

DRAFT

Six Pillars Framework for Wellbeing, Positive Relationships, and a Sustainable Future

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1 Introduction

The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life.

Albert Einstein

This values education and personal development program is about being successful in the things that matter in life, so we must be clear on what matters in our lives and what our values are, otherwise we may find that something is missing. Our worldviews and values allow us to guide our lives and make sense of our lives and the world. All experiences are grounded in a perspective or another. A worldview seeks to answer, who I am, what is important to me and what is the nature of the world and universe I live in. The key questions in life are what values, skills and behaviours will bring us happiness, and be most beneficial to ourselves and others, and what values and behaviour will sustain our lives and relationships with others? This is important as developmental psychology has shown that high levels of personal evolution are earned over time by a sustained commitment (Combs, 2009).

In the absence of these answers, as William James puts it, the world is “a buzzing confusion”. With the advent of online engagement, exposure to values and ideas from other cultures has expanded. However, hyper-connectivity does not necessarily mean a greater understanding of ourselves or others. The big challenge for societies now is how to accommodate the new modernity while still embracing the nourishing aspects of values systems that have sustained the civilisations of the past. How do we embrace change while still valuing the wisdom of the past? Additionally, how can we overcome this “us versus them” mentality and polarisation we often find in media which are separating and fragmenting us from each other and causing us to not see the better side of others.

We urgently need to make sense of ourselves and the world. Now we have reached the point where we need to transform both how we think of the world and what we make of ourselves and our world. One of the problems is that we consider the success we have achieved in manipulating the world through science and technology as proof that we understand it. It is hardly surprising therefore that while we have succeeded in manipulating the world to achieve great scientific, economic, educational and social advances, we have also brought havoc to the world and our natural environment because we have not fully understood them and appreciated our impacts on the world.

1.1 The focus of our attention

The self can be described as having three fundamental orientations towards the world, a) as self-existing (is awareness of the self's existence as an individual consciousness distinct from others), b) as situated and connected (strong emotional bonds with family, tribe, group, nation and religion), and c) as a 'universal' identity that comes through connection in open networks, such as humanity, society, culture, spirituality, nature, and the economy, mediated internally by concepts and values. Each of which has internal content and external form (Trubshaw & Turfus, 2021).

This brings us to the issue to where we place the focus of our orientations towards the world and what values drive us. Public discourse in a culture can accentuate some ideas, beliefs, and values at the expense of others, so where do we start? McGilchrist (2021) argues that where we place our attention is not just another cognitive function, it is the disposition adopted by one's consciousness or worldview towards the world. For example, we can view a person as part of a process in a workplace - a part of a mechanism (policies and procedures) within a business or can view them as a whole person which causes us to deal with them in a more empathetic and holistic way; it all depends on our values and our plane of attention. A good analogy is using a radio; to begin with we try different channels and after a while we tune into one. The other channels are still there, it's just that we no longer are listening to them.

McGilchrist (2021) maintains that we must not take detached view of the world because we may no longer see the problems of others as our own. Present, detached, engaged, alienated, empathetic, broad or narrow; the focus of our attention has the power to alter whatever it meets. Since our consciousness plays some part in what comes into being, where we place our attention can both create or destroy, engage

with, or ignore, but never leave our world unchanged. This is a world from which we cannot detach ourselves since we are part of it and affected by our relationship with it. So how we attend to something or don't attend to it matters a very great deal. By paying a certain kind of attention, you can humanise or dehumanise, cherish or strip value. By a kind of alienating, fragmenting and focal attention, you can reduce humanity or the natural world to utility (McGilchrist, 2021). As a result alienating ourselves from the world.

Our worldview matters. This is why reductionist worldview (all things are mechanical products of a system) can lead to materialism in politics and economics putting the focus on a very narrow and detached view of humanity. The more one pays a dehumanising, mechanising attention to the world, the more those aspects of the world become our reality.

1.2 Our worldviews matter

Our worldviews can also be obstacles to seeing things in new ways and finding new possibilities. You can't put new wine into old wineskins – we may need to abandon old or dysfunctional views. For example, a report found that the majority of men don't pursue their dreams because of self-image issues and low self-esteem (Holden, 2022). When a new worldview comes along that challenges our existing views and truths, we resist it until we recognise the need to change our perceptions of reality because our 'truth' no longer fits reality. An example of resistance to new truths is scientific development. When new information appears that challenges existing theory, scientists often resist the new paradigm, but with time, the scientist's perception of his or her environment must be re-educated.

A friend of mine gave me (JB) a book about the possibilities of building a non-killing world. I am an idealist and believe in the inherent goodness of people and the possibilities for change. I also have been working for peace for 40 years, but my first reaction was, "is this really possible?" We wish for the best, but in the back of our minds, we are sceptical of whether it is possible to create a life and a world of peace, prosperity and happiness. Cynicism often seems the smarter choice than idealism. This questioning illustrates the engraved mindsets we hold and the need to see the power that values and ideals can have in transforming our world.

When we look at the violence in history, it is hard to be idealistic. Many anthropologists maintain that humans are instinctually or biologically programmed to be aggressive. However, we can be optimistic since some records show that over the past many centuries, less than 0.5 per-cent of all humans have killed others (Radhakrishnan, 2019). Therefore, given the evidence points to a greater percentage of peaceful socio-cultural systems, it would be incorrect to say that human nature is inherently non-peaceful (Sponsel, 2019).

One of the key messages of this text is the need to open our minds to the possibilities of what we can achieve in our lives and society with respect to the values and practices we adopt and with respect to our happiness, wellbeing and peace. We need to set sail on an amazing journey of discovery of new potential and joy. We hope to encourage people to prioritise a quest for joy, meaning, connection with others and service towards others, over external pursuits such as wealth and power.

While happiness is considered to be the proper measure of social progress and the goal of public policy, a large part of society's focus is to meet economic needs. Material wellbeing is clearly important, but prioritising meaning, connection and service are vital for creating a culture of love, prosperity and peace in our own lives and the lives of others. "A good life" and a "happy life" is more than accumulating material wealth and self-gratification. One can eat healthy food, exercise and live in a comfortable environment, yet still not be happy. These narrow motives cannot satisfy our need to feel connected to others and to transcend ourselves. Even if we have wealth, education and position we can still feel anxious because we do not feel that our lives have meaning, that we are connected and have not found a way to live for something greater than ourselves.

Wealth and power are often pursued because it is thought they will bring joy and satisfaction, and so often, the focus on work, practical matters and paying bills becomes our lives, but we know that life is more than this. We can observe in modern society that in spite of the deep-seated craving for love, almost everything is considered to be more important than love - success, prestige, money, as a result almost all our energy is used to learn how to achieve these aims and almost none to learn to love (Holden, 2022). How often do we sacrifice more meaningful pursuits and relations because we find our value in careers, external accomplishments and the approval of others?

The prevalence of mental health issues, injustice and conflict suggests that we need to pay more attention to the social foundations of happiness, namely love, values, meaning and our connection with others. Research shows that love, freedom, altruism, honesty, health, income and good governance are the main factors that support happiness and social wellbeing (Helliwell, Layard, & Sachs, 2017). To find wellbeing and happiness we need to feel that our lives have meaning and purpose, and connection with others. Psychologists Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung believe that the key to our mental health is love (Holden, 2022).

1.3 The great human contradiction

When human values, ideals and desires are fulfilled, happiness ensues. We all have desires and aims, and these are based on what we value and the ideals we are pursuing. Some desires and their associated practices can be positive but they can also be dysfunctional. Inappropriate desires and practices can lead to unethical and unproductive outcomes, which can lead to unhappiness for both ourselves and the others that are part of our lives. As Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue, we are collectively creating results that nobody wants.

We have all seen examples of ethical and effective behaviours in ourselves and others, but the opposite is also true. At times, both practices are evident in the same person, which is the great human contradiction. At times, we can be both good and unethical, and effective and ineffective in our lives. In this text, goodness is defined as serving the benefit of the whole as well as the individual, while unethical practices are self-serving, at the expense of others. Selfishness is at the core of the problem.

Otto Scharmer (2013) uses the analogy of the farmer's field to understand the great human contradictions. The farmer plants in the field, but the quality of the soil determines what it will produce. The social field of society is what we can see, but the quality of the soil below the social field – our humanity determines what we humans produce. The quality of the soil is how we relate to ourselves, each other and our natural environment. Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue that the contradiction in humans is an outcome three divides. First, the 'spiritual divide' within each of us which disconnects between self and self. There is a divide between one's current "self" and the emerging future "self" represents one's greatest potential. The spiritual divide

is the least notice by people. Symptoms such as anxiety, depression and suicide are expressions of the divide within ourselves. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), in 2000, more than twice as many people died from suicide as died in wars. In this text this division is referred to as the division between mind and body, between our conscience and our behaviours, and between what we know is right to do and what we actually do.

The second, is the social divide which is the disconnect from self and others, and the third is the ecological divide which is the result of human disconnect from nature.

We become what we love and who we love shapes what we become - Clare of Assisi

How can we mobilise a change of mindset to transform society? How can we change how systems are operating? The solution is changing our mindset and our 'heartset' (our capacity to love). Otto Scharmer calls for a mindset shift from an ego-centred (me) to an eco-centred (we) awareness, namely an awareness that focuses not only on my wellbeing, but the wellbeing of the whole. A new way of operating that is inclusive of the welfare of others. We need an open mind, open heart and open will. A new framework for learning, leading, innovating, and profound systemic renewal relies on the quality of results produced by any system depends on the quality of awareness from which people in the system operate. The success of our actions as change-makers does not depend on what we do or how we do it, but on the inner place from which we operate. We cannot transform the behaviour of systems unless we transform the quality of attention that people apply to their actions within those systems, both individually and collectively (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013).

The first step in being good and effective is getting our values right and putting our focus on the right things. This step is critical because pursuing the wrong values and aims, however much we believe they are right, can lead us to unhappiness. Additionally, knowledge about values, skills and behaviours can help us change how we interpret the world (a new worldview) and change our behaviour.

In this text love is the central value of life. It is the connecting force that binds us together as humans. Love allows us to transcend ourselves and achieve unity through the actions of love. Some psychologists maintain that our sense of separateness is the fatal flaw and central pathology of the human condition. Humans became divided within themselves and with others. Psychologists Eric Fromm and Otto Rank

recognised our sense of separateness as the central problem of human existence, and the root cause of all suffering and human destructiveness. Our deepest need is to overcome this separateness. Human history and the various texts are full of stories of humans recognising the division within themselves and with others.

Hence, we have to ask, what is the source or cause of this pathology (a departure from what is considered healthy). Unification Thought (UT) maintains that love is the force that binds us to each other and the natural world, once love becomes self-serving relationships become dysfunctional which leads to division, conflict and chaos (S. H. Lee, 1981).

1.4 Know thyself, live responsibly and lovingly

To exist is to change, to change is to mature, to mature is to go on creating oneself endlessly – Henri Bergson

Our understanding of the world we live in changes as we grow from infancy to childhood, and on to adulthood. Our relationships to others and community also changes. To develop one must acquire basic concepts in order to develop more complex ones and explore new possibilities. Many adults do not develop high levels of cognitive, interpersonal, emotional, value and moral understanding and skills because of poor family upbringing, disadvantaged education or other factors. As a society we are coming to understand the importance of cultural diversity, but not developmental diversity (Combs, 2009).

Historical wisdom and culture have given us the ability to shape our nature from one generation to another. Research and wisdom point to four fundamental issues with respect to being happy - living consciously (know thyself and your purpose), being at peace with oneself and others, and living responsibly and lovingly (connection). Some psychologists maintain that wellbeing and happiness are more than the absence of negative psychological states, but rather rely on a life of love, values and ideals that provide meaning and purpose, connection and belonging (see Figure 1.1) (Frankl, 1984; Kyrios, 2017).

What drives meaning and connection? It is the values, love and ideals that we pursue. Getting our values right is the first step on the journey. I need to determine what I will

pursue, who I will become and how my relationships (love) would be like when I'm happy.

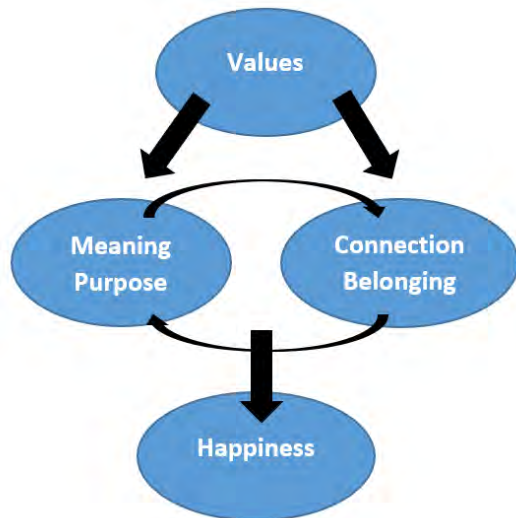


Figure 1.1 Meaning and Connection

The values and abilities outlined in this text are sourced from moral and developmental psychology, social and emotional learning (SEL) and moral philosophy. Government school curricula and skills frameworks are also included because they reflect the priorities that schools need to consider when planning teaching and learning concerning values, social and emotional learning, and the skills that individuals need to have to be effective in their lives and society.

1.5 Six Pillars of Meaning and Connection

This values education program and the resources that it contains outlines a Six Pillars Framework for personal wellbeing, loving relationships, and a sustainable and prosperous future. The topics covered in this program are framed within the Six Pillars framework. The basic structure of the six pillars come from Unification Thought (Jin, 2006; S. H. Lee, 1981), values education texts and other academic texts. Contributors to this work come from various academic disciplines, education and professions. When contributors use the term “I” to discuss personal experience this is followed by their initials, i.e. ‘JB’.

The audience for this text are senior high school students (10, 11 and 12), adults seeking personal development and relationship growth, and civil society, government

and business organisations seeking to build a moral, flourishing and sustainable society.

We maintain that this framework provides a holistic approach to education to foster good people, good education, good businesses, good government and good global citizens. The Six Pillars are briefly introduced here and the first three pillars are unpacked in the following chapters. The Six Pillars are underpinned by the values and abilities of six foundations (see Figure 1.2).

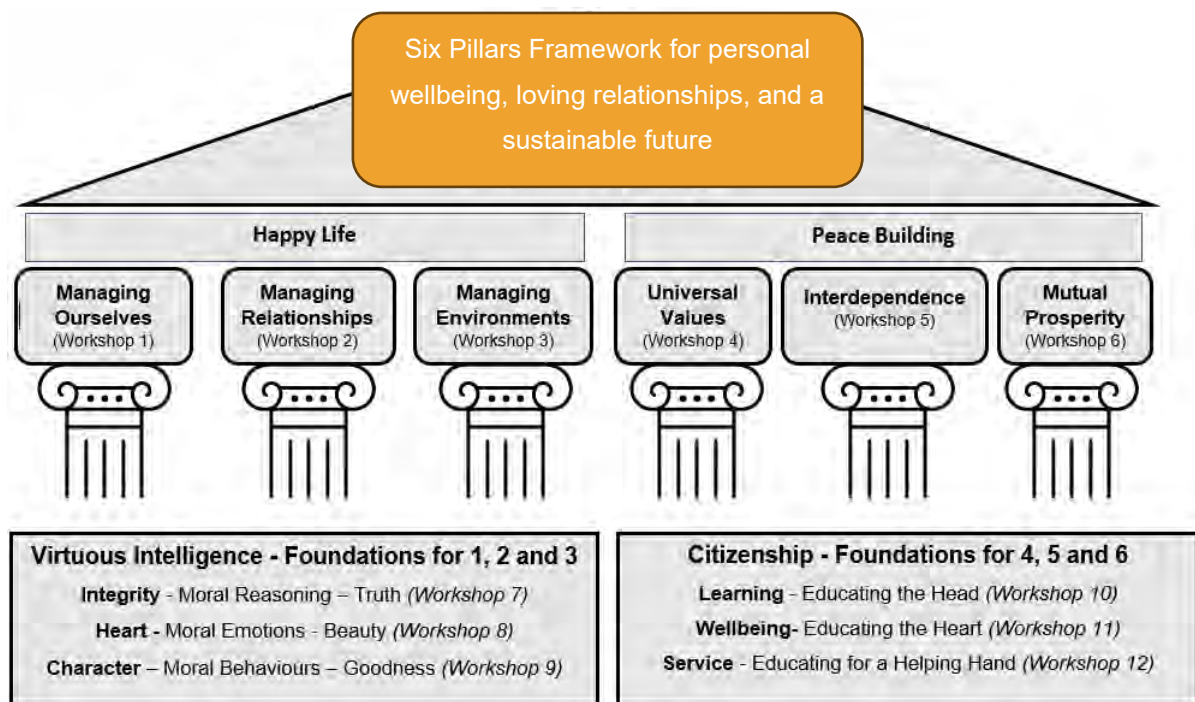


Figure 1.2 Six Pillars Framework for wellbeing, positive relationships, and a sustainable future.

1.6 Pillars 1, 2 and 3 – The Life Goals

The first three pillars are the Three Life Goals. Values education and social and emotional learning are based on learning the values and abilities that help us: 1) manage ourselves well; 2) manage our relationships well; and 3) manage our natural environment well – Humans create a comfortable living circumstances, but doing so with care for the natural environment. These three life goals allow us to contribute positively to society and the natural world (see Figure 1. 3).

Education includes fostering virtuous and excellent individuals, so that they can contribute positively to society and have the ability to realise good families in which parental love, conjugal love and children’s love are fully realised. Finally, is to educate

individuals to love and care for the natural environment. The realisation of virtuous and excellent individuals relies on education of the heart (love and moral values), to realise good families education of norms is needed (social values), and to care for the natural environment relies on heart and sustainable practices. The journey from ego-system (me) to eco-system (others) awareness, or from “me” to “we,” has three dimensions: (1) a better relation to ourselves; (2) better relations to others; (3) better relations to the whole system (the world and the natural environment) (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013).

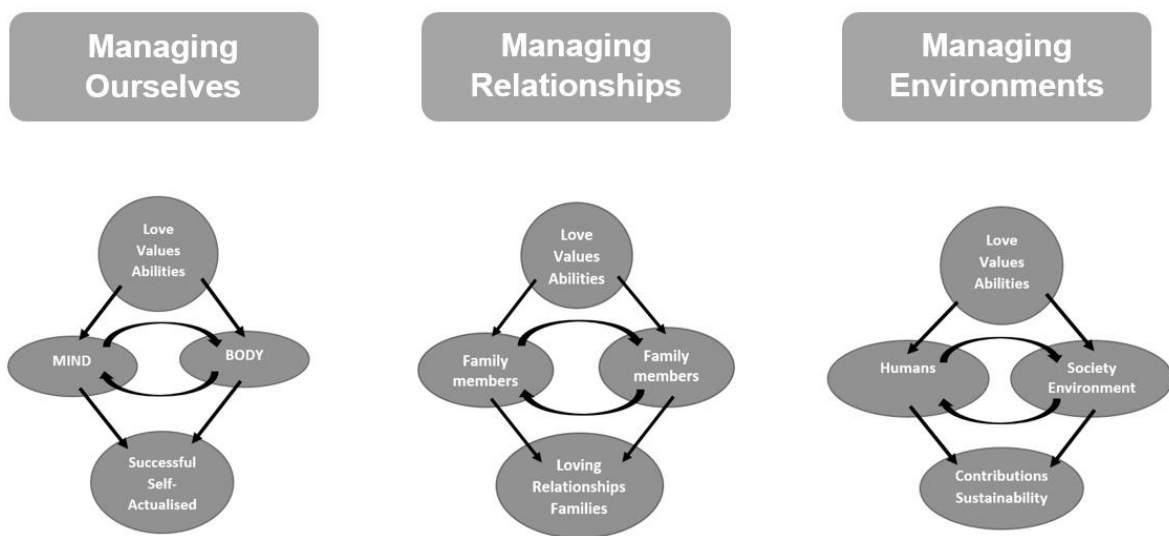


Figure 1.3 Three Life Goals

1.7 Pillars 3, 4 and 5 - Three Global Citizen Mindsets and Practices

The second set of pillars are the three global mindsets and practices that underpin a social vision for peace and development: 1) shared universal values; 2) interdependence; and 3) mutual prosperity (*Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Value - A Compilation of Academic Explorations, 2021*). These will be discussed in another text. These mindsets and practices foster national and global citizens who seek to find our common humanity and shared values. Global citizens also have a profound sense of our interdependence - an awareness of the interconnectedness of self, the human community and the natural environment (Singleton, 2015). A sense of interdependence and shared identity underpins social justice and relationships. Global citizens also recognise the importance of our mutual prosperity - locally, nationally and internationally (OECD, 2019).

1.8 Foundations 1, 2 and 3 - Three Moral and Psychological Domains

Three moral and psychological domains underpin the three life goals: 1) reasoning; 2) emotion; and 3) behaviour. In the Six Pillars Framework, these are labelled as Integrity, Heart, and Character. Integrity is the label for the values and abilities associated with moral reasoning, while the heart is the label for moral emotions, and character is the label for moral behaviours.

1.9 Foundations 4, 5 and 6 - Three Teaching and Learning Domains

The three teaching and learning domains of learning, wellbeing and service underpin the three Global Citizen Mindsets and Practices.

A holistic education needs to foster:

- 1) intellectual and creative abilities (learning);
- 2) emotional and social abilities that underpin wellbeing and connection with others; and
- 3) service learning through public service that fosters personal development and the common good.

This century's demands, require an upgrade to our educational system, one in which the inner life balances our concerns for skills that serve the marketplace (T. Hart, 2008). We need to foster the right mindsets and the right skillsets.

This text can be used to undertake reflections and activities that foster moral values, and emotional and social abilities. The values and abilities discussed throughout this book use the following structure:

1. **Key Topics** - What we need to know with respect to values and abilities.
2. **Critical Questions** - Reflections on values and abilities.
3. **Abilities and Activities** - What can be done to foster values and abilities?

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



Figure 1.4 The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

The United Nations 17 SDG are referenced and associated with various topics throughout this text because business and civil society organisations are becoming increasingly aware of the need to address these in their own organisations. The aim of the SDG is to provide a blueprint for peace, wellbeing and prosperity for humanity and the earth. The goals are supported by 168 targets and 330 indicators, which are detailed on the UN website (<https://sdgs.un.org/>)

The fourth industrial revolution, or so-called Industry 4.0 (I4.0), is emerging from the introduction of several advancements in a way that substantially and rapidly transforms the design, manufacturing, operation, and services related to manufacturing systems or products. One important dimension of Industry 4.0 is not seen simply as a new means to promote economic growth, but also as a pivotal element that will enable a more sustainable future. The 2030 Agenda of the United Nations for sustainable development sets out clear goals for the industry to foster the economy, while preserving social wellbeing and ecological sustainability (M. Mabkhot et al., 2021).

2 Pillar One – Managing Ourselves and Self-Actualisation



Related SDG - The UN SDG 3.4 states that by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing. Indicators that this goal is met are lower suicide mortality rate and coverage of treatment interventions (pharmacological, psychosocial and rehabilitation and aftercare services) for substance use disorders. Also, Goal 4 is to - Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. See <https://ourworldindata.org/sdgs>

This section is about mental wellbeing which is associated with better health and educational outcomes. Academic achievement and the health status of students are interrelated. Physical and emotional health-related problems may inhibit young people from learning by reducing their motivation to learn.

Many persons have the wrong idea of what constitutes true happiness.

It is not attained through self-gratification but through fidelity to a worthy purpose. -

Helen Keller

Helen Keller is encouraging us to achieve find a worthy purpose. Purpose, meaning and connection (love) and fulfilling our potential allows to achieve self-actualisation and wellbeing. Self-actualisation, in Maslow's hierarchy of needs, is the highest level of psychological development, where personal potential is fully realised after physical and ego needs have been fulfilled.

Becoming self-actualised is a conscious journey with eyes open to the reality of our own state of being and the higher ideals that we need to pursue to realise our own potential and for meaning and love. Most people live their lives in a straight line from

birth to grave, without looking left and right, without questioning their lives in the current state. They look at what needs to be attended to, right now, such as their careers and family needs. Although this focus is important, it may not lead to a life full of meaning and self-actualisation.

A wise lecturer with years of experience in teaching business innovation said that people who are creative and innovative think outside the box, looking left and right to see the bigger picture and the potentials that are not immediately apparent. This is also true for our own self-actualisation. When we become aware of our potential and shortcomings through self-reflection, personal growth can follow. In my own life, self-reflection made me realise what was truly important; peace within myself, meaning centred on authentic values and connections (love).

The focus in this chapter is on self-actualisation and managing ourselves well, which relies on a) finding purpose and meaning; b) living consciously; c) personal responsibility; d) understanding mind and body relations; e) managing mind and body and f) emotional intelligence.

2.1 Pillar 1a - Finding Meaning and Purpose

Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for. – Viktor Frankl

A young woman posted this Facebook status: “Has anyone seen the plot? I’ve f***** lost it somewhere”. Followed by a post about getting drunk on the weekend. We have all asked, what is the purpose of my life? This is an urgent question to answer. We need to know the ‘why’ of our lives on a daily basis. We do not want to feel anxious about the meaning of our lives. We do not want to feel that we are just part of a process. We want to feel that are part of something bigger than ourselves and our own self-interests. How do I find my purpose? - often hides fears, such as “I have no purpose” and I have no value” (Holden, 2022).

Bluezones.com research suggests that knowing our sense of purpose is worth up to seven years of extra life expectancy. The World Health Organization reports more than 800,000 people die by suicide every year. More people die from suicide than from

conflicts, wars and natural disasters combined (Schlein, 2014). This tells us a lot about the importance of mental wellbeing and finding meaning and connection.

2.1.1 Frankl' Levels of Meaning

According to Frankl's logotherapy, striving to find meaning in one's life is the primary motivational force in human beings. Logotherapy's main aim is to help us live a meaning-centred life. The *will to meaning* named by Frankel is more than just a secondary rationalisation to the *will for pleasure* (Freud's theory) and the *will to power* (Nietzsche's theory), the *will to meaning* comes first which lets us grow into bigger versions of ourselves (Holden, 2022).

Viktor Frankel's level of meaning seen below in Figure 2.1, identifies the three levels of meaning. In level 1, individual meaning requires us to find our unique and specific meaning that can only be fulfilled by us alone. This satisfies our own need for meaning. In level 2, shared meaning allows us to connect our true self with others, after all, meaning is intrinsic in every relationship. Meaning becomes larger as we connect to others such as our family. In level 3, the super meaning connects human beings to universal meaning or purpose. This meaning belongs to a much larger story which takes us beyond the realm of logic into the realm of universal ideals and love. By doing the inner work on level 1 and 2 we begin to glimpse the super meaning.

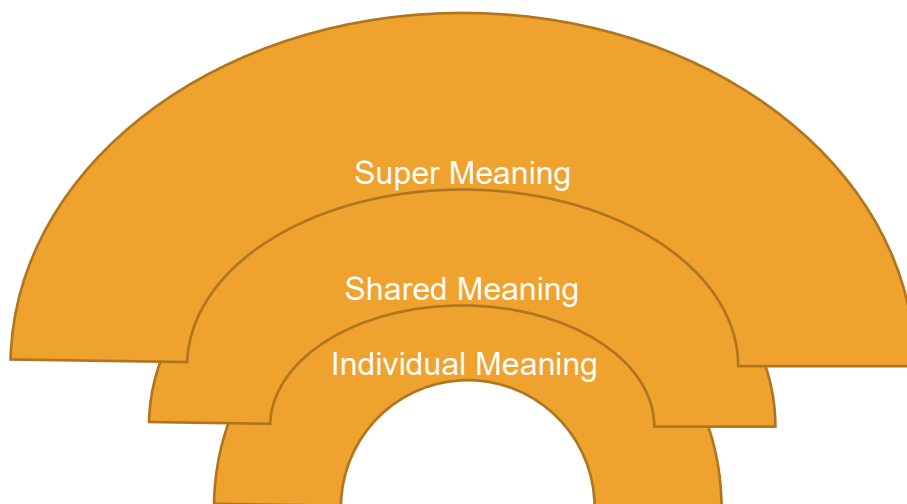


Figure 2.1 Frankl's Levels of Meaning

2.1.2 Connection and Meaning

Systems theory, neuroscience and Unification Thought shows that life is about interconnections, relationships and context. Research done by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found that 19.6% of those who live alone and “never or rarely” receive social and emotional support reported feelings of depression, compared to 11.6% of those who live with others. The report found similar results across all races, income levels and genders (Salai, 2024). Without our connections to others we feel isolated and lacking in support and meaning.

The system theory model allows us to understand the complexity of the world by looking at it in terms of relationships and wholes – the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. Systems thinking is a high level of conscious thought in which the individual sees the world in terms of interconnecting processes which are important for understanding our world. Anything we can think of, from economies to people, represents a manifold of connected facets which cannot be manipulated or understood separately from each other (Combs, 2009). For example, we can see that our natural environment is composed of many systems that impact and rely on each other (the solar system, electrical, biological and ecological systems) and human systems such as economic and political systems. When we disrupt one system this has an impact on another system. For example, deforestation impacts animal life. Systems theory has shown that life on earth is a complex web of natural and social systems, all interconnected, that giving-and-receiving actions, input and output, reciprocally feed back into each other (circularity) which is the context of the interactions (Seising, 2010; Straussfogel & Schilling, 2009).

Systems can vary from microscopic to universal. Examples include a cell, an ecosystem, a human body, a city, an organisation, a transport system, a health system, a country, the solar system. Systems exhibit these characteristics: all elements are required and are integrated with the broader purpose; can be part of bigger systems and have smaller sub-systems within them (Immaraj, 2024).

Open systems have input and output flows, exchanging matter, energy or information with their surroundings. System components impact each other creating a feedback loop; the process by which an effect (an output) feeds back (an input) onto its very cause (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). The system in Figure 2.2 represents

the feedback loop between humans and our natural environment. The connection (purpose, values, direction, and behaviours (inputs)) that humans have with the natural environment determines the quality of that environment (for good or for ill). Human inputs feedback on to humans in the form of outputs from the nature. If we pollute the environment, this will impact our health in a detrimental way. This provides a good example of how giving-and-receiving actions between subject (a system) and object (another system) can create value for good or for ill. Additionally, most human experiences and processes in nature can only be understood in context, namely where and how these experiences and processes take place, namely how giving-and-receiving actions between subject and object occur in lived experience. Understanding is context-bound. For example, if we want to understand the behavioural problems of a young person we may want to look at the family context in which the person is living.

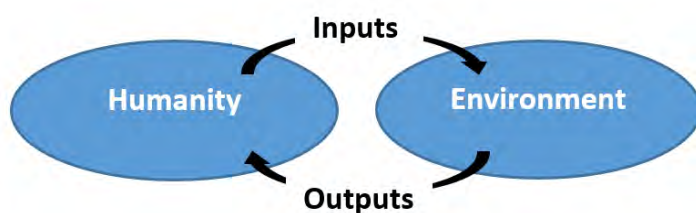


Figure 2.2 Feedback loop between humans and their natural environment

Neuroscience has shown that neurons that fire together, wire together. This means the more two neurons activate together, the stronger their connection becomes (M. Wood, 2024). UT maintains that all beings exist in a reciprocal relationship of giving and receiving between subject-object and the purpose of this is to establish a relationship with a counterpart. For example, human life is maintained through the relationship between cells and organs, and limbs and the circulatory systems and so on. The brain in the subject position, controls the muscles which are in an object position. In order for there be interactions between subject and object, one must initiate the relationship and the other respond. The initiator is the subject and the responding partner is the object. Giving and receiving love between subject-object partners is the central objective of our lives. Children growing up in homes that are full of vivid discussions learn how to share ideas and receive ideas. Also, babies exchange

sounds with other babies and it's fun for them to exchange the sounds and later real words with other people. This giving and receiving is vital for their brain development.

Group Activity – Everything is interconnected

1. Get the group to stand up in a circle.
2. Ask each person to pick two people in their mind from the group
3. Ask people to now move and form a triangle with an equal distance with those two people.
4. Take two people bring them to the front and ask the people to form their triangles again.
5. Now ask the group to analyse what happened.

Joy and meaning

2.1.3 Joy and meaning

What is joy? Joy is one of the three types of happiness. The other two are pleasure and satisfaction. Pleasure is happiness of the senses. Satisfaction needs a reason – I am happy because of ... what? Joy is part of our DNA. We are born with joy in us, if we have spent any time with a baby or an infant we know this is true. Joy is a life force. Following your joy connect you to your purpose on a personal level, on a shared level and on the universal level (Holden, 2022).

Where do we find joy and meaning? First, on an individual level we find joy and meaning in living our purpose, cultivating our skills and talents, and becoming the person we want to be and achieve our potential - self-actualisation.

Second, as we find love and joy in relation to our subject and object of love. Through our relationships, our lives reach a higher dimension of meaning – we live for something greater than ourselves. Holden (2022) maintains that love is at the heart of the inquiry. Happiness makes no sense without love and neither does success. He argues that if our definition of success has little or no mention of love then we need to get another definition. Too many of us are living with definitions of success that are

too narrow, two egocentric and self-serving which keep us chained to our narrow selves.

Connections with others provide meaning, joy and happiness which are most deeply found in love. Unification Thought (UT) maintains that humans beings have an unrestrainable impulse to seek joy through love (connection). Love is the emotional force that the subject and object partner (you and your loved one) give to each other (see Figure 2.3) (S. H. Lee, 1981).

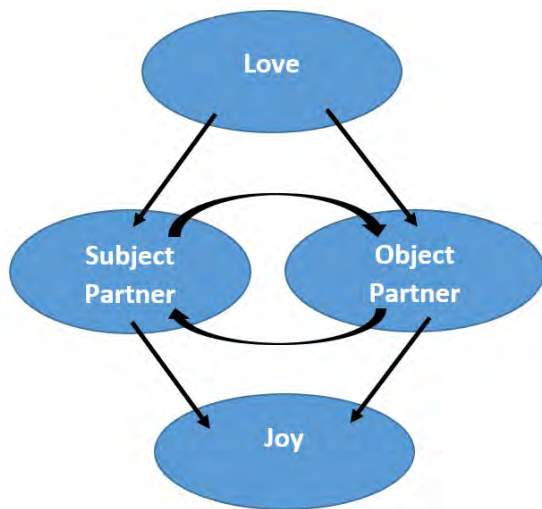


Figure 2.3 Joy is an Outcome of Relationships

Love and service for others can be a great source of meaning and purpose in our lives. When you are in love, you don't sit there thinking about the meaning of your life, as you are living that meaning and that happiness - your life makes sense. If you are searching for true love, then at least you know that it offers a profound source of meaning and happiness. On a shared level (beyond the individual level) our purpose enables us to overcome our sense of separateness from others and be an instrument for a greater good and the service to others. We need to embrace love as our shared purpose (Holden, 2022).

Let me share an experience I had about this. I have believed for 40 years that living for others in a loving way is vital for me and others. However, there came a time when I was in a dark and cynical place where I asked myself, why should I care about others? What's in it for me? I was part of the Nelson Mandela Committee in Australia

and was asked to attend the annual Nelson Mandela Lecture. I did not want to go; I thought to myself “what’s the point of all this service for others stuff?”. Well, I ended up going, out of a sense of duty to our president who is a friend of mine. The speaker at the lecture spoke about the life of a man who understood the importance of living for others - I was not convinced. I was in a resentful and self-centred space. A week passed and I snapped out of that dark mindset. I began to remember the joy, meaning, connection and value that comes from caring for others. The mindset of living for others provided me with the joy and meaning that relationships bring to my life. At that point I truly understood the core purpose and meaning of the universe – the relationship of love. Both the subject and the object need each other. We need our subject of love, we need our object of love, we are relational being which finds joy in a relationship with human beings. joy and love require an object and a subject of love (see Figure 2.3).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Write down the values and purposes that provide meaning to your life and share this with another.

I feel on purpose in my life when ...

I feel on purpose in my life when ...

I feel on purpose in my life when ...

2.1.4 Purpose, value and wellbeing

Our purposes provide us with a clear system of values for measuring our lives and defining the vision for our lives. A vision should be great and aspirational based on big ideals. For example, I want to be at peace in myself, be free of anxiety and worry, live consciously, stop doubting myself, be true to who I am with others, be the best husband and father, and make the world a better place. Mary Oliver’s poem “*Sometimes*” urges us to pay attention and not just to visit the world around us, but make our lives something particular and real.

Living consciously and finding meaning is important for our mental wellbeing, while a diminished sense of meaning and purpose undermines our wellbeing. Some

psychiatrists maintain that one-third of patients seeking help from mental health professionals present with the issue of lacking meaning and purpose in their lives, rather than chronic anxiety and depression. Such widespread phenomena as depression, aggression and addiction are not understandable unless we recognise the vacuum of meaning in the lives of many people (Frankl, 2006). Additionally, there is a very clear indication that young people generally are less resilient and more anxious than the older generation. Trubshaw and Turfus (2021) maintain that this may be associated with a loss of self-empowerment among young people and a largely comfortable existence that creates a sense of existential angst. With respect to self-actualisation, a clear purpose in life positively increases people's belief in their capacity to execute the behaviours that will produce the outcomes they want, which also plays a protective role against depression (Hosier, 2011).

The search for values, meaning and purpose starts with me, yet it can also be found in the wisdom and experience of history and accomplished in the smallest of tasks. These tasks, done with mindfulness, care and creativity, can contribute to our wellbeing, our home, our work places, our communities and our world (Damon, 2003).

The journey starts with authentic values and purposes that ring true for us. The development of morality may be instructive here. Becoming an adolescent shifts from conformity in ethical thinking to what adults say, towards the belief in absolute morality. At this point an adolescent believes that there is a true and final solution to any moral question. Many adults retain this absolute morality style of thinking with respect to values which is characteristic of fundamentalism in its many forms (Combs, 2009). For this reason it is important to think deeply about our values and worldviews. For example, the need for acceptance by peer groups, versus the need to be me, is an internal war that many of us face - the battle between ego and authentic values. Ego is as a term used in modern psychiatry to mean the many ways we manage our affairs to effectively to cope with the world around us, or not. A mature ego is important in managing our unconscious processes that can hijack our personality and our behaviours (Combs, 2009). In the context of this discussion a fragile or immature ego are the voices inside our heads and the unconscious processes that dictates the way we act and want to be seen in public by others. Our ego more than anything else keeps us in our comfort zone and from breaking out to be ourselves (Carnegie, 2003). We should never fake who we truly are. Values and meaning also involve finding an

attachment to something greater than ourselves.

2.1.5 The Purpose of the whole and the purpose of the individual

“What is my purpose?” can be problematic because the word “my” can narrow our inquiry right from the start. Your purpose is not only “your purpose” because it does not exist in isolation, it exists in relationship to others and to the rest of life. What you are calling my purpose is really a shared purpose that is bigger than you. For example, the liver has an individual purpose as a separate organ, but is part of the whole body – the bigger purpose. This is also true for the bee community, it serves its own purpose to look after the queen and reproduce, but it also pollinates the world's flora and crops – the bigger whole, the bees’ universal purpose, so to speak (Holden, 2022).

Holden (2022) maintains that to better appreciate our personal purpose we must consider humanity’s purpose. By doing this we no longer experience ourselves as a separate entity in the world, but rather as an expression of a greater purpose. Ego in this respect is our sense of a separate self, it is the “me”, “myself” and “I”. The mistake most of us make with our ego-self is to try to achieve ideals and great things by searching for a purpose that is independent of others. We have a shared purpose with all of creation which is far bigger than our ego – the narrow self. We have an individual purpose and a shared purpose with others – the whole. We should not try to figure out our purpose by ourselves inside our heads, we should do so with the help of others and in our relationships.

Unification Thought maintains that to better understand our individual purpose we need to see the link to the purpose of the whole – the bigger picture. When an individual being is seen as a being with dual purposes, namely, the “purpose for the individual” and the “purpose for the whole,” it can be called a connected being. Its purpose for the individual is to maintain its existence and development as an individual, and its purpose for the whole is to live for the existence and development of the whole (Jin, 2006).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Write down the values and purposes that provide meaning to your life and share this with another.

Define your individual purpose and your connection to the purpose of the whole.

2.2 Pillar 1b - Living Consciously and Conscientiously - Know Thyself

2.2.1 Living consciously

The great psychological, philosophical and spiritual teachings of history tell us that we are often not who we think we are; we need to discover who we truly are. Socrates said, "To know thyself is the beginning of wisdom". It is impossible to overcome our hang-ups and biases if we do not know what they are. Self-awareness is about value clarifying and preparing us to meet the challenges of life (Greenleaf, 2002).

In our technological world, we are often measured by our immediate accomplishments, such as the number of "hits" we get on social media, how much money we make or how we are advancing in our careers. We often go around looking for approval, rather than looking within ourselves for the personal qualities that allow us to be happy and self-actualised. In fact, we even make many of our value judgements based on group consensus, often without even realising it.

Knowing who we are and what is vital for us is important when constantly flooded with news, social media and commercial interests which influence us to compare ourselves with others that are more beautiful, youthful, rich, famous, successful and smart. However, such reflections can push us to know who we are, what truly matters to us and our shortcomings. We need to discover our strengths, our biases and our failings so that we can be our best selves and experience wellbeing. However noble our purpose and intentions may be, people make mistakes, even with the best of intentions.

The fact that we are always connected may deprive us of the time needed to pause and reflect. In this context, our ability to contemplate and reflect deeply about what is truly important in our lives is vital. To achieve what is important in our lives we need to think deeply about what we want to accomplish and persevere with what we believe

is important. We may have a project we want to do, but we cannot expect to be successful immediately or to not encounter difficulties. Additionally, we cannot expect people to immediately see the value of what we are doing and support it. To stop is to fail; to persevere is to succeed. To succeed we must endure and persevere without talking, quietly working to build our foundation without seeking recognition. We must act out of purpose without seeking recognition. The time will come when we can speak with authority based on our internal and external accomplishments. The people who are successful endure and persevere quietly and think deeply. In life, often the person who speaks more than everyone else will not necessarily be successful. When things become difficult the person who thinks deeply will continue building their foundation, without acting impulsively. They will resolve to start acting, and only speak when the foundation is built. It may feel good to speak out constantly, but in the long run, it is not wise (Moon, 1978).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Reflect on a daily basis on what is truly important to you. Do what is important without seeking the recognition of others. Do you speak a lot about what you want to accomplish or quietly work towards your goals?

Be at least as interested in what is going on inside you as what happens outside.

If you get the inside right, the outside will fall into place. - Eckhart Tolle

Self-awareness and self-evaluation of our values, thinking, emotions and behaviours are an integral part of our personal growth and wellbeing. This helps us understand our values - what we care about and what motivates us. It could be argued that many people are not living consciously, nor are they aware of who they are, or their strengths and weaknesses. We can observe what we do and how we do it. But the quality of the source (our inner place) from which we operate tends to be outside the range of our normal observation, attention, and awareness (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013).

There are many ways of knowing ourselves and the world around us. There are many developmental lines and these can be helpful to evaluate who we are and want to be - the cognitive line (an awareness of what is); the moral line (an awareness of what should be); emotional awareness; interpersonal (how we should

relate to others); the needs line (Maslow's need hierarchy - physiological, safety, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization); self-identity (who am I); aesthetic line (self-expression – beauty and art); spiritual line and the values line (what a person considers most important) (Combs, 2009). Additionally, you may consider yourself at Jenny Wade's "authentic stage" (cited in Combs, 2009, p. 86) where you feel well-grounded and comfortable with yourself, confident in the internal guidance of reason, enjoy a sense of self-actualization, are able to deal with most psychological challenges and stresses through your own inner resources.

2.2.2 Conscience and integrity

The purpose of self-inquiry is to help us recognise higher values, meaning and purpose in our lives. Self-inquiry cultivates self-awareness to recognise our inner voice (our conscience) and to make authentic choices. This generates self-honesty that is needed to meet the fears and demons that stand before us and to discover our creative potential (Holden, 2022). Living consciously and mindfully, with self-awareness and self-evaluation and listening to our conscience allows us to see what we are doing wrong and to learn from our mistakes. Living consciously also influences how we define and manage ourselves, how we develop our relationships, and how we act in the world and treat others with care and love. How many times do people hurt others because they are not aware of how their shortcomings and problems affect others? How many times do we hurt others and are not authentic because we do not listen to our conscience.

When we change our question from asking what is it we want, to what is being asked of us, our conscience opens up, which allows us to be influenced by it - this is truly a change of mind and heart. Our conscience teaches us that the ends and the means are inseparable. Our conscience introduces us into the world of relationships which moves us from an independent consciousness to an interdependent one. Conscience provides the 'why' (Covey, 2002).

Conscience and conscientiousness is a moral emotion which is defined by some moral psychologists as a person's integrated moral values which act as internal moral sanctions that guide decision making and behaviour (Berkowitz & Grych,

1998; Juthberg & Sundin, 2010; Schalkwijk, Stams, Stegge, Dekker, & Peen, 2016). With respect to conscience, a link exists between moral reasoning, emotion and behaviour. Colby & Damon (2015) maintain that moral reasoning is the voice of the conscience. Conscientiousness also involves reasoning and the emotional experience of feeling committed to and accountable for one's own moral values (Bauman, 2013; Goleman, 2004; Juthberg & Sundin, 2010) – the means and the ends must be moral. With respect to moral emotion and behaviour, conscience is operationalised as an emotion-regulating function and is linked to reparatory behaviours (Schalkwijk et al., 2016). Conscientious individuals have a desire for high quality interpersonal relationships (Cho, 2017). Conscientiousness is considered an anticipatory emotion or intuition prior to an action (Krettenauer & Johnston, 2011), and the recent 'intuitive turn' in moral psychology indicates that a set of intuitions underpin morality (J. Haidt, 2007; Mercier, 2011).

Conscience as an anticipatory emotion influence behaviour in two ways. First, it lead to self-evaluations as a result of emotional discomfort (guilt or remorse) following a behaviour that is in opposition to one's own moral values. Second, it influences moral reasoning when evaluating behavioural intentions (Giner-Sorolla, 2012; Krettenauer & Johnston, 2011; Lazuras, Barkoukis, Ourda, & Tsorbatzoudis, 2013; Schalkwijk et al., 2016; Wang, Yang, Yang, Wang, & Le, 2017). Some studies indicate that conscientiousness fosters moral responsibility and acts as a deterrent for immoral behaviour (Lazuras et al., 2013; Schalkwijk et al., 2016).

How we listen to our conscience is linked to our personal sense of integrity because conscientiousness is considered to be a sense of holding oneself accountable (Goleman, 2004). If we don't live by our conscience we will not experience integrity (Covey, 2002). To be a person of integrity we need to live up to our own moral values, and when there is a division between our values and our practices in daily life, we cannot be considered to have integrity. A personal sense of integrity is important because most individuals want to be valued as a moral person and have personal pride in themselves; when individuals do something that goes against our own values, they undermine their own sense of personal integrity (Carlson & Erickson, 1999; Dillena, Enter, Peters, Dijka, & Rotteveel, 2017).

Some moral psychologists maintain that conscientiousness influences behaviour because it acts as an *intuition of wrongness*, before a behaviour (Giner-Sorolla, 2012) or as a remorse, felt after a bad behaviour (Krettenauer & Johnston, 2011). If an individual has developed an internalised norm and does not act accordingly, they will experience an internal sanction in the form of a negative self-evaluation, feelings of remorse or a bad conscience and a feeling of a loss of integrity (Allison & Bussey, 2017; Blasch & Ohndorf, 2015).

In a study of 14 year old's use of social media they spoke about the remorse they and their peers felt about some of their past actions on social media. Tyrone said that "a lot of people will go back to what they've said on Facebook ... and say 'Why was I was such an idiot?'" Some students also spoke about feeling conscientious in standing up for others who were being bullied online. Shouja indicated, "I'm not exactly sure what the word I'm looking for is, but just like the feeling of just going on with it and pumped up to go for it and that you'd feel better after doing it". Dee, one of their teachers, maintained that the conscience was important because it "sets the foundation of your reasoning. I think children that have a bit more of a moral compass would genuinely behave more morally online". Additionally, some young people appeared to express their sense of responsibility by holding themselves accountable for their own practices while using social media, suggesting that this sense of responsibility may be linked to their conscience/remorse. This finding on remorse is important because some youth appeared to have developed internalised values and experienced internal sanctions (remorse) when they acted in ways that they felt contradicted their values. (Bellavance, 2018). Clearly integrity was important to them which was linked to their conscience.

With respect to how the conscience develops some moral psychologists maintain that moral emotions develop in children when they learn to distinguish between their own personal perspectives and those of others, and become aware that moral transgressions have negative consequences on others (Malti & Latzko, 2012). Moral emotions such as remorse allow individuals to learn from moral mistakes. Discussing conflict situations and the emotions they invoke in students can help to foster children's socio-moral sensitivity (Malti & Latzko, 2012). Some data suggest that emotional

learning could occur from past mistakes made while using social media (Bellavance, 2018).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Reflect on this question. How many times do people hurt others because they are not aware of how their shortcomings and problems affect others?

Share with someone else.

Self-awareness and self-evaluation allow us to see what we are doing wrong and to learn from our mistakes. How does this apply to you? What are the benefits of such reflections to your life and those around you? Was this linked to your conscience and if so, what role did it play?

2.2.3 Self-Awareness and Self-Evaluation

Your purpose is to escape the chains of your narrow self and express your true self –

Robert Holden



Figure 2.4 Plato's Cave (This image is licensed under Creative Commons)

The analogy of Plato's Cave describes a group of people who have lived their lives chained to the wall of a cave, facing a blank wall. The people watch shadows projected on the wall from objects passing in front of a fire behind them. The shadows are the prisoners view of reality which are not accurate representations of the real world, while the objects seen in sunlight represent the true forms of objects. Socrates explains how

the philosopher and the conscious ones are like prisoners freed from the cave who come to understand that the shadows on the wall are not the reality of the world ("Allegory of the cave," 2022).

Departure from the cave

When one prisoner is freed and leaves the cave, the light hurts his eyes, this makes it difficult to see objects in the world, as they really are. If the prisoner was told that what he is seeing now is real instead of what he saw on the wall of the cave, he would not believe it. In the pain of sunlight the freed prisoner would turn away and run back to what he is accustomed to in the cave. Now suppose that someone should drag him up the rough ascent of the cave and never stop until he could drag him out into the light of the sun. The prisoner would be angry and in pain. However, slowly his eyes would adjust to the sunlight and gradually see people and things as they really are.

Our ego must die before we can see the world in a new way (Holden, 2022). Leaving the cave is like dying. People resist letting go of their small ideas about the world and who they are, but this is vital in order to embrace the bigger self and the greater world outside the cave.

Return to the cave

The freed prisoner would think that the world outside the cave was superior to the world he experienced inside the cave and would attempt to share this with the other prisoners to convince them to take the journey outside the cave. The freed returning prisoner, whose eyes are now unaccustomed to the darkness of the cave would be a blind man when he re-enters the cave. The prisoners, according to Plato, would infer from the returning man's blindness that the journey out of the cave had harmed him and that they should not undertake a similar journey and resist any attempts to free them.

Griffith (2019) maintained that Plato's analogy describes the human condition. The humans living in a cave are in a state of denial of their true human condition. The individual who leaves the cave into the light of day sees for the first time the real world as it really is, or sees themselves as they truly are. The freed prisoner returns to the cave to tell the others that they only see shadows of objects and shadows of who they truly are, and that the real world awaits them if they're willing to struggle to free themselves from the bonds of the cave. This symbolises the false truths of the world

and their own lack of self-awareness. Humans need to escape into a sun-filled setting outside the cave, which represents the transition to the real world of truth or proper knowledge. However, the cave dwellers resist leaving the cave, which represents a human unwillingness to see the truth and confront the reality of the human condition. People stuck in the cave can be experts at criticising others and interfering in the affairs of others, but not necessarily good at evaluating and changing themselves. People stuck in the cave may think that the situation they find themselves in is the problem, however, the problem can often be our perceptions of the situation and how we react to it.

Self-awareness and self-evaluation must be the focus of our reflections. As people who leave the cave, we need to focus our energies on seeking truth and changing ourselves and the world. The heroes journey is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than themselves. The hero starts the journey with a narrow self, but goes on the journey to experience a transformation that allows new consciousness to occur (Holden, 2022).

Becoming aware of my failings towards others, such as not listening well to them, allowed me to make a greater effort to listen. Becoming aware of my judgemental attitudes allowed me to judge others less and discover the good in people. Leaving the cave allowed me to see a different reality.

Self-awareness (leaving the cave) is not easy when it comes to emotions because self-awareness may cause emotional discomfort (the sunlight hurts the eyes). Additionally, emotions typically occur before we become aware of them. Science has shown that parts of our brain (the amygdala) react more quickly than the thinking brain (the neo-cortex), such as when we need to react to an immediate threat. This mechanism is good for dangerous situations but can be bad when we overreact emotionally to certain events, or when we act without thinking if we have developed dysfunctional brain patterns (Goleman, 2004), such as seeking attention by crisis, judging others without thinking, thinking that others don't like us, and constant worrying, to name a few. Another distraction in the cave can be making the focus of events about themselves. Some people turn events into a crisis and turn the focus onto themselves. I call this, 'seeking attention by crisis'. This is something we could expect from a teenager, not an adult.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Is Plato's analogy one that describes peoples' attitudes?

Do you think you are more like the prisoners who do not want to leave the cave or the one who wants to leave? If so, why?

Would you go back and tell the others that there is a reality outside the cave?

2.2.4 How do we Become Self-Aware?

So how do we leave the cave and find out what our strengths and weaknesses are? There are several ways. First, we can find out by paying close attention to what we do and how we treat others and being honest with ourselves and others (Peterson, 2018). What we think, say and do are expressions of our values and aspirations. We use the sunlight of self-awareness to renew ourselves and free ourselves from dysfunctional mental patterns and behaviours. I certainly learn about myself when I observe my thinking and behaviours, and when I genuinely express to others what is important to me. When you honestly express your views, you learn a lot about yourself; the good and the improvements needed.

2.2.4.1 Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

Self-awareness (seeking to leave the cave) is the faculty that psychotherapy seeks to strengthen. For example, cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) helps people identify and change thinking and behaviour patterns that are harmful or ineffective, replacing them with more accurate thoughts and functional behaviours. CBT maintains that emotions and behaviours are influenced by perceptions of events. For example, depressed patients are considered to be excessively negative in their interpretations of events. The therapist and patient work together to identify maladaptive thinking and behaviour, test their validity, and make revisions if needed (Fenn & Byrne, 2013).

A key cognitive concept in CBT is 'guided discovery' (Fenn & Byrne, 2013). This involves trying to understand the patient's view of things and helping them expand their thinking to become aware of their underlying assumptions and discover alternative perspectives (other possibilities) and solutions for themselves. Therapists

use questions to probe a patient’s assumptions, question the reasons and evidence for their beliefs, highlight other perspectives and probe implications. To target dysfunctional assumptions, the patient can be asked to provide evidence that supports or does not support their assumptions. For example, ‘What else could we assume?’, ‘What do you think causes ...?’, ‘What alternative ways of looking at this are there?’ and ‘Why is ... important?’.

Activities – Write in your journal and share with another.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

1. Think of a situation where there was conflict or discomfort with another person.
2. Write down what you were thinking at that time about that person – the story.
3. Write what you consider to be the facts.
4. Share with your group how much was the story and how much were facts.

Story	Fact

Activity - Question Mental Your Models

Another technique is practising hearing your anxious and doomsday automatic thoughts by saying them with a funny voice like Elmer Fudd or Daffy Duck. It will sound really silly, but you can quickly turn an anxious or upsetting moment into a humorous one. This is also a good activity for children.

Write in your journal and share with another

Question your own mental models. People are experts at judging others and events. We must be able to questions the assumptions we make of others and events. Ask;
 Why did they behave that way?
 What was my reaction telling me about myself?

Acknowledge what you are feeling and adjust your emotions – maybe they were having a bad day, maybe this is an opportunity not a problem, take on positive emotions like gratitude.

Adjust the behaviour that you identified as wrong.

Adjust your thinking - self talk – “John stop catastrophising about events that you have no control or may not happen.”

Rewriting Rigid Rules About Living (Alberts, 2022)

Rigid beliefs about life stem from persistent, irrational demands about ourselves, others, and the world. To become less rigid in their beliefs about life, individuals can replace demands with flexible preferences that set more realistic expectations for themselves and others. In doing so they can disengage from unrealistic expectations directed at the self and others.

Step 1: Identify your rigid beliefs

- I must achieve perfect results.
- I should always be successful.
- Other people should show me respect.
- People ought to know better.
- I must be liked by everyone I meet.
- Other people should see things from my point of view.
- Life should not be difficult or frustrating.

Take some time to think about beliefs you have that come from demands or expectations about yourself, others, or the world around you.

Write down these rigid beliefs in your journal.

Step 2: Reflecting on rigid beliefs

How does this rigid belief make you feel?

What demands are you making over which you have no control?

In what ways does this belief set unrealistic expectations for yourself or others?

Step 3: Replacing a rigid belief with a flexible alternative

This step is about creating a new flexible belief and opportunities to replace the rigid belief detailed above. To do this, you will think about how you might change demands into flexible preferences.

Instead of thinking about what must or should happen, think about what you would prefer to have to happen and what opportunities lie before you. Let's use the example, "I should always be successful, and people should respect me." A more flexible alternative that considers your preferences and desires rather than demands would be: "I would prefer to be successful and respected, but no one is perfect or liked by everyone. We can't get everything we want and demanding that from other people is unrealistic."

So, how would you prefer things to be in this situation?

I would prefer/I would like...

Step 4: Reflecting on the flexible belief

How does this flexible belief make you feel?

In what ways does this belief set more realistic expectations for yourself or others?

How does this belief give you more control in this situation?

Does changing your belief allow you to see new possibilities?

2.2.4.2 Mental prisons – Free your mind, free yourself, be yourself

That you may retain yourself respect, it is better to displease the people by doing what you know is right, then to temporarily please them by doing what you know is wrong.

William J. H. Boetcker

The second way to discover our strengths and weaknesses is by becoming aware that we have created mental prisons for ourselves. One of these prisons are the deeply engrained patterns of thought and behaviours that govern our lives. Another is the constant racing in our minds about the past and the future, the worries and not living

in the moment (Tolle, 1999). The source of our suffering can often be dysfunctional mental patterns in our own minds. Holden (2022) maintains that we are more prone to stress when we don't listen to our inner voice, when we make inauthentic choices and we are not living our authentic purpose. He recommends that we become curious about the anxiety and stress to discover the message behind them.

For example, for me, this meant becoming aware of my need for the approval of others and letting go of this need. The desire for approval led me to not be true to myself, which caused me to suffer. This realisation allowed me to free myself from the mental prison I had created for myself. Let's call it the 'approval of others prison'. People are often imprisoned by their concepts, judgements, insecurities, anger and anxiety, and are often not aware of them. They just feel anxious, dissatisfied and angry, and they do not know why.

You might think about doing public speaking or starting a project, and you immediately become self-conscious and anxious about what others might think, or that you might not be good enough. We are building new prisons for ourselves through the stories we tell ourselves. Our prisons can also be the possessions we do not need and the work we do not want to do, to name a few.

Watching the Thinker

Tolle (1999) maintains that we are not our minds. We are not these compulsive thoughts that run through our minds. In fact, compulsive thinking is an addiction. Try and stop it and you will see how hard it is to stop thinking in negative terms or going over in your mind about thoughts that have very little connection to reality, or that you cannot do anything about. Identification with our mind creates a screen of concepts, labels, and judgements that twist our perceptions of reality and interfere with our relationships. We must become aware of our dysfunctional thinking. Whenever we are able to observe our mind, we are on the journey to free our mind from being trapped in dysfunctional thinking. We need to free ourselves from involuntary internal dialogues - the thoughts that imprison us. Tolle referred to this as 'watching the thinker'. We are not free because we do not know our authentic or dysfunctional selves. We are not free because we struggle to manage our minds well, and consequently our behaviours. We are not free because we are separated from our true selves. Our minds and body are not united nor focussed on true values.

I once saw a movie about the life of the civil rights leader, Dr Martin Luther King. I'm not sure if the movie reflected events correctly, but I learnt something important from it. In the movie, when Dr King went to court to demand basic human rights, he reflected that he had entered the courtroom with a 'slave mentality'. Leaving the courtroom, he determined that he would never again enter a courtroom with this sort of mentality, begging for basic human rights and dignity. He needed to free his mind first. In a 1954 sermon, he said, "Here is another type of slavery which is probably more prevalent and certainly more injurious than physical bondage, namely mental slavery. This is slavery that the individual inflicts upon himself." (King, 1954).

Setting myself free from the mental prisons that I have created for myself is an important purpose for me, but I had to become aware of these first. We create so many inner dialogues and stories in our minds, to the point where sometimes they consume us. I had to be aware of my emotional desire for approval, my anger, and my insecurities before I could start managing my thinking, emotions and behaviours in this regard, and be true to myself and at peace.

Abilities and Activities - Emotional Self-Awareness

An important ability is identifying and describing the factors that influence our thinking and emotional responses. A good method for achieving this ability is to make a list of the thinking and emotions that have guided your actions in the past – the good, the bad and the ugly. List all the fixations in your mind with the past and the future. List your insecurities. Now list how you can use this information to monitor your thinking and emotions and to guide your thinking and actions in the future.

2.3 Pillar 1c - Personal Responsibility

The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. Becoming conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge. —

Carl Jung, 1951

Self-actualisation and our search for meaning and happiness start when we realise that life does not owe us happiness and that human responsibility can never be avoided. Taking responsibility is the opposite of having a victim mentality. There truly is freedom in taking responsibility for how we respond to what happens to us in life.

Research suggests that complaining or venting won't make you feel better. You'll feel worse—and in the process, alter the way your brain functions. Something bad happens, to you or around you. You vent. Something else bad happens to or around you. You complain. Soon you become good at complaining. The way the brain functions shows that what we do often creates myelin, a microscopic neural substance that adds considerable speed and accuracy to thoughts and movement. Myelin strengthens neural pathways related to a particular skill. The problem with this process is that our neural pathways are not equipped to make value judgments. Do something positive over and over again, and you'll gain a useful skill and habit. Do something negative over and over again, and you'll build a destructive skill and habit. The lesson from the research is that the next time something goes wrong, don't waste time complaining, but put that same effort into making the situation better. Practice responding that way, and in time you'll build up neural pathways that make responding that way even easier (Haden, 2024).

Happiness cannot be pursued; it ensues from how we live our lives and the actualisation of a potential meaning or purpose (Frankl, 2006). Research suggests that the pursuit of happiness might sometimes lead to negative outcomes because there are wrong ways to pursue happiness and wrong types of happiness. The pursuit of happiness does not always appear to lead to desired outcomes. In fact, at times, the more people pursue happiness, the less they seem to be able to obtain it. People who are resilient to life's struggles, take responsibility for the challenges of life are happier because they accept that negative emotions are part of life. People who tend to accept (versus avoid) negative emotions exhibit lower levels of anxiety and depressive symptoms (Gruber, Mauss, & Tamir, 2011).

The quality of our lives depends upon how much we take responsibility for ourselves and how we become self-actualised. If we feel unhappy or unfulfilled, the urgent question is, "what do we need to do"? Erich Fromm (cited in Combs, 2009, p. 127) maintained in his book about Germany during the Third Reich that an escape from

individuality, and the choices and responsibilities that go with it can lead to serious personal and social problems.

The Chinese philosopher, Confucius, used archery as a way to illustrate personal responsibility. When the archer misses the centre of the target, he turns to himself to seek the cause of the failure. Psychology has shown that when people are aware of their personal sense of responsibility and their responsibilities, they are better able to beat their fears, realise their values, have positive emotions, help others, try to find solutions instead of running away from problems, turn negative situations into positive ones, achieve goals, accept difficulties, learn lessons, work hard and learn how to deal with stress (Okan & Ekşi, 2017).

Frankl (2006) suggested that we can even find meaning and growth in our struggles, the journey and suffering. Life is not without its challenges or worries, however, individuals who try to decipher the message behind hardships will grow through their tribulations. I would suspect that for most of us, our struggles have provided us with opportunities to learn and grow.

2.3.1 The Hero's Journey and Responsibility

"One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious. The latter procedure, however, is disagreeable and therefore not popular." Carl Jung

Carl Young founded analytical psychology. In this quote he reveals the hero's journey; the hero leaves the comfort of their normal life to challenge their own demons (internal struggles) to be the person they want to be, or to pursue higher ideals or a greater cause, or to fight external demons. Along the journey the hero faces challenges on a personal level, but also from those who oppose them on their journey.

The hero's journey is a common thread that runs through myth and legend, across cultures, and presents itself in stories told throughout the world. Heroes take journeys, confront dragons and discover treasures. Everyone is a hero, or has the possibility to be one in their life journey. Heroes are ordinary people, on an extraordinary journey. We all have a voice inside that believes we are destined for something special, something greater than ourselves. It's about our ability to be inspired by a dream and pursue it to follow our hearts and keep moving forward even when we doubt ourselves or others doubt us.

Joseph Campbell described the hero's journey as having three stages – the departure, the initiation and the return. These themes serve as a powerful understanding of the human experience and personal development to achieve our own highest unique potential (Zimberoff, 2009).

The Departure – The Call – Change your Life

The journey begins when a person is called to adventure and leaves the ordinary world of their lives. The ordinary world is the environment in which most people live, it is the place where most people feel comfortable, where the expectations we have placed on ourselves and the expectations placed on us by others exist. However, the ordinary world it is also a place where our dreams can be drained out of us and where we may come to feel that we are stuck and not moving forward. The hero does not want to stay in the ordinary world. This can be the point where we come to feel that it's time to take the first step and change our lives.

A person can choose to either accept or refuse the call to adventure, and the choice profoundly affects their character. Those who refuse the call to adventure no longer have ultimate control over the events of their own life.

Those who choose to accept the call begin the journey with the crossing of the threshold from the known into the unknown. The call comes to the potential hero through some extraordinary life experience that shakes them up such as illness, suffering, an encounter or an epiphany. Most of the time an incident occurs that summons us to begin the journey, we are kicked out of the ordinary in our lives and challenges occur. An event shocks us which wakes up to make a change, at which point we have crossed the threshold from the known into the unknown - 'we are not in Kansas anymore', so to speak. I had such an event when I was 19 years old. I had a disagreement with my father which caused me to leave home and my girlfriend broke up with me. I decided to go on a journey of the unknown and leave my home in Montreal Canada with just a backpack and to go to British Columbia. Many of us have had extraordinary life experience that shook us up. After the departure the hero recognises that they cannot return to the world they knew and they don't know what lies ahead.

Having roused ourselves from the status quo of ordinary world, we now prepare ourselves for the rigors of the journey to transform ourselves. Our yearning for

something greater has activated the beginnings of our search, which leads us to discover new truths separating us from generally accepted everyday consciousness. Discovering new truths and levels of consciousness creates portals to "crossing over" which involves learning to pay close attention to clues left by other seekers and learning to trust our inner guidance (Zimberoff, 2009).

The Initiation

During the journey we are confronted by outdated beliefs, early conclusions, deep-seated assumptions, and immature behaviour patterns that have been with us since childhood.

Along the way the hero experiences tests (psychological, physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual) to challenge them, but on the journey events and people help us. Those who are able to rely on the help of others along the journey will often find creative and enlightening solutions to the journey's challenges. Those who are able to pass the tests of the journey itself are rewarded with finding new possibilities, wisdom, following their dreams, being authentic, and finding joy and peace. In the Wizard of Oz, the Scarecrow, the Cowardly Lion, and the Tin Man were each given a representation of what they thought they had been lacking, but in each case they had demonstrated, through the journey itself, that they already possessed a brain, courage, and a heart, but they had to experience the journey in order to believe in themselves and find their those qualities (Zimberoff, 2009).

The hero's goal is to find the treasure (the highest expression of self, wisdom and joy). Some become seduced upon finding the treasure and succumb to greed; they keep it all for themselves, an unfortunate choice that usually leads to misery and ruin. Most heroes want to bring the treasure back to their loved ones and their community. However, this leads to undergoing additional hardships and challenges (Zimberoff, 2009).

The Return

The ending shows us how the dark power that challenged us can be overthrown. Whatever the fate of the hero, the real underlying purpose of the process has been to show us how, in the end, light overcomes the darkness. More important than

achieving the rewards of the journey in the form of personal growth, the ability to return to the community from which the journey began and communicate what has been learned is vital. The hero who achieves the goal of the journey but is unwilling to return and share what has been gained is unable to enjoy the fruits of his or her efforts. But if the hero returns home, and is able to understand the meaning of the experience and communicate the benefits of the journey to the community, then the hero's journey is complete.

Six archetypes of heroes

There are six archetypes of heroes that we can learn from in order to move forward on the journey (Villate, 2012).

1. The 'Orphan' archetype is embodied when people see themselves as victims and focus on their suffering. They need to learn to feel their feelings so they can move through them and let them go.
2. Through their journey 'Wanderers' seek to discover their own identity so that their work and life reflect their purpose and feed their passion. Thus, their task is to find themselves.
3. 'Warriors' are focused on achieving their goals and defeating the competition. The task of Warriors is to prove their worth. However, the Warrior is a heroic archetype only when their courage and focus are employed for the greater good.
4. The task of the 'Altruist' is to show generosity. Altruists sacrifice for others, committing to something greater than themselves. They seek to make the world a better place.
5. The 'Innocent' archetype is guided by the gift of a deep faith in the unfolding of life. They trust that the various situations in life will lead them down the path for which they are destined. Through this surrender, they find happiness, which is their task.
6. The 'Magician' shares a basic worldview with the Innocent, but claims a greater amount of power, which is his or her gift. Innocents go with the flow and trust in a higher power and the universe, but Magicians take responsibility in a more active and immediate way for the state of their lives or of the planet.

The hero's journey takes you beyond the chains of the narrow self into achieving higher ideals. It is the journey that your ego-self takes to reach self-actualisation and

a purpose-driven life. The hero who starts the journey is not the same person who completes it.

Carl Young's Stage of Life

1. The Athlete: Early on, you want to make a name for yourself, create a good impression and be attractive. We are self-absorbed and pursue happiness, chase success, and we look for love and we are full of ambition, yet in this state we have not yet experienced a higher purpose than our ego.

2. The Warrior: At this stage we want to conquer the world, our aim is to be financially independent, to own our own home and assert our free will. Yet at this stage we begin to realise that we are here to love, but our circle of love is still narrow focusing on family.

3. The Statement: At this stage we begin to ask ourselves, "there must be more to life than this". The life that we are living feels too small for us now and we want to play a part in a bigger story. The most important question one can ask is "what am I living for?" Carl Young asked "what myth am I living?". A myth is a great story that you want to be part of, a story of love, a hero's journey to bring about change and make the world better, namely, a higher purpose that you give yourself fully to. At this stage we look out for what truly inspires us and what we want to give our life to. At this stage we must surrender our ego and find higher ideals, it is a stage when a single grain of wheat falls to the earth and dies so that it can bear new fruit.

4. The Spiritual: Now we are living an inspired life. We are not just driven by the rational and the small minded person we once were. We now recognise what inspires us and we do what we love. At this stage we are living for universal ideals. We no longer care about being normal, "To be normal is the ideal aim of the unsuccessful," said Carl Young.

Activities – Write in your journal and share with another.

Write in your journal about your own hero's journey and which archetypes and Young's stages of life applies to you and why.

Psychology and the dying of the ego

To free ourselves of the chains of the narrow selves and narrow lives we must allow our ego to die. Dying means letting go of our narrow selves including our self-image, the stories we tell ourselves about the world and being born again into a greater awareness of the reality of the world, and who we truly are and why we are here. The hero must be willing to die. First, this means to deny your immediate impulses in order to achieve a goal or something you value. Second, this means killing off your old ego (your smaller self). A hero is someone who has given their life to something bigger than themselves. You put the single seed of grain (your narrow self) into the ground and die to become a new fruit bearing self. Carl Young argued that the destabilisation of the ego is sometimes experienced as a kind of death with the transformative energies released in the dying of the ego (Zimberoff, 2009).

In psychology, one of the key points of the cognitive developmental process is the idea that development is not automatic. Development requires both an interaction between the person and the environment, and the stimulation of significant events that serve to move the individual toward the next stage. If the call to adventure is answered, clients, with the assistance of the counsellor, learn new ways of seeing the world and work toward a new way of living in the world. Furthermore, the development from one stage to the next involves a surrendering of the old way of meaning making and the development of a new way of seeing the world. This is, in essence, the death of the old and the birth of a new manner of seeing and being in the world (Lawson, 2005).

Abilities and Activities - The Values that Define Who You Are

Part 1 - Know Thyself: Write down what a better life means for you and what your dream life would look like.

Part 2 – Your Funeral: Now, imagine that you have just died. What would you like people to say about you at your funeral?

Are your answers the same for Part 1 and for Part 2?

If for Part 1, you wrote, “travel the world and make lots of money, and for Part 2 you wrote, “be a good friend, husband or mother” then your answers are incompatible and inconsistent. If your answers are the same, the chances are that you are currently doing what is important to you in your life (Saver, 2010).

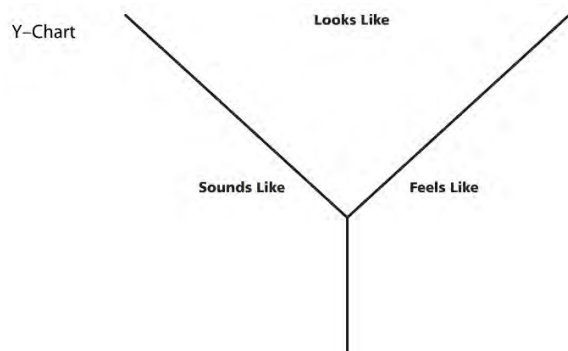
Part 3 – Your Identity: Now write down the values and behaviours that would make your life better. Ask yourself, what are the values that define me - my identity? Why are these important to me?

Part 4 – Your Struggles: Have there been times when you did not live up to your own values and expectations?

Do you understand the influence of your values on your reasoning and behaviour, such as the consequences of your actions on others, the mistakes made, and the influence of others on your own behaviours?

What did you learn about yourself and your values from this?

What did you learn from your struggles?



Use a Y-Chart to describe the three aspects of the topic. For example, what do your values and behaviours - sound like, feel like and look like? You could also '*think, pair and share*' with another person about the personal qualities you think are needed to achieve your values and purposes.

2.4 Pillar 1d - Understanding Mind and Body Relations

Understanding mind body relations is critical for personal development. Human development is perceived fundamentally in two ways, one being more rational and external, placing emphasis upon physical satisfaction and science. The other focused on the mind by seeking to elevate human consciousness through pursuing moral ideals and practices transcendent of physical needs. These currents in human life form the basis of the two dominant worldviews concerning human development and self-actualisation. The reason this is important is because values education is primarily about changing our consciousness and managing mind and body well.

In science, these two currents also exist, however, disagreements about the nature of human life regarding the role of the body, and human reasoning and consciousness

persist. One current in science focuses on the reductionist and materialist view of consciousness and mind based on biological, chemical and physical processes, while another current focuses on the science of human consciousness, reasoning and moral convictions in understanding human development (the subjective side of human experience).

2.4.1 The concepts of subject and object, and giving and receiving

It should be said at the onset that in this text, the relationship between mind and body is an example of subject/object relations where both the subject and the object reciprocally influence each other – a holistic approach. The mind is primarily in a subject position guiding behaviour, while the body can be in a subject position depending on the physical processes of the body. Unification Thought maintains that the subject position is the active one (i.e., giving) in relation to the object, whereas the object is passive (i.e., receiving) in relation to the subject. Terms such as central and dependent, dynamic and static, and initiating and responding characterise subject/object relations (Jin, 2006).

An example of the beneficial reciprocal nature of giving and receive between mind and body is when we make a resolution to exercise. This is the process of negative feedback. Exercising takes willpower and places the mind in the subject position to guide the body. It is also a process in which the mind pursues a goal and resists the impulse of the body to be lazy and not exercise. If laziness wins over the mind's determination, the body takes a subject role over the mind, thus reinforcing the lazy behaviour (see Figure 2.5). This latter scenario is the process of positive feedback, which, in this case, is not beneficial. However, positive feedback coming from the body can also be beneficial. When we exercise, our body feels better, which influences our desire to exercise thus reinforcing that behaviour.

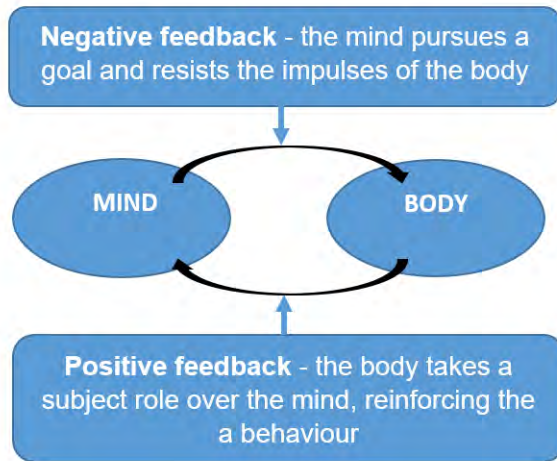


Figure 2.5 Mind/Body - Positive and Negative Feedback

In the physical world, various subject/object relations exist such as in the solar system and in the atom where the nucleus is central and the electrons are dependent. The relationship of 'central and dependent' also exists between parent animals and their young, between the educator and students, and between the giver and the receiver. It should be noted that the position of the subject and object are not fixed but dependant on the situation. For example, any human relationship involves a constant change in subject/object relation and who is giving and who is receiving. A father may give love and advice to his son, placing him in the subject/giving position, but the son can also give me love and advice. This giving and receiving of love and advice allows for personal growth and development to occur. The interplay between differing opinions (subject and object) can produce new alternatives and growth (See Figure 2.6).

Here is another example, the most important criteria for a successful relationship with one's partner is how we respond to each other. If one partner expresses an emotion or a state of being such as they come home and say, "I'm really tired today" and the other responds with compassion, "oh, how are you going?" This is an example of good giving and receiving since the person who expresses an emotion in the subject position gets a loving and compassionate response from their object of love turning towards the other, instead of away. The number one cause for breakdown in a relationship is turning away from the needs of the other, which brings us to clearly understand the importance of giving and receiving, namely, always seeking to give first. This indicates the reciprocal nature of life where all things exist in relation to one

another through the process of giving and receiving. Reciprocal comes from the Latin *reciprocus* (based on re- 'back' + pro- 'forward').

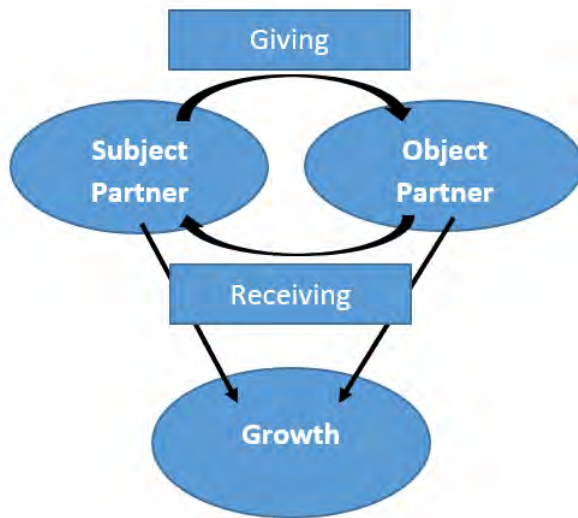


Figure 2.6 The reciprocal and interchangeable nature of subject and object

2.4.2 Holism - An Integrative Explanation of Existence

Mind and body as systems need to work harmoniously to act an integrative whole. Holism as a scientific and philosophical analytical approach to understanding our world, namely that through the process of giving and receiving, the subject and object change each other and form greater wholes - the whole is greater than the sum of its parts in order to understand a system (the first implication of holism). For example, in psychology, holism is an approach to understanding the human mind and behaviour that focuses on looking the person as a whole. In quantum physics holism maintains that a meaningful analysis of one system is indistinguishable from that of the other. Also, the objective in systems biology is to advance models of the interactions in a system, not only in terms of their component parts. Systems biology aims to understand how genes and proteins function together to form organisms like an animal cell. Scientific proponents of holism consider the search for the emergent properties within systems the primary reason to incorporate it into scientific assumptions or perspectives.

Why is this important for your life and personal development? In holism relationships don't just connect pre-existing things but modify what we mean by things. We come to

know the world and change the world when we interact with it (giving and receiving actions (G&R). The failure to observe this principle underlies some of the current misconceptions of science, politics, economics, philosophy and spirituality (McGilchrist, 2021). For example, the relationship between an individual's mind and body largely determines the person's value (how they effectively behave in their world - morally and physically), and their mental and physical health (how they manage mind and body well). Creativity is also G&R between subject and object which facilitates the discovery of the self, of others and things. Through G&R we come to know the world as we interact with it more and more, but we also nurture the world into being. The function and impact of love is like that. A mother (in the subject position) loves and nurtures her child (in the object position – the object of her love).

The second implication of Holism is that the universe is not a random grouping of dissociated entities moving aimlessly through time and space but rather systems of interrelated entities which interact in an orderly fashion guided by a unifying purpose. For example, some scientists maintain that the mind and body are fundamental structures and functions of the universe, not by-products of chance development. The mental and the physical developed together, as an expression of both the physical and mental life of the universe. Humans are composed of the same elements as the rest of the universe. The existence and relation between mind (mental) and brain (physical) may represent something more basic about the natural order. It could explain the appearance of mental life at complex levels of biological organisation. If there are organisms capable of reason, the possibility for such organisms must have been there from the beginning of the world. These organisms must have properties that are not merely accidental, hence, consciousness and reasoning must have been latent in the nature of things (Nagel, 2012).

An integrative explanation of existence (holism in science) maintains that life has a purpose moving towards more and more integrative wholes (i.e., combining two or more things to form an effective unit or system), which is the ordering or integration of matter into ever larger and more stable wholes when subject and object interact. Parts naturally work together to bring the whole into more advanced states. It may seem that randomness is the primary condition of life and the universe, and order is the exception. However, order is the universal norm. The flow of the universe is always creative, though it has order. It is a process of collaboration and co-creation

("Philosophy of mind," 2022). Physicists and neuroscientists reveals that the connectivity among neurons stems from universal networking principles, not just biological specifics. This discovery, transcending biology, potentially applies to non-biological networks like social interactions, offering insights into the fundamental nature of networking (M. Wood, 2024).

2.4.2.1 *An individual as an integrative whole*

When an individual's mind and body become united centring on love and values, they become an integrative harmonious whole to become self-actualised (see Figure 2.7). When a husband and wife (subject/objects of love) are united in love and share values, they form a larger integrative whole – a family (See Figure 2.8). This family expands into greater integrative wholes - a nation and the world greater (see Figure 2.9).

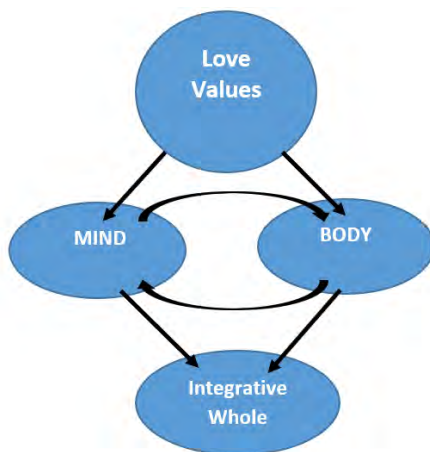


Figure 2.7 *An individual as a self-actualised integrative whole*

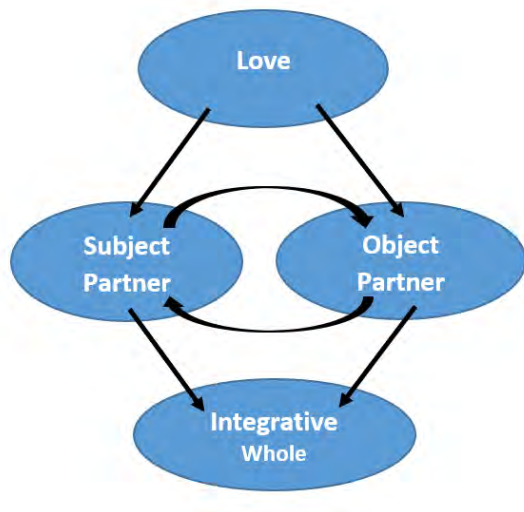


Figure 2.8 A loving family as an integrative whole

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others

Provide example of the beneficial reciprocal nature of giving and receive between mind and body in your life.

Provide some examples of good giving and receiving in your relationships and how you respond to your partner.

Unification Thought (UT), like holism maintains that everything exists and forms a greater integrative whole through the reciprocal relationships. How does this apply to your life?

2.4.3 Are we our Mind or our Body?

Understanding the relationship between mind/consciousness and body is crucial to personal development. Am I an outcome of my body, my physical impulses or my mind, my consciousness? Is human life is simply a response to a set of physical impulses, and are consciousness, freedom and free will myths? The study of consciousness has a long history, but what is consciousness? Are we able to recognise and respond to reason and values that are not just the product of our evolutionary responses or instincts? The mind (consciousness)/brain problem introduced at the birth of modern science may be harder to solve than imagined. Critical questions still need to be answered about what kind of being we are. This understanding is important when pursuing human development. The mind(consciousness)/ brain issue has is at the core of this text since its emphasis is

on the power we have to transform ourselves, define who we are and transform the world around us. Reasoning moves us beyond are biologically based dispositions. We must be mindful not to limit our focus on the organic and chemical nature of consciousness as this can cause us to disregard the psychological and moral dimensions and therefore the possibility of humans transforming themselves and their world. The issue is whether conscious thought and reasoning are vital links in the causal chain, as opposed to being merely a side effect of our biology and chemistry (Baumeister, Masicampo, & Vohs, 2011).

In this section the argument is made that human consciousness is real and vital in how humans have made the world. Human societies and cultures are narratively constructed, and the narrative of freedom is one of the most fundamental construct. Within this narrative the reductive idea of determinism (we are our physiochemical processes) is contradictory to the practice of morality, namely, that an action should be based on whether that action is judged to be right or wrong based on rules and principles. Additionally, freedom – willed action, responsibility, consequences, moral choice, truth and justice are the foundation of what we choose to call civilisation (Trubshaw & Turfus, 2021).

In this text, a holistic/systems approach to mind/body relations is taken which encourages us to avoid only considering the physiochemical, without considering the conscious and moral nature of human beings, because this can lead us to resign ourselves to, and excusing human behaviour, as purely physiological. The outcome of a purely physiological view steers us away from the possibility that people can consciously change their behaviours, overriding their biology when necessary (Griffith, 2019). The following section discusses these views, namely, the reductionist biological determinism and the subjective human experience (consciousness).

2.4.4 Reductionist biological determinism and the subjective human experience (consciousness)

Consciousness is one of the defining features of human life, yet difficult to explain. There are three lines of research with respect to mind and brain interactions and the science on this is still not definitive (Freeborn, 2019). These are: a) reductionist biological determinism (physiology is the primary determinant of character) b) the role of consciousness (the subjective human experiences - reasoning moves us beyond

our biologically based dispositions) and c) a holistic approach where consciousness and biological factors reciprocally influence each other.

While many biologists and psychologists might favour nature over nurture as the primary determinant of who we are and how we behave, there is evidence to the contrary, causing us to reject reductionist biological determinism as the only explanation of human nature (Sponsel, 2019). Nature is our pre-wired genetic inheritance and other biological factors, while nurture is the influence of external factors such as family upbringing, life experiences and learning, as well as, the role of consciousness and reasoning (the subjective human experiences).

2.4.4.1 Reductionist/Materialistic Science

The first line of research is reductionist biological determinism which maintains that human behaviour is primarily directed by biochemical mechanisms in the brain. Who we are, what we do and our personality and feelings are outcomes of these mechanisms. A reductionist outlook can lead to deterministic view, namely that free will and consciousness are illusions (Combs, 2009; McGilchrist, 2021). The brain is a cybernetic machine and the best way to understand it is to view it as an information processing device (Combs, 2009).

Reductionism as a philosophy of science is a theory that asserts that to understand the nature of complex things we need to reduce them to simpler or more fundamental things. Reductionist science argues that by discovering the basic elements of which everything is composed, and showing how they combine, will yield an understanding of the complexity we observe. Reductionism is often criticised on the ground that the whole, is not, identical to the sum total of its parts. Theoretical reductionism often claims (though not without controversy) that biology will ultimately be reduced to chemistry, and chemistry in turn will be reduced to physics ("Reductionism," 2022). The only way to understand the nature of anything we experience is by looking at the parts that things are made of and building up from there. How these things are related is viewed as a secondary matter (McGilchrist, 2021). However, it is argued that biological organisms are too complex to explain by looking at individual part numbers alone because this can lead to oversimplification (Brigandt & Love, 2017).

A reductionist approach to understanding human consciousness maintains that the only way to understand human life is through mechanistic science (Torey, 2009).

According to this position mental states, and free will are material entities, and so completely determined by natural laws ("Philosophy of mind," 2022). The unconscious and automatic processes that occur in the brain have led some to questions as to whether conscious thought has any influence on behaviour at all. Choices and feelings are not based on aspirations or free will (Baumeister et al., 2011). Consciousness and reasoning are just activities in the brain. From this perspective, only physiology and neuroscience have the capacity to provide the ultimate explanations for human consciousness, reasoning and existence. Reducing mental events to physical ones is also a common answer to the mind/body problem in psychology (Heller, 2004).

Clearly, physiology plays a significant role in who we are. For example, evolutionary science and research into human behaviour have yielded a consensus that fairness, empathy and altruism are part of our biological makeup (Colby & Damon, 2015). Additionally, our neural pathways produce automatic responses that protect us from danger and a host of other functions of which we are not aware of (Goleman, 2004).

A neuroscientific definition identifies properties of the brain, typically the brain's electrical properties as an explanation of consciousness. All experiences in this life comes to us through the brain, and is therefore constrained and shaped by it. This becomes obvious when a person has a stroke or an injury to the brain resulting in some aspects of the normal experiences of the individual disappearing from their world (McGilchrist, 2021). However, which electrical property provides the most fruitful explanatory basis for understanding consciousness remains an open question. It is widely agreed that experience arises from a physical basis, but we have no good explanation of why and how it so arises. Why should physical processing give rise to a rich inner life at all? If any problem qualifies as the problem of consciousness, it is this one (Wu, 2018).

It is hardly surprising that certain parts of the brain 'light up' on a scan when we fall in love because every single experience you have has its correlates in the brain. However, where exactly that is, does not tell us much about the experience of falling in love. Hence, the reductionist limitation (McGilchrist, 2021). Birch (sited in Griffith, 2019, p. 274) maintained that mechanistic science can explain what happens in the cells of the brain when conscious thought is present, but it leaves unanswered the question about the feeling of consciousness. Science is highly successful at dealing with objective events in the brain but has great difficulty in dealing with the subjective

side of human experience. The problem is not so much whether the brain works like a computer but whether this helps us understand consciousness (Combs, 2009).

The materialistic naturalistic explanation of consciousness and reasoning is still a speculative evolutionary explanation which maintains that evolutionary processes can explain the existence of consciousness and reasoning, making free will irrelevant (Nagel, 2012). All scientific models are partial fits giving a selective view of the matter under investigation. Einstein pointed out that whether you can observe a thing or not depends on the theory you use. We must not take a dogmatic approach with respect to our models for this will obscure the nature of truth. We must be willing to speculate freely on the limitations of our models – this is good science (McGilchrist, 2021).

Nagel (2012) argued that the materialistic version of evolutionary theory does not offer a complete picture. It is hard, at times, to understand the confidence among some in the scientific establishment, who are committed to reductive materialism, that the whole scenario will yield purely chemical and biological explanations. Given that an understanding of the universe as being prone to generating consciousness and reasoning may require additional understanding than the familiar forms of materialistic naturalistic explanations currently on offer, it therefore makes sense to continue seeking a systematic and holistic understanding. The failure of evolutionary materialism is the abandonment of the search for transcendent self-understanding. We must be aware that there is tremendous pressure on scientists to regard the reductionist view of science as sacrosanct on the grounds that anything else would not be considered scientific.

2.4.4.2 Consciousness- The Subjective Human Experience

The second line of research is that consciousness and reasoning play an important role in behaviour. This requires an alternative to the current materialistic naturalistic explanation of life which is currently the preferred model.

The noted psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl (1984), while in a Nazi concentration camp, pondered on whether human beings are unavoidably influenced by their body and their surroundings (nature), or have the capacity to shape their moral lives. He asked:

Is there no spiritual freedom in regard to behaviour and reaction to any given surrounding? Is that theory true which would have us believe that man is no more than a product of many conditional and environmental

factors – be they biological, psychological or sociological in nature? Does a man have no choice of action in the face of such circumstances? The experiences of the camp life show that man does have a choice of action. There were enough examples, which prove that apathy could be overcome, and irritability suppressed. Man can preserve a vestige of spiritual freedom, of independence of mind, even in such terrible conditions of psychic and physical stress. Frankl, 1984, p. 66

Although scientists continue to seek a purely chemical and biological explanation of the origin of consciousness there are also naturalistic scientists who say that it seems almost a miracle that consciousness and reasoning could have appeared through such a process. Consciousness is not just a lucky side effect of evolution. The account of how consciousness came into being from chemical and biological evolution must explain the appearance of conscious organisms, which a purely materialistic explanation cannot do (Nagel, 2012).

Reasoning moves us beyond are biologically based dispositions

It is important to realise that our experience of ourselves and the world is a product of the ways we perceive them. The alternative view is that reality is exactly what it appears to be. This does not mean that there is nothing to reality but experience, but that the immediate evidence of our senses should not be taken as the final authority of how things are (Combs, 2009). Nagel (2012) maintained that the mind is central to, and not a side effect of, physical laws. The mind is not an accident but a basic aspect of nature. Mental functions enable us to transcend the immediate perceptions of the life world, as perceived through our senses and instincts, to explore the reality of nature and values. When we take a reasonable, detached attitude towards our pre-reflective dispositions (our senses and instincts) acquired through evolution, we are engaged in a form of detached reasoning. Reasoning allows us to rely on our systems of measurement (i.e., science and morality) to correct perceptions and biologically based dispositions. We recognise that reasoning can correct instinctive impulses (e.g., anger, sex and hunger). We are using systematic reason to justify our conclusions and actions, which we do not get purely from our biological origins or cultural history. Reason connects us with facts and truth directly, while perception

(our senses and instincts) connects us with the truth only indirectly. Reasoning provides us with the freedom to question the immediate perceptions of our senses, instinctive impulses, motivational dispositions and conditioning. In its evolution, humanity has now reached the point where we have moved beyond just appearances and biological dispositions. Once we come to recognise the distinction between appearance and reality, and the existence of factual truths that go beyond perception and emotion, we must recognise that the ability to arrive at such truths requires an explanation. We recognise that it is not enough to think that natural selection has given us the ability to recognise what is right and wrong, although biology is part of it. We recognise that we cannot merely trust our natural biological reasoning, instincts, impressions or emotions. Somehow humans have moved beyond instinct and emotion and have come to an understanding of reality and of real values (Nagel, 2012). Let us look at some examples of how consciousness and reasoning can transform our biological dispositions.

First, neuroscientists have found that neurons in the brain are involved in habit formation. When we participate in a new activity or thinking, we are training our brains to create new neural pathways. When the activities/behaviours, thinking and emotions associated with the behaviour are repeated, the pathway gets stronger until the behaviour is the new normal. We are actively coding our brains (B. J. Fogg, 2020).

Second, positive mood states change brain patterns and improve cognitive performance (Friedrich, Wood, Scherer, & Neuper, 2014).

Third, research in psychogenic pain shows that this kind of pain has no organic or structural cause, but is a result of emotional and psychological problems. This condition is brought on by psychological trauma and the suppression of painful emotions. If the person cannot accept and express these emotions, the memory of them is suppressed in the person's unconscious. As a result, every physical and emotional stimulus that can remind the unconscious memory of the trauma will reactivate the pain experience. The most important implication for treatment is that the patient accepts the psychological origin of the pain, suggesting the importance of conscious reasoning when dealing with this type of pain (Hosier, 2011).

Fourth, conscious determinations cause behavioural outcomes. Mental practices such as planning, goal setting, reflection, reasoning, perspective-taking, self-affirmation,

communication, and overriding automatic responses demonstrate evidence for the conscious causation of behaviour (Baumeister et al., 2011). Additionally, brain changes occur in response to purely internal mental activity. For example, externally focused concentration such as playing an action video game has been demonstrated to improve selective visual attention (T. Hart, 2008).

Fifth, despite the relatively high genetic heritability shown in most brain processes associated with learning, educational practices are still a key contributor to student development, allowing genetically based skills to be enhanced or diminished. There is a psychological perspective to learning, which requires many different cognitive functions such as working memory, cognitive control, and attention. Additionally, motivation, resilience, and social factors such as familiar and educational environments influence learning. Therefore, one of the main goals of education is to form adaptable and versatile people who can make the most of their capabilities (Bueno, 2019). The brain is also malleable and is affected by education, daily experiences, and cognitive functions. The brain forms during embryonic and foetal development under the direction of genetic programs. However, it continues building and rebuilding the map of neural connections throughout the whole of life. This process of neuronal plasticity is the cellular and neural basis of learning (Bueno, 2019).

Sixth, moral reasoning is important with respect to moral development. Moral emotions are strongly shaped by prior deliberative moral reasoning (Bellavance, 2018).

Holistic/Systems Approach to Mind and Body Relationships

The third line of research is holism, which seeks to understand human development through the reciprocal influence of consciousness and biology on each other. The third position could be characterised as the circular causation of individual parts within a system; namely, who we are is an outcome of both consciousnesses (the mind's capacity to train and control impulses) and biochemical mechanisms.

2.4.4.3 Holism

Holism in science is an approach to research that emphasises the study of complex systems as a whole. Systems are approached as coherent wholes whose component parts are best understood in context, and in relation both to each other, and to the whole (Bellavance, 2018). A systems approach and holism are an alternative to the reductionist approach that seeks to understand a system by examining its individual

parts in isolation from each other. The holistic scientific approach considers both biological, and subjective human reasoning and experience (psychology) when seeking to explain the human condition. For instance, the brain is malleable and can be changed through education and daily experiences, yet its formation and functioning are based on a genetic substrate that influences it (Bueno, 2019). Additionally, when individuals interact with the world, they bring their values and practices that influence others, while they in turn influence others with their values as well. Also, physical conditions affect mental health, and mental conditions affect physical health. Science suggests that almost every human behaviour comes from a mixture of conscious and unconscious processing (Baumeister et al., 2011).

The exclusion of everything mental from the scope of physical science was bound to be challenged because humans have an irrepressible desire for a unified world picture. We do not accept that we simply exist in the world, but seek to understand ourselves within a larger worldview. Our understanding of biological organisms and their evolutionary history needs to expand beyond materialism to accommodate an explanation of consciousness and reasoning. A holistic approach to nature gave rise to conscious beings with minds in a way that makes us knowledgeable of these minds, so we come to understand ourselves as a result (Nagel, 2012).

Nagel (2012) maintained that there is a need for a constitutive model (holism) which shows how the mental and physical are inseparable and depend on each other – a theory of consciousness woven into the evolutionary story. A psychophysical theory governing the emergence of consciousness that is inseparable from the structure and functions developed through natural selection is needed. Consciousness is not only an effect of brain processes, but is also influenced by reasoning and consciousness. The mind can take a subjective position and make decisions rather than just be constituted by the brain. This process is indicated by the arrows in Figure 2.9.

We need to include in our scientific exploration the mind, meaning and values as fundamental to our understanding of nature and matter. He maintains that a post-materialistic theory would have to offer a unified explanation of how the physical and the mental developed together. We need to understand why the appearance of conscious organisms occurred, not just that the behaviour of complex organisms was likely. We need a conception that acknowledges the mind based on the principles of nature and the physical laws - a unified conception of the natural structure and function

of mental and physical life. Such a theory at present does not exist but we can still ask the questions and seek the answers.

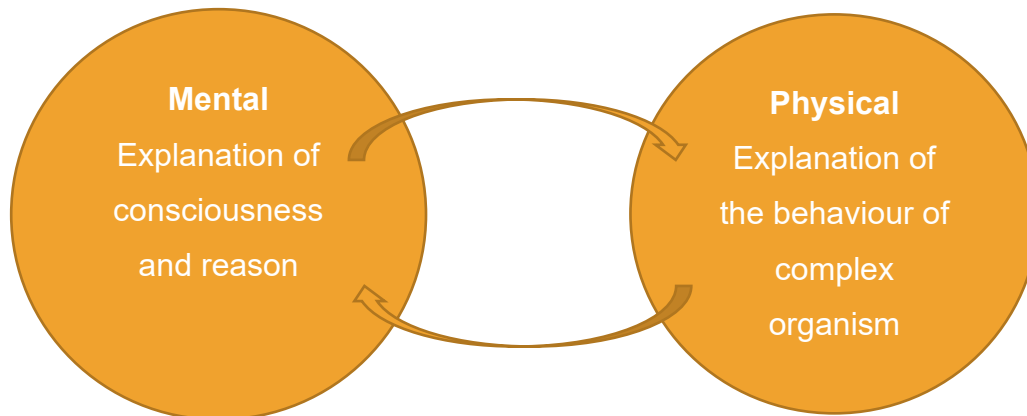


Figure 2.9 A theory of consciousness woven into the evolutionary story

A model is required to explain how humans are able to detect and be motivated by reasoning and personal values, as well as by instinctive motivations. Human action needs to be explained physiologically, but also by individual judgements, after all, we exist in a world of values, and we respond to them with normative judgements and reasoning, which guide our actions. Considering this, humans can be considered conscious subjects with psychological structures and processes. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that rationality and consciousness allow us to have a some level of free will (Nagel, 2012). As previously discussed Unification Thought maintains that the relationship between mind and body is an example of subject/object relations where both the subject and the object reciprocally influence each other – a holistic approach. The mind is primarily in a subject position guiding behaviour, while the body can be in a subject position depending on the physical processes of the body. The reciprocal nature of giving and receive between mind and body takes into account reasoning and personal values, as well as instinctive processes when understanding human behaviour.

Pereira (2015) also maintained that consciousness is psycho-physiological phenomenon. Conscious experience is a fundamental aspect of reality, neither separable from, nor reducible to, the physical, chemical, and biological. The physical, chemical and biological sciences are essentially incomplete relative to an explanation

of the conscious mind. Consciousness also includes the presence of feelings about the content of information being processed and the attribution of meaning. Most psychological researchers are now interested in investigating how nature and nurture interact in a host of qualitatively different ways (T. Hart, 2008). Conscious processes work in concert with unconscious ones. Accordingly, a change of the state of mind implies a change in the state of the brain and vice versa (Friedrich et al., 2014).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Are you your Mind or your Body? Which one has more influence?

Do you believe that human responsibility and human self-transformation is the key point of values education and human conscious personal development? If so, why?

2.4.5 Conflict between mind and body and inner conflict

Since wars begin in the mind, it is in the minds that the defences of peace must be constructed.

Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO, 1945



Related SDG – 16.1 - Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere. One of the indicator 16.1.3 is - Proportion of population subjected to physical, psychological or sexual violence in the previous 12 months is reduced.

Good and evil is propelled by the thoughts, attitudes and actions of individuals. The quality of our civilisation is shaped by individuals with high ideals who can implement these (Greenleaf, 2002). Mind and body work together very well, however, there are times when they come into conflict. Understanding conflict between mind and body and resolving this is vital for our personal development, peace within ourselves and with others, hence reducing conflict within and without. Psychoanalysis as the study of inner conflict suggests that there are many types of inner conflicts such as

contradictions, self-deception and self-defeating behaviours (Smith & Siegel, 2010). Dealing with inner conflict starts with self-awareness and making appropriate corrections.

When it comes to mind and body unity we are both the hero who conquers selfishness and impulses in the pursuit of higher ideals, and the villain who is subdued by selfishness and physical impulses which works against our ideals and values. This is why there is a long spiritual and philosophical tradition in history of denying the impulses of the body in order to pursue higher ideals. Additionally, psychology maintain that managing physical impulses well is vital for wellbeing.

Conflict exists between the inner self (mind) and outer self (body) because our actions and behaviours do not always align with the core wishes and values of our mind. This conflict causes us to feel anxious or even angry. We are not at peace with ourselves.

Conflict does not merely occur with others, but also within ourselves. Selfishness can control our lives and effect our relationships. Every good or evil act starts in the mind, then actualises in the life of a person and in the life of others. The private victories established within oneself, establishes the foundation for public life (Covey, 2002). Peaceful relations internationally and between people must begin with peace within oneself.

On the one hand, the mind and conscience want to follow cherished values, goals and ideals, but on the other, the body's impulses lead us in the opposite direction of our ideals, following self-gratification and physical impulses, resulting in unethical and ineffective behaviours (Goleman, 2004) (see Figure 2.10).

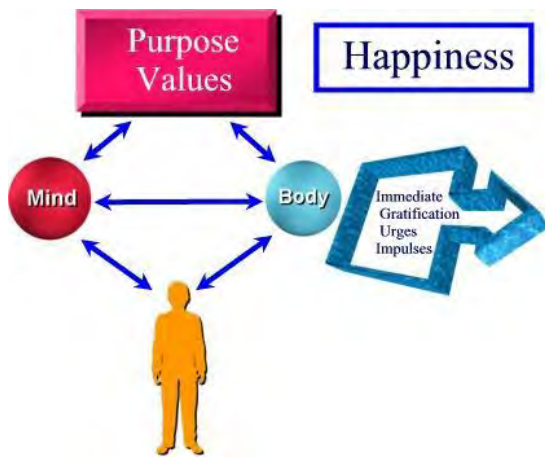


Figure 2.10 Managing Self-Gratification

The body's desire for self-gratification can dominate the life of people, resulting in selfish pursuits, frustration, and guilt. The pursuit of self-gratification can also cause us to look at life from a self-serving perspective, which affects our relationships with others and how we behave. A simple example is overeating, which causes us to feel bad about our lack of impulse control and affects our health. A lack of impulse control can become a disorder, where a person has trouble controlling emotions or behaviours that violate the rights of others, or conflict with societal values. Some of the common types of impulse control disorders are: persistent impulsive and angry outbursts, violent or aggressive behaviours, substance abuse, frequent loss of one's temper, being easily annoyed, often resentful and violating social rules (Wagener & Thomas, 2019).

It takes discipline to follow our cherished values and objectives and when we do not, we experience regret and self-loathing (inner conflict). I (JB) have realised that when I am anxious and angry, it is often because I have not lived up to my own values and have not managed my body well. I am disappointed or even angry with myself. When a behavioural pattern established in our brain takes over and goes against our authentic self and values, we feel frustration and even disappointment with ourselves. Deep down we know this is wrong. It is not the fault of others, but of ourselves. Many people are not even conscious of this. When conscious, this may manifest in feelings of not being worthy or good enough.

The problem is that when we are anxious, disappointed, and angry with ourselves, we can take it out on those around us. We may also seek to fill this hole within through

self-gratification - sex, alcohol, drugs and food, to name a few. To fill the hole within we may strive after possessions, money, success, power, and the recognition of others, in order to feel better about ourselves. Even when people attain these things, the hole is still there, which is when we are really in trouble because we cannot delude ourselves anymore (Tolle, 1999).

Another example of conflict within is the need to be right all the time because our ego is fragile and must be defended. Power is a weakness disguised as strength. This can become a form of emotional violence. We must become aware of our defensiveness and what we are actually defending (Tolle, 1999). Peace needs to be cultivated in the human mind and actualised in our behaviours. There can be no peace if I am at war with myself; that is, a conflict between who I want to be and how I actually behave. The individual's mind and body should come into harmonious relationship, not be in opposition – we must become an integrative whole. When we discipline ourselves, we can overcome self-centred desires and inappropriate emotions more easily.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Have you ever experienced regret and self-loathing for not following your values?

How did this affect you and others around you?

Have you ever been disappointed or angry with yourself? How did you deal with this?

How did you fill the hole within because of a lack of mind/body unity?

2.5 Pillar 1e - Managing Mind and Body Well

To actualise our values and purposes, we need to manage ourselves well, which involves love, mindfulness, self-control, setting goals and emotional intelligence.

To experience unity and peace in our relationships, we must first have unity and peace within ourselves. We must have integrity – the unity between our values and our behaviour. Having moral integrity is considered by some ethicists as having high moral expectation, feeling a sense of personal responsibility and accountability (Eby et al., 2013), and living up to one's moral values (Laabs, 2011; Volkman, 2015). We are not moral because we hold moral values, but because we have acted rightly (Durant, 1926; Morales-Sánchez & Cabello-Medina, 2013).

The value and quality of a person's life is largely determined by how they manage their mind and body well - integrity. To love another, and to be successful require this. Putting your mind to a task and doing it, takes mind and body unity and focus. For example, we need to focus our mind, ears, and eyes to fully listen and capture the meaning expressed and displayed in the body language of the person to whom we are listening to. Attention, memory, learning, and performance are dependent on the state of mind and body unity. Performance on the tennis court or playing the flute depend not only on skill level, but also on state of mind and body. For example, anxiety can affect performance.

Mind and body need to be guided by purpose and values. People experience wellbeing, happiness, self-esteem and success when they guide their lives based on values and purpose (see Figure 2.11). We cannot just live and be guided by the impulses of our body. Studies on emotional intelligence have taught us that managing ourselves well involves the mind's capacity to manage our thinking, emotions, and bodily impulses in the pursuit of values and purposes that are important to us (Goleman, 2004).

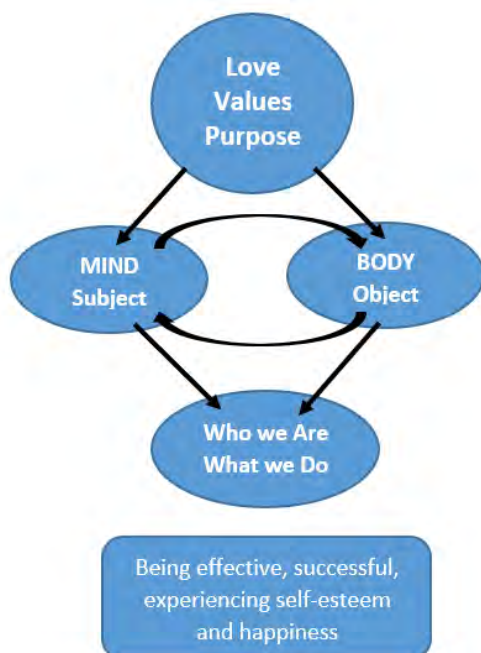


Figure 2.11 Managing Mind and Body, and Self-Actualisation

2.5.1 Love - Mind and Body Unity

The first and most important method for bringing our mind and body into unity, and being at peace is by becoming a person of love and practicing it. This is because love is the precondition for unity within oneself and with others. Unity is established on the basis of love, and peace on the basis of unity (S. H. Lee, 1981).

Love and emotions such as empathy, gratitude and remorse are felt in relation to others, which results in the growth of our hearts and care for others. There is no greater value and emotional experience that brings mind and body more powerfully into unity than love (see Figure 2.12). When we perceive the emotional pain of another (empathy), we too, in part, feel that pain. In so many ways, our values, judgements and motivations come from our emotions, especially love. Research suggests that loving-kindness acts quickly, and that the longer people practise kindness and love, the stronger these brain and behavioural tendencies towards others become (Bonnstetter, 2018).

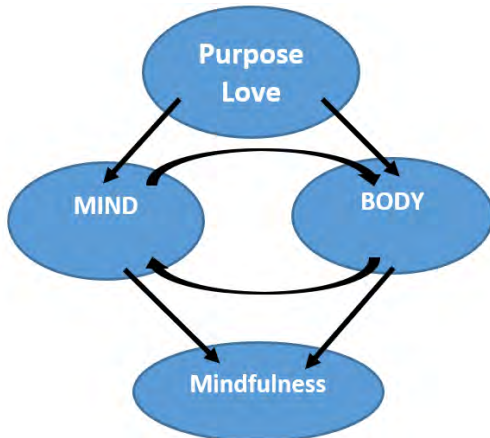


Figure 2.12 State of Mindfulness and Love

Conversely, depression feeds on preoccupation with the self, while helping others lifts us out of anxiety and self-preoccupation. For me (JB), one of the greatest means to focus my mind and body and managing emotional issues has been to consider the needs and feelings of others. Shifting the emotional focus from myself to others created opportunities to cultivate a heart of love and allowed me to understand others better.

Love for another puts your mind and body into focus. Having a mindset that seeks to benefit others reduces the impact of a self-serving mindset and self-preoccupation. The body is driven by biological needs and these needs can interfere with our capacity to love others. Practicing love means that we need to realise that “it’s not about me”. People often avoid relationships, but this is a mistake, as it robs us of the opportunity for the growth of our hearts and self-actualisation.

In my own experience, love brings harmony between my mind and body, as love seems to put so many things into perspective. Love does require mind and body unity. It takes discipline to love another when you are physically tired. Just ask a mother! I (JB) remember my son asking me to play pool with him on the new pool table we had just purchased. I got home from work, and he asked me to play with him. I told him that I was tired and would play with him tomorrow. Yes, he asked me again the next day and I told him I would play with him on the weekend. He said, “ok”, but at that moment I felt bad and recognised the front line of the battle between my mind and body, between my bodily impulse to rest, and my desire to love him by playing with him, at the expense of my body. The mind is willing, but the flesh is weak, we are told. If I continued to deflect his requests, he would still love his dad, but would lose trust in me, at least a little bit. I would also lose trust in myself, which would lower my self-esteem.

Gratitude is so important for being at peace within oneself.

2.5.2 Mindfulness - Mind and Body Unity

Remember then: there is only one time that is important – Now!

It is the most important time because it is the only time when we have any power. –

Leo Tolstoy

The second method for bringing our mind and body into unity is by practising mindfulness. Children live in the present moment, but do we? In young children happiness derives from just being alive and having their family and friends nearby. Eckart Tolle (1999) urges us to discover the power of now by living fully and present

in the moment. The present moment is all we have - now must be the primary focus of our lives.

For most of us, we live in our mind, in the past and future. If we find it hard to be in the moment, let us start by observing the habitual tendency of our minds to escape the now. How can we love another if we are not with them fully in the moment? If you have ever found yourself having listened to a speaker, only to realise that you had very little idea of what they said, then you know the importance of focus, attention and being present in learning. It is not the quantity of time we spend on a task that matters, it the quality of attention. This is especially important in a society where sound bites and streaming media seem to be training minds for continuous partial attention, rather than sustained concentration (T. Hart, 2008). The internet is an interruption system that divides our attention. Research shows that frequent interruptions scatter our thoughts, weaken memory and make us more tense and anxious (Schwab, 2016). Hence, our ability to focus our attention and single-mindedly immerse ourselves are essential to learning, creative achievements and our wellbeing. For me, I (JB) tell myself, "John, if you are making a coffee, then focus on that, not thinking about the past or the future".

Is our mind wandering or focused? Psychology tells us that, a wandering mind is an unhappy mind and that living in the present moment can make ordinary activities more interesting and joyful (Hassed, 2018). It is not easy to be present to what is going on around us, and listen to what others are saying, and it is not easy to be responsible for the words we say. Those who practise meditation know well that the mind wanders; we go from thought to thought, like a monkey jumping from one branch to another. When we have a focused meditation, we reduce the habitual chatter of the mind, and we feel more at peace.

To be focused on the now and what is really going on, requires developing a quality of presence to the moment and a constant reflective attitude of attention. We need to create the space and time to be able to experience beauty and others. Attention and noticing do not just happen automatically (Bartunek, 2019). We need mind and body unity. When we do something that is of great interest to us, the hours fly by. We experience a sense of absorption and timelessness, which is frequently the natural state of a small child filled with wonder. We are in a state of flow or mindfulness when our mind is fully involved in a task and our bodies are relaxed. Learning in a state of flow is joyful and deeply nourishing. This method is the opposite of being anxious and

agitated, emotionally high-jacked and barred from flow. Strained concentration, fuelled by worry produces increased cortical activity – a strained brain (Goleman, 2004). Strained mind/body relations therefore make us less productive and more anxious.

Flow

I (JB) really enjoy the peace of the moments when I am learning how to write new computer code or writing because my mind is focused on a single task and time flies by. We have all experienced this when we do something we enjoy. Athletes in a state of flow describe it as ‘being in the zone’ where excellence becomes effortless. It is a state of being relaxed, yet highly focused. Living in the moment is a state of mind and body unity, where there is focus on the purpose at hand.

Mindfulness helps us change our perception of events and let go of hindrances in our lives. This practice is also associated with psychology. Non-attachment allows us to accept what is and be open to new possibilities, which can involve letting go of our own mistakes, established behaviours and hang-ups or the mistakes of others. It also involves letting go of our attachments to the aspects of our lives that are not healthy.

I (JB) had to let go of my desire for approval and irrational worries, in order to be authentic and free myself from the prisons I created in my mind. As I freed myself of this attachment, I could also be more accepting of myself and others and perceive others in a more positive light and create new possibilities. This freedom allowed me to be more present and listen to others – to be in the moment instead of thinking about what I was going to say and do next to gain approval or impress others. How can we listen to and understand others if we are so self-absorbed in our own unresolved issues or concerns. We need to become self-aware and mindful of our own inner dialogue to be fully present. Mindfulness is also the capacity to pay attention to your attention namely to what you are actually focusing on and what you are actually thinking.

The absence of misapprehensions (a wrong idea or impression that you have about something - the stories you created) and emotional problems is the natural state of the mind - a peaceful mind. Perception also means that events are stressful depending on how we perceive them. Is it the thoughts, feelings or events that cause stress, or our attitude towards them (Hassed, 2018)? As Epictetus, a Greek

philosopher wrote, “It’s not the things that happen to us that are upsetting but the view we take of those things”. The 90/10 principle is the notion that we can control ninety per cent of what happens in our lives, and ten per cent, we cannot. Ninety per cent of our lives comprise how we choose to react. The other ten percent consists of things that happen to us.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Is my mind wandering or focused?

How often is my mind thinking about the past or the future?

What can I do to live in the moment?

Describe the experience of when you are fully living in the moment.

Ask yourself the following questions:

Are events inherently stressful or are they stressful depending on how I perceive them?

What is the effect of being more present in the moment, rather than being preoccupied with the past (what I did wrong, or others did to me) or future (what will happen to me)?

2.5.2.1 Mindfulness, Meditation and Wellbeing

Brainwaves are electrical impulses in the brain, which is how an individual's behaviours, emotions, and thoughts are communicated between neurons. Meditation is one of the mind/body therapy methods, which has been used as a complementary medical method to deal with pain, and help reduce worry and self-criticism by managing brainwaves. There are several studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of mindfulness meditation in chronic pain management (Hosier, 2011). One of the most well-established effects of mindfulness is a change in physiological state. For example, if we close our eyes and focus on our breath, we send a signal throughout the body–brain system that decreases blood pressure, lowers heart rate and reduces cortisol levels (cortisol is the primary stress hormone) (T. Hart, 2008).

Meditation is an intentional self-regulation of attention to regulate information flow and monitor experience in each moment. Meditation can be done in simple daily activities by

being present in what we are doing at that moment. One meditation technique is to focus on the body's breathing and sensation. This is beneficial for the mind because it helps regulate the alpha waves in the brain. If you are able to produce alpha brain waves, you can foster a state that can help you get some rest and relaxation. A person who takes time out to reflect or meditate is usually in an alpha state. Cognitive control regions in the frontal cortex are thought to drive brain wave modulation. A study suggested that meditation and mindfulness training can foster alpha brain waves (Sacchet et al., 2015).

The benefits of mindfulness include better mental and physical health. For example, mindful practices reduce anxiety, diminishes stress, enhances coping, benefits attention, strengthens emotion regulation, increased performance and educational outcomes, better relationships (greater emotional intelligence, empathy and improved communication), neuroplasticity (the ability of the brain to form new synaptic connections, especially in response to learning, experience or following injury) and mental balance (Bonnstetter, 2018; G. L. J. Haidt, 2019; Hassed, 2018).

Abilities and Activities – Mindfulness

The three foundations of mindfulness came from the ancient teachings of Buddhism. These are 1) focus; 2) mindful awareness; and 3) Dhamma.

Focus

The first practice for entering into a state of mindfulness is to focus on one thing at a time and live in the moment; being fully present instead of being lost in thought about the past or the future. For example, focusing on one's breathing and bodily sensations, or fully on an activity.

Mindful Awareness

The second practice of mindful awareness (feelings and mind) is when a person becomes more aware of their feelings and thinking at the moment. We need to pay attention to what is going on inside us and around us. By observing ourselves we can better manage habitual patterns of feeling and thinking such as living in the past and future, and worrying. Tolle (1999) referred to mindful awareness as the basic principle of being present as 'the watcher' of what happening inside you.

The practice of mindful awareness (becoming conscious) is a first step to inner freedom by focusing on the ethical and unethical qualities of the mind. Is my thinking

based on truth or some dysfunctional thinking? This involves self-evaluation of what is arising in the mind such as jealousy, hatred or resentment, and being aware of attachments present in the mind. For example, when greed or wanting is not present, we notice that the mind is not attached.

Dhamma - self-transformation

The third practice of mindfulness is Dhamma. Only some aspects are covered here. This practice goes beyond self-reflection into the realm of self-transformation. We are encouraged to let go of our hindrances and attachments (free ourselves from our mental prisons). The ego is very vulnerable and insecure, as it sees itself under constant threat and is always seeking something to attach itself to in order to strengthen its illusory sense of self. Ego, in this sense, is negative because it is the false mind-made self. We come to understand that the mind-made fictions we have created are not who we are (Tolle, 1999). When we become aware of factors that are beneficial for the growth of understanding, we are invited to learn how to cultivate, develop and strengthen them. As mindfulness grows, mental capacity is shifted from the objects of attention to the process of being self-aware and personal change (Olendzki, 2004). In this respect, Dhamma also involves key practices of mind and body unity (mindfulness, joy, tranquillity, concentration, skilful understanding and thinking, and loving-kindness, to name a few).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

2.5.3 Self-Control - Mind and Body Unity

The third method for bringing our mind and body into unity is by practising self-control. Bodily impulses to seek pleasure and avoid displeasure are important for happiness and survival. However, impulses to pursue here-and-now rewards can be at odds with our cherished values and goals. In a world where the pursuit of pleasure is paramount and where the media sells us self-gratification, why would we seek to control our impulse for pleasure? Many may say, “I just want the freedom to enjoy myself!” This view is based on a misunderstanding of how we need to be purpose-driven to be happy and free.

We all want to be free to do what we want, but we also recognise the need to be responsible and manage ourselves well. When people have the choice to choose

rightly or wrongly, they can take ownership of their choices and be free. However, exercising freedom of choice without responsibility leads to a loss of freedom. Being responsible and managing ourselves well allows us to be free to actualise our purposes. For example, a child's development requires an amount of freedom to learn from experience, as well as, practising responsibility. Why do people take drugs? The answer is easy, but why people don't and can manage themselves with respect to alcohol or excessive eating is not easy to pin down (Peterson, 2018). You might say, "self-discipline is needed". That is true; let us explore this.

Psychology, philosophy, social and emotional learning consider self-control important for managing ourselves and our relationships with others. Psychologists define self-control as the ability to suppress inappropriate emotions, desires, impulses and actions in favour of appropriate ones in order to achieve important values and goals and maintain good habits (Berkowitz et al., 2002; Goleman, 2004; Goodwin, 2015). Poorly managed desires and impulses can lead us in the wrong direction and can hurt others. A lack of impulse control can cause problems such as substance abuse, gambling and sexual disorders (Wagener & Thomas, 2019).

A person with self-control has good self-esteem and is strong-willed and resilient (Colman, 2015). Self-control is also important for controlling what we say and supports academic, occupational, and social success. Additionally, a study found that adolescents with higher self-control experienced less stress in their lives (Galla & Wood, 2015) (see Figure 2.13).

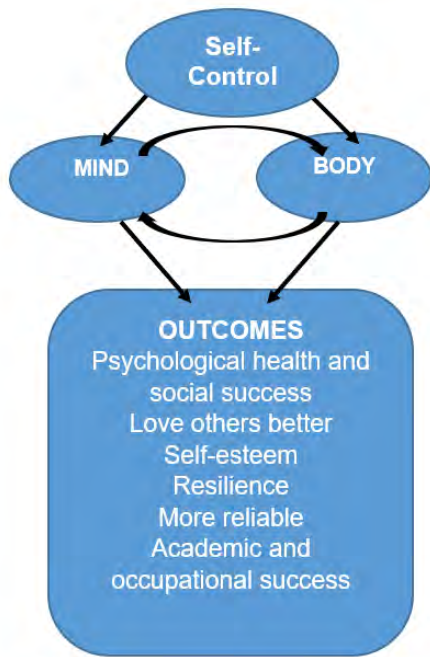


Figure 2.13 Outcomes of Self-Control

Abilities and Activities – Self-Control Concept Map

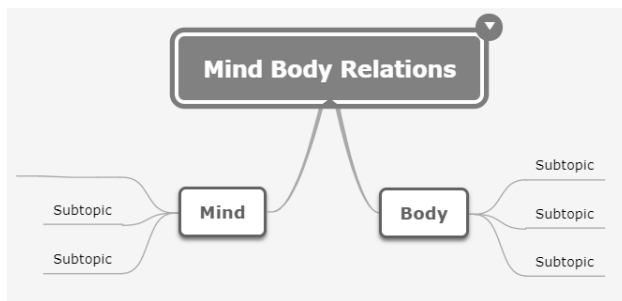


Figure 2.14 Self-Control Concept Map

Make a concept map of how your mind influences your body and behaviours, and how your body influences your mind, your values, and your goals. Figure 2.14 is an example of a concept map that can be used to complete this task. Where it says subtopic you can write how your mind and body influence you.

2.5.3.1 Delay Gratification

Goal-directed behaviour is an important aspect of emotional intelligence, which means that a person can self-regulate themselves and manage their impulses. Delaying gratification is now considered to be a fundamental life skill that, if developed early, can provide a lifetime of benefits to individuals who choose to wait for a better reward. These individuals are typically less impulsive and more effective in life (Goleman, 2004).

The Stanford experiment was a study on delayed gratification (Silva, Moreira, & Jr, 2014). In this study, a child was offered a choice between one small but immediate reward of a single cookie, or two, if they waited for a period of 10 minutes. A single cookie was put on the table in front of them. During this time, the researcher left the room for 10 minutes and then returned. For a 6-year-old child, 10 minutes is an eternity. A follow-up study conducted after the children had graduated from high school found that children who were able to wait longer (delay an immediate gratification) for the preferred reward (two cookies) tended to be more confident, persevering, and trustworthy, and have better educational and social outcomes. Conversely, the early grabbers were more anxious and more easily upset (Goleman, 2004). We have learnt that if we delay something we like or want in the moment for something better, life works out better.

Abilities and Activities – Delay Gratification

MIND	BODY
Identify the inappropriate emotions, desires, and actions that interfere with achieving your goals.	Delay gratification to achieve one goal, and make it a habit. Then give yourself a reward!
Identify the emotions, desires and actions that allow you to achieve your goals.	Suppress inappropriate emotions, desires/impulses, and actions in favour of appropriate ones. Replace a bad habit with a good one.

We all need to identify the inappropriate emotions, desires and actions in our daily life that interfere with achieving our values and aspirations, and in developing good relationships. Self-awareness and self-assessment of one's values, reasoning, and the impact of one's actions, on oneself and others, are important for fostering self-control.

We also need to identify the emotions, desires and actions that allow us to achieve our goals. Practise, practise, practise - set boundaries for yourself. Self-control requires goal-directed behaviour in the face of competing inputs and actions. Deny one desire, gratification or impulse to achieve a goal and make it a habit. Then give yourself a reward. Behavioural psychology has taught us that when we reward an action we reinforce it, for good or for ill (Peterson, 2018).

2.5.4 Setting Goals - Mind and Body Unity

The fourth method for bringing our mind and body into unity is by setting goals and working on achieving them. Setting goals is a practical application of self-control and delaying gratification. Setting goals is about personal growth and achieving our potential. When goals are reached, we experience great rewards (personal satisfaction and external accomplishments). We experience many positive emotions in relation to achieving the goals we feel are important. We are not happy unless we see ourselves progressing.

2.5.4.1 Growth Mindset

People's beliefs about their abilities have a profound effect on how those abilities will progress. Setting goals is also associated with a growth mindset, which is based on a belief that abilities are not fixed and can be developed by the individual. When confronted by challenges, we see these as an opportunity for learning and extending ourselves (Hassed, 2018).

There are always risks and challenges associated with starting any new initiatives and setting goals in life. What if we fail? This failure can affect our self-esteem and resilience and cause us to lose face in front of others. However, without taking risks and starting new initiatives, how can we progress and achieve our potential? Life is

full of risks. Having a child is a risk, taking up a new outdoor activity is a risk, but without these, life would not be as wonderful – so, challenge yourself.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

Do you have a growth mindset? What does that mean for you?

What are the barriers for you to set goals and start new initiatives?

List the risks you take in your life? Are these rewarding?

2.5.4.2 Goals, Habits and Emotions

Goals and tasks that we set for ourselves can become habits. B.J. Fogg (2020) the author of *Tiny Habits*, maintained that the way to create new habits is through behaviour design. We need to hack and code our brain. He recommended that we make the habit or goals we want to achieve ridiculously easy at first. For example, he would do two push-ups every time he went to the toilet to stay fit. The more we do a behaviour (push-ups) when prompted by a specific activity (in this case, going to the toilet), the less we have to think about it and the more we will do it automatically; that's a habit that has been coded in the brain.

Also, we can deliberately reinforce a habit by tapping into the reward circuitry of our brain, which causes it to encode the sequence of behaviours we just performed. The reward comes in the form of the emotional satisfaction of having achieved the goal. Positive emotion rewires the brain. It is not primarily repetition over a long period that creates habits, but rather the emotion we attach to the habits.

Goal setting can be learnt, even at a young age (ages 5 to 6) (Palmer & Wehmeyer, 2003). Well-defined goals allow us to choose, design and implement the important targets necessary to achieve our desired results. Goals establish direction for ongoing activities, identify expected results and improve teamwork through a common sense of purpose (Rouillard, 2003).

There are internal and external goals. Externally it could be to write a book, learn a new skill, managing what we eat and exercising more. An internal goal could be addressing the need to seek the approval of others, being true to oneself, not doing or

saying things that would make us feel bad about ourselves and not criticising others – humans are experts at that.

Abilities and Activities – Answer these Critical Questions

Would you get on an airplane if you didn't know where it was going to land?

How will you know where you are headed without goals?

How will you know if you are succeeding or developing?

List the things that are important, but not urgent. Then answer the following questions:

Is there one thing in my life that is in disarray that I could set straight?

What would my life look like, if it were better?

What would my life look like if I was caring for myself and others better? (Peterson, 2018).

Who are the people involved in the goal-setting process? Where are the opportunities? (*Australian Core Skills Framework*, 2015; Rouillard, 2003).

Abilities and Activities – Set SMART GOALS

S.M.A.R.T. Goals are:

Specific

Measurable

Action oriented

Realistic

Time and resource-constrained

The following is a list of abilities and activities when setting SMART goals (Rouillard, 2003). Each step poses a problem that needs to be solved and requires us to manage our mind and body well, in order to be successful and effective. Setting goals allows us to: a) identify a problem and define the accomplishment or solution; b) identify barriers to solving the problem; c) overcome challenges; and d) self-evaluate our performance (see Figure 2.15).

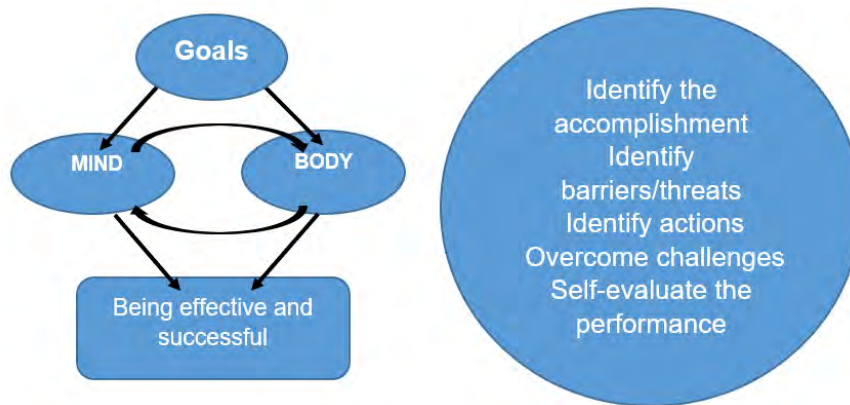


Figure 2.15 Managing Mind/Body and Setting Goals

Setting and achieving goals require mind and body unity because we have to set our mind to a task and overcome challenges and bodily impulses to achieve the goals. Without optimism, commitment, effort, perseverance, and resilience in the face of challenges, goals cannot be achieved.

Abilities and Activities – Set a Goal and Make it a Habit

Your task is to delay gratification to achieve one goal and make it a habit. How do we do this? First, you need to know yourself and determine what you want to improve or accomplish.

What are the bodily urges that hinder your ability to do what you want?

What are the mental hindrances that impede your ability to do what you want?

To set goals, do the following and complete the sentences:

1. Define the accomplishment:

Identify personal/career goals and purposes that define who you are.

Critical questions: What are my needs, roles and responsibilities? I will establish a

2. Visualise the accomplishment:

- Listen to the speaker’s praise and description of your accomplishments.
- Stand on the podium to accept the award.
- Write out the deposit slip for the bonus earned.
- Experience a sigh of relief at turning in a completed project.

3. Determine specific and measurable outcomes: The business will have a location with equipment like I will stand up for myself each day by doing ... Can you measure if your goals have been met? If so, how?

4. Define the action plan with short-term and long-term objectives: Create the timeline of activities and deadlines for completion, and identify the resources – the people, money, time, and other resources needed to achieve the goal. Prepare a project plan in the form of a Gantt Chart. There are several free templates online.

5. Identify barriers and threats to achieving your goals: One of these barriers is the psychological obstacles that exist in our minds. Once again – Know thyself! Ask yourself – why can't I achieve the goal? Why haven't I? We must believe that the goal can be achieved. If there is doubt about the possibility of achieving the goal, a psychological obstacle is created. In general, the most common obstacles are a defeatist/deficit mindset, procrastination, unproductive activities, and impatience. List the methods that can help overcome these psychological obstacles. Henry Ford said, "If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right".

6. Stay focused on achieving goals despite distractions and problems. Accomplishing a goal is 95 per cent perspiration and 5 per cent inspiration.

7. Self-evaluate your performance and adjust actions to complete goals. Actively monitor performance against goals and milestones, adjusting plans and expectations as required. Keep a logbook that evaluates your performance with respect to achieving a goal(s).

8. Reward yourself for your accomplishments. This could be small things such as giving yourself a treat when you have accomplished a task – reinforce good habits.

2.5.5 Emotional Intelligence - Mind and Body Unity

The fifth method for bringing our mind and body into unity is by practising emotional intelligence (EQ) and spiritual intelligence (SQ). Zohar (2023) proposed a new paradigm of intelligence (see Figure 2.16). The intelligence quotient (IQ) refers to our rational, logical, rule-bound, problem-solving intelligence. It is also a style of rational,

goal-oriented thinking. Material capital refers to the financial wealth and assets that IQ supports.

Emotional Intelligence (EQ) is manifested in empathy, self-awareness, self-control, and in the ability to know one’s emotions and respond appropriately to the emotions of others. This is a form of social capital which corresponds to our E.Q. Social capital can be measured by the amount of trust people have for each other and the empathy that people feel for each other. The rate of crime, divorce, literacy and litigation all measure the social capital.

SQ, our spiritual intelligence quotient, underpins IQ and EQ. Spiritual Intelligence (SQ) is the ability to access ones deepest values and motivations in life. It is ‘what you are’. This reflects what an individual stands for, believes in, aspires to and takes responsibility for. It is also an ability to access higher meanings, values, abiding purposes, and unconscious aspects of the self and to embed these meanings, values, and purposes in living a richer and more creative life.

Capital	Intelligence	Function
	IQ	
Material Capital	Rational Intelligence	What I think
	EQ	
Social Capital	Emotional Intelligence	What I feel
	SQ	
Spiritual Capital	Spiritual Intelligence	What I am

Figure 2.16 Three types of Intelligence

2.5.5.1 Emotional Self-Awareness

We use emotional learning to make good decisions and take appropriate actions, to avoid disasters and free ourselves to be true to who we are. Emotions contain valuable information (wisdom) about relationships and the world around us. Having rich

emotional experiences and channelling these toward productive ends is vital to self-actualisation and happiness.

The first feature of emotional intelligence is emotional self-awareness. The second is a balance between emotions and reasoning. How we feel influences how we think, and how we think influences how we feel. Achieving this balance requires an understanding of how much our emotions influence our decisions and how much we use emotions to facilitate thinking and behaviours. Too little awareness of our own feelings makes our reasoning faulty (Goleman, 2004). People in sad or negative moods tend to focus on details and search for errors. Those in a more positive mood, are more optimistic and creative. Conversely, our emotional responses result from the way we appraise our experiences through reasoning about them. Reason and emotions reciprocally influence each other, and we need to balance reason and emotions well to guide our decisions and our lives. This balance facilitates wisdom and wellbeing (see Figure 2.17). What emotional intelligence has taught us is that we need to relate to others and deal with daily events with the right balance between our reasoning, mindsets and emotions, whether it be acting morally, choosing a lifelong partner, choosing a career, or dealing with our children (Goleman, 2004).

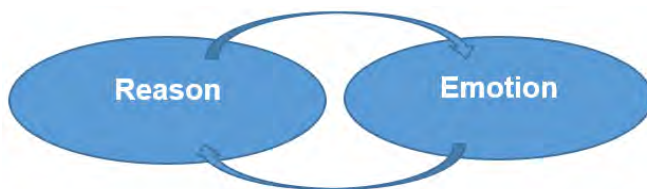


Figure 2.17 Reciprocity between Reason and Emotion

The interaction between reasoning and emotion is an example of subject/object relations like that of mind and body, where both the subject and the object reciprocally influence each other. Reason can be more dominant, or emotions can, depending on the situation. Additionally, we need to recognise our own emotions and how they affect our thoughts and behaviours. We need to understand our emotional cues and accurately identify their emotional meanings. Emotional cues involve other feelings that occur concurrently with other emotions. For example, we may become angry

when we feel guilty for doing something that goes against what we consider right. We need to be aware of this and control our anger so that it does not affect us or others.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

In which circumstances are reason or emotions more dominant?

How do your emotions affect your thoughts and behaviour?

Can you perceive your emotional cues?

How do these emotional cues help you in determining your behaviours?

2.5.5.2 Understanding Emotions in Others

The second feature is the ability to understand emotions in others, which involves perceiving emotional cues and accurately identifying emotional meanings. This ability to monitor the emotions of others and to use this information to guide our thinking and behaviours in relation to others is vital. This requires mindfulness and being present at the moment. Children that are more successful at understanding emotional cues in others are more likely to develop appropriate social skills and prosocial responses, and form positive relationships with others (Martins, Osorio, Verissimo, & Martins, 2016).

2.5.5.3 Managing our Own Emotions

The third feature is the need to manage our own emotions well. The goal of emotional self-control is not emotional suppression, but rather it is being aware of negative emotions and dealing with them well. This reminds us of the importance of self-awareness. First, we do not need to avoid unpleasant feelings, however, we do need to manage uncontrolled emotions. We need to balance negative emotions with positive ones. We need to look after ourselves and soothe ourselves emotionally (Goleman, 2004). However, we need to be careful about how we do this. When we are angry, frustrated, stressed, anxious and feeling self-doubt we seek comfort through alcohol and food, to name a few. We can also take it out on others.

Emotional self-control is using and controlling our emotions in a positive way in all aspects of life and especially in our relationships with others. This may be true with anger. When someone hurt us by undermining what we are trying to achieve, we feel like retaliating. After cooling down, we may reconsider our response based on our values (considering the viewpoint of the other before coming to conclusions). Of course, we need to stand up for ourselves but do so without the motivation to retaliate. Hence, self-awareness and self-evaluation based on our values plays an important role in managing our anger.

Another aspect of emotional self-control is controlling how long emotions will last and how strongly they are felt. The physical brain's chemistry influences emotions such as fear, anger and anxiety, which undermine our capacity to think rationally. These emotions trigger the emotional brain to fixate attention on the threat at hand and ignore everything else. This is good for serious threats, but not so good for everyday stressful or frustrating events. Chronic worry is attributed to the low-grade emotional hijacking (Goleman, 2004). The anger we felt when being undermined by another person can be short-circuited by thinking about our values – reason and emotions interacting. Also, we need to avoid the self-righteous inner monologue that we are right and challenge our own irrational thinking. Cut off as quickly as possible from the inner dialogue that feeds anger.

The positive aspect of worry involves dealing with potential threats and problem-solving. However, anxiety and worry also involve low-grade melodramas that can ruminate in our heads and consume us. They can persist but can also be halted through employing constructive reflections and mindfulness. We all know the value of a cooling-off period, especially when it involves something pleasant or exercise.

Research suggests that venting anger is the worst way to cool down because it pumps up the emotional brain's arousal, especially when it is directed at the person who caused the anger (Goleman, 2004). My (JB) boss once told me that everything looks darker when you are tired. He suggested a good night's sleep and things would look brighter in the morning. In fact, neuroscientists have found that sleep deprivation amplifies anxiety in the regions of the brain associated with emotional processing (Goldstein et al., 2013). Being aware of such processes can help us manage our emotions better.

Abilities and Activities - Emotional Self-Control

Ask yourself the following question: How do I manage negative emotions or regulate my moods?

Below are some behaviours that we can practise to better control our emotions (Whitbourne, 2015):

1. Shift the focus to the purpose and needs of others.
2. Self-control. Be true to your values and control your impulses. This strategy is the most important for emotional self-control. Do not act in ways that will cause you to go against your values, causing you to become frustrated with yourself.
3. Select your battles. Avoid circumstances that trigger unwanted emotions. For example, you must accept that you cannot change others. Trying to change others triggers unwanted emotions. You must be true to yourself and others, but you cannot change others.
4. Change your thoughts. Let us say that you feel inferior to the people around you. They appear better or younger than you. Shifting your focus away from them and onto your own great attributes and abilities will allow you to feel more confident about yourself. Emotions are also beliefs. By changing your thoughts, you may be able to change the way you believe the situation is affecting you. Write down your negative thoughts, and in this way, you can reappraise them.

Another approach is to discuss the issue with a trusted person to help you change the way you appraise situations. This is known as cognitive behavioural therapy. The focus is on modifying dysfunctional thoughts, emotions, and behaviours by interrogating and uprooting negative or irrational beliefs. For example, it is irrational to believe that school or work should always be fun.

Ask your spouse or a friend to act as your personal therapists in this space. They may ask you if your thinking is really rational, and ask you hard questions. You may get annoyed at first, but with time, you may see the wisdom of the questions and observations. Ask a trusted person to challenge your irrational beliefs, ruminations or catastrophising. Ask yourself if what you may be telling yourself might result in anxiety or emotional upset. Am I confusing a thought with a fact? For example, "She didn't

smile at me. I must have done something to offend her, or she doesn't like me anymore". It probably had nothing to do with you. She may be struggling in her own life. Don't be too quick to judge others, as we never know what they are going through. Am I jumping to conclusions? What effect is this thinking having on me?

5. Change your response. Get control of your responses. Your heart may be beating out a steady drumroll of unpleasant sensations when life makes you anxious or angry. Take deep breaths and perhaps close your eyes to calm yourself down. Teachers often ask children to take time out away from others when they are frustrated. The emotional mind is racing, and it needs time to calm down. You could express your frustration in other ways that allow you to release angry feelings, such as exercise.

Abilities and Activities – Get in Touch with How you Feel, write this in your journal and share it with others

As we have seen, emotions can lubricate rather than impair rationality. Try to be honest with yourself and others about how you feel. Then you can more freely get in touch with and express your true feelings appropriately and make better decisions. You can also listen to your negative emotions and understand what they are trying to tell you. Silencing them will not make problems go away. Organisations that encourage people to be open and honest about their emotions perform better at collaboration and establishing stronger ties with colleagues. Be yourself and allow people to be themselves (Razzetti, 2019). Ask yourself if being open and honest with others would establish better relations, even if it is not easy. Am I confusing a thought with a fact?

2.5.5.4 *Spiritual Intelligence (SQ)*

What makes a great leader? Some say it is the ability to make tough decisions. Others say great leadership is the ability to command and control or to inspire loyalty. However, great leadership depends primarily on vision—not just any type of vision, but one that we can appreciate intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. – Danah Zohar

Danah Zohar proposed 12 SQs: 1) self-awareness, 2) being vision and values led (to be able to live according to the beliefs and values that you hold yourself accountable to), 3) positive use of adversity, 4) a holistic view of life and connexions, 5) compassion/empathy (to feel something 'with' someone rather than 'for' someone),

6) celebration of diversity, 7) standing up for one's own convictions even if it goes against the crowd, 8) asking deeper fundamental questions, 9) the ability to reframe our worldviews and see the bigger picture, 10) spontaneity (the ability to let go of fear and inhibitions, and ensuring you are living in the present moment), 11) a sense of vocation (called upon to serve, to give back to a world) and 12) humility (Zohar, 2023) (See Figure 19). Most of these have already been covered in this chapter. However, let us look at this a little closer.

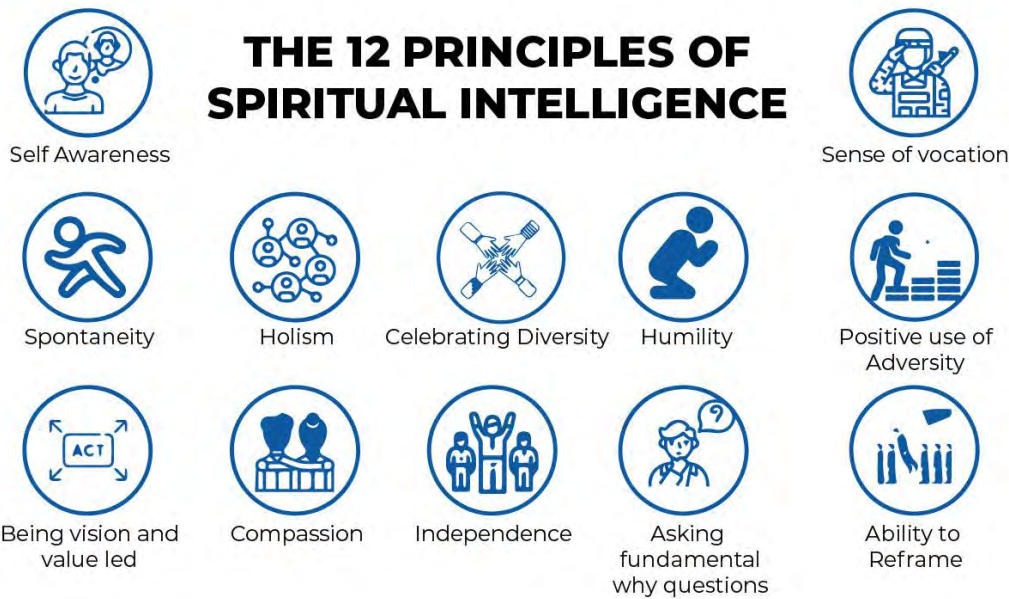


Figure 2.18 - 12 Spiritual Intelligences (Blackbyrn, 2022)

Spiritual intelligence is defined as the ability to identify life as ‘meaning’, ‘purpose’ and ‘values’ that connects the meaning of peoples’ activities and intellectual capabilities to questions of human existence. The point is a shift from the ego to the soul, to gain a greater clarity of mind and the realities of the present moment. Spiritual intelligence deals with the mental aptitude of realisation for ‘being in existence’ and the ‘meaning of life’. Research shows that with higher level of spirituality individuals can have better internal inspirational motivation in their work, help people to develop their decision making skill and goal attaining capacities through employing self-awareness and personal meaning production (Anwar & Osman-Gani, 2015).

King (cited in Anwar & Osman-Gani, 2015, p. 4) identified the four main dimensions of spiritual intelligence. This is another way to view the Zohar’s 12 SQs.

1. Critical Existential Thinking

This is the practice of critically contemplating what your life really means to you, what your true purpose in this world and existential issues (e.g., presence, reality, the universe).

2. Personal Meaning Production

This is the ability to acquire personal meaning and purpose from all your physical and mental experiences. This also involves realising the fact that everything that you are a part of, or partake in, also becomes a part of you.

3. Transcendental Awareness

Transcendence refers to an existence or experience which is beyond the physical realm. These transcendental patterns exist within all of you and your surroundings.

4. Expansion of the Conscious State

The capacity to move around higher level of spiritual awareness, enter higher states of consciousness at one's own discretion. This can take the form of meditation and prayer.

3 Pillar Two - Managing our Relationships and Self-Actualisation



Related SDG - Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. 3.4 - By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing.



Related SDG - Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

Our relationships with others and particularly our relationships with family members is an important

part of our education. We all need to learn to relate well to others.

Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. Gender equality and empowerment is modelled in the family. Goal 5.2 - Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

The education and the practices modelled in the family are the starting point for the reduction of violence and exploitation.



Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The family and the extended family set the values and practices that individuals take with them in society and the institutions they influence.

A fundamental aspect of mental health, wellbeing, happiness and self-actualisation involves experiencing and maintaining loving relationships. This chapter focuses on a social model of development - we can only be happy and healthy when we are loved and can love in return. A truly happy life is not underpinned by power, knowledge or money, as eventually the happiness they bring will fade and the person will renew their

search for happiness in their relationships. Love may be considered a “warm and fuzzy” term by some, but in this chapter, it is defined in real terms that impact the development of our hearts, character, and how we develop morally, psychologically, physically, and how we relate with others. In this sense, altruistic love and dysfunctional/selfish love have major implications for our wellbeing and for the wellbeing of other people in our lives.

Love is the primary developer of one's capacity for being a functional and healthy human being, and the chief stimulus for the development of social competence. To practice love we need values and structure such as that provided by the family. In an age in which a great deal of unloving-love masquerades as the genuine article, in which there is a massive lack of love behind the show of love, in which millions have been unloved, it is critical to understand what love really is. In our modern world, we have often left the study of love to the last.

Happiness is underpinned by love; however, relationships can be a source of many struggles. For example, difficulties within the family or a partnership are major causes of depression (Lauber, Falcato, Nordt, & Rössler, 2003). Considering this, fostering abilities to strengthen relationships and families is critical for happiness and wellbeing.

Difficulties in relationships fall into two categories, social/relational and physical/financial. Social issues involve love, values and not managing ourselves well in relation to another. Love issues that strain relationships include poor communication, being unsupportive, withholding affection and infidelity. Value issues include disagreements on values and goals, trust issues, differences in raising children, toxic people associated with a partner and lying. Self-management issues include bad behaviours and poor habits, poor stress management and misdirected anger. Physical issues include infertility, emotional and physical abuse, substance abuse and financial issues, such as stealing and unemployment (Goldsmith, 2018; "Normal differences and warning signs of a relationship breakdown," 2019).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

What social/relational and physical/financial issues have you encountered in your relationships? How did you cope with these?

What values and mindsets enabled you to cope with these issues?

How did you communicate with your loved one to resolve issues?

3.1 Pillar 2a - Love is the Central Value of Life

The simple math of love is the more you love, the happier you feel, the more you love the healthier you are, the more you love the more successful you are at everything. In sum, your life works when you love and it doesn't when you don't.

Robert Holden

Love is the central value to be realised in our lives. On the foundation of love the values of truth, beauty and goodness are formed. For example, the practice of love is evaluated as goodness (S. H. Lee, 1981). Also, our happiness depends in large part on our relationships with others. One could say that hell is the absence of people we love. In his book, Viktor Frankl (2006) detailed his experiences in a Nazi concentration camp. In the camp, he came to the realisation that love is the greatest ideal we can aspire to. He describes his realisation about the meaning of life after having a conversation with his beloved wife in his mind while standing with a work crew in the freezing cold. She was in a different camp. He wrote:

For the first time in my life, I saw the truth as it is set into song by so many poets, and proclaimed as the final wisdom by so many thinkers. The truth – that love is the ultimate and the highest goal to which man can aspire. Then I grasped the meaning of the greatest secret that human poetry and human thought and belief have to impart: The salvation of man is through love and in love.” (Frankl, p. 37)

We have all pondered about the source of our value as a person. People often find their value in their jobs, but if asked, they will say ‘there is more to life than work’. It is predicted that Artificial Intelligence and robotics will put many people out of work. Where will these “irrelevant workers” find meaning? Ask the people in poor countries where they find meaning, and they will say relationships. This realisation is significant because love is the reason for life. We have all felt joy, even just thinking about a loved one, just like Frankl. How wonderful love is!

3.2 Pillar 2b - Giving and Receiving Love

Giving and receiving love is a vital practice that underpins happiness and wellbeing. Human relationships involve giving and receiving (G&R), and relationships break down when one or both parties do too much taking and not enough giving or not enough communication, namely are not applying the principle of giving and receiving well. A Harvard study has shown that close relationships are what keep people happy and healthy throughout their lives. Those ties protect people from life's discontents, help to delay mental and physical decline, and are better predictors of long and happy lives than wealth, social class, IQ, or even genes. Additionally, people's level of satisfaction with their relationships at age 50 was a better predictor of physical health than their cholesterol levels were and people who were the most satisfied in their relationships at age 50 were the healthiest at age 80 (Mineo, 2017).

Once we understand that love is the central value of life, then we need to find out how to realise the ideal of love in our relationships. Unification Thought maintains that love, ideals and joy cannot be achieved alone, but are primarily found in our subject or object partner of love - our spouse, children, parents, relatives and friends. Joy is an outcome of giving and receiving love. Joy remains dormant until we exchange love (Jin, 2006; S. H. Lee, 1981) (see Figure 3.1).

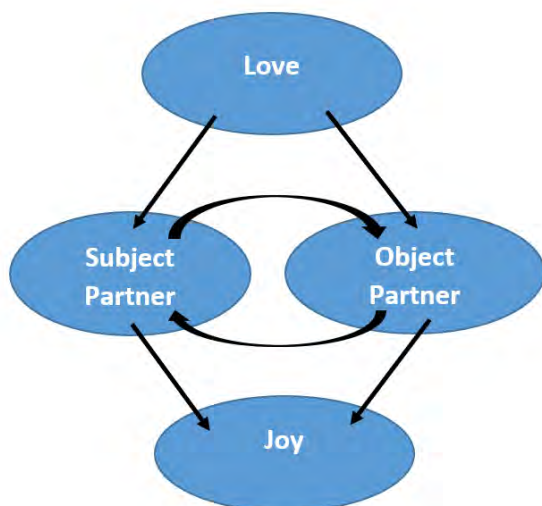


Figure 3.1 Joy is an Outcome of Relationships

It is important to assess the quality of these interactions; what we give and receive; the nature of the exchanges in our relationships. People are often so self-absorbed that they forget that it is in our relationship to each other that we can find the greatest joy and meaning. Joy comes from the act of giving to another and the positive responses that are returned. What we put into the relationship (the input), will be what we get back (the output) from the other person. In Figure 3.2 the system is the relationship between two people.

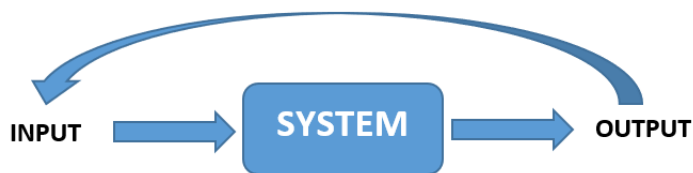


Figure 3.2 Giving and Receiving Feedback Loop

Systems theory has shown that life on earth is a complex web of natural and social systems, all interconnected, that give and receive, reciprocally feeding back into each other (circularity) (Seising, 2010; Strausfogel & Schilling, 2009). Life systems exist based on circularity, where an effect (an output) feeds back (an input) into its very cause (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001).

This circularity is important for human relationships. You may have heard of the saying – “What goes around, comes around”, or karma and cause and effect. What people say and do in their relationships, have consequences that feed back onto themselves. If I am more caring, I will receive more care in return. A biological example of the circularity of outputs and inputs is the blood’s circulatory system. Poor circulation (giving and receiving) causes health problems. Poor communication and poor mutual giving and receiving cause relationship problems. Conversely, good communication underpins positive relationships. Another example of the importance of giving and receiving is when a child who does not learn to share, doesn’t create friendships. A child who only receives, cannot progress, they must learn to give back. Research suggests that if you live a lonely, self-centred life, you are almost guaranteed to be miserable and unhealthy - loneliness kills, it is as powerful as smoking or alcoholism (Mineo, 2017).

Certain values and behaviours underpin relationships that are harmonious and mutually beneficial. The most important is the giving and receiving of love which causes the value of the exchange to increase for both parties. As a result, partners seek to give more to each other, again increasing the value of the relationship. For love to work, both parties must exist for the other. The problem is that people can be self-centred, hence short-circuiting the principle of giving and receiving.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

What does giving and receiving mean for you in your relationships?

What are the qualities that allow for good giving and receiving?

When was giving and receiving important for you?

3.3 Pillar 2c - Values and Practices that Underpin Good Relationships

This section discusses the understanding, values and abilities that underpin good relationships. The ones covered in this section are the importance of living for the sake of others, shared values, and communication. You may think that this requires changing how you are currently operating and you would be right. But consider the alternative. A Harvard study showed that people who were train wrecks when they were in their 20s turned out to be wonderful octogenarians, while alcoholism and major depression could take people who started life as stars and leave them at the end of their lives as train wrecks (Mineo, 2017).

3.3.1 Living for the Sake of Others – Altruism

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community, and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it whatever I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. George Bernard Shaw

The first value and practice that underpins a relationship is living for the sake of the others (altruism). The essence of moral authority is service, namely subordinating one's self for the sake of a higher purpose or showing love for another (Greenleaf, 2002). The essence of goodness is living for the sake of others. Being conscious of others inspires us to be part of something bigger than ourselves.

Scharmer and Kaufer (2013) argue that humanity needs a shift from an *ego-system* awareness which focuses on the well-being of oneself to an *eco-system* awareness that cares about the well-being of all, including oneself. When operating with ego-system awareness, we are driven by one's survival, pleasure and our own enhancement to the exclusion of others. When operating with eco-system awareness, we are driven by concerns that are informed by the well-being of the whole.

Each of our good ends can be attained falsely without thinking of others. Selfishness tells us that the ends justify the means (Covey, 2002). Gandhi (cited in Covey, 2002, p. 8) placed altruism as the central value of morality because it is so easy for humans to operate under unprincipled values with respect to the means we use to achieve our ends – pleasure (an end) without conscience (a means), knowledge without character, commerce without morality, science without humanity and politics without principles.

So, what comes first, giving or receiving? Giving comes first. I (JB) have found that this simple principle has brought happiness to my life. The love between my wife and I were always renewed when I applied the principle that life is not about me alone, but also about her and others. This mindset changes the focus of self and is conducive to happiness because it fosters loving relationships.

The simple principle is that genuine and sustainable love is realised by giving first, while false love is self-serving. The self-serving individualism we often encounter in society is due in part to a lack of understanding of how love is generated and maintained. I came to understand that adults often have a mindset like teenagers, who are waiting to be loved and expecting to be loved first. Humans are very intelligent, we have learnt many things, but are often still adolescents when it comes to learning to love.

Devine, Saunders, & Wilson (2001) maintained that genuine and healthy love is based on the qualities of living in the best interests of the other, serving, and being sacrificial,

unchanging, unconditional, forgiving and ethical. Love means giving and forgetting that one has given and living in the best interests of the other – the basic mission statement of parents. Martin Luther King Jr said, “Life's most persistent and urgent question is, 'What are you doing for others?’”

The world is full of self-seeking people, however, the unselfish ones that serve others have a great advantage. Living for the sake of others is good not only for our mental health but also for our physical health. One study found that women in midlife who were in highly satisfying marriages had a lower risk of cardiovascular disease compared with those in less satisfying marriages. Additionally, there is a link between negative interactions with family and friends, and poorer health, while caring behaviours trigger the release of stress-reducing hormones (“The health benefits of strong relationships,” 2010).

Both self-centred and changing love and genuine and unchanging love exist. Changing love fluctuates according to the interests of the moment. Because it is self-centred, it changes. On the other hand, because genuine love exists for the benefit of others, it is more likely to be unchanging. I (JB) have been married for many years, and the love my wife and our love for each other is unchanging - we still want to take care of each other. In fact, with time this desire seems to increase. The driving force is the love that is experienced through that relationship and the mindset of wanting to live for the sake of the other. The best thing about life is knowing that you are loved and cherished.

Altruism and balancing personal and social interests

How can we reconcile these views of altruism? We need to look at a wider perspective, the working and evolution of both the human mind and human society, and their mutual interaction. Our basic biological instincts are to advance our own interests. However, we learn from a young age of the need to resist and control such urges as part of a socialisation process. We learn to balance personal and social interests throughout our lives. Every parent knows that children have to be taught to behave with consideration for others. It takes effort to develop the will to direct their own behaviour in line with other people's desires rather than just their own (Trubshaw & Turfus, 2021). This is where the socialisation of morality plays an important role.

3.3.1.1 Ubuntu

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

What comes first for you, giving or receiving? Why is this? Do you mostly give first or expect to receive first?

What are the qualities and behaviours that make good relationships? What can I do to improve my relationships?

3.3.2 The Importance of Shared Values

To understand the importance of shared values in a relationship we need to first ask ourselves - what we expect from a relationship, namely what we value in the other, and the values we bring to a relationship? When we relate to others, both parties have some expectations or hopes for that relationship.

Relationships that are based on values and qualities that both parties value and share. These foster cooperation, trust and care. An operating theatre nurse once explained to me that when a surgical team have the best interest of the patient at heart (shared values and purpose), the surgical team work harmoniously and successfully to achieve the best outcome for the patient (see Figure 3.3). Open communication and good teamwork (good giving and receiving between humans) in the theatre are possible because of the shared values and purpose. She added that if the values and purpose are not the same, the atmosphere in the theatre is tense, communication is poor and the outcome for the patient may not be as good. When there is a breakdown of shared values there is a decline in the quality of relationships and the potential for conflict (Kittel, 2018). Additionally, shared values must be established before people are willing to accept rules and systems. Shared values creates discipline and order without demanding it (Covey, 2002).

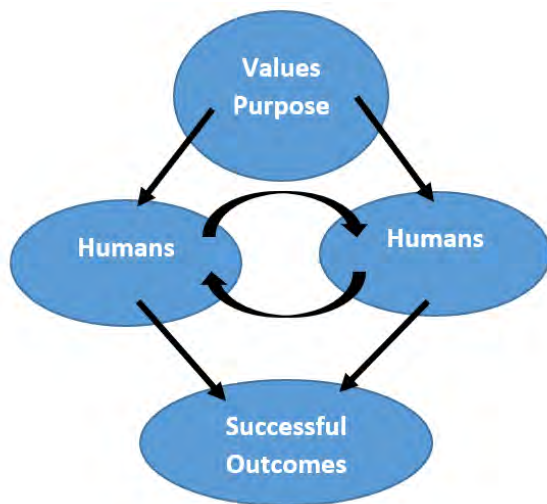


Figure 3.3 Outcomes Based on Shared Values

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

Pair and share with another your fundamental ideas about relationships. Did we find some shared values? You will find that you have a lot more in common with others through discovering shared values. Now, discuss what qualities, values and practices make for good teamwork.

3.3.3 Good Communication

Good communication fosters relationships, and closeness and builds trust. Trust is not something that can be established at once, and not necessarily easily established, and can be rapidly destroyed. Communication depends not only on conveying the correct information but also on the way we communicate (Tuluhan & Munevver, 2018). The result of communication must be mutual understanding and benefit. To reach this understanding we must be willing to adopt the perspective of others, continue to communicate until understanding is reached and develop actions that are good for all involved (P. Lee, 2019).

The starting point for genuine communication and compassion is engaged dialogue, where there is a desire to understand what others are saying and how they see the world. Communication has various levels. First, is 'polite conversation' in which nothing new is explored. Second, is 'debating', which is when people actively search

for new information and engage in argument. Third, is 'reflective dialogue', which is characterised by putting yourself in another's shoes to try to understand their position. The fourth and most powerful step is 'generative dialogue', in which two or more people experience a sense of common purpose and potential for change; each person can experience a sense of self as part of the whole (P. Lee, 2019).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

Do your communications lead to mutual understanding and benefit?

Are you willing to adopt the perspective of others and continue to communicate until understanding is reached? If so why and how?

What does generative dialogue look like for you?

What was your experience when this occurred?

3.3.3.1 Speaking

We need to express our feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes in an understandable and appropriate manner. We can practise and improve this while interacting with public institutions and local communities around issues of public interest and in this way, we can learn to express our views appropriately and with the right language.

We can learn a lot about ourselves such as our views and insecurities about expressing our genuinely held views and values. Think about the language we use. Are the words demeaning, antagonising or provoking? Conversely, we should use language that humanises others, and that is respectful and life-affirming. Humanisers are people who adopt the ideals of human rights, justice and peace and apply these values in their everyday language and interactions (Matos, 2019).

We must also communicate honestly about who we are. By communicating who we are in an authentic way, we learn about ourselves and create real relationships. The people around us can challenge our views and help us to see something we could not see on our own, and therefore increase our ability to communicate well and develop relationships.

If we are debating, we should not see it as a conflict, we should present our views as if we were right, but listen as if we were wrong, we should also take the most respectful interpretation of other people's points of views, acknowledge where we agree and what we learned from the other (G. L. J. Haidt, 2019).

Activity – Write an article about an issue in the news or one that affects your local community. Through this, we can learn to express our views appropriately and with the right language.

3.3.3.2 Reflective Listening

We also need to be good listeners and observers. Listening is as active and as important as speaking. The best test of whether we are communicating is to ask ourselves: are we really listening (Greenleaf, 2002)? People like good listeners because they show interest in what others are saying and ask good questions. Listening involves developing sensitivity to verbal and non-verbal messages. Reflective listening trains us to be good listeners which is the process of listening attentively, paraphrasing and reflecting on what is said to the speaker while withholding judgment and advice. The process involves after listening, we summarise what the speaker said (feelings and thoughts) by repeating them back to them to check if the listeners understanding was accurate (showing understanding). We also need to respond effectively and express attachment, compassion and acceptance.

Abilities and Activities – Reflective Listening

Practise reflective listening with a loved one and ask your partner if they felt listened to.

3.4 Pillar 2d - Families are Schools of Values and Love



Related SDGs

Goal - 1.2 By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. Goal - 3.4 By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being. Goal 4.7 - By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed ... gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development. Goal - Goal 16. - Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

The United Nations maintains that families are the hub of intergenerational interactions that support individuals, an important sustainable development goal that underpins mental, physical and economic wellbeing. Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that the family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Family members look after each other. Loving families foster relationships that are characterised by shared values, interdependence, a sense of mutual responsibility and mutual prosperity for each other. Kim (2021) argues that co-ownership is also vital for mutual prosperity. The family is a good model for co-ownership and mutual prosperity. In the family, the needs of the whole (the family) and the needs of the individual are

naturally harmonized through love. Individual and group co-ownership co-exist in the family. For example, assets such as the family home are inherited by the children when parents pass away. Wood (2020) argues that the spirit of mutual support that exists in the family should be applauded. The family provides a vital social safety net that governments cannot provide.

Unification Thought maintains that families are the schools of love and values, and personal development. The family is a source of life, love, ideals and peace. Peace is not desired only on the world level, but also in nations, societies and families. The basis for family peace, is peace in the individual, once family peace and love exists, it can multiply in society and the world. Families are the basic units of society (S. H. Lee, 1981).

Children are mostly self-focused, but as they interact with their parents and siblings, their capacity to consider the needs of others increases. Children learn that the wellbeing of the family is as important as their own individual wellbeing. If sibling love has developed sufficiently, then the ability to love one's spouse can blossom more easily (Devine et al., 2001).

The values and ideals established in the family have a great influence on us and these can endure a lifetime and even be passed onto next generations. My life and values came about because of the love and hope my parents had for me. When parents express their expectations and hope for their child, these hopes become part of the child's self-image/identity, and developing expectations and hopes for themselves (Patrick & Gibbs, 2012).

Family life allows us to experience the emotional and social learning that allows our hearts to grow. Family relationships are the foundation for the emotional content necessary for our happiness, and the growth of our capacity to love and create positive relationships with others in society. Family relationships allow us to grow into happy and functional beings. How we think and feel about ourselves, and how we respond and give to others are first learnt in the family. Thus, familial love is more than just a warm and fuzzy thing, it is a strategic biological device, a piece of moral machinery that enables genetically related individuals to reap the benefits of cooperation (Greene, 2013).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

Define the emotional experiences you have had in your family that have formed your personality.

3.4.1 Social challenges to family life

In the modern world, family life has undergone major social and economic changes. These changes have created challenges that strongly indicate the need to foster strong families. Some demographers studying developed nations have expressed concern about what they see as an erosion of the family as an institution with dire consequences for society. For the past 50 years some academics, the media, and the entertainment industry have advanced an agenda of undercutting the foundations of marriage as a core of family life and family as one of the core facilitators of communal life. This agenda has gradually been institutionalised in education, law and politics (Trubshaw & Turfus, 2021).

Divorce

The change that has had the most far-reaching consequences on family life is separation and divorce (Hewitt, 2008). This indicates the importance of getting the foundation of the family right – the couple. There are health, financial, emotional and social costs to divorce. Conversely, there are important benefits to marriage with respect to wellbeing, longevity and wealth (Mineo, 2017).

Children raised by single parents are at greater risk of living in poverty and experiencing health, academic and behavioural problems than children growing up with both parents (R. G. Wood, McConnell, Moore, Clarkwest, & Hsueh, 2012). Research shows that about twice as many children from one-parent families as from two-parent families drop out of high school. Children raised in one-parent families are also more likely to have a child in their teenage years, and to be idle both out of school and out of the labour force as young adults. Also, children of divorced families have less access to the time and attention of two adults, and consequently have less parental supervision and emotional support (Waite, 2000).

Mental health issues for women and men associated with divorce include disruption of a primary affectional bond, insecurity, depression, hostility, self-acceptance issues and a decline in personal growth and positive relations with others (Desai, 2019; Hewitt, 2008). Additionally, problem drinking is higher for unmarried men and the end of marriage increases men's cigarette and alcohol consumption, which may be due to the stress associated with the divorce (Waite, 2000).

Research suggests that having divorced parents is the highest risk factor for divorce in one's own marriage, which may be because children of divorced parents receive poor socialisation and role modelling for marriage. Additionally, children of divorced parents have more behavioural problems than children of intact families, which, in turn, negatively affects the quality of their intimate relationships in adulthood (Hewitt, 2008). For children, divorce is associated with difficulty relating to peers and family members, lower scholastic achievement, lower self-esteem, and more strained peer and parent-child relationships than their same-age peers from intact families (Louden, 2009). However, it should be noted that single parents can do a very good job at parenting with of course additional challenges.

3.4.2 Economic challenges to family life



Related SDG

It is interesting to note that economists are the ones suggesting that we need to foster and support strong families. A 2011 report from The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which produces analysis to promote policies to improve economic and social wellbeing across the globe, warned that over the next decades, governments would struggle to sustain current levels of social security expenditure for seniors, single adult households and single parent families. As these numbers of households increase, governments would struggle to provide the care needed and more individuals would find it difficult to get the support they need. The

OECD report argued that single adults, single-parent families and the elderly were to become the new poor in the future (OECD, 2011). If a person is living alone and don't have the support of their extended family they will need to rely on government support. The alternative model is to do everything we can to foster and support families and extended families as these naturally provide the physical and mental care family members need.

China has become an aging society, as is the case in many countries of the world. The rapid aging of the population presents great challenges in terms of China's social security expenditure and economic growth. In addition, the implementation of the family planning policy has greatly reduced the proportion of children. Changes in population age and birth rates have long-term economic impacts. For example, population aging requires more social security expenditure by governments. A recent study suggested that the Chinese government should improve the birth policy in China and encourage the birth of two and three children, and increase support for families (Chen, Chi, Chen, Lyulyov, & Pimonenko, 2022).

3.4.3 The Source of Morality is the Family

What has been the greatest influence on our values and our morality? The answer is simple – family values and love. The foundation of morality is love. Love means to consider the good of others even at one's own expense. For Gandhi love was a potent instrument for social transformation (Swarup, 2019). We can all understand that a standard of values is established in the ethics of love found in the family. As Nelson Mandela said, "No one is born hating another person because of the colour of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite."

The love that my wife and I (JB) share is the shared standard of value for how we behave towards each other and exemplified in front of our children. When a couple marries, they pledge their desire to live in obedience to a standard love they have established between them. For parents, the standard of values is the love for their children, and for children, it is the love for their parents.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another

What are the values associated with love in your relationships – with your partner, children, siblings and your parents?

Are you willing to change for your partner? If so, what?

3.4.4 The Family – An Integrative Whole

A scientific integrative explanation of life maintains that smaller elements of life combine into greater wholes to form higher levels of structures and existence. Biological evolution is not directionless; it tends toward greater biological complexity. Physicists, Stephen Hawking and Albert Einstein argued that the universe shows order. Over the eons, a chaotic universe organised itself into stars, planets and galaxies. Here on Earth, atoms became ordered or integrated to form molecules → which in turn integrated to form compounds → virus-like organisms → single-celled organisms → multicellular organisms → and then societies of multicellular organisms. Life is a drive towards synthesis, growth and towards wholeness (Griffith, 2019).

The universe is a system of interrelated entities which interact in an orderly fashion guided by a unifying purpose. An integrative explanation of existence (holism in science) maintains that life has a purpose moving towards more and more integrative wholes ("Philosophy of mind," 2022).

Unification Thought maintains that the purpose of life is for the mind and body of the individual to be united, centring on love and values, as a result of becoming an integrative whole. Husband and wife, children and the extended family should be united in love to form a larger, integrative whole – a family (Jin, 2006).

3.4.5 The Four Spheres of Love in the Family

The family is an integrative whole. Within the family, we can experience the interdependent system of the four spheres of love: parental love for children, children's love for their parents, sibling love, and conjugal love (see Figure 3.4). These emotional

experiences form who we are. Values and love are the centre of these relationships. Society is sustained and renewed based on the values and love fostered in the family.

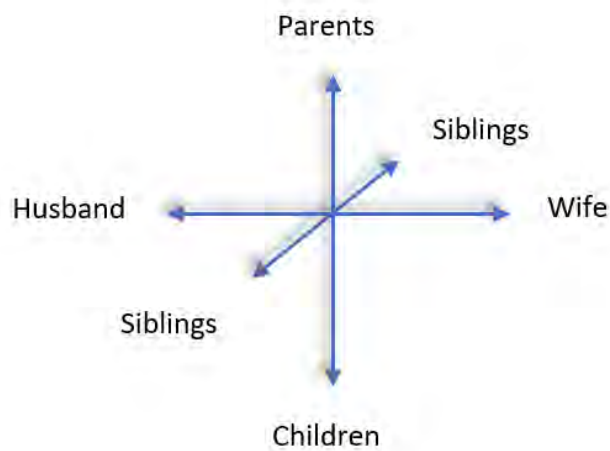


Figure 3.4 Four Spheres of Love

In our lifetime, we need to develop our hearts in these four spheres of love so that we can experience the richness and depth of love that these relationships have to offer. If we have not loved our parents, our siblings, our spouse and our children enough, we can still do this, if time and circumstances permit. My (JB) mother is 95 and I always feel that I have to love my mummy more. I am sure she feels the same way about me. We can also love others outside our own family as our own children, siblings, parents and grandparents; these become our extended family. Family is never far away if we are looking!

Activity – write in your journal and share with another.

How did the emotional experiences associated with the four spheres of love formed who we are for good and for ill?

3.4.6 The Extended Family and the Spheres of Support



Related SDG

In the family, each sphere opens up a new and rich experience of love and support. Each sphere builds upon the other facilitating growth for the next, like expanding concentric circles. Dr Ungar (2019), a noted scholar on resilience, maintains that relationships and support structures that exist in the extended family, friendships, community and society are the spheres/layers of love that support and allow children and adults to develop and experience wellbeing (see Figure 3.5). These are important developmental assets. People who have social support from family, friends and their community are happier, have fewer health problems and live longer. Conversely, a relative lack of social ties is associated with depression, later-life cognitive decline and increased risk of premature death ("The health benefits of strong relationships," 2010; Mineo, 2017). Additionally, research shows that positive peer relationships buffer against the negative behavioural consequences associated with parental discord (Oudekerk et al., 2014). The importance of all our connections cannot be overstated.

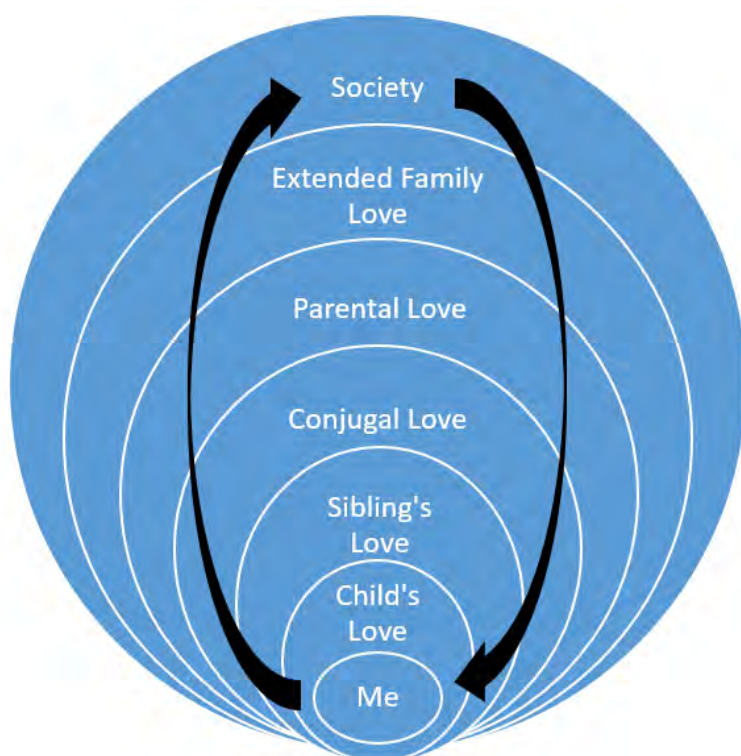


Figure 3.5 Spheres of Love and Developmental Assets

Beyond the nuclear family, grandparents, aunts and uncles, friends, schools, spiritual communities, clubs and so on are the additional layers of support that exist in society. For instance, research shows that individuals who enjoy spending quality time with their mate's family and friends were less likely to commit infidelity (Harwood, 2009). In addition, grandchildren from divorced families are likely to benefit from an increased involvement with grandparents through emotional support and having less strain in their lives.

Also, our identity, self-esteem and resilience are deeply rooted in all these relationships. It takes a village to raise a child, which means that an entire community needs to interact with children for them to grow into happy and functional beings. The spheres of love and support help us to grow into happy and functional beings, however, they also set the standard for how we relate to others in society. This interdependence and reciprocity are indicated by the two arrows in Figure 3.5.

A peaceful society and world resemble the form of a functional family. The child learns to love by being loved. To love one's neighbour as oneself requires first that one must

be able to love oneself and the only way to learn that, is by having been adequately loved during the first six years of one's life (Montagu, 1970).

Our hope as parents is to raise children who can contribute to the welfare of others, the nation, and the world. If families focus only on their own interests, society will suffer a loss of kindness and altruism that would naturally flow for loving families that foster the value of altruism. Living for the sake of others means the individual lives for the sake of the family, the family for the sake of the community, the community for the nation and the nation for the world (see Figure 3.6). The noted Professor of Sociology, Brigitte Berger (1995) maintained that the family creates culture. Dr Moon maintained that good family members become good citizens in their nations and the world. When such people leave their homes, they become people loved by all in society. They relate to others outside their own family as if they were their brothers and sisters, parents, grandparents and children. When they meet older people, they love and honour them. When they meet younger people, they have the heart of an older sibling or parent towards them. These layers can also be understood as the societal structures supporting the family, the nation supporting the society and the world supporting the nation (see Figure 3.6). As we have seen, systems reciprocally influence each other.

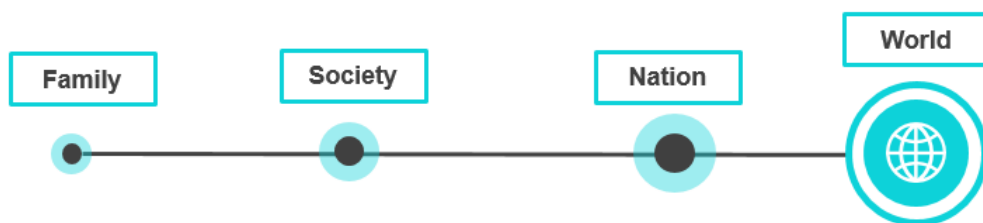


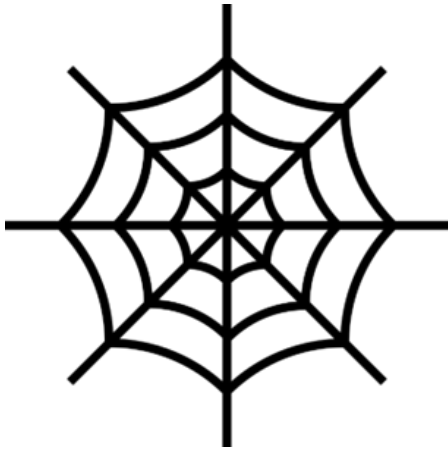
Figure 3.6 The global layers of support

Activity – write in your journal and share with another.

Explain how the relationships and support structures that existed in your extended family, friendships, community and in society have helped you develop and supported your wellbeing.

How do your family values influence how to treat others in society?

Place yourself on the middle of the spiderweb and write down all the support structures that made you, who you are. Also, write down how you support others in this web.



3.4.7 Families as Dysfunctional Schools of Values and Love

Families can also be “dysfunctional schools” of values and love. Many of our emotional hang-ups, prejudices and insecurities come from family relations. When there is an absence of love in the family and relationships become toxic and dysfunctional, people learn and perpetuate the wrong values in their relationships. For example, with respect to parent-child relationships, research shows that early experiences (e.g., rejection by parents) contribute to the development of core beliefs, which lead to the development of dysfunctional assumptions (e.g., ‘Unless I am loved, I am worthless’) (Fenn & Byrne, 2013).

Inter-parental conflict also adversely affects the parent-child bond. Adolescents exposed to a marital conflict are associated with anxiety to participate in relationships of their own and a diminished capacity to engage in social interactions outside of the family system. Additionally, children learn and model the behaviours of their parents with respect to conflict-based behaviour and methods of resolving conflict within their peer and romantic relationships (J. Ross & Fuertes, 2010).

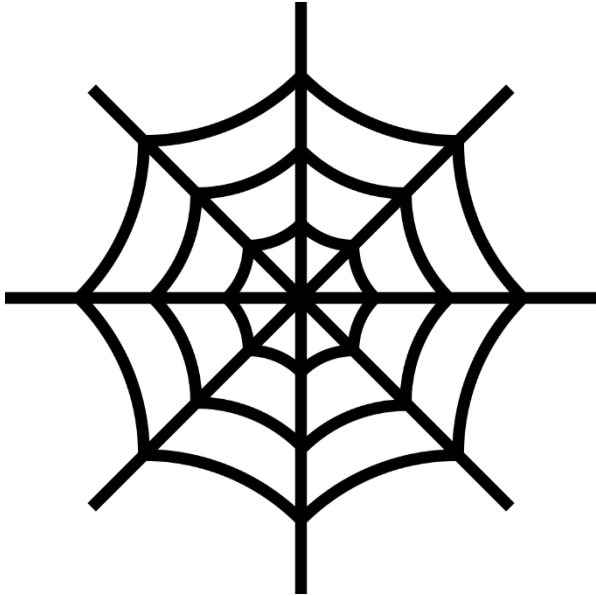
Additionally, research suggests that a history of childhood abuse (many adults who abuse children have abused themselves) and exposure to spousal violence are risk factors for perpetrating child abuse (Anderson, Edwards, Silver, & Johnson, 2018). In fact, a significant percentage of sexual abuse is perpetrated by family members or by other caregivers who are close to the child. The greater the emotional bond between the perpetrator and the victim, the greater the potential for harm (Crosson-Tower,

2005). There are no closer relationships than family ones, hence, harm can be so profound.

The absence of love, particularly in childhood can have disastrous effects. The anthropologist Ashley Montagu (1970) maintained that love is without question the most important experience in the life of a human being. The newborn baby is extraordinarily sensitive to love and relies on love for normal development. The baby behaves as if expected to be loved and when this expectation is not met, the baby reacts in a grievously disappointed manner. There is now good evidence that leads us to believe that not only does a baby want to be loved, but also wants to love. All drives are oriented in the direction of receiving and giving love. If the baby does not receive love, it is unable to give it, as with the child, so it is also with adults. From the moment of birth, the baby needs the reciprocal exchange of love with its mother. It has been universally acknowledged that the mother infant-relationship perhaps more than any other defines the very essence of love. The infant can suffer no greater loss than the deprivation of a mother's love. Maternal rejection may be seen as the cause factor for every individual case of neurosis or behaviour problems in children (Montagu, 1970).

Research has found a link between insecure attachment between parents and children to delinquent behaviours in youth. These youth have problems with attachment to parents and in parental communication and satisfaction. Attachment deficits may also influence the degree of control over inappropriate sexual urges. Additionally, youth attachment styles to parents influence the quality of friendships. Interventions with troubled youth can begin by targeting family attachment and enhancing communication skills with parents and reducing feelings of anger and alienation (Yoder, Leibowitz, & Peterson, 2018).

Activity – Write your name in the centre of a web and write down the layers of connections that have undermined you and how.



3.5 Pillar 2e - Sphere One: Conjugal Love

Now let us unpack in more detail the positive significance of each of the four spheres of love, starting with the relationship between men and women. First, the starting point of a family are partners who love each other and have the right values and personal qualities to make the union work. This union is the foundation for successful families and because family life extends to our relationships in society, this union is a vital foundation.

Making a great marriage requires work; like a garden, you have to cultivate it regularly. When two adults with significant values, maturity of love and psychological affinities encounter each other, then romantic love can become a pathway, not only to sexual and emotional happiness but also to personal growth. Two people dedicated to personal growth can stimulate personal development in each other (Branden, 2013).

3.5.1 The benefits of marriage

Some may ask why is marriage important? People are searching for “the one true love”. I (JB) once asked a young woman I know, “What are you doing on the weekend?” She replied, “I am watching Bachelorettes on TV, on my own, with a bottle of wine”. I thought to myself, it is a deep human aspiration to find our prince charming and our princess. I saw this question posted on Quora – “Depression is killing me after

my breakup. I lost passion and purpose in everything. I feel that I need someone I can love and who loves me back, and to share our life moments together. I can't live without it. What should I do?" We all need someone to love and who loves us back.

As the importance of relationships in a couple for health, work productivity, and parent/child well-being has entered public awareness, there has been an explosion of research attempting to explain, predict, and improve relationship quality. Marriage affects wellbeing and behaviours because the social support provided by a spouse helps individuals deal with stressful situations, and provides individuals with a sense of meaning in their lives and an obligation to one's partner, thus inhibiting risky behaviours and encouraging healthy ones. Additionally, marriage provides increased material wellbeing, health, educational, and safety benefits (Mineo, 2017). Marriage also connects people to other individuals and social groups such as in-laws who support individuals (Waite, 2000).

Young adults who reported higher perceived competence in social and romantic functioning also tended to report higher self-esteem and a lower occurrence of depressive mood (J. Ross & Fuertes, 2010). Conversely, unhappy marriages are associated with many negative stress-related outcomes including poor physical health, high blood pressure, poor immune system functioning, mortality, and risk of mental health problems. Low marital quality also spills over into people's professional and personal lives, predicting lost work productivity and lower well-being for children (Joel, Eastwick, Allison, & Wolf, 2020).

The stability of the marriage is the foundation for the family and is important for childhood outcomes. The relationship between a child and their mother and father is a vital part of their mental and emotional development. Children raised in families where the relationship between husband and wife is stable are generally healthier, better educated, and more likely to avoid poverty than those who experience transitions in family structure. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 1 in 4 children live without a biological, step, or adoptive father in the home (Bureau, 2022). Research shows that a father's absence affects children in numerous unfortunate ways such as children are more likely to have behavioural problems, while a father's presence makes a positive difference in the lives of both children and mothers ("The Father Absence Crisis in America," 2022). This is not to discredit single-parent families or

divorced parents but to acknowledge the role both parents play in the lives of children. Many examples exist of successful single-parenting.

You may ask, do cohabiting parents differ from married ones? Married parents are more likely to stay together than cohabiting ones. Two-thirds of cohabiting parents split up before their child reaches age 12, compared with one-quarter of married parents. The fact that married couples are more likely to stay together is an important finding with respect to the importance of a marriage commitment (Krause, 2017).

3.5.2 The values and qualities that underpin a good marriage

Marriage is a journey, not a destination. Marriage between a man and woman is a journey of love, creating life and expanding values and love in their family and society. That relationship is so important for our happiness, our capacity to love our children and even to be a good leader. Understanding the characteristics that underpin a positive relationship in a couple and what undermines these is needed.

So how do we find our true love and once we do, what are the qualities that underpin that relationship? In short, it is not about finding the right person, it is about becoming the right person. Many single adults have turned to online dating sites to search for their future mates. Looking at these websites suggests that physical attraction and compatibility (interests and hobbies) seem to be the standard for a successful relationship. However, over time, people's interests and what attracts them to the other may change. Recent findings suggest that although the compatibility of personal characteristics in couples is important, the effort made by each spouse to make the relationship work is the most important factor (Borbón, 2015). The partnership you build and how appreciative you are of your partner says more about the quality of your relationship than either of your personalities. Do not focus so much on whether a person fits your type or whether they tick all your boxes. Instead, think about how you're engaging with each other and whether your relationship leaves you feeling satisfied. The lesson is that each of us creates compatibility, attachment and romance. Making relationships work relies primarily on considering the needs of the other and striving to improve oneself.

This brings us to consider how to become the right person and the qualities we bring to the relationships, namely, love (living for the sake of the other), appreciation of the other, being responsive, being committed to the relationship and managing ourselves well, communication, supporting your spouse's aspirations, conflict resolution, and gender equitable beliefs and behaviours. Out of these abilities females outscored males in three areas (communication, knowledge of partner, and self-management) while males outscored females in conflict resolution (Epsteina, Robertsona, Smithb, Vasconcellosc, & Laoc, 2016).

Given the powerful implications of relationship quality for health and happiness, a central mission of relationship science is explaining why some romantic relationships thrive more than others. We need to know what predicts how satisfied and committed I will be with my partner. Research shows that experiencing conflict, depression or insecure attachment are relationship risk factors. However, when people are able to establish a relationship characterised by an appreciation for each other, sexual satisfaction, a lack of conflict, and perceive their partner to be committed and responsive, then those individual risk factors may matter little (Joel et al., 2020). Gottman's research shows that the day-to-day connections we make to reach out to connect with our partners ('bids') are vital to successful relationships (Brittle, 2024).

3.5.2.1 Love - Treat your spouse like royalty

Love is expressed in service to one another, respect, giving each other time and attention (taking notice and acknowledging what the other is saying and doing), and sexual intimacy. Love is also about inquiring and caring about how to change yourself for your partner. How to please one's partner sexually and staying attractive to them is also important. My wife (JB) has often said that to become a good couple we must change ourselves for the other and act in a way that is pleasing to the other. Make time for intimacy. "Treat your wife like a princess", my wife and I suggested to our sons. I love doing this, at least once a day. I bring her a cup of tea on a nice tray, make her lunch, and tell her she is beautiful and how much I love her. She responds with a smile.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

How do you consider the needs of the other?

How do you strive to improve yourself for your loved one?

3.5.2.2 *Be committed to the relationship and manage yourselves well*



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<https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=107394062>

In most cultures, marriage is celebrated as a public affair and a commitment in which family and friends gather to witness and celebrate the union between husband and wife. This is a public commitment made by the couple in front of all who love them. The public nature of this commitment indicates that cultures through the ages have valued marriage and the commitment of the couple to each other as the bedrock for their lives and for future generations. Regardless of the level of commitment between a couple, society still recognises marriage as an institution where the most stability is gained.

Although the institution of the family takes on various forms, it comes with an ethical obligation that promotes the common good of society (Lutz, 2020). Marriage is a social institution that comes with moral obligations; these moral obligations form the core of families, promote social stability, and endure fluctuating emotions and struggles. What we really want is for our partner to have a deep, unshakable desire to be with you and you alone. In short, you want your partner to love you not only for your wonderful

qualities, but just because you are you. Only love provides the kind of loyalty you need in a couple and parenting (Greene, 2013).

Lutz (2020) maintains that the traditional understanding of marriage as a social institution is a legacy that we should strive to preserve which requires understanding love as both an emotion and a virtue (behaviours). Emotion alone is too unstable a base upon which to build a permanent relationship. With the romantic model, marriage lasts only until romantic love or sexual attraction dies. A virtuous society requires an understanding of marriage as a social institution that perseveres, in bad times and in good times. Love means to live for the sake of others in good times and in hard times.

The transition from a traditional to a liberal society has been accompanied by a transformation of marriage from an institutional model to a romantic model. Liberal societies are characterised by individualism and liberty is understood as freedom from authority. The “soulmate model” of marriage assumes that marriage’s primary function is to build and sustain an intense romantic or emotional connection that should last only as long as it remains happy and fulfilling for the self. There is tension that needs to be managed in marriage between a means of securing social stability, and realising individual freedom and emotional satisfaction (Lutz, 2020).

While romantic love is a strong motivator to form personal relationships, it often fades when those relationships encounter challenges. For many today, marriage is not popular or is considered an outdated institution - it is unreasonable to expect couples to stay together for a lifetime, in this day and age. There is more social pressure than ever before to be individually happy and this may outweigh the necessity to make a marriage work. Society has accepted that life partners, need not be for life anymore. Although a percentage of marriages end up in divorce, this does not mean that a lack of faith in marriage as an institution.

Cohabitation has become very popular, however, cohabitation does not generally imply a lifetime commitment to stay together. Cohabiting couples seem to bring different more individualistic values to the union than do those who marry. The shift to cohabitation from marriage may show a shift in values, namely a declining commitment within the unions of men and women to each other and their relationship as an enduring unit in exchange for more freedom (Waite, 2000).

If love is considered transient in society, it is important to have a foundation to hold couples together to realise that love, friendship, support, trust and commitment are vital for the couple's wellbeing. We cannot encourage couples to live a more relaxed relationship particularly when children are involved because parents are responsible for a child's welfare.

Being committed to the relationship is a key value and practice. Research suggests that men and women are less likely to experience marriage breakdown if they have a greater commitment to the institution of marriage (Hewitt, 2008). Additionally, there is strong empirical evidence that relationship and marriage education programs can improve relationship satisfaction and communication for couples committed to the relationship. However, such programs for unmarried couples had little benefit, which suggests that individuals need to be committed to the relationship before marriage or starting a family (R. G. Wood et al., 2012).

If marriage produces many benefits for individuals, why has it declined? First, because of increases in women's employment, the benefits of marriage are reduced for women as they are not dependent on the financial support of men. Second, high divorce rates decrease people's belief about the long-run stability of marriage and thus may reduce their willingness to invest in it. Third, changes in divorce laws have shifted the financial burden for the breakup. Fourth, for men, marriage and parenthood are less attractive when divorce is common because they face the loss of contact with their children if their marriage dissolves. Sixth, public policies that support single mothers, and changing attitudes towards sex outside marriage and towards unmarried childbearing have all been implicated in the decline in marriage (Waite, 2000).

3.5.2.3 Manage ourselves well

Knowing oneself and managing oneself are so important when we seek to create a sustainable relationship. For example, managing one's sexual impulses is critical. First, sexual infidelity is a major source of conflict in a relationship and leads to a decline in wellbeing. Perpetrators of infidelity feel confused and shame. Betrayed partners feel hurt, and angry, lose trust, have decreased confidence in relationships, feel abandoned and have lower self-esteem. Additionally, infidelity is the most frequently reported reason for divorce, while sterility is second, and abuse is third

(Harwood, 2009). Most people do not approve of infidelity, yet studies suggest around 30 to 40% of unmarried relationships and 18 to 20% of marriages see at least one incident of sexual infidelity (Treas & Giesen, 2004). Also, from a woman's perspective, the husband watching pornography may also be considered a form of infidelity.

Hence, the value of commitment and managing ourselves well is important because if opportunities arise for sexual encounters outside a committed relationship, we need to be clear on our values and be aware that sexual impulses can hijack cognitive processes that affect how we think or behave in certain situations. Impulse control is important to not hurt the ones we love.

3.5.2.4 Communication - Know your spouse and support their aspirations

Honest and respectful communication is vital for a marriage. An inability to communicate well causes difficulties in relationships. The ability to actively listen to your partner with empathy and understanding is critical. How well do you understand each other's core needs? Knowing and communicating about each other's values, thoughts, feelings, aspirations, and likes and dislikes proved to be an important predictor of satisfaction in a relationship. Gottman's research about being responsive showed that couples that stayed married turned towards one another for authentic communication and connection 86% of the time, while couples that divorced averaged only 33% of the time (Brittle, 2024).

Additionally, a relationship becomes the strongest when two people discover they have shared values and aspirations. Values such as commitment to the marriage, trust, and the willingness to see another's viewpoint are important. Research also suggests that values that have their source in faith, and cultural and family practices such as having children in marriage and less cohabitation before marriage reduce rates of divorce (Hewitt, 2008). Based on our (JB) love for each other, my wife and I found our shared values and know each other's aspirations. This allowed us to support each other's goals and aspirations. To support this process, we must listen deeply – even be aware of the unspoken.

Activity – Complete the ‘bids’ for the connection worksheet and share them with others.

Activity – Write in your journal and pair and share.

Have I paid enough attention to my actions and reactions with respect to my spouse/partner today? Have I practised acting in a loving way towards my spouse? How has my relationship with my partner helped me to grow in positive ways? How have I helped my partner to grow?

3.5.2.5 Conflict resolution

Adolescent social skills and their ability to effectively resolve interpersonal conflicts are associated with the development and maintenance of peer and romantic relationships. A lack of conflict and how you handle conflict is a good indicator of the future success of your marriage. We often want to be right and put our views forward expecting others to listen and accept these. There is a lot to say about being able to think deeply and listen before speaking and acting. We need to be patient in a relationship, being ready to forgive and apologise when needed. The best way to improve your relationship is to accept feedback and use that information to improve yourself. If you cannot do this in your couple, it will be hard to do with others. Instead of getting upset when you get criticised, be thankful that your partner is honest with you.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others.

Do you listen to your partner before speaking and acting?

Do you accept feedback and use that information to improve yourself?

3.5.2.6 Gender equitable beliefs and behaviours



Related SDG - Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. 5.1 - End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere. 5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation. 5.4

Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate. 5.5 Ensure women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life. 5.a Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

Having equitable gender beliefs and practices is vital for a good marriage and a good family. A marriage counsellor with many years of experience said that marriage is a partnership of equals. The United Nations maintains that equality will not be achievable without greater equality in families ("2020 International Day of Families "Families in Development: Copenhagen & Beijing+25," 2020). In family seminars that the conversation about who is the "boss" at home and "who wears the pants" often comes up. A friend of mine (JB) told me that we should not put focus on power relations between men and women, but on understanding what constitutes a positive and mutually beneficial relationship. We need to foster and practice gender-equitable beliefs and behaviours and combat rigid gender role stereotypes.

Positive male and female relationships need to be modelled in the family. I (JB) have found that my four sons respect and serve their wives, and I believe that this is partly because I modelled this with my wife. Actions, speak louder than words. I also saw how my father served and respected my mother and did his share of cooking and household work. This modelling is important as modern marriage. Family life are often based on both spouses sharing in paid and unpaid work and constantly negotiating arrangements that suit both spouses' needs. It is up to all of us to model serving and egalitarian relationships at home and in society.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

What are the attitudes and beliefs that justify, excuse, conceal or minimise improper male and female relationships? What does it mean to be a man and what it means to be a woman? This information can make us aware of our own attitudes. Think of a gender lens as putting on spectacles; out of one lens, you see the viewpoints, needs and realities from a woman’s point of view and out of the other lens, you see the viewpoints, needs and realities of men. Your vision is the combination of what each eye sees. What do you see?

3.5.3 Challenges to building positive male and female relationships

There are challenges in building good relationships between men and women. Parents and society play an important role in teaching about healthy male and female relationships, but they can also be fostered incorrectly.

3.5.3.1 *The negative influences of popular culture on male and female relationships*

Popular culture is having a significant impact on fostering a misunderstanding of what it means to be a man and to be a woman, and what equality and sexuality should look like. As a society, we need to provide young people and adults with realistic and healthy representations of these relationships. Research shows that negative representations of male and female relationships impact young people’s attitudes, and mental and physical health. For example, there is a link between violence and the sexualisation of women, and men’s attitudes towards women. Behind the sexualised images is a message about the expectations, values and ideas of manhood and womanhood. What is concerning is the accumulated effect of dysfunctional representations, particularly on children and teenagers (Papadopoulos, 2010).

Children are increasingly targeted and exposed to sexualised media. The premature imposition of adult sexuality on young people before they are capable of dealing with it mentally, emotionally or physically is not helping them to understand healthy sexuality. When it comes to internalising media and advertising messages, developmental psychologists have shown that children do not have the cognitive skills

to cope with persuasive media messages (Papadopoulos, 2010). What is the impact of this?

Sexualised media messages are selling the idea that young men and women have to present themselves as sexually desirable in order to attract attention. In popular culture, women are often portrayed as provocative and men as sexually dominant. The message for boys is often to be sexually dominant and to objectify the female body. A UK Government report concluded that being “sexy” is no longer about individuality or about girls being true to their “authentic voice”. Young people have been displaced from the natural form of ‘who they are’ by the intrusion of sexualisation imposed by adults (Papadopoulos, 2010). Research about values shows that 14-year-old girls and boys post revealing pictures of themselves in order to get more attention on social media. Teens are on the lookout for ‘likes’ and ‘hot’ (Bellavance, 2018).

Viewing pornography can affect young people's sexual attitudes, expectations and practices. In Australia, research shows that 90 per cent of boys under the age of 16 have visited a pornography site online, with around 60 per cent of girls doing the same (P. Wood, 2019). Other research found that one in four boys and one in 20 girls watch pornography weekly (Warren & Swami, 2020). What is concerning about viewing pornography is the wrong message of control, pleasure and physical aggression it can give to young people about sexuality. Research has shown that boys who view pornography are more likely to engage in verbal and physical sexual aggression, and adolescents who are exposed to violent sexually explicit material were six times more likely to be sexually aggressive than those who were not. Additionally, exposure to pornography was associated with greater acceptance of sexist attitudes about gender and sexual roles, including notions of women as sexual objects (Papadopoulos, 2010; Warren & Swami, 2020). Also, teenagers’ expectations of their first intercourse, were more disappointing than the expectations of youth who viewed less sexual content (Martino, Collins, Elliott, Kanouse, & Berry, 2009).

With respect to adults, a recent report shows that one in three men, whether married or in a committed dating relationship, said they viewed pornography at least weekly, compared to 1 in 8 of the women who were dating, and 1 in 16 for married women. Why is this a problem? The study found that a third of the women worry their partner could be more attracted to pornography than to them, and might be thinking about pornography during sex. Additionally, the highest levels of relationship stability,

commitment and satisfaction were reported by couples in which both partners said they don't view pornography. As frequency of pornography viewing climbed, relationship stability, commitment and satisfaction slipped (Collins, 2021).

3.5.3.2 *Fostering sexual ethics and healthy sexual development*



Related SDG - 3.7 - By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

Two decades ago, the American National Commission on Adolescent Sexual Health wrote the following definition of sexual health:

Sexual health encompasses sexual development and reproductive health, as well as such characteristics as the ability to develop and maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships; appreciate one's own body; interact with both genders in respectful and appropriate ways; and express affection, love, and intimacy in ways consistent with one's own values (cited in Harden, 2014, p. 457).

As young people move from early to late adolescence, they experience and explore different feelings and behaviours with respect to sexuality. This is an important period for young people's healthy psychosocial, moral and physiological sexual development. It is vital considering the critical role of families and society play in setting values and helping adolescents grow up to be healthy adults with responsible approaches to sexuality, consent, and sexual behaviour. This is also needed for the adults.

During this period teenagers receive different information about sex from parents, peers and popular culture. This information shapes their attitudes and behaviours. For example, there may be some pressure on boys to pursue girls sexually, while girls are expected to be sexually attractive and available. Their attitudes about sex can affect the risks they take and how they treat others. Understanding their own sexuality and making informed decisions about their behaviours is essential for healthy sexual

development into adulthood from a personal ethical, relational and physiological perspective. For these reasons this text maintains that sexual education must incorporate a moral/ethical and physiological dimensions. Schools and society make great efforts to educate young people about a broad range of topics related to: human physiological development, such as puberty, anatomy and reproduction. Some program also discuss risky sexual behaviours and romantic relationships. This text maintains that a comprehensive and holistic program must include sexual ethics in romantic relationships, gender ethics and healthy human physiological development (see Figure 3.7).

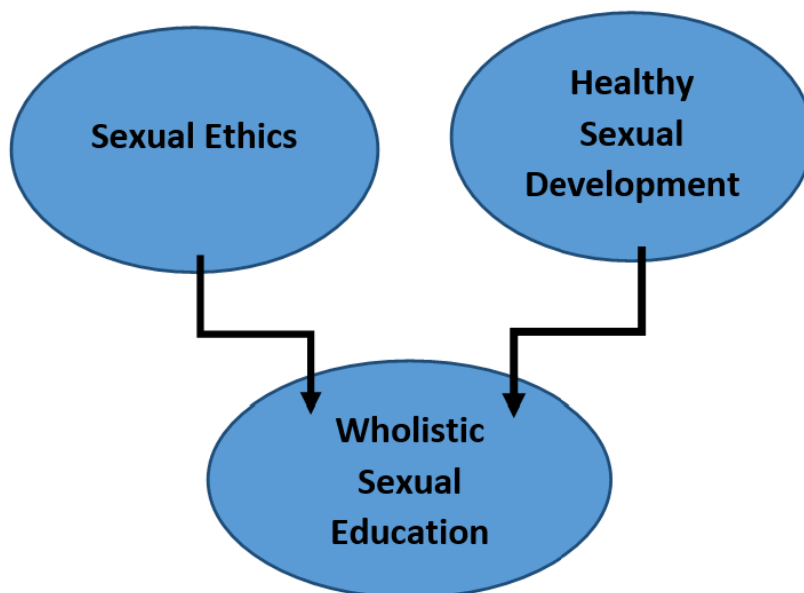


Figure 3.7 A holistic sexual education program

3.5.3.2.1 Risky sexual behaviours

Risky behaviours for teenagers include sexual activity with multiple sexual partners, without the use of contraceptives, and while under the influence of drugs or alcohol. The social consequences of adolescent risky sexual behaviours can be long-lasting and costly to adolescents, their families, and society at large. Early-onset sexual intercourse, sex with multiple partners, and unprotected sex, increase adolescents' susceptibility to sexually transmitted infections and unplanned pregnancies. Australian research shows that by the age of 16 two thirds of teenagers have had a romantic

relationship and one-third had sexual intercourse. Half of the girls and one-third of the boys said that they had experienced some form of unwanted sexual behaviour towards them in the past 12 months (Warren & Swami, 2020). It is estimated that 16% of female college students experience sexual abuse before beginning college and this is associated with various psychological symptoms such as post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression (Hahn, Hahn, Simons, & Caraway, 2021). Studies have also linked sexual abuse to substance abuse issues, such as early alcohol use, regular tobacco use, illicit drug use and dependence, early injection drug use and higher rates of prescription drug abuse (Pechansky et al., 2011). Another study found that almost 20% of female undergraduates reported having a sexual debut due to wanting to be loyal to their boyfriends or under emotional coercion from their partner. Under these circumstances, the requirements for female safety and the ability to protect themselves are weakened (Li et al., 2015).

3.5.3.2.2 The case for sexual ethics

When seeking to foster healthy sexuality, we need to recognise that sexuality is not devoid of values – love is not always true. You can have sex, but it may not be out of love, but a sexual urge. When sexuality is imbued with love, responsibility and commitment, it deeply enhances our happiness. Without love and intimacy, sex can become empty, self-serving, ungratifying or even abusive. Quality sex education provides young people with opportunities to explore their own values, along with the values and beliefs of their families and communities.

The importance of fostering sexual ethics is strong when considering that one in nine girls and 1 in 53 boys under the age of 18 experience sexual abuse or assault at the hands of an adult. Sexual abuse prior to age 18 may put some women at risk of engaging in sexual risk-taking (Schneider & Hirsch, 2018).

Early and risky sexual behaviours can establish unhealthy sexual patterns. These alarming statistics underline the need to implement prevention programs targeting risk factors long before the onset of risky and inappropriate behaviours. Parents, the extended family, and the community play a vital role in fostering ethical and healthy sexuality.

In addition, research shows that quality sex education programs can help young people delay the onset of sexual activity, reduce the frequency of sexual activity, reduce their number of sexual partners, and reducing the sexual risk-taking behaviour of adolescents (Sanderson, 2000).

So where will young people get ethical and healthy sex education about ethical and respectful relationships and have open conversations about the positive nature of sexuality and ethical values and practices? Popular culture, peers, and the media?

Because teenagers exist and develop in relation to others, adolescent sexual understanding and behaviours are outcomes of the interactions between individual characteristics, and the social context and interpersonal relationships that teenagers experience. Good communication with parents about sex and parental monitoring, focusing on academic achievement and peer norms supporting ethical and healthy behaviours are effective methods in limiting young people's engagement in risky sexual behaviour and fostering later age first intercourse (Norris et al., 2015).

The social and emotional skills required for ethical and healthy sexuality, to resist peer influences with respect to risky sexual behaviours are often developed in interactions with parents. Relationships with parents set the stage for relationships with peers. Low-quality parent-adolescent relationships, as measured by lack of parental social support and communication with adolescents, increase the likelihood that adolescents will be susceptible to the pressures and values of the peer group, and the influence of peers on teens' sexual behaviours. Caring and communicative relationships with parents can protect against or strengthen associations between peer risk factors and adolescent sexual decision-making. Peer influences do not replace parental influences with regard to adolescent sexual behaviour; rather, parental practices continue to serve an important role either directly forecasting sexual behaviour or moderating the link between peer attitudes and sexual behaviour (Oudekerk et al., 2014).

Parenting must be done well when it comes to sexual ethics. The parent-child relationship, monitoring styles and disciplinary styles are suggested to shape youth experiences with peers, including the extent to which youth are influenced by peers'

problematic behaviours. Young people whose parents are more controlling are more likely to have close friends who were accepting of sexual behaviour at earlier ages. Parenting style is important because adolescents who fail to establish autonomy in relationships with parents are unlikely to exhibit autonomy with peers and might be vulnerable to the values of the peer group. Teens with overly controlling parents might tend to move away from those parents and be more conforming to peer relationships. However, adolescents whose close friends were accepting of early sex were not doomed to engage in risky sexual behaviour when parents were more communicative and emotionally supportive (Oudekerk et al., 2014).

The social life of early adolescents is shaped by the increased influence of peers, which can be beneficial or negative. There are several reasons for this. First, is role modelling - the larger the number of peers who engage in a certain behaviour, the more correct the behaviour will be perceived to be, and the more likely it is that adolescents will engage in the same behaviour, particularly if this comes with social gains (e.g., acceptance, respect and popularity). According to Social Norm Theory, people have a tendency to adapt/change their own behaviours with their perceptions of behaviours that are popular, prevalent and accepted in the social life of individuals (Bongardt, Reitz, Sandfort, & Deković, 2015).

Negative peer influence is linked to both substance use and earlier initiation of sexual behaviour. Friendships with peers who hold more conservative attitudes about sex have been linked to delayed sexual intercourse. Conversely, friendships with peers who approve of sex at early ages have been linked to increased risky sexual behaviour. Greater peer acceptance of early sex at age 13 was significantly associated with greater risky sexual behaviour before age 16 (Oudekerk et al., 2014).

The benefits of peer resistance skill-based interventions for protecting against peer influences in adolescent substance use are well documented. The REAL model for resisting peer pressure to use substances involves four primary resistance strategies: Refuse, Explain, Avoid, and Leave. REAL can be used by youth to increase their own agency with respect to making healthy behaviour choices in the face of peer pressure. A study shows that 74% of young girls who took part in a study showed some communication competence with respect to the REAL model when it came to resisting initiation of sexual behaviour (Norris et al., 2015).

Activity – Pair and Share – Try to answer the following questions.

1. What would you say or do if a person you liked wanted to do sexual things with you that you did not want to do?
2. What would you say or do if you were invited to a party where the parents were not home?
3. What would you say or do if you were at a teen club or party where people were doing sexual things?

3.5.3.3 Sexual ethics guidance

My wife and I (JB) recognised that sexual curiosity is a normal part of growing up, therefore we needed to provide our four boys with some guidance about what healthy and responsible sexuality looks like and how to build healthy male and female relationships. The psychologist Archibald Hart (1994) suggested that having sex should be done at the right time, with the right person, when the right conditions are fulfilled, while Devine et al. (2001) added that it should be with the right motives and values. Upon reflection, we had done some reading about this when our boys were growing up, but although this understanding evolved, somehow we came to some of the same conclusions.

3.5.3.4 The right time

Currently, the trends of sexual debut age among adolescents around the world are becoming younger. When is the right time for youth to start having sex? There are many opinions on this. Not until marriage, a couple of months into a relationship. Some researchers argued that consensual adolescent sexuality is good for their development (Harden, 2014). However, other research suggested that premature sexual experiences can lead to social and health problems. For men, early intercourse has been positively associated with sexual behavioural risks and sexual arousal and orgasm problems, while women who started having sex early had an increased likelihood of reporting sexual behavioural risks ("Long-Term Benefits of Delaying First Sex Appear to Be Limited," 2008). For example, risky sexual behaviour for young

women is often associated with sexual coercion. Hence, sex is not necessarily positive or healthy when done under the wrong conditions and time.

The first advice we (JB) gave to our boys was to delay sexual activities until the appropriate time. We suggested not until marriage, yet we knew that in the end, this would be their choice. Sexual abstinence is a sexual choice that may be the healthiest choice for an individual at a particular time. Evidence from studies conducted in the USA showed adolescent perceptions of parental disapproval of early intercourse are associated with a delay in the onset of sexual activity (M. S. I. Ross, 2002). Maybe this was true for us.

You may ask – what’s wrong with young people exploring their sexuality as teenagers? We wanted them to learn to control their sexual urges, in order to create the right conditions and timing for their first sexual encounter. Unlike adults, young people find it hard to delay gratification. We told them, “Controlling urges is important for relationships. How will you stay in a committed relationship if you can’t control your sexual urges?” Emotional intelligence has taught us that self-discipline is learnt when we are young. Young people who delay gratification are able to be more successful at school, in their careers and in their relationships (Goleman, 2004). Having impulse control with respect to sexuality is important in maintaining a long-term relationship. At this stage of their lives, adolescents are in a conflict between forming intimate, loving relationships and avoiding committed relationships (Fuller, 2019). Hence, taking it slower seemed to be a piece of good advice for our boys.

Research conducted in China suggested that females initiating sex earlier, were more likely to have their first sexual intercourse with men who were not their “boyfriends”, less likely to take contraception, were more likely to have multiple lifetimes and concurrent sexual partners, to report pregnancy, and be diagnosed with sexually transmitted diseases. Additionally, after their sexual debut, 40.6% of students felt regret and unease, 29.1% had a sense of loss, 26.1% felt guilty, 12.5% felt hateful, and only 23.8% reported feeling happy (Li et al., 2015).

Research suggests that those who abstain from sexual intimacy during the early part of their relationships allow communication and other social processes to become the foundation of their attraction to each other rather than just sex. Compared with those in the early sex group, those who waited until marriage rated their relationship stability

and satisfaction higher, and their sexual relations and communication better (Bryner, 2010). However, another study showed that those having sex later than the norm (usually 18), were no more satisfied with their sexual relationships than those who had started at an earlier age ("Long-Term Benefits of Delaying First Sex Appear to Be Limited," 2008). However, sexual satisfaction does not necessarily mean an emotional bond and satisfaction in the relationship.

I (JB) remember one day talking to teachers in the staffroom about dating. Since I had sons at my school, they asked me whom my sons were dating. I told them that my wife and I encouraged our sons not to have sex before marriage and discouraged dating until the right time. They must have thought – “this man is a throwback from the 50’s”. The room became silent and the atmosphere awkward - why? In our society, it is considered cute by most people for teenagers to date and explore their sexuality. Well, when you put two young people together with hormones rushing and the desire to be loved (mostly insecure), what do we expect will happen?

3.5.3.5 The right person

We also suggested to our boys that a premature sexual relationship may cause them to be stuck in a relationship that may be wrong for them. If couples become sexually active too early, this rewarding area of the relationship may overwhelm good decision-making and keep couples in a relationship that might not be in their best long-term interest. Parents worry about this one because they want their children to mature and be with the right person before they get involved in a sexual relationship. Additionally, we suggested to them that having transient sexual relationships was not good, because this would make it harder for them to bind with “the one” later on. Research shows that younger married couples have higher rates of infidelity (Harwood, 2009).

3.5.3.6 The right motives and values

We also advised them that sex and love are not necessarily the same thing. It is important that love and sex come together, and for this to occur you need to be a bit more mature. Research suggests that most people find it hard to imagine passionate love, absent of sexual desire. However, this does not mean that sexual desire and love are the same. For example, males report having fewer problems imagining sex without love, than females do. However, when people are asked to think about love

they start thinking about long-term attachment and commitment, and the positive aspects of their partner. Conversely, sexual desire focuses on the “here and now”, not the long-term prospects of the relationship (Förster, Epstude, & Özelsel, 2009).

3.5.3.7 The right conditions

We also suggested to our boys that sexuality is wonderful when one is in a loving, respectful, and mature relationship. Sex fosters intimacy, bonding, and shared pleasure. In this context, people can be free to explore their sexuality. You may ask, what does maturity have to do with sexuality? Can we expect teenagers to have this? Most of us would say, no. Sex is compelling and sexual desire when not managed well can diminish our ability to love and be loved in a deeply emotional way. Think about it, when you are aroused does it mean you want to love the other, or are you expecting something from the other, for you? Arousal needs to be paired with love. We need to harmonise other-centred love with passionate sexuality. Research shows that two-thirds of sexually experienced teenagers (12-19) say they wish they had waited longer to have sexual intercourse for the first time (61% of females and 39% of males reported this). The reasons included: being too young; not being ready to have sex; not being within a close relationship and not being with the right person; sex being unplanned and not protected; and expectations of the initial sexual experiences were unrealistic. Variables associated with these responses included younger age at first intercourse, lower parental education and lower parental monitoring (Martino et al., 2009).

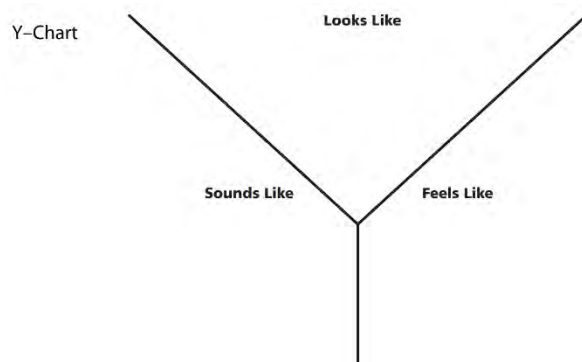
We provided the advice listed above to our boys, but we knew that in the end, it was their call and that there are no guarantees that their own relationships would not come with challenges. Did our sons turn out weird or frustrated because they followed our advice? I don't think so. However, is this different for adults? Are you frustrated to be in a monogamous, committed relationship? Most would say, “No, it's wonderful”. My wife and I feel that we did the right thing because our sons were spared the regrets and the pressures put on young people to be sexually active at an early age.

In conclusion, we must be mindful that as adults and as a society we are not selling the wrong messages and sexualising our youth at a very early age. What the research is telling us is that there is a strong link between the messages kids get at home and

from the media and their attitudes about sex and relationships between men and women. Research suggests the need for an intervention that includes reaching out to parents and teens. Parents could discuss sexual messages in popular culture with their children and offer a broader perspective on sexuality to compensate for the skewed portrayals in the media. Youth could be made aware of the ways in which sex is depicted and perhaps distorted (Martino et al., 2009). It is incumbent on adults to help young people with a “reality check” with respect to sexuality.

Activity – write in your journal and share with another.

What advice would you give to a teenager with respect to a) sex should be done at the right time and with the right person; b) when the right conditions are fulfilled; and c) with the right motives and values?



Activity

Define what postponing sex means for you. Was this relevant to you? List the benefits. Make a plan - list the strategies that would allow you to resist pressure to have sex. List some delay statements you could

tell another. Using the Y-Chart describe what postponing sex means for you or controlling your sexual desire means for you. What it sounds like, feels like, and looks like. You could also ‘*think, pair and share*’ with another person about the qualities that make a relationship healthy. Suggest tips to the other person for waiting.

3.6 Pillar 2f - Sphere Two: Parental Love



Related SDG – Reduction of Poverty Indicator 1.2.2 - Proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions. Goal 3.5 - Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.

Since the 1980s the important role of the family has increasingly come to the attention of the international community. The United Nations (UN), General Assembly adopted a number of resolutions and proclaimed the International Year of the Family and the International Day of Families. The UN emphasised the critical role of parents in the rearing of children and the family has the primary responsibility for the nurturing and protection of children. For the full and harmonious development of their personality and health, children should grow up in a family environment and in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. In keeping with the spirit of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, family and parenting support is increasingly recognised as an important part of national social policies and social investment packages aimed at reducing poverty, decreasing inequality and promoting positive parental and child wellbeing.

Once a couple has children, they become parents, and this brings love, joy, and challenges. The key point of becoming a parent is that this sphere of love allows us to grow in our capacity to love by experiencing the love a parent feels for their child and the joy and love a child gives in return. We come to understand our parent's love, when we become parents (Devine et al., 2001). As parents, our job is to love and care for our children, and this must take priority over our careers, income or other considerations. This is not easy, love takes effort, and it means living for the sake of the child. You want to make the world a better place, and be good a parent; you want to mess up the world, and be a bad parent. The family is the school of values and love, and parents are its first teachers.

How do we become good parents? What lessons are we teaching our children? This brings us to think about what we learnt from our own parents about parenting and how their parenting affected us for good or for ill. The research is very clear about the critical role parents play in the development of a child because parental attachment impacts personality development and social relationships (T. Hart, 2008; Junkins, 2019).

3.6.1 Parental attachment and personality development

The most important task in the first years of the life of a child is the creation of a secure emotional bond with a primary caregiver. Long before infants can speak, they adjust their actions and judge others as someone who will attend to their needs and make them feel safe, or not. If you cried when you were hungry as a child and received love and support in return, you developed a sense that you are deserving and worthy of love. If you were unloved, neglected or abused you developed a sense that you are unworthy to be cared for by others and you learnt to rely on yourself, and not trust others. These types of positive or negative responses are etched into unconscious memories. Our memories become working models that crystallise into habits and behaviours in our lives (Haddad, 2020).

When the caregiver does not provide adequate care, a child's brain may not develop properly which may affect the individual's ability to manage their emotions in adulthood and affect moral development and their ability to learn. Without that security, our body, brain, and behaviour tend toward a fearful and defensive retreat (T. Hart, 2008; Junkins, 2019).

Physiologically and psychologically the infant's nervous system is dependent on the caregiver, which fosters a child's sociality and ability to communicate, relate and connect with others. Additionally, inadequate, or poor early care can set a low threshold for activating stress response systems in social situations undermining social bonding; effects that can persist throughout the lifespan. Human babies are born with only 25 per cent of the brain complete, thus, the caregiver's training in a baby's self-regulation is vital in managing stress responses. Care-deprived infants develop aberrant brain structures and behavioural disorders that lead to greater hostility towards others (Junkins, 2019).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

How did your parental attachment impact your personality development? Think of early memory.

If you were unloved, neglected or abused you may have developed a sense that you are unworthy to be cared for by others and you learnt to rely on yourself, and not trust others. Is that true for you or a loved one?

Does not being able to trust mean you don't trust yourself?

3.6.2 Parental attachment and social relationships

Parental love for children is also foundational for future quality relationships. A secure attachment at one year is related to peer and social competence in the pre-school years. Parental attachment and values shown by parents also affect how siblings relate to each other.

Parental influence does not decline as children mature into adolescence. Social skills, emotional adjustment and relational competence in young adults are also greatly influenced by parental attachment. Young people who have a good attachment to their parents tend to report better self-esteem and a lower occurrence of depressive mood. According to attachment theory, the child constructs internal working models of the self (how they see themselves) and what she or he can expect from relationships based on her or his first relationship with parents. These models form the basis for peer and romantic relationships, operating as a template by which to appraise and interpret subsequent relational interactions (J. Ross & Fuertes, 2010).

The quality of adolescent intimate relationships with parents is linked to a positive self-concept, psychological adjustment, and physical health. Conversely, diminished quality of relationships is associated with an increase in depression and lower self-esteem (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Further, poor attachment in childhood can lead to being less empathetic and receptive to others (Junkins, 2019).

According to 'continuity models of family-peer linkages', the quality of peer relationships will mirror the quality of family relationships (Oudekerk et al., 2014). Positive or negative maternal caregiving at 18 months can predict a child's positive or negative attachment styles 20 years later. Additionally, a child's attachment

experiences with parents affect his or her subsequent functioning in peer and romantic relationships (Armsden & Greenberg, 1987). Relationships between infants and caregivers share similar features with adult romantic partners. For example, both feel safe when the other is nearby and responsive. Anxiety and avoidance in romantic relationships were found to be positively correlated with early caregiving (Haddad, 2020).

3.6.3 Parental attachment and conflict resolution

Children who have an insecure attachment to their parents have more instances of sibling conflict (Fuller, 2019). Higher parental attachment security is positively associated with better conflict resolution behaviour in young people. Conversely, inter-parental conflict adversely affects the parent–child bond and negatively affects social skills and emotional adjustment. Parents' poor conflict-based behaviours negatively influence their children's way of resolving conflict with their peers and in romantic relationships. Adolescent exposure to marital conflict has been associated with anxiety to participate in relationships of their own and with diminished capacity to engage in social interactions outside of the family system.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with another.

Did parental attachment and values shown by your parents affect how you related to your siblings?

Does the quality of peer relationships mirror the quality of your family relationships?

Did parental attachment have an impact on how you resolve conflicts?

3.6.4 Parenting styles

Even though parents may not always be aware of it, children naturally learn from and resemble their parents, and this also applies to how they parent their own children. The varied styles of parenting, lead to a varied degree of social competencies in children. For example, the causes of oppositional defiant disorder in children are associated with harsh, inconsistent and neglectful parenting styles (Wagener & Thomas, 2019). The way parents resolve their child's joint needs for both nurturance, and limit-setting has a major impact on the degree of social competence and the behavioural adjustment of their children. One way in which adolescent-parent relationships might become problematic occurs when parents undermine the

autonomy of the teenager to handle adolescent strivings for greater independence and control over personal decisions. Parents' use of guilt, anxiety, shame, withdrawal of their love, or other psychologically controlling tactics undermines the development of this autonomy. Adolescents whose parents use psychologically controlling techniques are at increased risk of making decisions that are developmentally immature and poorly reasoned (Oudekerk et al., 2014).

Some of the most beneficial factors for youth development are parental affection, consistency of parenting, response to children's cues, expressing and modelling values, respect for the child and open discussions. Some of the reasons parents struggle to raise children include a lack of support, stress and substance abuse in the lives of parents, unrealistic expectations placed on the child, not knowing how to help children grow and behave in a positive way, parental doubt in their ability to meet the child's needs and the poor childhood experiences of the parents ("Why does child abuse happen?," 2020).

In the following sections, the four parenting styles - authoritarian, indulgent, neglectful and authoritative are unpacked (Kusterer, 2009; Sheh, 2013). The focus will be on authoritative styles as this is the best one. The authoritarian parenting style is characterised by strict and inflexible behaviours, highly demanding and emotionally unresponsive (cold). The emphasis is on obedience, respect for authority and an expectation that the rules be followed without question or explanation.

Indulgent parenting is characterised by low demands and high responsiveness. These parents are warm and accepting, but exercise little authority, make few behavioural demands and allow considerable self-regulation by the child or adolescent. This reminds me (JB) of teachers who want to be friends with their students. This does not work for teachers or for parents because adults will often sacrifice standards and respect to create "friendship". As a teacher, I know that students may not like me when I discipline them, but in the long run, it is better for them and with time, they do come to respect and appreciate this. However, after disciplining my students, I always show them that I believe in them, reinforcing their good qualities. Adults need to reward the attitudes and behaviours that underpin young people's success in the world.

A neglectful parenting style is neither demanding, nor responsive. These parents do not monitor their children's behaviours nor support their interests, and parents are

often disengaged from their parental responsibilities. Neglected adolescents are the most disadvantaged with respect to social competence, academic achievement, and psychosocial adjustment.

Before describing the qualities of authoritative parenting, it is important to understand that raising children is a partnership between both parents. The unique characteristics of mother-daughter, father-daughter, mother-son, and father-son relationships have an impact on child development. Research has shown that attachment to fathers was found to be predictive of better social skills, which in turn promoted greater relational competence and better emotional adjustment. Fathers may play a more significant role in children's exploration of the environment and new situations, including social experiences. Additionally, a father's involvement in a child's education had a positive impact on student achievement. Father-child physical play time, affection and engaging father-son interactions predicted later popularity in school, lower levels of depression and higher levels of marital satisfaction in adulthood (Sheh, 2013).

Attachment to mothers was found to be predictive of better conflict resolution, which in turn promoted greater relational competence and better emotional adjustment. Mothers may primarily function as a secure base when the attachment system is threatened, and being able to re-establish attachment with the mother during times of distress may model for the adult-child how to apply such skills within interpersonal relationships to maintain attachments in their own lives (J. Ross & Fuertes, 2010).

One of the keys to parenting is that both parents adopt a similar parenting style and support each other in that style. Inconsistent parenting between mothers and fathers was related to anxiety and depression in adolescents. Mothers have traditionally been the caregiver; socialised to provide care for their children, while fathers have been socialised to be the provider and disciplinarians. Consequently, mothers and fathers have often adopted different parenting styles. Mothers more often use an authoritative parenting style, while fathers use an authoritarian parenting style. With women increasingly joining the workforce and fathers spending more time with their children, fathers are mostly adopting authoritative or permissive styles of parenting (Sheh, 2013).

Activity – write in your journal and share with another.

What parenting style have you observed? What did you learn from this?

What parenting style do you use or would use if you were a parent? Explain why.

3.6.4.1 Authoritative Parenting

Inductive discipline (raising attention to one's impact on others) and authoritative parenting have generally been found to be positively associated with children and adolescents moral reasoning and prosocial behaviour. Adolescents who perceive their parents as having an authoritative parenting style are more likely to espouse values consistent with those of their parents and foster a moral identity in adolescents. The adolescent's favourable evaluation of induction as fair and appropriate fosters the likelihood that the adolescent will attend to, accept and internalise the values and guidance given by parents (Bellavance, 2018; Patrick & Gibbs, 2012).

Authoritative parenting maintains a balance between high levels of demands and supervision, and responsiveness and warmth. These parents consistently monitor their children's behaviours but are also warm and supportive. Research has generally found that adolescents raised under this style scored higher on measures of psychosocial competence and school achievement, and lower on measures of internal distress and problem behaviours (Kusterer, 2009).

Parents help their children balance the need for autonomous and active thinking with other-oriented, rule-following tendencies. Parental warmth/responsiveness refers to the degree to which parents promote individuality, self-regulation, and self-assertion by being aware, supportive, and understanding of children's unique needs and demands, allowing them to grow in their autonomy and responsibility. Parents who were responsive to children's signals and needs had a warm and loving relationship with their children.

Parental control/demandingness refers to the standards parents put in place for children to become integrated into the family. First, this develops the mindset in the child that the welfare of others in the family needs to be considered, as well as their own. Second, parents need to supervise, discipline and be willing to address disobedience. Children are damaged when those charged with their care are afraid of any conflict or upset and leave them without guidance. It is an act of responsibility and love to guide and discipline a child (Peterson, 2018).

We must remember that a common developmental characteristic of childhood and adolescents is egocentrism, which changes with maturity. Parents who set high expectations raised children who were high in self-control, altruism, and self-esteem. Parents who used induction, praising or disciplining with explanations, with a focus on the consequences of the child's behaviour on others, produced children with more mature empathy, conscience, altruism and moral reasoning (Berkowitz et al., 2002; Sheh, 2013). When I (JB) interviewed students while doing my PhD about their behaviours while using social media, Baba (a year nine student) provided an example of the importance of parental guidance and influence, stating, "I have the rule, if my mum would see it and be like, "Oh my God, it's terrible," I won't post". Some parents I interviewed suggested that parental supervision and clear expectations were important for their child's use of social media.

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others.

“Communicating with Your Child: What Would You Say”

Find chances to strengthen your communication with your child in everyday situations. What would that look like?

Family rules are a specific, clear statement of what you expect. Write these down.

Letting your child know what you expect is important for a positive parent-child relationship. Remember to keep your expectations appropriate for your child's age. Children love rewards. Praise, hugs, and kisses work really well for young children.

Using Discipline and Consequences: What Would You Do?

3.6.4.2 Parental modelling of values and behaviours

Children mimic what they see being done in their lives. Research suggests that parents who modelled self-control and altruism had children with higher self-control and altruism. A critical factor to consider when giving your children the basis for a happy adult life is to treat them with love and respect from the very beginning so that the child comes to expect and perceive these qualities as normal in any relationship. The child will come to understand this respectful behaviour as the best way to be and communicate with others. Then when our children encounter abusive behaviour, they will see it as unacceptable (Branden, 1992, 1997).

Husband and wife should show love for each other in front of the kids. In my (JB) experience, children love seeing mummy and daddy show affection to each other. My father was not a person who showed affection externally, but he was a good and loving man. I remember when I was eight and my father had not come home one night. It was a 20 below zero night in Canada. Remember, no mobile phones in 1963. I woke up late in the night, peeked my head out of my room and my mother had a blanket on my dad, cuddling him, trying to warm him up. I never forgot this scene. It touched my heart deeply. I knew at that moment that my mum loved my dad. It turns out his car had broken down on the highway and he was not dressed for it. The police found him and brought him home. With respect to my own family, my sons did not need my wife and I to preach about the value and wonders of marriage. I suspect that when they saw us show affection for each other, they said to themselves, consciously or not, "I want this as well".

3.7 Pillar 2g - Sphere Three: Sibling Love

The third sphere is sibling love for each other. We develop our capacity to share and care for others through our relationship with our siblings. This relationship shapes our personality and how we interact with our families and friends and is also a good preparation for marriage.

Additionally, siblings can help each other learn about the world, feel secure about exploring it, how to behave in certain situations and foster empathy, and older siblings can be role models. If a younger sibling sees their older sibling as an attachment figure, it provides a model for how to relate to others. When a new child enters the family, the older sibling is called upon by the parents to care for their little brother or sister. This teaches altruism and care to the older sibling.

Warmth in sibling relationships has also been shown to be positively related to emotion regulation. Additionally, when there is conflict and stress in the family, siblings can support each other. For example, siblings of divorced parents who were close experienced less of the negative impacts of the divorce. Also, when siblings are more aggressive with each other, they are with their peers (Fuller, 2019).

Activity – write in your journal and share with another.

How was your relationship with your sibling(s)?

How has that relationship been important for you?

3.8 Pillar 2h - Sphere Four: Children's Love for parents

The fourth sphere of love is filial piety - the love of a child for their parents. Filial piety tests the true nature of a person (Sun, 2017). As children grow up, they need to take age-appropriate responsibilities towards their parents. As children get older, they show gratitude to their parents by caring for them. The child's love becomes parental, towards their parents.

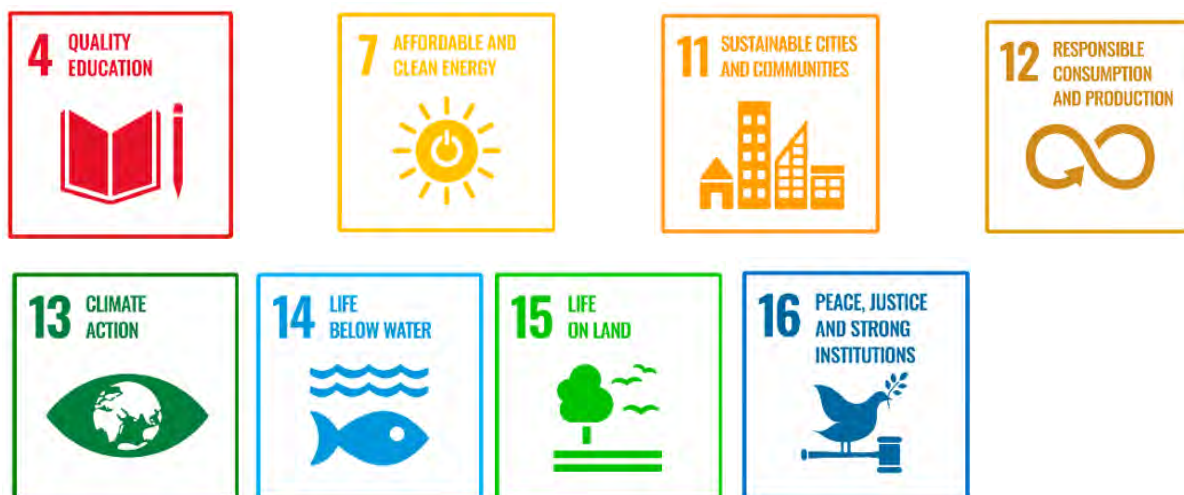
Love is given to the child, but it must also be returned. Children also need to give back to their parents and siblings to develop. If we just receive it, we cannot progress. As parents, we move from looking after our children (child care) to our children looking after us (parental care). The model of parental care in collectivistic cultures tends to thrive compared to individualist traditions of developed countries. In developed countries, the emphasis is on individual development and self-fulfilment. Viktor Frankl (1984) said that western societies are obsessed with youth and accomplishments, while less emphasis is put on appreciating the wisdom and contributions of elders. Responsibility for the care of parents by their children has diminished, and governments and other institutions have stepped in to fill the gaps. However, in OECD countries the elderly are becoming the new poor. In this context, it becomes urgent for us to consider what it means to love our parents. Love comes full circle, starting with a couple loving each other, parents loving their children, siblings loving each other and now children loving their parents.

Activities – How to Love your Parents

Here is a list of things we can do for our parents: 1) Visit them with family members; 2) Spend holidays with parents; 3) Hold birthday parties for parents; 4) Cook for parents; 5) Give a call to parents during weekends; 6) Sincerely listen to parents' life stories; 7) Tell parents that you love them; 8) Support parents' hobbies; 9) Help parents to complete their unfinished dreams; 10) Regularly take parents to physical check-ups; 11) Regularly communicate your thoughts with parents; 12) Take parents to important events; 13) Let parents visit where you work; 14) Travel with parents; 15)

Do exercise with parents; 16) Participate in parents' social events; and 17) Watch movies with parents (Sun, 2017).

4 Pillar Three – Managing our Natural Environment and Sustainable Development



Related United Nations SDG

Goal 4.7 - By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development ... Goal - 7.2 - By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix. Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Goal 11.4 Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage. 11.a - Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning. Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. 12.5 By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse. 12.6 Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle. 12.8 By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature. Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. 13.2 Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning. 13.3 Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning. Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable

development. 14.1 By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution. 14.4 By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices ... Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss. 15.5 Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

A healthy society gives equal attention to economic development, ecological sustainability and social justice because they are mutually reinforcing. Additionally, environmental issues also impact peace and security.

This chapter is about caring for, managing, protecting, and restoring our natural environment. For this to occur education must be provided to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development. Preserving our natural environment is one of the defining tasks of the 21st century (Guterres, 2020). The United Nations maintains that there is growing international recognition of Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) as an integral element of quality education and a key enabler for sustainable development ("Education," 2023).

Humanity now faces existential risks because we have poorly managed and abused our natural environment. This values education program does not view economic prosperity and technological development as a problem in itself, but sees the management of this development as the challenge. As the UN preamble for Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development states (<https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>) – ‘This Agenda is a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity.’ We must create new models for how to sustainably harmonise technological development with the ecology of the natural world for the benefit of humanity and the Earth.

4.1 Paradigms for a technological society

The modern era is defined as a 'technological society' producing the 'good life'. Most scientific and technological development has been motivated by the ideal to improve the human condition. Unparalleled advances in public health, education and technological development have brought great benefits and this has become a permanent feature of our technological civilisation. The sections below explore the different paradigms with respect to how humans understand the relationship between humans and technology. This is important as it sets the tone for our view of how we manage our relationship with the natural world.

The instrumental paradigm posits that technologies are neutral tools and values-free; they are a means to an end established by humans. This view holds that technology is subservient to the values established in the social sphere. Moral concerns only arise when humans use technologies immorally. The instrumental paradigm focuses on the implementation of technology through valuing effectiveness, control, and economic utility. This is considered to be the dominant view adopted by modern governments and policy sciences, which impacts how we use natural resources.

The substantive paradigm argues that we should be wary of the instrumental paradigm because no tool is neutral since technologies have inbuilt biases (techniques and goals set by organisations) that affect the social dimension and the natural environment. Technologies are shaped by the social interests and biases of the people who produce and control them, and these "interests" are embedded in the design, deployment and uses of technologies. Under this paradigm technology is seen as a 'means to an end' transforming everything, including human life and nature into means to our ends. We are more interested in technical efficiency and effectiveness (saving time and that things work well) than in how this affects humans and the environment (Morgan, 2019).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others.

The instrumental paradigm posits that technologies are neutral tools and values-free. How does that sit with you?

The substantive paradigm argues that no tool is neutral since technologies have inbuilt biases (techniques) that affect the social dimension and the natural environment. How does that sit with you?

Do we stop developing technology?

4.2 Pillar 3a - Coupled human-natural systems

You cannot get through a single day without having an impact on the world around you. What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of a difference you want to make.

- Jane Goodall

This chapter offers a view that human values and goals shape our technologies, but our technologies also shape us (a system) for good or for ill. A systems approach views life on earth as a complex web of natural and social systems that are interconnected and that reciprocally affect each other (Seising, 2010; Straussfogel & Schilling, 2009). This applies also to interactions between human social systems and all other ecosystems (Marten, 2001). Education on the existence and nature of systems can foster system sensitivity and a desire for healthy environments (Junkins, 2019). This is why this values education program places so much importance on the principle of giving and receiving, and the circularity of life - what we do impacts nature and nature in turn impacts us – all life is connected.

An open system is a system that has external interactions with its environment. Biological organisms (humans) and ecosystems are open systems. An ecosystem can be a small pond or as big as planet Earth. Humans and the natural environment are two interacting systems that affect and feed back onto one another. Open systems have input and output flows, exchanging matter, energy or information with their surroundings. System components both impacting each other create a feedback loop; the process by which an effect (an output) feeds back (an input) onto its very cause (Heylighen & Joslyn, 2001). The system in Figure 4.1 represents the feedback loop between humans and our natural environment. If we input pollution into our environment, this pollution will impact us in the form of poor air quality (the output). In

the study of human ecology, human actions generate effects that reverberate through ecosystems and human social systems. What goes around, comes around.

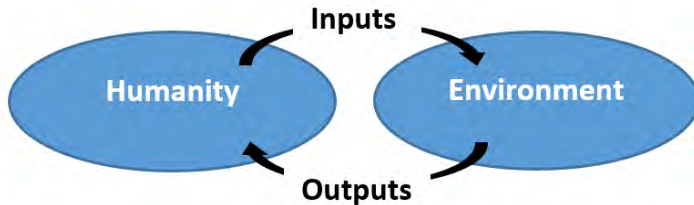


Figure 4.1 Feedback Loop between Humans and their Natural Environments

4.2.1 Human impacts on ecosystems

In human ecology, the environment is everything in a specified area - the air, soil, water, living organisms, and including everything built by humans. Human ecology analyses the consequences of human activities as a chain of effects through the ecosystem and human social system. People affect ecosystems when they use resources such as water, fish, timber, and livestock grazing land. In most cases after using materials from ecosystems, people return the materials to ecosystems as waste (Marten, 2001). For example, oceans are coupled with human-natural systems. Ocean sustainability supports human livelihoods. Change driven by human pollutants and the overexploitation of natural resources is challenging the capacity of the ocean to provide benefits.

Another example of human impact (inputs such as pollution and resource depletion) on ecosystems, which feed back onto us in the form of outputs (poor air quality, climatic change, ocean acidification, land degradation, water scarcity, and fisheries and biodiversity loss). All these outputs affect the quality of human life on Earth. Up until 2000, human beings had cut down more than 2.3 million km² of primary forest. About 90% of fisheries are harvested at maximum sustainable yield limits. We have driven species to extinction at a rate that is more than 100 times that observed in the fossil record. Vertebrate species have, on average, had their population sizes cut in half in the past 45 years. The concentrations of major greenhouse gases are at their highest levels for the past 800,000 years (Whitmee et al., 2015).

The beneficial outputs we receive from our natural environments are enormous. The Earth's atmosphere, oceans, and important ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, and tundra help to maintain a constant climate, provide clean air, recycle nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus, and regulate the world's water cycle, giving humanity freshwater. The land, seas, and rivers, and the plants and animals they contain, also provide many benefits, chiefly food, fuel, timber, and medicinal compounds (Whitmee et al., 2015).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others.

Brainstorm some of the major issues surrounding sustainability such as water, non-renewable and renewable energy, recycling, landfill, and fisheries.

Select one issue from the list and write a short story.

4.2.2 Planetary health

The Earth is aching and sick, we need to care for it. People are very concerned about their own health, but are they concerned about the health of the Earth? Humans play an important role in managing the planet's systems and reducing damage to them. One of the solutions is the concept of "Planetary Health". This is an emerging field of study connecting human health, civilisation and the natural systems on which humans depend. This approach suggests that health and environmental policies need to be harmonised (Whitmee et al., 2015).

Changes to the structure and function of the Earth's natural systems represent a growing threat to human health. Research shows that a quarter of the global disease burden was attributable to human-modifiable environmental factors. For example, three out of every four new infectious diseases in people come from animals including HIV, Ebola, Zika, Hendra, SARS, MERS and COVID-19 (Baker, 2020; Whitmee et al., 2015). Hunting and selling wildlife, often endangered, increases the risk of disease transmission from animals to humans. Ambient air pollution from fine particulates causes around 3.6 million deaths per year, mostly as a result of fossil fuel combustion (Whitmee et al., 2015). Our health and survival, and that of our planet are interdependent systems.

Pillar 3b - Separation of values from development

"Let us not forget that human knowledge and skills alone cannot lead humanity to a happy and dignified life" - Albert Einstein

Science and technology have been used for the conquest and exploitation of nature. As a result, we have become desensitised to the destruction of nature, seeing its exploitation as normal. This has caused us to lose sight of our responsibility to care for nature. Humanity has traded off many of the earth's supportive and regulating processes to feed and fuel human population growth and development. However, we can no longer take for granted the planet's ecosystem's ability to sustain future generations. In a world still plagued with unsustainable exploitation of nature's resources, famine, conflict, inequity and disease, it is evident that science and technology are not being used as ethically and effectively as they could be. Humans were always better at building tools than using them wisely. We gained the power to manipulate the world, but not the wisdom or the will to manage the complexity of the global ecology.

The major issues that need to be addressed to manage science, technology, and economics, and by extension our environment well, encompassing four dimensions – 1) a separation of values from development, 2) the need for transdisciplinary research, 3) implementation and governance failures, and 4) the sustainable practices of organisations and individuals.

The first main challenge to address in order to achieve sustainable development is the lack of values perspective. This has several dimensions. First, is the separation of values from scientific, technological and economic development. For example, corruption and misuse taint all aspects of the fishing industry. Additionally, science is a human activity; it can be constructive or destructive. For example, mathematics is used for guiding instruments used for killing on a mass scale (Patkar, 2019). The idea that science and values lay in two competing areas has created disasters in the 20th and 21st centuries. When science fails to emphasise values, it diminishes the importance of the value perspective in the minds of human beings and, by extension, in its applications. Science does not need to be amoral to maintain its neutrality for the

sake of scientific objectivity (Sponsel, 2019). Scientific neutrality can lead to viewing nature and technology as tools that allow us to achieve what we want, separated from value considerations. Scientific and technological development seen through this decontextualised and objectified lens of instrumentality/utility opens it up to exploitation (Feenberg, 2002; Floridi, 1999; Sikka, 2012). The ethical desire to use development for the prosperity and peace of humanity is being sidelined or even undermined by a lack of values perspective. The misuse of scientific knowledge by various political and economic interests has caused equity and environmental problems (Moon, 1984). Scientific and technological development has often marginalised the role of values in development. It is therefore critical that we cooperate across academic, social, political, national and industry boundaries.

4.2.3 The materialist values perspective

The second problem associated with a lack of values perspective is the growth of selfish individualism and a materialist values perspective. In industrialised nations, self-fulfilment, materialism, free enterprise, and continuous economic growth have become major components of our worldview. Such value perspectives have negative consequences for humans and the natural environment. The deployment of technology shaped by commercial interests affects social and ecological systems (Buckingham, 2007; Feenberg, 2002) and the demand for consumer goods extends far beyond that required for a decent life (Marten, 2001). As development progresses, we are gradually losing our ability to control it. We are not taking responsibility for the detrimental effects on the health of humans and the natural environment. If this continues, it will have destructive consequences, which will be difficult for us to remedy (Moon, 1980).

4.2.4 Postmodern consciousness and a global identity

The third problem associated with a lack of values perspective is the lack of a global worldview or consciousness. Morgan (2019) refers to a global worldview as a ‘postmodern consciousness’ which allows us to consider alternatives to the current modern paradigm. This means adopting affirmative attitudes such as valuing universal values, multiculturalism, spirituality, the dignity and wellbeing of all, and environmental conservation, to name a few. We face global problems, without a truly functioning

global community. No single discipline or local prescription can solve the problems facing humanity (Moon, 1983, 1984). When it comes to climate change and the threat of nuclear weapons, countries are not sovereign. These require global solutions, based on a global worldview. A failure to reach an agreement between countries or reach a decision is identified as a significant barrier to the success of environmental management (Howes et al., 2017).

4.2.5 Inequality and environmental issues

The fourth problem associated with a lack of values perspective is inequality and greed, and their link to environmental issues. Because of a lack of values perspective, we have not exalted human dignity and care for our environment (Moon, 1984). We disregard human welfare and environmental harms for the sake of present-day gains (Whitmee et al., 2015). Hence, equity issues need to be considered in development and climate policies.

The impacts of climate change are unevenly weighted against the world's poor and vulnerable people, which have the least resources to withstand climate stresses. The interplay between climate change, conflict, hunger, and poverty creates increasingly complex emergencies. The former President of the World Bank argued that if we do not confront climate change, we will not end extreme poverty (J. Y. Kim, 2014). For example, air pollution continues to kill millions of people around the world, often the poorest (Howes et al., 2017). Damaged ecosystems that lose their capacity to meet basic human needs close off opportunities for economic development and social justice (Marten, 2001). For example, developing countries that lack policies or technology limit their capacity to regulate biofuels, which impacts food security and biodiversity (Howes et al., 2017). The annual report by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) acknowledged climate change is a factor that drives refugees away from their homes, causing them to be unable to return home later ("Global Trends - Forced Displacement in 2019," 2019). Climate change also drives conflict in areas where resources become scarce. The failure to achieve environmental sustainability has prompted discussions on the need for new economic paradigms (Howes et al., 2017). A healthy society gives equal attention to economic development, ecological sustainability and social justice because they are mutually reinforcing (Marten, 2001).

4.3 Pillar 3c - Linking values with development

Environmental problems are primarily a problem of selfish human behaviour. Hence, we need to have the right values to change behaviour and drive sustainable development. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) maintains that the values and attitudes we adopt and live, affect how we relate to all our activities in the environment, and so is a major influence on our prospects for achieving a sustainable future (Cox, Calder, & Fien, 2010). Values and knowledge are important because they shape the way that we process and interpret information and translate it into action, while science and technology provide us with tools for actions (Marten, 2001). The moral orientation of economics and science centred on shared values will help foster equitable and sustainable development (see Figure 4.2). In order to advance human dignity, moral values need to be combined with the scientific analytic approach. Solutions to human problems will come through such a holistic approach.

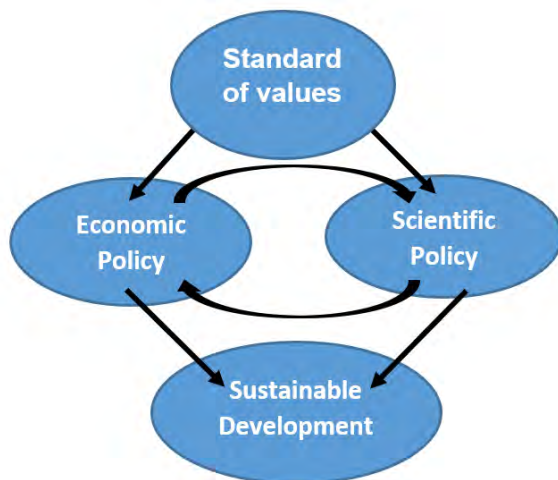


Figure 4.2 Values and sustainable development

4.3.1 Academic Values and Sustainable Development

In the sphere of values, scholars need to have an impact in three areas with respect to sustainable development. First, scholars need to be pioneers in the realm of conscience, inspiring humankind to follow an ethical path so that humanity can cope with problems facing our world, and work towards the fulfilment of human ideals. Scholars need to convey proper values to the people of the world; this is as important

as the research and theoretical teaching. If the underpinnings of science and technology had been on human dignity and care for our environment, the formidable problems of environmental destruction could have been prevented (Moon, 1983, 1984). Second, they need to contribute their knowledge to address corruption and immorality. Scholars need to be more engaged with current public debates and voice their moral concerns.

4.3.2 Family values and sustainable development

What values can underpin sustainable development? The essence of this standard of value must be love fostered in the family. For example, in many traditional societies humans are considered children of nature and the proper attitude is to respect Mother Nature. Traditional owners who have had longstanding connections to the land have emphasised that everything in nature is connected. It has been part of their culture to treat nature with careful respect, in order to avoid adverse consequences. For example, the spiritual religion of Australian Aborigines involves a strong emotional and spiritual attachment to the land on which they live and to all living things, because people, plants and animals all came from the same ancestors. In Native American beliefs, land formations, plants and animals have spirits, and all are sacred and worthy of respect. This passage describes the view of Native American traditional owners of the land:

We are indigenous people to this land. We are like a conscience. We are small, but we are not a minority. We are the landholders, we are the land keepers; we are not a minority. For our brothers are all the natural world, and by that, we are by far the majority (Dunlop, 2000).

On the other hand, a growing number of people feel a strong spiritual connection with the natural world independently of whether they participate in organised religion (Marten, 2001).

Activity – Write in your journal and share with others,

Do you feel a connection to nature? If so, how?

What can we learn from traditional owners about their connection to the land?

4.3.3 The transdisciplinary research challenge

The second major challenge is that transdisciplinary research activities and capacity with respect to sustainable development need substantial and urgent expansion (Whitmee et al., 2015). The world requires the responsible action of scholars, and this requires an interdisciplinary approach.

The complicated problems of the world cannot be fully understood simply within the narrow perspectives of individual fields of knowledge. In the twentieth century we created ministries and UN agencies to deal with individual, collective and environmental problems. In academia we created dedicated university departments, scholarly journals, and professional career paths to combat each problem. Today we realize that this silo-type approach to dealing with one symptom/problem cluster at a time is not working. On the contrary, it seems to be part of the problem (Scharmer & Kaufer, 2013). Solutions are beyond the capability of any single specialised society of scholars. Cooperation among scholars is no less important than individual research in specialised fields. The fragmentation of academic disciplines is preventing the fulfilment of its overall work. Each discipline has its own unique, partial view of reality. For example, there is a lack of research into problems and solutions with respect to energy production, irrigation, food security, carbon dependence and biosecurity (Howes et al., 2017). Additionally, although a vast majority of scientists concur that climate change is a fact, there is no consensus regarding the best economic response to this threat (Harari, 2019).

For transdisciplinary research to be conducted it must be guided by a well-understood purpose and shared values. Various fields need to be brought together through complementary relationships and cooperation to serve the common good. An ideal society can only be made possible when every field of science and technology is unified for the benefit of humankind (Moon, 1974, 1980, 1984).

4.3.4 The Implementation and Governance Challenge

The third challenge is the implementation and governance challenges. Implementation traps such as the prioritisation of economic growth, the lack of political will, poor governance, lack of capacity and a lack of laws stand out as key issues for implementation and governance. First, failure may result when policy papers are not

well developed with incomplete specifications, referred to as an 'implementation trap'. Conflicting objectives, policy goals being too vague or broad to be converted into actions, terms within policies not clearly defined, a lack of guidance on how policies and objectives can be achieved at, and a lack of coherence between policies and objectives prevent successful implementation (Howes et al., 2017).

An example of an implementation trap is a lack of coordination between central and local governments which poses serious barriers to local implementation. The fragmented central-local connection hinders environmental initiatives from fully coming to fruition. Local political resistance can also be a barrier when imposed central policies routinely face backlash due to local government concerns that environmental measures will undermine growth and employment. Another challenge is when short-term results drive the agenda, over long-term sustainability (Ku, 2018). Other examples of implementation and governance problems include: how governments and institutions delay recognition and responses to threats, and the lack of implementation of environmental policies and practices in manufacturing, agriculture, transport, and energy (Whitmee et al., 2015). Additionally, a lack of accountability due to inadequate monitoring, reporting and verification mechanisms and authoritarian governments are barriers to international environmental cooperation (Ku, 2018).

Second, economic policies are another example of implementation and governance challenges. There are ongoing economic incentives supported by government policy, for private and public activities to continue to exploit natural resources without considering the damage to the environment. For example, European Union fisheries subsidies have fuelled the growth of the EU fleet to a level estimated to be two to three times higher than what the ocean can sustainably provide. Conversely, poorly designed regulations are causing market failure by discouraging investment in, and development of, innovative environmentally sustainable solutions. There is a disconnection between economic markets and environmental sustainability - a decoupling of economic growth from environmental degradation. This decoupling is the result of the wrong values and policies. For example, the failure to pass the Canada Endangered Species Protection Act was due to the framing of all discussions in economic terms and commercial interests, valuing economics over species protection (Howes et al., 2017). Conversely, when economic development is balanced with

considerations for the depreciation of natural resources, then sustainable development is possible (Whitmee et al., 2015).

The third example of implementation and governance challenges is when governments either do not have the capacity and/or the political will to implement sustainable policies. The absence of appropriate laws and laws that are impediments to achieving environmental targets are of concern. Case studies indicate that failure may result when they are not implemented fully, are not politically popular, or go against a prevailing political agenda (Howes et al., 2017).

These implementation and governance failures point to the need for education. The seriousness of sustainability issues and the urgent need for change have not been effectively communicated to key stakeholders or understood. This suggests that there has been a failure to convince decision-makers that sustainable development offers a realistic pathway to a prosperous economy, a better society and a healthy environment (Howes et al., 2017). However, the politics of left and right have left us with no long-term plan which requires input from the economic and environmental perspectives of both the left and the right.

4.3.5 Unsustainable development

The fourth major issue is the lack of sustainable practices of organisations and individuals. The environment has been the foundation for human flourishing. There is growing evidence supporting the notion that the current pattern of consumption and production cannot continue without overstepping planetary boundaries - the safe operating space for humanity (Kumi, Arhin, & Yeboah, 2014). We now risk our well-being and health because of the degradation of nature's life support systems. We are mortgaging the well-being of future generations to realise economic and development gains in the present. These gains are driven by inequitable, inefficient, and unsustainable patterns of resource consumption and technological development (Whitmee et al., 2015).

Deloitte Australia chief economist Chris Richardson says the COVID pandemic showed the cost of overlooking catastrophic risks. This is a wake-up call for us to get ahead of that other big risk - climate change. Climate change is no longer a possibility, but a reality and its costs are rising each year doing nothing is now the wrong policy

choice. It is predicted that by 2050 Australia will experience economic losses on par with COVID every single year if we don't address climate change ("Australia risks losing more than \$3 trillion by 2070 unless it acts on climate change, new report shows," 2020).

Despite the global reach of policies to protect the environment originating from the 1992 Rio Earth Summit, the state of the global environment has continued to deteriorate. This international commitment was supported by domestic policies at the national and local levels of government. There have been some patchy improvements in selected indicators for a few locations, however, the overall decline in environmental quality has continued unabated. The world's ecological footprint (which measures resource use) exceeded the sustainable capacity of the planet in 1970 and emissions of greenhouse gasses are rising. The inability to improve environmental sustainability is due to a complex number of causes and policy implementation failures from the international to the national, regional and local levels (Howes et al., 2017).

4.3.6 Sustainable development

This section discusses sustainable development policies and practices which are primarily concerned with how best to govern the relationship between humans and the natural environment for the benefit of both (Marten, 2001; Whitmee et al., 2015). There is hope for a sustainable future if we aim for sustainable development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. If policymakers and individuals can learn from past failures and address these issues, we may still be able to set the world on a sustainable development path.

Opportunities now exist to improve governance, harness new knowledge, and exploit a range of technologies that can improve health and reduce environmental damage (Whitmee et al., 2015). The United Nations Secretary-General said that we can deal with our climate emergency by a) achieving global carbon neutrality (net zero emissions of greenhouse gases) within the next three decades; b) aligning global finance behind the Paris Agreement; and c) delivering a breakthrough on adaptation to protect the world – and especially the most vulnerable people and countries from climate impacts (Guterres, 2020).

4.3.6.1 A holistic approach to sustainability

Sustainability is inherently a holistic, systems approach, and the business sector is a major part of both the problem and the solution (Farias, Farias, Krysa, & Harmon, 2020). To do this, we need to first re-evaluate change in the value system that underpins scientific and economic development. Sustainable development includes three interdependent and mutually reinforcing values/pillars: social development (which was discussed with respect to values), economic development, and environmental protection (discussed below) (Díaz-Sieffer, Neaman, Salgado, Celis-Diez, & Otto, 2015; Kumi et al., 2014).

4.3.6.2 Sustainable practices – Circular economy systems

The first sustainable practice is the circular economy system that keeps products in use for as long as possible by repairing goods and recycling end products. Figure 4.3 represents a circular economy of inputs and outputs with respect to manufacturing, consumption and recycling (Commission, 2018). This also includes the reduction of waste through the production of goods that are more durable, require lower quantities of materials and less energy to manufacture. To do this, we also need to incentivise recycling, reuse, repair and better manufacturing practices (Whitmee et al., 2015).



Figure 4.3 Circular Economy

4.3.6.3 *The sustainable practices of individuals*

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. - Margaret Mead

Activity- Get Informed and be Intentional about Sustainability

In this section, we discuss what a person can do to support sustainable development. Sustainable development is more likely to be successful if it gains social backing. That means that each of us must become informed and be part of the solution – why? First, there is a lack of public demand for action. Second, our understanding and attitudes about environmental science influence our behaviours. A study of fishermen’s attitudes in the European Union showed that a lack of trust in scientific estimates for stock depletion contributed to overfishing. Third, environmental issues have become highly politicised and thus contentious, leading to misinformation and doubt that action is needed. Fourth, community opposition to environmentally sustainable policies/actions is a problem. Fifth, a lack of community awareness/knowledge of sustainability issues were also identified as a result of communication failure (Howes et al., 2017).

Activity- Determine your footprint and make a plan – Add this to your journal and share it with others.

Everything starts with the priorities we set. We all need to decide that today; I will intentionally be more sustainable. To do one thing, such as, use a bit less water and electricity today. A good way to start is to determine your impact, and your footprint. Go online and use the Eco Footprint, Carbon Footprint and Water Footprint calculators. This will give you a measure of your own impact on the environment. The other problem with respect to individual responsibility is the promotion of commercialisation and consumption to children and adults. I remember sitting in a school assembly during the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. A Year 12 student leader stood up in front of 300 senior students and told them to buy a new phone to alleviate the impact of the crisis. I thought to myself, “there must be a better way”.

Activity - Connect with Others

Once we become intentional about our own environmental footprint it is a good idea to connect with others or with community organisations that support sustainability by exchanging products and sharing practices. Who knows, you might make friends with people who share similar values to yours. Find out about collaborative movements in your community and work with them. You will learn many things.

Activity - Reduce purchases and simplify your life.

Before we buy any product, we need to ask: do I really need this? How did the production of this product impact the environment and what further impacts will there be with the disposal of the product? Write this in your journal.

When you are thinking about buying something, wait 10 days after the first time you decide you want it before you make your decision. This will eliminate impulse buying. "Retail therapy" involves the rush of dopamine when we consider buying something. To get the same rush, we need to buy more. To counter this, repeat this mantra in your head – "don't buy this, you don't need it". Neuroscientists scanned people's brains as they considered a range of products. The pleasure centre of the brain showed more activity. However, when the study volunteers were given the prices of the items, the part of their prefrontal cortex associated with decision-making, lit up. Subjects with the busiest prefrontal cortex were most likely to decide against the purchase (Shenhav & Karmarkar, 2019). Look at the price and think before you buy works. Another way to reduce is to simplify your life. Only keep belongings that you use/enjoy on a regular basis. By making the effort to reduce what you own, you will be more inclined to purchase less, hence creating less waste ("Green Eco Tips for Sustainable Living," 2020).

Activity – Push the industry to reduce waste and reduce your own consumption.

At present, 30–50% of all food produced is wasted because of poor practices in harvesting, storage, transportation, marketing, and consumption (Whitmee et al., 2015). Let us push supermarkets to sell more "seconds" when it comes to fruits and vegetables. In 2018, 11% of U.S. households were food insecure at some time during the year. Wasted food is also an environmental problem. Once wasted food reaches landfills, it produces methane, a greenhouse gas. Finally, wasted food is an economic issue. It is estimated that in the United States, food loss and waste, total \$161 billion.

In the home, 13% of food is thrown away before its use-by-date ("Food: Too Good to Waste Implementation Guide and Toolkit," 2020). Buy no more food than what you expect to use, you will be more likely to keep it fresh and use it all up. Freeze and preserve surplus fruits and vegetables. Prepare perishable foods soon after shopping and be mindful of old ingredients and leftovers you need to use up.

Reduce your energy consumption, and commit to using 10% less per month. Use LED lighting as it has the greatest potential impact on energy savings. Use a clothesline and fix leaking taps quickly. Avoid products that are packaged for single use. Instead, buy in bulk and transfer the products to your own reusable containers. Pack waste-free lunches whenever possible. Carry a mug with you wherever you go for takeout beverages ("Green Eco Tips for Sustainable Living," 2020). Encourage businesses to reduce waste. For example, McDonald's restaurants around the world only recycle 10% of guest packaging ("Packaging and Recycling," 2020).

Activity - Reuse, repair and make your own.

The third sustainable practice is the circular economy to reuse, repurpose and make your products by finding new uses for old things. Pinterest is a good source of inspiration. Wherever possible, replace disposable products with reusable ones and buy used products online. We can also borrow equipment that we only need temporarily from family and friends. Shop at and hold garage sales. Sell items online. This is a great way to reuse products. Donate your unused equipment such as computers. My wife sends used sewing machines to Pacific Island women to run micro businesses. Start a compost pile with yard trimmings and food scraps. Create or join a "fixers" collective in your community. You can learn and help each other repair broken appliances and other household items. Fixers collectives try to change a "throw-away society" habit, into a repaired one.

Activity – Refuse.

We should also refuse and reject programs and products that produce waste as often as we can.

Activity - Increase physical activities.

Increased active travel (walking and cycling) in cities can reduce greenhouse gas and address physical inactivity, which contributes to more than 3 million deaths a year. Inactivity is associated with heart disease, diabetes, colon and breast cancer,

Alzheimer's and depression. When you try for five minutes to find the closest car park at a shopping centre, find one further away and walk.

Activity - Diversify your diet.

Major proportions of the world's crops are being fed to animals or used for biofuels resulting in 41% of the calories available from global crop production is lost. Allocating more crops from animal feed and biofuels to direct human consumption could substantially increase global food availability (Whitmee et al., 2015). A United Nations report concludes that the livestock sector (primarily cows, chickens, and pigs) is one of the largest sources of greenhouse gases. ("Green Eco Tips for Sustainable Living," 2020).

We cannot change the past, but we can change the future.

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