TOPICS · TOPIC 10

Learning to Value Yourself

Examines self-worth as a condition for spiritual development and access to abundance. Links success and harmonious communication to the use of inner values.

- Mind and Self-Esteem

Context. What is the purpose of the human experience?

Before moving on to the next topic, it is helpful to place ourselves within a context that offers a new way of looking at life, a new paradigm, one that allows us to be happier and to understand human beings. You don't have to agree with everything that follows, or believe any of it, because we are not talking about beliefs. All you need to do is verify in your own life the results of applying this information, to see whether they hold true for you.

If these inner results are happiness, peace, and harmony, then we will know that this information is true. If our external experiences in relationships, health, resources, and adaptation to our environment improve, then we will confirm that this information is wisdom.

The purpose of the human experience is to evolve, to develop our consciousness so that we may be filled with wisdom and love. All human beings, without exception, have come into the world to work on our spiritual development, sharing and participating in experiences with other human beings. Life is a remarkable educational process of the Universe; planet Earth is a “spiritual school,” and every experience we live through can be compared to an academic year.

Spiritual development is inner work, absolutely individual and personal. No one can do it for another person, but neither can it be done “without others.” In other words, we need interaction and experience with other people in order to build our own development, to get to know ourselves. Sometimes, instead of taking charge of our own development, we

try to interfere with that of others; in those cases, instead of learning from others, we want to change them. All this accomplishes is to distort the educational process, or to try to distort it, and in doing so we complicate our own lives.

Only by understanding this can we effectively ask ourselves, “What does life want to teach us in each situation?”, since every situation is a lesson. Ultimately, it is about learning to transmute ignorance into wisdom.

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

In order to lay the foundation for a new civilization that brings a greater level of satisfaction to all people, we must begin by bringing harmony to ourselves. To do so, it is essential to study the universal laws and apply the principles that lead to wisdom. We must bear in mind that we will truly reach wisdom only through constant practice and by discarding the theories and concepts that prove to be wrong. In this way, it will be possible to develop peace and harmony right where we are, through the lessons of daily life, since life is the best school and nature the best teacher.

All it takes to achieve efficiency is to stop resisting the perfect order of the Universe; mental inefficiency is necessary to discover, through saturation, that the Laws of the Universe exist. Once we have suffered enough, we are ready to understand the Laws. For the external struggle to cease, the internal one must cease first, and for that we must have accepted that everything that exists and everything that happens is perfect and necessary, because it has a purpose of love.

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

There are seven Laws of the Universe that govern all of its processes of creation, administration, and evolution. Of these seven, four are fundamental, since they control the development and evolution of the consciousness of the human species anywhere in the Universe. These four Laws form the lower triangle, while the Law of Evolution is the upper one, governing the lower triangle, also called 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 that is within the Law works and flows on its own.

Everything that brings suffering, anguish, pain, or illness does so because we are going against the Laws, and through that we come to recognize them. The results we experience when we step outside the Laws allow us to recognize their existence. It is

necessary to make mistakes in order 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 to change others.

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

LAW	POSTULATES	EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW
NATURE	1. Everything complementary attracts one another. 2. Every living being requires the specific food for its species. 3. Every natural manifestation requires the right conditions. 4. Every living being has, by instinct, a sense of the Law. 5. All of nature's cycles have specific functions. 6. Every violation of the Law produces serious consequences. 7. Every living being has its function.	Physical ailments: malnutrition, disease, addictions, degeneration, misery, hunger, physical and mental defects, physical malformations, ecological imbalance, erosion, pests, shortened lifespan…

LAW	POSTULATES	EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW
HARMONY	1. Everything that is emitted acts, reacts, and returns. 2. Whatever is attacked defends itself. 3. Whatever is pleasing is accepted. 4. Only love can transform beasts into people. 5. Only understanding prevents destruction. 6. We must manage situations, not be managed by them. 7. Example is the best teacher.	Psychological distress and relationship problems: mistrust, fear, distancing, isolation, individualism, loneliness, sadness, depression, fights, shyness, lack of communication, disunity, barriers, trauma, complexes…

LAW	POSTULATES	EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW
CORRESPONDENCE	1. Every situation is a lesson. 2. Every circumstance is generated by oneself. 3. There is no event that does not correspond to the person who experiences it. 4. We are each placed exactly where we are meant to be. 5. We come into life with everything we need to live it. 6. Only what has to happen happens. 7. We only give or have what is necessary.	Discomforts in one's individual life environment: blockages, dissatisfaction, difficulty succeeding in what one does, draining struggles against life's circumstances, inability to take charge of one's own life, fears, anxieties, constant frustrations...

LAW	POSTULATES	EFFECTS OF VIOLATING THE LAW
EVOLUTION	1. Only experience makes it possible to understand the truth. 2. Only opposites foster the development of consciousness. 3. You only move up a level through the corresponding transformation. 4. You are only the result of yourself. 5. We only face the situations we have not understood. 6. The need for understanding alone is the reason for physical existence. 7. Only through imbalance can balance be recognized.	Social unrest: rebellion, anarchy, or self-destruction, when the experiences yet to be lived are limited; wars, strikes, violence, revolutions, crime, hatred, and conflicts, when human concepts are imposed.

In the tables above, on the right-hand side we see the effects of violating the Law. In the topic on 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 with rules. The former are immutable and cannot be repealed; they originate in the wisdom of the Absolute or Divinity and are therefore absolute. They cannot be modified or negotiated, and disobeying them has a negative result, in the sense of being unpleasant, and also a positive one, in the sense of the learning it involves. That is why it is said that human beings do not actually create laws but rather establish rules; we call them *human laws*, but they are rules, because they can be repealed, are temporary, and are useful for a given moment.

We have come to planet Earth to develop the three inner virtues: Happiness, Inner Peace, and Love or Service to Others. This development brings excellent results in four areas: Relationships, Resources, Health, and Adaptation to the Environment:

Inner Peace | Love | Happiness | Adaptation | Relationships | Resources | Health

The idea is to use these virtues to relate to the external world. Learning to be happy, to have peace, and to love is the true purpose that brought us human beings into the physical world of matter.

VIRTUES	CHARACTERISTICS	SCIENCE IN WHICH IT IS STUDIED	REPRESENTS OR DEVELOPS IN
Happiness	0% suffering 100% understanding 100% self-worth	Acceptance	The function
Peace	0% conflict 0% reactivity 0% confrontation 100% respect	Taking on life with wisdom	The destiny
Love	100% capacity for service 0% resistance, 0% fear 100% adaptation 100% commitment	Unconditionality	The 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, you only have to face everything you believe takes your happiness away.
- To be happy, you don't need anything external, only understanding and a particular mindset.
- Non-acceptance is the only cause of suffering; we must stop resisting reality.

- It is essential to stop working on others and to work solely and exclusively on yourself, changing within yourself whatever bothers you (the ego) so that it stops doing so.
- If there is suffering, only one question needs to be asked: “What am I not accepting?” The answer lies there.
- Everyone, without exception, has what they need to be happy; however, very few know how to be happy with what they have. Learning to **have peace**:
- Nothing and no one provides peace.
- Inner peace is the result of one's own spiritual development, not a gift.
- Managing peace requires several elements: clear and accurate information to understand that life is a process of love and that evil does not exist; the ability to manage one's own life energy; and training.
- If you lose your peace, ask yourself: “What am I resisting? What do I want to change? Who am I blaming?” Learning to **love your neighbor as yourself**:
- To do this, all you have to do is take part in activities or spend time with people whose behavior is very different from your own, so that you learn to love and respect them just as they are.
- Love cannot be offended; it is invulnerable, immutable, universal, and neutral.
- Love implies a total understanding of the Universe; it is a way of being and does not need an “object” onto which to project itself.
- Love is not a force, but a tool.
- Love is not a feeling.
- To love is to always give the best of yourself.
- If you’re feeling unmotivated, it’s best to ask yourself why you’re allowing this specific situation to limit your ability to serve, which in reality shouldn’t depend on external events. By developing the three inner virtues, you’ll achieve excellent external results in all four areas:
- In relationships.
- In resources.
- In health.
- In adapting to our environment. Five elements are present in the life experience of every human being: purpose, destiny, mission, function, and intention.

1. The Purpose

There is a purpose of love that brought us into the material world; it is the perfect goal of learning two things:

1. Being happy on your own, that is, not depending on anything or anyone to enjoy inner peace and happiness.
2. Loving your neighbor as yourself, that is, respecting the rights of all beings in the Universe. And how is this learned? Here we can see the perfection of the Absolute's pedagogical design. To do the exercise of learning to be happy on your own, you need to live in a place, with certain people and in circumstances where everything that happens around you is more or less aggressive. In this way, we will realize that our problem is not caused by what happens around us, but by the way we relate to it, and by the rejection and resistance we set in motion. As for the second part, loving your neighbor as yourself, it means respecting others just as they are, not trying to change them, and not resisting them. You need to live in a place where the people around you think differently, have varied customs, and believe different things. In this way, we will learn to love them as they are, without judging or condemning them. This is how the purpose of love is fulfilled; it is the true reason why we human beings are on planet Earth. More than 2,000 years ago, the Master Jesus taught us this when he said:

"Love your enemies»"; who are not our enemies, but people who think differently.

Being happy means experiencing zero suffering in the face of whatever happens; and loving means offering zero resistance to others. Wisdom is equal to love, not to sentiment. A person who has love cares deeply about others but does not suffer; by contrast, a person who lacks wisdom but has kindness cares deeply about others but suffers enormously. Those who don't care, the callous and the indifferent, have neither wisdom nor kindness.

2. Destiny

It is what we come to learn from the material world—learning to use the seven tools of love in order to have invulnerable peace. It is a great opportunity to learn what we lack.

We all bring into the world an unavoidable destiny, one of enormous value. Our culture teaches us to try to evade destiny instead of showing us how to make the most of it. The key to making the most of destiny is: "You have the ability to enjoy anything you do, because that ability is within you.".. However, if someone tells their child: "You always have to do what you like.", it will create an enormous block in them.

Destiny is a pedagogical design whose purpose is to allow human beings to verify and discover information that governs the Universe and its perfect order. It is therefore the best opportunity to transcend all of our human limitations. Instead of complaining about the difficulties life presents, we should take advantage of them as a great opportunity to transcend them; then they will disappear forever. If we don't learn from difficulties, far from disappearing, they will become more complicated, persist, and become permanent.

3. The Mission

It consists of what we can teach in the material world. We should enjoy our mission intensely, whether or not it is part of our own function.

Mission allows us to recover a great deal of the vital energy invested in the exercise of learning to be happy. Mission is what has already been understood, what is already known; therefore, it can be used to serve others while enjoying ourselves intensely.

Both mission and destiny are represented in the personality: the latter through the belief system, and the former through understanding. As we transmute our ignorance into understanding and wisdom, we will have more and more mission and, therefore, more satisfaction. 4. The Function

It is what each person does to earn their livelihood; it consists of putting as much enthusiasm, joy, and love as possible into what you do, even if it isn't part of your mission.

We know that all living beings have a function within the order of the Universe. It takes wisdom to take it on with joy, with enthusiasm, with a full capacity for action and service. Function is not about "earning a living"; life is not "earned," because it is a divine gift. What we earn is the sustenance of this biological entity, this body.

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

5. The Intention

It is what we want for ourselves or for others. Intention should be directed in such a way that it does not interfere with the destinies of others or try to evade our own destiny.

Intention is the most complex element for human beings today, because sentiment, the idea of goodness, and the other ideas that culture mistakenly passed on to us constantly lead us to try to interfere with the destinies of others. If we accepted that destiny is something extraordinary and not "bad," that it is the best opportunity we have to fulfill

what we came to do in the world, we would stop trying to change other people's destinies.

When a child wants to become independent and the parents oppose it, how can we act so as not to interfere? We always want things to work our way. In this case, the parents feel it isn't the right time because their child doesn't have a stable job, for example, and they don't want them to leave home. Our "I wants" are the cause of suffering. The "I want" is also called 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 tell the child: "For us, the most important thing is that you are happy and that you find your own path, so we respect your decision. Know that if you want to come back, the door will always be open."

Ultimately, wisdom means having a clear sense of purpose, making the most of destiny, enjoying your mission, taking on your function, and managing the intention not to interfere with other people's destinies, and it requires that all of this be practiced in thought, word, and deed.

Chapter 1. The True Meaning of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem means self-worth: being happy with ourselves and knowing that we can be happy with others if we accept them as they are—if we don't attack them, invalidate them, or blame them. That is the way to have good relationships. If we value ourselves highly enough, we will have the capacity to value others; otherwise, we won't be able to do so.

Our culture taught us that thinking about ourselves is selfish, which is absolutely false and results in low self-esteem—that is, the inability to value ourselves and to receive—and, consequently, a lack of resources to serve others.

Thinking about ourselves is called self-worth. Selfishness, on the other hand, consists of not accepting others as they are, but wanting to change them so that we can feel good. Trying to change another person and telling them, "You're behaving badly; this is done the way I say," is selfish behavior disguised as love, based on a subjective interpretation of what is wrong, which results in a lack of acceptance of the other person. The wise thing to do would be to ask: What do I need to change in myself in order to accept that person?

If we don't tell ourselves, "I think of myself, because I am the most important thing to myself," we will have very little to offer others and we will not be able to be happy; and "I think of myself and give nothing to another that they have not earned and deserve to receive, because otherwise I am interfering with their process of evolution; I'm harming them, and I have no interest in harming others." Furthermore: "I think of myself because I can't give what I don't have; first, I need to fill myself with love, wisdom, values, and resources so that I can offer excellent service to others."

If we give in to the demands of someone who asks for what they haven't earned, we cause significant harm, because that person becomes incapable of serving others; and if you aspire to serve others, you need to know how and have the means to do so. It's pointless to think of others if we aren't first capable of doing something for ourselves. What, then, are we going to offer others? Sadness, depression, limitations, fears, anxieties, failures, problems… Is that of any use to them? Or would it be better to offer appreciation, peace, serenity, the capacity to serve, high self-esteem, and the ability to be happy with the things we have? But how can we offer that if we don't have it ourselves?

The right way to work with inner values is, first, to value ourselves highly, and then to learn to serve others.

There is an approach for improving self-esteem that yields excellent results: **mental reprogramming**.

One suggestion for mental reprogramming—especially for people who are feeling depressed—is to look in the mirror every morning and say to yourself:

> *"You are the most important person in the Universe to me.*

I am determined to make you happy (and we start smiling at ourselves in the mirror)

> *and to give you the best in thought, word, and deed. I invite you to enjoy this day so you can see the wonderful things that can come from you and what you can reap."*

Another suggestion for mental reprogramming to improve self-esteem is to repeat the following phrases:

> *"I am a perfect creation of God, and I have the ability to be happy on my own. No external situation can affect my peace and serenity. I am capable of giving my*

> *best in every circumstance. I am fully open and willing to receive the abundance of the Universe and all the wonderful things life has in store for me."*

Another form of mental reprogramming—also highly recommended—is *the seven tools of love*, which are seven new values we need to put into practice in our minds and seven renunciations of the ego. The seven tools of love are:

1. *1.* **Act with complete effectiveness and serenity** in any circumstance that arises, giving your best in the tasks that fall to you. Renounce harming anything or anyone in thought, word, and deed. Maintain absolute steadfastness and loyalty to the agreements and commitments you freely make.
2. *2.* **Adapt wholeheartedly to the place** where you are meant to carry out your duties, so that you can live a life full of satisfaction there. Renounce fleeing the place and the situations you are meant to live through. Believing that happiness lies anywhere other than within us is a false illusion.
3. *3.* **Be grateful for everything you have** and for all the difficult and painful situations, because they are opportunities that life gives us to learn and evolve in our spiritual development. Give up suffering in the face of difficulties, understanding that they have a deep purpose of love, so that we can recognize the universal laws and free ourselves from limitations, dependencies, and suffering.
4. *4.* **Take ownership of the results of your own decisions** and your own life experience. Recognize that your thoughts, feelings, and emotions are generated by you, not by what happens around you, and much less by what others think, say, do, or fail to do. Renounce blaming anything or anyone for what happens to you. There is no one to blame.

5. Respect everyone's ideas, customs,

beliefs, and behaviors, as well as their right to make their own decisions. Renounce *criticizing*, disparaging, judging, condemning, and punishing anyone for any reason, because we understand that everyone does the best they can with the best they know, and who are we to judge? We will limit ourselves to offering wisdom only to those who expressly ask for it—those who accept our subtle, respectful offer.

1. *6.* **Appreciate and intensely enjoy everything you have and do**. Recognize that you always have everything you need, and value it; that way you will develop the capacity to enjoy new things and relationships. Renounce complaining about what you have, since complaining makes you poor. Prosperity is the result of appreciation. Those who do not value what they have are on their way to losing what they need.

2. **Accept** that the Father's/Absolute's purpose is perfect and that everything that happens is neutral and necessary. We give up trying to change others and, instead, work on ourselves. We give up conflict and trying to alter the perfect order of the Universe and its necessary processes, and above all, trying to interfere with other people's life experiences.

> *Starting today, let's think only the best, say what is fitting, and do what is necessary.*

Reprogramming statements must be repeated mentally hundreds of times, because the mind already contains prior information that must be overridden with the new information. If there were no prior information, it would take hold instantly, as happens in a child's mind; but since we are not children, in order to dismantle the old information and replace it with the new, we need to repeat the formula many times. But it's not just a matter of repeating it mechanically; rather, we need to feel it, see it in our minds, and touch it—using all five senses so that the mind begins to accept it and we start acting in accordance with this new pattern: "I am happy no matter what happens outside; I have the ability to serve; I am a perfect being."

1.1 Avoiding Low Self-Esteem

Using an inadequate educational system, one based on "no" and prohibition, the adults told us the opposite when we were little: "You're good for nothing, you don't do anything right, you're worthless".. Because we believed it, we now need to change that information in order to raise our self-esteem and begin to be happy on our own.

Thinking about oneself is not selfishness, but wisdom. A selfish person is someone who wants to change others to make themselves feel good, whereas someone who values themselves thinks: "I am a supremely valuable being, and I am capable of making myself happy—nothing can stop me; I am the most important person to myself."

Low self-esteem is not believing in yourself; believing that you are incapable, that you can't do it; that everyone else does everything better than you; that you lack abilities; and that you can't be happy. Low self-esteem is a belief, and we can replace it with the truth through mental reprogramming, until our bodies, too, begin to obey what we think.

Furthermore, low self-esteem can lead to the ingestion of toxic substances, which deplete our vital energy and lead us into a state of depression. Mental cleansing, however, allows us to keep our vital energy high and to enjoy an invulnerable peace of mind. Mental limitations are deactivated as vital energy rises, and they are activated when that energy declines.

Likewise, low self-esteem can create a block in our ability to obtain financial resources. When someone doesn't feel capable, or believes they don't deserve what they receive, they're closing themselves off from receiving what life has in store for them. If we don't even consider the possibility of receiving something, we get scared and don't know what to do with what's offered to us. So we need to break through this block, and to do so, we can do the *mirror exercise*, focusing solely and exclusively on ourselves. Once we know how to make ourselves happy and achieve prosperity, that's when we'll have a tool to serve others.

Low self-esteem can also result from an authoritarian upbringing, because the person is not allowed to take ownership of or value their own abilities. This is one of the major limitations we need to change. If we had very authoritarian parents—in the sense that they sought to impose their customs and ideas above all else—they may have caused us to develop a fear of facing life, among other consequences, and experiences are necessary for us to reach understanding. The result of individuality is the ability to share without attachment, and to find the self-worth and mental flexibility that lead us to a constant process of personal, social, and technological change and growth.

Positive thoughts generate positive feelings, which boost our energy, self-worth, self-esteem, and joy, and improve our relationships. The result we achieve in life with this attitude is prosperity, satisfaction, and success, which is why we reaffirm that this is the truth of life—a truth that leads us to grow ever more in spiritual peace and satisfaction.

Expressions of affection improve our self-worth and inner security, as well as our enthusiasm and mental balance; that is why it is important to give and receive affection. Affection is not necessarily related to sexuality, and it can be expressed through kind words, thoughtful gestures, hugs, and caresses that nourish and bring balance to the person receiving them.

The best thing for self-esteem is *"yourself":*

Love yourself – Pamper yourself – Take care of yourself – Educate yourself – Forgive yourself – Cherish yourself – Treat yourself – Smile at yourself – Surpass yourself – Value yourself

1.2 Strengthening Inner Values

Before moving on to the next chapter, let's define what a value is, so we don't make the mistake of training or strengthening aspects that we thought were values but aren't.

Definition of **value**: to appreciate the result obtained from an activity; here we will use it primarily to define something that brings satisfaction. It is a quality, a gift that has been granted to us as human beings. It is something that, when used, adds love and improves

the relationship. It can only be recognized as such through interaction. Value is something that, whenever it is given, received, or shared, brings satisfaction to both the giver and the receiver.

For example, *sincerity* isn't always a value. If someone says something that is valid for them but not for the person listening, then it isn't a value. For example, telling someone that the dress they're wearing looks awful on them isn't a valuable expression—even if it's sincere—because it makes the other person feel bad. Expressing negative feelings isn't a value; we must be careful about what we say, do, and think so as not to hurt anyone.

> *An inappropriate thought only harms the person who has it, but what we say and do can cause problems for others.*

Generally speaking, social norms are not values, but merely behaviors that enable us to live together and to deal with ego-related situations that cannot be understood.

Sincerity, then, is not always a virtue or value; sometimes it is simply a limitation of the ego that consists of honestly expressing our ignorance to others and thus harming our relationships. A sincerity that leads us to tell a person what we believe are "home truths", and to present them with the whole list of problems we see in them only serves to damage the relationship; it is, therefore, behavior that stems from ignorance, because others are not to blame for what one feels. There is a very clear example of a sincere person and the results they get: "I am a sincere, honest, and direct person; I call a spade a spade, and I don't mince words, but I have no friends, I don't know why…".

A sincere person is someone who always says what they believe and allows themselves the luxury of criticizing others for what they think is wrong, thereby damaging all their relationships. In our relationships with people and with the world, we need to be very respectful, which is more valuable than what we often call "honesty" or "sincerity."

Being respectful means accepting others—their possessions, customs, ideas, beliefs, behaviors, destinies, and appearance—and, in general, everything about them; it means giving up criticizing, judging, condemning, or attacking them, or interfering with them, and, of course, taking anything that does not belong to us.

Sincerely expressing our opinion about others is in many cases a way of judging them, and we cannot judge or criticize someone for doing the best they know how to do. It is necessary, essential, and inevitable to make mistakes in order to learn, so it *makes no sense to judge others for what we consider to be their mistakes* and to tell them our conclusions. This is an ego issue, and such expressions of sincerity help us neither to have a better life nor better relationships, so it is preferable to give them up.

A value is something permanent, not temporary, because it is part of our understanding, our consciousness, and our virtues. For example, one person may have *service* as a value, and another *adaptability*: these are two different values, but both bring inner and outer satisfaction—for others and for the person themselves.

Inner values are virtues and qualities that arise from understanding, and they are part of love and truth. Truth sets us free from all fear, limitation, anguish, illness, and conflict; therefore, anything that does not set us and others free is not the truth. We often confuse an event with the truth: recounting something as it happens is not always telling the truth—it is merely a narrative; telling the truth is something deeper.

Inner values are spiritual virtues that allow us to experience peace, harmony, imperturbability, mental clarity, joy, enthusiasm, and all kinds of fulfilling inner states. Expressing them makes others feel good.

An **external value**, on the other hand, is a positive property of an object, based on the service it provides us. It should never be confused with cost or price. Furthermore, values never involve suffering. For example, keeping a memory of an ancestor is a sentimental attachment (although it is also possible to remember those who are no longer with us without pain), not a value; and, unlike a value, it can cause us pain if we lose it, for example. Values are never associated with suffering but rather with satisfaction, joy, and growth, whereas attachment is a limitation of the ego. It is easy to confuse values with limitations, but the value of a work of art is not its price, but rather the satisfaction we derive from enjoying it.

External values are important because of the service they provide and the satisfaction they bring, and internal values are the virtues that allow us to improve our lives and relationships and succeed in everything. A person who uses values inevitably succeeds in life and never fails. This is nothing new; Master Jesus taught it more than two thousand years ago when he said, “Seek the kingdom of God within yourselves, and all else will be given to you as well.” The problem is that we do not know how to seek the kingdom of God within ourselves; it refers to the inner treasure, to our values. It is the kingdom of love. How do we know that we are not expressing our values? Because our lives are not excellent.

A “treasure” is a value because it is connected to satisfaction, well-being, and everything that can bring a better condition, both within the individual and in their external relationships. Without exception, we all have tremendous gifts and values within us; we just have to learn how to use them.

Competing means facing off against others, comparing yourself to them, and feeling bad when you don't come in first. It is not a value, but a limitation—first instinctive and, second, mental.

Our proposal is to give up competing altogether and replace it with a different attitude: *being competent*. There is a big difference between a competitive person and a competent person. A competent person does the best they can without worrying about others' results, while a competitive person fights against others and, if necessary, cheats to win.

A competent person never worries about what others do or don't do, or whether they are better off or worse off, because their intention is not to enter a competition; they simply give their best and achieve their own results.

There is an example that illustrates the difference very well. It is that of an African runner who won many gold medals at the Olympic Games and who, as was observed, was not the first out of the blocks when the starting gun went off, but practically the last. Moreover, he did so calmly, without expending adrenaline or energy on the start, and yet he finished first. When asked why he behaved this way, he said that he wasn't competing—he was simply running—and he knew that to cover a certain distance in a specific time, he needed to maintain a precise pace and a constant speed. He knew that at that pace he would achieve the world record, and he didn't waste energy either by competing or by sprinting out first. Throughout the race, the others fell behind because they couldn't keep up with his pace. He said he never competed against others and didn't care whether there were eighty runners or none at all; he felt no stress or anxiety and didn't expend any adrenaline—he simply did what he had to do, and he won.

Let's be competent in everything we do, without worrying about whether someone else does it better or worse, because that's an external situation, and we should only concern ourselves with doing our best, because that always leads to success.

> *Being competent is a value, but being competitive is a futile effort, a source of stress, and a limitation.*

False beliefs lead us to think we are developing values when, in reality, they are limitations. For example, if we focus on "I want" instead of "I need," we'll encounter opposition and a sense of dissatisfaction, and we'll blame fate, circumstances, or ourselves, because we believe that opportunities aren't equal for everyone. This will lead to frustration and low self-esteem; we'll be reinforcing our mental limitations by believing that injustice exists, when the only things that exist are the Law of Correspondence and the Law of Generation.

To view life from the ego is to view it from "I want": "I want others to change; I want things to happen the way I think they should; I want everything I don't need; I want everything I don't have."

To view life from wisdom is to see it from what "I need" in reality: "I have everything I need." We shouldn't resist life, but rather let go and flow with it. To do this, we need to give up "I want," seeking, and asking, and simply *ask life* and then *act*: that way, we'll obtain everything we need.

False beliefs lead us into conflict and generate negative, self-destructive feelings—such as bitterness, resentment, a desire for revenge, hatred, low self-esteem, insecurity, or a sense of incapacity—which, when they manifest physically, destroy all processes of internal and external balance.

> *Low self-esteem prevents us from enjoying everything that exists, because we don't believe we deserve what life gives us.*

Chapter 2. Discovering the Best in Yourself

Who are we really? Human beings, in their threefold constitution (body, mind, consciousness), express themselves primarily through their personality—that is, in the mental realm. However, the behaviors we express through our personality can have different origins within the human constitution itself: instinctive behavior, learned behavior, and conscious behavior.

These three types of behavior are expressed through the personality with the following characteristics:

1. **Instinctive behavior** manifests itself as "*I desire*." Instinct is devoid of feelings, and its basic function is the preservation of life through desire and the emotions that stem from it. It is easily recognized because it consists of automatic codes of fear, pain, or pleasure that have nothing to do with reasoning.
2. **Learned behavior** manifests itself as "*I believe*." Personality is made up of everything we have learned and determines the different types of feelings we experience in response to life's circumstances. When we find neither satisfaction in our relationships nor success in life, it is because we are acting from our false beliefs. That is why it is necessary to verify the results of our behaviors, so that we can find the truth and act solely from the positive aspects of our personality. In the personality, instead of fear there is trauma, and instead of pain, suffering; this is not physical, but mental.
3. **Conscious behavior** manifests itself as *"I know."* Human consciousness accumulates an understanding of the results of life experience, verifies the truth, and allows love to be expressed through freedom, support, respect, and service to others.

Understanding from consciousness allows us to recognize that all human beings act from the best that each of them knows how to do, according to their level of wisdom or ignorance. Behavior determines the outcomes of success or failure that each of us obtains from life. When faced with failure, we need to change our behavior. What determines our behavior toward the world? Three archives within us:

4. The **instinct archive**, which is genetic and determines "automatic" behavior if we allow it to, because we can modify it.
5. The **personality archive**, which stores beliefs and what we have learned from our culture, environment, and experiences. If these beliefs are false, they lead to negative behavior.
6. The **consciousness archive**, which is the highest, with divine, permanent, and immortal characteristics, accumulates the *successive understandings* that the personality develops and, therefore, is filled only with *truths of love.* This is where the immense treasure within us lies. Most of us use the personality archive, and it is what causes us to experience problems, conflicts, difficulties, sadness, bitterness, and frustration in life. We need to cleanse this mental archive. The archives within us have characteristics of *duality* that we need to learn to manage: first by recognizing it, and then by renouncing the use of our mental limitations and training ourselves to strengthen our values. The duality of the mind determines different behaviors. For example, in the instinct archive, duality is recognized through the thresholds of the five senses: reality presents itself as something safe and acceptable, and we feel harmony; or as something dangerous, in which case we feel fear and the urge to flee or attack. In the personality archive, on the other hand, we recognize duality through our belief system. If we see everything as a problem, we will experience suffering, anguish, stress, resentment, or rancor within ourselves.

However, if we look at it from the perspective of understanding, which resides in the personality, we will see an opportunity to learn to be happy, to learn to love, and to break free from our limitations.

There is no problem in the archive of consciousness, because it is an archive of purity, of uncontaminated love, and it accumulates the treasures that are gradually discovered in the personality. In it, there will always be acceptance and inner peace.

Events are neutral; they are neither good nor bad. It is the personality that labels something as good or bad, out of its ignorance and mental limitations, and from that judgment we develop negative behavior that undermines all our chances of success in life. If we could analyze an event we label as bad from the standpoint of understanding, we would see it as an opportunity to learn, to love, and to be happy regardless of what happens outside, and we would maintain a behavior that would help us achieve success in life.

> *If we see life as an opportunity to learn, our behavior and our results will be positive.*

Through our conduct, we establish a connection between our inner and outer worlds. Our senses give us an internal sense of what is happening outside, and based on that, we relate to the outside world through our behavior. Our actions instantly produce a result; if that result is unsatisfactory, it is because the action was inappropriate, which means it originated in a limitation, not in a value.

> *When we act from the best that is within us, we always find satisfaction and success in life.*

«I am my values», whether or not they guide my behavior. If we don't act from the best of ourselves, we need to start making an effort to bring out our virtues and transcend the mental limitations that keep us from acting from our values.

Within every human being lies an immense potential of qualities, abilities, virtues, and values, of which most people use only a small fraction. The reason we do not make proper use of this immense potential is that people normally behave and interact based on their learned limitations, thereby largely nullifying their own values and even coming to believe that they do not have any.

The problems or difficulties we constantly face stem from the fact that we handle ordinary life situations from our learned limitations. We see many of the opportunities life offers us as difficulties and turn them into problems. So it is not surprising that few people truly achieve success in life, whether in economic and social terms, with the establishment of excellent relationships, or in the development of consciousness.

The *secret to success* lies in handling every situation life presents us with as a wonderful opportunity for growth and for developing our abilities. To do this, we must always act from the best within each of us, no matter what is happening or what situation we are called upon to manage.

The problems we have faced throughout our lives may have led us to hold on to a certain amount of resentment or guilt. These feelings become serious obstacles to the development of our best qualities, in addition to consuming alarming amounts of vital energy, greatly limiting our chances of finding satisfaction and achieving success in life. We need to learn from the mistakes we make and those that others make, accepting that there is no one to blame.

If we raise children through punishment and prohibitions, we contribute to their becoming adults who are unable to be happy and who have low self-esteem. If we interpret that a child deserves punishment, instead of thinking that he or she has made a mistake and needs to learn from it, we are acting from a false belief.

On the other hand, when faced with certain difficult situations, we sometimes ask ourselves what we can learn from them, and we don't find the answer right away, which leads us to feel resentment or guilt. To free ourselves from these negative states once and for all, we need to know that, through difficult situations, life teaches us to adopt four behaviors that bring about a profound cleansing of resentment and guilt through forgiveness:

Accept – Take Responsibility – Act – Be Grateful **Accepting** a situation means no longer trying to change it, having understood that it is the result of our own inner attitude, of the selfishness that makes us try to change others so that we can feel comfortable, without making any effort to cooperate or adapt to our surroundings.

Taking responsibility means not blaming anyone or anything for the situations we have to live through, for the decisions we make, or for the feelings or emotions we experience.

Acting effectively, serenely, and with equanimity means doing what is necessary in any situation, however difficult, so that life can continue normally, without showing any aggressive, sentimental, or emotional reaction, regardless of whether or not the situation has a solution.

Being grateful means valuing what we learned from the situation, since that allows us to develop qualities such as understanding and the inner strength needed to avoid making the same mistakes again. We are not grateful for the difficult situation itself, but for what it allows us to learn.

The first step you need to take to achieve success is *to clearly identify the best qualities you have*, and then *to devote yourself wholeheartedly* to developing them to their fullest potential.

Developing our qualities is a process that requires a voluntary effort on the part of the individual not to be carried away by the reactions that originate in their learned limitations. However, this effort will be richly rewarded by the satisfying results the person will soon see in all their relationships and, of course, in their work and financial life.

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

To strengthen our values, constant training is necessary; and if, for example, someone does something to us that we don't like, we can respond with loving behavior instead of lashing out at them. We need to draw on our values often to strengthen them, because otherwise we will continue to empower our limitations and harm our lives.

Limitations and virtues can be easily recognized. If we see the situations of any kind that we observe around us (relationships, the economy, social issues, politics, or health) as a problem, it is because we are analyzing them from our inner limitations.

On one occasion, a disciple told his Master that he had a problem and asked him to help him solve it. The Master replied that the disciple should first define what a problem is. After the disciple explained it, the Master answered: “I understand you now: what you want to tell me is that you have an opportunity you don't know how to take advantage of, but that is not a problem.”

We must accept that problems do not exist; rather, it is our own limitations that prevent us from handling certain situations. If, instead of acting from our limitations, we decide to act from our virtues, the problems disappear. Opportunity is the pure capacity to feel happy; it is a situation viewed through understanding, through truth.

If we behave in a positive way, we will derive pleasure from our instincts; personal satisfaction from the part of our mind devoted to our personality; and, as our level of understanding develops, we will experience joy, peace, and harmony. If we see life as an opportunity, it is because we are interpreting it correctly for what it is: a wonderful opportunity to be happy. If we do not see it that way, it is because we are viewing it through the lens of our own limitations.

The idea we want to convey is that we must learn to be happy on our own, without depending on others or blaming them for not making us happy. In reality, only we ourselves can make ourselves happy.

A Law of Nature tells us that whatever is constantly used and worked on is trained, strengthened, and prevails. Thus, since most people generally act from their own limitations, these limitations end up prevailing over their virtues, resulting in constant failures in their relationships and greatly limiting their chances of achieving satisfaction in their financial, family, and professional lives.

When a person consistently draws on the best within themselves, these qualities eventually prevail over their own limitations, which opens up many sources of satisfaction in their life—not only financially, but in all other areas as well. When we express the best of ourselves, life gives back, as compensation, the best it has for each of us. Knowing this, we might ask ourselves: “Who am I?” and “What is the best in me?”

No one is merely their knowledge, concepts, beliefs, or traumas, nor the limitations their behavior reveals, since all of this is part of a learned personality, and it can be changed.

> *Each person is what they have understood about life and the self-confidence they have built.*

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

We are not our limitations, flaws, or ignorance, but rather the *transcendent virtues* that become part of the immortal and merge with the permanent consciousness of love. That is why our virtues are part of our very essence, and they are what we must strengthen. All limitations are merely temporary. We'll see this more clearly through the following exercise.

2.1 Practical Exercise: Trust

We form a group of about six people who stand in a circle, and another person stands in the center of the circle, blindfolded. This person lets themselves fall, like a stiff stick, toward the sides of the circle. The others catch them and gently push them back toward the center so they don't fall to the ground or get hurt. Each person spends one minute in the center of the group, moving in all directions.

The exercise consists of observing the sensations you experience, both when you are in the center and when you are part of the circle of support around it. In the latter case, do you take responsibility for the person you are looking after?

At first, those in the center may feel fear, distrust, insecurity, anxiety, or apprehension. Initially, when we are unfamiliar with something, we experience sensations that aren't very pleasant, due to our limiting thoughts. Later, the exercise becomes enjoyable once we decide to let go as we gain confidence and security.

This is exactly what happens to us in life: if our expectations are rooted in fear, mistrust, or anxiety, and we have mental restrictions—even if they're far from real—these restrictions prevent us from surrendering and letting go, and instead keep us limited. Fear is a mental phantom.

The reality is that there were six people around each of us, and it was practically impossible for anyone to get hurt during this exercise; in the worst case, the person would fall to the ground very slowly and wouldn't suffer any harm. The only limiting factor was our own negative thoughts.

This is how to overcome trauma: first, you gradually begin to build self-confidence, discover your own values, trust others, and realize that, as you trust, others respond in kind. Let's remember that it is our own restrictions that provoke rejection in other people. Once we overcome our mental limitations, we begin to let go into life, gain confidence, feel secure in ourselves, and give the best we have—and then we feel joy and pleasure.

If, in a one-minute exercise, we managed to let go—trusting that everything would be all right—and were able to move from unpleasant feelings to a sense of pleasure within ourselves, let's think about what we can achieve if we work along these lines on our inner development to build confidence and stop seeing problems where there aren't any.

As for the moment when you are part of the circle, do you feel any sense of responsibility in supporting the person in the center? The fact that the person trusts us makes us commit to them—something we don't do if we feel they don't trust us. Furthermore, there's another, even more powerful aspect: the person in the center was blindfolded, defenseless, and seemingly vulnerable, which made us protect them more, just as we would a baby.

A person who completely gives up defending themselves, fighting, or attacking becomes worthy of being fully *protected* by the forces of the Universe and by others. On the other hand, if someone does not fully commit to relationships, work, or life, they will not achieve good results, but rather experience fear and mistrust. If we are always on the defensive, we generate aggression and block all channels of support from others, causing our lives to become chaotic.

Self-transformation involves gaining **self-confidence**, regardless of what happens on the outside. If we strengthen limitations, fears, and distrust, we increase our suffering, we have more conflicts, and, by not letting go, we cannot flow with life. Inner work consists of *letting go and letting others go into life.* In the case of parents, it is necessary to give up being "control towers," which is behavior that stems from a lack of confidence in ourselves.

In the previous exercise, there are usually overprotective people who won't let the person in the center move even a millimeter, but that means not letting the other person let go and have their own experience. If we learn to let go of ourselves and let others go, we'll be able to enjoy life, but to do that, we need to *strengthen our values*. We often don't realize how many people love 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 will grow stronger, but if we act from our limitations, it is our limitations that will grow stronger. We don't enjoy what we don't know how to do—only what we do know how to do; therefore, we must set out to learn and train ourselves so that we can enjoy it. Training consists of putting our qualities into practice—trust, communication, and the expression of the best in us—so that they grow stronger.

Virtues show up as inner and outer satisfaction, while limitations are recognized by inner suffering and outer problems or conflicts. To develop our virtues, it is not enough to recognize them; we must train in them constantly. Let's decide to do this now: let's show our qualities and express them, and in this way, we will train them.

Learning to lead—learning to be creative, to overcome fears and limitations, and to make decisions—is just as important as learning to adapt, obey, or imitate. Both are qualities; the one who follows and the one who leads both need virtues. We must break free from our limiting mental frameworks and realize that we can be people with the capacity to create a new life for ourselves. If we do not step out of the frameworks that our culture has mistakenly passed down to us for thousands of years, we will not be able to have a new life.

The first learning process that living beings, including human beings, experience is *imitation*. It is just as important to set a good example for others to imitate as it is to be able to imitate. Everyone has different qualities: some people find it harder to lead than to adapt to a situation led by someone else, while for others it's the other way around. The ideal is to do both: adapt or lead, as needed in each moment.

Understanding is like a case that holds all our qualities, virtues, and values. But we need to develop acceptance, a spirit of service, calm, serenity, and the ability to adapt, which requires a certain mental flexibility. In this, we must find inner peace, joy, enthusiasm, and the confidence to act, as well as patience and tolerance toward what others do, without judging them. Let's commit to doing this: to trying out new behaviors that bring us greater satisfaction, to expressing our values, to clearing our minds, to forgiving, and to understanding that, in reality, no one has ever done anything to us. What makes us suffer is our own reactions to what others do.

The difficulties life presents are like the darkness that contrasts with light so that we can appreciate the sun. When we begin to **recognize our own values**, we are at the threshold of the light and have the chance to leave suffering behind.

What we call difficulties or problems are generally situations we don't know how to handle or what to do about. In reality, these situations show us exactly what we need to learn from life in order to be happy, because as long as there are situations in our lives

that we don't understand, happiness will remain out of reach. For that reason, difficulties are true *opportunities for learning*; as we learn from them, our qualities and abilities grow and strengthen, bringing us ever closer to happiness.

> *Let's welcome life's challenges, because through them we can learn what happiness means.*

How could we recognize light if we didn't know darkness?

How could we value joy if we didn't know suffering? How could we appreciate peace if we hadn't first felt fear and anguish?

How could we value love if we hadn't experienced selfishness and limitations?

> *No one knows what they have until they lose it.*

Chapter 3. Searching for Our Hidden Treasure

There is no human being without a valuable inner treasure and great values. Yet in many cases, these remain untapped.

Every human being is a gigantic treasure, but few people realize it. To do so, the first thing we need to do is value what we have, because all of it has value.

If a human being has not recognized themselves in the values they possess, they live regretting the past, bored with the present, and fearful of the future, which leads them to feel resentment and guilt. However, someone who has already recognized their values, who has found their treasure, appreciates past experience for the beautiful and valuable things they were able to learn from each one. They are grateful for every situation and every person, especially the most difficult ones, for the immense value they had in developing their understanding, training, and ability to be invulnerable and imperturbable.

The mental conception we have in the present about the past is entirely changeable. The events that occurred are not, but they have no importance. We need to change our mental conception of our past until we understand that it is something valuable. From that understanding, we can seize the opportunity of the present as the only moment in which we can truly create the future, since the future will be the result of what each of us does here and now: if we use our values and our inner treasure, the future will be

excellent. Finally, we must trust completely in the outcome of the future, because we know which values we are putting into practice in the present.

All too often we look at *the past* with resentment for the harm done to us, or for the injustice of life, or we blame ourselves for the harm we believe we caused. When we think that someone caused us pain, or that we hurt someone else, we greatly limit our lives by filling ourselves with resentment, frustration, and guilt, which keeps us from being happy and successful.

In *the present* we are full of attachments; we become attached to people and things because we believe we need them, and underlying this is a deep process of unconscious selfishness. However, to be happy we need absolutely nothing different from what we already have within us, and if we cannot find happiness with that, nothing and no one will be able to make us happy. People are wonderful for sharing the values we hold, but when we share fears, attachments, or selfishness instead, our relationships become dependent, and resentment and conflict begin if others fail to satisfy our ego as we expected them to. These all-too-common situations do not help us find success in life; we need to learn a different way of relating to one another.

Finally, as for the *future*, we live in panic about losing what we have. Often, after achieving some goals through effort, we realize that we don't enjoy what we've achieved because we fear losing it. Then we devote ourselves to defending our possessions, and if we lose them we suffer; we don't realize that something that limits our happiness is not a value worth defending. Everything we have at our disposal has a purpose: for us to enjoy it and for it to help us have an excellent life. A human being's life is too short to spend it suffering and embittered over what we can't change. *Happiness is found within us*, so no one else can make us happy, nor can certain situations we pursue, nor possessions or money.

3.1 Sequence for Clearing Limitations

When someone believes they have an external problem, even if it is actually an inner limitation, not knowing how to resolve it creates within them a limiting experience of resentment, hatred, frustration, revenge, and anger. Consequently, in line with what they think, they will get a very unsatisfying and unpleasant result, and when this result starts to repeat itself, the person has had enough.

Having reached that point, the person begins to look for different tools and *recognizes the need for an inner change*, a change in the way they see life. Then they move on to a more important point: *forgiving others and forgiving themselves*. If someone is capable of forgiving another person for the mistakes that person made, they also need to have the same capacity to forgive themselves for their own mistakes.

The next tool that comes into play is the *deep acceptance* that everyone does the best they know how, even if they make mistakes, 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 for intelligence, and He made me a fool; I asked 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 inner experience is *recognizing a value*. The person recognizes that their experience was very valuable, and achieves another external outcome, one of harmony, which will allow them to gain confidence in their ability to be happy.

The exercise of clearing limitations and reprogramming the mind described above allows light to enter our minds and lets bitterness, guilt, and resentment leave, as well as the need to lash out at others to resolve our personal problems stemming from a lack of peace.

If we were to address each trauma, or each limitation, one by one, there would be so many that we would never finish. That is why we propose clearing a large number of limitations all at once. The way to do this is to stop blaming others for our mistakes and reactions, and to understand that no one has ever done anything to us, except ourselves.

3.2 The Inner Treasure

The greatest treasure there is is one that can never be spent, because every time we use it, it grows even more. That treasure can only grow when it is useful to others, when they can benefit from it. Where can that treasure be found, and how is it used? It lies within us and is made up of our strength, our understanding, our qualities, and our values.

The inner treasure we possess lies in our *ability to understand and serve*, which allows us to recognize the best in people, build excellent relationships, appreciate the value of life, and take advantage of the opportunity to learn every day how to express love through service.

Few people have found the path to their true inner treasure; the rest do not realize that there is nothing outside, that it is impossible to connect with the richness of the Universe without recognizing their own worth and strength, and that, in their futile efforts, they only succeed in blocking it.

Abundance, happiness, peace, and success in life are the result of using our values, and there is no one who does not have them.

We must find them and then learn to put them to work; to do so, we must look within ourselves, to the understanding that resides in our minds. Understanding is the mental

clarity that allows us to see love in everything we observe, no matter how difficult a situation may be; that allows us to harbor no grudge, resentment, or hatred toward anything or anyone; and to appreciate everything we have and everything that happens. In this way, we can serve unconditionally, regardless of whom or how, and always express the best of ourselves in any circumstance. This is how to use the treasure. The result is an excellent and abundant inner and outer life; that is why it is the greatest treasure that exists and can never be spent. There is nothing more abundant than the Universe, but we have no access to that abundance unless we discover our inner treasure.

Human conflicts do not arise from a lack of values—which we all have—but from a lack of training in how to express them; and if we do not express them, they are of no use.

3.2.1 Exercise: The Treasure Map. The Best of Yourself

To find the treasure, we're going to draw a map of ourselves—to get our bearings, know where we're going, and avoid the places we don't want to go. The map shows several different routes to the same destination and guides us to our treasure.

First, draw a large outline on a sheet of paper—as if it were your own shadow—leaving plenty of space so you can write both inside and outside the outline later. Write your name on the sheet and, if applicable, an affectionate nickname you like to be called.

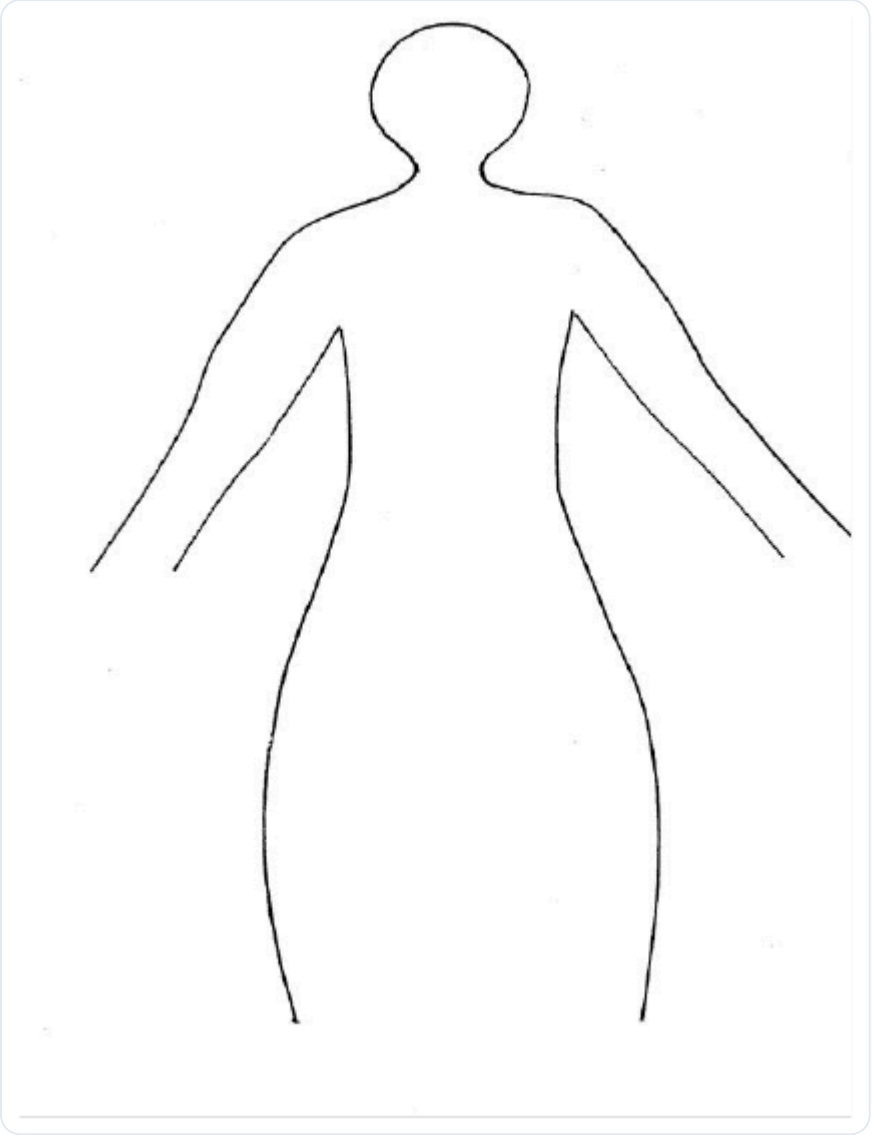

Figure 1

We will call what is inside the figure *the internal world*, and we will note down everything that happens there in response to the questions we pose below. Outside the figure, we will note down the events or occurrences that take place around us; this is what we will call *the external world*.

There are two different worlds that constantly coexist: what happens outside of us and what we feel and think inside. Does what happens outside determine what happens inside, or is it the other way around? We may not be entirely clear on this at first, but wisdom teaches us that what happens outside originates within the individual, even though at first glance it seems the other way around to most people.

If we believe that external circumstances limit our lives or determine what happens inside us, when we feel dissatisfied, we act in the following way: we blame others, we lash out, we try to change everything around us, and if we fail, we become filled with bitterness and resentment, hatred, and a desire for revenge. That's how we ruin our lives.

The fact is, not being clear about how these two worlds interact can have serious consequences for the outcomes we achieve.

As we have said, from wisdom we know that the internal world gives rise to everything that happens around us, even if we do not know how, and that internal world is governed by Laws. If what happens on the outside isn't satisfying—if it's not what we expect to receive from the world—we need to ask ourselves just one question: "What am I using from my internal world?" If the result is negative, it means we're putting the worst of ourselves into practice. In order to decide which part of our inner self we want to activate and put to work, we first need to know ourselves; otherwise, we won't know how to select the positive part that we all possess, and our outcome won't be what we hope to achieve. This is the problem we hope to solve with the personal map.

Let's begin the exercise. Please write around the figure the answers to the following questions related to **the external world**:

- *What I can't stand others doing to me is…* ignoring me, yelling at me, imposing on me, forbidding me to do things, etc.
- *What I like most for others to do for me is…* pampering me, bringing me a gift, speaking to me in a certain way, spending quality time with me, doing me a favor or helping me out, caressing me, etc.
- *Life has been unfair to me …* when I was scolded for something I didn't do, when I was denied something I thought I was entitled to, when I was fired from my job without knowing why, when I didn't have enough money for something I thought was important, etc.
- *Life is (or has been) very fulfilling for me* … when my first child was born, when I earned a degree, when I fell in love for the first time, when I achieved something I'd been striving for, etc.
- *What do I do to get the things I need?* It could be working, studying, asking for handouts or loans, doing business, etc.
- *What do I do with the people I love most?* How I treat them, how I communicate with them, and so on.
- *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, I wish them harm, I insult them, I speak ill of them, I keep quiet…
- *Why don't I like them?* For now, we've finished with the external part of the map. What we've done is create a mirror to help us know ourselves, because what's on the outside shows what's inside, and until we've clearly defined the external world, we

won't be able to know ourselves. To describe our **internal world**, we'll use feelings as a tool. By analyzing them, we can learn a little more about our inner selves. Look into your heart and write down what you feel:

- *How do I feel when others treat me badly?* Anger, bitterness, hatred, resentment, a desire for revenge, resignation, sadness, disappointment, frustration, etc.
- *How do I feel when others treat me well?* Joy, satisfaction, peace, pleasure, a desire to share, etc.
- *How do I feel about life's injustices?* Suffering, a sense of being misunderstood, etc.
- *How do I feel about the most rewarding things that life offers me or has offered me*? Gratitude, joy, satisfaction, etc.
- *How do I feel about the people I love most*? Joy, enthusiasm, a zest for life, support, etc.
- *How do I feel about people I don't like?*
- *What do I think of them?* Now let's write down inside the figure of the personal map the qualities, virtues, or values that lead us to feel joy, enthusiasm, satisfaction, and a desire to support, share, and serve. These are the qualities we need to use and strengthen, because they are what we will take with us when we leave our physical body. For example, based on the answers to our questions, we'll write down: I am kind, enthusiastic, flexible, orderly, respectful, helpful, grateful, cheerful, affectionate, cooperative, trustworthy, attentive to detail, enterprising, pleasant, understanding, committed, intelligent, organized, peaceful, prudent… *If we do not achieve the expected results, it is because we are not making proper use of our inner treasure.*

Figure 2. The Treasure Map

Look at this map and cross out any limitation that you definitely do not have. The ones we don't cross out are the obstacles we need to work on in order to reach our inner treasure.

If we get out of practice in expressing the treasure, it will be buried deep within us; we will not be able to find it, and we will be unable to express our values—which leads us to wretchedness. This is not, as is commonly believed, what is suffered by those living in destitution—those who lack the basics or necessities—but rather what we carry within us, just like wealth. If someone completely hides their treasure, they forget the path to it and become miserable. On the contrary, if they use their inner treasure daily, they will always find fulfillment in their lives. In general, people who live in wretchedness neither know how nor want to serve; they do not know how to love, and they harbor resentment, hatred, and a desire for revenge over what they believe to be unjust.

It's better not to hide our treasure. So why do we do it? Because our culture hands us the following command: "Stop walking around with that silly smile; I don't know what you're laughing at. Be serious." Yet being serious means hiding our values. Culture also tells us that we can't be tender or affectionate because anything too sugary is fake, and besides, others will take advantage of you if you let them. In this way, culture keeps pushing us to develop our limitations, so if we follow its commands, we end up hiding our treasure so that it won't be stolen from us and so that we won't be attacked or misunderstood. That's how we act serious, become bitter and frustrated, see our energy drop, and fall into misery. If a human being's life isn't excellent on the outside, it's because their treasures are hidden. The person who shows their treasures will succeed.

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

The inner treasure does not flow unless we do something to obtain it and thus benefit from it. For the treasure to flow, we must break the limiting patterns that our culture passed on to us and that became embedded in our personality as self-imposed limitations—that is, as something we hold within ourselves without knowing it. Some of these limitations have to do with communication, as we'll see in the next chapter.

Chapter 4. Sharing Our Wealth

Once we have found the best in ourselves—that hidden treasure—the exercise we need is to value it and learn to share it. Discovering our inner values and sharing them—like giving and receiving a gift that is not costly but valuable, such as a smile or a hug—allows us to have a much more fulfilling life. If we find our values and put them to work, there's no need to look for anything else, because the rest will follow on its own.

> *Sharing is giving and receiving in a balanced way. And only the best in us can connect with the best in others.*

Without sharing, it is impossible to develop any kind of organization, and this situation is the origin of individualism and poverty. People who don't know how to give or receive, or who refuse to do so, are the source of social and economic imbalance in any organization. On the other hand, those who know how to share generate cooperation, unity, growth, and mutual satisfaction.

Those who only give will never have what they need in order to serve.

Those who only receive will never receive enough to live on.

Those who refuse to give will always be poor because they don't know how to serve.

Those who refuse to receive will always be poor because they don't know how to value.
Those who give without receiving create people who are incapable of valuing.

Those who receive without giving create people who are incapable of serving.

> *If we receive what we give, let's give the best of ourselves.*

4.1 Training Ourselves in Harmonious Communication

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

Sharing our wealth with the wealth of others requires learning to express it in a very pleasant way, and for this we must take care with our communication.

Harmonious communication has four guidelines: supporting, accepting, taking responsibility, and valuing ourselves.

Table 1. Communication to Support Others

Usual (self-limitations)	Harmonious (willingness to serve)
It's not my job	I'd be happy to help you
Why me?	They consider me
Always me	They trust my work
They only ever tell me	Thank you for teaching me
I don't know	We'll find out
That's their problem	Let me help
In a bad mood	If I can help you, count on me
I can't right now	I'll help you now
Let someone else do it	I can do it
What can I do about it?	I'll look for a solution
I'm busy	Give me a moment

Figure 1 (continued)

Usual (aggressive)	Harmonic (understanding)
You're wrong	I find what you're saying interesting
Don't be a jerk	I understand you
That's not true	I understand your point of view
I don't like…	I would like us to reach an agreement
Don't do that	How would you feel if…
I can't stand it when…	I love it when you…
I don't want you to…	I know it's important to you
Why are you doing that?	I understand that you're doing your best
Only you would come up with that	We could think of something different
You think I'm an idiot	From my experience, I think that…
I warned you.	This allows us to learn something new

Table 2. Communication to Accept Others

Table 3. Communication to Take Responsibility

Usual (I blame others)	Harmonic (I don't blame anyone)
They make me mess up	I make mistakes regarding what others do
They make me furious	I get furious when…
You make me suffer	I suffer over what you do
You annoy me	I get annoyed by what you say
They exasperate me	I get exasperated
They make me angry	I get angry at…
You offend me	I feel offended by…
If someone says that to you…	If someone says that to me…
It happens to anyone	It's happened to me
Everyone is tired	I'm tired
It's really boring	I find it boring
It's dangerous	It scares me

Table 2. Communication to Accept Others (continued)

Usual (I don't deserve it)	Harmonic (I'm worth it)
I'll never believe in anyone again	Others believe in me
I'll never fall in love again	Others recognize my values
You can't trust anyone	I am worthy of complete trust
Think the worst and you'll be right	Others are as I treat them
That only happens to me	I learned something important
No company for me, not even a pillow	I am fair and I know how to cooperate
It's better to be alone than in bad company	I can always help others
Everything is so hard	There's always something new to learn
This is a valley of tears	I make the most of the experience of living
Nobody loves me	I express the love and worth within me
Everyone has a hidden agenda	I find fulfillment in my relationships
Life is one titanic struggle after another	I enjoy every result I achieve

Table 4. Communication for Self-Valuing (Self-Esteem)

Communication is a technique; knowing how to speak is one thing, and knowing how to communicate is another. We establish communication through our gaze, a smile, our attitudes, and our tone of voice; the verbal aspect accounts for only 20% of all communication.

Harmonious, understanding communication is not a matter of sincerity, since sincerity, as we have already said, is not a value.

4.2 How to Share Our Wealth

> *We can only recognize the wealth in others when they show it;*

> *and we can only value our own wealth when we bring satisfaction to others.*

Managing our inner wealth is just like running a business: if it isn't shown, it doesn't sell, and if it doesn't sell, nothing is earned. The more we show and share our wealth, the better others will be able to recognize it, value it, and benefit from it, and so we will gain more every day.

What must we do to always receive the best? Always give the best we have. You can't reap a different harvest from the one you sowed; therefore, let's always give the best of ourselves in every circumstance, without worrying about what others are like or what they do—because that problem isn't ours—and that way we will always reap the best.

When we share something and begin to feel joy, it's because we're sharing values. Then our energy rises, our relationships flow better, and everything starts to work.

Affection is extremely important in our lives and is one of the ways of sharing values. Let's remember that the values of our inner treasure need to be shared through the senses. Sight, touch, speech, and hearing are fundamental tools for transmitting and receiving values. But everything begins at a single point beyond the senses: thought. The way we think is the way we will begin to behave, and we will connect either with our treasure or, on the contrary, with our limitations. It is essential to learn to think loving thoughts constantly, because that is what will transform our lives and allow us to connect with our inner world.

When we don't find complete satisfaction in our relationships with others, it is because we are not giving the best of ourselves; for, as has been said, the worst in each of us connects with the worst in others. The same is true of the treasure: we need to use our values continually to build a bridge between them and those of others, as well as with life itself. When we express resentment, hatred, frustration, bitterness, desires for revenge, and every kind of aggression, we connect our own limitations with those of others, and our life becomes a living hell.

On the other hand, if we keep and hide our treasure out of fear that it will run out or be stolen from us, it won't do us any good either. Sometimes we hide it so well that we ourselves are unable to enjoy it, and we become slaves to something that brings us no benefit. Why do we do that? Fundamentally out of ignorance and, in the case of physical things, out of selfishness.

> *We only occupy the place that corresponds to us, and*

life always gives us what corresponds to the attitude we express. Each of us finds in our life exactly what we allow to manifest from within; we can never run away from what we need to live through in order to learn to recognize the love within us, and thus allow it to manifest in all the experiences we go through.

There is nothing to fear, because life places each person in the corresponding place and circumstances, according to the qualities and abilities they demonstrate, so that they can do their work and fulfill their mission there.

Our only duty to life is to decide at every moment which qualities we will use and how we will behave, and to accept with confidence what life has in store for us. What awaits us in the future will depend on what we decide to do.

Throughout our life experiences, we accumulate both falsehoods and truths in our minds, because from the very moment of our conception until the moment we return this "physical garment" to the earth, we are always receiving things for our mind—some useful and some not, some of them garbage and others values—but when everything is mixed together, we don't even know what we have.

If in the present we act from our values, the result will always be satisfying, at any moment. But if we act from our limitations, the result will always bring conflicts, problems, and dissatisfaction, at any time. Therefore, we don't need to worry about the future; we simply need to focus on acting from our values in the present.

> *The world that corresponds to us is the result of applying our best values and qualities.*

The world that corresponds to us originates in our decisions, and these, in turn, arise from our thoughts, which may be grounded in understanding (that is, in values) or in ignorance.

Decisions become actions that affect our relationships with others and give rise to certain situations that reflect our inner world in the outer world: the first creates the second for each of us. Decisions shape our behavior and our relationships with the world and with other people, and those relationships will bring satisfaction and success if they originate in values and understanding, but not if they originate in ignorance and ego, because the outcome will then be negative. The purpose of it all is for us to learn to make decisions and to think, and for that we need a solid foundation of understanding.

As mentioned earlier, recounting an event does not always mean telling the truth. Telling the truth means knowing how to communicate something that allows others to live an experience or deepen their understanding, or that contributes to a process of personal improvement. It means communicating the understanding of the event, not the event itself, in a way that makes a better understanding of the event in question possible, since the event itself is always neutral, neither good nor bad.

The world each of us sees is the one we carry within us, because it is a projection of our inner values. Therefore, if we want a different world, we don't need to change it; rather, let's change what is inside us and look for our values.

> *The world we encounter outside is a projection of who we are on the inside.*

Chapter 5. The Keys to Excellence

> *To be an excellent person means to have achieved mastery through love.*

Sometimes we come across places and circumstances that have a certain magic that draws us in, enchants us, and makes us feel wonderful, even if we can't easily say what is happening. This is the result of **excellence**, which, though not obvious, can be felt, noticed, and perceived through a series of subtle, indirect details that attract and communicate beyond words. Excellence is like love, whose result is confirmed when, in forming relationships, people find a pleasant feeling that invites them to share life and serve others.

We can recognize excellence in the following situations:

- We spend time with certain people and feel a special attraction to them.
- We watch a show, and the performers amaze us with their skill.
- We go to a place that we like because of its atmosphere.
- We walk into a company that pampers us with its thoughtful touches.
- We buy certain things that we like because of how they look.
- We use devices that amaze us with their technology.
- We visit places that captivate us with their beauty.
- We breathe in certain scents that delight us with their fragrance.
- We touch objects that we love because of their texture.
- We see certain works that enthrall us with their perfection.
- We listen to music that enchants us with its harmony.
- We taste foods that fascinate us with their flavor. *Excellence is like love. No one can resist its charms.* A company or organization that is a model of excellence has the following characteristics:

- **Friendly attitude**. This means always greeting people with a smile and speaking to them courteously in a pleasant tone. *A smile costs nothing and is worth a lot.*
- **Harmonious communication**. This happens when we speak calmly, look the other person in the eye, keep a relaxed and open body posture, and use appropriate language.

> *A loving face communicates more than many words.*

- **Valuing others**. This is achieved by recognizing that the person in front of you is someone very important, with many qualities and virtues, from whom you can learn a great deal. When it is a client, moreover, that person is the one who makes the work being done beneficial. *Let's value people, and we will always have someone to help us.*
- **Pleasant appearance**. This is achieved by always being well groomed, as the job requires, so as to always make a great impression.

> *Let's dress like flowers, which always inspire admiration.*

- **Constant attention to detail**. Timely and constant thoughtfulness, both personal and in service, lays the foundation for success. Examples: offering a chair, holding the door, making a small gesture of kindness, having paper, a pen, and a calculator on hand, offering an arm, and so on. All of this creates the feeling of being very well taken care of.

> *It's the little things that make a friendship, and friends that make an organization.*

- **Timely attention**. This means that as soon as a person walks in, there is someone ready to inform them, guide them, and help them with whatever they need. *Help at the right time is worth more than untimely service.*
- **Efficient service**. This is achieved by meeting the needs of the user or client in the shortest time possible.

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

- **Concrete solutions**. These make users feel supported and grateful when they are offered concrete solutions or options for their needs. *It's better to give options than to create expectations.*

- **Precise advice**. This makes people feel that they are important to the company, since they can always find the information they need about the products or services available. *Nothing is more valuable than good information.*
- **Comfortable atmosphere**. In any organization, a comfortable atmosphere creates a sense of spaciousness that invites sharing and builds trust. *Products and services, like beauty, enter through the eyes.*
- **Cleanliness and order**. Cleanliness, order, and impeccable organization give an impression of efficiency, service, prosperity, and abundance, all of which create a wonderful sense of being pleased to be in that place and, naturally, make you want to come back. *Showing prosperity attracts abundance.*
- **Proper lighting**. It produces a particularly appealing effect, which is interpreted as: "There is clarity and confidence in what is done here; this is a trustworthy organization." *Light attracts well-being and fosters trust.* An excellent human being is someone who has done the work of getting rid of limitations and begins to live with their values recognized.

When we do things in an excellent way, a kind of magic is created, and the people we deal with think: "How wonderful, how good I feel in this place, how extraordinary, I love spending time with these people, visiting them, and so on."

Excellence in itself, as a principle of love, generates success because it offers no kind of resistance. People feel wonderfully good and sometimes don't even know exactly why. When we arrive at a place where there is excellence, we notice it from the moment we walk in. The attitude of the people who welcome us, the atmosphere, the order, the neatness… Everything is arranged to make us feel great. It is the difference between stepping into a garden full of flowers and entering a cluttered, dark place.

Excellence is something we need to create in our lives and foster in others. We can see an example of the latter in the following story:

"A man hired a gardener and told him that the garden at his house was very neglected because he hadn't lived there for a long time, and that he would like him to fix it up and leave it in excellent condition. The man left the gardener to work, and when he returned a few days later to see how things were going, he found that the garden was still a mess, but he noticed that there were two or three very beautiful little flowers. So he called the gardener over and said, 'I hired you to help me get this garden in order, and I want to congratulate you, because I've discovered some gorgeous flowers; please tell me how you managed to make them so beautiful.' The gardener was a little surprised because he had done very little work and was expecting a scolding. The garden's owner added, 'It would be wonderful if, next time, the whole garden looked like those two flowers,

because in them I recognize your great value, and I'm sure we can multiply it.' He left, and when he returned two weeks later, the garden was completely overflowing with flowers."

The previous example shows how someone recognizes an inner value in another person and, in doing so, strengthens it, helping that person become excellent from their own values.

To develop excellence, we need to use all the tools mentioned earlier: harmonious communication, mental reprogramming techniques, the search for our values, and the process of personal development in every sense.

We should never tell someone what they do wrong, only what they do well. There isn't a single person of whom we can't say they do something well, so we can always help others strengthen some quality. Let's do as the garden's owner did: we can recognize someone's qualities and tell them we're sure they can multiply them; that way, we'll be excellent in our communication.

We shouldn't worry about what others are like, but rather about how we are with them and what we offer them. We don't have to worry about what they give us, but rather about what we contribute to them; that way, we'll strengthen their ability to reciprocate. A customer who feels very well taken care of at a place—even if it seems more expensive than others—will surely return, because they find there what they can't find anywhere else. That is excellence.

We shouldn't settle for giving just a little; instead, we should give ourselves completely so that, in the same way, we receive a great deal. People who develop an excellent quality or a kind of magic within themselves—who think and express the best and give everything they can—always receive and enjoy the best. That's why there's no reason not to always express and receive the very most. Magic is excellent, and excellence produces magic.

Worrying is useless; we should focus on doing what needs to be done with serenity.

These are the **keys to excellence**:

- *Always express our best values*, no matter what is happening, to create a new reality of excellence.
- *Never speak ill of anyone* for any reason, but always express the best of everyone, of every place, and of the entire Universe.
- *Appreciate everything you have*. When someone complains, it's because they don't appreciate what they have—which is the same as thinking they don't need it—so life ends up taking it away from them. To have excellent things, you need to appreciate

everything you have: a family, friends, a body, a job, a home, and our planet Earth—which is extraordinary because it offers the best opportunities to recognize and learn to express the profound values of love and to transform ourselves.

- *Completely and definitively give up criticizing, judging, or condemning anyone for any reason*. It doesn't matter what a person does, says, or devotes themselves to, because that is not a problem for us to solve. Everyone has their own corresponding evolutionary experience and must work on it within themselves, not within others. Furthermore, when we recognize the values someone has, we are not being hypocritical, because other people's values are always present—we just have to unearth them and bring them to the surface. We simply have to cast our seeds of love at all times, without worrying whether some fall by the wayside, where the soil is dry, or on barren ground, or where there's no moisture—because surely some will fall on fertile, moist soil. But since we can't know where that soil is, if we started choosing the soil in which to sow the seed, we would never do it—and the fact is, people aren't very used to expressing values.

An excellent human being is one who expresses themselves only from their values. Excellence requires practice and constant training in its expression. For this work, we need to bring all our spirit, enthusiasm, and energy, and so transform ourselves by strengthening what is already excellent within us because it is of Divine Creation. The work of strengthening it is indeed ours, for God/the Absolute planted the seed of love within us; but cultivating it, caring for it, and making it grow is human work, and we have to put it into practice where there are difficulties, problems, or conflicts.

The only way to perfect ourselves by working within is to be surrounded by people who have not reached the level of Mastery, because they are the ones who will yell at us, attack us, and point out our mistakes and flaws—the ones who will not accept us and who will deceive us. That is the gym for the development of love, where we learn to become invulnerable, to love those who attack us, and to find values in difficulties. That is what gives us Mastery.

Every person selects and processes the information they receive according to their mental state. If we aspire to improve our *personal appeal*, our charisma, and our chances of success in life, we need to fill ourselves with thoughts of love and happiness—transmuting false information into true information—and in this way our attitude will be magically transformed. That is why reprogramming is necessary to bring the mind to a higher frequency and thereby improve its structure.

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

Conclusions

- *Self-esteem = Self-worth* ≠ Selfishness
- *Thinking of oneself is not selfishness, but wisdom.* Selfishness consists of not accepting others as they are, of wanting to change them.
- *Low self-esteem is a belief,* and we can replace it with the truth through mental reprogramming.
- If we constantly seek *to overcome our limitations* we will find our great inner treasure, which will allow us to achieve satisfaction and success in everything we undertake in life, as well as to improve our relationships through excellent use of our own values.
- Sharing is giving and receiving in balance. Since we receive what we give, *let's give the best that is within us*.
- If *we act from our virtues*, problems disappear.
- *Understanding* is the case in which all values and qualities are kept.
- If we see life as an opportunity to learn, our behavior and results will be positive.
- Appreciating everything you have leads to abundance and happiness.
- Let's constantly use the best that is within us, and our lives will become a wonderful experience of fulfillment. There's no need to believe anything—just practice and see in your own life whether this information works and yields satisfying results. With this information, we have *three courses of action*:
- Store it in our library.
- Carry it with us and teach it to everyone.
- Make the information a part of ourselves, so that it becomes the way we act. Only in this last case will we achieve satisfactory results.

Training Exercises

Mental Reprogramming Exercise

- Repeat the recommended phrases and the seven tools of love.

Harmonious Communication Exercise

- Make a list of all the phrases for harmonious communication. Carry the list with you and use it throughout the day whenever you need it to replace the aggressive communication you normally use. Once you've "internalized" it, you won't need to carry it anymore, because you'll have learned to communicate harmoniously.

Exercises for an Excellent Life

- Express your values and qualities. If it helps, make a list of your virtues so you don't forget them and can strengthen them.
- Recognize and express other people's values, even if they haven't done so themselves. Many people are unaware of the values they have, which makes it difficult for them to express them, but if you do it for them, they will learn to recognize them.

If *you always do the same thing with the same attitude, you'll always get the same results. Change the information, change your attitude, and your results will change.*