

LEARNING TO VALUE OURSELVES

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Context. What's the purpose of the human experience?

Before embarking on the next theme, we ought to outline a context that presents a new way of looking at life, a new paradigm; one that lets us be happier and understand human beings. You don't have to agree with everything that follows, or to believe anything, because we are not talking about beliefs. All you have to do is to see how your own life changes after applying this information, to see if it works for you.

If the results inside you are happiness, peace and harmony, you'll find this information to be true; and if the external results, in terms of relationships, health, resources and how you adapt to your environment improve, you'll verify that that this information is wisdom.

The purpose of human experience is to evolve, develop our own consciousness and so be filled with wisdom and love. Each and every one of us has come to this world to work on our spiritual development, sharing and participating in experiences with other human beings. Life is actually a process in which the Universe teaches us; planet Earth is a "spiritual school" and each life experience is like one academic year.

Spiritual development is an internal, and so absolutely individual and personal task. Nobody can do it for anyone else, yet nor can we do it "without another"; in other words, we need to interact and share experiences with other people in order to achieve our own development —to know ourselves—. Sometimes, instead of getting on with our own development, we try to interfere with other people's, and instead of learning from them we try to change them. All this does is to distort the learning, or attempt to distort it, and this complicates life itself.

Only if we understand this can we be efficient by asking ourselves what life wants to teach us in each situation, because each is part of a learning process. In short, we have to learn to turn ignorance into wisdom.

When we notice that suffering is disappearing, our inner peace is becoming invulnerable and that our own capacity to create, love and serve is expressed without any condition or restriction, it means that we have achieved wisdom.

In order to lay the foundations for a new civilization that will bring a greater level of satisfaction for everyone, we must start by harmonizing ourselves. To do this it is essential to study the Universal Laws and apply the principles that lead to wisdom. We should bear in mind that only by sustained practice and discarding theories and ideas that prove to be mistaken can we really achieve wisdom. This

way we can develop peace and harmony directly on the ground, with the teaching of daily life, because life is the best school and nature the best teacher.

All we need to achieve efficiency is to stop arguing with the perfect order of the Universe; mental inefficiency is necessary in order to discover, through saturation, that the Laws of the Universe exist. When we reach the point where we have suffered enough, we are ready to understand the Laws. Internal opposition must stop before external opposition can, and for this to happen we have to have accepted that everything that exists and everything that happens is perfect and necessary, because its purpose is one of Love.

Studying and understanding why things exist and why they happen can lead us to recognize the Laws, which in turn make it possible to create a better future for Mankind.

There are seven Laws that govern all of the Universe's processes of creation, administration and evolution. Of the seven, four are fundamental, for they control the development and evolution of the consciousness of the human species anywhere in the Universe. These four Laws form the lower triangle of the Laws, while the Law of Evolution is the superior Law that governs the inferior triangle, which is also known as the triangle of hell, because it is the lowest part of the Universal Laws.

We will be within the Law when we love, enjoy and value what we have. Everything within the Law functions well and flows on its own.

Anything that brings suffering, anguish, pain and illness, happens because we are going against the Laws, and that is how we are going to recognize them. The results we obtain when we go outside the Laws enable us to recognize their existence. We have to make mistakes to be able to discover the Law. Mistakes are not the problem; the problem is not learning from them.

The Law is designed so that we ourselves make a change, not so that we try and change others.

As can be seen in the following tables, human experience is governed by four specific Laws.

| LAW | POSTULATES | EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW |
|--------|---|--|
| NATURE | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All things that are complementary attract each other. 2. Every living being requires the specific food for its species. 3. Every manifestation of nature requires favorable conditions. 4. Every living being has an instinctive sense of the Law. 5. All cycles of nature have specific functions. 6. Every violation of the Law produces serious consequences. 7. Every living being has its function. | <p>Physical ailments: undernourishment, illness, vices, degeneration, misery, hunger, physical and mental defects, physical malformations, ecological imbalance, erosion, plagues, shortening of longevity, etc.</p> |

| LAW | POSTULATES | EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW |
|----------------|---|--|
| HARMONY | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Everything that is sent out acts, reacts and returns. 2. Everything that is attacked defends itself. 3. Everything that pleases is accepted. 4. Only love can transform beasts into persons. 5. Only understanding avoids destruction. 6. We must control situations, not be controlled by them. 7. The best teacher is learning by example. | <p>Psychological ailments and relationship problems: distrust, fear, estrangement, isolation, individualism, loneliness, sadness, depression, fights, shyness, lack of communication, disunity, boundaries, traumas, complexes, etc.</p> |

| LAW | POSTULATES | EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| CORRESPONDENCE | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Every situation is a learning experience. 2. Every circumstance is generated by oneself. 3. All events happen to whom they are meant to happen. 4. We are always exactly where we are meant to be. 5. We come to life with what we need to live it. 6. Only what needs to happen, happens. 7. We only give or have what we need. | <p>Upsets in the individual environment: mental blocks, dissatisfaction, difficulty in achieving success in what we do, wearisome battles against the circumstances of life, inability to accept one's life, fears, anxiousness, constant frustrations, etc.</p> |

| LAW | POSTULATES | EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW |
|------------------|---|--|
| EVOLUTION | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Experience alone opens the way for understanding the truth. 2. Only opposites lead to the development of consciousness. 3. .We only move up a level through the appropriate transformation. 4. We are only the result of ourselves. 5. We only argue with situations that we have not understood. 6. The need for understanding alone is the reason for physical existence. 7. We can only recognize balance from imbalance. | <p>Social upsets: rebellion, anarchy or self-destruction, when limits are imposed on the experiences to be lived; wars, strikes, violence, revolutions, delinquency, hate, conflicts, when human concepts are imposed.</p> |

In the tables above, the effects of violating the Law are listed on the right-hand side. In this discussion of the Laws of the Universe we will also find an explanation of the benefits of not violating the Law.

It is important not to confuse the Universal Laws with human laws or rules; the Universal Laws are immutable and non-repealable, their origin lies in the wisdom of the Absolute or Divinity and therefore they are absolute; they cannot be amended or negotiated, and disobeying them brings a negative outcome—in the sense of unpleasant—, and also a positive outcome—in the sense of it being a learning experience—. That is why it is said that in fact human beings do not construct laws, what we do is issue rules; we call them *human laws*, but they are rules, because they are repealable, transitory and useful for a given moment.

We have come to planet Earth to develop three inner virtues: Happiness, inner Peace, and Love or Service to others. This development brings with it excellent results in all four fields of: Relationships, Resources, Health, and Adaptation to the environment:



The idea is to use these virtues to interact with what is around us. To learn to be happy, to be peaceful, and to love is the true purpose that has brought human beings to the physical world of matter.

| VIRTUES | CHARACTERISTICS | SCIENCE IN WHICH IT IS STUDIED | IT REPRESENTS OR IS DEVELOPED IN |
|------------------|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| Happiness | 0% suffering 100% understanding 100% self-worth | Acceptance | Function |
| Peace | 0% conflicts 0% reactivity 0% confrontation 100% respect | Accepting life with wisdom | Destiny |
| Love | 100% service orientation 0% resistance, 0% fear 100% adaptation 100% commitment | Unconditionality | Mission |

Happiness, peace and love are principles of the divine essence; they have no polarity, they are immutable.

Learning to **be happy**:

- ✓ To learn to be happy we have only to face up to all that we believe takes our happiness away.
- ✓ To be happy we do not need anything outside of us, just understanding and a certain attitude of mind.
- ✓ Non-acceptance is the only cause of suffering; we must stop arguing with reality.
- ✓ It is essential to stop working on others, and work only and exclusively on ourselves, changing what it is inside us that is annoying (the ego) so that it stops doing it.
- ✓ If there is suffering, then just one question needs to be asked: what is it that I am not accepting?; that is where the answer is to be found.
- ✓ Everyone, without exception, has what they need to be happy; however, very few people know how to be happy with what they have.

Learning to **be peaceful**:

- ✓ Nothing and no one brings peace.
- ✓ Inner peace is the result of one's own spiritual development, not a gift.
- ✓ Handling peace requires several elements: clear and accurate information to understand that life is a process of love and that evil does not exist, the skill to manage one's own vital energy, and training.
- ✓ If peace is lost, we must ask ourselves: "What am I resisting?; what do I want to change?; who am I blaming?"

Learning to **love one's neighbor as oneself**:

- ✓ All this requires is to be involved or share time with people whose behavior is very different to our own, to learn to love and respect them just as they are.

- ✓ Love cannot be offended, it is invulnerable, immutable, universal and neutral.
- ✓ Love signifies total understanding of the Universe; it is a way of being and does not need an "object" on which to project itself.
- ✓ Love is not a force, it is a tool.
- ✓ Love is not a feeling.
- ✓ Love is always giving the best of oneself.
- ✓ If there is a lack of motivation the best thing is to wonder why I am allowing the specific situation to limit my capacity for service, which in reality should not depend on external events.

By developing the three inner virtues excellent outer results are obtained in all four spheres:

- ✓ In relationships.
- ✓ In resources.
- ✓ In health.
- ✓ In adapting to the environment.

In the life experience of any human being five elements are present: purpose, destiny, mission, function and intention.

1. Purpose

There is a purpose of love that brought us to the world of matter; it is the perfect objective of learning two things:

- a) To be happy in oneself, i.e., not to depend on anything or anyone in order to enjoy inner peace and happiness.
- b) To love one's neighbor as oneself, i.e., to respect the rights of all beings in the Universe.

And how do we learn this? Here we can see the perfection of the Absolute's pedagogical design. To perform the exercise of learning to be happy in ourselves we need to live in a place, with certain people and circumstances where everything that happens around us is more or less aggressive. In this way we will realize that

our problem does not lie in what is happening around us, but in how we relate to it, and the rejection and resistance that we set in motion.

As for the second part, loving one's neighbor as oneself, this means respecting them just as they are, not seeking to change them, not putting up resistance to others. We need to live in a place where the people around us think differently, have varying customs, and create different things. In this way we will learn to love them as they are, without judging them or condemning them. This is how the purpose of love is fulfilled; it is the real reason why we human beings are here on planet Earth.

More than 2000 years ago, the Master Jesus taught us this when he said: "Love your enemies"; they are not our enemies, they are people who think differently.

Being happy means experiencing zero suffering about what happens; and loving means offering zero resistance to others. Wisdom is the same as love, not feeling. Those who have love care deeply about others, but they do not suffer; however, those who possess goodness but not wisdom care deeply about others, but they suffer enormously. Those who do not care, the indolent, the indifferent, possess neither wisdom nor goodness.

2. Destiny

This is what we come to learn from the world of matter —how to manage the seven tools of love to attain invulnerable peace—; it is a great opportunity to learn what we are missing.

All of us bring to the world a destiny that is inevitable and highly valuable. Our culture teaches us to try and avoid destiny instead of showing us how to harness it. The key to harnessing destiny is: "You have the capacity to enjoy whatever you do, because that capacity is within you." However, if someone says to their child: "You must always do what you like", this will generate a huge block in them.

Destiny is a pedagogical design whose purpose is to enable human beings to verify and discover information that governs the Universe and its perfect order. It is therefore the best opportunity for transcending all human limitations. Instead of complaining about the difficulties that we face in life, we must take advantage of them as a great opportunity for transcending them; then they will disappear for good. If we do not learn from difficulties, far from disappearing, they will become more complicated, they will persist and they will become permanent.

3. Mission

This is what we can teach in the world of matter. We should enjoy our mission intensely, whether or not it is part of our function.

Our mission enables us to recuperate a large amount of the vital energy invested in the exercise of learning to be happy. Our mission is what we already understand, what we already know. It can therefore be used to serve others while bringing enormous enjoyment.

Both our mission and our destiny are represented in our personality: the latter through our belief system and the former through understanding. As we progressively transmute our ignorance into understanding and wisdom, we will increasingly have a bigger mission and therefore more satisfaction.

4. Function

This is what each individual does to support themselves; it consists in putting all possible enthusiasm, joy and love into what one does, even if it is not part of one's mission.

We know that all living beings have a function within the order of the Universe. It takes wisdom to accept it with joy, enthusiasm, and total capacity for action and service. One's function does not consist in "earning one's living"; living is not "earned" because it is a divine gift. What one earns is what supports this biological entity, this body.

Thus, our support is guaranteed as a result of our function. Those who are happy and enjoy what they do will always have an abundance of resources at their disposal.

5. Intention

This is what we want for ourselves or for others. Intention must be directed in a way that does not interfere with the destinies of others nor seek to avoid our own destiny.

Intention is the most complex element for human beings today, because feelings, the idea of kindness and the other ideas that our culture has erroneously conveyed to us lead us continually to try and interfere in the destinies of others. If we were to accept that destiny is something extraordinary and not "bad", that it is

the best opportunity we have to fulfill what we came to the world to do, we would stop trying to change the destiny of others.

When a son or daughter wishes to become independent and their parents are opposed to it, how shall we act so as not to interfere? We always want things to go our way. In this case, the parents consider that it is not the right moment for their son or daughter because they do not have a steady job, for example, and they do not want them to leave home. The "I want's" are the cause of suffering. An "I want" is also unconscious selfishness because we want others to be happy doing what we want them to do.

What would be the wise and loving thing to do in this case? To say to the son or daughter: "The most important thing for us is for you to be happy and find your way, and we therefore respect your decision. We want you to know that if you want to come back the door will always be open."

In short, wisdom means being clear about our purpose, taking advantage of our destiny, enjoying our mission, accepting the function and holding the intention of not interfering in the destiny of others. All this must be practiced in thought, word and deed.

Chapter 1. The true meaning of self-esteem

Self-esteem means valuing oneself: being happy for and with yourself and knowing that we can be happy with others if we accept them as they are, if we do not attack them, invalidate or blame them. That's the way to have good relationships. If we value ourselves enough, we will be able to value others; otherwise we will not be able to do so.

Culture taught us that thinking about oneself is selfishness, which is absolutely false and results in low self-esteem, i.e., the inability to value ourselves and to receive and, therefore, the lack of resources to serve others.

Thinking about oneself is called valuing oneself. Selfishness, on the other hand, is not accepting others as they are, but wanting to change them in order to feel good. Trying to change another person, and telling them: "You're behaving badly, you've got to do this like I say", is selfish behavior disguised as love, based on a subjective interpretation of what is wrong, leading to a failure to accept others. It would be wiser to say: "What do I need to change in myself to accept him?"

Unless we say to ourselves: "I think of myself, because I'm what matters most to myself", we will have very little to offer others and we will never be happy; and we continue saying: "I think about myself and I don't give anything to others unless they earn it and deserve to receive it, because otherwise I'm interfering in their process of evolution, I'm hurting them and I don't want to hurt others." Furthermore: "I think of myself because I cannot give what I don't have; first I need to fill myself with love, wisdom, values and resources to be able to provide an excellent service to others."

If people ask for something that they have not earned and we give in to them, we can do great harm, because they become incapable of serving; and if we want to serve other people, we have to know how and have what it takes. There's no point thinking of others first if we cannot do something for ourselves. What are we going to offer others then? Sadness, depression, limitations, fears, anxieties, failures, problems? What good does that do them? Or would it be better to offer self-appreciation, peace, serenity, service orientation, high self-esteem and the ability to be happy with the things we have? Yet how can we offer that if we do not have it ourselves?

The right way to work on internal values is to first value ourselves a lot, and then learn to serve others.

One very good way of boosting self-esteem and that brings excellent results is **mind reprogramming**.

One useful mind reprogramming technique, especially for people who feel depressed, is to look at yourself in the mirror every morning and say:

"You're the most important person in the Universe for me.

I intend to make you happy (and start smiling at yourself in the mirror) and give you the best in thought, word and deed.

I invite you to enjoy this day so you can see what wonderful things you have to offer, and what you can get in return."

Another mind reprogramming technique for boosting your self-esteem involves repeating the following sentences:

"I'm a perfect creation of God and I have the ability to be happy by and for myself.

Not a single external circumstance can affect my peace and calm.

I'm capable of doing the best that I can, whatever the circumstances.

I'm wide open and ready to receive the abundance of the Universe and all the marvelous things that life holds for me."

Yet another highly recommended mind reprogramming technique involves using *the seven tools of love*, which are the seven new values that we need to sow in our mind and seven ideas that the ego must let go of. The seven tools of love are:

- 1. Acting very efficiently and calmly** in any situation whatsoever, doing the best one can in each and every one of your assigned tasks or duties. Giving up attacking anything or anyone in thought, word and deed. Remaining absolutely firm and loyal to the agreements and commitments that we freely establish.
- 2. Adapting unreservedly to the place** where we are meant to carry out the functions to achieve a life filled with satisfactions. Giving up running away and avoiding situations we have to experience. Believing that happiness is outside is a delusion.

3. **Being grateful for everything that we have** and all the difficult and painful situations, because they are opportunities that life gives us to learn and evolve in our spiritual development. Refusing to let difficulties make us suffer, by understanding that they have a deep purpose of love for us to recognize the Laws of the Universe and free ourselves from limitations, dependence and suffering.
4. **Taking responsibility for the outcome of our own decisions** and life's experience. Accepting that we are responsible for generating our thoughts, feelings and emotions, but not for what happens around us, and much less for what others think, say, do or do not do. Stopping blaming anything or anyone for what does or does not happen to us. There is no one to blame.
5. **Respecting everyone in their ideas, customs, beliefs, and behavior**, as well as their right to make their own decisions. Giving up criticizing, judging, discrediting, condemning and punishing any person for any reason, since we understand that everyone does the best they can with what they know best, and it is not up to us to judge. Instead, only give wise information to people who expressly ask for it, and to whoever accept our subtle offer because we are respectful.
6. **Valuing and enjoying immensely everything that we have and all that we do.** Admitting that we always have everything we need and appreciating it; and in doing so, we can develop the ability to enjoy new things and relationships. Stopping complaining about what we have, because complaining makes us poor. Self-esteem brings prosperity. Anyone who complains about what they have is on the way to losing what they need.
7. **Accepting** that the Father's purpose is perfect and that everything that happens is neutral and necessary. We must give up trying to change others and -instead- work on ourselves. We reject conflict and stop trying to change the perfect order of the Universe and its necessary processes, and especially trying to interfere with other people's life experiences.

*From today we're only going to think the best,
say what's right and do whatever is necessary.*

These mind reprogramming techniques have to be repeated hundreds of times, because the mind already contains information that has to be replaced with the new information. If there were no other information in the mind, it would take root instantly, like in the child's mind; but we are not like children, which is why we have to repeat the saying so many times to remove the old information and replace it with the new information. That does not mean repeating it mechanically, because we need to feel it, see it in our mind, touch it; use the five senses so that our mind starts accepting it and begin acting in line with that new pattern: "I'm happy no matter what happens outside; I'm capable of serving; I'm a perfect being."

1.1 Avoiding low self-esteem

Using the wrong teaching system —based on saying "no" and prohibiting everything—, adults told us the contrary when we were children: "You're good for nothing, you never do anything right, you're useless." Since we believed it, now we need to change that information to raise our self-esteem and start being happy for ourselves.

Thinking about yourself is not selfishness, but wisdom. Selfish people want to change others to feel good themselves, while people who value themselves think: "I'm a supremely valuable being and can make myself happy, nothing can stop it; I'm the most important person for myself."

Having *low self-esteem* is not believing in yourself; believing that you're incapable, and cannot; that everyone else does everything better than you; that you lack the ability and cannot be happy. Low self-esteem is a belief and we can replace it with a truth through mind reprogramming, until our body also begins to obey what we think.

Low self-esteem can also lead us to use toxic substances that use up vital energy and lead us to a state of depression. Mental cleansing, on the other hand, lets us keep high levels of vital energy and an invulnerable peace of mind. Mental limitations are turned off when our vital energy rises, and are turned on when our energy drops.

Another drawback to low self-esteem is that it can block our ability to obtain financial resources. When someone does not feel able, or thinks that they do not deserve what they get, they shut the door on what life has for them. If we fail to even consider the possibility of receiving something, we get scared and do not know what to do with what we are being offered. If that is the case, we need to unblock ourselves, and using the *mirror exercise*, thinking only and exclusively

about ourselves, is a good solution. As soon as we know how we can make ourselves happy and achieve prosperity, we will have a tool to serve others.

Sometimes low self-esteem is the result of an authoritarian education, which does not let people take responsibility for or value their own ability. This is one of the major limitations that we need to change. If our parents were very authoritarian, in the sense that they wanted to force their customs and ideas on us, they may have made us frightened of facing up to life, among other results, and life's experiences are necessary to reach understanding. The result of individuality is the ability to share without attachments, and finding the self-worth and mental flexibility that will lead us to a constant process of change and personal, social and technological growth.

Positive thoughts enable us to generate positive feelings, which boost our energy, self-worth, self-esteem and cheerfulness, as well as improving our relationships. The life result we get with this attitude is prosperity, satisfaction and success, so we reaffirm that this is the truth of life; which leads us to grow increasingly in spiritual peace and satisfaction.

Displays of affection boost our self-worth and internal security as well as our enthusiasm and mental balance; which is why it is so important to give and receive affection. This does not necessarily have anything to do with sexuality, and can be expressed through pleasant words, thoughtfulness, hugs and caresses that nourish and balance the person who receives them.

The best way to boost your self-esteem is to focus on *yourself*:

Love yourself.

Pamper yourself.

Look after yourself.

Teach yourself.

Forgive yourself.

Be fond of yourself.

Treat yourself.

Smile at yourself.

Excel yourself.

Value yourself.

1.2 Strengthening internal values

Before moving onto the next chapter, we should define what a value is, to avoid making the mistake of training in or strengthening aspects we thought were values and are not.

Definition of **value**: appreciating the result obtained from an action; here we will use it primarily to define something that gives satisfaction. It is a quality or gift that we have been given as human beings. It is something that, when used, brings love and improves a relationship. It is recognized as such through interaction. A value is something that is always given, received or shared; something that brings satisfaction both to whoever is giving and whoever is receiving.

For example, *sincerity* is not always a value. If someone says something they regard to be true, but the person listening does not think the same, then it is not a value. For example, telling someone that the dress she's wearing is awful is not worth saying, however sincere it may be, because it makes the other person feel bad. Saying what you think when it's negative isn't a value; so be careful with what you say, do and think, so as not to hurt anyone.

*An improper thought only hurts whoever thinks it,
but words and actions can hurt others.*

Broadly speaking, social norms are not values, but only patterns of behavior for living with others, for handling ego-related situations that cannot be understood.

So sincerity is not always a virtue or value, as sometimes it is simply a limitation of the ego that consists in honestly expressing our ignorance to others and thus damaging our relationships. A sincerity that prompts us to tell someone what we think are the "four truths", and to reel off a list of the problems that we think they have, only serves to harm the relationship; so this type of conduct stems from ignorance, because other people are not to blame for what you feel. Here is a very clear example of someone who is sincere and the results they get: "I'm sincere, honest and direct; I call a spade a spade, and I don't mince words when I say things. But I haven't got any friends, and I've no idea why not ..."

Sincere people always say what they think and afford themselves the luxury of criticizing others for what they think is wrong, and so damage all their relationships. In our relationship with other people and with the world we need to be very respectful, because doing so is more valuable than what we often call "honesty" or "sincerity."

Being **respectful** implies accepting others and their belongings, customs, ideas, beliefs, behavior, destiny, form and, in general, everything; it means stopping criticizing, judging, condemning, attacking them or interfering with them and, of course, not taking anything that does not belong to us.

Much of the time, sincerely expressing our opinion about others is the same as judging them, and we cannot judge or criticize someone else because they do the best they can. It is necessary, essential and unavoidable to make mistakes if we want to learn, so *it makes no sense to judge others for what we consider to be their mistakes*, and tell them our conclusion. This problem stems from our ego, and such expressions of sincerity do not help us either to enjoy a better life or better relationships, which is why it is better to give them up.

A value is permanent, not temporary, because it is part of our understanding, our consciousness and virtues. For instance, one person's value might be *servicing others*, while another's might be *adapting*: they are two different values, but both produce internal and external satisfaction, in others and in ourselves.

Internal values are virtues, qualities, a product of understanding, and are part of love and truth. The truth releases us from any kind of fear, limitation, distress, disease, and any conflict. If that is so, anything that does not release us and others is not the truth. All too often we mistake an event for a truth: telling something exactly as it happens is not always telling the truth, but just telling a story; telling the truth is something deeper.

Internal values are spiritual virtues that allow us to have peace, harmony, imperturbability, mental clarity, joy, enthusiasm and all the successful internal situations. Expressing them does other people good.

An **external value**, meanwhile, is a positive property of an object, on account of how it serves us, and must never be confused with its cost or price. What's more, it never implies suffering. By way of example, keeping a memento of an ancestor is a sentimental attachment (although we can remember people who are no longer with us without pain), not a value and, unlike the latter, can cause us pain if we lose it, for example. Values are never associated with suffering but with satisfaction, joy and growth, while attachment is one of the ego's limitations. It is easy to confuse values with limitations, but the value of a work of art is not its price, but the satisfaction that we get from enjoying it.

External values matter on account of the service that they provide and the satisfaction they generate, and internal values are the virtues that allow us to improve our lives and relationships and succeed in everything. A person who uses

values irremediably succeeds in life and never fails. This is nothing new, because the Master Jesus taught it to us two thousand years ago, when he said: "But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be given to you." The problem is that we do not know how to seek the Kingdom of God within us; he was referring to the inner treasure, our values, the kingdom of love. How do we know that we are not expressing our values? Because our life is far from excellent.

A "treasure" is a value because it is connected with satisfaction, well-being, and with everything that can improve conditions both inside individuals and in their external relations. Each and every one of us, without exception, has huge gifts and values within us and we just have to learn how to use them.

Competing involves rivalry with others, comparing yourself with them and feeling bad if you do not come first. It is not a value, but a limitation; firstly an instinctive one and secondly a mental one.

What we suggest is to stop competing for good, and replacing this attitude with another: *being competent*. There is a big difference between competitive people and competent people. Competent people do the best they can without worrying about others' results, while competitive people fight with others and, if they have to, cheat to win.

Competent people never care about what others do or fail to do, if they are in a better or worse situation, because they do not intend to start a competition. Instead, they, simply do the best they can and get their result.

Here is an example that illustrates the difference very well. There was an African runner who had won lots of Olympic gold medals. The odd thing was that, whenever the starter pistol was fired, he was never the first off his mark, but almost the last. Odder still, he started calmly, without burning up adrenaline or energy and yet he always crossed the line first. When asked why he did this, he said that he was not competing, just running, and that he knew he needed to stick to a precise, constant pace to run a given distance in a specific time. He knew that he would beat the world record at that pace, and he did not waste energy competing or starting first. Throughout the race, one rival after another got left behind because they could not keep up. He said that he never competed with anyone else and didn't care if there were eighty other athletes or none, because it didn't make him feel stressed or anxious, or waste adrenaline. He just did what he had to do and won.

We are competent in everything we do, without worrying if someone does better or worse, because that is an external situation, and we should only concern ourselves with doing our best, because it always leads to success.

Being competent is a value, but being competitive is a useless effort, stressful and a limitation.

False beliefs make us think that we are developing values when actually we are generating limitations. For instance, if we focus on "I want" instead of "I need", we will find opposition and a sense of dissatisfaction and will end up blaming fate, circumstances or ourselves, because we believe that not everybody has the same opportunities. This will cause us frustration and low self-esteem; we will be adding to our mental limitations by thinking that an injustice has been done, when all that exists is the Law of Correspondence and the Law of Generation.

Looking at life from one's ego is to contemplate it from the "I want": "I want others to change, I want things to happen as I like, I want everything I don't need you, I want everything I don't have."

Looking at life from wisdom is to contemplate it from the "I need": "I have everything that I need." There is no need to offer resistance to life. Instead, let go and flow with it. So forget about saying "I want", looking and asking for anything, and just *ask life* and then *act*: if we do, we'll get everything we need.

False beliefs lead to confrontation and trigger negative, self-destructive feelings, such as anger, resentment, vindictiveness, hatred, low self-esteem, insecurity or inability and, when they somatize, they destroy all our internal and external balance processes.

Low self-esteem prevents us from enjoying everything that exists, because we do not feel worthy of what life gives us.

Chapter 2. Discovering the best of yourself

Who are we really? Human beings, in their threefold dimension (body, mind, consciousness), mainly express themselves through their personality—in other words, in the mental field—. Yet the patterns of behavior that we express through our personality can stem from different sources within our human dimension: instinctive behavior, learned behavior and conscious behavior.

These three types of behavior are expressed through the personality in the following ways:

1. **Instinctive behavior** manifests itself through the "*I want*". Instinct is devoid of feelings and its basic function is maintaining life through desire and emotions that stem from it. It is easy to recognize because what it triggers are automatic codes of fear, pain or pleasure, that have nothing to do with reasoning.
2. **Learned behavior** manifests itself in the "*I believe*". Our personality is formed by everything we have learned and determines the different types of feelings we experience in life's circumstances. When we find no satisfaction in relationships and no success in life, it is because we are acting from our false beliefs. That is why we have to check the result of our behavior, in order to find the truth and only act from the positive side of our personality.

Instead of fear, our personality harbors traumas, and instead of sorrow, suffering; it is not something physical, but mental.

3. **Conscious behavior** manifests itself in the "*I know*". Human consciousness stores our understanding of our life experience's results, verifies the truth and lets us express love through freedom, support, respect and service to others. Understanding from our consciousness lets us recognize that all human beings always do the best that they can, in accordance with their level of wisdom or ignorance.

How we behave determines the success or failure results that each of us get out of life. If we fail, then we need to behave differently. What determines how we behave in the world? Three files inside us:

- a) The **instinct file**, which is genetic and determines our "automatic" behavior, if we allow it to, because we can modify it.

- b) The **personality file**, which stores our beliefs, what we have learned from culture, our environment and experiences. If the beliefs are false, they prompt negative behavior.
- c) The **consciousness file**, which is the highest, with divine, permanent and immortal features, and which stores the *successive understandings* that our personality steadily builds. Therefore, it only fills up with *truths of love*. It is the home to our gigantic inner treasure.

Most of us use the personality file, which is what lets us experience problems, conflicts, difficulties, sadness, bitterness or frustration in our life. We need to cleanse this mental file.

The files inside us have a *duality* that we need to learn how to handle: first by recognizing it, and then by stopping using our mental limitations, and training ourselves to enhance our values. The duality in the mind prompts different behaviors.

For example, in the instinct file duality is recognized through the thresholds of the five senses: reality is seen as safe and acceptable and either we feel harmony or else a certain danger, in which case we feel fear, the need to escape or attack.

In our personality file, however, we recognize duality through our system of beliefs. If we see everything as a problem, inside us we will feel suffering, anxiety, stress, resentment or bitterness. Yet if we see it from our understanding (to be found in our personality), we will find an opportunity to learn to be happy, to learn to love and to break away from our limitations.

There are no problems in the consciousness file, because it contains purity, untainted love, and stores the treasures that are discovered in our personality. It will always contain acceptance and inner peace.

Events are neutral, and so are neither good nor bad. It is our personality, shrouded in its ignorance and mental limitations, that labels something as good or bad, and that judgment prompts us to engage in negative behavior that harms any chance of succeeding in life. If we could use our understanding to analyze an event that we have labeled as "bad", we would see it as a chance to learn, love and be happy whatever goes on outside, and we would behave in a way that would help us achieve success in life.

*If we see life as a learning opportunity,
our behavior and our results will be positive.*

How we behave forges ties between our inner and outer worlds. Our senses provide an inner sense of what is happening outside, which we then use to relate to the outside, through our behavior. Our actions instantly produce a result, and if it is not satisfactory, then it was inadequate, which means that it was prompted by a limitation, not a value.

*Whenever we act from the best part of us,
we always find satisfaction and success in life.*

"I am my values", whether they guide my behavior or not. Unless we act from the best of ourselves, we will have to begin making an effort to bolster our values and transcend our mental limitations, which are what hinder us from acting from our values.

Every human being has a huge potential of qualities, powers, virtues and values, but most people only use a fraction of them. The reason why we fail to make the most of this huge potential is that normally we behave and relate with one another from our learned limitations, which is why we negate many of our own values and even go as far as to believe that we do not have any.

The problems and difficulties that we face time and time again stem from the fact that we tackle life's everyday situations from our learned limitations; and that we regard many of the opportunities that life offers us as difficulties and turn them into problems. So it is no wonder that few people achieve financial and social success in life by striking up excellent relationships, and also succeed in developing their consciousness.

The *secret to success* lies in treating any situation that life brings us as a wonderful opportunity to grow and develop our skills, which involves always doing the best we can, whatever is happening and no matter what situation we have to tackle.

The problems we have faced throughout our lives may have led us to keep on feeling resentment or guilt, and such feelings can seriously hinder us from building our best qualities, as well as burning up alarming amounts of vital energy. All this significantly limits our chances of feeling satisfied and leading a successful life. We need to learn both from our own mistakes and other people's, admitting that nobody is to blame.

If we educate our children by prohibiting and punishing them, as adults they will be incapable of being happy and will have a low self-esteem. If we consider that our children deserve to be punished, instead of thinking that they have made a mistake from which they need to learn, we are acting from a false belief.

Likewise, some difficult situations make us wonder what we can learn from them, and when we fail to find an answer straight away, we end up feeling angry or guilty. If we want to get rid of these negatives states once and for all, we need to recognize that life uses difficult situations to teach us four patterns of behavior that can cleanse us fully of resentment and guilt by forgiving:

Accepting – Taking Responsibility – Acting – Being grateful

Accepting a situation means to stop trying to change it, by understanding that it is an outcome of our own internal attitude; the result of the selfishness that makes us try to change others in order to feel comfortable, without making any effort to cooperate or adapt to our environment.

Taking responsibility means not blaming anyone else or anything for the situations we are meant to experience, for the choices that we make or for the feelings or emotions that we experience.

Acting effectively, serenely and with equanimity means doing whatever is needed in any situation, however tough it is, so that life can go on as normal, without having any aggressive sentimental or emotional reaction, regardless of whether or not the situation can be resolved.

Being grateful means valuing what we have learned from a situation, because this lets us develop qualities such as understanding and the inner force we need to avoid making the same mistakes again. Not being grateful for the difficult situation *per se*, but for what it lets us learn.

The first step to being successful is to *clearly identify our best qualities*, and then *make every effort* to develop them to their full potential.

Developing our qualities entails making a big effort to avoid being carried away by the reactions that stem from our learned limitations. Luckily, this effort will be more than outweighed by the satisfactory results that we will soon notice in all our relationships and, of course, both at work and in our financial income.

*The secret to success lies in knowing
how to make good use of one's values.*

To reinforce our values, we need to train constantly; and if other people do something that we do not like, then we should react with a loving behavior rather than attacking them. Unless we bring out our values often enough to strengthen them, we will end up enhancing our limitations and damaging our lives.

Limitations and virtues are easy to recognize. If we regard any situation around us —relationships, the economy, social ties, politics or health— as a problem, then we are analyzing it from our internal limitations.

Once a disciple told his Master that he had a problem and asked him to help him fix it, to which the Master replied by asking him first to define what a problem is. After the disciple had explained it, the Master answered: "Now I understand: what you mean is that you've got an opportunity that you don't know how to use to your advantage, but that's not a problem."

We have to accept that there are no problems, but instead just limitations for tackling certain situations. If we decide to act from our values instead of our limitations, problems go away. The opportunity is a pure ability to be happy, and a situation seen from understanding and from truth.

If we behave positively, from our instinct we get pleasure; from the part of our mind devoted to personality, personal satisfaction; and as for developing our level of understanding, we will have joy, peace and harmony. If we see life as an opportunity, then we are interpreting it right as what it is: a wonderful opportunity to be happy; if we do not see it like that, then we are seeing it from our limitations.

The idea we want to convey is that we have to learn to be happy for ourselves, without relying on others or blaming them because they do not make us happy; actually, only we can make ourselves happy.

According to a Law of Nature, whenever something is used constantly, it trains, gets stronger and enforces itself. So as most of us tend to act from our own limitations, these eventually overpower our virtues, which is why our relationships break down time and time again, hindering our chances of feeling satisfied with our financial income, family ties and job.

If we always bring out the best of ourselves, our positive traits will end up overpowering our limitations, and paving the way to plenty of sources of satisfaction in our lives, not only in financial terms but also in all other areas. When we express the best of ourselves, life pays us back with the best that it has for each of us. Knowing this, we could ask ourselves: "Who I am? and "What's the best of myself?"

Nobody is just their knowledge, concepts, beliefs or traumas, or the limitations that are mirrored by their behavior, because that is all part of the learned personality and so can be changed.

Everyone is what they have understood about life and the self-confidence that they have built up.

If we use our best qualities and find satisfaction in everything that we do, inevitably we will become the best of ourselves.

We are not limitations, defects or ignorance, but instead the *transcendent virtues* that become part of the immortal and are assimilated into the permanent consciousness of love. That is why our virtues are part of our very essence, and what we have to boost; whereas all our limitations are just temporary. This will be seen better in the next exercise.

2.1 Practical exercise: confidence-building

A group of six people stand in a circle, while another person, you for example, stand blindfolded in the middle of the circle. Then you fall backwards, as stiff as a stick, towards one side of the circle. The other people catch you and gently push you back inwards so that you don't fall down or hit yourself. Then everyone else takes turns to go into the middle and do the same.

The aim of the exercise is to realize what sensations you feel, both when you are in the middle and in the outer, supporting circle. When you are on the outside, do you take responsibility for the person you are looking after?

When you are in the middle, at first you might feel afraid, distrustful, insecure, anxious or frightened. Initially, when we do not know something, the sensations we feel are not very pleasant, due to our limiting thoughts. Then the exercise becomes fun, when we decide to let go because we feel more confident and safe.

The same thing happens to us in life: if our expectations are fear, mistrust and anxiety, and we have mental constraints —however unreal they may be—, our constraints prevent us from letting go, and instead keep us shackled. Fear is a mental ghost.

The fact is that there were six people around each of us and it was virtually impossible for anyone to get hurt during end the exercise; if the worst came to the worst, they might fall down very slowly, so they wouldn't get hurt; the only thing limiting them were their own negative thoughts.

This is how to overcome traumas: first you gradually begin gaining self-confidence, discovering your values, trusting others and realizing that, as you start trusting, others respond too. Remember that your restrictions are what make other people reject you. Once you have overcome your mental limitations,

you can start to enjoy life, gain self-confidence and give the best of yourself, and in doing so, feel happiness and pleasure.

If you managed to let go in a minute-long exercise, trusting that everything would be fine, and were able to replace an unpleasant feeling with a pleasant feeling, just think what you can do if you work on your internal development in the same way, in order to gain confidence and stop seeing problems where there are none.

As for when you were part of the outer circle, did you feel any kind of responsibility when you had to support the person in the middle? The fact that the person relied on you made you feel a commitment towards them, and that would not happen if you felt that they did not trust you. Much more importantly, the person in the middle was blindfolded, helpless and apparently vulnerable, which is why you protected them more, just as you would do with a baby.

If you give up defending yourself, fighting or attacking altogether, you become entitled to be *protected* by the forces of the Universe and by others. On the other hand, if you don't put your heart into your relationships, your job or life, your only reward will be fear and distrust. If you are always on the defensive, you generate aggression, block other people's support channels and your life will become a chaos.

Self-transformation involves gaining **self-confidence**, whatever is going on outside. If we let our limitations, fears and mistrust grow stronger, our suffering does as well, we face more conflicts and, since we cannot let go, we cannot flow with life. Our inner work consists in *letting go to life and letting others do the same*. If we are parents, we need to stop acting like "control towers", a kind of behavior that stems from a lack of self-confidence.

In the confidence circle exercise, there are nearly always overprotective people who don't let the person in the middle move an inch, but that means they are not allowing the other person to let go and live their own experience. If we learn to let go and let others go, we can enjoy life, but to do so we need to *strengthen our values*. Often we do not realize how many people love us and support us. We have to **let ourselves be loved**, because we have values that are worth sharing.

2.2 Training our virtues

If we use our virtues, they get stronger, but if we act from our limitations, then these will get stronger. Nobody enjoys things they don't know how to do, only what they *do* know how to do; that is why we should aim to learn and train

ourselves to enjoy it. Training entails bringing into play our qualities — confidence, communication and showing the best of ourselves—, so that they grow stronger.

Virtues are displayed as the results of internal and external satisfaction, while limitations can be recognized because there is internal suffering and external problems or conflicts. If you want to develop your virtues, acknowledging them is not enough. Instead, you have to train and practice using them constantly. Now is the time to do so: show everyone your qualities, express them and train them as you do.

Learning to lead —learning to be creative, crush fears and limitations and make decisions— is just as important as learning to adapt, obey or follow. Both are qualities, and both the observer and the leader need virtues. We need to break down our limiting mindsets and realize that we are fully capable of building ourselves a new life. Unless we break with the approaches that culture has mistakenly conveyed for thousands of years, we will not get ourselves a new life.

The first learning process that living beings, including human beings, go through is *imitation*. Setting a good example that others can imitate is just as important as being able to imitate others. Each of us has different qualities: some of us find it harder to adapt to a situation when someone else is in charge, while for others the opposite is true. Ideally, we should do both: adapt or lead, as necessary at any given moment.

Our understanding is like a case where we keep all our qualities, virtues and values. Yet we need to get better at accepting, being service-minded, calmer, serener and more adaptable, which means having a flexible mind. When doing so, we should find inner peace, joy, enthusiasm, the confidence to do so and patience and tolerance with what other people do, without judging them. Now is the time to try out new patterns of behavior that make us feel more satisfied, express our values, cleanse our mind, forgive and understand that actually nobody has ever done us anything. Instead, it is our own reactions to what others do that makes us suffer.

The hardships that life makes us face are like the darkness that contrasts with the light to let us appreciate the sun. When we start **acknowledging our own values** we are at the gates of light and have the chance to leave suffering behind us.

What we call difficulties or problems are usually situations that we cannot handle, or simply we do not know how to react to them. In fact, these situations show us exactly what we need to learn in life to be happy, because as long as we

fail to understand certain situations in our life, our chances of being happy will remain remote. That is why difficulties are real *learning opportunities*; as we learn from them, our qualities and abilities will grow stronger, putting happiness within closer reach.

*Welcome life's challenges,
because they let us learn the true meaning of happiness.*

How could we recognize light if we did not know darkness?

How we could appreciate joy if we did not know suffering?

How could we appreciate peace if we had not first felt fear and anguish?

How could we value love if we had not first experienced selfishness and limitations?

You don't know what you've got until you lose it.

Chapter 3. Looking for our hidden treasure

Every single human being has a valuable treasure and great values inside them. Yet all too often these values have never been used.

Every human being is a huge treasure, but few persons ever realize this. To do so, first we need to appreciate what we have, because everything is valuable.

Any human beings who have not recognized their own values live their lives regretting the past, bored with the present and afraid of the future, and all of this makes them feel resentful and guilty. Yet people who have already recognized their values have found their treasure, appreciate their past experiences because of the lovely, valuable lessons they have learnt from each situation; they are grateful for every situation and everyone, especially the most difficult ones, because they have helped them to further their understanding, train even better and become invulnerable and unflappable.

Our present ideas about the past can be changed from start to finish —the events themselves cannot, but then again, they are not important at all—. We have to change our thoughts about our past until we understand that it is very valuable. As soon as we have grasped this, we can seize the opportunity of the present as the only time we can truly create the future, which will be the result of what each of us do here and now: if we use our values and inner treasure, the future will be excellent. Finally, we must totally trust the outcome of the future, because we know what values we are bringing into play right now in the present.

All too often we look back on *the past* with resentment towards people who harmed us, or feeling that life has been unfair, or we blame ourselves for the harm we believe we did. When we believe that somebody caused us pain, or else that we harmed them, we limit our own life significantly because we are full of bitterness, frustration and guilt, and that stops us being happy and successful.

In *the present* we are too attached; we get attached to people and to things because we believe that we need them, and underlying this is a deep-rooted process of unconscious selfishness. Yet all we need to be happy is none other than what we already have inside us, and if we cannot achieve happiness with that, nothing and nobody will make us happy. People are wonderful for sharing our values with; but if instead we share our fears, attachments or selfishness, our relationships become dependent, and resentment and conflict start emerging if other people fail to satisfy our ego as we expected them to. These very frequent situations never help us to succeed in life, and we need to learn to relate to others differently.

Last of all, when we think about the *future*, we feel panic that we might lose what we have. All too often, after making a huge effort to achieve certain goals, we realize that we are not enjoying our achievement because we are afraid of losing it. So we focus on defending what we have, and if we lose it, it makes us suffer; we fail to realize that anything that limits our happiness is not a value we ought to defend. There is a purpose to everything that we have: we should enjoy it and it should help us to have a great life. Human life is too short to spend it suffering and embittered about what we cannot change. *Happiness lies inside us*, so nobody else can make us happy, nor can certain situations that we pursue, nor too can our belongings or money.

3.1 Limitation-cleaning sequence

Whenever we have an external problem —even if really it is an internal limitation—, not knowing how to solve it triggers a limiting experience of resentment, bitterness, frustration, revenge and anger inside us. The outcome, consistent with our thoughts, will be highly unsatisfactory and very unpleasant, and when that outcome starts repeating itself, we feel saturated.

That saturated feeling prompts us to start looking for different tools, and we *recognize we need to change on the inside*, and change our way of seeing life. This leads to an even more important point: *forgiving others and forgiving ourselves*. If we can forgive other people for the mistakes they made, we also need to be able to forgive ourselves for our own mistakes.

The next tool to bring into play is *profound acceptance* that everyone does the best that they can, even if it is wrong, and that, thanks to that, we all learn to find our inner strength. As the saying goes: "I asked God for strength and He made me weak; I asked God for intelligence and He gave me brawn; I asked God for peace and He gave me war." Precisely so that I could discover and learn what I was asking for.

Once the step of acceptance and forgiveness has been taken, the next internal experience is *acknowledging a value*. We acknowledge that our experience was very valuable, and in return get another external result, namely harmony, that lets us gain confidence in our ability to be happy.

The limitation-cleansing and mind-reprogramming exercise described above brings light to our mind, cleansing it of bitterness, guilt and resentment and any need to attack others as a way of solving our personal, lack-of-peace problems.

If we were to tackle one trauma or limitation at a time, we would never finish. That is why the idea is to clean up and remove lots of limitations in one go.

The way to do it is to stop blaming others for our mistakes and reactions, and understand that no one has ever done anything to us, except for ourselves.

3.2 The inner treasure

The greatest treasure that exists is the one you can never spend or use up, because whenever we use it, it grows more. That treasure can only grow when it is useful for others, and when they benefit from it. Where can we find that treasure and how can we use it? It is inside us, and is made up of our strength, our understanding, our qualities and values.

Our inner treasure lies in our *ability to understand and serve*, which lets us recognize the best in everyone, enjoy lovely relationships, appreciate the value of life and seize the opportunity to learn every day to express love through service.

Very few people have found the path towards their real inner treasure; the rest do not know that there is nothing outside, that they cannot enjoy the Universe's wealth unless they acknowledge their own value and strength, and that, in their futile efforts, they only manage to block it.

Abundance, happiness, peace and success in life are the result of using our values, and there is nobody who does not have any.

We have to find them and then learn to put them to work; and that entails looking within ourselves, inside the understanding that resides in our mind. Understanding is the mental clarity that allows us to see love in everything we observe, however difficult a situation may be; it allows us to stop holding grudges or feeling resentment or hatred for or against anyone or anything; and appreciating everything we have and everything that happens. If we do, we can unconditionally serve anyone and anyhow, and always show the best of ourselves in any circumstance. This is how to use the treasure. The result is a lovely and abundant inner and outer life, so it is the greatest treasure ever to exist and one that can never be used up. There is nothing more abundant than the Universe, but we cannot enjoy that abundance unless we uncover our inner treasure.

Human conflicts do not occur because of a lack of values, which all of us have, but because we have been trained to express them, and if we do not express them, they serve no purpose.

3.2.1 Exercise: the treasure map. The best of yourself

To find the treasure, we have to draw a map of ourselves, to guide us and know where to go, and avoid the places where we do not want to go. The map shows several different routes to the same place and guides us to our treasure.

First, take a piece of paper and draw a large shadow-shaped silhouette. It should be large enough to let you write inside and outside the silhouette. Write down your name and, if you want to, any nickname that you like being called by.

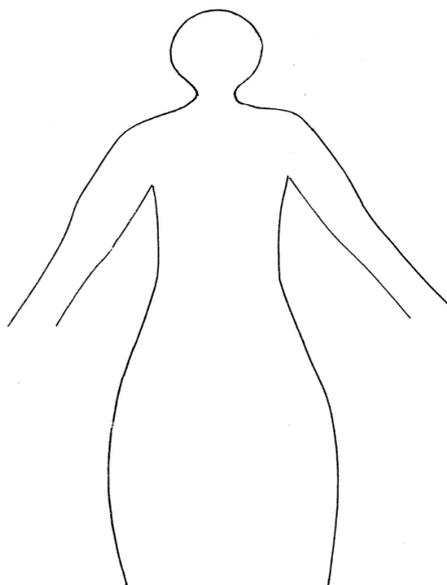


Figure 1

Everything inside the figure is your *inner world*, where you write down everything that happens in it in response to the questions listed below. Outside, write down all the events that take place around you; this is your *external world*.

There are two different worlds that always coexist: what happens outside us and what we feel and think inside. Does what happens outside determine what happens inside, or vice versa? It might not be very clear to us to start with, but our wisdom tells us that whatever happens outside originates inside us, although most people seem to think that it's the other way round.

If we think external situations limit our life or determine what goes on inside us, then whenever we are not satisfied, we tend to lay blame, go on the attack, try to change everything on the outside and, if we fail to do so, get really angry, hateful and resentful, pent on revenge. That's how we ruin our life. The truth is that not being sure how these two worlds interact can seriously hinder us from getting what we want.

As said earlier, wisdom tells us that our inner world generates everything that happens around us, though we do not know how, and that inner world is governed by Laws. If what happens outside is unsatisfactory and not what we expect to receive from the world, we need to ask ourselves: "What part of my inner world am I using?" If the result is negative, then we are bringing into play the worst of ourselves. If we want to decide what part of our inner world we want to turn on and put to work, first we need to know ourselves; if not, we will not know how to select the positive part that all of us have, so what we get will not be what we expect. This is the problem we hope to solve with the personal map.

Start the exercise by writing around the figure the answers to the following questions about **the external world**:

- ✓ *What I can't stand other people doing is when ... they ignore me, yell at me, order me around, tell me not to do things, etc.*
- ✓ *What I like most is when people ... indulge me, bring me a present, talk to me in such and such a way, spend quality time with me, do me a service or help me, hug me, etc.*
- ✓ *Life was unfair to me ... when I got into trouble for something I didn't do, when I didn't get something I thought I deserved, when they fired me without telling me why, when I didn't have any money for something that I thought was important, etc.*
- ✓ *My life is (or has been) very satisfactory ... when my first child was born, when I got a diploma, when I fell in love for the first time, when I got something I really wanted, etc.*
- ✓ *What do I do to get the things I need? It could be work, study, beg or ask for a loan, do business, etc.*
- ✓ *What do I do with the people I love most? How do I treat them, how I communicate with them, etc.*
- ✓ *What do they do to make me love them? What do I see in them, what do I like about them, etc.*
- ✓ *What do I do with people I don't like? I ignore them, hope things go wrong for them, insult them, talk rubbish about them, keep silent ...*
- ✓ *Why don't I like them?*

Now you've finished the external part of the map, and you've drawn a mirror to find out more about yourself, because everything on your outside points to what is on your inside; and you can't know yourself properly until you're clear about the outside world.

The next tool you need to describe your **inner world** are your feelings and the more you analyze them, the better you'll know yourself on the inside.

Look inside your heart and write down what you feel:

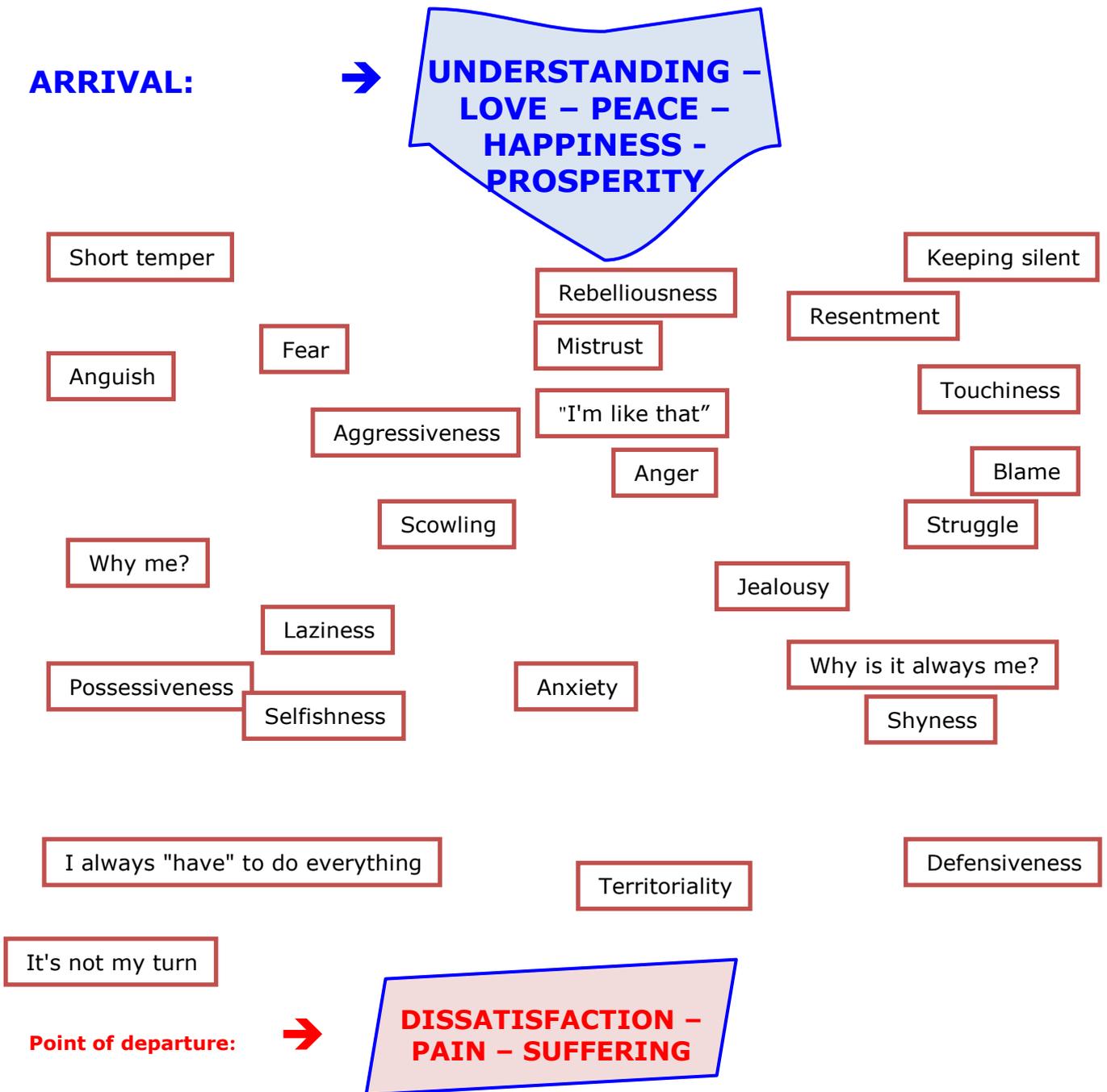
- ✓ *What do I feel when others are unkind to me?* Anger, bitterness, hatred, resentment, vindictiveness, resignation, sadness, disappointment, frustration, etc.
- ✓ *What do I feel when others are kind to me?* Joy, satisfaction, peace, pleasure, a desire to share, etc.
- ✓ *What do I feel about life's injustices?* Suffering, incomprehension, etc.
- ✓ *What do I feel about the most satisfactory things that life offers or has offered me?* Gratefulness, joy, satisfaction, etc.
- ✓ *What do I feel about the people who I love most?* Joy, enthusiasm, a zest for life, support, etc.
- ✓ *What do I feel about people I don't like?*
- ✓ *What do I think about them?*

Now write down inside your personal map which qualities, virtues or values prompt you to feel happy, excited, satisfied, willing to serve, share with and support others. These are the qualities that we need to use and reinforce, because it is what we will take with us when we leave our physical body.

For instance, in response to these questions, you might write down: I'm friendly, enthusiastic, flexible, tidy, respectful, helpful, grateful, cheerful, loving, cooperative, reliable, thoughtful, enterprising, pleasant, understanding, committed, intelligent, organized, peaceful, prudent ...

*If we don't get the results we expected,
then we aren't using our inner treasure properly.*

THE TREASURE MAP



The game of life is like sailing through a sea of obstacles and not bumping into any of them, without getting shipwrecked in the sea of misery and limitations.

Figure 2. The treasure map

Look at this map and cross out any limitation that you are sure you don't have. Any that you don't cross out are the obstacles you need to work on to reach your inner treasure.

If we fail to bring our treasure into play, it will melt within us, making it impossible to find and hindering us from expressing our values, leading us to hardship. Contrary to popular belief, this is not the same as what the hard up — people who lack the most basic necessities— suffer, but what we carry inside us, just like wealth. People who hide their treasure forget how to reach it and become miserable and wretched. If, on the other hand, they use their inner treasure every day, they will always feel satisfaction in their life. Broadly speaking, people who live wretched lives do not know how or want to serve, do not know how to love and inside are full of resentment and hatred, as they want to take revenge for what they believe to be unfair.

It is best not to hide our treasure. So why we do? Because culturally we are given the following order: "Stop walking around with that stupid smile on your face. What are you laughing about? Act serious." Yet acting serious means hiding one's values. Culture also tells us that we cannot be loving or affectionate, because if you act cute and sweet, you must be a fake. On top of that, other people will take you for a ride if you let them. So culture keeps pushing us to further our limitations, and if we follow its orders, we will end up hiding our treasure to prevent anyone from stealing it, harming us or misinterpreting us. In doing so, we get more serious, embittered and frustrated, our energy drops and we descend into hardship. People who do not lead a great life on the outside, do so because they have hidden their treasures. People who display their treasures will be successful.

A successful person is someone who knows how to be happy with what they have, because they always have everything they need to be happy.

Our inner treasure does not flow unless we do something to get it and so benefit from it. Our treasure can only flow if we break with the limiting approaches that culture conveyed to us and that were sown in our personality as if they were self-imposed limitations, i.e., as something that we keep inside ourselves without knowing it. Some of these limitations have to do with communication, as is discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Sharing our wealth

Once we have found the best of ourselves, that hidden treasure, the next step is to appreciate it and learn to share it. Discovering our internal values and sharing them —like giving and receiving an inexpensive but valuable gift, such as smile or hug allows — enables us to lead a more satisfying life. If we find our values and put them to work, the rest will not be necessary because we will get it as an extra.

*Sharing is balanced giving and receiving.
And only the best of us can relate to the best of others.*

No kind of organization can be set up without sharing, and such situations give rise to individualism and poverty. It is people who do not know how to give or receive, or refuse to do so, who trigger the social and economic imbalance of any organization, while people who do know how to share prompt cooperation, unity, growth and mutual satisfaction.

Anyone who only gives will never have what it takes to serve.

Anyone who only receives will never receive enough to live on.

Anyone who refuses to give will always be poor because they cannot serve.

Anyone who refuses to receive will always be poor because they cannot appreciate.

Anyone who gives without receiving generates people incapable of appreciating.

A person who receives without giving generates people incapable of serving.

If we receive the same as what we give, we give the best of ourselves.

4.1 Training in harmonious communication

*Communicating is always giving the best of ourselves,
and lovingly receiving what others offer us.*

Sharing our wealth with other people's wealth involves learning to express it in a very pleasant way, which in turn calls for careful communication.

Harmonious communication consists in four types of behavior: supporting, accepting, taking responsibility and appreciating oneself.

Table 1. Communication to support others

| Usual (self-limitations) | Harmonious (readiness to help) |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| It's not my turn | I'd be glad to help you |
| Why me? | They take me into account |
| It's always me | They trust my work |
| They only say that to me | Thanks for teaching me |
| I don't know | We'll find out |
| It's his/her problem | Let me help |
| Reluctantly | Count on me if I can help you |
| I can't right now | Give me a moment and I'll help you |
| Get someone else to do it | I can do it |
| And what can I do? | I'll find a solution |
| I'm busy | Hang on a minute |

Table 2. Communication to accept others

| Usual (aggressive) | Harmonious (understanding) |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| You're wrong | What you're saying seems interesting |
| Don't be stupid | I understand you |
| That's not so | I get your point of view |
| I don't like ... | I'd like to reach an agreement |
| Don't do that | What do you think ... |
| I can't stand it when ... | I love it when you ... |
| I don't want you ... | I know it matters to you |
| Why are you doing that? | I know you're doing what you can |
| You would think that | We could think about something else |
| Do you think I'm stupid? | In my experience, I think that ... |
| I warned you | This shows us something new |

Table 3. Communication for taking responsibility

| Usual (I blame others) | Harmonious (I don't blame anybody) |
|---------------------------------|---|
| They make me make mistakes | I make mistakes with what others do |
| They make me furious | I get furious when ... |
| You make me suffer | I suffer with what you do |
| You annoy me | I annoy myself with what you say |
| They infuriate me | I get infuriated |
| They make me angry | I get angry with ... |
| You offend me | I take offence with ... |
| If someone says that to you ... | If someone says that to me ... |
| It happens to everyone | It's happened to me |
| They're all tired | I'm tired |
| It's very boring | It bores me |
| It's dangerous | It frightens me |

Table 4. Communication for appreciating oneself (self-esteem)

| Usual (I don't deserve) | Harmonious (I am worthy) |
|---|--|
| I'm not going to believe anybody ever again | Others believe in me |
| I'm not going to fall in love again | Others acknowledge my values |
| You can't rely on anybody | I am completely trustworthy |
| Think the worst and you won't be far wrong | Others are just as I treat them |
| That only happens to me | I learnt something important |
| Forever alone | I'm fair and know how to cooperate |
| Better alone than to keep bad company | I can always help others |
| Everything is very difficult | There's always something new to learn |
| This vale of tears | I make the most of the experience of living |
| Nobody loves me | I express the love and values that lie within me |
| Everyone has hidden intentions | My relationships are very satisfying |
| Everything in life is a titanic struggle | I enjoy every result that I get |

Communication is a skill; knowing how to talk is one thing, and knowing how to communicate is another. We communicate with other people with our eyes, with a smile, our attitudes and our tone of voice; words only account for 20% of all communication.

Sympathetic and harmonious communication is not necessarily sincere, because sincerity, as explained earlier, is not a value.

4.2 How to share our wealth

*We can only recognize wealth in others
when they show it;
and we can only appreciate our own wealth
when we make others feel satisfied.*

Managing our inner wealth is just like running a business: anything not on display doesn't get sold, and if you don't sell anything, you don't earn anything. The more we show and share our wealth, the better others can recognize, appreciate and benefit from it, letting us earn more every day.

What do we have to do to always receive the best? Always give the best of ourselves. You can only reap the crop that you've sown; so we should always give the best of ourselves, whatever the circumstances, without worrying about what others are like or what they do —because that's not our problem—. If we do, we will always reap the best.

When we share something and start feeling happy, it is because we are sharing values. When we do, our energy rises, our relationships flow better and everything starts working.

Affection is very important in our lives and one of the ways to share values. Remember that our inner treasure's values need to be shared through the senses, and that sight, touch, speech and hearing are fundamental tools for transmitting and receiving values. Yet everything starts at a single point outside the senses, thought: how we think determines how we begin to behave and connect with our treasure or, on the contrary, with our limitations. It is essential to learn to have loving thoughts all the time, because that is what will transform our lives and allow us to connect with our interior.

If our relationships with other people ever fail to fully satisfy us, it is because we are not giving the best of ourselves; because like we said before, the worst of each of us links up with the worst of others. The same is true of our treasure: we have to use our values all the time if we want to build a bridge between them and

other people's values, as well as life itself. When we express resentment, hate, frustration, bitterness, vindictiveness and any other kind of aggressive behavior, our own limitations interconnect with other people's, and our life becomes hell.

If we stash away and hide our treasure, afraid that it might run out or be stolen, it won't do us any good either. Sometimes we hide it so well that not even we can enjoy it and we become enslaved by something that brings us no benefit. Why do we do that? Basically due to ignorance and selfishness in the physical plane.

*We only occupy our rightful place and
life always gives us what we have earned with our manifest attitude.*

What each of us finds in our lives is what we allow to be manifested from our interior; we can never escape what we need to experience in order to learn to recognize the love within us, and allow it to manifest itself in each and every experience we go through.

We have nothing to fear, because life puts everyone in their rightful place and circumstances, depending on the qualities and skills that they show, so that they can do a job and fulfill a mission there.

All that we owe life is to always decide what qualities we are going to use, how we are going to behave, and confidently accept whatever life has for us. Whatever we decide to do will be what awaits us in the future.

Throughout our life experiences, our mind builds up a stock of lies and truths, because from the moment that we are conceived to the moment when we return our "physical dress" to Earth, a never-ending stream of things reached our mind. Some are useful and some not, some are rubbish and others are values, but when they are all mixed up, we do not even know what we have.

If we behave from our values right now, the result will always be satisfactory, at any time. Yet if we act from our limitations, the result will always bring conflicts, problems and dissatisfactions, at any moment in time. So there is no need for us to worry about the future, but simply take care to act from our values in the present.

*The world that each of us lives in is
the result of applying our best values and qualities.*

The world that each of us lives in stems from our decisions which, in turn, stem from our thoughts, which may be founded on understanding, i.e., values, or on ignorance.

Decisions become actions that affect our relationships with others and trigger certain situations that are a reflection of our interior in the outside world: our inside creates our outside, and that goes for each and every one of us. Decisions generate behaviors and relationships with the world and people, and those relationships will be satisfactory and successful if they are based on values and understanding; but not if they sprang from ignorance and the ego, because in that case the result will be negative. The purpose of everything is to learn how to decide and think, and to do that, we need to have a good basis of understanding.

Like we said before, to narrate an event is not always to tell the truth. Telling the truth is knowing how to convey something that lets us or others enjoy an experience, understand better, or that results in self-improvements. Telling the truth is communicating our understanding of the event, not the event *per se*, so that we or others better comprehend the event in question, which is always neutral, neither good or bad.

The world that each of us sees is the one that lies inside us, because it mirrors our internal values. So if we want another world, we do not need to change it; what we do have to change is what lies inside us, by looking for our values.

*The world that we find outside
mirrors our inside.*

Chapter 5. The keys to excellence

*Being an excellent person means
having achieved mastery through love.*

Sometimes we find ourselves in places and situations shrouded in a certain magic that attracts us, delights us and makes us feel very good, even though we find it hard to define what is happening. This is the result of the **excellence** that, albeit not evident, can be felt, noted and perceived in a series of subtle and indirect details that attract and communicate beyond words. Excellence is like love, because its results can be seen when we strike up relationships with other people and find a pleasant feeling that makes us want to share our life and serve others.

Excellence can be recognized when:

- ✓ We deal with certain people and feel a special attraction.
- ✓ We watch a show and the artists surprise us with their skill.
- ✓ We go somewhere that has a very pleasant atmosphere.
- ✓ We join a company that is very thoughtful towards its employees.
- ✓ We buy something that is appealing to the eye.
- ✓ We are using devices with amazing technology.
- ✓ We visit places of enchanting beauty.
- ✓ We breathe certain scents that delight us with their fragrance.
- ✓ We touch lovely-textured objects.
- ✓ We see certain works of art that are seductively perfect.
- ✓ We hear music that enraptures us with its harmony.
- ✓ We taste fascinatingly-flavored food.

Excellence is like love. Nobody can resist its charm.

The following characteristics can be seen in any company or organization that is a model of excellence:

- ✓ **Pleasant attitude.** This means always greeting people with a smile and speaking politely in a pleasant tone.

A smile takes nothing, yet can be very valuable.

- ✓ **Harmonious communication.** This means talking calmly, looking into people's eyes, keeping your body relaxed and using appropriate language.

A loving look conveys far more than dozens of words.

- ✓ **Appreciating other people.** This means acknowledging that the person before you is very important, has plenty of qualities and virtues, and that you can learn a lot from them; and if that person is a customer, then it is who lets you benefit from the work you do.

If we appreciate people, we'll always have someone to help us.

- ✓ **Pleasant appearance.** This means always dressing to suit your job and always make a great impression.

We should dress like flowers, which always arouse admiration.

- ✓ **Ever thoughtful.** Always being thoughtful, both in your personal and professional life, is one of the keys to success. Examples: offering someone a chair; holding open a door; being thoughtful; having paper, a biro and calculator on hand; offering your arm; etc. It all goes to make people feel well attended.

Thoughtfulness breeds friendship and friends make an organization.

- ✓ **Prompt attention.** This means that, as soon as someone comes in, there is someone there to inform, guide and help them with anything they need.

Helping someone on time is better than serving them inappropriately.

- ✓ **Efficient service.** This meets meeting a user's or customer's needs in the shortest possible time frame.

Other people's time is a treasure that we must not waste.

- ✓ **Specific solutions.** They let users feel supported and grateful when they are offered specific choices or solutions to their needs.

It is better to give choices than to create expectations.

- ✓ **Accurate advice.** It makes people feel that they matter to the company, because they always find the information they need about the available products or services.

There is nothing more valuable than good information.

- ✓ **Cozy atmosphere.** In any organization, a cozy and comfortable atmosphere gives a feeling of spaciousness that makes people want to share and generates confidence.

Products or services, like beauty, catch the eye.

- ✓ **Cleanliness and order.** Cleanliness, order and impeccable organization give the impression of efficiency, service, prosperity and abundance. All of that gives people a wonderful, pleasant feeling of being there and, naturally, make them want to come back.

Showing prosperity attracts abundance.

- ✓ **Adequate lighting.** This produces a particularly appealing effect, which people interpret as "Here everyone is clear and sure about what they're doing, so it's a trustworthy organization."

Light attracts wellbeing and fosters trust.

An excellent human is someone who has done the work to get rid of their limitations and start living with their recognized values. When we do things in an excellent way, it prompts a sort of magic and the people we deal with think: "How wonderful, I feel so great here, how extraordinary, I love sharing with these people, visiting them, etc."

Excellence per se, as a principle of love, breeds success because it offers no resistance. People feel absolutely great and sometimes don't even know why. Whenever we get to a place where excellence abounds, we notice it as soon as we come in. The attitude of the people who welcome us in, the atmosphere, order and tidiness ... Everything is there to make us feel at home. It's the difference between going into a garden brimming with flowers or somewhere dark and disorderly.

Excellence is something we need to create in our lives and empower in other people. The following story illustrates this:

"A man hired a gardener to tidy up his garden and make it look lovely again, telling him that it was overgrown and untidy because he hadn't lived in the house for ages. He left the gardener working in the garden, and when he came back a few days later to see how things were going, he found that the garden still looked awful, but realized that there were a couple of very beautiful flowers. So he called the gardener and said: 'I hired you to help me tidy up this garden and I'd like to congratulate you, because I've come across some lovely flowers. What did you do to make them so beautiful?' The gardener was rather surprised, because he hadn't done much work on the garden, and had expected to get told off. The garden's owner added: 'I'd love it if next time the whole garden is like those two flowers, because they have shown me how valuable you are and I'm sure we can put your talent to good use. '" He went off and when he came back a fortnight later, the garden was overflowing with flowers."

This example shows someone recognizing someone else's internal value, and in doing reinforce it, helping that person to become excellent from their own values.

Developing excellence entails using all the aforementioned tools: harmonious communication, mind reprogramming techniques, the quest for our values and the process of self-development in all senses.

We should never tell people what they are doing wrong, only what they are doing right. There's not a single person who can be said not to do anything right, so we can always help others to foster one of their qualities. We should follow the garden owner's example and acknowledge people's qualities and say that we are sure they can multiply them. Doing so is an excellent way of communicating.

We should stop worrying about what other people are like, and instead concern ourselves with how we are with them and what we offer them. We don't have to worry about what they give us, but about what we give to them; in doing so, we make them better at compensating us. Customers who feel they have been served really well somewhere are sure to come back, even if it seems more expensive than other places, because there they find what they can't get anywhere else. That is excellence.

Don't settle for giving just a little. Give everything and you'll get plenty in return. People who cultivate an excellent quality or magic inside themselves, who think and say the best and give everything they can, always receive and enjoy the best. So there is no reason not to always express and receive as much as one can. Magic is excellent and excellence produces magic.

There is no use worrying, so we should get on with doing what has to be done, peacefully and calmly.

These are the **keys to excellence**:

- ✓ *Always express your best values*, no matter what is happening, to achieve a new reality of excellence.
- ✓ *Never speak ill of anybody* for any reason whatsoever, and instead always say the best about everyone, about everywhere and about the whole Universe.
- ✓ *Value everything that you have*. When someone complains, it is because they do not value what they have, which is the same as thinking that they do not need it, so in the end life takes it away. To have excellent things, you have to value everything that you have: family, friends, a body, a job, a home and our planet Earth, which is remarkable because it affords the best opportunities to recognize and learn to express the deep values of love and transform yourself.
- ✓ *Give up, once and for all, criticizing, judging or condemning anybody for any reason*. Whatever that person does, says or is up to, because it is not up to you to solve that problem. Everyone has their own evolutionary experience and has to work on it inside themselves, not on other people's. Last but not least, when we acknowledge someone's values, we are not being hypocritical, because other people's values are always present, and just have to be unearthed and brought to light.

All we have to do, all the time, is to cast our seeds of love, without worrying if some of them fall by the wayside and the soil is dry, or on barren land, or where there is no moisture, because some are sure to fall on humid, fertile soil. Yet we cannot know where that soil is, so if we were to choose the land where we sow our seeds, we would never do it, because people are not used to expressing their values.

Excellent human beings only express themselves from their values.

Excellence is something that requires constant practice and training to express. A task that calls for our full spirit, enthusiasm and energy, so that we can transform ourselves by reinforcing what is already excellent within us in because it is of Divine Creation. The task of reinforcing it is ours indeed, because God/the Absolute placed the seed of love within us; but cultivating it, looking after it and making it grow is a human task, and one that we must put into practice wherever there are difficulties, problems or conflicts.

The only way to improve when working on our inner values is by being surrounded by people who have not yet become Masters, because it will be them who shout at us, attack us and highlight our mistakes and shortcomings, who do not accept us and deceive us. It is the gym in which to develop love, in which to learn to become invulnerable, to love anyone who attacks us and find values in difficulties. That is what makes us Masters.

Everyone selects and processes the information that reaches them in line with their state of mind. If we want to boost our *personal appeal*, our charisma and our chances of success in life, we need to be filled with thoughts of love and happiness —turning misinformation into truthful information—, and if we do, our attitude will change magically. That is why we need to reprogram our mind, move it up to a high frequency and thus improve its structure.

Personal appeal is gained by giving the best of ourselves, without any condition or restriction: we will feel happy wherever life puts us. People who have developed their personal appeal have the following internal values: reliability, a commitment to everything that they do and inner peace.

Conclusions

- ✓ *Self-esteem = Self-worth ≠ Selfishness*
- ✓ *Thinking about yourself is not selfishness, but wisdom.* Selfishness is not accepting others as they are, and wanting to change them.
- ✓ *Low self-esteem is a belief* and we can replace it with a truth through mind reprogramming.
- ✓ If we constantly strive to *go beyond our limitations*, we will find our great inner treasure, which will allow us to achieve satisfaction and success in everything we do in life, and improve our relationships by making the best use of our own values.
- ✓ Sharing is balanced giving and receiving. We get back whatever we give, *so we should always give the best of what we've got.*
- ✓ *If we act from our virtues*, problems disappear.
- ✓ *Understanding* is the case where all values and qualities are kept.
- ✓ If we see life as a learning opportunity, our behavior and results will be positive.
- ✓ Appreciating everything that we have leads to wealth and happiness.
- ✓ If we always use what is best in us, our life will become a wonderful and satisfactory experience.

We don't need to believe anything, but just practice and verify in life if this information works and gives satisfactory results.

With this information we have *three alternatives for action*:

- ✓ We can keep it in our library.
- ✓ We can carry it with us and show it to everyone.

- ✓ We can integrate the information within us, so that it becomes how we act. Only in this last case will we obtain satisfactory results.

Training exercises

Mind reprogramming exercise

- ✓ Repeat the recommended sentences and the seven tools of love.

Harmonious communication exercise

- ✓ Make a list with all the harmonious communication sentences. Keep the list with you and use it whenever you need it to replace the aggressive communication that you normally use. When you have learned the list off by heart, you won't have to carry it around with you, because you'll have learned to communicate harmoniously.

Exercises to enjoy an excellent life

- ✓ Express your values and qualities. If it helps you, make a list of your virtues so that you don't forget them and you can reinforce them.
- ✓ Acknowledge and express other people's values, even if they themselves have not done so. Many people are unaware of their values, which makes it hard for them to express them, but if you do it with their values, they will learn to recognize them.

If you always do the same thing with the same attitude, you will always obtain the same results. Change the information, change the attitude and you will change the results.