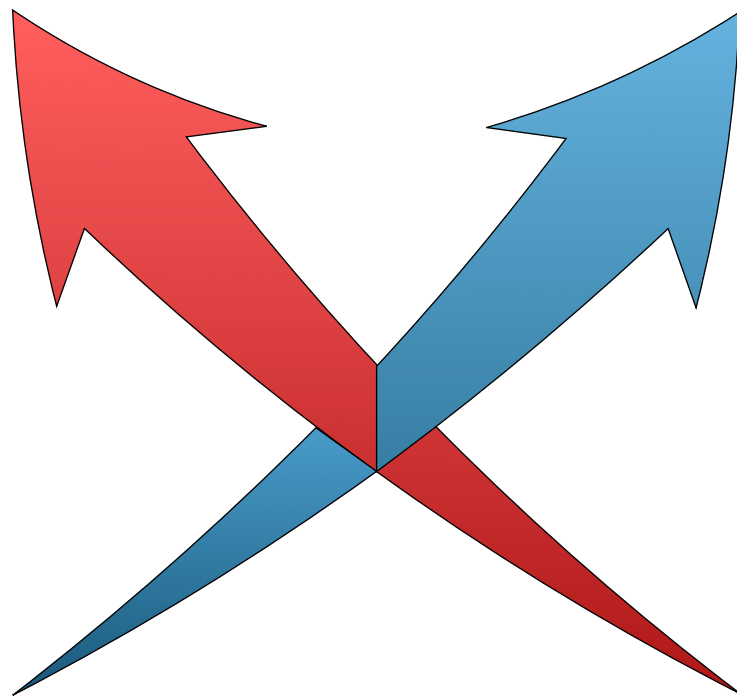


HEALING RELATIONSHIPS



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PART ONE

RELATIONSHIPS

Chapter 1

WHO ARE WE?

Who we are is tied to how we relate.

Introduction

Imagine that you are at a party, about to introduce one of your friends to another friend. You say, “Tom, I’d like you to meet George.” What do you say next? You might say a little bit about George, perhaps one of the following:

He’s a school pal of mine.

He’s my cousin.

He’s a member of our church.

He’s a teacher.

He and I go bike riding together.

He’s Carl’s father.

He’s great at fixing cars.

Chances are that almost everything you say about George will tell about a relationship he has with someone or something outside himself. It would be possible to describe George without describing his relationships; one could say, “George is 511” tall,” “He has blue eyes,” or “His middle name is Thomas.” But the really interesting information about George answers the question, “How does he relate to the people and the world around him?”

We define ourselves by our relationships. Whether you are an employer or employee, a teacher, doctor, accountant or repairman, father, mother, husband, wife, son, daughter, man, or woman; whether you are European, Asian, African, short, tall, old, young, rich, poor, wise, stupid, funny, gentle, honest or wicked, you are what you are by virtue of your relationships with the people and the world around you.

Who we are is determined by *how we relate*. This theme occurs repeatedly throughout the teachings of the New Church, beginning with the teachings about God.

Who is God?

No one can describe God as He is in Himself. The Infinite, Divine Being is beyond the limitations of human speech and thought, and even above angelic comprehension.

The human mind, for all its loftiness and superb analytical power, is finite... Therefore it is incapable of seeing the infinity of God as it is in itself and so seeing God... It is futile to want to know God as He is in His Being or in His Substance; but it is enough to acknowledge Him by finite things, that is, His creation in which He dwells infinitely (TCR 28).

It is possible to describe God, not as He is in Himself, but as He relates to His creation. We call Him Creator, Redeemer, and Savior. He is our Father, King, Helper, Healer, and Friend. These words describe a God who desires to have a relationship with His people. The Lord is present with every person, urging and pressing him to receive Him” (TCR 766). God is Love, and the es-

sence of love is loving others than oneself, wishing to be one with them and devoting oneself to their happiness” (TCR 43). This is the reason behind everything that the Lord does.

As heaven is from mankind and is an abiding with the Lord to eternity, it must have been the Lord’s purpose in creation.... The Lord created the world *not for His own sake but for the sake of those with whom He would be in heaven*. Spiritual love by nature desires to give its own to another.... It derives this from the Lord’s divine love which is such infinitely (DP 27).

It makes no difference whether we talk about the Lord or about a relationship with Him since the two go hand in hand.

Whether we say *the Lord*, or *love from Him and consequently to Him*, it is the *same thing*, because love is a spiritual relationship, and causes Him to be where the love is, for love Causes him who is loved to be present in itself. (AC 9841)

We Are Because He Is

We need to describe God in terms of His relationship with creation because we cannot understand Him as He is in Himself. We need to describe ourselves in terms of our relationships because we do not even exist apart from them. Most of all, we cannot exist apart from our relationship with God.

Since God alone is I Am or Being, that is Jehovah, there cannot be anything in the created universe which does not owe its being to Him (TCR 19).

Had not God created all things from Himself, nothing whatever would be. In a word, we are because God is’ (DP 46).

“Heaven is heaven, not from the angels, but from the Lord, for the love and wisdom in which angels are and which make heaven are not theirs, but the Lord’s, in fact are the Lord in them. And as love and wisdom are the Lords and are the Lord in heaven, and make the life of angels, it is plain that their life is the Lord’s, in fact is the Lord. The angels themselves avow that they live from the Lord. Hence it is evident that *heaven is a relationship with the Lord*. But a relationship with Him is various and one person’s heaven is not another’s, so heaven is also according to the relationship with God (DP 28).

Without a relationship with the Lord we would not exist, and it is the quality of that relationship which determines who we are.

We Are Our Loves

“Love is the life of man” (DLW 1). A man is completely as is his love” (AC 6872.3). A spiritual person loves God and his neighbor, and his quality is determined by the nature of those relationships. “Love to God and love towards the neighbor are what cause man to be man” (AC 3957.8). A person is like a vessel that receives love, and yet the person cannot receive love if he isolates himself from others. Real love only exists where two or three are gathered together in His name. Man is born for the sake of himself but for the sake of others, that is, that he should not live for himself alone, but for others” (TCR406). Love is a spiritual relationship” (HH 14). To say that a person receives love from the Lord is the same as saying that he receives relationships from Him.

In the case of a person who is dominated by love of self and love of the world, his relationships and loves are not spiritual, but still the quality of his loves and his life is directly related to his relationships.

Influx

At times the appearance that we can be isolated is strong, but in reality we always have some kind of relationship with others. Relationships are so central to our lives that if it were not for

our relationships with others, we would have no life at all. This is especially true of our relationships with angels and spirits.

No angel or spirit can have any life unless he lives in some community, and in so doing in a harmonious relationship of many people. A community is nothing else than the harmonious relationship of many, for one person's life in no sense exists in isolation from the lives of others. Indeed no angel, spirit, or community can possibly have any life... if he is not joined to heaven and to the world of spirits through the many in his own community. The same applies to the human race... For everyone during his lifetime is dwelling in some community of spirits or angels, although he is not conscious of doing so. And if he is not joined to heaven or the world of spirits by means of the community in which is lives, he cannot go on living one moment longer. (AC 687)

No angel or spirit subsists without man, and no man without spirit and angel; there is a mutual and reciprocal relationship. (LJ 9.9)

The process of our spiritual growth or regeneration is actually a matter of changing our relationships with the communities around us.

A person chooses certain communities for himself, that is, he places himself within one of these, for like is brought into association with like.... And as he allows himself to be led to good which is more interior and more perfect, so he is conveyed to more interior and more perfect angelic communities. His changes of state are nothing else than changes of communities. (AC 4067)

We Are Our Uses.

One of the reasons our quality is determined by our relationships is that our life is our use. From use, through use, and according to use, is life given by the Lord" (AC 503). "The use itself which a person loves determines his life, and distinguishes him from others." (AC 4459.7) "The good with a person is exactly according to the use of life. (AC 92963) In a spiritual idea a man is not a person, but a use." (Div. Love xii.4)

The uses we do for others are genuine if they spring from love for the people to whom they are directed. A person who loves uses spiritually does not look to self, but to others outside of self, with whose good he is affected." (DLW 426)

The Church Is Its Relationships

The focus of all the doctrine of the church is on helping people relate to each other and to the Lord. All things of the doctrine of the New Jerusalem relate to love to the Lord and to love towards the neighbor. (AR 903) "There is not any other doctrine, that is, not in any other thing than mutual love, which is the true doctrine of faith" (AC 2009e). "The veriest truth of the church is that love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor are the primary things." (AC 4776)

It is the same whether we say that the church is love for the Lord and love for the neighbor, or that the church is relationships, because "love is a spiritual relationship." (AC 2034, 2349.2, 3986, 5002, 4351, 4191)

Of course the church does not exist simply to teach about relationships. The relationships are what actually make the church. "Love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor make heaven with man...and therefore they also make the church with him." (HD 60) "For there to be a church there must be with the member of the church faith in the Lord and also love to Him and love towards the neighbor. These things make the church." (AC 8788)

The being of any society or community is conjunction—that is, the relationships that exist within the community (AC 5002). Likewise, the being of the church is the connections that exist between its members, between the church and the world, and between the church and the Lord.

It is our ability to have a relationship with the Lord, more than anything else, which distinguishes the New Church from other churches.

This New Church is the crown of all the churches that have up to now existed upon earth, because it will worship one visible God, in whom is the invisible God, as the soul is in the body. In this way and no other is God's relationship with us possible.... A relationship with a visible God is like seeing a person in the air or sea opening his arms and inviting you into his embrace. (TCR 787)

What is Good?

Often the Writings speak in terms that are abstract from person. For example, instead of speaking about *good people* and *bad people* the Writings frequently speak abstractly about *good* and *evil*. We would be misled if we were to conclude from this that good and evil exist as something abstract from person. Good and truth can exist only in a *subject*. (CL 87) They are *human* qualities. Good and truth, evil and falsity are spoken of abstractly not to *remove* the people involved, but to *broaden* the application to a larger number of people. For example, when we speak of a good woman, our thought is limited to that kind of person. When we speak abstractly about the quality of being good, we can be speaking of a good woman, a good man, a good angel, a good congregation, a good community, or all of these at once.

Normally when the Writings speak of what is good, they are referring to what is good about our relationships. Goodness, like love, is not a quality that exists in an individual by himself, but a quality that is shared among more than one. A *good person* is one who has *good relationships*. Consider how the following passages connect good with relationships.

There is never any good except from *love*. (AC 112)

All good is of love and charity. (AC 2190, 2235, 2460, 10110.4, 101532)

The Lord wills that all goods be *communicable*. (AC 1388)

Evil itself consists in *disunion*. This is plain from good, for *good is conjunction*, because all good is of love to the Lord and of love toward the neighbor. The good of love to the Lord conjoins the man with the Lord... and the good of love towards the neighbor conjoins him with heaven and the communities there. (AC 4997)

It is spiritual to regard everyone as conjoined with one's self who is in good. (AC 50253)

If people knew what *charity* is, they would know what good is. (AC 5354, 7178)

The internal man places all good in *thinking and willing well of the neighbor*... The external man places all good in speaking and doing well of him. (AC 8745)

When the Writings speak of the spiritual and heavenly good that is within a person, they are speaking of that person's spiritual and heavenly relationships. Here again we see that the process of regeneration is one of developing spiritual relationships.

Putting It Together

If you were to take away a person's relationships, you would take away his loves, his uses, his good, his thoughts and affections that inflow from the other world, and his connection with God. In fact, you would take away his life.

We could compare a person to a letter of the alphabet. A single letter has virtually no meaning. The letters take on meaning only in relation to other letters. For example, if the letters in this sentence had no significant connections with each other they might read like this:

ikth ehtsar xifntch oFhionee lenad n sitetrs her thgnent coons diene tithate se haeoe :en tisttengt racine, idicd ly miter

The meaning lies not in the letters themselves, but in the relationships which exist between the letters when they are all put together in a purposeful way. Likewise, the meaning of our lives does not lie in our individual personalities, but in the relationships we have with one another when we come together in a purposeful way.

Chapter 2

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN RELATIONSHIPS

All our relationships are connected. The way we relate to God is closely tied to the way we relate to other people, and our relationships with other people are interrelated as well.

Love for the Lord and Love for the Neighbor

I have often listened to radio preachers as I am driving in my car, and I have heard a number of sermons about the Cross. There is one that stands out to me as being more helpful than many others. The preacher compared our relationship with the Lord to the vertical section of the cross, and our relationship with other people to the horizontal section. If the vertical part of the cross is skewed," he said, the horizontal part will be skewed as well. You can't have a right relationship with other people if you do not have a right relationship with God." He went on to say that the converse was also true. If your horizontal relationships are crooked, then your vertical relationship will be out of line also.

This concept runs throughout the revealed Word of the Lord, beginning with Cain, whose worship was not accepted because he harbored a hatred for his brother. We see it in the Ten Commandments, which were written on two tables of stone: One table focused on our relationship with the Lord, and the other on our relationship with the neighbor. They were kept together in the Ark of the Covenant to show that these two relationships go together. In Isaiah, the Lord complains about people who come to worship Him and claim to have a good relationship with Him, while their relationships with others are full of greed and oppression. First change your relationship with others, He says, and then you can have a good relationship with Me. *"Loose the bands of wickedness, undo heavy burdens, and let the oppressed go free.... Deal your bread to the hungry... when you see the naked, cover him... Then you shall call and the Lord shall answer; you shall cry and He shall say, 'Here I am!'"* (Isaiah 58:6-9)

In the New Testament, the Lord tells us that we can't separate our relationship with others from our relationship with Him. *"If you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."* (Matthew 5:23,24) Wherever there is love for the neighbor there is also a relationship with the Lord. *"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them."* (Matthew 18:20) As the apostle John said, *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God, and whoever loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love, does not know God, for God is love."* (1 John 4:7,8)

Because our relationships with the neighbor and with the Lord are tied together, whatever we do for others we are also doing for the Lord. *"Inasmuch as you have done it to one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you have done it to Me."* (Matthew 25:39) It is also true that whatever we do for others the Lord will do for us. *"If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."* (Matthew 6:14) He asks that our relationships with others be patterned after His relationship with us. *"Love your enemies and do good... and you shall be children of the Highest: for He is kind to the unthankful and to the evil. Be therefore merciful, as your Father is merciful."* Luke 6:35-37)

The connection between love for the Lord and love for the neighbor is mentioned frequently in the Writings.

Love to the Lord can never be separated from love towards the neighbor; for the Lord's love is towards the universal human race... and therefore he who has love to the Lord has the Lord's love, and thus cannot do otherwise than love the neighbor. (AC 2023)

Within charity there is love to the Lord, thus the Lord, although the person is not aware of it (HD 106.8).

There is no love to the Lord with a person except in charity: in the latter the Lord conjoins Himself with the person. (Life 22)

Love towards the neighbor is derived from love for the Lord, as what is posterior from its prior, or as what is exterior from its interior; in a word, as an effect from its effecting cause. (AE 707.2)

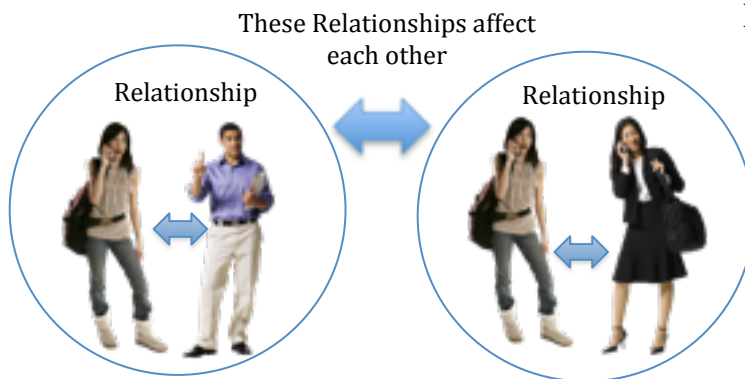
As end, cause and effect are distinct from each other, so in the spiritual world, are love to the Lord, charity towards the neighbor, and the works of charity. For these three to make a one, or to come forth together, the Erst must be in the second, and the second in the third... Unless interiorly in charity there is love to God, it is not charity. (AC 6508.3)

He who loves the neighbor from good loves the Lord. (AC 2718.5)

No one can love the Lord unless he also loves the neighbor. Love to the Lord embraces love towards the neighbor, for love to the Lord originates in the Lord, thus in Love itself towards the whole human race. (AC 22272; see also HD 96e, TCR 456, D Wis 3, AC 9042).

Relationships Between Relationships

The connection between love for the Lord and love for the neighbor illustrates in a very simple way a profound fact: *There are relationships between relationships.* Relationships between people exist because people interact with each other and affect each other.



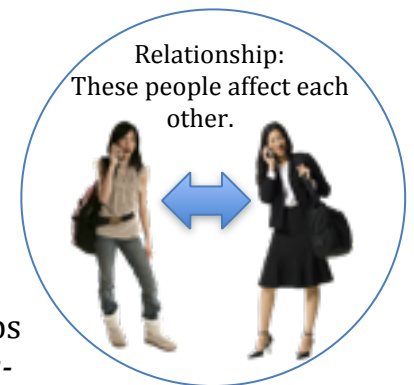
Relationships between relationships exist *when the relationships interact with and affect each other.*

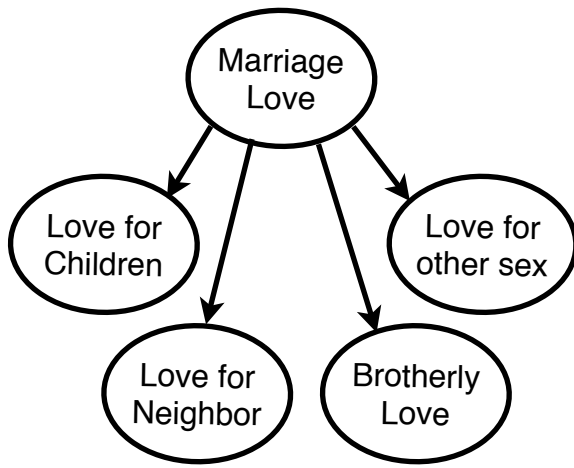
In other words, if a person's relationship with the Lord is full of anger and resentment, this will affect his or her relationships with other people. Or, if someone relates to other people in a gentle, open-minded way, it will affect his relationship with the Lord.

The same is true for many other relationships. If a husband and wife cannot get along with each other, their children will probably have problems in their relationships with each other. If a CEO treats his managers with thoughtfulness and respect, it is likely to have an effect on the way the employees treat the customers.

Marriage Love and Other Loves

The marriage relationship is a focal point for all other relationships. As children, everything in our lives centered around our parents relationship with each other. Whether that relationship was healthy or sick, whether there was infidelity or commitment, whether one or both were absent, our lives were profoundly affected by the way they interacted.





As adults, our marriage relationship or lack thereof may have more impact on the way we relate to others than anything else. Whether a person’s marriage is happy or unhealthy it tends to be where all his happiness or unhappiness is centered. People who are not married may find that their social life is greatly affected by being single, or that their relationships with friends change entirely when their friends marry.

The Writings describe marriage love as the fundamental of all loves, as the parent of other loves.

All heavenly and spiritual loves are derived from marriage love as offspring from their parent (AC 4277, 4280.4).

By marriage love is meant all heavenly and spiritual love, for the reason that true marriage love is the fundamental love of all loves. Therefore, those who are in it, are also in all the other loves of heaven and the church (AC 9961.6).

Marriage love is like the parent, and all the other loves like offspring (CL 65).

Marriage love comes down from the Lord by way of heaven, and from that love, as from a parent, mutual love is derived, which is the foundation on which heaven rests. (AC 2733.2).

One example of this is the relationship between marriage love and love of children. The origin of love of infants is marriage love (CL 393). These two loves are tied together. With parents, married love is conjoined with the love of infants by spiritual causes and consequently by natural causes” (CL 404.) Because of this connection, the quality of the love of children depends on the nature of the parent’s love for each other. “The love of infants is of one kind with spiritual married partners, and of another with natural” (CL 405).

Another example is the relationship between marriage love and a pure love for members of the opposite sex. A chaste relationship between a man and women or between a woman and men (that is between any person and members of the opposites sex in general) exists only with people who are in true married love (CL 55.3). This love is a relationship of minds and not at the same time of bodies, which can exist only with people who are in true married love” (CL 55.7) Angels have this love of the sex because they have married love (CL 44.5).

What is true of the connection between the marital relationship and parent-child relationships applies also to many other kinds of relationships.

Married love [in heaven] consists in the desire to be one in the life of the other, but mutual consists in desiring what is good to another rather than to oneself, as with the love of parents towards children, and as with the love of those who are moved to do good not for their own benefit but because they find joy in doing it. Such angelic love is derived from married love, and is born from it like a child from its parent. (AC 2738)

From the marriage of good and truth in heaven all loves are descended, which are such as the love of parents towards their children, the love of brothers for one another, love towards other relatives, and so on down in their order according to their degrees of affinity. (AC 2739)

Levels of Marriage

The connection between relationships can also be seen in the levels of marriage frequently described in the Writings. The marital relationship between husband and wife results from the connection between good and truth within them. This in turn depends on the relationship be-

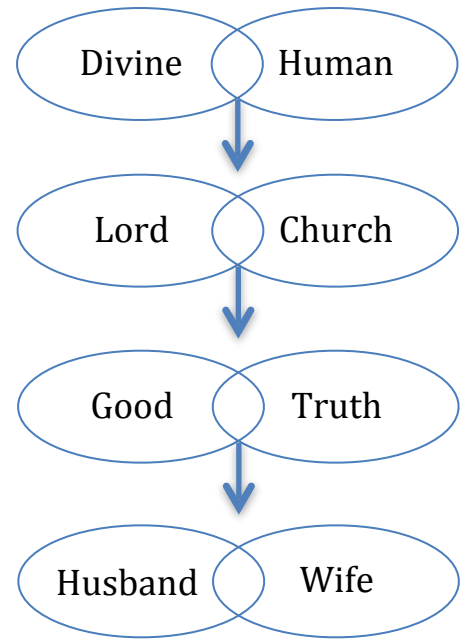
tween the Lord and His church, which depends again on a union between the Divine and the Human in the Lord.

Marriage love... is the fundamental of all loves; for it descends from the marriage of good and truth in the heavens... but the marriage of good and truth in the heavens descends from the relationship of the Lord with the heavens.... (AC 9961.3)

The conjugal, in the supreme sense, is the union of the Divine and the Divine Human in the Lord. Hence comes the union of Divine good and Divine truth heaven; for that which proceeds from the Lord is Divine truth from Divine good. Hence heaven is Heaven, and is called a marriage.... From this marriage of good and truth descends genuine marriage love (AC 6179. See also AC 2728, 2729, CL 62, 70, 116, 156, 113)

Marriages represent good's relationship with truth, and truth's relationship with good. Moreover, marriage love originates from this relationship: marriage love with the celestial is from the relationship of good with truth, and marriage love with the spiritual from the relationship of truth with good. The marriages also actually correspond to these relationships. (AC 4823.3)

Marriage love is love to the Lord. All who are in true married love are in love to the Lord; for the reason that it descends from the marriage of the Lord with the church. (De Conjugio 7)



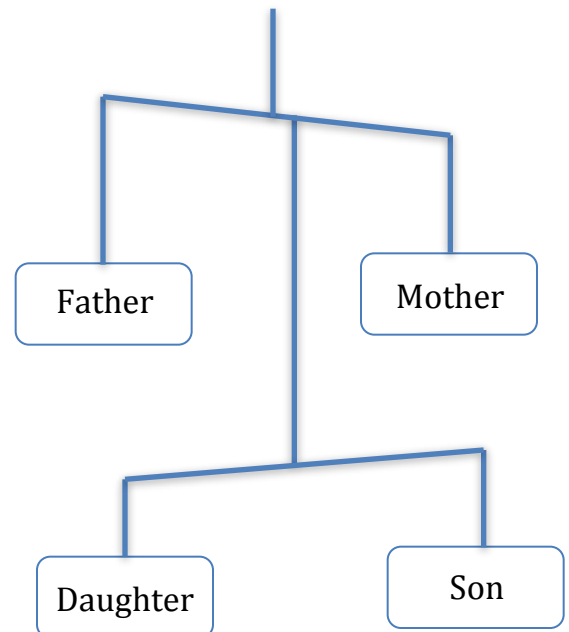
The System

Imagine a mobile hanging in the middle of the room. It is made up of pieces of glass and metal tied together with wire and string. When you first look at it the pieces of glass and metal are the most obvious elements. The wire and string are less noticeable at first, but they are essential to the beauty and structure of the mobile. Some of the qualities of the mobile are:

1. It has structure. If you were to change the way the pieces were tied together, it would be a "different" mobile.
2. The whole is greater than the sum of its parts. If you were to scatter unconnected pieces of glass, metal, string and wire around the floor, you would not get the same effect.
3. Whenever one piece is bumped, it affects the whole mobile.
4. After being moved, the mobile tends to return to its original state. All the pieces create a very subtle pressure that keeps each piece in its place.

In these respects, the mobile is a good illustration of a system. The family system has the same qualities:

1. The family has structure. If you were for example to change the way the father relates to the oldest daughter, it would be a different family.
2. The family is greater than the sum of its members. The family's character is not simply the result of four or five people living under one roof; it comes from the way those people are connected and the ways they relate to each other.
3. Whatever happens to one member affects the whole family. When one person is "bumped," the rest are forced to change in some way to accommodate him. If the father develops a gambling habit, everyone else has to change somehow in re-



sponse to that.

4. When one person changes, the rest exert a subtle pressure to put him back in his original place. This can be either positive or negative. In a healthy family, a person who becomes ill will receive the kind of nurture or help that will promote healing, to bring the family back to its normal state. In an unhealthy family the opposite happens. For example, if a troubled child is taken out of the family for counseling, then when he returns to the family, the same family pressures will still exist (unless the rest of the family has also received therapy). These pressures will tend to push the child into the same trouble he had before.

What is true of the mobile is true of the human form. Consider the human body, for example:

1. The body is an interconnected balance of many parts, with definite structure,
2. The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.
3. Whatever happens to one part affects the whole. A little pin prick in the toe will make the whole body jump.
4. The body works to maintain its normal balance. If you drink a lot of liquid, the body will eliminate a lot of liquid in order to keep the normal balance.

Chapter 3

THE HEART'S FAMILY

A person's mind has many facets. A large family of emotions, thoughts, motive and behaviors dwell within the mind. Between the members of this mental family are relationships almost like those between person and person.

Theories of transactional analysis suggest that each person has several different modes of interacting with others. Observers have noted that in transactions with others a person may act as a *child*—dependent, playful and irresponsible; or as a *parent*—authoritative, managing and serious, or as an *adult*—responsible, self-directed and capable.

These three modes of interaction with others involve ways the person interacts with himself as well. There seems to be within the person a parent, a child and an adult. For example, when a person tells himself “Don’t be so silly,” it is the parent in him addressing the child in him.

This concept is similar to teachings in the Writings about inter- and intra-personal psychology. There are different parts of a person's mind, and these different parts relate to one another almost as different people would relate to each other.

In the Word persons mean nothing else than spiritual realities... so that two persons are used to mean two things present in the same individual. (AC 3979)

Will and Understanding

Probably the most common example of this is the relationship between the will and the understanding. New Church people are quite familiar with the concept that there is a kind of marriage relationship between these two.

Love or the will betroths to itself wisdom or the understanding, and afterwards weds it, that is, enters into a kind of marriage with it. Love betroths to itself wisdom by preparing for it a house or bridal chamber, and marries it by conjoining it to itself by affections, and afterwards lives wisely with it in that house. (DLW 402)

The basis of any marriage is the consent given by both parties. This has its origin in the marriage of good and truth, in that one party-good-proposes and the other-truth-consents, and the two are thereby joined together... While a person is being regenerated a kind of marriage must take place between the will and the understanding, good being on the side of the will, truth on that of the understanding. (AC 3090)

There is never with a person the least of thought, of affection, or of action, in which there is not a kind of marriage of the will and the understanding. (AC 718)

There are two things with a person that make his life, namely, will and understanding... The relationship between these two is called a marriage, for these two when coupled are related in the same way as are a married pair: they love each other, they conceive and bring forth, and the consequent offspring is called fruit. (AC 84232)

The Inner Person and the Outer Person

Just as the will and understanding in an individual relate like two people, so the internal and external mind are related. In fact the inward and outward parts of a person's mind are often called the internal person and the external person or man.

There is in a person an external which is called the external person, and an internal which is called the internal person. (AC 99222)

The relationship between the internal and external person is like the relationship between father and son, or between parents and children.

Each of them, good and truth in the natural or external man, is a 'son', that is to say, a son of the rational or internal man, for whatever comes into being in the natural or external man flows in from the rational or internal man, and from there comes into being and is born. (AC 3494.2).

It is because there are two distinct people within each individual that we often talk with ourselves. For example, a conversation between Abram and Lot symbolizes the interaction between the internal and the external man. Abram said to Lot, Is not the whole land before you? Separate yourself, now, from me. Abram and Lot symbolize the internal and external man.

Here the internal man addresses the external man, or rather addresses these things in the external man which do not agree with the internal, addressing them in the way that a person is accustomed to do when he detects some evil present in himself from which he wishes to be separated, as happens in times of temptation and conflict. (AC 1579).

Perception itself is nothing else than a certain form of conversing that take place inwardly, but which makes itself known whenever the spoken word is grasped perceptively. Every form of inward dictate, even conscience, is nothing else, but perception is a higher or more interior degree of it. (AC 1822).

The Inner Family

The marital relationship between will and understanding is actually a starting point for many relationships that exist within the human mind. The result of this relationship is that there are whole families within the mind. The inner will and understanding bring forth children-goods and truths in the outward man. These grow up and have children as well. The result is that the mind is made up of parents, children, grandchildren and "in-laws."

All things that are in a person are as one household (that is, as one family). (AC 3020)

The truths and goods with a regenerated person, or one born anew from the Lord, are exactly like families in a large and long series from one father. There are those which bear relation to sons and daughters, to grandsons and granddaughters, to sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, in a word, relations of various degrees, and consequently of various kinds. (AC 9807)

A brother is the affection of good, and a sister is the affection of truth, for in the natural man, as in the rational, there are relationships by both blood and marriage of all the things in it. And it also is from this that the mind, both the rational and the natural, is called a house (or family), where parents, brothers, sisters, kinsmen and other relatives exists in order. (AC 3129)

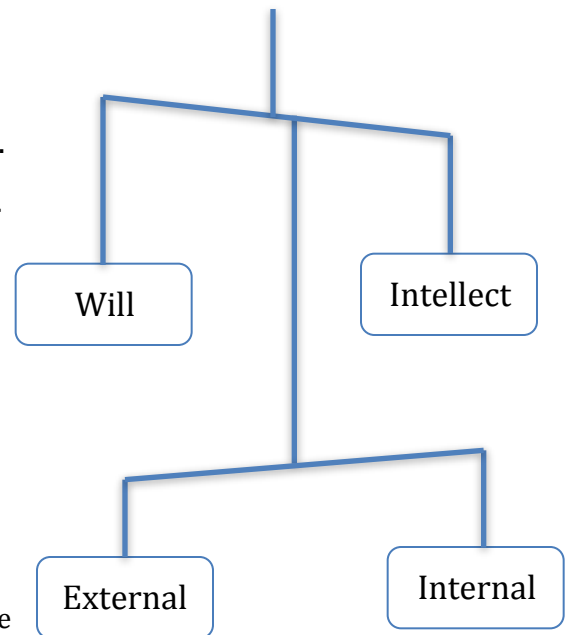
With a regenerate person goods and truths are like generations, there are some which are in the place of a parent, some which are in the place of children, some which are in the place of sons-in law and daughters-in-law, some which are in the place of grandsons and granddaughters, and so on. Consequently there are blood relationships and kinships of these goods and truths and there are families in a complex series.... The goods and truths in a person mutually love each other, and recognize each other in accordance with the love, and thus associate together. (AC 9079).

Procreating goods and truths are in the spiritual man, and procreated goods and truths are in the natural man, and those in the spiritual man are like the father and mother, and those that are from these in the natural man are like brothers and sisters; and again truths and goods that are procreated anew as if from sons married within marriageable limits, and from daughters married within the same, are in the natural man, after these as parents have been raised up into the spiritual man; for all conception and all bearing or gestation in the womb takes place in the spiritual man, while the birth itself takes place in the natural man. Thus the spiritual man is continually enriched by the elevation into it of truths and goods out of the natural man, which as parents will procreate anew. And there all things are associated like the societies of heaven according to the affections of truth and good, and their relationships and connections. From this it is clear that these spiritual procreations, like the natural procreations from a father and mother, are multiplied like families and houses on earth. (AE 724.4).

The Mind as a System

In the previous chapter we noted that people's relationships are connected in such a way that they make a system. Each family system has its own character and structure, and when one family member changes, it affects the rest of the family. The same thing is true for the family of loves and thoughts within each person. Each person's mind has its own structure and balance. Earlier we described the human body as a system. The same concepts apply to the human mind:

1. The mind has definite structure: internal and external, will and understanding, parts of the mind that interact with each other in predictable ways.
2. The mind is more than the sum of its parts. The mind is more than a random heap of feelings, ideas, facts and intentions. The content of the mind is less important than the way the parts of the mind relate to each other. For example, it is one thing to have a lot of facts in your memory and another thing to have those facts related to each other in a meaningful way.
3. What happens to one part of the mind affects the rest of the mind. If your emotional being is feeling anger, it will affect also your ability to take in information, your ability to solve problems and your ability to accommodate to other people.
4. The mind seeks to maintain its balance. When a new thought comes in that could threaten person's usual way of thinking, many different subtle defenses work to bring the mind back to its usual patterns.



When we look at a family system, we may easily overlook the interconnected relationships that tie the family members together. We may not realize that the family is a system, because we are focusing on the individual parts. When we look at the system within the human mind, we have the opposite problem. It is easy to see that the mind is tied together into one. It is more difficult to distinguish clearly the different parts of the mind. We may not realize that the mind is a system, because we do not understand that it is made up of many interconnected parts.

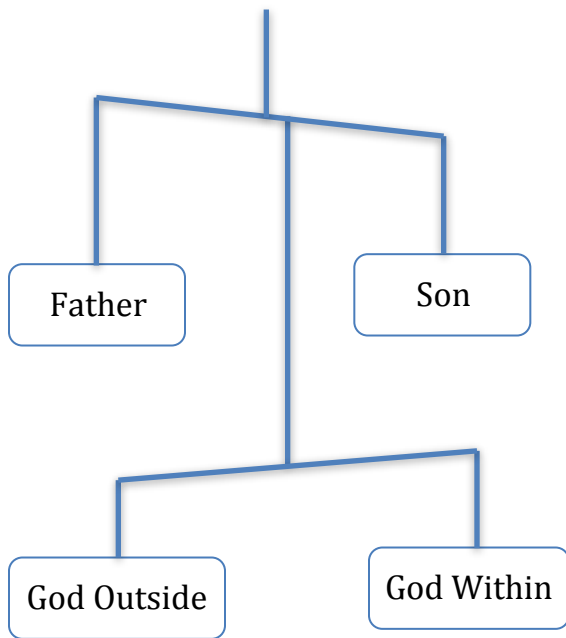
Despite the apparent separateness of the members of a family, and the lack of clarity about the human mind, there is a strong parallel between the two. The mind can be compared to a family because it is made up of many parts, and the family (or any interconnected community of individuals) can be compared to a single person because it is an interconnected whole.

Heaven, taken as a whole, reflects a single person, and so does each community in heaven.... As heaven is a person in greatest form and a community of heaven is a person in a lesser one, so an angel is a person in least form. For in the most perfect form (which heaven's form is), there is a resemblance to the whole in the part and a resemblance to the part in the whole. (HH 73).

The form of communities on earth is certainly not as perfect, yet there remains a tendency for the parts to bear a resemblance to the whole and the whole to the parts.

Gods Family

The human mind and the family are similar interconnected systems. Both of these forms have their origin in the Lord. "Heaven as a whole and in its parts reflects a person because it stems from the Lord's Divine Human." (HH 78). Consequently, we could say that there is within the Lord a whole family of interconnected Divine Goods and Truths. This is of course one way of resolving



the mystery of the Divine Trinity. The fact that there are Father, Son and Holy Spirit making One God simply means that there are different aspects or “Persons” within the one person Jesus Christ, just as there are within each of us.

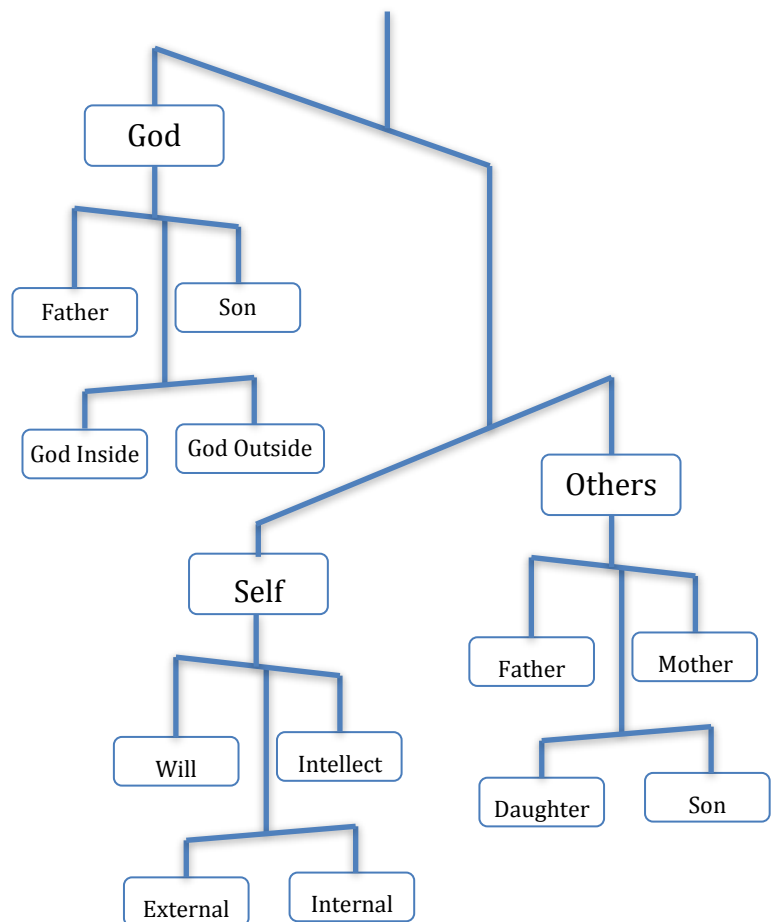
In the Old Testament, the life of the Lord is treated symbolically in the story of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Joseph. Each of these people symbolizes Jesus, and in fact each symbolizes a different aspect of Jesus’ life. Furthermore, the people around them also represent aspects of the Lord. For example the conversation between Abram and Lot mentioned earlier refers to an inner conversation between the Lords internal and external. The family and personal systems we see around us and within us are actually reflections of the order that exists within the Lord.

A System of Systems

There are a number of systems in the world we live in. We have described briefly the system within the human mind, the system within a family, and the system or human form within the Lord. These systems are themselves parts of a larger system The Lord, Heaven and the church together make one system of interconnected systems. Like the other systems, this one can be described as a single person, the Grand Man, which is made up of all the communities of heaven and of the church on earth. The Soul of this Person is the Lord. “The universal angelic heaven together with the church on earth, before the Lord is as one person.... And the Lord Himself is the soul and life of this whole person.” (TCR 119)

This system of systems can also be compared to a family in which the Lord is Father, the Church with Heaven is the mother, and those who have been reborn are sons and daughters. In the Word, the Lord is called...

...Bridegroom and Husband, and the Church is called Bride and Wife; and the Relationship of the Lord with the Church, and the reciprocal relationship of the Church with the Lord is called marriage. Also the Lord is called Father and the Church is called Mother. The offspring from the lord as Husband and Father and the Church as Wife and Mother are all spiritual, and in the spiritual sense of the Word are meant by sons and



daughters, brothers and sisters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and by other names belongs to generation. (CL 116-120)

There are a number of reasons why these systems are connected together. One reason is the point of the first chapter: who we are, is tied to how we relate to others. The more deeply you look inside a person, the more you will see his connection with those around him, and the more you understand a person's relationships with others, the more deeply you know him. This is because the deepest part of a person is his love, and love has to do with ones interaction with others.

Another reason goes back to the second chapter: There is a relationship between our relationships; there is a connection between love for the Lord and love for the neighbor, between marriage love and the marriage of the Lord and the Church. This means that the kind of relationships that exist in a family will be tied to the kind of relationships that people in that family have with the Lord. They will also be tied to the kind of relationship that exists between the will and understanding in the individuals in that family.

We mentioned earlier the levels of marriage: the marriage between the Lord and the Church, between good and truth, and between husband and wife. These three levels reflect three interconnected systems. The marriage of the Lord and the Church is the focus of an individual's relationship with God. The marriage of good and truth is the focus of an individual's relationship with Self. The marriage of husband and wife is the focus of an individuals relationship with Others.

These systems taken together make one larger system As with other systems, if one subsystem is changed, it will affect all the others, and after a "bump" it will tend to settle back into its original state.

An example of this might be that if a person has a conversion experience (changes his spiritual system), it will have an effect on the rest of his life, both his inner system of thinking and feeling, and his outward system of relating to other people. But as soon as the impetus to change his spiritual system stops, the pressure of other relationships and his own inner unresolved conflicts will probably cause him back to the place he was before the conversion experience.

Chapter 4:

SICK SYSTEMS

Evil is contagious. It spreads throughout the system. When relationships are sick, the whole system shows symptoms of that sickness.

When one part of the human body is diseased or malfunctioning, the whole body is affected. A problem with the heart, or the lungs or the kidneys, is a problem for the whole body (although obviously some diseases are more localized than others). The same thing is true with family systems. When one person is ill it affects the whole family system

There are many ways a person can become ill. Diseases may be physical, psychological or spiritual, contagious or inherited, acute or chronic, curable or terminal. While many of the thoughts presented here apply to all kinds of disease, I am focusing on two types of illness in particular: *addiction* and *codependency*.

Addiction

There are various definitions of addiction, and some debate about what constitutes an addiction. Some definitions focus more on specific physical symptoms such as increased tolerance, withdrawal and blackouts. Others are more broad, focusing more on social and emotional symptoms such as denial, blaming and personality changes. I am using a broad definition which includes not only the more well defined physical addictions to such agents as alcohol and heroin, but also the addictions to agents such as television, work, sex and power. These addictions usually have to be described more in psychological/emotional terms than in physical ones.

Both physical and psychological addictions have certain symptoms which can be used to determine whether an addiction exists and how strong it is. The following list is taken from John Friel and Linda Friel:

1. **Preoccupation with the Addictive Agent:** Thinking about it, talking about it, looking forward to it, being distracted because of it, not being able to “be” with others because of the preoccupation. It is this aspect of addiction that makes intimacy difficult, if not impossible, after a while because the addiction becomes our *primary relationship*. We are more interested in watching W, having sex, drinking, mining, gambling, etc., than we are in being with the people we once loved.
2. **Increased Tolerance for the Addictive Agent:** We need more and more of the chemical or experience to achieve the desired effect.
3. **Loss of Control:** We can't have just one.
4. **Withdrawal:** Irritability, Depression, moodiness, tearfulness, anger, hostility, etc.
5. **Sneaking:** Hiding bottles, shamefully buying pornography and hiding it in one's car, under one's bed.
6. **Denial:** “Problems? What problems? Everything's fine!”
7. **Personality Changes and Mood Swings:** Moody, temperamental, irritable, sad, hyperactive, elated, then back to sad again.
8. **Blaming:** It's everyone else's fault. There is a powerful inability to accept responsibility for one's own life with this symptom.
9. **Blackouts:** With chemical addictions we can't remember what we did while we were under the influence. With other addictions we have “dissociative-blackouts”. We daydream, “space out”, “go into the ozone” for a while.

10. **Physical Symptoms:** With non-chemical addictions, they are most often the stress disorders, such as headaches, ulcers and the like.

11. **Rigid Attitudes:** Black-and-white thinking; intolerance of others' opinions.

12. **Loss of Personal Values:** We stop caring as our addiction progresses. We don't take care of ourselves. We do things which we would never do prior to the acceleration of our addiction—sexual things, inconsiderate things, hurtful things, illegal things.

13. **Disability and/or Death:** Death comes either through physical damage due to a drug or chemical, or through stress related illnesses, such as cancer or heart attack or stroke or through eventual suicide.

Ruth Maxwell summarizes this in one sentence: *“Addiction exists if a persons chemical use is interfering in any important area of his life—his physical health, family, social, or work life—and he continues to use chemicals in spite of that interference”* (Maxwell, p. 21).

This broad definition of addiction to chemicals can be applied to any kind of compulsive or addictive behavior, such as the following:

Chemical abuse	Wife abuse	Child abuse	Sexual abuse
Overeating	Anorexia	Bulimia	Gambling
Pornography	Adultery	Television	Work
Power	Spending	Smoking	Cults

Note that the addictive agent itself may be perfectly harmless. There is nothing inherently wrong with alcohol, food, sex, work or power. Note also that there is a difference between addiction and abuse. One person can get drunk or abuse illegal drugs and yet not be addicted, while another person becomes addicted while drinking only moderately or while taking drugs for legitimate medical purposes. It is sometimes thought that addiction is the result of abuse, but often the abuse is the result of the addiction, and does not occur until after the addiction has taken hold.

There are several reasons why I have chosen to talk about addiction in a paper about relationships. One reason is that addictions are a major source of relationship problems. As Friel points out, the addiction becomes the addict's *primary relationship*, more important than his loved ones, causing intimacy problems. In fact, a broad definition of addiction might be: *Any habit which is destructive of relationships.*

Another reason for focusing on addictions is that they are a good illustration of some important issues relating to spiritual diseases. Specifically, the way that a person is controlled by his addictions mirrors the way people can be controlled by evil.

A third reason for discussing addictions is their connection with codependency, which we will discuss below.

Codependency

The term *codependency* comes out of the field of drug and alcohol abuse. Some time after AA began to have its impact on the world it was discovered that people who married alcoholics or who grew up in homes where there was alcoholism seem to have a lot of problems in common. Many of these “co-alcoholics” had little in common except their involvement with alcoholism in a family member. Their backgrounds were different educationally, economically, socially, religiously etc., yet they shared common traits such as low self esteem, guilt feelings and inability to express feelings or maintain close relationships. Gradually it became clear that these people had their own

sickness, related to alcoholism and at least partially caused by it. This disease became known as co-alcoholism. Later, the same ideas that were used in treating alcoholism and co-alcoholism became used in dealing with other chemical dependencies, and the person who had suffered from living with a chemically dependent person became known as the codependent.

I have chosen to discuss codependency in the context of healing relationships partly because codependency is a relationship illness. Some people describe it as an addiction to a relationship, that is, an unhealthy dependency upon another person. Also, one of the most significant symptoms of codependency is the inability to develop and maintain close relationships with others.

Furthermore, codependency is an illness of the *system*. Generally whole family becomes ill, and the whole family must receive treatment, not just one or two people.

Causes of Codependency

One of the marks of a codependent is the tendency to get involved in relationships with addicts. For example, a person may be married to an alcoholic, and then get a divorce to escape the alcoholism, and end up marrying another alcoholic. More often than not the person who falls into this pattern is one who had grown up in a home where there was alcoholism or some other addiction. Many experts now believe that the problems of codependency stem mostly from growing up in a family where there is addiction, and that adult relationships with addicts are a result of this.

Chemical abuse

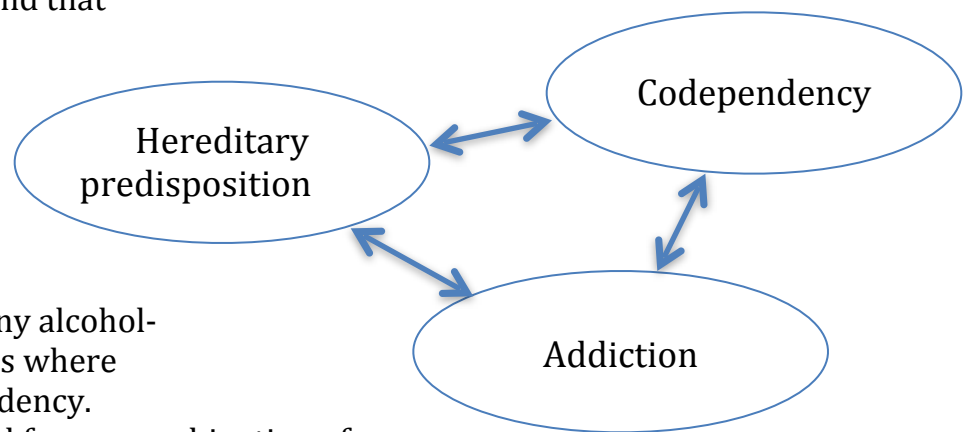
There is evidence that codependency is not only caused by addiction but also causes addiction, or at least encourages it. Many alcoholics and addicts grew up in families where there was addiction and codependency.

Their addiction may have resulted from a combination of the addictive role model they had as children, the codependent, dysfunctional family system, and an inherited predisposition to addiction.

In the case of alcoholics, an inherited predisposition is a major factor in the development of addiction. Children of alcoholics tend to metabolize alcohol in a different way from “normal” people and have a far greater chance of becoming alcoholic than others do, even if they were separated from their natural parents at birth and raised in a family without addictions. Some experts believe that the genetic or hereditary factor is also important in other addictions and in codependency.

There are many unanswered questions in the scientific community about the causes of codependency and addictions, and it is not important for us to answer them now, if we simply recognize that there are strong mutual links between heredity, addiction and codependence.

Codependency may appear in families where there is no alcohol or drug addiction. Robert Subby (1987, p. 10, 11) describes four types of troubled family systems that seem to stand out as prime breeding grounds for codependency.



1. *Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency.* It was in this field that codependency first became recognized. Now it is apparent that this is only one of the systems in which co-dependency thrives.
2. *The Emotionally or Psychologically Disturbed Family System:* Whether the craziness of a family member is real or imagined, codependency is the product of having that person inside the family running around and acting out in inconsistent, unpredictable and crazy ways.
3. *The Physically Abusive, Sexually Abusive Family System.* In these families co-dependency arises because personal boundaries are constantly being violated.
4. *The Fundamentalistic or Rigid Dogmatic Family.* These overly controlled family systems tend to operate on a narrow track. They are rigidly constructed and offer their members only a one dimensional view of the world—a view that stresses order, discipline, regimentation, and above all, sameness.

Rules

In a healthy family rules help keep things in order, running smoothly and to protect the family structure and each of its members. Events may happen that interrupt the working of the family and throw it off balance temporarily but the rules and habitual behaviors established previously will tend to get it functioning again.

Codependent families, like all families, have rules that govern the way people interact. These rules, like the rules in a healthy family, tend to keep the family in its normal state. The difference is that in a family where there is codependence and addiction normal means dysfunctional or chaotic. For example, “normal” may mean that the alcoholic is drinking, the codependent is trying to fix the alcoholic, and the children are being neglected. The family rules ensure that this keeps happening.

Ruth Maxwell (1986, p.1) describes three primary rules that are established by the alcohol or drug dependent family member:

Rule number one. *The alcohol- or drug-dependent person is the most important person in the family. His needs and wants matter the most, while yours matter little, if at all. This rule, set forth by behavior more than words, clearly states that the chemically dependent person can do whatever he wishes whenever he wishes, and that you exist to serve him.*

Rule number two. *The alcohol- or drug-dependent person is always right, you are always wrong. No matter what you do, you never win, not for long.*

Rule number three. *His alcohol or drug use is not the primary problem. This rule set forth by both words and actions, clearly states that outside circumstances and people, especially you, are at fault not, God forbid, his alcohol or drug use. Therefore, it is your responsibility to shape up and avoid talking to anyone about his chemical use.*

These rules allow the chemically dependent person to continue his use, and also keep the family from functioning in a healthy way. These and other rules that operate in a dysfunctional family are described in the following sections, along with some basic symptoms of codependency.

“Don’t Feel”

Codependents generally have a very hard time identifying and expressing their feelings. As children they may have found that when they expressed their feelings, they would be laughed at or considered immature. They may have found that most of the feelings they had were painful. It was easier to shut them off completely. They may have found that talking about feelings would usually lead to conflicts with other family members who felt threatened by them.

Historically, emotional expressiveness has not been a highly valued trait in American society. For men, a strong, silent image is admired. And while women are given more latitude in expressing their emotions,

girls are taught at a young age that certain emotions, such as anger, are not ladylike and not acceptable... In families with unresolved chemical dependency and codependency issues, this emotional blocking is an even greater problem. Expressing feelings is hard enough, but especially so when the spoken or unspoken rules make it clear that we just “don’t.” Instead we learn to stuff it... We don’t go into feelings, we don’t explore them, and we don’t talk about them.... Eventually this cutting off of our emotional selves becomes so complete that even WE no longer know who we really are. Our heads tell us one thing -like we don’t care what others think of us - while our bodies unconsciously begin to tell us something else. We develop things like tension headaches, ulcers, high blood pressure, rashes, sleep problems, back pain, or free-floating anxiety. We lose all our spontaneity and become so cut off from our true feelings, that we can’t really see how they are affecting us. (Subby, 34, 35)

“Don’t Trust”

Children raised in alcoholic family structures have learned how to not trust others in talking about the real issues. They have also learned it is simply best to not test that others will be there for them, emotionally psychologically, and possibly even physically To trust another means investing confidence, reliance, and faith in that person. Confidence, reliance and faithfulness are virtues often missing in the alcoholic home. Children need to be able to depend on parents to meet their physical and emotional needs in order to develop trust. In alcoholic environments, parents simply are not consistently available to their children. (Black, p. 33-35)

One of the reasons children learn not to trust is that the rules are always changing and promises are usually broken. On Tuesday the addicted father promises to take Billy to Saturday's ball game. Each day Susie comes home from school, she does not know whether she will find a mother who is unreasonably angry or who is unseasonably forgiving.

“Don’t talk about the problem.”

This is the primary rule of denial. It may be established by overt statements. The incestuous father might say, “This is our little secret.” The alcoholic parent may say, “What happens in this family is nobody else’s business. We don’t wash our dirty linen in public.” It may also be established covertly. The parents never talk about their problems, and whenever problems are mentioned they either cause resentment and retribution or they are pushed aside and discounted.

Many codependents have an easy time talking about problems. They just don’t talk about the problem. They talk about minor problems instead of major problems. They talk about other people's problems instead of their own problems. They have accepted the dependent’s rule which states that the addiction is not the primary problem.

It is extremely difficult for children to break this “No Talk” rule. Claudia Black (1981, p. 33) writes,

While many children fear not being believed, they may also experience guilt talking about the problems of their parents. They feel a sense of betrayal in talking about such delicate problems. Children find the family situation so complex and confusing, they feel inadequate in attempting to verbalize the problems-they just don’t know how to tell others. Children feel very loyal to their parent, and invariably, they end up defending their parents, rationalizing that it isn’t really all that bad, and continuing in what has now become a denial process.

Triangulation

When two people are having problems communicating, they may bring in a third person to be the go-between. In some cases this may be helpful, as with a marriage counselor, who helps the couple be honest and direct with each other. In dysfunctional families the third person usually serves just the opposite purpose-he helps the two people be dishonest and indirect with each other.

Codependents learn to communicate indirectly, with one person acting as messenger between two others (triangulation)... Ideally, parents should be able to talk directly to one another without having to draw the children or some other third party into the middle of their conflicts... [The child] gets caught in the middle. If he doesn't get Dad's message across to Mom, he feels that he has let Dad down. And if Mom reacts negatively, he winds up on the receiving end of all the anger and rejection she really wants to direct toward Dad. Either way, both parents are using the child to avoid having to face each other... When the situation finally explodes, as eventually it always does, the children are left thinking they are the cause of their parent's troubles. (Subby, p. 36, 37)

Perfectionism

The underlying feeling in a dysfunctional home is that things are about to fall apart. This feeling is kept hidden under an appearance that everything is under control. By being good and happy and perfect on the outside, the inner chaos and pain can be pushed aside.

Part of the cause of perfectionism in dysfunctional families is constant criticism. Children who constantly hear "Why did you spill the milk?" or "You sure are a mess!" or "Can't you say anything that makes sense?" will eventually internalize the criticism and develop a deep sense of shame. Because they are continually rejected for being weak, flawed or unhappy, they will come to believe that being accepted, loved and successful depends on always being strong, perfect and happy. No matter how successful, strong and perfect they are, their parents and later their internalized shame will tell them that they still are not good enough.

Above all, this rule embodies unrealistic expectations... What happens in some families is that we create an ideal in our heads about what is good and right and best, but this ideal is so far removed from what is possible and realistic that we wind up punishing ourselves and others because our expectations are not met. (Subby, p. 37)

In dysfunctional families parents frequently speak as if the children were responsible for the parents' happiness. If the mother is drinking, it is because the children are brats. If the father is a workaholic, it is because the children cost too much money. Instead of taking responsibility for their own feelings, they say in effect, "It's up to you to make me happy. You can make me proud." When this attitude becomes entrenched, the children will have the guilty feeling that if they are less than perfect they are destroying their parents' happiness.

"Don't Be Selfish"

This is another version of the rule that *the alcohol- or drug-dependent person is the most important person in the family*. His needs and wants matter the most, while yours matter little, if at all. The addict's time and energy is absorbed by the addiction. The co-addict's time and energy are absorbed by the addict. Any needs the children display threaten the addiction and the parents' control of the children. Being unselfish in a dysfunctional family means giving up not only one's wants but also one's needs.

Unfortunately, this message does not help people become less selfish. Because they are taught that meeting their own needs directly is selfish, they get caught up in meeting them indirectly through others.

We learn to view ourselves as wrong for placing our needs before the needs of others... If we believe our own needs are wrong, then we will never be able to ask directly for those needs to be met. Consequently, the co-dependent often tries to get personal needs met through manipulating or by taking care of others. Eventually this makes us overly dependent on others, and our whole existence becomes wrapped up in caretaking. (Subby, p. 39)

Although the actions may appear selfless, their actual need to take care of others so that others will take care of them. True unselfishness is taking care of ones own needs with the goal of then being able to help others effectively.

Inability to Play

One of the key characteristics of adult children of dysfunctional families is the inability to play and have fun. For a child growing up with addiction, abuse, neglect, criticism and constant crises, there is no place for frivolous fun. If there is playing, it will usually be highly structured, competitive sports through which he can prove his worth or be in control.

From the very beginning, the co-dependent adult child believes that the world is a very serious place. Life is seen as difficult and almost always painful.... Take for example, one of the more classic co-dependent beliefs that what you do is somehow a measure of who you are. Ones identity and sense of self-worth become inextricably linked to ones job. From this perspective, since play according to the co-dependent workaholic would be a stupid waste of time, then it follows that play would also be viewed as the threat to ones identity. Another phrasing of the rule might be: "Real (serious) people don't play." (Subby, 43)

Spontaneity and play go against many of the attitudes and traits that are ingrained in adult children of dysfunctional families. Spontaneous fun means letting go, trusting, and the adult child has learned not to trust himself or others. It means not being in control, and to the adult child that means chaos. Having fun means having feelings, and the adult child has learned to be uncomfortable with his feelings. Playing is selfish. The adult child has learned not to take time for his own needs and wants. Play is a waste of time that does not accomplish anything. The adult child has learned that he is what he does, that he is only OK when he is proving himself through his accomplishments. Playing looks foolish. The adult child is conceded about what other people think. Having fun with people lowers barriers. The adult child has been hurt too often to let the barriers down.

Double Messages

The addict and co-addict are constantly pretending. The world they talk about is different from the world they feel. This inner contradiction frequently comes out in the messages they give to their children and others.

Children being raised in alcoholic homes constantly hear mixed messages... messages which teach distrust. A parent often gives a child false information intentionally, in a feeble effort to protect the child from reality. A mother may tell the children she is happy, when she is actually miserable. A father may reassure a child that nothing is wrong when the child can see mother is acting strangely. The child is confused because one message is coming from his parent's words, and a contradictory message from the body movement and tone of voice. Such confusing messages propel the child into a life of second-guessing what is really happening. (Black, p. 39)

Double messages are of the kind, "I love you/go away." "I need you/I don't need you." "We are proud of you/We are ashamed of you." "Sure, we like you/ why can't you be more like your brother?" More often than not, these double messages are extremely subtle, and the more subtle they are, the harder it is to identify that they were ever there in the first place. (Friel & Friel, p. 86)

Rigid Attitudes

Living in a dysfunctional family is like walking through a minefield. Anger and fear and chaos lie just beneath the surface, ready to explode at any second if you make just one wrong step. If you cross the abusive parent, you'll be beaten. You can't afford to think about what you would like to do or what might be a good idea, because you have to do it the right way, the only way, or else.

There is only one right way to be. There is only one right way to do it. I must be in control at all times or my life will topple. An awful lot of compulsive behavior and obsessive thinking comes under this heading. It is one thing to have clear beliefs and values. It is another to be a slave to those beliefs, and to force those beliefs onto someone else. Family rituals are important. Compulsive family rituals are destructive.... Those of us who grow up in rigid families find the normal confusion of interpersonal relationships, the ups and downs of friendship and the normal unpredictability of changing social networks to be more than we can bear. As adults, we seek out rigid, controlled relationships and social systems where the rules of life are spelled out in black and white (Friel & Friel, p. 81).

The system is like a house of cards. Everyone is dependent on everyone else, and there is no glue holding them together. If one person starts changing, everyone else's position is threatened. Feelings might come out in the open. They might have to face the problem. The codependent might lose control. The addict might have to give up his addiction.

"Don't rock the boat" is the all-encompassing rule, the master rule and gatekeeper who rides herd over all the other rules in the family. "Don't rock the boat, becomes the rule that rules. This simple but stern injunction, "Don't rock the boat!" locks each individual family member inside a set of unhealthy rules. If left unchallenged, these rules will inevitably suppress change, hinder growth, and obstruct any hope of recovery. (Subby, p. 46)

High Tolerance For Pain

Codependents make great martyrs. The homes they grew up in were filled with emotional and sometimes physical pain, and in the midst of the pain they learned to deny their feelings, always be strong, not talk about their problems, not pay attention to their needs, not complain about abuse, always put others first.

As adults who have learned to tolerate lots of inappropriate behavior from others, we find ourselves re-playing our childhoods in our current relationships. We get in abusive or manipulative relationships where our partners lie to us repeatedly, or hurt us physically, or criticize us unmercifully, and we just stay with that person. We make lots of excuses for their behavior. We pride ourselves in how tolerant and patient we are. We begin to believe that we are better than everyone else, because the only people we let into our lives are abusive people. (Friel & Friel, p. 89)

Abuse

As many as 30% of women and 15% of men suffered physical sexual abuse as children. One survey indicated that 20% of husbands beat their wives on a regular basis. This is just the tip of the iceberg. Often abuse is confused with punishment. Adults who were abused as children do not know how to distinguish between appropriate punishment and abuse. Furthermore, the punishments are based on a twisted and overly rigid system of family law. The child who enables the addiction will be rewarded and the child who confronts it will be punished for being disrespectful. Lying, stealing and contempt are acceptable as long as they do not challenge the family rules. Non-physical abuse can be just as damaging as physical abuse, but seldom gets reported or even recognized as abuse. The major types of abuse include the following:

Emotional abuse—Double binds (all choices given the child are negative.), projection and transfer of blame onto the child, overprotecting, smothering, excusing, blaming others for the child's problem, fostering low self-esteem, double messages, not talking about the abuse at all.

Emotional neglect—Failure to nurture, care for or love the child, failure to provide structure or set limits, not listening to or believing the child, expecting the child to make the parent feel good, not being emotionally present due to mental illness, chemical dependency, depression or compulsivity.

Physical neglect—Lack of food, clothes, shelter, medical care, supervision, protection from abuse of others.

Verbal abuse—Excessive blaming, shaming, name-calling, put-downs, teasing, belittling, nagging, screaming, verbal assault.

Physical abuse—Slapping, shaking, scratching, squeezing, hitting, beating with boards, sticks, belts, cords, etc., burning, freezing, forcing food, starving, overworking.

Sexual abuse/neglect—Fondling, innuendos, leering, exposing self, intercourse, oral sex, anal sex, penetration with objects, sexual “games,” sexual “torture,” forced sex with other children or animals, not teaching about sex, puberty, etc.

Vicarious abuse—Watching someone else in the family suffer physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect. This can be just as damaging as actually being the recipient of other types of abuse.

In addition, the threat of abuse is itself a form of abuse. An addict who is constantly angry, though never openly abusive, can generate a climate of fear that is almost as oppressive as physical abuse.

Abuse itself is a compulsive behavior that can foster codependency. In many families the abuse is combined with (and may to some extent be the result of) chemical dependencies or other compulsive behaviors. For example 2/3 of alcoholic families experience physical abuse, 1/4 of children in alcoholic homes have been incest victims and 60 to 80 percent of alcoholic women were once incest victims.

Denial of Sexuality

We have many rules and prohibitions regarding sex, but by and large the over-riding rule is “Don’t talk about IT,” and especially don’t talk about Doing IT.... For the codependent, the shame and anxiety associated with unresolved sexual issues is directly proportional to the length of time we have lived by the “don’t talk” rules that surround us.... Shame over our sexuality is largely due to our ignorance about it. What should be viewed as normal and healthy with respect to our sexuality is very often judged as bad and wrong simply because we are unable to talk about it. This shame will remain with us until we break out of the silence that surrounds the sexual dimensions of our real self. (Subby, pp. 46-51)

The rule “Don’t talk about sex” is tied to a number of other symptoms and rules. Talking about sex involves feelings and requires trust, so it violates the “Don’t feel, don’t trust, don’t talk” rules. It also goes against the rigid attitudes that thrive in dysfunctional families. Furthermore, talking about sex often touches the pervading shame felt by members of a codependent family. Finally, in many dysfunctional families sexual abuse is a primary problem entrenched in its own denial system that stops the family from talking about it.

The Quick Fix

As we noted earlier, one of the symptoms of the dysfunctional family is addiction. A large proportion of people who grow up in dysfunctional families later develop addictions and compulsive behaviors. And in families where addiction already exists, codependency enables the addiction to progress.

One reason for a person in a dysfunctional family to turn to an addiction is to escape the pain. A family full of abuse, repressed feelings, perfectionism, neglect, rigidity and blame is not a pleasant place to be. Alcohol, drugs, television, work, food, or extramarital sex can provide an escape. Also, many people turn to these addictive agents not at first to escape, but because of some perceived benefit they provide—relaxation, lowered inhibitions, feeling of well-being, etc.

Friel and Friel (p. 37, 38) point out that while physiological factors in addiction vary from one addictive agent to another, the social/emotional factors seem to be common to all addictive agents.

In almost every case, these factors include:

1. Temporary anxiety reduction
2. Temporary stress reduction.
3. Temporary feelings of power and well-being.
4. Avoidance of true feelings.
5. Avoidance of crucial life problems and developmental tasks.
6. Avoidance of intimacy.

They go on to note that these benefits are both quick and temporary:

Because of the very nature of addictive processes, these benefits are not long-lasting. The well-being we feel while drunk wears off leaving us in worse shape than when we started drinking the day before. We are left with a hangover, tremendous guilt and shame.... Put simply, these addictive agents serve to fill in developmental gaps in us quickly and temporarily and by using them often, we never get the chance to fill in the gaps permanently.

It is important to note that once the addictive process begins, the addict may be more functional when using than when he abstains. When he is mildly high, he is more relaxed, less self-conscious, more confident, happier. When he comes down, he feels shame, guilt and depression, he is irritable, tense, sick, tired and confused.

Rescuing

Addiction can destroy a family. A person who loves an addict may gradually see his relationship with her crumble, along with the family's social life, finances, emotional health, and physical health. The codependent has a very strong need to get his life back under control. The way to bring order into his life, it seems, is to get rid of his partner's addiction. So more and more his efforts focus on helping the addict control the addiction.

Unfortunately, what generally happens is that the more the codependent takes responsibility for the addict's life and addiction, the more the addict gives up that responsibility. The codependent is then in the position of helping, controlling and saving the addict in matters for which the addict takes no personal responsibility. This is known as rescuing or caretaking.

We rescue anytime we take responsibility for another human being for that person's thoughts, feelings, decisions, behaviors, growth, well-being, problems, or destiny. The following acts constitute a rescuing or caretaking move:

Doing something we really don't want to do.

Saying yes when mean no.

Doing something for someone although that person is capable of and should be doing it for him- or herself.

Meeting people's needs without being asked and before we agreed to do so.

Doing more than a fair share of work after our help is requested.

Consistently giving more than we receive in a particular situation.

Fixing people's feelings.

Doing people's thinking for them.

Speaking for another person.

Suffering people's consequences for them.

Solving people's problems for them.

Putting more interest and activity into a joint effort than the other person does.

Not asking for what we want, need and desire (Beattie, 1987, p. 78, 79)

Shame

Most people feel guilty when they have done something wrong or that others would not approve of. An appropriate amount of guilt can be very healthy. But for a codependent person, guilt is excessive. The codependent will feel guilty when other people do things wrong, or after innocent mistakes, or when things simply are not perfect enough. Beneath this guilt is shame the believe that something is fundamentally wrong with ones self.

As children, all we know is how we feel, and if what our parents do or say hurts us, then we end up believing that perhaps they meant to hurt us—which hurts us even more. Because we can't understand what's going on, as children we may decide that in some way we are responsible for the way our parents act. If we choose to believe the latter, and we often do, then in time we will as children come to believe that there is something profoundly wrong with who we are. Not just that we have done something wrong—this is guilt—but rather that we are somehow innately bad and therefore responsible for all the problems in the family—which is our ingrained sense of shame. This private logic—that there is something fundamentally wrong with us—is the cornerstone of a shame-based, codependent lifestyle. (Subby, p. 94)

Blame

While shame is often hidden beneath perfectionism, rescuing, and other covers, blame is usually a prominent feature of dysfunctional families. Family members blame each other for their feelings (Now you've really made me angry), for their addictions (If you weren't such a lousy husband, I wouldn't be drinking") and for their behaviors (If I'm a nagging wife, its because you wont do anything for yourself).

Often there is some validity to the blame (he really is a lousy husband or he really won't do much for himself). And often the blame is accepted ("Yeah, I have been lousy"). Because people in dysfunctional families have an underlying sense of shame, they tend to blame themselves for everything, not only things they do wrong, but things others do wrong. Even if the blame is partly valid and is accepted, it is unhealthy, because the blamer is giving up responsibility for her own feelings and behavior, and is increasing the sense of shame in the other person. The blame is even worse when a person is blamed for something that is not his fault at all.

Blaming sometimes takes the form of "scapegoating," when one person is blames for all the family's problems.

The scapegoat gets to act out all of the family's dysfunction and therefore takes the blame and "the heat" for the family. He gets drug addicted or steals, is the "black sheep," gets in a lot of fights, acts out sexually, etc. The family then gets to say, "If little brother weren't such a delinquent, we'd be a healthy family." The cost to the scapegoat is obvious. (Friel, p. 56)

Love/Hate Confusion

There are many ways that love and hate get mixed together in a dysfunctional family. Family members may believe that they should love each other and help each other. They may want this love desperately, so they make every possible effort to help others in the family. But in an effort to show love they start rescuing others. They take responsibility for the lives of their loved ones, in an effort to make those lives better. But the loved ones don't get better and don't appreciate the "help," so the rescuers are left feeling resentful and rejected.

Another way love and hate get confused is through double messages. A parent says he loves his children and later gets angry and beats them and then says he's sorry and asks for forgiveness. Or an addict says how much she loves her husband, and makes wonderful promises about how much she is going to do for him, but she doesn't keep the promises. Or a father tells his daughter how much he loves her, and then he has sex with her and she wonders why she feels so confused about love.

Love and hate also get mixed up because of the rigid, judgmental attitudes (*"You'd be a lot better off if you did it my way"*) and abusive punishments (*"I'm punishing you for your own good"*) that seem to come from good intentions.

People's lives get all tangled together in a way that sometimes looks like love, while under the surface is resentment and manipulation.

Struggle For Control

Life in a dysfunctional family is a constant struggle for control. The addict gradually loses control over the addictive agent. To regain his sense of control he controls other people.

Chemical dependency is a tyranny of the highest order. The alcohol- or drug-dependent person is governed by the forces of his addiction, and in turn he governs others totally. He becomes an awesome tyrant. His irrational behavior is very specific and so powerful that it alters the thoughts, feelings, and behavior of others. (Maxwell, 1986, p.5)

Others in the family may feel that the addict needs to be controlled to stop the family from breaking down. They may mistakenly believe that the addict is choosing to use the agent. They encourage, threaten, or manipulate the addict to try to get him to control his addiction, not realizing that it is beyond his control and theirs.

Codependence in the Congregation

Since codependence is widespread in our society, it inevitable will have an impact on our ministries. In some the codependence may be more severe and easily identifiable. In other cases, it may be milder or more carefully hidden. In any case, the presence of codependence is likely to have an impact on the working of the congregation as a whole. For example:

People in the congregation have a hard time being direct with the minister. They tell the minister that everything is okay and they feel great about how things are going in the congregation. Then they write to the Bishop a very critical letter.

The minister has a hard time expressing his feelings to his congregation. He feels resentment that they are not supporting him financially or emotionally; he feels shame that they are not attending his classes, but he cannot say these things openly to members of the congregation.

One of the members of the board objects strongly to any changes in the way the church operates. This person has contributed a great deal to the church and has been very involved in the life of the church, and has very clear ideas about how things ought to be done in this congregation. When things are not being done the way they "ought" to be, this person attacks the problem by questioning someone else's integrity, makes many phone calls to gather a personal following, and manipulates the pastor by threatening to resign or stop contributing. Some members of the church respond by labeling this behavior as uncharitable or unchristian. No one connects this behavior to the fact that this board member grew up with an abusive parent.

The minister is the family hero. He must be perfect, to prove that the congregation is healthy. When he does not live up to the expectations of the congregation, they let him know in subtle or not so subtle ways that he is failing in his job because he is not making them proud not making them happy.

There is alcoholism in the congregation, but it is never addressed as an issue. An alcoholic's family is torn apart by adultery, guilt, shame, anger, and fear, so the minister preaches about adultery, guilt, shame, anger, and fear, but does not address either publicly or privately the issue of the addiction to alcohol.

The minister is workaholic. He almost never takes a day off, and when he does he feels guilty or has a hard time having fun. By working hard he can gain the approval of his congregation as a great minister, even though things are pretty bad in his marriage and family. The minister can get away from the pain at home by throwing himself into his work.

The minister denies the pain he feels from his congregation. He is criticized, underpaid, asked to do menial jobs that no one else in the congregation is willing to do, told that his motives are wrong, that he is destroying the church, that it is his fault that people are leaving the church, that he is making people in the congregation angry. His wife is socially ostracized, his children are not welcome, he is criticized for having difficult children, he is manipulated, blamed, and embarrassed by people in the congregation who need to be in control of the church environment in order to feel good about themselves.

The extent to which this kind of behavior is a problem in the General Church might be a matter for discussion. Certainly there are both healthy and unhealthy behaviors in our church. What happens in our congregations is to some extent a reflection of what happens in society in general. We can't expect to be unaffected by the world's problems.

Consider the following facts:

There are at least 10,000,000 alcoholics in the U.S.

1 of 6 adults have grown up in an alcoholic home.

1 of 5 husbands in the U.S. beat their wives regularly.

1 of 3 women were abused sexually as children.

There are countless people who...

have chemical dependencies (alcohol, cocaine, valium, cigarettes, etc.)

abuse children (sexually or physically)

have eating disorders (bulimia, anorexia, overeating)

have mental illnesses, emotional repression

are compulsive shoplifters

are compulsive spenders

are addicted to gambling

are workaholics

are addicted to television

are addicted to pornography or unhealthy sexual behaviors

are strict fundamentalists and dogmatists

For every person who has one of the above problems, there are probably three more who have developed codependent behaviors from having lived or worked with them. It is difficult to even guess what the statistics are for these groups, especially since many of them overlap. It is not difficult to see, though, that probably a half or more of our population is likely to be significantly affected by dependent or codependent behavior. It is not likely that a New Church congregation could completely escape such a widespread plague in our culture.

More important than determining the degree of this disease, of course, will be addressing issues of how to bring healing into the congregations and the individuals where it exists.

Chapter 5: THE SICK CHURCH

The same characteristics that are found in dysfunctional family relationships are found in the relationship that a dysfunctional church has with God.

The Sickness Spreads

We have seen that codependency is a disease that can infect a whole family system. What happens when the same type of illness spreads throughout society as a whole? What happens when a whole religion is infected? As we look at the connection between illness in a religious system and illness in the family system, one question that may arise is, To what extent are the spiritual illnesses of our culture a cause of codependency and addiction? And what effect does addiction and codependency have on peoples religion and the way they relate to God?

No Sun, No Moon, No Stars

There are prophecies in the Bible about what will happen when the end of the age comes around.

The stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in its going forth, and the moon will not cause its light to shine.” (Isa. 13:10)

“The sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.” (Joel 2:10)

“I will cover the heavens and make its stars dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light.” (Ezek. 32:17)

“He sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken.” (Matt. 24:29)

“The sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth.” (Rev. 6:12)

The Writings explain that these prophecies are describing what happens in a fallen church. The sun, the moon and the stars represent three essential elements of the church, love, faith, and knowledge. In a fallen church these are lost-people do not have loving relationships with one another and with the Lord, there is no faith or trust in the Lord, and there is no knowledge about what is genuinely good and true.

“The sun here means love which is obscured, the moon means faith, which does not give her light, the stars mean knowledge of faith which falls from heaven.” (AC 32)

The sun means love and charity, the moon means faith from these, and the stars mean knowledge of good and truth, which are said to be obscured, to lose their light and to fall from heaven, when there is no longer any acknowledgement of the Lord, nor any love to Him, nor any charity towards the neighbor, and when these have become nought, the love of self with its falsities takes possession of man, for the one thing is a consequence of the other.” (AC 2441)

When love, faith and knowledge are lacking in the church, they will also be lacking in the church’s homes and congregations. The prevalence of codependency in our society seems to be tied to this lack in the church. Compare the three primary rules that operate in the codependent household with these prophecies about the church.

Children who grow up in homes where there is addiction, abuse and neglect learn to hide their feelings, because feelings are not accepted. They learn that they cannot trust their parents to be there when they need them. They learn to not talk about the problem, to pretend it just isn’t there

in hopes that it will go away. For millions of children in our culture, the sun and moon grow dark, and the stars diminish their brightness.” (Joel 2:10)

Literal Symbol	Fallen Church	Codependent
No Sun	No Love	Don't Feel
No Moon	No Faith	Don't Trust
No Stars	No Knowledge	Don't Talk

We have noted already that system of relationships that exists within a family is tied to the system of relationships that connect people with the Lord. In other words, the way a person relates to the Lord as Father and the Church as Mother is tied to the way he relates to his own family members. If a person's relationships within his family are unhealthy, Should we expect that this person will also relate to God in an unhealthy way? Or, if a person has a twisted view of God, should we expect that to twist his relationships with other people? Love for God and love for one's neighbor are intimately tied together. Is the same true of hating God and hating the neighbor? Or feeling persecuted by God and feeling persecuted by one's neighbors?

God appears to each person according to that person's own qualities. David said to the Lord, "To the merciful You will show Yourself merciful; with a blameless man You will show Yourself blameless; With the pure You will show Yourself pure; And with the devious You will show Yourself shrewd." (2 Samuel 22:26) Jesus said, "With what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the same measure you use, it will be measured back to you." (Matt. 7:2) Again, "If you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matt 6:15) Of course, the Lord is never judgmental or unforgiving, but people who only know how to see relationships in terms of judgment and anger, will interpret the Lord as judgmental and angry as well.

Love for God	Dysfunctional Relationship with God
goes with	goes with
Love for Neighbor	Dysfunctional Relationship with Neighbor

There seems to be a connection between the symptoms of codependency and the characteristics of certain approaches to God. Each of the rules we discussed in the previous chapter has its parallel in the way the church at times relates to God.

“Don't Feel” —the Lack of Love.

When people believe that they are saved by faith apart from love, feelings get covered up, repressed.

It appears as though truth were the most important part of the church because this part of the church comes first in time. It is from this appearance that leaders of the church have given the palm to faith, which relates to truth, rather than to caring which relates to goodness. In like manner, the learned have given the palm to thought, which relates to the understanding, rather than to affection which relates to the will. Therefore, as regards any knowledge of what they are, the good of caring and the affection of the will lie

hidden away as though they were in a tomb, and some people throw earth over them as they would over dead people to prevent them from rising again (CL 126).

When people develop codependent relationships with God, they come to believe that God cares about what they believe, but not about how they feel. A person who pays too much attention to his feelings may begin to question whether his blind faith is really working. And when it is thought that believing is more important than feelings and love, it becomes a great sin to allow one's faith to be questioned.

Angels can only express what entirely agrees with their affections. HH 237.

Every word, idea, and grain of thought belonging to angelic spirits is alive; in every single particular of them there is affection proceeding from the Lord, who is Life itself. (AC 41).

A person who has a healthy relationship with God knows that it is more important to have love than to have the "correct" beliefs, and that feelings are precious gifts from God that need to be nourished and expressed.

"Don't Trust"—the Lack of Faith.

For some people faith is simply a matter of doctrine, a creed to be confessed. For others, it is deeper—a conviction, a trust and confidence in the Lord. Genuine trust can only exist as a result of genuine relationships. Trust depends on caring and love.

The faith which is called confidence is possible only with those who are in charity towards the neighbor, and in love to the Lord. (AC 9242).

Spiritual confidence or trust has its essence and life from the good of love, but not from the truth of faith separated from it. The confidence of separated faith is dead. Therefore true confidence is not possible with those who have led an evil life. (AC 7762)

One of the reasons why people learn not to trust is because the rules always seem to be changing. Parents may be unreliable and inconsistent, their action being based on the way they feel at the moment. The same thing happens with the way people think about God. If they do not know the rules by which He works, they may believe that He acts as a Friend one moment and as an Enemy another. They may believe that the bad things that happen in their lives are punishments or tests from God. They do not know that God always cares for them, so they have a hard time trusting Him. When people don't know the laws by which the Lord works, they cannot understand His providence, and consequently their faith or trust in providence is lost (see DP 70).

In a healthy church there is confidence and trust in God. "To believe in the Lord is to have trust that He saves." (F 35) "Unruffled is their spirit, whether they get the things they want or not. And they do not grieve over the loss of them, being content with their lot." (AC 8478)

"Don't Talk"—the Denial of Evil.

Every evil has its own falsity with it. Every evil tries to hide itself and prevent a twisted picture of reality to keep itself secure. Addiction produces false thinking. So does abuse. So does the need to control other people.

What happens in a dysfunctional church is that this denial gets institutionalized. People in a dysfunctional church learn to talk about other people's problems instead of their own.

A purely natural person can see evils and good qualities in others, and can also criticize others. But because he has not looked into and examined himself, he sees no evil in himself; and if any evil is uncovered by someone else, he employs his rational faculty to conceal it, like a snake hiding its head and plunging into the dust, or a hornet into dung. (TCR 565)

Swedenborg relates the story of a person who prayed, “I am guilty of offenses deserving death and eternal damnation. Have mercy on me for the sake of your Son; purify me by His blood.” When angels examined this person, they said that he was in fact full of evils, but he was still not aware of even one of his evils, since he had never examined himself. He had believed that after a verbal confession evils were no longer evils in the sight of God, both because God turns His gaze away from them and because he has been forgiven. (TCR 518).

This person felt that he was no good and shameful, but he was unwilling to talk with God about specific problems in his life. He thought that if he denied his evils, then God would too. The dysfunctional church portrays God as one who will deny your evil if you play His game. Playing His game means agreeing with Him (believing), feeling ashamed (guilt), ignoring your own problems (being covered by the blood), and most of all not confronting His abusive behavior.

People who are being abused know that they are being abused—they hurt. Yet denial is such a powerful force that it prevents them from realizing that abuse is abuse. Their eyes are closed to the reality that is all around them. The same thing happens in people’s relationship with God. They have gotten into an abusive relationship with “God,” and their eyes are closed to what is really going on.

Shut people’s eyes and stop up their ears, that is, prevent them from exercising thought from any understanding, and then say whatever you please to people on whom some idea of eternal life has been imprinted, and they will believe it. Even if you should say that God is capable of being angry and of breathing vengeance; that God is capable of inflicting eternal condemnation on any one, that God wills to be moved to mercy through the blood of His Son... and other things of the same kind. But open your eyes and unstop your ears, that is, think about these things from understanding, and you will see that they do not fit with the real truth. (F 46).

The healthy church begins with actual repentance—acknowledging, confessing and dealing with specific problems or evils in one’s life. The first step is to get past the denial. Even more important is the fact that the true God can accept people who are imperfect. He does not have to deny our evil, turn away His gaze and pretend that everything is OK, in order to accept us. God accepts the reality of our evil and works with us towards recovery.

Triangulation—Intercession

One of the reasons people triangulate their relationships and their problems is that they are afraid to face people and issues directly. They may be afraid that they will not be accepted, or afraid of being abused. An unhealthy church may have the same fear about approaching God directly. When God is seen as angry and vengeful, people tend to avoid facing Him by going through others, such as priests, saints, or His Son.

They who believe that there are three Persons who constitute the Divine and who together are called one God, from the sense of the letter of the Word have no other idea of mediation and intercession than that the Lord sits at the right hand of His Father and speaks with Him as a person with a person, and brings people’s supplications to the Father, and entreats that for His sake, because He suffered the Cross for the human race, He may pardon them and have mercy. (AC 8705).

When people do pray directly to the Father, they still tend to triangulate. “Father, have mercy, for the sake of your Son.” The implication is, *“I know you cannot accept me on my own, but maybe if I bring Jesus into the picture you can.”*

Just as such people avoid facing God directly, they picture God as being unwilling to face the human race directly. The idea is that because He was angry at the human race, and could not endure

the sight of them, He sent His Son to bring about reconciliation. In reality, God is pure love and mercy, and never needs a third person to convince Him accept us. He intercedes for us not by helping us avoid facing the Father directly, but by helping us to face our evils and be healed.

The Lord does not pray the Father for them and in this way intercede, for this would be to act in an entirely human way. But He continually excuses, and continually forgives, for He continually feels compassion. And this is done on the part of the Lord Himself, for the Lord and the Father are one. (AC 8573.2).

In a healthy church people go directly to God, and God comes directly to them.

It is known that a relationship with the Lord is one thing, and His presence another. A relationship with the Lord is not possible except with those who approach Him directly. His presence is with the rest. (AR 883).

Nor is the approach to Him blocked for anyone since He constantly invites everyone to come to Him. (TCR 358).

Perfectionism—Fulfilling the Law

There is a big difference between perfectionism and trying to do a good job. Both healthy and unhealthy people may set high goals for themselves, and have high expectations of other people. A person who dreams impossible dreams and reaches for unreachable stars is not necessarily a perfectionist. The problem with perfectionism is that it involves an unwillingness to accept people's efforts. The perfectionist says in effect, I can't accept you because you are not good enough." No matter how hard you try you will still have faults or shortcomings that will give the perfectionist an excuse to reject you.

Some people portray God as a perfectionist. They say that He requires a righteous life, and that any sin, even the smallest, will make our lives unacceptable to God. If you have broken one commandment, they say, you have broken them all, as far as God is concerned.

In a sense God has very high expectations for us. His goal for each of us that that we reach the highest heaven, and this involves fulfilling the law. The difference between God and a perfectionist is that God accepts and appreciates even the smallest effort. God knows that we cant be perfect-even angels cant (AC 3308, 42953, 4803). All He looks at is our efforts. He is only concerned that we try. By a wise person, and also by the Lord, an intention is accepted as an act. (CL 400).

For example, the Lord tells us that it is not be being perfect but by making an effort that we progress in marriage love.

Neither with men nor with angels can any love ever become pure, so also with this [married] love. But since it is the intention that belongs to the will that is primarily regarded by the Lord, therefore, so far as a person is in this intention and perseveres in it, so far he is initiated into the purity and holiness of this love and gradually progresses in it. (CL 71)

"Don't Be Selfish"—Lawless Omnipotence

Why did God create the universe? Some would answer that He did it for His own glory. Some would say that our primary purpose in life is to give glory to God. They may say that heaven is perpetual worship of God because God desires praise. After all, He is perfect, He created us, He deserves praise, doesn't He?

This concept fits well with the idea that God can do anything He wants because He is omnipotent.

The prevalent opinion today is that God's omnipotence resembles the absolute power of a king in this world, who can act at his pleasure however he wishes: acquit or condemn whom he will, make the guilty

innocent, pronounce the traitor loyal, promote the unworthy and undeserving over the heads of the worthy and deserving, even on any pretext snatch away his subjects' good, condemn them to death, and do other similar things. (TCR 57).

The trouble with these concepts is that they describe God in rather selfish terms. They say that God created us and wants us in heaven for His own sake, and therefore He can do anything He wants with us.

Thus the rule "Don't be selfish because it might interfere with the addict's selfishness" becomes parallel to the rule "Don't be selfish because it might go counter to Gods selfishness." Both of these rules are a form of "Do as I say, don't do as I do."

Actually God did not create the universe for His own glory, but for the sake of people. Heaven is not a life of praising God, but a life of usefulness to others. God asks us to worship Him not for His own sake, but for ours; Gods love is totally selfless. While the addict struggles for control, the Lord struggled for an entirely different purpose.

The Lord, in all His conflicts brought about by temptations, never fought out of self-love, that is, for Himself, but for all throughout the universe. He did not fight therefore to become the greatest in heaven, for that is contrary to Divine love. He scarcely did so to become the least. He fought solely so that all others might become something and be saved. (AC 1812).

Inability to Play—Rejecting the World

For some people religion involves cutting yourself off from and world, and especially from the pleasures of the world. That may mean no drinking, no dancing, no card-playing, no movies. For some it has meant vows of poverty, or constant prayer and meditation. For some it becomes a matter of rigidly controlling ones social life: not being friendly with non-believers, thinking of every human situation as an opportunity for either damnation or salvation.

It is believed by many, that to renounce the world, and to live in the spirit and not in the flesh, is to reject worldly things, which are chiefly riches and honors; to be continually engaged in pious meditation concerning God, concerning salvation, and concerning eternal life; to lead a life in prayers, in the reading of the Word and pious books; and also to afflict ones self. But this is not renouncing the world; to renounce the world is to love God and to love the neighbor; and God is loved when a person lives according to His commandments, and the neighbor is loved when a person performs uses. (HD 126).

Moaning and being miserable has nothing to do with shunning evil.

What is easier for a person in trouble and agony than to utter sighs and groans from his lungs and lips, and also to beat his breast and make himself guilty of all sins and still not be conscious of any sin in himself? Do the diabolical hordes who then occupy his loves depart along with his sighs? Don't they rather hiss at those things and remain in him as before, as in their own house? (TCR 529).

There is no need for him to walk around somberly, with a sad, mournful face and a bowed head-he can be cheerful and happy. (HH 358).

The idea of being somber and sad seems to fit well with the idea that God is angry. How can you enjoy yourself if God is upset with you? A healthier attitude recognizes that the Lord is never angry and wants to share His happiness with us. He wants our lives to be fun.

God, just as He is Love itself, is also Happiness itself. for every love breathes out an aura of joy from itself, and the Divine love breathes out the very height of blessedness, bliss and happiness for ever; so God makes the angels and people after death happy from Himself, which He does through a relationship with them. (TCR 43)

People who refuse to be happy or have fun do not fit with the life the Lord wants for us.

I have been granted to talk with some people in the other life who retired from the world's affairs in order to live in a devout and holy manner, and with other people who had afflicted themselves in various ways because they believed that was renouncing the world and taming the lusts of the flesh. But many of them cannot associate with angels because they have in this way acquired a mournful life, and have retired from a life of caring which can only be led in the world; while the angels' life is happy because of its blessedness, and is made up of sewing good purposes which are works of caring. (HH 535)

Possibly these people afflict themselves and are somber because they will be greatest in heaven if they do. But "what is it to be greatest, except to be most happy?" (HH 408) I wonder what went on in the minds of the people who stopped the parents from bringing the little children to the Lord. Perhaps their thought was, "This salvation is serious business. Jesus has no time for playing children." Yet play is an integral part of heaven.

The Writings tell us that the story of Isaac and Sarah laughing with each other is a picture of the interaction between Divine Good and Divine Truth in the Lord. (AC 3392) This attitude of play affects all the angels. All things laugh, play, and live before their eyes. (HH 4893)

Good relationships depend on people finding delight in each other. "The essence of all love consists in a relationship, in fact this is its life, which is called delight, pleasantness, deliciousness, sweetness, blessedness, happiness, and felicity. (DLW 47) There are so many words for happiness in the Latin that it is hard to find enough English words to translate them.

This is especially true of the marital relationship. Marriage love in its origin is the playing of wisdom and love (CL 75.7) "When love acts by means of wisdom, the two are in mutual delight, and they play together like little children." (CL 183.6) This playful innocence in the soul affects the whole relationship (see CL 183.7). "Because true married love is innocence, the playfulness between a married pair is like the play of children together; and this is so in the measure in which they love each other." (AE 996.2)

Double Messages—Contradictory God

The double messages in dysfunctional families come from people who are divided. They think one way and feel another; or they think one thing on the inside and think something else on the outside. People in dysfunctional religions see God in a divided way His love is one thing; His justice is something else.

People who have dysfunctional relationships with God tend to understand Him in contradictory ways. Some of the double messages such people hear are:

God loves people, yet He punishes people in hell.

God accepts everyone, yet He rejects people who have the wrong beliefs.

God is three Persons, yet God is one.

God wants you to keep the commandments, yet you are saved by faith apart from the works of the law.

God is just, yet He allows one person to be punished for another's sin.

God predestines people to heaven or hell, yet people who are sent to hell are at fault.

Be good, or God will be bad.

God is forgiving, yet He is still holding Adam's sin against us after all these years.

In a healthy church people see God in a more consistent way.

He is completely loving and punishes no one.

He accepts everyone and even lava the worst devils, although He cannot have a relationship with them.

God is one Person, with soul, mind and body.

God wants you to keep the commandments and helps you do your best.

God is just, viewing each person in terms of his intentions.

God has created everyone for heaven, so people in hell are there by their own choice.

God is good to the evil and the good, and sends His rain on the just and the unjust.

God always forgives and never holds anything against anyone.

Rigid Attitudes—Doctrinal Conformity

In a healthy church people care about each other and about the Lord more than they care about being right. Varieties of doctrinal opinion and ritual are accepted easily.

If Christians would make love to the Lord and caring for the neighbor the principal part of faith, all these sects would be merely varieties of opinions concerning the mysteries of faith, which truly Christian people would leave to everyone to hold in accordance with his conscience, and would say in their hearts that a person is truly a Christian when he lives as a Christian, that is, as the Lord teaches. Thus from all the differing churches there would be made one church; and all the dissensions that come forth from doctrine alone would vanish; in fact, all hatred of one against another would be dissipated in a moment, and the Lord's kingdom would come upon the earth. (AC 1799.4)

Then everyone would say, in whatever doctrine, and in whatever external worship he was, This is my brother, I see that he worships the Lord, and is good.' (AC 2385e; see also AC 6628, 1285, 2982, 3268.10, 1288, 3267.2, 39862, 2982, 1277, 6269.2, 8928.3, 3241.3, 3452e, 3451e, 1316, 1834, 1799.4, 2385e, SD 4535.)

In a dysfunctional church there is no room for such variety of opinion and ritual in the church. Instead of accepting people as Christians on the basis of the way they live, they reject anyone who does not conform to their own persuasion. One result is that many different sects and schisms arise. Another result is that each sect has very rigid attitudes and a high need for conformity.

These rigid attitudes toward one another are tied to a concept of God as one who will send you to hell if you do not have exactly the correct beliefs and rituals. Such people may have arguments about whether God will send children to hell because they have not been baptized, or because they have not said that Jesus died for their sins, or because they do not "know" they have been saved, or because their church has a pope, or for any number of other small reasons. Such an intolerant God is the idol of an intolerant, rigid church.

High Tolerance of Pain—Sacrifice and Martyrdom

Dysfunctional families have a high tolerance for pain or inappropriate behavior. For example, an abused child may justify the abuse by thinking to himself, "My father is punishing me because I deserve it."

In the same way people who have a dysfunctional relationship with God may believe that God would send people to hell for wrong beliefs, and yet this person would justify this abuse by saying, God is punishing those people because they deserve it.

The parallel between the unhealthy attitudes of the codependent and the unhealthy attitudes in a dysfunctional church are so clear that codependents will often refer to their unhealthy selves as

saints and martyrs. Whether it happens in the family or in the church, the belief that you can gain love and acceptance by proving how much pain you can tolerate (martyr) or by showing how much work you can do (saint) is mistaken. Genuine love may at times involve some sacrifice, pain or work, but it cannot be bought with these.

Abuse—Hell Fire

A God who throws His children into hell fire to burn to eternity would probably qualify as a child abuser by modern standards. I believe that such a picture of God is not only symbolic of abuse, but when foisted on others, it becomes itself a form of spiritual/emotional abuse. The picture of God as angry and punishing can be about as effective in inspiring fear as actual physical abuse, and, I think, can do as much damage emotionally. For abusive people, the angry God can become just another weapon along with fists, belts, furniture and electrical cords.

People who have a healthy relationship with God could never imagine Him hurting or abusing anyone.

The Lord is as far from cursing or being angry with anyone as the sky is from the earth. (AC 1093)

It is clear that there is not any anger in Jehovah from the fact that He is love itself, good itself, and mercy itself, and anger is the opposite, and is also a weakness into which God cannot fall. (AC 6997)

These few considerations can reveal the madness of those who think, even more believe, most still teach, that God can damn anyone, curse him, cast him into hell, predestine his soul to eternal death, avenge injuries, be angry or punish anyone He is not even able to turn His face away from a person and frown upon him. These and any actions of this kind would be contrary to His essence. (TCR 56e)

Remember that vicarious abuse (watching someone else be abused) can be just as damaging as direct abuse. The vicarious atonement is an example of such abuse on cosmic scale. The dysfunctional church has its eyes riveted on the Cross, believing that Jesus was suffering a punishment from His Father that would otherwise have been for them. The members of this church may be cowed into submission, and grateful that somebody else got the abuse, but a loving relationship with such a Father is difficult.

Denial of Sexuality—Celibacy

The writings teach that marriage love and religion go hand in hand. An earlier chapter focused on how one's relationship with God is tied to one's marital relationship. In a church where there is a twisted, superficial relationship with God, there will be twisted, superficial relationships between man and woman as well.

The rule in dysfunctional families, "Don't talk about Sex," manifests itself in the dysfunctional church as a general denial and repression of sexuality. Many people have seized upon the Lord's teaching that in heaven they are not given or taken in marriage, and jumped to the conclusion the people in heaven are essentially sexless. Thus sexuality becomes a worldly matter, and something we would be better off not having to deal with at all.

Celibacy is another example of idealizing sexlessness. Priests and nuns are expected to avoid any sexual relationship. Theoretically, their relationship with God is so all-consuming that marriage would be superfluous or distracting. This implies that people who can repress their sexuality are somehow more acceptable or closer to God.

A final example of denial of sexuality is the strict moral values that result in sexual repression. This is common among fundamentalist groups. What may appear on the face of it as a high moral

stance is actually a judgmental rejection of people who fail to meet the strict sexual expectations, combined with an unwillingness to deal realistically with sexual issues.

Unwillingness to deal with or talk about sexuality does not make it go away. When sexual feelings are repressed, they come out in some other way.

Sexual inclinations are within people from creation and consequently from birth, and when they are re- strained and repressed, there is no alternative but for this inclination to go off into heat, and with some into burning heat. And this heat, when it rises up from the body into the spirit, infests and with some defiles it. Moreover, it may be that the spirit, thus defiled, will defile also the things of religion and cast them down from their internal seat where they are in holiness, into mere externals where they become things of the mouth and gesture alone. (CL 155)

This may account for the fact that fundamentalists, who are literalistic and legalistic in their religion, and repressive in their attitude towards sexuality, also have the highest rate of incest of any group.

The Quick Fix—Instant Salvation

For an addict, the fix provides an escape from the guilt and pain of daily life, and also help the addict function better than he can in between fixes. People who have an dysfunctional relationship with God gain similar benefits from the concept of instant salvation. A person whose life's filled with shame, guilt, manipulation and isolation, can find immediate relief simply by faith that he believes that Jesus died for his sins. This belief gives him permission to push aside the guilt and shame temporarily, to pretend that his sin or sickness is wiped away, to have a functioning relationship of sorts with God. Thinking that this faith will solve his problems and being relieved of the consciousness of guilt, he has an immediate euphoria.

If he were really thinking about what is going on in his life, he would realize that instant salvation doesn't really affect his life any more than going down to the bar for a drink. But his attention is on the good feeling that he gets as a result of this faith, so it seems to work fine, just as alcohol works for the alcoholic.

All who think from life about salvation, do not think of any instant salvation from immediate mercy; but they think of the means to salvation, in which and through which the Lord is working according to the laws of His Divine Providence, thus through which a person is led by the lord out of pure mercy. But people who do not think from life about salvation, suppose that salvation is instantaneous and that mercy is immediate. This is done by people who separate faith from caring—caring is life. They also suppose that faith is instantaneous, and at the last hour of death if not before. (DP 339; see also AC 4063.3 I 53543, 5398, DP 279.4, 280. 338, 340, AR 500_3).

A person with a healthy relationship with God will recognize that healing takes time, even a lifetime. In fact, angels keep on getting healthier and healthier to eternity.

Rescuing—Salvation by Grace

There is a big difference between the rescuing/caretaking that goes on in a dysfunctional family and the helping/caring that happens in a healthy family The mode of operation of the rescuer is that he:

...has no concern for whether the person wants to be rescued.

...takes responsibility for matters that the person being rescued does not take responsibility for.

...shields the other from the consequences of his irresponsible behavior.

...is trying to be in control of the situation.

...is trying to get his own needs met.

By contrast if we wish to be try helpful, we should

...give help where help is wanted.

...give the other person responsibility for his own life.

...allow the person to experience the consequences of his behavior

...turn control of the situation over to the Lord.

...find ways to meet our own needs so that we are in a position to help others.

Unhealthy rescuing has a lot in common with salvation by grace apart from the works of the law. According to this dogma, salvation is not a result of our choices or efforts, but is the result of God's freely given grace to those who are predestined for Salvation. Thus a person can be saved regardless of how he lives and whether he tries to do what is right. This has all the qualities of a "rescue":

Since salvation is predestined, God saves people whether they want it or not.

Since salvation comes through grace apart from any effort of our own, God takes complete responsibility for our salvation and we have none.

Since a person can live an evil We and still be saved, God is saving him from the consequences of his own irresponsible behavior.

Since salvation is predestined, God as in control and makes all the decisions.

Since salvation has nothing to do with the way we choose to live, it is done to meet God's needs, not our own.

People who think that God will rescue them in this way tend to use the same rescuing moves on other people. One area where this is apparent is in evangelization. Such people may try to:

...make you a member of their church whether you like it or not.

...take responsibility for other people's spiritual welfare.

...use manipulative, controlling methods of evangelization.

...promise that your sins will have no consequence if only you believe.

...do evangelization in order to get their own needs met (church budget, prestige, etc.).

A person with a healthy relationship with God will think of a completely different kind of Savior—one who:

...is concerned about whether people want to be saved.

...gives them responsibility for making an effort towards salvation.

...gives people complete freedom of choice.

...allows them to experience the consequence of that choice (even if it is contrary to His will).

...is primarily concerned for their needs.

Shame—The Depravity of Man

In some churches people are told that they were born sinners. They are told that when Adam sinned his nature was changed so that he became completely depraved and deserving of eternal

death. This sinful nature was passed to all his descendants, so we all are deserving of eternal death by virtue of our sinful nature.

This belief tends to create low self-esteem in people. They come to believe that God does not accept them because there is something fundamentally wrong with them.

Some people who have rebelled against this crazy idea have gone to the other extreme, saying that people are naturally good, and if you just leave them to themselves and don't interfere, they will become wonderful people.

There is some truth in this idea. Every one is created for heaven, with an innate capacity to love God and the neighbor. But to say that this happens naturally is unrealistic. Furthermore, this Pollyanna-ish belief does not help people with their self-esteem as much as one might suppose. Many people know, even as children, that something is wrong with their relationships. Blithely stating that people are naturally good may make people think that they are exceptions and that something is wrong with them because they did not turn out that way. When people are told that God accepts them because they are naturally good, they may still wonder, *Why don't I feel naturally good? Am I different, broken? Will God accept me?*

Given these approaches to the problem of shame, people will tend either to resign themselves to having feelings of shame, or cover them over with a pretense of being OK. Neither approach helps people conquer shame.

A healthier approach is:

1. Face reality: we do have problems that we inherited genetically and socially from our parents.
2. Recognize that God accepts us, problems and all (we don't have to be good to be acceptable).
3. Realize that we can change and grow if we make an effort.

A healthy church will help people face their inherited evils. They won't have to cover them up or resign themselves to shame.

The sense of shame and guilt that children of dysfunctional families have is similar to the sense of shame that thrives in dysfunctional churches. It involves thinking that something is wrong that cannot be accepted or fixed. In healthy churches and families this is replaced with a sense of healthy guilt and responsibility that comes with knowing we have problems that can be accepted and changed.

Damaging concept of inherited evil	Healthy concept of inherited evil
You are a sinner, guilty of eternal death because of your sinful nature.	You have inherited evil tendencies, but they do not make you guilty or deserving of punishment.
Your sinful nature (like everyone else's) is the result of Adam's original sin.	Your inherited problems stem from the way your parents and grandparents lived and behaved.
There is nothing you can do through your own efforts to change your sinful nature.	You can accept your inherited evils, and then change and outgrow them.
God cannot accept a sinful life. You will be damned to hell if you don't get Christ to cover for you.	God accepts you as you are and wants to help you heal.
The only solution is to have your sins instantly wiped away by believing that Jesus died for you.	The only solution is a day-by-day process of taking responsibility for your life and seeking to cooperate with God.

Blame—The Judgment

In dysfunctional churches, as with dysfunctional families, a lot of blame gets passed around. In many cases, the people get blamed for things they were not even involved in. One example of misplaced blame is the idea that God condemned the whole human race to hell because of Adam's sin.

Some people say that God did this because He is a just God. It is the same concept of justice that makes a child think he really does deserve all the blame his perfectionist father heaps on him. This sense of justice is based on shame: If anyone blames me for anything, they are probably right, because there is something fundamentally wrong with me.

Perhaps the ultimate example of unhealthy blame is the way Jesus is portrayed as the scapegoat. Some people say that Jesus took all our guilt upon Himself, and paid the penalty for our sins. In the Father's eyes, He became guilty of everyone's sins, and consequently the punishment for all those sins could be placed on Him alone, and mankind can believe that they are absolved of their sins and have no further responsibility for them.

This is similar to what happens in dysfunctional families when one child becomes the scapegoat. Even though the whole family system is sick, the one child gets all the blame. The rest of the family can then believe that as long as he is getting therapy or being punished, the family is absolved of its problems and responsibilities in the matter.

People who relate to God in a healthy way feel loved by Him, not blamed or judged by Him.

The Lord imputes good to everyone and evil to none, and consequently His judgment sends no one to hell, but raises all to heaven in so far as a person follows. This is established by His own words: Jesus said, "When I am raised up from the earth, I shall draw all to myself." (John 12:32) "God did not send His Son into the world to judge the world, but so that the world should be saved through Him..." (John 3:17, 18) Jesus said, "I judge no one." (John 8:15) (TCR 652)

Love/Hate Confusion—A Loving/Angry God

Dysfunctional churches frequently conceive of God as being both loving and angry/punishing. The reason God would be angry with people and punish them, they would say is that He is a just God who cannot bear disobedience and sin. They might say that a person who emphasizes God's love but not His justice has an unbalanced view of God.

These people talk about God's love and justice as if they were two different things, as if God acted in one way when He was being loving and in another way when being just. Actually love and justice are the same thing, especially in God. He has only one way of acting, and it is both loving and just at the same time. His love is just and His justice is loving.

Unfortunately, people who have codependent relationships with God have no better concept of justice than people who grow up in abusive families. We might say that justice is to let each person experience the consequences of his own decisions and behavior.

It is not justice to condemn the whole human race to eternal punishment for the sin of one person (Adam).

It is not justice to punish the innocent (Jesus) so that the guilty (sinners) can go free.

It is not justice to let evil people who say they believe go unpunished while good people who happen to have different beliefs suffer eternal torture.

It is not justice to predestine some to heaven and others to hell.

These things are abuse, not justice. With such ideas current in our society, it is no wonder that many people who have been in dysfunctional churches have confusion about whether God loves them or not.

In a healthy relationship with God there is no doubt that God loves people. It is known both from revelation and experience that God is pure love, kindness, compassion and mercy without a trace of anger, vengefulness or hatred.

Struggle for Control—Predestination

The struggle for control that frequently plagues the dysfunctional family is quite the like struggle for power that occurs in a dysfunctional church. On the one hand, God is pictured as a very dominating, controlling God. He is in total control of each person's destiny to the point of torturing people who do not do what He wants or even predestining people either to heaven or hell. As Swedenborg said,

How can anyone who relied upon sound reason come to the conclusion that we are predestined? Surely only cruel ideas about God can flow from this, and criminal ideas about religion? Surely anyone whose support for predestination has engraved it on his heart can only think about everything belonging to the church, and likewise about the Word, as being worthless? Can he think of a God who has predestined so many thousands of people for hell as anything but a tyrant? (TCR 487)

At the same time the people in such a church may try to take control. They may act as if they can send people either to heaven by baptizing and absolving them or to hell by excommunicating them. They may act or speak as if God has given them all His power, telling people what to believe and how to live, controlling their spiritual destinies, sometimes attempting to control their money or family life as well.

In a healthy church, freedom thrives, because it is freedom that allows the Lord to be present.

True freedom of will in spiritual matters resides in a person's soul in full perfection From there it flows, like a gush of water into a spring, into both parts of his mind, the will and the understanding, and through these into the bodily sense, and into speech and action.... It is by means of the freedom, in the freedom, and together with the freedom a person enjoys that the Lord makes His presence felt by a person, unceasingly pressing to be received. But He never deflects or does away with his freedom, since, as I said before, nothing that a person does without freedom in spiritual matters lasts. It can therefore be said that it is this freedom that permits the Lord to reside in a person's soul. (TCR 498)

Who is Codependent?

We should be careful whom we label as codependent. The disease of codependency is not something that a person either has or does not have. Some people are very healthy; some are extremely codependent. Most people are somewhere in between these two, being either mildly or moderately codependent. In this regard codependence is like sickness in general. Some people are very sick; some are very healthy. Most are neither perfectly healthy nor critically sick.

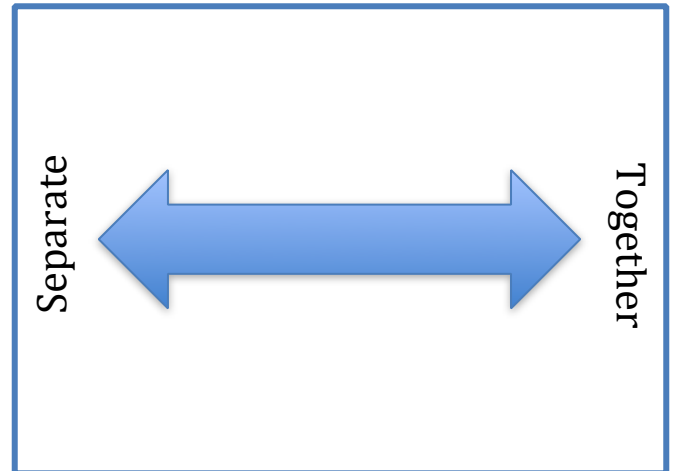
The same thing is true for church congregations. Some are very sick; some are very healthy. Most lie somewhere in between. We could say the same thing about whole religions—they range from very healthy to very dysfunctional. The purpose of describing codependency is not to draw lines between sick and well people, but to give as many people as possible ways of moving towards greater happiness through healthier relationships.

Chapter 6: TOGETHER AND SEPARATE

The difference between being separate from others and together with them is not as great as we sometimes suppose. Healthy relationships require the ability to do both in healthy ways.

We tend to think of relationships as being close or distant. We put separation on one end of the scale and Togetherness on the opposite end. We sometimes romanticize the togetherness, picturing it as perfect agreement, oneness of thought and action; an intense devotion that inspires one to transcend all limitations through self-sacrifice.

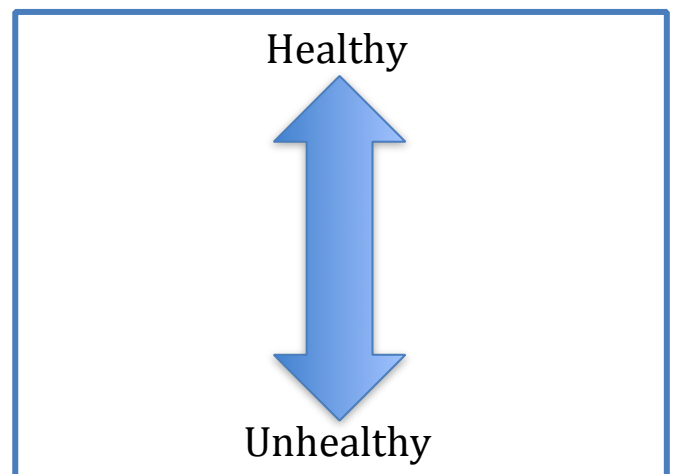
On the other hand, we at times idealize the separateness as independence, rugged individualism, the strong, tough self-reliance that enables one to cross the wilderness, overcome the enemy, laugh at pain. Then we try to find a place somewhere along the scale that is comfortable for us. Ironically, some people feel out of place no matter where they put themselves on the scale. At the “separate” end of the scale they feel lonely, isolated. Looking for intimacy, they move to the “together” end of the scale. At first, getting closer to another person may have all the pleasure of a spring romance. But after a time, they feel uncomfortable again. They may feel a lack of reciprocation on the part of the other person. Perhaps there is a feeling of resentment at having given so much to a person who does not respond. There may be a feeling of being manipulated or of being “smothered.” In any case, when the togetherness loses its romance, the person may back away towards the “separate” end of the scale, seeking peace from a difficult relationship, but finding the same old loneliness. Moving back and forth from together to separate to together again doesn’t really make a significant change in a person’s way of relating to others.

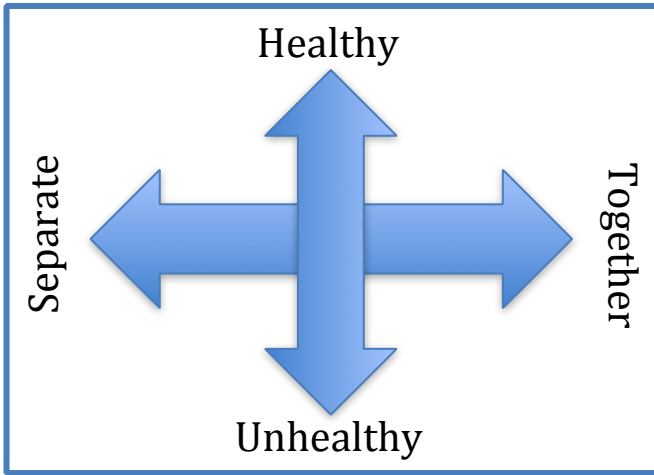


Healthy or Unhealthy

When people idealize togetherness, they tend to think that most of their problems would be solved if they could only be closer to people (or perhaps a certain person). They may not realize that togetherness can be either healthy or unhealthy. The fact that they may be close to others, sharing and working with them does not by itself mean that the relationship is healthy.

At the other end of the scale, people who idealize separateness or independence may think that their problems would disappear if only they could get away from their entanglements and be on their own, whether this means leaving a job, leaving a marriage or leaving one’s parents. These people may not realize that separateness can be either healthy or unhealthy. Getting away from other people does not in itself make their relationships work better or worse.





The key factor in relationships is not how close we are to others, but how healthy our relationships with them are. Health and illness are a dimension of relationships that is entirely different from closeness and separateness.

When we put health/illness in one dimension and together/separate in another, we can identify four different ways that people can relate to others.

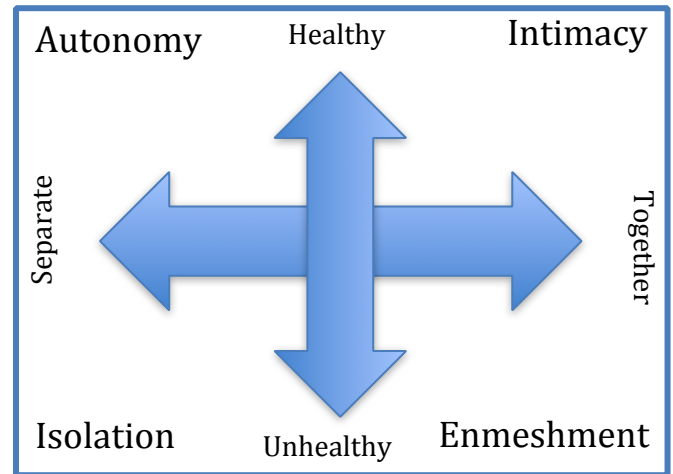
Autonomy—*healthy separateness*. Autonomous people know themselves, are in touch with their own feelings and motivations. They are honest and direct about their own desires and concerns and

about what they would like from others. They can make their own decisions, decide for themselves when they need help, have their own goals, projects. They accept their limitations and feel good about themselves. One of the basic elements of true autonomy is respect—respect for others, respect for self, respect for differences of opinion, respect for people’s personal boundaries and values.

Intimacy—*healthy togetherness*. Intimacy involves communicating openly, sharing feelings and thoughts, working and playing together; reseed, supporting and enjoying each other; caring, helping and being committed to each other. A key element in intimacy is a willingness to be affected by others—to be affected by their happiness, by their sadness, by their thoughts, their efforts, their needs.

Isolation—*unhealthy separation*. Isolation involves loneliness, withdrawal, and apathy. People may isolate themselves by hiding their feelings, pretending to be other than they are, or by reducing their relationships to ritualistic, mechanical behaviors. Recently I was talking with someone who grew up in a family where there was chemical dependency. He said, “We never did much together. We all went our separate ways.” Speaking of the rules that govern dysfunctional families, Subby says, “These rules serve to protect and isolate us from other people.” (Subby, p. 31). Don’t feel, don’t trust, don’t talk. If you get too close or share too much you will get hurt.

Enmeshment—*unhealthy togetherness*. People become enmeshed when the boundaries between their own lives and others lives become confused. This happens when they give up responsibility for their own lives by allowing themselves to be manipulated or abused; by feeling guilty about others’ behavior, by blaming their feelings on other people, by constantly sacrificing their own well-being for others. Enmeshment also happens when people take responsibility for others lives by trying to change other people, by trying to control others, by trying to save other people from the consequences of their own behavior, or by apologizing for other people’s problems.



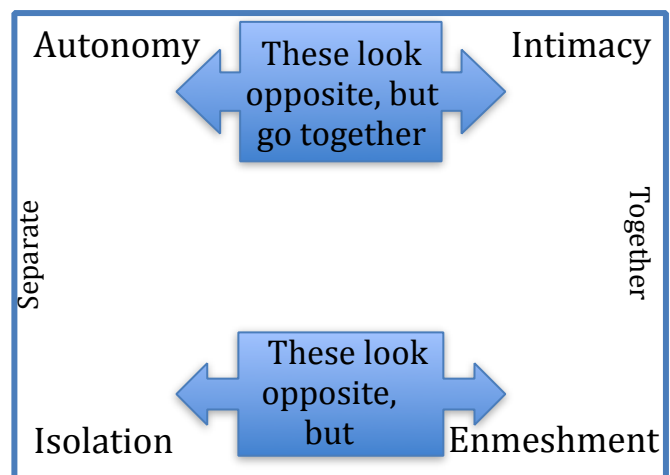
The chemically dependent person’s defenses are particularly troublesome because they invade the autonomy of others—dependents merge boundaries just like infants merge boundaries with their mothers. Bot passive aggression and projection will make others feel what the dependent feels but does not acknowl-

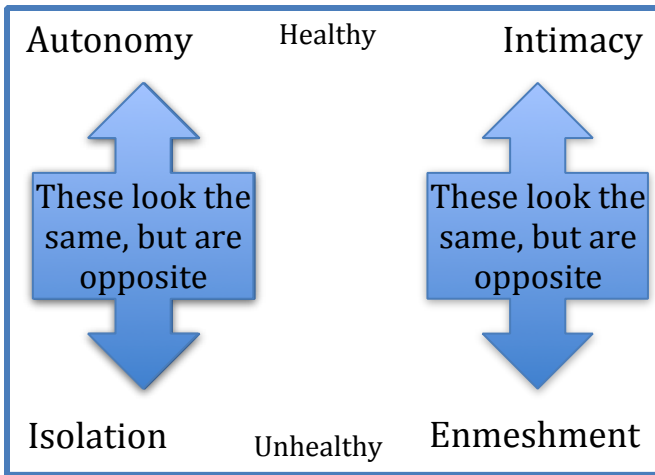
edge. Denial will make others question their own sanity. The associated childlike narcissism will render others into subservience, tending to the dependent's needs while unmindful of their own. These defensive mechanisms induce a breakdown of clear knowledge of what is mine and thine. Relationships with the chemically dependent person become entangled; individual boundaries become fuzzy; outsiders looking in will have trouble determining where one starts and the other leaves off. (Maxwell, 1986, p. 71, 72.)

<p>AUTONOMY knowing self being aware of feelings being honest about desires making own decisions deciding when to get help having own goals, projects accepting own limitations feeling good about self freedom</p>	<p>INTIMACY communicating openly sharing feelings, thoughts working and playing together respecting, supporting enjoying each other caring, helping commitment meeting each other's needs</p>
<p>ISOLATION loneliness withdrawal apathy hiding feelings not talking or sharing pretending mechanical relationships. feeling cut off or trapped</p>	<p>ENMESHMENT not being responsible for self taking responsibility for others manipulation, abuse guilt about others behavior blaming feelings on others sacrificing own well-being pretending needing to change others shielding others from consequences apologize for others problems</p>

Opposite or Similar

Although we tend to think of togetherness and separation as being opposites, autonomy and intimacy are not opposites at all. Being truly intimate with another person requires that one have a sense of self. The more a person's identity and self-responsibility have developed, the more that person is capable of genuinely sharing and being committed to another. The converse is also true: Genuine autonomy requires that one be intimate with others. The more deeply a person communicates with others and leans to work and play with others, the more that person finds his own identity and sense of





inner direction; Autonomy and intimacy are not opposites. They go hand in hand, each moving in step with the other.

In unhealthy relationships there is a connection between isolation and enmeshment. A person who is very lonely may try to escape the loneliness by clinging to others. Fear of being abandoned may lead the person to “people pleasing,” manipulation, apologizing for others, or other enmeshing behaviors. On the other hand, a person who feels threatened by manipulation or loss of self in an enmeshing relationship may protect himself by withdrawing, denying the pain he feels, pretending to be different than he really is, or otherwise isolating himself from the relationship. Isolation and enmeshment feed upon each other. A person may quickly swing from one extreme to the other (e.g., first clinging, then breaking up), or one may feel both lonely and over-involved at the same time.

This is one example of the general principle that *two qualities which appear to be opposite may be closely tied together*. For example, enmeshment and isolation appear to be opposite extremes, but actually they are closely tied together. Likewise, autonomy and intimacy may appear opposite, while being closely tied together.

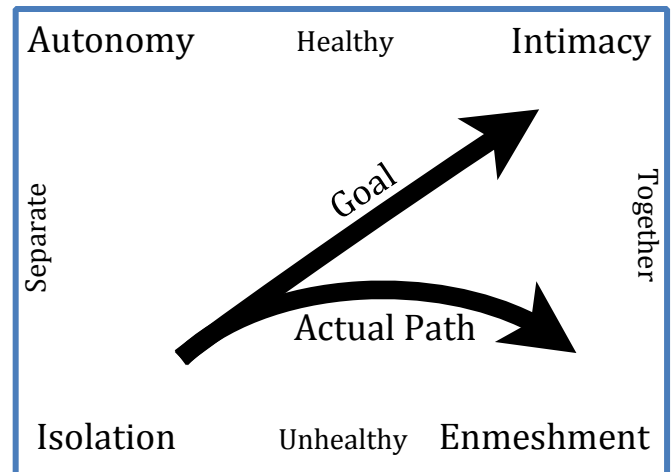
The converse is also true, that *two qualities which appear similar may be quite different*. For example, a behavior such as working on a project alone may be a manifestation of either autonomy or of isolation. The difference is in the motivation and attitude involved in the work. Likewise, either enmeshment or intimacy could be involved in a woman taking care of her husband. Intimacy and enmeshment can appear to be similar, although the inner feelings and attitudes involved are poles apart.

away from loneliness

Away From Loneliness

A person who fears abandonment or wants to escape loneliness may try to attain intimacy by getting closer to other people. Often the person ends up getting enmeshed instead. There are several reasons for this:

1. Fear or avoidance of isolation is not a motivation that encourages healthy relationships.
2. Moving from isolation towards intimacy requires a much greater degree of inner change than moving towards enmeshment.
3. In avoiding isolation a person may also avoid the healthy autonomous behaviors that are necessary for genuine intimacy.



Away From Enmeshment

A similar thing happens with the person trying to escape over-involvement. People who seek independence may attempt to achieve it by cutting themselves off from the people they are en-

meshed with. Unfortunately, it is much easier to find isolation than true autonomy because:

1. Fear/avoidance is not the kind of motivation that leads to healthy relationships.
2. Becoming autonomous requires greater change than becoming isolated.
3. Enmeshment may be confused with intimacy, so in avoiding enmeshment the person may also avoid the intimacy necessary for teal autonomy.

Boundaries and Barriers

In ancient times, people would often set up pillars to mark the boundaries between their lands.

In most ancient times people used to place stones where their boundaries ran which separated one person's property or inheritance from another's. These served as a sign and witness to the existence of the boundaries there.

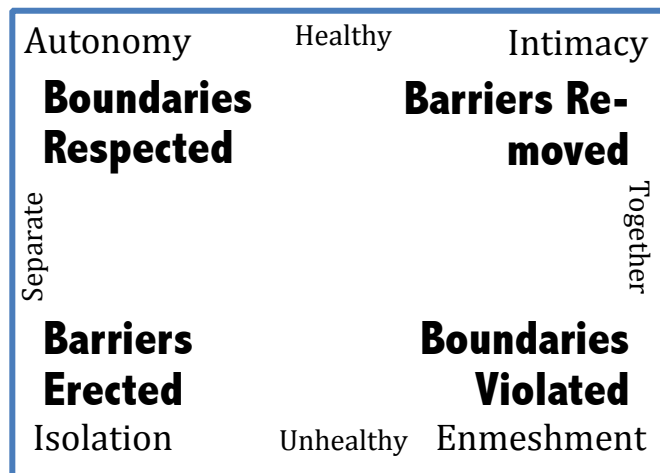
In most ancient times stones were set up on the boundaries between families of nations to stop them crossing those boundaries to do one another any harm.... No crossing them to do harm was the law of nations among those people. (AC 4580)

You shall not remove your neighbor s landmark, which the men of old have set. (Deut. 19:1 4)

These pillars were regarded as sacred because they symbolized something spiritual. Specifically they represented truths or forms of good in the external man, which are all the person's thought, speech, and activity. (AC 3727) These ancient people recognized that there are boundaries between properties are like the boundaries between people on an emotional and spiritual level. They saw it as a sacred duty to respect each other's boundaries.

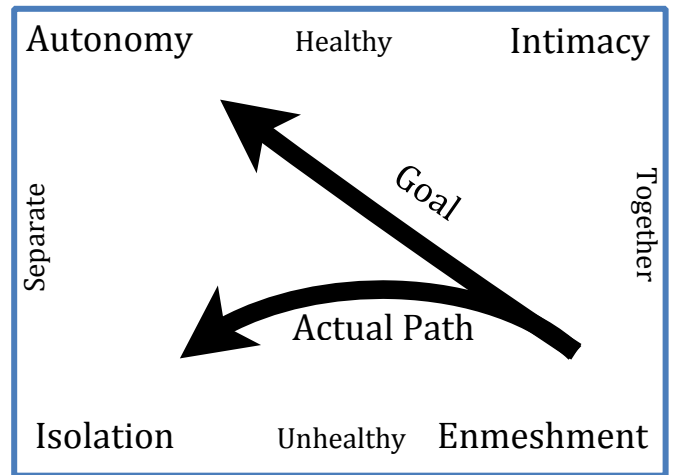
As time passed, people began to lose their concern for their neighbors and conflicts arose. Boundaries were violated more and more often, so-people began to build walls. When the children of Israel came to the land of Canaan they found that the cities were very strong and walled up to heaven" (Deut. 1:28), like the city of Jericho, which was shut up tight so that no one could go out or come in (Josh. 6:1). "These walls symbolized the falsities which defended evils" (AC 8815).

The difference between a landmark and a wall is significant. Landmarks are useful when there is respect for them-that is, respect for the people whose land they mark. Walls are needed when that respect is lacking and the boundaries are crossed "to do harm."



In healthy relationships boundaries are respected. Each person's freedom, individuality, and values are honored. Each makes his own decisions and has his own responsibility. In a healthy relationship there is no need for walls. There are no banners that prevent people from communicating openly and sharing freely.

In unhealthy relationships, boundaries are violated.



People are pressured or forced to do things against their will. They are manipulated and controlled. They feel responsible for other people's lives and problems. Often people get confused about where the boundaries between people are.

At the same time, people start putting up barriers. They isolate themselves, hide their feelings and stop listening. Every effort to communicate involves roadblocks and defenses that are designed to maintain control, avoid intimacy and protect the addiction.

Autonomy and Intimacy in Marriage

There are many places in the Writings where the concepts of unity and autonomy in relationships are found. Perhaps the most obvious is the marital relationship. The unity of the marital relationship is described as the two becoming one:

A person who is in true married love loves what they other thinks, and what the other wills, thus he also loves to hi no as the other, and he loves to w ill as the other, consequently to be united to the other and to become as one person. (AC 10169)

Those who are in true married love continually desire to be one person, but those who are not in married love want to be two. In its essence, married love is nothing else than the willing of two to be a one, that is, their will that the two lives shall become one life. (CL 215)

It is implanted in the wife's love to unite her husband's will with her own, for in this way the wife becomes the husband's and the husband the wife's, thus the two become one person. (CL 196)

The will of the wife is also the husband's will and the understanding of the husband is also the wife's understanding, since each loves to will and to think like the other, that is mutually and reciprocally. Thus they are conjoined into one. (HH 369)

The intimacy of becoming one cannot be separated from autonomy. Many passages show that as husband and wife become one, they nevertheless remain distinct and in some sense separate. They are still two.

They become one person according to the increase of married love.... Therefore two partners (in heaven) are called two when named husband and wife, but one when named angels. (CL 177)

They feel themselves to be united, the husband feeling himself to be united with his wife, and the wife with her husband, and each having the feeling of being in the other, as though united even in the flesh, although they are separate beings. (CL 178)

That which takes place from true married love takes place from freedom both ways, for all freedom is from love; and both have freedom when the one loves that which the other thinks and that which the other wills. (AC 10173)

The offices of the husband and those of the wife are distinct, and at the same time conjoint. (CL 176)

It is not a fusing into one, but an approach, close and intimate according to the law, and in the case of people who are in true married love, even to touching. (CL 158)

The relationship would cease to exist if they ceased to remain two. Even as they become more and more one, they retain their autonomy. In fact, it is because of the differences between them that they can become one. Husband and wife are completely different from each other, and the distinction becomes clearer as they mature in their relationship.

The masculine is one thing and the feminine another, being so different that the one cannot be changed into other. (CL 32)

Because ...the masculine form is the form of the understanding, and the feminine the form of the love of that understanding, it follows that the male has a face, voice, and body different from the female.... They differ also in their attitudes and their ways. In a word, nothing whatever in them is

alike; and yet in their single parts there is an urge to join together. In fact, in the male the masculine is masculine in every part of his body even the most minute, and also in every idea of his thought and in every grain of his affection; and so likewise, the feminine in the female. (CL 33).

In the marriage of one man with one wife between whom there is true married love, the wife becomes more and more a wife, and the husband more and more a husband. (CL 200)

Rather than feeling more smothered or dominated as they draw closer together, partners feel more and more free.

“The freedom of true married love is the height of freedom because that love is the love of loves” (CL 257).

In marriage relationships where there is not true married love, there is still togetherness and separateness, but these are unhealthy. The most extreme example of this is marriages where the partners try to control each other. The desire to be in control destroys intimacy and isolates them from each other, while at the same time it brings them together in unhealthy, enmeshed ways. Consider how enmeshment and isolation interplay in the following passage where I have italicized indications of isolation and made bold indications of enmeshment:

He who domineers wishes his will alone to be in the other, and nothing of the other’s will to be reciprocally in himself, which destroys all mutuality, and thus null sharing of any love and its delight one with the other. Where there is dominion no one has freedom.... So far as dominion enters, minds are not united but divided. The interiors of those who live in such marriage are in mutual collision and strife.... The collision and antagonism of their inward beings are disclosed after death, when commonly they come together and fight like enemies and tear each other. (HH 380).

Enmeshment can appear to be like intimacy. Swedenborg describes partners who are “almost united as one through their need to control the other.

Hellish marriage [is] when people who are in such hatred are joined together through control. Marriages are like this with all who subjugate their partner by stubbornness; and then, at the same time, they live together in externals as if in friendship, but in internals they are in deadly hatred.... These people are permitted to hold each other in deadly hatred, until they feel such delight in that marriage, that they can almost be united as one; for each feels the delight of dominion in the other, and since one has contributed to that delight with the other, it is that delight which is felt. (SD 4745).

In [a hellish marriage] they converse together, and are also coupled from what is lascivious; but interiorly they burn against each other with deadly hatred. (HH 377).

What applies to marriage relationships also applies in a general way to many other relationships. When they are healthy, there is an appreciation of differences coupled with a sharing of affections and thoughts. When they are unhealthy, there is a desire for control coupled with opposition and isolation.

Distinguishable Oneness in the Lord

We have observed that autonomy and intimacy go together even though they may outwardly appear to be opposites. This union of autonomy and intimacy is in all our healthy relationships from the Lord. It is His influence that brings both of these into our lives. The Lord is the source of both autonomy and intimacy.

The qualities of autonomy and intimacy in a marriage relationship, like all other qualities in the marital relationship, spring from similar qualities in the relationship between good and truth. Ultimately, they spring from the relationship between Divine Good and Divine Truth in the Lord. That relationship between two aspects of the Lord is such that Good and Truth in Him are perfectly one, yet at the same time perfectly distinct.

Where there is Being [Esse], there is Taking Form [Existere] . One is not possible apart from the other.... This the rational mind comprehends when it thinks whether there can possibly be any Being which does not take form, and whether there can be any Taking Form except from Being. And since one is possible with the other, and not apart from the other, it follows that *they are one, but one distinctly. They are one distinctly like Love and Wisdom...* For there can be no love except in wisdom, not can there be any wisdom except from love.... *These two are one in such a way that they may be distinguished in thought but not in operation, and because they may be distinguished in thought though not in operation, it is said that they are one distinctly [or distinguishably].* Being and Taking Form are in God Man are also one distinctly like soul and body. There can be no soul apart from its body, nor body apart from its soul. (DLW 14).

Because Divine Being is Divine Love and Divine Taking Form is Divine Wisdom, these are likewise one distinctly. *They are said to be one distinctly because love and wisdom are two distinct things, yet so united that love is of wisdom and wisdom is of love.* (DLW 34).

This can help us understand the relationship between Father and Son in the Lord. They are one because the Father is in the Son and the Son in the Father , and both make one Person. Yet they are distinct, because the Lord works of Himself from the Father, rather than the Father working through the Son.

The Lord works of Himself from the Father and not the reverse. This can be illustrated by the spontaneous reaction of the lungs from the heart. These are two distinct actions, but still reciprocally connected.... It is the same with everything internal and external in a person's character. Internal and external are two different things, but still joined in a reciprocal bond. The internal acts in and on the external, not by means of it.... A closer parallel to this might be the mutual relationship between the soul and the body, which are two separate things, but linked in a reciprocal bond.

The soul acts in and on the body, but not by means of the body, and the body acts of itself from the soul.... It is the same with the Lord's Divine and His Human; for the divine of the Father is the soul fo His Human and the Human is His body. (TCR 153,154).

In a healthy church the relationship between Father and Son or between Divine Love and Divine Wisdom involves both intimacy and autonomy. In a dysfunctional church the relationship between Father and Son is twisted into one that involves enmeshment and isolation. Consider the relationship described here:

God the Father, being angry with mankind, cast them away from Him, and out of justice resolved to take vengeance by their eternal condemnation. He said to the Son, "Go down, fulfill the law, and take upon Yourself the condemnation destined for them, and then perhaps I will be moved to compassion. So He came down, and fulfilled the law and suffered Himself to be hung on the cross and cruelly put to death. When this was done, He returned to the Father, and said, "I have taken upon Myself the condemnation of mankind, so now be merciful." In this way He interceded for them. But He received for an answer, "I cannot be merciful toward them. But, since I saw You on the cross, and looked at Your blood, I have been moved to compassion. Still, I will not pardon them, but I will give them credit for Your merit—but only to those who acknowledge this. This shall be the faith by which they can be saved. (F 44).

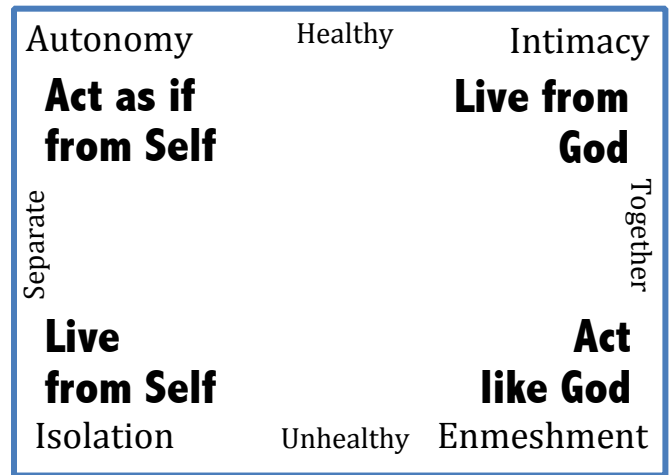
There is isolation in the Son having to suffer the Father's rejection and abandonment in order to appease His anger. There is enmeshment in the responsibility for Father's anger going to the Son, and in the Son accepting abuse from the Father.

Most Christians do not have such a dysfunctional picture of God. However, there are still many people whose spiritual and emotional life has been damage by the concept of an angry God.

Our Relationship With God

The elements of autonomy and intimacy apply to our relationship with God just as to any other relationship. These two elements go hand in hand, so as our relationship with Him become closer and closer, we feel more and more autonomy.

The more closely a person is conjoined with the Lord, the more distinctly he seems to himself as if he were his own, and the more clearly he perceives that he is the Lord's.... Since all that a person does from freedom appears as his own, for it is of his love (and to act from one's love is to act from freedom...), it follows that a relationship with the Lord make a person seem to himself free and therefore his own. And the closer the relationship with the Lord is, the more free he seems, and so the more he seems his own. He seems to himself more distinctly as his own, because the Divine Love is such that it wants its own to be another's, that is, to be a person's and an angels.... The more distinctly a person appears to himself as his own, the more clearly he perceives that he is the lord's because the more closely he is connected with the Lord, the wiser he becomes... and wisdom teaches this. (DP 42-44).



Exactly the opposite happens when a person's relation with God is unhealthy. In this case the person *isolates* himself from God by denying God's existence, rejecting God's love, or destroying God's work. At the same time the person becomes *enmeshed* with God by taking credit for things

Intimate/Autonomous Relationship with God	↔	Intimate/Autonomous Relationship with Self	↔	Intimate/Autonomous Relationship with Others
Enmeshed/Isolated Relationship with God	↔	Enmeshed/Isolated Relationship with Self	↔	Enmeshed/Isolated Relationship with Others

God does, blaming God for his own faults, abusing Gods people, Gods Word and God's name, and at the same time feeling persecuted by God. The boundaries between himself and God are lost or violated, and as such a person becomes more and more controlling he starts to act as if he *were* God.

Some dependents and codependents come to two major realizations as they recover:

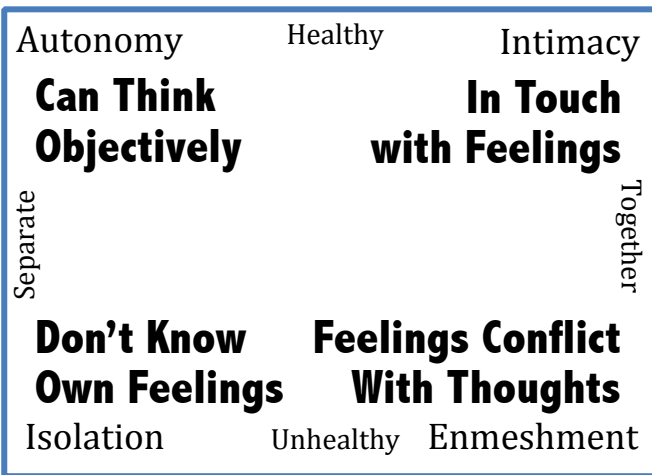
1. There is a God.
2. It's not me.

These two realizations are the starting point for developing a healthy relationship with God. The first idea ("There is a God") involves intimacy. It usually comes from an awareness that God is working in ones life and a feeling His closeness. The second idea (Its not me") involves autonomy, since it makes a distinction between God and man.

Thoughts and Feelings

We have discussed the distinguishable oneness" that exists between the Divine and the Human, o between Love and Wisdom, in the Lord. Both autonomy and intimacy have their origin in the Lord Himself. A similar relationship exists within the human mind between a persons internal and his external, and between his feelings and his thoughts.

In a healthy person the will and understanding (or thoughts and feelings) are united and yet remain autonomous. The autonomy of the intellect shows in a persons ability to reflect on his feelings objectively, to see things from other points of view to give him a perspective of things be-



yond his emotions. In other words, the person’s thoughts are free, not controlled by his emotions. The will is autonomous when the person’s feelings are allowed to be felt, and it’s OK to be happy, sad or mad without having to justify it or explain it. In other words, the person’s feelings are free, not controlled by his reasoning.

Along with this autonomy in each part of the mind will be an intimacy between them. That is, the person knows his feelings, he can talk about and think about them. When a thought comes into his mind, feelings immediately come up. When feelings come

into his mind, he recalls the associated thoughts. So his thoughts are in touch with his feelings and his feelings are in touch with his thoughts.

The intimacy and autonomy of the will and understanding are reflected in the marital relationship. This relationship requires freedom on both sides, just as marriage does. There has to be “consent from both mental powers—the will and the understanding.” (AC 3156, 3157). There must be a free state. (AC 3158).

The basis of any marriage is the consent given by both parties. This has its origin in the marriage of good and truth, in that one part—good—proposes and the other—truth—consents, and the two are thereby joined together. (AC 3090).

The combination of intimacy and autonomy in the joining of the will and understanding is explained in detail in *Divine Love and Wisdom*, where it shows that the relationship of the will with the understanding is parallel to the relationship of the heart with the lungs. These relationships are two-fold. There is one mode in which the lungs act together with the heart, and another in which they act almost separately. The understanding can also act either together with the will or separately from the will. This separation allows the understanding to be elevated above the will, yet even when it is separated and elevated, the understanding still derives all its life, and its ability to be elevated, from the will. (See DLW 404, 413). The will can also be elevated. This elevation is distinct from the elevation of the understanding, because the will is raised into greater warmth, while the understanding is raised into greater light. (DLW 415). This autonomy of the will and the understanding makes possible an intimacy between them on a higher level. When they are both raised, which happens when the will loves wisdom, they can be joined together as in marriage. (DLW 414, 421).

In an unhealthy person, the will and understanding become isolated from each other.

When the understanding is at variance with the will, as it is with people who claim to have faith and yet live otherwise, then a mind previously one is split in two. One half seeks to transport itself into heaven, while the other inclines towards hell. (AC 35).

But at the same time this leads to enmeshment of the will with the understanding. The will makes understanding its servant, and perverts, adulterates, and falsifies it. (DLW 421).

If the understanding ascends and sees by the light of heaven such things as are of wisdom, this natural love draws down such wisdom, and joins her to itself in what is its own; and there either rejects the things of wisdom or falsifies them or encircles itself with them, that it may talk about them for reputation’s sake. (DLW 424).

The isolation and enmeshment between the will and the understanding, or between thoughts and feelings is one of the key symptoms of codependency. Isolation of the two is observed in the tendency of codependents to split their thoughts and feelings in various ways, most often by losing awareness of feelings. Enmeshment of will and understanding is observed in the tendency of codependents to try to control their feeling through their thinking. They generally end up being controlled by their feelings anyway.

Maxwell describes some of the defensive roles codependents use. Some repress or forget events they cannot bear. "Repression splits the conflict; the event is forgotten, but the feeling remains." (Maxwell, 1986, p. 80). These codependents often have dramatic personalities and can express their emotions fully. (p. 82). Other codependents intellectualize their problems:

The defense of intellectualization allows them to put aside their feelings. They split conflicts just like persons who repress, but rather than burying the idea of the conflict as in the curious forgetting of repression, intellectualizers bury the associated feeling and remember the event. (Maxwell, 1986, p. 84).

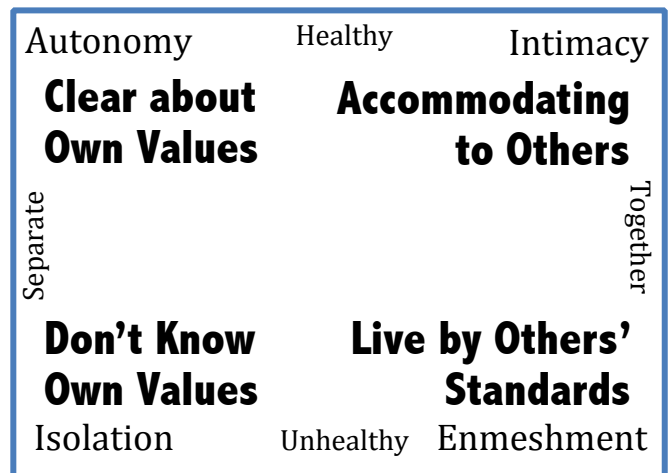
This tendency to split thoughts from feelings does not prevent their enmeshment. Even though feelings may be pushed down, put aside and controlled, they end up controlling peoples thinking and actions anyway.

[A] problem with repressed feelings is they don't go away. They linger, sometimes growing stronger and causing us to do many peculiar things. We have to stay one step ahead of the feeling, we have to stay busy, we have to do something. We don't dare get quiet and peaceful because we might then feel these emotions. And the feeling might squeak out anyway, causing us to do something we never intended to do: scream at the kids, kick the cat, spill on our favorite dress, or cry at the party. We get stuck in feelings because we're trying to repress them, and like a persistent neighbor, they will not go away until we acknowledge their presence. (Beattie, p. 133).

We can see from this that the controlling/isolated relationship between feelings and thoughts is very much parallel to the controlling/isolated relationship codependents tend to have with others.

Inner and Outer

The relationship between the internal and the external, like the relationship between thoughts and feelings, is one that should involve both intimacy and autonomy. The autonomy impossible because the internal and external are most distinct. The internal and external can be quite different. A person can think one thing while in public, and another things when in private. Yet even though they are distinct, they are united.



The internal man which is spiritual and the external man which is natural, are altogether distinct. (HD 47).

The internal man and the external man are completely distinct and separate since heavenly and spiritual things are what move the internal man but natural things the external man. but although they are distinct they are nevertheless united, that is to say, when the heavenly-spiritual comprising the internal man flows into the natural comprising the external man and reorganizes it as its own. (AC 1577)

A person's soul is one with his body, or his internal one with his external, even though they are quite distinct and separate from each other. (AC 2018).

The internal and the external are indeed distinct from each other; but in the natural, where they are together, the internal is as in its form adapted to itself, which form does not act at all from itself, but from the internal which is there is. (AC 6275.2)

With a person who is unregenerate, the internal and the external are enmeshed:

Until his regeneration starts a person is not aware of even the existence of the internal man, let alone the identity of the internal man. Submerged in bodily and worldly concerns he imagines there is no difference between the two. Furthermore he has submerged in those same concerns the things that belong to the internal man and has made one through obscurity out of things that are distinct and separate (AC 24).

The internal is said to be closed when it completely makes one with the external; for then it is not in itself, but in the external. (DP 139.6).

Yet at the same time that internal is enmeshed in the external, we can say that the external is isolated from the internal.

Regarded in itself the external man is nothing other than the servant of the internal. It is something instrumental whereby ends in view pass into uses, and uses manifest themselves in an effect, and thus all things may be accomplished. The reverse happens when the external man separates itself from the internal and wishes to serve only itself, even more when it wishes to have control over the internal, which happens principally because of self-love and its desires. AC (1598).

Every evil person, while in externals, is not like himself, such as he is in internals. He then not only speaks and acts differently, but also thinks and wills differently... and that he is then far off from himself is evident from the fact that when he returns from externals into his internals, which takes place when he is alone, he then thinks and wills quite differently. (AE 1 133).

Something like this happens with codependent people. They spend most of their time focusing on other people, not on themselves, so their inner person gets lost. They fix other peoples problems, react to other peoples behavior and live up to other peoples expectations. They don't pay attention to their own needs, their own behavior, or their own values. The only self they know is their public self—the self they put on for appearances' sake. The inner person is closed off, enmeshed in the outer person.

Codependency is a disease of the intra-personal system. Body, mind and spirit are divided from one another as a result of the dysfunctional rules. (Subby, p. 81).

Co-dependency: the denial or repression of the real self based on an erroneous assumption that love, acceptance, security, success, closeness, and salvation are all dependent upon one's ability to do "the right thing." (Subby, p. 26).

"The Right Thing" is not what you personally believe is right or what your conscience tells you, but what you think others expect of you. It is focused on action, not intention. Its how you appear, not your motives, that are important. A person's identity gets defined by things outside himself.

True identity lies behind the individual's pseudo-identity that is reflected in what they do for a job, how much money they make, what religion they are, who they know, or when they live. (Subby, p. 120).

Without a healthy, accepting and loving relationship within yourself, there is no mom for self-actualization or a clear identity. For the practicing co-dependent there is only a kind of co-dependent pseudo-identity that is based on what you do, who you know, how much you make, where you live, or what religion you are. The co-dependent identity is an identity formed from the outside in, instead of from the inside out. As a result the individual becomes dependent on the outside realities in order to compensate for what is lacking on the inside (Subby, p. 65.)

Codependency is primarily a reactionary process. Codependents are reactionaries. They overreact. They underreact. But rarely do they act. (Beattie, 1987, p. 33)

To recover a codependent has to get back in touch with the things inside himself. He has to move from conscientiousness to conscience. He has to examine the intentions of his will and the affec-

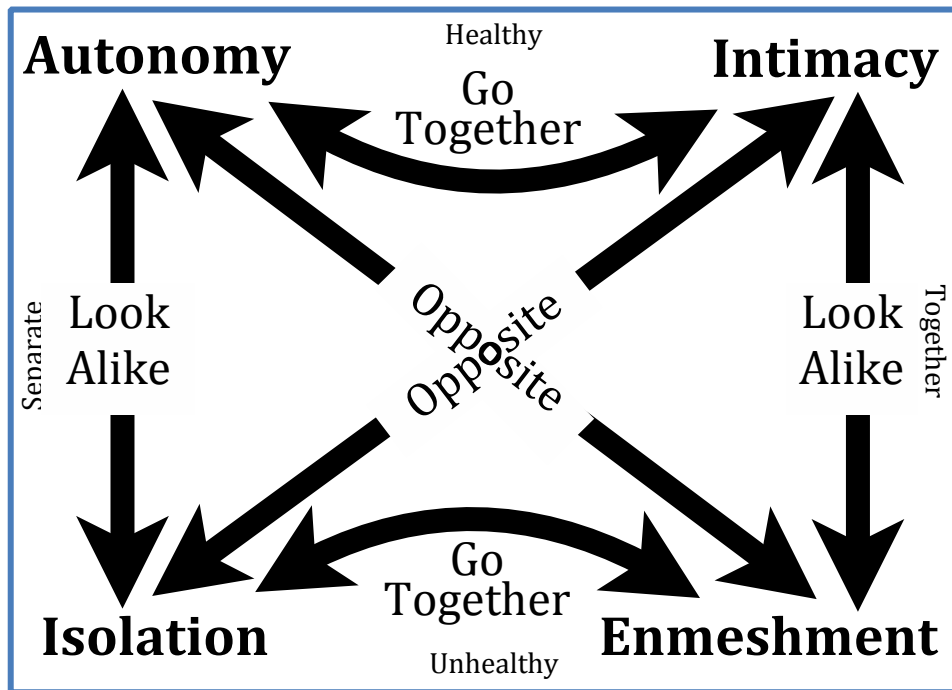
tions connected with his thoughts. He has to hear his inner dictate rather than just the voice of the preacher.

Recovery from codependency requires a balanced integration of the public and private self. (Subby, p. 111).

Tying It Together

We can see from this overview that there are many different kinds of relationships in which intimacy and autonomy, or oneness and distinctness, play a joint role. There is a tendency for people who are enmeshed/isolated in one area to have similar relationships in other areas, and for people who are healthy in one area to be healthy in others.

↔ ↔ This illustrates that codependency is a system disease. It spreads from relationship to relationship, both inwardly and outwardly, from generation to generation. It is a personal disease, a family disease, a social disease, a physical disease and a spiritual disease. This disease must be addressed in all these contexts in order for healing to take place

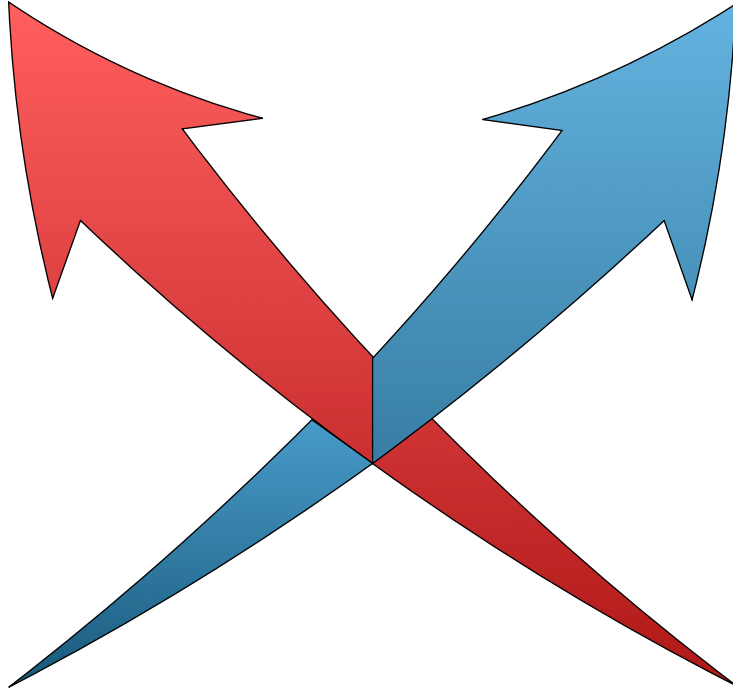


HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

PART TWO: HEALING

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Chapter 7: Evil and Disease

Evil and disease are closely linked in the Word. How should this affect our attitudes towards disease and evil?

Disease in the Word

Many passages in the Word indicate that there is a close connection between evil and disease. In the Old Testament we find that diseases were often said to come upon people as a punishment for their evils.

There is no soundness in my flesh because of Your anger, nor is there any health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; like a heavy burden they are too heavy for me. My wounds are foul and festering because of my foolishness. (Psalm 38:3-5).

If you do not obey Me, and do not observe all these commandments, and if you despise My statutes, or if your soul abhors My judgments, so that you do not perform all My commandments, but break My covenant, I also will do this to you: I will even appoint terror over you, wasting disease and fever which shall consume the eyes and cause sorrow of heart. (Lev. 26:14-16).

An example of this is when Gehazi lied to get two talents of silver from Naaman, and was then struck with the leprosy from which Naaman had been healed (2 Kings 5:27). Another way evil and disease are tied together is when diseases are used as a metaphors to describe evil:

Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, Children who are corrupters! The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores. They have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment (Isaiah 1:4-6).

When the Lord came into the world, He did many miracles. Anew of them were not healing. He walked on water, stilled the tempest, fed the five thousand and turned water to wine. But the overwhelming majority (probably 99%) of His miracles involved healing diseases. When John the Baptist sent a messenger asking if He were the Christ, Jesus answered, "Go and tell John the things which you hear and see: The blind receive their sight and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up and the poor have the gospel preached to them (Matt. 11:4,5).

Of course, the Lords primary concern was with evil rather than with physical disease. But His miracles focused on physical disease because of their correspondence.

As diseases represented the hurtful and evil things of the spiritual life, therefore the diseases which the Lord healed mean liberation from various kinds of evil and falsity which infested the church and the human race, and which would have led to spiritual death. For Divine miracles are distinguished from other miracles by the fact that they involved and have re ad to states of the church and of the heavenly kingdom. *Therefore the Lord's miracles consisted chiefly in the healing o diseases.* (AC 8364.6).

In addition to their being a close connection between evil and disease, there is a similar connection between healing and salvation. In the original languages, the words for healing and salvation are closely connected, and sometimes the same word. For example, the phrases, "Your faith has made you well," and in the next chapter, "your faith has saved you," are exactly the same in the Greek (NKIV: Luke 17:19, 18:42).

Evil Causes Physical Disease

The connection between evil and disease involves more than just symbolism. There is an actual correspondence between them, a cause and effect relationship. Evil is the cause of disease.

All the diseases here named [in Deut. 28] mean spiritual diseases, which are evils destroying the life of the will of good, and falsities destroying the life of the understanding of truth; in a word, destroying the spiritual life which is of faith and charity. *Natural diseases also correspond to such things, for every disease of the human race is from that source, because it is from sin. Moreover, every disease corresponds to its own evil. The reason is that everything of a person's life is from the spiritual world; wherefore, if his spiritual life sickens, there is also evil derived from it into his natural life, which there becomes disease.* (AC 8364.3)

Diseases correspond to the desires and passions of the lower mind, which are also their origins; for the origins of diseases are, in general intemperance, luxury, of various kinds, mere physical pleasures, as also feelings of envy, hatred, revenge, lewdness, and the like, which destroy a person's interiors; and when these are destroyed the exteriors suffer, and drag the person into disease, and so into death. It is known in the church that a person's death is from evils, or on account of sin; and it is the same with diseases, for these belong to death. (AC 5712)

As death is from no other source than sin, and sin is all that which is contrary to Divine order, therefore evil closes the very smallest and most invisible vessels.... From this comes the first and inmost corruption in the blood. When this corruption increases, it causes disease, and finally death. If however a person had lived a life of good, his interiors would be open into heaven, and through heaven to the Lord... In consequence the person would be without disease, and would merely decline to extreme old age, even until...he would pass without disease out of his earthly body into a body such as the angels have, thus out of the world directly into heaven. (AC 5726; see also SD 4592)

Everyone derives diseases to himself from evil of Life; this is the source of diseases. (SD 2439)

When evil begins to reign in the body, in its blood, disease comes. (SD 2716)

There are also natural causes involved in disease, but apparently they do not have much effect if the spiritual cause is taken away.

Diseases are indeed with men from natural causes, which do not at the same time come forth with the spirit in the other life; but as often as they come forth, spirits gather who correspond to that disease; for the spirits who are in evil and falsity, produce precisely such things as are perceived by the sense in diseases.... Hence it is, that such spirits apply themselves there, and increase the disease by their presence, for if they are removed by the Lord, the man is at once restored; for there are evil and false spirits to which correspond every kind of disease and sickness (SD 4648, 4649; see also SD 4733, 623, AC 8850e).

The effect cannot subsist unless the cause is constantly in it, because the effect ceases when the cause ceases (AC 5711).

The Body Is The Form of The Mind.

It is easy to see that a people's bodies express their thoughts and feelings. We are used to identifying what goes on in people's minds by looking at their actions, listening to their voices, noting the expressions on their faces and observing their grooming and dress. These are things which the person appears to control—they come from some intention within.

There are other aspects of one's body which are less controllable, but still may give us clues about the person's character or lifestyle. For example, a person may be overweight, or muscular, or tanned or have curly hair, and this may affect our attitude towards the person. There are still other physical traits which a person cannot control at all. For example, a person's race, sex, height, eye color; age and hat size. Any attempt to make a correlation between these factors and the makeup of a person's mind is likely to border on racism, sexism or some other kind of prejudice. Consider the following statements:

Jews are materialistic.

Men are better with mathematics than women are.

Tall people earn more than short people.

Blacks score lower on intelligence tests than whites do.

Old people have more wisdom than young people do.

There are several reasons why such correlations may strike us negatively. One reason is that such statements frequently involve **value judgments**; they are used to prove that Group A is *better* than Group B. Another reason is that they are often applied to *individuals* even though they are **valid only for large statistical groups**. Sometimes the generalizations are applied **out of context**, and sometimes they are actually **false**.

We must keep these pitfalls and abuses in mind when we consider the teaching in the Writings that the body is a reflection of the mind.

An angel or person is such as his love is, and this not only in his organic beginnings in the brain, but also in the whole body, for the body is nothing but an organ derived from its beginnings (AC 6468e).

The whole man from head to heel, inwardly and outwardly, is nothing but his own truth or falsity, and his own good or evil, and the body is the outward form of them (AC 10264.3).

From head to heel,...to the last things in the body, a person is such as his love is (DLW 369).

Peoples bodies are nothing but forms of their minds outwardly organized (CL 310; see also AC 10740, 10823, DLW 136, 219, 268.2, 362, HH 463).

Does this mean that if a person's body is struggling with disease, his mind must be diseased as well? And if one's love is healthy, his body will be deathly as well? It seems that these teachings need some qualification or explanation, or else we end up judging people who are sick.

There are many ways that we could qualify these teachings about evil and disease. However, the basic teaching is clear: evil causes disease. These statements can be rather challenging, and different people have interpreted these teachings in different ways. I would like to focus on three alternative interpretations of these teachings.

First Alternative: Treat Sick People as if They Are Evil

The first way of responding to these teachings is to conclude that since disease is caused by evil, sick people must be evil. We may treat diseased people as if they were evil or morally weak, implying that they somehow deserve the disease or have it as a result of their moral or spiritual choices. Given this outlook, one might try to help the person by teaching them about good and evil, encouraging self-control or exhorting them to change their lifestyle. Physical treatment may be neglected or rejected on the basis of the belief that the person can recover simply by having more faith, or by bringing his life into order. If the sick person continues to be sick, one might conclude that it is because he is unwilling to give up his vices, is lacking in faith, belongs to die wrong religion, or is being punished by God for some hidden sin. Ultimately, the sick person may be morally condemned or ostracized for being so evil (as evidenced by his illness).

Second Alternative: There Are No Practical Connections

A second way of responding to these teachings is to generalize them-recognize a broad connection between evil and disease that does not apply in individual cases. People might say that disease is in a general way the cause of evil, but it is the sum of evil in the spiritual world influencing

the natural world that makes our bodies susceptible to disease. One can't say that everyone who has physical blindness has it because he is spiritually blind, or that if a person has AIDS it is because he is an evil homosexual. God does not punish people with sickness, and the fact that a person happens to be exposed to some germ has no significant connection to his relationship with God or his moral decisions. Physical sickness needs physical treatment, and spiritual evil needs spiritual correction. It's fine to moralize, exhort or possibly even ostracize people who choose to commit adultery, physically injure others, steal or otherwise act immorally, but people who are sick should not be blamed or lectured at for things that are obviously beyond their control.

Third Alternative: Treat Evil People as if They Were Sick

A third way to respond to the teachings is to conclude that one reason why evil and disease are so closely linked is to teach us about what evil is and how to treat it. In other words, evil is spiritual disease, and therefore we should treat a person who is involved in evil the same way we would treat a person who is sick. Moralizing and being judgmental about adultery or homosexuality does no more to help people than lecturing cancer patients about how bad they must be to have allowed themselves to get cancer.

Healing, either spiritual or natural, begins with acceptance, not condemnation; it is promoted by nurture, not by blame. The cancer patient cannot make the cancer go away simply by deciding that he does not want to be sick, and forcing himself by sheer will power to be strong and healthy and not feel any pain. Rather, the cancer patient needs to accept the disease and needs the acceptance and care of other people. And if the disease gets worse, that is no reason to discontinue treatment or lay blame on the patient. Likewise, if a person is involved in some evil, that person needs acceptance and care, and should not be blamed if the acceptance and care we offer does not seem to be bringing about complete healing.

In physical healing we can generally recognize that there are some things which we can control and some which we cannot control. A Type I diabetic *cannot* by any effort compel himself not to have diabetes. He can compel himself to take the necessary amounts of insulin. When it comes to spiritual things, some people have difficulty making the distinction between things that can be controlled and ones that cannot. Their automatic answer for anything they consider evil is, "You're wrong to want to do that. You should control yourself." If people can control their behavior, perhaps they should. However, if they are unable to control their behavior; then it may be counterproductive to tell them that they ought to. Perhaps what they really need to hear is, "You may need to admit that you cannot control your behavior." When a person needs to accept his own powerlessness, it can help to be among others who accept him and his powerlessness without condemnation.

Spiritual Healing

Perhaps the most obvious application of the teaching that evil causes disease is to "spiritual healing." If there is a cause and effect relationship between evil and disease, then a person should be able to overcome his diseases simply by eliminating his evils, right? This does, of course raise some problems. One problem is that this viewpoint may lead to a judgmental attitude towards people who are sick. Another problem is, What kind of techniques will bring about the spiritual change necessary for physical healing to take place? Meditation? Visualization? Faith? Prayer? Ritual? Anointing? Laying on of hands? Each method has its own host of advocates with plenty of

anecdotal evidence for its effectiveness. Still another problem is, Why doesn't it work? There doesn't seem to be any method which produces consistent results on any but minor illnesses.

An underlying assumption in this approach to spiritual heading is that since evil causes disease, *we can overcome evil as a means to overcoming disease*. This assumption may be false, because whenever we use *spiritual means* to accomplish a *natural end*, then the proper relationship between the spiritual and the natural is destroyed. A sick person comes to a spiritual healer, and the healer says, "Let's use prayer, meditation and faith to bring about physical healing." If the end is natural and the means are spiritual, the priorities are wrong.

People often miss the fact that just as the *cause* is everything in the *effect*, so the *end* is everything in the *cause*. The most important question is, *Why* does this person want to be healed? If the person wants spiritual healing in order to experience greater physical pleasure of some kind, then there is nothing truly spiritual about the healing.

If we wanted the best possible technique for spiritual heading, it would probably be shunning evil. Faith, meditation, prayer or laying on of hands can certainly be helpful, but they do not go so quickly to the root of disease as does shunning evils directly. The problem is that even shunning evils is not at all spiritual if it is done for the sake of physical health, rather than for the sake of spiritual health.

If anyone shuns evils for another reason than because they are sins, he is not shunning them, but merely ensuring that they are not visible to the eyes of the world. (TCR 330).

There are many who...from custom and habit learn to shun evils as detrimental to their honor and their wealth. But if they do not shun evils from a principle of religion, because they are sins and against God, then the desires for evil with their delights still remain in them, like impure waters stopped up, or stagnant. (DP 117).

A person must do these commandments from religion, because they are commanded by the Lord. And if he does them from any other consideration whatever, for instance, from regard merely to the civil law or the moral law, he remains natural, and does not become spiritual. (AE 902:3).

As a specific example, when people shun adultery merely for fear of disease or because of diseases they already have, they are still adulterers in spirit (CL 15).

There are some well-documented cases of spiritual healing that worked. And there are probably many, many more cases that worked but are not well documented. And on the other hand, there are countless attempts at spiritual healing that have not worked. Whether it works or not may be partly dependent on the motivation a person has in seeking spiritual healing, as well as the motivation of the healer. If the motivation is materialistic or physical, then the healing is at best superficial, and in many cases may aggravate the disease by masking the symptoms and interfering with more natural means of healing.

A Sound Mind in a Sound Body

Some medical professionals seem to attribute every mental illness to physical causes. More and more evidence shows that there is a connection between mental illness and genetic defects or chemical imbalances in the body. Researchers are finding more and more drugs that can have a dramatic positive effect on a person's mental health.

Some would go so far as to say that the mind is no more than the result of all the chemical processes, electrical signals and neural connections that make up the brain, and that all mental illnesses therefore have physical causes. A corollary of this is that evil is caused by physical disease.

This position seems to be directly opposed to the teaching that evil causes disease. People who work on this assumption are frequently effective, and, ironically, they sometimes seem to have a sense of priorities better than that of many faith healers with regard to spiritual and natural things.

“Spiritual” healing for the sake of natural health, is less appropriate than physical healing for the sake of spiritual health. A doctor who gives medicine so that his patient can become spiritually healthier, has the correct priorities. In this case, natural things are a means to spiritual things. This is the correct order because the relationship between cause and effect is similar to the relationship between end and cause.

A person who is interested in merely external pleasures takes care of his own skin, gratifies his stomach, likes to live sumptuously, and finds that the choicest food and drink yields him the highest pleasure. A person however who is interested in internal things also takes delight in those same pleasures, but his governing affection is to nourish the body with pleasurable foods so that it may be healthy, the end in view being a healthy mind in a healthy body. His primary concern is health of mind, for which health of the body serves as a means. (AC 4459.6)

A person must by all means care for his body, as that it may be nourished, and clothed, and may enjoy the delights of the world; but all these he does not for the sake of the body, but for the sake of the soul, namely, that the soul may act in a sound body correspondently and rightly, and may have the body as an organ entirely compliant to it. Thus the soul must be the end. Yet neither must the soul be the end, but only a mediate end, for which the person must care, not for its own sake, but for the sake of the uses which it must perform in both worlds; and when the person has uses as the end, he has the Lord as the end (AC 5949.2).

A person cannot be conjoined with the Lord unless he is spiritual, he cannot be spiritual unless he is rational, and he cannot be rational unless his body is in a sound state. (DLW 330)

The reason no one is reformed in a state of disease of the body, is that reason is not then in a free state; for the state of the mind depends on the state of the body. When the body is sick, the mind is also sick; if not otherwise, still by removal from the world... When therefore a person is in a state of disease...he is not in the world...in which state alone no one can be reformed; but he can be confirmed, if he was reformed before he fell into disease... Wherefore, if they are not reformed before the disease, after it, if they die, they become such as they were before the disease; wherefore it is vain to think that anyone can do repentance and receive any faith in diseases. (DP 142)

These teachings may seem to imply that mental and spiritual illness can be caused by physical problems. They seem to go contrary to the idea that spiritual things are causes and natural things are effects. Of course, this is an appearance. A *cause* (as Swedenborg uses the term) cannot continue to exist, much less to thrive, if it is not within the effect. Take away the effect, and the cause perishes. We cannot correctly understand the relationship between cause and effect unless we also understand the *appearance* that the causes of natural events are other natural events and even of spiritual events or conditions.

The relationship between cause and effect is like the workings of a clock. On a physical level, the spring causes the clock works to move. As long as the spring is wound and exerting force, the pendulum continues to swing back and forth. When the spring winds down, the pendulum stops. As a comparison, the force of evil causes disease. When the evil is removed the disease is healed.

The analog of the clock can be taken one step further. If you take hold of the pendulum and stop it, the whole of the clockwork will stop and the spring will stop unwinding. When you start the pendulum again, the clock starts again. It *appears* that the swing of the pendulum is the force that makes the clock run. It almost looks as if the swing of the pendulum is the cause and the movement of the clock and unwinding of the spring is the effect.

The *reality* is of course that the force of the spring is the cause, and the swing of the pendulum is the effect. The reason it can appear the other way around is that the cause cannot continue without the effect. The same is true with health. A person who is spiritually healthy is like a clock with a wound spring. Spiritual health brings about natural health the same way that the spring makes the pendulum swing. Without spiritual health natural health gradually slows to a stop. Yet even if the spiritual health is vigorous (spring wound up) you can bring the whole mind to a halt by interrupting the person's physical health (swing of the pendulum).

This analogy illustrates the importance of the holistic approach to healing. When a clock has run down, two things are necessary to get it going again. First you must wind up the clock, and then you must set the pendulum in motion. If you set the pendulum swinging without winding the clock, it won't keep swinging for very long. Similarly, when a person's health is run down, physical treatment is like pushing the pendulum. It gets the person going again, but it does not last very long unless the person gets spiritually rewound at the same time. One of the implications of this connection between spiritual and physical health is that if people seek physical healing for physical reasons, simply ignoring the spiritual issue altogether, it may be detrimental to them spiritually because the real cause of the illness is not being addressed. Physical healing should not be isolated from the positive effect it can have on one's spiritual health.

Alcoholism as a Disease

Over the last century there has been ongoing debate about whether alcoholism is a disease. Gradually more and more people are coming to recognize it as a disease, yet the debate continues, reaching even the Supreme Court of the United States. There are several aspects to this issue. One part of the issue is the question of whether the causes of alcoholism are primarily physical, or psychological.

There is a fair amount of evidence to support either view. Indications that it is a physical disease include evidence that genetic factors are involved. An alcoholic's body processes alcohol in a different chemical means than is found in the bodies of non-alcoholics, and frequently this is the case even before the person starts drinking. People who are children of alcoholics are likely to become alcoholics themselves, even if adopted at birth and raised in non-alcoholic homes. As alcoholism progresses, it has destructive, addictive effects on the body which cause the body to "need" alcohol in order to function and prevent withdrawal symptoms. The craving for alcohol is reinforced-if not caused-by actual chemical changes in the body.

On the psychological side, it is observed that many people who become alcoholics are ones who grew up in a dysfunctional home, and consequently have an underlying codependency that encourages-if it does not cause addictions such as alcoholism.

The issue of alcoholism as a disease has an element that is far more crucial than the question of what causes it. That issue is blame. If a person is alcoholic, is it his own fault? Or is it due to circumstances beyond his control? Frequently this issue is confused with the issue of cause and effect. Sometimes people who wish to exonerate the alcoholic cite evidence that the disease has physical causes. The assumption is that if it has a physical cause, then it is not the fault of the alcoholic. On the other side, there are people who wish to show that alcoholism is a matter of the alcoholic's free choice. These people often attribute alcoholism to psychological causes.

It is important that these issues be distinguished. The fact that alcoholism has psychological—in fact, spiritual causes, does not mean that it is the fault of the alcoholic. All diseases have spiritual causes. That has nothing to do with blame and fault.

Blame is a key issue because it appears to have an important effect on recovery. When people are blamed for their alcoholism (or when they blame themselves), recovery is much harder, if not impossible. One of the key elements that has made AA such a success is the recognition that alcoholism is a disease which the alcoholic cannot control. This takes the blame off the alcoholic and allows him to focus on recovery.

Four Issues In Disease

Being able to recognize the correct response to the disease/evil question depends partly on being able to distinguish several intertwined issues that are often confused. These issues are:

1. What is the cause?
2. Who is to blame?
3. Can it be controlled?
4. Who is responsible for it?

A simplistic approach to evil lumps these all together. For example I could say that if someone does something to hurt me, then his deciding to hurt me is the cause and he is to blame. We can encourage him to control himself in the future by holding him responsible for his actions. In this case I would not be making any distinction between the cause for, blame for, control of, and responsibility for the evil.

The Lord's disciples had a similar simplistic approach when they asked, 'Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?' (John 9:2). Their only thought was to find out whom to blame for the disease.

A friend of mine was blinded at birth by the administration of pure oxygen. In those days, doctors did not know that oxygen could burn the eyes, so one can't really *blame* the doctor, even though the doctor did *cause* it. In this case, there is nothing anyone can do to *control* the blindness, yet my blind friend—who did not cause it, was not to blame and cannot control it—must take *responsibility* for her blindness.

This illustrates that cause, blame, control, and responsibility are really four distinct issues. In some cases we may cause things that we cannot control (the doctor causing blindness), in other cases we may be able to control things that we did not cause (a diabetic may not have caused his diabetes, yet he may be able to control it to an extent with insulin). There may be things we *can* control that are not our *responsibility*, and things we *cannot* control which *are* (as in parents taking responsibility for a handicapped child).

In the case of an alcoholic, the issues are not quite as clear to most people. Many people lump them all together: the alcoholic caused the alcoholism by his excessive drinking, they say, so obviously it is his fault. If he would just be responsible for controlling his drinking, then he would be all right.

Who caused it?

More and more evidence indicates that a person does not become alcoholic because of excessive drinking, but because he has a genetic predisposition to metabolize alcohol differently than other people *even if his drinking is not excessive*. In many cases it is only after the addiction has become strongly entrenched that the drinking becomes excessive. The bottom line is that the alcoholic does not cause his alcoholism. This viewpoint, which focuses on physical, metabolic and genetic causes for the disease is in contrast with the view psychological, emotional or spiritual weakness as the cause of the disease.

Who is to blame?

The issue of blame involves a person's intention. Blaming a person for his alcoholism implies that not only that he caused it, but that he *intentionally* caused it, or at least willingly failed to prevent it. Seeing alcoholism as a disease means *not blaming* the alcoholic, and more importantly, allowing the alcoholic not to blame himself.

Can it be controlled?

Most alcoholics, as their disease progresses, try to control their alcohol without success.

Alcoholics may swear to themselves, their wives, children, clergymen, or anyone else conceded with their drinking that they will control their intake. But their addiction makes certain that they will drink in spite of their best intentions and heartfelt promises. The alcoholic's most cherished values-his honesty, integrity, self-discipline, even his love for his family-are repeatedly overthrown because he cannot reliably predict or control his own drinking behavior. Any normal human being would feel disgust and self-loathing at this seemingly pathetic inability to exert control and exercise will power; and so does the alcoholic, who may be normal in every respect except his reaction to alcohol.

The alcoholic's guilt, depression, self-loathing, and despair are therefore understandable reactions to a bewildering and mysterious inability to stop the ravages of drinking. Neither the alcoholic nor those around him know that his cells have become abnormal, for the physical dependence and cellular addiction have worked inside him for months or perhaps years, invisible and unnoticed. No wonder the alcoholic believes he is weak-willed and pathetic. No wonder many of the people who observe his-behavior believe that he is psychologically unstable, self-destructive, and perhaps suicidal. Without an understanding or knowledge of his addiction, they have no way of knowing that the alcoholics irrational behavior is beyond his control (Under the Influence, p. 68).

The issue of control is central to understanding alcoholism and its treatment. Since the alcoholic is unable to control his drinking, any treatment which is based on encouraging self-control (such as moralizing, psychoanalysis or punishment) is bound to fail. This is a paradoxical issue, because as long as the alcoholic believes he can control his drinking, he will fail to control it. The first step in recovery is for the alcoholic recognize that he cannot control his alcoholism, that it is only with the help of some higher power outside of himself that he can recover. Once he realizes that he cannot control himself, he can begin to get his life into control.

Who is responsible?

One of the steps to recovery involves making amends. The recovering alcoholic needs to look for ways he may have hurt others, and make amends if he can. This may mean making amends for things he did when totally inebriated, for things he cannot remember having done, for things that he did not intend or want to happen and perhaps in some way tried to prevent. The willingness to take responsibility (not blame) for something that one did not cause and could not control is a step towards maturity and recovery.

Evils Are Spiritual Diseases

The debate about alcoholism as a disease will continue as long as the debate focuses on alcoholism rather than on a more central issue. The central question is, *How do we treat evil? Is evil a disease?* As long as addictions to adultery stealing, lying and profanity are treated with judgmental moralism, there will be a tendency for alcoholism, drug addiction and codependency to be given the same sentence.

If we can recognize that all evils are diseases, then the question of whether alcoholism is an evil or a disease becomes moot. In the Word diseases frequently symbolize evils, for the reason that evils are spiritual diseases.

In the spiritual world, diseases are evils and falsities; *spiritual diseases are nothing else; for evils and falsities take away health from the internal man and induce sicknesses of the mind*, and at last pains; nor is anything else signified by diseases in the Word (AC 6502).

The reason disease means evil is that in the internal sense such things are meant as affect the spiritual life; *this life sickens when there is falsity in the place of the truth of faith, and evil in the place of the good of charity*; for these bring that life to the death which is called spiritual death...as diseases bring the natural life to its death. Hence it is that by disease in the internal sense is meant evil (AC 8364.2).

As diseases represented the unfairnesses and evils of the spiritual life, by the diseases which the Lord healed is meant deliverance from various kinds of evil and falsity, which infested the church and the human race, and which would have induced spiritual death (AC 8364.6).

By all the diseases here mentioned are meant *spiritual diseases, which are evils* destroying the life of the will of good, and falsities destroying the life of the understanding of truth, in a word, destroying the spiritual life which is of faith and charity (AC 8364.3).

The diseases of which the Lord heals them involve spiritual diseases, which are from evil (AC 8495e).

Disease and sickness means the illness of the internal person, which happens when it sickens as to its own life, which is the spiritual life, thus when it turns aside from truth to falsity, and from good to evil. When it does this, that life sickens; and when it entirely turns itself away from good and truth, it dies... therefore such things as belong to diseases and death in the natural world, in the Word are said of the diseases of the spiritual life and of its death: thus also, the curings and healing of diseases (AC 9031 3).

Disease means truth falsified and good adulterated; *these are the diseases of the spiritual life*; for the spiritual life exists and subsists through the truths which are of faith and the goods which are of love; and when these are falsified and perverted, the person sickens; but when they are denied at heart, the person spiritually dies (AC 9324).

Disease and Blame

We can look at evil as a *disease*, or we can view it as a problem of *morality and self-control*. Our viewpoint will help determine the methods we choose for helping the person who is in evil. In a way it does not really matter how we *think* about the evil. It matters how we *treat* it. The way we think about evil is important if it affects the way we treat people (including ourselves) who are in evil.

If we approach evil as a disease, we will tend to be concerned for healing the disease. We will accept and care for the person who is in evil. At the same time we may recognize that the treatment of evil, like the treatment of many diseases, requires that the patient be honest with himself and others and take responsibility for changing his lifestyle.

An almost opposite approach is to deal with evil through blaming. If we become aware that someone has done something that is against our moral code, we may reject the person for being evil. Our concern may not be so much to cure the evil as to control it to prevent it from affecting

us. When we tell evil people how evil they are, it makes them feel guiltier, but does not help them in a practical way with taking responsibility for their lives. Rather than encouraging them to be honest, our negative judgments about them encourage them to hide the evil from a feeling of shame.

The therapeutic atmosphere does include care, concern, confrontation, honesty, and acceptance; the therapeutic atmosphere does not include sympathy, pity, moralizing, accusation, condemnation, punitiveness, or rejection (Maxwell, 1986, p. 180).

Disease Approach	Blame Approach
Acceptance	Rejection
Healing	Controlling
Caring	Judgmentalism
Responsibility	Guilt
Honesty	Shame

Judgment and Judgmentalism

In our daily life we constantly need to be making judgments. We must decide how we will spend our time, energy and money and in the process we will determine that certain people and things are more valuable to us than others. This judgment is especially important in human interactions, where appearances can be most deceiving. It takes careful judgment to distinguish “rescuing” from a genuinely caring act, or to distinguish self-esteem from egotism. Any professional who wants to help others heal will need every ounce of his judgment to make the correct diagnosis.

This use of judgment is not at all the same as *judgmentalism*. The doctor uses judgment for *diagnosis*, to determine the course of action most likely to lead to healing. A *judgmental* person uses judgment (or even lack of it) to *condemn* people. It is the difference between making outward judgments about a persons behavior or apparent motivation and making inward, spiritual judgments about a persons intentions and relative worth as a human being. It’s the difference between saying, “You have an illness,” and saying, “You want to be evil.”

How Do We Heal?

Doctors have known many things that can help cure physical diseases. Presumably, ministers have known many things that can cure spiritual diseases. However, when the patient was an alcoholic, doctors and ministers were both pretty much unsuccessful before the advent of Alcoholics Anonymous. Where some ministers were trying to treat alcoholism with faith or moralism, and some doctors with medicines, AA had a different approach that involves essentially two key ideas. One is that only God has power over the disease. The other is that a person must be willing, with Gods help, to remove evils from his life. This type of therapy is now used in thousands of twelve step groups, as well as hospitals and treatment centers around the world. The main reason it has become so widespread is because it seems to work better than anything else, This gives us a great deal of empirical evidence that repentance and acknowledgment of Gods power are central issues in healing.

Spiritual diseases can only be healed by the Lord, in fact, by looking to His Divine omnipotence, and through repentance of life (AE 815.5).

Chapter 8: THE TWELVE STEPS AND RELIGION

Twelve Step programs are not “religion,” but they are spiritual programs. What relationship should they have with the New Church?

Are The Twelve Steps a Religion?

Most twelve step organizations say that their program is not religion, but a spiritual program. Religion often implies a commitment to some dogma, organization or ritual, while spirituality can be a part of anyone’s life, religious or not. Twelve-steppers may be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, Buddhist, Taoist, agnostic or atheist. The focus is on God *as we understand Him*, and that is different for each person. For many people their “Higher Power” is the members of their recovery group. Some define God in very inclusive (and consequently vague) terms: “Spirituality is ones relationship with the unexplainable, ineffable, the vastness and power of the universe. Some of us call this entity God; others do not. (Friel & Friel, *Adult Children*, 1988, p.186).

For Swedenborgians, the distinction between spirituality and religion must be carefully examined, because Swedenborg uses the word *religio* in a different way than many people in our society use the word “religion.” Although twelve step programs are quite different from most religions we are familiar with, they are in some ways similar, and they come very close to the definition of religion given in the Writings.

Freedom

One reason twelve step programs do not qualify as religion, is that they allow their members more freedom than religions do. Often the description of any religion will include specific dogmas to believe, rituals to perform, rules to obey, and organizations join. For example, a faithful Catholic is expected to go to confession, attend mass, believe in the vicarious atonement, be a baptized member of the church, and say his “Hail Mary s. Some religions give their members very detailed rules about food, clothing, social life, beliefs, finances, etc.

Twelve step programs do not have these limitations. A person may call himself a member of AA, for example, but AA is not very religious about induction ceremonies, membership dues or attendance records. Again, AA tends to promote certain beliefs, even religious beliefs, but not in a religious way. Instead of telling people what to believe, they say, “Here are some ideas that have worked for us. Take what you can use and leave the rest.” There are suggestions, but no rules. There is faith, but no dogma. There are members, but no membership requirements.

Inclusiveness

Another reason why twelve step programs do not qualify as a religion is that they are inclusive. Usually religions tend to be rather exclusive. The rituals, dogmas, rules and organizational goals of one religion are often more or less in conflict with other religions, so that a person is not likely to be both a Catholic and a Jew, or both a Muslim and a Baptist.

Twelve step programs, on the other hand, go to great lengths to include everybody The Tenth Tradition of AA states that “The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one,” even to the point of having no official views on any controversial issues, “particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion.” (AA, Third Ed., p. 567.) There should be no problem with being both a

member of a twelve step program and a committed Mormon, Buddhist, Taoist, or Episcopalian. When a group talks about God in such a way as to make atheists feel included, it is not acting much like a religion.

A Different Kind Of Religion

Twelve step programs do have the counterparts of ritual, dogma, rules, and organization. Someone says, "I'm John. I'm an alcoholic," and everyone replies, "Hi, John." This is as much a ritual in some AA meetings as crossing oneself is in a Catholic church. One difference is that it is more inclusive: a person who may have difficulty with the idea of crossing himself probably won't have a problem with saying, "Hi, John." The twelve steps themselves are rules which for many people are more religiously observed than the Jews' avoidance of pork or the Mormons' tithing. The difference is that the twelve steps are entirely self-imposed. Actually they are not stated as rules, but as descriptions of what worked for some people. It is not the absence of ritual and rules, but freedom and inclusivity surrounding them, that sets the twelve step programs apart from most religions.

On a deeper level, religion has little to do with ritual, dogma, organization and rules. It is rather a matter of one's relationship with God, one's relationship with other people, a matter of shunning evils as sins and being of use to society. If we describe religion this way, we can see that the twelve steps do embody a religion, and in fact a better example of religion than many which wear the label proudly.

Relationship With God

In the New Church the central teaching is that God is Man. It is the idea of the Divine Human that makes possible man's relationship with God (see TCR 787). The twelve-step program seems to approach this idea of God from a different angle. Very little is directly said about God's nature. The emphasis is instead on building a relationship with God. We especially see this in the eleventh step: (We) sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. Other steps mention believing in God as a Power higher than ourselves, turning our lives over to His care, admitting our wrongs to Him and asking Him for help.

At first glance, I thought that these references to God said nothing specific about God. I later noticed that they either implied or assumed a number of important ideas about God.

There is a God.

We are not gods.

There is one God.

God cares about people.

God has a purpose for us.

God cares about people, even when they cannot manage their lives.

We can have conscious contact with God.

We can communicate with Him through prayer and meditation.

We can communicate with Him in somewhat the same way we would communicate with other people (e.g., "Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being...")-

We can communicate with God from humility.

We can approach God only through our understanding of Him.

God can remove our evils.

God will remove our evils if we ask Him.

We must act as if of ourselves in order to receive God's influence.

God will not condemn Or ignore people for having the wrong beliefs.

The most important part of our relationship with God is living according to His will.

Living according to His will is more important than any specific beliefs we may have about Him.

Certainly there are many groups that will not draw the same implications from the twelve steps that I have here. There is room for many different kinds of understanding in these organizations. None of these ideas are forced on anyone, but most if not all are encouraged. They are the soul of the twelve-step movement. Are the twelve steps religion? It depends on our definition of religion.

Shunning Evils

Many people have noticed the parallel between the doctrine of repentance found in the Writings and the twelve steps.

For example, consider the four steps of repentance mentioned True Christian Religion 528-530:

Real repentance is:

1. examining oneself
2. recognizing and acknowledging ones sins
3. praying to the Lord
4. starting a new life

Similar steps are mentioned in The New Jerusalem and Its Heavenly Doctrine, 160-63:

A person who wants to be saved must confess his sins, and do the work of repentance. To confess sins is:

1. to know evils
2. to see them in one's self
3. to acknowledge them
4. to make ones self responsible, and to condemn ones self on account of them.

When this is done before God, it is confession of sins. To do the work of repentance is:

5. to pray for removal of evils
6. to desist from sins
7. to live a new life according to the precepts of charity and faith.

Compare these with some of the twelve steps:

1. We admitted we were powerless...that our lives had become unmanageable.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening...we tried...to practice the principles in all our affairs.

The twelve steps do not mention evil or sin. Instead we find words like “unmanageable,” “wrongs,” “harmed,” “defects of character,” and “shortcomings.” This vocabulary softens the judgmental tone so often associated with evil and sin. The vocabulary is different, but the subject is the same. Duse the word evil in the following list because that is what we are used to in the Writings. Twelve Step programs encourage a number of ideas about repentance (again, often by implication or assumption):

- We are powerless over evil on our own.*
- Evil will destroy us if we do not overcome it.*
- God can remove our evils, and will if we ask him.*
- Overcoming evil is a step by step process.*
- If is an ongoing, daily process.*
- We must make an effort as if of ourselves to overcome evil.*
- We must recognize our need for Gods help.*
- We must examine ourselves to discover our evils.*
- We must confess our evils to God.*
- We must pray for help in overcoming evil.*

These ideas that are either implicit or explicit in the twelve steps illustrate the fact that twelve step programs promote some rather specific ideas about subject of overcoming evils.

Relationship With Others and Use

Twelve step groups encourage people to improve their relationships with one another in several ways. First, members are taught to make amends to people they have wronged (steps 8 and 9). This helps rebuild relationships that have been damaged by irresponsible or compulsive behavior.

Second, members are encouraged to help others who have the same problem, and to practice the principles in all their affairs (step 12). As a result, the primary focus of the group becomes its use to society. The fifth of the Twelve Traditions of AA states, “Each alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity *having but one primary purpose*—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

Third, the group itself provides an environment where people can learn to relate to each other in healthy ways. Attending a twelve-step group is not itself one of the twelve steps, but regular attendance is strongly encouraged. The twelve steps are written in a plural form. “We admitted...” An important part of the twelve steps is that *alcoholics* (or codependents, drug addicts, child abusers, perfectionists, workaholics, etc....) *are working together* towards recovery. I doubt whether the twelve steps would be very effective without the power of the group process.

Through this focus on relationships with others, the twelve step programs teach love for the neighbor. Dr. Bob, co-founder of AA Said in his last talk that the Twelve Steps “when simmered

down...resolve themselves into the words love and service. (*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*, AA World Services, 1980, p. 77). Is this religion? It depends on how you define religion.

The Essentials of the Church

When we compare twelve step programs to the New Church, we may notice some important things missing from the twelve step programs. (We may also notice some important things missing from the New Church, but that is not the subject here.) AA has no teaching about the *Divine Human*, no doctrine about *life after death*, no *Divine Revelation*.

The Divine Human

On an individual level, many twelve steppers look to Jesus Christ as their Higher Power. As a group, twelve-step organizations do not endorse a belief in Christ or any other specific religion. If we classify the twelve step movement as a religion, we can't really call it Christian, although it certainly comes from a Christian tradition and is more Christian in the true sense than many nominally Christian organizations.

The concept of God promoted in twelve step organizations is that there is one God who is loving and wise and who has power to heal. Just as important, these organizations encourage their members to have a personal relationship with God. This approach to God opens people's minds to thinking of God in a human way.

The Word

Of course, twelve step programs do not have their own Divine Revelation, as many religions have. The Bible was an important part of the early AA groups. In fact, one of the names that was considered for the group was "The James Club," after the book of James, which was a favorite because of its emphasis on works. The Bible is still an important part of many twelve steppers' personal programs. Nevertheless, it does not have an official status in the twelve step programs.

The book *Alcoholics Anonymous* comes close to being a Bible for many people in AA, and some people consider it, or especially the twelve steps, to be in some way divinely inspired. Other twelve step programs have their own books that serve the same function. It is not that these books are considered to be inerrant or verbally inspired, as some people view the Bible, but rather that people use these books as guides for daily living and for establishing and maintaining a relationship with God. These books also serve as organizational charters, in much the same way the Word serves as a constitution for the General Church.

Freedom and inclusivity apply here. No one is asked to believe in the twelve steps or accept any position in regard to them. People are free to use them in any way they wish. Likewise, no one is rejected for taking a position in regard to other divine revelations. People are included whether they believe in the Bible, the Koran, or the Upanishads.

Life After Death

Twelve step programs do not promote any particular belief in life after death; in this respect they are not like most religions. On the other hand, many people who are hopeless about the future find hope in these programs, and generally the future they find includes an ongoing relationship with God. Many twelve steppers can say, "I was dead, and am alive again." In other words, al-

though twelve-step programs say nothing about life after death, they focus a great deal on salvation.

The Essentials of Religion

Although twelve step programs present God in more or less a Human manner, encourage the reading of religious books, and have something analogous to teachings about salvation, they certainly do not adhere to the essentials of the *New Church*, the first of which is recognition of Jesus Christ as the One God. Still, they do adhere very much to the essentials of *religion*.

Of the Lord's Divine Providence every nation has some religion, and primary in every religion is the acknowledgement that God is, else it is not called a religion. Every nation that lives its religion, that is, does not do evil because this is contrary to its God, receives something spiritual in its natural life. Who on hearing a Gentile say he will not do this or that evil because it is contrary to his God, does not say to himself, "Is this person not saved? It seems it cannot be otherwise." Sound reason tells him this (DP 322.4).

Since many Christians, if not all, have faith that the church is common to many—it is in fact called a communion—there must be some very widely shared things of the church that enter all religions and that constitute this communion. These most widely shared factors are *acknowledgement of God and good of life (DP 325.2)*

To acknowledge God and to refrain from evil because it is contrary to God are the two acts that make religion to be religion.... The Lord has provided that there should be some religion almost everywhere and that these two elements should be in it, and has also provided that everyone who acknowledges God and refrains from doing evil because it is against God shall have a place in heaven (DP 326, cf. 340).

Based on this description of religion, we can say that the twelve-step movement is religion, and that anyone who lives by its principles will be saved. At the same time we can recognize that in other respects (e.g., dogma, ritual, priesthood) it is not a religion, and has good reason not to be labeled as such.

The Twelve Steps and The New Church

If the twelve step movement is a religion, but is not New Church, then what should be the relationship between the two? Should we as ministers support it? Ignore it? Let people know that we have something better? Start our own twelve step programs?

I don't know of a simple answer, but I do think our relationship can be based on certain assumptions from the Writings. The Lord's church exists throughout the world, yet it exists in a special way where the Word is and the Lord is known. The special church in relation to the universal church is like the heart and the lungs within the body (HD 244-246). Obviously, a body cannot be all heart and lungs. Other organs are needed.

It has been provided by the Lord that *everyone who acknowledges God and does not do evil because it is against God, should have a place in heaven*. For heaven in the complex represents one Person, whose life or soul is the Lord; In that heavenly Person are all things which are in a natural person, with a difference such as there is between heavenly and natural things. It is known that in a person there are not only organized forms from the blood-vessels and the nervous fibers, which are called viscera, but also skins, membranes, tendons, cartilages, bones, nails, and teeth... *The heavenly Person which is heaven, in order that all these things may be in him, cannot be composed of people of a single religion, but of people of many religions; therefore all who make those two universal principles of the church to be of their life, have a place in that heavenly Person, that is, in heaven, and enjoy happiness in their degree (DP 326).*

The relationship between the New Church and another religion ought to be like the relationship between the heart or lungs and another organ of the body. Only the Lord can see what place each person and each religion has in the Grand Man. Lets assume that the twelve step movement

Hereditary Evil	Codependency/Addiction
Hereditary evil is a tendency or inclination towards evil, not actual evil.	Codependency and addiction are not inherited, but a predisposition or susceptibility to them is inherited.
It only has an actual effect to the extent that the person acts on the evil and makes it his own.	For example, a person who is predisposed to alcoholism does not actually become an alcoholic until after he begins drinking.
Hereditary evil is from ones recent ancestors (not from Adam).	Codependency is passed down from one's family of origin.
Hereditary evil consists of habits that have become second nature, and are passed from parent to child.	Codependency consists of patterns of behavior or unwritten rules acquired in childhood.
Hereditary evil is tied to the love of dominion for the sake of self.	Codependency is tied to the need to control other people.
Hereditary evil is broken only through repentance and regeneration.	Twelve step programs are the best treatment for codependency/addiction.
Hereditary evils involve evil delights.	Addiction gives a high, a feeling of power.

serves the function of the liver in the Grand Man. It would be a mistake for the heart to say to the liver, "I don't need you," or "It would be better if you were more like the heart and lungs." The two organs should work together and communicate, yet each should be distinct from the other. Likewise, between the New Church and twelve step programs, there should be a willingness to share ideas, to work together on the process of healing relationships, while at the same time there should be a willingness to simply let twelve step programs be twelve step programs and the New Church be the New Church. In other words, our relationship with other religions, like any healthy relationship, should involve both intimacy and autonomy.

[People who are out of the church, yet acknowledge one God, and live according to their religion in a kind of charity towards the neighbor, are in communion with those who are of the church \(AC 10765\).](#)

Chapter 9: CONTROL AND SURRENDER

All evil is addicting. Overcoming it requires that we recognize our powerlessness and allow the Lord to control it.

The Need for Control

Evil is destructive. It hurts people. There is no doubt that it needs to be controlled. When addiction strikes a family, it may leave in its wake physical disability insanity, adultery divorce, brutality death, broken dreams, confusion, mistrust. . . When an individual becomes addicted, he gradually eventually can lose everything that he values. His family his friends, his job, his home, his self-respect.

Sometimes addictions are very subtle. A person may go for years and years without even realizing that he has lost control over some part of his life. His family, his work and his self-respect are damaged, but that damage is attributed to other causes-pressure at work, incompatibility at home, faults in other people. The addiction is so well hidden, or the denim is so great, that the person does not even know it is there. Still the addiction does its work. His preoccupation with digs, television, pornography, or another person prevents him from resolving critical conflicts in his marriage or other relationships, closes him off from other people emotionally, stops him from completing important tasks at work and at home.

As the disorder gradually spreads itself through various parts of the person's life, there is more and more need to get those parts of his life under control. The person's whole life may be focused around getting things under control. His marriage is not working, so he has to control it. His children are acting out, so he has to control them. His job is becoming unmanageable, so he has to get it under control.

An addiction is not easily controlled. By definition, it is a loss of control. When people are chemically addicted, "Their urge to get the chemical back into their system is frequently as overwhelming and as primary as our urge for oxygen" (Maxwell, 1986, p. 24). You can't just decide to stop breathing.

The hallmark of addiction is loss of control. Chemically dependent persons lose the ability to *consistently* predict what their chemical use will be like. They can often reduce the amount they consume, but can't keep it reduced. They can often stop using chemicals, but can't stay stopped. They can occasionally put their intentions about using into action, but not consistently. Eventually virtually *every* decision they make will be based upon how it will affect their chemical use. No amount of control will dominate their compulsion. No amount of reason will penetrate their obsessive thinking. Control is lost. Free will is lost. Dank or sober, drugged or clean, addiction becomes the dominating force of the person's *whole* life (Maxwell, 1986, p.28).

Meanwhile the people around him are feeling the effects of a life that is either subtly or blatantly out of control. They sense that things are not right, or they see their lives falling apart. They need to help the addict-help him see what is happening, help him get control, help him stop the addiction, help him survive. And they have to survive themselves. They have to stop the abuse and anger and neglect and shame of living with an addict. As the dependency and codependency progress, the need for control increases. The codependent becomes more and more controlling.

People say codependents are controllers.

We nag; lecture; scream; holler; cry; beg; bribe; coerce; hover over; protect; accuse; chase after; run away from; try to talk into; try to talk out of; attempt to induce guilt in; seduce; entrap; check on; demonstrate

how much we've been hurt; hurt people in return so they'll know how it feels; threaten to hurt ourselves; whip power plays on; deliver ultimatums to; do things for; refuse to do things for; stomp out on; get even with; whine; vent fury on; act helpless; suffer in loud silence; try to please; lie; do sneaky little things; do sneaky big things; clutch at our hearts and threaten to die; grab our heads and threaten to go crazy; beat on our chests and threaten to kill; enlist the aid of supporters; gauge our words carefully; sleep with, refuse to sleep with; have children with; bargain with; drag to counseling; drag out of counseling; talk mean about; talk mean to; insult; condemn; pray for miracles; pay for miracles; go to places we don't want to go; stay nearby; supervise; dictate; command; complain; write letters about; write letters to; stay home and wait for; go out and look for; call all over looking for; drive down dark alleys at night hoping to see; chase down dark alleys at night hoping to catch; run down alleys at night to get away from; bring home; keep home; lock out; move away from; move with; scold; impress upon; advise, teach lessons to; set straight; insist; give into; placate; provoke; try to make jealous; try to make afraid; remind; inquire; hint; look through pockets; peek in wallets; search dresser drawers; dig through glove boxes; look in the toilet tank; try to look into the future; search through the past; call relatives about; reason with; settle issues once and for all; settle them again; punish; reward; almost give up on; then try even harder; and a list of other handy maneuvers I've either forgotten or haven't tried yet.

We aren't the people who "make things happen. Codependents are the people who consistently, and with a great deal of effort and energy, try to force things to happen.

We control 'm the name of love.

We do it because we're "only trying to help.

We do it because we know best how things should go and how people should behave.

We do it because we're right and they're wrong.

We control because we're afraid not to do it.

We do it because we don't know what else to do.

We do it to stop the pain.

We control because we think we have to.

We control because we don't think.

We control because controlling is all we can think about.

Ultimately we may control because that's the way we've always done things.

Tyrannical and dominating, some rule with an iron hand from a self-appointed throne. They are powerful, They know best. And by God, it will be done this way. They will see to it.

Others do their dirty work undercover. They hide behind a costume of sweetness and niceties, and secretly go about their business—*other people's business*.

Others, sighing and crying, claim inability, proclaim their dependence, announce their overall victimization, and successfully control through weakness. They are so helpless. They need your cooperation so badly. They can't live without it. Sometimes the weak are the most powerful manipulators and controllers. They have learned to tug at the guilt and pity strings of the world (Beattie, 1987, p. 69-71).

This need for control comes from an inward feeling of being out of control. It is a response to the feeling that one's whole life and family is controlled by the addiction.

Codependents appear to be depended upon, but they are dependent. They look strong, but feel helpless. They appear controlling but in reality are controlled themselves (Beattie, 1987, p. 46).

Where there is control, one is a slave; and the one who has control is also a slave because he is led as a slave by the craving for having control (HH 380).

Control and Reason

How do we bring sanity into this kind of situation? For most people the most obvious answer to lack of control is to bring more control into the situation. Preferably self-control. So they reason

with the addict, in an effort to get him to control himself. When that fails, they attempt to bring control in other ways, by nagging, pleading, threatening.

The major mistake that families and virtually everyone else makes is to assume that... [addicts] have control over their use—that they have a choice. (Maxwell, p. 28)

Control and reason are the missing ingredients. Everyone, and I mean everyone, automatically assumes the solution lies in the realm of supplying these missing ingredients. *Every co-dependent attempts to control the uncontrollable and reason with the unreasonable; in turn every co-dependent is destined to fail. Lack of control and reason are definitely the problem, but neither control nor reason is the solution.* (Maxwell, p. 98)

Can Evil Be Controlled?

When we talk about evil, it is often in the context of free choice. We believe that evil was originally the result of mankind's free will, and we believe that to overcome an evil a person must compel himself not to do the evil.

When we consider the possibility that evil is uncontrollable, we may reject such an attitude as being fatalistic. Certainly a person should not simply resign himself to being evil. Nor should he slacken his effort, hang down his hands, and wait for a miracle from God. Reason and common sense tell us that evil should and must be controlled. Moreover, it is frightening to consider the possibility that evil is uncontrollable. It means admitting that we are helpless and the situation hopeless. It means giving up one's dreams and feeling cornered and cheated and not knowing what to do. This is hard enough by itself; often it is made harder by our society's lack of acceptance of people who are not in control of their lives. There is no safe place to be helpless, hopeless and uncontrolled.

Unfortunately, evil is difficult or impossible to control. When a person attempts to control evil, he is attempting to control hell. No one has the power to do this except due Lord. No one can control evil on his own. It can only be done from the Lords power.

Before anyone has been regenerated he cannot possibly know...that he is unable by his own power to resist any evil or falsity. Indeed he does not know that evil spirits are activating and implanting the evils and falsities, still less that he is in communication with hell by means of evil spirits and that hell presses on him like the sea against every part of a dike, which he can by no means resist by his own strength. Yet because he cannot do otherwise, until he has been regenerated, than imagine that he resists by his own strength, this too is permitted; and in this condition he is admitted into conflicts or temptations (AC 1661.3).

Evil As An Addiction

The loss of control that takes place with chemical addiction is well known. It is not so well known that any kind of disorder can lead to a similar loss of control. When people get involved in any kind of evil, they can get addicted to the evil and be *unable to control it even if they want to*.

It is known to those who have been in temptations and combats, that they perceive in themselves what is discordant, but *so long as the combat lasts they are not able to get away from it, but still they desire to do so*, sometimes to the extent of being angry with what is evil, and wanting to expel it. (AC 1580)

It is obvious that if the evils in the external man are not removed the cravings and their delights grow and abound. The more a thief steals the more lust he has for stealing till at last he cannot stop; So with the defrauder the more he cheats. *It is the same with hatred and revenge, with luxury and intemperance, with fornication, and with blasphemy.* It is known that the love of controlling, from the love of self, grows in proportion as it is uncurbed; just so the love of possession, from the love of the world; it seems as if they had no limit or end. (DP 112.3)

It is known that a thief *feels such delight in thefts that he cannot desist*; and, amazingly, he has more love for one stolen coin than for ten that are given him. It would be the same with adulteries, if it had not been provided that that evil should be attended with a loss of potency according to the abuse. (DP 296.4)

When a person first from consent, then from purpose, and at last because it feels good, throws himself into evil, then a hell is opened which is in such evil... When a person comes into evil in this way, *it clings to him*; for the hell in the sphere of which he then is, is in its very delight when in its evil; therefore *it does not desist, but obstinately presses in, and causes the person to think about that evil, at first occasionally, and afterward as often as anything presents itself which is related to it, and at last becomes the thing which completely controls him*. And when this takes place, he then seeks for such things as confirm that it is not an evil, and this until he wholly persuades himself; and then so far as he can, he seeks to remove outward bonds, and makes evils allowable and clever, and at last even admirable and respectable—such as adulteries, thefts done by art and deceit, various kinds of arrogance and boasting, contempt for others, verbal abuse, persecution under an appearance of justice, and the like. The case with these evils is like that with downright thefts, which *when committed of set purpose two or three times cannot be desisted from; for they continually cling to the person's thought*. (AC 6203e)

A person cannot possibly resist the delight of adultery, except from the Lord; for they act into the hereditary life, within the thought, so that the person cannot possibly notice it. (De Conj. 81)

Not All Get Addicted

Frequently our experience may indicate that many evils are not addictive. There are people who lie, steal, commit adultery get revenge and use profanity who do not seem to have lost control. In many cases it appears that people deliberately choose to do these things, and that they can (and often do) easily choose to desist. Many of us have had the experience of doing some of these things and then later regretting it and choosing not to do them again. One reason for this experience is that most addictions affect different people in different ways. Some drugs are highly addictive and will cause addiction in almost everyone who uses them. Others, like alcohol, cause addiction in relatively fewer people. Most people can drink or get drunk without getting addicted. Many people can *abuse* alcohol without becoming *addicted* to it.

Another reason why some people lose control while others do not is that addiction is a progressive disease. A person may be able to control the addictive agent or behavior at first, but as time goes on it gains more and more power over him.

Heredity and Addiction

Yet another reason for the differences in people's ability to control addictive behaviors is heredity. Some people are born with predispositions to alcoholism; others have a heredity that makes alcoholism very unlikely. The Writings seem to imply that the same is true for evils in general. Specific evils are strongly present in some families and not in others. The evils to which a person is inclined depend greatly on the person's family history.

Hereditary evil, my friend, is derived solely from a person's parents, not indeed the evil which he actually commits, but the inclination to it . . . Every one knows that children are born with a general resemblance to their parents in face, manners and disposition; and even grandchildren and great-grandchildren with a resemblance to grandparents and great-n-and parents. . . . A person is not born into evils themselves but only in to an inclination to them, yet with a greater or less bias to particular evils. (TCR 521)

Everyone who by his own actions commits sin consequently acquires a certain disposition, and the evil arising from it is implanted in his children and becomes hereditary. Thus what a person inherits from either parent, from his grandfather, great-grandfather, great-great-grandfather, and so on back, accordingly multiplies and increases in his descendants, and remains with each one. And with each one it is increased further still by the sins of his own doing. Nor is hereditary evil dispersed and rendered harmless except with people who are being regenerated by the Lord. This anyone can recognize, if he has paid the matter any attention at all,

from the fact that *the evil inclinations of parents are so noticeable in children that one family, indeed one generation, can be distinguished from another by means of it.* (AC 313; see also 34693)

Every family has some characteristic evil or good by which it is distinguished from other families; and this that is from parents and ancestors is well known. (AC 4317)

It used to be thought that codependency was the result of living as an adult with a chemically dependent person. In recent years researchers in codependency have learned that most people who are codependent as adults grew up in dysfunctional families. The fact that they have somehow paired up with addicts as adults is as much a result of their codependency as it is a cause for it. It appears that it is a generational disease. The dysfunctional patterns of behavior are passed from parents to children, from one generation to the next.

There is some disagreement about how these patterns are passed from one generation to the next. In the case of addiction (especially alcoholism, which has been more thoroughly studied) it is fairly clear that the predisposition towards addiction is passed on both genetically, and psychologically through the childhood emotional environment.

The issue of whether certain traits are inherited or environmentally induced is clouded by a number of assumptions that have colored our society's view of heredity. One assumption is that acquired traits cannot be transmitted hereditarily. This assumption has been widely taught even though it is founded on scant evidence. It has led people to believe that traits are *either* inherited *or* acquired, but not both. It then becomes an issue to decide whether "nature or nurture" is the key factor, when actually in almost all cases both are too closely connected to separate.

Another assumption is that hereditary evil does not exist if it does not appear. Children in dysfunctional families frequently develop their denial systems between the ages of six and nine. On this basis it is assumed that denial is an acquired, learned behavior without a hereditary basis since it did not appear earlier.

We know from the Writings that patterns of behavior are passed from one generation to the next both hereditarily and environmentally. Actual evil is not inherited, but only tendencies toward evil. Those tendencies cannot become active until there is some knowledge or experience of evil into which they can act. The implantation of remains can provide a counterbalancing effect that is greater with some than with others. Consequently heredity and environment combine to influence a child's patterns of behavior. Nature and nurture are intimately intertwined in producing the psychological tendencies of the human mind.

More important than *how* these traits are passed from parent to child is the fact that they *are* passed on. And when we compare the nature of codependency and addiction with the nature of hereditary evil (as described in the Writings), we find that the two look a lot alike:

From the similarities between hereditary evil and codependency, one could easily conclude that dependency and codependency are forms of hereditary evil. At times I am almost convinced that codependency is simply a clinical description of the hereditary love of dominion. At other times I doubt whether it is possible to describe behaviorally a love that is so adept at hiding itself behind sane externals.

The Need for Recovery

There is among some professionals in the field of codependency a belief that everyone needs to go through some recovery process (such as a twelve step program) because everyone is to some degree dysfunctional.

[N]early all untreated or untrained people in the general population are to some degree co-alcoholic, even though they are not now, or have not been in the past, closely related to or associated with an alcoholic (Whitfield, in *Codependency*, 1984).

In looking at the emotional health or lack of health in a family system, we suspect that families are probably normally distributed just like most other traits in nature and in psychology specifically. The majority of us, approximately 2/3, fall in the average range, with an average amount of health and an average amount of dysfunction. This means that the majority of us have our cups filled up partially, but by no means fully. This also means that the majority of us have some clear-cut dysfunction to work on, and some clear-cut addictive or other symptoms that plague us (Friel & Friel, p. 73).

Given our definition, is it not true that almost everyone is codependent? It is not true that almost everyone had some form of dysfunction in their childhood that could lead to codependent symptoms? And if everyone has "it", does it not lose its conceptual and diagnostic meaning? We think not, for the same reasons that "depression" has not lost its meaning despite the fact that everyone had "it" sometimes.... [We] look at length and severity of symptoms, as well as total number of symptoms, before we make a definite diagnosis. The same should be true with co-dependency (Friel & Friel, 161).

Codependency is widespread, and it is possible to find some symptoms of codependency in almost anyone. Some people seem to have the attitude that everyone needs to be in a twelve-step program, and that anyone who is not in recovery is sick. Sometimes people in recovery can have a "healthier than thou" attitude that can be a little annoying (especially to people who are in denial). On the other hand, the need for everyone to recover from codependency is conceptually very similar to what the Writings say about the need for everyone to repent. Everyone has hereditary evil (though some have more than others)—it affects our whole society.

The only way to recover from the effects of hereditary evil is through repentance (a process similar to the twelve steps). If you aren't repenting, you are spiritually dysfunctional.

The inclination and propensity to evils transmitted by parents to their children and posterity, *can only be broken by a new birth from the Lord*, which is called regeneration. Without this, that inclination *not only remains uninterrupted, but acquires new strength* as parents succeed parents, becoming more prone to evils, till at length it is a general inclination to evils of every kind. (TCR 521)

The reason no one can come into the kingdom of God unless he has been born again, is that a person hereditarily from his parents is born into evils of every kind. (DP 83)

The love of honor, command, and supereminence is the last state of the church.. . At this day *almost everyone*, when he comes into the spiritual world, bears with him from the natural world that he wants to be honored, to exercise command. (AE 101 .2)

As 'm the Christian world, there universally reigns the love of commanding, and the love of riches; and these loves are at this day so deeply inrooted that it is not known that they ever seduce, it is important that their quality should be taught. *They seduce every person who does not shun evils because they are sins*; for he who does not shun evils does not fear God, and therefore remains natural. And as the loves proper to the natural man are the love of commanding and the love of riches, he therefore does not see with interior acknowledgment the name of these loves in himself. (AE 1189.3)

Hereditary evil is not altered except by a life of faith and charity from the Lord. (AC 8550)

This inherited nature is broken and becomes mild with parents who shun adulteries as hellish. (AE 1002.3)

The Root of Addiction

In chemical addictions there is a good feeling associated with use of the chemical that reinforces its control over the person. People drink and take drugs because these things can change their moods in an almost magical way. This is true of any evil. There is a delight associated with evil that is felt more and more powerfully as the evil progresses. One of the reasons this good feeling is so powerful is that it gives the addict the illusion of being in control. A person who is riddled with unwelcome feelings of guilt, despair or anxiety may find that with drugs or other external means of altering his mood he can control his feelings, his shame, his world.

Underneath every addiction is a need to be in control. One of the most powerful aspects of drugs is the illusion they give a person of being powerful, insightful, free of pain, 'in control. For a person who is living with an addict, the symptoms of codependency serve a similar purpose. Not talking, not trusting, not feeling, and all the other symptoms of codependency help maintain the illusion that things are in control.

While [our symptoms] serve to give us the illusion that we are in control, they are in fact clear indicators that what we have really done is to give up healthy control of our lives to something outside of ourselves. By becoming trapped in an addiction or phobia, we actually trade true control over our lives for the illusion of control. It is this illusion of control that makes giving up our symptoms so frightening. (Friel & Friel, p. 23).

What is true for addiction is true for every evil. Every evil has delights that reinforce it. At the root of these evil delights is the desire for control, which provides probably the most addictive delight of all.

Every love has its own delights. Even a love of evil has them with those who are in lusts,-as the love of committing adultery, of revenge, of fraud, theft, cruelty; in fact the most wicked, of blaspheming the holy things of the church, and pouring out their venom against God. *The love of controlling from self-love is the fountain-head of these delights.* They are from the cravings that assault the interiors of the mind. From them they flow down into the body, and there excite the unclean things that stimulate the nerves. And so from the mind's delight, according to the cravings, comes delight to the body. (DP 38)

It has been given me to feel of what quality and how great is the delight of the love of controlling from the love of self... It was such as to *surpass all the delights that are in the world.* (AC 215.6)

A person who is in the love of controlling from the love of self, *feels in this love a delight of life which surpasses other delights of every kind.* So everything that belongs to that love he calls good, and all that opposes it he declares to be evil, when yet it is the opposite. (DLW 271)

The love which is the head of all hellish loves, or to which they all relate, is the love of control springing from the love of self. (DLW 41)

The hardest struggle of all is with the love of control from the love of self. A person who subdues this easily subdues the other evil loves, for this is their head. (DP 146)

This love (of dominating from the love of self) also is such that in proportion as the reins are loosed, which is the case so long as what is impossible does not stand in the way, in the same proportion it rushes from step to step even to the highest; and finds no bounds there, but grieves and sighs if there is no higher step. (CL 262)

The need for control is the root of evil and addiction, and therefore overcoming evil depends on destroying this root. This explains why it is often difficult for a person to control his evils and addictions. You cannot remove the love of dominion or the need for control through an effort to be in control. That is only feeding the fire. Rather, the solution lies in giving up entirely the need to be in control. The solution to the need for power lies in powerlessness.

Powerlessness

The best antidote for the need to control is a recognition of one's powerlessness. For an alcoholic, the only way to combat the desire for alcohol is to give up alcohol completely. For a person who is controlled by the desire for power, the only remedy is to give up *power* completely. This is a fundamental paradox in all addictions: *The need for control leads to loss of control, or enslavement. Giving up control leads to control and freedom.*

All the power the angels have comes from recognition of their powerlessness. As soon as they think they can be in control instead of the Lord, they lose control.

In heaven he who believes from the heart that nothing of power is from himself, but that all power is from the Lord, is called the least, and yet is the greatest, because he has power from the Lord. (AC 4459.4, cp. 4932, 5428.2)

The angels are indeed in great power, but no one from himself. In fact, anyone in heaven who believes that he is in power from himself, is deprived of it in a moment. (AE 333)

One angel has more power than millions of hellish spirits; not from himself, but from the Lord; and *he has it...in proportion as he believes that he can do nothing from himself* (AC 341 7e).

The angels have no power whatever from themselves; but *all the power they have is from the Lord; and they are powers in proportion as they acknowledge this*. Whoever of them believes that he has power from himself, instantly becomes so weak, that he cannot resist one evil spirit (HH 230).

This is one of the primary lessons people have to learn in their spiritual struggles. Generally speaking, the struggle with any evil will continue to get worse as long as a person uses self-control to fight it. The struggle ends only when the person comes to a recognition of his own powerlessness.

Take those people who attribute everything to their own prudence [i.e., controls, and little or nothing to Divine Providence. *Even if thousands of reasons are produced to prove that Divine Providence...exists in every least detail...their state of thought regarding their own prudence would remain unaltered... But when the feelings of distress and grief enter into them because they have no power at all that is their own to do anything, and those feelings reach the point of despair, their firm persuasion is broken down and their state altered. In this case they can be brought to a conviction that they have no power that is their own to do anything, and that all power, prudence intelligence and wisdom originate in the Lord.* The same is true of people who believe that their faith is self-derived and their good self-derived. (AC 2694.3).

Self-Compulsion and Abstinence

Of course, there is a need for self-compulsion. An alcoholic needs to compel himself not to take the first drink. A codependent must compel himself not to "help" other people. One of the most important elements of an addict's recovery is abstinence. The person cannot recover as long as he is drunk or high. This is true for any other evil as well. A person who is addicted to adultery cannot recover at the same time as having an affair.

We certainly should not think that it is bad for addicts, codependents and people who are involved in evil to try to get their lives under control. *It's just that self-compulsion, without a sense of powerlessness and acknowledgement of God, simply does not work.* It may work temporarily. It may work superficially. But it does not get to the root of the disorder in the person's life.

The only way to get power over evil is to ask the Lord for help in struggling with it. If a person seeks the power from God to escape from his evil, it is always available.

Every person is such that he can shun evils as of himself by the Lord's power, if he implores it; and that which he does afterwards is ooh from the Lord (Life 31e).

The Lord continually inflows with power into the will so that one can shun evils; and with power into the understanding so that one can think that there is a God; but still no one can do the one unless at the same time he does the other (DP 329).

No one can purify himself from evils by his own power, and by his own forces, and yet it cannot be done without the power and forces of man, as his own (TCR 438).

Many mental health professionals believe that for most people the drug addiction is not the *cause* of the codependency as much as it is a *symptom*. For many people the drug is simply an external medication for the internal pain they feel as a result of their childhood dysfunction. It might seem reasonable to suppose that the best approach to recovery would be first to heal the underlying cause of the addiction, and then deal with addiction itself. In fact, many therapists have in the past tried this approach without a lot of success. Twelve-step programs emphasize the importance of the addict completely refraining from using their drug of choice. The deeper healing that is necessary cannot take place until the person stops getting high. You cannot heal the underlying codependency until the addiction is under control.

The parallel teaching in the Writings is that the evil desires in the internal man (e.g., the love of dominion or codependency) cannot be removed as long as the delights of evil (e.g., externally induced “highs/”) remain in the external man. In order for a person to become spiritual (i.e., healthy) he must remove the delights of evil in the external man (e.g., addictions). Otherwise the addiction and the evil desires behind it just keep growing.

The internal cannot be purified from the lusts of evil as long as evils in the external man are not removed, for these impede.... It is obvious that when evils are not removed in the external man, the lusts with their delights grow and flourish. The more he steals the more a thief lusts to steal until he cannot stop; so with a defrauder, the more he defrauds; it is the same with hatred and vengeance, luxury and intemperance, whoredom and blasphemy. It is notorious that the love of ruling from the love of self increases when left unbridled; so also the love of possessing things from the love of the world; they seem to have no limit or end. Plain it is then that so far as evils are not removed in the external man, lusts for them intensify; also that in the degree that evils are given free rein, the lusts increase (DP 111, 112).

The person who is codependent, that is, who is addicted to a relationship rather than a drug, may find it more difficult to abstain. How do you abstain from *relationships*? Of course you can't, and it wouldn't be healthy to try. But you can abstain from unhealthy *behavior*. Maxwell suggests that one way for a codependent person to do this is through reversals, which means the person does the opposite of what he or she is already doing. For example, if a codependent person is trying to control another person's addiction, it would probably be more helpful to stop controlling it. If the codependent person is trying to reason with the addict, it would probably be more helpful to keep quiet. If the codependent is listening to the addict's reasoning or defenses, it would be more helpful to stop listening. If the codependent is taking care of the addict, it would be better to stop caring for the addict and start caring for one's self. The general rule is, *Whatever you are doing is not working, so try doing the opposite*.

The use of reversals seems to be congruent with the concept of fleeing from evil.

Now as evil and good are two opposites, precisely like hell and heaven, or like the devil and the Lord, it follows that if a person flees from an evil as sin, he comes into the good that is opposite to the evil. . . . Since this good and that evil are opposites, it follows that the latter is removed by the former [i.e., the evil is removed by the good] (Life 70, 71).

In other words, one of the ways we can get healthier is by doing the opposite of what we do when we are sick.

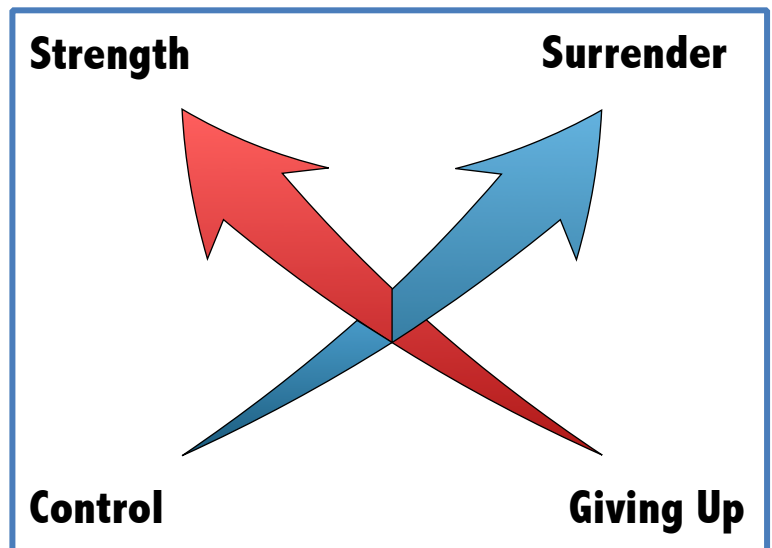
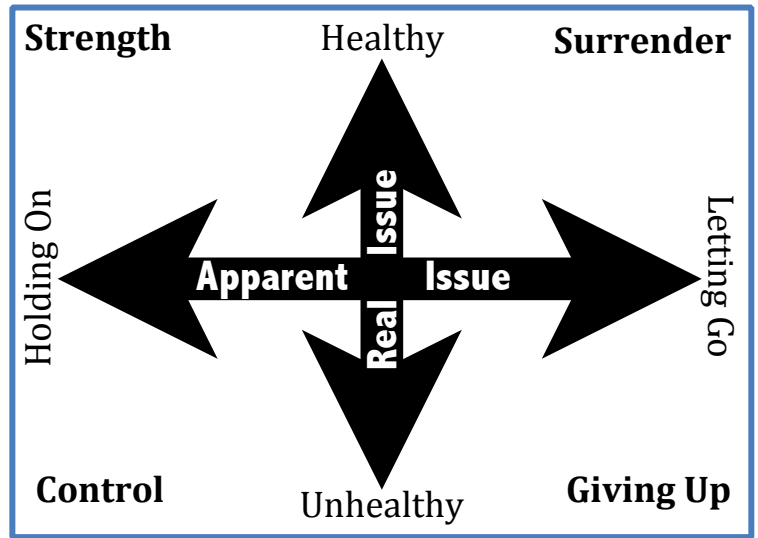
Control vs. Giving Up

It can seem to a person in a dysfunctional family as if there are two options: either try to control the situation, or give up. Probably neither of these is particularly appealing, so the person chooses what seems to be the lesser of two evils at the time. A person who does a lot of controlling may have a hard time with the concept of "Letting go and letting God." The worst thing he can imagine is giving in to the forces that seem to create chaos in his life. What he does not realize is that giving up and surrendering are completely different. Surrender is turning your life over to God. Giving up is turning your life over to the forces of evil. But this difference is not so apparent to someone who is used to being in control and is not sure of the goodness of God's providence.

Though being in control and giving up seem like opposites, they are actually two sides of the same coin.

On the other end of the scale, it is easy to confuse being strong with being in control. A codependent person maintains temporary, external control of his own or others behavior even while there is inward turmoil. The recovering person, on the other hand, is able to control his addiction not by his own external force, but with inner strength from God. This kind of strength comes only with surrender to God.

A person who tries to be strong without surrendering to God will fall into the trap of trying to control people instead. A person who surrenders without at the same seeking God's strength to fight evil, is merely giving up. In order to recover, a person must seek both to be strong and to surrender. It is the only way to rise above the dilemma of giving up vs. control.



Chapter 10: SELF-LOVE AND REGENERATION

Many experts in the field of codependency and mental health advise people to learn to love themselves. How does this fit with the New Church teachings about regeneration?

Every New Church person knows that love of self is often equated with evil in the Writings. We are taught from the time we are very young that we ought to love our neighbor, to do good to others and to be unselfish.

The love of self and the love of the world are in direct opposition to love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor. Therefore the love of self and the love of the world...are hellish loves. They are, indeed the reigning loves in hell, and constitute hell with man (TCR 400.14).

It is not surprising that some people hesitate when they learn that part of their recovery from codependency will be learning to love themselves and to take care of themselves rather than others. It's as if the cure for codependency runs counter to everything their religion has taught them.

Self Love As A Means

One way of understanding the place of self-love is as a means to realizing love for the neighbor. It appears (in light of popular psychology) that you must learn to love yourself before you can love other people, so that love of self is the source of love for others. This is not a contradiction to the teaching in the Writings that love of the neighbor is and ought to be a prior love. Rather it is a confirmation of what the Writings teach.

Understanding this is a simple matter of recognizing that the appearance is different than the reality. The Writings speak according to the reality, and psychology speaks in terms of how things appear to psychologists and self-observant individuals. The process begins with a hidden love for the neighbor, that is an affection for good within the mind which may not be observed. When a person cares for himself (physically, emotionally and spiritually) from this affection, love of self is good. When this happens, love of the neighbor has priority because it is the end or motive behind the love of self. The person is loving himself so that he may be capable of loving his neighbor.

In reality the process starts with the hidden love for the neighbor, but experience tells us that the process starts with love of self, because that first love for the neighbor is unobservable, not experienced. Love for the neighbor does not manifest itself until it has the means to do so, and love of self is one of the means.

End ➡	Cause (means) ➡	Effect
Hidden love for neighbor ➡	Visible love of self ➡	Visible love for neighbor
The Writings start here. ➡	Psychology starts here. ➡	Both see this effect.

For example: A person inwardly wants to have healthy connections with others, but that desire is drowned out by the person's experience of resentment, fear and isolation in his present relationships. So the person learns to detach, take care of his own needs and love himself. Later, as he gains more strength and independence, he is able to get over the resentment and isolation and establish healthy relationships with others.

Love of self can either be healthy or unhealthy. When love of self is the end and love of the neighbor is the means, it is unhealthy. When it is the other way around, it is healthy. Frequently codependents spend a lot of time neglecting their own needs and taking care of others. On the surface this may appear as sacrificial, selfless love. Beneath the surface lies a selfish motivation—the codependent (being unable to take care of himself directly) is seeking to get his own needs met by managing the lives of others. Thus caring for others is the means, but caring for self is the end.

It is a common saying that everyone is his own neighbor; that is, that everyone should first consider himself; but the doctrine of charity teaches how this is to be understood. Everyone should provide for himself lifts necessities, such as food clothing, shelter, and many other things which the state of civil life in which he is necessarily requires, and this not only for himself but also for his own, and not only for the present time, but also for the future; for unless a person procures for himself lifts necessities, he cannot be in a state of exercise charity, for he is in want of all things (HD 97)-

The love of heaven regards spiritual uses; the love of the world regards natural uses, which may be called civil uses; and the love of self regards physical uses, which may be called domestic, performed for ones self and ones own family. These three loves are in every person from creation, and therefore from birth, and they perfect him when kept in their proper order, but destroy him when not so regulated (TCR 394, 395).

When the love of heaven is the head, it descends by influx into the love of the world, which consists chiefly in the love of riches, and by their instrumentality it performs uses. Then by means of this love it descends into the love of self, which is chiefly the love of high position, and by means of this also it performs uses. These three loves, therefore, conspire to promote uses by the influence of the one upon the other (TCR 403).

As the codependent recovers, he learns that it is best to give up responsibility for other peoples lives and take care of himself—then he will be in a position to *genuinely* care for others. Thus love of self becomes the means and love of others the goal.

We can't identify a person's priorities by examining how he spends his me (caring for himself vs. caring for others). Instead we must understand *why* a person does what he does and what eventual goal he is trying to accomplish.

Which self?

To understand self-love, we must know what the self is. A little self-examination or study of doctrine can show us that each of us has a number of "selves." We have a public self and a private self, a higher self and lower self, a conscious self and unconscious self. Before we can answer the question, "Is love of self healthy?" we must ask,

"Which self?"

If we think simply in terms of a good self (influenced by the Lord) and a bad self (turning away from Him), it becomes obvious that it is healthy to love the good self and unhealthy to love the bad self. This can work well as long as our concept of what is good is not muddled up by dysfunctional religion and twisted concepts about God.

Confusion of Terms

Part of the confusion about love of self comes from the fact the phrase can mean entirely different things to different people and in different contexts. Swedenborg uses the term in both positive and negative senses. At times, he is careful to explain which kind of self-love he is talking about.

The two loves from which all goods and truths come forth, are love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor; while the two loves from which all evils and falsities come forth, are the love of self and the love of the world. The latter, *when they predominate*, are utterly opposed to the former (TCR 399.6).

More frequently, love of self is used without a qualifier, and we are expected to understand that the unhealthy kind of self-love is meant. Usually the Writings refer to self-love as a hellish love, one which uses other people for selfish purposes and hates those it cannot control. One of the results of this is that readers of the Writings may come to think of love of self as a negative, evil love.

Psychologists also frequently speak of self-love and self-esteem, and generally they give it a very positive, even central, place in the individuals emotional development. In quoting the Second Great Commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself, they may put the stress on the last two words, saying that you cannot love the neighbor until you love yourself. Self-love is often seen as not only the starting point but the goal of mental health.

This contrast between what psychology says and what the Writings say about self-love has at least two possible explanations. One possibility is that the psychologists are on the wrong track—that they misunderstand the common saying, mat everyone is his own neighbor; that is, that everyone should first consider himself (HD 97).

Another possibility is that the psychologists are using a different definition of self-love, and are consequently talking about a different subject altogether. If this is the case then comparing the two would be like comparing what *Astronomy Today* says about the stars with what *People* magazine says about the stars—they're talking about two entirely different kinds of stars.

I have no doubt that the first explanation is partly the correct. Certainly some psychologists give self-love more credit than it is due, and some seem to connect self-love primarily to worldly ends such as success, power, wealth, influence and physical health. Other psychologists, however, connect self-love with such qualities as having confidence in ones beliefs and values, being in touch with one's feelings, accepting ones limitations, increasing one's usefulness and recognizing ones connection with God. I suspect that these psychologists are speaking of a different kind of self-love.

Psychologists know about unhealthy love of self, but they call it *narcissism* or *egotism*. It is a big part of codependency and addiction.

Unfortunately, not only do chemically dependent persons repeatedly and rigidly use primitive and immature defenses, they also exhibit associated narcissistic or self-centered attitude and behavior traits that are most commonly seen in young children; such as sustained feelings of unwarranted or deluded superiority, a sense of entitlement ("the world owes me"), supersensitivity (to oneself, not others), arrogance, grandiosity, and omnipotence. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous hit the nail right on the head when they refer to their former selves as "his majesty the baby" (Maxwell, 1986, p. 69).

If we want to know what the Writings say about the healthy kind of self-love, we had better not look in *The Swedenborg Concordance* under the heading "love of self," because most of the passages quoted there refer to the first kind of self-love (the self-serving kind). Probably a better place to start would be under the headings "Regeneration" or "Conjunction."

Regeneration and "Conjunction"

Regeneration is a process of changing one's relationships. It involves developing one's relationship with God, and changing the way one relates to others. It also involves changing the way one relates to ones self. In Chapter 6 we noted that the relationships one has with God, with others and with ones self are all tied together and influence each other.

At that point we observed that a persons relationship with himself involves both the connection between will and understanding and the connection between his inner and outer person. Different parts of a person relate to each other almost in the same way that different people relate to each other. The will and understanding relate to each other like husband and wife; the internal and external relate to each other like parent and child. In the same chapter we showed that these inner relationships or “conjunctions,” involve both intimacy and autonomy, just as interpersonal relationships do.

For now, lets consider the relationship between will and understanding. Note that this relationship is (or at least ought to be) a loving relationship. That is, the will and the understanding love each other the way a husband and wife love each other.

Love or the will betroths to itself wisdom or the understanding, and afterwards weds it, that is enters into a kind of marriage with it. Love betroths to itself wisdom by preparing for it a house or bridal chamber, and marries it by conjoining it to itself by affections, and afterwards lives wisely with it in that house (DLW 402).

Love or the will is elevated into heavens warmth, while the understanding is elevated into its light. When both are elevated, a marriage of the two takes place there, which is called a heavenly marriage, because it is a marriage of heavenly love and wisdom; consequently it is said that love also is elevated if it loves wisdom its consort, in that degree (DLW 414).

When love and wisdom start getting connected with each other within a regenerating person, what does this romance feel like to the person? Does it feel as if one part of himself is in love with another part? Is it this marriage love between will and understanding that psychologists identify as self-love? Certainly there is a danger of a person getting inwardly involved in a hellish marriage in which selfish desires are romantically captivated by false ideas. Yet if this negative love of self may appear outwardly similar to the heavenly marriage, don't we have to be careful not to condemn the two of them together?

Inner and Outer

We can say similar things about the internal and external of a person as we have just said about will and understanding. The process of regeneration is in part a uniting of the inward person with the outward person, the spiritual with the natural.

The regenerative process involves the transformation of both the internal and the external of a persons mind. The first step is to establish inwardly the desire and intention to become a spiritual person. When a persons ideals and affections turn him towards loving the Lord and other people, then the inner person is being transformed. What follows is an effort to bring those inward ideals into outward words, actions and habits.

The relationship between the inner spiritual person and the outward natural person is of symbolized in the Word by the relationship between parents and their children. Just as the father is the father of the act, the inner person is the father of the outward person. Examples of this are the relationship between Isaac and his children, and the relationship between Israel and his children. This relationship, like the romance between will and understanding, involves a kind of reciprocity and mutual love between the two parts of the individual.

The process of recovery for a codependent person involves developing a good relationship between the inner, private person and the outward, public person. This relationship might be de-

scribed by a psychologist as self-love, while the Writings would describe it as the regeneration and conjunction of the internal and external person.

Without a healthy, accepting and loving relationship within yourself, there is no room for self-actualization or a clear identity. For the practicing co-dependent there is only a kind of co-dependent pseudo-identity that is based on what you do, who you know, how much you make, where you live, or what religion you are. The co-dependent identity is an identity formed from the outside in, instead of from the inside out. As a result the individual becomes dependent on the outside realities in order to compensate for what is lacking on the inside (Subby, p. 65.).

The epitome of this relationship between the inner and outward person is found in the Lord. The Father and the Son are not two separate People in God, but are two aspects of the same Person. The Father is the Soul, the internal, the Divinity within Jesus, and the Son is the Body, the external, His Humanity. The relationship between the two is such that the Father loves the Son and the Son loves the Father. There is nothing at all selfish in this love, because in uniting the Human and the Divine within Himself the Lord always had as an end the salvation of mankind. Yet, considering that Father and Son are aspects of One Person, there seems to be between them a lend of Divine love of self. (I say this with some hesitation, knowing how fallible are our finite descriptions of God, and how easily we project merely human qualities upon Him.)

Self-love and detachment

An important part of the process of healing from codependency is detachment. Detachment is the process of disentangling one's life from the lives of other people, getting out of enmeshed relationships. The person who is detaching is learning to stop "rescuing" and taking care" of other people, stop feeling their feelings, stop talking responsibility for others problems. Detachment also involves learning to care for ones self, get one's own needs met, feel ones own feelings, and take responsibility for one's own life.

Detachment is not a cold, hostile withdrawal; a resigned, despairing acceptance of anything life and people throw our way; a robotic walk through life oblivious to, and totally unaffected by people and problems; a Pollyanna-like ignorant bliss; a shirking of our true responsibilities to ourselves and others; a severing of our relationships. Nor is it a removal of our love and concern, although sometimes these ways of detaching might be the best we can do, for the moment.

Ideally, detachment is releasing, or detaching from, a person or problem in love. We mentally, emotionally, and sometimes physically disengage ourselves from unhealthy (and frequently painful) entanglements with another persons life and responsibilities, and from problems we cannot solve...

Detachment is based on the premises that each person is responsible for himself, that we can't solve problems that arent ours to solve, and that worrying doesn't help. We adopt a policy of keeping our hands off other people's responsibilities and tend to our own instead (Beattie, 1987, p. 56, 57).

On the surface, detachment can seem selfish, just as caretaking can seem unselfish. For example, it may seem selfish to say, I am going to do what I want , and I really don;t care what you think about it. This could be an expression of selfishness, but it could also be the statement of a person who wants to act from his own conscience rather than from a need for approval from other people. To recover, a person roust detach from love of reputation and honor. Again, it could seem selfish for a person to say, "I'm not going to help people and take care of people any more." This statement could come from a selfish person or it could come from a person who realizes that his "helping" and "caretaking" are motivated by a need to control other people. To recover, a person must detach from love of dominion.

Another Source of the Feeling of Self-Love?

Things are often different than they appear. The life we constantly receive from the Lord appears as if it were our own. The closer our relationship with the Lord becomes, the more independent we feel, even as we more fully recognize our dependence on Him. The appearance that we live independently of God pervades our lives, and therefore our psychology. What may appear as one thing to a psychologist viewing the mind empirically may appear quite differently to a theologian viewing it from doctrine.

While a psychologist knows that a person must love himself in order to be mentally healthy, the theologian understands that the feeling of self-love is tied to the appearance that we live from ourselves. What looks and feels like self-love in the regenerating person may actually be the Lord's love appearing as if it were our own.

Angels

In order to be regenerated, we must come under the influence of angels, who love us dearly. We do not sense their presence directly, but we do feel the affections which flow into us from them. These affections feel to us as if they were our own. Does it follow from this that when the angels with us love us and accept us, it seems as if the love and acceptance come from ourselves?

The angel's love for others is not prejudicial or superficial. It is not based merely on personality and appearances. They go beyond this to the things which make our very lives. They especially love in us the good intentions and true ideals that we have from the Lord. Those good and true qualities in us belong to the Lord, but they appear to be our own. So in reality, the angels are loving the Lord in us, while the appearance is that it is our own qualities they love.

The love that flows into us by means of angels appears to be our own both as to its source and its object. It comes from the Lord through the angels, but it appears to come from ourselves. And the object of this love is the good qualities that are actually the Lord's, yet appear to be our own. So what is actually love from the Lord directed to the Lord could appear to the outside observer as love from self directed towards self.

The Writings often equate a person's loves with his ends. In this sense love of self generally means having self as the end rather than as the means, and this is always evil, since it makes the neighbor an object to be used. This kind of self-love does not extend in the least to the Lord, since for Him, Self is never the end, always the means. The Father (the Divine) loves the Son (the Human) not for His own sake, but for the sake of the salvation of the human race. Viewed in terms of the end, it is not self-love. Viewed in terms of the appearance, the love between the internal and external could be classed by a psychologist as self-love.

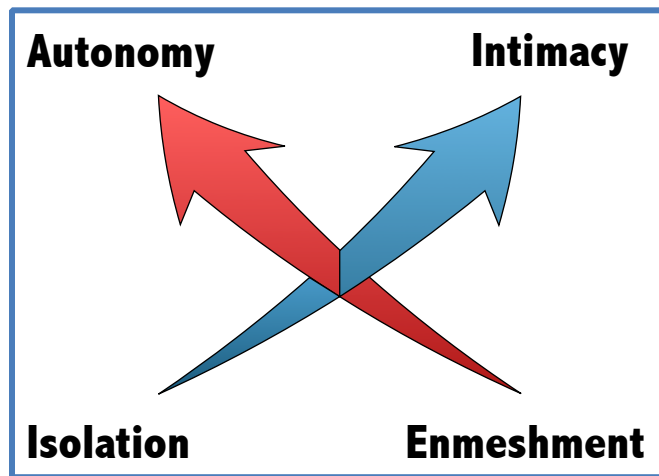
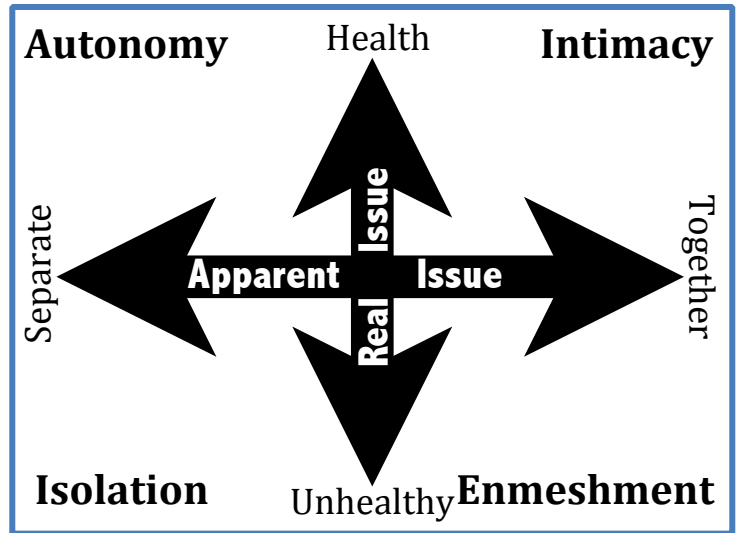
Appearance and Reality

One of the reasons why there is confusion about self-love is that things are not always as they appear. *Sometimes things that appear the same are actually opposite, and things that appear opposite are quite similar.* Because the reality and the appearance are often so different in codependency, it has been called "paradoxical dependency."

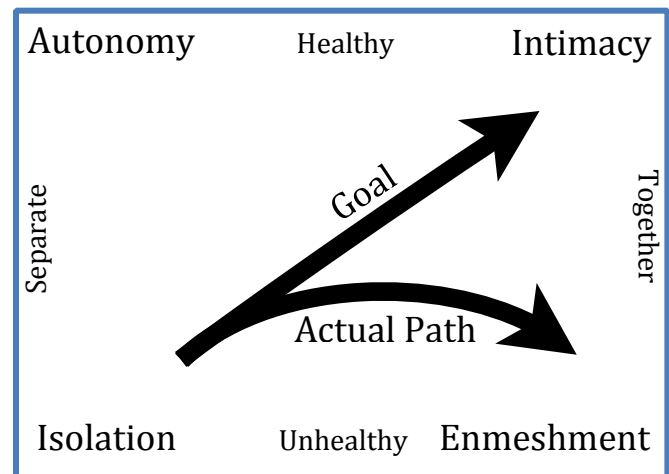
Because many co-dependent people appear to be so self-sufficient, strong and in control of their lives, Friel (1982) has also termed this pattern "paradoxical dependency", the paradox being that beneath the public image of strength and security often lie the opposite feelings of insecurity, self-doubt and confusion. "Everyone thinks I am so strong, and all of my friends and relatives come to me with their problems," say many

co-dependent people, “but if they knew the real me, they would be very surprised. Sometimes its all I can do just to get through each day” (Subby & Friel, *Co-dependency*, p. 32).

In Chapter Six we noted that isolation and enmeshment may appear opposite even though they actually go hand in hand. Likewise, intimacy and autonomy may seem superficially to be on opposite ends of the scale when in fact one cannot exist without the other. On the other hand, autonomy and isolation may superficially look the same, although they are actually quite opposite. Likewise, enmeshment and intimacy may appear outwardly similar, but inwardly they are quite different.



Because of the difference between appearance and reality, it is easy for people to be unaware of what the real issue is. People often think that the issue in their lives is deciding whether to be *together* with or *separate* from certain other people. In fact the real issue is whether they can maintain both separateness (autonomy) and togetherness (intimacy) in a healthy way.



As we noted earlier, people who feel isolated and are looking for intimacy often end up enmeshed instead, because it is easier to move back and forth on an unhealthy level from isolation to enmeshment than it is to move from an unhealthy level to a healthy level. One way to avoid this trap is to go both ways at the same time—when trying to avoid isolation and attain intimacy, try at the same time to escape from enmeshment and attain autonomy.

Humility and Self-Esteem

The same kind of connection exists between humility, shame, self-esteem and egotism.

Self-esteem (healthy self-love) appears outwardly very much like egotism (unhealthy self-love), but inwardly they are completely different.

Egotism	Self-esteem
Putting others down	Building others up
Boasting how good you are	Demonstrating goodness
Pretending to be God	Being loved by God
Taking credit	Sharing credit
Wanting others to be worse	Doing your best

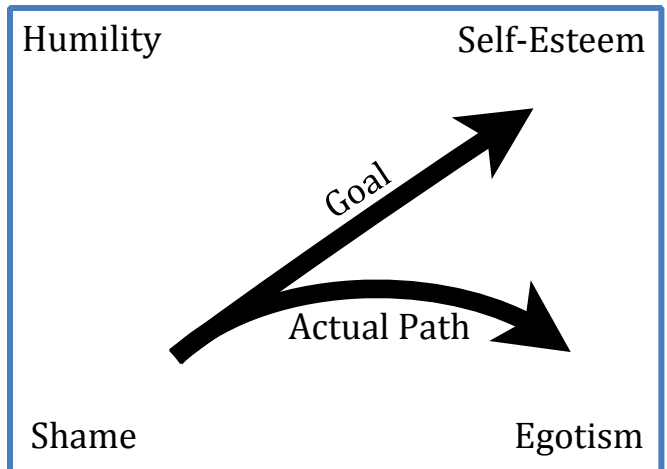
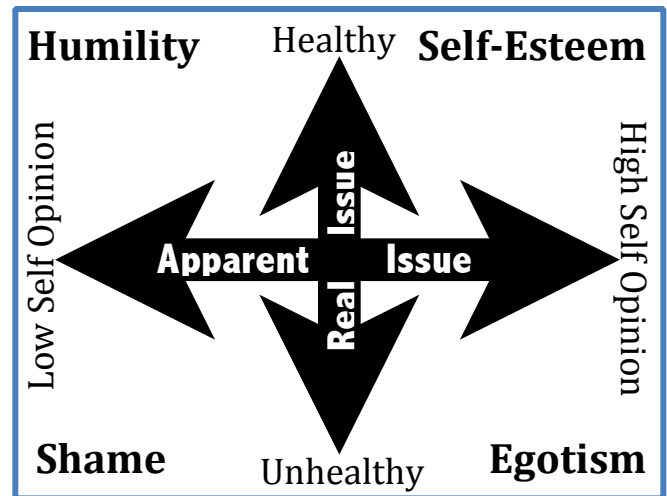
Humility and shame appear outwardly to be very similar, but inwardly they are totally different.

Shame	Humility
A need to be powerful	A feeling of powerlessness
Makes you feel trapped	Lets you be free
Externally focused on others	A willingness to be open
A need to hide	A willingness to be open
Feels bad	Feels good

Although shame and egotism appear opposite, they actually go hand in hand, because both are based on comparing ones self with others and on attributing to ones self the good or evil that flows in from the spiritual world. Likewise, humility and self-esteem may appear opposite, but actually they go hand in hand because they are both based on seeing one's self in relation to God and allowing Him to work in us and through us.

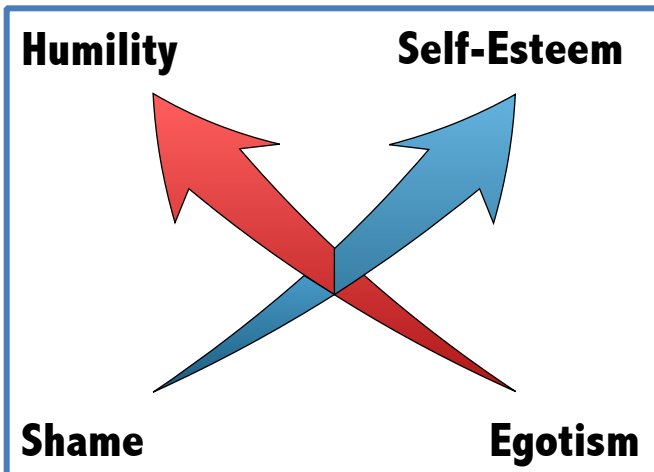
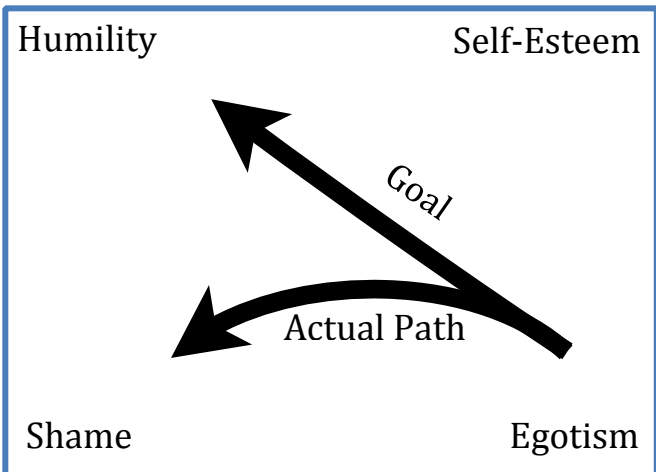
When people are full of shame and want self-esteem, they frequently get into egotism instead. Then others might react negatively to their egotism and tell them to be more humble, but instead of humility they just feel more shame. They believe that the key issue is whether they have a low opinion of themselves or a high opinion of themselves when in fact the issue is whether they look at themselves from a worldly or a spiritual perspective.

One of the tasks of recovery is transcending the paradoxes that result from a difference between appearance and reality.



Recovery Requires Transcending Paradoxes

A paradox is something that appears to be contradictory but in fact is true. It is essential in recovery that we let go of black-and-white thinking, which is at the root of these paradoxes in which we get trapped. For example, can someone be “good” and “bad”? Can we love and hate the same person? Can we become powerful by “giving in”? The answer to all of these questions is “yes.” Yet, before recovery, we struggle very hard with these questions. We want to label him “good” and her “safe,” when in fact it is humanly impossible for anyone to be “good” all the time or always “safe” to be with (Friel & Friel, p. 181).



Another example of a paradox is, Can someone have humility and high-self esteem at the same time? We must transcend this paradox in order to escape shame and egotism. One way to avoid the trap of egotism when looking for self-esteem is to seek for humility at the same time. The process of moving from egotism to humility and the process of moving from shame to self-esteem are complementary parts of a single spiritual journey. To do one without the other is to get off the spiritual path.

Chapter 11: RESCUING AND GENUINE CARING

People who live or work with addicts are taught to stop helping, enabling, and rescuing the addicts. How does this fit in with the teachings about forgiveness, usefulness, and charity?

To Care or Not to Care?

An important element in the recovery of a codependent person is learning not to rescue others. The need to rescue is very strong in most codependents. Everything they have learned, often including their religious upbringing, tells them that rescuing is the right thing to do. After all, aren't we supposed to help people who are in trouble? Shouldn't we be willing to forgive when people hurt us? Won't love and caring help those people become better? These questions can create even more difficulty for people when they have religious overtones. Then God expects them to be caring, loving, helping and forgiving.

Many people have been told all their lives, "Don't be selfish. Take care of other people before yourself. Often codependents are very good at not being selfish and taking care of others. They have been denying and ignoring their own needs for years while they slave to make someone else a better person. When they finally get into recovery, they hear, "Stop taking care of other people and start taking care of yourself." It can be very confusing knowing which is right.

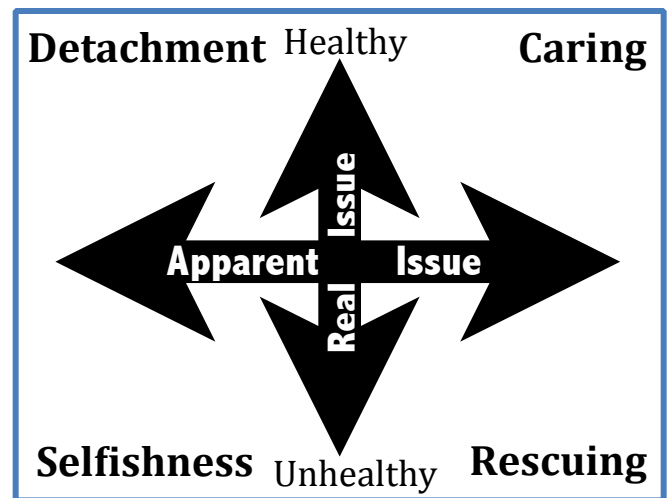
The difficulty arises from the fact that rescuing (a behavior of enmeshed people) looks outwardly very much like genuine caring (a behavior of intimate people). If a woman stays with her husband even though he beats her or is unfaithful, is it love? If a parent is forgiving with a child who is abusing drugs, is it genuine caring? The Bible says love your enemies, do good to those who despitefully use you," "turn the other cheek," "forgive until seventy times seven." When these healing, Divine messages are superficially or carelessly applied, they may encourage rescuing, rather than true caring.

Some people, in the process of learning not to rescue others, find that their religion does not help them relate to others in a healthy way. Their need for healing and their pain tells them, "Stop sacrificing yourself." But their religion says, "Go the extra mile. Turn the other cheek." Some simply leave religion behind.

There is a simple reason why it is so important for recovering codependents to stop their helping, rescuing and caretaking. The reason: *It doesn't help.*

It doesn't help a drug addict for someone else to take care of his physical needs while he himself ignores them. It doesn't help the TV addict to have someone bring him dinner in front of the TV. It doesn't help a wife abuser to for his wife to apologize for making him angry and to say she forgives him.

Yet the codependent keeps saying to himself, *If love her enough and try hard enough, she'll change.* Of course, she doesn't change, and the addiction doesn't stop. But the codependent keeps trying anyway. His crazy thinking tells him, *If something*



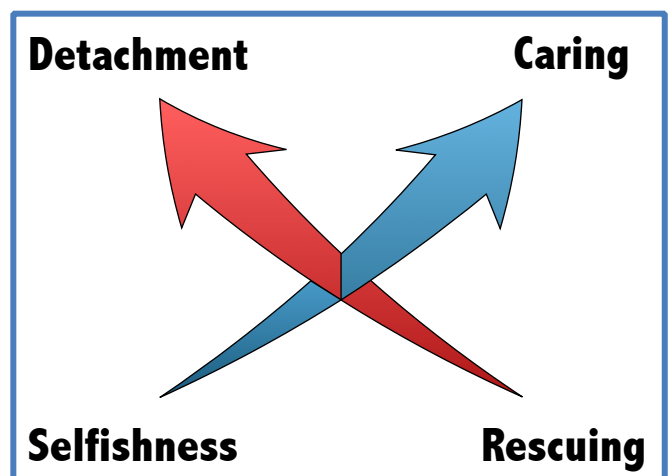
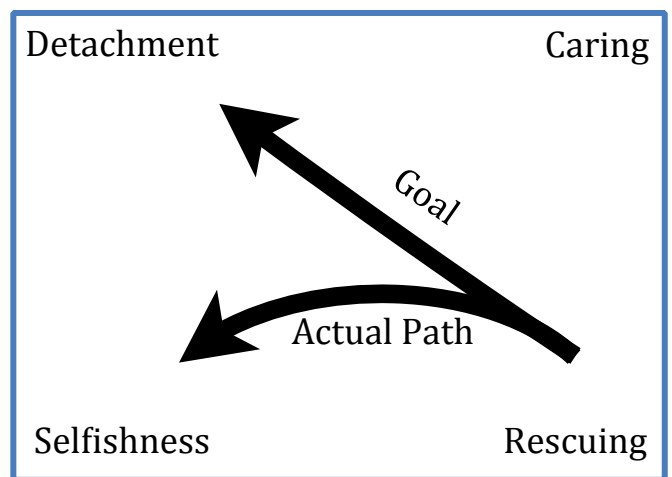
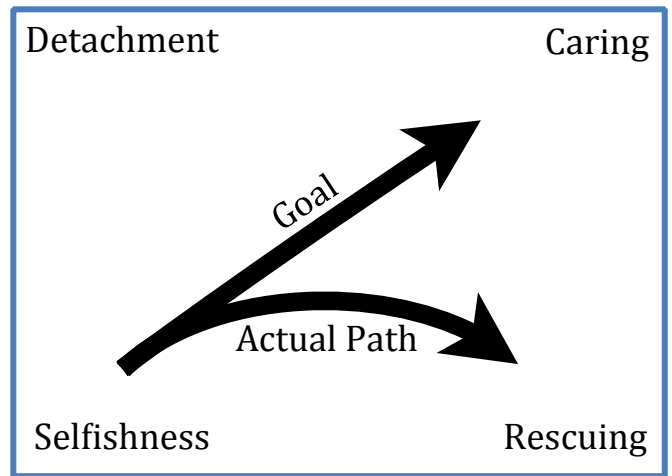
isn't working, keep on doing it. If giving him love does not change him, give him *more* love. If being patient has not stopped the abuse, be more patient. So the codependent keeps on caring, giving and loving, hoping that doing the same thing over and over will bring about a change.

Of course, there is no reason, religious or otherwise why a person ought to stop caring for others. What is important is to see the difference between *rescuing* and *genuine caring*, because knowing the difference gives the recovering person alternatives. When he knows what genuine caring is, he can do something different from what he was doing before something that may be genuinely helpful. Rescuing and genuine caring are an example of two things that appear similar but are actually opposite.

In a healthy person there is no conflict between concern for others and concern for ones self. His goal in serving himself is to better able to serve others. The codependent person on the other hand, gets caught between rescuing and selfishness. The dysfunctional rule that says, "Don't be selfish," means for the codependent, *don't pay attention to your own needs*. Thinking he can be a more wonderful, caring person and avoid the shame of selfishness by ignoring himself, he gets sucked into rescuing people and talking on too many responsibilities. But he comes to his caring with great emotional needs and an expectation that people will make him happy if he is caring and unselfish enough. Of course they don't, and when the pressure builds to the point where the codependent decides to give up some the of rescues, there is too much resentment to be able to detach from the situation. So the person ends up being just plain selfish, but still emotionally trapped.

If you attempt to care for people without being detached, you will end up rescuing them instead. If you attempt to detach without caring for people, you will end up being just plain selfish. You are more likely to stay on track if you seek detachment at the same time as you learn to be more caring.

The difference between genuine caring and rescuing is discussed extensively in the Writings, although Swedenborg does not use the word "rescuing." He uses other words to describe what seem to be the same kinds of behaviors.



Spiritual Good vs. Natural Good.

The kind of caretaking a dysfunctional person does is the kind that comes most naturally. Often the role of caretaking develops in a person as a child. If one's parents were not available to meet the needs of the family, the child may have learned to pick up the slack. The child was doing what had to be done to survive, and as a consequence developed habits of trying to take care of other people's problems. It may be that the person's mother or father was a saint who worked hard and never complained, and the child naturally follows that role model.

The good we do because it comes naturally to us or because we learned it as children is called "natural good" in the Writings. Natural good and spiritual good look very similar on the outside, but inwardly, they are quite different. Some of the differences between spiritual and natural good are summarized in this table:

Spiritual Good (Caring)	Natural Good (Rescuing)
Based on Conscience	People-Pleasing
Evil Shunned First	Good Done Without Shunning Evil
No Expectation of Reward	Meritorious Good
Friendship Based on Values and Use	Close Friendship With Evil People
Focus Is On Intention	Focus Is On Behavior
Openness, honesty about inner self	Hiding, shame about inner self
Aims At Giving Others Freedom	Aims At Controlling Others
Being good	Being nice
Good and Evil Clearly Distinguished	Good Seems Evil, Evil Seems Good

Conscience vs. People-Pleasing

One of the differences between spiritual and natural good is that spiritual good is done from inner spiritual principles, while natural good is done from with a view of getting approval from others. A person who is in spiritual good may be adaptable and flexible, but he will also make decisions on the basis of firm spiritual values which he will not compromise. Codependents often make other peoples expectations the basis for their actions. They have lost or never developed their own sense of values, and they come to 8HM that the right thing to do is what other people think is the right thing to do. They may do a lot of good, but they do it in order to gain approval. This lend of approval-seeking, people pleasing behavior...

...reflects a deeply-seated, private and often unconscious belief that the road to love, belonging, acceptance and success is dependent on our ability to do what we *think* others want or expect us to do. The practicing co-dependent looks as "doing for others as a means to achieve these goals. Unfortunately, those we "do for" and those who we are trying to please are often not as concerned about our welfare as they are about their own. The proverbial carrot of success is a cunning, baffling and powerful force in the co-dependent's life. For the codependent who believes that okayness depends on his or her ability to meet the real or imagined needs of others, this approval-seeking or people-pleasing behavior becomes a mood-altering dig of choice (Subby, p. 22).

The codependent may be a loyal employee, a model husband or wife, a pillar of the church and community and a sacrificing parent. The codependent person may give and give and give, always doing what people need and expect him or her to do. Yet all this good may be done in order to gain approval of other people. Good done for this reason is not genuinely good.

He who does not know what Christian charity is, may think that it consists not only in giving to the needy and poor, but also in doing good to a fellow-citizen, his country, and to the church, for whatever cause, or for any end whatsoever; but it should be borne in mind that the end determines the quality of all a persons works. If his end or intention is to do good for the sake of reputation, or for the sake of reaching posts of honor, or procuring gain, then the good that he does is not good, for it is wrought for the sake of self and hence also from self (AC 9210).

Shunning Evil First

Another difference between spiritual and natural good is that spiritual good is only with people who have first done the work of repentance.

The first thing of charity consists in putting away evils, and the second in doing good actions that are of use to the neighbor.... As far as the evil implanted in his will is not removed, it taints the good he does with evil; for evil lies within the good like a nut in its shell, or marrow in a bone. Although what a person then does has the appearance of good, yet inwardly it is not so (TCR 435).

As we noted earlier, everyone needs to recover. If you are not in recovery, you are sick with the inherited evils that permeate our society. Before you can do good that is genuinely good you must examine your own motives.

I asked, "How can one know whether he performs uses from the love of self or from the love of uses? Every person, both good and evil, performs uses, and he performs them from some love. .. Who then can know from what love and from what origin the uses are?" To this the two angels responded, "Devils perform uses for the sake of themselves and their reputation, that they may be advanced to honors or may acquire wealth. It is not for these that angels perform uses but for the sake of the uses themselves and from love of them. *Man cannot discern between these uses*; but they are discerned by the Lord. Everyone who believes in the Lord and shuns evils as sins performs uses from the Lord; but *everyone who does not believe in the Lord, and does not shun evils as sins, performs uses from himself and for the sake of himself*. This is the distinction between uses performed by devils and uses performed by angels" (CL 266.4,5).

Heavenly love is with those who approach the Lord and live according to the precepts of the Decalogue and infernal love is with those who do not approach the Lord and do not live according to the precepts of the Decalogue (AR 502.3).

People who are codependent often appear very healthy and functional to someone who does not know what goes on inside their house and mind. They work hard, they are friendly and they take care of people, but they do these things because they are afraid of being rejected rather than because they love to do them.

Meritorious Good

One of the differences between spiritual and natural good is that natural good is done for the sake of some benefit to ones self.

Those who do goods with the view of obtaining merit, do not do them from the love of good, but from the love of reward,... therefore, they are not spiritual but natural (HD 150).

The hope of getting something in return is a big part of most rescues. Often the rewards codependents look for are *approval* by others and *getting their own needs met* by others. The codependent thinks,

If I am really nice to people, then they will like me.

If I do what he wants, then he won't get mad.

How could you do this to me after all I've done for you?

I'm always taking care of everybody else, and nobody takes care of me.

Of course there is nothing wrong with wanting people to like you. Even the Lord wants people to like Him. The problem arises when a person tries to earn approval by living up to other peoples expectations or by taking responsibility for their problems.

One of the results of feeling that we deserve (or meet) approval or help from others is that we tend to measure our self-worth by the things we do. We may feel that we have to do a lot and do it perfectly in order to be valuable as a person.

Take for example, the individual who has believed all his life that being loved by others depends on what you can do for them. This means, of course, that if I no longer do the things which I believe are a prerequisite to receiving love, then it follows that I will no longer be loved.

This is the psychology of conditional love, and for the co-dependent its a major obstacle to overcome on the road to recovery.

In simple terms, it could be said that the co-dependent endeavors to do the right or expected thing in order to get the love they so desperately need (Subby, p. 38).

Take, for example, one of the more classic co-dependent beliefs that what you do is somehow a measure of who you are. One's identity and sense of self-worth become inextricably linked to ones job... When an adult co-dependent believes fervently in this philosophy, it becomes increasingly important to their feelings of okayness that they not be without something to do. Its okay to play if you are a child, but not if you are an adult (Subby, p. 43).

Another result of taking credit for our "good works" (i.e., rescues and caretaking) is that we fall into the roles of the Saint or the Martyr. The roles are very similar except that the Saint tries to earn his reward by doing good deeds, while the Martyr tries to earn his reward by suffering.

The Martyr says, "Look at all I've gone through! Its about time someone paid attention to how I've suffered!"

The Saint says, "Look at all I've done for you! It's about time someone paid attention to how hard I've worked!"

Both the Saint and the Martyr feel that they deserve more recognition and help from other people. Both are likely to have smoldering resentments because they don't get the respect and support they feel is owed them. Ironically, both tend to reject help and approval when it is offered, because if they allow people to actually help, they cannot maintain their position of superiority as easily.

"Friendship of Love"

A common pattern with codependent people is that they get involved with addicts or alcoholics without realizing what the other person is really like. For example, a woman who grows up with physical abuse may swear that she will never marry an abusive person, and later discover she has married one anyway. She may finally divorce the wife beater in order to escape, and then end up marrying another abusive man. The inability to see what she is getting into comes from a pattern of denial of abuse, a tendency to blame herself for men's anger, a focus on external behavior rather than inner motivation, and a need to rescue the man who is angry with women (by proving to the man that she is not the bad lend of woman that he would be angry with).

Unless the woman gets help and begins to recover, she will have an extremely hard time escaping from the pattern of abuse. She will very likely either stay in the same abusive relationship or get involved in a series of similar relationships.

True Christian Religion tells us of the danger of having intimate friendships with people without having regard for their spiritual values (TCR 446-449). In many ways Swedenborg’s descriptions of these relationships are very much like the relationships that often exist between addicts and codependents. The following chart illustrates the parallel between these two kinds of relationships.

Codependent/Addict Relationship	“Friendship of Love” (TCR 446, 448)
Codependents are often emotionally attracted to people with negative values or lifestyles—people who need “help.”	“Close friendships are formed without regard to the real nature of the internal man or spirit.”
Codependents can experience very deep emotional suffering as a result of their association with addicts.	“The one whose interiors are in hell breathes his hellish influence into the one whose interiors are in heaven.”
Codependents sometimes become addicts themselves.	“The good were drinking in the delights of the wicked.”
Codependents have difficulty separating from the dependents even though they are being abused.	“They remain bound together like us sheep tied to a wolf or a goose to a fox, or a dove to a hawk.”
Codependents often go through hellish experiences, for example physical abuse, because they cannot break their attachments to addicts.	“The interiors of the good, who are thus bound fast to the wicked, are closed and both are thrust down into hell, where the good suffer very severely.”
Codependents often have difficulty attaining emotional health. Effects of the relationship with the dependent can last for years.	“After their release they are prepared for heaven by the process of reformation, but with greater difficulty than others.”

Swedenborg’s descriptions and warnings about this kind of intimate friendship focus on its effects after death, when spiritual qualities can be more readily seen and differences between the good and the evil judged. In making a parallel between such friendships and codependent relationships, I do not intend to suggest that the addict is inwardly evil and the codependent person inwardly good, or that “friendship of love always involves addiction.

The addict’s evil (addiction) or the codependent’s good (rescuing) maybe merely external. Furthermore, the roles could be reversed—the addict might be trying to recover while the codependent is keeping them stuck. Or, both may be struggling with recovery. We cannot judge a persons spiritual state on the basis of addiction or codependency. Nevertheless the parallel between inward and outward states is instructive.

Behavior vs. Intention

Sometimes our behavior is the natural outcome of our intentions. Other times we assume a behavior that is different from what we really are.

Charity and good works are distinct, like willing what is good and doing what is good... If works proceed from the spiritual mind they proceed from its will to good that is charity; but if from the natural they proceed from a will to good that is not charity. *Externally it may appear like charity, but still it is not charity in its internal form; and that which presents the appearance of charity in external form only does not possess its essence.* (TCR 421)

Codependents tend to do rescue people and take care of people in order to appear normal, to meet others expectations and to gain approval. They do these things without paying attention to their own needs and values. On the outside they may look strong and capable, but on the inside is resentment, shame, confusion and fear of being found out. They pay more attention to *looking* good than to *being* good.

Looking Good vs. Being Real

This co-dependent “looking good” psychology is really nothing more than the reflection of a false identity based on doing whatever the script tells you is the “right thing to do.” Being true to yourself is not part of being co-dependent.

Looking good is a show, a cosmetic cover-up, a posture. Playing the impostor means that the co-dependent must always live with a nagging fear that one day they will be found out. This nagging fear forces the co-dependent to scramble around even more in an effort to keep up the image. (Subby p. 67)

Shame vs. Openness

One of the characteristics of natural good is shame. Inwardly a person is aware of being evil. Outwardly the person puts on the appearance of being good. The dissonance between these two feelings gives the person a feeling of shame.

The posterity of the Most Ancient Church had natural good in place of innocence; by which *their evil was hidden*; and as they were in natural good, they were affected with *shame* (AC 216).

At the heart of most rescues is a demon: low self-worth. We rescue because we don't feel good about ourselves.. Although the feelings are transient and artificial, caretaking provides us with a temporary hit of good feelings, self-worth, and power. us as a drink helps an alcoholic momentarily feel better, a rescue move momentarily distracts us from the pain of being who we are. We don't feel good about ourselves, so we feel compelled to do a particular thing to *prove* how good we are (Beattie, 1987, p. 84).

When a healthy person does good things it is not to hide his inner feelings but to express them. A healthy person wants to be completely open with other people.

Those who are true members of the church are so far removed from cunning, that they utterly abhor it, and those among them who are as the angels, are desirous that, if it were possible, their minds should be open, and that what they think might be clearly manifest to every one: For they intend nothing but good towards the neighbor, and if they see evil in any one they excuse it. It is otherwise with those who are in evil; they fear lest anything they think and will should show itself (AC 6655).

Control vs. Freedom

One of the differences between spiritual and natural good is that in spiritual good there is always a concern for the freedom of others. Natural good often has evil veiled within it, and within the evil is love of dominion-the desire for control. Rescuing behavior often comes from a need to control the addiction. The rescuer is not so much concerned with the other person's freedom as with changing his behavior. Often we rescue people even when they don't want to be helped.

Natural good is such that from itself it is not willing to obey and serve the rational; but *wants to command* (AC 3470.3).

The nature of love of dominion is that it hides itself (AC 2910.2, 4227, DP 210). It lies behind layers of caring and concern, advice and instructions, innuendos and repressed emotions. But still it is there with everyone. The love of dominion is part of the hereditary evil that taints natural good before it becomes spiritual. Everyone has this love in him from birth, so everyone must struggle with an innate need to be in control.

From the hereditary it is inborn with everyone to want to exercise command over others (AC 10791).

There are three universal loves of which *every person is molded from creation*: the love of the neighbor,... the love of the world... and the love of self, which is also the *love of exercising command over others* (CL 269.2).

A healthy person will care for people and help them as much as a codependent person will, but the help will be given when it is wanted, and in such a way as to enhance the persons freedom, rather than control him.

Being Nice vs. Being Good

The stereotype of a child of an alcoholic is someone who acts out, who misbehaves and gets into trouble because of his unhappy home life. This child is The Scapegoat, who acts out the familys pain and lets others believe that they are not the cause of the problems. Actually, a small minority of children in alcoholic homes fit this type. Most of them fit in other roles: The Lost Child, who never gets in anyones way and never causes problems; The Hero, who always has to be strong and perfect and accomplished to prove that the family is okay; The Responsible One, who washes and cooks or earns the money or picks up the mess because no one else will do it and the family will fall apart if it doesn't get done; The Clown, who covers up the pain with a joke and a smile. Although there is pain and anger beneath the surface, most codependents develop roles that require them to be pleasant and not cause any problems. They don't realize that there is a difference between being *good* to others and being *nice* to them.

Maybe someone taught us these lies, and we believed them: don't be selfish, always be kind and help people, never hurt other peoples feelings because we "make them feel," never say no, and don't mention personal wants and needs because its not polite.

We may have been taught to be responsible for other people but not responsible for ourselves. Some women were taught that good, desirable wives and mothers were caretakers. Caretaking was expected and required of them. It was their duty. Some men believe good husbands and fathers are caretakers- superheroes responsible for meeting every need of each family member...

Others may have interpreted religious beliefs as a mandate to caretake. Be cheerful givers, we are told. Go the extra mile. Love our neighbors, and we try. We try so hard. We try too hard. And then we wonder what's wrong with us because our Christian beliefs aren't working. Our lives aren't working either (Beattie, p. 85).

For many people part of being nice is never getting angry. Many codependent people "stuff" their anger, ignore it, or cover it with "nicer" emotions like sadness or martyrdom.

Frequently, codependents and other people believe the following myths about anger:

It's not okay to feel angry.

Anger is a waste of time and energy.

We shouldn't feel angry when we do.

We'll lose control and go crazy if we get angry.

People will go away if we get angry at them.

Other people should never feel anger toward us.

If others get angry at us, we must have done something wrong.

If other people are angry at us, we made them feel that way (Beattie, p. 141).

The concept that you should be nice to everyone is tied to a false concept of charity.

It is a common opinion at this day, that every person is equally the neighbor, and that *benefits are to be conferred on everyone who needs assistance*; but it is in the interest of Christian prudence to examine well the quality of a persons life, and to exercise charity to him accordingly. The member of the internal church exercises his charity with discernment, consequently with intelligence; but the member of the external church, *because he is not able thus to discern things, does it indiscriminately* (HD 85).

The need to be nice comes more from habit and a desire to avoid conflict than it does from spiritual principle.

Those who are in good natural not spiritual...are such as are gentle and well disposed from what is hereditary and therefore accessory, that is, such as do good from their nature, but not from religion.... They allow themselves to be persuaded by everyone, and easily by the evil (AC 5032).

Some from what is hereditary derive a certain softness of heart... but it is a false conscience (AC 1033e).

What seems good is evil

When a codependent person “rescues” people, he does it with the belief that he is helping them. In fact, the rescuing behavior does not help at all, but actually makes the situation worse because it “enables” the addict to continue his addiction. The codependent may think he is helping when he dumps the addicts alcohol down the drain or nags the addict to eat well or cleans up his vomit or makes excuses for his behavior. Actually these things may not be good, and may in fact be evil, because they encourage the addict to give up responsibility for his own life.

The converse is also true: what seems to be evil to the codependent may actually be good. The codependent thinks he would be hurting the addict if he told his boss about the addiction or made him walk home when drunk or informed the police about his digs and violence. In reality these things could be the best thing for the addict, but to the codependent good may appear as evil.

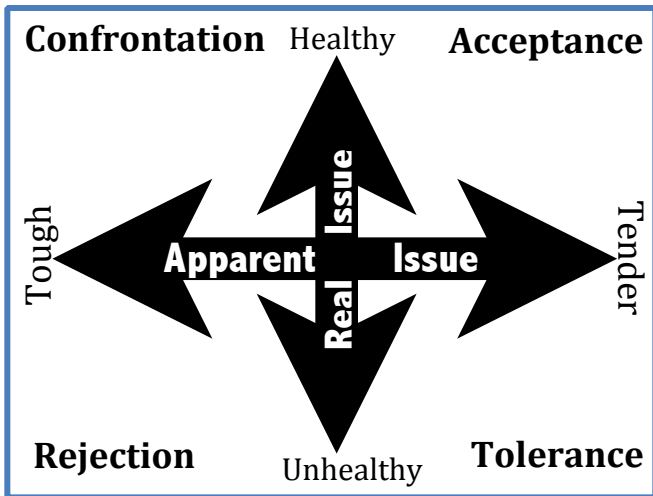
The natural good which is born with a person is in itself nothing but an animal something; for it exists with animals also.... *Although it appears as good, still it may not be good, but may indeed be evil*; for it can receive falsities also, and believe that to be good which is evil (AC 3408).

Those who are in the affection of good from which is not truth are not of the church... for they are in natural good and not in spiritual good, and allow themselves to be led into every evil and also falsity, provided there is *induced on the evil an appearance of good*, and on the falsity an appearance of truth (AC 3963e).

Merely natural goods and truths *are in their essence evils and falsities*, although before those who are merely natural and sensuous they *appear as goods and truths*, because their goods are pleasures and delights springing from the loves of self and of the world (AE 754).

Acceptance and Confrontation

One of the issues faced by a codependent people who are living with addicts is how to be nice to them without getting treated like a doormat. The *apparent* issue is a choice between opposing the addicts because of their hurtful behavior, or favoring the addicts in order to help them. On the one hand, the codependents find the addicts’ behavior intolerable, painful, disgusting, irresponsible, and inexcusable. It’s terrible and something has to be done. So they each in their own way *re-*

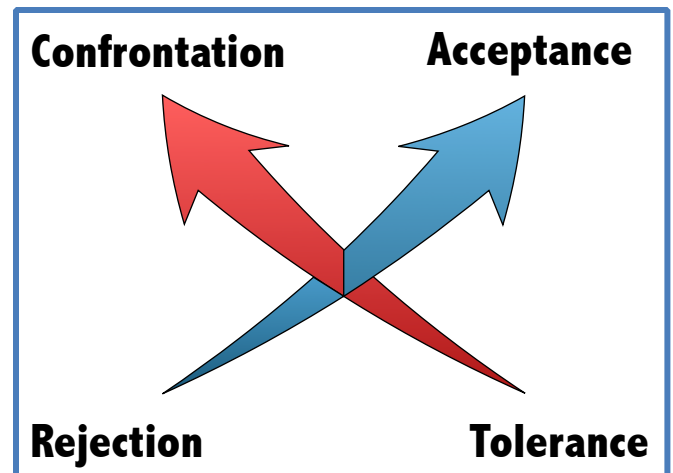


ject the addicts' behavior. They rant and rave, beg, threaten, scold, or denounce the addicts to show disapproval and get the addicts to change. It is done in many ways, but it adds up to *rejection* of the addicts.

When rejection does not work and the negative behavior continues, the codependent may decide that they should forgive the addicts, take better care of them, be more conciliatory or try harder. So they give the addicts another chance. Then they come to *tolerate* the very behavior they had earlier condemned.

To people caught in the trap of codependency, it may seem as if the Only alternatives are either to tolerate the behavior or to reject it. What they may not realize is that tolerating and rejecting may look opposite, but they are actually two sides of the same coin. In fact it is very easy to do both at once; for example ignoring the addict and his addiction is a way of rejecting and tolerating him at the same time.

Codependents also may not realize that neither of these "alternatives" is helpful. Either one or both together tend to allow the addiction and its associated problems to continue and to increase. Thus the codependent becomes an "enabler," who unintentionally allows the addiction to remain and grow. He is following the enabling equation:



$$\text{Rejection} + \text{Tolerance} = \text{Enabling}$$

The real issue is not whether you tolerate or reject the addict, but whether your actions and words encourage the addict to take responsibility for his own life and face his own problems. The opposite of enabling is intervention, which has its own equation:

$$\text{Acceptance} + \text{Confrontation} = \text{Intervention}$$

When articulated, this equation states, "I truly do accept the fact that your behavior, which includes your reasoning, is intolerable, and I will take no part in it, which means you'll have to change or handle your crises and emotional pain yourself. When co-dependents follow the enabling equation of rejecting then accepting the unacceptable, they flee from reality and in a very real sense, are in a state of denial. Following the intervention equation brings them home, back on target in touch with reality. ...Accepting reality makes the codependent feel at peace, while the second half of the intervention equation, confronting the reality of intolerable behavior, increases the co-dependent's emotional strength (Maxwell, p. 117).

Acceptance and tolerance look similar from the outside, even though inwardly they are totally different. Tolerance frequently involves denial of the problem-pretending it is not there or hoping it will go away. Acceptance involves accepting the reality and severity of the problem. Likewise, confrontation and rejection may seem similar, but they are actually quite opposite. Con-

frontation is facing a person with a hope that they may change, while rejection is turning away from the person in the expectation that they will not.

Both confrontation and acceptance are necessary for intervention. Acceptance without confrontation is really just tolerance. Confrontation without acceptance is really just rejection. When both are together, a person can speak the truth with love. People who are recovering need to learn both how to confront and how to accept.

The Lord Does Not Rescue Us

Sometimes people act helpless or allow themselves to become victims in order to encourage others to rescue them and care for them. Some people do this with God, too. They expect God to magically make everything better, to make their lives easier without any effort or responsibility of their own. They may pray constantly, or simply hang down their hands and wait for God to act. But the Lord does not “rescue” people. He is always ready to help, but He only does so in ways that allow people to take initiative and be responsible for their own lives.

A person ought to purify himself from evils. Otherwise he would be like a servant with face and clothes covered with soot and filth, who should go to his master and say, “My lord, wash me. Would not his master say to him, “You foolish servant, what do you mean? See there are water, soap and a towel. Have you not hands of your own and power to use them? Wash yourself.” And the Lord God will surely say, “You have from Me the means of purification, and also the will, and the power. Therefore, use these my gifts and endowments as your own, and you will be purified (TCR 436).

[People who were in a desire to exercise command] said it is strange that *the Lord does not hear their prayers when they are praying, and so did not help those who made supplication*. But I was permitted to reply that they cannot be heard because they had as their end such things as are contrary to the welfare of the human race, and because they pray for themselves against all (AC 42.27.4).

Those in temptations are wont to drop their hands and betake themselves solely to prayers, which they ardently pour forth, not knowing that their prayers have no effect, but that they must fight against the falsities and evils which are being injected by the hells.... Moreover they who are in temptations and not in any other active life than that of prayers, do not know that if the temptations were interrupted before they had been fully completed, they would not be prepared for heaven, and thus could not be saved. For this reason, also *the prayers of those who are in temptations are but little heeded*; for the Lord wills the end, which is the persons salvation, which end He knows, but not the person; and the Lord does not act in favor of prayers that are against the end, which is salvation [i.e., healing] (AC 81 79.2).

No more can be saved than want to be saved (DP 333).

He who hangs down his hands and awaits influx receives nothing (AE 701 .3; see also AC 1 712.2, 5660.2, 1937.2, 81 76, 10299.4, DP 210, TCR 356).

Chapter 12: HEALING RELATIONSHIPS

How do we go about the process of healing relationships? Ultimately, our healing starts when we start to have honest, caring interactions with other people. Healthy relationships are the source of healing, as well as the goal.

Healing the Whole Person

As we have seen in the first part of this paper, all a persons relationships are tied together. It is impossible to separate a persons relationship with God from his relationship with his fellow human being; and these both are tied to his inner connectedness between his intellectual and emotional life and between his inward (private) and outward (public) characters. In the second part we have briefly examined the connections between the mind and the body and between evil and disease. One of the consequences of these many connections is that illness spreads throughout the system, and therefore healing must be system-wide or holistic. Recovering from an addiction (and probably from any hereditary evil) involves healing on spiritual, psychological, social and physical levels.

On a *spiritual* level the addict needs humility (recognition of powerlessness and a relationship with a Higher Power). On a *psychological* level he needs to accept and take responsibility for his feelings (marriage of will and understanding), as well as to learn to know and love himself (opening of internal man and its connection to the external man). On a *social* level he needs to detach from enmeshed relationships and break out of isolation to attain intimacy. On a *physical* level he needs to stop abusing his body with mood-changing substances and start taking care of himself (good diet, exercise, etc.) and listening to the messages his body is sending him. Full recovery is unlikely if any one of these is neglected. Fortunately, making a change in just one of these areas can have a positive effect on the rest.

Conflict and Temptation

The path from illness to health is often difficult. When a person is dysfunctional (physically, socially, emotionally, or spiritually), the illness is woven into the fabric of the person's life. In order to become well, many things have to change, including ones relationship with God, one's relationships with other people, one's thinking and feelings, and one's physical intake and behavior. Frequently, these changes involve pain or struggle. The more strongly the illness has taken hold, the more difficult the struggle will be.

On the physical level, there may be illness, withdrawal pain and struggle with physical desires. On a social level, there will often be conflict with other people, especially when breaking out of enmeshed relationships. On a psychological level, there may be conflicts between one's thinking and feeling, or between ones public and private selves. On a spiritual level, there may be temptations-when ones relationship with God is challenged.

Level of Life	Type of Conflict
Spiritual life	apparent absence of God, doubt, despair
Psychological life	inner conflict between thoughts & feelings
Social life	conflict with other people

On all levels, the struggles are a part of the healing process. Since the different parts of a person's life are withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness interwoven, struggle on one level is often tied to struggles on other levels. For example, a person who is going withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness through a temptation in regard to their relationship with God might also experience struggles emotionally, withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness socially, and physically.

We can't judge people by their struggles. We can't assume that just because a person is going through outward withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness struggles that he is also going through temptations, or on the other hand, that a person who is not experiencing withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness outward struggles is not going through temptations inwardly. In fact, we can't assume that struggle is tied to any withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness healing at all. Addicts and codependents go through all kinds of struggle even when they are not doing any withdrawal, struggle with physical desires, illness healing. Nevertheless, there is frequently a connection between these different levels of struggle.

Spiritual temptations are of the internal man; but natural ones are of the external. Spiritual temptations sometimes come forth without natural ones, and sometimes with them. Natural temptations are when a person is suffering as to the body, honors wealth; in a word, as to the natural life; as happens in diseases, misfortunes, persecutions, unjust punishments, and the like. The anxieties which then come forth are what are meant by natural temptations. But these temptations do nothing whatever to the person's spiritual life, and they cannot be called temptations.... But spiritual temptations are of the internal man, and they assail its spiritual life. The anxieties then felt are not on account of any loss of natural life; but on account of the loss of faith and charity, and consequently of salvation. These temptations are frequently induced through natural temptations; for when a person is in these, namely in disease, pain and grief, the loss of wealth, or of honor, and the like—if then, thought comes about the Lord's aid, His providence, the state of the evil in that they glory and exult when the good suffer... then spiritual temptation is joined with natural temptation. (AC 8164)

A state of compulsion is a state of disease; of spirits cast down by misfortune; a state of imminent death.... To a good man these states are states of temptation, in which he overcomes. (AC 8392)

The process of healing involves all levels of the system because the Lord does not work on one person or one part of a person independently of all the other people and parts in a system.

The Lord does not change the state of any part, or of any thing in particular, except suitably to the whole form. (DP 124.3)

In the quest for healing relationships, it is useful to recognize the connection between these different levels of struggle, especially between our inner spiritual struggles and our interpersonal conflicts.

Interpersonal Conflict

Interpersonal conflict is a large part of most people's lives. Sometimes the conflict is severe: divorce, lawsuits, physical abuse, rape, war. Often the conflict is what we might consider a normal part of life: disciplining children, disagreements with coworkers, marital arguments, dealing with people who are at times offensive or irresponsible.

Human conflicts, from disagreements and arguments to rape and war, are described in stories in the Word. The Word deals with human life, and therefore it deals with human conflict. On a literal level the conflict is between two people or two nations. On a spiritual level, a different conflict is

being described—a conflict between spirit and flesh or between good and evil. It is a conflict that takes place within a single individual.

External temptations are persecutions by the world; internal ones are persecutions by the devil (AC 1820).

For example, in Genesis we find the story of a domestic conflict between Hagar and Sarah. On a literal level it is about jealousy and superiority—the normal stuff that makes human conflict. On a spiritual level this outward conflict is symbolic of inward temptations, which are nothing else than inward conflicts or clashes and struggles over who is to have power and control, evils being ranged in those conflicts on one side and goods on the other (AC 1923; see also 1917, 2654).

In another story we are told that “there was strife between Abram’s herdsmen and Lot’s herdsmen. On a literal level, it was a conflict arising from having too many people and animals in too little space. On a spiritual level this conflict symbolizes “that the internal man and the external did not agree, ‘Abram’s herdsmen’ being used to mean heavenly things, ‘Lot’s herdsmen’ things of the senses” (AC 1570). In a similar way, the outward conflict between Jacob and Esau is symbolic of inward conflict (AC 3318, 3321, 3605, 3614).

The connection between outward conflict and inward conflict goes beyond the symbolism in the Word. As with other correspondences, there is a causal interconnection between the two. Inner conflict may result in outward conflict the same way thought may result in speech, and outward conflict may stir up inward conflict the same way speech may stir up thoughts.

One reason why temptation is often tied to outward conflict is that spiritual love is a love for die neighbor, and this love is attacked during temptations. This attack on our love for other people may come through conflict with others, or it may result in conflict with others. For example, suppose the hells are attacking a woman’s marriage love. One way they may do this is by inspiring adulterous thoughts in the woman. To the extent the hells are successful, those adulterous thoughts could cause marital conflict. Another way the hells might attack the marriage is by leading the woman’s husband into adultery and thereby creating a marital conflict that would bring the faithful partner into the doubt and despair of temptation. It is not a temptation unless ones love for others is put in doubt, and often this attack on ones relationships involves outward personal conflict.

He who is in temptation is in doubt concerning the end; the end is the love, against which the evil spirits and genii fight, and thus put the end ‘m doubt, and the more in doubt the more one loves. If the end which is loved were not placed in doubt, and even in despair, there would be no temptations. (AC 1820)

With those in whom there is love to the Lord, whatever assails love to the Lord produces an inmost torture: this is celestial temptation. With those in whom there is love towards the neighbor, whatever assails this love occasions torture of conscience: This is spiritual temptation. (AC 847.)

In order to survive and overcome in spiritual temptations, a person must have love for other people and be willing to change his relationship with them.

The temptations in which a person overcomes are attended with a belief that *all others are more worthy than himself* and that he is infernal rather than heavenly; for such things come to him in temptations (AC 2273).

No others can be tempted than those who are in the good of faith that is, in charity towards the neighbor. *If those not in this charity should be tempted, they would succumb at once* (AC 4274.2).

I suspect that one of the reasons why some people experience a great deal of personal conflict is that in their conflicts they generally react by making external changes instead of resolving the conflicts within their own minds that give rise to die outward conflicts. On the other hand I sus-

pect that there are people who withdraw from any personal conflict because to do so would bring in to the open hidden conflicts within their own minds that they are unwilling to face.

As a general principle, true charity is possible only through regeneration. The process of inner spiritual growth is necessary for the development of healthy relationships. *A person cannot genuinely resolve conflicts with other people unless he resolves the conflicts within himself.*

You Can't Recover Alone

We have just stated that *spiritual growth is necessary for genuine relationships*. The converse is also true, that *genuine relationships are necessary for spiritual growth*. Spiritual growth makes one with the growth of charity or love for the neighbor. A person cannot grow spiritually as a hermit or ascetic who withdraws from relationships with other people. Both regeneration and recovery from codependency can take place only in the context of healing interactions with other people.

People who work with recovering addicts and codependents have discovered that recovery is not very likely if the recovering person continues to be in a family system where the relationships are unhealthy.

It is not nearly as effective for the spouse alone or only the children alone to receive help—the entire family must be part of the recovery process (Black, 1981, p. 66).

Recovery cannot be done alone. As we have said many times already, trying to do it alone is one of the primary symptoms of our dysfunction. This has a lot to do with the core shame from our childhoods. We don't want others to know what is going on inside of us because we are afraid that they will be shocked, will reject or abandon us or shame us further. It also has to do with our need to be in control in unhealthy ways. It has to do with the arrogance and moral superiority that is such a strong part of codependency...

Recovery cannot be done alone because the experience of sharing our inner selves with others in a safe way is what we have been missing all our lives. True, we may have lots of people with whom we share our problems late into the night, but are they people who don't get enmeshed with us? Are they people who let us have our pain so that we can learn from it and do something about it, or do they enable us, and get secret satisfaction out of feeling that they are better than us? Do they need to be needed, or can they simply be there for us without trying to "fix" us and offer solutions all the time.

We cannot recover alone, but we also cannot recover if all of our time is spent with others who are not in recovery either (Friel & Friel, Adult Children, p. 179).

Chemically dependent persons who were able to break their psychic isolation—to relate on a personal, feeling, level with their peers, in the group setting and with a Higher Power—were the most likely to attend AA regularly upon discharge. Conversely, those who had trouble relating in a group setting or in developing a means of maintaining contact with a power greater than themselves were least likely to attend AA and were most likely to suffer increased social and psychological dysfunction. Consequently, helping chemically dependent persons develop relational skills, interpersonal and spiritual, is as important as helping them break their denial system (Maxwell, 1986, p. 188).

It is important to be involved with other people during recovery from chemical abuse because part of the problem is that the addict's relationship with chemicals has become more important than his relationship with people.

Addiction exists if a person's chemical use is interfering in any important area of his life—his physical health, family, social, or work life—and he continues to use chemicals in spite of that interference (Maxwell, 1986, p.21) His relationship with chemicals will, in fact, become his most important relationship.... it becomes his life's guiding force (Maxwell, 1986, p. 26).

In order to reverse these priorities, the addict must be in a context where healthy relationships with others can grow.

The role of relationships with others in the healing process is tied to the concept that it is through love for others that we are regenerated. The teaching in the Writings that a person's internal is opened by love to the neighbor and love for the Lord implies that in order to be regenerated a person needs to be in a context where he can love his neighbor—where healthy relationships with others are possible. Without healthy relationships, usefulness and caring, the inner person can't be opened.

The interior mind is opened solely with those who are in innocence, in love to the Lord, and in charity towards the neighbor (AC 3224e).

In proportion as a person is in love to the Lord and in love towards the neighbor, in the same proportion he is in the internal man, and thinks and wills from it, and also speaks from it and acts from it (AC 9705).

Love to the Lord and charity towards the neighbor open the internal man (AC 10578.2).

These two loves... open and form the internal spiritual man, because they reside there. (HD 61).

There is not charity unless there are works of charity: in the exercise, or use, consists the charity, and he who loves the neighbor as himself never perceives the delight of charity except in the exercise or use; and therefore a life of charity is a life of uses (AC 997).

No man is ever born for the sake of any other end than that he may perform a use to the society in which he is, and to the neighbor (AC 1103.2).

Divine Providence in Human Relations

In order to understand the role of temptations in the regenerative process, we must understand the Lord's providence. Temptations do not happen randomly or mechanically. They happen only when the Lord allows it, and the Lord allows temptations to take place only when they can help the person's salvation. If there were not some good that could come from it, it would not be allowed to happen. This is true of all evil. In the last analysis, all evil external and internal is permitted for the sake of salvation. I suspect that human conflict comes under the same umbrella. No conflict between people would be allowed by the Lord unless through that conflict the people could have a potential of greater healing.

When a person is going through a conflict with other people, an appropriate question might be, *What is the conflict within me that this outward conflict can help me resolve?* When a person is going through some inner conflict, an appropriate question might be, *What changes will I need to make in my relationships with others as a result of resolving this inner conflict?* By identifying the connection between the different levels of conflict, the path to healing may become more clear.

Healing Relationships

When a person is codependent, he is part of a system of relationships that suffer from dysfunction. As long as the person remains in the system it is difficult to change, because the system of unhealthy relationships reinforces the unhealthy thinking and behavior of the people in it. One of the most important factors that leads a person from sickness to health is establishing healthy relationships with people outside the system. This is one of the functions of counseling and group therapy. The person who is codependent can find healing in the therapeutic relationship with a counselor or with other people in a support group.

Through personal relationships with healthy people a person can learn to be honest and trusting, and to accept their feelings without shame or blame and to break out of his dysfunctional patterns.

Co-dependents need a healthy adult and parent model to walk them through their fear and demonstrate for them that these terrible demons of change can't destroy them. In large part, this is the role of the therapist in treatment for co-dependency. I've never met an effective therapist working with adult children who didn't recognize this basic need in their co-dependent clients...the need for a healthy role model.

Yet strangely enough this simple philosophy is often overlooked in the process of treatment. I believe that if a counselor can be a good parent, a good guide and a patient mentor, then the client will ultimately begin to move in the direction they need to go toward a sane and healthy relationship with themselves....

So in recovery we need to find a mentor, a sponsor, or perhaps a group who will walk with us and lend support through the often difficult process of recovery. .

You see, the real danger in recovery for the co-dependent is the choice to continue to do it alone. Remaining alone is almost always a set-up to get lost in the shuffle. Alone we are unable to resolve our conflicts and as a result we begin again to look for the quick fix or some medication to ease the burden (Subby, 119-122).

Saved By A Relationship With The Lord

In the General Church many have shied away from speaking of accepting Jesus as "a personal Savior" or of having a "personal relationship" with Him. Many of us have had contact with people who boast of having a relationship with the Lord even as their actions indicate that they are rather far from the Lord. We don't want to trivialize our relationship with Him or have Him as a Friend instead of as our God. Our relationship with the Lord involves more than superficial feelings of friendship and gratitude.

He who believes that he loves the Lord, and does not live according to His precepts, is very much mistaken, for to live according to them is to love the Lord (AC 10578.3).

Many suppose that they worship the Lord by faith when they believe the things pertaining to the doctrine of the church, and that they worship the Lord by love when they love Him. But by merely believing and loving, the Lord is not worshipped, but by living according to His precepts; for these alone believe in the Lord, and love Him. Others say that they believe in Him and still they do not; and they say that they love Him, and still they do not (AC 106452).

To love the Lord is not to love His Person, but to love those things that proceed from Him; for these are the Lord with man (AE 973.2).

We are not equal to The Lord, and our relationship with Him must have reverence and respect in it. The Lord called His disciples "brothers," but they were not to call Him "Brother," but "Lord," for He is their Master and King (see AR 32). It is important that our relationship with the Lord not be superficial or merely social.

On the other hand, there is a danger that our relationship with the Lord might become too abstract, too removed from the Human. If there is anything that makes the New Church distinctive, it is the fact that we can have a relationship with the Lord because we worship a visible God (see TCR 787). This is the central and most important concept in the church. God is Man-The Lord is the Divine Human-and therefore we can have a relationship with God Himself. This is the promise for the New Church:

Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will be with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be with them, and be their God (Rev. 21:3).

More than anything else, it is this relationship with God that brings healing to people, that makes them whole. Notice the healing words in the next verse:

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying; and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away (Rev. 21:4).

The Writings say, "Salvation depends upon conjunction with God" (TCR 787e). To paraphrase, "Healing depends on a relationship with God." This is the principle recognized in the 11th step of AA: We "sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out." The Lord brings us healing by giving us a relationship with Himself. The whole process of glorification was for the sake of establishing a relationship between Himself and humankind that would be the basis for our healing or salvation.

In the union of His Human Essence with His Divine Essence the Lord had in view His relationship with the human race, and this was His end, and this His love, which was such that the salvation of the human race, as beheld in the union of Himself with His Father, was to Him the inmost joy (AC 2034.7).

Without a relationship with the Lord, everlasting life and salvation are impossible, because He is Himself both of these (TCR 726).

What does connection with the Lord mean but being among those who are in His body? And His body is made up of those who believe in Him and do His will (TCR 725).

It is connection with God, which affords a person salvation and everlasting life. Man was created to be capable of having a relationship with God.... A spiritual person can think about God and grasp ideas relating to God; he can also love God, and be attracted by what comes from God. It follows from this that he can have a relationship with God... This relationship affords him salvation and everlasting life (TCR 369).

In proportion as He is with a person the person has salvation (AE 460 .2).

They are saved who are in the Lord and the Lord in them (AR 5532).

Salvation and life eternal is primarily to worship the Lord, and to live according to His commandments in the Word, because thereby conjunction is effected with the Lord and consociation with the angels in heaven (AR 851).

The Lord alone has power over the hells, and a person has no power at all from himself or from what is his own; therefore a person has power to the extent that he is linked to the Lord through love (AE 2093).

There are many things which are a part of our relationship with the Lord. To have a connection with Him we must understand truth from the Word, we must flee from evils as sins against Him, we must love our neighbor and be of use to him, and we must undergo temptations. Through all these ways of responding to Him our relationship with Him will grow strong and healthy. Yet even *before* we love the Lord and our neighbor, before we shun evils as sins, before we understand the truth in the Word, *the Lord is there*, standing at the door and knocking, desiring to enter in and be our Friend. He is already there, at the Beginning and End of our journey, wanting to be with us, loving us unconditionally, waiting for us to respond.