

CHARACTER EDUCATION

NATURAL LAW

HUMAN HAPPINESS & SUCCESS



By Thomas F. Kelly, Ph. D.

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DEDICATION

TO JACK O'LEARY

THE MOST VIRTUOUS MAN I KNOW

OTHER BOOKS BY DR. KELLY

SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT FOR QUALITY SCHOOLS. Available electronically at **no charge**. Download from Systemic Assessment, Inc. web site

<http://www.drTomKelly.com> This is a manual for planning and implementing the ideas of W. Edwards Deming, William Glasser, Steven Covey and Dr. Kelly.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT. Available from National School Services for \$95. Call 800-262-4511 This is a manual for school and district planning teams.

Before man are life and death,

Whichever he chooses shall be given him.

Sirach: 15: 17

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1 IT'S THE LAW

NATURAL LAW

By Thomas F. Kelly, Ph. D.

After fifteen years of efforts at school reform, there is general consensus among educators, politicians, and the public at large that we have little if any progress to show. The reason for this, despite great efforts on the part of many educators and large expenditures of resources, can be seen in the fact that these efforts have consistently been based on false first premises. This book will explain why efforts to improve student achievement, discipline, self esteem, etc. have failed and what must be done to make them successful.

In the sixties at college, while minoring in philosophy, I was introduced to the concept of natural law. At the time I was not ready to learn it. I thought it was boring.

In the nineties I was reintroduced to the concept in Steven Covey's best seller The Seven Habits Of Highly Effective People. This time I was ready, I understood. Not only did I understand the concept of natural law, but also it's inestimable importance in human relationships and affairs.

The idea is not new. Aristotle was the first to observe that there are natural laws that govern human behavior, happiness and success. A clear example of a natural law is "everything in moderation." No legislature ever passed that law. No court can overrule it. I can violate that law, but there are consequences. Natural laws have natural consequences, and they are inescapable. No smart lawyer can beat the rap for me.

NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN HAPPINESS

I note the "inestimable importance" of natural law because of its causal relationship to our present precipitous state of cultural decline. Most of us recognize the ever increasing incidence of discipline problems in our schools, the growing disrespect in our culture, and the general decline in social standards of conduct. Our family structure, the most essential ingredient in our culture, is crumbling. All of these problems are now chronic in our culture.

W. Edwards Deming has observed that 95% of the chronic problems that we face in our organizations are structural or systemic. Families are our most basic organizational unit. I suggest that we view our national culture as an

organization, a cultural super structure if you will. The reasons for our cultural decline are systemic. Specifically, our social standards are confused and murky. What has become clear to me is that many of our standards of conduct are inconsistent with natural law. As long as that is the case, our decline will continue.

I must distinguish between standards and law (I mean the legalistic view of law, or formal legislation here). It has been correctly observed that when social standards are adequate, laws are unnecessary. When social standards are inadequate, laws are irrelevant. Americans tend to rely on the legal system for the common good. It is clearly inadequate. If laws were sufficient, there would be no crime, no bigotry, etc. Man made laws are necessary but not sufficient for human happiness. This will be explained in detail below.

What I will do in this work is make clear the essential causal relationship between natural law and human happiness and success. For our culture to rise toward excellence, this causal relationship must be recognized and thoroughly understood. It must be advocated and modeled by our leaders, taught in our schools, churches and families and practiced as the “standard” of acceptable behavior.

VIRTUES AND VALUES: CATEGORICAL CONFUSION AND CULTURAL CHAOS

In logic there is a fallacy known as categorical confusion. This involves treating things in different categories as if they are in the same category. For example, if we were to view birds and flowers as if they were both in the animal category, we would be unable to deal with both birds and flowers rationally.

The two categories that we are presently confusing in our culture are the categories of virtues and values. They are not the same, but we tend to think of and see them as interchangeable, the same. This is a formula for personal and social disaster. We need **definitions**.

VIRTUE: A BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES ME GOOD

VALUE: SOMETHING I WANT

This distinction is critical. Virtue pertains to morality. Value pertains to preferences, which are or are not moral according to their relationship to virtue. Further, values are relative. \$10 dollars is a value. \$50 is a greater value. Values can be good or bad. Some people value peace, others war.

Virtues, on the other hand, are absolute. Kindness is always good. Patience is always good. Justice is always good.

Therefore, virtue is primary in importance, value is secondary. By confusing these categories, we frequently put values ahead of virtues. For example, present American culture places freedom ahead of responsibility. This is a disastrous view. Freedom is a value, something I very much want. It is not a virtue. Freedom does not make me good any more than it makes me bad. Responsibility is a virtue, a behavior that makes me good.

Consider those people we all admire. Each of us knows of individuals who are truly exceptionally good people, people we genuinely admire. These people are “better” than the rest of us. They are the “best” people in our experience. They put responsibility first. Paradoxically, they are the freest people we know. Responsibility is an absolute prerequisite for freedom. The less responsible a person is, the less free that person is. Consider a drug addict. Is he free? Of course not. He has forfeited his freedom to his own irresponsibility.

Ironically, when we put freedom before responsibility we deny our own freedom, make our own freedom impossible. We are thus neither free nor responsible. When we put responsibility first, we are both responsible and free. Responsibility is the essential first premise for all real freedom.

When a culture puts freedom before responsibility, it has sown the seeds of its own destruction, which seems inevitably to follow. History is replete with examples of cultures that rose to world dominance. None of them stayed there. They all declined from within as they turned away from the virtue that brought them to the heights to indolence and corruption. When the Berlin wall came down we were clearly the dominant culture in the world. It seems we no sooner reached clear dominance than our moral decline (already begun) rapidly accelerated. The United States is in historical virgin territory. No previous culture has remained dominant throughout the history of the world. Whether we can or not is an open question. The outcome is in doubt, to say the least.

Current popular views on love and sex provide another example of confusion of virtues and values. Love is not sex and sex is not love. Sex is a value. Love is a virtue. Indeed love is the sum of all virtues. When I am patient with you I love you. When I am kind to you, tolerant of you, respect you, etc. I love you.

The media in particular is responsible for promoting this confusion. They speak of “making love” when referring to “making sex” as if the two are the same thing. This pernicious lie is constantly being told to our young people. Hitler noted that if you repeat a big lie often enough most people would believe it.

Sex is a good value when it is chosen in a virtuous context, as part of genuine love. Sex chosen in any other context is destructive and harmful, a bad

value. We need only look around us to see the incredible destruction, disease and misery caused by promiscuous sex. So when the young boy says to the young girl, "if you love me you'll let me..." The young girl's response should be, "if you love me you will put my welfare before your immediate pleasure. You will not ask me for that." Genuine love always puts the virtues of responsibility and respect ahead of the value of pleasure.

Sadly, many adults also suffer from this confusion of sex and love, imposing harm and misery on themselves and their children. They contribute to the "misery cycle" we are presently caught up in by teaching this confusion to their children by word and example.

Because of confusion of virtues and values, people frequently put values ahead of virtues. This violates natural law and leads inevitably to chronic confusion, need frustration, conflict (both internal and interpersonal), broken relationships, unhappiness, etc. While people who consistently put virtue first are not without occasional problems in their lives, they do not have these chronic problems. This is verifiable through simple observation of these folks.

Therefore, it is critical that we distinguish clearly between virtues and values. Until these categories are clarified, people will continue to fall into the trap of putting values ahead of virtues. This will inevitably lead to grief for themselves and others around them. This clarification should be the first goal of Character Education programs in our schools.

SOME VALUES COMMONLY CONFUSED WITH VIRTUES

CULTURE	HISTORY
BELONGING	KNOWLEDGE
ETHNICITY	RELIGION
FAMILY	PEACE
FREEDOM	POWER
FUN	RACE

While it is true that many values are extremely important, they do not make me good any more than they make bad. Religion, for example, does not make me good or bad. I am a lifelong Catholic, but Catholicism does not make me good or bad. If I behave virtuously, I am a good Catholic. If I do not behave virtuously, I am not a good Catholic. Religion is a value, not a virtue. Because all of the great religions have taught these virtues throughout history, they tend to

be closely associated with them. While this is appropriate, the two are distinct. Virtues are not the exclusive property of any religion. Indeed, there are atheists who subscribe to traditional virtues.

The same is true for values such as family. Important as it is, family does not make me good or bad. If I behave virtuously I am a good family man. If I do not behave virtuously, I am not a good family man.

When dealing with such great values it is all too easy to confuse them with virtues. The definitions are critical.

VALUES ARE THINGS THAT I WANT.

VIRTUES ARE BEHAVIORS THAT MAKE ME GOOD.

Moral goodness is a function of behavior or virtues. It is not a function of group membership or values. This does not make values such as family unimportant. My family is more important to me than my life. Nonetheless, it is not a behavior or virtue. A person can be a member of a wonderful family and behave immorally. Conversely, he can belong to a terrible family and be virtuous.

MONUMENTAL DAMAGE DONE BY SIGMUND FREUD AND B. F. SKINNER

Ideas (beliefs) should never be underestimated in terms of their capacity for promoting good or evil. Communism is an excellent example. It took 70 years, wars, genocide, nuclear threats and finally economic collapse of the Soviet Union and all of Eastern Europe for the world to understand that Communism (as defined by Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Mao, etc.) is a bad idea. The destruction resulting is incalculable.

Ideas can become great forces, for good or evil, in individual lives as well as whole cultures and societies.

Many view the 1960's as the beginning of cultural decline in America. "Do your own thing", sexual liberation, drugs, the "me generation" etc. This usually is attributed to the Vietnam war. Doubtless that was a contributing factor. The Vietnam war was a catalyst for this moral disintegration, but not its primary cause.

In the 1990's we see the effects of the rejection of traditional moral standards. Families falling apart, discipline declining drastically in our schools, crime rampant and people living behind multiple locks and alarms. How we got here is very important knowledge if we are to rise from our present cultural malaise.

For the first half of the twentieth century, up to the 1960's, American universities, and consequently our entire culture, were dominated by Freudian psychology. We all went around talking about our subconscious and "why you really did that."

Just as Communism was based on some faulty logic, Freud based his psychology on some false first premises. He postulated that man in his "natural state" functioned at peace with his instincts. But civilization taught that he should restrain his sexual instincts, his anger, etc. In his natural state he was uninhibited by the constraints of civilization and its willing accomplices, parents and religion. These constraints caused the development of our super ego which inhibited our "natural" behavior. In our natural state, for example, if I were to see an attractive woman I would be expected to do what comes naturally. But in civilization that's a no no. Now I'm expected to "repress" my natural inclinations. That of course causes frustration, aggression and sickness. ESSENTIALLY, FREUD TAUGHT THAT MORALITY MAKES US SICK. It is only right then that we strive to liberate ourselves from civilization's "unnatural" moral constraints.

Even though we replaced psychoanalysis with equally deterministic behaviorism in the late 1960's, these ideas put forth by Freud have gained popular acceptance and permeate our present victim culture. Millions of people see themselves as victims of their past, their parents, the system, the government, etc.

Indeed the damage done by Freudian psychology was compounded by Skinner in the 1960's. The civil rights movement caused Americans to reject what was perceived as the genetic determinism associated with Freud. It had clear racial implications. This was no problem for the psychologists. Skinner and the behaviorists were quick to respond, "that's right." In fact, it's not our genes or our instincts that determine our behavior, it's the environment. The famous "nature - nurture" argument was frequently heard. "The environment is also a factor." Ironically, in our efforts to escape from genetic determinism, we inadvertently slipped into environmental determinism. Victim psychology was victorious, unchallenged, supreme. We had exchanged one set of intellectual chains for another.

The determinism and pessimism of Freud and Skinner are very much with us today. Unfortunately, Freud and Skinner spread beliefs that are not only false, but also devastating to both individuals and society. They teach helplessness. With his environmental determinism, Skinner taught that morality was irrelevant. Even worse, Freud taught that morality is destructive, makes us sick.

In fact, morality makes us well. The simple truth is that traditional virtues are natural laws. We cannot escape them, nor avoid the natural consequences when we violate them. We are faced then with a simple equation:

VIRTUE = HAPPINESS, SUCCESSFUL RELATIONSHIPS, ECT.

VICE = UNHAPPINESS, FAILED RELATIONSHIPS, ETC.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RESPONSIBILITY & FREEDOM

The great psychiatrist, William Glasser, has developed a new psychology, Control Theory (a.k.a. Choice Theory), which offers an alternative to the determinism of Freud and Skinner. Glasser has correctly observed that human behavior is motivated by five basic human needs:

physical
freedom
belonging
power
fun

I refer you to his outstanding books for full explanation and the details of his liberating psychology. Suffice to say here that Glasser will be to twenty-first century psychology what Freud and Skinner combined have been to the twentieth. The big difference of course, is Glasser's right.

In studying Control Theory, applying it to my own life and teaching it to others, I have come to realize why it is true and effective. Glasser's five basic needs are examples of our common human nature. They are universal in all people, part of our nature. For example, the reason democracy is spreading all over the world is because man needs to be free and will strive for freedom all his life.

Indeed, no matter what culture you observe, people all need these five things. No matter what age, gender, race, nationality, etc. these needs are there to be seen. If we observe individuals carefully, we can always trace the cause of any of their behavior to one or more of these basic human needs. What this amounts to is a frame of reference for all human behavior including learning, discipline, etc., completely different from that of traditional psychology.

NATURAL LAW AND THE SATISFACTION OF BASIC NEEDS

Glasser explains that we spend our lives striving to satisfy these five basic human needs.

Abraham Maslow was the first of the great modern psychologists to realize that we were studying psychology backwards. We were looking for the

unhappiest, sickest most miserable people we could find and studying them to see why they were like that. He suggested we look instead for the happiest, healthiest most well adjusted people and study them to see why they were like that. He called these folks “self-actualizing” people. With this paradigm shift modern psychology was born.

Maslow further observed that these people have a lot in common. He said that they have needs which he called “meta needs”. These included things like justice, love, simplicity, etc. We can verify Maslow’s positive approach to psychology from our own experience. Think of a person that you know who you think is an outstanding human being, a person that you truly admire.

I can describe that person to you.

THAT OUTSTANDING PERSON IS:

HUMBLE	MODERATE
COURAGEOUS	PATIENT
SELF DISCIPLINED	PERSEVERANT
FORGIVING	PRUDENT
GENEROUS	RESPECTFUL
HONEST	RESPONSIBLE
HOPEFUL	SIMPLE
JUST/FAIR	SPIRITUAL
KIND	TOLERANT
LOYAL	WORKS

I have asked that question of thousands of people and they all agree that their outstanding person can be accurately described by the above list of attributes. When we think about it, WE ALL KNOW WHAT EXCELLENCE IS: TRADITIONAL VIRTUE.

What we don’t seem to recognize is that TRADITIONAL VIRTUES ARE NATURAL LAWS. The reason we all admire these people is that they are living in conformity to natural law. That is why they are excellent. That is also why they are the happiest and most content people we know. The fact that they all

can be described in the same terms (i.e. VIRTUE) indicates a common cause for their being excellent, happy, and content.

In terms of Glasser's model, these people are "need satisfied". They have their basic human needs; physical, power, freedom, belonging and fun in balance and satisfied. Since these are all virtuous people, it is clear that the general means to a happy life is traditional virtue. It is not by chance that these virtues have been taught by every human culture throughout recorded history. This fact is true because mankind has discovered the necessary relationship between virtue and happiness. The fact that he also keeps forgetting and rediscovering it not withstanding.

THE SECRET TO HUMAN HAPPINESS IS HUMAN VIRTUE. Virtue is the common denominator for all truly happy people. Isn't it ironic when we think of the tremendous amounts of money, time and work expended on self help courses and programs. There is only one self help program that works: virtuous behavior.

It is equally ironic to observe present massive efforts to improve discipline in our schools. Millions of dollars are being spent on training programs that propose rewards and punishments, assertive discipline, etc. None of these programs recognize the only discipline program that works: traditional virtue.

We have only to look around us to verify this simple truth. People who are well disciplined are virtuous. To the extent people are not well disciplined, they are not virtuous. There is no such thing as good discipline without virtue. **VIRTUE IS GOOD DISCIPLINE. GOOD DISCIPLINE IS VIRTUE. THEY ARE IDENTICAL.** Therefore, to improve discipline we must teach and practice virtue. Nothing else will do.

Nonetheless, thousands of schools are trying to improve discipline while overlooking this essential foundation. Until this essential foundation is recognized and acted upon, discipline will continue to decline in our schools despite the expenditure of tremendous resources of money, work and time to improve it.

This is of course equally true for the problem of crime and the general deterioration of behavior in our culture at large. We must reinstitute these standards in our families, our workplaces and our neighborhoods. Simply spending more money and passing more laws will not do it.

VIRTUE: THE HIGHER STANDARDS WE NEED MOST

The latest intense educational effort is aimed at raising academic standards. The entire country is engrossed in this important goal. Enormous

energy and resources are being expended to come up with “authentic assessments” as one of the primary means to these higher academic standards.

Raising Academic standards is really not a problem. We could, for example, require a grade of “B” for credit. “Poof,” we’ve raised standards. All of the activity to change tests is in fact occurring because about 85% of our students cannot now reach high standards on our present tests. I’ve asked thousands of educators to estimate the percent of students in American public schools that are consistently achieving at a high level. Virtually all of them agree it is 15% or less. If we change our tests without “dumbing down” the standards, we will still have about 85% of our students unable to reach high standards.

Students with high achievement will perform at high standards on the new tests just as they do on the present tests. The students with low achievement will perform poorly on the new tests just as they do on present tests.

The problem of low test scores is a problem of low achievement, not a problem of which test we use. A good reader, for example, will score high on any reading test you give him. A good math student will score high on any math test. If I have a strong mastery of math, I don’t care which test or other measurement you require of me. I will do well.

The real reason we don’t just raise standards on existing tests is that we know the result will be massive failure. The nonsense and confusion emanating from many of our new assessments (portfolios are a promising exception) is a smoke screen for this simple fact. What needs to be changed is the entire system. Higher achievement will not come from changing tests. It will only come from more effective schools, better curriculum and instruction as well as numerous other structural changes.

The entire nation is undertaking what amounts to a gigantic diversion. No one thinks we need higher academic standards more than me. At the same time we are neglecting to deal with the programmatic causes of low achievement, we are failing to deal with the even more important root problem. The higher standards we need most are not academic. The higher standards we need most are moral. If our moral standards were high, academic standards and achievement would be much higher.

If Standards such as responsibility, perseverance, work, etc. were in place in our culture, academic standards would automatically rise. Without such standards as norms for behavior, raising academic standards will be an exercise in futility. Even if we improve the other systemic problems (which we are generally ignoring right now), we will still have low, mediocre achievement and increasing discipline problems in our schools.

VIRTUE AND SELF ESTEEM

Last St. Patrick's day I came to an important insight. It occurred to me how many times in my life people had said, or clearly implied, that I'm good because I'm Irish. This of course is nonsense. Irish doesn't make me good any more than it makes me bad. The things we value have no moral implications, good or bad.

Self esteem is another area of high interest and effort in our schools, families, and throughout the larger culture. One tactic used to improve student self esteem is to teach them their cultural heritage. While that may have some value, one's cultural heritage does not make them good any more than it makes them bad. For purposes of building self esteem, it is a house built on sand.

I recently observed a counseling session in which a teenage girl was trying to overcome a problem of low self esteem. She told the counselor that the other students didn't like her. She was having a very difficult time getting along with them. When asked why she responded that they make fun of her. She then explained that her nose is too big ("look at my nose") and that she is at least six inches too short for her age.

The counselor asked if she got along well with any of her teachers. She responded that she liked Mrs. Smith. When asked why she said that Mrs. Smith is real pretty.

"Nice nose?"

"Oh yeah. And she dresses really nice."

The counselor then asked if there were any pretty teachers that she did not like. She responded, "Oh yeah. Mrs. Jones."

"She's real pretty?"

"Yeah."

"Dresses nice. Nice nose?"

"Oh yeah."

The counselor then summarized. "Let me see if I've got this straight. You like Mrs. Smith because she's pretty and dresses nice. But you don't like Mrs. Jones who also is real pretty and dresses nice. Correct?"

"Yeah."

"Tell me a little more about Mrs. Jones. Why don't you like her?"

"She doesn't like us. She doesn't respect the students, she's sarcastic and mean."

"And Mrs. Smith?"

"Oh she's real nice to us, cares about us"

"Could it be, since both teachers are real pretty, the reason that you like Mrs. Smith is not because she's pretty, but because she's good?"

The student looked shocked. It had obviously never occurred to her that that could be the reason.

The counselor continued by asking her to tell him more about how the other kids treated her. She said that they make fun of her. They call her names.

“What kind of names?”

“Oh they call me shorty, this and that, liar, this and that, this and that.”

“They call you a liar?”

“Yeah.”

“Do you ever lie to them?”

“Weeeeell sometimes.”

At this point we can see the cause of her self esteem problem. Her problem is not her nose. She is a liar and nobody likes a liar, including the liar. It will do no good to teach her her cultural history, tell her a thousand times that her nose is okay, bombard her with constant positive reinforcement, etc. She knows that she is a liar and none of the traditional strategies for building self esteem will change that. The only solution to her self esteem problem is the virtue of honesty. Nothing else will do. As long as she continues to lie, she will not like herself. The reason is quite simple. Liars are not likable. No one respects or likes a liar.

Once again, we see the schools extending great effort and resources to improve student self image while overlooking the only effective means to that end: virtue. Without this foundation, efforts to raise student self esteem are an exercise in futility.

Schools are generally trying to improve self esteem by various types of “reinforcements.” These include efforts to send positive messages to students to show them that we think that they are good, worthwhile, etc. Sadly, the schools are once again misled, in this case by behavioral (i.e. stimulus - response psychology). The fallacy here is the assumption (i.e. false first premise) that self image is a product of how others (i.e. the environment) see me. By definition, self image is a product of how I see myself. You can send me all the positive messages you want, but I will know if I am a liar, a cheat, cruel, disrespectful, etc. My self esteem will be high only when I respect and love myself. This can only take place when I am respectable and lovable, or virtuous.

Ironically, we all have known people from incredibly negative and destructive environments who nonetheless have high self esteem. These people respect and love themselves as well as others. They are virtuous. That’s all they need.

Observation makes this clear. Those people we admire all have very high self esteem. In fact they respect and love themselves. The reason is quite obvious. They are respectable and lovable. Virtuous people always are. The

essential first premise for a positive self image is virtue. Absent that first premise, all other strategies and efforts to assist such students (or adults) are in vain.

Schools should be concerned with student self esteem, which is seen by some as a psychobabble term for self respect. This is true not only for the sake of the students themselves, but also because those who do not respect themselves will be unable to respect others. Disrespect for others is a sure sign of low self esteem. But we are going about it all wrong. The girl in the counseling example cited above doesn't even know what "good" is. She thinks "pretty" is "good." As long as this moral confusion exists, the problem will continue and get worse. I have a question for my generation. How did we let this happen? We were taught better than this.

Schools must teach character education (we used to call it "citizenship"). I will make specific recommendations on this topic later. But first we must clear up the moral confusion prevalent among most adults.

NATURAL LAW AND SUCCESS

Steven Covey points out that there are two "C's" in success. One is for character and the other is for competence, the two ingredients needed to succeed at any task. He is correct. But they are not of equal importance. Character is primary. If I have character, I will do what is necessary to develop any competence I need.

At the age of 53 I decided to learn how to use a computer. Prior to then, I did not know how to turn one on. I signed up for courses. One day I was working in an intermediate word processing class of 10 students. There were two teenage girls in the class who demonstrated considerable ease in learning. They were cutting through this stuff like a hot knife through butter. I was having a tough time. In fact, by the end of the day I was more confused than when I entered the class in the morning. I sat there developing a headache and wondering, "what do I have to do to learn this computer?"

It occurred to me that this teacher was communicating effectively with adolescents. After all, I'm a Ph.D. This guy is obviously not on my level. Then I thought, "will arrogance help me learn the computer?" No!

What then am I to do? Suddenly it occurred to me. I need to be patient. I need to persevere, to work, be humble (it's okay for this to be harder for me than it is for two adolescents), etc. The answer is, "be virtuous." If I do these things I will learn the computer. My headache almost immediately was relieved. I knew what I needed to do to succeed. Sure enough, a year later I am relatively accomplished and quite comfortable with the computer. In fact, I enjoy it very

much and am confident that I can and will learn as much as I want in this fascinating technology; as long as I'm patient, work, persevere, etc.

More importantly, I realized that the key to success of any kind is virtue. If I behave virtuously, I can develop competence in most, if not all things I want. **VIRTUE IS NOT ONLY THE SECRET TO HAPPINESS, BUT ALSO THE SECRET TO SUCCESS AS WELL.**

HUMILITY: THE FIRST VIRTUE

In his Seven Habits of Highly Effective People Covey notes that humility is necessarily the first of all the virtues. This is because without humility we cannot pursue or possess the other virtues. If there is one virtue that we've trashed it's humility (though God knows we've trashed them all).

In looking at history, it is clear that the primary problem plaguing mankind has not changed from the beginning of humanity to the present. If we go back to Adam (that's the beginning of course), we see that Adam's sin was pride. It was not good enough for Adam to live in paradise with God. Oh no. Adam had to eat from the tree of knowledge, know everything and be perfect just as God is perfect. Adam would not accept his own imperfection.

Because of Adam's pride, he unleashed the four horsemen of the apocalypse on us: war, pestilence, famine and death. They roam the earth at will to this day. If you doubt this, watch the 6:00 o'clock news tonight and see for yourself. This was the first violation of natural law (i.e. the natural law of humility).

Adam was the first human perfectionist. A perfectionist is a person who takes great pains and gives them to others. Since he will not tolerate the possibility of imperfection in himself, he is intolerant of it in others. In truth only One is perfect. The rest of us are imperfect. **HUMILITY IS THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT MY OWN IMPERFECTION.** Without humility I cannot pursue my own improvement. I cannot pursue virtue, the only means to excellence, self improvement or the improvement of anything else in my life. Any suggestion of imperfection is seen not as a possible opportunity to improve, but as a threat.

In fact, **EXCELLENCE IS THE HABIT OF SELF IMPROVEMENT (OR THE HABIT OF PURSUIT OF VIRTUE).** Excellence becomes possible only when I recognize and accept that perfection is not. Without this recognition and acceptance I am the prisoner of my own pride.

The trap of arrogance is precisely that it effectively blocks excellence or the pursuit of self improvement. Energy is expended instead in defense of one's

own perfection. It is little wonder that arrogant people are generally disliked and have poor relations with others. Since they consistently violate the natural law of humility, they are generally unhappy people with the necessary resulting low self esteem. Nobody likes arrogant people, including the arrogant person. Arrogance is the enemy of both happiness and real success. The previously cited example of learning the computer is a clear example of how arrogance can be an obstacle to success.

Humility, ironically is the first virtue even for high self esteem. I must be able to be tolerant of myself, accept the fact of my own imperfection or high self esteem is impossible.

In sum, Covey is right. Without the great virtue of humility the other virtues are beyond our grasp, as therefore are happiness and success. Without virtue we can have neither. Just as pride is the first of all vices, humility is necessarily the first of all the virtues.

RESPONSIBILITY: THE NECESSARY FIRST PREMISE FOR FREEDOM

Since we have observed that those people we admire are the most responsible and therefore the freest people that we know, we need to consider present thinking on responsibility.

Popular culture tends to refer frequently to group responsibility. Individuals are seen, even defined in terms of group membership: Black, White, male, female, rich, poor, old, young, etc. We hear things like “generational responsibility”. These categories are functioning as a modern form of tribal identity (leading to a variety of forms of tribalism). I have heard people say things like “Irish is who I am” thus defining themselves in terms of a group. Lacking individual identity, it is small wonder that we deny individual responsibility. Thus “males” are responsible for gender bias. Twentieth century “White people” are responsible for the American slave system. “Blacks” are responsible for most crime. “Jews” were responsible for Germany’s defeat in World War 1, etc. The acceptance of group responsibility is the necessary first premise for group guilt. We seem to overlook the fact that bias is nothing more than the process of judging individuals by group membership.

Just as group membership makes me guilty of nothing, it also in and of itself makes me responsible for nothing. **THE ONLY RESPONSIBILITY THAT MAKES ANY SENSE OR HAS ANY VALIDITY IS INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.**

Premise: Individuals are the products of their environment

Conclusion: Therefore they are not responsible for their behavior.

But then who is responsible? The environment, which translates many ways. Frequently it translates into groups. For example “men” are responsible for sexism. “Whites” are responsible for racism. Thus while individuals are not responsible for their behavior, groups are.

The great irony here is that an obvious contradiction is overlooked by the group guilt advocates. If, as they believe, individuals are victims and not responsible for their individual behavior, how can groups made up totally of irresponsible individuals be responsible?

Paradoxically, the extent to which a group acts responsibly will be in direct proportion to the degree of individual responsibility of its members. No more and no less. There is no such thing as group responsibility. I am responsible only for my individual behavior.

This misplaced responsibility on groups has led to incredible nonsense and damage. In our efforts to impose group responsibility we have absolved individuals of responsibility. Once again we can see the pernicious influence of stimulus - response psychology. I am the victim of my environment. If I have a problem getting a job it's because of affirmative action which discriminates against me as a White man. My problem is the bias of others (women, non white males, etc.) and consequently I resent these groups and attribute responsibility for my problem to them. I therefore have no individual responsibility to get a job. The world is unfair. I am the helpless victim of an unfair world. Unfortunately that will never get me a job.

In truth whatever the implications of membership in the countless groups to which I belong (male, white, middle age, middle class, college educated, Catholic, retired, etc.), group guilt and group responsibility belong to none of them. The view that individuals are not responsible for their own behavior is a critical assumption absolutely necessary for our present moral confusion and decline. That belief, introduced by Freud and confirmed by Skinner, is still legitimized in most university psychology training. Indeed, it has branched out from the psychology department and thoroughly infiltrated most of the liberal arts departments, and even some of the science and business departments. Thus firmly gripping academia, it permeates the entire culture. It is not only false but immoral and catastrophic in its individual and social impact. Intellectually, it is the equivalent of teaching that the world is flat.

THE VIRTUE OF WORK

Work is presently seen as a value in our culture. Its worth, therefore, is relative. A doctor is seen as “better” than a custodian for example. This is also clear since the importance of work itself is viewed by many as relative. Work is

good if you have a particular reason, to make a living or perform some good deed. It is not considered essential, however as evidenced by the American welfare system which until very recently in effect said that “if you don’t work all your life, it’s okay. In fact if you are the second, third etc. generation to spend your whole life without working, it’s okay.”

A college student in New York City complained to President Clinton that he was being required to clean toilets for his welfare while attending college (City University is also almost free, since it is heavily subsidized by taxpayers.) Why should he have to do this “demeaning work?” The President did not give a clear response.

On hearing of this incident, New York State’s Senator Patrick Moynihan stated that it is perfectly all right to require this work. He thus implicitly demonstrates recognition of the “virtue” of work. Notably, the President did not.

In fact, work is a virtue. It is a behavior that makes me good. When I work, I not only earn my daily bread, but I also make a contribution to the common good. It doesn’t matter what form work takes as long as it’s honest work. The road crews out digging and working on the road today are enabling the rest of us to move about more safely and conveniently.

All too often we have heard things like, “What do you expect people to do, take jobs at MacDonaldis?” This implies that jobs like working at MacDonaldis are demeaning, that it is better not to work than to take such a job. Nothing could be further from the truth. There is great dignity in honest work, although we have corruptly lost our respect for many forms of honest work. By thus encouraging people to not work, we contribute to their low self esteem, continued dependence on others and their general destruction. We unwittingly help to keep them out of the workforce by supporting such irresponsible behavior, and thus contribute to their misery.

In our confused state, while we attempt to defend this condition in others and thus support their “self esteem” we have actually elevated sloth to the status of virtue. High self esteem is not possible in people who are able to work and do not.

People who work can test this experientially. Would it be acceptable for them to not work themselves, or for their working age parents, children or friends to not work? They would be horrified. And yet many think it is “compassionate” to accept this behavior in others, even to facilitate it through their support of programs that make it possible and are essential to sustain such self destructive anti social behavior.

Interestingly, when our genuinely high self esteem people retire and no longer need to work for a living, they still work in some way. Many do volunteer work as long as they are able, recognizing that work is necessary for their well

being, they feel the need to contribute to their fellow man in some way. While they may reduce the amount and nature of the work that they do, they will continue to so “contribute” as long as they are able.

It is in fact a pernicious falsehood to believe work is any less necessary than responsibility, respect, kindness etc. It is every bit as much a natural law as any other virtue. With the exception of the tiny fraction of people who cannot work, long periods without work are detrimental and destructive to those who do not work and to society at large.

The choice to not work is clearly self destructive. Yet it has been encouraged in so many ways for so long in our country.

THE FALLACY THAT POVERTY CAUSES CRIME

A logical fallacy that is currently causing great harm has a Latin name: non sequitire. This fallacy occurs when we conclude erroneously that one thing is necessarily logically followed by another. It is commonly believed in American popular thought that poverty causes crime. Indeed it is concluded that poverty is one of “the root causes” of crime. Therefore, as long as poverty exists, crime will be caused by it.

The view that poverty causes crime is analogous to the view that wealth causes virtue. It is, of course, equally absurd. No one would subscribe to the later view. There is overwhelming evidence that poverty does not cause crime.

1. Does poverty cause the crime of rape? Obviously not.
2. If poverty causes crime, why are there wealthy criminals?
3. If poverty causes crime, why are the overwhelming proportion of poor people not criminals?
4. There is no reason to believe that white collar crime, clearly not caused by poverty, is any less common than crime committed by the poor.

The non-sequitire assertion that poverty causes crime creates an abhorrent bias against poor people. If you see one near you be careful, they are far more likely to be criminals. The view that the poor are disproportionally criminal is a hideous bias. In addition to supporting this bias, in their “compassionate” efforts to excuse poor criminals of responsibility for their crimes, they not only insult the overwhelming majority of innocent poor people, but support crime, since the tiny fraction of poor people who are criminals are seen as the victims of their poverty and therefore not responsible for there behavior. They are the helpless victims of their environment. (Thanks again B. F. Skinner.)

As Glasser so brilliantly explains in his watershed psychology book, Control Theory, our environment does not “cause” any of our behavior, but merely presents us with some of the choices available to us at any given time. All of our

behavior is “caused” or motivated by the five basic human needs common to all people: poor, rich, male, female, etc. Some choose virtuous behaviors to respond to these “causes” while others choose vice or negative destructive behaviors.

Indeed the cause of crime has not changed throughout human history. The first recorded crime was Cain’s murder of his brother Able. The cause was not poverty, but vice. Specifically Cain slew Able because of jealousy. To this day jealousy and all of the other vices (greed, lust, anger, pride, sloth, despair) are the only causes of crime. There have never been any other causes, are none now and never will be. Without these vices there would be no crime.

Poverty is no more the cause of crime than wealth is the cause of virtue. It’s time to abandon this clearly fallacious and devastatingly destructive belief.

THE SOLUTION TO POVERTY

The causes of poverty in America are many. Some are born into poverty. Some are lured into it by the welfare system. Some come as immigrants from impoverished countries. Some are poor simply out of bad luck or injustice.

Whichever of the many causes may apply to anyone, there is only one solution to poverty. For the answer, we can once again resort to our own experience and observation.

For hundreds of years literally millions of poor people have come to America and risen out of poverty. How did they do it? The answer is virtue. They worked, often in the most “menial” of jobs. Frequently they did so for extended periods of time. They saved (thrift is an example of the virtue of prudence or the application of wisdom to practice). They persevered, were patient, etc. Other than the remote instance of winning the lottery, (which provides false hope to millions for every winner) no other behavior has ever worked. The only person who can get me out of poverty is me. The only plan or method known to be successful is virtue.

When referring to poor people, I have often heard the statement, “What do you expect them to do? Lift themselves up by their own bootstraps?” This clearly indicates the belief that poor people are unable to help themselves. It is obviously impossible for anyone to pull himself up by his own bootstraps. Subtly, poor people are thus told, “you are incapable of helping yourself. You are helpless.”

In fact, virtuous behavior is always helpful, and not just for dealing with the problem of poverty. Virtue is the answer for any problem! Try it out. Any problem you can have, no matter what it is: Virtue is the best response you can make. Unfortunately, many poor people believe the false view of their “compassionate” well wishers that the solution to their poverty is in the hands of others.

This truth does not absolve anyone else of responsibility to do whatever they can to create conditions to enable poor people to choose virtuous alternatives that will result in rising out of poverty. Others can strive to maximize opportunities for poor people. Nonetheless, whether you will help me or not, only virtue will improve my condition. Unless poor people help themselves, their poverty will be permanent. To deny this truth in the name of “compassion” is destructive foolishness at best.

HIGH STANDARDS, IMPERFECTION, AND HUMILITY

While working with a group of educators on this topic of high standards of virtue, I was challenged by a participant.

“Tom, are you saying that you always live up to these standards?”

“No. Of course not.”

“Doesn’t that make you a hypocrite?”

“No. That only makes me human.”

The simple truth is that I am imperfect. The fact that I all too frequently fail to live up to my high standards is only human. When I fail, I pick myself up and try again. As far as I’m concerned that’s what life is all about. It is the virtue of humility that enables me to except my own imperfection while striving for my own improvement.

The fact of human imperfection is undeniable. Unfortunately it has been used as an excuse to lower standards. Once again the fallacy of *reducio ad absurdum* is put into effect. Because people can not consistently reach so high without at least occasional failure, we lower the bar. Once lowered, the new expectations become the norm. For example, since sexual abstinence is difficult for most young people, we conclude that it is impossible. The new standard becomes give them condoms since we can’t expect them to live up to a higher standard of respect and responsibility. Expect them to be sexually promiscuous, since better behavior is virtually impossible.

We have done this in numerous ways. Since it is unreasonable for children to be well behaved all the time, we expect children to be discipline problems in school. We expect people to cheat on their taxes. We expect married people to be promiscuous and half of our marriages to end in divorce. Most people cannot be expected to vote, etc.

Since all people are imperfect, imperfection has become the standard. Categorical confusion again, this time of sin and sinner. While I am nobody’s judge (as required by the virtue of tolerance) I am responsible to judge behavior: both my own and others. Condemning people is intolerant. Accepting wrongful behavior is to participate in it. People and behavior are not the same. Since I live

in a glass house I can throw no stones. Indeed, let him who is innocent cast the first stone. If we practiced the great virtue of tolerance, no stones would be cast at people for failing, while high standards of virtue are maintained for behavior.

But confusion of person and behavior has caused us In the name of tolerance to accept, and even approve of destructive behavior. Divorce is a good example. No one has the right to judge anyone who is divorced.

I know a woman whose husband deserted her with four young children. She has been nothing less than heroic in her responsibility to raise her children. I have never met a person of greater virtue. There are undoubtedly cases when divorce is the lesser evil among the available choices. There are cases when one partner has little or no responsibility for the divorce. That doesn't make divorce itself good. It is categorically bad. It is always tragic when a relationship is broken, particularly so when children are hurt in the process. So while virtue requires me to respect and love divorced people (in this case even the irresponsible husband/father) every bit as much as anyone else, it also requires me to reject divorce as a standard. While it may sometimes be necessary, it is never good.

Many divorced people understand this critical distinction better than many others. Having experienced this tragedy, they know all too well that there is nothing good about it. As long as there is marriage, there will be divorce. We however, have elevated divorce to an "alternative lifestyle," an acceptable standard. A standard by definition should be the best we can be or do. While some will undoubtedly always have to accept divorce, we should never accept it as a standard. Humble divorced people see their divorce as a failure, which it is.

Having so failed, what should one do? The answer is quite simple and always the same: PURSUE VIRTUE JUST AS ONE SHOULD AFTER ANY OTHER FAILURE. The divorced person can and should pursue virtue and excellence in their own life, and are just as capable of achieving them as anyone else.

THE LITTLE ENGINE, THE TORTOISE AND THE LONE RANGER

We tend to set our standards in terms of people we admire. These models are extremely important, especially to young people who are generally very impressionable. When I was in kindergarten I remember (50 years latter) the teacher reading us the story of The Little Engine That Could. The little engine was virtuous. He was characterized as hard working, persevering, optimistic (optimism is an example of the virtue of hope), self respecting, etc.

She also read us the story of The Tortoise and the Hare. Although less gifted than the hare, the tortoise was more virtuous (hard working, perseverant, etc.). It was clearly more important to be virtuous than have talent. The arrogance

of the speedy hare was self defeating, even to the extent that he could be beaten by a the slowest of creatures, a virtuous turtle.

Starting in kindergarten, and continuing throughout public school, I was taught virtue. Later we read about and discussed “honest Abe” and others too numerous to list. The public schools considered the teaching of virtue as a central part of education. Indeed, as I look back, it was considered the most important thing we needed to learn. Models of virtue were continually presented and discussed, especially in terms of their virtue. Natural law (though not specifically labeled as such at that time) was the primary and constant focus of my education. How fortunate I was to have attended such a fine public school.

I travel a lot working with schools around our country. One night in my motel room I was channel surfing and came across The Lone Ranger in an old black and white episode. To the background of the William Tell Overture, I watched something I hadn't seen in at least 40 years. What did the Lone Ranger do? He went around defending the weak from the forces of evil. He was courageous. He was tolerant, his best friend was of another race. He was respectful. You'd better not bother any women while the Lone Ranger was around. (He is still one of my heroes. If you visit my website and have sound, you can hear the William Tell Overture.)

I recalled other T V shows. Superman started each episode explaining how Superman strove for “truth, justice, and the American way.” Truth and justice are of course great virtues.

Virtue was thus taught to me by my school, parents, church, and even the media. As little Tommy Kelly sat there watching things like the Lone Ranger, he frequently thought, “When I grow up I want to be like him.” The whole culture supported this teaching.

How far we've gone, down hill. Now we tell our children not to bring their guns to school and adults not to sell drugs near schools. We have been in moral retreat since the sixties. The only question remaining seems to be, “how low can we go?”

THE MEDIA AND EMERGING GUTTER CULTURE

Who are the role models for our children now: Madonna, Rambo, Dennis Rodman? What standards do they teach? The media is the single greatest contributor to the emerging gutter culture gaining dominance in our country. The ubiquitous nature of the media has enabled the culture of “Tinsel Town” to become dominant.

For hypocrisy the media is second to none. They proclaim their concern for righteousness constantly while selling violence, disrespect and promiscuous sex, for money. Shows about families portray parents as idiots. Two parent families are referred to disparagingly as “Leave it to Beaver” families. This term is a code used to ridicule two parent families. Ridicule is heaped on people constantly in news and talk shows. When the media is challenged on this point, they quickly point out their rights. While my rights are a great value, my responsibilities are a great virtue. When we make our “rights” the standard, we lower the bar and defy natural law. A costly mistake. The media shows little inclination to accept their responsibilities. Their tremendous influence on the entire culture is devastating.

Masculinity is under constant attack by the media. It seems like you rarely hear the term “husband” without the corresponding “wife beater.” “Father” is frequently followed by “child abuser.” This denigration of masculinity is constant in the media. Even “heroic” men are portrayed as masters of violence, brutality and havoc. Much of this constant attack is quite subtle. The practice of sexual harassment is portrayed as everywhere. The virtuous men who were the ubiquitous role models for young Tommy Kelly are no longer to be seen in the media.

I repeat my stinging rhetorical question for my own generation. How did we let this happen? We were taught better. We react to pollution of our air and water with indignation and outrage. We boycott anyone sponsoring such things. Yet we sit idly while our culture is being polluted. We are even duped into criticizing those few brave souls who speak up as “puritans, prudes” and/or assailants on our rights.

Let me be very clear here. I am not calling for censorship. More laws are not the answer. I am merely calling for each of us to accept the individual responsibility to reject garbage. That means being courageous enough to call garbage what it is. It means being disciplined enough to not pay for garbage, or the products of those who sponsor garbage. If there were no profit in garbage, there would be virtually none in the media.

While it is true that I do not sell garbage for money, that is not enough. People could not pollute our culture if we did not accept it. It is not enough to criticize others for cultural pollution. There are things I can do to stop it. I am morally obligated to accept this responsibility, no matter how small my individual contribution may be. Virtue isn't limited to not doing wrong, but also requires doing right. I forget who said it but it is true: For evil to prevail all good people need do is remain silent. That is generally what is going on right now.

WHEN BAD IS GOOD

Our present moral confusion is greatly enhanced by another fallacy known as “nonsequitire.” This fallacy occurs when I imply that something logically follows when it does not. Victim psychology makes effective use of this fallacy for example when it teaches us that we are not in control of our own behavior. Therefore, we are not responsible. This phenomenon takes many forms. I will give a few examples.

Many believe we are the “product” of our family. If our family is a mess (an all too common condition these days) it is unreasonable for anyone (especially myself) to think I will be anything but a mess. It is to be expected that I will be “a mess.” Whatever the wrongdoing of my family may be, I can be expected to behave no better. Thus the nonsequitire: My family is a mess, therefore I must be a mess.

I have heard teachers and administrators say things like, “after all, these are poor children.” The unspoken implication is clearly that therefore we should expect low achievement, lots of violence, promiscuity, a higher rate of crime, etc. After all they are the products of their environment, which in this case is poor.

Adults who are third or fourth generation on welfare are not expected to work. They are consistently reminded that they are the products of their poverty.

There are many more examples similar to the above. The common denominator for all of them is that they are used to justify the denial of responsibility. I am not responsible for my own life or my own behavior because:

1. I am poor
2. I have dysfunctional parents (a good excuse even if I am rich)
3. I am female (and we all know that the world is unfair to females)
4. I am Black
5. I am Hispanic
6. I am Asian
7. I am this, I am that, etc.

Imagine the odds against a person who is Black, female, poor, and has dysfunctional parents: a quadruple whammy, the ultimate victim.

Once identified as victims, irresponsible conduct is only to be expected. It is not the responsibility of the individual but his circumstances. Therefore their irresponsible behavior is acceptable. It may even be good. For example, when a poor person defaces public property with graffiti it is not considered disrespectful, but rather an expression of “folk art.” When a rich person does the same thing, while we may not view it as good, it is certainly acceptable since he is merely expressing his rage at his abusive parents.

We all are familiar with the recent case of the two brothers who murdered their wealthy parents and almost got away with it. Their first trial resulted in a hung jury because, “they were the victims of abusive parents.”

There is no excuse for irresponsible behavior. Whatever the circumstances of my life, I am constantly confronted with choices. I can choose right or I can choose wrong. There is no justification for choosing wrong. Wrong is never an acceptable alternative or justifiable choice. It matters not how “wrongly” others behave toward me. I am not responsible for their conduct, only my own.

We have set cultural mores in place that absolve individuals of their responsibility for their own behavior. We then accept and even justify wrongful behavior. To do this is to participate in wrongdoing. I am responsible for accepting and/or justifying wrong behavior. I may not judge people but I am responsible to judge behavior.

In addition to the above justifications for wrong, we frequently hear things like, “Everybody does it.” Thus the criterion for behavior is not justice, respect, patience, etc., but rather how many people do it. If it is a lot, it is acceptable behavior. If the number is large enough it is good.

Thus we have arrived at a world which sees “BAD” AS ACCEPTABLE AND EVEN “GOOD.”

WHEN GOOD IS BAD

If you want to do something bad and get away with it, do it in the name of something good. In fact, if you want to do something very bad, do it in the name of something very good. For example, “rights” are constantly put forth as the reasons for wrongs. The “right” to free speech is the reason for supporting pornography. The “right” to bear arms is the reason to justify possession of machine guns and armor piercing bullets. These are glaring examples of the “reductio ad absurdum” fallacy. This fallacy occurs when we take something good and extend it to the absurd.

I remember while teaching I would sometimes see a fellow teacher doing something ineffective and/or even destructive in our school. When challenged on the matter, the response was, “I’m doing this for the children, because I care about the kids.” Who can argue with that? This usually resulted in acceptance of the damaging behavior. The good “end” or intention justified the destructive means.

I frequently see politicians do the same thing. When challenged on any behavior, they typically justify it in the name of “protecting Social Security” or “providing for those unable to provide for themselves.” Thus they divert attention away from their wrongful behavior claiming it is caused by something good. This devious tactic usually goes unnoticed and unchallenged.

I am convinced that more damage is done in the name of something good than under any other justification. If we look at history, we see wars conducted in the name of God. Hitler propagated the big lie in the name of country. History is replete with examples of great wrongs performed in the name of great values and even in the name of virtue. We seem all too ready to accept this devious nonsequitur method of justification for all kinds of wrongs.

To compound the damage, when people come to their senses and recognize the wrong done, they typically blame the “good” whose name was used to justify it instead of the person responsible. The fact that religion, for example, has been used to justify war and other evils tends to result in the nonsequitur conclusion that religion caused these evils instead of the people responsible. Anything good can be misused. The “good” misused to justify “bad” is still good. Its misuse is bad.

The justification of something bad in the name of something good is one of the most deceptive and destructive fallacies. It all too frequently results not only in acceptance of bad as good, but also in rejection of the good misused to justify the wrong.

BELIEFS: A MATTER OF CHOICE

Beliefs are a matter of choice. I’ve asked thousands of adults I train, “how many things in your life are you absolutely certain of?” They usually respond, “somewhere between very few and none.” They also generally agree that as they get older the number decreases.

Glasser explains clearly that virtually all of my behavior is my choice. Beliefs are part of my behavior. Therefore, beliefs are choices. People believe what they want or choose to believe.

For example, I believe in God. An atheist says, “Tom, prove to me that there is a God.” Of course I can’t. But my response to him is, “prove to me that there is not a God.” And of course, he can’t. The simple truth is that the existence of God cannot be proved or disproved. Why then does one person believe that there is a God and another believe that there is not? The answer is because one person chooses to believe that there is a God and the other one chooses to believe that there is not.

I am married thirty-three years to a very beautiful woman. I believe that my wife is faithful to me. Can I prove that? Of course not. I am not with her every minute. Once I recognize that beliefs are a matter of choice, I am able to choose beliefs that enable me or disable me. The belief that my wife is faithful to me enables me to have a positive relationship with her.

Without this awareness (i.e. that my beliefs are my choices), I tend to choose beliefs randomly or simply accept them uncritically. If I choose the vice of jealousy, I will choose to not trust my wife. Having thus violated natural law, this will disable my ability to relate positively to my wife and hurt my wife, my children, and myself.

Beliefs are extremely important because they drive behavior. Since they are choices, I am responsible for and can choose beliefs that enable or disable me. Disabling beliefs cause me to see myself as a victim, unable to act on my own behalf. I thereby justify denial of responsibility for my own behavior. I also tend to deny the responsibility of others for their own behavior.

If I look honestly at my own beliefs, I probably will find many that are negative and disabling. I can and should change these destructive beliefs. Indeed, I am morally responsible for the beliefs that I choose.

A few years ago after 19 years, one of my friends was laid off from Grumman (Long Island's largest single employer has laid off thousands in the past 10 years) as part of a downsizing process. I met him soon after and we had a fascinating conversation.

"How are you doing?" I inquired.

"Not so good," he said. "Who wants to hire you when you're 51?"

I recognized his terribly disabling belief. As long as he chose this negative destructive belief he would be unable to help himself. "Tell me" I said, "at 51 do you believe that you are more or less able to do your job than you were at 41?"

He thought for a minute and replied, "definitely more able."

"Why is that?"

"Obviously I have ten more years experience and that is built on all of my previous experience. But that's not the way they look at it out there in the market," he quickly added. Thus now doubting his first disabling belief, he chooses a second equally disabling belief.

"Besides you and me," I said, "do you think that there are ANY OTHERS out there who would agree that you are more able to do your job now than when you were 41?"

"Well sure there are SOME, but not many."

"How many jobs do you need?"

He looked at me in clear surprise and thought about it for a while. Then he smiled.

It took six months and he had to relocate off Long Island, but he got a job that paid him \$9,000 more than the one he lost.

He actually could have retired in a reasonably comfortable situation. But he didn't want to retire. As long as he believed that he could not help himself (i.e., that he was the victim of his age or the way others saw his age), that belief would have paralyzed him. Once he decided that he could help himself (i.e. practiced the virtue of hope), all he needed was patience, perseverance, work etc. The answer to his problem was the same as the answer to all human problems: VIRTUOUS BEHAVIOR. Whether or not virtuous behavior can immediately and fully solve all of our problems, it is clearly the best solution available to us. In the long run, it is the only behavior that will bring us happiness and success.

One of the most useful things we can do is periodically examine our own beliefs. Recognizing that my beliefs are my choices, I must identify negative beliefs (i.e. those inconsistent with virtue) and replace them with positive ones.

Unfortunately our present culture fosters, and even teaches negative, destructive and disabling beliefs. Criticism, personal attacks, denigration of other peoples' motives, coercion, and even violence and drugs, etc. are seen as legitimate means to get what we want. Conspicuously absent in our present culture is the teaching of virtue as the appropriate means to get what we want. All too many believe that the teaching of virtue is somehow inappropriate. They have a fuzzy notion that it is the imposition of values, which they confuse constantly with virtues. This popular belief is a primary cause for our present decline. It is, like other beliefs, a choice; a tragic and devastating choice. The fact that it is frequently a choice made out of ignorance is all the more reason to clarify and teach the truth.

THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

It has been said that the passion for knowledge is mankind's weakest passion. Such a statement can only be made by those who have never experienced it. The desire to know, to understand can be just as consuming as any other passion. I can honestly say that I have never met anyone who wants knowledge more than me.

As President Lyndon Johnson once put it, "The answer to all our national problems comes down to a single word: education." He is not alone in thinking that the basic means to improve the world is knowledge. Many in academia have made knowledge the ultimate value, a false god. They are not alone. Many

teachers and parents fall into this trap and see academic success as more important than anything else. They thus foster and teach this false view.

Knowledge of course is a value, not a virtue. Knowledge is something I want, not a behavior that makes me good. What I do with knowledge, whether I use it for virtuous purposes will determine my “goodness,” not the possession of knowledge itself.

Knowledge is frequently confused with virtue. We tend to admire and defer to people with obvious knowledge. This may or may not be appropriate, according to how they use their knowledge. The categorical confusion of “smart” and “good” is causing a lot of harm. All too frequently we follow someone because he is smart, overlooking the fact that he is not good (i.e. virtuous).

One of Glasser’s five basic human needs (or motives) is power, particularly the power to control my own life. The means to power is knowledge. This profound truth is generally unrecognized by the overwhelming majority of people.

Recognizing that knowledge is a value, we nonetheless need to understand that it is essential for satisfaction of the basic human need for power. It is also a powerful means to maximize my virtue and my ability to contribute to the common good. The virtuous person with great knowledge has the capacity to do great good. The acquisition of knowledge is therefore a responsibility, a moral requirement.

The more knowledge I have the more options I have to control my own life and to help others. We must recognize the fact that knowledge is power and ignorance is weakness (not bliss as frequently reported). The most critical knowledge we need is not presently being taught in our schools or anywhere else. That is of course the knowledge of natural law. We must teach students the virtues and their importance, and the consequences of practicing virtue or failing to practice it. What could possibly be more important? Present confusion of virtues and values is first and foremost a matter of ignorance. Teaching the difference and the implications of natural law is therefore the first responsibility of schools (as well as parents, churches and all who teach, which is all of us).

Knowledge is not only the means to power to control my own life, but to freedom (it is the truth that sets us free, and only the truth), belonging, physical health and fun. It is the means to satisfy all of my basic needs. I must learn to be free, to belong, to maximize my health, and to have fun in virtuous ways. These are all learned behaviors. Therefore they must be taught. The knowledge I refer to here is specifically the knowledge of natural law. To leave this out of the curriculum is as immoral as it is destructive. Once we recognize this, we are responsible to correct it.

THE VIRTUE OF SIMPLICITY

The father of modern psychology is the great psychologist Abraham Maslow. In his positive approach to psychology he sought to study the happiest, healthiest and most successful “self actualizing” people. They are those people discussed earlier that we all know and admire as such fine human beings. One of his observations about these people was that they have needs just like the rest of us, but they operate in terms of a specific set of needs which he called “meta needs.” If they are deprived of these meta needs, they become mentally and/or physically sick.

Among his meta needs he included things like the need for justice, love, truth and SIMPLICITY. Interestingly, his meta needs line up almost exactly with the list of virtues. He implied the need for virtue, and therefore natural law, throughout his magnificent work. It is fascinating to see how great geniuses can intuit and imply great truths without specifically seeing them. Maslow’s self actualizing people are virtuous people. When we think about it, the only means to self actualize (or self improvement) is virtue.

Maslow was the first of the great modern psychologists (although there were philosophers back as far as Socrates and Aristotle) to connect virtue as cause with human happiness and success as effects. Glasser continues this connection more specifically when he posits the three “R’s” of Reality Therapy: Reality, Responsibility, and **Right and Wrong**.

People like William Glasser (Reality Therapy and Control Theory) and Steven Covey (The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People) are examples of thinkers who take the complex and simplify it. The best definition of genius I’ve ever heard is “the ability to recognize the obvious.” These two psychologists offer us practical psychology that is totally consistent with natural law and describe extremely useful and specific tools to pursue virtue.

Unfortunately, in our present state of cultural confusion and decline, simplicity is seen by most as a value. In fact, it is typically seen as a negative value.

If I were to say something like, “John is a simple man.”

The typical unspoken response to that is, “That’s too bad. Those things happen.”

On the other hand, we tend to positively value complexity.

If I were to say, “John is a complex man.”

The typical unspoken response to that is, "He must be very deep, sophisticated, profound."

Actually he is probably just confused, and thus unable to think or express himself clearly.

When we consider the greatest thinkers, the greatest contributors to humanity, they have all been clear thinkers and communicators. The greatest detractors from humanity are the complicators: Freud, Skinner, Marx, etc. These complicators created complex thought systems which tended to impress the gullible by their sheer complexity. These gullible folks thought that they didn't understand because the ideas of these "great thinkers" were too "sophisticated," "profound," "deep." Actually they were just too complicated and confused, to say nothing of the fact that they were based on false first premises which make all subsequent conclusions based on them doubtful.

We can also research this view from our own experience. Think again of those people that we admire most. Do they appear complex or simple? They are simplifiers. What you see is what you get. They can reduce the most complex problems to their fundamental parts and go from there to the best solutions. We see this in the best teachers we have had. Indeed it is characteristic of history's greatest teachers; Jesus, Moses, Confucius, Buddha, etc. They are simplifiers. The best definition of teaching I have ever heard is, "the art of simplification." It is simplicity that is profound, not complexity. Complexity is the playground of fools.

The means to success and happiness for example is very simple: Pursue virtue. I need do naught else. Look at the confused formulas put forth by "experts" all around us while the obvious simple truth is right in front of our eyes.

It is true that pursuit of virtue can and will involve complexity, but that is exactly the challenge of this pursuit. To pursue virtue successfully, I must constantly strive to simplify the endless stream of complexities that I encounter along the way.

We frequently hear the statement, "that's too simple." "Too simple" is a contradiction in terms. A thing can't be "too simple." What may be going on is "incomplete." We have left out some important element(s). We frequently do leave important elements out of our thinking or conversations. "Incomplete" however is not the same as "simple." Incomplete is incomplete. In fact, when we present incomplete ideas we do not simplify them but complicate them. Incompleteness is not a form of over simplification, but a form of complexity.

Complexity is a trap. Those who value complexity tend to do so out of arrogance. Unfortunately, our intellectual "elite" have tended to present complexity as a "good." Academia is wallowing in complexity. Professors who point out the obvious nonsense being taught in our colleges and universities are typically denied

tenure. The statement that, “you just don’t understand this complex problem” is usually a cover for the fact that the speaker does not understand it himself. But lacking humility, he wants to imply that he does while you don’t because you are not as smart (sophisticated, deep, complex) as him. If he understood it clearly, he could explain it clearly. If he doesn’t understand it clearly, he doesn’t understand it at all.

To value complexity is to value confusion with its resulting anxiety, fear, misunderstanding and all too frequent conflict. Complexity is the enemy of human happiness and success. As long as there is ignorance there will be complexity. The virtuous person strives all his life to simplify, clarify, understand, explain.

There are then two basic categories of people: Complicators and simplifiers. Those people we admire most are all simplifiers. That is one of the primary reasons we admire them so much. I am a simplifier and proud of it. I will not be cowed by the criticism and slander of arrogant and foolish complicators.

Simplicity is a virtue; a behavior that makes me good.

EUPHEMISMS: CAMOUFLAGE FOR CORRUPTION

Have you visited your local “adult” book store lately? Have you “made love” with many people this month? Have you seen any movies with “mature” themes?

It wouldn’t do after all, to ask if you visited your local smut store, engaged in promiscuous sex, or watched a gruesomely violent, profane movie. Euphemisms shield us from the ugliness of such behaviors. The fact that these euphemisms are transparent doesn’t seem to deter us. They provide a handy code to perfume the rancid smell. They are favorite tools of people with low standards.

If I were to refer to a “smut shop” I would be attacked as a puritan, a prude, one who wants to impose his values on others. Nonsense! If people want to wallow in the gutter, it’s a free country. I for one will not be intimidated. The gutter is the gutter and we all know it. If you want to exercise your “right” to wallow in the gutter, don’t try to deny me my right to call the gutter what is.

All too frequently we lack the virtue of courage and allow ourselves to be silent while others put forth gutter standards as stylish, sheik, avant-garde, good. They proclaim their promiscuity, for example, as a product of their liberation from “oppressive religion.” In fact it is their violation of the virtues of responsibility, respect, loyalty, etc. Euphemisms to mask corruption and espousal of “rights” to avoid responsibilities are common tactics used to justify and even praise gutter standards. This is a fraud. We need to look past these lies to the truth.

2 WHAT CAN WE DO

DEVELOP A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

Schools and other organizations across the country are developing mission statements as a means of focusing their work. Steven Covey suggests that each individual develop a personal mission statement as a means to focus our individual lives. This can serve as the screen or frame of reference for my choices, a compass to give me the correct direction for my decisions, my own behavior.

The mission should be long range. It should enable me to have a consistent direction for my life, an overriding goal, a guiding star for my day to day decisions and behavior. We need to focus our attention on improving ourselves. My goal in life is simple: improve myself. My goal is not to improve my wife, my children, my boss, my staff, my friends, my enemies. Improve myself. That leaves plenty to do. My mission statement should be a gauge to progress.

A good mission statement should have six criteria. It should be:

1. ideal - not what I am, but what I want to become
2. brief - a global concept easily remembered for ready reference
3. clear - easily understood and communicated
4. compelling - important to me
5. practical - useful, valuable
6. assessable - readily evaluated

After considerable thought I have my own personal mission statement. It conforms to all six criteria and is immensely useful.

PURSUE VIRTUE

I have recognized that virtue is the only valid means to happiness and success and therefore want my life to be an ongoing pursuit of virtue.

This mission is ideal. Virtue is beautiful. I can never be perfect (i.e. totally virtuous) but I can always improve, become more virtuous. Pursuit of virtue causes consistency with natural law, puts me in harmony with cosmic realities.

I can keep my list of virtues prominently displayed in my office and my home. I have a list in the loose-leaf that I use as a calendar and notebook. I thus build in consistent reminders of my mission. I have modified my environment so

that it is easy to remember and hard to forget, overlook or get distracted. At the top of each virtues list is: MISSION: PURSUE VIRTUE.

When I plan or need to make a decision I can easily reference my mission. Is what I'm thinking of doing virtuous? Will it advance my mission? If so, fine. If not, I don't want to do it. Thus my mission statement helps me to assess my behavior and choices against the only criteria that matter; virtue or natural laws.

IMPROVE MY ENVIRONMENT

While Glasser's Control Theory makes it clear that I am not controlled by my environment, it is nonetheless true that I am influenced by it. It would be foolish of me indeed to assume that the environment has no impact on me.

The first key question vis-à-vis my environment is whether it influences me toward virtue or away from it. If I pollute my environment with pornography, violent movies, disrespectful TV shows, etc. I can expect to be influenced away from virtue.

The second key question vis-à-vis my environment is almost never asked or considered. What can I do to influence my environment? My relationship to my environment is in fact a two way street. I can influence and change my environment. This particularly empowering knowledge is not even mentioned much less stressed in most schools. I can impact my immediate environment, and to an even greater extent my future environment, with my choices. Control Theory is particularly helpful here in explaining how we can do this. Once I understand and believe this fundamental truth, there are virtually no limits to my power to improve my own life, only temporary obstacles to be dealt with virtuously. Simply, the means to increase control of my own life and increase my positive impact on my environment is virtuous behavior.

While working on my master's degree in the teaching of reading, the subject of bibliotherapy came up. It was suggested that certain books could positively influence students. I remembered some of the biographies of virtuous people that I had been assigned in school and how much they influenced me. Clearly, what I read does affect me. These books not only presented models of behavior, but numerous positive alternatives to those already available in my environment.

I subsequently used bibliotherapy with my students. They loved reading such positive, healthy material. I could see their excitement at discovering new insights and behaviors, new possibilities for their own lives.

It saddens me deeply to see the trash sometimes offered to students and even required by some schools. When challenged, I usually have been told, "This is reality." Unfortunately there is a tendency for the descriptive to become

normative. We create our own realities. If my mind is polluted with degenerate alternatives, I am much more likely to choose them as norms or standards for my own behavior.

The most important function of education is to present children with positive alternatives. Not just positive value alternatives, but more importantly positive virtuous alternatives. We should constantly be presenting students “good” examples of virtuous behavior. All too often, instead of emphasis on individual responsibility and choice, students are taught victim choices. They are the victims of big business, big government, environmental polluters, their parents, etc. Their victim status is constantly repeated in an endless variety of ways. Then we hear complaints about how children are becoming less and less responsible. Ironically, those who complain loudest are the very teachers who are teaching them that they are victims.

TEACH VIRTUE

If I believe that natural law exists, what could be more important? If we teach anything, we should teach what is most important. We hear so much about “basic skills.” What is more basic than virtue?

If a school is viewed as not teaching the basic skills of reading and math, it is roundly criticized and attacked. Yet ignoring virtue, the most basic skills, is presently the norm. Schools are generally afraid to raise the issue due primarily to confusion of virtues and values. Fearful of controversy over values, which are indeed relative, and/or being accused of teaching religion, the schools now present a tremendous moral vacuum. This vacuum is readily filled by the media and the rest of the gutter culture. Our children do not lack examples and instruction in violence, promiscuous sex, drug use, disrespect, irresponsibility, etc.

Schools must return to the teaching of virtue. I say return because historically “citizenship” was a core curriculum. People do not learn right from wrong by osmosis. They learn what they are taught. To accept a moral vacuum and hope that it will randomly be filled correctly is destructively naïve at best, and irresponsibly evil at worst.

The schools, of course, are not the only ones derelict here. As a regular church goer, I rarely see morality taught there. We now hear platitudes about gender equity and race. The right and wrong underlying these and other issues is not even mentioned. Our culture has deteriorated so far that even our churches rarely teach morality. Each Sunday I hear some sort of fuzzy pabulum about love.

When I mention this I frequently hear something like, “what do you want, fire and brimstone.” No I just want the truth. Please don’t extend my request to the absurd and act like I am stupid. To act like everything is good is to lie. Evil exists

in the world. We see it all around. But our churches won't mention it. I haven't heard the word "sin" in church in 20 years. Any infrequent allusion to wrongdoing is portrayed as a function the wrongdoer's victim status. There is no hint of responsibility. If nothing is wrong, nothing is right. It's all the same.

While I am obviously generalizing about churches and schools, there are of course exceptions. Nonetheless, the moral vacuum that now permeates our culture can be directly traced to the two primary teaching institutions and their movement away from teaching morality. It's fine to accent the positive, but ignoring the negative is to participate in and support it. (Even the positive that is being accepted is generally in terms of specific politically correct social issues, not moral principals.)

The problem is compounded. We now have a generation of parents who (again, with obvious exceptions) were not taught morality. They are quite fuzzy about right and wrong. They were taught about their rights, but not their responsibilities, much less the primacy of responsibility over freedom. They are operating out of ignorance that has been systemically disseminated by the media and its accomplices without adequate response from failing institutions (i.e. church and school).

None of the above in any way diminishes our individual responsibility to teach virtue to our children. That fact notwithstanding, the single greatest systemic social problem now is the failure of our institutions to teach moral standards.

THE FALLACY OF TEACHING BY EXAMPLE

One of the tremendous mistakes in teaching morality is the idea that we should teach it by example only. My own Catholic church, at Vatican II, made the tragic decision that this teaching should be by example. It was assumed that teaching the ten commandments while behaving in ways that violate them was hypocrisy. We shouldn't tell them the commandments, we should show them by our example. In fact, it's not necessary to tell them. They will learn them by observation of us.

What arrogance! "Just watch me kids. I'm so good, that's all you need." How totally lacking in humility. All you need is my example. Unfortunately, my example is imperfect, inconsistent and quite flawed.

Do as I say even if it's not always what I do. I frequently am asked this question, "Doesn't that make you a hypocrite?" No! That just makes me human. Knowing right and wrong and doing right and wrong are two different things. At least knowing, I have clear choices. In any event, the "teach them by example" strategy has been a dismal failure. (Please don't extend my argument to the

absurd and say that I am against giving good example. I merely am pointing out the obvious truth that example is woefully insufficient for teaching morality.)

When I was a boy, the church taught me the ten commandments, the seven deadly sins, the eight beatitudes, the spiritual and corporal works of mercy, etc. These contain the virtues and their corresponding vices, (also well worth knowing). Ask any group of 18 year olds if they know the ten commandments. Ask any group of 40 year olds. I have asked many such groups. With very rare exceptions, they don't. We now are dealing with our second generation of "Christians" who are religious illiterates. They lack the vital moral teachings contained in Christianity.

They need not be Catholics to be so ignorant. I find most people don't know these fundamental norms of western civilization. Moses wasn't taught the ten commandments by example. He was told directly, even given them in writing so he wouldn't forget.

The only Christian churches presently emphasizing morality now are slandered with derogatory labels: fundamentalists, the religious right, etc. These churches are a tremendous threat to "mainstream" religion because, whatever their faults (and they have them), they are increasingly being seen as a moral alternative.

W. Edwards Deming observed that 95% of the chronic problems in organizations are structural or systemic. Our culture can be seen as an organizational superstructure composed of numerous subsystems. The present moral vacuum in our culture can be traced to the failure of schools and churches to respond to the immoral challenges of the gutter media and other forces of decay. To reform our culture we will need not only individual reorientation, but reorientation of our key institutions; schools and churches.

As long as these two critical institutions remain morally ambiguous, individuals will be swimming up stream and we will continue to loose ground. Our individual responsibility, therefore, is not just to improve ourselves but also to get involved with these institutions and work to improve them as well.

SELF IMPROVEMENT: THE ONLY KIND THAT WORKS

Genuine improvement of human beings can only be self imposed. The only person in the world who can improve me is me. My wife can't improve me. My supervisor can't improve me. The government, the church, no one else but me. (All of the above can affect my environment, but the choice to improve or not is mine alone.)

Culturally, we spend a great deal of time and effort trying to improve others. Husbands and wives try to improve each other. Supervisors attempt to improve

staff. Teachers try to improve students, etc. In Control Theory Glasser explains the utter futility of such efforts. Not only do they fail, they alienate those we are trying to “improve,” hurt relationships and cause hostility and conflict.

If we again consider those people we admire, they don’t spend their energy on improving others. They certainly will support and help others in any way they can. But they only have one target for improvement; themselves.

Ironically, it never seems to occur to me that the best way to improve my marriage is to improve me. Not my wife, not my children, my siblings. Me! In fact the greatest contribution I can make to my family, my job, my country, etc. is to become the best me that I possibly can.

Since humility teaches me that I can never be perfect, this is a lifelong job. While perfection is impossible, excellence is not. Indeed, the definition of excellence is the habit of self improvement.

Paradoxically, these self assessing and self improving people have much greater positive influence on all others than those actively seeking to improve them.

The primary focus for improvement must always be me.

SELF ASSESSMENT: THE ONLY MEANS TO EXCELLENCE

As a key to improving others, we spend a great deal of time assessing them. In fact we formalize this assessment in our jobs. Supervisors assess staff. In schools superintendents assess administrators, administrators assess teachers, and teachers assess students. Everybody is responsible for assessing and improving someone else. The mediocrity prevalent in our schools is no accident. No one else’s assessment will ever improve me.

Once we recognize the futility of “other” assessment, and the need for ongoing self assessment, we know what to do. The next question is how. How can I self assess as an individual? How can we self assess as an organization; a family, a school, a police force, a country, etc.

VIRTUE: THE STANDARDS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT & SELF IMPROVEMENT

Whatever else we assess, first and foremost we should continuously assess our own virtue. As with all assessment, it is meaningful only to plan and implement improvements. What do I do to be more kind, honest, responsible, etc.? Each virtue can be done on a separate page. See the following activities.

3 ACTIVITIES TO INCREASE VIRTUE

The following pages suggest activities that can be used to teach and increase virtue. If you discover others, please let me know so that I can add them to the book for others to use. Tkelly7662@aol.com.

VIRTUE	WHAT I/WE DO NOW	WHAT I/WE COULD DO
HUMILITY		
COURAGE		
SELF DISCIPLINE		
FORGIVENESS		
GENEROSITY		
HONESTY		
HOPE		
JUSTICE/FAIRNESS		
KINDNESS		
LOYALTY		
MODERATION		
PATIENCE		
PERSEVERANCE		
PRUDENCE		
RESPECT		
RESPONSIBILITY		
SIMPLICITY		
SPIRITUALITY		
TOLERANCE		
WORK		

This assessment can be done by individuals and/or groups. Just as individual success and happiness are predicated on virtue, so also are group or organizational success and happiness. **A separate worksheet is recommended for each virtue.**

FOR EXAMPLE:

VIRTUE	WHAT I/WE DO NOW	WHAT I/WE COULD DO	HOW
HUMILITY	Admit mistakes Etc.	Define humility Teach why humility is necessary for excellence Praise examples of humility Etc	
COURAGE	ETC	ETC	

For a school to be successful, it must assess and improve its collective virtue. This focus on virtue should be the primary concern of school improvement efforts. **A separate worksheet is recommended for each virtue.**

Another format for such assessment and planning could be:
TO INCREASE WE CAN WE CAN STOP

HUMILITY

COURAGE

SELF DISCIPLINE

FORGIVENESS

GENEROSITY

HONESTY

HOPE

JUSTICE/FAIRNESS

KINDNESS

LOYALTY

MODERATION

PATIENCE

PERSEVERANCE

PRUDENCE

RESPECT

RESPONSIBILITY

SIMPLICITY

SPIRITUALITY

TOLERANCE

WORK

Exercise to teach virtue. Each virtue can be a separate page/exercise. For each describe what that virtue looks like and what it does not look like'

VIRTUE	LOOKS LIKE	DOES NOT LOOK LIKE
HUMILITY		
COURAGE		
SELF DISCIPLINE		
FORGIVENESS		
GENEROSITY		
HONESTY		
HOPE		
JUSTICE/FAIRNESS		
KINDNESS		
LOYALTY		
MODERATION		
PATIENCE		
PERSEVERANCE		
PRUDENCE		
RESPECT		
RESPONSIBILITY		
SIMPLICITY		
SPIRITUALITY		
TOLERANCE		
WORK		

4 ASSESSMENT OF CHARACTER EDUCATION

The first premise for all improvement is assessment. If our assessment of what is needed is faulty, we will expend our energy in the wrong direction. We must be able to:

1. accurately assess need
2. agree on priorities for improvement
3. reassess to monitor progress and set new priorities

For machine scoreable response forms, contact tkelly7662@aol.com

CHARACTER EDUCATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

by Thomas F. Kelly, Ph. D.

1. Staff understand the difference between virtues and values
2. Students understand the difference between virtues and values
3. Parents understand the difference between virtues and values
4. Virtues are prominently displayed in classrooms
5. Virtues are prominently displayed throughout the school
6. Readings assigned present virtuous role models
7. The concept of natural law is understood by staff
8. The concept of natural law is understood by students
9. Students understand the relationship between virtue and happiness
10. Students understand the relationship between virtue and success
11. Staff understands that virtue satisfies basic human needs
12. Students understand that virtue satisfies basic human needs
13. Students understand that work is a virtue
14. Staff understand that simplicity is a virtue
15. Students are taught the virtues
16. Examples of virtuous behavior by staff are recognized
17. Examples of virtuous behavior by students are recognized
18. Students know all of the virtues
19. Students recognize the priority of virtues over values
20. Staff behavior is virtuous
21. Student behavior is virtuous
22. Character education is integrated into the school's program and activities
23. Staff is trained in character education
24. Parents understand the school's character education program
25. The teaching of virtue is seen as at least as important as anything else
26. Curriculum content and materials are assessed for their contribution to teaching virtue
27. There is staff development in character education
28. There is curriculum development for character education
29. Materials are available for character education
30. Staff recognize the relationship between virtue and self respect
31. Students recognize the relationship between virtue and self respect
32. Parents recognize the relationship between virtue and self respect.

5 MATERIALS FOR TEACHING VIRTUE

POETRY FOR TEACHING VIRTUE

One of the best ways to teach virtue is through poetry. Good poetry appeals to all ages and tends to be memorable. The following poems can serve as the basis for discussions, essays, etc. If you have poems, biographies or other materials that you think would also be useful, please send them to Dr. Kelly for possible inclusion in this book (see below). Please include grade levels that you think appropriate for the materials. I would like to include a bibliography of materials for teachers in the book.

**One ship drives east and another west
with the one same wind that blows
It's the set of the sails and not the gales
that tells them the ways to go**

**Like the waves of the sea are the waves of fate
as we voyage along through Life
It's the set of the soul that decides our goal
and not the calm or the strife**

Author Anonymous

GOD'S MINUTE

**I have only but a minute
only sixty seconds in it
forced upon me
can't refuse it
didn't seek it
didn't choose it
but its up to me to use it
give account if I abuse it
only just a tiny minute
but eternity is in it.**

Author Unknown

BECOMING

**Everything that is
has come to be
and everything that will be
is BECOMING**

T. Kelly

SUGAR BOWL

If a man loves his sugar bowl

I am obliged to respect it

I may neither criticize, belittle or mock

his sugar bowl

Nor the feelings he has for it

T. Kelly

IF

If you can keep your head when all about you
 Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
 But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
 Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated don't give way to hating,
 And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise;

If you can dream and not make dreams your master
 If you can think and not make thoughts your aim
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
 And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
 Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken;
 And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools;

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
 And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
 And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
 To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
 Except the will which says to them: "Hold on!"

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
 Or walk with kings - nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
 If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
 With sixty seconds worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
 And-which is more--you'll be a man, my son

by R. Kipling

QUESTION

**Can a man love one
and not love all;
or, love all
and not love one?**

Thomas Kelly

DECISIONS

**If I wish to be
and I will to be
I am primarily
The product of myself**

T. Kelly

BIOGRAPHY FOR TEACHING VIRTUE

Please send suggestions to Dr. Kelly at tkelly7662@aol.com

OTHER LITERATURE FOR TEACHING VIRTUE

Please send suggestions to tkelly7662@aol.com

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, JOURNALS, ETC.

Please send suggestions to tkelly7662@aol.com

6 OVERHEADS FOR PRESENTING / TRAINING / TEACHING

NATURAL LAW

EXISTS

UNIVERSAL

ABSOLUTE

ARISTOTLE FIRST OBSERVED 2,500 YEARS AGO

EXAMPLE: EVERYTHING IN MODERATION

NATURAL LAW

GOVERNS HUMAN RELATIONS

GOVERNS HUMAN HAPPINESS & SUCCESS

**VALUES & VIRTUES: CATEGORICAL CONFUSION
& CULTURAL CHAOS**

VALUE: SOMETHING THAT I WANT

RELATIVE: \$10 & \$50

GOOD OR BAD: PEACE & WAR

VIRTUE: A BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES ME GOOD

ABSOLUTE: KINDNESS IS ALWAYS GOOD

PATIENCE IS ALWAYS GOOD

JUSTICE IS ALWAYS GOOD

ETC.

THE MONUMENTAL DAMAGE DONE

BY SIGMUND FREUD & B. F. SKINNER

OLD PARADIGM:

FREUD: PSYCHOANALYSIS

SKINNER: BEHAVIORISM (S-R)

RESULTS:

DETERMINISTIC: VICTIM PSYCHOLOGY

LEARNED HELPLESSNESS

NO POWER / CONTROL

NO RESPONSIBILITY

AMERICAN CULTURE IS PERMEATED WITH

OLD PARADIGM VICTIM PSYCHOLOGY

PARADIGM SHIFT

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RESPONSIBILITY & FREEDOM

NEW PARADIGM: GLASSER

CONTROL THEORY (a.k.a. CHOICE THEORY)

RESULTS:

FREEDOM

LEARNED EFFECTIVENESS

POWER / CONTROL

RESPONSIBILITY

VIRTUES ARE NATURAL LAWS

VIRTUES: BEHAVIORS THAT MAKE ME GOOD

HUMILITY

MODERATION

COURAGE

PATIENCE

DISCIPLINE

PERSEVERANCE

FORGIVENESS

PRUDENCE

GENEROSITY

RESPECT

HONESTY

RESPONSIBILITY

HOPE

SIMPLICITY

JUSTICE/FAIRNESS

SPIRITUALITY/FAITH

KINDNESS

TOLERANCE

LOYALTY

WORK

The above list is self evident and universally recognized as “morally good.”

It is critical that we distinguish clearly between virtues and values. Until these categories are clarified, people will continue to fall into the trap of putting values ahead of virtues. This will inevitably lead to grief for themselves and others around them. This clarification should be the first goal of Character Education programs in our schools.

SOME VALUES COMMONLY CONFUSED WITH VIRTUES

CULTURE

HISTORY

BELONGING

KNOWLEDGE

ETHNICITY

RELIGION

FAMILY

PEACE

FREEDOM

POWER

FUN

RACE

GENDER

DEMOCRACY

EQUALITY

VALUES DO NOT MAKE ME GOOD

ANY MORE THAT THEY MAKE ME BAD

VIRTUE IS PRIMARY IN IMPORTANCE

VALUES ARE ALWAYS SECONDARY IN IMPORTANCE

NATURAL LAW: ALWAYS PUT VIRTUES BEFORE VALUES

NATURAL LAW & SATISFACTION OF BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

NATURAL LAW SATISFIES BASIC HUMAN NEEDS

PHYSICAL

POWER

FREEDOM

BELONGING

FUN

NEED SATISFIED PEOPLE HAVE VIRTUOUS HABITS

NEED SATISFYING ORGANIZATIONS HAVE

VIRTUOUS NORMS & STANDARDS

VIRTUE: THE HIGHER STANDARDS WE NEED MOST

**WHEN SOCIAL NORMS ARE ADEQUATE,
LAWS ARE UNNECESSARY**

**WHEN SOCIAL NORMS ARE INADEQUATE,
LAWS ARE IRRELEVANT**

**WE CANNOT SOLVE MORAL PROBLEMS WITH
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL OR ANY OTHER SOLUTION
BUT VIRTUE**

VIRTUE IS THE BEST SOLUTION TO ALL PROBLEMS

VIRTUE AND SELF ESTEEM

ONLY VIRTUE CAN CREATE SELF ESTEEM

ONLY VIRTUE MAKES ME GOOD

VALUES CAN NEVER CREATE SELF ESTEEM

VALUES CANNOT MAKE ME GOOD

FREEDOM DOESN'T MAKE ME GOOD OR BAD

IRISH DOESN'T MAKE ME GOOD OR BAD

ETC.

EFFORTS TO IMPROVE SELF ESTEEM THROUGH VALUES

WILL FAIL

NATURAL LAW GOVERNS SUCCESS

SUCCESS HAS 2 “C”s

CHARACTER & COMPETENCE

STEVEN COVEY

CHARACTER IS THE ESSENTIAL “C”

IF I HAVE CHARACTER,

I WILL DO WHAT IS NECESSARY

TO DEVELOP COMPETENCE

THOMAS KELLY

CHARACTER WILL CAUSE ME TO:

WORK,

PERSEVERE,

ETC.

UNTIL I DEVELOP NEEDED COMPETENCE

HUMILITY: THE FIRST OF ALL THE VIRTUES

**HUMILITY: THE ABILITY TO RECOGNIZE AND ACCEPT MY
OWN IMPERFECTION**

**WITHOUT HUMILITY I CANNOT RECOGNIZE MY OWN NEED TO
IMPROVE**

**WITHOUT HUMILITY I CANNOT POSSES THE OTHER VIRTUES
I SEE MYSELF AS PERFECT. THERE IS NO NEED TO IMPROVE.**

PRIDE / ARROGANCE: THE OLDEST VICE

HUMILITY IS THE FIRST PREMISE FOR EXCELLENCE

**EXCELLENCE IS THE HABIT OF SELF ASSESSMENT
& SELF IMPROVEMENT**

OR, EXCELLENCE IS THE HABIT OF PURSUIT OF VIRTUE

**PERFECTIONIST: A PERSON WHO TAKES GREAT PAINS AND
GIVES THEM TO OTHERS**

**RESPONSIBILITY: THE NECESSARY FIRST PREMISE
FOR FREEDOM**

**WITHOUT RESPONSIBILITY I AM THE PRISONER OF MY OWN
IRRESPONSIBILITY**

E G IS A DRUG ADDICT FREE?

**PARADOX: THE MORE RESPONSIBLE I AM,
THE GREATER MY FREEDOM**

**THE PEOPLE WE ADMIRE MOST ARE THE MOST RESPONSIBLE
THEY ARE ALSO THE MOST FREE**

FREEDOM IS A FUNCTION OF RESPONSIBILITY

TRUE BONDAGE IS A FUNCTION OF IRRESPONSIBILITY

GROUP RESPONSIBILITY IS A FALLACY

ONLY INDIVIDUALS ARE RESPONSIBLE.

**GROUPS CAN BE RESPONSIBLE ONLY TO THE EXTENT THAT
THE INDIVIDUALS IN THEM ARE RESPONSIBLE**

I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR MY BEHAVIOR

AND ONLY MY BEHAVIOR

WORK IS A VIRTUE, NOT A VALUE

WORK IS A BEHAVIOR THAT MAKES ME GOOD

WHEN I WORK I MAKE A CONTRIBUTION TO THE

WELFARE OF MANKIND

THERE IS GREAT DIGNITY IN ALL HONEST WORK

PRESENT CULTURE HAS ELEVATED SLOTH

TO THE STATUS OF A VIRTUE

PRESENT CULTURE ALSO SEES WORK AS A VALUE'

THEREFORE ITS VALUE IS RELATIVE. YOU ARE A

"BETTER PERSON" IF YOU ARE A DOCTOR THAN IF YOU

ARE A WAITER

THE FALLACY THAT POVERTY CAUSES CRIME

POVERTY DOES NOT CAUSE CRIME

ANY MORE THAN WEALTH CAUSES VIRTUE

DOES POVERTY CAUSE RAPE?

WHY ARE THERE WEALTHY CRIMINALS?

ARE ALL / MOST POOR PEOPLE CRIMINALS?

WHAT CAUSES WHITE COLLAR CRIME?

**POVERTY CAUSES CRIME = BIAS TOWARD POOR
PEOPLE**

ENVIRONMENT DOES NOT CAUSE BEHAVIOR

ENVIRONMENT PRESENTS SOME OF THE CHOICES

AVAILABLE TO US AT A GIVEN TIME

THE SOLUTION TO POVERTY

THE ONLY SOLUTION TO POVERTY IS WORK

THE ONLY KNOWN EFFECTIVE SOLUTION

**THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS “DEMEANING” HONEST
WORK**

**TO SUGGEST THAT WORK IS NOT IMPORTANT
IS TO SUGGEST THAT SLOTH IS A VIRTUE**

**WORK, AS WELL AS THE OTHER VIRTUES, IS THE ONLY
SOLUTION**

**IN FACT, THE BEST SOLUTION TO ANY PROBLEM IS
VIRTUE**

**WHEN WE RECOGNIZE THIS GREAT TRUTH, WE CAN
AVOID MOST PROBLEMS AND SOLVE / RESOLVE / LIVE
WITH OTHERS**

HIGH STANDARDS, IMPERFECTION, & HUMILITY

**IMPERFECTION MEANS THAT I CAN NOT EVER
FULLY LIVE UP TO PERFECT VIRTUE**

**EXCELLENCE IS THE CONTINUOUS EFFORT
TO BE VIRTUOUS**

**OCCASIONAL FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO HIGH STANDARDS
DOES NOT MAKE ME A HYPOCRITE, ONLY HUMAN**

THE LITTLE ENGINE, THE TORTOISE AND THE LONE RANGER

WE NEED MODELS OF VIRTUE:

THE LITTLE ENGINE THAT COULD

THE TORTOISE AND THE HARE

THE LONE RANGER

HONEST ABE

**OUR CURRENT CULTURE OFFERS MANY MODELS
OF VICE**

VIOLENCE

PROMISCUOUS SEX

DISRESPECT

AND RARE MODELS OF VIRTUE

THE MEDIA AND EMERGING GUTTER CULTURE

**THE MEDIA SELLS VIOLENCE, PROMISCUOUS SEX,
AND DISRESPECT FOR MONEY**

**THIS IS DEFENDED IN TERMS OF THEIR RIGHTS
WHILE THEY IGNORE THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES**

**SUBTLE SUBVERSION AND STEREOTYPING
OF WHOLE GROUPS:**

**MEN, HUSBANDS, FATHERS,
TRADITIONAL FAMILIES, ETC.**

WHEN BAD IS GOOD

VICTIM PSYCHOLOGY TEACHES THAT

I AM NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR MY OWN BEHAVIOR

MANY EXCUSES ARE USED TO MAKE BAD BEHAVIOR

ACCEPTABLE

MY DYSFUNCTIONAL FAMILY

MY NEUROTIC WIFE

MY DISRESPECTFUL CHILDREN

MY NOBLE MOTIVE

ETC.

WHEN GOOD IS BAD

MY “RIGHTS” ARE FREQUENTLY USED TO JUSTIFY

MY WRONGS:

FREE SPEECH JUSTIFIES PORNOGRAPHY

THE RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS JUSTIFIES POSSESSION

OF MACHINE GUNS & ARMOR PIERCING BULLETS

MY GOOD MOTIVES JUSTIFY MY BEHAVIOR WITHOUT

REGARD TO CONSEQUENCES

ONSEQUITURE BLAME:

WHEN BAD CONSEQUENCES ARE RECOGNIZED,

THE “GOOD” USED TO JUSTIFY THEM IS BLAMED,

RATHER THAN THE PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE

E.G. WAR IS BLAMED ON RELIGION

BELIEFS: A MATTER OF CHOICE

**HOW MANY BELIEFS IN YOUR LIFE ARE ABSOLUTELY
CERTAIN?**

BELIEFS ARE CHOICES

I BELIEVE IN GOD

I BELIEVE MY WIFE IS FAITHFUL

I CAN CHOOSE BELIEFS THAT ARE ENABLING OR DISABLING

I SHOULD PERIODICALLY REVIEW MY BELIEFS

AND REPLACE DISABLING BELIEFS WITH ENABLING BELIEFS

MY FRIEND BELIEVED NOBODY WOULD HIRE HIM BECAUSE

HE WAS 51

ONCE WE RECOGNIZE THAT BELIEFS ARE CHOICES

WE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR BELIEFS

THE POWER OF KNOWLEDGE

KNOWLEDGE IS A VALUE, NOT A VIRTUE

**CATEGORICAL CONFUSION OF SMART AND GOOD IS
DESTRUCTIVE**

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER, IGNORANCE IS WEAKNESS

**KNOWLEDGE OF NATURAL LAW IS THE MOST EMPOWERING
KNOWLEDGE AND SHOULD BE TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS**

IGNORANCE OF NATURAL LAW IS SEVERELY DISABLING

IT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SUBJECT

ONCE WE UNDERSTAND THIS, IT IS IRRESPONSIBLE

AND IMMORAL TO LEAVE IT OUT

THE VIRTUE OF SIMPLICITY

SIMPLICITY IS CURRENTLY SEEN INCORRECTLY AS A VALUE

GENERALLY SIMPLICITY IS SEEN AS A NEGATIVE VALUE

E.G. HE IS A SIMPLE MAN I.E. UNSOPHISTICATED

COMPLEXITY IS GENERALLY SEEN AS A POSITIVE VALUE

E.G. HE IS A COMPLEX MAN I.E. DEEP, PROFOUND

IN FACT, HE IS PROBABLY JUST CONFUSED

ALL OF THE GREAT TEACHERS THROUGHOUT HISTORY

HAVE BEEN SIMPLIFIERS

COMPLEXITY IS A PLAYGROUND FOR FOOLS

EUPHEMISMS: CAMOUFLAGE FOR CORRUPTION

ADULT BOOK STORE

MAKE LOVE

MATURE THEMES

**GUTTER STANDARDS ARE PUT FORTH AS STYLISH,
SOPHISTICATED, SHEIK, AVANT-GARDE**

**PROMISCUITY IS PORTRAYED AS LIBERATION FROM
OPPRESSIVE RELIGION RATHER THAN IRRESPONSIBLE,
DISLOYAL, DISRESPECTFUL, ETC.**

**EUPHEMISMS TO MASK CORRUPTION AND ESPOUSAL OF
RIGHTS TO AVOID RESPONSIBILITIES ARE COMMON TACTICS
TO JUSTIFY AND EVEN PRAISE GUTTER STANDARDS. THIS IS
A FRAUD**

**PASSIVE ACCEPTANCE OF EUPHEMISMS TO MASK
CORRUPTION IS PARTICIPATION IN CORRUPTION**

WHAT CAN WE DO?

1 DEVELOP A PERSONAL MISSION STATEMENT

IDEAL	COMPELLING
BRIEF	PRACTICAL
CLEAR	ASSESSABLE

MISSION: PURSUE VIRTUE

2 IMPROVE MY ENVIRONMENT

3 TEACH VIRTUE

THE FALLACY OF TEACHING BY EXAMPLE ONLY

4 TEACH & PRACTICE SELF IMPROVEMENT, THE ONLY KIND THAT WORKS

5 TEACH & PRACTICE SELF ASSESSMENT, THE ONLY KIND THAT WORKS

7 TEACH VIRTUE: THE STANDARDS FOR SELF ASSESSMENT, SELF IMPROVEMENT, HAPPINESS & SUCCESS

7 TRAINING AVAILABLE

Thomas F. Kelly, Ph. D.

CHARACTER EDUCATION, Dr. Kelly's newest book is based on the work of William Glasser and Steven Covey, This program offers a unique approach to improving student discipline. It clarifies present confusion of virtues & values and demonstrates their appropriate place in schools. Once clarified, we must recognize the common logical mistakes presently dominating our culture and develop a systemic response in our schools.

SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT FOR QUALITY SCHOOLS, is Dr. Thomas Kelly's book. It presents numerous strategies and materials for implementing the ideas of Glasser, Deming, and Covey in schools. Numerous surveys, overheads, planning forms and activities are included. A new paradigm of self assessment for students, teachers, administrators, and schools is offered In detail. A one day overview of this book is recommended. More extensive training of up to two weeks is also available on this topic.

ALL TOGETHER NOW (ATN) training in use of networked computers for shared decision making and collaborative planning. This inexpensive, easy to use process is accomplished through new software available in MS-DOS and Macintosh versions. It is user friendly and designed to be used without any knowledge of computers. **ATN** saves time, work and money and makes shared decision making and collaborative planning fun. Facilitator training is a half day program.

ALL COURSES LISTED BELOW ARE 15 HOUR SEMINARS

Books will be provided at the first session. Activities will involve reading and discussion of each book. It is recommended that Control Theory be taken first. **The format of these sessions enables participants to turnkey this training easily.**

CONTROL THEORY, the psychology of William Glasser offers a constructive alternative to the determinism of Freud and Skinner. This psychology underlies the extraordinary program in the Johnson City Public Schools and the "Quality School" as described by Glasser. Control Theory is especially helpful for improving student achievement and discipline.

THE QUALITY SCHOOL, William Glasser's new paradigm for education incorporates the work of W. Edwards Deming with his own Control Theory. Glasser effectively translates Deming's Systems ideas from the business world to education. The Quality School as described by Glasser will be the new paradigm for schools in the twenty-first century.

REALITY THERAPY is William Glasser's practical approach to Psychology. The three 'R's" of REALITY, RESPONSIBILITY, and RIGHT AND WRONG are the framework for this proven approach to troubled students. Reality Therapy is useful for classroom management and strategies to avoid discipline problems. It is the only approach to helping at risk students with a long and proven track record of success.

THE SEVEN HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE PEOPLE, is Steven Covey's work on the consistent habits of highly effective people. These habits can be taught, practiced and learned. Covey's work has been on the New York Times best seller list for several years. It provides numerous strategies that can be extremely helpful in the classroom as well as many other areas. Ethics and morality are stressed as the means to human happiness and effectiveness.

Dr. Thomas F. Kelly has trained thousands of educators, including teachers, administrators, parents, and school board members as well as members of school and district planning teams. Training can be tailored to individual school needs. He has published numerous needs assessment surveys, books and articles on all aspects of school reform.

THOMAS F. KELLY, Ph. D.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Thomas Kelly's many years of public school experience include:

- Teaching from Pre-K through graduate levels
- High school assistant principal
- District reading coordinator
- Sixteen years Regional manager of the NYSED's Effective Schools Consortia
- Interim Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Trenton Public schools, Trenton, New Jersey
- Interim Assistant Superintendent Mount Pleasant Cottage Special Act School District, Thornwood, New York

Academic training includes:

- Ph. D. in Educational Psychology
- Graduate degrees in
 - American History
 - Teaching Social Studies
 - Reading and Language Arts
 - Administration

Speaking and training experience includes:

- Keynotes to groups as large as 800

- Extensive work with school based shared decision making teams
- Principals Academies
- School Boards
- Programs designed to meet the needs of individual schools/districts

Publications:

- Numerous books and articles on all aspects of school improvement
- Needs assessment surveys for shared decision making and collaborative planning used by more than 5,000 schools nationally
- Latest book Is SYSTEMIC ASSESSMENT FOR QUALITY SCHOOLS is available free from website
- Co-author of All Together Now decision making software

Presently Dr. Kelly is:

- Working to implement the ideas of William Glasser, W. Edwards Deming and Steven Covey in schools
- Assisting schools in systemic assessment to guide systemic change
- Training educators in Character education

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