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THE
CONTINUUM
THEORY

OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

by Stefan Deutsch

INTRODUCTION

The task is . . . not so much to see what no one has seen; but to think what nobody has yet thought, about that which everybody sees.

– ERWIN SCHRÖDINGER

As Dr. Richard Lerner explains in *Concepts and Theories of Human Development*, “Alternative world views lead us to ask different questions about development. Not better, just different. The real value of a new worldview and the theories it may bring forth is in its usefulness for descriptions, how well it explains development, and its use in devising new ways to optimize human behavior.”¹

The Continuum Theory™ provides just such a worldview, a new definition of life span and human development, which more fully explains human development and opens up new worlds of possibility for reaching the optimum potential of each and every individual.

The concepts for the Continuum Theory were developed away from mainstream academia. After I obtained my bachelor’s degree

in physics and philosophy, I had a hard time with the philosophy of psychology, so I left NYU's Graduate School where I was studying movement therapy. Although Freud's concepts were intuitive and well ahead of his time, I felt uncomfortable with the idea of building a science on them. It felt like a lot of the terminology was without strict, functional definitions, and I took issue with the convoluted imagery of the struggle between the ego, id, and superego, and the Oedipal Complex into which all problems had to fit. Jung, with his concepts of the twelve archetypes and the universal unconscious, was not a better fit for me. The developmental theories which focused primarily on the first ten years of life—the theories of Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Bronfenbrenner, Ainsworth, Watson—all used observation and then developed a statement about that observation. Kant said, "Observation without theory is blind, theory without observation is empty," clearly intimating which has to come first.² A theory is an intuitive insight into the nature of reality which needs to precede observation, not the other way around (like Schrödinger said, about something everybody sees but nobody has yet thought). Otherwise it is only a statement about an observation and not a theory, in my opinion.

And finally, the main reason I left mainstream academia was because, again in my opinion, if a theory of human development is truly a theory and not just a truism about a set of observable data, we should be able to apply it and get answers to all the issues and problems surrounding human development, not just for people up to age ten or in mid-life, or for dysfunctions, but rather for each and every phase, stage, and issue of life. A theory of human development needs to be able to give life to answers no matter where we look—which I did not see with the present set of theories and still don't, and it is why I decided to search for answers that satisfied these two criteria

for me. I placed myself at the margins—and here is what Joseph Melnick wrote about us working at the margins.

If we believe that growth occurs at the boundary and that remaining marginal in the sense of living in two worlds is the desired stance . . . it follows that we need to look at the positive values of the “irrelevance definition” of marginality. We need to be cautious about embracing too much of the mainstream judgment that if we are not central to the dominant central perspective then we are of limited professional and theoretical value.

When you are marginal, you have the freedom to be more experimental. You are not tied down by the rules and introjects of the prevailing culture. Nor are you governed by bureaucrats who often stifle creativity, replacing it by rigid standards of conduct and practice.

In sum, when pondering the question, “Are we becoming too marginal?” my response is, “Not marginal enough.” I believe that our challenge is to hold onto our marginality in the future.³

I believe that we continually have to develop universal new ideas and theories for growth and development to occur in any area. This is also true of our ideas of life span, human development, and the self, which are the areas I have been focusing on.

The Continuum Theory

My vision was to establish *nomothetic* laws about human development: laws that focus on universal sequences and their contexts in human development that could apply to all people all of the time.

In the past, we lived on the earth without knowing what Earth was, having ideas like the earth is flat, it's the center of the universe, the sun revolves around us and if it gets angry it may not rise again. We lived with ignorance and misunderstanding. But once we had the knowledge that the earth was round, it inspired us to travel the globe and meet other civilizations. Once we understood that the sun wasn't an angry god that revolved around us, we could stop being afraid that our actions could cause it to not rise again. We could envision traveling in space. These understandings were vital contributions to humanity's growth.

You may ask me if it is important to have a functional definition of self to advance our knowledge in human development, psychology, and psychotherapy. For me, the answer is, absolutely. Can we do what we do in psychology and psychotherapy without knowing what the self is, or agreeing upon a definition of what the self is? To me the answer is, *we certainly have been trying but have not achieved it well enough*. For the science of psychology and psychotherapy, we need to have a functional definition of the self that everyone can agree on, so the research that is done can be uniformly described and understood by everyone.

I have given this close to thirty years of thought, asking questions that perhaps others haven't and not accepting answers that perhaps others have.

The life span development of a human being is evolutionary in nature. I believe it occurs as an overlapping, three-part developmental process: body, mind (brain), and the self. The self is conceived-birthed along with body and mind, with all three existing initially as potential that is able to develop fully. All three begin this development at conception-birth. The self has the identical potential for development as the body and mind and is fully integrated with

body and mind. The self is the seat of conscious awareness. It is the *I* we refer to. The more fully it is developed, the more it is able to use the body and the mind and its own abilities and facilities to navigate effectively through life.

It makes complete sense that the self would identify itself with what it becomes aware of first, i.e., with its own body. It is the first thing its awareness becomes familiar with, the first thing it experiences, the first thing it can begin to log into its memory bank (the mind), the first thing it can begin to comprehend, and the first thing its parents continually attend to. So, since the self's first conscious experience is of and with its body, it stands to reason it will identify with and believe that it is a body.

As the mind develops, the self begins to notice that those in charge of its development are trying to reach another part of it other than its body. The repetitious nature of much of this early communication is intended for the self to remember certain things like the naming of objects. It begins to realize that it can bring forth, recall this repetitious information, that it is using something else other than its body. It begins to use this other part and finds that it is rewarded with appreciation from those in charge. It begins to enjoy using it. The self may not know yet what this other part is or what it is called, or where the seat of this apparatus, its mind, is. Those attending to it are beginning to teach it language, counting, and the recognition of objects; later, they ask it to memorize facts; and later, they ask it to think about problems of mathematics, reasoning, and consequential thinking. It is natural for the self to start to think of itself as a body and a mind.

Since the concept that we are self (the self being the conscious force that is aware of and makes decisions with relation to its body and mind) is missing from our developmental philosophy, the self's

developmental needs are never addressed. Nor does it become fully aware and conscious of its own abilities or facilities. Therefore, the self's needs and developmental potential are left latent or, worse, are damaged and continue to wait to be healed and fully developed.

From conception, each human being has a life force, an energy to potentialize its body, mind, and self. The reality of this life force is obvious when we consider how a zygote potentializes in the womb into a full-blown human being which is birthed. This life force continues throughout life. From conception and on into late teens, each human being's life force, the energy to potentialize, is focused primarily on the full development of the body. Once that is completed, this developmental energy, the life force moving us to develop fully, shifts its energy to the full development of the mind's potential. From late teens to around forty years of age, each human being's life force is focused primarily on the full development of the mind. That is why the questions a human being asks at around age thirteen—What's for dinner? Can I get the latest sneakers?—shift around the age of twenty-plus to more conceptual questions about politics, religion, gender, race, the future, and relationships that requires one to use the mind.

The third stage, which starts around forty years of age, is when nature again shifts its energy from the development of the mind's potential to the full development of the self's potential. This explains not only mid-life crises but also why so many individuals begin to turn from materialism (which is simply the self using the memory bank and calculator that is the brain, quantifying what one has, thinking that more is better, and that more equals happiness) to an awareness, a realization that more is not making oneself, or anyone for that matter, happy. The shift occurs when the questions that are being asked regarding how to achieve happiness change from the quantity of stuff and money to the quality of one's life. One begins to

question one's own motives, attitudes, relationships, and career path, thus becoming what we might call a more aware person, and perhaps one who yearns for a more meaningful lifestyle.

Of course, even though going through each stage is part of nature's plan, all but the body stage must be consciously fostered by other human beings. This development of the body stage can be seen when a child will naturally try to stand up, then try to walk, engage in play, and generally try to imitate other bodily movements and actions of adults around him or her. All of this helps growth and development of the body's potential. The same is only true to a limited degree with the mind. A child might acquire language by imitation, but reading and writing must be taught, and problem solving and consequential and creative thinking must be explained at a time the mind is most capable of acquiring these abilities—from twenty years of age onward. The final stage, that of developing and potentializing the self, takes the greatest amount of teaching and conscious attention. We initially teach self-control and certain moral issues to a child and young adult in order to have them be ready to potentialize their self's full development in the third stage, around forty.

Historically, two factors prevented people from potentializing both their minds and their selves. The first was that all their time was consumed by simply trying to find food and protect themselves from dangers.⁴ The second was that the average life span was so short, it prevented most people from reaching the chronological age where their life force could shift into either the full development of mind (twenty-plus) or later to the full development of the self (forty-plus). Both of these developmental stages need conscious attention and teaching by those who have developed their own minds and selves. Very few people ever developed their minds beyond learning language, customs, and traditions. There were even fewer people whose

selves were developed, who could then help to develop and potentialize others' selves.

When philosophers and psychologists debate about the self, it is always whether there exists some type of solid, full-blown, finished entity like the body or the brain that can be examined and studied. In trying to get a handle on the self, it seems we harken back to ideas we generally think of as spiritual: an immortal soul that persists after the body dies, a being, a spirit (as in guardian spirit), an invisible entity inside of us that usually is ascribed consciousness, and often is synonymous with goodness. We relate to self as a spirit in a similar way that we see a god as a spirit, something that perhaps directs or should direct us.

What seems to be missing from this debate is the possibility that the self is very much like the body and mind, birthed at the same time and totally integrated with body and mind. It is not a separate entity but has different facilities, as do body and mind. I believe all three are vibrating, energetic entities. All three come into existence at birth. All three need nourishment and nurturing. All three have their own developmental potential. For simplicity's sake, I call the various abilities that can be potentialized in the body *muscles*, in the mind *capacities*, and in the self *facilities*.

All three need specific exercises for their specific abilities to fully develop. If you tie up the feet, like some people used to do, you can damage the body's potential for mobility and balance. If you do not talk to a child or engage the mind of a child in reasoning, you will damage the mind's potential to communicate and reason. The self has its own facilities with potential to develop. But since we cannot see self, and since from science's perspective it does not exist, we do not worry about what developmental damage we may be causing by, as it were, tying it up, not nourishing it properly, not exercising it

suitably, and not developing it correctly. I believe the facilities of the self are actually diminished and damaged over time instead of being fully developed, which I believe is the primary reason why many people experience emotional problems and feel unsatisfied and unfulfilled with their lives.

Both Eastern philosophers and Western philosophers and psychologists deny the existence of the self as a real entity. Eastern philosophers like Confucius and Lao Tzu were hoping to end humanity's suffering caused by what they saw as attachment to self (ego) and its struggle with accepting the way things were (which is not that different from teachings about being rewarded in the afterlife if you accept the way things are here on Earth). Western philosophers and psychologists denied the existence of the self because they couldn't observe or study the self. I believe that the denial of self as a real entity is a mistake of major proportions.

Since our origin, humans have looked up and have seen light coming from the sky. One was a very bright, warm light, and one was a smaller, cooler light, and there were lots of tiny glimmering lights. We didn't know where any of these lights were coming from; all we knew was that we could observe the light. The observing of the light was real, even though the source was obscure. Later, much later, we were able to establish the source and the composition of the sun, moon, and stars, and explain why they emanated or reflected light. Knowing the composition of the source of the observable light isn't necessary for us to say that the light we observe is real and therefore its source is real. I believe it is same with self.

We have for thousands of years observed behavior, which we have attributed to a part of a human being that isn't the body or mind. We have called it *spirit*, *soul*, and *being*. It has been clear to us that a person who goes around slums, gathering up and caring for the

dead and dying, is not behaving based on a well-developed body or super-intelligent mind. We understand this behavior is being activated by another part of the person. We have observed this type of *selfless* behavior in many individuals historically and close to home. We have created words in our languages to describe it. But because we can't observe the source of this selfless behavior, like we couldn't observe the source of the lights in the sky, and because we don't know the source's origin and composition, we are trying to dismiss the reality of the source, while accepting the reality of the behavior.

The concept of atoms, which was put forth by Democritus in the third millennium BCE as "tiny, invisible, indivisible particles that in different combinations formed all material reality," was similarly ignored and discredited by our much more famous philosophers like Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, Kant, Newton, and Galileo, who all believed matter was made up the four elements: air, fire, earth, and water. Why? It was taught by wise, educated men in power who had control over what people believed and, no matter how logical and intuitively correct the theory was, at that time they could not see atoms.

We can't see the self. So, what? Now, I don't think that it is all bad to not believe in things we can't see, like the Loch Ness Monster, Leprechauns, and Superman, but when our *experience* continually confirms a concept, we owe it to ourselves to investigate it more fully.

There is actual harm done to a person because we insist on denying the existence of a developmental self. This harm relates directly to all the issues that have the prefix *self*: low self-esteem, no self-support, no self-confidence, no self-love, low self-worth, no self-respect, no self-awareness, no self-care, not self-motivated. They translate into terms such as self-destructive, unconscious, unaware, self-conscious, self-doubt, self-sabotage, procrastination.

Many of the issues of psychology, parenting, education, and medicine (such as stress, anxiety, depression, personal failure, and rebellion), can be explained and healed better by viewing the self as an entity that can make good decisions once it is fully developed. This development is based on 1) growing its awareness so it can be fully in touch with what feels painful, wrong, or absent; 2) being able to clearly define pain, as well as wants and needs, which we call creating a vision; 3) communicating these newly recognized feelings and needs effectively and without blame; and 4) doing it all with unconditional, loving behavior. Self-love prompts one to obtain what one needs. Self-love is synonymous with self-sufficiency, not with being selfish or self-centered. Since loving energy is nourishment like air, food, and water, it makes logical sense that it needs to be supplied unconditionally. The conditional behavior of most well-meaning parents, friends, and others deprives people of the necessary amount of nourishment they need to thrive. The best solution is what I mentioned before—teaching children to become unconditionally self-sufficient, as they are in acquiring air, food, and water.

The Story of M: Her Father's Condition

The father of one of my associates (we'll call her Mary) had a severe spinal injury when she was just a child. The accident not only paralyzed him from the neck down but also forced him to live in an iron lung, in an institution for the rest of his life. His wife, left with two children, asked if it would be all right to divorce him and remarry. He agreed. Then, a choice had to be made by this unfortunate man: to live a life of purpose, or to feel sorry for himself for what turned out to be another forty years. Forty years of life with a well-educated brain and a body that could not be used to take care of himself.

Tragedy strikes many individuals. Some tragedies—like bankruptcies, job loss, divorce, fires that destroy homes, robberies, car accidents, and serious but not deadly illnesses—are not nearly as catastrophic as being stuck in an iron lung because, one may argue, they comparatively allow for greater possibility of reclaiming one's life.

Many individuals who experience these tragedies are healthy, well-educated people. The rest of their lives is still in front of them and they have a clear possibility of seizing an opportunity to confront their tragedy and overcome it. And yet many of them become depressed, non-functioning, bitter, angry, self-pitying, defeated, unhappy individuals.

What is the difference between those who choose the road to overcoming tragedy and those who feel defeated?

Mary's father—who had lost his body, who needed help even for the most personal and potentially embarrassing bodily functions, and who was locked into an iron lung in one room—made a choice. He became one of the most prolific lobbyists for all forms of disabilities and inspired legislation and reforms and raised America's consciousness regarding the needs of the disabled.

The stress, the hopelessness that tragedies and disappointments produce affect individuals who are both physically and mentally well-developed, differently. Why should that be if we are only a body and a brain? If we are only a body and a brain, then all the answers and solutions must lie in those two areas, the only areas open for investigation and research.

Focusing on body and mind has led to medical and psychological communities prescribing drugs that numb feelings or induce a sense of euphoria (well-being). Both affect the body's and brain's functioning. While in some cases they may assist the individual to temporarily function better day to day, they in no way assist in dealing with

the underlying causes of why the tragedy affected a person in such a debilitating way.

Looking for and trying to deal with underlying causes is the province of some form of psycho-intervention. Psychiatry is depending more and more on drugs. It has no other model for effective intervention. The time taken by psychiatrists for conversation is lessening, according to the *New York Times*.⁵ Even when they understand the background of a client, the client doesn't necessarily feel better about themselves or the future. The results of talk are meager.

What part of a human being is preventing this healthy, well-developed body and this healthy, well-developed brain from functioning in the same healthy way it used to before the tragedy occurred? After all, it is the same body and same brain! What part is in control of this body and brain?

My belief is that without having something real to work with, something that we know must be at the root of emotional distress, we cannot approach healing effectively. Including in our scientific model the concept of a real self—a real self that has been damaged in childhood or adulthood and now needs rehabilitation and development—would make diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment more likely to succeed.

We know without needing to do tests that the self's four areas of development (which I will discuss later) have been ignored or damaged and need to be the focus of attention. Developing clients' awareness so they can be aware of their full spectrum of feelings, rather than numbing their awareness of pain with drugs, is the start.

The next step is to teach clients about the need for creating a new vision, a new set of possibilities. Once clients understand that they can affect the future by implementing a new vision, they become more hopeful. Even if they don't believe in it, their focus of attention

becomes the future with positive possibilities. In *The Mind and the Brain*, Dr. Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley discuss the brain's plasticity and how vision can require the use one's brain.⁶

Teaching individuals about effective communication helps their vision begin the manifesting process. Once we communicate to the people in our universe, the universe and people begin to respond to our communications. The communication creates something to talk about, a future with possibilities.

Finally, teaching people to love and ask for love, the necessary nourishment of the self, gives them energy to persist. Instead of drugs, what people need is to learn to love (feed) themselves. Exactly the way they learned how to feed their bodies and brains with air-food-water, they will learn to feed themselves with love.

The most hopeful, energizing thing in life is to have a vision that is fed by love. At the time of conceptualizing the Continuum Theory, I hypothesized that what we call love is a form of nourishment that nourishes the self. Since then, the research of Barbara Fredrickson at the University of North Carolina has made significant strides toward proving my thesis that love is exactly like air, food, and water, nourishment vital to the development and thriving of human beings.

At this time, mainstream therapeutic interventions do not address love as a real, tangible energy. Harville Hendrix has written about getting, keeping, and giving love. His program, Imago Relationship Therapy, has been highly successful, although it lacks the theoretical underpinnings of what love is. Its success can be directly related to an approach that emphasizes what my theory calls loving behavior. Empathy, respect, validation, consideration, patience, and conscious communication are all different forms of love, different ways of transmitting loving energy. They all nourish that part of us that is not the body or brain but the self, which controls both body and brain.

My therapeutic training is in Gestalt therapy, which is highly awareness oriented, and the connection between therapist and client often will include the touching of hands, hugs, cradling as an infant, and many other loving behaviors that are not encouraged in most other therapeutic interventions. Yet, Gestalt theory never mentions love and insists that the self is merely a process of ebb and flow—not very useful for either the therapist or the client.

The issue isn't or shouldn't be whether the self is real or not. The issue is or should be what explains human behavior in a way that is consistent with our experience, is more useful in positively altering human behavior and thereby assisting individuals in achieving their life goals and living happy, healthy lives. Ease of access is another issue: which explanation is more easily understood by the layperson and clinician alike, and can more easily be used by all for the betterment of society? Imagine having scientific ideas of human development and the development of the self that inspires laypeople, one they can learn and effectively use themselves, just like they could use the wheel or arithmetic.

My mission was to create a theory of who we are and how we can create better lives, a theory that is easily learned and easily used by everyone. First, I spent over ten years devising a new theory of life span and human development. Then, I spent the next twenty years researching the many applications of the theory, all of which turned out to support its efficacy. So, for me, the debate about whether self is an entity has been over for quite a while.

For you perhaps, the debate is just starting. I am more than happy to take on your skepticism, your questions, and your objections.

Self is an entity, albeit not defined in the way philosophy and psychology often try to define an entity as separate, solid, visible, or taking up space. I believe that the reason we are still embroiled

in the debate of whether self is real, besides the fact that I have not yet made my theory or findings fully public, is that we keep starting the debate by going all the way back to the Cartesian theater and before, continually asking the same questions rather than new, practical ones. Actually, the questions and answers haven't changed much—only the vocabulary for expressing them has, much of it now coming from clinical psychology.

New Questions

My experience some thirty years ago with Creative Aging, an organization I co-founded, was that people resisted the idea of aging. They did not have the perspective that each year, each decade brought the possibility of developing a yet undeveloped potential—a potential which, once developed, would assure greater power and satisfaction in life. I researched this by asking hundreds of individuals to chart life on a graph. The result was a bell-shaped curve, peaking at thirty-five years of age, clearly showing that the overwhelming majority of people perceived life span as an inevitably declining process. This perception is quite evident when we see people turning thirty, forty, and fifty, who by and large are upset and anxious rather than enthusiastically looking forward to the next decade of their lives and development.

Why is this? I wondered.

Are they correctly perceiving life? Is their definition of life as an inevitably declining process turning it into one exactly, like a self-fulfilling prophecy? What if it turned out that life span was actually an upward-curving, ever-potentializing process? If that were true, would people forty, fifty, and sixty years of age perceive the next decade of their lives differently? And if that were possible (that life

is an upward-curving process of potentializing), what theoretical framework would support it and prove it? My intuition said that, in fact, life is an upward-curving process of potentializing, which we misperceive because the body and, to a lesser degree, the brain do seem to decline with age. If we believe we are only body and brain, then we are right to resist this process and not look forward to the next decade and then the next. After all, who in their right mind (or left brain) wants to watch themselves decline?

I set out to find a theoretical framework that would not only prove that life is an upward-curving process of potentializing, but also in the process, change people's perceptions. I wanted to inspire people across generations to find their true potential, satisfaction, and unconditional love, and to motivate people to be the most productive in their later years. Retirement, for most, is certainly not the most productive part their lives.

So, with that as background, let's delve into the theory.

The Theory of Self: Research

I believe that psychology need not go, as it does presently, in two different directions: 1) the study of pathology and 2) the study of well-being. I believe that the body and mind, both being machines, can and do break down, can produce variations that are beyond our control and even our imagination, and can lack certain hormones and other chemicals needed for health and well-being. But I believe that these cases are by far in the minority. As far as the causes of depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses medical and psychology communities are attempting to cure, I believe that most of the pathologies are the result of the same dynamic that applies to a majority of individuals: a basic ignorance of who they are as human beings,

how they function, their lack of awareness of what their needs truly are, their lack of vision and knowledge as to how to ask for what they want, and finally, how to be unconditionally loving toward themselves (self-sufficiency) and others, and how to ask for and receive unconditionally loving behavior.⁷

This can all be taught! It can happen once people understand that they have a self that needs development and rehabilitation.

I believe that both an individual life span and human evolution (at least from the Stone Age through today) have three-part developmental processes: the physical, the mental, and that of the self. The micro-evolutionary process (or human development and life span) mirrors the macro-evolutionary process of human evolution. Both theories are easy for people to follow and for me to provide evidence for. I will start with the theory of human evolution, because the historical documentation makes it relatively simple to prove.

The three stages of human evolution can be seen when we document the evolution of ideas relating to the body/me survival stage, the mind/we survival stage, and the self/us survival stage. It is this theory of human evolution that underscores my theory of life span.

Although I am not an archaeologist or anthropologist, records seem to indicate that the Paleolithic Age, or the Old Stone Age, covered about ninety-nine percent of human history. During this period, stone tools were developed. During the Paleolithic Age, humans grouped together in small scale societies and gathered plants and hunted wild animals. This ninety-nine percent of human history took more than two million years. Human beings lived in isolated bands with the average life expectancy of perhaps twenty years or less. The next stage in human evolution was called the Pleistocene, and it was characterized by the introduction of agriculture around the tenth millennium BCE.

When you consider that, for nearly two million years, human beings existed in a very primitive mode of survival, don't you have to ask yourself the question, *Why?* I did!

We see how rapidly knowledge advances today. Then, why did it take nearly two million years for humanity to move from stone tools to metals, from exclusively hunting and gathering to also developing the knowledge of domesticating plants and animals when their very survival was at stake?

Anthropologists have theories about why this took so long to happen, and so do I. The following table can start to explain my theory.⁸

Humans by Era and Region	Average Lifespan at Birth (years)
Late Pleistocene (Neanderthals)	20
Upper Paleolithic	33
Neolithic	20
Bronze Age	18
Classical Greece	20–30
Classical Rome	20–30
Pre-Columbian North America	25–35
Medieval Britain	20–30
Early Twentieth Century	30–40
Current world average	78

According to the Encyclopedia Britannica

Certainly, humans being in small groups isolated from one another, fearful of and hostile to one another and focusing on daily survival, was a contributing factor to their inability to develop better

survival tools and ideas. As for those in warmer parts of the world with an abundance of easily accessible animals and vegetables, perhaps they did not need to develop tools or ideas for survival. But I believe there was an even more important factor. And that was their life span.

I believe that people do not develop their brain's potential for problem solving and consequential thinking until after twenty years of age. And for that to even happen after twenty, the groundwork for thinking, as opposed to mimicking and doing, has to be laid. I believe that not only was the training of individual young limited to survival skills, but also that too few lived long enough to use their own brain's development to analyze their experiences, entertain ideas, and perform trial and error, which could have brought about new solutions. As archeologists have shown, critical, evolutionary thinking happened only in the most limited sense for a very long time.

As we can see by analyzing the table, the short, average life expectancy persisted until the early twentieth century. So, how did humanity manage to create advances in knowledge, given my theory? When people began domesticating plants and animals around ten thousand years ago, disease from domesticated animals and closer contact with denser human populations brought down the average life expectancy. But population numbers went way up. Because of better nutrition, the chances of more people surviving longer was statistically ensured. Survival was no longer tied to what the environment had to offer so much as to hard work or the weather. Agricultural communities also developed specialized trades. This set of circumstances allowed more individuals to reach an age where their brains' potential could be developed, along with having more time, in winter and growing seasons, where the potential of their brains could be put to use.

It is not surprising that with the advent of sewage systems, hygiene, antibiotics, anesthetics, and sufficiently available food in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, record numbers of people started to live into their forties, fifties, and sixties. And it was these individuals who were directly responsible for industrial revolutions and nearly all of the scientific advances that improved the quality of life.

But that is not all that has happened as a result of scientific advancements leading to longer life spans. Another revolution—that of a morality that included strong social responsibility—started to take root.

Again, how would we explain this by looking at life span? Why were there two world wars and countless others, genocides and holocausts, slavery and child labor, together with all of these scientific advances? After all, didn't we have an ever-growing number of these mind-developed, educated human beings? Isn't developing the mind enough to make people more caring about other human beings? History clearly tells us no. And to this day, merely being educated does not equate with being compassionate and caring. It seems that a developed mind is insufficient for the greater causes of humanity: ending hunger and poverty, bringing peace, and ensuring equality and opportunity for self-expression to all.

The second question you may want to ask yourself is, *Why did it take two million plus another ten thousand years for us to start becoming more morally responsible for our fellow human beings?*

If we go back to the table, we see that today, the average life span is seventy-eight years. At the turn of the twentieth century, it was forty-seven years in the US. In most other countries, it was even less.

The answer is relatively simple. With the majority of human beings living only into their twenties and thirties, not only was there insufficient time to develop the self, but not even sufficient time to

develop the mind. Moreover, survival, dominance, and the competitive nature of humanity were at the forefront of human interactions.

At the turn of the twentieth century, more food and then penicillin brought the average life expectancy to forty-seven, and the advent of universal education began to provide the foundation for the wholesale development of people's minds. Air travel, television, atomic energy, medical breakthroughs, the Internet, and many more inventions are the clear product of the millions of human beings now afforded the opportunity to develop their minds. But world wars, religious wars, hunger and starvation, abuse, slave trade, servitude, hate, cold wars, nuclear annihilation, financially using people by not paying or underpaying them, still persisted.

It wasn't until the mid-1950s, when the population started to reach their fifties, sixties, and beyond in large numbers to today's average life expectancy of seventy-eight, that millions of people with developed minds began to reach an age where the full development of their selves was possible. So, it is no coincidence that there has been a greater response to global strife, hunger, and illness that is much more humane and caring than ever before.

1. Love Proves the Self Is Real

I became conscious of the word *love* at about the age of thirteen. It was, of course, in the romantic sense of the word. Since then, I've met thousands of people and have come across very few who have not experienced the pain of love lost, of being rejected by one whom we love.

It is common knowledge that love is wanted and needed by human beings. It is also common knowledge that love can be given and received just like a gift—a little, a lot, or not at all. Just read the

books—from romance to self-help, from psychology to spirituality—as they incessantly talk about love. So, is the love that everyone talks about and writes about and believes in fact or fiction?

The sciences, including psychology, have given little attention to the fact that love 1) is wanted and needed and 2) can be given and received by all. Combining logic and experiential observation, I have discovered that what our experience indicates to be true is absolutely correct. These two facts are the foundation for a dramatic shift in our knowledge about human development, the self, and love. These new ideas have a profound impact on psychology, psychotherapy, parenting, education, relationships, and especially our views about the self and human development.

Not long ago, it was common knowledge that Earth was the center of the universe. That was fiction. When Galileo proved Copernican heliocentrism (the fact that Earth revolved around the sun), he was denounced and accused of heresy. Why such anger at a new idea? Only a hundred and fifty years ago, the greatest universities on Earth were teaching that air, fire, water, and earth made up everything material in the universe. Why were they still teaching this, you may ask yourself, when the concept of the atom was put forward over two millennia ago by the philosopher Democritus? The idea of atoms was considered foolishness. Invisible particles—please! Just like the king's new clothes, fairy tales are for children, not serious adults, certainly not scientists! As we mull over the two examples above, consider what Thomas Kuhn, the father of the modern philosophy of science, had to say about progress in scientific ideas: “normal science” has a built-in resistance to revolutionary new ideas.⁹ As we saw, Democritus and Galileo were, unfortunately, ahead of their time.

The ideas I formulated over thirty years ago about the nature of love were similarly ahead of their time. I believe these ideas will have

a dramatic impact on people's quality of life. I believe science today is ready and willing to hear new ideas about love, especially an idea that will change the way the sciences approach human development, which impacts human relationships and, therefore, happiness. At the core of the new approach lies a new theory of the existence of the self. As we have discovered in the past, just because science says something exists or doesn't, doesn't make it so. I do not mean to imply that science hasn't made or won't continue to make a tremendous contribution to the advancement of knowledge and the quality of life. But often, our obsession with the observable, our comfort with what we think we know, and our fear of being wrong, makes us persist and insist on old, ineffective ideas and hinders us from seeing what may be right in front of us.

As far as we know, love is (like *atomos* used to be) not observable—not by x-rays, cathode chambers, certainly not by the human eye. Therefore, to science, it doesn't exist and isn't worthy of study. Yet, it seems to me that the effects of love are very observable and easily replicable in scientific studies. Although there is talk of love everywhere, no scientific theory has ever been put forth regarding the nature of love. This has kept in place the universal confusion about what love is and how to love effectively.

It is not surprising that one of the most commonly used sayings about love is “we hurt the ones we love the most.” Look at the high divorce rate between people who pledged eternal love, and consider the lack of closeness in many parent–child relationships. It seems we do hurt the ones we love the most. If this is true, it is obvious that human beings don't know, and aren't being taught, how to love and be loved. I know my theories of the self and the nature of love, which are parts of my Continuum Theory of Human Development, will change that.

After I theorized that life span is a three-stage developmental process—body, mind, and finally self—I wondered: If the self were a real entity, just like the body and brain, what questions would that generate? Since we can't see it, where does it reside? What would nourish it? It must need nourishment exactly like the body and brain do. How would we develop it? It must need a developmental protocol, like the body and brain have. How would it interact with the body and brain? We discovered how the body and brain interact with each other. What would its role be in daily life and in a person's decision-making process?

It was questions like these that took me on a twenty-year quest that ended when the Continuum Theory of Human Development finally had all the pieces of the puzzle in place.

Out of asking some simple questions, which I don't believe I'd ever heard asked before, came more questions, then the answers, one by one. One of the hardest answers to come up with, one that took years to discover, was to the question, *If self is real, it must need nourishment, so what is nourishment for the self?* I knew it wasn't air, food, and water, the nourishments for body and mind, but I couldn't see beyond that. When I finally realized what the answer was, I not only had a handle on the true nature of love, but a functional definition of love, and proof that love, as well as the self, was real. Love (loving energy) is the nourishment for the self.

I believe that love is one of the basic nourishing energies of life, just like air, food, and water, and not some romantic notion.¹⁰ One that science has yet to "discover." Just like Democritus's atomos (which today we know as atoms, those tiny, invisible particles he postulated made up the universe), we have never been able to see love or loving energy. Just as atoms existed even though we could not see or measure them only two hundred years ago, not being able to see or

measure the quantum energy waves that love is composed of does not make its existence, the energy I call love, any less real.

We have certainly all experienced the reality of love, such as when our mother smiled at us, when Dad hugged us, when a friend wanted to play, when our date really liked us, when our partner said “I will” and “I do,” when our child said, “I love you.” All of these experiences affect us in a very tangible, physical way. They served us (our body-mind-self) as beneficially as air, food, and water did and made us feel wonderful. These positive experiences gave us the nourishment our self needs. How do we know that for sure? Some part of us feels warm, energized, and nourished after having these experiences! The fact is that we feel nourished when we receive love, just like we feel nourished when we breathe in clean air, have a nourishing meal, or drink fresh water. I believe that what we call love is nothing more or less than the nourishment our self needs. Love when received and ingested behaves in our system as do all other nourishments. Love may not be tangible or visible, just like atoms aren’t, but the way our body-mind-self reacts to both getting love and being deprived of love proves that love is real. This simple, practical analogy helps us to understand love is real and is needed as nourishment for self.

We would never discourage infants, children, teenagers, or even adults from asking for—demanding—air, food, or water if they were thirsting, suffocating, or starving to death. Life depends on those things. We are all very committed to physical survival, and we understand and encourage this commitment. When it comes to emotional survival, which depends on having the nourishment called love, it’s quite a different story. By the time we’re adults, we have become poor beggars on the bread line of life when it comes to love. We’re afraid to ask for, and are often unable to get, the love we need, want, and deserve. And we’re not much better at *giving* it to the ones we want to.

We all have felt warm and fuzzy, special and secure, and energized and happy. Sometimes we call it being loved. The warm-and-fuzzies are what we all want and need. But there are really painful feelings associated with love too, and we have all experienced those, as well. What is love if it can nourish us, make us feel warm and fuzzy, and yet also cause us to be in pain? How does this impact our understanding of the nature of love? What are the implications of this for psychology, psychotherapy, parenting, marriage, education, work, and relationships?

These questions puzzled me for years. Finally, the light bulb went on as I asked myself the following questions. Try answering them for yourself.

- Does food, a nourishment, cause us to be happy or in pain?
- Does water, a nourishment, cause us to be happy or in pain?
- Does air, a nourishment, cause us to be happy or in pain?

Having food, water, and air make us feel better than when we are without them. We need them for our very survival. Air, food, and water are vital nourishments for our body-mind. So, it is not air, food, and water themselves that causes pain, but only the absence of air, food, and water—the deprivation of vital nourishments for body-mind—which causes pain. This may be a simple fact that we all know, but it has powerful implications about the nature of love. It turns out that we react exactly the same way to the absence of love—deprivation of it—as we do to being deprived of air, food, and water. Think—is it love that causes us to feel pain or is it the absence of love that causes pain?

When we don't receive any of the vital nourishments we need like air, food, and water, we experience pain. When we don't receive love,

we also experience pain. Is it possible that love is a vital nourishment, just like air, food, and water? Is it love that causes you happiness and pain? Think of when the absence of love hurt you as a child. I bet they were times like these: when Mom looked at you angrily, when Dad yelled, when a friend did not want to play with you, when a family member made fun of you, when someone you liked ignored you. Today, you may feel hurt when a spouse gets impatient, when siblings don't call, when a co-worker gossips, when a neighbor is inconsiderate, when your children don't appreciate your efforts. These situations all cause you pain because they are all examples of wanting to feel love present, and instead love is absent. These are all people you love but it is not love itself that caused you pain. It was the absence of the love that you wanted from them that caused you pain. When love is present you feel warm, energized, happy, and content. When love is withdrawn or not available, you feel emptiness and pain. Therefore, love is something we need and when we don't have it, when we are deprived of it, we suffer.

I told you earlier that I believe love is a real, vibrating energy, which can be generated by a human being and gifted to another, as well as graciously accepted or rejected. If love's presence or absence can cause extreme sensations like happiness and sadness, energy and weakness, it must be present or absent to have the power to effectuate this. If love is at times present and at other times absent, it must be a *thing*. If love is a thing, love must be real. Finally, as I have mentioned in earlier paragraphs, love behaves in the human being exactly like the known nourishments of air, food, and water. Therefore, love is real and nourishment.

Now that we have established love is a nourishing energy (the absence of which causes us pain), we must next ask, *What hurts when we are deprived of loving energy? Where is the source of pain?* It is

clear to me that it is not my elbow, kidney, or any other body part that hurts in the absence of love. Although we continually refer to our heart (as in a *broken heart*), we seldom go to a cardiologist, like we do when we have a heart attack or a real pain in our heart muscle, nor is there ever a bypass operation performed for a broken heart. So, what hurts so much that some people choose suicide, go into deep depression, or suffer sadness for months? Again, I believe that the part of us that hurts and feels the painful absence of loving energy is the self.

I believe this is strong, logical, and experiential proof that 1) love, synonymous with loving energy, is real, and therefore 2) the self, which is nourished with loving energy, is also real.

Review

Love is a necessary nourishment. Love is either present or absent. The presence or absence of love causes the following: an increase or decrease of energy, a sense of well-being or lethargy, a feeling of joy or sadness. For all of these feelings and sensations to occur in a human being, it takes the presence or absence of real energy. These do occur in human beings, therefore love is a real energy.

That it is the absence of love that causes pain may now seem obvious, but in fact it leads us to a revolutionary new way of giving and receiving love. This thing we call love is a real energy—quantum, molecular, vibrating. Yes, it is invisible, and it is a necessary nourishment human beings consistently need. Love is uniquely the only nutrient that human beings themselves generate, rather than it coming from the environment (like air, food, and water).

Love—this unique, vibrating, living energy—is something we give and receive in different forms and amounts, such as the following:

A greeting	A smile	Encouragement
Understanding	Acceptance	Patience
Kindness	Teaching	Listening
Empathy	Acknowledging	Compassion
Supportiveness	Giving	A kiss
A touch	Graciousness	Gratitude
Being available	Intimacy	A hug

These and many more behaviors send love. We thrive on it and need an endless supply of it, as with the oxygen we continuously breathe.

2. A Developed Self Is Where True Power Lies

As mentioned, I believe that a fully developed self is the most powerful part of a human being. What do I mean by *powerful*? We all would like to be someone who touches, inspires, and motivates the people we meet in life. Often, we face situations where people are not touched, inspired, or motivated by us. We wonder what we could have done, what else we could have said. Why, we wonder, had we not moved them? We feel frustrated and helpless. We might even blame them for not responding to us.

When we love someone, we do not get frustrated, we do not get impatient. That comes from the mind and an undeveloped self. We might feel sad; by communicating our sadness (which comes from our heart-self) rather than our frustration (which comes from our mind), we can touch the other person's heart. I am using heart and self synonymously. Only touching one's heart-self is effective. It connects someone with the truth that they deserve to love themselves and it is only from that place that someone can do something beneficial for themselves. That is what I mean by *touching* another.

Touching someone means that their self has fully felt your love to the point that they realize they deserve not only your love but their own. It inspires them to look inward, to develop more awareness, to take action or to do something that will benefit many. The more developed one's self is, the more lives it touches, inspires, helps, heals, nurtures, and teaches.

This is true because a developed self realizes everyone has a self that is identical to theirs and is connected to them, connected to the whole. All selves need loving and they need to feel connected to other selves. This is like gravity—you can count on it anytime, anywhere. The developed self knows this and cares about all other selves. It no longer sees others in terms of color, religion, race, gender, nationality, or social position but as selves with similar needs to love and be loved.

I was looking for logical evidence that life span is in fact a three-stage developmental process, that each stage develops to a higher potential of a human being. I believed that it was important to prove that each stage, including that of a developed self, gives us greater control and greater power over our lives and over our environment. I believe that greater control and greater power develop as we move from using the body's full potential to using the mind's full potential, and finally by developing the self's full potential. I theorized that the potential of each stage of development was exponentially greater in power and effectiveness than the stage before.

The developed mind's potential and power is greater than the developed body's potential. We can immediately see that it gives us greater control and power over our lives and environment.

Let's compare the physical power of twenty of the strongest people in the world with a small, physically weak person who has a machine gun. A machine gun is a mental construct. It shows what the mind

is capable of creating. We know that even though it's twenty people against one, it is still no contest. The individual with the machine gun can destroy all twenty stronger people and then some. The power of the mind always triumphs.

Think about all the tools the mind has invented to assist the body with doing tasks. Cars, trains, boats, cranes, telephones, television, machines that assemble with pin-point accuracy, not to mention flying machines. These accomplish feats which the body could never accomplish alone.

It is easy to see that the mind has exponentially increased human beings' control and power over life and the environment. This led me to contemplate how I can prove that developing the self's full potential can take us to an exponentially higher level of power and control over our lives and environment.

As you ponder this question, know that it took me over fifteen years to answer it. Yes, you read it correctly—fifteen years. I knew that if I didn't answer this question, I would doubt the strength of my theory of life span and my theory of self. If I did come up with the answer, I would have, with absolute certainty, validated the theory of self and therefore the effectiveness of my whole theory of human development. So, you can see a lot was riding on discovering the answer.

That piece of the puzzle finally fell into place. What is the most powerful thing a human being can do? Is it power as a display of strength, force, or speed? But there didn't seem to be any examples of the self creating anything like machines, which enabled the mind to transcend the power of the body.

I looked for those we all consider to be the most powerful people in the world, those we hold in highest regard. And it dawned on me. Their feats of power had nothing to do with physical or mental force.

I followed that line of thought and the answer was waiting, like a ripe, juicy apple ready for the picking.

The most powerful thing one human being can possibly do is to touch another human being. Touching us inside in a way that brings out the best, most compassionate, loving part of us. Touching us in a way that we feel fully connected to our own feelings and that of every other human being. Touching us in a way that moves us to action on behalf of ourselves and humanity. Touching us in a way that our personal self diminishes and our collective self takes on paramount importance.

We know about prisoners of war who chose to die rather than submit to the enemy. You cannot make people do something against their will. Yes, you can threaten people with harm and death, and most will succumb to the fear, but that is not *moving* someone—that is creating a malcontent who will wait for a chance to plunge a knife in your heart. And yes, you can bribe and manipulate them, but once you are discovered, they will loathe you.

Truly moving people takes a different power, one we all respond to. One that touches us deep at our core, actually touches the self in us, and inspires us to follow and do great things. One that makes us love not only the message but the messenger.

It is power of insurmountable dimensions that no physical or mental force can accomplish. Nothing has been ever invented that substitutes for this power. Moses, Jesus, Mohamed, Buddha, Gandhi, Mandela, Kennedy, King, Mother Teresa, and countless famous and nameless have done this. Men and women who have touched us and led us to greatness.

That, ladies and gentlemen, is the greatest power known to humanity, and it resides in the self, its potential waiting to be fully developed in each of us.

3. The Effort Scale

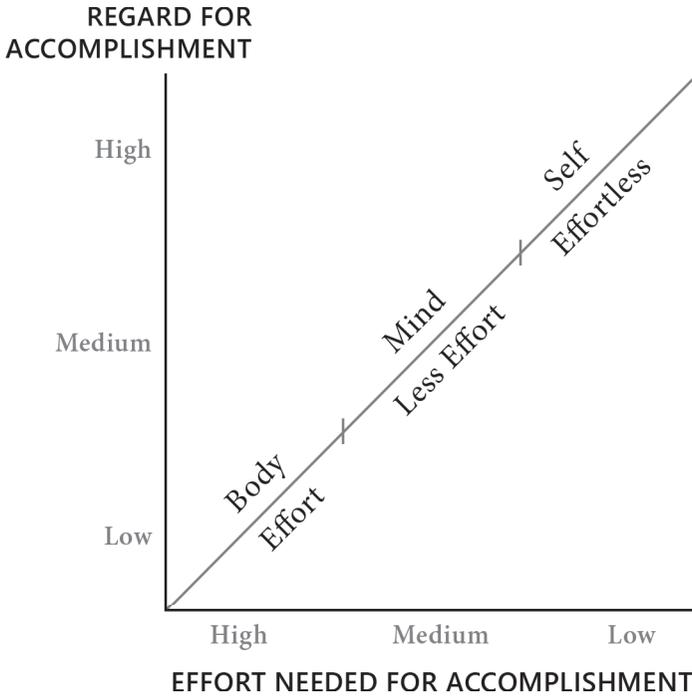


FIGURE 1 Consider how a well-developed self performs effortlessly, and it is these accomplishments most fondly remembered in various cultural histories.

This graph illustrates the existence of the self. We will discuss the scale from two perspectives: first, by looking at the effort needed to achieve results using the body, the mind, and the self, and second, by looking at the level of regard to which people hold these various efforts. We will use the need to lift a heavy weight to compare body and mind.

1. Body

When using the body, lifting heavy objects takes a lot of effort, and we can't move them far if at all. How high a regard do human beings hold the moving of a heavy object, with all the effort involved? What

impact does the effort have on our quality of life? Using the body to accomplish various goals and objectives is usually characterized by two things:

a) Low regard. These goals (like lifting, pushing, throwing, running fast, running far, climbing, seeing, hearing, shouting, swimming, jumping or any physical thing the body can accomplish without tools) are of a limited value. We don't hold the accomplishments of the body in very high regard, nor do we think these activities ultimately make a major contribution to the quality of human existence. They are all low on the scale of regard.

b) High effort. Most of the activities of the body are characterized by physical exertion, sweat, and strain, and they require the body to be in good shape. They are high on the scale of effort.

2. Mind

We notice it takes less effort to apply the mind to the same activity. To move a heavy object, we developed the lever, the inclined plane, the wheel, the pulley, the crane, and cranes on wheels. Our mind enabled us to use a lot less effort to move heavy objects a lot farther. Does this impact the quality of the human condition? Using the mind to accomplish various goals and objectives is usually characterized by two things:

a) Medium regard. By using the mind, we have taken all the things the body can and can't do (like fly, stay underwater for months, talk to someone thousands of miles away, see atoms, and the like) and developed tools that successfully enable the body to do them significantly better. Using the mind to develop tools is much higher on the scale of regard. We might claim that the quality of life has been improved by all the tools the mind has developed. Where would we be without airplanes or electron microscopes?

b) Less effort. Most activities associated with using the mind (like thinking, problem solving, predicting, learning languages, and mathematical computation) are characterized by less or no physical exertion, no sweat or strain. Advances such as cranes that can lift houses, high-speed trains and cars that can take us faster than our legs can, telephones and televisions that help us see and talk across the world, farm machinery that harvest an abundance of crops without breaking our backs, along with a million other inventions, are all examples of how the mind can be used to improve our quality of life. Higher regard, less effort.

Those who invented machines to supplement the strengths and weaknesses of the body, those who epitomize the use of the mind, are thought of with greater regard than those who exhibited physical power. We would like to emulate the success of inventors for the fame or fortune it might bring. Still, accomplishments such as developing the printing press (Johannes Gutenberg), electricity (Benjamin Franklin), the light bulb (Thomas Edison), penicillin (Louis Pasteur and Alexander Fleming), assembly lines for cars (Ransom E. Olds and Henry Ford), flight (the Wright brothers), and the telephone (Antonio Meucci and Alexander Graham Bell), while improving the general quality of life for many of us, didn't make us feel more human or closer and more loving toward other human beings.

I am arguing that—even though those who have invented those machines are thought of with high regard—comfort, ease, and even extended life are not synonymous with happiness and true satisfaction in life. Are we happier today? Do we have more inner peace and more satisfaction? Do we get and give more love? It is highly arguable that we are happier today, but if we want to make a case for that, we must ask, *Is our happiness attributable to our use of the mind that created these tools?*

The names of the people who conquered the world, who epitomize the use of physical force, such as Attila the Hun, Genghis Kahn, Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, Adolf Hitler, and Joseph Stalin, are generally not held in positive high regard but in negative regard. These people did not make us feel more human or feel a closer connection to other beings.

3. The Self

As impressive as the feats of the mind are, they still are not held in the highest regard by humanity. I am referring to the impact an act or invention has on the quality of our inner life—our happiness, our inner peace, our getting and giving love. The highest regard is reserved for accomplishments that seem to touch a part of us inside—touch our hearts, our souls positively and move us to feel happiness and joy. Accomplishments that make us feel more human, feel a closer connection to other beings, come from the full development of the self.

Using the self to accomplish various goal and objectives is usually characterized by two things:

a) Highest regard. Using the self is usually characterized by a care and concern for the health, well-being, joy, peace, and satisfaction of other selves, not by sweat and strain or brainpower. When we consider Olympic gold medalists or the Nobel Peace Prize winners, it is easy to see who we admire the most. It is the people who win the Peace Prize. We sense that these people cared about us collectively and made our planet a more loving place to live. Just some of the people most attributed with this type of endeavor are Moses, Jesus, Muhammad, Buddha, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. They are also the most revered and held in highest regard. Their actions brought us closer to feeling our own

humanity and a human connection to others. The touching of another's self is the greatest power on Earth and can move humanity in ways that physical force, even intellectual force, cannot. We call these individuals *developed*—that is, they have become aware, they have used their awareness to create a loving vision effectively, and they are unconditionally loving. Those are exactly the qualities we strive to develop within each person using the Continuum Theory.

b) Lowest effort. Using a developed self is effortless. In using the body and mind, we can measure an effort output. It can leave us exhausted when we exert our bodies or our brains. When we use a developed self, there is no level of exertion. It comes from being—allowing ourselves to be. We are not using the body or mind in order to create more creature comforts or things. There is no sweat and strain or problem-solving involved. It takes work to develop the self. It takes work to develop the body and brain. But it takes effort when you use the body and brain. When you use the self, it has a quality of effortlessness.

A developed self is needed by human beings to achieve happiness, peace, and fulfillment in life. This cannot be accomplished by using body or mind alone.

4. Intuition, or the Inner Voice

Inner wisdom, sixth sense, discernment, inner voice, gut feeling, inner child—these are all terms we use to describe that sense we all have of something within us that is a source of guidance, awareness, and knowing that we either listen to or ignore. I believe it is worthwhile to look at what these universally accepted and used concepts may imply, based on experiential observation and inductive and deductive reasoning.

Hundreds of books have been written about all of these concepts. The constant references made to these concepts show a widely held belief in them. My explanation below, of why people believe in these concepts, is relevant to my theory of self. It will also give you more food for thought regarding their source, which I believe is the self.

Is it possible that all these refer to something calling to us from deep inside? Are there many separate entities inside each of us, or is it possible we are talking about the same thing? If it is the same thing, why do we insist on calling it so many different names? Why can't we just agree on one name? And when we say "same thing," do we mean "same source"? If we do, or if it is, what is that source of awareness, guidance, and knowing that we unintentionally experience?

We have all experienced a certain type of knowing that seems to have little to do with information we have obtained through reading, schooling, talking to friends, observing, or any past experiences we may have had. We meet a person we never met before. They are smiling and friendly, but somehow we just don't feel comfortable. Very often this discomfort turns out to be valid, turns out to have real basis, when something negative happens. If we didn't listen to that inner voice, we now realize we should have.

The business or social dealings you entered into (despite your gut feelings telling you not to) usually turned out to be a big mistake. Because I like people, I am also guilty of not having listened to that voice that said, "Something is not right." I have ignored it (magnanimously, I thought—after all, I don't know anything about these people, so why should I doubt them?), only to regret my decisions. Almost everyone I have ever spoken to has made similar mistakes of omission, having not listened to that voice from within.

What happened to a client a few years ago is something most of us are familiar with, and studies with twins corroborate this story.

One morning, she woke up and said she had the worst night of her life. Her head ached; she had not sleep all night. She felt there was something wrong with her daughter, who was going to school on the other coast. She called her immediately, and sure enough found her daughter crying. The daughter was very down and had had what she reported as the worst night of her life.

This instance is far from unique. As a matter of fact, it seems to be all too common.

We often explain this type of phenomenon by calling it a woman's intuition (thereby indicating that men seem to have less of it), gut sense (a feeling we all seem to get in the pit of our stomachs), sixth sense, intuitive cognition, discernment, feeling, hunch, idea, impression, suspicion. Roget's dictionary defines intuition as "the power to discern the true nature of a person or situation: insight, instinct."¹¹

These terms and phrases are not based on one or two situations that one or two people experienced. They are based on an almost universal experience all people have shared from time immemorial. In mainstream human development and psychology circles, we tend to discount phenomena, we tend to discount phenomena we can't explain. Interestingly, we don't do that in other sciences—nuclear physics, astrophysics, biology, chemistry. Even if we can't prove it, we note it as a reality of that science. Astrophysicists have noted certain ways light behaves in space, and instead of discounting it have posited general relativity and the existence of black holes.

If we want psychology, philosophy of psychology, and human development to be more scientific, can we discount phenomena just because we can't see or explain it? I don't believe we can.

Next, we must ask ourselves from where this information that we only feel comes. Our intuition cannot be explained by simply calling it coincidence. The only way to explain these instances of knowing

and connection is to simply admit that there must be a connection between people that we can't explain, see, or touch . . . yet. From a strictly materialist point of view, where there was no wire or physical entity connecting two people, there was no connection, and the pain the mother experienced at the same time her daughter was experiencing was just coincidental. But that is simply being silly. For the sake of pretending to be scientific, we will deny the limits of our understanding regarding finding out what in fact does connect us and inform us. By denying, we stop our search for the answer.

Because these experiences are universal, I feel it would be scientifically more honest of us to posit an explanation—a black hole—and pursue a line of questioning and research that may answer it. Which is what I did.

So let's get back to the theory. Because body and mind are electrical, quantum, vibrating energy fields, I believe the self is as well. We perceive the boundary of the body and we think that what we cannot contact, especially at great distances, we cannot know. The self, being an energetic vibrating quantum field, is not bound by the body. As such, it can connect with other selves, other energy fields, and have access to information, even from large distances.

In summary, our personal experience with the existence of intuition, inner wisdom, sixth sense, inner voice, gut feeling, inner child, and discernment all points directly to a source of knowing which I believe is the self.

Innate Human Abilities

Human beings have a number of innate abilities. Having an innate ability means nature has equipped us to do something without thought and without being taught. One innate ability we all have is

the ability to learn how to walk. Watching the relentless efforts of an infant to stand and walk is enough to convince us of that. Yet, just as much as an infant strives to stand and walk, adults can interrupt, inhibit, or even damage that ability. Let's for example take an over-protective mother who decides to carry her daughter until she is two or three years old because she is afraid of her baby falling or touching germs. This behavior would interrupt and inhibit the development of the child's innate ability to walk normally. Imagine this same mother carrying the child until she was ten or fifteen years old. That would damage the daughter's ability to walk, and only painful rehabilitation could correct it. For centuries, some members of Chinese society bound female children's feet, believing that dainty feet were more feminine. The practice disabled these women for a lifetime. That is why it is outlawed in China today.

Another innate ability among the many we have is to talk. Even a century ago, the commonly held belief was that because infants couldn't talk, they were unintelligent and couldn't think yet. We didn't realize how developed their brains were for absorbing and retaining knowledge. The only thing that wasn't yet developed was the muscles of the tongue, which would enable them to form intelligible sounds. This belief led to people using baby talk, imitating infant's sounds rather than teaching them, and in general not talk to their supposedly unintelligent children until much later. Although ultimately children did learn the language, the use of baby talk and lack of communication hindered the development of their brains and their grasp of language. Of course, we now know better. Infants are intelligent and capable of learning, so today every attempt is made to fully develop an infant's ability to talk and think as early as possible.

All children are born with the innate ability to love. Infants instinctively reach for, smile at, and hug their mother-figures, there-

by giving and receiving loving energy. The ability to love is there at birth; however, it must be nurtured and fully developed so it can become unconditional in nature. It is developed by a combination of imitation and guidance, just like the innate abilities to talk and walk. Children learn to talk by imitation; the more we talk to them in complete, adult-like sentences, the more they will be able to express their thoughts in complete, adult-like sentences. The loving of others and the loving of oneself needs to be modeled the same way, consistently, so that a child can learn to imitate that behavior. As infants need for us to point to things and name them, loving behavior needs to be taught by modeling and by pointing to loving behaviors and naming them. Just like we lovingly correct a child when he misuses a word or falls trying to walk, we must correct his unloving, conditional behavior, lovingly. Most importantly, we need to model loving behavior in a consistent way. We want people to love us even when we make mistakes. Wouldn't it be nice for them if we loved them when they were less than perfect? I believe most of us love to love. We want to love. We are never happier than when we love. We need to love for our health and happiness.

As I said in the introduction, although the innate ability to love is there in every human being, for most of us it is damaged. Although some adults may be able to consistently give love, most are not. My father wasn't; my mother was. As a child watches parents walk and talk and wants to imitate them, a child watches and experiences how parents give, ask for, and withhold love. They end up imitating their parents' loving and unloving behaviors. As adults, they love in the same style they witnessed love being exchanged by family members (parent to parent, parent to child, sibling to sibling, parent to grandparent, and so on.) Sadly, the innate ability of loving, rather than being fully developed in a child, is damaged all too often.

Study: The Satisfaction Index

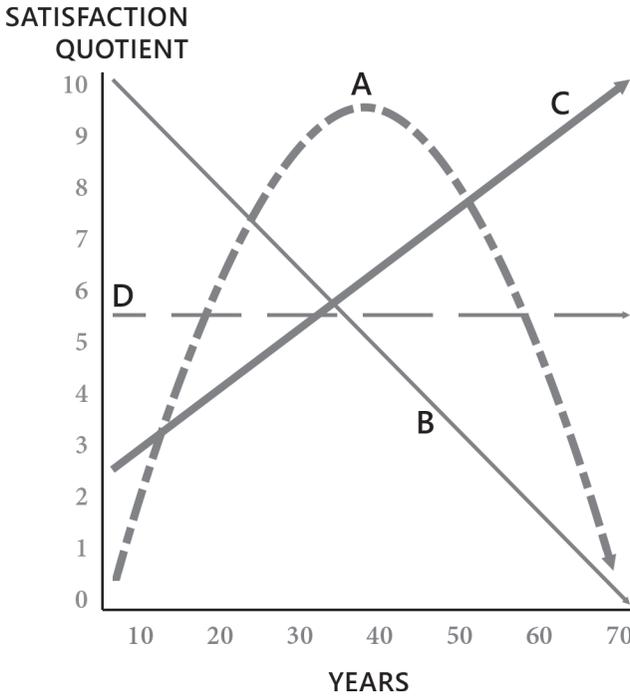


FIGURE 2 The x-axis represents some of the decades in a human life span. The y-axis indicates the level of perceived or anticipated satisfaction during those years.

I once conducted a survey that indirectly measured the level of anticipation with which individuals look forward to the coming years and decades. There was a total population of 288 people interviewed for this study with an age range of twenty-three to eighty-six, and to them I posed the following question: “If you had to draw life on a graph, from birth to death, and show where you believe life is at its peak (where it is at its most satisfying) and where it was at its lowest in satisfaction, how would you draw it?”

The results of this survey are included here as evidence because I believe that with the full development of the self comes real power, satisfaction, and happiness. I believe this stage of life should be ea-

gerly anticipated and looked forward to. Instead, many people today are simply happy to be alive and healthy.

A. Dashed, bell-shaped line.

Seventy-three percent of the participants interviewed subscribed to this view of life and satisfaction. It starts at around one on the Satisfaction Index and peaks between thirty and fifty years and then steadily declines. Their age range was from twenty-three to sixty-nine.

These individuals felt that there comes a time, somewhere between thirty and fifty years of age, when life starts to become a downhill experience. Irrespective of their ages, they were unanimous in not really looking forward to aging, and certainly not to the next decade. They felt being a child or teenager was too powerless because they had few choices, if any, and even the lack of responsibilities did not make the prospect more attractive. They also felt that the whole aging process, except for things like greater material wealth or security and higher career achievements, was still by and large a negative experience. They would have preferred to stay young, between twenty and thirty.

B. Solid, descending line.

Twelve percent of the participants interviewed subscribed to this view of life and satisfaction. It starts at ten on the Satisfaction Index and goes steadily down through seventy to eighty years of age. This group consisted of participants aged thirty to eighty-three.

Their notion was that life could not possibly be any better than when you and your every need are taken care of. You are also loved more than for the rest of your life. The rest of life after infancy and childhood is an ever-escalating series of struggles, disappointments,

and responsibilities, ending with slowly eroding physical and mental capacity.

C. Solid, inclined line.

Ten percent of those interviewed subscribed to this view of life. It starts at around three on the Satisfaction Index and goes steadily upward as we age. This group was aged from sixty-five to eighty-six.

These participants reasoned that as you age, you tend to accept things the way they are. You let go of your dreams and become more realistic. Eventually, the kids grow up and leave, reducing parental responsibilities, and ultimately, you can retire and not have to work. They considered retirement the high point of life and worth looking forward to so they could do the things they always wanted—reading, traveling, watching the grandchildren, and so on.

D. Dashed, level line.

This group represented about five percent of the total interviewed. It starts at around five on the Satisfaction Index and stays there.

Participants who chose this were aged between thirty-five and seventy-two. Their reasoning went like this: life always has its ups and downs, so it doesn't really get any worse or better. Perhaps with age, we get to handle our problems more effectively. Life is what you make it.

Conclusions

Only ten percent of participants in the survey felt life was designed to get better and that aging was good because they have something to look forward to. Everyone in this group was already over sixty-five, so we might suppose they were rationalizing their situation, or per-

haps this time in their lives was the best that they had experienced. This group looked forward to being grandparents, reading, traveling, gardening, and other things they wanted to do. I strongly feel that, as pleasant as those activities are, they are not synonymous with development and growth.

On the other hand, if we add up the other percentages on the graph, we can see that almost ninety percent of all people interviewed characterized life as a process, which after fifty or sixty years has more negative aspects associated with it than positive—a decline of body and mind, health issues, and financial dependency. For these participating individuals, their physical vitality and mental sharpness seemed to be more important than having free time. Simply doing activities that do not generate anticipation and excitement defeats the purpose and potential that life holds for us at the latter stages.

None of the groups considered that the most exciting stage of development, the one that has the greatest potential for achieving true satisfaction—developing power, effectiveness, mission, passion, connection, fame, and even fortune (all of which can stem from our becoming more aware and better at envisioning, communicating, and behaving unconditionally)—is the last stage of life after forty or fifty.

This last stage of development starts at approximately forty to fifty years of age and can continue until death! Within our developed self lies the answer to the question, *What is my life's purpose, and do I have all of the tools necessary to carry out that purpose?* Only when we come into the knowledge of our life's purpose and find ourselves engaged in pursuing it successfully do we come close to the satisfaction we are all entitled to. I believe in order to manifest true satisfaction, we must discover and achieve our life's purpose, and we can only do this if our self is fully developed.

Unrealized Opportunities to Further Explore the Self

I found one of the most interesting pieces of evidence for the existence of the self as I was researching intuition and insight. In the book *My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey* by Jill Bolte Taylor, PhD, a brain scientist speaks about her eight-year journey after a massive brain hemorrhage that wiped out her left brain. For eight years, she felt as if she was living in the “La-La-Land” of her right brain.¹² It was in some ways a wonderful experience for her. She writes about her experience of functioning without her left brain, without being able to sequence action or thoughts, without being able to learn or understand why any sequential action was necessary. But she doesn't seem to explain why, if she was so happy in the La-La-Land of her right brain and her left brain wasn't functioning, what part of her fought this eight-year battle to recover the use of her left brain. What part of her even had enough consciousness to decide that it wanted to fight this battle? Her only comment, but one that is dropped immediately, is as follows: “My scientific training did not teach me anything about the human spirit and the value of compassion.”

Only very briefly is *the human spirit* referred to and implied as her source of motivation. Well, I asked myself, if so, wouldn't we all want to find out more about this human spirit? How does it function? How can we develop it? What nourishes it? How does it interact and relate to the body and mind?

Unfortunately, Jill did not take up that line of questioning. She was content to use the term human spirit and felt that she and everyone else knew exactly what she was talking about. I am certain, in her mind, no research is necessary, and the question of the existence of the human spirit, or self, continues to be unanswered.

NOTES

1. Richard M. Lerner, *Concepts and Theories of Human Development* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002).
2. Nicholas Rescher, *Studies in Quantitative Philosophizing* (Frankfurt: Ontos-Verlag, 2010), 20.
3. Joseph Melnick, "Editorial," *Gestalt Review* 5 no. 3 (2001): 161–166.
4. Thomas Mayor, "Hunters-Gatherers: The Original Libertarians," *Independent Review* 16 no. 4 (2012): 485–500. Consider also Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
5. Gardiner Harris, "Talk Doesn't Pay, So Psychiatry Turns to Drug Therapy," *New York Times*, March 5, 2011, accessed August 27, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/06/health/policy/06doctors.html?pagewanted=all&r=2>.
6. Jeffrey M. Schwartz and Sharon Begley, *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force* (New York: Harper Collins World, 2002).
7. In my experience, mental illnesses are not illnesses at all but rather people's reaction to trying to navigate life's problems without the proper tools.
8. Russell Howard Tuttle, "Human Evolution," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, last modified April 16, 2015, accessed August 30, 2015, <http://www.britannica.com/science/human-evolution>.
9. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1962).
10. Barbara L. Fredrickson, *Love 2.0: How Our Supreme Emotion Affects Everything We Think, Do, Feel, and Become* (New York: Hudson Street Press, 2013). Fredrickson's research validated my hypothesis that love was nourishment.

11. *Roget's II: The New Thesaurus*. 3rd ed. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.
12. Jill Bolte Taylor, *My Stroke of Insight: A Brain Scientist's Personal Journey* (New York: Plume, 2009).

