

FOREWORD

Have you ever wondered, "Just what is human nature, and where does it come from?" In reviewing history, it is obvious that people have been more concerned with trying to control survival and security than learning how to develop love and wisdom. In trying to get survival and security under control we have been intensely competitive, and often tried to exploit one another to gain temporary advantages. One sad result is that we have come to think of fear and greed as *just human nature*.

Throughout history, some people have become loving and wise, and these we tend to revere as saints or deities. Jesus, Buddha, Lao Tzu, Confucius, Gandhi, etc. are familiar examples of people we have seen as extra special, or even as deities because of their degree of love and wisdom. There is also the occasional person in our personal acquaintance that seems to embody the qualities of love and wisdom, and we often admire, respect and feel warmly toward these people.

As much as we respect, admire, or even worship people who integrate love and wisdom, we have yet to establish (at least as far as I am aware) the training necessary so that people who want to become loving and wise can learn the required skills and awareness. Instead, our daily priorities and purposes indicate

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we value survival and security, while love and wisdom are relegated to beliefs, assumptions or ideals that we revere; but so far, have failed to clearly define and consciously master.

What I am suggesting is that it is time to make becoming loving and wise both a *practical goal* and a *conscious purpose* in our everyday lives. To make developing love and wisdom a practical goal we must have a sequential process defined by observable facts, specific skills, and concrete activities, not just vague feelings or fantastical beliefs. Too often, people imagine that love and wisdom are a consequence of how they *feel* or what they *believe*, rather than a *factual* development of their minds and emotions created by mastering specific skills and concrete activities.

The purpose of this book is to provide the information everyone needs to master their *objective internal needs and potentials*, as well as *specific mental tools necessary to think for understanding and a concrete process for building genuine emotional bonds*.

Each category provides *complex sequences* of skills and awareness necessary to build love and wisdom. With the mental and emotional development created by mastering these sequences of skills and awareness we become empowered to fulfill both our *universal* and *unique* needs and potentials. Becoming loving and wise is one consequence of this fulfillment.

I have identified the processes necessary for internal growth through a lifetime of reading, personal observations, and professional experience. Essentially, my life has been devoted to pursuing the answer to one question, “What, if anything, will make human life *internally* satisfying and genuinely meaningful?”

Through books I have scoured history, literature, philosophy, and psychology looking for the answer to my question in the lives, emotions, thoughts, and imaginations of Western civilized experience. I have also explored the thoughts, lives, emotions, and experiences of Eastern philosophers and spiritual leaders.

For twenty-five years, I practiced traditional psychotherapy, and for the last ten years have taught the awareness and skills necessary for mental and emotional development. Through studying people who became loving and wise, as well as those who did not, I have identified *universal* needs, potentials, and mental tools that every internally developed person I have ever studied has to some degree understood and mastered.

What anyone can easily observe is the internal development of a few people is not enough to change the history of human beings. While we are better off having a few wise people to provide examples rather than having none, it is also clear that each ordinary person needs to master internal development in his own way, and for his own purposes. It boils down to the old cliché that it is better to *teach a man how to build his own house rather than give him one that is already completed.*

Certainly, simple observation of the daily plight of human beings around the globe would indicate that the existence of a few, or even many loving and wise people has not trained the rest of us to be loving and wise. Instead, we tend to either ignore or pervert the teachings of the great personages of human history. It seems that we simply cannot live in a house of love and wisdom that someone else has built, but must learn how to build our very own abode.

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The initial skills and awareness necessary to build love and wisdom are presented in **Part One**, the *Five Internal Potentials*. These internal potentials are universal for all human beings, and every internally developed person I have studied has to some degree mastered all five. Fulfilling the *five universal potentials* leads to an internal growth that is neither mystical nor magical. Instead, these potentials are easily observed *possibilities* that common sense will tell you are essential to developing your mind and emotions. The five potentials are: ***Understanding, Caring, Mastery, Creativity, and Contribution.***

Each potential identifies sequences of skills and awareness necessary to build layers of insight and understanding that over time grow into love and wisdom. In mastering **understanding**, for instance, we fulfill our human potential to observe, think, and *see in detail* every critical relevant truth. Through this process, we learn how to see and understand our perspective (*motivations, needs, purposes, choices and behaviors*). One valuable lesson we learn is that our unique experience of life is separate from that of our mate, children, and friends.

Developing a *desire* to understand ourselves, life, and other people requires that we master the second principle—**Caring**. ***While understanding develops our consciousness, caring provides the “desire” to use our newfound awareness to become loving and wise.*** Together, the desire generated by caring, and the insights acquired by understanding create a foundation of internal development necessary to master every need and potential. It is important to note that when people fail to grow the primary reason is always the same—they lack the

desire!

Mastery is the third universal potential, and provides the skill we need to apply the insights acquired with understanding and energized by caring. Mastery is a critical potential because everyone needs the skill, awareness, self-worth, and internal power created by becoming competent. We can observe that one requirement for acquiring any kind of competence—internal or external—is to first define, then practice, and eventually master specific skills and awareness.

The fourth potential—**creativity**—extends and expands mastery into expressing a unique vision of our love for life. After using understanding and caring to master our *universal* needs and potentials, we need to develop our *unique* talents. Most people are impatient and want to jump into being creative without first mastering their basic needs and potentials. ***This impatience insures we produce only the mediocre expressions of an insecure ego, rather than express the authentic creativity of an original consciousness.***

Finally, to fulfill our internal potentials requires becoming competent to **Contribute**. There is no activity more effective in providing an enduring expression of love and wisdom than becoming competent to contribute to the experience and lives of other people, Mother Nature, and eventually to the collective consciousness and caring of the entire species.

Benjamin Franklin, a well-known and wise American, consciously formed his life around *contributing* to the benefit of the people around him. Benjamin said he wanted his legacy to be that he was *useful* to other people, rather than he *died a rich man*.

In reading about his life, we quickly see that Benjamin consciously worked to master all five universal human potentials.

In **Part II** we define the most important internal needs. A *need* is distinguished from a *desire* by the fact that if we fail to gratify a desire we experience disappointment but no real damage. By contrast, if we fail to feed a need then we experience some degree of real damage to our mind, emotions, or body. Understanding our needs is essential to feeding them.

It is important to notice that ***acquiring enough internal development to feed needs and fulfill potentials in our personal, professional, and relationship lives is a critical source of internal happiness.*** Nothing in life is either healthy or happy if its needs and potentials are not fed and fulfilled. Simply look at the trees, plants, flowers, birds, and animals to see if anything is truly healthy, happy, or complete if its needs are not satisfied and its potentials not fulfilled.

While flowers and trees are not subject to being *consciously* happy or unhappy, we still think of them as “unhappy” when their needs are not satisfied. This is why we often speak of plants and trees as “looking sad” when they are brown and droopy rather than green and vibrant.

Animals will both look and act unhappy when they cannot fulfill their potentials, like in a zoo when they are captive and cannot move about freely. In captivity, even when their external needs for food and shelter are adequately satisfied, their internal needs for stimulation, mobility, and challenge are denied and the animals clearly suffer, just like you or I would. (It is important to note that we often deny an animal’s internal needs,

similar to how we often deny our own!)

Of course, suffering, like happiness is experienced in degrees. So, animals in a zoo suffer from an *internal* loss of freedom, variety of experience, and purpose. On the other hand they are not *externally* abused or intentionally made miserable. Wherever on the scale of happiness/misery you currently reside, understanding needs and potentials will help you observe and measure the degree of happiness/misery you have created.

The ultimate source of love and wisdom is to master being able to *understand and nurture* ourselves, life, and other people. In normal life we are not trained in how to see ourselves and other people accurately, define internal needs and potentials, or how to *think* until we *understand* our own and everyone else's perspective. Instead, we are taught to pursue success and security, and to acquire impersonal information that leaves us anxious about our self-worth, unable to build bonded relationships, and still in the dark as to how to define *conscious purposes* that give our lives direction, structure and meaning.

Now, here in **Part III**, we present the bedrock foundation for all understanding in *thinking for understanding and the seven mental tools*. When we master the seven mental tools then we become internally competent to explore everyday reality and learn what is true, define what is needed, and teach ourselves how to feed every real need. This training is significant because it is the foundation for learning how to *understand and nurture* ourselves and other people, which just so happens to be a handy initial *working definition for learning how to love and become wise*.

Finally, in **Part IV** we define the need that many people are

most obsessed with but unprepared to satisfy—building bonded relationships. In this section, we present the key elements in building any emotional bond: *personal conversation, conscious touch, and sharing reality, purposes, and quintessential moments.*

Historically, every increase in human understanding has created real improvements in everyday life—beginning with learning how to control fire and use it for cooking and heat. People improved life again by learning how to grow food and store it, rather than depend on hunting and gathering. Then, inventing the wheel and making sophisticated tools and weapons made life even more comfortable and secure.

In addition to making external life more comfortable, people have also progressed socially and culturally. In advancing civilization, we created language, law, and writing. We also organized ideas and beliefs to create religion, politics, and philosophy. However, to view human evolution in perspective, we must acknowledge it was only in the last century that we passed laws to protect children from industrial exploitation. It also took until the 20th century to establish the 40-hour workweek, give women the right to vote, and make racial discrimination both illegal and immoral.

If we are to continue this *internal* evolution then we must *consciously* acquire all the awareness and skills necessary for our mental and emotional development. One happy consequence of internal growth is that we learn to care more about *understanding and nurturing* than *competing and exploiting*. At this point in history, we desperately need the internal competence essential to *understanding and nurturing* all life on planet Earth—plants, birds,

animals, fish, and other people.

The current need for internal development is urgent because an epidemic exists of individual crises in terms of endless addictions, as well as anxiety, overweight, unsatisfying relationships, depression, and widespread apathy. We also suffer global problems with insufficient resources, over-population, unstable economies, global warming, and chronic political conflicts.

To solve the personal issues that damage our individual lives, and the global problems that threaten our existence, requires a degree of internal competence and ability to work cooperatively that does not now exist. Our only hope is for large numbers of people to want mental and emotional development for their own happiness, as well as to solve the global issues that challenge and threaten all human beings.

In the following pages are the concrete internal skills and awareness everyone needs to build his own house of love and wisdom, and in the process develop his mind and emotions to a degree of subtlety and sophistication not offered in normal life. It is important to notice that mental and emotional development is necessary to integrate not only love and wisdom into our everyday experience, but also internal happiness.

When you read this book it might help to study it like a textbook rather than read it like a novel. I have been told that it contains an intense concentration of information that requires energy and a focused mind to understand and assimilate. Other than careful studying, all you need to bring to the party is a whole-hearted commitment to explore, learn, integrate, and apply the information.