TRUTH, LOVE
AND
JUSTICE

The Path to Realizing Human Potential, Peace and Prosperity

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Dedicated

to
John R. and Ethel M. Clarken,
my parents and first teachers,
and to all
who strive to
make this world
a better place for all.
Truth, Love and Justice

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Preface

For as long as I can remember, I have been interested in the big questions in life such as What is the meaning of life? What is good? What is truth? What should I do with my life? I sought answers to these questions from anyone and anywhere I could. Though I had limited resources growing up on a tenant farm in Iowa, I had a deep desire to know and many kind-hearted and generous people to help me find my way. My parents taught me the virtues of hard work and the caring and committed teachers in my small rural school gave me a good foundation for a life of learning.

When I was 16 years old, I had a transformative experience that changed the course of my life. Gene, a classmate of mine, invited me to go with him to the Iowa State Fair where he was exhibiting his pig. While he was showing his pig in the Future Farmers of America Swine competition, I visited each of the many religious booths at the fair seeking answers to the question of life. The last one I visited was a religion I had never heard of—the Bahá’í Faith, and it the answers that I had been looking for. It had clear and convincing solutions to many of the perplexing problems that had troubled my mind and heart and it has continued to be an ongoing source of insight and inspiration in my life.

One of the solutions I was advocating was racial justice and unity which lead me to attend the University of Southern Mississippi in 1969 to become more directly involved with the civil rights movement. After two quarters I dropped out to live and study in the Bohdi Sala ashram in the French Quarter of New Orleans. When I felt I had learned what I could there, I moved into a two-room farmhouse to pursue simple living, self-sufficiency and spiritual discovery by myself. The military draft and a drought ended my Walden experience, after which I returned to college, eventually attending six different colleges and universities in five different states, earning five different degrees and eventually pursuing a career as a teacher and a teacher of teachers.

I taught at a rural elementary school for children from the Stockbridge-Munsee Reservation and surrounding farming communities, a YWCA-sponsored secondary school for girls on the slopes of Mt. Kilimanjaro, a primary school for children from different tribes and nations in northern Tanzania and a post-secondary Danish training center for international volunteers working in Africa. In addition, I have taught and worked in urban and rural, black and white, religious and secular, public and private, and state and international colleges and universities in the United States, the Virgin Islands, Botswana, China and Switzerland.

My experiences, education, teaching and faith have helped me to find answers and meaning and to move beyond my limited self-interests and thinking. I have tried to do the right thing and to become a better person and have hoped for similar things for my students and others in my life. In this process, I have found three guiding ideals to be particularly helpful and
powerful—truth, love and justice. I believe these three principles are instrumental for effectiveness when working with and for the transformation of individuals, communities and institutions. They are especially powerful when employed by those in leadership positions to promote the well-being of individuals and society.

In this book, we will explore the universal principles of truth, love and justice and how they might change our perceptions, rhetoric, assumptions and claims about reality. Truth, love and justice are essential tools for transforming ourselves and our world. By exercising our faculties of mind, heart and will through the capacity-building forces of truth, love and justice, we gradually realize our potential and move closer to a world of peace and prosperity.
Chapter 1. Seeing the World Through New Eyes

How We See Our World

There exist many competing opinions regarding who we are and what is best for our world. Different prescriptions to improving ourselves and our world based on varying points of view have been tried and new ones are proposed all the time. As we explore these remedies and lines of thinking, we must continually seek better understanding and ways to improve and avoid the extremes and dichotomies in thinking which characterize our modern world and strive for moderation and balance in our lives.

The demands and complexities of life are generally not well understood or appreciated by those who purport to know the answers and push their solutions on others. Reforms are often top down and fail to appreciate the vital importance of the grassroots and those responsible for implementing change. Those affected by imposed policies may not understand or support the ideas or processes being put upon them. Unfortunately, most people are not consulted about policies and reforms they live under. When they do not see the need for these changes, they may resent being told how to do live their lives. Most people value autonomy, security and stability and react adversely when criticized, attacked, threatened or challenged.

In general, people are less likely to adopt a new way of thinking, feeling and doing things if they have a long-term adherence to a different idea, have a strong emotional attachment to contrary way of thinking or have taken a public stand in support of opposing methods or arguments (Gardener, 2011). Both those trying to bring about change and those resisting their reforms, need to free themselves of their prejudices and stubbornness and engage in frank, full and courteous consultation.

There are varied points of view about what is right and what should be done in any given situation. In the absence of mutually agreed upon facts or truths that can serve as the basis for discussion and decisions, we tend to hold onto our own limited and sometimes faulty understanding, open only to information and data that support our own perspectives and biases, while ignoring or denigrating those that do not.

Even when looking at the same object or situation, we are likely to see a different perspective from others. Many optical illusions illustrate this point. For example, Figure 2 may be seen as a vase or as two faces looking at each other, depending on what you focus upon.
It is difficult for us to hold more than one perspective at a time. Because most people are familiar with this example, they can easily see both sides and recognize both views are true depending on what you focus upon. When you are looking at the white, you see a vase and when you look at the black you see two faces. Figure 3 may not be familiar to you. What do you see? In Figure 3, most people see a bird with something in its mouth standing on a bank by the water with birds flying in the distant background. What if I gave the exact same picture to someone else and they said it was a picture of a person in a boat with a big fish in front of it and an island with two trees in the background. What would you think? Can you see what that person sees in this picture?

Now look at the picture turned upside down in Figure 4. Can you see what the other person saw? It may take some time and effort, especially if you are very committed to the “truth” of what you saw in Figure 3.
These simple visual examples might illustrate how hard it can be to see something from a different point of view, especially when we think we know what we are looking at. What if each person only had these pictures in their minds, which they could see very clearly, but which they could only describe to the other person in words? Can you imagine the confusion and conflict that might result when people who all their lives had looked at Figure 3 tried to convince those who had grown up looking at the same picture as presented to them in Figure 4 that they were all wrong?

Like these examples, we need to develop the ability to look at life from different perspectives and develop the attitudes and language to convey our understandings to others so that they can see what we see and we can see what they see. The good news is that we can and that we will, though, unfortunately, it appears it will not happen quickly or easily as such change requires upsetting established institutions, patterns and systems in order to implement unproven or unwanted reforms, creating added stress in our over-extended lives.

Though viewpoints, paradigms, mental maps and models paradigms help us make sense of the world and allow us to form conceptual frameworks and theorize, they can also limit our ability to improve our lives. When they are faulty, incomplete or skewed, the decisions we make based upon them will be similarly misconceived. We are uncomfortable when our world is upset with ideas that challenge what we believe and who we are, when familiar patterns and relationships are altered and when our opinions clash with others. By applying the standards of truth, love and justice, we can explore some of the paradigms, filters and lenses we use to view reality and create a more holistic foundation for our thinking, feeling and choosing.
Plato’s Allegory of the Cave and Analogies of the Sun and the Divided Line

We might look to Plato’s *The Republic*, written approximately 380 B.C.E., to understand better the nature of paradigms, perspectives, knowledge and change. In his allegory of the cave, Plato helps us appreciate the difference between the perceived world of appearances and the real world of ideas by describing prisoners who have lived their entire lives chained so that all they can see is the blank wall of a cave. All that these prisoners know of reality are shadows on the wall that are created by figures and forms being paraded behind them on poles carried by people walking between the wall and a fire.

In this world, the prisoner who could best explain and make sense of the shadows would be considered the most enlightened. If any of the prisoners were to become free and see the actual objects making the shadows, they would not be able to recognize, name or explain them. They would believe that the shadows with which they are familiar are more real than the forms they see with their own eyes. If they were to look further, to the fire, they would be blinded by its light and turn back towards the shadows to which their eyes are accustomed and which they have regarded as reality for all of their lives. But suppose further that these prisoners are taken out of the cave into the sunlight. They would be hopelessly blinded and distressed in this new world. Most likely, they would try to return to the cave and the world they knew and to which they could relate and feel at home.

If they remained outside, though, they would gradually come to realize the sun was the source of light and life, even for those in the cave who had never seen or known of it. The sun, the source of physical illumination and life on earth, is a metaphor for a transcendent higher force that sheds light on and is the fountainhead of true knowledge and goodness. As the sun gives both the light that illuminates physical objects as well as the energy needed for the eye to see them, the idea of goodness might help describe the purer source of the illumination needed to see abstract ideas, as well as the knowledge, vision and insight to grasp the higher essence of things. The sun itself might be analogous to the form or idea of goodness, and by extension, the first principles from which all knowledge comes and the source of all intellectual illumination. Without this light we are blind to truth.

The physical images of the world that we perceive through our eyes might be compared to the shadows that we imagine to be real in the cave. These physical forms each have a Form, which is their non-material essence that transcends them. We imagine these shadows as the “real” thing, but it is only in the more pure world of Forms that we can see the truth and reality within these shadow realities clearly through our mind’s eye. Ideas formed from the physical world are dull and shifting, like the shadows in the cave, compared to the more real and life-giving realities of the Greek ideals of truth, beauty and goodness that are all aspects of the Form. Indeed, just as the sun is the force that created the wood that created the fire and figures to make the illusory shadows in the cave, the eternal power of the higher reality is the source of the forces...
of truth, love and justice that and their manifestations in this world that create the shadows of these in our mind that we perceive as real.

Just as freed prisoners who went back into the cave would have a hard time convincing their fellow prisoners still chained to the wall that what they thought was real was only shadows, so have the seers, philosophers and prophets in convincing us that there is a higher reality than what is apparent to our senses. When we have had our inner eyes opened, we no longer fit into or function well in the world of shadows. When our ideas of reality are no longer constricted to the form and language of shadows, and we seem ridiculous trying to explain things for which the cave dwellers have no words, conception or belief. Such prisoners, lacking any direct experience with this reality invisible to them, would think the freed prisoners misled or crazy and would not listen to them. Like the founders of new theories, philosophies and religions who have brought radical new insights and advances to humanity throughout history, the shadow followers would shun, persecute or kill those who challenged or tried to destroy their worldview.

In this connection, Plato describes four levels of reality—common illusions, belief, reasoning and philosophical understanding—which he compares to a line divided into four parts. The first two represent the visible world and the second two the non-visible intelligible world of higher abstract reality. As we ascend out of the darkness of our initial, limited understanding and conjecture, we develop some beliefs about how the world works from visible, sensible physical objects. We then begin to reason at the third level, which involves hypothesis and mathematics. Finally, at the highest level we begin to comprehend the first principles of the whole and the Good. Each higher level contains more truth and provides a higher perspective that encompasses and transcends the lower states.

We might compare these four levels of knowledge to various levels of closeness to, or illumination by, the sun or as the various stages of insight gained from freeing ourselves from the darkness of ignorance in the cave. Our illusions, conjectures and opinions based on our everyday experiences might be compared to the understandings of shadows made by physical objects in the cave or as the reflections of objects on water, whereas beliefs about these objects formed these shadows gained through such tools as scientific observation and method, might be represented by the figures making the shadows or the reflections themselves. The shadow, the reflections and even the objects that created them only manifest and reflect limited aspects of reality. In the third level, representing the beginning of the intelligible world, our reasoning developed through mathematics and theoretical science may be likened to seeing the abstract reality of these lower sensible realities, whereas the highest level represents philosophical understanding of first principles and reality.

Plato’s metaphors of the cave, sun and divided line can help us understand why we perceive reality as we do and how we might see things differently. We are much like those prisoners in the cave. Our views of reality and our worldviews are created from the shadows.
projected onto the walls of our experiences, from the images formed by our environments and paraded before the flickering fire of our limited paradigms. Like the freed prisoners, we can come to understand that these shadows are but reflections or representations of truth and begin to comprehend them through the sunlight of the deeper reality of the “Good”, which constitutes the most authentic knowledge. This book is an attempt to help us move out of the caves of our flawed worldviews and examine the problems facing us in a brighter light of truth, love and justice so that our minds, hearts and wills can be guided by the highest principles in our search for the good of all.

**Shadows: Coming out from Our Caves of Ignorance**

Though our biased and limited conceptions may be only shadows of reality, they are all we have ever known. We have been taught by our families and culture to relate to them as real and, for the large part, we blindly accept and imitate what we are taught. We might question this or that particular shadow, but we do so within the mindset that the shadow world is an accurate model of reality. If we can free ourselves to search for the truth behind the shadows, we can discover greater truths as we emerge from our caves of ignorance and prejudice.

When we free ourselves from the chains of our egocentric and ethnocentric thinking, we realize that the shadows of what we thought of as real have been cast by manmade constructions of truth paraded between the fire of perception and the wall of tradition, only to believe that these figurines that were making the shadow are what is real, when they are just man-made forms depicting a yet higher expression of reality. A much clearer comprehension of reality awaits us as we gradually free ourselves from the darkness of the cave of unknowing and we perceive with increasing insight in the light of knowledge. This requires a quickening and freeing of our minds, hearts and wills and a commitment to the light of truth, love and justice. Those still contented with their caves will not welcome the light and will deny the fact that their lives and beliefs are based on mere shadows.

Our everyday experience puts us at the center of the universe and sees reality from that narrow vista. Our conception of reality depends upon our constrained viewpoints and perspectives. For example, we do not experience the planet we live on as a rotating ball hurling through space. To us, it appears flat and stationary, and this was what people have assumed to be true for most of human history. As courageous and visionary individuals were able to free themselves from the chains of ignorance and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the earth, we very reluctantly and slowly came to accept that the earth is a sphere. A few more centuries and another revolution in thinking were needed to admit that this planet was not the center of the universe. Though it appears that the sun moves around the earth, and our language still reflects this thinking in terms such as the sun “rising” and “setting”, we have given up these shadow views for more accurate depictions of our universe. Like the cave dwellers’ whose
limited worldviews based on the knowledge they could glean from shadows on the wall, we tend to cling to faulty ideas and harmful ideologies until overwhelming evidence and suffering pushes us to change our ways of thinking.

Today we recognize such earth-centric thinking as naive, but when heliocentric ideas were first proposed, their originators were the ones considered foolish, even heretical. Galileo, for example, was persecuted and his scientific ideas rejected because they contradicted the accepted beliefs of the day. Religious authorities condemned him to death for suggesting that the sun, not the earth, was the center of the known universe. The keepers of the cave at that time believed such a reality could not exist or be allowed to challenge the paradigm to which they were committed. Galileo, like many others who introduced revolutionary ideas, did not allow his theories to be published until after his death for fear of the backlash against him. History has shown that freed prisoners like Galileo, usually do not find their new insights welcomed by those committed to the shadow dogmas of the cave. Condemnation of new truths and their proponents is common throughout history, by high and low, educated and uneducated alike.

Many of the great revolutions in thinking, or paradigm shifts, have been the result of people freeing themselves from limited and partial viewpoints and seeing things from a broader and higher perspective. For example, the Copernican revolution was based largely on a shift in perspective from an earth-centered universe to a sun-centered cosmology. This simple change of viewpoint challenged the established knowledge and theories of astronomy and our understanding of human nature itself. Copernicus’ new theory helped initiate a revolution in astronomy and science. However, Copernicus himself could only see so far. His thinking, too, was incomplete, and we discovered later that the sun was not the center of the universe, not even of our galaxy.

As we struggle to emerge from our caves of erroneous and restricted knowledge with clearer vision and greater insight, we gain new perspectives that allow us to see our previous understandings as partial. In other words, these earlier theories and views are not necessarily wrong, but they are only useful in limited ways. We are now in the midst of another such revolutionary process, a global paradigm shift.

**Developing New Ways of Thinking**

Our perceptions are formed by the interaction between our environments, our senses and our faculties of understanding. In other words, a combination of experiences and ideas largely determine what we think and feel to be true and right. Our families and communities strongly influence what and how we see and value things. We naturally consider our versions of reality to be true, good and just, not knowing anything else, and we defend them even when they may be dysfunctional. Over time, these values and views evolve into mindsets and traditions that can
become encrusted in our cultures and lives, keeping us from growing as individuals and as a society.

As we are generally unaware of these lenses and orientations, we tend by default to interpret our thoughts, feelings, motivations and actions as reasonable, even as common sense. However, what we think and feel is a combination of subjective, relative and selective interpretations based on paradigms, worldviews or cultural lenses that are mostly invisible to us. In other words, our views of reality depend upon the caves we live in and in the shadows we know.

We primarily feel or sense our subjective reality, perceive or think about concrete reality and conceive or imagine abstract reality. We do not normally separate these processes, but experience them as a seamless whole; therefore, it takes effort and insight to distinguish among them. We do not have spontaneous knowledge of our capacities or an understanding of the structure of objective reality. As we increasingly understand our subjective states, we can better act consciously to increase our knowledge of our true capacities and limitations. Initially, who we are is just as much a mystery to us as any other aspect of reality (Hatcher, 1998).

What we believe about the world is in no small part the product of tradition, preconceptions, imitation, fancies, biases and prejudices, which combine to create a worldview that affects both what we see and how we see it. We become accustomed to our limited and biased ways of thinking, feeling and acting, making it very hard to change, even when we know it is in our best interests to do so. Take smoking, drinking, overeating and other bad habits for example. If these obvious, physical patterns are so hard to control, how much more difficult must it be for us to change the intangible thoughts and feelings we have. What are some ways we might do that?

Kuhn’s (1962) work on the nature of scientific revolutions has helped us to appreciate better the nature of change in thinking and paradigms. Kuhn’s description of scientific revolutions in the hard sciences can help us understand change in general, which should be based on the best scientific knowledge we have available to us.

Each individual, community and institution has unique worldviews, with associated assumptions, implications and perceptions. They each create theories and operate according to and laws. These form the seedbed for new knowledge and innovations for the next generation. Our worldviews are based upon some structure and stability that must cope with anomalies and change. As these grow, so do questions and problems, leading to increased stress, which, if not resolved, will come to a crisis. It is generally at this stage that new ideas are tried and old paradigms challenged. We live in such a time. The battles over how to solve our problems and deal with change are being waged. At their foundation, these are questions about what is true, loving and just.
Like battles in the hard sciences, paradigm wars use empirical, rhetorical, philosophical and ideological weapons. These battles do not tend to be short lived. The famous physicist Max Planck observed, “a new scientific truth does not triumph by convincing its opponents and making them see the light, but rather because its opponents eventually die, and a new generation grows up that is familiar with it” (as cited in Kuhn, 1962, p. 150). New ideas and models can demonstrate superiority over the established paradigms by presenting convincing evidence, but as much as we may suppose this process would happen in a logical and rational manner in the hard sciences such as physics, history proves otherwise (Kuhn, 1962).

If our paradigms consist of shadows, we will try to make sense of new information according to the shared views of our preconceptions. As world problems and global crises deepen and our old paradigms no longer adequately reflect our reality, humanity will need to discard old ideas, values and behaviors and begin to investigate reality in the sunlight of the principles of truth, love and justice. We need a new way even of viewing these foundational principles if we are to significantly improve our world. We will need to dramatically expand our knowledge, deepen our compassion and broaden our sense of fairness if we are to realize our potential. Our current views of truth, love and justice are but shadows and images of the real things. We need to free ourselves from the prison of these limited conceptions if we are to solve the pressing problems facing humanity today and create a world of peace and prosperity.

Einstein was right: the problems created by the prevalent way of thinking cannot be solved by the same way of thinking. This is a crucial insight. Without renewing our culture and consciousness we will be unable to transform today’s dominant civilization and overcome the problems generated by its shortsighted mechanistic and manipulative thinking . . . . The conscious orientation of the next cultural mutation—the shift to a new civilization—depends on the evolution of our consciousness. This evolution has become a precondition of our collective survival. (Laszlo, 2006, pp. 39, 77)

Before we can overcome our current faulty perceptions and inadequate paradigms, we must understand something about them. It is important to be aware that we experience our world through a limited, subjective lens, not as detached, objective observers. Quantum theory posits that the very act of observing reality affects what and how we see the phenomena we observe. We need, then, to examine our world and our beliefs carefully, both independently and collectively. As we more fully and frankly explore reality in order to assess it from deeper, truer and broader perspectives, we can grow in understanding.

Developing a new theory about the world allows us to imagine other ways the world might be. Understanding other people and ourselves lets us imagine new ways of being human. At the same time, to change our world, our selves, and our society we have to think about what we ought to be like, as well as what we actually are like. (Gopnik, 2009, p. 8)
Chapter 2. Human Nature and the Principles of Truth, Love and Justice

The Allegory of *The Wizard of Oz*

Just as Plato’s allegory of the cave and his analogies of the sun and divided line help us understand the different levels of perception and reality, one of the most viewed, famous and popular movies of all times, *The Wizard of Oz*, may also be useful as an allegory to help us think about human potential and development.

As we begin our discussion of developing greater authenticity, altruism and autonomy using the faculties of our minds, hearts and wills through the pursuit and exercise of truth, love and justice, the Scarecrow’s desire for a brain, the Tin Man’s longing for a heart, the Lion’s wish for courage and Dorothy’s yearning to go home, can serve as an allegory in the journey that we each must make to realize and unfold our inherent knowing, loving and willing capacities.

Knowledge, the ultimate goal of the Scarecrow’s search for a brain, love, the true longing in the Tin Man’s desire for a heart and willpower, the lion’s craving for the courage to do the right thing, are all key and universal aspects in every individual’s development. The knowledge, attitudes and resolve Dorothy must call forth in accompanying her companions in their journeys to find a brain, heart and courage lead her to the home of her true self by developing her inner and primary capacities to know, to love and serve others. As Dorothy helps the Scarecrow appreciate and cultivate his thinking, the Tin Man his capacity for love and the Lion his courage, these same qualities are strengthened in her and help her in her journey toward her destiny.

The trials and tests on life’s path help us overcome our immature and limited identities, which are often based on superficial or cultural conceptions of who we are. One of the great challenges along our journey is to not become subject to selfish interests and egotistical desires. If Dorothy had been too self-interested to help those she encountered along life’s road, neither she nor they would have achieved their goals. It is in helping others that we help and find ourselves. Our development is dependent on finding and developing our brains, hearts and courage in using the principles and powers of truth, love and justice, as they free us from being dominated or controlled by our egos, desires and dependence on those to whom we look for approval. Knowing truth, feeling love and willing justice enable us to make healthier choices that contribute to the greatest good for the greatest number.

In our journeys to Oz in search of authenticity, altruism and autonomy, we will travel on yellow brick roads of mythical thinking through alluring but treacherous forests of magical beliefs. Without a sufficiently developed brain, heart and will and with limited awareness of reality, we are dependent on others to find our way. As we obey and abide by the guidance of the good witches of our higher nature and avoid and overcome the bad witches of our lower selves, we are provided with multiple opportunities to learn that some actions result in positive
consequences and others in negative. As we learn to properly use our capacities in meeting various changes, challenges and circumstances on the road to developing new capabilities, we develop consciousness, conscience and competence.

Overcoming the challenges of life helps develop more effective ways of using our brains to think, our hearts to feel and our wills to act. When we are not adept, do not properly use these capacities or do not use them responsibly, we bring suffering on ourselves and others. In the Tin Man’s, the Scarecrow’s, the Lion’s and Dorothy’s efforts to attain their goals, they each had to overcome problems—dealing with the witches, flying monkeys, bad apple trees, and fields of poppies of their world. We need to develop the vision, passion and persistence needed to overcome such the temptations and fancies of life. As we work through faulty or distorted theories, values, needs and desires, our views become more aligned with reality and we are better able to access and work on our inner world of purely personal and subjective states, sensations, thoughts and feelings, which enables us to overcome our limitations and achieve our goals.

As we make good choices, develop our capacity and gain a more accurate knowledge of how the world works, we draw closer to the home of our true selves and the purpose of our journey. Each challenge successfully conquered further motivates us and increases our courage to advance towards our goals. As we learn to meet our needs in a legitimate, responsible, moral and honest manner, we develop greater self-mastery, autonomy and happiness. When we do not, we fall into diversions, dependencies and addictions to escape the suffering we experience and we become prey to impulses and desires we find difficult to resist, which can rob us of the freedom and happiness we seek.

The travelers believe that their salvation lies in the Emerald City of Oz. They seek answers from the Wizard of Oz, who they imagine is all-powerful and knowing. The Wizard, who appears in the form of a flaming head and thunderous voice, exploits their faith in him to obtain more power, in the form of the broomstick of the Witch of the West. However, the Wizard is just a front for a very flawed character, hiding behind his false image of greatness and displays of power.

The wizards of our world, those who purport to be the purveyors and arbiters of truth, love and justice to whom we vainly look for answers, compassion and fairness, are very often guided primarily by prejudice, passion and power. These wizards, with their limited knowledge, experience and worldviews, suppose their worldly position, authority, power, expertise or success privileges them over others. Their perceptions of the intricate, complex and interrelated affairs of humankind tend to be harmfully reductive, skewed and faulty. Their lives and deeds diminish and devalue many of the values and principles they claim to support and their rhetoric and assumptions subvert the best interests of humanity. Like the Wizard of Oz they pretend to have answers and to serve others while they hide behind curtains of hypocrisy and half-truths, projecting images of greatness and wisdom.
To placate those who long for true knowledge, they selectively give out diplomas, positions and credentials instead of fully developing their capacity to independently seek out and find truth. They offer pocket watches of rhetoric that are empty of the compassion they represent when the world is pining for the love that can only come from a pure heart. Their medals of courage and achievement do little to recognize the heroic struggle countless souls endure each day to provide sustenance and security to themselves and their families or to assuage the injustices and violations of basic human rights under which they toil. This wizardry cannot feed humanity’s legitimate need and desire for systematically and intelligently applied truth, love and justice. It is deceptive and unfair. Those who purport to know and care are not interested in our welfare. When those we put our faith in are found not to be honest, caring or fair, we also lose faith in them and withdraw our support. We need to find and develop those qualities of mind, heart and soul that are within us waiting to be discovered and unfolded.

**Human Nature and Capacities**

When we refer to human nature, we generally are referring to the ways of thinking, feeling and acting that distinguish us from animals. We have a body with its animal nature and traits, but have also been endowed with unique capacities to know, love and choose how we will behave. These capacities distinguish us from other animals and are what make us human.

Mythology, philosophy and religion have explored the what, how, where and why of these capacities to better understand the meaning of human life and guide human behavior. Art, poetry and literature have also given expression to and have expanded upon what it means to be human. More recently, the sciences have been studying human nature and capability to gain more knowledge about who we are and the workings of our thinking, feelings and behaviors.

Knowledge, emotion and volition are associated with our immaterial or spiritual nature. This aspect of our nature is also referred to as the soul. The soul is defined as “the complex of human attributes that manifests as consciousness, thought, feeling, and will, regarded as distinct from the physical body” (Encarta Dictionary) and “the principle of life, feeling, thought, and action in humans, regarded as a distinct entity separate from the body, and commonly held to be separable in existence from the body; the spiritual part of humans as distinct from the physical part” (Dictionary.com). In other words, the rational soul is the power manifested through our minds, hearts and wills that is the source of our consciousness, thoughts, feelings and actions. Attending to all three faculties and harmonizing them is important for developing human potential—physical, social, psychological and spiritual, which in turn is the foundation for improving the world.

Our minds, hearts and wills, which are the seat of our thinking, feeling and choosing capacities are most efficiently and fully actualized through the powers and pursuit of truth, love
and justice. Only as we recognize and cultivate these primary virtues and their many correlates are we able to overcome our animal natures and free ourselves from the debilitating ignorance and imprisoning ideologies that constrain and corrupt our natures and possibilities. Like the three primary colors from which all colors can be derived, so too can all of the virtues be seen a combinations of these three foundational qualities. If our thoughts, feelings and actions are not guided and shaped by the principles of truth, love and justice, we bring untold harm on others and ourselves. On the other hand, abiding by these values bring out the best in human nature.

Because of our varying social, psychological, emotional and moral backgrounds and personalities, we respond to and interpret different experiences and situations in diverse ways that heavily influence how and what we think, feel and choose. In addition, we make our choices according to varying circumstances, motivations and inclinations. These various cognitive, affective, moral, social and motivational frameworks combine in powerful, unconscious and still little-understood and studied ways to determine what we think, feel, choose and do. As these processes generally happen unconsciously, they are not available to us to examine objectively.

These capacities, based on many interconnected and complex factors influenced by the interaction of our natures and our environments, are being investigated with new methodologies and technologies, and science is helping us become more aware of how our thinking can often be faulty. For example, we unconsciously accept as fact things that make sense to us, come easier to us or make us feel better, without seeking more reliable answers. We are strongly biased to believe and confirm what we have been taught to be the truth, regardless of its lack of support by reason or scientific processes. We will accept flimsy evidence that supports our views and reject and find flaws with proofs that do not confirm them. In addition, we have trouble accepting new and surprising information that does not conform with what we believe to be true (Kahneman, 2011).

Our actions and motivations are determined by our inner beliefs and stories or models we construct about our reality, which reflect the current state of our perceptions, conceptions and emotional attitudes derived from the sum of all our interactions and our understanding of causality. To the degree our inner model, our theory of life, accurately reflects reality and causality, we can anticipate to some degree what will happen as a result of our choices. If what we predict comes to pass, then our theory is confirmed, if not, then we must adjust our thinking, which may be faulty, incorrect, inadequate and/or incomplete.

We do not view ourselves as a mosaic of true and false conclusions, genuine and illusory perceptions. In defending our self-image, we see only the seamless, undifferentiated whole of “I”. As we believe we are defending our very being, we begin to bind up more and more of our mental, emotional and volitional energy in such things as rationalization, justification, deception, fear, anger, jealousy or aggression, in defense of our constructed self-perception. To justify our
faulty beliefs and conceptions, we will infer and invent causes and intentions and gloss over or neglect ambiguities while suppressing uncertainty and doubt (Kahneman, 2011).

Our thought and behavior tends to oscillate between the realms of the inner individual world and the external collective world. We attempt to come to peace with and be accepted by the group at the same time as we seek independence. External groups attempt to influence us through various means which require some compromise our individuality to engender acceptance and interdependence. These foci or forms of action are referred to as the psychological processes of differentiation and integration which are important in developing capacity for flow and creativity (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 2004).

As some evolutionary biologists and complexity theorists have suggested, the things we value tend to involve the combination of differentiation and integration, or in other words, diversity and unity. The simultaneous presence of both is referred to as complexity. When we talk of evolution, or progress, we usually refer to systems, ideas, behaviors, and technologies that are more complex than those that existed before. At the societal level, integration, order and congruence without differentiation result in deadening conformity, whereas differentiation without integration leads to chaos. At the individual level, complexity is manifested in two forms: the intrapersonal and the interpersonal. A complex person is one who has fully developed and differentiated his or her potentialities in terms of thoughts, feelings, and motives, while at the same time being able to align and internally integrated these potentialities in the service of personal goals (Csikszentmihalyi, 2004, p. 342).

The development of basic human capacities is a process involving the differentiation and integration of our brains, hearts, bodies and wills. These agencies are referred to as the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor and conative domains in psychology and need to be diversified and developed while at the same time unified and balanced to result in healthy growth and evolvement. Truth, love and justice represent the actualizing vehicles for differentiating and integrating our thinking minds, feeling hearts and choosing wills. Human development can be explained and understood as the interaction and realization of these aspects of our nature using our bodies, minds and souls.

Our higher spiritual nature directs our thinking capacity toward knowing truth, our feeling toward valuing love and our doing toward choosing justice and service. However, when our knowing, feeling and willing faculties are guided by our animal nature and desires, healthy growth and development are impeded, and mental, emotional and motivational imbalances and disorders occur. We are influenced by our inner beliefs, stories and models. As we strive for higher and more complete constructs of truth, love and justice in our interactions with others, we can be diverted, frustrated or harmed along the way. We are enabled to effectively interact with our world to the degree our inner subjective models of truth, love and justice accurately reflect reality and causality.
We primarily feel our subjective reality, perceive concrete reality and conceive abstract reality. We do not normally separate or differentiate these processes, but experience them as a seamless whole. It takes great effort and insight to differentiate these processes and then to integrate them. Initially, our subjective self is just as much a mystery to us as any other aspect of reality. We do not have spontaneous knowledge of our capacities or an inborn understanding of the structure of either subjective or objective reality. As we gain some objective access to our subjective states, we can learn how to increase our knowledge of our capacities and manifest the virtues of truth, love and justice.

Some Expressions of Truth, Love and Justice

Mention of these three faculties, capacities and principles can be found in most of the wisdom traditions, religions and philosophies of the world, as well as in many psychological theories, though they may have been expressed using different terminology. For example, the three elements of the mental, emotional and moral can be found in Aristotle’s habits for realizing human potential: 1. mental activity, (knowledge), which leads to the highest human activity, contemplation; and 2. practical action (moral virtues conforming to the golden mean) and emotion, such as courage (Nicomachean Ethics).

According to Habermas, the primary domain and realm of validation of truth is science; of love, art, and of justice, morals. In Steiner’s philosophy and pedagogy employed in Waldorf education, truth is related to the thinking head, love to the feeling heart and (just) action to the willing hands. In humanism, these are expressed in the ideals of reason, compassion and courage, and in philosophy with logic, aesthetics and ethics. Kant’s critique of pure reason, aesthetics and practical reason and Plato’s ideals of truth, beauty and good may also be seen as manifestations of these same categories.

True learning involves valid knowledge (truth), service (love), and morality (justice). Each of these requires power: “the ability, strength, and capacity to do something” (Encarta Dictionary). The philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich notes in his Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analysis and Ethical Applications that these three ideals, concepts, powers and qualities

…appear in decisive places in the doctrine of man, in psychology and sociology, they are central in ethics and jurisprudence, they determine political theory and educational method, they cannot be avoided even in mental and bodily medicine. Each of the three concepts in itself and the three in their relation to each other are universally significant. (1954, p. 1)

These three virtues also simplify, strengthen and sharpen the Rotary four-way test—Is it the truth? Will it build goodwill and better friendships? Will it be beneficial to all concerned? Is
it fair?—to the three-way test of is it true, loving and just. As we develop our capacity to think empowered by truth, to feel by love and to choose by justice, we become more authentic, altruistic and autonomous. As we pursue, discover, and hold to truth, we gain knowledge and clarity; as we develop love, our care and empathy for others grows, and as we seek justice, we engender courage and moral integrity, which lead to increased understanding, unity and peace.

These are the psychological powers, capabilities and faculties of the mind, heart and will respectively, which we can associate with the head, heart and hand. The cognitive, affective and conative domains are considered integral parts of a tripartite model of the human mind supported by a number of psychological models, including those of some earlier psychologists such as W. Wundt, W. James and R. May (Johnston, 1994).

The distinction between cognition, conation, and affectation, is convenient and historically well-founded in psychology though it should be regarded as a matter of emphasis rather than the partition. All human behavior, especially including school learning and achievement, involves some mixture of all three aspects. (Snow & Jackson, 1993, p. 1)

When human purpose is expressed spiritually, it is most often stated in terms of knowing, loving and obeying God or some higher power. Knowing God is considered the highest form of knowledge and truth, loving God the highest love and submitting our wills to God’s will and obeying God’s laws the greatest expression of goodness, rightness and justice. These three principles are also reflected in the three paths to spiritual salvation that can be discerned in several faith traditions. The path of truth is to acknowledge the truth of God or of God’s teacher and teachings, the path of love is to worship and accept the loving grace of the Beloved and the path of righteous action is to submit our wills to and fear the displeasure of the Creator. Some refer to these as the way of knowledge, the way of feeling and the way of action. They are also seen in Aurobindo’s threefold path of the yogas of knowledge, love and action.

Table 1 below gives examples of various expressions in many different contexts of the principles of truth, love and justice that may be helpful in analyzing, synthesizing, evaluating and applying them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Guiding Principles</th>
<th>Truth</th>
<th>Love</th>
<th>Justice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Human capacities</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Choosing (Acting)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Human potential</td>
<td>To Know</td>
<td>To Love</td>
<td>To Do/ To Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capability of</td>
<td>Mind</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related body part</td>
<td>Head</td>
<td>Heart</td>
<td>Hand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 1. Some aspects and correlates of truth, love and justice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual types</th>
<th>Thinkers</th>
<th>Feelers</th>
<th>Doers</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Psychological domains</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Affective</td>
<td>Conative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intelligences</td>
<td>Cognitive</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
<td>Moral</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resulting condition</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Altruism</td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related quality</td>
<td>Clarity</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective expressions</td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Creation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective outcome</td>
<td>Understanding</td>
<td>Unity</td>
<td>Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domains and validity claims (Habermas)</td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Arts</td>
<td>Morals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy (R. Steiner)</td>
<td>Thinking/head</td>
<td>Feeling/heart</td>
<td>Willing/hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Humanism</td>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
<td>Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy</td>
<td>Logic</td>
<td>Aesthetics</td>
<td>Ethics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculties (Kant’s Critiques)</td>
<td>Pure Reason</td>
<td>Aesthetic Judgment</td>
<td>Practical Reason</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greek Ideals (Plato)</td>
<td>Truth</td>
<td>Beauty</td>
<td>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rotary Four-Way Test</td>
<td>Is it the truth?</td>
<td>Will it build goodwill &amp; better friendships?</td>
<td>Is it fair and will it be beneficial to all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yogas (Aurobindo)</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Way of</td>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>Feeling</td>
<td>Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divine purpose</td>
<td>To know God</td>
<td>To love God</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paths to spiritual salvation</td>
<td>Belief in Savior</td>
<td>Love of Savior</td>
<td>Obedience to Savior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>False substitutes</td>
<td>Ideology</td>
<td>Romanticism</td>
<td>Legalism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Several false substitutes for truth, love and justice are found in such things as ideology, romanticism and legalism (Hatcher, 1998). Ideologies such as Nazism, communism, fascism and racialism have been the cause of incalculable harm to humanity, and continue to exercise their pernicious influence in the world. The current materialistic dogmas that permeate our conceptions of human nature and the affairs of humankind have perverted our views of truth, love and justice resulting in erroneous assumptions about human nature and callous disregard for the welfare and rights of others.
Truth, Love and Justice in Personal and Societal Development

As mentioned in the previous sections, the power of thought is actualized in pursuing and practicing the principle and ideal of truth, as is that of feeling in developing love and of will in pursuing and abiding by justice. Imbuing our choices, feelings and thoughts with truth, love and justice is empowering. Our individual and collective cognitive potentialities require truth, our affective love and volitional justice to be fully realized. We tend to favor one of these domains over the other two, resulting in our valuing thought, feelings or action more.

Our growing consciousness or awareness of these potentialities and principles allows us to integrate them more fully in our lives. Our practicing of truth leads to greater authenticity, of love to increased altruism and of will to augmented autonomy. These capacities have also been referred to as intelligences, a term that describes more than cognitive knowledge and skill. As such, mind, heart and will are associated with the cognitive, emotional and moral intelligences. All of us have different innate, inherited and environmental possibilities for manifesting our potentialities of mind, heart and will. Whatever our inborn capacities and character, however, unless they are trained and developed, they will not realize their fullest capacities.

A framework for effective development and education depends upon a proper balance and realization of these three human domains. Psychologists use the terms cognition, affection and conation when referring to our thinking, feeling and acting capacities, respectively. Cognition is related to knowing, thinking, intellect and logic; affection to loving, valuing, emotion and aesthetics and conation to willing, striving, volition and ethics. Knowing, loving and willing, then, relate to a tripartite model of human behavior that involves the cognitive, affective, and conative constructs and domains. These constructs are expressions of our thinking, feeling and choosing potentials for truth, love and justice and can serve as a new way of thinking about human development and education (see Figure 5).
Figure 5. Capacities, intelligences, domains and faculties related to truth, love and justice.

Goleman’s definition of emotional intelligence, “to refer to a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act” (1995, p. 289), includes all three domains. These cognitive, affective and conative aspects influence and are influenced by one another. They moderate one another and need to be used together. The faculties of mind, heart and will expressed through our knowing, loving and willing capacities, serve as a framework for analyzing and evaluating our individual and collective potential so that we might create more effective educational systems.

The three guiding principles of truth, love and justice are correlated to the tripartite model of cognition, affection and conation to enable us to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number (Clarken, 2006). The highest and guiding principle for our knowing, or cognitive, capacity is truth; for our loving, or affective, abilities is love and for our willing, or conative, potential is justice. These cognitive, affective and conative faculties are the dynamic focal points for effective interactions between us and our environments, and are key aspects of learning. Individual, community and institutional well-being and welfare depend upon these faculties being properly nurtured, developed and harmonized in each of these three agents of change. Current educational models often fail to address these areas adequately, especially the affective and conative domains.

Dorothy finds her way home to her true self by helping the Scarecrow, Tin Man and Lion uncover their hidden attributes. In one sense, each of us is in the role of Dorothy as we reach out to those along our path to help them fulfill their potential. In fact, it is only as we help others that
we ourselves are enabled to achieve our goals. In another sense, all of the characters in The Wizard of Oz can be seen as different aspects of our inner lives. The interplay between the brain, heart and will in becoming our true selves and helping others develop their potential is a complex, unfolding and ongoing story.

On our way to the gleaming Emerald City of Oz, which we believe holds all our answers, we discover that much of what we think is real is but an illusion and that that which is real is found within. As the veils are removed from our eyes and we begin to realize the hollowness of much of what we have believed, we can further process and determine with our own minds, hearts and wills what is true, loving and just. As we proceed on our journeys, we will be enabled to see more clearly authentic expressions of these principles and to recognize how our previous beliefs and perceptions were faulty.

There is no such thing as too much truth, love or justice; however, if the expression of truth is not moderated by loving-kindness and fair-mindedness, it is possible that it can be harmful. The same is true of love and justice. The three must be used in harmony with one another, and their skillful and artistic application and expression refined in our daily interactions. In many ways, they are like the three primary colors, which can be combined in different proportions to create all other colors. We human beings are like artists who paint the unique and beautiful canvases of our world with the many virtues that can be derived from applying three foundational virtues of truth, love and justice in different combinations and ways.

We use knowledge, feeling and willpower together to grow and develop. Knowledge can modify our feelings, skills or will to act, but if our feelings and will are not also transformed, little actual alteration in our behavior will occur. Even when our knowledge of right and wrong is sound, our valuing, willpower and moral commitment may not be sufficient to translate that knowledge into action.

The development and integrated application of truth, love and justice is necessary to help create a healthier individual and society. These principles help develop well-balanced and vital individuals, communities and institutions. They work regardless of context and challenges. Individuals and society suffer from the denial of these aspects of their reality. Smart, eloquent, powerful and attractive people who only pretend to honor the principles of truth, love and justice, have been the cause of much harm. The world is in dire need of leaders at all levels of society who possess the authentic knowledge, altruistic values, and autonomous will necessary to guide their communities and institutions in these difficult times.

As we grow in competence, we are able to take increasing responsibility for our own process of developing and becoming, using our unfolding capacities to realize even more of our potentialities. The loss to society of those who have not developed the necessary skills to succeed is devastating, to say nothing of the loss to those individuals.
When we help others develop a truer picture of their real selves, including strengths and weaknesses, and have helped them develop their brains, hearts and courage, a new reservoir of energy is freed up which results in an increase of these capabilities. When we act, our brains, hearts and courage become visible to others. Therefore, we affect not only our selves, but our environment, beginning a cycle of growth that involves both ourselves and others. This feedback can create new motivation and lead to better ways of thinking, feeling and acting.

We can use the following three questions to improve our decision-making process and our lives: 1. Is it true? 2. Is it loving? 3. Is it just? As we know, these questions are not always easy to answer, and it is not likely that everyone will come to the same conclusions about any given matter. Decisions should nevertheless be made based on a full and frank consideration of these principles. All three should be weighed by individuals, communities and institutions in making choices as a society and in living our lives as individuals. When used together they bring about wisdom, unity and prosperity. As we build unity among the diversity of expressions of truth, love and justice, our communities and institutions, as well as the individuals within them, will flourish.
Chapter 2. Truth

What is Truth?

Truth is defined in the American Heritage Dictionary as “conformity to fact or actuality, a statement proven to be or accepted as true.” It is related to sincerity, integrity and fidelity, to an original or standard. Truth is that which is considered to be the supreme reality and to possess the ultimate meaning and value of existence. Truthfulness is considered the foundation of all virtues (‘Abdu’l-Bahá cited in Shoghi Effendi, 1990, p. 26).

Of the three primary virtues of truth, love and justice, truth seems to be the principle upon which we as a society can most likely come to some agreement, as we already have certain standards of truth that are commonly accepted, as well as a language of truth seeking and speaking. There is, however, an acute need for an unbiased and independent investigation of the truth surrounding education. This cognitive search for truth should be freed from subjective prejudices, superstitions, traditions and politics. The ideas that “might makes right” and that those in power should determine the rules need to give way to objective, scientific and verifiable fact-finding guided by principles of morality, justice, unity and the consideration for the rights of all people.

The falsehoods that we have grown up include the many mental maps and paradigms with which we navigate our world. It is often because we fail to examine these wrongly held concepts that we fail to progress. More recently psychologists and neuroscientists are beginning to uncover the many ways we make mistakes in thinking. Popular books by such authors as Daniel Gilbert, Malcolm Gladwell, Daniel Kahneman, Steven Levitt, Steven Pinker, Martin Seligman, Nassim Taleb and many others have discussed some of these. As we objectively consider the various theories and criterion of truth, examining which claims have greater merit, we will develop our capacity to discern truth from falsehood, and thereby further release our potential and realize the possibilities for peace and prosperity.

The point is that what we take as true can be subjected to a number of analysis and may depend upon perspective. Ultimately we never definitely say that something is true, as our understanding of that truth will vary according to our language and knowledge. But it is important to interrogate our beliefs and commonly held assumptions. Saying that something is true does not make it so. Saying that something conforms to external reality requires extensive analysis of both subjective and objective factors and terms. We look for subjective and objective completeness, consistency and coherence in a truth or system, but often fail to see the lack of these very things when they are apparent to others. By validating our views with others we are
able to overcome some of our biases and weaknesses, but still are limited by the dispositions, views and abilities of the group.

It is generally acknowledged that our sense of truth is socially constructed and that people from different social contexts will view reality through their respective lenses. If those we are looking to for validation share similar worldviews, we are more likely to have our views confirmed, even if they are wrong. In view of the above, we might view truth as more of a process, than a product. Our truth emerges and evolves and we try it out in our lives. By confessing the inadequacy of our knowledge and being open to continually refining it, we are able to discard those ideas and ways of thinking that are no longer helpful and to test and adopt new and better approximations of truth and more mature ways of ascertaining it.

**How Do We Know Truth?**

Our perception of truth is heavily influenced by the individuals, institutions and communities with whom we interact. Because we each develop a unique perception of reality that we construct from our experiences and the cause-and-effect relations we create in our minds, we must continually renegotiate our understanding of what is true. We can also become more aware of some errors to which we are prone in our efforts to ascertain truth.

The ways that human beings gather knowledge and determine truth can be considered using four basic categories:

1. Senses and experience
2. Reason, logic and empiricism
3. Tradition and religion

Each of these is limited and fallible, as both experience and science can show. We will briefly explore these views to see why none of them can be relied upon, even though we do so all the time.

**1. Senses and Experience**

Our senses perceive illusions and mirages as true—tell us the world is flat, for example, and suggest that the sun revolves around the earth. Further, our perceptions are selective, often based on what we are looking for, and are remembered in a very unreliable manner. Our perceptions and experiences are both limited and biased, heavily influenced by our environments, and especially by our cultures and our memories. We focus on evidence we have and do not think about what we do not have or see. Moreover, our experiencing self is different
from our remembering and forecasting self, as has been shown in numerous studies (Gilbert, 2005; Kahneman, 2011).

A good deal of research highlights the problems of using our perceptions and experience alone as standards of truth. Psychophysics, which quantitatively studies the relationship between physical stimuli and events and how we sense, perceive and interpret them, has found that we have a diminishing sensitivity to quantity on several levels. Our senses of proportion are skewed as size or intensity changes and we lose an accurate perspective in ranges greatly increase or decrease (Kahneman, 2011). Another example that has been extensively studied is the accuracy of eyewitness reports.

Indeed, there is no area in which social science research has done more to illuminate a legal issue. More than 2,000 studies on the topic have been published in professional journals in the past 30 years.

What they collectively show is that it is perilous to base a conviction on a witness’s identification of a stranger. Memory is not a videotape. It is fragile at best, worse under stress and subject to distortion and contamination.

The unreliability of eyewitness identification is matched by its power.

(Liptak, 2011)

2. Reason, Logic and Empiricism

The limitations of reason, logic, empiricism and rationality have been extensively scrutinized by postmodern analysis, and problems of human reason are further exposed by modern psychologists, as described above. Beyond being limited, reason and rationalism can be perverted to undermine truth, love and justice.

It is curious that the position of extremist rationalism, as represented by the myth of total reason, leads to the same repressive and antihumanist political consequences as are encouraged by the irrationalism of fundamentalist religion….extreme rationalists must resort to emotional generalizations in the guise of reason. The results are empty propositions, simplistic generalizations, and ideological fantasies dressed in the mantle of rationality. The myth of total reason, in other words, destroys reason and replaces it with substitute gratification and irrationalism.

(Saeidi, 1987, pp. 20-21)

Meanwhile, scientific and logical conclusions are often based on assumptions, statements or theories that are abstract and not verifiable. For example, it may be logically true that if all A is a B and if C is an A, then C is a B, but statements that use this logic are often misused may not be accurate if underlying assumptions are incorrect:
Although the statement “if I believe something to be right, then he whose opinions differ from mine must be wrong” passes the tests of formal logic and although it is applicable in countless situations, its usefulness vanishes once the object of discussion becomes relatively complex. It is not that “A” and “not A” can both be true, but that the vastness of truth does not allow most matters of belief, if there is any depth to them at all, to be reduced to such comparisons. The only options this simplistic posture finally leaves open are either religious and ideological fanaticism or the brand of relativism that does away with faith, embraces skepticism, and idolizes doubt. (Arbab, 2000, p. 151)

It is clear that scholars, scientists and philosophers often disagree on what is true, even when considering the same data and facts. Their current understandings are generally expected to eventually be replaced or modified by truths that are more accurate and encompassing. Basic questions about the workings of our universe and environment remain contested. However, science does offer methods for verifying truth that allow us greater reliability than other approaches, and should be used to do so whenever possible.

3. Tradition and Religion

Truths based upon tradition and religion can vary based upon the beliefs and faiths from which they are derived, but they also differ from culture to culture, and even among individuals within the same communities and institutions. In addition, the accepted beliefs of the various traditions and religions have been seriously challenged and undermined by both science and postmodern philosophy. What was accepted by previous generations as true and good has been later seen as false and prejudiced. These accepted customs were not scrutinized and were based on limited and biased assessments and information, allowing for equally limited and biased decisions. We are strongly influenced by the norms and models we have been raised with and taught to believe, and do not know about or seriously consider alternative views.

On the basis of what standard, then, do we privilege one tradition or religion over another? As our understanding of religion is also based upon our limited reason and on emotional attachments, and we can see how these varying interpretations are contradictory and change over time, interpretations of the “truth” of Holy Scriptures must necessarily also be reexamined and renewed. “The historicity of reason is built on the idea that both the objective reality of the divine Word and the subjective reality of the human mind are constantly changing and developing” (Saeidi, 1987, p. 10). As we evolve more refined processes of investigating truth and more objective approaches to verifying our traditions and religions, we will become more sophisticated and successful in integrating their various truths and to discard the superstitions and outworn creeds that still weigh them down.
4. Inspiration and Intuition

Though inspiration and intuition may be convincing to the person who experiences them, these also vary from person to person and time to time, but like other approaches to truth, they are prone to error and lack the verification of their validity required for us to reasonably rely upon them. We have all had experiences in which intuitions did not lead to the truth and can think of instances in which individual intuitions differed. This is something we seem to see played out in many arenas. We link truth to what we feel is true which is influenced by our emotions and desires, as well as fancies and imaginations. How are we to separate true inspirations from hopeful wishes? How do we distinguish our subjective beliefs from objective realities?

When we make our decisions without recognizing our inclinations to favor what we are inclined towards and to create all sorts of reasons to support our choices, we are in danger of being led astray. We are susceptible to the cognitive and affective errors of finding backing for ideas that create personal ease and comfort, that confirm the mental maps we follow however unconscious we may be off them, which cause use to overlook errors in our thinking and fill in the blanks more than is reasonable. The scientific evidence is that we unconsciously compute more than is intended, substitute easier questions for harder ones and respond more strongly to losses that to gains (Kahneman, 2011).

Consequently, the more of the above approaches we can use together, combining both scientific and moral values to validate our claims of truth, the more we can rely on the conclusions we reach. These limited ways of knowing can become checks on one another.

Science and Religion: Complementary Paths to Truth

Science and reason provide especially powerful tools for exploring the physical aspects of reality, while religion and philosophy are very useful in exploring its non-material aspects. If we balance and use these tools wisely, recognizing their strengths and limitations, we can avoid the fanaticism, absolutism and fundamentalism to which they are susceptible. A scientific approach to investigating the claims and interpretations of religion and a moral and spiritual consideration of scientific findings are essential for either to be constructive.

Science and religion are the two broad categories of truth claims that can be most effectively used in our search for truth. Each by itself is powerful, but subject to misuse and abuse. Together they serve as complements to one another to help us in “(1) developing our inner resources to respond appropriately to unexpected events or to actions by the environment on us, and (2) learning how to initiate positive and productive interaction with the environment” (Hatcher, 1998, p. 38).
Using reliable and trustworthy sources and methods of science and religion together offers a more balanced approach to and a standard of truth. However, this can be a challenge, especially in the realm of religion, where so much superstition, dogma and fanaticism has crept in through centuries of interpretation and perversion. A scientific approach to investigating the claims and interpretations of religion is essential for determining the truth of statements made in its name. William Hatcher claims, “religion, like science, is most correctly viewed as a knowledge-generating enterprise, rather than a belief-affirming or rule-making enterprise” (Hatcher & Hatcher, 1996, p. 122).

The so-called hard, or narrow, sciences explore physical data that can be experienced via the senses. The softer, or broad, sciences study social and psychological realities through empirical observations. The spiritual sciences, practiced for millennia, investigate the more abstract reality of the spirit via practices and evidence derived from revealed scripture and religion. All three sciences share three common features through which to ground their truth claims—1) they are based upon a paradigm (injunction), 2) they require some empirical evidence (experience) and 3) they can be confirmed (validation) (Wilber, 2000). In other words, using certain methods or injunctions we can conduct experiments or have direct experiences which can produce experimental data or evidence that can be verified by qualified experts or external parties, which should lead to a more reliable and valid understanding of our world.

Within each of these three domains of the physical, social and spiritual sciences, earlier less refined views have been replaced or transcended by understandings that are more expansive, inclusive and complete. This progression and evolution of knowledge has been a springboard to advancing civilization throughout the ages. For example, in astronomy and physics, the early views propounded by Greek philosophers were new insights at that time and their observations formed the basis for later discoveries and specific laws formulated by the likes of Kepler and others. These views were further refined, consolidated and made more comprehensive by the work of Newton who propounded general laws of motion and gravitation that explained Kepler’s earlier laws about the movement of planets. These early laws were accurate but incomplete; however, they have formed the foundation upon which later findings, including Einstein’s theory of relativity and the later and more complete theories such as quantum mechanics, have been based. Each new contribution to knowledge extended our insights and furthered our understanding.

Likewise, progressive unfolding of knowledge occurs in the social and spiritual sciences. For example, the early religions along with their social and spiritual teachings—each valid and reliable in their own experimental condition and context—were followed by later religions with more comprehensive and complete understandings and guidance on social and spiritual reality. These more advanced theories of living and being built upon the earlier ideas and practices in ways that increased human well-being and understanding. As these truths unfold according to our increased understanding, they are better suited to changing domains and circumstances.
The discovery of the true meaning of a text or a work of art is never finished; it is in fact an infinite process. Not only are fresh sources of error constantly excluded, so that the true meaning has filtered out of it all kinds of things that obscure it, but there emerge continually new sources of understanding which reveal unsuspected elements of meaning. (Gadamer, cited in Lample, 2009, p. 182)

As in the physical sciences, religions go through various stages of understanding and progress. The earlier stages involve limited understanding of the relationship between cause and effect. This stage is based upon beliefs that must lead to simple hypotheses and experiments if they are to be validated. Later, models and theories can be developed and tested based the knowledge accrued from earlier learnings and from which basic laws might be articulated. From all of this knowledge, more general and comprehensive laws can be advanced and their worth put to the test.

However, in religion, we are given laws and theories related to phenomena concerning our physical, social, psychological and spiritual natures through a being that is considered as all-knowing, all-loving and all-powerful. Rather than having to discover these universal laws and principles through a long and slow scientific process, they are revealed to us through inspired sources. However, the comprehending of these physical, social and spiritual insights and our process of hypotheses making, experimenting, validating, understanding and applying these laws and principles goes through stages similar to those in the physical sciences.

Many of these religious laws and theories can be verified scientifically, and should be as much as is possible. If they do not stand up to rigorous scientific scrutiny, they should be considered suspect. However, not even the great laws and theories of the physical realm can be proven. All that can be ascertained with some certainty is that all that we currently know support our conclusions. Those more general and comprehensive the laws, the more valid and reliable we can suppose them to be. Until someone can falsify their claims, they stand as truths upon which we can count (see Furútan, undated, for further exploration of some of the themes above)

These religious wisdoms regarding physical, social, psychological and spiritual matters have been the cause of the progress of humanity, and it has often been only gradually, sometimes after centuries, that the cause and effect relationships behind these injunctions have been uncovered by science. Many religious teachings still fall outside the ability of current science to validate or disprove. Religion can tell us what laws and principles are operating in our universe long before science may be able verify them with empirical evidence. Balancing both approaches greatly advances human understanding of the universe.

However, present-day understanding and practice of religion, its role and its relevance have been seriously criticized, questioned and undermined in our world dominated by materialistic notions and fashions. Just as religion has been confronted by science, both rightly
and wrongly, the modern methods and ideals of materialistic science that claim to provide a solid basis for understanding have been challenged by postmodern thought (Lample, 2009, p. 163), which regards truth as subjective. Likewise, postmodernism increasingly considers religious claims as irrational.

Part of the problem of the modern age is that we are trying to apply new, vital scientific principles to old, outmoded and corrupted forms of religion. Religion, like science, evolves, and old understandings are replaced by more current, complete and accurate ones. For example, if we compare the modern science of medicine with the earlier practices of medicine, we would consider the older ones primitive, based on ignorance, superstition and a limited application of scientific method or principle. The conclusions drawn from a broad range of the latest verified scientific findings are certainly more reliable and advanced than the early studies based upon conjecture and limited observations, experiments or experience. Similarly, we must look to the latest expressions and understandings of sacred scripture for a more complete, accurate and up-to-date description and explanation of life and reality, rather than the outmoded and discredited ones.

Though neither the spiritual nor physical aspects of reality change in their essence, our capacities to understand and interact with them do. Just as science advances, so does religion. Religions are revealed according to the capacity of the people to whom they are given and can only be comprehended to their limited understanding. As humanity advances and conditions change, so must the spiritual and social guidance given. The universal spiritual laws, ideals and principles are elucidated according to the growing capacity of the people based upon their learning and incorporating earlier lessons.

Like our scientific understanding of the laws of physical reality, our ability to understand and apply many of the religious laws and ordinances in the spiritual and social realm evolve over time. They are adjusted in each succeeding religion to meet the social requirements of the time. Just as what is considered true, loving and just evolves along with our individual physical, psychological and spiritual development, so do religious teachings to address the collective maturing of humanity. The concepts and practices of truth, love and justice have changed accordingly throughout the history of religion and have been the central and vital force in the further advancement of civilization.

The foundations of truth, love and justice, as well as our modern day conceptions of them, can be traced back to the earliest expressions of religious belief and practice. But religion, like science, should incorporate the learnings from the past while it moves ahead with the latest insights and applications. In addition, we need to look to the authenticated and reliable texts of the original teachings, not their corrupted and unauthenticated forms, and then scientifically examine the hypotheses and theories that have derived from them. Those that can be tested and
have shown themselves to true should be adopted as general laws and theories upon which we can base further development.

We can look at the common themes, insights and teachings of all religions, those that have stood the test of time and proven to be helpful in multiple experiments for patterns and evidence of what works (Clarken, 2010). As we examine how their spiritual truths, social teachings and moral applications have unfolded and been revealed over, our assurance of their value for our time and our determination of those that were suited for the particular time and people to which they are revealed, will grow. Like many of the current scientific hypothesis and theories today, our analysis and evaluation of these religious laws and teachings are at an early stage of development and open to many different interpretations. We must be comfortable with this level of uncertainty and ambiguity and not feel the need to draw conclusions where they are not yet warranted.

The standard in both science and religion is that if a law, theory or principle can be disproved, then it can no longer be considered as true. This is a high, but worthy standard by which to measure the validity of a science or religion and to differentiate those that might be considered true and those that can be shown to be false. A scientific approach is an effective way of checking the subjective interpretations of religious beliefs and scripture. The scientific thinking process helps us better determine truth from error, more accurately investigate material and spiritual reality and lessen distortions or inadequacies of knowledge.

Similarly, religion is essential for providing moral import, direction and meaning to scientific findings; it guides us in the righteous and equitable use of that knowledge. If we balance and use those two tools wisely, recognizing their strengths and limitations, we can avoid the fanaticism, absolutism and fundamentalism to which both science and religion are susceptible, and which lead to reductionist materialism and superstitious dogmatism respectively.

The creative dialogue between science and religion is an objective, profound and practical source of truth and knowledge generation. Each offers a perspective, and together they provide a more comprehensive view of reality. Broad, nonlinear, interpretable revelation is balanced by narrower, linear and testable scientific knowledge, and minimalist, bottom-up, partial science complements maximalist, top-down, comprehensive religion. The domains of science and religion are not dichotomous, but complementary—each contributes to the other and is needed to balance and regulate the limitations and excesses to which the other is prone. Religion gives meaning and moral direction to scientific endeavors, which are vulnerable for abuse by selfish and narrow interests, and science can help verify and validate religious beliefs which can devolve into fanaticism and superstition without the moderating influence of scientific reason. Together, they can contribute significantly to the advancement of civilization as indicated below.
Developing our Minds to Know Truth

Making use of the above knowledge sources allows us to expand systematically our framework for determining truth. Developing the mind in an unfettered search for knowledge and independent investigation of truth is essential for human development and realizing human potential. The mind’s guiding principle and actualizing virtue should be truth. As we develop our unique perceptions of reality, constructed from our senses, experiences and limited knowledge, we must continually re-evaluate and renegotiate our understandings of truth with other people, organizations and communities with whom we interact. A key goal of the mind and an object of truth is to know and understand ourselves. Knowing our strengths and weaknesses and developing our potentialities are fundamental tasks for each individual.

The skill of knowing is a process of understanding reality as it really is, rather than as we imagine it to be. Those who understand reality are able to interact with it more fully, happily, effectively, honestly and successfully. Knowledge is as a ladder that allows one to ascend to a higher comprehension of life. Those who do not know the fundamental laws and principles of human reality are bound to suffer because of their ignorance. Divorced from the guiding principle of the search for truth, the emotional principle of love or the moral standard of justice, the mind can be dangerous to both the individual and society.

The faculties of the mind are related to the capacities to think, rationalize, remember, and comprehend, along with other cognitive functions that help us to know and to distinguish truth from falsehood. Accurate thinking requires a disposition towards truth and is related to what is generally referred to as intelligence, defined as follows:

A very general mental capability that, among other things, involves the ability to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend complex ideas, learn quickly and learn from experience. It is not merely book learning, a narrow academic skill, or test-taking smarts. Rather, it reflects a broader and deeper capability for comprehending our surroundings—“catching on,” “making sense” of things, or “figuring out” what to do. (Gottfredson, 1997, p 13)

Through our and others’ experiences, we develop an understanding of life. Being able to think critically, constructively and creatively to comprehend reality and solve problems is an important capability. We should use scientific methods to help validate what our senses, reason, traditions and intuition tell us. Each of these ways of knowing can by itself help “to initiate positive and productive interaction with the environment” (Hatcher, 1998, p. 38), but used together, they provide a surer foundation upon which to ascertain more certain truth.

Thinking and knowing relate to cognition, which is defined as “an intellectual process by which knowledge is gained from perception or ideas” (Webster’s Dictionary). Cognition is one
of the most studied areas of psychology and of education. The taxonomy of the cognitive domain divides knowledge into ascending levels of complexity that can be related to truth and learning. These levels, ordered from lowest to highest, are: recall, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. (Bloom, Englehart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956)

Recall means to remember or recognize, comprehension involves understanding, and application requires the ability to make use of knowledge in practical situations. Analysis requires the ability to break down knowledge into its component parts, synthesis is the bringing together of parts of information to gain new understanding, and evaluation is the ability to judge the value of the relevant facts and issues. Creativity has been added by Anderson & Krathwohl as a level that transcends the others and involves the ability to generate new understanding, patterns or structures. All seven levels can be applied to four kinds of knowledge identified by Anderson & Krathwohl: factual, conceptual, procedural and metacognitive (2001). In such a model, a verb is generally used to describe cognitive processes and an object the knowledge dimension. For example, applying the cognitive process of creativity at the factual level may result in the generation of unique logs or lists based on facts. At the conceptual level it may be manifested in the assembling of ideas and at the procedural and metacognitive, the design of processes and creation of models, respectively.

The taxonomy of the cognitive domain applied to truth would be as follows:

1. Recognize and retrieve relevant information related to truth.
2. Understand and construct meaning about the truth.
3. Apply or use truth appropriately.
4. Analyze, break down and compare truth.
5. Synthesize, connect and relate different truths and aspects of truth.
6. Evaluate and make judgments about truth.
7. Create or generate novel expressions, patterns or structures of truth.

Developing reasoning and powers for unfettered search for knowledge and independent investigation of truth are essential to thinking for oneself and to true learning.

Since, then, the challenge is the empowerment of humankind through a vast increase in access to knowledge, the strategy that can make this possible must be constructed around an ongoing and intensifying dialogue between science and religion. It is—or by now should be—a truism that, in every sphere of human activity and at every level, the insights and skills that represent scientific accomplishment must look to the force of spiritual commitment and moral principle to ensure their appropriate application. People need, for example, to learn how to separate fact from conjecture—indeed to distinguish between subjective views and objective reality; the extent to which individuals and institutions so equipped can contribute to human progress, however, will be determined
by their devotion to truth and their detachment from the promptings of their own interests and passions. (Bahá’í International Community, 1995)
Chapter 3. Love

What is Love?

Love is attraction manifested in the physical realm as the force holding all of creation together. In human interactions, it is a force for healthy individual and collective development. It is in loving relationships with physical, mental and spiritual entities that our affective capacities expand to transcend ever higher and broader levels of competence. Love has played a central role in the philosophies of Empedocles, Plato, Augustine, Pico, Hegel and Schelling, as well as in existentialism and depth psychology (Tillich, 1954, p. 4).

The emotions of happiness, sadness, anger, fear and disgust can all be viewed as varied expressions of our loving capacity. For example, happiness can be described as an emotion that results when an object or entity that is loved is near or treated in a way that brings pleasure or satisfaction. Sadness can result when what we love is removed from us or hurt. Anger may occur when the object we love is treated unjustly or threatened, and fear when the loved thing is threatened and we are unable to do anything about it. Finally, disgust can be triggered when what we love is somehow violated or threatened in revolting ways (Diessner, 2002).

Love is the vital and potent releaser of the heart’s potential. Loving relates to affect, “a feeling or emotion as distinguished from cognition, thought, or action” (Webster's Dictionary). Emotion is defined as “an intense feeling; a complex and usually strong subjective response, as love or fear” (Webster's Dictionary).

In spite of all the misuses to which the word love is subjected, in literature and daily life, it has not lost its emotional power. It elicits a feeling of warmth, of passion, of happiness, of fulfillment, whenever it is used. It brings to mind past or present or anticipated occasions of loving or being loved. Its root meaning, therefore, seems to be an emotional state which like all emotion cannot be defined, but which must be described in its qualities and expression and is not a matter of intention of demand, but of happening or gift. (Tillich, 1954, p. 3)

However, love is deeper and more complex than emotion or a feeling of emotional warmth. As a principle, love can be defined as an active force of attraction, and, as such, can be considered the most elemental force in the universe, holding together and harmonizing all matter and spirit. In relationships, it involves acceptance and concern. It is considered a vital and basic aspect of human existence by all of the world’s religions. Love gives us energy and directs our actions. On the highest level, love is the attraction to good, beauty and truth. Love has the
potential and power to overcome the repulsive forces of conflict and hate. It causes us to be altruistic—acting for others’ good and giving priority to legitimate needs of others over our own needs. We engender love when we encourage beauty, happiness and the best in others’ and our own lives.

Love is an attractive and constructive force that operates according to measurable laws and principles. In the physical realm, we can measure these attractive forces, such as gravity and electromagnetism. In the social and spiritual realms, love is less easily subjected to empirical investigation, though great progress has been seen in our ability to do so over the last decades.

Love is a potent force for learning, and is essential to any successful educational endeavor. Any effort that is not motivated and guided by the principle of love will be limited or harmful in its effect. The greatest teachers are inspired by love. If we love and care about one another and respect and honor other’s positive contribution, our communities will flourish. Such an attitude helps to create a love for learning, a vital force in the acquisition and expansion of knowledge.

Religion and Love

In our discussion of truth, we considered how science and religion both contribute to its realization. In relation to love, religion has been and continues to be the primary defining and directing force. Religion is said to be derived from the Latin word “religio” which means to bind together.

Augustine says the “order of love” (ordo amoris) is the “brief and true definition of virtue.” According to this order, the human person must love everything in creation according to its proper relationship to God, which means loving God above all creatures and not inordinately loving any creature as the human person’s ultimate end. (Cahall, 2005, p. 117)

We will refer to Christianity here for an example, to better understand love and the role religion has played and can play in its development. Jesus Christ clearly identified love as the essential law of life, religion and well-being.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40, KJB)

Jesus expanded and deepened the accepted understanding and practice of love beyond God and family to include loving our enemies and turning the other cheek. As St. Paul
elaborates, Jesus saw love as patient, kind, bearing, believing, hopeful and enduring; not envious, boastful, irritable, resentful, self-insistent or rejoicing in wrongdoing (1 Corinthians 13:1-13). This love makes all things possible. Further, it is made quite clear that those who do not do right or love are not of God: “This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother” (1 John 3:10 NIV).

With such lofty sentiments and clear instructions supported by powerful examples, narratives and parables, why is not this one teaching of love, which can be found at the core of all of the world’s religions, more prevalent in our reality? Why are these teachings on love, which serve as a great antidote to the selfishness, narcissism and entitlement we find growing today, not the central guiding principle of our lives, including our education?

Several reasons for this failure go beyond the scope of our present theme, but one I think is pertinent to our discussion here: the corruption of religion. This is an important theme for us to explore here because I am encouraging us to look to religion as a vital source for guidance in understanding truth, love and justice. In doing so, we have to discern true religion from that which calls itself religion but which has ignored or perverted the central principles of its scriptures. Likewise, we have to distinguish true science from pseudo-science. Both religion and science can be and have been corrupted and misused by ideology and self-interest.

Let us again turn to Christianity for our example. The true religion of Christianity is focused on love, as evidenced by the words and life of its founder, Jesus Christ; however, much of what we see practiced today in the name of Christianity is focused on doctrines introduced centuries after Christ, many of which contravene his original message. Over time, church leaders have focused on these dogmas and their own faulty interpretations of Christ’s teachings to such an extent that Christianity today is more associated with ideologies and doctrines than with its primary principle of love. The introduced rituals, dogmas and doctrines, which are not mentioned in the New Testament, have caused division, dissension and enmity, rather than the love that Christ so clearly intended (Hatcher, 1998, p. 8-11). Similar corruptions have occurred in most other world religions. A return, then, to this essential teaching would seem necessary if society is to progress.

**Science and Love**

The influence of emotions in human development is a vital aspect of the application of the principle of love. Though the importance of love and emotions are beginning to receive greater attention in the social sciences, they have been less explored in scientific literature and treated less often in policy than have knowing and cognition.
A growing body of scientific evidence demonstrates that emotional development begins early in life and is closely connected with the emergence of cognitive, language, and social skills. Early emotional development lays the foundation for later academic performance, mental health, and the capacity to form successful relationships. Despite this knowledge, most policies related to early childhood focus exclusively on cognitive development as it relates to school readiness, neglecting the importance of such capacities as the ability to regulate one’s own emotions and behavior and to manage successful interactions with other people. As a result, many of our nation’s policies, such as those that regulate child care provider training, availability of early childhood mental health services, and early identification and treatment of behavioral disorders, overlook emotional development as a focus of evaluation and intervention. (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004, abstract)

Sternberg’s (1986) theory suggests that love has three elements: The first, intimacy, encompasses feelings of closeness and bondedness; the second, passion, reflects physical drives and the third, decision, relates to commitment. Love can be seen as a combination of acceptance and concern. Acceptance without concern is tolerance and concern without acceptance is criticism or conditional love (Hatcher, 1998). The kind and degree of love experienced depends on the values and interactions of our knowing and willing capacities (Clarken, 1986).

Love is related to the affective domain, which has been divided by Krathwohl, Bloom and Masia (1964) into five hierarchical levels with several sublevels. The lowest of these levels is receiving, which merely requires the person to be aware, accept the input, and control attention. Next is responding, displaying new behavior from experience; then valuing, being involved or committed; organization, changing the value system to accommodate new values; and finally, characterization by value, behaving consistently with the new value. The affective domain centers on attraction to values and various manifestations of love.

Using the affective domain to develop love might include the following:
1. receiving and showing awareness of love
2. reacting and responding to love
3. valuing and developing a commitment to love
4. operating within a system of values that relate to and accommodate love
5. showing a consistent pattern and framework of love

Love also relates to emotional intelligence, “the ability to perceive emotion, integrate emotion to facilitate thought, understand emotions and to regulate emotions to promote personal growth” (Mayer & Salovey 1997). Goleman’s definition of this intelligence, “a feeling and its distinctive thoughts, psychological and biological states, and range of propensities to act” (1995, p. 289), includes four main competencies of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (1998). Mayer, Roberts & Barsade state that emotional intelligence
“concerns the ability to carry out accurate reasoning about emotions and the ability to use emotions and emotional knowledge to enhance thought” (2008, p. 511).

Emotional development “has been tied to cognitive functioning (Isen, 2008; Lazarus, 1999), conative development (Buckley & Saarni, 2009; Saarni, 1997), social development (Goleman, 2006), moral development (Hoffman, 2000), spiritual development (Guela, 2004), and self-views (Hamacheck, 2000)” (Huitt, 2010). The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2004) states,

…the core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one’s own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one’s own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and sustain relationships. (p. 1)

Emotional intelligence and affective development are the foundation of progress in individuals, institutions and societies. They are the foundation of unity, motivation and learning, which can overcome conflict and hate through self-sacrificing and selfless actions for others’ good.

All the processes of change, imagination, and learning ultimately depend on love. Human caregivers love their babies in a particularly intense and significant way. That love is one of the engines of human change. Parental love isn’t just a primitive and primordial instinct, continuous with the nurturing behavior of other animals (though certainly there are such continuities). Instead, our extended life as parents also plays a deep role in the emergence of the most sophisticated and characteristically human capacities. (Gopnik, 2009, p. 15)

Feelings engendered in relationships requiring love, harmony and unity lead to moral behavior. Affective development should lead to happiness in the individual and others. Understanding these forces can help us to regulate and direct their influence in ways that are more beneficial to others and ourselves. It stands to reason that any effort not motivated and guided by healthy emotions and the principle of love will be limited or harmful in its effect. We must overcome lower attachments, desires or passions and cultivate higher loves and attractions that lead to interconnectedness, service, reciprocity, caring and cooperation.

As we can see, love is a necessity in life. It is the foundation of healthy relationships and societies. It is the generator of unity. We sorely need it in our schools and in all our affairs. However, it is not an easily measurable or definable construct, and we tend not to talk about love in public affairs or acknowledge its role in our institutions and policies. As science matures, no
doubt it will lead us to a greater understanding of love, which may help us to better understand its role in our reality.

**Developing our Hearts to Feel and Manifest Love**

Teilhard de Chardin suggests that, since humanity has developed its brain, it now needs a heart for “the ultimate wholeness of its powers of unification” (1959/2004, p. 172). The Greeks, too, considered the courage of the heart a necessary essence of soul (Boadella, 1998, p. 9; Gidley, 2007, p. 113). Throughout philosophy, religion and literature are examples of the role the heart plays as the seat of physical as well as moral and spiritual life.

There are several definitions for heart, most of which generally refer to its physical or emotional character. Definition number three in the Encarta Dictionary describes the heart as “the source and center of emotional life, where the deepest and sincerest feelings are located and a person is most vulnerable to pain”. Here, we are talking about that heart, defined as “3. basis of emotional life, 4. character, 5. compassion, 6. affection, 7. spirit” (Encarta Dictionary).

As the capacities of the mind are generally associated with the brain, those of the emotional and spiritual heart tend to be associated with the physical heart. We have traditionally seen the heart as an important part of our natures, and the prevalence of everyday expressions such as “to give” or “to take heart”, demonstrates its role in our lives. Interestingly, modern science is providing evidence to support the notion that the physical heart is connected to our emotional and metaphysical heart in ways beyond the metaphorical. We have come to learn that the organ of the heart does more than pump blood. It communicates neurologically, biochemically, electromagnetically and hydrostatically with the rest of the body. HeartMath is one such research-based approach to using scientific data to identify and develop the many capacities of the heart and describe how they are regulated by love (Childre & Martin, 1999).

The engagement of the heart manifests an affective state of consciousness, distinguished from cognitive and volitional states. The heart is influenced by the mind and will, and it influences them. Emotional health, morality and spirituality affect the ability to attach effectively to others, regulate emotion and moods, process cognitively and act responsibly (Stillwell, 2002). Those interested in developing human capacities should first purify their own hearts with love so that the mind and heart, reason and emotion and thinking and feeling can work together most effectively.

What are some tools that help develop the heart? Traditionally human beings have turned to prayer, meditation and reading and living according to sacred scripture to develop their emotional and spiritual hearts. Serving others, overlooking faults and giving priority to the legitimate needs of others over our own needs are encouraged toward this aim. HeartMath recommends consciously disengaging from mental and emotional reactions while focusing on
the area around your physical heart and on positive emotions such as love, locking in to the heart’s power and cutting through distorted feelings. These tools have been shown to improve physical, mental and emotional health (Childre & Martin, 1999).

Purity of motive and positive emotions such as happiness and joy enhance inquisitiveness and enthusiasm, which can initiate and sustain a cycle of growth and development. Love is the most powerful force and positive emotion of the heart. It is also an idea, an attitude, a virtue, a state and a social phenomenon that gives us vitality and drive. We put our energy and effort into what we love, what is in our hearts. Also, being loved helps us experience cognitive, affective and physical benefits to better realize our latent talents.
Chapter 4. Justice

What is Justice?

Justice is the guiding principle of will, and our willpower must be used in its interest and promotion. Justice is defined as fairness or reasonableness, especially in the way people are treated or decisions are made (Encarta Dictionary), and as the quality of justness, righteousness, equitableness, or moral rightness (Dictionary.com). Exercising will requires the capacity to strive and to initiate and sustain action to develop our powers for justice and good.

The principle of justice encourages us to strive for love and truth as we seek to eliminate prejudices and inequity from our environments and ourselves. Justice requires courage and generates greater intentionality. Through its application, we develop autonomy—the capacity to make independent moral decisions and act on them—and the ability to positively transform our inner lives and those of the people around us, creating a cycle and culture of growth, safety and well-being.

It is important here to distinguish between justice and legalism. Legalism is defined as “strict adherence to a literal interpretation of a law, rule, or religious moral code” (Encarta Dictionary). It is often substituted for the difficult and purifying process related to the more powerful concept of justice. For example, though we may abide by a moral code or a law, we may do so with malicious intent or without integrity. If the exercise of justice is not undertaken with a pure, loving motive and based on honesty and trustworthiness, it can become mere form without substance.

Plato’s (1991) dramatic dialogue on justice, The Republic, one of the most influential works of all time, concludes that justice is preferable to injustice and that the just life is better than the unjust life (Allen, 2006). In the dialogue, Socrates explains that justice causes and perfects the three other cardinal virtues of temperance, wisdom and courage.

John Rawls (1971), in his seminal work on political philosophy and ethics entitled A Theory of Justice, stated,

Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought. A theory however elegant and economical must be rejected or revised if it is untrue; likewise, laws and institutions no matter how efficient and well-arranged must be reformed or abolished if they are unjust. Each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override. (p. 1)
However, justice, like truth and love, is experienced subjectively, and, as such, is vulnerable to misinterpretation. Let me give two examples to illustrate. The first involves experiments where participants were asked to apply equal amounts of pressure to each other’s finger. Though they thought they were exerting the same pressure as they were given, they typically doled out about 40% more than they received. This escalation is the result of a cognitive error that perceives the pain we receive as greater than the pain we produce (Shergill, et al. 2003). Another set of experiments had two participants play the role of world leaders who were to respond to one another concerning whether to initiate a nuclear strike (Swann, Pelhman & Roberts, 1987). Later, when shown one of their own statements, they remembered the reasoning behind it, but when shown a statement from the other person, they remembered only how they responded to it. This self-serving selective remembering illustrates how our reasoning is biased by our point of view.

Together, these two experiments and others show how our subjective perception can lead us to imagine that we experience injustice in an imbalanced way, leading us to believe our actions and motives are justified while experiencing those taken toward us as less reasonable. As justice clearly has subjective and objective as well as individual and collective aspects, all of these need to be considered for a balanced perspective.

Will and the Conative Domain

Of the mind, heart and will, it seems the will has been the least understood and studied. Will has both direction and magnitude. In relation to cognition and motivation, it is referred to as volition, and in relation to affection as determination and desire. Psychologists refer to this area of thought as conation, “the aspect of mental processes or behavior directed toward action or change and including impulse, desire, volition, and striving” (The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Fourth Edition). Volition is defined as “the power or faculty of choosing.” Conative capacity is defined as “the enduring disposition to strive” (Brophy, 1987, p.40). In short, conation refers to our capacity to act and relates closely to the concept of power. People strong in conation are enterprising, energetic, determined, decisive, persistent, patient and organized (Giles, 1999).

Making decisions, setting goals, making plans to achieve goals, commitment, perseverance and evaluation of effort are some elements of the conative domain. Subcategories include the development of will power by thinking, deciding, doing for ourselves, carrying on in the face of difficulties and seeing challenges as opportunities for growth. Discipline, conscience, confidence, trust, faith and love are other areas that influence one’s volition and motivation.
There are several taxonomies for the conative domain. Atman’s taxonomy has five stages—perception, focus, engagement, involvement and transcendence. Using Atman’s five stages, we can describe how conative capabilities might apply to justice.

1. Perception—Identify a just purpose and direction that can be applied to experience.
2. Focus—Set just goals.
3. Engagement—Decide what is just action and how to accomplish it.
4. Involvement—Take initiative to do the just thing.
5. Transcendence—Commit wholly to just behavior, seeing actions through to completion, transcending obstacles and limitations.

We can apply Atman’s cyclical twelve steps or sub-stages to justice as well:

1. Recognize need, problem, challenge or opportunity,
2. Set a goal,
3. Brainstorm alternatives,
4. Assess risks,
5. Select a strategy,
6. Get your act in gear (visualize),
7. Organize,
8. Make it happen,
9. Push on,
10. Wrap it up,
11. Ooo & ah! (Evaluate),
12. Create purpose and long-range direction. (Atman, 1982)

These twelve stages and steps can be more simply categorized as aspects of planning (steps 2-6), acting (steps 6-10) and reflecting (steps 1, 11, 12). We can start at any place in this cyclical process in our efforts to develop justice.

Assagioli (1973) has posited six stages of willing that correlate closely with Atman’s five stages: (a) purpose (evaluation, motivation and intention), (b) deliberation, (c) choice/decision, (d) affirmation, (e) planning/programming and (f) direction of the execution. Snow and Jackson’s (1993) provisional conative taxonomy, meanwhile, contains six categories of conative constructs in the context of education which also relate to developing a foundation of justice: (a) achievement motivation, (b) self-regulation, (c) interests and styles of learning, (d) self-related and (e) other-related.
Among the constructs in this category are: several kinds of achievement motivational distinctions, including need for achievement and fear of failure, but also various beliefs about one’s own abilities and their development, feelings of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and attitudes about particular subject-matter learning; volitional aspects pertaining to persistence, academic work ethic, will to learn, mental effort investment, and mindfulness in learning; intentional constructs reflecting control or regulation of actions leading toward chosen goals, attitudes toward the future, and self-awareness about proximal and distal goals and consequences; and many kinds of learning styles and strategies hypothesized to influence cognitive processes and outcomes of instruction. Many other more traditional personality or style constructs, such as intellectual flexibility, conscientiousness, extroversion, or reflection-impulsivity, could also be added to the list. And many of these constructs and measures may prove extremely useful in understanding student commitment to learning on the one hand, or disaffection from it on the other. Most may also be relevant to problems of aggression and other maladaptations to school life. (Snow & Jackson, 1993, p. 1-2)

Science, Religion and Justice

Just as with truth and love, religion is and has been a primary basis of justice and morality in the world, both individually and collectively. The teachings of the world religions are among the most important influences on the moral ideals pertinent to the concept of justice. Principles of right and wrong have been tested over millennia and have gradually become the norms by which the majority of the peoples of the world determine what is just. These moral standards have helped to transform the individuals and the societies that have espoused them and form the foundation of civilization.

Science has only very recently begun to study the area of justice and moral development directly. Kohlberg’s stages of moral development form perhaps the most established and tested scientific theory in this area. He felt moral development and reasoning primarily concerned justice, and he identified two “justice operations”—equality and reciprocity. Kohlberg worked from Piaget’s cognitive-developmental approach (1977), which emphasizes the application of thinking skills to develop higher moral reasoning, based on six stages of cognitive-moral development. Morality, he observed, seems to develop in stages from pre-conventional, to conventional to post-conventional. Though this theory has been criticized for is its neglect of caring (Gilligan, 1982), which supports a balance of both justice and love, the three levels and six stages it describes give us another useful way to think about and determine our sense of justice.

Level 1 (Pre-Conventional)
1. Obedience and punishment orientation (How can I avoid punishment?)
2. Self-interest orientation (What’s in it for me?)
Level 2 (Conventional)
3. Interpersonal accord and conformity (Social norms)
4. Authority and social-order maintaining orientation (Law-and-order morality)

Level 3 (Post-Conventional)
5. Social contract orientation
6. Universal ethical principles (Principled conscience)

A pre-conventional sense of justice is egocentric, seeking to avoid punishment and get its way. A conventional view is more ethnocentric, seeking to abide by social norms and laws. The post-conventional justice is more concerned with principles than personalities. As we mature, we respond in predictably higher levels to ethical dilemmas, all on the basis of the principle of justice.

If we scientifically and historically study the role of religion and its effects on civilization, looking for commonalities and connections, we can see the teachings of the world’s religions as parts of one great civilizing process taking hold at different times in different places, but with essentially the same purpose—to help humanity mature on all levels and to promote civilization. The evolving nature of collective moral growth expressed in the progressively higher conceptualizations and expectations of justice in various religions can be compared to Kohlberg’s stages of moral development.

For example, the story of Adam and Eve eating from the tree of good and evil can be understood as a metaphor for humanity’s maturing to the stage of moral awareness, of knowing right from wrong, which is a needed element for Kohlberg’s first stage of obedience. The early religions addressed humanity’s growing moral capacity speaking to its collective pre-conventional moral stage of development by focusing on obedience, a punishment orientation and promises of rewards to help people develop greater moral capacity and a higher sense of justice. Later religions retained these concepts, but placed more emphasis on Kohlberg’s higher levels of moral reasoning drawing on our developing relationship to social norms, authority and contract orientations. The teachings of the most recent world religion, the Bahá’í Faith, are centered on universal ethical principles based on the guiding vision of the oneness of humanity.

Though humankind has advanced over many centuries, as has its capacity for understanding justice and morality, some, clinging to tradition and convention, continue to follow outdated teachings revealed for circumstances that no longer exist. These teachings were, of course once very crucial in advancing civilization, but many of them are no longer suited to the needs and conditions of the present day. As a result, they have been largely unsuccessful in resolving the problems and addressing the changes and challenges in knowledge and morals that, incomprehensible when they were revealed, are now prevalent and pressing.
In addition, literal and erroneous interpretations of these scriptures and have led to a corruption of their original meanings. The more authentic religions, as revealed by their founders, went from being vital and beneficial to destructive and detrimental as superstitions, dogmas and fanatical interpretations were introduced into them. A scientific approach to studying these religions would go far to helping remove the perversions that have been introduced over time.

The practice of religion, like science, must be moderated. These two are complimentary sources of knowledge and advancement. These two life-forces, like male and female, require one another if they are to bear fruit. Both bring something different but equally vital to the relationship. If either becomes too dominant, then the relationship suffers. Religion is primarily a social-moral force, whereas science is primarily material-rational. Religion provides the direction and goal and science provides the means. Taken together they can help in the realization of justice through the reconciliation of faith and reason.

**Developing our Wills to Choose and Live According to Justice**

Justice and injustice result from the exercise of our free will. As individuals we choose how we will respond to situations within our personal control. Institutions, and the communities of which they are a part, likewise make choices on whether to exercise their collective wills to overcome prejudice, discrimination and injustice.

Developing our will so that we will choose justice over injustice requires moral intelligence—“the mental capacity to determine how universal human principles should be applied to our personal values, goals, and actions” (Lennick & Kiel, 2005, p. 7). Lennick and Kiel indicate that moral intelligence is a combination of integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion. Integrity includes four competencies: 1) acting consistently with principles, values, and beliefs, 2) telling the truth, 3) standing up for what is right, and 4) keeping promises. Responsibility’s three competencies are 1) taking personal responsibility, 2) admitting mistakes and failures, and 3) embracing responsibility for serving others. Forgiveness involves 1) letting go of one’s own mistakes and 2) letting go of others’ mistakes. Compassion is defined as actively caring about others.

Borba’s (2001) definition of moral intelligence—the capacity to distinguish right from wrong, to have strong ethical convictions and to act on them to behave in the right and honorable way—identifies seven related virtues: empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness. The Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) Panel on Moral Education defines a moral person as one who respects human dignity, cares about the welfare of others, integrates individual interests and social responsibilities, demonstrates integrity, reflects on moral choices and seeks peaceful resolution of conflict. The
above descriptions are also similar to other conceptions of moral intelligence, such as Damon’s (1988) description of morality.

Putting the welfare and rights of others over our own self-interests requires individuals, institutions and communities to make conscious exertion to overcome natural selfish inclinations. Individual and collective power and will have often been exerted towards unjust ends and are only turned toward justice with effort and the discipline to regulate our egos, passions and desires.

Exercising self-control and working for justice take physical, psychological and spiritual effort—what is generally referred to as willpower. Numerous research studies have documented this mechanism during the last decade (Inzlicht & Schmeichel, 2012). The prevalent model of self-control, proposed and initially tested by Baumeister and his colleagues, suggests it is a limited internal resource (Baumeister, Vohs & Tice, 2007; Vohs, Baumeister, & Schmeichel, 2012). One of their first experiments, which has become a classic, found that participants who had resisted the temptation to eat cookies and chocolates showed weakened self-control in subsequent tasks, suggesting they had used up their self-control resources, a phenomenon called ego depletion (Baumeister, Bratslavsky, Muraven, & Tice, 1998).

Other research demonstrates that ego depletion can be partly overcome by attention, subjective beliefs and motivations when depletion is mild. For example, belief and heightened motivation and attention were able to ameliorate the effects of moderate ego depletion (Inzlicht & Schmeichel, 2012; Vohs, Baumeister, & Schmeichel, 2012). In short, it seems that willpower is a capacity that can be trained and developed over time and use, but requires striving and effort on our part.

Just as we associate our cognitive capacities with our brains and our emotional faculties with our hearts, our will is often related to our guts—our digestive systems, resulting in expressions such as “having the guts to do something”, “intestinal fortitude” and “gut reactions.” The digestive tract has more nerve cells than the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system and acts in many ways as an independent second brain. Unlike our limbs other organs, the gut continues to function without input from the central nervous system. Our guts also produces every neurotransmitter found in the brain as well as more than 95% of the body’s serotonin and about 50% of its dopamine, both important neurotransmitters that affect mental and emotional states (Gershon, 1999). Though philosophy, religion and literature tend to ignore or intestines, the associated grit, self-discipline, drive, strength and resolve have been attributed to success on several levels and have been the subject of much folklore and, increasingly, scientific investigation.

Developing human potential is the process of using will to choose to develop our knowing and loving capacities, and then translate them into positive action. We demonstrate the
results of our choices in our lives, deeds and actions. To develop willpower, individuals should be encouraged to make plans and decisions, set and achieve goals and develop commitment, perseverance and self-regulation. By thinking, deciding, doing for ourselves, carrying on in the face of difficulties and seeing challenges as opportunities for growth, we develop discipline, conscience, confidence, trust and faith. We should be encouraged to reach our highest levels of potentiality and to self-assess our progress on a daily basis. Clear and measurable goals are useful in bringing ourselves to account and increase our ability to self-regulate. We should all strive for excellence and promote learning and service in ways that we can evaluate on a daily basis.

Whereas truth guides us in understanding our world, and love is the central principle in our relationships with one another, justice must be upheld by social institutions for the maintenance of progress, order and unity in society. While emotions provide affect for our actions, will commits, directs and energizes our behavior and is intimately connected with justice. Will, or volition, is that part of us that decides what we will do and then purposively strives to accomplish it. It requires training of our impulses, desires, volition and perseverance, especially as we are predisposed to favor our personal interests over those of others.
Chapter 6. Developing and Applying Truth, Love and Justice

How Do We Develop Our Potential?

Human beings have enormous potential, much of it unrealized and unknown. Our physical, psychological and spiritual capacities continue to develop and unfold as we extend the frontiers of technological, intellectual and moral accomplishment and challenges. How can we help to stimulate that growth in our world and ourselves?

As we increasingly learn to reason and develop clear and healthy values by exercising our decision-making capacities, fostering moral awareness, enhancing sensitivity to the feelings of others and developing empathy for other points of view, we can create a context for growth using virtues to strengthen our conscience, guide our behavior and foster our moral discipline. Eliminating meanness, prejudice, gossip, fault-finding and backbiting and modeling and prioritizing self-control, courtesy, respect and self-motivation are tools we can cultivate to moderate our thinking, feeling and choosing before we act and realize our potential (Borba, 2002).

We develop our individual and collective thinking, feeling and choosing potentials through our minds, hearts and wills. We often waste tremendous energy, as well as social, political and economic resources, following beliefs and practices that are not only ineffective, but also counterproductive. We need to become more systematic and thoughtful in our approaches to helping others develop their capacities so they can contribute to their own and others’ well-being and promote the welfare of the world more effectively. We develop our potential for service and happiness through loving, fair and respectful engagement with others.

Development is the process of potentiality becoming actuality, like acorns transforming step by step to become fully grown oak trees. What a plant can become is encoded in its seed; however, it requires proper conditions to manifest its potentialities. At human conception, unique genetic potentialities are endowed upon each individual, determined by the DNA of the mother and father. Educators—whether in the form of parents, family, peers, communities or institutions—can assist us in realizing these capacities in life. Healthy role models and values inspire us and help us become more responsible and service oriented (Damon, 1988).

Developing human potential is the process of using will to choose to translate our knowing and loving capacities into positive action. We can initiate this process beginning with any of these three focal points for change. For example, we may begin with action: perhaps we are doing something and feel it is not as effective as it could be. As we reflect on why we feel
this way and how we might improve, we think about what might work better, engaging our
cognitive and affective capacities as we do so. In these processes it always helpful to consult
with others, especially those involved with you in the activity and those who have more
knowledge and experience.

Positive power results from combining these three components. The change process must
involve all three capacities to be systematic, sustainable and effective. In this manner, all
participants should be considered as collaborators in establishing clarity of vision, purpose and
roles, and these will evolve as needed according to new learning and circumstances.

The role of truth, love and justice can easily be underestimated, but most of the problems
in the world can be diagnosed as some failure to adequately apply these three human
potentialities in individuals, communities and institutions. Though it is vital that we seek balance
using all three principles to regulate our lives and maintain unity, each has a key role in our
individual, community and institutional lives. Truth is the ideal standard in our seeking
individual understanding of reality. Love is the dominant force in developing and maintaining
our relationships and in community interactions. Justice must the key guiding principle of
institutions if they are to be successful in the maintenance of progress, order and security in
society.

Our cognitive, emotional and volitional capabilities are greatly affected by our social
environments, especially in our early years. Though aspects of each of these faculties are
influenced by inherited qualities from genetic endowments, they are, as we have said, shaped and
developed through the interactions of our thoughts, feelings and actions within the environment.
Our thinking, feeling and choosing capacities each have an individual and collective expression
and can be viewed both subjectively and objectively. All three capacities and all four
perspectives should be considered when making a change.

As we create social and cultural contexts to support the development of intellectually,
emotionally and morally mature persons through critical thinking, altruistic feelings and moral
decision-making and conduct, we affect the climate and policies around us. Until human
resource development

focuses on the cultivation of character and the development of a moral sense of identity
and moral imperative, until it begins to purposefully emphasize models of authentic
moral authority and to foster moral responsibility and agency, until it makes central the
cultivation of expanding levels of empathy, progressively embracing the human race and
until it is willing to entertain an explicit spiritual conversation about truth and meaning in
life, it cannot really fulfill its responsibility to human potential. (Mustakavoa-Possardt,
2004, p. 266)
Some Metaphors and Models of Change

When all three faculties, capacities and principles work positively together, the individual and society develop and advance. When any of the three are missing or faulty, problems result. For example, acting without love or knowledge or with misguided love or knowledge is generally ineffective or harmful. Those who do not know how to love or behave, or who love falsehood and injustice, will bring trouble to themselves and society. A number of metaphors and models can be useful in understanding the dynamic interaction of these capacities and principles.

For example, we can use the analogy of the human body to understand better the relationship between our knowing, loving and willing capacities and the principles of truth, love and justice. Like the body, these faculties and aptitudes develop as they take in, assimilate and utilize nourishment. Simply stated, the food of knowledge is truth, of feelings is love and of will is justice. They are also the vehicles by which we exercise and develop our non-physical self. The complexity and diversity of the various systems, organs and parts of the body working together is an illustration of the organic interactions of our mental, emotional and volitional capacities working together to produce a beautiful and powerful character.

Consider also how energy is needed to create a change. As we actualize our potential, we experience cognitive, affective and conative benefits that lead to a cycle of growth. Truth, love and justice are the catalysts for enhancing and expanding our knowing, loving and willing capacities and reflect the highest ideals of our minds, hearts and wills, respectively. As we learn more about these principles and practices, we can apply them to improving our lives and helping our communities develop. We need to know what these principles are and be able to use them effectively, artfully and conscientiously to help others offer the most they can to the world.

In this sense, these three faculties and standards can be compared to the three blades on the rotor of a windmill or wind turbine. As the blades of knowledge, love and will seek greater truth, love and justice, they develop the ability to create more power. External pressures or forces cause the blades of our thoughts, feelings or decisions to rotate, transforming the wind energy of external thoughts, feelings and actions into the mechanical and electrical energy of internal growth. These blades need to be adjusted and in balance to effectively interact with the environment and generate energy for positive change.

These three human attributes can also be considered in terms of mathematical formulations, such as knowing x loving x willing = potential value (KLW = PV) or truth + love + justice = advancement (T + L + J = A). Each capacity can have a positive, negative or zero value. In addition or multiplication, an increased quantity in any skill relates to a corollary increase in positive results. In multiplication, positive values result when you put two positives together—loving (+) truth or justice (+)—or when two negatives are put together, such as hating
(-) lies or injustice (-). Negative values result when you put a positive with a negative, such as loving (+) lies or injustice (-), or hating (-) truth or justice (+). Zero values for each of the capacities might be described as ignorance, apathy and indecision (Clarken, 2003).

Individuals have different predispositions and strengths that may tend to favor one capacity or principle over the others. If they favor thinking, they may have a need to align their feelings and choices with their new knowledge or insights. Some might begin the change process by feeling differently, which may require an adjustment in their understanding and choices. Others may start the change process with some decision or goal that leads to modifications in thinking and feeling.

Development of any of these human capacities will result in a need to develop the others to maintain equilibrium. Reaching homeostasis, where all the capacities are congruent, balanced and stable, is desired; however, life circumstances will challenge us to keep growing while maintaining a healthy balance, and we can capitalize on these challenges to further develop our capacities, continuing toward higher goals and ideals.

For example, some injustice or wrong may cause hurt (loving capacity) and push someone to decide how (knowing capacity) to best respond (willing capacity). This external event results in internal disequilibrium or upset, causing the person to try to find some resolution by adjusting understanding, affect or determination to respond more productively, thus achieving greater authenticity, altruism and autonomy. It involves effort, courage and faith to develop a greater realization of potentialities.

Interactions between the self and reality are the cause of growth and development, and can lead to true happiness and autonomy. We can exert control over our responses to the challenges life offers us, but we have little control over the challenges themselves. Every effect has a cause and every cause an effect. To respond productively requires effort and an internal locus of control. Many mistakes and errors will be made in the process of refining ourselves, but these unwise acts or decisions can be helpful if we use them to correct and improve our understanding and judgment. As we gradually improve our thinking, feeling and choosing, we expand and consolidate our capacities.

**Leading with Truth, Love and Justice**

I was required to make many decisions regarding the welfare of the students, staff, faculty, community and institution in the classroom, schools and universities where I worked. I have tried to progressively apply the principles of truth, love and justice as I grew in awareness and capacity. Below we will briefly explore the application of the three-way test of is it true, loving and just.
Is it True?

I have had to learn how to distinguish between what I believed to be true and what is actually true, and then help those I worked with do the same. A good teacher is engaged in the process all the time. As an administrator, I also worked with the faculty and staff I oversaw in an effort for us all to get a clearer sense of the truth by asking what the various parties believed to be the truth about the matter? That exercise in itself was revealing and helpful in bringing greater awareness and understanding to the problem.

By further asking how they knew what they believed to be true was true we gained deeper insight. Often what a person believed to be true turned out to be different from what was actually true, or was not supported by facts or evidence. When in addition others also had to be convinced of its truth, we were able get closer to, or at least some agreement about the truth which helped to clarify our discussion of what the just and loving thing to do would be.

For example, one of the policies put in place was no fault-finding, gossiping or backbiting among the faculty or staff, as these common but destructive practices tear down morale and generally violate the three-way test of is it true, loving and just. If anyone said something negative about another or reported unkind words spoken by someone else, the first thing generally done was try to ascertain the truth while assuring them of my love and concern for welfare the parties involved and my intent to resolve the problem fairly.

Once, a faculty member came complaining about something another person had said about him. Queries similar to those described above were used to try to determine what was true. First, how did he know what he believed had been said had actually been said? In this case, a student had told him that another professor had made a disparaging comment about him in class. When he told me factually what was reported to him, it was quite different from what he was telling me had been said, and it was apparent to both of us that he was making assumptions—what he had been told could have been taken in several ways. Second, how did he know that what the student told him was true? He didn’t, and even if the student thought it to be true, it also became apparent that the student could have heard something different from what was actually said or meant. The faculty member saw that he was upset based on a lot of second-hand and unreliable information—unverified and imagined “truths.”

To try to get closer to the truth, while the faculty member making the complaint was sitting in my office I called the professor who reportedly made the offending comment and asked her if she had said anything about this person in class, and if so, what she had actually said. She confirmed that she had made a comment, but had not said what was reported, and, moreover, did not have negative feelings about the offended faculty member. It is, of course, possible that she may not have been telling the truth, and if the situation warranted it, we could have further
explored that possibility. But even at this point all parties involved were confident that the truth could and would be ascertained to the extent needed and were satisfied in that knowledge.

Is it Loving?

“Is it loving?” is the second question in the three-way test, but in many ways it is the foundational one. If we do not feel that others love us and we do not feel love for them, then living or working together will be very challenging. Authentic concern for the welfare of others is intuitively sensed and is a powerful force for progress, whereas self-serving or insincere love is detrimental to all parties. In the case above, the parties involved knew that I genuinely cared about them; otherwise my attempts to help them resolve their difficulties would have had no or limited effect. This love is vital for any positive and productive relationship and is demonstrated in the kindness, courtesy, compassion, care and concern we consistently and genuinely show to others.

In one case, an offended party was quick to conclude the offending party had malicious intent, as the two people had a history of antipathy. When bad feelings exist between people, their words and actions are often seen as offensive, even when they are not intended to be. If differences of opinion or offensive actions occur between those who share a mutual affection, there at least is a foundation upon which they may be resolved. Love is a powerful force in creating, developing and maintaining productive and prosperous communities.

The question “Is it loving?” has several components: Am I being loving? What would the loving thing to do be? What does love look like to the recipient? What would increase love for all? Do I feel loved? Are my feelings justified? In answering these questions about love, it is necessary to ask questions about truth and justice as well, as these should guide our feelings and the appropriate loving response. Any one of these virtues without the other two can be out of balance and harmful. Justice needs to be based on truth and is foundational for love.

Though truth and justice are not always pleasant to give or receive, love consistently brings happiness to both giver and receiver. However, love can be the most difficult of the virtues to cultivate. We are most challenged to develop love when we are dealing with people we feel do not love us and who we consider to be unlovable. When faced with those who do not honor truth and justice, our love must not be misinterpreted as ignorance or as condoning their behavior. True love should increase truth, love and justice for all. In other words, if we truly love dishonest, hateful and tyrannical people, we will interact with them in ways that will increase the likelihood of their becoming more truthful, loving and just by discouraging rather than encouraging their harmful ways.

In resolving problems between antagonistic parties, one may be able to determine or enforce some level of truth and justice, but this not so with love. In another situation, I was able
to get one party to agree to apply the principles of truth and justice to the problem at hand, but she was honest in saying she felt she could not love the other parties involved and did not have any positive feeling towards them. I told her that her being truthful about the situation and her feelings and her willingness to be fair with her colleagues would go a long way in starting the process of healing and making things better for everyone, but until she could genuinely feel some compassion towards them in spite of their differences, there was little likelihood she would find a truly satisfying resolution and the contentment and peace she sought. Her honesty and self-awareness about her negative feelings, which she was justifying on the basis of unfounded perceptions, were then instrumental in her identifying an area she could work on if she wished to make things better all around. This understanding also helped her distinguish which problems she could address herself and which were beyond her control.

Is it Just?

“Is it just?” applies not only to the individuals involved in a given situation, but also to the communities and institutions of which we are a part. In both of the cases above, the offended parties felt they were being treated unjustly. We have an inborn and an acquired sense of right and wrong, and when we feel we have been dealt with unjustly, we tend naturally to respond with indignation and to seek justice. A vital responsibility of institutions and those that act on their behalf is to create justice or at the conditions where its likelihood is optimized.

As a leader in any community and institution, administering justice is a central concern. In my roles as teacher, professor, director and dean, people often came to me seeking solutions to their problems. Because I was known as a caring and compassionate person, some people thought that I should and would give them what they wanted. They sometimes imagined that a loving person would naturally agree with and support them whether they were right or wrong.

In fact, when parties would come to me with their concerns, I would often tell them up front that I cared about them and their problem, but that in my role as the responsible party to help solve their problem I would have to deal with the matter from the point of view of fairness to all the parties concerned. As I served as a trustee of the all the individuals employed and served by the school, as well as the public, profession, board and state, I needed to regard justice from the perspective of all of these entities whereas what they saw as fair often was based on their self-interested perspectives.

In the spirit of honesty, openness, concern for and fairness to all, I tried to treat every decision I made as if it would be questioned and evaluated based on fairness by all sides in the problem. If that could not be achieved, I needed to be able to defend my decisions on the basis of justice, and sometimes imagined the case going to court and my having to defend it in a cross examination.
For example, when professors, staff and students came to me to ask for financial support for their endeavors, I would ask them to make a case for how this would serve the best interests of all parties. I would explain that I needed to justify the decision to the other individuals in our community, as well as to our community as a whole and to the officials and institutions who expected me to act responsibly in my position of authority. Some people would suggest that others need not know what was agreed to, but I was clear that I would deal with others as compassionately, openly, honestly and fairly as I would with them.

One approach that assisted in these situations was to have every major decision either made or agreed to by a responsible committee, in full consideration of all available facts and implications, and to make all such decisions as transparent as possible. Many of these decisions were made by selected bodies of peers in a confidential consultative milieu where they were able to frankly discuss their diverse points of view in order to arrive at more equitable decisions. This procedure helped prevent some of the interpersonal pressures, manipulations and problems that can be created in such power situations. It also limited conflict and contention, as well as perceptions of mismanagement by those in authority. It also avoided paternalistic relationships that can inhibit personal growth, responsibility and justice and curtailed gossiping and backbiting and unjustified claims of unfairness.

**The Importance of Building Capacity for Truth, Love and Justice**

Just as the characters in the Wizard of Oz go through a series of challenges and tests on their road to finding their brain, heart and courage, so do we as individuals. We can see moral meaning in all things and draw value from all our daily interactions. We can conceptualize our journey home to our true self or higher reality as a series of crises and victories as we experience the predictable stages of social and emotional development, such as those of trust, autonomy, initiative, industry, identity, intimacy, generativity and integrity proposed by Erikson (1959). Though pain and suffering need not be sought out, they are an inevitable part of life and, when necessary, should be accepted as part of the process of growth. Seeking only pleasure while avoiding hardship will not increase our consciousness and development.

Our brains, hearts and will, like our stories, inner values, intelligences, conceptual schemas, frameworks and worldviews, change and evolve as we negotiate the challenges, changes and chances on our life’s path. From these ups and downs the beliefs and behaviors that play an influential role in individual and social development are transformed. An increase in self-awareness and self-knowledge that allows us to give up our faulty or incomplete views is the first step in growth and instantly releases negative energies bound up in trying to maintain a false self-concept to be used for positive and authentic growth.
It requires strength to overcome the self-doubt and deficiencies of our lives. Like Dorothy, we are at our bravest and best when fighting for others. It is by doing the right thing for others that we are able to overcome the evil that exists in our world and in our lives. When out of love and protection Dorothy tries to save the Scarecrow by throwing water on the fire that is destroying him, she melts the Wicked Witch of the selfish and negative forces within her. Like Dorothy, we face evil, trickery and adversity all around us. As we help others to find their brains, hearts and wills, we develop our own faculties and subdue or destroy the parts of ourselves that lead us astray. As we help others find their gifts, talents and selves, we find our own. We become self-actualized by forgetting ourselves and helping others.

Asking ourselves whether we are being true, loving and just to all parties serves as a compass to help us find our way. As we apply the three-way test in our daily activities, our lives and the lives of those around us will improve. As we apply the principles of truth, love and justice and develop a new paradigm to help us with the challenging problems of life, we will find better ways to improve the conditions of the multiple individuals, communities and institutions that will be transformed in the next stage in the historical evolution and advancement of civilization.

Not only do we solve the problems we were facing, we also developed new insights and capacities to solve related difficulties in the future. As we consciously practice truth, love and justice, they became part of the culture of our workplace. In an environment characterized by truth, love and justice, we learned to treat others with honesty, compassion and fairness, and problems get resolved before they get worse.

We flourish when our thinking capacity is directed toward knowing authentic truth, our feeling toward valuing altruistic love and our doing toward choosing justice. As we work toward balancing and harmonizing the diversity of expressions of truth, love and justice through individual efforts to include and involve all parties, we increase our capacity to inform and transform our communities and institutions. Using and encouraging the assets of individuals, communities and institutions are the keys to effective development and the actualization of individual and collective human potential.
Chapter 7. Education and Its Reform

Education as a Scientific, Artistic and Moral Endeavor

Education is a vehicle for developing the knowing, loving and willing faculties of our minds, hearts and wills and for realizing and expressing the ideals of truth, love and justice. We need to consider education’s role and functioning from these various vantage points if we are to improve it. In correlation with these faculties and principles, education can be seen as a science, an art and a moral activity. Regarding education through only one of these lenses will result in a limited and skewed understanding. Though science and scientific principles are foundational to understanding, improving and reforming education, so are values, morals and a host of other philosophical, artistic, ethical and spiritual concerns.

If we apply the principles of truth, love and justice, then scientific methods and knowledge, artistic creativity and beauty and ethical mores and standards become vehicles for expressing and exploring these cognitive, affective and conative qualities. Science is an important means of understanding the material world. Scientific thinking is a powerful tool in our search for truth and a sign of a well-trained and mature mind. Art is a manifestation of the creative forces emanating from our hearts. It is through art that we seek to express love and beauty. Morals involve right and wrong according to the standard of justice. Through exercising our wills, we develop our conscience and live our lives according to what is right and good.

Dewey’s concept of education was as the highest expression of science and art conceivable in human experience. He not only saw education as both a science and an art, but as a moral endeavor as well (1897, 1916, 1933, 1938). Some people argue that schools and teachers should not teach morals, but there is no way they can avoid doing so. Understanding, appreciating and abiding by principles of right and wrong is necessary for any classroom, school or society to function. The teaching of civics and civility, which was at one time a central focus in schools, is part of education’s moral function, as is the promotion of truth, love and justice in society.

Education cannot be reduced to facts, understood solely through science or explained merely in terms of simple cause-and-effect relationships. Education involves much more than the dispensing and learning of information. Science depends on the creativity, originality, inventiveness, imagination and artistic application of knowledge in solving problems. When science is not guided by morality and ethical practices it can be horribly destructive, as we have witnessed throughout history.
Education also cannot be reduced solely to artistry or an expression of love. Love can be based on unwholesome or unhealthy attachments and prejudices, becoming harmful and destructive. Artistic creativity can either uplift or degrade and needs both morals and science if it is to be properly channeled for the advancement of civilization rather than towards its demise.

Similarly, education as an exclusively moral endeavor also has its problems, as we have seen from past practices that ultimately promoted falsehoods, hate and injustice and perverted students’ knowing, loving and willing faculties. Such an education can quickly degenerate into ideology, superstition, oppression and fanaticism. Morals need to be applied with love in the light of truth if they are to bring about justice and good. The foundation of the moral function of education can be found in the principles of truth, love and justice.

These principles must be combined and applied in scientific, artistic and moral ways to create effective education. It requires discipline, talent and ethics to understand and give meaning to knowledge and to innovatively engage students in learning and in developing responsible and meaningful relationships with others. Education is an integrative endeavor for the development of thinking, feeling and willing, leading to the formation of habits of judgment and the development of character, the elevation of standards, the facilitation of understanding, the development of taste and discrimination, the stimulation of curiosity and wondering, the fostering of style and a sense of beauty, the growth of a thirst for new ideas and visioning of the yet unknown. (Scheffler, 1976, p. 206)

To paraphrase the above definition, we could say education is the development, elevation, facilitation, stimulation, fostering, visioning and forming of habits of truth, love and justice. Even more simply, it is the formation of the habits of being truthful, loving and just. Education deserves the highest care any society can give it in terms of its scholarship, skills and standards, and society will prosper to the extent these tools are applied in the service of education. Education and reform efforts should be judged by how well they meet the highest standards of science, art and morals and promote the principles of truth, love and justice.

Reform and Progress

Current educational reform efforts seem to be driven more by ideology—certain philosophical, social, economic and political positions—than by a sincere search for what is true, loving and just. As an educator, I question the assumptions and positions of the ideologies supporting many of the policy changes recommended for education. I also resent having that which I love—education—being treated unfavorably, unfairly and dishonestly. When reformers say that they want the best education for our children, that this or that reform will improve our
children’s education and that they must therefore create policies to see a certain reform is enacted, we should question each statement for its veracity.

As education is not only a science, but an artistic and moral endeavor as well, we can look to these fields to see how they establish and modify their views, values and methods. Scientific communities endeavor to review previous research, form theories, test hypotheses, make accurate observations, share results and verify findings using accepted scientific approaches and standards. Scientific findings are subject to validation using verifiable evidence. Members of the scientific community well versed in the methods, theories and content under investigation examine the findings and, if they are found to be valid, incorporate the new knowledge in the field. What is “true” in science changes as new knowledge is discovered and new theories explored. These principles of validation apply whether the scientific investigation pertains to physical, social or spiritual matters.

In the art world, the standard has traditionally been what is moving, beautiful or original. Everyone is allowed their opinion, but those recognized as authorities in the artistic methods, theories and content under consideration tend to be the arbiters of the quality of art. However, tastes vary and the role of art changes, along with the notion of beauty and meaning. What is considered uplifting or meaningful may not be the same at different times or in different cultures. Much of the art renowned today was not or would not have been appreciated in earlier times.

Societies and cultures make judgments on what is good, often looking to religious, moral and legal authorities for guidance. We adjust moral values to the changing conditions of the community. In the area of jurisprudence, elected bodies set laws while judges and juries interpret and apply these laws, and certain standards of justice must guide those enforcing them. If the society does not feel the laws are just, lawlessness will grow along with the need for heavier enforcement. Authorities and communities must change laws that are not effective if they hope to maintain order and advance the societies they serve.

This collective process of validation to confirm the intersubjective truthfulness, value or rightness of a work, method or idea has been instrumental in the advancement of the sciences and arts and of civilization as a whole. In a democracy, individuals are given the opportunity to voice different opinions. On the other hand, systems dominated by fundamentalism, ideology or totalitarianism do not allow such a dynamic process of truth seeking and community building, which is necessary for true prosperity and development.

The idea that truth is multifaceted, that no single approach or form can exhaust the totality of reality, suggests an open dialogue among people with diverse points of view. It tends to give democratic validity to the voice of each individual human being. Both religious fundamentalism and the myth of total reason demand the rejection of alternate
points of view and, consequently, the repression of democratic norms. (Saeidi, 1987, p. 20)

Many of the great discoveries and advances in our world began with one person having an original thought or creation. But our history is filled with examples of established scientific, artistic and moral institutions refusing to entertain alternative points of view and even actively repressing them. Many examples exist in the sciences and arts and in society of more accurate theories, advances in creative expression and new moral standards being rejected because people clung to their outdated and limited conceptions.

Consider how many now-famous and revered scientists, artists and moral leaders were demeaned by their contemporaries, receiving no recognition for their accomplishments during their lifetime. Many a creative genius died impoverished and unappreciated and, as we noted before, many early scientists arranged for their theories to be published after their deaths so they would not suffer condemnation. Likewise, many of the founders of the world’s most prevalent moral systems were severely persecuted, their works denounced as heresy by those in authority. Not only did those in their respective communities reject the new paradigms, but even more often those who lacked the background and relevant knowledge to evaluate their work unfairly judged them. This problem continues today as scientists make authoritative statements on artistic or moral matters and moralists make pronouncements about scientific or artistic endeavors of which they lack adequate understanding.

With our current historical perspective, we can see how the sciences, the arts and moral systems helped to establish modern civilization. New insights, innovations and creations have allowed us to imagine reality in novel ways and subsequently to think, feel, and act differently.

**Teachers, Students and Schools under Attack**

I have written a book entitled *Education Under Attack: What Schools Can and Cannot Do and How Popular Reforms Hurt Them*, in which I chronicle some way education and teachers are being unfairly blamed for many of society’s problems by those would-be reformers who wish to overhaul the American education system to accord with their ideologies and their misinformed diagnoses and prescriptions. I will very briefly share some ideas from that book in the remainder of this chapter as I try to apply the three guiding principles of truth, love and justice that I believe are vitally needed to help us transform education in a way that will benefit all. These three guiding principles, based in the ethical, philosophical and religious ideals of the true, the beautiful and the good, offer an antidote to the many problems facing us, including the harmful policies being prescribed for education’s ills. You may find more information and references in the book, which is available online at no cost.
Among the more simplistic and appealing solutions being offered as vehicles for improving education is the provision of “objective” and “economical” tools for measuring and incentivizing the quality of schools, teachers and students, primarily through test-based accountability. It is an attractive solution that promises truth and justice by placing a scientifically determined quantitative value on the learning of students and the effectiveness of teachers and schools and rewarding or punishing them accordingly. In principle, both the accountability and incentives promised by standardized testing are effective and constructive tools in reform efforts, and they have been heavily endorsed by both government and business. However, evaluating education and teachers with wisdom and fairness is a complex and challenging endeavor of which test scores are an unstable and unreliable measure. Consequently, decisions based upon such scores are not generally helpful.

High-stakes tests are too often misused to unfairly reward or punish students, teachers and schools and tend to result in abuses like cheating, teaching only what is to be tested while neglecting other valuable education and focusing on student scores at the exclusion of other concerns such as learning and development. As a result, test scores may well rise while actual learning suffers. The problems of schools, teachers and students who lack the tools needed to meet expectations are further exacerbated by the unfair placement on them of the lion’s share of blame for their failure. This, though evidence makes it clear that factors outside of the school have more influence on learning than is generally acknowledged. Motivation and morale break down when institutions or individuals are held accountable for things beyond their control.

Similarly, pay-for-performance approaches have produced some short-term benefits, especially for those whose primary motivations are self-gain; however, educators, who need to work in cooperation and collaboration to achieve long-term goals and whose purpose is to help others, tend to be more motivated by the higher ideals of truth, love and justice. Of course, most teachers could use higher salaries, but pay-for-performance has not improved educational outcomes and has instead created dissension and distrust and damaged morale. Teachers are intelligent and experienced enough to know that student performance varies as a result of a host of factors, a great many of which are beyond the teacher’s or the school’s control. For them to be paid on such a basis, then, violates the basic standards of truth, love or justice.

Though focus on incentives such as pay-for-performance and high-stakes tests may bring certain short-term results, long-term benefits may be sacrificed because of their controlling, limiting, deceptive, demoralizing and demeaning aspects. When learning is reduced to trivial, superficial or narrow activities, the desire to learn, now and in the future, is sacrificed along with the joy, meaning and growth it should entail.

When reforms or methods promise an honest and fair appraisal of students and teachers but fail in reality to do so, they undermine the relationships and love of learning needed to make education effective. Such data can too easily be manipulated to tell whatever story one wishes to
tell, as can been witnessed in the many corrupt political and business practices that have received so much attention in recent decades. Tests can be made harder or easier to create the illusion of success or failure to serve a particular agenda and in any case provide minimal useful feedback, encourage extrinsic motivation, penalize creativity and do not help or motivate students or teachers to do better (Brady, 2011).

Educators, like most people, tend to be motivated by challenge and accomplishment. The key to fostering motivation for any person is to encourage internal and autonomous striving and use external rewards only with measure and wisdom. Tests can be motivating when they are used to provide relevant information or feedback, but they are de-motivating when they become controlling or too difficult. If teachers are pushed to sacrifice the best interests of their students and communities for such short-term and shortsighted aims as high-stakes standardized test scores, merit pay or other incentives, the nurturing soils of truth, love and justice are eroded. In short, reforms that aim to pinpoint accountability and apply external and materialistic incentives violate the foundations of truth, love and justice and are ultimately ineffective and destructive.

Some of the most common and flawed arguments made in this context are those based on the broad assertion that “schools are not doing a good job”: such and such is not being done in our schools, therefore this reform is needed to make our schools better. While the basic logic of such an argument may be viable, if the statements upon which it is based are not true, the conclusions drawn from it are not likely to be sound. A similar example is in charges that teachers are not doing a good job: you are a teacher; therefore, you are not doing a good job. Such a statement cannot possibly be blanketly true, and reforms based on that conviction are, consequently, bound to be flawed and ineffective, and quite contrary to the principles of truth, love, and justice. Only as we scientifically investigate the problems with the intention of serving the best interests of all will we find the right solutions for the greatest good. Not only are we using bad “science” based on faulty and skewed methods and data to make decisions that affect the lives of countless individuals, many of those making these decisions have questionable motives and very biased perspectives of fairness.

We could do more to improve education if we undertook honest, caring and fair assessments of the schools and teachers in our society, paying them according to these standards and affording them the support and status they deserve. If we were to pay teachers a respectable wage and give them their due respect, honor and status, we would begin to see among them more of the best and brightest of our society. Under such conditions, with just treatment and appreciation, it seems reasonable to expect that educators would do their best without being manipulated or cajoled by cash rewards as we find better ways to fairly evaluate and compensate their contributions.

Education is a collective and long-term endeavor. Often the fruits of a good teacher’s labors do not become apparent until many years later. These fruits cannot be measured by tests,
grades or policies. We value the teachers who most positively challenged and improved our lives, who cared, who saw our potential and encouraged us to become more, who opened our minds, illumined our hearts and quickened our wills. Serving in the awakening and unfolding of another’s potentialities, higher learning, praiseworthy goals, true nature and noble self is one of the great rewards of teaching.

If we really wish to do more to encourage overall education and welfare, we must give young children a good physical, mental, emotional, moral and spiritual foundation upon which to build their futures. This will optimize their learning and improve their lives. If we dedicate ourselves to the betterment of the minds, hearts and wills of all children and reform education according to the highest principles of truth, love and justice, we will change the world.

However, we have seen that many of those in power are willing to sacrifice the interests of the masses for their own selfish gain. As trust breaks down the push for external controls, incentives and accountability increases and high-stakes testing, standardization and market management take the driver’s seat. Education is turned into a market-driven enterprise and equity, honesty and unity are replaced with efficiency, cost-cutting and profits.

Teachers, parents, schools and communities who care about their students and are committed to their proper development will do the best for their students within whatever constraints exist, but we need to support schools and teachers as they strive to understand and exemplify these qualities.

As human beings, we yearn for truth, justice and love, and we should do what we can to exemplify these virtues and ensure that they characterize our communities. As we do, we will see trust, respect, equity, unity and collaboration grow. Unity and collaboration are discouraged in our current reform atmosphere, which puts a premium on individual achievement and competition. But trust, initiative and respect are eroded when primarily external measures of accountability and testing are used to control and manage teachers and schools.

Some Challenges of Educational Reform and Re-visioning

Education has, can and will continue to reform to respond to changing conditions and expectations. As we compare and contrast paradigms used to define and explore human capacities and education, we must discover how to develop the best vision from the diversity of perspectives. “Since evidence can be adduced and interpreted to corroborate a virtually limitless array of worldviews, the human challenge is to engage that world view or set of perspectives which brings forth the most valuable, life-enhancing consequences” (Tarnas, 1991, p. 406).

When the family, school, neighborhood, community, region and nation have conflicting worldviews, problems arise—these systems are stressed and their relationships strained. Some
basic agreement in thinking, values, intentions and behavior is essential if these entities are to advance. As we strive for unity using the standards of truth, love and justice, our diversity of views allows us to compare and grow so we are able to act on reality from a new, more advanced paradigm. The systems related to education “need to be revisioned, which means to adopt a new paradigm, rather than reformed, which means to make them function better within a current paradigm” (Huitt, personal communication, October 20, 2011).

Evidence from research studies, scholars and practitioners in the field suggests many popular reform proposals are not supported by truth. They seek to simplify, quantify and economize the multiple and complex factors related to education and, as a result, are destructively reductive, skewed and faulty. Some of these can even be quite deceptive, ultimately working to the detriment of the systems they purport to be fixing, diminishing and devaluing the very education they claim to esteem, and, in turn, violating the principles of both love and justice.

The rhetoric and assumptions upon which most educational reform claims are made, though appearing to be well-intentioned and thoughtful, actually subvert the best interests of education and the values of honesty, caring and fairness. Many self-appointed reformers presume that their positions in politics, the press or business entitles them to make changes in a field of which they have limited knowledge and experience. Further, popular business models seek to inappropriately quantify and put a price on the intricate and interrelated activities of education. Their dominant and unexamined materialistic values have been destructive in many areas of society, as we have experienced in the many financial crises that have threaten the stability of the world. Their ideological framework and policies now threaten to further jeopardize, diminish and devalue education. Societies and governments that put private gain over public welfare will suffer and decline in the end.

For reforms to be effective, they should be based on systematic knowledge, scientific methods and sound principles methodically and intelligently applied, not on politics, power, pride, prejudice or passion. New and innovative ideas in education are truly needed, but their effectiveness should be proven by qualified experts so that some determination of their worth and validity can be made before they are enforced in schools; otherwise, demoralizing policies and destructive practices can result and cause great harm. The value of any innovation or discovery must be carefully examined and theories, thoughts, methods and results shared for review. This is a process best undertaken among educators and those who study education. Unfortunately, the professionals and practitioners in education who are uniquely qualified to make such assessments are generally not given the resources and support to carry out the scientific inquiry needed to make clearer determinations about what works.

Education is the foundation of human excellence, prosperity, joy and glory. Its pursuit is incumbent upon everyone. It is the cause of the progress of individuals and nations. It is a basic
human right that should be extended to every person on earth. However, our systems of 
education must be reformed if they are to provide opportunities for all to realize their gifts and 
talents in service to humanity. An untapped will and effort will be required to accomplish this 
indispensable requirement for the advancement of the best interests of the world, and we must all 
come together to find the ways and means to reach this essential, noble and lofty goal.

Can schools, teachers and teacher educators do better? They must. As conditions, 
circumstances and needs change, education has to adjust to meet new challenges. If time-
honored and entrenched traditions, approaches and policies no longer work, they must be 
changed or discarded. This is a challenge facing every individual, community and institution in 
the world at this time of rapid and dramatic change. However, many of the reform efforts being 
proposed for formal education in the United States are misaligned in both approach and content.

Education reform is an extremely complex process, which to some degree affects and is 
affected by every community and institution. Education influences them and the individuals that 
compose them, and they in turn influence education. Further, educational systems have their 
own internal individual, community and institutional components, which interact with one 
another in dynamic and multifaceted ways. Without some understanding and regulation of all 
these internal and external factors and their interplay, educational reforms that may bring short-
term benefits result in long-term costs, as was seen with industrial reforms and the environmental 
health of our planet.

Education is experiencing many problems at present. We must try to face these 
challenges with a united front. A host of questions need to be answered honestly and openly in 
this regard. What are the real problems with education? How do we explain and deal with the 
differences of opinion about what should be done to solve these problems? What are the 
pertinent facts related to needed educational reforms? What principles should guide us in seeking 
reform? What are some reasonable solutions based upon these facts and principles? How can we 
begin to reform education in a systematic, sustained and constructive way? How can we ensure 
that all education programs are held to high and appropriate standards?

Furthermore, how can we identify the best indicators and predictors of high quality 
teaching? What reliable and valid measures can be agreed upon to improve teaching and 
learning? What is the evidence that supports the assertion that both teacher education and 
education in general are in need of reform and that recommended reforms will actually help and 
ot harm?

Changing our paradigms of truth, love and justice can serve as a dynamic framework 
within which to explore these questions. Through expanding our understanding and application 
of these three principles, their power to transform education and society will become apparent. 
Our individual and collective well-being will grow as we engage in the discussion and practice
of truth, love and justice. They will help us to develop and trust our inner core capacities, elicit the best in us and give us a renewing fount of energy. They can serve as a universal standard through which we can transform our behavior and character, begin to resolve our problems and move toward greater unity of thought, commitment and action.
Chapter 8. Some Scientific and Religious Factors of Learning

Understanding Learning through Science and Religion

Learning processes are varied, ranging from simple to complex and unconscious to conscious. Understanding them and the principles that relate to them is key to promoting human happiness and well-being. The process of learning and the development of potential progress to the degree we are conscious, caring and intentional in engaging our thinking, feeling and willing faculties towards the identification and exploitation of learning opportunities. We can improve our learning and development if we use information and experience to expand our capacities and engage our varied intelligences in ways that uphold truth, love and justice, on the basis of the best guidance from science and religion.

Throughout history, principles and theories of learning and of developing human potential have largely derived from religion and become incorporated into traditions and culture. Only recently has science come to play a predominant role in furthering our understanding of these subjects.

The last 20 years have witnessed tremendous advances in theory and research in developmental and cognitive psychology, and on the emotional, motivational, personality, and social processes of individual learners that contribute to the dynamics of the learning process. (Spielberger, 1998, p. ix)

Psychologist, philosophers, neuroscientist, and computer scientist are beginning to carefully and precisely identify some of the underlying mechanisms that give us this distinctively human capacity for change—the aspects of our nature that allow nurture and culture to take place. (Gopnik, 2009, pp. 8-9)

Scientific findings related to learning are prodigious and are expanding rapidly. It is not possible for us to even begin to explore them fully here, nor is there agreement on what can be considered of value. For the purposes of our brief discussion, we will limit ourselves to the synthesis of learner-centered psychological principles that have been reviewed by leaders and scholars in education, psychology and other scientific disciplines and approved by the American Psychological Association (1997). These are presented in the document “Learner-Centered Psychological Principles: A Framework for School Reform & Redesign”, which is freely available online at http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/learner-centered.pdf. These principles have several limitations, but they offer a viable starting point from which to consider more than a
century of research on teaching and learning that reflects both conventional and scientific wisdom and provides a framework for effective schooling, positive mental health and the greater realization of potential (McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

The learning principles that can be derived from the various world religions are likewise expansive and diverse and well beyond the scope of our discussion here. Not only is there no consensus within any one religion about what learning principles are uniformly supported by their scriptures and traditions, differences of opinion on the matter are found even among the believers of individual sects and congregations. For the purposes of this discussion, I have drawn upon my own understanding of learning principles derived from the teachings of the most recent of the world religions, the Bahá’í Faith (Clarken, 1998a, 1998b). Comparable to the document endorsed by the American Psychological Association, a compilation of some of the teachings on Bahá’í education has been approved and made freely available by the international governing body of the Bahá’í Faith (http://bahai-library.com/compilation_bahai_education) and will serve as my primary source.

The principles presented by the American Psychological Association concern cognitive, metacognitive, motivational, affective, developmental, social and individual factors. Though they do not directly treat moral and spiritual factors, I have nevertheless included the latter in my consideration of principles below. The learning principles derived from the compilation of Bahá’í writings on education represent a fraction of the guidance on education available in that religion’s literature, but constitute a concise and authoritative source. Throughout, I will also incorporate my own thoughts on the principles of truth, love and justice, which provide a new framework for considering individual and societal transformation supported in both science and religion.

It is understandable if you disagree with some of the ideas presented and suggestions made in considering what we might learn by looking at the American Psychological Association’s learning principles and the Bahá’í principles and ideals of education. This discussion is meant only as a starting point from which we can refine our views on learning and education, an opportunity to reconsider and re-vision how we might improve our lives, education and world using the powers of science and religion guided by the principles of truth, love and justice.

As this topic is immensely broad and complex, and understanding of human development evolving daily, our discussion here must necessarily be both preliminary and superficial. It is simply an attempt to provide some practical thoughts on how the guiding principles of truth, love and justice might be expressed in a new paradigm for education and its reform. Since the discussion is based upon a general and limited understanding and application of the sources mentioned above to the subject of learning factors, I will not be making direct references to them below. You may look at the original documents online at the sites given above.
Evolutionary and Developmental Factors

Like the characters in The Wizard of Oz, we come to realize our potentials as we learn to delay gratification, control our impulses, strive to gain victory over our own selves, correct our views of reality and ourselves, understand the problems we cause ourselves and others, take responsibility for our actions and fulfill our needs in a healthy manner. As we journey through life, moving through the successive stages of infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood, and our focus shifts from our physical survival needs to gradually incorporate our emotional, mental and volitional capacities, our sense of self expands from impulsive animal instinct to self-conscious, self-protective and self-centered awareness to role- and goal-oriented conformity on our way to the integration and autonomy of adulthood that includes and transcends all the previous stages. As our sense of who we are grows from bio- to ego- to ethno- to world-centric, our perspectives expand with our thinking, feeling and choices.

Just as our body’s cells divide, multiply, specialize, differentiate and combine into larger groupings, such as organs, which are further integrated into systems that work together to make a fully functioning organism, so do our cognitive, affective and conative domains grow and work together to form a fully-functioning psyche. As we develop the unique capacities associated with our physical, mental, emotional and volitional faculties, we must also learn to integrate them for their mutual reinforcement and the welfare of the individual and society. Interactions with and within these multiple capacities and with other people are required to actualize our potentialities. Given the proper settings, these capacities unfold or come into existence naturally, just as our bodies develop their genetic potentialities with a proper diet, exercise and care. However, while physical reality is bound by the law of entropy, intellectual and spiritual capacities can continually grow and develop throughout our lives.

Development is the process of potentiality gradually and systematically becoming actuality. Our knowing, loving and willing all seek expression through our unique capacities and characters. Growth results from the creation, expansion and consolidation of capacities. Developing human potential, both individual and collective, is the process of translating and transforming our knowledge, love and will into action.

We pass through the equivalent of millions of years’ of evolutionary development in just nine months in the womb. We start out as a microscopic single-cell creature and moving through numerous intermediate stages where we resemble various lower animals until we become a fully developed embryo. Our bodies continue to develop through many more hierarchical stages until we reach maturity. Through our interactions, our bodies, minds and souls are able to benefit from the accumulated knowledge and wisdom that has been slowly acquired by humans over many millennia and to comprehend matters which humanity’s brightest geniuses discovered only through years of study and of which people in former ages could not conceive. Today’s children
can, in a matter of months, pass through cognitive stages of development that our prehistoric forbears spent generations incorporating into their thinking.

Just as our bodies pass through eons of physical evolution in a relatively short time, so do our minds and souls. Our moral and spiritual capacities have grown from the progressive infusion, through the evolution of religion, of higher and more refined understandings and practices of truth, love and justice. The teachings of the founders of the world’s religions have exerted a transformational influence in developing morality and furthering the social good. The effects their laws and codes have had on humankind over the centuries can be seen everywhere today, as they have been largely adopted as part of the moral, legal and social frameworks of modern societies. These advancements over countless ages create the foundation upon which to build.

It is clear that change and development are universal principles that are part of the natural order. All living things pass through different stages or degrees of maturity. At each new stage, new powers and capacities are evident. A plant reaches maturity when it bears fruit and an animal when it has fully developed its physical capacities. Human beings attain maturity when their physical, mental and spiritual faculties are sufficiently developed to bear the fruits of truth, love and justice.

The developmental processes through which humanity and human beings progress can be seen as stages of increasing autonomy, differentiation and integration, resulting in more complex, higher order thinking, feeling and doing in individuals, communities and institutions, affecting knowledge, culture and society. Change or development in any one of these areas affects the others, and, is in turn, affected by them. These internal faculties are in a constant state of change and development, as are the external influences of the culture and society in which they are embedded.

The different stages that individuals, groups and humanity go through are similar to one another. Collectively, the associated changes have often taken place over centuries, but an individual may go through an analogous stage in a matter of months or years. As we better understand these developmental stages, we can better assist ourselves and others to develop properly.

Recent thinkers and researchers in evolutionary and developmental theory in many areas of human experience have identified patterns that demonstrate the parallels in these stages. Though development may appear to proceed randomly or unpredictably, we are beginning to see that individual and collective development is a gradual and foreseeable process that can be described in terms of hierarchical stages, which are now being studied (Asimov, 1984; Habermas, 1979; Neumann, 1955; Piaget, 1977; Wilber, 1995). Collapsing all of these developmental theories into four stages roughly comparable to infancy, childhood, adolescence
and adulthood allows us to see how age, identity, perspective, cognition, morality, ego, needs, emotion, worldview, culture, faith, technology, economics, society and religion might affect one another and be developed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Stage</th>
<th>Infancy/Early Childhood</th>
<th>Childhood</th>
<th>Adolescence</th>
<th>Adulthood</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ages: Individual Collective (estimated)</td>
<td>0-6 yrs</td>
<td>5-12</td>
<td>11-21</td>
<td>20+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Paleo to mesolithic</td>
<td>Neolithic to Bronze</td>
<td>Iron to Enlightenment</td>
<td>Global to future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Center/ Identity</td>
<td>Physio/ Bio-centric</td>
<td>Ego/ Role-centric</td>
<td>Ethno-centric</td>
<td>World-centric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>none</td>
<td>1st - 2nd person Preconventional</td>
<td>3rd person Conventional</td>
<td>4th and on person Postconventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perspective (Cook-Greuter)</td>
<td>Presocial, symbiotic, impulsive</td>
<td>Self-protective, rule-oriented, conformist</td>
<td>Self-conscious, goal-oriented conscientious</td>
<td>Individualistic, autonomous, ego-witnessing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self Sense (Cook-Greuter)</td>
<td>Symbiotic/ Impulsive</td>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>Conformist/ Conscientious</td>
<td>Individualistic/ Autonomous/ Integrated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self stages (Loevinger)</td>
<td>Physiological, Safety</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral (Kohlberg)</td>
<td>Pre-moral</td>
<td>Pre-conventional</td>
<td>Conventional</td>
<td>Post-conventional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moral (Gilligan)</td>
<td>Pre-moral</td>
<td>Selfish</td>
<td>Care</td>
<td>Universal Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-emotional (Erikson)</td>
<td>Trust, Autonomy</td>
<td>Initiative, Industry</td>
<td>Identity</td>
<td>Intimacy, Generativity, Integrity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Needs (Maslow)</td>
<td>Physiological, Safety</td>
<td>Belongingness</td>
<td>Esteem</td>
<td>Self-actualization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logical mode (Baldwin)</td>
<td>Pre-logical</td>
<td>Quasi-logical</td>
<td>Logical</td>
<td>Extra-logical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faith (Fowler)</td>
<td>Preverbal, magical, projective</td>
<td>Mythic-literal</td>
<td>Conventional/ Individual reflexive</td>
<td>Conjunctive faith/ universalizing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ego Types (Graves)</td>
<td>Autistic, magical animistic</td>
<td>Egocentric</td>
<td>Sociocentric, multiplicitic, relativistic/ individualistic</td>
<td>Systemic (integrated)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worldviews (Beck/Cowan)</td>
<td>Instinctive, Magical-animalistic</td>
<td>Power gods, Absolutist-religious</td>
<td>Individualistic-achiever, Relativistic</td>
<td>Systematic-integrative, Global-holistic</td>
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<tr>
<td>Epochs (Habermas)</td>
<td>Archaic, Magical-animalistic</td>
<td>Mythological, Mythic-rational</td>
<td>Rational-reflective</td>
<td>World Citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scarce Resources (Habermas)</td>
<td>Bodily security (power over nature)</td>
<td>Legal security (law and order)</td>
<td>Value</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sociocultural (Gebser)</td>
<td>Archaic, Magic</td>
<td>Mythic</td>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>Integral-aperspectival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural (Wilber)</td>
<td>Archaic, Magic-typhonic</td>
<td>Mythic-membership</td>
<td>Rational-egoic</td>
<td>Integral-centauric</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Units (Wilber)</td>
<td>Tribes, Organized hunts</td>
<td>Village, Early state</td>
<td>Empire, Nation-state</td>
<td>Planetary, global</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural</td>
<td>Magical/ animistic</td>
<td>Power/mythic</td>
<td>Rational/ pluralistic</td>
<td>Integral/holistic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social/Political Units</td>
<td>Survival groups/ clans</td>
<td>Tribes/city states</td>
<td>Nation/ corporate states</td>
<td>World state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Techno-economic (Lenski)</td>
<td>Hunting and gathering</td>
<td>Horticultural, agrarian</td>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>Informational</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Systems (Bellah)</td>
<td>Primitive, archaic</td>
<td>Historic</td>
<td>Early modern-modern</td>
<td>(Postmodern)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Organization (A. Taylor)</td>
<td>Family, clan, band</td>
<td>Tribe, territorial, theocratic empires</td>
<td>National state</td>
<td>Supra-national</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2. A Four-Stage Comparison of Individual and Collective Development Across Several Domains (Adapted from Wilber, 2000)
As we can see, our consciousness gradually evolves to differentiate self from non-self and then to differentiate between and integrate with all the various realities it encounters. In our earliest years, our identity is centered in our physical body and its needs. Our minds, hearts and wills are primarily influenced by our animal instincts and our bodies tell us what to think, feel and do, a mode of operation, focused on physiological and survival needs (Maslow, 1971). As awareness of our body increases, we are able to exercise and develop some control over it. We can grasp with our hands, use our senses to differentiate things in our surroundings, make sounds and move with greater intentionality.

Gradually, as we grow into childhood, our consciousness identifies our feelings and thoughts as being separate from the body and begins to shift some of its identity to them. Our minds, hearts and wills shift from being physiologically driven to being more influenced by our egos and role identities. At this stage we know, care and act primarily from a selfish viewpoint that only considers others to the extent that they affect us.

However, as we continue to differentiate and integrate our ways of being, feeling and knowing, our growing consciousness gradually becomes open to new realities and our focus shifts from the self to the family and, eventually, to the wider world. As our perspectives broaden, so does our identity (Miller and Cook-Greuter, 1994; Loevinger, 1977). We develop the awareness that others think, feel and behave differently from us, and we learn to take these differences into account and adjust our own worldviews accordingly. We come in contact with people different from us and are influenced by them. Our ability to understand, to care and to do the right thing increases and we are better able to interact appropriately with them using the tools of truth, love and justice.

As we move away from the self-centered and individualistic views of childhood toward more universal understandings of truth, love and justice, we obtain a truer knowledge of self and of reality and become healthier and happier. If, however, we continue to focus on material and selfish aspects of life, we do not develop the faculties of our true potential. Our sense of who we are individually and collectively grows as we progressively transcend these pre-conventional, conventional and post-conventional stages of development. Humanity as a whole is presently entering an adult developmental stage, seeking a maturity that is much needed in our present world.

Developmental factors like differentiation, integration and generalization are the primary processes of learning and development, whether physical, intellectual, emotional, social or spiritual. These processes start at the moment of conception and continue throughout life. Learning in early life becomes the foundation for and directly affects the later stages of development.
In whatever way a tree is bent, it will grow. Therefore, early growth, development and education are vital to future well-being. As we mature, we need love, knowledge, rights and responsibilities appropriate for our developmental level. Through proper training and education, and according to our capacity, the limitations of earlier stages can be allowed give way to new energies and abilities. It is important that parents and society provide the best opportunities for infants and young children to realize their budding potentialities. Then, as we grow in competence from early childhood, we are able to take increasing responsibility for our own process of developing and becoming. It is toward this autonomous, conscious and responsible use and development of potentialities that we should be directing our resources.

Just as we need doctors to help assess and improve physical health, we need help to diagnose and prescribe what is needed for each stage of our mental, emotional and spiritual development. If others have not properly developed, if they possess some undesirable traits or are lacking in some quality, we should patiently train, heal and help them. If we oppress, criticize or censure them, it can be a great impediment to their development.

We must strive to make the greatest progress in the shortest time and aid others to do the same. Growth and development are dependent to some degree on age, but the more we persevere and are assisted, the greater our progress. Healthy institutions and communities foster environments in which individuals can meet their potentials. By developing, respecting and supporting individual, community and institutional capacities, a dynamic and energized environment is created that benefits all parties.

**Cognitive, Metacognitive, Social, Moral and Spiritual Factors**

Blind imitation and unthinking obedience, appropriate to very early stages of development, hinder advancement as we mature. We have all been endowed with the power to think, feel and act for ourselves. As we mature, we learn to see with our own eyes, be guided by our own hearts and act according to our own convictions. We are to cultivate the ability to seek out and investigate reality for ourselves and to bring our lives into alignment with moral principles.

This learning occurs in a context. It is a proactive and reactive process involving the actualization of our innate, inherited and acquired capacities and characteristics through interactions with our environment, which includes our inner self, other people, objects, abstractions and unknowns. By effectively engaging with these entities we develop new capacities. This is a complex, difficult and lifelong process involving the emotional abilities to perceive, use, understand and manage emotions (Mayer and Salovey, 1997), and of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management (Goleman, 1998).
We draw on our environments using our five physical senses to take in information from which we construct and generate meaning through our imagination, which gives shape to things transmitted through the senses; thought, which considers or conceives of whatever is imagined or perceived; comprehension, which gives context and meaning to what is thought by connecting and constructing understanding; and memory, which recalls what the physical and mental senses have experienced (‘Abdu’l-Bahá, 1987, pp. 210-211). As our understanding increases, we are better able to utilize and manipulate the objects in our world first to advance our learning and welfare and then to help others.

We construct meaning using our minds, hearts and wills—the respective faculties for our knowing, loving and willing capacities—through truth, love and justice. Our innate capacities are all positive by nature, but can be used improperly and must be disciplined and trained according to scientific and spiritual principles of development. We build upon our existing cognitive, affective and conative frameworks to generate ever more substantial learning and development and adapt or discard earlier structures when they cease to function. Understanding how our worldviews can be altered, replaced or transcended in light of new experience and knowledge is vital for growth.

We are all simultaneously learners and teachers. We actualize our own capacities as we help others. It is primarily in social groups that our senses of truth, love and justice are challenged and our capacity for understanding, unity and equity developed. Investigating truth with others helps create greater love, insight, fellowship, unity, happiness, awareness, certainty, and well-being.

Our first and most primary relationships are with our parents, especially our mothers, and then with our families. Our evolving relationships with our world develop our capacities of knowing, loving and willing as we form, validate or adjust our understanding of reality and of ourselves, and help others do the same for themselves.

Questioning and seeking answers with others refines our knowledge, skills and attitudes. In explaining our thinking, feelings and actions to others, we acquire a deeper understanding of ourselves and help coordinate, focus and extend learning. Play and other social activities tap into our creative and motivating potentialities and provide added energy and capacity for learning.

Not all social influences or interactions are productive, however. While relationships that are caring, complementary, collaborative and cooperative yield positive results, competitive relationships are often destructive in that they are divisive and generally unjust. In addition, competition is based on limited views of truth, love and justice that result in mistrust, alienation and power-seeking. When we are compared to others and made to believe we are better or less than them, our progress and unity are hindered. We should be encouraged to strive for the highest degree of excellence according to our own capacity, not to foster a sense of superiority,
but to strive to improve ourselves in order to better serve others and live fulfilled and meaningful lives.

Institutions and communities have a responsibility to provide learning environments that encourage healthy individual development. Creating contexts characterized by the care, fairness and honesty needed for actualizing individual and collective capacities in more effective ways is an important factor in promoting personal and societal progress and prosperity. Fostering environments characterized by truth, love and justice facilitates the development of the knowing, loving and willing capacities of everyone involved.

As we learn to recognize each individual’s intrinsic worth and eliminate harmful social structures, we encourage and create healthy social environments where the virtues of discipline, order, patience, forbearance, understanding, detachment, service, compassion, tolerance, love, kindness and fellowship can thrive. Respect, courtesy and kindness are learned and strengthened through life-long effort and practice in demonstrating concern for the welfare and feelings of others as we strive to overcome stereotypes and prejudices and develop an appreciation for diversity. We learn fairness by recognizing and standing up to injustice and helping others do the same.

The faculties of knowing, loving, and choosing are essential to our moral development. Kohlberg (1981), for example, tends to locate moral development in the brain in terms of justice. Gilligan (1982) and Noddings (1984) meanwhile use terms that relate more to the heart, such as caring. Others talk about moral development in terms related to action and courage (Hatcher, 2000). The moral capacities of integrity, responsibility, forgiveness and compassion (Lennick and Kiel, 2005) and empathy, conscience, self-control, respect, kindness, tolerance and fairness (Borba, 2001), along with the spiritual qualities of critical existential thinking, personal meaning production, transcendent awareness and conscious state expansion (King & DeCicco, 2009), are all important for development. As we attend to these so that human potential and motivation are released, happiness, honor, well-being and security grow.

Some other spiritual factors of learning are meaning, motivation, vision, value, existential questioning and an awareness of divine presence. Qualities of spiritual learning include self-awareness, spontaneity, being vision- and value-led, holism, compassion, celebration of diversity, positive use of adversity, humility, a tendency to ask why, the ability to reframe, an ability to separate details from their contexts and a sense of vocation (Zohar & Marshall, 2001). Core spiritual abilities and capacities include transcendent awareness, heightened spiritual states of consciousness, sanctifying daily experiences, spiritual problem-solving and virtuous behavior (Emmons, 2000). As we recognize and reflect upon the nonmaterial and transcendent aspects of our existence, new meaning and consciousness develop.
We construct and connect cognitive, metacognitive, social, moral and spiritual frameworks on the basis of what we have learned as we build toward what we want for the future. We each have our unique experiences to build upon and have different gifts and talents to contribute to the construction of a healthy and vibrant society. As we learn how to effectively use these frameworks for learning and for constructing further meaning and to employ the skills of generalization, categorization and analysis of cause-effect relations, we are increasingly able to choose what is best suited to our particular circumstances. As we find valid sources of knowledge, love and courage outside of ourselves, we can use them to augment our own faculties. The processes of independent investigation of truth, altruistic love and goodwill require the application and exercise of a healthy balance of independence, interdependence and dependence.

**Motivational and Emotional Factors**

As we learn to balance the many aspects of the mind with the motivational and emotional factors of the heart and will, we are better able to achieve lofty and worthy aims. Evolutionary psychologists suggest that many of our present-day impulses and emotions can be viewed as deeply ingrained responses developed over many millennia that selected for traits to survive in environments very different from modern society. Maslow’s (1971, 1975) hierarchy of needs correlates to these evolving motivations, starting with survival (basic physical needs) and moving successively through security (physical and social protection), belonging (social needs), cognition (knowledge), aesthetic (beauty, loving), self-actualization (willing and doing) and self-transcendence (spirituality), the highest level of development.

In life, some people’s needs and motivations do not move beyond survival, the lowest level of Maslow’s hierarchy. This level is associated with those unconscious instincts that we share in common with animals. However, if we are chiefly guided by our instinctual selfish motivations and emotions, we limit ourselves to little more than animal existence, pursuits and satisfactions. Our knowing, loving and willing capacities are uniquely human capacities that relate to the higher levels in Maslow’s hierarchy.

Self-transcendence involves the soul and the spiritual aspects of humankind. Unlike the needs of the lower order, which only act as motivators when they are not fulfilled, higher order needs become more motivating the more they are met—the higher the purpose, the higher and more sustaining the intrinsic motivation.

As our motivations and emotions are increasingly guided by truth, love and justice, our capacity for service, fortitude and integrity matures. In cultivating healthy knowledge, love and will, we grow in capability, courage, curiosity, choice, control and concern. Moreover, development itself depends on a level of knowledge, love and will within social structures—
communities and institutions—that engenders greater authenticity, altruism and autonomy. Developing our potentialities in service to a higher purpose or power gives focus and meaning to our lives. As we act with truth, love and justice, the well-being of all is served, and as we dedicate our lives to matters of importance that benefit humanity and achieve positive results, we develop ever-greater happiness, capacity and well-being. Further, our constructive actions evoke helpful reactions that can increase the likelihood of continued growth and development.

Cause-effect relationships can also have negative effects that hinder our development, however. While extrinsic rewards and punishments are needed and useful as positive and negative forces, they are limited in their effectiveness and can at times hinder motivation, especially if misused or if we are already intrinsically motivated (Deci, 1971; Deci, Koestner, and Ryan, 1999; Fehr and Falk, 2002; Kohn, 1999, Shapira, 1976). For example, human beings are naturally internally motivated by authentic challenge and accomplishment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Seligman, 2011), and their self-determination and autonomy can be negatively affected by external influences, including rewards (Deci & Ryan, 1985), especially if these are viewed as inauthentic or manipulative. Indeed, we tend to choose relatively easy tasks when external rewards are given, but more challenging activities when they are not (Shapira, 1976), and both teachers and students do less well when pressure or motivation from outside is applied (National Research Council, 2011). This is why assessments by others can be motivating when they are used to provide helpful information or feedback, but are discouraging both motivationally and emotionally when they are controlling or critical. The sense of accomplishment gained from completing goals and developing virtues is lost when we feel controlled or criticized by others.

Factors that cause people to flourish—positive emotion, relationship, accomplishment, engagement and meaning (Seligman, 2011), are excellent tools for developing authenticity, altruism and autonomy. When we provide others with healthy choices by using reward and punishment with moderation and wisdom and moving away from extrinsic motivators toward self-control and self-fulfillment in a deliberate and measured way, we help them develop their individual willpower (Kohn, 1999).

Verbal, emotional and other attacks and abuses negatively impact character, motivation and development, especially in young children, and violate the principles of truth, love and justice which encourage the cultivation of the many qualities and traits related to building volitional capacity in the individual, such as resolution, endurance, perseverance, constancy, determination and striving. Motivation relates positively to effort and is itself positively related to relevance—if we do not see the significance to our lives of a particular pursuit, our motivation, and therefore our effort, is negatively affected. Our emotional and motivational capacities grow as we gain a more accurate understanding of cause-effect relationship and how to legitimately fulfill our wants and needs. As we mature, we learn how to better realize our objectives and optimize our happiness and well-being.
When we or something we care about, including our moral sensibilities, are wronged, offended, unjustly treated or threatened, we respond emotionally with anger, fear or disgust. The avoidance of these unpleasant emotions can be very motivating. Understanding these emotions helps us regulate and direct their influence in ways that are more beneficial to us and others.

When we consider that love can also be seen as the elemental force of attraction that connects and holds all things together in the universe, from quarks to galaxies, from couples to civilizations, we see that disintegration results when it is missing or weakened. The positive powers of love are a potent counterforce to overcome the negatives of untruth, hate and injustice. The emotions of sadness, anger, fear and disgust—all connected to the power of love—if used properly, can create positive forces and outcomes. However, if these negative emotions become overwhelming and are not properly channeled, they can have a detrimental and debilitating effect on development.

If our emotional and motivational faculties are not guided by beauty, unity, truth, goodness, service and justice or are not properly associated with and supported by them, then difficulties will ensue and our development will be impaired. If we choose what we care about out of ignorance, self-centeredness and selfishness, as is common in our modern world, or if our love falls out of balance with our knowing and willing capacities, the ability to be happy, creative, autonomous and psychologically healthy is impeded.

Accomplishment requires discipline, self-regulation, goal-directedness, activity, and responsibility, combining achievement motivation (related to our knowing and willing faculties) and affiliation motivation (utilizing our loving capacities). When we know what to do, want to do it and choose to act on it, we have increased and focused effort, which leads to greater mastery and courage, and we will be more and more attracted to good qualities and repelled from those that may appear attractive but are actually negative and destructive. Once we are moving in a particular direction, inertia tends to keep us going that way. The more conscious, deliberate and proactive we become, the more likely we will be able to move in a helpful way and be able to maintain that positive process.
Chapter 9. Our Challenge: Creating a New World

Setting Goals: A Tool for Transformation

Our motivation is closely related to our goals and purpose in life. Goals affect our actions, lives and learning. Our minds, hearts and wills are goal directed, and truth, love and justice should be their primary motivations and aims. The more we are aware of our goals, define them and consciously work towards them, the more likely we are to achieve them. If we encourage our children and youth in developing the ability to establish and reach worthwhile, long-term and meaningful goals, it will become second nature to them. Such training will result in high resolve, a healthy self-esteem, a sense of purpose and increased capacity. These qualities enable us to persevere and accomplish great things in our lives.

Our aims and purpose in life evolve along with our sense of self. Our first unstated and unconscious goals are to satisfy our basic needs and desires. They have little to do with loving and doing for others and seldom reach beyond our primal biological drives. As we grow, our goals move from self to family, and then hopefully expand to our community, nation and world. If our goals do not move outward to encompass higher truth, love and justice, we fail to achieve the purpose for which we were created and will suffer physically, psychologically and spiritually. Healthy communities and institutions adopt and pursue worthwhile goals and create meaningful and coherent representations of reality that require their members and those they serve to move beyond less mature views to those that integrate ever-widening and more inclusive social groups to form a unified whole.

If we apply our knowing, willing and loving capacities toward material ends or lower purposes, we will reflect and move in that direction, pursuing selfish interests instead of justice, bias and prejudice instead of truth, self-centeredness instead of love for all, and will use our powers and knowledge only toward worldly pursuits. People with selfish and materialistic goals tend to be unjust and arrogant and a scourge to themselves and others.

We can choose to set our goals high, to strive toward noble aims and purposes, to control our passions and desires and to avoid frivolous and useless endeavors. If our goals are positive and healthy, they will take attraction, time and energy away from less worthy aims. Lofty goals will not indulge unhealthy selfish concerns and interests. Our success and prosperity depend upon being the cause of well-being, happiness and advantage to others. These goals are worthy of striving for and give meaning to life. Unfortunately, they are not the goals promoted in our modern culture.
If a standard or goal is too general, difficult or long term, it is easy to lose sight of it or feel it impossible to achieve. It is helpful to break such goals down into specific short-term, accomplishable tasks. For example, we are more likely to be successful if we resolve to be truthful, loving or fair in each act we do, evaluating our success and then deciding what needs to be done next to move closer to our broader goal. We must be prepared to adjust goals as we grow and gain new knowledge. We can establish standards for success that encourage accomplishment and set specific targets that are measurable so we know when we have achieved them.

Responding effectively to the challenges life offers requires willpower and resolve. It is natural to avoid pain and suffering, but facing and overcoming challenges, difficulties and hardships is an inevitable part of the path to development and happiness. Sacrifice and suffering are required, expected and accepted in the process of achieving worthwhile goals and, in the end, give life meaning and value. Life’s tests, then, should be seen as opportunities for growth rather than threats to well-being. What one person may see as painful and difficult can be perceived as challenging and rewarding from another point of view (i.e. running a marathon or speaking in public). We are more likely to benefit from negative experiences if we can reframe them in a positive way. It is our understanding of reality and of cause and effect relationships rather than reality itself that often determines our actions, reactions, thoughts and feelings. If our perceptions are not based in truth, our capacity to further know, love and will is impaired.

We can be taught and can develop through experience successful strategies for learning such as making decisions, associations, inferences, connections, interpretations and summaries and drawing conclusions. We must develop self-discipline and the skills of comparing and contrasting utilizing the knowing, loving and willing faculties to evaluate options and distinguish truth from falsehood, fact from opinion and cause from effect, striving for accuracy, clarity, sensitivity and open-mindedness in our discussions. As we generate new ways of viewing situations using inquiry, analysis, comparison, contrast and evaluation (Marzano, et al., 1997), we also learn to express our views with moderation and consideration endeavoring to bring the principles of truth, love and justice to bear.

Helping one another solve problems develops our cognitive, affective and conative powers. The search for knowledge and truth are essential aspects of thinking for oneself and true learning. Memorization, meditation and reflection are also useful and necessary learning tools that can help us become successful learners. Parables, stories, metaphors, analogies, play, recreation, travel, music, visual arts, drama and other creative expressions all facilitate learning, especially in the young. As we incorporate combinations of these strategies to further our understanding of human potential, we will advance individually and collectively. Encouraging our head and heart to work together can lead to great discoveries and accomplishments in science, the arts and life in general.
Seeking and discovering truth fosters strategic thinking and complex learning. Creating justice is itself a form of strategic thinking. Our capacities are enhanced as we develop and use them in challenging and unique situations. Consultation with others is one of the most powerful tools for acquiring new knowledge, skills, qualities and dispositions. Consultation involves seeking powerful and positive solutions through joint investigation of truth in a loving and just context. Understanding which knowing, loving or willing modes we find most effective can help get us started and facilitates our developmental process. Redirection, reflection and reinforcement help us choose approaches and activities that will assist in effective learning.

**Balancing Individual Diversity with Collective Unity**

Science and religion both attest the essential oneness and unity of the human race, but they also affirm that no two people are exactly alike, even identical twins. We are alike in that knowing, loving and willing are part of our nature and purpose, but each person has particular endowments, experiences and heredity that make his or her capacities, subjective realities and experiences distinctive. In short, our similarities are greater than our differences, but each of us is undoubtedly unique.

That is to say, we each have unique endowments and interests based on innate, inherited and acquired characteristics. Innate capacities and characteristics are those inborn qualities that make us different even from those who had similar genes and environmental influences. Inherited characteristics are determined by our genetic makeup and acquired characteristics come from the interaction of our genetic endowments with the environment.

The combination and interaction of these three sets of characteristics determine who we are as individuals and why and how we are different from others. We cannot change our innate and inherited qualities, since we acquire them at birth, but we can modify the degree to which these capacities are developed in order that we may realize our given potentialities. Education at all levels is the primary way we can significantly facilitate healthy development. The differences our environments, education and experiences can make are very great, and we must do our best to see that all are equipped to fully develop their minds, hearts and wills so that their inborn capacities may be fully and properly realized.

The ultimate authority and responsibility to understand, develop and utilize our unique talents, interests, capabilities and environments lies with the individual, but we can help others understand, accept and work with their unique resources and can provide the means, materials and methods to develop them. Knowledge is like wings that can free us from the limitations of this world and a ladder by which we can climb to greater heights. We demonstrate the results of our learning in our lives, through our deeds and actions. Every person should be encouraged to
reach the highest levels of achievement according to his or her capacity and then to strive for even greater excellence.

Some mistakenly fear that diversity must lead to disunity and believe that unity requires uniformity. But in reality, the richness, health, well-being and beauty of an individual or group depend upon the principle of unity in diversity. Because of our uniqueness, we each bring special talents, abilities, personalities and interests to learning. We need not make these differences a source of disunity, conflict or competition. Truth, love and justice help us change our ignorance to knowledge, hate to love, injustice to justice, conflict to unity, and violence to peace as we move toward them from our various perspectives. Always working to maintain unity through the appreciation of diversity, understanding that the differences among us are wellsprings for enriching truth, love and justice, we foster unity in diversity in our communities and institutions, making this a better world for all of us.

Truth, love and justice are essential to the development of the whole person, just as nutrition, exercise and rest are to the body. They are also the tools for uncovering the unique gems and riches to be found, uncovered, extracted and refined in the mines of our minds, hearts and wills. Just as every mine contains different gems or minerals that require specific approaches to discover and bring forth, unique contexts, conditions and characteristics require particular methods to be employed to find and polish an individual’s strengths and virtues.

Life is a learning process and many mistakes and errors are bound to be made as we refine ourselves and help others, but with proper guidance and effort we can create environmental influences that help guide our responses in healthy ways to develop individual and collective faculties. Understanding the learning process enables us to reflect upon and refine our capacities as we apply them to new situations.

Knowledge, Education and Transformation: A New Perspective

At different times throughout history, various vehicles, such as tradition, mythology, religion, reason or science, have been used as the standard for determining what is true and right. The pre-modern era was dominated largely by tradition, mythology and religion, whereas the modern age by guided more by reason and science. The postmodernist period that is emerging rejects earlier truth claims and views reality through the lens of relativism. Our history and experience have shown these approaches were not reliable in isolation. The post-postmodern period, then, must find a healthy balance and harmony among these approaches.

The present period is being characterized as the information age. It is an age of knowledge. Knowledge is powerful, and that power can create or destroy depending on the uses to which it is put. Learning happens within a culture, and our sense of what truth, love and justice should look like is heavily influenced by the social forces that dictate what we are
expected to think, feel and do. Culture often determines the uses and values of knowledge, and society can create ways and means to either encourage or limit knowledge. It also largely determines the technology, discoveries, research, laws, inventions, arts, reforms and regulations we have available to us. We see many cultures and societies in the world today struggling with new realities, clinging to traditions and outworn conceptions of truth, love and justice that are challenged by the waves of change and threaten their views and beliefs.

Historically, social developments have roughly progressed from family units, to clans, to tribes, to feudal states, to city-states to nation states to the now emerging global state. Humanity has passed through stages connected with hunting and gathering, horticultural, agricultural, and industrial ages, all of which have led to the present information age and the emerging era of globalization. In the same way that genetic changes have been passed on to succeeding generations, so have the scientific, cultural and intellectual developments connected with the human mind and spirit. Each higher stage has allowed for greater expression of and opportunities for developing capacities, both individual and collective.

We have also seen an evolutionary development in the areas of morality, spirituality and religion. Religion has evolved building on earlier teachings and introducing necessary changes according to the growing capacity and demands of each successive age. These religious teachings have addressed the changing spiritual, social, cultural and physical conditions of each age and advanced human development. Those aspects of religion revealed for less developed times, no longer appropriate at our present stage of maturity, need now to be replaced by guidance, teachings, insights, standards and approaches better suited to, and revealed for, the current age.

True religion serves as the wellspring for happiness and well-being. False religion, on the other hand, can lead to the downfall and collapse of a society and civilization, as we have seen so often in history. One of the persistent problems of institutionalized religion has been its clinging to teachings that no longer address the needs of humanity while rejecting and trying to suppress more evolved ideas with which it may not agree. Ironically, the founders of the world religions, who have been some of the most powerful and progressive influences on the advancement of truth, love and justice throughout history, have been consistently and severely persecuted, often to the point of martyrdom, by the followers of the religions which preceded their revelations.

As we re-examine and re-evaluate our individual and collective pasts and the attitudes and assumptions that have guided our thinking and actions, we discover that they are firmly embedded and difficult to alter. We need either to be presented with a worldview that is more accurate than ours and is supported by overwhelming evidence or to experience the dramatic failure of our own paradigms, usually in the form of a major crisis, before we will consent to change. We generally do not discard our attitudes and habits until they have broken down.
means, however, that those who are able to successfully change and advance to higher levels of functioning will see life’s challenges and crises as opportunities for growth.

Our capacities to know, love and will are what distinguish us from animals and enable us to learn and progress. It is these faculties that create culture and society, and are in turn influenced by them. Knowledge is one of the primary tools needed for change. The greater the knowledge, the greater the potential benefit of the change it produces. Ignorance is the primary limitation to progress and well-being. The most fundamental aspect of progress, then, is the transformation of ignorance into knowledge.

Universal education is a basic human right. In view of justice and equity, we should all, according to our needs and capacities, be enabled to participate in the acquisition and generation of knowledge and have access to the means by which to apply it. Governments and other societal institutions should see to it that the necessary infrastructure exists to enable every individual to receive an education adequate to their individual and collective needs and aspirations. Though it is the individual’s responsibility to acquire knowledge, it is the society’s duty to provide the ways and means, including creating and supporting the institutions that make learning possible.

It is a source of joy and wellbeing to be educated and to have a refined character. We should strive to be well grounded in beneficial sciences and spiritual practices. Most people today tend to be superficial in their thinking, feeling and doing because of the low standards of our society. Education that is systematic and organized facilitates our learning and progress and is necessary for human excellence and prosperity. It enables us to diagnose problems and seek solutions using the highest scientific and ethical principles, make ongoing assessments and adjustments as needed and strive to eliminate ignorance and gain the highest levels of excellence. We should strive to be excellent at something and to provide some service to society.

Knowledge as determined solely through reason, tradition, intuition or one or another of our senses, however, is prone to error. Used together, though, these faculties and resources can serve as a more reliable source of truth. True science and true religion considered together likewise offer a more balanced source and standard for assessing truth than either by itself. Knowledge and its acquisition should be guided by the ethics of love and the morality of justice if it is to be of benefit. True justice and equity depend on altruistic love, fair-mindedness and goodwill.

Human beings are like iron and need the fire of education to help refine, form and make us strong. Education protects us from the rust and corrosion of ignorance and corrupt desires. Physical education to nurture and strengthen the body and develop bodily soundness and health involves such things as proper nutrition, hygiene, and physical exercise. Intellectual education, to encourage rational thought and psychological development, relates to those activities that contribute to the advancement of material civilization and are of benefit to the world, such as
useful arts, crafts, trades and sciences. Spiritual education, having to do with the acquisition of morals and virtues founded in the world religions, facilitates, guides and regulates all our activities in healthy ways and infuses our lives with meaning and energy. Each type is progressively more difficult to measure, but goals, standards and assessments can be made for each.

These three types of knowledge and education all depend on the guiding principles of truth, love and justice, the most potent forces for developing our bodies, minds and spirits. They all progress in an organic and systematic fashion that can be understood using the tools of science and religion. Our educational paradigms should include all these aspects of human nature and development, and our reform of education should be guided by them.

Knowledge alone, however, will produce no results. It must be applied to the realities and problems facing the individual and society. Knowledge must be combined with resolve and action before any fruit can be realized. As we strive to obtain knowledge, society is responsible to supply the ways and means for its attainment. When society abides by these principles, progress and prosperity will be experienced by all.

**The Challenge of Our Time**

We have all been created noble and are each endowed with value, rights and responsibilities. Our integrity depends on our faculties and powers being harmonized and moderated as they grow in strength and complexity. Often our feelings, knowledge and actions are in conflict with one another or with reality, leading to emotional, mental, behavioral, moral and spiritual dis-ease. To improve our social reality, we must learn ways of solving problems and dealing with differences that create and promote greater understanding, unity and equity.

The essential and fundamental crisis and challenge of the present age is the lack of development of the moral and spiritual qualities needed to move humanity out of its current moribund condition. Spirituality can act as a leaven to affect positively the character of our culture, communities and institutions, but its influence has been limited because of its association with established and discredited religions. The full and proper development of human capacity is achieved through the application of the best approaches and knowledge from science and religion. Moral understanding and behavior furthers the advance of that process. Education according to this view is a spiritual and moral process leading to a meaningful, fulfilled and virtuous life. The highest forms of truth, love and justice are revealed through our conscientious and rational application of science and religion. To know, love and live in accordance with ultimate reality is the path of discovering truth, love and justice.

Only as we find higher meaning and purpose and seek to live in accordance with higher aspirations and principles do we find true contentment and peace, both inwardly and outwardly.
The modern-day pursuit and worship of greed, pride, fame and consumption are contrary to the virtues of truth, love and justice. By focusing on more noble and inspiring purposes and capabilities, the ability to take initiative in a creative and disciplined way, sustain effort in the face of obstacles and behave responsibly is enhanced. Morality and spirituality have been endorsed in all of the great religions and their value has been validated in the lives of those who were rightly guided by them. Developing a spiritual practice of prayer, meditation, study and service enables us to better transcend selfishness and self-centeredness and leads us to a healthier and happier life.

Kindness, forgiveness and mercy are foundational to protecting human rights and developing human potential. Reward and punishment should be wisely employed to establish security and justice, which are needed for unity and peace to exist. Education and socialization must be pursued with care and wisdom. Children should be raised such that they are repelled by the idea of doing wrong or betraying the love and trust of their communities and institutions, which are responsible for creating environments that encourage positive attitudes and behavior and discourage wrong.

An appreciation of the oneness of humanity is the key for advancing truth, love and justice. This vital concept captures the changes that are taking place and need to take place for humanity to advance. As we increasingly see all of the peoples of the earth as belonging to one family, the human race, our culture and society will transform in profound ways. This change in culture is the prelude to a world civilization with universal education, rights, values and opportunities that allow and encourage a rich diversity of thinking, feeling and acting supported by global institutions, laws, standards, technology, and communications.

The barriers among nations, religions, classes, and races that have kept people apart for centuries will need to be broken down as we move towards realizing the oneness and unity of the human race. Unifying the rich diversity of humankind will release resources and energies that will greatly enhance our lives and open abounding opportunities for truth, love and justice to flourish.

As we learn to respect the dignity of people who are different from us, we create conditions in which we all prosper. By creating prejudice-free environments, empathizing with others and building healthy self-concepts without developing a sense of self-righteousness, we develop characters that improve our lives, communities and institutions. As we follow and promote the golden rule; create positive, united communities characterized by safety, security, stability, trust, caring, self-respect and a sense of belonging; learn to cultivate and celebrate the uniqueness of each person; encourage reflection and flexibility in thinking and develop moral competence, our thinking, feeling and willing capacities and our senses of truth, love and justice grow.
One obstacle we face is realizing that our view of truth is largely seen through an unconscious lens. Many in modern societies immersed in a paradigm that believes that reality is material and what is true is purely objective, based solely upon natural and measurable laws. Our culture tends to seek explanations of reality with little regard for things immaterial. Our minds, hearts and wills are constantly challenged by an aggressive and alluring materialistic, consumer-driven and narcissistic ideology that has corrupted our essential faculties and their powers. We live in a society that encourages unhealthy self-love, self-interest and self-promotion and invalidates healthy love and concern for others. Developing our potential will require us to transcend our limiting perceptions and attachments by focusing on higher purposes and capabilities.

The basic challenge and goal, then, is to know, love and serve ourselves and our needs while we do the same for others and help others to do so as well. Our lives are a series of successes and failures in this regard. Every day we are tested. Every day we choose whether to manage our affairs and responsibilities based on moral and ethical principles that can transform our world or not. In our daily pursuits, we can take initiative in sustainable, creative and disciplined ways that enable those we work with and for to persevere and overcome the many obstacles that are placed in their paths. And we can turn each obstacle into an opportunity, as did the characters in *The Wizard of Oz*.

Learning about our strengths and weaknesses so we can deal with them effectively is a fundamental charge to all individuals. Learning from our experiences and those of others past and present helps us develop a framework for life. As we consecrate ourselves in service to the greater good, utilizing the creative powers of our natures through the application of truth, love and justice, we develop our communities and release our potential. It requires the exercise of our minds, hearts and wills, and develops integrity, prosperity and healthy authenticity, altruism and autonomy. As we strive for excellence in the humble spirit of service, physical, psychological and spiritual well-being will follow for individuals and the communities and institutions of which they are a part.

Thinking, feeling and willing are directly related to the cognitive, affective and conative domains that must be properly nurtured, developed and harmonized for individual, community and institutional health and well-being. These faculties and structures are the dynamic focal points for effective interactions with others, and are key aspects of learning and development actualized in pursuing the spiritual principles of truth, love and justice. Our growing consciousness or awareness of these potentialities and principles allows us to develop our practice of realizing life-enriching, authentic, valid knowledge; altruistic, sincere love and autonomous, virtuous will. To be effective, development must practice and be based upon truth and authenticity, love and altruism and justice and autonomous choice.
Building capacity is an intellectual, emotional and moral endeavor. The subjective and objective, individual and collective aspects of mind, heart and will, and truth, love and justice need to be considered for holistic understanding and improvement. Utilizing our minds, hearts and wills in pursuit of truth, love and justice is a powerful contributor to the advancement of individuals and societies. These capacities enable and encourage individuals to be capable, conscious and conscientious developers of themselves and their communities.

If we fail to address the mind, heart and will or to develop each faculty fully, we will not develop the goals, values and actions essential to a whole, healthy and balanced person, organization and society. Their development leads to a positive self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-reliance that can counteract the egotism, narcissism and selfishness that are endemic in modern society. The key to releasing our potential and realizing peace and prosperity in our troubled world is in our hands.
Acknowledgments

I have tried to write a book that exemplifies the ideals of truth, love and justice, I have many faults and only limited abilities, for which I alone bear blame. I take full responsibility for any errors, omissions and other weakness you may find in this book. I do not claim anything I have written here as completely new or original, and it is possible much of what I have to say has been said before, but I hope my effort to share what I believe to be true, loving and just will be a worthwhile contribution to the betterment of the world.

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References


