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## Journeying Together: An Essay on Intimacy

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Journeying Together:

An Essay on Intimacy and Spirituality

Utilizing Five Stages of Ego Development

Submitted in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

of Master of Arts, Lindenwood Colleges

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5 August 1979



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I would like to thank Dr. Craig Eisendrath for his continual encouragement and intellectual examination of this essay as it evolved. Also I would like to thank June Stankiewicz for many thought provoking discussions where this essay was challenged and my views became clearer and more succinct. Most particularly my special appreciation to my partner, Jackson H. Day for his continual support, encouragement, and perseverance. Through his help with clarifying my ideas and thoughts, I was able to form a more cohesive presentation about journeying together in intimate and spiritual relationships.

## PREFACE

This paper is an essay. It will seek at times to be persuasive, yet it is not intended to be a polemic. It has required a substantial quantity of research, and yet it is not intended to be a research paper which must develop a conclusion from a series of documented or documentable hypotheses. As an essay, this paper's central purpose is to assimilate and integrate; to pull together the strands of thoughts, observations, and conclusions both of the author, and of a host of others, into one conceptual whole. The objective of this paper, is to provide a holistic view of the development of intimacy and spirituality in long term committed sexually bonded relationships, and the dynamic flow of energy thereby released, and in so doing to be of benefit to the practitioner of couple therapy.

### Editorial Note on the Gender of Pronouns

The English language does not as yet have a generic personal pronoun. Traditionally the masculine pronoun was used when either or both sexes were addressed. This inevitably gave a masculine overtone to the communication. An alternative is to specify both and refer to 'he or she', 'his and hers,' but this can become quite cumbersome.

An alternative selected in this paper is to use the feminine pronoun whenever the masculine pronoun would traditionally have been used. This inevitably gives a feminine overtone to the communication which may helpfully stimulate some images and associations in the reader's mind which otherwise might not have occurred.

It was not felt appropriate, however, to change the gender within quotations. Therefore a generic masculine pronoun within a quotation may be followed by generic feminine usage in the text. In each case the reader is asked to note that the generic use is emphasized, not the accidental change of gender.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. PORTRAIT OF A COUPLE

Imagine a couple in a picture--a picture which like a movie shows change and progress over time. The couple meets. Each experiences an attraction, perhaps due to physical appearance, perhaps due to a gesture that reminds the other of a fond memory of another person. The couple spend some time together trying to establish that this might be 'the right person.' Each shares just enough of him or herself to establish a comfortable framework for the other to open up. Questions are being asked and decisions are being made at the same time. Do they like each other? Can they trust each other? Is this the kind of person that they want to share their personal visions with? Can the other be trusted? As affirmative answers appear, each reaches out further to connect with the other. In this process, if one of the partners is not rejecting, nor too judgmental, of the other, the foundation is laid for "expression of authentic feelings" (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 17) and each partner is open to more honest self-disclosure.

The couple is then directed or catapulted, as the case may be, to establish a connectedness and bonding between the two. They begin the quantum leap of making a commitment to each other. The commitment may first be simply that of dating regularly; or it may include the bond of sexual intercourse; or it may extend to living together.

When the initial encounter is beginning, the couple shares only their most general creative feelings. These may be expressed primarily as intellectual ideas. As the level of trust deepens, however, both



take more risks to share their more personal visions. The visions initially shared may reflect their lighter side, or be visions already tested, for which positive affirmation has been previously received. But then imagine the couple at a party in the summer time: one suggests to the other that they go wading in the fountain in the park. Such a suggestion is creative, playful, and risky. Without a previous clue or cue that such a suggestion might be accepted, combined with personal security, this creative element might never have the opportunity to surface. As both share and express their own creativity with each other, and both are affirmed in this sharing, then they can become open to sharing their individual dreams, and to evolving mutual ones of a journey together.

At that moment of romping in the fountain the couple is most likely to experience a sense of elation, or high. Perhaps this particular experience may appear superficial, but it provides the basis for an awareness of peak experiences, and for a joyful celebration that may later guide the couple to seek even more meaningful depth experiences. Martin Buber stated, "all real living is meeting." As the security of the bonded relationship deepens and the flow of communication is enhanced, the couple will add more and more of their creativity to their relationship and in turn, experience their energy turned back out to the world as they experience an expansion of oneness with all on their journey together.

## B. HOW THIS PAPER CAME ABOUT

This paper began in the personal journey that I have been on for many years by myself and with significant others. After a number of struggles with what each time I thought was the intimate relationship, I renewed my journey and reached out to my partner of the last seven years. Though this part of my personal journey has felt scary, risky, and at times even painful, the discoveries and personal celebrations have offered me a refreshment and nourishment like that of a cool, tranquil forest. As my own journey progressed, I also began reaching out to walk with others on their journey. These others were my clients and their struggles were also painful and scary.

The one message each of us was trying to put out has been dramatically portrayed in a family sculpture presented by Virginia Satir. (Workshop, Maryland, October 1973) In this sculpture, each member of a family stood in a circle trying to speak all at the same time to the other family members. They spoke in ways that they hoped would make them heard: demanding, placating, wheedling, persuading. Behind each family member stood an alter ego softly saying, "I just want to be loved." To me, the alter ego was stating in the simplest terms the desire of all of us for intimacy and spirituality. I was very moved by this dramatic role-play.

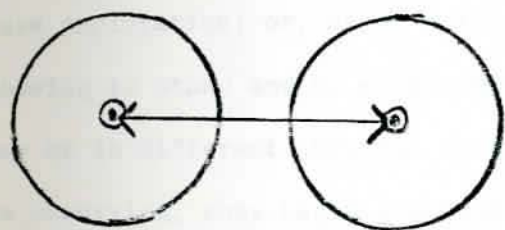
For me the search to understand and fulfill this basic need has taken many directions. The search has included study and supervised training in the areas of family systems, personal decision-making, human sexuality and bonded relationships. As my journey progressed, it became clearer to me that the long term, committed, sexually bonded relationship which incorporates intimacy and spirituality uniquely offers to this basic need for love an environment in which to grow and be nourished.

### C. INTIMACY AND SPIRITUALITY

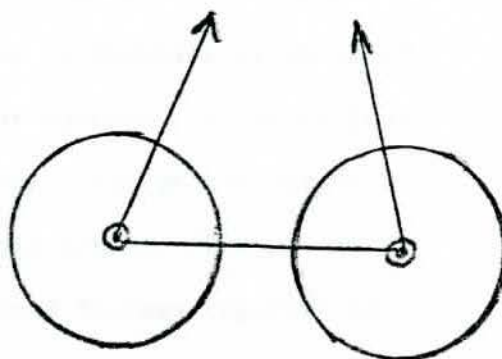
For me, intimacy and spirituality are the most important dimensions of profound long term sexually bonded relationships. These two dimensions are frequently elusive in definition but yet represent exciting and rewarding discoveries in experience. Each moment that intimacy and spirituality struggled to emerge in my relationship, a time of growth followed which led to a deeper level of consciousness and closer bonding with my partner.

A definition of intimacy and spirituality is necessary at this juncture. As I will use the words in this paper, intimacy consists of a relationship between two people which connects them at the central core of each, and in which the two are the major focus of each other's attention. Spirituality consists of a similar relationship, but one in which the focus of attention has moved outward from the couple themselves.

Viktor Frankl (1975) describes the human being as centered around a core which is the "'center' of spiritual activity." (p. 28). Intimacy alone can be a very good romance, since an intimate couple may not choose to explore and own their spiritual dimensions. With spirituality as well, it has become a journey together. These definitions can be diagrammed as follows:



INTIMACY ALONE



INTIMACY AND SPIRITUALITY

Intimacy, or the ability to experience it, is learned through experiences of genuine, loving, person to person contacts. Intimacy can be a choice to take risks and share the most 'terrible' parts of one's life with another. This is difficult for many to try, and as a result, many relationships end in failure.

Yet it must not be assumed that the individuals in a failed relationship do not want to be intimate. George Bach and Ronald Deutsch (1970) state that "actually, it reflects a hunger for intimacy. Most couples split up because they failed to find the intimacy that they longed for; or because they cannot endure the pain of living without the intimacy that they once felt they possessed." (p. 35). It is a paradox that men

and women, as much as they may appear to be in a flight away from intimacy, seek to experience it as a part of their relationships.

Intimacy and spirituality can be experienced. When the flow of energy from the central core takes place between two people, intimacy and spirituality do occur. Through a mutually cooperative flow of energy between them, partners know and respond to each other. They can provide the support that is needed by the other. The support can be a push or pull as in mountain climbing or cave exploration; or, as at a time of joy or sadness, it can be just knowing to stand and be silent with the other. Though the partners may be in different physical spaces when this dynamic flow of energy is occurring, they begin and continue a shared journey together in which they see and experience the world together in a new way.

#### D. THE HUMAN POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

The potential of human ability to grow and develop has always been understood. Despite this, men and women have not lived life to its fullest. "Early in the history of modern psychology, William James remarked that few men bring to bear more than about ten percent of their human potential on the problems and challenges of human living." (Egon, 1973, p. 1). Without potential we would remain in a static life space, never fulfilling any of our visions, never even dreaming.

To be activated, potential requires a push or a pull. Discomfort with the present can be a push toward growth. For Abraham Maslow (1968) it is when the shallow life doesn't work that it is questioned. (p. 14) The contrast between shallowness and profound living dominates those who are

activating their potential. When life is seen as shallow, an uncomfortable anxiety creeps in. It is this anxiety that catapults individuals to change. Thus discomfort with the present is a necessary component of potentiality.

The recent human potential movement has sought to replace the ideal of a tension-free life, replacing it with the notion of a tautness or force which can facilitate the growth of an individual. The stress and pressures of daily living can create for some the desire to return to earlier comforts and satisfactions. Such stress may thus be seen as growth inhibitors. Yet for others these same stresses and pressures may function as growth motivators. As motivators, these stresses can guide an individual to satisfy her curiosity and strive for enhanced competence. (Loevinger, 1976, pp. 131-132). The failure of the earlier comforts and satisfactions to sustain can also act as a growth motivator, especially if the individual can turn to others for help to explore her own potential and become open to her dreams and visions.

The fear of risking keeps many from ever realizing their potential. Maslow (1968) asks, "Why is it so hard and painful for some to grow forward? ...the attractions of safety and security, ...the functions of defense and protection against pain, fear, loss, and threat; ...[People] need... courage in order to grow ahead." (p. 46). Discomfort, anxiety and pain alone cannot provide the courage to grow. Achievement of human potential requires the pull as well as the push. The willingness to take risks, endure anxiety and bear pain requires the pull of dreams for the future. It requires the pull of love in the present.

Then, pulled as well as pushed toward potential, an individual can take the risks which lead to a breakthrough of identity, and then can know the exhilarating spirit and beauty of life.

Love and potential are reciprocal. Actualization of potential helps an individual experience love more fully. Conversely, Maslow (1968) observes, "Lovers are able to see potentials in each other that other people are blind to. (p. 78) Moreover, "Not only does love perceive potentialities but it also actualizes them. The absence of love certainly stifles potentialities and even kills them." (p. 98) An individual without love is like a vacant shell from which a hermit crab has departed. Like the shell, the individual has no purpose or direction. With love the opposite is true. Love comes from the people we interact with. Love comes from ourselves as well, and the lover affirms this that the loved one feels for himself. Then both lover and beloved can act on their dreams and visions, and their functioning more fully express their potential. Then they are extending their energy to the universe. In turn they themselves are revitalized from their relationship.

When each explores her own potential and stretches to explore her higher consciousness, she will find the inner strength and peace to reach her potential. Over twenty years ago, Anne Morrow Lindbergh (1978) wrote of such a desire: "I want a singleness of eye, a purity of intention, a central core to my life that will enable me to carry out ...obligations and activities as well as I can. I want in fact--to borrow from the language of the saints--to live 'in grace' as much of the time as possible. By grace I mean an inner harmony, essentially spiritual, which can be translated into outward harmony." (p. 23).

In reviewing the stages over which this development toward potential takes place it must always be remembered that the push of pain can drive an individual along the path of the earlier stages, but only the pull of such desires as Anne Lindbergh expresses can lead a person to the highest stage.



## II. CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW.

### A. FIVE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN ADULTS

Intimacy and Spirituality are experienced differently by different people; perhaps even more important is that they are experienced differently by the same people at different stages of their lives. For a model of these stages as they affect persons who have reached adulthood, I have turned to Jane Loevenger's model of ego development, which I have paraphrased in this section. She presents five stages typically found in adults:

- o Self-protective
- o Conformist
- o Conscientious
- o Autonomous
- o Integrated

These stages I consider non-regressive--that is to say, upon reaching each new stage, we incorporate the traits of the previous stage, but only in extreme deprivation situations, such as prison, might we revert to it. It is important to review these five stages before continuing with our discussion of the long term committed sexually bonded relationship.

1. The Self-Protective Stage

a. Motivation: rewards and punishments

The person who stays in the self-protective stage has been characterized as motivated by rewards and punishments, disconnected from others, unable to engage in self-criticism, dependent on rituals, and preoccupied with control. The self-protective person is characterized by the acceptance that there are rules, but they are accepted with some reservation and because of the possible punishment. Motivation is essentially protective, thus the term the self-protective stage. For the Self-Protective Person, the concept of 'rules' is fairly narrow and in practice means to take care not to get caught. Above and beyond self-protection, the rules that the Self-Protective Person is aware of tend to be used for her own satisfaction. The rules are known, but not internalized as a personal set of rules for guidance or self-control.

b. Lack of connectedness

For this person, the world is viewed as separate from herself. She has not developed a sense of connectedness with others. "The self-protective person has the notion of blame, but he externalizes it to other people or circumstances." (Loevinger, 1976, p.17) Following a sequence of rulebreaking and punishment, the self-protective person blames others for punishing her rather than herself for breaking the rule. The same applies in non-rule breaking situations which appropriately call for taking responsibility. Here we find the self-protective person putting the blame on a group of people, such as 'my bad luck is due to having been in several foster homes all my life,' or 'my teachers don't like me, therefore I don't do well in school.'

She does not view herself as a participant of her circumstances, but rather feels that the responsibility lies with other persons.

c. Inability for self-criticism

The ability of critical self-analysis is not a part of her developmental characteristics. Finding herself in a difficult situation, she is unable to perceive her contribution to her circumstances or take even partial responsibility. Instead, she justifies herself by holding the other person responsible. In fact, she will disclaim any responsibility in a given situation believing that this will ultimately protect her from harm or punishment.

d. Dependence on rituals

The practice and enjoyment of rituals by the self-protective person is an integral dimension. The use of rituals, however, is pursued in order to afford her greater protection and insulation from harm. Participation in rituals does not offer her an avenue for self-reflection and meditation, but rather is a way to insure continued protection for her world, a world that is set apart from that of others around her.

e. Preoccupation with control

Referring to the self-protective stage, Jane Loevinger (1976) states that "the older child or adult who remains here may become opportunistic, deceptive, and preoccupied with control and advantage in his relations with other people." (p.17) She will view the world as one where only one person can win: and therefore act as if ultimately she wants to create a situation where the winner is herself.

## 2. Conformist Stage

### a. Identification with a group

When she moves to the conformist stage, an individual begins to identify her own wellbeing with that of a group. This move can only occur when she experiences a great deal of trust between herself and others. While the transition from self-protective to conformist is normal for a child, the self-protective adult frequently is unable to develop this level of trust and therefore is much less likely to make this transition.

### b. Group rules as motivating for behavior

With affinity to a group, the conformist wants to obey the rules of the group. The approval and acceptance by the group is a primary motivating force. The group establishes the rules governing any particular behavior and she complies without regard to the consequences of the behavior. This distinguishes the conformist from the person in the later stages for whom consideration of the consequences of behavior has a much more significant impact. She typically views behavior not accepted by the group as immoral as well as inappropriate.

### c. Group memberships as determinant of right or wrong

As the title of the stage implies, the conformist conforms to the needs, rules, and roles of the group. Persons who do not conform to her group, whether due to their age, sex, religious backgrounds or other distinctions, are viewed as different. Like the self-protective person, the conformist is not open to self-criticism. The group provides the norm and whatever the group establishes is right. She is unable to

perceive individual differences and needs in general. The members of the group are looked on as appearing the same, doing the same things, and liking and wanting the same things. When a member of the group does not fit this expected model, that member becomes unacceptable, and then quickly is shunted to a new group of those who are 'not normal.'

d. Stereotyping

This refusal to accept anyone who does not fit the group norm is reflected in the conformist's need to establish particular stereotypical role models for the group based on such things as sex, race, interests, religion, etc. Her value system encompasses such needs and behavior as being 'nice' to others in the group and their being 'nice', in turn, to her. Therefore helpfulness and usefulness which provide convenience, collaboration and participation with others in the group bring her a feeling of a sense of belonging and in turn a strong sense of security with the group. This security leads to a feeling of well-being for her. However, her relationship to the group is based on external attitudes and behavior rather than genuine feelings.

e. Lack of depth

The conformist has not reached a level of awareness that allows for individual differences and uniqueness. She is unable to discern individual dissimilarities and differences. Thus, for her the feelings that are generated for the other individuals in a group are superficial. When she feels sadness due to a particular situation, she may imagine that the whole group is experiencing this feeling without the awareness that the particular emotion may not be felt or

experienced by the whole group. Furthermore, her feelings are generally centered on external concerns such as an interest in how they appear to the others, how they are being accepted by the others of the group, what their reputation is, and what particular items of ownership fit with the expectations or perceived expectations of the group. These concerns about her own status in the group naturally interfere with her ability to truly sense the feelings of others.

### 3. The Conscientious Stage

#### a. Self-aware level

Loevinger portrays a transitory level between the conformist and conscientious stages known as the Self-aware level. Here the individual exhibits characteristics of both stages.

#### b. Responsibility

For Loevinger (1976), the conscientious person has attained the ability to establish "long-term, self-evaluated goals and ideals, differentiate self-criticism, and a sense of responsibility." (p.20) In addition, she observes that, "only a few persons as young as thirteen or fourteen years reach this stage." (p.20) The conscientious person perceives future goals for herself which include work and relationship desires, as well as life time pursuits which encompass long range visions. The conscientious person is able to critically evaluate these desires and perceive their impact on her life and actions. In addition, the conscientious person assumes responsibility for her actions. She knows that she controls her fate; that her actions originate within herself. Moreover, she publicly represents her actions as her own.

c. Internalized rules

The conscientious person recognizes rules of society and at this time begins to evaluate them and integrate them into her own personal belief system. The conscientious person may choose to break the current rules and laws of society if she perceives that they do not abide by her personal belief system, "a fact recognized in the status of the 'conscientious objector' " (Loevinger, 1976, p.21). For the conformist person, a broken rule is sufficient cause for guilt, and she fears being ostracized by the group. For her, one rule is as important as the next, whether it pertains to mode of dress or the taking of life. Unlike the conformist, the conscientious person is affected by the influence and impact of her actions on another person, rather than by strict adherence to group norms. The sense of responsibility that the conscientious person experiences implies concern and caring for the other in a much more individual way than the previous stages could allow. Her sense of responsibility for others makes her her 'brother's keeper'; This role has both negative and positive aspects. The major elements of the adult conscience occur in the conscientious stage. The conscientious person makes choices as to which rules she will abide by and own for herself.

d. Expectation and standards

Coincident to the ideas of responsibility and obligation toward another human being is the belief in and desire for prerogatives, natural expectations, integrity and justice. These standards are extended to the self and others, and may imply that each person is able to choose freely in those matters relevant and important to her, or may imply that the conscientious person is imposing her own values on another.

The previous stages where the self-protective person accepted rules because they would result in either a reward or punishment if they were followed or not, and the conformist experienced himself as a "pawn of fate" with little or no control over her actions. Now, the conscientious person may perceive her future as being an act of her own choosing. The conscientious person may create her own destiny and design. She holds the key to her own future in her dreams and visions for herself.

The conscientious person can establish her own patterns and regulations. She evaluates her work according to its importance and benefit to herself and the world. She allows herself to be critical of others when their standards do not match or exceed her own. She is displeased by people she perceives as lazy, or trite in their ideas or work habits. However, the differences among patterns and routines that she and others establish are not always viewed negatively. She perceives the uniqueness of the person and accepts this individuality as valuable.

e. Appreciation of variety:

The variety of modes and styles exhibited by individuals makes for a vital world. The conscientious person utilizes the information from these divergent viewpoints to make informed choices. Her acknowledging of other's viewpoints deepens and increases her own interpersonal contacts. Her ability to appreciate variety also leads to deeper levels of mutual creativity in her relationships. In addition, her ability to accept and appreciate differences gives her conscientiousness a maturity which if absent would leave her rigid and doctrinaire.



f. Farsightedness

The conscientious person is more farsighted in her planning and decision making. She views consequences as involving more than simply the impact of conforming or not. She views the world and her day to day activities with a greater degree of depth. She is able to establish priorities, and differentiate between choices which benefit long range objectives, on the one hand, or simply represent superficially fun relationships in the present.

4. Autonomous Stage

As with the conscientious stage, there is a transitional level between the conscientious stage and the autonomous, known as the Individualistic Level. Individuals at this and other transitional levels exhibit characteristics of both stages. They are in the process of redefining their understanding of self and others.

The autonomous stage is that stage where the individual allows autonomy for others and self. It is characterized by a deeper understanding of the uniqueness of persons. The autonomous person not only tolerates but cherishes individuality for herself and others. While she desires autonomy, she realized that autonomy has limitations, since each person is connected to others in varying degrees, either through family ties or friendships.

The autonomous person recognizes that "conflict is part of the human condition." (Loevinger, 1976, p.22) She is willing to acknowledge and respond to both inner and external conflict. She has the self-reliance

and spirit to recognize conflict and pursue its resolution rather than ignore it, or assume that it is the fault of the environment over which she has no control. Her awareness of inner conflict replaces the conscientious person's moralistic view of conflict. Whereas the conscientious person sees conflicting needs with moral implications, the autonomous person accepts life as a mosaic of multifaceted combinations. She allows for a tremendous variation and vagueness in the situations that she confronts day by day. Her understanding and ability to endure ambiguity leads "to increased ability to tolerate paradox and contradiction... which leads to greater conceptual complexities." (Loevinger, 1976, p.22) Thus, in contrast to persons in other stages, the autonomous person can more clearly distinguish such concepts as love and lust, and the needs of self and others.

Moreover, the autonomous person is "able to unite and integrate ideas that appear as incompatible alternatives to the lower stages." (Loevinger, 1976, p.23). For example, she may see that selfishness as it applies to the improvement of the self is important for a more meaningful selflessness or serving of others.

The recognition of the need of others for autonomy lessens the artificial hold that people at the earlier developmental stages seek to have upon other people. Yet it is in recognizing one's autonomy and that of others that the individual perceives the limitations of isolation from the rest of the world.

Despite the limitation that the forces which move an individual to a particular action result from experiences along the way, the autonomous person as much as possible desires to see things realistically and to be objective with others. This offers her a more holistic view of the world than the person in earlier stages experiences.

The autonomous person experiences, feels, and expresses the vital events of life as exciting. This is evidenced by the depth of the interpersonal relationships that she develops, relationships without constraints and restrictions of role expectations and mutual dependence characteristic of earlier stages. Instead, there is an acceptance of the different roles which exist for different situations and no feeling of compulsion to impose such roles on others.

#### 5. Integrated Stage

The integrated individual has been called the highest stage by some; it may also be viewed as the stage of peak potentiality. It allows for an expanded possibility for the individual to meet those unique aspects of herself and to fully connect herself as a separate individual with the world as a total universe. The integrated person can be described as an autonomous person who has achieved a greater ability to transcend the conflicts of time with a clear and collected sense of identity.

Loevinger states that Maslow's definition of the self-actualized person best describes the integrated stage. The process of the integrated stage is one that reconciles inner conflicts to a greater degree, and incorporates a letting go of unattainable desires, an increased cherishing of individuality, and a conscious thrust of energy toward the identity of the individual.

## B. INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE STAGES OF RELATIONSHIPS

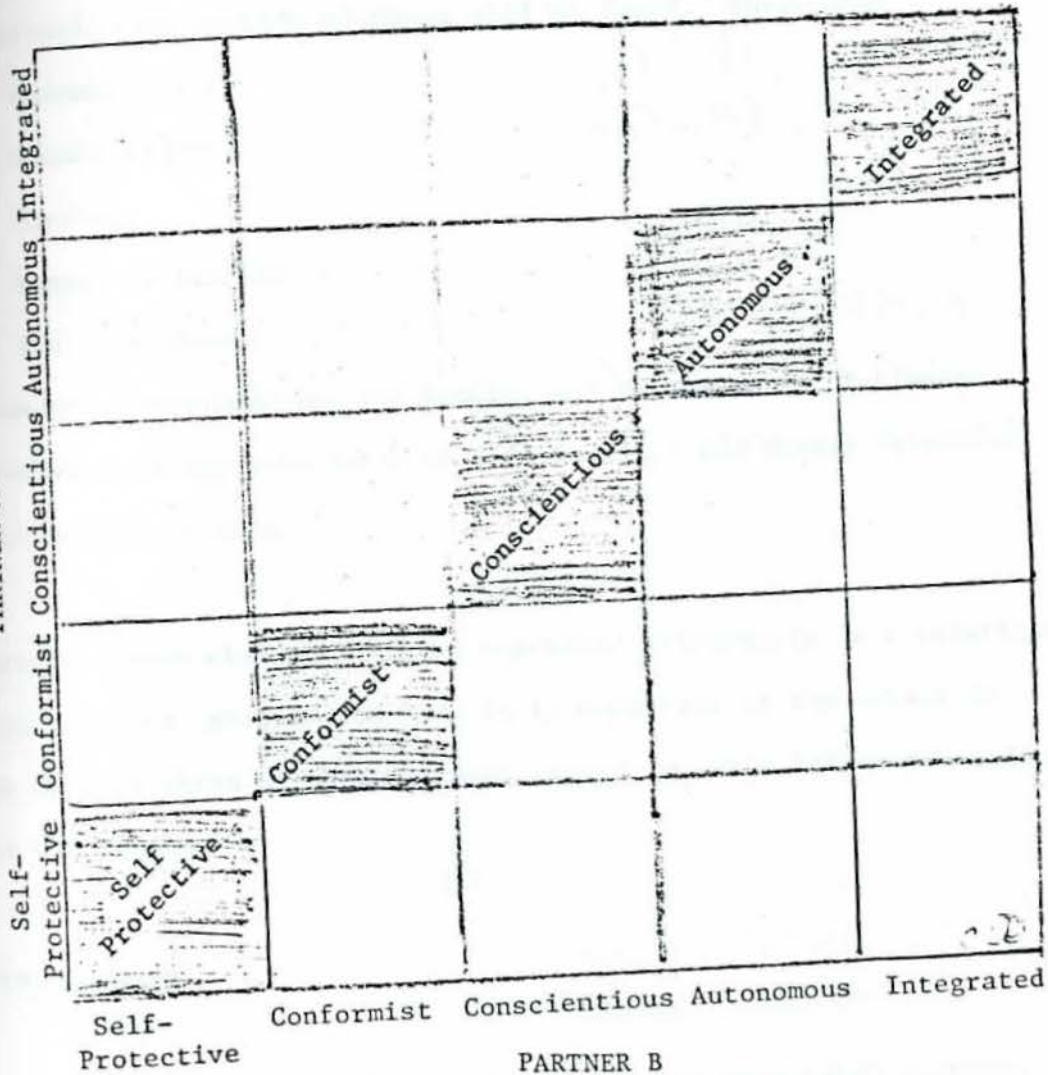
The five stages just discussed are helpful beyond describing the development of individuals. These five stages can also characterize relationships, especially those which are the focus of this essay, long term committed sexually bonded relationships. In my experience, when individuals relate to an intimate other, they often are in the same stage of development. For instance, an individual in the conscientious stage may seek out and relate to another who is also in the conscientious stage. Such a relationship can be characterized as a conscientious relationship. In such a case, the couple can be said to mold their life together around the developmental position that each holds.

During the course of the relationship both individuals may grow and the relationship will naturally reflect the development of the individuals.

Almost inevitably two individuals will experience times in which they are not at the same level of ego development, either through differing rates of growth, or even because they were at different levels from the start.

The following graph illustrates the many possible combinations of two individuals in different stages of ego development as they form relationships. The scope of this essay, however, focuses on those relationships where both individuals are at somewhat similar levels of ego development and whose relationships can thus be so labeled. In the graph, these relationships are shaded. Discussion of the other possible relationships must be the topic of other essays.

PARTNER A



### C. THE FIVE DYNAMIC ELEMENTS

Regardless of the stage to which a relationship and its participants have developed, five dynamic elements will be found. These are:

- \* Communication
- \* Connectedness
- \* Bonding
- \* Mutual Creativity
- \* Peak Experience

Communication, Connectedness, and Bonding are requisite for Intimacy; Peak Experience is characteristic of Spirituality; and Mutual Creativity is characteristic of both.

Clearly, these elements will be expressed differently in a relationship depending upon its stage. However, it is important at the outset to describe each of these elements without regard to stage before proceeding with our discussion.

#### 1. Communication

Communication consists of both the verbal and non-verbal exchange within a relationship and includes a sharing of feelings, values, ideas,

goals, and needs. Initially, in any relationship, communication is superficial. Depending on a couple's stage of development this superficiality may continue indefinitely or be quickly replaced with communication which is increasingly profound and authentic. In a relationship which is not static, the level of communication deepens and the exchanges increase to include the couple's innermost thoughts, ideas, and values. Communication is a cornerstone of intimacy, which requires an expression of authentic feelings.

Communication becomes more rewarding for a couple as the relationship itself becomes stronger and more satisfying. Each partner becomes more open and responsive to hearing and understanding the other. L. Navran found that

happily married couples talked more to each other; conveyed the feeling that they understood what was being said to them; has a wide range of subjects available to them; preserved communication channels and kept them open; showed more sensitivity to each other's feelings; personalized their language symbols and made more use of supplementary non-verbal techniques of communication. (Gilbert, 1976, p.222)

Positive communication is important to the development of growth of the long term sexually bonded relationship. As the exchanges between a couple who have authentic and honest feelings becomes more open and free, the couple's bond of intimacy becomes greater. The optimum in a relationship, asserts Sidney Jourard, "where each partner discloses himself without reserve." (Gilbert, 1976, p.222). Such an intimate level of relating as a continual and committed style is most characteristic of the autonomous and integrated stages of development.

goals, and needs. Initially, in any relationship, communication is superficial. Depending on a couple's stage of development this superficiality may continue indefinitely or be quickly replaced with communication which is increasingly profound and authentic. In a relationship which is not static, the level of communication deepens and the exchanges increase to include the couple's innermost thoughts, ideas, and values. Communication is a cornerstone of intimacy, which requires an expression of authentic feelings.

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The traditional courting system cheats people of such intimacy (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p.7). Individuals who use the traditional courting system to relate to a potential intimate tend to utilize games and manipulation to achieve their objectives rather than sharing authentic feelings and needs. Their relationship is then built on the foundation of fantasies and images of the way that they believe a relationship should be. This serves the partners either to protect themselves or to satisfy their images of the kind of relationship others idealize. The end result is that their own real needs become overlooked or cast aside as irrelevant or inappropriate.

Traditional, non-intimate, and artificial relationships such as these cheat people of intimacy by not allowing communication of angry or hostile feelings. Instead, the partners strive to impress each other. In denying angry feelings they shut themselves off from other open or authentic feelings as well, for each partner, at whatever stage of ego development, has hostile feelings in the relationship and "is capable of hostility," which is "part of understanding and accepting the self." (Allen and Martin, 1971, p.164)

When this hostility is kept pent up and not dealt with within the normal communication of a relationship, it brings tension and stress to the relationship. Sudden explosions of pent-up angry feelings can occur which nevertheless obscure rather than reveal the root of the hostility.

A husband opens a bill and screams in rage, "I'm mad because you're the most extravagant woman in town. I should have known you would be. Your mother spoiled you rotten and drove your father to the poorhouse. Is that what you're trying to do to me? Well, I won't take it!"

He's getting rid of his hostility, but in the process he's wounding his wife and chipping away at their marriage. Had he taken time to analyze why he was really angry he would be able to say, "I'm mad because you charged five hundred dollars' worth of clothes at the dress shop when you know I am so worried about our finances that I haven't even bought a new overcoat, which I need much more than you need dresses."

With that statement he begins to rid himself of his anger and makes her aware of the reasons for it, without stripping her of dignity or undermining their relationship. Since he's being realistic he must understand that she will react to his anger. Perhaps with anger of her own. He must be willing to hear her out, as she has listened to him. (Allen and Martin, 1971, p.165).

When couples are able to confront each other, first knowing and communicating what they are really angry about, when they can express their own fears that precipitate the anger without bringing in extraneous hostile feelings, they are in a better position to find a compromise or resolution to the feelings. Inability to communicate these feelings can lead to the destruction of the relationship.

While communication must include both negative and positive feelings if it is to be intimate, merely expressing hostility does not create an intimate relationship, and may only provide an illusion of self-affirmation. Fromm (1974) criticizes inauthentic communication in which "to show one's anger, one's hate, one's complete lack of inhibition is taken for intimacy." (p.45) He suggests that this attitude leads first to intimacy being

relegated to sexual intercourse, and the couple then ultimately separating and seeking new love relationships. Since the problem has consisted of inabilities in communication rather than choice of partners, it is an "illusion that the new love will be different from the earlier ones" (Victor Frankl, 1975, p.45).

True self-disclosure through open, honest communication must include a genuine concern for the feelings of the other partner and a willingness to hear what the partner is saying. A partner who feels attacked experiences a significantly diminished ability to hear.

## 2. Connectedness

The second dynamic element encompasses the relationship's commitment aspects.

In a healthy relationship, commitment to the other person in some degree precedes the sexual encounter; at the time of the sexual encounter an emotional commitment has occurred. This commitment need not be static or remain the same throughout the entire relationship. For some couples it may be a commitment to care for each other as friends whether or not they remain together, or may include a long term life-joining relationship.

The commitment to the other requires a genuine sharing of authentic, honest feelings. Only when this level of communication exists can a commitment to the other occur. Individuals who are not able to share

genuine honest feelings find themselves continuously caught or trapped in their fantasy of what the relationship should be. They are unable to facilitate movement of the relationship to a more rewarding position.

When a couple begins to share authentic, honest feelings, they are able to begin to share their visions and goals with each other. Then they can see how each's needs and visions may enhance those of the other, and there is a foundation for a commitment with the other.

When a couple base their commitment on their shared vision and goals, the relationship has a stronger foundation for stability. This provides a more efficient and integrated relationship, in which there is a synthesis of the needs of the individual.

"We may envy the passionate love affair, but we admire two people who have integrated many facets of their relationship." (Grunebaum, 1976, p.282). By contrast, the couple who base their commitment on their fantasies and images of what should be, sooner or later find at least some of their visions and goals in opposition to each other's needs and wants. They may find this opposition difficult to resolve, and without resolution no sharing can ensue between the two to enable them to form a genuine commitment to each other.

The concept of commitment in a relationship has undergone some evolutionary changes in the past:

The commitment during the early historical period was to the institution of marriage "till death do us part," and the commitment during the second period was to marital love and companionship as long as these were not outweighed by dislike and incompatibility. The current trend is toward a commitment to sexual satisfaction and to individual development and fulfillment. (Vincent, 1976, p.267)

Clark Vincent (1976) suggests that this current trend is symbolic of our 'throw-away society' in which when one of the individual's needs are not met the partner is traded in for a new model, or discarded to be replaced by a more 'meaningful' partner.

Commitment/connectedness thus is an affirmation by each to pursue communication, mutual creativity, and peak experiences with the other. It encompasses a desire to grow and expand with the other and to become an expandable reflection of the other in the relationship with growth as the central theme. Milton Mayerhoff (1971) states that "To care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself." (p.1). Each person who cares thus makes a commitment to the other to enable a transformation to be taking place in the relationship at all times. Otherwise, the relationship is static. Caring is more than just liking another person, then. It is more than wanting that other person to do well. It is more than wanting that person to get what she wants. Rather it is a commitment to the other's developing and changing to a more expansive relationship with the self, with life, and with the universe.

When a couple experience connectedness, each is open to experiencing a mutual and universal expression of him or herself in the other.

This is an ultimate expression of what Martin Buber (1958) presents as the true oneness with the other, the I-Thou relationship.

Buber states that "the aim of relation is relation's own being, that is, contact with the Thou. For through contact with every Thou we are stirred with a breath of the Thou, that is, of eternal life." (p.63)

This relationship may or may not include the desire to carry on the life of the relationship and the universe through procreation. Historically this was a sign each made to the other that in fact the relationship was consummated--complete--perfect. As the women's and men's movements have begun helping to bring a balance of equality to the sexes, as well as a rethinking of sex role stereotypes, women have the opportunity to consider not having children. While many women and men continue to find that procreation brings its traditional feeling of fulfilment, some have found that the relationship is more fulfilling, harmonious, and satisfying without having children. Procreation is no longer a criterion for the intimate I-Thou relationship.

### 3. Sexual bonding

When a relationship is based on a genuine, honest, sharing of feelings, the sexual encounter seals the commitment and the relationship. Like the seal on a letter, this sexual seal's strength or weakness depends on the importance with which it is viewed. When a couple is committed to maintaining the integrity of the relationship, the seal is maintained intact.

If one or both want to break this seal, it is simply a matter of breaking it.

Because an emotional commitment can be sealed by sexual bonding does not imply that all couples who have sexual encounters have such a sexual bond. Since time began, couples have been having sexual experiences without making commitments to each other. The era from 1960 to 1975 has witnessed a generation inclined to separate love, sex, and commitment. This separation led to the establishing of styles that "have accepted and approved of (1) sex without love or commitment, (2) sex with love but no commitment and (3) love with commitment but without sex." (Vincent, 1976, p. 267) When sexual bonding occurs in the intimate relationship the couple is not 'just having sex.' Rather, they are committing themselves to each other in a way above and beyond 'just having sex.' Here, the sexual relationship is not the most important aspect of the relationship. It is simply a dynamic part that allows the couple an avenue for positive expression of love and caring toward each other.

This 'New Age' has brought sexual liberation into the forefront of awareness, but it has not brought with it a comfort with sexuality or a freedom about sexuality. The 'New Age' brought sufficient discomfort that it may be followed by a pendulum swing back to the opposite extreme of the previous repressive years. Such an extreme swing is typical of new steps to liberation. When individuals are unleashed from repressive bondage, they seek to make up for all the lost experiences they felt missing. But that introduces a compulsiveness which contrasts with the true freedom experienced by the couple whose commitment is to

discovery with the other in a style that allows for a natural flow of their energies.

The sexual liberation brought a new level of consciousness to the public. Though it can only be viewed as "the earliest phases of consciousness expansion' in the Western World" (Roszak, 1975, p.46) it provides the foundation for individuals seeking higher levels of consciousness. It is perhaps too soon to see the pendulum in its natural swing or to know if there is to be another repressive era. However, as individuals and couples find their individual comfort level with their own sexuality rather than a repressive environment or a manic search for what they feel has been missing, they can begin expanding their consciousness in other areas.

The sexual bonding that a committed couple have for each other is not just based on physical needs but also on psychic needs as well. The desire to respond to their partner's need for affection and playfulness becomes an integral part of the bonding in the relationship. For the new couple this may be seen as trying out new and exciting adventures. For the couple who have been together for a period of time, this bonding is exhibited in the sharing of intimate communications, which are frequently expressed nonverbally. This sharing may be expressed as an all encompassing glance at the other which communicates their love to the other; or the personal, private expression of a private pleasure.

Many couples in a long term, committed sexually bonded relationship find that after some time the joy and excitement of the sexual encounter dissipates and may be replaced by boredom and hopelessness.



This indifference and tedium is surely the demise of the relationship. The fact that it can happen supports the need for intimate communication to help a couple adjust to the changes that inevitably occur in relationships. Without intimate communication the couple tends not to have the energy or creativity to bring a new and exciting sexual bonding into the relationship. Thus, once again, sexual bonding implies more than 'just having sex' with one's partner; it is the exchange of love in the relationship.

#### 4. Mutual Creativity

Mutual creativity occurs when a couple share a creative attitude, creative effort, and mutuality. The result is an expandable and secure excitement with each other characterized by both intimacy and spirituality. Mutual creativity includes the ability to dream, be playful, grow, and change together.

##### a. Creative attitude

Mutual creativity presumes an openness to what is not yet, a desire for discovery, adventure, and excitement. This dynamic fosters new discoveries by the couple who experience new and exciting feelings for, and awareness of, their relationship. They experience the 'here and now-ness' of their being and their relationship.

Mutual creativity in this sense of 'immediateness' and 'in-touch-ness' has come to the fore during the recent 'consciousness revolution'.

However, this revolution is not just a revolution but also an evolution. John White (1978) states:

There is a profound wisdom in convention, but first you've got to be unconventional to appreciate it. From that perspective, the consciousness revolution is also an evolution. It is not just simplistic, nostalgic retreat into the days of yore. Rather it is an upward spiralling, a quantum leap in awareness so that both the past and present are purified of destructive elements and fused in a lifestyle that humanizes technology as older ways of living close to the earth are revived with increased understanding of their value as conventions. (p. 3)

Today in the 'New Age' couples are exploring new ways and seeking to reconnect with the old ways that provide a wholeness with the Universe.

All along the Aquarian frontier, we find people cultivating a ready eye for the visionary possibilities of all they encounter and do; the rhythms of the body, the chores of daily life, the practical arts and crafts, the vulgarities of popular culture. (Roszak, 1975, p. 256)

This pursuit of the common and ordinary pleasures of life has taken hold with a fresh vigor to benefit today's consciousness sculptors of a new and creative life for all. This marvelous pursuit of the pure and sacred joys of life has sprung up like a new wellspring of desire to simply experience life to its fullest and richest.

The creative attitude goes to the heart of what life is about -- "being alive, creative, spontaneous, cherishing one's wholeness, and uniqueness and being receptive and open to the world." (Ticho, 1974, p. 248)

b. Creative effort

A creative attitude will have little further result without creative effort.

This implies labor, effort, perseverance, self-discipline. Unless the creative idea and all those activities which are more mechanical and ego-determined work together, hand in hand, in harmony, the object cannot be created. The first aspect -- creative thinking and inspiration -- can never complete creation unless the second aspect is brought to bear on the venture. This applies, without exception, to everything. Whether you create an object, compose a symphony, paint a great picture, write a novel, cook a meal, search for new scientific discoveries, heal illness, create a situation of mutual love, develop on the path of self-realization, it applies to all endeavor, to all successful completion, to all meaningful self-expression. This synthesis of creativity, imagination, ideas, on the one hand, and execution, on the other, must take place. ... The creative attitude is a free-flowing, spontaneous manifestation. Execution is an act that comes through the determination of the ego will. It is more mechanical, more laborious and requires consistency and effort. This has totally different characteristics from the spontaneous, effortless influx of creative ideas. (Broch, 1970, p. 185)

At the beginning of a long term relationship, mutual creativity may focus on the couple's desire for immediate gratification. This focus gradually shifts to delayed gratification as the partner makes a commitment to, and shares her dreams with, the other, and the couple creates a mutual and shared vision together. As the 'New Age' brings a fresh understanding of patience, which in turn offers the ability to be one with the universe, so will each person understand that the ordinary and common is really the miracle of life.

Creative effort requires patience and discipline.

It is essential, however, that the discipline should not be practiced like a rule imposed on oneself from the outside, but it becomes an expression of one's own will; that it is felt as pleasant, and that one slowly accustoms oneself to a kind of behavior which one would miss if one stopped practicing it. (Fromm, 1956, p. 93)

There are other dimensions of mutual creativity for the relationship. Discipline plays an important role in both creativity and love. Without the ability to take risks and without courage in the relationship, mutual creativity would never be experienced by the couple. Allowing for spontaneity is an integral part of the relationship. When an individual is willing to take risks and move, she is taking a courageous step toward becoming "less self-centered and much more moving, flowing, open, honest and direct." (McCarroll, 1974, p. 25) It is at this time that the partner provides a source of energy for the other to grow and develop.

c. Mutuality

Each partner brings a wealth of visions and dreams to the relationship. As the couple shares these visions and dreams, the relationship grows and develops. Each partner begins to feel secure with the other. They learn how, in their particular relationship, to hear the other and make compromises and modifications so that their individual dreams become shared dreams. As each is able to merge his or her ideas with the other's in order to create one mutual vision, the couple begins to grow and change, to experience mutuality, and form a union.

d. The result of mutual creativity

The exercise of mutual creativity results in excitement, intimacy, and spirituality. Excitement is provided by the flow of energy which the new union brings. It is expressed as play and creativity with the other

and as joyfulness and caring for the world.

Experimenting with life and learning by assimilating our experiences is the growth process of the nourishing self... We discover through our own experiences what suits us best. Any experience, even the most toxic, has the potential for enhancing our ability to continue to discover a nourishing life style through creative adjustment... The possibility of newly emerging excitement is endless. (Greenwald, 1975, p. 222)

Furthermore, mutual creativity increases the level of intimacy with the other, and with it, communication. As the level of mutual creativity heightens and expands, a whole framework for a wonderful creative excitement enters the life of the couple. Carl Whitaker (1976) describes this experience:

When I look at my significant other and see myself, the reflection makes for a much greater level of expandable and secure excitement. It is not a question of combining with someone else to form a 'we'; it is a question of increasing myself with a reciprocal of myself. Within the security of that identification, adventure, stimulation, and all the components of play are available, both physical play and intellectual play--and an irrational total gestalt of creative excitement. (p. 264)

This, then, is the attainment of mutual creativity, the total gestalt of the relationship. It is the wholeness and union that each can experience with her partner as the relationship grows and develops. Whitaker notes how the reciprocation of oneself leads to a creative excitement.

The aspiration of all people to experience intimacy with another, and thereby mutual creativity, requires attention, involvement, objectivity, and steadfastness of spirit. (Naranjo, 1974, p. 116)

For some individuals in their development this commitment can be fraught with fear and resistance even though the desire for intimacy

exists for all. As each member of the couple develops individually, she is able to involve herself in the other and to be more objective towards the other because her own security is less dependent on the other's being or functioning a certain way. This offers a greater personal spirit of steadfastness in the relationship. What follows from mutual creativity is the foundation for the transcending experience, or the peak experiences.

#### 4. Peak Experience

##### a. Transcendence

Peak experience is the high one experiences, taken one step further to include a transcending experience that directs the individual energy to encompass the world and to reach out in a caring, helpful mode. Peak experiences are defined by Claudio Naranjo (1974) as:

moments of openness to the experience of higher feelings... characterized by a more or less lasting desirable effect upon the individuals. Any perfect action seems to be the potential source of a peak experience... (p. 83)

This experience has an impact on the individual and in turn she is transformed by the experience. This transformation is exhibited by a heightened state of awareness and a more peaceful relationship with the self, others, and the universe. This transcendent experience is the state of deepened consciousness, or a peak experience.

Such an experience may simply be a deeper awareness of some phenomenon like a tree. When one looks at a tree is it simply an inanimate object, just an it, just a tree? Or can looking at a tree really be experienced as Buber suggests when he speaks of becoming

through an I-Thou relationship with someone or something? One can experience the tree in a very 'self' way, one can in fact become the tree spiritually and experience the joy and beauty of the tree and even the pain of the tree when the wind races through and rips off a branch of it. When the tree is experienced this way, the individual self of the person is also experienced.

The peak experience may also be a growing extension of a sense of I-AMness for the size of the world. The experience of I-AMness "invites the person to experience himself as if he were the responsible doer of his actions and the locus of his perceptions, so that he may have a chance of discovering that this is indeed 'true'. (Naranjo, 1974, p. 176) Peak experiences reflect a feeling of inspiration--that is, a feeling that a new spirit has been breathed into everything else. (Israel, 1968, p. 6) Peak experiences, then, are experiences of spirituality.

Theodore Roszak (1975) describes the peak experience as a 'cosmic drama' that offers to the world the 'Hidden Wisdom'. This search through the Hidden Wisdom is humanity's search to find the original and lost perfection of her beginning. The mythical fall of Adam and Eve expresses a change in the world that left each person on a continual search for the perfection that was lost. This force or 'Hidden Wisdom' is that which draws "God, humankind, and nature together in a vast epic whose purpose is to radically transform each into something wholly and marvelously different from what it now is." (p. 106) The energy from the peak experience provides a uniting of the universe, person with person, person with nature, person with all.

Maslow (1968) presents a portrait of the peak experience and the qualities it entails:

1. The peak experience is felt as a self-validating, self-adjusting moment which carries its own intrinsic value with it. (p. 79)
2. [In the peak experience there occurs] a very characteristic disorientation in time and space... [one] becomes oblivious of his surroundings, and of the passage of time. (p. 80)
3. The perception of the individual in the peak moment tends strongly to be ideographic and non-classificatory. (p. 94)
4. One aspect of the peak experience is a complete, though momentary, loss of fear, anxiety, inhibition, defense and control, a giving up of renunciation, delay, and restraint. (p. 94)
5. The person in the peak experiences feels more integrated...than at other times. He also looks [to the observer] more integrated. (p. 104)
6. As [the person] gets to be more purely and singly himself he is more able to fuse with the world, with what was formerly not-self, e.g., the lovers come closer to forming a unit rather than two people, the I-Thou monism becomes more possible (p. 105)
7. People during and after peak-experiences characteristically feel lucky, fortunate, graced. (p. 113)
8. [Some of] the characteristics of the cognition found in the generalized peak experience [are]:  
a. the experience or object tends to be seen as a whole,...detached from...purpose. b. the percept is exclusively and fully attended to. (p. 74)
9. Concrete perceiving of the whole of the object implies, also, that it is seen with 'care' (p. 75)
10. [Peak experience] seems to make the perception richer. (p. 77)

Thus the peak experience provides the individual with a heightened awareness of herself and the world at the same time she maintains her objectivity. The peak experience also increases her concept of the world



as a whole. She feels at one with all and with herself so that the flowing and graceful qualities of her life become predominant and may be seen by an observer. The individual does not have a need to stereotype others or her surroundings into some expected style of behavior. She is able to connect more fully with her partner and to experience an I-Thou relationship with him. Following the peak experience, she as an individual, and both as the couple fused together, reach out to the world in a caring and helping way to connect more fully with the universe. This then becomes the transcending quality of the peak experience.

b. The sacred through the common

The transcending process provides the avenue for experiencing the sacred through the common. Through daily living people can experience the sacred and the wholeness of the universe: the connection with the earth and the air, the connection with the animals of the world, as well as other humans. The sacredness of the universe is all about us, and yet until peak experience many people fail to experience it and celebrate its joy.

Roszak (1975) describes the transcending experience and its sacredness when he states:

When one speaks of "transcendence," the idea that seems frequently to come to mind is that of a great world-denying leap into an elevated dimension of reality above and beyond the Earth. But that is a corruption of the concept as it has been taught since time out of mind. At the very origins of human worship, the sacred was experienced in, or through, the common stuff and substance of life: in the animals of the hunt, in the fecundity

of women, in the rebirth of Spring, in the dance of the fire, in the majestic presence of the Sun. It was seen everywhere and in all things, as an object of wonder or of terror. Transcendence, in such an experience of the world, means per-ception: seeing through to the empowered presence of things, the ground and glory of their naked being. All that need be transcended is the illusion of ordinariness, which is only an opacity of the jaded and corrupted senses. (p. 257)

For some, the transcending experience may even be seen as one of being godlike with the gods. Perhaps it is to this end that the transcending experience leads man. This "taste of excellence" (Roszak, 1975, p. 87) that is admired in a few, is what other people strive to experience for themselves. The transcendence of the peak experience offers each person the potential for reaching out and touching another in a caring and loving way.

This posture of reaching out to touch one another, to care about each other and extend love, each to the other creates a reciprocal benefit. Those who love will in fact receive more love in turn. The "interaction effect" of spirituality works both ways by creating a

dynamic parallelism...between the inner and the outer.... Each makes the other possible ... As he becomes strong, he tends to be able to see strength and power in the world. As he becomes more loving and lovable, he tends to be able to see love in the world. Perhaps this is part what is meant by the fusion of lovers, the becoming one with the world in the cosmic experience, the feeling of being part of the unity one perceives in a great philosophical insight. (Maslow, 1968, p. 95)

#### c. Self-actualization

Action in the spiritual sphere is needed to lead all persons to selfless dedication to the world at large. Each individual may pursue this spiritual quest through exploring and developing the self. It is not enough to just spend the days in idle frivolity or

laziness. To find a purpose in one's life and to fulfill that purpose is to experience spiritual and personal growth. Thus, one's chosen discipline or way of life or career is "both a path and, when perfected, the goal." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 53) The karma yoga, which is the yoga of action, offers a course of life activity designed to pursue the spiritual quest:

The yoga of action lays stress upon the volitional side of human nature. It regards the will to live, the striving for growth and perfection, as the natural starting point for spiritual training. Action is indeed of the very essence of life. No man can ever stop acting. The question is whether he is engaged in some fruitful action or in meaningless action. The inescapable need for action is reflected in the popular saying, "An idle man's brain is the devil's workshop."

When a person withdraws from the outside world and shuts himself up in his solitary room, he is still acting...Even when a person goes to the hills, he may carry the whole of society upon his shoulders. His unfulfilled desires and repressed wishes are sure to accompany him everywhere. He withdraws from all purposive action only to find his mental vacuum filled with the ineffectual self-paintings of the repressed libido. (Naranjo, 1974, pp 55-56)

Therefore spiritual freedom and freedom for self-actualization require conscious and directed activity since activity itself is always a given. "The necessary passivity and receptivity of inspiration, or of peak experience must now give way to activity, control, and hardwork. A peak experience happens to a person, but the person makes the great product." (Maslow, 1968, p. 143) All people have peak experiences but some people are not open to them or aware of them; and some people do not respond to the peak experience when it is there for them to do so.

d. Consciousness

There is a relationship between the peak experience and the consciousness. As the level of awareness increases, the person becomes more cognizant of the peak experience.

Consciousness itself, the basic fact of being aware that we are aware, remains the medium through which everything happens to us. It is primary, and cannot be explained in terms of anything else. It can only be experienced...In fact, the word 'consciousness' is formed by the union of two Latin words--con, 'with', and scire, 'to know' --literally means 'that with which we know.'" (White, 1978, p. 2)

The spiritual quest is frequently very elusive to humanity. How does one begin this great quest and how does one experience it? There is a knowing parable of the spiritual quest that illustrates the illusory qualities of the peak experience and in turn the transcending process that leads to spirituality:

Nasrudin was sent by the King to investigate the lore of various kind of Eastern mystical teachers. They all recounted to him tales of the miracles and the sayings of the founders and great teachers of their schools, all long dead.

When he returned home, he submitted his report, which contained the single word, "Carrots."

He was called upon to explain himself. Nasrudin told the King: "The best part is buried; few know--except the farmer--by the green that there is orange underground; if you don't work for it, it will deteriorate; there are a great many donkeys associated with it."

From The Exploits of the Incomparable Mulla Nasrudin (Naranjo, 1974, p. 53)

No one knows there is a carrot under the green top unless they have been told or have dug around to see what is below. Just as each person is not born with all the knowledge of consciousness, she must be told or dig around to find the answers and the knowledge.

Each person has an inner guide to help her find the carrot under the green top. This inner guide is an inner teacher that promotes growth of the self and the universe. It is through self-exploration that peak experience will be met and have the most powerful impact on the direction and purpose of life for the individual. Self-exploration offers the resources to resolve problems and experience others to the fullest. This innocent, unmediated knowing of the world is available to all people; however, once the child grows to adulthood it is strongly repressed in order to avoid any thought of the inner world of oneself and the universe. R. D. Laing states:

As adults, we have forgotten most of our childhood, not only its contents, but its flavor; as men of the world, we hardly know of the existence of the inner world; we barely remember our dreams, and make little sense of them when we do; as for our bodies, we retain such sufficient provocative proprioceptive sensations to coordinate our movements and to insure the minimal requirements for bio-social survival--to register famine, signals for food, sex, defecation, sleep; beyond that, little or nothing. Our capacity to think except in the service of what we are dangerously deluded into supposing is our self-interest and in conformity with common sense is pitifully limited; our capacity even to see, hear, touch, taste, and smell is so shrouded in veils of mystification that an intense discipline of unlearning is necessary for anyone before one can begin to experience the world afresh, with innocence, truth and love.

The first step to knowing one's purpose is the journey to the inner world. As the inner journey and self-development begin, so too can the journey with a partner commence. Through this journey together, the peak experiences and the transcending of the old to incorporate the new innocence of the universe, the couple can reach out to the world to help and care for others. The highest level of consciousness is in fact the spiritual self. Each person is a 'meaning-seeking' being (Roszak, 1975, p. 94) trying to find a purpose to life together with others.

e. Thresholds of peak experience

Peak experience occurs at different thresholds. Maslow asserts that the basic needs must be met first. He believed that "spontaneous 'peak experience' occurred only after the person's...needs, such as survival, self-esteem, self-expression, love, etc..." were met. (Owens, 1978, p. 49) William James postulates that the threshold for a mystical experience for some individuals could be so high as to preclude ever experiencing a 'mystical experience'...whereas others could have a threshold sufficiently low as to experience mystical feelings on a weekly if not daily basis." (Vincent, 1976, p. 269) Some people are so frightened by the idea or so much in awe of the peak experience that they are never able to allow themselves to have the experience. The increased interest in meditation has provided individuals with a way of listening to the messages of the peak experience instead of talking them away.

Furthermore, meditation may become the guide to the transcending experience of the individual. "One of the Chinese words for meditation means the 'union of me and the object' not as a conqueror but as a peer." (McCarroll, 1974, p. 103) This form of meditation does not control the object but rather joins in union the object with the person.

f. Impact

The impact of peak experience on individuals and the couple today implies a far reaching spiritual change in the world. The authentic spiritual quest is one of uniting the universe and offering a more flowing and holistic world for all. This is an ongoing transformation of the human personality: to live life to the fullest with all at the spiritual level. This transformation, which is at an evolutionary proportion in the world today, effects change for tomorrow.

### III. THE COUPLE IN THE SELF-PROTECTIVE STAGE

Self-protective persons have been portrayed as motivated by rewards and punishments, disconnected from others, unable to engage in self-criticism, dependant on rituals, and pre-occupied with control.

When two such persons enter a relationship with each other, almost inevitably their communication will be superficial, fantasy-based, and dishonest. Their connectedness will exhibit a reciprocal inability to care, to commit, or to trust. Their bonding will exhibit manipulative role playing and sexual instability. The place in their lives into which mutual creativity should fit will be crowded out by the banality, isolation and impatience caused by their preoccupation with control. And finally, where there should be peak experience, there will be merely the protective shell of ritual. An encounter with Thelma and Barry is in order.

#### A. THELMA AND BARRY

Thelma grew up in a household where her mother desperately wanted love and affection and was afraid that she wouldn't get it. When Thelma married she also wanted and needed to be loved by her husband. Yet each time he would offer any form of affection she would berate him about something that had happened earlier. Nothing could satisfy her. Thelma looked at anything Barry did in order to find fault. As Thelma became more vicious in her attacks on Barry, he withdrew from her. To Thelma this affirmed that he didn't love her. Thelma wanted most from Barry an assurance of his love; yet each time he tried to show his love to her she withdrew her affection and attacked him. Thelma was fright-



ened of any deep intimate relationship with a man yet she wanted to be loved in a relationship. The one thing that she feared most actually became a reality. After seven years of marriage, their relationship ended.

The relationship offered both Barry and Thelma the opportunity to find love; yet each was afraid. Thelma was too frightened to reach out and connect with Barry in an intimate way. Barry on the other hand was too frightened to stand up for himself. Feeling attacked each time he reached out to Thelma with affection, he ultimately withdrew from her into his own self-protective shell. At the time the split occurred, the situation had become so tense and unclear that each left the other believing that the other had stated he/she wanted to end the relationship. Neither of them got what they wanted, which was to feel loved and cared for. In turn each felt that the relationship justified their worst fears about relationships.

## B. COMMUNICATION FOR THE SELF-PROTECTIVE COUPLE

When self-protective partners communicate, their communication is fantasy-based, dishonest, superficial, and often involves low self-esteem.

### 1. Fantasy-based

The relationship of the self-protective couple is based on wishes or fantasies each has of the other, which in turn stem from needs each self-protective person has for herself. There is little 'up-front' disclosure of needs and desires. Rather, based on a need to be loved, the self-protective person fantasizes the partner to be super-loving. Based on a need to be protected, she

fantasizes her partner to be exceptionally strong and protective. The self-protective partners thus can be said to be not in love with each other, but rather, in love with the fantasy of what each can do for the other.

These fantasies are never communicated to the partner. The self-protective person is unwilling to share these fantasies for fear the other will not live up to her images. As with Thelma and Barry, such a fear often precipitates exactly the effect--loss of partner--which has been imagined. As a consequence, the self-protective partners will only be able to communicate about superficial things without expressing their feelings and needs, or hearing those of the other.

Another fantasy which dominates the self-protective relationship relates to effort. The self-protective person is fixated on what the relationship must do for her--not what she must do for it. She has a romantic image of what a relationship should be, which precludes the effort and energy that is needed to create a long term sexually bonded committed relationship.

## 2. Dishonest

Honest communication in the relationship is rarely a skill available to the self-protective person. Communication is based on the needs of fantasy images and assumed rules. Communication is blocked by fears related to loss of the fantasies and to the anticipated rewards and punishments related to the rules. When Thelma and Barry met, each viewed the relationship in terms of what it could offer them for their own pleasure and reward. They found it difficult to imagine how the strengths, weaknesses and differences of each might complement those of the other. Instead, each focused on how they would

like the other to be, according to their fantasies. Thelma wanted Barry to be strong and caring, while Barry wanted Thelma to be sweet and playful. The result was dishonest communication. Each tried to communicate that they were in fact all of the things the other wished--until they were married. Bach and Deutsch (1970) write,

When one courts, one puts on one's best face, inflates strengths, conceals weaknesses, and generally seeks to manipulate the other person. The courter neither presents the reality of his own self, nor explores the reality of his partner. (p. 38)

After the marriage some of the courtship-type dishonesty is eliminated, producing disillusionment for each partner without producing any increase in honesty. The self-protective person is too fearful to honestly expose her real feelings and wishes, venting these needs instead in attacks on her partner for failing to measure up. At the same time, the self-protective person's self esteem is too low to permit energetic and honest expression of strengths or self-criticism, so that communication persists in covering-up both virtues and faults.

### 3. Superficial

What, then, is left to communicate? The dreams that she shares with her partner are trite and superficial, with very little follow-through for her visions to become realities. In addition, she is unable to hear what her partner wants and needs, and to interpret those needs in order to help him achieve his dreams. As she is not in touch with her own feelings it is difficult for her to communicate those feelings to someone else.

When Thelma and Barry sought to establish their relationship, it was on the basis of their imagined ideas of what a relationship should be and their imagined ideas of what the other should fulfill for them. Neither Thelma nor Barry was able to know, or hear, or communicate to the other, what they actually wanted in a relationship.

The fear or distrust that each felt prevented them from exposing or sharing any of their true feelings and ultimately caused only pain in the relationship. "Fear or hatred for the other sex are at the bottom of those difficulties which prevent a person from giving himself completely, from acting spontaneously, from trusting the sexual partner." (Frankl, 1975, p. 75) The self-protective person does not even take a chance to hear the other because she is unable to accept either herself or the other as they truly are.

The electricity which passes between a couple at first meeting feels tremendously profound, but merely masks superficiality. The electric shock of meeting someone who may fill the fantasy image easily tempts the self-protective person to feel, "This could be love NOW" (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 70). This feeling that one's possible mate for life may have appeared close at hand has the impact of a tiny light of 25 watts turning into a heat lamp. But the self-protective person is unable to interact in a style that is appropriate for such an exchange. Thelma and Barry, when they first met, felt a wave of relief. It was as if each had found someone who could fulfill their every need without either ever hearing that the other really could or wanted to. Neither Thelma nor Barry were willing to risk stating their needs to the other for fear that in fact they would be rejected or punished by the other. Only after their relationship had dissolved could Thelma say that at the beginning she had had a small feeling that Barry was not really able to meet her needs. But when this

feeling occurred she shoved it far away so that it would not be able to confront her with its ugly presence. One recalls the quip, "my mind is made up, don't confuse me with the facts."

Shut off from so many avenues of communication, the superficial self-protective couple may converse about the situations of the day as they happened--but will be unable to analyze or draw conclusions about their impact. If one partner, after an exchange of the day's events, states that she is to take a business trip, the other may construe this as a threat to him and try to persuade her not to go.

A consequence of this superficiality and the ingredients leading up to it is that, as with Thelma and Barry, the self-protective relationships are not likely to exist long. Yet to the self-protective person, the idea of getting married is often more important than the individual involved, or the duration of the relationship. And with the current cultural acceptance of divorce, the self-protective person can maintain a continuous series of relationships without ever being out of one for very long--or ever being into one very far.

#### 4. Low Self-esteem

Low self-esteem is an almost inevitable consequence of the self-protective person's fantasy-based, dishonest, and superficial communication. Low self-esteem perpetuates the focus on what her partner can do, rather than on what the self-protective person can do for her partner or the relationship.

Double messages which the self-protective couple convey to each other are one consequence of low self-esteem for communication. Satir

has characterized troubled families as those who engage in double-level messages, and she attributes this kind of disclosure to low self-esteem issues. Her contention is that every interaction between two people has a powerful impact on the respective worth of each and on what happens between them. (Gilbert, 1976, p. 226)

Such double messages communicated by the couple exclude the sharing of personal feelings but include the expression of expected behavior and thought in order to avoid a possible rejection or retaliation.

A second consequence of low self-esteem is that communication for the self-protective couple is often confrontational. Both Thelma and Barry would attack each other personally when they were feeling threatened, rather than addressing the issue involved. "Self-esteem, it would appear, exerts powerful influence in communication modes involving conflict resolution." (Gilbert, 1976, p. 226)

For Thelma and Barry, the conflicts were never resolved. Even after a year's separation they were still carrying around the same feelings about the other that existed at the time of their relationship.

### C. CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE SELF-PROTECTIVE COUPLE

Long term, committed, sexually-bonded relationships by definition involve the connectedness produced by commitment, caring and trust. For self-protective couples, however, severe problems appear in these areas. The necessary ingredients of connectedness are noticeably missing for the self-protective person, because caring about, commitment to, and trust of the other competes with the motivation largely to protect herself.

## 1. Inability to care

For the self-protective person, the ability to care for her partner is limited to what he can fulfill for her. Her concerns are "rooted in self-interest to the exclusion of other people." (Israel, 1971, pp 8-9) She has not matured to a degree which could include an awareness of the other as an individual with legitimate wants and needs separate from herself.

If the relationship becomes too demanding of her, she will withdraw rather than express care and concern for her partner. This is true, even when he is offering what would be understood as love or caring. The self-protective person thinks she is striving for intimacy, but the striving relates to a fantasy of what the relationship should be, rather than what she can create with her partner. As the relationship gets too close the "partner who requires more distance in order to be comfortable is the one who will be more likely to start fights for optimal distance." (Bach and Wyden, 1968, p. 37) This distancing function provides the protection from being hurt or rejected. It may also be needed to revitalize and re-energize the self-protective person to spend time with his partner. While all relationships need some time to 'refuel,' the self-protective partners are more likely to view this distancing as an affront or rejection. Each may then in turn withdraw from the other, too.

## 2. Inability to commit

Because the self-protective person bases her desire for a relationship on a fantasy, she is unable to make a genuine commitment to her partner; her commitment, instead, is made to the fantasy.

Thelma and Barry were motivated by a need to be seen by others as being in a relationship. When marriage approached, both felt that perhaps they were safe now from the expectations of family and the world. Whitaker (1976) presents the concept that the relationship is influenced by many other things than the individual decision. "Commitment, although it feels like an individual decision, is undoubtedly grossly influenced by psychosocial adaptation, the hunger for fusion, security, and even a long-range growth plan." (p. 264)

Though the self-protective couple attempt to show a commitment for each other, they fail to do it in a constructive way. One member of the self-protective couple may feel that to treat the other as a child or as a parent will be viewed as acceptance and affirmation. Actually, however, this is only a passive way of controlling the other. Such a style of relating becomes that of the parent and the good child, or at the extreme, that of the master and the slave. "The prototype of the parent or master is Torvold, Nora's husband in Ibsen's A Doll House. The parental partner exercises governing and caretaking control over the mate and infantilizes him or her." (Sager, 1977, p. 89) The commitment between the parental mate and the child mate is a commitment to maintain the status quo. The individuals are not permitted to grow and change for then the relationship would have to grow and change. This relationship style requires that the child partner remain dependent on the parent partner and sufficiently subservient to the parent. The parent's model requires that they assume the director's role or that of the task master. If either parent tires of this



model, the potential change threatens the relationship and may result in it ending. In the case of A Doll House, the commitment is to the expected or fantasized image of what the relationship should be to protect the individuals.

Such a relationship inhibits intimacy. Bach and Deutsch (1970) found that it "became apparent how early in a relationship intimacy was blocked, and the seeds of failure sown." (p. xi) The seeds of failure prevented the couple from extending a commitment to the other and benefitting from any resulting intimacy.

### 3. Inability to respect

Closely related to the lack of self-esteem discussed under the topic of communication is an inability to esteem or respect the other. This lack of respect is expressed when the self-protective person values her partner for those situations or things that he can provide to her. Typically, he is viewed as a husband who will provide her with a home, a car, and someone to take her to parties so that her friends will know that she is important. Conversely, she is valued if she can be attractive, and make him comfortable when they are at home or out so that others will see him as important. The situations that the self-protective person tries to create are situations to make him feel better about himself, instead of starting with a personal sense of self-esteem.

### 4. Inability to trust

Inevitably, the partner who is unable to adequately care about or commit to another has also not developed the ability to trust herself or her partner

in a relationship. Without trust both remain on guard as to the intent of the actions of the other. When one partner suggests an activity, the other may be building a barrier to protect him from any imagined harm. The self-protective person perceives that the "rules for living" call for her to be in a relationship; however, what she is unable to perceive is that the relationship requires a level of intimacy and commitment outside her scope of understanding. As the two self-protective partners come together, they may play together, or even seduce one another; but as the relationship demands more intimacy and sharing in order to become viable, they will pull away either by breaking off the relationship or by maintaining it on a very superficial level.

Trust, which the self-protective individual has not developed, is thus a necessary component of any intimate relationship. To trust is to take a risk; and the self-protective person is unable to do so. She hedges her bets, plans every step far in advance--all to avoid risk. It is to no avail. Without trust, the self-protective person precipitates those situations she is most frightened will happen. Jerry Greenwald (1975) states: "Without self-trust, an essential ingredient in the intimate self, those things we fear most are the very things we are liable to bring on ourselves." (p. 174)

Without self-trust there exists no way that either member could trust the other. Thelma's mother was always critical of her children, who then were unable to trust themselves. Barry's mother constantly ordered her husband around, so Barry expected men to be treated like robots. Neither Thelma nor Barry had ever lived in an environment where the individuals were treated with respect. They had never learned how to trust their own feelings or themselves. In retrospect, in adolescence each had found it difficult to establish contact with

chums or peers and even felt ostracized or rejected. They were unable to bring any level of personal security to the relationship and in the end it turned out to be a losing relationship.

##### 5. Lack of self-disclosure

Self-protective partners begin their relationship on the shaky foundation of each keeping everything 'rosy and nice' for the other. Each tries to out-accomodate the other. However, once the legal trappings of marriage are bestowed on the relationship, then the partners feel free to 'let their hair down' and begin the process of exposing their hidden side. Paradoxically, this 'letting the hair down' frequently serves not the cause of self-disclosure, but of avoiding intimacy. The self-protective person does not want to communicate a dislike for intimacy but rather is so frightened of exposing herself that she withdraws from any truly intimate situation which might offer her affirmation and love.

Self-disclosure is the honesty in one's outward-turning communication. But for the individual to feel comfortable disclosing her innermost feelings and hopes, there must exist for her an understanding of, and comfort with, her own feelings. The self-protective person is terrified of her own feelings, repressing them and tuning them out. "There is probably no experience more terrifying than disclosing oneself to 'significant others' whose probable reactions are assumed, but not known." (Jourard, 1971, p. 31) The self-protective person works hard to avoid the terror of such self-disclosure--and in so doing avoids bonding as well.

## 6. Role-playing

The self-protective person may imagine that the relationship will work best if she is able to assume a role of some model she perceives to be acceptable. Two such models frequently seen in self-protective relationships are those of the Helpless Victim and the Power Seeker.

The Helpless Victim manipulates others to do things for him because he is perceived to be unable to do things for himself. He frequently connects with a Power Seeker who likes to feel that she is a benevolent despot, a server of the helpless. One manipulates the other, and the relationship perpetuates itself. Sometimes the partner 'catches on' to the capricious manipulation which is taking place. Sheldon Kopp (1976) portrays such a discovery of the Helpless Victim at work:

I used to think that you were the victim...a weak, ineffectual woman whom life had dealt some cruel blows. You were really...manipulating everyone with your supposed helplessness...Your possessions always meant more to you than anyone else...." (p. 49)

The self-protective person does not necessarily want to value her possessions more than anything else; only, she feels these things will not punish or hurt her. The ability to carry that logic to its end seems to escape her--that inanimate objects also cannot provide her with any rewards or pleasurable feelings. As a result of always being the victim, she may develop an uncanny ability to victimize her oppressor. Kopp (1976) continues his description:

As an adult she was too often a self-discrediting support for her husband, helping him to do his thing, while settling for the meager reward of 'security' for herself. Needless to say, she made him pay. For years she engaged in all the self-degrading, secret spitefulness that women have developed to subtly victimize their oppressors...much like passive resistance. (p. 46)

The Power Seeker pursues total mastery over another. She portrays herself as the server of the helpless. She wants to control as she is terrified of being controlled herself, and this style assures her that no one will ever hold a position over her. "Such a man (woman) strives for the power to control other people, so that he will not have to experience his own helplessness, and so that he can escape from the fear that others will manipulate him...." (Kopp, 1976, p. 105)

#### D. SEXUAL BONDING FOR THE SELF-PROTECTIVE COUPLE

Bonding affirms the polarities of two people and yet joins them together. It will be recalled that sexual bonding is viewed as being a seal on the committed relationship; that sex functions as a seal over and above its roles in meeting people's needs for touching and sexual pleasure; and that when sexual intercourse functions as a seal in such a relationship, it meets psychic needs as well, acting as a foundation for new levels of consciousness and opening the couple to the deepest levels of I-Thou experience.

Sexual experience matching this description is especially difficult for the self-protective couple. For them, sex does not act as a seal, it does not serve well even in meeting elemental needs for sexual pleasure, and it does not open up new levels of consciousness or spirituality.

##### 1. Not a Seal

Sex does not act as a seal for the self-protective couple because the relationship is typically between each person and her fantasy rather than between

two people, and therefore the self-protective person fails to make the commitment necessary for a longterm relationship to develop.

A man and a woman meet, and an intense relationship quickly develops. Though they have met each other only hours before, one says to the other, "I feel like I've known you all my life." The self-protective person could truthfully make this statement. Because she is relating to her fantasy rather than the real other person, she, in fact has known him (the fantasy) all her life.

Because the self-protective person is not interested in really getting to know the other, instant relationships are a predominant pattern. The self-protective person may seek instant sex as a way of affirming to herself that the relationship is intimate. However "the likelihood is that instant sex will retard or prevent intimate development." (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 221) Since non-intimate sex is not conducive to repeated encounters, such a relationship does not develop and is soon over. In turn, the experience can serve as a self-fulfilling prophecy, making concrete the feared possibility of never being in a relationship.

## 2. Not a simple pleasure

Failing to obtain long term intimacy, the self-protective person hardly fares better in simply enjoying sex as a physical pleasure. Sex for its own sake has become more widely accepted by today's moral standards and can be a positive experience when the partners are able to communicate openly and honestly about their true wants and needs. The self-protective person, however, typically presents statements of love when she just wants a sexual encounter.

Each then experiences both the fear and reality of exploitation, with the consequence of further weakening any potential the relationship has.

3. Not an opening to spirituality

The self-protective person is unable to be aware of her own feelings and those of others. This is due to her self-protective fearfulness; and with respect to her attitudes toward the other, to the fantasies projected on the other. This disunity within herself results in a disunity with her partner. Sexual expression is disrupted, and with it spiritual expression. It is only when she develops to later levels that unity with the self begins and in turn unity with the other follows. Without such a unity, she remains isolated from any added consciousness of spirituality.

E. MUTUAL CREATIVITY IN THE SELF-PROTECTIVE COUPLE

The self-protective person experiences little of the mutual creativity which ideally both expresses and enhances the long term committed sexually bonded relationship. She experiences banality rather than adventure, self-seeking isolation rather than mutuality, and impatience rather than disciplined caring.

1. Banality

Parallels to mutual creativity which are experienced by the self-protective couple center around individual, self-oriented needs. The ability to creatively act with another person on dreams and visions fails as the self-protective person

finds herself unable to express her dreams and fails to respond to the other's dreams. Adventure and discovery are relegated to the banal activities of individuals. These banal activities are not to be confused with the common activities of life which are the essence of the earth. Rather, these are pseudo-activities which allow her to grasp at ways she believes will fulfill the images of mutual adventure, discovery and creativity without any real communication or regard for the other's feelings.

## 2. Self-seeking isolation

The self-protective person prioritizes her life based on her own selfish wants and needs without regard for her partner. "The worst thing that happens once other priorities start to take precedence over the partner is that the partner is used to benefit them." (Allen, 1971, p. 157) She tries to manipulate him to achieve her own goals and desires and in turn draws further away from him.

The key criterion for mutual creativity is that two people share creative ideas mutually for each other. The self-protective person is not committed to the idea of merging his differences to create the mutuality that would result in a comprehensive whole, and is thus unable to participate in this level of relating.

## 3. Impatience

For creativity to exist, there must be a level of discipline in the relationship, at which the self-protective person is ineffectual. Discipline promotes caring for the other and the self. In turn, discipline is only actualized



with a workable level of patience. The self-protective person is only willing to exercise patience when she fears a reprisal or punishment. She has not confronted the possibility that her images of what will make her happy may not be actualized. Therefore she is not willing to assume the work that might be required to bring these images to reality.

#### F. PEAK EXPERIENCE FOR THE SELF-PROTECTIVE COUPLE

Maslow (1968) states that, "by protecting himself against the hell within himself, he also cuts himself off from the heaven within." (p. 142) The self-protective person fails to experience peak experiences due to her fear that reaching into the psyche will expose her to too much pain. Out of this self-protective fear, she denies herself and her partner an experience of transcendence, sacredness, and self-actualization.

##### 1. Shallowness

The peak experience would present the self-protective person with a profundity that would be excessively difficult for her to handle. For her, the belief of what is within the self is so uncertain and shallow that to expose the self is only to bring pain. Relating to the depth of another individual is likewise too frightening to her. "The movement of opening up and taking in, the relaxed bliss of streaming into another energy field and accepting the emanation of the other energy field--this bliss is unbearable and appears dangerous." (Broch, 1970, p. 6) The self-protective person sees herself only superficially and views others similarly.

For Carl Gustav Jung (1957), "consciousness is a precondition of being." (p. 46); but for the self-protective person, the consciousness is not yet awakened. She confuses "self-knowledge with knowledge of the conscious ego personalities." (Jung, 1957, p. 6) For her, this self-knowledge includes what she perceives is necessary to function comfortably in the world around her. Her ego is underdeveloped. An authentic understanding of the self must precede authentic communication with another. But she avoids authenticity for fear of punishment and reprisal. Without an authentic interaction between the partners, the peak experiences of life are never experienced and appreciated.

## 2. Profaneness

The inability of the self-protective person to have peak experiences appears incongruous in the face of a tendency by them to seek out a strong involvement with established religion. Those self-protective individuals that participate in organized religion utilize the rituals of the church to afford protection rather than to enable a genuine connection with the stronger forces of the universe. Sam Keen describes the churches' potentially narrow benefits to the self-protective person, when he writes:

The sanctuary is so seldom filled with vitality and enthusiasm. The words are still there: "celebration," "joy", "hope", and "love". But the music drags and there is no dancing and little radical openness to surprise and change. In my experience, the substance of wonder is more frequently found in the prose of the secular than in the often quaint poetry of religion. The sacred is in the profane; the holy in the quotidian; the wonder is the world. (Sam Keen, quoted by Naranjo, 1974, p. 11)

The established religions thus provide protection and repression, rather than instilling a desire for celebration and discovery; in short, they provide profane-ness rather than sacredness. Thus protected and repressed, the self-protective person is cut off from the peak experiences that are all around her.

#### IV. THE COUPLE IN THE CONFORMIST STAGE

The most important trait distinguishing the conformist from the self-protective couple is trust. The conformist has learned to trust, although it is the group she trusts, rather than herself yet. When conformist persons combine in long term, committed, sexually bonded relationships, this fact predominates all four of the dynamic elements.

##### A. ROSASHARON AND CONNIE

John Steinbeck writes of a couple whose names are Rosasharon and Connie in his book The Grapes of Wrath. Rosasharon and Connie show many of the features of conformist persons. They want to be close without really understanding each other. They share their feelings with each other when they talk and giggle together, but they can't share their fears. Their desires are shaped by the culture at large. They want to participate in the dreams of a normal couple. Rosasharon wants to live in a white house and wants Connie to study so that he can get them out of the rut that they are in. Connie shares this dream with Rosasharon. They fear most not achieving the great cultural dream, but are unable to share any such 'bad' feelings with each other. Connie becomes frightened of Rosasharon's pregnancy. Their shared ideas and dreams then become ways of feeling intimate yet result in Connie leaving. As they appear to get closer to each other

they are in fact drawing farther apart without ever speaking of it. Rosasharon wants a house for the baby to be born in and Connie wants the baby to have all new clothing yet when they can't see how this might happen, Connie leaves Rosasharon without a single word of his departure. He was never able to tell her how frightened he was of the ensuing pregnancy and the destitution and poverty in which they lived.

## B. COMMUNICATION FOR THE CONFORMIST COUPLE

Communication for the conformist couple is characterized by an environment dominated by social pressure. This leads to a personal style of communication marked by adaptation, and an interpersonal style marked by dependence on assumptions. The result of this communication style is a high degree of limitation on the potential for intimacy.

### 1. Social Pressure: The Environment of Conformist Communication

Social pressures are the environment in which the communication of conformist couples takes place. These pressures set the tone for conformist couples. Rosasharon and Connie sought as their reference group all those who had bettered themselves and provided nice homes for their children. Unable to achieve this they became discouraged.

Psychotherapy often supports social pressure to conform. Some psychotherapeutic models have attempted to shape the individual to the accepted social norm "by smoothing away all the rough unsociable edges;" For such psychotherapy, the "fixed beacon of normality is the going

social consensus, especially as voiced by official authority" (Roszak, 1975, p.188). The concept of molding an individual to the social norm has an added damage for the conformist. She may fail to achieve the important developmental task of coming to trust her partner. She begins this developmental stage when her level of trust of others develops. It is the most crucial step in living in a world with other people and relating to them. At this point intimacy in its true sense can have its beginnings.

The social pressure also affects how open in communication a conformist will be with her mate. If the group's style is to broadcast all information given out by any member of the group, group members may be more reluctant to share their feelings and concerns. If the group norm is to respect privacy then each will be more open to sharing their fears and joys. "The condition for openness is the guarantee that whatever is presented to the others is disclosed in privacy... Privacy is essential for the disclosure that illumines a man's being-for-himself, changes his being-for-others, and potentiates desirable growth of his personality." (Jourard, 1971, p.66)

## 2. Adaptation: Their personal style of conformist communication

The conformist shares those feelings with her partner that she feels he wants to hear. She is unable to clearly state her wants and needs and feelings to her partner but rather presents them as she perceives he wants to hear them. Conformist communication is thus based on her need to

feel accepted by him and to be helpful and nice to him. At times this communication may be authentic and at other times it may simply be a reflection of her sense of the group standards.

Because of these limits on self-disclosure, the conformist's knowledge is also limited. Typically the group through a spokesperson such as a minister conveys strong statements of the way people ought and ought not to be. The effect is to "make man so ashamed of his true being that he feels obliged to seem different" than he is. (Jourard, 1971, p.6). In doing so, she has failed to esteem and explore that part of herself that is different from the group, for the conformist finds such exploration difficult.

This is not to say that all of the action of the conformist is 'bad.' The developmental stage of the conformist is a necessary and beneficial stage. The self-protective person has not learned to trust another and when the individual makes the giant leap to the conformist stage she is trusting another and a group. Such trust of others leads to closeness and intimacy. It also helps the individuals to know how to flow with the group and the society. At later stages the individual is able to make more choices for herself and yet carries the learning experiences from the conformist stage with her.

Both self-protective and conformist persons put their best face forward in the courting game, in effect wearing masks. The conformist, though, does this for group sanction and approval while the self-protective person does so not to experience reprisals.

The conformist who has reached adulthood finds it safer to keep the masks to cover her fears and hide what she believes are her frailties.

These masks, or preferred style of behavior, are those of the reference group.

### 3. Assumptions: The Interpersonal Style of Conformist Communication

The conformist, assuming that her partner is like her, makes many assumptions about the other which are incorrect. She assumes that she knows what is happening with the other, such as when Rosasharon asked Connie if he was still going to take night classes, and Connie was evasive. When the conformist makes assumptions she fails to check them out and finds that she is "Flying Blind," to use the expression of Irene Kassorla (1976). She feels "that most of us spend much of our communicating time 'mind reading.' We don't verify the meaning of what is being said. Rather, we make assumptions about what we think we are hearing. We seldom check. We're often confused, and we Fly Blind." (p.95)

Flying Blind results in blind love by the couple. It allows the couple to establish illusions about the relationship. Flying Blind is characteristic of the conformist couple, though not unique to them. The conformist's need to fit the group norm precipitates this communication style. Maslow (1968) states that:

Frequently enough love for another brings illusions, the perceptions of qualities and potentialities that don't exist, that are not therefore truly perceived but created in the mind of the beholder and which then rests on a system of needs, repressions, denials, projections and rationalizations. If love can be more perceptive than non-love, it can also be blinder." (p.99)

The conformist, though trusting the group ignores her own feelings and those of her partner.

Rosasharon and Connie exhibit the blindness of conformist love in both their nonverbal and verbal communication. They shared private secrets with each other that they giggled over and they acted shy with each other. Their desire to be like other normal couples their age kept them separate from their parents and from the older people of the migrant workers. They shared their own special intimate dreams and secrets--yet they found it difficult to talk about them specifically with each other.

This assumptive style often interferes with the imagination and creativity that is necessary to intimacy. When the other believes that each should understand because they love each other, then the relationship flounders without knowledge or direction. Expressed in words, this assumptive style or expectation is, "He ought to know how I feel, or You'll decode me correctly if you love me." (Bach & Wyden, 1968, P.123).

#### 4. Limited Intimacy: The Result of Conformist Communication

Gina Allen and Clement Martin (1971) state that "intimacy is possible only between real people whose minds and bodies and senses are tuned to the 'here and now' and who can relate to each other, 'I and Thou' with openness and honesty." (p.95)

Because the conformist is unable to clearly understand and hear the other, intimacy is difficult to achieve. What the conformist is open to hearing from the intimate other is what she expects him to say. At times this may be an accurate communication of the other's wants and needs and at other times may simple be a way of shutting out what the other has to say. When Connie told Rosaharon that he was still



interested in studying to do better the last day they were together, Steinbeck creates the impression that Rosaharon knew that Connie was in the process of beginning a big change, yet she refused to allow herself to hear the subtle inflections of differences that he was communicating.

### C. CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE CONFORMIST COUPLE

Connectedness, the verbal commitment of the relationship, provides the energy for the relationship to continue and grow. For the conformist there are a number of characteristics that make the style of commitment different from the previous stage.

Social and group pressures affect the relationship and commitment of the conformist. As a result, many contacts are superficial and, at the time of courting and marriage, many relationships fail to establish genuine intimacy. Erich Fromm (1974) suggests that modern man's contacts with his fellow men are of the 'most superficial' level (p.73). Not all conformist relationships can be viewed as superficial, for they have moved from the self-protective stage of distrust to the conformist stage that requires trust of another. However, the influences and pressures of the group leave the conformist out of touch with his actual feelings at times. It is really not until the transition between the conformist and conscientious stage, which Loevinger (1976) describes as the self-aware level, that the individual begins to explore and become aware of his true feelings. Still, Loevinger supports the potential of conformist for commitment with the observation that there is in fact some "reciprocity in interpersonal relations and some genuine cooperation is compatible with a conformist stance in adolescence and maturity, that is, with continued emphasis on external rules

rather than internal obligations." (p.179). The person at K.S. Isaac's Gamma Level, which corresponds closely with the conformist stage, "is capable of true sympathy." (p.112). The conformist couple care about the other and make commitments to the other albeit using the group norm as the model or style of the commitment.

A consequence of the conformist commitment is to view the relationship from a 'we' perspective. More than any other stage, the conformist relationship is felt to be such a relationship. This style of seeing the other precludes the individuality of the other. In the 'we' concept, the couple must think alike. This concept is sometimes expressed as 'one plus one equals one'. In Bach's and Deutsch's (1970) view, such a "proposition is as difficult emotionally as it is in mathematics. It means that each partner's answer to any important question ought to match the other partner's." (p.24). This equation in effect substitutes the identity of two who feel compelled to be alike, in place of a real connection between two who are different.

Another aspect of the 'we'ness is feeling incomplete without the partner, because one's identity comes from outside oneself it excludes the individuality of each. This creates a dependency on the other.

This dependency colors and limits interpersonal relations. To see people primarily as need gratifiers or as sources of supply is an abstractive act. They are seen not as wholes, as complicated, unique individuals, but rather from the point of view of usefulness. What in them is not related to the perceiver's needs is either overlooked altogether, or else bores, irritates, or threatens (Maslow, 1968, p.36).

This inability to see the other as anything but a part of the whole, an aspect of one 'we' clearly limits the nature of the commitment and connectedness involved.

Despite this limitation, the conformist receives validation from his partner through collaboration. Harry Stack Sullivan (1953), defining this validation, states: "

Validation of personal worth requires a type of relationship which I call collaboration, by which I mean clearly formulated adjustments of one's behavior to the expressed needs of the other person in pursuit of increasingly identical, that is, more and more nearly mutual satisfactions, and in the maintenance of increasingly similar security operations." (p.246)

This description conveys the picture of a conformist couple molding to each other out of a need to receive validation and affirmation. In the process both feel better about themselves and feel liked by the other.

With the experience of validation and acceptance by the intimate other, also comes a level of self-acceptance. The conformist may conform to the reference model of the group so much that she may find self-acceptance difficult. Yet intimacy with self is a necessary component of intimacy with another, and its absence "hampers our growth and integration into a whole person." (Greenwald, 1975, p.42) Without self-acceptance the commitment is frequently to that of the group idea rather than to the other. This then allows for the changeable partner concept to exist, and one person can fill the role as easily as another.

#### D. BONDING FOR THE CONFORMIST COUPLE

Sexual contact, the physical and psychical bonding of the relationship, is affected by the social pressure to which the conformist is subject. Since social roles of the group may prevent partners from relating as persons, they may also interfere with sexual bonding. "For men and women can't relate to each other as persons, freely and lovingly, if each must struggle against the other to maintain his socially approved position by acting his socially assigned role." (Allen and Martin, 1971, p.5) As the couple act out their assigned social role they cut off their own wants and needs to some extent. Conformists participate in this style in order to feel accepted by the group.

Sex for the conformist is especially likely to be influenced by social dictates. This influence appears in popularizations of the 'right' way to achieve the 'Joy of Sex', or the attitudes which make sexual orgasms a social necessity. Roszak (1975) and Gillies (1978) both discuss the way today's sexual freedom movement institutes pressure to enjoy sex in a certain way. The result is preclusion of a necessary 'flow' in the sexual relationship. The group sets the norm and the style, and the conformist complies.

Despite all these differences, many of which limit the conformist, the sexual bond can be satisfying. Tenderness is a natural response toward another to alleviate the sense of loneliness and isolation that each person experiences, and while it poses difficulty for the self-protective couple, the conformist and higher stage couples can engage in it. The

sharing that can take place between individuals in the sexual act, at least momentarily, creates a union between the two where one feeling is undefined as to who really experiences it. This provides a sense of affirmation of the self within the love act. Each person wants a sense of personal identity which is affirmed in the sexual relationship. It is this feeling of self confidence and self-worth in oneself and the other that facilitates communication between the partners. These feelings also add a vitality and excitement to the relationship that nourishes and replenishes their ability to nurture.

As sex has an "infinite range of meanings and rewards," (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p.129) the conformist can enjoy it without experiencing the depth that is possible. And for the conformist exploration of sexual fantasies provides a lead-in to growth toward the next stage. As she develops a greater comfort level with her committed partner and affirms the sexual encounter they may begin to explore beyond the 'standard' way of intercourse to enjoy a variety of sexuality and sensuality. As suggested by Richard Robertiello (1976) in The Decline and Fall of Sex, "Let us pursue the spiritual and psychological aspects of our sexuality with the same zest that we have pursued the anatomy lessons and the techniques." (p.71). As she begins this search, she will find herself propelled to the transitional stage of the self-aware level, which will lead to the next stage, the conscientious.

## E. MUTUAL CREATIVITY FOR CONFORMIST COUPLES

Mutual creativity includes many dimensions even for the conformist couple. Excitement and playfulness in the relationship draws the couple together and allows for growth for the individuals and the relationship. One of the most dynamic forces of growth is that of excitement. Excitement provides the energy for connecting with another and the self, to gain awareness and in turn for the individual to experience the world as a new and exciting though sometimes frightening universe. It provides adventure and discovery and a sense of gratification that can result in a shared mutual vision. For the conformist, the level of mutual creativity that is experienced is the learning environment for future connection with the world.

Some aspects of the conformist stage, however, may get in the way of mutual creativity.

### 1. The Family and Mutual Creativity

Though the family can support mutual creativity it may smother it, especially at the conformist stage. "The conventional family (couple) preserves the status quo, but too commonly fails to serve such important functions as facilitating personal growth and self-actualization in the married couple and their children." (Jourard, 1971, p.104) When couples unite to form a unit they quickly get settled into a routine that appears to inhibit their mutual creativity. The partners seem to put their creative energy into their work; when they get back together with each other they are exhausted and unable to be creative. As couples seek out counseling

or growth experiences it is frequently precipitated by one member being dissatisfied, but typically the couple or family goes into therapy to help the dissatisfied person to readjust himself to the old family model. Families give non-verbal reminders or cues to maintain the status quo family configuration.

## 2. Personal Identity and Mutual Creativity

Generally the wearing of a mask which meets the group norm is an affirming action on the part of the conformist. When the reference group is truly one that the individual or couple feel comfortable with, then the style of the group is sanctioned by all, and there is even room for development of some novelty. When the members of the group have a new discovery of something that might be appropriate for them, the whole group adopts this style. When a new concept takes shape that may be different for part of the group, two groups may form from the primary group. This may occur when the friends of a couple are encouraged to a new activity and part of the group decides not to participate.

On the other hand, when the conformist compromises her identity to fit the image of the group she may find over time that such mask-wearing can lead to feeling smothered. (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p.180). The lack of personal identity expression suppresses playfulness and adventure. By result, she feels no sense of gratification. Conformity to social expectations creates an atmosphere of continually proving oneself. An example of this is the objective of conquest in love-making that can leave the partners with a sense of emptiness and make creativity simply a numbers game. (Robertiello, 1976, pp. 72-73).

### 3. Play

The conformist does find it possible to make some beginnings toward mutual creativity through play. The culture's encouragement of play, although in limited ways, assists creativity and gratification. As the group condones different varieties of play, she can experiment and find those areas that she feels most comfortable and affirmed by the group. Kopp (1976) states that "it is necessary to...(learn)...how to play, before (people) can become free to know and follow their own wishes." (p.118) This time is the training period for future growth and mutual creativity.

Esteem from the group approval is a starting point through which the conformist receives faith in herself. Here are sown the seeds of her future ability to stand out from the herd. This self-esteem allows her to respect the ideas and visions of others.

#### F. PEAK EXPERIENCE FOR THE CONFORMIST COUPLE.

For conformists, the experience of peak experience occurs with some infrequency and in minimal ways. The erotic force which in all people propels them to seek union with one another plants the seed for the peak experience. This erotic force spurs the couple on to a high that offers a glimpse of the joy and pleasure of the potential peak experience. This same erotic force provides "a natural longing for companionship and friendship which can be turned to God. The conformist is most likely to regard God as man's unfailing friend and ever-present companion." (Naranjo, 1974, p.79). Thus this desire for friendship is a spiritual orientation that she may seek, and through which



she may have a peak experience. Maslow (1968) says that "if they are not mountain peak-experiences, at least they are foothill experiences, little glimpses of absolute self-validation, delight, little moments of Being." (p.154).

One situation in which the conformist may have peak experiences is in the group setting of revivals. The revival setting allows her a safe environment to take a glimpse at Being. The group sets the tone of behavior and gives permission for all to participate. The fallacy with the revival situation is that it creates a fairly "superficial contact with his fellow men." (Fromm, 1974, p.73). It cuts the individual off from other individuals and encourages all to become as one in an external way without exploration of the inner self. The laughter and high feelings become contagious without an awareness and understanding of the feelings. In a sense, the revivalist experience is to spirituality what the 'we' experience is for intimacy.

The conformist behavior traits can get in the way of peak experiences in major ways. She does not deal with the basic questions that are pre-requisite to the peak experience: questions such as "What do I want? Who am I? How can I grow and change?" (McCarroll, 1974, p.38). Such questions help the individual and the couple to know more about themselves and what they want from the relationship. These questions are basic to the illuminating experience of peak experience.

The conformist's need to conform to socially approved norms (Loevinger, 1976, p.18) may block her from the peak experience. Lack of trust and courage to step away from the group norm and social expectations keep her stuck and unable to reach out for those experiences that might offer an illuminating experience.

The Biblical story commonly referred to as the Transfiguration provides an apt illustration of the reaction of conformists confronted with a peak experience. In this instance Jesus is the focus of the peak experience. The reaction of the three disciples who were with him is not to share the experience--but to undertake a ritual of tabernacle building considered appropriate for such occasions by group norm.

The need of the conformist to fit the social norms that she perceives to be necessary will often cause her to miss the highs of her life that might lead to peak experiences. As Kopp (1976) says of the conformist, "so often intent on learning the rules of the game...he is sure that there must be...some hidden order to be discovered that will provide the key to happiness...(he) cannot believe that he...has only ...to play 'the game of no game'. (p.120)

The conformist can become so cut off from her own feelings that she has no identity and feels isolated from herself. When this happens she will fail to have any peak experience. A case in point is that of Brad who had the group set the tone of his whole life. Brad was unable and unwilling to search out his own feelings which in turn left him empty and the mirage of the group.

Brad had no idea who he really was. Except for his feelings of emptiness and loneliness, he had little awareness of his inner self. To overcome his feelings of alienation he became a 'reactor' to other people. To do anything alone was meaningless. He hardly knew whether he really enjoyed a movie or a television program until someone else told him how he, the other person, felt about it. Then Brad would pick up

on the other's experience and make it his own. This was not a superficial act. Being so out of touch with himself, he simply swallowed other people's attitudes and made them his own. He avoided the full painfulness of his lack of identity and loneliness by developing a large circle of friends and engaging in as many activities as possible, all of which were initiated by others. This became his lifestyle for many years. He seemed busy, active and involved in the world; yet he continued to have increasing feelings of depression, which mystified him. He constantly felt he had a lump in the pit of his stomach which he could get rid of only through physical activity or tranquilizers. Being out of touch with himself, he could not see that his depression and the lump in his stomach were body messages telling him he was emotionally starving and isolated despite all the outward appearances to the contrary. (Greenwald, 1975, p.24)

Brad had not only cut himself off from his Self, he was also cut off from the potentials of life and any peak experience.

The conformist stage is important to an individual's development, for she is able to trust others, something she could not do while self-protective. However, if she remains in the conformist stage for her lifetime, she will fail to know herself fully to experience the variety of freeing potentials in life.

## V. THE COUPLE IN THE CONSCIENTIOUS STAGE

In their transition from the conformist stage, the conscientious couple have reached and passed Loevinger's self-aware level, the level of development which probably includes the greatest number of persons. At this level, they experienced "an increase in self-awareness and the appreciation of multiple possibilities in situations." (Loevinger, 1976, p. 19). Now, at the conscientious stage, the individual has internalized rules and makes decisions based on the consequences of acts rather than the rule itself. She takes control of her own fate and accepts the ambiguity of the law.

### A. DON AND ANNA

Don and Anna had met at a lecture on organic gardening. Both had a personal concern for gardening and foods produced without any additives. They were clearly aware at the time of their meeting that most of the world did not hold their views about food, but both knew that they wanted to pursue their interest to create a better environment. They shared an interest in setting up a small truck farming business and decided to move to a rural farming area to do so. Don and Anna talked about the responsibility involved. They recognized their lack of experience and the amount of hard work that would be required to make their truck farming work. Each reviewed the amount of work that had to be done, their skills at those particular tasks, and what they would have to learn.

In communicating, Don and Anna feel a strong obligation to express their own wants and needs to each other. However, their sense of obligations and expectations are frequently interpreted to be their wants and needs. A difficulty arose when one had a particularly strong desire for the other to participate in an activity, and was unable to let go of her expectations when the other wasn't interested. Though their rules were not absolute it was hard at times for them to create a joint set of rules that they could operate from.

For Don and Anna, commitment began from a shared idea for the future. It evolved into a longer term relationship allowing them to share joint goals. As it evolved, it came to include sexual bonding. In this process they each struggled with different ideas about their sexual relationship but persisted because having entered the relationship, they felt they 'ought' to keep it going. In Don's family the mother demeaned the role of men. Don thus had to work at understanding his own feelings and anger through therapy. When he met Anna he had already been married and divorced. Though he was not ready to get 'legally' married again, he did want a relationship.

Anna's parents had stayed together, but never appeared happy with each other. Anna decided early in her life that for her a relationship should be something that both would work at. She felt that she should enter this relationship with Don slowly. When it proved to be supportive she could consider marriage.

Both were willing to make some sacrifices for the relationship to develop. While they rejected their childhood religion, each continued to feel a spiritual obligation. When they moved to the country they brought others with a similar religious interest together to form a religious meeting group. They experienced enjoying the variety and differences that the new friends brought to their

meetings although in fact they had created a peer group of like minded people. This community resource network provided information and education to the community. Through this involvement they expressed their feeling of responsibility to the community.

Both Don and Anna were still concerned with their own possessions and had not accepted a shared ownership in those things that they had brought to the relationship.

Don and Anna had established a style that was unique to their relationship. They created new rules for their relationship that helped it to work so that each were cared for and their needs taken care of.

## B. COMMUNICATION FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS COUPLE

The conscientious couple regard communication as an important and helpful obligation. "Inherent in the concept of marital helping is the belief that to be helpful to one's spouse, one must first understand him(her). One significant way of reaching this understanding is through verbal communication." (Burke and Weir, 1977, p. 922) As a result, they are beginning to value their communication with each other, and beginning to discover that it affirms their relationship, and their level of intimacy with each other.

For the conscientious couple, communication calls for self-disclosure, risk-taking, and immediacy.

### 1. Self-disclosure

The conscientious person is likely to feel a commitment to clear communication with her partner and feel guilt when it fails. She may get

to know people as friends and begin to understand perhaps to some extent the things that concern or upset them. She is capable of self-disclosure but she is tentative. She may disclose a personal feeling but then quickly gloss it over with a superficial comment. Her growing knowledge of her feelings is held back by her ideas of what she ought to feel. She has established a set of rules for her own operation in life and assumes the responsibility for her actions. Her inability to let others do likewise, however, interferes with communication with them.

## 2. Risk-taking

Self-disclosure requires risk-taking, and the conscientious person is able to take risks more than those in previous stages. Sharing oneself to any extent makes one vulnerable, yet is necessary to permit experiencing the highs and the creativity of life with another person. Only when this risk of self-disclosure is taken can a truly intimate relationship develop. Such a relationship, possible for the conscientious couple, is not based on the fear of what might happen, or the rules of the group, but on the sole response of one unique and unparalleled individual to another. Many conscientious people, however, become so rigid in their own beliefs that they are no longer able to accept others.

Risk-taking involves the sharing of negative as well as positive feelings. The conscientious person can better recognize that each partner has hostile feelings and is "capable of hostility [which] is part of understanding and accepting the self." (Allen and Martin, 1971, p. 164) When pent up, this hostility brings tension and stress to the relationship. Frequently con-

scientious couples explode with angry feelings and yet still fail to get at the root of the hostility. This can lead to the destruction of the relationship. (Allen and Martin, 1971, p. 164) When these hostile feelings are confronted and expressed, the conscientious person realizes a release of tension, and constructive/creative change can occur. However, frequently an inability to let go of her own expectations keeps such resolution from happening.

The conscientious couple may feel an obligation to confront, which is confused, however, by an unwillingness to risk the relationship. "Confrontation...represents the critical point of action and is the culmination of the prior development of our awareness and communication." (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 170) When an intimate couple are unwilling to continue relating in a negative or apathetic mode, they will seek to confront their own feelings and share these with their partner. However, the conscientious couple may prefer to continue relating negatively by ignoring or denying outstanding issues, rather than risking confrontation.

This is due to the fact that risk-taking cannot happen except when each partner brings to the relationship and communicates a sense of self-worth. The conscientious person is willing to take risks, but not particularly sensitive to the behavior and feelings of others around her. The secure person can relate on a much freer, sensitive, unhampered level because she is willing and able to take care of herself, while an individual lacking this inner intimacy places a burden on her partner, which can result in withdrawal and rejection.



A sense of personal identity is also required for risk-taking.

Bach and Deutsch (1970) state,

asserting your identity, you preserve it and continue to have an impact on partners, so that they know and respect that identity. If you continually compromise identity, it becomes eroded and confused. You feel smothered. Then the usual reaction is to push the partner away in order to gain breathing space. (p. 180)

While persons in earlier stages may compromise identity for other reasons, the conscientious person is able to alter behavior or feelings based on a sense of her own identity. She is most likely to compromise identity because of behavior, feelings or goals she feels she 'ought' to have. When the partner is willing and able to assert her own identity, she experiences self-respect and the respect of her partner.

### 3. Immediacy

For the conscientious couple, communication exists in a tension between a perceived obligation to the here and now, and to the future. The conscientious person shares a variety of rich and authentic expressions of herself and her partner in their relationship at times, but also tends to give such expression second place to other obligations. She works at relating in the present, yet historical feelings get in the way of the dialogue and communication. She does try "to create a feeling of immediacy and open intensity." (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 126) This level of interpersonal relating is important for intimacy to develop and grow.

## C. CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS COUPLE

For the conscientious couple, connectedness involves an increased self-acceptance and acceptance of the other; a clearcut sense of personal growth and of journeying together; and caring. The result is a connectedness which is unique in its conscientiousness, but which contains some blocks as well as some potentials.

### 1. Self-acceptance

Connectedness requires acceptance--of self and the other; and the conscientious couple are able to achieve both types of acceptance to a greater extent than in earlier stages.

#### a. Self-acceptance and faith

Acceptance requires faith and trust in life, self, and others. An individual, to connect with her intimate partner, must sustain and nourish a level of trust with him that allows both of them to grow. Faith calls for a desire to reach out and meet another rather than to pull back and avoid connectedness. One way that individuals pull back is through intellectualizing. To intellectualize, and analyze, the other can be done in order to avoid the experience of commitment. By contrast, when a couple truly connect with each other they cannot know--and need not know--all about the other.

b. Self-acceptance and acceptance of the other

Self-acceptance is a prerequisite to unity with one's partner and leads to an acceptance of the other. It is the "experience of unity with another human being (that) underlies the feelings of true love as distinct from much that we call love." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 203)

Understanding and accepting one's own imperfections on the deepest level of consciousness and extending this acceptance to another is the basis for the sense of connectedness between people. Individuals who feel compelled to achieve perfection personally before they can truly relate with another will also tend to expect perfection of their intimate other. This then places an immense burden on their partner to be something they are not, and may not really want to become.

Meeting in an intimate and spiritual way requires a capacity for concern for the other. This can occur only when the other person is seen as a whole person and the individual sees himself as a "stabilized unit." (Ticho, 1974, p. 243)

Awareness of others as truly separate from the self begins with the conscientious stage. With such an awareness, love of someone who is different from the self can occur. This lays the basis for tenderness and concern, giving and receiving. The conscientious person may be self-giving at this time--however there may be a subtle expectation for something in return in the future.

The couple that see each other as individuals also see their relationship with more depth and variety. For Bach and Deutsch (1970), this added perspective on the intimate relationship is expressed as "one plus one equals

three. The three elements are: the man, the woman, and their relationship." (p. 26) Each has an identity that they bring to the relationship and each recognizes the other's identity. By combining the two identities they create a third connected identity. When they meet each other, that forms the identity of the relationship. Each meets the other and responds to the other in the here and now without making any assumptions of the other.

## 2. Growth

Connectedness fosters growth without smothering. "To care for another person, in the most significant sense, is to help him grow and actualize himself." (Mayerhoff, 1971, p. 1) When two people choose to connect with each other in an authentic, honest way they are committing themselves to their own growth and that of the other. Thus, love of another fosters growth for the individuals and the relationship.

Growth is facilitated by care for the other and for one's self. Self acceptance provides an environment that offers the conscientious person a maturing, nourishing environment in which to grow. She can thus make choices of values and ideals based on her own experiences rather than trying to conform to what she believes is expected of her. In addition, having made these choices freely for herself, she is able and willing to take responsibility for them.

If it is to be growth oriented, the commitment that each makes to the other needs to be without imposition of style and moral values, without molding the other to some expected form of behavior, and without stifling the other's pleasures even when they may be different from one's own. The commitment that one makes to another is a gift rather than an imposition,

expectation, or prison. "In helping the other to grow I do not impose my own direction; rather, I allow the direction of the other's growth to guide what I do, to help determine how I am to respond and what is relevant to such responses." (Mayerhoff, 1971, p. 5) Paradoxically the ability of the conscientious couple to make commitments assists them in this process, yet their very conscientiousness may get in the way, as they sometimes stifle the other under a heavy burden of expectations.

### 3. Working at the Relationship

Commitment in a relationship cannot continue without constant affirmation, renewal, and input of energy. The commitment of energy to the relationship must be actively sought and affirmed. The helping relationship influences "the quality of life of the marital partners," (Burke and Weir, 1977, p. 924) and when left unattended the commitment of the couple suffers and fades.

The conscientious partners can at times become so self-absorbed that each fails to see the other as a separate and unique individual. Satir points out that "every interaction between two people has a powerful impact on the respective worth of each and on what happens between them." (Gilbert, 1976, p. 226) In order for a sense of self-affirmation to occur each partner must actively seek to participate in dynamic interactions. It is important that the partners agree upon a form of communication and commitment that affirms their self-esteem in approaching interpersonal conflict.

#### 4. Blocks to Connectedness

The conscientious couple may fail to achieve connectedness through a failure to look within, through self-preoccupation, through excessive moralism, and through an inability to risk.

##### a. Failure to look within

One way the conscientious couple fails to connect with each other is to look for solutions outside of their relationship rather than from within. As Don and Anna would face a problem, their own expectations of each other would get in the way of resolution. They found it difficult to express their own needs, keeping them hidden. At the same time, each was telling the other that there was a right way to do something without hearing the other's needs. Getting connected involves letting go of expectations and yielding the self.

##### b. Self-preoccupation

A second inhibiting mode of the conscientious person is to be caught up in hyper-reflection. This is just as debilitating as looking for solutions outside of the self. The hyper-reflective mode is stifling and inhibits spontaneity and immediacy between the partners. While self-exploration is valuable,

there is a danger in these quests--the age-old problem of preoccupation with the self. It is as if a person is hypnotized while looking in a mirror. He focuses only on his image. He refuses to move, wanting more knowledge, more spirituality, more self. He is very conscious of the self. He is stuck. This demand for more self is not really self-exploration, it is going in circles. Self-awareness can turn into preoccupation with self. (McCarroll, 1974, p. 5)

The conscientious person thus faces a dilemma. On the one hand, self-exploration is valuable and rewarding for her in the intimate and spiritual dimensions of relationships. On the other hand, she must reach out if she is to connect with another. If she doesn't, and only looks inward, she and her partner will grow apart from each other as each becomes her own selfish pet.

c. Excessive morality

The conscientious person may carry morality to an extreme. Excessive playing of the 'brother's keeper' role may result in smothering of the other. The conscientious person feels so totally responsible for the other that she may in fact cut him off from his own growth and development. She may not allow him to go through his own pain. When this happens the conscientious person shows little respect for the integrity and individuality of her partner, implying the view that he has little ability to weather the storms of life. Such a person has developed no sense of the other's ability and has little faith in him. Maslow (1968) says of such individuals:

Not allowing people to go through their own pain and protecting them from it may turn out to be a kind of over-protection, which in turn implies a lack of respect for the integrity and the intrinsic nature and the future development of the individual. (p.8)

d. Inability to risk

Though there may be a sense of security for the individual in not taking risks, the conscientious person is also aware of the loss that this behavior invokes for him. She may be continuously troubled that there is some aspect of

her personality that she must keep hidden because it is so terrible that her significant other would surely reject her if it were disclosed. She may then try to find solutions outside herself by connecting with others, without ever 'meeting' herself. The conscientious person who is a romantic "acts as if she were incomplete--only with his partner can he become whole." (Sager, 1977, p. 87) The romantic looks to the other partner rather than to herself to complete her own sense of identity, and in the absence of the partner she experiences intense feelings of incompleteness. Thus the romantic has been unable to truly connect with herself or her partner in any deep and meaningfully lasting way.

The mathematics of romantic type interaction can be expressed as  $\frac{1}{2}$  plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  equals 1. In this equation neither partner has a separate identity. Each has the idea that 'the other makes me whole and without the other I am not anything.' While the conscientious person may participate in this style of interaction, its pain is compounded by her awareness that this approach is ultimately lonely.

#### D. SEXUAL BONDING FOR CONSCIENTIOUS COUPLES

Sexual bonding, as we have mentioned previously, serves to seal the relationship; it incorporates sensuality, and it potentially has a psychic impact. Compared to couples in other stages, the conscientious couple is likely in an especially strong way to experience sexual bonding as a seal. For them, the sensual function of sexual bonding may be weaker, however, and the psychic impact which is sexual bonding's potential will tend to be underdeveloped.



## 1. Sexual Bonding as a strong, conscientious seal

The conscientious couple want their sexual contact to be more than just sex. They want to experience feelings of love and caring with the other in a lasting way. Conscientiousness, by its very nature is most likely of all the stages to lead to enduring--though not necessarily happy--monogamous relationships. For the conscientious couple, sex is the expression of love through physical bonding. Sex serves to allow a direct contact between the two which strengthens the commitment and bonds the union of the two. The sexual encounter, experienced this way, makes real the strength of their relationship. "Sex can realize its highest potential as one of the most direct and meaningful expressions of love." (Frankl, 1975, p. 89).

While conscientious couples see each partner as a separate person, the relationship which their sexual bond seals is frequently based on long term goals related to what each thinks the relationship might or should be. This may in turn affect their perceptions of each other. The conscientious couple may have feelings of "I am my brother's keeper," and this may interfere with their ability to see the other as a separate, unique person. Thus their sexual bonding may involve one using the other. On the other hand it may affirm oneself and the other together. Generally, conscientious couples desire to relate to each other as unique human beings. They value the ability to express their love through sexual encounters. The sexual bond seals their relationship and commits each to the other.

They are aware of intimacy. With more clarity and crystallization than the previous stages, they see its outlines emerging in their relationship. They relate to each other with a new respect for the other's differences.

The physical union is valued as an expression of their love and intimacy. To Allen and Martin (1971), intimacy occurs "when emotion is joined to physical passion, and spirits as well as bodies are allowed to touch in affection and mutual affirmation." (p. 3) To experience a fullness and caring toward the self and the other, both physical and emotional components are necessary. The conscientious couple no longer identify their needs through group pressure, but feel more obligated to search within themselves and express the needs they find there.

## 2. The problems of being conscientiously sensual

For the committed couple caring is an integral part of the relationship. This strength, however, may also be a weakness. The conscientious person may be so committed to 'love, honor and respect' that he has problems with sexuality. The conscientious couple may be so concerned that the relationship work or that they stay together that they are unwilling to address the sexual problems that may occur. When the sexual contact disappears, the connectedness becomes empty. With the connectedness gone, the sexual contact in turn also becomes empty. When a couple relates without sexual contact, psychic affirmation of each other may be precluded. Passionate love then fails, and the couple take on a relationship comparable to that of siblings. The harm of such a relationship lies in the physical needs which a couple that choose to make a commitment to each other for a period of their adult lifetime fail to meet in ways that adequately affirm their love and caring for the other. Connectedness and bonding between individuals should help the couple accept their physical as well as their psychic selves.

For the conscientious couple there is a danger of being overly introspective about their sexual and sensual relationship. Over-scrutinizing the relationship will interfere with couple bonding, and is sometimes a way of keeping some distance both from one's true self and also from the other. A couple also can become preoccupied with the privacy needs of their own bodies to the extent that they are unable to share their physical and psychic needs with each other.

### 3. The psychic side of sex: underdeveloped

As a consequence of the conscientious partner's potential relative lack of sensual freedom, the psychic impact of the sexual bonding is not as great as in the later stages. She is preoccupied with her own self at times and this may interfere with her ability to stay in touch with her partner. When she searches for her own soul and identity, the search may become of paramount importance. At that point she may lose touch with the needs and desires her partner may be expressing. She may become preoccupied with her desire for achievement and the natural flow and exchange between the two may be lost. Since she is concerned with communication, this preoccupied state will generally not last for too long a period. The other is likely to confront her about this lack of communication in the relationship and each will feel the need to reconnect with the other.

### E. MUTUAL CREATIVITY IN THE CONSCIENTIOUS COUPLE

The goal orientation of the conscientious person tends to get in the way of truly experiencing the creative possibilities at hand. The

conscientious person is often too self-conscious to wholeheartedly join in potential mutual creativity. While the conscientious person will put in the required energy, the underdeveloped creative attitude compared to the autonomous or integrated couple will lead to a comparatively diminished response in excitement, intimacy and spirituality.

#### 1. Creative attitude

The conscientious person has an underdeveloped potential for creativity. An important task of this stage is to prepare the way for heightened creativity in the autonomous and integrated stages. The conscientious person is in the process of 'coming to herself,' and is laying the groundwork for creativity. In the move from the conformist stage to the conscientious stage, she achieves an ability for independent thought which is the catalyst for beginning the journey to creativity in the relationship. She must strengthen her ego in order to be fully creative and this is the time in the developmental process for that action. It is through the awareness of the self and the consciousness that the person can move to a more vital affinity with the universe.

The conscientious person can develop faith in her creative imagination at this time of development. As she explores herself and establishes a contact with those parts of herself that she enjoys and celebrates, she is more readily able to express her own creativity for herself and to share it with others. This stage is a time for her to find a personal strength and belief in her own creativity. Ideally the conscientious stage is a

springboard to life's potential. For some, however, the conscientious stage is a springboard that has lost its spring, for many remain here without the ego strength to develop further.

When in a long term relationship, the conscientious partner may feel that familiarity has bred contempt, and that monotony has replaced excitement. There may be a temptation to leave the familiar in favor of variety.

True familiarity, on the other hand, is forever fascinating because the human brain can, and does, meet any situation in an endless variety of ways. Children tend to display this wonderful creative responsiveness before parents teach them to be on guard against openness and transparency. (Broch, 1978, p. 35)

For the conscientious, their very conscientiousness may represent a guard against openness and transparency.

The conscientious person through self-reflection, concern, and the assumption of responsibility, is developing strength of character. A sense of this achieved strength can help her drop her guards against creativity. Through a sense of freedom from the group, and her personal strength, an enlargement and enhancement of creativity and enjoyment may occur.

Compared to the conformist, the conscientious person experiences less fear. The conscientious partner is less fearful of not conforming to the concepts of others regarding what is right and wrong. This allows a greater variety of ideas and spontaneity. Being creative

could be traced back to the relative absence of fear... they seemed to be less afraid of what other people would say or demand or laugh at...Perhaps more important, however was their lack of fear of their own insides, of their own impulses, emotions, thoughts. (Maslow, 1968, p. 140)

The conscientious partner is more likely to feel comfortable both with her own ideas and needs and also the realization that hers are separate from the other's. She is more willing to risk sharing these ideas with her partner. This is a necessary component of mutual creativity.

She finds that she is able to learn more and grow more when she is willing to struggle with the outcome of her mistakes. Together with her partner, she develops plans and goals for her relationship. She is willing to experiment with these new ideas. The willingness to learn from mistakes rather than seeing them as failures helps to propel her to more creative and exciting expression of thoughts.

She can distinguish and control attitudes. She sees that she is not at fault for her troubles all the time. As she finds herself more through self-exploration, she is more daring and creative in those areas of discovery of the world around her, realizing that not all discoveries are pleasant nor are they all her own doing.

## 2. Creative Effort

Work takes on a new dimension for the conscientious person. Work is not onerous for the conscientious, autonomous, or integrated persons. The conscientious person experiences a joy in achievement, and the autonomous and integrated experience joy in the actual doing. The joy makes the discipline, the attentiveness, and the patience much easier to achieve. For the conscientious person the danger lies in becoming too goal oriented.

She may lose sight of the purpose of her experience--enjoyment and self-fulfillment. But a genuine sharing between two conscientious people helps keep the purpose of the work experience in sight and there is a deepening of the relationship.

#### F. PEAK EXPERIENCE FOR THE CONSCIENTIOUS COUPLE

During the peak experience the person is fully integrated for the moment. She "may be regarded as temporarily healed." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 204). There is a sense of wholeness and unity with others.

Peak experience can occur for a person in two major ways.

First, it can occur by surprise, uninvited, a peak moment of growth which brings resolution to an experience of stress or crisis, a moment which then becomes focal in the reorganization of life that follows. For the Christian Apostle Paul, for instance, such a peak experience occurred as he travelled to Damascus. His experience was exceptionally vivid, including auditory and visual hallucinations and the experience of being blinded for the three days following. His experience followed stress and crisis, in which he suppressed his growing fascination with Christians by ever more energetically persecuting them. The result of the experience was positive personal growth and a radical life reorganization--he now became a leader, rather than a persecutor, of the Christians. Peak experience in this fashion can happen to persons at any stage of development.

There is a second way that peak experience can occur, and that is through the person's own seeking or openness to it. The conscientious person represents the first stage at which the possibility of invited--in distinction from uninvited--peak experience exists.

1. Capacity for invited peak experience

A number of changes affecting this potential for peak experience have occurred as the person enters the conscientious stage. First, peak experience for the conscientious person is affected by her developing ego, which includes a sense of responsibility, increased introspection, and growing self-confidence. The ego of the conscientious person is strong enough now to acknowledge differences in others and herself. This ego development of the conscientious person grows and encompasses more of the psychic which leads potentially to peak experience. Thus, the conscientious couple as well as the individual are more receptive to peak experience since they are more willing to take responsibility for their actions.

Second, the conscientious person relates to the group differently, realizing that the group no longer can provide all the support and knowledge that she needs to establish goals and ideals. Instead, there is an increased sense of self-respect and respect for others that she develops in her relationships.

Thirdly, the conscientious person has an expanded sense of awareness and control. She sees the different parts of the self, both the psychic and the physiological. The physical urges are perceived as possible exciting



experiences that she can act on, rather than actions which are in control of her. She finds that she can give more fully of herself in her sexual relationships and through this experience she is more able to share peak experiences with her partner.

Fourth, if her partner has a peak experience, she is willing to acknowledge and share in the experience.

These changes for the conscientious person lay the groundwork for the invited peak experience. Unlike persons in the later stages, however, the conscientious person experiences a number of areas of her life which interfere with complete openness to peak experiences, even as they draw the person on to such experiences.

## 2. Responsibility

Due to her increased preoccupation with her consciousness, the conscientious person takes on the role of 'brother's keeper.' This can be either a positive, supportive role, or a smothering and controlling one. In its positive mode, the role of brother's keeper, of taking responsibility for others, offers help and advice to the other while respecting his rights and ability to refuse that help.

In its negative mode, however, this role is a means of projecting one's own personal beliefs. It reduces the other's personal rights and responsibilities. It introduces the pejorative aspects of the relationship between parent and child. Such a parent tells the child what to do and when, without allowing the child to take risks and experience growing for herself. In such a mode the keeper smothers the chances for peak experience

of the kept, and the kept person participates in being smothered. Such a mode creates a crutch for the kept by not allowing him freedom to make his own choices and design his own life for the creative actions that will generate peak experiences. The keeper and the kept both want the same rules for others that they have for themselves. If either keeper or kept does not hold the value that illuminating experiences are positive, then they may be precluded from recognizing peak experiences.

By contrast, the conscientious person who turns responsibility toward herself can open the door to peak experience. When she consciously takes responsibility for her actions, she can accept having a peak experience and can openly own it. The peak experience can unite her responsibility and consciousness. "Being human is being conscious and being responsible, culminating in a synthesis of both" (Frankl, 1975, p. 60) This synthesis may even be remembered as a significant experience or turning point in her life.

### 3. Introspective Self-consciousness

The other major facet of the conscientious person is her consciousness. She has a growing awareness of her inner life. Her introspectiveness is necessary for openness to the peak experience. Through her own self-awareness, self-appreciation, and self-respect, she can appreciate and relate to the universe in toto. To Israel, (1971)

Self-respect is the first step toward spiritual understanding, for each person knows of himself at least a little, and once he can appreciate the grandeur of that isolated piece of mechanism, that small flame of consciousness, he can begin ever so timidly at first to divine the grandeur of the greater world outside himself. (p. 6)

Thus, for the conscientious person, appreciation of self becomes appreciation of multiple possibilities. She acquires an appreciation of an attentive viewpoint of her partner. This, in turn, leads to mutuality and a deepened relationship with the other.

The conscientious person will make it a priority to have new experiences and to seek out change within herself. Ultimately, experimentation with her own differences can expand her life base. As she sets priorities, she will begin to affirm the importance and validity of the peak experience. But without an awareness of the inner self, she will continue to be unable to have peak experiences except in a time of crisis.

Humility also develops through this inner search. The impact of the peak experience as an illuminating and powerful experience is magnified by humility and awe at the grandeur of the world.

For the conscientious and later stages, peak experience expresses self-hood. "Selfhood, in the domain of feeling, is expressed in the gratuitous joy and love that mystics have expressed throughout centuries." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 99). The conscientious person first begins to explore and know her own selfhood and then expands her awareness to the world at large. She then glimpses the potential for wholeness with others and within herself.

#### 4. Intellectualization

One drawback for the conscientious person is that in her excitement about understanding everything, she might not realize that the intellect cannot solve all problems. Through trying to solve all problems through

her intellect, she misses those intuitive and spontaneous resolutions that are always within all people. Some things cannot be solved truly any other way. "It is experience that matters: direct, personal perception that vibrates through the organism transforming perception and conduct." (Roszak, 1975, p. 243) A classic example of the conscientious person resolving problems this way is to make the statement, "show me the right way, I will follow." For her, intellectual understanding connotes some kind of rule that can be a guide.

## 5. Conflict

Conflict can lead the conscientious person to growth, which then can lead her to peak experience or higher stages of development. This experience brings about a sense of integration and fusion with the self and the world.

Fusion, inner unity, is obtained by means of 'friction,' by the struggle between 'yes' and 'no' in man. If man lives without inner struggle, if everything happens to him without opposition, if he goes wherever he is drawn or wherever the wind blows, he will remain such as he is. But if a struggle begins in him, and particularly if there is a definite line in this struggle, then, gradually, permanent traits begin to form themselves, he begins to crystallize. (P. D. Ouspenski, In Search of The Miraculous, quoted in Naranjo, 1974, pp. 185-186)

The conflicts experienced by the conscientious person are newfound struggles between control and expression, between urges and need, rules and her own moral understanding. The conscientious stage is a time of establishing self-directed standards and ideals. The conscientious individual is searching for her own conscious choices separate from an imposed style.

Some may respond to conflicts through asocial behavior, with rebellious action expressing repressed instincts. "But if the individual

has sufficient courage and stability to face an issue squarely...a solution of the conflict may develop spontaneously in the depths of the unconscious... its solution will be seen like a miracle." (Harding, 1963, pp. 9-10) When she endures and searches for the solution, her ego can maintain control over the breaking through of the repressed instincts, and a non-rebellious solution can be found.

She can miss the impact of peak experience when she is unwilling to open her life by discipline and listening to its internal messages.

Such, then, is the range of spirituality. It permeates all life, and is with us and in us right from the beginning. But it has to emerge from the shell of self-satisfaction if it is to direct our lives. (Israel, 1971, p. 6)

It is the strength of the consciousness in her central core that can lead a person to finding her spiritual quality.

#### 6. Self-confidence

The conscientious person feels in control of her own fate. This is a feeling less known in earlier stages. She is more open to being, and out of that comes positive action allowing the peak experience to change her life. For her grace is ever present. It merely must be tapped to be experienced. She can understand that when troubles control her, rather than the other way around, that is when she loses touch with the grace in her life. It is when she can break through this focus on being the trouble that grace can be realized. Through confronting her ego with the conflicts which occur, and listening to her true inner voice to guide her, rather than focusing on a problem being in control, the illumination

of the peak experience can follow her. "For, as a Buddhist would say, each of us is the living Buddha, and the experience of enlightenment is the one we are having right now, only we have not found it out." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 182) When she runs away from her problems, she is also running away from peak experience.

## VI. THE AUTONOMOUS COUPLE

The autonomous couple cherish individuality for each other. They recognize that conflict is a part of daily life and the human condition. A central characteristic of this stage is the ability to openly acknowledge, communicate, and deal with a conflict of desires. Each partner recognizes the other's need for autonomy, yet is aware of the limitations of that need.

### A. SCOT AND FERN

Scot and Fern have spent some time working out the complexities of their relationship. Fern works in the city during the week at a job that she finds personally stimulating and rewarding. She has a small apartment that she stays at during this time. On the weekend she returns to her home outside of the city where Scot stays with the children. Scot has a freelance business that he has set up in his home so that he can spend the evening with the children. Fern and Scot are committed to both finding careers that are advantageous and stimulating. Though their lifestyle may appear unusual to some of their neighbors, both Scot and Fern believed that their relationship did not require conventional behavior roles for the two of them to feel satisfied and rewarded. Each has an interest and desire to grow and develop.

Scot and Fern know that their relationship creates a certain level of ambiguity, so that when they meet on the weekend they take time to reconnect with the children and then have some time that they spend with each other to catch up on the events and concerns of the week. Scot and Fern both strive to express their feelings credibly, with candor, and with openness as they relate. They aspire to be objective to themselves and each other, and their goal is to relate realistically with each other. Each does this by sharing with the

other their real concerns and delights of the week. Since self-fulfillment is the goal of both Scot and Fern, their pleasure in the other's satisfaction adds to their own.

Scot's commitment to Fern and hers to him is based on finding that place in their life that is satisfying and rewarding without hampering the other. They want to maintain their relationship yet they recognize that each has different needs at this time in their life. Scot and Fern reaffirm their relationship sexually when they are together. The desire for sexual contact is directed toward one of affirming and declaring their affection to the other. A sexual high is no longer a necessary need for either. Their pleasure in their relationship comes from spending quiet moments together in the knowing ways that please each other which they have learned through the course of time.

#### B. COMMUNICATION FOR THE AUTONOMOUS COUPLE

Autonomous people have achieved a stage where the ingredients necessary for intimate communication are increasingly present. "Intimacy is possible only between real people whose minds and bodies and senses are tuned to the 'here and now' and who can relate to each other, 'I and Thou', with openness and honesty." (Allen and Martin, 1971, p. 95) From the conscientious stage the couple strived to communicate and be self aware. The autonomous couple now seek inner freedom and value their relationship as a treasured contact with another who knows them and is committed to them. The desire for open and honest communication with the other is paramount for the autonomous couple. They do not wish to spend time with games that are circuitous and time consuming. They value their contacts and wish to maximize those times together with their significant other.



## 1. Listening

Openness to the other takes on a new depth for the autonomous couple, a depth often like that discussed by Eastern philosophers. The autonomous couple is willing to listen in a different way than those in the previous stages. They are more open to hearing without anticipating and demanding. This creates a natural flow of energy between them. Neither demands or must hear what the other has to say, yet each wants to and is open and available to hear the other. Maslow (1968) describes this as perception.

Perception can be undemanding rather than demanding, contemplative rather than forceful. It can be humble before the experience, non-interfering, receiving rather than taking, it can let the perception be itself. (p. 86)

The autonomous person takes time to hear the other without trying to anticipate what they have to say or how they might react to a given situation. The autonomous person can even be supportive to her partner when her feelings are different from his. She recognizes differences and cherishes them.

## 2. Self-disclosure

For the autonomous persons in a relationship, communication makes a basic shift from the I-WE to the I-THOU through self-disclosure and letting go of the other. The autonomous person no longer feels a sense of ownership of the other and her desire for contact is achieved through a transparent disclosure to him. When she can let go of her expectations of her partner fulfilling certain roles and needs, and let him 'be,' then the relationship is based on truly honest communication. The autonomous person strives for this level of communication--

yet at times struggles with it.

A number of additional pre-requisites which are achieved in the autonomous stage enable communication to happen. Self-acceptance promotes self-disclosure and self-esteem. The autonomous person seeks to know and accept herself as she is in order to change and develop further. Tolbert McCarroll (1974) describes this when he says, "You must drink your own water, be it bitter or sweet. You must be yourself. If you want to change or grow, you have to accept where you are and be who you are." (p. 21) The autonomous person wants to know her partner as he is without imposing roles and expectations on him. The autonomous person, in contrast to the conscientious person, knows who she is and no longer feels so conscious of herself. She allows herself to be, and the other to be also.

The autonomous person has additional courage which is necessary for self-disclosure. "Not solely the courage to be, as Paul Tillich wrote of it, but the courage to be known, to be perceived by others as one knows himself to be." (Jourard, 1971, p. 7) When she is willing to share of herself, she will also find that she is able to know herself more fully through the process. She discovers through self-disclosure that when she is open others are also open. "Disclosure invites or begets disclosure." (Jourard, 1971, p. 14) Jourard found this to be so when he started to work with a different group of people than those he was trained to work with. When the autonomous person invites another to share himself with her each is more open. When she demands, however, that her partner share a part of his inner self, then he may become more reluctant for fear of what may be expected of him.

### 3. Respect

Autonomous people are capable of greater respect for others.

Because self-actualizing people ordinarily do not have to abstract need-gratifying qualities nor see the person as a tool, it is much more possible for them to take a non-valueing, non-judging, non-interfering, non-condemning attitude toward others, a desireless, a 'choiceless awareness.' (Maslow, 1968, p. 40)

The autonomous individual wishes to know the other, rather than just perpetuating her own images of what the other person should be. She seeks out the individuality and the uniqueness of others with a reciprocal benefit of knowing herself more truly.

Heightened awareness of her own aloneness makes the autonomous person even more desirous of connecting with others. The differences of each make the relationship of the autonomous couple a fascinating and miraculous exchange. Each becomes to the other a microcosm of the unique wonder of the world. The autonomous person sees the other and knows that she can be open and the other can share of himself, which in turn allows her the courage to connect with the world and the universe. The autonomous person can connect with another without feeling absorbed. She also has the courage to be alone with herself.

#### C. CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE AUTONOMOUS COUPLE

The autonomous person not only functions better alone, but forms deeper and more interesting relationships. This occurs for a number of reasons:

- The autonomous couple, with their greater sense of self-worth, is not as likely to be dependent on one another.
- The autonomous couple, with their greater level of comfort with each other, do not need to be smothering.

- With their greater desire to see and be seen for what they are, they can cherish more the uniqueness of the other.
- Mutuality, being enhanced, more readily translates to concern and caring.

#### 1. Self-worth and interdependence

Each partner communicates a sense of self-worth in the relationship. This personal self-worth provides the individual with an inner strength which she may draw upon for self-affirmation in times of adversity or stress. This in turn provides strength for continuing to develop and experience intimate relationships with others. Self-affirmed, the individual does not need to place such a large burden on her partner.

The partner who is intimate with himself communicates through his attitudes and behavior the message that he is responsible for himself and that the other person in a relationship is not taking on an unwanted burden. (Greenwald, 1975, p. 45)

The autonomous couple is most likely to be aware of and concerned with each other's separateness. The autonomous couple guard and cherish their own and others' individuality.

Self-worth enhances the autonomous couple's ability to be alone. Even intimate couples need breathing or recuperation space at times. This may differ for each partner, with each one setting his own limits for renewal through solitary times such as listening to music, reading a book, or working on some project by himself. Self-worth enables the partner not to take this time of renewal as a message of anger to the other partner.

Because of the greater sense of self-worth, the autonomous couple is not as dependent on each other as the conscientious couple. With the increasingly more realistic perception of self and others there develops a more genuine consideration of others. When the couple see each other as unique individuals and cherish this in the other, the desire and freedom for the long term relationship to develop and ensue is greater than at the previous levels.

## 2. Freedom from smothering

The autonomous person does not need to smother her partner. Unlike the conscientious person who merely tolerates differences, she cherishes individual differences. Each partner recognizes that there is a sadness and yet joy in separateness which can never be changed. Each thus accepts her separate self as she is, and her partner as he is.

While the conscientious person was prone to excessive moralism--the role of 'brother's keeper', the autonomous person recognizes that she cannot force the growth of the other. She will not place unreasonable demands on herself, nor will she help the other when she is unable to do so. The autonomous person will try to help when she has the ability or the skills, but is free from the feeling that she must have the answer and should help regardless of the situation. She is under no delusions of grandeur as to her ability to help, and under no delusions that others depend on her for happiness. She will not place ridiculous demands on the other to fulfill her needs. She will not make the other follow any pace but his own. The autonomous person does not wish to smother another, or to be smothered.

A related freedom is the discovery of the autonomous person that she can live with her own helplessness. When help is inappropriate, she is willing

to allow the other to experience his own pain. The conscientious person had difficulty extending this openness to another. Kopp (1976) describes this next step beyond being one's brother's keeper: "Love is more than simply being open to experiencing the anguish of another person's suffering. It is the willingness to live with the helpless, knowing that we can do nothing to save the other from his pain." (p. 23) When help is inappropriate or impossible the autonomous person can live with her helplessness. She is willing to allow the other to experience his pain.

The ability of the autonomous person to cherish and affirm differences enhances the positive connectedness of polarity. Polarities are those differences and opposites that add variety and vitality to the relationship. For the autonomous person, polarities are "the attractive fascination of differences, (which offer)...another key to intimacy." (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 163) The autonomous couple can make polarities work for them. Because they cherish individual differences they will not tire of the polarities nor need to smother them in the other person. A key to effective intimacy is that of needing time alone to develop and reaffirm personal identity. Thus reaffirmed, an individual can give more to the other. The polarity is enhanced. The autonomous person functions as a whole person and is not dependent on the other, rather being interdependent instead. As a consequence each partner has an individual identity and the relationship itself develops an identity. When one member of the relationship makes a decision or does something the couple knows that it is not a reflection on the other.

For persons in the earlier stages, the experience of polarity may be attraction to an opposite because she will make him feel whole or complete. For them, the opposite may be idealized as one who has or is everything that

the partner isn't. This attraction supports a dependent relationship rather than interdependent one. When the autonomous couple experience polarity, however, the meeting and connecting of two different people allows for a unique whole to occur. When "they open up toward one another, they cooperate with and affect one another, so as to create a new divine manifestation--in whatever form this may be." (Broch, 1970, p. 1) Joining their separateness to form a relationship, new and exciting experiences occur.

The autonomous person does experience a danger, however, of carrying autonomy to the opposite extreme. When this happens, freedom from smothering is misinterpreted to mean total independence. This results in the individual being lonely, without connections. Then there can be no benefit of the long term sexually bonded committed relationship for the autonomous person, and she loses her freedom through her loneliness.

Today's intimate revolutionaries usually ignore the 'we' concept. Unable to reach intimacy, they often try to convince themselves that they do not want any interdependence. Their cult is autonomy--independence carried to the extreme. (Bach and Deutsch, 1970, p. 25)

This carrying autonomy to the point of isolation is also somewhat verbalized in the wellknown Fritz Perls quote: "You do your thing, and I'll do mine; and if by chance we meet, it's beautiful; if not, it can't be helped."

In this situation each partner is so free to go her own way as she sees fit that neither partner wants or feels any responsibility toward the other. Each becomes comfortable with her own 'prison of loneliness' and each is afraid to leave this prison of her own making. No meeting or connectedness in an intimate or spiritual way takes place between the partners. Neither partner, fearing a rejection, risks reaching out to the other. Neither risks reaching deep within herself to find her own true identity.

While the autonomous person can fall into this danger, the truly autonomous person experiences it as a temporary phenomenon, a time of withdrawal to heal a wound, perhaps, but then to move on. Sooner or later, the autonomous

person who is comfortable with individuality, aloneness, or independence finds it is something she wishes to share--and the impulse to connectedness resumes.

### 3. Cherishing uniqueness

The autonomous person wants to be seen for who she is and to see others as they really are without placing her own needs and values on the other. Thus, the autonomous person cherishes the uniqueness and individuality of others. She also makes choices based on her own needs and seeks to accomplish them without having to use the other person to achieve her goals. The autonomous person determines her own environment rather than just reacting to it. Scot and Fern each felt a need to accomplish certain experiences in their lives, so they sought to work out an arrangement where each felt satisfied and yet each could support the other at the times he or she was able to. Scot liked working at home and being with the kids. He felt that the relationship was strong enough that the expected societal roles did not have to be imposed on their relationship. Fern wanted to continue her career and knew that it was the quality of the relationship that was important rather than the amount of time that she spent with her children or Scot.

### 4. Mutuality translated to concern and caring

Autonomy and maturity permit healthy intimate mutuality of equal partners. Sager (1977) describes this healthy mutuality of



two individuals in his description of equal partners:

The person who acts as an equal partner seeks a relationship on equal terms for himself and his partner. The equal partner expects that both will have the same rights, privileges, and obligations, without any overt or covert double-standard clauses. The equal partner expects each to be a complete person in his or her own right, largely self-activating, with his own work and emotionally interdependent with him or her. Consequently, each would respect the other's individuality, including weakness and fallibilities. (pp. 85-86)

Sager goes on to talk about the 'flow' that occurs between partners as one of maturity and acceptance, in which they are free of infantile urges and needs, yet able to be childlike and be taken care of, and also the parent who takes care of the other. His or her loveability is not dependent upon the other yet allows an interdependence to ensue. The equal partner will be relatively free of competitiveness with her partner. Though this relationship is neither passive nor possessive, there is a strong commitment by both partners to the other. Mutuality leads to unity, and bridges the gap between duality and unity. The autonomous person respects the other's individuality and is responsive to his needs.

Because of this, the autonomous and integrated couples are better able to care for others than persons in the previous stages were. Caring requires that each have a deep knowledge of the other, and such knowledge is not created by 'good intentions' alone. As an individual's conceptual complexity and openness increases to the level of the autonomous stage, the individual is better able to care for others. Caring for another is more possible when each is a whole person. Hidden agendas and judging of others do not get in the way of caring for the other for the autonomous and integrated persons. Caring fosters growth and unity of the relationship. When the basis of the relationship is not the values and expectations of the couple, but rather the desire of each person to be his true self, then the relationship becomes cherished and fosters growth for each other.

Caring is a necessary part of meeting, the process of coming together and uniting with another, since meeting in an intimate and spiritual way requires a capacity for concern. These elements are only likely to be present when the other person is seen as a whole person and the individual sees himself as a "more or less stabilized unit." (Ticho, 1974, p. 243) When these elements are present, however, a true meeting of the two, a connectedness, can occur.

#### D. SEXUAL BONDING OF THE AUTONOMOUS COUPLE

The Autonomous stage is the first to exhibit maturity in the encounter of one person to another. The Autonomous Couple has developed an appreciation of each other's uniqueness and therefore encounter each other rather than using each other. Viktor Frankl (1975) describes this maturity of the autonomous and integrated stages:

The mature individual's partnership moves on a human level, and the human level precludes the mere use of others. On the human level, I do not use another human being but I encounter him, which means that I fully recognize his humanness; and if I take another step by fully recognizing, beyond his humanness as a human being, his uniqueness as a person, it is even more than an encounter--what then takes place is love. (pp. 87-88)

Compared to couples in the previous stages, the autonomous couple has achieved a more relaxed sensuality. For the autonomous, the seal aspect of sexual bonding is a focal point of growth, and the autonomous couple is more aware of the seal between them. When the relationship is confronted with more difficulty than previously, the autonomous couple are more concerned with trying to find resolutions to the problems. While

this certainly does not mean an autonomous couple will never seek to separate, they are able to cope with and tolerate conflicting inner needs more easily.

1. Sensuality in Flower

The autonomous couple is free to accept the sex experience as a total body pleasure. For them the sexual experience is the "pleasure of the total body, the pleasure of holding and being held, of touching and being touched." (Kuten, 1976, p. 292). For the autonomous couple the sexual encounter is a solemn declaration to each other of their love and the shared psychic commitment that each has for the other. The autonomous couple give to each other a sensual mingling of caring affirmation, love, and respect for the other, to create a union of the two for a psychic thesaurus to be shared always.

Compared with previous stages, the autonomous couple is more comfortable with sex substitutes. The autonomous couple is more open to pleasuring each other in ways other than sexual intercourse. They are also less likely to demand sex in the fashion of the self-protective couple, expect it as with the conformist couple, or try to do it purely for the benefit of the other as with the conscientious couple. The comfort one has with sex and the need to depend on sex is based on the individual needs of the autonomous couple.

The autonomous couple have an increased appreciation of the polarities between them. The conscientious couple are first cognizant of these polarities, and as the individuals develop to further stages their appreciation of the differences increases. As couples draw closer together and take risks to share of themselves more openly they find their vulnerability to be apparent. Each

must be able to draw away and affirm his or her separateness in order that each may be refreshed and reinvigorated. Able to accept and be comfortable with her own separateness and that of her partner, the autonomous person can bond together more intensely with care and love for the other.

The differences nurtured in the space between potential lovers serves as a start to the relationship that they will share, and a spur to the conflicts that they will agonize over. The differences are a source of wonder and curiosity--and of the joy that comes from knowing another and being known. (Kuten, 1976, p. 292)

The experience of flow in the sexual relationship is one in which the partners are sensitive and responsive to the separate needs of each other. As the couple develops a wealth of knowledge of each other, they are given cues and responses that may direct them to offer support in a caring, loving, and responsive way. When individuals seek to be sensitive to those day to day needs and also the sexual needs, each feels nourished and grows from the exchange. A stronger bond is created between the partners.

## 2. Seal and Psyche

The autonomous couple is more comfortable with keeping conflict issues out of the way of sensuality and sexuality. In doing this they offer a stronger expression of the seal to each other. If there has been an anger-generating situation before the couple pursues sexual contact, the autonomous couple will seek to resolve it. The autonomous couples take more time simply to 'cuddle' with each other, without always ending with intercourse. For the most part, their sexual bonding resembles that of the Integrated couple, and this includes psychic impact.

## E. MUTUAL CREATIVITY

The autonomous person is freer of the oppressive demand of the conscience that is a primary concern of the conscientious person. She is also more able to enjoy experiences for their intrinsic joy. She is more concerned with self-fulfillment for both herself and her partner. She is more open to experiencing the 'here and now' rather than being tied to a goal orientation as the conscientious person is. As a result she is more likely to participate freely in mutual creativity--and mutual creativity is more likely to be all encompassing.

The mutual creativity that is experienced by the autonomous couple consists of two parts: inspiration and execution. The inspiration includes the dreams, the visions, the plans, and imagination of the couple as they share their life together. The execution is when the couple put their dreams into operational terms and then follow through with them. The effect of both the inspiration and execution is enhanced mutuality.

### 1. Creative Attitude

Creativity results from the autonomous person's greater wholeness. As she is more openly and willingly accepting of herself, she enjoys more imaginative and inventive levels of mutual creativity with her mate. Her creativity, no longer so goal oriented, may just focus on simple pleasures that take on an excitement to add vitality, life and energy to the relationship. Thus the autonomous couple share in the common and simple miracles with a renewed pleasure that brings a wholeness to the relationship. Maslow (1968) describes the impact of creativity on the relationship as an "epiphenomenon of their greater wholeness and integration, which is what self-acceptance implies." (p. 141)

The autonomous couple are more adventurous. They are willing to approach daily pleasures in an adventurous and exploring manner. When they take a walk in the woods they can become a part of the woods, so as to enjoy and delight in all the small wonders, a new flower poking its head from amongst the last fallen leaves, or a rivulet of water that has created a miniature waterfall over the hill that is covered with rocks and pebbles, and the joy of sharing the changing growth of the spring tree outside the window each day as the buds begin to open and form their flowers followed by the fresh tender green leaves. For the autonomous couple these simple delights are as important to their mutual creativity and experiencing as some major event.

The truly intimate couple are constantly open to the diversity of experience of their own responses that may occur to those situations that transpire on a daily basis. The truly creative person is one who communicates to keep the interest of her partner. She is the one who has something to say to the other and actively listens when she is spoken to. She and her partner have exciting ideas to shape and mold their life with plans for the future and the day. Creativity requires that she be able and willing to draw on all her past unconscious and even preconscious thoughts. It is when she no longer fears these thoughts that creativity will occur. With the ability to let go of imagined roles and behavior models, she can regress spontaneously to her creative desires without him governing her every action. Contact with the intimate self releases great energy for creativity. Greenwald states that:

Good contact with our Intimate Self and our Intimate Other provides enormous energy with which to relate to our world in a most satisfying, most meaningful and creative fashion. It provides us with the ability to experience great joy and excitement because of the limitless potential for self-discovery and growth and the increasing ability to function in the world. This is the optimal condition for fulfillment of our self and for living a meaningful, nourishing life. (Greenwald, 1975, p. 223)

She can also open up to creativity through her dreams. To focus on dreams is another way to reconnect with her whole life. The night dreams of a person are as important to the relationship as the visions and dreams of the waking. The dream of the sleeping person provides a message from the subconscious that is brought to the conscious mind. Dreams become the individual's private guru to the conscious dreams and visions that are shared with the other. "Dreams frequently point the way in which we could grow and develop. Through the dream, voices deep within us are brought to the surface. Our unconscious tells a story to the conscious self." (McCarroll, 1974, p. 51) This seed of enlightenment is a source not only for the autonomous individual, but also for each relationship to expand to its fullest potential.

She is more open to the self and actually seeks it out. As a result she is more open to the self's creative energies. If these energies are self-directed she asks the question of their purpose and their direction in life. Thus there is an interaction effect through which mutual creativity enhances individual identity. Aware of the self as the determiner of her own fate, she accepts responsibility for action or inaction. She takes more initiative knowing that her actions are not fruitless. Thus she will put her ideas into action and be the instrument of her own life.

## 2. Creative effort

Beginning with the conscientious stage and continuing through the autonomous and integrated stages, people are increasingly more open to their own and other's creative ideas and more likely to follow through on their ideas. As they become more aware of themselves, rather than external forces, as the initiators, they acknowledge their ideas more freely. They have more courage

to take risks, and to risk asking the question, 'will it fail, or will it work?'

Creative attitude combines with effort and risk taking to produce unique solutions to problems. Scot and Fern had developed a conflict over jobs and home location. They resolved the problem by creating two home locations and sharing the child care and their time together in nontraditional ways. The autonomous couple is more open to creating options that are unique for their own situation. The desire to be seen as needing autonomy and to see others in this way is characteristic of the autonomous couple. Because they see this separateness of others they tend to cherish their relationships. For Scot and Fern it was of paramount importance for the relationship to work in a way that was both satisfying and stimulating for both. A creative attitude helped them solve their problem; creative effort made their solution work.

The autonomous couple still struggles with role ambiguities. For the autonomous person, C. Sullivan, M. Grant and J. Grant (1957) suggest, "role ambiguities in himself may still arouse his anxieties. He may (wonder)...which is 'the real me'" (quoted by Loevinger, 1976, p. 107). This concept and concern with roles can create strife in the relationship and is an area that the couple struggles with.

Some spouses point out to their mates, "You can't have it both ways." When said to the husband, this may mean, "You can't expect me to work full time as well as cook, clean, and take care of your laundry as your mother did." Said to the wife it may mean, "You can't expect to compete with men and then pull that feminine-wives stuff." Why can't either want it both ways? Most people do. It does not mean we will be able to have it both ways, but the need and desire may be there. These are points for negotiation, considerate handling, and quid pro quo arrangements as the couple work together to establish their own modus vivendi. We are the products of our times, and consequently our struggle against parts of our familial and broader cultural heritage that we wish to change is necessarily an arduous one. (Sager, 1977, p. 98)



Self-trust provides the effort for mutual creativity. The autonomous couple has a vested interest in making a plan work, when the plan originates with the self. The couple are proud of the plan and the anticipated outcome. Because the plan is self-originated, the individual feels more comfortable with it. It fits.

The joy in the doing of a task brings with it a joy in the experience for the autonomous and integrated couple. Such joy in 'work' makes patience and discipline easier to utilize and implement.

The plan which originates with the self is thereby best suited to the self or the couple. The planner thus has a vested interest in making the plan work and in executing it.

When there is love both between people and toward the self, creativity and potentiality is encouraged and inspired. Each partner of the relationship invites the other to stretch and experience new visions and journeys. In the autonomous relationship, each partner knows that in order to experience life to its fullest she must reach for even those stars that are farthest away and encourage and support her partner to do the same. What we are or have been is no longer important when we seek to expand our creativity to share with the other. As each grows, she realizes that it is the process of growth that is crucial rather than the content of the experience. Only then can the couple truly experience the vital breath of life, the spiritual oneness with all.

### 3. Mutuality

When two autonomous persons become partners the creative attitude and energy between them is enhanced. The freedom to structure the relationship in many different ways adds the wealth of variety to mutual creativity. Some couples

may choose to live separately for a time, relating through visits, phone calls and letter communication. Other couples may choose to experiment with more communal living arrangements where the families can offer nourishment to each other, thereby creating a new extended family for support. "The criterion of a successful solution to marital and family relationship problems is not the appearance of the relationship, but rather the experience of freedom, conformation and growth on the part of the participants." (Jourard, 1971, p. 109) When the family can allow for mutual creativity to enter their relationship then the opportunity for growth to occur provides an exciting change in the possibilities of the relationship. The result is excitement, intimacy and spirituality.

## F. PEAK EXPERIENCE FOR THE AUTONOMOUS COUPLE

The autonomous person, being more open to the experience of complexity, is more open to true peak experience as contrasted with a mere 'high.' More tolerant of individual differences, she is more open to and accepting of the peak experiences of others. A consequence of this tolerance is that she is also more comfortable finding herself. Less encumbered with selfishness and a conscious preoccupation with the self, she is on a search for her true self.

Thus, in Taoist terms she is in "the first stage in the attainment of spiritual fullness" which is to become a 'true man,' only after which can she "become a 'universal man'." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 34)

This first stage requires a toleration of the ambiguities of self, others, and the world. It is a pulling in to gain comfort with the separateness of all persons in order to experience the oneness with all in the universe.

The autonomous stage carries a new interest in developing. The autonomous person is aware of conflicts and differences in contrast to the integrated person who has reconciled the differences. She is aware of the spiritual quality which begins with a search for knowledge of all that exists to be learned, and continues with a refining of that knowledge to discover what is constant and common to all mankind. She experiences spirituality not simply as activity, nor an ethereal feeling, but a search for the interconnection between all that is.

### 1. Facilitating Peak Experience for the Autonomous Person

As has been noted previously, peak experience will occur in two major ways--first, spontaneously, and secondly, as a result of processes consciously

undertaken with the search for peak experience in mind.

Spontaneous peak experiences for autonomous persons are likely at the point where conflicts resolve themselves. Recognizing conflict as part of the human condition, resolution of even mundane conflict takes on spiritual qualities. Such conflicts include not only those between the ego and the unconscious, but also those between mind and body, good and bad, selfishness and unity.

Our essential disunity is due to the fact that we interpret the world on two levels (rational vs. irrational, adult vs. child, conscious vs. unconscious, etc.) and our experience cannot change unless we allow ourselves to experience this dichotomy. For healing to take place, the wound must be exposed; for purification to occur, sin is necessary; for growth, immaturity; for totality, nothingness." (Naranjo, 1974, p. 160)

This dual nature of man thus contains intrinsic conflicts that each must explore and recognize for there to be growth.

Like the conscientious person, the autonomous person deals with each conflict as it comes along to receive some relief. For the autonomous person, too, at some point the experience of conflict and resolution may be so powerful that she is moved to her very central core. She may then be so opened up to the experience, and aware of it that she may be able to respond from her core more freely and openly thereafter. This experience may in fact be a peak experience for some. Conflict thus may be the source of energy that can lead to the peak experience for them. The autonomous person recognizes that the psychic tension of conflict is followed by a more open and courageous ability to face ambiguity and tension. With this recognition, the autonomous person can transfer the energy of psychic tension to the spiritual peak experience.

The autonomous person can also initiate processes which lead to peak experiences. Because of the positive place in her life created by spontaneous peak experiences, she has a high motivation for undertaking these processes. She

is more courageous in facing conflicts that develop. She is more willing to take a leap of faith toward new levels of maturity. She is more able to face conflict rather than ignore it or project it out to the environment. With her ability to express herself more vividly and with poignant humor she is more aware of the complex and exciting inner life that is conducive to peak experiences. She is also more receptive to the vividness of the peak experience.

She is also more aware of specific processes for achieving a peak experience than the conscientious person. This awareness is facilitated by her ability to view reality as multifaceted and complex, in contrast to the more polar conscientious way of thinking. Less willing to accept situations as either-or, she sees more alternatives and variables. She is interested in development. This propels her towards seeking identity through her work.

Thus she is willing to prepare herself to receive peak experience through such methods as meditation. Through the "practice of simple awareness in all the activities of daily life", (Naranjo, 1974, p. 102) her growth is expanded to an awareness of herself, her partner and the universe. This simple awareness alone will facilitate peak experiences. Combined with meditation which is a focused act of passivity, her level of receptivity to an experience which is illuminating, transcending, and reaches out to the universe is enhanced.

"Meditation is a deep passivity combined with awareness." (McCarroll, 1974, p. 106) It is the exploration of the inner self to facilitate stability and peacefulness with the world. To use meditation for preparing for peak experiences is to use it to unclutter the attic of the mind, which helps in turn in achieving a sense of realness and reality in life. The use of meditation to resolve or find solutions to conflict is a valuable tool even in interpersonal conflicts when talking to the partner will be ultimately required for resolution. Meditation allows for a high level of creativity to ensue, and for the optimum connection with the self which is necessary to resolve conflicts.

## 2. Consequences of Peak Experiences for the Autonomous Person

### a. Reaching out

A reaching out to others is characteristic of the autonomous person who has had an illuminating or peak experience. Though she is seeking her own self identity she is aware of and appreciates the interdependence of emotional relationships with others. When such things as the excitement of falling in love or an illuminating experience occurs in the previous stages there may be a reaction to tell the whole world, but the autonomous couple are more comfortable with a quiet recounting to significant others. Their orientation is not to smother people but to share with them and to hear each other openly and actively.

### b. The experience of wonder

For the autonomous person, peak experiences are illuminating and vivid. For persons in previous stages, the illuminating part of the peak experience is not always easy to 'grab ahold of.' For such persons, the ability to connect the illuminating quality of peak experience with everyday life has not occurred. For the autonomous person, peak experience allows her to see the wonder of common things. The autonomous person aspires to be realistic about both herself and others, and reality has no need to be hidden as its beauty shows through always. The eastern traditions describe this as the "art of union with reality" which "is an intense feeling of oneness." (Fromm, 1956, p. 67) This connection and wonder with the common things of everyday life illuminates the peak experience.

## Self-fulfillment

Because the nature of the autonomous person is to have self-fulfillment rather than achievement as the goal, she has the right mindset for peak experience. She will prepare for the peak experience by being in the here and now. She begins to think of living life well. This in turn will generate the peak experience and put her in the right mind for oneness and peacefulness.

There seems to be a kind of dynamic parallelism or isomorphism here between the inner and the outer. This is to say that as the essential Being of the world is perceived by the person, so also does he concurrently come closer to his own Being...this intrinsic effect seems to be in both directions...Each makes the other more possible...Perhaps this is what is meant by the fusion of lovers, the becoming one with the world in the cosmic experience, the feeling of being part of the unity one perceives in a great philosophical insight. (McCarroll, 1974, p. 95).

The paradox is apparent, the direction of universality is through knowing of oneself. To be receptive to the peak experience is to be concerned with self-fulfillment as opposed to achievement.

### 3. Peak Experience and Spirituality for the Autonomous Person

The autonomous person is aware of the developmental process, in which the search for the self is the quest. As a result of past experiences she proceeds with the idea of recognizing and acting on the peak experience. This personal growth is the action of the peak experience. "The birth of the divine child in man symbolizes the bursting of the light of truth in the human mind or the emergence of a spiritually transfigured personality."

(Naranjo, 1974, p. 80) Acting on the illumination of such peak experience, with the resulting personal growth, may catapult the individual to the integrated stage. "The travail of life and its bitter disappointment are to be seen as the path towards completion of the self, or integration of the personality; it is the road of self-discipline to enable man to serve the world and himself rather than merely to serve himself at the expense of the world." (Israel, 1971, p. 6) This illumination, then, is the path to the truly integrated person, one that is in tune with the universality of the world. Progress on this path is the action of the peak experience, the transcending quality that occurs out of the peak experience. Knowledge for the transcending aspect comes to the autonomous person from the unconscious to guide her to this universality. Through the expansion of the consciousness, without a preoccupation on selfishness or the intellect, but rather the inward journey itself, an awareness of the developmental process can be seen. Going on the inward journey can be seen as healing from a psychological viewpoint, and developmental from an education viewpoint. As consciousness expands, the individual has become more whole, more complete.

Just as the neurotic patient cannot reach out to form an I-You relationship until she is whole, so too the person in a conflict-ridden relationship is unable to reach out to form an I-You relationship with her partner. Intimacy and spirituality between two people is a dynamic dyad that allows each to expand their universe together. This relationship goes beyond that of someone to have as a bed partner and companion. There are more expanded horizons that the couple can experience.

There is in fact one more aspect, one more step for the true flow of intimacy to occur in the long term sexually bonded relationship. The



aspect of spirituality that exists for each of us when through meeting our partner a supreme level of intimacy can develop between the couple and they begin a journey together toward a spiritual life together. In order for this level of spirituality to occur there must exist a level of communication and friendship between the individuals that allows for a trust and sharing of innermost feelings to be exchanged. It is through time and communication that the partners develop a wealth of information and are able to use this information to support each other.

Traditionally this something to which human existence is directed has been described as religion. The spiritual quest has taken on the proportions of a religious quest to find inner strength, to find the meaning of our lives and those powerful forces that affect us. Carl Rogers describes the religion of the future:

But religion, to the extent that the term is used, will be that of tentatively held hypotheses which are lived out and corrected in the interpersonal world. Groups, probably much smaller than present day congregations, will wrestle with the ethical and moral and philosophical questions which are posed by the rapidly changing world. The individual will forge, with the support of the group, the stance he will take in the universe--a stance which he cannot regard as final, because more data will continually be coming in.

In the open questioning and honest struggle to face reality which exists in such a group, it is likely that a sense of true community will develop--a community based not on a common creed nor an unchanging ritual, but on the personalities of individuals who have become deeply related to one another as they attempt to comprehend, and to face as living men, the mysteries of existence. The religion of the future will be man's existential choice of his way of living in an unknown tomorrow--a choice made more bearable because formed in a community of individuals who are like-minded, but like-minded only in their searching. (McCarroll, 1974, pp. 189-190)

This future religion is a search by individuals who are committed to exploring their own growth and experiencing life to its fullest possible potential with the world.

## VII. THE INTEGRATED COUPLE

Abraham Maslow directed much of his work to describing the self-actualized individual and it is to such an individual that Loevinger refers her reader when she discusses the Integrated person. For this reason I shall present Maslow's description of the self-actualized individual:

They are independent of the fads, fashions, and prejudices of those around them. They lead individual lives, yet work efficiently and harmoniously with others. In other words they know when to conform and when not to. They are able to avoid the polarities of mass-living and anarchy. Furthermore, they are truly democratic, taking people for what they are in themselves irrespective of colour, race or class. They have a delightful sense of humour, being able to laugh philosophically at the vicissitudes of life and the absurdities inherent in it, including their own foibles. They possess considerable powers of discrimination and perception; they can detect humbug and cant, and are merely amused by pomposity and self-importance. They live in the moment and have a splendid awareness of present things. Thus they are able to concentrate well on the work at hand, and they dwell less on past regrets and future fears than others do. They also can form deep relationships because they can communicate easily. This is due to their self-awareness, freedom from personal fears, and philosophic sense of humour. The self-actualising person has good friends, but he is not interested in those superficial acquaintances that pass as friends in indiscriminating company. Such self-actualising people are a joy to know because they are creative, harmonious, intelligent, and understanding. They have no need to cast emotional burdens on others, nor do they assert themselves. (Israel, 1968, p. 9)

Isaacs (1956) presents a model of the Alpha level which is comparable with the Integrated stage. Unfortunately, the model is almost so 'nice' and perfect that it may leave one with the feeling that no one reaches the integrated stage. "The struggle toward individuality is over, since one's own and others' individuality is recognized...Freedom from the struggles and needs of earlier levels leaves the Alpha with a greater amount of affective warmth available and there is the ability to extend it with full appreciation for the individuality of the other person and with awareness of varying dimensions of the others' personality." (Quoted

by Loevinger, 1976, p. 113) In fact, there are integrated people in the world. They are not 'perfect' people that are out of touch with the real world, but in fact are very much aware of the difficulties as well as the joys of living.

#### A. FRANCES AND EARL

Frances and Earl are both older, with their children in college or trade schools. They live in a poor Black community in the South. They have been active in their church for many years and Earl is involved as the spearhead of the neighborhood community group.

Frances and Earl felt that education for their children was an important responsibility. Neither of them had completed their own schooling and they knew what a difficult time they had had finding work. Today their life seems relatively comfortable, similar to that of their neighbors and even better than that of some. They had raised four children and had encouraged and instilled in all of them the need for further education. The Bible was a primary source of reading material in their home and other books were read as they were acquired. The children grew up to explore further opportunities. Since their own children were now off in schools or had graduated, each of them worked with the local youth group to encourage other children to complete their education.

Frances is also very active in their church. She is looked up to as the wise woman of the community and many people consult with her at times of trouble or crisis. She is able to offer them support and suggestions.

Frances supports the pastor by visiting the shut-ins and helping with house visits to parishioners. She is able to respond to the individual needs of each person yet understands their interrelatedness with the whole community.

Frances had spent her early years of marriage raising her children, doing laundry and ironing for the town people. She was well liked and respected by these people even though this was not in the traditional patronizing style of the South she lived in. The community seemed to understand her wisdom and appreciate it.

The holidays were an important gathering time for the family. This was a time for the children who were away from home to return and celebrate together. Such reunions were viewed as important times to regroup and renourish each other. They were a time to share the events of time and to stay in touch with the values and beliefs of the family. Frequently the gatherings included non family members who joined the family for support and direction in lives that had sometimes turned wayward.

Earl was active also in the community neighborhood association. He had gone to several public meetings to persuade the town leaders to install certain programs for his neighborhood and to encourage them to look at the impact of proposed programs that were going to annex some of the black community's property to benefit the town. One such meeting was to encourage the town to look at their proposed city plan that would ultimately displace the neighborhood with new upper class housing. Earl valued the community he lived in. He knew that some day many of the people might choose to leave, however that was something that he felt should come from the neighborhood

rather than the town.

Earl had been a pilot behind the Big Brother program for boys who needed further guidance and direction. It was through this program that his own family reunions had included other people besides his own family members.

Earl and Frances were committed to their relationship. It was through sharing and respecting the other's opinion that they maintained this. They had long since developed a comfortable open and honest style of communicating with the other that recognized each other's separateness and ability to be creative. A mutual value they share is the family and the ties to the family. Each wanted the children to advance themselves yet to maintain the strong family values and beliefs. They felt good that they had been able to see this happen for their children and those of others they knew. For Earl and Frances the evenings were a special time to be together. They no longer felt the need to always do things together. They might read or do some quiet activity, able to share together the salient points of their readings. Earl and Frances had a natural flow of energy in their relationship that brought a wholeness and holiness to it. The intimate and spiritual flow was always apparent.

#### B. COMMUNICATION FOR THE INTEGRATED COUPLE

The integrated couple communicate using the techniques and style of the autonomous couple. They do have some unique characteristics of their own which will be presented here.

### 1. Communication in Depth

For the self-protective person, communication is difficult if not impossible beyond a superficial level. At the conscientious level communication is a preoccupation. For the integrated person communication is at an optimum without such a preoccupation. She finds it possible to communicate most effectively with individuals who are at any level, though she may not choose to do so. She is more sensitive to non-verbal cues and exercises this sensitivity with more ease than persons in other stages, since she is not so wrapped up in herself.

### 2. Appreciation of Paradox

The integrated couple have a deep appreciation for paradox and for the inadequacy of words to adequately convey meaning. For them, paradox helps to offer meaning and understanding where words do not convey the idea. Paradox addresses many levels and the integrated person finds new meanings with every communication. The integrated person utilizes paradox to find a middle ground or balance in a given situation.

### 3. Communication of Feelings

She deals with her anger through resolute action. She knows that the anger and hostility which plague many can only deteriorate her goals and purpose. Thus in the integrated couple she strives to know her anger and to express it openly without manipulating her partner to own it as his anger instead. As "aggression is necessary to reach a goal...hostility is a natural reaction to interference with the drive to reach a goal." (Allen and Martin,

1971, pp. 164-165). The integrated individual knows that anger and hostility can only debilitate the relationship when it is not shared and resolved.

#### 4. Lack of self-consciousness

A pre-requisite for communication is that of 'having one's self together'. This is achieved for the integrated person to the extent that the self no longer need get in the way.

We must enter into the center of ourselves and there we become no longer conscious of ourselves. The self-conscious person is indeed not a person who is studying himself too much but not enough. He prefers to stay at an early level of self-exploration instead of dropping deep within himself. As he begins to really hear himself he avoids the dramatic, the phony, the artificial, the mask--he becomes himself. He does not attempt to be anyone else. A man who is truly himself is not preoccupied with himself. (McCarroll, 1974, p. 6)

The integrated couple no longer worry about how they are perceived by the others. They know themselves. Each knows the other. They cherish their differences and ambiguities. They derive pleasure from uniqueness and what it offers to the relationship. They extend their communication to others in their universe. They offer a model of growth and development without forcing their style on anyone.

#### C. CONNECTEDNESS FOR THE INTEGRATED COUPLE

The integrated person is open to connecting with others as they truly are. True to herself, she can now be loved for who she is, as others can now see her as she is.

The integrated person sees and accepts both the good and the bad in herself and others. Doing this, she then truly owns responsibility for all her actions. The integrated individual has a desire to know and to respect both the good and the evil in herself. There is a freedom and responsibility felt by the integrated person when she chooses not to say or act on negative feelings that might hurt another. Thus when she feels a negative impulse she is willing to control that feeling. Her willingness to exercise this control is different than that which stems from superstitious anxiety or manipulation of the situation. She recognizes that there are two sides to being understanding and sensitive to others: that of loving goodness and the power of controlling evil. Thus, when the integrated couple choose to be committed and connected to each other they do so from the perspective of a choice that is not manipulative and negative towards the other.

The integrated couple more openly express to each other the negative emotions that are experienced by all people. They are able to put out their negative feelings and let a resolution follow. They have gone substantially beyond the point of carrying their feelings within them, seething and festering to be thrown out at the other at a time of rage. The expression of negative feelings at the time of their occurrence allows the couple to continue their relationship and to build on it openly and honestly. Their desire for self-disclosure through honest communication increases the connectedness between the couple. When Earl and Frances are aware of negative feelings between each other they discuss those feelings with an awareness of their impact on their total life and the family around them. They are cognizant of the impact which withholding those feelings would have and choose not to



let their anger seethe or impact on their day-to-day interactions.

Both Frances and Earl are aware of their responsibility to themselves.

They know that their self-disclosure of both negative and positive feelings in a caring and supportive way builds their relationship.

If an individual is to grow, she must be willing to accept herself first. She must be willing to accept the 'good and the bad' in order to be in harmony with herself. Self-acceptance, in effect, is a blueprint for further growth.

Knowing the state into which you can grow, into which you must eventually grow, because this is your innate destiny, is important. It is the blueprint without which you cannot steer your ship. But there is a subtle and yet distinct difference on the other hand, between this model that beckons, and forceful attempt to be what you have not yet organically grown into, on the other. If you recognize the model without forcing yourself you accept your human state. You know that by virtue of your humanness you cannot immediately be the ideal, totally fused individual. You know that it takes a long time, much experience, many lessons, many trials and errors, untold incarnations until your soul substance has emerged to become this whole being. You need to know that such a state exists, even if you are still quite unable to experience it. You need to know it without self-pressure, without self-moralizing, without discouragement. (Broch, 1978, p. 6)

The integrated couple will be that couple most likely to grow, because the integrated couple accepts themselves as they are.

By unconditional self-acceptance, they are able to affirm each other. This allows them to seek meaningful interactions in the relationship. They seek to pursue meaningful communication, and expanded mutual creativity, through a strong connectedness with each other which results in more frequent peak experiences with the other. The integrated person lives each moment more fully, as if death is continuously peering over her shoulder. Kopp (1976) describes this state thusly: "The central fact of my own life is my death...Whenever I have the courage to face this, my priorities become

clear. At such times nothing is done in order to achieve something else. No energy is wasted on maintaining illusions...the imminence of my own death...makes what is going on now all that counts...(p. 42)

The desire to live each moment in the present requires the integrated couple to continually affirm their connection with the other through their communication and actions. Earl and Frances do this in the daily nonverbal communications that say they care for the other and that they respect the other. The integrated couple will not always achieve the goal of living each moment, but they will be aware of it and come closest to this ideal.

Self-acceptance provides one a caring, nourishing environment in which to mature and grow. In this environment the integrated person is able to make choices of values and ideals based on her experiences rather than trying to conform to what she believes is expected of her. Further, making choices freely for herself, she is able and willing to take responsibility for them.

In addition, self-acceptance for oneself allows for caring of another human being and in the intimate relationship provides an environment of growth for the other and the relationship as well.

To help another person to grow is at least to help him to care for something or someone apart from himself, and it involves encouraging and assisting him to find and create areas of his own in which he is able to care. Also, it is to help that other person to come to care for himself, and by becoming responsive to his own need to care to become responsible for his own life. (Mayerhoff, 1971, p. 7)

When she has a strong sense of self-acceptance, she is able to care for another individual. Thus caring for another person becomes an extension of her own ideas. Self-acceptance leads to caring for the other which in turn leads to growth of the other and the relationship.

The integrated person is not preoccupied with the self as the conscientious person is. Nor is the integrated individual concerned with asserting her independence and freedom as the autonomous person is. She is able to let things go and wait for their return if they are to return.

If you really want something badly enough  
you've got to let it go free.  
And if it comes back to you, it's really yours  
If it doesn't...you never had it anyway.

#### D. SEXUAL BONDING IN THE INTEGRATED COUPLE

The integrated couple combine the conscientious couple's comfort with the relationship's seal, and the autonomous couple's comfort with sensual flow with greater levels of psychic impact in their sexual bonding.

While the process of growing up results in the restructuring of sexuality from the whole body to focus on the genitals (Kuten, 1976, p.290) enhancement of sensuality results in some global pleasure return. The narrowing of this focus is seen in the progression of stages through the conscientious. When the autonomous person begins to search for self-identity, the focus of sensual pleasuring again expands. Sexuality acquires more depth. The integrated couple view sex not just as genitally related but as including the whole sensual interaction and being a matter of great import and pleasure.

Spirituality expands the interaction in the relationship. Sensuality through meditation leads to wholeness in the relationship. Intimacy and spirituality are enhanced by doing something physical. "To have a greater sense of the forces within our bodies and to bring these forces into harmony, movement as meditation or as preparation to meditation plays an important

role..." (McCarroll, 1974, p. 104). These forces such as 'energy flow' between the couple increase their pleasure with life and each other. At the point of true flow, goals are completely discarded. "Through Transcendental Sex, you reach flow not by trying or by setting goals, but through meditative exercises and suggestions that help you discard goals altogether." (Gillies, 1978, p. 201) This allows for a flowing sexual experience that is not encumbered with expectations and ideas of how it should be. It allows the couple to truly experience what may happen in the sexual and sensual encounter.

#### 1. The Psychic Impact of Integrated Sexual Bonding

For the integrated couple the sexual encounter begins to come together with the most in-depth aspects of life. This does not mean that their sexual interaction may necessarily change but that their understanding and appreciation of the flow of energy between them will be vital and comfortable.

Individual men and women need to understand the enormous importance of the wholeness of love, eros, and sex; of affection and respect; of tenderness and passion; of trust and mutual partnership; of sharing and helping each other. It must be understood that the committed relationship is not a moralized edit that deprives you of pleasure...It must be understood that the power current evoked through a fusion between love, respect, passion and sexuality is infinitely more ecstatic than any casual fusion could ever be." (Broch, 1978, p. 251/6)

The integrated couple are concerned not only with their intimate relationship but they also share a mutual concern for the world at large. Their relating to each other is a matter of choice and they are not tied to the fantasies and images of the previous stages. The intensity and vibrancy of the relationship therefore surpasses previous stages, when each is totally

open to the other without expectations or demand. The integrated couple know that to state their needs diminishes the risk of rejection and remorseful feelings between them. It is at this time that the two are truly meeting each other from their central core, which is the spiritual core of all man. This is truly a psychic nuclear point that is a deeply spiritual experience for the two.

The energy released, the creativity liberated, the mutuality of ecstasy--these are deeply spiritual experiences, in through, and with God. Divine sexuality must be recognized in the New Age. It is neither to be found in the old taboos and denials, nor in the moralizing judgement about this creative force; nor is it to be found in the deviations that occur by necessity as a result of incomplete development. The explosive force of the male/female tension and its release mechanism permeates the total personality and transcends the finite. It truly spiritualizes the body and materializes the spirit, which is the task of evolution. (Broch, 1978, p. 251/6)

The integrated couple are most able to progress from intimacy to the spiritual; or from the genital to the symbiotic; because they are most in touch with both the psychic and the physical selves and most in touch with the total self--the self as a whole.

#### E. MUTUAL CREATIVITY

Mutual creativity for the integrated couple will generally involve everything that existed for the autonomous couple, and more. The major difference relates to the fact that the autonomous couple, still in the process of gaining inner strength, is preoccupied with the process; the integrated couple having passed through that stage, resolves the experience of conflict without being absorbed in the process.

As a result, for the integrated couple more than any other, the experience of mutual creativity becomes virtually indistinguishable from the experience of peak experience.

## 1. Creative Attitude

The integrated person has outgrown the need for certainty in life. For persons in previous stages, the need to know and feel secure was a constant part of relating. For the integrated person the knowing and security comes from the self entirely. She has in fact a clear and strong identity. No longer can external certainty offer her a foundation and security. She knows for herself what is and what isn't or can't be. She cherishes the ambiguities and individualities of her partner, yet is aware of the potential of inspiration coming from him.

As the integrated couple have established a strong identity, they no longer need others' affirmation that they are whole, for they know their wholeness. This is not to say that they do not want to hear affirming thoughts, only that their life does not hinge on them. The integrated person is no longer dependent on conforming to the imagined rules of society and at this stage she chooses freely to respond to those situations that she wants to. She is free to respond to those dreams and visions that she desires. She is more open to flowing with the superconscious messages that occur to all people whether or not responded to. The superconscious offers a host of inspirations and illuminating messages. Israel (1968) describes the superconscious in this way: "the impulses of the superconsciousness are spontaneous and unexpected. They break into consciousness suddenly as intuition, inspiration, illumination, creative imaging, compassion and love (not merely personal, but also universal.) (p. 6). This spontaneous breakthrough is uninhibited, effortless, and free of stereotypes or self-imposed expectations. It is the mutual creativity to reach out and connect with others and the universe. Unhampered by criticalness and expectations, the individual connects with the world through an I-Thou relationship.

## 2. Creative Effort

Creativity is dependent on an inner integration of the individual. Each person in the relationship becomes a guide to the other, fostering growth and a communion with all. "To the extent that creativeness is constructive, synthesizing, unifying and integrative, to that extent does it in part depend on the inner integration of the person." (Maslow, 1968, p. 140) The integrated couple do not need to take power away from each other but rather through their mutually creative efforts they give power back to the other. When a person is truly integrated, she no longer needs to esteem herself from another source but through self-responsibility can offer caring and nourishing.

## 3. Results of mutual creativity

Mutual creativity is an unending process of discovery and growth. Through this growth we find the true meaning of intimacy and spirituality with another.

Intimacy is an unending process of discovery and growth in ourselves and in the life we build with our Intimate Other. It involves a process of separate nourishment and mutual nourishment. The more we nourish ourselves, the more nourishment we have available to give to our Intimate Other. Similarly, Creative Intimacy leads to growing awareness and acceptance of our separate selves and each other as we are. (Greenwald, 1975, p. 29)

Thus an expandable and secure excitement continues for the integrated couple beyond their own relationship to that of relating with the universe.

## F. PEAK EXPERIENCE FOR THE INTEGRATED COUPLE

### 1. Peak Experience is Enhanced by the Qualities of the Integrated Person

The integrated person transcends some of the conflicts of the autonomous stage. She also cherishes the individuality of others. She is reconciled to inner conflicts rather than simply coping with them, though she has a need to continue working on her growth. Mayerhoff (1971) describes the integrated perspective when he states:

No one else can give me the meaning of my life; it is something I alone can make. The meaning is not something predetermined which simply unfolds; I help both to create it and to discover it, and this is a continuing process, not a once-and-for-all." (p. 45)

For the integrated person, there is a renunciation of the unattainable. "The loss of illusions and the discovery of identity, though painful at first, can be ultimately exhilarating and strengthening." (Maslow, 1968, p. 16) For the integrated, finding comes from living one day at a time or for the moment rather than seeking. Seeking for her has become a search through blindness and only creates a tunnel vision which precludes the ability to see the way. She finds more growth with being. This is a paradox: being leads to finding, and seeking does not. Through this way of living, she is able to accept those things that cannot be changed and enjoy them.

Though the integrated person is no longer seeking herself, she does not always know herself. She has established an identity but recognizes there is more to know. Without always being on a search or voyage, she journeys one day at a time with her partner to find those parts that will add vitality to life. Thus she moves from a search for self to a search for meaning in life. (Frankl, 1975, p. 79) Individuation for her is the journey to reach completeness within,



that allows her to be. This requires discipline and a willingness to risk finding even the painful parts of herself, which when confronted can lead to wholeness. The journey can be long and rough at times, or like a breath of fresh air at other times. When each person brings a unique newness to the relationship, then the journey can and may go more smoothly at times.

With an established and integrated identity and a full sense of the self, she is more open and in touch with the spiritual qualities of life. Through the greater awareness of the self and the relation to the universe, the openness to peak experiences follows naturally.

The person that has accepted her own identity can reach out through an extension of her own hand to that of the universe to help others. "But self-esteem is worthless except in the context of a living community. On a desert island even all the world's wealth is valueless to the solitary inhabitant. It is in the sharing of the gift, in the communication of knowledge, and in the irradiation of the being of the person, that the self becomes a priceless object." (Israel, 1971, p. 6) The couples' level of mutual creativity is thus externally oriented to the universe. They receive their nourishment from the action toward the community. Thus the integrated person is one that lives in the present, fully conscious, with a concern and dignity for herself and others. She is open to seeing what may come and looks to others to help her grow. For the integrated person, mutual creativity merges with the peak experience. "The body can be known introspectively as well as objectively, rhapsodically as well as analytically. And known from within, it is a magical instrument, a visionary resource." (Roszak, 1975, p. 255)

Peak experiences are with the integrated person more often, almost constantly.

The self-search recedes and becomes replaced by an I-Thou relation with others. Things are no longer seen as good or bad, right or wrong, but as natural. The integrated person can reach out to others and does not need them to respond or to respond in the same way. She lives in the here and now, being fully conscious and all embracingly aware of the wonder of everyday life. She is aware of ambiguities and appreciates them, rather than fighting against them. There is a fusion or spiritual quality which is all embracing within the self. The integrated person is truly human. She has found the search for meaning rather than the search for self. She has transcended this self-search and is no longer self-conscious. Grace has become a part of her life rather than just a matter of fleeting moments. "Man can attain health and fullest personal development only insofar as he gains courage to be himself with others and when he finds goals that have meaning for him--including the reshaping of society so it is fit for all to live and grow in." (Jourard, 1971, p. ix)

## 2. Fusion

Fusion or oneness with the universe is a noological experience for the integrated person. This is the spiritual quality of the peak experience that is shared by all yet it is most apparent with the integrated person. With the noological quality the integrated person recognizes that there is some force that is more powerful and that will lead one along the path. One sees this force in all people and is aware of the oneness of all.

the noological quality the integrated person recognizes that there is some force that is more powerful and that will lead one along the path. One sees this force in all people and is aware of the oneness of all.

In the eclipse of God, we have no place to begin but with ourselves. Within ourselves. All we have lost in the course of becoming this torn and tormented creature called modern man--the visionary energies, the discipline of the sacred--we discover again in the depths of our identity. There or not at all. We tunnel our way home through the floor of the mind, through that uncharted Self which is our other and inward universe." (Roszak, 1975, p. 19)

For in this day the essence of God is not to be found in the three planes of heaven, earth, and hell. We have abandoned that concept to be replaced by what? That of knowing noologically that God is the central energy core in all man.

Self-transcending lends itself to seeing things as a whole. Ultimately it leads to the resolution of ambiguity.

There are times when a greater reality of self is revealed to us. It is, as it were, for a moment that the enclosed, isolated personal self, so aware of its separation, opens out to reveal something far greater than itself. It becomes luminous, extensive, all-embracing yet free. The sense of separation has changed into one of intimate communion with all other selves, and yet the identity of the self is clearer and more beautiful than ever. This is the experience of the Higher Self, also called the Spiritual Self, or the Transpersonal Self. It is the heart of mysticism, and the aim of the mystic journey is to discover the true Self and learn of its relationship with the universe and with God. (Israel, 1968, p. 7)

The integrated person transcends worldly things to discover the beauty that has existed always for her to partake of. With a new age she celebrates the unadorned, simple, common joy of living. She

seeks not to amass unnecessary wealth but rather to enjoy those treasures that are plentiful for all. This is a time for a new look at the priorities that have plagued people and to subscribe to an old way that has been a part of the spiritual path of old.

The impact of spirituality on intimacy and the relationship is that of knowing the other through the I-Thou connection. The wholeness and beauty of the other is realized. It is enlarged to include the entire universe in view. In the I-Thou relationship, she is fully and wholly present and alive, and intensely involved. In order to wholly prevent risks, they are necessarily taken; there is no possibility of hiding. One addresses and is addressed by the person's substance or core or true self. Both persons in the I-Thou relationship are participants, not observers, and each partner is affected and changed by the experience. The relationship cannot be either ordered or planned; one can only open one's self to being addressed. In order for this to happen, the person must have achieved a certain inner unity and maturity. The integrated person's way of addressing another is one of increasing humility. "The awareness that is the key to spiritual growth finds its final development in human relationships. It is in the participation in relationships that one's own identity becomes more fully revealed to one, and that the Spirit becomes fully experienced." (Israel, 1975, p. 12)

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