

CHAPTER 1: You Are the Leader!

A leader must learn to make good decisions. That is same for the leader of a country, a corporation, or a family. We are the leaders of our own lives. We actively shape our future by the decisions we make now. The seeds of tomorrow are planted by the choices we make today.

It is exciting! You will decide your own destiny. You are in charge of your own future. You alone are the leader on your own life path.



Of course, we are all strongly influenced by our environment. We are born into a particular family and grow up in a particular society with particular values.

Yet, although such things may limit our options in life, we are not completely bound by them. As human beings, we have the freedom to weigh our options and to choose among them. We possess creativity and imagination, which enable us to respond to situations in different ways. We can change our circumstances by the decisions we make.

Each decision we make alters us in some way. Therefore making good decisions is important. For instance, if we face an obstacle and decide to give up, it becomes easier to do the same thing the next time, until it becomes a habit to give up. We can end up convincing ourselves that we are totally helpless and incompetent. On the other hand, if we decide to face down and overcome some challenge, we develop the confidence to do so again—and again. As this becomes our habit, we end up with a strong character and willpower. Making the right decisions makes us into good leaders of our lives.

A Tough but Good Decision

President Abraham Lincoln had a tough decision to make. He had to decide whether he should free the slaves.

Of course, we know nowadays that slavery is wrong. People did not always know this, though. In the past, some people thought slavery was good.

In the early 1860s, the United States was in a civil war, North against South. Most Northern states did not have slavery. The Southern states did have slavery. The North wanted one country, one Union, even if some states had slavery. The South wanted their own separate country, with slavery as the norm.

Lincoln was not sure the nation would accept the freeing of the slaves. Northerners would fight to keep the country together—for the Union—but Lincoln wasn't sure they would fight to free slaves. Lincoln had an election coming up, which he thought he might lose. Plus, the war was not going well for the Northern side.

Yet Lincoln decided to do what was morally right. He freed the slaves. It was a revolutionary decision. The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, declared the slaves to be "forever free." Rallies and riots broke out against Lincoln in the North because of this decision.

Yet because of this decision, former slaves entered the Union army in large numbers and helped to win the war. Because of this decision, many righteous people in other countries began to support the North instead of the South, because they too were against slavery. It could be said that this decision won the war.

Historians around the world consider Abraham Lincoln one of the greatest American presidents. Freeing the slaves is considered his most important single act. Lincoln himself said of his tough but good decision: "If my name ever goes down in history, it will be for this."

Every decision has consequences. Whether we like it or not, we will experience the consequences of our decisions. We are free to choose what we will do or not do, but no one is free of the consequences of his or her decisions—we must take responsibility for our choices or actions. Thus, the freedom to make decisions and responsibility for the consequences of those decisions go hand in hand.

We are free to choose what we will do or not do, but we are not free to choose the consequences of our decisions.

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

Every day of our lives we are involved in making decisions. Some are small while others are of vital importance. How do we make decisions? Is there always a right, or best, decision? What do we do if we realize we have made a mistake?



Decisions, decisions

Take a moment to think back on some of the more important decisions you made in the past year. Write down about five or six of these decisions. Then think about how you came to 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. I acted on impulse.
- 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 I just felt inside that it was the thing I ought to do.
- An *emergency* decision. There was no time to agonize over it. The decision had to be made quickly.
- 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 and how they would be affected, so I took account of their advice and suggestions.
- A *prayerful* decision. I didn't know what to do, so I prayed and asked God for his guidance.
- A *guided* decision. I felt I was out of my depth, so I asked someone I respected 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 *default* decision. I did nothing and matters took their own course.

Which of the above do you think are the best ways to make decisions? Which ones are not good ways to make decisions?

Learning to make good decisions is essential if our life is to take the course we want it to. Our ultimate destiny is in our own hands. It will be the result of the many decisions we are making day by day. We must learn to make good decisions and, when we make a bad one, do everything we can to admit our mistake and make up for it. This is how we become good leaders of our own lives.

The Pros and Cons Method

One excellent way to make certain decisions is to write down the Pros and Cons of any course of action, dividing a piece of paper in half and writing the Pros in one column and the Cons in the other.

If the Pros outweigh the Cons, either numerically or in importance, the action should be taken.

Tip: "It is the right and moral thing to do" outweighs almost all other considerations.



Questions for Reflection

1. How much do decisions depend upon external circumstances and how much on our own will?

2. How much freedom do you have to make decisions?

3. What decisions are you free to make now that you were not free to make five years ago?

4. What kinds of decisions do you not yet have the freedom to make?

5. Are there some decisions in your life that you regret having made?

6. If so, why did you make those decisions?

7. Can you change the consequences of those decisions?

8. How would you go about trying to change the effects of a bad decision?

9. What have you learned from your past decisions, whether good or bad?

Exercise: “Approaches to Decision-Making”

1. Look at the list of approaches to decision-making listed near the end of this chapter. Are some of these approaches better or worse than others? Try to list them in order of best to worst.
2. For each of the ways of making a decision, think of:
 - a) a situation where that approach would be the right one
 - b) another situation where that approach would not be the right one
3. Which way of making a decision 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 get romantically involved with someone
 - Deciding whether to marry a certain person
 - Deciding how to help a friend who is going through some struggle
 - Deciding how to respond if someone offers you drugs

Reflection Exercise: “Future Decisions”

Think about three important decisions you expect you will have to make in the next ten years. Which is the most important?

Will you use the same decision making process in each case? Why or why not?

What kind of guidelines will you use in making these decisions?

CHAPTER 2: Leading Your Life Responsibly

The word "responsibility" may not seem very exciting. When we think of responsibility, we often think of the dull things in life we *have* to do. Yet taking responsibility can be very exciting in the way that it makes us feel about ourselves: proud; competent; grown up; skillful; as if we can do anything we put our minds to.

Taking responsibility helps a person mature. This was documented by a study of teenagers during the Great Depression, when the world experienced huge financial problems. In some families the teenagers had to take on adult responsibilities. The girls did the home chores so their mothers could seek employment. The boys went out and earned money at jobs to give to their families. They had to work harder than they did before the Great Depression took away their families' money. They didn't have as much time for fun.

Yet teachers noticed big differences in these teenagers. They were more independent and self-controlled than others. They were more grown up. Years later, when they were adults, they were more family-centered than those who had not taken on responsibilities as teenagers.



Other studies have shown that children and teenagers who do chores at home grow up to be happier, more successful, to have better marriages and more friends than children and teenagers who have no responsibilities at home.

So, dull as it may sound, responsibility is actually a tool to help you grow up to be a better and happier person. And that's exciting.

Willingness

A responsible person is willing to help out when needed. Have you ever heard the children's story of the hen who wanted help from the other animals in preparing a loaf of bread? She asked the other animals to help as she planted the wheat for the bread, harvested it, separated it, made the bread dough, and baked the bread. None of the other animals would take any responsibility. Yet, when the bread was baked, all the animals wanted to eat it. The hen said no to them. Since they weren't willing to help with the

responsibility of making the bread, why should they enjoy the rewards of eating it? The hen enjoyed the delicious bread all by herself.

This is a child's tale, but it teaches an important lesson about life. If we are not willing to take responsibility, we neither deserve nor get the rewards of labor.

Word and deed

One good way to tell if a person is responsible is to measure word against deed. Does he or she say one thing but do another? Or does the person back up his or her great words with equally great deeds? It is easy to say the right words, but to act on them is something else again.

Related to responsibility is the ability to keep promises. A responsible person takes promises seriously. What if five people promised to help clean out a room at school but only two showed up to do it? How would you feel if you were one of the two who did what they said they would? How would you feel about the other three who broke their word?

How many people do you know who keep their promises? Some people have no intention of keeping their word. Some politicians are famous for making promises that will get them elected. Once in office, they seem to forget many of their own words.

It is important to keep promises and to do what we say we will do. Breaking promises is irresponsible because it puts a burden on other people—a burden we said we would shoulder ourselves.

Elbert Hubbard's Story of a Responsible Man—"A Message To Garcia"

"When war broke out between Spain and the United States it was very necessary to communicate quickly with the leader of the Cuban rebels against Spain. Garcia was somewhere in the mountains of Cuba—no one knew where. No mail nor telegraph message could reach him. The President must secure his cooperation, and quickly. What to do!

Someone said to the President, "There's a fellow by the name of Rowan will find Garcia for you, if anybody can."

Rowan was sent for and given a letter to be delivered to Garcia. How 'the fellow by the name of Rowan' took the letter, sealed it up in an oil-skin pouch, strapped it over his heart, in four days landed by night off the coast of Cuba from an open boat, disappeared into the jungle, and in three weeks came out on the other side of the Island, having traversed a hostile country on foot, and delivered his letter to Garcia—are things I have no special desire now to tell in detail. The point that I wish to make is this: [President] McKinley gave Rowan a letter to be delivered to Garcia; Rowan took the letter...

No man who has endeavored to carry out an enterprise where many hands were needed, but has been well-nigh appalled at times by the imbecility of the average man—the inability or unwillingness to concentrate on a thing and do it...

'You see that bookkeeper,' said the foreman to me in a large factory.

'Yes, what about him?'

'Well he's a fine accountant, but if I'd send him up town on an errand, he might accomplish the errand all right, and on the other hand, might stop at four saloons on the way, and when he got to Main Street would forget what he had been sent for.' Can such a man be entrusted to carry a message to Garcia?

Civilization is one long anxious search for just such individuals. Anything such a man asks shall be granted. He is wanted in every city, town and village—in every office, shop, store and factory. The world cries out for such: he is needed and needed badly—the man who can carry a message to Garcia."

Website: people.Whitman.edu/~hashimiy/Garcia.htm

Thinking of others

Responsible people are able to put aside their own welfare and concentrate on the larger picture of what is good for everyone. They do not allow their own egos to get in the way of the decision-making process but think clearly about what is best for the whole. If in the process they make a mistake, they admit it and move on.

Irresponsible people get caught up with themselves. How they appear is more important than who they are. They always want to be right, even if it means inflicting harm upon others. They tend to be arrogant.

Responsible people not only admit their mistakes, but they are ready to take the blame for any damage due to a bad decision. Irresponsible people are quick to make excuses for things that go wrong, often putting the blame on others.

An excellent example of irresponsibility is the character of Gilderoy Lockhart in the popular Harry Potter series. Gilderoy takes credit for the brave actions of others, convincing the world of wizardry that he is a great hero. At Hogwarts, however, he continually places students and faculty in danger by being self-centered. At a climatic moment, he is caught running away from a horrible monster in order to save himself. The real hero, Harry Potter, takes responsibility, sacrifices his own safety, and saves the situation.

A person who has a sense of responsibility fulfills her obligations despite her personal feelings and situation. A responsible teacher gives her all to her class even if she had an argument with a co-worker that morning. If she is sick, she calls in as soon as possible in order to arrange for a substitute and does all she can to provide a clear lesson plan.

At the time of Hurricane Katrina, many responsible people were called heroes for either reporting to work or not leaving their posts despite the threat to their own lives. Countless hospital caregivers, nursing home staff, police, and firefighters led the way to help other people get to safety instead of running away from their responsibilities.



Beyond the call

An even higher level of responsibility is when people enter a situation, not because they are supposed to or obligated to by their position, but because their heart calls them to take action where they see a need. People like Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Jr. became great leaders by going “beyond the call of duty” to seek change in their societies. They held no public positions. They became leaders because of their concern for the suffering of their people. Their compassion and indignation over the injustices they saw led them to take on huge responsibilities.

Both Gandhi and King did this at a sacrifice to themselves. Their families suffered because they were gone from home so often, serving the people. Their finances suffered because they neglected their professions. Gandhi was an accomplished lawyer, and King had a doctorate degree and was the pastor of a successful church. Both men could have been private successes. Instead, they chose to be public servants—even giving their lives—in order that people of color might be treated with justice in their nations. For taking on these responsibilities, they will be remembered forever.

The highest level of responsibility involves following your heart and conscience to do what is right, whatever the personal cost. The push to act comes from within you and involves sincere concern for the welfare of others and for ideals like justice.

Everyone is responsible

Responsibility is not just for a few famous people, though. Although we will not all become like Gandhi or Martin Luther King, taking responsibility is part of being a fully mature human being. It makes us free and fulfills our sense of purpose. Without taking responsibility, we cannot grow into the kinds of people we were meant to be. We will not feel good about ourselves or realize our potential if we do not take responsibility in our lives.

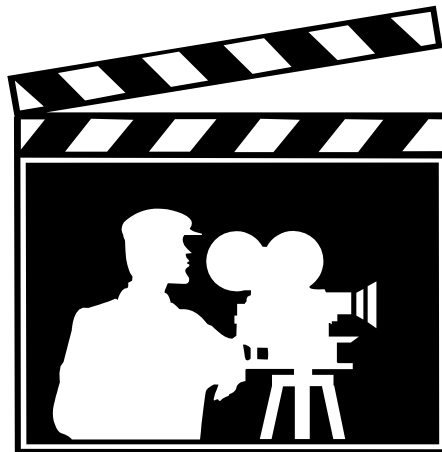
If we demonstrate responsibility in little things, we will find eventually that we become responsible for much larger things. The world notices and rewards responsible people. In fact, as the story of the man who carried a message to Garcia points out, the world has great need of them.

Becoming responsible

Whether we become responsible people or not depends on the decisions we make day by day. To begin to take responsibility in our lives, it is wise to remember the advice of American patriot Thomas Jefferson:

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.

A modern way to think of this is to pretend you are the star of your own life movie—your life is being filmed! Act the way you think a hero or heroine should act. Remember that your deeds are being recorded. Make the film of your life an exciting and inspiring one—one you will be proud to have others watch.



Questions for Reflection

1. How would you describe a person who has a sense of responsibility?

2. What is one way to tell if a person is responsible or not?

3. Why do you think some people grow up to be responsible and others not?

4. Do we decide the kind of person we become?

5. Do you know people who say one thing but do another? Why do they do this?

6. Who do you know whose words and deeds are one?

7. What related character qualities do these people have?

8. Are responsible people always unselfish?

9. Are unselfish people always responsible?

Exercise: “The Hike”

Alex, Steve, and Jim 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 slide down this way!” said Alex, as they came to a steep hill.

“It looks dangerous to me,” said Jim, 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, Steve?”

Steve was silent. Actually, he thought it was a pretty stupid idea. But all afternoon Alex had been teasing him, calling him chicken and a baby. It was time to prove him wrong.

“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 laughter of his companions if he admitted his mistake. Then suddenly, Jim, 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 Jim had a deep cut in his leg and was in great pain. Alex and Steve looked at each other.

“We’ll have to carry him down to the town,” Alex said. “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 Jim had almost fainted due to the loss of blood.

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

“We can’t do that,” said Steve. “It’s a crime. We’d be arrested.”

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think of the relationship among Alex, Steve, and Jim? Are they real friends?

2. What can you tell about the character of each of them?

3. There are three places where Alex shows he is an irresponsible person. Can you spot these three places? What are they?

4. Does covering up one irresponsible action with another help the boys get out of the situation they are in?

5. Alex is a leader among the boys. His decisions seem to carry some weight with them. Do you think Alex is a good leader?

6. What do you think Steve and Alex should do at this point?

7. In what way was Steve irresponsible? In what way was he responsible?

Reflection Exercise: “Responsible Acts”

Think of three responsible acts you have done in the past week. Now think of three irresponsible acts you have done. What motivated you in both of these cases? Looking at the course of your life, do you think you are becoming a more responsible person or a less responsible one? Give reasons for your answer.

CHAPTER 3: Taking the Lead in Understanding Each Other

In a healthy relationship, each side seeks to understand the other first, then is concerned with being understood. In an unhealthy relationship, each side is more concerned with being heard and understood, instead of taking the time to understand the other side.

Understanding one another requires considering the other person's viewpoint rather than just our own. Understanding others and their point of view is important. The more we understand others, the more we can respect and value them. We need to see the situations and problems they face through their eyes. Each of us can take the lead in understanding others.

Empathic listening

One way to understand others is through listening with empathy (empathic listening). This means listening to understand a situation from the other person's viewpoint. To have empathy means to fully and deeply understand another person, feeling things as they feel them.

Much more is involved in empathic listening than simply understanding the words being spoken. We must listen not only with our ears but also with our hearts.



When people speak to us we know we do not always give them our full attention. We may pretend to listen, saying, “Yes,” “Uh-huh,” or “Right,” but our minds and attention are really somewhere else. Sometimes we even ignore someone who is trying to speak to us. Even if we do listen attentively, we are likely to be focusing on the subject matter rather than on what is going on inside the other person. Very few people practice empathic listening—the highest quality of listening.

John: 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*?

John: That's right.

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

John: 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.

In reality, John has no real idea what is going on inside his little brother's head. He is only connected with what is in his own mind and only imagines he knows what his brother is going through. It is certainly easier to see from our own point of view. Usually we want others to also see this viewpoint while we don't try to understand theirs.

In empathic listening we try to understand what is going through other people's minds and hearts. We don't automatically assume that other people see the world the way we do. Instead, we sincerely open ourselves to what others are saying.

Seeking to understand requires humility and consideration for others. Once we have taken the lead in understanding others, then we can ask to be understood.

Communications glitches

The root of many difficulties in understanding one another is unclear expectations, which tend to cloud communication attempts. Whether it is a mother communicating with her child about household chores or an office manager dealing with the work of his staff, unclear expectations can lead to misunderstandings, disappointments, and distrust.

Dorothy's Summer Job

Dorothy had a job during the summer to save money for college. She was an assistant to one of the directors of a company. She worked hard for him and did whatever he asked her to do in the office. He was pleased with her work, and Dorothy was happy.

After a while, though, Dorothy noticed the secretaries in the office becoming angrier and angrier with her. When she asked them anything, they snapped at her, and she could tell they were saying bad things about her behind her back. It was becoming miserable to even go to work. At last, she asked the director if he knew what was wrong.

"Oh," he said. "Part of what you are supposed to do is assist the secretaries too. They are expecting you to do the filing they can't finish every day. They're mad that you're not helping them."

Dorothy said, "I didn't know I was supposed to do that."

"Well, I never told you that you had to help them," he said. "I have more than enough for you to do. But I guess from now on you are going to have to share some of their work if you want them to be nice to you. They're expecting you to help them."

Dorothy began offering her assistance to the secretaries after that conversation. They were a little kinder to her then. When she stopped working at the company to return to school, she wished someone had told her clearly what she was expected to do. She could have avoided a lot of misery that way.

People often have expectations that are not outwardly expressed, but which are assumed. In a marriage, husband and wife usually have expectations of one another. They

often expect the other to act the way their own mother or father acted. Although these expectations may not have been communicated or even consciously recognized, much less agreed upon, they can create real friction when not satisfied.

The same thing happens in friendships. One person may have unspoken expectations of how a friend should act. The other person may not be aware of what is expected and winds up hurting the other person's feelings. For instance, one friend may expect that she will be invited along on any fun time her best friend goes on. The second friend may feel it is obvious that they both will have other friends they do things with separately at times. These unspoken expectations will lead to misunderstandings and hurt feelings unless they are brought out into the open and discussed.

Sometimes it takes a lot of courage to make our expectations clear in relationships. It can seem easier to pretend that differences do not exist and hope that things will somehow work out. However, in the long run it is better to admit our differences up front. If everyone knows where the other stands, there is a better chance to find areas of solid agreement. Simple misunderstandings can become complicated, leading to distrust, conflict, pain, and communication breakdown.

Becoming a leader in communicating

Being a good communicator is an important leadership skill, whether leading a family, a club, a team, or your own life. It is crucial to our relationships with others.

To be good communicators, we must be aware of what is going on inside us and take responsibility for it. Self-awareness means being in touch with our own perceptions, views, feelings, and desires. It is also very important for us to take responsibility for these things. We need to express them in clear, responsible terms without being harsh, rude, or demanding.

For example, it is better to say, "I feel frustrated that you have not returned my science book. I need it to study for the exam we will have in a few days. Please return it this afternoon," rather than demanding, "Give back the book you took from me now, you thief!" Another alternative—silently getting angrier and angrier but saying nothing—is not a good one. You will communicate your anger through your "body language" and tone of voice, no matter how you try to hide it. This will not help the situation. Only the first example of communicating one's feelings will lead to better understanding.



Understanding each other means to be able to "read" others well too. Sometimes what people are saying with their faces, bodies, or tones of voice may be different from their words. Taking the lead in communication might mean saying something like this to a friend: "You say you are okay about being cut from the team, but you keep fouling me when we play at the park. If you are angry because I made the team and you didn't, I can understand. But I don't want to be fouled all the time." True friends are able to communicate honestly with each another rather than having to hide or ignore things in order to keep the "peace."

Successful leaders are those who can confront issues directly yet constructively. This usually means telling the person honestly about the issue, but not in a way that will ruin the relationship. Approaching issues with care and consideration can resolve many issues that otherwise could be very unpleasant to discuss.

A Drinking Problem

Kyle had a problem. He and Brad loved to go to friends' parties. Brad was older than Kyle and could drive. He provided transportation to and from the parties, not only for Kyle but for other friends too. The problem was Brad also liked to drink at these parties. When Brad drank, he was a terrible driver. More than once, they had almost gotten into an accident. After the last party, Brad had almost tipped the whole car over—with five people in it.

Kyle approached Brad by talking about what they had in common: the fun they had at parties. Kyle recounted the last party they had been to and what a good time it had been. He said how much he liked going to parties with Brad and wanted to keep doing it and how much he appreciated Brad's driving. Then he said it was hard, though, to always have to worry about getting home safely. He explained that drinking and driving don't mix, and how last time Brad's drinking had put in danger not only himself and Kyle, but other people too. Brad also could have gotten in bad trouble with the police, Kyle pointed out. Kyle finally said that if Brad was going to keep drinking at parties, they would have to come and go separately; otherwise it was too much stress for Kyle to enjoy the parties.

At first Brad agreed the separation was best, but after a while he missed Kyle's company. He called Kyle to offer him a ride to and from the next party.

"I won't drink anything," he promised.

Because Kyle had kept things friendly, Brad was able to give up his destructive behavior and the two were able to go on enjoying their friendship together—safely.

Win/win relationships

A *win/win* attitude is a state of mind that seeks the benefit of all parties involved in the communication process. A win/win solution to a problem is one in which everyone benefits. Win/win views life as cooperation or constructive competition.

We can build and keep win/win relationships on the foundation of trust and respect. If there is trust and mutual respect, people are focused on issues, not on personalities or positions. When there is trust and respect, we know that we can be open with one another because we feel safe. Even though we may see things differently than others, we feel assured that our opinions will be heard respectfully. Others know that, in turn, their opinions will be respected. Everyone is committed to trying to understand each other's point of view and to work together to find solutions satisfactory to all sides.

Most people are guided by a win/lose mentality. "If I am right, you must be wrong;" "If I am going to get my way, you can't have yours;" "If I am going to come out on top in this, you must come out on the bottom."

Yet part of understanding others is understanding that no one wants to be wrong and to lose out, to have no say in things, and to be sent to the bottom of the list in influence and importance. People need to be respected and heard. Leaders understand this, and they lead in such a way as to help others win too.

Oprah Winfrey, one of the most influential opinion leaders in the world, said the secret to her success was that she had realized most people just want to be heard.
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Understanding each other has the power to solve both minor problems and major crises. To understand one another requires continuous investment of our minds and hearts. It is a journey filled with great rewards, though, as we learn to connect more deeply and honestly with ourselves and others.

Questions for Reflection

1. What is "empathic listening"?

2. Do you think it is really possible to see or understand a situation from another person's viewpoint?

4. Do you agree that many difficulties in relationships are caused by unclear expectations"? Why or why not?

5. Do you think you are a good communicator? Back up your answer.

6. What does it take to be a good communicator?

7. Describe a "win-win" point of view.

8. What is a "win/lose" mentality?

10. Do you have a "win/win" or "win/lose" mentality?

Reflection Exercise: “A Conversation”

Janine and Alice, who live in neighboring apartments, have the following conversation one night:

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

Alice: 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.

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

Alice: Janine, 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.

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

Questions for Reflection

1. What do you think of Janine's attitude towards Alice?

2. Janine tells Alice that she shouldn't live her life in fear, but how honest is she about her own fear?

3. How do you think Alice and Janine feel after this conversation?

CHAPTER 4: Relationship Skills

Good relationship skills are part of being a good leader of one's own life and/or a leader of others. Good relationship skills are related to character, and like good character, they can be learned, practiced, and developed.

We are meant to learn these skills mostly in the family, but also at school, with our friends, teammates, and etcetera. We can always learn more and improve upon our relationship skills and correct ourselves when we haven't learned them properly.

Relationship skills involve, among other things, understanding our value, checking our attitudes, developing good habits, and dealing well with anger and other emotions.

Understanding Our Value

Understanding our value means that we understand our worth as human beings. It is a value that no one can take away from us. If we are unable to accept ourselves in this fundamental way, we will come to our relationships not out of a sense of fullness but out of neediness. We will enter into relationships more to receive than to give. We will be relying on and placing an unfair burden on others to make us feel valuable. Eventually, they will tire of playing this role, and the relationship will end.

Take this test of how valuable you feel: The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

After each statement, write one of the following: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

1. I feel that I am a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
2. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
3. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.
5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
6. I take a positive attitude toward myself.
7. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.
8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
9. I certainly feel useless at times.
10. At times I think I am no good at all.

Score yourself this way:

For statements 1, 2, 4., 6, and 7 give yourself the following points for your answers:

SA = 3

A = 2

D = 1

SD = 0

For statements 3, 5, 8, 9, and 10 give yourself the following points for your answers:

SA = 0

A = 1

D = 2

SD = 3

Add it all up. If you scored between the numbers 15-25 you are within the normal range of feeling valuable and worthy. If you scored below 15, your self-esteem is low and you need to raise your self-image.

Checking our attitudes

Developing and keeping a positive attitude is an important relationship skill. No one likes to be around a complainer or someone who is always unhappy and critical. Being able to notice and regulate our own moods will have a big impact on our relationships.

It is not our circumstances that determine our attitude; we do. Life is all about choices. Every situation is a choice. We *choose* how we react to situations. We *choose* how people will affect our mood. If something bad happens, the person can choose either to feel sorry for him- or herself, or to learn from it and bring the best out of it he or she can.

Bouncing Back with a Positive Attitude

Bill was sad. He had not made the basketball team. He had made it last year, but this year he had tried out with a sore ankle from a sprain of a few weeks before. Favoring his sore ankle, he had not given his best, and the coach had cut him out.

He tried to tell himself he didn't care, but he was so slow and sad around the house, his mother said, "You are disappointed."

Bill admitted, "Yeah, I'm disappointed. It makes me wonder if I'm good enough to ever make the team again."

"Anyone would be disappointed," said his mother. "But maybe it was a blessing in disguise. Your ankle needs time to heal. It wouldn't heal right if you played on it. If it doesn't heal right, it could keep you from participating in a lot of different games and sports later on."

When Bill thought of it this way, his spirits lifted. It was true; his ankle wasn't ready to play on yet. Maybe he just needed time. He could try for the team again next year.

Bill smiled happily. "What's for dinner, Mom?"



One study discovered that attitude was far more important in people's career success than intelligence, education, talent or luck. The researchers concluded that 85% of success is due to attitude and only 15% to ability. Having a right attitude leads to career success. It leads to success in relationships as well.

A Powerful Friend

"Who am I?"

I am your constant companion. I am your greatest helper or heaviest burden. I will push you onward or drag you down to failure. I am completely at your command. Half the things you do you might just as well turn over to me and I will be able to do them quickly and correctly.

I am easily managed—you must merely be firm with me. Show me exactly how you want something done, and after a few lessons I will do it automatically. I am the servant of all great individuals and, alas, of all failures as well. Those who are great, I have made great. Those who are failures, I have made failures.

I am not a machine, though I work with all the precision of a machine plus the intelligence of a human. You may run me for a profit or run me for ruin—it makes no difference to me.

Take me, train me, be firm with me, and I will place the world at your feet. Be easy with me and I will destroy you.

Who am I?

I am *Habit*."

From Sean Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* (New York: Simon & Schuster, a Fireside Book, 1998)

Good habits, such as working hard and persevering through difficulties, are also important relationship skills. Most habits start out like a thread so thin it can't be seen. Through repetition that thread becomes entwined into a cord and eventually a rope. Each time we repeat the habit, it becomes stronger and stronger. Bad habits create a rope around our necks that eventually strangles us. It is important, therefore, to watch the way we think, speak, and act.

An old proverb says: "Sow an act, reap a habit; sow a habit, reap a character; sow a character, reap a destiny." Leading ourselves into good habits means we will be better at making and keeping relationships. Returning phone calls, favors, keeping our promises, working hard willingly, honoring commitments even when it is hard to do so—these are the habits and skills that reap success in relationships.

Dealing with anger and other emotions

Another important skill in building good relationships is learning to control our negative emotions, such as anger, fear, defensiveness, and resentment. All of us have been hurt in some way or another in the course of our lives. Problems arise when we never resolve these feelings, and then bring them into our relationships. The result is that we react in a negative way to a word or action that brings up painful memories. Our reaction may have little to do with the present situation. If we do not explore these feelings and understand their origin, we will end up destroying one relationship after another with our out-of-control emotions.

We must find constructive ways of letting loose the steam building up inside of us. Sports and physical activity can help let off steam. So can expressing our anger in a safe way: punching the pillow in our bedroom as if it were the person who made us angry; enlisting a family member to listen to us "vent" about how upset we are; and writing our angry thoughts down on paper all help to get negative feelings out without hurting anyone, including ourselves.

Clara's Story

"It took me a long time to realize that I should wait until I cooled down before I talked to someone about something they had said or done to make me angry. I always wanted to get my feelings out right in the moment, but then it always ended up in a worse argument.

Walking away helped. People always seemed to understand when I said, "I want to take a walk and think this out a little bit." Walking would help me cool down. Then, when I talked to the person, I didn't say so many bad things or shout at them. I found I could say many of the same things, honestly, but not in such a mean way. Many times the person who had made me angry was already sorry by the time I got back from my walk!"



It is also helpful to step back and analyze our destructive behavior: such as assuming we know what the other person is thinking, bringing up past hurts and offenses, interrupting rather than hearing the other person out, blaming, accusing, using put-downs, being sarcastic, exaggerating, or being insincere. All these behaviors damage a relationship. We are being unfair to the other person if we use them.

Instead, we should develop the skills of listening to the other person respectfully, letting them speak first and get their ideas out before we speak. We should stick to the issue at hand rather than issues from the past. We can speak calmly and confidently rather than using sarcasm and exaggeration, and we can express our hurts and fears sincerely instead of covering them up with blame and accusation of the other person.

An important skill to practice during disagreements is to think of and express appreciation for the other person's good qualities (there are always some!). This makes the other person feel safe to seek for common ground with you, and will calm you down as well.

Taking charge of one's self in the above ways makes for better relationships. It means becoming a person skilled at handling the ups and downs of life and the challenges that relationships present to all of us.

Stages of relationship bonding

Good relationship skills also involve understanding the various stages of bonding in a developing relationship. In modern society, many people have come to expect and demand immediate results. We have "fast" food, "instant" messenger service on the internet, "instant replays" and "on the spot" coverage of breaking news. We expect to be able to get what we want when we want it.

Such expectations, however, do not suit the building of close, long-lasting relationships. These relationships require a great deal of investment over time, and they pass through a series of steps before reaching a stage of deep intimacy. These steps are progressive, building upon each other, and they follow a clear order.

The stages of bonding are:

1. getting to know each other
2. establishing trust
3. developing a healthy emotional interdependence based upon common interests and values
4. feeling a stake in the relationship
5. commitment to the friendship

It is impossible to jump over any of these stages, just as a person would not be able to jump over any stage of his or her physical development. Attempting to skip any of the steps will lead the relationship, if it lasts at all, to have one or more unhealthy characteristics, such as naïve trust, distorted judgment, emotional dependency, over-attachment and a lack of real concern for the welfare of the other person.



Such a relationship will show signs of anxiety, fear, insecurity, and self-centeredness as the partners become too close too fast, motivated more by neediness than to be a genuine friend to the other. The relationship becomes one of mutual convenience, each side using the other to satisfy some deep-seated need for love. But what they find, however, is not love at all, and the relationship will last only until there comes a point when the "friends" are challenged to demonstrate true concern for each other. For the relationship to survive such a challenge, both sides have to reflect and make sure each step has been covered carefully.

Good relationships demand a lot of us. Each of us needs to master the skills and virtues needed for good relationships so we can become a leader in our home, neighborhood, and among our friends—someone everyone wants to be close to.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you have value?

2. What gives a person value?

3. What determines our attitude: we ourselves or our circumstances? Explain.

4. Do you agree that our attitude is more important than our ability in determining personal success? Give an example.

5. What are some good habits named in the chapter?

6. How can negative emotions destroy a relationship?

7. What are some ways of controlling negative emotions?

8. What are the main stages of relationship bonding?

Exercise: "Personal Leadership"

Check your level of personal leadership by indicating the degree of your agreement with the following statements:

1. I often question my value and worthiness as a human being.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

2. I find myself complaining a lot. It is difficult for me to see the positive side of a situation.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

3. I have bad habits that I can't seem to stop.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

4. Usually I am able to control any destructive emotions.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

5. I usually decide things on impulse rather than thinking things out first.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

6. I can do just about anything I set my mind to.

☐ Strongly agree ☐ Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Strongly disagree

If you expressed agreement with statements 4 and 6 and disagreed with the others, you have a strong sense of responsibility and self-control. If you agreed more with statements 1, 2, 3 and 5, and disagreed with the others, you need to work on taking responsibility.

Personal Exercise: "Controlling Negative Emotions"

Think of the last few arguments or fights that you've had. Did you give in to your negative emotions? What was the response of the other person in these situations? Were there times when you were able to control any negative emotions? What did you do? How did things turn out in these cases?

CHAPTER 5: Playing the Romantic Lead in Your Life

Part of leading one's life is dealing with issues of love well, especially romantic love. Romantic love is a major concern of life. Millions of words and thousands of paintings have been devoted to the topic of romantic love. This reflects the inner longing within human beings for the thrill of experiencing a deep intimacy with someone, the joy that comes with it, and that wonderful, almost indescribable sensation known as "being in love."



Romantic love is usually regarded as the most passionate expression of love between two people. People in such a relationship feel like they could conquer the world. It is an almost trancelike state in which people believe the power of their love can overcome any problem. Everything seems possible!

Romantic love exhibits intense passion, complete devotion, and purposeful hopes and dreams. The emotions of romantic love give people a new outlook on life and a deep sense of happiness. Psychologists point out that true romantic love has a good effect on people's character. It brings out the best in us, motivates us to improve ourselves, and inspires us to strive for a higher level of maturity and responsibility.

We do not experience romantic love in our relationships with our parents, children, relatives, or friends, although we may love them passionately. Romantic love is particular to a man and woman and involves sexual attraction.

Some people ridicule romantic love, saying it doesn't really exist but is simply the product of a deluded imagination. However, if married partners experience no romance, then something wonderful is missing, no matter how sincere their commitment to each other may be. Without romance, marriage gets reduced to two people living together without passion who are dominated by the dull grind of daily life.

This is why couples are urged by marital counselors to *put* romance into their marriage—to make time for one another, alone, to do enjoyable things together, and to do kind and beautiful things for one another, like sending love notes, flowers, and showing special consideration and tenderness. Romantic love needs care and nourishment; otherwise, it can all too easily fade away.



Romantic love may not be what you think it is

Some people confuse genuine romantic love with infatuation, but there is a difference. Couples who are infatuated with each other are living in a state of blissful ignorance. Their partner is perfect in their eyes. Such a relationship is based on fantasy. Usually the infatuated person is "projecting" (like a movie camera projects an image on a screen) qualities onto their beloved one that the person doesn't have. When the persons finally become aware of whom the other person really is the relationship usually dies quickly.

Real romantic love is founded on strong but tender realism. In real love, both partners are aware of each other's limitations and faults, yet they love each other anyway, and work on improving themselves and their relationship. Authentic romantic love continues to grow and deepen over time.

The media has contributed to the confusion about love. Movies and songs make romance appear easy and natural if only you are with "the right person." Romance is expected to come instantly as a captivating and irresistible force between two people. But this type of romance does not require that the two people really know or care much about each other at all. True romance is developed through patience and an honest effort to live for the benefit of the other instead of focusing primarily on one's own needs. It develops in an atmosphere of trust and is based on the whole person, rather than on a temporary attraction.

Romantic feelings cannot be commanded to appear, and they can disappear sometimes. The early romantic feelings of a marriage can give way to learning together to deal with life together and the conflicts and challenges it brings. Sometimes couples give up during these trying times. Yet deep feelings of romantic love can be cultivated between a couple as they weather life together, learning to respect and honor one another, and staying with their commitment to one another.

As we have said before, love is not merely an emotion or feeling; it is also a decision to be loving even when feelings and emotions are going through trials. Once a couple has remained committed to acting lovingly toward one another over time and through difficulties, romantic love springs up between them and bonds them together forever.

"Do You Love Me?"

A surprising love song about romance in marriage occurs in the movie and play *Fiddler on the Roof*.

Tevya and his wife Golde have been married for twenty-five years. Their marriage was arranged by their parents. They met for the first time on their wedding day!

After all these years of being together, Tevye asks Golde, "Do You Love Me?"

(Golde)
Do I *what*?

(Tevye)
Do you love me?

(Golde)
Do I love you?
With our daughters getting married
And this trouble in the town
You're upset, you're worn out
Go inside, go lie down!
Maybe it's indigestion

(Tevye)
Golde I'm asking you a question...Do you love me?

(Golde)
You're a fool!

(Tevye)
I know...But do you love me?

(Golde)
Do I love you?
For twenty-five years I've washed your clothes
Cooked your meals, cleaned your house
Given you children, milked the cow
After twenty-five years, why talk about love right now?

(Tevye)
Golde, The first time I met you
Was on our wedding day.
I was scared.

(Golde)
I was shy.

(Tevye)
I was nervous.

(Golde)
So was I.

(Tevye)
But my father and my mother
Said we'd learn to love each other,
And now I'm asking, Golde,
Do you love me?

(Golde)
I'm your wife...

(Tevye)
I know.
But do you love me?

(Golde)
Do I love him?
For twenty-five years I've lived with him
Fought him, starved with him
Twenty-five years my bed is his
If that's not love, what is?

(Tevye—joyfully))
Then you love me?

(Golde)
I suppose I do.

(Tevye)
And I suppose I love you too.

(Both)
It doesn't change a thing,
But even so,
After twenty-five years
It's nice to know.

Sheldon Harmick, Lyrics, "Do You Love Me?" *Fiddler on the Roof*, Mirisch Productions, Inc., and Cartier Production, Inc., Released by United Artists Corporation, MGM/UA, Home Entertainment Group, Inc., 1971.

Romantic love and virtues of good character

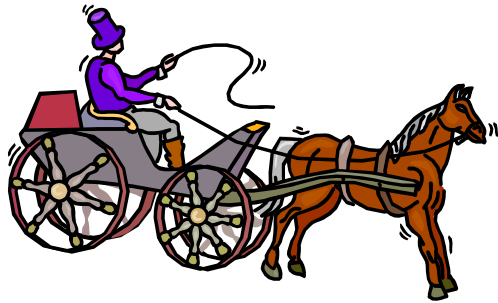
Love and character might not seem to be related, but they are. Doctors have found through scientific studies that the main reason people divorce is that they have lost respect for one another's characters. Romantic love is ruined when spouses do not show good character.

Romantic feelings toward a husband or wife arise because of admiration of the spouse's good qualities of character. Scientists have studied people who have good marriages. They found that respect for one another's virtues and characters played a large part in genuine romantic love. Successful spouses are kind, considerate, unselfish, humble, and generous in their relationships.

Other scientific studies have also shown that people who are altruistic—that is; people who care about others in general—have long-lasting, romantic marriages. Developing altruism as a young person, through caring for others, doing service projects, taking care of children, the elderly, the sick, your neighbors, classmates and friends, is good insurance for a happy, love-filled marriage later in life. Altruism builds the virtues that make true love bloom. It makes you a fine and admirable person—someone a spouse will love for a lifetime.

Like a horse and carriage

An old popular song goes: "Love and marriage go together like a horse and carriage. You can't have one without the other!"



True romantic love and marriage do go together. Despite what the media says, true romantic love reaches its full fruition only in married life, on the foundation of the couple's virtues of character experienced over years of devotion to one another. Genuine romantic love reaches new heights as we experience total oneness in mind, body, and heart with the one to whom we have given ourselves in marriage.

Even the richest person in the world could not purchase such a love. It has eluded royalty and celebrities. Yet it is available to the most ordinary men and women, if they are virtuous and committed to one another in marriage.

Questions for Reflection

1. How would you define true romantic love?

2. What is the difference between true romantic love and infatuation?

3. Some people ridicule romantic love, saying it's simply the product of the imagination. What do you think?

4. In general, how is romantic love portrayed in the media?

5. How does romance develop in a marriage relationship?

6. What do virtues and good character have to do with romantic love in marriage?

7. What are some ways you can develop altruism now, so as to enjoy romance later in life?

Exercise: “Famous Romances”

Can you match these famous romantic partners to one another? Draw lines to connect the couples.

Cleopatra

Robin Hood

Juliet

Prince Albert

Beatrice

Rhett Butler

Queen Victoria

Dante

Scarlett O'Hara

Antony

Maid Marian

Romeo

Reflection Exercise: “Spouse Wanted”

You are going to write a newspaper advertisement (it will never appear in the newspaper!) for the type of spouse you would want for yourself. Note what character qualities or virtues you most admire.

The Love Herald

Advertisements

Spouse Wanted

Must Have the Following Qualifications

CHAPTER 6: Should You Have Sex Before Marriage?

We have said that leadership involves making good decisions. One of the most important decisions many young people face today is whether to wait until marriage to engage in sex or to go ahead before marriage. This is a major decision in how to lead one's life and should be considered very carefully.

Many media messages seem to tell us there is nothing unusual or wrong with having sex without marriage. People in movies and on TV do it all the time. However, there are rarely any consequences shown on the screen—like diseases or unwanted pregnancies. The reality of people's lives that are having sex without marriage is a very different story.

Felicity and Jim—Love and Disease

Felicity, an attractive blonde in her twenties, went to her doctor with a question. It was about her love life.

"Doctor, I've recently met a great guy named Jim. The only problem is Jim has herpes (a sexually transmitted disease) from a previous sexual relationship. He says he doesn't have any symptoms, but he says he is 'shedding.' What does that mean?"

The doctor told her that her new partner was "shedding" the virus—meaning germs were flaking off him frequently if he was not taking medication—and the germs could get on her if she had sex with him.

Felicity's doctor told her firmly not to have sex with anyone until they were married. If she was deeply in love with Jim and he with her, they could use certain practices to protect her from getting the disease once they were married. The doctor recommended that the man wear a condom during sex with a cream on it that destroys viruses. They should not have sex any time he was having symptoms of the disease. Further, any baby they might have would also be exposed to the disease, which could be very dangerous for the baby.

Felicity left the doctor's in tears. She was in love. But she couldn't imagine marrying someone with whom she would have to avoid sex at times because he was "shedding" germs of a disease he had gotten from another woman. The idea of using medicines and creams and latex whenever she made love to him upset her. She was horrified that his disease might affect a baby born to them.

Felicity decided to break off with Jim and look for a man who had stayed sexually pure—as she had—saving sex for marriage.

This is not that unusual a case. In some countries, as many as 20 percent of people over the age of 12 have herpes. That is one person out of every five. Sometimes the personal ads in newspapers outline the kind of diseases the person has so that only people with the same disease, or people who don't mind being infected with the disease, will get in touch with the person for a date. Isn't it romantic?

Think about how your plans for your future could be destroyed if, as a result of even one sexual encounter, you became or caused someone to become pregnant, or got a sexual disease. Your life would suddenly get very complicated and likely go in a destructive direction. Teenagers often think such things could never happen to them, yet statistics show it is happening to many.

Let's look at some of the reasons people decide to have sex before marriage.

Justifying sex before marriage

Some people think that sexual relations before marriage are not harmful and are even beneficial. We will examine some of these ideas and see how “beneficial” sexual relations before marriage really are:

- *Some people say that before marrying, couples need to be sure they are compatible. They should have a "trial marriage" to see if it will work. Since sex is an important part of marriage, they say it is important to get to know each other in this way before marriage.*

Research shows that couples who live together before marriage are much more likely to divorce than those who do not. These "trial" marriages or testing periods don't work the way people think they will.

In fact, premarital sex does not help one to discover whether one's partner possesses the truly important qualities or virtues necessary for a successful marriage, such as trustworthiness, honesty, or kindness. On the contrary, it can cloud judgment and lead to marrying the wrong person. Sex creates strong emotional bonds and can make one believe a relationship is deeper than it really is. This emotional bonding can lead a person to prolong a relationship that is based mainly on sexual attraction—very powerful feelings that nevertheless fade. As a result, a person eventually feels trapped in a relationship he or she has outgrown.

- *Another argument in favor of premarital sex is that the sexual experience gained will help people to have better sex in their eventual marriages.*

Sex, however, is a mystery that is very exciting for a married couple to explore, learn about and share together. On the other hand, if one of the partners is "experienced," he/she will often compare his/her spouse to previous persons with whom he/she has had sex. In this way, previous partners come back to haunt the marriage bed and create dissatisfaction. A scientific study of people who were virgins when they married found that they enjoyed their sex lives with their spouses more than people who were not virgins when they married.

- *Some people say that sex is simply a physical need, like eating or sleeping, and there is nothing wrong with satisfying this need.*

Sex is not a need; it is a drive. If you do not eat, you will die. If you do not sleep, you will lose motor and mental skills, have accidents, and are unable to work. If you do not have sex, will you die? Will you lose motor and mental skills? In fact, those who live celibate lives, such as monks and nuns, are renowned for their long lives, good health, and spiritual wisdom!

Sometimes people compare human sexuality with animal sexuality. However, there is a great deal of difference. 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. Human beings have the ability to control their behavior with their minds. We can think and evaluate a situation before we act. We don't have to follow every desire or impulse we feel. This is because human sex is not just a physical act. It is meant to be an expression of love between two people who are committed to one another for life. It downgrades our humanity to separate sex from love.

- *Some say that marriage is old-fashioned. Why can't people be in a relationship without marrying?*

A wedding ceremony represents a public commitment between a man and a woman. Every culture known to scientists has had marriage. Is it just an ancient custom—or is it something that people everywhere, in every time era, have wanted? Those who are not prepared to make a public commitment to each other, as in marriage, are not yet ready for the intimate relationship of sex.



When two people simply live together, the partners—sometimes unconsciously—keep the idea of walking out when things get tough. This influences the atmosphere in the family, if there are children. Even when the relationship seems harmonious, the partners can never be completely sure of each other. There will always be a feeling of insecurity about their relationship.

- *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. Our words send information and meaning. If we misuse our words, our ability to communicate will be devalued.

The same applies to love, which is often described as a language. If we easily say, "I love you," to lots of people, then it becomes difficult to find words to express love to the person who really is special. If we easily have sex with people, even if we think we are expressing love, we no longer have any unique and exclusive way to express love to the person who is most special to us. Just as words are devalued by misuse and overuse, so is sexual love.

That is why the marital relationship has been the place traditionally reserved for sexual love. Sexual love becomes the seal upon this unique, exclusive relationship and sets it apart from all others.

Some benefits of abstinence until marriage

Abstinence spares us from unwanted feelings of guilt, regret, hurt, and betrayal that come from uncommitted sexual relationships. Research shows that there is a big difference in the psychology of people who engage in sex before marriage and those who don't. Teenagers who choose abstinence tend to be more capable of thinking about their future and planning ahead. Those who are sexually active, on the other hand, often do not think ahead. They tend to live in the moment. No wonder they get into trouble!

Sexual abstinence means not only not engaging in sex, but also keeping our thoughts and words clean and pure. In its broadest sense it means saving our heart and soul for that special expression of love meant for marriage. In addition to avoiding the negative consequences of premature sexual relations, such as unwanted pregnancies and diseases, we can count among the benefits of abstinence the following:

- *You are free to develop your character.*

Young people spend a lot of time making themselves sexually attractive. By deciding to wait until marriage, you can devote your attention instead to developing your virtues, which will make your marriage more romantic later on. By saving sex for marriage, you can focus on preparing for your career and your future in general.

- *You can develop genuine friendships with a wide variety of people.*

You can be free to have many friends and to learn the value of friendship without sexual pressures. Many times teenagers are afraid to simply make friends with someone because a 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 control your sexuality until you are married, the pattern you have established can easily destroy your marriage. If either you or your spouse could not control your sexual behavior before marriage, how can you trust that you can 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 will last forever. But if you break up, heartbreak is inevitable, and somehow the second love is never as wonderful as the first. But if that first-love feeling results in marriage, that marriage will be much fresher and more alive than one which you entered after the memory of other broken relationships.

- *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. If both you and your spouse come into the marriage pure, you will never suffer the experience of comparing your spouse or being compared to anyone else. Partners should be able to love and accept each other in an innocent and discovering way.

- *You will be able to love your spouse truly.*

True love means that we live for the welfare 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 benefit of your spouse builds respect and love now, like putting money in the bank. By being true to that person before marriage, you are showing that you cherish that person above all else. He or she will be very grateful for the gift of purity you bring to the marriage.

Questions for Reflection

1. Which reasons for saving sex until marriage seem most convincing to you?

2. Which reasons seems least convincing? Explain why.

3. What is abstinence?

4. What do you think of the justifications people make for premarital sex?

6. How do you think you would feel if you suddenly discovered you were pregnant, or you caused someone to get pregnant?

7. What would you do?

8. How would you feel if you suddenly discovered you had a sexual disease?

9. What would you do?

Reflection Exercise: “Your Plans”

What are your plans for the next ten years? How old will you be in ten years? Think about what you want to have accomplished by then. What are your goals in terms of your education and career? Are you thinking of traveling somewhere? If you become involved in an uncommitted sexual relationship, how could this influence the fulfillment of your plans? What can you do now to avoid a situation by which you might damage your future?

CHAPTER 7: Preparation for a Successful Marriage

Marriage is an important part of leading one's life. Over 90% of people in the world get married. Most young people say they want to get married. They want to find their "soul mate" and share a happy, fulfilling life together.

Sadly, not all these hopes and dreams come true. Marriage can be very challenging. It is best to prepare ahead for marriage, while you are young. Otherwise, you may not be ready for the challenges.

Marriage is like a journey. Have you ever heard of the pioneers who crossed the North American Great Plains in covered wagons to go West? Marriage is like setting out on such a journey with your partner. People have gone ahead of you on the path, but only you will have your own unique experience.

Along the way, you will run into many difficulties as well as joys. You will be changed by the journey. There is much you will have to adapt to. There are many qualities of strength you will have to find inside yourself that you never knew you had.

As the pioneers found, there are many things you will have to give up along the way and leave on the side of the road during the journey. The pioneers could not cross rivers and go up hills with heavy furniture from their former homes in the East. You will find that there are many self-centered things in your character that are too burdensome to take along on the journey of marriage. You will have to leave them behind.

As on a pioneer journey, being married means being willing to think not in terms of *me* but of *us*. It takes teamwork—the two of you working together. Marriage is good practice in true love, because it means always taking another person into consideration, even at a sacrifice of yourself.

In the intimacy of marital life everything about ourselves is exposed to our partner. Who we have become up until then is on display to our spouse and family every day. Will they like what they see in us? Are we patient, kind, sacrificial, willing to work and help with a cheerful and positive attitude? If so, we will have marital happiness. If not, there will be much strife. It is best to develop your virtues now, so you are better prepared for the journey of marriage.



Commitment

One thing about such a journey: there's no turning back. We must be committed in marriage. Yes, we know that there is widespread divorce in the world. People give up on solving their problems together and decide to separate. Yet most divorced people do not find their problems solved by the divorce. They are still unhappy, stressed, and sometimes less healthy than people who made their marriages work. What is more, the divorce rate for people who marry a second time is higher than the divorce rate for people who marry for the first time. Divorce doesn't teach you anything about being a better marriage partner; and switching partners to someone new (and hopefully better) doesn't seem to work either.

In contrast, people who stay with their marriages often work through their difficulties and become happier together a few years down the road. This is why commitment is so important. Along the way, there may be beautiful waterfalls, rich forests, and clear blue skies. Giving up too soon and too easily—not making and keeping the commitment of marriage—means that you may miss out on the wonderful things ahead.

It is helpful to know that most successful marriages go through three stages: a first stage of romance where everything is good and wonderful; a second stage of disappointment and disillusionment when reality sinks in; and a third stage in which the couple commit themselves to each other again despite all the problems and shortcomings. To get through these stages successfully, people need to stay committed to the marriage.

In the first stage of a relationship we all tend to show off our best side. We dress and behave well, bringing out the best in ourselves and our partner. Everything is wonderful. We are madly in love. There's little effort involved.

In time a couple will begin to discover each other's weaknesses and bad habits. Perhaps for the first time they will begin to feel negative things about their spouse as they live together day in and day out. They start to think that something has gone wrong with the relationship and that perhaps it wasn't really love at all—or that they married the wrong person. It is at this point that many couples, especially with the freedom in our modern world, decide to divorce.

However, if we understand that this is a normal part of a developing relationship, we can learn to work through the problems in a more constructive way. In fact, we should consider this stage an opportunity for the relationship to grow to a deeper level. We have to hold on to our marriages; doing everything we can to improve them. When we come through this stage by being committed to one another no matter what, we will experience a deep and love that cannot be exchanged for anything or anyone else. What is more, this love allows us to be a force for love in the world as we raise our children, become good neighbors, co-workers, friends, and community members.

Bo Lozoff, married over thirty years, says:

"It begins to dawn on you that your partner has not only seen the best that she fell in love with but she has seen the worst over the years and she still loves you. You have seen the worst in her and you still love her. It begins to dawn on us that marriage can be a sacred tool for helping us transcend conditional love; to really understand whole love, which sees all the best and worst and says, 'I've seen all of you and I love you...'"

Commitment in marriage is to recognize the value of a lifelong union between a man and a woman. It involves a lifelong commitment to *marriage* itself. At the marriage ceremony we make a commitment to our partner and the community of believers and loved ones who have come to support and witness this commitment. We commit ourselves to live with this person no matter what: in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer. We are willing to go through difficult experiences without leaving or even threatening to leave. We accept this person as our spouse. Period. Indeed, making a commitment is what a wedding ceremony is all about.



Through this kind of commitment, we can experience a tremendous bonding with our spouse. Instead of rejecting, withdrawing from, closing off, or separating from our spouse, if we digest the undesirable experiences and emotions. By always working together for positive change, we can experience a more profound love—where two people become united as one in mind, heart, and body.

Fidelity

Many virtues or character strengths contribute to happy marriages. As you develop the positive side of your character now, you are actually investing in your future marital happiness. The more honest, loyal, trustworthy, patient, unselfish, and giving you become now, the happier your marriage will be.

However, there is one virtue—fidelity—that stands out from all the rest. It is as important as commitment and is related to it. Fidelity means sexual faithfulness to one's partner. If a person is one in mind, heart, and body with his or her spouse, it is impossible to then become one with someone else without ripping apart from the spouse. Infidelity shreds a marriage. While some marriages have been repaired after an infidelity, it is extremely hard to do. Most marriages are never the same after sexual infidelity.

What most modern people want in marriage is intimacy—being extremely close on all levels to a beloved and loving partner. Young people say they want a "soul mate": the person they can be very close to in a special way forever. This is intimacy. Yet intimacy is based on trust. You do not tell your deepest secrets to someone you do not trust (if you have ever had a friend spread your secrets around, you know how much it can hurt). You do not show your most tender heart to someone you do not trust. You do not give yourself sexually to someone who does not value it enough to keep it sacred between the

two of you. Infidelity tears trust apart in a couple, destroying intimacy, destroying love itself.

While commitment and fidelity may not seem very romantic, they are actually the foundation of romance. They are the ground upon which the flowers of romance grow. Commitment and fidelity are the twin pillars of marriage—they hold the house of marriage up. As long as a couple is committed and faithful to one another, their marriage has a base for success. Without commitment and fidelity, a marriage has little hope to make it through the difficulties of life's journey together.

As you hope for a happy marriage in the future, think about developing virtues within yourself now. Are you unselfish? Are you able to think of another person before you think of yourself? Do you love others for their benefit or only for what you can get from them? Do you keep your commitments? Are you loyal? Are you sexually abstinent? If your answer to all these questions is yes, you are well on your way to a happy future marriage.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are the two main virtues you need for a successful marriage?

2. What other virtues are important in marriage?

3. What are the different stages of marriage?

4. Can you understand why some people give up in the second stage? Why shouldn't they?

Ask your parents and married relatives to tell you the story of their life together; find out all you can about married life. What do their stories tell you about the nature of physical and emotional intimacy? What do they say makes a good relationship? What about the experience of love as people get 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 got married? In what way? After getting answers to these questions, what advice would you give a young person on establishing a successful marriage and family?

[illegible]

CHAPTER 8: The Single Parent Family

For various reasons many children in today's world are growing up in homes where one or both parents are missing. Their situations may be due to the death of a parent or due to divorce. Some parents have serious personal problems (such as mental or physical illness, substance abuse, or other difficulties) and cannot take proper care of their children. In such cases, a child may be taken by authorities to live with someone else, preferably another close relative. In recent decades many couples also have had children without marrying. In many of these cases, the mother ends up raising the children alone.

Single parent families exist all around us. You probably know children who live with just their mother, father, grandparents, or other relatives. Maybe this is your situation. Families with just one parent are not uncommon nowadays.

People in these situations are coping with life's difficulties as best they can, and many are doing so with heroic self-sacrifice. Some have little choice about their situations; their difficulties were beyond the reach of easy or available answers.

It must be recognized, though, that most children would dream of a family where they are embraced by the love of a father and a mother together. Most children whose parents have divorced hope that their parents will reunite someday. Most of these hopes and dreams are not going to come true. If this is the case in a family, the challenge for the members of that family is to become well-adjusted and loving people in spite of not having ideal circumstances. (Not all children in two parent homes have ideal circumstances either!)

No matter what kind of a family we come from, we all face trials of one kind or another. It is up to us to find a positive dimension in any situation, no matter how unfair or difficult it might seem. Only then can we grow from the experience and turn it into something beneficial. All great men and women had their own difficult circumstances to overcome—some quite severe. Many would say that without such obstacles, they would not have developed the ability to accomplish what they did.

Overcoming difficulty

Overcoming difficulties in life can help us to become more loving, responsible people if we tap into the energy and strength within to overcome them. Working through life's challenges gives us the experiences we need to help those around us who need support and understanding too.

In any situation a key is not to focus on your own troubles. Rather, help others despite your difficulties. By doing so, you may find that your own problems are solved.

It seems to be human nature to compare our own circumstances with others whose lives seem to be easier. Taking this viewpoint, we convince ourselves that we have been wronged or that others have more than we do. Then, quite naturally, we start asking ourselves: "Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Why am I worse off than others?" We might begin to bear a grudge, become sulky, or see nothing but the awful injustice of our situation. Instead of solving our problems, this only makes them worse. We end up feeling hopeless.

If instead we remember someone whose life is harder than ours (there is always someone!) we can find some measure of gratitude and gather the strength to overcome

our challenges. No matter what our circumstances, we can always find those who are worse off than we are. If we are without a parent due to divorce or death, let us remember the orphans who are without any parents, some of whom are also homeless.

Peter's Story:

"It's easy to feel sorry for yourself," said Peter, a teenage boy whose parents had been through a nasty divorce the year before. "And I did! But then I thought about Karl. I'd always thought Karl had it made. Karl was one of the best looking boys in our class and the most popular girls wanted to date him. He was a star athlete and got good grades and his mom and dad seemed so nice. I would curse when I thought of how lucky he was compared to me.

Then his older brother was killed in a car accident when Karl was a sophomore. A year later, his mother was diagnosed with cancer and died during Karl's senior year. You could see how much Karl was struggling. He always looked puzzled and angry at what had happened to his family. When I compared my situation to his, I stopped feeling sorry for myself. My parents were healthy and so were all my brothers and sisters. Yes, we had a hard time on our hands, but at least we were still all in the world and still speaking to one another. Everyone's got some things they are struggling with—even the ones who look like their life is so perfect."

The single mother home

If you are a child in a family headed by only your mother (as most single parent families are) it may be helpful to see the situation from your mother's perspective. Then you will realize how much more difficult it must be for her than for you. At least you have your life, with all of its possibilities, ahead of you. Your mother, on the other hand, is in a situation where, by necessity, she must work hard just so the family she already created can survive. Can you imagine how difficult it must be for her? Your mother most likely hides her troubles from you. When you understand how much she is suffering, your personal problems will not seem so bad after all.

In her youth your mother must have had many dreams for her life. She never imagined that some of those dreams wouldn't come true. She hopes your dreams will come true. You are her brightest hope now.

The best thing you can do is to try to be mature and become a person your mother can depend upon. What does this mean practically? It may mean helping to clean the house, repair things, do the laundry, wash the dishes, and be a source of support. Doing such things shows that you are grown up enough to share some of the family responsibilities. It also means feeling some responsibility for your family's situation. When difficulties arise at home, you are ready to bear part of the problem and give support to your family. This will make life easier for your mother, and it will help you later when you have a family of your own.

Without a father at home, it may be harder to understand men in general for a girl or how to become a responsible man if you are a boy. If your father abandoned or hurt your mother in some way, you may develop a negative impression of manhood. Under these circumstances, it is good to find someone else who can take on the role of a parental figure, such as an uncle, teacher, or grandfather. Having a healthy relationship with a father figure will show you a good role model of a man and help you to overcome many of the challenges that typically arise during the adolescent years.



The single father home

In some cases, a lone father is raising children. It is hard for a man to be both mother and father. The soft, gentle, nurturing side of parenting may not come naturally to him at all. By nature, a father may want to be firm, disciplinary, and keep the children in line with rules. Housekeeping and cooking may be things he was never trained in, unlike a mother who probably learned something about them from her own mother.

He may find it especially difficult to relate to a growing girl. Or he may, without meaning to, make his children, especially his male children, think that women are untrustworthy. This is especially true if he has been a victim of divorce or infidelity. If his wife is gone because of death, he has his own grief and loneliness to overcome, as well as the grief and loneliness of his children.

Once again, seeking a female to serve as a mother figure is very helpful to those growing up in such a situation. A relative, teacher, neighbor, or community worker can provide some of the feminine side of love. Sympathizing with the lone parent and trying to understand how hard his life must be for him without a partner to share adult responsibilities will help children who are in these circumstances cope with their own losses.

Difficulties can make a person better

Harboring resentment toward a missing parent may create challenges. It is better to find something positive about the situation. For example, you may have a more compassionate heart for those in difficult circumstances than someone with both parents. You may develop the capacity to feel more easily the pain and problems of others. You may become a far more capable and competent person than your friends because you had to learn how to do grown up things earlier. You can become a person who is able to overcome difficulties with confidence and dignity. These are things to be grateful for.

In an earlier chapter, we discussed how children of the Great Depression became better and more mature people when their family circumstances were so difficult that they were forced to go to work at an early age. While they lacked many material things, these children turned out to be mature, responsible, family-centered people when they grew up—more so than children who did not have such troubles. Their characters were actually helped, not harmed, by the Great Depression.

"My Beginning Will Not Dictate My End"

Jacqueline grew up in a single parent home. She was the child of a teenage prostitute. They lived in a big city, and their neighborhood was crowded, poor, and dangerous. She was sexually abused by several men as a very young girl.

When her uncle took her out of that situation, Jacqueline went to work to repair her life and become a success. She became a leader in an important corporation in the United States. She refused to be angry or to feel sorry for herself. Her motto was: "My beginning will not dictate my end." Psychologist C. Terry Warner said of her, "Everyone...found her warm and welcoming... at noon and after work people would wait outside her office for a chance to talk with her about their troubles."¹

Even though Jacqueline had to overcome things no person should have to in her family situation, she overcame her experiences to the point where other people found support in her for their own troubled lives. She became a person surrounded by people who liked, needed, and wanted the warmth and strength she had developed in herself.

Learning from the past for a better tomorrow

Understanding how single parent home situations come about in the first place may help you to avoid or prevent some of the circumstances that lead to them for your future family.

We all want love. But love is easily confused with infatuation, which in today's world often causes people to engage in early sexual activity without thinking of the consequences. If the girl gets pregnant, what do you think will happen next? Almost certainly the child will grow up without a father. Even if the father does marry the

¹ C. Terry Warner, *Bonds That Make Us Free*, The Arbing Institute, Inc., Shadow Mountain Press, 2001, p. 281.

mother, statistics show that these types of marriages often are not very stable or long lasting.

This is a concern not only for girls, but for boys as well. How would the young father of a baby feel, knowing he has a child somewhere who is growing up without him? Many men are haunted by such knowledge. Others wonder if they have a child somewhere that they never knew about. Later in life, some are tormented by guilt and fear and doubt because of these worries. If we think about such things, we may be led to make more responsible decisions about our sexuality, postponing sex until marriage.

Since divorce is a cause of many single parent families, now is a good time to prepare for your future marriage so that it is successful. As we said in the last chapter, there will naturally be problems and conflicts in your marriage, even in the best of relationships. How are you going to overcome them? Divorce sometimes seems like a desirable option, rather than doing the hard and sometimes painful work of overcoming problems in a relationship. What about the children? It is helpful to understand the realities of marriage before getting into a serious relationship. It is important to develop the commitment to address the problems when they arise rather than relying on the option of divorce. You can be working on your ability to make and be faithful to your commitments now, while you are still growing up. You can be working on virtues that will make you a better and more desirable spouse. You can be developing the altruistic love that makes marriages more romantic and satisfying by serving people in your home, school, and community now.

A few last words

A key to keeping your spirits up when your family situation is challenging is never to blame yourself if one of your parents is not there for any reason. It is never the children's fault when parents split up. Your parents' relationship was not your responsibility.

If they are single parents, your parents probably have had their share of difficulty. It is important not to judge or accuse them or the missing partner for what may have happened. What we can do is to try to support them and determine to understand so that we do not repeat their mistakes. The more we strive to become mature, virtuous, and responsible people, the brighter the future will be for us. To see us happy and establishing a stable family ourselves will be a great comfort to our parents and will help some of their dreams come true.

Questions for Reflection

1. Do you think that a child from a single-parent family will have a greater sense of responsibility than other children his/her age who live with both parents?

2. What types of responsibilities do you think such a child might have that he/she may not have if he/she were living with two parents?

3. Would having more responsibilities necessarily be a bad thing?

5. How do we learn to communicate with members of the opposite sex if we grew up in a single parent family with a parent of the same sex as us?

6. Do you see any positive points to growing up in a single parent family?

9. How can we learn from the mistakes of our parents?

10. How can we learn from their successes?

Exercise: “Kathy's Story”

My name is Kathy. 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 my little sister after school. I did most of the shopping. My mom came to depend on me a lot, not just for shopping and taking care of my sister, but I was

like her best friend. My dad had been really strict with us when he was around, while my mom would basically let me do anything without asking. Without my dad I could go anywhere and do almost anything I wanted. My friends had to be home early and always tell their parents where they were going, but not me. It was fun in a way, and my friends envied me, but actually I wish that my dad had been around to guide me more. Although he was strict, I really felt his love through his concern.

Then my mom got a boyfriend. He was a good person. After a while he moved into our apartment. Mom became much happier, and I liked having him around. He never told my sister and me what to do, but always listened to our ideas and struggles. But I wish that they had gotten 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 me. I still miss my dad. While he was alive I never realized how much I loved him and needed him.

Questions For Reflection

Complete the following with at least five examples:

- Things I have learned from my father (or father figure)

- Things I have learned from my mother (or mother figure)

CHAPTER 9: Respect and Tolerance

We live in a world where people are divided into all kinds of groups based on nationality, religion, age, gender, race, etc. Because of this it is easy to look at others not as individuals but according to the group to which they belong. This prevents us from seeing the person for who he or she really is. We start making assumptions about the person based upon what we think about his or her group. This causes many conflicts. It is very important to learn to respect others, even if they are different than we are.



A leader needs to learn to work with diverse people. Good leaders learn to balance the different opinions and interests of the people they lead. Even parents—and all parents are leaders—have to understand the differences among their children, who are boys and girls, older and younger, and different from one another in interests, talents, and personality. To take on any leadership role in life, we have to learn to respect and tolerate differences.

Respect

As we grow up, we long for the respect of other people and want to show respect to other people. Respect means showing regard for the worth of someone or something. It takes the following three forms:

- Respect for myself
- Respect for others
- Respect for all forms of life, for the environment, and for human-made things as well.

Respecting myself requires treating my life—in both its spiritual and physical dimensions—as having value. That's why it is wrong to do self-destructive behavior such

as drug or alcohol abuse. In fact, if we don't respect and love ourselves, it is very hard to respect and love others.

Respecting others requires that we treat all human beings—even those whom we dislike—as having dignity, rights, and value equal to our own. That is the Golden Rule—“Treat others as you want to be treated.”

Respecting the whole complex web of life prohibits cruelty to animals and calls us to act with care toward the natural environment, the fragile ecosystem on which all life depends. It includes respect for our home, our school, our own room, or area and the responsibility connected with taking care of those things.

We are meant to learn how to respect others in our families. We learn by the way our parents treat us and by the way we see them treat each other. They teach us not to hit our siblings and to be polite to visitors. Most parents are concerned with teaching their children to behave well, have good manners, and treat people respectfully. They know that courtesy and good manners enable people to get along with each other and resolve problems in a peaceful way. If we are rude, we can expect our parents to teach us a better way. In word and deed our parents also teach us to respect property. They teach us to handle things with care and not to take things that belong to someone else.

All this is to help us to develop the right heart towards others, to help us understand that when we show disrespect towards someone, we are saying, “You are not worth much. Your thoughts and feelings are of little importance.”

We naturally will show respect when we realize that we are all part of the human family, whatever our background, race, nationality, or religion. Each person has unique value. Once we understand this, we could never mistreat or abuse one another, but would treat others with the respect we would like to be shown ourselves.

Tolerance of differences

People who feel very deeply about something often find it difficult to respect those who see things differently. We believe that we are right, which means those who disagree with us must be wrong. In such cases we may even come to regard such people as our enemies, not because they have done anything to us personally but just because their beliefs are not the same as ours. We may convince ourselves that their beliefs are not only wrong but dangerous, and we may see them as enemies of society.

This is why throughout history religious people have fought and even killed each other. On both sides of such conflicts, one could find sincere, moral people who nevertheless could not tolerate each other's points of view. Fortunately, in many countries a tradition of religious tolerance has developed so that people are not discriminated against or punished for what they believe as much as in the past.

Tolerating differing opinions actually strengthens a society, as evidenced by the growth of democracies over the past several hundred years. Democracy is based upon tolerance of differing opinions, recognition of universal rights regardless of differences, and majority rule with protection of minorities. Democratic societies tend to prosper as the

human potential within them is unleashed due to these freedoms, protections, and tolerance of differences.



Still, there are limits to tolerance. One of the problems of modern democracies is their tendency to place little or no limits on what they will tolerate in the name of freedom of expression. Democracy functions best when virtuous people use their freedom to act responsibly.

Empathy

A person who takes a pointed stick to poke a baby bird should do it to himself first to feel how it hurts.

—African proverb

One of the ways we can develop and deepen our respect and tolerance for other people is through empathy. When we empathize with someone, we can understand the way he or she feels and thinks. We may not necessarily agree, but we can at least understand and see the world through his or her eyes. There is a wise American Indian saying: “Do not judge another person until you have walked a mile in his moccasins.”

Learning to empathize is not easy. It is a challenge to our heart to grow and extend itself out to accept others. It means developing some kind of emotional connection to them. Here are some questions we can ask ourselves in order to more deeply understand another person's situation. (We need to stop to ask ourselves these questions, especially when we are in disagreement with another person.):

1. How does the person feel?
2. How would I feel if I were in that situation?
3. How would I want other people to act if I were that person?

Empathy leads to understanding and compassion. When we seek to understand and appreciate differences, we can avoid destructive conflict and negative feelings.

Empathy leads us to ask ourselves, “If I were in that person's situation, how would I want to be treated?” Most likely we would answer in one or more of the following ways:

1. I would want to be treated as a person with value and not be used by others.
2. I would want to be treated with care, not violence.
3. I would want to be treated as an individual, not just as a member of a certain group.

Generalizations

Point number 3 in the above list brings up the issue of making generalizations and stereotyping people according to the group to which they belong. We noted in the beginning of the chapter that doing this may lead to conflict if we fail to respect and tolerate the differences between groups.

In one sense generalizing is unavoidable. The first time we meet someone from a particular school, country, or religious group, we will probably form a general impression of what such people are like from this person. This is why it is important for a person to behave sensitively when he or she goes abroad. When we meet a foreigner, whether we realize it or not, we tend to see him or her as a representative of his or her country and judge the country accordingly. If we have a bad experience with that person, we will probably assume that everyone from his country is like him or her. If later we have the opportunity to meet others from that country, we may discover that the first person was not really a good representative, and we will modify our image of the country accordingly.

The problem is that uncorrected generalizations can harden into stereotypes—oversimplified and rigid images which are often wrong and/or exaggerated. Stereotypes usually contain a grain of truth, but it is only a grain, not at all the whole truth about the person. Stereotyping is the result of intellectual laziness and prejudice. A person cannot be bothered to learn the complete facts and instead relies upon the secondhand opinions of others without checking their accuracy. He or she accepts these opinions because they conform to his or her prejudices.

Stereotypes sometimes can be favorable (“All Englishmen are gentlemen”) or amusing (“Scotsmen have deep pockets and short arms”). Yet they can also be malicious (“Jews are miserly”).

Malicious stereotypes may be due to an attitude of racial or national superiority combined with ignorance. Negative stereotypes often are made by people out of fear of the unknown and dislike of those who are different. Such people typically will refuse to acknowledge evidence that doesn't fit the stereotype they have made of a particular group. People who do not conform to the stereotype may be hated even more than those who do fit it, because they have proven the lie of the stereotype and challenged people's assumptions.

Prejudice

Stereotyping leads to prejudicial attitudes towards groups of people. Prejudice means to make a judgment about someone or something before the truth is known about that particular individual. Because of prejudice, a person can be judged guilty not due to the facts of a situation but simply because of what group he or she belongs to. This attitude has resulted in the inhumane treatment of people over and over again throughout history.

For a hundred years, even after slavery was ended, African Americans were subjected to great mistreatment in the United States because of prejudice. In Nazi Germany, anti-Semitism finally led to the Holocaust, when Jews were killed in concentration camps.

The tribal slaughter in Burundi and Rwanda is another example in the tragic history of prejudice and intolerance.

Prejudice is usually passed on in the family from parents to children. Charged with emotion, prejudice usually has no rational basis. Prejudice can be transmitted through the media and fanned by politicians trying to gain votes by attacking an unpopular minority. Prejudice and stereotypes are sometimes spread through ethnic jokes and slurs. Persons who engage in such "humor" may tell themselves that what they are doing is okay as long as there is no one from the targeted group present to hear it. But in speaking this way, and by listening to and laughing at such jokes, a poisonous atmosphere of disrespect and intolerance toward members of that group is created and spread.

Since prejudice represents a fundamental lack of respect and tolerance, it is harmful both to those people who practice it (it is narrow and unfair and may lead them to do abusive things) and to those who are victims of the prejudice (since they may be subject to abuse). It is the responsibility of each person to examine the ideas and viewpoints inherited from his or her family and society and determine how accurate they are. We should constantly be on guard against stereotypes and prejudice. We need to be looking constantly into our hearts and asking ourselves how much we really know about various groups of people before we start forming opinions about them. This is an important step on the way to learning to respect and tolerate others who are different from us but who nevertheless are fellow human beings.



Questions for Reflection

1. Define the words *respect*, *tolerance*, *empathy*, *stereotype* and *prejudice*.

Respect _____

Tolerance _____

Empathy _____

Stereotype_____

Prejudice_____

2. How does developing empathy help us to have respect for others?

3. Why is respecting yourself essential to respecting others?

4. Are there limits to tolerance? What are they? Give some examples.

5. Why do we often show disrespect towards those we disagree with?

6. How do you want to be treated? Do you treat others that way?

7. Do you hold any prejudices or stereotypes?

8. Is there a difference between generalizing and stereotyping? If so, what?

9. Why do you think people often form opinions about people and things before they know all the facts?

10. Can you identify any stereotypes and prejudices that you have heard either in your family, at school, or elsewhere?

Exercise: "Stereotypes and Prejudices"

Think of a group of people about whom you hold negative beliefs and feelings. List those beliefs and feelings. Then try to remember where you learned all of these things. Are your beliefs based in truth? Where did your ideas about this group come from? Are these ideas that you would want to pass on to others? Why or why not? No single group of people is completely bad, no matter how we may feel about them. What good points can you identify in this group of people?

Reflection Exercise

Why should we respect all people and not just those we feel are “deserving” of our respect?

CHAPTER 10: Money, Money...

To lead our lives well, we must learn to use resources well. One of the most common resources is money. Yet money is one of the most out-of-control areas of people's lives. Even many adults have trouble managing their money well.

To live in this world we need money to get what we need and want. It may seem reasonable to believe that our happiness depends on money. The more money we have, the happier we will be, as all our wants and needs are fulfilled, right? Or will we?



If we sat down and made a list of all the things we would like to do with money, it would be a very long list. The list might consist of good food, an apartment downtown facing the river, maybe a two-story house in the country, vacations, designer clothes, a big TV, a new car, and so on. The list probably would be endless.

Yet even if you were able to buy and do all the things on your list, sooner or later you would start feeling dissatisfied once again. You would begin to realize there are still more things you want to buy and do. This is because our desires really are limitless! No matter how much money we have, we can easily feel frustrated because enough is never really enough if we are basing our happiness on materialistic desires. In fact, our wants can become so out of control that we spend money on them, rather than on our needs. Then we are really in trouble.

In speaking about money, there is another problem: that of inequality. While some people seem to be very well off, many others are living poorly. If money is the source of our happiness and self-esteem, we can easily feel unhappy and envious if we have less than others, or, if we have more, to feel smug and look down on those who have less than us. However, if we understand that our value and happiness come from elsewhere, we know that to judge people simply on the basis of their material wealth is foolish. A person's true worth is measured not by their wealth but by the quality of his or her heart and character.

Financial strategies for high school students

This is not to say that it is bad to think about money issues: what it can buy, our material needs and desires, how to obtain money and manage it well. Indeed, because we

live in a material world, we need to learn how to do these things if we are to be a responsible person.

The high school years are a good time to begin learning the value of money and how to manage it properly. These years are usually characterized by a growing need for money as our interests develop. You already may be facing the problem of not having enough money. What can you do about this? You basically have three choices:

1. You can try to persuade your parents to give you more money.
2. You can accept your current financial situation.
3. You can try to find ways to earn money yourself. You might try to get a job. There can be countless opportunities if you look for them. Working has the added benefit of giving you new experiences and learning how to deal with different people and situations.

What do you think of these three strategies? Which do you think is the best one? Why?

Ethical considerations in regard to money

Money presents us with ethical challenges. There are honest ways to make money, but there are also immoral, unethical, and illegal ways to do it. It is always tempting to look for ways to make "easy money." At one end of the scale is the school bully who demands lunch money from those younger and weaker than himself; those who cheat innocent people out of money in various ways; people who sell goods they know to be defective, etcetera. At the other end are those who make their living honestly by working hard, serving their customers, and treating them with respect.

In a free market society, a person who uses his creativity to satisfy his customers by producing good quality products at a reasonable price, or by providing needed services, will likely become quite successful. Such a person would be a creator of wealth. This creativity can be as valuable and satisfying as artistic creativity. Thus, the state of being rich is neither good nor bad in itself. Everything depends on its moral foundation, i.e., how the money is made, and what it is used for.

The real purpose of business is not simply to make a profit but to create wealth for the general society. As the society benefits, so shall the business itself prosper.

Henry Ford

Long ago, automobile producers could only make a few cars at a time, so only the rich could afford to own a car. A man named Henry Ford thought everyone should be able to have a car. He wanted to make a car the average person could afford.

He accomplished this through inventing a technique of production called "the assembly line." Each person in a line attached one part to an automobile as it moved on a conveyor belt to the next person in line, who attached another part. This way Ford could produce many more automobiles than anyone else.

Using the assembly line saved a lot of money, so Ford was able to sell his cars at a very low price. He also paid his workers better wages than the other car makers. This saved Ford time and money in finding and training workers because his workers wanted to keep working for him. Plus, these well-paid workers bought cars!

Ford became the biggest car manufacturer in the world. He became a very rich man, but he also helped build a middle class in America that could afford to buy many fine things—including cars.

Fulfilling the purpose of creating wealth for the general society begins with an attitude of serving the customer. Successful businesses generally aim to help their customers. Part of the reason is that if a business produces poor goods or provides poor service, customers will look elsewhere. Therefore, badly managed businesses (not only in terms of efficiency but also in customer service) tend to fail and be replaced by well-managed ones. If we have to choose between shops where the service is good and one where the employees are rude, it is clear we will choose the one where we are treated well.

Gaining an income

Working brings us many benefits, both internally and externally. Internally, it helps us to develop our skills and overall character. It teaches us responsibility, cooperation, teamwork, and many other qualities. By supporting ourselves through our work, we gain self-respect. We feel grown up. Externally, work allows us to contribute to the support of others. We can begin to help our parents financially and support our own family after we marry. It allows us to live altruistically in a substantial way, lending our work greater meaning.

Let's say you have found an honest way to earn money. The next question is: what are you going to do with it? Now that you have money, the question of budgeting comes in. It involves a new level of responsibility—learning to live within your means. You learn this now on an individual level; in the future, you will need such money management skills on the family level. As you start earning money, it is important to develop good habits of managing it. Otherwise, you will find yourself always in debt, no matter how much money you earn.

How we manage our money depends on what kind of character we have developed. Will you keep it all for yourself and expect to still receive an allowance from your parents? Will you tell your parents that from now on you will be responsible for your own expenses and that they do not have to support you any longer? Will you give some of your income to your parents as a contribution to your upbringing?

Once you have an income, you will be faced with many decisions that will test your character and priorities:

- Do you splurge on snacks, comics, and makeup? Do you spend it on entertainment, such as CDS, movies, etc.?
- Do you spend all your money on yourself, or do you spend some of it on other people?
- Do you make a weekly and monthly plan on how you are going to spend your money, or do you just go out and spend it as soon as you get your paycheck?
- Do you put some of your income in a savings account so that in the future you will have money to go to college or buy a car?

Having money challenges us to think about our priorities, both in the moment and in the course of our future life. Smart people plan for their future. Other people find it a bore because it forces them to be responsible. Learning to control one's money is not easy. It is much easier to waste it and have nothing to show for it. By postponing immediate gratification, setting money aside for the future, we are making an important foundation for our future success and happiness.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are some things you can buy with money that will make you happy?

2. What are some things you can buy with money that will make others happy?

3. What are some things you can't buy with money?

4. What things are most valuable to you and why?

5. Are rich people always happy? Why not?

6. What is your source of happiness?

7. Why is money often the source of conflict between people?

8. How is making money an ethical issue?

9. What are some ethical and unethical ways of making money?

10. Explain how these either benefit or hurt society.

Exercise: "Wants and Needs"

Write a W next to the things in the following list that are wants. Write an N next to the things in the following list that are needs. Remember—a need is something basic to your survival.

New CD
Vegetables
Shelter
Headphones
Water
Jewelry
Movie tickets
Popcorn
Protein
Clothing
Soap
Designer sneakers

Reflection Exercise: "Choosing a Job"

Put the following in the order of importance to you when choosing a job:

- Good money from the start
- Honest work
- Good prospects for advancement
- Social status
- Personal interest
- The opportunity to serve people
- The opportunity to use your talents
- Number of hours
- The opportunity to develop your skills
- Good relations with co-workers
- Feeling that you are doing something useful
- Self-respect

CHAPTER 11: A Leader Lives Altruistically

When we look around us, we realize that the world is not the way we would like it to be. There seem to be problems everywhere. Many things happen that we feel are wrong or unjust—either at home, at school, or in the wider world. What should we do?

On the one hand, it is tempting to busy ourselves reforming everything (except ourselves). On the other hand, it is tempting to distance ourselves from what goes on around us and just concentrate on our own lives.

Yet we cannot simply live for ourselves and ignore the rest of the world. People are social beings, and they need networks of connections and relations with other people. We also understand that a purposeful and meaningful life is one that contributes to something greater than just ourselves. People find meaning in doing things for their families, their schools, their communities, their nations, and our world. Such altruism brings joy, energy, and fulfillment to a person.

Kevin—a teenage leader

"Kevin! Kevin!" It seemed like that was the only name in the park that day. Everyone wanted Kevin's attention and companionship, and everyone was calling his name.

Kevin was a teenage boy who lived for serving others. He spent his pocket money buying treats and snacks for the other kids. (His mother wondered why he was always low on money!) When another kid got hurt, Kevin would take him or her to his house and wash out the cut and apply a bandage or call the kid's parents. When kids needed to get home after dark, Kevin tried to get rides for them or walked them home himself. He often brought water to the park for other kids on hot days, or brought the kids to his kitchen door and asked his mother for juice or ice water for them.

Because of how much he helped others, the other children turned to Kevin to mediate arguments in the park and on the field and basketball court. Kevin was able to soothe tempers and calm people down so they could talk out their problems with each other. He prevented fights by helping kids get their anger out in words instead of blows. Since he excelled at sports, the kids trusted him to decide any questions or arguments about the rules in a game. They knew he'd be fair.

"Why is everyone always calling 'Kevin! Kevin'?" a jealous neighborhood boy complained

"He's the leader!" the other kids told him.

A person who lives always thinking of others becomes a central person—the person everyone turns to and wants to be around. He or she is the center and focus of activities and energy. Such a person is a natural leader.

How do we live in an altruistic way?

Living altruistically is a hallmark of leadership, and may make us, as it did Kevin, the leader among our friends. So how do we live for others?

It begins with having compassion for people. Compassion means being able to understand another person's situation and to respond in a way to try to relieve any suffering or distress.

The Good Samaritan—a leader in doing good deeds

The Good Samaritan in The New Testament is so famous that there are thousands of hospitals, community centers, and charity groups all over the world named "The Good Samaritan" after him. Newspapers sometimes use the title in their headlines to describe someone doing a good deed: "Good Samaritan saves child from oncoming car," and such. The story of The Good Samaritan tells us two very important things: that we are to help others when we see them in need, and that anyone can do good things for the sake of helping others.

The Good Samaritan belonged to a religious "out group." The leaders in the town looked down on his group. Still, when a man was robbed, beaten, and left for dead on the side of the road, it was the Good Samaritan who stopped and helped. He cleaned and bandaged the man's wounds, he helped him to an inn, he paid the innkeeper himself, and later returned to check on the injured man to make sure he was all right. He probably saved the man's life. In this, the Good Samaritan showed that he was a truer leader than the important people in the town, who had walked right past the injured man and had not bothered to help him.

We need to notice when people need our help. We need to be able to feel their pain and suffering and want to relieve it for their sake, not for ours. Then we must act.

The story of the Good Samaritan reveals the unconditional nature of truly good actions. The Samaritan did not stop to think what kind of benefit he would gain from his good actions. He did not set out to be a leader. On the contrary, he unconditionally gave what he had for the welfare of a stranger.

It has been argued that the Good Samaritan did this at some risk to himself. The man was robbed and beaten on an isolated stretch of road known for attacks by bandits. By stopping to help, the Good Samaritan exposed himself to the danger of a bandit attack. He acted at his own expense too—surely he would have preferred to spend the money he gave the innkeeper on himself. Yet he didn't. He gave of his time, efforts, and resources to help another man. He has been an admired leader and example ever since.

Truly good deeds are done purely for the benefit of others. If someone does something for others but is motivated by expectation of a reward, it can hardly be called a good action (although it may appear so). Our actions are truly good only when we help

sincerely with a pure heart. Often such good actions do not bring us any external reward at all—they cost us, as a matter of fact! And other people may not even notice what we have done. The real reward, unasked for and unexpected, is our own inner sense of peace and joy.



There is one sure way of becoming a good person and a true leader—to care for others with a pure motivation. At first, it may be difficult. At times we may have to push ourselves, but if we keep at it, eventually we will find that it becomes quite natural and even easier to live altruistically.

Doing good deeds brings the greatest joy, and this stimulates us to do other good actions. Doing good things for other people generates all kinds of positive energy in our lives and in our world. We become a center of generating goodness—and that is a true leader.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does it mean to live altruistically?

2. Is it possible to just live for ourselves? Will we be happy that way?

2. What is compassion?

3. Explain the difference between a true leader and someone who just wants to be the center of attention.

4. What things did the Good Samaritan do to help the beaten man?

5. Have you ever helped someone you didn't really have to help?

6. In what ways do you live altruistically?

Exercise: "Myself as a Leader"

At home, try to do things for others tonight. See if you don't experience what the teenage leader Kevin experienced—everyone calling your name, becoming the center of things, feeling needed and wanted on all sides. It can be fun and rewarding. Notice how you feel when you go to sleep after such an evening. You may be a little extra tired, but look for an inner feeling of peace and satisfaction.

Reflection Exercise:

Think about and write down things you can do for other people in all the settings of your life: at the breakfast table at home, on the bus or walking to school, in class, after school, going home to dinner, and so on. Now try to do them!

CHAPTER 12: Leading a Noble Life

Every nation has its heroes. Some national heroes are admired by the whole world. If we pay close attention to those who are remembered and known as noble, we can recognize that most of them had one thing in common: They were people who lived for something greater than themselves, often at a sacrifice of themselves.

We all often experience conflict and confusion when faced with the need to sacrifice the self. We eat that ice cream although we know we shouldn't; we can't get up in the morning and get to school on time because we prize our sleep too much. If we have an opportunity to cheat on an exam, or if we can gain the friendship of one person by betraying another, how do we act? Do we act selfishly or unselfishly?

A noble person, although he or she may be tempted not to, consistently does the unselfish thing, even at a sacrifice to him- or herself. When the body wants to be comfortable and taken care of, the noble person will help if needed, instead of taking care of him- or herself. When it comes time to profit at the expense of others, the noble person will choose not to.

When we study history, the people who stand out are those who dedicated their lives unselfishly to the service of others—in the fields of science, art, religion, or politics. They inspired others by their example of selfless determination. They lived by the values of truth, beauty, goodness, and love. Such individuals are universally regarded as the heroes of history.

Marie and Pierre Curie—Noble Discoverers of Radium

Marie Sklodowska was born in 1867 into a poor Polish family. However, Marie worked and studied so hard that at last she was able to afford to go to school in Paris to study science.

One of her teachers, Pierre Curie, was as in love with science as she was, and soon they loved one another too. They got married and set up a backyard laboratory in a shed.

Working night and day, with Pierre's help, Marie Curie discovered a new element. She named it "Polonium" after her native country of Poland.

The Curies discovered another element, one that gave off rays. They called it "radium." The Curies were so dedicated to scientific discovery that, for romance, they would go back into their laboratory at night and gaze at the beakers full of glowing radium.

In 1903, they won the Nobel Prize for Physics. Marie Curie was the first woman in history to win a Nobel Prize. She was also the first woman in France to receive a doctoral degree. In a few years, she became the first person in history to receive two Nobel Prizes when she won the prize for chemistry.

The Curies worked day and night to learn more about the humanitarian uses of their discoveries. They gave their knowledge away rather than trying to profit from it. Sometimes they forgot to eat, they were so intrigued by what they were discovering.

Soon both Curies began to experience illness and sores on their hands because of working with radioactive material. In those days, they did not know they should wear protective gear. Still, they worked on in order to bring their discoveries for the benefit of the world.

Radium is used to help cure cancer. It also produces "X-rays" which show the inside of the human body and bones so that doctors can see if anything is broken or abnormal.

After Pierre's death, Marie Curie worked to establish a Radium Institute where new scientific discoveries could take place. When World War I broke out, she raised money so that she could make mobile X-ray machines to go to the war front to help injured soldiers. She and her daughter personally served the soldiers, and they built 20 mobile X-ray units and 200 stationary X-ray units to try to save soldiers' health and lives. Sometimes Marie Curie had doctors put radon on patients' wounds so that the radiation could kill diseased tissue.

Marie Curie died of causes probably related to radiation over the years.

In 1995, her bones and Pierre's bones were buried in the Pantheon in Paris, where the great French citizens are buried, because of their selfless devotion to the betterment of humankind through science.

The exemplary lives of noble men and women enlighten the hearts and minds of all people regardless of nationality, race, religion or historical era. They have taught us that the most serious and important challenge a human being can take up is to overcome selfishness in order to benefit other people. This is true love. The greater a person's true love for others, the more inspiring memories that person will leave for generations to come.

We may love ourselves, our family, our people or our nation. But the greatest standard of love is achieved when we can overcome all our limitations and share our love with the world. Whoever can do this will become an extraordinary person whom history will remember.



Think of your own heroes. Some may be religious figures; others are statesmen, writers, artists, generals, and political leaders, as well as many others. Some of them are known to everyone. Others are less well known—like your own parents or relatives or a great teacher you had. Famous or not, their lives remain examples of devotion and self-sacrifice. In overcoming obstacles and temptations they demonstrated the power of the human spirit. In their lives they set a high moral standard and added to the spiritual wealth of the world through leading noble lives.

Questions for Reflection

1. How would you define true nobility?

2. Who are some of the noblest people in your nation's history?

3. Was this person selfish or unselfish?

4. What does it mean to live for a cause greater than yourself?

5. In what ways can a person's actions change the lives of others for the better?

6. If you were to become a person of noble cause, what would your cause be?

7. What do you think is the most important thing to live for?

8. How would you like to be remembered?

Exercise: "Influential Figure"

Think about an individual who influenced historical events in a positive manner and answer the following questions:

1. What was the attitude of this influential figure?

2. What did this person do that made him/her exceptional?

3. What are some of the values that this person possessed?

4. What personal characteristics did this person display?

5. In what ways did this person's actions show that he/she was more concerned about others than about him/herself?

6. How is this person remembered today?

Reflection Exercise: "Myself as a Noble Figure"

Would you like to be the kind of person you chose in the previous exercise? Why or why not? Could you become that type of person? Why or why not? Reflect on how you could live a noble life. What kinds of obstacles might you face, internal and external? What would be the results of such a life?

CHAPTER 13: Citizenship—leadership by the people

The *American Heritage Dictionary* defines a citizen as “a person owing loyalty to and entitled by birth or naturalization to the protection of a given country.” By this definition, we see that citizenship involves responsibilities as well as rights. In exchange for their protection, we owe our nations loyalty.

Being a loyal citizen

Being a loyal citizen means many things. It means responding when our country calls. It means contributing our labor to our country's prosperity. It means raising good families and teaching children to be good citizens. It means observing and respecting our country's laws and supporting our country's moral health. It means having good character and a consciousness of being part of a whole rather than just a lone individual.



Most countries call for some responsibilities on the parts of their citizens. Citizens are expected to pay taxes, to vote, to serve on juries, to be aware of national issues, to serve in the military, or to perform some sort of national service.

Citizens are also expected to contribute to the prosperity of a country. The daily efforts of ordinary working people—farmers, artists, scientists, engineers, teachers, business people and civil servants—keep a society functioning. People's labor, large and small, is one of the most basic ways in which they bring benefits to their society.

Good citizens also raise good citizens in their families. Scientists have found that learning allegiance to one's family helps people to feel allegiance to their society. Learning to obey the rules in a family, to listen to the authority of one's parents, to share and behave fairly with siblings, are all training in belonging to the larger family of the community and nation as good citizens.

For instance, a person who has learned to love his or her grandparents will extend those loving feelings to all the old people in a community, associating them with the kindness and benevolence of his or her own relatives. A loving parent with children will be understanding toward other people's children. A child who is respectful toward his or her own parents will naturally be respectful to teachers, policemen, municipal employees,

representatives of the law, and others in authority. A nation depends on its families to teach its children good and ethical relations with different kinds of people—good citizenship.

Good citizenship inevitably involves good character. Character traits such as honesty, integrity, a sense of responsibility, compassion for others, courage, and fairness are some of the virtues of good citizens. Good citizens obey the just laws of their countries. They are moral in their work lives. Business dealings are guided by morality. Merchants are honest in dealing with customers. Managers are guided by ethical considerations in treating their workers fairly. Lawyers do not take advantage of those who trust them. Business leaders do not cheat their shareholders. Good citizens do not allow their personal ambition to cause them to exploit others, misuse public funds, or engage in other deceitful or criminal activity. Moral citizens produce a good society where there is fairness, trust, and unity—a society it is a pleasure to live in.



Good citizenship involves recognizing one's obligations to the larger entity of which one is a part. Each cell in our body is a model of good citizenship. Although each cell takes care of itself, this is not its primary concern. It exists for a higher purpose. Whether it is a brain cell, skin cell, stomach cell, or other kind of cell, it works to contribute to the organ of which it is part, and the organism as a whole. By ensuring the health and survival of the entity it belongs to, it ensures its own survival. So, too, if we as citizens work to ensure the health and survival of our nation, we will also survive and thrive in the process. If instead, people live primarily for their own selfish interests, ignoring the welfare of the greater society, eventually that society will meet its own destruction and bring destruction to its citizens

For these reasons, we say that citizenship is leadership by the people. It is up to the average, common man and woman to work diligently, to be a good person, to raise a good family, to obey society's laws and uphold morality, and to contribute to the greater whole of the society to which he or she belongs.

Todd Beamer—a good citizen in life and in death

Todd Beamer, a man in his thirties, was a good citizen. He served his community through coaching baseball and teaching at Sunday school. He was a responsible employee at a company, often sent on travels to represent the company. He was a good father, raising two sons with his wife Lisa. He was devoted to his family.

Lisa Beamer says her husband Todd made heroic choices every day of his life—choices that benefited others. However, his most heroic choice was made on September 11, 2001, when hijackers took over the plane he was on.

From cell phone calls, Todd understood that the hijackers on his plane were probably planning to crash it into a public building in Washington, D.C. (likely the White House or the U.S. Capitol). Other hijackers had flown planes into the World Trade Center in New York City and the Pentagon just a short time before, killing thousands of people.

Todd was a huge man—two hundred pounds and well over six feet tall. Todd did what he thought was right—he led other big men on the airplane in a charge against the hijackers. Todd did not think they would succeed in saving the fifty people on the plane. Yet it seemed to him it was the greater good to try to prevent this plane from killing hundreds or thousands of other citizens.

The American men attacked the hijackers and wrested the plane from their control. They stopped the plane from hurtling into a building, but not without bringing it down: the plane crashed into a field. Everyone on board was killed, but the hijackers did not achieve their goal: many more casualties in a large city.

Todd's wife, Lisa, started a foundation to give free help to children who have suffered losses in their lives. It is called “Heroic Choices” in honor of the kind of life Todd Beamer believed in: choosing to be a good citizen in life and in death.

Democracy—leadership "of the people, by the people, for the people"

The democratic "experiment" of the past several hundred years places special demands and expectations upon its citizens, for they are the real leaders of the nation. Democracy is a government or leadership "of the people, by the people, for the people," as Abraham Lincoln said in his famous Gettysburg Address.

Previous to democracy, under the feudal or monarchic system, common people were given little freedom, responsibility, or authority. Their responsibility was limited to serving the needs of the state or feudal lord, either by being a foot soldier in times of war or offering the products of their labor as farmers or craftsmen in times of peace. Substantial decision-making and governance was left to the aristocracy.

In a democracy, however, power is meant to reside in the hands of the people themselves, who choose their rulers through elections. These elected officials, unlike

feudal lords, hold power only as long as they continue to win elections. To do so, they need to serve and represent the interests and opinions of those who elect them.

Because the citizens lead in a democracy, most democracies have freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press, and other freedoms that are guaranteed by law, so that the citizenry can make their own decisions.

For a democracy to function well, it requires a responsible, active, and educated citizenry. People must pay attention to what their leaders are saying and doing. During elections they must try to understand the positions of the various candidates on key social issues—and then vote. In a democracy poor leaders can gain power by mobilizing their supporters to get out the vote, while the opposition remains apathetic. For democracy to work well, the citizens have to truly lead by being aware of the issues and voting responsibly.



For this reason, it is said that in democracies, people get the leaders they deserve. If they work hard at being good citizens and choose their leaders wisely and responsibly, they will have good leaders. If they are lazy and do not vote or care, they will be led by whoever is able to maneuver himself or herself into a position of power, whether that person is a good leader or not.

As always, with freedom comes responsibility. In addition, in order to take responsibility, people need freedom. The two are always intertwined. The best citizens use and enjoy their freedom, but they shoulder their responsibilities as well. Such citizens are the true leaders in any society.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does being a loyal citizen involve?

2. How does good character contribute to good citizenship?

3. How do family relationships contribute to good citizenship?

4. How is a cell in the human body a model of good citizenship?

5. Why do citizens in a democracy have greater responsibility than those in a monarchy or feudal system?

6. Why is democracy leadership "of the people, by the people, for the people?"

7. Why do citizens in democracies need freedom?

8. Why do they need to take responsibility?

Exercise: "Getting What We Deserve"

"It has been said that, in a democracy, we get the leaders we deserve." Do you agree with this statement? In what ways might it not be totally correct?

Reflection Exercise: "Future Citizen"

Imagine yourself old enough to vote in a presidential election. One candidate is well-educated, with much experience in government, but has been through three divorces and has been known to maintain several mistresses at once. The other main candidate has an average education, little experience in government, and has been married twenty-five years and raised four wonderful children who are successful in various professions. Which would you vote for, and why?

CHAPTER 14: Leadership

Although this book is about developing leadership, it is worthwhile to look at the topic in a specific way in order to understand types of leaders, what makes a good leader, the vision a leader needs, the heart of a leader, and the way leaders cope with setbacks.

Types of leaders

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 comes out in emergency situations.

If you were on a hike with a group of young teenagers, for example, and the adult leader became seriously ill, would everyone look to you to lead them out of the difficulty? That would mean you have natural qualities of leadership. Would you look for someone else to lead and carefully try to follow his or her directions and example? That would mean you were learning leadership skills. Or, seeing a leadership vacuum, would you take charge and begin organizing the group with tasks to help keep them calm, making a plan to care for the adult who is sick and also get back to camp safely? That would mean you have leadership qualities that emerge in a crisis.

Some people lead by example—by being the first to do something. Have you noticed that when some people do things a certain way, others follow? For instance, Crystal starts wearing her hair a certain way, and soon many girls are wearing theirs that way. Brian decided to play lacrosse rather than football, and soon many boys are signing up for lacrosse.

You can be a leader by being the first to do something too. You may not be a leader of fashion or a leader in sports, but you can be the first to volunteer for a blood drive, or a cleanup project, or for the school fundraiser. If you do this often, you'll soon find yourself appointed to positions of leadership.

Leading By Example

Reverend Larson and his wife had just had their second child. They were a busy couple, trying to take care of a growing congregation as well as hold down jobs and raise funds for a new church building and school. They had their hands full.

Yet when a member of their church came to them with a social concern, they not only listened, they lied. The member told them that he had learned on his job that there were so many orphans and neglected children in the city that the foster homes were overwhelmed. The agency he worked for had asked him to ask the churches if any of their members could take in foster children.

The Larsons felt they could not ask their congregation to do something they were not willing to do themselves. Even though it was difficult for them, they took in a foster child. Then they asked their congregation to follow their example.

Mrs. Larson said, "I couldn't believe it, but soon I loved that new child as if she was my own baby. A lot of our families had the same experience. We grew so much as a group, in love and learning to take care of the needy. It wasn't easy to take the lead on that, but I'm glad we did."

Some clubs and associations have an elected leadership. For example, you might become the head of the chess club, soccer team, sewing club, or student council. That means the members think you would be the best person to take care of them and the goals of the group.

All of us are called upon at times to take the lead. No matter what type of leader you may be, if you concentrate on developing your leadership qualities, you will be a better and more effective one when your moment comes.

What makes a good leader?

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 leader? What makes someone worthy of our loyalty and support? Here are some qualities to look for in a leader:

- Good leaders serve other people.
- Good leaders inspire leadership in other people.
- Good leaders communicate and plan well.
- Good leaders are always learning and growing.
- Good leaders are also good followers.
- Good leaders take initiative.
- Good leaders are willing to do what they ask their followers to do.

The above points tell us that leadership ability is a product of one's character. What a person actually does is a result of who he is. All the famous leaders in history not only had excellent abilities—they had good character too.

Alexander the Great

Imagine being 18 years old and being crowned king! Alexander, known as "the Great," became King of Macedon in Greece, 2,300 years ago, when he was just 18. Yet even though he was still a teenager, Alexander was an outstanding leader.

Alexander was always the first into danger during battle. He would not sleep or eat until all his soldiers had slept and eaten. He would not drink water if there was not enough for every soldier to have some. After battles, he would visit the wounded and speak to each one, even when he was exhausted himself. Because of these great qualities in Alexander,

his men were ready to follow him to the death. Alexander and his men conquered all of the known world at that time.

Most warriors in those days burned down the cities they conquered and took all the gold and valuable things they could for themselves. Alexander did not allow this. Instead, he tried to make the cities he conquered prosperous and ruled them with justice.

As a youth, Alexander had the best teacher possible, the famous philosopher Aristotle. Aristotle believed very much in virtue. He taught the young boy to be virtuous and to do good deeds. Alexander learned his lessons well and became a man of virtue. Because of his virtues, he became one of the most illustrious leaders in history. Thousands of years after his lifetime, he is still known as "Alexander the Great."

The vision of a leader

To lead means to go in front of others, to see beyond present circumstances into a better future and to help others follow that vision. Vision is an extraordinarily powerful thing and a necessary part of being a leader.

"If you can dream it, you can do it." Walt Disney

A manager, for instance, needs to be a good organizer, take care of his people, and make sure that the organization is operating efficiently. But a manager is working within a certain framework that has already been determined. A leader, on the other hand, helps create new frameworks through which to achieve greater goals. He or she sees ahead. He or she sees the possibilities of what could be but is not yet. A leader is a person who commits to fulfilling that dream without becoming bogged down in countless day-to-day distractions. He or she knows what needs to be aimed at and is ready to marshal energy to achieve it. Through vision and foresight, the leader helps to transform things and create the future.

Possessing a vision is one thing, but being able to communicate it to other people and inspire them with it, is just as important to effective leadership. The vision must be something that others can see and get excited about taking part in. A good leader is able to give people a sense of ownership over any project, which motivates them and helps them feel a sense of responsibility. The leader and the people can then work together for a common purpose.



Once the vision has been effectively communicated, it need to be sustained. Leadership means being able to continually keep followers—whether they are employees, club members, students, or citizens—motivated and focused on the goal. All too often projects begin with great enthusiasm, but over time people lose their focus and sense of purpose. Thus, an important element of good leadership is determination and constancy—keeping focused on the goal and able to keep others focused on the goal, sometimes over a long period of time.

Obviously, successful leaders need to have confidence in their ideas and their ability to make them real. That does not mean to be arrogant—far from it. As we've said, good leaders need to have the humility to learn from other people. But while being aware of their own shortcomings, leaders believe in their visions. They are secure enough to surround themselves with people who can make up for their deficiencies in different areas, all the while maintaining confidence in their vision and their ability to make it into a reality.

The heart of a leader

Finally, we can say that to be a good leader you have to be a "people" person. You have to like and care about people. Much of a leader's time is not his own. You need to 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 on behalf of the larger purpose. It means that he or she has to be in control of himself or herself before being in control of others.

Beyond this, a leader needs to have sincere care and concern for those led. Some people "lead" through fear and intimidation, through reward and punishment, but this is not real leadership. This is control and manipulation. In the long run people will rebel against and abandon such a leader. Exceptional leaders are those who project a parental concern for others.

Some of the greatest leaders came to be known by parental names, reflecting how their followers perceived their love and care. Mahatma Gandhi was referred to by his people as *Bapu*, meaning "Papa." George Washington has been called the "father of his country." "Mother" Teresa's is called by this parental title by people all over the world because of the motherly, caring love she showered upon the poor. Such leaders are able to strike a deep personal chord with people through their example of commitment and sacrifice. Their qualities remind people of the parents who cared for them from birth. They become parental figures to the national or human family.

Coping with setbacks

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.

Abraham Lincoln—depression, adversity and triumph

"Lincoln's long struggle against adversity—inner adversity as well as the terrible problems of his day—is something anybody can identify with and learn from. We can learn from Lincoln's life that even those who rise to supreme heights have personal dilemmas—identity crises, ambivalences, hurts, setbacks, and even a loss of will—which they have to anguish over and work their way through... I am still astonished that he survived the burdens of his office. But he not only survived them; he prevailed. He fought the war through to a total... triumph, a triumph for popular government and a larger concept of the inalienable rights of man."

Stephen B. Oates, *Abraham Lincoln, the Man Behind the Myths* (New York: Harper Perennial, A Division of HarperCollins Publishers, 1984), p. 147.



Abraham Lincoln, freer of the slaves, leader of the North in the American Civil War, and the 16th President of the United States

For many people the word "failure" is a dreaded word that has a ring of finality to it. It is 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.

Drawing on their character strengths or virtues to nourish a cherished vision and to support those who can help to carry it out, leaders eventually achieve at least some of their goals. Those who achieve the highest goals go down in history as the kind of people we can always look to for inspiration when we need the strength to make our dreams come true.

Questions for Reflection

1. What are several different types of leader?

2. What are some qualities to look for in a good leader?

3. Think of someone you know who is or was a good leader. What made him that way?

4. Explain the difference between a leader and a manager.

5. What member of a family does a good leader most resemble?

6. Have you ever been a leader in some way? What was your experience?

7. Have you ever met with failure? How did you handle the experience?

8. What did you learn from your failures?

Exercise: “Leadership in History”

Research one of the following major historical leaders. How did this person change the society and the 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?

- Joan of Arc
- Napoleon Bonaparte
- Adolf Hitler
- Nelson Mandela

Reflection Exercise: “My Leadership Qualities”

In the section “The vision of a leader” we said that a leader has to have four main qualities:

- 1) a sense of vision
- 2) an ability to communicate that vision and inspire others with it
- 3) an ability to sustain that vision over time
- 4) self-confidence.

Using these factors as a guide, analyze your own leadership potential.

CHAPTER 15: Leading the Natural World

There is no doubt that human beings are the most creative of the inhabitants of planet Earth. While all natural creatures have great beauty and many astonishing attributes, humankind engage in the widest variety of activities and enterprises. Because of this, people are the leaders of the natural world.

Human beings have projected themselves into space, beyond this Earth, defying the force of gravity, to explore other bodies in the galaxy. Human beings have penetrated the ocean like the fish and mammals of the deep sea, but they have also soared in the heavens like the birds. Human beings have existed in snow and ice, making homes of the snow itself, and they have existed in the most sweltering jungles, making homes of the leaves. Human beings have learned to protect themselves from the relentless sun during the day and at the same time have invented lights and lenses to help them see in the dark, making them the masters and mistresses of the night as well as well as the day.

Human creativity is boundless, and it has helped humankind take charge of the natural world. With this leadership, however, comes a great responsibility to our Earth—a responsibility we have so far not lived up to very well.

In recent decades the world has grown in environmental awareness even as the destructive consequences of population growth, industrialization, and energy use have grown. Today the world worries about global warming, deforestation, destruction of the ozone layer, air and water pollution, endangered species, and depletion of resources. More and more people are becoming aware of the need to conserve resources, recycle products, protect animals, reduce consumption, and find new sources of energy. More and more people are becoming aware that human beings need to be better leaders of the natural world.



Environmental inter-relatedness

If we recognize that every creature has value and purpose, our creativity and mastery are guided by reverence for life. Our reverence is heightened by the recognition that the environment is a total organism, with everything deeply interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent. As human beings, we are part of this interdependent web of life that is wonderfully self-sustaining and productive if used and protected wisely.

With our limitless creativity, human beings are uniquely capable of contributing to and enhancing the harmony, beauty, and abundance of the natural world. We have the potential to protect the environment, maintain its beauty, and conserve its resources to be passed on to the following generations, without waste or mismanagement. Rather than use our expertise in science and technology merely to extract wealth from the earth and create a comfortable artificial environment at the expense of nature, our challenge is to exercise caring, creative mastery without causing harm.

Someone once said that we do not inherit the earth from our ancestors. We borrow it from our children.

Our planet has been called Mother Earth for good reason. Like a mother, it provides us with what we need to grow and be healthy. How should we treat our mother? We should treat her with a feeling of gratitude for the life and nourishment she constantly and unconditionally provides, and we need to give back the care and protection she needs to keep providing for us and future generations.

The natural world can be seen as an extension of our body. It is composed of the same elements that we find within our own bodies. Just as good character leads us to care for our bodies and restrain our more selfish desires, it may also lead us to restrain our greed in order not to abuse our environment.

Growing awareness and measures

Environmental awareness requires an understanding of how the things we do influence the world around us. As always, our actions have consequences. Until recently, we have pursued economic progress without thinking of the negative effects it was producing in the environment, or else we considered these effects to be simply the unfortunate results of improving our quality of life in a material or economic sense. Economists, in calculating the costs and benefits of a certain economic activity, usually would not figure the negative influence on the environment into their equations. Progress would be measured simply in terms of the increase in GNP (Gross National Product) while ignoring the fact that cities were becoming more congested and polluted, vast tracts of land were being destroyed through mining and deforestation, and the overall ecological balance was being upset.

Today, more than before, environmental costs are being figured into new development, and the quality of life is considered to be more than a matter of economic growth. People have begun to think about the long-term environmental effects of economic activity.

Consider global warming. It is estimated that emissions of so-called "greenhouse gases" that contributes to global warming is expected to increase by 52% by 2030. Such predictions challenge us to search for alternative sources of energy instead of using the fossil fuels like oil or coal that produce such gases. Solar energy and nuclear energy are two types being considered.

Fossil fuels are also non-renewable, meaning that once used they cannot be replaced. Sooner or later they will be completely gone. Renewable energy sources include solar energy, which can be turned into electricity and heat.

Pollution control measures have drastically reduced emissions per automobile in the past twenty years. However, during that time the total miles traveled has doubled, resulting in higher levels of air pollutants in many parts of the world. Car pooling, greater use of mass transit, and reducing the number of unnecessary trips are ways of cutting down air pollution caused by motor vehicles. The great hope, of course, is that eventually we will find the way to run cars on nonpolluting fuels such as solar energy, electricity, or even water.

In recent decades various types of animals, such as the dolphin, rhinoceros, gray wolf, the whooping crane, some turtles, and iguanas, have become endangered. Over-fishing has caused many fish such as salmon, flounder, and red snapper to be in danger of being wiped out. Laws restricting or prohibiting the capture or killing of these and other species have been passed with stiff penalties if violated in order to preserve these species.



Most of the above involves government agencies, businesses, and environmental awareness groups getting involved in the fight for a better environment. But there are some things every person can do to be a leader in preserving the environment.

What you can do

Everyone can do something about littering. Most of us have been guilty of littering at one time or another—a result of careless attitudes and improper waste handling. Often, people feel no sense of ownership, even though areas such as parks and beaches are public property and therefore belong to everyone, including the person who litters. There is a tendency to think someone else—a park maintenance or highway worker—will pick up the trash. We can be part of the solution to this problem by developing a personal sense of responsibility and ownership. We can determine not to litter ourselves, to discourage others from littering, and to clean up what litter we see.

One of the most effective ways we as individuals can help to protect our environment is through recycling. Every year we toss out billions of tons of trash. We can save tremendous amounts of resources by recycling paper, steel, aluminum cans, and plastic. The latter is made from oil, which, as we have said, is nonrenewable and emits greenhouse gases. Ten percent of all waste is some form of plastic, which takes thousands of years to decompose. Unfortunately, currently only 5% of all plastic is recycled. By recycling more of these and other items, we can conserve our resources as well as reduce the pollution of our environment.

Enhancing the quality of life

With the world's population continuing to rise, and nations like China and India on the verge of dynamic economic expansion, we cannot reasonably expect the demand for energy sources to decrease or even level off in the very near future. In view of this, many people foresee a bleak future for humankind in which we use up available resources and pollute the planet to the point of self-destruction. For this reason, many people have called for population control.

Our greatest hope, however, lies not only in wise growth of either populations or of economies, but in using our knowledge and creativity to utilize technology in the service of the overall quality of life. Human creativity and mastery may be mobilized to harmonize natural processes with production in order to enhance the beauty and balance of nature as well as the quality of human life.

The problem until now is that the focus of technological development has been to drive economic development rather than consider its uses in supporting the development of a grander vision of human life. This is due in part to the secularization of human society and its focus on the material realm. We now realize, however, that material wealth alone does not produce the happiness we all want. We know that spiritual values like love, truth, beauty and goodness are essential for finding ultimate joy and fulfillment in life.

With a change in consciousness, we can begin to use our knowledge and technology not only to produce better automobiles, bigger buildings, and faster computer processes, but to create more beautiful living environments, cleaner and more efficient energy use, alternative sources of energy, and more family-friendly services in various areas of human life.

The task is to change our vision of life to care for not only our physical needs and material development, but to include those intangible and non-material things that give life its ultimate purpose and meaning, and to allow those deeper and finer impulses to guide us in leading our natural world.

Questions for Reflection

1. What kinds of environmental problems is the world facing today?

2. What are some of the causes of these problems?

3. In what areas have we seen an improvement in the environmental situation over the past twenty years?

4. What brought about this improvement?

5. In what ways have you personally contributed to environmental pollution (littering, using non-biodegradable products, etc.)?

6. In what ways have you been helping to improve the environment (picking up litter, recycling, etc.)?

7. What suggestions do you have for ways that we can solve our environmental problems?

Exercise: "A Day in the Country"

To enhance your environmental awareness, spend a day in the country, either by yourself, with a friend or with your family. Observe the environment around you. In what ways is it completely natural? In what ways has it been changed through human influence? Was this influence good or bad? What kinds of animals inhabit the area? What kind of vegetation do you find growing? Can you foresee any changes taking place in the area in the next ten to twenty years due to human activity?

Reflection Exercise: "Environmental Research"

Choose one of the following environmental issues for a research project. Determine the nature of the problem, its cause, and propose possible ways of its solution. In discussing possible solutions, include technological, political, economic and social aspects:

- Global warming
- Endangered species (choose one)
- Deforestation
- Destruction of the ozone layer
- Air pollution
- Water pollution
- Depletion of resources (choose one)

CHAPTER 16: Moral Leadership: Looking to Philosophy and Religion

Human civilization took thousands of years to develop from primitive hunting and gathering tribes to agricultural villages, to industrialized societies and the highly sophisticated technological world of today's information age. Yet nowadays, major changes come about within decades and show no signs of stopping or slowing down.

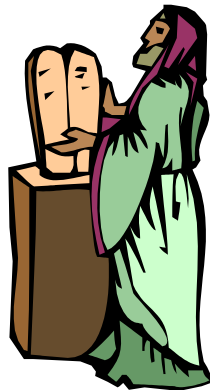
People worry that the continuity that has held cultures together from one generation to the next is being lost in the midst of such rapid changes. It is not uncommon for young people to feel alienated from the culture in which they grew up and even from their own families, due to how different the world is from the way it was when their parents were young.

In many cases a need for continuity and constancy are leading people to return to traditional values of morality and ethics for guidance. These values have held civilizations together for hundreds and thousands of years. They are well worth examining.

Early moral codes

One of the earliest systems of moral codes and laws was developed under the reign of King Hammurabi (1792-1750 B.C.) at Babylon. Carved on a pillar of stone, they focused on all aspects of human life and show that Babylon was a sophisticated civilization.

Another early code of laws was the Ten Commandments, received by Moses during his recorded encounter with God on Mount Sinai around 1290 B.C. These laid out some of the most fundamental tenets governing human behavior, such as forbidding murder, theft, adultery, giving false witness, envying other people's goods and spouses, and instructing people to honor their parents.



These ancient codes of law have been the basis of many societies' understanding of a moral culture and they continue to be so to this day. The code of Hammurabi was an early means of organizing society and letting people know what was morally expected of them. This posting of laws lives on in the legal moves in the United States to enshrine the Ten Commandments in public places to remind citizens and students of their basic moral obligations.

Philosophical influences

Beginning with the ancient Greeks, philosophy made important contributions to the development of morality and ethics in human life. According to Plato, the human soul needed to be governed by the virtues of temperance, courage, wisdom, and justice. Plato's image of an ideal person was "one who loves wisdom" (the meaning of the word "philosopher") and "one who is harmonized"—that is, a person whose mind and body are harmonized in practicing the four major virtues.

The Renaissance promoted a worldview that valued human dignity and also emphasized the harmonious development of mind and body. Led by philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, the Age of Enlightenment asserted that human beings have a basic natural goodness that simply needs to be cultivated. The philosophies of these periods, however, tended to underestimate the presence of evil within the human soul.

One Enlightenment thinker, Emmanuel Kant, did acknowledge the evil in human nature. According to him, evil comes into being when self-love overcomes morality. The solution is to place morality above self-love. There is a moral imperative, he said, that pushes all of us to do what is right.

In the Industrial Age some people thought that whatever promoted the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people was good. Happiness was most closely associated with physical pleasure. Pain was evil.

In the 20th century, philosophy tended towards moral relativism, stating that there is no absolute standard of good and evil. One person's good could be another person's evil. It was all a matter of perspective. Another well-known viewpoint is situational ethics—right and wrong are determined entirely by the circumstances, rather than by some overarching idea. In general, philosophy appears to have taken a journey from moral certainty to moral uncertainty, weakening its power to influence society. However, there are some important correctives going on now as the character education movement and social scientists begin to reaffirm long-lasting truths about good and bad.

The contributions of the world's religions

Religious teachings profoundly influenced the development of societies' moral and ethical codes as well as their legal systems. For thousands of years religious beliefs have urged people to live virtuously. Virtues like respect, responsibility, honesty, compassion, and a host of others have been central to the ethical teachings of many religions. Belief in an afterlife in which there are rewards and punishments for one's actions on earth has led many people to strive for goodness and to reject evil. Much of the good in the world comes from the following of religious teachings.

A Change of Heart

Statistics show that most people who go to prison do not change just from being locked up. The best guarantee of change is a conversion experience to a religion or spiritual enlightenment. Men and women who convert to a religion in prison usually do not go back to criminal lives—and many of them reach back to vulnerable young people or other prisoners to share with them how they became clean and free from the lives of crimes they had once led. They have had a change of heart that gives them the strength and the desire to resist the temptations they once gave into so easily.

Faith-based rehabilitation programs usually produce a 13-17% rate of return to a life of crime and prison. The usual average of released prisoners returning to a life of crime is between 60-70%.

Malcolm X is a famous prison convert. He was a slick street operator from a difficult family background who was after anything he could get. He wound up in prison for his crimes. While in prison, he received information about a branch of Islam prevalent among African Americans. He sought forgiveness from God for his life of robbery, larceny, drug dealing, and violence. He never returned to his criminal ways but led a morally upstanding life from then on. Although Malcolm X was famous for his anger at white racism (and he eventually evolved into a position where he could embrace white people too) he never committed a crime again.

At the same time, religious conflicts, often based on the misuse or misinterpretation of religious doctrine, have caused many problems. The true focus of religion is not to claim that one religion is better than another, or to advocate fighting, but to help people find truth and virtue. Sadly, throughout history many people have used religion to justify their own selfish, limited, or ignorant ends, giving the benevolent force of religion a bad name.

Overview of the world's major religions

What are the major world religions and what are their moral and ethical teachings? Stretching back over 3,000 years, the most ancient of the religions still practiced today is **Hinduism**. Nearly all Hindus live in India, with some in England, America and other countries. Based upon the Vedas—sacred literature written in verse and containing hymns, chants, and prayers—Hindu theology speaks of many gods, with Krishna, Brahman and Vishnu are the main ones. Hinduism preaches tolerance, believing there are many paths to spiritual enlightenment and liberation. Its most well-known scripture is the Bhagavad Gita. With its emphasis on selfless service, it was a prime source of inspiration for Mahatma Gandhi, one of the most famous peacemakers in history.

One of the primary teachings of Hinduism is the doctrine of *karma*, which says that our every thought, word, and action has consequences, either good or bad, thus upholding the ultimate moral justice of the universe.

Sikhism and **Jainism** are offshoots of Hinduism. Sikhism, born during the Middle Ages, sought a greater devotion to God and a denial of egoism as the basis for a good life. Jainism, founded much earlier, is known for its rigorous asceticism and doctrine of *Ahimsa*—non-injury to all living beings.

Another offshoot of Hinduism is **Buddhism**, which went on to become a major world religion by itself. Begun in India with the Gautama Buddha, Buddhism spread throughout most of Asia, although eventually dying out almost completely in India itself. The essence of Buddhist teaching lies in its Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path. The Four Noble Truths are: 1) life is suffering, 2) suffering is caused by selfish desire and ignorance, 3) the solution to suffering lies in the elimination of selfish desire and ignorance, and 4) this is achieved through the Eightfold Path.

The Eightfold Path emphasizes moral discipline, concentration and gaining wisdom through knowledge and experience. More important than ascetic practices, however, is moderation in action and meditation to gain control over one's desires. Like Hinduism, Buddhism believes in the concept of *karma* and *Dharma* (universal law).

The other major Asian religions are **Confucianism** and **Taoism** (in China) and **Shintoism** (Japan). The latter is centered on the worship of many deities called *kami*, which include the spirits embodied in natural objects, phenomena such as wind and thunder, and passed away heroes and sages. Chief among them is Amaterasu, the Sun Goddess. Shinto ethics stresses inner harmony and sincerity. In China, Confucianism and Taoism are interwoven. However, they do possess some distinguishing characteristics. Confucianism is mainly a system of ethical teachings, defining the values of family life and the proper administration of the state. Society is ordered according to the five relations of sovereign and subject, father and son, elder and younger brother, husband and wife, and friend and friend. These relations should be motivated by the flow of love.

Confucius urged his followers to pursue an ideal of conduct, which he called the Way of the Superior Man. The superior man is sincere, respectful of his parents, loyal to his lord, has good manners, and practices the Golden Rule. Most of all, he is humane towards his relatives, friends, and associates.

By contrast, Taoism, founded by Lao Tzu, teaches that the way to a better society is by seeking a mystical identification with the principles of nature, the impersonal *Tao*, through meditation. Human beings should live in accordance with the Tao by consulting the *I Ching* (Book of Changes), a guide for meditation and spiritual growth.

The Western world has inherited three main religious traditions from the Middle East: **Judaism**, **Christianity** and **Islam**. These have been called religions of the Book, because they are based upon scriptural writings. For Judaism, they are the Torah, Mishnah, and Talmud; for Christianity, the Bible; and for Islam, the Quran. They have a common root in the person of Abraham and are united in their view of a personal God, although they differ in how they see the personality of God.

Jews give high regard to the Law as set out in the *mitzvot*, ethical and ritual commandments, and elaborated in the Talmud as the *halakah*, or the requirements of life. Christians emphasize faith in Jesus Christ, who gives grace, empowerment, and guidance for living the moral life. Jesus taught a doctrine of unconditional love and forgiveness, even of one's enemies. The central tenet of Islam is submission to the one God, Allah. Muslims follow a strict moral code that honors the chastity of women and the sanctity of

marriage. Historically, Islam has exhibited a tolerance of other faiths and has supported scientific and literary development.

Conclusion

This brief review demonstrates the enormous contributions philosophy and religion have made to human civilization. Without their moral and ethical teachings, the world would be far worse off. However, today, as we have seen, philosophy seems to have reached a state of moral confusion. Religion, divided as it is, is sometimes seen as the problem rather than the solution to war and injustice.

Both philosophy and religion have the potential to add more of their benevolent influence on human affairs when philosophers regain their moral bearings and religious leaders put aside their differences. Harmony can be achieved based upon their common interest to uphold spirituality, morality, love, marriage, family, and good societies.

Questions for Reflection

1. Why are people today looking to tradition to guide them?

2. What were the major philosophical periods named in the chapter?

3. Which do you think has played a greater role in history, philosophy, or religion?

4. What are the major religions?

5. What do these religions have in common?

6. Why does belief in an afterlife of rewards and punishments influence behavior on earth?

7. How can philosophy add more benevolent influence on human society? What does philosophy have to do?

8. How can religion add more benevolent influence on human society? What does religion have to do?

Exercise: Your own "Ten Commandments"

Think of ten commandments you think would make society better if everyone obeyed them.

Reflective Exercise: "Customs and Traditions"

Think of the customs and traditions of your own culture. How many of them have their roots in religion or have been influenced by religion? What role has religion played in the shaping of your culture? Was it basically a good one, or otherwise? How much has religion influenced your life, either directly or indirectly? How has it influenced your family's beliefs and values?

CHAPTER 17: Becoming Leaders in a Diverse World

For many different reasons, in the course of human history, thousands of languages, customs, lifestyles, belief systems and civilizations have developed. Many of these no longer exist, such as the ancient civilizations of the Aztecs or Sumerians. Others were absorbed by a stronger culture, such as the Greek culture by the Romans (the Romans, in turn, were strongly influenced by the Greeks they conquered). Still others, such as the Chinese culture, live on today.

The trend of the world has been for cultures to trade both goods and ideas and to come to resemble each other in many ways. With more and more advanced means of communication and transportation, over the past several hundred years, cultures have merged. British historian Arnold Toynbee concluded that out of 21 to 25 major civilizations in world history, only five main cultural spheres remain: the Christian world, the Muslim world, Hindu culture, Oriental culture, and native African culture.

The worm that changed the world

Did you know that the beautiful material of silk—in great demand all over the world—is made from threads spun by worms?

It was silk that opened the famous Silk Road. The Silk Road (actually a network of trading routes) was one of the most important avenues of trade in the ancient world. It stretched for seven thousand miles, from China to Italy. Along the route, camels, caravans, oases, and bazaar towns grew and flourished. Multiculturalism was born on this trade route.

Silk was not the only good traded along the Silk Road. Many other goods, including jade, porcelain, spices, and gold made their way along the road. Yet the unusual and beautiful cloth called silk was only made in China, where the secret was guarded well. Only by changing hands along a route from China could the rich people among the Persians and Romans have the lovely material for their clothing.

Trade was important in bringing cultures together, but more important than trade were the ideas, including religious beliefs, that spread along the trade routes. Buddhism and Islam spread along the trade routes. So did political ideas, and ideas in art, dance, and music. Trade was the horse, perhaps, but culture was the rider. The Silk Road was the beginning of the "global village" that has become today's reality.

Going against the general trend of cultural merging, there has been a growing rediscovery of and interest in many cultural traditions because people fear their cultural identity will be swallowed up by a more dominant culture. As an example, in recent years many Native Americans have sought to return to their original territory and to reclaim that land legally. Many black Americans have tried to trace their ancestry back to their African roots. The end of the Soviet Union gave new life to hundreds of ethnic groups across its former territory.

Even though technology has aided globalization of culture, it has also aided the diversification of human culture. Cable TV has enabled many ethnic groups to have their own channels in their own language. The Internet has given rise to an explosion of websites and “blogs” devoted to the promotion and protection of various cultural traditions and values. Desktop publishing has allowed many groups to produce their own materials at relatively little cost. There are also many language- and culture-specific radio stations as well. These developments have allowed many cultures to thrive or revive in the midst of the overall trend towards universalization.

Cultural conflicts

Until recent history, the world's various cultural spheres could co-exist because there was minimal communication or crossover. Now that communication has expanded, transportation has improved, and economies are strongly interdependent, the world has "shrunk" to the point where the remaining cultural spheres routinely rub up against each other. There are those on all sides who welcome and embrace this, while there are others (also on all sides) who resist it.

At the same time, cultural struggles are taking place within the civilizations themselves. In both America and Europe, so-called "culture wars" have been taking place between a relatively secular, liberal, and progressive camp and a relatively religious, conservative, and traditional one. These wars have been taking place on many fronts: over abortion, drug use, homosexuality, sex education and the definition and meaning of marriage and family.



Although these conflicts involve many aspects, such as political power, the control of resources, the distribution of wealth, at their root is a clash over values. The basic challenge facing all of us is: how do we remain true to ourselves and our values and at the same time show respect to those whose values are different from ours in some way? Can we find common values that unite us all and allow us to live in peace with one another?

Universal values and virtues

Scientists have found that there are common values that people the world over believe in. For instance, there is no culture that praises a soldier who runs away from battle and betrays his country. The virtue of bravery is prized. There is no culture where dishonesty in business dealings is considered good or fair. The virtue of honesty is expected and admired. All cultures would praise a person who sacrifices himself or herself to save someone else. The virtue of self-sacrifice is honored. All cultures have strong rules against murder. The life of another human being is considered important; people are expected to exercise the virtue of self-control even when they are hurt or angered. The virtues of kindness and humility are recognized and appreciated anywhere in the world, whereas cruelty and arrogance are decried wherever a person goes.

There are universal values that have the power to unite people rather than dividing them. There is also what anthropologist James Q. Wilson calls a human "moral sense", a sense of right and wrong that also appears to be worldwide. Even children agree that some things are right and others are wrong. Children from all over the world agree, when interviewed, that it is wrong to trample the flowers, to hurt an animal, or to hit another person for no reason. Surely in every culture there are words for the child's cry, "He hit me first!" Or "That isn't fair!" Even children have a sense of right and wrong, of justice and injustice, even without being taught these things.

It is these ideals that give us the hope that we are indeed one human family. It is these universals that give us hope of one day living together in peace.

One world family

There is a growing awareness that we are truly a global family. The term "global village" was coined over forty years ago to describe our world. As communication and travel increased, the world became like a big neighborhood, rather than a vast, unexplored mass of people who were indescribably different from one another.

This concept was confirmed for us the first time we could see our common "home", the planet Earth, from outer space. In that image of Earth, upon which no national boundaries appeared, we could witness our true situation—that ultimately we all live in the same "house" and that we have a common destiny.

Today, through technology, we possess the power either to destroy our home—and ourselves—or make our home more hospitable, friendly, and prosperous for everyone. The key lies within our hearts. If it's true that we are like one family living in a common home, then we are really all brothers and sisters. How can you kill your brother or sister? If we understood that we are all related as one human family in our hearts, how could we in any way harm another human being?

Tomorrow's leaders will need to embrace the vision that we are all brothers and sisters. The task before us is to learn to live and work together to make a harmonious, happy, human family. In the 21st century we have the tools to make it possible. It's up to us to learn to use them properly and fulfill the age-old dream of world peace.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does "global village" mean?

2. In what ways are human beings all the same?

3. Which is more fundamental—our differences or what we have in common?

4. What traditions in your culture do you feel are in danger of being lost?

5. What kind of ethnic backgrounds are represented in your community? How much do you know about them?

6. Do you know anyone living in another part of the world?

7. Do you feel a sense of kinship with people who are far away when you read about them in magazines or books?

Exercise: "Getting to Know You"

Make a list of all the people in your area who are from a different background from your own. Choosing three of them, try to find out more about them and their families: What kind of traditions do they follow? What does their native dress look like? What are their beliefs? Do they ever feel misunderstood or mistreated because of their background? Try putting yourself in their shoes.

Personal Exercise: "Pen Pal"

Think of a country where you would like to have a pen pal. You are writing your first letter to this person. What are you going to say? What are you going to tell that person about yourself, your family and your country? What questions are you going to ask this person about themselves, their family, and their country? Now ask your parent to help you find a real pen pal from that country.

GLOSSARY

Definitions are taken or adapted from Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Edition (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 1999)

abandoned—to leave; to take away support, protection or help from

abnormal—unusual; not normal or average

abstinence—the state of staying away from; refusing to take, use, or indulge in

abundance—a lot of; large quantities; plenty

abuse (v and n)—a bad way to treat someone or something; using something badly;

the bad use of treatment of someone or something

accuse—to blame or charge with a fault or offense

adversity—something that goes against a person's well-being; hardship

advocate—support; speak out for

alienated—to feel distant or different or unfriendly toward someone or something

you used to feel close to

allegiance—loyalty; devotion

alternative—a different choice

alters—change; to make different but not to change completely

altruistic—unselfishly caring about and acting for the sake of another or others

ambivalences—having two strong but different feelings about a person or situation

ancestry—relatives you have descended from going back a long time

anguish—sorrow; upset; stress; worry

apathetic—feeling no interest; not caring

appalled—to be horrified by; shocked at

arrogance—thinking you are more important or better than other people

artificial—made by people, not nature

asceticism—the practices of denying yourself food, sleep, money, luxuries to reach greater spiritual awareness

assumptions—ideas a person takes to be true even if they are not proven

attributes—specific qualities or gifts of a person or thing

automatically—doing something without thinking, as a machine does

average—common; not out of the ordinary; like everyone else

bleak—no warmth, light, kindness or hope; empty, cold, windy

blissful—full of happiness; complete joy

bogged—sinking, having a hard time going forward, as if in mud

boundless—no boundaries; huge; big

budget—the amount of money that is planned or ready to be used for certain purposes

burden—something that is carried; a load, either mental or physical

captivating—to influence, attract or capture through charm

casualties—persons lost to death or injuries, as in war casualties

celibate—living without sexual intercourse, often throughout the lifetime

chastity—keeping sexually pure; not having sex outside of marriage

cherish—to hold dear; to hold precious

citizenry—a whole body of citizens

civilization—a high level of cultural and technological development

climactic—coming to the highest point of tension, drama, and excitement

compassionate—being kind, sympathetic, wanting to help others

compatible—able to live together well and in harmony

complex—made up of many paths

congested—too full; clogged; hard to pass through because too full

consciously—with thought and awareness; fully in the mind

consideration—long and careful thought

convert—to change over from one belief to another

conveyor—someone or something that carries or brings something from one place to another

cope—to try to handle or overcome problems and difficulties

correctives—something that corrects or makes things right

creative—able to make new things by using the imagination

crossover—coming in to new areas

crucial—important; cannot be done without; the main thing

culture—the customs, beliefs, social forms and material traits of a group

decades—ten year periods

decried—to cry out against; to have a low opinion of and say so

dedicate—to commit to a goal or a way of life

defective—not perfect; not normal; not working right

defy—to resist; to say no strongly; to do the opposite of what is asked

deficiency—not enough; a lack; a shortage

depletion—a state of being empty; emptiness; all used up and gone

depression—to feel sad, discouraged, unhappy, hopeless about the future

Destiny— fortune; fate; where a person will end up; where a person is going

devotion—acts of love or worship; dedication

dignity—the quality of being worthy, honored or esteemed

dilemmas—hard choices between two difficult problems or solutions

dire—extreme; desperate

discriminate—to notice the differences between people or things; sometimes to treat others poorly because they are different

disillusionment— disappointment; feeling one's dreams or hopes or beliefs did not come true

distinguish—to mentally separate into kinds of types

distractions—things that take the mind or thoughts away from problems or what a person was doing or thinking

diverse—various; many different kinds

dominate—to rule; control; take over

ecosystem—the many parts of a natural system of life forms living together

efficient—working well; using resources well; getting things done well; productive

ego—the self or a person's own idea of him- or herself

elude—to avoid; to escape; to get away from

embodied—to give a body to; to make real or into flesh form

embrace—to put you're arms around; hug; hold

emissions—letting something out; giving off

empathy—feeling someone else's feelings or experiences as if they were your own

empower—to give power to

enhance—to increase or improve

enlightenment—a state of mental or spiritual brilliance

enshrine—to keep as sacred; to put up or into a holy place to be protected

ensure—to make sure; to make safe; to make certain

enterprise—project, business, group undertaking

entity—a being; something that has its own separate existence from others

envious—painful or resentful feelings

essential—something basic; necessary; something that cannot be done without

ethical—to do with right and wrong

ethnic—having to do with the national, racial, tribal, religious or language group a person belongs to

exaggerate—to make bigger or better than something really is

exceptional—better than most; superior; unusual

exclusive—leaving others out; keeping others out

exhort—to urge strongly; to give strong warnings or advice

expansion—getting bigger; spreading; increasing

expectations—expecting things; looking forward to things

expertise—expert help, knowledge or opinion

extension—stretching something; pushing something out further but still being connected to it

External—the outward or outer part of something

extract—pulling or taking something out with some force

flourish—to grow a lot; to do well; to increase

foolish—silly; lacking in sense or wisdom

foresight—the ability to see ahead; to see something before it happens or comes to be

foster—to give parental care to; a home where orphans are given parental care

foundation—base or support on which a whole thing or structure stands

fragile—easily broken or destroyed

framework—basic structure or skeleton

friction—rubbing against each other; disagreements

fruition—completion; bringing pleasurable and satisfying results or fruits

fundamental—base; support; of central importance

gender—one's sex, whether male or female

gratification—pleasure; satisfaction; feeling pleased and satisfied

grind—weakening or destroying slowly, like rubbing something into a powder

grudge—a deep feeling of resentment held over a long period of time

hallmark—mark of purity or quality

humanitarian—a person who cares about and tries to help others

humility—having the quality of being serving; not proud; able to admit error and weakness

hurtling—to move very fast; with force

ideal—a mental picture of the way you would like to be; the way you would like things or other people to be; the highest, best way you can imagine people or things or the world to be

ignore—to not notice; to act like something or someone is not there

illustrious—standing out because of brightness or brilliance

imbecility—complete foolishness; being idiotic

imperative—very important; must be done; a command that must be obeyed

inalienable—cannot be taken away

incompetent—cannot do things right or well

indescribably—so good or bad it cannot be described or put into words

indignation—anger at something wrong, unjust, mean

inequality—not treated as being the same or equal; uneven or unfair treatment

inevitable—cannot be changed or avoided; it will definitely happen

infatuation—a foolish, short-lived affection for someone that feels like love but which is not real and does not last

inhabitants—people who live in a place or area

inhumane—cruel; not kind; inhuman

insecurity—a feeling of being not sure; unsafe; not stable

inspire—to make someone feel moved, motivated, or given enough liveliness and power to achieve or so something

integrity—completeness; wholeness; not being divided; to live up to one's beliefs and words; to live up to a code of honor or high standards

intensity—having a lot of strength, force, energy or power

intention—what a person is planning or meaning to do

intertwined—to be tied together; involved together

interwoven—to be mixed, blended, or woven together

intimacy—closeness; knowing someone warmly, personally, deeply

intimidation—to make someone fearful so they do what you say; using threats

intrigued—fascinated; wanting to know more

irresistible—very desirable and attractive; cannot be said no to

isolated—to be alone; to make someone be alone

justification—explaining why something is right or just

kinship—being related in a deep way, like relatives of the same blood

larceny—stealing someone's property

latter —the second of two groups, persons, or things named

liberation—being freed

littering—throwing small amounts of garbage on the ground or floor in public places; scattering

malicious—mean; nasty; wanting to hurt

maneuver—movement; smart shift of position

manipulation—to be a person who controls others or plays with others to fool or trap them

marshal—general officer; law officer; chief

mastery—having great skill, superior skill or knowledge

mediate—to help different sides come together in agreements, especially after a conflict

meditate—to think; reflect; to focus your thoughts on something

merge—to blend together; to become one

minorities—the smaller in number of two or more groups

moderation—not extreme; in medium amounts; not doing too much or too little

motivate—to cause a person to act or move; influence; drive

multi-culturalism—recognizing valuable contributions from many different cultures

municipal—having to do with local government

mystical—having a spiritual meaning or appearance

naïve—natural; simple; lacking in knowledge of the world

nourishment—food or that which makes a person or other living being grow

nurture—taking care of, feeding, so something or someone will grow well

obligation— duty; something you must or have to do

obstacle—things in the way; blocks; things that stop you

offshoots—branch; something that grows out of something else

options—choices

outstanding—so good, the person or thing or work stands out as being better than others

overarching—over all other things

oversimplified—to make something so simple as to actually make it wrong or not accurate

overwhelm—overpower; to ask to do too much; to ask to do things that are too difficult

penalties—a loss or hardship suffered for doing something wrong

perceptions—observations; feelings; sensing things

persecution—to bother, attack, accuse someone because of his or her beliefs or stands on issues of right and wrong

phenomena—everything that occurs that can be seen or heard rather than just thought about

pillars—a firm, upright support of a structure

pioneer—person or group that starts or helps open up a new line of thought or activity

postpone—to put off until another time

potential—possibility; something capable of developing into something

prevail—to win over with strength

prevalent—widespread; generally or widely powerful, accepted, favored, practiced

previous—that which came before

primary—first in importance or value

primitive—rough; simple; uncivilized; backward in technology

priorities—things that should come first; things that are most important

profound—deep; wise

prohibits—to stop by authority; to prevent or forbid

prolong—to lengthen the time of something

promote—to make higher, to contribute to the growth or prosperity of something

prophecy—a prediction of something to come; a divinely inspired vision of what will happen or be

prostitute—a woman or man who gives sexual services to others for money

ram—to bang hard into something with something so strong it causes breakage

rational—having to do with reason, with the mind

reaffirm—to say yes again; to give support to an idea or commitment

rebel—a person who takes up arms against or fights against a government or ruler

reclaim—to rescue from an undesirable state; to renew

recount—to tell about in detail

reform—to change; to shape again; to make better

rehabilitation—to bring back to former strength or capacity; to bring back into a good reputation

righteous—morally right; genuinely good

relentless—not stopping, refusing to be less hard, cruel, or severe

resentful—to be full of angry feelings; to be full of dislike

reside—to live or stay somewhere

resources—a source of supply or support; natural source of wealth; what can be used

reverence—to hold up high; to worship; to look up to

ridicule—to make fun of; to make someone an object of laughter

rigid—stiff; hard; hard to flex

ritual—the form and words of a ceremony, especially a religious ceremony

sacred—set apart for the worship of a god or God; holy

sacrifice—to give something up for a belief or for love of something

sanctity—holiness of life and character

sarcastic—speaking in such a way as to cut or sting another person

scriptural—according to sacred writings

seal—something that makes something else secure; to close or make secure against leaks or getting in; something that confirms or closes something

secularization—becoming non-religious

sensitive—easily hurt or damaged; responds easily; delicate

setbacks—things that stop or put back progress; defeats

shortcomings—defects; lacks; weaknesses

smug—very happy with the self to the point of selfishness

sophisticated—very developed, experienced, cultured and aware

splurge—to spend a lot on something

statistically—according to numbers

stimulate—to excite to activity, growth, or feelings

stress—strain; tension; being pulled in two or more directions at once

strife—conflict; fighting; struggle

strive—to give serious energy and effort to achieving something

substantial—real; true; important; having some weight

sulky—to be silently in a bad mood

suppression—to push down; to put down with authority; to keep secret

sustain—to give support or relief to; to carry along

sweltering—extremely hot

technique—method of doing something; achieving something

temperance—to be careful and wise in action, thought or feeling or use of alcohol

tenet—a principle or belief

tolerate—to put up with; to bear; to suffer or allow

tormented—to cause pain to body or mind over and over again

tracts—a stretch of land

transcend—to rise above or go beyond limits

transmit—to send from one person or place to another

traversed—to go against, to go or travel across or over

triumph—a victory; a win; a success

ultimate—the farthest point; the final or last thing; the end point

unconditional—not limited; without conditions on it; completely accepting

unconsciously—with being aware of something, even though it is coming from within

unique—unusual; one of a kind; being without equal; no one exactly the same as

universal—happening or being present everywhere; common to all people of all times and places

utilize—to make use of; to turn to practical use

vacuum—an emptiness of space

virtue—a moral strength or excellence; a character strength

vulnerable—open; open to being hurt or attacked; without defenses

well-nigh—almost; nearly; close to

wounded—hurt; having an injury; having broken skin and damaged tissue

wrested—to pull, force or move with a violent twisting motion