

## Ethical Behavior and the Flow of Love

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In this sequence of articles on Unification Thought, I've been laying out some big ideas about ethical behavior.

But as thought-provoking and enlightening as big ideas may be, it's in the actual day-to-day practice that learning happens. Through practice, a basis for deeper understanding is created. And practice needs outward patterns of behavior to reinforce it, because maintaining an ethical awareness that's different from what society defaults to doesn't come easily.

### The Need for Manners and Customs

It's that need for rules to practice by, that made Unification Thought's few references to "manners, customs and principled duties" catch my eye. Looking back, I know that although my Dad and Mom (who were once diplomats) raised me with discipline and trained me to have manners and be dutiful, by the time I moved out and attended college, I'd grown skeptical of that training. My manners didn't disappear entirely, but they definitely diminished.

In graduate school however, when I got drawn by classmates into martial arts, the traditions I encountered and embraced resurrected my parents' training: in the martial arts tradition, there are duties and clear standards of conduct between students and their teachers and between elder students and younger students. We students learned that we were accountable and responsible to our master for our behavior to our elders, peers, juniors, and to people outside the dojang (martial arts studio). The way we carried ourselves and the way we represented the school and our master was a matter of honor, respect, and gratitude. We also had cleaning duties to carry out in the training hall each week. To my great surprise, esteem and affection grew within that structure.

So when Unification Thought mentioned manners, customs and duties, they became particularly significant for me, because now I could see them in a new light: they weren't just archaic formalities, but they were how we students could really become members of our teacher's martial arts family.

One mention of this whole idea of behavior is actually not in the Theory of Ethics, but in the Theory of Education and it states:

The education of ... standards of conduct starts at home, practically as soon as a child is born. A child must be taught certain manners and customs, first at home, then both at home and in school. When a man fully understands and practices the principled duty of a man, and a woman fully understands and practices the principled duty of a woman, the education of norm has been completed.

Explaining Unification Thought, p. 225

And in the most recent Unification Thought textbook, there is this similar paragraph:

The role of parents is to bring up their children. The Korean term for raising children is yangyuk... which consists of two Chinese characters... (the first) means to raise children by giving them food, clothing, and shelter... (the second) means to educate: parents teach their

children family law, manners, ethics, morality, and any necessary knowledge, with a deep and warm heart.

New Essentials of Unification Thought, p. 526

I was a single martial arts instructor for some time, then later a married man and parent, as well as a working professional and an adjunct professor. These situations provided me various test-beds for Unification ideas about ethical training. As a result, I can imagine an ethical society where manners, customs, and duties are practiced and create a gracious way of life. I can now imagine that — in such an ideal world — all the nuances of God's love would be expressed and experienced by people in their families, schools, workplaces, and recreational venues.

If I were alone in being able to envision this, I would likely become hopeless, seeing the disparity between my vision and the reality of the world.

### **Observing Universal Values**

But I'm apparently not alone in looking for the manners, customs, and duties that are mentioned in Unification Thought. For example, in looking up the word "gracious" — which is a word I've long associated with Unification Thought's ideal, ethical society — I easily found articles in sources that pleasantly surprised me. Here is one short excerpt:

I have always, always loved graciousness. I think it's one of the most beautiful traits a person can have ... When I've written a positive book review and the author takes the time to e-mail me or leave a comment on the blog, I mark them down as an author I will forever seek out. Graciousness is often a symptom of having a great deal of class.  
[www.selfhelpdaily.com/tag/graciousness/](http://www.selfhelpdaily.com/tag/graciousness/)

And another longer one:

...the only representation of you, no matter what your station, is you — your presentation, your demeanor. You simply must attend. Stand when someone enters the room.... Look them in the eye. Ask yourself: Does anybody need an introduction? If so, before you say one word about business, introduce them to others with pleasure in your voice. If you can't muster enthusiasm for the people you happen upon in life, then you cannot be gracious.... Be attentive to what people say. Respond, without interruption. You always have time. ... You grant it to others without obligation. That is the gift of being gracious. The return — the payback, if you will — is the reputation you will quickly earn, the curiosity of others, the sense that people want to be in the room with you. ... your reputation precedes you in everything you do and lingers long after you are finished. People will mark you for it.  
[www.esquire.com/features/how-to-be-gracious-0513](http://www.esquire.com/features/how-to-be-gracious-0513)

That last one is from an article in Esquire magazine, printed last year. If you have a few extra moments, click the link and read the few more paragraphs in the article.

In summary, the ethics of Unification Thought provides us with a higher perspective into proper interpersonal relationships, starting within a family whose love is drawn from a deeper well — God's. But to actually bring these ideals into our reality takes a bit of discipline to start modeling some manners, customs, and duties which reinforce a higher view and a deeper heart.

Unification Thought doesn't list those manners and customs, but I think it doesn't need to. With only a little effort, we can probably rediscover many ethical practices from within our own cultural backgrounds — we only need to look back a generation or two. Once we rediscover them, we can refresh and update them; no need to reinvent the wheel. Then, as one of my martial arts teachers would say: "Practice makes permanent; right practice makes perfect." With right ethical practice, we amplify our capacity to channel God's Love into our family and community.