

***THE WISDOM OF LEADERSHIP***

Workshop Presentation: Dr Phil Harker

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*"Everyone has two choices. We're either full of love ... or full of fear"* [Albert Einstein]

*"Where love reigns, there is no will to power: and where the will to power is paramount, love is lacking."* [Carl Gustav Jung]

Just as, 'a building is only as sound as its foundation', so any attempt at gaining 'wisdom' in relation to the *Leadership of Jesus* would only be as good as the foundation such an understanding had in relation to the nature of 'what it really means to be human'. The following paper, adapted from a chapter titled '*Choosing Between Love & Fear*' in the little book *Humanity at Work* by Scott T. & Harker P., seeks to address this question. A better understanding of the nature of human choice and how this 'choice' contributes, not only to 'individual difference', but also to all human conflict of the negative kind, will hopefully provide a more solid foundation for both leadership and conflict resolution.

We enter the arena of life as a vulnerable and dependent child, with little or no conscious knowledge of how to react to the world about us in order to maintain our personal sense of well-being. We quickly learn that our needs are not automatically supplied and that we need to . 'do something' in order to guarantee supply.

The child lying in the cot feels hungry. [It doesn't know it feels hungry, it just feels bad!] It spontaneously reacts to the feeling. It rolls over — nothing happens. It bumps the side of the cot — nothing happens. It makes a crying sound — mother enters the room and supplies food, so relieving the inner 'bad' feeling, and the child learns to cry. The action of crying has been positively reinforced by attention and food, leading to a relief of bad feeling and, hence, the child is quicker to try crying next time it feels uncomfortable in this particular way. **And in this fashion we learn almost all the early behavioural responses that we make to our world.**

In his book '*Happy Children*' Rudolf Dreikers provides a wonderful illustration of what happens when the crying response is not reinforced.

"Nine-month-old Peter was a normal child of deaf-mute parents. He was crawling on the floor one day and bumped his head against the table; tears poured from his eyes - but the astonished observer heard no sound! She stood watching for a moment, then rushed over to Peter, picked him up and comforted him. Infants size up situations. Peter didn't bother with the sound effects because he sensed that his parents were deaf. Older children of deaf-mute parents display a loss of temper by stamping their feet rather than by futile screaming. Their parents feel and react to the vibrations."

All the negative emotional responses we make to our world when things don't go the way we prefer or think they should [and these responses have a powerful effect on the undermining of our sense of well-being and competency] are really just learned reactions that somewhere in our earlier years 'worked' often enough to become habit. They 'worked' in the sense that such responses achieved some immediate result that was seen at the time as being positively reinforcing. The negative results of these behaviours were less obvious.

We learned to get angry because, having first modelled the behaviour from our father/mother/other significant person, this reaction was reinforced for us in controlling others through inducing fear and guilt in them. Or we learned to have a 'huff' and go silent because it was reinforced by our being let off the hook by others who felt a sense of guilt for having upset us. Or we learned to act distressed and helpless because this behaviour was reinforced by our parents who allowed us to avoid our personal responsibilities. Or we learned to argue because it was reinforced by a sense of power over others who backed down under pressure. Maybe we even learned to feel guilty when we said 'no' to people who wanted us to do something, because when we were young, people withdrew their regard from us when we did not do what they wanted us to do and made us 'earn' their regard by complying to their wishes.



*As the child grows into adulthood there are three great sets of needs that dominate life, and satisfaction of these needs becomes the basis of well-being.*

The first set of needs is the physical needs, the needs we have in common with all living things. If we don't supply our physical needs we die - physically. Fulfillment of our physical needs allows us to **survive**.

The second set of needs is the social needs, the needs we have in common with animals because, like animals, we have the capacity to be aware of our outer world and to respond to that world through the processes of thinking, feeling, and decision making. Like animals we are intimately connected through strong emotional bonds to our fellow creatures, particularly those of our own species. If we don't find reasonable satisfaction for our social needs we die - emotionally [and sometimes even physically]. Fulfillment of our social needs allows us to **cope** emotionally.

The third set of needs is the spiritual needs - needs for meaning, the uniquely human needs. We have these needs because, not only do we think and have an awareness of our social and physical world [just as animals do] but we also have a 'watcher' [what is sometimes referred to as the 'spirit of our being'] that gives us the capacity to 'watch' our own thinking and decision making processes at work; at least the conscious tip of these processes. Hence, we are **self-aware** and experience an inner psychological world as well as an outer material world. Because we can access and 'look over' our memory banks we are consciously aware of the passing of time and look for some continuity of purpose in what we do day-by-day. In other words, we have a need to understand the 'meaning' of our lives. If we don't supply our spiritual needs and thereby fail to find meaning in our lives, we can languish and die - spiritually [and sometimes socially and physically]. This 'spiritual sickness' is sometimes referred to as mental illness, although this should not be understood in terms of something a person can 'catch', such as one catches the measles.

Fulfillment of our spiritual needs is necessary to a sense of personal worth. We must find meaning and purpose in our lives if we are to experience our full humanity. The meeting of these needs provides a sense of well-being that transcends the conditions of our immediate social and physical circumstances and thereby allows us to be better adjusted in our attitude towards such circumstances. We have seen in a previous chapter that more and more people are seeking to have this need for meaning met at work.

Any perceived threat to our physical, social or spiritual well-being produces essentially the same internal response - the fear response. It is the natural inborn fear response that drives us into action [known as the 'flight or fight' response] and the reduction of this sense of fear [when we do something that 'works' to satisfy our vulnerable needs] acts as a reinforcer of that behaviour, increasing its use in similar situations in the future. Whenever there is a potential for fear, related to one of our needs - and this occurs almost anywhere - we will learn 'fear avoidance' behaviour.

Satisfaction of our three types of needs, however, should not be seen as separate pursuits, as the three sets of needs are intimately tied together into a whole, which we call the 'self'. Towering above the three sets of needs is the ego's need to maintain the integrity and the consistency of the self-image as a whole and meaningful picture. It is to this concept that we now turn in order to develop the understanding of human behaviour a little more deeply.

Looking more closely at these three types of needs we find that they relate to three distinct levels of our humanity. The first level, as previously mentioned, we have in common with all living things, and is comprised of all our physical and survival needs. All living things have physical needs and perform physical actions of some kind in relation to their environment. Human beings have physical needs and perform actions to maintain their physical survival. Some of the physical actions performed by others have an effect on our own lives, and we learn to make some sort of response to them as well as to our environment in general.

Let us pause for a moment here and think about our response to the actions of others, particularly when these actions are seen to be negatively directed toward us. It soon becomes clear that our response to them is not



simply a response to the other person's behaviour. Rather, it is more a response to what we subconsciously assume to be the other person's motive for that behaviour, as well as the degree of deliberate intent for that behaviour. In other words, we do not blame the other person's *body* for the behaviour - we hold the person's *mind* responsible for the behaviour. We assume that it was done deliberately and intentionally as a free and responsible creative agent - and that's what we're mad at. We are angry because we believe he or she *chose* to do it to us. But let us look more closely at the nature of what is actually happening inside the person to whom we are attributing this motive.

The next level in the human make-up is the level we have in common with other animals. Not only do we have a body and perform actions, but we also have a mind, and in that mind we experience thoughts and emotions, and make decisions in relation to our environment. "If my wife and I call the dog at the same time, it goes to her - she feeds it more often!" It makes a decision on the basis of past reinforced learning. This decision is not necessarily free - it is simply a *learned* way of reacting to its environment. It has learned what actions lead to the most likely satisfaction of its needs and this memory is 'hard-wired', so to speak, into its mental functioning. Because the dog has the capacity to be aware of its environment [and its own body] and has found security and satisfaction as part of a social grouping<sup>1</sup>, it has the drive, not only to fulfil its physical needs, but to fulfil its social needs as well.

Yet, here we come to an interesting point that marks the divide between animals and humans. It would seem that, although the dog has the capacity to be aware of, and make responses to, its physical and social environments, it is not aware of its own thoughts and decisions. This self-conscious capacity seems to be unique to human beings and introduces a whole new level of life with all its positive and negative potential.

As a human being, I not only have the animal-like capacity to be aware of, and make responses to, my environment, my body, and my social world, but I also have the capacity to be aware of my own thinking. I have *self-consciousness*. This capacity changes the whole ball-game, for although it introduces the possibility of making a real choice in relation to narcissistic love-of-self versus the unconditional love-of-another, it also introduces all the problems related to the human ego and the defence of the 'self' as briefly discussed in earlier chapters.

Sir Wilder Penfield, the renowned British neurosurgeon, spent decades cutting and probing human brains [while the patients were fully conscious!] after which he would ask them what they had experienced, when, for example, their arms would move or words were uttered as he probed. They told him that it seemed to them that they were voluntarily performing actions even though they knew that it was the result of his probing. Penfield coined the idea of a 'watcher' in the brain that enabled the person to observe the process of his or her own thoughts and decisions, but which was, of course, not able to be aware of itself.

Because the 'watcher' can not watch itself, we tend not to be aware of either its presence or its role, but it would seem that it has a greater role to play than simply one of watching like some sort of internal video camera. It is watching with a distinct bias, and this bias influences the way in which the mind [the second level of our human make-up that we have in common with animals] interprets, analyses and reacts to its environment.

The physicist and thinker, Albert Einstein, once stated: "*Everyone has two choices. We're either full of love or full of fear.*" Now obviously he was not talking about the number and variety of possible decisions that people are able to make as they react to their world, for these are virtually without limit. Rather he was referring to the nature of a deeper choice that all human beings are uniquely required to make in relation to their sense of 'self' as it interacts with other 'selves' within their social environment. This suggests that

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<sup>1</sup> All dogs are genetically linked to wolves who are essentially 'pack' animals with a distinct hierarchy of power. Dogs simply see us as the biggest, smartest, most dominant members of their pack and give us all the loyalty once given to the Alpha wolf! Having no separate sense of self the dog's sense of identity is tied to the 'pack' which is why it pines for us when we are absent. The animal still 'loves' us but has no choice in the matter. Human beings, on the other hand, having a separate sense of self, must make a choice to move beyond mere service to that 'self' if they are to genuinely love a 'self' or 'selves' other than their own. That is why we give such a choice a greater value.



human beings, in contrast to lower forms of animal life, have a real choice. However, this choice is not made at the 'animal' or cognitive level of conscious decision making, rather it is made at the deeper level - the 'watcher' level [i.e. by the spirit that 'dwells' within that makes 'self' consciousness possible] - which is unique to human beings.

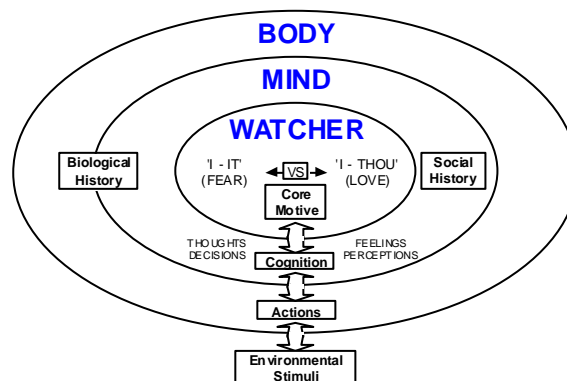
Such a choice would appear to entail a shift in the focus of identification of the human spirit. When the 'watcher' looks out through the windows of mind and body, all that it perceives itself to be is *this* mind and *this* body. It **never** sees itself. In this respect the 'watcher' is like the human eye. If I never saw a mirror or another human, I might never know I had an eye. Yet once I understood the principle of sight I could *infer* that I had an eye, even if I could only believe in such by 'faith', so to speak. Thus the 'watcher', which has no capacity to directly see itself, is naturally inclined to associate itself with what it can perceive; the mind and the body of its host. This is the natural starting point of all self-conscious life.

Because the 'watcher' has this natural identification with a vulnerable and transient mind and body [known as the 'self'], the primary motive driving the mind's decision-making processes is that of 'self-preserving' *fear*. Fear has many and varied faces, but one aim - preserving all that with which the 'watcher' identifies. This is a natural reaction when the 'watcher' perceives its fundamental existence is inexorably tied to the 'self' with which it identifies. As the boundaries of the 'self' expand however, to take into account the lives of others, the motive basis may eventually move from *fear* to *love*. The expansion of the boundaries of spiritual understanding may ultimately include a realisation - a 'dawning awareness' - of the existence of the 'watcher' itself. A realisation, albeit, based upon inference and an act of 'faith', rather than by direct observation.

**When the individual comes to the realisation that self-consciousness implies another level of existence - a metaphysical level<sup>2</sup> - which brings them into union with all others, a fundamental shift in core motive is enabled: a shift from *fear* to *love*.** Love is the dissolution of the separateness of mankind. When we see the world through the eyes of love, we know that our deepest well-being is enhanced by furthering the well-being of all humanity. Fear is the selfish motivation beneath the competitive attempt to preserve the ultimately unpreservable! When we see the world through the eyes of fear, we compromise, and indeed sometimes sacrifice, humanity to the illusion of 'self' interest - short lived at best.

The paradigm shift we are talking about is a shift away from a *fearful* identification with the vulnerable and ephemeral life of the known 'self' and towards a *loving* identification with the common spirit of humanity - the metaphysical dimension of human life that makes possible the uniquely human phenomena of self-consciousness.

Some may find it difficult to accept that an adequate understanding of their own humanity requires the postulation of an additional dimension to their existence beyond that of the known dimensions of body and mind. However, it is being suggested here, that this question of what it actually means to be human is the *fundamental* question that must be satisfactorily answered before the social structures of community life can be adequately managed.



Tripartite Model of 'What it Means to be Human'

<sup>2</sup> Necessarily 'metaphysical' if any notion of real choice is to be entertained.

What is being proposed, moreover, is that the 'moral' choice, as described above, is the only mechanism through which any human being can influence the direction of his or her own life, and also, when taken collectively, is the only mechanism through which humanity can influence the evolving direction of its own collective existence. All the other factors, working in the service of this core motivational purpose, interact like 'clockwork' to determine the unique shape and direction of individual and collective life - despite the grand illusion of creative personal autonomy.

The moral *choice*, so often hidden from conscious view, but always present beneath the day-to-day decisions that we make, is the choice that determines the motivational direction of our life and hence determines what we consider to be worth noticing, amongst the myriad potential things that *could* catch our attention. And this includes what catches our attention amongst all the things that clamour for recognition in our own subconscious. This paradigm 'choice' forms the foundation criteria for all our decisions, actions and reactions. It is the 'choice-behind-the-choices', so to speak, that allows us to *influence* every decision we make, both conscious and subconscious. Though we make many and varied *decisions*, the *choice* for which we are ultimately responsible is always the same! This realisation means that the assumed basis for pride, guilt, adulation or blame, when attributed to either self or others in relation to their manifest behaviour, is no longer sustainable. This can be a great shock to the human ego. The desire to attribute personal intent to human behaviour is very great, and, on first appearances, very costly to let go of.

The Jewish philosopher Martin Buber has aptly described this shift from *fear to love* as a shift from an 'I - IT' to an 'I - THOU' view of relationships. If I have an 'I - IT' view of relationships I see others as *objects* and therefore potential *resources* for the satisfaction of my own 'self'. In such relationships I may want to use this or that part of you, even at the cost of some other part of you, just as I would view any other type of resource available for my 'use'. If I have an 'I - THOU' view of relationships, however, I see you as a *whole* person and therefore I have to take into account the impact on your *whole* set of needs when I deal with you. Martin Buber saw this choice as the great, and possibly the only real, choice that defines us as human beings. Such a conception of human relationships is worth contemplation by those who take a purely 'human resources' approach to the utilisation of human beings in the workplace.

The widespread disharmony in families, businesses, and society in general bears stark testimony to the fact that so few people actually recognise the nature of the uniquely human choice that would bring alignment to their collective lives. Operating upon what *seems* to be true, most people spend their lives viewing themselves and others as 'creators' of their myriad behavioural responses rather than as 'creatures' with a uniquely human binary choice.

The assumption that human beings are free 'creators' of their own thoughts and decisions, leads naturally to the view that people are mini 'gods' with all the associated outcomes of human pride, guilt, blame and adulation. The modified assumption that limits human 'freedom' to a potential 'shift' in the moral direction of core motive or purpose [i.e., that sees human beings as being capable of rising above the motivation of fear-driven 'narcissism'], allows for the development of a mentality that seeks to maximise the quality of collective human life [and such is the espoused purpose of an 'organisation'] by fostering every opportunity that promotes, rather than prevents, just such a shift in human motivation. This has enormous implications for leaders who desire to raise the potential quality of working life and not just the productive 'quantities' in their organisations. With such an approach, conflicts are reduced, and productivity becomes the natural by-product of people finding quality in their working lives; a far cry from the environment in which productivity is 'motivated' by a striving to please those in positions of power who have more skillfully mastered the subtle art of fear-based motivation.



***Whadayamadat!***

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*When you're angry at your students,  
or your colleagues or your boss  
When you act as if they're guilty,  
and you're getting rather cross  
Remember that they never chose,  
their birth, 'twas merely chance  
Like you, their drive is love or fear,  
all else is circumstance  
So, it's the motive that you're judging,  
they don't choose the things they do  
And the motive that you're mad at,  
is the same one driving you!*

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