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NEVER LET THE PAST RUIN THE FUTURE

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(Conference)

I think it would be interesting to review some of the things that might have caught my attention in my almost 67 years of working with people with problems. Well... problems are a fairly common phenomenon. Most people have a few as they go through life. Some feel they have more than they should, and in modern times, we can say more broadly that the whole world has problems, but there really has to be a reason for all of this. And one of the reasons is that almost all of us have to learn by experience. No matter how much good advice we receive, we still want to do things our own way. And sometimes we get it right, and that's fine. But often our way isn't the best, and after we've made a serious mistake, our next problem is trying to shift the blame onto someone else. This is quite normal, and with its success, you can find someone who can seemingly be considered responsible. If all else fails and no one is available, we have to cast our burden on the Lord. Actually, when you start to study it, you begin to realize what it's all about. All these problems and responsibilities we face are necessary for personal growth. Unless some problem arises along the way, the average person will never become mature. They will continue living in a fool's paradise unless something happens that conclusively demonstrates the need for more intelligence, more energy, more strength, and a clearer vision than they possess. So almost all learning, all growth, is an effort to become more comfortable in a world of countless discomforts. So let's try to see what this is all about.

Now, of course, some of the biggest mistakes we make are made when we are least informed about life—that is, in childhood and early adulthood. Without experience, without a foundation for dealing with life's realities, we make decisions that can influence our entire lives, and we have very little overall frame of reference from which to make those decisions. Of course, people, theoretically young people, are supposed to

turn to their elders for guidance. This is becoming less and less common nowadays, and in reality, the elder isn't necessarily in a much better position, because they too were unable to turn to their elders when they were growing up. We have a chain reaction of immaturity trying to adapt to the challenge of existence. So we have to try to figure out what we can do about all this, and we begin to study life's problems and find that dispositions and temperaments have their origins in several different potential sources. There is a popular belief that we inherit various dispositional tendencies. Whether this is true remains a matter of debate. Some think that we do not inherit these attitudes but that we inherit bodies in which chemical function produces these attitudes and continues to do so generation after generation.

We also hold the belief that, in one way or another, the individual brings to life some kind of record, a certain understanding and knowledge from a previous incarnation. This general attitude is now held by a large number of progressive thinkers, who feel that we are here to fulfill a law of karma. For most people, the law of karma is simply retribution. In fact, the Sanskrit term is just as justified as forward progress in both happy and unhappy circumstances. But the problem with karma has a weakness that we are only now beginning to notice. And that is that it is not

It's possible that an individual brings a lesson into their present life based entirely on past existences. Because at the time they created karma, they were living in a different kind of world. The problems we face today were unknown back in the time of the Caesars. No one was worried about computers. Back in the Middle Ages of the Crusades, no one really cared much about television. These blessings came later.

So we come into this world perhaps carrying a certain wisdom that has universal meaning, but we aren't prepared from the past for the exact situations of the moment. We therefore have to take certain basic characteristics of integrity and insight and try to apply them to circumstances that have never existed before for us. This creates a problem that, again, is somewhat difficult to adapt to. There are also many who believe

that some of our problems arise before we are born, that the unborn child is already being shaped by the world they are about to enter. If this is true, it could explain why almost all children come into the world crying. If they've already had a taste of what's to come, I don't blame them.

On the other hand, a great many people have a good experience. Many people feel well treated. A large number of people grow up in a pleasant family environment. But there is still a large mass in the world who have not had proper protection during their childhood. Their parents have not done what they should have done, either because they themselves didn't know what to do, or if they did know, they found a way to avoid the responsibility.

So we arrive here with all our burdens and difficulties. The most common difficulty we have stemming from the past is neurosis. A person who grows up is fortunate if they reach maturity without being hurt in any way, and fortunate if they haven't been disillusioned by anything. If they haven't already found this world a very difficult place to live.

And as a result of a series of events, he begins to develop a neurotic tendency. He may have been born into a family that broke up shortly after his birth, and he was raised by a single parent. This could not have been avoided, but it remains a fundamental cause of neurosis.

As it progresses, a single mother's household may require considerable neglect of her needs and goals. She is forced to take a secondary role in relation to income and finances. All of these things become deeply ingrained in her nature and remain there as a series of pessimistic attitudes and gloomy thoughts. When various events occur, the individual relapses into some of these experiences to explain her current problems and prevailing weaknesses. Thus, the problem of neurotic tendencies is almost always associated with incidents that occurred early in life, containing elements that are considered unfair, unreasonable, or beyond her capacity to accept and understand.

Let's take, for example, the broken home syndrome, which is now extremely common. To assume that this means nothing to a child during their development is self-deception. I see many people in their sixties and seventies who have the most bitter reflections on their first ten years of life. They blame most of the failures they have experienced on the lack of companionship, support, and understanding, the perception and affection they missed in their early years. It might seem that these things are only transitory, but if an individual is given a proper upbringing along with food, shelter, and clothing, they should be grateful for this, but there is more to it than that. Maturity requires the development of affection. Personal relationships require overcoming challenges, appreciation, interest, and significance, and some gentle but firm guidance throughout the early years. So if all of this is not present, the person will find herself in a predicament. Beside her, belonging to another generation, is the person responsible for this situation. A person who found herself in a broken home or was trapped in one. Someone who had to go out and earn a living to support herself and the child; her life was neurotic and frustrating, and she passed these tendencies on to the child as well. All these things are perfectly reasonable, perfectly natural, and more or less inevitable, but the result is neurosis. As a person grows older, it's always possible to do something about neurosis. We don't have to keep accepting it indefinitely. We can find ways to grow and overcome a neurotic situation. To do this, however, requires a certain amount of conscious effort. The individual must try to make these adjustments. They must try to overcome their own illness. But what happens? Well, they reach fifty with all their weaknesses and openly admit that they haven't been able to overcome them. That perhaps during the day they can manage it, but at night the old dreams return. Nightmares, the pressures of outrageous circumstances, and throughout life, a certain psychological distortion takes hold. A paralysis of the natural joy of life, of the natural good spirit to face situations. All this means that there must be some possible corrections, and we are now beginning to recognize these corrections. Education is not

only about teaching an individual the alphabet or preparing them for a profession or occupation. Education must help young people overcome the scars of abandonment, misunderstandings, and the false pressures of society. The growing child or young person must be taught to be stronger than the circumstances that surround them. They must learn to recognize the true meaning of the things that happen to them. Everything happens for a reason. If the event dominates, life is damaged. If the person takes hold of the occurrence and understands it, then there is a definite step forward.

So the problem of finding explanations for these pressures must lie in the upbringing of all young people. They must be taught to overcome the limitations and restrictions of their own childhood. Now, if a child has been very happy and well cared for, one might say that this isn't reasonable or necessary, and it wouldn't be in that case, but other factors stealthily make their way in. One of the worst of these is the spoiled child. The child who has everything, the child everyone idolizes. The child who is expected to never have to do a single honest day's work in their lifetime. This type of child is also pampered and lives in a kind of psychological paradise during these early years. But at some point, the angel arrives and throws the young person out of paradise and places them in a very harsh and difficult world that they will have to face. When this happens, the spoiled child is at a great disadvantage. He expects to be pampered his entire life. This manifests in his thinking, in the career he tries to establish himself in, and, if he marries, in his expectation of being pampered by his wife. All these things become the basis of conflicts, and in this difficulty, the pampered person gradually succumbs to the neurotic pressures of his own unfortunate background and slowly develops bad habits. Many neurotics turn to narcotics or alcoholism.

This is a long story, but somewhere along the way, philosophy has to step in and try to do something about it. One in three people is probably a potential neurotic. This is because illness strikes in many different ways throughout so many different periods of life. Many are collectively affected by war. Others by major depressions, and still others

by plagues. All sorts of negative circumstances create the habit that slowly eats away at a person's optimism. Against this external pressure, there have to be internal resources, and that's where religion, philosophy, and idealism have a role to play. It is necessary for the person who finds neurosis creeping into their life to recognize that they must overcome it. They have to find the true solution to the dilemma they have lived with for much of their life. Gradually, they must come to recognize that they cannot forget the past, but must interpret it correctly so that it no longer harms the present or the future. You must find a way to profit from the neurotic burdens you have inherited or accumulated. You must realize that every problem is not only a responsibility but also an opportunity. For most people, this world is a clinic where each individual has to resolve their own ills. It is therefore very important for the individual to find ways to transform neurotic pressure into an expression of gratitude, discovering that their problems have done the most for them, and their successes have done the most for them. And they must gradually realize that growth is an overcoming of ignorance, and that all problems lie in the realm of ignorance. No matter how brilliant a person may be, if they cannot manage their own disposition constructively, they remain ignorant. We have neither the educational faculties nor the suitable facilities to deal with this type of problem, except in clinics or private counseling. But even the best private counseling cannot overcome the greatest difficulty. Ultimately, each person must solve their own problems. If a patient goes to a doctor to solve a problem, then the doctor will empower them by pointing out that the problems could have been their own. They won't advise them on how to manage the patient's situation. So the work ultimately boils down to the cheapest and most boring of all processes, which is putting our lives in order.

I know of a case that came to me, of a boy who had grown up in a broken family. It had broken down when he was only a couple of years old. He went through one pressure after another, bounced from one relative to another, ending up with a stepfather who had no interest in him. And a mother incapable of coping. Looking back on his own childhood from adulthood, this person felt that he had been mistreated, that he had

been neglected. That he was born to suffer, and that it was inevitable that he would break down under the pressure of it all and feel sorry for himself for the rest of his life. This doesn't make up for it, but it happens in millions of cases. This person has to be taught gradually that each of these disappointments gave him a new moment in life, a new understanding of things. The fact that he came from a broken home made him one with thousands of other people who come from broken homes. These problems have to be resolved. The individual, lacking any support from their family, must develop inner support as soon as possible, and maintain it throughout periods of neurotic pressure until the end of their life. The key lies in confronting the problem, whatever it may be, with strength and transforming it into their own message. This reveals, once and for all, the tremendous advantage that comes from having overcome these difficulties.

It's hard to believe that perhaps those who have triumphed over their own weakness are the best people in the world. Those who have too easy a life get into trouble later on, but it's possible for those who have had a very difficult life to let go and enjoy years of serenity when the time is right. We also have to realize that in many families, cruelty is a factor. Children are treated cruelly. Adults are treated cruelly. And cruelty is something very difficult for a sensitive person to understand. In the case of cruelty, the victim often becomes belligerent and retaliates, trying to fight their way out of a dilemma. They begin to develop hatreds and antagonisms that continue throughout their lives, sometimes developing a determination for revenge to hurt others, just as they have been hurt. This, again, is a sign of ignorance and weakness.

Most of these problems exist and continue to exist generation after generation because they haven't been addressed from the outset by our education system. We educate individuals as if they were well-oiled machines. We fail to recognize the true individuality of each person. We don't realize that every child in a school class is a different person, with a different background, with a different reaction to environmental pressures, and with a different capacity, or lack thereof, to understand the meaning of

what they are trying to learn. Therefore, it becomes crucial that children receive an education that includes optimism, understanding, empathy, resilience, and forgiveness, as all of these must be part of their upbringing if they are not to develop into neurotics.

Religion does a lot for this in some cases, but on the other hand, we suddenly develop another problem: the religious neurotic. The problem isn't that the person lacks religion, but rather that they lack the means to manage it. They are also very likely to belong to some conservative group and feel the need to constantly impose their religious convictions on others. One of the quickest ways to become a neurotic is to try to convert others. Everyone has their own way of doing things and believes they have a right to their own way of life. Religion can help, however. Religion can help preserve a person's moral code, and the stronger the moral code, the more easily they can handle pressures. From the outside. If a person has a strong conscience within themselves, they can avoid most of the pitfalls that could cause them certain problems. But this strong conscience is slowly disappearing from society. Today, the average person is not guided by conscience, but by convenience. The individual wants to do what they want to do regardless of the consequences. And as a result, they end up where the doctor can do very little for them. They can help, but they cannot help a person overcome their dispositional peculiarities until they are completely convinced that they will be better off without them. They will generally try to get rid of things that don't mean much. But sometimes it takes a long time to delve into a person's inner life and truly reach the root cause because it is carefully covered up. It is upholstered in every possible way. They guard their problem as if it were the most vital part of their existence. The more they guard it, the more problems they find themselves in. But he will always conceal it, revealing only minor flaws in his temperament and trying to evade the most important one, taking a long time because until he addresses the core issue, his life will not be set right. Much can be accomplished by working with the religious aspect of human life, but for religion to be useful, it must be non-dogmatic. It must be tolerant and kind. But it must also be firm,

and the individual must be taught to seek the good in everything and to be willing to recognize it, even if he doesn't like it.

Throughout one of the apocryphal sayings attributed to Jesus, it refers to the time when the disciples were walking along the road and saw the decomposing carcass of a dog. The disciples recoiled in horror at the unhappy sight. Jesus stood and looked at the animal for a couple of minutes and then turned to his disciples and said, "Pearls are no whiter than their teeth." Finding the pearl in the dilemma is very important. However, somewhere in everything there is something good, something of value, something that teaches us what to do or something that teaches us what not to do. Throughout the entire journey, it is trying to push us toward fulfillment. The more we resist achievement, the more constantly it pushes us, often with great bewilderment.

But we must try, in every incident that arises, to receive the message. To see if we are handling it or not. If, when the message arrives and a problem looms, are we prepared for it? Are we sufficiently integrated within ourselves to be able to handle a moderately sized difficulty with dignity? A major difficulty might require a little more practice, but a moderately sized one should be handled with dignity by the average person. Now, if this problem arises and the individual fights it, that is not dignity. If they deny its existence, that is not intelligence. The answer to the problem is that it must be resolved.

In some religions and philosophies, the effort is made to cast these problems upon the "Lord," and when we don't know what to do, then ask for Divine help. That is perfectly appropriate and correct if we have used all our own available resources. If we have done the best we could and the problem is completely beyond our control, then we must turn to divine will. But we generally don't like to do that because while we say "Thy will be done," there is a sub-voice underneath saying, "My will be done." We want it our way and expect God to see it that way. Because if He doesn't, we're in trouble. We must try from the outset to figure out how the problem can be handled by ourselves. Are we

avoiding it? Are we afraid to confront it? Is it more comfortable to suffer? Many people experience times of greatest joy through suffering, but unfortunately, very few of us can suffer alone, and the professional sufferer generally causes many other people to suffer. They are miserable too, so that's not a good answer. The good answer is realizing that the individual is capable of solving any problem they face. If it were completely beyond their capacity, it wouldn't even be a problem. They wouldn't even know it existed. But if it touches on any aspect of their own experience, they should be able to arrive at a worthy and just solution.

Another type of problem we encounter is loneliness. Loneliness sometimes seems unpleasant and unreasonable. However, in the long run, loneliness is the common state of everything that exists, from the smallest insect to the largest star. Loneliness is inevitable because every individual in the world around them is the vast complex of their own personality. They must bridge the gap between their inner nature and their outer life. In most cases, this transition is not efficient. Not everything is as it should be, at the very least. But in every case, there comes a time in life when we have to learn to get along with ourselves and learn once and for all that we can be good company to ourselves. We can find all sorts of things to do to counteract loneliness. We can develop a vocational interest. We can take on responsibilities for the sheer pleasure and opportunity of service. We can do all sorts of things to break the concept of loneliness, if we truly want to. Once we experience a certain degree of solitude, the tendency is to cling to it and nurture it, becoming increasingly less well-adjusted. And ultimately, to end up being antisocial in every sense of the word.

The person who declares war on society is actually declaring war on the University of Life. The individual who abandons their own world abandons their responsibilities because they dislike them, and is therefore able to develop a beautiful argument for why they shouldn't accept them. This person is avoiding burdens.

normal aspects of life are destined for a solitary end. A solitary person is someone who

has never had a friend, a true friend. Therefore, they cannot have a friend. However, every solitary person has a privilege that others do not. For example, a family in which all members are diligently engaged in their work has very little solitude, but also very little intimacy. There are times when every individual should be alone. Alone to think things through. Alone to put their life in order. Alone to meditate on the greater realities of things. So solitude is actually a condition that must precede the experience of enlightenment. The enlightenment of the wise forever destroys the illusion of solitude. The person who has found their own center encounters a world of wonderful opportunities and privileges. The individual finds the Universe friendly instead of frightening. They find the life they lead fruitful instead of exhausting. These things have to happen within the person. They cannot be delegated to others. We can feed and clothe others in their emergencies, but we cannot bring happiness to their inner lives. Each person must do that for themselves. Ancients and modern thinkers have also concluded that the most perfect way to achieve happiness is to stop trying to be happy, and instead try to do better things, to help more, to learn more, and to love more. These are the sources of lasting and valuable relationships.

So in religion we have this problem. I know of a case of a young woman who was about to get married when her fiancé died in the war. She was in her early twenties and already heartbroken. When she reached eighty, she was still heartbroken. She never got over it. In her fifties, she took holy vows and remained in a convent for the rest of her life, and she was never able to transcend this tragedy. Many people thought she was very religious, very devout, and she was very dedicated, and she was all these things. But it cut her life short. A tragedy she couldn't prevent took away the only thing she thought could make her happy. And because she thought that way, she was never happy again. This kind of circumstance must be overcome, for it destroys the value of life. It frustrates the whole purpose of growth. This young woman should have had a proper season of sorrow and mourning. She should have been hurt to a suitable degree, and then she

should have gathered herself together and found things to do. If she couldn't be happy, perhaps she could make others happy, and that was far better than burying herself in a religious house.

Everyone has to make adjustments and accept the decisions that come their way. Another very different case, but with the same general pattern, was that of a young woman who was, for fifty years, the complete slave of her widowed mother. This widowed mother, who loved her devotedly, and the daughter, who loved her mother with equal devotion, formed a small package. A package too small for both of them, a package of frustrations that prevented them from advancing to any appreciable or recognizable degree. By the time the mother died at ninety, the daughter's life was little short of pointless. Therefore, a strange sadness quite understandably took hold of the daughter when she, too, finally found solace in religion. So religion is a kind of mechanism by which great sadness, loneliness, and frustration find a little comfort; it is not a solution, but a comfort. It is not an answer to the problem, but a way to cope with it a little better.

With all these problems, it all becomes, how can we make them a little more bearable? And I think most of our people who are considerate know about this kind of thing: when in doubt about what to do, forget about yourself. Forget everything that's happened to you. Stop telling all your friends about your misery. Get over this constant regret of not having done anything in your twenties.

that ruined your life. Let go of the idea that the past can destroy the future; it can't unless you allow it. Therefore, those who have suffered in the past shouldn't carry their suffering into the future. In fact, they shouldn't have brought it into the present. Those who have experienced various unhappy events, some of which may involve feelings of guilt, must realize that the person who experienced those events 50 years ago is not the same person living life today. They say that every seven years, every cell in the human body changes. And it's also true that over the course of a lifetime, every cell of the

human soul changes. Life becomes different. The person who made the mistake in the past is not the same person alive now. And there is nothing that binds this person to the past except memory. And while memories cannot be destroyed, you must learn to use them and not allow them to harm you.

Now, one way to handle the situation of memory with great care is to revisit the occasion and see if we truly understood what had happened. Were you really as culpable as you believe you were? Were you at that time sufficiently advanced in thought, insight, and understanding to be able to make a corrective decision? If, through simple ignorance, you did the wrong thing, if through a simple lack of knowledge and understanding you made mistakes, so what? Everyone makes them. The mistakes of the first twenty years of life are always present, or almost always, in some form. But there is no reason for them to be projected into the present. They should never be allowed to cloud or discourage a life. And any religion that demands complete repentance for this kind of suffering should be carefully avoided. The problem is not forgetting. The problem is not learning from the mistake, gradually developing a richer and fuller life by learning from the mistake what not to do again. We have a great number of people in society who made They made a mistake at 15 or 20 and have made one every year since then, which isn't very helpful because they haven't learned anything.

Your own past is a book. It's a clinic. Lord Bacon observed in his essay on the Pyramid of Pan that every experience in life is part of an experimental career, under the heading of experiments in laboratories of various compounds made and combined, separated and rearranged. In life, these compounds are attitudes that come together, separate, and are also rearranged. But in life, the great laboratory is where knowledge is gained. It is the place where ideas, hopes, beliefs, and notions are tested. And every person has made a bad decision and tested a concept and found that it didn't work. These things add up to a gradual psychic education in which the person becomes wiser and more prudent, until they can control their own life with dignity. This is all that is

hoped for. It is not forgiveness that is most desirable. It is maturation and overcoming of mistakes. It is simply developing within ourselves the understanding and the capacity that make it possible for us to forget the problems and remember only the good gained from the experiences. Therefore, these are all things to be learned, and those who rise above their own mistakes are the best people in the world. They are the ones who are going somewhere, and they will get there. They are the ones who take care of themselves before Nature has to step in to heal them. They are the ones who have grasped the importance of their own lives. If we look back on our lives, each of us has a textbook. Occasionally, someone of a cheerful disposition decides to write a book about themselves. This may or may not be entirely truthful. A number of people I know who have written books have written about a life they wish they had lived, not the one they actually lived. But still, biography has its place, and autobiography somehow becomes a soothing calling.

It helps people profit from their own lives by selling hundreds of thousands of copies. But what's really behind it all is the personal growth we gain. By looking back on our own lives, we can see how we could have done a dozen things better. We also gradually realize the futility of holding grudges. A grudge is usually an objection against a person. And there's hardly anyone who isn't disliked by someone. This is common knowledge. This is clinical knowledge. It's a fact that almost everyone has someone they just hope won't let them down.

We have some people we know we'd throw out the door if they showed up. Others we wish we could ignore. About some, we'd say we never met them or even knew about them. But almost everyone has something. Now, this ignoring or this resentment is something else entirely that needs to be analyzed, broken down, and studied. A large part of these resentments aren't as honest as they seem. Many are simply old-fashioned jealousy. A resentment can stem from something that bothers us about someone who's doing things better than we are, and instead of trying or striving

to do better ourselves, we belittle the person who's doing it better. We also hold grudges against people who haven't agreed with us at different times in our lives or who have done something against us. Sometimes, resentment is directed against dishonesty. Sometimes against gossip or envy. But resentment is almost always a rejection based on real or imagined causes. The difference between a real or imagined cause in these particular circumstances is negligible, regardless of whether we were justified or not. Resentment must go; something has to happen with resentment. I have known people who come to me with resentment, and the person against whom they held that resentment had been dead for over 20 years, but it had no effect, nor will it. Resentment was recognized as the primary cause of great disaster in life. If it hadn't been for this resentment, these people would have been happy, well-adjusted, successful human beings. But the deceased person against whom they held the resentment had destroyed their lives. They did everything harmful and terrible to them, and it was beyond possible forgiveness. But all this is just talk. In reality, no matter how bad someone may be, we have to realize the fact that we must forgive our enemies, do good to those who wrong us. This is therapy. What is not therapy, and what we call it so often, is... It's true that we might have cause to feel mistreated, and that this doesn't justify continuing to maintain this attitude. The attitude we must adopt is one of constructive indifference. We must tell ourselves, this is no longer our problem. We don't wish harm or evil upon anyone. We don't want punishment or despotism for anyone. We simply decide that we can live our own lives, in our own way, without these other circumstances interfering, whether real or imagined.

We see people all the time who come to therapy who have been seriously hurt by someone. Sometimes these hurts are quite real. A woman whose husband has been taken from her by another woman is likely to hold a grudge, and you can't really blame her. But the answer is that after you've worked through the grudge a bit, the thing is to let it go. It's not going to do you any good. Let these other people go as they please. The

person who holds onto the grudge is the one who gets sick. So all attitudes that destroy your health are regrettable. Regardless of the cause, regardless of the justification, whatever makes you sick is not good for you. And almost all grudges and antagonisms lead to destructive circumstances. The individual seems to attract more of the same, especially if they become morbidly bitter about the issue. Whatever happens, happens. Whatever happens, we have to separate peacefully. We must relinquish this whole idea of hoping that something terrible is going to happen to the other person because they deserve it for what they did to us. This attitude is absolutely wrong, and it will harm the person who holds it. We might well say that all this sounds like moralizing, but that doesn't mean much, because people can hold grudges, and they do. They can be jealous, and they are. They can be neurotic, and they will be for quite some time. So there's no reason to assume that these life factors simply befall the individual. The answer is that they do. The answer is that they shorten physical life, destroy health, interfere with careers, alienate family members, disappoint children, and lead to all sorts of unhealthy relationships in life based on despair or exasperation. Therefore, they are not good. No one can afford to hate anything. We can disbelieve in some things. We can wish they were different. We can do all we can to change them. But blind hatred for something we do nothing about is a very dangerous emotion. We must try to put principles before hatred. If a person performs an act that goes against principles, that is not the right kind of act. That is neither honest nor honorable. We have the right to refute, but when we disapprove, we only have the right to assert our position and, if necessary, to withdraw from the association; we must do so. We cannot harbor resentment. We cannot try to solve some of these problems for other people.

Another interesting factor comes with the practitioner. The doctor is generally a person with extensive experience in dealing with human problems. The practitioner, however, is also an individual. The professional has undoubtedly had their own problems in life. They may have come from the same endangered background as the patient. They

may have the same problems. However, the doctor also has their own attitude toward things. They have their own convictions about realities and illusions. And they probably have a formula for how to get people out of their problems. So, given this, the client/patient must realize that the doctor cannot solve the other person's problems. A practitioner cannot tell you how to live, who you should or shouldn't like, or the reason for your loneliness. The doctor can only advise you on what to do about your problem. The doctor, who tries to make a decision for you, takes away your right to make the right mistakes, and that's something you will have to do. However, the doctor can point out that you have this error and that it's up to you to do something about it. The doctor may also be able to review your personality resources to discover your skills, abilities, dedications, interests, hobbies, and occupations, and thus find things that might be of value and remind you of them. But the doctor cannot solve your problem. The most any of them can do is help you have the courage, strength, and integrity to solve the problem on your own. This is why the clergy has more or less dominated this field. It's because the clergy throw everything into the hands of the Lord. And the Lord, in this case working on the sufferer, mostly works through the patient's disposition. Therefore, through prayer, meditation, honest disclosure of the error, and all the various devices by which the person is compelled to confront themselves as a religious duty. These things can help, but they can also exacerbate situations due to increased pressure. But, in general terms, anything that makes a person aware of their own responsibility for their condition is constructive and helps to resolve it.

Most people have never truly analyzed their abilities and potential. Very few are genuinely aware of what they could achieve if they channeled their efforts into a constructive approach. Some have had a bit of experience, some have harbored secret hopes and desires that they would be capable of accomplishing certain things in their lives. All of these things can combine to bring about a very valuable and significant shift in the politics of life. Individuals who spend a lot of time alone should seek partnerships

outside themselves. Not to convert others, and not to adopt their ways, but to openly and freely share each other's experiences in an effort to discover greater values and deeper understanding.

All these things ultimately add up to sitting quietly by yourself and asking, "How do I feel?" And if the answer is that you feel terrible, then it's time to find out why. If you think, "I wish I were dead," you don't really mean it. In most cases, you wish someone else were dead. But in any case, discouragement, frustration, the feeling that life isn't worth living, and that the faculty of memory is fading because we never used it properly—these things are depressing. And as life drains the energy of youth, we sink into a kind of self-satisfied cesspool, which is far from constructive. So wherever there is adversity, and if you can look around and not see a world where good things are happening, you have serious problems. In this particular emergency we find ourselves in today's world, it's becoming increasingly common for people to develop strong neurotic tendencies. Almost everyone is against something these days. Almost everyone feels personally affected or offended. That their cherished dreams have been shattered and discarded. That the world is in a bad way and there's nothing we can do to feel particularly happy about anything. Well, this is the first fundamental principle, but is it true? Some people would like to think so, but the clinical situation could differ from their own.

We also say that 1986 was perhaps one of the most important years we have ever known. We are gradually wearing down the inescapable awareness of our mistakes. We are coming face to face with the fact that we cannot break the rules. And one by one, as we try to break them, these rules tend to break us. Little by little, it is becoming more and more evident that things have to change. And that things have to change constructively, and the old selfishness has to die, because we can no longer afford to have it.

We may have tried to do things before. There were new lands to conquer, it was

always possible to have a successful career. Now we're starting to question things. We're starting to estimate what the next 50 years will mean in terms of population and natural resources, in terms of pollution and all these things. And suddenly we're starting to see in the world the kinds of disorders that are inside ourselves, but that we hadn't recognized. We were unhappy because we didn't feel well. But people don't feel bad just because they feel bad. There's a reason of some kind. They've broken a rule. They've overlooked something that was necessary. They've done something that wasn't necessary. So today, the pressure of society is like the neurosis of the individual. Suddenly we're discovering a world of neurotics. A world in which almost everyone is afraid to live. Almost everyone doesn't know what to do next. This may sound like a terrible disaster, and it is. But in the universal plan of things, there's always a reason. And that reason is right. And the purpose of that reason is that we will make the necessary adjustments to comply with Universal Law. In our enthusiasm, we have forgotten that we live in a Universe of cause and effect. When we remember that and follow the rules, we will fare much better and discover that all the suffering we have endured has been well worth it because we have finally found a solution to humanity's mistakes.

Now, this same kind of thing is happening inside people. The world's dilemma is reacting in the individual's personal life. The world is in trouble because of the way the world acts. The individual is in trouble because of the way they act. They are part of something that cannot win. They are part of a large, interconnected system that cannot succeed. And in all of it, in all its branches, pieces, and departments, we have overlooked the basic principle of humanity: love one another. And this is going to continue to get difficult until we figure that out. But when we do figure it out, we must accept it and live it, and then we will be starting to grow.

Are we maturing? Are we gaining insight we could never have had if we hadn't earned the right to be better people? It's the same with a person: when they tire of suffering, they'll do things to stop it, but as long as they're content to struggle as best

they can, they'll repeat the same mistakes of the past and fall back into alcohol and drugs. So it's a matter of taking ownership of the facts. Every person has the right to be a constructive person, regardless of the world they live in. No one can be destroyed by a mass psychosis, however dynamic and urgent it may be.

We have to either let go of negative things or remain positive. It's the same with our problems with people. People are involved because of community problems. Community problems exist because of people. We're in the mess we're in because we're selfish and didn't prevent disaster, and when it came, we tried to perpetuate it. We try to build substantial houses on barren land, and we can't. So, throughout life, we're being taught, and we're here to be taught. We're here to make the same mistakes until we stop making them.

We are here to gradually learn the great lesson: that when we uphold the rules, the rules will uphold us. We are here because we are here to grow. As citizens of eternity. And these citizens must grow.

We are vaguely, but undeniably, not maturing properly. So it is very important for everyone to clean house, to get rid of all the negative excuses they maintain for not being able to do what they should be doing. To overcome the idea that we have the privilege of suffering because we have suffered. This is not the answer. We have the privilege of ceasing to suffer, because we have found that it is the path to peace for all concerned. Thus, all along the way we have this problem of allowing the past to become history, or of letting it dominate us.

There have always been wars, and there always will be. This is not the path of life. This is the path of dishonesty in government. There has always been corruption. There have always been dictators. The history of the world is a mass of mistakes, intentional or accidental, and all past civilizations have risen and fallen. So it is in our personal lives as well. People of all ages have made their mistakes. Gradually, however, all these groups have grown in some way. We are the past. We are all that has come before. We have

been gaining ground along the way, and the number of well-intentioned, dedicated, and thoughtful people is steadily increasing. We are here because we need more growth. We need another course. We have to achieve a higher level of education than we have ever had before, and that is possible only because we have a greater need than we have ever had before, and because of our own evolution, we have a greater understanding of this need than we have ever had before.

We can manage everything well if we hold on to our divine selves and let go of the negative pressures that allow us to accept what isn't right. We don't have to suffer, just because some people think it's inevitable. If we suffer for one reason or another, it should unfailingly produce some constructive consequence. Suffering can be like a prison sentence, and the problem is that as soon as the prisoner is released, they do it all over again. As soon as our old pain subsides, we do it all over again. We don't learn the lessons, and it's because we don't learn them that we still have them.

I believe, then, that for most people who provide therapy, most scientists who are psychiatrists, these professions in psychology work for them. The fact is, these people certainly arrive, upright and dignified. They look very good. They have reasonable skills. Many of them have graduated from good schools. Most of them have jobs. Many of them have families, and they are all a wonderful group of potential individuals who could very well do great things, but almost every one of them is stuck with something. This something they can't handle. There's something they don't know what to do about. And in fact, if the person who doesn't know what to do about that 'something' were to go to a professional and say, "I don't know what to do about it," the professionals would probably say, "Well, how do you think you should handle it?" And then the person might give the same answer the professional would have to give. They know they know what they're doing. But they want to forget it because it interferes with some sense of fulfillment they want to nurture. We have the same problem in every area of life today. Our entertainment industry is overrun with this kind of thing. Entertainment, simply

because we feel like it. Social delinquency is rampant simply because we do what we want to do, and then we wonder why we run into trouble. You can't break the rules and not suffer. Whether it's a family of three or four or the world at large, you have to follow the rules. And those who follow the rules find out something truly terrible.

They discover, to begin with, that they can be right, without the rest of the world having to be right too.

There is no evidence that everyone will arrive at a similar discovery at the same time. Each person finds it for themselves when they allow it to happen within. The answers to everything we seek are actually within us. They are in the soul of the human being. They are within the divine factor at the foundation of all human life. Deep down, we know what is right. But with the mind, emotions, and body, we fight against it. We want to gratify the emotions. We want to satisfy the appetites of the body, and we want to fulfill the ambitions of the mind, and the divine factor within us is neglected, denied, and ignored. Therefore, if you want to overcome any kind of negative attitude, the power to do so is within you. There is something within you that will heal any illness caused by the mind. But it is something you have to work on. You have to be determined to do it. You have to put the greater good of your own survival before the negative attitudes you have been inclined to have and maintain.

I know someone who said they couldn't get over their temper tantrums. So what did they do? They took tranquilizers. They took all sorts of pills to cure their outbursts of rage. Which, of course, is a bit idiotic in itself. They're trying to get high to get out of a bad mood. But every now and then, though, they'd have to surface for air, and when they did, the temper was still there. And eventually, they became interested in a religious approach to the problem and were told definitively that prayer and meditation would probably help. So they tried it, and it did help. And they gave God the credit, but it was the god in the person who did the work. They had a chance. The higher part of us had a chance to achieve natural good, and this chance had been delayed for years by the

tranquilizers. But Until the other attitude was available, there was nothing more to be done. So the answer to all these things is help—mental and emotional help—and it depends on keeping the rules, and keeping them in every sense of the word. Keeping them means obeying Nature, and Nature is the most incredible cooperating creature that has ever existed. Do you realize that Nature is a term that applies to a conglomeration of Universes of Cosmic Systems, including everything imaginable from insects to angels? It contains all the infinite confusion of so-called life: sugars, meteorites, comets, everything imaginable, and yet Nature is in perfect order. Nature takes care of the whole problem quietly and simply, and there are very few mistakes made along the way. This is because Nature is dependent on Universal Law for its support. Nature is upholding the rules by which Nature itself was brought into existence and by which it must continue until the end of time. So we can all do the same.

Around the annual seasons, a good time is offered to initiate maneuvers to see what can be done about things. What about sending a card or two to someone you haven't written or spoken to for ten years? Or let's leave it at five; we're not going to be cruel about this. But to someone you've ignored because you harbor resentment. They may turn around and send you another resentful card in return, and they may tell you they never want to hear from you again. But in that case, it would be them telling you. That would be their business. What you're telling them is your business. If you've made the right decision, you've fulfilled the need. If you've done it honestly with a sincere desire to heal a rift or discord, you've accomplished the purpose for which you were offered, namely, to bring about peace in the world. If others don't accept it, you're not responsible. However, you will be surprised.

of the number who will accept it if it is done willingly. It may also be a matter of searching through the confusion of the moment. The work may have been too much. Are the responsibilities more than you can handle? Do you consider the cost of living extravagant for you? If these are all problems that are disturbing your inner life, try to

resolve them. Try to resolve the problems of limited funds by limiting extravagances you may think are necessary. The simpler life is, the closer it is to the truth. And too many possessions are the basis of more problems than any joy they ever brought.

In the same way you look at the world, try to see the Grand Plan behind things. The Plan of the ultimate recognition of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity and the Fatherhood of Deity. Try to recognize a great and benevolent plan, whether you feel about it personally or impersonally. A grand plan that says, "All things must work together for the good." "Evil cannot survive." If you have two good deeds and put them side by side, they can incorporate and support each other. Put two bad deeds side by side, and they destroy each other. Therefore, evil cannot win. Evil cannot end the Great Divine Plan. It has to succeed. And anyone who gets in the way of that success is going to suffer a little. So it's best to stop hindering this progress and come into harmony with it. And try to put an end, forever and ever, to any negative attitude within yourself. Try to increase your own inner potential. If you have idle study time, work with it, be a source and a cause for the community, and make sure that you have a daily life that is as useful, constructive, and kind as you possibly can make it. This is how, in the long run, it will bring you inner peace. It will also prepare you to be part of a great path of evolution of existence that is based on the inevitable victory of good. The inevitable victory of love over hate. Of truth over error. Wisdom over ignorance. These things together are the end. And we are probably fortunate in 1986-1987 that this condition is as intense as it is. We are reaching the point where we can no longer throw it away and dismiss it. We can no longer turn away or close our eyes to it. And when a disease reaches such a degree, there is only one answer. It must be cured. And this is the same as with a patient who seeks a doctor or a psychiatrist. They rarely go until the situation is very advanced. But when there is nothing left to do except grow or perish, Nature says you cannot perish, so you might as well start growing. There is no way out of growth. It is inevitable. Nothing that has ever existed can prevent or circumvent it. In some cases, however, it is slow and

painful to arrive. And this is because we have resisted it and failed to develop the potential within ourselves that justifies our expectation of a good and happy life. I believe that most of us who work on plans for self-improvement and the search for ways to serve others in their needs find that these dedications have already created precious interludes in our lives and that helping people is a beautiful job, if you do it well. If it is about living for and through them, it is a difficult and impossible job. But if you can inspire people to correct themselves, to restore their hope of rediscovering the wisdom and strength of a relationship with the infinite, if we can help lonely people realize that their loneliness is not necessary... That loneliness is not the intention...

We are all meant to be busy, busy living. Busy doing. Busy growing. These are the things we should be concerned with. If we have lost those close to us, even this we must bear with dignity. Because all this happens, and it always has. But in none of these events is God cruel. All things work together for the common good, and all the problems we have are a unified growth process under a veiled guise.

So if we maintain that kind of attitude and work with it, I think maybe next year can be a pretty good year for a lot of people. I think it's going to be a much better year for a lot of nations as well, because we're slowly waking up. We're gradually becoming more aware of things. We're gradually overcoming the false belief that our existence is just a small span of years that we should make as comfortable as possible. In reality, our existence is a short space HERE to make eternal growth possible. To contribute to the infinite unfolding of our life potential across time and space. We are obligated to grow. And the only thing we can do is slow down through self-pity, jealousy, hatred, and all that kind of stuff. These are the mistakes that, if we keep making them, will seriously harm us, but they can't destroy us. We can be tortured by our own mistakes, but we can't die from them. In due time the truth within ourselves is resurrected and takes control over the personality, and we will once again be the children of infinity that we are in essence, whether we know it or not.

So in this era where we're all trying to be as nice and wonderful as possible, let's try hard to say that we can forever eliminate any unpleasant or sad thoughts about anyone. This isn't an easy thing, but perhaps it's easier than you think. The reason it's difficult is because many people have built a flawed life on that excuse. They've insisted that this other person or people have hurt them. They aren't unhappy because this person exists, but rather that this person has been the cause of all sorts of misfortunes over the years. This isn't true. That individual may have caused the original incident, but The individual who was injured has repeated, multiplied, and exaggerated it to the point that he has in turn damaged his own life.

If we don't dwell on these negative thoughts, they can't harm us. And if they are harmful, overcome them and carry into the future only the growth, wisdom, love, friendship, and understanding that you have cultivated within yourself. We are all growing, and with God's grace, an understanding of the requirements of Natural Law, and the willingness to work together for the common good, the goals we seek will come in the fullness of time.