

THE ART OF LISTENING

One day the small child in your life rushes in bubbling excitedly as a child will on slight provocation, and you hear yourself saying absently, "Oh, I'm busy getting dinner now, dear, do run out and play. Tell me later."

Another night your husband, just arrived home from his other world, tentatively starts speaking of something and you break his train of thought with a problem about the washing machine. He never does get back to what was on his mind, and idea, perhaps, he had been thinking all day of sharing with you.

You return from your vacation full of excitement and the wonder of some far distant spot to be greeted by one of your favorite friends in this vein. "I can't wait to hear about your trip. So much has happened while you were away. Did you hear about the concert, and the fabulous beach picnic, and you remember those people who moved next door?" And she rushed on and on. All your lovely awarenesses you were so eager to speak of, your feelings about the little Swiss mountain villages where you stayed, remain deep within you.

Have we all forgotten how to listen these days? We don't listen properly to each other. We don't listen to nature, we don't listen even to ourselves. How seldom do we thoughtfully, attentively listen to another, refraining from presenting our ideas until the speaker has finished his own. How few of us listen beyond words to the truth of a situation.

Good listening inevitably involves silence, creative meaningful silence. In the course of our lives what a small part silence plays, how infrequently we experience it. When any two people come together the necessity for expression becomes almost compulsive. If neither we nor the other person is actively talking the atmosphere is unnatural; we are uncomfortable. Ideas that have no time to mature are spilled forth, one overlapping another in the urge to leave no single moment unfilled with verbal expression. What a lot of incomplete thinking gets into circulation as a result. And, more important, what reservoirs of potentially helpful ideas are bottled up, undeveloped because a hastily conceived thought has been flung out to fill a gap in the conversation.

I have a close friend with a son-in-law problem. For four years she had been telling me about this in great detail, and for four years I'd been giving her advice. It was so clear to me exactly what she should do, steps 1,2,3. How enthusiastically I gave her my advice each time and how thoroughly she ignored it.

One afternoon she called long distance with a new crisis. For a change I decided to listen. Once I had given up the idea that I had to tell her what to do, I seemed to hear differently. Having removed from my shoulders the self-imposed obligation to come up with the answers, I began to feel the problem as she felt it, and to be aware of the need in a new way. I no longer felt I even had the solutions nor that I should have. My answers could never be hers. So I listened, and she talked on.

"I can't tell you what a help it has been to discuss this with you," she said nearly half an hour later. "In fact, the whole thing comes clear to me now, and I know what I am going to do. You certainly have been wonderful to be so understanding."

Actually I had said hardly a word. I had only listened with an occasi

occasional question that appeared to help her clarify things further as she continued her tale. I'm very fond of my friend and this she knows, so my listening obviously must have had in it the quality of warmth I felt for her.

Not everybody is a poor listener. Each one of us surely knows one or more warmhearted, interested, receptive friends to whom we can turn in time of need and be listened to.

Recently I had what seemed an insurmountable problem. I simply had to talk to someone who would understand. Of two or three very close friends I began to consider which one I would go and see. If I went to Anne, I knew she'd have the answers, and what she'd tell me to do, and I didn't want to hear that. If I went to Betty I could almost hear her words. It would be quite different but I didn't want that either. So then I thought of Mavis who would probably just listen. I was close to all three and each would be sincerely wanting to help. But it was Mavis I went to see. I talked and she listened with never a word of advice or criticism, and I'm sure I deserved plenty of the latter. Yet at the end of the afternoon I knew such a sense of relief from having talked it out. The problem was not immediately solved, how few are, yet I felt a sense of direction that I had lacked before. I knew in my own heart what the next step was. And I could see daylight ahead.

What is involved in becoming a better listener, and how do you begin? You obviously cannot become the perfect listener in a week or even a lifetime perhaps, but you can start today.

If you think about good listeners and good listening certain ideas will occur to you as they have to me. For example, a good listener must be a warm and friendly person with a basic affection for people, a great capacity for understanding and compassion, and an ability and willingness to care enough to become involved. You never have to tell a person you care about him. By the way you listen he knows. And if you care he is helped. Caring is affection, and affection has an influence on both mind and body.

You may not happen love every person you find yourself listening to, but a sense of kindness is needed. If you listen with genuine kindness, your interest and concern show.

A good listener you soon realize listens intelligently, trying to understand thoroughly what is being said. He listens with interest and patience. He is constantly aware of the speaker as a fellow member of the human family. If you feel real affection for your friend his thoughts should be as important to you as he is, as you naturally want to learn what they are.

If you listen imaginatively you soon feel yourself in the speaker's shoes. This helps. So does listening without the sense of eagerly waiting to seize the conversation. Be willing to withhold comments and concentrate on creating an atmosphere which invites your friend to express his own opinions without injecting your thoughts on the subject. Be the kind of listener that can be trusted not to pass on anything told you.

All this isn't easy or quick. It is something we grow into as we grow ourselves. As we become more loving persons we automatically become better listeners.

To listen another soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be also

almost the greatest service that any human being ever performed for another." Once you begin to listen to other people you also find yourself listening in other areas.

Who among us has not been awed into silence by a walk under the stars on a clear night, or on a sunny beach when the wind is high and mare's-tails are blowing? Being silent at such time proved doubly rewarding. If you go out alone into the garden and listen you hear a surprising number of things. You hear little sounds of life, to be sure, a bee buzzing among the roses, a bird chirping somewhere, a beetle crawling over a leaf, yes but you also hear much more if you are quiet. Nature has a great deal to tell each of us. There are messages in the seasons, in the way things grow or the hardy goldenrod thriving along the roadside in rough gravelly soil; in a white pond lily flourishing in rich black muck; in a compost pile where garden refuse is regenerating into live, fertile earth; and even in the ridiculous little cucumber in our garden one year that climbed the tree rose three feet above the ground and ripened there among pink roses.

There is another realm where we could be better listeners. Very few of us listen clearly to that small voice within that frequently has something important to say. This is the voice that nudges us to write that letter or make that phone call of appreciation. Sometimes it tells us it is time to stop what we are doing and take a rest, or it tells us to start immediately with that new project. It tells us what is too much and what is too little. This is the voice that gently pricks when we start to criticize a neighbor.

As you grow into a better listener you will one day discover that a core of quiet has developed within you. It becomes more natural to listen beyond words to a situation, to nature, and to your own inner voice. Something is happening. Everything in life comes into sharper focus and has more significance, and so does every person, including yourself. Everyone seems to stand taller, and so do you. As your ability to listen continues to develop you find yourself a more effective person in home, business, and community, and for the rest of your life.

We all have so much to gain by breaking into whatever we may be doing and listening; to friends, to people who need to talk, to nature. Listen especially to the small child at your elbow with something to share, and to your husband when he comes home from his day in the office.

The dinner you may be preparing when the interruptions come will soon be eaten and forgotten, the day's problems things of the past. But something else waits there to be lost or gained. Pause five minutes. Yield to those reachings for communication by child, husband or friend. They can lead to moments of closeness, infinitely precious, that will be with you always.

"We live only to discover beauty. Aoo else is a form of waiting."

"A woman's way of asking is to give."

"Every act of obedience, however dry or dead the heart may feel, safe guards and deepens love in the soul."

"God grant me the serenity to accept things I cannot change, Courage to change things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

THE ART OF BEING HUMAN by Wm. McNamara

It is loving knowledge of God and His Creation that makes a saint; not flight from the world, multiplication of devotions, or even moral rectitude. It is to know God, so well that you fall in love with Him.

We must frown on nothing except our sins.

Mysticism is the passionate longing of the soul for God, a person whose life is ruled by this thirst.

A human being is made not born. When we become perfectly human, we are saints.

The purpose of grace is to make us richly exuberantly alive.

The saint is one who lives life to the hilt.

No one can become full unless there's an emptiness to be filled. No one can receive a gift unless he has space to receive it, unless he is receptive. Supernatural life is a gift from God. The way to receive it is to become empty, open, receptive, making room for God.

When we find we are reaching and grabbing instead of standing with reverence before the sacredness of things, then there is selfishness.

It is harder to live for Christ, than to die for Him-we act the way we think.

The process of becoming human (a saint) is a process of falling in love.

To love is to be. To love is to dwell in the holy before we do, while we do, and after we have done.

Love is the whole response of one person to the beauty and worth of the individuality of another person.

Rich men are capable of giving material things. The richest man in the world is the one capable of giving himself. He can confer of himself to others. He gives of his very life, of his joy, of his sadness, of his interest, of his understanding, of his wit, of what is most alive in him. If a lover, by his donation of so much life, does not become a loved person then his love is impotent. Even if one participates in the life of the other, in his thoughts, plans, etc. so long as the loved person does not reciprocate and turn his spiritual countenance, toward him, the longed for union cannot be fulfilled. In so many ways giving means receiving.

Love is a great labor. It is hard work. Each time we choose to love,

we endanger our way of living. Ease, comfort, security, survival--a veritable routine of false gods--are wrecked when men head-on with love. When we who love offer our lives at full risk we shake the foundations of our way of living.

It is easier to love humanity than to love the individual man. It takes courage to love. It is the supreme fulfillment of human courage, for we have to overcome all the enemies of love which are so plentiful, subtle, and insidious; pride, fear, self-complacency, softness, human respect, ignorance, etc.

The active quality of love is characterized by certain elements as care, responsibility, respect, and knowledge.

The positive part of the commandment of love is to care for him with intelligent and warm hearted love; to inspire him, to cherish him, to buoy him up, to defend him, to help him.

To be able and willing to respond to another human being is to be "responsible." With the responsibility must be respect. "to look at." and when we have a steady, deep look at a person we see him as he is; a unique, distinct, unrepeatable creation, an image and likeness of God, one for whom Christ died, the most mysterious thing in the world. The person is therefore accepted and responded to as he is, that is, ontologically good, true and beautiful. And so in the presence of something so fundamentally sacred--even though defective and unpleasant on the surface level--we stand in awe and reverence eschewing curt criticism and refusing to exploit or even to ignore.

We cannot really respect a person unless we know him. We cannot love what we do not know. But neither can we know what we do not love. The one who loves is the one who really knows and understands. One who loves gets through the external features into the more real, into the innermost secret of a man.

THE CHURCH IS CHRIST.

All of our troubles come, from not keeping our eyes on Christ.

The man of prayer has no scorn, disdain, or even indifference for the world of human things, the world of the flesh, of materiality, of squalor. He loves God's world, God's creatures; and by his love he extends his pure, clean hands into the corrupt and squalid world--and to the extent that he does, he heals and saves the world and restores all things in Christ.

Natural law is nothing more than the fundamental rules of human behavior.

YOUR OTHER SELF by CANON JEAN VIEWJEAN

Love that is worthy of man is above all an intimate communion with another's true self. It is seizing him spiritually in his most intimate self, in his own mystery, in the throbbing of his personality, in his unique destiny, and in his absolute value.

It is touching, feeling, tasting and sorrowing the intimate reality of another; It is entering within him, identifying ourselves with him, coinciding with him. It is experiencing him as another self, and, therefore, being willing to protect him, perfect him, gladden him,

develop him, create him, make him become something.

Detachment—we don't make an absolute of our beloved, nor does detachment mean that we become disinterested in another's person, his life, his feelings, his sufferings.

Every human being ought to be considered and loved in the unique mystery of his concrete personality.

To see a person, a person united to God, and in His presence is to see him as he truly is; apart from God, he cannot be really known. Love becomes charity precisely when it perceives, recognizes, and loves God thus present in man, and man thus present in the bosom of God.

Charity, moreover, is to love with God present in our own heart., to participate in God's own charity, to love with the very love God puts in our heart, Charity is a true love, then, real, and concrete. It is a greater and higher love. When we "love in God," we evoke and reach the deepest sense of any human being. It is a love in which God takes part by giving His Heart to the one loving, and His countenance to the one loved. Charity is more than a man who loves; it is God loving with him and in him.

Whatever he may do, or whatever anyone may do for him, man lives alone and dies alone. There is a radical inability in him to communicate himself to others to the depths of his personality, and is likewise impossible to penetrate to the last hidden fold of another being. For there is in each man a secret region that cannot be conveyed to another. No one can see the hidden soul that lives behind the soul he does see.

To accept does not mean to fold our arms or let them fall at our sides. We must continually strive to surpass ourselves, to go beyond our body. We must look to the spirit. It is the soul we must make more clean, loyal, pure, detached and crystalline. Then it will reclothe our words, eyes, gestures, and bodies with its light. It will see others more clearly and at the same time become more transparent to them. "In true love" "it is the soul that envelops the body." We must see others rather than ourselves.

Once you realize one plus one always remain two, without ever becoming one, then you must go beyond; forget one of the unities, yourself, I mean, and think about the other.

He who forgets himself finds himself; he who gives receives, he who loses himself, finds himself!

(Humble love) directed to man venerates the image and likeness of God. He who is animated by this love first of all respects himself, his own proper mystery, his own vocation, and the idea God has of him. He also acts with immense respect toward others, judging no one; He mistrusts craftiness, constraint, even his own power, and is quite content to stimulate the resources hidden in his neighbors' liberty. He is full of boldness for defeat does not frighten him. Despite its apparent weakness Humble love is a gigantic force.

The day when we, without waiting for others to change, stop complaining and counting the injuries we have received from fate, others, the state, famacoa; affairs, our husband or wife, or contractors, our landlord or tenet--the day when we have but one concern; to throw the weight of our own justice into a world without justice, and do this without wearying of it, then and only then will we take rank among the forces that construct

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EDIFY-UNITE-

edify, unite, reconcile, and create. Suddenly we will have found the same peace and joy that we see overflowing in the heart of a St. Francis of Assisi or of a St. Vincent de Paul.

"Lord, wake me up! Make me silence all these vicious voices in me; my offended touchiness, my antipathy, hatred, irritation, my vengeance. Pierce me deeply with your gaze, to make me become more and more transparent, pure, and calm. Help me to deny myself, forget myself, and disappear before my own eyes. Help me to have a peaceful look and be full of love. And, out of regard for this brother, help me to find again the spontaneity and joy I had on that blessed day when our hearts first met."

We are ourselves, and we stay that way. We can only go out of ourselves by entering into others. We become others only thru love.

When our neighbor contradicts us, offends or irritates us-when he is on the verge of becoming an "object" to us, by placing him in our prayer, he reassumes his value as a person.

Remember, this too; there are many men we meet in life who ask nothing of us, and many others who do appeal to us and for whom we can do nothing. Every day ends with the sad remembrance of the brothers to whom we could not go---and others, as well, to whom we could not respond because of the limitations of our time, strength, fortune, even our heart. There is but force remaining in us then; that of gathering them all in our tenderness, making them intimately present to us, and then placing them in our prayer, confiding them to God's loving omnipotence.

Nothing makes the heart grow bigger, nothing makes communion with the world more intimate, brings men closer, or makes them more fraternal and real to each other.

True love, stands firm. It returns to itself and reflects upon itself. It knows that its essential mission is to accept the belloved as he is, and to work daily to make him become what he ought.

Yes, love is no laughing matter.

To love all men is general and to love enemies who are absent is very easy. But to love those who are very close, who continually disturb and upset our peace of mind, without even being aware of it; to put up with their faults without a word, the faults that always irritate us in the same spot, like a perpetual nail in our shoe; to listen to their complaints, their pessimism and despair which veil all the world in black crepe; to be still even when they disturb the recollection we need so badly, and rob us of our time for prayer--so necessary to find our soul in God--this is the inglorious heroism that is daily required of love. This will perhaps always be the love's demand, without any hope of ever seeing the end. If only it were just a question of accepting suffering for a week, a month, or a year! But some times we are forced to admit that patience will be required of us until the last breath, the real triumph of love will come only by enduring until this last moment.

To forget our own weariness, our disillusionment, and weakness, we must become attentive each day to the miseries of others, listen to their woes,

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fears, reproaches, and suffering. We must carry these in our own heart, for it is often relief enough for one who suffers just to be able to recite his long litany of troubles to someone. The greatest charity we can show here is to listen in silence, but with all our souls' attention.

To lose ones' soul! Almost all love must pass thru this purifying fire. Often one will feel he is being deceived, giving without receiving, losing ~~everything~~ everything, even himself, and falling into a bottomless pit. When he comes thru the trial victorious, he discovers that, far from losing himself, he has found himself. He has changed. He has taken on a new demension, a new intensity, a new depth that he could never have dreamed of at the moment of their initial enchantment of his young love.

When one touches a person's soul, he not only creates his own being but discovers the Being par excellence as weill and touches the Infinite

Detachment---You exist for me absolutely even outside our personal relations, above and beyond all you can give me; I adore in you a reflection of the divinity from which nothing can snatch me; and I need not possess you in order that you exist for me. One who loves with detachment and liberty knows that he is entrusting the object of his tenderness to One more loving and powerful than he himself. His only wish is to be a cause that has been delegated by the First Cause to work toward making men become what they ought.

Those who are unhappy have no need for anything in the world but people capable of giving them their attention. The capacity to give one's attention to a sufferer is a very rare and difficult thing; it is almost a miracle; it is a miracle. Nearly all those who think they have this capacity do not possess it. Warmth of heart, impulsiveness, pity are not enough. "The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say to him; "what are you going thru?" It is a recognition that the sufferer exists, not only as an item in a collection or a specimen from the social category labeled unfortunate, but as a man exactly as we are, who was one day stamped with a special mark of affection. For this reason it is enough, but it is indispensable, to know how to look at him in a certain way.

"This way of ~~looking~~-looking is first of all attentive. The soul empties itself of all its own contents in order to receive into itself the being it is looking at, just as he is, in all truth.

In no circumstances may he lay aside this respect for man, not even for the vilest Judas, the cruelest tyrant, or the most wretched criminal. The most fallen of men remains a creature of God, preserves his divine vocation, and retains his title as a soul redeemed by the blood of Christ. This dignity remains indestructible.

"If one day the wicked have an excuse," "they will only be able to find this; that no one loved them!"

Attention is one of the principal manifestations of the respect and charity we owe our neighbor. It is like a profound prayer to Him. To pay attention to someone is to judge him worthy of our souls' consideration, though it be but for an instant.

THE ART OF LOVING BY ERICH FROMM

(Knowledge) if a means of liberating mankind from the destructive power of fear.

The individual person and the collective person supplement and integrate each other.

As one's thinking is, such one becomes, and it is because of this that thinking should be purified and transformed.

All (my) attempts for love are bound to fail, unless I try most actively to develop my total personality.

He who knows nothing, loves nothing. He who can do nothing understands nothing. He who understands nothing is worthless. But he who understands also loves, notices, sees...The more knowledge is inherent in a thing, the greater the love. Paracelsus.

Most people see the problem of love primarily as that of BEING LOVED, rather than that of LOVING

There is hardly any activity, any enterprise, which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love.

The process of learning an art can be divided conveniently into two parts: one, the mastery of the theory; the other, the mastery of the practice.

A third factor necessary to becoming a master in any art--the mastery of the art must be a matter of ultimate concern; there must be nothing else in the world more important than the art...

While recognizing their separateness they remain strangers, because they have not yet learned to love each other (as is made very clear by the fact that Adam defends himself by blaming Eve, rather than by trying to defend her) THE AWARENESS OF HUMAN SEPARATION WITHOUT REUNION BY LOVE--IS THE SOURCE OF SHAME. IT IS AT THE SAME TIME THE SOURCE OF GUILT AND ANXIETY.

In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one and yet remain two.

This attitude of concentrated meditation is the highest activity there is, an activity of the soul, which is possible only under the condition of inner freedom and independence.

Spinoza arrives at the statement that virtue and power are one and the same.

The active character of love can be described by stating that love is primarily GIVING, not receiving.

The most widespread misunderstanding is that which assumes that giving is "giving up" something, being deprived of, sacrificing.

Giving is the highest expression of potency. In the very act of giving I experience my strength, my wealth, my power.

Giving is more joyous than receiving, not because it is a deprivation, but because in the act of giving lies the expression of my aliveness.

Not to give would be painful.

Th the sphere of material things giving means being rich.

What a person considers the minimal necessities depends as much on his character as it depends on his actual possessions.

Poverty beyond a certain point may make it impossible to give, and is so degrading, not only because of the suffering it causes directly, but because of the fact that it deprives the poor of the joy of giving.

In truly giving, he cannot help receiving that which is given back to him. Giving implies to make the other person a giver also and they both share in the joy of what they have brought ot life.

If you love without calling forth love, that is, if your love as such does not produce love, if by means of an EXPRESSION OF LIFE as a loving person you do not make of yourself a LOVED PERSON, than your love is impotent, a misfortune.

He is afraid of giving himself--hence of loving.

Certain basic elements, common to all forms of love,. These are CARE, RESPONSIBILITY, RESPECT and KNOWLEDGE.

Love is active concern for the life and growth of that which we love.

God explains to Jonah that the essence of love is to "labor" for something and "to make something grow."

Responsibility, in its true sense, is an entire voluntary act; it is my response to the needs, expressed or unexpressed, of another human being.

Responsibility could easily deteriorate into domination and possessive ness, were it not for a third component of love, RESPECT.

Respect is the ability to see a person as he is, to be aware of his unique individuality.

It is clear that respect is possible only if I have achieved independence.

To respect a person is not possible without KNOWING him.

The furthur we reach into the depth of our being, or someone else's being, the more the goal of knowledge eludes us.

Love is active penetration of the other person, in which my desire to know is stilled by union. In the act of fusion I know you, I know myself, I know everybody--and I "know" nothing. I know in the only way knowledge of that which is alive is possible for man--by experience of union--~~by~~ not by any knowledge our thought can give.

The only way of full knowledge lies in the ACT of love; this act transcends thought, it transcends words. It is the daring plunge into the experience of union.

Psychological knowledge becomes a substitute for full knowledge in the act of love.

They are bisexual also in the psychological sense. They carry in themselves the principle of receiving and of penetrating, of matter and of spirit. Man--and woman--finds union within himself only in the union of his female and his male polarity. This polarity is the basis for all creativity.

"Without Night, the nature of Man would receive no income, so there would be nothing for Day to spend."

Mother IS warmth, Mother IS Food, Mother IS the euphoric state of satisfaction and security.

I AM LOVED. I am loved because I am mother's child. I am loved because I am helpless. I am loved because I am beautiful, admirable. I am loved because mother needs me. To put it in a more general formula I AM LOVED FOR WHAT I AM, or perhaps more accurately, I AM LOVED BECAUSE I AM. This experience of being loved by mother is a passive, one there is nothing I have to do in order to be loved--mother's love is unconditional. All I have to do is TO BE-- to be her child. Mother's love is bliss, is need not be acquired, it need not be deserved.

The needs of the other person are as important as his own--in fact, they have become more important. To give has become more satisfactory more joyous, than to receive; to love, more important even than being loved. By loving, he has left the prison cell of aloneness and isolation which was constituted by the state of narcissism and self-centeredness. He feels a sense of new union, of sharing, of oneness. More than that, he feels the potency of producing love by loving--rather than the dependence of receiving by being loved--and for that reason having to be small, helpless, sick--or "good." Infantile love follows the principle: "I LOVE BECAUSE I AM LOVED." Mature love follows the principle: "I AM LOVED BECAUSE I LOVE." Immature love says: "I LOVE YOU BECAUSE I NEED YOU." Mature love says: "I NEED YOU BECAUSE I LOVE YOU."

Motherly love by its very nature is unconditional. Mother loves the newborn infant because it is her child, not because the child has fulfilled any specific condition, or lived up to any specific expectation.

Unconditional love corresponds to one of the deepest longings, not only of the child, but, of every human being; on the other hand, to be loved because of one's merit, because one deserves it, always leaves doubt; I did not please the person whom I want to love me, maybe this or that--there is always a fear that love could disappear. Furthermore, "deserved" love easily leaves a bitter feeling that one is not loved for oneself, that one is loved ONLY because one pleased, that one is, in the last analysis, not loved at all but used. No wonder that we all cling to the longing for Motherly love, as children and also as adults.

If I truly love one person I love all persons, I love the world, I love life. If I can say to somebody else, "I love you," I must be able to say, "I love in you everybody. I love through you the world, I love in you also myself.

If I perceive in another person mainly the surface, I perceive mainly the difference, that which separates us. If I penetrate to the core, I perceive our identity, the fact of our brotherhood.

Only in the love of those who do not serve a purpose, love begins to unfold.

The relationship of mother and child is by its very nature one of inequality, where one needs all the help, and the other gives it.

If there were more depth in the experience of the other person, if one could experience the infiniteness of his personality, the other person would never be so familiar--and the miracle of overcoming the barriers might occur every day anew.

If an individual is able to love productively, he loves himself too; if he can love ONLY others, he cannot love at all.

"As long as you love another person less than you love yourself, you will not really succeed in loving yourself, but if you love all alike, including yourself, you will love them as one person and that person is both God and man.

The nature of his love for God corresponds to the nature of his love of man, and furthermore, the real quality of his love for God and man often is unconscious--covered up and rationalized by a more mature THOUGHT OF WHAT HIS LOVE IS.

"Love begins when a person feels another person's needs to be as important as his own."

Love implies a reaction to UNEXPRESSED needs between two people.

Mother can give life, and she can take life. She is the one to revive; and the one to destroy; she can do miracles of love--and nobody can hurt more than she.

The problem of existence can be solved by each one only for himself.

Love is possible only if two persons communicate with each other from the center of their existence, hence if each one of them experiences himself from the center of his existence.

They are one with each other by being one with themselves, rather than by fleeing from themselves. There is only one proof for the presence of love: the depth of the relationship, and the aliveness and strength in each person concerned; this is the fruit by which love is recognized.

The DISTINTEGRATION OF THE LOVE OF GOD has reached the same proportions as the disintegration of the love of man.

One must learn a great number of other--and often seemingly disconnected things--before one starts with the art itself.

If one wants to become a master in any art, one's whole life must be devoted to it, or at least related to it.

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

The ability to be alone is the condition for the ability to love.

To be concentrated means to live fully in the present, in the here and now, and not to think of the next thing to be done, while I am doing

something right now. Needless to say that concentration must be practiced most of all by people who love each other.

Many people have never known a person who functions optimally. They take the psychic functioning of their parents and relatives, or of the social group they have been born into, as the norm, and as long as they do not differ from these they feel normal and without interest in observing anything.

Humility and objectivity are indivisible, just as love is. I cannot be truly objective about my family if I cannot be objective about the stranger, and vice versa. If I want to learn the art of loving, I must strive for objectivity in every situation where I am not objective. I must try to see the difference between my picture of a person and his behavior, as it is narcissistically distorted, and the person's reality as it exists regardless of my interests, needs and fears.

If someone would want to reserve his objectivity for the loved person, and think he can dispense with it in his relationship to the rest of the world, he will soon discover that he fails both here and there.

The practice of the art of loving requires the practice of faith.

Rational faith is a conviction which is rooted in one's own experience of thought or feeling. Rational faith is not primarily belief in something, but the quality or certainty and firmness which our convictions have. Faith is a character trait pervading the whole personality, rather than a specific belief.

Faith is an indispensable quality of any significant friendship or love.

Only the person who has faith in himself is able to be faithful to others, because only he can be sure that he will be the same at a future time as he is today and, therefore, that he will feel and act as he now expects to. Faith in oneself is a condition of our ability to promise, and since, as Nietzsche said, man can be defined by his capacity to promise, faith is one of the conditions of human existence. What matters in relation to love is the faith in one's own love; in its ability to produce love in others, and in its reliability.

Another meaning of having faith in a person refers to the faith we have in the potentialities of others.

To have faith requires COURAGE?, the ability to take a risk, the readiness even to accept pain and disappointment.

To love means to commit oneself without guarantee, to give oneself completely in the hope that our love will produce love in the loved person. Love is an act of faith, and whoever is of little faith is also of little love.

By activity is not meant "doing something," but an inner activity, the productive use of one's powers. Love is an activity: if I love, I am in a constant state of active concern with the loved person.

To be active in thought, feeling, with one's eyes and ears, throughout the day, to avoid inner laziness, be it in the form of being receptive, hoarding, or plain wasting one's time, is an indispensable condition for the practice of the art of loving.