



## THE PRESIDENCY: SERVANT-LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

The following section highlights the presidency of two institutions of higher learning in the Western United States, Gonzaga University and Whitworth College. Robert Spitzer, S.J. of Gonzaga and Bill Robinson of Whitworth have developed a lasting friendship with one another, unique in that one is president of a Catholic university, the other president of a Protestant college. Considered by many to be servant-leaders with effective and very different approaches, the two presidents have become crucial developers of their respective communities. Under their leadership Gonzaga and Whitworth continue to receive national acclaim.

Gonzaga University, a Jesuit liberal-arts university in Spokane, Washington, has been ranked by the *Princeton Review* as among the top 10 percent of undergraduate universities in the nation. *U.S. News & World Report* ranks Gonzaga as one of the top 5 “best universities” in the West, and top 5 in “best value.” A school with a perennial top 20 basketball team and a vibrant, vital student culture, Gonzaga is one of the premier institutions for higher education in the United States.

Also located in Spokane, Washington, Whitworth College is a private, Presbyterian liberal-arts college. Whitworth consistently garners top 10 status both as one of the “best universities” and “best values” in the West in *U.S. News & World Report*. Students at Whitworth enjoy nationally known programs and a student culture that deepens heart, mind, and spirit. A family atmosphere pervades college life. Noted for its cutting-edge, progressive leadership and integration of intellect and faith, Whitworth is established as a nationally recognized site for higher learning.

In the following section, each president responds to three servant-leadership questions. Following their answers, an excerpt of each president’s writing on leadership appears.



SERVANT-LEADERSHIP AND TRANSPARENCY: A BRIEF  
INTERVIEW WITH ROBERT SPITZER, S.J.

—ROBERT SPITZER, S.J.  
GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

*1. Robert Greenleaf refers to love as essential to both the servant and the leader in generating legitimate power in the self, the organization, the community, the world. Emerson furthers this point when he proposed the following: mediocre people want to be loved; true people are lovely. How does love influence your own leadership and your way of following others?*

I commit myself to two fundamental ingredients of love on a daily basis: to look for the contributive before the comparative in my life and to look for the good news before the bad news in others. I do not always succeed in these ventures, but when I do, my leadership is enhanced significantly because I can more readily attend to the common good before self-aggrandizement in my leadership and the “who” before the “what” in others. These two attributes are readily sensed by both colleagues and staff; and when they are, they cause empathy, trust, and an ethos of the common good. Love is a fundamental part of good organizations and good business.



2. *Servant-leadership implies the ability to develop deep discernment (the contemplation and action of a whole person, servant and leader) with regard to the seemingly irresolvable problems in the self as well as the systems around us. How do you develop the discernment needed to be effective, bring healing, and create lasting change?*

As a Catholic priest, I find that daily prayer is integral to my life. I integrate the more contemplative aspects of my organizational life into my prayer. When I sense God's presence in my life and know of his care and concern not only for me but for all others around me, my perspective changes. Instead of viewing myself as the center of the universe, I can see myself as a peer on the periphery of the universe with God at the center. This gives me both the grace and freedom to put the contributive before the comparative and the good news before the bad news. This puts the long-term and short-term problems of business into perspective within a calm that is not my natural disposition. Good judgment seems to follow naturally.

3. *Greenleaf refers to listening as perhaps the most central essence of the servant-leader. Tell us a story of a servant-leader you know who is a great listener, and how that person's listening has informed your present way of being.*

Dr. Stephen Freedman (Academic Vice President at Gonzaga University) is an outstanding listener. He has taught me that when working with the faculty there are two primary benefits to listening. First, a very intelligent and important constituency knows that they are being heard, and this produces both peace and trust within our stakeholder relationship. Second, the suggestions of the faculty tend to be oriented toward enhancing educational quality, and careful listening can bring about concerted actions toward achieving this goal of mutual interest.

Unfortunately, the sheer number of decisions in my position causes me to move quickly toward judgment, and so does my personality. The exam-



ple and mentoring of Dr. Freedman has led to enough experience and good results to convince me to take the time and effort to build a discipline around this important facet of leadership.

---

The following essay is reprinted from chapter 4 of Father Spitzer's book *Healing the Culture: A Commonsense Philosophy of Happiness, Freedom, and the Life Issues*.



## HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND LOVE

—ROBERT SPITZER, S.J.

Our view of happiness influences our view of success (how we view a life well lived), which, in turn affects our view of self-worth and quality of life. These attitudes, which determine how we relate to ourselves, influence our view of love (how we relate to others).

### HAPPINESS, SUCCESS, QUALITY OF LIFE, AND LOVE

In my study of the history of philosophy and developmental psychology, I have noticed four major groupings or levels of happiness. The first and most basic level of happiness (in Latin, *laetus*) comes from an external stimulus. It interacts with one or more of the five senses, gives immediate gratification, but does not last very long. A sensorial pleasure like an ice cream cone or a possession like a new car can impart immediate gratification from these stimuli. In this essay, I will call it Happiness 1.

The second level of happiness (in Latin, *felix*) comes from ego gratification. *Ego* in Latin means "I." This kind of happiness comes whenever I can shift the locus of control from the outer world to myself. Hence, whenever I win, gain power or control, or gain admiration or popularity, I feel happy. I feel as if my inner world is expanding. My control relative to the outer world is enhanced. I will call this level Happiness 2.

The second level of happiness does not exhaust the scope of human desire. We also desire love, truth, goodness/justice, beauty, and being. These desires initially manifest themselves as a desire to contribute. The second kind of happiness tried to shift the locus of control to the self. In the third level of happiness (in Latin, *beatitudo*), we try to invest in the world beyond



ourselves. We want to make a difference with our lives, time, energy, and talent. I will call this level Happiness 3.

Strange as it may seem, the third level of happiness still does not exhaust the scope of human desire, for humans not only desire some love, goodness, truth, beauty, and being, they can also desire unconditional, perfect, ultimate, and even unrestricted Love, Goodness, Truth, Beauty, and Being. The five Transcendentals. In the context of faith, one might call this the desire for God. But even if one does not have faith, one can treat it as an awareness of a seemingly unconditional horizon surrounding human curiosity, creativity, spirit, and achievement. This particular desire differentiates humans from all other animals. I will call this level Happiness 4 (in Latin, *gaude*).

Our view of happiness influences our view of success (how we view a life well lived), which, in turn, affects our view of self-worth and quality of life. These attitudes, which determine how we relate to ourselves, influence our view of love (how we relate to others).

## I. SUCCESS

One of the ways we explicitize our view of happiness is to talk about our view of a “successful life.” Defining “success” shows us what we really think we should achieve or what our goals ought to be. The absence of these goals could be viewed as a life under-lived or wasted. Important as this term is for the whole meaning and direction of our lives, most people never take the time to explicitly define it. They may have some thoughts, feelings, and intuitions about it; they will sometimes exclaim, “I am a success,” or “My life is a failure”; they may have unexplained feelings about failure or success; but these feelings arise out of a history of expectations from parents or friends, peer pressure, signals given by teachers or coaches, impressions picked up from television or music, or some interior need for status, affection, acceptance, etc. These implicit signals frequently form a structure of goals which guide individuals in everything from choice of



career to choice of spouse. As has been noted above, it can also determine happiness or unhappiness, a sense of direction or aimlessness, strong identity or weak identity, underliving life or optimally living life. Hence, we must not only get a sense of what makes us happy and where we look for happiness, we must also translate this into our view of success. The more we explicitize “success,” the more reflective, contributory, and loving we can be.

Just as there are levels of happiness, so there are also levels of success. I like to enumerate four levels for each. The first level of success transforms the first level of happiness into the criteria for a life well lived. Hence, accumulating many possessions, pleasures, creature comforts, food, wine, and the other epicurean delights would constitute a life well lived. As I’m going through my life I would feel as if I had accomplished my purpose if I had visited the world’s great spas, or perhaps stayed in five-star hotels in most countries throughout the world, tasted the finest foods, drank the best wines, had six different residences for all occasions of weather, etc.

One’s view of success converts one’s view of happiness into a life pattern, or a kind of momentum. Until dissatisfaction arises (in the form of crisis), one could overlook the vast majority of one’s powers, potential achievements, feelings, contributions, experiences, perspectives, and loves. A society which embraces and promotes this view of success would show symptoms of unhappiness, emptiness, and lack of regard for the common good.

We cannot wait for the discontent and emptiness of the first crisis to dislodge us from superficiality. This method could take so long that one might come to grips with underliving one’s life only at the age of sixty. Thirty-five or forty years could have been spent on a treadmill or in a dream world that simply did not address questions about contribution, dignity, or love. Possessions are not enough. They can be comfortable, but they cannot fulfill. They can help me to escape from emptiness, but they cannot cure it.

Thus, it is incumbent upon citizens with a greater and deeper recogni-



tion of the value and potential of human life to ask friends, neighbors, and family to reflect upon and explicitize their views of success. We must make the options known. We must show them ways of achieving them all. We must all be mentors for one another. Failure to stimulate this process of reflection allows superficiality with its accompanying feeling of emptiness to perdure. This leaves only one choice for our friends, to escape into new pleasures and possessions, that is, to further entrench themselves in the superficiality which vitiates them. To stimulate the process of reflection, however, is to empower our friends with a new view of their potential, and a new hope for life. If this new view takes hold, they will never be the same again, filled, as it were, with a new sense of purpose, depth, creativity, and passion for life.

The second level of success follows from the second level of happiness. It transforms the values of the comparison game into the criteria for a life well lived. Again, this view of success is rarely recognized in the context of other alternative definitions. Nevertheless, one can tenaciously hold onto it, feel it, and believe in it as if one had spent years reflecting upon and choosing it. What makes a life well lived? Having more accomplishments, status, popularity, and higher position than others, etc. Having *more* and being *more* is success. Again, significant crisis can dislodge one from this view, but it takes so long, causes so much human misery, so much breakdown in relationships, and so much time and talent wasted. Again, it is incumbent upon us to help our friends and culture put this second level of success into the context of the other three so that it can be clearly seen for what it is. We must be persistently Socratic in order to be good friends and culturally responsible. We must ask, "What do you mean by 'success'?" or "Why do you feel successful?" or "Why do you feel your life is a failure?" "Is this all there is to 'success'?" Can a failure on one level be a success on another? Can one and the same event in our lives be both success and failure? So long as we allow this all-important term and its all-important feelings to remain enshrouded in interior mystery, we eschew our duty to friends and to culture, to the weak and the strong, to those with a voice and those without, to children and adults, to our present and to our future.



The third level of success transforms the third level of happiness into the criteria of a life well lived. If people have reached the third level of happiness, they ought to make this contributory view of life as specific as possible. They need to remind themselves in writing and through friends, which contributions and relationships constitute their reason for being. They might want to sit down and write the names of the children, the family, the friends, the colleagues, employees, community members, etc. to whom they have the opportunity to contribute. How can I touch the lives of these people through an act of listening, a letter, a smile, an act of friendship, a commitment, etc.? How can I make the world a little safer? How can I alleviate a little of the world's suffering? How can I improve a few of the world's institutions? How can I bring about greater unity, learning, hope, spirit, and concern? What are the opportunities for positivity?

If this view of success is explicitized, it will surely give rise to a more positively contributory life. While it alleviates the emotive crisis of the comparison game, it will lead to greater dynamism and focus while it deepens friendships and collegiality.

No matter how empowering and enlightening this view of success is, it has an Achilles' heel. It plays into a fatal flaw in human idealism. It makes us yearn for an ideal of Love, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty that we cannot produce, and that others cannot produce for us. It leaves us open to disappointment, frustration, dashed romanticism, and dashed idealism. It tempts us to think we can do it all ourselves, to believe too much in our own perspectives and accomplishments, to exaggerate our already overly-exercised belief in our own heroism. The third level of success compounds and accelerates our heroic self-image. The hero begins to eclipse the humility and gentleness of love, and soon the little moments of care, compassion, delight, and empathy are replaced by the very serious agenda of actions toward heroic purpose. The ability to laugh at myself is replaced by the seriousness of my projects. Something is lost. I'm too central, my project too important. Little people are too easily ignored. The pace of contribution replaces the opportunity for simple love and delight.



The fourth level of success counteracts these problems because it brings a universal perspective to the fore. If one has faith, one might call it “God’s perspective.” When one sees oneself amidst the whole panoply of human freedom and human good, one tends to take oneself and even one’s problems much less seriously.

Recall that a Level 3 view of success is open to a kind of messianism where one’s exaggerated heroic feelings have a two-fold negative consequence: 1) they allow a Level 2 view to creep back into one’s consciousness and to undermine one’s Level 3 view (e.g., “My life is more important than that other person’s,” or “I am doing much more for humanity than others”); and 2) this forces me to be more central to the purpose of others’ lives than any one human being can possibly be (e.g., “I have to be mentor, rescuer, parent, and friend to all 500 people on my Christmas card list”). Aside from the inevitability of failure and burnout, one is likely to drive all one’s friends to the brink of despair with an ever growing heroic self-indulgence and arrogance.

The only way to transcend these negative consequences is to immerse oneself in a universal perspective where one is not the center of the universe. If one has faith, this is accomplished by letting God be the center, not only of the physical universal, but of all personal and interpersonal universes. In this perspective one does not have to be the mentor and rescuer of all. One does not have to have superior advice to other mentors. One can work side by side with other human contributors. One can even rejoice in the successes of others that have had positive effects in the world. If one has faith, one can thank God for the positive contributions one has made without having to think that “My contributions are better than hers,” or “My life is better than his.” This universal perspective, then, not only helps to remedy the problems of failure, burnout, and arrogance, it helps us to rejoice in goods not produced by us and not even related to us. In short, it produces an empathy similar to that of a little child who begins to laugh because everyone else in the room is laughing, although she does not understand why. This empathy of joy brings Level 3 to its healthy fulfillment,



for now my passion and energy are turned to doing the good for the other before my good for the other. When we can rejoice in the good for its own sake before we rejoice in our having done it, we will not only form a community toward the common good, we will experience a unity and empathetic solidarity which brings the joy of friendship to a new level. From the perspective of faith, this love is what God intends for the world.

It should be repeated yet again that we are the primary instruments of bringing this perspective and love into the world. If we see the immanent problems of messianism and exaggerated heroism undermining the good that we do, we must call it to one another's attention. This need not be done in a self-righteous way. It need not be done even in a specific way. It is sufficient to present the above generalities to our friends and children and allow them to apply it in specific ways to their own lives. Pointing out specifics (e.g., "Aha, you just manifested some messianic behavior, some elevated self-importance, you hypocrite") is generally very counterproductive and just as hypocritical as the hypocrisy pointed out. It is better to form a community of reflection about general principles wherein each recognizing her own weakness progresses slowly toward a detachment from ego which will bring hypocrisy to a silent end. Those with faith will say, of course, that this is possible only with God's grace, that is, with the assurance of Unconditional Love manifest in unconditional patience, kindness, forgiveness, gentleness, and peace, leading me to where I cannot lead myself. Whatever one's view, failure to move toward this universal perspective will generally result in heroism undercutting its own virtue amidst hypocrisy.

## II. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF-WORTH AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Human beings judge themselves several times a day. This judgment may come in the form of explicit questions and answers such as, "Is my life progressing well? Am I living up to my expectations?" Or, it may come in the form of a hunch or a feeling, whereby I either feel good about myself, my life and my progress, or I don't. This judgment process either empow-



ers one to do more, be more creative, have more energy and more joy about life, or it vitiates one, takes away one's energy, creativity, and capacity to associate. Therefore, it affects the way one views love, friendship, suffering, and freedom, and what one is looking for in all these areas.

One may not have an explicit or conscious view of self-worth/quality of life, but one certainly has an implicit view, and this implicit view may be most easily seen by looking at one's view of happiness, or even what one is pursuing in order to achieve happiness. The objective of this section is to indicate how one's view of self-worth/quality of life affects: 1) how one feels about oneself (self-esteem/self-love), and 2) one's view of love. This will directly impact one's interpretation of suffering, ethics, and freedom.

With respect to Level 1, if one restricts one's happiness or purpose in life to what is sensorial and external, one is also likely to restrict one's self-identity and self-image to the domain of things, chemicals, physical properties and external agents. This has four major consequences. First, it restricts my dignity. If I view myself as only a clump of chemicals, I will tend to think I have a dignity commensurate with merely inanimate, manipulatable objects.

Secondly, it will affect the goals I seek. If I view myself predominately as an aggregate of chemicals, I will probably imagine that the most I can do with my life is acquire sensorial pleasures, avoid sensorial pains, and possess and extend myself through external things. "A good cigar is what makes life worth living." "Eating at *Michelle's* make's life really worthwhile." "What would life be without a Mercedes E-class with leather upholstery?"

Thirdly, I will tend to believe that others judge themselves on the same basis as I and therefore, I will mistakenly presume that most people will be impressed and pleased by a multitude of sensorial pleasures and external possessions.

Fourthly, I will make judgments about other people's worth or value (their esteemability) on the basis of how many pleasures they indulge in, or how many possessions they have.



Several problems emerge with this very restricted view of self-worth/quality of life. First, I reduce my life's purpose to "getting" or "having." It forces me to "thingify myself," thereby blinding me to the real possibility of unconditional Truth, Goodness/Justice, Love, and Beauty in my life. I spend most of my psychic energy and my waking hours overlooking the whole domain of "doing" and "being." I am virtually oblivious to creativity, love, justice, contribution, and even the arts, not too mention the transcendentals, the eternal, the absolute, and faith. I'm simply too busy for such things. This limited viewpoint is really forcing me to underlive my life.

The second problem concerns my view of myself. When I "thingify" myself, I think the tangible and the pleasurable is what really matters, and hence I miss the most intangible, and therefore the deepest parts of myself. I don't value my esteemable self, nor do I value my likeable self, nor my lovable self. Indeed, I may be completely unaware of these integral dimensions of myself. Do people admire, like, or love me? I'm too busy with the material world ("the real world") to be concerned with these things. Regrettably, I only see about one-tenth of who I am or could be.

The third problem is that I will value others in the way that I value myself. Hence, I will judge others according to their material pleasures and possessions, while being oblivious to their esteemability, likeability or lovability. Inasmuch as love begins with noticing the lovable in the other, love at this stage is severely weakened. Furthermore, if friendship is based on noticing the likeable in the other, friendship would also be severely undermined.

Clearly, this viewpoint underestimates my potential, my self-worth, and my assessment of others. Since I do have the capacity and desire to live for more than these things, it does come back to haunt me. As will be shown, it reduces my view of love to the merely physical, forces me into an epicurean view of suffering and to a pleasure/utilitarian form of ethics, and limits my view of freedom to "escape from constraint."

If one identifies one's self-worth with pleasure and possession, one



will have little tolerance for material deprivation, illness, weakness, and pain. This will make aging a problem, for one will accentuate these negative features to the almost total exclusion of the positive Level 3/4 features of aging (e.g., growth, wisdom, love, and faith). Part of the beauty of aging is that the capacity for Levels 3 and 4 can grow in direct proportion to the decrease in the capacity for Levels 1 and 2. If one's view of life is restricted to Level 1 alone, this enhanced capacity and its intrinsic beauty will be lost altogether, leaving the aging process to seem quite undignified and even deprecating.

With respect to Level 2, if I identify my happiness and purpose in life with merely ego-gratification and comparative advantage, then I will restrict my self-identity to my esteemable self. What will really matter about me is the number of achievements I have wrought, the awards and honors I have received, the recognition and admiration bestowed, and the power, promotion, and position obtained. These characteristics will become so important that they will likely overshadow both the likeable self and the lovable self. I will, therefore, miss a whole host of intangible features that characterize my friendship (like the capacity to inspire others, help and be there for others, for common cause and camaraderie, the joy I can bring to others through my presence, etc.). I will also overlook the intangible features of the lovable self (the capacity for intimacy, for deep concern, sharing of feelings, mutual efficacy, etc.). Needless to say, this will not only inhibit my capacity for friendship and love, it will also narrow my view of myself to a fraction of my human potential.

As with Level 1 above, one can see the consequences of this on the view of suffering, ethics, and freedom. Suffering which does not lead to specific Level 2 goods (competitive advantage, admiration, etc.) will be viewed as essentially negative and meaningless. Ethics will be reduced to egoistic utilitarianism, and freedom will be viewed as an escape from the many threats of this world – threats which include most people.

The aging process will again be viewed in an essentially negative way. One will experience a decrease in one's capacity to achieve, gain compara-



tive advantage, receive adulation, and obtain promotion and control. Since these are the only things that matter to a dominant Level 2 person, aging will be viewed as a complete loss of self and self-worth. Inasmuch as one misses the enhancement of Level 3 and Level 4 capacities in the aging process, one restricts oneself to the essentially negative decrease in Level 1 and Level 2 capacities. Again, the aging process seems terrifying, instead of a prospect for better self-communication, love, forgiveness, contribution, wisdom, self-transcendence, and faith.

With respect to Level 3, one begins to put the emphasis on the likeable and lovable self. Though one does not give up the material and esteemable self, one's priorities have now shifted. The valuing of contribution, the recognition of the dignity of the other, and the consequent care that comes from this produces a care for oneself. As one begins to value the contributions one can make through one's talent, time, and energy, one begins to value those characteristics within oneself that will lead to such contributions.

Level 3 begins by noticing the contributions I can make and the way I can make my life valuable to a world which is much bigger than me. It begins with a recognition of how the five transcendentals lead to this kind of contribution. Eventually, I proceed to a recognition that some inner work must be done in order for this contribution (these five transcendentals) to burgeon within, through, and from me. I must tend to attitudes which will promote truth, fairness, goodness, love, and harmony. This means looking into authenticity, humility, honesty, courage, self-discipline, and the like. This transformation of ethical viewpoint also leads to a transformation of self-image. Interior characteristics which seemed in their intangibility to be so abstract and therefore ignorable (e.g., authenticity, sympathy, generative concern, humility, etc.) now appear to be necessary means to the ends that I love and want to pursue (the transcendentals). When this occurs, I become aware of some deeper dimension within me, a dimension which is in tune to virtue, love, and character. When I was in Level 2, I had very little cognizance of this inner dimension, but now, as I struggle to incorporate the authenticity and virtue necessary for love and contribution, I see



that I have almost missed this profound dimension of myself. The more I pursue self-transformation, the more I discover how real this domain of presence, love, and character really is. Eventually, it becomes bigger than life, and when it does, I find myself having so much to give. The quality of the gift (the truth, the love, the justice) is improved, and it seems as if I do not have enough time to give it all away, and that people can't seem to get enough of it. I eventually discover that this interior dimension is so real and so powerful it transforms every relationship, action, and word that issues forth from me. It even transforms my internal words to myself. There is a breadth, depth, richness, wisdom, sensitivity, and completeness that infuses itself into what comes out of me and goes back into me.

This radical change in self-image produces an equally radical change in my view of self-worth. I now recognize and value my "likeable self" (the self capable of authentic, other-oriented, generative, caring friendship) and even my "lovable self" (capable of the depth, intimacy, and commitment which makes affection come alive). This new awareness cannot help but alter my view of love, ethics (virtue), and freedom, for everything is now moving out of me before it comes back to me.

My desire to be "on mission," my desire to make a contribution in the areas of truth, justice, goodness, love, and beauty, my desire to use my creativity, energy, and talents to enhance the good of concrete individuals and even the systems which govern organizations and the world leads to care, friendship, and love. The desire to make a difference in the world does not stop at creating a better system, writing a book, creating a structure, etc.; it finally grounds itself in concern for real people. The desire for a better world cannot be inconsistent with the good of concrete individuals in the world. When one really cares about a better world, one will be open to caring about the individuals in the world. If this hasn't occurred, then one's movement to Level 3 could be seriously undermined. If one cares about a structure more than the individuals affected by the structure, then one should look closely at one's motives, for it may be that the desire to leave a legacy or to be known as a great "pursuer of justice" is more important than achieving the good for a person. This thinking could be a sign of



ego-gratification (Level 2), more than a desire for contribution (Level 3). The error here is captured initially in the logical inconsistency of caring about the whole without caring about the parts. There is another more poignant sign of this error, namely, real people are really transcendental (having the desire for unconditional Truth, Love, Goodness/Justice, and Beauty). Structures are not. They are merely human fabrications which have to be constantly rekindled, because they can die in the course of history. The importance of historical legacies can therefore be greatly exaggerated.

The progression of the development of Level 3 now begins to emerge. First, one begins either with a concern to contribute to the whole (e.g., structures and systems) or to contribute to individual people. Though most people have a preference, some begin with caring about both equally.

Second, one begins to extend one's interests into the less developed domain. For example, if one was more concerned about structures, one begins to look for the good news in particular people and to develop concern for them. So also, if one began with a preference for individual people, one begins to concern oneself with the structures and the common good that affects them. This choice to move beyond one's preferential domain is integral to an authentic move to Level 3.

Thirdly, one's choice in steps one and two above begins to affect one's view of self-worth, for I now prize those powers, habits, and qualities of myself which promote contribution to individuals and to the whole. I am now much less interested in what people think of me, and far more interested in the contribution I am really making. I am less interested in people acknowledging that I am making a contribution to the culture, and more interested in actually making a contribution (whether or not that contribution appeals to popular sentiment). I am less interested in having people think I am a loving person and more interested in making sure that the people within my purview are being taken care of. I really see this contributory and caring part of myself to be the core of my being. My reputation, in contrast, begins to take a back seat.



I am not suggesting here that reputation is not important for credibility, or that one should not rejoice in the good that one is really able to do, for clearly, credibility and real contribution are integral to my identity. I am here suggesting only that reputation cannot be focused on as an end in itself, and, therefore, that it must be subordinated to the capacity for love and the desire for real contribution. It is now reputation for the sake of love and real contribution.

Fourthly, I begin to prize those means virtues which allow love and real contribution to emerge freely from them (e.g., humility, self-discipline, courage, authenticity, patience, kindness, generosity, etc.). Prior to step three, these characteristics might have appeared to have been abstractions. One might have viewed them as being important because a particular psychologist, philosopher, or religious figure thought they were important, but one did not really believe that these constituted the real core, the important core of one's being. Now, as one moves progressively into step four, one begins to honor these means virtues as if they really mattered, indeed, as if they were the very entryway into the meaning of life itself.

This view of self-worth clearly changes one's perspective on the aging process. Instead of viewing aging as a decline in one's powers (in one's capacity to achieve, gain comparative advantage, receive adulation, and obtain promotion and control), one now sees aging as an increase in one's powers (the capacity for love grounded in patience, humility, generosity, authenticity, and breadth and depth of vision). This growth in the capacity for humble love can do more good for the next generation in six months than thirty years' worth of pursuing unmitigated winning, reputation, and achievement. Again, one can see how a decline in Level 2 powers can lead to a rapid increase in Level 3 powers when one values those Level 3 powers. Those Level 3 powers, in turn, will produce lasting, pervasive effects for many generations to come.

With respect to Level 4, one now begins to put the emphasis on the transcendent self. Though one does not give up the material, esteemable, likeable, or lovable self, one sees them within the context of one's transcen-



dental nature and mission. As Level 3 becomes progressively more awakened, one begins to see the intrinsic, unconditional nature of the five transcendentals: Love, Truth, Goodness, Justice, and Beauty. As I probe the depths of Love, for example, I begin to see that it has no intrinsic boundary, and that it really is the unity which transcends all boundaries between people. Again, as I probe the depths of Truth, I notice that it really has no intrinsic boundary, but that it is the unity connecting all finite and conditioned truths. Again, as I probe the depths of Justice, I notice that it has no intrinsic boundaries, but rather is the unity which overcomes the inequities and boundaries among people and groups. In short, I am introduced to realities which, by their nature, overcome boundaries instead of making them. One may not explicitly recognize that one is dealing with realities that “overcome boundaries,” but one can strongly intuit that one is immersed in pervasive or enduring realities.

If one has faith, one would characterize the above transcendent realities as attributes of a personal God. One would not be living to promote the transcendent realities which, by their nature, overcome boundaries among people and groups, but rather for God Who overcomes boundaries among people and groups. The difference here is quite significant because the first position suggests that one can do it oneself, whereas the second suggests that one needs God to promote these transcendental ideals, and that one is God’s instrument in this mission. In the first position the onus for promoting the transcendentals within the world lies squarely on the person. In the second, God is the source of the transcendentals and the onus for their promotion is limited to what a person can do as an instrument, vehicle, or conduit. The first position is open to discouragement and even cynicism because one could discover that one can never fulfill the charge of directly promoting the transcendentals (unconditional Love, etc.) in the world. This could ultimately lead to the claim that “life is absurd.” For if I reach Level 4 (thinking that the onus for its actualization rests squarely with me) and then subsequently discover that I can never carry out this mandate, I might conclude that my inner nature is contradictory (i.e., I desire as my ultimate purpose what I can never attain).



In any case, when one reaches Level 4, one associates one's self-worth with one's connection to God or to the eternal, the unconditional, and the universal. At this juncture, one begins to see oneself as having an intrinsic transcendental nature (which is normally referred to as a "soul"). This term is used both by people of faith and those who approach the transcendentals from a purely philosophical or rational perspective. One has now moved from an awareness of one's intrinsic dignity (Level 3), to one's intrinsic transcendental dignity. One is now caught up in an eternal and universal destiny, and this awareness, in turn, affects the way that one looks at others. If Level 4 is consistent with authentic Level 3, one will automatically transfer the intrinsic transcendental dignity (of one's own "soul") to that of others. One seems to be aware of the equality of dignity among all human persons. Somehow one sees that it is repulsive to Justice itself, Love itself, and Truth itself for one human person to have a transcendental dignity and the other not to have it.

I noted a danger to Level 3, namely, that one could be concerned about changing structures or systems without being concerned about individuals (i.e., social idealism without love). The same can apply to Level 4. If one is not careful to integrate love for concrete, individual persons with one's pursuit of the transcendent, one might again find oneself promoting the greatest common good by undermining the good of the individuals participating in it. In short, one might say, "I'm too busy promoting the faith to attend to the needs of Joe," or, "The demands of promoting the kingdom of God require that I spend only ten minutes per week with family and friends." Even worse, I might think that it's necessary to create boundaries or even to promote hatred among people in my zeal to help God. The error of this reasoning can be seen by considering the logical inconsistency between promoting the common good (the good of the whole), while ignoring or even undermining the dignity of, or the good for, the individuals constituting that whole. Therefore, the achievement of Level 4 depends on an authentic appropriation of Level 3. Promoting transcendent ends must be consistent with promoting the transcendent soul in individual people.

The more I recognize the intrinsic, transcendent dignity of others, and



the more I promote this dignity through an authentic appropriation of Level 3, the more I recognize the intrinsic, transcendental dignity in myself. The more I use my powers to see and promote the transcendent, the more I see myself to be transcendent by my very nature. And the more I recognize my transcendent nature, the more capable I am of recognizing it in others. This recognition of the transcendental dignity of all human persons gives my life universal purpose. I now see my actions (even my little acts of love or “unlove”) as having a universal significance. They are not restricted merely to a particular place in time, they seem to have an effect on the balance of good and evil in the world. I think of my life as affecting the Kingdom of God or its emergence in human history. This intuition is generally not viewed in a narcissistic way (e.g., “My life is so great that it affects the whole of human history”). Rather, this universal destiny is attributed to every human being. Thus, all of our lives are tied up in a destiny that is universal and eternal. We all have the dignity of being able to affect the emergence of the Kingdom of God through God’s good grace. This eternal and universal dignity of all human beings, this capacity to contribute to, or negate what is universal and eternal, fills us with a sense of sublime purpose and awe for the mission we have all been given.

This awareness of transcendent, universal, and eternal nature, purpose, mission, and dignity seems to me to lie at the ground of all great cultural epics (e.g., *King Arthur*, *The Search for the Holy Grail*, *The Song of Roland*, and in contemporary times, such stories as J.R.R. Tolkein’s *The Lord of the Rings* or the movie series *Star Wars*). These epics see in all ordinary persons (e.g., Frodo Baggins or Luke Skywalker) not simply a heroic destiny, but a destiny co-involved with the promotion of universal and eternal good. They point to a sublime purpose (filled with challenges, nobility, failures, and divine intervention) which shows each ordinary individual’s existence to be an adventure capable of contributing to the transcendent good of all. If one has faith, one will conceive of this “good of all” as the Kingdom of God. Some psychologists, philosophers, and writers believe that this awareness is intrinsic to human beings even as children (in an archetypal, symbolic story called “An Everyman’s Odyssey”). They



believe that they can see this awareness in the art and dreams of children from many diverse cultures. Perhaps this explains why epics like *King Arthur*, *Star Wars*, and *The Lord of the Rings* have had such amazingly popular, indeed, even universal appeal. Whether one subscribes to this theory or not, it still remains true that as one moves gradually into Level 4 one does have a greater sense of this sublime, universal, and eternal purpose of life, grounded in one's transcendental dignity. Furthermore, this awareness is grounded in, and inextricably connected to an awareness of everyone else's sublime, universal, and eternal purpose of life. Thus, it seems that our awareness of our transcendent dignity is tied to our awareness of universal transcendent dignity. Transcendence and universality in the fourth level are inextricably related.

If the awareness of transcendent dignity is not accompanied by an awareness of the universality of this dignity, then one is not at Level 4. Rather, one is probably combining a belief in God or a belief in transcendent mystery with a Level 2 identity. These beliefs reflect an appreciation of a transcendent realm, but do not see this reality as affecting the dignity of individual human persons. Frequently, this manifests itself as a non-personal religion or even as superstition or magic. It sees the transcendent realm as something fascinating but not co-involving love, justice, or goodness. The notion of "God," as a consequence, frequently becomes uncaring, depersonalized, and sometimes even unjust and capricious. This has two negative effects. First, one can use "God's will" to justify uncaring, impersonal, unjust, and even capricious acts. Secondly, one could think that "God" is less capable of compassion and justice than a human being, which, of course, can lead not only to unnecessary discouragement, but even unnecessary frustration and resentment. As a consequence, one can begin to actually spurn the transcendent end towards which one feels oneself called. "Why would I want to go there? It seems contrary to justice, love, and truth." As a consequence, one never pursues the transcendentals for which one's heart pines.

If, however, one's belief in God is accompanied by a Level 4 identity which is aware of the dignity of all human beings, and sees the transcendent



connection among these dignified individuals, one's desire to purify one's pursuit of Love, Justice, Goodness, and Truth becomes considerably heightened. It was mentioned above with respect to Level 3 that a desire for Love could lead also to a desire for all those virtues which contribute to Love (e.g., humility, self-discipline, courage, authenticity, patience, kindness, generosity, etc.). These virtues now take on a transcendent, universal, and sublime significance. One not only sees humility as a good and necessary virtue in the pursuit of Love (Level 3), one sees it as a sublime and necessary virtue for one's transcendent, universal purpose, and even for the good of the world and the Kingdom of God. It now carries a weight, an import, gravity, and dignity that it did not have in Level 3.

If one has faith, one will see humility as "the will of God." Certainly one identifies or connects one's transcendent self-worth to this virtue, and one bestows on this virtue a sublime dignity. By doing this, one does not become proud, for the pursuit of humility is done in conjunction with God. The objective, then, is not to master oneself (Level 2). The objective is to cultivate a habit with the help of God (the transcendent reality) for the good of all.

If one studies the lives of Jesus, St. Francis, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Martin Luther King, Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Dag Hammarskjöld, C.S. Lewis, and so many others, one can see a similar pattern: an intimate awareness of the transcendent dignity of all human beings arising out of not only a belief in a loving God (transcendent reality), but also a deep care and commitment to individual human beings and the pursuit of good social structures and systems. This pattern not only indicates what they did, the kind of life they led, but also what they prized in themselves (self-worth). They prized human dignity seen in the light of God, and those attributes within themselves that made them free to recognize that dignity. They prized Love itself (God), and Love's presence, in others, in themselves, and in the connection between us all. This view of self-worth, caught up as it is in the Source and in everything grounded in the Source, gives rise to freedom to do the good for all, and each individual,



as if it were the good for oneself. This view of self-worth is intimately connected with one's view of quality of life and freedom.

This view of self-worth clearly changes one's perspective on the aging process. Instead of viewing aging as a decline in one's powers to pursue comparative advantage, admiration, and achievement, one now views aging as a fuller participation in one's sublime, universal, transcendent dignity. My aging well is not simply a good example for others, it is not simply a vehicle for imparting wisdom, love, and faith to the next generation. It has an eternal and universal significance beyond any beneficiary within my purview. It has a sublime dignity caught up in God's presence among us. Aging has a venerable quality worthy of compassion. Compassion is not extended to the aging simply out of the goodness of one's heart. Rather, it is given out of joy in being close to the venerable, close to those who exude a sublime dignity. Socrates' disciples did not extend compassion or sympathy to him because they thought of themselves as "nice people." They did it because they sensed his inherent transcendent dignity. They sensed the lovability in the sublimity of this man. This Level 4 dignity induced sublime love and life in them. Compassion was not only effortless, it was a joy.

This act of compassion is a two-way street, for it takes a Level 3/4 person to find joy in the venerability of a Level 3/4 person. Joyful compassion of this sort arises out of co-naturalness. Had Socrates' companions been in Level 2, his intrinsic venerability would have gone unnoticed as his disciples turned their attention to a more productive and "praiseworthy" mentor. Thus, Level 4 has its benefits not only in manifesting the venerability of the person, but also in being able to see what is manifest.

### III. LOVE

I noted previously that love of self and love of neighbor are inextricably related. It is difficult to love someone if one doesn't love oneself. The notion of self-worth will therefore have a considerable influence on the notion of love. The phrase "notion of love" does not refer simply to an idea that one carries about in one's mind. It refers to what one is concretely



looking for in one's intimate relationships with others. I call it a "notion" because one may not be explicitly aware of it. Most human beings pursue some form of intimate relationship with others (e.g., romantic friendships and committed or deep non-romantic friendships). When they pursue these relationships, they are looking to fulfill certain objectives. These could be objectives for oneself, for the other, for the relationship itself, and even for the transcendent domain. Whether these objectives be explicit or implicit, they have a profound effect on our dreams and hopes, and on the way we conduct our friendships, view our identity, and actualize our goals. In view of the tremendous influence that this notion can have, it is imperative that people make explicit what they currently believe, what they want in their futures, and how they are going to move from the former to the latter.

The way one views "happiness" directly impacts the way one views both self-worth and love in their interrelationship to one another. The following briefly describes the way in which the various levels of happiness determine the notion of love (what we are looking for in friendship and relationship).

With respect to Level 1, the dominant concern is for what is external, tangible, immediately gratifying, physically stimulating, and pleasurable. This obviously affects what one is looking for in friendships. "Love" is identified with certain external phenomena and feelings. External beauty seems to be the dominant source of the feelings being sought, and so becomes the dominant objective of friendship. If this external beauty is virtually the only objective of friendship, it compels one to possess it because this gives one control over one's "ultimate" fulfillment. In order to achieve this "divine" state, one has to treat the other as object. One cannot have perfect control over a free, self-conscious, transcendental being, because that very control would destroy free transcendentality. Obviously, turning the other into an object (a thing) not only diminishes the dignity of the other, but also forecloses the possibility of intimate relationship. A person in Level 1, however, does not recognize either the value of intimate friendship or contribution to the common good. A beautiful possession is good enough, even if it immolates the dignity of that beautiful possession.



Physical gratification enhances the aesthetic sense and the feeling of control and is pursued as a means of bringing one's feelings to closure. If these elements are not accompanied by a recognition of the intrinsic dignity of the other (i.e., the other's likeable or lovable self) one will reduce the other to a mere thing, and eventually, destroy the other's sense of freedom, self-efficacy, and dignity. This debilitates intimacy, commitment, contributory behavior, and even undermines the deeper sense of the romantic. It has devastating effects on the generative love needed for healthy family life, and in the end makes it difficult for people to love anyone who falls short of certain standards of physical beauty.

I'm not suggesting here that physical beauty is not in some way related to romantic love, for many people experience a strong correlation between them. I am here only noting that if love is reduced to physical beauty and the feelings arising from it, it will result in a dehumanization of the other. This dehumanization could either be actively resisted (in which case the relationship will likely come to a bitter end) or it will be accepted (in which case the other's freedom and individuality will be immolated and subsumed into the dominant party).

With respect to Level 2, if one's view is predominately ego-oriented, then love as a gift of self will seem quite unintelligible. However, the ego-orientation will immediately recognize the benefits of being loved.

Being loved is one of the most powerful Level 2 satisfactions. The other's outpouring of affection betokens my desirability (which is integral to my ego-gratification). There is nothing wrong with the other finding me desirable. Indeed, this is an integral part of Level 3/4 love. However, in the Level 2 mindset, ego orientation is so powerful that it tends to interpret "the other finding me desirable" as "love."

I do not recognize the radical incompleteness of this view of love, because I am looking at the world by looking at myself first. I am compelled to look at you with respect to me. This means I am constantly looking at you through my vision of myself. As Level 2 becomes more compulsive, my need to be desired follows in suit. Eventually, the other



will not be able to satisfy my insatiable need. I have to turn to other people who are more acutely aware of my desirability. They are my true friends (particularly if they frequently acknowledge my desirability). I therefore progressively detach from the person who knows me too well, or who does not have enough psychic energy to gratify my ego needs.

This attitude not only undermines even the possibility of commitment, it actually compels me to move from person to person. Each new person is (1) another verification of my desirability, (2) another occasion to possess the physically beautiful (Level 1), and (3) a convenient occasion to move on when previous persons are getting to know me too well. It never occurs to me that I am simply using the other to fulfill compulsive needs for ego-gratification. The *other* may be acutely aware of this. He or she could feel hurt, frustrated or resentful by being treated as a mere instrument of ego-gratification.

Sexuality in these relationships exacerbates the problem. While its intimate quality enhances the feelings of desirability (to the Level 2 person), it also enhances the feeling of “being used” to the “beloved” who is likely to be shortly abandoned. The feeling of abandonment and “being used” after sexual intimacy can be so profound that it can make the spurned person cynical about the romantic, can undermine trust in others, and even do significant damage to self-esteem. If the second level of love becomes endemic to the culture, it could produce significant retardation in the ability to be generative, committed, intimate, and romantic. In other words, it could undermine the possibility of deep friendships, marital intimacy, and family life. These cultural problems are, of course, accompanied by significant emotional pain.

How can individuals and the culture protect themselves from the above problems? First, Level 3/4 individuals must protect themselves if they are attracted to compulsive Level 2 persons. They should think carefully about the impending consequences, for these consequences not only cause pain, but cause long term damage to the psyche (e.g., a loss of trust, self-esteem,



and a sense of the romantic). In short, it would probably be prudent for Level 3/4 people to seek intimate friendships with other Level 3/4 people.

Secondly, it is important for us as individuals to make every effort to move from Level 1/2 thinking to Level 3/4 thinking. Failure to do so will almost surely result in using and abandoning many intrinsically good, trusting human beings. If this is not attended to, it is likely that the inclination to “use and abandon” will grow progressively more compulsive, leading to a multiplication of victims.

Thirdly, the culture, for its own sake, must help the younger generation to move from Level 1/2 thinking to Level 3/4 thinking, for we cannot afford to lose the capacity for trust, intimacy, healthy self-love, and the romantic. It would constitute the virtual annihilation of interpersonal depth and marital commitment. Everyone from children to the elderly would suffer immensely.

With respect to Level 3, “love” moves from seeking affirmation of desirability to the joy of loving the lovable. It may do well to recall here that “love” is not simply referring to an idea, but rather “what I am seeking in a relationship.” When a person moves to the third/fourth levels of happiness, ego-gratification becomes contextualized by the desire to contribute. Normally, this desire to contribute manifests itself as a desire to contribute directly to a specific person and/or a desire to enter into common cause with the other to accomplish a good which is of concern to both. This desire to contribute to or with the other cannot be accomplished through infatuation or affection alone (Level 1/2 love). I must be able to reach deeper and recognize the intrinsic goodness of the other despite his weaknesses.

If the other is committed to Level 3/4, this project becomes immeasurably easier, for I can attend to the goodness of the other’s ideals, commitments, love of others, kindness, and generosity. By seeing this, I am led quite profoundly to the intrinsic goodness of the other lying at that person’s intrinsic core. This incites a desire for committed friendship. A Level 3 person wants to support, help, build up, and connect with a person with this kind of goodness. I desire a connection with the other, not to elicit an affir-



mation of my desirability, but rather to affirm the other's goodness and to affirm our common cause. If the other finds me desirable in this context, I would not interpret it narcissistically, for it is not the objective I am seeking, it is a result of seeking the good for, and common cause with, the other. Thus, the betokening of desirability is seen as a result of both my love and the other's love (my awareness of the other's goodness and the other's awareness of my goodness). It is a gift that I give to the other because of his goodness, and a gift that the other gives to me for the same reason. In this context, then, the affirmation of desirability reinforces commitment instead of undermining it. It should be noted that this occurs not simply within romantic relationships, but also in completely non-romantic, committed friendships.

When affirmation of desirability is subordinate to the affirmation of the goodness of, and common cause with, the other, ego-sensitivity decreases substantially. I am not continually being hurt or angered by a lack of recognition. I no longer need to show off, exaggerate, or pander for attention. I am content to enjoy the other in common cause or to appreciate the goodness of the other for the other. This not only decreases game-playing, manipulation, and ego-competitiveness, it also helps both individuals to see their self-worth in a different light (see above, section I.). In Levels 3 and 4, my vision of my self-worth is conditioned by my vision of the goodness of, and common cause with, the other. I see myself through my friendship with, or love of, the other. Hence, I see myself as a contributor, a pursuer of common cause, a friend, and a generative, loving individual. This view of self-worth stands in stark contrast to the one that is grounded in ego-gratification. When I see myself as friend, I become aware of many formerly intangible characteristics about myself (e.g., the quality of my presence to others, the authenticity of my love, personal integrity, humility, patience, and kindness). Seeing these "new qualities" in myself changes my view of quality of life, others, and aging (see section I. above).

In Level 3, commitment is not only easier, it's necessary. The only way I can enter into common cause with others, and to support and appreci-



ate them, is to allow them to share in part of my time and future. Commitment, of course, has many degrees.

A valued colleague with whom I share common cause may not at first want or require a significant commitment of my time and future; but as enjoyment and appreciation of the other grows with the passage of time, both I and the other could mutually decide to commit more of our time and future to each other. Such a growth in commitment requires mutual consent. I cannot desire greater commitment and then deliver an ultimatum to the other to follow suit. This would undermine the freedom and dignity of the other and eventually, the friendship. If a free, mutual consent to deepen commitment occurs, then interdependence and care will increase.

If the friendship is romantic, this increase in interdependence and care will normally result in an increase in intimacy, affection, and attraction. These strong emotions support the unity and commitment of both parties. This intimate emotional bonding and interdependent unity can become so strong that it cannot be duplicated for another person. One simply cannot feel that strongly about a second person, nor does one want to, for thinking about another person in such a strong way seems to disturb the strong feelings that one had for the first person.

This extraordinarily strong commitment (which, as it were, makes the other a first priority) has a quality of exclusivity. This does not mean that the couple excludes others from their relationship, but only that they exclude others from the same level of commitment within the relationship. Indeed, when a couple is committed in this “exclusive” way, their capacity for common cause is substantially heightened, and hence, they tend to allow many people to enter into and benefit from their relationship with one another. Level 3 and Level 4 love tends to move beyond itself.

Recall that love is “gift of self.” It is evident that it is not only gift of myself, but also gift of ourselves. Love not only goes beyond the self, it even goes beyond the intimate unity of ourselves and welcomes others into itself as a kind of “home.”

It is easy to notice when a couple intends “exclusivity” in the wrong



way. Instead of excluding others from the same level of commitment, they exclude others from their relationship and themselves. If one should visit their home, one feels like an outsider instead of feeling welcome. Indeed, the feeling can be so palpable that the visitor will want to leave within five to ten minutes. Conversely, if the couple gives their relationship (their “us-ness”) away, if they find common cause by serving others together, the visitor will probably feel so much at home that the couple will have to ask the visitor to leave at midnight. I am not suggesting that a couple needs to share all of their intimate moments with others. The couple will need and desire time alone for deep intimacy, and this deep intimacy, in turn, will provide the unity, the common cause, and the “home” that will welcome and help so many others.

Exclusive Level 3 love provides an appropriate context for the intimacy of sexuality. I noted above with respect to Level 2 that sexuality would exacerbate the problem of narcissism in a predominantly Level 2 relationship. It has precisely the opposite effect in the exclusive commitment of a Level 3/4 relationship. Sexuality now becomes part of both persons’ gift of self to the other. As such, it lends considerable emotive support to the intimacy of exclusive commitment. It enhances the sense of unity, being at home, common cause, and deep appreciation of the other, which characterizes this intimate form of Level 3 love. This intimate Level 3 love also transforms sexuality, for one is frequently more concerned with the well-being of the other and family than with one’s own well-being.

In a dominant Level 1 perspective, sexuality can become the aggressive pursuit and possession of the beautiful. In a dominant Level 2 perspective, it can become the aggressive pursuit of affirmation of desirability (which can become destructively narcissistic). In exclusive commitments with a Level 3/4 perspective sexuality finds its meaning through generative love, and so enhances intimate gift of self rather than aggressive possession or pursuit of ego-satisfaction. Just as there is Love 1, Love 2 and Love 3, so there is Sexuality 1, Sexuality 2 and Sexuality 3 where the third is the complete converse of the first two. In the third, sexuality is intimate, unifying, generative, and generating, whereas in Levels 1 and 2, despite the good



feelings that can accompany sexuality, it frequently undermines the substance of generativity, romance, and committed love. It can even become aggressive, possessive, exploitative, and destructive.

At the end of the day, Level 3 rescues not only sexuality, but also intimacy, trust, romantic friendship, non-romantic friendship, and interpersonal commitment. In short, it emancipates human depth and care, and therefore conditions the very possibility of family life.

With respect to Level 4, love stems not merely from a recognition of the intrinsic dignity of human beings, but from the intrinsic transcendental dignity and lovability of all human beings. As was noted in section I (with respect to self-worth), transcendental dignity and universality go hand in hand. Hence, the more I recognize the transcendental nature of the other, the more I recognize that all human beings participate in it. Note that I am not speaking here of a love of humanity (which is a concept), but rather of a love of all concrete, individual human beings.

How does this love emerge? In a recognition of others' desire for unconditional, perfect, and eternal love, truth, goodness, beauty, and being. This is accompanied by the concomitant recognition that I am incapable of fulfilling any human being. I further recognize that none of us is capable of fulfilling any of us, because none of us is Love itself, Truth itself, Goodness itself, Beauty itself, and Being itself. Love 4, then, begins with a corrective of Love 3. Left to itself, Love 3 is open to a fatal flaw, namely, that the deep, intimate, exclusive connection between friends seems to suggest that the human other can be the absolute fulfillment of the heart's desire. But the awareness of the transcendental dignity of the other calls this hyper-romantic assumption into question. It makes me realize that if I am not God (unconditional love) I cannot ultimately fulfill the beloved's ultimate desire, and furthermore, if the other is not God (unconditional love) the other cannot ultimately fulfill my heart's desire. In short, we cannot ultimately fulfill one another even though our love is true, intimate, and exclusively committed. The other is too "big" for me to fulfill, and I am too "big" for the other



to fulfill. The only thing that can fulfill any human other is a real, unconditional Transcendental (or God).

Now, Level 4 is not simply a recognition of what I am not. It is a recognition of who and what God is. As I noted in Chapter Three, section IV, human beings not only have an intuitive sense of their transcendental desire, but also a sense that a reality exists which can satisfy this desire for the unconditional. Some, like St. Augustine, tried to show that I couldn't experience a desire for the unconditional unless I had some awareness of it, and that I couldn't have an awareness of it unless it came to me in my conditioned and imperfect nature. This is why Augustine claimed, "For Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in Thee."

If one were to look at this from the perspective of faith, one could say that God dignified us with the desire for nothing less than the perfect and unconditional. He created this desire by simply being present to our self-consciousness. After sensing this presence, human beings could never be ultimately satisfied with anything short of the presence of God. This presence is responsible for all forms of human creativity, mysticism, and perfectionism. But God could not simply give us a desire for Him without also giving us a strong intuition and awareness that that desire would be fulfilled. If God did not do this, we would simply collapse from despair. We would, in the end, proclaim in unison that life is absurd. We yearn ultimately for what we cannot have.

Coincident with the intuition of God's presence, is the intuition of Creation and Creator. When human beings conceive of ultimate fulfillment, they seem to link it back to an ultimate beginning. This could be due either to a rational judgment that past time requires a Creator, or to a simple intuition that one's ultimate end is linked to one's ultimate beginning. In either case, one has a sense that Something ultimate, unconditional, perfect, and even eternal exists, and that the whole of human destiny is linked to It. This awareness takes the notion of love to a new level.

The third and fourth levels of love in combination have another gener-



ative quality. Unlike Levels 1 and 2, they do not oppose the world to themselves as something to be possessed or dominated, but rather see others and the world as having immense value worthy of one's time, energy, and commitment. One sees others, the world, and even the kingdom of God as a good much bigger than the self, and every investment one makes to improve it enhances one's purpose and reason for being. One does not want to escape from, or protect oneself from the outer world, one feels free, self-determined, and even self-fulfilled when one invests in, and contributes to this outer world. Faith brings this second view of freedom to fulfillment in co-responsibility.

Those not having or wishing to pursue faith, may want to skip the rest of this essay. The arguments made for personhood, inalienable rights, freedom, and the life issues in this essay are not predicated upon the forthcoming description of faith. It is included in this volume only to help those possessing or interested in faith to integrate their faith into their personal and cultural philosophy.

Love and faith are inextricably related. As the reality of Unconditional Love (God) is accepted and acted upon, love is transformed. It allows Unconditional Love to touch one's concrete love of the other, and allows this transformed love of the other to reveal the depth of Unconditional Love. The relationship between faith and love may be described in four steps. The first concerns a belief in and an awareness of the Unconditional Love of God. This step may be initiated by asking the following four questions. If these four questions are answered according to what follows, one will have embarked on the journey of both faith and the fourth level of love:

1) What is the most positive and creative power or capacity within me?

When one lives according to Level 3 principles, contribution becomes extraordinarily significant for purpose and identity in life. Hence, this first question, dealing with my most positive and creative power is an attempt to find out the best means I have for making this contribution. Most people who have embraced a Level 3 perspective will probably answer, "love," for as love has been defined with respect to Level 3 above, it cannot be nega-



tive or destructive. It builds up, generates, and creates. It is a pure force of positivity, unity, and common cause toward the common good. The more one detaches oneself from ego-compulsiveness (Level 2), the more positive, life-giving, and creative one's love becomes. This positivity and creativity in turn fills one's spirit through an intense awareness of higher purpose. If one answers this first question with "love" (from a Level 3 perspective), proceed to the second question.

2) If we (as creatures) are made to find our most positive, creative purpose in life through love, could it be that the Creator is devoid of love?

Here, I am assuming that one is open to the possibility or the reality of a Creator. As noted above, this belief could be attributable to a rational proof for God's existence,<sup>1</sup> a mathematical proof of a beginning of time,<sup>2</sup> an Augustinian awareness of my desire for Unconditional Love and its presence to me,<sup>3</sup> or a simple intuition of being loved by God which initiates the desire to pray and give praise.<sup>4</sup> Whatever the source of one's belief in the Creator, one must reflectively consider that if one is made for the very purpose of love, could it be that the Creator is less loving than oneself? If this seems illogical or even vaguely nonsensical, one ought to reflectively affirm the love of the Creator and proceed to the third question.

3) If my *desire* for love is unconditional, then could it be that the Creator of this desire for unconditional love is not Himself unconditional Love?

Level 4 is a recognition of the unconditional desire within ourselves for Love, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Being. If we assume that the Creator did not intend to frustrate this unconditional desire within all of us, it would seem that His very intention to fulfill it would indicate the presence of this quality within Him, namely, would indicate within Him the presence of Unconditional Love, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Being. If the reader reflectively affirms this, proceed to the fourth question.

4) If the Creator is Unconditional Love, would He want to enter into a relationship with us of intense intimacy and generativity, that is, would He want to be Emmanuel ("God with us")?

If one operates according to a Level 2 logic, this suggestion would be



preposterous. Why would God (who is Creator and all-powerful) want to bother with Creatures, let alone actually be among them and enter into intimate relationship with them? However, in the logic of love, or rather, in the logic of Unconditional Love, such a suggestion seems quite consistent, for love is looking for the good news in the other, entering into a generative relationship with the other, entering into a unity with the other whereby doing the good for the other is just as easy, if not easier, than doing the good for oneself. This kind of love has the non-egocentricity, humility, self-gift, deep affection, and care which would make infinite power into infinite gentleness. In other words, “Emmanuel” would be typical of God. This would characterize the way that Unconditional Love would act, not being egocentrically conscious of the infinite distance between Creator and Creature, but rather being infinitely desirous of bridging this gap in a unity opening upon pure joy. It would be just like God to be “God with us.”

If the answer to this fourth question is correct, then our relationship with God, and surrender to God, will not be an eradication of freedom, but rather a fulfillment of it, for now Emmanuel will take our every action and bring it to completion for the good of every person. As a source of ultimate unity, God will allow our spatially and temporally conditioned actions to have a cosmological effect, to somehow be of immense importance to a world quite beyond our perception and imagination. If one’s answers to the above questions resemble the ones given above, then one has effectively made the first step toward the unity of faith and love.

The second step in integrating faith and love (the acceptance of God’s will) is a recognition that God’s intentions for us cannot be separated from His being. If God is, possesses, or operates by Unconditional Love, then His intention for us must be the same. Thus, God’s will is for the optimum love, goodness, truth, and being to emerge from every act of human freedom manifested in the world. If God’s will is to bring love even out of our malicious intentions, then His will should not be feared, but rather trusted in and prayed for.

We are frequently filled with childhood images of God which are



inconsistent with Unconditional Love. For example, we could conceive of God as being an exacting perfectionist who is tapping His foot impatiently, saying “Spitzer, you have repeated this same mistake one thousand three hundred and twenty-two times, and I’ve had it!” Or we could imagine the “pay-back God,” saying “Spitzer, the reason you have suffered this eye disease is attributable to an unloving act you did fifteen years ago, but I remembered it all these years and have been waiting to give you your just desserts.” There is also the God of the comparison game, who only wants to prove how imbecilic I am by comparison with Him. One can think of dozens of other viewpoints inconsistent with Unconditional Love. The key to recognizing them is that they generally produce debilitating fear rather than trust, despair rather than hope, and therefore resentment and anger rather than love. They can frequently lead to silliness and superstition.

I recall when I was a child, I received a chain letter in the mail indicating that if I did not send ten letters like it to my friends, God would send me to Hell. At the age of seven, I did not have enough money to comply with this demand. I was finally forced to ask my mother for ten stamps under pain of Hell. My mother looked at me and said, “Do you really believe that God would send you to Hell for not mailing out ten letters? I can’t think of any more idiotic notion of ‘God.’” I, of course, didn’t want to take any chances. I really would have rather had the stamps, just to be sure, but she wouldn’t give them to me. And so I finally had to purge this “idiotic” notion of God from my mind and heart. We all have to do this as adults. If we do not, it is difficult to proceed in faith, for faith requires that we trust in the One who will make us truly free to love one another as He has loved us.

The third step integrating faith and love (surrender grounded in God’s will) obviates the peculiar human tendency to want to achieve Unconditional Love, Truth, Goodness, Beauty, and Being by oneself. There is a capacity for idealism in all of us. When we hear about absolute fairness and love, we would like to be the agents that bring it into the world. But we soon discover that we cannot do this for others, and others cannot do this for us. We have two options at this juncture: we can become frustrated or even dashed idealists and proclaim that life is absurd, or we can ask “God



with us” to come to us (because we cannot bring ourselves to Him by ourselves). If we trust in Unconditional Love and believe in His unconditionally loving will, the second course of action (an act of surrender) becomes possible. We open ourselves to God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

At this point, a radical transformation occurs in my meaning and purpose in life. I no longer live merely for love, I live for the intentions and purpose of Unconditional Love. Since Unconditional Love’s viewpoint is frequently beyond our own, an act of surrender (radical trust) is required. Because the will of Unconditional Love is eternal and unconditional, it is only partially visible. Hence, we must be led. There is a trade-off here. If one wants to pursue what is truly loving, good, and just for everyone (God’s will), one must walk through faith by means of a vision and power that is not one’s own. The ultimate act of freedom is to choose to let Unconditional Love do what I cannot do, think what I cannot think, and actualize what I cannot actualize on my own. The ultimate act of freedom is to make the most of my love by letting God bring it to its most profound fulfillment in His will. Ultimate freedom is choosing to let God lead me. The ultimate irony of faith is the discovery that freedom is not “being in control,” but rather “being led.”

The fourth step of integrating faith and love (humility grounded in surrender), is extraordinarily important in the purification of love. Most married people recognize that love requires humility (the capacity to detach oneself from one’s ego-perspective and egotistical desires). It may have occurred to the reader that the ideal of Level 3 love mentioned above seems almost impossible to live out on a day-to-day basis because it is quite difficult to be humble on one’s own. One must be careful about thinking that humility can arise out of self-mastery (thinking, “I will be humble”), because self-mastery tends to orient us towards our ego. The reader may have theoretical objections to this proposal, but my experience has been whenever I try to master myself so as to bring about humility, I find myself in a worse state of pride than I was in before. This view of humility does not help the cause of love, it greatly hinders it.



I find a deep peace in saying “Thy will be done.” I can let all of my ego-concerns go and say to myself, “There is only one thing that matters: what God wants.” Thus, I do not have to be successful at a particular speech. I will be successful if I do my best and God wills it. And if God does not will it, I would prefer that I not be successful, for that success would be contrary to Love. Thus, I have detachment from all the “have-tos” in my life, detachment from all the “would-have-beens” and “could-have-beens” (unfulfilled dreams or disappointments). This does not lead to an attitude of “doing nothing, because God will take care of everything”; rather, it leads to an attitude of “do everything you can, because God will guide everything He wills to fruition.” Surrender is enormously freeing. It brings with it a peace and a confidence, an assurance and a Love which unshackles human love from the fears, dashed expectations, and “have-tos” that compel us to protect ourselves before we can empathize with or care for the other.

In sum, faith brings love to fruition by letting God work through it in ways unseen by us, and letting Him deepen it in ways unimagined by us. With God, therefore, there is the power of love, and empowerment anchored in humility, gentleness, and surrender which opens upon a universal generativity and creativity constituting the most profound possible purpose of life. This, indeed, is the substance of things hoped for.

---

Robert Spitzer, S.J. holds a Ph.D. in philosophy from Catholic University of America, master’s degrees in theology from the Weston School at Cambridge, in divinity from the Gregorian in Rome, and in philosophy from St. Louis University. Research interests include ethics in organizations and the culture, metaphysics, ontology of physics, and the dialogue between faith and reason. His book, *The Spirit of Leadership*, details the formation of the ethical leader. He is currently working on a manuscript on quantum cosmology titled *Real Time: Horizons and Parameters of Reflect-*



ing on *Quantum Cosmology*. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, he has been president of Gonzaga University since 1998.

---

#### NOTES

1. Many such proofs have been written in the late 20th century. Some examples may be found in 1) Bernard Lonergan. *Insight: A Study of Human Understanding*. Ed. by Frederick E. Crowe and Robert M. Doran. (Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1992), pp. 692-708 (Chapter 19). 2) Mortimer J. Adler. *How to Think about God*. (New York: McMillan Publishing Company, 1980), pp. 69-108. 3) James F. Ross. *Philosophical Theology*. (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), pp. 140-194.

2. The background for this was formalized by David Hilbert, the father of finite mathematics, in a seminal article on the distinction between actual and potential infinities. David Hilbert. "On the Infinite," in *Philosophy of Mathematics*, ed. by Paul Benacerraf and Hilary Putnam. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1964), pp.141-151.

G.J. Whitrow, professor of mathematics at the University of London's Imperial College of Science and Technology, has formalized several arguments on the basis of Hilbert's distinction. See, for example, "The Age of the Universe," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 5 (1954-55), pp. 215-225, and, *The Natural Philosophy of Time*. (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1961). Also, "On the Impossibility of Infinite Past Time," *British Journal for the Philosophy of Science*, 29 (1978), pp. 39-45. William Lane Craig has written a more popular version of the proof in *The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe*. (San Bernardino, CA: Here's Life Publishers, Inc., 1979).

Several noted physicists have also explored the boundaries of scientific knowledge and the possibility of a transuniversal creative force. One very interesting account may be found in Sir Arthur Eddington's *The Nature of the Physical World* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1968). See especially Chapter 15 ("Science and Mysticism"), pp. 316-342.

3. Saint Augustine. *Confessions*, translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin, (Penguin Books: London, England, 1961), Books 9 and 10.

4. In addition to the experience which many of us may recognize in our own lives, one of the key expositors in the 20th century of this natural, intrinsic awareness of God is Evelyn Underhill. See, for example, *Mysticism: A Study in the Nature and Development of Man's Spiritual Consciousness*. (London: Methuen, 1930); *Practical Mysticism*, (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd.; New York: E.P. Dutton & Co., 1914); *Life as Prayer and Other Papers*, ed. Lucy Menzies. (Harrisburg, PA: Morehouse Pub., 1991); and *Man and the Supernatural*. (New York: E.P. Dutton & Company, 1928).

Benedict J. Groeschel has integrated psychology and spiritual development beginning with the call of God, and proceeding through the three steps of the mystical life in *Spiritual Passages: The Psychology of Spiritual Development*. (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

C.S. Lewis describes this initial experience of God as "stabs of joy" in the



autobiography of his early life entitled *Surprised by Joy: The Shape of My Early Life*. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1955).

Rudolf Otto, "An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational" in his classical work, *The Idea of the Holy*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1955).

Of course, descriptions of this fundamental spiritual experience go back to the earliest moments of the Old Testament (perhaps, 1800 B.C.), and have been given sublime articulation by many spiritual writers throughout the centuries. For a brief explanation of 26 descriptions of this experience, see Elmer O'Brien, *Varieties of Mystic Experience*. (New York: Mentor-Omega, 1964). Four of the best known expositors include Bernard of Clairvaux (*Selected Works*, trans. and ed. by G.R. Evans, in *The Classics of Western Spirituality*. New York: Mahwah, 1987), Julian of Norwich (*A Book of Showings to the Anchoress*. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1978), St. Teresa of Avila (*The Collected Works of St. Teresa of Avila*. Volume One, Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications, 1976), and St. John of the Cross (*The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, trans. by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez. Washington, D.C.: ICS Publications 1979).

There are literally thousands of books devoted to fundamental religious experience arising out of every religious tradition. A cursory search of the catalogues of virtually every library will reveal this.