emotional bonds that last beyond death?
- What effect did the story about her grandfather’s first kiss have on Jana?
- Do you think that Jana’s friends made fun of her for not kissing boys?
- Do you think that boys respected Jana because of her decision? Why or why not?
- Did Jana’s husband benefit from her decision? Why or why not?
- When is devotion to a deceased spouse not a positive thing? Is it possible to be devoted to someone’s memory but be open to making new relationships for a good purpose?

The Gift of the Magi

This is another story about devotion, this time between a young married couple. It is an abridgement of a story written by the famed American short story writer O. Henry.

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Their home was a furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly fit beggar description, but it certainly was close.

Although the salary of Mr. James Dillingham Young was shrunk from \$30 to \$20 a week, whenever he came home and reached his flat above he was called ÒJimÓ and greatly hugged by Mrs. James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go very far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are.

Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling — something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before a mirror. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandmother's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear of two splashed on the worn carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme. Sophronie. Hair Goods of All Kings." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sophronie."

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take your hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practiced hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation — as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value — the description applied to both.

Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it shyly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

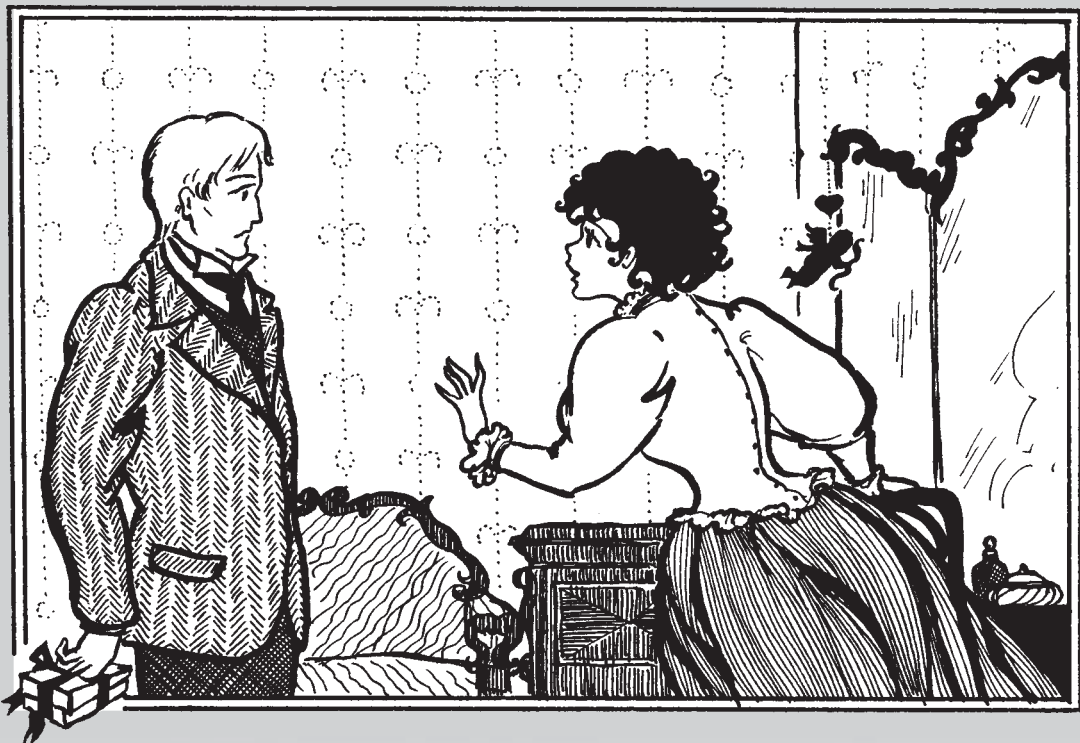
When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends — a mammoth task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me," she said to herself, "before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do — oh! What could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."



The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for Jim.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again — you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice — what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you — sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered," she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, "but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance, Jim seemed to wake quickly. He embraced his Della. Then he drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell," he said, "about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! A quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs — the set of combs, side and back, that Della had worshipped for so long in a Broadway window. Beautiful combs, pure tortoise shell, with jeweled rims — just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and her heart had simply craved and yearned over them without the least hope of possession. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the coveted adornments were gone.

But she hugged them to her bosom, finally she was able to look up with dim eyes and a smile and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then Della leaped up like a little singed cat and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm. The dull precious metal seemed to flash with a reflection of her bright and ardent spirit.

"Isn't it a dandy, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it."

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

"Dell," said he, "let's put our Christmas presents away and keep 'em a while. They're too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy you combs. And now suppose you put the chops on."

CHAPTER 31

Our Emotional Life

From the moment we are born we go through many emotional experiences. The cry of a newborn baby is the expression of discontent at the change of surroundings, and at the same time the pledge of his existence as a human being: Inhaling air, he begins to live. At two months, a baby begins to smile, expressing the pleasure of communicating with his parents. Gradually he acquires new emotional experiences. Individual differences begin to show: Some children are very emotional and express their emotions violently; others are emotionally quite reserved. This provokes corresponding reactions in the people around them, which further influence the child. A child who comes from an emotionally difficult background is usually less inclined to study than a child who has had positive emotional experiences. Hence, our character and even our intellectual activities depend greatly upon our emotional experiences in childhood. The more the personality is developed, the richer is the spectrum of its emotional states.

Most scientists distinguish three basic innate emotions: pleasure, fear and anger. Based on these, the variety of human emotions and feelings appear and are expressed. Although the whole human brain takes part in the appearance of emotional states, some leading centers of emotions have been discovered. The most important of

these brain structures is the hypothalamus.

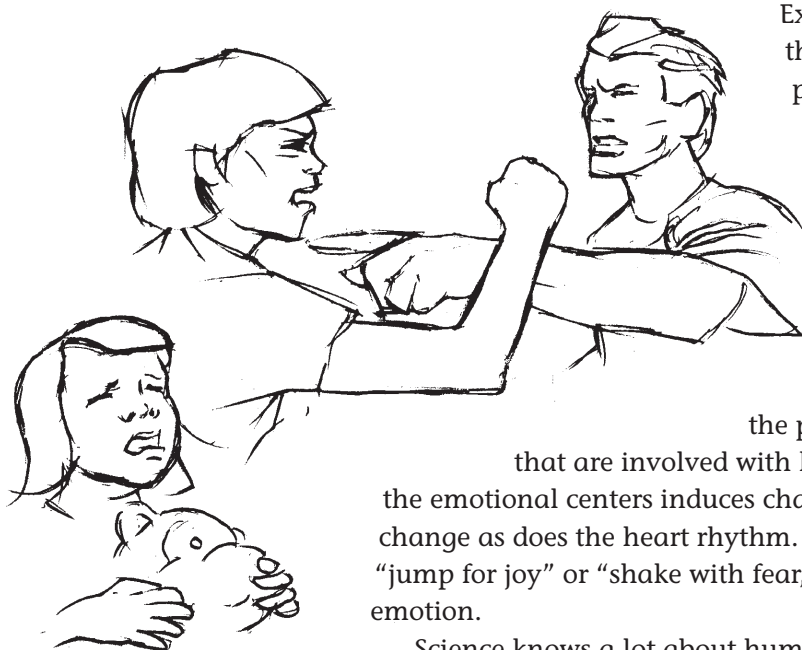
Experiments have shown that by stimulating the hypothalamus with the help of implanted electrodes, it is possible to artificially induce the states of pleasure, fear and

anger. The hypothalamus is closely connected to the cortex of the brain, so the impact of the surroundings on the cortex influences the physiological centers of emotions in the same way as their direct stimulation. The hypothalamus is also closely connected to

the pituitary gland and other parts of the brain

that are involved with hormone secretion. This is why stimulating the emotional centers induces change in the whole organism: Our emotions change as does the heart rhythm. We may grow red or pale. Our body may “jump for joy” or “shake with fear,” and our face expresses the relevant emotion.

Science knows a lot about human emotions and the mechanism of their appearance and development. But science studies only the effects of a person's





environment on his emotional state at the level of his psyche and psychophysiology. In the first volume of “My Journey in Life” we discussed the existence of not only the physical but also the spiritual aspect of human beings and introduced the notion of Heart. We can postulate that the psychophysiological mechanisms of the emotions are intermediaries between our physical and spiritual bodies. If this is true, we should consider anew the role of emotions in our bodily and spiritual life.

There is considerable evidence that pleasure is much stronger than fear, anger and other emotions that usually are called negative (in the sense of their being opposite to the emotion of pleasure). This conclusion

explains the power of love—the feeling based on the emotions of joy and pleasure. Writers often portray negative emotions—fear, hatred, resentment, aggressiveness, shame, guilt, grief and suffering. Historical materials are also more eloquent in reflecting people’s aggressive behavior compared with their life’s experience of positive emotions. In everyday life we also pay much more attention to the manifestation of negative emotions. That is why we get the impression that negative emotions have a more important role in human life than positive emotions. This is a delusion. Everything human appears only on the basis of positive emotions, most distinctly expressed by the feeling of love, and only these emotions make up the foundation for human progress.

All our life is full of feelings. Feelings are the result of strong emotional experiences. Let us consider the kinds of feelings that are based on the experience of positive emotions. Such feelings form the basis for the progress of human relationships and human society in general.

- ✕ Religious feelings, which express the joy of coming closer to God or the achievement of spiritual perfection.
- ✕ Altruistic feelings, which appear when one helps others.
- ✕ Communicative feelings, which reflect an emotional attitude toward those who are important to a person, such as parents, children, friends, etc.
- ✕ Feelings of desire for glory, which come from the need to develop self-esteem.
- ✕ Feelings expressing satisfaction as the result of one’s successful work.
- ✕ Feelings caused by the successful overcoming of barriers, dangers or difficulties.
- ✕ Romantic feelings, reflecting the desire for something mysterious or unusual.
- ✕ Intellectual feelings coming from studying something new, discovery of the unknown or solving complicated intellectual puzzles.
- ✕ Aesthetic feelings caused by communication with beauty or nature.
- ✕ Feelings of ownership of things with no immediate practical need.
- ✕ Feelings of satisfaction of physical and spiritual comfort.
- ✕ Sexual feelings, expressing itself in relationships of intimacy.

Obviously, pure feelings of any one type are rarely experienced. Normally they are interconnected and form something new, which we perceive as happiness. The

cause of happiness can be a variety of things: love, marrying, success in studies, work, sports, etc. A person can be happy due to the fullness of life, health, good relationships or overcoming difficulties. People always search for happiness because they are born to be happy, and positive feelings are the basis of happiness.

That makes it clear why the only really valuable family relationships are those permeated by positive experiences and why manifestations of anger or fear are destructive for family life. Research has shown that marriages are strongest when the husband's and wife's emotional experience, and the manifestations of this emotional experience, are similar or complementary. In the relationship between parents and children much depends on parents' reaction to their children's emotional experience and on the children's reaction to the parents' behavior.

Sexual relations are based on emotions, and people seek pleasure in these relationships. Of course, negative emotions also play an important part in sexual behavior. For example, the emotion of embarrassment leads to the restriction of sexual desire. The emotion of fear holds a person back from promiscuity; the emotion of guilt prevents premarital sex and adultery. Still, the most fulfilling love between a man and a woman is based on the mutual emotion of pleasure. Love is first of all joy. Joy is characterized by the feeling of confidence and significance, by the feeling of loving and being loved. The confidence and personal significance that are acquired through joy give a person the capacity to overcome difficulties and enjoy life. Joy is not an emotion that one can pursue and catch. It is a byproduct of a loving relationship.

Nevertheless, the human capacity for feeling joy develops in many aspects. If parents are active and joyful, the child's life can be joyful as well. The joyful experience of first love is the most distinct manifestation of human emotions. In the past, the idea of "platonic love," i.e., the love between man and woman without sexual contact, was common. For people capable of enjoying a pure relationship with the loved one, such love induces even stronger emotions than does one involving sexual relations.

Physical sexuality is incompatible with such emotions as fear. Fear experienced by a girl or a boy in a first sexual encounter at an immature age may result in later sexual impotence or resentment of any sexual relations. Rape not only inflicts an incurable psychological trauma on the victim, but also deadens the perpetrator's ability to feel joy.

Joy brought about by love is the greatest gift to humans. It is an essential part of our personality. It also helps our personality to grow, because the meaning of any feeling is not in itself but in our attitude towards that which it is connected and towards the actions it causes. What is truly important for those who surround us is that our feelings lead to actions, thus not only giving us experiences of joy, but through this, bringing benefit to the community.

Individual Exercises



- Look at a picture that expresses a strong emotional experience and try to describe the emotions felt by the depicted characters.
- Think of the brightest emotional experience of your childhood. What was its cause? How did it express itself? What do you feel today when thinking about it?
- Observe the people around you and try to guess what kind of feelings they are experiencing—positive or negative. Which ones did you see more often?

For Your Journal



During the week write down in your journal all the situations in which you experienced strong emotional feelings. Find words that most accurately characterize these feelings. At the end of the week look through your notes and define the emotions that were most dominant. Are you satisfied, or would you like to change something?

Experiences in a Concentration Camp

from Man's Search for Meaning, by Viktor Frankl

In spite of all the enforced physical and mental primitiveness of the life in a concentration camp, it was possible for spiritual life to deepen. Sensitive people who were used to rich intellectual life may have suffered much pain (they were often of a delicate constitution) but the damage to their inner selves was less. They were able to retreat from their terrible surroundings to a life of inner riches and spiritual freedom.

Only in this way can one explain the apparent paradox that some prisoners of a less hardy make-up often seemed to survive camp life better than did those of a robust nature. In order to make myself clear, I am forced to fall back on personal experience. Let me tell what happened on those early mornings when we had to march to our work site.

There were shouted commands: "Detachment, forward march! Left-2-3-4! Left-2-3-4! First man about, left and left and left and left! Caps off! These words sound in my ears even now. At the order "Caps off!" we passed the gate of the camp, and searchlights were trained upon us. Whoever did not march smartly got a kick. And worse off the man who, because of the cold, had pulled his cap back over his ears before permission was given.

We stumbled on in the darkness over big stones and through large puddles, along the road leading from the camp. The accompanying guards kept shouting at us and driving us with the butts of their rifles. Anyone with very sore feet supported himself on his neighbor's arm. Hardly a word was spoken; the icy wind did not encourage talk. Hiding his mouth behind his upturned collar, the man marching next to me whispered suddenly: "If our wives could see us now!" I do hope they are better off in their camps and don't know what is happening to us."

That brought thoughts of my own wife to mind. And as we stumbled on for miles, slipping in icy spots, supporting each other time and again, dragging one another up and onward, nothing was said, but we both

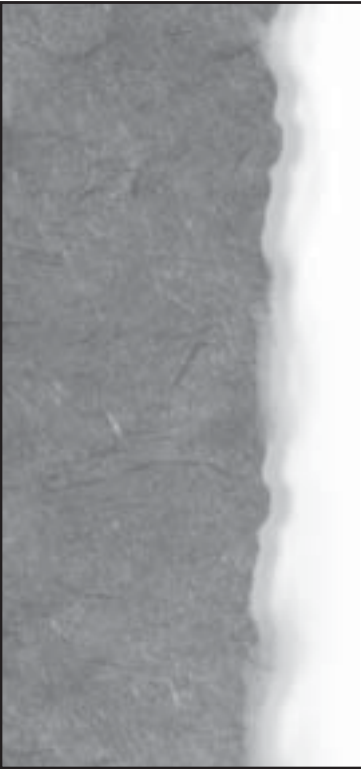


knew; each of us was thinking of his wife. Occasionally I looked at the sky, where the stars were fading and the pink light of the morning was beginning to spread behind a dark bank of clouds. But my mind clung to my wife's image, imagining it with an uncanny acuteness. I heard her answering me, saw her smile, her frank and encouraging look. Real or not, her look was then more luminous than the sun which was beginning to rise.

A thought transfixed me: for the first time in my life I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth — that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love. I understood how a man who has nothing left in this world still may know bliss, be it only for a brief moment, in the contemplation of his beloved. In a position of utter desolation, when man cannot express himself in positive action, when his only achievement may consist in enduring his sufferings in the right way — an honorable way — in such a position man can, through loving contemplation of the image he carries of his beloved, achieve fulfillment. For the first time in my life I was able to understand the meaning of the words, "The angels are lost in perpetual contemplation of an infinite glory".

In front of me a man stumbled and those following him fell on top of him. The guard rushed over and used his whip on them all. Thus my thoughts were interrupted for a few minutes. But soon my soul found its way back from the prisoner's existence to another world, and I resumed talk with my loved one: I asked her questions, and she answered; she questioned me in return, and I answered.

"Stop!" We had arrived at our work site. Everybody rushed into the dark hut in the hope of getting a fairly decent tool. Each prisoner got a spade or a pickaxe.



“Can’t you hurry up, you pigs?” Soon we had resumed the previous day’s positions in the ditch. The frozen ground cracked under the point of the pickaxes and sparks flew. The men were silent, their brains numb.

My mind still clung to the image of my wife. A thought crossed my mind: I didn’t even know if she were still alive. I knew only one thing — which I have learned well by now: Love goes very far beyond the physical person of the beloved. It finds its deepest meaning in his spiritual being, his inner self. Whether or not he is actually present, whether or not he is still alive at all, ceases somehow to be of importance.

I didn’t know whether my wife was alive, and I had no means of finding out (during all my prison life there was no outgoing or incoming mail); but at that moment it ceased to matter. There was no need for me to know; nothing could touch the strength of my love, my thoughts, and the image of my beloved. Had I known then that my wife was dead, I think that I would still have given myself, undisturbed by that knowledge, to the contemplation of her image, and that my mental conversation with her would have been just as vivid and just as satisfying. “Set me like a seal upon my heart, love is as strong as death”.

CHAPTER 32

Resolving Inner Conflict

A story from Zen Buddhism

Two monks were walking along the banks of an overflowing river. They saw a young woman who was afraid to cross. Although the monks had taken vows never to touch a woman, the older monk picked her up and carried her to the other side of the river. The younger monk seethed in anger all day. The two didn't speak until sunset, when they were allowed to break their vow of silence. Then the younger monk, enraged, accused the older monk of defiling not only himself but also the whole order. The older monk simply answered, "I put the woman down on the other side of the river early this morning. It is only you who have been carrying her around throughout the day."

Surely we all have had an experience of having to make a difficult choice. Sometimes we choose to betray a friend, promise or principle in order to preserve another relative, group or belief. Often inner conflict arises because we either regret the consequences of our choice or we realize that we made the wrong choice.

Inner conflict and turmoil can affect our emotional and physical health. If you realize that you have made a mistake in a relationship or that one of your decisions





resulted in hurting others, the best thing to do is to make amends immediately or very soon. This can be a difficult process. It sometimes helps to write out specific things that you would like to say to the offended person. “Jane, about the other day when we...”. You can rehearse it all in your mind or verbally so that when the moment comes the words are not stuck in your throat or somehow your mind suddenly goes blank. You can also:

- ✗ Admit to a third person the exact nature of your wrongdoing in order to get it out where it can be examined.
- ✗ Be willing to experience the pangs of guilt from your conscience. This is our inborn guide, our wise teacher. Our

conscience will hurt if we have treated others unjustly. Be thankful for such a sharp and active conscience. There’s a song that says “I wouldn’t feel so very bad if I weren’t so very good.”

- ✗ Learn to apologize – practice makes perfect. Admitting when you are wrong is not the end of the world and actually can turn out to be a very wonderful experience.
- ✗ Be willing to make amends by doing greater positive actions – more than what is required. This is like insurance to prevent further offenses in the future, because the ones you hurt but then helped surely will remember your actions.
- ✗ Forgive yourself – remind yourself that mistakes are part of the path of life. Sadly, some people carry their guilt around with them for years, allowing it to destroy what could have been a happy and productive life.

Other times you might be the offended person as the recipient of an injustice, misunderstanding or betrayal. It’s nearly impossible to go through life without people stepping on our toes, insulting us either consciously or unconsciously, or taking advantage of our trusting nature. No matter how much we may try to protect ourselves from the hurts and pains of life, some degree of it will happen anyway.

If you are seething in anger, resentment, disappointment or the “why me?” syndrome, you probably are taking energy from other important areas of your life – your goals for sports, schoolwork, time with your friends and family, etc. Ann Landers, a famous American newspaper advice columnist, once wrote, “Hate is like acid. It can damage the vessel in which it is stored as well as destroy the object on which it is poured.”

Here are some tips for dealing with the experience of being mistreated:

- ✗ Although painful, admit to yourself that a bad thing really DID happen – you are not making it up. Face the fact honestly that you were betrayed or hurt in some way. Remember, bad things happen to good people. Just because someone hurt or betrayed you, it doesn’t mean you deserved it.
- ✗ Tell someone whom you trust about the situation. Many times the perspective of an older or wiser person can immediately relieve some of our emotional

stress. As well that person can give practical advice about the next step to take in seeking to resolve the situation.

- ✕ Write things out. Pretend you are a newspaper reporter and interview yourself on what happened. Use “who, what, when, where, how and why” questions to clarify your experience and put it in a non-emotional perspective. Then write out your feelings on another piece of paper. Be honest, clear and use as many descriptive adjectives as you can!
- ✕ Request a meeting with the offender and try to explain calmly your thoughts and feelings on the matter at hand. Ask for the presence of a mediator if necessary – someone who can help to clarify misunderstandings or difficulties as they arise in the conversation.
- ✕ Meditate or pray about the situation. Many people find that talking with God, or imagining a conversation with a loving parent, is a very helpful tool in resolving inner conflict, forgiving others and coming to deeper insights about themselves and their relationships with others.
- ✕ Forgive those who cannot forgive or apologize. Maybe the person who hurt you is a chronic liar, a cheat or a weak-willed character. The fact is that he is creating his own destiny through his response to life’s challenges and you are creating yours. Your act of forgiveness may indeed help both of you toward a more enlightened state of mind. No one of us is perfect. We all commit mistakes in our relationships with others, hurting those around us either wittingly or unwittingly. In those times if we want to experience forgiveness, we must be willing to forgive.





Discuss the following moral dilemmas in groups of two or three. Come up with a plan of action for resolving the inner conflict of the parties involved.

- A friend at school wanted to place her desk near yours, and you convinced the teacher that you two would really be a positive influence on each other. But now you suspect that your friend has been stealing your favorite new pens! You discuss the matter with her after school, but she denies it and your pens continue to disappear. What might you do to resolve the situation? Refer to the steps above.
- In an unusual moment of jealousy and envy, you tell a lie about your friend – that she is addicted to diet pills – that's why she is so thin. The rumor finds its way to the school nurse, who wants to bring your friend to the doctor for psychological help. Your friend is totally confused and you confess the truth. She slaps you in the face and says that she'll hate you forever. What might you do next? Explain things to the nurse? Apologize again?
- Your test answers look suspiciously similar to the ones of the student sitting next to you, who has the reputation of being the brightest in the class. The teacher accuses you of cheating and tears up your test. You explain that you weren't cheating, that you studied all night and that it was just a coincidence that you had similar answers. In this case, there is no fairness or justice. The teacher gives you a zero and no chance to make up the test. What might you do to release the anger and difficult emotions that you feel toward your teacher? Is it worth it fighting to prove your innocence?

CHAPTER 33

Marriage and Family in Islam

“The family provides the environment within which human values and morals develop and grow in the new generation. The family system and the relationships between the sexes determine the whole character of society and whether it is backward or civilized.”

— Sayyid Qutb, modern Muslim reformer

The family

Muslims regard the family as an institution ordained by God. For this reason the Koran deals more with family life than with any other subject.

The Muslim family does not consist solely of the mother and father plus children. It is a complex, interwoven unit that includes brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, and cousins. If tragedy hits any relative or even a member of a neighbor's household, the family is expected to rally round and give support during the time of need.

Every member of the family has a clearly defined role and responsibilities. Special honor is given to the elders. In Muslim families age comes first, and grandparents take priority over children, who are taught to be respectful and considerate.



He who has no compassion for our little ones and does not acknowledge the honor due to our elders is not one of us.

— Hadith

Great importance is laid upon the training and education of all Muslim children. This process begins when a child is born. The head of the family whispers the call to prayer into the baby's ear so that the first word he hears is "Allah." As children grow up, parents teach them the manners expected of them in their religion and the society in which they live. The source of authority is custom and tradition reinforced by the extended family.

Instructions to children:

- ✕ Be patient, grateful, compassionate, respectful and kind to your parents.
- ✕ Listen when parents speak. Do not interrupt or argue with them.
- ✕ It is impolite to call your parents by their first names.
- ✕ If your parents ask something that you cannot fulfill, apologize politely.
- ✕ Help your parents without being asked.
- ✕ When parents become old, be aware of their increased physical weakness and possible mental weakness. Be aware, and increase your patience and kindness.

Instructions to parents:

- ✕ Avoid overconfidence and false pride arising from your love for your children, and be on guard against misdeeds.
- ✕ Give them the best possible education, not just to be clever but also to be able to earn a living.
- ✕ Help them to make happy marriages.
- ✕ Always treat them justly and with love. Never be unfair.
- ✕ Don't be overprotective or negligent.
- ✕ Don't put heavy burdens on them by trying to force them to do things beyond their capability.
- ✕ Train them to be Muslims.

Men and women

Islam teaches that Allah created everything in complementary pairs, and for this reason men and women have equal spiritual worth. This was a tremendous advance on the pre-Islamic era in which women were regarded as little more than chattel and could be commanded as fathers or husbands pleased. Daughters had no inheritance rights and often were buried alive in their infancy.

The principle of equality before Allah gave great rights and freedoms to women at a time when they were considered to be inferior beings. But Islam does take account of the physical differences between the sexes. The idea of ending the difference between the roles of men and women is unthinkable to Muslims. They have observed the catastrophic consequences for sexual morality and consequent family breakdown that have occurred in societies where traditional roles have been rejected.

By sanctifying the institution of marriage, Islam made its greatest contribution to the lives of women:

- ✕ Marriage became the sole legitimate place for sexual relationships.
- ✕ A woman has to give her free consent before she may be wed.
- ✕ The marriage bond was strengthened and just provision was made in case of divorce, which also can be initiated by the wife.
- ✕ Women were given the right to own and inherit property.



Modesty and faith are joined closely together; if either of them is lost, the other goes also. Every religion has a special character; the character of Islam is modesty.

— Hadith

Wife and mother

A Muslim woman's primary role is that of wife and mother. She manages the household, raises the children, and supervises their religious and moral training. Although a Muslim woman is permitted to go out to work, in practice not many do so. Nevertheless, in the modern world more and more Muslim women receive higher education, as they take up their right to equality with men.

Muslim women behave and dress modestly. When in public, women try not to draw attention to themselves. If

they catch a man's eye, they do not stare at him but look away.

Muslim women usually cover their heads with some kind of scarf or veil. They cover their arms to the wrists and their legs to the ankles. This is called wearing *hijab*. The wearing of the black *chador*, or veil covering the face, is a matter of local custom and is not a requirement of Islam. Problems arise in modernizing Muslim societies when women may be forced to wear such garments against their will.

When a woman becomes a mother, she takes on an enormous responsibility. In allowing her body to produce a new living being, she should bear in mind the inalienable rights of every child:

- ✕ The right to life, and equal chances in life.
- ✕ The right to legitimacy—which means that every child should have a legal father.
- ✕ The right to a good and loving upbringing.

Husband and father

Despite the equality that the Koran gives to men and women, in Muslim societies men take the dominant roles in most of the social, religious and political institutions.

A man's social standing, though, is initially largely dependent on his being a good husband and father.

The father is head of the family and is responsible for the family's welfare and business outside the home. The man is expected to provide the means for the family to live and fulfill its responsibilities to the wider community as well as to protect the home and generally to enable his wife to fulfill her role.

The best gift that a father gives to his children is that of a good education and manners.

— Hadith

Marriage

Muslims regard marriage as the normal human status for all adults. Marriage is regarded as a sacred covenant, a legal contract not simply between two individuals but between two families. It is quite normal in Muslim countries for relatives outside the immediate family, such as cousins, to marry. This makes the extended family very close.

[H]e created you mates that you may dwell in tranquility with them and he has put love and mercy between your hearts ...

— Koran 30:21

We created you from a simple pair of a male and a female ... that you may know each other (not that you may despise each other).

— Koran 49:13

Islam teaches that the spiritual and physical desires that everyone has should be fulfilled in a wholesome and pure way without excess and without causing suffering. Muslims believe that sex is good but that sexual pleasure pursued without regard to moral considerations is unwholesome. It degrades sex and corrupts the people that engage in it. Such permissiveness leads to the breakdown of society, to selfishness,

rape, lying and deception, lack of responsibility, alcohol and drug addiction, theft and even murder.

That is why Islam prohibits any type of privacy between couples who are not married to each other. Muslims do not believe that sexual freedom before a commitment to marriage contributes anything to the future stability of that marriage. The assumption that the couple will have “tried each other out” and so will “know” each other is nonsense to Muslims. In societies in which sexual freedom is tolerated, many marriages fail and divorce rates are very high. Muslims would not welcome mar-

When a husband and wife share intimacy, it is rewarded, and a blessing from Allah; just as they would be punished if they engaged in illicit sex.

— Hadith





The Prophet said, “A woman should only be married to a person who is good enough for her or compatible to her.”

— Hadith

Muslims think that parents know their children and, as married people themselves, know what kind of qualities are necessary for a good marriage. Muslims regard “being under the influence of love” as a dangerous and intoxicating state of mind that can easily cloud their judgment. Although for Muslim couples love usually comes after marriage and not before, the divorce rate in Muslim countries is very low.

Potential Muslim couples get to know each other in order to find out each other’s qualities and to discover whether there is a basis for mutual understanding. They see each other before marriage so that feelings of love, companionship and closeness develop. They are not on their own but are chaperoned, often by one of their brothers. Courtship is only the first step toward marriage and may not always end in marriage. Therefore a woman’s reputation and chastity have to be protected.

Do not marry only for a person’s looks; their beauty may become the cause of moral decline. Do not marry for wealth, for this may become the cause of disobedience. Marry rather on the grounds of religious devotion.

— Hadith

The most important ingredients in a Muslim marriage are shared values and beliefs, so that even if the couple come from different cultures and backgrounds, they possess the same basic worldview, attitudes and habits which bind them together. The most important compatibility is one of heart.

Although Muslims often marry a relative, interracial and international marriages are not unusual. This is because the Islamic family, the *ummah*, crosses the boundaries of race and nationality. People are Muslims first and only secondly are they members of a particular nation or tribe.

The wedding

The actual wedding ceremony usually takes place in the home of the bride. Sometimes the bride and bridegroom take their marriage vows in each other’s hearing, but at other times they remain in different places, so witnesses hear the vows and pass word to the partner that the promises have been made. The bride and bridegroom make their vows in the presence of two adult male witnesses. Prayers are said, passages are read from the Koran and the vows are made. Rings are exchanged and a marriage contract is drawn up and signed.

riage to a partner who had experienced many previous “trial encounters,” because they might quite easily seek other “trials” even after marriage.

Arranged marriages

Marriages for young Muslim couples are often arranged by their parents. For Muslims marriage is not just about two people starting a new family, but rather the joining together of existing families. Although both partners must freely consent to the marriage, parents help their children to choose.

The best of treasures is a good wife. She is pleasing to her husband's eyes, obedient to his word, and watchful over his possessions in his absence; and the best of you are those who treat their wives best.

— Hadith

The most detestable act that God has permitted is divorce.

— Hadith

Within a few days of the wedding a party called the *walima* is given for all friends and family. It usually consists of a sumptuous feast, and many presents are given.

Divorce

Although Islam upholds the sanctity of marriage and the need for its continuance and permanence, it also recognizes that not every marriage will be successful. Therefore Islam, although strongly discouraging it, allows for divorce as a last resort.

Before there is a divorce, all members of both families try to bring about a reconciliation, since the ending of a marriage is almost like death. However, the divorce process itself is quick and easy and the woman is provided for fairly. Despite the ease with which Muslims can divorce, the divorce rate is actually extremely low.

Adultery

Muslims regard adultery as the most dishonorable and shameful thing a person can do. It is a serious crime because it can cause the breakup of one if not two families. The hurt and betrayal it causes are so deep that it is almost impossible to be forgiven for it.

Have nothing to do with adultery, for it is a shameful thing and an evil opening the way to other evils.

— Koran 17:32

Therefore Muslim men are forbidden to tempt married women, and a wife should never willingly betray her husband's trust. A good wife would prefer death to dishonor.



Polygamy

There has been much misunderstanding of the Islamic view of polygamy. Islam permits a limited polygamy, but it does not encourage it. The ideal Muslim family is one husband and one wife, and nearly all Muslim marriages are monogamous. However, Muslim men are permitted to have up to four wives, but only on certain conditions:

- ✗ the first wife should give permission
- ✗ later wives must not be a cause of distress
- ✗ all wives must be treated equally

Since the last stipulation is virtually impossible to keep, Muslims often say that when Muhammad made this stipulation, he was really saying that men should have only one wife.

Situations in which a man may take a second wife are:

- ✗ if the first marriage does not produce children;
- ✗ if the first wife is so unwell that she as well as the husband and children need to be looked after.

Muslims point out that men in Western countries practice “serial polygamy” by having one wife after another, and also sire many fatherless children. Muslims think it would be better to have polygamy than a society full of one-parent families and abandoned older women. However, as mentioned before, monogamy is without question the Islamic ideal.

Something to
think about



- How important do you think it is for a person to marry someone who shares the same religious beliefs?
- What do you think of the division of roles between husband and wife?
- Why do Muslims think it is better for the family if mothers stay at home?
- What does equality in marriage mean?
- How does the rare Muslim practice of polygamy compare with having one wife after another?
- What is the role of a Muslim father in the family? Do you think it is good for the man to take responsibility for his household?
- Explain why Muslims think that permissiveness is so destructive. How does promiscuity lead to the breakdown of society and the corruption of values?
- Can you think of any reasons why arranged marriages, such as those found among Muslims, often survive longer than love matches?

On Marriage

by Kahlil Gibran

Then Almitra spoke again and said,
And what of marriage, Master?
And he answered saying:
You were born together, and together
you shall be forevermore.
You shall be together
when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Ay, you shall be together
even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.

Love one another, but make not a bond of love.
Let it rather be a moving sea
between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread
but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous,
but let each one of you be alone.
Even as the strings of a lute are alone
though they quiver with the same music.

Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart.
And the oak tree and the cypress
grow not in each other's shadow.

CHAPTER 34

Why Families Break Down

When people marry, they usually hope that their marriage will last until they die. They certainly don't think that their relationship will sour and break down. Nevertheless, throughout the world the divorce rate is soaring. In Russia the divorce rate is about 60 percent. In Moscow it is 75 percent; this means that three of every four marriages end in divorce. Several million people divorce each year. If we are to avoid adding to these statistics, it is worth taking a look at the causes of divorce. Then we shall be more prepared for the challenges that come and hopefully will be able to overcome them.

Courtship helps to ensure that a couple are intellectually and spiritually compatible. This process usually leads people to unconsciously choose a person who is similar to themselves in many respects, usually sharing a similar educational background and coming from similar families. This makes it easier for the marriage to work, since there are fewer challenges to strain the relationship. Both partners usually will have the same expectations of running the household, of the roles in the home and of child rearing. Many conflicts can arise where opinions and values in these matters differ.

Causes of divorce

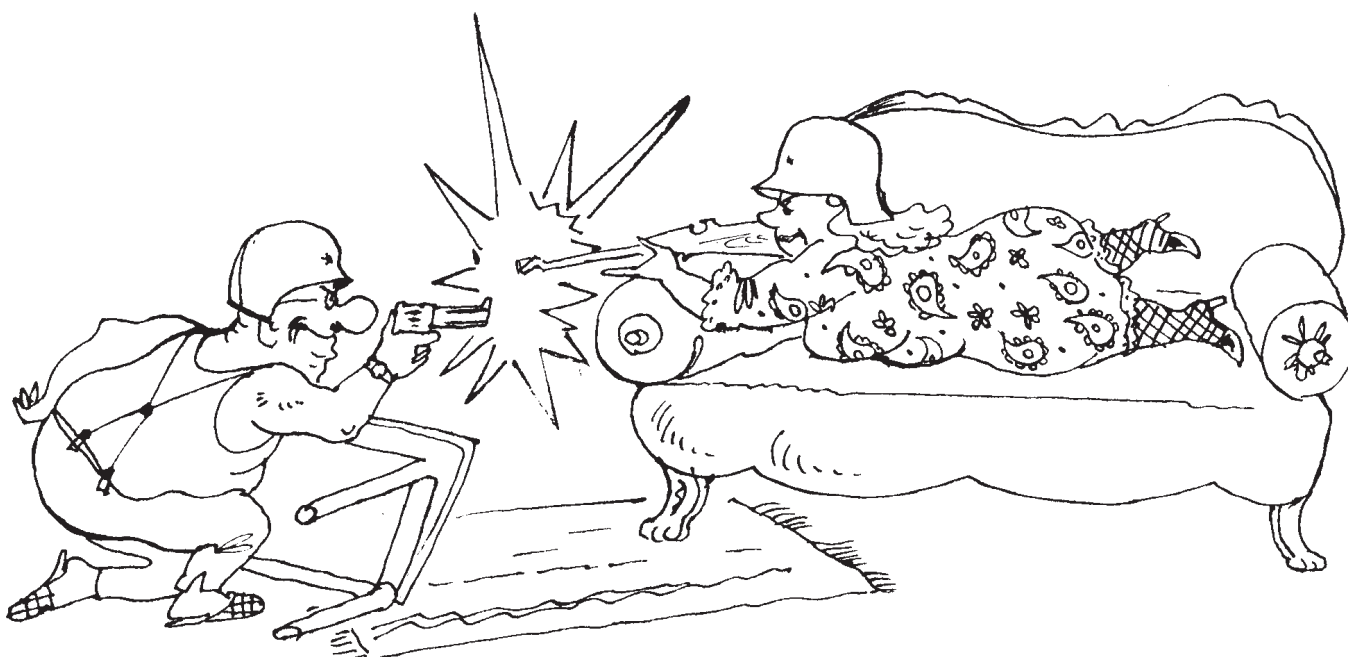
There are many pressures on marriage in modern society. Rapid social, economic and ideological changes present challenges that were unknown to earlier generations. Several general factors have contributed to this increase in divorce.

- ✕ The focus of marriage has changed. In the past, marriage was more of a social custom and institution. The family was a working unit involved in farming or business. People



generally did not marry because of love. Today marriage is more of an emotional encounter. Before marrying it's good to ask ourselves: Are we really ready to enter this world of feelings and emotions? How good are we at forming stable, mature relationships? Are we too emotional or too reserved?

- ✕ Women's widening professional opportunities have brought other challenges. A woman today often has a fulltime job. Sometimes her salary is higher than her husband's. This may weaken his self-esteem and pride. He may feel superfluous, unable to make a unique contribution to the family. A large independent income also makes it easy for women to live without a husband. In such a situation the marriage partners need to be more sensitive to each other and to try to understand each other's point of view.
- ✕ Today we have greater expectations of marriage than ever before. However, this can mean that we are easily disappointed. We must recognize that a successful marriage doesn't come ready made; it needs work.
- ✕ When a couple do things together, their relationship becomes deeper. They learn to support, help and encourage each other. During this century the state has taken over many of the functions that traditionally were performed by the family, such as education, health and welfare. Having fewer common tasks to unite them, a husband and wife can easily drift apart. To counter this, we have to become more responsible. We should not expect or allow others to do what we should do ourselves.
- ✕ Teenagers are particularly susceptible to the emotional challenges of marriage. Marriages at this age are often accompanied by stresses arising from housing, work and economic difficulties. It is worth waiting for the right time to marry. Before taking such a serious step, we need to ask ourselves whether we are mature enough to meet the challenges that marriage brings.
- ✕ Sometimes a couple meet and marry very quickly, before really knowing each other's good and bad points. Studies have shown that the success of a marriage is related to the length and quality of courtship. When a couple wait several years before marrying, they have the chance to check and recheck whether they are really suited for each other. It is worth taking the time to prepare for marriage by getting to know one's future spouse deeply.





- ✘ Drinking has destroyed countless marriages. Alcohol reduces inhibitions, and a drinker, if angry or frustrated, may verbally and physically abuse his spouse and children. Excessive drinking also can lead to economic problems when the family is left short of money. Often people drink to escape from reality. Learning the right way to go through painful experiences is a good preparation for future family life. Instead of trying to escape, we need to accept reality and deal with it with integrity. Learning not to be controlled by our physical desires is an important part of our training course.
- ✘ Divorce rates for non-religious people are higher than for those who practice their religion. How one views marriage—whether as a sacred covenant or merely a relationship—makes quite a difference. The sustained attempt to suppress religion undermined the sacred view of marriage. At the same time divorce was made easy and children were often brought up by the state. It is quite a challenge to restore the true meaning of marriage. Before you marry, find out what your future spouse thinks of the institution of marriage. Your marriage will definitely be more stable if both of you share the same understanding of marriage and its value. If your ideas differ, it's better to find it out before you marry. Then you will have a chance to reconsider your decision or will be better prepared for the difficulties that can appear in your family life.
- ✘ Surprisingly, some people marry when they are not in love, allowing themselves to be pressured into marriage. Before marrying, be sure that you truly love each other—and are not just “in love”—and that you are ready to make a commitment for life. It is better to call off an engagement, even at the last moment, if one has doubts, than to marry in haste and regret it later on.

- ✕ A challenge for many married couples is the relationship with in-laws, particularly when the newlyweds move into the parents' home. It is not easy for a wife or husband who is a stranger to join a household. It involves establishing and stabilizing emotional and practical relationships with all the in-laws. Observe your parents and grandparents, and learn how they interact with each other.
- ✕ As we grow, we change. If you marry when you are 21, you may find that your spouse is a different person at age 30. The challenge of a couple is to change and grow together as partners, facing the future together and supporting each other when difficult times come. These shared experiences enrich the marriage and make it deeper and more fulfilling. People who don't do this may feel that they have grown apart.
- ✕ When two people marry, they become a couple and have to adjust to sharing their life with another person. This takes time and effort. It means giving up some of the things one did as an individual in order to create a family. In our relationships we need to learn to balance our own desires with those of other people. Then it will be much easier to find harmony with our spouse.
- ✕ Another factor to be aware of is family finances. If one spouse is frugal but the other is a compulsive shopper and wastes money, there is bound to be conflict.
- ✕ Work too can put a strain on a marriage. If one spouse works too many hours, the couple will not have the time to relax and enjoy each other's company. Another problem may be unemployment. When a person loses a job, that person feels rejected and like a failure. He easily can feel humiliated, angry, and depressed and can become very irritable. In addition, the loss of income most likely will put a strain on the family.
- ✕ Some couples marry because the bride is pregnant. In such a situation the couple may not have discussed whether they love each other or whether they are ready for the responsibility of having a family. They may feel trapped and



see their marriage, and often the child, as some kind of punishment. This is hardly a happy beginning for a family. Statistics show that the majority of such marriages end in divorce. It's difficult to think of a better reason for keeping chastity.

- ✕ A major cause of divorce is adultery. When a couple first marry, they are excited by each other and just want to be in each other's presence. Over time the sparkle in the relationship may fade. If they are not growing in love and deepening their relationship, they can easily grow bored with each other. The relationship becomes stale and predictable. Their love grows cold. Often they will argue frequently, as the love that would make them more tolerant is missing.

At this point one may meet an attractive woman/man, and find that person stimulating and fun to be with. Friendship can turn to infatuation. The relationship is exciting and fulfilling. Sometimes this "affair" lasts only a short time or may be just a casual encounter. The spouse never finds out. However, the secret creates a barrier between the husband and wife and creates distance. It is a worm that eats away at the relationship. More serious extramarital relationships may last for years. If the betrayed spouse discovers the relationship, it can lead to divorce or, if the couple stay together, at the very least an irreparable loss of trust and closeness.

Marriage can be the source of great joy and happiness, but it is also a challenge. Before undertaking such a challenge, we should be prepared. The best preparation is to develop self-control. We must learn to manage our time and money. We must challenge ourselves so that we can control our physical desires and fulfill them at the right time and place. We must follow our conscience at all times and not give into temptation.

Furthermore, we must learn how to love others. This does not mean learning how to have sex. The key to satisfactory sex is a satisfactory relationship. Sex is important in a marriage, but most couples find that what happens *in* bed is affected by the quality of the relationship *outside* the bed – in other words, the loving relationship that a couple maintain in their daily life.

From this we can see that marriage should not be undertaken lightly. Whom you marry will be the most important decision of your life. Marriage is the most intimate relationship you will ever have. It can lead to the greatest joy, but it also can lead to misery. Preparing for marriage and its challenges is very important. Your entire life before marriage should be a preparation for marriage and becoming a parent. If you think like this, you will be far less likely to divorce and instead will find that through marriage you can grow and find deep happiness and peace.

For Your Journal



Imagine that you are about to marry. You and your future spouse decide to make a formal agreement with each other. What would you like to include in this agreement? What assurances would you like to give to your beloved?

CHAPTER 35

Human Sexuality

Before we learn about sex, we need to understand what human sexuality is. So much is seen, heard, said and even sung about sex today, that many people think sex is only something we do. However, our sexuality is part of our personality. It's not just our sexual organs and what we do or don't do with them; it's all the traits and values—physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual—that make a person male or female.

The word “sex” is used to refer to the physical and personal act of male and female genital union, sexual intercourse. This union brings with it an awesome responsibility for the persons involved and thus must be discussed and treated with respect. Sex is much more than just a casual pleasure.

The word “sex” also is used to refer to our gender, male or female. From the moment we are conceived, our maleness or femaleness is determined. Indeed, our sexuality, or the way we express ourselves as a male or female person, is part of us from the very beginning of life. Some of our expressions are determined by heredity, and others are learned as we interact with the world around us. Very early in life we begin to find ways to express our sexuality in words, feelings, thoughts and other creative ways.

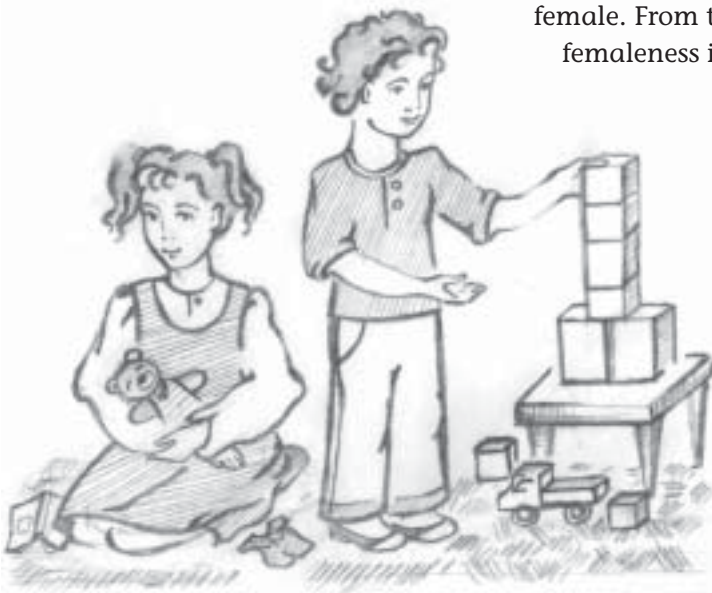
Even the male brain is different from the female brain. Tests have shown that the lobe of the brain with verbal skills develops more quickly in girls, while the lobe with visual skills develops more quickly in boys. One reason why men usually don't express feelings as well as women is that men have less of a connection between the verbal and emotional

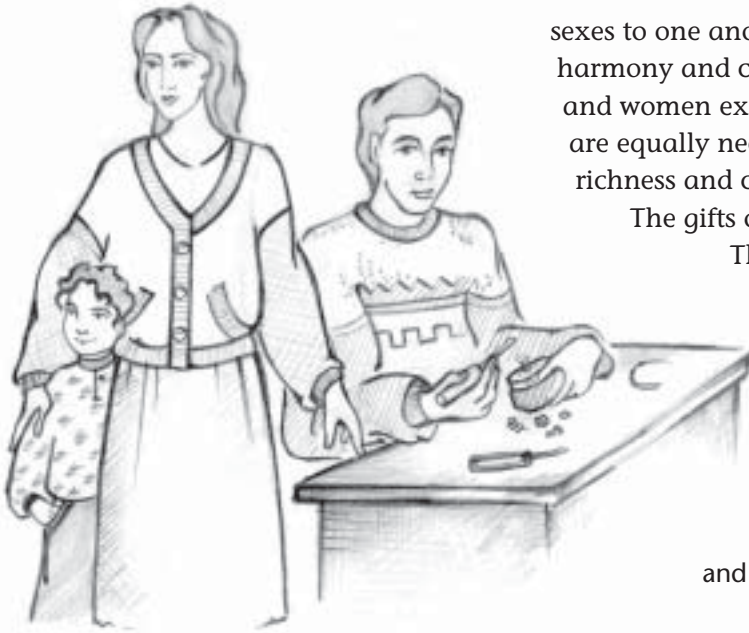
parts of the brain than women have.

While men are more adept at analytical reasoning, a woman's mind tends to arrive at the same conclusion through intuitive insight. A woman's heart is generally more sensitive, and women seem to have a better sense of ultimate objectives and people.

A woman's exercise of authority is different from a man's. It's neither better nor worse. A woman's point of view and priorities differ from a man's. A man's emotional warmth is different in quality from a woman's emotional warmth.

Everything you think, feel and do—you experience as a man or as a woman. Why is this? Human sexuality is a gift for differentiating between and attracting the





sexes to one another. Men and women experience balance, harmony and completion through each other. Although men and women express different aspects of human nature, both are equally necessary in order to experience the wholeness, richness and completeness of love, life and humanity.

The gifts of one are not better than the gifts of the other.

They complement one another, and that's why men and women need each other. When we can understand this, we can accept and respect each other's differences. Everyone discovers his or her complete self in relation to the other.

God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

— Gen. 1:27

This Bible verse teaches not only that man and woman reflect the different aspects of God's nature—man expressing God's original masculinity and woman expressing God's original femininity—but also that a man's and woman's harmonious union reflects God's oneness.

How can we learn to respect our sexuality?

We need to come to terms with our sex and sexuality and learn to grow with them as we mature. Respect for sex is necessary if sex and sexuality are to have a constructive, enriching roles in our lives.

Some young people think that learning to have sex is more important than learning to love. They may become sexually active before marriage, thinking that is the way to enhance their life. Peer pressure to perform sexually can be intense, and many young people feel, either consciously or unconsciously, that they need to be sexually active in order to be accepted.

Once we understand that our sexuality extends throughout our entire being and is part of our whole personality, we will not feel pressured to prove our manhood or womanhood through sexual intercourse.

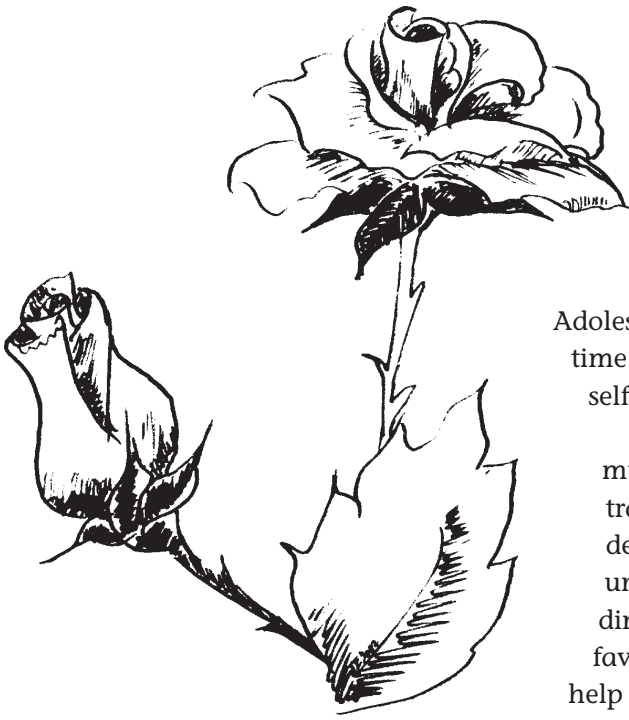


Almost everyone grows to physical sexual maturity without any effort. But how can we grow to sexual maturity emotionally, mentally, socially, and spiritually? Developing their sexuality without becoming sexually active is the main challenge that teenagers face.

What is maturity?

This is an important question. By maturity we are speaking not about physical maturity, but about spiritual maturity, the maturity of our personality. As an adolescent it's important to be aware of the qualities of a mature person, so that we'll know how to become one!

Becoming mature is a lifelong process. Believe it or not, even your parents



can be learning and growing in maturity—they probably have learned a lot just from raising you! Although maturity is a lifelong process, we must reach a certain level of maturity to function properly and well in the adult world.

Children come into the world dependent and self-centered. Slowly, as they begin to share and help, they learn that they are not the center of the universe. Adolescence is a time for important growth in maturity. It's a time to move from being self-centered and impulsive to being selfless and disciplined—practicing self-control.

It requires a lot of self-control and training to become a musician, an athlete, or a scientist. In the same way we can train ourselves to love unselfishly and unconditionally with depth and commitment. We can start now by practicing unselfishness and sacrifice (for example, helping with dinner when we'd rather be with our friends, giving up our favorite TV show in order to do a better science project or to help our younger brother or sister do homework).

By developing our ability to love, our sexuality develops harmoniously. It is eventually realized in its fullness—manifested in a selfless love and in the gift of the total self—allowing us to become a true man or a true woman. Husband and wife are then able to grow together in love and service to a new level of maturity. In nature, nothing reproduces before it has completely matured. If you are given a rosebud, you are given a promise of beauty. You don't rip it open right away so that you can enjoy the fragrance and softness and color immediately. If you did, you would have nothing of value whatsoever. You can only enjoy a rose if you keep it in a protected place and wait for it to unfold. Then it will share with you its fragrance, its color and its softness, all in its own time.

If we don't take the time to go through this development first, we are like a person who tries to swim in a pool before filling it with water. If there is no water, we cannot swim. If there is not enough water in the pool, swimming is difficult or impossible. If the water is deep enough, it buoys us up and we can swim with freedom of movement. In other words, our "pool" of love needs depth before it can hold us up for a happy experience of marriage and parenthood.

Individual Exercise



You are a TV critic for your local newspaper. Watch a popular TV program and write an article about it. Point out who was mature and who wasn't and what the consequences of acting immaturely were. Interview others who watched the show and include their reactions in your article.

For Your Journal



How mature am I?

Immaturity

- Self-centered, concerned only about “me”.
- Focuses on immediate pleasure, the here and now; unconcerned about the future.
- Insecure, needs to go along with the crowd.
- Sees boys and girls in stereotyped roles, macho and dependent.
- Confuses love with physical attraction.

Maturity

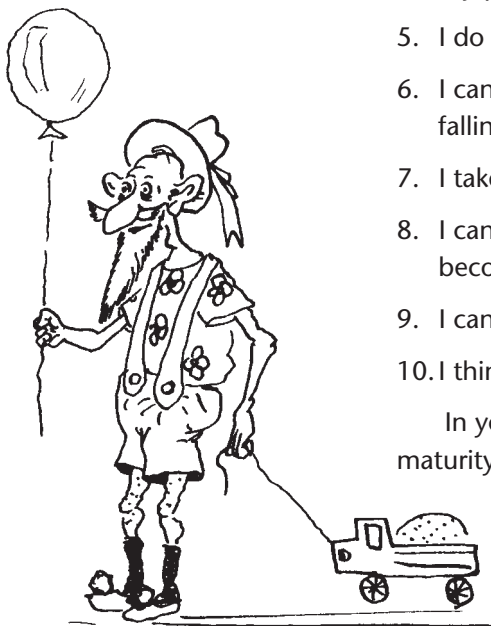
- Caring and kind toward others, secure enough to give not just take from others.
- Aware of long-term consequences, accepts responsibility for decisions.
- Independent, knows one’s mind and values; resists wrong peer pressure.
- Understands complexity of sexuality, the interplay of gentleness and strength.
- Sees physical and emotional components of love as inseparable.

There are many adults who do not act like adults. Their maturity is only physical. The more mature we are, the more control we have over our impulses and the more responsible we will be.

How mature are you? Try rating yourself on the “Maturity Scale” below. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for each sign of maturity, with 1 meaning “strongly disagree” and 10 meaning “strongly agree.”

1. I can stand up against the group when I think that what they’re doing is wrong.
2. I can pass up immediate pleasure for future gain.
3. I think about and respect the feelings of others.
4. My parents can depend on me to help at home.
5. I do my school assignments thoroughly on my own and on time.
6. I can face frustration, discomfort or defeat without complaining or falling apart.
7. I take responsibility for the consequences of my decisions and actions.
8. I can control my anger and settle disputes reasonably without becoming abusive, violent or destructive.
9. I can admit my mistakes without making excuses for them.
10. I think about how something will affect others before I do it.

In your journal, write your thoughts concerning your level of maturity and in what ways you hope to change.



Love, Life and Lineage

Sexual union expresses a type of relationship—a permanent, faithful and exclusive one: an eternal commitment of marriage. Sexual love has three major purposes:

1. Experiencing the most profound love and depth of relationship between a man and a woman.
2. Creating new life, which initiates an eternal relationship with another human being.
3. Passing on inherited traits to another generation and continuing the lineage.

The essence of life is love. The human lineage is transmitted by means of the love and life of a husband and wife. Thus, love, life and lineage—the most valuable things to us—are all realized through sexual love. The linkage of love, life and lineage gives history its continuity. Therefore, love between husband and wife is the fulfillment of a divine design.

Sexual love is the fulfillment and expression of the commitment of eternal love between a mature man and mature woman—a celebration of a couple's total unity with God and with each other, enabling them to give and receive love in a true way. Sexual love is God's design for a couple to experience love in all the beauty, fervor and purity that He intended for them. Husband and wife create children as the fruits of their love, experiencing true parental love, which is selfless and unconditional. These children can fulfill their true potential. They create a harmonious family that lives in true joy and happiness.

CHAPTER 36

Sexual Integrity

Searching for love

Adolescence is a period when young people want to assert their independence, start work or advanced study and, with particular reference to their sexuality, become familiar with themselves as a man or woman and begin discovering the world of the opposite sex. However, it also characterizes a time when we are confused about our identity. This is because a young person is concluding the childhood years and beginning life as an adult. One moment we feel grown up and independent and the next we feel a great need to depend on our parents.

Because adolescence is a time when our physical bodies reach full maturity and a time of great psychological change, there is a growing and intense awareness of the opposite sex. In the area of sexuality it is the period of discovering our sexual identity.

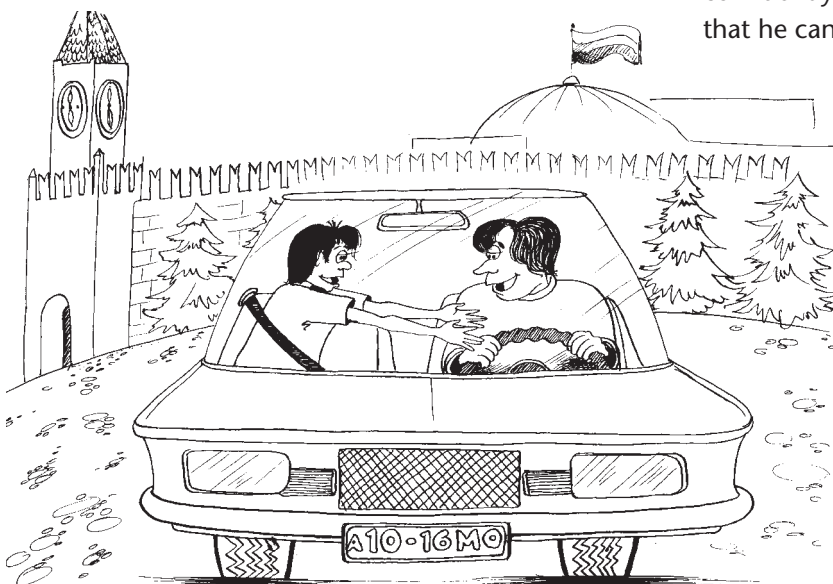
Until relatively recently in human history, many people throughout the world did not date before they married and rarely spent time alone with their intended spouse until their wedding day. Courtship often proceeded under the guide of a chaperone. A suitor might formally kiss the hand of his beloved upon their engagement, but greater physical passion was reserved for after the wedding.

What would you do if your ten-year-old brother asked you to let him drive your father's car while you were driving through the center of a big city? He has a strong desire to do so and he has all of the physical requirements to carry it out. He has eyes, hands, feet and ears, and he's tall for his age. Very

confidently he tells you not to worry, assuring you that he can handle it. But you know very well that

this is not the best way to help him to develop his driving abilities. He may kill himself and someone else too.

If you really love your brother and care about the well-being of others, it is inconceivable to let him drive on his own through the center of town, and if you did agree to teach him to drive, you would definitely choose a suitable environment for his safety and the safety of others under your direct supervision.



Don't you think this example relates to the themes we are discussing? How often do we resemble this boy, thinking we are mature enough to make decisions on our own, including the areas of sex and love? Doesn't this kind of thinking sometimes lead us into relationships for which we are not ready?

Chastity is not a popular virtue these days. With hearts pounding and pulses racing, adolescents approach sexuality as though it were a mysterious deity. It is new, it is exciting, it is completely overshadowing.

However, we need to be aware that what people seek *through* sex is something *other* than sex—something deeper, more permanent. Sex and love are not the same. But what is the difference?

It is true that sex is a natural desire, but the role it plays in our lives and the importance we attribute to it are a matter of choice. No one can live without love, but no one has ever died from a lack of sex. Unlike animals, human beings have the freedom to choose whether to be sexually active or not. There are many people who have chosen a life of celibacy, often for religious reasons.

Love is as essential to life as food. Research on infant needs has demonstrated that without love, expressed in physical tenderness and cuddling, infant mortality rates increase significantly. For adults, the lack or loss of love can drive people to despair and even suicide. Everyone needs to experience love. When love is lost, people desperately look for a substitute.

Sex alone cannot substitute for love. If we have sex, hoping to find love, we certainly will be hurt. Love has to come first, accompanied by trust, responsibility and commitment.



Sex and intimacy

Human sexuality involves the whole person and thus the whole of life. Sexual relations are like the summit. The base for the summit is daily life together, a life in common. This requires an environment of the home. The home is the place of an intimacy of heart that naturally extends into the sexual life of a couple. Therefore, sexuality concerns the innermost being of a person.

Through the act of love, married couples give themselves to one another in body and mind. For married couples, sex is a sign of love and an exclusive right they share. Each values the other as the most important person in his life, for the rest of his life. At the heart of sexual intercourse is the expression of love arising from a continuous, committed relationship.

Cut off from marriage, a sexual relationship is torn from its roots. Often the motivation for entering this kind of relationship is “what can this person give me” rather than “what can I give to make this relationship lasting and beautiful.” It is not the expression of complete trust and security between two people linked in a profound and permanent way.

Outside marriage, the sexual act awakens that which is most intimate, most sacred, most vulnerable in the human heart—without being able to fulfill the deep need to love and to be loved with a *complete* love. The need to relate permanently to another human being in total love and raise a family is as much a social need as a personal one.

In many relationships the partners feel committed temporarily but have not sealed their love with a permanent pledge to a shared destiny for life. They have not taken the step to confirm their commitment by saying to their family, friends, and community: “We are in this together—for life. We are ready to be parents if children come our way. We’re a family.”

Without a recognized and permanent commitment, sexual relations remain terribly fragile. They are subject to the moods, fears and passions of one or the other and under constant doubt: “You love me because I please you today, but what about tomorrow? Do you truly love me for who I am?”

One of the partners may be more committed than the other and, when the relationship breaks up, may feel very distressed and used. In fact, some relationships resemble exploitation in which two people agree to use one another for sexual relief and

serve each other’s emotional needs temporarily before they are ready for permanent relationships. Sex is too precious and powerful a force to be used in this way.

Set your limits

Sexual integrity allows us the freedom to develop and strengthen our character so that we can experience the fullness of love. Integrity means completeness or wholeness. Wholeness is unity between our mind and body, the balancing of all the parts of the self to create a dynamic and harmonious order. Wholeness focuses on building the full beauty and strength of the self, which makes happiness possible.





Sexual integrity creates order and beauty in one's character and happiness in one's life. Marriage requires much more friendship than romance, and one who intends to marry someday needs to cultivate the art of friendship more than skillful sex.

In comparison with sexual integrity, sexual impulsiveness and permissiveness can deform one's character, leading a person to become extremely self-absorbed. Sexually permissive people are like starving people, scrounging wherever they can for food. It is as if within themselves there is an inner emptiness, a bottomless pit crying out to be filled but which can never be completely filled. They never feel "full-filled" or have a sense of completeness. They always feel

"a part of me is missing."

Union: The goal of love

The goal of all love is said to be growth to the point of total union—living in unity with another person, with all humanity and with all things in the universe. This view of union is one based on spiritual love.

The concept of union or merging with the divine is found in most religions. God is thought to be omnipresent. Therefore, it is possible to merge with the divine as long as one is realizing one's own true self. This desire for oneness or union is what propels the continuing growth of love. It is the impetus to merge with someone you love on a much deeper level than mere physical connection. It is the impetus to seek harmony within oneself and with all of life.

Hatred is repelling, love is unity.

— Father Alexander Men,
Russian Orthodox priest

For Your Journal



Make three columns with the headings *Falling in love*; *Committed, life-long love*; and *Using the other, not love*. Beneath each heading write as many behaviors, feelings, and thoughts as possible that are associated with that kind of experience.

Sexual Integrity

There are those who say there is no connection between intercourse and a personal relationship. Sex is for pleasure only. This argument is favored more by men than women. But the contention is simply not true. From the first year of life, instincts are integrated in the whole personality. They do not live as separate entities and they have been shaped and controlled in an interaction with parents who relate in love. Thus to separate sex from the rest of the personality and to isolate it from feelings is a distortion of authentic human encounters. When coitus takes place, there is a meeting of persons with the integrity of feelings and emotions involved.

Another facile argument is that sexual compatibility is of paramount importance in permanent relationships and as such should be tested before marriage. When the relationship is good, sex is often good; furthermore, when the relationship is stable and satisfactory, it can compensate for poor or even absent sex. In other words, the key to satisfactory sex is a satisfactory relationship. Premarital sex, however good, is rarely an indication of how the relationship will turn out. The establishment of a sound personal relationship is the best guarantee for marital stability and successful intercourse. Coitus is not a research tool for personal compatibility but rather should seal the relationship when an apt choice has been made.

Even when these considerations are conceded, it is still held that it is impossible to remain chaste before marriage. For myself and millions of my own generation who observed the rule of premarital chastity, the idea that instincts are so overwhelming that they cannot be contained is novel. There is no doubt that the relevant factor here is the attitude of society and of the individual. If society takes the view that restraint is not possible and indeed bombards the young person with sexual titillation and condoms, then clearly society is of no assistance whatsoever in sexual control. There is no doubt that men and women are perfectly capable of making a whole range of sacrifices when these are needed and seen clearly to be appropriate. Sex is precious when used in the right way, but when it is misused it loses its worth and value.

— Jack Dominian, Catholic theologian and psychologist

CHAPTER 37

The Challenge of Chastity

Let's begin by answering some of the questions that millions of teenagers ask. What is chastity? What is modesty and purity? How do you practice chastity? What are some of the consequences if you don't? How far do you go? What if you've already gone too far?

What is chastity?

Chastity, very simply, is sexual self-control.

Chastity is possible, livable and good. Believe it or not, many people today are choosing chastity. Why? Because they want to experience true love. Premarital sex oftentimes leads to lack of deep commitment and mutual responsibility in relationship, resulting in emotional trauma and suffering. Don't you think that there's enough pain in the world without practicing something that invites new kinds of pain? So we need to understand why and how to say no to premarital sex and how to say yes to true responsible love. Chastity is the way of true love.

"Hey, all you guys out there! I don't know about you but I want a girl who respects my values and me. I don't want a girl who is going to manipulate me and tease me, who will try to tempt away my self-control. I want a girl who's going to wait for me until I'm married because I'm going to wait for her, too. I think to have had it before marriage would tend to take away from the completeness and the total uniqueness of our total belonging





to each other. I want to learn how to make love with the person I will spend my whole life loving. And to do that before marriage would tarnish the complete trust, the complete believing in each other that we should have in a marriage. I know that chastity may not be the easiest virtue for us guys today but it's one that promises lifelong rewards. I value my virginity. Don't you wish everyone did?"

— Andrei, age 17

Sex is not the center of the universe

You have been hearing from magazines, books, radio, newspapers, TV, films and music that sex is the center of the universe—that sex is the most important thing that's ever going to happen to you in your entire life!

But don't you think it is very humiliating to think that sex and love are the same? Aren't we putting ourselves on the same level with animals? Would you like the person whom you love to love you only for your sexy appearance? In this case if (or when) in several years you lose your attractive appearance, it will mean that you will lose love as well, wouldn't it?

We all need direction and guidance in life to help us to understand where we are going and how to get there. But these days it seems we're bombarded with many conflicting messages about love, life and sex. Our inner voice (some call it the conscience, or God) tells us one thing but the world around us seems to tell us differently. The world says, "Sex is for fun. Enjoy yourself. If it feels good, do it!" But our conscience says, "Sex is an expression of your commitment of love and life. Don't settle for less." Which are you going to follow—your conscience or the world?

What is sexual maturity?

How can we be mature? How can we be a whole person? Knowing how love, marriage and sex fit together in the spectrum of life is necessary to our sexual maturity.

Many teenagers are not sexually active. It is possible in today's world to wait until marriage. It may not be the easiest choice but it is definitely the healthiest—and the most mature. Learning to practice respect and self-control are part of developing one's maturity.

Oksana: Come on, Kostya. I thought you were a real man.

Kostya: I'm man enough to respect you.

Oksana: Don't you find me attractive?

Kostya: No, that's not it at all. You're gorgeous. You drive me crazy!

Oksana: Then, what's the matter? Aren't you mature enough to handle it?

Kostya: Hey, I'm mature enough to make the right decision.



Oksana: I didn't know you were so straight!

Kostya: Oh, come on Oksana, don't make it so difficult. I have feelings. I have desires. But I have enough problems in my life and don't need the ones that sex brings. So, let's go to Penguin's and get an ice cream to cool you off.

Please understand what we are saying here.

There is nothing bad about sex itself. It is a beautiful gift given to two people who have committed themselves to each other in love. Through this relationship they will bring children into the world. These children will help to solidify the love between parents even more. Children represent the incarnation of the love of their parents.

You may be wondering why we have sex drives.

Externally they serve the purpose of motivating us to carry on the human race. They are necessary to our very survival! However, outside of a committed relationship in marriage our sex drives provide us with an opportunity to exercise self-control. Just because we're tempted doesn't mean we have to give in to it. Some people think that sex is a need like eating or breathing, but no one ever died from lack of sex. There are many people who practiced celibacy in their life, regarding it as an important component of their spiritual development. Through self-control we gain the ability to channel our sex drives in a healthy direction so that they can fulfill their internal purpose, which is to enable us to experience love and intimacy more deeply with our marriage partner.

How do we protect this beautiful gift of chastity?

Sooner or later, there comes a time when we will face sexual temptation. How do we develop the internal strength to overcome such temptation? We do this by developing a pure mind, clean speech, modest dress and virtuous action.

How do we develop a pure mind? We have to stay away from the mind's "junk food". The mind is an amazing gift. It has the ability to take in information and store it so you can use it later. However, the contents of the mind are not easily erased. What goes in stays. If you fill your mind with images of sexual passion, disobedience, rebellion and violence, how can you ever develop good character traits like being loving, considerate and faithful? What goes in eventually comes out.

Two thousand years ago Jesus said that we could judge a tree by its fruit. The mouth speaks whatever fills the mind. A good man produces good from his storehouse of goodness and an evil man produces evil from his storehouse of evil. Telling a dirty joke reveals the cheapness with which we regard our sexuality. Dressing immodestly does the same, as well as stimulating lustful desires in others.

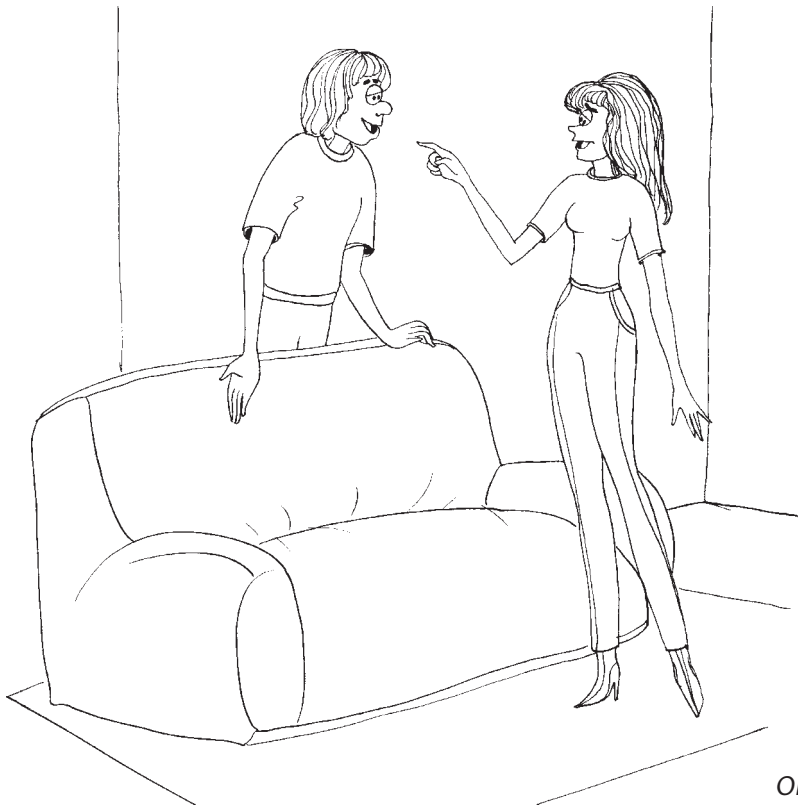
In today's world there are many people who do not hold themselves—or others—in such high regard. Some wonder whether there is anything worth living for, whether there is anything of real value. Even life. Even love.

How do we know what is valuable in life? Whom do we look to and to whom do we go to find our value?

For a religious person the answer to this question is that we are created by God in His image and likeness. That is what determines our value, gives us human dignity. And He gave us parents to teach us His values.

If we are not religious, then our values and way of life should be determined by our conscience. In the majority of complicated situations, especially from the point of view of morality, conscience will tell us what to do — as long as we don't try to suppress its voice. And if it is still difficult to make the right decision (and it happens quite often, especially when we are young and don't have too much life experience of our own), then perhaps the wisest thing to do would be to refer to the experience of older people whom we respect, whom we look up to. For some of you that will be your parents, for others — a teacher, or perhaps a public or historical figure. If we look at the world around us, searching for people who found lasting happiness in their lives, most likely we will find that all these people shared some common values: love, unselfishness, living for the sake of others. One of their main life principles probably would be “treat others the way that you want to be treated”.

All this sounds good, but what are you going to do on a Saturday night when the temptations come?



Vladimir: But Olga, we love each other. Isn't it natural to show it? Won't it bring us closer?

Olga: If we can't get closer by knowing each other's hearts and minds, we won't do it through sex. Besides, God says it's wrong, and I'm certainly not going to argue with Him.

Vladimir: Don't give me that stuff. You know you want to. I'm not going to hurt you.

Olga: Sex isn't a game, Vlad. We don't even know the hurts that are involved. And stop playing with my emotions!

Vladimir: Don't you care about me?

Olga: I care enough to say no and to forget that you asked the question.

Vladimir: But everyone's doing it.

Olga: Then you won't have any trouble finding someone else.

In working with teens who have been sexually active, psychologists discovered that they are not really having fun. Rather they are dealing with many complicated and confused feelings: guilt, shame, worry, many kinds of hurts. That's how they themselves tell it:

A girl: “When you're dating someone who doesn't have any limits, you're always wondering, ‘how far will he go’? How much does he love me? Do I really love him? What if I get pregnant? Or an STD? You spend so much of your time worrying about these things.”

A guy: “When I'm on a date and know that most likely we will end up in bed together, I find myself thinking of what to do until then? How can we plan our date so that it's going to happen ‘naturally’? It's all so calculating.”

So, it isn't all that much fun. But why then do so many teens do it? How does it happen?

“You know, there are many ways. For example, there’s a guy and he’s unsure of himself. So, he’s trying to prove his masculinity over and over again. It’s wrong for a guy to manipulate a girl to reassure himself of his masculinity. On the other hand, a threat to a guy’s masculinity can be quite a big blow. With the liberation movement, there are some pretty aggressive girls nowadays. I guess, one of the toughest challenges for a guy is the issue of his manliness.”

— Timur, age 19

But what if it is love?

Many teens ask, “What if you’re really in love with a person, you’re close and committed and you’re almost married to them?” Do you know that 50% of engagements are broken?

How much in love do you have to be before sex is okay? What if your parents tell you, “It’s okay as long as you are in love?” But you are just learning, trying to figure out the difference between infatuation, romance, love, commitment, and all these things. What if they tell you that you just have to be in love, but you are confused about what love is? Sex in those situations, even if sincere, only multiplies the heartbreak and stress, while confusing the soul.

Renewed virginity

What if you have gone already too far? Does it mean that everything is lost and that there is no way back?

Tatiana: You know, everything happened in such a stupid way, although at the time I thought I was being really smart and loving. Now that I understand better, I can see how immature I really was. By having sex our relationship didn’t become better. Instead we got a lot of extra problems.

Natasha: But you can still renew your virginity.

Tatiana: What does that mean?

Natasha: It means that you decide to stop having sex until you are married. Do you think you can stop?

Tatiana: I think so. But everything became so complicated this past month.

Natasha: When I don’t know what to do or how to act, it helps me to speak to God. Then the answer comes as if by itself, and I feel peace and harmony in my heart.

Tatiana: But, you know, the time I went with you to church, I didn’t feel anything special. Actually I felt myself even lonelier there.

Natasha: Because you lived all your life without God, it’s difficult for you to feel Him. Also, all religions consider sex before marriage to be a sin, and this sin separates you from God. It kind of blocks out the reception, fogs up the line.



Tatiana: Maybe you're right. In any case, I wouldn't mind finding in my life that source of love and hope that you speak about so much. Maybe it would help me in making difficult decisions.

Natasha: God is always ready to help us.

Tatiana: Seriously, it does sound good. To tell you the truth, I don't feel good doing it. But I'll never be able to explain this to Alexei — he expects it now.

Natasha: Well, just tell him what you are learning about love and sexuality, that you want to change your ways so you can both grow up and be sure that your relationship is really love— not lust.

Tatiana: What if he breaks up with me?

Natasha: Then, what have you lost? I mean, is he in love with you or sex? Are you really in love with each other? Who knows? Maybe he's feeling guilty, too, and he just needs you to say something to him so you can both grow up?

Tatiana: You know, you're right. It's like a trap and I want to be free. I do want to renew my virginity.

It's not true that teenagers have to suffer because of the sexually cheapened culture that we live in today. You can be part of the chastity generation. You can find the wisdom and courage you need to put more real love in your life— now and in the years to come.

For Your Journal



- Why can we say that chastity brings freedom? What kind of freedom is it?
- What are some of the ways to keep chastity?
- How can premarital sex get in the way of learning about true love?
- How can we develop a pure mind? Clean speech? Virtuous action?

Spring Fragrance

A Korean folk tale

Lee Doryung, the young son of a popular city governor, was out walking one day with his friend and servant. Entering a part of the town he had not seen before, he suddenly caught sight of a young lady of great beauty on a swing with her mother.

"Who is that angel?" he asked.

"It is Choon Hyang," answered his servant. "Daughter of the retired courtesan, Plum Blossom." Entranced by her beauty, Lee told his servant to invite the young lady to come to talk to him. The servant hurried off, but soon returned with an enigmatic reply: "Does the flower come to the butterfly, or the butterfly to the flower?"

At home that night, Lee could hardly eat, for his mind was full of thoughts of Choon Hyang. When his parents had gone to bed, he crept out of the house and made haste to Choon Hyang's house.

There he found Choon Hyang waiting for him. The two were in love at first sight. But marriage seemed impossible, for Choon Hyang was from a lower class, while Lee was from a noble background. He soon would have to go to the capital, Seoul, for the civil service examinations. But she loved him too, and they begged Choon Hyang's mother to let them marry. Finally, she agreed that they could marry in secret, as long as Lee promised in writing not to abandon her daughter. He agreed eagerly.

After a short time of marital bliss, the time came for Lee to leave town and go to Seoul to take the examinations essential to his progress. With many tears and kisses, he parted from his young bride, promising to return as a gentleman and take her away.

However, events took a different turn. While Lee was away on his studies, Lee's parents were also summoned to Seoul. They were replaced by an oppressive governor who imposed heavy taxes on the people. The



governor began to take an interest in the lovely Choon Hyang, whom he often commanded to come to his palace to dance. Time passed and the governor proposed to Choon Hyang.

"I am promised to another," she said.

"Who, Lee Doryung?" sneered the governor. "When will you face reality? He won't ever come back to a peasant like you! He probably has a real wife and children in Seoul already. But I could look after you. ... " Time and again this scene was acted out, until at last the frustrated governor had Choon Hyang thrown into jail. There she had long hours to ponder. Years went by, and still there was no sign of Lee. What had happened to him? Had he found a more attractive wife in Seoul? She could not believe it, and waited in hope.

After graduating from his examinations, Lee had been summoned by the king to perform a special task. He was to travel throughout the country, disguised as a beggar, in order to observe whether the country was being governed justly. He traveled with a company of soldiers, also disguised as beggars. It was an important commission, and it took time. At last, he came close to his own hometown.

"How are the times?" he asked of the people.

"Never worse!" they said in chorus. "Our governor is a cruel man. He takes away our food, our land, and even our daughters!"

"Daughters!" exclaimed Lee. "And do you have any news of Choon Hyang?"

"Yes, poor thing," they replied. "First of all she was deflowered and abandoned by the former governor's son. And then, as if one pig wasn't enough, now she has been imprisoned by the new governor for resisting his approaches!"

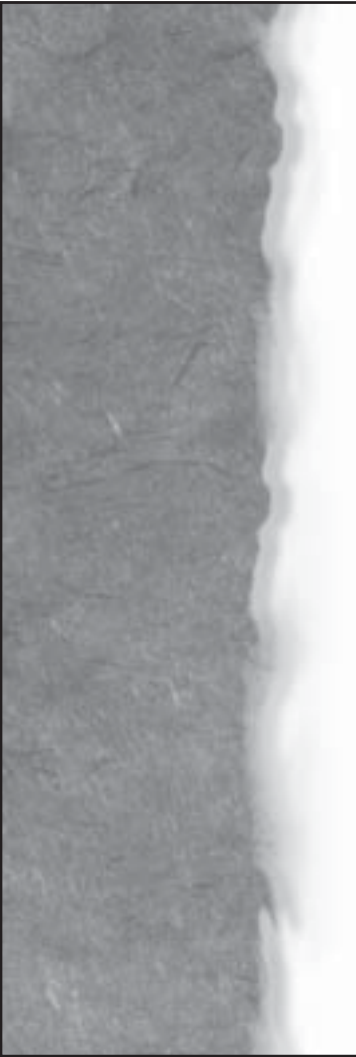
Lee hurried to Choon Hyang's mother's house. With some difficulty, he convinced her that he was indeed her son-in-law, but to preserve his disguise, he told her that he had failed his examinations and been reduced to begging. Would Choon Hyang want to see him in those circumstances?

"No, you must go now!" said her mother "She is sick in prison and may not have long to live. And she is still waiting for you, watching out of her cell window. Let her see you before she dies!"

Still in disguise, Lee went to the prison, hoping he was not too late. He could see a thin and pale Choon Hyang watching from a basement cell. Making his way to the window, he told her that he had suffered disgrace and returned as a beggar. Could she forgive him? Yes, she could. To see him before she died was enough. Yet there was a more urgent matter.

"Tomorrow the governor intends once more to force me to marry him," she said. "He promises medicine and food if I agree. And he is going to hold a party in celebration!"

Lee had heard enough. Hurrying away from the prison, he met with his men and gave them precise instructions for the following day. When the banquet time arrived, he found his way into the governor's palace and into the banqueting hall. Seeing a beggar in their company, the governor ordered him thrown out. But with the help of his men, Lee soon found his way back into the banquet hall.



"Your Excellency," he said, "I have a poem of congratulations for you." He began to read. It was no ordinary poem, but rather an indictment of all the wrongdoing of the governor and his regime.

"Enough!" said the governor. "Seize this man and throw him into prison!" At this, Lee stood to his full height, and taking off his disguise, showed his royal seal of authority to the governor, who was quickly arrested.

Now dressed in his royal robes of authority, Lee sent for Choon Hyang from the jail. She, of course, could not recognize in this powerful official her beggar husband who had recently returned.

"Choon Hyang," he said, "you have been grievously mistreated by this wretched governor. I do not believe his charges. I will release you from prison immediately ... if you become my wife."

Choon Hyang burst into tears. "What a miserable people we are," she sobbed, "that every one of our king's servants is as corrupt and lustful as the other! I would rather die in prison!"

Moved to tears himself, Lee spoke again: "Look, my love, it is I, Lee Doryung. I have come back to you as promised." With tears of recognition the two lovers were united.

With the fall of the evil governor peace returned to the town and Lee took his wife to Seoul to meet the king. When he heard the remarkable tale of her perseverance and fidelity, the king exclaimed, "Not even our noblewomen can match this!" In recognition the king made Choon Hyang a duchess.

CHAPTER 38

Sex before marriage?

One of the dilemmas many people face is whether to have sex before marriage. Before taking such a momentous step, it is wise to think seriously about the consequences. To start with, what are the positive reasons for staying chaste? Fortunately, there are many.



Abstinence gives us the time and space we need to grow to maturity. We retain a great deal of freedom of choice as well as control over the direction that our lives can take. Our possibilities will not be blocked because of a sexual disease or an early pregnancy.

Think about how your plans for your career or education could be destroyed if, for instance, at the age of 17 you had to care for a baby.

Many teenagers worry that by abstaining from sex they will become strange. In reality, the opposite may be true. In a world where so many people conform, you may find that saying “no” makes you a sensitive, thoughtful

and mature person. A relationship can deepen far more quickly when words and thoughts are used to express feelings, rather than physical means.

Some people think that marrying and wearing a ring is somehow a passport to self-control. Is that true? How can a person who hasn’t learned to control his body before marriage suddenly know how to do so after marriage? In a good marriage there is trust, companionship and love. Those values can be passed on to the next generation, which is why it is often said that a good marriage is the foundation for a good society. Becoming a mature, respectful individual now is a vital part of having an emotionally healthy family later.

Abstinence spares us from the feelings of fear, shame and guilt that often accompany premarital sex. Studies show that there is a very big difference in the personality of people who engage in premarital sex and those who don’t. One of the most important differences is that teenagers who choose the way of chastity prove to be capable of thinking about their future and planning ahead. Those who become sexually active, on the other hand, often admit they aren’t thinking more than a week or a month ahead about anything at all. No wonder they get into trouble!

Still, some people think that there are reasons that justify sexual relations before marriage. We will examine some of those reasons and see how sensible they really are.

- ✗ Sometimes people say that before they marry, they should make sure they are compatible. They should have a “trial marriage” to see if it “works.” Since sex is an important part of marriage, they say it is important to “get to know each other” before marriage.

However, recent research in Britain has shown that this is not a good reason:

A survey by the British Office of Population Censuses and Surveys contradicts the modern belief that living together before marriage provides the strongest foundation: Couples who lived together were 30 percent more likely to divorce after five years than those who had not cohabited.

Sex does not help you to discover whether a person has the qualities you are seeking in a partner – for example, trustworthiness or honesty – or whether your partner is capable of loving or being loved.

On the contrary, premarital sex can cloud your judgment and lead you to marry the wrong person. Sex creates very strong emotional bonds, and can make people believe a relationship is deeper than it really is.

This emotional bonding can lead us to prolong a relationship that is based only on physical attractiveness or a need for security. As a result, people can feel trapped or committed to a relationship they have outgrown.

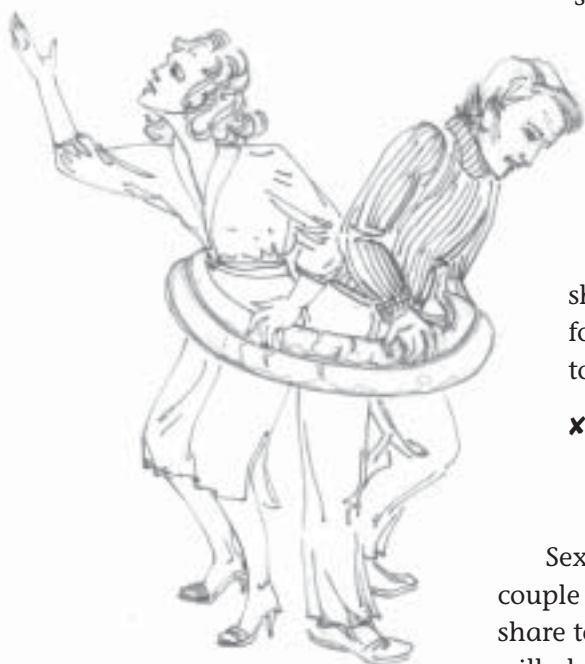
- ✗ Another argument is that it is good to be sexually experienced before marrying so that sex will be better in the marriage.

Sex, though, is a mystery that is very exciting for a married couple to discover together. In this way they learn together and share together. A man who is “experienced,” on the other hand, will always find himself comparing his wife to other women with whom he has had sex. (Of course, the same is true for an “experienced” wife.) If a couple does have sexual problems, they can consult with a marriage counselor.

- ✗ Some people say that sex is a purely physical need like eating, and there is nothing wrong with satisfying this need.

However, there is a difference. Sex is not a need; it is a drive. If you do not eat, you will die. If you do not sleep, you will go crazy. If you do not have sex, will you die? In fact, those who live celibate lives, such as monks and nuns, are renowned for their longevity and good health!

Animals cannot control their sex drive and have no choice but to mate when they are in heat. For them sex is not related to love. We are not animals. We can control our behavior with our minds. We think, evaluate and make decisions before we do things. We don’t follow every desire or impulse that comes into our heads. As the British writer C.S. Lewis commented, “If a healthy young man indulged his sexual appetite whenever he felt inclined, and if each act produced a baby, in ten years he might easily populate a small village.” We can fulfill our desires and direct our drives in the proper manner. Our sex drive is humanized through love.



Sex is not just a physical act; it is an expression of love between two people. It degrades our humanity by trying to separate sex from love.

- ✗ Many people say that marriage is merely a convention. They say they want a permanent relationship without marrying.

However, a marriage ceremony has only as much meaning as a couple give it. During a wedding a couple make public vows of mutual commitment. When they do this, they and everyone else recognize that this relationship has a certain status and is to be respected. Of course, a stamp in a passport is not a guarantee of a happy marriage. The success of a marriage depends on the extent to which the couple love each other and feel responsible not only for themselves but also for their relationship.

All these arguments for sharing a life together in love sound very attractive. However, aren't these people who argue for sex without marriage really hiding an unconscious fear of taking on the responsibility of a family? Relational problems are inevitable. If you are not prepared to make such a public commitment, it means you are not yet ready for this type of relationship. Therefore it is better to wait.

When a couple decide to marry, they take on a serious responsibility. But when two people simply live together, at least one of the partners—sometimes unconsciously—keeps the right to walk out when things get rough. This inevitably influences the atmosphere of the family. Even when the relationship seems harmonious, the partners cannot be completely sure of each other. There will always be a feeling of uncertainty.

Psychological research has shown that for the majority of families marriage helps a couple to harmonize their lives. The woman feels more secure with her partner and free from anxiety. Pregnancies, even unwanted ones, aren't as big a problem for married couples as they are for co-habiting couples.

- ✗ A common argument nowadays is "If I love someone, it is natural to express that love sexually, even if I know it will not be a permanent relationship."

One way we communicate with each other is through language. Each word and expression conveys some information and meaning to another person. If we misuse words, then we will no longer be able to communicate. So-called "strong" words, especially, become devalued if they are overused.

The same applies to love, which is often described as a language. If we say "I love

you" to everyone, then it becomes difficult to find words to express love that is more exclusive and unique. It is part of our human nature to desire a lifelong, unique relationship with someone of the opposite sex. This is the conjugal relationship to which there is an exclusive sexual dimension. This is why traditionally people reserve their sexual love for the person whom they marry. This sexual love becomes the seal upon this unique, exclusive relationship and sets it apart from all other relationships. If one has sex with several people, one no longer has any unique and special way to express love to a person. Just as words are devalued by misuse and overuse, sexual love also is devalued if it is misused.



The benefits of chastity

Let us think about what chastity means. Traditionally it is understood as abstinence from improper sexual relationships, but it also includes purity of thoughts, words and actions. Chastity means keeping one's heart and soul pure and untouched for that unique love that belongs to marriage. In addition to avoiding the negative consequences of immature sexual relationships, chastity (if we take such a broad definition) has other benefits.

You can be free to develop your character to maturity.

Young people spend a lot of time making themselves sexually appealing. By taking the sexual pressure off yourself by deciding to wait until marriage, you can devote your energy and time to developing your unique personality. You don't need to conform to anyone else's standards of behavior or beauty. You can spend time developing your creativity, talents, skill, interests, and prepare for your career. By saving sex for marriage, you have the time to pursue your vocation, interests and hobbies, which you may have less time for at a later stage of your life.

You can develop friendships with a wide variety of people.

You can be free to befriend many people and learn the value of friendship without sexual pressures. Many times a young man or woman is afraid to simply make friends with someone because their partner may become jealous. Often very good friendships are ruined when the friends become sexually involved. By deciding to wait until marriage, all of your friends can remain as friends because you have drawn a clear line between your friends and your eventual spouse.

You can trust yourself and your future spouse.

By developing self-control before you are married, you can trust yourself to be faithful after marriage. If you cannot wait until you are married, the guilt and mistrust within yourself can easily destroy your marriage. If you know your spouse had no ability or desire to control his or her sexual behavior before marriage, how can you completely trust your spouse after marriage?

You can keep your marriage fresh and alive.

The intensity of first love is tremendous—it fills every cell of your body. You walk into your first love full of hope and expectation. You feel as if it must last forever. If you break up, then heartbreak is inevitable, and somehow the second love is never as intense as the first. But if that first-love feeling is cemented by total commitment in marriage, your marriage will be much more fresh and alive than if you enter it with walls fortified from past hurts. You are more likely to realize your dreams of marriage if you enter it as fresh and alive as your dreams.

You won't be compared to past lovers.

It's not easy to forget the experience of previous love affairs, even if you are married. Here is one young man's sad testimony: "Before I was married, I had many girlfriends. Sometimes when I'm making love, I can't help remembering their faces and bodies. It can be so bad, I don't know whom I'm sleeping with anymore."



If both you and your spouse come into the marriage chaste, you will never suffer from comparing your spouse to anyone or being compared to anyone. There is nothing more demeaning to self-esteem than to be told that you aren't as good as someone else, especially in this most intimate aspect of life. Without someone to be compared to, you can accept each other in a more innocent, unblemished way.

You will be able to respect your spouse with a sincere love.

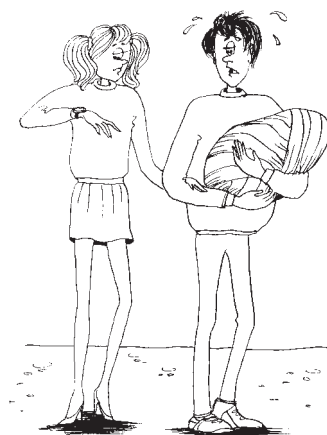
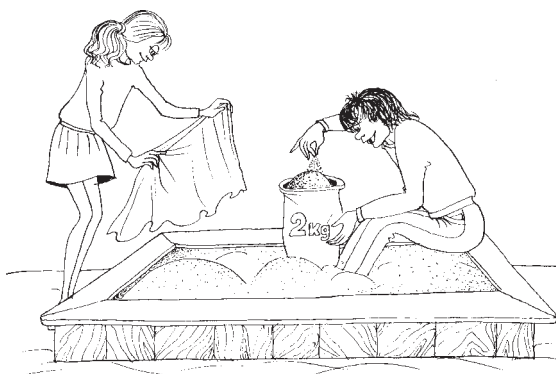
True love means that we live for the sake of the other. In marriage the husband thinks of what is best for his wife and the wife thinks of what is best for her husband. They live to bring joy to one another. Your ability to control your sexuality for the sake of your spouse shows respect and love. He or she is cherished above all else.

Individual Exercise



"The Baby"

For four days keep near you at all times a two-kilogram bag of flour (or sugar, salt, etc.). Never put it down. This is your "baby." The only time you can put the bag down is when you go to sleep at night. You should set your alarm clock for some time during the night and rise to "check on the bag." This exercise will give you some idea of what it is like to have a baby. When you have finished, write a reflection on your experience.



For Your Journal



- How clear are your plans for the next ten years? Take a moment and think about what you want to have accomplished by then. Start by writing down how old you will be. What are your goals in terms of schooling and career? Are you thinking of traveling? If you become involved in an immature sexual relationship, how could it influence the fulfillment of your plans?
- What short-term plans can you make now in order to avoid a situation by which you might damage your future?
- Which reasons for saving sex until marriage seem strongest or most convincing to you? If no reasons seem convincing, explain why.



To read

"Judy's Story", from *The Art of Loving Well*

CHAPTER 39

Problems, Situations...

QUESTION: When I become hungry, I eat. When I'm thirsty, I drink. When I'm tired, I sleep. If I have physical sexual feelings, and I'm not supposed to sexually satisfy them before marriage, why do I have them?

ANSWER: If someone ate ten times a day or slept 18 hours every day, it would be considered abnormal and excessive, unless, of course, the person were still an infant. Just as we learned to control our desires to eat and sleep and fulfill them in an appropriate manner, puberty is a time to learn to master our sexual desires. As we learn to live with and control our desires and feelings, we grow as a person and learn how to relate well to all kinds of people and to manage all kinds of situations.

In the same way, when we have sexual urges, we must decide whether to act on them. We don't have to follow our impulses. Our sexual desires are there for us to think about and to remind us of who we are. They can encourage us to decide how we will grow up, and what kind of man or woman, husband or wife, mother or father, we will be. Remember that the greatest portion of our sexuality is expressed





through our personality. Sexual energy can and should be integrated into loving energy on behalf of family, friends and humankind.

QUESTION: What should I do when I have sexual urges?

ANSWER: During our development, emotional and physical feelings serve to increase our awareness, sensitivity, thoughtfulness, and responsibility in the maturing process that leads to manhood and womanhood, marriage and parenthood.

There are many ways to release sexual energy. One thing that distinguishes us from animals is our ability to channel sexual energy into productive activities and relationships that give us joy and allow us to release intense emotional and physical feelings. You can become involved in sports, drama, academic or scientific projects, artistic endeavors. Doing things together with your friends, such as skating and skiing, can also be an outlet for such energy. It's very healthy to develop your talent for giving love and joy to others in a non-sexual way.

QUESTION: Is self-control easier for some people than others?

ANSWER: Yes. But it isn't "easy" for anybody. It takes practice and commitment. One of the best things about learning self-control is that success in one area will pay off in another. If you can manage your sexual feelings, chances are you'll also be managing other areas of your life as well, such as your studies, relationships with your parents, friends, etc. The best time to learn self-control is while you're still young; but it's never too late to start!

QUESTION: What should a girl do if a boy tries to get what he wants?

ANSWER: A boy might be very passionate and seem emotionally loving. His usual line is "If you love me, you'll do it." But love first of all needs mutual commitment and responsibility. The girl should test what a boy really means when he talks about love.

A teacher said to her teenage students, "Tell me, in one word, what love means to you." The boys used words like "sex, girls, and fun." The girls used words like "sharing, caring, and tenderness." Part of the reason for such a difference is because girls mature faster than boys and have more of an emotional need. Girls need to realize that boys can become physically involved with sex without becoming emotionally involved.

If you've decided to save sexual intimacy for later, you'd better develop refusal skills. We all know the famous lines, and here are some possible responses:

"You can trust me." — "I do trust you, I trust you to stop pressuring me."

"You don't know what you're missing." — "Yes, I do; I'm missing only worries."



"Everyone's doing it." — "But not with me."

"I love you. Don't you love me?" — "If you really loved me, you'd respect me. I don't need to prove my love."

"I can't stop." — "Well, I can."

"What's wrong with you?" — "Nothing's wrong, let's keep it that way!"



QUESTION: In sex the boy is supposed to take the initiative, and girls know that. Then what is so bad about a boy insisting on having sex?

ANSWER: A boy who uses his sexual nature to seduce another can easily begin to feel it no longer matters with whom he has sex. If he is not ready to submit himself to the interests of the girl, to dedicate himself to her, should he become involved in something that should have such a level of commitment? The girl thinks that he loves her, while he is just using her. Isn't it selfish?

You should consider that this is someone's future wife and someone's future mother. How would you like it if someone treated your future wife in this way? How would you feel if someone had used your mother in this way before she was married and caused her a great deal of emotional shock and pain? If seduction is so normal or justifiable, would you encourage another boy to treat your own sister in this way?

QUESTION: What should a boy do when a girl tries to "trap" him into having sex?

ANSWER: Out of their need for emotional bonding, girls sometimes confuse sex with love and try to engage a boy into a committed relationship by using sex. A girl might even allow herself to become pregnant to try to pressure a boy into marrying her. But if you realize that girls want emotional bonding and security long before boys are ready for that level of commitment, then you won't confuse sex with love.

Male and female differences are a protective shield. If boys wanted commitment as soon as girls do, and if girls normally wanted sex as soon as boys, marriages would take place much too early in life. Their differences, when respected for what they are, help to delay union until sufficient emotional growth occurs.

QUESTION: We're living in the modern world, in a free society. Don't you think this virginity stuff is a little old-fashioned?

ANSWER: Everyone wants to be free, but there's a lot of confusion about what it means to be free. Some think being free means doing whatever you feel like,

whenever you want to. The idea of abstaining from sex seems to be the opposite of being free. But if you think about it, the person who abstains from sex outside



marriage doesn't have to worry about all the problems that go along with such a lifestyle: sexually transmitted diseases, unwanted pregnancies, pressure to marry someone they don't really love, the responsibility of being a single parent, pressure to have an abortion, dropping out of school, and a lot of emotional hassles. So who is really free — the person who does whatever he or she feels like, or the person who has self-control? A free person does what he or she knows is right and doesn't give in to peer pressure.

Chastity is not old-fashioned. You are looking ahead. You should learn to appreciate the dignity of using your mind rather than being controlled by instincts. Our freedom should be used to make mature decisions.

QUESTION: Some people believe that teens think about sex all the time. I hardly ever do. Am I normal or is something wrong with me?

ANSWER: Just as it's normal to have sexual thoughts and feelings, you needn't worry if, at this age, you don't. A man-woman relationship needs love, intelligence, respect and commitment. You can't love someone if you don't respect that person.

Make up your own mind. Because of our fear of rejection and our desire to "belong," we sometimes do things we don't really want to do because we want to be accepted and not have to stand up against peer pressure. If you feel good about yourself, you are more forceful about standing up for what you believe in. You can take the pressure. You are less likely to do something just to be liked by others.

Once you understand the meaning of sex and where it belongs in your life, you will have more strength to resist temptations, and get on with the important tasks of learning, maturing, and becoming a productive and creative person.

QUESTION: My boyfriend says he really needs sex, and if I don't do it with him, he'll find someone else. What should I do?

ANSWER: If he believes that sex is more important than his friendship with you, then let him find someone else.

QUESTION: How do you control your feelings if you really like someone, but you're too young to get serious?

ANSWER: These feelings are only natural, and often you will like certain people more than others. Problems can arise when you concentrate all your feelings on just one person, because you make your growing emotions harder to control. To help yourself stay in control, find your security in a number of friends of both sexes and continue to meet and be friendly to others.

QUESTION: Is it good to have a girlfriend or boyfriend?

ANSWER: Having a girlfriend or boyfriend provides additional pressures that most teens don't need. In these years when we experience many personal changes, it's easy to find that in a few months we are no longer right for each other. However, it is hard to break up. As our affections grow for a person, we sometimes find ourselves being dependent on him/her rather than growing as an independent, secure person. Finally, in a boyfriend-girlfriend relationship the sexual temptation becomes stronger.

Many teens who are very involved in sports, academics, drama, or other activities find that their social needs are met through the friendships of classmates also involved in these things. This is healthier.



QUESTION: What if I already have been sexually involved with someone, but now want to save sexual intimacy for marriage. Is it too late?

ANSWER: Many people think that you can't go back once you've "gone all the way." The fact is, you **can** still make choices about your sexual activity. Once you have given in to your sexual impulses, you can regain control over them. You can choose sexual freedom. This decision to stop having sex until after marriage and the acting out of that decision is called "renewed virginity."

Any person can do this by:

- ✕ deciding to change.
- ✕ detaching him/herself from old habits, from people, places and situations that weaken self-control.
- ✕ developing new, non-physical ways to share affection.

It's not always easy to do the right thing, but it's a sure way to feel real self-confidence, self-respect, and self-control. It's never too late to be free. Believe in yourself, in your ability to live a life of real value and real love.

Expectations

Boys say...

✕ The trouble is, whenever you invite a girl for a date, you feel so much pressure. You can't feel at ease or be your normal self. All the time you have to pretend to be someone you're not so as to meet her expectations.

✕ Girls expect too much from us. A person naturally feels anxious about going out on a first date, but you have to hide this uneasiness by all means. I wish we could be above all that fuss. If you let them see that you are shy or scared, you're bound to be rejected.

✕ Your friends put pressure on you as well. Time and again they ask how far you've developed the relationship. So you start telling all kinds of stories although nothing took place in reality. And that can bring about serious problems.

✕ Everybody puts pressure on you. As soon as you start going out with a girl everyone starts preparations for your wedding. Perhaps we'd like to get to know each other better, to see for ourselves whether we make a good match. But your peers are always expecting some action from you.

Girls say...

✕ The trouble is, guys expect you to do whatever they want. And almost always they have but one desire.

✕ Girls can't go anywhere by themselves. It's okay for guys to wander around by themselves on the streets. But if you're a girl, you're expected to have a boyfriend. If you don't have a boyfriend, there must be something wrong with you. But if you have a boyfriend, you have to behave in a way girlfriends are expected to behave. If you don't, you're looked at as if there were something strange about you.

✕ Despite the fact that our society is considered to be free, in reality there are many things that are taboo for girls. It is considered to be indecent for a girl to approach a guy; or a girl shouldn't argue with a boy if his buddies can hear it, no matter what the boy might be saying or doing.

✕ It is much easier to go out with another girl rather than with a boyfriend. You don't feel any pressure. When you go somewhere with boys they pay attention to your every step. You have to pretend to be sophisticated and grown up, no matter what you may actually feel.

CHAPTER 40

The Pornography Plague

Suddenly it's everywhere. Almost every street corner newsstand has newspapers and magazines featuring naked men and women in bizarre poses. Articles accompanying the vulgar pictures commend the virtues of free sex: when you want, and with whomever you want. And it doesn't stop with the printed media. Films, plays and even music worship the joys of free sex. Whereas a few years ago pornography was hard to find, now it is difficult to avoid.

It's not surprising that men and women are interested in the naked human form. After all, it is the most complex, subtle and beautiful part of creation. This is why throughout history it has been the source of great inspiration for numerous painters and sculptors. However, that interest is easily misdirected, and pornography caters to misplaced and perverted interest. Whereas great art ennobles and uplifts the spirit, pornography appeals to a person's baser nature. People who are involved in the porn industry make large sums of money by exploiting this side of human nature.

One of the factors that have helped pornography to spread so quickly is that many people are emotionally starved. Since love is linked to sex, they are misled into thinking that pornography will satisfy this hunger. Yet while it is initially exciting and exhilarating, pornography results in an even greater feeling of emptiness. It is merely a substitute for love. Just as people become addicted to drugs, people become addicted to pornography and cannot control their desire for it. The British writer C.S. Lewis described this situation very eloquently:

"You can get a large audience together for a striptease act — That is, to watch a girl undress on stage. Now suppose you came to a country where you could fill a theatre by simply bringing a covered plate onto the stage and then slowly lifting the cover so as to let everyone see, just before the lights went out, that it contained a mutton chop or a bit of bacon. Would you not think that in that country something had gone wrong with the appetite for food? And would not anyone who had grown up in a different world think there was something equally queer about the state of the sex instinct among us?"

— C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Our mind is amazing. It easily takes in and stores the information it gathers through the five senses. The images we see and the sounds we hear are not easily erased. They stay in our mind and are readily recalled. These images affect us emotionally and are the source of information upon which we make decisions and judgments. What goes into our mind comes out later in what we say and the way we behave. Thus, if our mind absorbs a particular view of sexuality, it is later expressed in our sexual behavior. If we have good role models and read good literature, our

mind is filled with noble thoughts and feelings. But if films, magazines and books are filled with images of passion, rebellion, disobedience and violence, how will we become loving, considerate and faithful people? When we allow perverted images into our mind, we soon will believe that they are normal. Pornographic material exploits and dehumanizes sex. Human beings are treated as things and women in particular as sex objects. The message pornography sends is that women enjoy being abused and treated in this degrading manner. If we look at and read pornography, we will absorb these values and perspectives. Our mind will become corrupted. Once these images are in, they are very difficult to get out.

Pornography presents a false view of human relations. The ideal woman is presented as a sex idol. This image corrupts the true view of womanhood. Women are judged by their looks and not as a whole person with a personality. This attitude corrupts the relationship between men and women. In movies men and women frequently are seen to have sex without any subsequent complications. Life is not like that, though. Sexual encounters have an emotional dimension, and people who are promiscuous are not psychologically healthy. Pornography promotes an ideal that is actually unhealthy and false.

“The purpose of a woman is to express in the world in a concrete form the Eternal femininity, one of the sides of divine nature, and by this to bring all the world to loving harmony, beauty and freedom.”

—Nikolai Berdyaev, *Metaphysics of Sex and Love*

Pornography is...

1. **Anti-family.** Nearly all the sexual encounters in films and books are between people who are not married. Thus pornography minimizes the importance of family relations, ridicules marriage and glorifies promiscuity. Such images cannot but undermine marriage and the family.

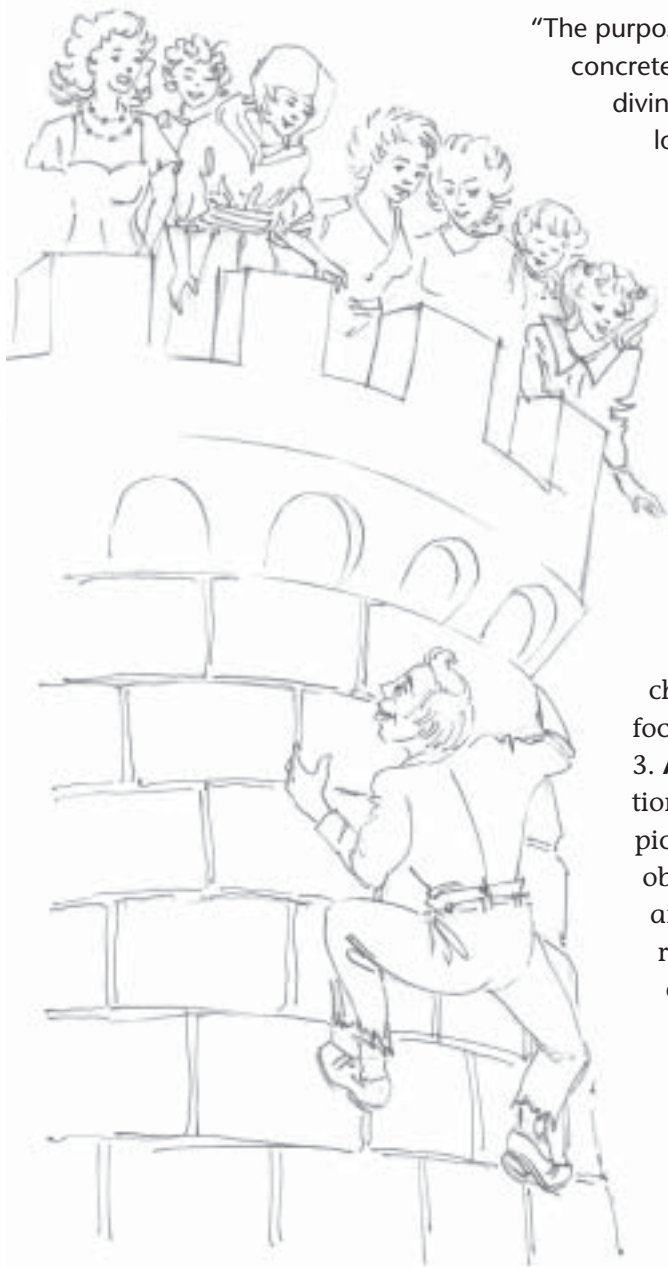
2. **Anti-human.** Pornography is obsessed with the sexual function as if it were the only important aspect of life. It reduces people to bodies.

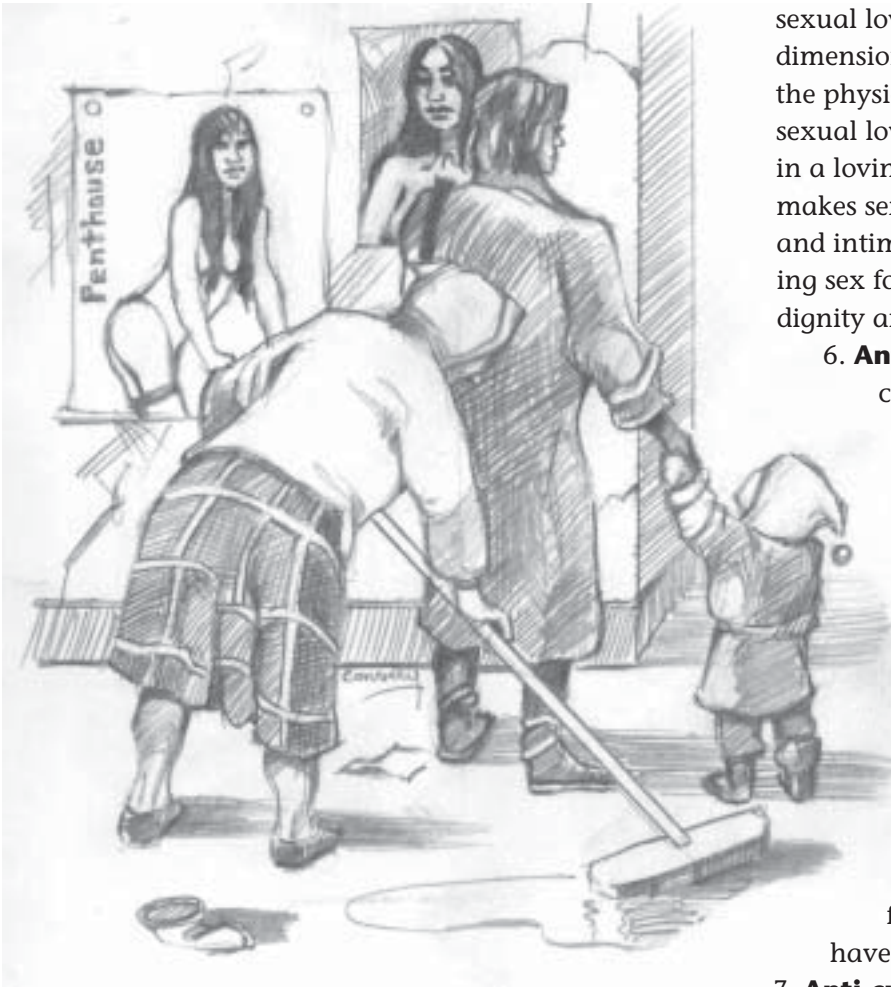
Women are judged by their body and not by their character. Stories lack plots with character, and pictures focus on the anatomy, not the face.

3. **Anti-women.** The outright degradation and humiliation of women are the central themes of pornographic pictures and stories. Women are consistently portrayed as objects of lust to be sniggered over and grabbed at, used and abused, and discarded in favor of another. Pornography is also potentially very dangerous to women. It encourages men to look at women not as persons but as sex objects to be used for self-gratification. Many murderers and sexual criminals confess that their crime was stimulated by pornographic material.

4. **Anti-children.** By sexualizing all relationships, pornography indoctrinates children with an amoral acceptance of promiscuity.

5. **Anti-sex.** Paradoxically, pornography is also anti-sex. It overrates the physical dimension of





sexual love while underrating the spiritual dimension. It reduces sexual love merely to the physical act. It fails to understand that sexual love can find proper fulfillment only in a loving, lasting relationship. Instead it makes sexual love, which should be private and intimate, a public spectacle. By exploiting sex for commercial gain, it denies the dignity and spirituality of sex.

6. Anti-social. Pornography always corrupts society. In societies where pornography has become more available, the number of serious sexual offenses such as rape has gone up greatly. As a result, the relationships between men and women in general become permeated by fear and suspicion. Pornography is also connected with organized crime, prostitution, drugs and political forces that want to demoralize the population. Often the subjects of porn films are women and children who have been forced into such work.

7. Anti-culture. Not all portrayals of the naked human form are pornography. Think of the

famous statue of the Venus de Milo. Art is uplifting and ennobling. Pornographic treatments typically degrade and destroy. The lifting of legal restrictions on pornography has not led to a flowering of culture.

8. Anti-life. The sexual organs of men and women are precious and sacred. Why? They are the place where the ultimate act of love is consummated and through which life itself begins. By exposing his or her body to lustful scrutiny, a person is violating the purpose of life.

Pornography and freedom

It has been claimed that in a free society there should be no censorship and that freedom of expression should be absolute. Let's think about this. Are you allowed to carry out a conversation with your classmates during class time? Why not? Can you walk into a church during a service and start shouting? Should you be allowed to slander and tell lies about a person, thus destroying his reputation and possibly his career and livelihood? What about the freedom not to be slandered?

We can see that freedom is never absolute. It is always constrained by one's social context and by laws that exist to protect everyone's freedom. There is a time and place for everything. Freedom is valuable because it allows us to pursue truth, beauty and goodness.

Pornography has little to do with the free exchange of ideas and the pursuit of truth. By its effects it dehumanizes people and takes away their freedom. It is a way of making money by stimulating and exploiting people's baser desires. Since many people find it offensive, its open display prevents them from having the freedom to walk about without being visually assaulted by every newsstand. Although it is not



necessarily easy to draw the line between pornography and art, there is a difference.

The problem is what to do about it? What should one do about harmful temptations? A similar problem concerns alcohol, smoking and drugs. All are harmful, both individually and socially. What should be done about them? Should people be protected from temptation, or should they be allowed to do what is wrong and harmful to themselves and others? In many countries there has been a long debate about such questions. There are basically three approaches:

1. to ban them altogether.
2. to allow them.
3. to restrict and regulate them.

Each approach has been tried by different countries. In Muslim countries modesty is a very important virtue. So it is very natural that pornography should be banned. It is illegal to display it, sell it or import it. Of course, it exists underground and those who really want it can always find a way to get it. Still, it is removed as a casual temptation and does not assault the senses of people who do not wish to see it. Any attempts to introduce pornography are vigorously resisted by ordinary people.

In several Scandinavian countries there is no censorship at all. All types of pornographic films, magazines and books are freely available and openly displayed to the public. This removal of censorship was introduced by the government for ideological reasons and was not supported by the majority of the population. It has been followed by a rise in sexual crimes and increase in the divorce rate.

Several other countries have allowed pornography but tried to restrict it. In Britain, for example, there has been a long debate about what pornography is and

what art is. Gradually pornography has become more widely available. However, there is still censorship of films and magazines. Child pornography is illegal, and other forms of pornography can be obtained only in certain “adult” shops. Pornographic magazines sold in ordinary shops have opaque plastic covers.

In general, we need to recognize that it is quite possible to have a free society without pornography. In fact, pornography undermines the free market by corrupting human relationships and making exploitation more acceptable.

Questions for Discussion



- Discuss the eight points made against pornography. Are there any points that you think are not relevant? Can you think of any other points?
- Are there limits to freedom of expression? How should those limits be decided?
- Do you see any pornographic material where you live? What can be done to prevent the spread of pornography?

Eternal Femininity

Eternal Femininity... What is it? Is it the curves of a nude body on the cover of porno magazines? Or is it the pleasure of gradually getting to know more and more deeply the uniqueness of the woman you love? Let's read from the following letter written by the great Russian novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky to his wife, Anna Grigoryevna:

Good morning, my dear angel!

Accept my hugs and kisses. I was thinking of you all the way here.

I've just arrived. It is half past eleven and I am a little tired. I am just sitting down to write. I had to wait for my train in Leipzig quite a long time. I was sitting in the station, imagining you asking me why I left my Anya. I remembered the whole of you, every tiny cell of your soul and of your heart. During this time, beginning in October, I have come to understand that you are such a wholesome, pure, shy, humble, beautiful and innocent angel who is trusting me. I am really unworthy of you. How could I leave you? Whatever for am I going? Where I am going? God entrusted me with you in order to protect all the particles of your heart, so that your heart may come into full blossom. God gave me to you so that I could make a vicarious sacrifice of all my sins. I must present you before God more developed and mature, free of anything that is damaging to one's soul and spirit. And I did not deserve it because I commit such wild actions like my silly trip here. I may influence you in a wrong way. I was terribly sad yesterday. I wish you were here so I could embrace you...

Anya, my pure light, my sun, I love you! When people part they have such deep feelings realizing how dear they are to each other. We are becoming one being out of two...

Ah, Anya, I need you. That is what I am feeling now! I remember your warm smile that permeates my heart. I miss you...

Good bye, my angel, my quiet, sweet, humble angel, please love me. I wish I could see you now, if just for one second. There are so many things we could discuss, so many impressions that have accumulated. It can't be all put into one letter. Besides, you know, I cannot write letters so well. Still, when I write several lines I feel better. So, I am going to write to you every morning. I need to write these letters because I am constantly thinking of you — every minute. For God's sake, take care of your health, try to find at least something interesting to do...

Good bye, my darling, good bye, my light.

Yours to the tiniest part of myself, kissing you endlessly,

Loving you,
Fyodor

CHAPTER 41

From the Doctor's Notebook

Sexual intercourse, like any activity, has consequences. In other sections of this book we cover the emotional, psychological and social aspects. Now we want to review the physiological dimension. The most obvious is the possibility of conception and pregnancy. Pre-marital and extra-marital sexual relations carry other risks as well, in particular catching a venereal or sexually transmitted disease (STD).

Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Fifty years ago there were two notable sexual diseases worldwide: syphilis and gonorrhea. Various other STDs were known only to the world of prostitutes. Today doctors have identified more than 25 kinds of STDs. Many, such as chlamydia, genital herpes, hepatitis B and human papilloma virus, have become commonplace among young people. These diseases range in their effects from minor discomfort to chronic pain to infertility and death.

Statistics show that *one in every four* Americans between the ages of 15 and 55 is living with an STD, two-thirds of them being under the age of 25. In Russia since 1990 the incidence of syphilis and other sexually transmitted diseases among teenagers has multiplied several-fold.

The reason for these dramatic statistics is the increase in promiscuity, particularly among young people. Having sex with someone is like having sex with that person's past sexual partners, too. You may think your partner is healthy, but how would you know if his or her past partners were also uninfected? It is impossible to know not only the history of one's sexual partner but also the history of his or her partners, and their partners, too—*ad infinitum*. The fact is that the enormous increase in STD infection makes it dangerous for anyone to have sex outside of marriage.

Here is a list and description of the most common STDs:

Chlamydia

In 1976 chlamydia was reported for the first time. Now it is the most common venereal disease in the United States. There is evidence that up to a third of all sexually-active teens are already infected with this disease. Chlamydia can cause infection of the uterus, fallopian tubes and ovaries. This infection can cause scarring and lead to infertility and painful intercourse even after the acute infection has been treated with antibiotics. In having sex with a chlamydia-infected partner, a person has a 50% chance of contracting the disease.

Genital Herpes

This disease became common in 1984 and today affects more than 30 million Americans. It causes cold sores, ulcers, headaches, fever and genital discharge. No

cure has been found, so once you have it you have it for life. Imagine having to tell the person you want to marry that you have an incurable venereal disease. Infection with herpes also threatens the unborn, because an outbreak during pregnancy carries a 60% risk of infecting the child, which often leads to death or severe brain damage.

Syphilis

This is one of the oldest STDs, having been known since the late 15th century. It is a bacterial disease that can be cured by penicillin. It was on the decrease, but its incidence has dramatically increased during the last decade. The disease develops in three stages. The first is rather mild and leads to a painless ulcer. The second stage, which develops anywhere from three weeks to six months later, is a flu-like illness followed by a latency period (which may last several years) during which the bacteria spreads. In the third stage there is a breakdown in the blood and nervous systems, often leading to insanity, paralysis and death. An infected pregnant woman can pass it on to her unborn child, causing meningitis, deformities or stillbirth.

Gonorrhea

Gonorrhea is also a bacterial disease. It usually causes an acute inflammation of the genital passages. Sometimes there are no symptoms while the disease progresses within the body. It is extremely infectious, and in women it can also spread to the uterus and fallopian tubes, causing infertility. It is now the primary cause of arthritis in young adults. In the past it could be cured by penicillin, but recently a number of resistant strains have developed, making its treatment increasingly difficult. Today one out of ten sexually active teens is infected.

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

This disease, a more generalized infection of the female organs caused by chlamydia and gonorrhea, infects more than one million women annually, 30% of whom are teenagers. Because scarring from the pelvic infection prevents normal passage of fertilized eggs to the uterus, it is the most rapidly increasing cause of infertility among women today.

Human Papilloma Virus

This virus infects up to half of certain groups of unmarried sexually active people. It causes venereal warts which can lead to painful intercourse as well as greatly increased risk for precancerous growths and cervical cancer. Women who have venereal warts are 1,000 to 2,000 times more likely to get cervical cancer than those without the warts.

Medical research has indicated that there are a number of risk factors that increase a person's chance of contracting an STD. They are:

- ✕ Beginning sexual activity at an early age.
- ✕ Having many sexual partners.
- ✕ Having sex with someone who is promiscuous.

HIV/AIDS

In the late 1970s doctors in the United States began to encounter patients with rare diseases who seemed to have severely damaged immune systems. In 1981 they gave this disease the name AIDS, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. The term "acquired" indicates that AIDS is a disease that one contracts from someone else. The disease was first discovered mainly among homosexual men and drug abusers. In



Typical Opportunistic Diseases Associated with AIDS

- *Parasitic infections* of the mouth and intestine, leading to diarrhea and severe weight loss, loss of teeth, open sores in the mouth.
- *Viral infection* of the retina leading to blindness.
- *Lung infections* such as pneumonia (developed by half of all AIDS patients) and tuberculosis (developed by a third).
- *Neurological disorders* including the progressive destruction of the tissues of the brain and spinal column.
- Various forms of *cancer*, such as Kaposi's sarcoma, causing extremely painful tumors and swellings.

1984 researchers found that the disease was being caused by a virus, which they called the Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV.

HIV/AIDS sufferers can now be found in every country of the world. Currently worldwide it is estimated that 40 million people are living with HIV/AIDS, while more than 16 million have already died from this disease. That number is currently increasing at the rate of three million each year. AIDS has become the fourth-leading cause of death in the world. The World Health Organization has called HIV/AIDS the worst epidemic in human history. Every day 16,000 new people are being infected by HIV. The latest forecast is that AIDS will claim an additional 65 million lives by the year 2020.

When the HIV virus enters the body, it begins to multiply by taking over white blood cells, which are supposed to defend the body, and turns them into carriers of the virus. During this stage, although a person looks healthy, he or she is able to infect others with the virus.

In the second stage of the disease, which may not arrive until several years later, clearer symptoms appear. These may include weight loss, diarrhea and extreme fatigue. The virus is still multiplying, in the process damaging and destroying the immune system—the organs, cells and tissues of the body that fight off disease and infection. The immune system eventually becomes so weak that the person cannot fight off even a mild illness like a cold or chicken pox.

At this point the disease moves into its third stage, during which the person in his or her weakened state may contract one or a number of so-called “opportunistic” diseases from which he or she will die. The evidence is that most people who contract HIV will go on to develop AIDS, and most these will die within three years. Despite decades of research and billions of dollars of investment, no cure or even an effective vaccine is yet in sight.

How is HIV/AIDS spread?

In reality, the HIV virus is rather weak and can survive only in body fluids. Therefore, any behavior that involves the exchange of body fluids is a risk. The main sources of infection are:

- ✗ Sexual relationships (more than 80% of the cases worldwide)
- ✗ Shared needles by drug abusers (5%)
- ✗ Blood transfusions
- ✗ Infected mothers passing on the virus to newborn babies

By far the most common way that HIV is being transmitted worldwide is through promiscuous sexual behavior. Prostitutes in particular are notorious for carrying the HIV virus—in some cities up to 80-90% are known to be infected. However, any type of promiscuous behavior places a person at risk. What began as a



“homosexual” disease in recent years has spread rapidly into the heterosexual world through premarital and extramarital affairs.

Another far less common way that HIV is being transmitted is through drug abusers who share needles on which there remain tiny particles of blood contaminated with the virus. There have been cases of patients in hospitals contracting the virus from transfusions of unchecked donated blood, although with increased vigilance these types of cases have been drastically reduced. Tragically millions of babies have been infected by their own mothers who were carrying HIV. Fortunately there is no evidence that someone can be infected by casual contact with someone carrying the AIDS virus.

Do contraceptives protect against STDs?

Not completely. The contraceptive that has been most promoted is the condom, which is actually designed to prevent the transmission of sperm. Thus, the pores of a condom membrane are smaller than sperm but many times larger than HIV and other viruses that cause STDs. In addition to this, condoms often leak and as is the case with many STDs do not cover the genital area affected. Because of these factors, we cannot responsibly say that condoms present an effective barrier to STDs. For instance, several studies conducted in the 1990s showed that, even with consistent condom use, sex between couples in which one partner is infected with HIV results in the infection of the other partner in about one-fourth of the cases on average. Even in preventing pregnancy, for which they were originally designed, condom failure rates have been shown to be between 13-27% for those under 20 years of age.

Who is at risk?

STDs, including HIV/AIDS, are behavior-related diseases. Therefore, they are among the most avoidable diseases in the world. People most at risk are those who engage in casual sex or have sexual relationships outside marriage, homosexuals, and intravenous drug users.

Although all the above are diseases that affect the physical body, they also affect a person's psychological well-being. A person who has an STD is likely to feel guilty, angry, resentful, ashamed and suffer from low self-esteem. Those people who know they have such a disease but continue to engage in sex are committing a serious crime, since their behavior may lead to the death or severe illness of their partners.

What can I do?

If you do not want to contract an STD, avoid high-risk behavior, which includes sex outside marriage as well as casual sex and drug abuse. If you have not had a sexual experience, keep it that way. Don't let anyone convince you that "it won't happen to you" if you start having sex.

If you have had sex, or taken drugs using a shared needle, then you are already at risk. The first thing to do is STOP. Then you should consult a doctor to get a health check. A doctor usually will be able to tell you if you are infected or not. If not, thank your lucky stars and make a new start.

If you are infected, at least you can face the future honestly. In order to stop spreading the disease, you should not have sexual relations with anyone. Some STDs can be cured. Although AIDS itself has no cure, you may be able to receive treatment for some of the opportunistic diseases. With a healthy diet and by abstaining from alcohol and cigarettes, you can avoid additional strain on your immune system.

Individual Exercise



Listed below are some statements about STDs. Which are true and which are false? If a statement is false, write a correction.

1. Usually you can tell if a person has syphilis just by his or her physical appearance.
2. STDs can be reliably detected through a simple blood test.
3. Only homosexuals and drug users are really at risk from AIDS.
4. STDs are now so widespread that almost anyone can get one of them.
5. Having sex with just one boyfriend or girlfriend is not a high-risk behavior, especially if you always use a condom.
6. Only less than half of people who are infected with the HIV virus will develop full-blown AIDS.
7. There have been several reported cases of AIDS being transmitted simply by hugging and kissing.
8. The risk of contracting an STD can be greatly reduced by the behavior we choose.

CHAPTER 42

Family and Society

Which comes first, the family or society? Which is more influential? How does the family influence society and how does society influence the family? Does my personal behavior have any impact on my family or society? If it does, how am I responsible for the consequences of my actions? We may think that sexual love is a private matter that is no one else's business. We may think, "Why shouldn't I do what I want? Surely I'm not harming anyone?" We are not the first people to think this way. Nor is our society the first to have faced such spiritual and moral confusion.

A community is made up of the relationships among people within that community. If these relationships become selfish and exploitative, then the whole community is affected. If people betray the trust of the people closest to them, they will be more likely to betray other people's trust too. Men or women who are prepared to break the promise they made to their spouse when they married will be more likely to break other promises. If we are prepared to cheat on those we love, why not cheat on those with whom we merely do business? This problem of love, or rather its misuse, is the direct or indirect cause of all social and economic problems, which are problems in human relationships.

Every civilization that has observed the rules of sexual propriety has prospered and endured. The collapse of formerly great civilizations, including the Roman Empire, has been traced in every instance to the breakdown of sexual order. When sexual order breaks down, the family breaks down. Instead of growing up in healthy, loving, stable families, children grow up in broken families, often with only one parent. A child needs to experience the love of both a father and a mother in order to develop a rounded character and know how to form wholesome relationships with both sexes. Children of single-parent families are often less able to cope with emotional and social difficulties and as a result are more likely to commit crimes. They tend to do less well at school. They are more at risk of suffering psychological problems and committing suicide. They are more likely to become involved in drugs. Because they often spend time alone in an empty house, they are more likely to join gangs. Such an outcome is by no means inevitable. However, children from such homes do have more challenges to face and more difficulties to overcome.

The story "The Princess and the Barbarian", written by the author George Gilder as a prologue for his book *Men and Marriage*, is not simply a fairy-tale. It is more like a parable—a story that can teach us a lesson. As with any parable, it has many different themes and levels of meaning.

Upon reading this story the first idea that stands out is the difference in behavior between two generations. The values of the new generation differ from those of the old generation. The courting and sexual morality of the first couple are very different

from those of the second couple. What this story also reveals are the implications of these different value systems.

The first barbarian is young and aggressive. His energy is undisciplined and pursues instant gratification. He seizes what he wants without regard for the consequences. When he sees the young princess, he is filled with lust and desire. He wants her. She, however, is the embodiment of femininity. She is modest and guards her virginity and integrity with her life. Through her love and attitude she helps the barbarian to become self-disciplined and transforms his lust into love. He is prepared to die, to change, to grow and give up his precious freedom for the sake of love. He changes from a hunter to a husband and eventually a father. As head of the family, he lives for the sake of his family and their future well-being.

The second barbarian is the same. The princess, though, has different values from those of her parents. She has been influenced by “progressive” ideas from abroad. She doesn’t care for her parents’ morality, and when she encounters the barbarian she welcomes some excitement. But she doesn’t love or respect him. She is not committed to their relationship. It would be too much effort to tame him. Instead she just enjoys the pleasure of his company without thinking of the responsibility that goes with it. When an older, suave, worldly-wise king appears at the court, she is attracted to him immediately. Why stay with a barbarian when one could have a king? The barbarian, his heart betrayed, seeks his revenge on the world.



To read

“The Princess and the Barbarian”, *Men and Marriage*, by George Gilder

Questions for Discussion



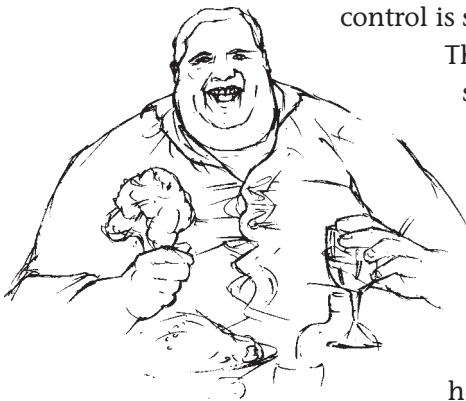
- In some societies or during some periods of history values are easily transmitted from one generation to the next. In other societies or at other times younger and older generations have different values. Why is this?
- Given that men are by nature more aggressive than women, how are they socialized into becoming responsible adults?
- How were the short-term goals of the first barbarian transformed into long-term goals?
- What distinguishes a youth from an adult? In other words, what do we mean when we say a person is grown up?
- Find out about the rites of passage that most tribal societies have and mark the transition in a young man's (and sometimes woman's) life from a youth to an adult. What is the value of such rites of initiation? What are the rites of initiation in your society or community?
- What happens when love is not integrated into society but remains on the level of self-gratification?
- How and why do the values of men and women differ? What is the unique contribution that each makes to society? How do they combine together to form society?
- What should a traditionally moral society do when immoral ideas surface, whether they be foreign or not?
- How can a person, or society, distinguish between moral and immoral ideas? What are the criteria for making such evaluations?
- How and why does the breakdown of order in sexual love influence society? Is it a cause-effect relationship, or is the effect more subtle and pervasive?
- What, if any, is the relationship between broken love, crime and violence?
- The couples in the story happened to be the rulers of their society. Do leaders and representatives have a special responsibility for setting the moral tone of their society?
- Does the behavior of a leader have more impact on a society than the behavior of an ordinary member of the society?
- When a person's heart is hurt, what does he or she do?
- What do you think are the social implications of the sexual morality taught by the world's religions?
- Are you surprised that most criminals come from broken homes or single-parent families? Why do you think this is?

CHAPTER 43

Self-Control

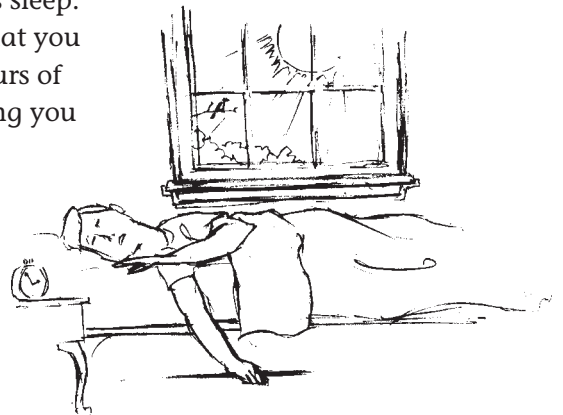
One of the main characteristics of being human is our ability to be self-reflective, because we have a spiritual aspect to our existence. As we grow physically, our mind and spirit should grow as well. Infants and toddlers have a hard time controlling their body. They eat when they are hungry, sleep when they are tired, and urinate and defecate whenever they feel the need. As we grow, we are expected to become progressively more mature. We can control our body with our mind. Self-control is seen as a measure of maturity.

There are many areas in life in which it is important for us to practice self-control. One example is eating. If it were possible for you to eat as much as you wanted, what would be the result? You would become overweight and sick.



Another example is sleep. Suppose you decided that you absolutely need ten hours of sleep a day. Even knowing you had to study for a test or had other responsibilities,

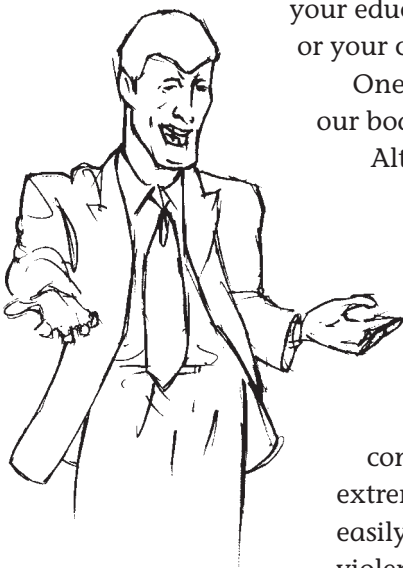
you would stay in bed for ten hours. How would that impact your education, your career prospects, or your communication with others?



One of the most difficult parts of our body to tame is our tongue!

Although it is small, it can be

very unruly. Often we can't control it and brag about ourselves, gossip about others, shout and curse. No matter how much we may regret saying certain words, it is impossible to take them back. Words may be invisible, but they are very powerful tools and can outlive their speaker.



We need to exercise emotional self-control. Perhaps you know some people who are extremely sensitive and emotional and burst into tears easily. Others may be very short-tempered or turn violently angry. People who lack emotional self-control are usually rather difficult to get along with. Our emotions are the source of our energy and motivation. Just



like horses, they have to be tamed and disciplined if they are not to run wild. With a bridle they will take you where you want to go.

Self-control in the area of sexual behavior is obviously a mixture of both bodily and emotional discipline. Both are especially challenging to teenagers. With the onset of puberty, large quantities of sex hormones start to be produced, which act on both the body and emotions.

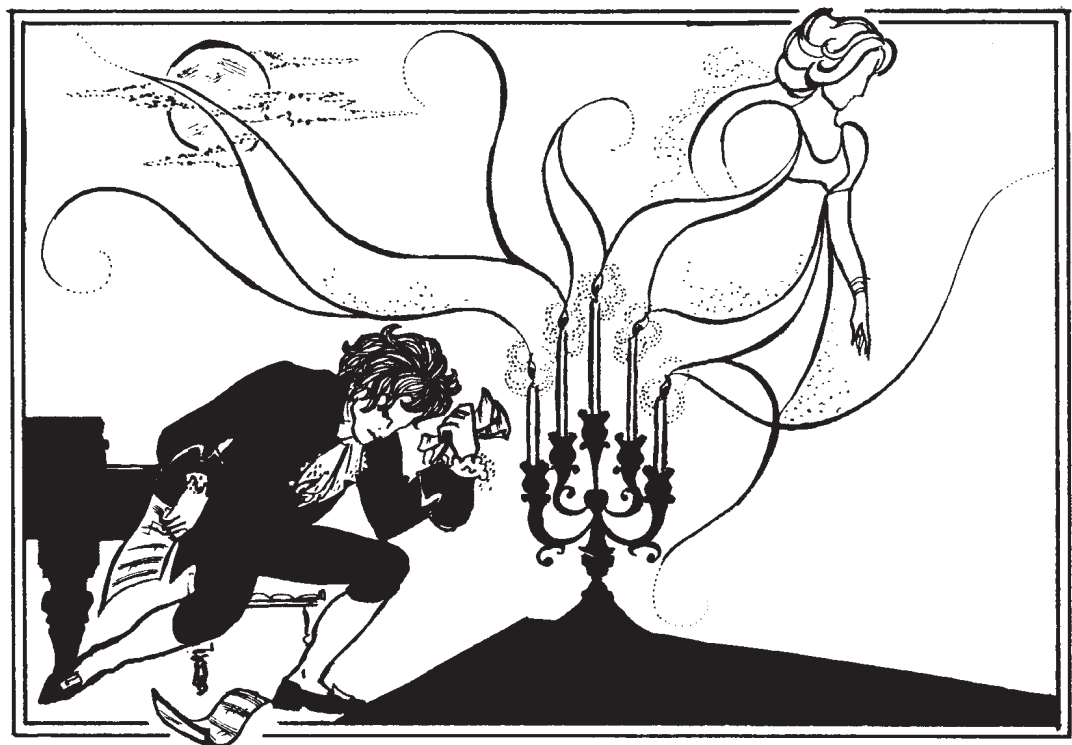
Hormones are a real factor. Nevertheless, we are not to be slaves to chemicals! Adolescence is a time to practice real self-control. When you are confident that you can keep yourself in control all the time, this is a good indication that you've made it to adulthood. Obviously, from that definition it can be said that a great number of "adults" are not really adults at all.

Self-control is not about suppressing or repressing desires, or pretending that they don't exist. For example, becoming aware of and being attracted to members of the opposite sex is part of the process of growing up, both physically and spiritually. It is not bad, and it is not wrong. It can be good, when these feelings are channeled into appropriate activities.

There are many ways in which sexual energy can be directed and harnessed before it is finally consummated in marriage. Some examples are sports, creativity (art, music, drama), voluntary service, spiritual exploration, etc.

If you have a chance, listen to Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. Many people are familiar with the peaceful opening theme, and it is easy to imagine a calm, moonlit night. But you will be surprised by the torrent of power and the energy of the second movement. At the time Beethoven wrote this music he was frustrated and rejected in love. All of his peaceful dreams (first movement) were suddenly frustrated and lost. Experts say you can hear his sexual frustration and energy in every bar. See what you think!

Sexual energy can be channeled into tremendously creative activities. Like any power, it can be useful if understood but can destroy you if treated casually. Think of it like electricity. Electricity is indispensable and very helpful but can kill you if you are careless.



People often regard self-control as limiting. The opposite is the case. For instance, an experienced pianist can sit down at a piano and play any piece of music he chooses. If you watch him, you may notice that his eyes may be closed as his hands move across the keyboard effortlessly. His body may sway as he lets the music flow through him. He is obviously enjoying himself immensely. Reaching this level of accomplishment takes years of practice. The first time you sit at a piano and try to play, it can be a very frustrating experience. Your fingers won't go where you want them to, and it takes all your effort and concentration to play a few notes correctly. Gradually you learn a few simple tunes and practice the scales again and again. As your fingers become disciplined, you no longer have to think about them. They just go where they should. The more disciplined you become, the more freedom you have. Eventually when you have completely disciplined your hands, you will be able to play whatever you like.

In the same way, self-control gives a person great confidence and joy. A person with self-control can trust himself because he knows that he will do and say what he wants to. The same applies to loving. We must learn self-control in order to love others.

Religions on Self-Control

All the world's religions and many of its great philosophers recommend the practice of self-control and self-discipline as the first prerequisite for maturity and growth. Here is a selection of their teachings:

Sikhism: With the conquest of my mind, I have conquered the whole world.
— Adi Granth

Buddhism: Though one should conquer a million men on the battlefield, yet he, indeed, is the noblest victor who has conquered himself.
— Dhammapada

Judaism & Christianity: He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he who rules his spirit is better than he who takes a city.
— Proverbs

Hinduism: It is true that the mind is restless and difficult to control. But it can be conquered ... through regular practice and detachment.
— Bhagavad Gita

Greek philosophy: What it lies in our power to do, it lies in our power not to do.
— Aristotle

Taoism: He who conquers others is strong; he who conquers himself is mighty.
— Lao Tsu

Something to think about



Self-control is the channeling and controlling of our drives and impulses—whether biological, emotional, or intellectual. This is not a popular concept in modern society. Restraining ourselves, after all, means possibly missing out on something special, some wonderful experience that we long to have. Teenagers especially sometimes seem to be willing to do anything to avoid boredom. According to the backdrop of voices in our society, self-control sounds like the opposite of living passionately.

An analogy may help to clarify the meaning of self-control and its relationship to living passionately. If you ever had experience with campfires, you know the difference between a fire made from wood and one made from paper. Think about each type of fire.

- Which type of fire is easier to get going? Looks most spectacular in the beginning? Goes out more quickly?
- Which type of fire takes more tending and careful preparation to build?
- Which fire provides more warmth? Might last through the night? Can be used for cooking?
- Which one is more likely to go out if a little wind comes up?

Self-control is “tending the fire within.” We are all blessed with the “fuel” of life’s energy within us—our emotions, our drives and urges, our longings for pleasure. We have to resist our impulse to get an instant big blaze going with this fuel, or it will burn out like a newspaper fire. We have to learn self-control—not giving in to our passions on demand. Then we will be able to build up our inner fire, tending it carefully and patiently. We will become persons of depth whose passion, like firewood, gives warmth and light for a lifetime. Having only physical intimacy does not lead anyone in that direction.

Being able to practice self-control makes a lot of sense when we look at our life as a long-term project of building our character. As discussed throughout this book, the key question for every human being is this: What kind of person do I want to be and become? Do I want to be a person who can “tend the fire within” for the sake of something worthwhile?

For Your Journal



Sometimes people see self-control as a factor limiting their personal freedom. Try to prove the opposite point of view.

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

CHAPTER 44

Falling in Love, Friendship and Real Love

Growing up involves learning to distinguish between different emotions and types of love. Much more intense feelings and emotions are experienced in the teenage years. Interest in the opposite sex starts to develop. Different questions start to surface. What is love? Is there any difference between falling in love and real love? Can there be friendship between boys and girls?

- ♥ Maya is so attractive. I really like to spend time with her. The other day I invited her to go to the cafe, and she said yes. We had a great time! She definitely likes me! We walked home together and just before she left I kissed her. Perhaps it is already love?
- ♥ Three weeks ago I met a boy. He's two years older than me, very tall and handsome. I dream about him every night, imagine us going to the cinema, speaking about everything. In my dreams I'm so cool, but in reality I'm afraid even to approach him. And he doesn't pay any attention to me. What shall I do?
- ♥ I fell in love with our math teacher. It's kind of strange to speak about it, but I guess it is a kind of love. Of course, I can't imagine myself going on a date with him, but I do love him. He is so nice. And he plays the guitar! One thing is for sure—I used to hate mathematics, the classes were so incredibly boring! But this year we got our new teacher, and now math is my favorite subject. Besides, it's the only way to get his attention. Can you imagine, within a year I became top of the class in math! It's true—love creates miracles!
- ♥ I really like Rita. We have known each other almost from kindergarten. It's so great spending time together—we understand each other. But why is it that this year all our classmates have begun to tease us, calling us “bride and bridegroom”? There is nothing like that between us. We are simply friends! Why can't they understand?
- ♥ A year ago I fell in love. At the beginning it was so wonderful—I felt as if I had wings. The whole world seemed so sunny, so happy and welcoming! I felt that for the first time my heart had opened. I was able to embrace so many people. I wanted everybody to be happy like I was. And Mike also loved me. But now—I don't even know how to explain it. All my friends envy me, we still love each other, but



most of the joy has vanished! I feel so tired and exhausted. I'm afraid it was too much for both of us. The feelings are so powerful—I simply don't know how to cope with them. Is this the way love is supposed to be?

Let us try to deal with some of these questions. Can pure friendship exist between a man and a woman?

Friendship and love

When a boy and girl or a man and woman become friends, their feelings for each other do not have to grow into romantic love. It is good to realize that a person of the opposite sex is not just an object of attraction. He or she is a person with whom one can share similar interests and values.

Friends of the opposite sex can help us grow. If you can keep the relationship “platonic,” or non-sexual, and become close in the manner of a brother and sister, it can be a healthy way to prepare for marriage. We hope that our textbook can help you understand how to be friends with someone of the opposite sex in a wholesome way.

That's what Anna, now 28, recalls about her high-school friends:

I graduated from high school almost 12 years ago. So many things have happened since that time, but what is most amazing is that my classmates from high school are still my closest friends. In fact, we relate to each other not just as friends but more like family members. We went through so many things together, and now these bonds are simply unbreakable. It all began in high school. We had a very good teacher, who invested a lot in us. We spent so much time together—went hiking, traveled somewhere during all the breaks—and as a result we truly became one family.

I remember when we were 15, a whole group of girls gathered together with this teacher, asking her how to create normal relationships with boys. And the main thing she told us was that there is a way to become friends with boys without getting involved in romantic affairs. We simply need to be sincere, not afraid to appreciate them, to notice and encourage them when they try to do something for us—even if it turns out to be clumsy. A simple piece of advice, but it did help. And now, even though we have our own jobs, families and children, and as a result don't see each other too often, still each one of us is sure—if something happened and help were needed, all of us would be together again.

Friendship begins with liking: a spontaneous feeling of enjoyment that is different from love. Liking may grow into affection, the feeling of love. Finally, affection may become the kind of love that shares the joy and pain in life. These are friends who grow to love each other, who share thoughts and values, and help each other out. Even though you may not like everything about your friend or everything he or she does, you like to be together. As in any relationship, friendships are not always easy, but the bad times can actually bring friends closer together if their love for each other is strong.

Good friends can always be trusted and relied upon. Nevertheless, one should be careful not to become possessive. Possessing and being possessed never allow a secure relationship to develop. Friendship means sharing. Friends do not start taking or owning what is freely given. High school is a time to build many new friendships, because this should be a time to grow in relating with many types of people, not just one. When young people become more secure in themselves, they can let other people be themselves and appreciate others for who they are. Then their friendships grow and become more enjoyable.



First love

Most of us have known someone in whom we see only what's good. No matter what others may tell us or even if we try to analyze that person's qualities intellectually, we see only radiance and beauty. With such a person, we feel happy and uplifted. When this person is someone of the opposite sex, we may refer to this experience as having a "crush." It is a non-sexual kind of love that we may experience toward many different kinds of people. We are capable of experiencing this love as early as 5 years old, but it seems to be more common once we reach our preteen and teenage years.

The specific qualities of such a love are most commonly respect, admiration, devotion, and surrender. Based on the openness of the heart, we are able to be more loving through the admiration for our "idol," thereby taking in the very qualities we love and admire in that person. This kind of love can be a good thing when it doesn't become exclusive. Having experienced this feeling in one person's presence, we long to find it in another. As we search for it, we are seeking (says Plato) the *ideal* of beauty and goodness that makes us feel most fulfilled as human beings.

We soon realize that having "crushes" is just a stage that we all go through. It doesn't and shouldn't last. Later at some point in our lives we experience the wonder of "first love." This awakening of our heart and emotions for one person is very beautiful. It stirs up powerful feelings and thoughts that we have never experienced before. It's very romantic, but it's far from reality. Usually when we experience such a feeling for the first time, we are in love with an image we have created and projected onto another person. Perhaps it's akin to the feelings of Tatiana Larina that the Russian poet Alexander Pushkin wrote about in his epic poem *Eugene Onegin*:

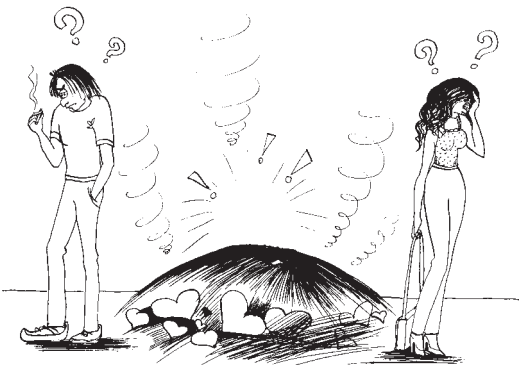
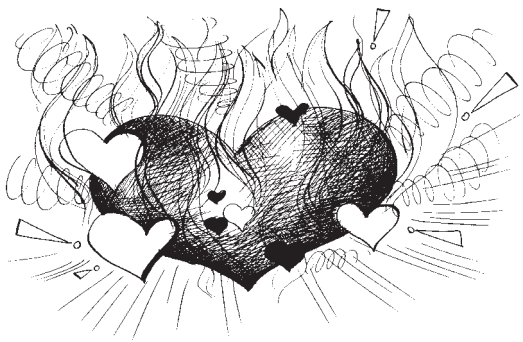
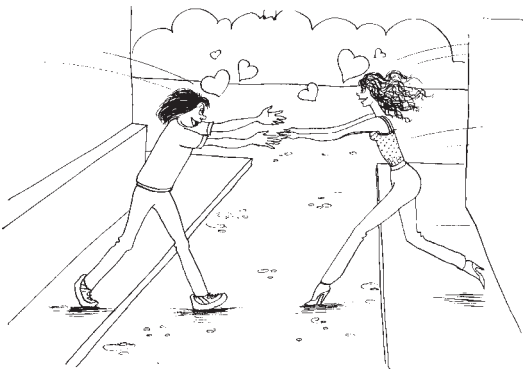
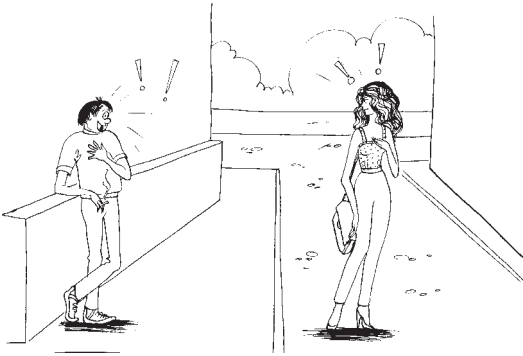
Thou comest oft in visions to me;
Wert dear, although I knew not thee;
Thy tones reverberate through me;
Thy gaze absorbed, enchanted me
Long since... But no, I was not dreaming!
Straight, when thou comest, not in seeming,
I knew thee, I took fire, stood numb,
And my heart told me: "He is come".

This feeling of first love is very beautiful at the beginning. We want to change and become the best we can be to be worthy of love. It is a time when we are unselfish and open to other people.

Step by step we become more and more involved in the relationship as it becomes more and more real. We begin to discover that the person with whom we are in love is a real human being. We either are disappointed that the reality has turned out to be different from our dreams, or we feel hurt because our beloved doesn't love us back. When the love is mutual—the bond becomes stronger and stronger, and at some point we begin to realize that the feelings are becoming too intense and difficult to control. If it reaches the point at which love ceases to be a source of happiness, we feel exhausted and trapped in a relationship.

First love is not bad, but sometimes the time is not right. Ideally we should

experience this first love with the person we plan to marry, because it is an unforgettable experience. If we experience this first love when we are already mature, it can become the happiest experience of our life, leading to marriage. If we become involved too early, then instead of happiness it may bring feelings of resentment and other consequences with which we'll need to deal for many years afterward. Therefore, it is best to avoid becoming emotionally involved with someone of the opposite sex at an early age.



Premature bonding

Adolescence is the time when the separation between children and parents is taking place. In this final stage of autonomy we experience loneliness, which sensitizes us to the need for comfort. Pain is often a result of loneliness that we are so desperately trying to escape. It is time when teenagers want nothing more than to be accepted by the surrounding world. However, instead of building loving and sincere friendships, young people often end up falling in love. Many believe that “falling in love” is “real love”. This is not true. It may *feel* so overwhelming as to be real. It feels like someone has unleashed our desire for heaven on earth. But love is more than feelings. Feelings are only one component of love. Insights, decisions, and caring actions are also included. Truly getting to know someone, understanding and loving another person, takes time. People have many sides to their character, personality and potential. This is why love at first sight is not real love but simply an attraction.

From a psychological point of view, one of the greatest problems with teenagers falling in love is that a young man and woman tend to merge their personalities before they have had a chance to form their own identity as persons. This is called premature bonding. Bonding is heightened in the emotional hothouse of sexual intimacy. The bonding of marriage is fine for two mature persons who are able to merge their personalities while maintaining their own individuality. But for young people who are still forming an identity, falling in love is usually an act of regression.

They are obsessed with the beloved, who are at the center of their thoughts at all times. Concentration on studies becomes difficult. They strongly prefer to be with their special boy or girl rather than anybody else. Nobody else exists who is even remotely comparable in terms of importance. Everybody else fades into insignificance. Consequently the immature couple may isolate themselves from family and friends, spending hours on the telephone or in each other's company. There is an enormous longing for closeness. They may short-circuit all the other important ways that they need to develop as they pour themselves into this intense relationship. This passion makes it easy for them to cross the line and become sexually intimate. Their love is very self-centered. It does not radiate and enrich all who come into contact with the couple. As one young man said, “I have a friend who's having sex with his girlfriend, and that's all they ever focus on. Their relationship is real narrow.”

Eventually, reality intrudes upon the seemingly fantastic unity of the couple who have fallen in love. Sooner or later, in response to the problems of daily life, one's individuality will reassert itself. He wants to have sex; she doesn't. She wants to go to the cinema; he doesn't. She doesn't like his friends; he doesn't like hers. Both of them in the privacy of their heart come to the realization that they are not one with each other. The beloved has and will continue to have his or her own desires, tastes, and prejudices that differ from one's own. The couple are not mature enough to respect and accept each other's differences but are threatened by them. The work involved in balancing those differences becomes more and more difficult. They "fall out of love."

Self-actualized love

One of the most prominent authorities on love in recent years was the psychologist Abraham Maslow. In his studies on self-actualized people (people who are living more to their full potential in life) Maslow described some of the ideal qualities of love.

The primary quality he found was self-sufficiency. According to his observations, self-sufficiency is the basis for love in the successful relationships of self-actualized people:

Self-actualizing people don't need each other as do ordinary lovers. They can be extremely close yet go apart quite easily. ... Throughout the most intense and ecstatic love affairs, these people remain themselves and remain ultimately masters of themselves as well, living by their own standards even though enjoying each other intensely. ... The ego is in one sense merged with another, but yet in another sense remains separate and strong as always.

In this kind of love, both partners have the freedom to remain fully themselves even as they share the experience of love.

Real love is a choice

Building a true and lasting relationship requires real work. Growing in love requires self-sacrifice, responsibility and great effort. Whereas "falling in love" is effortless—we simply "fall" into it—real love requires an individual to exercise one's will and extend oneself beyond one's limits. Real love purposely nurtures one's own spiritual development as well as another's. Falling in love does not.

When we have fallen in love, we do not feel the need to develop. We are totally content to be where we are. We also tend to idealize the person we "love."

We want to believe that there is nothing wrong with that person. If we detect shortcomings, we perceive them as insignificant or even attractive—little quirks or darling eccentricities that only add color and charm.

When desires and feelings rule our lives and dictate the quality of our existence, we are not experiencing genuine love. We are dominated by our feelings and have surrendered our will.



Real love, as well as involving feelings, is also an act of will and implies choice. If a mother loved her child only when she felt like loving, what would happen to that love when her child angered, disappointed, or embarrassed her? Her disturbed feelings could replace her affectionate feelings. But a mother's love is stronger than her hurt or upset feelings. If love depended only on feelings, it would be very unstable.

We do not *have* to love. We *choose* to love. It is important to grasp this principle in light of all the propaganda suggesting that love is an uncontrollable feeling that comes and goes like the wind. Most of the plots of novels, films and television are based on the premise that love is a feeling that just happens—or doesn't happen.

The truth is that love means living for the sake of another. We can love people whom we do not like. We can love people even when they do things we do not like. Love means extending ourselves for the benefit of another person. This can be quite painful, since it may mean denying our own wishes for the sake of the one we are loving. But when we love in this way, we do not count the cost.

This principle corrects a common misconception, namely, that love is easy and requires neither thought nor effort. According to this belief, love does not have to be learned, but instead is simply a matter of doing what comes naturally! Many hearts have been broken because of this misunderstanding. In reality, learning to love takes time and requires patience. This patience can save you from making mistakes that may result in indelible painful memories.

Love is an art to be learned and a discipline to be maintained. The art of loving can be compared to any discipline. Once a person masters the basic techniques of art or music, he finds that he has greater freedom to express his creativity. The same is true for love. As we mature in our ability to love, we gain greater freedom in the expression of our love. We are free to express love more spontaneously because it is selfless and unconditional. Everything we think, feel and do is an expression of true love—of living for the sake of others.

For Your Journal



Concepts about love

In a peaceful place with background music, read the following statements and questions. Close your eyes and think about each one before reading the next one. Then begin writing in your journal:

1. Write a definition of love. Also write something about what love is not.
2. Compare and contrast the experiences of “falling in love” and real love.
3. Describe an experience in which you felt loved by your mother or by a mother-figure who took care of you.
4. Describe your love for some object or activity.
5. Describe an experience in which you felt loved by your father or by a father-figure who took care of you.
6. Describe an unfulfilling experience of love.
7. How am I genuinely expressing or extending love to myself?
8. How am I genuinely expressing or extending love to others?
9. Where am I dissatisfied with my present state of loving?
10. What old beliefs or messages about love do I need to give up in order to develop the ability to love truly?

After you finish answering these questions, think of someone to whom you would like to write a letter (it could also be yourself or even God). Tell that person what you would like to change about your relationship. You may write a dialogue as well. Be creative.

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.



To read

“Sixteen”, by Maureen Daly, in *The Art of Loving Well*

CHAPTER 45

Coping with Rejection

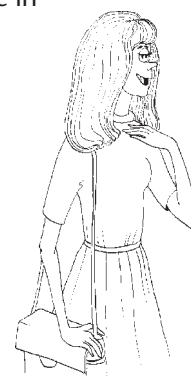
We all feel rejected at one time or another. We may be dropped from the school soccer team, or feel that people are not interested in us. All of us have to learn how to accept rejection. How well we do this will show our character and our ability to become mature.

Feeling rejected



Everyone was going to Valerka's dacha for the weekend. The sole subject of conversation was: we need to take a tape recorder, tapes, food; don't forget about swimming, etc. ... I tried not to participate in the conversations or pretended to agree with everything, but nobody invited me!

We came to the party together. I was so happy that he invited me, and I felt that at last I had a boyfriend. But soon he left me and spent the whole evening speaking to Svetka, then invited her to dance. I spent some time unnoticed in the corner and then left the party, making up some excuse. If I didn't run away in time, he would go with Svetka, leaving me alone. It would be too humiliating!



My best friend found a new set of friends. We've been friends since second grade, but now he never has time. He's always busy and never tells me with what; he's got money, girlfriends. He even forgot about my birthday.



I liked Lena for a long time. She seemed to be the most wonderful of all the girls. I simply didn't notice anybody else. I didn't know how to approach her, so finally I wrote a letter. Next day I saw how she was laughing at my letter together with her friend. I wanted to disappear. I ran up to her and grabbed the letter.

Sasha says that dad is his best friend, but my father doesn't even notice me. Once I decided to speak to him about everything, simply to have a man-to-man conversation. At first he was listening to me with a kind of curiosity, but then somebody from his office called, and at that moment he forgot about my existence and spent the whole evening speaking about his "important" things. And we never came back to our conversation.





Throughout life we are involved in relationships. Some are superficial and it doesn't matter much what such people think of us, while others are of tremendous significance. It is very important to learn how to respond to rejection.

For example, suppose a shop assistant is rude to you. There are several ways you can respond. You can take it personally and think that there is something wrong with you. If you always think this way, you will soon feel crushed. Since it is painful to accept that there is something wrong with oneself, many people build a wall to protect themselves. They then respond by attacking the other person. Alternatively you can try to imagine why the assistant is behaving in this way. Perhaps she has had a bad day. Maybe she hates her job or she just hasn't been trained properly. It's good to keep in mind that if she were happy, she would not be treating you badly. So why not try to make her smile!

When we are in love, we feel that we cannot live without our beloved. Everything this person says and does has great significance for us. When we love in this way, we open our heart, trusting this person with our deepest thoughts and feelings. In doing so we make ourselves vulnerable. The person we love the most is also the one who can hurt us the most. Thus such relationships can be the source not only of joy but also of pain. This is why the person we love the most can become the one we hate the most.

When we are rejected, we feel hurt because we are not valued. If the person we love rejects us, we feel as

though we have no value, because our sense of value and purpose in life are connected with loving that person and making him or her happy. This causes great pain. For this reason people often close their heart, deciding that they will never allow themselves to be hurt again. However, closing our heart in order to protect it from pain also prevents the heart from being touched by love. We no longer feel sad, but neither do we feel joy. This is what happens when people are depressed. They feel dead, empty and lifeless, without any real emotional connection to other people.

The healthy way to deal with rejection is to feel it—to allow oneself to be sad and to really feel the pain of loss. This does not mean wallowing in self-centered pity. Simply feeling sorry for ourselves only causes loss of hope and determination. Self-pity that results from rejection also indicates that our love was partly selfish. An unselfish person will still love even after rejection, because one cannot stop loving a person and caring about his or her well-being. Our love becomes purified. We become a deeper person with a richer character. People who have experienced tremendous suffering often have a deep heart and great wisdom and understanding.

The rejection trap

The following thoughts all derive from self-centered thinking. If you have such thoughts, you'll be stuck in a "rejection trap." So be aware of them and you'll soon see a big change in your feelings.

Religious perspective

All religions have thought very deeply about suffering and its meaning. Christians believe that when we suffer, God feels our suffering as His own. This is because we are God's children and, like any parent, God suffers when His children suffer. As well, because God has been rejected by His children, when we suffer we can understand how God suffers.

- ✕ *One failure means I'll always fail.* Of course, it doesn't. Learn to think of each situation separately, not as part of an unchangeable pattern. Everyone fails sometimes.
- ✕ *It's my fault that we broke up.* Don't blame yourself for everything. You're only 50 percent of a relationship, so you can't be 100 percent to blame.
- ✕ *She said I was stupid, so I must be.* Thinking badly of yourself won't help. Think about when it was said, how it was said and who said it.
- ✕ *What will people think?* What you think is what matters. Perhaps this is one of the hardest lessons to learn, but it's certainly one of the most important.

Anya's Story

Anya was in her tenth year at school. All the girls in her group were absorbed in love affairs, both real and imaginary. They talked of practically nothing else. Anya was almost 16 and had never been in love. At last He appeared.

Anya attended courses in painting, and in the middle of October Kostya joined their group. Anya felt at once that she had finally met the prince she had been waiting for. Kostya was only a year older, but she thought she had never seen such a wonderful, intelligent, grown-up person. He had visited every exhibition, seen every film, read every book. How could he be compared with any of the boys she knew? So of course Anya fell in love. But she would not admit it for a long time. She was naturally shy, and it had always been torture for her to talk to a boy, let alone perfection itself, as Kostya was! She was sure he would never even notice her. So at first she adored him in the privacy of her thoughts. If he occasionally talked to her, she relived the event for a week—till they met again. Fortunately, she could see him quite often, because they had classes together three times a week. Her life revolved around these three days. Anya didn't dare dream of any response to her love. Just to see him again! To offer him a good book or a good cassette (he was very fond of jazz) and hear his slightly surprised "Thank you."

But as time passed Kostya began paying more attention to Anya. It was not a personal interest; it was just because most of their fellow students were only 13 or 14 years old—no wonder he was not interested in talking with them. So, he began chatting to Anya. Although their contact was confined to the time they spent at the studio and a 15-minute walk to the Metro station, Anya was on cloud nine. She never asked herself why he did not invite her to his house or introduce her to his friends. She had been aware all along that he was too good for her and gratefully accepted any trifling signs of his attention without having any hopes for the future.

Kostya enjoyed her company when she was there. He forgot her the minute they parted at the Metro station, and did not remember her till they met at their next class. He had enough friends as it was. Girls liked him, particularly because he looked older than he really was. In his world there was no place for Anya.

Some months passed. Anya still adored Kostya, and her only dream was that their contacts would last forever. After class they would walk to the Metro together, sometimes passing the nearest station and walking on to the next one, talking about everything. She would wait for the next evening, the next meeting. But summer came, and the start of

vacation. Anya was desperate. She would not see Kostya till September. On the day of the final class they walked to the Metro, as usual. "Well, see you in September," Kostya said casually. "Till September," was all Anya could reply.

The summer seemed unbearably long. At last September came. On the first Monday Anya hurried to the course. She had with her the wonderful paintbrushes she had managed to get for

Kostya. Half the summer she had been dreaming of the moment she would give him her present. But Kostya did not come to class. Neither did he come a week or a month later. He did not phone her. At last Anya asked the teacher about Kostya. "Didn't you know? He has started preliminary courses at the art college, and he spends a lot of time studying there."

For about half a year Anya expected Kostya to remember her and phone her, at least on her birthday. Then she lost all hope. "It's all my fault. How stupid of me to have hoped for anything! It was too marvelous for me!" she thought. Still she kept suffering. She became more unsociable and shy than she had been before. "Probably love is not meant for me. I don't like the boys with whom my classmates fall in love, and the only person I could fall in love with made it clear that I didn't mean anything to him. Well, so be it!" That was the only lesson her first love taught her.



Questions for Discussion



- Why couldn't Anya discern Kostya's real attitude to her?
- Why do you think Kostya couldn't see Anya's value?
- What could Anya change in order to build their relations on the basis of mutual respect? What was Kostya's responsibility?
- What do you think were the prospects for their relationship, had Kostya kept attending the course?
- What would you advise Anya in order to help her overcome her grief?
- In what way will this incident affect Anya's relations with boys and Kostya's relations with girls?

Paul's Story

Paul and Larissa were two students at the same university. They were both away from home for the first time and were feeling a little homesick and lonely. They met at a party and were drawn to each other. They enjoyed each other's company and found their developing relationship emotionally and intellectually satisfying. They liked the same music and enjoyed doing things together. They started to spend more time with each other and less with other friends.

As time went on, they became more and more attracted to each other. One evening, overcome with romantic passion and desire, their relationship became sexual as well. There was no discussion about marriage, a question they both avoided.

After a few years, college graduation came. Larissa had grown tired of her relationship with Paul and decided after graduating to start afresh somewhere else. Just before his final exams, she told Paul she wanted to end their relationship as she was moving away and wanted to have a "new start."

Paul was devastated. It affected him badly, especially since it was just before his final exams. He felt that the most important part of himself had been rejected. His heart felt as though it would break apart. The pain was indescribable. He was fortunate, though, in having friends who supported him.

However, he was determined never to be hurt like this again. He shut his heart, and vowed that he would never trust a woman. From now on he would only use women. He could never love again.

Even though he later married, this deep pain from when he was young never healed. Although he wanted to, he could never open his heart to his wife and could never really trust her. Their relationship became hollow and empty, a loveless marriage. Even though he had children, he could never really love them wholeheartedly either. This affected his children. He never could experience the joy of that first love again.



Questions for Discussion



- Why were Paul and Larissa attracted to each other?
- What effect did sex have on their relationship?
- Why was Paul so affected by Larissa's rejection?
- Would their relationship have ended differently if they had not had sex?
- How else might Paul have responded to what had happened?
- If you were one of Paul's friends, what would you have said to him?
- Why was it so difficult for Paul to give his heart to anyone again?

For Your Journal



Think of a situation in which you felt rejected. How did you feel: unwanted, ignored, useless, unimportant, left out, a failure, hurt, resentful? Note down what you felt and what you actually did or said at the time. Did you express your feelings or not? Looking back, how well did you cope with the rejection? Do you wish you had handled things differently? If so, how? How would you cope with a similar situation in the future? Write about what happened, saying what your feelings were at the time and what your feelings are about it now.

The Date

"I could make him notice me if I wanted to!"

"Oh, sure," laughed Ira's friends, "if you wanted to! Go on, then, show us how!"

Ira put a hand behind her head and swung her hips a little. But it was not really convincing, even to her. Everyone else just groaned. "All right, maybe it's not that simple. But I still think it could be done. And I think someone ought to do it. Who does he think he is, going round with his nose in the air, as if girls just didn't exist! It's time someone taught him that you can't just ignore half the human race."

"I reckon you'd stand a better chance if you rolled yourself in mud and dressed up as a soccer ball!" joked Anya. "The thing with Ivan is, if it's not on the soccer field, he doesn't see it. His whole life revolves around sports."

"Well, it shouldn't. It would do him good to have another interest in life," said Ira.

"Oh, come on, Ira," said Maya, "you're not interested in what would do Ivan good. And you're not interested in that feminist line about ignoring half the human race. You're just annoyed because he doesn't notice you!"

"That's not it, and I'll prove it to you!" cried Ira. "Look, I'll bet you five I can get him to ask me out. And then when he does, I'll turn him down flat. That'll teach him and you what I think of him!"

The others laughed, feeling a little uncomfortable, and let the subject drop. Ira would not carry out her threat — she had only said it in the heat of the moment, and Ivan was okay, really. All right, he was sports mad, and his friends were all boys, but nobody really thought he looked down on girls. Ira would soon give up when she got no reaction.

But she did get a reaction. No one was quite sure how it happened, but as the weeks went by, Ivan did seem to be taking more notice of Ira. Nothing much — sometimes a grin and a wave as he came off the soccer field, sometimes checking his homework with her — What did you put for question 3? And certainly Ira made sure that she was always around when Ivan was doing anything interesting.



Then one day Anya came up to the others in great excitement just as they were leaving school.

"Come and watch!" she said. "I reckon Ira's going to win her bet after all! You know she's in that drama rehearsal, and it's gone on a bit late? Well, I've just seen Ivan hanging around outside the hall. He's trying to look like he's not doing anything much there, and a couple of times he's got up and begun to leave, then he sort of hesitated and turned back. You can see him from the top of the stairs. Come on!" and she ran back to her observation post.

One or two of the girls had not heard of the bet that Ira had made. When Katya heard about it, she was indignant. "That's horrible! How could she do it?"

Leila simply said, "I could never ever do that in a million years!" and walked away down the corridor. No one could work out whether the note in her voice was envy or disgust.

"Oh, come on!" said Maya. "Haven't you heard of the battle of the sexes? That's what adult life is all about, and if you don't fight for your side you'll get beaten. Ira didn't mean anything serious by it."

"That's exactly what I mean — she's made a game of it. Maybe Ivan does think he's the next Russian soccer star, but that's better than making a game out of other people".

The argument went on so long that in the end it was only Anya who saw Ivan approach Ira as she came out of the hall. It was only Anya who saw Ira hesitate briefly, then say a few words and walk away. And it was only Anya who saw the look on Ivan's face as he ran out of the school.

But when Anya cornered Ira the next day to congratulate her on winning her bet, Ira did not seem all that interested.

"What did you say to him, Ira? You certainly taught him what's what! He hasn't even turned up in school today!"

"Hasn't he?" said Ira, "I didn't know that. But it's nothing to do with me."

CHAPTER 46

Romantic Love

Romantic love has appeared at all times and places. Just about everyone inwardly longs for a thrilling love relationship involving oneness, a deep intimacy with another person, joy and optimism, spice and excitement, and that wonderful, euphoric, almost indescribable sensation known as “being in love.” Millions of words have been written to describe the state of being in love. Romantic love has the distinction of being regarded as the most passionate kind of love shared between two people. Some people say they are “on cloud nine.” Usually they mean that they feel energized, motivated and confident to conquer the world, because they know they are loved by their beloved. They believe that the strength of their love will overcome all problems. Everything seems to be in the realm of possibility!

The qualities of romantic love are intensity, passion, devotion, and purposeful aspiration. The emotions of romantic love give people a new outlook on life and a sense of well-being. Psychologists point out that true romantic love has an organizing and constructive effect on our personalities. It brings out the best in us, giving us the will to improve ourselves and to reach for greater maturity and responsibility.

Romantic love is meant to be the thrill factor in every marriage, which is why we don't feel romantic love for our parents, children, relatives, or friends. When a man and woman love each other with *all their hearts*, they experience an intensely thrilling sensation. There is a state of profound physiological arousal. Some people ridicule romantic love, saying it's simply a myth. Nevertheless, if marriage partners do not love each other in this way, then something wonderful is missing, no matter how sincere their commitment to each other may be. Without this factor, marriage often becomes reduced to two people caught in the realistic grind of daily life.





Some people confuse genuine romantic love with falling in love or infatuation. But couples who have fallen in love or who are infatuated are totally content. Everything is perfect in their eyes, and thus infatuation is based on fantasy, whereas real romantic love has a foundation of strong but tender realism. Both partners work on trying to improve themselves and their relationship. Infatuation is occupied with external matters. Love is a response to the whole person. Infatuation is temporary and fades with time. Love keeps on growing and deepening with time. Infatuation demands and takes. Love delights and rejoices in giving.

Romantic love is a possibility for all who want to experience it in their marriage. Emotions cannot be commanded to appear, but they will come freely when the conditions are right. The desired feelings come as a result of right thinking and right actions. When reason is excluded from love's excitements, what results is not love but lust, superficial infatuation, or empty sentimentality. And who wants that in their marriage?

Romantic love is the sensation one experiences from the way one's partner looks, feels, and the emotional experiences that are shared. We can learn to provide

our mate with the kind of emotional climate that stimulates romantic interest and in which love flourishes. Within the depths of a committed relationship, thrills and strong emotions add a sweet savor to the daily life of marriage and family life.

For religious people, romantic love is as old as time itself. The religious perspective believes that God intended for our emotional potential to be fully developed in marriage and to find its fulfillment in oneness with our beloved. Sex is intended to give us pleasure and happiness, as we unite with our spouse in mind and body. Romantic love is believed to be God's gift and creation for marriage. It is a sign that God honors and blesses the love between husband and wife.

One of the greatest love songs ever written

Of the world's romantic literature, the Song of Solomon is among the greatest. This is a small book in the Bible devoted exclusively to love and marriage. Tradition ascribes this song to King Solomon, although today many biblical scholars believe that he was not the author. Although it was written almost 3,000 years ago (945 B.C.), it still serves as an inspirational and practical model of the growth of love for the average couple today. The principles concerning marriage transcend time and cultural differences and will always work when applied.

The Song of Solomon tells the story of a marriage between the king of Israel and a beautiful, unsophisticated country girl whom he met in the northern vineyards of

his kingdom. He wins her love, makes her his queen, and causes her love for him to deepen and intensify with the passing of time.

Shulamith, we are told, was a country girl, chastely brought up, but required by her stepbrothers to work in the vineyards so that her skin became deeply tanned, in contrast to the elegant, pampered, white-skinned ladies of the court. She felt inferior, unworthy to be Solomon's queen, but her husband skillfully and lovingly built up her self-image.

He did this first of all by praise. He sensitively praised her in the areas where she felt most insecure. He voiced appreciation of her physical appearance and her lovely character in specifics, not in vague generalities.

Behold, you are beautiful, my love, behold, you are beautiful! Your eyes are doves behind your veil. Your hair is like a flock of goats, moving down the slopes of Gilead. Your teeth are like a flock of shorn ewes that have come up from the washing...Your lips are like a scarlet thread, and your mouth is lovely. Your cheeks are like halves of a pomegranate behind your veil...You are all fair, my love; there is no flaw in you.

— RSV, 4:1-3,7

He compared her with all other women so favorably that she could rest in the knowledge that she pleased him as no other woman could.

Like a lily among the thorns is my darling among the maidens.

— NIV, 2:1

He told her that she was completely and perfectly beautiful—without flaw. He did not say this just when they were courting or on their wedding day. He continued to praise her in the maturity of their marriage.

After making love on the wedding night, the young husband describes their love as a beautiful garden and as a wonderful feast he has celebrated.

Then another voice speaks—a mysterious voice. Who can it be? Wedding guests? On the wedding night? Hardly! The only one who could be with the couple at this most intimate time must be God. It is God who is approving and affirming the love shared this night. God's words are: "Eat, O friends, and drink: drink deeply, O Lovers." In other words, continue to enjoy the feast of love I have prepared for you!

The king not only praised Shulamith, he never criticized her, not even when she perhaps deserved it. His words to her were always encouraging, and they bore fruit in the kind of loving, responsive wife she became.

His love and approval were not just a private matter. The king showed publicly his adoration and respect for his wife. In the royal banqueting house, his banner over her was love. It became obvious to everyone that Shulamith was the most important person in his kingdom—to be honored, respected, and protected in every way. He treated her like a queen, and that is what she



became. He privately loved her in such a way that she could finally give herself completely to him, withholding nothing of her trust, her thoughts, her care and her love.

Of course, their marriage had challenges, as all marriages do. It is not unusual to have natural differences with one's mate. The test of spiritual and emotional maturity is how one works out these problems.

One day Shulamith had difficulty in adjusting to Solomon's demanding schedule as chief of state. One night, perhaps when he had promised to come home early, he did not arrive until very late. By this time she may have been offended. She was more concerned about her own comfort and schedule than about loving her husband. So she said she was not ready to see him, and she would not open her bedroom door to him.

Instead of making an issue of it, he quietly withdrew for a few hours to let her think it over. He left her alone, and gave her time to deal with her angry feelings. He left a sign of his love for her at the door—a gift: her favorite perfume.

Because he had not reacted as an irate husband, his wife quickly realized that she had acted selfishly. As soon as he withdrew, she began to long for him and went out to look for him. When the two were together again, the husband reassured his wife with tender love words repeated from their wedding night. "I love you just as much as ever." Within his love was the unspoken forgiveness for her.

Obviously Shulamith thought much about her husband. Her thoughts were occupied with him, even when they could not be together because of his duties.

All night long on my bed I looked for the one my heart loves; I looked for him but did not find him. I will get up now and go about the city,
through its streets and squares; I will search for the one my heart loves. So
I looked for him but did not find him.

— NIV, 3:2

She respected his manly character and often expressed her admiration of him to others.



My beloved is all radiant and ruddy, distinguished among ten thousand. His head is the finest gold; his locks are wavy, black as a raven. His eyes are like doves besides springs of water, bathed in milk fitly set. His cheeks are like beds of spices, yielding fragrance. His lips are lilies, distilling liquid myrrh. His arms are rounded gold, set with jewels. His body is ivory work, encrusted with sapphires. His legs are alabaster columns, set upon bases of gold. His appearance is like Lebanon, choice as the cedars. His speech is most sweet, and he is altogether desirable. This is my beloved and this is my friend.

— RSV, 5:10-16

When he complimented her, she responded with her own expressions of praise and left him in no doubt as to her feelings for him.

How handsome you are, my lover! Oh, how charming!...Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest is my lover among the young men. I delight to sit in his shade and his fruit is so sweet to my taste.

— NIV, 1:16, 2:3

Brought up as a chaste young woman, she now was free to delight in her husband's caresses and she wholeheartedly responded to his love. She was thrilled by his touch at all times, eager for his embraces and she let him know it. She enjoyed his company and planned delightful times for the two of them.

He tells her, "Show me your face, let me hear your voice; for your voice is sweet, and your face is lovely." This speaks of a man who loved to look into his wife's eyes, who loved to talk with her and to hear what she had to say to him. As a result of this openness and communication, their relationship could grow and mature until it became many-faceted, expressing all aspects of love. He was her brother, lover, teacher, friend, companion, husband, and she was equally everything to him. Their conversation, their lovemaking, their enjoyment in being together became even deeper and richer in quality.

To see how she blossomed in the security of his love, we can compare three statements she made. When she first came to love him, she said, "My beloved is mine and I am his." Her possession of him was foremost in her mind. But later in their relationship she said, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine." Note that she reversed the order. Now his possession of her was more important. Finally, in the fullness of their love, she said, "I am my beloved's and his desire is toward me." By this time she was so focused on him that she had forgotten about possessing him. She had lost herself in the greatness of his love, and she gloried only in his desire for her.

At the end of the Song, the husband's last words were: "Let me hear your voice." These were the words he had first whispered to her when they were courting. Then he had compared her to a gentle dove hidden from him whose voice he wanted to hear so that he could come to know the inmost person of her heart. Now he still longed with the same intensity to grow in the knowledge of his fascinating wife. And his wife repeated her longing to be with him. Their physical love life had become better and better, nourishing their entire relationship. The romance of their marriage had only increased with the years!

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away.

— NIV, 8:6-7

The fires of true love can never be quenched because the source of its flame is God himself. Even were a river of rushing water to pass over it, the flame would yet shine forth. Of all the gifts in the world, this priceless love is the most precious and possessed only by those to whom it is freely given. For no man could purchase it with money, even the richest man in the world.

Individual Exercises



History and literature have produced many legendary lovers. Briefly investigate the lives and loves of any famous couple. What impediments did their love encounter? How did they overcome those obstacles? Prepare a two- or three-minute presentation to give to the class. Be sure to distinguish between fiction and fact. Some possibilities include:

Antony and Cleopatra
Romeo and Juliet
Dante and Beatrice

For Your Journal



My ideal relationship

Make three columns. In the first, write *Spouse*; in the second, write *Parents*; and in the third, write *Friend*. In the first column list all the qualities that you would like to experience in an ideal relationship with your spouse. Then in the second column list all the qualities that you would like to experience in an ideal relationship with your parents. Finally, list all the qualities that you would like to experience in an ideal friendship with a person of the same sex.

From your list, what do you believe makes marriage a special and unique relationship? What is the *special* something that you want to give to your spouse and *only* to your spouse?

To***

by Alexander Pushkin

The Russian poet Alexander Pushkin was well-known for his verses expounding romantic love. Here is one of them:

O wondrous moment! There stood before me
A radiant, fleeting dream you stood,
A vision fancy fashioned for me,
A glimpse of perfect womanhood.

Through all life's sadness, all its flaunted
But hopeless flurry and unrest
Your lovely face my spirit haunted,
Your tender voice my ear caressed.

Swift tempests, o'er me, wrathful, breaking,
Dispelled the dulcet dreams of yore.
Your image blurred, my heart forsaking,
Your voice caressed my ear no more.

In cold and gloomy isolation
The years sped by, the lonely years,
Bereft of God, of inspiration,
Bereft of life and love and tears.

And then—o bliss!—time's flight defeating,
You came again and 'fore me stood,
A vision radiant and fleeting,
A dream of perfect womanhood.

My heart is filled with sweet elation,
Anew it craves, anew reveres,
And is awake to inspiration,
Awake to life and love and tears.



To read

"I Love You", by Elmo Robinson, in *The Art of Loving Well*

CHAPTER 47

Riquet-Topknot

By Charles Perrault

Once upon a time there was a King and a Queen. They had such an ugly baby that people who saw him were not sure whether he was a human child. The Queen was very much distressed at the ugliness of her son and often cried when she looked at him.

One day as she was sitting at the cradle, a good witch entered the room. She looked at the little monstrosity and said:

"Don't weep, Queen; the boy is really very ugly, but it won't prevent him from being kind and attractive. Besides, he will be the cleverest person in your kingdom and will be able to make clever the person he will love most of all."

Everyone was very glad at the good witch's prophecy, and the Queen was especially happy. She wanted to thank the witch, but the witch disappeared as suddenly as she had appeared.

The witch's prophecy came true. As soon as the boy learned to speak his first words, he began talking so cleverly and fluently that everyone was delighted and exclaimed:

"O, how clever the little Prince is!"

I forgot to say that the Prince had been born with a topknot on his head. So he had got a nickname—Riquet-Topknot.

At the same time a neighboring Queen had a daughter. The girl was beautiful as a summer day. The Queen nearly lost her wits with joy when she saw how beautiful her little daughter was. But the same witch that was present at little Riquet's birth told her:

"Don't be too glad, Queen: the little Princess will be as stupid as she is beautiful."

The Queen was distressed at the prophecy. She began to cry and asked the witch to give her daughter a little cleverness.

"I cannot do it," said the witch, "but I can provide that the man the Princess will love will make her as clever as himself."

On saying that the witch disappeared.

The Princess grew, and each year she became more and more beautiful. But her stupidity increased together with her beauty.

She didn't answer when asked questions, and if she did, everyone covered their ears at her stupidity. Besides, she was so absent-minded that she could not put a cup on the table without breaking it, and when she drank water, she spilled half of it on her dress. That is why no one liked her in spite of her beauty.

When guests came to the palace, they approached the beautiful girl first just to look and to admire; but on hearing her stupid talk, they left.

It made the poor Princess very sad. She would gladly give all her beauty for a tiny bit of cleverness.

Although the Queen loved her daughter, she could not but reproach her for her stupidity. That made the Princess suffer even more. Once she went to the forest to cry over her unhappiness. Walking in the forest, she met a small, hunch-backed man who was very ugly but dressed splendidly. The man was walking toward her.



It was the young Prince Riquet-Topknot. He had seen the portrait of the beautiful princess and fallen in love with her. He had left his kingdom and come there to ask the Princess to become his wife.

Riquet was very glad to meet the beautiful girl. He greeted her and, seeing how sad the Princess was, he said:

"Why are you so sad, Princess? You are so young and beautiful! I have seen many beautiful princesses, but you are the best."

"You are very kind," said the Princess and stopped because she was so stupid she couldn't add anything. "Such a beautiful person shouldn't be so sad," Riquet-Topknot continued.

"I'd rather be as ugly as you than so beautiful and so stupid," said the Princess.

"You are not stupid, Princess, if you consider yourself stupid. A really stupid person never admits it."

"I don't know," said the Princess. "I only know I am very stupid, that is why I am so sad."

"Well, if you are sad because of that, I can help you."

"But how?" the Princess asked.

"I can make clever the girl I love most of all," Riquet-Topknot said. "And as I love you most of all, I can give you as much cleverness as you want, if only you marry me."

The Princess was embarrassed. She said nothing.

"I see my proposal has distressed you," Riquet-Topknot said. "But I am not surprised. I will give you a year to think it over. In a year I shall come for the answer."

The Princess thought the year would be endless and agreed.

As soon as she promised Riquet-Topknot to marry him, she felt herself a different person. From that very moment she began to talk to Riquet-Topknot so reasonably and

fluently that Riquet-Topknot thought he had given her more cleverness than he had left for himself.

When the Princess came home, the courtiers didn't know what to think of her sudden change. She went to the forest as stupid as is possible, and returned exceedingly clever and reasonable.

The King began to ask advice from the Princess and even decided important state affairs in her room.

The rumors of this extraordinary change spread widely. Young Princes began to come from neighboring kingdoms. Each of them tried to win the Princess's love and asked her to marry him. But the Princess thought they were not clever enough and refused to marry any of them.

At last a very rich, very clever and very slender prince came. The Princess liked him at once.

The King noticed it and said she could marry that prince if she wanted to.

In order to think it over, the Princess went for a walk and by mere chance strode into the forest where she had met Riquet-Topknot a year ago.

Walking along the forest and thinking, the Princess suddenly heard some noise underground, as if people were running to and fro.

The Princess stood still and listened. She heard shouts:

"Give me the pot!"

"Put some wood into the fire!"

At that moment the ground opened, and the Princess saw a large underground kitchen full of cooks, kitchen-boys and different servants. A crowd of cooks clad in white caps and aprons, with enormous knives in their hands, went out of the kitchen. They went to a forest clearing, sat down around a long table and began chopping meat and singing merry songs.

The surprised Princess asked for whom they were preparing such a rich feast.

"For Prince Riquet-Topknot," the fattest cook answered. "Tomorrow he celebrates his wedding."

When the Princess remembered that a year before on this very day she had promised to marry the little monster, she nearly fainted.

Having recovered from her confusion, the Princess moved forward, but no sooner had she taken 30 steps than she saw Riquet-Topknot, who was merry, healthy and splendidly dressed as a bridegroom.

"You see, Princess, I keep my word," he said. "I think you have come here to keep your word too and to make me the happiest man in the world."

"No," the Princess said. "I haven't made up my mind yet, and I am afraid I'll never be able to marry you."

"But why?" Riquet-Topknot asked. "Can it be because of my ugliness? Or perhaps you dislike my mind or my character?"

"No," said the Princess, "I like both your mind and character."

"Then it is my ugliness that scares you away. But that can be mended, because you can make me a very handsome man!"

"How can I?" the Princess asked.

"It is very easy," Riquet-Topknot said. "If you love me and want me to be handsome,

I'll become handsome. A witch has made me able to make clever the girl I love. And the same witch has made you able to make handsome the man you love."

"If it is so," the Princess said, "I want you to become handsome with all my heart!"

No sooner had the Princess uttered these words than Riquet-Topknot seemed to her the most handsome and the most slender man she had ever seen.

They say it had nothing to do with witches and witchcraft. It is simply that the Princess fell in love with Riquet and ceased to notice his ugliness. Now his ugly features seemed to her nice and attractive.

At any rate the Princess agreed to marry him immediately, and they celebrated their wedding the next day.

For Your Journal



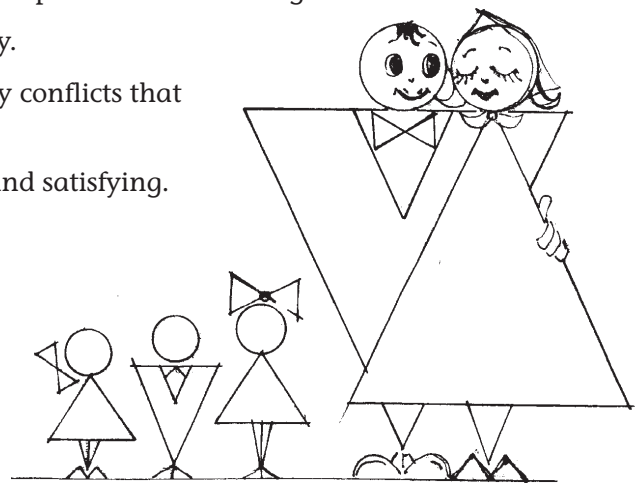
Imagine that you are given a choice: You could be born very beautiful but very stupid, or you could be the embodiment of wisdom and kindness, but be very ugly. Which would you choose? Make a list of reasons that determined your choice and think how these reasons might influence your life.

CHAPTER 48

Preparation for Marriage

Most young people have high expectations of marriage—

- ✗ that they will be happy.
- ✗ that there won't be any conflicts that they can't manage.
- ✗ that sex will be good and satisfying.
- ✗ that if they have children, they will grow up and cause few problems.
- ✗ that their love for each other will never change.

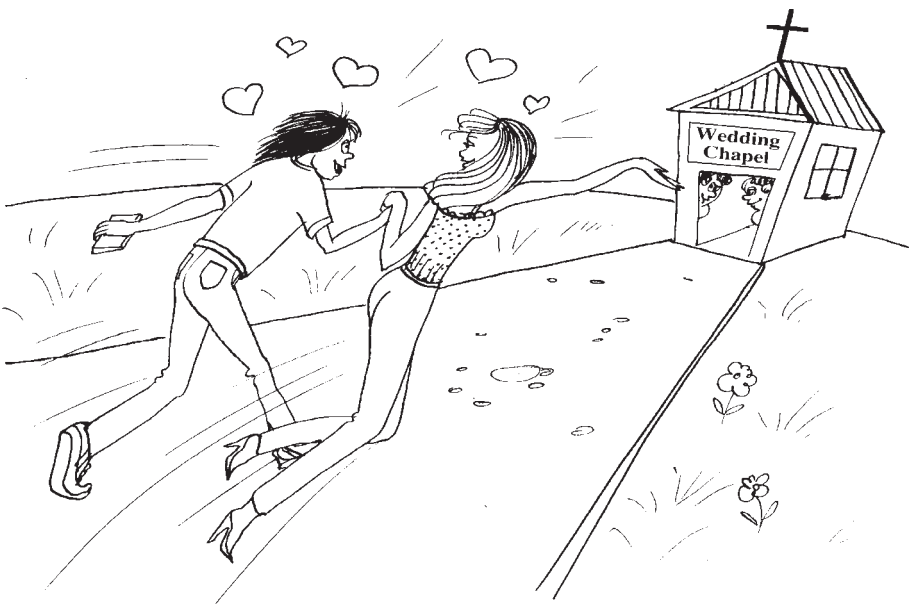


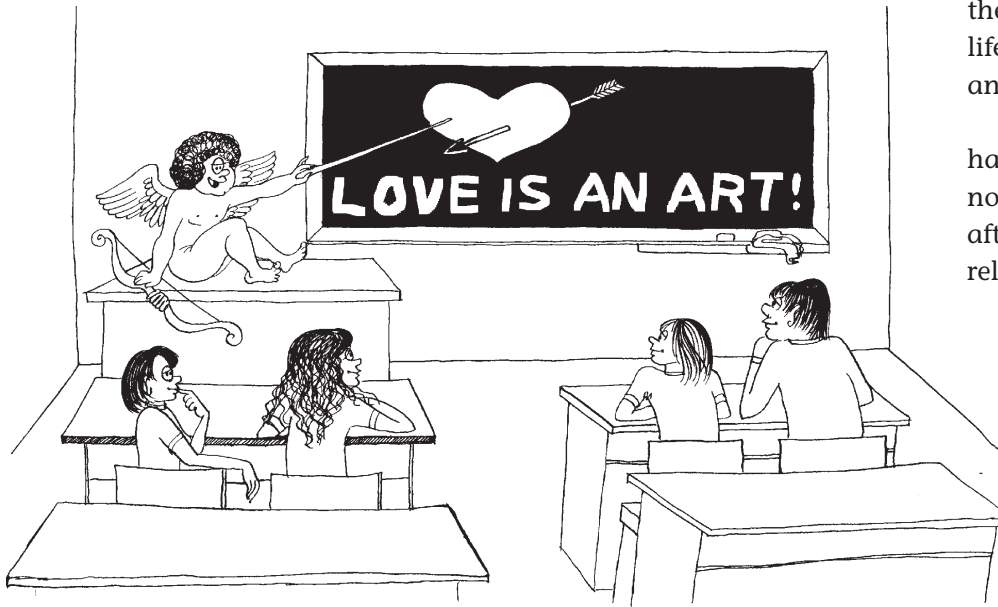
It is good to have high expectations, but we also need to look at the reality of marriage.

It may seem a little early to talk seriously about marriage, but it is relevant for your life even now. We can say that this period in your life is the training period to qualify you for marriage. There is a special time for acquiring knowledge and training in every profession and field, such as medicine, engineering, architecture, typing, teaching, art, cooking, physics, etc. Are any of these professions more important than

marriage and family life? They, too, require special skills, knowledge and training.

Many couples jump into marriage wrapped in a romantic haze that can hardly be penetrated. They are walking on clouds and feeling no need for counsel, advice or preparation. "Happily ever after" seems guaranteed from their point of view. It is impossible for them to believe that their emotional euphoria could ever be eroded by daily routine, growing irritations, competing attractions, financial pressures and





the tensions of daily family life. After all, they are in love, and isn't that all that matters?

Some people think that the happiness they experience now will be so much better after marriage. They are relying on marriage to provide them with something it can never deliver. In reality, marriage will magnify whatever problems they are trying to overlook in their present relationship or even in themselves. Instead of asking what our

marriage can do for us, we should be asking, what can we do for our marriage?

Others hurry through premarital preparations, confident that their marriage can succeed without any instruction on love. Their high expectations are invariably based on their hope that their partner will be able to meet all of their wants, needs, wishes, and desires for the next 50 years. They think that their happiness will depend on how well their partner performs for them.

Luckily, some couples are fortunate and eager to learn everything they can about developing a positive, loving relationship that will endure. They are ready to put conscious, intelligent effort and careful planning into the development of the intimacy that can sustain their love for a lifetime.

Marriage requires fertile soil

It is unfortunate that there is no real training or education for people who want to marry. Because of this, there is a lack of focus on the realities of married life. People do not expect to go through difficulties, and when difficulties do arise, they imagine that there is something wrong with them, with their partner or with the relationship. We have little guidance about how to use real difficulties in a constructive way—as an opportunity to open one's heart and become more loving and as a result a better human being.

Marriage is very much like a plant. Both need good, fertile soil in order to grow. We get that fertile soil from the work we do on ourselves *before* we marry. Most marriages start out as a physical attraction or an emotional relationship rather than a spiritual relationship. Marriages based on such foundations can be the cause of much disappointment and confusion once the emotional or physical attraction wears off. If love is only emotional, if it is unconscious, it has no real depth. People often become disillusioned: "Why did I ever marry this person? This isn't the person I married."

In cultures where parents are no longer responsible for matching the necessary attributes of young people in order to have a successful marriage, the couple themselves have to do so in a process called courtship. This process involves various phases of greater intimacy. If, in this interaction, liking progresses to the desire to want to be with this person for life, the relationship may lead to marriage. Courtship often lasts one or two years. During this time there is a constant evaluation and re-evaluation of values, suitability, and complementarities. It is a vital time, because the quality of



courtship is intimately linked with the outcome of the marriage. Although love may blossom during courtship, it is only in a committed marriage that love comes into full bloom through the total investment of the two partners in the relationship. Only then do couples grow to really know and understand one another and completely harmonize together.

Courtship exists for the purpose of selecting a future spouse. It isn't advisable to begin courting until we are seriously considering marriage. Studies from all over the world have shown that marriages under the age of 20 carry a high risk of divorce. Although people at this age have reached physical and intellectual maturity, they usually have not reached an equivalent level emotionally and spiritually.

For one human being to love another is very difficult. For this reason young people must learn to love. Take time to ask questions and reflect about the answers.

If you want to learn to love, you should learn what qualities are present in a loving person and how these are developed. Look for the qualities of people whom you respect and admire. What are the qualities that you would like your beloved to have as a spouse and as a parent? Then focus on developing these qualities within yourself and in your relationships. Every person has the potential for love, but potential is never realized without work. With love as a stimulus, you as an individual can develop, ripen and become mature. Then, when you finally join with your soul mate, you will know how to make the relationship grow.

Practical ways to prepare for marriage

Develop control over your body

By serving your spouse and living to give another joy, you sometimes will make sacrifices. Physical work or sports can help you to become able to discipline your body. Developing control over your body also means keeping it as healthy as you can, through eating the proper foods, exercising, and refraining from tobacco, alcohol and other bad habits.

Don't be in a hurry

There are several problems with early marriages. First, an individual changes greatly between the ages of 16 and 25. If you are in a hurry to get married, you may marry the wrong person for all the wrong reasons. You may overlook very severe difficulties. If you are not sure, it is better to wait. If the person is really the right one, he or she won't mind waiting, and the love won't change.

Keep commitments

Commitment means giving 100 percent in order to keep a promise. This takes much effort and practice. Therefore, before marriage, it is good practice to keep your word.

Be financially responsible

It is important to learn how to account for the money you spend, and to learn the difference between spending on essentials and spending on wants. It is of great value to learn to control your desire for things so that you can use money for more important things.

Be open to advice

Often people become so involved in relationships that they cannot see what is really happening to them. Therefore it is good to ask advice from someone who is concerned about you and who knows you well. Your parents or other elders know you very well and can see the whole picture. Allow yourself to be open to their advice, and listen to what they have to say. If you can't see what they are trying to tell you, then perhaps you need to step back from the relationship and try to see things more objectively.

Learn to love

How you spend your time before marriage develops your character and personality. Before marriage, practice serving others, sacrificing for others, investing for the sake of your parents, brothers and sisters, friends and community. Develop your sensitivity to all kinds of people, not just those who are like you. Learn to love people of different ethnic or social backgrounds. Activities such as art, dance, music and sports are also important in building character.

Work through differences

Learn skills to resolve conflict. Don't avoid people who make you angry. Instead, learn to win their heart and work through differences. These skills will be invaluable not only in marriage but also in the relationship with your children.

Love your parents

To love your parents is to understand that they were not perfect but probably tried the best that they could under the circumstances. It is important to deal with your feelings toward them, so that any resentment can be liberated. When your resentments toward your parents are resolved, you can be free to love them with an open heart. This process will help to make you a better spouse and parent.

Spend time with children

If we spend time around young children and infants, we can begin to see just how much they need love, attention and time. Often we don't think about the reality of having children until after we are married. Being aware of this before we are married



helps us to prepare ourselves for the needs of children.

Take the future seriously

When you are young, having fun is a major preoccupation. The future seems far away. But before you know it, your future is here and you wonder why you didn't prepare better for it. This is certainly true about marriage. Consider and prepare seriously for your own future. No one else can do that for you.

If I truly love one person,
I love all persons,
I love the world,
I love life.
If I say to somebody else,
"I love you,"
I must be able to say,
"I love in you everybody,
I love through you the world,
I love in you also myself."

— Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*

For Your Journal



What do I want from marriage?

Exercise A: My Ideal Mate

Refer to the journal writing exercise from the chapter on *Marriage*. From your own description of an ideal marriage, what qualities and characteristics are desirable or necessary in the personality of your ideal mate in order to create such a marriage? Make a list. (Do not look at Exercise B until you have completed Exercise A.)

Exercise B: My Ideal Self

Referring to Exercise A, ask yourself if you think that your ideal mate would like you to have these same qualities in your own personality? Using the list from Exercise A, put a check mark near all those qualities that you feel that you personally possess at the present moment. Once you are married, do you think that you automatically will come to possess all of these qualities or do you think that you need time to develop and mature your character and personality toward your ideal self? How much time do you think your development will realistically take? One month? One year? A few years? Without these qualities, do you think that you can achieve your ideal marriage?

See the Appendix for the psychological test pertaining to this lesson.

Being in Love and Love

From Mere Christianity, by C.S. Lewis

What we call “being in love” is a glorious state. It helps to make us generous and courageous, it opens our eyes not only to the beauty of the beloved but to all beauty. But whatever people say, the state called “being in love” usually does not last. But, of course, ceasing to be “in love” need not mean ceasing to love.

People get from books the ideas that if you have married the right person you may expect to go on “being in love” forever. As a result, when they find they are not, they think this proves they have made a mistake and are entitled to a change — not realizing that, when they have changed, the glamour will presently go out of the new love just as it went out of the old one. In this department of life, as in every other, thrills come at the beginning and do not last. The sort of thrill a boy has at the first idea of flying will not go on when he has joined the Royal Air Force and is really learning to fly. The thrill you feel on first seeing some delightful place dies away when you really go to live there. Does it mean it would be better not to learn to fly and not to live in the beautiful place? By no means. In both cases, if you go through with it, the dying away of the first thrill will be compensated for by a quieter and more lasting kind of interest. What is more, it is just the people who are ready to submit to the loss of the thrill and settle down to the sober interest, who are then more likely to meet new thrills in some quite different direction. The man who has learned to fly and becomes a good pilot will suddenly discover music; the man who has settled down to live in the beautiful spot will discover gardening.

It is simply no good trying to keep any thrill. Let the thrill go — let it die away — go on through that period of death into the quieter interest and happiness that follow — and you will find you are living in a world of new thrills all the time.

CHAPTER 49

Marriage and Family in Christianity

In the beginning, at the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be made one with his wife and the two shall become one flesh.

— Mk. 10:6-8

The sacrament of marriage

Marriage in the Christian tradition is a sacrament, the sanctification of the union of a man and a woman for a life together and for procreation. A sacrament is a sacred act and under a visible sign, the invisible gift of the Holy Spirit is conferred. The sacraments, of which there are seven (Baptism, Confession, Holy Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, Holy Orders and the Last Rites) may only be administered by the established church. For a Christian, marriage is thus intimately connected to his or her spiritual life and salvation. It is a sacrament to restore the chastity that was lost at the time of the Fall of Adam and Eve as is recorded in the Bible.

Through marriage two lives are united into one through the sacrament of love administered by the minister or priest during the wedding service. Marriage lays the foundation for the family. It is holy because it anticipates the Kingdom of Heaven and in itself constitutes a little kingdom.

The model for understanding marriage is the Christian view of God as Trinity. The three persons of the Trinity—the Father, Son and Holy Spirit—are united into oneness through love. A married person is in the image of the triune God. Thus, marriage is regarded as “the union of two persons in one being, a single substance”, or “the union in one body and soul, but in two persons.”

The traditional purpose of marriage is three-fold. It is a relationship of conjugal love between the spouses, for their mutual support and comfort; it is the proper place for sexual intercourse; and it is for the procreation of children.

The marriage service

The marriage service usually takes place in a church, is ministered by a priest or minister and is attended by family, friends and relatives. In recognition of marriage as a social institution, it is an event through which the wedding couple declare publicly before God and those



When husband and wife are united in marriage, they are no longer seen as something earthly, but as the image of God Himself.

— John Chrysostom,
early Christian saint



“Love should be essentially an act of will, of decision to commit my life completely to that of one other person. This is, indeed, the rationale behind the idea of the insolubility of marriage, as it is behind the many forms of traditional marriage in which the two partners never choose each other, but are chosen for each other—yet are expected to love each other.”

— Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*

present their intentions. Traditionally, the bride is dressed in white, symbolizing purity.

In the Catholic and Orthodox traditions, the couple confess their sins to a priest before the service and receive absolution. They then receive Holy Communion. After the Divine Liturgy, they turn their thoughts to the image of marriage, which according to St. Paul is the union of the church with Christ.

The traditional elements of a Christian marriage service are:

1. A time of welcome during which the couple and all those present are reminded about what is at stake in a marriage.
2. Scriptural reading so that those present may reflect on the significance of marriage in light of Christian teaching.
3. A time of prayer in which the church invites the couple and the congregation to beseech God's presence and support to the marrying couple to be sustained throughout their lives.
4. Recitation of the wedding vows by the minister or priest, sometimes together with the couple, the latter giving their public assent to love, comfort, honor and keep each other as long as they shall live; to cherish each other for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, throughout their lives.
5. Expressions of unity: the joining of hands and the exchanging of rings symbolize the couple's promise of lifelong fidelity to each other.
6. Blessing prayer in which the minister or priest invokes God's blessing upon the marriage of the man and woman.
7. Pronouncement of the marriage in which the minister or priest pronounces them man (husband) and wife, sometimes adding “those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder”, thus asserting the eternal nature of the marital union.

Virginity, celibacy and chastity

When a couple marry, they should be virgins. This is a state of integrity in which the couple have not wasted or misdirected the sexual forces of their bodies and souls. Instead they have preserved them for their proper fulfillment in marriage. Physically speaking, a virgin is someone, man or woman, who has not had sexual intercourse. However, the church has always recognized that it is the inner quality of innocence and purity that is most important. Marriage does not extinguish this quality if a person's heart remains pure in front of God and, in a woman, virginity blossoms into motherhood.

You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell.

— Matt. 5:27-30

Celibacy is the state of a person who has taken a vow, usually a religious one, not to marry or have sexual relations. Monks and nuns are people who have taken a vow to live celibate lives. They have decided to dedicate their lives exclusively to God and, in a sense, are married to God.

An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord’s affairs—how he can please the Lord. But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord’s affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband.

— 1 Cor. 7:32-43

Chastity is the preservation of sexual purity according to one’s state in life—virginity for the unmarried, continence for the widowed, and fidelity for the married. In Christianity, the violation of chastity, either by fornication or adultery, is regarded as one of the worst sins.

Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? Therefore, honor God with your body.

— 1 Cor. 6:18-20

Conjugal love

The Bible is full of stories about love. There are stories of couples who were deeply in love with each other, such as Jacob who loved Rachel so much that he was prepared to work for her father for seven years before being allowed to marry her (Genesis 29). In another story Elkanah comforts Hannah his wife, who desperately wanted children, by telling her that she is “worth more than ten sons.” (I Sam. 1:8) There is praise for faithfulness based on a love that can outlive death. There is celebration of fidelity towards the “love of one’s youth.” Then, there are the stories of Samson and Delilah, and David and Bathsheba, which depict the power of selfish love and lust, and how it can corrupt and destroy individuals, families and whole societies.

St. Paul wrote about the beauty of unconditional love. It is this quality of love that should be brought to a marriage by both partners.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

— 1 Cor. 13:4-8



Love is very mysterious. It can come and go suddenly, seemingly without explanation. Christians believe that human love is unstable because people are very changeable due to the Fall. Conjugal love is particularly vulnerable. It can become dry and empty if the couple tire of one another. Sexual love (*eros*) is so powerful that it can corrupt a relationship as well as the spiritual life of the couple.

Erotic love is usually associated with sexual attraction. It is egocentric and seeks after its own happiness.

In contrast, *agape* love is absolutely selfless and seeks the happiness of others, thus expressing the essence of God's love towards people.

In other words erotic love is passion-love. I want you so that *I* can be happy. I want to *receive*. On the other hand *agape* love is altruistic-love. I want to give to you so that *you* can be happy. I want to *give*.

God's love is always fresh and unchanging. As God is the parent of all humankind, in sanctifying our marriage God is entrusting us with one of his sons or daughters. Like any good parent, God is concerned about the well being and happiness of his children. He does not want us to be hurt. If we can love our spouse with the love that God has for that person, that love will never die but will become deeper and stronger. It means that only love that is engrafted to the love of God can assume the respon-

sibility of marriage. In this way *agape* is able to transform *eros*. Human love is raised up to the level of divine love.

"The love of God and the love of man are not two loves, but aspects of the same unifying love."

— Maximus the Confessor, Greek theologian

The goal is that the "two should become one." For this, it is necessary for each partner to give up his or her "self-ness". Each must grow until they are able to live and die for one another. Each becomes part of a new unity, a new and higher level of existence. To be happy, both spouses have to be happy. One cannot be happy without the other. No decision is made in isolation. The pain of one becomes the pain of both. Whatever you do, the other is involved. In the Orthodox marriage ceremony the man and woman are crowned. These crowns refer to the martyrdom of love that each will go through on the painful course to becoming one as they drink the one cup of life.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.
No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

— 1 Jn. 4:12

Here it must be said that loving someone is quite different from liking someone. There are always traits and qualities that a loving couple dislike in each other. It may be arrogance, laziness, talkativeness or impatience. It may be some habit or taste inherited from a parent. How does one deal with traits one dislikes? The intimate nature of married life makes it a greater spiritual challenge than the monastic life. In

other social groups one can avoid a person who has irritating traits. You can control yourself and put up with another's exasperating traits for a limited time. But in a marriage there is no escape. You have to come to terms with your marriage partner and learn to accept him or her, warts and all.

Christians believe that through the sacrament of marriage God's blessing and grace will help the couple face and overcome their difficulties. God's love helps a couple to love each other and to change and grow. Without that loving support a marriage can soon end up "on the rocks." Marriage is thus a place for spiritual growth, the overcoming of self-centeredness and the denial of self. For it to work, each partner must be absolutely committed to the other. We are challenged to deny ourselves as we are confronted with the uglier parts of our character and those of our partner. As you can see, marriage is a responsibility not to be undertaken lightly.

Parental love

The Christian family should be a place where one's faith is experienced and lived all day everyday.

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

— Col. 3: 18-21

A family is based on the dynamic of love between husband and wife as well as between parents and children. In the same way that God's love is creative, human love also strives to be creative. In creating children conjugal love gives rise to parental love. Christians should see their children as a gift from God. Marriage involves giving up one's singleness as each spouse becomes a part of the other and form the entity of a couple. With the arrival of children parents find themselves giving more and more of themselves as they become a family. In this process each family member is challenged to discover new dimensions to his or her character. It is one of the paradoxes of the spiritual life that self-fulfillment comes only through self-denial.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

— Lk. 9:24

The model for parental love is God's love, that is, it is completely self-giving and sacrificial. As Jesus lived and died for humankind, good parents will live and die for their children. Parental love should not be given in expectation of being appreciated. Such love is its own reward. A mother's love for her child fills her own life and enriches it. Love should be given for its own sake. Parental love should be freely given and the children's growth to independence welcomed. The child belongs not to the parent but to God. Thus, his or her freedom and own portion of responsibility have to be respected.

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.

Jn. 15:12-13

Through marriage and parenthood Christians have the opportunity to experience God's love and understand His character more deeply. It is interesting that in the Bible God's relationship to man is frequently described using the metaphors of marriage and family.

Divorce

Christian marriage is regarded as a covenant, a binding relationship of mutual loyalty. The promises made during the marriage ceremony are for life. Of course, like any relationship the marital one is subject to stresses and strains, but the expectation is that if something goes wrong there will be repentance, forgiveness and reconciliation. A model for this relationship is that between God and Israel in the Old Testament. Although Israel was often unfaithful God was always willing to forgive. Thus, there has always been a strong theological prejudice in Christianity against divorce.

It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

— Matt. 5:31-32



Tragically, not all marriages work. Sometimes they breakdown. The causes of marital breakdown vary but the outcome is always the same: the death of love.

Divorce is a declaration of the absence or destruction of love. It is a recognition that a marriage has died. One of the main causes of marital breakdown is adultery. Marriage only becomes real through love. Adultery, however, destroys the mystical essence of marriage and causes the death of love. In permitting divorce (or annulment in Catholicism) Christianity shows its respect for the person and for the sacrament of love. However, traditionally churches made divorce difficult because they wanted to prevent easy divorces and instead encourage couples to work on their difficulties and try to overcome them. Some have argued that since marriage is an important social institution, divorce should not be permitted except under extreme circumstances, such as repeated infidelity or abuse on the part of one of the partners. However, the trend in recent decades has been to loosen the requirements for divorce, with the implication that one's individual happiness took precedence over the social welfare.

Questions for Discussion



- In what way does becoming a parent give a person an opportunity to deepen his or her relationship with God?
- What does it mean in practice to say that "the two should become one"?
- What is the difference between liking and loving? Is it possible to love someone you do not like?
- What is the difference between a religious marriage and a civil marriage?

CHAPTER 50

The Way of Loving Relationships

So, we have come to the last chapter of our book. Before we part, we would like to share with you some of the inspirations that fed us while we were creating this book. When we were just beginning our work, we wanted only one thing—to tell you about love. We wanted to help you to find a love that would fill your life with light, that would create peace and harmony in your soul, in your relationships with others and in the world around you.

The words in this final chapter come from a speech by Dr. Sun Myung Moon, the founder of the International Educational Foundation, the organization that published this book. Perhaps for some of you the words will seem too religious. However, they simply speak about unconditional, faithful and unchanging love—God’s love. Our farewell wish for you is that these words will remain in your hearts and help you to discover such love in your own life.

The love of God is the center of the universe and all creation came about as a manifestation of this love. If the Fall had not occurred, the world would have been centered upon God’s love and God would have had total dominion over everything.

Creation occurred through gradual phases, beginning with the mineral kingdom and progressing through plants, animals, and culminating in human beings. What is the essence of nature? Nature is like the museum of the love of God. You can read the story of love by observing nature. The phenomenon of love is seen everywhere—in the trees, the birds, the insects and animals. God’s love created everything and that



is why everything in nature exists for the sake of love. Because all things have beauty and love, we are attracted to them—and we see God in them. All forms of existence seek to reverberate joyfully as a part of that love.

When our television antenna is very high, we receive more signals than a lower one. What is the highest love antenna in the creation? Is it the tall trees? The birds? No, the highest and most sensitive antenna in God's creation was given to men and women. Do you agree? The love antennae of human beings are invisible. They reach all the way up to God through the realm of thought and feeling.

Within the original vision of things, nothing within the universe would have thought of itself as alone or isolated. The concept of "self" as a separate entity is the result of the fall of man. The healthy, unfallen universe would be one in which every entity recognized its relationship with the whole.

Between men and women, there would be no concept of loneliness. No matter how great a man is, he would know that he is nothing without a woman. Likewise, no matter how beautiful a woman is, she would realize that she is nothing without a man. How does that make you feel to hear such a thing? The very purpose and meaning of our existence is for the sake of others. Subject exists for object and object exists for subject—men for women and women for men. How do we really know that we are one or the other?

The most holy place

In many respects, men and women have the same characteristics. We all have one head, two eyes, a mouth, two hands and two legs. In fact, when women are wearing men's clothing, it is hard to tell the difference! Of course, there is one absolute difference in the external features of men and women and that is the sexual organs. The man's organ gives him his manhood; the woman's gives her womanhood. That is truly the most precious part of a person because it determines our identity as a man or a woman.



What is the function of the sexual organs of the woman? We could say that it is the main pipeline of love. In other words, its function is to connect you to love. If you have four billion cells, every one of them will be activated and focused upon the activity of that pipeline when it is activated.

The most holy place within the human body is that area of love. God is the master of love and He wants to see His love manifested in the love between a man and woman.

Therefore, men and women

cannot be permanently separated. They need each other and they look forward to their union in that most holy place. That is the essence of love.

Every man and woman possesses his or her own holy place. Can someone purchase that holy place with money? Love has a value greater than life itself even in the secular world. People recognize that love cannot be bought with money. How much more valuable is love in the heavenly world? A fundamental question is



whether life or love is the most precious. You say love, but why? No matter how long we live, our biological existence has no value unless we are experiencing love. Life does not automatically connect us with the most holy place, but love does.

Love is the supreme value. Do you men live for the purpose of eating three meals a day? Or perhaps you only care about sleeping eight hours a night? No, it is for the sake of love that we live. That is how God created us. Do you have any objection to that purpose? Likewise it is for the purpose of feeling and expressing love that the arts, literature, theater and so forth exist.

The universe welcomes those men and women who consider love the supreme value. Does anyone here think I am wrong by saying this? Love is almighty. It is greater than life itself. There are no adjectives large enough to describe love. It is absolute, it is unchanging, it is beautiful, it is sweet; yet none of these words encompass love. Throughout the history of literature and poetry, what has been praised more often, love or life? Perhaps power and money are the focus of poetry? No, love is most praised.

Men and women are willing to sacrifice their own lives for the sake of their loved ones. The word “holy” must be connected to love. It is only in the context of love that the word “holy” has meaning. For example, any husband who is able to sacrifice himself for his wife’s sake is a holy husband; the reverse is true as well. The person who is willing to die for the sake of his parents is called a child of filial piety. He/She is a holy son or daughter. The person who gives his life for his nation is considered a holy patriot. Likewise, the person who gives his life for the sake of all of humanity is a holy saint. Anyone who gives his entire life for the sake of God is truly a holy son or daughter of God.

A revolution of love is needed

Human beings are the primary pipeline of love to God, but what happened to men and women? They degenerated and turned their most holy places into the filthiest and most degraded places. Many women are abused by men who seek for nothing but to gratify themselves sexually. That is far worse than the animals.

The love of every person is connected, like an electrical outlet, to the source or the central powerhouse. That central powerhouse is God and that love flows through not

only to human beings but also to the animals, the plants and the mineral world. Human beings are the mediators of that love to the rest of the universe, but since man became a defective mediator, God's love became disconnected from the entire universe.

The most fundamental revolution needed in this fallen world is the one of love. Our most holy place is not a shameful place. It is a place of dignity. We should walk with great dignity and move through this world knowing that our most holy place is part of us. All the filth and disease of this world will be repelled by that attitude. The time will come when the whole world will bow down to the beautiful couple who walk arm in arm, united in holy love.

The Kingdom of Heaven is nothing other than this—the world in which men and women protect their love, maintain themselves in a God-centered way, and stroll down the street together in perfect harmony.

The textbook of love

People have been asking a fundamental question throughout history: Why did God create human beings and the universe? Many great philosophers have offered their thoughts on the subject and usually their thoughts were rather intricate and complicated. But the answer is very simple. All of nature reveals the answer to this question.

Did you hear the singing of the birds this morning? Everyone keep absolutely quiet for a few moments so we can listen to them. . . What are they doing out there? They are singing love songs to one another. Nature is our textbook. When I hear those birds, I feel inspired to sing a love song to my wife. Everything in creation exists in pairs—the cats, the birds, even the insects.

Therefore, I came to the conclusion that nature is our classroom of love—it is the holy place which God created in order to teach people how to love. Everything you eat—vegetables, fruit, bread, etc.—wants to become a part of your body when you have a loving attitude. They want to experience a higher dimension of love. But when you eat them with a selfish and hateful mind, they revolt against going into your stomach. They don't want to be a part of anything other than love.

Just as the things of creation gladly give themselves up to become part of a loving human body, we humans also willingly die for love because love is the most holy and

supreme impulse. If we can lay down our life for the sake of our spouse, we are the greatest lover.

Likewise, those parents who give their lives for their children have the highest love.

We should learn the lessons of love from nature and know how to relate to the beauty of nature and how to enjoy being in creation. The holiest people have always





been on intimate terms with nature. We should naturally want to go out every day and look at the sky and the birds and the animals in order to perceive new lessons in love. Our home can be one of love, not only for our family but also for the things of nature. All the creatures, including the insects, will want to become a part of our “love orchestra.” We can have plants, animals, flowers and insects dwelling together in love.

Even though we may be all alone, we can feel the thrill of seeing a lovely flower. We can watch the fish in a pond as they vigorously chase after each other and think: “They are running after love and they never get tired.” The salmon can teach a beautiful love lesson to humanity because they experience only one love and then they die. They give their lives to love, to hatch their eggs, and then they die. Their lives are consummated by the fulfillment of their love, so they have nothing more to live for.

Now you can understand the true concept of love. When you get up in the morning, why not time your walking with the rhythm of the birds singing? They are great teachers of love. When a husband and wife are truly in love, having a disagreement will not hurt but will increase your loving feelings later. After you clash with each other, you can embrace each other that much more strongly.

So now do you understand that your most holy place belongs to your spouse, not to yourself? We were not born for our own sake but for the sake of others. As long as our terminology is “we” and “us” the universe supports us, but as soon as we think in terms of “I” and “me” the universe will turn against us. Can we complain against this rule?

This is the beauty of marriage—it pushes people to think always of themselves in terms of another. Likewise, living in a family requires us to think in terms of “we”—the children think of their parents, the parents think of the children, each child thinks of the other brothers and sisters. But often this is not the case in many homes; for this reason many families are heading toward destruction.

People have simply not imagined that the love of God was supposed to have dominion over all creation. If you could choose between reading a difficult and complicated philosophy book or a poem about love, which would you prefer? Quite simply, people enjoy the sweetness of love over everything else.

The quest for original love

The fall of man wrought total destruction upon God's dream of love and degraded the most holy experiences into the most shameful. Human beings, the supreme creation of God, were degraded to a point far below that of the animals, plants and minerals. Man naturally seeks a direct relationship with God but instead we feel far away from God. The original love was supposed to be man's ticket into heaven but on the contrary man purchased his ticket to hell through illicit, self-centered love.

The misuse of love by the first human ancestors crushed God's ideal of love and He became brokenhearted. Think of the parental heart. Imagine that a wealthy father built an elaborate and beautiful home for his children, but all of a sudden the children died. Every time that parent looked at their home, it would make him more brokenhearted. By the same token, every time God looks at this beautiful universe He created for His children, he is reminded that they are spiritually dead. He must wish that such a beautiful home never even existed to hurt His heart.

Certainly God is always on the verge of anger, feeling that He would like to smash everything He created in order to be free of the pain. But God's very own purpose of existence is at stake, and therefore God must endure, no matter how terribly difficult it is. He must slowly but surely restore this shattered world into one healthy whole. The only power greater than fallen, selfish love is that of God's true, selfless love. That love is 100% pure love which cannot be found any other place except within God. Salvation can only come from this original, 100% pure love.

Original love is the only hope for man because no other power can break man's bondage to evil. Therefore the religions of history have had the basic purpose of pursuing that original love. Directly or indirectly, all men and women have sought to regain the original love, to possess it, embody it; that has been the dream of humankind. Idealistic people have always dreamed of societies, a nation and world centered upon original love.

Some people have a vague concept of what the ideal world might be like. It is the world centered upon original love. It must be realized in a substantial society on the earth, which we call the Kingdom of Heaven on earth. We are certainly not living in the original world at this time so we have to pursue it. It is the destiny of all people to seek original love through the path that religion has trod.

Centered upon this original love, we can establish original families, societies, and nations—where only the love of God prevails and God and humanity shall finally know true and everlasting happiness.



APPENDIX



APPENDIX:

How Well Do You Know Yourself?

The following are a few psychological tests that you may want to try your hand at to help you to understand yourself better and how well you relate to other people. They are listed in connection with some of the lessons in this book.

1. Love—The Greatest Value

Many men and women like to devote even their spare time to work. Of course, each person does it in accordance with his or her interests. Do you want to know whether you have a bent for work, studies or business? If you do, take a pencil and answer the following multiple choice questions.

1. **You plan to finish the work you began long ago but have been postponing. Suddenly you receive a call from a girl/boy that you like inviting you to go out on a date.**
 - a) You say, "Later, honey", clench your teeth and finish up the work quickly.
 - b) Saying, "I'm right there!", you drop everything and rush out the door.
 - c) Having decided to be a nerd, you decline the invitation, and do your work with a light heart.
2. **You are faced with a choice: to go straight to a party you've been invited to, or first to clean your room, because you are tortured by your conscience and your parents.**
 - a) Repeating, "A time to work and a time to play", you begin cleaning your room.
 - b) Repeating the same saying, you decide that the longed-for hour has come and run to the party, promising to clean up everything when you get back.
 - c) Without a care you just listen to your parents scolding you for being untidy and walk out the door.
3. **You have been asked to do a favor that cannot be done by anyone else.**
 - a) Patting the person on the shoulder, you say "No problem!", and with the help of one of your numerous friends, you do the favor.
 - b) Claiming that you are too busy, you just shrug your shoulders and go away.
 - c) Acknowledging the person's request, you think feverishly and fulfill part of the request.

4. How important are clothes to you?

- a) They mean the world to me. I am nothing without fashionable clothes.
- b) I like dress nicely, because it pleases both me and other people.
- c) I need good clothes for the sake of my work. If I am badly dressed, people won't want to work with me.

5. What are friends to you?

- a) Friends are splendid! I do my work with their help. They help me alot. I really need friends!
- b) Friends are a good thing. I cannot live without friends. They help me in difficult situations.
- c) Friends are everything to me. I seek their advice and also try to help them.

6. Do you pay enough attention to your school work? Do you always warn your family when you will be late?

- a) Nonsense! If I am out late, I have a good reason for it. My school work can wait.
- b) Yes, it is good to call and warn them. I do call, if possible. But I think it's nothing terrible if I am a bit late. I'll get my school work done.
- c) Certainly, I do call and warn them. How can I worry my family! In any case, I am never late. I take my school work very seriously.

7. What importance do you attach to your personal life and to your future family?

- a) I think that family and home will be the priority in my life. I want to get married and have children. I need to work only to support my family.
- b) Well, having a family is all right. It is nice to spend an evening with your family sometimes, to talk with your children and your beloved, but work can't be ignored.
- c) Oh, no! I can't see spending my life tied down to a family. Let my wife (or grandmother, mother-in-law, etc.) look after the children. My true vocation will be my professional work. There I feel like I can be a real person. There I will be in my element.

8. Can you relax, forget about your work and its problems?

- a) I can, but not always. If I have important problems, I cannot help thinking about them. Relaxing does not make me happy in such cases.
- b) When I am on vacation, I can easily stop thinking about work and enjoy myself.
- c) I don't remember the last time I felt relaxed. There is always my work to do.

Test Key:

- | | | |
|---------|-----|------|
| 1. a=5 | b=3 | c=10 |
| 2. a=10 | b=5 | c=3 |
| 3. a=10 | b=3 | c=5 |
| 4. a=3 | b=5 | c=10 |
| 5. a=10 | b=5 | c=3 |
| 6. a=3 | b=5 | c=10 |
| 7. a=3 | b=5 | c=10 |
| 8. a=5 | b=3 | c=10 |

Interpretation:

More than 60 points

You have genuine ability to work hard. People of such qualities are rare. But perhaps you need to slow down a little. A difficult time in your life may come when you will find yourself completely alone. No wonder, since you don't think about your family or appreciate your friends. You are threatened by the prospect of turning into a machine: cold, lonely and soulless.

35-60 points

You manage to be yourself and at the same time not be an outsider in life. Your family likes your company. You are attentive and caring towards them. At the same time you don't let your work get away from you, as you oversee everything yourself. Go on with your work, but don't forget about those who love you, and everything will be alright.

Less than 35 points

You are too light-minded. You shouldn't be so aimless. Life is not all play! Of course, you are a nice person, but you should not forget about work. You should become a bit more serious.

3. Me in a Group

There are times in life when you feel happy. There are other times when you dislike yourself and everything around you. It is probably quite natural. But you may secretly envy those who always look pleased with themselves and treat everything philosophically. What category of person are you? Are you happy? This test may help you answer this question.

1. When you think about your life, you feel that:

- a) everything is more bad than good.
- b) everything is more good than bad.
- c) everything is great.

2. At the end of the day you usually:

- a) are unsatisfied with yourself.
- b) think that the day could have been better.
- c) go to bed with a feeling of satisfaction.

3. When you look in the mirror you usually think:

- a) What an awful sight! I'd rather not look.
- b) Not so bad.
- c) Everything is wonderful!

4. If you hear that an acquaintance of yours has won a big prize, you think:

- a) Hey! Why wasn't it me?
- b) I hope that someday I'll be as lucky!
- c) I feel so happy for him/her!

5. If you hear about some accident over the radio, you think:

- a) I'm sure the same will happen to me sometime!
- b) Fortunately, I could escape such a disaster!
- c) I'm sure it's not as bad as it sounds.

6. When you wake up in the morning, you usually:

- a) don't want to think about anything.
- b) see what is waiting for you.
- c) are glad that a new day has begun and promises new surprises for you.

7. You think that your friends:

- a) are not so interesting and sensitive as you would like them to be.
- b) are quite tolerable.
- c) are great people!

8. Comparing yourself with others you decide:

- a) I am unappreciated.
- b) I am no worse or better than others.
- c) I have leadership abilities, which everyone recognizes.

9. If you have gained 4 or 5 kilograms, you:

- a) are panic-stricken.
- b) think it is all right.
- c) watch your eating habits and exercise more.

10. If you are down you:

- a) curse your fate.
- b) know that the bad mood will pass.
- c) do something to entertain yourself.

Test Key:

a=0

b=1

c=2

Interpretation:

17-20 points

You are such a happy person that it is hard to believe! You enjoy life, while ignoring problems and unpleasant things. You are a cheerful person. People like you for your optimism, but. . . isn't your attitude towards life a little too superficial and light-minded? Maybe you need some sober-mindedness and skepticism.

13-16 points

You are an "optimally" happy person. There is more joy than sadness in your life. You are courageous, have a sober mind and a cheerful character. You don't panic at difficulties, but gauge them soberly. You are comfortable with other people.

8-12 points

Happiness and unhappiness in your life are expressed by the famous formula 50-50. If you want to bend the balance in your favor, try not to panic when difficulties arise, but face them calmly and confidently. Trust in your friends and don't leave them in trouble.

0-7 points

You are used to seeing everything black and think that it is your destiny to be unhappy. You don't try to hide that attitude toward life. But where is it getting you? Try to spend time with optimistic people. It would be good for you to find some hobby.

4. Leadership

What are you—a general or a private? Try to determine it with the help of this test.

1. Friendship for you means:

A - cooperation; B - support; C - love and care.

2. A real artist must possess first of all:

A - talent; B - desire; C – training and practice.

3. At a party you feel like:

A - a rooster; B - a mother hen; C - a baby chick.

4. If you were a geometrical figure, you would be:

A - a cylinder; B - a sphere; C - a cube.

5. When you like a girl/a boy you:

A – boldly make the first step; B - wait for her/him to make the first step; C – try a few steps.

6. Facing unexpected circumstances you:

A – back up; B – go full speed ahead; C – are at a loss what to do.

7. When you speak in public, you feel that you are:

A – listened to respectfully; B – criticized; C – embarrassed.

8. Going on an expedition, it is better to take companions who are:

A – strong; B – clever; C – experienced.

9. To tell the truth, Cinderella was:

A – a victim of circumstances; B – took advantage of her opportunities; C – naive.

10. How would you define your life:

A – a game of chess; B – a boxing match; C – a game of poker.

Test Key:

Number	A	B	C
1	3	2	1
2	3	2	1
3	3	2	1
4	1	3	2
5	3	2	1
6	3	2	1
7	3	2	1
8	3	2	1
9	1	3	2
10	2	1	3

Interpretation:

If the sum is *less than 16 points*, you are a private. You defer to others too much and identify yourself with others' weaknesses. That is why you are not capable of commanding and competing successfully for this requires swallowing and digesting other people's difficulties. Maybe behind your unwillingness to take responsibility there are bad memories of past attempts ending in failure. You need to analyze the reasons why and take steps to change your character.

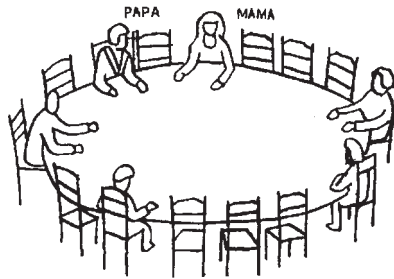
If you have scored *16-24 points*, you are a junior officer. It is a rather awkward position, like being between a hammer and an anvil. You are both a leader and a follower. It is difficult for you to graduate to a higher level. Your thinking is too rational and based only on your own experience.

If you have scored *more than 24 points*, you are a general. You are always the first to involve yourself in social affairs. If you are ambitious and not afraid of working hard, this ability may advance you to high positions. If you are neither, then you will be considered a wonderful friend and adviser, and probably always the center of attention.

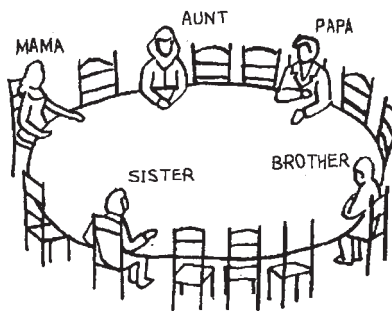
5. How We Communicate

This exercise will help you to think about your relationships with other people, who you are close to, who you have difficulties with.

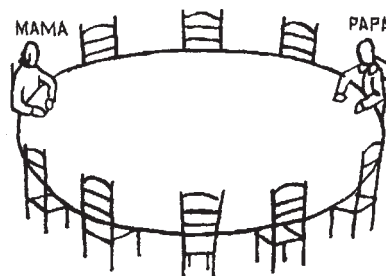
1. Here is a table where different people are sitting. Mark your place with an X.



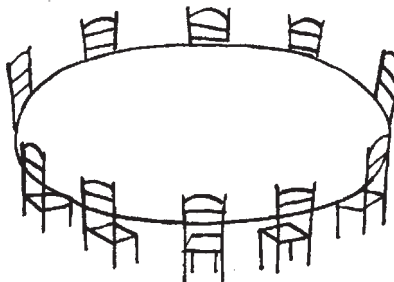
2. Mark your place with an X.



3. Mark your place with an X.



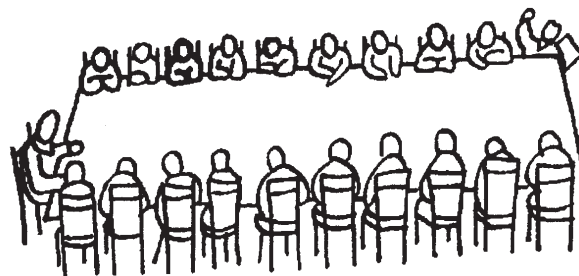
4. Now place some people and yourself around the table. Mark who these people are: father, mother, sister, brother, friend, classmate.



5. Here is a table at the head of which someone you know well is sitting.

Where would you sit?

Who is that person?



6. Together with your family you are going to spend the holidays in a big house that belongs to an acquaintance. The other members of your family have already chosen their rooms. Choose a room for yourself.

Brother				Papa & Mama
Sister				

7. You have come to your acquaintance's place as a long-term guest. Mark with an X the room you would choose.

Papa & Mama				
Grandfather & Grandmother				

8. Again at your acquaintance's. Mark the rooms of some people and your own room.

9. There is a plan to surprise someone.

Do you want it to be done?

To whom? By whom?

Does it make any difference?

10. You have a chance to go on a vacation, but there are only two vacant places left: for you and for someone else.

Whom would you take with you?

Where would you go?

11. You have a toothache and must go to the dentist to pull out the bad tooth.

Will you go alone or with someone?

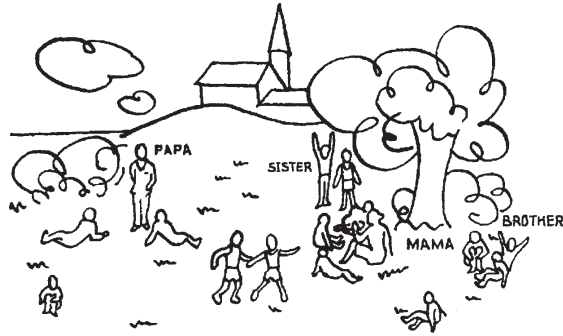
If with someone, who is it?

12. You have passed an exam. Whom will you tell about it first?

13. You are spending some time in the country. Mark your place with an X.



14. Another occasion in the country. Again, mark your place with an X.



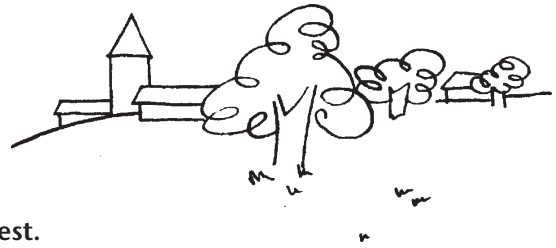
15. Where are you now?



16. Now place some people and yourself in this picture.

Draw or mark them with Xs.

Who are these people?



17. You and some other people have received some gifts. Someone has received a much nicer gift than the rest.

Whom would you like to see in his place?

Or doesn't it make any difference to you?

18. You are going on a long trip, leaving your family.

Whom will you miss the most?

19. Your pals are going for a walk. Mark your place with an X.



20. With whom do you like to spend time?

- With friends of your own age.
- With your juniors.
- With your seniors.

21. Here are your friends. They are quarreling and you don't know why.

Mark your place with an X.



22. Here are your friends. They are quarreling about the rules of a game.

Mark your place with an X.

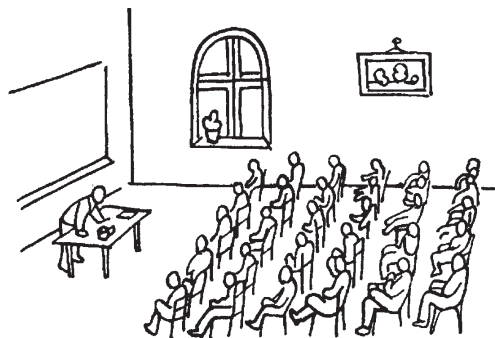


23. A classmate has pushed you and knocked you down on purpose.

What will you do?

- Cry.
- Complain to the teacher.
- Hit him back.
- Scold him.
- Say nothing.

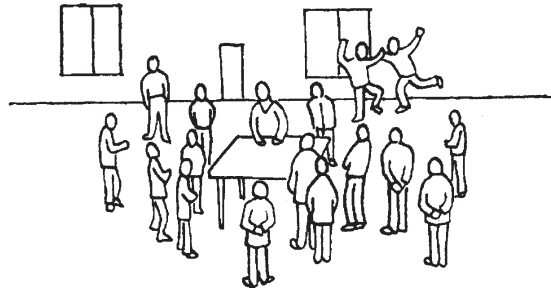
24. Here is a person you know well. He/she is saying something to those sitting on the chairs. You are among them. Mark your place with an X.



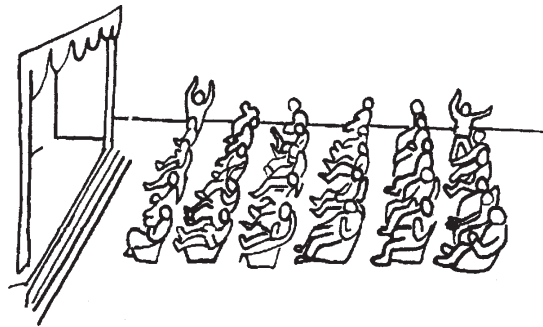
25. You help your mother:

- a lot.
- some.
- seldom.

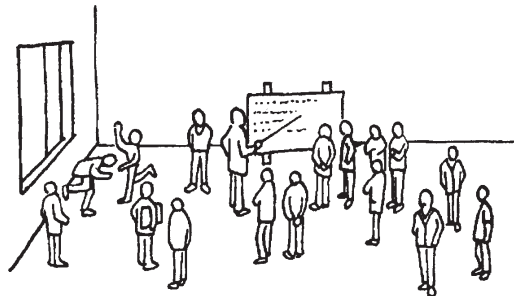
26. These people are standing around a table. One of them is explaining something. You are among those present. Mark your place with an X.



27. These are people watching an interesting performance. Mark your place with an X.



28. The teacher is explaining a task. Mark your place with an X.



29. An acquaintance is laughing at you.

What will you do?

- Cry.
- Shrug your shoulders.
- Laugh back at him.
- Call him names or fight.

30. An acquaintance is laughing at your friend.

What will you do?

- Cry.
- Shrug your shoulders.
- Laugh at him.
- Call him names or fight.

31. A classmate has taken your pen without permission.

What will you do?

- Cry.
- Complain to the teacher.
- Shout at him.
- Try to take it back.

32. You are playing chess (or checkers) and lose two times running.

- Are you displeased?
- Will you keep your feelings inside?
- Will you get angry?
- Will you go on playing?
- Will you give up?

33. Your father does not let you go out.

What will you do?

- Accept it.
- Sulk.
- Try to go in spite of the prohibition.
- Cry.
- Protest.

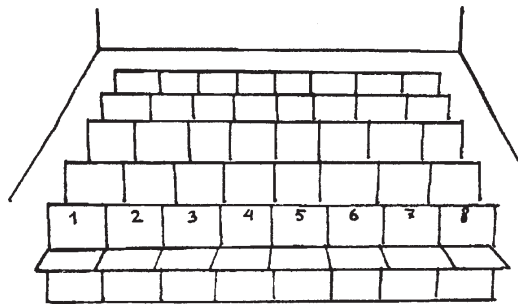
34. Your mother does not let you go out.

What will you do?

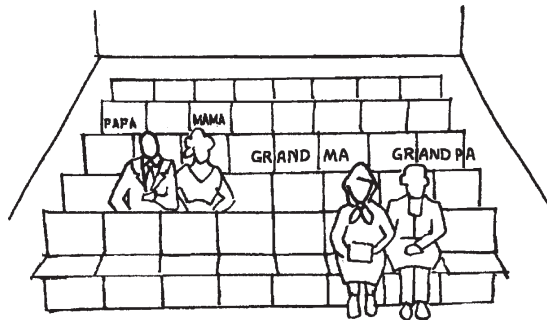
- Accept it.
- Sulk.
- Try to go in spite of the prohibition.
- Cry.
- Protest.

35. The teacher has left the class and charged you with maintaining order during his absence. Are you capable of fulfilling the task?

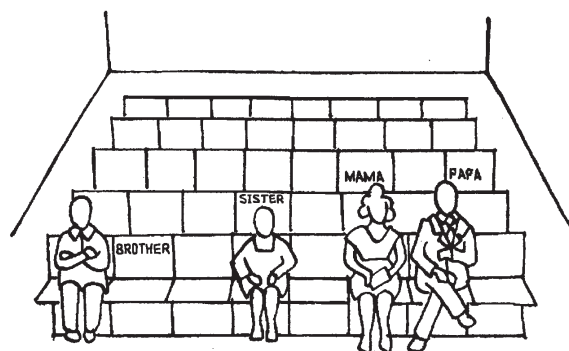
36. You have gone to the movie theater with your family. There are many vacant seats in the hall. Where will you sit? Where will the other members of your family sit?



37. There are many vacant seats in the movie theater. Mark your place with an X.



38. At the movie theater again. Where will you sit?



6. *Respect in Relationships*

Are you a contentious person? To find out, try this test, choosing one answer to each question.

1. A quarrel has started in a bus. Your reaction:

- a) I take no part.
- b) I briefly express my opinion in favor of the party I consider right.
- c) I interfere actively, so that the conflict becomes focused on me.

2. Do you complain to your parents about your teachers?

- a) No.
- b) Only if I have a serious reason to do so.
- c) I easily complain about my teachers.

3. Do you argue with your friends?

- a) Hardly ever.
- b) Sometimes.
- c) All the time.

4. Lines are an indispensable part of life. How do you react if somebody tries to cut in line?

- a) I am upset, but keep silent; it saves trouble.
- b) I admonish the person.
- c) I push forward to prevent the person from getting in front of me.

5. At home you get an untasty dish for dinner. Your reaction?

- a) No matter.
- b) I will eat it silently, but grudgingly.
- c) I will make a caustic comment and may make a point about refusing to eat it.

6. If someone has stepped on your foot in the street or bus...

- a) I will give the offender an indignant glance.
- b) I will admonish the person calmly.
- c) I will give the person a piece of my mind!

7. If one of your relatives has bought something you don't like...

- a) I will keep silent.
- b) I will make a short comment.
- c) I will make a big deal of it.

8. You were unlucky in a lottery. How will you react?

- a) I will try to look indifferent, but will swear to myself never to take part in it again.
- b) I won't conceal my resentment, although I will treat it humorously.
- c) It will spoil my mood for a long time.

Test Key:

a=4
b=2
c=0

Interpretation:

22-32 points

You are tactful and peace-loving. You are good at avoiding arguments and conflicts. You avoid confrontational situations. Maybe this is why you are sometimes called a person without backbone. You should gather your courage if the situation requires you to speak up.

12-20 points

You are considered a contentious person, but actually you speak out only when there is no other way. You stand your ground firmly without thinking how it will affect your professional success or friendly relations. Nevertheless, you are always polite. You don't degrade yourself by hurling insults those you disagree with. All this arouses respect for you.

0-10 points

Arguments and conflicts are like air for you. You don't seem to be able to live without them. You like to criticize others, but if you hear someone criticizing you, you may eat the person alive. You criticize in order to boost your own ego rather than for the sake of being constructive. It is very difficult to be near you. Your violence and rudeness repulse people. Maybe that is why you have no genuine friends? Anyway, try to overcome your quarrelsome character.

23. Communication Skills

With the help of this test it is possible to discover how one behaves in the case of a disagreement. There are 5 styles of behaving: 1) *cooperation*, which is usually optimal; 2) *compromise*, which is quite acceptable in many cases; 3) *avoidance*, which is recommended in the case of "fires" that are not provoked by the other person; 4) *accommodation*, which is possible in the case where the other person is right, and 5) *rivalry*, which is the least effective yet the most wide-spread mode of behavior in conflicts. In order to determine which style is most characteristic of yourself, read attentively each of the double statements *a)* and *b)* and choose the option which corresponds most closely to the way you think and act.

- 1. a) I tend to let others take responsibility for solving a dispute.
- b) Instead of dwelling on our points of conflict, I try to draw attention to what we agree on.

2. a) I try to find a compromise.
b) I try to settle the matter taking into account the interests of both the other person and myself.
3. a) Usually I am persistent in pushing my viewpoint.
b) Sometimes I sacrifice my own interests for the sake of the other person's.
4. a) I try to find a compromise.
b) I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.
5. a) To settle a dispute I always try to gain the agreement of the other.
b) I try to do everything to avoid unnecessary tension.
6. a) I try to avoid trouble for myself.
b) I always try to win the argument.
7. a) I try to avoid a dispute, hoping to settle it later.
b) I think it is possible to give some ground in order to gain something greater.
8. a) Usually I am persistent in pushing my viewpoint.
b) First of all I try to understand the essence of the issue in dispute.
9. a) I think that it isn't always worth fighting about some things.
b) I take pains to win an argument.
10. a) Usually I am persistent in pushing my viewpoint.
b) I try to find a compromise.
11. a) First of all I try to understand the essence of the issue in dispute.
b) I try to appease the other person in order to keep good relations.
12. a) I try to avoid taking a position that may arouse dispute.
b) If he is open to compromise, I try to see things from the other person's viewpoint.
13. a) I often suggest a compromise.
b) I insist on everything being done as I want.
14. a) I inform the other person of my viewpoint and then ask his opinion.
b) I try to convince the other person of the superiority of my viewpoint.
15. a) I try to appease the other person in order to keep good relations.
b) I try to do everything to avoid unnecessary tension.
16. a) I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.
b) I try to convince the other person of the superiority of my viewpoint.

17. a) Usually I am persistent in pushing my viewpoint.
b) I try to do everything to avoid unnecessary tension.
18. a) Usually I give the other person a chance to gain the upper hand if it makes him happy.
b) If he is open to compromise, I try to see things from the other person's viewpoint.
19. a) First of all I try to understand the essence of the issue in dispute.
b) I try to avoid a dispute, hoping to settle it later.
20. a) I try to overcome our disagreement immediately.
b) I try to find the best combination of gains and losses for both of us.
21. a) During negotiations I try to be attentive to what the other person is saying.
b) I am likely to discuss the problem right up front.
22. a) I try to find an intermediate position.
b) I always stand my ground.
23. a) I usually try to satisfy the interests of both sides.
b) I tend to let others take responsibility for solving a dispute.
24. a) I try to satisfy the other person's desire, if he thinks it is very important.
b) I try to persuade the other person to accept a compromise.
25. a) I try to convince the other person that I am right.
b) During negotiations I try to be attentive to what the other person is saying.
26. a) Usually I suggest a compromise.
b) I usually try to satisfy the interests of both sides.
27. a) Usually I try to avoid arguments.
b) Usually I give the other person a chance to gain the upper hand if it makes him happy.
28. a) Usually I am persistent in pushing my viewpoint.
b) To settle a dispute I always try to gain the agreement of the other.
29. a) Usually I suggest a compromise.
b) I think that it isn't always worth fighting about some things.
30. a) I try not to hurt the other person's feelings.
b) I always try to take a position in an argument so that both sides can be happy.

Test Key:

Number	Rivalry	Cooperation	Compromise	Escape	Accommodation
1.				a	b
2.		b	a		
3.	a				b
4.			a		b
5.		a		b	
6.	b			a	
7.			b	a	
8.	a	b			
9.	b			a	
10.	a		b		
11.		a			b
12.			b	a	
13.	b		a		
14.	b	a			
15.				b	a
16.	b				a
17.	a			b	
18.			b		a
19.		a		b	
20.		a	b		
21.		b			a
22.	b		a		
23.		a		b	
24.			b		a
25.	a				b
26.		b	a		
27.				a	b
28.	a	b			
29.			a	b	
30.		b			a

The maximum number of points for each style is 12. Count the points you have scored and decide which style is dominant for you.

43. Self-Control

The aim of this test is clear and simple, and at the same time important—to find out how much self-control you have. Do you tend to be frugal or spendthrift? How you are will no doubt affect your relationship with your future spouse.

1. **Do you take on 2 or 3 jobs at the same time?**
 - a) Seldom.
 - b) Often.
 - c) Never.
2. **After you receive your paycheck will you buy expensive things knowing that later it will be difficult to make ends meet?**
 - a) Never.
 - b) Always.
 - c) Sometimes.
3. **If you see clothes that you really like, will the price stop you from buying them?**
 - a) Sometimes.
 - b) Never.
 - c) Always.
4. **If some household device (such as a coffee maker) breaks down, would you prefer to buy a new one or repair the old one?**
 - a) Prefer to buy a new one.
 - b) It depends on the price of the repair.
 - c) I'd try to repair it myself.
5. **If there is a hole in your stocking or sock, what will you do?**
 - a) Mend it.
 - b) Throw it away together with the second one.
 - c) Keep the second one, for it may come in handy.
6. **Do you turn off the light in a room when you leave it?**
 - a) Rarely.
 - b) Sometimes.
 - c) Always.
7. **Do you use the telephone only when it is necessary or more freely?**
 - a) Only when necessary.
 - b) I like to talk on the phone.
 - c) It depends.

8. Are you able to do several things well at the same time?

- a) Yes.
- b) No.
- c) It depends.

9. If there are a lot of old newspapers in the home, what will you do?

- a) Throw them away.
- b) Recycle them.
- c) Leave them.

10. Do you buy more bread than you need?

- a) Yes.
- b) Sometimes.
- c) Never.

11. Do you eat everything on your plate or do you leave a bit sometimes?

- a) I leave food sometimes.
- b) I never leave anything.
- c) I always leave some.

12. Do you take care of your clothes and shoes?

- a) Yes.
- b) No.
- c) Not always.

13. Are you careful with the things of other people?

- a) No.
- b) Yes.
- c) Even more careful than with my own things.

Test Key:

- | | | |
|---------|-----|-----|
| 1. a=1 | b=0 | c=2 |
| 2. a=2 | b=0 | c=1 |
| 3. a=1 | b=0 | c=2 |
| 4. a=0 | b=2 | c=1 |
| 5. a=2 | b=0 | c=1 |
| 6. a=0 | b=1 | c=2 |
| 7. a=2 | b=0 | c=1 |
| 8. a=2 | b=0 | c=1 |
| 9. a=1 | b=2 | c=0 |
| 10. a=0 | b=1 | c=2 |
| 11. a=1 | b=2 | c=0 |
| 12. a=2 | b=0 | c=1 |
| 13. a=0 | b=1 | c=2 |

Interpretation:

20-26 points

You are too thrifty. You always think everything over, try to do everything today, postpone nothing till tomorrow.

13-19 points

You don't like displaying what you have, but sometimes allow yourself to show generosity.

6-12 points

You live in grand style. Sometimes you want to economize and refuse yourself even necessary things, but you soon make up for it.

0-5 points

You are careless, not very responsible and are light-minded not only about money, but about everything of material value.

44. Falling in Love, Friendship and Real Love

How grounded are you in matters involving love? Does physical appearance matter most to you? Are you able to see your beloved for whom he/she really is, or are you easily blinded by your feelings of love? This test will help you to see yourself more clearly.

1. Do you believe in "love at first sight"?

- a) Why not?
- b) No way, this is not love.
- c) Sometimes it happens.

2. Could you fall in love with a person if your friends treated him/her with contempt?

- a) Possibly.
- b) Probably.
- c) No way.

3. Would you go with your partner to a movie you've already seen?

- a) I would if he/she asked me to.
- b) I would be happy to do so.
- c) No, but we could meet after the film if he/she wanted to see it.

4. If your group of friends doesn't like your partner, what will you do?

- a) Discuss it with friends.
- b) Doubt my choice.
- c) I cannot imagine such a thing.

5. What do you mention first when telling somebody about your partner?

- a) The external appearance, such as the face or hair.
- b) Thinking ability, education level, manners, behavior, speaking ability, conscientiousness.
- c) I might say anything, because I cannot enumerate all the merits of my beloved.

6. Do you know what your partner is doing when you are not together?

- a) As far as I know I have no rival, so I don't worry about such things.
- b) Yes, because we always tell each other what we have been doing since our last date.
- c) We are both free, so he/she may do anything he/she pleases.

7. Can you imagine your relationship coming to an end sometime?

- a) I never think about it.
- b) It will happen anyway sooner or later.
- c) We are so attached to each other that it will never happen.

8. Do you feel your life is wonderful only when you are together?

- a) If a person is in love, it cannot be otherwise.
- b) Yes, I miss him/her when we're not with each other.
- c) Life can be wonderful only for those who are in love.

9. When you are together, do you discuss life's "eternal" questions?

- a) There is almost no time for it.
- b) What for?
- c) Yes, quite a lot.

10. Do you have the feeling that your partner is a different person now from the one he/she was at the beginning of your relationship?

- a) He/she is just the way he/she always was.
- b) He/she has turned out to be a different kind of person than I thought, but this way I like him/her even more.
- c) He/she is not such a wonderful person as I first thought.

Test Key:

1. a=10	b=3	c=7
2. a=7	b=3	c=1
3. a=6	b=7	c=3
4. a=10	b=7	c=7
5. a=2	b=7	c=10
6. a=4	b=7	c=0
7. a=9	b=4	c=7
8. a=9	b=1	c=7
9. a=2	b=1	c=7
10. a=10	b=7	c=5

Interpretation:

Less than 30 points

Maybe a friendly relationship means more to you than his/her personality. Maybe you even don't know him/her enough and are rather satisfied with his/her appearance: "Oh what a victory I have won. Look who I have conquered!" Such a feeling may be pleasant, but be careful: you are choosing a mate for yourself, not for someone else!

30-65 points

You love both the appearance and the character of your chosen one. You not only appreciate his/her merits but accept the person as a whole. You are trying to understand him/her, and it is only natural to be interested in the person with whom you would willingly share your life. You feel you can overcome any obstacles together!

More than 65 points

What a wonderful thing love is! But it can only last when the couple truly love each other and not just the love feeling itself. You are so carried away with your partner that you don't see the real person. Rather, you are projecting your image of him/her onto your partner. You won't be disappointed in your beloved if you try to understand who your partner really is rather than the image created by your fantasy.

48. Preparation for Marriage

Being in love is good but if spouses want to live a long and happy life together, they must understand each other as well. This test will help a young couple to see how much they have succeeded in mutual understanding.

1. **Do you feel that you should make a more serious commitment to each other?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) It is not necessary.
 - c) It is hopeless.
2. **When there is a delicate question you would like to ask your partner can you be straight forward without beating around the bush?**
 - a) Yes, always.
 - b) Yes, but only under certain conditions.
 - c) No.
3. **Do you think your partner conceals a lot of what troubles him/her?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) I don't know.
 - c) Usually no.
4. **Can you discuss serious matters with your partner at any time?**
 - a) Yes.
 - b) Not always.
 - c) Mostly no.
5. **When you talk to each other, do you have to be careful about what you say?**
 - a) Yes, I think over and weigh my words.
 - b) No, we say directly what we think.
 - c) I express my opinion but listen to my partner's, too.
6. **When you share your problems with your partner, do you feel that you might be bothering him/her?**
 - a) Yes, often.
 - b) He/she doesn't take my problems seriously.
 - c) He/she is always sympathetic.
7. **Do either of you make important personal decisions without consulting the other?**
 - a) Sometimes it happens.
 - b) We discuss things, but we each decide by ourselves.
 - c) We discuss and decide everything together.

8. Do you sometimes prefer to share your problems with your friends rather than with your partner?
- a) Sometimes it happens.
 - b) No, I prefer discussing my problems with my partner.
 - c) My friends understand me better.
9. Are you sometimes thinking of something else while talking to your partner?
- a) It happens.
 - b) No, I listen attentively.
 - c) If I feel my mind wandering, I try to concentrate.
10. Do you usually try to express your opinion first when conversing?
- a) Certainly.
 - b) I usually let my partner say everything he/she would like to discuss first.
 - c) I think we both share with each other mutually.

Test Key:

1. a=1	b=0	c=2
2. a=0	b=1	c=2
3. a=1	b=2	c=0
4. a=0	b=1	c=2
5. a=2	b=1	c=0
6. a=2	b=1	c=0
7. a=2	b=1	c=0
8. a=1	b=0	c=2
9. a=2	b=0	c=1
10. a=2	b=0	c=1

Interpretation:

0-10 points

Your couple is used to talking about problems. Each of you shares your troubles and the partner listens attentively. You have no need to talk to someone else, because your partner understands you the best.

11-20 points

One cannot say that your couple doesn't share problems at all. But there are things you don't speak about and don't dare to discuss. This leads to alienation. You are looking for a person who will understand you.

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